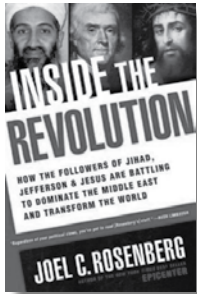


Book Reviews & Notes

Inside the Revolution: How the Followers of Jihad, Jefferson & Jesus Are Battling to Dominate the Middle East and Transform the World, by Joel C. Rosenberg (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009, 551 pp.)

—reviewed by Harley Talman



The subtitle points to Joel Rosenberg's love for alliteration. Inside *Inside the Revolution* is his "R" rated taxonomy for the three most dynamic movements within the world of Islam: (1) Radicals for whom "Islam is the Answer, Jihad is the Way"; (2) Reformers who believe "Islam is the Answer, but Jihad is not the way"; and (3) Revivalists for

whom "Islam is not the answer, and Jihad is not the way; Jesus is the Way." He asserts that whichever group wins the hearts of the "Rank-and-File" (the suffering, poor and powerless masses) will change the world, for better or worse. The author summarily completes his sketch of Islamic society with the "Resisters" (the conservatives who do not desire real change, but want to keep power) and the "Reticent" (those who have leanings, but are uncommitted to any of the movements).

Rosenberg, son of a Jewish father, but a believer in Jesus Christ, has written several popular, biblically informed novels, as well as his *New York Times* nonfiction bestseller, *Epicenter*. His career includes working for influential leaders such as Steve Forbes and Benjamin Netanyahu. He has been often interviewed by the major media as well. His political and journalist connections have given him opportunity to interview the key personages whose profiles and perspectives are perhaps the major contribution of this book. As a novelist, Rosenberg writes in an engaging way—I easily read his 550 pages in three days.

In Part I, the author surveys militant Islamic attacks on the USA during the past generation. Interviewing experts like General "Jerry" Boykin, who was deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence, and Porter Goss of the CIA, he persuasively argues that Iran and al-Qaeda are absolutely out to get nuclear weapons and plan to destroy the West. Based on prior intelligence failures, we cannot be sure when Iran will have the bomb, but evidence points to soon. Sobering is the evidence that Iranian President Ahmadinejad is driven by a theology that believes that the "Hidden [12th] Imam of the Shi'a is the "mahdi" who will come to usher in utopia. Moreover, indications are that he

believes he can hasten mahdi's coming by instigating a war to annihilate Israel and the Great Satan, America. Also sobering are the results of the mammoth Gallup research project that indicates 7 percent of the world's Muslims are radicals. This small percentage is no small threat: 91 million Muslims are sympathetic with and potentially supportive of violent Islamic jihadist attacks against the West. Besides preparing to defend against military jihad, Rosenberg warns us to defend against economic jihad by increasing domestic drilling for oil.

Unlike most other books that sound the alarm against Islam (usually equated with Islamic extremism), Part II of *Inside the Revolution* highlights the many Reformers who "don't get nearly enough attention or respect" from the mainstream media (p. 215). Rosenberg outlines their theology that is positive toward the "People of the Book" (Jews and Christians), based on the peaceful verses in the Quran. He notes that the Reformers argue that key verses cited by militants are often taken out of context. Rosenberg details the defection of Hossein Khomeini, grandson of the Ayatollah, to democracy and then presents notable examples of political leaders (Afghanistan's Hamid Karzai, Iraq's Nouri Al-Maliki and Jalal Talibani, Morocco's King Mohammed VI, and the late Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan) who are attempting to defeat the Radicals by spreading the Reformer's agenda. Rosenberg is impressed by these leaders and hopeful about the future of Islamic democracy, though he recognizes that it must look somewhat different than democracy in the West.

Part III, "The Revivalists," chronicles numerous testimonies of Muslims, including Radicals, who have become followers of Christ and seek to spread his gospel throughout the Middle East. Some attack Islam, others just preach Christ. Rosenberg traces the surge in Christianity in the region, describing the key role of ethnic Christian evangelists, as well as visions and dreams, satellite broadcasting (especially Father Zakariah), the Bible, discipleship and leadership training. He goes on to present the "Theology of the Revivalists" (which looks very much like a Western theology of the gospel). One chapter summarizes the biblical eschatology that Rosenberg has taught to the Revivalists, including the roles of Iran and Iraq. (Not all of his fellow premillennialists would agree that Gog should be equated with Russia). The book concludes with a call for Christians to "join the revolution" by learning, praying, giving and going. An appendix lists 20 terror plots against America that have been foiled since 9/11.

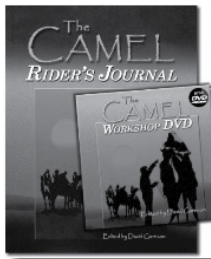
Inside the Revolution is interesting and insightful book for those interested in Islam, politics, and the advance of the gospel in the Middle East. (That should include a lot of people!) It introduces readers to important political and spiritual figures, many of whom the average person (or American, at least) knows little about. If nothing else,

Responses ... indicate initial success in Muslim communities. A voice out of Africa says that even the Imams don't wish to debate this material, but rather come forward for prayer.

it should awaken us to the grave danger facing the West from the extremists and the need to support the efforts of the Reformers. Readers will be inspired by reading about the works of God's Spirit and the testimonies of those who are advancing the gospel in the Middle East. Hopefully that inspiration will increase the motivation and commitment of each reader to "be about his Master's business" and to "work while it is still day, for night is coming when no one can work."

The Camel Rider's Journal, edited by David Garrison
(Arkadelphia, AR: WIGTake Resources LLC, 2009, 96pp.)

—reviewed by Scott Hedley, a research associate in Asia



The preface of *The Camel Rider's Journal* recommends this new book as a companion to the earlier book by Kevin Greesen, which is entitled, *The Camel: How Muslims Are Coming to Faith in Christ!* Responses from those who use Greesen's method of ministry indicate initial success in Muslim communities. A voice out of

Africa says that even the Imams don't wish to debate this material, but rather come forward for prayer. Now, David Garrison has authored a very practical sequel, broken down in a simple flow of chapters like: (1) Welcome to the Camel workshop, (2) Finding where God is at work, (3) Getting to know the Camel, (4) The Camel step by step, (5) Camel destinations, (6) Common Muslim questions and answers.

Strengths of the book. There were many positive aspects of the book. First, I loved how Garrison and Greesen (his predecessor) showed us a way of using the Koran to bring Good News to Muslims. I agree fully with Garrison's idea that we should find the Person of Peace in a community (Luke 10) and work through that person. Second, Garrison selects some excellent Old Testament stories that do help illustrate why Jesus had to come and die (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Exodus and the plague of the firstborn) and explains why these stories are so important. Third, Garrison does a good job of equipping believers to know how to answer the most common objections Muslims have (such as the Bible has been changed, Jesus is not the Son of God, Jesus did not die on the cross, Muhammad is the greatest prophet, Muhammad has superseded Jesus, and others).

Potential weaknesses of the book. As I speak to other believers about using the Koran to bring the Good News to Muslims,

some believers object to this approach by saying that using the Koran is equivalent to endorsing the Koran. Garrison gives three reasons why we should consider using the Koran in witnessing to Muslims, but he fails to give clear examples of how Biblical authors quoted non-Biblical material to support their arguments and direct their listeners to more seriously consider the Bible. Allow me to list some that would have strengthened his case: (1) Paul quotes from Epimenidus in Acts 17:28 and from Aratus in Acts 17:29 (both of whom are pagan prophets writing about Zeus); (2) Jude quotes from the book of Enoch in Jude 15; (3) Paul quotes Cretan prophets in Titus 1:12-13.

A second possible weakness to the Camel approach is that it seems that this approach attempts to extract Muslims from their socio-religious culture and get them into the Western Christian socio-religious culture. In section 3.2 of the accompanying DVD, Kevin Greesen and his two friends were referred to as speaking about Christianity rather than speaking about Christ. Isn't this of critical importance? Garrison doesn't seek to overcome the gospel's identification with Christian civilization, and clearly states elsewhere (Garrison 2004) that he is opposed to approaches such as Insider Movements.

Thirdly, section five in the book stated that the evangelist should take the Muslim through various Old Testament stories which help the Muslim to understand why Jesus had to come. But this book recommends doing this *after* first talking about Jesus extensively with the Muslim. In the Muslim situation where I minister, I believe it would be better to cover the Old Testament stories first so that the Muslim understands why Jesus had to come before talking about Jesus.

Fourthly, this approach may only work with Muslims who can read, who like to read, and who are willing to read the Koran. It also requires evangelists to memorize a lot of details about the Koran.

Overall I would recommend this book as a very practical tool for equipping believers to bring the Good News to Muslims as long as the practitioner is aware of the potential weaknesses of the book.

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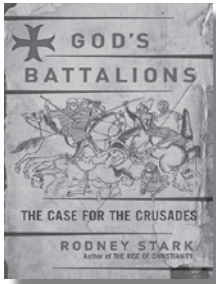
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Stark argues that there is no historical evidence for the alleged long-standing Islamic bitterness over the Crusades; for this antagonism did not emerge until around 1900 . . .

Gods' Battalions: The Case for the Crusades, by Rodney Stark (New York: HarperOne, 2009, 276 pp.)

—reviewed by Harley Talman



Throw out your history books! The prevailing view about the Crusades—that “an expansionist, imperialistic Christendom brutalized, looted, and colonized a tolerant and peaceful Islam”—is not true! So declares the distinguished professor of the Social Sciences at Baylor University and author of thirty books

on the history and sociology of religion. Rodney Stark synthesizes the conclusions of specialists in the field to support his position. Not content with one revolutionary idea, Stark also argues that there was no such thing as the “Dark Ages.” He blames, among others, British and French intellectuals of the misnamed “Enlightenment” for inventing the term in order to “glorify themselves and vilify the Catholic Church” (p. 6). While acknowledging that educated Arabs had greater knowledge of classical learning and produced some great mathematicians and astronomers, he demonstrates that European agricultural, maritime, and military technology was vastly superior. If not, then how could the crusaders march long distances with great losses and then defeat much larger Muslim forces—and continue to do so as long as Europe was willing to support them?

God's Battalions argues that the Crusades actually began with the Muslim invasions of Christian territories. The European Crusades was merely a response caused “by centuries of bloody attempts to colonize the West and by sudden new attacks on Christian pilgrims and holy places” (p. 8). The motivations for the Crusaders were neither to convert Muslims nor to gain material rewards. The leading families paid much of the cost at the outset, financially and in offering their sons. Moreover, the subsequent crusader kingdoms were not colonies, but rather required huge subsidies from Europe. Whether one agrees that the Crusades were biblically defensible or not, the fact that their motivations were religious, not material, is illustrated by the fact that few knights responded to a proposed Crusade to reconquer wealthy Spain which was also much nearer. Yet tens of thousands answered the call to liberate the Holy Land; then after conquering Jerusalem, most returned home. An equally great motivation for the knights to volunteer was their need for penance—due to their occupation of killing and their notoriously immoral lifestyle. When the

pope promised that crusading would wash away all their sins, as well as liberate the Holy Land, the knights viewed themselves as on a “holy mission.”

Stark also rejects as myth the notion of superior Islamic tolerance. Such claims are betrayed by Islam's normal official policy of repressive treatment, humiliation, punishment, and heavy taxation of the dhimmis (subjugated Jews and Christians). Moreover, there were the massacres: Armenia's nobility, 6,000 Jews in Morocco in 1032-33, the same or more in Grenada, and tens of thousands of Christian civilians in Cyprus (1570). Stark observes that intolerance and brutality were characteristic of the age, and Muslims were not much different than Christians and Jews. He also dismisses the rampant glorification of Saladin as a paragon of chivalry. He show how this view was the result of the moderns' ignorance of the rules of war—not to mention what Muslim writers record of Saladin's butcheries. In that vein, Stark also points out the error of judging medieval warfare by modern conceptions. “Both Christians and Muslims observed quite different rules of war” (p. 8). Furthermore, Stark argues that there is no historical evidence for the alleged long-standing Islamic bitterness over the Crusades; for this antagonism did not emerge until around 1900, as a reaction to the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the onset of genuine colonialism.

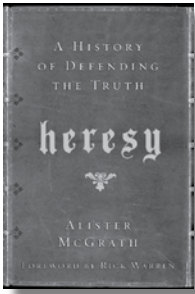
Stark closes his book with this succinct summary of the thrust of his book: “The Crusades were not unprovoked. They were not the first round of European colonialism. They were not conducted for land, loot, or converts. The crusaders were not barbarians who victimized the cultivated Muslims. They sincerely believed that they served in God's battalions” (p. 248).

God's Battalions is well argued and readable. In the recent period of mission where Christians have apologized to Muslims for the Crusades, Stark may cause us to contemplate—should we perhaps modify such confessions? Some may choose to humbly speak this truth in love. Others might confess that “*all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” On the other hand, we can always apologize for abuses and atrocities that were perpetrated in even the most just of wars.

In any case, this work of a recognized scholar is singularly significant for its demythologizing of the Crusades. It is especially relevant and important for all who are concerned with history, politics, ethics, or missions to Muslims.

Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth, by Alister McGrath, Harper Collins, NY, 2009 (234pp., w notes/index 282pp.)

—reviewed by Brad Gill



The prolific Alister McGrath has taken up his pen in response to the rising appeal of heresy within Western culture. At a glance, his book seems quite oblivious to the frontiers of mission. The mission thinker might automatically shelve this volume, for McGrath is primarily addressing the Western propensity to love heresy and suspect orthodoxy.

He also focuses on the early centuries of the church and its 'intra-mural' theological debates, a subject more typical of a syllabus in Christian Doctrine 101. But the patient reader realizes that McGrath's spin on heresy can provoke new discussion on how theology develops within movements to Christ across other religious terrain. It could be highly stimulating when read in the context of Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist worlds. Indeed, it should be read anywhere there is suspicion of syncretism, where hearts and minds are nervous for the gospel.

Too often heresy is a crime scene teeming with theologians and 'heresiologists' who don't realize they're in desperate need of an historian with a kit capable of extracting good contextual evidence. Enter McGrath as historian. In his initial chapters he explores the evidence for the origins and the essence of heresy, what exactly it is and where exactly it comes from. He skillfully debunks our 'received version' of heresy and exposes both the bias and historical inaccuracies of contemporary scholarship. Throughout both Part One and Two he sifts through the early development of Christian doctrine, that period between the apostolic fathers and the formulations at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. He then narrows his study on what he calls the *consolidation of faith* in the 2nd century. This is the period when

...the rise of controversy forced increasing precision of definition and formulation. And with this increasing concern for theological correctness came an inevitable tightening of the boundaries of what was considered as "authentic" Christianity. The periphery of the community of faith, once relatively loose and porous, came to be defined and policed with increasing rigor. (p. 24)

His claims that it was in this particular century that 'haire-sis', the idea of 'choice', a neutral sense of an intellectual option, "rapidly came to be a pejorative, not a descriptive, term." This is when ideas on one side of "the binary opposition of heresy-orthodoxy" were stigmatized and labeled subversive to the Christian faith. (p. 39)

It was amidst this increasing density, systematization and crystallization of orthodoxy that McGrath sees heresies emerge, "more as *byways* opened up for exploration through the process of doctrinal development." (p. 66) Words like *byways*, *process*, and *exploration* describe the theological pilgrimage of the church leading into this second century. McGrath is generous with this innovative process, but does not deny its danger to Christian authenticity. He both affirms the early church's diversity while maintaining a clear bottom line on heresy as "doctrine that ultimately destroys, destabilizes or distorts a mystery rather than preserving it." (p. 31) He insists we appreciate the historical process, and refuses to conflate the first two centuries. Historical conditions (i.e., "where we're at" temporally in the maturation of a particular Christ-ward movement) remain crucial to how we understand the emergence of heresy.

In Part Three he unpacks the church's early theological congestion by selecting some classical heresies "to illustrate some more general principles that seem to underlie the origins and development of heretical movements." (p. 11) His quick but substantive analysis of these famous "isms" (Docetism, Arianism, Donatism, etc) gives historical grounding to his broader theoretical purpose. McGrath 'the historian' covers the multiple influences in the emergence of heretical thought (Ch. 8, "Cultural and Intellectual Motivations for Heresy"). Heresies are not simply the losers in some orthodox power game (Ch. 9, 'Orthodoxy, Heresy and Power'). McGrath refuses any simple reductionism when it comes to heresy, but recognizes the complex interplay of cultural or rational norms, social identity, and religious accommodation in the emergence of heresy (p. 180f).

Now why recommend this study to the practitioner of cross-cultural mission? Again, I'd like to suggest that McGrath's insights can be applied to analogous settings where the church is emerging in new cultural and religious contexts. His treatment is a template that can stimulate poignant and useful questions. For starters, just when does heresy tend to emerge in younger church movements? McGrath is suggesting it emerges later, a bit down the road. He states consistently that heresy "reflects the ecclesiological situation of the second century, not the first" (p.38), and that while the "ideas may have originated during the apostolic period, their heretical nature emerged only during the second century." (p. 34) McGrath's assessment is that a more mature Christian movement rendered certain first century affirmations vulnerable. They were deficient and needing greater refinement.

Ways of expressing certain doctrines that earlier generations regarded as robust began to appear inadequate under relentless examination. *It was not necessarily that they were wrong; rather, they were discovered not to be good enough.* (p. 24)

Allow me license to extend this a bit further. McGrath appreciates the diversity and energy of a young Christian movement which contains a multiplicity of groups across the Greco-Roman world. In its early years it's centered on common themes and truths, and while teeming with debate and dialogue, is less prone to drawing hard protective boundaries. It's only over time that one senses an increasing force to the judgment of heresy. Any contemporary mission movement might manifest what McGrath sees in this classical era, i.e., that a single Christian movement will have a *necessary* exploratory process with many diverse perspectives focused on Christ as the center. Forgive me if I'm overextending McGrath's insights, but this is where the book becomes valuable aid to cross-cultural mission.

But McGrath keeps us honest about this process by another question that shadows his chapters: Could heresy result from an overzealous contextualized apologetic? McGrath sorts the evidence of these centuries, when the Christian church faced the philosophical and pluralistic thought forms of the Greco-Roman world. He focuses on Justin Martyr and other church fathers who claimed they saw the finger prints of God amidst their pagan philosophical systems. They searched for useful terms like "Logos," indigenous to the intellectual vernacular of the period. McGrath sees the use of these indigenous terms for Christian apologetic as being a two way street. Any effective accommodation to the pagan mind was potentially a "Trojan Horse" that could "destabilize or distort the mystery" of the gospel. But McGrath "the historian" sees as well that terms like "Logos" offered a useful presentation to the Platonic mind of Christ as mediator between humanity and God. (p. 178) Yes, he does see the threat of overzealous apologetic, but his historical judgment is to appreciate a *judicious* translation of indigenous themes.

This is a good work for mission fields, but the missiologist might find himself restless with it all. I might suggest a sequel to answer this restlessness. While McGrath mentions that cultural influences affect heresy, and spends a final chapter on the emergence of Islam, he does not examine how the rich cultural mosaic affected theological development (and heresy). He does not pursue how this young Christian movement had already moved east, north and south into drastically new cultures. He treats Iraeneus of Lyons simply as a heresy hunter and not as one trying to preach into the Celtic barbarian world that surrounded him. And what of the transition from Greek to Roman (Latin) worlds? Of the movement into Armenia? Of the Syrian church's backlash to Greek dominance? Of the Nubian and Berber influences on theology in Africa? How are we to understand heresy on these early cross-cultural frontiers of the faith? Did a cultural frontier simply demand a defense of the truth against heresy, or did it open new perception of truth? Ah, historians must give us volume two. **IJFM**

From the Editor's Desk (continued from p. 3)

colonial enterprise.⁸ Such a positive assessment of translation, when combined with Bediako's call for mother-tongue translators, is the basis for Gravelle's historical analysis of changing roles in Bible translation.

These African voices continually call us beyond our Western preoccupation with the transmission of the gospel (contextualization *for* them) to examine the authentic African response to the gospel (contextualization *by* them). In his recent interpretation of Africa's "post-Western discovery of the gospel," Sanneh mentions the appearance of a new contextualized creed among the Maasai people of Africa (p. 7).⁹ The world of nomadic wandering and ravenous hyenas peeks through its poetic cadence. It raises the interesting question of theological form on the frontier, and how creeds may protect both the truth and the authenticity of any younger movement to Christ. Larry Dinkins speaks to the issue of crafting contextualized creeds from his experience in Buddhist Thailand (p. 5).

I recently spent a week sitting under Dr. Tite Tienou (Dean of Trinity's School of Intercultural Studies) and he spoke of Bediako and Kalu's legacy. I was attending his seminar "Ethnicity: Gift and Barrier" in preparation for this same theme at the upcoming September meetings of the ISFM in Charlotte (details at ijfm.org). I was enervated by this perceptive African scholar as he probed and provoked my American assumptions on the subject. His voice joins the "mash-up" of African contributions to contemporary frontier missiology. Their mature insights on indigenous agency, cross-cultural transmission and religious identity will echo throughout the pages of this issue.

Enjoy,



Brad Gill

Endnotes

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⁷ Lamin Sanneh, *The Crown and the Turban: Muslims and West African Pluralism*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1997

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⁹ Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations*, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 241-242