Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs)

LOP 13: Christian Witness to Muslims

Lausanne Occasional Paper 13

Report of the Consultation on World Evangelization
Mini-Consultation on Reaching Muslims
held in Pattaya, Thailand from 16-27 June 1980
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Prefatory Note

This report, Christian Witness to Muslims, is one of a series of Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs) emerging from the historic Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) held in Pattaya, Thailand, in June 1980. The report was drafted by members of the "Mini-Consultation on Reaching Muslims," under the chairmanship of Mr. Bruce J. Nicholls, who also served as International Co-ordinator of the pre-COWE study groups on Muslims.

The report is a popular version of the materials prepared by the members of the mini-consultation and submitted to a wider sub-plenary group for comment. The responsibility for the final text rests with the drafters and the consultation chairman.

The report is released with the prayer and hope that it will stimulate the church and individual members in reaching this large segment of the population.

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Introduction

The seventy participants in our Consultation have come from twenty-six different countries—many of them countries in the Muslim world. We have realised how much we owe to the stimulus of previous conferences, such as those in Lausanne in 1974 and in Colorado Springs in 1978; and we have begun to reap some of the fruits of the local and national study groups which led up to this Consultation. We have found ourselves involved in some hard thinking about the nature of the task before us, but our fellowship and discussion together have encouraged us to sound a clear and definite call to action.

1. A Call to Reflection

Since many of the study materials produced by the Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) have been based on the "Peoples Approach," we have tried to analyse the different disciplines which have come together to produce this new approach and have noted the following in particular:

Recent studies in anthropology, sociology, and cross-cultural communications, which have led to new insights into how individuals and communities behave and how ideas are communicated;

Observation of how new churches have come into being in different contexts in the Third World, and analysis of possible reasons for the growth of these churches (The Church Growth Movement);

Reflection on the insignificant results of much mission work in the past, combined with new attempts to learn from the study of church history;

In seeking to relate this approach to Christian witness to Muslims, we have realised that it contains at least five distinct convictions or emphases which we need to consider separately;

- Churches *ought always to be growing*.
- We ought to *approach people groups* rather than individuals.**
- Where we find that some peoples are resistant to the gospel and others more receptive, we ought to *concentrate our efforts on the more*

receptive.

- We need to have a much greater *respectfor other cultures*.
- We need to *plan carefully*.

It is important to recognise that some of these emphases are not new; e.g. , the work of the well-known Islamicists in the Western world in the last 100 years has led to a profound respect for Islam both as a religion and a culture. Nor are they the exclusive possession of any one school or movement. What is new is the way in which these emphases have been brought together and combined in recent years.

Critics of this movement often react strongly to what appears to be a complete "package," a total system of missiology, which appears to have acquired the status of dogma. We have noted, however, that those who identify with the movement are the first to assure us that this is *not* how they understand these new approaches.

In the following five sections, therefore, we seek to relate each emphasis to our witness to Muslims, to draw attention to its strengths, and to note some of its possible weaknesses and limitations.

A. Churches Ought to Grow

Observations of how new churches have come into being in different contexts in the Third World has encouraged the conviction that churches should always be growing. We should never be content with churches which are static or even receding.

This challenge needs to be accepted as a corrective to the attitudes of despair or resignation which so often paralyse the churches in their thinking about the Muslim world.

At the same time, however, we have noted that this valuable emphasis raises certain questions:

(i) It appears to imply that *success* in evangelism is to be measured by the number of those who respond; i.e., where there has been little or no response to the gospel, we must conclude that there has been some failure to communicate the gospel, probably due to some basic mistake in method or approach. Not all of us are able to accept such an assumption.

(ii) When applied to the study of church history, it becomes hard to understand periods in which churches have passed through severe trial and testing, and not always grown as a result.

(iii) It does not take into account other factors; e.g., sociological factors, which affect the growth and contraction of churches. Thus, for example, many small, struggling churches in the Islamic world are losing large numbers of their members (and leaders) through emigration. (Perhaps we should be taking action together to reverse this flow, and encourage Christians to return to their country of origin!)

B. People Groups

The special COWE book entitled "That Everyone May Hear: Reaching the Unreached" by Edward R. Dayton, raises the question, "How do we evangelize the world?" It goes on to suggest as the starting point for an answer "ONE PEOPLE AT A TIME is the way to do it" (p. 12).

When the approach outlined in this book is applied to Muslim evangelization, we find that *all* Muslim peoples come into the category of "Unreached Peoples." We thank God for the many situations in which these new ways of thinking about our approach to unreached Muslim peoples have helped to bring new churches into being.

This, for example is the testimony of a missionary who had been engaged for 28 years in traditional kinds of evangelistic and teaching ministries, which relied heavily on an approach to individuals, in spite of the fact that families and groups in the society often made group decisions about important matters involving rites of passage and religious practises:

"A village farmer learned something about the gospel from a single tract. Shortly after he moved into a different village, he shared the tract with the household heads. With this scant information, these Muslims professed faith in Jesus Christ. Muslim teachers from the city discouraged them and, not having instruction, they turned back.

"It was at this time that I and a local missionary visited them. That evening we sat with the household heads outside in a circle with women and children on the periphery. We explained and discussed the gospel. Soon I became the target of their questions. They all resolved into one major issue: could they retain their old religious practices and have Jesus Christ too? I politely skirted the question and gave further information about Jesus Christ and the Word of God. There were several rounds, during one of which one man shook out his garments angrily and stomped out of the group. He never returned. At midnight we broke up without having come to a decision. We were sad because no progress had been made.

"Early the next morning the good news came that the eleven men had decided unanimously to put away the old religion (Islam) and follow Jesus Christ. We spent another two hours confirming their faith. They ranged in age from 20 to 70. This was a multi-individual interdependent decision.

"God put this in my lap and I could not deny it. No missionary or pastor was originally involved, only a very weak believer with a single tract, *'One Way.* 'I had used an indirect approach which left the decision over the issue to the group. At some point that night they had arrived at a consensus, each one of them agreeing and believing, but acting as a solid group. I was converted to the belief that groups could make valid decisions regarding their faith in Jesus Christ."

The following are certain obvious strengths of this group approach:

(i) It helps us to *see people as they see themselves*. We can thus see each people or people group as "a sufficiently large sociological grouping of individuals who

perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another" (Dayton 1979: p. 22).

(ii) It helps us to see *who can best reach* any particular group in the Muslim world (Dayton pp. 61-63).

(iii) It seeks to begin with *the elders of the group*, who are the decision makers, and with opinion makers. When their confidence has been gained, others find the door is open to them also.

(iv) It helps to *avoid social dislocation*. Instead of having individual converts extracted from the society, there is a group of believers affirming Christ together. The group may always remain small; but, in some cases, it may become a "group movement" involving larger numbers.

(v) It helps to *avoid cultural dislocation*. Becoming a Christian does not necessarily mean leaving one's own cultural framework. Cultural barriers between Christians and Muslims are therefore lowered. Teaching from Scripture enables the believers to understand, appreciate, and when necessary, judge their own culture.

(vi) *A Christian community* is established, however small, in which the gifts of the Spirit can be demonstrated, and leadership emerge. Teaching and discipline in this new community can overcome the danger of nominalism.

(vii) The *whole group of believers* can commit themselves to the task of *reaching others* in their community, with or without help from the outside.

Questions and reservations about the group approach

(a) This approach represents only *one* way of looking at any society. And while it may be the most helpful way of looking at most tribal societies, it is not necessarily the only way, or even the most helpful way, of looking at all peoples (e.g., in the vast cities of the modern world). The complex interplay of economic, cultural and political forces in any nation makes it difficult to understand these societies simply in terms of its different "people groups."

(b) This approach does not take sufficiently into account the extent to which the natural solidarity of any group or tribe is strengthened and reinforced by its belonging to the Muslim "Nation" or *umma*. The Law of Apostasy makes it extremely hard for individuals or groups to profess faith in Jesus openly; and sanctions which are applied are often very severe.

(c) There are many situations in the Muslim world where the Peoples' Approach does not seem to fit all the facts of history or experience. For example:

(1) Frank Khairullah's paper for the Colorado Springs Conference ("The Rule of Local Churches in God's Redemptive Plan for the Muslim World") voiced serious questions about a particular study of the church in Pakistan which was based on Church Growth principles. According to one's point of view, this paper can be regarded either as an example of an anti-Western bias which is not open to new ideas, or a genuine protest against an unbalanced application of a preconceived idea in a foreign situation. (See *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed.,

Don M. McCurry, pp. 566-580.)

(2) While the approach seems to be applicable in tribal situations (e.g., West Africa and Bangladesh), it is difficult to see how the principles can be applied, except in very general terms, in other situations (e.g., in the Middle East), where the head of the family does not have the same authority, and where families and tribes do not make the same kind of group decisions.

(3) Some individual converts in different cultural situations have found it extremely hard to relate the theory to their own experience. When they do not happen to be the heads of the families and are not able to persuade the whole family, they find themselves forced to step out on their own. If the group approach is pressed rigorously, it can make them feel that there is something wrong with the way they have professed their faith, and that *if only* they and the Christians had acted differently, they would not find themselves standing alone.

C. Resistance and Receptivity

The Church Growth Movement has encouraged us to be more critical in evaluating the results of all missionary activity. If a particular approach or method meets with little response, we should seriously consider moving on to some other place or trying some other approach. While heroic and dogged endurance may be called for in certain situations, there may be many other situations in which, instead of being a virtue, it is an indication of a rigidity which refuses to think critically, or an inflexibility which denies many others the opportunity of ever hearing the Good News about Jesus. Some of us may, therefore, need to be shaken out of an easy complacency which rationalises failures and makes them appear as victories.

When we begin, however, to apply this general principle in particular areas, we find that we can never be sure whether estimates of comparative resistance and receptivity are to be applied in local areas, in whole countries, in continents, or in the whole world. If the principle is applied strictly, we might have to advocate that relatively unresponsive people, like the English, should be largely denuded of Christian workers, while the universal church concentrates its efforts on places like Indonesia where there has been such phenomenal growth. By this same measure, most Muslim peoples would remain with the absolute minimum of Christian missionaries. It should be noted that Java and Indonesia used to be considered unresponsive areas, until faith and perseverance led to the founding of massive new churches. Stories of this kind could be multiplied.

How, then, are we to measure resistance and receptivity in the Islamic world? It seems at first sight as if the Muslim world is impossibly resistant to the gospel, for at least three reasons:

(i) Historical Reasons

At the time of Muhammad, Christianity in Arabia was largely a foreign religion. It was also deeply divided over doctrinal disputes. Ever since the Great Councils of Nicaea (325 A.D.) and Chalcedon (451 A.D.), the churches in the East had been

arguing about the doctrines of the Trinity, and Person of Christ. To make matters worse, it was a religion associated with political power and colonial expansionism. The Byzantine Emperors stood firmly for the Orthodox faith and fiercely persecuted the different heretical sects. For many Arabs, therefore, Christianity was synonymous with Byzantine domination and fierce repression of any beliefs which differed from the religion of the state.

It is an over-simplification, and even a distortion of history, to say that Islam was "spread by the sword." But it is understandable if the Muslim who remembers the Crusades wants to turn the accusation back upon the Christian church. During the last two centuries, the vast majority of the countries which now make up the Islamic world were under colonial rule. Their rulers were nearly all European, from so-called "Christian" nations. It is therefore inevitable that many Muslims' view of Christianity has been coloured by memories of this kind.

(ii) Theological Reasons

Muhammad saw himself as a prophet to whom God was revealing the final and definitive form of the same revelation which had previously been given to all the prophets before him, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. The Muslim is therefore, in a sense, "innoculated" against the gospel, because he believes that the Qur'an sums up the essence of all that had been revealed before.

(iii) Sociological and Political Reasons

Islam makes no distinction between "the things that are God's" and "the things that are Caesar's. " The Kingdom of God among men must be demonstrated not only in the hearts of all true Muslims, but in their societies and nations. Ideally the state *must* be Islamic, and the constitution of the country ought to be based on the revealed law of God (Shari'a). When this conviction reinforces feelings of family, tribal, and national solidarity, the Muslim has a strong sense that he belongs to the one Muslim nation (Umma). The invitation to "become a Christian" is seen, therefore, as an invitation to cut oneself off from family, tribe, and nation.

These different reasons, taken together, give the impression to most observers that the Islamic world is totally resistant to the gospel. It would be tragic, however, if we were to accept this conclusion without question. Joshua and Caleb saw all the same sights and collected exactly the same information as the other 10 men sent to explore the land of Canaan. But they had a different kind of trust in the living God, which gave them a different perspective and enabled them to give a report which was positive and hopeful, while all the others were negative and pessimistic.

What we need to do is to look for new ways of measuring potential receptivity all over the Islamic world. What if we try to see traditional stumbling blocks in a new light, and notice every new factor in the situation and every new door which God is opening? For example:

What if it is *our* prejudices which create more barriers to the communication of the gospel than any that exist in the mind of the Muslim?

What if the gospel Muhammad seemed to be rejecting was a distorted and defective version of the gospel, full of misconceptions about the person and work of Christ?

What if we can encourage the Muslim to read the Scriptures for himself with an open mind, and so remove some of his misunderstandings?

What if there are situations today in which the Christian presents no political threat whatsoever to his Muslim neighbour, and instead of coming to rule or to destroy, comes to serve and to build?

What if we find thousands of migrant Muslim workers and students spread all over the world, especially in cities where there are large, active churches?

What if Muslims who believe in Jesus can find a new way of belonging to the body of Christ which does not cut them off from their culture and their people?

What if we try to think in terms of a "mission to Islam" and not simply in terms of a mission to individual Muslims?

The moment we begin to see the present situation in this light, we may realise that, instead of being in a position to shake the dust off our feet, we have hardly begun to bear witness to Jesus the Messiah in the world of Islam. If only we could take every opportunity that is presented to us, there might be a responsiveness to the gospel which we had never dreamed of. (See further the article "Resistance/ Response Analysis of Muslim Peoples" by Don M. McCurry in *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, pp. 182-195).

D. Respect for Other Cultures

The Lausanne Occasional Paper ([LOP No. 2, "The Willowbank Report"—Gospel and Culture](#)p. 23) states: "In the process of church information, as in the communication and reception of the gospel, the question of culture is vital. If the gospel must be contextualised, so must the church." It goes on to comment about 19th-century methods of church planting and attitudes to culture, "During the missionary expansion of the early part of the 19th century, it was generally assumed that churches 'on the mission field' would be modelled on churches at home! The tendency was to produce almost exact replicas. Gothic architecture, prayer book liturgies, clerical dress, musical instruments, hymns and tunes, decision-making processes, synods, and committees, superintendents and archdeacons—all we exported and unimaginatively introduced into the new mission-founded churches. It should be added that those patterns were also eagerly adopted by the new Christians, determined not to be at any point behind their Western friends, whose habits and ways of worship they had been attentively watching."

Some voices were raised in protest, notably those of Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn and later of Roland Allen (LOP 2:23). Out of this grew the concept and demand for indigenous churches—"self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating."

In the last 30 years there has been a growing sensitivity to missiological insights concerning the cultural relevance or contextualisation of the church. "Now, therefore, a more radical concept of indigenous church life needs to be developed, by which each church may discover and express its selfhood as the body of Christ within its own culture" (LOP 2:23).

The seriousness with which many Christians are now relating these questions to the world of Islam was reflected in the Colorado Springs Conference in November 1978, where no less than 7 out of the 13 Foundation Papers dealt with questions relating to culture. Some were:

"The Gospel and Culture"

"The Cross-Cultural Communication of the Gospel to Muslims"

"The Muslim Convert and his Culture"

"Dynamic Equivalence Churches in Muslim Society"

"Contextualisation: Indigenisation and/or Transformation"

When we come to apply these general questions to particular aspects of Muslim culture, we need to recognise that "Islamic culture" is an exceedingly complex thing, and that generalisation can often be misleading. We also need to recognise that each single aspect of Islamic culture needs to be considered separately. Because it is hard to make Christian value judgements, we probably need to begin by distinguishing three broad areas:

(i) Areas which are genuinely "neutral," in the sense that there is *no obvious conflict* with a Christian world-view—e. g., music, calligraphy, Muslim laws of inheritance, relationships within the extended family.

(ii) Areas in which there are *obvious differences* between the Muslim and Christian way of life—e.g., there is a considerable gap between the Christian insistence on monogamous marriage and the Islamic permission to have up to four wives.

(iii) Areas in which there may be *hidden differences* between Muslim and Christian cultural forms—e.g., since Islamic art is deeply informed by a Muslim world-view, we cannot assume uncritically that such art forms are purely "neutral." This is not to say that they cannot be used or adapted, if necessary, by Christians. And it is not to say that we should take Orthodox iconography or Rembrandt's paintings as perfect examples of "Christian art" and think of Arabesque as something "Islamic." What it does mean is that we recognise that there *may be* differences in the Christian and Muslim world-views which profoundly affect their art forms.

Further questions may arise when we ask the question: *who* is in the best position to make this kind of judgment about Islamic culture? There is sometimes a danger that Christian anthropologists treat the world culture as a "sacred cow." It may be easy for them to feel that certain Islamic cultural forms are neutral, and that they can be easily retained or adapted in any Christian community. The believer in the Islamic situation, however, feels a host of pressures which the outsider cannot feel. Neither one can see the situation in a totally objective way, and they must

therefore seek to sit together under the Word of God and allow it to judge everything in the culture.

E. The Need for Planning

Many of those who live and work in the Muslim world find themselves so submerged with immediate demands and pressures of different kinds that they are hardly able to step aside and ask questions about where they are going and how they hope to get there. Missionary societies can sometimes get themselves into the position of following well-established patterns, and simply muddling along without any clear objectives or long-term goals. It is, therefore, vital that we do some hard thinking and develop realistic plans for the coming years. It is especially important for those who are planning to send people or resources to do so in the closest possible co-operation with those who know the situation in each country. It is they who have to suffer in the long run if serious mistakes are made.

The following are some of the questions which need to be faced by all who are in any way involved in the process of planning:

(i) *What is actually happening in the Muslim world?* Can we find ways of listening to what Muslims are saying and thinking, not only about Christianity but about their faith and about the burning human issues which they face? What is the significance of the political changes that are taking place in many countries of the Muslim world? How are these changes affecting the position of Christian minorities and traditional missionary institutions?

(ii) *What are the immediate needs of churches already established in Muslim countries?* What kind of supportive ministries do they need? Are we totally committed to working with them and through them? Should some people be encouraged to work independently of them?

(iii) *Who are the best people to reach out* to communities which are, as yet, "unreached"? If they are nationals, who will be responsible for them, and what resources will they need? If they are expatriates, in what capacities can they go?

(iv) *What are the special gifts required?* What are the special qualities needed in anyone who seeks to be a cross-cultural witness in the Muslim world?

(v) *How should resources be channelled?* How can they be used in such a way as to release the gifts of the local churches, and not to stifle them? How can we avoid the mistakes made in the past by well-meaning, but thoughtless, individuals and agencies from affluent countries, which have channelled resources (of people, funds, and materials) in unhelpful ways?

Our attempt to apply these five questions to our witness in the Muslim world has convinced us of the need for further reflection and discussion about their different approaches to our task.

We call, therefore, for a continuing discussion among ourselves which is based on the following understanding:

- that we avoid creating stereotypes and caricatures of different positions, and

guard against any polarisation between "the group approach" and "the individual, extractionist approach";

-that where there are fundamental differences in assumptions and approaches, we do not seek to gloss over them with platitudes about "the need for diversity of approaches";

- that we avoid using the Scriptures to justify our preconceived theories (Jesus spoke about joy in heaven over *one* sinner who repents, Luke 15:7; and said that loyalty to him came before loyalty to the family, Luke 14:26. On the other hand, the Bible contains many examples of conversions in which *whole families* were involved: e.g., Zacchaeus, Luke 19:9; the Samaritan village John 4:39-42; the people of Lydda and Saron, Acts 9:35; the Philippian jailor, Acts 16:31-34.);

- that trust in the sovereign working of the Holy Spirit does not do away with the need for discussion about methods (none of us believes that any one technique or method will guarantee success);

- that we try to distinguish between reactions in ourselves which are based on genuine differences of theology or approach, and those which spring from cultural or emotional factors.

We urge those who write about new approaches and seek to practise them in Muslim contexts to be especially sensitive to comment and criticism from national Christians and missionaries living and working among those people, to be more critical of their theories, and to be willing to revise them constantly in the light of history and experience.

We urge those who are critical of these approaches not to reject them out of hand as "the latest fashion," but to examine them honestly before God and, in fellowship with others, seek to find out if and how they can be applied in their own situation.

2. A Call to Action

A. The Call to Train in the Local Church

There can be few areas in which it is more important to mobilise the whole church for the task of evangelism.

Three Stages of Training

(i) Training in the Local Church

We urge that every church whose members have any contact with Muslims should work out some kind of training programme of the appropriate level for its members.

Such a programme should involve as many members as possible, young and old, mature Christians and new Christians; it should seek to:

- encourage members to relate to their Muslim neighbours. We may need to learn or relearn some of the basic lessons in the art of friendship. And if this art doesn't come easily to us, we must learn it from one another and from the Scriptures. "If you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even pagans do that. " (Matt. 5:47).

- teach the essentials of the Islamic faith and life; and
- help members to begin to learn how to listen to Muslims and communicate the Christian faith to them.

(ii) Training of Individuals

Churches should be encouraged to set aside individuals or families, who, in the course of training in the local church, show that they have a special concern in this direction and want further opportunities for training. Training at this level includes:

- listening to committed, practising Muslims explaining and commending their faith;
- learning by observing how others with more experience relate and speak to Muslims (following the method by which the disciples learned from Jesus);
- learning how to study the Bible (and perhaps the Qur'an?) with individual Muslims or groups;
- learning from the experience of Muslim converts.

(iii) Training of Specialists

Those who prove themselves to have special gifts in this kind of ministry should have opportunities for further training. Wherever possible, such training should be at existing training centres. Where there are not such centres to meet this need, we recommend that WEF or LCWE consider establishing additional regional training centres.

For further information about possible training materials and programmes suitable in different areas, write to one of the following addresses:

- The Director, The Samuel Zwemer Institute, P.O. Box 365, Altadena, Calif. 91001, U.S.A.
- The Director, "In Contact" Ministries, St. Andrews Rd., Plainstow, London, E13 8QD, England
- The Director, IAP, P.O. Box 49005, Nairobi, Kenya
- The Director, Henry Martyn Institute, P.O. Box 153, St. Luke's Compound, Hyderabad 500001, India

B. The Call to Rethink and Restate our Faith

As soon as we begin to listen to Muslims and try to share the gospel, we begin to realise how difficult it is to express ourselves in a way that Muslims understand. The painfulness of this experience ought to drive us back to the Bible, in order to learn new ways of understanding our faith and relating it to the Muslim mind.

The following are examples of what this process of rethinking and restating our faith may involve:

(i) The Oneness of God: The Old Testament is just as insistent as the Qur'an that we worship the One Eternal God: "He is Allah, the One! . . . The Lord our God is one Lord . . . " (Deut. 6:4).

If we recognise that the first disciples were brought up as orthodox Jews and therefore convinced monotheists who rejected every kind of idolatry as vehemently as the Muslim does, we may be able to approach the difficult question of the Oneness of God and the Trinity through the experience of the first disciples. If we can see how they were able to relate and identify the man Jesus with the One Eternal God without rejecting their belief in the Oneness of God, and without being guilty of the sin of idolatry, we may be able to redefine the Oneness of God in a way that the Muslim mind can accept it.

(ii) Man as a Fallen Creature: The Qur'an recognises that man is the highest creation of God and speaks of him as a "steward" entrusted with the care of God's world. It speaks of man as a servant of God, but shrinks from describing him as a son. Every man is born in the state of innocence before God, and does not inherit any sinful nature from his parents.

Against this background, we are called to speak of man as a creature created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), created to enjoy a covenant relationship with God as Father. When we speak of the Fall and of all mankind as being under the judgement of God, we have a less optimistic, but, we believe, more realistic view of the nature of man than the Muslim has. Through the redeeming life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Eternal Son who knows God as Father, we are invited to become sons of God and enter into a renewed covenant with him as Father.

(iii) The Person of Jesus: The well-known Surah of Unity says: "Say: He is Allah the one! Allah, the eternally Besought of all! He begetteth and was not begotten." (Surah 112:1-3). One of the greatest stumbling blocks for the Muslim is our description of Jesus as the "Son of God." It is therefore important that we appreciate the gradual process by which the first disciples came to believe in Jesus (e.g., "Who is this man? Even the winds and the waves obey him," Mark 4:41). We also need to recognise the wide variety of titles which the first apostles used to describe Jesus (e.g., "the Lord and Christ," Acts 2:36; "the Prince of life," Acts 3:15; "thy holy Servant," Acts 4:27; "the Word," John 1:1; "the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. 1:24).

If we can look at Jesus through the eyes of the disciples, we ought to have much greater sympathy for the Muslim, as he wonders how Jesus could be anything more than a prophet.

Another way in which we can learn from the gospel is to notice the restraint with which Jesus used the titles "Messiah" and "Son of God." Because he realised that they would be so badly misunderstood by his hearers, he never used them for himself. And when challenged to declare whether or not he was the Messiah, he gave an answer that was neither a straight "yes" or a straight "no," and then went on to speak of himself as the Son of Man (Luke 22:66-71). If Jesus treated such difficult titles with such restraint, we have every justification for treating the title "Son of God" with similar restraint with the Muslim.

It will also be necessary for us to appreciate what the Qur'an says about Jesus, in order to help the Muslim to see that the Qur'an itself gives titles to Jesus which are never given to Muhammad or any other prophet (e.g., "His (i.e., God's) Word" ... and "a spirit from him," Surah 4, vs. 171-172). Although the Muslim has his own way of interpreting such titles, they can often be used as a starting point, or even as a bridge in explaining how Jesus is related to God.

(iv) The death of Jesus and the atonement: The well-known text in the Qur'an appears to deny that Jesus was ever crucified: "They (the Jews) slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them; ... they slew him not for certain. But Allah took him up unto Himself" (Surah 4: 157-158).

Our theological study of the atonement usually deals only with the many different theories of the atonement. We find ourselves, therefore, ill prepared to meet the challenge of the Muslim, who not only believes that Jesus did not die on the cross but also finds the very idea of atonement unnecessary or incomprehensible. Although the idea of ransom and sacrifice are found in the Qur'an, they are not in any way connected with Jesus. Underlying the Qur'an's apparent denial of the crucifixion is the idea that God does not need *any* atonement or sacrifice to enable him to forgive men. According to the logic of the Qur'an, it is unthinkable that God should allow his prophet to suffer and be humiliated by men; he *must* step in to vindicate him.

We therefore need to be able to help the Muslim to understand the divine logic which demanded that Jesus *had to suffer*. The mere collection of Old Testament proof-texts may not help the Muslim, unless we can at the same time explain why it was necessary for Jesus to die (Luke 24:26-27). If we can help the Muslim to understand *why* God allowed Jesus to die, he may be more willing to believe that Jesus really *did* die on the cross. The Muslim who understands the *reason* for the crucifixion is more likely to accept the *fact* of the crucifixion.

(v) The Authority of the Scriptures: Muslims generally have a great respect for the Christian Scriptures and are curious to know what they contain. The Qur'an contains many verses which speak of the Qur'an as a confirmation of the Scriptures revealed earlier—e.g., the *Tawrat* revealed to Moses, the *Zabur* to David, and the *Injil* to Jesus. At the same time, however, Muslims have generally been taught, on the basis of certain verses in the Qur'an, that Jews and Christians have tampered with their Scriptures, and that our Old and New Testaments have been corrupted. It is often necessary, therefore, to explain that the earliest extant manuscripts of the whole of the Old Testament and New Testament (the *Codex Sinaiticus*) date from the fourth century A.D. (i.e., 200 years before the time of Muhammad). The Old Testament texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls date from the last few centuries B.C. and the earlier part of the first century A.D.; and they confirm the accuracy of our accepted texts. Similarly with the New Testament, there are several manuscripts or parts of the New Testament which date from the

third century. And the earliest fragment of the New Testament that has been found dates from around 125 A.D. (the Chester Beatty Papyrus). If, therefore, Muhammad believed that the revelation which came to him confirmed the previous Scriptures, which he knew were in the hands of Jews and Christians at that time, at what stage could they have been corrupted, and by whom? Muhammad could hardly accuse the Jews and Christians of corrupting the text of their Scriptures and, at the same time, claim that the Qur'an was confirming all that the Scriptures revealed before.

(vi) The use of the Quran: We need to give careful thought to the question of whether or not we should use the Qur'an in trying to communicate the gospel to Muslims; and if so, *how* it should be used. This is proving to be a controversial issue; and we find that there are basically five different attitudes held by Christians who have the same understanding of the authority and inspiration of the Bible.

(a) The Qur'an should *never be used* in discussion with the Muslim, because using it implies that we accept it as inspired, and are putting it on the same level as the Bible.

(b) The Qur'an should be studied, but only to help us to k*now and appreciate what Muslims believe, and to enable us to learn Muslim* terminology.

(c) The Qur'an should be *used against itself*, to demonstrate that it is self-contradictory. Such a polemic use of the Qur'an will show its weakness and create a hunger for something better.

(d) The Qur'an should be *used as a starting point*; e.g., the many verses that speak about Jesus and other biblical characters can be used to point to the biblical version of these same stories.

(e) The Qur'an can be *used as a source of truth*. Our recognition of all the *truths* which the Qur'an does contain makes the Muslim much less defensive and more open to read the New Testament. Since the Muslim has been told that the Bible has been corrupted, it is an enormous step forward for him even to read the Bible alongside the Qur'an. This view can be supported by a study of the ways in which biblical writers handle non-biblical material—e.g., Jesus' use of apocryphal writings of the inter-testamental period; Paul's quotations from Greek poets and his use of words like *musterion* (mystery).

This brief outline touches on a few of the areas in which we need to rethink and restate our faith. If the gospel was first given to us in an Eastern context, it ought to be possible for us to get behind the Graeco-Roman patterns of thought through which we have interpreted it, and express it once again in ways that make more sense to the Eastern mind. We also need to encourage believers who have come out of an Islamic background to have the freedom to think through those issues; and trust that the Holy Spirit can and will lead them in their search for effective ways of communicating to the Muslim mind.

C. The Call to Care and Serve

We are all too aware that the words "evangelism" and "evangelization" provoke a particularly strong and negative reaction from our Muslim neighbours. We *are accused of having exploited men's weakness and need, and offered material inducement in order to win converts.*

(i) Biblical understanding of service

We therefore need to define clearly our understanding of service:

(a) We are not trying to meet human need *in order* to be able to preach the gospel and win converts. Rather, we see loving service of our neighbour as an obligation that is laid upon us. The second of the two Great Commandments says, "Love your neighbour as you love yourself" (Luke 10:27). Jesus himself said, "I, your Lord and Teacher, have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

(b) We do not seek only to meet needs among the poor and the sick. There can be as much human need in a wealthy oil state as in a tribe which has none of the welfare services of a modern state.

(c) We find it impossible to separate service from proclamation, because we cannot separate *physical* and *material* need from *spiritual* need. We believe that the Good News of Jesus is for the *whole man* (Luke 4:16-19). Even in situations of considerable restriction, we believe it is possible, in the context of real friendship and loving service, to bear witness to the One in whose name we serve. This can be done through the quality of our lives and our work, and through natural openings in conversation, where we are asked to explain the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15).

(d) If we are accused of exploiting human need to preach the gospel, we reply that we could be accused of gross selfishness and callousness if we have the means to relieve human suffering and withhold the service that we can give. We can honestly ask if any other religion has any motive for going out to meet human need which is as compelling as the love of God revealed in Jesus. We go out because we feel compelled by the love of God (2 Cor. 5:14). Even if our message is rejected, we are willing to go on seeking to serve and heal.

(e) We do not believe that Christianity is any less of a missionary religion than Islam with its understanding of *da'wah*. We respect the Muslim who seeks actively to propagate his faith and are willing to enter into a dialogue with him.

(f) If all healing and wholeness come from God, we need not make a false distinction between "natural healing" (i.e., through scientific medicine) and "supernatural healing" (e.g., through casting out demons). Every healing ministry can be carried out in the name of Christ.

(ii) Outworking in practice

How do these attitudes to service work out in practice?

(a) We need to develop a holistic team approach to all our service and

proclamation. The work of the evangelist should not be isolated from the work of those who have other practical skills. The "missionary" needs to work very closely with the Christian in secular employment. For example, an evangelist can function as a paramedical worker in T. B. control programmes, and be trained to do simple sputum tests; a technician or a businessman can be trained and encouraged to lead worship, and teach in situations where there can be no ordained minister.

(b) Our service and proclamation need to be carried out in the context of the community, since we seek to reach all kinds of human need. Thus, there is continuing need for hospitals, schools, and other welfare organisations, where service rendered in the name of Jesus is part of a holistic approach to evangelization.

(c) Christians should not only be involved in programmes organized by the church, but also be willing to be involved in programmes which have no connection with the church.

(d) Any group of believers which comes together in the community can continue and develop different forms of service and proclamation in its own community. Social action cannot be seen as an inducement to conversion offered by outsiders if the local Christian community is totally involved. It is the local church which is thus acting as salt and light in its own community. Christians who have been liberated from fear and superstition, and from the guilt of sin, are the most natural and effective agents of change in community development programmes. It is the local believers rather than expatriates whose good works should be "seen among men" (Matt. 5:16).

D. The Call to Welcome Muslim Believers

Many Muslim converts experience the same difficulties which Saul experienced as a new convert among Christians in Damascus and Jerusalem. It needed the loving welcome of Ananias (Acts 9:17) and the understanding friendship of Barnabas (Acts 9:27-28) to help Saul to be grafted into the body of Christ. His initial discipleship training must have been given by the believers in Damascus. After this he needed the period in "Arabia" to enable him to think through the implications of all that had happened to him (Gal. 1:17).

We therefore need to give special care and attention to discipleship training for new believers, since this can sometimes be more difficult than the initial teaching of the gospel which brought them to faith. As far as possible, this teaching should be done in the context of the family.

Care for new believers must include care for every aspect of their well-being. Churches must recognise their responsibility in this area—e.g., some individuals may need vocational training to help them to find new employment, and to render social service to the whole community. This local church must also be willing to provide temporary care and shelter arrangements for any new believers facing difficulties in their community. The whole church needs to be willing to suffer with

those who suffer.

While there may be some situations where Muslim converts have little difficulty in becoming members of an existing church, there are far more situations in which they experience real difficulties in joining existing churches and feeling at home in them. The vast majority of the barriers and stumbling blocks are social and cultural rather than religious. For this reason, many have begun to ask if it is possible for believers from a Muslim background to come together to form churches of their own.

(i) Common elements

This kind of enquiry begins by considering practises in which Muslims and Christians have a great deal in common:

(a) Muslims pray. Christians also pray, although in a different style and form, and with different motivation.

(b) Muslims worship in mosques. Christians usually worship in a building or a house; and sometimes in the open, as Muslims do.

(c) Muslims fast. Jesus recommended fasting and expected his disciples to fast.

(d) Muslims give alms to the poor. Jesus said it is better to give than to receive. Christians are to care for their dependents, and have always been encouraged to give to the needy.

(e) Muslims have a form of baptism or rite or passage, such as circumcision. Christians baptize converts.

(f) Muslims have naming ceremonies of infants. Christians often dedicate their children to God or baptize them.

(ii) Form and function

In trying to understand how these practises should be regarded by believers from a Muslim background, we must distinguish carefully between form and function. If an outsider seeks to change or eliminate a particular form without understanding how the form is related to function, he may be altering an important function, and thus destroying something very important to the society. The following are some examples of how form is related to function:

The form	*The function*
The daily prayers	Identification with all Muslims; a good work designed to help him to gain paradise.
Mosque attendance	A worship experience, expressing solidarity with the whole umma.
Prostration in Prayer	A demonstration of complete surrender to the Sovereign Omnipotent God.
Fasting	An acknowledgement of sin and the need for purification; a good work which wins merit.
Almsgiving	A good work expressing compassion

	to others and raising one's self-esteem.
Removal of sandals when entering Mosque, etc.	Reverence for a holy place
Circumcision	A rite of passage identifying a young person with Islam.
Naming ceremony	The child is now accepted as a full member in the family.

It is important that substitutes in the Christian context are found, so that meaningful functions are associated with the forms. In some cases, the form itself can be kept and given a Christian meaning. If in other cases the form needs to be adapted, we need to ask how this will affect the function in each case. Where forms are abandoned altogether, new forms may need to be found which will fulfil the function of the old forms.

(iii) Caution required

As we look forward to a continuing debate on the subject of the contextualisation of the church in Muslim contexts, there may be a need to sound certain notes of caution:

(a) If we encourage converts to develop their own churches, we must do everything in our power to avoid giving the impression that the Muslim is not welcome in existing churches, or that he is a "second class" believer. Some way must be found for established churches and convert churches to extend the right hand of fellowship to each other, if only on certain special occasions.

(b) We must recognise the enormous differences between the cultures of different Muslim communities. There is no such thing as a uniform "Islamic culture" which is found in every Islamic community. What is appropriate in one situation may be quite inappropriate in another.

(c) We need to recognise that new approaches or experiments which seem suitable in one situation may have far-reaching repercussions in other situations (e.g., approaches to questions concerning marriage).

(d) Because of the dangers of working in isolation, we need one another in exploring new approaches, and need both stimulus and correction from one another. We must learn to trust one another and believe that others are genuinely seeking to be faithful to the Scriptures in their own situations (e.g., the question of baptism). Since the baptism of converts is open to such terrible misunderstandings in the Muslim community, some Christians are wondering if there are ways of being faithful to the Scriptures and fulfilling the intention of baptism, while at the same time avoiding the misunderstandings that it seems to convey.

E. The Call to Communicate by the Written and Spoken Word

The following are two particularly valuable ways of seeking to communicate the gospel.

(i) Distribution of the Scriptures

Almost every believer from a Muslim background testifies to the important role that the Scriptures have played in bringing him to faith. We therefore recommend that all Christians in contact with Muslims be encouraged to distribute portions of the Bible as widely as possible (e.g., the Gospel according to St. Luke can be especially helpful for the Muslim to start with. Matthew is also valuable, but some Muslims may find it difficult because it is so Jewish. Mark introduces a stumbling block in the very first sentence by speaking of Jesus as "the son of God." The Gospel according to St. John may be more helpful at a later state.).

Churches in each area should be encouraged to find ways of presenting the Scriptures in creative and attractive ways which will help the Muslims in their own community. The Bible Societies are keen to print and distribute all kinds of Scripture selections which are especially appropriate for Muslims.

Churches and missions should give just as much care and attention to other media like cassettes, films, radio, etc., especially in areas where the literacy rate is low.

Scripture memorisation can be very helpful for new believers, especially if they have previously been taught to memorise the Qur'an.

(ii) Correspondence Courses and Other Literature

Correspondence courses have proved very valuable, especially when the material is not a straight translation of material used in other con texts, but especially prepared with Muslims of a particular country in mind, and followed up by personal correspondence or contacts.

We need to encourage much greater sharing of all available resources, in order to benefit from the experience of others and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. We need to widen the range of written material available for distribution:

- we need literature to appeal to the educated, and different kinds of literature to appeal to the uneducated;
- literature should deal with real human issues and not only about "spiritual" issues;
- the approach should sometimes be direct, and sometimes more indirect; anything that communicates a Christian world-view can be part of our proclamation of the gospel and need not be regarded as pre-evangelism (Acts 14:15);
- there needs to be a variety of literary forms; testimony, novels, biography (especially biographies of Jesus), drama, apologetics, newspapers, magazines, etc.;
- we need to make use of pictorial language rather than conceptual language; we need to rediscover the art of using parables;

- polemical writing is not likely to attract readers; apologetic material can have real content without being aggressive and critical in its approach;
- written material for Muslims cannot be mass-produced; any materials that are translated should be adapted carefully and freely to suit the local situation.

Christians in each region should study the cultural heritage of Muslims in their own area, their thought patterns, their felt needs, and religious and social change; and encourage writers to produce more original material. We have noted that there is a great deal of extremely valuable material that has been produced in the past and is now buried in oblivion or collecting dust on office shelves (e.g., the plays and dialogues of Temple Gairdner).

We have also noted that there is a great deal of valuable material which is available in different places but is not being circulated to those who could most benefit from it.

- Bibliographies and catalogues of material cannot always give an adequate description of the content.
- Many individuals and institutions do not have the financial resources to pay for these materials from their own pocket, or from their budget.
- There is at present no network which makes it possible for materials to be sent to a wider audience. SIM has produced an excellent booklet about the Fulani people in West Africa entitled, "Let's Help the Fulani People." Such a booklet could suggest many valuable ideas for other situations.

(iii) Recommendations

(a) We therefore recommend that existing study centres or institutions in at least eight different areas of the world should:

- collect material from within their own area,
- pass on what could be of value to other centres,
- receive material from other centres and insure that it is passed around to others in their own region.

(b) We request that some financial investment should be made to enable materials of this kind to be disseminated more widely.

(c) We recommend that an international editor should be appointed who would be responsible for facilitating the flow of these materials.

F. The Call to Dialogue

It is the duty and privilege of the Christian church to proclaim the divine promise of wholeness for man, and to invite men to be reconciled to God and live in fellowship with him and his people.

In seeking to mediate the gospel in appropriate ways, Christians have often sought to understand the world-views and belief systems of people of other faiths, including Muslims. This understanding, in turn, has led to a sharing of the gospel in ways understood by them. Such have been the beginnings of dialogue. It is

interesting to note, in this connection, that in the New Testament the word "dialogue" often means a conversation conducted to convince another party of the truth (e.g., Acts 17:2, 18:4).

Today, apart from this kind of dialogue which is known as *discursive dialogue*, there are other kinds of dialogue as well. There is, for example, the *dialogue on religious experience*, in which members of different faiths seek to share their particular religious experiences with one another. There is also the so-called *secular dialogue*, in which representatives of different faiths discuss ways in which greater communal understanding can be developed, how common action can be taken to correct various social evils, and how followers of different faiths can co-operate in the task of community development and national reconstruction.

We may agree at once that dialogue is a valid and even necessary activity for Christians. It is only through patient and friendly dialogue that a Christian learns how another person gives meaning and significance to life. Again, it is in dialogue that a Christian is able to appreciate in depth what his neighbour believes and what is the nature of his religious experience. Also, in these days of widespread poverty, social disruption, and war, it is vital for followers of different faiths to co-operate in pursuing peace and social justice for all.

It is sometimes asserted that dialogue must be conducted only to foster mutual understanding and co-operation and that dialogue must never be used for "proselytisation." If by proselytisation is meant approaches which violate the freedom and integrity of the other, we reject this firmly. We believe it is not in the spirit of Christ to win people through material inducement or any form of "brainwashing."

On the other hand, we believe in evangelization in the spirit of Christ. We believe that Christians are called to witness at all times, and in all situations, to the new life which they have received through Jesus Christ by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Certainly, it is incumbent upon us to witness with the greatest sensitivity and sympathy; but witness we must, even, and perhaps especially, in the context of dialogue. People must be allowed to accept or to reject the claims of Jesus Christ in an atmosphere of freedom.

Again, it is sometimes asserted that in dialogue there is "mutual witnessing" between Christians and people belonging to another faith. If, by this, it is meant that both state their respective positions, then this is obviously true. Also, it may be that the Christian can learn much from the life-style, devotion, or learning of the other.

Sometimes, however, more than this is meant. It is implied, for example, or stated, that other religious systems "complement" the Christian gospel—i.e., they have insights about the nature of God or the plan of salvation which the gospel lacks. To achieve a "rounded" knowledge of God and his will, it is asserted, we must listen to the witness of other religions. Such a concept of "mutual witness" we

cannot accept, although personal appreciation of the nature of the gospel may become clearer through dialogue. The gospel itself is the full and complete revelation of God and his plan of salvation. It demands a response, not augmentation or completion. Dialogue has been called a mood or a spirit of friendship and co-operation. This we accept and seek to foster. However, we reaffirm that dialogue is and should be an integral part of Christian mission. Some kinds of dialogues may lead to service for the sake of the gospel. Others may lead us, either within the context of dialogue or in some other way, to a direct but sensitive sharing of the Good News with our non-Christian partner.

In dialogue we seek to share our different beliefs, theological systems, experiences, and plans. But we also seek to proclaim that which is not simply ours but God's, which is not meant just for us, but for all men; which presents a categorical demand not just for us, but for all. The aim of dialogue must most surely be to learn and to appreciate, but it must chiefly be to teach and to tell men and women about Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

G. The Call to Work for Justice

One of the hardest sections of the [Lausanne Covenant](#) to put into practise in the Islamic world is the one entitled "Freedom and Persecution":

"It is the God-appointed duty of every government to secure conditions of peace, justice and liberty in which the church may obey God, serve the Lord Christ, and preach the gospel without interference. We therefore pray for the leaders of the nations and call upon them to guarantee freedom of thought and conscience, and freedom to practise and propagate religion in accordance with the will of God and as set forth in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We also express our deep concern for all who have been unjustly imprisoned, and especially for our brethren who are suffering for their testimony to the Lord Jesus. At the same time we refuse to be intimidated by their fate. God helping us, we too will seek to stand against injustice and to remain faithful to the gospel, whatever the cost. We do not forget the warning of Jesus that persecution is inevitable."

Before we try to protest on behalf of Christian communities in other countries, we should remember that injustices have been committed in the Muslim world in the past in the name of Christ. We need to confess "we have sinned as our ancestors did" (Psalm 106:6).

Moreover, we have no right to point the finger of accusation at Muslim communities and governments, if we are blind to the ways in which Muslim minorities suffer from unfair discrimination in so-called Christian countries in the West. Christians in this kind of situation are called to take seriously the words of the Mosaic Law, "You shall not oppress the alien, for you know how it feels to be an alien; you were aliens yourselves in Egypt" (Exodus 23:9). We also need to take very seriously Jesus' warning about the danger of judging others, "Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the log in your

own eye? ... You hypocrite!..." (Matthew 7:3, 5). Only if and when we have taken this warning seriously can we begin to draw attention to situations in the Muslim world in which Christian minorities feel that their religious freedom is being threatened, not only by subtle forms of discrimination, but also new Islamic constitutions which affect the status of minorities.

We have noted that Christians in Communist countries have generally welcomed publicity that has been given to particular cases of unjust treatment of individuals and communities. When the reporting is known to be scrupulously accurate, it has strengthened the position of those who are unable to defend their own rights. The situation of Christian minorities in Muslim countries is not exactly comparable. And some Christians are afraid that any publicity about their situation could make it even worse. Others, however, are confident that they would benefit from pressure that is brought to bear on the governments when it is based on thoroughly reliable and accurate information.

We recognise the need for the world-wide church to speak out against all forms of oppression and social injustice. If we cannot do this through representative church bodies (such as the World Council of Churches), through independent church agencies (e.g., Keston College), or secular bodies (e.g., Amnesty International), we need to explore other effective means of voicing these concerns on behalf of *both* Muslim *and* Christian communities.

We urge Christian leaders in all walks of life to use their influence to encourage governments and business organisations to follow as far as possible the principle, "Do for others what you want them to do for you" (Matthew 7:12). This would mean, for example, treating other communities in the same way that we would like to be treated if we were in a similar situation. It might mean putting pressure on governments and companies not to deny or restrict freedoms in their own country which they themselves enjoy in other countries. It is hypocritical for governments to subscribe to the UN Declaration of Human Rights and for their citizens to enjoy those rights when they are living in a foreign country, but to deny those rights to foreigners living in their own country.

If we are asked how working for justice in these ways is connected with the proclamation of the gospel, we ought to note that Isaiah repeatedly describes the ministry of the Servant of the Lord in terms of establishing justice on the earth:

> He will bring justice to every nation . . .
>
> He will bring lasting justice to all . . .
>
> He will establish justice on the earth . . .(Isaiah 42:1, 3, 4)

We, therefore, sound this call to action in all these areas in confidence that the Holy Spirit has gone ahead of us, preparing, illuminating, and convincing (John 15:26, 16:8, 14); that the Holy Spirit is working in us, transforming our lives into living letters, written with the Spirit of the living God (2 Cor. 3:3, 17-18); that the Holy Spirit is giving his gifts to the whole body of Christ, equipping us for service

in the power of God (I Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:11-12; Rom. 12:4-8); that the Holy Spirit will continue to teach and guide us to understand God's will in every situation (Rom 12:2).

Along with this call to action, there must be an equally clear call to prayer. The urgency of our task, the difficulties we face, and the opportunities before us should drive us to pray the prayer of the early church, which is especially relevant to our witness in the Muslim world:

> And now, Lord, look upon their threats; and grant to [us] thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed [in] the name of thy holy servant Jesus. (Acts 4:29-30, RSV)

**The Homogenous Unit Principle—See *Lausanne Occasional Paper No. I: The Pasadena Consultation—Homogenous Unit Principle.*