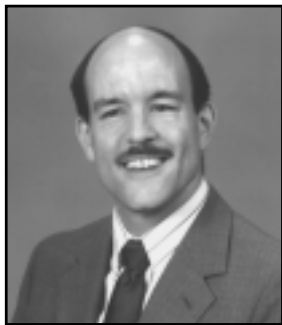


MF Behind the Scenes

Rick Wood, Managing Editor



The World Awakens to One of the Many Faces of Islam

On September 11, 2001, the American people and the world received a devastating wakeup call. The world awoke to the stunning brutality of Islamic terrorism. This phenomenon has been around for some time—Israel has battled it for the last 53 years of its history. There have also been sporadic attacks on U.S. interests as well.

But now Islamic terrorism has taken on a new magnitude of maliciousness with the mass murder of over 4,000 innocent civilians. This was the most deadly attack on the U.S. in its history.

In the midst of our grief and attempts to heal from this tragedy, we all struggle to understand what this all means for us and the world. What impact will this have on Christ's mission to reach all peoples—especially Muslim peoples?

Many are struggling to understand Islam and what part Islamic terrorism plays in this global faith encompassing 1.2 billion people. Is this the start of a titanic battle for world domination between the faithful followers of Muhammad and the infidels of the West, as Osama bin Laden has characterized current events? To what degree does bin Laden represent the masses of Islam?

In this issue we seek to answer a number of these questions and to

help you understand the many faces of Islam. See the articles starting on page 10.

Few would disagree that there are tens of millions of Muslims and their Islamic leaders who share the same beliefs as bin Laden. But there are also many more millions of Muslims who do not. To a significant degree Islam is in a fight for its own soul and the whole world has a vested interest in who wins the battle.

All Christians and civilized nations must now come together with moderate Muslim nations and their religious leaders and denounce this violent form of Islamic theology and declare that this is not true Islam and that violence in the name of Allah will not be tolerated.

The civilized world also needs to take a firm stand for religious freedom and the right of all people to freely choose and practice the faith of their choice without compulsion. This is an issue that goes far beyond Islam. Religious persecution is rampant in our day.

On September 11th we felt the painful consequences of largely ignoring the Muslim world. For most of the last five centuries since the Protestant Reformation the Church has done relatively little to bring the Gospel of Christ to the Muslim peoples of the world.

It is time for the Church to renew its efforts to reach out in love to the Muslims in our midst and to those around the world. But is the Church serious about going to the Muslim world? George Verwer has said, "The problem is not in finding enough missionaries to go. The problem is finding enough Christians and churches willing to send them." I have often heard many Christians complain about the high cost of sending missionaries. But now we

can all see that the cost of not sending them can be ever so much higher. The civilized world has declared war on terrorism. Now it is up to Christians to tear down the strongholds of Satan that have held the Muslim peoples in bondage for hundreds of years. It's time for us to set these captives free.

Moving On

For the last 12 years I have had the tremendous privilege and honor of serving as the managing editor for *Mission Frontiers*. I have had the joy of reporting on the progress of global efforts to reach the unreached peoples as well as the impact of the AD2000 Movement. Since 1993 this column has appeared in each issue of *MF* with an overview of the critical issues facing the Church. I hope that my thoughts and passions reflected on these pages have been a challenge and an inspiration to you to become more actively involved in reaching the unreached. But my time with *Mission Frontiers* has now come to an end. As of January 15, 2002, my ministry with *Mission Frontiers* will be complete.

I will be moving on to work with Luis Bush, the former director of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. I will be the administrator for a global survey of Christian leaders from around the world. This survey is designed to help us hear what God is saying to His people regarding world evangelization in the hope of fostering a new vision for world evangelization. I will have an e-mail conference and a website to distribute the results of the survey and to foster discussion. If you would like more information on this new ministry, please e-mail me at rickwood@xc.org. Thanks for the memories and keep up the good fight for the Kingdom.

For His glory,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Rick".