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Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs)

LOP 4: The Glen Eyrie Report: Muslim Evangelization

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Introduction: The Background

During mid-October 1978, a week-long consultation was convened at Glen Eyrie, Colorado, to explore the responsibilities of North American Christians toward the Muslim World. This was part of a continuum that began with the [*International Congress on World Evangelization*](#) at Lausanne 1974. At that time many were deeply stirred by what God was doing in their midst, but were moved to penitence by their flawed and limited commitment to the missionary task. At Lausanne they entered into solemn covenant with God and with each other to pray, to plan and to work together for the evangelization of the world. Their concern was: "Let the Earth Hear His Voice" and their focus was on "unreached people." Of particular interest to many of the participants was the large bloc of unreached Muslims.

Two subsequent conferences heightened this concern to reach the unreached. [*The Pasadena Consultation*](#) 1977 celebrated the diversity of peoples and cultures making

up the human race. Its participants made particular effort to relate this reality to the worldwide missionary task. They were in deep agreement that Scripture supports the Christian witness that seeks to preserve cultural diversity, for this will "honor God, respect man, enrich life and promote evangelization" (Par. 4).

Later, [The Willowbank Consultation](#) 1978 was convened to explore in depth the interrelation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and culture. Upon this sequence the [North American Conference on Muslim Evangelization](#) was built to focus on reaching these unreached Muslim peoples and to explore the wide range of implications of the Gospel in their Islamic cultures.

The days at Glen Eyrie were very full, and session followed session in relentless sequence. When a pattern began to emerge that seemed to indicate the overruling Providence of God in our midst, we began to prepare this report. It is neither an official statement nor a declaration, much less a covenant; so none of us has signed it. But we send it out as reflecting the mood of the participants and indicating the highlights of what took place in our midst. We commend it to our fellow Christians throughout the world for study, and as a reminder that the Lord will truly meet with his people when they concern themselves with the unfinished task of evangelizing the Muslim world.

1. Pre-conference Preparation: The Ferment

Those invited to participate were drawn from a wide range of church traditions, missionary experience, specialized training and evangelical commitment. All were concerned with Muslim evangelization. They represented a variety of roles and disciplines: mission executives, field missionaries, mission professors, Islamicists, anthropologists, theologians and media experts. In addition the conveners invited a sizeable number of men and women from churches in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. They too represented different roles and disciplines: pastors, theologians, Islamicists and active laymen.

During the six months prior to the conference, forty foundation papers were prepared by selected authors—men and women—to alert the participants to the complexity of issues related to the task before them.

Ten papers were conceptual, in that they explored its major underlying postulates.

"The Gospel and Culture," Paul G. Hiebert

"The Cross-Cultural Communication of the Gospel to Muslims," Donald N. Larson

"The Incarnational Witness to the Muslim Heart," Bashir Abdol Massih

"The Muslim Convert and His Culture," Harvie M. Conn

"Dynamic Equivalence Churches in Muslim Society," Charles H. Kraft

"Power Encounter in Conversion from Islam," Arthur F. Glasser

"Contextualization: Indigenization and/or Transformation," Charles R. Taber

"New Theological Approaches in Muslim Evangelism," Bruce J. Nicholls

"An 'Engel Scale' for Muslim Work?" David A. Fraser

"Resistance/Receptivity Analysis of Muslim Peoples," Don M. McCurry

Sixteen papers described key "givens" in the Christian encounter with Islam today.

"Islamic Theology: Limits and Bridges," Kenneth Cragg

"Popular Islam: The Hunger of the Heart," Bill Musk

"The Comparative Status of Christianity and Islam in the West," R. Max Kershaw

"The Comparative Status of Christianity and Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa," Gerald O. Swank

"The Comparative Status of Christianity and Islam in North Africa," Gregory M. Livingston

"The Comparative Status of Christianity and Islam in the Middle East," Norman A. Horner

"The Comparative Status of Christianity and Islam in Turkey," Mehmet Iskender

"The Comparative Status of Christianity and Islam in Iran," David G. Cashin

"The Comparative Status of Christianity and Islam in the Sub-Continent," Richard Bailey

"The Comparative Status of Christianity and Islam in Southeast Asia," Frank Cooley, Peter Gowing, Alex Smith, Warren Meyers

"The Comparative Status of Christianity and Islam in Russia and China," J. Robert Overbrook

"Current Status of Christian Literature for Muslims," Raymond H. Joyce

"Current Status of Bible Translations in Muslim Languages," William D. Reyburn

"Current Status of Radio Broadcasting to Muslim Peoples," Fred D. "Bud" Acord

"An Overview of Missions to Muslims," George M. Peters

"A Selective Bibliography for Christian Muslim Workers," Warren W. Webster

The final fourteen papers defined concrete responses deemed essential to effective missionary service among Muslims.

"The Call to Spiritual Renewal," J. Edwin Orr

"Development of New Tools to Aid Muslim Evangelization," Donald R. Rickards

"Levels, Styles and Locations of Training Programs," Vivienne Stacey

"Building the Network of Research Centers," Roland E. Miller

"The Value and Methodology of Planning Strategies," Edward R. Dayton

"Tentmaking Ministries in Muslim Countries" J. Christy Wilson, Jr.

"The Need for a North American Nerve Center," Ralph D. Winter

"Dialogue: Relevancy to Evangelism," Daniel Brewster

"North American Ties to Third World Missions to Muslims," Waldron Scott

"The Need for a New Journal on Missions to Muslims," C. George Fry

"Food and Health as Partners of Muslim Evangelism," Robert Pickett and Rufino L. Macagba, Jr.

"The Role of Local Churches in God's Redemptive Plan for the Muslim World," Frank S. Khair-Ullah

"The Christian Approach to the Muslim Woman and Family," Valerie Hoffman

"To Reach the Unreached," the report to the Lausanne Committee for World

Evangelization of its Strategy Working Group.

Uppermost in these foundation papers was the overriding concern that Jesus Christ be known, loved and served in the midst of each of the more than 3,500 separate peoples making up this massive religious community.

The conferees not only studied these papers beforehand; they were required to draft written responses to the ten conceptual papers. This generation of intellectual ferment and expansive dreaming was deemed essential to the success of the conference. All were greatly stimulated by this process, particularly the authors who were inevitably informed, enriched and balanced by the friendly counsel of those whose expertise differed from their own. In fact, this intense pre-conference interaction heightened the expectation with which all gathered at Glen Eyrie to study the Scriptures and to involve themselves in corporate reflection, discussion, planning and prayer.

2. Contrition and Repentance: The Essential

At the opening session of the conference, this mood of expectancy was overshadowed by a painful reality. The keynote address raised the question: "Why is not the Muslim world better evangelized?" The probing went deeper. Related questions were asked: "Why is it that barely two percent of North American Protestant missionaries are involved in this work? Why their limited understanding of Islam and Islamic culture? Why their long persistence in using inappropriate and ineffective methods to communicate the Gospel to Muslims?"

These questions were joined by others in the days that followed. Indeed, as the week progressed we became inwardly convinced that we first had to take the measure of what these questions implied. We came under the compulsion of a sense of sorrow, and experienced a renewed hunger for the forgiving grace and mighty working of God in our lives. The more we listened to one another, particularly to those God was manifestly using to reach Muslims for Christ, the more we felt we should give expression in this report to our sense of contrition.

In so many ways we North Americans have failed. And our personal failures are a reflection of the larger tragedy of the Christian Church. Over the centuries Christians in both the West and the East have all too readily cherished and cultivated an antipathy towards Muslims, and have expressed it by largely neglecting their obligation under God to share Jesus Christ with them.

We stand appalled that relatively few Muslims have entered into life through responding to his Gospel. And we grieve that at this late hour in the history of the Church there exist so few vital and outgoing congregations of Muslim believers in Jesus among this largely accessible people. And yet, it is our fault. We Christians have loved so little, and have put forth such little effort to regard Muslims as people like ourselves. They too bear the image and likeness of God. They, too, deserve the love and respect God would have his people accord all men. Although we know their inmost needs—like ours—can only be satisfied by Christ, we

somehow draw back from sharing him with them. They deserve a Christian presence in their midst that is neither tentative nor timid—the sort that is imbued with vigorous faith and counts on "the God who only does wondrous things." But this demands more of us than we have been willing to give. And our North American mission agencies continue to conduct the sort of culturally insensitive, unplanned missionary work in their midst that falls far short of the ideal of Christian presence in Muslim Society.

And we North American Christians also tend to be critical of Islamic culture. In our pride and ethnocentrism we have forgotten that our own culture is terribly flawed. True, it reflects the creativity of a pluralistic society, but it also expresses our fallenness. Since Christ judges all cultures and is seeking through the Gospel to infuse and transform them with his Presence, he would have us discern and appreciate the redeemable in Islamic culture.

An aspect of our concern should be the cultivation of a new awareness of the nature of the Islamic faith. It touches every aspect of the lives of Muslims. They are determined that God's rule shall range publicly over every detail of the life of their nations.

In sharpest contrast, of course, Jesus Christ offers men a truly holistic Gospel. Indeed, his is the Gospel of the Kingdom. It embraces the totality of human existence. We North American Christians are only beginning to discover that all too often we have preached a Westernized, truncated message that does not do full justice to biblical revelation.

We are challenged when we stand before the world of Islam. But as Evangelicals, we refuse to confine our mission to the development of better Christian-Muslim relations or to involvement in social service on their behalf. Jesus Christ has defined our agenda, and because we love him we are constrained to embrace as well the mandate he has given the Church to evangelize the Muslim world.

3.The Listening Process: Mutual Interdependence

Early in the week we began to take the measure of the Muslim world: its extent, size, people diversity and many variations of religious faith and practice. Simultaneously, we began to implement the planning process the conveners deemed essential to the spiritual productivity of the conference. Indeed, their structuring of the day-to-day sequence was in response to the encouragement received from Christians worldwide. One group had drafted a statement with the buoyant exhortation: "Commit yourselves to work together in the unity of the Holy Spirit and in the bond of peace. Anticipate and plan for a great turning to Christ by millions of Muslims."

All felt that we had to make a decisive break with the past. We were reminded of an earlier conference in Cairo in 1906 convened by that great American missionary statesman, Samuel M. Zwemer. It brought together more than 60 representatives of almost 30 missions and churches, and marked "the beginning of

a new era in the Christian mission to Muslims." This was followed by a similar conference he convened in Lucknow in 1911. And yet, such enormous changes have taken place in the Muslim world since, that all of us felt a new forward step was called for. The North American Church tolerates too limited a knowledge of Islam and Muslim peoples. Its mission involvement in the Muslim world is marginal at best. Moreover, it is dominated by a methodology that demands critical revision. New approaches are needed in North American missionary training programs. On and on. An entirely new pattern of interaction was needed between Western missionaries and their brothers and sisters in the Muslim world. Actually, it was precisely for this reason that so many Muslim converts and national church leaders from the Middle East, Africa and Asia had been invited to participate in every workshop and in every discussion and planning session. North Americans were encouraged to be "swift to hear" and discouraged from initiating any planning on their own.

These key evangelical men and women from the Middle East, Asia and Africa are themselves deeply and fruitfully involved in the task of Muslim evangelization. Hence, every effort was made to listen to their non-North American perspectives. They were given very specific assignments by the Western participants: "Help us in learning how to work together. Be patient with those of us who are slow learners. Pray for those of us who appear insensitive to your concerns. And above all, do help us to see God's world through your uniquely different eyes." Needless to say, they exceeded themselves in meeting the high demands of this task.

The witness of these consultants was wonderfully reinforced by a series of short addresses given by Western missionaries—men and women—likewise fruitful in their evangelistic work among Muslims. The note uniformly struck by each was that in the course of their service, however, they had to break with the "older" patterns in which they had been trained. They had to rethink before God what he would have them do. This impulse to review their ministry and alter it significantly came in every instance from their non-Western friends. This confirmed to all of us the essentiality of such collaboration. It exposed the folly of North Americans thinking they can go-it-alone. It underscored the exciting possibilities for new perspectives on mission to Muslims arising from the deliberate creation of patterns of mutual interdependence between Eastern and Western Christians. The implications are far-reaching.

One missionary in Lebanon had to receive from an Arab scholar insight into how he might escape the sterile apologetic pattern of the past and recast his entire evangelistic approach, via the Quran, as well as the Bible. A woman missionary in Pakistan, after struggling unsuccessfully for some years to interject her "Western" Jesus into Muslim culture, was brought lovingly inside that culture with the help of Muslim friends, and in time discovered an "Eastern" Jesus that was more than able to meet their needs. A team of two women deliberately turned from a barren,

traditional approach to adopt step-by-step the unexpected thesis that "women are the key." This resulted in the Gospel being deeply and widely planted in a previously unevangelized rural community in Pakistan. A highly trained missionary in India had to be pointedly counselled by a national church leader so that he might recast his approach from friendly manipulation to the sort of friendship evangelism that makes one love Muslims for what they are, and not for what we want them to become.

Several other reports were given in similar vein. All spoke of non-Western input. All described the sense of release and gratitude that came through this helpful counsel. All bore witness that a sovereign God is working significantly in Muslim hearts today. Our faith was challenged by the evidence, whether in Iran or Tunisia, in Israel or Egypt, in Syria and Bangladesh and Indonesia. As we listened we almost came to the conclusion that given half a chance, and provided the evangelists' approach is more relational than cognitive, there is the possibility that any Muslim will come to love Jesus.

But there is a price to be paid. All who spoke shared in one way or another the fact that this listening to non-Western friends and responding, this re-thinking and changing one's methodology and planning involved them in spiritual crisis. All knew pain and brokenness. Their testimonies endorsed what the early Franciscans gave to those who would serve Christ among Muslims. "Go out" they said:

"...not as the Latins were wont to do—with weapons—but with words; not with force—but reason; not with hatred—but love, the kind of love that should exist between Christians and non-Christians, the same love with which the apostles approached the Gentiles, the love that God Himself had for those who did not serve Him." (Abbot Peter of Cluny)

What did this mean to us? No easy triumphalism on our part, although we were convinced of the final triumph of God in history, when every knee shall bow to Jesus Christ. And no "gimmick" methodology either, for we must face the Cross and enter into the trauma of conflict with "the powers" while seeking to witness simply and lovingly to Jesus Christ. Only thereby shall we be used of God to turn Muslims "from the darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18). If one would be God's instrument to plant the Church in a Muslim society, he has no alternative but to follow the methodology of the Apostle Paul who wrote: "It is now my happiness to suffer for you. This is my way of helping to complete, in my poor humanflesh, the full tale of Christ's afflictions still to be endured, for the sake of his Body which is the Church" (Col. 1:24, NEB).

The more we listened to the testimonies of field missionaries and of nonWestern consultants, the more aware we became of the heavy demands God would make of all who would serve him among Muslims. The keys to effective mission were defined and underscored again and again:

- *The cruciality of transparency before others.*

- *The centrality of love in all our dealings.*
- *The cultivation of a sensitive regard for truthfulness, about oneself and about the stark demands of the Gospel.*
- *The inevitability that tears of compassion will flow*
- *The demanding but encouraging possibilities of prayer and fasting.*
- *The need for courage, patience and persistence.*
- *The ability to absorb scorn and suffering.*
- *The essentiality of unwavering faith and joyful praise: our God is the God of the impossible.*

To conclude this section: effective Muslim evangelism can only be accomplished through humble respect for Islam cultures, and by seeking to master the use of these keys, and through deliberately adopting a pattern of intercommunication and conscious interdependence between national Christians and Western missionaries. And this pattern must be sustained by the interdependence of the structures to which they belong. Gone is the day when Western missionaries can regard themselves as sufficient for the task. It was at Glen Eyrie that we resolved, as never before, to make the most of the opportunities given to us by God—to develop a loving sense of responsibility to the whole household of faith, particularly to all Christians and churches in the Muslim world. From henceforth, we are determined to regard ourselves willingly accountable to one another, that together God might work through us to the achieving of his redemptive purpose for the Muslim world.

4. The Planning Process: Utilizing All Resources

A great concern of those who participated in the Lausanne Congress 1974 was that there be an end to the "sinful individualism and needless duplication" that all too often have marred the missionary service of evangelicals. They pledged themselves "to seek a deeper unity in truth, worship, holiness and mission" and urged "the development of regional and functional cooperation for the furtherance of the Church's mission, for strategic planning, for mutual encouragement, and for the sharing of resources and experience" (Par. 7). However, the participants did not go much further in their deliberations than to note that "the development of strategies for world evangelization calls for imaginative pioneering methods." In fact there was a certain drawing back from anything more specific because of the fear that "those activist, pragmatic Americans" would somehow organize the Holy Spirit right out of the task of world evangelization!

Not a few of the addresses contained expressions of this concern. The desire was to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and focus attention on his sovereignty. To follow him and to serve as he directs is the highest virtue. No small effort was put forth to support from Scripture this thesis that God alone has the initiative! And no plenary address was more heartily received than the one which included the following:

"Effective mission does not spring from human blueprints ... I don't believe the early Christians had much of a strategy ... the Gospel spread out in an apparently haphazard way as men obeyed the leading of the Spirit, and went through the doors he opened (Report: pp. 166, 174)."

The participants at Glen Eyrie shared this concern. God must be God! His missionary servants must labor under his direction, and solely for his glory. They must resist the arrogance that boasts of having within themselves all that is needed to evangelize the Muslim world. No human being, no matter how able, dare affirm that he or she knows what to do and how to do it!

And yet, when the conveners sought direction from the Lord touching the inner structure of the conference, they felt that Lausanne 1974 gave them the mandate not only to pray, but to expect God's guidance and surprise.. It also gave them the obligation to think strategically about the evangelization of the Muslim world. They were convinced that such an obligation was also biblically enjoined. Does not Scripture speak specifically? "We should make plans ... counting on God to direct us ... [and] the final outcome is in God's hands" (Prov. 16:9,1, LB).

However, in order to bring the subject of planning into New Testament focus, it was decided that each day should begin with an exploration into relevant aspects of the strategies and patterns of the witness and service of the Apostolic Church. This resulted in the selection of the following themes and texts.

The long-range plan of the Apostle Paul to establish a missionary base at Rome from which to evangelize Spain (Rom. 1:1-17; 15:1-29).

The day-to-day movements of his missionary team in establishing a foothold in unevangelized Europe (Acts 16:1-34).

The apostolic conviction of the essentiality of cultural adaptation if one is to be effective in his cross-cultural witness to Jesus Christ (John 4:1-42; 1 Cor. 9:16-23).

The inescapable necessity of accepting suffering and self-denial if one is to be fruitful in his cross-cultural missionary service (Phil. 3:1-21).

The Jerusalem Church pattern for resolving "new convert" problems arising from cultural differences (Acts 15:1-29).

The possibilities for courageous and victorious witness in the face of civil and religious opposition (Acts 4:1-35).

But then followed a measure of agony. Large sections of three days were taken with the assignment to develop a method for strategic planning and then with the task of applying that method to a series of specific situations. This found many of us involved in a process that was largely unfamiliar. Some tended to dismiss the planning as an American aberration, only to fall vulnerable to the rebuke: "What a sham ... Yes, how stupid to decide before knowing the facts" (Prov. 18:13, LB). But in the end the great majority felt the instructional experience had been most helpful. "It is pleasant to see plans develop..." (Prov. 13:19a, LB).

These good feelings developed when we became particularly involved in examining

critically actual missionary situations in the Muslim world. It was then that we sensed in new ways the manner in which even the planning process was a vital exercise in partnership with God. We were agreed that from henceforth we should incorporate this larger experience of being "God's fellow workers" into our future ministry among Muslims (1 Cor. 3:9-15).

As to the "planning sequence" that we finally adopted and which we commend to the wider Church, the following seemed essential:

State the philosophy, policies, assumptions and purpose of the mission: "Why has God brought our mission or parachurch agency into existence?"

Describe the actual field situation—the specific people to whom God has called us: "What are the dominant felt needs of the people we are to evangelize?"

Define the mission's role in terms of its potential and its limitations: "What aspects of the need of this people does God want us to meet?"

Set measurable goals—a work plan—for the mission to carry out that express its faith in the working of God: "What is to be the schedule and sequence of our work?"

Detail the specific obstacles that in all probability will stand in the way of the goals being reached: "What problems should we anticipate and prepare for?"

Specify the means and methods that conceivably might be blessed of God in reaching this people: "How are we to go about our assignments?"

Appraise the resources already available (people, funds, facilities, etc.) and determine the additional resources that will be needed to complete the task: "What do we have and what shall we need?"

Anticipate that from time to time there will be evaluation of the work and adjustment and modification of the plans as we remain in dynamic interaction with God: "What have we accomplished with the resources which God has given us?"

Needless to say, involvement in this process convinced us in a most telling fashion that there is no normative approach to Muslim evangelization. Every situation is unique and must be examined on its own. It is only when we ask these basic questions, however, that we become utterly convinced of the essentiality of the planning process. Only thereby can we avoid the "sinful individualism and needless duplication" that Lausanne 1974 deplored. But we also learned something else of tremendous significance. Every small group and workshop in our conference was so structured that each contained the sort of participant mix that inevitably brought enrichment and balance to our insights, but also brought tension. How could it be otherwise with theologians working alongside anthropologists, communicators trying to understand Islamicists, field missionaries interacting with national church leaders, and mission executives seeking to work harmoniously with mission professors? All were competent and the perspectives of one and all were valid. And the insight of each participant informed the rest. Here was interdisciplinary dialogue at its best. Suffice it to say that in these planning

exercises the "listening process" came fully into its own. But, it was not easy for this diversity to come to productive agreement. The process took time and prayer, and the loving acceptance of one another. But when agreement was achieved, all knew that a planning process had been uncovered and experienced that must indeed precede all future evangelical activity on behalf of the Muslim world. "Plans go wrong with too few counselors ... [but] many counselors bring success" (Prov. 15:22, LB).

5. The Inescapable Reality: Caesar and the Powers

Good planning is essential if we are to make use of the resources God has given us. On this we are agreed. But we also are aware of the spiritual struggle involved in carrying out even the best of God-given plans. No one is deceived at this point, for the participants in the conference are anything but novices in the service of God. Indeed, all those actively engaged in making Jesus Christ known, loved and obeyed throughout the Muslim world know that they are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil. And there is always Caesar, who is never the friend of Jesus Christ.

It was inevitable that whenever the subject of conflict and suffering was broached, there were those who quickly reminded us—and did so correctly—that for much of this Christians had only themselves to blame. Not all missionaries have been wise and holy, noble and loving. Some have tended to misrepresent and belittle the moral and religious stature of Muhammad and the Quran. All too many have been uncritically defensive of Christian missions in the Muslim world during the long years of Western political dominance. As a result, they have been largely indifferent to the task of reducing the mistrust and misunderstanding that accentuated past tensions and rivalries. And they have given the impression that they lack concern for the deterioration of Christian values in the Christian world while openly encouraging the process of secularization in the Muslim world.

It was humbling for us to be confronted by this evidence of cultural imperialism coupled with aggressive and insensitive proselytism. We were agreed that much within the modern missionary movement needs rectification. And yet, we were also reminded that this was not the whole story.

We had to consider the plight of those Christians scattered throughout the Muslim world who are limited in the exercise of their religious freedom. Many have either fled or withdrawn into ghetto communities, because they found it impossible to act as responsible citizens toward their nation. They have been denied the right to erect or acquire buildings for public worship, religious education and social activity. And these restrictions are contrary to Islamic law. Actually, however, this discrimination is but a part of a larger contemporary problem—Muslims and Christians are both being denied their human rights in various parts of the world. Both know insecurity. Both are under heavy and varied pressures to conform. Both need freedom to protect their human dignity, to exercise their particular religion

and to propagate their faith. Whereas we would contend for "the full right to convince and be convinced" and would deplore all that stands in the way of this freedom, we are obliged to confess that we have all too often been unaware of the obligation to support our Muslim neighbors in their efforts to obtain their human rights.

This does not mean that we have forgotten the somber reality of the Law of Apostasy, and the particular problems and perils it poses for those who submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in Muslim lands. Even at this late hour in the long history of Muslim-Christian relations, reports are not infrequent of harsh discrimination, community hostility, violence against persons and buildings, and the suffering of the oppressed. We pray that Muslim leaders will sense anew their God-given obligation to promote justice and freedom. We pray that the conduct of Muslim states will increasingly approximate *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* by which they agreed to respect

"...human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion."

Finally, there was deepest agreement that when the issue is Jesus Christ, and when persecution has broken out because of loving attempts to name his Name, no redress should be sought. In one workshop the question was asked: "How should the converts stand up to potential serious persecution which could expel them from their land and livelihood?" All sorts of suggestions came to the fore, but the conversation was abruptly terminated when a convert from Islam said, in effect, what the Apostle Paul advised long ago: "Let no one be moved by these afflictions for you yourselves know that this is to be our lot." It is "through many tribulations that we enter the Kingdom of God" (I Thess. 3:3; Acts 14:22).

6. The Unfinished Agenda: Looking Ahead

It was inevitable that as the conference progressed workshops and discussion groups increasingly faced the future. When they did so, many issues surfaced that called for exploration and old questions arose that demanded new answers. In the process all of us became aware of the wide variety of tasks that will have to be undertaken if the Church seriously desires to evangelize the Muslim world. Fortunately, the conveners had anticipated this ferment and had planned the sequence of sessions to encourage this transition to practical matters.

More than a whole day was devoted to uncovering and defining the details of this "unfinished agenda." And the more we became involved, the more we came to appreciate the significance of the planning process we had sought to master earlier in the week. How essential it became to all our final deliberations!

This work began when the decision was taken to divide the participants along the lines of their specialties. This meant that each group of participants met on its own—overseas consultants along with North Americans—whether theologians,

missionaries, anthropologists, communication experts, mission professors, Islamicists or mission executives.

Each specialty group was commissioned to ask itself: "What specific contribution can and should we make to further the Muslim evangelization?" On the first time around, more than thirty major and relevant tasks were defined as needing urgent attention. And the momentum kept increasing.

The growing ground swell of suggestions demanded that task forces be formed to suggest the first steps in translating them into specific plans. The process then reached the stage where objectives were defined and goals set. Discussions swirled around such tangibles as means, methods, resources and timetables. In the end a lengthy plenary session heard the reports and provided the occasion for yet more input. In many ways, this final gathering was the most stimulating and fruitful session of the whole conference. All that followed was largely taken with inspiration, worship and summarization. All were agreed that the Lord had graciously welded us into a dynamic, creative oneness. When report after report was received, there seemed to be an almost apostolic dimension to our determination to lay all these matters before the whole Church and invite the participation of all likeminded Christians all over the world. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28).

This brief report cannot detail the extensive output of the six task forces. What follows is but a summary of high points to encourage this participation. Indeed, an ever-widening circle of concerned Christians will be needed in the days ahead if the Church is to carry to completion the evangelization of the Muslim world.

A. Human Rights

Recognizing that both Muslim and non-Muslim governments, both Muslim and Christian religious organizations have violated human freedom by various forms of coercion, especially depriving people of the freedom to change or not to change their religion, we recognize the desirability of establishing an international Christian-Muslim office on human rights, to receive complaints, investigate them, and make recommendations for redress to the concerned parties.

B. Resource and Research Center

Recognizing the need for developing vital and continuous inter-communication among all those involved in Muslim evangelization, we purpose to establish a central resource and research center in the United States, to be followed as need arises by regional centers in all major segments of the Muslim world. This center shall be organized and directed by an experienced missionary scholar, supported by researchers from a variety of church traditions, trained in anthropology and Islamics. It shall also recruit consultants who can visit and serve the churches. It shall gather a wide range of pertinent information on the location, character and size of all Muslim people groups along with their psychographic and demographic characteristics. Its archival structure shall include a resource library containing all

types of media communication.

Recognizing the need for an expanded body of information about unreached Muslim peoples, we purpose that this center shall establish a research consortium for the coordination of pertinent data. The director shall authorize that linkage be established with all major research agencies worldwide to develop working relationships with missions serving among Muslims, and to gather relevant information from those educational and research institutions currently doing mission-related research. The center shall also publish a monthly newsletter to channel data on available services to churches and missions throughout the Muslim world.

This research center shall encourage all theological and missionary training schools in North America to strengthen their course offerings in Islamics and to prepare suitable syllabi and textbooks for foundation courses on mission to Muslims.

C. Evangelism

Recognizing that the major untapped force for evangelism among Muslims is the Christian community scattered throughout the Muslim world, we shall seek to concentrate our attention on all existing churches, training and motivating both pastors and people to a new awareness of Islam. We shall seek with them to develop and refine new and more appropriate evangelistic methods for introducing the Gospel to Muslims. Particular attention will be given to the use of relevant Quranic themes in the initial stages of evangelistic encounter.

D. Communication Patterns

Recognizing the importance of communicating Christian truth in ways consonant with communication patterns already in use in Muslim societies, we propose that the research center shall stimulate the development of extensive research activities within strategic segments of the Muslim world with a view to developing appropriate methods and materials, along with teaching guides.

1. *For Non-Literate People:* to enable the poet, singer or chanter to communicate the Gospel and Bible stories in such a fashion that the way will be prepared for the teaching of reading.

2. *For Women and Children:* to study their varied roles at different levels in Muslim societies, respecting the code of modesty and sexual segregation where this prevails; to provide for more meaningful home-oriented women's activities; to recognize the authority of men who are heads of households through seeking to witness to entire families; to work through those women who are recognized as religious or community leaders; and to present more winsomely the Christian alternative to the demonic influences which particularly assail women in Muslim societies.

E. Church Planting—Converts in Congregations

Recognizing that the evangelization of the Muslim world largely depends on the

spiritual vitality and outgoing love of national churches in its midst, we purpose to pray that God will increasingly bring renewal to these privileged Christians. We anticipate that under his blessing those involved in evangelizing Muslims will be able to engage in more than seed-sowing. We believe that discipling and church planting will also take place.

This anticipated growth will possibly heighten the difficulty converts encounter in seeking a church home that receives them warmly and completely. We purpose through deliberately contrived study programs to make every effort to change the attitudes of Christians toward Muslim converts. Only those churches interested in winning Muslims to Christ will be interested in what happens to them after conversion.

However, where there is resistance or reluctance on the part of national Christians to involve themselves in this task, we shall seek to develop separate Muslim convert churches. These latter congregations shall be encouraged to develop culturally appropriate forms of worship that arise out of the natural expression of earlier worship patterns that will be true to biblical teaching and yet will neither deliberately flaunt our Christian liberty nor carelessly involve the believers in syncretistic belief or conduct.

F. Theological Research: Study Groups

Recognizing the need for extensive theological reflection on the contextualizing of the Gospel and the Church in Islamic culture, we purpose that the center shall stimulate the forming of a theological study group to undertake the systematic exploration of the many theological issues raised at this conference which bear on the task of evangelizing Muslims.

Because Islam and Christianity hold certain tenets in common, but differ markedly on others, we purpose that the study group shall seek to identify and explore the theological issues that are related to effective communication of the Gospel to Muslims. This group will be authorized to produce a comparative study of significant Christian-Islamic theological vocabulary and follow this with a manual of the actual bridges and blocks in Christian witness to Islam. The bridges would include such concepts as God, Creation, Prophets, Sacrifice, the Word of God, the Judgment, Satan, Heaven and Hell, the Virgin Birth, Healing Ministry, and Second Coming of Christ, the felt needs of men and women and the Lord's Prayer. The blocks would include such controversial issues as man's need of Redemption, the essentiality of the Cross, the Substitutionary Atonement, the Trinity, the Incarnation, religious terminology, the meaning of history and its relation to politics, the integrity of the Bible, Islamic family and social pressures and the reasons behind the all too frequent failure of the Church to express true Christian community. Since these studies will be greatly enriched if accompanied with an exploration of the reasons behind the variation in Muslim response to the Christian message, we encourage the center to undertake this research

assignment. Particular attention shall be given to their relation to those significant points of contact with Popular Islam at the primary level of experience.

This group shall conduct a feasibility study to ascertain the type of publication needed to share its findings among Christians worldwide.

G. Muslims in North America

Recognizing the growing presence of Muslims throughout Canada and the United States, we propose that the center shall seek to create an in-depth demographic profile of their distribution and make a comprehensive study of what Christian work is being done among them. All this shall be undertaken with a view to planning strategies for their evangelization. Not only do we pray that convert churches shall emerge in Muslim communities, our concern is that American churches shall be so informed that they will increasingly take this responsibility on themselves in a meaningful and effective fashion, incorporating into their congregations those converts who desire to worship with them.

(NOTE: Many other practical suggestions were made during the closing hours of the conference. All were carefully recorded and are being referred to the continuation committee for attention. They range from missionary and lay leadership training to matters pertaining to the task of evangelism among Black Muslims, immigrants, and international students.)

Conclusion: Hope in God

At Glen Eyrie we sensed anew our individual and collective responsibility to devote heart, soul, conscience and resources to the task of making Jesus Christ known to the many diverse peoples of the Muslim world. Before we parted we gathered at his Table to worship and to receive grace for the many demands he will place upon us in the days ahead. We reaffirmed that he is both the Light of the world and the Hope of the world. He is Jesus Christ, the Lord over all, the One who makes all things new. It is he who encourages us to move forward with hope.

We hope in the forgiveness of God who is the Best of Forgivers. We know that he has put away our past failures through his suffering love in Jesus Christ. And it is in Christ, the One who has borne our infirmities, that we presume to make our new start.

We also have hope for the forgiveness of our Muslim friends and neighbors, that they will indeed not count our failures against us, but will give us their friendship and love.

And for the future we place all our hope in the Spirit and power of God. It is his salvation that he desires to communicate through us, and therefore it is he who will enable us: to witness powerfully and understandingly; to serve with compassion; to live neighborly; and in every way to share with Muslims the boundless grace of God.

We ask him to help us to be the true servants of his love throughout the Muslim world.

We cannot but supplement the dominant concern of Lausanne 1974 with the thrust of Glen Eyrie 1978:

"Let the earth hear his voice"

and

"May Muslims feel his touch"

[Learn More about the Glen Eyrie Consultation](#)

which produced this Lausanne Occasional
Paper.