

REACHING OUT

No. 3 in Focus on LEM series

Focus on LEM

No. 1 Lebanon at the Crossroads

2 Lebanon on the Highway

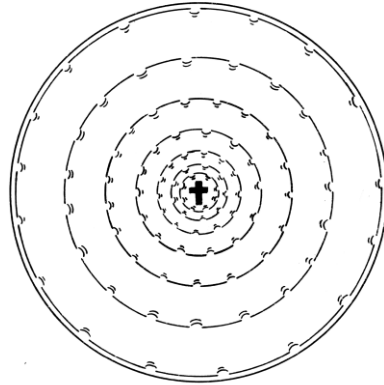
3 Reaching Out

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THE RIPPLE PATTERN

LESLIE de SMIDT



What is the pattern of our missionary endeavour and vision?

Throw a crust of bread into a quiet pool, and silently and almost imperceptibly, the motion of ever enlarging circles disquiets its tranquil surface. Throw yet another and another, each point source radiating the message of its presence in ripple after ripple, meeting, interlacing, forming new and intricate patterns on the water's surface as they move out towards each other.

On the cover of this book and at the head of this article is the symbolic representation of this "Ripple Pattern" which has emerged as the strategic concept of the LEM. The Arab world can be pictured as a vast pool of human spiritual need where the depths are centred on the Middle East and the shallows reach out to almost all the world — on the one shore Canada, South America, Britain and Europe, and on the other shore South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Lebanon, the strategic heart of the Arab world is the centre from which the missionary task force could reach out into the whole area. Men and women are needed who will help minister the "Bread of Life" in and from the centre of action in Lebanon, through evangelistic outreach, literature publication and distribution, radio programming, educational and university evangelism and other church centred activities. After learning Arabic and being integrated into LEM life and thinking, some of these will move out into surrounding lands such as the United Arab Emirates in the Arabian Gulf, and Yemen along the Red Sea (both of these countries being open to ex-patriate endeavour at this time).

The Lebanese Evangelical Society, the national daughter society of the LEM, came into being to be the missionary arm of the Evangelical Churches of Lebanon. Arab missionaries are beginning to be sent out by this society to other Arabic-speaking countries. Students come from all parts of the Middle East into Lebanon for their education. If these were to be reached for Christ, what a missionary force they would be, returning to their own lands.

Thousands of Arabs are now migrating to the west and there they are released from the social pressures that restrict their freedom of response to the Gospel. Some of these migrants are themselves committed Christians and are seeking to win their fellow migrants for Christ. Arab evangelists from Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt are visiting them from time to time in the countries of their adoption to assist in this task.

Recently the LEM has become involved in plans to reach these Arab migrants in the homelands. Retired missionaries and others are seeking to reach them in the cities of the western world. Others are needed who are called of God to this work, firstly to spend a few years in Lebanon studying Arabic and the Arab culture, in order to return to work among the Arab migrants in their own lands. For such a widespread area of service,

every person with whatever qualifications and expertise he may have, will find a deeply satisfying and fulfilling opportunity for serving the Lord among the Arab people of the world. So the ripples move outwards in ever increasing circles.

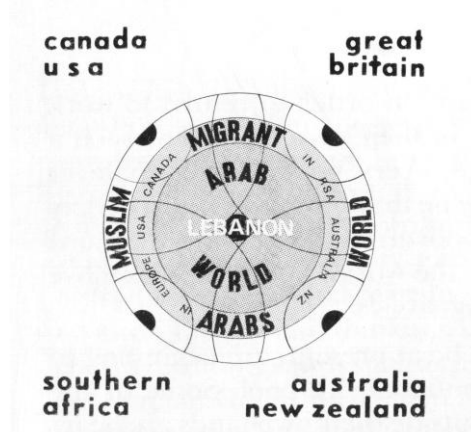
Ripples, faint though they be at present, are beginning to move back towards the centre of the pool. Some of the Arabs reached for Christ outside their own lands are being moved with a desire to train for missionary service in order to return to the Middle East, from Britain, USA and Australia. A movement which could increase and be effective under God.

This whole concept is seen clearly in the New Testament, it is the pattern Christ Himself followed. Christ, the Bread of Life, plunged into this needy world and set in motion the ripples of human compassion reaching out, first in the Seventy and the Twelve, and then after Pentecost in the thousands who came to the feast. So the Gospel has spread to all parts of the world.

Missionary endeavour is not the prerogative of the West; it is the divine imperative and dynamic of the Church of Christ, His body, from its inception, whether it be in Jerusalem in Palestine in the first century or in the Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula in the twentieth century. These younger churches in their outreach are having a refreshing impact upon the jaded palates of the religiously overfed West.

As we contemplate this vision as it is unfolded in the following pages, may the Spirit of God open the eyes of our understanding and move our hearts to respond to the call for action.

OUTREACH STRATEGY DOUGLAS ANDERSON



In recent months fierce battles have raged in the area of Mt. Hermon on the southern Lebanon border, for this strategic mountain — one of the highest in the whole Lebanon, Syria, Palestine region — is a key position for the command of this sector of the war zone.

Over twenty years ago, in days when the troubles of war were still confined to the more southerly area, Les de Smidt and I set off from Hasbeya in the Hermon foot-hills, very early one morning, for the long winding climb up this historic mountain, thought by many to be the Mount of Transfiguration. The higher we climbed the more breath-taking became the view, but nothing we saw on the way up prepared us for the scope of the panorama that spread out below us once we had reached the top some nine hours after we had left the Mission house in Hasbeya. Hermon's summit rose, like a great lonely cone, above all the surrounding peaks and on all sides there was an uninterrupted view of land and sea — a view that, in the clear air, led our eyes away into distances of Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and over the sea to Cyprus. Here from this lonely summit we commanded a 360° view of the area below, no wonder armies fight for the control of this

majestic pinnacle — no wonder many have looked on this point as the place where Heaven's glory, in the person of Jesus Christ shone through — for all strategy — whether it be on the human level of man's finite plans or on the divine level of God's infinite desires for man's wellbeing — all strategy must be based on that all-over view that takes into consideration every aspect of the work and every angle of the area covered. When we come to such a tremendous task as strategy for outreach in the Muslim World it is of utmost consequence that we are guarded from “piece-meal” planning or unrelated unco-ordinated thrusts in one part of the work or another. It is in the light of such a challenge that all who are involved in any way in LEM work, whether it be in the Middle East, on Home Councils, as Missionary Partners or in the vital work of prayer, must be convinced of and gripped by the overall plan for the work that God is revealing and be willing to subjugate all individual efforts and Submit all personal plans to the overall strategy that our Lord reveals -in the mount-. In spelling out some of the broad outlines that those of us here in Lebanon who are workers with God and with you, have come to recognize as integral parts of this plan I am only reiterating and gathering together what has been written about, talked over and prayed through over a lengthy period. But if we are to translate the vision gained in the heights into practical outreach and advance on the widest possible plans, then we all must make this plan the guiding principle for all our planning, working and praying for LEM work wherever we may be.

1) The Area: The strategy of outreach has led us beyond the confines of Lebanon, and our LEM Constitution now names our field as Lebanon and the Middle East. This is a reality as far as literature and radio ministries are concerned and indirectly through the training of pupils in the schools and teachers in the Training College, but we are still to reach out beyond Lebanon with missionary personnel.

Our sights are set in the first instance on the United Arab Emirates in the Arabian Gulf area and this could well be part of the two-pronged advance as mentioned in the article “The Arab World” in this publication. For this advance to become a reality we must all acquaint ourselves with the areas beyond Lebanon, the challenges, needs, problems and opportunities; we must be able to present these areas to interested candidates and must — on all levels of the work, at home and on the field — be able to prepare prayerfully and financially for what such an advance will mean. It is quite impossible to expand the work to a Middle East sized area on a Lebanon sized vision, burden or financial commitment.

2) Interaction: This strategy of outreach calls for greater interaction between home councils and supporters on the one hand and the field council and the missionaries on the other. Like overlapping circles in a ever expanding work these areas must become more closely integrated. This will call for greater liason and perhaps the expense of occasional International Conferences but it will be crippling to any outreach strategy if there is lack of coordination among the various aspects of the work.

This lack is only too possible when we consider the vast distances that separate our areas of support and the different roles in LEM policy and functioning that the various councils of the Mission have played in the past. But in all new advance the scriptural principle is to “forget what lies behind and press determinedly on to the goal that God sets before you”. This calls for a conscious alignment with the present situation, and a willingness on the part of all to accept the common, overall strategy that can be applied in each local situation. In this context of “Interaction” it is recognized that in many of the “Home-lands” there are large Arab communities which are in need of ministry and there is a wide scope for “missionary” work amongst them which could eventually, as one of its results, be the means of interesting expatriate Middle Easterners in the evangelization of their own homelands.

As this two-phased evangelism builds up we would be in a better position to implement the scriptural teaching of the “Supra-national” church where the family of God in Christ is above national barriers and we get away from the traditional idea of certain countries being the “sending” countries and others the “receiving” countries and also we will be in a better position to counteract a present day teaching which seeks to divide the world up into “areas of responsibility” and “areas of responsiveness” and attempts to limit the activity of Christians in one country to missionary work in certain nearby areas and attempts to concentrate on those areas of the world where there are obvious outward responses which have been termed as “fruitful” or “successful” In the strategy of outreach that can meet Middle Easterners wherever they

are — i.e. in their home territory or as migrant communities in other lands — we would be demonstrating the supra-national aspect of God's programme for His world and in the eventual moving out of Middle Easterners either from their homelands or from their adopted countries both of which are now in their beginnings — we would be encouraging that action which demonstrates our unity in Christ's love which encompasses the world.

3) Co-operation: Outreach today in any given area of the world calls for the seeking out of "like-minds" in Christ's service in that area and the setting up of means of cooperation. It is because of this that the Middle East Missionary Alliance must be seen as much more than a good means of economy and good stewardship on the part of home councils (it is that of course) but it could become a vital means of implementation in this outreach strategy whereby the Middle East is encircled for Christ. Experience, means, plans and personnel are co-ordinated in an all-out drive to present Christ to the millions who still dwell in darkness in the lands bordered in the north by Lebanon and in the south by Eritrea. This co-operation or merging of forces will, of course, also determine the application of strategy in the homelands and will effect the vision shared with supporters, the challenge presented to the Christian public and the nature of the call for recruitment.

4) Recruitment: Outreach strategy into new areas and into new types of work such as the Training Outreach (See Lebanon on the Highway) as well as maintaining the present commitments in educational, literature and evangelistic work will call for a broader and more comprehensive Recruitment Policy. LEM has long been known as a "selective" mission, a name that has frightened some away. In any broadening of recruitment policy we shall have to guard against the loss of potential personnel because we still apply the same list of requirements that have been used when thinking mainly of educational work but we shall need to seek people with the same spiritual soundness and strength of character which fits them for the demanding task of Muslim work, but we must have open minds to consider family from the gulf now rejoicing in Christ people of different skills, educational attainment and general background, without in any way lowering the overall spiritual standards. For outreach strategy we shall need among others "General Missionaries" — that type of Christian servant who can serve God in different ways as the work demands, who can adjust to varying circumstances, who can live with people and communicate the Gospel in love without always having the props of institutional work. We shall need people of adaptability, who will be willing to go far beyond the scope of their specialization in the tremendous task of sharing in the reaching out to one hundred million Muslims in the Middle East.

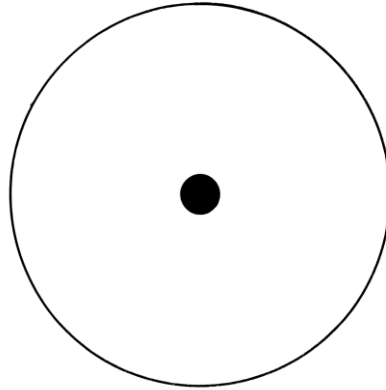
5) Practical Prospects: As the Lebanese Evangelical Society now fully bears the responsibility for former Lebanon Evangelical Mission institutions in Lebanon, missionaries are freer to seek new avenues of service within Lebanon and further afield. We are still firmly committed to helping in the LES work as we are enabled and all outreach strategy recognizes this present commitment but we are already embarked on the plan of secondment to other Christian Institutions in Lebanon and co-operation with others on a voluntary basis, and this is widening the sphere of LEM's influence in Lebanon greatly. This is a very needy area, and there are many calls for both teachers and nurses for outreach in this aspect of LEM's work.

In the Gulf area we are seeking to find means for entry by providing a needed service for the present missionary community which would give the LEM missionaries a reason to be there and a base from which to engage in evangelistic outreach. This plan is now entering a vital stage in its development and we shall need confirmation in the granting of permission, the training of personnel and the provision of a great deal of capital in order to be able to go ahead.

We believe that Lebanon still constitutes the centre for Outreach, but we are also firmly convinced that God has called us to advance in days that are challenging and important for the Middle East. This advance calls for the discernment of the plan given in the mount, its acceptance by all of the LEM family and its determined application whatever the cost may be.

RURAL LEBANON

DR. G.J. JENNINGS



As an anthropologist with many years of field study in the Middle East, the author holds as a working postulate the view that culture is a functional whole, he believes it necessary to understand as much as possible the entire village culture. This holistic view of culture means also that to introduce Christianity quite likely will disturb present cultural integration, but an understanding of the culture will enable missionaries to avoid introducing unnecessary disruptive changes in the cultural whole. Or, where change is inevitable, understanding will help the missionaries anticipate what features and institutions will be most drastically affected. To anticipate probable changes will aid the missionaries to inaugurate alternate or substitute institutional patterns to prevent extreme cultural disorganization.

The village environment

Water is the critical factor in determining the settlement pattern of Lebanese villages, although there are modifying tractors such as arable land and, formerly, security sites for defense against enemies in this area that has seen the flow of armies in an almost ceaseless series of hostilities and armed conflicts. In Lebanon the geologic formation of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Ranges, separated by the remarkable Beqaa, a level valley separating the two parallel ranges, gives rise to numerous springs that are the basis of life for villages along the mountain slopes and foothills. Trending in a northeasterly and southwesterly direction, there are three alignments of villages: (1) the villages occupying the western slope of the Lebanon Mountains overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, (2) the villages that cling to the eastern facing slope of the Lebanon Mountains and overlook the Beqaa, and (3) the villages built on the western slopes and hills of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains overlooking the Beqaa to the west. In most cases the villages are located on rugged terrain near a spring, or springs, and commonly the tilled village lands are located in part in the adjacent lowlands of the Beqaa, or some minor extension of these plains into the surrounding foothills. A trellis pattern of roads reflects the government's attempt to establish transportation links for this parallel arrangement of villages along the two mountain ranges.

Most of the villages trace their history back into the Ottoman Empire at which time Lebanon was neglected mostly because the Empire's leaders focused attention on more productive lands nearer to the capital city of Istanbul. With the coming of World War 1 and the French Mandate, the villages began to be linked more closely with the affairs of the country but, despite this, isolation was generally characteristic except for villages along the route from Beirut to Damascus, and, to a lesser degree, those villages along the coastal route from Tripoli on the north through Beirut and Sidon and Tyre to the south. The Second World War brought national independence to Lebanon and further efforts were to link the villages in the political and economic realms. Not only did trade between the villages and such cities as Beirut and Tripoli increase, but men serving in the military forces brought back to the villages new ideas from the urban centers.

Furthermore, many of Lebanon's villagers have emigrated overseas to West Africa, North America, and South America to expand the villagers' horizons, but though some of these emigrants-returned, there seems to have been minimal acculturation from the travelers' experiences.

Lebanese villagers usually consider their own village as a world apart or a separate entity for a number of reasons. These reasons are intimate and immediate and are heavily laden with emotional attributes. First, the feeling stems in part from the fact that the inhabitants are the possessors, and inheritors of village land; land which is their own possession and guarantees some means of sustenance. Second, the feeling stems from the close inter-network of blood and marriage ties whereby all persons of the village are related to one another by blood or marriage, or a combination of the two. These ties knit persons into a fabric of mutual obligations, one towards another, enhancing the sense of personal and village security, and marking the community off from the larger world. The village society, patrilineal and patrilocal, counts its descent from the first male ancestors who came to the mountain sites. From these male ancestors and village founders stem the village clans. Lineage related to inheritance of village land and interrelation of lineages through introclan marriages strengthens the sense of village separateness and village cohesion. The single Muslim faith (Sunni or Shia) is a further mark of common identity.

This trinity of land, kin, and religious ties dominates and shapes the pattern of village life. The interlocking of land, kin, and religious sentiments is strengthened in turn by a common stock of village tradition and lore. Life in all Lebanese villages is based on the same general sentiments stemming from local, kin, and religious ties, although the outward expression varies in form and intensity in accordance with religious adherence, economic activities, and village location. Back of this body of sentiments which shapes village life itself is the larger geographical and historical picture, which also has bearing on the pattern of village life, although it is not apparent to the villagers themselves, nor does it have the same immediate emotional significance.

The original plan and structure of the typical Lebanese village reveal the sense of the village as a separate entity. The plan and structure likewise reveal the close allegiance of the villagers to their immediate physical surroundings. The village spring, the source of village life, formed the center of the village community. No household lay more than a few minutes walk from this flow of water upon which all households depended. The houses, rectangular in shape, flat roofed, and one story or two stories stepped back against the mountain side, were built of adobe, stone, and cement, mostly derived from immediate surroundings, the flat roof tops being underlaid by poplar poles cut from village groves. However today most houses are of reinforced concrete frames and water and electricity is laid on to each. The household frontages and doorways face downwards to permit a better view of other homes and the fields beyond.

Surrounding the village nucleus are the village lands. Close to the village, so that they may be easily guarded, lie the circular threshing floors, set on flat surfaces open to play of winds. The threshing floors, like the ovens and grape presses, tend to be clan property. Interspersed between the houses, or close to them, lie the mixed vegetable plots and lesser orchards. These are fed by waters diverted from the spring's overflow, each clan having traditional water rights. The proximity of the garden plots to the houses permits each household to keep a watchful eye over the ripening melons and other produce, and allows as well all persons of the household, old and young, to share in the care of them. Farther afield lie the larger orchards of various fruit trees. Situated on the downward slope or on the valley floor are the more extensive fields of barley and of wheat. Commonly the terraced vineyards surround the village or rise above the village on higher slopes, although some vineyards are on lowlands where they can be watched from strategic sites in the village. These garden plots, orchards, fields, and vineyards are the property of village family groups, or individuals within families, their holdings scattered in a number of dispersed plots over the mountain side.

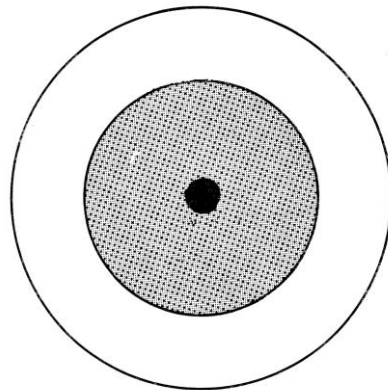
The higher or more rugged stretches of uncultivable land is grazing and fuel-gathering ground. This is communal village property. The garden plots are watered by irrigation trenches derived from the spring's source, each clan jealously maintaining its traditional water rights. Fields are frequently left for a year or more or crops are rotated in order to renew the vigor of the soil. Following the grain harvest, flocks are pastured on the stubble, their droppings fertilizing the ground. The terracing of land both extends the cultivable area and preserves the soil from erosion during the valued rainfall.

No village is self sufficient, however, but each is dependent on the outer world for such food staples as sugar, salt, tea, and coffee, as well as for items of clothing, various household utensils, and farm tools. Each is also linked to the outer world through the tax system, through the district demand for the recording of births, marriages, and deaths, and through the demands for the maintenance of general civil law.

Nonetheless, the villagers conceive of their community as a distinct and separate entity. All village members know the boundaries of their village. All have a strong sense of village loyalty to each other and to their villages as a whole. Personal attachment to the village is closely linked to the sense of security the community affords. Here within the village all persons are known to one another, meeting daily on the village alley-like streets, at the store, or at the spring. A similar close knowledge of persons is not shared with the outer world. From close kinsmen in particular each villager may expect help, especially in times of crisis. The world beyond the village orbit does not possess these close ties of blood. Here, land is owned or land will be inherited, which at all times affords a measure of sustenance. The outer world does not possess a similar guarantee of security since the peasant has no tangible stake in it. Within the village is a familiar world of objects and traditions. The outer world does not possess this familiarity. The village is also a world of persons possessing a single faith, all recognizing the oneness and ultimate rule of God.

The Christian missionary must appreciate that land, kin and religious ties form a dominating unity in the village environment. Rather than attempting to introduce individualistic and competitive notions which characterize Western culture, the missionary must seek to initiate what Donald McGavran calls "People Movements to Christ" (1955). These movements do not mean that Christianization of the village Muslims can disregard reborn men and women. To effectively Christianize the village as a whole, the missionary must not attempt to remove individuals from their social ties to place them into a different society. Instead he must view life through the eyes of the villagers who look upon individual action as treachery. The Muslim villager links his ties with the land, with his kin, and with his beliefs in the supernatural, and all of his problems are resolved by group consideration and decision.

THE ARAB WORLD DOUGLAS ANDERSON



Geographically, the Arab world spreads from North Africa through Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Jordan, Irak, Syria and Lebanon — deserts, lush pasture, long coastlines and mountains. Culturally, it encompasses a great variety of peoples, backgrounds, classes and stages of development. Linguistically, it is united in the use of Arabic, the language of the Koran, as the first language in all official matters and in education, but there are wide differences in the degree of literacy, standards of education and opportunities for higher courses of professional or technical training. Religiously, it is predominantly Muslim, with strong pockets of Christianity in some places and the Druze religion in others.

Politically, the cauldron is boiling with such a mixture of ideologies, theories, opinions and beliefs that there is a perpetual state of tension and frustration. Economically, the area presents a scene of vivid contrasts, flourishing commerce in areas of amazing economic growth along with pockets of hardship and poverty. Being based in Lebanon and having visited various parts of this great, fascinating, challenging Arab world over the past years certain impressions stand out which may help in formulating a picture of the needs, opportunities and strategic position of the Arab world today.

Both Tunis, the capital of Tunisia and Algiers, the capital of Algeria, are large modern cities, well planned and beautifully situated. Treasures of antiquity are carefully preserved and displayed amidst modern office and apartment blocks. The French influence is still marked and it is obvious that many prefer to speak, read and write in French, but Arabic is now being taught and encouraged everywhere. The power of Islam is all pervasive and although the pressures take differing forms in both countries there is still strong opposition to the intrusion of Christianity.

The small group of believers in Christ are hard pressed and constantly watched. The witness is carried on by nationals and missionaries in a way that is both courageous and circumspect. Gospel radio programmes and Christian literature are means that can be used for Gospel outreach but still the desperate need is for freedom in which Christ can be presented personally along with the need for those who are prepared to enter in to make Him known. There would be opportunity for Arab Christians from other lands, notably Lebanon, to travel in the countries of North Africa and for some time the Lebanese Evangelical Society has been prayerfully seeking a national missionary, with a knowledge of Islam and Gospel witness in a strongly Muslim context, who will respond to the challenge of these parts of the Arab world. This need is as yet unanswered and the groups of believers still need shepherding while the great majority still needs to hear the Gospel message.

The Libyan desert is barren, relentless and forbidding as it stretches on into Egyptian territory. But Egypt today shows another picture for even spiritually it is not the barren desert it has so long appeared. Here in Egypt there is rapid change, and there is a general air of friendliness, cooperation and a growing sense of well-being. Although the work and witness of Western missionaries continues to be restricted in this large country, there are deep movements of the Spirit of God in revival within the Coptic Church itself, a movement which under God could lead to great changes in the whole of the Arab world if the flame of revival spread and national Christians again carried the message of peace with God throughout these troubled lands. At present there are reports of two or three thousand people gathering in one church alone in the heart of Cairo for regular Bible Study, a Coptic priest has been wonderfully renewed and is on fire for God and he is now holding evangelistic campaigns where Muslims and nominal Christians are turning to Christ in increasing numbers. There are miracles of healing and a constant spreading of the Gospel witness into new areas of the land. Opposition causes the church authorities to move closer together and give this movement their official blessing.

Egypt is in a state of change in many ways — may the spiritual awakening grow to such proportions that it will be a decisive factor in the guiding of this great nation in such important days. May it also be a vital component in the sowing of the Word of God that will be a prelude to the ingathering of souls for Christ that this whole Arab world so deeply needs.

From Egypt, southward the terrain is mountainous and barren. The heat along the Red Sea is oppressive and the city of Jeddah is covered in a red haze of heat and sand. Jeddah is a city of importance in a land of growing importance, the land of Saudi Arabia. This large, wealthy, fascinating country with royal family, age old culture, deeply entrenched Muslim religion, still bars the way of the Gospel to its villages, towns and cities. No formal Christian witness can be carried out in that great land even today. But the Word of God enters in mysterious ways, through radio, through requests for Christian literature and through the purchase of thousands of portions of the Scriptures by Saudi Arabians who travel abroad. And when the Word of God enters a land there is no telling what it will do. Centuries ago, before the coming of Islam there was a Christian community even in Mecca and throughout the land of Saudi Arabia there were strong groups of Christians among the tribes peoples and in the settled cities and towns. May the day when this is repeated

soon come.

Across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia lies Sudan and Eritrea. The great range of rugged mountains that rise near the coast of Eritrea tower above the inland lowlands that stretch westward to the Sudan border. In this Eritrean province of the Kingdom of Ethiopia groups of God's servants proclaim the Gospel in places of tremendous contrast. The lofty mountains, with their cool refreshing breezes can be places of beauty and fruitfulness where water is carefully stored and used, but the lowlands with their grey, barren soil, large rocky boulders and prickly thorn bushes shimmering in the sultry heat can cause even the strongest hearts to tremble. Asmara the capital is a pleasant city with wide streets, quiet districts and an air of order but in the small towns and villages there are many signs of hardship and poverty and the fear of rebel activity and official reprisal. Dotted over this vast area there are outposts of Gospel witness and by means of schools, hospitals and clinics the servants of Christ are making the Gospel known to the predominantly Muslim population. But then Eritrea has another significant role to play in the over-all planning of Gospel penetration into the Arab world, for it provides an excellent base for teams to go out into lands across the Red Sea and as far as the Gulf, just as Lebanon provides the base in the north for similar penetration southwards into the Gulf area thus providing the means by which the Arab world can be encircled for Christ. Already Arab missionaries have gone from Lebanon to Yemen and the United Arab Emirates and are proving the wonder working power of God in these long closed and newly opened lands.

The Gulf area, especially the fast growing and amazingly prosperous United Arab Emirates, is perhaps the most challenging and complex region for Christian missions today in the whole of the Arab World. Moving with incredible speed from the sleep of neglect, poverty and harsh desert conditions into the vibrance of oil wealth, mechanisation, education and liberation, these independent Sheikhdoms with a centralised administration are poised on the threshold of new experiences, new hopes and new dangers. Great roads span the once trackless deserts, expensive new hotels attract tourists and international businesses are housed in fine new office complexes. Delightful, sincere desert dwellers are bombarded by modern civilisation using every means and medium to influence and win the minds and hearts of a newly awakened people.

Conditions are still hard in some places, Islam is still supreme but Christ is at work and great things wait to be done for Him. In the island city of Abu Dhabi, the capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, a missionary couple from TEAM carry on a faithful witness in this progressive and growing city. They look for reinforcements to hasten the message of Christ and there are doors of opportunity open to us in fellowship with them there. Also in Abu Dhabi, but far inland in the desert area TEAM carries on a successful medical work at Al Ain, and it is there that Rev. Aissa Fakhoury and his wife Jelfa, from the LES are faithfully witnessing for Christ. Here also there is a call for LEM to help in making Christ known. Along the coast from Abu Dhabi in the large, interesting city of Dubai, which is the commercial centre for the whole of the Emirates, there is a present and pressing call for LEM to place missionaries and the possibilities are many for those who will go, prepared to endure the heat and the conditions and by patient buying up of opportunities establish a base for Gospel outreach that can have far reaching effects in the whole Gulf area. From Dubai to Fujaira on the opposite coast of the peninsula, the road is indescribably bad. The road passes smoothly along through desert as far as a beautiful oasis but as it begins to climb the barren rocky outcrops of mountains it becomes steadily worse until it is almost unpassable. In Fujaira the WEC has a small clinic work dealing mainly with maternity cases and manned only by lady missionaries. Back on the other coast and still further towards the tip of the peninsula, bordering on the Muscat territory, a lone Syrian Christian nurse carries on a clinic work and bold witness for Christ. And all around there are people in need, people as yet unspoiled by the fast encroaching materialism and progressive ideologies that are flooding in with every new development. Here is the challenge of an area without Christ, an area with the brave few seeking to reach the still untouched multitudes. Here is the challenge to us not to be too late.

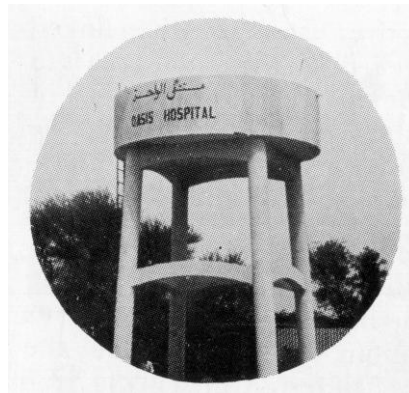
Northward we are compelled to consider other oil wealthy areas such as Kuwait and Bahrein and to know again that Islam is still in control although there is a growing Christian witness. Another Lebanese Christian leader and his wife have gone recently into full time evangelistic work and church nurturing in this area and their presence is a great strengthening to the cause of Christ there. Then the huge area of Irak confronts us

and this land, once open to the Gospel ministry of foreign missions is now closed to them. There is a local evangelical church but it is a church under pressure. A socialist government in a Muslim country makes the going hard indeed for those who would be true to their Master. Jordan, one of Irak's neighbours has felt the effects of war and strife, but now in the capital city, Amman, there is a definite sense of order and purpose. Economically, Jordan faces a difficult task, but there is a determination about its people that speaks well for its future. Spiritually, the followers of Christ also show strength and determination and enjoy a measure of freedom unknown in other predominantly Muslim lands. Jordan could well play a major part in a breakthrough for the Gospel in the Arab world and both national Christians and missionaries working there are carrying on a vital and strategic work for Christ. Syria, which also borders on Irak and Jordan, is a land in the grip on a nagging, constant battle on its southern border and this military pre-occupation and state of preparedness is sapping the vitality of its economy and trade. Here also, missionary work by foreign workers is forbidden but the local evangelical church is quite strong in some parts while in others there is almost no witness for Christ at all.

Lebanon, in the whole of the Arab world, holds a unique position for it is the stronghold for evangelical Christian witness and the centre for education, commerce and culture for the entire area. Its position in the economic and cultural spheres is being seriously challenged as other lands attain higher degrees of advancement. There is often the feeling that Lebanon has had it "too good for too long" and neighbouring countries have been known to cast envious eyes on it. Lebanon is the only Arab country that is not predominantly Muslim as about half of the population is nominally Christian and this is also another reason for the growing feeling that other Arab lands should have a greater share in the prosperity of this tiny independent state. The position of Lebanon in the Arab world today is critical and there is an undercurrent of uneasiness among many of the leading citizens and concerned thinkers, especially among the Christians, that the days of privilege for Lebanon could be seriously threatened. The evangelical cause in Lebanon is strong and there is the beginning of a national missionary movement but there is always the recurring fear that unless revival sweeps through the church in cleansing and revigorating power, the day of opportunity in the Arab world may find many of God's people in Lebanon unprepared for the great task of evangelisation. Lebanon is still the key to the Arab World and still the outreach from Lebanon to the Arab World can be most effective, especially when linked with a similar thrust from Eritrea. But if this whole area is to be reached, if the door is to be opened and a new day of Christian witness is to be seen in the Arab World then the witness in Lebanon, through evangelistic outreach, literature and radio ministries, church building and educational evangelism must be strengthened now.

The Arab World could be on the brink of a new awakening — in many ways the giant is stirring and straining to take its rightful place among the nations of the world, but the witness of the world-wide church of Jesus Christ in the Arab world is not keeping pace with the needs or the challenges. If the giant comes fully awake without the power and peace of the Gospel of Christ, the world will feel the effect of a great, advancing Muslim power. Today is the church's day of opportunity to write another "Acts of the Holy Spirit" in these great vast lands and among the needy, hungering hearts of the peoples of the Arab World.

THE MEDICAL APPROACH LESLIE de SMIDT.



Medical work is a deeply significant expression of God's concern for a sick world, a world in deep need. Christ twice likened himself to a physician. In practice He was a kind of Mobile Clinic moving around the country. Now a clinic or a hospital is a place of healing. This is where the sick people come in their need of help. At the same time it is a centre of healing, for all manner of healing influences radiate out from it, the attitudes, standards and purposes expressed in it affecting whole communities. But essentially hospitals and clinics are people. Without people they cannot exist. A Lebanese doctor has told how he visited the mission hospital in which he was born. Everything was there in the wards and in the operating theatre — but there were no people — no doctors or nurses and so no patients. Years ago it had ceased to be a hospital. It had potential but no actuality without people.

People came to Jesus. The leper came crying, "Sir, if you WILL, you can heal me!" Jesus reached out, touched him and said, "I WILL, be healed!" And he was. Those words, "you WILL ... " and "I WILL...- indicate the centrality of purpose in the healing experiences in life and in man's approach to God as well as in God's response to man.

Christ's purpose was expressed in His healing actions. This active purpose is discerned by people in need and it is in the active purpose of medical personnel towards men in need that the compassionate love of God reaches them.

Down in Abu Dhabi, at El Ain, in the Arabian Peninsula Doctors Marian and Pat Kennedy of TEAM are working at the Oasis Hospital. While visiting there, for the first time in my life I touched a man who had had leprosy. He had no fingers, his hands were rather scaly and as I shook hands with him there was an instinctive revulsion even though the leprosy was arrested. Fancy touching a leper! This miracle of the healing of the leper came so clearly to my mind, for what Christ had done was to touch a leper. He bridged the gulf. The healing touch — man to man — wins for the healer the right to touch the heart of the person. This is the wonder of medical work.

I was deeply impressed while at El Ain by a visit to the desert with Doctors Marian and Pat. As we went amongst the Bedouin encampments there a young girl of about twelve or thirteen came down to meet us. She went up to Dr. Marian and in the most impressively affectionate way greeted her, put her hand on her arm and said, "Come up to our home." This girl had had some kind of in growing boil in her face that they find very difficult to cure. Fortunately, in this girl's case, a cure had been possible. She had been completely disfigured by this boil but here she was just humbly thankful and affectionate as a result of what had been done for her. Dr. Marian had such a wonderfully intimate touch with her and had the right to touch her heart.

Now this ability to touch the body can be used to rescue derelict humanity. Christ said to the leper, "I WILL

heal You." Imagine the loneliness of that leper — it's the loneliness of ailing humanity. The "madness" of Christ was that He healed and healed and healed until His disciples said He was going crazy. He was reaching out to humanity in its distress and its loneliness with the healing touch.

That word the healing touch always brings to mind a doctor or a nurse taking someone's pulse. The light touch of the doctor or nurse on the wrist just conveys something of the meaning of the healing touch. A simple thing and yet there it is. It reduces the loneliness felt — it bridges the gap. It is the touch of one who cares. So here we have something of the purpose of Christ in healing the sick —getting through to hearts. Now think of the paralysed man let down to the feet of Jesus through the roof by his four friends. Christ said to the man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven." Then afterwards He said to him, "Pick up your bed and go home for you are healed." And so he was. Is this the psychosomatic approach to medicine? This question of forgiveness is a central, a unique aspect of Christianity. What is Christ indicating when He says to the man "Your sins are forgiven?" He drives, down to the root of the trouble, to something in the heart of the man that is affecting his health.

Now the experience of forgiveness is in itself healing. There is a deep sense in which a healing work is an expression of God's forgiveness towards man and man's forgiveness to man. This is what it is tremendously important for us to realize. When we are helping people in physical need, when they are experiencing healing as a result of our ministry and service then we are expressing to them directly God's forgiveness towards man. This forgiving attitude is expressed in practical healing work and it gives tremendous significance to the busy routine of doctors and nurses and people in a hospital.

Christ says to this man, "Rise, pick up your bed and walk", and the man does it. The real confidence of the patient and the personality of the healer are deeply involved. Christ imparted to that man confidence to do what He said. A healer must be a man of faith. He must have faith in his ability; he must have faith in the knowledge that he has acquired; he must have faith in the action of the medicine that he prescribes and he must have faith in God. And that is where the confidence, the faith, the trust, gets through to the patient. And this man got up and walked. There was a renewal which was directly related to the sense of forgiveness that was imparted to him whether he realized it or not. Something passes from the healer to the healed. Doctors' and nurses' values are transferred. It is impossible to minister to people in physical need without this transference taking place in some form or another. For in this kind of ministry there is a giving of one's self — a sharing of one's faith whether it is verbalised or not. The action is expressive and frequently conveys more than words do. The doctor-patient relationship become a unique relationship and it becomes a tremendous responsibility because the healer's values are transmitted to the patient in some measure or other. Our faith is a tremendous factor in our healing work.

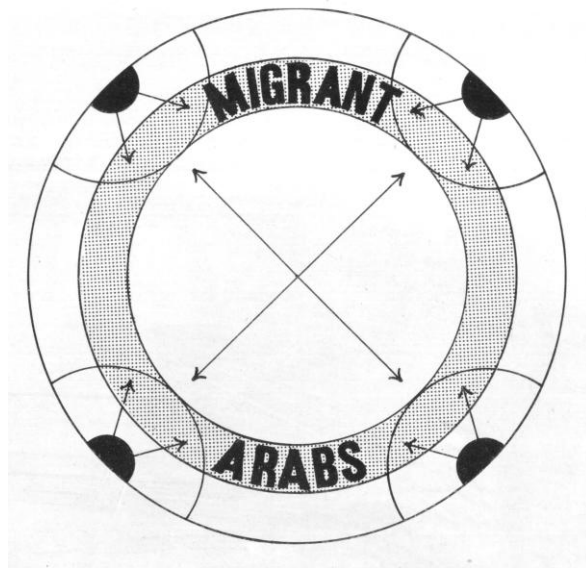
Christ was also deeply concerned for and involved with people in need. So deeply involved was He that when a woman with "an issue of blood" touched Him meaningfully in a crowd He was conscious of it immediately and identified Himself with her. "Who touched me? I was conscious of it in spite of the crowd." There is an amazing responsiveness to people in need here. Why did she want this contact with Him? Certainly she had heard of His healing response to the need of others. His fame and her need had met. She came to Him believing that somehow that need would be met. This is the point in a healing work — the faith of the healer, personal, shared, transferred in and through his work, involves him with the people in need and so an atmosphere of trust is established in which lives can be transformed.

In medical work the issues are life and death. Here's a little girl who was thought to be dead, and Christ came in and brought life. I do not know what it feels like to be a doctor and see people healed because of what you have been able to do for them. I can only imagine that it must be a tremendously satisfying thing. Christ's attitude is that these issues of life and death are of divine concern and so medical people are more directly involved in expressing God's concern to people than anybody else. The saving of life, the healing of bodies and minds which this work involves is a work of God whether it is acknowledged or not. It is an expression of God's attitude towards humanity. And I think it is terribly important to realise this. It is in action that we express the concern of God for people in their need. And it is only in action that our explanations make any sense. And this is why I think a hospital is a place where people are able to give expression to the

attitude of God towards man in his need. It can not be done so well anywhere else; for a hospital is a place of purpose and the purpose is the healing of man in every way.

For these truths, these values and this redemption to reach the people in the Arab world in the depth of their need, medical personnel are needed. Men and women of faith, concerned, responsive and faithful, to be the means by which God's forgiveness and His healing power may be experienced in lives with saving effect. LEM is looking for Doctors and Nurses who can fulfil this kind of service in the lands of the Arabian Peninsula where the door is open NOW.

Migrant Arabs Aubrey Whitehouse



The secretary at the desk in the immigration department looks up and says yet again the words she repeats so often each day, "No, there's nothing more to do now, we have your application and you will be notified by mail when your visa is granted," The applicant turns and leaves the office, another stage completed on the long way to a new country.

Some time later he becomes part of the milling crowd at the Beirut Airport. People, people everywhere. Queues waiting to check in luggage, family groups, people coming and going, children darting in and out, the constant buzz of hundreds of voices, the passenger boarding calls, a mother leaning against the barrier weeping, bewildered faces, excited faces, sad faces. Where are they all going? America, Great Britain, Canada, Australia — they are moving, migrating from their homelands out, out further into the world. But it's not so far these days — at the most 24 hours flying time and most of them will be returning for a visit in a few years.

And so the Arab world through its migrants has extended into every continent. Every year the number of migrant Arabs increases, Lebanese, Egyptians, Jordanians, Yemenis, and others move out to join the hundreds of thousands, the millions living abroad. They represent various religious groups Muslim, Druze, nominal Christian from the ancient eastern churches, members of evangelical churches — and constitute a challenge to anyone who is concerned to win them for Christ. Many of them settle in industrial centers keeping to their own ethnic groups so that for large numbers of the adults Arabic remains their language and becomes a barrier to social contact with the people of their adopted country. Such a situation can result

in loneliness, often to the degree of desperation and frustration, and this is where the word of the Gospel can bring hope, comfort and courage. This is the challenge, but who is able to meet it?

Believers from among the migrants have taken up the challenge in many cases and there are active Arab churches in centers throughout the western world which are ministered to by migrant pastors or laymen who have secular jobs during the week and spend their weekends in an effective ministry in Arabic speaking communities. Others hold Bible studies in their homes to which they invite neighbours and friends who may not have been at all approachable with the gospel when they were in their own country. There they were bound by family, political and religious traditions which went back for centuries, but now to a certain extent they are free of these and are only too ready to gather with people who speak their language. Other believers become agents for the distribution of Arabic Christian literature which again is very effective in the spread of the gospel.

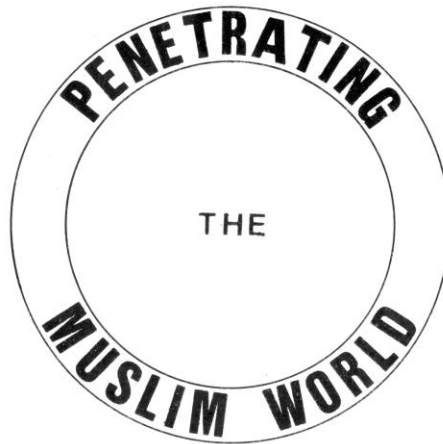
Then as mentioned in the introductory article "The Ripple Pattern" retired and returned missionaries are also seeking to meet the challenge. Mr. and Mrs. A. Whitehouse of Melbourne, Australia are fully engaged in such a ministry, worked out in cooperation with the church of All Nations. This church has installed a system for simultaneous translation so that people of four different languages, among them Arabic, can join in the English services. In this way the English-speaking children of migrants can participate in the service with their parents. In home visits and gatherings cassette tapes of Arabic messages, readings and music are always appreciated and often give contact with new people. Another possible way to spread the message is through the mass media — the Arabic language newspapers and may be radio programmes.

WEC missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Young, who have served in Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates, are now full-time workers for their mission among the thousands of Arab migrants in England. There are industrial workers, students, doctors, lecturers and other professional people from Iraq in the north through to Yemen and Saudi Arabia in the south, from Jordan in the west to Kuwait and Bahrein in the east. Most of the students are sent by their governments and will return to their countries either to take up government posts or as lecturers in training projects. The consequent effects of such students being won for the Lord are boundless. The ripple pattern could reach right back to the center of the Muslim world. The industrial workers welcome visits in their homes, their coffee houses or their shops. They too are conscious of release from the family or religious pressures of the homeland and because of this they listen, they are interested and the message of the gospel makes its impression. In France there are one million Arabs. Migrants from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco and the summer gives opportunity for teams of students from the United States and Britain to work among them. And so through Europe Arab migrants are found, students, and workers, all potential messengers for the gospel of Christ to their own people. It is the same in every continent — the Arab world has reached out to wherever men live. This is the challenge the Lord is calling on us to meet. The challenge of the Arab migrant in his need, real need of our Christ.

* For suggestions as to how you can help meet this need see the article "Emmigration" in "Lebanon on the Highway" No. 2 in this series.

Penetrating the Muslim World

HARRY GENET



A fresh look is long overdue. Even Israeli Premier Golda Meir dropped the habit of referring to them as “the enemy,” and began calling them “neighbors.” Evangelicals, too, urgently need to look at the Arabs from a fresh perspective. The Yom Kippur war last October shattered the myth of the Arabs as inevitable fumblers of battles in wartime and of diplomacy in peacetime. The rising cost of a gallon of gasoline makes us grimly aware of new Arab muscle in the world economy.

With dated stereotypes of the Arabs being shed right and left, Christians must shed their half-century-old concepts of evangelism. We still envision veiled women and robed men clinging so tenaciously to Islam that missionaries spend lifetimes fearlessly preaching the gospel and winning few or no converts.

This cliché in our thinking is more than some innocent little delusion. It has effectively canceled out serious obedience in applying the Great Commission to a sizeable chunk of mankind – 130 million individuals by 1972 estimates. It’s high time we discarded the myth of the unwinnable Arab.

A fresh look will show us that the Arab world never formed so monolithic an obstacle to the gospel as we have conjured up in our minds. Islam did sweep like a tidal wave across the Middle East and North Africa. But, like a tidal wave, it advanced rapidly and superficially, leaving the high ground untouched. Sizable populations in the mountains of Lebanon and Syria, the remote villages of the Upper Nile and elsewhere have withstood Muslim pressures and preserved their beliefs down through the centuries. The Arab world has never been 99-and 44-one-hundredths percent pure Muslims. More than 90 percent, yes — but 100 percent, never. The ten million Arabs who call themselves Christians hold significant potential for true conversion and for winning their Muslim compatriots.

A fresh look will also show us that Muslims are not so uniformly convinced and dedicated as we have supposed. It is a revelation to stand in any of a number of Arab cities during the call to prayer and observe how few interrupt their pursuits to participate. Islam has appeared so deeply entrenched only because it is buttressed by society and state. The social penalties for breaking ranks are formidable, so the facade is maintained. But the structure is increasingly hollow.

A growing proportion of Arabs are nominally Muslim but practically unbelievers. Arab nations have imported alien innovative processes and thought patterns. Some have attempted to do this without modifying unquestioning loyalty to Islam. Others pay lip service to Islam while giving real allegiance to socialistic ideologies. This tension between creed and practice cannot be sustained indefinitely. Many

suppress their doubts because they feel Islam is the only rallying center for the Arab -nation-- much as their Israeli counterparts regard Judaism.

IF THE ARAB WORLD is riper for evangelization than we have guessed, what is preventing a widespread turning to Christ in our day? The main obstacles are misconceptions on all sides.

When a Muslim Arab pictures a Christian, a Protestant is not what springs to mind. He sees adherents of traditional churches — mostly unfamiliar to us — which have survived in his region. He sees the Greek Orthodox, the Assyrian descendents of the Nestorian Church, the Coptic, Syrian and Armenian Orthodox Churches, and the Uniate churches, loosely tied to Roman Catholicism. These are churches of icons, of incense, and often of unfamiliar chants. When the Muslim rejects Christianity as idolatrous, this is his conception of the faith he spurns.

Muslim misconceptions, while serious, can be dealt with, Christian misconceptions about evangelizing Arabs are more subtle and sinister.

The preponderance of nominal Arab Christians do not believe their Muslim countrymen can be converted, and would not readily receive them into their churches if they were. Centuries of being on the defensive has dried up any missionary zeal they once may have possessed.

Western Christians succumb in another way — defeated «closed-door» mentality. True, most Arab countries at some time have proscribed any gospel witness, but for every area that once permitted gospel witness and now forbids it, I can name another that once forbade witness and now allows it. Because we have pictured a fluid situation as rigid, we have never fully exploited the open doors.

We have also perverted a commendable interest in the Lord's return. We have allowed speculation about the future to erode our commitment to obey Christ now.

We excuse a callous disinclination to take the gospel to some ethnic groups by assuming they will be on the wrong side of the Armageddon battle lines! Our arrogance in predetermining the future leads to a bias that overlooks reality. Even inside the borders of Israel today, for example, more Arabs than Jews identify themselves as Christians. But we screen out such information because it fails to conform to our view of the chosen people.

Distorted thinking has led to lopsided missionary endeavor. Only iron curtain countries compete with Muslim countries for the dubious distinction of highest population-to missionary ratio.

THE ARAB WORLD cannot yet be classified as an area notably responsive to the gospel. But over the last decade increasing exposure to the rest of the world, migration to the larger cities and secular higher education have all been undermining Islam's dominance in society. An increasing openness in exploring Christian belief has surfaced simultaneously. The Middle East, once widely regarded as impregnable, is clearly shifting into the winnable camp.

Once the Western church comprehends this historic shift, I believe it will roll up its sleeves and begin claiming the allegiance of Arab hearts to Christ on an unprecedented scale. When it does, it will have a good number of spirit-filled Arabs as allies. Let me introduce a few:

Syrian student Isam Khoury was won to faith in Christ at Haigazian College in Beirut by Navigator missionary Waldron Scott. After teaching in Syrian schools and winning a number of students to committed and reproductive faith, Isam returned to Beirut. Earning his M.A. at the American University of Beirut, he is now on the Navigators' staff.

Muhammad Chafir, a Moroccan of Berber stock, was won to faith in Christ by a Gospel Missionary Union worker. But Chafir initiated the contact! After studying at the LBI, he began to broadcast gospel messages to

his own people. Now with his wife he is serving as a full-time missionary with the North Africa Mission's Radio school of the Bible.

A heartening development is the beginning of a grass-roots Arab missionary movement. The National Lebanese Evangelical Society, spawned by the Lebanon Evangelical Mission, now supports three Arab missionaries outside Lebanon. Thoughtful missionaries foresee increasing evangelism by Arab believers, with overseas witnessing filling a supporting role in training, communications and funding.

What can Western Christians do now to expedite a turning to Christ in the Arab world?

1. Make sure that your view of eschatology is not diluting your compassion for men and women for whom Christ died.
2. Help combat the dated myth that God is able to save all men except Muslims.
3. Befriend Arab students and migrants in your country. Behind a sometimes argumentative exterior are many lonely searchers. Set loose from rigid social and family constraints, they can be won to Christ here where they are freer to decide objectively.
4. Check your church's missionary commitment for balance. If the eighteen Arab countries are entirely omitted, ask why. The church for centuries has made a detour around the Arab world. It's time to stop going out of our way to avoid Islam.

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WANTED OUT REACHERS DOUGLAS ANDERSON

Sand, sculptured by the wind, curves away into the golden distance as camels march in a stately line past the desert well. A man in simple Arab dress kneels by the well and draws a skin bucket full of water while his wife tends to the two or three goats nearby.

The tall city office block, near the crescent-like curve of the Beirut bay on the blue, lazy Mediterranean is modern and imposing. On the third floor an air-conditioned suite of offices is tastefully and expensively furnished. The secretary announces that the Director is busy on the telephone to America but will soon be free. A few minutes later he comes out, tall and handsome, dressed with impeccable taste—the picture of a successful, charming, energetic, , international businessman.

The dim light filters in through the alabaster window in the cool reception room. The carpets on the floor are dark and rich and women, their veils lifted back and their outdoor «shershafs», the long, black cover-all, laid aside, sit on the floor around the walls on the carpet-covered mattresses.

They have gathered in a Yemeni home for the afternoon of visiting, gossip and chewing of “qat” the mild drug that induces lethargy and a passing sense of well-being.

The child sits quietly in a corner of the classroom until a teacher comes and leads him to the play-ground. He waddles along uncertainly showing fear and distrust in his hesitant steps. He is new to the school, the rooms are big and many, his fellow-pupils boisterous and exuberant. He follows his teacher out into the sunlight and he feels its warmth and suddenly begins to cry and croon — “Yaimmy, yaimmy” (mother, mother) and he pulls away from the teacher and stands bewildered and alone. He is only five; he is blind and retarded.

"I don't go much for religion of any kind really — it doesn't fit into my pattern of life anymore. Now, talk of freedom of expression, freedom of behaviour and freedom of choice and I'll listen — but religious restrictions aren't for me". The young high school graduate is dressed in jeans and a multicoloured tank top; her hair is long and straight. She is modern in any country and she talks in a carefully cultivated international style of English. She is typical of "youth" anywhere, in her life-style, her dress and her philosophy but she is also wistful and sometimes confesses that she feels adrift, without an anchor in an uncharted sea.

The man breaks abruptly away from the group which surrounds the missionary giving out tracts. He crumples the paper in his hand, throws it down and carefully grinds it under his foot. "Infidels", he mutters, "there is no God but the one God and Muhammed is the prophet of God".

What a contrast of people, divergent in age, background, philosophy, culture and outlook — but they all have one thing in common — they are all Middle Eastern Arab Muslims.

These are people with varying needs, expressing themselves in different ways, understanding life in conflicting terms, yet all with an underlying bond. Any Christian approach to them must be designed to meet them where they are and in terms which they can understand. This means that those seeking to reach out to the Arab world of the Middle East today must be adaptable, teachable and ready patiently to seek the ways and means of making the message of the Gospel relevant and living to such a varied group of people.

The religious challenge is basically the same — a misconception of the foundational truths concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prevailing concept of Christ in the Arab world is that taught in the Koran, in which He is seen as the Prophet Issa, a great man of God who did wonderful things, taught many truths about God and who was translated to a lower part of Paradise without tasting physical death. According to Muslim teaching He is not the Son of God — this is taken to refer to a physical generation — and He did not die on the cross — therefore those who would reach out to the Muslim must not only be those who accept the Biblical teaching of Christ but whose lives are controlled by Him to such a degree that there is the unmistakable touch of His reality about them.

Into the area of the denial of His deity and sacrificing love those who would serve Him must carry the mark of true fellowship with God in Christ and the humility of sacrificial, loving service for others. There must not be any hint of a patronizing spirit or of the attitude that confuses the missionaries national characteristics and habits with the core of Christian teaching. The call is for those who can interpret the Gospel of Christ in the situation of the people to whom they go so that the result will be a Christian church which is related to the life and culture of the people and not a foreign importation.

(For a fuller treatment of Islam see "Lebanon at the Crossroads" and for a resume of the Maronite Catholic teaching and the Druze religion see "Lebanon on the Highway").

The cultural challenge is carried in the whole aspect of the religious task of the missionary. Much has been written of this and it is the widely accepted principle that everything is to be done to guard against the missionary making Christianity appear to be "foreign". Yet much that is done denies this basic principle simply because too many are in such a rush to evangelise on their own terms that they do not take the time to study and appreciate the culture of the people to whom they go, nor are they prepared for the hard work of interpreting Scriptural truths in the context of that culture.

Therefore on the cultural level those who would reach out to the great world of Islam in the Middle East must come with a willingness to learn and live as far as they can by a new culture while humbly accepting the fact that they will always remain to some degree "foreign". The important thing is that this "foreign-ness" should not stem from any national stubbornness but should be smoothed and covered by a deep and true love for the people to whom the missionary has come.

In the particular terms of work to be done the challenge presented in the Middle East to Christian missionaries today is the challenge of a fast-growing society at varying levels of development. In many parts

capital for this growth is unlimited and aid of all types is readily available from all over the world. Therefore missionary work must follow different patterns in different areas of the Muslim Middle East. Where the national church is established and where missionaries are permitted to work, such as in Lebanon, the LEM is in need of men and women who can identify with the national Christians and work with them in evangelism, youth-work and every aspect of church planting and development. This will call for people of training in these areas of church work who are adaptable enough to apply their skills to the local needs.

Where Christian schools exist, such as the LES schools and others in Lebanon, as well as in certain other areas, LEM is looking for trained personnel, who have proved themselves as able educators in their homelands, who will apply their skills in situations that are both challenging and sometimes frustrating. But in the use of these skills within an institutional environment the need is for those whose adaptability will fit them for a wider ministry wherever the need may arise. Special opportunities exist for secondary school teaching of most subjects with emphasis on Maths and Sciences as well as English and Scripture at every level.

The need also exists for teachers with specialist training in Blind school teaching to assist in the LES School for the Blind. There is also need for those who have experience in the training of teachers who can hold seminars in specialised subjects and oversee the practical application of modern techniques in schools that are open to LEM missionary personnel. Educational evangelism opens many opportunities for Christian witness in camps, conferences and regular Bible clubs where problems facing young people can be discussed in a Christian atmosphere, in the light of God's Word.

In the field of Literature, radio and audio-visual evangelism there are exciting possibilities of new avenues of service for those who have training and skills in these areas. Allied to the work of audio-visuals and literature there is a specialised need for a team to work in Lebanon preparing a well-documented and modern coverage of the Middle East for LEM publicity purposes in overseas countries.

The adoption of the policy of "Secondment" (see article on Outreach Strategy) has opened up wide possibilities for work for LEM missionaries in evangelism, church work, educational and medical outreach and therefore there is an ever-widening scope presented to those who have a Spirit-born burden for the Muslim world of the Middle East.

Beyond Lebanon as LEM looks to extend its ministry to the Gulf area there is a growing need for missionaries of the "general" type who will be prepared to tackle a variety of jobs in difficult circumstances, as well as medical personnel who can work on a secondment basis in established Christian hospitals.

In the Muslim Middle East today there exists a great scope for service in a variety of ministries through the work of the LEM and its openings into other allied missionary work in this deeply needy and challenging part of the world. Outreach today calls for those who are prepared to push back the Gospel frontiers in these lands and reach out to individuals, families and groups with the great redeeming love of Christ that can overcome all difficulties, hardships and opposition and so build up the church of Jesus Christ in the Arab Middle East.

WHO'S WHO

Leslie de Smidt a graduate of All Nations Bible College, England, he came to Lebanon with LEM from South Africa in 1947. He has served as principal of the LBI and Field Leader, and has now been seconded to one of the national evangelical churches as Administrator of its Beirut school.

Douglas Anderson a graduate of Melbourne Bible Institute, has been a missionary with LEM for 27 years. He has been active in educational work, evangelism, literature outreach and has been Field Leader in Lebanon since 1970.

Dr. G.J. Jennings is a Christian Anthropologist and a Professor at Geneva College Beaver Falls, Pa., USA. He is General Secretary of LEM in USA and also of LOVE (Lebanon Overseas Village Evangelism) a society formed to promote evangelism especially in Muslim villages in Lebanon and the Middle East.

Aubrey Whitehouse was for 23 years a Missionary in Egypt with the EGM. After two years in Eritrea he was seconded to LEM for work in LBI and later became its Principal. On his retirement to Melbourne Australia in 1971, he became active in work amongst the migrant Arabs there and serves as pastor to the evangelical Arab community associated with the Church of All Nations in central Melbourne.

Harry Genet on loan from the Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM), served in Beirut as Field Secretary of the Arabic Literature Mission. He worked in close co-operation with LEM in CALL (Christian Arabic Literature League) during this period. After six-and-a-half years he turned over his responsibilities to Mr. Hanna Bassous. Mr. Genet is now managing editor of TEAM's magazine "HORIZONS".