

*Shadowland*

Islam: 600 Years Too Late

Burt Jones

One of my dearest friends in college long ago was an exchange student from Morocco. He was a Muslim. I had never heard the word. He was a gentle, pleasant soul, well liked by everyone. He gave me my first glimpse into a religion that would jolt the world decades later. What a difference between the Islam described to me by my college friend Muhammad and what I see today.

Have you ever wondered what today's Muslims believe and how they view the world? As of 2007, the latest figures estimate that there are more than two billion Muslims worldwide, growing at the phenomenal rate of four hundred percent per year! With such diverse cultures as Africa and North America, it is difficult to generalize an answer concerning their views and beliefs. The Koran is the book of guidance for all Muslims. Although many credit the Koran as having been written by their prophet Muhammad, devout Muslims accept the strangely majestic literary form as it was directly revealed to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel (Surah 53:1-10). It is our hope that this brief overview of a very complex religion will provoke the reader to delve into the deeper wells of Islam and seek the Truth regarding this foreign religion.

The major players in this religion, leaving a trail of blood from its earliest days until the present are Shi'ites, Sunnis, Kurds, and Watenabes. The latest participant in this Middle Eastern drama is the United States. One could say that there is Iraq, America, and a hard place, positioning America figuratively between Iraq and a hard place.

**Does Islam Promote Terrorism and Violence?**

An influential Islamic cleric said that even if the terrorists were driven by an intense hate of the West, they ignored the basic rules of engagement, which expressly prohibit the killing of non-combatants, women, children, the elderly — even trees! It forbids suicide (suicide bombers?). In short, they are not supposed to kill innocent people. Instead, radical Muslims appear to this writer to have memorialized several Qur'amic verses and cited them selectively and incompletely for their convenience. Islamic

extremist doctrine seems to be a combustible brew of crude Puritanism and ethical and moral irresponsibility.

### **The True Status of Women under Islam**

From 1996 until the end of 2001, the country of Afghanistan was under the control of a regime called the Taliban — a word derived from *Talib*, or religious students. What is not commonly known, and was passed on to me by a dear friend with knowledge of the Middle East, is that the most vicious and cruel Taliban leaders were mostly young Islamic scholars trained in *madrassas*, or religious schools, located in Pakistan and funded in part by Saudi Arabia.

This group's psychotic obsession with female chastity, virginity, and modesty has rendered many Muslim men incapable of viewing women as equal and worthy companions. When confronted with the issue of the suppression of women, Muslim clerics insist that Islam has been misunderstood. They blame tradition and tribal laws for the low status of women. Some scholars agree that Muhammad did proclaim some rights for Muslim women. For example, he abolished the pre-Islamic Arabian custom of burying alive unwanted female infants. He also **graciously** decreed that women could own and inherit property, and that women could, from that time forward, enjoy sex with their husbands.

Space does not permit the listing of the flagrant inequalities toward women in the Islamic world. Suffice it to say that, from *Sharia: Islamic Law* —(female genital mutilation, to the law against the education of women), it makes one wonder just how long the world will continue to tolerate this gender apartheid in the Islamic world and it still persist in calling itself civilized.

### **Islam — the Shape of Things to Come**

Many Muslims look to the long history of Islam to find clues about the future of this urban religion. Muslims have divided the world into two parts: *dar al-islam* (The House of Peace) and *dar al-harb* (The House of War).

Over the centuries, Western-educated elites who shunned Islamic law modeled their governments and economics on secular and Western ideas. These developments have left present-day Muslims with

various ideas about which direction they should take. I would suggest that there is a **great** Islamic field white unto harvest. **Where are the laborers?**

The words of some American Muslims may help us to more easily approach these individuals, not as terrorists, but rather as friends and neighbors who are lost and need the Gospel:

“I must return to the land of my fathers and rebuild and wipe the tears from the eyes of the orphans.”      --an American Muslim from Detroit

“I will work with all my strength to reclaim the religion I once knew which has been stolen by imposters.”      --an American Muslim student from Washington, D. C.

It is my hope that every Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and all those of different religions will ask themselves: “Where is the Old Testament of my religion?” “Where are the prophecies of my religion?” “But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord!!