



Articles Provocative and Challenging

Rory,

Provocative and challenging articles in the last issues. Put me down for a steady reader. Two years subscription enclosed.

Warmest regards to Ralph Winter.

Al Hammond

Excellent Contribution to the Cause

Dear Friends,

I have just discovered that my subscription will end with Vol. 23:4. I order to renew this for the next

two years . . . May the Lord enable Dr. Winter and his creative team to carry on the good work that has been an excellent contribution to the Cause. Blessings to all!

Sincerely yours,

Arthur F. Glasser

Issues Not Ours to Decide

To the Editor,

It seems to me that some of the contextualization debate, particularly that about C4 vs. C5, needs a bit of perspective. We debate about their self-identity, their participation in Islamic rituals, and their conceptualizations of who Muhammad was. Have we noticed that we are talking about their expressions of the common faith, not ours?

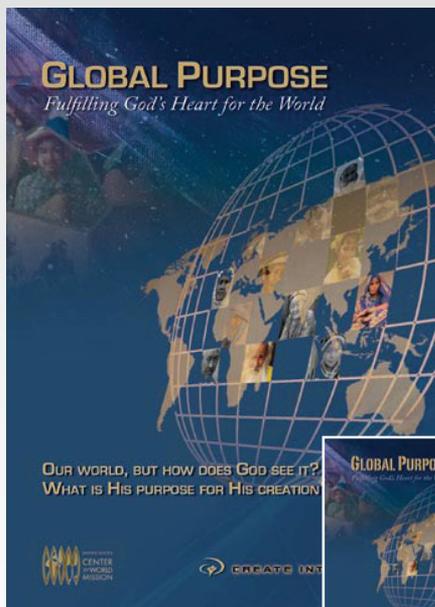
I tried to imagine what it would be like to read an article about Chinese house-church leaders deliberating the

theological accuracy of current Church trends in the US. Just how would I feel about that? At the very least, I think I would question what role the Chinese, as outsiders, really hoped to play in our internal affairs. This would not invalidate their criticisms, but it would put them in perspective.

Our deliberations about how faith in Christ should be expressed in the Muslim world are on about this same level. Even the field practitioners in this dialogue (myself included) do not, and never will, completely understand what it means to be raised in the Ummah, but now follow Jesus.

So far our new brothers and sisters have been gracious and seem to honor our role as their "elders" in the faith. But sometimes I wonder if given the chance would they remind us that these issues are not ours to decide. What we are really talking about is the

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nature of the Christ-centered communities that result from our mission efforts, and that is something that ultimately needs to be settled by those who are themselves members of those communities as they attempt to live Biblically authentic lives within the Islamic world.

It is possible that this is the beginning of a great move of God in the Muslim world, one that will result in a new stream of Christianity developing. But if it is, then we must realize that the shape it takes will be largely beyond our control. We in the world mission community have the privilege of having a part in this, but that part is quite small.

I realize that I am not offering ideas for solving the thorny missiological questions raised by this blessed moment. But I do think this small reminder might alter the trajectory of the ongoing debate among missiologists.

Nevertheless, this is a wonderful discussion and I am thankful to the IJFM staff for getting it into print where many of us in the field can benefit from it.

In His grace,
Gene Daniels

Editorial Bears No Resemblance to Reality

[Editor's Note: For ease of reading, Ralph Winter's comments are interspersed throughout the letter instead of appearing at the end. Further, Dr. Robinson's letter was slightly edited and sections relevant to the editor's response are underlined.]

To the Editor:

After reading [your] recent editorial, "What No One is Saying About the Palestinian Gridlock," I expect I will

be forgiven for wondering if Festus' words to Paul do not here apply, "Your great learning is driving you mad." The main reason "no one is saying" what [you] here put forth is that it runs counter to every historical, humanitarian and moral reason for the existence of the State of Israel. In short, it bears no resemblance to reality either in its historical statements or in its proposal.

Winter: Thanks very much for your response. I am at the moment high up over the Atlantic returning from an international conference of mission leaders in Turkey. It was a triennial meeting of the Asia Missions Association. It is interesting that half of the entire population of Turkey was forcibly repatriated to Greece in the early 1920s (if they survived at all), even though Greece had occupied the area for many centuries.

Also, I am mindful that the United States was founded by godly people choosing to leave rather than fight, and it has worked out well. The Amish have moved again and again, never taking their new land by force. That too has worked out well, hasn't it?

Winter: Mad? Yes, I would certainly be worthy of being accused of madness if I had not anticipated alarmed responses such as this one. But people sometimes need to be stirred in their settled thinking by other points of view. In this case a huge amount of human suffering is the issue. It is not merely a philosophical question if you really care for the Jews.

It is not even necessary to argue from a divine right to the land, or as [you have your] hypothetical respondent say, "There is no other Holy Land." That would be a worthwhile discussion. But on the grounds of history and morality alone, the editorial is full of

sweeping mischaracterizations and misstatements.

The land was not "seized" by four million Jews. There has been continual Jewish settlement in the land from time immemorial up to an including the 19th-21st c. Lands often changed hands by sale, not by seizure. When the Arab states refused to accept the proposed two-state partition of the land, and Israel did, the Arab response was to wage war. The "seizure" in reality reflected both an apportionment of the spoils of war by the major European powers, and a provision for a humanitarian, secure Jewish existence as advocated for by the Zionism movement.

Winter: Yes, "often." But extensively by seizure. See *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* by Ilan Pappé, reviewed in this issue of IJFM on p. 163.

Where did the European powers gain the necessary authority to "apportion" the land? And how cruel it has turned out to be when this was to be a "secure Jewish existence"!

[Your] characterization of the acceptance by Jews of the land is also wildly off the mark. [You] compare it, unbelievably, to someone accepting \$10,000 from a bank robber. The reality is that the two-state proposal was done in a fair and internationally accepted way in the aftermath of a world war, on behalf of a persecuted people who were offered a homeland after being denied one for centuries, a people of whom one-third were exterminated in the Holocaust.

Winter: "Internationally accepted"—yes—by all the irrelevant parties. The second decision (beyond "giving" the land), namely to erect a two-state situation, was certainly not approved of by both parties. It was absolutely unilateral. The European injustices to the Jews are horrifying

and terrible, but can hardly justify the seizure of someone else's land. Can anyone claim that the Arabs in the land would have agreed to the situation today? And, more germane, can anyone claim that the Jews would have tried to settle where they are had they foreseen the present?

The remark that should Jews become a minority within a Muslim (read, Palestinian) country, "they would not like that," is perhaps the mother of all understatements. Hamas refuses to recognize Israel and the stated intent on the part of several Palestinian groups is to see that Israel retains none of the land. Anti-Semitism reigns in Palestinian textbooks and calls to destroy the Jews en toto have become familiar. Perhaps the reason that Jews living under Palestinian overlords "would not like" it is because there might not be any left to like anything at all.

Winter: All the more reason to get out. At least we agree that the inevitable future of a Muslim-majority Israel is not attractive. So?

[Your] "solution" to the problem of [your] own making is to ship out the Jews of Israel to Australia, or as [you] call them, "the Jewish element in Israel," a disconcertingly xenophobic-sounding phrase. Well, not exactly. [You] envision a voluntary move whereby the Jews would ship themselves out. Never mind that this conjures up visions of the forced expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290 and from Spain in 1492, or the semi-voluntary wanderings throughout Europe. The suggestion itself is so patently naive as to have absolutely no possibility of ever happening, except as a rhetorical device to underscore [your] belief that the Jews are in Israel as a "huge mistake."

Winter: If I spoke of something voluntary, how accurate is it to compare what I said to the harsh and unfair "forced expulsion" of Jews in Spain?

"No possibility"? Is it not already true that a large number of Israelis have already chosen to leave? Do you even know how many? All I am saying is that they might better not just flee but head for a truly "secure" homeland. Also, how many Jews in the USA are quite deliberately, with their eyes wide open, choosing NOT to go to Israel, and, for the very same reasons, others are or could easily leave?

[You] think the Middle East should be reapportioned with lands "seized" returned to their allegedly proper owners, and ask "Why should the Middle East be different?" I wonder what [you] are prepared to do about the U.S. seizure of Native American lands—a real, uncontested seizure, not a revisionist reading. Or about the arbitrary establishment of states like Pakistan or Afghanistan, or African nations, that were cut across tribal lines at the whim of colonial powers.

Winter: Am I not precisely objecting to such "whims of colonial powers"? Because it was done before should such behavior continue?

As an antidote to [your] revisionist history and fantasia of a proposal, I suggest Alan Dershowitz's *The Case for Israel* as a useful place to start to learn the background and realities of the current situation.

Winter: Would Dershowitz really contest the facts I have cited? Again, I suggest you read Pappé's book. And would Dershowitz approve of tens of thousands of Puritans and Scandinavians, etc. leaving their justly owned lands in Europe to be able to live in peace?

Incidentally, the western half of Kansas is very thinly populated and both houses and land are quite inexpensive. It is just that a lot of the land in Australia might be cheaper.

Appreciatively,
Ralph Winter

Sincerely,

Dr. Rich Robinson
Senior Researcher
Jews for Jesus