

# Book Reviews



*Waging Peace on Islam*, by Christine A. Mallouhi. (348 pp. ISBN 0-8308-2304-2, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000)

—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter

Christine Mallouhi's book is quite unusual, perhaps absolutely unique: how often does an Evangelical Christian write a book that is reviewed again and again by the famous Al Jazeera TV station? Married to a man whose roots are in the Islamic tradition, and with years of residence within different Islamic contexts, she has accumulated a gold mine of high quality—and urgent—insights.

She begins with a chapter, "A Better Way." It describes through fascinating personal experiences the many unfortunate misunderstandings plaguing any kind of sound and sensible view of Christian/Muslim relations today. The chapter ends with a delightful appeal to Francis of Assisi's whole approach to life, to belief, and specifically, to Islam.

She then launches into 43 pages of a fresh, fascinating analysis of Francis' entire life, going into detail about his personal contacts with Muslim leadership.

From there on, in just 20 pages, she briefly and adeptly rehearses the "Troubled Encounters" between the two traditions in the last 1500 years.

This leads to a specific application of her perspective in regard to "The Problem of Palestine"—and, note, she is describing things from the Arab point of view on the grounds that our newspapers have already highlighted

every violent act of the Palestinians. Now she is talking about personal experiences—and she does so for the remainder of the book. While many have speculated about these things from afar, her accumulation of a mountain of personal experience is the most significant and irrefutable heart of the whole book.

This must be one of the most valuable books anyone can read—if they want truly to understand the Christian/Muslim situation. For anyone dealing with Muslims it is a must. And, it is very readable!

*Editor's Note: To order, see WCL ad on inside cover.*



*Revolution*, by George Barna. (156 pp. ISBN 1-4143-0758-6, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2005)

—reviewed by Ralph D. Winter

Revolution in this case means a seismic shift from ordinary church going to a vital life of holiness and obedience that may or may not include going to a conventional church.

Barna has for years been a reality check often bringing out discouraging statistics about the behavior of the average Evangelical. This book is no exception in that sphere. He reels off pages of statistics. Choosing only a few examples:

- Church worship is generally the only time people worship God.
- The typical believer will die without ever leading a soul to Christ.
- Only 9% of all born again adults have a Biblical world view.
- Churched Christians give away about 3% of their income.
- In a typical week only one out of four believers will serve other people.
- Less than one out of six has an accountability relationship with another believer.

- Most Evangelicals rely on the church not their family life to develop spiritual maturity in their children.

However, this book is a new departure. Somehow he has turned a corner. The picture he now sees is no longer (merely) a tepid, harmless, un-influential church that is bound to go downhill. He is now championing a new phenomenon that is also true: a massive number of church people for whom Christ is so important that they no longer look to the church as their main source of inspiration, and may not even go to church.

Indeed, this "revolution ... is on track to become the most significant recalibration of the American Christian body in more than a century."

Not only that. This book is now on every page, practically, an earnest sermon to the reader to join that revolution.

I see two problems. Is it now true that the connection across the country between these new revolutionaries is no longer denominational, but as readers of Christianity Today and Barna books? (He does not suggest either of these.)

Secondly, and far more seriously, these renewed revolutionary soldiers do not apparently have any concrete sense of the vast spectrum of ugly evidences of evil in this world which they are crucially needed to fight. They are seeking to be more holy, more Christlike, but that does not, in this book, come across as anything as significant as what Bill and Melinda Gates are talking about, not even the concerns of the rock star, Bono. **IJFM**