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In the public debate concerning the role that Islam plays on the world scene, powerful voices rise to the defense of the world's second largest religion. A careful distinction is made between the true nature of the Islamic faith and the perverted version advanced by "fanatics" and "extremists." Others say Islam actually means "peace" and that those who diverge from this understanding of the religion are "reactionaries" who are outside of the mainstream of Muslim opinion on the matter.

Naturally, the question arises: "Are these assertions accurate?" Is it the case that Islam is a good religion that has simply gone wrong, a great faith distorted by a radical group on the fringe?

A religion is based upon two things: texts and traditions. What do the texts and traditions of the Muslim faith say with respect to deeply cherished values of modern people such as freedom of religion, the dignity of women, and the distinction between church and state? Is Islam, as a worldview, "just a religion," or is it more aggressive, an expansionist, political ideology? Are Muslims content to render unto secular Caesars what is rightfully theirs, or do they have their hearts set on an oppressive theocracy of their own making? With all due deference to the many Muslims who privately practice their beliefs with kindness toward their neighbors, critical thinking demands that one come to terms with such questions. What do the texts and traditions of Islam have to say about essential aspects of today's world?

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Troubling Islamic Religious Texts

If biblical revelation is progressive, then Muslim "revelation" is regressive. While the Bible moves from the stern tutelage of Old Testament theocracy to the abundant, grace-filled Church of the New Testament, the Qur'an and Hadith move from Muhammad's season of diplomacy in Mecca to his legalistic and aggressive pronouncements in Medina, written later in exile.

Early on, Muhammad wrote that "any [including Christians] who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have

their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve” (Q2:62). And he seemed to favor religious liberty when he wrote, “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (Q2:256). But these kind words

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gave way to the harsh language of the “Sword Verse”: “[F]ight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem...” (Q9:5). Unfortunately, since Muhammad wrote this fighting verse late in life, it has the greater authority. This follows the Muslim principle of “abrogation,” by which later verses may be used to cancel out conflicting, earlier verses.

Muhammad’s hard stance toward “infidels” persisted in the Hadith, Islam’s second sacred text, a collection of authoritative sayings and biographical sketches from his life. Herein, he accused Christians of putting Jesus (whom the Qur’an recognizes as merely a prophet) “in a position not rightly his”¹ and declared that a Muslim who left the faith (an apostate) might be put to death.² Thus the prophet spoke, and so succeeding generations of Muslims must work out the details. For instance the Malikite school of legal thought³ stipulates, “He [the apostate] is allowed three days of grace; if he fails to utilize the chance to repent, the execution takes place.”⁴

This is not a promising textual beginning for a religion which presumes to be a “religion of peace.” If Muhammad’s norm is to attack the pagan and execute the apostate, then how can the truly devout Muslim be peaceable?

Discrimination and Persecution: the Logical Extension of Islamic Holy Writings

With such a textual foundation, it is no wonder Christians in Muslim lands have endured much discrimination and persecution down through the ages.⁵ Assigned to *dhimmi* status⁶ by the predominant Islamic cultures, believers have often been denied the full range of civil rights and equal standing before the law. And abuse is not limited to Muslim-majority nations, for where Muslims enjoy strength in even a neighborhood or institution, they often flex their muscles to the detriment of “infidels” in their midst. Here are examples from over a dozen countries, representing the spectrum of abuse:

1. In late 2005, three Christian schoolgirls were beheaded near the **Indonesian** town of Poso, Sulawesi, in an area of ongoing Muslim-Christian violence. One of the heads was left beside a church.⁷

2. Even after the Taliban were overthrown in **Afghanistan**, Abdul Rahman, a convert to Christianity, faced the threat of the death penalty at the hands of the new democratic government in 2006.⁸

3. A *fatwa* (decree) issued on July 3, 2000, by an agency of the **Saudi Arabian** Ministry of Religious Endowments declared that building any place of worship other than a mosque was illegal.⁹ And in June 2006, ten police officers with wooden clubs arrested four African Christians at prayer in a private home in Jeddah.¹⁰

4. Though **Malaysian** Islam is alleged to be tolerant, one state's chief minister denied Catholics the right to build a new church with a steeple and cross, claiming it would be too provocative.¹¹ And a secondary school syllabus for Islamic Education included stern measures for dealing with apostates; one section recommended execution, "[t]o show to others at large that Islam is not a religion to be mocked at will," and, "[s]o that no one will dare to denigrate the Islamic religion."¹²

5. Since the Hamas victory in the January 2006 election, Protestant and Catholic buildings in the **West Bank** have been hit with fire bombings and other acts of vandalism.¹³ In **Gaza**, the Bible Society received bomb threats, and their neighbors joined the landlord in insisting that they leave.¹⁴

6. Under **Pakistan's** blasphemy law, Christians are subject to all sorts of abuse, merely for their faith. Imprisoned for his faith, Mobeen Boota endured harassment, slander, torture, and crude attempts to convert him to Islam.¹⁵

7. In **Jordan**, Siham Qandah was denied survivor benefits when her husband, a Muslim army officer, died. Instead, because she was a Christian, the money and her children were assigned by the courts to her brother, who had converted to Islam. The decision on custody of the children was only overturned in June 2005 after years of costly legal battles.¹⁶

8. In the prosperous, seemingly ultra-modern Emirate of **Dubai**, a Filipino pastor was convicted of "abusing Islam" and engaging in "Christian missionary activity." For giving material to an Egyptian man, who accepted it willingly and knowingly, the pastor received a "suspended sentence of a year in prison, deportation and confiscation of seized materials . . ." ¹⁷

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9. **Turkey** is also known as a “progressive” nation, but in October 2003, Yakup Cindilli “was badly beaten . . . whilst giving out New Testaments in his home town. The beating resulted in a blood clot in his brain that caused serious injuries including loss of speech and use of some limbs.”¹⁸

10. In **Iran**, particularly intolerant since the rise of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Pastor Ghorban Tori was kidnapped and stabbed to death in November 2005. “Later the same day the secret police raided the home looking for Bibles and other Christian materials in the Farsi language. The homes of other known believers in the same town were also raided.”¹⁹

11. In **Kenya**, with only a 10% Muslim population, extremists raided a Pentecostal radio station in Nairobi, killing one and injuring three. The provocation seems to have been “a Swahili-language broadcast entitled ‘Jesus is the way’, advocating conversion of Muslims to Christianity.”²⁰

12. In **Nigeria**, “Muslim extremists overwhelmed police officers providing refuge for an unidentified Christian woman in this town [Izom] in Niger state on June 28 [2006] and stoned and clubbed her to death for doing street evangelism.”²¹

13. In **Egypt**, provincial governors must approve church repairs, while mosque repairs can proceed without high-level clearance.

14. Even **England** sees its share of Muslim intimidation. A Lincolnshire eye specialist won damages after he “was forced out of his job by Muslim colleagues” and subsequently proved that “he was made to resign from the ophthalmology department of Pilgrim Hospital, after staff there discovered that he was a Christian.”²² Meanwhile, in Bradford, “[C]hurches have been firebombed, sexual threats have been made against the wives of preachers, [and] a church caretaker’s dog was hanged . . . Black Pentecostal churchgoers are also threatened. . .”²³

Of course, differing shades of Islam can be found in various regions, but this sample list of disturbing incidents demonstrates a common thread of Muslim intimidation of Christians around the world.

Not surprisingly, the story of Christian presence in majority Muslim countries from 1975 to 2006 is largely one of flight.²⁴ The Christian community in Lebanon—a majority for most of the 20th century—now constitutes just 40% of the population and continues to decline. The erosion of the Christian populace of Egypt is well known as is Christian flight across Sudanese borders. And, sadly, Christian presence in the Holy Land is merely a shadow of its former self. In all these locations, a key factor in Christian retreat is pressure from and even persecution by their Muslim neighbors.

Contrasting, Favorable Treatment of Muslims in the West

In contrast, majority-Christian societies have shown great openness and tolerance toward Muslim minorities in their midst. Statistics bear this out. Over the past 30 years, Muslim growth in the West has been rapid and substantial. In Britain, the Muslim community went from 400,000 to 2,000,000, and similar gains were registered in France, Germany, Denmark, Holland, and the United States. In the 1990s alone, the Muslim population essentially doubled in Australia and Canada.

The proliferation of Muslim places of worship is another case in point. In Britain, the number of mosques and Islamic centers grew from 18 in 1966 to around 2,000 in 2006,²⁵ with dominating new structures in London, Edinburgh, and Birmingham. Perhaps the most alarming example of Muslim, claim-staking construction in the West is the

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proposed, 40,000-capacity mosque next to the site of the 2012 London Olympics. It would signal to the watching world that Islam is powerfully present in one of the West's great cities and that its vitality may well surpass that of the long-standing Christian community.²⁶ Similarly, mosque construction in the United States has flourished in recent decades. Most of America's over 1,500 mosques²⁷ were built after 1980, with major funding from Saudi Arabia.²⁸

At the same time, Muslims are endowing university chairs and/or centers in Islamic studies at such distinguished institutions as Oxford, Harvard, and Georgetown. (The two American schools have each received \$20 million from the same Saudi prince.)²⁹ Though the programs and professoriates may display academic trappings, they are designed for Islamic propaganda rather than objective inquiry.

The Clash of Worldviews

Christianity and Islam treat the "aliens in their midst" differently, because their theologies and worldviews are radically divergent. Islam is not only a religion, but an ideology which tends towards utopian totalitarianism. As with similar ideologies it is willing to suppress the opposition in establishing its version of "heaven on earth."

In contrast, the Christian does not believe that "heaven on earth" is possible before Christ returns. Painfully aware of the effects of the Fall, believers insist upon governmental checks and balances, whereby even the Church has limited power. The ideal is a "free church in a free state."³⁰

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Furthermore, convinced that meaningful conversion and perseverance in the faith are voluntary, Christians work by persuasion, not by coercion (cf. 2 Cor. 5:11), though regrettably throughout history, there have been some exceptions. While they seek to influence culture and the state by being “salt and light” in the land, they do not aspire to exclusive and oppressive dominance.

For Islam, religious tolerance is *prudential* and *temporary*; for Christianity, it is *essential* and *lasting*. While the demands of diplomacy,

defense, commerce, and minority status may compel Muslims to accommodate pluralism for a season, they betray their foundational texts if they countenance perpetual religious liberty and equality for all people and for all faiths.

When Christian bodies such as the Second Vatican Council³¹ and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) advocate religious liberty, they do so with firm grounding in the Bible. When Muslim reformers such as Yasmin Alibhai-Brown³² suggest, “Muslims have to learn to ... treat people the way they expect to be treated themselves,”³³ they risk rebuke and retaliation from those who take the Qur’an literally. The same goes for the Malaysian group, Sisters in Islam, which has provoked the wrath of federal and state authorities with the question, “How can religious authorities and Muslims demand that those wishing to convert to Islam should have all the freedom to do so yet at the same time, deny this freedom to Muslims who wish to leave their faith or believe otherwise?”³⁴ These are courageous words since many Muslims would count as heresy any suggestion that perpetual religious liberty for other faiths is desirable.

Many followers of Muhammad are relentless in their quest for the reign of shari’a law, that is, civil government according to the dictates of the Qur’an. In cultures where they have tasted the benefits of religious liberty, they exploit this freedom in the cause of bringing about Muslim rule. For instance, in the U.K., since the 1970s, Muslims have repeatedly asked that aspects of shari’a be built into the legal system for Muslim citizens, and a 2004 survey of British Muslims showed that 61% of them supported the use of shari’a courts in Britain to resolve civil cases within the Muslim community.³⁵

Taqiyya

Complicating and confusing matters, many Muslims follow the principle of *taqiyya*, or deception, in advancing their cause.³⁶ As one Muslim writer has put it, “Lying is not always bad, to be sure; there are times when telling a lie is more profitable and better for the general welfare,

and for the settlement of conciliation among people, than telling the truth.”³⁷

Such behavior is consistent with the Qur'an, which excuses false oaths in chapters 2 (verse 225)³⁸ and 16 (verse 106).³⁹ On this basis, Shi'ites and Sunnis alike justify conscious deception in order to protect oneself in a hostile environment. Indeed, Al-Ghazali (d. 1111) reported that Muhammad himself said it was acceptable to lie in three circumstances: for reconciliation among people; in war; and amongst spouses, to keep peace in the family.⁴⁰

Former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was a master of this two-faced approach, extending it to the political process in general. In May of 1994, he delivered a sermon in a mosque in Johannesburg in which he declared, “The Jihad will continue, and Jerusalem is not [just] for the Palestinian people, it is for all the Muslim nation.”⁴¹ This call to jihad followed Arafat's assertion of his peaceful intentions towards Israel when he agreed to the Oslo Accords at a public ceremony in Washington, D.C. on September 13, 1993. When the Western media questioned him about the sweeping, aggressive statement in the Johannesburg sermon, Arafat said, quite falsely, that the term “jihad” had been used simply as a call to Muslims to be more devout in practice of their faith.

Jihad

There are, indeed, two forms of jihad, whose Arabic root word means “to endeavor, to strive, to struggle.” One type (“higher jihad”) is spiritual and peaceful; its focus is the tongue (speaking the truth), the heart (reforming feelings and intentions), and the hand (doing good works).⁴² But there is a belligerent form of struggle (“lower jihad”), which seeks to maintain or extend Islamic rule over non-believers through physical means, whether police, military, or terrorist.

Today many Muslim apologists insist that the peaceful jihad has always been primary, a claim which does not stand up to scrutiny. In the words of Bernard Lewis, “For most of the fourteen centuries of recorded Muslim history, jihad was most commonly interpreted to mean armed struggle for the defense or advancement of Muslim power.”⁴³

So while Christians have denounced armed religious crusades, a significant number of contemporary Muslims condone and even practice

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this sort of literal “holy war.” In this, as in so much else, they are merely following the model of Muhammad, who spent much of his last ten years engaged in military campaigns.

A Hopeful Sign: the Growing Call for Reciprocity

Against this disturbing backdrop, it is encouraging to see Church leaders, and some Muslims, joining in a basic call for fairness. More and more observers are insisting that Muslims respect the principles of religious liberty in the Western lands where they now reside and that Muslim-majority countries grant reciprocal freedom to those of other faiths who live within their borders, including converts from Islam. This is the message of the above-mentioned Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, who continues by insisting that Muslims must learn to “make demands of themselves that they make on others . . . [W]e must have respect, yes, but it has to go both ways.” She adds, “For example, I don’t see many Muslims at the moment worrying at all about the fact that Christians living in Muslim countries have a very hard time, and there are, frankly, not as many churches in Pakistan as there are mosques in [Britain].”⁴⁴

Here, she echoes the sentiments of Cardinal Francis Arinze, former head of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, who insists that a “religion should not ask for [full acceptance] in a country where it is a minority and deny it to others when it is the majority.”⁴⁵ Indeed, this is non-negotiable: “In order to build for peace, we need the acceptance and practice of reciprocity.”⁴⁶ And a second such voice comes from Anastasios Yannoulatos of the Orthodox community, which has suffered

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from Islamic incursions through the centuries: “Parallel to the polite stance and respect for the Muslims who live in the West, similar support is needed for Christians who are oppressed in intolerant Islamic environments in Africa and Asia.”⁴⁷

Some Anglicans, too, have joined in the call. England’s Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, who has written widely on Islam over several decades, adds, “In both English and Arabic . . . the term [reciprocity] evokes images of mutuality, of give and take and of

partnerships. Surely, these ought to be the basis of dialogue between people of different faiths?”⁴⁸

The goal is clear and reasonable, but the situation is dire: According to the 2001 Geneva Report of the WEA, “[A]t the beginning of the 21st Century the largest faith group being persecuted is the Christian faith. It has been estimated that over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied fundamental human rights solely because of their

faith.”⁴⁹ (The same report noted that eight of the twelve countries engaged in widespread persecution and discrimination were Muslim-majority states.)

So how might the cause of reciprocity be pressed? Certainly, Christians should give thanks for the work of independent advocacy agencies whose honored ranks include the following:

Barnabas Fund (www.barnabasfund.org)

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (www.csw.org.uk)

Middle East Concern (www.idop.org/mec.html)

Center for Religious Freedom (www.freedomhouse.org/religion/)

Compass Direct (www.compassdirect.org/en/index.php)

Voice of the Martyrs (www.persecution.com)

Fortunately, Muslims favoring reciprocity need not embrace policies utterly foreign to their heritage. Though Christians and Jews living in

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Muslim lands throughout the centuries have typically been second-class citizens, many have enjoyed considerable freedom. While their *dhimmi* status has not been ideal, it has at least been tolerable. Under these circumstances, Christians in many countries have been allowed to maintain churches, publish

literature, and join in the political process as avowed believers. With this history in place, reforming Muslims might simply encourage their countrymen to reclaim honorable traditions once workable in their lands.

Thus, international diplomats from both Church and state are raising this cause with some unanimity and effectiveness, but what can the local church do? How might pastors lead their churches to respond to the challenge of resurgent Islam? First and foremost, believers must recognize that this is a spiritual battle which calls the Church to fresh consecration.

Part II: The Response of the Church

The Awakening that Must Come

As the world grapples with the sobering challenge of what to do about resurgent Islam, the Church must take a very hard look at herself and ask the following questions:

1. Does the Church in the West and her leadership have anything distinctly Christian to contribute to this crucial issue of our time?
2. Does the Church in the West have enough moral and spiritual capital, does she have the requisite courage to withstand and respond to the advance of resurgent Islam in the immediate future?

Candid answers to these questions can be unsettling. Christians in America and Europe take their place among the most comfortable, privileged—and spiritually lethargic—people the world has ever known. Certain sectors of the Church bear an uncomfortable resemblance to those citizens from the northern kingdom of Israel to whom Amos prophesied:

*Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory
and stretch themselves out on their couches,
and eat lambs from the flock
and calves from the midst of the stall,
who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp . . .
who drink wine in bowls
and anoint themselves with the finest oils,
but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! (Amos 6:4-6)*

When the northern tribes of Israel disregarded God's repeated calls to repent, the Lord raised up the Assyrians to carry them into exile. Despite this chilling precedent, the southern kingdom of Judah likewise refused to turn from their wicked ways and return to the worship of God. Even during the Babylonian captivity, the exiles refused to respond to the prophet's message of judgment, preferring instead the preaching of false teachers who proclaimed peace when there was no peace and who promised a speedy return to their homes in Jerusalem (Ezek. 13:16). The majority turned their backs on true worship and persisted in their idolatry and rebellion, yet there always was a remnant who longed for God's presence, for holiness, boldness, and Spirit power.

Holiness

God has *always* desired holiness. The pursuit of fervent holiness and faithful discipleship—that way of life in which a person actually learns to

obey everything that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:20)—has been largely ignored in the Western Church today. As author Dallas Willard explains, “There is an obvious Great Disparity between, on the one hand, the *hope for life expressed in Jesus*—found real in the Bible and in many shining examples from among his followers—and, on the other hand, the *actual day-to-day behavior, inner life, and social presence* of most of those who now profess adherence to him.”⁵⁰ This “Great Disparity” is what now imperils God’s people, undermining their ability to meet the critical challenge of resurgent Islam.

Boldness

This un-preparedness should weigh heavily upon pastors and teachers of God’s Word—those whose primary calling is to “watch out” for the souls in their care “as those who will have to give an account” to God for themselves and their flock (Heb. 13:17). Theirs is the prophetic heritage of Nathan, who called King David to account, and of Elijah, who confronted the prophets of Baal; the legacy of Isaiah, who condemned the Asherim, and of Amos, who proclaimed God’s judgment on those who abused the poor; the courageous example of John the Baptist, who spoke truth to power in Herod’s palace, and of Paul, who rebuked the Galatian legalists—and, finally, of the glorious message of the Lord, who spoke woe to Pharisees and lawyers who masked the truth of God.

Spirit Power

Who is sufficient for such things? Not even one, if the measure is human wisdom. That is why the Church must learn afresh to avail herself of divine power, accessible through the kingdom of which Jesus preached, and now at work among His people through His promised Spirit.

It was to a pagan world of religious relativism, much like the one today, that the Apostle Paul proclaimed the gospel, “not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power” (1 Cor. 2:4-5 NIV). In light of this emboldening truth, a few principles can be outlined to inspire a faithful response to the challenge of resurgent Islam.

Firstly, repentance must once again characterize the people of God.

Modern people, of course, find repentance difficult. As theologian Reinhold Niebuhr observed,

Proud men and successful civilizations find it difficult to know God, because they are particularly tempted to make themselves God. That is why “not many mighty, not many noble, not many wise after the flesh are called.” Without the godly sorrow that worketh repentance there can be no salvation.⁵¹

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Secondly, the Church must invest herself in the good work of making disciples as well as converts. It must once again catechize believers in the faith, for the effects of this kingdom-building work will be revolutionary. Such teaching cannot fail, for it honors the Great Commission of the One who has been given “all authority in heaven and on earth.” Yes, the enemies facing the Church are terrible, but the good news of Jesus possesses all the divine power needed to “destroy strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4)—*if* it is believed, taught, and lived.

Thirdly, individual heroes of the faith must step forward, for God still searches for a man. Such a man, the Lord told Ezekiel, stands in the gap on behalf of the

land so “that [He] should not destroy it” (Ezek. 22:30). The Church in the West must recognize the fact that the threat of resurgent Islam arises from the Muslim zeal to convert the world to their way of life. Are followers of Jesus motivated by an equally powerful zeal for Him? Can the modern Church in America and Europe be characterized by a single-minded devotion to will one thing—for the glory of God?

Fourthly, the people of God must once again walk in the power of the resurrection of Jesus and embrace the sacrificial way of the cross. This life recalls the witness of the early Church who stood for the truth even when they knew their lives were at stake for simply announcing the good confession, “Jesus is Lord.” These believers were marked by a courageous willingness to stand firm against adversaries preaching false creeds, and they maintained a steadfast confidence that God was with them through their suffering and would ultimately vindicate them.

Fifthly, Christians must come together as a body to meet the challenge. Muslims speak often of *umma* — solidarity and unity of purpose within their worldwide community. By comparison, Christians tend to focus on what issues divide them, as evidenced by the thousands of Christian denominations existing today.⁵² If the followers of Jesus want to reach the world with His message, they must return to the Lord’s high priestly prayer, where He asked the Father that His disciples “may be one even as we are one” (John 17:22). That prayer for unity must be echoed by God’s people in “every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9).

Finally, godly confidence must displace fear and doubt. Despite the

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power and challenge of resurgent Islam in the world today, the Christian must never forget that Christ's kingdom will prevail. From the Torah to the Psalms, to the Prophets, to the Gospels, to Epistles, to Revelation—at every turn God comforts His people with,

“Fear not!” For as the Psalmist rejoiced⁵³ and the writer of Hebrews recalled and declared,⁵⁴ “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

Further Steps for the Local Congregation

Though lacking many of the resources and freedoms enjoyed today by the Western Church, first-century Christians still “turned the world upside down.” Full of the zeal of the Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit, they made the most of what they had and provided a convicting example to the contemporary Church—which is richly blessed with talent, funds, and influence. As conscious stewards of these assets, local congregations can move forward on a number of fronts. Here are five possibilities:

1. Courses of study on the scripture, history, and current manifestations of Islam. Helpful literature is plentiful for such inquiries. A good place to start would be Mark Durie’s *Revelation? Do We Worship the Same God? Jesus, Holy Spirit, God in Christianity and Islam*⁵⁵—and Robert Spencer’s *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam*. The Church might also turn to reliable guest speakers for insight and the opportunity for question-and-answer. Whatever form it might take, examination of these issues readies the people for conversation in the public square and for evangelistic opportunities.⁵⁶

2. Intentional outreach and direct evangelism. The gospel is not only wondrously true; it is powerful when presented unashamedly and unambiguously. As Isaiah 55:10-11 teaches, the Word of God accomplishes great things when disseminated, so Christians should ensure that their Muslim neighbors have opportunity to hear God’s message of grace through Christ.

3. A network of similarly motivated pastors and churches. Preachers who speak plainly on these matters can expect harsh criticism and treatment. In this context, the support and counsel of others who address these issues courageously is invaluable.

4. Use of various communication resources. Fortunately, God’s Church enjoys a wealth of talents, contacts, spiritual gifts, and platforms

for articulating God’s truth and righteousness. These resources should be used to proclaim the truth in the face of resurgent Islam. Who will bring moral clarity to the world if not the Church?

5. Earnest prayer. Prayer is the Church’s most potent weapon and its power cannot be overstated—for “[t]he effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16 KJV). God’s house must once again become a house of prayer.

The power of a holy, obedient, prophetic, and praying Church is incalculable. Nothing could match the splendor and fruitfulness of a repentant and revived body of believers. In reality, the spiritual vacuum now tormenting the West will be filled by something—if not with the glory of the living God, then with oppressive secularism or Islamic legalism. Yes, to meet these adversaries, it will take sacrifice, not only of resources, but also of comfort and safety. But sacrifice is the watchword of a people who meet, with all hopefulness, at the foot of the cross.

Endnotes

¹ James Robson, trans., *Mishkat Al-Masabih: English Translation with Explanatory Notes* (Lahore: SH. Muhammad Ashraf, 1981), p. 1342, 26.35.3.

² “Blood Money,” in *Sabih Bukhari*, at *USC-MSA Compendium of Muslim Texts*, trans. M. Muhsin Khan, 9.83.18, <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/083.sbt.html> (accessed August 28, 2006). It is repeated in 9.83.37.

³ One of the four primary legal traditions in Sunni Islam.

⁴ A’isha `Abdarahman at-Tarjumana and Ya`qub Johnson, trans., *Malik’s Muwatta*, at *USC-MSA Compendium of Muslim Texts*, 36.36.18.16, <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/muwatta/036.mmt.html#036.36.18.16> (accessed September 6, 2006).

⁵ See, for example, Bat Ye’or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude: 7th - 20th Century* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996).

- ⁶ The term given to non-Muslims, especially Jews and Christians, living within an Islamic state ruled by shari'a law.
- ⁷ Tim Johnston, "Three Indonesian Girls Beheaded," *BBC News Website*, October 29, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4387604.stm> (accessed August 18, 2006).
- ⁸ "Afghan Convert 'Was Ready to Die,'" *BBC News Website*, March 28, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4852426.stm (accessed October 6, 2006).
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⁵⁵ Availability for Mark Durie’s book in both the U.S.A. and Australia is as follows: Garden of Readin’, Elmbrook Church, 777 South Barker Road, Brookfield, WI 53045, USA

Phone: 262-796-5720

E-mail: dborleis@gardenofreadin.com

Website: www.gardenofreadin.com/

The Australian distributor is City Harvest International,

<http://shop.cityharvest.org.au/>.

⁵⁶ **For Further Reading:**

Answering Islam: A Christian-Muslim Dialog, <http://answering-islam.org/>. A massive apologetics website which includes wide-ranging articles presenting Christian answers to Muslim challenges, and leveling quite a few challenges to Islam itself.

Mark Durie, *Revelation? Do We Worship the Same God? Jesus, Holy Spirit, God in*

Christianity and Islam (Mt. Gravatt, Australia: City Harvest, 2006). A succinct and persuasively argued study which rejects the claim that Islam and Christianity share the same God, Spirit, and Jesus.

ITL: Thought-Provoking Muslim-Christian Dialogue, <http://www.itl.org.uk/>. An apologetics website which presents a challenging Christian response to Islam (somewhat softer than *Answering Islam*).

Michael Nazir-Ali, *Conviction and Conflict: Islam, Christianity and World Order* (New York: Continuum, 2006). This book examines the role of religion in society and, especially, the relationship of religion to the state, to law, and to the justifiability of armed conflict.

Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan* (London: Doubleday, 2006). A fearless study of how Britain has become the European base for international radical Islamic groups, with proposals to correct the problem.

Peter Riddell & Peter Cotterell, *Islam in Context* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003). A survey of Islamic belief and history to the present day, focusing on internal divisions within Islam and how those divisions affect the interaction of Muslims with the rest of the world.

Patrick Sookhdeo, *Islam: The Challenge to the Church* (Pewsey: Isaac Publishing, 2006). A readable, well-argued examination of the challenge of Islam to the Church and the urgent need for Christians to meet it.

Patrick Sookhdeo, *Understanding Islamic Terrorism: The Islamic Doctrine of War* (Pewsey: Isaac Publishing, 2004). An important study of the textual teachings and historical application of the Islamic doctrine of jihad.

Robert Spencer, *The Myth of Islamic Tolerance: How Islamic Law Treats Non-Muslims* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2005). A collection of papers by different writers focusing upon Muslim treatment of non-Muslim minorities down through the ages.

Robert Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2005). An excellent survey of Islamic history and belief asking the most challenging questions which most other scholarly works dare not ask.

The Muslim-Christian Debate Website, <http://www.debate.org.uk/>. An apologetics/polemics website which provides Christian answers to Muslim objections and which challenges the very textual foundations of Islam.

Bat Ye'or, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilisations Collide* (Lancaster: Gazelle Book Services, 2002). It shows how doctrinal patterns of subjugation of the *dhimmi* peoples (i.e., Christians and Jews) initiated during the Arab and Turkish waves of Islamic conquest are of contemporary relevance.

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