

THE LINK

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The Muslim Experience In the United States

By Yvonne Y. Haddad

The religion of Islam is now an American phenomenon. Once considered the Arab way of life and a faith alien to America's Christian heritage, it has moved into a position of sufficient size and strength to become one of the prominent and rapidly growing religious movements in America.

Muslim contact with America occurred quite early. It was revealed at the quin-centennial celebration of Columbus's birth in 1955 that the explorer's private library contained a copy of the work of the Arab geographer, al-Idrisi. This book, which describes the East coast discovery of the "new continent" by eight Muslim explorers, is said to have inspired Columbus's own expedition. Arab involvement in the discovery of America also rested with Columbus's interpreter, Louis Torres, a Spaniard of Arab descent who had converted to Christianity after the reconquista.

In 1539 the Moroccan guide, Estephan, accompanied Fra Marcos de Nize, a Franciscan who explored Arizona and New Mexico for the viceroy of New Spain. Records also mention the 1717 arrival in the United States of Arabic-speaking slaves who refrained from eating pork and believed in Allah and Muhammad. Other references point to the existence in 1790 of "sundry Moors" in South Carolina. The state house of representatives voted to try them according to



Muhammad Omar, founder of the Quincy, Mass. mosque, recites the Qur'an and leads his congregation in prayer.

the laws of the citizens of South Carolina and not under the Negro codes, because they were subjects of the Emperor of Morocco, the first national leader to recognize the independence of

the United States in 1787.

In the 1850's the United States Government studied the feasibility of raising camels in the desert of the Southwest. In 1856 thirty-three camels arrived in Arizona, accompanied by two Turks and three Arab handlers. One of these cameleers, Hajj Ali, turned California prospector when the camel experiment failed.

Aside from those few individuals who crossed the ocean as explorers or unwilling slaves, early Muslim contact with the United States was minimal. A few Yemenis came after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869; others took advantage of the Homestead Act of 1870, or visited the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 and remained as traders.

Actual Muslim immigration to the United States occurred in several waves—1875 to 1912, 1930 to 1938, 1947 to 1960 and from 1967 to the present. The world wars and changes in the immigration laws of the United States caused the lulls. The first permanent group arrived from what was then called Syria, now the combined area of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. Mostly uneducated, unskilled, and of peasant stock from the mountain areas of Lebanon, this group actually followed Lebanese Christians who reported their successes on return to Lebanon.

The economic situation in the Middle East from 1890 to World War I gave impetus to further immigration.

About This Issue

Sundown, November 19, 1979, will usher in a new Muslim century. The date, according to lunar reckoning, will be 1 Muharram, 1400, the first day of the first month of the first year of the 15th century.

The starting point for the Muslim calendar was the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina and the founding in Medina of the first organized Muslim community—year 622 in the Gregorian or Western calendar.

To commemorate this centennial event, *The Link* looks back on the early history of the Muslims in the United States and examines the growth of Islam in this country, particularly over the past three decades.

The study was researched and written by Dr. Yvonne Haddad, Visiting Assistant Professor in Philosophy and Religion at Colgate University. Special gratitude is due to Imam Abdul Rauf, Imam Muddathir Siddiqi, Mr. Tareq Quraishi, Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi and Dr. Anis Ahmad among others who

gave of their time to volunteer insights and to discuss various aspects of the Muslim experience in the United States.

Photos are courtesy of Yvonne Haddad, the Muslim World League, Foundation of North America, and the Islamic Center of New York.

In conjunction with the Interdenominational Education for Mission Theme for 1979-80, "Middle East Mosaic," Friendship Press is publishing a variety of books on the Middle East, four of which are reviewed in this issue. Our reviewer, O. Kelly Ingram, professor of Parish Ministry at the Divinity School of Duke University, has been speaking, lecturing, preaching and writing about the Middle East since 1958. He is editor of *Jerusalem: Key to Peace in the Middle East*. Books reviewed may be obtained at discount prices through A.M.E.U.; see Books To Order section, page 15.

Our November/December issue of *The Link* will be devoted to a special report on the West Bank and Gaza.

John F. Mahoney, Executive Director

Farming became unprofitable because of a general decline in the price of farm products. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 destroyed the land trade route to India. Japanese silk became very competitive on the French market and thus destroyed the silk industry of Mount Lebanon. The disease-ridden vineyards of Mount Lebanon added more trouble.

There was a rise around 1900 in the number of Muslims, especially the Shiah, who entered the United States. Apprehension about going to a non-Muslim country had held them back, but the success stories of other immigrants provided the necessary incentive. Most of the early immigrants intended to return home after accumulating enough capital to build a house or start a business. Some who were successful returned and became proof of the richness of the United States, where, it appeared, those who worked hard not only made a living but also improved their living standard and their social status.

Several factors in the United States,

however, impeded the flow of immigrants. Many were turned down by immigration officials at Ellis Island. Discrimination appeared in various localities. One court found them ineligible for citizenship because they were neither Caucasian nor African. Although a higher court overruled that decision, the debate about the size of their head and nose as determinants of race continued in the press.

The immigrants also faced new restrictive laws that limited the number to be permitted in the United States. Preference was given to relatives of previous immigrants, as evidenced in the flow of immigration after World War II. Inter-marriage and the influx of relatives from the Middle East helped to preserve Old-Country ideals and customs and to slow down the process of acculturation and assimilation.

In the 1950's a new kind of immigrant appeared. The immigrants were mainly Palestinians displaced by the creation of Israel, Egyptians whose land had been appropriated by the

Nasser regime, Syrians from influential families excluded from participating in Syrian government, Iraqis fleeing the republican regime. There were also East European Muslims seeking freedom from Communist governments.

Most of these new immigrants were Westernized as well as fluent in English. They sought higher education, advanced technical training, and specialized work opportunities as well as ideological fulfillment. About two-thirds of the students married American women and tried to integrate into the general society. Many of them now teach in colleges and universities and are therefore intellectually integrated into American society.

Most of this group came as settlers. Mainly from urban areas, they had attended Western or Westernized schools in their home countries. Some had experimented in representative government, or remembered their frustrated efforts to institute freely elected governments in their countries. Their identities were thus influenced by national rather than religious considerations.

The change in immigration policy initiated under the Johnson Administration furnished the opportunity of immigration to Asians. Competence of the immigrant to provide services needed by the American economy became the criterion of eligibility. This has led to the emigration of highly qualified professionals from Indonesia, Pakistan and Muslims from India. The persecution of qualified people of Indo-Pakistani background in Africa brought some of them to the United States via Great Britain or Canada.

Not all of the immigrants, of course, are professionals. A substantial number of Lebanese Muslims now live with relatives in the United States as a result of the dislocation caused by war. Others include: 200 tailors and their families from Turkey needed by the garment industry in Rochester, New York, and Yemeni migrant workers in California.

It is estimated that there are at present about three million Muslims in the United States. Of these a little less than two million are "indigenous Muslims," i.e. converts—many black and followers for a while of Elijah Muhammad.

Immigrants from more than 60 countries also shape the Muslim community in the United States. The immigrant settled groups number about 200,000, while college and university students from Muslim countries are estimated at more than three-quarters of a million.



Islamic Centers in the United States

The development of Islamic institutions and centers in the United States came about slowly because the number of Muslims in proportion to the total population has been relatively small (an estimated 30,000 in 1954 and somewhere around 100,000 in the early 1970's). Immigrants who came to amass wealth and return to their homelands were not interested in establishing institutions; their allegiance remained with their families at home, which they helped support financially.

Those Muslims who did decide to settle in this country, however, began to think of developing institutions and organizations to preserve and maintain their faith and to instruct their children. Individuals in different areas took the initiative: Abdullah Ingram in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Muhammad Omar in Quincy, Massachusetts; and J. Howar in Washington, D.C.

The earliest recorded group who organized for communal prayer in private homes was in Ross, North Dakota in 1900. By 1920 they had built a mosque. Later they became so integrated into the community that they assumed Christian names, married Christians and in 1948 the mosque was abandoned.

Soon after, in 1919, an Islamic association developed in Highland Park, Michigan, to be followed by one in Detroit in 1922, then by the American Mohammedan Society (of Tartar origin) in Brooklyn in 1922, the Young Men's Muslim Association (Arab) in Brooklyn in 1923, and the Arab Banner Society in Quincy in 1930. The first building designated as a mosque was in Cedar Rapids in 1934. This group also purchased the first Muslim cemetery (believed still to be the only one in the U.S.). In 1957 the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C. opened to serve an American congregation as well as members of the diplomatic corps from many Muslim countries.

Today there are more than 200

mosques and Islamic associations in the United States. (A separate Muslim entity, the World Community of Islam in the West, has an additional 100.)

There are: 32 in New York State, of

cient organizational structure. The last fifteen years have seen the rise of a number of national organizations to fill these needs. (Islam does not have a hierarchical structure in which or-



Architect's rendering of The Islamic Center of New York

which 15 are in New York City and vicinity; 22 in California; 15 in Illinois; 14 in New Jersey; 12 in Pennsylvania; 11 in Ohio and Michigan; 9 in Indiana; 6 in Washington D.C.; 4 each in Texas, Florida and Maryland; and 3 in Iowa. The remaining mosques are spread throughout the country, mainly in major metropolitan areas.

The rise in the number of Islamic associations stems from the increase and participation of students from Muslim countries and from the greater number of Muslim immigrants who are committed to an Islamic way of life. All of this has created the need for instructional material and for more effi-

ganization is imposed from above. These organizations, as a result, have begun from individual and local efforts, and participation in them is completely optional.)

The Federation of Islamic Associations came into being through the efforts of Abdullah Ingram of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Ingram gained religious recognition for American Muslims serving in the army as a result of his personal request to President Eisenhower. In 1952 he called for a meeting of Muslims from various United States and Canadian centers to coordinate efforts to keep the faith of Islam, to preserve Muslim culture, to expound the teach-

ings of Islam, and to propagate true information about the faith. This meeting brought into being the International Muslim Society, whose members were mostly second- and third-generation Lebanese Americans. Two years later, during its third meeting in Chicago, it adopted the name Federation of Islamic Associations.

The F.I.A. continues to hold annual meetings and conventions. Unlike some of the more recently formed organizations, its character is largely social in nature. Through the structure provided by the F.I.A., Muslims have a chance to meet and become acquainted within a common cultural and religious context. The organization also provides specific services to the Muslim community. It publishes *The Muslim Star* magazine, devoted to Islamic topics, and in 1970 produced selected readings from the Qur'an as well as a directory of Muslims in the United States. It has attempted to make a census of Muslims in this country, to standardize Sunday school teaching materials, and to counteract the anti-Muslim and anti-Arab literature in the United States through an anti-defamation office. Coordinated activities with United States and international Muslim groups have resulted in such projects as a joint hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca in 1975 with the Muslim Student Association.

In May of 1962 the Muslim World League was established in Mecca as an

international body of Muslims to foster the cause of Islam in the world. Its goals include the defense of Islam against those who seek to destroy it, the development of Muslim communities and the provision of assistance where needed, especially in areas where Muslims are oppressed or where they are a minority. Its missionary outreach seeks the spread of Islam.

With offices in several nations, including one in the United States, the League has served since 1974 as a non-governmental representative at the United Nations. It also has a consultative status with U.N.I.C.E.F. and U.N.E.S.C.O. League activities in the United States extend to free distribution of the Qur'an and other Islamic material in English translation, providing information about Islam through lectures and pamphlets, and maintaining an office for helping the religious needs of Muslims in prison. It also provides Imams for mosques, and has contributed to the Muslim Student Association and other Islamic organizations throughout the country.

The Muslim World League sponsored the first Islamic Conference of North America, which met in Newark, N.J. during April 22-24, 1977. Representatives from more than 200 mosques and Muslim associations attended. The purpose of the conference according to its *Proceedings*, was "to strengthen and help coordinate Islamic work and pro-

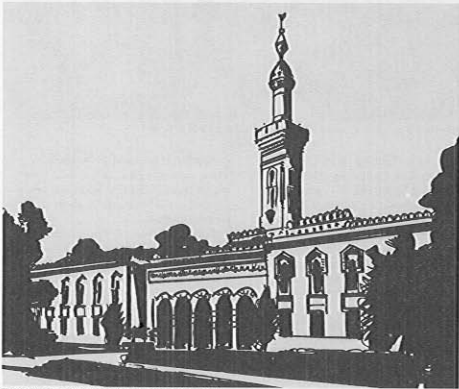
mote unity and cooperation among the large number of Muslim groups in the North American continent." The conference organized itself into the Islamic Coordinating Council of North America, which aims at harmonizing the various Islamic organizations and streamlining the efforts of the various communities in order to eliminate duplication.

The most active of the Islamic organizations in the United States is the Muslim Student Association, established by 25 Muslim students from 15 different universities on January 1, 1963, at the University of Illinois in Urbana. Its purpose was to unite Muslim students under one platform in order to provide Islamic understanding of problems besetting contemporary societies. The M.S.A. projects a spiritual life outlook which encompasses the religious, social, economic, political, and moral perspective on the world.

Prior to the 1970's most of the Muslim students who came to the United States were enrolled in graduate programs. They considered the West as the source of knowledge and a guide towards development and progress. During the 1970's, however, Muslim students began to seek an alternative source of identity and purpose. The 1973 war, followed by the oil boycott, provided a new outlook on the future.

The dramatic rise in the income of various countries due to the rise in oil revenues accelerated the number of students being sent to the United States. Among these are a large number of undergraduates, whose mindsets have not yet been formed. In addition, many students are coming from other parts of the Arab world than before, and from families with generally less formal education. Many graduates from the universities have chosen to remain in the United States. After joining the available mosques, they have felt that Islam is not living up to its potential of molding the totality of life in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an.

All of these changes led the M.S.A. to set up a new series of objectives in 1975. The original goals of the M.S.A., as stated in 1963, were to improve student knowledge of Islam, to perpetuate the Islamic spirit, to educate in how to live in a non-Muslim culture, to explain Islam to North America and to restore Islam in the students' home countries on return. The priorities as reformulated by the planning and organizing committee of 1975 now read as follows: producing and disseminating Islamic



The Islamic Center of Washington, D.C.

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

Among the projects and activities of the M.S.A. are the Islamic Books Service, a correspondence course on the principles of Islam, a fund for helping oppressed Muslims, a cooperative project for no-interest loans, printing and publishing of outstanding Islamic literature, a prison project to teach Islam to inmates, an information bureau about Muslim festivities and duties, a slides and films project, and providing tape recordings of the Qur'an and cards with Muslim greetings. Plans are

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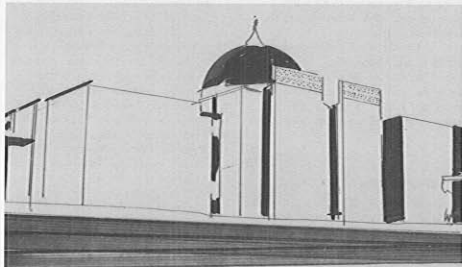
progress. The Islamic Medical Association has recently explored the possibility of providing free medical care for Muslims in the United States, tapping the resources of the thousands of Muslim doctors in various areas of the country. In some places this is already taking place. Doctors belonging to the Quincy Islamic Center, for example, provide members with free medical care after the Sunday prayer. And in the Hartford area Muslim physicians have offered free services to the inner-city community on the provision that the city provide some structure for a clinic.

The Islamic Party in North America, begun in 1972 at the Masjid-ul-Ummah in Washington, D.C., stresses solidifica-

tion

primarily an indigenous Muslim group. Another organization is the Council of Masjid in the United States, with offices in New York City. Primarily concerned with encouraging the building, furnishing and maintenance of mosques, the council fosters cooperation among mosques in the United States, between mosques in this country and those in other parts of the Muslim world, and with headquarters in Mecca. It attempts to protect all United States mosques from being taken over by deviant groups, while encouraging local mosques to secure funds for care of buildings, salaries of Imams and general operating expenses. Like the other Muslim organizations, it encourages the spread of an Islamic consciousness and supports the educational, social and benevolent activities of local mosques.

Also organized in the 1970's was the Council of Imams in North America. This council places persons serving as Imams of mosques in touch with one another so as to coordinate religious holidays, provide publicity on publications concerning Islamic subjects, and exchange information about the roles that their respective mosques are playing in individual communities. The council serves as a bureau for the coordination of speakers on Islamic subjects and, through its Committee of Legal Advice, provides legal help and information to Muslims who encounter problems. Present members of the Council of Imams are: Dr. Muhammad Abdul Rauf, Director of the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C.; Shaikh Muhammad Jawad Chirri, Director of the Islamic Center of Detroit; Imam Vehbi Ismail, Director of the Albanian Islamic Center in Detroit; Abdul Mun'im Mahmud Khattab, Sarnia, Ontario; Dr. Adil Al-Aseer, Director of the Islamic Center, Columbus, Ohio; Dr. A. Muhsin El-Biali, Director of the Islamic Center of Southern California; Imam Kamil Y. Advich, Director of the Islamic Cultural Center of Greater Chicago, Northbrook, Illinois; Dr. Alaeddin Kharafa, Director of the Islamic Center of Toledo, Ohio; Dr. Husni Gaber, Director of the Islamic Center of New York; Shaikh Abdul Ghafur Al-Barakani, Director of the Islamic Center of Dearborn, Michigan; Shaikh Othman Abdul-Salam, Director of the Islamic Center, London, Canada; Imam Muddathir Siddiqi, Director of the Islamic Center of New England, Quincy, Massachusetts.



The Islamic Center of New England, Quincy, Mass.

underway to construct a national headquarters in Plainfield, Indiana, where the central office is now located. The new buildings will include an Islamic center, a mosque, a library, a gymnasium, an auditorium, and administrative offices for the M.S.A. and its subsidiary organizations such as the Islamic Teaching Center and the North American Trust.

Three organizations formed by alumni of the Muslim Student Association are the Islamic Medical Association, the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers, and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, all professional organizations that hold regional and national meetings. Academic papers on cogent topics and on the pressing needs of the time are read in the effort to provide a modern and relevant perspective from within the Islamic context. The basic aim of all of these organizations is to give Islamic guidance on educational, economic and political

tion of a core of Muslims dedicated to the teaching and propagation of Islam. Its members study classical Islamic texts as well as the writings of contemporaries such as Sayyid Qutb and Abul A'la Mawdudi. Its internationally distributed journal, *Al-Islam*, is dedicated to daawah and instruction in what it sees as Islamic solutions to social, economic and moral problems. In addition to distributing free literature, the party provides communal services such as counseling, both domestic and personal, offers halal (properly slaughtered) meat at reasonable prices, and sponsors projects for feeding the hungry. Through its own economic system it is able to provide resources for its members, whose affiliation with the Islamic Party is based on individual commitment and a concern for the welfare of the Muslim community in America. Unlike other organizations, mainly composed of immigrant Muslims, the Islamic Party is



Islam and the American Blacks

Historians believe that many of the slaves brought to this country from East and West Africa were Muslims who were forced to convert to Christianity by their masters. Conversion to Islam by blacks was evident at the turn of the century. Among the early black Muslims was Noble Drew Ali, "prophet" of Islam, born Timothy Drew in North Carolina in 1886. Noble Drew Ali founded the first Moorish-American Science Temple in Newark, New Jersey in 1913, and later started other temples in Philadelphia and Detroit.

was the religion of the white man, Islam was the religion of the Asiatics, and each nation should have its own religion.

When Noble Drew Ali died in 1929, his followers split into several groups. Some have continued to be faithful to his teachings, while others joined the movement begun by W.D. Fard in 1930 in Detroit. Fard's movement was led by Elijah Muhammad, who assumed the title of Messenger of God. In the initial period, Fard was perceived as an incarnation of the Divinity who had come to lead his people out of the

vert to Islam at the time of the Prophet). Now officially called the World Community of Islam in the West, this group is identifiable in doctrine as a continuing entity and is separate from other groups of Afro-American Muslims in the United States.

Until 1975, when the leadership of the World Community of Islam in the West was assumed by Wallace (Warith) Deen Muhammad, the community was perceived as an American sectarian religion that contained Islamic trappings but lacked validity. Its doctrines, its worship as well as its racist assertions were seen as un-Islamic. Since 1975, the movement has been accepted as one within the fold of Islam. Its tenets have evolved to agree with the teachings of the Qur'an. Doctrines defining God as black and dismissing whites as devils have been changed with the explanation that the former ideas were necessary transitional beliefs because of the brainwashing the blacks underwent as slaves.

No other group has been as effective and successful in this country as the World Community of Islam. From the beginning Elijah Muhammad insisted on total commitment from the converts, as evidenced in a dramatic separation from previous habits and associations. The convert was expected to cut ties with his former friends and to devote himself to the study of the new faith. This was designed to instill pride in the self based on superior knowledge and sense of heritage. Besides the emphasis on individual redemption, which stressed moral living and ethical conduct, the convert was integrated into a caring brotherhood that provided him with a sense of belonging, of support and sustenance against a hostile world. Furthermore, the group instilled a sense of national and international identity that endowed the believer with a purpose in life. He became a means for the redemption of society through the power of God. As a member of God's community the con-



Imam Muddathir Siddiqi, shown here with his wife and an American Muslim, directs the Islamic Center of New England, and is one of the few Imams trained in Islamic studies in the Middle East as well as the United States.

Blacks, he said, were "Asiatics." He also insisted that "for a people to amount to anything, it is necessary to have a name (nation) and a land." He called on all blacks to refuse any affiliation (such as blacks, colored, Ethiopians or Negroes) save that of Asiatics, Moorish or Moors. While Christianity

wilderness. Hence the early name "the Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America."

The group's name continued to change from the Lost-Found Nation of Islam to the Nation of Islam and the American Bilalian Community (in reference to Bilal, the first black con-

vert to the World Community received a profound sense of personal worth.

Elijah Muhammad's emphasis on moral living, on the acquisition of wealth through hard work and on a middle-class lifestyle in which the members were expected to respect one another, increased its appeal among upwardly mobile individuals and those who experienced painful discrimination. Black women have been taught to respect their husbands as responsible providers, and the black males are expected to treat females with special regard. The W.C.I.W., in distinguishing between Islamic education and the

traditional white American educational system, has established 46 universities of Islam, which give instruction to children through the high school level.

The history of the World Community has had some stormy moments (especially in relation to Malcolm X) and some schism has occurred (particularly after the death of Elijah Muhammad and the assumption of the leadership by his son Wallace). Several mosques have continued their adherence to the doctrines of Elijah Muhammad. Since 1975 Wallace has developed the teachings of the W.C.I.W. on the premise that mature members who have been

weaned from subservience and restored to human dignity are now ready for the whole truth. Wallace Deen Muhammad is now recognized by Muslim countries as a true Muslim.

Immigrant Muslim organizations such as the Muslim World League and the Muslim Student Organization in the U.S.A. have provided training for the ministers of the W.C.I.W. Copies of the Qur'an and other Islamic literature are distributed free to the members. The estimated two million members are listed as indigenous Muslims in all reports about Muslims in the United States.



Islamic Practice in America

The establishment and growth of Islam in the United States has followed the familiar developmental patterns where a faith is brought into a new homeland by immigrants. Such patterns exist in the penetration and spread of Islam to fringe areas of the Muslim empire (such as Africa and Indonesia), that have not been conquered by Muslim armies and where individuals have maintained the faith without the support and supervision of an Islamic government.

A "portable" faith, Islam is not hampered by the necessity for clergy, sacraments or specified structures. Therefore in the initial stage of its establishment in the United States, as in other areas, it remained a personal faith of the individual immigrant or trader. As the community grew, immigrant groups established corporate prayer to serve their spiritual needs. This was followed by efforts to recruit teachers in order to provide religious instruction for their children. In time, Islam became the religion of certain indigenous groups, specifically black Americans who found liberation and rebirth through its teachings.

In other areas of the world, the initial growth period of Islam reflected "mixing" or acculturation, as the new converts applied their old religious heritage. The followers of Elijah Muhammad, for example, retained a substantial amount of Biblical and Christian forms, including lengthy ser-

mons filled with Christian apocalyptic references. Pews kept in the masjids (mosques) impeded the proper performance of the prescribed Islamic ritual prayer.

Other mixing occurred as immigrant Muslims borrowed forms from local inhabitants. During this period, immigrant Muslims saw the role of the mosque imitate functions of denominational churches, such as those of social and cultural centers. Not only were weddings and funerals conducted at the mosques, but American patterns of fund raising (primarily by women) through mosque bazaars, bake sales, community dinners and cultural events were adopted. Occasionally even folk-dancing in the basement of a mosque brought young people together in fellowship.

Also reminiscent of Christian practices was the passing of the collection plate during the Sunday meeting to supply funds for the maintenance of the mosque. Despite the specific injunction against usury in Islamic law, bank loans with interest were taken out in order to finance the building of the mosque structure. Acculturation also extended to methods of administration, when, in "congregational" fashion, elected committees assumed the right to hire and dismiss the Imam or prayer leader.

The role of the Imam in the larger mosques has taken on new dimensions

dictated by the new realities of the American milieu. Administration and maintenance of the mosque have united with his traditional duties of leading the community in prayer and providing guidance through preaching and Qur'anic exegesis. As the ambassador of the Muslims to the community at large, he frequently lectures in churches and schools about Islam.

The Imam has also become the family guide and counselor, a function precipitated by the needs of a minority attempting to adjust and integrate into American culture. The predominance of nuclear families in America has led to undue pressures on the spouses who are used to the counseling of parents and friends; the multiplicity of lifestyles, with no clearcut societal definition of acceptable behavior, further accentuates the pressures on those families.

Interfaith marriage, especially in cases where the woman does not convert to Islam, has led to deep strains on the marital relationship. This is particularly true in the area of the religious education of the children. The liberal Muslim father who advocates and practices tolerance tends to become more inflexible when the religious instruction of his children is involved. (Islamic education for children was given first priority by parents in two different surveys conducted in 1973 and 1977.) The Imam thus plays a primary



The Islamic Center of New England

Muslims began to arrive in the Boston area around the turn of the century, when seven families from Lebanon settled in Quincy. Muhammad Omar, one of the early settlers, reports that the community formed the Arab-American Banner Society in 1930, whose goals were to provide social as well as religious solidarity for the group. They purchased land in the hope of building a center for prayer and social occasions, but were unable to raise enough funds to construct a building. In 1961, 35 members of the second generation, anxious to preserve their Arab heritage by teaching Arabic language and culture to their children, reactivated the Arab-American Banner Society. A fund drive was started and a building was completed in 1964.

Gradually the number of Muslims increased, as did the activities at the mosque. By 1971, an addition doubled the size of the original building, providing both office and library space for the mosque. Now known as the Islamic Center of New England, the group places new emphasis on Islamic affiliation that transcends all ethnic and cultural identities. The Qur'an is recited in the original Arabic, also the language of the prayers.

Boston's central location has enabled the Quincy center to serve the six New England states. It is the headquarters of the New England Islamic Council which includes: Masjid Li-Hamdullillah, Roxbury, Mass.; Massachusetts Institute of Technology Islamic Society, Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Islamic Society, Cambridge, Mass.; Boston University Islamic Society, Boston, Mass.; Worcester Islamic Society, Worcester, Mass.; Fairfield County Islamic Society, Stamford, Conn.; Amherst University Islamic Society, Amherst, Mass.; and Northeastern University Islamic Society, Boston, Mass. Not included in the N.E.I.C. are several other mosques in the New England area.

Muslims from the six different states



A Sunday school class makes miniature prayer rugs from paper strips.

come to Quincy for services and seek advice regarding religious matters. Between 100 and 300 persons attend the religious lecture on Sunday. It is estimated that there are between 5,000 and 10,000 Muslims in the Northeast, of whom 3,000 are students, professors or technical trainees. The mosque thus attempts to help them preserve their Islamic identity, while promoting religious consciousness.

There are 30 nationalities represented at the center, including Turks, Arabs, Chinese, Albanians, black Americans, Pakistanis, Indians, Indo-

nesians and many others. The center provides the opportunity for corporate prayer, but also functions as an educational center. It runs a Sunday school for about 150 students and 7 teachers. Courses in Arabic language, culture and history are taught in an adjoining public school. The students then gather at the center for religious instruction in Islamic life, e.g. how to pray, fast and pay the tithe. Students are also instructed about the life of the Prophet, and are taught to memorize the Qur'an and given lessons in its exegesis. The Imam of the center performs wedding

ceremonies and makes funeral arrangements. The community does not have its Muslim cemetery as yet, but would like to purchase land for one.

The women of the Islamic community in Boston are quite active in the life of the center. Their Ladies Auxiliary Committee assists in the Eid celebrations and raises funds through food and bi-weekly bake sales, rummage sales, bazaars and monthly dinners. Monthly religious discussions are held in homes by the Auxiliary. The women are also active in the administration of the center; several of them have been elected members of the Board of Directors. Women attend the khutba services where they worship in the back of the room, but do not lead the prayers or give lectures on Islam.

The center provides instruction in the Islamic life through such activities as special lectures and training members in the correct method of Qur'an recitation. Monthly meetings, held in the homes of members, consider topics dealing with living an Islamic life in the United States. The center also reaches out to the community, presenting Islam to other

out into the community to preach Islam. Center-produced radio and television programs about Islam have been aired locally. Free books and pamphlets are distributed to prison inmates. The center publishes a newsletter, which discusses matters of concern to Muslims on the community, national and international level.

Sunday is the day of most concentrated activity at the mosque. Prior to the lecture, an adult discussion group is held in the basement, with topics of concern suggested by the members. The discussion usually focuses on problems of living as Muslims in the United States. The group sits at two long tables, one for males and the other for females. The Sunday the author attended, all the women wore scarves on their heads, although no one covered her face. The first question raised concerned the need for women to cover their hair. Imam Siddiqi informed the group that Muslim women are asked to do this because the Prophet Muhammad said that women should not reveal their hair. They should wear long sleeves and dresses long enough to cover their ankles, he said. Hot pants and

to the context of marriage.

Discussion then focused upon proper male attire, with the implication that Islam might be discriminating against women. The Imam said that Islam forbids men from wearing gold, silk and long capes. Islam is against ostentation and arrogance. Men are not to look at women while talking to them, but rather to avert their eyes.



Muhammad Omar with his great grandson.

Imam Siddiqi further added that Islam is against waste and extravagance. People should not eat out of golden plates. The Qur'an teaches that all the possessions human beings have are gifts from God. They are a trust, not to be wasted or squandered.

A question was raised about the fairness of the Islamic form of justice, i.e. whether the punishment is excessive. The Imam explained that Islam urges the building of upright character. Those who deviate from the path are punished with what befits their crime. Islam has a standard form of justice; it does not cater to rank or wealth. The administration of justice is rendered equally to all those deserving. This, he said, reflects the Qur'anic teaching that all human beings are accountable for their deeds. They will also be judged on the day of resurrection. There is no intercession; those who do not repent will be cast in hell, while the righteous will enjoy eternal felicity in the garden of paradise.



Muslim Youth Organization members help serve refreshments after the service.

Americans. Children from area schools visit the mosque to learn about the teachings of Islam. The Imam as well as other members visit area schools and colleges, giving lectures about their faith. Center members serve as hosts of missionaries from other areas as they go

low-cut necklines provoke sexual excitement, leading to lust and indulgence prohibited by Islam. The Imam felt that female exposure of parts of their body leads to their exploitation as sex objects. Islam teaches men to honor and respect women and it restricts sex

role in both helping families resolve some of the problems attendant to these concerns, and in providing the kind of Islamic education desired by many Muslim parents.

In the smaller and more recently established societies, the role of Imam is assumed by the most learned man in the congregation. Sometimes he is the one most thoroughly versed in Islamic traditional learning; other times he is the person who has earned the highest academic degree. Both forms of leadership may exist in one congregation, so that one leads the prayer while the latter preaches the sermon or becomes the president of the executive committee.

Since the beginning of the 1970's there has been a return to normative Islam, sometimes referred to as reform. Efforts are made to purge Islam of innovations accrued over the years and to eradicate unnecessary and un-Islamic patterns of acculturation. This phase was facilitated by the influx of highly educated immigrants, totally committed to Islam as a way of life.

The dramatic rise in the number of Muslims in the United States during the last decade has heartened followers who remember a time when Muslim holidays went by scarcely noticed or observed. The celebrations in the various mosques and organizations have added a new dimension to the growing sense of dignity, identity and purpose of the Muslims. S.S. Mufassir, on the occasion of the American Bicentennial, wrote in *Islamic Items*, "But the technocratic, cybernetic society which has put to death the false God of man's making has failed to render Islam irrelevant. Islam has survived in the very heart of the industrialized West, and has pushed forward with indomitable spirit without apology, compromise, assimilation or mutation."

This affirmation reflects the growing belief of Muslims that they have a purpose and a message for mankind. This assumption of mission in the United States is nurtured by Muslim scholars from India, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia who travel throughout the country proclaiming normative Islam, and by various local Muslim organizations committed to daawah (mission) and supported by mission funds from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Libya and Pakistan.

Professor Ismail al-Faruqi of Temple University, an internationally recognized Islamic leader in the United States, introduced Wallace Muhammad to the Plenary Session of the American

Academy of Religion in 1978 with these words: "In America, Islam is contending anew. It is contending for men's souls, as well as claiming that it supplies the answers to the very social and religious problems besetting America. The social problems of America are well known—racism, nationalism, the disintegrated family, promiscuity, alcoholism. Well, Islam contends that it has radical solutions to all these evils."



Worshippers in the New York City area gather in the Manhattan Center to observe Eid-al-Fitr, one of Islam's most significant holidays.

This does not mean, however, that Islam has an easy task in the United States. Very few immigrant Muslims attend mosque services on Sunday. Those who do are roughly estimated between one to five percent.

The early immigrants faced grave problems establishing Islam. Mostly uneducated and unacquainted with American bureaucracy, they felt discrimination in their jobs as well as in their efforts to erect houses of prayer. Zoning laws obstructed them. They found themselves unable to teach Islam to their children for want of materials in English. Even today college courses on Islam pass through alien filters. A recent study of five universities where Islam and Middle Eastern subjects are taught showed that out of the fifty-three professors teaching in these fields, only four were Muslim.

It is almost impossible for Muslims to fulfill the duty of praying five times a day at prescribed times, including noon and early afternoon, without facing ridicule or pressure from their peers. The author is aware of one Muslim who lost his job because he was performing ablutions (the ritual cleansing necessary before prayer of such parts of

the body as the hands, feet, elbows, ears, face and head) in the men's room. Prayer also necessitates a clean area with no pictures or portraits hanging on the walls.

Muslims are expected to join other believers in the communal prayer on Friday, an impossibility for many. Consequently, corporate prayer services held on Friday are often attended by the old and the unemployed. All mosques hold Sunday services, which

are only alternative meetings and do not replace the efficacy of Friday worship.

The two most important holidays of Islam, Eid-al-Fitr (celebrated at the end of the month of fasting) and Eid-al-Adha (observed by Muslims worldwide at the end of the hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca to join the whole community of Muslims in renewed dedication to the worship of God) are not recognized holidays in this country. Muslim students are not excused from classes, nor are workers given a day off to participate in these celebrations.

The dietary laws of Islam forbid the consumption of alcohol, of pig and of improperly slaughtered meat. Muslims are expected to eat halal (meat from an animal that is not stunned but properly butchered and bled with the name of God recited at the time of slaughtering). Although some urban areas have butchers selling halal meat, and other Muslims use Kosher meat reciting the proper phrase on it before consumption, most Muslims have no access to it. The use of lard in most baked goods makes Muslims wary of consumption of prepared foods. (Recently, it has been revealed that buns

used by McDonald hamburger chain use lard and are therefore not to be consumed by Muslims.) Furthermore, it has been found that pig enzymes are used in processing cheese. Efforts have been made to isolate the brands that use these enzymes in order to guide Muslims in their choice of food.

The practice of Islam in the United States is hampered by American civil laws which are different from Islamic laws governing divorce, alimony, child custody and support, marriage, inheritance and adoption. Islamic law is derived from the teachings of the Qur'an, which define God's way for mankind. Thus, by living in America and adhering to American law, the Muslim may be forced to accept judgments that contradict the will of God.

Muslims often see overindulgent American culture based on materialism as going against the Islamic ethos. The Qur'an teaches that man was placed on the earth to administer it for God. The emphasis on consumption and planned obsolescence is paramount to mismanagement of resources; the goals of individualism and personal gratification jeopardize the Muslim teaching of corporate commitment and responsibility. Individual satisfaction leads to exclusiveness and discrimination which are contrary to the revelation of the Qur'an affirming that all people are brothers and sisters. The only way one human being can excel over another is in piety and devotion to God.

Muslims experience a great deal of prejudice in the United States. In addition to general public ignorance about the teachings of Islam, there is an accumulated heritage of mistrust that has lingered since the Crusades.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has led to several myths perpetuated by Zionist interests about Islam and the Muslims. For example, R.E. Tyrrel in the journal *Masada* (Vol. 9, No. 1, 1977), published by the American Zionist Youth Federation, says, "Arabs are not like Philadelphians, nor are they like Frenchmen, nor even Israelis Arabs are devoted to a non-Western warrior religion Whatever the case the Arab draws his blade with gusto and when he is finished butchering he is always that much closer to Allah." The author further maligns Arabs living in the United States when he states, "All in all the Arab, especially the pious Arab, makes a most unpleasant neighbor."

Well-known philosopher, Ayn Rand, on a Phil Donahue show aired June 12,

1979, dismissed the Arabs as a collection of "savages" who are "racist" and who oppose Israel because it brings industry, technology and intelligence into the area.

A letter by Dr. M. Siddiqi to the *Washington Post* protested Joseph Kraft's article which claimed that Islam "cannot run the affairs of people who want and need to modernize." Dr. Siddiqi wrote: "To the narrow and limited mind of the writer the only way to modernize is to follow the footsteps of the West. The author bewails that Islamic leadership does not permit adultery and promiscuousness as some Christian leaders have done (by allowing female public exposure, dating, easy mixing, pre-marital 'games,' extramarital relations and open marriages, homosexuality and unisex marriages)."

A "Sixty Minutes" program on Arabs in England entitled "The Arabs are Coming, the Arabs are Coming" not only generated fear, but also portrayed the Arabs as spendthrifts and their women as "chattel." Other programs characterize Muslims and Arabs as cunning, cruel, weak, decadent and untrustworthy. Still others show them as gluttonous, scheming and crafty with insatiable sexuality. None take note of the fact that the rate of divorce in Muslim countries is only a fraction of what it is in the United States. Studies have shown that social science textbooks as well as Sunday school materials maintain all of these stereotypes.

Islam has faced other problems in America. A logistical problem arose as Muslims dispersed throughout the United States. Only where chain migration occurred in places like Cedar Rapids, Detroit, and Toledo were the Muslims able to organize religious institutions. The present emphasis on unity in diversity, as an attempt to hold the community together and avoid fragmentation, has succeeded, due to the fact that most of the new immigrants are highly educated and that English is used during sermons and lectures.

The lack of involvement of many Muslims in the United States with the mosques reflect the fact that they are mostly Westernized and secularized. A great number of them have opted to live in this country, as one Muslim leader put it, "because they are dazzled by its affluence and want to participate in it." A great number of them would find better positions were they to return to their home countries, but the choice they have made leads them to seek

integration into American life.

Political tensions between various Arab and Muslim countries surface once in a while in community gatherings. In former days, this led to a ban on discussions on political and doctrinal topics. With the reassertion of normalist Islam, emphasis is put on the eternal nature of Islam. There is no American Islam, or British Islam, or African Islam—only Islam as willed by God for humanity and as revealed in the Qur'an. Periodically, rivalries for position or influence lead to factions and schisms. Various groups vie for power. A few have sought aid from overseas, thereby exaggerating their numbers and the scope of their influence.

The Qur'an teaches that women are equal to men before God in responsibility. There are differences between the sexes based on the functions for which God has created them. The male is created for work and to provide for the family, while the woman is responsible for the home and for the raising



Women read the Qur'an and participate in prayer at the back of the mosque.

of children. Her functions as teacher, guide and loving companion are essential for the proper care of the future generations. The division of roles and responsibilities guarantees equity for the spouses, as they complement each other in the tasks for which they were created.

Women are expected to cover their hair and no part of their body should be evident besides the face, the hands and the feet. This is to limit temptation to lust and to curb sexual arousal. Decent attire helps maintain the dominance of the spirit over human activity. Sexual indulgence outside the marital context is sinful and the offenders must be severely punished. Only if morality is maintained and virtue is made paramount in human life can society be preserved from disintegration and chaos.



Islam's Future in America

Islam in the United States continues to grow through three means: conversion, immigration and birth.

Conversion provides a cadre of Muslims committed to normative Islam, asserting the necessity of Islam's governing the totality of behavior in the social, economic, political, cultural, educational and religious aspects of their lives. Historically, converts have made the best advocates of faith. For them, faith is not just the verbal affirmation of the believer's understanding of the teachings of Islam, but involves all aspects of the practice of the Islamic religion.

Conversion in the United States appears to be highest among women who marry Muslim students and among prison inmates. Generally speaking, converts come from the lower class and lower middle classes. In recent years an appreciable number of highly-educated Americans have found in Islam the answer to life's quest.

Interviews with converts have revealed that they are most influenced by the persistent emphasis on a moral life and by the experience of corporate life. Islamic ritual as well as the encouragement to steadfastness despite rejection, tribulation and hardship were rated very high as factors that led to conversion. Also cited was the emphasis on decency and strong family ties.

The previous record of the second and third generation and a substantial number of Westernized immigrants points toward the possibility of the development of an American Islam, influenced by Western culture serving the social and personal as well as the religious needs of the community. This Islam, although emphasizing and maintaining group solidarity and corporate responsibility, ascribes faith and commitment to a private relationship with God. It refrains from pronouncements on religious and political topics, and does not actively seek the conversion of others to the faith. It functions under the ethos of tolerance and ascribes a number of normativist Islamic pronouncements on social, economic and political matters to cultural influences, believing they are not mandatory in the American context.

Non-Westernized new immigrants have formerly functioned as conservative agents maintaining the validity of the home culture and restraining others from innovative changes. (Normative Muslims consider innovation as apostasy.) The number of future immigrants as well as the nature of their commitment to Islam will no doubt influence the road Islam may take in the United States. Should a substantial number immigrate from among those committed to national rather than

Muslim identity, as in the most recent immigration from Iran, and should they be willing to subsidize the Islamic organizations, we may witness a shift to an Islam which is less normative and more willing to acculturate.

At present, most members of the Council of Imams in North America are foreign born and foreign educated. They are charged with interpreting Muslim law for Islamic living in the United States. Although individuals among them have developed creative interpretations, they all continue to assert normative Islam: That the message of God continues to be the same. As He provided Adam with guidance on how to live in commitment to His purposes, He continues to demand total allegiance to His way. His message is the same yesterday, today and forever.

The Islamic experience in the United States is a challenge. It provides an arena where Muslims from all over the world can meet and work together on a continuing basis. It offers the opportunity to live an Islamic life, to cooperate, to transcend all national, linguistic, ethnic and racial differences and create a truly normative Islamic community based on the will and commitment of the believers.

Book Views

Middle East Mosaic study, based on the Interdenominational Education for Mission Theme for 1979-80.

Four publications have been prepared for this study. They are reviewed as follows:

Sojourn in Mosaic

By Robert A. Elfers, Friendship Press, Incorporated, New York, 1979, 88 pp., \$2.95.

I suspect that there are some among the intelligentsia who will not appreciate this book for the simple reason that it is not tedious non-fiction. The fact is, however, that it is packed with the kind of information an Education for Mission book should contain, but the data are unfolded in the course of an absorbing novel. The book will beguile those who are still child enough to love a mystery and romantic enough

to love a love story, for it is both, and, while he is telling his story, Mr. Elfers takes us through Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel via the most exciting missionary outreach in each country.

The tale, you see, is about Amon Smith, a young widower who has been engaged as a kind of sleuth to find the beautiful daughter of a wealthy American who has lost his dissident child to who knows what new culture

because of his insistence upon holding her fast in the security of the wealthy American establishment. Amon, no doubt, is not the first pursuer to fall in love with his quarry, but that is all of the story I intend to tell. Much of the interest and suspense depend on the reader's curiosity about Amon and Mary, so I will not ruin it by divulging what happens in the last chapter.

The book communicates three things: (1) The political, economic, and religious conditions of the countries visited; (2) the state of Christian churches in the Middle East; and (3) the ecumenical gatherings in each country of those Christians who are determined to identify the extremes of human need to which they seek effective ways to minister.

The "child" in me likes to play, but this book commands the respect of the "adult" in me also. I like to have information communicated to me, and there is much information here. I wish I had been given more information about the polity, doctrine and history of the various churches to which the author alludes, but, within the scope of eighty-eight pages and a charming story, one cannot have everything.

The book is stronger on political history than economic analysis, and the latter may very well be the more critical issue at this moment in time. Even so, I think that here again I am in agreement with Mr. Elfers for the simple reason that the American people need to know the political history he presents. In a disarming way he has debunked the myths regarding the warrants for Israel's existence and behavior.

There will be those who will quarrel about the book's lack of balance. The Zionists have not been given equal time, but this book is about the Middle East mosaic of which Israel is a minor fraction. Besides, the Zionist perspective is presented adequately in the media. *Sojourn in Mosaic* has integrity as it stands. Those who read it will enjoy it as they learn.

The World of Islam

By John B. Taylor, Friendship Press, New York, 1979, 56 pp., \$3.95.

In the sub-culture in which I grew up I was presented the stereotypical perception of "Mohammedans," a term the use of which exposes one's ignorance. Muslims, according to the stereotype, are unwashed nomads who resist modernization and oppress women. Islam's thoroughgoing monotheism was

great and occasionally envied by those who grew weary of defending the doctrine of the Trinity, but the moral injunctions of the Qur'an were barbaric, so we thought. I grew up thinking that Islam was demonstrably inferior to Christianity and that missionaries had only to "tell it the way it is," and the poor, benighted Muslims would rush to embrace the obvious truth.

Imagine my surprise when my professor of missions said that Muslims are among the most difficult to proselyte to Christianity. He said that, if they converted, they would have the same feelings an Episcopalian has when he becomes Methodist. Then I discovered that the Muslim Empire extended from India to Spain and North Africa, and that of all the countries in that empire only Spain defected from Islam. Also, I learned that more than half a billion people—one sixth of the world's population—are Muslims, and not all of them were conquered by the sword, hardly any converted by the sword, and none were compelled by the sword to remain faithful. And so I grudgingly admitted that Islam has something that commends it to its adherents, and that is what John B. Taylor writes about in *The World of Islam*.

The first thing that commends Islam is its monotheism. Muslims are rigorously monotheistic and convinced that submission is the proper human stance before God. God is Lord, and we are His servants. This is the basic conviction of Islam and is summed up in the simple creed: "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God." This simple statement affirms a universalism grounded in faith in one God and Father of us all.

The second thing that commends Islam, according to Dr. Taylor, is the Holy Qur'an, the recitations of God's messages to humanity given to Muhammad, from one part and another of which the "Five Pillars of Faith" are derived. These are the duties of persons to God or ritual acts of faith, including the simple creed, prayer, giving of alms, fasting and pilgrimage. Beyond this primary concern for the God-person relationship, the Qur'an lays down the principles that are to guide personal and social behavior. That is why an Islamic nation is feasible and, perhaps, in some instances, desirable. The basic guidelines of community life are provided in the Holy Qur'an.

The third thing that commends Islam, the author says, is its capacity to unite pluralistic groups into cohesive

communities. The rapid spread of the Muslim faith across an empire reaching from India in the east to Spain and North Africa in the west was the accomplishment of military genius, but the welding of such an empire into an integrated administrative unit was the accomplishment of the power of Islam to unite peoples. The unifying forces in this faith were allegiance to God, Islamic jurisprudence, and a recognized orthodoxy. Taylor's book clarifies for the lay person the rather complicated interrelation between religion and politics in Islam.

In addition to lifting up the salient and distinguishing features of Islam, *The World of Islam* gives a brief overview of its history. The last chapter looks at the Muslim's faith in terms of the varying aspirations of the three basic schools of thought, i.e., the traditionalists, the modernists, and the secularists, and points out the need for interfaith cooperation in the Middle East to facilitate the finding of solutions to large political and economic problems. Fortunately, both Christians and Muslims are more open to interfaith dialogue today than they have ever been in modern times.

The book is simple, concise and easy to read, for it sustains interest. It succeeds in introducing the essentials of Islam. Dr. Taylor has prepared for lay persons a brief guide to Islam, and I am excited by the prospect of this book being read widely throughout the Church.

Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, A Christian Perspective

By Cranford Pratt, et al., Friendship Press, New York, 1979, 61 pp. including study notes and biographical information, \$2.75.

This book left me alternately elated and outraged. If I were not largely in agreement with the final conclusions, and, if I did not appreciate the information it contains, I would have held a one-book burning for what appeared to me to be untenable opinions.

I suppose the apparently contradictory statements grow out of the complex and ambiguous subject under consideration. Also the book seems to have been the work of a committee, and high moral committees that are committed to their task will endure a large measure of contradiction in order to achieve the final purpose. The coherence and singleness of purpose of

this book is extraordinary for a group effort. One can imagine the trading of points that went on in order to reach a final unified conclusion. Surely many of the opinions expressed had less than unanimous support, but I would bet that every point represented a consensus. Individual chapters are not ascribed to individual authors, indicating that the report is, in fact, a committee effort, and while I take vigorous exception to some of its points, I will not be snide and say, "Like the camel, it looks like the work of a committee." If the occasional weakness was the committee's need for consensus, the overwhelming strength of the book is that it made maximum use of the resources of the committee which resolved its internal tensions in a wise and factually supportable final statement.

The reader may have surmised that I disagree with some of the opinions expressed in the book. For one thing, it seems to me that the book sets up a "straw man" and proceeds to knock him over when it rejects the notion that "... the Arab struggle against Israel is a liberation struggle against a regime imposed during the period of Western imperialist dominance in the Middle East." (p. 37) Most who are familiar with the facts would not formulate the historical report in these terms and would agree with the committee in rejecting this thesis. The committee, however, moves from rejection of this dubious historical interpretation, which was developed more to support liberation theology than to discredit Israel, to the unwarranted conclusion that therefore, "Israel should be viewed as a legitimate Middle East state rather than a colonial remnant . . ." (p. 38) The creation of the state of Israel was of such dubious legality in 1947 that there was considerable sentiment in the United Nations in favor of submitting the proposal to the Court of International Justice prior to the action partitioning Palestine. One may view Israel as a legitimate state today without condoning the way in which it came into being. In fact, I suspect that most Arab states will be willing to acknowledge Israel's right to exist when Israel is ready to observe appropriate moral and legal restraints.

Another point at which I became uncomfortable with the book was its seeming contradiction in asserting on the one hand, "... the Jews had strong and legitimate claims to Palestine," (p. 40) which seems to imply that acting on these claims was legally and/or

morally acceptable, and to state, on the other hand, "The historical and religious claims of Israel cannot obliterate the rights of these Arabs." (p. 41) These two statements strike me as mutually exclusive. It is a fact of history that, in the process of acting on their claims, the Zionists did, in fact, obliterate the rights of the Palestinians.

While I support the book's final conclusion about the need to provide for Israel's security needs in order to arrive at some final settlement, I cannot give priority to this less than primal need over the Palestinians' primal need simply to exist as a people with some recognized identity. The book deplors the intransigence of the P.L.O. in refusing to recognize Israel as a legitimate state, but it fails to chide Israel for its official policy of denying the existence of the Palestinian people.

I also do not agree that "The judgment of the United Nations in 1947 that the social and political realities of Palestine required its division is as valid today as it was thirty years ago." (p. 46) I might agree that it is more valid today, but I cannot agree that it was valid thirty years ago. It seems to me that there were some reasons for it, but more against it. Speaking of the Palestinians, the committee observes: "Their suffering is real, their grievances well-founded, their aspiration to a national homeland legitimate." (p. 42) And what is their basic grievance? It is that, when the Jews in Palestine represented one-third of the population and owned only one-eighth of the land, world Jewry had enough political clout to persuade the United Nations to partition Palestine against the will of the overwhelming majority of the population. That was a tyranny of a powerful minority over a politically impotent majority. The present day Carter campaign for human rights condemns such behavior in South Africa, and, yet, the authors applaud the 1947 U.N. partition of Palestine! They reject the claim of Jews to a "... more solid basis than Palestinians to claim total sovereignty over . . . Palestine on historical, religious, legal or political grounds." (p. 43) In the absence of such priority, how could the U.N. partition be justified?

If one is impatient with the book's equivocation, he/she needs to consider that this book will be read by a public overwhelmingly and irrationally disposed to favor the Israelis and despise the Palestinians. To get a hearing by the American and Canadian public the

book must demonstrate that the authors have listened without bias to an expression of the beliefs, value systems, and feelings of both sides. One may become exasperated with the Committee's attempt to be all things to all people, but only extreme partisans will accuse them of not making an effort to present both sides with fairness. To me, the chief weakness of the book is that it bends over backward to be fair to both sides—which is probably the main reason for its potential effectiveness.

Conflict or Community: A Guide to the Middle East Mosaic

By David H. Bowman, Friendship Press, New York, 1979, 47 pp., \$2.75.

This leader's guide for the Education for Mission study, Middle East Mosaic, is an excellent and essential book for anyone responsible for planning this year's course of study, for the Mosaic study is perhaps that most complex and most exciting ever proposed under these auspices.

In addition to some helpful background material dealing with the major dynamic forces in the Middle East, there are two suggested course plans, one for an intergenerational group and one for a children's group.

Users of this guide are urged to pay special attention to the article on "Zionism and the Jewish Religious Tradition" and the one on "Jerusalem's Islamic Calling." Notice that Rabbi Hertzberg does not insist that anyone believe that God has covenanted to restore Palestine to the Jews. He says that the Jewish claim is based on the fact that Jews have felt an attachment to the land. Arabs, on the other hand, argue that Palestinians were for thirteen hundred years the indigenous population, and the land was their property. The property rights of the Palestinians have been ignored, hence the indignation of the Arab world. As a Christian, I deplore the way in which Palestinian rights were ignored by Americans, the United Nations, and the Zionists. At the same time, my Christian conscience will not permit me to engage in or condone any attempt to remove the Jewish population in Palestine. Some way must be found to serve the cause of Palestinian nationalism and to compensate Palestinians for their losses while at the same time guaranteeing the security of Israel. This is the dilemma at the core of this study.

Reviewed by O. Kelly Ingram

Books To Order

New Selections

Simha Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*. Croom Helm (London) 361 pp. \$24.95. Spells out Zionist views on the Palestinians prior to 1948 by outlining assumptions shared by most Zionists. In spite of differences within the Zionist movement, these assumptions continue in the present. Our price, \$15.50.

For Middle East Mosaic series, Friendship Press (see Book Views, pp. 12-14, for descriptions):

David H. Bowman, *Conflict or Community*. 47 pp. \$2.75. Our price, \$1.85.

Robert A. Elfers, *Sojourn in Mosaic*. 88 pp. \$2.95. Our price, \$2.00.

Alan Geyer, ed., *Peace, Justice and Reconciliation*. 64 pp. \$2.75. Our price, \$1.85.

John B. Taylor, *The World of Islam*. 56 pp. \$3.95. Our price, \$2.60.

Uri Avnery, *Israel Without Zionists: A Plea for Peace in the Middle East*. Macmillan Publishing. 278 pp. \$1.95 (paperback). A remarkable description of Israeli politics, as presented by a member of Israel's Knesset and the sole representative of a party that believes in the transformation of the Jewish state into a pluralistic and secular one that is able to achieve reconciliation with the Arabs. Our price, \$1.70.

Robert B. Betts, *Christians in the Arab East*, rev. 1978. John Knox. 318 pp. \$12.00. A comprehensive study of the Arabic-speaking Christians and the role they have played in the Middle East from the time of the Islamic conquest up to present day developments. Valuable demographic statistics and a comprehensive bibliography included. Our price, \$7.75.

Thomas A. Bryson, *United States/Middle East Diplomatic Relations 1784-1978: An Annotated Bibliography*. Scarecrow Press, Inc. 219 pp. \$10.00. A guide for students, scholars

and libraries. Classified into units according to era. Treats relationships between various Middle Eastern and North African countries and the U.S. Well-compiled for easy reference. Our price, \$8.05.

John H. Davis, *The Evasive Peace*, revised 1976, Dillon/Liederbach Inc. 136 pp. \$5.95. Factual background to present Arab-Israeli dilemma, with a prescription for peace in Middle East. Our price, \$3.60.

A.C. Forrest, *The Unholy Land*, Devin-Adair Co. 178 pp. \$3.95 (paperback). The author's personal, informed and uncompromising stand against what he considers to be imbalanced and distorted news coverage of the human tragedy brought about by the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. Our price, \$3.60.

David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, Faber & Faber. 367 pp. 6.50 pounds. Aptly subtitled "The Roots of Violence in the Middle East." In tracing these roots, the author explodes a number of myths about both Arabs and Zionists. A carefully researched and documented account. Our price, \$8.05.

Alfred Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection: What Price Peace?*, Dodd, Mead & Co. 800 pp. \$20.00. Covers the Arab-Israeli conflict from the time of Herzl to Camp David. It treats the subject from every angle. It is well-documented; the research involved is monumental. Contains much information of which Americans are mostly unaware. One authority has said that it should be read by every responsible citizen in the West. Our price, \$12.85.

Anthony Pearson, *Conspiracy of Silence: The Attack on the U.S.S. Liberty*, Horizon Press. 179 pp. \$9.95. An account of the Israeli attack on the Liberty during the June 1967 Middle East War and the ensuing lack of publicity and information. The author

believes it was not an accident, as the Israelis claimed, and gives reasonably certain conclusions as to why the attack took place and the reasons for the cover-up. Our price, \$6.85.

Ephraim Sevela, *Farewell, Israel*, Gateway Editions. 295 pp. \$12.95. The author's disenchantment with Israel, which he had thought would be the fulfillment of his dreams, is emotionally expressed in his treatment of what he calls Israel's "racism" and the disintegration of the world's Jewish communities. Our price, \$8.10.

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Dramatic cost increases in paper, printing and postal rates have caused us to reexamine this policy. We considered a mandatory subscription fee, but were reluctant to lose any of our readers simply because they could not afford it.

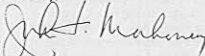
Instead, we are initiating a voluntary subscription fee, which would be tax deductible.

A.M.E.U. requests from readers who can afford it a gift subscription of \$5.00 a year.

The funds are needed. And with your tax deductible donation you will be making it directly possible for us to maintain and increase our circulation.

On behalf of Americans for Middle East Understanding, its directors and staff, I thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



John F. Mahoney
Executive Director

A.M.E.U.
475 Riverside Drive
Room 771
New York, N.Y. 10027

Americans for Middle East Understanding:

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A.M.E.U. is incorporated as an educational organization in the State of New York and all contributions are tax deductible.

The Link aims at maintaining contacts among Americans who believe that friendship with the people of the Middle East is essential to world peace, who would contribute to this goal by spreading understanding of the history, values, religions, culture and economic conditions of the Middle East, and who would—in this context—press for greater fairness, consistency and integrity in U.S. policy toward that area.

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All correspondence should be addressed to Room 771, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10027. (212) 870-2356.



Americans for Middle East Understanding
Room 771, 475 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y. 10027