

# *Gospel in the Air*

Evangelie in de lucht

Dedicated to the four women  
who surround me as a 'cloud of witnesses'  
Adrienne, Stephanie, Rosa Maria and Justine

*They've got catfish on the table  
They've got gospel in the air  
And Reverend Green be glad to see you  
When you haven't got a prayer  
But boy you've got a prayer in Memphis*

Part of lyrics of 'Walking in Memphis' (1991)  
Mark Cohn

# *Gospel in the Air*

## **50 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS THROUGH RADIO IN THE ARAB WORLD**

Evangelie in de Lucht

50 Jaar Christelijk Getuigenis  
door Radio in de Arabische Wereld

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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## Preface

During the 1950s, Christian Arabs and missionaries in the Arab World began to produce and broadcast Christian Arabic radio programs as part of their mission to the majority population in the Arab World. No publications of any scientific sort exist regarding this work and the subsequent 50 years. This study sheds light on the history of the Protestant Arabic radio broadcasting during this period. The major focus in this study is on the question to what extent these programs have presented a contextually suitable Christian message, and to what extent the organizations doing this work have become indigenous.

The *Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* echoes the bias of many who think being Christian means being skeptical of media technology. 'Religious institutions and churches have responded slowly and grudgingly to [...] mass media. [...] Opinions may differ as to whether the press belongs to the world, the flesh, or the devil, but not many Christian voices have been raised suggesting it belongs to the realm of the Spirit, even less that it has a place in building the Kingdom of God'.<sup>1</sup> This study shows that this is only partially true. Many Christian Arabs and missionaries to the Arab World have been eager to use the latest technology in radio for proclaiming the Gospel.

Professor Dr. Jan A.B. Jongeneel has been a source of inspiration in writing this thesis. He combines his academic approach to missiology with a commitment to the mission of the Church. His own definition of missiology is as follows:

Missiology is the academic discipline which – from a philosophical, empirical, and theological point of view – reflects on the history, theory and practice of Christian world mission as a means for both preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and casting out 'evil spirits' (active in idolatry and immorality), for the glory of God and the well-being of all human beings.<sup>2</sup>

Jongeneel's approach to missiology as an academic discipline has been a great help in writing this thesis, among other things because he forced me to be rigidly methodological. His patience with the present author and his work has been an exemplary learning experience.

The Rev. Dr. Andrea Z. Stephanous' critical views of my writings about the Arab world have been helpful and appreciated. He is the director of the House of Culture (*Dâr al-Thaqâfah*), the communication department of the Coptic Evangeli-

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<sup>1</sup>Randall Balmer and Catharine Randall 'No Luddites Here; Evangelicals have (almost) always been quick to adopt communications technologies' in. *Christianity Today* Vol. 45, No. 3 (19 February 2001), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Jan A.B. Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science and Theology of Mission in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. A Missiological Encyclopedia Part 1: The Philosophy and Science of Mission* (Frankfurt am Main, 2002, first edition 1995), p. 64.

cal Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) of the Coptic Evangelical Church in Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Hansjörg Biener, teaching media studies at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany) has also been a great help in this study. His many scientific writings about radio and its history, and especially the Christian branch of that, have been a useful framework for my own studies. His vast knowledge of Christian SW radio ensured that some critical eyes read the results of my induction in the vast maze of the radio universe.

This book could not have been written without the help of hundreds of radio experts, historians, Arabic linguists, and Arab and Western missionaries involved in the organizations that are broadcasting and producing Arabic Christian radio programs. As no general books or articles have been written about what Christian radio in the Arab World entails, I am deeply ingratiated to the many individuals that helped me put this study together.

Two of my colleagues in the Christian Arab television production organization I work for, were also kindly helpful. Sharîf Fû'âd was a great help for the translation of the hundreds of Arabic radio programs that I have described in this study. Nansî Farîd controlled the translations and was a great help in using the right vowels of the Arabic words used here.

Lyn Weaich, a fine Australian friend, has excelled in criticizing my text, both in regard to the English language and to its logic. I do not think that our friendship suffered too much from this process of working together. All mistakes left in this study are *mea magna culpa* of course.

A special word of thanks is due here to Gerrit Noort, a *savant* of Dutch missions in Central Celebes (Indonesia). Since we were teenage *buddies* our paths have continued to cross, even as doctoral students of the same professor. Gerrit's career and thoughtful dedication to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His Church are an inspiration to me, and his doctoral studies at Utrecht University under the auspices of Jongeneel, motivated me to do likewise.

Had I been aware of the time the writing of this study would take, I might not have had the bravery to ever start. That may be a platitude but it is true nevertheless. The writing of this work has taken almost all of my spare time during the past five years and also quite some time during working hours. I am therefore thankful to my wife Adriënne and to my daughters Stephanie, Rosa Maria and Justine who have seen me glued to my computer for all those years and I am also thankful that my employers allowed me to use so many working hours.

I need to apologize to my family, my friends, and my colleagues. I did not give them the attention they deserved, as my mental abilities were mostly occupied with the issues of this study. I am now slowly awaking from five years of hibernation in my cave. There is a world out there, not only worth studying, but more important, worth living in, as a witness to the grace of the triune God.

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<sup>3</sup> Stephanous also holds the position of Moderator of the Synod of the Nile of Egypt and he is chairman of the Council of Services and Development at the Synod.

## Abbreviations

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
ABC	Arabic Broadcasting Convention
ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
ABS	Arabic Broadcasting Service
ABTS	Arab Baptist Theological Seminary
ACEB	<i>Association Chrétienne d'Expression Berbère</i>
AMC	Arabic Media Convention
AMC-ME	Adventist Media Center - Middle East
AOG	Assemblies of God
ART	Arab Radio and Television
ASBU	Arab States Broadcasting Union
AUB	American University of Beirut
AUC	American University of Cairo
AWEMA	Arab World Evangelical Ministers Association
AWM	Arab World Ministries, Arab World Media
AWR	Adventist World Radio
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCC	Bible Correspondence Course
BCE	Before the Common Era
BCMS	Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
BLP	Bible and Literature Production
BTGH	Back to God Hour
BTTB	Back to the Bible
BVB	Bible Voice Broadcasting
C1-C6	Cross-Cultural Church Planting Spectrums
CAMA	Christian and Missionary Alliance
CBB	Christian-Background Believer
CBC	Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CCC	Campus Crusade for Christ
CCCB	Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting
CCIB	Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting
CE	Common Era
CEOSS	Coptic-Evangelical Organization for Social Services
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CNA	Channel North Africa
CNN	Cable News Network

CRCNA	Christian Reformed Churches in North America
CRMF	Christian Radio Missionary Fellowship
CW1-CW6	Contextualization Warnings
DW	<i>Deutsche Welle</i>
EACC	East Asia Christian Conference
EGM	Egypt General Mission
ELWA	Eternal Love Winning Africa
ERF	<i>Evangeliums Rundfunk</i>
ESA	Educated Standard Arabic
FCC	Federal Council of Churches
FEBA	Far East Broadcasting Association
FEBC	Far East Broadcasting Company
FETV	Far East Television
FLN	<i>Front de Libération Nationale</i>
FM	Frequency Modulation
FMEEC	Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches
FOCA	Fellowship of Christian Assemblies
FR	Family Radio
GMD	Global Mission Department
GMT	Greenwich Mean Time
GMU	Gospel Missionary Union
GRO	Global Radio Outreach
HAM	High Adventure Ministries
HCJB	Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings
IBRA	International Broadcasting Association
ICB	International Christian Broadcaster
ICRE	International Communication Research for Evangelism
IMB	International Mission Board
IMC	International Mission Council
IRR/TV	International Russian Radio and Television
KJV	King James Version
KM	<i>Karmel Mission</i>
KOH	King of Hope
KRO	<i>Katholieke Radio Omroep</i>
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
kW	Kilowatt
LBC	Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation
LBI	Lebanon Bible Institute
LBS	Lebanese Broadcasting Station
LEM	Lebanese Evangelical Mission
LES	Lebanese Evangelical Society

LWF	Lutheran World Federation
LWFCOC	Lutheran World Federation Committee on Communication
MANA	Media Association North Africa
MBB	Muslim-Background Believer
MBC	Middle East Broadcasting Centre
MBS	Mutual Broadcasting System
MCR	<i>Monte Carlo Radiodiffusion</i>
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
MECF	Middle East Communication Fellowship
MECO	Middle East Christian Outreach
MEGO	Middle East Gospel Outreach
MELM	Middle East Lutheran Mission
MERF	Middle East Reformed Fellowship
METV	Middle East Television
MEU	Middle East Union
MISSERM	Mission and Service for Muslims in the Maghrib
MMC	Malaga Media Center
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
MW	Mediumwave
mW	Megawatt
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no place
NAB	National Association of Broadcasters
NAM	North Africa Mission
NAP	North Africa Partnership
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation
NCRV	<i>Nederlandsche Christelijke Radio Vereeniging</i>
NEBM	Near East Baptist Mission
NECC	Near East Christian Council; since 1962 Near East Council of Churches
NECCRAVCO	NECC Radio and Audio-Visual Committee
NEST	Near East School of Theology
NIV	New International Version
NMP	Nile Mission Press
NRB	National Religious Broadcasters
NRI	Netherlands Radio Industry
NSF	<i>Nationale Seintoestellen Fabriek</i>
PBS	Palestine Broadcasting Service
PCC	People's Communication Charter
PGM	Pacific Garden Mission
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization

RAM	<i>Radio Al Mahabba</i>
RAT	Radio Africa Tangier
RAVEMCCO	Radio, Visual Education, Mass Communication Committee
RCA	Reformed Church in America
RCR1-RCR6	Radio Contextualization Realms 1-6
RMC	Radio Monte Carlo
RMC-MC	Radio Monte Carlo - Monte Carlo
RMC-ME	Radio Monte Carlo - Middle East
RSB	Radio School of the Bible
RTA	<i>Radio-Télévision Algérienne</i>
RTE	Radio Trans Europe
RVOG	Radio Voice of the Gospel
SCC	Sudan Council of Churches
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SIM	Sudan Interior Mission; from 1982 Society of International Ministries; from 2000 Servants in Mission
SW	Shortwave
TAV	Today's Arabic Version
TEE	Theological Education by Extension
TLH	The Lutheran Hour
TMT	Trans-Mediterranean Territories
TTB	Thru the Bible
TWR	Trans World Radio
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAR	United Arab Republic
UBS	United Bible Societies
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UPCNA	United Presbyterian Church of North America
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
VOA	Voice of America
VOH	Voice of Hope
VOT	Voice of Tangier
VPRO	<i>Vrijzinnig Protestantse Radio Omroep</i>
WABA	West Africa Broadcasting Association
WACC	World Association for Christian Communication
Wb2000	World by 2000
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCMR	World Conference on Missionary Radio



WGU	World's Gospel Union
WOH	Words of Hope
WRMF	World Radio Missionary Fellowship
YFC	Youth for Christ

## Glossary

This glossary contains some of the non-English words that are used regularly in and are important for this study. The words are Arabic except if otherwise stated.

<i>‘Adhâb Âbadî</i>	Eternal punishment
<i>‘Ahd al-Jadîd</i>	New Testament
<i>‘Ahd al-Qadîm</i>	Old Testament
<i>‘Amal khaṭīyah</i>	Committing a sin
<i>‘Arabīyah</i>	Arabic
<i>‘Arsh al-ni‘mah</i>	Throne of grace
<i>‘Ashâ’ al-Rabbânî</i>	Lord’s Supper
<i>‘Ilâqah</i>	Relationship
<i>‘îsâ</i>	Jesus ( <i>Qur’ânic</i> )
<i>‘Ulamâ’ (sg: ‘Alim)</i>	Scholars
<i>A‘tarîf</i>	I confess
<i>Abûnâ</i>	Our Father
<i>Ahl al-Dhimmah</i>	People of the Covenant
<i>Ahl al-Kitâb</i>	People of the Book
<i>Allâh</i>	God
<i>Allâh al-âb</i>	God the Father
<i>Allâh dhahara fî al-jasad</i>	God appeared in the flesh
<i>Allâh Ta‘âlâ</i>	God Almighty
<i>Amazigh (pl: Imazighen)</i>	<i>Berber</i> : Free Man
<i>Amîr</i>	Governor, Prince
<i>Asallim</i>	I surrender
<i>Awlâd Allâh</i>	Children of God
<i>Ba‘th</i>	Resurrection
<i>Birr</i>	Righteousness
<i>Damm</i>	Blood
<i>Dârîjah</i>	Popular (used for Moroccan colloquial Arabic)
<i>Dhât Allâh</i>	Essence of God
<i>Dhimmî</i>	A person of the <i>Ahl al-Dhimmah</i>
<i>Diakonia</i>	<i>Greek</i> : Service
<i>Ḍamîr ṣâliḥ</i>	Good conscience
<i>Fâdî</i>	Redeemer
<i>Fasîḥ</i>	Clear, eloquent (used for Modern Standard Arabic)
<i>Filioque</i>	<i>Latin</i> : and the Son
<i>Fushâ</i>	More eloquent (used for Classical Arabic)

<i>Ghaḍab Allāh</i>	Wrath of God
<i>Ghufrān</i>	Forgiveness
<i>Ḥaḍrah Allāh</i>	God's presence
<i>Ḥadīth</i>	Speech; narrative relating deeds and utterances of the Islamic Prophet and his companions
<i>Ḥarām</i>	Taboo
<i>Ḥayah</i>	Life
<i>Iblīs</i>	Devil
<i>Ibn</i>	Son
<i>Ibn Allāh al-wahīd</i>	Only Son of God
<i>Ibn ḥaḳīqī Allāh</i>	Real Son of God
<i>Ijtihād</i>	'Exercising independent juristic reasoning'
<i>Iltizām</i>	Commitment
<i>Imām</i>	Prayer leader in Mosque, and for <i>Shi'ites</i> : Deputy of the Prophet
<i>Īmān</i>	Faith
<i>Injīl</i>	Gospel
<i>Irādah</i>	Will
<i>Jahannam al-nār</i>	Hell fire
<i>Jihād</i>	Holy war
<i>Jizyah</i>	Poll tax (for Christians)
<i>Jaḥīm</i>	Hell
<i>Kafārah</i>	Atonement
<i>Kāhin</i>	Priest
<i>Kalimah</i>	Word
<i>Kanīсах</i>	Church
<i>Kerygma</i>	<i>Greek</i> : Proclamation, Preaching
<i>Khalāṣ</i>	Salvation
<i>Khalīfah</i>	Deputy
<i>Khaṭīyah (pl: Khatāyâ)</i>	Sin
<i>Khidmah</i>	Ministry, service
<i>Kitāb al-Muqaddas</i>	Holy Bible
<i>Koinonia</i>	<i>Greek</i> : Communion
<i>Lahūt al-Masīḥ</i>	Divinity of Christ
<i>Ma'rifah shakhṣīyah</i>	Personal relationship
<i>Maghfīrah al-khaṭāyâ</i>	Forgiveness of sins
<i>Maghrib</i>	Occident (hence: North Africa)
<i>Maḥḍar Allāh</i>	God's presence
<i>Majlis al-Millī</i>	Confessional Community Council
<i>Malakūt Allāh</i>	Kingdom of God

<i>Malik</i>	King
<i>Masîhî</i>	Christian
<i>Masîhî bi al-haqq</i>	Real Christian
<i>Masîh</i>	Christ
<i>Mawlûd min jaded</i>	Born again
<i>Mawt al-Masîh</i>	Death of Christ
<i>Miaphysite</i>	<i>Greek:</i> 'One Naturist'
<i>Millet</i>	<i>Turkish:</i> Confessional Community
<i>Monophysite</i>	<i>Greek:</i> 'Single Naturist'
<i>Mu'jizah</i>	Miracle
<i>Mu'min</i>	Believer
<i>Mu'min haqîqî</i>	Real believer
<i>Mukhallîş</i>	Savior
<i>Muşâlahah</i>	Reconciliation
<i>Nabî</i>	Prophet
<i>Naḥdah</i>	Renaissance
<i>Ni'mah</i>	Grace
<i>Nidâ' Allâh</i>	Call of God
<i>Qalb şâdiq</i>	Honest heart
<i>Qâma ma' al-Masîh</i>	Raised with Christ
<i>Qassîs</i>	Pastor
<i>Quddûs</i>	Most Holy
<i>Qur'ân</i>	Koran
<i>Rabb</i>	Lord
<i>Rabb Yasû' al-Masîh</i>	Lord Jesus Christ
<i>Raḥîm</i>	Merciful
<i>Salâmah min al-taḥrîf</i>	Protection from distortion
<i>Samâ'</i>	Heaven
<i>Sayyid al-Masîh</i>	Lord Christ
<i>Shakḥ</i>	Person
<i>Shakḥî</i>	Personal relationship
<i>Sharî'ah</i>	Way, Path
<i>Sharikah</i>	Companionship
<i>Subḥânahu</i>	(God) be praised
<i>Sulṭân</i>	Authority
<i>Sunnah</i>	Habits (of the Prophet)
<i>Şuliba ma' al-Masîh</i>	Crucified with Christ
<i>Şalîb</i>	Cross
<i>Şawt</i>	Voice
<i>Sûrah</i>	Chapter (of the Qur'an)
<i>Tabrîr</i>	Justification

<i>Tafsîr</i>	Exegesis
<i>Tajassud</i>	He incarnated
<i>Tajwîd</i>	Art of 'musical' recitation of the Koran
<i>Ṭarîq, Ṭarîqah</i>	Path, Way, Road
<i>Tasbîḥ</i>	Praise
<i>Tawbah</i>	Repentance
<i>Tawbah ḥaqîqîyah</i>	True repentance
<i>Tawḥîd</i>	Oneness
<i>Thalûth</i>	Trinity
<i>Ṭabî'ah al-basharîyah</i>	Human nature
<i>Ṭabî'ah al-khat'iah</i>	Sinful nature
<i>Ujrat al-khatîyah hîyá mawt</i>	Wages of sin is death
<i>Ummah</i>	Community
<i>Wahî</i>	Inspiration
<i>Wazîr</i>	Treasurer, Minister
<i>Yasû' al-Mu'allim</i>	Jesus the Master
<i>Yaṭlub wajh Allâh</i>	He seeks God's face
<i>Yawm al-ḥisâb</i>	Last Day
<i>Yidfa'a thaman khatâyâ</i>	He paid the price of the sins
<i>Yifdi</i>	Redeem
<i>Yukaffir</i>	Atone
<i>Yukhallis</i>	Save



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

### *1.1.1 Description and Analysis of Protestant Radio in the Arab World*

This study researches the history and aims of Protestant Christian transnational missionary radio broadcasts to the Arab World in the languages of the Arab World. These radio broadcasts were mostly by Shortwave (SW), but also by Mediumwave (MW). The Arab World includes the vast landmass of the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East and North Africa. By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this area consisted of about 323 million people in 22 countries that had Arabic as their official language.<sup>1</sup>

During the first seven centuries of the Common Era (CE), most of the countries in the realm that is now called the Arab World witnessed the growth of the Christian faith in a multitude of cultural and linguistic expressions. Islam became the dominant religion in those lands since the seventh century. On the one hand, it incorporated elements of the Christian faith into the *Qur'ân* while on the other hand it halted the process of Christianization. The percentage of Christians gradually dwindled in many regions.

Islam was less inclined than Christianity to allow diversity and different cultural expressions of the faith and also introduced the Arabic language as the *lingua franca*. This *Arabization* was not equivalent to *Islamization*, because those who chose to remain Christian *also* slowly adopted Arabic as their vernacular and because Islam permeated a much wider region than the present Arab World.<sup>2</sup>

For many centuries hardly any Christian apostolate occurred in the Arab World. The Churches of the Arab World, of which the Coptic-Orthodox Church in Egypt and the Maronite Church in Lebanon are the largest, often suffered from a lack of civil and political rights. Most Christians were not inclined to upset the sensitive social equilibrium by trying to familiarize Muslims with the Christian faith. European Christianity seldom felt compelled to proclaim the Gospel in Arab lands either.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, France, the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy had colonized most of the Arab World. The colonial powers allowed Western missionaries to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the public domain. Colonial bureaucrats however were generally unsympathetic to mission work as they were sensitive to the delicate balance between themselves and the Muslim populations they presided over.

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<sup>1</sup> The countries are Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

<sup>2</sup> From the perspective of many Muslims this means that the process of Islamization has not been completed yet.

Samuel Zwemer, a lifelong American missionary in the Arab World, wrote during World War II that Christians should be ‘storming the Ear-Gate’ of the Arab World by radio. ‘In our day we must use the battering ram of the radio incessantly and repeatedly to summon [the lost] to surrender to Jesus Christ.’<sup>3</sup> This call to a new methodology was made in the context of a growing international radio broadcasting industry and in the midst of the struggle of many Arab countries for their independence.

In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century most Arab countries gained their independence and many regimes recognized the positive role that their native Churches had played in the anti-colonial struggle. However, the new regimes had no sympathy for the Christian witness of foreign missionaries among Muslims, and as a result most missionary visas were withdrawn in the years after independence. At that same time, Arabic missionary radio began to develop.

This study describes the history of Protestant Christian radio and its missionary outreach in the Arab World as regards its history, work and aims. It includes denominational and nondenominational, Ecumenical, Evangelical and Pentecostal organizations.<sup>4</sup> This study is timely as Protestant radio in the Arab World has a history of half a century, while no general history has been written on the subject yet.

The focus on Protestant programs was the result of several limiting considerations. A major consideration was that of the size of this study. Another one was that governmentally arranged Christian broadcasts were excluded, as well as Christian broadcasts with no particular missiological aim. This resulted in an exclusion of Radio Vatican, as that station is under the tutelage of Vatican City. Including Radio Vatican would also have necessitated a comparison between its broadcasts and those of the Protestant stations, which would also increase this study unduly. The Christian radio stations that have been broadcasting in Lebanon during its civil war (1975-1990) have also been excluded, as they existed mainly for political, military or economic reasons or a combination thereof, and to address their own Christian constituencies.

One limitation of this study is that its primary focus is on programs in the Arabic languages. Although millions of ‘Arabs’ have non-Arabic mother tongues, and although there are Christian broadcasts in those languages, the content of these programs is not described in this study. These programs are only referred to in the description of the organizations that are being treated. Another limitation of this study is that the economic aspects of the Protestant Arabic broadcasting industry have to a large extent been ignored. This was needed for the sake of the size of this study and to maintain a focus on missiological issues.

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Zwemer, *Evangelism Today: Message not Method* (New York, London, 1944), p. 100.

<sup>4</sup> The terms *Ecumenical*, *Evangelical* and *Pentecostal* are by no means mutually exclusive, but they are used to designate broad streams of Christian theological thought among Protestants.



### ***1.1.2 Focus on Indigenization, Contextualization, and Christian Witness***

#### **1.1.2.1 Indigenization**

This study researches the programs of the producers and broadcasters of Christian Arabic radio programs from the perspectives of *indigenization* and *contextualization*. It then considers to what extent the indigenization and contextualization have led to a Christian *witness* in the programs.

In missiological studies the term *indigenization* has been largely replaced by the term *contextualization*. For the sake of this study, a circumscribed usage of the term *indigenization* was deemed helpful. It is used solely for answering the question to what extent the radio organizations developed formal and informal Arabic management in their organizations.

#### **1.1.2.2 Contextualization**

##### ***Defining Contextualization***

The other question this study endeavors to answer is to what extent contextualization of the Christian message has taken place in Christian Arabic radio broadcasts. Among the Christian producers and broadcasters, the concept and the limits of contextualization have at times been hotly debated, even before the term itself began to be used. There were some very serious differences of opinion about how to make suitable programs for Arab Muslims, but an added problem in the debate was also that the word *contextualization* itself was a ‘blanket term for a variety of theological models’.<sup>5</sup> When this study quotes Christian radio missionaries about contextualization, it is not always clear what they meant with the word.

The term *contextualization* was first used in a missiological context in the early 1970s in circles of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches (WCC). It referred to the theological processes many non-Western Churches were going through, of reinterpreting the Gospel in terms of their own culture and situation in time.<sup>6</sup> That process in itself was not new to the Arab World; the Churches throughout history endeavored to contextualize the Gospel, even though they did not use that term.<sup>7</sup>

David J. Bosch, South Africa’s leading missiologist, argued convincingly that ‘our entire context comes into play when we interpret a biblical text’ and that therefore, all theology is by its very nature contextual. This means that theology cannot present a supra-cultural ‘pure’ message.<sup>8</sup> Non-Western Churches should be encouraged to write their own theologies in an ongoing *dialogue* between the Christian Scriptures, themselves, and their own culture. Contextualization is le-

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<sup>5</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York, 1991), p. 421.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 420-421.

<sup>7</sup> The most visible example of that is how the national Churches of Egypt, the Levant and Mesopotamia gave up on using their previous languages and adopted Arabic for daily life as well as for their religious texts and worship.

<sup>8</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, pp. 422-423.

gitimate and necessary in every society if the Gospel is to root in that society and to not remain an imported pot plant.

This study agrees with Bosch's cautioning words regarding the universal character of the Gospel as well:

[There] *are* [italics by Bosch] faith traditions which all Christians share and which should be respected and preserved. [...] We therefore - along with affirming the essentially contextual nature of all theology - also have to affirm the universal and context-transcending dimensions of theology. [...] The best contextual theologies indeed hold on to this dialectic relationship.<sup>9</sup>

Among Evangelical missiologists, the word *contextualization* came to be used not so much for theological processes within indigenous churches, but more for the pragmatic methods of expatriate missionaries endeavoring to witness to the Gospel as much as possible in terms of the *receptor* culture.

David J. Hesselgrave, one of the leading American missiologists of the Evangelical mission movement since the 1970s, defined contextualization as 'the process of communicating the biblical Gospel in such a way as to make it meaningful to the people of any given cultural context'.<sup>10</sup> He suggested in general that the Gospel should be communicated in new cultures by simple Biblical storytelling. If through those means a Church came into existence, that Church should become the 'hermeneutical community' deciding how Scripture is best understood and applied in the Church's own context.<sup>11</sup> Although Hesselgrave thereby recognized the need of the indigenous Church to be the main factor in the process of contextualization, he considered the foreign missionary as the catalyst of that process.<sup>12</sup>

Among Evangelical missionaries to the Islamic world contextualization has become a much discussed theme since the 1970s. The American Phil Parshall, who was a missionary in Bangladesh and in the Philippines with Servants in Mission (SIM), played an important role in popularizing the theme through his many publications calling for contextualizing the Gospel into the cultures of Islam.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 426-428.

<sup>10</sup> David J. Hesselgrave, 'Great Commission Contextualization', in *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (Vol. 12 No. 3, July-September 1995), p. 139. Hesselgrave was professor of mission and director of the School of World Mission and Evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois (USA) from 1965-1991.

<sup>11</sup> Hesselgrave, 'Great Commission Contextualization', pp. 141-143.

<sup>12</sup> The different usage of the term *contextualization* in circles of WCC on the one hand and in the Evangelical mission movement on the other hand, was no coincidence. WCC was a meeting place of denominations from the Western world and the Global South that related ecumenically, so its focus was on denominational initiatives. The Evangelical mission movement was dominated by Western missionaries and non-denominational organizations that proclaimed the Gospel in cultures other than their own, and often in contexts with no existent local church.

<sup>13</sup> Among his books, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization* (Grand Rapids, 1980) has probably been the most influential. 'Phil Parshall certainly became the vanguard of C4 in the late 70s. Phil endured an extreme amount of opposition from more than a few C1-3 believers. But Phil [...] wrote a book to build his case for C4, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*. [...] Ironically, less than 20 years after its release, C4 is today probably the most common approach used by new missionaries to Muslims', according to Joshua Massay in 'His Ways are not our Ways', in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (April 1999) as found on <http://bgc.Gospelcom.net/emis> (2 May 2005).

***John Travis' Cross-Cultural Church Planting Spectrums: C1-C6***

A much discussed categorization for stages of contextualizing the Gospel into Islamic cultures has been proposed by John Travis.<sup>14</sup> This American missionary among Muslims in Asia proposed his categorization in the missiological publication *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (EMQ) in 1998. He described what was discussed by many Evangelical missiologists in the Muslim World and implemented by some. His scheme therefore helps to understand what some of these missionaries meant by contextualization. Travis spoke of six distinct *Cross-Cultural Church Planting Spectrums: C1-C6*.<sup>15</sup> In respect to the churches in the Arab World, Travis' spectrums can be summarized as follows:

**C1: Historic Churches using a non-Arabic language**

These churches can be Orthodox, Roman-Catholic, or Protestant. Some predate Islam. There are thousands of these churches in the Muslim world. Some reflect Western cultural styles. A huge cultural chasm exists between these churches and the surrounding Muslim community. Some Muslim-Background Believers (MBB's) may be found in C1 churches. They call themselves Christians.<sup>16</sup>

**C2: Historic Churches using the Arabic church-language**

Except for the Arabic language used in these churches, they are essentially similar to C1. The Arabic used is mainly distinctively Christian and non-Islamic. The cultural gap between Muslims and C2 is large. Often more MBB's are found in C2 than C1. The majority of churches located in the Arab World are C1 or C2. C2 believers call themselves Christians.

**C3: Churches using religiously neutral Arabic language and cultural forms**

In these churches, religiously neutral forms are used, like folk music, artwork, etc. Islamic elements are filtered out so as to use purely non-religious forms. This is done to reduce the foreignness of the Gospel and the church. The congregation, comprised of a majority of MBB's, may meet in a church building or on more religiously neutral terrain. They call themselves Christians.

**C4: Christian communities using Arabic Islamic language and forms**

These communities are similar to C3, but Islamic forms and practices are also utilized (for instance, praying with raised hands, keeping the fast, avoiding pork, alcohol, and dogs as pets, using Islamic terms, dress). Meetings are not held in church buildings. C4 communities consist almost entirely of MBB's. C4 believers, though highly contextualized, are usually not seen as Muslim by the Muslim community. C4 believers identify themselves as followers of *'Īsā al-Masīh* (using the *Qur'ānic* name of Jesus) or something similar.

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<sup>14</sup> His name is a pseudonym.

<sup>15</sup> John Travis, 'The C1 to C6 Spectrum: A Practical Tool for Defining Six Types of Christ-centered Communities (C) Found in the Muslim Context', in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (October 1998), pp. 407-408.

<sup>16</sup> The term MBB is used by many Evangelical missiologists. The disadvantage of the term is that it focuses on the past of the people it designates, and it creates a distinct class of Christians beside those born into Christian families. In the context of the Arab World, some missionaries even speak of Christian-Background Believers (CBB's), thus distinguishing nominal Christians from 'true' believers who were born in the Christian community.

**C5: Communities of ‘Messianic Muslims’ who are followers of ‘Īsā al-Masīh**

C5 believers remain legally and socially within the *ummah* (community) of Islam. Aspects of Islamic theology which are incompatible with the Christian faith are rejected, or reinterpreted. Participation in corporate Islamic worship varies from person to person and group to group. C5 believers meet regularly in communities with other C5 believers and share their faith with Muslims who do not follow Christ. C5 believers are viewed as Muslims by the Muslim community and refer to themselves as Muslims who follow *Īsā al-Masīh*. Other Muslims may see them as theologically deviant and expel them from the community. Where entire villages accept Christ, C5 communities may result in ‘Messianic mosques’.

**C6: Small communities of secret believers**

Due to fear, isolation, or the threat of severe governmental or community retaliation (including capital punishment), C6 believers worship Christ in secret, either individually or in small groups. Many came to Christ through dreams, visions, miracles, radio broadcasts, tracts, Christian witness while abroad, or reading the Bible on their own initiative. C6 (as opposed to C5) believers are usually silent about their faith. They are perceived as Muslims by the Muslim community and identify themselves as Muslims.<sup>17</sup>

This scheme of Travis is one-sided, as it focuses on the extent to which Christian communities resemble Islamic religious meetings and on the usage of Islamic forms and language. That is a rather simplified view of the actual context of people in the Muslim World. Travis also focuses on the question to what extent followers of Jesus identify themselves as Christians or as Muslims, but his scheme does not treat issues of theological content. Therefore, for assessing the level of contextualization of Christian radio broadcasts this C1-C6 scheme will only be used in a limited manner, as described hereunder.

**Radio Contextualization Realms RCRI-RCR6**

This study has developed its own instrument for assessing to what extent Christian Arabic radio programs are contextualized. It has done so based on the premise that the impact on the Gospel of man and society leads to personal and societal *transformation*. The instrument created here for assessing the extent to which the Gospel is presented in a contextualized manner, is a list of realms where that contextualization needs to take place. In the chapters 6 to 19, the different organizations and their programs are studied in the light of the question whether the Gospel is presented in a manner that respects the precepts for each of those realms.

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<sup>17</sup> Travis, ‘The C1 to C6 Spectrum’, pp. 407-408. Parshall was highly critical of those missionaries that considered the C5 position as a missiologically desirable and theologically acceptable aim. Many missionaries believed that Parshall propagated the idea that MBB’s should stay in the mosque as loyal Muslims, while believing in Jesus, just as Judaism knew its Messianic Jews. See Phil Parshall, ‘Danger! New Directions in Contextualization’ in *Evangelical Mission Quarterly* (October 1998), as found on <http://bgc.Gospelcom.net/emis>. Parshall wrote in this article that he never held that position and that he did not agree with the idea. The discussion continued unabated, as was evidenced by another lengthy article by Parshall in 2004 in the same magazine, in which he explained why he disagreed with the C5 method. Phil Parshall, ‘Lifting the Fatwa’, in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (July 2004), as found on <http://bgc.Gospelcom.net/emis>.

These realms are summarized as *Radio Contextualization Realms 1-6*, or RCR1-RCR6. RCR1 is related to questions about the target audience; RCR2 to RCR5 are related to the content of the programs; RCR6 refers to the delivery of the programs. In order to produce and broadcast programs that present a contextualized Christian message for the transformation of man and society, the precepts for the following realms should be satisfied:

**RCR1: Homogenous Target Audience**

Programs must aim at a concretely defined homogenous target audience thereby enabling producers and broadcasters to address the audience's concrete context. Producers or broadcasters who do not have a clearly defined target audience in mind will gravitate to making programs that are contextually appropriate for their own linguistic and religious community and social stratum.<sup>18</sup>

**RCR2: Holistic Context of the Target Audience**

Christian discipleship entails the application of the Gospel to all spheres of life. Contextually suitable Gospel programs therefore reflect the Gospel's impact on all these spheres. The real context of the audience has personal, socio-economic, political, historical, cultural, religious and other components which need to be addressed.

**RCR3: Language**

The program's language should be the language that the target audience considers its own. In the Arab World, this entails a choice between the usage of the literary Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), any of the colloquial Arabic languages, Amazigh languages, or any other language that is spoken in the Arab World as a mother tongue. It may also involve combinations of these.<sup>19</sup>

**RCR4: Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

In Christian programs, linguistic and cultural terms and forms must be used that are understandable for the target audience, or that are clearly explained. This entails a choice of words, examples, stories, music, and even of presenters or speakers in the programs that is congenial to the audience.

**RCR5: Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

The goal of Christian communication is to present Jesus Christ to the audience, and to gather Christian believers into the concrete, organized, expression of the Body of Christ, the Church. It is therefore important that programs portray Christ and the Church in a meaningful and relevant manner.

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<sup>18</sup> In 1989, the Lausanne Movement squarely supported this People Group orientation in radio. It wanted to 'aggressively counter' the idea that radio was for 'the masses out there' and that the same message would 'suffice for all people equally': 'It is our view that every integrated radio strategy will need to be worked out in the context of the People Group targeted. Programming needs to be conceived such that the Christ of the Gospel finds and meets listeners in that group right where they are in their very real world of 'today' with all its anxieties, frustrations, doubts and fears. How could we, then, justify a generalized approach?' See 'Radio in Mission' (1989), an occasional paper of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, on [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org) (18 December 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Amazigh (pl: Imazighen) means *Free Man* and is the name Berbers prefer to use for themselves. This thesis does likewise, in order to avoid the pejorative *barbarous* connotation of Berber.

**RCR6: Media Environment of the Programs**

The audience's understanding and appreciation of the message is affected by the technology that carries the message and by the surrounding programs it is delivered within. It is therefore important to ask to what extent the broadcasts come by a channel and in the midst of other programming that is appreciated by the target audience.

It is important to be aware that RCR1-RCR6 do not refer to *stages* of contextualization, but to the different *realms* where contextualization must be implemented. Though creating measurable scales for these realms is not possible in the context of this study, it is also clear that in each of the realms it is possible to speak of being less or more successful in contextualizing the Gospel. This study does use Travis' C1-C6 scheme as a rough scale for assessing RCR5 contextualization in regard to the question how the Church is portrayed in the radio programs. This is partially done as a manner to assess the relative value of the C1-C6 scale for describing to what extent churches in the Arab World are contextualized.

**Contextualization Warnings CW1-CW6**

For evaluating the theological and missiological suitability of the methods of contextualization as propagated and used by the organizations studied here, some *caveats* are in order. Contextualization should be done in a manner that respects the three major components of the process, namely *Gospel*, *Church* and *culture*. For assessing Christian radio broadcasts to the Arab World, this study has developed the following six Contextualization Warnings, CW1- CW6:<sup>20</sup>

**CW1: Recognition of Absolute Truth**

There should be a recognition of the uniqueness of the self-revelation of God in the Bible and ultimately in Jesus Christ, and of the necessity of faith in that revelation and participation in the Church for salvation.

**CW2: Process within the Community of the Church**

Theologizing about how the Gospel ought to be contextualized must be done by Church communities, not just by individuals, let alone by individuals who are not part of the church community of the targeted context.

**CW3: Unity of the Worldwide Church of the Past and of Today**

Church communities that contextualize the Gospel into their own culture must ensure that their methods of contextualization are rooted in the unity of the global Church of the past and of today, and that their methods do not undermine it.

**CW4: Prophetic Role of the Gospel**

When the Gospel enters into a new cultural context, it becomes part of that culture, but it also has a prophetic message for that culture. The Gospel in its core and in all

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<sup>20</sup> These *Warnings* to a certain extent reflect the *caveats* of the American missiologist Paul G. Hiebert. See Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, 1994), pp. 84-86. Hiebert was professor of mission and anthropology as well as chairperson of the School of World Mission and Evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois since 1991 until he passed away in 2007.

its expressions will transform people in every culture; efforts to accommodate the content of the Gospel to the context make it less offensive, but also less salvific.

**CW5: Good News for the Individual and for Society**

The Gospel is Good News for the individual and his soul but it is also Good News for all of creation; that includes socio-economic and political structures. True contextualization maintains a balance between the individual and the societal sides of the Gospel.

**CW6: Form and Meaning Inseparable**

There ought to be awareness that cultural forms and language are inextricably linked with meaning; they cannot be separated.

In this study a variety of Christian Arabic production and broadcasting organizations will be evaluated with respect to the level of contextualization achieved in their programs. The above outlined RCRs and CWs will form the criteria upon which conclusions will be drawn.

**1.1.2.3 Christian Witness**

Christian witness is the *raison d'être* for the Christian apostolate, and Protestant mission radio should be measured against that yardstick. Is the Christian message a 'Gospel in the air', or has the witness to Jesus Christ been presented in terms that reflect the concrete context of the Arabic audiences and contextualization as an ongoing *dialogue*?

The word *witness* as used in the Christian religion is a Biblical term. The writers of the Bible knew the word from its usage in Greek society. There, the term *martus* was used for a witness to facts in the legal sense, and also to facts, truths, and views more generally. A witness could be someone who made statements about objective events, or he made his personal convictions known.<sup>21</sup> When the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, uses the term *martus*, it generally has the same meaning as in non-Biblical Greek, though often with a distinctly religious flavor.

In the New Testament, the usage of *martus* is similar to secular usage in Greek society and religious usage among the later prophets of the Hebrew Bible. A *martus* testifies to the events of history as an eyewitness. These events include the life of Jesus and his physical resurrection. However, they also testify to what they, in faith, have understood Jesus to be, namely the Son of God who gives eternal life to those who believe in Him and who will inaugurate God's Kingdom on earth.

Already in the New Testament, the meaning of the term *witness* undergoes a shift from the *eye-witness* to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, to the *confessing witness* who attests to the theological meaning of these historical events without have been present. The apostle Paul exemplified this change in usage of the term. The later books of the New Testament combine the idea of being a wit-

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<sup>21</sup> Hermann B. Strathmann, 'Martus, martureoo, marturia, marturion', in Gerhard Kittel (ed), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* Vol. IV (Grand Rapids, 1967), pp. 476-478. Lothar Coenen, 'Zeugnis', in L. Coenen, E. Beyreuther, H. Bietenhard (eds), *Theologischen Begrifflexikon zum Neuen Testament* III (Wuppertal, 1977), pp. 1478-1486.

ness with participation in the suffering of Christ. Jesus Himself is, in the last book of the New Testament, pictured as the supreme Witness who sealed his testimony with his death. The theologian Hermann B. Strathmann says correctly that the ‘crucified Lord is the model of the Christian witness’.<sup>22</sup>

During the second century, the concept that witnessing entails the verbal testimony to the historic facts of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, as well as its theological meaning, was maintained. At the same time, the term *martus* became reserved for those who sealed that witness by their death. Hence, the term *martus* came to mean *martyr* and *witness* at the same time. This should be seen in the light of the fact that at times the church suffered from severe persecutions by the Roman state.<sup>23</sup>

The close relationship between suffering and Christian witness was maintained in churches that continued to live in circumstances of persecution and suppression, like the Coptic-Orthodox Church of Egypt. As the Churches in the Arab World were more and more restricted in verbally witnessing to Christ in the public domain, they increasingly spoke of Christian witness in terms of their Eucharistic liturgy and their diaconal social work, in apposition to verbally testifying to the Gospel to those outside the pale of the Church.<sup>24</sup>

In Roman-Catholicism, the link between being faithful witnesses and suffering was internalized in mystical movements and in some monastic movements, but not in mainline theology. In the Churches of the Reformation, with their focus on the Scriptures as the final authority for faith and theology, Christian witness was mostly defined as the verbal proclamation of the Gospel.

In the 1950s, the International Mission Council (IMC) developed a theology of Christian witness. At its Willingen Conference in 1952, it defined the Christian witness as *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*.<sup>25</sup>

The *kerygma* is used in this study for the verbal testimony to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, both in the community of the Church and in the world. This includes verbalizing the Gospel to adherents of other religions. *Koinonia* is used for the communion of the Christian believers with Christ and with each other, with the Eucharist at its heart. Part of this is also the search for the unity of the Church. *Diakonia* is the service rendered by the Church to the needy, both in the Church and in the world. This entails acts of charity, but political involvement as well, including the defense of human rights.

To the extent in which the Church practices the *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia* in a balanced manner, its Christian witness resounds. When one or more of these three elements of the Christian witness are weak or lacking, the other elements also lose some characteristics of being a witness to Christ.

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<sup>22</sup> Strathmann, ‘Martus, martureoo, marturia, marturion’, p. 496.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 504-508.

<sup>24</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, pp. 210-213.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.p. 511-512. The Dutch missiologist Johannes C. Hoekendijk from the University of Utrecht (The Netherlands) played an important role in the formulation of this triptych. There are problems with this triptych, as the Biblical terms have overlapping meanings; the triptych of terms was deemed helpful, however, when defined as done for this study.



The influence of Orthodox theology on the understanding of the Christian witness has been significant, especially after the New Delhi Assembly of the WCC in 1961. The Eastern Orthodox Churches have brought the importance of the Eucharist as the focal point of God's self-revelation to the foreground. As a Eucharistic community, the Church emulates Christ's death in its attitude of vulnerability, and his life in its holiness. In order for *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia* to be a true witness to Christ, they must be embedded in the holiness and vulnerability of the worshipful Church community. This Orthodox view reverberates to a certain extent also in the Evangelical mission movement, where much stress is laid on the need for personal integrity and holiness in mission as the *sine-qua-non* for being effective witnesses to Christ. The Manila Manifesto affirmed in 1989 that 'we who proclaim the Gospel must exemplify it in a life of holiness and love, otherwise our testimony loses its credibility'.<sup>26</sup>

### **1.1.3 Impact of Christian Arabic Broadcasts**

Until recently audience response figures have often been used among the Christian radio broadcasters and producers as the main tangible means to assess the impact of their programs on the Arab World since on-the-ground audience research has been impossible for them in most Arab countries. However, as there are many factors that impact the size of audience response to programs, this study does not use audience response figures to assess the size of the audience or whether programs are properly contextualized.

Another method to judge the impact of Christian radio would be to study the response of the Arabic media to Christian Arabic radio. Although the articles concerned are useful for assessing Muslim Arab perceptions of Christian broadcasts, they do not give usable factual information beyond sounding the alarm.

A further difficulty in attaining information with respect to broadcasting effectiveness is encountered through censorship. In 1991, the Egyptian Muslim writer Karam Shalabî published a book in Arabic about Christian Arabic Radio, titled *The Evangelistic Broadcasting directed at the Arab Muslims (Al-Idhâ'ah al-Tanşîriyah al-Muwâjijah ilâ al-Mûslimîn al-'Arab)*. The book was published by Islamic Legacy Bookshop (*Maktabah al-Turâth al-Islâmîyah*) in Cairo. Within a week of its publication it was removed from bookshops and libraries by the office of the censor and it has been impossible to obtain a copy of this book for the sake of this study.<sup>27</sup> Efforts to get hold of this publication and similar responses to Christian radio broadcasts in the secular and Islamic Arabic media are recommended as a source for further studies.

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<sup>26</sup> This is the 15<sup>th</sup> Affirmation of The twenty-One Affirmations of the Manila Manifesto (Manila, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> Information about Egyptian censorship forbidding this book and taking it out of all bookshops was received from the prestigious *Madbûlî* bookshop in downtown Cairo.

## **1.2 METHODOLOGY**

### ***1.2.1 Historical Method***

The first method applied in this study is the historical method; it is used in all chapters. This study begins with describing the political history of the Arab World, its languages and literacy, and the history of Christianity and of transnational radio. These chapters 2 to 5 are mainly based on secondary literary sources. That is deemed justifiable as these chapters are introductory only, and neither the actual theme of this study nor the primary field of expertise of the author.

The historical method is also used in the chapters 6 to 18 for describing the historical development of Christian Arab radio during the past fifty years. The research for these chapters concerning broadcasters and program producers is based on primary sources. Due to a lack of historical works the first need was to describe the historical framework of each organization. Similarly these primary sources are also used in chapter 19, where a conclusive overview of the history of Christian Arabic radio is presented, based upon research of the history of each of the organizations involved. That chapter also contains a brief history of the discourse on contextualization of those involved in Christian Arabic radio.

The availability of primary documents varied during this study due to the assessment of the organizations involved regarding the level of secrecy that needed to be maintained. In most Arab countries Christian media are deeply distrusted if not illegal, and thus not all Christian organizations and individuals were prepared to open their files or to give information for this research. That attitude, often for the protection of personnel, is understandable. The assessment of risk by organizations and individuals was usually based on whether or not their personnel worked in countries where they had the freedom to be fully open about their work.

Published works such as books, magazines and articles from the Internet, as well as unpublished Master and Doctoral theses, have been used as secondary sources. Publications of the organizations described were especially valuable, both for the factual information about their history and for assessing the theological and missiological viewpoints of the organizations.

Interviews with people who had been involved in Christian radio, either face-to-face or by post and email, were a tertiary source of information. In order to assess the value of the information gained in this manner, it was extensively cross referenced with information gained from archives and other sources, and by having other people who were involved to read and criticize the texts. The information gained was usually read by the original interviewees again, to confirm the accuracy of the final material. The growing body of information found on the Internet of a non-scientific level was viewed as a tertiary source and was cross referenced as well.

### ***1.2.2 Systematic Method***

Beside the historical method, this study used a systematic method. This history of Christian Arabic radio seeks to systematically answer the questions related to indigenization, contextualization and the Christian witness of broadcasters and producers of Christian Arabic radio programs. This systematic approach is necessary in order to create order in the wealth of information on Christian Arab radio. It is also a precondition for being able to compare the organizations involved in Christian Arab radio.

In the chapters 6 and 8 to 13, where the message of Christian Arabic radio as broadcast during one week in September 2004 has been described, the systematic method is used extensively. These chapters describe the Christian radio broadcasters that were actually broadcasting in 2004. Radio ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa'), treated in chapter 7, was one of the broadcasters of Christian Arabic programs, but as the station was destroyed in 1990, there were no programs broadcast in September 2004.<sup>28</sup> The chapters 14 to 18 describe Christian radio producers that placed their programs in the blocks of airtime of the broadcasters as described in the chapters 6 and 8 to 13, so their programs of September 2004 are researched in that context only. These chapters contain the results of research into how the programs dealt with Biblical topics, the Arabic Churches, Ecumenical issues, matters of pastoral care, cultural, socio-economic and political issues, and the issue of Christian-Muslim relations. The question to what extent the treatment of these themes reflected a contextualized approach is paramount, beside the question as to what extent the Christian witness resounded through these programs. These central questions about contextualization and the Christian witness make this study in the first place one in the field of missiology.

Audience response figures have also been subjected to systematic research. Any information that could be gathered about these figures has as much as possible been described in graphs in order to study trends. This study has systematically endeavored to relate changes in audience response to issues pertaining to the broadcasts *per se*, like signal strength and hours of broadcasts, but also to factors external to these broadcasts like political and societal changes.

### ***1.2.3 Comparative Method***

In the chapters 6 to 18 the comparative method is used in order to assess the formal programming strategies against the actual programs produced and broadcast throughout the individual organization's history and specifically from 20-26 September 2004. Chapter 19 compares the broadcasters, the producers and their messages with each other, both as regards to their similarities and to their differences. That will be done with a focus on indigenization, contextualization and the Christian witness of these organizations and their programs.

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<sup>28</sup> The letters ELWA were the call sign assigned to the station by the authorities in Liberia. The letters stood for *Liberia West Africa*. The organization liked to say that it meant *Eternal Love Winning Africa*.

### 1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

#### *1.3.1 Historical, Linguistic, Religious, and Radio-Industrial Context*

The chapters 2 to 5 describe the historical, linguistic, religious and radio-industrial background to the development of Christian Arabic radio. These chapters are not only relevant as a general context for understanding the development of the Christian radio organizations, but they are also of relevance to understanding the extent to which the programs of those broadcasters are contextualized.

Chapter 2 deals with the historical framework in which Christian radio in the Arab World has developed. As such it first contains a brief overview of the history of the Arab World and the role of Islam therein. During the period of the anti-colonial struggle and in the early post-colonial years, the Arabs were unified by their dream of a restoration of their historical unity and greatness. Initially this hope for an Arab renewal was enthusiastically adopted in most Arab countries, by Muslims as well as Christians. Christian Arabic radio reached its zenith at a time when the dream of Arab unity, progress and prosperity began to be shattered.

Chapter 3 discusses languages and the educational systems and issues of illiteracy in the Arab World. For Christian Arabic radio these issues are paramount as all radio producers had to make choices regarding the languages to use and the audiences to target. The adoption of MSA by all Arab countries as their official language was an important unifying element for the Arabs. This was a political decision as MSA was not spoken by anyone as a mother tongue in the Arab World. All inhabitants of the Arab World spoke rather different local and national colloquial Arabic or non-Arabic languages.

Chapter 4 discusses the main Churches in the Arab World, and particularly the status-quo of Christianity in the Arab World during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This description is relevant in the framework of this study as the producers of the Christian radio programs have come from these Churches and moreover, the Churches and their members were often the target audience of the broadcasters.

Chapter 5 describes the development of Arabic radio. It treats the Arabic transnational broadcasts by non-Arabic countries as well as the development of the radio industry in the Arab World itself. Egyptian political radio broadcasts were effective means of propaganda during the 1950s and 1960s. These broadcasts encouraged many Arabs to buy radios. This was greatly encouraged by the fact that the development of transistor radio had made radio accessible, even to the poor in the Arab World. Though Egypt's broadcasts were aimed at unifying the Arab World, the political landscape of the Arab World remained politically fragmented. Following Egypt's example, other Arab regimes invested in their own SW transmitters during the 1960s and 1970s to fight out their differences over the airwaves. These often bitter verbal wars played an important role in creating an Arab audience for radio broadcasts, and thus also for Christian broadcasts. Arab nations continued to invest in powerful transmitters during the 1990s.

### ***1.3.2 Christian Arabic Radio Organizations and their Broadcasts***

The chapters 6 to 19 describe and analyze all Protestant Christian radio broadcasters and selected radio producers in the Arab World. This study chose to treat each main organization separately. This was deemed necessary as their separate histories had not been written previously and because there was little synchronism in how these organizations developed. This study first focuses on the organizations that were *broadcasters*, in chapters 6 to 13. Then, in the chapters 14 to 18, some organizations are treated that only *produced* programs, and placed those for broadcasting in the program grids of the organizations described in the chapters 6 to 13. The sequence in which these two groups of organizations are treated is based on when they first began broadcasting or producing Arabic programs.

The organizations working in Christian Arabic radio are often part of larger organizations that broadcast and produced programs in other languages and in other parts of the world. All organizations tend to bear the imprint of the attitudes, opinions and personalities of the original founders. Therefore the origins of these organizations are briefly described and analyzed before turning to the Arabic 'branches'.

The central question of this study is to what extent the different organizations have indigenized their work, presented a contextualized message, and gave clear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Arab World. Part of that assessment is to study whether the organizations treated are denominational or non-denominational, Ecumenical, Evangelical or Pentecostal, amillennial, premillennial or post-millennial, and whether they have a polemic or a more apologetic approach. In order to answer these questions, each organization was examined with respect to its history, its statement of faith, its programming philosophy, its target audiences and preferred languages, the actual programs produced and broadcast, and the audience response to those programs.

The chapters 6 and 8 to 13, about the broadcasting organizations that were actually broadcasting in 2004, include an analysis of the actual Arabic programs broadcast during the week of 20 to 26 September 2004. These chapters systematically describe the specific content of these programs with a view to the contextualization of the Gospel and the extent to which they are a witness to the Gospel. The description focuses on the content of the broadcasts as regards Biblical topics, the role of the Arabic Churches, Ecumenical issues, matters of pastoral care, cultural, socio-economic and political issues, and the issue of Christian-Muslim relations. This selection of topics was not based on what the broadcasters deem most important, but was made for the sake of this study. Only programs produced in MSA and Arabic colloquial languages were included in this research.

In the description of the Christian Arab radio producers it was necessary to mainly focus on organizations with a long history in Christian Arabic radio production and on those with an important productive output, as these played the major role in the development of structure and strategy in Christian Arabic radio. Constraints of space and time meant that some major organizations could not be treated in this study. These include the radio work of the Near East Baptist Mission (NEBM), the Middle East Lutheran Mission (MELM) and Life Agape. The dozens of Arab individuals within and outside the Arab World who have produced pro-

grams of 15 or 30 minutes each week added much to the content and depth of Christian Arabic broadcasts, but they did not have a major impact on the structural and strategic developments this study is interested in. Some of these individual producers and their work are briefly treated in the context of the broadcasters who aired their programs.

### ***1.3.3 History and Nature of ‘Gospel in the Air’ in the Arab World***

Chapter 19 describes the organizations that are the focus of this study as treated in the chapters 6 to 18 historically, systematically, and comparatively. First, a brief general history of Christian Arabic broadcasting is given, from the perspective of organizational developments, airtime, indigenization, and developments in the Arab World and the USA and Europe. Next, the issue of contextualization is treated. This includes a general history of how contextualization was treated by the broadcasters and producers. Then, an overview is given of how the broadcasters actually contextualized their programs of 20-26 September 2004. This is measured by the RCR1-RCR6 Radio Contextualization Realms and the CW1-CW6 Contextualization Warnings as developed for this study. Then, this chapter draws some conclusion about the C1-C6 spectrums of John Travis, and regarding audience response and its actual figures as treated in this study.

Chapter 20 focuses on the nature of the Christian radio broadcasts to the Arab World. It first discusses the tendencies to uniformity and pluriformity in the Arab World. For the Churches of the Arab World and Christian Arab radio to have a future, increasing pluriformity of Arab society is vital. Without this, there is no place for a Christian witness in the public domain. Next, the development toward unity and pluriformity among Christian radio in the Arab World is described. A major question will be to what extent Christian radio as a whole is able to be a signpost for the unity and the pluriformity that it depends on in social and political life in the Arab World. Then, chapter 20 discusses the extent to which Christian Arab radio has been able to present a balanced Christian witness in the public arena through its *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*. This study ends with an eye on the future of Christian Arabic radio broadcasting. It presents a set of suggestions for contextualized Christian witness in Arabic radio broadcasts, in the light of expectations for the Arab Churches and Christians in the Arab World.

## **1.4 SOURCES**

### ***1.4.1 Primary Sources***

For the description of the broadcasters of Christian Arabic radio programs in the chapters 6 to 13, the archives of some organizations and individuals involved could be accessed. Robert Arnold, the archivist of SIM in Fort Mill, South Carolina (USA) made every useful document from SIM’s archives on ELWA available.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> SIM originally stood for *Sudan Interior Mission*. In 1982 it came to mean *Society of International Ministries*, and in 2000 it came to mean *Servants in Mission*.

Hovig Nassanian and Derek Knell of Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) in Limassol (Cyprus) made many documents on FEBA available. Alex Elmadjian of the Adventist Media Center-Middle East (AMC-ME) and Bert Smit of Adventist World Radio (AWR) went through their files in Nicosia (Cyprus) and Binfield (England) and made relevant documents available.

Of the broadcasters treated in the chapters 6 to 13, it was not possible to access the archives of Trans World Radio (TWR), Family Radio (FR), International Broadcasting Association (IBRA), Bible Voice Broadcasting (BVB) and its originator High Adventure Ministries (HAM), and HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings').<sup>30</sup> Some personnel and former personnel of those organizations were, to varying degrees, helpful in the writing of this study by allowing themselves to be interviewed. These organizations also published newsletters, magazines, and books that were used in describing their work. The lack of archival information does give the historical descriptions of these organizations a tentative character and further research is needed.

All five producers of programs that are described in the chapters 14 to 18 have opened their archives for this research. Shelagh Friedli of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Geneva (Switzerland) gave free access to archival materials of Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) and the Near East Council of Churches (NECC), after 1974 called Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). Shirley Madany researched the archives of the Arabic department of the Back to God Hour (BTGH) in Chicago (USA) and made many valuable papers available. Arab World Ministries (AWM) in Worthing (England) and Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) in Malaga (Spain) allowed free access to their archives. Michael Bond of Global Radio Outreach (GRO) in Seattle (USA) made board minutes, annual reports and other relevant documents accessible.

Books written by the Christian broadcasters and producers themselves were used extensively in this study for the chapters 6 to 13. They usually focus on the global impact of these broadcasters and not on their Arabic work, and they were obviously all written from the perspective of the organizations they describe. These publications were important for this study as they helped to create the historic framework and general introductions to the organizations treated, even though most of them had a rather hagiographic character.

This study has made extensive use of interviews with many of the people working in Christian Arabic radio. These interviews were sometimes done face to face, but more often email and sometimes by post. Some of these people were able to consult their agendas, even from the mid 1950s. Others came up with their personal newsletters, and others again allowed their memories to be triggered by texts as supplied by the present author. The input of these many people has been very helpful. Those interviewees who preferred not to be mentioned have remained anonymous; others have appeared in the footnotes and in the text of this study where appropriate.

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<sup>30</sup> The letters HCJB were the call sign given to the Ecuador station by the authorities there. The organization liked to use it for 'Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings'.

The websites of the organizations researched were additional sources of information and often contained skeleton frames of their history. As these websites often having a fundraising role, the historical information supplied was viewed in that context. These websites usually contained statements of faith, and sometimes the programming philosophies of the organizations.

The primary sources for the description of the actual programs as described in chapters 7 to 13 were the Arabic programs as broadcast from 20-26 September 2004.<sup>31</sup> This period was randomly selected. The programs were received on Sony ICF-SW7600GR digital radios with SW and MW bands, and taped on audio cassettes with the help of three Egyptian and one Sudanese men.<sup>32</sup> The recordings were made approximately 100 kilometers northwest of Cairo at the Coptic-Orthodox desert retreat center *Ānāfūrā* of Bishop Thomas. In that location radio waves suffered less interference than in the city of Cairo. Many programs were not directed at Egypt, and could not be received at all. Most of the broadcasters except FR and BVB made all the programs digitally available, so that some programs that were aimed at other parts of the Arab World could also be researched. The programs of FR and BVB could be accessed through web-radio. In this way all primary materials needed for these chapters were available.

#### 1.4.2 Secondary Sources

For the description of the history of the Arab World in chapter 2, mostly secondary sources were used. In order to create a framework for the history of the Arab World Philip K. Hitti's unsurpassable *History of the Arabs* (2002, first edition 1937), Albert Hourani's *A History of the Arab Peoples* (2002, first edition 1991) and Bernard Lewis' *The Arabs in History* (1993, first edition 1958) were used. Hitti and Hourani were Lebanese *émigrés*, Hitti to the United States, Hourani to the United Kingdom. Their works were useful as they give a detailed overview of Arab history. They wrote from the perspective of a Pan-Arab historiography, which affects how these books value the impact of non-Arabs on the history of the Middle East. Lewis' book was useful as it was written from an outsider's viewpoint, and as it was more critical of Arab history in general and Pan-Arabism in particular.

The description of the linguistic situation in the Arab World in chapter 3 used an amalgam of articles and books, both written in English and in Arabic. Especially the Arabic sources must be mentioned here, as these gave this study insight in the linguistic self-assessment of Arabs. For understanding the Arabic language and also to a certain extent, early Islamic history, the *Qur'ān* was one of the important sources. Sa'īd Aḥmad Bayūmī, *Umm al-Lughāt* [Mother of Languages] (2002) was a good reference. So was Ḥoṣām al-Khatīb, *Al-Lughah al-'Arabīyah: Idhā'ah 'Aṣrīyah* [The Arabic Language: Modern Dissemination] (1995). Finally, Aḥmad Samīr Baybars, *Al-Wāqa' al-Lughawī wa al-Huwīyah al-'Arabīyah* [Linguistic Re-

<sup>31</sup> Only for the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) broadcasts, programs from 19-25 September 2004 were researched as those were received digitally from their Adventist Media Center (AMC) in Cyprus. As this difference was inconsequential for this research, this slight digression was not rectified.

<sup>32</sup> These were Tāmīr Jūrj Rāghīb, Bāsim Sa'ad As'ad and 'Isā Frānsīs 'Abd Allāh, under the leadership of Sharīf Fū'ād Mīrham.



ality and Arab Identity] (1989) must be mentioned. These books defend the need to use MSA as the sole language by all Arabs, as it is the language of Islam and of Arab unity. These sources have been supplemented by the author's own research over almost 20 years of travel and living in the Arab World and speaking with many Arabs about issues related to language, education and literacy.

For the description of the different branches of Christianity in the Arab World in chapter 4, an important handbook was Habib Badr (ed), *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (2005). This book was originally published by the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) in Arabic in 2001. It is especially helpful for its views of the mission movement and the Ecumenical movement in the Arab World. Other important handbooks used were Aziz S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (1967), and Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* [Eastern Christians within the World of Islam], (1997). These books present two rather different approaches to the Middle Eastern Churches and the problems they face in Arab Muslim society. This difference is a reflection of how the Arab World has changed in the 30 years between the publishing of their books.

Atiya wrote his book when secular Pan-Arabism was still popular in the Arab World. Many Christians saw the dream of an Arab World independent of foreign influence and united by a common language and history, as the precondition for a Christian future in the Arab World. Atiya concluded that 'national unity' had come 'to stay, that religion belongs to God and the homeland to all'.<sup>33</sup>

Teule and Wessels did not share Atiya's optimism. The *fundamentalization* of the Arab World since the 1970s created tremendous problems for the Churches. In the introduction of their book, they seamlessly move from describing the historic struggle of Arab Christians to describing what some contemporary Christians think should be done in order to survive in Arab society. Their book describes:

[...] the tension between 'being different' and the search for their own Christian Arab identity. Exactly because of them 'being different', through their connections with other cultures than the Arab one, Christians were often the ones through whom new ideas and concepts were introduced in the world of the east. The other side of the coin is that these 'others' were often forced into the roles of 'strangers' by the Muslims. Parallel to this is that some Christian groups cherished this otherness and felt more connected with their Byzantine or European fellow believers than with their Islamic neighbors. [...] There are also Christians who, supported by their church leaders, believe that if Christianity in the east wants to have a future, one needs to resolutely choose for an 'Arab Christianity', a Christianity that is enculturated (incarnated) in the religio-cultural reality of the region.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Aziz S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (Millwood, 1991, first edition 1967), p. 112. This quote was, strictly speaking, about the situation in Egypt, but as the mood all over the Arab World was rather similar at that time, it may be assumed that Atiya had a similar optimistic view of all of Arab society.

<sup>34</sup> Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), pp. xvii-xviii.

This view of the need for an enculturated Christianity does not lead Teule and Wessels to a denial of the grave problems between Arab Muslims and Christians in history and in the present. They base the proposed solution on the fact that there *are* grave problems and that Christians have often fared rather poorly under Arabic Islam. Atiya however seems so impressed by the dream of peaceful cohabitation of the 1950s and 1960s, that he is unrealistically positive about the relationships that existed between the Arab Muslims and Christians during the first few centuries of Islam.

The result of this approach was that Atiya sometimes glossed over some of the problems in Muslim-Christian relations. Chapter 4 explores these problems and the impact they have had on the development of the Churches of the Arab World, and their significance in understanding contemporary Christianity in the Arab World.

Other handbooks that were used frequently in this chapter were the volumes *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* by Kenneth S. Latourette (1976, but originally published between 1937 and 1945, and Stephen Neill's *A History of Christian Missions* (1979, first edition 1964). As these handbooks were not focussed on the Arab World alone, they were secondary to Badr, Atiya and Teule and Wessels. Other sources referred to are Betty Jane Bailey and J. Martin Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East* (2003) and Andrea Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East: The Challenge of the Future* (1998). Special mention should also be given to Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* (1992), a fine source for early church history. M.D. Knowles, *De Kerk in de Middeleeuwen I* [The Church in the Middle Ages I] (1968) was also used much.

For chapter 5, on the development of transnational propaganda radio toward and by the Arabs, Muḥammad Fathî's *Al-Idhâ'ât al-Miṣrîyah fî Nisf Qarn: 1934-1984* [Half a Century of Egyptian Broadcasts: 1934-1984] (1984) was useful for understanding the role of Egyptian radio. Douglas A. Boyd's standard work *Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Middle East* (1999, first edition 1993) ought to receive special mention as it was so often used as an indispensable reference work. Boyd focuses on the development of radio in its political context, without paying much attention to the technical side of the industry. James Wood's *History of International Broadcasting Vol. 2* (2000) and Donald R. Browne's *International Radio Broadcasting: the Limits of the Limitless Medium* (1982) were also used as sources, even though they were not solely focused on the Arab World. Wood described radio history with a focus on technical developments, while Browne's study followed Boyd's focus on radio within its political context.

For general background to the chapters 6 to 18, Hansjörg Biener's *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfundarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* [Christian Broadcasters Worldwide: The Work of Broadcasting in a Climate of Competition] (1994) was often consulted. The more general books on international broadcasting as mentioned before were also useful for writing these chapters, as each of those recognized the Christian SW broadcasters as an important part of the industry in the Arab World.

### 1.4.3 General Literature

This study has greatly benefited from many tertiary sources that have been regularly consulted, even though not all of those have been formally entered into the footnotes.<sup>35</sup> For studying Islam phenomenologically and in its socio-political context in the Arab World, the German handbook by Werner Ende and Udo Steinbach (eds), *Der Islam in der Gegenwart; Entwicklung und Ausbreitung. Staat, Politik und Recht. Kultur und Religion* [Islam in the Present; Development and Expansion. State, Politics and Law, Culture and Religion] (1984), and the Dutch handbook of Jacques Waardenburg (ed), *Islam; Norm, ideaal en werkelijkheid* [Islam; Norm, Ideal and Reality] (1984) and H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers (eds), *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1974) have been particularly useful.

Edward W. Said, in *Orientalism* (1978) and in *Covering Islam; how the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world* (1981) became the champion of those who argue that most of what is said in Western scientific and expert circles about Islam is biased. After 11 September 2001, when *al-Qâ'idah* destroyed the World Trade Center in New York, it has become increasingly clear how difficult it is to write objectively about Islam. Since then, Western scholarship has published an increasing number of very worthwhile books. Those can, broadly speaking, be divided in two camps: those who focus on Islamic fundamentalism, and terrorism as a result of concretely discernable social, political and economic antecedents, and those who see fundamentalism, or terrorism, as basically rooted in Islam itself. Examples of the first trend are for instance Mahmood Mamdani's *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim; America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (2004) and Gilles Keppel, *The War for Muslim Minds; Islam and the West* (2004). To the second camp of writers belong, for instance, Lewis, as exemplified in his book *What went Wrong; the clash between Islam and modernity in the Middle East* (2002), and Samuel P. Huntington with his book *The Clash of Civilizations* (1997).

In the field of missiology, David J. Bosch's *Transforming Mission; Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (1997, first edition 1991) can hardly be overrated as a handbook. Jan A.B. Jongeneel's encyclopedic works have also been valuable tools for reference. These are *Philosophy, Science and Theology of Mission in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. A Missiological Encyclopedia Part 1: The Philosophy and Science of Mission* (2002, first edition 1995) and *Philosophy, Science and Theology of Mission in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. A Missiological Encyclopedia Part II: Missionary Theology* (1997). As the focus of this present study is on contextualization, Paul G. Hiebert's *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (1994) was used, especially for his *caveats* in the realm of contextualization. With

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<sup>35</sup> Throughout this research, from late 2002 to 2006, the usefulness of the internet increased tremendously in terms of the growing quantity and quality of material available. Powerful search engines such as Google were indispensable in cross-referencing between broadcasters and producers. Google Scholar gave direct access to many scientific publications as evermore scientific writers and publishers used the internet for publishing their articles and books. As with all books, articles, interviews and information found in archives, the information found on the internet was critically assessed. The main difficulty with websites is that they tend to disappear or to change names. Therefore the footnotes make reference to the dates when the websites were accessed for this research.

its aim to apply sociology and anthropology to missiological communication, Marvin K. Mayers, *Christianity confronts Culture; A Strategy for Cross Cultural Evangelism* (1974) played an important role in the development of missiological thinking of many Christian radio organizations. The same is true for Donald McGavran's *Understanding Church Growth* (1970). His sociological approach to missions was embraced by many missionaries. He popularized the ideas that in church growth and mission, the focus must be on homogenous units, that the goal of mission is to get as many people into the church as possible, and that churches and missions should set measurable goals and count their results for refining their strategies. An important counterbalance against this sociologically driven church growth approach is James F. Engel and William A. Dyrness, *Changing the Mind of Missions; where have we gone wrong?* (2000). Samuel Escobar, *A Time for Mission; the challenge for global Christianity* (2003) is a critique of the approach of Western churches to set their own missiological goals, while treating the rest of the world as recipients of their message. This study agrees with this critique, and holds that with respect to mission in the Arab World, the missiology of the indigenous Churches of the Arab World must be decisive for how non-Arabic missionaries operate in the Arab World.

### 1.5 ARABIC TRANSLITERATION

Arabic does not use the Latin alphabet so Arabic words and names used in this study are transliterated. The transliteration of Arabic poses some complications, as is shown for instance by the different manners in which the name of the Prophet of Islam is written. Is it Muhammad, Muhammed, Mohammed, or Mohammad? None of those choices is technically wrong.<sup>36</sup>

This study uses the transliteration method of the Library of Congress of the USA.<sup>37</sup> This transliteration method has been followed when reference is made to Arabic words or proper names. Hence the *Qur'ân*, not the Koran, and not Gamal Abdel Nasser but Jamâl 'Abd al-Nâsir. Though Arabic does not have capital letters, this study uses capitals in cases where English would do so.

For the sake of readability, plurals and adjectives of Arabic transliterated words are Anglicized. Thus, this study speaks of *ḥadīths*, not of *ahādīth*, even though that is the actual plural of *ḥadīth*, and about *Qur'ānic*, not *Qur'ānī* or *Qur'āniyah*, though those would be the proper male and female adjectives of *Qur'ān*.

Five exceptions are made to this system of transliteration. First, for the names of Arabic countries and their major, generally well-known cities, the common English names are utilized. It would be too confusing to speak of *Miṣr* or *Dâr al-*

<sup>36</sup> The common scientific spelling of the name of that person is actually Muḥammad, with a dot under the 'h', to differentiate the letter from the 'h' as pronounced in 'house'. The 'h' in the name of Muḥammad should be pronounced more like the 'h' in 'human', but slightly more aspirated. The second Arabic 'm' in the prophet's name is doubled in transliteration because literary Arabic puts a *shaddah* (a small symbol that looks like 'w') above the 'm' as a sign that it has to be pronounced somewhat longer. For purely technical reasons (Times New Arabic does not work well with bold typeface) this system of transcription has only been followed partially in headings and sub-headings.

<sup>37</sup> See [www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/roman.html](http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/roman.html) (30 January 2005).

*Baydâ'* when reference is made to Egypt or Casablanca. Secondly, in quotes the transliteration of the person cited is followed. The third exception is for the names of Arabs who have emigrated. This study uses the transcription they have adopted as their formal name. The fourth exception is when Arabs are authors of non-Arabic books or articles. In those cases the footnotes use the name of the author as transliterated in their own publications. Finally, the words *Islam* and *Muslim* are treated as English words, and not as their formally transliterated forms *Islâm* or *Mûslim*, except in transcriptions of Arabic literary sources.

Two important companions in this study have been two Arabic-English dictionaries. For understanding MSA, J. Milton Cowan (ed), *Hans Wehr; A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (1980) was indispensable. For Egyptian colloquial Arabic, El-Said Badawi and Martin Hinds, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arab* (1986) was also important.



## 2 The Arab World: Political History

To understand the role of Arabic Christian radio broadcasts and its Christian witness to the Arab World, it is important to have a measure of insight into the history of the Arabs. In this introduction to Arab history, the focus is on Christian-Muslim socio-political relations. This entails the issues of *Arabization* and *Islamization*, which will be important themes in this chapter. It also entails the question to what extent the Churches were able to do their Christian witness in the public domain. Special attention is given to the early history of Islam and its conquests, the Crusades, and to the post-colonial period, as these periods have greatly influenced the mutual understanding of Christians and Muslims in recent history and thus impacted the work of Christian broadcasters to the Arab World.

This chapter divides the history of the Arab World into six broad epochs. These are the pre-Islamic period (until the year 570), the time of Islam's Prophet Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh (570-632), the period of expansion of Islam (632-1055), the period of the Arab World being under siege (1055-1517), then the period of Turkish and Western domination of the Arab World (1517-1922), and finally, the decolonization of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (from 1922).

Such an approach to the history of the Arab World shows broad general developments, but it is complicated by the fact that the different geographic parts of the Arab World have enjoyed a common history only in part. The Arabic language and the Islamic religion created a bond between the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, and the Middle East, but this was only to a certain extent and the differences and the conflicts between these peoples were not obliterated after the coming of Islam.<sup>1</sup>

The power center of Arabic Islam was initially located in the Arabian Peninsula. It then shifted to Damascus (Syria), and later to Baghdad (Iraq) and Cairo (Egypt). Iraq and Egypt are shown to be the main powerful actors that have either ruled over or influenced large parts of the Arab World throughout history. Therefore to a certain extent, a description of the history of the Arab World is focused on Egypt and Iraq. Only since the 1970s has Saudi Arabia become an important power broker in the Arab World, regaining a position of importance in the Arab World that it only had very briefly at the inception of Islam.

### 2.1 ARABIA BEFORE ISLAM

The first detailed information about the Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula dates from the Hellenic period when a series of semi-sedentarized border states were created

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<sup>1</sup> Islam itself created its own divisions between the peoples of the Middle East and the Arabian Gulf, for instance through the division between *Sunnīs* and *Shi'ites*. A recent book that underlines the deep divisions in the Arab World among those lines is Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival; How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York, London, 2007, first edition 2006).

in the Syrian and northern Arabian desert areas. The most important of these states was that of the Nabataeans. At its peak it stretched across the area between the Red Sea, the Dead Sea and the Hijâz. These people spoke Arabic but used Syriac, the written form of Aramaic, in writing. Arabic was not a written language yet. Its capital city was Petra, a key city on the trade routes between the Kingdoms of Southern Arabia and the Mediterranean. This Nabataean country was used by the Roman Empire as a frontier state to guard it from marauding Arab tribes.<sup>2</sup>

In the year 24 before the Common Era (BCE), the Nabataean Kingdom served as the base for Emperor Augustus' expedition to conquer the south-western part of the Arabian Peninsula. Rome hoped to control the trade routes to India but the expedition by 10,000 men under prefect Aelius Gallus was a total failure. Never again would any European force try to conquer the inlands of Arabia.<sup>3</sup>

During the third century of the Common Era (CE), the Syro-Arabian desert saw the development of Palmyra, another important Arab Kingdom. Its Queen Zaynab (Zenobia) ruled over major parts of Asia Minor and the Middle East including Egypt. The Kingdom's wealth was attributed to its power over the northern trade routes from Arabia and Europe to Syria. When Zaynab proclaimed her son emperor it was not well received; Palmyra was conquered in 272 by Roman armies.<sup>4</sup>

The wars between Byzantium and the Sâsânids of Persia during the third and fourth centuries CE made the Red Sea and the Euphrates Valley hazardous for traders to travel. Secure trade routes through the arid Arabian deserts were essential and thus the Arabian merchants profited from this instability. However, the peace between the Byzantine and Persian Empires between 384 and 502, made these routes redundant again. This resulted in a period of economic decline for the Peninsula.<sup>5</sup>

Like Rome, the Byzantines and the Sâsânids allowed the development of Arab buffer states. The Ghassânids formed one such state and were based around the Yarmûk River. In 374 the first bishop, Mûsâ, had been appointed among the Palestinian Arabs, according to tradition at the request of the Arab Queen Mavia. After the Ghassânids had taken power, the Kingdom adopted the Christian faith. They were possibly originally a Yemeni tribe that had settled in Syria. They spoke Arabic while, like the Nabataeans, they used Syriac for writing.<sup>6</sup>

The relationship between Constantinople and the Ghassânids deteriorated by the late sixth century because the Ghassânids were suspected of treason; they were seen as not doing enough against Persian invasions. They had received generous financial handouts from Constantinople since the time of Emperor Heraclius for

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<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (Oxford, New York, 1993, first edition 1950), pp. 20-21. The Apostle Paul lived for three years in this environment after he had become a Christian. Letter of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, 1:17-18.

<sup>3</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (Houndsmills, New York, 2002, first edition 1937), pp. 46-50.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 21-22. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 23-27.

<sup>6</sup> Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam* (Leuven, 2007), pp. 37-40. Lucas van Rompay, '2. Opkomst en groei van onafhankelijke volkskerken in het Oosten tot aan de Arabisch-islamitische veroveringen (451-461)', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), p. 28. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 78-84.



their services as a buffer state but the emperor stopped paying these subsidies after their exhaustive war with Persia that lasted from 603 to 628. As a result Byzantium lost their full allegiance and this was to cost the Empire dearly when the Muslim armies began to move out of the Peninsula and into the Byzantine Empire.<sup>7</sup>

The Kingdom of Ḥīrah, between Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula, was a buffer state between the Sāsānids Persians and the Roman Empire. Toward the end of the third century CE, the Lakhmid dynasty had been established in the southwestern parts of present Iraq. As early as the year 410, Ḥīrah had a Christian bishop. The population adopted the Nestorian faith, which was the most attractive Christian expression to the Persians. The last Lakhmid king, al-Nu'mān III (580-602), converted to the Christian faith. The vernacular of Ḥīrah was Arabic but Syriac was used for writing. According to Hitti, the Christians in southern Iraq 'acted as the teachers of the heathen Arabs in reading, writing and religion'.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the seventh century, Ḥīrah was taken over by Persia and a Persian resident took direct control of the Kingdom. The region remained a Persian outpost until 633 when the land was conquered by Muslim forces.<sup>9</sup>

Before the coming of Islam, there were also churches in the Arabian Peninsula itself. During the third and fourth century many inhabitants of Bahrain appear to have adopted the Christian faith as a result of mission work. Bahrain was the location for two of the five Nestorian bishoprics that existed on the Arabian side of the Gulf at the time of the arrival of Islam.<sup>10</sup>

Najrān, north of Yemen, adopted the *Miaphysite* (usually called *Monophysite*) faith around the year 500; according to tradition a holy man from Syria, Faymiyūn, proclaimed it first in Najrān.<sup>11</sup> In Yemen there was also a small Christian minority at that time. Theophilus Indus, an Arian, was sent as an envoy of Emperor Constantius to Yemen in 356, and founded the first known church in Aden. He founded two more churches to the north.<sup>12</sup> There were also some early Miaphysite missionary activities from Syria. During the sixth century, Yemen had bishops, priests, monks and martyrs, resembling any other Christian land.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>8</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 83-84. Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2: *The Thousand Years of Uncertainty - 500 AD to 1500 AD* (Grand Rapids, 1976, first edition 1956), p. 272.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 27-28. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 83.

<sup>10</sup> It is uncertain when the two bishoprics on Bahrain were dissolved though they are known to have survived until the year 835. In Jubayl, in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, the remains of a church were found in 1986. The Saudi authorities have not allowed any archeological research, but the church may have been one of the five Nestorian bishoprics in Arabia. The ruins originally contained four stone crosses, which later went missing though the marks where the crosses were are still visible. Information found on [www.arab.net](http://www.arab.net) (13 January 2006) and on [www.nestorian.org](http://www.nestorian.org) (14 January 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 61. The second Caliph, 'Umār, deported the Najrāni Christians who refused to adopt Islam in 635-636, to Iraq. For a discussion about the terms *Miaphysite* and *Monophysite*, see chapter 4 on Christianity of the Arab World.

<sup>12</sup> Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam* (Leuven, 2007), pp. 116-118.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 1: *The First Five Centuries - to 500 AD* (Grand Rapids, 1976, first edition 1956), pp. 233-235.

Judaism had more success than Christianity in establishing itself as a religion in Yemen. In the early part of the sixth century there was a Jewish king, Dhu-Nuwâs. The rivalry between Jews and Christians led every now and then to hostilities. Dhu-Nuwâs massacred Christians in Najrân in 523 by burning them in a trench.<sup>14</sup> The Byzantine Emperor Justin I then successfully implored the Abyssinians to help their Christian brothers. In 525 they arrived and stayed as rulers.<sup>15</sup> They colonized Yemen until 575 when they were defeated by the Persians who came to the aid of the pagans and the Jews. Yemen thus changed into Persian hands. In 628, Bâdhân, the fifth Persian ruler of Yemen, became a Muslim.<sup>16</sup>

The war between Byzantium and Persia of 603 to 628 made the trade routes from Syria through western Arabia, to Yemen and India, important again. The economic upswing of the Arabian tribes may have stimulated their cultural life. The first proof of Arab literary activity dates from this period. The Arabs created a wealth of Bedouin poetry that was orally transmitted and written down when Arabic came to be used for writing, in the century after the beginnings of Islam. During this period of economic activity there were also some settlements of Jews and Christians in the Arabian Peninsula, spreading their Hellenistic and Aramaic Christian and Jewish cultures in the heartlands of Arabia.<sup>17</sup>

The west Arabian city that profited most of all from the upswing of trade was Mekka in the Hijâz. This area was important as an accessible, hence strategic, location on the south-north trade route between Yemen and Gaza through Petra. The tribe ruling Mekka, the Quraysh, dispatched large caravans of associated traders into all directions, with the connivance of the Byzantine, Persian and Ethiopian border authorities. This made Mekka and its tribes an important power in Arabia.<sup>18</sup> The Quraysh were also held in high esteem as the guardians of the *Ka'bah*, a small temple in Mekka that contained the statues of all 360 gods that were worshipped in Arabia. The *Ka'bah* was an important shrine for pilgrims.<sup>19</sup>

Philip K. Hitti, the Lebanese-American historian who started the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University in the 1940s, described how the Hijâz was 'ringed about with influences, intellectual, religious and material, radiating from Byzantine, Syria (Aramaean), Persian and Abyssinian centers' in the century preceding the mission of Muḥammad. He also concluded that the 'antiquated paganism of the Peninsula [seemed] to have reached the point where it failed any longer to meet the spiritual demands of the people'.<sup>20</sup>

It is certain that through Jews and Christians many Arabs had turned away from polytheism and had become acquainted with monotheistic notions. In the Hijâz there were many professing Christians, including in Mekka and Medina, though it must be noted that these were probably not indigenous to the region.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The *Qur'anic* chapter *al-Khandaq* (The Trench) refers to this event.

<sup>15</sup> The year 525 is based on Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam* (Leuven, 2007), pp. 126-127; Hitti uses the year 523, see Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 61-65.

<sup>16</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 61-65.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 23-27.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 106.

<sup>19</sup> Hassan Ibrahim Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture* (Cairo, 1969?), p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>21</sup> Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam* (Leuven, 2007), pp. 137-140.

Among those who did not become Jews or Christians, many had adopted some form of monotheism and were called *ḥanīfs*.<sup>22</sup> Monotheistic ideas were to set the Arabs on a new course. This was to happen at a time when the organized political life of Arabia was disrupted and anarchy prevailed. ‘The stage was set [...] for the rise of a great religious and national leader’, Hitti wrote.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.2 MUHAMMAD: PROPHET AND LEGISLATOR: 570-632

### 2.2.1 *Period of Mekka*

One of the traders of the Quraysh was Muḥammad. He was born around 570 as a resident of Mekka and he was aware of developments outside Arabia. In *Sūrah al-Rūm* Muḥammad showed his support for Byzantium in its war against the Persians.<sup>24</sup> It seems likely that his business trips brought him into the sphere of influence of the Persian and Byzantine Empires.

The most important characteristic of religions during the time of Muḥammad was that they were understood as essentially ‘national’ religions in the sense that the different ethno-linguistic communities of the Middle East had their own religious rites in their own vernacular. This fact is usually overlooked in evaluating Muḥammad. Mitrī Raḥāb underlines, correctly, that in the religions of the Middle East, culture, language, ‘national identity’ and religious belonging, were inseparable. The different denominations in the Middle East were *people churches*. The Christian Arabs however, did not have their own people church. They remained dependent on ‘foreign’ churches, for their liturgy and church language. An Arabic Bible did not exist in the period before Muḥammad.<sup>25</sup>

Raḥāb points to the pre-Islamic Christian preacher Quss ibn Sa‘īdah, who lived in the sixth century and who is sometimes identified as a bishop of Najrān. He seems to have been the first preacher who used Arabic in his sermons and he was also known as a great Arab poet. Muḥammad was deeply impressed by the stories he had heard of this preacher who began to contextualize the Gospel in the Arabic realm. Raḥāb stresses that the development of Islam should be seen in this context:

The prophet Muhammad [...] saw himself surrounded by two national religions, Judaism and Zoroastrism, and by a number of national churches: Syrian, Greek, Coptic, Abyssinian, etc. An Arabic national-religious entity and an Arabic revelation

<sup>22</sup> The word came to mean ‘true believer’ or ‘orthodox’ in Islam, but its original meaning is unknown.

<sup>23</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>24</sup> Mitrī Raheb ‘Der Islam: Ein gescheitertes oder gelungenes Projekt christlich-arabischer Kontextualisierung’, in Ulrich Dehn und Klaus Hock (eds), *Jenseits der Festungsmauern* (Neuendettelsau, 2003), p. 286. Mitrī Raḥāb leads The International Center of Bethlehem and is the priest of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem (Palestine).

<sup>25</sup> Raheb, ‘Der Islam: Ein gescheitertes oder gelungenes Projekt christlich-arabischer Kontextualisierung’, pp. 286, 298.

were still lacking. With the Quran, the prophet Muhammad [...] continued the process of contextualization that had just begun.<sup>26</sup>

Muḥammad began to preach to the people of Mekka about the wickedness of idolatry, the need to serve the one true God (*Allāh*), and the imminence of divine judgment. He also preached that the words he was proclaiming were direct revelations from God through the angel Gabriel (*Jibrīl*) and that his preaching was in accordance with how God had revealed himself in the Scriptures of Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Muḥammad's initial approach is illustrated by the visit of some of his early followers to the Abyssinian church. They presented their views about Jesus from parts of the *Qur'ānic* chapter *Sûrah Maryam* (Mary) to these Christians and assumed that they would recognize that Muḥammad was proclaiming the same message as the church did. This indicates that initially Muslims truly believed that they proclaimed the same message as the Church had always done; they believed that they did not introduce a new religion but a contextualized version of the Christian religion. Muḥammad saw his uniqueness in that he had been sent to the Arab nation that had not had prophets before and that did not have their own Scriptures.<sup>27</sup>

Rahâb concluded that Muḥammad initially did not want to start a new religion, but an indigenous Arabic liturgy, and this conclusion seems reasonable. As a confirmation of that stance, he pointed to the fact that in the Middle Eastern Churches, the Bible was mainly known through the texts that were recited in the liturgy, in much the same way as in Islam the *Qur'ân* came to be recited. Also, the word *Qur'ân* is derived from the Aramaic word *Qeryânâ*, which in the Syriac church was used as the term to designate the Lectionary of Bible texts that were chanted in the liturgy. Initially Muḥammad refused to consider what was revealed to him as a new Holy Book. He rebuked those who wanted him to present them with a new Holy Book and considered that as a sign of unbelief. What had been revealed in the Scriptures of the Jews and the Christians seemed to have been enough for him.<sup>28</sup>

### **2.2.2 Period of Medina**

The leaders of Mekka did not accept the message of Muḥammad, possibly for fear of the city losing its respected status of a pagan religious sanctuary and perhaps also because of the social and economic implications of Muḥammad's message. Most converts to Islam were poor. The citizens of Medina, 450 kilometers north of Mekka, heard of Muḥammad and invited him to come with his followers and reside among them. Medina had no vested interest in paganism as Mekka had. In 622, Muḥammad and his followers moved to Medina, where he was allowed to implement his new religion. Muslims call this the *hijrah* (emigration); this event

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 301-302. The quote of Rahâb is translated from German by the author of this study.

<sup>27</sup> Raheb, 'Der Islam: Ein gescheitertes oder gelungenes Projekt christlich-arabischer Kontextualisierung, pp. 304-306.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 306-309. More on the language of the *Qur'ân* and the influence of Aramaic on the *Qur'ân* can be found in chapter 3.

was considered important enough to become the beginning of the Islamic calendar. The *Qur'ānic* parts that were revealed in Mekka seem to reflect more of Muḥammad's religious preaching *per se*, while the parts that were produced in Medina are more concerned with implementation and legislation of his religious ideas.<sup>29</sup>

In Medina, Muḥammad was able to spend extended time with Jewish people groups, while in Mekka he had not met with many. In Mekka he had always felt attached to what he termed *People of the Book* (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) but he must have been bitterly disappointed that neither Jews nor Christians recognized his message as similar to what they already believed. His message in Mekka included that the prophets, sent to the different nations, always proclaimed the same message. That seemed disproved in Medina, both by the differences between Jews and Christians and because neither of them accepted Muḥammad as a prophet. In Medina for the first time Muḥammad began to realize that *al-Tawrah* (the *Torah*, the Jewish Scriptures) and *al-Injīl* (the *Evangel*, hence the Christian Scriptures) contained different message from the Islam he presented. He then began to speak about the *Qur'ān* as the ultimate reference Scripture. Anything in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures that did not match the *Qur'ān* was, according to Muḥammad, changed by unfaithful Jews and Christians. The *Qur'ān* was no longer a liturgical text but had become Holy Writ.<sup>30</sup>

Another change that occurred in Muḥammad's self-understanding was that he no longer saw himself as the prophet for the Arabs only but as the ultimate prophet for all nations.<sup>31</sup> He linked his revelation directly to Abraham, thereby preceding Moses and Jesus. Whereas in the early period in Mekka, Abraham was only seen as a righteous *ḥanīf*, in Medina Muḥammad came to see Abraham's message as the proto-revelation of God. Jews and Christians had deviated from that message and Muḥammad had come to set the record straight and to lead people back to the original religion. Islam had now become a religion of its own. No wonder that in Medina, Muḥammad told his flock to no longer pray in the direction of Jerusalem but towards Mekka and to no longer fast during the Jewish time of fasting at *Yom Kippur* but during the Arabic month of *Ramaḍān*.<sup>32</sup>

The politico-religious *ummah* (community) Muḥammad established in Medina was a development upon the pre-Islamic Arabian town, supplementing the social *mores* of pre-Islamic times with a new set of rules and beliefs. All the regulating ideas were within the structures of tribalism. The British historian Bernard Lewis described the main change:

<sup>29</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 35-38.

<sup>30</sup> Raheb, 'Der Islam: Ein gescheitertes oder gelungenes Projekt christlich-arabischer Kontextualisierung', pp. 310-313.

<sup>31</sup> Raḥāb thought this may have been the result of the Jews calling him a heathen. The Jewish term for heathens, *ummot ha-olam* (peoples of the world) had a negative connotation for the Jews but the Arabic equivalent *ummiyūn* (ignorant people, illiterates) became the positive term Muḥammad used for the masses that he came to identify himself with. He considered himself, like the Apostle Paul, an apostle for the nations. Raheb, 'Der Islam: Ein gescheitertes oder gelungenes Projekt christlich-arabischer Kontextualisierung', pp. 313-316.

<sup>32</sup> Raheb, 'Der Islam: Ein gescheitertes oder gelungenes Projekt christlich-arabischer Kontextualisierung', pp. 313-316.

[Faith] replaced blood as the social bond. Already in the pre-Islamic tribe god and cult were the badge of nationality, and apostasy the outward expression of treason. The change meant [...] the suppression within the Umma of the blood feud and the achievement of greater inner unity, by arbitration. Of equal importance was the new conception of authority. The Sheikh of the Umma, that is, Muhammad himself, functioned for those who were truly converted, not by a conditional and consensual authority, grudgingly granted by the tribe and always revocable, but by an absolute religious prerogative. The source of authority was transferred from public opinion to God, who conferred it on Muhammad as His chosen Apostle. This transfer shaped the whole future history of Muslim government and Muslim political thought.<sup>33</sup>

In Mekka Islam was a religion in a state, while in Medina Islam itself became the state. Then and there Islam came to be the militant polity that it would be for any Muslim who wanted to implement his religion in accordance with the original precepts and organizational principles.<sup>34</sup>

In 630, the Muslim army from Medina conquered Mekka. When two years later Muḥammad died, most tribes of Arabia had come to terms with the new political power and had come to offer their political submission. ‘Muhammad had aroused and redirected the latent forces of an Arab national revival and expansion’, Lewis concluded. ‘The fact that his death was followed by a new burst of activity instead of by collapse shows that his career was the answer to a great political, social and moral need.’<sup>35</sup>

Muḥammad’s policy towards the Jewish and Christian tribes in Arabia was to try to convert them to Islam. If they did not comply he was prepared to create treaties whereby these tribes were allowed to keep their synagogues, churches and religious leaders while having to pay tribute and render some services to Muslims. The Jews of the oasis of Khaybar, in the north of the Hijâz, had to pay half of the total produce of their oasis after they were conquered in 628. The Islamic prophet told the Jews of Khaybar that he would still be entitled to drive them out of the oasis anyway.<sup>36</sup> The Christians of Najrân also became subject to similar, though less rigorous rules.<sup>37</sup> For Bedouins who were dependent on the meagre produce of an oasis, paying a tribute of 50 percent meant starvation. ‘Treaties’ of this sort were devastating for the minorities that did not convert to Islam. In the harsh climate of Arabia, the choice was between becoming Muslim and slow starvation. It is dubious why in spite of this, many scholars continue to speak about the Jewish and Christian tribes in Arabia as ‘protected’ tributaries, while in reality they were subjected and exploited.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 117.

<sup>35</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 46.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Ishâq (704-767), the earliest biographer of Muḥammad, wrote this in *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah* (Prophetic Stories). See Wim Raven, *Ibn Ishaq. Het Leven van Mohammed: De vroegste Arabische verhalen* (Amsterdam, 1980), pp. 202-206.

<sup>37</sup> Fred McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), p. 76.

<sup>38</sup> For instance Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, p. 76.

## 2.3 ARAB EXPANSION: 632-1055

### 2.3.1 Arab Conquests under the First Four Caliphs

When Muḥammad died in 632, Abū Bakr was appointed as his Caliph (*khalīfah*) or deputy (632-634). He was immediately faced with Arab tribes that, in accordance with tribal law, considered the treaties with Medina null and void. Abū Bakr had to create new treaties with those tribes, but because many refused, he undertook their military subjugation. The Arab Muslim armies under Khālid ibn al-Walīd quickly subjugated all of Arabia and forced its submission to the Islamic state that had its center in Medina. Muslims call these the *Wars of Apostasy (riddah)* even though many Arabian tribes had never been Muslims, hence never left that faith. They were now subjected to Islamic rule for the first time.

Many theories have been propounded for explaining why the politically unified Arabian Peninsula then proceeded to conquer the Middle East and North Africa. These theories range from population pressure in the Peninsula, the impoverishment of Arabia, the Arabic proclivity for raids, drought, the weakness of the adversaries, and the need for booty, to pure coincidence.<sup>39</sup> This is not the place to go deeply into all these potential causes. Suffice it to say that in any case, a distinction needs to be made between the reasons why the Arab armies ventured outside the Peninsula, and the reasons why they were successful in their conquests.

Hitti spoke about a ‘momentum’ of the ‘newly acquired technique of organized warfare’ and of these internal Arab campaigns transforming Arabia ‘into an armed camp’<sup>40</sup> Lewis thought the Arabs were driven by the pressure of overpopulation in its native Peninsula to seek an outlet in the neighboring countries.<sup>41</sup> Ḥassān Ibrāhīm, who taught Islamic History at different universities in the Arab World, took the traditional Islamic view and believed that Abū Bakr ‘fulfilled the commandments of the new faith to spread it’, adding however that he also profited from ‘the Arab’s instinctive love of fighting’.<sup>42</sup>

The new religion of the Arabs may have been an important motivational force, but to say that the Arab expansionist movement was in order to spread Islam, as Ibrāhīm suggested, seems incorrect. It is unlikely that the Arab armies initially intended to conquer the Middle East and North Africa. It is more likely that their initial attacks on countries outside the Peninsula were mere raids for booty in order to support the central institutes of the budding state in Mekka and Medina. Only when the Arabs realized how weak their neighbors had become did they decide to proceed to occupy their lands.<sup>43</sup> When they occupied non-Arab lands, the original intent was exploitation, not Arabization or Islamization. Those concepts

<sup>39</sup> Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 3-9, gives a brief overview of some of these views.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 140-142.

<sup>41</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 55, 60.

<sup>42</sup> Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, p. 38.

<sup>43</sup> Thus M. Shaban, ‘Conversion to Early Islam’, in Nehemia Levtzion (ed), *Conversion to Islam* (New York, 1979), p. 27.

became more central to the policies of the Arab conquerors when it became clear that the conquests were not a temporary issue.<sup>44</sup>

In July 636 the Arab armies inflicted a crushing defeat on the Byzantine armies at the Yarmūk River after some years of skirmishes. This put all of Palestine and Syria, including Lebanon, under the Arabs. A year later, in the summer of 637, a Persian army was defeated at Qâdisîyah, opening most of Iraq to the Arabs. Five years after the death of Muḥammad, the whole Middle East was in Arab hands.<sup>45</sup>

In December 639 an Arab army under ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ decided to launch a raid from Palestine into the Sinai Desert for looting the bordertown al-‘Arîsh. That went so easily that ‘Amr decided to march further into Egypt. In 640 he conquered the Byzantine fortress of Babylon, an area that is now enveloped in the city of Cairo. In 641 the Byzantine troops in Egypt surrendered, though Alexandria held out for one more year. Cyrus, the Greek-Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria, eventually signed a treaty with ‘Amr, resulting in the withdrawal of the last Byzantine troops.<sup>46</sup> When in 644 the second caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (634-644) was murdered by a Persian slave, the initial wave of wars and migration of Arabs came to a halt.<sup>47</sup>

One of the main reasons why the armies of Byzantium and the Sâsânids were unable to stop the Arab attacks was that they were exhausted from their own war. They had signed a peace agreement in 628 but this had not given them enough time to recover sufficiently to stop the Muslim armies. Some of the semi-Christianized Arab tribes in the area of Jordan threw in their lot with the Muslims aiding them in conquering Syria and Palestine. This support for the Muslim armies may have been induced by the desire of these Christian Arabs to be liberated from Byzantium’s religious impact in order to develop a more indigenous Christian faith, but the fact that Byzantium had shortly before withdrawn its financial support for border protection probably also played an important role.

Albert Hourani, a son of Lebanese Protestant immigrants to Great Britain and a historian at Oxford, thought that the easy Arab victories were a matter of plain indifference of the conquered. The Byzantine and the Sâsânids rulers were not indigenous themselves:

To most of them it did not matter whether they were ruled by Iranians, Greeks or Arabs. Government impinged for the most part on the life of the cities and their immediate hinterlands; apart from officials and classes whose interest were linked with theirs, and apart from the hierarchies of some religious communities, city-dwellers did not care much who ruled them, provided they were secure, at peace, and reasonably taxed. The people of the countryside and steppes lived under their own chiefs and in accordance with their own customs, and it made little difference to them who ruled the cities.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 49-51; Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 140-142.

<sup>45</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>47</sup> Amir Hassan Siddiqy, *Decisive Battles of Islam* (Kuwait, 1986), pp. 57-62.

<sup>48</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London, 2002, first edition 1991), p. 23.



Byzantium had placed a high tax burden on their provinces of Egypt and Syria. It was persecuting the Copts and other churches of the Middle East who did not agree with the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451). These two factors had not created any love for Byzantium among the Christians of these lands. The treatment of the Copts by the Byzantines was so bad, that George C. Anawati, an Egyptian Church historian, concluded: 'That meant pushing the Copts into accepting anyone who seemed able to deliver them from their religious and political persecutors'.<sup>49</sup>

In the Persian ruled lands of present Iraq, the situation was also unstable. King Yezdegerd was a boy when the Arab armies began their march into Iraq. He was incapable of uniting his crumbling country against the Arabs; the inhabitants of the Semitic and religiously disaffected Iraq did not care much for their Persian rulers. The Arabs were almost welcomed as liberators, according to Lewis.<sup>50</sup>

Another reason why it is questionable that spreading Islam was the motivation behind the expansionism of the Arabs is that it was *Arabianism*, not Islam, which triumphed first. Between the military conquests and the religious conversions of the conquered regions a long period intervened. Early on in Islamic history conversions to Islam were often discouraged. Such conversions meant less fiscal income that could be shipped back to the Hijâz, the center of the expanding Arab World.<sup>51</sup>

The Arab armies retained the apparatus and personnel of the Persian and Byzantine administration and did not interfere with their internal civil and religious administration. Jews and Christians were called *dhimmîs*, short for *Ahl al-Dhimma* (People of the Covenant), in accordance with Islamic canon law.<sup>52</sup> The fact that initially Islam was identified with Arabianism is clear from the status of converts who began to throng to Islam from among the conquered peoples. The new believers could only enter the religion of the state by becoming clients (*mawlâs*) of one or another of the Arab tribes. In theory these people were equals of the Arabs, but in reality the Arabs looked down upon them as socially inferior and they tried to exclude them from the material benefits of being Muslim.<sup>53</sup>

The third caliph, 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (644-656), is traditionally credited for having created the *textus receptus* of the *Qur'ân*. He is said to have ordered the collection of different existent versions of the texts on which basis a generally accepted text was put together while all other versions were destroyed. Western studies in the development of the *Qur'anic* text are throwing serious doubts on this orthodox Islamic view that the *Qur'ân* was created at this early stage. Only a very small number of Arab scholars are engaging in similar textual criticism.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Anawati, George C., 'The Christian Communities in Egypt in the Middle Ages', in Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (eds), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands Eight to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), pp. 237-238.

<sup>50</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>51</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 145.

<sup>52</sup> See the entry on *Dhimma*, in H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (eds), *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1974, first edition 1953), p. 75.

<sup>53</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 55-58.

<sup>54</sup> More on this in chapter 3 on languages in the Arab World.

In 656, ‘Uthmân was killed by some mutineers from the Arab army in Egypt. The main grievance of the killers, and others, seems to have been the centralizing tendencies within the growing Empire. This was not in line with Arab tribal habits. ‘Uthmân had filled the important positions of government with members of his own Umayyah family from Mekka. There was also some disagreement about the distribution of the booty and whereas Abû Bakr and ‘Umar were able to inspire the Arabs with their piety, ‘Uthmân could not. From then on, the relationship between most Muslims and their caliph began to slowly shift and focus more on his political and financial role instead of his religious role.<sup>55</sup>

The fourth caliph, ‘Alî ibn ‘Abû Tâlib (656-661), was a first cousin of Muḥammad and the husband of his favorite daughter Fâṭimah. He decided to rule the Arab Empire from Kûfah in Iraq, thus shifting the center of power of Islam away from Arabia. ‘Alî had to first assert his power by defeating a coalition of forces that included Muḥammad’s favorite wife ‘Â’ishah, daughter of ‘Abû Bakr. Only Syria under governor Mu‘âwîyâ did not accept ‘Alî’s rule.<sup>56</sup> A few years of intense internal battling led to the murder of ‘Alî in 661. Mu‘âwîyâ was then hailed in Syria as caliph and he was generally accepted all over the Empire. He was, like ‘Uthmân, a scion of the Umayyah family. He nominated his son as his successor and the dynasty of Umayyads then ruled the Arabs until 750.<sup>57</sup>

The Arab armies were large enough to defeat the Byzantine and other armies, but not for dominating the societies they conquered. The Miaphysite Churches of the Middle East were now liberated of the Byzantine persecutions, while the Muslims were not able yet to interfere in their ecclesiastical life. In Egypt the Arab armies were based in Fuṣṭât, which is part of present Cairo, and in the harbor of Alexandria. It took 40 years before the Muslim Arab soldiers were allowed to settle wherever they wanted in Egypt.<sup>58</sup> It can be concluded that initially, for many Churches that fell under the rule of Islam, the freedom for Christian witness in the public domain increased. Not only could the Churches show their Christian faith through their *koinonia* and *diakonia*, but the *kerygmatic* witness was also possible in the public domain.

### 2.3.2 Umayyads

After almost two decades of anarchy, Mu‘âwîyâ decided to safeguard the unity of the Arab Empire by centralization. His first step was to make Damascus into his residence and the powerbase of his new Ummayyad dynasty (661-750). Damascus had a well established cultural and administrative tradition with able local officials

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 61. Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, p. 59.

<sup>56</sup> According to Hitti, the real issue was whether Syria or Iraq should be supreme in Islamic affairs. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 180.

<sup>57</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 61-64. Islam considers the first four Caliphs the *Rashîdûn* (Orthodox). The rule of Mu‘âwîyâ and his dynasty is usually seen as a deviation of how the Prophet intended his *ummah* to be led. This is partially due to the fact that all Arab and Muslim historians rely on source materials that were written under the ‘Abbâsîd dynasty that replaced the Umayyads and based its legitimacy on the premise that they implemented the Islamic legislation better than their Umayyad predecessors.

<sup>58</sup> Shaban, ‘Conversion to Early Islam’, pp. 28-29.

who made it possible to control the remote areas of Arabia, Egypt and Iraq. Mu'âwiyá relied on Syrians, who were mainly Christians, and on the posterity of the Christian Arabs of Palmyra, to run the administration. The chancellor of Mu'âwiyá was a Syrian Christian, Manşûr ibn Sarjûn, whose family had brought to power some of the financial controllers of Byzantium before Islam came to Syria.<sup>59</sup> This predominance of Christians was to the exclusion of the Arab immigrants from the Hijâz.

During the Umayyad period, the Arab Empire grew slowly. In North Africa 'Uqbah ibn Nâfi' was responsible for the extension of the caliphal rule. He founded Qayrawân in 670 and used it as the base for operations against the Amazigh tribes.<sup>60</sup> Many of those along the Mediterranean littoral were Christians; the Roman Empire had held the coasts of North Africa for centuries. The nomadic and semi-nomadic Imazighen further inland followed their pagan religions.<sup>61</sup>

Scholars have given many reasons for the ease with which North Africa was conquered by the Muslim armies. The lack of integration of some of the Imazighen in the Byzantine Empire played a preponderant role in the Arab military victories. The Muslim armies were able to enlist large numbers for their wars against the Byzantine troops. Stephen Neill, a British Church- and mission-historian, believed that Christian North Africa was easily conquered by Islam because of the strong theological, linguistic and racial issues that had 'racked the Church in North Africa generation after generation and left it hopelessly weakened in the face of its enemies when the day of judgment came upon it'.<sup>62</sup>

The issue of the ease of the Arab conquests should not be confused with the reasons why the Church in North Africa had disappeared by the 12<sup>th</sup> century. In any construct of that process, it must be taken into consideration that the process of Islamization was very slow. It took over half a millennium for Christianity to have disappeared from North Africa.<sup>63</sup>

'Uqbah is said to have reached the Atlantic Ocean, but the powers of the Arabs over North Africa remained precarious until Ḥasân ibn al-Nu'mân al-Ghassânî, in the last decade of the seventh century, put an end to Byzantine and Amazigh resistance in North Africa. North Africa became the base for the invasion of Spain in 711.<sup>64</sup> The Imazighen played an important role in conquering Spain for Islam although they remained fiercely independent and continued to cause internal problems. It was their insurrection which ravaged North Africa and Spain from 734 to 742. Many tribes only accepted Islam after several centuries.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 194-5.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>61</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 214.

<sup>62</sup> Stephen Neil writes that the christianization of North Africa was an upper class matter, mostly among Latin speakers. He says that it is unclear how seriously native Punic-speakers and Imazighen were taken, and assumes that matters of language and race were among the reasons for the Donatist Schism. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, New York, 1979, first edition 1964), p. 38.

<sup>63</sup> See for an instructive study in the main causes suggested for the de-christianization of North Africa, the unpublished MA thesis of Ronnie van der Poll, *De Verdwenen Kerk van Noord-Afrika: Een Analyse van de in de onderzoeksliteratuur gegeven redenen* (Heverlee, Leuven, 2003).

<sup>64</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 502. Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, p. 89.

All over the Arab Empire, the number of converts to Islam grew, especially in the Arab garrison cities. According to Lewis this was because of the ‘disposal by the Arab masters of the Empire of vast sums of money’. It was attractive to become a *mawlá*, as Arabs did not have to pay a poll tax, *jizyah*, but only a minimal religious tax, *zakâh*. Beside that, a *mawlá* was entitled to a stipend.<sup>66</sup> Lewis described the problems these conversions created for the treasurer of the Muslim Empire:

[The] whole structure of the Arab states was based on the assumption that a minority of Arabs would rule a majority of tax-paying non-Muslims. The economic equalization of the [non-Arab Muslims] would have meant a simultaneous decrease of revenue and increase in expenditure. That could have only resulted in complete breakdown.<sup>67</sup>

Under Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (685-705) conversions were discouraged for these fiscal reasons, and also because the Arabs usually looked down upon non-Arabs, and did not want to integrate them into their *ummah*.<sup>68</sup> Ibrâhîm spoke in this context about ‘the Arab’s belief in [the] superiority of his race and language’ and he considered it ‘no wonder [...] that this attitude aroused the anger and discontent of the non-Arabs against the Umayyads’.<sup>69</sup> Many of the non-Arab converts to Islam felt attracted to Islamic opposition movements that usually held egalitarian beliefs.<sup>70</sup>

‘Abd al-Malik ruled the Empire as a centralized monarchy, modified by Arab tradition and by the remnants of the idea of theocracy. He was the first Muslim to create Islamic coinage, an important symbol of power and identity. He also laid the basis for a fiscal renewal, which his successors could complete into what became the Islamic system of taxation.<sup>71</sup> ‘Abd al-Malik gradually replaced the old

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<sup>66</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 218. Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 41-42, describes how in the first century of Islam the only reason non-Arabs had for accepting the highly discriminatory status of the *mawlá*s with its many disadvantages, must have been that their other options were even worse. He concludes they were mainly prisoners of war that escaped from slavery or death, or farmers in the worst state who needed an income in the city. Bulliet speaks of ‘riffraff’ in this context. In an article ‘Conversion Stories in Early Islam’, in Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bkhazi (eds), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands Eight to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), pp. 128-132, Bulliet argues that in early Islam, conversion was mainly a matter of choosing to be part of the community of Arab conquerors. Only later would the convert find out what it meant to be a Muslim. According to Bulliet, only in the fourth century of Islam, conversion became a much more spiritual, religious issue.

<sup>67</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 72. The ‘last thing the Muslims wished was to exterminate or to convert them all’, Neill generalizes for the whole period from 500-1000 CE. He tries to correct the ‘tragic picture’ that Christian tradition has drawn of the Islamic conquests, a picture that focuses on two options: death or apostasy. Whereas that picture is indeed incorrect and one-sided, Neill seems to underestimate the lasting impact of those periods in Islamic history when Christians were indeed forcefully driven to the fold of Islam. Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>68</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 72.

<sup>69</sup> Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, p. 98. He wrote his book towards his death in 1968, at the time when the Egyptians were fighting a war against Saudi Arabia over the future of Yemen. Perhaps this resulted in his negative statement.

<sup>70</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 232.

<sup>71</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 78.

Byzantine and Persian administrative systems with a new Arab system and used Arabic as the official language of administration and accountancy. This encouraged more and more people to become literate in Arabic, as that was the basis for upward mobility. One result of that was that the word 'Arab over time no longer denoted someone from the Arabian Peninsula, but any Muslim speaking the language of the Arabs, irrespective of his or her nationality.<sup>72</sup> The tribes of the Arabian Peninsula were thus rapidly losing their special position and were against the centralization of the Empire. They formed a theocratic opposition, stressing the voluntary and religious aspects of the caliphate.<sup>73</sup>

Under the Umayyads, the Christians still had much space for a public *kerygmatic* witness. One of the greatest examples of such witness is John (Yûḥanná) of Damascus, who had enjoyed a classical Greek education. He wrote the first Christian tract against Islam. He was the grandson of Manṣûr ibn Sarjûn, and was brought up at the court of Caliph Mu'âwîyá, where he was good friends with Mu'âwîyá's son and heir Yazîd. Yûḥanná inherited his father's office of chancellor for Syria.<sup>74</sup>

Yûḥanná's dogmatic work entitled *Sources of Knowledge* included a chapter titled 'Concerning Heresies' in which Islam was treated.<sup>75</sup> A tract, *Disputes between a Saracen and a Christian*, is ascribed to Yûḥanná; it has been plausibly suggested that he did not write it but that it was based on his oral teachings.<sup>76</sup>

Yûḥanná had a fairly accurate picture of Islam. In the *Disputes* Yûḥanná treated, among other themes, some issues that were discussed among Muslims at the Umayyad court; he seems to have participated in some public debates in the caliphal palace. The *Disputes* reflects the debates of those days between the *Qadarite* theological school that stressed human freedom against the idea of predestination (*al-Qadar*) as defended by the *Jabariyah* school of thought. Yûḥanná also participated in the dispute between those who held that the *Qur'ân* was created and those who supported the view of an uncreated *Qur'ân*.<sup>77</sup>

As Yûḥanná involved himself in the iconoclast controversy of the Church, defending the usage of icons in worship, it seems that the Byzantine Emperor Leo III discredited him at the court in Damascus. This may have led to Yûḥanná's deci-

<sup>72</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 240. Presently, in many Arab countries the word *Arab* is also used specifically for Bedouins of any background.

<sup>73</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 232.

<sup>74</sup> Andrew Louth, *St John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford, 2004, first edition 2002), pp. 5-6.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 195-6. John of Damascus was the champion of the Orthodox iconology. Most of his writings are part of the internal Byzantine discussions on theology, with no reference at all to the Islamic rule over the Christian lands of the Middle East. It seems he saw Islam as just a temporary problem in the Christian lands. See for instance John of Damascus, 'An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith', in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* Second Series Vol. IX (Grand Rapids, 1989, first edition 1898). In Louth, *St John Damascene*, p. 76, Louth rejects the criticism that John never wrote these chapters on Islam.

<sup>76</sup> Louth, *St John Damascene*, pp. 76-77. In his entry on John of Damascus, Studer does not mention his tractate against Islam. B. Studer, 'John Damascene', in *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. I (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 442-443.

<sup>77</sup> Louth, *St John Damascene*, pp. 80-83. Much in the biography of Yûḥanná remains unclear. He may have gained much of his knowledge of Islam from the monks in Palestine. See Louth, *St John Damascene*, pp. 3-14

sion to retire to a monastery in Palestine.<sup>78</sup> The resignation from the caliphal service also coincided with the time when Caliph al-Walid changed the administrative language from Greek to Arabic.

Yûḥanná was an example of the important public role Christians could play and the space for their public Christian witness; his retreat to the monastery also indicates the limits of that freedom. Moreover, the strict anti-Christian legislation of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azîz showed that the trend was against Christian freedom. In 718 this ‘Umar II became caliph. Muslim historians stress his piety, justice, and his role in spreading the faith.<sup>79</sup> During his reign the first mass movement of conversion to Islam took place. ‘Umar’s main aim was to reconcile the non-Arab converts with the Arab Muslims. Those who converted to Islam formed a growing class of people refusing to pay anything but the lower rates of Muslim tax which was originally reserved for Arabs only. ‘Umar granted the converts most of their wishes, for example that from that time *jizyah*, the poll tax, was only to be paid by the *dhimmîs*. This decision crippled the finances of the state. As the number of Arab landowners also grew, the income from tax diminished even further. Many Imazighen and Persians adopted Islam to enjoy the pecuniary privileges.<sup>80</sup>

The *dhimmîs* were subjected to humiliating restrictions due to the rules of ‘Umar. They were officially excluded from serving in the administration and they were subjected to rigid social and financial disabilities. These restrictions included having to cut their forelocks, wear distinctive clothing, ride without saddles, and they were prohibited from building churches. During the eighth century, four successive caliphs so persecuted Christians that some bishops left their see and many Christians became Muslim. During that century the Copts often rose in revolt and each time their rebellion was suppressed.<sup>81</sup> This shows that by then, the Islamic rule over the Christian Middle East had become more severe than the Byzantine rule had ever been; under the Byzantines, there were never any large defections of Coptic-Orthodox bishops or mass conversions for being relieved of the pressure by the authorities.

The rules of ‘Umar II were strictly implemented at various times but often they were not. Christians continued to serve in the administration of the Empire for centuries. It would only be under the ‘Abbâsid Caliph Mutawakkil (847-861) that *dhimmîs* were again subjected to demeaning and strict measures.<sup>82</sup> One reason why it was difficult to implement the rules of ‘Umar II was that under the Umayyads non-Muslims still formed the vast majority of inhabitants; Jews and Christians were needed for running the administration and the sciences of the Empire. Because of this, Christians could still play an important role in public life and enjoy certain freedoms. Except in the Arabian Peninsula, Muslims formed less than ten percent of the population in the total realm they ruled in the Umayyad period.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>78</sup> See Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>79</sup> See for instance Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, pp. 96-97. He speaks about the ‘bright page’ and a ‘glorious period’ in Muslim history, without mentioning the fate of the *dhimmîs* under ‘Umâr II.

<sup>80</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 219.

<sup>81</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, p. 303.

<sup>82</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 79-80. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 232-234.

<sup>83</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 29, 43.

### 2.3.3 'Abbāsids

In 750, the dynasty of the Umayyads came to an end after a civil war lasting a few years. Abū al-'Abbās led an insurrection from Kūfah and toppled the last Umayyad ruler. This meant the beginning of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty (750-1258). The takeover was a social and economic revolution arising from the discontent of the underprivileged town populations and especially the Persian converts who worked in the cities as merchants and artisans.<sup>84</sup> The Lebanese historian M. A. Shaban who taught at the School for Oriental and African Studies in London, wrote:

In my opinion the 'Abbasid Revolution had as its objective the assimilation of all Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs, in the Empire into one Muslim community with equal rights for every member of the community. Those who took part in this Revolution certainly had a more universal interpretation of Islam than the relatively limited Umayyad view.<sup>85</sup>

A major difference between the rule of the Umayyads and that of the 'Abbāsīds was the principle of Arab descent. To an increasing extent this was no longer adhered to. Many of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs were sons of non-Arab slave women. Noble birth and tribal prestige had lost their value resulting in the Arab tribes becoming rather insignificant while the non-Arab Muslims acquired the equality they wanted. Islam had become the badge of identity for the new ruling class, not Arabianism as it was in the past. This forced the new rulers to focus on the religious bonds within the Empire, more than the Arabs had done previously.<sup>86</sup>

Another important change was that the capital moved from Damascus to Kūfah, and later to Baghdad.<sup>87</sup> According to Lewis, the effect of the transfer of the capital to Baghdad was considerable:

It symbolized the change from a Byzantine succession state to a Middle Eastern Empire of the traditional pattern in which old oriental influences, and notably those of Persia, came to play an ever-increasing part.<sup>88</sup>

Under the 'Abbāsīds the Middle East was initially stable and Islam continued to expand eastward into Central Asia. The most brilliant period of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty was at its inception. Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-800) enabled Baghdad to grow into a world center of wealth and learning, standing alone as a rival to Byzantium. The growth of large-scale international commerce led to the development of merchant banking. The concepts of checks and letters of credit arose. Cities flourished commercially, and the cities that were once Arab garrisons changed in character with the internal peace.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 85.

<sup>85</sup> M. A. Shaban, *The 'Abbasid Revolution* (Cambridge, 1979, first edition 1970), p. xv.

<sup>86</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>87</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 286.

<sup>88</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 88.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-100. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 301.

The provinces were ruled by a governor (*amîr*) with a treasurer (*wazîr*) as his counterpart. Both had to directly report to Baghdad. Under the ‘Abbāsids the state machinery became more ordered and more complicated, especially its financial institutes. During the first century of the dynasty the income of the state was at its summit only to decline by every passing century.

In the army the role of Arabs diminished as more Turks from Central Asia were used. These Turks were called *Mamlûk* (owned), pointing to the fact that initially they were slaves, reflecting the need of the ‘Abbāsids to have a more professional and loyal army.<sup>90</sup> A strong central army was important. The common religion of the rulers in the Muslim provinces no longer deterred them from setting up autonomous dynasties. The move of the capital eastward made the ‘Abbāsids lose their interest in the western provinces of North Africa so they did little to prevent the break-up of that area. Spain, Morocco and Tunisia had virtually become independent between 750 and 800. The caliphate was no longer coterminous with Islam.<sup>91</sup>

During the initial phase of the ‘Abbāsids, many Christians played a major role in the administration in Baghdad and in the economic life and the intellectual development of the Empire. They knew how to make themselves necessary to the new regime.<sup>92</sup> Their religion was tolerated, and sometimes assistance was even given to the repair of their churches.<sup>93</sup> Atiya did not deem it necessary to ‘bring out the darker side of a bright age’, so he did not discuss the persecutions against the Nestorians. In line with his Pan-Arab nationalist ideas, he chose to describe the first three centuries of Arab-Muslim rule as a rather positive period, with the persecutions against Christians as the exceptions to the rule of peaceful cohabitation.<sup>94</sup>

For the Christian community in Mesopotamia, the early ‘Abbāsīd period was a time when they enjoyed relative freedoms to witness in the public domain. They could practice their *koinonia* and the charitable side of *diakonia*, but the verbal witness to Christ in the public domain became more problematic as their numbers decreased. Christians became a minority in the ‘Abbāsīd heartland of Iraq by the end of the ninth century.<sup>95</sup> Commensurate with their decrease in numbers, their liberties to witness to the Gospel also decreased.

### 2.3.4 Fâtîmids

Egypt was made independent of the ‘Abbāsids in 868 by the Turkish slave Aḥmad ibn Ṭulûn who had been sent by Baghdad to Egypt as a present for the governor. He led a revolt and became Egypt’s new master. Baghdad was unable to respond

<sup>90</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 35. Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 90. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 319-320.

<sup>91</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 104-105. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 289.

<sup>92</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>93</sup> Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, p. 95. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, p. 272.

<sup>94</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>95</sup> Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, p. 95. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, p. 272.



to the rebellion of Egypt as it was also faced with a dangerous revolt of tens of thousands of African slaves in southern Iraq. Shortly before that, a peasant uprising in Iran had weakened the central powers of Baghdad. The caliphs lost more and more of their power and by the end of the tenth century the 'Abbâsid Empire had become synonymous with Iraq. The reality of one Muslim Empire under one representative of the Prophet had disappeared. While Baghdad lost its luster, Egypt took over its leading role in culture and learning.<sup>96</sup> Soon, Syria came under the sway of Egypt.

New religious movements within Islam had played an important role in weakening the 'Abbâsid Empire. The most successful movement was the *Shi'ite* (Party, namely of the fourth caliph 'Alî) movement. It claimed that the true *khalîfah*, called *imâm* by the *Shi'ites*, should be a descendent from the Prophet through his daughter Fâtimah. The respect and power claimed by the *Shi'ite imâms* was much greater than that of the caliphs, as they claimed to be divinely inspired and infallible.<sup>97</sup>

The beginning of the tenth century saw armed bands of *Shi'ites* ravaging Syria, Palestine and Northern Iraq. At that time, there was a subversive state, Qaramiṭah, on the east coast of Arabia. In 930 these *Shi'ites* sacked Mekka, carrying off the sacred Black Stone from the *Ka'bah*. Hitti speaks about this movement as a 'most malignant growth in the body politics of Islam' because they considered the bloodshed of other Muslims as legitimate.<sup>98</sup> Hitti never used such harsh language to discuss the Islamic attitudes to shedding blood of adherents of other religions or races. Perhaps this negative comment on the people of Qaramiṭah was influenced by Hitti's admiration for Arab society during the 'Abbâsid period in accordance with his Arab nationalist perspective. He believed that the demise of that society was mainly because of the growing role of non-Arabic speakers in the military and in the government. The inhabitants of Qaramiṭah were Arabs, and therefore traitors within the parameters of Hitti's view of the desirable unity of the Arabic Empire.

In Yemen *Shi'ite* was able to seize power and he subsequently sent emissaries to Tunisia. After an effective propaganda campaign amongst the Kitâmah Imazighen of North Africa, Yemen orchestrated and enthroned the first Fâtimid *imâm* in Tunisia in 908. Within a few years all of North Africa was in the hands of these Fâtimid rulers. They remained the titular heads of the sect that brought them to power even though they were soon accused of watering down their *Shi'ite* beliefs.<sup>99</sup>

Mu'izz, the fourth caliph of the Fâtimids, conquered Egypt in 969, after Egypt had suffered years of famine, plagues, and military weakness. According to Ibrâhîm, the Egyptians 'did not object to transferring their allegiance from an 'Abbasid caliph to a *Shi'ite*, because they knew that the transfer of authority would imply no change in their political condition. In either case they would remain de-

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<sup>96</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 104-106.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>98</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 445.

<sup>99</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 117-120. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 617.

main dependent on a foreign ruler but a change of government might have been seen as being accompanied by an improvement in their internal affairs'.<sup>100</sup>

In 972 the Azhar Mosque was built, and a year later the area around that mosque, *al-Qâhira* (the Conqueror), became the Fâtimid capital and the basis of modern Cairo. Egypt became the springboard for further growth of the Empire. Syria and Arabia soon came under Egypt's sway. The Fâtimid period was one of great commercial and economic growth with good relationships with Europe and Asia. Alexandria in Egypt and Tripoli in Syria were harbors of importance and Fâtimid fleets ruled the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>101</sup> The Empire enjoyed tranquility and prosperity during the tenth century when the Fâtimids were at the height of their power. The main streets of Cairo were roofed and lit; shops sold at fixed prices and jewelers and moneychangers could leave their doors unlocked.<sup>102</sup> Under Caliph Mustanşir (1036-1094) the Fâtimid Empire included all of North Africa, Egypt, Syria, Sicily and western Arabia.<sup>103</sup>

According to *Shi'ite* belief, the caliph in Egypt was considered infallible and ruled by hereditary right as part of a divinely appointed family. The government was centralized and effective, including its religious branch that sent out missionaries for the *Shi'ite* faith all over the Muslim world. The Fâtimids made no systematic attempt to impose their doctrines on the Egyptian Muslims who remained for the most part *Sunnîs*. That term pointed to those following the habits (*sunnah*) of the Prophet as interpreted by the majority of Islamic theologians. The extent to which the Fâtimid rulers harbored friendly feelings towards the *dhimmîs* is exemplified by 'Azîz, the son of Mu'izz. He appointed a Jewish governor to Syria and a Christian treasurer to Cairo. He also married a Christian woman whose brothers were Coptic clergy; one of them was the patriarch of Alexandria.<sup>104</sup>

In spite of these positive examples, there were many times when the Copts suffered from what Atiya calls the 'undying popular hostility of the lower Muslim classes, who thirsted for pillage and hated the Christian tax collector'. Especially at times of war, the Copts were often used as a source for added taxation. The caliphs often failed to bridle the Muslim mob and resorted to pacifying the populace by wholesale dismissal of Copts from the administration. The same caliphs often hired the Copts again as they found that they could not do without their administrative skills.<sup>105</sup>

This problematic position of the Copts was related to their decreasing numbers. Whereas in the past, when they still formed a large majority, they could speak about their faith in the public domain, this now had become impossible. The Arabic Christian literature they began to develop was for internal usage. Due to their numbers, Muslims could now implement their laws that made the Christian *kerygma* for converting Muslims a capital crime. One major example of this was

<sup>100</sup> Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, p. 233.

<sup>101</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>102</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 626.

<sup>103</sup> Bayard Dodge, *Al-Azhar: A Millennium of Muslim Learning* (Washington DC., 1974), pp. 1-7. Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>104</sup> Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, p. 238.

<sup>105</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 90-92.

the regime of Caliph ‘Alī Maṣūf al-Ḥâkim (996-1021). He acted severely against Jews and Christians and made any public witness to the Christian faith impossible. This was part of a popular reaction against the favoritism shown by the previous caliphs towards the *dhimmīs*.<sup>106</sup> At a time of disastrous famines in Egypt, in 1007 and 1008, Ḥâkim imposed ‘Umar II’s dress codes on Christians and he banned them from eating some vegetables such as *mulû khîyah*, a sort of spinach soup. He also forbade the playing of chess, the manufacturing of ladies shoes and many other eccentricities. Ḥâkim is until today venerated by the Druze as divine; Arab historians usually consider him deranged. Ḥâkim had many churches in his realm destroyed. In 1009 he destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Hitti called this one of the ‘antecedents’ for the Crusades as the church had been the object of pilgrimage of many Europeans. The keys of the church had been sent to Charlemagne as a blessing from the patriarch of Jerusalem in the year 800.<sup>107</sup>

### 2.3.5 Arabization and Islamization by the End of the Tenth Century

The economic welfare under the ‘Abbâsid and the Fâtimid dynasties enabled Arabic culture to flourish. Jews and Christians played an important role in that development. Greek books were translated into Arabic, often by Christians, and many original Arabic works were written on Islamic and Christian theology, philosophy and medieval sciences. The Arabic language and grammatical books for the literary language were perfected. The Arabs developed their own forms of music and arts. From Morocco to Iraq, a lush and recognizably Arab culture had developed. In the words of Lewis:

It was the Arabization of the conquered provinces rather than their military conquest that is the true wonder of the Arab expansion. By the 11th century Arabic had become not only the chief idiom of everyday use from Persia to the Pyrenees, but also the chief instrument of culture. [...] As the Arabic language spread, the distinction between Arab conqueror and Arabized conquered faded into relative insignificance.<sup>108</sup>

By the tenth century Arabic had become the medium for religion and poetry. It was used to express scientific and philosophic thought as well as in politics and diplomacy from Central Asia to Spain. Arabic literature and culture was constructed with the input of people from different religions and countries as wide apart as Morocco and Iraq.<sup>109</sup> Even the Jews and Christians of Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa began to use Arabic on a large scale.<sup>110</sup> It should be noted in this context, that this usage of Arabic as a written language was confined to the cul-

<sup>106</sup> Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, p. 240.

<sup>107</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 635-636. Joan Wucher King, *Historical Dictionary of Egypt* (Cairo, 1989, first edition 1984), p. 316.

<sup>108</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 143-144.

<sup>109</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 316. Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>110</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, p. 303. The collection of icons in the Coptic Museum in Cairo shows how gradually, even in the art and worship of the Coptic-Orthodox churches, more and more Arabic was used.

tural elites that could read and write. People did not speak that language, and often used their indigenous languages and different colloquial forms of Arabic. This mirrored the usage of Latin in Europe.

By the end of the tenth century a large part of the population of what is now termed the Arab World had become Muslim, not only in the cities but also in the countryside. It is estimated that in Iraq between the years 800 and 882, the Muslim constituency among the population grew from 18 to roughly 50 percent.<sup>111</sup>

According to Shaban, the remarkably rapid spread of Islam among the non-Arabs in the Empire was a result of the complete assimilation of all members of the Muslim community.<sup>112</sup> This also meant that society became even more strictly divided into Muslims and non-Muslims. Jews and Christians were also driven to Islam because they suffered from many restrictions. During the 'Abbâsîd period, they were second-class citizens, subject to fiscal and social disabilities, and occasionally to open persecution.<sup>113</sup>

Hourani underlined that sustained and deliberate persecution of non-Muslims by Muslim rulers was rare and never instigated or justified by the spokesmen of *Sunnî* Islam. This specific reference to *Sunnî* Islam was because especially in Egypt, there were deliberate persecutions by some of the *Shi'ite* rulers. According to Hourani, when *Sunnî* rulers were engaged in harsh treatment of their Christian minorities, it was because of pressures 'mainly from the urban masses, particularly in times of war or economic hardship. [...] At such moments, the ruler might respond by enforcing the laws strictly [...] but not for long.'<sup>114</sup> Even as minorities Christians were free to exercise their religion. They had normal property rights and they were often employed in high offices in the state. For instance, the Nestorians played a particularly important role under the 'Abbâsîds. They were important in medicine, finance, trade and crafts, as intellectuals and sometimes even as viziers.<sup>115</sup>

At normal times relationships between Jews, Christians and Muslims were cordial, but the adherents of the three religions grew ever further apart. This was more so in the cities than in the countryside where on the level of popular religions, many feasts and saints were shared between the religions.<sup>116</sup> Hourani rightly stressed that 'even in the best of circumstances the position of a minority is uneasy, and the inducement to convert existed'.<sup>117</sup>

According to Hitti, the process of Islamization went much faster than that of Arabization. 'It was in this field of struggle that the subjected races presented the

<sup>111</sup> Wadi Z. Haddad, 'Continuity and Change in Religious Adherence: Ninth-Century Baghdad,' in Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhari (eds), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands Eight to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), p. 35.

<sup>112</sup> Shaban, 'Abbasid Revolution', p. 168.

<sup>113</sup> Haddad, 'Continuity and Change', pp. 33-4.

<sup>114</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 118.

<sup>115</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 355. Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 101, 103.

<sup>116</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 188.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 47. Hourani, however, tends to draw an unrealistically positive picture of the relationship between Muslims and Christians, and his thesis seems to be that only because of colonialism, those relationships have soured. Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, p. 95, gives a similar simplified impression by saying that '[Under] the Abbasid Caliphs (eighth to thirteenth centuries) [...] Christians were protected and favoured'.

greatest measure of resistance'.<sup>118</sup> This generalization is open to critique, as the main religious minorities in the Arab World, the Copts and the Maronites, have fully adopted Arabic as their language, while some of the largest non-Arabic speaking minorities, the Kurds and the North African Imazighen, have fully adopted Islam as their religion. In each part of the Arab World, the processes of Arabization and Islamization were different, dependent on many factors including local ones.

## 2.4 ARAB WORLD UNDER SIEGE: 1055-1517

### 2.4.1 Turkic Invasions

Central Asian invaders began to move westward into the Arab World when the Arabs could no longer defend their Empire. The Saljûq Muslim Turks occupied Baghdad in 1055. They continued to formally recognize the 'Abbâsid caliphate but the caliphs were powerless figureheads. Palestine and Syria were soon taken from the Fâtîmids by the Saljûqs. They also conquered major parts of Anatolia from Byzantium. The Saljûq Empire soon broke up again, but the movement of Turks into the centre of Middle Eastern politics could not be halted. The Saljûq conquests of the Middle East and parts of Anatolia led eventually to the Crusades.<sup>119</sup>

Mikhâ'il al-Suriyân, a Syriac-Orthodox patriarch at the time of the Saljûqs, praised the religious tolerance of Saljûks after they had conquered the Middle East. As he wrote this in a language the Muslim rulers did not know, his praise for the Muslim rulers may have been truthful. It may also have been part of the patriarch's efforts to appease these rulers, in accordance with the habits of minorities in the Arab World even today.<sup>120</sup>

As the Saljûks divided the Middle East into many smaller Kingdoms, it is hard to generalize how this changed the status of the Christians. It seems that altogether, they were less tolerant to Christians than the Arabs were. During the second part of the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Saljûk ruler of Aleppo decided to convert or kill all Christians in his land. Atiya speaks of the 'traditional intolerance' of these Muslims. Western Christians on pilgrimages to the Holy Land came back with stories of holy places not being accessible any longer. In the context of their marauding among Armenian Christians in Anatolia, Atiya calls them 'extremely bigoted and destructive'.<sup>121</sup> It is likely that the increased persecution was more related to the shrunken size of the Christian population, than to the race of the rulers.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> century new groups of Central Asian Turks went on the move, and a few thousand settled at the borders of the Byzantine Empire. In Bythinia, Osman I founded a small Empire which came to be called *Memalik Osmanyâ* (Principality of Osman), the basis for what later became the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>118</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 361.

<sup>119</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 159-161.

<sup>120</sup> Hage, 'Het christendom onder de heerschappij van de islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', pp. 80-81.

<sup>121</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 210, 331.

Bursa became its capital in 1305. What was left of the Saljûq Empire was soon incorporated and the Ottoman Empire expanded rapidly. The creation of a standing army, an innovation of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, made it the greatest military power of the time.<sup>122</sup>

Initially the thrust of the Ottomans was in the direction of Europe. The Balkans became part of the Ottoman Empire and in 1453 Constantinople fell into their hands too. This meant, among other things, that the Hagia Sophia Church, symbol *par excellence* of Greek-Orthodoxy, fell into Muslim hands and was changed into a mosque in 1453. By the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Ottomans had subjected the Arab World as well.<sup>123</sup>

#### **2.4.2 Amazigh Tribes and the End of the Fâtimids**

The Fâtimid dynasty that flourished in Egypt during the tenth century, as described before, began to lose power during the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Muslim Amazigh tribes from Upper Egypt went on the rampage in North Africa and sacked the Tunisian capital Qayrawân in 1056 or 1057. This created more devastation in North Africa than the first Arab invasion in the seventh century.<sup>124</sup> Thereafter another Amazigh tribe, under the dynasty of Muḥammad ibn Tûmart (1078-1130), took north-west Africa and what remained of Muslim lands in Spain away from the Arabs. Algeria, Tunisia and Libyan Tripoli were added to this Amazigh Empire between 1152 and 1160.<sup>125</sup>

During the 11<sup>th</sup> century there were still five bishops in the area of Carthage, but the conquests by the Imazighen effectively ended the Church there; in 1160 most Christians escaped to Sicily. However, there was still a bishop in Morocco in 1246, and even during the 14<sup>th</sup> century there were still some native Christians in North Africa.<sup>126</sup>

By the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century the Fâtimid Empire had shrunk to little more than Egypt, reflecting the general malaise in the Arab World. Hitti believed that the main reason for their losses was related to the Fâtimid rulers' dependency on non-Arab mercenaries:

The decline of the Fatimid power began soon after the [beginning of the] fateful policy of importing Turkish as well as negro mercenary troops. The insubordination and constant quarrelling of these troops among themselves and with the Berber bodyguards became one of the chief causes of the final collapse of the Kingdom. It was Circassian and Turkish soldiers and slaves who later usurped the supreme authority and established independent dynasties.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Heribert Busse, 'Grundzüge der islamischen Theologie unter der Geschichte des islamischen Raumes' in Werner Ende und Udo Steinbach (eds), *Der Islam in der Gegenwart: Entwicklung und Ausbreitung Staat, Politik und Recht, Kultur und Religion* (München, 1984), p. 48.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp 158-159.

<sup>125</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 547-548.

<sup>126</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, pp. 304-305

<sup>127</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 620.

Şalâh al-Dîn, the Kurdish *wazîr* of the Fâtîmids in Cairo, was able to wrestle away power from the weakened Fâtîmids. He declared the *Shi'ite* caliphate finished in 1171 and began to mention the name of the 'Abbâsid caliph in prayers. Three years later he conquered Syria, creating a short-lived Syro-Egyptian Empire.<sup>128</sup> Accepting the 'Abbâsid caliph was mainly a matter of earning legitimacy for Şalâh al-Dîn. In the eastern parts of the Arab World the 'Abbâsid Empire had already become powerless and had broken up into semi-independent countries.

### 2.4.3 Crusades and Reconquista

In 1060, five years after the Saljûqs had conquered Baghdad, the first serious attacks of European powers against the Arab World began. Normans under Robert and Roger d'Hauteville began the invasion of Sicily. This was the first European effort to gain lands back from Islam, and it can be termed a *counter-jihâd*. For European Christianity, the conquests of Islam had been shocking. The once Christian lands of the Middle East and North Africa had been lost. Most of Spain was in Muslim hands, and during the 11th century, the Saljûqs began conquering large parts of the Byzantine Empire. The emperor in Constantinople asked the Christians of Europe to come to his rescue.

During the 11th century, Europe began to wage wars against the Arabs, reconquering not just Sicily, but major parts of Spain, and even parts of Palestine and the Syrian coast. The *reconquista* of Spain and the Crusades should be seen as one related movement to regain lost lands. Hitti is right when he calls the Crusades 'the reaction of Christian Europe against Moslem Asia, which had been on the offensive since 632 not only in Syria and Asia Minor but in Spain and Sicily also'.<sup>129</sup> Thomas F. Madden, professor of history at Saint Louis University (USA), agreed with Hitti:

[The Crusades] were not the brainchild of an ambitious Pope or rapacious knights but a response to more than four centuries of conquests in which Muslims had already captured two-thirds of the old Christian world. At some point, Christianity as a faith and a culture had to defend itself or be subsumed by Islam. The Crusades were that defense.<sup>130</sup>

The *reconquista* was successfully finished in 1492 with the fall of Grenada. The Crusades for liberating the Holy Land were unsuccessful. These two movements had great impact on the Arab World. According to Amin Maalouf, a Chris-

<sup>128</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 163-167.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 635.

<sup>130</sup> Thomas F. Madden, 'The Real History of the Crusades', in *Crisis: Politics, Culture & the Church* (1 April 2002) on [www.crisismagazine.com](http://www.crisismagazine.com) (25 June 2004). A similar view is held by David E. Kerr, professor of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh who in an unpublished paper 'The Crusades and their Impact on Christian-Muslim Relations: The Mission Dimension' (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 3, wrote that the Crusades in fact began in 1018, when a band of Frankish knights went from France to Spain to help Christians there against the Muslims. He mentioned that Toledo (1085) and Valencia (1094) and Sicily (1085) were liberated by Western Christians before the Crusades in the East began. Kerr quotes Arnold Toynbee and William Montgomery Watt who held similar views.

tian Lebanese writer, the epoch of the Crusades made the Arab World turn in on itself, and led to 'long centuries of decadence and obscurantism'. He argued this was the result of the Arab's fear of those who came in touch with the Faranjá (the Franks), as the Crusaders were called by the Arabs. They were usually seen as rather brute and barbaric by the Muslims but they also had some merits. Among the Kingdoms of the Faranjá in the Holy Land, even the poorest peasant had political rights as the Europeans had developed ideas of equity and sound administration. That was unheard of among the Arabs where kings ruled with absolute power. Maalouf argued that many Arabs were worried that their fellow Muslims might turn to Christianity 'if they discovered well-being in Frankish society'.<sup>131</sup> Though Maalouf did not try to substantiate that idea, it is certainly true that while Europe was willing to learn from the Arabs, the Arabs did not think they had anything to learn from the Europeans. So, according to Maalouf:

Assaulted from all sides, the Muslim world turned in on itself. It became over-sensitive, defensive, intolerant, sterile – attitudes that grew steadily worse as world-wide evolution, a process from which the Muslim world felt excluded, continued. Henceforth progress was the embodiment of 'the other', Modernism became alien.<sup>132</sup>

Maalouf did not hint at other reasons for the general decline of the Arab World. His thesis reflects his own desire that in modern times the Arab World would open its windows to the Western world. Maalouf said that the Arab World still 'cannot bring itself to consider the Crusades a mere episode in the bygone past'.<sup>133</sup> For most Arabs and Muslims, the Crusades remain the quintessence of Western ugliness, and in most contemporary battles between the Arab World and the West, imagery from the Crusades is used to evoke strong anti-Western feelings and rally Muslims behind their governments or parties.

The question whether the Crusades have been made into an anti-European emblem by the Arab resistance against the French during the 19<sup>th</sup> century warrants further study. If that is so, then the Arab response to the Crusades can be seen as the pendant of Western historiography about the Crusades since the period of the Enlightenment and Protestantism. According to the Italian Catholic writer Vittorio Messori, the Enlightenment cast a 'black legend' shadow on the Crusades, and used it as a weapon in its psychological war against the Roman-Catholic Church:

In order to complete the work of the Reformation, it was 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe that began the chain of 'Roman infamies' that have become dogma. [...] In connection with the Crusades, it was anti-Catholic propaganda that invented the name, just as

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<sup>131</sup> Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes* (London, 1984), p. 263.

<sup>132</sup> Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, pp. 264-265. This is confirmed by Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (New York 1969), p. xvii: 'It is clear from the Muslim sources that what little exchange there was of men and ideas, was almost always the result of Frankish initiatives'.

<sup>133</sup> Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, pp. 264-265. Maalouf wrote his book while living in Paris. His conclusions reflect the worries of many Arab intellectuals, that the Arab World suffered from a lack of economic and political development because it refused to fully partner in global developments of democracy and economic liberalization, and because it continued to be dominated by despots.



it invented the term Middle Ages, chosen by 'enlightened' historiography to describe the parenthesis of darkness and fanaticism between the splendours of Antiquity and the Renaissance.<sup>134</sup>

Madden agreed with this view and complained that in spite of the fact that in the past few decades many historians have begun to describe the Crusades in less negative terms, they are still 'generally portrayed as a series of holy wars against Islam led by power-mad Popes and fought by religious fanatics'. In the public mind, the Crusaders are supposed to have been 'a breed of proto-imperialists [who] introduced Western aggression to the peaceful Middle East and then deformed the enlightened Muslim culture, leaving it in ruins.'<sup>135</sup>

The prevalent negative views of the Crusaders are easy to justify by pointing to the barbarism and the anti-semitism of these Europeans. The Crusaders themselves were aware of the cultural refinement of the Arabs, and they saw their enemy Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, for instance, as the epitome of chivalry. In spite of the major cultural and religious differences between the Crusaders and the Arabs, friendly and peaceful relations developed between them.<sup>136</sup> The Crusader states became part of the patchwork of political and economic life in the Middle East and Muslims around them made treaties and sometimes fought side by side with them against other Muslims. It should also be remembered that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, the Kurd who became an Arab hero for liberating Jerusalem from Christian hands, fought many more battles against other Muslims than against the Crusaders.

The Copts suffered from the impact of the Crusades; they lost much of the limited freedom to be a witness in society as they had enjoyed under the Fāṭimids. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, under the pretext that the Copts might be colluding with the Crusaders, dismissed many Copts from public offices, and humiliated the whole community by forcing them to wear distinctive dress and not ride horses. They were also heavily taxed, forcing many to adopt Islam. St. Marks Cathedral in the harbor of Alexandria was torn down. After the conquest of Jerusalem by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in 1187, the Christians of Egypt were treated better again, and many could regain their lost positions or possessions again.<sup>137</sup>

#### ***2.4.4 Mongol Invasions and the End of the 'Abbāsids***

The 'Abbāsīd caliphate formally ended in 1258 after Mongol armies, under prince Hülegü, first conquered Iran and then occupied Baghdad and all of Iraq. Baghdad

<sup>134</sup> 'Crusades: Truth and Black Legend. Italian Writer Vittorio Messori Joins Debate', in *Zenit* (27 July 1999) as found on <http://www.ewtn.com> (6 July 2004).

<sup>135</sup> Madden, 'The Real History of the Crusades'. The efforts to justify the Crusaders for their wars against Islam increased remarkably after the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York by radical Muslims on 11 September 2001.

<sup>136</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 643. In later times, the native Christians of the Arab World were sometimes accused of being supportive of the Crusades, but during the Crusades themselves, that was probably not the perception of the Muslims. Hitti for instance relates how the Egyptian ruler Kāmil, who forced the last Crusaders out of Dimyāt in 1221, was so favorably disposed towards his Christian subjects, that the Coptic Church remembered him as the most beneficent sovereign it ever had. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 654.

<sup>137</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 94-96.

was sacked and destroyed by the Mongols. They allowed the civil administration and the irrigation works in Mesopotamia to collapse, thus weakening the sedentary forces and allowing Bedouin raiders to roam around freely. As Mesopotamia became part of an Empire that was ruled from Iran, it became isolated from the Arab World. After the Mongols had defeated the 'Abbâsid Empire, both Christians and Muslims suffered from the destruction of the cities and the land.<sup>138</sup>

When the Mongols ended the 'Abbâsid caliphate, it was in a pitiful shape. Hitti lists the exploitation and the over-taxation of the provinces, the sharp divisions between Arabs and non-Arabs, Muslims and non-Muslims, Arab Muslims and neo-Muslims, the divisions of *Sunnîs* and *Shi'ites*, the opulent luxurious life of the ruling classes who exploited the ever growing impoverished masses and the regular occurrence of major epidemics as the reasons for the weakening and falling apart of the caliphate.<sup>139</sup>

Both Hourani and Hitti admired the 'Abbâsid Empire and culture, and considered its *Arabness* its greatest asset. They saw the downturn of the 'Abbâsids after the tenth century as a result of the ever-increasing role of non-Arabs in the Empire. In this respect they reflected the views of many Arabs in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries who believed that a renaissance of the Arab World would only be possible when the Arabs ruled themselves and cleansed their societies of foreign symbols.

Under the 'Abbâsids and the Fâtîmids, the world of Islam had come more and more under Persian influence. The caliphate in Baghdad adopted ever more things Persian: titles, wines, clothing, wives, songs and ideas.<sup>140</sup> In spite of that, the process of linguistic Arabization continued in the Middle East. Under the 'Abbâsids the word '*Arab* came to denote anyone who spoke Arabic, not just Muslims but also the *dhimmîs*.

In North Africa west of Egypt there were almost no churches left. In Egypt, Syria and Iraq the churches became minorities due to conversions. In many cities colloquial Arabic had become the vernacular and the Arabic colloquial dialects also began to be spoken in the countryside all over the Middle East.<sup>141</sup>

Initially, the Mongols were Shamanists, Buddhists and Nestorians, but they were not Muslims. They considered Islam their main enemy, and they were benevolent to the Christians in their Empire, possibly because they hoped to create a common front against the Arabs together with the Crusaders. This period coincided with an increased interest in mission by European Christians, so the number of Franciscan and Dominicans evangelizing in the Mongol Empire increased rapidly. The Nestorians were for some decades awarded extensive freedom to publicly witness to the Christian faith in Arabian Mesopotamia and to the East. The Nestorians appointed a Christian Mongol, Marko of Kawshang in China as Patriarch Mar Yahbh-Allagha in Baghdad (1281-1317). The most poignant example of

<sup>138</sup> Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>139</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 484-486.

<sup>140</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>141</sup> Busse, 'Grundzüge der islamischen Theologie unter der Geschichte des islamischen Raumes', p. 48. Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 96-97.

the reversal of the Nestorian fate was that the Nestorian patriarch was allowed to build a church in the former secretariat of the *sulṭān*.<sup>142</sup>

The fall of Acre (1291), which meant the end of the Crusades, seems to have moved the Mongol ruler Ghâzân Maḥmûd (1295-1304) to adopt the Islamic faith of the majority of his subjects. The state became Islamic and the Mongols began to melt in with the Arabian and Persian populations. The freedoms of the Christians, mostly Nestorians, were dramatically curtailed again, as well as the liberty for Europeans to do mission.<sup>143</sup> Atiya speaks of a 'renewal of Nestorian persecution with intense ferocity' by the Arab and Kurdish Muslims at the turn of the century, even against the will of Ghâzân.<sup>144</sup>

The Christian position deteriorated badly when Tīmûr Lang (1336-1405) captured Baghdad in 1393 to rule Persia, Mesopotamia, and later Syria as well. He was an ardent Muslim who did not allow the Christian religion any space in the public domain. Many monasteries and churches in Mesopotamia were destroyed.<sup>145</sup> Whole communities were massacred; others lost their ancient tenacity and entered the faith of the conqueror to save their skins.<sup>146</sup> The number of Christians dwindled, and they restricted their religious life to celebrations within the walls of their churches and monasteries.<sup>147</sup>

The Arab World lacked the ability to revitalize itself from the 11<sup>th</sup> century until the Renaissance (*al-Nahḍah*) of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The processes of Arabization and Islamization which had unified the Arab World during this period may actually have played a role in stifling the development of society. The Arabic language that had become the only vehicle for intellectual discussion was very difficult to learn as it was distant from the Arabic vernaculars. Because the guardians of Islam believed the Arabic language to be sacrosanct as the language of the revelation of the *Qur'ân*, any adaptation of the language was considered *ḥarâm* (taboo). This created an ever-widening chasm between the literate elites and the majority of the population. This excluded large segments of society from participation in intellectual life and societal development.<sup>148</sup>

The process of Islamization diminished the number of Jews and Christians in the Arab World. These two groups played a major role as conduits of knowledge from Europe and Persia into the Arab World. Christians and Jews were important for being able to propound radically liberal, non-conformist ideas. For revitalizing society, these new ideas and information were a necessity but for orthodox Arab Muslims, non-conformism and liberal thought became evermore *ḥarâm*.

Islam as a religion was at the core of Arab society. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, the foremost Islamic theologians had agreed that in religion *ijtihâd* (the exercising of

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<sup>142</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, pp. 336-341. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 274.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 275.

<sup>145</sup> Hage, 'Het christendom onder de heerschappij van de islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', pp. 80-82. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 210.

<sup>146</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 276.

<sup>147</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 699-702. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, p. 340.

<sup>148</sup> More on this matter in chapter 3

independent juristic reasoning to provide answers when the *Qur'ân* and the *sunnah* are unclear) was no longer acceptable. That decision meant that anything the early Islamic theologians had said about the interpretation of the *Qur'ân* and the *ḥadīths* in order to create rules for society was the only acceptable norm. As those laws were not formally codified, this decision of the conservative religious leaders gave them great powers in society as the only interpreters of law.<sup>149</sup> It also tended to stifle intellectual life in general and it was therefore detrimental to the revitalization of Arab society.

#### **2.4.5 Mamlûk Empire**

After 1260, the Middle East fell under the sway of the Mamlûk officers who took over power in Egypt. This Mamlûk Empire would last until 1517. Baybars, the first Mamlûk ruler in Cairo, was able to conquer Syria, once more creating a Syro-Egyptian Empire. The Mamlûks were also able to finish the last vestiges of Frankish presence in the Holy Land. Nubia, the Christian Kingdom south of Egypt, was finally permanently conquered, and to the west of Egypt the Imazighen were subdued.<sup>150</sup>

The Mamlûks were originally Turkish slaves, imported for military and civil roles. Later, northwest Caucasian Circassians, Kurds, even some Europeans, became part of these ruling Mamlûk classes of Egypt. Turkish was the language of government, and many of the dominant class, including some *sultâns*, could hardly speak Arabic.<sup>151</sup> Hitti, who blamed the 'foreign' armies hired by the Fâtîmids for their downfall, was positive about the military role of the Mamlûks in as far as they checked the invasions of other non-Arabic armies:

These slave sultans cleared their Syrian-Egyptian domain of the remnants of the Crusaders. They checked for ever the advance of the redoubtable Mongol hordes of Hulagu [...] who might otherwise have changed the entire course of history and culture in Western Asia and Egypt. Because of this check, Egypt was spared the devastation that befell Syria and al-Iraq and enjoyed a continuity in culture and political institutions which no other Muslim land outside Arabia enjoyed.<sup>152</sup>

Under the Mamlûks, Egypt and Syria would eventually be ruined. High taxation, debased coinage, factional infighting of the ruling military oligarchy, occasional plagues and regular revolts all contributed to the 'mental fatigue' of the Mamlûks, according to Hitti. 'In fact the whole Arab World had by the beginning of the thirteenth century lost the intellectual hegemony it had maintained since the eighth.'<sup>153</sup>

The churches in Egypt suffered under the Mamlûks. According to Atiya, insecurity and increasing poverty drove the Muslims of Egypt 'into reckless despera-

<sup>149</sup> Busse, 'Grundzüge der islamischen Theologie unter der Geschichte des islamischen Raumes', p. 36.

<sup>150</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 675.

<sup>151</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 169-171. Entry 'Baybars I' in Joan Wucher King, *Historical Dictionary of Egypt* (Cairo, 1989, first edition 1984), pp. 202-204.

<sup>152</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 671.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 683.

tion'. The Copts were indispensable to the financial machinery of the state which in turn made them hated by the Mamlûk rulers. Moreover, mobs of Muslims every now and then attacked the Copts. Between 1279 and 1447 at least 54 churches were destroyed in Cairo, beside some monasteries elsewhere in Egypt. At one time some monks retaliated, burning down many mosques and hundred of houses. The Coptic Patriarch Yûḥanná X (1363-9) was brought to court, subjected to humiliating treatment and the confiscation of property. During those periods, there was no space for a Christian witness in the public domain. The Christian ruler of Abyssinia was able to intervene and ensure better treatment of the Copts by the Mamlûks when he threatened to retaliate against the Abyssinian Muslims and to change the course of the Nile.<sup>154</sup>

Syria was taken from Egypt by Tîmûr Lang in 1400-1401 thus administering a blow to Egypt's economic and military strength from which it would never recover. Another major blow was the European ability to use the sea route around the Cape of Good Hope. In 1498 Vasco da Gama was the first to follow that route to India, thus depriving Egypt of important income from the Red Sea routes.<sup>155</sup>

## 2.5 OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND EUROPEAN POWERS: 1517-1922

### 2.5.1 Arab World Subjugated to the Ottomans

In 1516-1517 Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Egypt were conquered by the Ottomans. The Hijâz was used as a springboard for conquering southern Arabia while the Ottoman armies used Egypt as the base for taking North Africa. With the final conquest of Iraq in 1534, almost the whole Arab World had come under Turkish rule. Only Yemen, major parts of the Arabian Peninsula and Lebanon would retain some independence. Morocco in the far west stayed fully independent of the Ottomans.<sup>156</sup> The Ottomans had won their victories mainly due to their superior firepower. The Ottoman fleet ruled over the eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea and in order to check Spanish expansion, the Ottomans established a chain of strongholds in Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>157</sup>

According to Lewis, the coming of the Ottomans meant, in many respects, 'liberation from the harsh rule of the late Mamlûk Sultans'.<sup>158</sup> As the independence of the Arabs ended and Turks replaced the Arab rulers, the role of the Arabic language diminished. Even when the Turks could speak Arabic fluently, they often addressed their Arab subjects in Turkish because Arabic was the despised language of the subject people. Another change was the shift of power in the Arab World from Iraq to Egypt as Egypt remained the only powerful centralized state in the Arab East. It became the center of Arabic culture.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>154</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>155</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 171-173.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>157</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 215.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

<sup>159</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 174-175.

The Ottoman Empire, with Istanbul as its capital, spent most of its resources and energy in expanding into eastern and central Europe and later in controlling those European provinces. The place of the Arab provinces in the Empire must be seen in that context. Iraq was important as a stronghold against the Persians. The revenues from Egypt and Syria were a major part of the Ottoman budget, and the possession of the Holy Places of Islam guaranteed respect for the Empire and its claim to Islamic leadership throughout the Muslim world.<sup>160</sup>

Initially, the Ottoman rulers were considered outsiders in the Arab provinces. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the imprint of Ottoman power and culture upon the Arab provinces appears to have gone deeper. Ottoman civil servants and military commanders settled in the provinces and founded households that were able to retain positions in the Ottoman service from generation to generation. These families gradually accustomed to their environment, and were called the 'local Ottomans'. The traditional Arab elites often worked harmoniously with these 'local Ottomans'. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, at least in some of the large Arab cities, powerful and permanent families of notables, some more Turkish, others more Arab, governed the land.<sup>161</sup>

Because of the importance of Egypt in the Empire, the Ottoman government frequently replaced the governors of Cairo, as they feared that they might otherwise become too independent from Istanbul. From about 1630, some Mamlûk families held predominant power in Egypt, and this tendency of local military elites to hold actual power over the governors that were appointed by Istanbul, spread over the Empire. In North Africa, Algiers was the only stronghold that stayed in the hands of the Ottomans until France conquered it in 1830. Oran was in the hands of Spain from 1509 to 1792. Much of the *hinterland* of Algiers, like Kabylia, was fully outside Ottoman control. In Tunisia and Tripoli, Ottoman power was also minimal.<sup>162</sup>

Başrah was almost independent from the Ottomans until it was recaptured in the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its proximity to the main sea routes to the east made it too valuable a prize to give up. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Ottoman power in Kurdish North Iraq had diminished. The area was almost independent from the Ottoman administration in Baghdad.<sup>163</sup>

Even though the Ottoman rulers preferred Turkish to Arabic and often refused to speak Arabic even if they could, Arabic as a language gained more ground. Poetry and secular works could be written in Ottoman Turkish but books on religion, law, history and biographies were written in Arabic. The Arabization and Islami- zation of the Middle East and North Africa continued steadily. Some Maronite priests, who had first been educated in Latin and Italian in colleges in Rome, began to seriously study the Arabic language in mountain monasteries when they returned to Lebanon. These monasteries were to become important centers for the study of history and theology in the Arabic language.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 253-254.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 227-230.

<sup>163</sup> Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, pp. 342-343.

<sup>164</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 239, 242.

The role of Jews and Christians in the Turkish parts of the Ottoman Empire became more important under the Ottomans, as both groups played a vital role in business relations with Europe. In cities where European traders lived, local Christians often functioned as intermediaries. Armenians were important in the silk trade with Iran. In the Turkic areas of the Ottoman Empire, the Christians were relatively free to do Christian witness through their *koinonia* and charitable deeds of *diakonia*. They could not freely speak about the Gospel in the public domain.<sup>165</sup> The volatile position of Christians was shown, for instance, in the fate of the Assyrian Church of the East (Nestorians); they lived peacefully among the Kurds for centuries but during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Kurds periodically turned against them and attacked and plundered their communities.<sup>166</sup>

Atiya sees the coming of the first Western missionaries, with their promises of educational and social help as well as political support against the Muslims, as the main cause of the souring relationship.<sup>167</sup> At the request of European consuls, between 1830 and 1834, the Ottoman army restored order after the Kurds had attacked members of the Assyrian Church of the East and as a result relationships became more cordial again. However, in 1843 the Kurdish chief Badr Khân attacked Assyrian villages in an effort to unify Kurdistan for an attack against the Turks. The massacres were enormous, with possibly 20,000 Christians killed. The patriarch often appealed to the Western powers for protection.<sup>168</sup>

The lesson learned by Christians in the Arab World from the sporadic bloodbaths, was that as small minorities they had to be very careful. Most Christian Arab were satisfied to play a minimal role in public life; their numbers had become insignificant in most parts of the Arab World, and just as the whole Arab World became impoverished, the Churches also suffered from poverty. They were extremely careful to not give any reason for the majority to attack them. According to Atiya, for the Copts of Egypt the period was ‘on the whole, one of miserable respite in comparison with the murderous persecutions of later medieval Mamlûks’. Copts were the accountants and managers for officials and tax-farmers in Egypt; they had fulfilled that role historically.<sup>169</sup> The situation for the Christians in Syria and Iraq was worse. They were impoverished and isolated, and they were often the victims of local persecutions. A spirit of *jihâdism* was regularly fanned by the Ottomans, as part of a *divide and rule* policy. For the Christians in the eastern parts of the Arab World there was no public space except if they did not speak of their Christian faith.<sup>170</sup>

The only area where Christians remained relatively free to do public witness was in Lebanon. The majority of the population there was Maronite, and it had been able to maintain that identity because of the isolation of the country that was surrounded by mountains. Even in the public domain, Christians could let their

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., pp. 234-236.

<sup>166</sup> H. Teule, ‘De Assyrische (nestoriaanse) Kerk van het Oosten’, in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>167</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 283

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pp. 282-288.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., pp. 99-100.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

witness be seen and heard. It is no co-incidence that in this rather liberal environment, the first printing presses were imported into the Arab World. Between 1610 and 1751, three Lebanese monasteries imported their own presses, in order to print books for the *kerygma* and the *koinonia* of the Church.<sup>171</sup> It can also be said that the Christian witness of the Maronites had an important *diakonal* element: it played an important role in the modernization of the Arab World as a whole.<sup>172</sup>

### **2.5.2 Impact of Europe on the Ottoman Empire and the Arab World**

#### **2.5.2.1 Capitulations**

In 1535, France and the Ottomans signed the Capitulations Treaty. This guaranteed French traders safety of their persons and property, and freedom of worship in the Ottoman Empire. It also gave France the right to act as a representative and defender of the Christian *dhimmis*. This enabled France to penetrate rapidly into the Ottoman Empire, constructing trading posts and consular missions. The English (1580) and the Dutch (1612) signed similar treaties, as did some other countries thereafter. In the wake of European businessmen came missionaries, teachers, and travelers. Most of the work of the missionaries was related to the indigenous churches, as evangelism to Muslims was not allowed.<sup>173</sup>

#### **2.5.2.2 French and British Control**

##### ***France***

In 1798 France invaded Egypt, beginning a new era of European-Arab relationships. France hoped to strike a blow against the British trade routes to India by taking Egypt. Hitti credits the French invasion with the beginning of renewal in the Arab World:

Until that time the people of the Arab World were generally leading a self-contained, traditional, conventional life, achieving no progress and unmindful of the progress of the world outside. Change did not interest them. This abrupt contact with the west gave them the first knock that helped to awaken them from their medieval slumber.<sup>174</sup>

This is somewhat one-sided and focuses on Egypt only, as Lebanon was already developing similar relationship with Europe through the Maronite Church. Irrespective of France's invasion in Egypt, that development was likely to have continued. On the other hand, Egypt's opening to the Western World after 1798 encouraged the beginnings of the Renaissance in Lebanon.

The French were forced to leave Egypt by the British who came to help the Ottomans. The British established themselves and became influential in Egypt. The Turkish-speaking ruler of Egypt, Muḥammad 'Alī, originally from Albania,

<sup>171</sup> In 1798 a fourth press was taken into the Arab World, to Egypt, by Napoleon.

<sup>172</sup> Paul Lunde, 'Arabic and the Art of Printing', in *Saudi Aramco World* (March/April 1981), pp. 20-35.

<sup>173</sup> Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, p. 210.

<sup>174</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 745.



succeeded in briefly reviving the hopes of an independent Arab Empire by military campaigns against Sudan, Arabia and Syria. To achieve this goal he decided to build a European-style army and determined that he needed to reform education and the economy to achieve it. He therefore invited Europeans to come and teach in both Egypt and Syria in order to modernize these countries. He was unable to hold his military conquests in the long term.<sup>175</sup>

In 1830 France occupied Algiers. The main reason for this event was that the merchants of Marseille wanted a strong trading position on the Algerian coast.<sup>176</sup> Resistance was led by ‘Abd al-Qâdir, who saw the struggle to free the land as a *jihâd* for liberating Muslim lands from infidels and not in modern nationalist terms. In this respect he tried to overcome the parochialism inherent in Algerian tribal society where most people did not speak Arabic. His centralizing policies however brought him into conflict with the vested interests of many tribal leaders. He was defeated in 1847 and a year later all of Algeria was occupied and formally incorporated as a province of France. ‘Abd al-Qâdir went into exile in Syria.<sup>177</sup>

By 1860, eight percent of Algeria’s inhabitants were European settlers. These immigrants wanted the country to become fully French.<sup>178</sup> In the 1870s the Arabs and the Imazighen revolted but their efforts were crushed. After that, Paris decided to allow the French migrants to own land. By 1914 Europeans owned about 35 percent of the cultivated land. By then, 13 percent of the total population and 75 percent of Algiers was European.<sup>179</sup>

In 1881 Tunisia was occupied by France to protect the Algerian border and to stop the growing influence of Italy in Tunisia. In 1883 Tunisia became a French protectorate placing the administration and finances directly under Paris. French became the formal literary language of both Algeria and Tunisia. Between 1907 and 1912 France also took most of Morocco while Spain occupied some smaller parts of that country.<sup>180</sup>

France invaded Lebanon in 1860, in order to help the Maronites against the Druze. From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century until 1840, the Maronites had cooperated closely with the Druze of Lebanon. This cooperation guaranteed their independence within the Ottoman Empire. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century many of the Druze of the ruling Shihâb clan became Christians and joined the Maronite Church, a rather spectacular matter in the context of the Muslim world. The Druze *Amîr* Bashîr II publicly declared his Christian faith in 1831.

The close relationship between the two communities came to an end in 1840, after Bashîr II was sent into exile by the Ottomans. That left a vacuum of power in Lebanon. The Ottomans also separated Lebanon into a Maronite zone and a Druze zone. The fact that England formally defended the Druze and France the Maronites, aggravated the growing separation between the communities. The Ot-

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., pp. 722-723. Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, p. 355.

<sup>176</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 269-270.

<sup>177</sup> Rudolph Peters, *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History* (The Hague, 1979), pp. 54-55.

<sup>178</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 269-271.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>180</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 717-718. Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 285.

tomans forced the Christians to disarm while the Muslims and the Druze were allowed to keep their weapons. In 1845, Druze and Christians burned each other's villages. This was only the beginning of the communal problems that would erupt fully in 1860.<sup>181</sup>

The increasing tensions between Maronites and Druze in Lebanon and Syria led to a bloodbath in 1860. In Lebanon alone, an estimated 7,000 to 11,000 Maronites were killed by Druze while 150 Christian villages and hundreds of churches were destroyed.<sup>182</sup> France sent an expeditionary force to Lebanon for defending the Maronites and they were able to quickly restore order.<sup>183</sup>

The Ottomans imposed heavy penalties on officials and local Muslims for fermenting the trouble. 'Abd al-Qâdir had given shelter to Christians and tried to stop the riots fearing that France would use the problems as an argument for arranging that Lebanon would get its own statute within the Ottoman Empire. That happened in 1861 anyway; Lebanon became autonomous within the Ottoman Empire under a Christian governor who was nominated by the *sultân*. The role of the French, including its Church, grew remarkably in Lebanon from this point in time. This attracted many Europeans and Americans to Lebanon which became an important 'window' through which the Arab World was in contact with Europe.<sup>184</sup> The Christian majority in Lebanon created the liberal atmosphere in which radical concepts of Arab nationalism could fully develop.

As a result of the French Revolution (1789), the French state had been secularized. It no longer held the view that it had a role in supporting the Roman-Catholic Church to present its Christian witness in the Arab World. The French view of the public domain guaranteed the liberties for the Christian minorities though. Especially in Algeria, which was considered a French province, mission work was allowed in order to convert Arab and Kabyle Muslims. Lebanon also became a haven for mission work. The Maronite Church was at liberty to be a Christian witness, through its *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia* in the public domain. In respect to *diakonia*, the Church was able to both be involved in charitable work, as well as in acts of politics and public justice. Roman-Catholic and Protestant missionaries were allowed to publicly proclaim the Gospel.<sup>185</sup>

### ***The United Kingdom***

During the 19th century the Western powers were no longer satisfied with trade relationships, they wanted to control the resources, services and transportation in the Arab World. Britain began running shipping lines and railways in the Arab World to mainly gain easier access to India. In order to secure safe transportation

<sup>181</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 406-407.

<sup>182</sup> Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (London, New York, 1994), pp. 2, 6. H. Teule, 'De maronitische kerk', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), pp. 181-182. Atiya speaks of 12,000 victims. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 407.

<sup>183</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 404-409

<sup>184</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 735-736. Abdul-Karim Rafeq, 'New Light on the 1860 Riots in Ottoman Damascus', in *Die Welt des Islams* XXVIII (Leiden, 1988), p. 412.

<sup>185</sup> Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6: *The Great Century: North Africa and Asia - 1800 AD to 1914 AD* (Grand Rapids, 1976, first edition 1956), pp. 63-64.

to India, Britain signed treaties with the Gulf *shaykhs* in 1820 and developed an ever stronger political grip on those coastal lands. In 1839 they occupied Aden. In 1869 the Egyptian Suez Canal, paid for by British and French investors, was opened, ensuring the key position of Egypt in European-Asian trade.<sup>186</sup>

An army officer, Aḥmad ‘Urâbî, became the spokesman for many Arab notables in Egypt who demanded more access to the power held by the Turks, and for Egypt to be less malleable to British dictates. The Turkish *khedive* (Turko-Persian for *lord*, hence for the Turkish ruler in Egypt) was forced to install a cabinet with a majority of Arabs in which ‘Urâbî became minister of war. Subsequently, in 1882, ‘Urâbî led a revolt against the Turkish dynasty of Egypt. The *khedive* invited the British to come and help him when his army would not allow him to dismiss ‘Urâbî from the cabinet. England obliged and occupied Egypt in 1882, thus ensuring its power over the Canal. In 1914 Egypt was declared a *protectorate*.<sup>187</sup>

The United Kingdom’s colonial history is different from that of the France, among other things because the British state was not formally secularized. Much more than France, Great Britain believed it had a responsibility to support the Christian witness in the lands where it ruled. It allowed the Churches of Egypt and Iraq as well as Roman-Catholic and Protestant missionaries to be a Christian witness in word and deed in the public domain.<sup>188</sup>

### 2.5.3 The Arab Renaissance

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Arab World witnessed the beginning of renewal. The increasing role of Europeans in the Arab World and the growing realization of Arab backwardness by many Arab intellectuals, led to a desire for a renaissance. That desire developed parallel with the growth of Western-style nationalism in the Arab World. The initial thesis of Arab nationalism was that all Arabic speaking peoples were one nation. It developed as an Arab reaction to Turkish domination in the first place, but also to the increasing Western presence. One of the first results of the nationalists’ desire for a renewal of the Arab World was an interest in the history of the early ‘Abbâsîd period and in the Arabic language. Arab nationalism was especially strong among the Christian Arabs, who were least susceptible to ideals of Muslim unity and the most open to new Western ideas of nation building based on a shared language.

The thesis that the malaise of almost 1000 years in the Arab World was related to the processes of Arabization and Islamization, with its rule against *ijtihâd*, seems to be confirmed by the fact that the Renaissance was most vibrant in Lebanon where Christians formed a majority. This created a rather liberal atmosphere in the country. Christian Lebanese were well placed in the Arab World to mediate modern European thinking into the heart of Arab culture, especially after Lebanon became practically independent from Syrian and Ottoman rule in 1861. This process was encouraged by the presence of European and North American Protestant

<sup>186</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 185, 187.

<sup>187</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 283.

<sup>188</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6, pp. 63-64.

and Roman-Catholic missionaries who, through their churches and schools, often instilled a desire for renewal in the minds of their Christian and Muslim students.

Some historians, like Lewis, argue that the Renaissance actually began in Egypt. He suggested that the unique geography of Egypt and its Pharaonic past played a major role. 'There can hardly be another country in the world, the identity and distinctiveness of which are so clearly stamped by geography as well as history.' According to Lewis, Egypt was, in an early stage, more open to Western influences than any other Arab country.<sup>189</sup>

The discussion about where the Renaissance began reflects the contemporary struggle for cultural predominance between Lebanon and Egypt. It is best to think of the early developments of the Renaissance in Egypt and Lebanon as parallel and mutually reinforcing movements. Lewis was right in suggesting an important Egyptian role.

Muḥammad 'Alī, the Ottoman-Albanian ruler of Egypt after that country had been able to rid itself of the French troops (1801), realized he needed European technology and education for building a strong army that could defend Egypt. This led him to begin the renewal of education in Egypt. The brief occupation of Syria by the troops of Muḥammad 'Alī (1830-1834) played an important role in effecting a major renewal in the Syrian educational systems as well.<sup>190</sup> In Syria, and especially in the area that in 1861 became Lebanon with its Christian majority, these new ideas rooted faster and spread wider than in Egypt.

Newspapers and magazines became two crucial means of spreading new thinking in the Arab World.<sup>191</sup> A small but influential generation of Arabs had grown up accustomed to reading books. Many of these elite Arab families were bilingual. French or English were used as the vernacular in their homes in cities such as Cairo, Alexandria and Beirut. Lewis underlined the important role of the missionaries in the literary Arab development:

[The missionaries were] restoring to the Arabs their half-forgotten classics and translating for them some of the sources of Western knowledge. They trained a new generation of Arabs, at once more conscious of their Arab heritage and more affected by Western influence [...] The new local middle class of traders and intellectuals came largely from the minorities [...] But this new class spoke and wrote in Arabic. Mission-educated Syrian Christians established newspapers and periodicals in Egypt as well as Syria, and reached a wider public as more and more of the population were affected by economic and social change. It was in this period that Arab nationalism was born.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>189</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East* (London, 1998), pp. 67-68.

<sup>190</sup> Entry 'Muhammad Ali Pasha', in Joan Wucher King, *Historical Dictionary of Egypt* (Cairo, 1989, first edition 1984), pp. 445-447.

<sup>191</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 189. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 746-747. Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, does not mention a word about the role of missionaries and Lebanese or any other Arab Christians playing a major role in reviving the Arabic language and developing nationalist ideas.

<sup>192</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 189-190. The Arabs saw the first clear example of the European concept of nationalism in the Greek uprising that began in 1821. In 1833 Greece became an independent Kingdom, with the military and diplomatic aid of the European powers.

One of the Lebanese converts to Protestantism, Buṭrus al-Bustānī, began the first Syrian political magazine after the bloody religious upheavals in Syria in 1860. His goal was to create harmony among the different creeds by together pursuing knowledge. During that same period, another Protestant, Naṣīf al-Yazījī, began publishing a magazine for political and literary review. Its motto was that ‘patriotism is an article of faith’, a totally new idea in the Arab World. The Syrian Protestant College, founded in 1866 by missionaries from the USA and later re-named American University of Beirut (AUB), became a bulwark of Arab nationalism.<sup>193</sup>

The backwardness of the Arab World could not be denied any longer. Some Muslims, who wanted to modernize society through renewing religion, began proposing that the gates of *ijtihād* be reopened as the prerequisite for societal change. One of the earliest and most influential advocates for pan-Islamic unity and for Islamic revitalization was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897). His political career began in Afghanistan and India, but he came to Cairo in 1870. In 1876 he founded a Masonic lodge, which included many of the later politicians of Egypt. When he was involved in the circulation of a Nationalist Manifesto in 1879, he was deported from Egypt. He settled in Paris for a while, but eventually he ended in Istanbul.<sup>194</sup>

One of the followers of al-Afghānī, who visited him in Paris, was Muḥammad ‘Abdū. He was to become one of Egypt’s most respected reformers, especially as he became *mufī* of Egypt in 1899. ‘Abdū and other Muslim modernists demanded the right to personally interpret the sources of Islam for modern life. In that respect they have, during the past century, been better able to speak to the needs of Arabs than the vast majority of conservative religious leaders who rejected *ijtihād* as *ḥarām*.

During the latter parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a small minority of modernists wanted to go much further than most modernizers. Some, like the Sudanese Muslim scholar ‘Abdullāhī Aḥmad Al-Nā‘īm, desired to liberate Arab society from its shackles; they were not interested in tying their opinions to the paradigms as set by the *Shari‘ah* (Islamic Law) but to the *Qur‘ān* or parts of that only.<sup>195</sup>

<sup>193</sup> George Antonius, himself a Protestant from Alexandria, described this history of the involvement of Protestant missionaries and their converts in the development of Arab nationalism in his classic work on Arab nationalism. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (Beirut, 1969, first edition 1938), pp. 35-60. Antonius was a Greek-Orthodox Lebanese-Egyptian writer and politician and a graduate from Cambridge University in 1913. He came to Palestine in 1921 as a British civil servant. He resigned in 1930 in protest over British policies against Palestinians. He appeared before the Peel Commission (1936-37) and was secretary to the Palestinian delegation and secretary-general to the united Arab delegation at the London Conference (February 1939).

<sup>194</sup> Wucher King, *Historical Dictionary of Egypt*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>195</sup> Peters, Ruud, ‘Het Recht: recente ontwikkelingen’ in Jacques Waardenburg (ed), *Islam: Norm, ideaal en werkelijkheid* (Weesp, 1984), p. 295. Rudolph Peters, ‘Erneuerungsbewegungen im Islam vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert und die Rolle des Islams in der neueren Geschichte: Antikolonialismus und Nationalismus’, in Werner Ende und Udo Steinbach (eds), *Der Islam in der Gegenwart: Entwicklung und Ausbreitung Staat, Politik und Recht, Kultur und Religion* (München, 1984), p. 93. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na‘im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (Cairo, 1992, first edition 1990), pp. ix-x, pleaded for basing contemporary Islamic thinking on the early chapters of the *Qur‘ān* only. Some websites like www.progressivemuslims.org (16 June 2006)

#### 2.5.4 The Break-Up of the Ottoman Empire

Successive Turkish governments between the 1890s and the 1920s wanted to rid themselves of as many Armenians as possible. In 1890 there were some 2.5 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Between 1894 and 1896, *Sultân* ‘Abd al-Ḥamîd II had mass killings organized, leading to approximately 200,000 victims.<sup>196</sup>

During World War I the Ottoman Empire sided with Germany and Austria against England, France and Russia. Russia tried to enlist the Armenians to take up arms against the Ottomans but, overall, it was not very successful. However, the Young Turks regime that in 1915 succeeded the *sultân*, used the war as a pretext for mass killings of the Armenians on a nation-wide scale in 1915-1916. Mustapha Kemal *Atatürk* (Father of the Turks), who built Turkey as a secular state, organized more killings in the early 1920s. The total death toll between 1915 and the early 1920s was between 500,000 and 1½ million, both through direct killings and through organized death marches. Among these people killed, were also hundreds of thousands of Assyrian Christians.<sup>197</sup>

The motivation behind the killings was a combination of extreme nationalistic and Islamic *jihâdist* fervor coupled with a strong desire for racial and religious purity in Turkey.<sup>198</sup> During the Ottoman court-martials of 1919 and 1920, many of the perpetrators publicly prided themselves in having ordered or implemented the mass murders for the sake of the well-being of the Turkish Empire. The tribunal was fully Turkish but even though the vast majority of Turks were supportive of the mass murders, the tribunal substantiated the key charge of premeditated mass murder. The proceedings of the trials can be found in *Takvim i Vekayi*, the official gazette of the Ottoman parliament.<sup>199</sup> The key indictment referred to the Turkish atrocities as massacres with the plundering of properties, torching of corpses and buildings, rape, torture and torment. The tribunal concluded that the crimes were perpetrated in a particularly organized way, calling it ‘the extermination of an entire people constituting a distinct community’. The court condemned many to long prison sentences and the heads of the Young Turks government were sentenced to death in absentia.<sup>200</sup>

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www.free-minds.org (16 June 2006) argue that only the *Qur’ân* should guide Muslims. This is a radical renewal within Islam.

<sup>196</sup> For a description of these massacres, see for instance Atiya, *History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 311-314. Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: A History of the Armenian Genocide* (London, 2003), pp. 130, 180, gives these numbers of victims. His book gives overwhelming support for the accusation that the Ottoman and Turkish authorities acted purposeful in the destruction of the Armenian population. See also Viscount Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Lebanese Evangelical Mission 1915-16* (London, 1916), a book that contains the testimonies of hundreds of eyewitnesses of the mass murders, as collected by Bryce and arranged and commented on by Arnold J. Toynbee.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> The aforementioned books, and especially Balakian, give extensive proof of this combination of religious and nationalist fervor behind the Armenian massacres.

<sup>199</sup> Balakian, *The Burning Tigris*, p. 334.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., pp. 342-344.

### 2.5.5 Broken Promises of Independence

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century England endeavored to woo the Arabs to their side against the Ottoman armies. During World War I, the Assyrians had no more hope for secure relations with the Kurds or with the Turks, and chose the side of the Allied powers against the Turks. Many left their homes and followed the British and Russian troops, hoping for independence after the war in the environs of Mosul. When that independence was not awarded, they became homeless refugees on the banks of the Upper Tigris and Euphrates under the British Mandate in Iraq. The Muslims of Iraq saw these Assyrians as traitors as they did not participate in the Arabic nationalist dream.<sup>201</sup>

London promised *Sharif* Ḥusayn of the Hijāz, in October 1915, that it was prepared to 'recognise and support the independence of the Arabs'.<sup>202</sup> On 5 June 1916 Ḥusayn proclaimed himself *King of all Arabs* and his army, led by his son Faysal, evicted the Ottoman garrisons from Mekka and Medina. In 1917 his army participated in defeating the Ottomans in Palestine. It soon became clear, however, that the British had never intended to give any independence to the Arabs. In May 1916 London and Paris had secretly signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement that divided the Arab World into spheres of influence for the United Kingdom and France. England would 'get' Palestine, Jordan and Iraq, while France became responsible for Syria and Lebanon.<sup>203</sup> The situation became more complicated in November 1917 when England also announced in its Balfour Declaration to the British Zionists that it viewed 'with favour the establishment in Palestine [of] the national home for the Jewish people'.<sup>204</sup>

On 8 March 1920, a nationalistic Syrian National Congress proclaimed the independence of Syria, which was supposed to include the present states of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Jordan. Faysal was to be the first king of the constitutional monarchy. At the same time, a similar congress in Iraq proclaimed its independence with Faysal's brother 'Abd Allāh as king. Two months later the United Kingdom and France met in San Remo (Italy) to divide up the former Ottoman Empire according to their Sykes-Picot Agreement, ignoring their earlier promises and the expressed decisions of the Arabs. England and France created a semblance of legitimacy by accepting 'mandates' over the Arab lands on behalf of the League of Nations. These lands were assumed to be in need of protection and support for their development towards independence. Maxime Rodinson rightly called this idea of mandates a 'hypocritical formula for colonization disguised as

<sup>201</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 282-288.

<sup>202</sup> A. Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Cairo, wrote this to *Sharif* Ḥusayn on 24 October 1915. See Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin (eds), *The Israel-Arab Reader* (Harmondsworth, 1984, first edition 1969), pp. 15-17.

<sup>203</sup> 'The Sykes-Picot Agreement', in Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin (eds), *The Israel-Arab Reader* (Harmondsworth, 1984, first edition 1969), pp. 12-15.

<sup>204</sup> Arthur James Balfour in a letter to Lord Rothschild (2 November 1917), in Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin (eds), *The Israel-Arab Reader* (Harmondsworth, 1984, first edition 1969), pp. 17-18.

benevolent aid'. The Arabs remember 1920 as the *Year of the Catastrophe* (*‘Ām al-Nakbah*).<sup>205</sup>

## 2.6 DECOLONIZATION: AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

### 2.6.1 Toward Arab Independence

After World War I the status of Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya did not change. The former three remained under French tutelage while Libya remained an Italian colony. The Egyptian uprising against the British in 1919, at the instigation of Sa‘ad Zaghlūl of the *Wafd* (representation) *Party*, led to formal independence for the country in 1922. *Khedive* Fū‘ād took the title of *King of Egypt and the Sudan*, though Great Britain continued to occupy Egypt and dominate its political life.<sup>206</sup>

In 1920, after the San Remo meetings, the French troops in Lebanon under General Henri Gouraud marched to Damascus to occupy Syria. Faysal was able to escape. In 1925, the present state of Syria was created. France allowed the Lebanese part of the original Ottoman province of Syria to become an independent state in 1926. The recognition of independence did not change France’s military occupation of Syria and Lebanon.

After Faysal had escaped from Syria, he was installed as king of Iraq by Great Britain in 1921. That was possible after London had rejected ‘Abd Allāh as the king of Iraq. Great Britain appointed ‘Abd Allāh as king of Transjordan instead in 1922. At approximately the same time Great Britain recognized the independence of King Ḥusayn over the Hijāz. Shortly thereafter this area was conquered by the chieftain Ibn Sa‘ūd from the Najd who inaugurated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).<sup>207</sup>

The major reason for the European powers to get direct rule over the Arab World was the development of the internal combustion engine. This made the oil of the Arabs immensely important. In 1925 the British Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) received a concession for exploration of oil in Iraq for 75 years. For England, with its growing navy and merchant fleet, free access to oil was extremely important. London granted Iraq its formal independence in 1930; British troops continued to occupy Iraq temporarily.<sup>208</sup>

When the British Mandate for Iraq ended in 1933, Assyrians in Iraq ran into problems. Their young patriarch Mar Shim‘ūn returned from his education in England and assumed the rule over the Assyrians as if they were his own nation, oblivious of the changes that had taken place in Iraq. In 1933, the minister of inte-

<sup>205</sup> Maxime Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs* (New York, 1982, first edition 1968), pp. 20-21. Later, the loss of Palestine in 1948 would also be termed the *Nakbah*.

<sup>206</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 76-78, 84. In 1911 Sa‘ad Zaghlūl, then minister for education, succeeded in making Arabic the medium of instruction rather than English in all Egyptian schools. Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>207</sup> Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>208</sup> Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 737.



rior requested him to stop acting as if he was in charge of a state within the state. He and the Assyrian chiefs refused to comply and met at Mosul, where they issued a protest against the government. Iraq then offered an ultimatum. The Assyrians were told to abide by the law, or leave the country. A thousand armed men decided to leave for Syria with their families but they were turned back by the French. On their return to Iraq, the Iraqi army attacked the disorderly refugees, and with the help of Kurds and Bedouin, they massacred them. The patriarch was then deported to Cyprus and stripped of his Iraqi citizenship for inciting rebellion.<sup>209</sup> Atiya has little sympathy for the Assyrians and blames the victims for their fate:

Nestorian society had become petrified in its formalism, tribalism and narrow nationalism. It stubbornly refrained from lending itself to the inevitable process of minority integration in the formative years of the Iraqi nation. It lacked the sagacity of wise leadership which seemed to be the only hope for steering a helpless little community to a haven of peace.<sup>210</sup>

Atiya was right in suggesting that the Assyrians ‘lacked the sagacity of wise leadership’ to steer the community towards integration in the new state. However, he was overly optimistic to call that state a ‘haven of peace’ for Christians, as subsequent history was to show.

In 1941, Syria and Lebanon proclaimed their independence with France’s agreement; the French troops left in 1946. During that year Transjordan also became independent. In 1947, the United Nations accepted the formation of a Jewish and a Palestinian state west of the river Jordan. The Arab League, formed in March 1945 by Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon, resisted that arrangement. In spite of this, Israel was founded in 1948. This led to a succession of Arab-Israeli wars.

In most Arab countries the desire to rid themselves of foreign influences expressed itself in popular political parties that spoke in nationalist terms as developed in Europe. In Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Iraq, anti-colonial politics, directed against the Ottomans, France and Great Britain, had nationalist and secularist overtones. That was logical, as much of the nationalism had first developed against the centralizing powers of the Ottoman Empire, which was the bulwark of Islamic orthodoxy. Hence, nationalism had a local flavor, or it was Pan-Arab, but not Islamic. This enabled the Christians in those lands to play an important role in their various nationalist movements. Due to the secularist nature of these movements, the Christian witness in that context was mostly in terms of *diakonia*, both in the charitable and the socio-political meaning of the term.<sup>211</sup> For the Christian witness in the sense of *kerygma* and *koinonia*, there was no space, just as Islamic religious beliefs were also to a large extent excluded from the national movements.

In Saudi Arabia, the desire for independence was expressed in *Wahhâbism*, which focused on a return to traditional Islamic ways. It was only after World

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<sup>209</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 282-288.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 286-287.

<sup>211</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, p.156.

War II that similar major movements of Islamic purity became popular in other Arab countries. These movements were usually not directed against foreign occupation but against their own secular Arab or liberal Islamic governments.<sup>212</sup>

## 2.6.2 Era of Nâsir

### 2.6.2.1 Symbol of Arab Unity and Strength

Jamâl 'Abd al-Nâsir became president of Egypt in 1953, one year after he participated in deposing King Farûq with a small group of army officers. The dominant political ideology in the Arab World during the 1950s and 1960s was that of Pan-Arab nationalism as proclaimed and embodied by Nâsir. This entailed the ideal of a close union of all Arab states, independence or even autarky from outside forces, social reforms that would bring greater equality and an acceptable minimum of economic wellbeing for all citizens.

After Nâsir had taken power in Egypt, the British government tried to convince him to participate in a defensive anti-Soviet pact. Most Arab countries did not want to participate but the pro-British Iraqi government was an avid supporter of the idea and signed the Baghdad Pact in February 1955. Nâsir was against this pact and proposed non-alignment as he feared it would divide the Arab World and distract it from the struggle against the real enemy, Israel. Egypt considered Arab unity, under the aegis of Nâsir, to be the best route for the Arab World to liberate Palestine.

The new regime forced the British forces to leave the Suez Canal Zone in 1954. A provision however was made stating that the British were allowed to return to the Canal Zone bases in the event of an attack on Egypt, Turkey or any Arab states. London colluded with France and Israel in 1956; Israel attacked Egypt and London used that occasion as a pretext to reoccupy the Canal Zone. Israel and England were forced to withdraw largely due to the strong American and Soviet criticism and threats. The war was intended to oust Nâsir but instead he became more popular than ever in Egypt and most Arab countries as a symbol of resistance and nationalism.

Nâsir presented a formidable force in the region. In 1956 he played a major role in changing the policies of Jordan by inciting its population to rebellion against King Ḥusayn and his British military advisor, John Glubb Pasha. Nâsir continued to influence external politics with his role in the Iraq revolution on 1958 that overthrew King Faysal and prime minister Nûrî Sa'îd which resulted in Iraq becoming a republic.<sup>213</sup> During that same year, Lebanon was threatened by a Pan-Arab revolt; many Muslims in Lebanon wanted the country to join Nâsir's new United Arab Republic (UAR) of Egypt and Syria.

One reason why France participated in the attack on Egypt in 1956 was Nâsir's role in supporting the Algerian revolution against the French occupation. Morocco and Tunisia were able to gain independence from France in 1956 but France wanted to hold on to Algeria. In 1954, the *Front de Libération Nationale* (Front of

<sup>212</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>213</sup> Mohammed Hassanein Heikal, *Cutting the Lion's Tail: Suez through Egyptian Eyes* (London, 1986), p. 54.

National Liberation, FLN) was formed and the first violent actions against the French took place. In 1958 FLN, fighting from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, proclaimed the Provisional Government of Algeria. In 1962 France was forced to grant independence to Algeria.<sup>214</sup>

### 2.6.2.2 Participation of Arab Christians

Nâsir's view entailed a central role for Egypt in the Pan-Arab movement. However in Syria and Iraq, the other potential centers of power in the Arab World, different forms of Pan-Arabism developed. The *Ba'th* (resurrection) ideology and *Ba'th* parties of these countries were inspired by Miṣhâl 'Aflaq (1910-1989), a Greek-Orthodox Christian from Damascus. 'Aflaq studied in the 1930s at the Sorbonne in Paris. He was impressed by the nationalism and socialism that he saw in Europe, especially in Germany, whose political philosophy he considered an important bulwark against the main enemy, which 'Aflaq saw in Communism with its anti-nationalist overtones.<sup>215</sup>

In Syria and Iraq, the *Ba'th* ideology became preponderant in the politics of the 1970s up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Ba'th* nationalism believed in one single Arab nation that should live in one state. The *Ba'th* ideology was much more clearly defined than Nâsir's Pan-Arabism which pivoted around him personally. *Ba'thism* was rigidly socialist and secular and had a strong following among the many minorities of the Middle East, including the Christians. In contrast Nâsir's dreams included the language of reformist Islam and used Islam as a rallying point for the Arab World.<sup>216</sup>

Under Nâsir's government, the position of Christians in Egypt was undermined through his policies of nationalization and sequestrations. The Copts were over-represented among the large landowners and therefore they suffered more from Nâsir's policies than Muslims did. Christian Egyptians were able to play a role in Egyptian politics but they were always underrepresented in government and they were only able to hold minor posts. This policy was exemplified in Buṭrus Buṭrus Ghâlî, a Coptic-Orthodox Christian. After the 1960s he played a leading role in the ruling Egyptian political party and institutes of the state and from 1977 to 1991 he was the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. That was a position *under* the foreign minister. Ghâlî was never promoted beyond this, as the general political opinion in Egypt was that a Christian could not be a foreign minister of Egypt. His abilities were later recognized by the United Nations when they elected him as their secretary-general.<sup>217</sup> In this context it is of interest to note that his grandfather, Buṭrus Ghâlî *Pasha*, was prime minister of Egypt from 1908 to 1910, reflecting the climate of secular nationalism of that time.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>214</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 370-372.

<sup>215</sup> Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs*, p. 74.

<sup>216</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 404-406.

<sup>217</sup> United Nations Press Release: Biographical Note SG/2015/ Rev.7-BIO/2936/ Rev.7 (15 November 1996).

<sup>218</sup> Wucher King, *Historical Dictionary of Egypt*, pp. 217-218.

### 2.6.2.3 Suppression of Islamic Fundamentalism

Shortly after Nâsir came to power all political parties were forbidden because his political philosophy dictated that his regime was the direct representation of the masses. The Muslim Brothers (*al-Ikhwân al-Muslimîn*) was technically not a party and perhaps because of its popularity, the organization was allowed to continue functioning. The Brotherhood was founded in 1928 for Islamizing society through education and had gained popular support all over Egypt. It was to a large extent a response to the impact of Christians in the educational institutes in Egypt.

After a number of incidents, relations between the regime and the Brotherhood broke down irrevocably when a member tried to assassinate Nâsir on 26 October 1954. Thousands of members were imprisoned and badly tortured. Six leaders of the Brotherhood were hung on 9 December 1954.<sup>219</sup> One of the imprisoned members of the Brotherhood was Sayyid Quṭb. In prison he was atrociously tortured; during this time he wrote some tracts and books. In 1962 he produced *Signposts on the Road* (*Ma'âlim fi al-Ṭarîq*), a seminal book which was to become the handbook for many groups more radical than the Brotherhood. Many sympathizers met secretly and studied Quṭb's thinking. He argued that as Nâsir's regime did not implement the *Shari'ah* and acted as barbarians, it placed itself, and thereby also Egyptian society, outside the pale of Islam. He suggested how the regime should be toppled.<sup>220</sup>

In 1965 the Egyptian regime struck hard at this Islamic movement by rounding up thousands of sympathizers. They were routinely tortured and under those circumstances some of the leaders of the Brotherhood confessed their aim to topple Nâsir. The police claimed that they found Quṭb's *Signposts* everywhere among all the cells of the movement, thus further proving that there was a plot against Nâsir. On 29 August 1966 Quṭb was hanged but he had left an important legacy. Whereas in 1954, the Islamic movement did not have a philosophy of how to counter the Pan-Arab regime of Nâsir, it now had *Signposts*. It would inspire millions of Muslims in the years to come.<sup>221</sup>

These events in Egypt did not go unnoticed in the rest of the Arab World. All over the Arab World, chapters of the Muslim Brotherhood were opened. In spite of the fact that Pan-Arabism had been a popular philosophy and that Nâsir and the other regimes had played the main role in the decolonization of the Arab World, Islamic opposition increased quickly. The development of many of these opposition groups happened remarkably synchronously. The 1960s were the formative years for many radical groups all over the Arab World; during the 1970's many of these radical groups began to use violence.

Christians in the Arab World felt threatened by the Islamization of society by the Muslim Brotherhood and related groups. Generally speaking Christian Arabs did not participate in the Arab discourse about Islamic radicalization, but they usually sided with the authorities against the Islamic radicals. Whereas Christians often played a public role in the anti-colonial struggles before independence, a Christian witness in regard to the lack of democracy and the weak adherence to

<sup>219</sup> Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet & Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (London, 1985), pp. 26-28.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-67, where Kepel gave a long summary of the content of *Signposts*.

<sup>221</sup> Kepel, *The Prophet & Pharaoh*, pp. 31-35.

basic human rights by the dictatorial regimes on the one hand and the Islamic radicalization of society on the other hand, was notably absent. The Christian witness in most Arab countries was reserved to the *kerygma* and *koinonia* within the inner life of the Church and to a certain extent to the charitable elements of *diakonia* in the public domain.

#### 2.6.2.4 Pan-Arabism Discredited

Egypt's war against the royalist troops of Northern Yemen (1962-1967) was not successful. It took the Egyptian army five years to achieve only a partial victory over the unruly troops of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The war made Nâsir an easy target for criticism by conservative Arab states like Saudi Arabia, as the proponent of Arab unity was now fighting other Arab countries with the support of the atheist Soviet Union. This Yemeni campaign began just after the UAR between Egypt and Syria had broken up. The following devastating defeat of Egypt against Israel in 1967 was another blow to the popularity of the Pan-Arab dream as propagated by the Egyptian authorities.

By the mid 1960s the economy of Egypt and most Arab countries was stagnant. The optimism of a bright Arab future had waned. Many Arabs began to question whether Nâsir and the other Arab regimes would be able to deliver on their promises. Nâsir's death in 1970 was a defining moment for the Arab World as he was the only leader that had been able to captivate people from all over the Arab World. He embodied the vision of Pan-Arabism. No charismatic leader of his competence stood up to lead the Arabs. Most other Arab regimes that had been tolerated for their role in decolonization began to lose popularity at the expense of the radical Islamic movements.

#### 2.6.2.5 Growth of the Arab Populations

After World War II Arab populations across the region grew rapidly due to their increasing longevity and in particular the lower infant mortality rate. *Figure 2.1* details the rapid increase in the populations of the Arab World.<sup>222</sup> By 1960 more than half of the population in most Arab countries was under the age of 20. Population growth led to rapid urbanization and large poor suburbs in all Arab cities as there were more people than the land could support.

The nationalist Arab governments were committed to creating strong nations and this involved educating people. All Arab states began large projects for building primary schools. In Morocco for instance, in 1954, 12 percent of all Moroccan children were in school. In 1963 that figure had risen to 60 percent. In 1939 there were six universities in the Arab World. In 1960 there were 20 universities.<sup>223</sup>

Due to the increase in educational facilities, more Arabs learned to read and write. Many media used Arabic and were shared between all Arab countries. In Egypt the number of cinemas increased from 194 in 1949 to 375 in 1961. In 1959, 60 feature films were produced in Egypt and shown all over the Arab World. This served to further unify Arab culture, creating an awareness of Egyptian Arabic and

<sup>222</sup> Population figures from UNFPA, 'The Arab Population', in *Arab World Competitiveness Report 2002-3* (Geneva, 2003), p. 38.

<sup>223</sup> Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 389-390.

making Egypt the leader in Arab cultural development. Egyptian radio played a leading role in the Arab World during this period. Books, magazines and newspapers from Egypt were available all over the Arab World. Lebanon, with its liberal media laws, also played a major role in the production of the written word.<sup>224</sup>

	1950	1975	2000	2025	2050
Morocco	8.9	17.3	29.8	42	50.3
Algeria	8.7	16	30.2	42.7	51.1
Tunisia	3.5	5.7	9.4	12.3	14.0
Libya	1.0	2.4	5.2	7.9	9.9
Egypt	21.8	38.8	67.8	94.7	113.8
Sudan	9.2	16.7	31	49.5	63.5
Lebanon	1.4	2.8	3.5	4.5	5.0
Jordan	0.5	1.9	4.9	8.6	11.7
Syria	3.5	7.4	16.1	27.4	36.3
Iraq	5.2	11	22.9	40.2	53.5
Kuwait	0.2	1	1.9	3.2	4.0
Qatar	0.03	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.8
Bahrain	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.9	1.0
Oman	0.5	0.9	2.5	5.4	8.7
UAE	0.07	0.5	2.6	3.4	3.7
KSA	3.2	7.3	20.3	40.4	59.6
Yemen	4.3	7.0	18.7	48.2	102.3

Figure 2.1 Actual and Projected Populations of the Arab World in millions: 1950-2050

### 2.6.3 Era of Islamic Radicalization

In the 1970s the economic disparity between the Arab countries increased dramatically. In 1973 the Arab Gulf states became the owners of their own oil reserves and were able to ask market prices for that commodity. This created new patterns of financial dependency in the Arab World as most Arab countries became clients of the wealthier countries bordering on the Arabian Gulf. Many of these countries in turn invested their new wealth on the stock markets of the USA and Europe, creating a sort of inter-dependency that would later be vilified by radical Muslims like Usâma bin Lâdin. The new wealth of the Gulf was also used for supporting the Islamic movements all over the Arab World. The conservative Gulf countries, with Saudi Arabia at the helm, believed they were the guardians of Islam. They did not tolerate secularism in the Arab World.<sup>225</sup> Oil-wealth from the Arabian Peninsula was also used for subsidizing the construction of mosques in many Western capitals.

The countries that became the main proponents of Pan-Arabism after Nâsir's death were Iraq and Syria. The *Ba'th* ideology was the only acceptable political

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., pp. 392-394.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p. 351.

viewpoint. Both countries had regimes that were feared and unpopular. Their harsh rule over their peoples did not allow any opposition. For the Christians these dictatorships were not detrimental so long as they toed the party-line. Both countries dealt decisively with radical Muslims. The most publicized strike was by Syria during a rebellion by the Islamic Front in the city of Ḥammâ in 1982. Large parts of the city were bombed and destroyed by the Syrian air force.<sup>226</sup>

In Syria, Iraq, as well as in the Palestinian liberation movement, Christians could play a major role in national politics. They were usually overrepresented in government and bureaucracy. In Syria and Iraq this was related to the fact that the governments depended on religious minorities in these countries. For example Târiq ‘Azîz, a Chaldean Christian, was able to hold the important position of foreign minister in Iraq. That would be impossible in Egypt where the government, for fear of being criticized by radical Muslims, has kept Christians out of the most important political roles.

Whereas Nâsir enjoyed the benefits the Soviet Union offered, President Muḥammad Anwar al-Sâdât (1970-1981) brought Egypt fully into the camp of the USA. In order to defeat the leftist forces in Egypt, he actively supported the Islamic groups on university campuses. After his war with Israel in 1973, Sâdât allowed the USA to broker a peace between Egypt and Israel in 1977. He and the Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1978. However, most Arab states rejected this Egyptian policy as defeatist. It was not in line with the Arab rejection of Israel while the Palestinian problem was still unsolved. Iraq became a new focal point for talk about cooperative Arab efforts for the liberation of Palestine. Sâdât was killed in 1981 by a radical Muslim organization called *Excommunication and Emigration (Takfîr wa al-Hijrah)*.

The murderers of Sâdât were motivated by a pamphlet of its group’s main thinker, the electrician ‘Abd al-Salîm Faraj, titled *The Forgotten Duty (al-Farîḍah al-Ghâ’ibah)*. The booklet argued that because Sâdât did not implement Islamic law, Egypt was as bad as any non-Islamic society. Therefore the duty of every Muslim was to personally withdraw from that evil society and wage *jihâd* against it. Many young people as a result felt justified to live as outlaws and finance their activities by robbing banks or jewelry shops, preferably those of Christians.

After Sâdât’s death, the Egyptian army suppressed a rebellion of radical Muslims in the southern city of Asyûṭ. These radical groups never threatened the stability of Egypt although they were a continuous irritant with their threats and crimes. Many radicalized groups of young people followed this approach, until they were crushed with an iron fist in the early 1990s.<sup>227</sup>

The emergence of militant Islamic opposition movements and the general Islamization of society has been the most remarkable phenomenon since the 1970s throughout the Arab region. It resulted from the thwarted hopes of secular ideologies to achieve both socio-economic progress and a strong international role for

<sup>226</sup> R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse, New York, 1985), p. 118.

<sup>227</sup> Kepel, *The Prophet & Pharaoh*, pp. 191-218. J.J.G Jansen, ‘The Creed of Sadat’s Assassins: The Contents of “The Forgotten Duty” analyzed’, in *Die Welt des Islams* Band XXV (Leiden, 1985), pp. 1-30.

the Arab nations. Millions of young people adopted radical, politicized forms of Islam and began to call the Arab authorities to adopt the *Shari'ah* as the main source for legislation and to implement it. For the Christians in the Arab World, that would mean a return to *dhimmitude*. For the Christian witness in the public domain it has been a major setback that many countries, including Egypt, adopted constitutions that stipulate that the *Shari'ah* is one of the pillars of national law. Egyptian law stipulates that 'Islam is the religion of the state (*din al-dawlah*) [and] the principles of the Islamic *Shari'ah* are the principal source (*al-masdar al-ra'isi*) for the legislation'.<sup>228</sup> Though the constitutions of most Arab countries also guarantee freedom of expression and the freedom of religion, the *Shari'ah* and its manifold interpretations can always be invoked against Christians.

The increase of Islamic radicalism in most Arab societies made many Christians feel threatened. From Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Jordan, and the Palestinian Territories, many Christians emigrated to the USA, Canada and Australia, further decreasing the percentage of Christians in those countries. The civil war in Lebanon (1975-1990) convinced hundreds of thousands of Maronite Christians to emigrate. Christians formed a majority in Lebanon in 1946; by 2007 their numbers had dwindled to 25-30 percent.<sup>229</sup>

The Lebanese civil war was just one of many armed conflicts in the Arab World during the 1970s and 1980s. Libya and Chad fought a war, as did Egypt and Libya. For dozens of years Sudan was embroiled in a civil war. Since the 1970s Algeria has seen much unrest, sometimes outright civil war. Morocco fought Polisario that strove for an independent state in the former Spanish Sahara. In 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon and occupied Southern Lebanon until 2002. In 1988 the Palestinians began their *Intifadah* (shaking) against Israel. Iraq fought a costly bloody war with Iran from 1980 to 1988, while it also fought a civil war against the Kurds. In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and proclaimed it to be a new province of Iraq.

#### **2.6.4 American Presence and the Response of Terrorists**

The Iraqi annexation of Kuwait led to a massive build up of American and other troops in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. In January and February 1991 they drove Iraq out of Kuwait again. This bold response of the USA was related to its fear that the oil industry and the price of oil might be negatively influenced by a preponderant Iraqi role. Since that time, the USA has kept its troops in the Arabian Gulf. It has also increasingly exerted its influence to force Arab states to adopt liberal economic laws under threat of being excluded from international economic life. To a lesser degree, pressure was exerted to democratize political life. Though many countries indeed liberalized their economy, progress toward democratization was minimal. The meddling of the USA in internal Arab affairs strengthened the resolve of the Islamic opposition movements in the Arab World.

<sup>228</sup> Article 2 of the Egyptian Constitution.

<sup>229</sup> There are no official figures for the number of Christians in Lebanon by 2006; the figure given here is based on estimations of different Lebanese Christians Church in interviews in February 2007 in Lebanon. The author of this study received these interviews on 24 February 2007.



Since the fall of Communism by the end of the 1980s, the USA was the only superpower left. In the words of Lewis:

[The Arab World and] Islam now stands face to face with an alien civilization that challenges many of its fundamental values and appeals seductively to many of its followers [The] challenge of today is incomparably more radical, more aggressive, more pervasive – and it comes not from a conquered, but a conquering world. The impact of the West [...] has shattered beyond repair the traditional structure of life, affecting every Arab [and] demanding a readjustment of the inherited social, political, and cultural forms.<sup>230</sup>

The destruction of the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001 by Usâma bin Lâdin was the most visible form of Islamic resistance against American hegemony. The USA, under President George W. Bush, began its ‘War against Terrorism’ by first attacking Afghanistan. It then occupied Iraq in 2003. The Iraqi President Şaddâm HÛsayn, who as the leader of the *Ba‘th* party was the last symbol of secular nationalism in the Arab World, was sentenced to death by hanging. Christians in the Arab World were often blamed for the actions of the Americans especially as Bush proclaimed himself to be an Evangelical Christian.

The dream of Arab nationalism had not come to fruition. Many Arabs had achieved access to education and health care but, for a lack of general development, vast segments of the fast growing populations were still unable to find meaningful work with reasonable salaries. National independence did not bring political freedoms either. Arab states were usually ruled by dictators and most were in many respects forced to follow the dictates of the USA. The foreign policies of the USA have definitely strengthened the Islamic radicalization in the Arab World, though it drew its main inspiration from Islam’s own history and theology.

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw Arab intellectuals using two distinctly different explanations and solutions for the state of the stagnation, dictatorship and dependency evident in the Arab World. The fundamentalists viewed the cause of the problems to be that the Arabs had been following Western ways instead of returning to truly Arab and Islamic solutions that should be applied to modernity. The modernist approach was to see the main problem as the adherence to traditional ways that had become degenerate and corrupt. For this later group, the solution lay in openness and freedom in the economy, society and the state, if not in religion itself.<sup>231</sup> These two approaches seem to be mutually exclusive.

For the Christian witness in the Arab World, the modernist approach appears to give most hope. However, since the defeat of Şaddâm HÛsayn it seems that, for the foreseeable future, political Islam will be the focal point of the Arab World. In 2004 Shibley Telhami, a political scientist of the University of Maryland in Baltimore, Maryland (USA) researched the self-perception of people in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). His survey showed that Arabs increasingly defined themselves as Muslims first, and as Arabs, or natives of their own country, second. His findings also showed major

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<sup>230</sup> Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 207.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208.

differences between the attitudes in those countries. In Egypt and Lebanon, most respondents identified themselves primarily as Egyptians and Lebanese. In the remaining countries, the majority cited their Islamic identity above anything else.<sup>232</sup> This illustrates how, at the inception of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Islam is playing an increasingly important role in the self-perception of the Arab World. This is a reversal from the 1950s and 1960s, when most Arabs considered themselves Arabs above anything else. Telhami's research also underlined that any generalization about the Arab World must always be seen in the light of the unique history of each individual country.

## 2.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS

In studying the Islamization of the Arab World, military conquests and political leadership must not be confused with religious change. Whereas the present area of the Arab World was conquered rather rapidly by the Arabian armies, the process of Islamization of the population was rather slow. Further studies about the Islamization of the Arab World and about Arab Christianity will gain in value if the differential rate of the progress of these two separate processes is recognized and the resilience of the Arabic Churches explained.

After the Arab conquests Christians faced grave problems in the Arabian Peninsula, but in the Middle East and North Africa they were generally speaking, able to freely witness to the Gospel through their *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*. To the extent that the percentage of Muslims grew, the Church became more restricted in its witness as the Muslim rulers were better able to uphold their discriminatory anti-Christian legislation. For many centuries, Christians could not speak about the Gospel nor practice their *diakonia* in the public domain. The Church could only witness through its *kerygma* and *koinonia* within the walls of its own buildings and communities. To a limited extent, it could witness through *diakonia* in the public domain. The Maronite Church and its history shows that one has to be careful with generalizations; the Maronites were usually more at liberty to witness to the Gospel, as they formed the majority of the population of Lebanon. During colonial times all Christian Arabs were able to witness freely in the public domain due to the Western colonial rulers upholding their Western laws guaranteeing freedom of religion as is presently expressed in international legislation.

It is tragic that the Christian Arabs in pre-Islamic days have not produced an Arabic Bible nor an indigenous Arabic liturgy for their Arabic congregations. For understanding the advent of Islam and its context, as well as for understanding the early Muslim-Christian relationships, knowledge of these early Arabic Christian communities is important. If these communities had contextualized the Christian witness in their own mother tongue and culture better, there might not have been a felt need for another monotheistic indigenous Arabic liturgy.

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<sup>232</sup> Sibley Telhami, 'Arabs increasingly define themselves as Muslims first', in the Lebanese newspaper *The Daily Star* (Friday 16 July 2004), p. 10.

For present relations between Christendom and Islam, the Crusades and the later colonization by France, Great Britain, Spain and Italy, continue to be a sensitive matter. There is a historical equilibrium between how the adherents of the Christian religion tried to invade the Middle East and North Africa compared to how Muslims did that centuries earlier. The Crusades were the military response of Christendom against the ongoing Muslim *jihād* against Christian lands. There is a moral difference between the two movements of conquest though. In terms of the morality of the Christian faith, the Crusades did not present the best of Christianity and they hampered its witness in the Arab World. From the perspective of Islamic morality, the conquests by the Muslim armies were a morally justified implementation of the Islamic faith.

At the time of the Crusades, there was no ‘Arab World’ yet. There was just a large geographic area of very different native tribes and languages that had historically been ruled by Christians but that were now occupied and ruled over by adherents of a new religion. The warriors of Islam were from different tribes and languages, and many were not indigenous to the ‘Arab World’. In parts of those lands, especially in Syria, Muslims still formed a minority when the Crusades began. During the times of the Crusades, there was no reason for the Europeans to think that these Islamic newcomers would continue ruling over those lands.

The modern coinage of the term *Arab World* assumes a similarity in ethnicity and language but in reality the Arab World consists of a patchwork of areas with their own regional characteristics, different people groups, and linguistic differences. The Arab World can be subdivided into areas with their own linguistic, socio-economic, cultural and religious peculiarities. A practical subdivision could for instance be:

1. Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait
2. Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine
3. Iraq
4. Egypt, North Sudan
5. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania
6. Yemen
7. Somalia, Djibouti
8. Comoros

The Renaissance in the Arab World that began during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was warmly welcomed by Arab Christians and Western missionaries in Lebanon and to a lesser extent also in Egypt. They also played an important role in nurturing this renaissance. The convenient myth of Arab unity was developed and sustained by many Christians in the Arab World for which a vision of language, not religion, was the criterion for unity. It was seen as proof that *dhimmitude* belonged to the past. The fact that they chose the early ‘Abbâsîd period as a preferred model, was logical.

The ‘Abbâsîd rule was the brightest period in Arab history because of the cosmopolitan attitude of the rulers during those years. It entailed the acceptance of an important role for non-Arabic and non-Islamic influences in Baghdad. Islamic

law was not upheld tightly and Christians played important roles in the administration and in the economic and culture life. The disappearance of this multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society, due to successful Islamization and Arabization, inaugurated a long period of Arab isolationism from developments in neighboring lands. The Islamic religious theological concept that the door to *ijtihād* had been closed played a central role in this stifling of development in the Arab World.

The words and deeds of Muḥammad and subsequent Islamic jurisprudence made Christians legally second-rate 'citizens' in Islamic countries. Islamic law, according to most theologians throughout Islamic history, does not allow a reinterpretation of the sources of Islam. Consequently the situation of Christians and their Christian witness under the rule of Islam have always been precarious. In the course of Arab history the discriminatory laws were not often implemented very strictly but Christians knew that at any time, these laws could be used against them. Moreover, the popular anti-Christian persecutions that occurred regularly throughout Arab history, even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, underlined that they could never be sure of equal treatment. In this context, it is worrying that the Islamic ruler, 'Umar II, who formalized many of the Islamic anti-Christian restrictions, is considered an example of piety and justice by modern Islamic historians.

Only a radical re-interpretation of Islam and a dramatic change in social *mores* among Arab Muslims will enable Christians in the Arab World to enjoy true liberty and equality, which is a prerequisite for their full Christian witness. In spite of the fact that most Arab countries have inherited rather liberal legislation from their colonial powers, it is to be feared that Christians in the Arab World will continue to be treated as less-than equal citizens.

The increasing Islamization of most Arab societies since the 1970s does not augur hope for the near future. In the face of populations that are often hostile to both their governments and to their Christian minorities, the liberties of the Churches are usually severely curtailed. They can not proclaim the Gospel in the public domain. Even in diakonal projects that are owned by the Church but that offer services to Muslims, the Gospel can usually not be verbalized if there are Muslims in the audience. The insistence by most Arab governments that they practice freedom of religion and implement modern legislation regarding human rights, usually focuses on the fact that the Christians in their countries are at liberty to practice their religion inside the walls of their own Churches and communities. The space for the Church in the public domain remains extremely limited.

Truly free and democratic elections as demanded by the USA might lead to further implementation of *Shari'ah* law in most countries of the Arab World. Most regimes and political parties would be assured of massive popular support if they promised the implementation of *Shari'ah* laws as part of their platform. To speak out against the *Shari'ah* could easily be interpreted as being against Islam. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for the Christians of the Arab World, it would seem that benign dictatorships are, one way or another, a better safeguard for a measure of equality and security, than governments elected by truly democratic popular vote. Up until 2007, this thesis has not been put to the test.

### 3 The Arab World: Languages and Literacy

A chapter regarding the languages of the Arab World *per se* is relevant for the study of Arabic Christian radio. Producers and broadcasters need to make decisions as to which of the many Arabic and non-Arabic languages they will produce and broadcast their programs in. The text of this chapter is written with these Christian radio organizations in mind since their linguistic choices directly relate to their Christian witness in the public domain. This chapter describes the availability of Arabic translations of the Christian Scriptures and six other major languages spoken in the Arab World. These translations are important for Christian radio and for the Christian witness in the Arab World in general.

First, this chapter describes the role of Classical Arabic (CA), the liturgical language of Islam. It is from this that the more modern and somewhat simplified literary language Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) was developed since the 19th century. MSA was never a spoken language. At the beginning of the 21st century, there were around 216 million people in the Arab World who were native speakers of one of more than 100 Arabic vernacular languages.

Mainly for religious and Pan-Arab political reasons, and less for educational or linguistic reasons, it was considered unacceptable in the Arab World to develop the colloquial Arabic languages into systems for reading and writing. This situation, with a spoken language that is very different from the written language, is called *diglossia*. It presents a substantial linguistic problem for the Arab World.

Secondly, this chapter gives some extra attention to the linguistic policies of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. This was necessary as some of the organizations treated in this study were especially focused on North Africa and thus the linguistic choices were paramount. Thirdly, due to the enormous role of the Egyptian vernacular on the Arab World, this chapter also looks into Egyptian colloquial Arabic. The issue of non-Arabic languages used in the Arab World is treated separately. At least 25 million Arabs were speaking non-Arabic languages as their mother tongue by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At that time, most Arabs were not able to read and write the official language of their country. Literacy in the Arab World depended on learning to use a language that had never been used as a spoken language. The issue of illiteracy and language education is therefore also touched upon in his chapter. It treats the educational enrollment levels in the Arab World as one of the main methods for assessing realistic literacy levels.

Finally, this chapter contains a brief treatment about the usage of MSA in its cultural context. Arabic can have great emotive impact on its listeners. This has been clearly identified by politicians that have used radio for spreading their political ideologies and also by some of the Christian broadcasters.

### 3.1 CLASSICAL ARABIC (CA)

#### 3.1.1 *The Arabic Language*

Arabic is a member of the Semitic language family.<sup>1</sup> In the north and center of the Arabian Peninsula, a range of inscriptions datable from roughly the fifth century Before the Common Era (BCE) to the fifth century of the Common Era (CE) exhibit a group of dialects which were probably the ancestors of Arabic. The earliest written inscription of proto-Arabic was found at Namârah in the Syrian Desert on the tombstone of a King from al-Hîrah, dating back to 328 CE. The script used was basically a Nabataean version of Aramaic.<sup>2</sup>

In the sixth century CE a number of Arabic dialects were spoken in the Arabian Peninsula although most information about these dialects is confined to scattered and unorganized remarks by later Muslim philologists. Very few Arabs in pre-Islamic Arabia wrote anything in Arabic, as no commonly accepted system for writing the language existed. However during this century a corpus of poetry developed which was preserved by oral transmission and was subsequently written down for the first time in the eighth century if not later. This corpus of pre-Islamic poetry is called *al-Mu'allaqât* (The Hanging), as according to Arabic folklore, these poems were hanging in a temple in Mekka.<sup>3</sup> The linguistic status of this poetic corpus is debated, but a frequently accepted hypothesis is that it represented a sort of elevated diction that was used throughout the Arabian Peninsula. The hypothesis has merits as the language of the poetry is not completely identifiable with any dialect that was used for the purposes of everyday life.<sup>4</sup>

#### 3.1.2 *Qur'anic Arabic Normative*

The form of Arabic that was used in the Hijâz, the northwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula is important as the message of the *Qur'ân* was received by the Islamic Prophet Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allâh in that environment. The *Qur'ân* is the earliest surviving document of written Arabic. Even though some of its language seems to be very similar to the poetry of the sixth century, Muslim theologians did not acknowledge any relationship in style. This was mainly because Muḥammad spoke harshly of poetry in general when he was being accused of being a mere poet.<sup>5</sup>

The Arabic of the *Qur'ân* and pre-Islamic poetry to a lesser extent became known as *Classical Arabic*. Arabs call this language *Fuṣḥá* (meaning: more elo-

<sup>1</sup> Other main members of the family are Ugaritic, Akkadian, Aramaic, Hebrew, and the Semitic languages of Ethiopia.

<sup>2</sup> A.F.L. Beeston, *The Arabic Language Today* (London, 1970), pp. 12-14. [www.arabacademy.com](http://www.arabacademy.com) (28 November 2003). Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (Houndsmills, New York, 2002, first edition 1937), p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> The origins of the title *al-Mu'allaqât* for this corpus of poetry is unclear. Some linguists believe the term might be derived from *'ilq* (necklace, hence: precious).

<sup>4</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London, 2002, first edition 1991), p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Catherine Bateson, *Arabic Language Handbook* (Washington D.C., 2003, first edition 1967), p. 59.

quent) or simply *al-‘Arabîyah* (Arabic). It was codified by grammarians during the eighth and ninth century in the Iraqi cities of Kûfah and Baṣrah and it was spread as the vehicle for literacy and religion into the Middle East and North Africa.<sup>6</sup> These grammarians were often Persian converts to Islam who wanted to ensure the proper understanding of the *Qur’ân*.<sup>7</sup> This indicates that during that period, Muslims had difficulties in understanding the Arabic of the *Qur’ân*. Probably even most Arab Muslims had problems with that, as no serious literary Arabic sources from the Umayyad period or references to those are extant.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.1.3 Dissenting View of Christoph Luxenberg

In the year 2000, a radically dissenting view of the language of the *Qur’ân* and CA was propounded by Christoph Luxenberg.<sup>9</sup> Most of his theses were not wholly original, but he argued them more radically than his predecessors in Western Islamic and Arabic linguistic circles. Luxenberg emphasized that Syriac was the *lingua franca* for the whole Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula before the Arabs imposed their language gradually after the seventh century. When the *Qur’ân* came into being, Arabic was not a commonly written language yet. The educated Arabs that could read and write at all were mostly Christians who were used to writing religious texts in Syriac. Luxenberg argued that it is inconceivable that those who were involved in the writing of the *Qur’ân* did not naturally integrate elements from their Christian and Syriac background in its language.<sup>10</sup>

As Mekka was an early Aramaic settlement, the language spoken in that city was a mixture of Syriac and Arabic at the time of the writing of the *Qur’ân*, according to Luxenberg.<sup>11</sup> He argued that the earliest versions of the *Qur’ân* were written in that mixture of languages in a sort of Syriac-Arabic shorthand that consisted of six symbols, without vowels and diacritical marks to differentiate between the letters. The present ‘authorized version’ of the *Qur’ân* developed during the few centuries after the inception of Islam, as the process of creating and deciding about diacritical points and some other symbols to stipulate pronunciation took time. According to Luxenberg, the grammarians made many mistakes in this process, as they were no longer aware of the original Syriac impact on the language of the *Qur’ân*. They assumed the text was written in the CA that had developed in the eighth and ninth century. In order to uphold this historical construction, Luxenberg had to assume that the oral tradition of *Qur’ânic* pronunciation and explanation during the first few centuries of Islam was ‘purely legendary’.<sup>12</sup>

The most respected Muslim exegete of the *Qur’ân* during the tenth century, Ja‘far Muḥammad bin Jarîr al-Ṭabarî, admitted in his exegesis (*tafsîr*) that many

<sup>6</sup> Beeston, *The Arabic Language Today*, pp. 12-14. [www.arabacademy.com](http://www.arabacademy.com).

<sup>7</sup> Bateson, *Arabic Language Handbook*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>8</sup> Anwar Chejne, ‘The Role of Arabic in Present-Day Arab Society’, in Salman H. Al-Ani (ed), *Readings in Arabic Linguistics* (Bloomington, 1978), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> For reasons of his or her security, this scholar used a pseudonym.

<sup>10</sup> Christoph Luxenberg, *Die Syro-Aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache* (Berlin, 2004, first edition 2000), pp. 9-11.

<sup>11</sup> Luxenberg, *Die Syro-Aramäische Lesart des Koran*, pp. 334-7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.

verses and parts of the *Qur'ân* were hard to explain. Luxenberg focused in his book on those parts of the *Qur'ân* that were considered philologically problematic by al-Ṭabarî. In those cases, Luxenberg endeavored to explain the text by first considering other Arabic punctuation, and if that did not work, he assumed a Syriac background. By doing so, he was often able to propose a more contextually consistent and understandable reading of the text. He also argued that the grammatical deviations from CA in the *Qur'ân* could be explained as correct applications of Syriac grammar.<sup>13</sup>

The Arabic word *Qur'ân* itself stems from the Syriac *Qeryânâ*, Luxenberg argued. That word was used in the Syriac churches of pre-Islamic and early-Islamic times to designate the Lectionary of Bible texts used in the liturgy.<sup>14</sup> Traditionally, most Arab scholars related the word *Qur'ân* to the Arabic verb *qara'a* (to recite). It is difficult to conceive how *Qur'ân* might have developed grammatically from that verb.<sup>15</sup>

Luxenberg explained how the *Qur'anic* chapter *al-Kawthar* (Abundance) was based on parts of the Syriac liturgy that reflected 1 Peter 5:8-9 from the New Testament, and how the chapter *al-'Alaq* (Blood Clot) had the character of the introduction in the Syriac liturgy to the celebration of holy communion. He translated the last verse of *al-'Alaq* as 'celebrate (your) worship (more often) and participate in Holy Communion'.<sup>16</sup> In an interview, Luxenberg summarized his view of the *Qur'ân*:

In its origin, the Koran is a Syro-Aramaic liturgical book, with hymns and extracts from Scriptures which might have been used in sacred Christian services. In the second place, one may see in the Koran the beginning of a preaching directed toward transmitting the belief in the Sacred Scriptures to the pagans of Makkah, in the Arabic language. [...] At the beginning, the Koran was not conceived as the foundation of a new religion. It presupposes belief in the Scriptures, and thus functioned merely as an inroad into Arabic society.<sup>17</sup>

It was predictable that Luxenberg would be vilified by Muslim scholars as he radically disturbed the traditional Islamic view of the *Qur'ân*, Arabic language and early Islamic history. Western scholarship has also been very guarded if not downright negative in its initial response. In 2004 the German Institute for Advanced Study (*Wissenschaftskolleg*) in Berlin held an academic conference focusing on Luxenberg's thesis and an international working group was formed to continue the discussion. Many of the conference discussions were critical of Luxenberg, and

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 81, 111.

<sup>15</sup> Another suggestion is that the word is related to *qarâ'in* (comparisons). The Arabic linguist Muḥammad 'Ali bin 'Ali bin Muḥammad al-Ṭaḥûnî (died 1157) said that the word *Qur'ân* was in fact a proper name. That indicates the difficulty to relate the word to any Arabic root. See al-Ṭaḥûnî's encyclopedia *Kashf Iṣlahât al-Fanûn* Vol. III (Beirut, 1998), p. 381.

<sup>16</sup> Luxenberg, *Die Syro-Aramäische Lesart des Koran*, pp. 310, 330-1. Translation by the present author of Luxenberg's German: 'Verrichte (vielmehr) (deinen) Gottesdienst und nimm an der Abendmahliturgie teil'.

<sup>17</sup> Alfred Hackensberger, 'Der Fuchs und die süßen Trauben des Paradieses' [The Fox and the Sweet Grapes of Paradise], in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (24 February 2004).



blamed him for serious methodological flaws and sensationalist generalizations.<sup>18</sup> However, even his critics agreed that his work has at least had the merit of showing that *Qur'anic* scholars have not so far accorded the literature of Syriac Christianity the attention it deserves as an important resource for reconstructing the *Qur'anic milieu*, and no Western scholar studying the *Qur'ân*, Islam, Arabic language and history can circumvent Luxenberg's suggested new direction in studying the *Qur'ân* and its context.

### 3.1.4 First Bible Translations in Arabic

According to Sydney H. Griffith, the first Arabic translation of parts of the Old Testament and the New Testament were produced for the liturgy of the Greek-Orthodox churches in Palestine in the second half of the eighth century. The oldest existent manuscripts of this translation date from the second part of the ninth century. The translation seems to have used the Latin Vulgate as the basis.<sup>19</sup>

The existence of these translated parts of the Bible may have been the basis of the tradition that the invasion of Iraq by the adherents of Islam prompted the Syriac-Orthodox Patriarch Yuḥanná II Sedre (631-648) to have the Gospels translated into Arabic. The patriarch is said to have taken the initiative around 643 when asked by Umayr ibn Sa'd ibn Abû Waqqâs al-Anṣârî, the *amîr* of Iraq. The Syriac Peshitta translation of the Gospels was said to be used as the basis for this Arabic version by a team of Syriac-Orthodox Christian Arabs from the Banî 'Uqayl, the Tanûkh and the Tay tribes. Modern scholars doubt the veracity of the story. There are similar doubts about the story that Bishop John of Seville (Spain) ordered a Bible translation at around 750 CE.<sup>20</sup>

In 867 CE, an Assyrian translator in Damascus, Bishr ibn al-Sirri, translated most of the New Testament into Arabic. This document, Mt Sinai Arabic Codex 151, is unique as it contains the date and the name of the translator, and it contains marginal comments by the author on the Bible text. Al-Sirri used a Syriac Bible as the original.

During the ninth century, the Jewish rabbi Sa'adiah ben Yosef Gaon, commonly known as Saadiah Gaon, translated the whole of the Hebrew Bible into Arabic. He did that for the sake of the Arabic-speaking Jews. The Copts used this translation

<sup>18</sup> Luxenberg's views were hotly debated, for instance, by a congress in Berlin from 21-25 January 2004, on 'Historical soundings and methodical reflections to the development of the Qur'an - ways to the reconstruction of the pre-canonical Qur'an'. For a description of the attitudes toward Luxenberg's thesis, see Michael Marx and Nicolai Sinai, 'Historische Sondierungen und methodische Reflexionen zur Korangeneese - Wege zur Rekonstruktion des vorkanonischen Koran' (Berlin, 25 February 2004). See [www.wissenschaftskolleg.de](http://www.wissenschaftskolleg.de) (20 February 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Sydney H. Griffith, 'Uebersetzungen ins Arabische', in Hans Dieter Betz a.o (eds), *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* Vol. 1 (A-B) (4<sup>th</sup> edition, Tuebingen, 1998), p. 1498.

<sup>20</sup> Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem I Barsoum, *History of Syriac Literature and Sciences* (Pueblo, 2000, first edition 1943), p. 106. W. Hage, 'Het christendom onder de heerschappij van de islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), pp. 79-80. Aziz S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (Millwood, 1991, first edition 1967), pp. 195-197, 200-208. Bruce Metzger, *Early Versions of the New Testament* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 258-259.

widely.<sup>21</sup> Among the Copts, some single Bible books began to be translated into Arabic from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. During that century, al-Ḥārīṭ ibn Sinân ibn Sinbât translated the complete Old Testament into Arabic, based on the Syriac Syrohexapla. A century later, the Diatessaron, a Syriac harmony of the four Gospels, was translated into Arabic by Abû al-Faraj ‘Abd Allâh ibn al-Ṭayyib. During the Middle Ages, different other parts of the Bible were translated into Arabic, often by Jews living in the Arab World.<sup>22</sup>

Sarkis al-Rizz, a Maronite bishop of Damascus, obtained permission from the Pope to gather and compare copies of the Arabic Scriptures, and create a new translation. His work was printed in Rome around 1671, in three folio volumes with the Apocrypha. This translation tended to follow the Vulgate, though Greek and older Arabic translations were used as well.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.1.5 Linguists as Custodians and Owners of the Language

For Muslims, the link between CA and the *Qur’ân* was axiomatic. The Egyptian linguist Sa‘îd Aḥmad Bayûmî spoke of the ‘genius of the language’. He called it the ‘language of inspiration’ as it was ‘chosen by God Almighty to express His truths. [...] There is a divine distinguishing touch to the Arabic language because God saw that this language was able to carry and transfer divine meanings to humanity’.<sup>24</sup>

CA is an important core of Arab culture, and has traditionally been the language of royal courts, the bureaucracy, and scholars. Literate expression was conducted mainly in CA because the *Qur’ân* was considered the standard of proper Arabic. According to Bayûmî, Arabic linguists have a responsibility towards their nation to safeguard the language from changes. He called that the ‘necessity to preserve it and to hold on to it’ (*darûrat al-ḥifâzi ‘alayhâ wa al-tamassuki bihâ*).<sup>25</sup>

Bayûmî’s approach was typical for those who considered themselves custodians of the sacred language of the *Qur’ân*. This approach did not allow for much freedom to adapt the language to modernity. Other Arabic linguists disagreed with that attitude of preservation and acted more as owners of this language.<sup>26</sup> In 1995 Ḥusâm al-Khaṭîb wrote that the proper usage of CA was ‘a shackle and a burden’ to modern expression.<sup>27</sup> He respected the need to study CA for religious reasons,

<sup>21</sup> Isaac H. Hall, ‘The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius V.A. Van Dyck’ in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (Vol. XI, 1885), pp. 276 – 286. Griffith, ‘Uebersetzungen ins Arabische’, p. 1498.

<sup>22</sup> Bertold Spuler, ‘Arabisch-Christliche Literatur’, in Michael Wolter (ed), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* Band III (Berlin, New York, 1978), p. 578. The Syrohexapla is a Syriac translation of the LXX column in Origin’s hexapla.

<sup>23</sup> It was (without the Apocrypha) adopted by the British and Foreign Bible Society and sued during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. See Hall, ‘The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius V.A. Van Dyck’, pp. 276-286.

<sup>24</sup> Sa‘îd Aḥmad Bayûmî, *Umm al-Lughât* (Cairo, 2002), pp. 21, 28.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>26</sup> This concept of custodianship versus ownership comes from Niloofar Haeri, *Sacred Language, Ordinary People: Dilemmas of Culture and Politics in Egypt* (New York, 2003), pp. i-xvi. Haeri was professor of anthropology at Johns Hopkins University in the USA.

<sup>27</sup> Ḥusâm al-Khaṭîb, *Al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah: Idhâ‘ah ‘Aṣrīyah* (Cairo, 1995), p. 14.

but defended the need to use a more modern form of Arabic for the rest of life, just as in all countries languages develop according to contemporary needs:

Those who look at this phenomenon separately from the changes happening all over the modern world, tend to exaggerate the issue. It can't be denied that most modern writers [...] have a weak style and their writing sometimes deviates from the rules of Arabic. We agree with those who want this [new] generation to have better knowledge of Arabic for religious reasons and for unity among Arab countries. But we would like to clarify two points: First, education in our country does not yield its expected fruit. [...] The new generation is [...] not active in acquiring the Arabic language. [...] Secondly, [...] most nations complain that their people, even writers, do not master their language.<sup>28</sup>

This discussion about modernizing the CA language has been going on amongst Arab intellectuals since the Arabic Renaissance of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, Turkish had supplanted Arabic in the administration of the Arab World, relegating CA to religious functions only. The only Arabic mastered by most of the Arab intelligentsia, was their regional colloquial Arabic.<sup>29</sup>

### **3.1.6 Renaissance of Arabic and Arabic Bible Translations**

Western, often Christian, scholarship during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was largely responsible for uncovering and making available some of the greatest Arabic works of the past. This created an interest among the Arabs in their own heritage, and paved the way for a renaissance of the language and its culture. Important in this context was the fact that the printing presses in many European cities, and eventually also in Istanbul, Cairo, Beirut and Damascus, began to publish Arabic books and a multitude of Arabic magazines and newspapers. It was also important that during this period, Western missionaries were opening schools all over the Arab World to increase the number of literate people. These missionaries played a role in reviving the interest in the linguistic traditions of the Arabs.<sup>30</sup>

Until the 1850, most missionaries in the Arab World used the the Bible translation of Sarkis al-Rizz. The 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a flurry of new translations. The first of these was one by Fâris al-Shidyâq and a professor Lee, produced between 1840 and 1850, under the auspices of the Church Propagation Society from the United Kingdom. In this version the mistakes of the King James Version (KJV) were copied, so it seems that al-Shidyâq translated directly from English. It was printed between 1851 and 1857 in London, but it never came into use.<sup>31</sup>

In 1865, after 17 years of work, the so-called *Van Dyck Bible* was finished in Beirut. The New Testament had been finished five years earlier. This was the first Arabic Bible translation from the original Hebrew, Greek and Syriac sources. The project was originally undertaken by the American Presbyterian missionary Eli Smith, who had the help of two Lebanese converts to Protestantism. These

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>29</sup> Chejne, 'The Role of Arabic in Present-Day Arab Society', p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Hall, 'The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius V.A. Van Dyck', pp. 276-286.

were Buṭrus al-Bustânî, who played an important role in the general movement to simplify the Arabic language, and Naṣîf al-Yazîjî, the foremost Lebanese writer of that time. Eli Smith died in 1857, with little of the work actually finished. His fellow missionary Cornelius Van Dyck took over and finished the translation.<sup>32</sup> This Van Dyck translation became the most popular version in the Arabic churches.<sup>33</sup>

The Jesuit Bible, published in Beirut between 1876 and 1880, was very closely modeled on the Van Dyck version. This was undertaken by a Western scholar, Augustin Rodet, with the help of the Arab translator Ibrâhîm al-Yazîjî. Van Dyck himself commented on that translation:

The Jesuits have issued a translation, made by them with the assistance of Ibrahim el-Yazigi, son of Dr. Smith's former assistant, and printed in three large octavo volumes. It is a fair translation generally, and only differs in very slight particulars from mine (so far as I have traced it) - and that only for the sake of differing from the Protestant Version.<sup>34</sup>

In 1885 the Dominican Fathers in the Iraqi city of Mosul produced the three-volume Mosul Bible translation, also called the *Nineveh Bible*. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Lebanese Bible Society published this translation for usage in the churches of Iraq.<sup>35</sup>

These two Protestant and two Roman-Catholic translations were major landmarks of the Arabic language renaissance. They were all rather literal translations in an eloquent CA that was modern for its day. They were more independent of the Arabic of the *Qur'ân* than any previous Arabic literature. They were therefore the first monuments of the modernization of CA.

## 3.2 MODERN STANDARD ARABIC (MSA)

### 3.2.1 Language Politics

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when most Arab countries fought for liberation from their colonial rulers, French and English were often the languages of the administrations and schools in the Arab World. For the Arab liberation movements the usage of Arabic as the official national language was part of what they strove for. As most liberation movements had at least in theory a Pan-Arab character, the usage of a common language for the whole Arab World as the language of public communication was considered of paramount importance. This led to the establishment of some important Arabic Language Institutes.

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<sup>32</sup> Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 305. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (Beirut, 1969, first edition 1938), pp. 47-52.

<sup>33</sup> Tom Hoglind, who worked with the Lebanese Bible Society, in emails to the author (16 and 17 May 2005). Director of the Lebanese Bible Society Lûsyân 'Aqqâd in an email to the author (25 May 2004).

<sup>34</sup> Hall, 'The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius V.A. Van Dyck', pp. 276-286.

<sup>35</sup> Hoglind in emails to the author (16 and 17 May 2005).

In 1919, the Syrian scholar Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī founded the Arab Academy in Damascus, endowed by King Fayṣal. During the 1920s, a Scientific Institute was set up in Baghdad, and in Egypt, the Royal Arabic Language Academy was founded in 1932. These institutes reflected the conviction among most Arabic linguists that the language with its grammar and dictionaries dating back a millennium, was in need of some modernization. They aimed at purifying, preserving and developing the language, to make it the right vehicle for communication in the 20<sup>th</sup> century without losing the ties with history and Islam. They were to ensure that any linguistic reforms would be minimal and incremental.<sup>36</sup>

Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, writer and minister of education (1950-1952) of Egypt, played an important role in formalizing the modernization of the language. Ḥusayn initiated the process of simplification of the schoolbooks as he wanted the state to define how Arabic should be written and read. He wanted a simplification of CA because he feared that otherwise it would become ‘a religious language and the sole possession of the men of religion’.<sup>37</sup> The language was so hard, that without a formal codification of a somewhat more modern form, he feared that written Arabic would move further towards colloquial Arabic:

[I am] unalterably opposed to those who regard the colloquial as a suitable instrument for mutual understanding and a method for realizing the various goals of our intellectual life... It might disappear, as it were, into the classical if we devoted the necessary effort on the one hand to elevate the cultural level of the people and on the other to simplify and reform the classical so that the two meet at a common point.<sup>38</sup>

Ḥusayn set up a committee that produced a draft grammar reform proposal in 1951, approved by the Language Academy.<sup>39</sup> Due to its political and religious sensitivity, the final report of Ḥusayn’s committee was only published in 1958. Thereafter the first school textbooks that used simpler Arabic began to be used in Egypt, Syria and Iraq.<sup>40</sup>

Arabic became the official language in the member states of the Arab League. The usage of Arabic as the official language was the main element uniting those countries. In those countries citizenship was defined in part in relation to this language that was no-one’s mother tongue.<sup>41</sup> The Arabic that had developed by the time of the independence of most Arab states, a century after the Renaissance, was a somewhat simpler literary Arabic than CA, and it had a different vocabulary. It

<sup>36</sup> Chejne, ‘The Role of Arabic in Present-Day Arab Society’, pp. 22-24. The Royal Arab Language Academy was founded, among other reasons because of ‘the assault on Classical Arabic by colloquial dialects’. Yunan Labib Rizk, ‘Academy of Arabic’, in *Al-Ahram Weekly* (17-23 July 2003). Walter Armbrust, *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 41-42.

<sup>37</sup> Quote of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in Mohamed Maamouri, ‘Language Education and Human Development: Arabic Diglossia and its Impact on the Quality of Education in the Arab Region’ (Philadelphia, 1998), p. 53.

<sup>38</sup> Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in 1954, quoted by Armbrust, *Mass Culture*, p. 43.

<sup>39</sup> After the revolution of 1952, the word ‘Royal’ was removed from the name of the Royal Arabic Language Academy.

<sup>40</sup> Maamouri, ‘Language Education and Human Development’, p. 54.

<sup>41</sup> Haeri, *Sacred Language*, p. x.

is usually called *Modern Standard Arabic* (MSA) by Western linguists. Arabs often term it *Fasīḥ* (clear, eloquent). This MSA was not static though and continued to slowly move further away from the traditional rules and vocabulary of CA.<sup>42</sup>

In 2004, research into the language used in newspapers in ten Arab countries, showed the MSA used in those countries to be ‘very uniform’, but there were clear variations in grammar and in the choice and spelling of words.<sup>43</sup> These differences were significant enough for Mohamed Maamouri of the International Literacy Institute of the University of Pennsylvania to speak of ‘different MSAs’ (plural). Dilworth B. Parkinson, professor of the Arabic language at Brigham Young University in Salt Lake City, Utah (USA), spoke of the ‘slipperiness’ of MSA.<sup>44</sup>

A larger problem than the diversity in MSA as practiced within the literate communities of the different Arab countries, was the fact that the experiments with new styles of written Arabic did not come close to bridging the chasm between MSA and the spoken language of any part of the Arab World.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.2.2 Language of the Educated

The growth of Arab radio since the 1950s has played an important role in creating a larger segment of Arabs throughout the Arab World that could understand MSA, being the preferred language of radio from its beginning. Muḥammad Fathî, a historian of Egyptian radio, wrote that this commitment to using MSA influenced the audience and helped them better understand and use the Arabic language.<sup>46</sup> In that sense, the media and their usage of MSA have to some extent played a role in uniting the Arabs.<sup>47</sup> In the 1990s Douglas A. Boyd, one of the foremost experts of the radio broadcasting industry of the Arab World, stated that MSA was ‘generally understood by the population of the Arab World’, but that was too optimistic.<sup>48</sup>

Sanâ’ Ghânim, president of the Arab Academy Language Institute in Cairo, researched the level of comprehension of MSA among different classes in society during the 1980s. She concluded that even when a simple version of MSA was spoken to the ‘masses’, the audience could often not comprehend it. Ghânim wrote about that research:

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<sup>42</sup> Bateson, *Arabic Language Handbook*, p. 79.

<sup>43</sup> Ahmed Abdelali, ‘Localization in Modern Standard Arabic’, in *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* (Vol. 55 No. 1, January 2004), p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> Dilworth Parkinson, ‘Knowing Standard Arabic: Testing Egyptian’s MSA Abilities’, unpublished paper presented to the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Arabic Linguistics (1991), p. 36.

<sup>45</sup> Bateson, *Arabic Language Handbook*, p. 70.

<sup>46</sup> Muḥammad Fathî, *Al-Idhâ’ât al-Miṣriyah fi Niṣf Qarn: 1934-1984* (Cairo, 1984), p. 112.

<sup>47</sup> Though the media initially used MSA as the standard language, gradually a slightly simpler form, often called *Educated Standard Arabic* (ESA) developed in the media throughout the Arab World, and especially in radio and on television.

<sup>48</sup> Douglas A. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Middle East* (Ames, 1999, first edition 1993), p. 323. Boyd’s confident statement may be the result of the difficulty defining terms like CA, MSA, and colloquial Arabic, and as there is a continuum in how Arabs use their language(s). Boyd may actually mean the somewhat simplified form of MSA, ESA.

Those fluent in MSA are university graduates, and not even all of them. I recorded a piece of [MSA] and made different groups of people with various levels of education listen to it. Then I had comprehension questions. Results showed that it is the adults with university degrees who can understand MSA. [...] I was shocked to see how few people amongst the masses understood standard Arabic. Actually, I let them listen to a religious recording that aims at reaching the masses, not the educated, only to find that those masses are unable to understand what the religious preacher was saying.<sup>49</sup>

These findings were confirmed by research done by Parkinson. In Egypt in the 1980s he used speeches and texts of increasing difficulty, all in MSA, and tested comprehension of reading and listening on a scientific sampling of adults. He concluded that 'those with less than a high school education appear to have a minimal ability to understand basic sentences at a very slow rate. [...] The average Egyptian with a college education could be described as a competent user of MSA'.<sup>50</sup> Most of those in Egypt who finished secondary school could passively understand MSA about topics they were familiar with, but a serious discussion in MSA would be beyond their comprehension.<sup>51</sup>

In other Arab countries the situation was similar. Maamouri concluded that in Morocco children with primary school had only 'rudimentary to minimal competence in writing and reading Arabic'.<sup>52</sup> Mary Catherine Bateson's conclusion that MSA 'remains the possession of an elite' in the Arab World, though first written in 1967, was still appropriate in 2003 when her book was reprinted.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.2.3 Arabic Bible Translations in MSA

Many Christian Arabs, even those with tertiary education, did not find the rather CA of the Van Dyck Bible or the other translations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century easy to follow. For those without secondary education, the language of these translations was difficult if not incomprehensible. However, most Arab churches used only the Van Dyck version as the formal Bible of church meetings and sermons because the churches in the Arab World were extremely sensitive to the Islamic accusation that Christianity had changed the text of the *Injil* (Gospel). The Coptic-Orthodox, Greek-Orthodox, Syriac-Orthodox and Presbyterian Churches preferred Van Dyck in the liturgy. The Maronites in Lebanon and Syria used the Jesuit translation, though the Catholics in Egypt used Van Dyck.

Other translations in a simpler MSA were produced and some became very popular for personal usage.<sup>54</sup> Many Christians in Egypt use *Kitâb al-Ḥayâh* (The Book of Life) translation personally. The Book of Life was translated in a some-

<sup>49</sup> Sanaa Ghanem, president of the Arab Academy Language Institute in Cairo, in an email to the author (28 November 2003). She also commented that people find it easier to understand written MSA than when it is used orally.

<sup>50</sup> Parkinson, 'Knowing Standard Arabic' (1991).

<sup>51</sup> According to Parkinson in an interview with the author in Cairo (13 October 2004).

<sup>52</sup> Maamouri, 'Language Education and Human Development', p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> Bateson, *Arabic Language Handbook*, p. 82.

<sup>54</sup> Tom Hoglind in an email to the author (25 May 2004).

what simpler MSA than Van Dyck. The translation was published in Egypt, although most of the translation work was done in Lebanon. The New Testament was finished in 1982 and the Old Testament in 1988. In the Levant, The Book of Life is also widely used, mainly due to its bi-lingual editions and the Life Application Bible which uses The Book of Life translation.

In 1993 the Lebanese Bible Society published Today's Arabic Version (TAV), popularly called *al-Mushtarakah* (collective, communal), as this translation was produced in cooperation with different denominations. This was in a similar form of MSA as The Book of Life. TAV is used mainly in the Levant and Iraq among Protestant churches but also by some Maronite churches in Lebanon who preferred it over their traditional Jesuit Bible. In Iraq and Lebanon it is the most commonly used Bible translation while in Egypt it is hardly used.

The Noble Book (*Al-Kitâb al-Sharîf*) was another translation in an easily readable form of MSA; it was produced by a missionary of the Assemblies of God (AOG) churches during the 1990s. This translation purposely used Islamic terminology for contextualizing the Gospel. For example, whereas all other Bible translations chose the name for Jesus (*Yasû'*) that has been traditionally used in the churches of the Arab World, The Noble Book used his *Qur'anic* name '*Îsâ*'.

An example of the theological and interpretative liberty the translators of the The Noble Book took is how one verse from the Apostle Paul's first letter to Timothy has been translated. The New International Version (NIV) translated that verse, correctly, as: 'For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.' The Noble Book states: 'There is no God but *Allâh*, and there is no mediator between Him and man but the man *al-Masîh 'Îsâ*.' (*lâ ilâha ilâ Allâh, wa lâ shafî'a baynahu wa bayna al-nâs ilâ al-insân al-masîh 'Îsâ*).<sup>55</sup> The first part of that translation is a literal repetition of the first part of the Islamic Creed (*shahâdah*). The word chosen for *mediator* (*shafî'a*) is an Islamic term mostly used in the context of the popular expectation that the prophet Muḥammad will be an intercessor for the believers on the Day of Judgment.<sup>56</sup> All other Bible translations use the neutral word *al-wasîf* for *mediator* in this verse, as well as the name *Yasû'* instead of the *Qur'anic* rendering '*Îsâ*'. Of interest is that all Arabic Bible translations translated the verse positively, in accordance with the Greek, while The Noble Book translated the verse with a double negation.

Most churches and missionaries in the Arab World have turned against using The Noble Book. Egypt refused to allow a container with 100,000 New Testament copies of this translation to enter the country in 2004 after consultation with the Orthodox, the Catholic, and the Presbyterian Churches of the country.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> The Greek original was 'Heis gar Theos, heis kai mesites Theou kai anthroopoon, anthroopos Christos Jesus'. See Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland et alia (eds), *The Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, 1993, first edition 1966), pp. 715-716. See *Kitâb al-Sharîf* (Luynes, 2002), p. 311 for 1 Timothy 2:5. This translation is published by the *Sharif Bible Society* in Luynes (France).

<sup>56</sup> Islamic tradition is not clear regarding this possibility of intercession, but most Muslims have this expectation. See the entry *Shafî'a* in H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers (eds), *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1974, first edition 1953), pp. 511-512.

<sup>57</sup> Information from difference sources who wanted to remain anonymous. The container was still in the harbor of Alexandria in 2007 awaiting collection. A huge fine for storage awaited those who were supposed to return it to Lebanon where it came from.



### 3.3 COLLOQUIAL ARABIC

#### 3.3.1 *Origins*

Whereas MSA is more or less the same throughout the Arab World, the spoken languages show great variations. Those languages may be broadly classified in four groups, namely those spoken in Egypt and Sudan, those spoken in the Arabian Peninsula, those spoken in North Africa, and the languages of the Middle East.

Linguists have supported a variety of theories about how these colloquial Arabic languages developed. Possibly a *koiné* Arabic was used by the Muslim soldiers that conquered the Middle East and North Africa. These Muslim armies consisted of members of different Arab tribes, and they needed a median colloquial for their communication. These armies and the officials in their train introduced this median spoken Arabic as the vernacular in the countries they conquered. The present Arabic dialects may have grown out of the interaction of this *koiné* Arabic with the local languages and with the formal literary Arabic that would develop from the religious sources of Islam. Other theories focused more on the idea that the present Arabic languages grew out of the different Arabic languages that were spoken in parts of countries like Egypt and Syria even before Islam was introduced in those countries.<sup>58</sup>

#### 3.3.2 *Different Arabic Languages*

By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in some Arab countries more than one distinct Arabic language was spoken, sometimes by minorities of many millions of native speakers. The differences between the Arabic dialects are enormous. The further away the countries are from each other, the greater usually the dialectical differences.

Upper Egyptian Arabic (Ṣaʿīdī) as spoken south of Cairo was one example of such a language that was clearly distinct from the Arabic spoken in Cairo and Lower Egypt. Upper Egyptian Arabic was spoken by almost 19 million Egyptians while the Cairene dialect, usually called *Egyptian Arabic*, was spoken by about 46 million.<sup>59</sup> For a complete list of the different Arabic languages, see *Figure 3.1*. This table is based on figures of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) from Dallas, Texas (USA), that listed over 200 different Arabic and non-Arabic languages spoken in the Arab World.<sup>60</sup> *Figure 3.1* excludes more than 100 non-Arabic languages spoken in southern Sudan, all languages with less than one million native speakers, and those languages that are in the first place spoken outside the Arab World, like French, Farsi and Armenian. After those are excluded, there were still 17 major different Arabic and six major non-Arabic languages spoken in the Arab World at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Charles A. Ferguson, 'The Arabic Koine', in Salman H. Al-Ani (ed), *Readings in Arabic Linguistics* (Bloomington, 1978), pp. 49-51.

<sup>59</sup> In Egypt, both the whole country and the capital city Cairo are called *Miṣr*.

<sup>60</sup> See [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com) (15 April 2003).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

In 1985 the main Christian missionary radio broadcasters together decided in their World by 2000 (Wb2000) project, to ensure that by the year 2000 all people groups in the world should have a minimum of 30 minutes of radio broadcasts per day in their own language if they had more than one million native speakers.<sup>62</sup> People groups were defined as unified cultural entities that used the same language. Because these broadcasters used this criterion, the information of SIL is a *propos*, in spite of criticism of many linguists that SIL does not use scientific criteria. According to Thomas Werkema, former President of the International Linguistics Center of SIL, the organization focused on the criterion of 'intelligibility from one group to another'.<sup>63</sup>

This approach to language led SIL, for instance, to speak of 18,900,000 native speakers of Upper Egyptian Arabic. David Dalby listed less than 78,000 native Upper Egyptian Arabic speakers.<sup>64</sup> From a scientific linguistic viewpoint Dalby may be right, but for the Upper Egyptians his approach was irrelevant as they experienced a community of language and culture with each other that excluded the Egyptians from Cairo and Lower Egypt.

### **3.3.3 Egyptian Colloquial Arabic**

#### **3.3.3.1 Dissemination**

In the Arab World the Egyptian Arabic of Cairo is, generally speaking, better understood by most Arabs than any other dialect that is not geographically close to their own. This Egyptian dialect is even better understood than MSA, the language that technically unites the Arab nations. This is due to a cluster of related reasons.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Egyptian radio was more popular than any other media in the Arab World. As Egypt was the first Arab country with transnational broadcasting facilities, millions of Arabs became acquainted with the Egyptian dialect. Their interest in these Egyptian broadcasts was kindled because of the heroic role of President Jamâl 'Abd al-Nâsir. Those broadcasts also propelled some Egyptian singers, like Umm Kulthûm, 'Abd al-Ḥalîm Ḥâfîz and Farîd al-Aṭrash, into their careers. These singers and their texts became immensely popular all over the Arab World into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Egypt also became the most important centre for Arabic cinema productions. During the years of Nâsir, the studios in Cairo had an output of hundreds of movies each year. When television was introduced in the Arab World in the 1970s, Egyptian films were watched evening upon evening by millions of people all over the Arab World. Beside films that were made for cinema, Egypt also became the largest production center for television programs in the Arab World. These films and programs were not in MSA, but in Egyptian Arabic.

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<sup>62</sup> As these goals were not attained, the name of the project was changed into World by Radio.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Werkema in an email to the author (4 December 2003).

<sup>64</sup> David Dalby's approach and figures are followed in David B. Barrett (ed), *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World* Vol. 2 (Oxford, New York, 2001), pp. 251, 272.

		Language	# Speakers	Where Spoken
North Africa	Arabic	Algerian	22,400,000	Algeria
		Libyan	4,200,000	Libya
		Moroccan	19,542,000	Morocco
		Tunisian	9,308,000	Tunisia
	Other	Shawīya	1,400,000	Algeria
		Tamazight	3,515,000	Morocco, Algeria
		Kabyle	6,000,000	Algeria
		Tashelhayt	3,500,000	Morocco, Algeria
Tarifit		2,000,000	Morocco, Algeria	
Egypt Sudan	Arabic	Egyptian	46,306,000	Egypt
		Sa'īdī	18,900,000	Egypt
		Sudanese	17,500,000	Sudan, Egypt
Middle East	Arabic	Mesopotamian	13,900,000	Iraq, Syria
		North Levantine	15,000,000	Syria, Lebanon
		North Mesopotamian	6,300,000	Iraq, Syria
		South Levantine	6,155,000	Jordan, Palestine
	Other	Kurdish	6,036,000	Iraq
Gulf	Arabic	Hijāzī	6,000,000	KSA
		Najdī	9,800,000	KSA, Iraq, Syria
		Khalījī	2,440,000	Gulf, Iraq
		Omānī	1,010,000	Oman
		Sana'ānī	7,600,000	Yemen
		'Adanī	6,760,000	Yemen

Figure 3.1 Languages with over one million native speakers in the Arab World in 2003<sup>65</sup>

Jalāl al-Sharqāwī, an expert of cinema in the Arab World, commented that it would have been impossible to have made films in MSA, not only because it was unrealistic and not true to life, but also because very few Arabs would have understood it. Egyptian cinema decided to produce films in colloquial Egyptian Arabic even though it could have meant that Egyptian films would have been unmarketable anywhere else in the Arab World. However, the endeavor proved very successful and the Egyptian dialect became understood in most parts of the Arab World. Egyptian films came to be known as *Arabic* films, while films produced

<sup>65</sup> [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com).

elsewhere in the Arab World came to be called by the name of their country of production, for example a Tunisian or a Syrian film.<sup>66</sup>

The preponderant role of Egyptian Arabic was also the result of the great need in most Arab countries for teachers in primary and secondary schools. With its large population, Egypt was able to supply the Arab World with the teachers it needed and because of the lower salaries in Egypt, teachers were easily enticed to migrate to other Arab countries. They introduced Egyptian Arabic all over the Arab World, as they would speak in their own vernacular to their students.<sup>67</sup>

### 3.3.3.2 Comprehensibility

The comprehensibility of Egyptian Arabic in the Arab World remains a relative matter. It may be better understood than MSA and other dialects, but auditory studies in Yemen in the late 1980s showed that Egyptian Arabic was not generally understood. Peter Twele assessed the comprehension of people across North Yemen to Egyptian Arabic and concluded that most women, as well as children under 15, could not understand it in spite of the large number of Egyptian teachers in that country and in spite of the popularity of Egyptian radio and television. Twele spoke of a 'large linguistic gap' between the Egyptian teachers and their Yemeni students. Boys of 13 and 14 years old, who often had had three to five years of education from an Egyptian teacher, often showed 'poor comprehension'.<sup>68</sup>

Due to a lack of more contemporary studies in other Arab countries, definite conclusions cannot be drawn, but the results of Twele's research in Yemen were probably symptomatic for the comprehensibility of Egyptian Arabic in many other Arab countries.<sup>69</sup> Boyd's opinion that Nāṣir's speeches, which were often held in a combination of MSA and colloquial Egyptian, 'could be understood by literate and illiterate alike in most of the Arab World', is an exaggeration.<sup>70</sup>

The development of transnational satellite television broadcasting in the Arab World has created a major shift in exposure to Arabic dialects. Since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Lebanese broadcasts have been the most popular on satellite television. It is likely that in the future the Lebanese dialect will attain the status that Egyptian Arabic has had, as from Morocco to Iraq, Arabs have begun watching Lebanese television programs at the expense of Egyptian programs.

<sup>66</sup> Jalāl al-Sharqāwī, *Al-Sinamā fi al-Waṭan al-'Arabī* (Cairo, 1984), pp. 56-57.

<sup>67</sup> Alan Richards and John Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East: State, Class and Economic Development* (Cairo, 1991, first edition 1990), p. 122. In the oil-rich Gulf States Egyptian teachers could earn at least ten times their domestic salaries. In 1990, over 50,000 Egyptian teachers had teaching jobs in other Arab countries.

<sup>68</sup> As described by Peter Twele, *Communication among Arab Varieties: Comprehension Testing in the Yemen Arab Republic* (Arlington, 1988), pp. 136-139. This is an unpublished MA Thesis for the University of Texas in Arlington, Texas (USA), as stored in its library.

<sup>69</sup> Yemen in the 1980s was, for instance, to a much greater extent exposed to Egyptian Arabic than all countries of North Africa. The presence of the Egyptian language is comparable with that in most other countries of the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East, though Lebanon and Syria never had the large number of Egyptian teachers that were sent to Yemen and the rest of the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq.

<sup>70</sup> Douglas A. Boyd, 'Developments of Egypt's Radio: 'Voice of the Arabs' under Nasser', in *Journalism Quarterly* (Winter 1975), p. 646.

Because Christian Egyptians formed the majority of all Christian Arabs, they played an important role in churches all over the Arab World. They often assumed that other Christian Arabs understood and even liked their Egyptian dialect. While comprehensibility was often not an issue, most Christians from other Arab countries preferred to be spoken to in their own dialects. Egypt and Lebanon had throughout the period of growing nationalism since the 1850s, competed for a dominant role in the intellectual life of the Arab World, and this was also reflected in church-life. The Lebanese were especially sensitive to being addressed in Egyptian colloquial Arabic.<sup>71</sup>

### 3.3.3.3 Resentment against Colloquial Arabic in Egypt

One effect of Arabs speaking colloquial was that many, when they wrote, tended to use the vocabulary of the vernacular. Most Arab intellectuals were negative about that. According to the Egyptian linguist Aḥmad Samīr Baybars, there were dangerous pitfalls for the language as it had become normal to see corrupted Arabic in the newspapers and magazines. He spoke of the ‘mistakes in syntax, inflection, spelling and style’ in the media. For him, that was proof that Egypt showed no dignity or pride in its identity.<sup>72</sup> It was interesting that he thought Egypt’s identity was more rooted in MSA than in the actual spoken languages. Ibrāhīm Madkūr, President of Egypt’s Language Academy, assumed that the colloquial would eventually be replaced by MSA as the everyday language of Egypt:

Language is human and cultural behavior – an identity given to its owner and an address for the personality and the nation. I ask each mother, father and school to put these [classical] meanings into the child’s character, and to deal with him accordingly... If the home and the schools are improved, and cooperate in creating a sound educational and linguistic environment, it follows that society will be free from the abnormal social phenomena which have arisen among us.<sup>73</sup>

In 1990, Madkūr supported the efforts to ‘effect a linguistic erasing of the Arabic dialects, and to extract from them a shared language which is easy to use, doesn’t contradict necessities [of daily life] and which enjoys flexibility and simplicity.’ Pan-Arab political arguments seemed most important in Madkūr’s resistance against the Arabic dialects. ‘[All] we are concerned with now is to arrive at a spoken language which is shared by all of the Arabic regions.’<sup>74</sup>

Arabic politicians, linguists and Islamic religious leaders usually rejected any discourse on the different colloquial Arabic languages and their associated communities of identity as being politically divisive.<sup>75</sup> They preferred to focus on the

<sup>71</sup> ‘Especially Lebanese Christians are sensitive to this matter. Lebanese and other Arabs do not like to be addressed in [the] Egyptian dialect’, according to Nabīl Quṣṭah, executive director of the Lebanese Baptist Society in an email to the author (23 May 2004).

<sup>72</sup> Aḥmad Samīr Baybars, *Al-Wāqa’ al-Lughawī wa al-Huwāyah al-‘Arabīyah* (Cairo, 1989), pp. 10, 28.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted by Armbrust, *Mass Culture*, p. 43.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>75</sup> Muhammed Raji Zughoul, ‘Diglossia in Arabic: Investigating Solutions’, in *Anthropological Linguistics* (Bloomington, 1980), p. 209. He concluded that ‘those who aspire to separation from the Arab World develop their dialects into a language while those who want to belong to the Arab World seek to do so by clinging to the unity of the language’.

common Arabic identity and preferred to see the language variations as a matter of dialect and as deviations from the norm of MSA that all Arabs were supposed to know as their national and religious language. The interest in the linguistic habits of ‘ordinary people’, a concern of many Western linguists, often had a distinctly colonialist cast to Arabs favoring MSA as the only proper language. Sometimes Arabs considered the interest of non-Arabs in colloquial Arabic a Western or a Zionist ploy to separate the Arabs from their religion and history, and from their fellow Arabs.<sup>76</sup>

### 3.3.4 Arabic Colloquial Bible Translation

Christian Arabs have generally followed the Muslim majority in their negative views of the usage of colloquial Arabic for literacy. The idea to use colloquial Arabic for Bible translation is rejected by most Arab Christians; many fear that these translations support the argument of Muslims that Christians have changed their Scriptures, and they also often think that colloquial translations do not show the reverence that is due to the Bible. However there have been some efforts by missionaries to produce colloquial Arabic translations. There are translations in Algerian Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, and one in a combination of those two with MSA. This last translation was produced by Eric G. Fisk, a Plymouth Brethren missionary from England.<sup>77</sup> It was published in 1960 and is called the *Fisk Bible, the North Africa Version* or the *Union Bible* as it used words from the vernacular of Morocco and Algeria.<sup>78</sup> However, the Christian communities and missionaries in Morocco and Algeria dislike this version because it is neither truly colloquial, nor good MSA.

A complete list of all Bible translations that have been important in the Arab World is found in *Figure 3.2*. It contains translations that date from before Islam, Arabic translations as produced after the coming of Islam, and translations in non-Arabic languages of major people groups in the Arab World.

## 3.4 DIGLOSSIA AND THE ARABIC LANGUAGE CONTINUUM

Charles Ferguson coined the term *diglossia* and defined it in 1959. He said that diglossia is the situation when two languages, or two varieties of the same language, exist side by side over the years, each being assigned a specific function. Ferguson argued that the Arab countries, where MSA coexisted beside the spoken languages, were a clear example. Theoretically, the role of each language was well defined. MSA was considered as the formal or cultural tool of communication. It

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<sup>76</sup> Armbrust, *Mass Culture*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>77</sup> Fisk describes the translation process in Eric G. Fisk *The Cross versus the Crescent* (London, 1971).

<sup>78</sup> Fred Plastow in an email to the author (26 April 2005). Plastow was a missionary in Morocco during the 1960s, until he was forced to leave the country in 1969. What is interesting is that Fisk describes the enthusiasm among the missionaries of the North Africa Mission (NAM) in Morocco for this translation upon its completion. He wrote that when the Bible arrived during a prayer meeting, ‘they immediately stood up and sang the Doxology’. Fisk, *The Cross versus the Crescent*, p. 144.

was used in lectures, public speeches, religious sermons, the media, and most publications. On the other hand, colloquial Arabic was used in all informal contexts. In reality, however, there was much overlap between MSA and colloquial Arabic when used orally. In that context, Parkinson wrote:

When the 'pure' Colloquial and the prescriptively correct fusha forms are analyzed from an outside point of view they are best seen as two separate but related languages, [but] as experienced and used by the average native speaker they are both parts of a single expressive system and should be viewed as stylistic variants of each other.<sup>79</sup>

Most linguists prefer to focus on the *continuum* between MSA on one hand and the colloquial on the other, rather than on *diglossia*.<sup>80</sup> Ferguson wrote in the 1990s that for understanding how Arabic functions, it is more useful to focus on the context of its usage than on 'dialect variation'.<sup>81</sup>

Regarding this context the Arabic linguist Benjamin Hary listed seven variables.<sup>82</sup> He spoke of the setting of the discourse, the topic, the language skills of the speaker, the emotional state of the speaker, the audience, the function of the discourse and the personal relationship of the speaker to the audience as the main factors in the choice of language. Based on a combination of these factors, the discourse could be at any place on the continuum between MSA and colloquial.<sup>83</sup> Very often in formal settings speakers may divert from their well-prepared MSA speech in order to add a comment or respond to a question thereby increasing the rate of colloquial usage dramatically. Nâşir was known for starting his speeches in MSA and proceeding to use something between MSA and the Egyptian colloquial when speaking to his own nation. In Pan-Arab contexts, he would not use these Egyptian colloquialisms to that extent.

The mixture of MSA and colloquial was common in all Arab countries in educational contexts, formal speeches, learned discussions, and in the media. It actually created a hybrid type of Arabic, sometimes called *Educated Spoken Arabic* (ESA). This Arabic was not the language of everyday conversation, and certainly not that of the illiterate masses, but there seemed to be a unifying trend in its usage throughout the Arab World. While proper MSA used the simplified grammar of CA and adapted its vocabulary, ESA used a more colloquial grammar but drew its vocabulary more from MSA. This made intellectual relationships between people from different Arab countries easier, but it did not make the language an easier tool for illiterates.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Dilworth B. Parkinson, 'Variability in Standard Arabic Grammar Skills', in Alaa Elgibali (ed), *Understanding Arabic* (Cairo, 1996), p. 99.

<sup>80</sup> The fact that there is a *continuum* can be seen in the difficulty of defining CA, MSA, ESA, and colloquial Arabic.

<sup>81</sup> Charles A. Ferguson, 'Diglossia Revisited', in Alaa Elgibali (ed), *Understanding Arabic* (Cairo, 1996), pp. 49-67.

<sup>82</sup> Benjamin Hary, 'The Language Continuum in Arabic Multiglossia', in Alaa Elgibali (ed), *Understanding Arabic* (Cairo, 1996), p. 76.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> According to the Arabic linguist Moyra Dale in an interview with the author (16 December 2003).

Language	Portion	Translator	Name	Finished
<b>Pre-Islamic Bible Translations</b>				
Greek	Hebrew Bible	Alexandrian Jews	Septuagint (LXX)	3rd century BCE
Latin	Whole Bible	Jerome	Old Latin to Vulgate	2-4th century CE
Syriac	Gospel Harmony	Tatian	Diatesseron	2nd century
Syriac	Whole Bible		Old Syriac to Peshitta	2-4th century
Coptic	Whole Bible			3-5th century
Ge'ez	Whole Bible	Syrian monks		4-6th century
Armenian	Whole Bible	Priest Mesrob		5th century
<b>Arabic Bible Translations</b>				
Classical Arabic	Selected Parts	Greek-Orthodox in Palestine	Lectionary	750-800
Classical Arabic	Most of New Testament	Bishr ibn al-Sirri		867 CE
Classical Arabic	Pentateuch, Gospel and other portions	Ahmad ibn 'Abd Allāh		9th century
Classical Arabic	Jewish Bible	Sa'adiyah ben Yosef Gaon	Tafsir	9th century
Classical Arabic	Old Testament	Al-Hārīṭ ibn Sinān ibn Sinbāt		10th century
Classical Arabic	Single Books	Coptic Translators		From 10th century
Classical Arabic	Diatessaron	Abū al-Faraj 'Abd Allāh		11th century
Classical Arabic	Whole Bible	Bishop Sarkis al-Rizz		17th century
Classical Arabic	Whole Bible	Fāris al-Shidyâq, professor Lee		1840-1850
Classical Arabic	Whole Bible	Eli Smith, Cornelius Van Dyck	Van Dyck Bible	1848-1865
Classical Arabic	Whole Bible	Augustin Rodet	Jesuit Bible	1876-1880

*Figure 3.2 Bible Translations in the Arab World (Continued on next page)*



Language	Portion	Translator	Name	Finished
<b>Arabic Bible Translations</b>				
Moroccan Arabic	New Testament, other portions			1902-1952
Classical Arabic	Whole Bible	Dominican Fathers	Mosul Bible	1885
MSA	Whole Bible		Book of Life	1988
MSA	Whole Bible		Today's Arabic Version	1993
MSA / Algerian and Moroccan	Whole Bible	Eric Fisk	Union Bible	1960
Algerian Arabic	New Testament, other portions	Charles Marsh and others		1872-1965
Islamic MSA	Whole Bible		The Noble Book	1990s
<b>Other Language Translations</b>				
Kurmanji (Kurdish)	New Testament, Bible Portions			From 1872
Tarifit	Gospels, Acts			From 1887
Kabyle	New Testament			From 1895
Tashelhayt	New Testament, Psalms			From 1906
Tamazight	Luke, John			From 1919
Shawīya	Portions			From 1950

*Figure 3:2 Bible Translations in the Arab World (Continued from previous page)*

In most Arab countries radio and television programs were broadcast in this journalistic, simplified variation of MSA, especially in politically oriented programs. Programs for entertainment were mainly produced in the colloquial dialects. In such cases they were always in the most prestigious spoken language in the country, and in a rather cultivated form of that vernacular. For instance in Egypt, radio

and television used a cultivated form of the Cairene language, never the language spoken in Upper Egypt. This means that, in regard to the Arabic language continuum, the vernacular as used in entertainment programs gravitated to ESA.

### 3.5 NON-ARABIC LIVING LANGUAGES IN THE ARAB WORLD

#### 3.5.1 Major non-Arabic Language Groups

Many non-Arabic languages in the Arab World were spoken in North Africa at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The four largest of those were the Amazigh languages Kabyle, Tashelhayt, Tamazight and Tarifit.<sup>85</sup> Another important non-Arab language was Kurmanji, the Kurdish language spoken in Iraq. The Copts of Egypt and the Syriac Christians in the Levant were fully Arabized by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>86</sup> In the Coptic-Orthodox Church the Coptic language was taught, but only for the sake of understanding the mass, which was partially celebrated in Coptic. Most Syriac-Orthodox had also been Arabized and the Syriac language was mostly relegated to usage in the liturgy at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not unlike the situation in the Coptic-Orthodox Church. There were some regions where Syriac was still the vernacular, like in Northern Iraq and Southeast Turkey.<sup>87</sup>

The Arabization that followed in the trail of Islam was a slower process in North Africa than in the Middle East. All North African tribes eventually adopted Islam as their religion but many not only kept some pre-Islamic traditions, but also their language. In the past decades, there has been a marked interest among these people who speak non-Arabic languages, to safeguard and revive their native tongues against the Arabizing efforts of their authorities. The Kabyle speakers in Algeria and the Kurds in Iraq have been most insistent to keep their languages and cultures alive, in opposition to the Algerian and Iraqi authorities.<sup>88</sup>

In North Africa, Lebanon, and Syria, French was a major language. France, while colonizing parts of the Arab World, enforced the usage of its language in education, and even after independence, French remained the language of prestige for millions of Arabs and Imazighen. In Morocco and Algeria many people whose mother tongue was one of the Amazigh languages could read and write better in French than in Arabic, even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>85</sup> The main Amazigh language in Algeria is Kabyle, spoken by three to six million people in Algeria. In Morocco, there are three major Amazigh language groups. Tashelhayt is spoken in the south (also written as Tachilhit, Tashilheet, and also called Tassoussit, Southern Shilha, or Susia). Speakers of this language are called the Ishelhayn). Tamazight is spoken in the Middle Atlas (also called Central Shilha, or Middle Atlas Berber), and Tarifit (also called Rifi, Rifia, or Northern Shilha) is spoken in the north. The first two languages in Morocco are spoken by 3,000,000 people, the third by about 1,500,000 people.

<sup>86</sup> In Syria there are some villages where Syriac is still used.

<sup>87</sup> H. Teule, 'Arabische christenen' [Arab Christians], in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* [Eastern Christians within the World of Islam] (Kampen, 1997), p. 347.

<sup>88</sup> The anti-Arab feelings of the Kabyle Imazighen are one of the reasons why since the 1980s tens of thousands of them have rejected Islam and became Christians. Many of them consider that a matter of returning to their pre-Islamic Christian roots.

### 3.5.2 Linguistic Rights of Minorities

In regard to the habit of many Arab countries to impose the Arabic language on their linguistic minorities, it is relevant to mention what has been said about the linguistic rights of minorities by different international organizations. Since 1995 the People's Communication Charter (PCC) functioned as a common framework for a permanent movement on the quality of a sustainable communication environment.<sup>89</sup> That PCC stated, among other things:

All people have the right to protect their cultural identity. This includes the respect for people's pursuit of their cultural development and the right to free expression in languages they understand. [...] All people have the right to a diversity of languages. This includes the right to express themselves and have access to information in their own language, the right to use their own languages in educational institutions funded by the state, and the right to have adequate provisions created for the use of minority languages where needed.<sup>90</sup>

The World Alliance for Christian Communication (WACC) supported PCC, and stated in 1999 that language forms 'one of the essential keys to cultural and personal identity. People construct their identities in the house of their language'.<sup>91</sup> In 1999, PCC organized public hearings in the Netherlands about whether the rights of speakers of some languages, including the North African Amazigh languages and Kurdish, were violated against. WACC reported the conclusions of these hearings regarding the Amazigh languages of North Africa:

The testimony provided by the witnesses [...] documents convincingly that in all the relevant states speakers of Berber languages are subjected to strong assimilation pressures, primarily Arabo-Islamization.[...] There is clear evidence of violation of linguistic human rights. [...] Government policy in North Africa aims at the extinction of Berber.<sup>92</sup>

The public hearings also treated the language rights of the Kurdish speakers in Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. 'In all cases the use of Kurdish is seen by the governments as a threat to the State', the hearing concluded.<sup>93</sup>

It is of interest to note the role of language and identity in the civil war in Sudan. In his book on the English language in Africa, Alamin Mazrui wrote about the role of the Arabic language in the eyes of the Southern Sudanese who were embroiled in a war with the authorities in Khartoum for decades:

<sup>89</sup> Cees J. Hamelink, professor of International Communication at the University of Amsterdam in The Netherlands was the initiator of the PCC. The main signatories of the PCC are the World Association for Christian Communication, the Cultural Environment Movement, the World Association for Community Broadcasting, the video-organisation Videazimut, the Association for Progressive Communication, the MacBride Round Table, and some national organisations in Japan, South Korea and India, according to Cees J. Hamelink in an email to the author (24 May 2004).

<sup>90</sup> People's Communication Charter (1995), see [www.pcccharter.net](http://www.pcccharter.net) (28 January 2003).

<sup>91</sup> 'First Public Hearing on Languages and Human Rights', in *Media Development* (No. 4, 1999), p. 8.

<sup>92</sup> 'What the Judges said about *Amazigh* (Berber) language', in *Linguicide: The Death of Language. Public Hearing on Languages and Human Rights, May 1-3 1999* (London, 1999), p. 12.

<sup>93</sup> 'First Public Hearing', pp. 11-12.

Arabic has often been regarded as a hegemonic language by the predominantly non-Islamic, multi-ethnic population of Southern Sudan. To this extent, the conflict in the Sudan is as much linguistic as it is ethno-religious. Part of the dynamic relates to the assimilative quality of Arabic such that those who acquire it as a first language can be regarded as ethnically Arab. This ethno-cultural quality of the language has sometimes triggered fears of Arab ethno-linguistic imperialism. [...] In this volatile dual polity, the South has, ironically, favoured the retention of English as its official language against the imposition of Arabic – in spite of the fact that Arabic has been spreading rapidly in the region even among non-Muslims. In cases of ethno-linguistic nationalism in Africa, then, the ‘ecumenical’ quality of English has sometimes been its strength. People feel comfortable to make the language ‘their own’ partly because, in doing so, they do not have to assume the identity of the other. The tendency of Arabic to assimilate ‘others’ who acquire it as a mother tongue, on the other hand, has generated fears of Arab hegemony.<sup>94</sup>

In the conflict in Darfur, between the Arabic-speaking Janjawid and the non-Arabic population of Darfur, language is one of the major issues. The Janjawid speak Arabic, and they are waging war against the population of Darfur that speaks Fur in the first place. The Janjawid have received support from the Sudanese authorities in Khartoum who endeavor to Arabize society.

A Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities proposed a Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 1993. This declaration said that ‘indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages’. The declaration also mentioned their right to equal access to all forms of non-indigenous media, and that states ought to take effective measures to ensure that state-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity. Since some articles concerning the rights to self-determination faced resistance by some nations, the Draft Declaration was not adopted.<sup>95</sup>

### ***3.5.3 Linguistic Policies in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia***

#### **3.5.3.1 The Politics of Arabization**

In Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, the processes of Arabization were linked to efforts of the post-colonial governments to legitimize their regimes as the liberators of French domination. The independent states wanted to do away with the language of the colonizers and adopted the language that linked it with the Arabs and Islam. Since the 1980s Arabization was also an instrument to counter radicalization.

The Arabic vernaculars of North Africa were usually considered dilutions of proper Arabic. The Amazigh languages in Morocco and Algeria were worse off as they were seen as remnants of pre-Islamic days and therefore as non-finished Islamization. Beside this, they were seen as hindrances to unifying the countries under the political power of the Arab rulers.

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<sup>94</sup> Alamin M. Mazrui, *English in Africa. After the Cold War: Multilingual Matters* (Clevedon, 2004), pp. 27-28.

<sup>95</sup> See [www.unesco.org/most/Inlaw9.htm](http://www.unesco.org/most/Inlaw9.htm) (12 December 2002).

In spite of the formal policies to Arabize society and education, the French language remained the tool for work and progress. Political leaders in all three countries knew that the chances of progress for their children in social and economic life would be hampered if they chose monolingual Arabic schools so most sent their children to bilingual or fully foreign educational institutions.

In education, there have been what the French anthropologist and Arabist Gilbert Grandguillaume termed *Cycles of Arabization*.<sup>96</sup> The schools and universities were forced to progressively Arabize, not by popular vote but by political dictates. This led regularly to popular outcries because of the deterioration of educational standards, forcing the authorities to allow at least a partial return to using French.

In Algeria the struggle for Arabization has been more controversial than in Morocco and Tunisia. In the later two countries Arabic never disappeared as a language used for literacy by the elites. In Algeria however, by the time of independence in 1962, in all education, administration and in public life, French was the only language.<sup>97</sup>

### 3.5.3.2 Morocco

After independence Morocco did not recognize the Amazigh cultures and languages. It focused on the unification of the country as an Arab country using MSA as its formal language. The Moroccan vernacular, called *Dârġjah* (popular) was only used orally and usually not in a formal context.

Until 1958, two years after independence, all education in Morocco was still in French. Between 1959 and 1966, Morocco endeavored to Arabize the civil service and education. Between 1962 and 1965, the first four grades of primary school were Arabized, and some of the classes of secondary schools. By 1966, all schools were suffering from massive problems. Free education for all had resulted in a great influx of students, and the Arabization had resulted in underperformance. The decision was made that the sciences were to be taught in French again and that not all children would be allowed into secondary school. The minister of education Muġammad bin Ĥimâ admitted on 6 April 1966 that he had been 'too hasty' in trying to implement Arabization.<sup>98</sup>

By 1980 the first four grades of primary school were fully taught in Arabic while in the secondary schools only 25-50 percent of subjects. In 1990 primary and secondary schools were fully Arabized. Universities continued teaching in French but some studies, like law, were also given in Arabic.<sup>99</sup>

According to official statistics compiled in Morocco in 1994, 90 percent of the 28 million people spoke *Dârġjah*, while 30 percent spoke one of the Amazigh lan-

<sup>96</sup> Gilbert Grandguillaume, 'Les langues au Maghreb: des Corps en Peine de Voix', in *Esprit, Immobilismes au Maghreb* (No. 10, October 2004), pp. 92-102. Grandguillaume was until 1997 professor at the Parisian *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (School of Higher Studies and Social Sciences).

<sup>97</sup> Grandguillaume, 'Les langues au Maghreb: des Corps en Peine de Voix', pp. 92-102.

<sup>98</sup> Gilbert Grandguillaume, 'L'Arabisation au Maghreb', in *Revue d'Aménagement Linguistique* (No. 107, Winter 2004), pp. 7-10.

<sup>99</sup> Grandguillaume, 'Les Langues au Maghreb: des Corps en Peine de Voix', pp. 92-102.

guages.<sup>100</sup> Radio in Morocco, mainly an instrument for communication in MSA after independence, also broadcast brief daily programs in French and in the three main Amazigh languages, Tashelhayt, Tarifit and Tamazight. These Amazigh broadcasts have increased throughout the years. In 1996, these three languages had 12 hours of programming per day.<sup>101</sup>

Some organizations defending the usage and development of Amazigh languages, such as the International Congress for the Amazigh Language and the Moroccan Association for Research and Cultural Exchange claimed that more than 50 percent of the population spoke Amazigh and were of Amazigh origin on their father's or mother's side.<sup>102</sup> These organizations were part of the defense movement for the Amazigh languages that developed during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This movement celebrated Amazigh cultures and languages and demanded their inclusion in public life as recognition of the Imazighen's democratic, educational and human rights. This culminated in The Berber Manifesto, signed in 2000 by 229 Moroccan intellectuals after two years of discussions.<sup>103</sup>

This movement wanted to change the approach of Morocco to the Amazigh languages and cultures, as these were predominately looked at from a folkloristic perspective. When presented on radio and television, Amazigh culture was shown as national folklore, just for entertainment. Governmental institutes stressed that there were great variations in the Amazigh languages and that they were perceived as 'wild, unstructured dialects that were not workable (*des dialectes sauvages non structurés et non opérationnels*)'.<sup>104</sup>

This defensive movement for integrating Amazigh languages came at the end of a cycle of Arabization. King Ḥasan II was so impressed by the insufficiency of Arabic education, as 55 percent of the country was still illiterate, that he called for reforms in 1994 in a speech to parliament. In that speech he mentioned the need for Amazigh education. A year later he spoke out against systematic Arabization. In 1997, literacy in Arabic and French was made obligatory for accession to university.<sup>105</sup>

As a consequence of the Amazigh movement and the need to offer better education in general, in 1999 a National Charter for Education and Training was adopted. This acknowledged the need for students to study foreign languages, not just Arabic. This opened the possibility for reintroducing French in primary and secondary schools. It also mentioned the need to have an 'open approach' to the Amazigh language. King Muḥammad VI personified this new approach. In a speech on 21 July 2001 he spoke explicitly about Morocco's Arabic and Amazigh character. In October 2001, by Royal Decree he established the Royal Institute of

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 249-250, 254.

<sup>102</sup> Adil Moustauoui, 'Dossier no. 14: The Amazigh language within Morocco's language policy', on [www.ciemen.org/mercator](http://www.ciemen.org/mercator) 16 June 2005). When Moustauoui wrote this, he was a PhD student at the Faculty of Arts of the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* (Independent University of Madrid). The article was published by Mercator, a project of the European Union for defending minority languages in Europe.

<sup>103</sup> Moustauoui, 'Dossier no. 14: The Amazigh language within Morocco's language policy'.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Grandguillaume, 'L'Arabisation au Maghreb', pp. 7-10.

Amazigh Culture which he deemed necessary for introducing Amazigh language in the educational system.<sup>106</sup>

### 3.5.3.3 Algeria

In 1962, Algeria was extensively French-speaking and French-educated. After liberation, those who defended full Arabization were mostly Algerians who had not had French education. For those people, progress in society had been totally blocked under French rule.

In 1963 Algeria's first president, Aḥmad bin Ballah (1962-1965), forced primary schools to teach ten out of 30 hours in Arabic each week. The following year this was increased to a full Arabic curriculum. During that year Algeria imported about 1000 Egyptian teachers as it did not have enough teachers who could read and write in Arabic. Many of these Egyptians were actually manual laborers who could hardly communicate with their students as they spoke in Egyptian Arabic and their own knowledge of MSA was usually deficient. Resistance against this enforced Arabization arose soon from students, Kabyles, writers, secularists and from the Francophone press.<sup>107</sup>

After an interval of a few years, the second president, Huwârî Bûmadyân (1965-1979) imposed Arabization on the civil service in 1968. The bureaucrats were told that within three years they had to function in Arabic. This had poor success but it did open the civil service to those who did not speak French. After 1970 the Arabization of primary and secondary schools was intensified. That not only meant doing away with French as the medium of instruction, but it also stipulated MSA as the medium of oral instruction. Some Algerian teachers pleaded publicly for being allowed to use the Algerian vernacular for instruction in schools. That was to no avail as children had to be taught that their vernacular was wrong and those using it were often accused of unworthy behavior. For the Arabs in Algeria this prohibited the blending of MSA and the vernacular, as occurred to a certain extent in Egypt.<sup>108</sup> For the Kabyles this was impossible at any rate:

Their principal vice is that they prove the existence of an Algeria pre-dating the Arab conquest. Furthermore, they have nothing in common with Arabic dialects. Their disappearance is programmed into the very logic of Arabization, as well as the practices of government. This has the unfortunate consequence that large sections of the population, whose identities are partly dependent on local languages feel excluded from the new project of nation building.<sup>109</sup>

The 1980s, under President Shâdhli bin Jadîd (1979-1991), were years of the Arabization of higher education. Combined with anger about the lack of economic development and the institutionalization of corruption by the old revolutionary leaders, two opposition movements appeared. One was the Islamic radical movement and the other was the movement of the Kabyles. The Kabyles were the main

<sup>106</sup> Moustauoui, 'Dossier no. 14: The *Amazigh* language within Morocco's language policy'.

<sup>107</sup> Grandguillaume, 'L'Arabisation au Maghreb', pp. 12-18.

<sup>108</sup> Gilbert Grandguillaume, 'Arabisation et Démagogie en Algérie', in *Le Monde Diplomatique* (February 1997), p. 3. Grandguillaume, 'L'Arabisation au Maghreb', pp. 7-10.

<sup>109</sup> Grandguillaume, 'Arabisation et Démagogie en Algérie', p. 3.

victims as they did not consider MSA or the Algerian Arabic colloquial their language. For them, Arabization meant marginalization.

The Algerian government estimated that their worst enemies were the Islamic movements, not the Kabyles. In the hope to appease those radical Muslims, and also the old leadership of the *Front de Libération Nationale* (Front of National Liberation, FLN) that had been overthrown in 1991, the authorities took further steps at Arabization. On 17 December 1996 the non-elected Transitional National Council voted unanimously that as from July 1998 all public institutes in Algeria were allowed to use Arabic only in their communication of any sort. Only higher educational institutes were given until 2000 to adapt. The usage of foreign languages, i.e. French, in meetings was explicitly forbidden.<sup>110</sup>

‘Abd al-‘Azîz Bûtflîqah, elected president in 1999, seemed to set Algeria on a new linguistic course. On the Day of the Student on 19 May 1999, a month after being elected, he said that it was ‘unthinkable to study ten years of sciences in Arabic while that can be done in one year in English’. That statement did not put him in the camp of the Arabizers, nor did his public speeches which were invariably in French, or in the Algerian vernacular.<sup>111</sup>

In February 2000, a National Committee for the Reform of the Educational System was installed in Algiers. Approximately 100 members reported a year later to Bûtflîqah. The content of the report remained a secret. It seems that it supported the modernization of education at the expense of Arabization. On 3 October 2001 Bûtflîqah recognized Kabyle as one of Algeria’s national languages and he also decided to participate in meetings of the Francophone movement in 2002. He was the first president of Algeria to do so.<sup>112</sup>

### 3.5.3.4 Tunisia

Tunisia had an Amazigh minority of about one percent at the time of independence in 1956, so it had a totally different situation than its neighboring countries. President Ḥabîb Bûrġîbâ (1957-1987) wanted to secularize and modernize his country, including the Arabic language. He was highly reserved towards the Arab World and its Pan-Arabism. Bûrġîbâ wanted to stress Tunisia’s unique roots, and therefore he focused on its pre-Arabic Punic and Roman history. For him, the Tunisian vernacular was never something to be ashamed of and French remained an important language for learning and work. Arabic and French had always been part of the education of most Tunisians, so the elite were fully bilingual. Thus, a bilingual approach to education was continued after independence.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, those who supported a higher level of Arabization generally had the upper-hand in government. One reason for that was pressure from Saudi Arabia to do so in exchange for budgetary support for Tunisia. In 1971 the first year of primary education was fully Arabized, and the second and third year in 1976 and 1977. Something similar had been tried in the 1960s, but had been reversed when French was re-introduced in the first grades of primary school. In 1986 however, Bûrġîbâ was so upset about the low quality of education

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Grandguillaume, ‘L’Arabisation au Maghreb’, pp. 12-18.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.



that he forced the reintroduction of French again in the second grade of primary schools. The Arabization was blamed for the low educational standards.

During the 1990s the tendency was towards Arabization again, partially as an effort to stop the growing popularity of the Islamic movement. The government once again wanted more Arabic in the schools but at the same time it worked hard against archaic methods of teaching French. On 23 July 2002, an educational law was adopted that tried to ensure that the Arab language was taught well in schools but it also enforced the teaching of at least two foreign languages. This was done in an effort to bridge the gap between the teaching of the sciences in secondary schools, which was done in Arabic, and the fully French studies of the sciences in the universities. The new law tried to remedy this discrepancy by ensuring general multilingual education in all schools.<sup>113</sup>

### 3.5.4 Non-Arabic Bible Translations in the Arab World

The major non-Arabic native languages that are spoken in the Arab World are Tarifit, Tamazight, Tashelhayt, Kabyle, Shawiyah, and Kurmanji. A complete Bible translation is not available in any of these languages (See *Figure 3.2*). Tarifit, Tamazight and Shawiyah do not even have a complete New Testament in their languages. For Tarifit this is surprising, as the first translation work began in 1887.

The first Kurmanji New Testament was finished in 1872. This translation was probably not adequate as during the 1990s new translations were made of the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.<sup>114</sup>

Between 1895 and 1901, a Kabyle New Testament was produced and published by the British Foreign Bible Society. This version contained enough mistakes for another version to be produced by the Trinitarian Bible Society around 1958. A third version of the New Testament in Kabyle was produced by the Christian Association of the Berber Language (*Association Chrétienne d'Expression Berbère*, ACEB) in Algeria in 1995. This is a somewhat more paraphrased translation. ACEB is presently working on a completely new translation of the whole Bible. In France, another organization is finalizing a new translation as well.<sup>115</sup>

In 1887 the Gospel of Matthew and in 1890 the Gospel of John were translated into Tarifit. In the 1990s, a new movement to produce the Bible in this language began. The Gospel of John has been published. All books of the New Testament are being prepared for publication, as well as parts of the Old Testament.<sup>116</sup>

In Tashelhayt, Bible portions have been available since 1906; the whole New Testament was published as late as 1998 by the United Bible Societies (UBS). A

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Matthew, Luke and Acts were published by the Institute for Bible Translation (Stockholm, 1993). See [www.ibtnet.org](http://www.ibtnet.org) (6 December 2006).

<sup>115</sup> Information from Joop Ossewaarde, who is involved in Bible translations, in an email to the author (16 November 2006). [www.ethologue.com](http://www.ethologue.com) (7 December 2006) was also a source of information.

<sup>116</sup> [www.tarifit.info](http://www.tarifit.info) (7 December 2006).

team is working on the Old Testament as well, while another group of translators is working on a different translation of the entire Bible.<sup>117</sup>

In Tamazight, Bible portions have been available since 1919, but the New Testament translation has never been finished. During the 1970s or 1980s the Gospel of John was published in Tamazight followed by the Gospel of Luke. The book of Acts is about to be published.<sup>118</sup> Since 1950 some parts of the Bible have been available in Shawiyah.<sup>119</sup>

### 3.6 ILLITERACY AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

#### 3.6.1 High Illiteracy

According to the *Arab Human Development Report of 2002*, published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Jordan had the highest literacy rate in the Arab World, with almost 90 percent of the total population of 15 years and older being able to read. Less than half of the population over 15 years of age in Morocco and Yemen could read in 1999.<sup>120</sup> UNDP pointed to the high percentage of illiterates, and warned that in absolute terms illiteracy was rising in the Arab World:

[The] estimated rate of illiteracy among adults dropped from approximately 60 per cent in 1980 to around 43 per cent in the mid-1990s. However, illiteracy rates in the Arab World are [...] higher than the average in developing countries. Moreover, the number of illiterate people is still increasing, to the extent that Arab countries embark upon the twenty-first century burdened by over 60 million illiterate adults, the majority of whom are women.<sup>121</sup>

Among Christians illiteracy seemed to be slightly lower, due to the somewhat higher tendency to live in an urban environment where more education was available and where survival without being able to read and write was harder. *Figure 3.3* shows how the official literacy rates in different Arab countries developed between the 1960s and 1990s as compared to the population figures. (Some of these figures were also given in *Figure 2.1* in the previous chapter).

The official figures for literacy were probably on the optimistic side. As different studies showed, Arabs who finished only secondary education usually had difficulty understanding MSA, and only university graduates seemed to be able to use MSA well. In order to assess who should really be considered literate, it is therefore relevant to look at the development of educational enrollment in the Arab World.

<sup>117</sup> [www.Tashelhayt.info](http://www.Tashelhayt.info) (7 December 2006).

<sup>118</sup> [www.tamazight.info](http://www.tamazight.info) (7 December 2006).

<sup>119</sup> [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com) (7 December 2006).

<sup>120</sup> UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2002* (New York, 2002), p. 151.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

	% of literates of 15+years			Population in millions		
	1960s	1977	1997-9	1950	1975	2000
Morocco	14	28	48	8.9	17.3	29.8
Algeria	25	35	66.6	8.7	16	30.2
Tunisia	32	55	69.9	3.5	5.7	9.4
Libya	19	45	79.1	1	2.4	5.2
Egypt	37	44	54.6	21.8	38.8	67.8
Sudan	19	20	56.9	9.2	16.7	31
Lebanon	?	88	85.6	1.4	2.8	3.5
Jordan	32	59	89.2	0.5	1.9	4.9
Syria	62	53	73.6	3.5	7.4	16.1
Iraq	18	26	53.7	5.2	11	22.9
Kuwait	15	60	81.9	0.2	1	1.9
Qatar	?	35	80.8	0.03	0.2	0.6
Bahrain	47	50	87.1	0.1	0.3	0.7
Oman	2	20	70.3	0.5	0.9	2.5
UAE	38	18	75.1	0.07	0.5	2.6
KSA	?	18	76.1	3.2	7.3	20.3
Yemen	2	25	45.2	4.3	7	18.7

Figure 3.3: Literacy and Population in the Arab World: 1950-2000<sup>122</sup>

The first university in the Arab World that was not a religious training institute was the American University in Beirut (AUB), founded in 1866 by American Pro-

<sup>122</sup> Figures of literacy in the 1960s from the Arab Regional Literacy Organization (ARLO) in a survey of 1971, published in *Highlight on the Status of Literacy Programmes in the Arab Countries* (Cairo, 1975), p. 39. ARLO was set up within the Arab League for coordinating literacy policies. Figures of literacy for the 1960s are for people of ten years and above, except for Morocco and Iraq, as those figures are for people of 15 years and above. The figures of Oman and Yemen in the 1960s come from an unpublished report by Ya'qub Hürânî titled *Middle East Communications Consultation Nicosia 1970* (18 September 1970). Figures of the 1990s are for people over 15 years old. Figures of The World Bank's *World Development Report* (Washington, 1979), pp. 128-171, as cited by Saad Eddin Ibrahim, 'Oil, Migration and the New Arab Social Order', in Malcolm Kerr and El Sayed Yassin (eds), *Rich and Poor States in the Middle East, Egypt and the New Arab Order* (New York, 1982), pp. 60-61. See also 'CIA World Handbook 2002', on [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) (20 January 2003) and UNDP's *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, p. 151. UNDP's *Egypt: Human Development Report 2003* (Cairo, 2003), p. 23. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 233. Some information was received from Srdjan Mrkic, Editor of the *UN Demographic Yearbook (Demographic and Social Statistics Branch)* in an email to the author (12 December 2003). Population figures for 1950 and 1975 come from Klaus Schwab and Peter Cornelius (eds), *Arab World Competitiveness Report 2002-2003* (New York, 2003), p. 38. Figures for TV ownership in 1997 and the years of the beginnings of television services are based on Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, who cited BBC estimates for the number of TV sets in each country. The fast growth of the population in Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is due to the oil wealth of those nations since 1973. They began importing large numbers of manual laborers. As these countries, and especially Saudi Arabia, considered information on their population a matter of national security, official figures for their immigrant population are not always trustworthy. Many estimates assume that over half of the population of Saudi Arabia has been expatriates since 1973. Most of those are non-Arabs.

testant missionaries as Syrian Protestant College (SPC). In 1925, Cairo University became the first public university in the Arab World. Only in the 1950s and 1960s did other Arab countries start universities. In Egypt the number of university students rose from 42,000 in 1952 to 124,000 in 1965 to 500,000 in 1985, and most Arab countries saw a similar rapid growth in tertiary education.<sup>123</sup> In 1970 those of eligible age to qualify for tertiary education in the Arab World were only 4.1 percent of the population. That figure rose to 12.6 percent in 1990. *Figure 3.4* lists the tertiary enrollment in the Arab World as a percentage of those who could age-wise partake in tertiary education.<sup>124</sup>

The total figures for the gross enrollment ratios in primary, secondary and tertiary education in the Arab World from 1970-1990 are given in the *Figure 3.5*.<sup>125</sup> The differences between the enrollments in the individual countries in the Arab World were large, and in general the countries of North Africa were far behind the countries of the Middle East in developing their educational systems. In North Africa, Arab and Amazigh children did not go to Arab schools during the period of colonialism. The small numbers that were allowed to go to school went to French schools only. In 1954, on a population of ten million, only 7,000 Algerians were enrolled in secondary school and 600 were in university. There were of course more children in primary schools. The shock of independence was enormous. In 1962, 27,000 of 30,000 teachers left Algeria for France. Of the 20,000 new teachers that were hired, only 20 percent were formally qualified for the job.<sup>126</sup>

Egypt was a typical example of the educational situation of most Middle Eastern countries. After independence substantial money was spent to quickly expand education as literacy and good educational levels were seen as the route to national development. The number of secondary school students rose between 1952 and 1976 from 181,789 to 796,411, that is, by 14 percent per year. That was twice as fast as the growth of primary enrollment. Enrollment in universities grew during the same period by 32 percent per year. In 1998, 39 percent of Egyptians between 18 and 24 were involved in some form of tertiary education. 'None of this made educational or economic sense', according to the economists Alan Richards and John Waterbury. 'Degrees were debased; they no longer certified known skills or educational levels.'<sup>127</sup>

A major problem in comparing the figures for tertiary education in the Arab World is that for some countries, attaining high enrollment was so important for their international image, that the figures could not always be trusted. The quality of tertiary education also varied widely between Arab countries. In keeping with the fact that much of the research into literacy in the Arab World is politically sensitive and has not always been based on valid research, it seems justified to assume that the actual number of functionally literate Arabs was therefore lower than the figures indicated. As previously mentioned with respect to research into

<sup>123</sup> Richards and Waterbury, *A Political Economy*, p. 133. Ahmed Abdalla, *The Student Movement and National Politics in Egypt* (London, 1985), pp. 26, 102, 107-120.

<sup>124</sup> Information from [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) (8 June 2006).

<sup>125</sup> Figures from UNESCO's *World Education Report 1991* (Paris, 1991) and [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org).

<sup>126</sup> Richards and Waterbury, *A Political Economy*, pp. 114, 123.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

MSA proficiency, those who did not finish secondary school were usually unable to understand texts in MSA beyond very simple sentences and only those who finished tertiary education were usually proficient in MSA. This would seem to indicate that the number of Arabs that understood MSA by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was far below the official figures for literacy indicated.

### 3.6.2 Causes for Illiteracy and Suggested Solutions

The actual percentile increase in literacy across all Arab countries was the result of the increase in educational opportunities offered. The outdated teaching methods of Arabic in the schools and the general deterioration of education in primary and secondary schools in some of the largest Arab countries was an important reason why it was so hard for children to learn MSA properly. Many teachers themselves could not read and write Arabic very well. There were also very few good books for children available in Arabic. Beside that, outside the school children heard little MSA spoken, so it was also a second language to them. Most linguists agreed that this problem of *diglossia* was the main reason why it was hard to eradicate illiteracy in the Arab World.<sup>128</sup> In order to overcome this problem, some radical proposals have been put forward.

The Lebanese Maronite Anis Frayḥah of AUB came with the most daring proposals for Arabic language reforms in the 1950s. He approached the matter from a descriptive viewpoint instead of the traditional prescriptive attitude. Frayḥah proposed a Pan-Arabic MSA as close as could be to the different colloquial dialects, as the literary medium. He also suggested *Romanizing* the script, as had been done very successfully in Turkey since the 1920s. His proposal was not well received.<sup>129</sup> Although until the 1950s the idea of using colloquial Arabic for literacy had sometimes been advocated in Egypt, it has not been strongly defended since then.<sup>130</sup>

In 1998, Maamouri reopened the discussion in defense of the idea of beginning the educational process for young children with reading and writing in colloquial Arabic as the best way to teach literacy. At the Mediterranean Development Forum in Marrakesh (Morocco) he advised Arab states not to wait until there was a Pan-Arab agreement on this. He considered the actual differences in MSA in the Arab countries an advantage for this approach. He challenged Morocco to take the lead, 'irrespective of what the other Arab countries are doing'.<sup>131</sup> Maamouri re-

<sup>128</sup> Bateson, *Arabic Language Handbook*, p. 83. Nabil M. S. Abdelfattah, 'Reflections on the Sociolinguistic Force of Journalism in the Process of Language Development in Egypt', in Alaa Elgibali (ed.), *Understanding Arabic* (Cairo, 1996), p. 131, writes that the 'home is potentially detrimental to the linguistic growth of a child's MSA in view of the use of only the Colloquial dialects for communication there'.

<sup>129</sup> Maamouri, 'Language Education and Human Development', p. 53.

<sup>130</sup> The organization that has done most with colloquial Egyptian Arabic in literacy was the Adult Literacy Training Project, under the aegis of The Egyptian General Association of Literacy and Adult Education and the Egyptian British Training Project for Adult Literacy (through the British Council). They have published two books of colloquial stories authored by literacy students, called *Aswātnā* (Cairo, 2004). Literacy students were very happy with these books. Moyra Dale in an email to the author (30 May 2004).

<sup>131</sup> Maamouri, 'Language Education and Human Development', pp. 6, 58.

ferred to statements of King Ḥasan II who in 1994 advocated the usage of the dialects of Morocco in the first few years of education, and to writings of minister of national education Ismâ'îl al-'Alâwî, who in 1998 pointed to *diglossia* as an educational problem. Al-'Alâwî wanted to teach all Moroccans 'an improved Arabic [...] which is more elevated than the colloquial but which does not respect 100 percent of the *fusha* grammar rules'.<sup>132</sup>

	1990	1998	2002-3
Algeria	11	15	21
Bahrain	18	26	33
Egypt	16	39	29
Iraq	13	13	?
Jordan	16	?	35
Kuwait	0	21	?
Lebanon	29	38	44
Libya	15	57	58
Morocco	11	9	11
Oman	4	?	8
Qatar	22	26	22
KSA	12	19	25
Sudan	3	7	?
Syria	18	6	?
Tunisia	9	17	27
UAE	9	13	35
Yemen	4	10	?

Figure 3.4 Percentile Enrolment in Tertiary Education in the Arab World: 1990-2003

Maamouri's main fear was the 'growing use of colloquials in formal and non-formal education and in other numerous daily activities' with the role of MSA 'slowly diminishing', so that 'the next generation of Arabs would not be any more adept at using it than their parents'. He warned for the impact this might have on the future of Arab education.<sup>133</sup>

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	2002
Primary Education	62.5	73.1	79.9	81.8	83.4	94
Secondary Education	20.4	28.2	38.0	47.1	53.3	65
Tertiary Education	4.1	6.9	9.5	10.8	12.6	20

Figure 3.5 Total Educational Enrolment in the Arab World: 1970-2002

<sup>132</sup> Quote in Maamouri, 'Language Education and Human Development', p. 58.

<sup>133</sup> Maamouri, 'Language Education and Human Development', p. 68.

### 3.7 THE ARABIC LANGUAGE IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT

#### 3.7.1 High-Context Language

Hisham Sharabi, a Palestinian who taught European intellectual history and Arabic culture at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. (USA) between 1953 and 1998, observed that in 'political life Arabic is a most effective instrument of influence and persuasion.'<sup>134</sup> In those days he saw how the political speeches of Nâsir kept the Arab audiences spellbound. Boyd, when writing on the development of Arabic radio, said three decades later that 'Arabic [...] is in many ways ideally suited to radio broadcasts'. He wrote that the language was 'specifically designed to influence others because of its rich grammar, repetitive style, and vagueness. The Arabic speaker who seeks to persuade others uses appeals that are more emotional than logical.'<sup>135</sup>

In 1985 Shukrî 'Ayyâd, who taught Arabic literature at Cairo University, wrote about 'the contemporary Arab mind' and said that 'Arabs speak grandiose words which they have no intention of putting into deeds'. According to 'Ayyâd, the Arabic language was used in this way because 'Arabs, dissatisfied with their environment [...] are compelled to take refuge in some idealized image of themselves.'<sup>136</sup> In their usage of MSA they find that refuge, he argued, as the language evokes memories of a glorious past, both in religious and nationalist terms. Boyd likewise concluded that Arabs 'tend to use their language as a substitute for action.'<sup>137</sup> It is questionable whether generalizations of this sort are valid, as similar generalizations can be heard in most countries about politicians and their promises.

These rather negative ways of looking at the usage of speech by Arabs may possibly be due to a lack of understanding of the role of communication in its Arabic cultural context. The anthropologist Edward T. Hall spoke of *high-context* and *low-context* cultures; the difference between these cultures depends on how much meaning is found in the context versus the actual words that are used. Low-context cultures, such as the American culture, tend to place more meaning in the language code and very little meaning in the context. For this reason, communication tends to be specific, explicit, and analytical. Hall also stressed that in all communication, meaning and context are 'inextricably bound up with each other'.<sup>138</sup> Hall's views are confirmed in the Arabs' usage of language.

According to Rhonda S. Zaharna of the School of Communication at American University in Washington D.C., to understand the impact of the Arabic language,

<sup>134</sup> H. Sharabi, *Nationalism and Revolution in the Arab World* (Toronto, 1966), p. 93. Sharabi was a Palestinian intellectual who edited the scholarly *Journal of Palestine Studies*.

<sup>135</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 324. See also Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (Oxford, 1993, first edition 1958), p. 143, where Lewis speaks of Arabic literature 'where the impact of words and forms often counted for more than the transmission of ideas'.

<sup>136</sup> Shukry Ayyad and Nancy Witherspoon, *Reflections and Deflections; A Study of the Contemporary Arab Mind through its Literary Creations* (Giza, 1986), pp. 1-2.

<sup>137</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 322.

<sup>138</sup> Edward T. Hall, 'Context and meaning', in L. Samovar and R. Porter (eds), *Intercultural communication: A reader* (Wadsworth, 1982), p. 18.

it is important to use Hall's differentiation between high- and low-context cultures. She defined those concepts as follows:

In high-context cultures, such as the Arab culture, meaning rests primarily in the context. Most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person while very little information is transmitted in the message itself. As a result, in order to grasp the full meaning of a message, the listener must understand the contextual cues. [In] high-context cultures, more is expected of the listeners than in low-context cultures. [...] In other words, in high-context exchanges, much of the 'burden' of meaning appears to fall on the listener. In low-context cultures, the burden appears to fall on the speaker to accurately and thoroughly convey the meaning in her spoken or written message.<sup>139</sup>

Western audiences often find Arabic messages unclear or they misinterpreted them because the context of the message was not taken into consideration. This difference in cultural communication styles is part of the difficulties experienced in the ongoing political conversations between the Arab World and Western countries at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 3.7.2 *Emotive Power*

The correct usage of CA and MSA gives great prestige to those speaking it because it connects them to Islam and the classical heritage of the Arab World but also because the language alone has great emotive power over Arab audiences. Even many Arabs who do not understand CA or MSA, take pleasure in listening to it, if it is well delivered.

Many Arabs are convinced that by applying their language well, which includes a strong delivery, the spoken MSA's intrinsic beauty and power will produce the intended effect on the audience. According to Hitti, hardly any language is so 'capable of exercising over the minds of its users such irresistible influence as Arabic. The rhythm, the rhyme, the music produces in listeners the effect of what they call "lawful magic"'.<sup>140</sup> He also spoke about the 'sheer joy in the beauty and euphony of words' as a characteristic of the Arabs.<sup>141</sup> The melodious sounds of the phonetic combinations and plays on words in the recitation of Arabic prose and poetry have been likened to music.<sup>142</sup> Fathî seemed to agree to that. He described Arabic as a language that is not just a tool for communication but also an end in itself as people 'enjoy the Arabic language, its style, and the sound of the words and phrases'.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Rhonda S. Zaharna, 'Rhetorical Ethnocentrism: Understanding the Rhetorical Landscape of Arab-American Relations' in *Public Relations Review* (No. 21, 1995), pp. 241-255. The author of this study has often heard people from a European or North American background accuse Arabs of being 'liars'. This is usually a misunderstanding, as Western people often do not take the context of Arabic speech into consideration for interpreting the message.

<sup>140</sup> Hitti, *History*, p. 90.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 559.

<sup>142</sup> Zaharna, 'Rhetorical Ethnocentrism', pp. 241-255.

<sup>143</sup> Fathî, *Al-Idhâ'ât al-Miṣrīyah*, p. 113.



Especially the correct *tajwīd*, that is the art of ‘musical’ recitation of the *Qur’ān*, has great emotive power over many Muslims, irrespective of their understanding of the words.<sup>144</sup> The power of the Arabic language for Arabs is mainly derived from its religious association through the *Qur’ān*. For Muslims, the majesty of the language of the *Qur’ān* is considered a miracle from God as most believe that their prophet was illiterate and unschooled.

According to Parkinson, this exultation about Arabic as a beautiful language was mainly ideologically and religiously inspired. According to him, in reality ‘people feel cold about MSA. Arabs just don’t like MSA. It’s just a cold formal language to them, as it is not their mother tongue.’<sup>145</sup> He concluded that on radio, he would prefer ‘most programs to be in colloquial, just a few things in MSA, like sermons, but not even necessarily that. People have to feel at home in religious programs, and programs in colloquial have a homely message.’<sup>146</sup>

### 3.7.3 Locus of Power

The relationship of CA and MSA to Islam makes the formal literary forms of Arabic a locus of power. Those that teach the language derive power from their linguistic abilities, as they are the custodians of the language that mediates the message of God to the believers. The authority of MSA has, in consort with the language policies of most Arabic countries, created a sharp division between those that are able to use the language, and those that are not. It has also become a locus for the discrimination between Muslims and Christians, even though most Christian Arabs use the same language for communication. Teachers of Arabic are nearly always Muslims as language classes in schools throughout the Arab World are to a great extent classes that study ancient Islamic texts. As Arabic is seen as the heritage of Islam, Christian Arabs are thereby to some extent relegated to second class citizens in the states that define citizenship, among other things, in terms of being users of the Arabic language.<sup>147</sup>

The guardians of the proper usage of Arabic play an important role in the Arab World. Even presidents and kings of Arab countries submit their public texts to the *savants* of the Arabic language before they are spoken or published. This has meant that what presidents and kings could have expressed in terms that were intelligible to the average person, was usually changed into a message for the intellectual elite. This reaffirms the continuing strict division within the social strata of Arab society.<sup>148</sup>

There is also a clear association of the Arabic language with contemporary nationalism. This is described well by Zaharna:

<sup>144</sup> See for instance Kristina Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qur’an* (Cairo, 2001). This book describes in detail the styles of *tajwīd* and the impact it has on the Arabic audience.

<sup>145</sup> Parkinson in an interview with the author (13 October 2004).

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Haeri, *Sacred Language, Ordinary People*, pp. 47-49, 65. See in this context also Maamouri, ‘Language Education and Human Development’, p. 21: ‘The transferability of literacy competency was limited to religious forms of learning within an attitude of strict adherence to the Arabic standard of the Quran, the privileged medium of Islamic instruction.’

<sup>148</sup> Haeri, *Sacred Language, Ordinary People*, p. 72.

[Many] throughout the Arab World have defined an Arab as anyone who speaks Arabic. [The] language became the driving force behind Arab aspirations toward national and cultural ascendancy. As such, both Arabic and the nationalist movement have complemented each other to such a degree that they could hardly be separated.<sup>149</sup>

This connection is confirmed the fact that before Nâsir, there was more emphasis on colloquial dialects in the Arab World and on national culture, but that Nâsir promoted MSA 'as a tool for the political movement', to use words of Fathî.<sup>150</sup>

This appropriation of the Arabic language by the nationalist movements was exemplified in how most Arab states set up formal institutes to guard the Arabic languages. These institutes became powerful brokers in the development of education. By doing so, the Arab states tried to make themselves the repositories of linguistic and social power instead of the Islamic institutes like the Azhar University in Cairo, and the local *kuttâb* (*Qur'ân* schools for children), that had traditionally played that role.

### 3.8 FINAL OBSERVATIONS

All radio broadcasters in the Arab World, including the Christian ones, are forced to make important decisions in their choice of languages for their broadcasts. CA was to a large extent the creation of Islam, and its importance is closely linked to the fact that it is the language of the *Qur'ân*. The same is true, though to a lesser extent, for MSA, the modernized version of CA. This official language of literacy in all Arab countries since their independence is not only linked to Islam, but also to Pan-Arabism and the dictatorial regimes of the Arab World. Those who want to present the Christian witness on radio in the Arab World need to question the wisdom of using this formal language as the basis for their communication. Equally however, producers should be wise enough to use MSA in broadcasts to show that they are able to use it well. It is proposed that in doing so producers would establish their intellectual credentials and emphasize the usage of the vernacular in their programs as a purposeful choice.

During the late 1950s and 1960s, when many young people were students and enthusiastic followers of Pan-Arab ideals, many liked to be addressed in MSA as it confirmed their political preferences and world views as well as likewise showing their educational progress. These people formed a small minority and it can be argued that even for these young people their actual identity was better defined by their mother tongue than by the language they preferred to be addressed in.

MSA is no-one's mother tongue. All inhabitants of the Arab World speak different national or regional Arabic colloquial languages or even entirely non-Arabic ones. This situation of *diglossia* is an important reason for the difficulty to eradicate illiteracy. Illiterate people cannot read and write MSA, and they also cannot understand its oral usage. The literacy figures cited previously therefore give a

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<sup>149</sup> Fathî, *Al-Idhâ'ât al-Miṣrîyah*, p. 113.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

good indication of how many Arabs can probably understand MSA when used on radio.

The official literacy figures of many Arab countries are inflated. In order to have a realistic idea of how many Arabs are able to use MSA with a level of proficiency for literate and oral communication, it is best to use the figures for enrollment in tertiary education in the Arab World. This means that during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, maybe ten percent of the adult population of the Arab World was able to comprehend serious radio programs in MSA. If the vocabulary and the sentence structure were very simple, that percentage would be somewhat higher. For a Christian Arab witness on radio, this suggests the need to mostly use the vernaculars of the Arab World.

People's vernacular is very important. It is their tool to express themselves. Their identity is inextricably bound up with the language they use. Radio that wants to affirm any people groups' values, cultures and identities must use their vernacular in communicating with them, not only in drama programs or entertainment, but also in serious programs like religious programs and news broadcasts. People with a strong sense of pride in their vernacular are less likely to be impressed by their government and Islamic leadership. These groups tend to look down on people who do not use MSA and they exclude them and their languages from serious programs in the media.

The non-Arabic minority languages are often more suppressed in the Arab World than colloquial Arabic. From the perspective of the Islamic and political leaders, these languages are symbols of unfinished Islamization and Arabization. Any radio broadcasts in those languages are assured of attentive audiences due to their rarity value. Moreover, these broadcasts are important as symbols of the linguistic right of these people to have media in their languages.

Egyptian colloquial Arabic is spoken by over 46 million Egyptians and understood by almost 19 million other Egyptians, beside tens of millions of other Arabs. Since the 1950s, Egyptian Arabic has impacted the Arab World through the role of Egyptian media and teachers and therefore, outside Egypt many others also understand Egyptian Arabic reasonably well. However, this matter should not be exaggerated. Most non-Egyptian Arabs do not understand serious Egyptian speech.

The disadvantage of using Egyptian Arabic for non-Egyptians is that it is not their native tongue. Egyptian Arabic is also often disliked in other Arab countries because of Egypt's role in the Arab World both due to its size and because it sent out large numbers of teachers, white-collar workers and manual laborers throughout the Arab World. It is notable however that the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century seems to be witnessing Lebanese Arabic taking over the preponderant role of Egyptian Arabic in the transnational electronic media.

According to the expressed goals of the Wb2000 as initiated in 1985, toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there should have been Christian broadcasts of 30 minutes per day in 17 Arabic vernaculars and six non-Arabic languages spoken in the Arabic World. This was based on there being 23 languages spoken as a mother tongue by over one million people.

Bible translations in the languages of people groups are a foundational part of the Christian witness. These are only available to a limited extent in the Arab

World. There are different translations of the whole Bible on the language continuum from CA to MSA, but translations that are closer to the vernaculars of the people are not available. The cultural elites in the Arab World, including the Christian elites, may consider translations that are closer to the vernacular unwanted, but these translations make the witness of the Scriptures understandable for the majority of the population that is not literate in MSA. The absence of the whole Bible in the languages of speakers of non-Arabic languages is even more problematic.

## 4 The Arab World: Christianity

Some knowledge of the history of the Churches of the Arab World is important for understanding and assessing the role of Protestant Arab radio during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Early Church history of the Middle East has an additional relevance as it formed an important part of the environment Islam reacted to during its initial development. An introduction to Pre-Islamic Christianity in the Arabian Peninsula has been given in chapter 2 as a background to the development of Islam, so that will not be repeated here. The Armenian Church has not been treated in this chapter as it was mainly based in Armenia and as it never had large numbers of adherents in the Arab World.

This chapter first introduces the unity and variety of the Churches with a focus on the theological discourse that led to the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) and the related schisms in the Church. It also treats the schism between the Greek-Orthodox and the Roman-Catholic Church.

Then, the Churches that were founded before the coming of Islam, the Greek-Orthodox Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, the Coptic-Orthodox Church and the Syriac-Orthodox Church are reviewed. After this, the Churches related to Rome are described, as well as the Protestant Churches that were founded after the coming of Protestant missionaries during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

To conclude this chapter, the life of Christians as minority groups in the Arab World is described. The contemporary efforts to strengthen their Christian witness through increased unity is also outlined, including the development of the Ecumenical Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). The chapter closes with some final observations.

### 4.1 UNITY AND VARIETY OF CHURCHES

#### 4.1.1 *The Five Patriarchates in Early Christianity*

During the fourth century, the Christian faith had important centers in the parts of the Roman Empire that would later be Arabized. On the north coast of Africa, Christianity was very popular, especially in Alexandria (Egypt) and in Carthage (in present Tunisia) and its coastal environs. It seems that in North Africa west of Egypt, Christianity was to a large extent the religion of the Roman colonizers with Latin as its vernacular, though the later Donatist controversies suggest that there was also an indigenous Christian Church that used the local Amazigh languages.<sup>1</sup>

In Egypt the faith was indigenized as it was not only adopted by the Hellenized elites, but also by the Coptic peasants who formed the bulk of the population. Egypt had seen rather intense periods of persecution of Christians, especially dur-

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 1: *The First Five Centuries; to 500 AD* (Grand Rapids, 1976, first edition 1956), pp. 87, 102-104.

ing the years of 281-311 when the anti-Christian policies of Emperor Diocletian were notorious. His persecutions should be seen as part of his efforts to restore the unity of the Roman state, whose religious cohesion was considered under threat from the fast growth of the Christian faith.<sup>2</sup>

Antioch was another important center of Christianity. From there, the faith radiated out across the rest of Syria. Antioch was a Greek city, but its *hinterland* in Syria had large numbers of Syriac Christians who looked mostly to Edessa, a center of Syriac Christianity outside the Roman Empire, for religious leadership.<sup>3</sup> Edessa fell formally under the ecclesiastical sway of Antioch. It played an important role in disseminating Christianity in Mesopotamia, the Semitic Western part of the Persian Empire. Christians were found throughout this realm although their number was not as large as in the Roman Empire.<sup>4</sup>

In the year 312 Constantine wanted to conquer the city of Rome in order to become the emperor of the western half of the Roman Empire. He tied his imperial ambitions to worship of the God of the Christians. Constantine seems to have believed that this worship would strengthen him as well as the unity of the Roman Empire. In line with the beliefs of the pagan emperors before him, he and his Christian successors believed that in order to ensure that God would protect the Empire's borders and unity they were obliged to protect the unity of God's worship. Therefore the Roman state came to play an important role in the life of the Church.<sup>5</sup> This development led eventually to Christianity being made into the religion of the state in 380, to persecution of adherents of other religions, and also to the interference of emperors in theological and juridical disputes within the Church.<sup>6</sup>

By the time Constantine made Christianity into the preferred religion of the Roman Empire, the Church had a well developed organizational structure. Most important was that the churches in the metropolitan cities Alexandria, Antioch, Rome and Constantinople each had one presiding bishop, with jurisdiction over all churches in those cities and their *hinterland*. These metropolitan bishops, with the bishops and other clergy under them, avoided interfering in each other's territories.

As Constantine wanted to unify the churches and force them to solve some of their conflicts, he called the patriarchs and their bishops from all over the Empire to Nicea, close to Constantinople, in 325. At what would come to be called the *First Ecumenical Council of Nicea*, more than 250 bishops gathered from all over the Christian world, but mostly from the East. With regard to Church polity, they agreed to the following:

<sup>2</sup> M. Forlin Patrucco, 'Diocletian', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. I (Cambridge, 1992), p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> Syriac (Suryâyâ) is an Eastern Aramaic language that was once used across the Middle East as a major literary language from the second to the eighth century. At its broadest definition, Syriac is used to refer to all Eastern Aramaic languages spoken by various Christian groups; more specifically, it refers to the classical language of Edessa, which became the liturgical language of Syriac Christianity.

<sup>4</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 1, pp. 91-93.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. J. Roldanus, 'Ontwikkeling van het christendom in het oostelijk Middellandse Zeegebied tot aan het Concilie van Chalcedon', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), pp. 3-5.

<sup>6</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 1, p. 181.

Let the ancient customs in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis prevail, that the bishop of Alexandria have jurisdiction in all these, since the like is customary for the bishop of Rome also. Likewise in Antioch and the other provinces, let the Churches retain their privileges.<sup>7</sup>

The same Council also agreed that ‘since custom and ancient tradition have prevailed that the bishop of Aelia [Jerusalem] should be honoured [and] have the next place of honour.’<sup>8</sup> Jerusalem was initially not recognized as a patriarchate, as it fell under the patriarch of Caesarea. Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem succeeded after much dispute, in changing this honorary position into a real patriarchate. That was agreed to at the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon. Since that time Jerusalem has always been counted among the patriarchal sees as the smallest and last. At that Council, the gathered bishops also agreed:

The city which was honored with the sovereignty and the senate [i.e., Constantinople, ‘the New Rome’], and which enjoys equal privileges with the old imperial Rome, should in ecclesiastical matters be as she is, and rank next after her.<sup>9</sup>

This decision lowered Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem in the hierarchy of Churches.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the vast majority of church leaders and Christians in those patriarchates rejected the theological decisions of Chalcedon may be seen in this light. According to Aziz S. Atiya, a Coptic-Orthodox historian of the Churches of the Arab World, the ‘Alexandrines were used to having their way, and would not be governed by the Council’.<sup>11</sup> There is no indication that the sequence of honor in ecclesiastical matters of the five patriarchates had juridical implications, as Rome would later claim.<sup>12</sup>

Of the five historic patriarchates, only Rome was based in a land that would continue to respect its liberty. The patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem would within two centuries after Chalcedon fall under Arab domination, while Constantinople enjoyed another millennium of freedom until it fell under Ottoman rule. For the historic Churches in the realm of what later became the Arab World, the Ecumenical decisions about how the Church was to be ruled were very important; they would continue to be the framework for how the Churches in the Arab World dealt with each other and with the Churches of Rome and Constantinople.

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<sup>7</sup> Canon VI of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea, in Henry R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church; Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees* (Edinburgh, Grand Rapids, 1988, first edition 1899), p. 15. This is Vol. XIV of Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series (Grand Rapids, Edinburgh, 1988, first edition 1899).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17. This is Canon VII.

<sup>9</sup> Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, p. 287.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Aziz S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (Millwood, 1991, first edition 1967), p. 58.

<sup>12</sup> The Roman Pope Leo the Great (440-61) refused to admit this canon that lifted Constantinople to a place under Rome, as it was made in the absence of his legates. It was not until the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) that the Latin patriarch of Constantinople was allowed this place; in 1439 the Council of Ferrara-Florence finally recognized the position for the Greek patriarch.

#### 4.1.2 Theological and Christological Definitions and Disputes

##### 4.1.2.1 Ecumenical Councils of Nicea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon: 325-451

The main theological disputes during the fourth and fifth century were about the relationship between God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, as well as about how the divine and the human nature of Christ were related to each other. These theological differences were often aggravated because of the different languages used in theology and in the liturgy. Churches used Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Syriac for their Church worship. This linguistic difference went along with a sense of uniqueness attached to that language and to a shared past.

The Emperors played an important role in how theological orthodoxy was defined. At the First Ecumenical Council in Nicea, the Church responded to teachings that were popularized by Arius, a priest from Alexandria. He preached that the divine Spirit that descended on the man Jesus had been created *in time* by God. Therefore, Jesus himself was not equal to God.<sup>13</sup> His main contender was Athanasius, an Egyptian monk who later became the patriarch of Alexandria. That city was the main center for learning in Christianity, which made the theological disputes immediately important for the whole Church. The bishops in Nicea took the side of Athanasius.<sup>14</sup> They decided that Orthodox Christianity should confess:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father. By whom all things were made, both which be in heaven and in earth. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down [from heaven], and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day He rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead. And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost. And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence [from the Father] or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion, - all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.<sup>15</sup>

The disputes about Arianism continued however with some of the emperors in Constantinople, the actual capital of the Roman Empire after 330, supporting the pro-Arian party. This turmoil was evident in Athanasius' fate in being exiled five times from his patriarchal See in Alexandria. One of the side effects during this time was that he introduced the monastic concept into Europe while exiled in Italy

<sup>13</sup> Roldanus, 'Ontwikkeling van het christendom in het oostelijk Middellandse Zeegebied tot aan het Concilie van Chalcedon', p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 39-45. M. Simonetti, 'Arius, Arians, Arianism', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. I (Cambridge, 1992), p. 77.

<sup>15</sup> Found in the Acts of the Ecumenical Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, in the *Epistle of Eusebius of Caesarea* to his own Church, in the *Epistle of St. Athanasius* and elsewhere, with some minor variations. This version is given in Henry R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church; Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees*, p. 3.



(339-346).<sup>16</sup> The Arian issue was settled for good at the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381). There, the bishops affirmed the Athanasian Creed with some minor adaptations. They underlined that Christianity teaches that the Holy Spirit is, like the Son, of *one substance* with God the Father.<sup>17</sup> The following Creed was agreed to:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father. By whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead. Whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver-of-Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.

And [we believe] in one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, [and] we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.<sup>18</sup>

The confessions of Nicea and Constantinople were adhered to by the vast majority of all Christians, both inside and outside the Roman Empire. This formally ended the period of disputes about Trinitarian matters but discussion about the nature of Christ now became acute: If Jesus was truly God, how did that relate to his humanity? During the first half of the fifth century, patriarch Kyrollos (Saint Cyril) of Alexandria stressed the unity of the nature of Christ. He spoke of the *one nature (mia physis)* of Christ, as his divine nature fully permeated his human nature.<sup>19</sup> The reality of the human nature of Christ was not denied, but it was compared to a drop of water in the ocean of his divinity. It is hard to not conclude that this approach led to a focus on the divine nature of Christ, though the present followers of Kyrollos, the Coptic-Orthodox, stress that the word *mia* should not be thought to mean *single one* but *unity out of two natures*. Hence it is better to call them *Miaphysites* than *Monophysites*. The Coptic-Orthodox reject that latter designation.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 45.

<sup>17</sup> Roldanus, 'Ontwikkeling van het christendom in het oostelijk Middellandse Zeegebied tot aan het Concilie van Chalcedon', p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> Parcival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, p.163.

<sup>19</sup> Roldanus, 'Ontwikkeling van het christendom in het oostelijk Middellandse Zeegebied tot aan het Concilie van Chalcedon', p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> See for instance the book by the Coptic-Orthodox priest, Tadros Y. Malaty, *Introduction to the Coptic-Orthodox Church* (Alexandria, 1993), pp. 73-74. The book is available on [www.stfrancismagazine.info](http://www.stfrancismagazine.info) (12 February 2007). Malaty writes: 'Jesus is at once God and man (Incarnate God)'. Malaty, *Introduction to the Coptic-Orthodox Church*, p. 74.

Kyrollos and his theologians developed their theology in interaction with a competing theological movement that arose in Antioch. Theodorus of Mopsuestia was its main thinker, but his Syrian student Nestorius became the best-known spokesman for this movement. He taught that the Virgin Mary gave birth to a man, not to God. The divine nature of Jesus only dwelled in him as in a temple. Nestorius and his followers stressed the distinction between the two natures of Christ and that there was no fusion between the two natures, which they accused the Alexandrians of teaching. Rather, they believed that by his human *will* Jesus obeyed the divine nature that lived in him.<sup>21</sup>

When Nestorius became patriarch of Constantinople in 428, he began to attack the Alexandrian theologians for believing that Jesus had one single nature. That led to an exchange of letters between Nestorius and Kyrollos, and eventually to the convocation of the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431) where the ideas of Nestorius were discussed by over 200 bishops. In a series of *anathemas* written by Kyrollos, the Council denounced Nestorius' teachings as erroneous. It decreed that Jesus Christ was completely God and completely man, and that there was a union of the two natures of Christ, in such a fashion that one did not disturb the other. The Virgin Mary gave birth to God who became man, so she could be called *Theotokos* (God-carrying). The Council stressed that the Creed as agreed to at the Council of Constantinople fifty years earlier was complete, binding and unchangeable. Nestorius was deposed and withdrew to a monastery close to Antioch.<sup>22</sup>

After Kyrollos' death in 444, Patriarch Dioskoros of Alexandria and Eutyches, leader of a monastery in Constantinople, proclaimed the radical view that Christ had only a divine nature. The patriarch of Constantinople condemned this and looked for theological support. He received help from Pope Leo the Great, patriarch of Rome. In 451 this led to the convocation of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, where over 600 Bishops congregated. Dioskoros was not given a hearing and his theological views were anathematized. Dioskoros and Eutyches were branded as *Monophysites* ('one-naturists') by their enemies.<sup>23</sup> Dioskoros died three years later in exile in Asia Minor. He became venerated as a saint by the Copts. The council proclaimed that Christ has two complete natures: the divine and the human:

Following the holy Fathers we teach with one voice that the Son [of God] and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same [Person], that he is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man, of a reasonable soul and [human] body consisting, consubstantial with the Father as touching his Godhead, and consubstantial with us as touching his manhood; made in all things like unto us, sin excepted; begotten of his Father before the worlds according to his Godhead; but in these last days for us men and for our salvation born [into the world] of the Virgin Mary, the God-Bearer according to his manhood. This one

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<sup>21</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 46-48.

<sup>22</sup> M. Simonetti, 'Ephesus, II. Councils', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. I (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 275-276.

<sup>23</sup> Roldanus, 'Ontwikkeling van het christendom in het oostelijk Middellandse Zeegebied tot aan het Concilie van Chalcedon', pp. 13-16.

and the same Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son [of God] must be confessed to be in two natures, unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly.<sup>24</sup>

This confession seems to have been an effort to find a middle way between Miaphysitism and Nestorianism, but it pleased neither party. Most ‘heretics’ did not repent. The precise definition of what was considered orthodoxy at Chalcedon, supported by many churches and by the Roman state, initiated the formalization of two dissident Churches beside the Church that was supported by the state. This process was not linear, as different emperors and Church leaders tried at times to work towards unity by conciliatory statements and actions.

It is noteworthy that during the fourth and fifth century, the Christian Arabs in Palestine followed the Chalcedonian faith. According to Theresia Hainthaler, the Arabic bishops were initially supportive of the Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4.1.2.2 Nestorians

The coming to power of the Sāsānid rulers of Persia during the first half of the third century, just when Christianity began to spread rapidly, hampered the growth of the Churches in Persia. The Sāsānids leaned heavily on Zoroastrism, a religion that experienced a revival and that had strong priestly leadership with great powers over the Persian population and its rulers.<sup>26</sup> It is probably no coincidence that these Sāsānid leaders began persecuting the Christians in Persia after the Roman Empire, its archenemy, adopted Christianity as its favored religion. Emperor Constantine considered himself a protector for Christians in Persia, and wrote to King Sapor II of Persia that he should protect the Church in Persia. This added to the reasons for Sapor II to think that the Christians in his lands were in fact a fifth column and supporters of Rome.<sup>27</sup>

In 410, a synod was held by the Persian churches in Ctesifon, the Persian capital and its most important bishopric. The bishops adopted the Nicene Creed, but the subsequent decisions of Ephesus were not accepted. Many Nestorians escaped to the Persian Empire after the verdict of Ephesus, and among them were their main theologians from the schools in Antioch and Edessa. Many went to the city of Nisibis, a center for theological learning.

Nisibis, the present city Nusaybin in southeastern Turkey, had been a mostly Greek city in the Roman Empire. During the fourth century bishop Mar Yaḳûb had founded a theological school there. Persia however conquered the city in 363, resulting in the flight of the Greek population. Persia then populated the city with 12,000 Persians.<sup>28</sup> During the fifth century, metropolitan Barsawma of Nisibis revived the theological school. Barsawma and the school played an important role in the fast spread of Nestorian ideas and the formal adoption of these views by the

<sup>24</sup> Parcival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, p. 264.

<sup>25</sup> Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam* (Leuven, 2007), p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 1, p. 227.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228. Roldanus, ‘Ontwikkeling van het christendom in het oostelijk Middellandse Zeegebied tot aan het Concilie van Chalcedon’, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> R. Lavenant, ‘Nisibis’, in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. II (Cambridge, 1992), p. 598.

Christians in Persia. The fact that these ideas were condemned by the Roman Empire may have helped their acceptance among the Christians in Persia. Barsawma also founded a hospital where the physicians of Nisibis were trained. This institute later had great influence in the Persian and the caliphal courts.<sup>29</sup>

After the Nestorians were condemned at Ephesus, Nestorian Christians in Persia were no longer actively persecuted though they continued to be treated as second-rate citizens. Their relative freedom was comparable to how early Islam treated its Christian minorities. In schools and monasteries the Nestorian Church, which presently prefers to be named *Assyrian Church of the East* (Assyrians), developed its own impressive culture and it played an important role as the mediator of Greek learning. During the fifth and sixth century, this Church expanded quickly throughout Persia and eastward. The Christian Arabs in the Persian realms tended to opt for the Nestorian faith; both al-Ḥīrah and the eastern parts of the Arabian Peninsula had many Nestorian churches. Najrān was probably also a Nestorian center, influenced from Persia.<sup>30</sup> The formal language used in the Nestorian Church was Syriac, the language of culture in Syria and Iraq where the Church was initially mostly found. Many adherents of the Persian state religion, Zoroastrism, converted and gave the Church a more Persian character.<sup>31</sup>

Toward the end of the sixth century, Assyrian Christology was finalized by its greatest theologian, abbot Mar Babai the Great (569-628) of the Monastery of Mount Izla. His words were incorporated into important parts of the Assyrian liturgy and are still in use today in the Assyrian Church:

One is Christ the Son of God, worshipped by all in two natures. In his Godhead begotten of the Father without beginning before all time; in his manhood born of Mary, in the fullness of time, in a united body. Neither his godhead was of the nature of the mother, nor his manhood of the nature of the Father. The natures are preserved in their *qnume* in one person of one Sonship.<sup>32</sup>

During the same period, Khosraws II came to power in Persia with the assistance of the Roman Empire. This, and the fact that he had a Syriac-Orthodox wife, was why he was initially favorable toward the Syriac-Orthodox Church. His hostility towards the Assyrians resulted from their patriarch having sided with his rival in the struggle for succession. After Khosraws II was defeated by Heraclius in 630, he turned against *all* Christians in his Empire.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Lucas van Rompay, 'Opkomst en groei van onafhankelijke volkskerken in het Oosten tot aan de Arabisch-islamitische veroveringen (451-461)', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), p. 19. These Nestorian Churches in Persia have become known as the Church of the East, Nestorian Church, Persian Church, East Syrian Church, Chaldean Syrian Church (in India only), Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, and as the Assyrian Church of the East.

<sup>30</sup> Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam* (Leuven, 2007), pp. 110, 136.

<sup>31</sup> Van Rompay, 'Opkomst en groei van onafhankelijke volkskerken in het Oosten tot aan de Arabisch-islamitische veroveringen (451-461)', p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 254. The Syriac term *qnume* has been the subject for a wealth of literature. Its probable meaning is *hypostasis* (Greek), or underlying substance.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2: *The Thousand Years of Uncertainty; 500 AD to 1500 AD* (Grand Rapids, 1976, first edition 1956), pp. 269-270.

#### 4.1.2.3 Miaphysites

Egyptian Christians turned in large numbers against the decisions of Chalcedon, which they saw as treason against the Council of Ephesus and against their popular patriarch, Kyrollos. Patriarch Dioskoros was banned and in his place Proterios was appointed by the Council of Chalcedon. He was murdered by an Egyptian mob in 457.

During the two centuries until the Islamic conquest of Egypt, there were usually two contending patriarchs in Egypt. The Coptic patriarch could generally count on the support of the population while the patriarch who followed the decisions of Chalcedon had the advantage of the military support of the Roman state troops. Those who followed Chalcedon were called *Melkites*, (Syriac for *royalists*, i.e., followers of the Roman emperor in Constantinople) by their enemies.

According to Atiya, 'the Copts became acrimoniously self-centred in their own religious nationalism' during these centuries.<sup>34</sup> Atiya's usage of the term *nationalism* for the Coptic sentiments of the fifth century is an anachronism. It seems true, however, that the Copts had already developed enough of their own identity to not be willing to accept dictates from distant bishops from other cultures. Part of the unique Coptic identity was its attachment to the story of the visit of the Holy Family to Egypt, the belief that the Apostle Mark was the founder of the Coptic Church, and the usage of the Coptic language in the liturgy. The severe persecutions suffered by the Copts during the third and early fourth century from the pagan Roman state, and then again during the fifth and sixth century from the Christian Roman state, strengthened their sense of uniqueness. Pride in hosting the influential Catechetical School of Alexandria also played a role in building the Coptic identity.<sup>35</sup>

Emperor Justinian (527-565) played an important role in tying the Roman Empire and its Church together. He built the Hagia Sophia Church beside his palace, symbolizing his conviction that state and Church should serve each other.<sup>36</sup> He was able to create a long-lasting peace arrangement with Persia and in so doing secured peace in the eastern half of the Roman Empire. It was this peace that then enabled him to reclaim North Africa from the Arian Vandals, Italy from the Arian Ostrogoths, and his armies also occupied southeast Spain. The Mediterranean Sea once more became a Roman lake.<sup>37</sup>

Justinian is also known for having closed the pagan school of philosophy in Athens, for curtailing the activities of Jews, and for allowing the assets of those

<sup>34</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen J. Davis describes the relationship of the Copts and the Chalcedonian State Church as the relationship of the colonized and the colonizers. He shows how the Copts saw the Chalcedonian Church leadership in Alexandria increasingly as 'foreigners', though he also underlines that to speak of Coptic nationalism would be an anachronism. See Stephen J. Davis, *The Early Coptic Papacy; The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity* (Cairo, New York, 2004), pp. 87, 120-121.

<sup>36</sup> A century later, in 655, Emperor Constans II punished Maxim the Confessor for defending the idea that the emperors could not also be priests. His right hand and his tongue were cut off. See Adelbert Davids, 'De Kerk van Byzantium', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> J. Irmscher, 'Justinian', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. I (Cambridge, 1992), p. 464.

who resisted baptism to be confiscated. During his reign, the majority of people living in the Middle East and North Africa came to profess the Christian faith even though by the end of the sixth century the Semitic cults in the Middle East were still strong. Even in the Christian center of Antioch paganism still had a titular head during the last quarter of the sixth century.<sup>38</sup> According to Church historian Kenneth S. Latourette, 'conversion [...] must for many have been recent or superficial when the Moslem invasion overwhelmed the land and led to defections to Islam'.<sup>39</sup>

Justinian endeavored to unify all Christians under one theology, both by proposing theological formulas for reconciling the different viewpoints, and by using force against the Miaphysites. His theological proposals for bringing the Miaphysites back into the Church of the state were not accepted. His efforts were a result of the common view that one united Church would mean a strong nation. Justinian's wife Theodora was a Miaphysite.<sup>40</sup> She was known as a supporter of the proclamation of that persuasion throughout the Empire and she tried to stop its persecution.<sup>41</sup>

In 541, Justinian forcefully replaced the Alexandrian Miaphysite Patriarch Theodosius with Apollinarius, a staunch supporter of Chalcedon. He also gave this patriarch prefectural military powers as well as the right to collect taxes for the upkeep of the churches. These powers enabled the Chalcedonian hierarchy to enforce its policies to persecute the Miaphysite Christians of Egypt, who defiantly stuck to their own hierarchy of leaders.<sup>42</sup>

Justinian was more successful in Syria than in Egypt. Whereas Egypt formed a geographic unity with a united population, Syria did not. Both the Chalcedonian and the Miaphysite branches of the Christian faith had large numbers of adherents, bishops and monasteries in Syria during the fifth century. As there was no unified 'national' resistance against Roman actions as in Egypt, Justinian was able to have Miaphysite bishops and monks replaced by Chalcedonians all over Syria, without a similarly strong development of an alternative Miaphysite hierarchy.

The Arabs inside the Roman provinces tended to be Chalcedonians. Outside the Byzantine Empire, they were mostly Nestorians or Miaphysites. Many Arabs greatly admired the many saintly Miaphysite monks who had fled from the realm of the Byzantine Emperor.<sup>43</sup> King Hārith II of the Arabic Ghassānid buffer state between the Byzantines and the Persians is said to have asked Justinian's wife Theodora to ensure that some Miaphysite bishops would be installed for serving the Ghassānid churches. It is interesting that Justinian went along, possibly because he needed the Ghassānids good services against Persia. The first two bish-

<sup>38</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 1, pp. 192-193.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>40</sup> Theodora was born in Constantinople but left for North Africa as a young woman. She is said to have been an actress and courtesan there, but through some Monophysites whom she met in the Middle East, she was converted. She then returned to Constantinople. J. Irmscher, 'Theodora', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. II (Cambridge, 1992), p. 822.

<sup>41</sup> Davids, 'De Kerk van Byzantium', p. 173. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 73.

<sup>42</sup> Van Rompay, 'Opkomst en groei van onafhankelijke volkskerken in het Oosten tot aan de Arabisch-islamitische veroveringen (451-461)', pp. 24-26. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 74.

<sup>43</sup> Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam* (Leuven, 2007), pp. 79-80.

ops were installed in 542. These were the Syrian Ya'qûb al-Barda'î and an Arab monk Sarjis.<sup>44</sup>

Al-Barda'î was very effective and injected new life into Syrian Miaphysitism, to give it its permanence. He was an intellectual, fluent in Greek, Arabic and Syriac, and during his episcopate he is said to have consecrated over one thousand priests and at least 27 bishops, among whom two would become patriarchs. He traveled discreetly throughout the Middle East under cover of a simple horse blanket (Syriac: *burd'ô*). His followers have often been called Jacobites, but this name is presently rejected by the Church that prefers to refer to itself as Syriac-Orthodox.<sup>45</sup>

As the Miaphysites were persecuted in the Roman Empire, many found safe haven in Mesopotamia. Persia recognized the Syriac-Orthodox alongside the Assyrians as a distinct religious community. Their followers spread widely, though they were never as numerous as the Assyrian communities. The Ethiopians impact on Yemen since the sixth century, was also supportive of the Miaphysite faith.<sup>46</sup>

It is impossible to say when exactly the division between the Chalcedonian leadership and the Miaphysites became permanent. Until late in the sixth century, the Miaphysites considered themselves loyal citizens of the Empire, and they assumed the emperor and Church leadership in Constantinople would eventually adopt their viewpoints. However, the persecutions during the sixth century continued to widen the chasm between the Chalcedonians and the Miaphysites. Another difference that increased the separation was that in Syria the Miaphysite Church used Syriac as the main language and in Egypt it used Coptic, while the Chalcedonian Church used mostly Greek and Latin. In the Miaphysite Churches, Arabs and Egyptians regularly occupied important positions. This unique identity, that included the commemoration of the victims of state persecution who were seen as martyrs, gradually made the divisions insurmountable.<sup>47</sup>

Between 604 and 620, Persia conquered almost all Middle Eastern parts of the Roman Empire, including Egypt, so that the patriarch in Constantinople lost touch with his Church in those lands. Chalcedonian churches and monasteries went through intense suffering as a result of their bishops being seen as representatives of the power of Rome.<sup>48</sup> Chalcedonian bishops were replaced by Miaphysite and Assyrian bishops. The position of Miaphysites in Syria became that of a tolerated minority, a position all Christians had already enjoyed for two centuries in Persia.

The Egyptian Miaphysites did not have much time to enjoy the relief of the Persian conquests; Egypt was only made part of the Persian Empire in 619, after a

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 28. M. van Esbroeck, 'Jacob Baradaeus', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. II (Cambridge, 1992), p. 428. Lucas van Rompay, 'Opkomst en groei van onafhankelijke volkskerken in het Oosten tot aan de Arabisch-islamitische veroveringen (451-461)', p. 28.

<sup>45</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, pp. 265-266. H. Teule, 'De syrisch-orthodoxe (jakobitische) kerk van Antiochie', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), p. 155.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam* (Leuven, 2007), p. 136.

<sup>47</sup> Van Rompay, 'Opkomst en groei van onafhankelijke volkskerken in het Oosten tot aan de Arabisch-islamitische veroveringen (451-461)', pp. 27-28.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

bloody and destructive war. Emperor Heraclius was able to re-conquer all the lands that were lost to Persia by 630. This gave the Chalcedonian Patriarch Sergius (610-638) the chance to endeavor a unification of Christianity with the support of Heraclius. Sergius proposed not to speak of the *nature* or *natures* of Christ, but of his human and divine *activities* (Greek: *energeiai*). These were enacted in one united manner as Christ had only *one will* (Greek: *hen thelema*). This idea, also known as *Monothelism*, was published by Heraclius in an edict, but the proposed ideas were eventually rejected as heretical at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (680-681) by all Churches. Only the isolated community in Central Syria that would later develop into the Maronite Church did not distance itself from the concept.<sup>49</sup>

After Heraclius had re-conquered Egypt, he immediately appointed Cyrus as patriarch in Alexandria. He held Monothelistic views and persecuted the Coptic Churches by torture, imprisonment and killings. Atiya speaks of a 'reign of terror' all over Egypt. The Coptic counter-patriarch had to hide for many years in small monasteries in the south.<sup>50</sup> During the Arab advance in Egypt in 640, Cyrus was accused by Heraclius of treason. In November 641 Cyrus negotiated the capitulation of Alexandria.<sup>51</sup>

#### **4.1.3 Schism between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman-Catholicism**

##### **4.1.3.1 Impact of Islam on Church Relationships**

It is noteworthy that the Islamic rulers who conquered the Christian World south of the Mediterranean, treated Christians to a large degree in the same manner as the Byzantine emperors had treated non-Chalcedonian Christianity. Another matter of continuity was that initially Islam might have been seen as a Christian sect with another Christology and with another definition of the relationship between God and Jesus. The role that the political rulers of the Islamic World played in upholding their 'state' religion is another major example of continuity.

The coming of Islam intensified the differences that had already developed between the four Eastern patriarchates and Rome. As the Arab navy began to dominate the eastern parts of the Mediterranean, relations between Rome and the other patriarchates became difficult, so they grew further apart.

The lack of relations between the two Chalcedonian Churches of Byzantium and Rome strengthened the tendency of the Roman patriarchate to become a Latin

<sup>49</sup> Van Rompay, 'Opkomst en groei van onafhankelijke volkskerken in het Oosten tot aan de Arabisch-islamitische veroveringen (451-461)', p. 29. M. D. Knowles, *De Kerk in de Middeleeuwen I* (Hilversum, 1968), pp. 134-135. This book is Part III of ten books in the series of Dr. L.J. Rogier, Dr. R. Aubert and Dr. M.D. Knowles (eds), *Geschiedenis van de Kerk* (Hilversum, 1968). Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 395. M. Simonetti, 'Monoenergism, Monothelism', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1992), p. 568.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 29. Entry 'Persian (Sassanian) Conquest of Egypt', in Joan Wucher King, *Historical Dictionary of Egypt* (Cairo, 1984), p. 509. G.P. Luttikhuisen en H.W. Havelaar, 'De koptisch-orthodoxe kerk vanaf haar ontstaan tot 1900', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de Islam* (Kampen, 1997), pp. 209-210. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 77.

<sup>51</sup> E. Prinzivalli, 'Cyrus of Alexandria', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1992), p. 216.



Church, while the Byzantine patriarchate became fully Greek and slowly grew into what is now called the Greek-Orthodox Church. The Roman Church gradually turned its back to Byzantium as it began to expand into the Frankish and Germanic parts of Europe, while the Church of Byzantium expanded into Eastern Europe.<sup>52</sup>

The fact that there was an increasing linguistical and cultural separation between the Churches of Rome and Byzantium increased the difficulty to solve their real theological differences. These were centered on the role of icons and statues in worship, on the inclusion of the *filioque* (Latin: *and the Son*) in the Creed, and the meaning of the primacy of the patriarchate of Rome. The differences came to a climax in the Great Schism (1054) and the Latin conquest of Constantinople (1204), which had begun as a Crusade against Islam.<sup>53</sup>

#### 4.1.3.2 Iconoclasm

During the eighth and the ninth century, the Church of Byzantium was wrecked by internal disputes over the usage of icons and other images in worship. Church historians disagree about what role Islam and its abhorrence of statues played in this internal Christian debate. Especially Emperor Leo III in Constantinople played an important role in forbidding the usage of icons. In 726 he published an edict declaring images to be idols and commanding all such images in churches to be destroyed. Leo III also sent a letter to Pope Gregory II in Rome, commanding him to accept the edict, destroy all the images in Rome, and summon a general council to forbid their usage. Germanus, the Byzantine patriarch, protested against the edict and appealed to Pope Gregory II. Leo III thereupon deposed Germanus as a traitor. The most steadfast opponents of the Iconoclasts were monks. Leo therefore fiercely persecuted many monasteries and eventually tried to suppress monasticism altogether. Gregory II refused to obey Leo III's orders even though the emperor threatened to come to Rome, break the statue of St. Peter and take Gregory II prisoner.<sup>54</sup>

The issue of icons brought the seventh ecumenical council, Nicea II, together in the year 787. In order to unite the Church, Empress Irene, her minor son Emperor Constantine VI, and Patriarch Tarasius of Constantinople called the bishops of Christendom together. Between 330 and 367 bishops convened and agreed to the following:

We, therefore, following [...] the divinely inspired authority of our Holy Fathers and the traditions of the Catholic Church (for, as we all know, the Holy Spirit indwells her), define with all certitude and accuracy that [...] the venerable and holy images, as well in painting and mosaic as of other fit materials, should be set forth in the holy churches of God, and on the sacred vessels and on the vestments and on hangings and in pictures both in houses and by the wayside, to wit, the figure of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of our spotless Lady, the Mother of God, of the honourable Angels, of all Saints and of all pious people. For [the more] they are seen in artistic representation, [the] more readily are men lifted up to the memory

<sup>52</sup> Knowles, *De Kerk in de Middeleeuwen I*, p. 145.

<sup>53</sup> These disputes will be treated later in this chapter.

<sup>54</sup> Adrian Fortescue, 'Iconoclasm', in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* as published on [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org) (7 April 2006).

of their prototypes, and to a longing after them; and to these should be given due salutation and honourable reverence, not indeed that true worship of faith (Greek: *latreian*) which pertains alone to the divine nature; but to these, as to the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross and to the Book of the Gospels and to the other holy objects, incense and lights may be offered according to ancient pious custom. For the honour which is paid to the image passes on to that which the image represents, and he who reveres the image reveres in it the subject represented.<sup>55</sup>

This decision of the Church was clear, but disputes about icons continued until 842. Theodora, regent for her young son after her husband had died, released those who were in prison for defending icons, and installed Methodius as patriarch. This monk had suffered years of imprisonment. In 842 a synod at Constantinople excommunicated the Iconoclasts. On the first Sunday of Lent, 19 February 842, the icons were brought back into the churches in solemn processions. That day was made into a perpetual memory as the Feast of Orthodoxy of the Byzantine Church.<sup>56</sup>

One of the main defenders of the usage of icons was the Syrian theologian Yuḥanná (John) of Damascus. His importance in this battle shows that during the eighth century the Chalcedonian Church in the Arab World still played an important role in the Chalcedonian communion. Some of Yuḥanná's songs were adopted as important parts of the liturgy of the Greek-Orthodox Church. This period was very important for the Church because its liturgy, including its art and songs, were now more carefully defined. This in itself widened the difference between the patriarchates of Rome and Byzantium.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4.1.3.3 Primacy of Rome, Conciliarism and the Filioque

When the Byzantine Church in 861 organized a synod for legitimizing the contentious appointment of Photios as patriarch, Pope Nicolas I of Rome disagreed and recognized the counter-patriarch Ignatius. Photios and the Greek-Orthodox counter-attacked and accused Rome of unacceptable meddling and of heresy for adding to the Ecumenical Creeds. Whereas all Eastern Churches confessed to believe in the Holy Spirit who 'proceedeth from the Father', the Roman Church at a council in Toledo (Spain) in 589 changed that wording into 'I believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*' (Latin: *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum qui ex patre filioque procedit*).<sup>58</sup> Byzantium and Rome solved their disagreements in 880 when delegates from Rome accepted Photios as the patriarch. The Greek-Orthodox Church repeated its rejection of any addition to the *Nicean Creed*

<sup>55</sup> 'The Decree of the Holy, Great, Ecumenical Synod, the Second of Nice', in Henry R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church; Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees* (Edinburgh, Grand Rapids, 1988, first edition 1899), p. 550. This is Vol. XIV of Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series (Grand Rapids, Edinburgh, 1988, first edition 1899).

<sup>56</sup> Fortescue, 'Iconoclasm'.

<sup>57</sup> D. Obolensky, 'De Kerk van Byzantium', in M.D. Knowles, *De Kerk in de Middeleeuwen I* (Hilversum, 1968), pp. 101-115.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

without specifically mentioning the *filioque*.<sup>59</sup> This temporarily solved the matter, but these disagreements eventually resurfaced as the main cause of the schism between the Roman-Catholic and the Eastern Churches.

The patriarchs of the Eastern Churches agreed that Rome was the first among equals of the five historic patriarchates and they also accepted the right of any of their bishops to ask Rome for a verdict in case of disagreements. However, they did not accept direct interference of Rome in their Church life and they rejected the monarchical interpretation that the Church in Rome gave to the concept of primacy. The Eastern Churches also rejected the idea that the theological inerrancy of the Church was expressed by one bishop, even if he was the pope. They believed that the Ecumenical Councils, where the whole Church was represented by its bishops, was the only divine arena for agreeing about theological matters.<sup>60</sup>

Byzantium's view of the sufficiency of the Ecumenical Creeds placed it squarely against the addition of the *filioque* to the Creed. The Roman popes had agreed to the addition but as they realized that the issue was contentious, they did not use the addition until the beginning of the eleventh century. The issue became problematic when Roman missionaries began to use the term while serving in Bulgaria, which was Byzantium's backwater.

#### 4.1.3.4 The Great Schism and the Crusades

In 1054 the differences between the Churches of Rome and Byzantium came to a head when rude anti-Roman tracts were published at the instigation of Michael Caerularius, patriarch of Byzantium. These were mostly against the usage of the unleavened bread at the Eucharist in the Roman Church. Pope Leo IX therefore sent Cardinal Humbert of Moyenmoutier to Constantinople. That visit escalated matters, resulting in both parties excommunicating each other. Thereafter the Roman Church forced the Greek congregations on Italian soil to accept Rome's liturgy. In Byzantium, Latin churches were forced to adopt the Greek liturgy.<sup>61</sup>

During the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Latin theologians began to speak about the events of 1054 as the Great Schism, but at that time itself, there was no sense that the disagreements were to create a lasting schism. An important example of the continuing *koinonia* between the Churches was that when in 1071 the Saljûk Turks began their attack on the Byzantine Empire by conquering Manzikert in the eastern part of present Turkey, Pope Gregory VII called on European Christianity for help. The Churches in the East also wanted assistance to safeguard the Holy Places of Jerusalem which had been occupied by the Turks in that same year. During the following decade, the Turks conquered most of present Turkey. When in 1084 the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I feared that even Constantinople would be conquered, he pleaded for help from Pope Urbanus II. That request played a role in the beginnings of the Crusades.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> On a theological level, the Greek Church saw the *filioque* as a misguided effort to stress the unity in being of the Trinity. Whereas the Latin Church focused on the unity within the Trinity, the Greek Church paid more attention to the differences between the persons in the Trinity.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 125-131. .

<sup>62</sup> Knowles, *De Kerk in de Middeleeuwen I*, p. 278.

The invasions of the Crusaders meant the first intervention of the patriarchate of Rome in the patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch. It is important to note in this context that at the time of the Crusades, Christians still formed the majority in parts of Syria.<sup>63</sup> One of the results of the First Crusade (1095-1099) was that after 1100, Antioch had not only a Greek-Orthodox but also a Latin patriarch. In the eyes of the Churches of the Middle East, this was an insult and not in accordance with the agreements of the Ecumenical Councils about the jurisdictions of the five patriarchates.

Jerusalem was reorganized as a Latin Kingdom with a Latin patriarch; the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem was deposed. In contrast to this, the lower clergy were still allowed to celebrate according to the Greek-Orthodox rites; doctrinal issues were not seen as important by the Crusaders, they simply considered the Chalcedonian believers to be part of the Church of Rome. Constantinople had a different view. When Şalâh al-Dîn (Saladin), the Kurdish *wazîr* of the Fâtîmids, besieged Jerusalem in 1187, part of the Greek-Orthodox community of Jerusalem helped him by opening the gates of the city. In effect they chose the Islamic over the Latin occupation. The conquest by Şalâh al-Dîn enabled them to re-install their patriarch in Jerusalem.<sup>64</sup>

The mutual disrespect between Rome on the one hand and Byzantium and the other patriarchates on the other hand, was made even clearer by the Fourth Crusade (1203-1204). Pope Innocentius III had called for this new Crusade to liberate Jerusalem. In order to take the city back the Pope wanted a direct attack on Egypt. However, the expedition took an unexpected turn without the Pope being able to stop it. The Crusaders gathered at Venice in Italy but did not have enough money to sail to Egypt. They therefore agreed with the Venetians to conquer the Greek city of Zara for Venice, and then they would be brought to the Holy Land by the Venetian fleet. Pope Innocent III excommunicated the army but that did not deter them. After conquering Zara the Crusaders marched to Constantinople and together with the Venetians they conquered and sacked Constantinople.<sup>65</sup> The Byzantine historian Nicetas Choniates was an eyewitness and described in vivid detail how dreadful the bloodbath and the desecration of the churches was.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Mitri, 'Christenen in het Arabische oosten: de rûm-orthodoxe kerk van Antiochie; geschiedenis tot 1928 en zelfbeeld', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de Islam* (Kampen, 1997), p. 124.

<sup>64</sup> Dr. D. Obolensky, 'De Oosterse Zienswijze: Het Schisma tussen de Oosterse en de Westerse Christenheid', in M. D. Knowles, *De Kerk in de Middeleeuwen II* (Hilversum, 1968), pp. 120-121. This book is Part IV of ten books in the series Dr. L.J. Rogier, Dr. R. Aubert and Dr. M.D. Knowles (eds), *Geschiedenis van de Kerk*, (Hilversum, 1968). H. Teule, 'De geunieerde kerk in het midden-oosten', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de Islam* [Eastern (Kampen, 1997), p. 246.

<sup>65</sup> Geoffroy de Villehardouin (ca. 1152-1218), a nobleman from Champagne (France), participated in this Crusade and wrote a masterly detailed history of the conquest of Constantinople and this phase of history in general. M.R.B. Shaw (translator), *Joinville & Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades* (London, 1963).

<sup>66</sup> Nicetas Choniates, *The Sacking of Constantinople*, from D. C. Munro, *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, Series 1, Vol. 3:1 (Philadelphia, 1912), pp. 15-16: How shall I begin to tell of the deeds wrought by these nefarious men! Alas, the images, which ought to have been adored, were trodden under foot! Alas, the relics of the holy martyrs were thrown into unclean places! Then was seen what one shudders to hear, namely, the divine body and blood of Christ was

The conquest of Constantinople in 1204 meant the end of the Fourth Crusade as the troops never went to the Holy Land. The events had significant lasting religious and political consequences. A number of Latin states were established in Greece and around the Aegean Sea. Most of the Greek bishops abandoned their bishoprics and left them to Latin bishops. They took refuge in Nicea, the city that had also become the seat of the Byzantine Empire. Baldwin of Flanders was appointed as the new emperor in Constantinople. Greek convents were changed into Roman monasteries. The communion between the Roman-Catholic and Greek-Orthodox Churches was totally broken. Pope Innocent III removed the ban that had excommunicated the Crusaders.<sup>67</sup> According to Church historian Dimitri Obolensky: 'on the level of the feelings of the population, the Crusades [formed] a decisive turning point', in the relations between the Church families.<sup>68</sup>

The Greek Empire was able to re-conquer Constantinople in 1261. Because of growing Turkish pressure on the city, there were some efforts by the Greek-Orthodox Church to renew the relationship with Rome. The last serious effort during the Middle Ages was at the Eighth Ecumenical Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439. Emperor John VIII Palaeologos and the Greek-Orthodox patriarch were there with a large delegation and signed a Union with Rome on 6 July 1439. The Greeks were allowed to continue using leavened bread for the Eucharist. In turn they accepted the Roman views of the *filioque*, the Roman theology of Purgatory and also, though in vague terms, the primacy of Rome. This willingness of Byzantium to accept the Roman views must be seen in the light of its military desperation.<sup>69</sup>

The monks and most of the population of Constantinople completely disagreed with this theological knee-fall for Rome, and it was also immediately rejected by the Greek-Orthodox patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. In spite of this broad based resistance, the Union was publicly announced in Constantinople in 1453. However, no European help came and five months later, Constantinople was taken by the Turks.<sup>70</sup>

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spilled upon the ground or thrown about. They snatched the precious reliquaries, thrust into their bosoms the ornaments which these contained, and used the broken remnants for pans and drinking cups, --precursors of Anti-Christ, authors and heralds of his nefarious deeds which we momentarily expect. Manifestly, indeed, by that race then, just as formerly, Christ was robbed and insulted and His garments were divided by lot; only one thing was lacking, that His side, pierced by a spear, should pour rivers of divine blood on the ground. Nor can the violation of the Great [Hagia Sophia] Church be listened to with equanimity. For the sacred altar, formed of all kinds of precious materials and admired by the whole world, was broken into bits and distributed among the soldiers, as was all the other sacred wealth of so great and infinite splendor. When the sacred vases and utensils of unsurpassable art and grace and rare material, and the fine silver, wrought with gold, which encircled the screen of the tribunal and the ambo, of admirable workmanship, and the door and many other ornaments, were to be borne away as booty, mules and saddled horses were led to the very sanctuary of the temple. Some of these which were unable to keep their footing on the splendid and slippery pavement, were stabbed when they fell, so that the sacred pavement was polluted with blood and filth

<sup>67</sup> Knowles, *De Kerk in de Middeleeuwen* I, p. 281.

<sup>68</sup> Obolensky, 'De Oosterse Zienswijze: Het Schisma tussen de Oosterse en de Westerse Christenheid', p. 121.

<sup>69</sup> Knowles, *De Kerk in de Middeleeuwen* II, pp. 124-125.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.116-120, 125. The Melkite patriarchate of Antioch moved to Damascus during the 14<sup>th</sup> century after the Mongols sacked Antioch.

The Crusades were not the only European influence in the Arab World; the same period also saw the first efforts to evangelize Muslims by European Christians. Whereas Thomas Aquinas defended the right of the Church to wage war against the heretics, Roger Bacon considered the Crusades a cruel waste of time as the Arabs should be converted to the Catholic faith. He believed that this had not been successful because the Arabs had not been approached in their own language. Pope Honorius IV (died 1287) agreed and encouraged the study of Arabic at the University of Paris. Several other universities established chairs for the study of Arabic to prepare missionaries.<sup>71</sup>

Francis of Assisi was one of the European missionaries with zeal to convert Muslims. In 1219 he made his way to Egypt, where he spoke to the *sultân*. He was shown remarkable respect but it is questionable whether the *sultân* understood much of the Gospel presentation. Other members of the Franciscan order made their way to Syria, Tunisia and Morocco, but their main witness was toward European travelers and Arab Christians.<sup>72</sup>

Another example of an early missionary to Muslims was Raymond Lull from Majorca (Spain). He believed that the Crusades were a failure because the Holy Land could only be won by love, prayer and tears. He learned Arabic, began a school for missionaries on Majorca, and endeavored to convince popes and cardinals to stimulate mission to the Arabs.<sup>73</sup> Neill credits him with being the first to develop a theory of missions as he did 'not merely [...] wish to preach the Gospel, but [also] to work out in careful detail how it was to be done'.<sup>74</sup> First, Lull stressed the need to fully understand the ideas of Muslims through a thorough competency in the Arabic language. Secondly, he believed in the creation of a comprehensive book that would scholastically answer Islam's arguments against the Christian faith and consequently convince Muslims of the truth of the Christian faith. The third requirement for evangelizing the Arab World was the preparedness to suffer for the faith. He went regularly to Arab lands for witnessing to the Gospel.<sup>75</sup> He was imprisoned several times in North Africa and in 1315 or 1316 he was stoned to death at Bugia in Tunisia.<sup>76</sup>

#### ***4.1.4 Protestantism as Revolt within the Roman Patriarchate: 1517***

At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the patriarchate of Rome could no longer contain a fast growing movement of protest against the moral corruption and theological deviations of the popes and their bishops. Martin Luther and John Calvin were the major leaders in this movement for Reformation. From the perspective of the Roman-Catholic Church, it was not a movement of reform, but a rebellion. Followers of the movement withdrew from the religious jurisdiction and theologi-

<sup>71</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, pp. 319-320.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 321, 326

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 321-323.

<sup>74</sup> Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, New York, 1979, first edition 1964), pp. 134-135.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

<sup>76</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 2, pp. 321-323.

cal guidance of Rome altogether. They formed new churches that placed themselves outside the organizational structure of the five historic patriarchates of the Church. The four patriarchates of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople would continue to view Protestantism as an illegal breakaway movement from the patriarchate of Rome. Irrespective of their views of the Roman patriarch, this movement of Protestantism was seen with contempt as it undermined the whole patriarchal structure of the Ecumenical Church.

## 4.2 EASTERN CHURCHES

### 4.2.1 Greek-Orthodox Church (*Al-Kanisah al-Urthûdûksîyah al-Yûnânîyah*)

#### 4.2.1.1 Loss of Political Support

Since the sixth century, there was unmistakably a process of de-Hellenization of the Church in large parts of the Middle East, partly as resistance against the Ecumenical Councils that were used by the Emperors for their centralizing policies. This process of de-Hellenization became irreversible when the Arab armies conquered the Middle East. The Greek-Orthodox churches suffered immediate setbacks as they were seen as representatives of the hostile Roman Empire. Initially, all other Christians in the new Arab Empire were free to worship and witness to the Gospel, even in the public domain. For the Miaphysites this meant an immediate increase in freedom. The relationship between the Greek Church and the Coptic Church was at its lowest ebb at the time of the Islamic invasion of Egypt.<sup>77</sup>

#### 4.2.1.2 Main Centers in the Arab World

For the Greek patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria the coming of Islam had a very negative impact on their status. As Greek-speaking communities they now lost their imperial political support, and the center of their Church, in Constantinople, was in enemy land from the perspective of Islam. Many Greek-Orthodox emigrated to Byzantium. The Greek-Orthodox patriarchates in the Arab World were often vacant for long periods and if they had patriarchs, they often preferred to reside in 'free' Constantinople. The Greek-Orthodox were allowed to keep their churches and monasteries since the Muslims did not interfere in matters of ownership of church properties.

Syria initially counted more Greek-Orthodox believers than Syriac-Orthodox and Assyrians. While the Muslim caliph was based in Damascus (661-750) they had access to the palace, and therefore some political impact. After the capital of the Arabic Empire moved to Baghdad, the Greek-Orthodox were isolated from the cultural and political centers of the Empire, while the Syriac-Orthodox and the Assyrians who were mainly based in Iraq and Persia, now had better access to the caliph. As the Arab political leaders often suspected the Greek-Orthodox of

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<sup>77</sup> Van Rompay, 'Opkomst en groei van onafhankelijke volkskerken in het Oosten tot aan de Arabisch-islamitische veroveringen (451-461)', pp. 30, 34.

conniving with the Byzantine Empire, they could not play a major role in the Arab and Ottoman Empires.<sup>78</sup>

Around the year 1000, Antioch came under direct control of Byzantium for over a century, thus reviving the Greek-Orthodox churches in that area and all over Syria.<sup>79</sup> Beside Antioch, the two other main centers of the Greek-Orthodox faith in the Arab World were the Monastery of St Sabas in the Kidron Valley near Jerusalem and the Monastery of Saint Catherine in the Sinai Desert. The Greek-Orthodox patriarchates in the Arab World continued to look for guidance to Byzantium, even though they were now part of another political Empire.

#### 4.2.1.3 Roman Impact and the Choice for Arabization

From the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the patriarchate of Antioch many of the best leaders and members went over to the Greek-Catholic Church. This was the culmination of a battle of decades where mundane issues like the rivalry between candidates for the Patriarchate and rivalry between the cities of Aleppo and Damascus, where most Greek-Orthodox Christians lived, played a role.<sup>80</sup>

The loss of many Greek-Orthodox churches to Rome led to an increased role of the patriarchs of Byzantium in the Arab World. They realized that without extra efforts even more members would be lost to Catholicism. The cooperation between the patriarchates of Byzantium and Antioch was complicated by the pervasion of European ideals of nationalism among the Greeks and the Arabs. The Church of Byzantium got evermore national Greek traits, while the Syrian Greek-Orthodox developed more pride in being Syrian and Arab.

By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian-Orthodox Church had begun to involve itself in defending and supporting its brothers in faith in Syria against Muslims. In 1898 the Russian-Orthodox had 64 schools and 213 teachers with almost 7,000 pupils in Syria and Palestine. They also opened medical clinics and a hospital.<sup>81</sup> The Russians actively supported the growth of an indigenous ethnic and cultural awareness among the Greek-Orthodox in Syria. This culminated in the deposal of the Greek patriarch, Spyridon, and the accession of an Arabic patriarch, Miltiades, in 1899. In Arabic historiography that event is often seen as an important step in the nationalist movement of the Arabs.<sup>82</sup>

Beginning in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century much mission work occurred in Syria. Through their Syrian Protestant College, later called *American University of Beirut* (AUB) Protestant missionaries influenced Greek-Orthodox students with their views of individuality, democracy and the separation of Church and state.

<sup>78</sup> Mitri, 'Christenen in het Arabische oosten: de rûm-orthodoxe kerk van Antiochie; geschiedenis tot 1928 en zelfbeeld', p. 124.

<sup>79</sup> W. Hage, 'Het Christendom onder de heerschappij van de islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), pp. 75-76.

<sup>80</sup> Mitri, 'Christenen in het Arabische oosten: de rûm-orthodoxe kerk van Antiochie; geschiedenis tot 1928 en zelfbeeld', p. 126.

<sup>81</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6: *The Great Century: North Africa and Asia: 1800 AD to 1914 AD* (Grand Rapids, 1976, first edition 1956), pp. 36-37.

<sup>82</sup> Mitri, 'Christenen in het Arabische oosten: de rûm-orthodoxe kerk van Antiochie; geschiedenis tot 1928 en zelfbeeld', p. 128.



However, the Greek-Orthodox were much less prepared to let go of their Eastern culture than the Maronites with their Lebanese particularism, and they fostered a desire and a love for a larger Syrian homeland. Many of them became actively involved in the Arab Renaissance (*al-Nahḍah*) and Arab nationalism.<sup>83</sup>

The end of the Ottoman Empire made the Greek-Orthodox in the Arab World subject to the decisions of the Western powers. The occupation of Syria by French, hence Roman-Catholic, troops was considered a disaster by the Greek-Orthodox there. They also disagreed with the division of Syria into different states. The creation of an independent Lebanon especially hurt them as it separated their community.

#### 4.2.1.4 Modern Presence in the Arab World

By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the patriarchate of Antioch was responsible for the management of 17 small monasteries and 25 primary and 12 secondary schools. The University of Balamand in Lebanon was also part of the patriarchate. Beside its regular university courses, it also offered theological training for priests. The liturgy of the Church in this region is mostly Arabic, with some parts in Greek. Membership of the Churches has been depleted by emigration to North and South America, Europe and Australia. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were an estimated 797,800 Greek-Orthodox in Syria and Lebanon.<sup>84</sup>

The loss of Palestine to Israel and especially the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem in 1967 created even more complications within the communion of the Greek-Orthodox.<sup>85</sup> The patriarchate of Jerusalem continues to be based in the Old City of Jerusalem and it has jurisdiction over various parishes in East Jerusalem, the Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The patriarchate is an extensive landowner in Israel, the Palestinian Territories and Jordan. In those lands, it is said to have about 156,000 members. Monks of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher are charged by the patriarchate to defend the Holy Places. They also serve at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Old City where they have officiated since 1177. Although the parishes are served by Arabic clergy and the liturgy is in Arabic, Greeks also play important roles in the Brotherhood and the hierarchy of the patriarchate. The patriarchate manages 37 schools, clinics, and a housing project. The housing project is aimed at ensuring that Church members do not emigrate.<sup>86</sup>

The Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa serves many Churches in East Africa. Many Africans in East Africa joined the Greek-Orthodox Church in the 1930s. In Egypt, the patriarchate maintains schools, clinics and orphanages, as well as the venerable Greek-Orthodox library in Alexandria. In Egypt

<sup>83</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 199.

<sup>84</sup> Jane Bailey and J. Martin Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?* (Cambridge 2003), p. 62. Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 318.

<sup>85</sup> Mitri, 'Christenen in het Arabische oosten: de röm-orthodoxe kerk van Antiochie; geschiedenis tot 1928 en zelfbeeld', pp. 127-131.

<sup>86</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 59-60. Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 318.

its congregation consists mainly of Syrians and Lebanese apart from Greeks who were born in Egypt. Their numbers in Egypt are estimated at 4,400.<sup>87</sup>

#### **4.2.2 The Assyrian Church of the East (*Al-Kanîsah al-Ashûrîyah al-Sharqîyah*)**

##### **4.2.2.1 Expansions under Early Islam**

By the time of the invasion of the Arab armies in Mesopotamia, Christianity there was mostly Syriac-Orthodox and Assyrian. Most physicians, the majority of the merchants and artisans, and many members of the civil bureaucracy were Christians. Christians and Jews in Mesopotamia are said to have numbered 1.5 million of which the majority were Christian.<sup>88</sup>

The Assyrian Church was a tolerated minority in the Persian Empire, and this did not change under the Arabs. The Assyrians played an important role in the intellectual life of the Arab World of the Middle Ages. Additional to their monasteries, the Assyrians also had formal schools of theology where Greek and Persian knowledge was transferred. Besides Biblical exegesis and dogmatic studies, the knowledge of natural sciences and medicine were well developed among the Assyrians. The caliphs were served by Assyrian physicians until late in the ninth century.<sup>89</sup>

During the Middle Ages this Church was impressive in its mission work. Thanks to Assyrians, there were churches in India, China and among the Mongols by the end of the seventh century.<sup>90</sup> During the ninth century, an increasing number of Assyrians became Muslim, while at the same time Chinese Empires destroyed the Assyrian churches out of hatred for anything foreign. The Assyrians did not give up on their mission work though. During the 11<sup>th</sup> century, they converted many Turkish Tatars. The Venetian traveler Marco Polo met with many Assyrian Christians in Peking during the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>91</sup>

##### **4.2.2.2 Downturn since the Mongols**

In the fast growing Mongol Empire, many people of influence became Assyrians.<sup>92</sup> While there was still a chance that the Mongols would make the lands they had conquered into a Christian Empire, the Assyrians appointed a Christian Mongol, Marko from China as their patriarch Mar Yahbh-Allagha in Baghdad (1281-1317). However, the Mongols decided to adopt Islam at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and from that point in time they became inimical against Christians, who were brutally decimated. The Syriac-Orthodox and Assyrian Churches were hit especially hard as they, more than the Greek-Orthodox, were found in the Mesopotamian heartlands of the new Mongol rulers.<sup>93</sup> Whole communities were massacred;

<sup>87</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>88</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 269-270.

<sup>89</sup> H. Teule, 'De Assyrische (nestoriaanse) Kerk van het Oosten', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), pp. 169-170.

<sup>90</sup> Teule, 'De Assyrische (nestoriaanse) Kerk van het Oosten', pp. 76.

<sup>91</sup> Hage, 'Het christendom onder de heerschappij van de Islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', pp. 76.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-82. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 210.

others lost their ancient tenacity and entered the faith of the conqueror to save their skins.<sup>94</sup> The Assyrians also lost their mission work in the East as they were unable to keep in touch with the churches in India and China.<sup>95</sup>

After the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Assyrian Church was relegated mostly to the mountains of Kurdistan in Turkey, Iraq and Persia. Their communities as a whole sank into poverty, ignorance and seclusion.<sup>96</sup>

For centuries the Assyrians lived relatively peacefully among the Kurds but during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Kurds periodically turned against the Assyrians and attacked and plundered their communities.<sup>97</sup> This was possibly the effect of the coming of the first Western missionaries, as argued by Atiyah. They came with educational and social help as well as political support against the Muslims; this changed the existent social equilibrium and it soured the relationships. This matter deserves further study.<sup>98</sup>

The genocide, perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire together with the Kurds at the end of World War I, was not only directed at the Armenian, but the Assyrians were major victims as well. In 1922 the Assyrian assessment was that in the area of Southeast Turkey and Northwest Iran, 275,000 Assyrians had died. Many Assyrians were killed in cold blood; most deaths occurred during deportation to and through the Syrian Desert, largely from starvation and dehydration.<sup>99</sup>

When the British Mandate in Iraq was over in 1933, the problems for the Assyrians began seriously again. The young patriarch, Mar Shim'ûn, returned from his education in England and assumed he could rule over the Assyrians as if they were his own nation, oblivious of the changes that had taken place in Iraq. In 1933, the minister of the interior requested him to stop acting as if he was in charge of a state within the state. He and the Assyrian chiefs refused to comply and met at Mosul, where they issued a protest against the government. Iraq then offered an ultimatum. The Assyrians were told to abide by the law, or leave the country. About a thousand armed men decided to leave for Syria with their families but the French turned them back. On their return to Iraq, the Iraqi army attacked the disorderly refugees, and with the help of Kurds and Bedouins, they massacred the Assyrians. The patriarch was then deported to Cyprus and stripped of his Iraqi citizenship for inciting rebellion.<sup>100</sup>

#### 4.2.2.3 Modern Presence in the Arab World

During the 1960s, most Assyrians moved to the USA; only an estimated 30,000 stayed behind in the Arab World. These were located around Mosul and in Baghdad but there were approximately 8,000 who had succeeded in crossing the Syrian

<sup>94</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 276.

<sup>95</sup> The Indian churches of the Assyrians continued to develop independently as the Mar Thomas Churches. The Assyrian churches in China disappeared. Hage, 'Het Christendom onder de heerschappij van de islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', pp. 82. Teule, 'De Assyrische (nestoriaanse) Kerk van het Oosten', p. 173. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 274.

<sup>96</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 276.

<sup>97</sup> Teule, 'De Assyrische (nestoriaanse) Kerk van het Oosten', pp. 174-175.

<sup>98</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 283.

<sup>99</sup> More information on the Turkish genocide in Chapter 2.

<sup>100</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 283.

border and had subsequently settled in the Khâbûr Valley.<sup>101</sup> In 1978, the Assyrian patriarch realized that he would never be able to reside in Iraq and the Church moved his formal residence to the USA.<sup>102</sup>

Due to life in the West, the Assyrian community began to leave its isolation. They began to enter into ecumenical contacts with other Churches in the Arab World. By 1998, there were an estimated 110,300 Assyrians in the Arab World, the majority in Iraq. The Iraqi occupation and the subsequent civil war after 2003 as well as some serious persecutions of Christians in that context, has led to an increased emigration of this Christian minority.<sup>103</sup> The American occupation of Iraq made it possible for patriarch Mar Dinkha IV to pay a visit to northern Iraq in September 2006, to give oversight to the churches there and to encourage the governor of the Kurdish region to open a Christian school in Arbîl.<sup>104</sup>

### **4.2.3 Coptic-Orthodox Church (*Al-Kanîsah al-Qibtîyah al-Urthûdûksîyah*)**

#### **4.2.3.1 Revival and Withdrawal**

The conquest of Egypt by the Muslim general ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ in 641 was probably experienced as a liberation by the Copts whose religion had been harshly suppressed by the Byzantine Empire:

The Byzantines had tried to efface both religious and political liberty in Egypt, whereas the early Arabs came at least with the prospect of religious enfranchisement for the Copts, who were destined to lose political independence anyway. The attitude of the Muslims toward the [Christians] would ensure under the Covenant of ‘Umar such religious status for the Copts as they had not enjoyed under the Byzantines for a long time.<sup>105</sup>

After the Byzantines were defeated, the Copts enjoyed a period of unprecedented revival of their religion. However, under the successive Islamic regimes, their position in Egypt became gradually more problematic. The Church became focused on survival, not on a role in society. This does not mean that inside the Church, there were no positive developments. The development of Coptic literature in the first centuries under Islam shows its vitality. In spite of that, by the tenth century, about half of the population of Egypt had become Muslim.

One of the major ecclesiastic events was that the patriarchate was moved from Alexandria to Cairo during the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Patriarch Kyrillos II took residence in St. Michael’s Church on Rûdah Island in the Nile, opposite to Babylon, the old part of Cairo that had a high percentage of Christians and many churches.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Teule, ‘De Assyrische (nestoriaanse) Kerk van het Oosten’, p. 176.

<sup>102</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, p. 131.

<sup>103</sup> Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 314. The emigration of the Assyrians because of increased persecution was widely reported in media during the civil war in Iraq.

<sup>104</sup> [www.cired.org](http://www.cired.org) (7 December 2006).

<sup>105</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 82.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

By the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Copts formed only ten percent of Egypt's population. By the year 1800, this had decreased to an estimated five percent. This shrinking percentage was expressed in the fact that while during the seventh century Egypt had 70 bishops, there were only 12 in 1671. By that time, Coptic monks resided in only four monasteries in Wâdî Naṣrûn and in the Red Sea area. Under the Ottomans, the Copts had become largely invisible in society. The Coptologist Otto F.A. Meinhardus speaks of the 'spiritual paucity' of the Copts from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reflected in the 'almost complete absence of theological creativity'.<sup>107</sup>

Under Muḥammad 'Alî at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt was set on a course of modernization. This influenced the Coptic community positively. Among Muḥammad 'Alî's financiers were some wealthy Copts, like the brothers Ibrâhîm and Jirjis Jûharî. They hired scribes to copy old Coptic documents, thus enabling the first serious studies of Coptology. Under Muḥammad 'Alî some Egyptian provinces were governed by Copts.<sup>108</sup>

The Coptic-Orthodox Church went through an important phase of renewal under Patriarch Kyrollos IV (1854-1861), who had been an abbot of the Monastery of St Anthony. He founded the Coptic-Orthodox College as part of his endeavor to ensure that priests had at least some theological education. Kyrollos IV stimulated the founding of schools, including the first girls' college in Egypt. He also imported a printing press for the Copts, which was the only press in the country beside the governmental press in Bulâq.<sup>109</sup>

Kyrollos IV had Pan-Orthodox ideals. He was on such good footing with the Greek-Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria that during the latter's absence he was sometimes asked to take care of the Greek-Orthodox flock. He also envisaged relationships with the Russian-Orthodox Church and the Church of England, but the *khedive* feared that this would lead to foreign interventions. When Kyrollos IV died in 1861, the *khedive* was suspected of having ordered his poisoning.<sup>110</sup>

The era of modernization under Muḥammad 'Alî was also the period when Roman-Catholic and Protestant missionaries began to come to Egypt in large numbers. This forced the Copts to answer the theological and Biblical challenges that the Western missionaries held in front of them. According to Atiya:

The impact of their dynamism on the Coptic Church saw its modern awakening from centuries of lethargy. The challenge shook the ancient Church to its very foundations and inspired its sons to rekindle the dimmed flame of a glorious past.<sup>111</sup>

This challenge was initially not met by the clergy. In 1874, a *Majlis al-Millî* (Confessional Community Council) was installed by the Egyptian authorities at the request of lay leaders in the Coptic community. This council was deemed neces-

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<sup>107</sup> Otto F.A. Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity* (Cairo, New York, 2004, first edition 1999), p. 66.

<sup>108</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

sary as some educated leaders among the Copts wanted to change the social, cultural and religious state of the Copts and the lack of leadership by the Church hierarchy. The 24 members, elected by the Coptic community, had power of participation in the management of Church property.

When Kyrollos V was appointed patriarch, he was the first to chair the *Majlis*. At the first occasion when the *Majlis* wanted to interfere in the management of some Church affairs, Kyrollos V refused to call it together, thereby rendering the *Majlis* ineffective. He unilaterally decided to close the clerical college and a girls' school. The lay leaders were so angered by the actions of Kyrollos V that they asked the government to interfere and demand that the *Majlis* meet. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that the Egyptian authorities forced Kyrollos V to retreat to the Monastery of Baramûs. The critics of the patriarch seemed to have overplayed their hand. According to Atiya, this measure 'aroused popular sympathy for him [...] as no one doubted his sanctity and good intentions'.<sup>112</sup> By popular demand Kyrollos V was allowed to return to Cairo six months later. He immediately forgave his Coptic adversaries, re-opened the educational institutes he had closed, and even expanded the opportunities for Coptic studies in Cairo, Alexandria, Banî Sûayf and Asyût. In spite of Kyrollos V's conservativeness, he eventually accepted the *Majlis* as a part of Coptic life.<sup>113</sup>

The lowest ebb for the Copts was reached under Patriarch Yûsâb II (1946-1956). Atiya speaks of 'sterility' and the 'absence of constructive policies in Church affairs' prior to Yûsâb II, but under Yûsâb II 'simony and corruption' were added to the problems of the Church. The bishops, the *Majlis* and a synod all agreed to relieve Yûsâb of his patriarchal tasks. He was forced to retreat to the Monastery of Muḥârraq near Asyût. After his death in 1959, a monk from the Monastery of Baramûs was elected as Patriarch Kyrollos VI.<sup>114</sup>

#### 4.2.3.2 Modern Presence in the Arab World

Kyrollos VI was extremely popular. Even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many Copts cherish pictures of him in their homes and wallets. Many remember him for his personality and miracles, but he was also an able administrator of the Church. Under Kyrollos VI many new churches were built, including a cathedral in Alexandria. Many Coptic benevolent societies were founded, often for Christian teaching and the welfare of the poor. One of the main examples of this is the Coptic Hospital in Cairo. Under his leadership the clergy of the Church began to be rejuvenated and better educated. A Sunday School movement began, to teach the laity the basis of the faith. Bible study became common in the Church.<sup>115</sup>

By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ecumenical relationships of the Copts with other Churches began in earnest. In 1954, the first Coptic delegation participated in meetings of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Evanston, Illinois (USA). They protested strongly against the kind welcome that was given to them as 'new-comers to oecumenicity', according to Atiya who himself participated in the delegation. The Copts said they had been partners in the Ecumenical movement

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, pp. 109-110.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp. 114-115.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp. 115-117.

gation. The Copts said they had been partners in the Ecumenical movement until they had been forced to withdraw because of the ‘iniquities and humiliation of Chalcedon’. Since then, the Copts have participated in many Ecumenical forums. They also participated as observers at Vaticanum II (1962-1965).<sup>116</sup>

Under Patriarch Shanûdah III, the Church has entered into Ecumenical relationships with the other Churches of the Arab World and beyond. The emphasis on youth work has remained. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in Cairo alone, the Copts had about 30,000 young people involved in teaching in Sunday School classes. The Church remains well established in all Egyptian provinces. There are also parishes in most Arab countries for the many Egyptians working overseas. In the USA, Europe, Canada, Australia and Brazil there are an estimated 400,000 to 1.2 million Copts. Estimations of the membership within Egypt range from 3.2 million to eight million.<sup>117</sup>

#### **4.2.4 Syriac-Orthodox Church (*Al-Kanîsah al-Suriyâniyah al-Urthûdûksîyah*)**

##### **4.2.4.1 Important Intellectual Role in the Arab Empire**

After the Arab conquests, the Syriac-Orthodox Church was free to develop openly. Atiya comments that ‘under Muslim rule [they] attained a degree of religious enfranchisement they had never had with their Byzantine co-religionists.’<sup>118</sup> The Miaphysites in Persia could now re-join the Syriac patriarchate of Antioch. The Syriac-Orthodox were able to extend their ecclesiastical rule from Jerusalem to Herat in Afghanistan. When Marco Polo traveled to China during the second part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, he found Assyrian Churches but also some Syriac-Orthodox Christians.<sup>119</sup>

The Syriac-Orthodox Church remained to a large extent marked by its monasteries. The Muslim conquerors had allowed the Greek-Orthodox to hold on to their cathedrals and episcopal residences, so the Syriac-Orthodox could not take those buildings, even after the number of Greek-Orthodox shrunk. The Syriac-Orthodox patriarchs continued to reside in the monasteries they were chosen from.<sup>120</sup>

The Syriac-Orthodox played an important role in the intellectual life of the Arab World of the Middle Ages, especially during the ninth century, though to a lesser extent than the more influential Assyrians. The monasteries of the Syriac-Orthodox often contained large libraries of Greek and Syriac literature. Especially the Monastery of Qenneshrâ close to Aleppo was important as an intellectual center; it for instance translated the Greek works of Aristotle into Arabic.<sup>121</sup> The Muslims, in their turn, were able to channel their knowledge to Western Christianity through Palestine where the Crusaders became acquainted with the

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., pp. 120-121.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., pp. 75. Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 317

<sup>118</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p.193, 210.

<sup>119</sup> Teule, ‘De Assyrische (nestoriaanse) Kerk van het Oosten, p. 76.

<sup>120</sup> Teule, ‘De syrisch-orthodoxe (jakobitische) kerk van Antiochie, p. 156.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

knowledge of the Arab World. Other centers of learning like Sicily and Spain, where Jews, Christians and Muslims worked together in relative peace, became points of exchange as well.<sup>122</sup>

Historians speak of a *Syriac Renaissance* during the period of 1150-1300. The Syriac-Orthodox had some influential scholars who greatly impacted the scientific life of Baghdad in those years. Two of the foremost scholars were Mikhâ'il Suriyân, patriarch of Antioch (1166-1199), and Bishop Bar 'Ebrâyâ (1126-1286). This bishop excelled to such extent in most sciences of his time that Atiya considers him a forerunner of the *uomo universale* of the European Renaissance. He generally wrote in Syriac as Arabic was becoming the vernacular for most Syriac Christians. It was because of this Arabization of society that Bar 'Ebrâyâ deemed it necessary to write on Syriac grammar and lexicography, as well as on the right pronunciation of Syriac words.<sup>123</sup>

#### 4.2.4.2 Relations with other Churches

The Syriac-Orthodox had good relationships with their Miaphysite brothers of the Coptic-Orthodox Church. For many centuries, Syriac monks had their own monastery in Wâdî Naṭrûn. The Syriac-Orthodox often attacked the Assyrian and the Greek-Orthodox Churches as godless and untrustworthy. They were initially able to win some important converts over from the Greek-Orthodox Church. Iliyâs, elected as the Syriac-Orthodox patriarch in 709, was one of the foremost examples of this.<sup>124</sup>

The Syriac-Orthodox had good relationships with the Latin Church of the Crusaders. The fact that the Romans were Chalcedonians did not seem to matter much. That may have been the outcome of the rather Ecumenical atmosphere in those days amongst the Syriac-Orthodox. Bar 'Ebrâyâ wrote in his *Book of the Dove* that the differences between the Chalcedonians, the Miaphysites and the Assyrians were just a linguistic matter; in terms of the content of their faiths, all Christians agreed regarding the nature of Christ.<sup>125</sup>

#### 4.2.4.3 Withdrawal

The Syriac-Orthodox turned inward and away from a role in the public domain after the Mongols, who had conquered all of Mesopotamia and Syria, decided to become Muslims at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The persecutions against the churches were severe. Tîmûr Lang (1336-1405) is remembered for destroying many Syriac-Orthodox monasteries and churches in northeast Syria and east Turkey.<sup>126</sup>

The Syriac-Orthodox community continued to shrink until by the 19<sup>th</sup> century it counted no more than 150,000-200,000 people. According to Atiya, they were

<sup>122</sup> Hage, 'Het christendom onder de heerschappij van de islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', pp. 79-80. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 195-197, 200-208.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 197.

<sup>125</sup> Teule, 'De syrisch-orthodoxe (jakobitische) kerk van Antiochie', pp. 160-162.

<sup>126</sup> Hage, 'Het christendom onder de heerschappij van de islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', pp. 80-82. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 210.



‘stricken with phenomenal ignorance and great poverty’ under the Ottomans. They lived mainly in Kurdistan and around Mosul and Hims. Most of the time the Kurds left the Syriac-Orthodox alone, but at other times they persecuted them.<sup>127</sup> The Syriac-Orthodox were such a small community that the Ottomans forced them to be represented by the Armenian Miaphysite patriarch, as part of the Armenian *millet* (nation). The *millet*s were treated to a large extent as separate nations within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>128</sup>

During a visit to Istanbul in 1838, the Syriac-Orthodox patriarch was convinced by his Armenian colleague that his Church would disappear if he did not organize some form of education for his people. As a consequence he founded some very simple schools for boys. The lay members of the Church however, developed faster than the Church hierarchy and the laity began to call for wide reforms in the Churches.<sup>129</sup>

Together with the Assyrian Church, the Syriac-Orthodox suffered regular persecutions from the Kurds. That made it important to have good Church leadership. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reform was urgently needed. In 1906 the patriarchal seat was given to Bishop Gregorios. His appointment as Patriarch Ignatius ‘Abd Allâh seems to have been an effort to wean him away from his Roman-Catholic and Iconoclastic leanings.<sup>130</sup>

In 1913 and 1914 lay members of the community convinced the *sulṭân* that a *Majlis al-Millî* should be set up as a constitutional part of the Syriac-Orthodox community. This *Majlis* participated with the Church hierarchy in handling Church matters such as finances. The council stressed the need for clerical education and a return to ancient Church discipline. This was deemed urgent as the Roman-Catholic and Protestant missionaries were making inroads among the Syriac-Orthodox.<sup>131</sup> In 1920 the Syriac-Orthodox patriarchate was moved from Mardin (Turkey) to Syria.

#### 4.2.4.4 Modern Presence in the Arab World

By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Damascus was the administrative center for the Syriac-Orthodox Church although most members were now living outside of the Arab World, in India, Turkey, Europe and the USA.<sup>132</sup> Only a few monasteries had survived. A unique monastery of the *diaspora* is located in The Netherlands. In the whole Arab World, but mostly in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, there are an estimated 146,300 Syriac-Orthodox. The building of new schools, church buildings and a home for the elderly, show that the Church is being revitalized. In Sunday Schools Syriac is taught to help preserve the ancient language and to maintain the Church traditions, especially the liturgical language.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>128</sup> Teule, ‘De syrisch-orthodoxe (jakobitische) kerk van Antiochie’, p. 158. From 1882 the Syriac-Orthodox had their own representation in Istanbul.

<sup>129</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 212.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 76-77. Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 315.

### 4.3 CHURCHES UNDER THE POPE OF ROME

#### 4.3.1 Maronite Church of Antioch (*Al-Kanīṣah al-Mārūnīyah li-Antākīyah*)

##### 4.3.1.1 Strength in Isolation

The Monastery of Mārūn in Syria was built at the place where a popular monk, Mārūn, lived as a hermit and miracle worker during the fifth century.<sup>134</sup> The Monastery was a strong defender of the Chalcedonian faith. Its monks had gone through times of serious persecutions by the Syrian Miaphysites during the sixth century. In 638, the year in which the Arab Muslims occupied Antioch, Emperor Heraclius proposed Monothelism as a compromise solution between the two theological positions. The Monastery of Mārūn accepted the proposed theological statement. It is unclear whether the Monastery knew that Monothelism was rejected at the Sixth Ecumenical Council of 681, as afterwards it did not change its position. The Monastery's stand was subsequently adopted by the Maronite Church that began when the Monastery decided to create a separate patriarchate. It must be noted that the Maronites later denied that they ever adopted Monothelism.<sup>135</sup>

The Greek armies sacked the Monastery of Mārūn in 694 and killed 500 monks, while the Arabs did the same shortly thereafter. Abbot Yuḥannā Mārūn therefore deemed it wise to move with his followers to the mountains of Lebanon where they could fortify themselves and begin a process of 'nation building'.<sup>136</sup>

Because of the troubles related to the coming of Islam, there was often no Greek-Orthodox patriarch present in Antioch. According to Maronite historiography, in order to have a patriarch in Antioch, the Monastery of Mārūn appointed abbot Yuḥannā to that position towards the end of the seventh century. Whether he was indeed the first Maronite patriarch is historically questionable. What seems certain is that by the eighth century, the Maronites formed a separate Church family, with their own patriarchs and with some unique theological traits.<sup>137</sup>

As long as the Arab Empire was ruled from Damascus, the Maronites in Lebanon and Syria enjoyed some calm under the centralized leadership of the state. Once these lands were ruled from Baghdad and Cairo after 750, this advantage disappeared. Local brigands became a continuous problem for the Maronites. They were therefore forced to defend themselves and build their own military and feudal structures. They succeeded in doing so in Lebanon but by the beginning of the tenth century, the Monastery of Mārūn had disappeared. According to the

<sup>134</sup> J.-M. Saugey, 'Maro', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. II (Cambridge, 1992), p. 216.

<sup>135</sup> H. Teule, 'De maronitische kerk', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de Islam* (Kampen, 1997), pp. 177-179. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 396

<sup>136</sup> Teule, 'De maronitische kerk', pp. 177-179.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

Arab traveler and geographer al-Mas'ûdî its destruction was caused by the Arabs (i.e., Bedouins) and by the caliph's oppression.<sup>138</sup>

#### 4.3.1.2 Influence of Rome

When the Crusaders landed on Lebanese soil, they were greeted as liberators and brothers by the Maronites.<sup>139</sup> The Maronites had close relationships with the Crusaders and soon also with the pope in Rome. William, the Roman-Catholic archbishop of Tyre, described how 40,000 Maronites came down from the mountains in 1182, to swear allegiance to the pope in the presence of Amaury, the Roman-Catholic patriarch of Antioch. According to William, they also formally rejected Monotheletism at that time. Maronite historians usually disagree with this reading of history, and assert that their Church never held Monotheletist views at all. It is clear though, that as from the time of the Crusades, the ties between Rome and the Maronites became ever closer. This was symbolized by the participation of Patriarch Armiyâ al-'Amshîti in the Lateran Council (1215).<sup>140</sup>

When the Crusaders were defeated, the Maronites had lost their natural protectors. It seemed that they initially tried to encourage European Christianity to endeavor new Crusades. As late as 1336, a German Dominican propagandist for renewed Crusades wrote that he had received assurances from the Maronites that in the next Crusade, they would fight again on the side of the Western Christians.<sup>141</sup>

When it became clear that the Maronites could not expect help against the Muslims, many emigrated to Cyprus, where they still have some churches. Most withdrew into the mountains of Lebanon again. The Mamlûk authorities took great care to ensure that the Maronites did not contact their former allies. Until the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1437-1439) there is hardly any proof of contact between the Maronites and Rome. The Maronites were represented in those Council meetings by a Latin Franciscan friar from Beirut.<sup>142</sup> The Muslim *amîr* of Lebanon distrusted these contacts between Rome and the Maronites and in 1440 he had the residence of the patriarch burned. Many were killed and the patriarch escaped to the safer Monastery of Qannûbîn in the mountainous Qadîshah Valley. This has thereafter remained the summer residence of the Maronite patriarchs.<sup>143</sup>

The Latinization of the liturgy and laws of the Maronite Church was stimulated by the presence of many Roman-Catholic priests in Lebanon from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. During the second half of that century the Jesuit Giovanni Battista Eliano travelled around Lebanon and Aleppo for buying old Maronite manuscripts and burning them, in order to make the Maronites forget about their original rites and to stimulate the adoption of the Latin rite. Eliano was also present at a Maronite synod at Qannûbîn in 1580. Many minor changes in the liturgy were adopted in accordance with Latin habits. The Maronite College, founded in Rome in 1581,

<sup>138</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 396. Many family names in Lebanon, like *Faranji* (Frank, i.e., European) and *Salibi* (Belonging to the Cross, hence: Crusader) show that the relationships between the Europeans and the Maronites became very close.

<sup>139</sup> Teule, 'De maronitische kerk', pp. 180-181.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 399.

<sup>141</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 398.

<sup>142</sup> Teule, 'De maronitische kerk', p. 181. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 400.

<sup>143</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 400.

played an important role in the Latinization of the Maronites. The brightest priests from Lebanon received their training there and they often played a role in effecting changes in the Maronite Church.<sup>144</sup>

Rome intensified its outreach to bring all Churches of the Middle under its leadership through founding its *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* in 1622. It began to print books for usage in the Middle Eastern Churches. Many Roman missionaries of different religious orders like the Jesuits, Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans and Franciscans traveled into the Arab World to win individual Christian Arabs for the Roman faith and ideally whole Church hierarchies. The Ottoman Empire allowed these missionaries to freely proselytize among the Churches.<sup>145</sup>

Some of these missionaries respected the eastern traditions and rites of those Churches and mostly aimed at bringing Churches under the guidance of the Pope, but other missionaries wanted to also Latinize the liturgies as much as possible. The spiritual discipline and the intellectual abilities of the Roman Church and its emissaries were attractive to the Christians of the Arab World. They opened schools, hospitals and seminaries. These Roman missionaries also represented the political power and the increasing wealth of Europe.<sup>146</sup>

To come under the aegis of the Roman-Catholic Church had an added attraction for eastern Christians as from 1770 the major European countries began to sign Capitulations agreements with the Ottoman Empire; France had begun to do this first. These allowed the European powers to be the formal protectors of certain Churches in the Ottoman Empire. For Arab Christians, being part of the Church of Rome meant *de facto* liberation from the rule of the Ottomans.<sup>147</sup>

The synod held in 1736 at the Monastery of Our Lady of the Little Almond Tree (*Sayyidah al-Luwayzah*) at the mouth of the Dog River (*Nahr al-Kalb*) in Lebanon was decisive for relations with Rome. Rome sent envoys to discuss the outstanding issues with 13 Maronite bishops. The *filioque* and the Latin catechism were formally accepted, the papal name was included in the liturgy, only lower clergy were allowed to be married, and monks and nuns could no longer cohabit in the same monasteries. Decisions of former pro-Roman councils were affirmed. In order to give maximum status to this synod, the gatherings were attended by a large delegation of the main Lebanese feudal families.<sup>148</sup>

From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century until 1840, the Maronites cooperated closely with the Druze of Lebanon. This cooperation guaranteed their independence within the Ottoman Empire. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century many of the Druze of the ruling Shihâb clan became Christians and joined the Maronite Church, a rather spectacular matter in the context of the Muslim world. The Druze *amîr* Bashîr II publicly declared his Christian faith in 1831.<sup>149</sup>

The bloodbath in Lebanon in 1860 led to the increased interest of France and the Roman-Catholic Church in Lebanese affairs. This created a further influx of

<sup>144</sup> Teule, 'De maronitische kerk', pp. 182-183. .

<sup>145</sup> 'De geuicerde keren in het midden-oosten', pp. 248-253.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 401.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 406.

Roman-Catholic orders and institutes. One of the most visible tokens of Roman-Catholic and French influence was the founding of the Jesuit University of St. Joseph in 1875 in Beirut.<sup>150</sup>

Patriarch Paul Mubârak Mus'ad (1854-1890) played an important role in the stabilization of the place of the Maronites within the Roman-Catholic hierarchy. Though he accepted the imposing role of the Catholic institutes in his land, like schools, hospitals, orphanages, and seminaries, he ensured that the Maronite Church retained its oriental character. At Vaticanum I (1869-1870) the Maronites, with the other Eastern Catholic Churches, pleaded with a measure of success for the right to not further Latinize the rites. The Maronites continued the usage of the ancient Syriac liturgy.<sup>151</sup>

Problems with the Druze combined with rudimentary agricultural methods and bad economic circumstances, encouraged many Maronites to emigrate to North and South America before World War I. During and shortly after that war many more Maronites left their country. The Ottoman rule over Lebanon during World War I was devastating. Of a population of about 450,000 an estimated 100,000 people lost their lives.<sup>152</sup>

Tension between the Roman-Catholics and the Maronites and the other Eastern Catholic Churches regarding Latinization finally ceased at Vaticanum II. There, the Eastern Catholic patriarchs pleaded forcefully against Latinization and for Roman-Catholics to respect their authentic Christian traditions. It was also formally agreed that the *Catholic* Church did not need to be a *Latin* Church. This decision was celebrated by the Maronites and all Eastern Catholics for their own sake but also because it enabled them to play an important role in fostering better relations between the historic Churches of the Middle East and those who had united with Rome.

#### 4.3.2 Roman-Catholic Church (*Al-Kanîsah al-Kathûlikîyah*)

After the Crusaders were defeated, the Mamlûks recognized the role of the Franciscans in Palestine to oversee the Christian Holy Places on behalf of the pope. The Roman-Catholic Church also continued to appoint Latin-rite patriarchs for the Holy Land, though the Latin patriarchate in Jerusalem would not be revived until 1847. This was mostly done for fear of the influence of the Anglican bishop who resided in Jerusalem from 1841.<sup>153</sup>

Under the Ottomans, the building of Roman-Catholic churches was allowed for expatriates who resided in the Arab World. In most Arab countries with an Arabic Christian minority, some Latin-rite Roman-Catholic churches came into being for the native Christians as well.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, the largest community of Latin-rite Christians was in North Africa. In Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, French Roman-Catholic churches were founded as a result of French citizens settling in those countries.

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., pp. 404-409.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., pp. 402-403.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 410.

<sup>153</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, p. 91.

The French conquest of North Africa was ‘hailed by the Roman-Catholic Church as an opportunity for the revival of its ancient strength in North Africa’ according to Latourette.<sup>154</sup> Missiologist Stephen Neill wrote that the ‘Mediterranean was well on the way to becoming – what it had been in the early days – a Christian lake’.<sup>155</sup>

The French authorities that ruled over North Africa were usually not supportive of mission work among Muslims as it had the potential to create unrest. The first bishop of Algiers, Antoine Dupuch, was dismissed for that reason in 1845. The second bishop, Louis Pavy, introduced the study of Arabic in his seminaries and ordered his priests to study the *Qur’ân* in order to be better able to discuss the Christian faith with Muslims. The French authorities forbade Muslims to even enter the cathedral of Algiers.<sup>156</sup>

The White Fathers of Archbishop Charles Lavigerie of Algiers (1866-1897) assumed that Algeria could be made into a Christian country that would then shed its light on Africa. Lavigerie resisted the authorities and demanded the right to evangelize Muslims. He wanted his White Fathers to first ‘win the friendship of the Kabyles before even introducing the subject of religion’ and he demanded his missionaries to dress and behave as much as possible as the local population did. The White Fathers and other Catholic orders opened schools, hospitals and orphanages in Algeria. In Morocco and Tunisia other Roman-Catholic orders used a similar approach. The number of converts to Catholicism from Islam remained minimal though throughout the period of French colonization. North Africa gained its independence between 1956 and 1962. Few Roman-Catholic churches stayed open after independence as most Europeans left North Africa.<sup>157</sup>

### **4.3.3 Eastern-Catholic Churches**

#### **4.3.3.1 Chaldean-Catholic Church: 1553**

In 1552 abbot Mar Yoḥannan Sullâqâ of the Rabban Hormizd Monastery in northern Iraq asked Rome to intervene in the practice of the Assyrian patriarchate to be inherited from uncle to cousin. In 1553 Sullâqâ was installed as a Catholic bishop while visiting Rome. Back in Iraq he was able to appoint five bishops but in 1555 he was killed, allegedly at the instigation of the Assyrian patriarch. In 1675 one of his successors, Shim’ûn IV, returned the breakaway Church to the Assyrian hierarchy. Interestingly though he did not give up his title, thus creating a double patriarchate in the Assyrian Church.<sup>158</sup>

In 1681 another effort to create an Assyrian Church under Rome began in the city of Diyarbakır. The Pope recognized its bishop as patriarch. However, in 1804 Rome withheld its recognition of a new patriarch, as the Assyrian Church of the

<sup>154</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6, p. 12.

<sup>155</sup> Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, p. 248.

<sup>156</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6, p. 15.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 7: *Advance Through Storm; AD 1914 and After with Concluding Generalizations* (Grand Rapids, 1976, first edition 1956), p. 256.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 277-279.

patriarchal line of Shim‘ûn IV had by 1804 again accepted Rome’s supervision. Yoḥannan VIII Hormizd was accepted by Rome as the metropolitan of Mosul and eventually also as the new patriarch. This meant that from 1830 onward, there was a new Church that was united with Rome, called the Chaldean-Catholic Church. The union with Rome reduced the original Assyrian Church to a small and isolated minority compared to the Chaldean Church. The Chaldean patriarch was called *Patriarch of Babylon* though he did not reside there.<sup>159</sup>

The Chaldean Church experienced the same tensions that the other Eastern Catholic Churches would have with Rome: especially during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Rome had strong Latinizing tendencies. During Vaticanum I the Chaldean patriarch Mar Yûsif VI ‘Awdah played a role in speaking up for the right of the Eastern Catholic Churches to maintain their own historic rites.<sup>160</sup>

The Chaldeans suffered greatly from massacres in Iraq during World War I, much like the Assyrian Church. An estimated 20,000 members were killed, including three bishops and many priests. In spite of this, membership grew spectacularly until the mid 1940s. This growth was largely from dissatisfied Assyrians who lacked leadership and who were severely suppressed as they were seen as anti-nationalists by the majority. In 1950 the patriarchate was moved from Mosul to Baghdad where most of its members have lived since World War II.<sup>161</sup>

#### 4.3.3.2 Syriac-Catholic Church: 1656

The Syriac-Orthodox continued to feel friendly towards Rome and endeavored to create rapprochement first through a mission in 1552. Mûsâ of Mardin went to Rome for reconciliation with Pope Julius III. The effort was not taken very seriously by either of the parties it seems. Rome was more interested in submission than in reconciliation and saw its chance when a Syriac-Orthodox priest, ‘Abd al-Ghâl Akhiyân from Mardin, converted to Catholicism through the work of a Latin missionary. ‘Abd al-Ghâl went to the Maronite College in Rome, and was renamed Andarâwis upon his appointment as the Syriac-Catholic bishop of Aleppo in 1656. He succeeded in building up a following due to his erudition and with the support of French diplomacy.<sup>162</sup>

When the Syriac-Orthodox patriarch in Mardin died and contesting parties fought over the Patriarchate, French diplomats convinced the Ottoman authorities to appoint Andarâwis as the Syriac-Orthodox patriarch. Pope Clement IX agreed with this appointment and thus from 1667, there was a Catholic patriarchate of the Syrians. The Syriac-Orthodox Church continued its own hierarchy despising those who aligned themselves with the Catholics. They called the Syriac-Catholics *maghlûbîn* (conquered). However, in the midst of the impoverished and uneducated Syriac-Orthodox community, the Catholics were able to attract many to their churches.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>159</sup> Teule, ‘De geuniceerde keren in het midden-oosten’, pp. 251-253.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

Together with the other Churches in southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq, the Syriac-Catholics faced persecution primarily from the Kurds during the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During and after World War I, massacres took place in the context of the Armenian genocide.

The submission to Rome was made easier for the Syriac-Orthodox after the Council of Sharfah (1888) in Lebanon. In this Council it was agreed that priests should be celibate although dispensation was possible for married Syriac-Orthodox priests who wanted to adopt the Catholic rite. Rome also agreed that the Syriac-Catholics could use the ancient Syriac Liturgy of St. James with only some minor adaptations. These changes involved the deletion of the open denunciation of Chalcedon and the insertion of the name of the pope.

The Syriac-Catholic Church has had some notable scholars. Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem Raḥmānī (1898-1929) was a theologian with an interest in Syriac literature and theology. He transferred his residence to Beirut because of hostilities between the Syriac-Orthodox and the Turkish authorities. His successor, Ignatius Gabriel Tabbunī, became the first Syriac cardinal at the papal court in Rome. He served as the patriarch for four decades and helped the Church to become a strong and prosperous community.

The Syriac-Catholics received substantial help from Rome. In 1882 the Missionaries of St. Ephrem were founded in Mardin. In 1935 this movement was reinvigorated by the adoption of the Rule of Benedict in the Monastery of Sharfah. That monastery became an important center for teaching and publishing about Catholicism.

#### 4.3.3.3 Greek-Catholic Church: 1724

In 1576 a Greek College was founded in Rome. Formally, Rome wanted to ‘heal the schism’, but in reality they worked for a ‘return of the schismatics’ to obey the pope. Greek-Orthodox leaders came to live in Rome and to teach their languages and liturgy to the Roman Church but they were also to be influenced by Rome.<sup>164</sup>

In 1709, the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch Kyrillos V of Antioch recognized the authority of the pope of Rome as the head of the Church. As a result the Church split in two. When a new patriarch had to be chosen in 1724, the Rome-oriented notables from Damascus chose Cyril VI as patriarch. He was a former student of the college of the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* and a great supporter of Latinizing the liturgy. The leaders of Aleppo chose a monk from the Greek-Orthodox Monastery of Mt Athos as Patriarch Sylvester. He was accepted by the patriarch of Constantinople and therefore also by the Ottoman *sulṭān* and, interestingly, also by the Franciscans in Aleppo who agreed with that choice.<sup>165</sup>

The new Church that was formed called itself Greek-Catholic, and, confusingly, also *Melkite*. The term *Melkite* was now used in a restricted sense, to designate adherence to the Council of Chalcedon rather than to the Byzantine Empire or the Church of Byzantium. The Greek-Catholic patriarch was called the *Patriarch of Antioch and the Whole East, of Alexandria and of Jerusalem*. This reflected the

<sup>164</sup> Teule, ‘De geuniceerde keren in het midden-oosten’, pp. 248-249.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., pp. 249-250.



fact that in Egypt, Palestine and other places in the Arab World, Greek-Orthodox leaders began to form new Greek-Catholic Churches.<sup>166</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tensions developed within the Greek-Catholic Church about the degree of Latinization of the rites. Although they were tied to Rome through the Congregation for the Oriental Churches in the Curia, they wanted to maintain their historic Byzantine liturgy as much as possible. The fact that in 1848 the Greek-Catholics were recognized by the Ottomans as separate *millet* made them rather independent of the Roman-Catholic Church as they no longer needed Rome's representation in Istanbul. This action gave the Greek-Catholics the freedom, through local synods, to adopt measures that were not appreciated in Rome.

At Vaticanum I, Patriarch Gregory II recognized the primacy of the Roman Pope but he pleaded for the right of the Greek-Catholics not to Latinize further. He feared that if this were to happen, the chasm with the Greek-Orthodox would widen and he wanted the Greek-Catholics to be a bridge between Rome and the Greek-Orthodox. These pleas did not go unheeded; toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the focus in Rome came to be more on uniting the Churches with Rome than on Latinizing them. The White Fathers of Cardinal Lavignerie played a major role in this shift of emphasis. Tension between the Roman-Catholics and the Greek-Catholics regarding Latinization finally ceased at Vaticanum II. There, Patriarch Maximos IV Sayigh pleaded forcefully against Latinization. This decision helped the Greek-Catholics principally to foster better relations between the Greek-Orthodox and the Roman-Catholics.

Compared to the Greek-Orthodox, the Greek-Catholics were prepared to go even further in the Arabization of the liturgy. Crown Prince al-Ḥasan bin Ṭalāl of Jordan considered that a positive matter, and called it the 'small beginnings of what was to become the great Arabic literary revival' of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Interesting in this context are his general comments regarding the outcomes of Catholic mission in the Arab World:

On the negative side, this missionary activity destroyed the original unity of historical Eastern Christian communions by creating Uniate churches out of each, or by attracting converts to Protestantism from each historical communion. What was left behind, as a result, was a legacy of distrust and quarrels between daughter and mother communities, the former considering the latter to be fossilized and obsolescent; the latter accusing the former of slavish Westernization and treason to the Eastern Christian heritage. On the positive side, however, one must bear in mind that the Uniates [had] an enhanced rather than a weakened sense of ethnic identity.<sup>167</sup>

The Crown Prince was negative about how the Catholic and Protestant missionaries damaged the unity of the Church, but he also gave credit to the Protestant missionaries, especially the Americans among them, for making Arabic the exclusive language of the Protestant churches. He mentioned the translation of an

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> El Hassan bin Talal, *Christianity in the Arab World* (Amman, 1994), p. 91.

Arabic Bible and the production of Arabic hymnals and the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. ‘Small wonder that the idea of Arab nationalism was given its first formulation and articulation by Christian Arabs who were mostly Uniates or Protestants’, or people who had been educated in their schools, according to the Crown Prince.<sup>168</sup>

#### 4.3.3.4 Coptic-Catholic Church: 1895

Yuḥanná, abbot of the Monastery of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, was present at the Council of Ferrara-Florence where the patriarchs of Christianity searched for unity. From Rome’s perspective, this was a matter of bringing the other Churches back under its aegis. The meetings seemed successful and union was proclaimed; Yuḥanná’s signature appears under the *Decretum pro Jacobitis*. The formulas for unifying the Churches were vague enough to be promising, but they were never put to the test as they were never followed-up.<sup>169</sup>

In 1586 a rather heavy-handed delegation from Rome visited Patriarch Yuḥanná XIV in Egypt. He arranged a synod and convinced enough of his bishops to accept the proposed union that effectively made the Coptic patriarch subservient to the pope. Yuḥanná died before the document was signed, and the movement lost its momentum. No further steps to unity were taken at that time.<sup>170</sup>

Because of Rome’s continuing interest to bring the Copts under its leadership, in 1602 a Coptic College was formed in Rome. In 1630 a Capuchin friar from Paris founded a small Roman-Catholic center in Cairo. In 1675, Franciscans came to Asyût and Jesuits settled in Cairo. These missions were not very successful. The first serious victory for Rome was that the Coptic Bishop Athanasius of Jerusalem became a Catholic in 1741. Pope Benedict XIV appointed him the first Vicar-Apostolic of the small community of Egyptian Coptic-Catholics, which at that time numbered no more than 2,000. Although Athanasius eventually returned to the Coptic-Orthodox Church, a line of Catholic Vicars-Apostolic continued after him.<sup>171</sup> During that same time a learned Copt, Rufâ’il al-Tûkhî converted to Catholicism and had to flee to Rome as he felt endangered by the Copts. There he edited the Coptic-Arabic *euchologion* (a book describing the liturgies) and other Coptic prayer books, to make them suitable for Catholic usage.<sup>172</sup>

The Roman-Catholic Church gained real ground among the Copts in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the French invasion (1798-1801). A French consul requested from Muḥammad ‘Alî that he would summon the Coptic patriarch to submit to the Pope. Muḥammad ‘Alî asked his Coptic secretary, Mu‘allim Ghâfî, to arrange this matter, so Ghâfî decided to give the example and became a Catholic himself.<sup>173</sup>

Roman-Catholic missions significantly increased their activities during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; many schools and hospitals were opened. These Catholic schools were a great attraction for the Copts. Both the Catholic and Pro-

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> ‘The Coptic-Catholic Church’, on [www.cnewa.org](http://www.cnewa.org) (5 December 2006).

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

testant missionaries were critical of the Copts for being ignorant of the Christian faith and the Bible. Many of the priests and bishops were indeed uneducated.

In 1895 Leo XIII re-established the patriarchate and in 1899 he appointed Bishop Kyrollos Makarios as Patriarch Kyrollos II 'of Alexandria of the Copts'. He began to issue encyclicals to the Copts inviting them to offer allegiance to the pope. The Coptic-Catholic Church retained most of its Coptic-Orthodox habits although the liturgy was adopted and in the necessary places the name of the Pope was used instead of that of the Coptic-Orthodox patriarch. According to Atiya, the people 'did not distinguish differences and the whole scheme looked like a conspiracy'. Thousands of Copts joined the Coptic-Catholic Church during this period; the Coptic-Orthodox leaders preached in defense of the faith of their fathers from every pulpit.

In 1908 a major setback occurred for the Coptic-Catholics when their Patriarch Kyrollos II resigned and joined the Greek-Orthodox Church. It was not until 1947 that a new patriarch, Morqos Khuzâm, was installed. In the intervening years without a patriarch the churches were served by apostolic administrators.

#### **4.3.4 Modern Presence in the Arab World**

##### ***4.3.4.1 Maronite Church of Antioch***

The civil war from 1975 to 1990 led to a sharp decline in the percentage of Maronites, as many emigrated. The war between Israel and Lebanon in the summer of 2006 led to a further exodus of Maronites. They presently have schools, universities, orphanages, newspapers, radio stations and the television station TéléLumière. These and many other organizations are aimed at building up the Maronite community and Lebanon as a state with a Christian political majority. The ascertaining of exact community demographics is a highly sensitive issue due to its ramifications for the political shape of the state. Some claim that the Maronites are still a majority in Lebanon while others believe they have been diminished to a minority in the realm of 23 percent of the population. There are probably between 500,000 and a million Maronites in Lebanon, with another estimated 500,000-750,000 in other Arab countries. Estimations of Maronites outside the Arab World range from one million to 2.5 million.<sup>174</sup>

##### ***4.3.4.2 Roman-Catholics Church***

The main Roman-Catholic churches in the Arab World are those in Jerusalem. The Franciscans are still responsible for guarding many of the Christian holy sites. Because issues of management of these places often became contentious between the different Churches in the Arab World, the Ottomans were forced in 1852 to describe in precise terms how this would be arranged. This is still the basis for how the Holy Sites are managed.

The patriarchate continues to sponsor many schools and social institutes in the Holy Land, not only for Christians but for Muslims as well. The present patriarch,

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<sup>174</sup> Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 319. Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 92-94.

Mîshâl Sabbâgh, has played a notable role in defending the rights of the Christians in Israel and Palestine. Due to his unique location he has been deeply involved in Ecumenical contacts and has played an important role in dialogue between Muslims and Jews. He also maintains ecclesiastical contacts with dozens of Catholic orders and institutions in the Holy Land.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Roman-Catholic churches in Palestine continued to use the Latin rite although their worship was Arabized. This made the Church truly autochthonous. Today it is estimated that there are approximately 28,400 Palestinian Roman-Catholics in the Holy Land apart from the thousands of expatriate Roman-Catholics in the patriarchate. In Jordan, mainly as the result of the Palestinian exodus from the Holy Land in 1948 and 1967, there are an estimated 34,900.<sup>175</sup>

In Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon combined there are another 23,000 Roman-Catholics. Most Arab Gulf states also have large numbers of Roman-Catholics, but most of these are expatriates, like believers from the Philippines. Many of the Gulf states do not make the numbers of these expatriates known, but the Roman-Catholics among them must be in the hundreds of thousands.<sup>176</sup>

#### 4.3.4.3 Eastern-Catholic Churches

The Chaldean Church endeavors to supply its members with education and pastoral care. The Chaldean Sisters of Mary Immaculate play an important role in primary schools, kindergartens and orphanages. Until the 1970s, the Roman-Catholics offered many added services through their orders but under the presidency of Şaddâm Ḥusayn the visas for expatriate clergy were reduced. During this time Patriarch Rufâ'il I Bidâwid had the impossible task of helping his Church to survive between the poles of integrity to the Christian witness, including Christian views of proper politics and human rights on the one hand, and a ruthless regime that imprisoned or murdered anyone with a dissident voice.

In 1998 there were an estimated 390,300 to 525,000 Chaldeans in Iraq and some 11,600 in Syria and Lebanon. These are figures from before the Iraqi occupation by the USA and the civil war that followed after 2003. Since then, many Christians have emigrated.<sup>177</sup>

The Syriac-Catholics of today promote lay education and parish renewal. The Monastery of Mar Behnam in Mosul radiates Catholicism to that region. There is close cooperation with the Chaldean-Catholics in lay education and parish renewal. In 1998 it was estimated that they were a community of approximately 101,000 in the Arab World, with half of those living in Iraq.<sup>178</sup> Due to the civil war in Iraq since 2003, this number has decreased; no actual figures are available.

<sup>175</sup> Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 325. Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 89-92.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Teule, 'De geunieerde keren in het midden-oosten', pp. 251-253. Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 320. Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 82-84.

<sup>178</sup> Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 321. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 214-215. Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 95-96.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were an estimated 442,800 Greek-Catholics, of which half lived in Lebanon. The others lived in Syria, Jordan, the Palestinian Territories including Jerusalem, and Israel.<sup>179</sup>

The Coptic-Catholic Church in Egypt had about 150,000-300,000 members at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In spite of its relatively small size, it played an important role in the social and theological development of its members due to its energetic leadership that was supported by many Roman-Catholic orders. Jesuits, Franciscans, Lazarists and the Egyptian Sisters of the Sacred Heart were prominently present in Church life. The Church published many scholarly works on theology and it engaged in the social development of its members and others. The Coptic-Catholics had a training center for priests in Ma'âdi, a southern suburb of Cairo.<sup>180</sup>

#### 4.4 PROTESTANT CHURCHES AND MISSION

##### 4.4.1 Beginning of Mission Efforts

The first Lutheran missionary in the Arab World was Peter Heyling, who worked in Egypt in 1633-1634. He hoped to rejuvenate the Orthodox Church and visited some monasteries but he received a mixed reception due to the efforts of some Roman-Catholic missionaries who accused him of heresy. From 1634 Heyling worked in Ethiopia; he was beheaded in 1652 after being accused of spying by the local governor of a Sudanese Red Sea port while traveling to Cairo.<sup>181</sup> The first organized Church mission was that of the Moravian Brothers, who worked in Egypt from 1768 to 1783.<sup>182</sup>

Protestant mission to the Arab World only began on a sizeable scale at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>183</sup> Most Protestant mission work to the Arab World during the 19<sup>th</sup> century began with the assumption that they would be able to revive the historic Churches in order to, together, reach the goal of the conversion of the Jews and the Muslims of the Arab World. This was often combined with a

<sup>179</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6, p. 38. Teule, 'De geunieerde kerken in het midden-oosten', pp. 250-251. Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 86-89. Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 324.

<sup>180</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 1, pp. 21-24. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 113. Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 84-85. Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 323. Bailey and Bailey speak of 300,000 Coptic-Catholics. Pacini has the more conservative figure of 150,000.

<sup>181</sup> Otto F.A. Meinardus, *Christians in Egypt: Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Communities Past and Present* (Cairo, 2006), pp. 104-107.

<sup>182</sup> Lyle L. Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record* (South Pasadena, 1977), p. 100.

<sup>183</sup> The founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in October 1792 by 12 Baptist ministers in England is often taken as the beginning of the new mission movement. Among them was William Carey, who had published *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.<sup>183</sup> A year later he went to India as a missionary; his example was followed by many more Christians from Europe and the USA. The American revival movement at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Pietistic movement in Europe formed the socio-religious environment for this new movement.

strong belief that the conversion of the Jews would usher in the return of Jesus Christ in millennial fashion.

The missionaries were soon disappointed in their goals, as the historic Churches were not interested in a Protestant reformation, while the Jews and the Muslims were only marginally interested in the Christian faith. They also faced strong resistance by the Ottoman authorities, who forbade evangelism among Muslims. This resulted in a change of focus among most mission workers, who around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century began Protestant Churches that welcomed members from the historic Churches. This was deemed urgent as the leadership of the historic Churches often excommunicated those who had adopted more Evangelical convictions.

Missionaries founded many schools, hospitals and orphanages, thus playing an important role in the development of medicine and education in the Arab World. Their social activism and Biblical knowledge were attractive to many members of the historic Churches. It also held a mirror in front of those Churches; the presence of the Protestant missionaries certainly influenced the renewal movement in the historic Churches of the Middle East.<sup>184</sup>

#### **4.4.2 Anglican Communion**

##### **4.4.2.1 Egypt: 1816**

In 1815 the Church Missionary Society (CMS) began its involvement in the Arab World by sending William Jowett to Malta for collecting information on the state of religion in the Arab World. CMS was a para-Church mission agency that functioned within the context of the Church of England.<sup>185</sup> It wanted to win non-Christians and not proselytize among other Churches; in its apostolate to Muslims it hoped to enlist the help of the indigenous Churches. In Jowett's words:

As these Churches shall reflect the clear light of the Gospel on Mohammedans and Heathens around, they will doubtless become efficient instruments of rescuing them from delusion and death.<sup>186</sup>

In 1816 CMS touched Egypt for the first time with some educational work. In 1819 Jowett moved to Cairo, where he was welcomed by priests and monks. He received letters of introduction from the Coptic-Orthodox patriarch to all monasteries, where Jowett distributed Arabic copies of the four Gospels. After him more CMS personnel arrived; they started schools for boys in six Egyptian towns where they also held Evangelical meetings with Copts in attendance.<sup>187</sup> CMS also supported the beginning of a school of theology for the Coptic-Orthodox Church.<sup>188</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>185</sup> El Hassan bin Talal, *Christianity in the Arab World*, p. 88.

<sup>186</sup> Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, Vol. 1 (London, 1899), pp. 224ff, as quoted in Lyle L. Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record* (South Pasadena, 1977), p. 153.

<sup>187</sup> Adib Naguib Salamah, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Egypt and Sudan', in Habib Badr (ed), *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (Beirut, 2005), p. 735.

<sup>188</sup> Salamah, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Egypt and Sudan', p. 736.

Initially, CMS did not seek to start an Anglican Church in Egypt. During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, CMS did much of its work in cooperation with missionaries from the Swiss and German Lutheran and Reformed Basel Evangelical Missionary Society (Basel Mission).<sup>189</sup> In 1850, Samuel Gobat, who had been a missionary in Egypt for 23 years, concluded that the 'success of the ministry of the CMS has effected a revival in the native Church'.<sup>190</sup>

After 1882, CMS' work in Egypt was reconstituted and its determination was now to bring the Gospel to Muslims. Literature was distributed, medical work was begun, and schools were started. Much attention was paid to the education of girls. William H. Temple Gairdner was one of the foremost missionaries working with Muslims.<sup>191</sup> In 1925, the Episcopal Church of Egypt was formed. In 1952, all institutes of CMS were handed over to the Episcopal Church.<sup>192</sup>

#### 4.4.2.2 Palestine and Jordan: 1823

CMS began its work in Palestine in 1823, and it created the first Protestant congregation there. CMS opened a hospital in 1843 which was probably the first in the Middle East. Together with the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, CMS played an important role in setting up the Anglican bishopric in Jerusalem in 1841.<sup>193</sup> The intervention of the king of Prussia made the Ottomans allow the establishment of the Jerusalem bishopric in that year. This was to be a spiritual home for Anglicans as well as Lutherans under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Canterbury. Under the second bishop, the Lutheran Samuel Gobat (1846-1879), who was trained by the Basel Mission, the Church began to grow. He was responsible for Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Ethiopia.<sup>194</sup> He appointed people to read the Bible at many locations and started a number of schools. Though his aim was to help the revival of the existent Churches, the congregations formed by CMS began to wean members away from those Churches. The new members of the Anglican congregations were Greek-Orthodox and Greek-Catholics. Many Anglicans were displeased with this development.<sup>195</sup>

For Gobat, the conversion of the Muslims was the actual target. He believed this should be done by the Christians of the Arab World, but CMS missionaries also evangelized directly among Muslims. At times, this was practically impossible, so throughout the years, the Anglican attention became mainly focused on relating to other Christians.<sup>196</sup>

In 1887, tensions within the Anglican Church about a High-Church versus Low-Church approach and related tensions between the Anglican and the Lutheran Church, led to the end of the Ecumenical arrangement for the bishopric in Jerusalem. In line with High-Church desires, the bishop stopped accepting native Chris-

<sup>189</sup> Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record*, pp. 153-154.

<sup>190</sup> Salamah, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Egypt and Sudan', p. 736.

<sup>191</sup> Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record*, pp. 167-169.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>193</sup> Rafiq Farah, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Palestine and Jordan', in Habib Badr (ed), *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (Beirut, 2005), p. 727.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 728.

<sup>195</sup> Talal, El Hassan bin, *Christianity in the Arab World*, p. 88.

<sup>196</sup> Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record*, pp. 157-159.

tians in his Church. This led to a temporary clash with CMS, which had just begun sending new missionaries to Palestine and other Arab countries. CMS wanted to convert native Christians to an Evangelical understanding of the faith and integrate them in their meetings.<sup>197</sup>

In 1910, the Anglican Church had 2,323 members and 54 schools with 3,000 students in Palestine. It had hospitals, clinics, orphanages and home visitation schemes. Most members were of Greek-Orthodox and Greek-Catholic background but there was also a good number of Jews and some Muslims attracted to the faith. These Muslim converts usually had to escape for their life, often to Egypt.<sup>198</sup>

In 1850, the Ottoman Empire recognized the Protestants as a separate *millet*. In Jordan and Palestine, they organized themselves under the Anglican Church.<sup>199</sup> The Protestant community in Palestine set up a *Majlis al-Milli* in 1905. That *Majlis* was led by native Christians. The *Majlis* did not accept the oversight of the British Anglican bishop as it wanted to be led by an Arab with sympathies for the national and social aspirations of the Arabs. In 1958, the first Arabic bishop, Najīb Qub‘ayn was appointed. The Anglicans, sensitive to the historic Churches of the Middle East, spoke not of the bishop of Jerusalem, but *in* Jerusalem.<sup>200</sup>

#### 4.4.2.3 The Arabian Peninsula: 1930s

The discovery of oil resulted in evermore expatriates working on the eastern littoral of the Arabian Peninsula. The Anglican Church opened churches to care for its members in the major cities of the coast of the Arabian Gulf and in Yemen.

### 4.4.3 Evangelical-Lutheran Church

#### 4.4.3.1 Egypt: 1825

The Basel Mission sent five men to work in Egypt in 1825, seconded through CMS.<sup>201</sup> The organization was interdenominational, but with many Lutherans. Among the first five men was Samuel Gobat, the later bishop of Jerusalem. In 1862, the work of the mission in Egypt was closed due to difficult political circumstances.

In 1900, G. Guinness and K. Kumm founded the Sudan Pioneer Mission (SPM) in Aswān. This was an interdenominational mission, both again with a Lutheran component, with workers from Switzerland, Germany, Egypt and Nubia. In 1901 the first sent workers from Germany arrived in Aswan. The initial focus of SPM was on work among Nubians and Bejas in Sudan but since the British did not allow work in northern Sudan, the SPM worked in the regio between Aswān and

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-159.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., pp. 159-162.

<sup>199</sup> Farah, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Palestine and Jordan', p. 730.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., pp. 730-731.

<sup>201</sup> The Basel Evangelical Missionary Society was founded in 1815. It is one of the largest and oldest German speaking Protestant missionary societies and was international and interdenominational from the beginning. The society opened an institution for training missionaries in 1816 and was initially involved in training people from British and Dutch mission societies that were already engaged in evangelism. The largest number of missionaries was supplied to CMS. The Basel Mission Society also began to establish centers of its own.



Isná. Initially, SPM started a school and Arabic Bible distribution. Later Bible translation into Nubian was added. A church was built on the mission compound in Aswân in 1909.

Branches of the mission were opened in Daraw (1907) and Idfû (1911). Medical work began in 1906 in one room on the Aswân compound, as an outpatient clinic. In 1913 that developed into a hospital, which was rebuilt in 1961. The mission was also running an outpatient clinic in the Old Nubian villages Koshtame, Gerf Hiseen, Dakke and Gharb Sehel until 1966. In 1985, the Nubians of Ballana in New Nubia invited the organization to open a clinic in their village. The mission, presently known as Evangelical Mission in Upper Egypt, consists of the church, the hospital, clinics in Daraw and Ballana, and a bookshop that was opened on the Aswân compound in 1999.<sup>202</sup>

#### 4.4.3.2 Palestine and Jordan: 1841

One of the Lutheran missionaries to Egypt, Samuel Gobat, became the second bishop of the shared Lutheran and Anglican Church in Jerusalem from 1846-1879.<sup>203</sup> In 1869, he handed over some of the evangelistic work and schools under his oversight to the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society. German, Swiss, Swedish and Finnish Lutherans were involved in developing churches and schools. The German father and son Johann and Ludwig Schneller played an important role in this Lutheran work by establishing the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.<sup>204</sup>

In 1929, the first Lutheran Arab congregation was organized even though the missionaries had already founded schools and orphanages in the previous century. Five Lutheran congregations developed in Jerusalem and on the Westbank. After Israel was founded in 1948, these churches all fell under Jordanian rule. In 1967, most came under Israeli occupation. Both in 1948 and 1967, many Lutherans as well as other Protestants, escaped to Jordan.<sup>205</sup> In 1979, the first Arab bishop, Dawûd Ḥaddâd, was consecrated. The Church subscribes to the Augsburg Confession which was translated into Arabic in 1993.

#### 4.4.4 Presbyterian and Reformed Churches

##### 4.4.4.1 Palestine: 1818

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) sent its first people to Palestine in 1818. ABCFM was originally Congregationalist and Presbyterian, and later solely Congregationalist. The organization had been founded in 1810, and its missionaries were of the opinion that they should not involve themselves with the externals of religious habits, but with the 'pure Gospel' as derived directly from the Bible only. Many of the missionaries held millennial

<sup>202</sup> Meinardus, *Christians in Egypt: Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Communities Past and Present*, p. 110. Christof Sauer, *Reaching the Unreached Sudan Belt. Guinness, Kumm and the Sudan-Pionier-Mission* (Nürnberg, 2005), pp. 454ff.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>204</sup> Farah, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Palestine and Jordan', p. 732.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

views, believing that their mission work would usher in the era of Christ's rule of peace on earth.<sup>206</sup> The Ottomans did not allow them to buy property or to settle more permanently in Palestine. ABCFM therefore decided to concentrate its work in Syria and Lebanon where it was not hindered by these problems.

#### 4.4.4.2 Syria and Lebanon: 1823

Missionaries of ABCFM chose Beirut as their base in 1823 and began the Syrian Mission in Syria and Lebanon.<sup>207</sup> Due to wars, they had to retreat to Malta (1828-1830) and their mission work was also severely hampered by the Egyptian conquest of Syria in 1831. Shortly thereafter, in 1834, the Arabic section of the printing presses that were based in Malta, were transferred to Beirut. This was the beginning of one of the main publishing houses in the Arab World.<sup>208</sup>

One of the early converts from the Greek-Orthodox Church and a prominent member of the literary elite of Lebanon, Butrus al-Bustâni, played an important role in producing the so-called *Van Dyck Bible* translation in Arabic. That work was begun by Eli Smith, and after his death, it was finished by Cornelius V.A. Van Dyck in 1864.<sup>209</sup>

The medical work of the Syrian Mission was limited to a hospital in Tripoli and clinics in Hammâ and Hîms. Mary P. Eddy reached many Muslims with her itinerant clinic. She was the first female doctor who gained the Ottoman's diploma in medicine and the right to practice there.<sup>210</sup>

The educational work of the Syrian Mission was outstanding and permeated the area with revolutionary Christian and democratic ideals. Many primary and secondary schools were opened. A major lasting result of the Syrian Mission was the founding of Syrian Protestant College by Daniel Bliss. Tens of thousands of Syrians and Lebanese, mostly from Christian backgrounds, went through these institutes. These educational institutes did not nurture a Christian force that was interested in proclaiming the Gospel to Muslims but the missionaries themselves were active and sometimes successful in that realm. Henry Jessup alone baptized about two Arab Muslims each year.<sup>211</sup>

Initially, ABCFM assumed it could cooperate with the existent Churches in order to together convert Jews and Muslims. The missionaries were soon disappointed; they deemed the native Churches dead and heretical. Antonie Wessels, an Islamologist at the Free University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands) describes their attitude thus:

As long as these 'nominal' Christians were not reformed, one could not expect the Moslems to convert to Christianity. It was agreed that the Christians were worse than the Turks. [The] conduct, ceremonies and superstitions of the Eastern Christians had to inspire in the followers of the false prophet a disgust for the religion of

<sup>206</sup> Antonie Wessels, *Arab and Christian? Christians in the Middle East* (Kampen, 1995), pp. 170-173.

<sup>207</sup> Habib Badr, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Lebanon, Syria and Turkey', in Habib Badr (ed), *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (Beirut, 2005), p. 715.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 718.

<sup>209</sup> More on this in chapter 3. Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, p. 109.

<sup>210</sup> Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record*, p. 129.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

the redeemer. Before the arrival of the Protestant missionaries, the Moslems had never had the opportunity to compare Islam with a form of Christianity that was exemplary enough to allow them to feel shame over their own religion. [...] Eastern Christianity had only solicited feelings of contempt from its Islamic environment.<sup>212</sup>

Because the historic Churches resisted Protestant mission work and many converts from those Churches were in need of their own Church meetings, the personnel of the Syrian Mission decided in 1844 that Evangelical congregations should be formed as soon as feasible and that they should be led by native pastors. An important reason behind this was also, that the missionaries and their flock needed formal structures as the Ottoman rulers wanted to deal with them in the context of their *millet* system.<sup>213</sup> The first Evangelical Church was opened in Beirut in 1848; dozens of new congregations were soon formed.<sup>214</sup>

The missionaries were instrumental in effecting a general renewal within the historic Churches by raising the general level of education, by convincing many of the leaders of those Churches that change was needed and also because these Churches wanted to stop the trickle of members to the newly founded Evangelical denomination. Lyle L. VanderWerff writes about the mission workers:

No only did they become a more acceptable witness but they became a stimulant producing a renaissance of Near Eastern peoples, a leading cause in the elevation of the whole intellectual, social and spiritual life of the Near East. This achievement was marred only by the failure to create within either young Evangelical Churches or older Orthodox Churches a missionary zeal for Muslims.<sup>215</sup>

By 1908 there were 2,744 members in these Protestant churches in Lebanon and Syria.<sup>216</sup> In 1924 the Presbyterian Syrian and Lebanese Evangelical churches united in the National Evangelical Synod in Syria and Lebanon. It received near autonomous status from its American founders. In 1932 the Near East School of Theology (NEST), an amalgamation of two older institutes, was opened in Beirut.<sup>217</sup> In 1959, the Synod became responsible for managing all educational and medical institutes that the American missionaries had originally handled. In hindsight this was perhaps done too abruptly as some institutes had to be nationalized in order to guarantee their proper management.<sup>218</sup>

A Congregational community of Churches had slowly begun to take shape from the 1850s. Since many of ABCFM's missionaries were Congregationalists they had installed in many of their converts a propensity against Synodal oversight. In 1961, these congregations organized themselves into the National Evangelical Un-

<sup>212</sup> Wessels, *Arab and Christian? Christians in the Middle East*, p. 174.

<sup>213</sup> Habib Badr, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East', in Habib Badr (ed), *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (Beirut, 2005), p. 714.

<sup>214</sup> Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record*, p. 121. Badr, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Lebanon, Syria and Turkey', p. 715.

<sup>215</sup> Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record*, p. 125.

<sup>216</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6, pp. 42-45.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 109-110.

ion of Lebanon. Like the Presbyterians, these churches were socially active in vocational training, schools and orphanages. They participated in NEST.<sup>219</sup>

#### 4.4.4.3 Egypt: 1854

In 1853, some of the Syrian Mission missionaries decided to move from Syria to Egypt. The first arrived on 15 November 1854. These were two missionary veterans, James Barnett and Gulian Lansing. Soon, other Reformed mission agencies arrived, such as the Holland Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1866. That mission worked in Qalyûb and Barrâj.<sup>220</sup>

The greatest stumbling block for the conversion of Muslims, in the eyes of the Protestant missionaries, was the state of the Coptic-Orthodox Church.<sup>221</sup> Initially most Protestant agencies hoped to revive the Coptic-Orthodox Church and to win converts from Islam.<sup>222</sup> The work of the missionaries led to a renewal in the Orthodox Church, but not to the extent desired by the missionaries so soon they began to focus their attention on converting the Coptic-Orthodox and the Catholics to Protestantism. The mission to Muslims was only marginally successful.<sup>223</sup>

In 1860, Presbyterian missionaries formed their first church with seven Egyptian members and during the 1860s many churches were founded in different parts of Egypt.<sup>224</sup> In 1863, the institute presently called Evangelical Theological Seminary (ETS) was founded. This is now is the largest Protestant theological institute in the Arab World. The missionaries, later aided by the first converts, traveled the country to *kerygmatically* witness through preaching and distributing literature. They also began educational institutes, hospitals and clinics, as part of their *diakonal* witness.

In 1871, the missionaries organized themselves into an association. This opened the way for the young churches that they had founded to develop as truly indigenous churches. These Coptic-Evangelical churches had oversight from the Synod of the United Protestant Church of North America (UPCNA). The *koinonia* of the newly founded churches must have been attractive, as towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they had about 4,500 members in 39 Coptic-Evangelical churches. Most growth was in the environment of Asyût. In that city they developed a large school, the Asyût Training College. In 1899, all over the country the Protestants enrolled about 15,000 students in 168 schools, which was almost the same number as in all the government schools combined. At that time, literacy among Protestants was 50 percent for men and ten percent for women which compared very well

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> For more on this Holland Mission, see the excellent MA Thesis of Martin Strengholt done at the University of Utrecht (1993) under the supervision of Professor Dr. Jan. A.B. Jongeneel, and later translated into English: Martin J. Strengholt, 'An Altar to the Lord. History and Theology of the Dutch Society for Spreading the Gospel in Egypt 1886-1978', in Lems, Huub (ed), *Holland Mission: 150 Years Dutch Participation in Mission in Egypt* (Utrecht 2005).

<sup>221</sup> Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record*, p. 145.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>223</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6, pp. 25-27.

<sup>224</sup> Salamah, in 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Egypt and Sudan', p. 736-738.

with the national average of ten and one percent.<sup>225</sup> Due to the growth of the mission work and the founding of churches all over the country, the number of presbyteries was expanded and in 1899 these were organized under one Synod of the Nile.<sup>226</sup>

The Nile Mission Press (NMP) was an important Presbyterian publishing house for Christian Arab books. The Presbyterian missionaries were trained for service in the Muslim world in the School of Oriental Studies, which was later incorporated into the American University of Cairo (AUC).<sup>227</sup> Shortly before World War II the Coptic-Evangelical Church had about 78,000 members.<sup>228</sup>

Even for those Egyptian Muslims who did not practice their religion devoutly, Islam increasingly became the symbol of their Egyptian and Arab nationalism. After the Suez War of 1956, Egypt began to expel most of its missionaries. The Egyptian Churches remained entitled to a certain quota of 'missionary visas' for foreign personnel, but these people were meant to work within the Church, not in mission to Muslims. In 1958, the Synod of the Nile became independent of the founding Church in the USA.<sup>229</sup>

#### 4.4.4.4 Arabian Peninsula: 1887

In the Arabian Peninsula, Christian mission work has only been allowed in times of foreign occupation. In Jeddah, ruled by Egypt for some time, Egypt allowed mission to Jews in the 1830s. Aden allowed mission work when Aden's policies were dictated from London. The Free Church of Scotland began medical work and evangelism in the city in 1887, stimulated by the British linguist Ion Grant Neville Keith-Falconer. A congregation of a handful of members came into existence. It would take until 1961 for that minute congregation to be formalized as the Church of South Arabia.<sup>230</sup>

In 1888 three students at the Theological Seminary of the (Dutch) Reformed Church in America (RCA) in New Jersey felt a burden for Arabia. They formed the Arabian Mission as part of ABCFM. One of them was Samuel M. Zwemer, who became one of the foremost missionaries to the Arabs. He aroused much interest in mission to the Arabs in both Europe and North America due to his travels and the many books and tracts he wrote.<sup>231</sup> Zwemer went to Syria in 1890 for language studies and then moved to the Iraqi city of Başrah on the Arabian Gulf. This was the first Protestant mission work in this part of the world.

From the outset, the ABCFM band of men focused on Bible distribution and medical work. They soon also began work in other cities on the Arabian Gulf. In February 1893 Zwemer opened a Bible shop in Bahrain. In 1894 RCA formally adopted the Arabian Mission as ABCFM was financially unable to support the work. In 1903 the Mason Memorial Hospital was opened in Bahrain. This hospi-

<sup>225</sup> Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record*, p. 149. Salamah, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Egypt and Sudan', p. 741.

<sup>226</sup> Salamah, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Egypt and Sudan', p. 739-740.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 7, pp. 257-258.

<sup>228</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 7, pp. 257-258.

<sup>229</sup> Salamah, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Egypt and Sudan', p. 740.

<sup>230</sup> Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record*, pp. 172-174.

<sup>231</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6, pp. 59-61.

tal was later renamed American Mission Hospital and continues its work until now.<sup>232</sup>

During the 1890s, work was also started in Kuwait and Oman. Like in Baṣrah and Bahrain, evangelism through literature distribution was central, but medical work also played an important role. In both countries a hospital was opened. According to Lewis R. Scudder III, Zwemer 'fervently believed that medicine was the battering ram of Christian mission'.<sup>233</sup> However, hardly any converts were won through the *diakonal* witness of the educational and medical institutes and the literature that was distributed only reached a very small literate population. Zwemer seems to have changed his view on the relative value of the approach of the Arabian Mission with the advent of radio. In 1944 he wrote that 'we must use the battering ram of the radio incessantly and repeatedly to summon [the lost] to surrender to Jesus Christ'.<sup>234</sup>

The missionaries of the Arabian Mission were welcomed and respected. They had a strong impact on local policies, especially as the resources for development became more available to the governments in the region. The rulers in Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain acknowledged that their countries were indebted to the Arabian Mission in developing their ministries of education and health, and in influencing public attitudes towards service and professionalism. As *moral agents* the missionaries were highly regarded as well.<sup>235</sup>

The Arabic churches founded by the Arabian Mission in the different cities on the Arabian Gulf, hardly attracted any converts from the local Arabs. Some expatriate Christian Arabs from Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine joined them. Due to the oil boom and the economic growth of the Arab Gulf states since 1973, the numbers of non-Arab Christians using the compounds of these churches has increased dramatically, thus overwhelming the small Arabic congregations. When the Arabian Mission was disbanded in 1973, these congregations became rather exposed.<sup>236</sup> This led, for instance, to Kuwait taking over the mission hospital in 1974. A year later, the hospital in Oman was also transferred to the government.<sup>237</sup>

#### 4.4.5 Other Denominations

The Plymouth Brethren were begun in Egypt through the work of the formerly Presbyterian missionary B. Pinkerton. He began his work for developing Brethren communities in 1874, and he was instrumental in founding seven churches throughout Egypt. In Ṭimâ, south of Asyût, a Brethren missionary school for orphans was begun in 1934. For many decades the Dutch missionary Heleen Voorhoeve was the motivational soul and director of this school.<sup>238</sup>

<sup>232</sup> Lewis R. Scudder III, *The Arabian Mission's Story; in Search of Abraham's Other Son* (Grand Rapids, 1998), p. 295. Scudder's book is a scholarly work on the history of RCA's *Arabian Mission*.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>234</sup> Samuel Zwemer, *Evangelism Today: Message not Method* (New York, London, 1944), p. 100.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 419.

<sup>236</sup> Scudder, *The Arabian Mission's Story; in Search of Abraham's Other Son*, pp. 336-337.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 283-284, 306.

<sup>238</sup> Meinardus, *Christians in Egypt: Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Communities Past and Present*, pp. 112-113.

In 1895, the first Evangelical Baptist Church was founded in Beirut by missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention from the USA. The first Baptist church in Egypt was begun in the Fayyûm oasis in 1955.

The first Pentecostal church in Egypt was begun in 1914 through the work of some missionaries. Among the successes of the Egyptian Pentecostal Church, also known as the *Apostolic Church*, is the Lillian Trasher Orphanage in Asyût. This orphanage was founded in 1911 by Lillian Trasher, a Pentecostal missionary from the USA.<sup>239</sup>

In 1899 an Irish missionary began the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) denomination in Egypt, mostly by trying to convince members of the Coptic-Evangelical churches to adopt the SDA views. The SDAs do not participate with the other Churches in the *Majlis al-Milli*; the denomination was registered independently in 1960 with the ministry of interior.<sup>240</sup> The SDAs in the Arab World are mostly Armenians; the Turkish genocide at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century made many SDA Armenians escape to the Middle East.

The Holiness Church began in Egypt in 1902 with the work of H.I. Randel. The Canadian Free Methodist Church relates formally to this denomination since 1959.<sup>241</sup> Rather similar is the Faith Church in Egypt, tracing its beginning to the mission work of Louis Glenn and his wife who settled in Damanhûr in 1905.<sup>242</sup>

#### 4.4.6 Modern Presence in the Arab World

##### 4.4.6.1 Anglican Communion

By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were about 30,000 Anglicans in the Arab World. The bishop in Cairo was responsible for the Anglican communities Egypt, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa. The Episcopal Church had a handful of churches in Egypt, beside a publishing and bookshop, a school for the deaf, a Sudanese refugee school, and a hospital and some clinics. It also involved itself in formal dialogue with Islam.<sup>243</sup> By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the diocese of Jerusalem was responsible for the congregations in Jerusalem, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The diocese of Jerusalem was the largest of the Anglican dioceses in the Arab World.<sup>244</sup> There were also ten Anglican parishes in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE and Oman. These were united in the bishopric of Cyprus and the Gulf which had its base in Nicosia (Cyprus). The Anglican Churches in the Gulf were the most coherent and Ecumenical congregations in the area. From the outset, these parishes were international and not uniformly Anglican.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., pp. 113-114.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., pp. 114-115.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., pp. 110-111.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., pp. 102-103.

<sup>244</sup> Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Vol. 6, pp 98-102.

<sup>245</sup> Lewis R. Scudder, Jr., 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Iraq and the Gulf', in Habib Badr (ed), *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (Beirut, 2005), p. 754.

#### 4.4.6.2 Evangelical-Lutheran Church

By 2003, the total membership of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Israel, the Palestinian Territories and Jordan was about 2,000. The Lutherans managed five schools and two boarding homes with thousands of students, half of whom were Muslims. They also managed social projects and a media center for publishing news about Palestinian matters. This institute in Bethlehem was headed by the priest Mitrî Raḥâb.<sup>246</sup>

#### 4.4.6.3 Presbyterian and Reformed Churches

The Protestant Churches in Lebanon suffered deeply from the civil war of 1975-1990; many members emigrated. By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Syrian-Evangelical Church was the largest Church with 46 congregations and 10,000-13,000 members. The National Evangelical Union of Lebanon was the second largest with nine congregations and approximately 6,000 members.<sup>247</sup>

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Synod of the Nile had 312 congregations and 261 pastors all over Egypt. The community administered hundreds of schools, orphanages, bookshops, hospitals and other social projects. The community was estimated to be between 50,000 and 300,000 members.<sup>248</sup> The Coptic-Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) was the social development arm of the Presbyterian denomination and managed some exemplary village development, literacy work and inter-faith dialogue projects. CEOSS also managed a large Christian publishing house, called *Dâr al-Thaqâfah* (House of Culture).<sup>249</sup>

The largest Presbyterian church in Egypt was *Qaṣr al-Dubârah* in central Cairo. It managed an amalgam of different ministries. This church confessed the Reformed faith, though it harbored many different styles of worship. This church claimed to represent a community of 7,000 people, making it the largest Protestant congregation in the Arab World.

#### 4.4.6.4 Other Denominations

By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Plymouth Brethren in Egypt had about 15,000 attendants in 165 congregations.<sup>250</sup> Because of their many publications, their influence extended, far beyond their small numbers, into the other Protestant churches.

There were eight Baptist congregations in Egypt, divided in two groups.<sup>251</sup> In Syria and Lebanon, the Evangelical Baptists had 18 churches. In Beirut they owned the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS), a publishing house, an orphanage, and some academic institutes including secondary schools. These were

<sup>246</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 106-108.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>248</sup> Pacini mentions a total of 20,900 Protestants of all denominations together in Egypt. That is an impossibly low figure. However, the 300,000 mentioned by Bailey and Bailey for the Coptic-Evangelical community alone, is very high. Pacini (ed), *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East; the Challenge of the Future*, p. 325. Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, p. 326.

<sup>249</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, p. 105.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112. Badr, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Lebanon, Syria and Turkey' p. 721.



legally handed over to the Lebanese Baptists at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptists de-institutionalized its global mission work. There were also some Baptist congregations among the Palestinians and in Jordan.

Presently, the Egyptian Pentecostals claim 170 congregations with about 150,000 baptized members. That number is exaggerated, and Meinardus' figure of 10,000 members is probably closer to the truth.<sup>252</sup> The Pentecostals still maintain the Lillian Trasher Orphanage with the support of the Assemblies of God (AOG) in the USA. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were also some Pentecostal churches in Jordan and Lebanon.

In 1992, the SDAs in Egypt had 1,361 registered members. They had about 1,300 members in Lebanon, 110 in Kuwait, 132 in Iraq, 60 in Jordan, and five in the UAE, with no members in the other countries of the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>253</sup> By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Egypt had about 700 SDAs in 17 active parishes; in Lebanon there were only a few hundred left. This decrease in membership is due to emigration.<sup>254</sup>

Presently, the Holiness Church has 91 congregations and about 4,250 members in Egypt, with its own theological college in Asyût.<sup>255</sup> The Faith Church, which resembles the Holiness Church, has 19 congregations. The largest of those in Cairo has an attendance of many hundreds each week, and is led by Sa'îd Ibrâhîm who is also the leader of the denomination.<sup>256</sup>

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century there were some Alliance churches in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine. These were begun by the mission work of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) from North America. In Lebanon and Jordan, there were also some congregations of the Church of the Nazarene.

## 4.5 CHURCH LIFE IN THE ARAB WORLD

### 4.5.1 *The First-Birth Right of the Historic Churches*

The historic Churches of the Arab World played a preponderant role in the creation of global Christian theology through the Church Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils. These Churches have, throughout their history as *dhimmis* under Islamic rule, held on to the historic Christian faith into the present age. For this reason, the initial Protestant mission into the Arab World believed that it should not set

<sup>252</sup> This number of 150,000 is given by Bailey and Bailey. It assumes that the average AOG church has a community of almost 900 baptized people. As they do not baptize children, and as children form a large part of the Egyptian population, this would mean that each AOG congregation has a community of at least 1500 people. This is an exaggerated estimation. Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, p. 121.

<sup>253</sup> Bert Smit, 'The Challenges of the Middle East', p. 2, in *Adventist Media Centre Middle East News* (No. 1, January 1992).

<sup>254</sup> Meinardus, *Christians in Egypt: Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Communities Past and Present*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

up its own Protestant Church; it recognized the *first-birth right* of the existent Churches. These missionaries later justified the start of Protestant denominations by describing the existent Churches in the bleakest possible terms. With hindsight, it seems that the mission agencies should have been more patient.

The historic Churches of the Arab World see Protestants in the Arab World with misgivings. As they are seen as rebels against Rome, they have placed themselves outside the bounds of historic Christianity in the view of the Churches of the Middle East. Beside that, the Protestants have been able to wean substantial numbers of people away from the existent Churches.

Many Protestant Arabs themselves have come to recognize the Christian legitimacy of the historic Churches and many have distanced themselves from parts of their Western Protestant theology and its related culture. According to Ḥabīb Badr, a leading pastor of the National Evangelical Church in Beirut, 'the family of Evangelical Churches has acquired, over the years, a local and deep-rooted character that enabled it to become a natural part of the Middle East.'<sup>257</sup>

Jûrj Şabrah, academic dean of NEST, wrote in 1993 that the Protestants of the Arab World are neither a colonial phenomenon nor a foreign transplant, but 'an extension of the Reformation and a communication of its essentially universal message'. He believed that Protestants should:

[...] first of all understand who they are in relation to this essential message of the Reformation, for, in the Middle East, many have alienated themselves from the Word of God either by dissolving it into some form of cultural Protestantism or by 'koranizing' it, namely, equating the Bible with the Word of God, making God's revelation a revelation of texts rather than a revelation [of] himself... Only by recovering the authentic traditions of the reformation which revolve around the living and life-giving Word can Protestants come to terms with their identity and discover the way to an ecumenical witness in this part of the world.<sup>258</sup>

Not only does Şabrah call for an *Ecumenical* witness, that is, a witness in *koinonia* with the historic Churches of the Arab World, but he also redefines the Reformation in terms that come close to the theological understanding of the historic Churches. He seems to make the *koinonia* of the Church with Christ central in the *tritych* of the Christian witness, instead of the *kerygmatic* witness of the Word as Protestantism has traditionally done.

Presently, most *Ecumenical* missionaries in the Arab World work formally with the Protestant Churches, and they also have cordial relationships, usually informal, with the historic Churches. Many *Evangelical* missionaries are not formally attached to a Protestant Arab Church; they often cooperate informally with local congregations and para-Church organizations. Most do not relate to the historic Churches at all. Part of their lack of interest in dealing formally with Churches, is the fact that for many Evangelicals, the 'invisible' Church of the 'true believers' is much more important than the concrete, organized expressions of the Body of

<sup>257</sup> Badr, 'Evangelical Missions and Churches in the Middle East: Lebanon, Syria and Turkey', p. 713.

<sup>258</sup> George Sabra, 'Protestantism in the Middle East; a Colonial Phenomenon, Western Transplant...?' in *The Near East School of Theology: Theological Review* XIV/1 (Beirut, 1993), pp. 38-39, as quoted in Antonie Wessels, *Arab and Christian? Christians in the Middle East* (Kampen, 1995), p. 184.

Christ. For the historic Churches of the Arab World, the focus is more on participation in the more tangible liturgy and the Eucharist.<sup>259</sup>

Among the independent groups of Evangelical missionaries, there seems to be a growing awareness that the historic Churches of the Arab World are a valid expression of the Body of Christ and some advocate cooperation with those Churches. This position is illustrated by an affirmation of some of those mission agencies in 1992: 'As Evangelical Protestants we affirm that the Orthodox Churches of the Middle East, too, belong to God Almighty and that they have a vital role to play in God's mission to the region'.<sup>260</sup>

This approach among both Protestant Churches and missionaries indicates a return to the recognition of the *first-birth right* of the historic Churches of the Arab World. For a Christian witness that recognizes the importance of *koinonia*, the Ecumenical work toward the unity of the Churches in the Arab World is the *sine-qua-non* of Christian mission.

#### 4.5.2 Life as Minorities

Throughout Church history in the Arab World until the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Christians were as subjected nations that were allowed to continue living in the midst of the Muslim world.<sup>261</sup> Christians were called *People of the Covenant* (*Ahl al-Dhimmah*), or simply *dhimmis*, in accordance with Islamic Law.<sup>262</sup> Some precise regulations for the life of Christians were developed. In public life, they were subjected to many discriminatory rules: they were not allowed to carry weapons; they could not use the same saddles for riding horses as Muslims did; they could not dress as Muslims did; they had to pay special taxes; building new churches was forbidden and even repairing churches was hard. Muslim rulers regularly applied these laws rather liberally, to the advantage of Christians. Commonly however, Christians were treated worse than these laws prescribed, both by the rulers but also by the Muslim population.<sup>263</sup>

The patriarchs were treated as political leaders of their Church community and they were held accountable that their subjects obeyed the laws of the land. In order to do so, the patriarchs could invoke the support of the army against their Church members. They were allowed to enforce their own ecclesiastical laws in the realm of personal law among their members and they were responsible for collecting taxes from them. This degree of political power meant that when patriarchs were elected, the caliph would usually have to also formally recognize them. As there were often contending candidates for the patriarchy, this gave the

<sup>259</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>260</sup> David P. Teague (ed), *Turning Over a New Leaf: Protestant Mission and the Orthodox Churches of the Middle East. Final Report of a Multi-Mission Study Group on Orthodoxy* (London, 1992), p. 116. This booklet was a publication by three mission agencies in the Arab World, namely Interserve, Middle East Christian Outreach (MECO) and Middle East Media (MEM). In 2006 an updated edition was published on [www.stfrancismagazine.info](http://www.stfrancismagazine.info) (1 June 2006).

<sup>261</sup> This is treated further in chapter 2.

<sup>262</sup> See the entry on Dhimma, in H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (eds), *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1974, first edition 1953), p. 75.

<sup>263</sup> W. Hage, 'Het Christendom onder de heerschappij van de islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', pp. 72-73.

caliph's real power over the leadership of the Churches. It was not uncommon for caliphs to be paid handsomely by the contenders, for influencing their choice.<sup>264</sup>

The Churches were free to celebrate their liturgies within the confinement of their walls but Christians had to be very careful when *kerygmatically* witnessing their faith to Muslims. Mission to Muslims was illegal and could be punished by death. This means that the Churches turned inward and became rather secluded communities in the midst of the Muslim Arabs. This did not deter some Church leaders from trying to convert Muslims. One of those was the Chalcedonian bishop of Ḥarran (in present Turkey), Abû Qurrah (ca. 750-825). Among his many works was his Arabic *Treatise on the Existence of the Creator and the True Religion*. It contained a carefully organized account of the religions of his time, including Islam. Abû Qurrah argued that the Christian religion was the true one.<sup>265</sup> Many writers published anonymous tracts in which the Christian faith was defended and Islam sharply attacked. Often the *Qur'ân* was attacked for being full of contradictions and Muḥammad for not being a real prophet. These tracts appeared in all the Churches of the Arab World.<sup>266</sup>

According to Atiya, the Churches under Islam enjoyed mostly peace and freedom, until the Crusaders 'tipped the balance' of peace:

It would be an error to contend that there had been no Christian persecutions before that time. As a rule, sporadic antagonism to the Christians was not a set policy in the early Islamic polity but rather depended on the whim of the ruler in the office. The Crusade was possibly the decisive factor in the alienation of the Muslim from the older spirit of fellowship with his Christian neighbor. Following this, the position of the Eastern Churches and communities, including the Jacobites, greatly deteriorated.<sup>267</sup>

The idea that the Crusades were the main reason why the position of the Eastern Churches 'greatly deteriorated' is in line with the Pan-Arab nationalist ideas that Atiya shared with many Arab intellectuals of the 1950s and 1960s. He assumed that the main problems of the Arabs were caused by European intervention. He also suggested that the increasing influence of non-Arab Muslims, such as the central Asians, caused the Islamic policies towards Christians to deteriorate. In rather racist terms, he was of the opinion that the 'decline of the pure Arab and the steady weakness of the caliphate against the rise in influence of non-Arab elements became overpowering in the Islamic polity'.<sup>268</sup>

Atiya also recognized that the disappearance of the 'clement tolerance of Arab rule' was because the Muslims had become less dependent on Christian functionaries due to the 'continuous growth in the education of the Muslim'.<sup>269</sup> Atiya never

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid., pp. 74-75.

<sup>265</sup> Guy Monnot, 'Abu Qurra et la pluralité des religions' *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, RHR 1/1991, on [www.rhr.revues.org](http://www.rhr.revues.org) (9 April 2006).

<sup>266</sup> Hage, 'Het christendom onder de heerschappij van de Islam (7e tot 13e eeuw)', pp. 73-74.

<sup>267</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 194.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p. 199. This also reflected the views of many Pan-Arab intellectuals, like Phillip Hitti. These matters are also treated in chapter 2.

<sup>269</sup> Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, p. 199.

mentions that the Christians had become a minority in the Arab World. It is likely that this was a major reason for the deterioration of the position of the Churches. Muslims were increasingly able to implement their own religious and societal views. This was not a popular idea in the 1950s and 1960s, when many Christians in the Arab World hoped that the movement of Pan-Arab nationalism would lead to equal rights for all citizens.

After the Ottomans had conquered Constantinople and the Balkans, they focused their attention on conquering the Arab World. By 1517, large parts of North Africa, Egypt, the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula had been subjected to Ottoman rule. This did not have great impact on the life of the Churches in the Arab World as the Ottomans did not change the social and legal structures of the lands they conquered. Christians continued to be treated as *dhimmis*.

The Ottomans treated the *dhimmis* as subject *millets* within the supreme nation of Islam. From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottomans recognized three of those *millets*, namely the Greeks, the Armenians, and the Jews. The Greek patriarch of Constantinople, who was appointed by the *sultân*, was seen as the ruler of all Chalcedonian Christians. The patriarch of the Armenians in Jerusalem was made to oversee the Armenians and all other Miaphysites.<sup>270</sup>

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of great changes within the Ottoman Empire. European influences were pervasive. It is interesting that, under pressure of France, England and Russia, the *millet* system was initially extended. The Protestants and the Catholics came to be recognized as separate *millets*.<sup>271</sup> The Western nations used this for deepening their own influences in the Ottoman Empire and the Arab World by acting as their legal protectors. These influences ensured that revolutionary European concepts like *nationalism* and *individual rights* made inroads into the Arab World. The *millets* were highly susceptible to adopting ethno-linguistic identities. The first dramatic effect of this was the Greek liberation war (1821-1831) that led to the formation of Greece.<sup>272</sup>

The Ottomans, under pressure to accommodate increasing regionalism and also for fear of European encroachment on their lands, modernized their state along European lines. This included an increased recognition of individual and minority rights. A whole range of reforms (*Tanzimat*) was announced during the period of 1839 to 1878. These entailed for instance that, as regards to taxation and the military levy, Christians and Muslims were treated as equals. The *dhimmi* system was legally dismantled in a radical breach with Islamic legal practice. Christians and Jews could now play important roles in the state. The *Tanzimat* also resulted in a more important role for the lay leaders of the *millets* at the expense of their patriarchs. This strengthened the tendency to secularism and the development toward modernity within the *millets*.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> A.H. de Groot, 'Christenen in het Osmaanse Rijk (1300-1914)', in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de islam* (Kampen, 1997), pp. 90-91.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

	1900	1970	2000	2025
Algeria	12.2	0.8	0.3	0.3
Bahrain	0.3	3.8	10.5	11.3
Comoros	0.1	0.5	1.2	1.5
Djibouti	0.5	8.1	4.5	4.1
Egypt	18.6	18	15.1	14.3
Iraq	6.4	4.1	3.2	3.1
Jordan	5.8	3.6	4.1	5.3
Kuwait	0.3	5.2	12.7	13.8
Lebanon	77.4	52.4	53	51.1
Libya	1.3	3.0	3.1	3.4
Mauretania	0	0.5	0.3	0.2
Morocco	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.6
Oman	0	0.5	4.9	5.9
Palestine	11.7	7	8.6	9.0
Qatar	0.4	4.4	10.4	12.1
KSA	0	0.5	3.7	4.8
Somalia	0.1	0.2	1.4	0.7
Sudan	0	8.5	16.7	18.4
Syria	15.7	9.9	7.8	7.7
Tunisia	7.5	0.7	0.5	0.6
UAE	0.1	6.1	11.1	11.9
Yemen	0.2	0	0.2	0.2

Figure 4.1 David B. Barrett's Percentages of Christians in the Arab World: 1900-2025

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most Arab lands came under the rule of the colonial powers. In their struggle for independence, Christian and Muslim Arabs often cooperated cordially. The anti-colonial movements all over the Arab World were mostly secular, giving Christians the hope that after independence, they could participate as equal citizens with Muslims in the life of society and state. For the Church in the Arab World, this was a matter of survival, as in all countries except Lebanon their numbers had become rather low and continued to go decrease.

In this context, it must be said that actual percentage figures of Christians in the Arab World must be treated with care, as there are no credible, independent sources. An example of this is given in *Figure 4.1*, which tabulates the percentage of Christians in the Arab World as published by David B. Barrett.<sup>274</sup> Not only does he not differentiate between Christian Arabs and expatriate Christians, but he also greatly overestimates the figures for Egypt and Lebanon.

<sup>274</sup> David B. Barrett, (ed), *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World* Vol. 2, (Oxford, New York, 2001).

Soon after independence, in the 1970s, a pervasive *fundamentalization* of society and the state began in many Arab countries.<sup>275</sup> Legally, Christians were assured almost equal rights with Muslims, but in practice they were often still treated as *dhimmis*; in most countries, the building of churches was restricted, conversion of Muslims to the Christian faith was punished by imprisonment, and Christians were made to feel secondary citizens by discriminatory treatment, both by the Muslim population and by state officials if not by law.

In the present period of increasing fundamentalism among Muslim Arabs, the Church is facing further marginalization. Its response varies. Though the fundamentalist trend in Islam tends to marginalize the Church, it is also true that many Christians in the Arab World opt for *self-marginalization*. This is both due to pressure from Islam and also to the trends of fundamentalism among the Christian Arabs themselves. The Maronites in Lebanon for example have opted for *militant ghettoization*.<sup>276</sup> They can afford that militancy as they are a large minority in Lebanon with political majority rights.

Other Churches in small minority positions, like the Coptic-Orthodox, have chosen isolation from society in a quieter manner. In 1993, Shanûda III opposed the idea of the Copts organizing themselves politically in a Coptic party, 'in order not to increase the isolation of Copts in the society'. He appealed to the Copts to participate in political life through the existent parties, and criticized the government for isolating the Copts by 'keeping them away from political activity'.<sup>277</sup> As the Copts are only a small minority in Egypt, their chances to be represented in the existent political parties is small in the present socio-religious climate; by asking the Copts to not organize themselves politically, their patriarch chose in fact for a continued distance of the Copts to political life.

Another approach among Christians is the most ultimate form of isolationism, namely emigration. The stream of Christians leaving the Arab World continues unabated; it increases each time there is a major political or military confrontation. This, combined with a continued leakage of Christians to Islam and the reduction in the size of Christian families, has led to an ongoing decrease in the relative size of the Christian populations in the Arab World.

In 1989 MECC suggested that the Church in the Arab World might also respond differently to the trend of fundamentalism: 'They can become a militant ghetto, they can become a docile ghetto, or they can seek to adopt an open Christianity which acknowledges the legitimacy of the Islamic revival, but which also searches for its own role in current events.'<sup>278</sup>

To 'seek the legitimacy of the Islamic revival' focuses on the root causes of that revival. Many Christians in the Arab World see the foreign policies of Europe and especially the USA as the main cause for the rise of fundamentalism in the Arab World. Western support for Israel is one major issue. This approach of MECC is exemplified in the Palestinian Liberation Theology as proposed by Al-

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<sup>275</sup> Fundamentalism is a proper term for this Islamic movement, as it purports a return to the *fundaments of religion* ('*usul al-din*).

<sup>276</sup> Wessels, *Arab and Christian? Christians in the Middle East*, p. 225.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>278</sup> Quoted in Wessels, *Arab and Christian? Christians in the Middle East*, p. 227.

*Sabil* in Jerusalem. This organization, led by the Anglican priest Nâ'im 'Atîq, endeavors to create a Christian theology that is contextual for the Arab World, in particular for Palestine; it wants the Church to stand in the forefront of the efforts to create an independent Palestinian state.<sup>279</sup> It must also be said that this organization in its efforts to play that role, mostly speaks to its own Christian constituency and to its Western supporters, and not to all of society.

Most Christians in the Arab World are so fearful of the Islamic majority that they prefer the ghetto or emigration options above participation in Arab society.<sup>280</sup> This attitude of fear and hopelessness is unlikely to change if the Muslims of the Arab World do not unequivocally pronounce, both legally and socially, that they regard Christians as fully equal citizens who are allowed to witness to their Christian hope, not only in the secure *koinonia* of their Church, or through their *diakonal* acts in Church and society, but also by the *kerygmatic* witness to Christ in the public domain.

#### 4.5.3 Networks

##### 4.5.3.1 Ecumenism and Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)

The first seven Ecumenical Councils of the Church were efforts to unify a Christianity that was developing into a plurality of theologies and cultures. These Councils were important for the formulation of theology but they did not heal the divisions; they rather underlined the differences. The Eighth Ecumenical Council in Ferrara-Florence brought leaders from all Churches together, but ended in failure. According to Jean Corbon, a Greek-Catholic who taught Ecumenism at the University of the Holy Spirit in Kaslik (Lebanon) and at the University of St. Joseph in Beirut, Ferrara-Florence did not succeed because:

[the] Churches had lived too long with the disparity of their growth without getting to know each other; the diversity of their cultures and canonic disciplines rendered them strangers to one another; and the general blocking among ethnicity, political power and ecclesiastical communion made the necessary recognition of legitimate differences incompatible with the receiving of the divine gift of unity.<sup>281</sup>

After the failure of Ferrara-Florence, the Roman-Catholic Church changed its approach. It began to invite individuals and dioceses that were part of Middle Eastern Churches into the Roman-Catholic fold; these Christian Arabs were allowed to maintain their liturgical languages and practices, with some adaptations, but they had to accept the primacy of the patriarch of Rome. This did not bring unity to the Churches in the Arab World, but it created more division. Protestant mission work that began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century added to that division.

The first serious call to unity of the Churches during the 20<sup>th</sup> century was made in 1902 in Istanbul by the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch Joachim III. He was, in the

<sup>279</sup> For more on *al-Sabil*, see Jos M. Strengholt, 'Middle Eastern Theology', published in William Dyrness and Veli-Matti Karkkainen (eds), *Global Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, 2008).

<sup>280</sup> Wessels, *Arab and Christian? Christians in the Middle East*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>281</sup> Jean Corbon, 'Ecumenism in the Middle East: History', in Habib Badr (ed), *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (Beirut, 2005), p. 874



words of Corbon, ‘stripped of the pomp of Byzantium and persecuted’. It was in those circumstances that he sent an encyclical letter to all Greek-Orthodox Churches, asking them to search for common ground with the other Churches to form a *koinonia* of Churches.<sup>282</sup> In the decades to come there was an increasing tendency to an informal Ecumenism in the Churches of the Arab World, but on a formal level not much was accomplished.

The first steps to formal Ecumenism were taken in the context of Protestant mission. In 1927 in Ḥilwân (Egypt) missionaries formed the Christian Council for Western Asia and Northern Africa. In 1930 it was renamed Near East Christian Council (NECC) and in 1962 the meaning of the abbreviation was changed to Near East Council of Churches. This change was prompted by the desire of the Protestant Churches of the Arab World to free themselves from the preponderant role of foreign mission agencies in NECC. This change also enabled NECC to enlist the Syriac-Orthodox Church among its members.<sup>283</sup>

In 1974 the organization’s name changed to Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). Whereas NECC was a mostly Protestant organization, MECC also encompassed all Miaphysite Churches and the Greek-Orthodox Church. The first general secretary was the Presbyterian Albârt Istîrû. In 1977, the Greek-Orthodox Jubrâ’il ‘Gaby’ Ḥabîb, who had played a major role in Ecumenical forums in Lebanon, took over.<sup>284</sup> Matters that had been important in the route towards the formation of MECC were the annual Week of Prayer for Unity, the formation of a regional theology, and the Christian Arab response to the war of June 1967 between Israel and the Arabs.<sup>285</sup> These would continue to be important themes in MECC. In 1990, the Catholic Churches joined MECC as full members.<sup>286</sup> In 1994, the Presbyterian Riyâdh Jarjûr was elected general secretary. He was succeeded after two terms in 2003 by Jirjis Şâlih, a Coptic-Orthodox theologian.

During this period of Ecumenicity, the Churches of the Arab World have made remarkable progress toward a witness of *koinonia*. Not only has that been made visible in communal *diakonal* projects, inside and outside of the structures of MECC, but also through a striking progress toward a unified theology, especially in those areas that led to separation during early Church history.

In 1965, the Roman-Catholic and the Greek-Orthodox Church mutually withdrew the anathemas pronounced against each other in 1054. This was an important step in renewing the *koinonia* of the Church as it led to better relationships between these Churches in the Arab World.

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid., p. 875.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., p. 876.

<sup>284</sup> Gabriel Habib, ‘Ecumenism in the Middle East: A personal Experience’, in Habib Badr (ed), *Christianity: A History in the Middle East* (Beirut, 2005), p. 887: ‘[In] the days of my youth [...] I was member of a group of students under the Orthodox Youth Movement, which called for spiritual revival in the Church and, through it, the search for lost Christian unity. [The] agenda of our group contained, in addition to studies from the Bible and the writings of the fathers of the Church and current social issues, the question of the unity of the Church and its witness in today’s world.’

<sup>285</sup> Corbon, ‘Ecumenism in the Middle East: History’, p. 877.

<sup>286</sup> Manfred Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World; The Experience of Radio Voice of the Gospel: 1957-1977* (Geneva, 1983), pp. 12-13.

While re-affirming their rejection of the Chalcedonian decisions, the Coptic-Orthodox and Syriac-Orthodox Churches became members of MECC in 1974, asserting that they would 'engage as a family of Oriental Orthodox Churches in the Middle East in any theological dialogue with other Churches and Christian world communions'.<sup>287</sup> Patriarch Shanûdah III participated personally in the Assembly of the WCC in Canberra (Australia) in 1991, where he was elected as one of its presidents. In 1994 he was also chosen as one of the presidents of MECC.<sup>288</sup>

The Coptic-Orthodox Church presently enjoys good relations with the Roman-Catholic Church. The two Churches signed a common declaration in 1973 that stipulated that they would search for unity.<sup>289</sup> In 1990, at Chambessy (Switzerland), the Greek-Orthodox, Coptic-Orthodox, Syriac-Orthodox and Roman-Catholic Churches reached a fundamental accord on their Christology, though full communion cannot be reached before some annexed matters are resolved. In the meantime, the Greek-Orthodox and Syriac-Orthodox patriarchates of Antioch have agreed to a pastoral protocol.<sup>290</sup>

Important for the ecumenical relations between the Churches of the Arab World is also, that many have decided to no longer use the *filioque* (Arabic: *wa al-Ibn*) in their creeds. Rome has allowed its Uniate Churches in the Arab World to not use it any longer. On 1 October 1987, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, and Shanûdah III, also reached an agreement that the Anglican Churches in the Arab World would no longer use the *filioque* as part of the Creeds. Agreement was also reached between Runcie, and Shanûdah III on the Christological formula of Kyrollos on the *mia physis*.<sup>291</sup>

In 1994, the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and the Roman Pope John Paul II signed a Common Christological Declaration in the Vatican, which states:

The controversies of the past led to anathemas, bearing on persons and on formulas. The Lord's Spirit permits us to understand better today that the divisions brought about in this way were due in large part to misunderstandings. [...] We experience ourselves united today in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God who became man so that we might become children of God by his grace.<sup>292</sup>

The Church leaders also decided to cooperate in the areas of catechesis and the formation of future priests. In the same year, MECC invited the Assyrians to become full members but the Assyrian Church declined. In 1997, the Assyrians signed a Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity with the Chaldean Church.<sup>293</sup> In 1997, Mar Dinkha IV entered into negotiations with the Syriac-Orthodox Church and as a result the two Churches stopped anathemizing each other.<sup>294</sup>

<sup>287</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, pp. 78

<sup>288</sup> Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, p. 7.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.* p. 74.

<sup>290</sup> Corbon, 'Ecumenism in the Middle East: History', p. 881.

<sup>291</sup> Meinardus, *Christians in Egypt: Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Communities Past and Present*, p. 104. In the Anglican Church in Egypt, the *filioque* was manually erased from the Arabic prayerbooks.

<sup>292</sup> Bailey and Bailey, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?*, p. 131-132.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> [www.cired.org](http://www.cired.org)

The importance of these and other agreements between the Churches of the historic patriarchates cannot be overestimated with a view of the impact on their Christian witness. Corbon speaks in this context of a ‘new silent Pentecost in which, fifteen centuries after the dissensions of the 5<sup>th</sup> century’, because ‘all the churches can today profess in their diverse languages the same faith in the Lord Christ, true God and true Man’.<sup>295</sup> According to Corbon:

The free gift of unity in plurality cannot be foreseen, but it is certain that it manifests its power in the weakness of the humiliated churches. [...] The Churches of the Middle East initially lived their diversity in unity. The divisions appeared at a time when the identity of each church was felt to be threatened by a dominating unity. During the course of centuries, all attempts at reconciliation failed for having misapprehended the mystery of the plural unity of the Church in the image of the Holy Trinity. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the ecumenical progress in the Middle East was a slow turning back to the sources, beyond the models of unity in this world, such as centralization or absorption or federalism or confessionalism.<sup>296</sup>

#### 4.5.3.2 Fellowship of Middle Eastern Evangelical Churches (FMEEC)

The Protestant Churches in the Arab World have been dwarfed in the context of MECC, the organization they themselves started. In order to not lose a platform for discussing matters pertaining to Arab Protestantism, they have created their own Pan-Arab organization, called the *Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches* (FMEEC).<sup>297</sup>

The objectives of FMEEC are to strengthen the mission and ministry of the Protestant Churches, to promote leadership training and formation of the laity, men and women alike, and to bring the member Churches to closer unity through working and learning together. There is agreement on certain theological matters:

[FMEEC is] an association of the Evangelical (Protestant) Churches of the Middle East which believe in One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in Jesus Christ as Lord, Saviour and the One Head of the Church. They believe that the Holy Bible is the sole foundation for Christian doctrine. They confess that justification is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and that good works are the fruit of faith.<sup>298</sup>

<sup>295</sup> Corbon, ‘Ecumenism in the Middle East: History’, p. 882.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> Information received from Rosangela Jarjour, general secretary of FMEEC, in an email to the author (23 November 2006). Members in 2006 were the Evangelical Church in Egypt, the Diocese of the Episcopal Church in Egypt, the Diocese of the Episcopal Church in Iran, the Diocese of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem, the Diocese of the Episcopal Church in Cyprus and the Gulf, the Episcopal Church in the Sudan, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iran, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan, the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait, the National Evangelical Synod in Syria and Lebanon, the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, the National Evangelical Union in Lebanon, the Sudan Presbyterian Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Synod of the Sudan, the Protestant Church in Algeria and the Methodist Church in Tunisia. See also W. Semaan, A. Wessels en H. Teule, ‘De niet-oosterse kerken’, in Herman Teule and Anton Wessels (eds), *Oosterse Christenen binnen de wereld van de Islam* Kampen, 1997), pp. 256-260.

<sup>298</sup> Jarjour in an email to the author.

FMEEC has not been able to resolve all differences between its member Churches; theological questions related to the Eucharist and the role of lay ministry are for instance unsolved. In 1997 the Fellowship formulated a *Proposal for the Unity of the Evangelical Churches in the Middle East*, which however was not accepted by all members. In 2005 a new proposal was launched, aiming at a formal agreement between the Churches of the Reformed and Lutheran traditions in the Fellowship.<sup>299</sup>

#### **4.5.3.3 Other Networks**

Among Protestants, there are some other major informal networks of cooperation. The Arab World Evangelical Ministers Association (AWEMA) is a network that regularly brings Protestant leaders together for general conferences about ministerial matters. The North Africa Partnership (NAP) is an annual gathering of missionaries and indigenous Christians from North Africa. Every 18 months the Arab Media Convention (AMC) gathers Christians working in the major Christian media fields in the Arab World for a conference. Whereas MECC is a fully indigenous organization, in AWEMA, NAP and AMC expatriate missionaries play major roles.

## **4.7 FINAL OBSERVATION**

For understanding the unity and variety of the present Churches in the Arab World, knowledge of the historic debates surrounding the Ecumenical Church Councils and the outcomes of these Councils, is indispensable. These Councils are not only important for their theological statements but for matters of Church polity as well, as these are foundational for how the historic Churches viewed themselves throughout history and until today.

The development of different Church families in early Christianity cannot be attributed solely to their theological differences; it also reflects the linguistic and cultural differences in the Middle East and elsewhere. The development of the different Churches in the pre-Islamic period can therefore be seen as the efforts of early Christians to contextualize the Gospel.

The Christians in the Middle East as encountered by the triumphant Islamic Arab armies spoke mainly Aramaic (Syriac), Arabic and Coptic. Linguistically, the native Arabic of the early Muslims was closely aligned to the Arabic spoken by large segments of Christianity and it was also not very different from the Syriac. For the early Muslims of the Arabian Peninsula, these Christians did not represent strange cultures, but cultures that were rather congenial to them. More study in this realm is needed but it seems that although there were major theological differences, there was no deep cultural chasm between the Christians and the early Muslims.

The Churches entered in a new process of contextualization after the coming of Islam as gradually all Christians of the Middle East became Arabic speakers; fol-

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<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

lowing this the Churches of the Middle East gradually adopted the Arabic language in their liturgy. This was a large cultural step for some Christians, like the Copts, but many others already spoke Arabic as their mother tongue, while others spoke Syriac which was not distant from Arabic. It can be concluded that the coming of Islam did not have a dramatic cultural impact on the Christians of the Middle East, though more for the Copts than for many others in the Middle East.

During the first few centuries of Islam, the Syriac-Orthodox, the Assyrians and the Coptic Christians were the scientists, medical doctors, administrators, linguists, and the theologians of the Arab Empire. It seems therefore that one paradigm for Arabic Christian and Muslim studies should be that the Muslims of the Arabian Peninsula entered into a process of *enculturalization* in the Christian Middle East.

An often-repeated comment by Protestant missionaries in the Arab World is that there is a wide cultural chasm between Christianity and Islam. This is an exaggeration and must be qualified. It is true that there is a chasm between Western Protestantism and the culture of Islam, but that is not true for historic Middle Eastern Christianity. The difference between Arabic Islam and the Churches of the Middle East that were established before the coming of Islam is mostly theological, not cultural.

The history of Christianity in the Arab World must be seen in the light of the legal framework of *dhimmitude* that early Islam created. Even when Muslims were still a minority in the Arabic Empire, they awarded Christians a minority status with limited rights. Early Islam treated Christians well compared to how the Byzantine Empire treated the Coptic-Orthodox, the Syriac-Orthodox and the Assyrians. Once Islam began to impose its legal framework on the Christians this situation changed. After Christians became numerical minorities, their situation was at times very bad. This was not only because of Islamic law, but because of popular anti-Christian feelings as well. The discriminatory *dhimmî* laws did not help to install respect among the Muslim masses for the minorities. The manner in which Islam treated the Christian minorities can be seen as a matter of contextualization; Islam followed the habits of the Roman Empire, Byzantium, and the Persians.

More study is needed regarding the response of contemporary Christians in the Arab World to the Crusades. It is likely that much of what is published presently on this issue is characterized by the desire of the Arab Churches to prove that they are credible nationalists. However, it seems that the European Crusaders were welcomed by many Middle Eastern Christians after four centuries of being subjected to discriminatory laws and periodic persecutions. About half of the populations of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine were still Christian when the Crusaders came.

The historic Churches have a *first-birth right* because of the formative role they had in the development of Christian theology. They have a strong sense that they have suffered for centuries under Islam to defend their faith and all it entails; liturgy, theology, icons, saints, and monasteries. This makes it the more painful for them when their members defect to Churches that are seen as newcomers from the Western World. The successful 'sheep stealing' by Western Churches, organiza-

tions and missionaries has made the Churches of the Arab World deeply suspicious of any foreign emissary of Christ, even if he purports to have come to support the historic Churches and not to teach new things or wean their members away. Western Christians ought to respect this hesitation; they must also confess the integrity of the Churches of the Arab World as valid expressions of the Body of Christ. The historic Churches of the Arab World have been confronted with the encroachment of the Church of Rome in their lands from the Middle Ages. Rome wanted formal submission and some changes in the liturgies that the Churches in the Arab World had defended against the Chalcedonians and later against Islam. As the emissaries of Rome were able to offer education, wealth, and protection, they were able to win the Maronites over as well as large segments of the Syriac-Orthodox Churches and smaller segments from the Coptic-Orthodox, the Greek-Orthodox and the Assyrians. When the Protestants began to send their missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they also came as representatives of a wealthy society, offering education, money, and status.

The work of Catholic and Protestant missionaries has had tremendous positive effects in the Arab World in general and on the historic Churches in particular. In the first place, these Western missionaries started primary schools, secondary schools and universities; they began to teach people reading and writing and they published books. They also played an enormous role in health care through building clinics and hospitals, and by teaching Arabs medicine and nursing. In their care for the poor, widows and orphans they were exemplary. Roman-Catholic and Protestant mission encouraged the historic Churches to involve themselves in these areas as well. It can therefore be concluded that the *diakonal* testimony of the Church was definitely strengthened by the missionaries.

The proclamation of the Christian faith by the Catholic and Protestant missionaries also strengthened the *kerygmatic* witness of the Church. Not only did they themselves present the Gospel through preaching and literature distribution, but they also encouraged the leadership of the historic Churches to develop their abilities to communicate the Gospel and to teach their members the basics of the Christian faith.

It is regrettable that the increase of the *kerygmatic* witness and the *diakonal* witness was at the expense of the Christian witness of *koinonia*; the missionaries founded many new Churches that further fragmented the one Apostolic Church. On the other hand it must also be underlined that the role of the missionaries would, eventually be decisive in the Ecumenical movement in the Arab World. The fact that, in 1974, NECC was prepared to give up its Protestant character in order to bring all Churches of the Arab World together into MECC, was in itself a sign of *koinonia*. This *koinonia* is also visible in the fact that all Churches of the Arab World have since then draw closer to each other and endeavored to resolve their theological and other disagreements.

## 5 The Arab World: Radio

This chapter first briefly describes the development of radio broadcasting in the United States of America (USA) and in Europe before World War II, with a focus on the development of Christian radio. The Christian radio industry in the USA was especially important for Christian broadcasts to the Arab World as much of the early impetus for these broadcasts came from Americans.

Secondly, Arabic Shortwave (SW) broadcasts by European and American broadcasters between 1938 and 1953 are treated. These broadcasts should be seen in the light of the desire of Europe and the USA to influence the Arab World with regard to their attitudes in World War II and the Cold War that followed.

The development of an indigenous radio industry in the Arab World up until 1953 is considered next. It will be seen that in most Arab countries, the interest of the Arabs in developing a radio industry was relatively small during the colonial period. During this period, European and American missionaries in the Arab World began to show an interest in developing Christian Arab radio.

A new period began with Egypt's revolution that culminated in Jamâl 'Abd al-Nâsir's presidency from 1953-1970. He used radio to export his revolutionary and Pan-Arab views to other Arab countries. This created a large audience for radio programs in the Arab World facilitated by the development of cheap transistor radios. During this period, the number of Christian organizations involved in broadcasting programs by SW to the Arab World grew fast.

Between 1970 and 1990, many Arab countries beside Egypt developed their own transnational radio broadcasting industry. However, audiences became skeptical of anything they heard on Arab radio due to state censorship in these countries and they developed the habit of listening to a diversity of SW broadcasting originating in the Arab World and outside. This created a large audience for broadcasters such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) from Great Britain and Radio Monte Carlo (RMC) from Monaco in Southern France. Christian broadcasts to the Arab World increased during this period; these broadcasts also benefited from the Arab habit to search the SW bands on their radio during times of crises.

Then, this chapter reviews the industry's developments after 1991. Arab governments continued to invest in strong radio transmitters but the audiences moved to watching satellite television. The development of satellite technology enabled private television broadcasters to beam their programs into the Arab World, thus by-passing censorship. In response, many Arab governments began to liberalize their state media but only very slowly and carefully. This has not led to more space for programs of the Arab Churches on state radio and television. Christian Arab satellite television has used this opportunity to witness in the public domain. Christian radio broadcasters have also continued to increase their witness through SW and MW radio from outside the Arab World.

This chapter ends with some final observations regarding the radio industries and the role of Christians in those industries in the Arab World. It also includes the

description of some trends in the Arab radio industry and in listening habits that are of importance for Christian radio broadcasters.

## 5.1 BIRTH AND GROWTH OF RADIO BROADCASTING UNTIL 1945

### 5.1.1 *Developments in the USA*

#### 5.1.1.1 **Early Radio: Before 1920**

Guglielmo Marconi is usually considered to be the first man to develop a successful wireless radio system. Though some others preceded him in effectively transmitting the first sounds by radio, Marconi had far more influence on the shaping of the radio industry than anyone else.

The first successful voice transmission through radio waves was done by a Canadian engineer, Reginald Fessenden. On Christmas Eve 1906, he made history by beaming a signal from the coast of Massachusetts to ships at sea. The content of this first transmission included a violin solo of Gounod's *O Holy Night*, readings from the Gospel of Luke, and Händel's *Largo*.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, radio was mainly a matter for inventors and amateurs. The American military realized the usefulness of radio and began using it during World War I for communication with ships and airplanes. By the end of the war, the development of radio technology had grown so fast that in the 8 June 1919 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Francis A. Collins foresaw the imminent expansion of radio broadcasting into a nationwide service. He reviewed the 'astonishing advance of wireless by which a single voice may actually be heard in every corner of the country'. He wrote that the recent radio advances were poised to 'work a revolution comparable to that of the railroad and the telegraph'.

#### 5.1.1.2 **Radio before the Networks: 1921-1925**

Formal Christian radio broadcasts in the USA began in 1921, almost as soon as the first radio stations began. The often-heard claim that conservative Christians were slow in adapting to the realities of modernity was only partially true. Some indeed felt that any contact with radio was sinful. Others wholeheartedly embraced it as a God-given opportunity for witnessing to the Gospel far beyond the church communities.<sup>2</sup>

In November 1920 the first secular station, KDKA, was established in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (USA).<sup>3</sup> One of the employees of KDKA was in the choir of the Pittsburgh Calvary Episcopal Church, and advised his station to broadcast the

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<sup>1</sup> Technically speaking, the first Christian message over the airwaves was when Samuel Morse wrote his first telegraph in 1837. He tapped in what came to be called Morse Language: 'What hath God wrought'. See Hal Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television in the United States, 1921-1991: The Programs and Personalities* (Jefferson, London, 1992), p. 1. See also Jeffrey Hadden's article 'The Globalization of American Televangelism' on [www.religiousbroadcasting.lib.virginia.edu](http://www.religiousbroadcasting.lib.virginia.edu) (17 January 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television in the United States*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> These letters KDKA were assigned to the station by the institute that regulated the usage of the airwaves. All stations were assigned similar four-letter names that were not an abbreviation.



meetings of his church. This broadcast on 2 January 1921 of a sermon by Jan Van Etten marked the first broadcast of any church meeting in radio history.<sup>4</sup> Walter A. Maier, who taught at Lutheran Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, began preaching on a Lutheran radio station in early 1923. This was the beginning of the program *The Lutheran Hour* (TLH), that would later also have an Arabic version.<sup>5</sup>

The period of 1922 to 1925 came to be known as the 'rush to register' period. The number of religious organizations owning radio licenses grew from 12 to 63. By the end of the 1920s, about 50 of 606 broadcasting stations in the USA were in the hands of churches.<sup>6</sup>

### 5.1.1.3 Networks and Nationwide Christian Programs: 1926-1945

In 1929, Maier bought airtime on the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), a privately owned commercial network of radio stations. For a while, TLH was more popular than any other program on American radio.<sup>7</sup> Radio was extremely popular especially during the years of the Great Depression because it was a relatively cheap means of information and entertainment. The number of radio sets in the USA doubled between 1929 and 1933, and the greatest increase in radio sales was when the Depression was at its worst. By 1934, 60 percent of all households had their own radio.<sup>8</sup>

CBS and the other main network National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), founded in 1926, came to be the platforms for the broadcasts of the Federal Council of Churches (FCC). FCC represented mainline Protestant, Roman-Catholic and Jewish communities. They did not have to pay for the airtime of their programs as they were considered to be a contribution to the public life of the USA.<sup>9</sup> These networks refused to give, or sell, airtime to most religious broadcasters that were not linked to the FCC. This included TLH. However, a new network that began in 1935, Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS), had no problems with selling airtime to TLH and other Christian organizations not linked with the FCC. Through MBS they could get much wider exposure than before.<sup>10</sup>

In 1935 TLH received 70,000 letters from its audience. Fred and Edith Pankow quoted one observer who said that 'for every 1000 listeners, only one writes. That means we have over 60 million listeners'.<sup>11</sup> This ratio would continue to be mentioned into the 21<sup>st</sup> century among Christian broadcasters, even though it is totally unsubstantiated. This idea that the audience is 1,000 times as large as the letter

<sup>4</sup> Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television in the United States*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Fred and Edith Pankow, *75 Years of Blessings and the Best is yet to Come: The History of the International Lutheran Laymen's League* (St. Louis, 1992), pp. 29-30.

<sup>6</sup> Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television in the United States*, p. 2. Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 47. Carole E. Scott, 'The History of the Radio Industry in the United States to 1940', on [www.eh.net/encyclopedia/scott.radio.industry.history.php](http://www.eh.net/encyclopedia/scott.radio.industry.history.php) (15 April 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Tona Hangen, 'Man of the Hour', in Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (eds), *Radio Reader; Essays in the Cultural History of Radio* (New York, 2002), pp. 115-118. Pankow, *75 Years of Blessings*, p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Kate Lacey, 'Radio in the Great Depression', in Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (eds), *Radio Reader; Essays in the Cultural History of Radio* (New York, 2002), p. 24.

<sup>9</sup> Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television in the United States*, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Pankow, *75 Years of Blessings*, pp. 54, 64.

response is a persistent myth that is attributed to BBC, even though the audience researchers at BBC deny the validity of the idea. In 1994, Graham Mytton, head of Audience Research and Correspondence at BBC, addressed a group of broadcasters about this issue. He said:

There is no commonly used ratio of listeners to letters, because there is no ratio. There is no relationship whatsoever between the number of letters you receive and the numbers of listeners you have.<sup>12</sup>

Mytton proved his point by comparing the result of on-the-ground audience research that was done in 1993 with the numbers of letters received from those audiences. In the Tamil language, the ratio was 1:10, in Hindi 1:500, and in Swahili 1:700. 'So you see there is absolutely no relationship,' according to Mytton.<sup>13</sup>

In 1939, 171 stations were broadcasting TLH. This dropped to 45 stations in the USA in 1942 due to war-time broadcasting regulations. Internationally, TLH continued to expand. In order to support the American military worldwide, it utilized 682 stations in 1945, both in the USA and elsewhere.

TLH would later be broadcast in Arabic, as well as some of the other programs of Churches and Christian organizations that played a role in early American radio history. The following three organizations are examples of this. The Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) began their program Voice of Prophecy in 1930, through the work of H.M.S. Richards sr. The Christian Reformed Churches began the Back to God Hour (BTGH) in 1939. Theodore Epp, the son of a missionary couple working with Indians in Arizona, started Back to the Bible (BTTB) during that year.<sup>14</sup>

In 1939, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) restricted its member stations from broadcasting programs that might endanger the neutral political stance of the USA. This prevented the religious organizations that hired airtime on the networks from almost any editorializing. That directly impacted their ability to convert listeners and to solicit funds from the audience.<sup>15</sup> In 1944 the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) organization was set up. The organization had a self-regulatory influence on its members, maintaining a high standard of ethics and quality. That was deemed important *per se*, but also as part of NRB's efforts to lobby for securing the right to buy airtime on the secular networks and to use that airtime as they deemed fit. NRB was also a counterbalance against the regulating influence of the FCC on those networks.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Elzbieta Olechowska and Howard Aster (eds), *Challenges for International Broadcasting* (n.p., 1995), p. 88. This book contains the transcripts of speeches and discussions of the conference Challenges for International Broadcasting, held in Vancouver (Canada) from 20-24 March 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Gleason H. Ledyard, *Sky Waves: The Incredible Far East Broadcasting Company Story* (Chicago, 1963), p. 144, speaks of FEBC's 'experience' of 100 listeners per letter, while Biener, in *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 36 footnote 4, quotes audience research by the Swedish government, which suggest a relationship of 1:10.

<sup>14</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 52. See also [www.backtothebible.org](http://www.backtothebible.org). (26 April 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television in the United States*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

#### 5.1.1.4 The End of Isolationism and the Voice of America (VOA)

The entrance of the USA in World War II was a defining moment in the history of the twentieth century. Until 1940, the USA government's main concern was with internal economic and social problems. When World War II began, the USA maintained at least nominal neutrality, though its lend-lease program provided Britain, France and later the Soviet Union with war material and credit. It was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 that forced the USA to set aside its interwar isolationism and become a player in the international arena. Sixteen million American men and women were drafted into the army between 1942 and 1945 and many of those fought in Europe, Africa and Asia.<sup>17</sup>

The Voice of America (VOA) began its broadcasts 79 days after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.<sup>18</sup> In addition to major land-based SW stations that covered vast areas with VOA and Armed Forces' programs, the American armies had over a hundred mobile broadcasting stations throughout Europe, Africa and Asia during World War II to broadcast on Mediumwave (MW) and SW.<sup>19</sup> Some of these mobile stations were sold to local broadcasters after the war. VOA built transmitters in the Philippines (1943) and later also in other friendly or dependent countries, like Tangier and Liberia.<sup>20</sup> These locations were suitable from the perspective of transmission reach, political stability and liberty, and each of these locations later played a major role in the development of Christian Arab radio broadcasting.

### 5.1.2 Developments in Europe

#### 5.1.2.1 The Netherlands

The Netherlands created its own unique form of semi-private radio broadcasting. In 1913 an engineer, Hanso H. S. Steringa Idzerda, began a privately owned company called Netherlands Radio Industry (*Nederlandse Radio Industrie*, NRI). This company produced parts for radio sets. To stimulate sales, Idzerda decided to begin regular entertaining radio broadcasts, a *novum* internationally. On 6 November 1919 he broadcast these programs for the first time. These stopped in 1924 when Idzerda went bankrupt. A year earlier the National Transmitters Factory (*Nationale Seintoestellen Fabriek*, NSF) another producer of radio equipment, had begun broadcasting from Hilversum.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> James Joll, *Europe since 1870; an International History* (London, 1976), p. 391. The Cold War that began in the late 1940s created a great interest amongst American Christians in events in Europe and the rest of the world. Communism, with its anti-Christian policies and godless philosophy, came to be seen as the greatest enemy of Christianity. The expansion of the Cold War to the Arab world in the 1950s, and the Arab-Israeli wars, made the Arab world a focus of attention for the Western world. This awakening attention in the American and European media influenced the churches as well. In 1982, Donald Browne, one of the foremost historians of SW broadcasting, used the words 'almost meteoric rise' to describe the growth of SW broadcasting during the late 1930s and World War II. After that war, the growth was briefly halted, but it experienced 'another rapid climb' during the 1950s and 1960s due to the Cold War. Browne spoke about growth 'leveling off' during the 1970s. Donald R. Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting: The Limits of the Limitless Medium* (New York, 1982), p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.veron.nl/amrad/history/idzerda/main.htm> (8 December 2005).

The first Protestant broadcasting company in the world, Dutch Christian Radio Association (*Nederlandsche Christelijke Radio Vereeniging*, NCRV), started airing its programs in December 1924. NCRV hired one night of airtime per week on the one nation-wide radio channel of NSF in Hilversum for proclaiming a conservative Reformed Gospel. The Roman-Catholic broadcasting company Catholic Radio Broadcaster (*Katholieke Radio Omroep*, KRO) began its broadcasts in November 1925. It hired airtime another night each week on NSF. In May 1926 another group of Protestants, Free-thinking Protestant Radio Broadcaster (*Vrijzinnig Protestantse Radio Omroep*, VPRO) began to place its message in the public arena. Other organizations followed.<sup>22</sup>

In 1928, the Dutch authorities adopted the first laws relevant to the private broadcasting associations. Airtime was allotted almost solely according to the number of members each of the private broadcasting organizations were able to organize. This had a positive impact on the Christians broadcasters because, through their own organizations as well as through the Churches, they were able to attract large numbers of members. The broadcasters were private, but not commercial; commercial broadcasts were not allowed. The broadcasting companies were financed by their own constituency that paid membership fees.<sup>23</sup>

In 1941 the Germans, while occupying the Netherlands, introduced Listening Money (*Luistergeld*). Anyone with a radio set had to pay an annual fee for the privilege to listen to the one German-regulated station, and with that money the station was paid for. After the war, this concept was retained by the Dutch. The regulated monopoly of the private associations was continued as before the war but the state used the *Luistergeld* to pay for the production of the radio programs and for their broadcasts.

In March 1927, the first Dutch transnational radio broadcasts began aimed at the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). These were the first permanent, more or less continuous, transnational broadcasts. They were aimed at Dutch listeners in the Netherlands East Indies, the Netherlands Antilles and Dutch Guyana. Soon, other languages beside Dutch were added. The programs were broadcast from the SW transmitter at the Philips Laboratories in Eindhoven. Philips did this to develop a market for its equipment. The transmissions were inaugurated by Queen Wilhelmina who addressed her colonial subjects. A year later, a SW station was opened in Malabar in the Dutch East Indies for broadcasting to the Netherlands.<sup>24</sup>

### 5.1.2.2 Germany

In 1919, Hans Bredow, head of the German postal authority, urged journalists and press agencies to begin radio broadcasts. The response was negative as the press agencies did not have a vision for radio in Germany yet. Therefore, against the original desire of the German authorities, development of radio had to be state-driven. In 1921 an official of the postal authority went on a fact-finding trip to the

<sup>22</sup> <http://home.luna.nl/arjan-muil/radio/nederlands/omroep-frame.html> (18 November 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, pp. 48-49, 198-199. These broadcasts developed into *Radio Nederland Wereldomroep* (Radio Netherlands World Broadcaster, RNW). [www.radiodx.com](http://www.radiodx.com) (8 November 2006).

USA and returned with a negative report describing the chaotic development of private radio. Thus in 1923 Germany released a complete orderly legislation for state-regulated radio. It invited private organizations to take the lead, within the limits of this law, to manage radio. In early 1924 the first radio companies were founded, such as the Middle-German Broadcasting Company (*Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk AG*) in Leipzig and the Northern Broadcasting Company (*Nordische Rundfunk AG*) in the north. These companies were financially dependent on subscriptions from their listeners, not on advertising.

Germany's first SW broadcast began in 1929. By the end of 1932, private broadcasting companies were no longer allowed and the state became the proprietor of all radio organizations, as the German government became evermore aware of its propaganda value. Propaganda minister Joseph Göbbels used SW radio as a powerful tool for propagating Nazism after Adolph Hitler came to power in 1933.<sup>25</sup> Broadcasts to the USA began in 1933, to South Africa, South America and East Asia in 1934, and to South Asia and Central America in 1938. By 1945, Germany broadcast 24 hours per day over SW in twelve languages.<sup>26</sup>

### 5.1.2.3 France and Peripheral Broadcasters

The French government initially allowed the development of a mixed system of private radio and state radio. Station of the Eiffel Tower was the first broadcaster in France. It began as an army operation with transmissions for the navy on 24 April 1910. On 24 December 1921, this station began its first daily broadcasts in France.

One of the leading personalities in creating private stations was Jacques Trémoulet. In 1922 he began a company that would own stations like Radio Montpellier, Radio Agen, and Radio Bordeaux South-West. His most popular station was Radio Toulouse (1925). It became a large, popular and profitable station that could be heard all over France, to the chagrin of the French government that could not compete with better broadcasts.

The state organization for radio, National Radio Broadcasts (*Radiodiffusion Nationale*), aimed to unify all broadcasting in France. The efforts of successive

<sup>25</sup> William F. O'Connor, 'Expatriate American Radio Propagandists', in Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (eds.), *Radio Reader; Essays in the Cultural History of Radio* (New York, 2002), pp. 277-278. Göbbels placed so much faith in the power of radio that he had loudspeakers erected on streets and squares. He also promoted the production of a cheap radio receiver, known as the *Volksempfänger*, or People's Receiver. By early 1941 the German population of 50 million had 15 million of these sets. 'What the press was in the nineteenth century, radio will be in the twentieth', Göbbels declared as he opened the tenth German Radio Show in Berlin on 18 August 1933. For Göbbels, radio was the 'chief and major mediator between the Movement and the Nation, between Idea and Man' as he declared on the same occasion. By the time of the Berlin Olympics of 1936, the German foreign-language broadcasting department was ahead of all other countries in terms of technology, staff numbers, and expertise in the manipulation of listeners. In 1936 Göbbels noted in a circular of his propaganda ministry: 'We National-Socialist propagandists have transformed the radio into the sharpest of propaganda weapons. Before we took power, the radio was run by amateurs. What we have now made of it is a tool for ideological education and a top-class political force.' Horst J. P. Bergmeier in an email to the author (24 May 2004). Bergmeier wrote a book on the Nazi usage of propaganda radio: Horst J.P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves - the inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven, London, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> Michael Sagurna, 'Radio in Deutschland', on [www.regiocast.de](http://www.regiocast.de) (20 March 2005)

governments to curtail private radio were increasingly successful. It was a major blow for the private stations when France succeeded in nationalizing Radio Paris in 1933. The owners of Radio Paris, realizing that France was in the process of nationalizing their station in Paris, decided to buy a station on the periphery of France for private broadcasts to France. The mountainous geography of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, its liberal political stance and the fact that there was a small existent station for sale, made it a good location. Trémoulet, fearful that his stations in France might be nationalized, tried to buy the station but the contract went to the owners of Radio Paris. They set up a company in Luxembourg called Luxembourg's Company of Radio Broadcasting (*Compagnie Luxembourgeoise de Radiodiffusion*, CLR) and signed a contract for a 30 year lease of the station.<sup>27</sup>

In January 1933, regular broadcasts began. SW station Radio Luxembourg became popular in France, Great Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands as it broadcast in the languages of those countries.<sup>28</sup> Trémoulet was able to buy another peripheral station, Radio Andorra. In 1935, the Principality of Andorra gave Bonaventure Vila a 30 year concession to run a radio station. In 1938 this was ratified by the two rulers of Andorra, the Spanish bishop of Urgel and the French government. Radio Andorra was financed by Trémoulet. His fear of the increasing tendency of the French authorities to nationalize radio was compounded when the French minister for telecommunications announced his unhappiness with the idea of a private radio station broadcasting from Andorra in French. He threatened to work for its closure but in spite of that, on 7 August 1939, Radio Andorra began its broadcasts.

At the outbreak of World War II, 14 commercial and 12 public sector radio stations operated in France. During the war, in both German-Occupied France and in Luxembourg, all radio stations were sequestered by Germany in order to be used for propaganda broadcasts. In the Vichy-held areas of southern France, radio was also taken over by the state. Trémoulet was able to keep Radio Andorra free from German influence as Andorra was a neutral state. Radio Toulouse and other stations of Trémoulet's continued to broadcast under Nazi tutelage.<sup>29</sup>

During the war Trémoulet represented the Vichy-regime in the construction of RMC. It was set up as a commercial station, but 'it appears that it derived very little, if any, revenue from the sales of air time, and it was almost totally supported by the Germans and Italians' according to Donald Browne, who described RMC as 'a useful propaganda weapon.' According to the German media expert Hansjörg Biener, the station was not intended to be a propaganda station, but a tool for transferring Nazi money abroad, that is, for money laundering.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> This would later be renamed *Radio and Television Luxembourg* (RTL).

<sup>28</sup> [www.aminharadio.com/portugal\\_rr.html](http://www.aminharadio.com/portugal_rr.html) (20 September 2004).

<sup>29</sup> M. Kerslake and F. Lhote (eds), 'Radio Andorra: A Brief History', in *Offshore Echos Magazine* (No. 38, May 1981), pp. 20-22. This magazine is a publication of the French Radio Club. More detailed information can also be found on [www.100ansderadio.free.fr](http://www.100ansderadio.free.fr) (9 December 2005).

<sup>30</sup> Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, p. 59, footnote 9. Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (29 April 2003). The idea that the station was meant to be a German propaganda tool seems unlikely from the brief history of the station during World War II. The inaugural program on 18 July 1943 included songs by Bing Crosby and a good portion of jazz music. As Hitler hated jazz and banned it wherever he could, the new station was far from being a mere mouthpiece for the Reich. The original

In 1931 the French state had begun its Colonial Mail (*Poste Colonial*) SW broadcasts aimed at its colonies. These broadcasts became a diplomatic tool after Hitler took power in Germany. In 1938, these SW broadcast were communicated in 30 languages. The organization was now called Paris Worldwide (*Paris Mondial*). The French regime of Vichy in Southern France tried to enlist the support of the colonies for its collaboration with Germany by its own SW broadcasts of The Voice of France, Faithful France, and Muslim France. These last broadcasts were aimed at North Africa and were in Arabic.<sup>31</sup> After France was occupied in 1940, General Charles de Gaulle began to broadcast on SW from London for encouraging resistance in France and its colonies.

#### 5.1.2.4 Vatican City

Pope Pius XI ascended to the pontificate on 6 February 1922. In 1925 the director-general of communications for Vatican City, the Jesuit Giuseppe Gianfranceschi began drawing up plans for the establishment of a SW station in the Vatican.<sup>32</sup> In 1929, four days after the signing of the Lateran Treaty which established Vatican City as an independent state, Marconi received permission to begin working in the Vatican Gardens.<sup>33</sup> Gianfranceschi became the first director-general of Radio Vatican. During the construction, Pius XI personally discussed with Marconi every step and detail.<sup>34</sup>

After a brief introduction of the pope by Marconi, Pius XI took the microphone and inaugurated the first worldwide radio message ever given by a pope. In Latin he used Bible verses that emphasized the universality of the Gospel message. ‘Listen, O Heavens, to that which I say; listen, O Earth, listen to the words which come from my mouth [...] Listen and hear, O Peoples of distant lands!’<sup>35</sup>

During World War II, Radio Vatican was in a very precarious situation. The Vatican was formally neutral during the war and broadcasts by Radio Vatican were increasingly censored through German and Italian intervention. In spite of that, Radio Vatican reported frequently about Nazi atrocities in no unclear terms condemning them as acts against the Gospel. The rounding up of Jews and racial segregation were condemned throughout the war on Radio Vatican and listeners were encouraged to not believe German and Italian propaganda. They were urged to resist the prevalent ideologies of Nazism and Communism in Europe by keeping the Roman-Catholic faith.<sup>36</sup>

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agreement stipulated that output of the station should be ‘completely independent and objective while respecting both German and French interests.’ These aims were largely achieved and RMC had a rather different sound from other wartime stations in France. This reflected the make-up of its strangely diverse staff who were a mixture of Gaullists, Jews, collaborators and opportunists. Patrick Middleton, ‘Making Waves in Monaco’, on [www.riviera-reporter.com](http://www.riviera-reporter.com) (27 April 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Jacqueline Papet, ‘Histoire : Si RFI m’était contée’, on [www.rfi.fr](http://www.rfi.fr) (9 November 2006)..

<sup>32</sup> [www.vaticanradio.org](http://www.vaticanradio.org) (12 October 2003)

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> [www.vaticanradio.org](http://www.vaticanradio.org).

<sup>36</sup> See for instance Robert Speaight, *La Voix du Vatican: Radio-Vatican et la Guerre* (Beirut, 1943). This booklet was originally written in English. Its intention was ‘to answer those, possibly in Spain and Ireland, who said: “The Pope is neutral. Why do you want us to side against the Pope?”’ Speaight, *La Voix du Vatican: Radio-Vatican et la Guerre*, p. 3. The writer uses concrete examples of broadcasts

### 5.1.2.5 United Kingdom

The British Broadcasting Company, as the BBC was originally called, was set up in October 1922 by a group of leading manufacturers of radio equipment, including Marconi. On Christmas Eve, J. Mayo held the first religious sermon on the BBC.

Great Britain introduced the Broadcast Receiving License to finance the BBC. People had to pay ten shillings per year for the right to own a radio. The license had to be bought at the post office. Half of the amount went to the government, and half to the BBC. In 1926, there were over two million licenses, and in 1938 there was over eight million. As a result, 98 percent of the population could listen to the BBC.

The *Company* became a *Corporation* in 1927, after some fierce verbal battles with the government over the news coverage of some strikes. The BBC was nationalized but it retained its independence from government by agreeing that it would be answerable to a Board of Governors that represented the public interest. The governors were to be appointed by the queen upon recommendation of the prime minister. In January 1928, in order to serve the public as broadly as possible, a regular weekday religious broadcast began.

On 11 November 1927, BBC began its first transnational test broadcasts to its Empire. These tests continued until 1932 when the BBC began its Empire Service, the forerunner of the World Service, with daily English SW broadcasts. In 1938 BBC began its first foreign language service, in Arabic. It then began to target Europe in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese by the beginning of World War II. During World War II, BBC maintained its unbiased approach to news reporting, although its broadcasts were also used for encouraging resistance in Europe. Toward the end of the war, BBC was broadcasting in 40 languages. For many Europeans, this made the style of the BBC the epitome of good broadcasting.<sup>37</sup>

### 5.1.2.6 Portugal

Radio broadcasting in Portugal began when Fernando Medeiros began the first Portuguese station, Radio Hertz. The first regular broadcasts began as late as 1925, from the amateur station CT1AA. In 1928 Jorge Botelho Moniz founded one of the most important private stations of the 1930s and 1940s, the Portuguese Radio Club.

In 1930 the directorate-general of Radio Electric Services was set up as part of the postal authorities, and a MW and a SW transmitter were purchased. All radio broadcasting was henceforth regarded as a state monopoly with National

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of *Radio Vatican* to prove that the Vatican resisted Nazism and the atrocities against the Catholic Church and the Jews; See also the brochure *L'Eglise et la Guerre* of an unknown writer, probably published in 1943 by the Catholic French underground press. The brochure also shows how the Catholic leaders of Europe spoke out against Nazism. Radio Vatican is quoted to show the resistance of the Vatican against Nazism. Ronald J. Rychlak in an email to the author (12 July 2004). See also Francois and Renee Bedarida, 'The Voice of the Vatican and Religious Resistance', in *Revue de l'Histoire de l'Eglise de France* (No. 64, December 1978), pp. 224-225 and Jacques Adler's article 'The "Sin of Omission"?, Radio Vatican and the anti-Nazi Struggle, 1940-1942', in *Australian Journal of Politics & History* (Vol. 50 No. 3, 2004), pp. 396-406.

<sup>37</sup> See the website of BBC, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) (9 December 2005).



Broadcasts accomplishing its first test transmissions in 1933. The station was officially opened in August 1935. The National Broadcasts acted as the mouthpiece of Portugal's dictator, António de Oliveira Salazar (1932 to 1968).<sup>38</sup>

Salazar allowed the Church to open a private station because it was a staunch supporter of his regime and of his authoritarian, traditionalist political system called *The New State (Estado Novo)* which he had inaugurated in 1933. He wanted to protect Portugal from both Western liberal democracy and Communism. In 1933, Roman-Catholic clergy, with the support of cardinal D. Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira, began to campaign for a Roman-Catholic radio station. Radio Renaissance (*Rádio Renascença*) began broadcasting on MW and SW from Lisbon on 1 January 1937 after it had completed tests for half a year. This station's finances were based on private donations.<sup>39</sup>

## 5.2 EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN BROADCASTS IN ARABIC: 1934-1953

### 5.2.1 Italy: 1934

The first Europeans to begin broadcasting programs to the Arab World in Arabic were the Italians. In 1934 they began SW broadcasting of Arabic news programs from their transmitters in the city of Bari in the south-eastern province Puglia (Italy). The original announcers of Radio Bari were Tunisians.<sup>40</sup> The station portrayed Italy's leader Benito Mussolini as the friend and protector of Islam in the struggle of the Middle East and North Africa to throw off the yoke of the United Kingdom and France. Mussolini played on Arab and Egyptian nationalism that erupted intermittently in violence and that undermined the colonial presence in the Arab World. At the same time, Mussolini aimed at making the Mediterranean Sea into Italy's *Mare Nostrum*. In 1935 the Italians began their war in Abyssinia and the colonization of Libya; in 1937 Mussolini was looking at invading Ethiopia. As Great Britain resisted this imperial Italian drive, the Italian Arabic broadcasts became increasingly anti-British.<sup>41</sup>

### 5.2.2 Great Britain: 1938

The colonialist plans of Italy and the anti-British broadcasts of Radio Bari encouraged British diplomats in the target area to pressure the BBC's Empire Service to begin its own Arabic broadcasts; these began on 3 January 1938. These were the first foreign-language broadcasts of BBC. In April 1938, this first 'war of the air-waves' that was waged specifically to influence the Arab World, ended temporarily

<sup>38</sup> [www.ics.pt](http://www.ics.pt) (9 December 2005).

<sup>39</sup> [www.aminharadio.com/portugal\\_rr.html](http://www.aminharadio.com/portugal_rr.html) (20 September 2004).

<sup>40</sup> Nevill Barbour, 'Broadcasting to the Arab World: Arabic Transmissions from the B.B.C. and Other Non-Arab Stations', in *Middle East Journal* (No. 1, 1951), pp. 58-59.

<sup>41</sup> Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel: from the Rise of Zionism to our Time* (New York, 1997, first edition 1982), p. 195.

because of the Anglo-Italian Pact. Among other things, Italy promised to stop its hostile propaganda to the Arabs.<sup>42</sup>

In 1951 Neville Barbour, assistant head of the Eastern Services of the BBC, wrote that in the early days, the ‘type of Arabic to be used’ was the most urgent issue for BBC:

Even excluding the linguistically very different Arab World in North Africa, there was a great diversity of spoken language in the Arab World of the Middle East for which the broadcasts were intended. Should some form of standard Arabic be used, universally intelligible to the relatively small educated class but to them only, or the particular dialect which could directly reach the hearts and understanding of the masses in a given country.<sup>43</sup>

The BBC experimented from time to time ‘with colloquial talks and features in Syrian, Egyptian and other dialects. These had a mixed reception, according to Barbour. BBC decided to mainly use ‘standard Arabic’.<sup>44</sup> Barbour was convinced that these broadcasts played a role in fostering Arab unity as they spread the usage of MSA:

The universal use of the standard Arabic is a remarkable tribute to its vitality; its use throughout the Arab World must itself have been greatly promoted by the broadcasts. [...] There can, in fact, be no doubt that foreign broadcasting, addressed as it is to the Arab World as a whole, is a prime factor in promoting a sense of unity amongst the Arab nations by spreading a knowledge of standard Arabic, by informing the various countries about one another, and by giving them a common stock of information and views on events of the day.<sup>45</sup>

Barbour made these comments in 1951. Two years later the Egyptian President Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nâsir began using radio as the main medium for spreading his Pan-Arab dreams. If this power of radio in the Arab World was already obvious in 1951, it becomes easier to understand why Nâsir in 1952, shortly after the Revolution, confidently decided to substantially invest in increasing Egypt’s transmission facilities.

### 5.2.3 Germany: 1938

Radio Berlin began broadcasting in Arabic in April 1938. One of Göbbels’ ‘stars’ was Amîn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynî, the *grand muftî* of Jerusalem, who had lived in Germany since 1942. He issued regular appeals to the Arabs from Berlin through the Bari station in Italy, calling the Arabs to *jihâd* against the British. Rashîd ‘Alî

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<sup>42</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 58-59. Douglas A. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Middle East* (Ames, 1999, first edition 1993), pp. 292-293.

<sup>43</sup> Barbour, *Broadcasting to the Arab World*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

al-Ghaylânî, the Iraqi prime minister until 1941, also became one of Radio Berlin's speakers.<sup>46</sup>

Yûnis al-Baḥrî, one of the Arabs involved in the Arabic broadcasts, described his work for the Germans in his autobiography of 1956, *Here Berlin, Long Live the Arabs (Hunâ Birlîn, Ḥayya al-'Arab)*. Al-Baḥrî was an Iraqi journalist and an officer in the German army. In his book, he claimed that he was responsible for all Arab broadcasts on Radio Berlin but that was an exaggeration, as there was never one person or one department responsible for all the Arab broadcasts of the Nazis.<sup>47</sup> Al-Baḥrî was a well-known speaker in some of those broadcasts, though. According to Barbour, he 'had a remarkable talent for the sensational type of broadcasting. [...] Berlin Radio was bound by no scruples, and cared nothing for factual accuracy'.<sup>48</sup>

Barbour and al-Baḥrî did share a similar view of the importance of the right usage of Arabic. Al-Baḥrî wrote in his autobiography that he refused to use any other language than MSA, even when Radio Berlin began to receive letters, articles, and poetry submitted from Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia in the colloquial Arabic of those countries. He decided to set aside an hour each day for North Africa, but he did not want to broadcast in its local Arabic dialects.<sup>49</sup> On this matter, al-Baḥrî described a discussion he had with Kurt Munzel, who was the head of the foreign ministry's broadcasting department for broadcasting to the Orient from 1 July 1941. Munzel tried to convince al-Baḥrî to change his mind and use North Africans dialects: 'The Arabic dialects are so different, how can the North Africans understand standard Arabic?' Al-Baḥrî replied:

That is a falsehood with no basis in fact or reality. [...] That is what the French colonialists claim. [...] The French are the ones who want to impose the dialect in Arab North Africa so as to wipe out standard Arabic and thereby weaken the feelings of Arab nationalism, strangle freedom, and the spirit of independence in the souls of the heroic North Africans!<sup>50</sup>

According to al-Baḥrî, his refusal to allow anything but MSA made Munzel decide to start broadcasting Arabic colloquial programs to North Africa from Radio Mondial in Paris. He would have preferred to broadcast those programs from Radio Berlin, but al-Baḥrî claimed that he resisted that successfully.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York, 1988), p. 104. Bergmeier in an email to the author (24 May 2004).

<sup>47</sup> Eric Mueller, 'Foiling Espionage in Berlin Radio's Arabic Service', in *The Journal of Historical Review* (Vol. 19 No. 1, 2000), pp. 32-36. This journal is published by an institute of revisionist historians.

<sup>48</sup> Barbour, *Broadcasting to the Arab World*, p. 66.

<sup>49</sup> See Yûnis al-Baḥrî, *Hunâ Birlîn, Ḥayya al-'Arab* Vol. 5 (Beirut, 1956), pp. 112-115. Text provided by Eric Mueller, Arabist and publicist in Texas, USA. Eric Mueller in an email to the author (19 April 2003).

<sup>50</sup> Bergmeier in an email to the author (24 May 2004).

<sup>51</sup> Al-Baḥrî, *Hunâ Birlîn, Ḥayya al-'Arab*, pp. 112-115. France imposed French as the language of administration in schools in Algeria as Algeria was considered an integral part of France. France also tended to depend more on Kabyle Berbers for running the country than on Arabic-speaking Algerians. The Algerian nationalist movement used MSA and Islam for unifying the Algerian population against the French rulers. It seems unlikely that al-Baḥrî, was ever in a position to take this sort of decision against a representative of the German foreign ministry. Al-Baḥrî's description of his adversity against

#### 5.2.4 Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR): 1939

In the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR), set up with Russia at the center after the Communist revolution of 1917, all radio was state-owned and the content of the radio programs did not allow for any minority viewpoint. Radio was used as a propaganda instrument for teaching people the dogma of Communism. All religious messages were banned from Soviet radio.

The USSR developed an enormous array of SW transmitters at home and in some of its satellite states. In 1929 it began its English, French and German broadcasts on Radio Moscow. In 1939 Radio Moscow started its Arabic service as a medium to support the Communist parties in the Arab World. After World War II, Radio Moscow was among the largest SW broadcasters in the world and the Cold War that followed motivated Moscow to broadcast evermore programs, including Arabic ones.<sup>52</sup>

#### 5.2.5 Vatican City: 1949

In 1949, Dutch Roman-Catholics donated a 100 kW transmitter to Radio Vatican, which made it by far the strongest Christian transmitter at that time. During the same year, experimental broadcasts in Arabic began. Regular Arabic broadcasts commenced in 1953. These broadcasts were in the first place for sharing the Vatican's Christian witness by serving Roman-Catholics in Arab areas where there was no access to a church or a priest.<sup>53</sup>

#### 5.2.6 USA: 1950

After World War II, VOA and related stations like Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and Radio Free Asia, increasingly became instruments of American foreign policy and weapons against the USSR. This was deemed important for counteracting Communist propaganda broadcasts from Radio Moscow.<sup>54</sup> For that reason,

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broadcasting in the Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian dialects may very well be related to efforts in 1956 to prove his Pan-Arab credentials after he had been hired by Jordanian radio to lead its broadcasts as a counterweight against Nâsir's broadcasts of Voice of the Arabs. During the 1950s, Egypt was broadcasting to Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria for the liberation of those lands from the French. Possibly al-Bahri, wanted to show that he did that even before Nâsir conceived of it and that he behaved as an independent Pan-Arabist while working for the Nazis. For more on Al-Bahri's role in broadcasting against Nâsir, see below.

<sup>52</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 11-18. Barbour, *Broadcasting to the Arab World*, p. 64.

<sup>53</sup> [www.vaticanradio.org](http://www.vaticanradio.org). In 1954, the offices, studios and transmitters were moved to Santa Maria di Galeria, 18 kilometers outside Rome. Its 440 hectares had been made extraterritorial in 1952. Pope Pius XII declared at the official opening in 1957 that the decision to have this powerful station was taken, 'so that the whole world can hear our voice, and so that the whole Christian community may hear our admonishments, our encouragements, and our desires'. Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 149-150. In 1982 Browne wrote that most 'listeners would find to this day that much of the station's programming is uninteresting and/or incomprehensible to any but theologians.' Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, p. 307.

<sup>54</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 198.

VOA began SW broadcasting in Arabic on 1 January 1950.<sup>55</sup> MSA was used throughout the history of VOA's Arabic Branch. VOA used Arabs from different countries of the Middle East as presenters but Egyptians played the main role. Algerians and Moroccans regionalized the morning news for North Africa.<sup>56</sup>

### 5.2.7 *Beginnings of Audience Research*

In 1943, the first real audience research was done in the Arab World. This was done at the request of the US army by the American University of Beirut (AUB). AUB researched the audience for transnational Arab radio in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. It found that most listeners were mainly interested in world news. BBC was the most popular foreign station and considered to be the most credible. The regional station that was most listened to was Radio Cairo from King Farûq's Egypt.<sup>57</sup>

Before the Egyptian revolution of 1952, VOA's Arabic broadcasts did not have a large audience. This was mainly due to problems with reception because the transmitters of VOA were in the USA. The signal reaching the Arab World was weak and often unreliable.<sup>58</sup> VOA exerted 'virtually no influence in the Middle East', Barbour wrote in 1951.<sup>59</sup> BBC's transmissions were better appreciated, according to Barbour, who pointed to the 'large number of letters received from listeners'. In the late 1940s, BBC's Arabic Service received 6,000 letters annually.<sup>60</sup> Compared to later audience responses that was not high but it should be seen in the light of the fact that few Arabs owned a radio in those days, literacy was low, and the Arab populations were relatively small.

### 5.2.8 *Christian Presence and Participation*

#### 5.2.8.1 *Christian Presence and Participation in Public radio*

There were probably Western Christians involved in the Western broadcasts in the Arabic language between 1934 and 1953, and possibly also some Christian Arabs. For asserting this, further study is needed. In Radio Vatican, Roman-Catholic clergy and laity from the Arab World participated in producing programs that created a Christian Arab presence on the airwaves in the Arab World. Before 1953, these broadcasts were only in an experimental stage.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Joe O'Connell of VOA's Office of Public Affairs in emails to the author (13 and 15 March 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 314.

<sup>58</sup> George C. Mackenzie, Jr., 'Arabic Branch', in *Voice* No. 32 (April-May 1989), p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> Barbour, *Broadcasting to the Arab World*, p. 63.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-69. An independent survey done in four main towns in Lebanon in 1962 showed that more than half of all radio listeners were regularly tuned into BBC. In 1963, BBC received a total of 37,000 letters from listeners. In the early 1980s, BBC received between 70,000 and 79,000 letters annually. In 1987 that dipped to 60,000. Figures based on *World Radio and Television Handbook*, 1989, as quoted in Muhammad I. Ayish, 'Foreign Voices as People's Choices; BBC Popularity in the Arab World', in *Middle Eastern Studies* (Vol. 27 No. 3, 1991), pp. 379-380.

<sup>61</sup> It has not been possible to access information on the content of these broadcasts beyond the fact that the mass was transmitted in Arabic.

### **5.2.8.2 Christian Radio Organizations**

The Roman-Catholic Church began Christian broadcasts through Radio Vatican in Arabic in 1948. Until 1953, there were no Protestant Christian radio organizations that broadcast extra-territorially into the Arab World in the Arabic language.

## **5.3 EARLY ARABIC BROADCASTING: 1928-1953**

### **5.3.1 Morocco: 1928**

In February 1928 the first radio broadcast was made from Rabat with a two kW transmitter. Between 1934 and 1936 only three hours of Arabic programs were broadcast each week. After 1936 this became 90 minutes per day. France developed radio in Morocco mainly to serve the French settlers and their hold over Morocco. The director of Radio Morocco was directly responsible to the French authorities.

It was only after World War II that radio in Morocco began to develop substantially. In 1947 Radio Morocco was brought under the postal authorities. During that year separate production and transmission facilities were created for French and Arabic programs. Only in Rabat, Fez, Casablanca and Meknes could the transmissions be received. In 1949, two 20 kW transmitters were inaugurated, one for the French, the other for the Arabic programs. In 1953 the Seven Wells (*Sâbi'a 'Uyûn*) transmission complex, containing two MW transmitters of 120 kW each, became operational. At night those covered most of the country with French and Arabic broadcasts.<sup>62</sup>

### **5.3.2 Egypt: 1934**

During the 1920s, more than 100 wireless broadcasters were operational in Egypt. Most of those were amateurs but there were also some businesses advertising their goods between the music that was broadcast. These stations were mostly in the hands of Brits, Italians and Greeks residing in Egypt. By 1930 most were closed as the number of radio receivers remained small, and in 1931 the government forbade all broadcasting. A year later, it decided that only public radio should be allowed.

In June 1932, the minister of communication signed a contract with the Marconi Company. Marconi himself was to run a non-commercial station after overseeing its construction; Egypt would own the facilities, which included three MW transmitters. The income was divided over Marconi and the government. It was generated from a tax on radio receivers. In 1934 Radio Cairo began two broadcasts, one in Arabic and the other in the languages of the non-Arabic communities in Egypt. By the end of 1939 there were 86,477 radios in Egypt. Marconi remained the majority owner of radio in Egypt until 1947 when radio was nationalized.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Moulay Driss Jaïdi, 'Morocco', in Douglas A. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Middle East* (Ames, 1999, first edition 1993), pp. 249-250.

<sup>63</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 16-19.

### 5.3.3 Iraq: 1935

The first radio station in Iraq was a government enterprise and began in 1935. This low powered MW station had seven fulltime employees and was overseen by a government committee. The lack of government funds reflected the lack of interest in broadcasting in Iraq at that time. King Ghâzî, who was personally very interested in anything technical and fiercely anti-British, began his own private station in the palace shortly after the broadcasts of the government station had begun. He was the sole announcer on his station and operated it according to his moods. He often read pro-Nazi bulletins as supplied to him by the Germans. King Ghâzî's station stopped broadcasting when he died under suspicious circumstances in 1939.

Until 1939, the government station had only broadcast five hours of Arabic programs per day. In 1939, a 15 minute Kurdish program was added. During the war, British program advisers and technicians helped the station to expand its broadcasting, with the intent to counter Nazi radio propaganda and to control the Iraqi population that was as anti-British as its King. After the war, Iraq showed no interest in further developing its radio broadcasts.<sup>64</sup>

### 5.3.4 Tangier: 1935

Following the Madrid Conference of 1880 some Western powers, including the USA, the United Kingdom, France and Spain, decided to maintain the territorial unity of Morocco rather than divide it up. In order to maintain the level playing field these governments forced Morocco to give special treatment to all their citizens who resided in the country. The territorial unity of Morocco however could not be maintained and the country was divided into Spanish and French protectorates in 1912.

The status of the city of Tangier remained vague as none of the Western powers wanted to concede power over Tangier to the others, given its strategic location on the southern side of the Strait of Gibraltar. In 1923–24, the city and its environs of 500 square kilometers became an international zone administered by France, Spain, and Britain. Italy joined in 1928.<sup>65</sup> The semi-independent enclave became a duty-free port with a liberal European atmosphere.

From a technical viewpoint, Tangier was an excellent place for broadcasting into Europe.<sup>66</sup> Due to its unique location and the liberal media laws of the city, private radio stations began to develop in Tangier. Radio Tangier was initiated in 1935 by a French lawyer, Mr. Hamburg, and was the first of its kind.<sup>67</sup>

During World War II, Spain occupied Tangier and allowed the Nazi Germans to come in and have a consulate. Tangier abounded with German intelligence offi-

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-125.

<sup>65</sup> *Convention as to Protection in Morocco* between the USA, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Norway and Morocco. Signed in Madrid, July 3, 1880.

<sup>66</sup> Paul E., Freed, *Towers to Eternity* (Nashville, 1994, first edition 1967), p. 67.

<sup>67</sup> See Jacques Lane, 'Tanger, Le Rêve Radiophonique', in *Medina: Maroc Magazine* (Juillet-Août 2002) pp. 75-79. See also [www.aquiradioandorra.free.fr](http://www.aquiradioandorra.free.fr) (18 January 2003).

cers. It was also used as a recruiting ground for the Nazi's Arabic broadcasts of Radio Berlin. Al-Baḥrī of Radio Berlin went to Tangier after Spain took over, to recruit Arabic broadcasters.<sup>68</sup>

After the war, the allied powers forced Spain to leave Tangier. Once again the city became an international free zone. The USA was one of the parties that did participate in the Tangier government until the incorporation of Tangier into Morocco in 1956. This gave the USA jurisdiction over its citizens and *protégés* and encouraged a number of American servicemen who had been in Morocco during the war years, to stay there afterwards or to later return to Tangier.<sup>69</sup>

Up until 1948 almost anyone could build a radio station in Tangier. This resulted in approximately ten commercial radio stations, which sprang up quickly in this radio paradise, especially after the war.<sup>70</sup> This development was stimulated by the availability of broadcasting facilities of the allied armies. The American armies in Europe and North Africa were willing to auction much of their stock to the highest bidders.<sup>71</sup>

Tangier attracted colorful radio broadcasters. One of those was the American Herbert Southworth. He went to Algeria in 1943 to work for the Office of War Information in the Office of Psychological Warfare of the USA. Because of his knowledge of the Spanish situation he was later posted to Rabat to direct Spanish-language broadcasts to Spain that was ruled by the fascist dictator Francisco Franco. At the end of the war he bought a quantity of US Army surplus radio equipment with which he founded Radio Tangier International to broadcast against Franco. Transmissions started in 1946.<sup>72</sup>

Another well-known broadcaster in Tangier was Trémoulet, who had been the owner of a media Empire in France, Spain and Andorra before World War II. During the war he was the representative of the Vichy-regime in the construction of RMC.<sup>73</sup> After the war Trémoulet escaped to Spain and Switzerland as he was accused of collaboration with the Nazi's. He also lost his media empire in France as France no longer allowed private radio. In 1946 he was sentenced to death *in absentia* for collaboration but in 1949 he was acquitted after the main witnesses of the original court case withdrew their statements.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, in 1947, Trémoulet bought three stations in Tangier that were well outside the realm of French law. These were Radio Africa Maghrib, Radio Africa Tangier, and Radio Inter Africa.

VOA was set up in the city in 1948. After Nâsir took over power in Egypt in 1952, VOA 'increasingly came to see [itself] as being in competition with Cairo Radio in the strategically vital region stretching across the countries of North Af-

<sup>68</sup> Eric Mueller, 'Foiling Espionage in Berlin Radio's Arabic Service', pp. 32-36.

<sup>69</sup> In order to free Morocco and Algeria from their pro-Vichy governments and in order to have a springboard for re-conquering Europe, the Allied forces had occupied Morocco and Algeria in 1942. In 1943, the Allies conquered all of North Africa.

<sup>70</sup> Lane, 'Tanger, Le Rêve Radiophonique', pp. 75-79. See also [www.aquiradioandorra.free.fr](http://www.aquiradioandorra.free.fr).

<sup>71</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 67.

<sup>72</sup> Paul Preston, 'Obit: Herbert Southworth, 22 November 1999', on [www.ku.edu](http://www.ku.edu) (15 April 2003).

<sup>73</sup> Radio Monte Carlo began a station in Cyprus in 1973 aimed at the Middle East. In order to delineate between the two stations they will be consistently called Radio Monte Carlo in Monte Carlo (RMC-MC) and Radio Monte Carlo for the Middle East (RMC-ME).

<sup>74</sup> [www.aquiradioandorra.free.fr](http://www.aquiradioandorra.free.fr).



rica and the Arab Middle East' to counter Egypt's Pan-Arab propaganda and the growing popularity of the Soviet Union in the Arab World.<sup>75</sup>

### **5.3.5 Palestine and Jordan: 1936**

In March 1936, the British authorities in Palestine began to broadcast through the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS). This radio station aimed to facilitate communication between the authorities and the Palestinians and Jews in the land and to counter the Italian radio propaganda. Programs were broadcast in English, Arabic and Hebrew. The studio was in Jerusalem while the 20 kilowatt (kW) transmitter was placed nearby in Ramallah. During and after the war these facilities were expanded.

In May 1948, when Great Britain left Palestine, Jewish forces occupied the part of Jerusalem where PBS had its studio. Ramallah and PBS' transmitter fell into Transjordanian hands. The Transjordanian authorities that occupied the Palestinian territories added studios to the Ramallah site and began their own broadcasts. Financial constraints hampered further development. In 1950 Jordan integrated the Westbank into its state and the radio station then came under the responsibility of the ministry of information in Amman.<sup>76</sup>

### **5.3.6 Algeria: 1937**

In 1937 radio broadcasting began in Algeria as a service to the French colonists. The broadcasts were called *France Cinque* (France Five, i.e., the fifth French channel) and were mostly produced in France where the other four national channels were. Of all radio sets in Algeria, 95 percent were owned by foreigners. In 1940, an Arab channel was set up and in 1948 one for the Kabyles. These Arabic and Kabyle broadcasts were quite limited in broadcasting hours per week. They were seen as part of France's civilizing task.<sup>77</sup>

### **5.3.7 Lebanon: 1937**

In 1937 Radio Levant, the first radio station in Lebanon began its broadcasts. It was managed by France with local employees. The main motivation for building the station seems to have been to counteract the Italian propaganda broadcasts. When the Allied forces occupied Lebanon in 1941, the Vichy troops that were forced to retreat destroyed the station. It was soon rebuilt however and both the French and the British governments had their programs broadcast over Radio Levant's MW and SW transmitters.

In 1946, when Lebanon became formally independent, the facilities of Radio Levant were formally handed over to the Lebanese government. It was renamed

<sup>75</sup> James Vaughan, 'Propaganda by Proxy? Britain, America and Arab Radio Broadcasting, 1953-1957', in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* (Vol. 22 No. 2, 2002), p. 157.

<sup>76</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>77</sup> Yahya Mahamdi and Douglas A. Boyd, 'Algeria', in Douglas A. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World : A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Middle East* (Ames, 1999, first edition 1993), p. 216.

*Lebanese Broadcasting Station (LBS)*. The Lebanese were not motivated to develop the rather low-powered service.<sup>78</sup>

### 5.3.8 Saudi Arabia: 1949

The Ottoman Turks had installed telephone lines and used radio communication for ruling over the Hijâz, the northwestern region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). When Ibn Sa'ûd conquered the Hijâz and began the creation of his desert Kingdom, he used a network of transmitters for communications in his vast land. He realized he also needed the support of the *Wahhâbi* conservatives, who were initially religiously set against using radio in the heartland of Islam. Ibn Sa'ûd therefore did an experiment with a group of *Wahhâbi* 'ulamâ' (scholars). He had them listen to readings in Mecca from the *Qur'ân* that were being broadcast from Riyadh. By doing so, he convinced the 'ulamâ' conclusively that radio was not from the devil as he would not have been able to transfer the word of the *Qur'ân*. In 1927 a *fatwâ* of the 'ulamâ' stated: 'We abstain from answering the question and without knowing about science we will not discuss it from the viewpoint of the teachings of God and His Prophet'. As they did not speak out against radio, in spite of their misgivings, Ibn Sa'ûd was at liberty to further develop it.

In 1949 the first radio station began broadcasting in KSA. This first station with a studio and a three kW MW transmitter was built in Jeddah. Ibn Sa'ûd's son Faysal, the later king of KSA, was made responsible for the broadcasts. Initially there were five hours of programs each day. Voices of women and music were not allowed. The majority of the airtime was filled with religious programs including some broadcasts that originated in Mecca. The transmitter was soon replaced by one of 50 kW, and the number of daily broadcasts increased. In 1953 Faysal ensured that the broadcasting came formally under a government institute, which later became the ministry of information. During the 1950s no other changes occurred. Throughout this period, only the Western parts of KSA could listen to radio from Jeddah.<sup>79</sup>

### 5.3.9 Christian Presence and Participation

#### 5.3.9.1 Christian Presence and Participation in Public Radio

French, British and other expatriates were involved in the technical development of radio in the Arabs lands and in broadcasts of Western languages until 1953. The presence and participation of Christian Arabs in Arabic broadcasts, was very limited. In Morocco, Tangier, Algeria and Saudi Arabia, the number of Christian Arabs was minimal. In Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and Jordan, the Christian minorities were not used to participation in public life and some of them considered participation in radio unacceptable for religious reasons.<sup>80</sup>

In Lebanon, where the Christians formed a majority of the population, the different religious communities were allowed limited time on radio for the broadcast-

<sup>78</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 68.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144-146.

<sup>80</sup> Nâ'im 'Atif in an interview with the author (24 March 2006).

ing of church services on Sunday and the meetings of the mosques on Friday. Syria, Jordan and Egypt also allowed their churches some limited time on radio for a Christian witness in the public domain.<sup>81</sup>

### 5.3.9.2 Christian Radio Organizations

In 1948 the Ecumenical Near East Christian Council (NECC), which was in 1974 reorganized as the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), decided at a conference in Cairo that it wanted to work towards developing Christian radio. In line with that, the Executive Council of NECC decided in 1950 to authorize the establishment of a program production studio in Beirut. In the early 1950s, NECC tried to find a location for a radio station but in 1952 it decided to explore the option of using existent local stations. NECC could not hire airtime though, and even the Lebanese authorities refused NECC airtime, as they only gave airtime to denominations.<sup>82</sup> North American and European missionaries were the driving force behind these early Christian radio developments. MECC's radio ministry is described in chapter 16.

Middle East Lutheran Ministry (MELM) was a Lutheran denominational organization, established in Beirut in 1950 as the Lebanese branch of TLH. From 1950 on, MELM had two monthly programs of 15 minutes and a program of 30 minutes on each fifth Sunday of the month on Radio Beirut of LBS. Lutheran missionaries from the USA played the major role in the early history of MELM.

In 1950, Maier of TLH published that 'the Arabic [broadcasts in Tangier were] discontinued because of local Moslem pressure'.<sup>83</sup> As no other reference to these broadcasts were found, it is possible that Maier referred to the discontinuation of *preparations* for broadcast, not to actual broadcasts. It is possible that TLH hoped to broadcast its Lebanese programs in Tangier as well. This may have been the first effort to evangelize Muslim Arabs by radio.

## 5.4 EGYPTIAN PREDOMINANCE: 1953-1970

### 5.4.1 Egypt's Interest in Broadcasting

After Nâsir's appointment as president of Egypt in 1953, he ordered the building of SW transmitters. He began using transnational radio as the 'pulpit of the revolution' to spread his anti-colonial and Pan-Arab ideas to the rest of the Arab World.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Harold A. Fisher, 'Christian Radio in the Near East', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. III No. 3, Third Quarter 1955), p. 10.

<sup>82</sup> Manfred Lundgren., *Proclaiming Christ to His World; The Experience of Radio Voice of the Gospel: 1957-1977* (Geneva, 1983), p. 14.

<sup>83</sup> Walter A. Maier, *One thousand radio voices for Christ* (St. Louis, 1950), p. 438. Maier writes: 'In the north [of Africa] we use the facilities of Radio International in Tangier, which sends out our messages in English, French, and Spanish, the Arabic being discontinued because of local Moslem pressure.'

<sup>84</sup> The term 'pulpit of the revolution' is used by Julian Hale in his book *Radio Power; Propaganda and International Broadcasting* (London, 1975), p. 72. Nâsir moved radio broadcasting from the Ministry of Public Guidance to the Presidential Office in 1958, leaving no doubt who controlled radio in Egypt.

During and after World War II, he had experienced the importance of radio as a means of communication to enemy-held lands. External broadcasting in the language of listeners rather than that of the senders was considered so worthwhile that, by the end of 1945, 55 countries had formal foreign-language SW broadcasting services.<sup>85</sup>

#### 5.4.2 *Timeliness of Transistor Radio*

In the early 1950s, few homes in rural and poorer urban areas in Egypt had electricity and radios were still expensive and large. In spite of that, officials in the American Embassy in Cairo noted that the medium enjoyed a universal appeal among all classes in Egypt. During the 1950s, small and cheap Japanese transistor radios penetrated into the most remote and poor parts of Egypt. This situation was repeated all over the Arab World.<sup>86</sup> The introduction of the transistor radio meant a communication revolution. These radios were icons of technological triumph and dominated the market until the late 1960s.<sup>87</sup> The bulky tube radios disappeared and were replaced with smaller and cheaper transistor radios that could fit into a shirt pocket or a purse. Radio became an item that could be owned by anyone in the Arab World.<sup>88</sup> A further great advantage of transistor radios was that they operated on batteries. In major parts of the Arab World, electricity had not yet penetrated the countryside and had not even up until the 1950s.<sup>89</sup>

The Libyan leader Mu'amar al-Qadhafi once thought to demonstrate the wealth of his country by quoting statistics that Libya had imported three transistor radios per person into Libya.<sup>90</sup> The transistor radio became *the* status symbol for many Arabs. In 1956, before transistor radios were introduced, there were 405,000 radio receivers in the Arab World. In 1960 there were more than one million. In 1973, there were 21.5 million radios in the Arab World.<sup>91</sup> In 1997, there were up to

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Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 29. James Wood, *History of International Broadcasting*, Vol. 2 (London, 2000), p. 150.

<sup>85</sup> Naomi Sakr, *Satellite Realms, Transnational Television, Globalization & the Middle East* (London, New York, 2001), p. 4. The very first post stamp Egypt published after the country was declared to be a Republic in 1953 commemorated an Electronics Exhibition held in Cairo. The stamp, of ten millimetres and bright blue, was issued on 23 November 1953 and showed a radio transmission tower and radio waves. See *Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue: Part 19 Middle East* (London, 1996, first edition 1980), p. 50.

<sup>86</sup> The situation throughout the Arab World was so similar in this respect, that Derek Hopwood in his book on Syria in 1986 copied his text on the topic of radio and its importance almost verbatim from the book he wrote a few years earlier about Egypt. See Derek Hopwood, *Syria 1945-1986 Politics and Society* (London, 1988), p. 162, and Derek Hopwood, *Egypt Politics and Society 1945-1981* (London, 1982), pp. 156-157.

<sup>87</sup> Camil Moujaber, 'Radio History', on [www.midcenturyradios.com/Radios-TR.html](http://www.midcenturyradios.com/Radios-TR.html) (8 March 2004).

<sup>88</sup> The transistor was invented by three scientists in 1947. The transistor rapidly replaced the vacuum tube as an electronic signal regulator. A transistor regulates current or voltage flow and acts as a switch or gate for electronic signals. As it is much smaller and lighter than vacuum tubes, it enabled radio to become much smaller than before.

<sup>89</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 4.

<sup>90</sup> Davis, *Libyan Politics, Tribe and Revolution* (London, 1987), p. 154.

<sup>91</sup> Hale, *Radio Power*, p. 173.

69 million radios.<sup>92</sup> The politically interesting broadcasts that Egypt began in the 1950s must have played an important role in the rapid growth of the number of transistor radios in Egypt and all over the Arab World.

#### 5.4.3 Reasons for Popularity of Egypt's Broadcasts

The broadcasts of Voice of the Arabs (*Ṣawt al-‘Arab*, VOTA) began in July 1953 and became the best-known Egyptian program. The aim of the station was ‘personifying the national thought of the Arab masses, presenting the Cairo viewpoint to the Arab populace, and emphasizing the relationship between the future of Egypt and the Arab nation’. Egypt wanted to play a leading role in the Arab World and this was reflected in its broadcasting policies. In 1954 VOTA was broadcasting seven hours per day and by 1967 that had increased to 24 hours per day.<sup>93</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, the pro-Western governments of the Arab World feared Voice of the Arabs as it played a major role in making Nâsir the role model for many young people. Bypassing the ‘reactionary’ Arab governments, he could appeal to the Arab ‘masses’.<sup>94</sup> As millions of Egyptians found work in other Arab states, Egyptian radio was also a method of ensuring that these immigrant workers would not adopt the political views of their host nations.

Radio was a powerful political weapon for the Egyptian government, not only because of its masterly usage of Arabic and revolutionary jargon but also because no other Arab state in those days had similar broadcasting facilities and coverage.<sup>95</sup> Egypt was the only Arab country in the early 1950s with international radio broadcasts. Morocco followed in 1959, while in the 1960s Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Jordan, KSA, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait and Lebanon began international Arabic broadcasts.<sup>96</sup>

Figure 5.1 shows the absolute and relative strength of the broadcasting facilities in the different countries of the Arab World from the 1960s to 2003.<sup>97</sup> These are combined figures for both MW and SW facilities. Differentiating between these would not have been very useful as many MW broadcasts in the Arab World were

<sup>92</sup> Boyd gives the number of radio sets for each Arab country in his book *Broadcasting in the Arab World*.

<sup>93</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 27. This study uses the names *Voice of the Arabs* and *Radio Cairo* interchangeably because, even for the Arab listeners to the different broadcasts from Egypt, it was confusing to know which broadcast they were actually listening to.

<sup>94</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>95</sup> Joan Wucher King, *Historical Dictionary of Egypt* (Cairo, 1989, first edition 1984), p. 628.

<sup>96</sup> Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, p. 280.

<sup>97</sup> Paul C. Noble, ‘The Arab System: Opportunities, Constraints and Pressures’, in Bahgat Korany and Ali Hillal Dessouki (eds) *The Foreign Policies of Arab States* (Cairo, 1984), pp. 53, 58. James Wood, ‘The Rise of Arab Broadcasting’, in *International Broadcasting* (March 1991), p. 42. Wood, *History of International Broadcasting*, Vol. 2, p. 139. ‘Bahrain Radio and Television Corporation’, as found on [www.gna.gov.bh/btrc/radio.html](http://www.gna.gov.bh/btrc/radio.html) (12 March 2003). For the figures of 2003, information was received from Mika Makelainen, editor of [www.dxing.info](http://www.dxing.info), in an email to the author (14 March 2004) and from Nicholas Hardyman (ed), *World Radio TV Handbook 2004: The Directory of Global Broadcasting* (New York, 2003). Figures for the situation in Iraq in 2003 are not available due to the destructive war of 2003. In some countries the kW is lower in 2003 than in 1992 in spite of some major investments in powerful broadcasting equipment. This may be due to the new transmitters not having been installed and used yet or possibly due to old equipment having been taken out of service.

transnational. Further research in this area would be useful as not all needed figures were available. *Figure 5.1* is therefore mainly helpful as an indication of the relative strength of the broadcasting facilities of the Arab countries throughout the years.

After VOTA had become the popular mouthpiece for Nâsir, the broadcasts of BBC and VOA became less interesting for the audiences in the Arab World. According to official American reports from Egypt, Iraq and Syria, VOA had ‘a small and unresponsive audience’, it ‘achieve[d] little’, it was of ‘little value’, ‘of poor reception’ and ‘hard to understand’.<sup>98</sup>

	kW	%	kW	%	kW	%	kW	%
	Early 1960s		Mid 1970s		1992		2003	
Egypt	3.770	53.4	4.886	36	9.800	8.7	11.264	13.6
Iraq	1.125	15.9	3.140	23.1	21.000	18.2	--	--
Syria	650	9.2	1.340	9.9	5.000	4.5	5.240	6.3
Lebanon	310	4.3	237	1.7	835	0.8	1.000	1.2
KSA	415	5.9	1.805	13.3	20.500	17.7	19.611	23.6
Jordan	525	7.4	318	2	6.400	5.6	4.715	5.7
Kuwait	220	3.1	2.476	17	11.200	9.8	6.150	7.4
Yemen	40	0.6	234	2.3	2.860	2.5	1.656	2.0
Qatar	--	--	162	1.2	4.000	3.5	2.451	2.9
Bahrain	--	--	35	--	200	0.2	381	0.5
UAE	--	--	75	0.5	9.500	8.3	7.282	8.8
Oman	--	--	50	0.4	1.600	1.5	2.150	2.6
Libya	--	--	--	--	8.800	7.7	2.691	3.2
Morocco	--	--	--	--	7.050	6.2	9.629	11.6
Algeria	--	--	--	--	8.300	7.3	3.880	4.7
Djibouti	--	--	--	--	--	--	680	0.8
Sudan	--	--	--	--	--	--	1.865	2.2
Tunisia	--	--	--	--	--	--	2.571	3.1

*Figure 5.1 Power of Radio Transmitters of Arab Countries: 1960-2003*

Wilbur Schramm’s investigation of the effectiveness of USA’s overseas broadcasting, conducted on the behalf of the National Security Council in the autumn of 1954, concluded that the Middle East was ‘a region which tends to be distrustful [...] of foreign broadcasts and of “propaganda”. [...] It is the considered opinion of our observers that no direct foreign broadcast, including BBC, has a substantial proportion of listeners in any of these countries’.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Vaughan, ‘Propaganda by Proxy?’, pp. 158-159.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

#### 5.4.4 Liberation of North Africa

During the first few years after the revolution in Egypt, VOTA focused mainly on the Arab struggle for independence in North Africa. Egypt supported the case of the Moroccan *Sulṭān* Muḥammad V who was exiled to France; it also helped Ḥabīb Bûrḡibâ's *Dustûr Jadîd* (New Constitution) Party in Tunisia; it allowed Algerian revolutionary leaders who resided in Cairo to use VOTA for their attacks on France. In 1956, both Morocco and Tunisia were granted independence. Egypt's attacks from then on focused on French policies regarding Algeria. The French tried to convince Nâsir to stop these verbal attacks, but to no avail. Paris considered the broadcasts from Cairo a major factor in Algeria's war of independence.<sup>100</sup>

In the 1950s, when the Algerian resistance began, the French-controlled Radio Algiers continued its daily broadcasts about 'the wiping out of the last remaining guerrilla bands', but VOTA showed the Algerian nationalists another reality. Experiencing such a discrepancy first hand greatly increased the Algerians' interest in owning radio facilities. In 1956, when the Voice of Free Algeria came on air, the French military rulers of Algeria banned the further sales of radio sets and began jamming the broadcasts. The myth of radio was thereby reinforced.<sup>101</sup>

#### 5.4.5 Struggle for Revolution in Iraq

The perceived effect of radio propaganda aimed at North Africa during the first three years of broadcasting was so great that VOTA became increasingly bold in supporting Nâsir's political aspirations for the Middle East. In 1955, Egypt started a virulent radio campaign against the Baghdad Pact and especially against the Iraqi leaders, King Faysal and Prime Minister Nûri al-Sa'îd. Any Arab leader that seemed to lean towards participating in the Western alliance received its share of vilification on Voice of the Arabs. This propaganda barrage against the Iraqi regime lasted almost four years. The Iraqi regime had a tight clamp on internal opposition. 'Demonstrations, strikes and newspapers could be dealt with through arrests, police actions and suspensions', according to Iraq-historian Phebe Marr.<sup>102</sup> The Iraqi rulers were unable however to control this propaganda weapon of radio that was used against them. Marr described the impact of VOTA on Iraq:

[The] Voice of the Arabs penetrated the village, the field, and the Bedouin camp, the barracks and the dormitory. Gradually its message spread hostility –previously limited mainly to the urban groups – among rural areas as well, swelling the numbers of those opposed to the regime and undermining whatever legitimacy the regime possessed. The greatest impact of the Voice of the Arabs was on the officer corps, which was capable of mobilizing the force necessary to overthrow the regime.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Hugh Thomas, *The Suez Affair* (London, 1986, first edition 1967), pp. 9, 17, 24, 87-88. During one of the preparatory meetings before the war, one of the French delegates said: 'Il faut coloniser le canal ou canaliser le colonel.' [It is necessary to colonize the canal or else to canalize the colonel.]

<sup>101</sup> Hale, *Radio Power*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>102</sup> Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, 1985), p. 119.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Great Britain had tried to help Baghdad to make its own Radio Baghdad into a tool in the battle of the airwaves, but to no avail.<sup>104</sup> In 1958, the pro-Western Iraqi rulers were ousted when they ordered their troops to march to Jordan for defending King Ḥusayn against a possible left-wing takeover. The Iraqi armies decided not to march for the defense of Jordan but against their own government. They had broad support in Iraqi society. It was in the foreign policy sphere that the regime had lost the battle, according to Marr. 'Iraq was surrounded by hostile Arab states [...] while the propaganda barrage continued unabated from Cairo.'<sup>105</sup>

The Iraqi coup leader, 'Abd al-Karīm Qāssim, had seen the power of radio, and asked the USSR to help Iraq construct new facilities. By 1961 Iraq had several powerful MW and SW transmitters. Qāssim and all the Iraqi leaders after him used radio to build their personality cults to spread internal propaganda and to disseminate Iraq's political philosophy to the Arab World.<sup>106</sup> The Iraqi leaders had seen the example of Egypt and by imitating that model, made themselves the main contenders with Egypt for being the leading nation in the Arab World.

#### 5.4.6 Verbal War with Jordan

In December 1955, when Jordan was about to become a member of the Baghdad Pact, VOTA started a campaign against King Ḥusayn. The Egyptian broadcasts seemed successful. Violent demonstrations broke out all over Jordan. Three cabinets fell in 23 days and Jordan decided it would not join the Baghdad Pact. The king was forced to fire his English military advisor, John Glubb *Pasha*, but he personally survived the revolutionary storm retaining his pro-British attitude.<sup>107</sup>

With British help, King Ḥusayn briefly experimented with his own radio station Radio Ramallah. In the 1950s, he began using the station against the political influence exerted by Egypt, Syria, and KSA on his small state.<sup>108</sup> The chief propagandist hired by the station was al-Baḥrī, the same broadcaster who during World War II had been an Arab propagandist on Radio Berlin against the British. His crude anti-Nāṣir tirades were unpopular in Jordan where Nāṣir was generally seen as a hero.<sup>109</sup> Radio Ramallah was soon closed, and in 1956 Jordan moved those

<sup>104</sup> Vaughan, 'Propaganda by Proxy', pp. 162-163.

<sup>105</sup> Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 121.

<sup>106</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp 125-126.

<sup>107</sup> Clinton Bailey, *Jordan's Palestinian Challenge 1848-1983: A Political History* (Boulder, 1984), pp. 11-13. Thomas, *The Suez Affair*, p. 25. It is questionable whether Voice of the Arabs played the preponderant role in the firing of Glubb but the credit given to Voice of the Arabs for this by Glubb himself, shows the perception of the effect of the broadcasts. See e.g. Gary D. Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and VOA in International Politics, 1956-1964* (New York, 1996), pp. 25-26.

<sup>108</sup> Vaughan, 'Propaganda by Proxy?', p. 165.

<sup>109</sup> The name of the program, *Ḥayya al-'Arab* (Long Live the Arabs) backfired on its originator. Al-Baḥrī's habit of shouting '*Ḥayya al-'Arab*' into the microphone at every available opportunity was intended to transform the phrase into a household term. Instead it became an object of derision. Richard Parker, Second Secretary at the US Amman Embassy, recorded that a hearty rendition of *Ḥayya al-'Arab* at a Jordanian social gathering was a sure way to produce a laugh amongst one's guests or hosts. However, al-Baḥrī's 'crude collection of stale tricks' caused a Jordanian Cabinet crisis and irritated the (generally pro-Egyptian) Jordanian population. Few people bothered tuning in to al-Baḥrī's tirades. See Vaughan, 'Propaganda by Proxy?', p. 166. Al-Baḥrī published his autobiography, *Hunā Birlīn, Ḥayya al-'Arab*, in 1956 within a year after *Radio Ramallah* was closed.



broadcasting facilities to Amman. Studios were also opened in Jerusalem; these were taken over by Israel when Israeli troops captured East Jerusalem in 1967.<sup>110</sup>

#### 5.4.7 *Victory in the Suez Canal War*

Nâsir nationalized the Suez Canal in July 1956. This was used as a pretext by Great Britain, Israel and France to begin a war against Egypt in October 1956. This war made Nâsir even more popular as the symbol of Arab nationalism.<sup>111</sup> Among the first British targets in the war were the transmitters of the Egyptian radio stations. One research project of the British Overseas Information Services concluded that radio broadcasting was 'probably the most effective form of propaganda in the region'.<sup>112</sup> The British prime-minister, Anthony Eden, was so convinced of the impact of radio that he tried to take-over BBC as he was unhappy with its efforts to be impartial in its broadcasting about the Suez War.<sup>113</sup> The main reason why France participated in the Suez War against Egypt was Nâsir's perceived importance in the Algerian struggle for independence against France through the revolutionary broadcasts from Cairo.

As part of its war efforts, Great Britain used secret radio stations broadcasting on wavelengths close to VOTA, calling for the Egyptians to overthrow Nâsir.<sup>114</sup> One of those radio stations was Near East Radio (*al-Sharq al-Adná*, or NER) in Limassol (Cyprus). After the bombardment of Radio Cairo, NER briefly remained the only powerful station in the Middle East. On 30 October 1956 the British formally requisitioned this commercial station from its owners. The Arabic staff of the station refused to serve the British interests though and instead, broadcast to Egypt that they were on Egypt's side. In 1957 the station was closed altogether.<sup>115</sup>

#### 5.4.8 *Meddling in Lebanon*

In 1958, the year of the Iraqi Revolution and of the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) of Egypt and Syria, a Pan-Arab revolt almost ousted President Kamîl Shâmûn of Lebanon. The USA came to his support, briefly sending marines to Beirut to safeguard his government. In Washington, President Dwight L. Eisenhower discussed the Lebanese situation and perceived it mainly as 'the problem of

<sup>110</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 92-96.

<sup>111</sup> Tawfiq Y. Hasou, *The Struggle for the Arab World. Egypt's Nasser and the Arab League* (London, 1986), pp. 57-58.

<sup>112</sup> Quoted in Vaughan, 'Propaganda by Proxy?', p. 157.

<sup>113</sup> Thomas, *The Suez Affair*, p. 155.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 334-335. NER had been founded with British government help in 1941 in Palestine and was moved to Cyprus after the end of the mandate in 1948. It had been used for clandestine British propaganda to the Arabs with an anti-French and anti-Israeli overtone. By 1955, the station was broadcasting on SW and MW.

Nasser's popularity with the Arab masses'. He concluded that there was 'a need for a powerful radio station' to counteract Nâsir's propaganda.<sup>116</sup>

VOA had been broadcasting half an hour of Arabic programs per day since 1950, but with weak reception. From 1952, VOA used the US coast guard ship *Carrier* off the coast of Rhodes (Greece) as a floating MW and SW station, among other things for Arabic broadcasts to the Middle East and North Africa. The Arabic broadcast increased to two hours daily in 1954, and later to three hours daily.<sup>117</sup>

When the USA wanted to expand its broadcasts after the crisis in Lebanon in 1958, VOA's officials faced the problem that it did not have MW facilities on the ground in the Middle East, unlike BBC with its base in Cyprus. In order to solve the problem VOA built a studio and a transmission station on Rhodes in 1963, and *Carrier* was taken out of service. VOA went on air from Rhodes in May 1964. Programs were produced there and no longer relayed by SW and then rebroadcast as before, so the quality of the signal and the local atmosphere of VOA's programs increased remarkably.<sup>118</sup>

Until 1958 Lebanon had not been very interested in developing its own radio. After 1958 however some SW broadcasts were added to Lebanon's output as the authorities had now woken up to the power of radio as a result of having been under attack by Nâsir.<sup>119</sup>

#### 5.4.9 *Fighting in the Civil War of Yemen*

In Yemen the broadcasts of VOTA were widely credited for helping to bring about the collapse of the Royalist government in the civil war of 1962-1970. This was chiefly achieved through calls for armed uprising coupled with reminders of various injustices and restrictions imposed by the royalist government.<sup>120</sup> Following several setbacks, Nâsir ordered the distribution of 100,000 transistor radios to the Yemeni tribes. According to Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Haykal, one of Nâsir's closest advisors, this 'had more effect than a whole division'.<sup>121</sup> That may have been an exaggeration, but it shows the perception of the power of radio during those years.

KSA squarely supported the Yemeni Royalists against Nâsir. The Saudi government was slow in countering Egypt's radio propaganda. During the early 1960s, plans were made to build a powerful national and international radio service for KSA. The slow implementation was partly due to the strong resistance of the *Wahhâbî* clerics of KSA, as many continued to consider radio to be religiously unacceptable.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Michael B. Bishku, 'The 1958 American Intervention in Lebanon: A Historical Assessment', in *American Arab Affairs* (Number 31, Winter 1989-1990), p. 114.

<sup>117</sup> George C. Mackenzie, Jr., 'Arabic Branch', in *Voice* (No. 32, April-May 1989), p. 8.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 308-309. In 1977, the Rhodes studio was withdrawn to the USA again, as VOA began to broadcast from the USA by satellite to its Rhodes relay station. Therefore the programs could be broadcast from Washington without losing quality.

<sup>119</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 68-70.

<sup>120</sup> Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, pp. 282-283.

<sup>121</sup> Mohamed H. Heikal, *The Cairo Documents* (New York, 1973), p. 173.

<sup>122</sup> Donald A. Boyd, 'Development of Egypt's Radio: 'Voice of the Arabs' under Nasser', in *Journalism Quarterly* (Winter 1975), p. 652.

#### 5.4.10 Islamic Broadcasts

During the 1950s and early 1960s, religion did not play a major role in Egyptian radio broadcasts. The socialist leaders were not very interested in religion, and conservative Arab states like KSA did not yet have the means to counter the Egyptian role in the Arab World. During the Yemeni war, when KSA began to seriously accuse Egypt of being irreligious, Egyptian radio tried to prove the Islamic devotion of the Egyptian regime through the broadcasts of Voice of the Merciful *Qur'ân* (*Ṣawt al-Qur'ân al-Karîm*, VOMQ). These broadcasts on MW and SW started in 1964, initially with 18½ hours but soon with 24 hours per day. These broadcasts included the call to prayer, *Qur'anic* recitals, explanations of the *Qur'ân* and the *ḥadīths*, religious discussions and other strictly religious programs.<sup>123</sup>

VOMQ was intended to prove to the Arab nations that Nâsir's regime, that aligned itself politically with the USSR, was not irreligious as countries like KSA claimed. These broadcasts were also meant to counter the criticism of the Egyptian Islamic opposition to Nâsir.

The broadcasts of conservative Islam over VOMQ played a role in educating the Egyptian population in basic Islamic thinking. It taught orthodox *Sunnî* Islam to the population of Egypt that had always had heterodox habits and opinions. In the search for an identity during the period after decolonization and the socialist revolution, these broadcasts played an important role in teaching young people what to believe and how to apply their religious beliefs to a new age.<sup>124</sup>

#### 5.4.11 Waning Credibility of Egypt's Radio Broadcasts

The failed experiment to unify Egypt and Syria in the UAR (1958-1961) and the lack of economic progress in the early 1960s, together with the lack of success in the Yemeni campaign, created doubts in many Arabs' minds about Nâsir's ability to deliver on his promises. This in turn reflected on the credibility of the VOTA that continued to describe Nâsir as a bigger-than-life hero. It was the dramatic loss in the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967 that really discredited VOTA as the newsreaders continued describing tremendous victories of the Egyptian armies against Israel while in reality Israel destroyed the Egyptian air force and occupied the Sinai within a few days. Israel also occupied the Westbank of the Jordan River including East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

When the size of the disaster became clear, Egyptian and other Arab listeners felt deceived and Aḥmad Sa'id, VOTA's chief announcer who had been regarded as a hero for his skillful propaganda campaign against Yemen, was forced to resign in

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., pp. 309-310. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 25.

<sup>124</sup> The educational system of Egypt also played an important role in this as the number of students in state schools grew fast. These state schools taught conservative Islam in the religious classes, while the Arabic classes also had a strong Islamic orientation. The Egyptian authorities also modernized the Azhar University, enabling that institute to annually send out thousands of new Imams who represented a culturally modern, though religiously conservative, Islam.

disgrace.<sup>125</sup> He was arrested, imprisoned, and later kept under house arrest for some years because he was considered the ‘agent of Egyptian humiliation’.<sup>126</sup>

The credibility of the Egyptian President himself was at stake after 1967. In 1984, Aḥmad Faṭḥī, an expert on Egyptian radio, wrote that the audiences believed whatever Nāṣir’s broadcasts would say, but only until 1967.<sup>127</sup> The defeat of Egypt was a defining moment in the history of the Arab World in general and of transnational media in the Arab World in particular. The Arab masses learned to be much more critical of their leaders. As long as the Arab leaders could uphold the image of being victorious, the exaggerations in the media were believed. The exaggerations about the victorious Arab armies that were in reality badly defeated broke the spell. Arab masses would not take their media’s claims at face value again.

The audience figures for foreign transnational Arab broadcasts went up tremendously in the years after 1967. Before 1967, broadcasters like BBC and VOA were mainly ignored by the Arabs and were unable to counteract the popularity of Nāṣir and his radio broadcasts. It was not the Western effort to discredit Nāṣir but his defeat by Israel and the exaggerations in the Egyptian media that created the credibility problem. The Arab World continued listening to broadcasts originating in Arab countries, but after the demise of Nāṣir, no Arab leader would ever again be able to dominate the airwaves the way he had. The Arabs began to avidly search for truth by also listening to Arabic broadcasts that originated outside the Arab World.

#### **5.4.12 Christian Presence and Participation**

##### **5.4.12.1 Christian Presence and Participation in Public Radio**

The major change in this period of 1953 to 1970 compared to the pre-1953 period was that fewer expatriate Christians were working in the Arab media, due to the decolonization of the Arab World. The percentage of Christian Arabs involved in the radio industry in the Arab World remained small, for the same reasons as in the pre-1953 period. It is likely that in the secular states of Syria and Iraq, Christians Arabs were overrepresented, but this needs further study.

##### **5.4.12.2 Christian Radio Organizations**

In the period between 1953 and 1970, many Protestant organizations began to produce and broadcast Arabic Christian radio programs. Some of the major ones are treated in this study. The first Protestant Christian broadcasts on SW were by the

<sup>125</sup> Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, p. 283.

<sup>126</sup> Hale, *Radio Power*, p. 75. Boyd quotes Charles Issawi (1963) speaking about VOTA: It ‘has to be heard to be believed: for sheer venom, vulgarity, and indifference to truth it has few equals in the world.’ Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 28. Boyd also states that Aḥmad Sa’id was dismissed from Radio Cairo only after Nāṣir’s death in 1970 and that he then went to Tripoli to work for Libya’s Voice of the Large Arab World. See Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 235. Tāriq Zaydān, a SW expert in Cairo, said the program in Libya was called Voice of Arab Egypt. He also mentioned that Aḥmad Sa’id was strongly pro-Nāṣir and anti-Sādāt, and that he hosted his programs against Egypt’s policies first from Libya but later from Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Tāriq Zaydān in an interview with the author (18 March 2004).

<sup>127</sup> Muḥammad Faṭḥī, *Al-Idhā’āt al-Miṣriyah fī Niṣf Qarn: 1934-1984* (Cairo, 1984) p. 170.

Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) in Lebanon. In 1953 they began the production of radio programs in Arabic. The first of these programs went on air in September 1953 from a SW transmitter in Sri Lanka. These Arabic broadcasts were halted in 1955. SDA missionaries from Europe played a major role in these early broadcasts of the SDAs. Chapter 6 describes the Arabic radio witness of the SDA Church.

In 1956, ELWA began to broadcast Arabic programs from its transmitters in Liberia.<sup>128</sup> Chapter 7 describes how ELWA initially used programs from a related audio studio in Aden for its broadcasts. ELWA was an Evangelical interdenominational organization and was conceived in the USA. North American missionaries initially played a major role in developing these Arabic broadcasts. In 1963 ELWA opened a larger studio in Beirut. ELWA propelled some organizations into Arabic radio production. One of these was the Back to God Hour (BTGH). BTGH's first programs were broadcast in 1957, as can be read in chapter 14. BTGH was the mission work of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA). Its Arabic work was led by the American-Syrian Bassam Madany. ELWA was also instrumental in the decision of Arab World Ministries (AWM) to start radio production. In 1960, when that organization was still called North Africa Mission (NAM), it had its first program on ELWA. The history of AWM is treated in chapter 15. It is Evangelical, interdenominational, and mostly North American and European.

NECC continued its preparations to become a broadcaster after it realized it would not be able to broadcast on the public channels of the Arab World. In 1963, they began three hours of broadcasts per day through Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) from Ethiopia. This is described in chapter 16.

In 1965 Trans World Radio (TWR) began Arabic broadcasts from its transmitters on Bonaire (Netherlands Antilles). TWR is Evangelical, interdenominational, and mostly North American and European. Its history is described in chapter 8. TWR propelled Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) with its Malaga Media Center in Malaga (Spain) and many others into Arabic program production. GMU's first programs were broadcast in 1966, as described in chapter 17. GMU is mainly North American, with a Plymouth Brethren theology, and it is interdenominational.

## 5.5 INCREASE OF TRANSNATIONAL BROADCASTING: 1970-1990

### 5.5.1 *New Arab Broadcasters begin Transnational Broadcasting*

After Nâsir's death in 1970 and especially after his successor resident Muḥammad Anwar al-Sâdât began the peace process with Israel in 1975, Egypt no longer played a leading role in the Arab World. Throughout the Arab World interest in the VOTA waned. One reason was the lack of credibility of Cairo's broadcasts since 1967. The growth of transnational broadcasts by other Arab states also played an important role. *Table 5.1* shows that Egypt was still the major radio

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<sup>128</sup> These call letters of the station, given by the Liberian government, stood for Liberia West Africa, but ELWA liked to say that it meant *Eternal Love Winning Africa*.

power in the Arab World in the mid 1970s, but it had lost its massive preponderance.

In the 1970s Libya, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar began their own international radio broadcasts. This became possible for these formerly poor states thanks in part to their oil-wealth after the price-hikes of the early 1970s.<sup>129</sup> Iraq, KSA and Kuwait also increased their broadcasting capacities compared to the previous decade. KSA began broadcasting *Qur'anic* recitals and sermons from mosques in 1972 and Libya did likewise in 1975.<sup>130</sup> From the perspective of understanding the different interpretations of Islam in the Arab World it would be rewarding to research the theological and other differences between the Islamic broadcasts from Egypt, KSA and Libya.

Another reason why VOTA became less interesting for the Arab World was that after Nâşir died, the much more circumspect and pragmatic Sâdât decided to limit the use of VOTA as an instrument of foreign policy.<sup>131</sup> Thus, VOTA in its broadcast during the October 1973 war was much more mature. Communiqués were factual, Arab aims were clearly stated and the news could generally be trusted. This very moderation was probably one reason why other stations overtook VOTA in popularity. Many Arabs preferred the bombastic, less-than-factual style of the VOTA of the days of Nâşir. After Sâdât began his peace process with Israel, broadcasts from Libya, KSA and Iraq became the voices of resistance against both Israel and Egypt, using the rhetorical styles they had learned from Egypt.<sup>132</sup>

Iraq, with its *Ba'th* (resurrection) ideology, aimed at leadership in the Arab World. It stepped up its broadcasts to the Arab World, enabled by its oil-wealth, in the 1970s when Egypt discredited itself by its peace with Israel. In May 1979, a two mW transmitter in Babylon and a 1.2 mW transmitter in Başrah were employed for broadcasting the Iraqi programs of the Voice of Egypt of Arabism to attack Egypt and its peace with Israel. The style of the station was similar to VOTA under Aḥmad Sa'îd. The entire theme of these broadcasts was against Sâdât and though Egypt denied its impact, it decided to jam the programs.<sup>133</sup> For Egypt the Iraqi campaign was an extra reason to begin adding to its broadcasting power again. In 1978 Egypt initiated a project doubling its SW and tripling its MW output.<sup>134</sup>

Iraq's expansion of its broadcasting power in 1979 came at the right time for Iraq. In its neighboring country, Iran, a revolution had brought *Ayatollah* Khomeini to power with an Islamic regime that was the antithesis of the Iraqi political ideology. As Iran was eager to export its revolution to neighboring countries, it began a program of expanding its MW and SW broadcasting facilities. In 1992, its combined kW capacity was 22,540 kW, more than any Arab state. The main non-

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<sup>129</sup> Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, p. 280.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 309-310. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 25.

<sup>131</sup> Brown, *International Radio Broadcasting*, p. 284.

<sup>132</sup> Hale, *Radio Power*, p. 76.

<sup>133</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Farsi language used by the Iranian broadcasters was Arabic. This became an important propaganda tool against Iraq during the first Gulf War of 1980-1988.<sup>135</sup>

### 5.5.2 Growing Popularity of Foreign Arabic Broadcasts

In 1970, RMC negotiated airtime with a Cypriot radio station. Broadcasts in Greek and Turkish were not allowed, but RMC could broadcast in any other language. In 1971 Radio Monte Carlo–Middle East (RMC-ME) started test broadcasts in French and Arabic, with a 20 kW transmitter in Cape Greco (Cyprus). Since 1973 the station used a 600 kW transmitter for MW.<sup>136</sup> This increase in capacity coincided with the Arab-Israeli October War of 1973. Because of the war, RMC-ME increased its Arabic output beyond its initial four hours per day. It soon became a favorite station for young listeners in the Middle East and a direct competitor to the BBC's Arabic Service because of its youthful and relaxed style. It also had a pro-Arab political stance.<sup>137</sup>

Since 1980, Morocco allowed a private station in Tangier, called *Radio Méditerranée* or *Medi-1*. This station could be received in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and parts of Libya, and also in the southern parts of Spain, France and Italy. The 51 percent majority ownership by Moroccans ensured that the station walked a careful pro-government line in its reporting.<sup>138</sup> France had a minority ownership in Medi-1, thus securing for itself some influence in its programming.<sup>139</sup>

Systematic audience studies done between the 1970s and 1980s showed that only a few of the dozens of Arabic broadcasters originating outside the Arab World were able to get a sizable audience.<sup>140</sup> In the Middle East, BBC and RMC-ME were very popular, followed at a distance by VOA. This popularity of BBC and RMC-ME was mainly due to their perceived objectivity in reporting about Middle East affairs compared to the biased broadcasts of most Arabic programs. The largest of those international Arabic broadcasters were Israel and Iran, each averaging 18 hours per day in 1989. RMC-ME followed with 12 hours, then BBC and VOA with nine hours each. Radio Moscow had seven hours of Arabic per day.<sup>141</sup>

BBC and VOA have both invested in audience research since the early 1970s. Research in KSA in 1972, when RMC-ME had not yet started its broadcasts, showed that of those listening to radio, 72 percent listened at least once a week to BBC, 70 percent to Egyptian international radio, 62 percent to Radio Kuwait and 37 percent to VOA.<sup>142</sup> In Kuwait in 1974, 22 percent of all respondents listened at least once a week to BBC. In 1977, BBC's audiences in Jordan and Egypt were

<sup>135</sup> Wood, *International Broadcasting* Vol. 2, pp. 139, 152-3.

<sup>136</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 174.

<sup>137</sup> Sakr, *Satellite Realms*, p. 126. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 298-299.

<sup>138</sup> [www.medi1.com/medi1/radio.php](http://www.medi1.com/medi1/radio.php) (17 March 2004).

<sup>139</sup> Likewise, in 1996 France became the full owner of RMC-ME as part of the *Radio France International* (RFI) group. See [www.rfi.fr/Fichiers/RFI/Histoire/histoire.asp](http://www.rfi.fr/Fichiers/RFI/Histoire/histoire.asp) (12 November 2005).

<sup>140</sup> Muhammad I. Ayish, 'Foreign Voices as People's Choices; BBC Popularity in the Arab World', in *Middle Eastern Studies* (Vol. 27 No. 3, 1991), p. 374.

<sup>141</sup> *World Radio and Television Handbook* (1989), as quoted in Ayish, *Foreign Voices*, pp. 388-389.

<sup>142</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 173.

three times as large as those of VOA.<sup>143</sup> Though audience research in the Arab World was in its infancy in the 1970s and the information is scanty, it is clear that compared to the 1960s, the Arabic broadcasts from outside the Arab World had become much more popular and that BBC was the most listened to among these.

The situation changed in the early 1980s. By then, the daytime commercial service of RMC-ME began to overtake BBC in popularity. In 1982, research in Egypt showed that RMC-ME was the most popular foreign Arabic broadcaster, with over 31 percent preferring RMC-ME. Israeli radio followed with 21 percent while BBC had 19 percent and VOA had 15 percent of the audience's preference. Confirmation of the increasing popularity of RMC-ME came from Kuwait in 1983, then a year later from Jordan and in 1985 from Egypt again.<sup>144</sup>

The trend seemed to change towards the end of the 1980s when an audience survey in Jordan showed that the BBC had the largest audience again. This popularity was repeated with similar findings in Tunisia, Morocco and Bahrain. In 1987, BBC claimed that '[day] in and day out an audience conservatively estimated at least 10 million listening at least once a week, but many more at time of crisis.'<sup>145</sup>

Research done in Egypt confirmed that BBC had grown in popularity towards the end of the 1980s. 'Adlî Muḥammad and Sâmi Muḥammad published the findings of their audience research in 1988. Of all Egyptians interviewed, 21 percent listened weekly to broadcasts from other Arab countries. More than twice as many, 43 percent, listened to Arabic radio broadcasts that did not originate in the Arab World. The international radio stations most listened to were BBC with 32 percent, RMC-ME with 26 percent, Israeli radio with 20 percent, and VOA with 18 percent. Statistics showed that the number of women listening to RMC-ME was relatively high.<sup>146</sup>

The same research in Egypt showed that of those Egyptians who regularly listened to international radio stations, 31 percent did so because the news on those international stations was 'truthful'. A smaller group, 24 percent, gave a more general answer stating they listened because the programming was 'good'. Of the listeners, 18 percent were interested in entertainment, ten percent listened because they heard things that were not on their national radio, ten percent gave no specific reason and seven percent said they were listening because they corresponded with the stations.<sup>147</sup> Of the Egyptian audience of these international stations, 58 percent had finished secondary school, while 28 percent had finished university.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Ayish, *Foreign Voices*, p. 375.

<sup>144</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 314. In 1989 VOA published in its magazine *Voice* that its Arabic service had 'an estimated seven million people in North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region. Millions of Arabic speakers in sub-Saharan Africa and Western Europe also tune in daily'. VOA did not publish how often these people listened to their broadcasts and these figures contradicted the findings of all other research. In 1989, VOA was broadcasting 9½ hours per day in Arabic. In 1988 70,000 Arabic letters were received. See George C. Mackenzie, Jr., 'Arabic Branch', in *Voice* (No. 32, April-May 1989), p. 9.

<sup>145</sup> Ayish, *Foreign Voices*, p. 375

<sup>146</sup> 'Adlî Muḥammad al-Sayyid Riḍā and Sâmi Muḥammad Rabî' al-Sharîf, *Ilâqât al-Mustam' al-Miṣrî bi al-Idhâ'ât al-'Arabiyah wa al-Dawliyah al-Muwajihiah*, *Dirâsah Maydaniyah* (Cairo, 1988), pp. 67, 83, 89.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 99.



### 5.5.3 Crises in the Arab World, Broadcasting, and Listening Habits

During and after the major wars in the Arab World (1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, 1990-1991, 2003), the number of international Arabic broadcasters grew along with the total number of broadcasting hours.<sup>149</sup> This was due to the increased demand for such services in those times of crisis. Radio played a major role in informing the Arabic population of what was happening. Most Arabs realized that many of their domestic broadcasts were not objective but were often plainly propagandistic and they did not trust their face value.<sup>150</sup>

Arabs developed a habit of listening to many different broadcasts, trying to discover what could be called the 'median truth'. Anthropologist John Davis described how some tribes in Libya in the 1960s and 1970s listened to their own Libyan broadcasts, but also to broadcasts from Egypt, Great Britain, France, KSA, Israel and Kuwait.<sup>151</sup> In that way they hoped to 'calculate the co-ordinates of reality with an acceptable degree of certainty'.<sup>152</sup> Libyans were 'passionate virtuosi of the shortwave band selector', according to Davis.<sup>153</sup> The same can be said about the Arabs in general. According to Naomi Sakr, in the years after the October War of 1973, the practice of 'sampling a range of foreign radio stations [...] in order to piece together an understanding of current events may have subsided somewhat. During the Gulf War of 1990-1991 it resumed with a vengeance.'<sup>154</sup>

### 5.5.4 Christian Presence and Participation

#### 5.5.4.1 Christian Presence and Participation in Public Radio

As other Arab countries beside Egypt became serious in transnational broadcasting, there was an increased need for specialized personnel. Lebanese Christians came to play an extraordinary role in managing these new broadcasting stations because of their good standards of education and their characteristic international focus. The more educated ones found themselves work in radio broadcasting in the Arab Gulf states, especially after the price hike of oil in the 1970s increased the salaries. Because of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) many Lebanese were eager to work outside their country.

#### 5.5.4.2 Christian Radio Organizations

The 1970s saw an increase in organizations that wanted to witness to Christ in the Arab World by broadcasting radio programs. In 1971, Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) began Arabic broadcasts from its SW transmitter on The Seychelles, as described in chapter 9. FEBA is a British organization of an Evangelical interdenominational character.

<sup>149</sup> See Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 294-297.

<sup>150</sup> Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, p. 280, speaks of 'a longstanding tradition of mistrust of those in authority, and that mistrust has often been attached to the domestic radio services as well'.

<sup>151</sup> John Davis, *Libyan Politics*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>154</sup> Sakr, *Satellite Realms*, p. 85.

In 1974, Family Radio (FR) also began Arabic SW broadcasts from the USA. This is treated in chapter 10. The organization is Evangelical and presently rather sectarian. It is wholly North American.

In 1975, the Swedish organization International Broadcasting Association (IBRA) began broadcasting Arabic programs, as can be read in chapter 11. IBRA belongs to a Pentecostal denomination. In its work, it is rather interdenominational.

TWR began broadcasting its Arabic programs for the Middle East over TMC-ME's MW transmitter on Cyprus in 1974. In 1977, it also began to broadcast a serious block of Arabic programs over RMC-MC's MW transmitters, beaming to North Africa, as described in chapter 8. 1977 was also the year in which RVOG was taken over by Marxist rebels, so NECC lost its major outlet of programs.

In 1981, High Adventure Ministries (HAM) began Arabic SW broadcasts from Israeli-occupied Southern Lebanon. This organization, originally founded in the USA, was reorganized in 2002 as Bible Voice Broadcasting (BVB) with a strong base in the United Kingdom. This interdenominational Charismatic organization is treated in chapter 12.

Finally, in 1990, HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings) began Arabic broadcasts over its SW transmitters in Ecuador, and later from Great Britain. These broadcasts targeted North Africa, as described in chapter 13. HCJB is mainly North American. The organization is Evangelical and interdenominational.

## **5.6 ARABIC RADIO SINCE 1991**

### ***5.6.1 Iraqi Crisis and Transnational Arab Radio***

Since 1990, Iraq's policies and wars have been the main driving force behind the development of Arab radio broadcasting. In 1990-1991, Iraq stepped up its external radio broadcasts to convince the Arab World of its justified claims on Kuwait as a new Iraqi province. In February 1991, during the second Gulf War, most of Iraq's transmitters were destroyed. This happened again in 1998, and also in 2003 when the American-led coalition occupied Iraq and toppled the Iraqi regime.<sup>155</sup>

VOA acquired a 600 mW MW transmitter in Kuwait after the war of 1990-1991. Coupled with some SW facilities, VOA used these with the goal to reach Iraq and the rest of the Gulf.<sup>156</sup> These efforts of the American-led coalition to silence radio in Iraq showed, among other things, their awareness of the power of radio in the Arab World.

### ***5.6.2 Foreign Radio Listening***

Obviously, transmission power did not mean everything. BBC found that listening to international radio 'went up enormously' in 1990-1991 for all international

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<sup>155</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 129.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, p. 309.

broadcasters in the area of the Arab World, but especially for BBC and RMC-ME. Presently, RMC-ME claims an audience of 12 million people for its Arabic broadcasts. Since 1996, when RMC-ME was taken over by Radio France International (RFI), its broadcasts are France's Arabic state broadcasts.<sup>157</sup>

BBC researched the listenership of international radio in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, the UAE and KSA. In Cairo and Alexandria, for instance, 46.3 percent of all people over 15 years old listened at least weekly to the BBC during the second Gulf War. That compared with 18.1 percent shortly before that war. The Arab audiences considered BBC and RMC-ME to be the most credible broadcasters, while the Arab broadcasters, together with VOA and Radio Israel, were seen as too biased to be trusted for information.<sup>158</sup>

Audience research in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria during the late 1980s and early 1990s showed that the citizens of Tunis and Casablanca were much more regular radio listeners than those in Algiers. In Casablanca and Tunis, about 75 percent of all adults were daily listeners while in Algiers this was 47 percent. In Casablanca, listeners tuned in for 3.5 hours per day while in Tunis and Algiers it was 2.3 hours per day. In 1988, about 25 percent of all adults in Casablanca and Tunis were daily listeners to a non-Arab foreign radio station. Though no figures are available for Algiers, the number would most likely be lower. Whereas in Casablanca, 18 percent of all adults regularly listened to BBC's Arabic broadcasts in 1988, this was as low as four percent in Tunis, and only one percent in Algiers.

In Algiers, French was the preferred language for radio listening. In that city, the French broadcast of RMC-MC, France Inter, RFI and Europe 1 all had substantial audiences.<sup>159</sup> Mark Eggerman explains the large differences in audience behavior in North Africa compared to the Middle East by pointing to the North African access to European television and satellite broadcasts, the languages used by the audience and the media, educational levels, broadcasting times, and the signal strength of BBC's broadcasts. Only Casablanca had audience figures for BBC that were comparable to those in Cairo and Damascus. According to Eggerman, this was due to the fact that the general listening habits in Casablanca created a peak audience at the beginning of the *siesta*, which was exactly the time when BBC began its Arabic broadcasts.<sup>160</sup>

In Tunis, listening to foreign Arabic broadcasts decreased steadily. Between 1988 and 1991, it went down from 25 percent to 15 percent. In Tunis the top-three regional Arabic broadcasters, Radio Algiers, Radio Libya and Radio Cairo, also had substantially smaller audiences in 1991 than in 1988. The French foreign broadcasters lost half of their audience in Tunis during that same period. 'One of the

<sup>157</sup>Graham Mytton, 'Challenges for International Broadcasting', in Graham Mytton (ed), *Global Audiences: [BBC] Research for Worldwide Broadcasting 1993* (London, 1993), pp. 142-143. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 315. [www.mc-doualiya.com](http://www.mc-doualiya.com). (2 April 2007). [www.biener-media.de/cy-rmc.html](http://www.biener-media.de/cy-rmc.html) (2 April 2007)

<sup>158</sup> Graham Mytton and Mark Eggerman, 'International Radio as a Source of News', in Graham Mytton (ed), *Global Audiences: [BBC] Research for Worldwide Broadcasting 1993* (London, 1993), p. 196. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 6.

<sup>159</sup> Mark Eggerman, 'Déjà vu in '62', in Graham L. Mytton (ed), *Global Audiences: [BBC] Research for Worldwide Broadcasting 1993* (London, 1993), pp. 169-177.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

reasons for these diminishing audiences may [...] be that increased access to and use of local Mediumwave and FM radio has made people less inclined to explore the Shortwave bands these foreign stations are broadcasting on', according to Eggerman.<sup>161</sup>

In this context it is interesting that BBC in 1962, after audience research in Casablanca and Rabat, concluded that its much smaller audience compared to Egypt and Lebanon, was due to the early transmission time, the fact that the Arabic Service did not broadcast in the vernacular Arabic, and that the broadcasts could not be heard on MW. In the 1980s, BBC's audience in Morocco was similar to the audience in Egypt. According to Eggerman, the 'formal Arabic used in BBC broadcasts is not always a "disadvantage" when it comes to capturing Moroccan ears – qualitative research indicates that many people do understand and appreciate hearing it on radio, particularly the news and current affairs programming'. This reflects that between the 1960s and the 1980s, the number of literate Moroccans had grown greatly. Eggerman wondered whether the access to new TV channels would not negatively impact the audience for the BBC programs, as that had already diminished the audiences in Tunis and Algiers.<sup>162</sup>

### **5.6.3 Television Competing for the Arab Audience**

#### **5.6.3.1 Total Government Control of Television**

In March 1954, a French company began the first television broadcasts in the Arab World, in the cities of Casablanca and Rabat. The French authorities in Algeria introduced television in 1956. In 1956 Iraq was the first independent Arab state to buy a small station. In the meantime, the American armies at the Wheelus Air Force Base near Tripoli (Libya) and at Dhahrân (KSA) had also set up their low-power stations for their own personnel. In 1959, Egypt and Syria bought their first television stations to begin broadcasting in 1960.<sup>163</sup>

Most Arab countries developed their television broadcasting during the 1960 although in the Arab Peninsula some countries began that development as late as the 1970s. While most Arab countries would, until the 1980s, have one television channel only, Egypt immediately began with three channels. Douglas Boyd credits Nâsir and his advisors 'for the role they envisioned for both radio and television'. Egypt was prepared to really invest in media more than any other Arab country.<sup>164</sup> It had the advantage of an existent cinema industry that could feed television.

Just as radio was kept under tight censorship by the Arab governments, television also reflected the opinions of the national authorities. Unlike radio however television did not have a transnational character until the 1990's, so the audiences in the Arab World only saw their own government's politics espoused on television. Thus in times of crises, television was not the medium to inform people about events. According to Muḥammad 'Aîsh, dean of the College of Mass Communication at the University of Sharjah (UAE):

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., pp. 176-177.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

[Until] recently, the concept of television journalism was virtually non-existent in Arab World television services, which for three decades had functioned more as government propaganda machines than as independent sources of information. Nightly newscasts were not only the major components of television journalism but they were themselves dull and monolithic in their format, content, and delivery orientations. Television news gatekeepers selected their topics with a view guided mainly by existing political, social, and cultural arrangements. Political news dealing with leadership speeches, official visits, and protocol activities was always topping Arab World TV news agendas. Opposition groups had less access to government-monopolized television and so did large segments of the population living beyond urban centers. In the 1970s and 1980s, a single-channel environment provided viewers with limited exposure to regional and international television from neighbouring countries and around the world.<sup>165</sup>

Just as transnational radio gained a large audience because the Arabs did not trust their own censored media, transnational satellite television became highly popular as soon as it was introduced in the Arab World in the 1990s.

### 5.6.3.2 Influence of Private Satellite Television

Since the 1990s, the Arab World's television monopoly model has begun to experience cracks as more autonomous television organizations have been created in several Arab countries, and as commercial television has begun to be developed alongside government broadcasting. An important reason why the Arab governments allowed a measure of liberalization in their media was the development of satellite television during the 1990s. The American satellite broadcaster Cable News Network (CNN) with its direct broadcasts that were transmitted by many national stations in the Arab World during the Gulf War of 1990-1991, gave the example and created a taste in the Arab audience for similar Arabic programming. Satellite programs could be broadcast from outside into the Arab World, and anyone with a small dish and a cheap decoder could receive those programs.

By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, all over the Arab World programs of the Abu Dhabi Satellite Channel, the Al Jazeera Satellite Channel, ORBIT, Arab Radio and Television (ART), the Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC), and the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) were being watched including hundreds of other private Arabic channels. About half of all Arabs had direct access to satellite broadcasts that were not and could not be censored by the Arab authorities. The impact of these stations on the political, social and religious views in the Arab World means serious competition for the Arabic public television stations. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century these public stations have been no match for the private stations in the battle for an audience.

'A'ish spoke in 2001 of a 'dwindling government television audience'. For the first time since the 1960s, the Arabs did not have to tune into transnational radio for an alternative perspective on international crises and could do so without their

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<sup>165</sup> Muhammed I. Ayish, 'American-Style Journalism and Arab World Television: An Exploratory Study of News Selection at Six Arab World Satellite Television Channels', in *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, (No. 6, Spring/Summer 2001), on [www.tbsjournal.com/Archives](http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives) (12 March 2004).

own government's interference. The private satellite television broadcasters offered an attractive alternative of professionally presented news programs.<sup>166</sup>

The liberal and secular channels LBC and Al Jazeera, with its many Lebanese journalists, and other similar channels attracted daily audiences of millions of Arab. The impact of these stations on the political, social and religious views in the Arab World means serious competition for the Arabic public television stations. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century these public stations have been no match for the private stations in the battle for an audience.

One effect of these private Arabic satellite television broadcasts was a proliferation of often rather politically radical fundamentalist Islamic programs on television in the Arab World. Many preachers that did not have a chance to broadcast on the government-owned national channels now had a chance to preach their version of Islam.

Due to the development of satellite television, a new version of television journalism evolved as a distinctive genre of programming on Arab television. The resultant effect was outlined by 'Aïsh:

[This] created a new environment conducive to the utilization of television as a powerful force of public opinion formation. The rise of commercial satellite television alongside government-controlled broadcasting has brought about a new public sphere marked by varied news agendas. More than ever before, previously suppressed political perspectives and orientation have become more visible on Arab World television. [This] rise of regional information organs has reinvigorated a sense of common destiny among many in the Arab World. Regional broadcasting has created regional news organizations - both in terms of news coverage and delivery-that far surpassed what had previously existed.<sup>167</sup>

One highly interesting effect of the growth and the popularity of the Arabic satellite channels was that they seemed to have fostered a growing sense of a common Arab heritage and destiny. Beside that, they also impact the development of the Arabic language. Throughout the Arab World channels like LBC, Al Jazeera and al-'Arabîyah are extremely popular and many of their programs are in Lebanese Arabic. Another effect of satellite television is that the Arab audience is forced to decide what sort of program it wants to watch, as there is now a tremendous amount of choice. This is likely to create an audience that not only with respect to television but also in other aspects of society, wants to be allowed to make its own choices.<sup>168</sup>

### 5.6.3.3 Incremental Steps to Liberalization of Television

The Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) proposed in the mid 1990s that the time had come for the Arabic governments to ease themselves out of the broad-

<sup>166</sup> Ayish, 'American-Style Journalism and Arab World Television'.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> According to Rev. Dr. Andriyâ Zakî, director of the Protestant media organization House of Culture (*Dâr al-Thaqâfah*) in Cairo, this resulted in the audience getting an appetite for talk shows where different viewpoints are discussed and documentary programs but also pornography. Andriyâ Zakî in a lecture at the Arab Media Convention (AMC) in Larnaka (Cyprus, 2002).

casting sector.<sup>169</sup> Ra'ûf Bâşî, the director-general of ASBU, circulated an internal document in early 1995, advising an increasing autonomy of the broadcasters in order to give them 'more credibility in the eyes of the citizens'. He suggested the Arab states should disengage gradually from direct management of the media and encourage the private sector to take over.<sup>170</sup> However, state monopolies have remained the norm in radio broadcasting in the Arab World even though in most parts of the world, broadcasting has been given a taste of privatization.<sup>171</sup>

Arab states like Egypt are aware that they have lost their hold over the television audiences in the Arab World due to the private satellite broadcasters. By 2003, Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan and Dubai were experimenting with privatizing their media scene. Egypt did so by opening a large Free Zone for Media in Six October City in February 2000. Ibrâhîm Şâlih, director of the Cairo Media Center at the Modern Sciences and Arts University in Cairo, described these experiments as a 'revolutionary conversion from state-controlled into market-based media', but in spite of that, he said in 2003 that 'Middle East media, including broadcasting, are manipulated by the official regimes, and they are still controlled by obvious state intervention.' This control resulted, for instance, in most Arab governments withholding airtime from representatives of radical Islamic programming on national television. Şâlih wrote that the government-owned media scene in Egypt and the whole Arab World were facing 'a harsh state of recession' due to bad management. 'Being governed for a long time by authoritarian systems, the media policy [...] has always adhered to reactionary, unorganized chaotic performance rather than planning ahead.' In journalistic programs, these media in 2003 still suffered from a 'lack of objectivity and reliability, absence of journalistic skills and reporting potentials as well as distortion of information and self-censorship'.<sup>172</sup>

#### 5.6.4 Liberalization of Radio

In the field of radio, the boom in satellite broadcasting was reflected on a smaller scale by a rapid growth in FM stations. By 2005, there were 174 Arabic FM stations operational. UAE and Algeria had the most crowded state-owned FM radio environment in the region. The UAE lead with 19 radio stations operating under five networks. Algeria followed UAE with 17 radio stations operating under the state's *Radio-Télévision Algérienne* (RTA) network. ASBU's advice to liberalize the media was not about television only but also with a view to radio. By 2005, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq lead the region respectively with 23, 17 and ten operational private FM radio stations respectively. The number of FM stations is likely to increase fast.<sup>173</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Sakr, *Satellite Realms*, p. 103.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103. Only five percent of countries in the world had retained their monopolies on the media by the year 2000.

<sup>172</sup> Ibrahim Saleh, *Unveiling the Truth about the Middle Eastern Media* (Cairo, 2003), pp. 1-2.

<sup>173</sup> Information from *Arab Advisors*, a media consultancy based in Jordan, by Dana Khatib in an email to the author (5 October 2005).

It is no coincidence that in those last three countries, where the rule of law was not truly established, the largest proliferation of private FM stations was seen. In Lebanon, the existence of private radio was mainly due to the civil war of 1975-1990. That war enabled private radio and television to mushroom. Each faction, religious group and power center had its own FM station during that period. Since the end of their civil war, the political direction has been towards restricting these liberties again. The Audiovisual Media Law (Law No. 382) of 1994 made Lebanon the first Arab country where private radio and television were allowed to operate within the borders of the country. The law came about as a result of Beirut's efforts to diminish the proliferation of free media and to avoid a proliferation of radicalization in the media. However, it was not able to stop the *Shi'ite* Hizb Allâh (Hizbollah, Party of Allâh) from broadcasting its radical Islamic message.<sup>174</sup>

In the Palestinian Territories, the relative freedom to set up private radio and television stations was a reflection of a desire by many Palestinians to create a new media-paradigm in the Arab World. The powerlessness of the Palestinian authorities contributed to private radio becoming a reality. In line with developments elsewhere in the Arab World however it is safe to assume that in the future radio in the Palestinian territories will be subject to stricter rules once the Palestinian Authority establishes a stronger grip on society. The potential is there to nationalize radio and television outright.

In 2003, Egypt began its experiment in private radio with the English station 104.2 Nile FM, a semi-independent local radio that can be received in Cairo. With its modern popular style and its British disc jockeys, this station became very popular. At the same time, the Arabic 100.6 Nujûm FM (Stars FM) also began in Cairo. Any reference to opposition movements and radical Islam were avoided but that was not difficult, as these FM broadcasters did not offer any news programs.

In the UAE, Abu Dhabi decided to privatize parts of its transmission facilities in 2001. In the early 1980s, Abu Dhabi had built four SW transmitters of 300 kW for its own international broadcasting. The Voice of the United Arab Emirates used these transmitters for instance for English programs proclaiming Islam and also for Arabic *Qur'anic* readings. In 2001 Merlin, a company related to the BBC, acquired the operating rights for parts of these facilities.<sup>175</sup> BBC itself used Abu Dhabi as one of its relay stations and so did Radio Canada International and other international broadcasters.<sup>176</sup>

In Iraq, by 2007, the political situation was highly volatile. It remains unclear as to whether the American-enforced liberalization of the media in Iraq will continue after their independence from foreign powers.

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<sup>174</sup> Sakr, *Satellite Realms*, p. 50.

<sup>175</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Materialdienst, Zeitschrift für Religions- und Weltanschauungsfragen* (No. 1, 2002), p. 15. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World*, p. 190.

<sup>176</sup> Press release by *Merlin Communications*, on [www.merlincommunications.com](http://www.merlincommunications.com) (1 April 2003).



### 5.6.5 Future of Transnational Arabic Radio

In 2000, James Wood, a British technical expert in radio transmission in the Arab World, predicted a future of healthy growth for MW and SW broadcasting in the Arab World:

All the signs show that AM broadcasting in this region of the world is, notwithstanding the emergence of new technologies, assured of a healthy growth rate for several decades to come. No other form of communication can with the same ease fulfill the four vital roles that highpower AM does; bringing kings and leaders in touch with the people, a tool during national disasters, entertainment, and a link with workers in adjacent Arab states.<sup>177</sup>

Most Arab governments at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century continued to enlarge their public AM broadcasting power. The conflicts and wars seemed to give the Arab regimes the incentive to strengthen their abilities to directly address their own nations and the rest of the Arab World. Of all households in the Arab World, 61.4% had a SW radio at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>178</sup> It is highly questionable, though, that the increase in radio broadcasting facilities will be matched by an increase in their audiences. It is likely that more listeners will be turned into viewers of news on satellite television channels.

The USA has continued to further invest in radio broadcasting to the Arab World. VOA cancelled its Arabic service in 2002 as VOA's owner, the Broadcasting Board of Governors decided a more effective radio propaganda service was needed. It therefore created Radio Sawá (Radio Together), a 24-hour Arabic channel broadcasting mainly music mixed with news and comments regarding the news.<sup>179</sup> It was hoped that this new concept of radio broadcasting would be seen as less propagandistic and therefore more influential. By 2007 however it was not clear what Radio Sawá's role in the gamut of broadcasters was going to be. The initial response seems to indicate that people liked the music although they did not care much for the news segments as they realized the propagandistic goals of the broadcasts. It is therefore questionable whether these broadcasts will serve the goals of the USA.

<sup>177</sup> Wood, *The History of International Broadcasting* Vol. 2, p. 140.

<sup>178</sup> Figure from Graham Mytton of VT Merlin Communications, at CIBAR Annual Conference (Stockholm, 6-8 November 2002).

<sup>179</sup> Radio Sawá broadcasts an upbeat mix of Western and Arabic pop music along with up-to-the-minute news, news analysis, interviews, opinion pieces, sports, and features a wide variety of political and social issues. Radio Sawa originates its programming from Washington and is broadcast across the region, using a combination of Mediumwave and FM transmitters, digital audio satellite, Shortwave, and Internet. On October 1, 1999, the Broadcasting Board Governors (BBG) became the independent entity responsible for all US government and government sponsored, non-military, international broadcasting. The day-to-day broadcasting activities were carried out by the individual BBG international broadcasters: VOA, al-Hurrah, Radio Sawá, Radio Farda (for Iran), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), and Radio and TV Martí, with the assistance of the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB). See also [www.bbg.gov/bbg\\_aboutus.cfm](http://www.bbg.gov/bbg_aboutus.cfm) and [www.radiosawa.com](http://www.radiosawa.com) (13 March 2004).

Late in the 20th century many international and Arab broadcasters became more interactive allowing live on-air comments and discussions by the audience. RMC-ME had started that trend in the 1980s but most broadcasters did not follow that example until the end of the 1990s. The example of and competition with some international television satellite broadcasters played an important role in that new trend in radio programming.<sup>180</sup>

### **5.6.6 Christian Presence and Participation**

#### **5.6.6.1 Christian Presence and Participation in Public Radio**

There was no important shift in the role of Christians working in radio in the Arab World. Even though the Lebanese civil war was over in 1990, the many Lebanese in the Arabian Gulf did not return back to Lebanon, so the Lebanese Christians retained their managerial role in many radio organizations.

#### **5.6.6.2 Christian Radio Organizations**

The major change among the Christian radio organizations that have been described before, is that they increased their programming during the 1990s. There was also an increase in organizations producing Christian Arab radio programs. One of these, Global Radio Outreach (GRO) is described in chapter 18. GRO began its Arabic program production in 1993. The organization is based in the USA, and it is Pentecostal with an interdenominational style of working.

The tendency to liberalization in the media effected Christian radio. Christian Arab radio programs could be broadcast by private FM stations in Palestine. Christian broadcasts were also not excluded from broadcasts by Abu Dhabi so Merlin sold airtime to AWR, FR, HCJB and other Christian stations. The precondition of the UAE was that they could not broadcast programs in Arabic or Hebrew.<sup>181</sup>

Just as Arab radio in general suffered from competition for an audience with Arab television, so was the dominant role of Christian radio challenged by the development of Christian Arab satellite broadcasting. From 1995, a growing number of Arabic Christian programs could be received on television in the Arab World by those with a satellite dish. Since 1995, Miracle Channel, SAT-7, Middle East TV (METV), Channel North Africa (CNA), NourSat, Far East TV (FETV), LifeTV (*al-Ḥayâh* TV) and others have begun broadcasting Arabic Christian television programs. By the end of 2005, these Christian channels together filled over 700 hours of airtime per week, while Christian radio at that time filled about 200 hours.

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<sup>180</sup> Târiq Zaydân in an interview with the author (18 March 2004).

<sup>181</sup> Press Release by Geoff Patterson of Adventist News Network (ANN) (Abu Dhabi, 7 August 2001).

## **5.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

### ***5.7.1 Birth and Growth of Arab Radio***

#### **5.7.1.1 Formative Period: 1928-1953**

All Arabic broadcasts by SW broadcasters from Europe and the USA were state-initiated. They were political propaganda tools, either related to World War II and the Cold War, or tools for presenting Communism by the USSR and Roman-Catholicism by Vatican City.

Most radio stations that were set up in Arab countries between 1928 and 1953 were used by the colonial powers that occupied those lands to broadcast to the own expatriate populations. These were part of the colonial experience, and often also part of the propaganda war related to World War II.

During this period, the opposing poles of radio broadcasts in the Arab World were Saudi Arabia and Tangier. In Saudi Arabia, one of the few Arab countries that were not colonized, radio developed as a tool to support the rulers' conservative views of Islam. In Tangier, a truly commercial radio industry developed, made possible by the rather liberal European political and social climate of the city.

#### **5.7.1.2 Period of Egyptian Predominance: 1953-1970**

During this period, Egyptian radio was very popular all over the Arab World. This was directly related to the popularity of the Egyptian President Nâsir and the lack of other strong Charismatic leaders in the Arab World. It was also the outcome of the massive investment of Egypt in its broadcasting power compared to the relative weakness of radio in other Arab countries.

During these years, Egypt used its broadcasts mostly as propaganda tools for gaining the allegiance of the Arabs for the Egyptian foreign goals. Western Arabic broadcasts like those of BBC and VOA were not very popular as long as Nâsir and his broadcasts were seen as credible sources of information and as long as Egypt was perceived to be leading the Arabs to freedom from Western dominance and influence. As the number of Arabs with radios grew enormously during this period, due to transistor technology, and because the broadcasts of Egypt were interesting, a large listening audience developed during these years.

#### **5.7.1.3 Increase of Transnational Broadcasting: 1970-1990**

During this period, the number of Arab countries with interesting and strong radio broadcasts grew while Egypt's role in radio waned. As all Arab countries censored their media, many Arabs thought they could only find out what was actually happening in their own land as well as in the rest of the Arab World, by listening to a host of Arabic broadcasts from different Arab countries as well as from Western nations. Millions of Arabs created the habit of searching for interesting broadcasts on the bandwidth of their radios, especially during times of war in the Arab World.

**5.7.1.4 Broadcasting after 1991**

The Gulf War of 1990-1991 created a new interest in the Arab World for investing in radio broadcasting facilities, especially in Iraq. At the same time, the development of satellite television in the Arab World began. This enabled the Arabs to look at programs from all over the world without being censored, as these satellite broadcasts often came from outside the Arab World. Television, more than radio, became the source for news programs for the Arabs, and transnational radio began to lose its importance.

Both in order to not lose its audiences altogether and also in line with international developments of the liberalization of radio, some Arab governments took very careful steps to liberalize parts of their radio broadcasts. This led mainly to more popular music stations and not to broadcasts of a political or religious character. These freedoms were not allowed as part of the liberalization.

**5.7.2 Christian Presence and Participation in Public Radio****5.7.2.1 Formative Period: 1928-1953**

Radio during this period was to a large extent a matter of expatriates living in the Arab World. Among those, there were many Western Christians. The number of Christian Arabs involved was minimal. They were not used to participation in public life and often perceived the industry as sinful. In some countries there were hardly any native Christians. Even in countries with larger Christian minorities, like Egypt, they hardly received airtime on radio.

**5.7.2.2 Period of Egyptian Predominance: 1953-1970,**

During this period, the number of Western Christians involved in radio in the Arab World, became minimal. There was no growth in the number of Christian Arabs in the industry either. Beside that, the Arab states did not allow much public presence of the Churches of the Arab World on radio. Only in Lebanon, where about half of the population was Christian, did they play a preponderant role in their radio industry. The Lebanese Christians were the better educated in the society and the political leaders of the country.

**5.7.2.3 Increase of Transnational Broadcasting: 1970-1990**

The role of Lebanese Christians in Arabic broadcasting increased when many found work in the Arabian Gulf during this period. These countries began to develop their radio capabilities with their newly gained oil-wealth. Beside this though, the role of Christians in the radio organizations of the Arab World remained marginal.

**5.7.2.4 Broadcasting after 1991**

Due to the socio-political and religious situation in Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon, the number of Christians in the Arab World decreased steadily after 1991. This led to a steady decrease in their numbers in public radio industry. The number of programs on state radio for the Churches in the Arab World remained very small.

### **5.7.3 Christian Radio Organizations**

#### **5.7.3.1 Formative Period: 1928-1953**

The first steps in the development of Christian radio organizations were made by Western missionaries who worked in the Arab World. Both the Ecumenical organization NECC and the Evangelical organization MELM began their interest in program production and broadcasting around the same time. These developments occurred mainly in Lebanon. Radio Vatican began Christian Arab broadcasts after World War II before any Protestants started to broadcast Arabic programs.

#### **5.7.3.2 Period of Egyptian Predominance: 1953-1970,**

During this period, Christian Arabic radio took off; many Western organizations were set up for broadcasting Christian Arab programs by SW to the Arab World. Beside NECC and MELM, many other organizations began to produce and broadcast Christian Arabic radio programs. These were all non-Ecumenical, Evangelical organizations.

While many Christian broadcasters saw Nâsir as their main enemy because of his successful efforts to win many young people for his vision of the Arab future, Nâsir should also be credited for creating an avid listening audience in the Arab World. He made radio listening popular, thus also creating a potential audience for Christian Arab broadcasts.

#### **5.7.3.3 Increase of Transnational Broadcasting: 1970-1990**

In 1977, NECC lost its major outlet as RVOG was closed; a few years later NECC stopped producing and broadcasting altogether. This was the end of Ecumenical involvement in Christian broadcasts to the Arab World. During these years, the number of Evangelical organizations involved in Christian Arabic broadcasts continued to increase. This was at a time when the Arabs learned how to search the airwaves for radio programs. This habit made many Arabs find and listen to the Christian Arabic broadcasts. Whereas under Nâsir a potential audience was created, in the period of 1970-1990 many Arabs began to actually find and listen to Christian radio programs.

#### **5.7.3.4 Broadcasting after 1991**

The number of Evangelical organizations involved in Christian Arab broadcasts over transnational radio has continued to increase. On a small scale, in Lebanon, they have benefited from the liberalization of radio in the Arab World. This international trend of liberalization has also made cheap airtime available on many transmitters in Europe and elsewhere and has enabled the Christian Arab broadcasters to dramatically increase their airtime. However, this has not offset the impact of the development of satellite television. Christian radio since 1991 has lost part of its audience. This trend in the decreasing audience response figures will be examined, as far as possible, in the following chapters for each major broadcaster and producer.



## 6 Adventist World Radio (AWR)

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in Lebanon prepared its first Arab radio programs in its Beirut studio and had those broadcast between 1953 and 1955. Twenty years later, the SDAs began broadcasting Arabic programs again, after much of the witness of the SDAs on radio was consolidated into Adventist World Radio (AWR). AWR initially used programs that were produced in the SDA studio in Collonges-sous-Salève (France). In 1993, Arabic programs produced in the SDA studio in Nicosia (Cyprus) were added to the broadcasts of AWR.

Since the early 1920s, the SDAs have shown an interest in Shortwave (SW) broadcasting. Various independent units of the denomination have owned and operated radio stations. In the Arab World, the SDAs were a tiny minority amongst the Protestants.<sup>1</sup> Their small numbers did not deter them from involving themselves in radio production and broadcasting.

Even though AWR and the two studios in France and Cyprus were formally independent of each other, they were both owned and operated by the SDA churches and are therefore treated together in this chapter. AWR and the studio in Cyprus opened their files and were forthcoming in interviews. It was not possible to relate directly to the SDA studio in France. Further studies of that studio and its productions and broadcasts are encouraged.

The SDA denomination has a rather exclusive theology that has created some distance between them and other Protestants. This chapter will give evidence of a lack of formal relations between the SDA radio ministries and the other protestant Arabic radio ministries although there has been cooperation on a practical level. It will also show that in regard to the actual message on radio and with respect to issues of indigenization and contextualization, there was minimal difference between the Arabic radio ministries of SDA and its Protestant brethren.

### 6.1 HISTORY

#### *6.1.1 Early Adventist Initiatives before Arabic Broadcasts: 1920-1953*

The ‘father of the radio work of the Adventists was the Rev. H.M.S. Richards (1894-1985). He first thought of broadcasting the Gospel via radio in 1920 and in 1929 he began with regular broadcasts in Los Angeles. His Bible Tabernacle of the Air was broadcast for free by many stations but in 1932 Richards began buying airtime.<sup>2</sup> In 1937 he began broadcasting his programs over the Mutual Broadcast-

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<sup>1</sup> In 1992, they had about 2,500 members in Sudan, 1,361 in Egypt, 1,300 in Lebanon, 110 in Kuwait, 132 in Iraq, 60 in Jordan, and five in the UAE, with no members in the other countries of the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula. Bert Smit, ‘The Challenges of the Middle East’, in *Adventist Media Centre Middle East News* (No. 1, January 1992), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 225.

ing System (MBS) on the west coast of the USA, renaming them *Voice of Prophecy*. In that same year the SDAs opened an office for coordinating their radio broadcasting activities.<sup>3</sup>

The first ever initiative by an Adventist into SW broadcasting was in 1928. John Fetzer, the manager of a Mediumwave (MW) station at the Adventist College in Berrien Springs, Michigan (USA) lodged an application for the installation of a SW transmitter. It is unknown what happened to that request, but the intended SW broadcasts never began.<sup>4</sup>

Outside the USA, some SDAs started their own broadcasting stations. In March 1938, for example, a group of amateur radio operators from the USA visited Pitcairn Island in the South Pacific by passenger liner. They installed a 50 Watt amateur radio station for English broadcasts and delivered their first broadcast from Pitcairn Island on 15 March 1938.<sup>5</sup>

### **6.1.2 Arabic Productions and Broadcasts: Since 1953**

#### **6.1.2.1 Early Productions and Broadcasts: 1953-1955**

In 1953 a newly established radio studio, located at the SDA College in Beirut, began the production of radio programs in Arabic and Farsi. The German missionary Volkert Henning had built this studio.<sup>6</sup> The first of these broadcasts in Arabic went on the air in September 1953 from the Ekala 35 kilowatt (kW) SW transmitter located near Colombo (Sri Lanka). The Commercial Service of Radio Ceylon used the SW transmitter of the British SEAC, which was too expensive to dismantle after the war. It was therefore given to Radio Ceylon free of charge.<sup>7</sup> At the time, Radio Ceylon was daily on air with 75 minutes that were specifically beamed to Africa and the Middle East.<sup>8</sup> It seems that the SDA programs in Arabic were broadcast for a year or two, terminating probably some time in 1955.<sup>9</sup> These pro-

<sup>3</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>4</sup> Adrian M. Peterson, 'Wavescan 303' (15 October 2000). The transcripts of this weekly program for 'long distance radio hobbyists' were available on [www.181.pair.com](http://www.181.pair.com) (20 May 2004). Peterson is a radio historian and the coordinator of international relations for AWR.

<sup>5</sup> Peterson, 'Wavescan 364' (16 December 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Bert Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003). Smit was a SDA missionary from The Netherlands. He was the director of an SDA studio in Cyprus from 1992-1997 and later became the director for the European organization of AWR (1997-2005). The small concrete studio in Beirut stands beside the administrative building of the Adventist Middle East University. The hill where the Lebanese SDAs have their facilities was donated by a wealthy Iraqi Adventist to the Lebanese Adventist Church before World War II. Because the SDA's owned the hill, it came to be called *Sabtīyah* (literally: belonging to the Saturday) and that is how the neighborhood around it also came to be known. The studio has been unused since the early 1970s although some students of the Middle East University have used it for practicing music as it is soundproof.

<sup>7</sup> Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (30 June 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, or Radio Ceylon as it is presently called, had been set up in 1950 as a commercially supported station for reaching South India. See Donald R. Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting: the Limits of the Limitless Medium* (New York, 1982), p. 51.

<sup>9</sup> See [www.radiodx.com/spdxr/awr\\_africa.htm](http://www.radiodx.com/spdxr/awr_africa.htm) (20 May 2004), where the AWR program Wavescan is published. Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit* p. 228.



grams were translations of the Voice of Prophecy programs.<sup>10</sup> It has not been possible to gather more information on these early broadcasts, but as these were translated programs, they were probably not very contextualized in the Arab World.

The tapes of these programs were kept in a storeroom on the second floor of the SDA Middle East College in Beirut. That room suffered a direct hit during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990). In 1993, Bert Smit, director of the Adventist Media Center for the Middle East (AMC-ME) in Cyprus, having heard that the original tapes of the broadcasts of the 1950s were still around, searched through the rubble and found about 100 reels. He transported all the reels to his studio in Cyprus.<sup>11</sup> The music and the live tapings of singing in SDA churches in Lebanon were generally not considered good enough to use. Only about half of the messages on the tapes were used again during the 1990s.<sup>12</sup>

#### **6.1.2.2 Resumption of Arabic Broadcasts by Adventist World Radio (AWR): Since 1975**

##### ***Preparations for Broadcasting: 1969-1971***

AWR began in 1969 as the international denominational SDA organization for SW broadcasting.<sup>13</sup> The initiative for 'the wider use of international radio in world evangelism' came from the General Conference (GC) of the SDA churches. Robert H. Pierson, the President of the GC, was asked by the General Conference Committee (GCC) to chair the Adventist World Radio Development and Expansion Committee, to study the 'possibility of using a powerful Shortwave radio station(s) [sic] to broadcast the Gospel to Russia and Eastern Europe and eventually to all the world'.<sup>14</sup>

In April 1970, Pierson reported to GCC that the possibility was 'most favorable' to lease a block of time on the new Portuguese Radio Trans Europe (RTE) station at Sines, 90 kilometers south of Lisbon. The station, consisting of three 250 kW transmitters had been built for Deutsche Welle (DW) as an additional site for transmissions to Eastern Europe. That coincided with AWR's interest. DW had three 250 kW transmitters, of which one was available for commercial usage.<sup>15</sup> Jacques Trémoulet, one of the major brokers of time on commercial radio in Europe, offered preferred airtime to the first organization that signed a contract. 'Assurances have been given regarding complete freedom in broadcasting religious messages', Pierson reported.<sup>16</sup>

The Central European Division and the Trans-Mediterranean Division of the SDAs were eager to participate in the project and immediately took financial re-

<sup>10</sup> According to Hagop Manougian, an Armenian administrator for the SDA church in Beirut, in an interview with the author, at the SDA office in Sabṭiyah in Beirut (14 July 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Manougian in an interview with the author (14 July 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>13</sup> James Wood, *History of International Broadcasting* Vol. 2 (London, 2000), p. 177.

<sup>14</sup> Minutes of the GCC of 13 July 1972, from the SDA Archives, Document 72-1017. 'Adventist World Radio Administrative Structure: Historical Background' (April 1993), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Allen Steele, *Loud Let It Ring! Adventist World Radio: Twenty-five Years of Miracles* (Boise, 1996), pp. 55-56. See also [www.tdp.info/por.html](http://www.tdp.info/por.html) (3 April 2007).

<sup>16</sup> 'Spring Meeting, 1 April 1970', from the SDA Archives, Document 70-1976.

sponsibility. The Trans-Mediterranean Division was based in Collonges-sous-Salève and wanted to broadcast to North Africa. The GC and Voice of Prophecy decided to financially support the new broadcasting ministry by channeling funds that had already been allocated to pay for broadcasts of the Voice of Prophecy in Russian, Ukrainian and English.<sup>17</sup>

Allen R. Steele was asked to move to Portugal and become the Project Coordinator of AWR.<sup>18</sup> However, AWR had not been quick enough to sign the contract to be the preferred broadcaster; the missionary broadcaster International Broadcasting Association (IBRA) from Sweden had been quicker.<sup>19</sup> This did not preclude AWR from broadcasting over RTE since 1 October 1971, but IBRA had been given the better timeslots.

Steele's priority was to ensure that the existent Adventist studios of the Central European Division and the Trans-Mediterranean Division, in Collonges-sous-Salève and Darmstadt (West Germany) would deliver the bulk of the programs to be broadcast. The German studio had broadcast its programs on Radio Luxembourg since 1948. Steele finished the programs that were mailed to him by adding the AWR station identification tune. That was a trumpet theme borrowed from the Voice of Prophecy programs.<sup>20</sup>

#### ***Increasing Airtime: 1971-1975***

On 1 October 1971, AWR began broadcasting its Voice of Hope 12 hours per week over RTE; it broadcast mainly the Voice of Prophecy programs, in ten languages. After a year, the number of languages had increased to 18.<sup>21</sup> According to Walter R. L. Scragg who was then the secretary of the Radio and Television Department and thus responsible for AWR, there was good audience response from different countries, and an 'unexpected bonus has been the responses from North Africa'.<sup>22</sup> These were probably responses to French programs aired to France but also heard in North Africa; otherwise it is not clear why they were called 'an unexpected bonus'.

Even after AWR had started broadcasting in 1972, it discussed whether it should remain just a production organization that bought airtime. The alternative would be to lease and manage the broadcasting facilities themselves and to offer air time to others.<sup>23</sup> AWR offered time for broadcasting free of charge for approved languages and target areas, while the regional Divisions of their Unions were to provide programming and to build and operate their studios at their own expense.<sup>24</sup>

This choice was made because of IBRA's example; the minutes of the GCC of July 1972 stated that it had 'become clear that they succeed partly because they

<sup>17</sup> 'Minutes of the GCC of 13 July 1972'.

<sup>18</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37, 42.

<sup>21</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 228.

<sup>22</sup> '30 December 1971', from the SDA Archives, Document 71-786. Later, Scragg became AWR's President.

<sup>23</sup> 'Minutes of the GCC of 13 July 1972'.

<sup>24</sup> 'Adventist World Radio Administrative Structure: Historical Background' (April 1993), p. 1.

are operated as a station'. AWR also decided to function as a station because it felt that the multi-language outreach that it was thinking of, needed a unifying factor to direct the audience to their language blocks and to tie the whole project together. The GCC realized that promotion of the AWR's 'station concept' would have a 'great appeal to listeners and church members'.<sup>25</sup>

In 1975, the Annual Council of GC adopted the following purpose statement for AWR:

Adventist World Radio serves as the parent organization for the Church's broadcasting which crosses international and division boundaries in an effort to beam the last-day message to areas of the world which are difficult if not impossible to reach through other avenues, as well as into areas where radio is not available to the church from within the countries of those areas.<sup>26</sup>

#### ***First Arabic Broadcasts from Malta: 1975-1979***

AWR was interested in broadcasting Arabic programs to North Africa and the Middle East. In April 1972 Harold L. Reiner, the associate secretary of the Radio and Television Department, reported that there were plans for 'reactivating and equipping [the] radio studio in Beirut, Lebanon. Large plans for radio outreach in the Afro-Mideast division are being planned'.<sup>27</sup> It has not been possible to find more information on what these 'large plans' entailed, or to find proof of any actual program production from the Beirut studio after the 1950s. Thus it would seem that the plans for reactivation were never implemented.<sup>28</sup>

In 1975 Arabic was added to the bouquet of AWR's languages on the air. AWR then broadcast 14 hours weekly in 20 languages. Of those hours, seven were broadcast from Sines and the other seven, after 1 August 1975, from Radio Mediterranean. This new 250 kW station in Delimara Point (Malta) was another relay station of DW and Trémoulet was, once again, the broker for the airtime.<sup>29</sup> In autumn 1982 all broadcasts from the Malta relay stopped due to a dispute between Malta and DW. AWR decided not to return.<sup>30</sup>

#### ***Searching for a Station: 1977-1978***

Because of the difficulty of AWR to have consistent airtime on any transmitters, the Annual Council of GC approved the 'concept of establishing radio broadcast-

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> 'Minutes of Annual Council of GCC, 16 October 1975', from the SDA Archives, Document 75-398. In 1980, GCC simplified this Statement of Purpose. It became: 'Adventist World Radio serves as the parent organization for the Church's broadcasting which crosses international and division boundaries in an effort to beam the last-day message to all the world.' 'Minutes of Meeting of GCC, 14 February 1980', from the SDA Archives, Document 80-51.

<sup>27</sup> 'Minutes of Meeting of GCC, 6 April 1972', from the SDA Archives, Document 72-931.

<sup>28</sup> Manougian in an interview with the author (14 July 2004).

<sup>29</sup> 'Minutes of meeting of GCC, 27 March 1975', from the SDA Archives, Document 75-81. Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 72.

<sup>30</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Hansjörg Biener, 'Radio Malta', on [www.biener-media.de](http://www.biener-media.de). (25 December 2005).

<sup>30</sup> Sant in an email to the author (25 December 2005).

ing stations, to be owned and/or operated under the direction' of AWR. This was new, as AWR had been thinking in terms of leasing airtime up until this point. AWR was considering three regions namely Asia, Europe-Africa and the Americas. GC wanted AWR to proceed quickly with priority being given to a station in the Far East. It was deemed that, until this proposed AWR-operated facility was functioning, the broadcasts on leased airtime should continue uninterrupted.<sup>31</sup> Because of these plans in 1977 for a worldwide ministry, GC felt it had to 'record [its] understanding that the AWR Shortwave outreach [should] in no way take the place of successful local broadcasting by the church' and that AWR did not want to 'take over' local initiatives.<sup>32</sup>

In 1978 AWR reported that it had 'learned that there are possibilities of establishing a denominationally owned radio station in Liberia. [...] A short-wave station in Liberia could cover seven of the world divisions'.<sup>33</sup> The station in Liberia never materialized, though it seems the Liberian authorities were initially willing to grant AWR its license. According to Reginald Kennedy, ELWA actively opposed this and convinced Liberia to not let the Adventists in. ELWA said it 'would be regrettable and deplorable if, in the building of another Christian station here ended up with the people more confused and weakened in their faith than they already are. This is one of the tragedies that has persisted in African countries. The fact of the matter is that people are weak in their understanding'.<sup>34</sup> Trans World Radio (TWR) refused to cooperate with SDAs.<sup>35</sup> AWR however, continued to relate on a practical level with most other Christian radio organizations.

In October 1979, the director of the Department of Communication, J. E. Chase, had mentioned to the Annual Council of the GC that a change in law in Italy had now made it possible for AWR to 'own and operate radio stations in that country and work is progressing on a station in Florence'.<sup>36</sup> However, it took until 1985 before a serious step was taken towards building a station in Italy. During that year, GCC took up a collection for a 'mega-station' in Argenta, mainly for reaching the Communist world. It would take five more years before AWR, through the Italian SDA churches, bought about 100 acres of land near Argenta for building its permanent broadcasting station. The dream was to have a 250 kW and a 100 kW transmitter with directional antennas to target areas in Europe, North Africa and Asia.<sup>37</sup> However, legal procedures and environmental concerns kept hindering the project. The expensive construction plans were put on hold in 1992,

<sup>31</sup> 'Minutes of Annual Council of GCC, 19 October 1977', from the SDA Archives, Document 77-388. Steele called 1978 a milestone in the history of AWR as GC leadership 'spelled out its vision of encircling the globe with the Adventist message', but he probably means the year 1977. See Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 83.

<sup>32</sup> 'Minutes of Annual Council of GCC, 19 October 1977.'

<sup>33</sup> 'Minutes of the Annual Council of GCC, 13 October 1978', from the SDA Archives, Document 78-282.

<sup>34</sup> Cited by Reginald Kennedy, *The Word Senders: A Personal Assessment of the work of the major Protestant, Evangelical Missionary Radio Stations*. (1980), p. 31 of Chapter 2, The Vision. Unpublished book found in the archives of World Alliance for Christian Communication (WACC).

<sup>35</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>36</sup> 'Minutes of Annual Meeting of GCC, 10 October 1979', from the SDA Archives, Document 79-255.

<sup>37</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 230. Wood, *History of International Broadcasting* Vol. 2, pp. 179, 186-187.

as a result of airtime becoming available at very low cost in Eastern Europe due to the fall of Communism.<sup>38</sup>

***Arabic broadcasts from Andorra: 1979-1981***

In the late seventies, AWR forged a partnership with Radio Andorra. On 8 September 1979, test broadcasts started from an old 3 kW SW transmitter. From 1 October 1979, AWR broadcast a daily one hour block which was mostly in English, but included a weekly half hour in Arabic on Wednesdays. With a new ten kW transmitter coming into use on 1 August 1980, AWR expanded its service. As of 28 September 1980 four hours were broadcast each evening with additional broadcasts on Sunday mornings. This schedule included a daily 15 minutes in Arabic, with 30 minutes on Sunday mornings.<sup>39</sup>

On 3 April 1981, the Andorran parliament forced Radio Andorra to close down by refusing to renew their 20-year contracts that had been signed in 1961. The station protested but the Andorran people apparently wanted to take over the radio equipment with the object of creating a truly local radio station for the Catalan people.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 230. Wood suggested that AWR received financial support from the government of the USA for this project. '[They] claim that their operating costs are borne from donations and legacies, sometimes with a proportion coming from programme suppliers. Notwithstanding the apparently random and irregular source of income, the major religious broadcasting companies have long-able term business strategies.' The facilities in Argenta would cost at least 50 million dollars, Wood argued. 'That the international religious broadcasters budget such sums to project the faith to more than 100 countries worldwide gives some idea of the religious and political importance of such projects to the broadcaster', he argued, without anything to substantiate the allegations that AWR was politically motivated and supported. Wood, *History of International Broadcasting*, Vol. 2, p. 178.

<sup>39</sup> Information from Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (2 April 2007).

<sup>40</sup> Before World War II, Radio Andorra mainly played music and advertisements. After the close of all the commercial private stations in France in 1945, the audience grew fast as it had less competition for its commercial programs. Many sponsored programs that were initially on Radio Luxembourg only, began to also be heard on Radio Andorra. France wanted to end the private broadcasts of Radio Andorra as many of these were directed at France. However, the Spanish Bishop of Urgel, one of the rulers of Andorra, wrote to the French government in 1945 saying that he was not prepared to accept a single modification to the original concession of Radio Andorra. France then closed the French advertising agencies that supplied Radio Andorra with its customers and in 1948 it began jamming the station from French soil with a transmitter near Bordeaux. France also closed the border to Andorra for radio personnel. The French government argued that Radio Andorra had no legal existence, was using a non-allocated frequency and was also interfering with French security transmissions. In 1949, Jacques Trémoulet, acquitted from the charges of collaboration, took the French government to court. He obtained an order against the government to stop jamming the frequency and to reopen the border to Radio Andorra personnel. Pressure against Radio Andorra's staff continued to increase, including an attempt to close the station down for 'immoral' advertising. In 1953 the border was even totally closed to all citizens of Andorra. Instead of jamming Radio Andorra, France set up a competitor on Andorra's soil, called Andorradio. Eventually an agreement was reached between France and Spain that solved the problem. Radio Andorra would not broadcast any news programs in French, while Andorradio would change its name and refrain from broadcasting news programs in Spanish. In 1961 the Bishop of Urgel decided to accept the two radio stations. Radio Andorra was to be under his tutelage, while Andorradio would be controlled by France. The new concession for Andorradio, later called *Radio Sud*, was signed for 20 years. During the second half of the 1970s, Radio Andorra did some broadcasting in French, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Spanish, English and some other languages on SW. Many of these were commercial programs, but there were also religious broadcasts in several languages. M. Kerslake

***Arabic Broadcasts from Portugal: 1981-1992***

Even with the attempts to find broadcasting time elsewhere, 30 minute Arabic programs continued to be broadcast weekly via RTE. At the time when RTE's broadcasts were halted, AWR used it for broadcasting 7½ hours per week, mainly on Sunday mornings, in English, Russian and Arabic. The main reason for stopping those broadcasts was that the cost increased markedly, while concurrently, large amounts of airtime became available at low cost on transmitters in post-Communist Russia.<sup>41</sup>

***Arabic Broadcasts from Spain: 1982-1984***

In September 1982, AWR started a test phase with a ten minute Arabic program on the MW of Spanish station Radio Algeciras. The late night program was broadcast daily except on Sundays and continued well into 1984. These programs could be heard as far as Casablanca (Morocco).<sup>42</sup>

***Arabic Broadcasts from Italy: 1991-2000***

In May 1991 AWR began a MW operation from Mazara del Vallo, Sicily (Italy) from which Arabic programs were broadcast to North Africa. Programs were broadcast from a 300-Watt transmitter for 14 hours per day, principally in Italian, but with half an hour in Arabic. This facility closed in July 1996.<sup>43</sup>

Italy passed a law allowing for SW stations to be owned by non-profit organizations in 1995 and under this law it had granted AWR a SW license in 1996. In September 1997 a zoning variance allowed the construction of the station in a formerly agricultural area.<sup>44</sup> On 4 July 2000, the city council of Argenta granted AWR the permit to build its new SW facility. Don Jacobsen, AWR President, described the importance of this permit:

This great Gospel lighthouse becomes a reality at last! [...] In cooperation with the six divisions that will be affected this new station will enable us to add some 15 new languages to the nearly 60 that AWR is already using, focusing primarily on those areas of the world where we are not now able to work by any other means. It will give us complete coverage of the 10-40 window, in the languages of the people who live there.<sup>45</sup>

In September 2000, an official delegation of AWR and SDA dignitaries went to Argenta to formally begin the project. A month later, the city council of Argenta finally revealed some of the 'fine print'. The transmission towers could not be higher than 30 meters. AWR had planned 120 meter towers, and the severe re-

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and F. Lhote (eds), 'Radio Andorra: A Brief History', in *Offshore Echos Magazine* (No. 38, May 1981), pp. 20-22.

<sup>41</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 146. Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>42</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 81. Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 229, 232. Biener in an email to the author (2 April 2007)

<sup>43</sup> 'A brief history of AWR', a flyer given to author by Smit (21 July 2003).

<sup>44</sup> 'Adventist World Radio Receives Permit To Build A Bigger Voice', Press Release (16 July 2000) by the Adventist Press Service, Switzerland. See [www.wfn.org](http://www.wfn.org). (20 October 2004).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

strictions stopped the project altogether.<sup>46</sup> Argenta would have been an excellent location for broadcasts to the Arab World.

***Arabic Broadcasts from Russia: 1992-1996***

On 1 March 1992, AWR began broadcasting on a 200 kW SW transmitter of Radio Moscow in Novosibirsk. It aimed 22 hours per day in nine languages at Asia. Steele commented that this was ‘probably the very station that had been used to jam AWR’s Russian and Ukrainian programs from RTE nearly twenty years earlier’.<sup>47</sup> The Novosibirsk radio station was one of the world’s largest, with 30 transmitters and 120 curtain antennas over a terrain of ten square kilometers.<sup>48</sup> In May 1992, Arabic and other broadcasts of AWR to Europe and the Arab World began from Moscow, Yekaterinburg and Samara on 250 kW SW transmitters.<sup>49</sup> AWR broadcast up to two unique hours of Arabic programs each day, with repeat broadcasts on different frequencies.

AWR was the first Western organization to lease airtime on a large scale from these Russian stations. In 1992 Russia was so desperate for hard currency that it was willing to lease airtime at extremely low cost to almost anyone. Due to the low cost, AWR increased its airtime, thus making it into a major international broadcaster. Two years later, Russia raised the fees for broadcasting so much that AWR and other Christian broadcasters decided to discontinue using these facilities. Throughout the year 1993, the AWR usage of the relay stations in Russia was phased out, until Samara was the only one left that was still carrying the AWR programming. On 25 October 1996, the final day of AWR broadcasting via Samara there still was a daily 30-minute broadcast in Arabic.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003). As an alternative outlet, on 1 August 2001, AWR also began SW broadcasts from leased facilities in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates). The station provided AWR with better signal coverage to central and southern Asia than had been achieved from its other stations in Europe, Russia, or Guam. In addition, the station allowed AWR to broadcast to the horn of Africa. Broadcasts in Hebrew, Arabic and Farsi were not allowed, but broadcasts in Dari, Urdu, Bengal, Punjabi and other languages of Islamic countries went unopposed. For the content of these programs there were no regulations by the authorities of Abu Dhabi. ‘United Arab Emirates: New Adventist Radio Superstation Begins Broadcasts’, Press Release by Geoff Patterson of Adventist News Network (7 August 2001), on [www.news.adventist.org/data/2001/07/0997195416/index.html.en](http://www.news.adventist.org/data/2001/07/0997195416/index.html.en) (20 October 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 145. ‘Adventist World Radio Administrative Structure: Historical Background’, p. 2. By the end of the 1980s, the USSR and its satellite states were more or less bankrupt. Its leader Michael Gorbachov, whose regime inaugurated the falling apart of the USSR and the end of the Communist era, legalized private broadcasting throughout the USSR as from 15 July 1990. Due to these new developments Radio Moscow had to cut back its programming as it no longer received the financial support it had been used to under Communism. In 1992, Radio Moscow began selling airtime to Christian radio broadcasters. This was in part to finance its own broadcasts but it also reflected the liberalization of society. The first Christian radio broadcaster to lease airtime on a large scale from Radio Moscow was AWR. Many of the international Christian broadcasters followed suit and used the opportunity of low cost airtime to broadcast to the Arab World and other regions during the 1990s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 212-213.

<sup>47</sup> Hansjorg Biener, ‘Stimme Russlands’, on [www.biener-media.de](http://www.biener-media.de) (20 December 2005).

<sup>48</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 145.

<sup>49</sup> Wood, *History of International Broadcasting* Vol. 2, p. 185.

<sup>50</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 153. Biener in an email to the author (2 April 2007).

In March 1993, AWR moved its Resource Center from Darmstadt (Germany) to Bracknell (England) where the SDAs of Great Britain had their Newbold College. This was to economize as Germany had become too expensive.<sup>51</sup> Most historical records of AWR's work before 1993 were lost during the move due to a fire in a container.<sup>52</sup>

***Arabic Broadcasts from Slovakia: 1994-2001***

In January 1994, AWR began to lease airtime from Slovak Telecom in Rimavska Sobota (Slovakia). From 1994 to 2001 AWR used up to three of the four transmitters at the same time, to beam programs to Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>53</sup> It had 250 kW SW transmitters and 'a signal that boomed into [the Middle East] like a local station', according to Steele. In September 1994 AWR began to lease airtime from another Slovak Telecom transmitter, this one in Velke Kostolany. Both stations soon raised their prices.<sup>54</sup>

***Arabic Broadcast from Guam: 1995-2001***

On 6 March 1987, AWR's first owned and operated station went on the air on Guam. Originally built to reach East Asia, KSDA Guam was also put into use for Arabic broadcasting when a third and fourth 100 kW transmitter became available and allowed broadcasts to new target areas. From 1995 until 2001 two transmitters of KSDA were used to air two hours of Arabic each day into the Arab World.<sup>55</sup>

***Arabic Broadcasts from Armenia: 1996-1997***

In October 1996 AWR also began Arabic MW broadcasts for Iraq on a one mW station in Yerevan (Armenia). This service from Armenia ceased again on 14 June 1997.<sup>56</sup>

***Arabic Broadcasts from Germany: Since 1996***

AWR started to use the 100 kW transmitters of Jülich in 27 October 1996. Those were then used by Deutsche Welle, but owned and operated by Deutsche Bundespost. While French and Arabic have long been on the schedule, an increasing portion of Amazigh languages were added since March 2004.<sup>57</sup> During that years, due to a financial crisis in AWR, the organization only broadcast 30 minutes of programs for the Arab World per day from Jülich, aimed at Algeria and Morocco.

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<sup>51</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 156.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>53</sup> Wood, *History of International Broadcasting*, Vol. 2, p. 186.

<sup>54</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 154.

<sup>55</sup> 'Listeners in Iraq Find Way to Church', in: *AWR transmissions* (December 1995), p. 11. Biener in an email to the author (2 April 2007).

<sup>56</sup> 'A brief history of AWR', a flyer given to author by Smit (21 July 2003).

<sup>57</sup> Biener in an email to the author (2 April 2007).



***Arabic Broadcasts from France: 1999***

On 1 June 1999, after a month of test broadcasting, AWR began broadcasts through Monte Carlo Radiodiffusion (MCR) of Monaco. The contract provided for 1½ hours of weekly broadcasts in Arabic and French to North Africa, southern France and eastern Spain. The Arabic broadcasts were 30 minutes per day. These broadcasts were not continued beyond the initial period of three months.<sup>58</sup>

***Arabic Broadcasts from Austria: Since 2001***

With the beginning of the summer schedule on 25 March 2001, AWR replaced its Slovak broadcasts by broadcasts from Moosbrunn (Austria). The first schedule of 14 hours daily included four hours of Arabic. AWR used one of the two powerful SW transmitters of 500 kW of Radio Austria International.<sup>59</sup>

The financial crisis that hit AWR in 2003, made it cut back dramatically on its globally leased airtime, including its Arabic broadcasts. AWR's broadcasts to the Arab World shrunk to one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening from Moosbrunn, beside the daily half hour from Jülich.<sup>60</sup>

**6.1.2.3 Studio of Trans-Mediterranean Territories (TMT)**

In France the SDAs had a radio studio in Collonges-sous-Salève where they also had their denominational head office. Since 1947 they have produced radio programs in that studio. Initially, the Rev. Pellicer, a *Pied Noir* who had returned from Algeria because that country became independent of France in 1962, was responsible for the production of Arabic programs for North Africa. He prepared programs, organized a Bible Correspondence Course (BCC) and he did follow-up work by visiting interested people in North Africa.<sup>61</sup> Pellicer had some Christian Arabs, including some Muslim Background Believers (MBBs), working with him.<sup>62</sup> It has not been possible to find out where these early programs were broadcast from nor when they began. However these programs did form the basis for AWR's broadcasts from 1975 to 1993 but after 1993 they were complimented by additional programs from the Adventist Media Centre – Middle East (AMC-ME) studio in Nicosia.

The radio ministry to North Africa was part of the Mission and Service for Muslims in the Maghrib (MISSERM), which was the SDA's term for its work in North Africa. Later, this work aimed at North Africa was referred to as Trans-Mediterranean Territories (TMT). It has not been possible to find out when this name was changed, as it has not been possible in general to get information from TMT. Further study of this studio and its broadcasts is needed. In the 1990s, the programs were produced by some North African MBBs. These programs were characterized as 'antagonistic Islam-bashing' by Smit.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Bert Smit in an email to the author (16 January 2003). Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 231.

<sup>60</sup> See Figure 6.1.

<sup>61</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>62</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

As from 1 October 1998 TMT delivered a daily 15-minute program for North Africa to AMC-ME, where it was integrated in a one-hour block. Until that date, both studios delivered their productions directly to AWR.<sup>64</sup> As from October 2003, TMT took over the coordinating role from AMC-ME again when that studio in Cyprus decided to stop its radio productions altogether. TMT created a 30-minute new Arabic program with segments prepared and recorded in Jordan, Morocco, Egypt and France.<sup>65</sup>

In 2002, TMT began producing programs in Tashelhayt in Morocco. AWR broadcast those half-hour programs once a week, on Fridays. At the same time preparation was going on for producing programs in Kabyle in Algeria. These different languages were to be broadcast beside the existing programs in colloquial Algerian and Moroccan Arabic.<sup>66</sup> Toward the end of 2004, AWR broadcast two Kabyle programs of 30 minutes and three Tashelhayt programs of 30 minutes each week, beside two programs in Moroccan Arabic.<sup>67</sup>

#### **6.1.2.4 Adventist Media Centre-Middle East (AMC-ME): 1993-2003**

The SDA Church in the Middle East, called *Middle East Union* (MEU) by SDAs, established AMC-ME during the denomination's regional meetings on 21 November 1991. AWR had offered airtime for Arabic, Farsi and Turkish programs in their international broadcasting schedule and the SDA churches in the Middle East were eager to enter into this ministry.<sup>68</sup>

Smit was asked by the churches in the Middle East to help them produce programs aimed at the Middle East by becoming their Middle East Union communication director. The churches in the Middle East did not think the programs for North Africa were suitable for the Middle East.<sup>69</sup> Smit summarized his vision for his programs and their broadcasts:

We are certain that radio will be one of the most important evangelistic tools for the Middle East. We hope and pray that the media centre will be instrumental in bringing people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. [...] The Middle East ranks high on the priority list of Global Mission. This region has the largest amount of unentered countries and territories in the world. There is only one Adventist for every 50,000 Middle Easterners. The closed Muslim world has been very effective in preventing the Adventist message from making even the slightest impact. Now, through radio, we hope to reach the 269 million people were they are.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Smit in an email to the author (16 January 2003). Alex Elmadjian in an email to the author (21 April 2003).

<sup>65</sup> Smit in an email to the author (16 January 2003).

<sup>66</sup> 'AWR Programme Schedule October 2002 to March 2003'. Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>67</sup> 'AWR Program Schedule: Winter, 31 October 2004 to 28 March 2005'.

<sup>68</sup> Smit in an email to the author (16 January 2003).

<sup>69</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>70</sup> Bert Smit, 'Adventist Radio for the Middle East!', in *Adventist Media Centre Middle East News* (No. 1, January 1992), pp. 2-3. Smit included Turkey and Iran in this number, but excluded North Africa.

AMC-ME began its operations in 1992 with a makeshift studio in a rented, three-bedroom house in the Engomi suburb of Nicosia. Smit was the first director of the production center.<sup>71</sup> AMC-ME hoped to be able to start broadcasting one unique hour per day in March 1992 but that proved to be too optimistic.<sup>72</sup> On 24 January 1993 AWR broadcast AMC-ME's first programs into the Middle East from Novosibirsk. In 1993, AMC-ME produced one hour per day.<sup>73</sup>

On 2 October 1993, with financial support from the SDA Middle East Affairs Committee, the radio team moved into renovated facilities in Dasoupolis on the outskirts of Nicosia where they had three custom-built studios with two control rooms. In 1994 that studio was able to produce two hours per day.<sup>74</sup>

In October 1993, AMC-ME began broadcasting its programs through the FM station Middle East College Radio of the SDAs in Beirut. The station broadcast daily from 06.00 AM to 22.00 PM local time. Hildá, an Egyptian missionary, produced the programs in Cyprus. She produced four-hour blocks of programs using existent programs and adding music. These blocks were shipped to Beirut where they were broadcast four times each day.<sup>75</sup> Students of Middle East College, later renamed *Middle East University*, had to go every four hours to the small control room to ensure the tape was repeated. The program contained the contact address of AMC-ME.<sup>76</sup>

SDA's university was located on a hilltop high in the Sabtîyah district in the mountains east of Beirut, so the location of its transmitter with its antenna on the roof of that university was excellent. There were however, hundreds of other FM broadcasters in Beirut, so the number of listeners cannot have been high. In view of the Lebanese government's post-war restrictions that discouraged small FM station operators, it was decided in December 1996 to sell the FM transmitter and the antenna.<sup>77</sup> Another reason why the broadcasts were halted was that the AMC-ME staff was not able to keep up their stream of regular programming.<sup>78</sup>

Smit left AMC-ME and moved to Bracknell as the European Region director of AWR Europe in January 1996. Alex Elmadjian, a British SDA missionary, became the new communication director of AMC-ME. He entered into a complex job. Mike Ryan, the director of the Global Mission Department (GMD) of the GC

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<sup>71</sup> Alex Elmadjian in an email to the author (11 February 2003). In 1997 Elmadjian had become the Middle East Union communication director.

<sup>72</sup> Bert Smit, 'Adventist Media Centre for the Middle East', p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Steele wrote in 1996 that the AMC-ME was 'able to broadcast up to eight hours a day of Arabic programs into the Middle East'. This was because the two hours produced in Nicosia, were broadcast 4 times on different frequencies. See Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, 148. Smit in an email to the author (16 Januari 2003).

<sup>74</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Manougian, who was responsible for the maintenance of the broadcast facility in the Middle East University, in an interview with the author (14 July 2004).

<sup>77</sup> The equipment was purchased by the Central African Union of the SDAs, to be used in Cameroon.

<sup>78</sup> Smit in an email to the author (16 January 2003). Manougian in an interview with the author (14 July 2004). Salim Faraj, an administrator of the Lebanese Adventist Church, remembered that one day the Syrian army came to complain that the broadcasts interfered with their communications. Salim Faraj in an interview with the author (14 July 2004). Alex Elmadjian, 'Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001'.

which had supported AMC-ME from the beginning, had begun to ask critical questions about the numbers of people baptized due to the broadcasts to the Arab World. The GMD made its funding dependent on these results and thus in 1996 AMC-ME initiated a follow-up program and a listeners club to prove that the broadcasts had an audience. According to Smit it 'proved difficult to obtain support from existing Adventist congregations to become involved in reaching out to Muslims', largely because AMC-ME could not show large numbers of converts.<sup>79</sup>

In 1998 AMC-ME could no longer produce two hours per day for AWR so its production dropped to one hour per day but, according to Smit, 'with an increase in quality'.<sup>80</sup> Part of the daily one-hour program was a 15-minute block that the French SDA studio produced for North Africa. This became integrated into the programs of AMC-ME from 1998.

Towards the year 2000, GMD forced a more pro-active approach. The concept of a contextualized programme became the primary focus. GMD demanded a concrete plan that would lead to baptisms as a precondition for further funding. As that was not forthcoming, GMD stopped its funding for AMC-ME. MEU with its very small churches could not continue to fund the radio production of AMC-ME alone. Thus, in October 2003, AMC-ME halted its radio productions and since then has remained closed.

According to Smit, the main reason for the closure was financial, as the local Arabic churches could not afford to finance AMC-ME after GMD stopped its support. 'We have repeatedly contacted church leaders and interested donors, some of whom made verbal commitments, but the money has not come in [so] we are unable to keep on', AMC-ME wrote to AWR in August 2003.<sup>81</sup> Elmadjian added that AMC-ME was hit hard by the dollar's steep drop against the Cyprus Pound in 2003.<sup>82</sup>

## 6.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

As AWR, TMT and AMC-ME were denominational ministries of the SDA Church, they adhered to the general SDA's Statement of Faith. This means that AWR, TMT and AMC-ME did not have their own contextually relevant statements. The SDA statement was long and detailed. With respect to the Bible and the Trinity it was conservative and Evangelical. The SDAs adhered to a premillennial theology. Their Statement of Faith was apologetic as regards the unique beliefs of the SDAs:

### *Creation*

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made "the heaven and the earth" and all

<sup>79</sup> Bert Smit in an email to the author (31 May 2005).

<sup>80</sup> Smit in an email to the author (16 January 2003).

<sup>81</sup> AMC-ME in an email to AWR in August 2003, quoted by Alex Elmadjian in an email to the author (12 April 2005).

<sup>82</sup> Elmadjian in an email to the author (12 April 2005).

living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was 'very good', declaring the glory of God.

#### ***The Remnant and Its Mission***

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness.

#### ***The Gift of Prophecy***

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.

#### ***The Sabbath***

The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's Kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts.

#### ***Christian Behavior***

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christ-like purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to

abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness.

***Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary***

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting Kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the Kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent.<sup>83</sup>

The SDA's most unique article of faith was about the writings of the prophetess Ellen G. White (1827-1915), which were a 'continuing and authoritative source of truth'. She was 'the Lord's messenger'. Although the theology of the SDAs was conservative in respect to the basic tenets of the Christian faith, its strong focus on the sanctity of the Saturday instead of Sunday, its unique eschatology and its fervor for physical health as proclaimed by White, set the SDAs apart from all other Churches.

With the strict adherence of AWR, TMT and AMC-ME to this Statement of Faith, there was no danger for the first *caveat* regarding contextualization, CW1, to not be heeded. The SDAs and their institutes recognized the existence of absolute truth in the Bible and in Jesus Christ, including the need to believe in that and to participate in the Church for eternal salvation.

SDAs' focus on health, including the total rejection of the drinking of alcohol and the eating of pork, was helpful in contextualizing its message to the Arab World. The fact that it celebrated the Sabbath on the same day as the Jews, and that it had its own messenger, even a female one, must have added to the difficulties of communicating the Christian message to Muslims. It also set the SDAs apart from all other churches. This made it unlikely that their broadcast would be able to heed CW3, about the need for contextualized programs to be rooted in the worldwide Church, both historically and geographically.

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<sup>83</sup> [www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental](http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental) (20 October 2005).

### 6.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

#### 6.3.1 Audience Profile

AWR's general Mission Statement said the organization wanted to broadcast 'the Adventist hope in Christ to the hardest-to-reach people groups of the world in their own languages'.<sup>84</sup> In 1997 Smit described the Arabic audience AWR should be targeting through the programs of TMT and AMC-ME:

He is a Muslim living in relative poverty in a region dominated by a strong religion. His life is not going very well and he feels alone, rejected and insecure. But his religion, instead of giving hope, tells him to be content with what he is. Imagine that he would have the chance to hear of another religion, telling him of a God who loves him, cares for him and wants him to be happy!<sup>85</sup>

That was a very broad target audience. The difference between 'a Muslim living in relative poverty' in rural Morocco and one in urban Iraq was immense. This did not reflect a homogenous target audience as prescribed by RCR1.

In 1999, AWR did a survey and it concluded that the following profile was a good description of its average listener:

A young man in his mid 20's, with either high school or college education. He enjoys our broadcasts and listens to them in the evenings for about an hour per day in the privacy of his home. He prefers a balanced, 'magazine style' format that includes programmes about culture, religion, health, social issues and literature. He also has a sense of humour. His musical preferences are equally balanced between traditional religious music and classical music with an acceptance of Western style music too. He wants to receive publications that are relevant to youth and deal with matters of religion, health and family issues. On the whole, he lists weak transmissions as his main obstacle to listening to our broadcasts regularly, although this is an inherent problem of the Shortwave medium.<sup>86</sup>

Like the description of the preferred audience, this description of the actual audience was also very broad. The audience was not described in terms of where people lived, their social status, or what their actual mother tongue was. The description seems to have been a reflection of the actual programs of AMC-ME. This is no wonder, as broadcasters *do* get an audience, however small that may be, that like their programming. The listeners who do not like their programs simply turn off their radio.

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<sup>84</sup> AWR Annual Report 2003, titled 'Passport to Mission: Adventist World Radio Travels the World' (2004), p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> Bert Smit, in 'AWR Newsletter' (April 1997).

<sup>86</sup> 'Listener profile based on AWR Arabic Survey 1999', attachment to Alex Elmadjian, 'Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001'.

### **6.3.2 AWR: Choice for Colloquial Languages**

AWR made a strategic choice to use the colloquial languages and not Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). ‘We believe it is best to speak to people in the languages they speak’, Smit said in 2003.<sup>87</sup> However, AWR followed the linguistic choices of its production organizations, as it was not a producer of programs itself and as it was subject to the linguistic choices of the two SDA studios in France and Cyprus.

### **6.3.3 TMT: Choice for Colloquial Languages**

From the beginning, TMT produced programs in Algerian Arabic and Moroccan Arabic. Tashelhayt was added to the languages in 2002, and in 2003 TMT decided it would also produce Kabyle programs.<sup>88</sup> TMT could have chosen to produce in MSA for North Africa, but preferred to use the colloquial languages. It is likely that this choice was due to pastor Pellicer who had grown up in Algeria and would have been aware of the small number of North Africans that could use MSA.<sup>89</sup> This choice for the vernaculars of North Africa was in line with RCR3, which prescribed that the languages used on Christian radio should be those that the people targeted considered their own.

### **6.3.4 AMC-ME: Choice for Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)**

AMC-ME had a different approach. It used MSA for 95 percent of its programs and only occasionally were the Egyptian and Lebanese vernaculars used, generally for the Pen Pal programs. The choice for MSA was because ‘this would be understood across the Middle East since it is taught in the schools [and as it] is also the standard language in newspapers, magazines and books’, according to Elmadjian.<sup>90</sup> Using MSA for the MSA-literate audience throughout the Middle East cannot be seen as proper contextualization of the Gospel for that specific audience. The cultural, socio-economic, religious, and other differences between MSA-literates throughout the region were large.

In trying to reach the whole Middle East with the same programs, AMC-ME’s choice of using MSA was understandable, though a better alternative would have been to use the Egyptian colloquial Arabic. That was better understood throughout the region than MSA, and it was also the mother tongue of a large part of the target audience of the Middle East. Most of the Arabs working with AMC-ME were Lebanese, so this concept was probably not acceptable to them.

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<sup>87</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>88</sup> ‘Adventist World Radio, Programme Schedule March 2003 to October 2003’.

<sup>89</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003). Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, pp. 27, 63-64.

<sup>90</sup> Alex Elmadjian in an email to the author (30 May 2005).



## 6.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

### 6.4.1 AWR

AWR published 'Program Content Requirements' as part of its broader 'Programming and Production Guidelines' for the studios it was working with. Those Requirements said that 'programs should be audience specific in order to attract as many segments of the population as possible and interesting enough to appeal to the largest number of people'. Being 'audience specific' was a clear recognition of the need to have a homogenous target audience in accordance with RCR1.

For the program content, AWR had some binding guidelines. Programs should be evangelistic, interesting, and relevant to the needs of the audience. These programs had to present the Gospel clearly without attacking other religions or political parties. This effort to steer away from discussing other religions and politics meant that the Gospel could only be applied to society in a limited way, against the warning of CW5. To the extent that the Gospel was not applied to society, it also lost some of its prophetic power, thus CW4 was not fully heeded either.

Programs of other denominations could be used if these did not contradict 'fundamental beliefs' of SDAs. In order to assess this, all scripts were to be reviewed by local reading committees for suitability. On a practical note, AWR also prescribed that the mailing address of the local Bible Correspondence School was to be given at least four times per hour throughout the programs. Topics of controversy with SDA churches needed to be avoided, and only music in harmony with the taste of local churches was to be used. That last statement was problematic from the perspective of contextualizing programs for a Muslim audience. It reflected the problem for a denominational radio broadcaster that targeted non-Christians but that had to please its own constituency. From the perspective of the need to choose linguistic and cultural forms that were suitable for the Muslim audience, as RCR4 demanded, this was not good.<sup>91</sup>

AWR also advised the studios regarding the format of the programs. Lectures and monologues were to be kept to a minimum and a magazine format was preferred. Programs should contain information on health, religion, history, culture, sociology, drama, interviews, a question and answer section, testimonies, and the invitation to write to the program.<sup>92</sup> With this approach, AWR clarified that it wanted to not only broadcast strictly religious programs but that it also realized that people have broader interests, in accordance with RCR2.

### 6.4.2 TMT

It has not been possible to learn from TMT about its programming strategies. It seems that TMT maintained a level of secrecy about its work that made it difficult for them to make information available. More study may prove useful.

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<sup>91</sup> 'Adventist World Radio Programming and Production Guidelines: D. Program Content Requirements' (April 1993).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

### 6.4.3 AMC-ME

The director of the GMD of MEU, Marty Phillips, was to ensure that AMC-ME implemented the media policy of AWR. She worked closely with Ḥanā Salīm, the program director, and with his team of radio scriptwriters and producers in finalizing the program content and style for the broadcasts.<sup>93</sup> In 1992, the Mission Statement of AMC-ME said:

[We exist] to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the urgent context of the Three Angels' Message to the people of the diverse religions, languages, cultures and nations within its territory. It seeks the wholistic restoration of the image of God in humankind to the image of God in preparation for the soon coming of Jesus Christ.<sup>94</sup>

That statement suggested that not only Muslims but also Christians were the target audience for AMC-ME. This signifies a lack of focus, against RCR1's precept to target a homogenous audience. With the statement that it focused on the diverse 'languages, cultures and nations', this statement might also point to the outreach that AMC-ME was supposed to do in Turkish and Farsi. AMC-ME also stated that it would do this as a service to the Church in carrying out its mission, that it would produce programs that proclaimed the Adventist message but at the same time 'representing the felt needs and cultures of the Middle East Union'.<sup>95</sup>

'Our radio program should be a guide bringing the listener into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ', Smit wrote in 1997. The programs aimed at effecting friendship and were meant to build bridges.<sup>96</sup> AMC-ME therefore called its Arabic programs Voice of Friendship (*Ṣawt al-Ṣadâqah*). Smit decided that for the Arab World, the 'antagonistic, Islam-bashing' style used by TMT for North Africa, was not suitable. He wanted to create a program format that would entail more 'sharing of what we have, a friendly approach'.<sup>97</sup> Elmadjian described the philosophy behind the programs:

While the philosophy of 'friendship radio' underpins all our editorial output there is concern that an overtly Christian style can cause offence and hinder long-term relationships with our listeners. [...] It is preferable to broadcast material which builds on shared beliefs, affirms the cultural values of the region and provides spiritual nourishment that leads the listener to a deeper relationship with God.<sup>98</sup>

According to Smit, AMC-ME in the Middle East was justified in this 'soft' approach by the fact that they began to receive more response from North Africans to programs produced by AMC-ME than TMT did. Again, he said, 'They liked our

<sup>93</sup> Elmadjian in an email to the author (11 February 2003).

<sup>94</sup> Bert Smit, 'Mission Statement', in *Adventist Media Centre Middle East News* (No. 1, January 1992), p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Smit, in 'AWR Newsletter' (April 1997).

<sup>97</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>98</sup> Elmadjian in an email to the author (11 February 2003).

programs more than the antagonistic approach from our studio in France'.<sup>99</sup> He also wanted the programs to be a reflection of the holistic view of life as confessed in the SDA churches:

We want to share with the Islamic world what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist. That is not just a matter of praying or preaching. In our programs we also want humor, health, family life, agricultural matters, sex, and education. Christian life includes all that and more.<sup>100</sup>

This approach was in accordance with RCR2 and targeted the audience in its concrete context. AMC-ME tried to avoid using the term *church* (*al-kanîsah*) in its programs, as for Muslims this would mean an 'instantaneous classification as infidels, drinking alcohol and eating pork', according to Smit:

We discovered that it was better to refer to ourselves as Seventh-day Adventists because that gave us a neutral opening and our listener would be more inclined to continue listening. We could tell them as Adventists that we share the Muslim concern regarding what we eat and drink and from that common ground, proceed further. Thousands of letters have meanwhile proven us right. Our approach is working and we can count tens of thousands of Muslim friends in the Arabic world.<sup>101</sup>

In spite of RCR5 that says that the Church must be portrayed in a meaningful way for the audience, AMC-ME decided not to portray the Church at all. Distancing SDAs from the churches of the Arab World by ignoring their existence may have pleased the Muslim audience but it was contextualization at the expense of Biblical ecclesiology. It probably reflected the theological and social distance between the SDA churches in the Arab World and other churches, and meant that *caveat* CW2 and CW3 were not heeded. The programs did not therefore endeavor to underline the unity of the Church but instead purposely created distance from the actual Arabic churches. .

One specific area where AMC-ME had to be careful in its wording was when it spoke about its prophetess, Ellen White. In its many publications, the word *prophetess* is translated as *nabîyah*. That is the female form of the word that is also used for the Islamic Prophet. Applying that word to a contemporary person, and especially a woman, is absolutely unacceptable for Islam.<sup>102</sup>

The Statement of Faith of the SDAs called her also 'the Lord's messenger', and AMC-ME only used that term in its programs. The logical translation in Arabic for *the Lord's messenger* in the SDAs' Statement of Faith, would be *rasûlat al-Rabb*. In Christian terms that gives her the status of the Apostles in the New Testament. In Islamic terms that would give her the status of the Prophet Muḥammad as the Islamic Creed contains the statement *Muḥammad is the messenger of God* (*Muḥammadu rasûl Allâh*). In order to avoid creating a stumbling block for Chris-

<sup>99</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Smit, in 'AWR Newsletter' (April 1997).

<sup>102</sup> Both because Islam does not know female prophets, and also because Islam holds that its own Prophet was the last one sent by God.

tians and Muslims alike, AWR translated the English word *messenger* as *mursalah* (a woman who is sent).<sup>103</sup>

Some of the over a hundred books that White wrote were translated into Arabic. AMC-ME used those on air that were ‘less doctrinal [...] and which expanded on biblical themes, like parables of Jesus, the prophets, Jesus’ life and ministry’, according to Elmadjian. ‘We also used her books which counseled on health, youth, and family issues. We did not have a written policy, but we consciously avoided themes that overly referred to Israel as God’s chosen people, since this would be misinterpreted by our Arabic audience.’<sup>104</sup>

The choice not to discuss the issue of Israel was an effort to contextualize the Gospel but the liberal usage of the books of White was questionable in respect to proper contextualization. RCR4’s advice entails using words, examples and stories that are congenial to the audience. White’s books, with their 19<sup>th</sup> century North American background, were unsuitable for Muslims. From the perspective of SDAs, this was not negotiable though as her writings were considered inspired.

By 1999 a new Strategic Plan was created by AMC-ME, in consultation with AWR and GMD, and adopted by MEU. The document became the handbook for AMC-ME, but due to its confidential nature it was not made accessible to the author. Elmadjian wrote in 2001 that the document was created in the framework of the studio’s need for ‘redirection, possibly towards a more contextualised approach in our ministry in order to better reach the hearts of our target audience as well as provide them with informative and entertaining radio’.<sup>105</sup>

In 1999 AMC-ME and AWR seemed to agree on the course of contextualization although it appears that they did not do so in the years ahead. This issue was a major reason why AMC-ME stopped producing radio programs in 2003. According to Elmadjian, there was disagreement about ‘a new strategy to make our programming more relevant to the majority population. Some of the personnel were uncomfortable with the new style of programming and felt compromised in their personal beliefs’.<sup>106</sup>

Elmadjian wanted to produce Christian programs with Islamic religious language. Not only did not all personnel agree with that but AWR also refused to broadcast programs of that kind.<sup>107</sup> They ‘could jeopardize AWR’s position’, according to Smit. His main worry was that the Arabic SDA churches did not like programs of that sort. ‘While alternative [outlets] were available, AMC-ME abruptly decided not to move ahead with the new format’ and stopped its production altogether. The abruptness of that choice was most likely related to the internal problems about the contextualization issues. Smit suggested that this was a tension between the missionaries and the local Arabic churches:

My personal feeling is that Christian neo-colonialism is often pressing for major changes which the local churches are not ready to accept. A missionary can come

<sup>103</sup> Alex Elmadjian in an email to the author (18 April 2005).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Alex Elmadjian, ‘Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001’.

<sup>106</sup> Alex Elmadjian in an email to the author (28 November 2003).

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

with brilliant but perhaps flawed concepts of 'new' evangelism and leave when things get to 'hot' but it is the local membership that will have to live with the consequences from both failures and successes. It seems local churches are more and more aware of this and less inclined to assist.<sup>108</sup>

The fact that an unresolved issue regarding contextualization played a role in the closure of the Adventist production in Cyprus shows the sensitivity of the matter. Though further research in this matter is needed, it seems that the division was to a certain extent one between strategic thinking of missionaries who wanted to go too far in contextualizing the Gospel for the Muslim audience, versus the indigenous SDA churches in the Arab World that did not agree with that sort of contextualization and that wanted to see themselves reflected in the programs. Warning CW2 was not heeded by AMC-ME; the Gospel must be contextualized, but that process must be designed within the national church community, not by individual missionaries. AWR stood more on the side of the local SDA church communities.

## 6.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

### 6.5.1 History: 1970s -2004

Initially the studios in France and Cyprus worked autonomously, each providing its programs to AWR. From October 1998, at the request of Smit the two studios began to combine their productions into one Pan-Arab program. TMT sent its 15-minute programs to Cyprus where they contributed to the overall program for AWR.<sup>109</sup> According to Smit, this 'provided welcomed assistance and relief in production with 15 minutes of the one hour show being provided by the Collonges-sous-Salève studio, resulting in a richer overall programme with greater variety'.<sup>110</sup> The main reason given by Smit why he urged the studio in France to produce less and integrate their programs into those produced in Cyprus was that he wanted them to concentrate on organizing the follow-up to their audience response better.<sup>111</sup>

RCR6 argues that the context of programs is important for how the audience understands programs. Integrating programs in North African languages into a program in MSA, would have political implications. It could suggest that Morocco or Algeria with their distinctive languages should be seen in a Pan-Arab context. This integration would seem unwise as, especially in North Africa, many people are rather negative about anything Pan-Arab, or even Arab. The integration of the programs also suggested that AWR treated the Arab World basically as one target audience, against the demands of RCR1.

<sup>108</sup> Smit in an email to the author (31 May 2005).

<sup>109</sup> Smit in an email to the author (16 January 2003). Elmadjian in an email to the author (21 April 2003).

<sup>110</sup> Smit in an email to the author (16 January 2003).

<sup>111</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

In March 2000, the total weekly program content produced by AMC-ME was 186 minutes. Of that, 53 percent was religious, 20 percent was health related, seven percent concerned family, and 20 percent consisted of other sorts of programs. The religious programs contained special segments for children and youth, as did the music programs. This did not include the daily segment of 15 minutes produced by the studio in Collonges-sous-Salève.<sup>112</sup>

Elmadjian reported the progress of AMC-ME in a five-year report for 1996-2001. Part of that report was a description of all programs that were aired in 2001. The following list shows the diversity of the programming as described by AMC-ME:

#### **Religious**

- 1 Bible Readings: portions of scriptures to fit the theme of the subjects.
- 2 Sermon of the Week: Sabbath sermon (Christ centered).
- 3 Bible Dictionary: explains the meaning of a word in the Bible & mentions the Bible references where the word appears.
- 4 Interview with the Bible: a dialogue stating what the Bible says on a certain topic with emphasis on modern application.
- 5 Bible Stories: starting with Lucifer's rebellion going through all the Bible characters and their experiences. Emphasizing values and spiritual lessons for us.
- 6 The Bible Answers Your Questions: answering listeners' questions from the Bible's point of view in the light of Christ's teachings.
- 7 Reflections: an experience or event that brings a spiritual thought or meditation.
- 8 Pen Pals: keeping listeners in touch with each other interspersed with music.
- 9 Bread of Life: daily Bible messages.
- 10 Dialogue: current issues put to 'experts' for comment.
- 11 Righteousness and Faith: explaining the doctrine of righteousness by faith as Morris Venden portrays it in his book, '95 Theses'.
- 12 The Morning Dawn: daily meditations for adults from the book 'Catch the Morning Dawn'.
- 13 Inspiration of the Book: daily meditations for adults from different devotional books.
- 14 Quest for Meaning: a theme that is covered as a one minute daily thought over a period of one week.
- 15 Yearnings of the Spirit: consists of Bible study covering a certain topic followed by words of wisdom focusing on the gems of truth.

#### **Music**

- 16 Melodies of Hope: favorite songs based on listeners requests, connected by suitable Bible verses.
- NB: There is a rich content of music in our broadcasts. Each of the programmes mentioned on this list is normally coupled with a relevant song or piece of music.

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<sup>112</sup> 'Qwert: Arabic Programme Grid from 28 March 2000', attachment to Alex Elmadjian, 'Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001'.

**Family**

- 17 The Happy Family: deals with family issues such as raising children, tips for a successful marriage and Middle Eastern recipes for vegetarian cooking.
- 18 My Home My Paradise: 'Family Matters' talks prepared by Dr. Kay Kuzma.
- 19 Children's Story: non-fiction stories to build up the morals of children with a spiritual emphasis.

**Youth**

- 20 Youth of the Hour: youth issues from a Biblical perspective. Answers questions that youth are asking today.
- 21 Stories of Great People: experiences of great people that teach the youth moral and spiritual lessons by example.
- 22 Youth Outlook on the Bible: real stories from current life from the Youth Bible supported by Bible texts.

**Health**

- 23 Spotlight on Health: deals with health principles for all members of the family.
- 24 Horizons of Better Living: covers the topics of the book, 'Better Living' by Dr. Abu Al-Wafa specially prepared for the peoples of the Middle East. It covers a variety of topics about general healthy living.
- 25 Energised: a daily health message with spiritual emphasis.

**Drama**

- 26 Pictures of Life: actual experiences of people that saw God's hand in their deliverance.
- 27 Real Stories: real events taking place in people's lives with lessons we can learn and apply to our own lives.

**Educational**

- 28 Interviews: a roving reporter meets professionals and ordinary people or visits interesting places.
- 29 The Computer Knocks on Your Door: programme about the world of computers and their application to everyday life intended for comprehension by a general audience.

**General**

- 30 From Here and There: picks up a flower from every garden in science, medicine, art, and lives of important people. Listeners often contribute to this programme.
- 31 Listener's Respond: reading and commenting on interesting or entertaining letters that reach our studio from over 50 countries.
- 32 Mix programmes from Collonges-sous-Salève.<sup>113</sup>

This list of programs was a reflection of the prime interest of the SDA denomination placing the *kerygma* of the Gospel in the public domain through radio. It also showed its interest in *diakonal* matters of family-life and health. This diversity of programs was an excellent choice, and it set the programs of AWR apart

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<sup>113</sup> 'Arabic Radio Programmes Currently Aired', attachment to Alex Elmadjian, 'Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001'.

from the other Christian Arab broadcasters who filled most of their airtime with purely religious programs. This programming of AMC-ME and TMT together took the actual context of the audience more serious than most other Christian broadcasters, in accordance with RCR2. As the area of political life was avoided, this was not done to its maximum potential. This means that warnings CW4 and CW5 were only partially heeded. To not apply the Gospel and its precepts to societal life including politics meant a narrowing of the Gospel message and its prophetic role.

The interesting breadth of programs was due to the fact that AWR, AMC-ME and TMT did not have to sell every minute of airtime to other organizations. They were able to create a measure of balanced programming that most other broadcasters could not afford. The only other broadcaster that was able to offer a similar degree of variety in its programs was Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG). It did not need to sell its airtime either.

### **6.5.2 Programs of 19-25 September 2004**

During the week of 19-25 September 2004, AWR broadcast half-hour blocks of programs to different parts of the Arab World. The total airtime on SW was three hours per day, and 3½ hours during four days of the week. The broadcasts were much better targeted at different regions, in their own languages, than was done previously, as can be seen from the broadcast schedule as given in *Figure 6.1*. Programs were in MSA, Moroccan Arabic, Kabyle, Tashelhayt, and Juba Arabic.<sup>114</sup> The program in Juba Arabic was broadcast twice weekly. A program in Moroccan Arabic was broadcast twice a week to Algeria and Morocco. Two Kabyle and three Tashelhayt programs were broadcast during the week, for Algeria and Morocco.

The broadcasts were no longer called *Voice of Friendship* as in the past, but *Voice of Hope* (*Ṣawt al-Rajâ'*) in accordance with AWR's general usage. This study has looked at the broadcasting aimed at Egypt and Northern Sudan. That block of 30 minutes was broadcast twice each day. An overview of the content of this program block is given in *Figure 6.2*. In these broadcasts, Voice of Hope encouraged its listeners to write to its PO Box in Geneva (Switzerland). In asking for audience response in only this manner the SDAs ignored the fact that most audience response was generated by telephone and emails by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Not giving those contact details was a missed opportunity to generate more contact with the audience.

#### **6.5.2.1 Biblical Topics**

In one of the Thought for Today programs, Munîr Salâm told the audience that it is an honor to be a slave for God (*'abd li Allâh*). It is also our duty to be a servant of the law (*'abd al-qânûn*). Reference was also made to the importance of being slaves to each other. The program explained that absolute freedom as presented in modern culture, which is 'to do whatever [people] like in an uncontrolled way', is

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<sup>114</sup> AWR supplied the programs that were broadcast from 19-25 September 2004.



nothing but slavery to oneself and a disgrace. The program said that only the Lord Christ (*al-Sayyid al-Masih*) was able to liberate people from the slavery to self and sin. Therefore, people should come to Christ, as ‘in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are absolutely free from sin’.<sup>115</sup> What the program said about serving God and His laws was understandable for Muslims but the language about Christ freeing people from sin was more difficult and needed explanation. AWR and the SDA production organizations professed that they aimed at a Muslim audience. However, the religious language that was used was generally speaking much more suitable for Christians, while the target audience of Muslims would usually not understand the Biblical and Evangelical jargon. Therefore RCR4, regarding the need to use language that is congenial to the target audience, was not implemented. These conclusions are, broadly speaking, also valid for the other programs studied here.

In another Thought for Today program, Salâm discussed Genesis 2:18, which states: ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’ The audience was advised to heed the manual, the Bible (*al-Kitâb al-Muqaddas*), that God has given to mankind. The program underlined that Eve was made to be a helper for Adam, not the other way round. It also said that man should not misuse his position to be dominant. When God gave Eve as a helper to Adam, they had not sinned yet. They were made for worshipping God and that is not easy, as ‘the gate is small and the road is narrow’, according to Salîm. ‘Everyone who has experienced the Lord and the strictness (*mudaqqiqah*) of the Christian life realizes the difficulty (*su‘ûbah*) of serving the Lord and the loneliness (*wahshah*) of the road’, hence the need for a helper. Thought for Today ended with the comment that those who do not find that right helper, ‘will greatly suffer in his life and only God can relieve his pain’.<sup>116</sup> For a broadcaster with a focus on a Muslim audience, this was rather difficult language that could have been avoided or at least explained.

The program Lessons from Life used the people’s interest in space travel as an introduction to speaking about the return of Christ. According to the program, people are sick of living on this earth and they are therefore eager to look for other worlds beyond our own. They look for a paradise without God. ‘Satan is playing a cunning role through the invasion of space, and I don’t think that his role is hidden from the true believer.’ Lessons for Life underlined that Satan knows that ‘we are living in the last days of the world. He knows that soon the Lord Christ will come and all the believers will be ready to meet their Master and to be [...] taken on angels’ wings to go to heaven’.<sup>117</sup>

You and I, my dear listener, know exactly that the Lord Christ is the way to God and the way to heaven because there is salvation (*khalâs*) in no one else. Nothing unclean shall enter it nor anyone who practices abominations or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>115</sup> AWR broadcast 19 September 2004, Thought for Today.

<sup>116</sup> AWR broadcast 22 September 2004, Thought for Today.

<sup>117</sup> AWR broadcast 19 September 2004, Lessons from Life.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

The program ended with asking the audience whether they were ready to depart and be with the Christ, 'the greatest astronaut'.<sup>119</sup> This program seemed more aimed at the 'true believer' that was referred to, than to an audience of outsiders. The Christian jargon used would have made this hard for Muslims to comprehend.

The program Biblical Characters discussed the person of Demas, of whom Paul writes: 'For Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica'.<sup>120</sup> The example of this man's life suggests in itself, that this program was mainly focused on Christians as Demas was a co-worker of Paul but had fallen away. This is confirmed by the Christian language that was used. 'We have to draw lessons and examples from this man's tragic end and to observe the Lord's teachings in order to finish the race in obedience.' According to the program, Demas became attracted to the world in which people lived according to their desires and for their body's sake. They had closed their eyes to the spiritual world. The program declared that people in this world 'are only searching for the temporal pleasure of sin.' Demas is used in the program to warn the audience that trying to gain a fortune and being focused on self-aggrandizement does not profit a man. Finally, the audience was advised to abide in the word of Christ (*fi kalimat al-Masih*) to the end'.<sup>121</sup>

Days of the Week	Frequency	Transmitter	Target Area	Time (GMT)
1234567	9770	Moosbrunn	Iraq	04:00-04:30
1234567	9770	Moosbrunn	Egypt/North Sudan	04:30-05:00
1234567	15470	Moosbrunn	Iraq	17:00-17:30
1234567	15470	Moosbrunn	Egypt/North Sudan	17:30-18:00
- -3 - -6-	15470	Moosbrunn	South Sudan	18:00-18:30
1234567	15280	Moosbrunn	Libya	18.30-19.00
1234567	15175	Jülich	Algeria/Morocco	19.00-19.30
-2-4- - -	15175	Jülich	Arabic/Morocco	19:30-20:00

Figure 6.1 AWR's Arabic Broadcasts: 19-25 September 2004

Faith and Life with Karîm Şalâh treated the topic of criticism of other people by discussing the story of Jesus' meeting with the Jewish leaders who brought an adulteress woman to Him. They asked Jesus if she should be stoned in accordance with the laws of Moses. Şalâh said that Jesus looked at the woman as he looked at

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> 2 Timothy 4:10 from the New International Version (NIV).

<sup>121</sup> AWR broadcast 24 September 2004, Biblical Characters.

any other sinner because lying, stealing, killing or gossiping was just as wrong. ‘Dehumanizing people is also a sin and every wicked thought [...] is considered a sin.’ The Jewish leaders who brought the woman to Jesus were disappointed by His answer that anyone without a sin, would be allowed to stone her. Jesus focused on the fact that they were all sinners, like the woman. The lesson to be learned, according to the program, was that gossip about other people and their faults was unacceptable. ‘Many of us try to build up a remarkable statue at the expense of others [...] but we must first look at our own mistakes.’<sup>122</sup> Both the Bible story chosen and the comments of Ṣalâḥ were interesting for a Muslim audience but his application was hard for a non-Christian to understand. The audience was asked to follow the example of Christ:

Christ came to our world to save us from evil and sin, and to set us free. He had to be punished for us, so He died on the cross for our salvation. His death was for our redemption and every one who believes and follows Him is saved from his sins and will get eternal life. Therefore let’s take Christ as our example in life, because He is the only one who never committed a sin when he lived on earth, and He is the one who calls for love that He Himself represented by his sacrificial work on the cross.<sup>123</sup>

Because of that self-giving example of Christ, the program then asked the audience to always follow His teachings by respecting and appreciating other people without despising them or gossiping about them. Here the application was clearer for Muslims: ‘Since Christ is our example, we should look at the sinner and try to instruct him and help him overcome his sin, and if we find out about any iniquity, we should cover it and try to mend it with a loving spirit.’ The program ended with the advice to ‘confess our own sins before God and ask for His mercy and forgiveness’.<sup>124</sup>

19-09-04	Thought for Today	Lessons from Life	Strive for the Best
20-09-04	Successful Raising of Kids		Lessons from Life
21-09-04	Family Life		Happy Homes
22-09-04	Thought for Today	World of Hygiene	Strive for the Best
23-09-04	Anxiety		Love your Neighbor
24-09-04	Biblical Characters		Faith and Life
25-09-04	Selfishness		Does God still do Miracles?

Figure 6.2 Content of AWR’s Arabic Broadcasts: 19-25 September 2004

The second program on 25 September explored the question of why we do not see miracles in our days. Miracles are first defined as acts of divine power in ways that are not humanly possible. The program then sought to show, from examples of the Old Testament (*al-‘Ahd al-Qadîm*) of the Bible (*al-Kitâb al-Muqaddas*), that

<sup>122</sup> AWR broadcast 24 September 2004, Faith and Life.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

even though Israel experienced great miracles, it did not lead them to repentance. ‘They were always unfaithful to Him.’ Then, the program declared that the greatest miracle was that God became a human being in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (*yasîru Allâh insân fî shakhş al-Rabb Yasû‘ al-Masîh*). It went on to say that Jesus Himself did many miracles, but that this did not impress people too much as in the end, he was crucified. These statements about Israel and the Incarnation and death of Christ would have totally distracted any Muslim in the audience from the theme of the program. The program used these examples to show that the argument ‘if only God would do miracles today, more people would come to faith’, is not valid. ‘My dear listener, all that God wants from you is to have faith in His power and love.’

The program then proceeded to explain that even today people hear of many miracles, for instance if someone survives a fatal car accident. It went on to say that the way in which God cares for us every day is a miracle. ‘Let us think deeply of these miracles, the daily miracles of His mercy, care and blessings.’ God cares for us when we travel, he helps us in our work, he comforts us in our sorrows, and He provides us with all we need. The program ended with the ‘miracle that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is able to work in the heart of the sinner and turn his life upside down. [...] Give your life to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will gain God’s miracle and become a living witness of the miracles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.’<sup>125</sup> This program was mainly suitable for a Christian audience.

#### 6.5.2.2 Arabic Churches and Ecumenical Issues

No mention was made of the church in any of the programs. This was not a coincidence, but an implementation of the programming philosophies. Therefore, AWR’s broadcasts did not heed CW3, which prescribed that programs should not undermine the unity of the worldwide church. To contextualize the Gospel by purposely avoiding any mention of the Body of Christ is not acceptable. As it does not reflect the *koinonia* of the Church, it diminishes the impact of the *kerygma* and the *diakonia* evidenced in the programs as a witness to Jesus Christ.

#### 6.5.2.3 Christian-Muslim Relations

The only vague reference to the issue of Christian-Muslim relations was in the program of 23 September. This program’s theme was that it is our duty to help and practically love our fellow human beings, irrespective of whether they are from our family, race or religion. That was a very relevant message in the context of the Arab World, and certainly of interest to Muslims and Christians alike. The parable of the Good Samaritan was used as an example. The priest and the Levite did not help their Jewish compatriot but the Samaritan did, in spite of the enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans. ‘Love removed all the differences between the two.’

The program continued to say that ‘our duty as human beings is to love and help each other. For this reason, the Lord Jesus came to our earth, became a man like us and joined our society to draw us toward each other by the bond of broth-

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<sup>125</sup> AWR broadcast 25 September 2004, no title.

erly love'. The program ended with some quotes from the apostle Paul about the Christian duty to love others.<sup>126</sup> That gives the impression that this program was mainly aimed at Christians.

#### 6.5.2.4 Pastoral Care

In the program *The Family and Successful Raising of Kids*, Anwâr Kamâl advised parents about building character in their children. The program focused on children from 5-12 years of age. Parents were advised to not consider disobedience as a challenge of their authority alone, but as a sin in the first place. 'You should face him at once if he manifests any kind of wrong behavior'. The program also advised parents to not solve behavioral problems by establishing laws (*qawânîn*), but by developing positive characteristics in the children. Three tools were suggested for that. In the first place, parents should lead the heart of their children toward God. 'Is he aware of his relationship with God? Is he interested in knowing and loving God?' In the second place, parents were told to help the child to understand himself. He should know his own strong and weak characteristics. Thirdly, parents were told to help their child to understand himself in his relationships with other children.<sup>127</sup>

In *Lessons from Life Salâm* instructed parents to follow Biblical principles in raising children. With some verses from the Bible, the program showed: 'The first thing you should do [...] is to raise your children in the love of God and the knowledge of His right path.' Salîm advised parents that they should not try to 'impose any kind of values' upon their children. Parents should cultivate their own values and make those attractive so that children will chose those for themselves. 'Your lifestyle has more impact on your children than your words.' Fathers were told to also discipline their children, without overdoing that. The program mentioned that in some countries spanking a child is illegal, but he reminded the audience that Solomon said that 'if you beat [the child] with a rod, you will save his life from hell'. The program ended with Salîm's invitation 'to read the Bible in order to get positive and reliable information regarding bringing up your sons and daughters in the right way according to God's will.'<sup>128</sup>

*Family Life*, by a person called Titrî, spoke of the need to raise children with a sense of self-assurance. It mentioned that children that are always supposed to perform beyond their abilities usually develop an inferiority complex. The program specifically said that comparing children with others who are better, or criticizing the child for his or her lack of accomplishment, should be avoided. 'Children mainly get their value from their deep sense that they are valuable in the eyes of people and that they are worthy and loved just the way they are'. The program had some concrete tips for parents. Parents should model the value of self-appreciation. Children should be allowed to do practical chores in the house alongside their parents. Also, parents should allow children to express themselves instead of speaking for them. Children should be encouraged to make their own

<sup>126</sup> AWR broadcast 23 September 2004, no title.

<sup>127</sup> AWR broadcast 20 September 2004, *The Family and Raising Children with Success*.

<sup>128</sup> AWR broadcast 20 September 2004, *Lessons from Life*.

choices and to learn to live with the consequences of that. Another suggestion was to spend time with the children.<sup>129</sup>

These three pastoral programs were all relevant for parents in the Arab World, but the language used was more suitable for middle class Christians in Europe or the USA than for the intended Arabic Muslim audience. As the actual audience had been defined as young men in their mid-20s, it is questionable whether programs about raising children were *a propos*. They seem to reflect the interest of the SDAs more than the interest of the actual audience. If that is true, these programs did not speak to the audience in its actual context, as needed in order to fulfill RCR2. The content seemed to be taken straight out of a Western article or book. The same is true for the program Happy Homes, about marriage.

Happy Homes dealt with the relationship between a husband and wife and the problems that may beset them. This program of ‘Aṭif Dawīs focused on problems related to cultural issues. An esoteric example was given of a family that did not go along with cultural developments. It was suggested that this family may in turn experience stagnancy and stress due to that. Or another potential problem was of a husband who may lead such a boring life that his wife begins to compare him with other men. Too much routine in life may make a couple discontent. A couple may be so focused on missed chances in the past that they do not anticipate the future. Dawīs warned couples that this general *malaise* may lead to one of the partners trying to fill the emotional or relational thirst by entering into illegitimate relationships. People may also stay together but rancorous and alienated, including sexual frigidity. It may also lead to a lack of appreciation for any beauty or culture in the relationship, and a lack of balanced emotions.<sup>130</sup>

In a program on 23 September with no title, Ṣalâḥ discussed the theme of anxiety and how to deal with it. He differentiated between anxiety based on actual problems and anxiety for what might occur in the future. The common-sense tips given were to take a firm decision not to worry, to not worry about trivialities, to maintain a balanced behavior, to cooperate with people, to describe the problem on a piece of paper and reconsider that an hour later, to concentrate on the present instead of the past or the future, to take time for being alone and enjoy each new daybreak, to continue loving people, to take good care of their appearance, and to learn something new every day for instance by reading. The advice given sounded rather shallow, especially for people with reasons to be fearful. Interesting is that Ṣalâḥ quoted the Arab poet and philosopher ‘Umar al-Khayyâm, in an effort to contextualize the otherwise rather Western-style approach to dealing with anxiety.<sup>131</sup>

Dawīs’ program on 25th September explored how to deal with selfish and arrogant people. Firstly, the characteristics of these people were given and then Dawīs described how most people feel in the company of selfish and arrogant people. There is a chasm, the person has no real interest in you, and you feel looked down upon. So how do you deal with people like that? The advice given was to look for

<sup>129</sup> AWR broadcast 21 September 2004, Family Life.

<sup>130</sup> AWR broadcast 21 September 2004, Happy Homes.

<sup>131</sup> AWR broadcast 23 September 2004, no title.

something good in the person and to praise him for that. A person was to avoid saying anything untrue in order to be kind, as that would only feed the arrogant or selfish man's pride. When speaking with him, the advice was to tell the person that you appreciate his work, and that he will achieve success by working together. If he was to make a mistake, the audience was counseled to help him to find excuses for that mistake, as that would create the right atmosphere to help the person do better. In doing all these things it was considered possible to help the man see the need for teamwork. If he could come to accept that he would learn to also care for others. 'In conclusion, I want you to keep working hard with him and he might be changed one day'.<sup>132</sup>

The program World of Hygiene advised the audience what to do when a child has a fever, or when someone suffers from sunstroke, transportation dizziness or nose bleeding, severe bleeding or the loss of teeth. This program was an effort to address the audience in its actual context.<sup>133</sup> These programs described as pastoral programs, as well as the programs described under cultural issues, were hardly religious. Though they reflected the interest of SDAs in matters of family and health, these programs stood apart from the religious messages of AWR and they therefore did not show how SDAs integrated these issues in their faith life.

#### 6.5.2.5 Cultural Issues

In Strive for the Best some brief tips were given for how to be good at conversation. The audience was advised to look people in the face, to not speak too loud and to not interrupt the other person when he speaks. Also, advice was given to not stand too close to the one addressed and to not speak too slow or too fast. Finally, the audience was told not to move their hands and their head while speaking. Not following these rules was called ill mannered (*ghayr mustahabb*).<sup>134</sup>

Another Strive for the Best program discussed the importance of 'the proper way' of shaking hands. It should not be too long in order not to irritate, and not too short as that might give the impression of a lack of interest. It should also not be too strong, in order not to hurt. The audience was told to look the other person in the eye and not to shake hands while smoking. Moreover, men should not initiate a handshake with a woman but wait for her permission, and one should also wait for those higher in rank to take the initiative. If someone wears gloves on a cold winter day, gloves must be taken off before a handshake, but when it rains, it was acceptable to keep gloves on.<sup>135</sup>

Both programs seemed to be taken straight from North American books about etiquette and were quite strange in the context of the Arab World. Some of the advice, such as looking people in the eyes and not standing too close to people, was culturally inappropriate. The advice about whether to shake hands with gloves in winter or on rainy days was also quite strange for Arabs to hear in some of the targeted countries. These programs did not take the actual context of the audience into account as they should according to RCR2.

<sup>132</sup> AWR broadcast 25 September 2004, no title.

<sup>133</sup> AWR broadcast 22 September 2004, World of Hygiene.

<sup>134</sup> AWR broadcast 19 September 2004, Towards the Best.

<sup>135</sup> AWR broadcast 22 September 2004, Towards the Best.

### 6.5.2.6 Socio-Economic and Political Issues

These matters were not discussed in the programs. This was a missed opportunity as the SW audience in the Arab World is generally known for its interest in these matters. Societal matters are part of the context of the audience and to avoid the themes meant that RCR2, about the need to address the audience in its actual context, was not fulfilled to its maximum potential. By not treating these societal issues, AWR in its Arabic programming did not heed CW5, regarding the fact that the Gospel is Good News for society as well as for individuals. It also diminished the Gospel's role as a prophetic force in society, thus neglecting warning CW4.

## 6.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

It has not been possible to access the audience response figures of the broadcasts of the SDA programs in the Collonges-sous-Salève studio. That is regrettable, as they appear to have been quite good at times. One reason why Smit advised TMT to stop independently dealing with AWR and to integrate their programs into one Pan-Arab block, compiled in Cyprus, was that the office in France was not handling its audience response very well. In that context, Smit mentioned the good response the French studio received:

They got between 3,000 and 4,000 letters each year, and they showed me thousands of unanswered letters. I advised them to stop their programs and only concentrate on answering their mail. Radio is seeding, but we must do something with it. Actually, I think our producers for the Middle East had the same problem. They did not do much in the area of audience follow up. We have lost more audience by not responding to mail, than by them not listening.<sup>136</sup>

In 1993, during the first year of broadcasts, AMC-ME received a rather disappointing 15 listener letters. In 1994, about 600 letters were received. In 1995, AMC-ME received more than 2,000 letters.<sup>137</sup> In 1995, the studio in France also received its highest response ever. Steele suggested that this was because of the powerful transmissions from Slovakia.<sup>138</sup>

In 1996 over 5,000 people wrote in, according to Smit. That figure consisted of the mail received in Cyprus and France. Based on that, Smit wrote that he would 'like to think that around five million people listen frequently to our Arabic service'.<sup>139</sup> He probably based that on the often repeated myth that every response received supposedly stood for 1,000 listeners. In 1997 Smit claimed that as 'a direct result of listening to the Arabic radio programs of AWR, many Muslim listeners have accepted Jesus Christ. Many have told us of their new love for Jesus and how our programs have changed their lives!'<sup>140</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Smit in an interview with the author (21 July 2003).

<sup>137</sup> Figures for 1994 and 1995 from Robert S. Folkenberg, 'From the G.C. President' (16 January 1996), as found on his website <http://www.folkenberg.net/FTP/96-01-16.PDF> (28 May 2005).

<sup>138</sup> Steele, *Loud Let It Ring!*, p. 154.

<sup>139</sup> Smit, in 'AWR Newsletter' (April 1997).

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*



AMC-ME received 12,029 letters during the five years from 1996 to 2000. It seems that this figure included those who wrote more than once. In 1999 2,546 letters were received. From the beginning of 2000 until the end of November 2,007 letters were received and if December 2000 was a normal month for mail, the total for the year 2000 may have been 2,190. This means that the average number of letters received in 1996, 1997 and 1998 was 2,431. In 1999 and 2000, AMC-ME began receiving emails and faxes, but those numbers were still low. No telephone answering systems were used.<sup>141</sup>

The main countries where mail came from during the 1996-2000 period are given in *Figure 6.3*.<sup>142</sup> Of the mail received by AMC-ME from 1996-2000, 51 percent was from people in North Africa who should have actually mailed their response to TMT, for handling there. Only 30 percent of the mail came from the Middle East. This happened in spite of explanations to the audience that North Africans were supposed to write to Paris, and people from the Middle East to Cyprus. Elmadjian gave some reasons for this behavior by the audience:

Likely factors for this is that listeners writing to the AMC are offered more tangible follow-up materials and possibly a more personalised approach in our response since there are more people assigned to mailroom duties. Another factor is that Colonges-sous-Saleve staff cannot possibly answer queries regarding our programmes (which they are barely acquainted with) that make up 75% of the total broadcast time.<sup>143</sup>

Most mail was received from Algeria and Morocco while Egypt followed closely. That made sense, as those areas were the main population centers of the Arab World. As of 1 September 2001, TMT took responsibility for the mail that AMC-ME received from North Africa and Europe, in order to enable the mailroom staff in Cyprus to concentrate effectively on follow-up in their own territory.<sup>144</sup>

Amâl Nabil was the mail coordinator in Nicosia. She ensured that each letter was answered with a personal response. In order to create a loyal audience, A Voice of Hope Radio Club was launched in March 1996.<sup>145</sup> Each member received a personalized membership card, a quarterly 12-page magazine, schedules, gifts and prizes through competitions. In 2001, the financial burden of printing and mailing over 3,500 magazines worldwide could no longer be borne by AMC-ME. When AMC-ME and TMT began cooperation in 1998, the idea had been that both studios would share in the work of the Radio Club but Cyprus carried the full workload including the commensurate cost. AMC-ME therefore decided to ask the listeners to annually renew their membership. By 2001, the membership slumped to 650.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> 'AMC Statistics 2000', attachment to Alex Elmadjian, 'Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001'.

<sup>142</sup> 'Adventist Media Centre - Middle East: Top 9 responding countries for mail between 1996-2000', attachment to Alex Elmadjian, 'Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001'.

<sup>143</sup> Alex Elmadjian, 'Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001'.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Elmadjian in an email to the author (11 February 2003).

<sup>146</sup> Elmadjian, 'Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001'.

AMC-ME used correspondence courses for its audience. The Middle East Centre for Correspondence Studies was set up in 1993 to partner with the radio ministry of AMC-ME. During the first 11 months of 2000, nine students studied the Arabic BCC, while 22 students were enrolled in the Arabic Health Correspondence Course. The Correspondence Course for studying English was more popular, with 420 students during the first 11 months of 2000 of whom 185 began in that year.<sup>147</sup>

During the same 11 month period in 2000, of a total number of 2,007 letters, 51 percent, or 1,023 letters, were actually for TMT. Based on those letters, AMC-ME advised TMT that about 40 people should be sent a Bible, four should be mailed a correspondence course, and five were deemed worthwhile visiting for further follow up. AMC-ME advised the ministry section of MEU of four people that might need visitation, based on the 602 letters it received from countries of MEU.<sup>148</sup> These figures were rather low. They suggest that the vast majority that wrote to AMC-ME did not write with spiritual questions. That was probably the reason why GMD stopped its funding and why Elmadjian wanted a new approach of more radical contextualization.

Country	Response
Algeria (EUD)	2,433
Morocco (EUD)	1,878
Libya (EUD)	1,314
Tunisia (EUD)	503
Egypt (MEU)	1,715
Iraq (MEU)	917
Sudan (MEU)	570
Yemen (MEU)	329
Jordan (MEU)	114
Other Countries	2,256

*Figure 6.3 AWR's Arabic Audience*

During 2002, mail from Iraq increased dramatically reflecting the increase in tension within the country. It has not been possible to obtain these actual figures but AMC-ME did publish that more letters were received from Iraq than from any other country in that year. The total figures for the years since 2001 have not been published either, and for a lack of more detailed information, not many conclusions can be drawn. It is nevertheless likely that the figures have plummeted since 2001, because AWR subsequently decreased its number of broadcast hours to the Arab World. Moreover, whereas in the past people were able to respond to addresses in France and Cyprus, they could now only write to Switzerland. Both steps were not good choices for generating response.

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

The programs in Tashelhayt that had just begun to be aired in 2002 did not draw much response. By July 2003, AWR had only received ten or 20 letters from Tashelhayt listeners but SDAs in Morocco were also using the programs for direct evangelism, according to Smit. 'People are asking their friends to listen, and based on that we can do local follow up.'

## **6.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

### ***6.7.1 Indigenization***

The broadcaster AWR was not managed by Arab members of the SDA churches and it was never intended to as AWR broadcast in many other languages besides Arabic. AWR's European department, that was responsible for the Arabic broadcasts, was run by a Dutch missionary of the AWR churches. AMC-ME in Cyprus was a ministry of MEU, the union of SDA churches in the Middle East. Although these Middle Eastern churches were officially the owners of this media ministry, they did not indigenize the management. MEU invited European leaders to manage AMC-ME. TMT needs further study before conclusions can be drawn regarding its level of indigenization.

### ***6.7.2 Contextualization***

#### **6.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

AWR said that it wanted to reach Muslims all over the Arab World. This was not a homogenous target audience. AMC-ME was aimed at both Muslims and Christians in the Middle East. This too was not a homogenous audience. TMT's target audience is not known beyond the fact that they aimed their programs at North Africa. The integration of TMT's and AMC-ME's programs were not wise from the perspective of the need to aim at a homogenous audience.

#### **6.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

The SDAs have a strong focus on health and family life and these and other issues were included in the programs of AMC-ME and the broadcasts of AWR. However, other important areas concerning the actual context of the target audience were also purposely avoided, like socio-political issues. The churches of the Arab World, clearly part of the actual context of most of the audience, were also ignored. CW5, about the need to not only speak about the Gospel in personal terms but to also let it speak about society, was not heeded. Therefore, the Gospel was also not allowed to be a prophetic beacon in the midst of society, hence CW4 was not heeded.

#### **6.7.2.3 Language**

AWR preferred to broadcast in the colloquial languages of the Arab World but it honored the linguistic choices of AMC-ME and TMT. AMC-ME used MSA in its programs while TMT used colloquial Arabic and the Amazigh languages of North Africa. This shows a very different approach between SDA churches. The choice

of TMT was arguably better from the perspective of contextualization. It chose to speak to people in their mother tongues. The choice for MSA meant that better educated people were targeted. However, those Arabs who are fluent in MSA do not form a socially and culturally unified target audience and furthermore, may prefer to be addressed in colloquial Arabic. Additionally, as MSA is to a large extent the language of the Islamic religion and the political leadership of the Arab World, it is questionable that those who like to be addressed in that language are the ones that are most open for a radical religious change.

#### **6.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

AWR, TMT and AMC-ME have never used Islamic jargon or Islamic cultural forms in their programs. They always used the Christian language as spoken in the SDA churches. The music in the programs, for instance, had to be in harmony with the taste of the SDA churches in the Arab World. When some in AMC-ME wanted to produce programs that used Islamic linguistic and cultural forms, the SDA churches in the Arab World did not agree. The plans were therefore not implemented. This issue was one of the reasons for the closure of AMC-ME. What was at stake was CW2, about the need to contextualize the Gospel within the Church community. In as far as the SDA churches defined what church meant, CW2 was heeded. CW6, about the impossibility to separate form and meaning in language and cultural forms, was not trespassed against.

#### **6.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

The programs of AMC-ME spoke about Christ in conservative Christian terms; He was the Son of God who came to the world in Jesus Christ. He died and rose again for the forgiveness of sins of those who believe in Him. The SDA organizations followed their churches' views, and those were held as absolute truth, in accordance with CW1.

The purposeful efforts of AMC-ME to avoid speaking about the Church, even its own SDA congregations, meant that RCR5 was not implemented in this respect. Thereby, CW3, regarding the importance of proclaiming the Gospel in a manner that strengthens the unity of the worldwide Church of the past and of today, was not heeded.

#### **6.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

AMC-ME and TMT programs were broadcast on AWR in the midst of other language programs of the SDA churches. This created an environment that had no detrimental effect on the audience's understanding of these programs. The two questions that warrant further study are firstly does SW radio coming from outside the Arab World have an impact on the audience's understanding of the programs and secondly what impact the use of a response address outside the Arab World has on the understanding of the message broadcast

### 6.7.3 Christian Witness

The fact that AMC-ME was able to broadcast programs of an interesting variety is due to the fact that AWR did not sell airtime. This enabled the radio producers in the SDA churches to create a balanced diet of programs that were a potentially interesting Christian witness for an Arab audience. In general, it is worth noting that the program producers and broadcasters of the SDA churches in the Arab World presented a Christian *kerygma* that was not different from what the other protestant broadcasters of Arabic programs presented. The central tenets of the Christian faith were witnessed to in the programs.

AWR also faced similar questions about contextualization and the impact of its programs on the Arabic audiences as the other Protestant broadcasters. More cooperation between the SDA radio organizations and the other Protestant Churches and organizations in the Arab World in general seems therefore possible and advisable. This would also be a good example of Christian *koinonia*. As AWR avoided mentioning the Church in its programs, this *koinonia* as an integral part of the Christian witness was lacking in its programming.

AWR did have a stronger focus on the *diakonal* role of Christian radio programs, in accordance with the SDA Church, than the other Christian broadcasters. The focus on family and health issues testified to this. AWR saw the need to educate people in more than purely *kerygmatic* matters. It was disappointing however that these programs did not show how themes like family life and health were integrated in the Christian thinking and in the religious life of the SDA churches. Some of these topics were treated without any reference to the Christian faith. This was at the expense of the Christian witness of the programs.



## 7 Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA)

Radio ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa') was the first Evangelical organization that began a long-term broadcasting ministry of Arabic Christian radio programs.<sup>1</sup> It did so from 1956 until 1990, when its studios and transmitters were taken over by rebels and destroyed. From its inception to 1975, ELWA was involved in the Christian witness through the production and broadcasting of radio programs but after 1975 it depended almost entirely on other producers. Therefore the focus of this chapter will be ELWA's ministry from 1956 to 1975.<sup>2</sup>

ELWA was influential in stimulating other organizations to begin producing Arabic programs. One of those was Bassam Madany who began his lifelong Arabic ministry with the Back to God Hour (BTGH) at the request of ELWA. One of the organizations ELWA had great influence on was the Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA). This chapter also describes in some detail why and how ELWA's studio in Beirut was handed over to FEBA.

ELWA's internal meetings and meetings with its external producers for discussing matters like what languages to use on radio, programming strategies, and matters related to contextualization in general, have been extensively treated in this chapter. ELWA and its studio in Beirut (Lebanon) played a central role between 1966 and 1975 in the discussions about how to contextualize the Gospel in Arabic on radio.

### 7.1 HISTORY

#### 7.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Broadcasts: 1948-1956

##### 7.1.1.1 West Africa Broadcasting Association (WABA): 1948-1950

William A. Watkins graduated in 1948 from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois (USA). He had grown up as a *Mission Kid* in French West Africa but had been forced to leave via Liberia due to World War II. After graduation he stayed on at Wheaton College as the college electrician although he had a dream to start a missionary radio station in Liberia.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'EL' was the prefix for Liberia and the 'WA' was for West Africa. ELWA had a contest and let people suggest a name. A Liberian boy won with the words 'Eternal Love Winning Africa'. Merle Steely in an interview with Kimberly Smith (20 November 1984) in the Billy Graham Center Archives, Collection 290T1. See also Jane Reed and Jim Grant, *Voice under every Palm: the story of how Radio Station ELWA was brought into being to meet the challenge of Africa* (Grand Rapids, 1970, first edition 1968), pp. 25-28.

<sup>2</sup> ELWA's files are located in the offices of Servants in Mission (SIM) in Fort Mill, South Carolina (USA). SIM was the owner of ELWA. These files were only accessible until 1975 during the writing of this study.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Merle A. Steely, 'The Founding of ELWA in 1950' (2003). This is an unpublished document that Steely sent to the author of this thesis in 2003.

Merle A. Steely came to study at Wheaton College, and lived in a mobile home in Watkins' backyard. According to Steely, 'for a year and a half, [Watkins] unburdened his heart to me about a radio station for Africa'. In February 1950, during a week of special revival meetings in Wheaton College, Steely felt compelled to speak to Watkins. 'I told him he had been talking about the radio station for Africa for a year and a half and now I felt we ought to do something about it. [...] I said we ought to meet one night a week in special prayer for the station.' That same night they prayed together. A third Wheaton student who participated was Ernest P. Howard who had also been a *Mission Kid* in Africa.<sup>4</sup>

Next day the three young men went to Raymond Edman, the president of Wheaton College, as they felt they needed advise for this overwhelming project. Edman suggested they should start a formal group, choose a name, apply for non-profit status, get a bank account and interest some 'big people' on campus with their plans. The three immediately began to do as suggested.<sup>5</sup>

In April 1950, the West African Broadcasting Association (WABA) was incorporated. Watkins became president, Steely its secretary, and Howard the treasurer. Some Wheaton College staff joined the board. On 14 August 1950, the constitution, the by-laws and the doctrinal statement were adopted. Abe Thiessen, the future president of the organization, was invited to join WABA later that month and he began in November of that same year.<sup>6</sup>

WABA understood that it needed all the help and advise it could get and in its start-up it tried to maximize cooperation. It obtained information from the State Department in Washington, the Federal Communications Commission, and from

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Bob Arnold (SIM Archivist from 2001-2005) in an email to the author of this thesis (9 September 2003). Abe Thiessen, 'The Beginnings of ELWA' (n.p., n.d.), p. 1, from ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, The Beginnings 1956-1969. In 'The Beginnings of ELWA', Thiessen gave the impression to have been involved in WABA from the beginning, even before its incorporation. He wrote: 'God gave the vision of radio for Africa to William Watkins. [...] Very shortly he shared this vision and burden with Abe Thiessen while both were students at Wheaton College. [...] Both of us were impressed with the immensity of the task in Africa. We thought of all the unreached people. We thought of the few missionaries, of the hour-glass of opportunity in Africa running out. [...] As we continued to pray, our vision and burden did not decrease, but rather increased. We were convinced that God would establish such a ministry for Africa. After much prayer we felt led to organize our own Mission, the West African Broadcasting Association, Inc.' Jane Reed, wife of one of the pioneers with ELWA in Liberia, wrote in 1968 that Watkins, Steely and Thiessen met with Edman of Wheaton College, and she also described Thiessen's role in the founding of WABA. See Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, pp. 23-24. In fact Thiessen was not personally present during those initial prayer meetings, he was not part of the group of men that initially met with Edman, and he was absent from the meetings where WABA was conceived and incorporated. He became involved after WABA had been set up. This is confirmed by the signatories of the WABA incorporation in April 1950 and also at the adoption of the by-laws in July 1950. Thiessen's absence is confirmed by Steely, who considered himself the 'historian' of WABA until he left it in April 1954. The signatures on the Articles of Incorporation (DuPage County, State of Illinois, on 19 April 1950) of WABA were Watkins, Howard, Steely, and Robert W. Bedard. These same four were shown as the Board of Directors. The by-laws of WABA, adopted 5 July 1950, contained eight names: Watkins, his wife Grace, Steely and his wife Vera Mae, Francis M. and Marion Wheeler, Bedard and Howard. It seems that the memory of Steely was better than that of Thiessen. Reed probably used Thiessen's 'Beginnings of ELWA' as a source for her book, hence her mistakes about Thiessen's role.



some African governments. It also discussed matters with Reuben Larson, a co-founder of HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings') who had his office in Wheaton. WABA shared office space with HCJB in Wheaton for a while. It sought counsel from different mission boards but none were interested in sponsoring radio in Africa. They were too occupied with the post-war expansion of their own ministries.<sup>7</sup>

While in Wheaton College, WABA tried to enlist 'top-notch young people' to join it.<sup>8</sup> 'We felt that God had raised us up as a nucleus to begin the radio station, but since we as students had no money, God must surely have men with money somewhere. We began to explore this avenue but did not find men with money interested in financing the project', Thiessen remembered.<sup>9</sup> The men were not discouraged though. Thiessen later recalled: 'In simple faith we continued to pray and to plan and to work.'<sup>10</sup>

Watkins and Howard had grown up in Africa and the American organizations that were consulted by the visionary young men must also have had at least some experience of mission in Africa. However, the decision to begin a radio station in Africa and the foundation of WABA seem to have been a matter of strategizing by North Americans only, without any consultation with African church leaders.

#### 7.1.1.2 Christian Radio based in Liberia: 1950-1951

The research that was done convinced WABA that Liberia in West Africa was the only country in Africa where they could build and operate their station.<sup>11</sup> Liberia was a logical choice as it was a stable Christian state under President William V.S. Tubman.<sup>12</sup> The country was created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the USA, colonized with African-Americans, and then given independence. Liberia had never been a colony of the European powers and thus did not have laws where mainly only government ownership of radio stations was allowed. It had a strong relationship with the USA and followed American liberal media laws. The new masters would keep a strong grip on the country, and had a pro-American attitude.<sup>13</sup>

Thiessen wrote that the group of WABA began to pray for a way to approach the Liberian government for the necessary permits. To this end, they met with a former Lutheran missionary Norma Bloomquist who had become director of the Department of Literacy of the ministry of education in Liberia, when she came to Wheaton. 'She told us that she was a personal friend of President Tubman and that she would personally present our proposal to him.'<sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Thiessen, 'Beginnings of ELWA', p. 2. Steely, 'Founding of ELWA'.

<sup>8</sup> Thiessen, 'Beginnings of ELWA', p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> The Constitution of 1847 defined Liberia as a Christian state. Tubman was president from 1944 until his death in 1971.

<sup>14</sup> 'The Talking Book Gives Encouragement to ELWA Listeners', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. V, No. 1, First Quarter 1957), p. 27.

<sup>15</sup> Thiessen, 'Beginnings of ELWA', p. 2. Steely, 'Founding of ELWA'.

Just before Christmas 1950, WABA received a telegram asking it to send a representative to Liberia for discussing the terms of the radio permit.<sup>15</sup> Watkins went in January 1951, but when Tubman received him, Tubman seemed uninterested and asked Watkins to return 'next year'. Watkins decided to approach the postmaster-general, by going directly and unannounced to his home. That worked well, and the postmaster-general agreed to register the radio station. The call letters were to be ELWA and the franchise gave ELWA great freedom. There were no time limitations, no power limitations, nor any other restrictions as to the content of their broadcasts. The contract was signed in February 1951.<sup>16</sup>

Among those involved in WABA there was some dissatisfaction in 1951 with the way Watkins was doing things. During the second annual meeting, in August 1951, Thiessen became the President, Watkins was made vice-President and Steely remained secretary of WABA. Thiessen, because of the poor health of his wife Ellen, was not allowed by SIM to live in Africa, so he stayed in the USA to lead the work of ELWA there.<sup>17</sup>

In October 1951, Watkins went back to Liberia to buy land for the radio station.<sup>18</sup> Hilmer Lindahl, a radio engineer with Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), joined him.<sup>19</sup> Lindahl had spent the previous four years waiting for the chance to build a radio station for SIM in Ethiopia. During those years, SIM had bought airtime on Radio Addis Ababa and been involved in some limited Gospel broadcasts, but this had not been very satisfying and had ceased.<sup>20</sup> SIM had therefore hoped to build its own station in Ethiopia and had some money in reserve for that but however, in 1951 SIM's request for a license was turned down.<sup>21</sup> SIM therefore asked Lindahl,

<sup>15</sup> The telegram was from Tubman himself, and said: 'Send man. Discuss terms of franchise.' Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Thiessen, 'Beginnings of ELWA', p. 2. Steely, 'Founding of ELWA'.

<sup>17</sup> Steely, 'Founding of ELWA'. Orbra Bliss in an email to the author (1 May 2004). Bliss commented: 'In missions, there are often a lot of obstacles to overcome and therefore that often brings together strong-willed people. And there we have Watkins, Steely, Thiessen and some others. I have read some of their writings and though both Steely and Watkins were gone by the time I arrived, through the years I have worked and talked with a number of people who did work closely with them at that time and I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of their personalities. I am sure there were many "spirited discussions", therefore I would take their characterizations of others with "a grain of salt".' Lewis E. Entz commented likewise in an email to the author (20 May 2004): 'The Histories of ELWA are somewhat different if "according to Steely" or "according to Thiessen". I would guess the truth lies somewhere in between. Steely was there for a strictly spiritual ministry, not hardware. Thus was not fully appreciated at ELWA. He transferred to Nigeria and there carried on a fruitful and satisfying ministry.' Entz was an engineer with ELWA from 1959 to 1968.

<sup>18</sup> Steely, 'Founding of ELWA'. Thiessen about this trip: 'We were able to send our first missionary'. He seemed to purposely downplay the role of Watkins. Thiessen, 'Beginnings of ELWA', p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> In 1982 SIM came to mean Society of International Ministries, and in 2000 it came to mean Servants in Mission. According to Bob Arnold in an email to the author (2 May 2003), in 1964 SIM had approximately 1300 missionaries in Africa and was the largest non-denominational mission society in the world. See also Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, 1979, first edition 1964), p. 459.

<sup>20</sup> Speech of a certain Mr. Pryor of SIM, held during a conference of Christian Action for the Radio in Africa (CARA) in Stellenbosch, South Africa (10-12 August 1962). See 'Radio ELWA in Africa: It's Message and Ministry', in *Pro Veritate* (Vol. 1 No. 5, 1962), p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Hansjörg Biener's *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 153. Bliss in an email to the author (1 May 2004).

on his way back to the USA, to spend some time in Liberia to help WABA to find the right plot of land. SIM's field director for Nigeria, C. Gordon Beacham, who had been with SIM in Nigeria since 1916, joined them and together they found 180 acres of jungle southwest of Monrovia, bordering on the coast.<sup>22</sup>

WABA's lack of money was made up for by their measure of faith. According to Thiessen, they 'prayed that God would move upon the Liberian government officials causing them to give us this property as a land grant. God answered prayer and this was exactly the action taken by the Liberian legislature'. They also received a duty-free concession from the Liberian government, making it possible to take radio equipment into the country without paying any duties.<sup>23</sup>

### 7.1.1.3 Final Preparations and First Broadcasts: 1952-1955

In 1951 SIM had begun to take an interest in WABA and in January 1952 WABA and ELWA became part of SIM.<sup>24</sup> Those involved in ELWA who wanted to go to Liberia, were obliged to formally apply to SIM as missionaries.

Every few months, new personnel would arrive in Monrovia with new equipment for the construction of the radio station.<sup>25</sup> A decade after WABA began, Thiessen wrote that during those early days, he 'began to understand that our decisions could not be dollar decisions. [...] Having determined the will of God, we must take the step of faith to begin the impossible and then watch God do the miracle. We began to learn that what God orders, He pays for'.<sup>26</sup>

Steely went to Liberia in August 1952. Together with Watkins he supervised the clearing of the jungle. In order to repair some roads, Watkins convinced Liberian government-related construction workers to deliver the necessary materials. The deal was shady Steely remembered and 'eventually we got caught out and fined about US\$800 and were threatened with being deported.' As a result, during that year when Guy W. Playfair, SIM's general-director, visited Liberia, Steely and some others discussed the issue with him. Playfair decided to send Beacham to take over the management of ELWA.<sup>27</sup>

While construction was still going on, Edman visited the site in Monrovia. He wrote about that visit, two years after his students had shared their dream for missionary radio for Africa:

I have seen it with my own eyes. Last month I visited the ELWA missionaries who are pioneering for Christ in radio for West Africa. I was with them in their homes, I traveled over the road which they had cut through the jungle to the site of ELWA; I saw the completed generator building and the foundation for the control room as well as many other details of the program. While there I remember the day when ELWA was just a dream, rather a vision, and a burden shared by a few undergraduates on Wheaton campus, I remember the afternoon they came into my office

<sup>22</sup> Bliss in an email to the author (1 May 2004). Thiessen, 'Beginnings of ELWA', p. 3. Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>23</sup> Thiessen, 'Beginnings of ELWA', p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Steely, 'Founding of ELWA'.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Steely, 'Founding of ELWA'.

for a conference and prayer on the subject. How impossible, even preposterous it seemed at that moment and already it is a reality!<sup>28</sup>

On 18 January 1954, ELWA began broadcasting. The first program was in English and included an introduction to the Händel's *Hallelujah* chorus by Dick Reed, one of ELWA's founders.<sup>29</sup> There were some introductions by Bill Thompson, who would later be the director of ELWA. Scripture readings were done by Steely, a dedicatory prayer was said by Beacham, Watkins made some remarks, and finally, the program finished with the singing of *Great is Thy Faithfulness* by Reed. The dedication service of ELWA was on 6 May 1954. President Tubman was present at the ceremonies. Thiessen spoke and explained that ELWA had not come to Africa to bring another religion but to bring a Person, 'for Christianity is a Person'.<sup>30</sup> In the dedication broadcast, Watkins gave an introduction, Beacham spoke some welcoming words, and Playfair spoke on the mission of ELWA.<sup>31</sup> The American missionaries led the event. The Liberians present were spectators.

A few weeks later Steely was told that his services were not needed at ELWA. He had hoped to preach and teach on radio but according to Steely, ELWA only wanted 'local national speakers and some American well known preachers'.<sup>32</sup> The management of ELWA in Monrovia consisted of North Americans but the people responsible for the actual programs were mainly Africans. How seriously ELWA took its decision to produce indigenous programs can be assessed from a statement by Reginald Kennedy, a former journalist with Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) in Addis Ababa and FEBA. In 1979 he wrote that ELWA had 'an indigenous sound not heard on other missionary stations'. At that time, ELWA broadcast in 46 languages and it had only two non-Africans amongst their program producers in Monrovia.<sup>33</sup>

During its first year, ELWA aired the Gospel over a one kiloWatt (kW) Mediumwave (MW) transmitter during 3½ hours each day, to a limited listening audience in and around Monrovia. During the first six months, the only antenna used was a horizontal wire stretched between two aluminium towers. Radio Engineer Henry Hungerpillar arrived in Liberia in May 1954 and within a month, together with Watkins and Thompson, erected the first 240-foot antenna, which became

<sup>28</sup> Thiessen, 'Beginnings of ELWA', p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Dick and Jane Reed had joined WABA when Watkins returned from Liberia with the permit for broadcasting. Reed had studied at Wheaton College after having served in The Philippines and Japan with the American Navy. See Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Thiessen, 'Beginnings of ELWA', p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Jon Shea in an email to the author (10 June 2004). Shea worked with ELWA from 1964, initially in the broadcast engineering department and after 1982 in administration.

<sup>32</sup> Steely, 'Founding of ELWA'. Steely went to Nigeria where he taught Bible, Greek and Hebrew until he retired in 1977. According to Bliss 'missionaries often spoke on ELWA, [but] I don't recall any who had that as their primary assignment in English with the exception of Howard O. Jones, who as a black American, fit right into the Liberian culture.' Bliss in an email to the author (1 May 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Reginald Kennedy, 'The Word Senders: A Personal Assessment of the Work of the Major Protestant, Evangelical Missionary Radio Stations' (n.p., 1980), p. 32 of chapter 2. This unpublished reflection on the Christian broadcasters was found in the library of the World Alliance for Christian Communication (WACC), document A302.

operational on 18 November 1954.<sup>34</sup> In March 1955, a ten kW transmitter was installed for Shortwave (SW) broadcasts.<sup>35</sup>

### 7.1.2 Arabic Broadcasts: 1956-1990

#### 7.1.2.1 Pioneering Stage: 1956-1959

In 1954, when ELWA began to discuss installing a ten kW transmitter, Arabic became one of the target languages. For ELWA, the choice of broadcasting Arabic Gospel programs to North Africa was a logical one. SIM had adopted English, French and Arabic as primary languages, as those were the main languages in Africa. In the 1950s about 60 million Africans, comprising 25 percent of that continent, spoke Arabic. For SIM, mainly working in Sub-Saharan Africa, Arabic was also relevant because of the Islamic missionary influence of North Africa on Central Africa.<sup>36</sup>

ELWA approached missionaries of SIM and other organizations to find Arabs for its broadcasts. Instead of trying to enlist missionaries, some of whom undoubtedly spoke Arabic rather fluently, the only speakers in the ELWA programs were native Arabs. Reed had written several letters to the Egypt General Mission (EGM) and the Nile Mission Press (NMP), both in Egypt. 'Both of these groups are interested in helping us to find Arabic language broadcasts', Reed reported in February 1955.<sup>37</sup> During a Programming Meeting in April, 'Adlî Fam Fanûs and Ibrâhîm Sa'îd, both from Egypt, were mentioned as potential contacts for developing Arabic broadcasts.<sup>38</sup> Fam, a member of a Brethren Assembly in Cairo, was the principal of the English Mission College in Cairo, and would later work with Trans World Radio (TWR) in Beirut, Monte Carlo and the USA. Sa'îd was the first pastor of Egypt's largest Presbyterian church in downtown Cairo, called *Qaşr al-Dubârah*.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Henry Hungerpillar in an email to the author (18 May 2004). Hunderpillar spoke of 4½ hours of broadcasts each day during the first few months. Jane Reed wrote in 1968 that these were 3½ hours, from 11:00-12:00 AM and 6:00-9:30 PM. See Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, p. 63.

<sup>35</sup> Ray G. de la Haye, 'A Report from ELWA Radio Village' (2 October 1963), p. 1, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, The Beginnings 1956-1969. Bliss in an email to the author (1 May 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Transcript of Meetings (10 and 11 May 1966), p. 6. Untitled document from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>37</sup> 'Programming Meeting' (21 February 1955), p. 3, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes 1954-1962. EGM was forced to leave Egypt in 1956 due to the Suez War. See the unpublished MA thesis for All Nations Christian College of Phil Bourne, 'Creating the Right Impression: Western Christian Perceptions of Mission Structures with Reference to Middle East Christian Outreach' (n.p., 1995), pp. 13-14.

<sup>38</sup> 'Programming Meeting' (25 April 1955), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes 1954-1962. The files of EGM in the United Kingdom did not contain any reference to contacts with ELWA about radio production. As EGM mission personnel were forced to leave Egypt in 1956 with one suitcase per person only, the files with correspondence of the organization in Egypt were most probably destroyed. EGM's leader, Aubrey Whitehouse, left for Lebanon where he became involved in radio production. Phil Bourne in emails to the author (25 October 2004 and 2 November 2004).

<sup>39</sup> Ibrâhîm Sa'îd began building that church in 1948, and was its only pastor until his death in 1970.

The minutes of the Programming Meeting of February 1955 mentioned a SIM missionary in Aden who could become involved in producing programs. 'Jack Maxson of SIM, Aden, is ready to help us with his domestic recorder. We shall arrange for a supply of tapes to be sent to him. There is a Christian Arab there in Aden who will do the actual preaching'.<sup>40</sup> This Christian Arab was Khalil Ma'rûf. Fred 'Bud' Acord, another SIM missionary in the city, also became involved in the productions, as well as Muḥammad 'Alî, an Adeni convert.<sup>41</sup> By the end of 1956, ELWA was receiving its first Arabic programs from Ma'rûf. He produced the whole Arabic Talking Book, a complete audio version of the New Testament, in his home.<sup>42</sup>

In 1956 ELWA began with some broadcasts in Arabic. The focus of these broadcasts was initially Sudan and Southern Arabia where SIM had its own missionaries. Soon ELWA began to also look towards North Africa and the Middle East even though SIM had no personnel there, and even though reception was very weak in those areas. In 1957 ELWA was broadcasting one hour of Arabic programs per day in the evening for a while through its ten kW SW transmitter. In 1958, mainly because of a lack of programs, broadcasts were reduced to four programs of half an hour each week to North Africa on the one hand, and the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula on the other hand.<sup>43</sup>

ELWA urgently looked for potential program producers, and by doing so, the organization propelled Bassam Madany of BTGH into his lifelong ministry of radio preaching. After ELWA asked Madany in 1957 to supply it with programs, he was able in August 1958 to send them his first 13 programs of 15 minutes.<sup>44</sup> During that same period, ELWA was also able to convince North Africa Mission (NAM) to begin program production.<sup>45</sup>

During a certain period in 1958, ELWA was not able to broadcast more than 15 minutes of Arabic programs per week. These were Madany's programs.<sup>46</sup> Jane Reed, one of the pioneers in Monrovia, wrote that this weekly program was the

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<sup>40</sup> 'Programming Meeting' (21 February 1955), p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Abe Thiessen, 'Report on Recording Studio for Arabic in the Middle East' (4 May 1960), pp. 1-2, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972. Letter of Bud Acord to Dr. R.J. Davis (30 June 1969), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972. This Muḥammad was living in High Barnet (England) in 1969. Acord had worked with SIM in Sudan since 1951, where he did his language studies before moving to Aden.

<sup>42</sup> From a document titled 'Statistics' (26 December 1956), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes 1954-1962. This document also mentioned that ELWA received Arabic tapes from England, but it was not possible to find the source of those programs. Letter of Bud Acord to Mr. Ohman (24 July 1961), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1968, Aden Studio. The Arabic Talking Book was reproduced by Madany for ELWA as the audio quality was too low.

<sup>43</sup> Untitled document (1957) from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes 1954-1962..

<sup>44</sup> 'Program Department Meeting' (21 August 1958), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes 1954-1962. 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'. De la Haye, 'Report from ELWA Radio Village', p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> See chapter 15 on Arab World Ministries (AWM).

<sup>46</sup> 'Program Department Meeting' (25 September 1958), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes 1954-1962..

beginning of ELWA's Arabic work.<sup>47</sup> That was incorrect, though it is fair to say that the first few years of ELWA's Arabic broadcasting were largely experimental. After this period of weekly broadcasts, the Arabic ministry began to stabilize and grow. During its first years, it was difficult for ELWA to have a consistent policy regarding broadcasting slots, as there were hardly any programs in Arabic available. Technical reasons like the weakness of the transmitters and the search for the best direction of the antennas also gave the initial broadcasts an experimental character.

### 7.1.2.2 New Transmitters, Antennas, and Studios: 1960-1963

Due to bad reception in the Arab World, the broadcasts were transferred to a new SW 50 kW transmitter in November 1960.<sup>48</sup> ELWA also erected an antenna for better transmission to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and finished another antenna to service the Middle East and the Peninsula. These improved the reception of the programs.<sup>49</sup>

Throughout the 1960s the broadcasts to the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula were one hour per day. In March 1961, the broadcasts to North Africa became daily.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the early 1960s the North Africa transmissions were 30 minutes per day. The North Africa beam was directed toward Algiers but it could be received on either side of the main beam, and was often best received in Morocco. The Arabic broadcasts were called the *Voice of Forgiveness (Ṣawt al-Ghufrân)*.<sup>51</sup>

The weak audio quality of the initial productions from the SIM-studio in Aden, and the great need of ELWA to obtain more Arabic programs were the two reasons why ELWA stimulated its producers in Aden to work on a more adequate recording

<sup>47</sup> See Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, p. 147.

<sup>48</sup> 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'. De la Haye, 'Report from ELWA Radio Village', p. 1. According to Pryor this 50 kW transmitter was dedicated by Billy Graham when he visited ELWA in January 1960, see 'Radio ELWA in Africa: Its Message and Ministry', p. 8. Billy Graham indeed visited the ELWA compound, but he never dedicated the new transmitter. Before the dedication was to take place, some supporters of SIM felt they could not support Billy Graham. They threatened that if ELWA gave Billy Graham the honour of the big new transmitter dedication, they would no longer support SIM. As a result Billy Graham dedicated the house of his associate evangelist, Howard O. Jones, which was on the ELWA grounds. This was described by Entz in an email to the author (20 May 2004). Entz was present when Billy Graham visited ELWA. Initially ELWA had decided to buy a 20 kW transmitter, but when Bill Caldwell, a missionary with Gospel Recordings in Congo, heard in 1958 that a 50kW transmitter would be much better, he sold \$95,000 worth in stocks and bonds and donated it to ELWA. Email of Dick Reed to Mary Naff (9 February 2004).

<sup>49</sup> For reaching North Africa, a curtain antenna was built. For the Middle East ELWA installed a reversible rhombic antenna. 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'. De la Haye, 'Report from ELWA Radio Village', p. 1. Shea in an email to the author (10 June 2004). 'Technical Department Report' (December 1959), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, The Beginnings 1956-1969. Letter of Max Weber to unknown addressee (30 October 1960), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, The Beginnings 1956-1969. The rhombic antenna is basically a diamond-shaped wire curtain that is made of four wires, each several wavelengths long connected to form a diamond or rhombus shape.

<sup>50</sup> 'Creating Radio Programs for Muslims: Presentation by Bassam Madany: Back to God Hour, U.S.A. Arabic Broadcast', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 54.

<sup>51</sup> Shea in an email to the author (10 June 2004). Len Salisbury in an email to the author (14 May 2003). 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'.

facility. While Acord was on furlough in the USA in 1961, Maxson and Ma'rûf asked for two rooms in the compound of SIM in Aden. Acord advised against that, as it would be a very noisy location. He suggested not accepting less than a 'full fledged, well organized set-up' rather than another temporary arrangement that would lead to the same problems that Ma'rûf had had with background noise.<sup>52</sup> However this was not possible and upon his return to Aden, he worked in the space allotted to him on the SIM compound:

I set up a small studio in a couple of our storage rooms and did what I could, which wasn't much because I didn't have the people to make the programs. Most of our people were Somalis and they didn't have the proper Arabic for the broadcasts.<sup>53</sup>

However, ELWA's leaders in Monrovia were not convinced that a permanent studio was needed in Aden. That was perhaps because of the political tensions in Aden or because they had already decided to open a studio in Beirut.<sup>54</sup>

In 1960 Thiessen traveled through the Horn of Africa and the Middle East to study the possibilities of developing an Arabic production studio. ELWA took the issue of its Arabic broadcasts seriously. Thiessen reported that Egypt was ruled out, probably due to the political course of its President Jamâl 'Abd al-Nâsir and that less than four years earlier, during the Suez War of 1956, most missionaries had been told to leave Egypt.<sup>55</sup> Thiessen also decided against Sudan, as he felt that the situation there was too unstable for building a studio. The Sudanese mail system for sending tapes to Liberia was also unreliable. His visit to Sudan showed Thiessen the need for good Arabic Gospel programs:

We were told and saw for ourselves that Khartoum, Omdurman, and their environs [...] are being flooded with radio sets. [These] people buy radio sets before they buy shoes. We drove through slum areas comprised of thousands of simple mud huts and most of them had radio antenna over them. We saw radios on the street corners with groups gathered around listening. [...] Certainly this affords a great new opportunity for evangelism.<sup>56</sup>

In Eritrea, Somalia, and Jordan, Thiessen met people of SIM and others with a keen interest in Arabic Christian broadcasts. Thiessen's report gives the impression that in Aden he met with Acord and Ma'rûf, but Acord, when later asked about that visit, was adamant that Thiessen never visited Aden.<sup>57</sup> During his trip, everyone advised Thiessen that Beirut would be the ideal location for a studio.<sup>58</sup> He visited Beirut, where he saw the wisdom of that advice.

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<sup>52</sup> Letter of Acord to Ohman (24 July 1961).

<sup>53</sup> Bud Acord in an email to the author (27 May 2003).

<sup>54</sup> Letter of Ray G. de la Haye to Rev. Fred D. Acord (7 August 1961), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1968, Aden Studio.

<sup>55</sup> Abe Thiessen, 'Report', p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2. 'No, Abe Thiessen never came to Aden at any time', according to Bud Acord in an email to the author (27 May 2003).

<sup>58</sup> Thiessen, 'Report', p. 2.



All the Evangelicals who Thiessen met in Beirut, suggested that SIM should set up its own studio there. 'The liberal groups on the other hand were interested in having us cooperate with them', Thiessen reported. He probably referred to Harold A. Fisher of the Near East Christian Council (NECC), whom he met in Beirut and who was constructing a studio there. Thiessen commented that NECC was associated with the World Council of Churches (WCC). For SIM and its constituency this was *anathema*.<sup>59</sup>

Thiessen met Keith Stevenson, an Australian missionary who worked with Gospel Recordings. He was impressed how Stevenson, with two tape recorders and a homemade mixer and a record player, 'has been doing a very fine piece of work under extremely trying circumstances'.<sup>60</sup> Stevenson used his own response address for programs he was supplying to ELWA and he had developed his own Bible Correspondence Course (BCC). He was also personally involved in the follow-up of people from many Arab countries.<sup>61</sup>

Stevenson told Thiessen that he was prepared to hand over the recording work in Arabic to SIM as he felt ELWA had the right emphasis. 'He went all out to offer us everything he could and I was sorry to be able to do no more than tell him we would take all of this under careful and prayerful consideration.'<sup>62</sup> Thiessen returned to the USA, and was enthusiastic about the opportunity to broadcast the Gospel to the Arab World. In his report he wrote:

The only Gospel that enters Arabia today is by way of ELWA. As you may know, radio is Nasser's most powerful weapon, and I am sure it is one of the weapons the Lord has given us in order to reach the Islamic peoples.<sup>63</sup>

Thiessen recommended setting up a new recording studio in Beirut. That should be led by a 'seasoned SIM couple', Arabic speaking and thoroughly trained in recording and production techniques. This was deemed necessary as the location would be far removed from the other SIM fields. 'We would want this work to maintain its own strong SIM stance rather than become too much identified with some of the groups there.' Thiessen thought that the only suitable man he could think of for setting up a studio in Beirut was Bob Hellwege whom he had met in Khartoum where Hellwege had served with SIM since 1950.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Letter of A.G. Thiessen to R.G. de la Haye (4 May 1960), p. 3, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>61</sup> Douglas Anderson in an email to the author (30 May 2003) wrote that Stevenson had served in the Australian forces in the Middle East and returned to the Arabian Peninsula soon after the end of World War II. He became engaged in itinerant evangelism in Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. After he married a Canadian missionary they settled in Beirut, where Stevenson formed the Near East and Arabian Mission, which recruited a few missionaries for Lebanon. Stevenson had close links with the West German *Karmel Mission*, which produced Arabic literature that was aimed at Muslims.

<sup>62</sup> Letter of Thiessen to De la Haye (4 May 1960) p. 3. Thiessen wrote that Stevenson was 'a dear brother, and we had wonderful fellowship with him, and I am satisfied that he is doing a fine work which is truly blessed of God [but] he is extremely difficult to work with and it would be folly for us to be linked up with him in any way'.

<sup>63</sup> Thiessen, 'Report', p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

### 7.1.2.3 Beirut Studio under Hellwege: 1963-1966

In 1963 Hellwege moved to Beirut, initially assuming that he would use a production facility that TWR was developing. However, after they arrived, Hellwege began his own studio on the top floor of a two-bedroom apartment in the Sabtîyah area of Beirut. Probably TWR did not have a functional studio yet. ELWA's studio was not far from the place where the Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) had a large institute including a recording studio.<sup>65</sup> At that time, the Near East Baptist Mission (NEBM) of the Southern Baptist denomination from the USA, also had a radio production facility in Beirut.

Peter and Pam Cousin later criticized the Christian studios in Beirut for, in some respects, behaving more as competitive businesses than as church or mission.<sup>66</sup> That criticism is not wholly warranted as 'church or mission' could hardly be used as examples of *better* cooperation. The studios in Beirut were extensions of denominations and mission organizations and behaved as their owners wanted. Besides that, there was a measure of formal and informal cooperation. One example of formal cooperation is that these studios together formed the Middle East Communication Fellowship (MECF), where ideas and program concepts were discussed. With the weight of MECF behind them, some participants were able to buy airtime from the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in the 1970s. In MECF, the Middle East Lutheran Mission (MELM), which was the producer of *The Lutheran Hour* (TLH), NECC and NEBM cooperated, while TWR, ELWA and FEBA were loosely aligned.<sup>67</sup>

Salim Tannous moved from the ELWA studio in Liberia to Beirut in 1963 to participate in the work of the new studio. When in 1966 his new-born son died in hospital, he and his wife Virginia resigned and returned to the USA. Tannous continued to work as a program producer for ELWA. Hellwege also resigned in 1966 and was replaced by Acord.<sup>68</sup>

### 7.1.2.4 Beirut Studio under Acord: 1966-1969

In the summer of 1966, Acord moved to Beirut where he was in charge of the studio for four years.<sup>69</sup> His tenure was foundational for ELWA's approach in the years to come. He was available to relocate to Beirut as he had closed his studio in Aden

<sup>65</sup> 'The director of Trans World Radio [...] offered their facilities to S.I.M. Our leaders feel we should go ahead with this. Bob Hellwege has moved to Beirut to use TWR studios.' See 'Program Department Minutes' (25 June 1963), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, ELWA Program Department Minutes 1963-1969. *Sabtîyah* means *belonging to Saturday*, i.e., owned by the SDAs, as they owned the area's hilltop where they had their buildings.

<sup>66</sup> Peter and Pam Cousins, *The Power of the Air: The Achievement and Future of Missionary Radio* (London, 1978), p. 135. Acord in an email to the author (27 May 2003). Fred D. Acord, 'The Current Status of Radio Broadcasting to Muslim Peoples', in Don M. McCurry (ed), *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium* (Monrovia, 1979), p. 382.

<sup>67</sup> For more on this, see chapter 16 on MECC.

<sup>68</sup> Dick Reed in a letter to the author (3 June 2004). According to Reed, Tannous came from Lebanon to the USA, where he attended Bible College in Colorado. Tannous made many Lebanese friends in Liberia. He wanted to be placed in Beirut as he felt he needed to live in the midst of Arab culture in order to produce good programs.

<sup>69</sup> Bob Arnold in an email to the author (2 May 2003). Acord in an email to the author (27 May 2003). 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'.

in September 1965 due to the dangerous situation that had developed due to the war in Yemen:

We are closing down the studio – in fact the whole [mission post]. The political situation has gone from bad to worse until there is nothing but a reign of terror here. We are under dusk to dawn curfew and the British are holding on through brute force. A British patrol was shot at last night in front of our building and we're under the threat of a bombing. [...] I am sending all our radio correspondence plus files [...] to Hellwege and Tannous.<sup>70</sup>

ELWA considered its Beirut studio the continuation of the one that was originally located in Aden.<sup>71</sup> One of the main co-workers of Acord was *shaykh* Nūr al-Dīn al-Shirākī. He was a converted Lebanese Muslim, whose father was a Muslim leader. Al-Shirākī was trained to be a teacher of Islam at the Azhar University in Cairo. During his studies he became a Christian. Al-Shirākī was considered staff by ELWA but he was also closely linked to Walter Wasserman's *Karmel Mission* (KM) from Stuttgart (West Germany).<sup>72</sup> Al-Shirākī worked with Wasserman on BCCs and during the Lebanese civil war he accompanied him to KM's head quarters in Stuttgart. He worked there during part of the war but was murdered in his home in Beirut during the last stages of that war.<sup>73</sup>

The programs produced in Beirut were sent to Monrovia by airmail where they were prepared for putting on air by Suhail Zarifa who did that work in Monrovia from 1966 onwards.<sup>74</sup> Zarifa was a Palestinian born in the Gaza Strip into a Greek-Orthodox family. He committed his life to Christ in 1959 in the Baptist Mission in Gaza. He became a regular listener of ELWA, in spite of the difficult reception of the broadcasts at that time. Zarifa earned a Bachelor's degree in Dental Medicine and Surgery in 1961 from the University of Alexandria in Egypt. In that city he participated in the evangelistic movement Salvation of Souls (*Khalâṣ al-Nufûs*). After finishing his study, he worked briefly with the United Nations in Gaza.<sup>75</sup> He applied to SIM and was accepted by ELWA after having studied at Vancouver Bible Institute in Canada. Zarifa worked with ELWA from 1966 to 1976. He divided his time between the production of Arabic programs on culture and health as well

<sup>70</sup> Letter of Bud Acord to Dick Reed and/or Ray de la Haye (22 September 1965), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1968, Aden Studio.

<sup>71</sup> 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'.

<sup>72</sup> It was not possible to get information about *Karmel Mission* from the organization itself as it preferred to maintain silence for the sake of its ongoing work in the Arab World.

<sup>73</sup> Len and Helen Salisbury, 'Our Memories'. Already in 1970, it was reported that 'Nura Din's [sic] life [was] in jeopardy every day'. As ELWA used a female Jordanian office manager in 1970, she and al-Shirākī had to be 'kept apart so that the Sheik does not appear to work under the direction of a woman'. 'Beirut Permanent File' (5 August 1970), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Department Head Meetings 1967-1972.

<sup>74</sup> Part of an unidentifiable document, from Archives ELWA/SIM, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Department Head Meetings 1967-1972. Salisbury in an email to the author (14 May 2003). 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'.

<sup>75</sup> 'Transcript of Meetings', p. 5.

as supporting the studio in Beirut in the mornings and working in a dental clinic in the afternoons.<sup>76</sup>

After the June 1967 war in the Middle East, when Acord was evacuated from Lebanon, he advised closure of the work in Beirut altogether because of the political tension in Lebanon and in the Middle East in general. He wanted to move the whole operation to Monrovia. Acord believed that the country was walking 'a tight rope between Christianity and Muslims. If the Muslims ever take over [...] this type of work would be surely limited, if not completely cut off'.<sup>77</sup> Acord also mentioned the cost of the studio as a reason for closing down, as well as the fact that the studio had no legal registration.<sup>78</sup>

SIM was not open to Acord's ideas. Raymond J. Davis, the general director of SIM, wrote: 'Our people are living in conditions and circumstances of tension in a number of places and are not planning to evacuate.'<sup>79</sup> Acord may have been more sensitive to the tensions in Lebanon than most others in those years as he had experienced a civil war in Aden and had been forced to leave that city under dangerous circumstances.

Toward the end of the 1960s, ELWA toyed with the possibility of a Lebanese Christian national becoming a member of SIM and operating the studio.<sup>80</sup> Davis, who had been in Beirut, did not like the idea. 'What I learned through talking with local church leaders during my [...] visits would not lead me to think there were any churches who could do this.' The main concern mentioned was factionalism.<sup>81</sup> The Lebanese Christians working with ELWA were deemed 'very useful [and] entirely trustworthy but probably not yet sufficiently capable of running the studio on their own.'<sup>82</sup>

In Monrovia, Zarifa spoke against the idea of phasing out the Beirut studio. Both for productions and for reception reports, Acord's presence in Beirut was deemed necessary. Zarifa, like Davis, felt that tension in the area was not a good reason to leave and besides which, there were not enough Lebanese co-workers

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<sup>76</sup> Arnold in an email to the author (2 May 2003). Suhail Zarifa in an email to the author (29 April 2004).

<sup>77</sup> Letter of Fred Acord to ELWA in Monrovia (6 November 1968) as quoted in a document titled 'Questions for Mr. Davis to Investigate in Beirut', which was sent to Davis by Perry L. Draper (24 March 1969), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>78</sup> Mentioned in a letter of Draper to Davis (24 March 1969). Draper wrote to Davis that 'tension is nothing new to the Middle East, [...] our financial statements do not indicate any undue expense in producing broadcasts, and [...] there is a great deal of local Christian talent that can and should be employed in the production of Gospel programs'. Draper attached a list of questions to study the situation in Lebanon, and asked Davis to visit Beirut to assess the situation. In early June 1969 Davis eventually visited Beirut.

<sup>79</sup> Letter of R. J. Davis to Rev. Perry L. Draper (4 April 1969), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>80</sup> Letter of Perry L. Draper to Dr. Ray J. Davis (14 May 1969), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>81</sup> Letter of Davis to Draper (4 April 1969).

<sup>82</sup> Letter of R. J. Davis to Rev. W. G. Crouch (14 June 1969) p. 3, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972..

available. ‘The concept of the “full-time Christian worker” is almost non-existent in Lebanon’, Zarifa concluded.<sup>83</sup>

ELWA’s inability to find personnel to whom it could entrust its studio after it had been working in Beirut for four years should be seen in the light of ELWA’s organizational and financial structures. SIM missionaries had to raise their own support and the organization did not have large general funds to pay for local Arabic staff. If Arabs wanted to become SIM missionaries they were required to complete theological training in North America, find a supporting church and regularly go on furlough to raise their support. Zarifa had followed that route, but not many Arabs could or would be prepared to do the same. This financial arrangement of SIM was detrimental to the Arabization of its staff and its management.<sup>84</sup>

### 7.1.2.5 Beirut Studio under Salisbury: 1970-1975

#### *Salisbury and his Personnel*

In August 1970 Len Salisbury from Australia took over the management of the studio from Acord. Salisbury had been in Beirut from 1965 to 1969 with the Lebanese Evangelical Mission (LEM). During those years he was loaned to TWR for six months to do the wiring of their new studio and he volunteered one Saturday each month servicing ELWA’s studio. In 1969 he went back to Australia and married. In 1970 he returned to Beirut with his wife Helen and became the manager of the ELWA studio as they had become missionaries with SIM.<sup>85</sup> Helen later described some of the difficulties encountered in the job:

It was a daunting task set before us. Len had little training in producing programs and listener follow-up. There was one young Lebanese girl to do the main part of writing and voicing of programs, plus do listener follow-up. The only other person was shared between the Carmel Mission and us and was doing part time writing and speaking programs for us. Len was to do the entire recording and putting the programs together, plus direct and administer the whole ministry. We were expected to produce some 22-quarter hour programs a week to be broadcast from ELWA to North Africa and the Middle East, and limited to a very small budget and unreliable equipment. We could expect little direct help from ELWA due to distance and the slowness of communication. Our main method of communication was by typed letters, which had at least a six-week turn around.<sup>86</sup>

During his first year Salisbury moved the studio. Salisbury’s friendship with Dawûd Talîl, the director of the Lebanese Evangelical Society (LES), which was the national partner of LEM, enabled ELWA to lease two apartments that Talîl owned in the Ḥadath district of Beirut. The Salisbury’s lived in one of these apartments while they built a more permanent studio on the roof. The other apart-

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<sup>83</sup> ‘Report of Meeting to Discuss Beirut Situation’ (16 March 1969) from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>84</sup> Len Salisbury in an email to the author (19 September 2005).

<sup>85</sup> Salisbury in an email to the author (14 May 2003). Salisbury, ‘Our Memories’. Len Salisbury in an email to the author (19 September 2005).

<sup>86</sup> Salisbury, ‘Our Memories’.

ment was used as a temporary studio and office.<sup>87</sup> In 2003, they wrote about that period:

This meant a lot of work for Len who had to dismantle the Sabtiyyi [sic] studio and move everything to new premises and construct the temporary studio and build the new studio. We were working with very limited financial resources, which meant we had to personally do the majority of the work. But we were young and full of zeal for the Lord and the ministry in those days and it was not an insurmountable chore. Len did not have the expertise to build studios but he gathered as much information as he could and part of the structure was built. Due to the lack of cash and time, the studio was not finished until FEBA took over [in 1975] and finished it and it became a very good studio and was used until a rocket later in the civil war destroyed it.<sup>88</sup>

In 1970, when Salisbury took over from Acord, he also took over the only two staff members. One of those was Talil, the other was a young woman whose father worked in the TWR studio.<sup>89</sup> This woman provided the follow-up to listener letters and wrote and recorded some programs. She continued with ELWA until December 1970. Soon thereafter Salisbury hired new co-workers in Shadi and Selwa Habib.<sup>90</sup>

Habib was a Palestinian, born in Haifa in 1943. His Protestant parents fled to Jordan when Israel occupied their hometown in 1948. They later settled in Damascus where Habib grew up. He graduated from Damascus University with a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Social Sciences.<sup>91</sup>

From 1968 to 1970 Habib had been responsible for the Arabic BCC's of the Lighthouse (*Manârah*) Christian Book Store in Beirut. In 1970 he worked for six months with MELM as a scriptwriter. Since his voice was not deemed clear enough for radio, MELM did not offer him the salary he needed for maintaining a family.<sup>92</sup> That was important as Habib married Selwa in 1970 in Beirut. She was raised in an Orthodox Christian home in Damascus.<sup>93</sup>

In 1971, Habib began working part-time with KM as well as with ELWA. In KM, Habib produced small booklets with testimonies of Muslim converts. Within a year the work for ELWA became full time. Selwa was able to study Arabic literature at the University of Lebanon, which helped her in scriptwriting for radio.<sup>94</sup> They worked together as a team in program production and in audience follow-up:

Because of a speech defect Shadi was unable to speak on air, so in desperation, [Salisbury] asked if his wife, Selwa would be willing to voice some of the programs Shadi was writing. Her first programs were woeful and [Salisbury] began to

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Derek Knell by the author (13 August 2003). Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>90</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'. The names Shadi and Selwa Habib are pseudonyms.

<sup>91</sup> Shadi Habib, 'Profile: Shadi & Selwa Habib, Arabic Broadcasting Service in Cooperation with HCJB world radio' (n.p., n.d.), given to the author by Shadi Habib (9 September 2003).

<sup>92</sup> Shadi Habib in an email to the author (13 September 2003).

<sup>93</sup> Habib, 'Profile: Shadi & Selwa Habib'.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. Habib in an email to the author (13 September 2003).

despair, wondering if she would ever improve, but eventually, as she gained confidence, she became a most valued and competent producer. Although Shadi thought his lisp was too pronounced, he was later willing to try doing recording and we found the lisp was not noticeable. He has been going to air ever since! Both Selwa and Shadi became the main stays in the ministry and [Salisbury] trained Shadi in radio production and recording, and they were both involved in the follow-up of listeners.<sup>95</sup>

Because of financial restraints, Salisbury was unable to pay more people to produce programs 'so the Lord enabled us to do what people thought was impossible; to have people to come in on a voluntary basis to do programming. When FEBA was looking into taking over the ministry, it was commented that despite the studio being run on a shoestring budget, the work was very effective.' One of the volunteers was Juwânnâ Abû Raḥmah. She and her husband Maṣṣûr had worked with a business in Liberia and were friends with many of the ELWA personnel there. When they returned to Lebanon, Juwânnâ worked one day each week in program production and follow-up.<sup>96</sup>

One problem that the staff of ELWA in Beirut faced in the early 1970s was their association with MECF. According to Salisbury, TWR and ELWA found they needed to withdraw from participation in MECF because its chairman, Dennis Hilgendorf of MELM, was 'misrepresenting' their work in the *International Christian Broadcaster* (ICB) magazine. 'As [MECF] was formed by the former SIM studio director, I had to consult with my superiors', Salisbury remembered. Problematic too was that Thiessen had begun ICB, and he was also the writer of the article that had created the trouble. The presence of NECC in MECF seems to have been the most sensitive issue for ELWA.<sup>97</sup>

The matter was discussed in Monrovia during a Radio Division Meeting in September 1971, and the decision taken was that 'Salisbury in Beirut should feel free to disassociate himself from the Fellowship if in his judgement the association is detrimental to the name and ministry of ELWA and the SIM'.<sup>98</sup> FEBA would later attend the meetings as an observer, without becoming a member. Habib remembered that after the studio of ELWA was taken over by FEBA, he and his wife, together with Derek Knell and Yola Patio did participate in some of the meetings.<sup>99</sup>

In 1970, ELWA hoped to enlist some Egyptian Christians for work in the studio in Beirut. Fu'âd Salwâ of *Khalâṣ al-Nufûs* in Alexandria was invited to come and work in Beirut. The options were to either migrate to the USA or Canada and become formal SIM missionaries, or to be sent as missionaries by *Khalâṣ al-Nufûs* directly. Zarifa hoped for that last option to work, probably because of the need to have Salwâ as quickly as possible in Beirut. 'I told him that ELWA's ultimate goal is to hand over the responsibility of the radio ministry to the societies, meaning

<sup>95</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'. In this quote the names Selwa and Shadi have been inserted to replace their actual names.

<sup>96</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>97</sup> Salisbury in emails to the author (16 and 17 December 2003).

<sup>98</sup> 'Radio Division Meeting' (4 October 1971), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Department Head Meetings 1967-1972.

<sup>99</sup> Habib in an email to the author (16 December 2003).

that Khalas El Nofos [sic] will provide the personnel for production of programs [...] there', Zarifa reported in August 1970 to the Arabic Department Meeting in Monrovia.<sup>100</sup> Zarifa probably used his personal network of relationships to enlist Salwá, as he had been part of the Alexandrian congregation of *Khalâş al-Nufûs*. The plans with Salwá did not work out, however.

### ***Handover of the Studio to FEBA***

From 1971 to 1975, the Beirut Studio of ELWA not only produced programs for its own broadcasts, but it also delivered programs to FEBA for broadcasting from The Seychelles. FEBA was not producing its own Arabic programs at that stage.<sup>101</sup>

FEBA had hoped to attract different organizations to buy airtime and broadcast their programs, but ELWA was the only organization interested to use the airtime FEBA had available. ELWA originally asked for a daily timeslot of 30 minutes, but eventually agreed to take full responsibility for one hour per day, which was the complete Arabic program on FEBA.<sup>102</sup> ELWA could not pay what FEBA hoped to receive for the airtime, but FEBA accepted that. Rolen Cornelius, the acting radio manager of ELWA, wrote to FEBA's program director Geoffrey Cook that he was 'greatly touched and encouraged by [Cook's] willingness to assist in financing these Arabic broadcasts. Yes, we are in the process of trying to get off the ground a program of sponsorship for [the] Arabic language broadcasts.'<sup>103</sup> The close cooperation was exemplified in Salisbury who became FEBA's Middle East coordinator, besides heading up the studio on behalf of ELWA.<sup>104</sup>

In 1971, ELWA was broadcasting one hour each day to the Middle East and the Peninsula and two hours to North Africa from Monrovia. During that year, ELWA decided to de-emphasize the broadcasts to the Middle East and the Peninsula, and to concentrate more on North Africa.<sup>105</sup> The arrangement to produce the content for FEBA's broadcasts to the Middle East had this in mind from the beginning. 'The Seychelles agreement has been approved. [...] This will eventually replace the Middle East broadcast from ELWA' according to minutes of 18 October 1971 of the Radio Staff Meeting in Monrovia.<sup>106</sup> In December 1971, after the Arabic

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<sup>100</sup> 'Arabic Department Meeting' (3 August 1970), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972. The name 'Fouad Salwa' occurs in these files, The name Salwa is an unlikely name for a man.

<sup>101</sup> Arnold in an email to the author (2 May 2003). 'A letter from Beirut indicates that two hours daily is to be allotted to Gospel programming in Arabic over The Seychelles station. So far ELWA is the only organization indicating interest in filling these slots', in 'Radio Briefing Session' (4 November 1970), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Radio Briefing Session Minutes 1969-1971.

<sup>102</sup> 'Arabic Department Meeting' (3 August 1970). During that meeting, Acord wanted his opinion minuted that ELWA should aim for five hours of programming each day, both over FEBA to the Middle East, and over ELWA Liberia to North Africa

<sup>103</sup> Letter of Rolen Cornelius to Geoffrey W. Cook (22 June 1971), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Schedules 1968-1972.

<sup>104</sup> Salisbury in an email to the author (14 May 2003). Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with an anonymous radio producer in the brochure *Lebanon on the Highway* (n.p., 1971), p. 55. This brochure was the second part of the Focus on LEM series.

<sup>106</sup> 'Radio Staff Meeting' (18 October 1971), p. 2, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Department Head Meetings 1967-1972.



broadcasts on FEBA had begun, the heads of the Radio Division Department in Monrovia discussed that the Middle East and Peninsula broadcasts of ELWA would continue at least three months, until it was sure that FEBA's broadcasting went well.<sup>107</sup>

This decision to discontinue broadcasting to the Middle East and the Peninsula was affirmed by the bad reception of some test broadcasts that were conducted in 1972. For that reason, Madany decided to no longer broadcast his programs for the Middle East and the Peninsula on ELWA, but on FEBA only. For ELWA that must have come as an unpleasant shock. Madany had been producing programs for ELWA for 15 years and BTGH had always paid for its airtime. The daily broadcasts from Monrovia to the Middle East were finally discontinued in March 1973 due mainly to a lack of finances. At this time ELWA experienced difficulty in even maintaining its existent broadcasts, so investing in the much needed dramatic overhaul of its transmitters and antennas was not a possibility.<sup>108</sup> ELWA however continued to supply FEBA with the programs it needed for its broadcasts to the Middle East.<sup>109</sup>

From March 1973 ELWA broadcast three hours per day to North Africa, primarily in Arabic although French was used as well. These three hours were comprised of 90 minutes in the morning and these were repeated in the evening. Because of ELWA's financial predicament they also discussed decreasing the broadcast time to North Africa. Zarifa convinced ELWA not to cut the broadcasts to North Africa because of their unique situation in that part of the Arab World:

The Arabic ministry is probably the only one that is almost paying for itself. [...] I believe that His provision is a sign of approval on this ministry. Let us not apply the scissors equally on all languages. [...] This field is a needy one and I could venture to say that it is perhaps the neediest of all. And since the Lord is providing for the Arabic ministry financially, all I am asking is to keep it the way it is. [...] This is the only voice that brings salvation to thousands of our listeners so let us not cut back on this. [As] for North Africa ELWA is His witness to the people.<sup>110</sup>

George W. Thomas, acting area director of SIM, together with Zarifa, visited the Beirut studio in December 1973, and concluded that ELWA had to decide to either close the studio, 'foregoing further investment and avoiding more embarrassing commitments' or ELWA should further invest in money, staff, program development and Arabic follow-up involvement. He advised at the same time not to eliminate the Arabic outreach, 'particularly to North Africa'.<sup>111</sup> During that same

<sup>107</sup> 'Radio Division Department Heads Meeting' (7 December 1971), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Department Head Meetings 1967-1972.

<sup>108</sup> Salisbury in an email to the author (19 September 2005).

<sup>109</sup> Memo of Suhail Zarifa to George Thomas and Bart Bliss (18 May 1973), from the SIM Archives, Suhail Zarifa Personal File.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. 'ELWA Transmission Schedule (External Only)' (13 March 1972), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 24, Broadcasting Division, Audience Survey Statistical 1955-1972.

<sup>111</sup> Letter of George W. Thomas to R. J. Davis (28 December 1973), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1988, Arabic Program Beirut, 1973-1976.

visit, they also investigated whether a national church in Beirut could take over the studio, but to no avail.<sup>112</sup>

John Wheatley, field director of FEBA, wrote to Zarifa in January 1974 that the cost of broadcasting would have to be increased. FEBA was installing a new 100 kW SW transmitter, and therefore the cost per 15 minutes went up by almost 50 percent. FEBA wanted US\$7.50 per 15 minutes as from 1 December 1974.<sup>113</sup> Bart Bliss, the external services director of ELWA at that time, responded in February 1974:

While I am sympathetic to what you feel are valid factors indicating a price rise, I have to inform you that an analysis of our Arabic broadcasting is in progress. We must be convinced anew whether we can or should continue such a major investment. [...] We have suddenly been hit from all sides with dramatic expense increases. [...] With a deficit budget for the past three years, we are operating outside of God's provision, which cannot continue.<sup>114</sup>

In spite of the changing emphasis in ELWA, there were some discussions in 1975 of broadcasting some programs to the Middle East with TWR through TWR's airtime on Radio Monte Carlo's Middle East (RMC-ME) MW transmitter in Cyprus. ELWA's interest in that was surprising as it was facing financial problems, and TWR charged much more per hour than FEBA did. The seriousness of the discussions is clear from the fact that TWR was reserving airtime for ELWA's programs in its schedule of May 1975. ELWA had mentioned that it might be interested in broadcasting some Bible readings in a *Qur'anic* style. William Mial, the TWR Field Director, wrote to Bliss that this would be 'slightly problematic' for TWR.<sup>115</sup> TWR did not want to use that sort of approach in its broadcasting. The problem solved itself as ELWA changed its mind and decided not to broadcast over TWR.<sup>116</sup>

In April 1975, Thomas suggested a new 'Arabic Broadcast Strategy' to Davis. Thomas was now SIM's director for Liberia and Ivory Coast, and therefore responsible for ELWA including its studio in Beirut. His plan was based on a conference held during the first few days of April. Thomas thought ELWA should no longer be involved in producing programs for FEBA, and that it should not involve itself in any other broadcasts to the Middle East and the Peninsula either. A main argument for that was that TWR was broadcasting with a strong MW signal over RMC-ME, reaching the entire Middle East and most of the Arab Gulf.<sup>117</sup> Thus, 'two cri-

<sup>112</sup> Transcript of 'Discussion' (20 February 1974), p. 15, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

<sup>113</sup> Letter of John Wheatley to Suhail Zarifa (24 January 1974), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1966-1974.

<sup>114</sup> Letter of Bart Bliss to Mr. L. John Wheatley (21 February 1974), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1966-1974.

<sup>115</sup> Letter of William Mial to Barton Bliss (20 March 1975), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1975-1991.

<sup>116</sup> Internal ELWA Memo from B. Bliss, ordering to send a 'cable' to Mial of TWR (3 April 1975), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1975-1991.

<sup>117</sup> RMC-ME reached Northern Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria during the day. At night, when TWR used the station, Saudi Arabia and some Gulf States including Iraq were also reached. See

teria are satisfied: Mediumwave transmission, and a greater penetration – not by ELWA, but for the Kingdom’, Thomas wrote. He added that ‘there is less need and less justification for perpetuating The Seychelles transmission by Shortwave’. Thomas suggested to fully focusing on North Africa.<sup>118</sup> He also proposed to tell FEBA that as from 31 December 1975, it would no longer be the agent for creating the program content for the FEBA broadcasts, and that it would also no longer purchase any airtime on FEBA. However, it was stated that ELWA would encourage its program suppliers to directly contact FEBA and to continue broadcasting from The Seychelles. He also suggested that FEBA should be approached about the possibility of them acquiring the studio facilities in Beirut.<sup>119</sup>

Davis’ response to the suggestions of Thomas was positive. ‘I am in whole-hearted agreement with your recommendations. It appears that the responsibility which we have felt over the years to broadcast the Gospel into the Middle East area is now being met in a more efficient manner by Radio Monte Carlo and Trans World Radio’. He wondered whether the Beirut Studio could not be given up somewhat earlier ‘in view of the financial problems’ SIM and ELWA were facing.<sup>120</sup>

In May 1975, ELWA announced to FEBA that it would not buy airtime after 30 November, and that the studio in Beirut would be available for FEBA.<sup>121</sup> This decision was not anticipated. FEBA’s chairman Douglas Malton said that ‘this new responsibility has been thrust unexpectedly upon [FEBA]’.<sup>122</sup> During the summer of 1975, SIM and FEBA negotiated a handover of the studio. On 13 August Malton wrote to Thomas that FEBA ‘unanimously approved’ in principle to take over the studio. Salisbury was asked to stay on until they would have someone in place to take over the studio. FEBA received the facilities at no cost on 1 October 1975.<sup>123</sup>

The main reasons given by ELWA for the withdrawal from the studio in Beirut and the broadcasts from The Seychelles was their lack of personnel, money, and audience response.<sup>124</sup> Thomas mentioned another reason why ELWA opted out of the studio in Beirut:

[Programs] produced in the Middle East [were] becoming less acceptable for release in North Africa. [...] SIM should now address itself, with priority to the Arabs of

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Douglas A. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Middle East* (Ames, 1999, first edition 1993), p. 298.

<sup>118</sup> Letter of George W. Thomas to R. Davis (4 April 1975) p. 2, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1988, Arabic Program Beirut, 1973-1976.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>120</sup> Letter of R. J. Davis to George Thomas (2 May 1975) pp. 1-2, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1988, Arabic Program Beirut, 1973-1976.

<sup>121</sup> Letter of Barton Bliss to William P. Mial (28 May 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1975-1991.

<sup>122</sup> Letter of Douglas Malton to George Thomas (13 August 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1988, Arabic Program Beirut, 1973-1976.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* Letter of George W. Thomas to ELWA Studio Staff Members (1 September 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1988, Arabic Program Beirut, 1973-1976.

<sup>124</sup> Letter of Thomas to Davis (4 April 1975), pp. 1-2.

North Africa [...] with no present or long term commitment to a Middle East broadcast service.<sup>125</sup>

This shows that ELWA was well aware of the differences between the audiences in the Arab World. In accordance with RCR1, ELWA endeavoured to broadcast programs that were focused on a narrower target audience than the whole Arab World.

Salisbury believed that ELWA's decision to withdraw from Beirut was also influenced by communication problems. 'During those days, communication with ELWA was by airmail letter, which took at least six weeks from the time the letter was written and posted to when we gained a reply. Only for urgent matters were we able to send a telegraphic cable, but you were limited to a few lines.'<sup>126</sup> That slow speed of communication was aggravated by some intercultural misunderstandings between Salisbury as an Australian and the management from the USA in Liberia:

Being young, inexperienced, and the fact that our Australian English differed in meaning to American, we had a few misunderstandings with our American leadership in Liberia, especially as we had not met any of them until Len went to meet with them in Monrovia for a week and [...] Suhail Zarifa visited Beirut for a week in 1974. We found it a little frustrating needing to make decisions about different matters before receiving a reply from our superiors at ELWA, Liberia, and having had very little contact with Americans, we found ourselves having a quick few lessons in American culture and language via airmail correspondence. We think it was partly the lack of adequate communication and financial resources at ELWA that eventually caused [the organization] to consider handing the Beirut Arabic ministry over to FEBA.<sup>127</sup>

On 1 September 1975 Thomas formally informed the Arabic staff of the Beirut studio of the handover. The workers addressed were the Habibs, al-Shirâkî and Juwânnâ. There was an assumption that all the staff would continue to work with the new studio owner, FEBA. Knell arrived shortly thereafter on behalf of FEBA, and Salisbury worked with him and with FEBA's David Mason until he left Beirut at the end of December 1975.<sup>128</sup> 'This time of Arabic broadcasts was probably the major highlight of our years of ministry. ELWA's ministry was a major reason that many in North Africa turned to the Lord', according to Salisbury. When the Salisbury's left Lebanon, they came under fire from snipers on the way to the airport. The civil war (1975-1990) had begun.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. The disagreements between Salisbury and 'the Americans' in Liberia were about budgets. 'The Beirut Office should have a better idea of what costs will be than the Arabic section in Liberia', Salisbury had written to Zarifa in Liberia. 'I could not give you that privilege. [...] Suhail has not had the privilege of setting his budget either, nor has any other director in radio', Schult replied to Salisbury. Letter of David J. Schult to Zarifa and Salisbury (25 January 1973), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1988, Arabic Program Beirut, 1973-1976.

<sup>128</sup> Salisbury in an email to the author (14 May 2003). Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

### 7.1.2.6 Full Focus on North Africa: 1975-1990

#### *Efforts of Closer Cooperation with RSB and MMC: 1975-1977*

In April 1975, Thomas suggested that ELWA should increasingly move to MW broadcasts instead of SW broadcasts for North Africa.<sup>130</sup> ELWA may have considered buying airtime on TWR for its broadcasts over Radio Monte Carlo in Monte Carlo (RMC-MC). On 1 December 1975 ELWA cancelled its evening broadcasts to North Africa while maintaining its block of 90 minutes in the morning. This decision was taken on the basis of positive test responses for the morning transmissions, which demonstrated an excellent signal. The evening broadcasts had been very hard to receive. Nevertheless during 1976 and 1977, ELWA continued to experiment with the evening broadcasts again.<sup>131</sup>

ELWA used some old programs of Zarifa and Tannous after the closure of its studio in Beirut. When Zarifa returned to Canada in 1976, ELWA became even more dependent on other producers. Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) with its Malaga Media Center (MMC) in Malaga (Spain), NAM and its Radio School of the Bible (RSB) in Marseille (France), and BTGH would be the three most important program suppliers until 1990.

In April 1975, Thomas pointed ELWA to the increasing desire of MMC and RSB to produce programs with native North Africans and he mentioned that both organizations were investing money in the improvement of their studios. Thomas suggested working closely with them and even wanted to place some of ELWA's personnel in their offices to produce an improved block of programs for North Africa. As both MMC and RSB were broadcasting their programs with ELWA and with TWR over RMC-MC there was some discussion about possibly creating an 'independent agency' for the benefit of production and broadcasting to North Africa. Thomas called that agency the North Africa Christian Media Association.<sup>132</sup>

The plan for an independent agency never materialized. ELWA did however enter into a strategic alliance with MMC and RSB. They used the name Media Association North Africa (MANA) for their cooperation.<sup>133</sup> This cooperation entailed that MMC and RSB pledged to fill a 30-minute block each day for ELWA at a reduced price. David J. Schult, acting director of broadcasting of ELWA, wrote in June 1975 to TWR about ELWA's strategic decisions:

[We] will be working closely with North Africa Mission and the Gospel Missionary Union in the outreach to North Africa. The multi-media outreach, which we have in mind, will include correspondence courses, literature and radio. Besides these mass media, I believe that there are missionaries and national Christians who can be contacted, for personal sorts of ministries in addition to these mass media. We are hop-

<sup>130</sup> Letter of Thomas to Davis (4 April 1975) pp. 1-2.

<sup>131</sup> Internal ELWA Memo from Bart Bliss to G. Thomas, S. Zarifa and others (27 November 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 18, Broadcasting Division, North Africa Broadcasts, 1955-1997. Memo from David J. Schult to George Thomas (1 August 1977), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 18, Broadcasting Division, North Africa Broadcasts, 1955-1997.

<sup>132</sup> Letter of Thomas to Davis (4 April 1975), pp. 2-3, 5.

<sup>133</sup> Letter of Bart Bliss to Hobe Dearborn (22 March 1976), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 18, Broadcasting Division, North Africa Broadcasts, 1955-1997.

ing to have 30 minutes per day in the colloquial Arabic, in addition to the programs in the Classical Arabic now being broadcast. In addition, we hope to increase the amount of Berber which is broadcast from Monrovia.<sup>134</sup>

The three parties began discussing this arrangement in May 1975. In March 1976 ELWA told RSB and MMC that it would be ready to begin broadcasting their programs on 1 June 1976.<sup>135</sup> In January 1977, Steven Vishanoff of RSB wrote to ELWA that RSB and MMC were still unclear about their production abilities and he said that no productions could be expected before September 1977. However, without further discussion with ELWA, MMC and RSB decided to broadcast the programs they had prepared over TWR-MC. MMC and RSB decided to make this *volte-face* probably because TWR was able to offer excellent airtime since 1977, and therefore a larger audience than ELWA.

ELWA's predicament showed the problem most broadcasters faced. They were financially dependent on selling their airtime. As customers, the producers were in a strong position because the number of potential customers for buying the airtime was limited. ELWA almost decided to stop its broadcasts to North Africa altogether after this decision of MMC and RSB. Bliss wrote to RSB and explained how this change of strategy created problems for ELWA:

I proceed to wonder out loud if God is trying to tell us something through this unexpected change? Radio ELWA's deficit the past eleven months has climbed to \$25,000. Part of this can be attributed to the extra North Africa transmission we added during 1977 with no offsetting income, but then we wanted to assist in the special Evangelistic campaign to Muslims. Radio ELWA cannot go further without cutting back on something. Is that something [...] our North Africa transmission? [...] Radio ELWA is evidently not in a strategic position to meet your objectives.<sup>136</sup>

ELWA, however, continued broadcasting 90 minutes in the early morning to North Africa, and 30 minutes in the evening, both in Arabic and Amazigh. TWR was broadcasting over MW in the evening. There was coordination between ELWA and TWR regarding these broadcast times, just as ELWA coordinated with RVOG in Ethiopia for most African languages to avoid overlap in broadcast times.<sup>137</sup>

#### ***Filling Airtime: 1978-1990***

ELWA's Arabic and Amazigh broadcasts in 1978 were 75 minutes in the morning and 65 minutes in the evening. These broadcasts reached Morocco, Tunis and Algeria, but not Libya. This was due to a combination of the direction of the anten-

<sup>134</sup> Letter of David J. Schult to William P. Mial (12 June 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1975-1991.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Letter of Bart Bliss to J. Maynard Yoder (October 1977), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 18, Broadcasting Division, North Africa Broadcasts, 1955-1997.

<sup>137</sup> Letter of George W. Thomas to Derek M. Knell (9 June 1977), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1975-1991.

nas and the limited power of the 50 kW transmitter.<sup>138</sup> In order to be better received in Morocco, a new antenna for the 25-meter band was installed in the early 1980s.<sup>139</sup> The broadcast times to North Africa did not change until 1990, when ELWA's broadcasts ended.<sup>140</sup> It seems that some of ELWA's programs continued to be used in MW broadcasts from Cyprus to the Middle East by TWR and the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).<sup>141</sup>

Towards the end of the 1980s, RSB, MMC and Madany were the main program suppliers of ELWA.<sup>142</sup> The frustration that the cooperation did not go as anticipated in 1977 had obviously not been too damaging for the relationship between ELWA, AWM and MMC.

ELWA cooperated in the World by 2000 (Wb2000) movement that was initiated in 1985. That movement urged the Christian broadcasters to focus on all languages with over one million native speakers. ELWA had an *ad hoc* committee to decide which African languages it wanted to concentrate on. The committee selected 44 new languages, and in order to put those on air, they advised ELWA to stop broadcasting Amazigh programs to North Africa and leave that to other broadcasters such as TWR. ELWA felt it had to concentrate on other languages but the decision also reflected that SIM did not have missionaries to do follow-up in North Africa.<sup>143</sup>

On 6 July 1990, ELWA was taken over by the rebel forces of Charles Taylor who occupied the station and started using it. The facilities were damaged by rockets of government forces targeting the area on 30 July. Towards the end of the year, the studio and transmitters were destroyed in the anarchy that engulfed Liberia. Programs in major West African languages were moved to facilities of TWR, which continues to broadcast them until today. The rebuilding of ELWA Monrovia suffered a severe set back when in 1996 a newly arrived 50 kW SW transmitter was

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<sup>138</sup> Letter of George W. Thomas to Thomas Cosmades (22 March 1978), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1975-1991.

<sup>139</sup> David Schult (ELWA's Broadcasting Director from 1979-1982) as quoted in an email of Shea to the author (10 June 2004).

<sup>140</sup> According to one former missionary with ELWA who wrote to the author in 2004, but who wants to remain anonymous, the Libyan leader Mu'amar Qadhafi tried to stop the broadcast of ELWA in 1979. In that year, when the Organization of African Unity (OAU) met in Monrovia, Qadhafi reportedly spoke with President William R. Tolbert of Liberia about discontinuing ELWA's broadcasts to North Africa. Qadhafi was said to have indicated that the programs were misleading Muslim youth. Articles in Algerian newspapers appearing about that time alleged the same effect. President Tolbert was reported to have said that Liberia was founded on Christian principles and ELWA's broadcasts would continue.

<sup>141</sup> 'Religious Broadcasters in the Middle East' (n.d.). This document was given to the author by NECC's producer Ya'qub Hürânî (13 July 2004). Given its content, it must have been produced between 1978 and 1980.

<sup>142</sup> 'ELWA Expansion Project Proposal' (November 1989) p. 8, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 18, Broadcasting Division, World by 2000, 1986-1997.

<sup>143</sup> The minutes of the *ad hoc* meetings of December 1988 suggested continued broadcasts to North Africa in Classical Arabic, but the word *Classical* was deleted in pencil. See Howard Brant, 'ELWA WB2000 Ad Hoc Committee Report' (December 1988), p. 1, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 18, Broadcasting Division, World by 2000, 1986-1997.

destroyed by factional fighting. The SIM management then decided on having only a small radio station to cover Liberia.<sup>144</sup>

## 7.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

WABA, the legal owner of ELWA, published a ‘Minimum Doctrinal Standard’ in a brochure in 1951. The complete text of that was as follows:

1. We believe that the Scriptures in their entirety are the written word of God; that they are therefore inerrant in the original autographs; and that they are of final authority for faith and practice.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, that He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; that He rose from the dead; that He ascended into Heaven, where He is at present our High Priest and Advocate, and from whence we expect His personal return.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned; and that all human beings inherit a sinful nature, and become sinners in thought, word, and deed.
5. We believe in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ; and that all who accept Him by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit, thus becoming the children of God, being justified on the ground of His shed blood.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the just and unjust; the saved to a state of eternal bliss and the unsaved to a state of eternal punishment.
7. We believe that holy Christian living through the enablement and guidance of the Holy Spirit is the necessary consequence of true regeneration and is the duty of every believer.<sup>145</sup>

When WABA became part of SIM in 1951, it had to adopt the doctrinal statements of SIM. The then current doctrinal version, dated probably from 1947, was titled ‘Soundness in the Faith’. Candidates with SIM had to express their own convictions in writing about each of the following statements:

1. The divine authority and plenary inspiration of the whole canonical Scriptures as originally given.
2. The doctrine of the Trinity.
3. The fall of man and his consequent moral depravity and need of regeneration.
4. The atonement through the substitutionary death of Christ, His resurrection and ascension.
5. The doctrine of justification by faith.

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<sup>144</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 156. Shea in an email to the author (10 June 2004). In 2005, SIM was discussing with some donor agencies whether they would be willing to participate in further rebuilding the SW facilities of ELWA. Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (2 April 2007).

<sup>145</sup> Brochure titled ‘West African Broadcasting Association Inc: Christ for Africa’s Lost through Radio’ (Wheaton, 1951), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, W.A.B.A. Correspondence.



6. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
7. The doctrine of sanctification.
8. The second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead.
9. The eternal blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost.
10. The separation of Christians from the world and the things of the world.<sup>146</sup>

'Soundness in the Faith' also stated that candidates for SIM should be 'catholic in their views, and able to have fellowship with all believers holding these fundamental truths, even if widely differing in their judgment as to points of Church government'. This places the organization in an interdenominational environment. The statement added that 'of course no candidates are accepted who do not abstain from the use of tobacco or alcoholic drinks'.<sup>147</sup> In 1958, SIM adopted a 'Doctrinal Statement' that was only slightly differently worded. The statements about sanctification and separation from the world from the 1947 document were put into one short paragraph that said that SIM missionaries should believe in the 'doctrine of sanctification; that is, personal dedication of self to God and practical separation of believers from the world and the things of the world'.<sup>148</sup>

In 1967 SIM and ELWA adopted a totally rewritten statement of faith. No missionary could be accepted if he or she was not in agreement with the following doctrinal statement:

1. The Bible which is verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit in the canonical Scriptures as originally given and is the inerrant and authoritative Word of God.
2. The triune Godhead in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
  - a. The Father, Who is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in all His attributes.
  - b. The Son, Jesus Christ: His deity, virgin birth, sinless life, atoning death, bodily resurrection, personal exaltation at God's right hand and personal return.
  - c. The Holy Spirit: Who is a Divine Person, equal with the Father and the Son and of the same nature.
3. The personality of Satan, who is called the devil.
4. The fall and lost estate of man, whose total depravity makes necessary the new birth.
5. Salvation by grace through faith in the shed blood and substitutionary death of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.
6. The eternal blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost.
7. The Church, the bride of Christ: in its universal aspect comprising the whole body of those who have been born of the Spirit; and in its local expression established for worship, mutual edification and witness.
8. Christ's great commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, making disciples, baptizing and teaching.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>146</sup> 'Principles and Practice' (Toronto, c.1947), p. 5, from the SIM Archives, Box MM-2

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 6

<sup>148</sup> 'Principles and Practice' (Toronto, 1958), p. 7, from the SIM Archives, Box MM-2.

<sup>149</sup> 'Constitution', in *SIM Manual: 1967 version* (Toronto, 1970), p. 12, from the archives at SIM, Box MM-2.

The wording of this new version was different from its precursor of 1947, but the content was substantially similar. The main differences were the inclusion of the term *inerrancy* regarding the Scriptures, and the demand of SIM that its missionaries should believe in the personality of Satan. In 1967 SIM probably felt it needed to reinforce its conservative Evangelical doctrines more than in the past. The inclusion of the need to preach, baptize and teach was probably to counterbalance the growing tendency among Evangelicals to also consider social and development work as proper expressions of mission. Although this last statement refers to mission, the Statement of Faith as a whole was not particularly missionary or contextualized for usage in the Arab World. The statement was apologetic, and it did not refer to SIM's views on millennial issues.

The doctrinal statements of SIM and ELWA were products of a basically Western Evangelical theology where salvation was in the first place individual and mainly expressed in legal terms. These statements demanded compliance to what was deemed of utmost theological relevance by conservative Protestant churches in the tradition of Western Christianity, not necessarily by the historic churches in the countries that needed to be reached by the missionaries of SIM.<sup>150</sup> These creeds were therefore not a good criterion for selecting mission personnel who would be good at contextualizing the Gospel for broadcasts to the Arab World.

ELWA's creedal statements and its demand that all co-workers had to agree to them, left no doubt that in ELWA's efforts to contextualize the Gospel for the Arabs, warning CW1 was not challenged. The need to hold on to the existence of absolutes and truth as revealed in Scripture and Jesus Christ, and the importance of the Church, would not be trespassed against.

## 7.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

### 7.3.1 *Changing Target Audiences*

When ELWA began its first broadcasts in 1956, the focus was on Sudan and Southern Arabia, where SIM had its own missionaries.<sup>151</sup> During a certain period in 1957 ELWA broadcast one hour of Arabic programs each day in the evening to Morocco and Tunisia. That same program was also broadcast to the eastern parts of the Arab World.<sup>152</sup> To broadcast the same programs to both areas shows that initially ELWA did not pay much attention to the question whether these programs were appropriate for the different realms of the Arab World.

Between 1960 and 1973, the broadcasts from Monrovia targeted the whole Arab World, but in reality, the audience was largely defined by a combination of the strength of transmitters, the capabilities and the direction of the antennas, interfer-

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<sup>150</sup> The Protestant Churches of the Arab World often adhered to the same creeds as the missions that had played a role in founding them. That in itself does not make these creeds any less 'western'.

<sup>151</sup> 'Statistics' (26 December 1956). 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'. Bliss in an email to the author (1 May 2004).

<sup>152</sup> Untitled document (1957) from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes 1954-1962.

ence of other broadcasting stations and propagational conditions related to the sun-spot cycle. In 1969, ELWA's broadcasts from Liberia were best received in Morocco, hence Acord's statement in 1969: 'Morocco is our main target'.<sup>153</sup> That intention was wise, as it enabled ELWA to focus on a homogenous target audience in accordance with RCR1. That this focus on Morocco was indeed related to the actual reception of the broadcasts in Morocco is shown by the shift in ELWA's target audience in the following years.

Only three years later, in 1972, ELWA spoke about Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon as its main target.<sup>154</sup> That was when it broadcast from Liberia to North Africa and the Middle East, while the Middle East was also targeted with ELWA's programs through FEBA's transmitters on The Seychelles. The reason why these countries were especially mentioned is because most of the mail came from there. The result was that ELWA had a diverse target audience. To make programs that were contextually right for that widely diverse audience from Morocco to Syria, was impossible. ELWA did not broadcast exactly the same programs to both North Africa as it did to the rest of the Arab World, but much of its programming was similar.

In 2003, Salisbury remembered that when he ran the studio from 1970-1975, Muslim students of 15 to 30 years old were considered the prime audience.<sup>155</sup> The choice to target that audience was wise. Gaston of RSB argued in 1966 that students should be ELWA's target audience as they were most responsive and receptive and because students were more flexible than others to listen to the programs of ELWA given the times of the broadcasts.<sup>156</sup> Whether ELWA succeeded in making programs that were suitable for students can only be assessed from the actual programs. It has not been possible to assess these in the context of this study. The focus on students partially mitigates the broadness of ELWA's diverse target audience in the Arab World. Students throughout the Arab World shared some common characteristics. However, as they cannot be considered a homogenous target audience, due to some important differences between student groups throughout the Arab World, ELWA did not implement RCR1 fully.

After 1973 ELWA's own broadcasts to the Middle East stopped, although it continued producing programs for FEBA's Middle East broadcasts until 1975. Since then, its sole broadcasts were to North Africa, which effectively meant Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. Thus, ELWA targeted a much more homogeneous audience than in the years before. At the same time however, it became fully dependent on what other organizations were producing, so its ability to broadcast the programs it wanted, decreased.

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<sup>153</sup> 'Arabic Department Meeting' (3 August 1970).

<sup>154</sup> 'ELWA Transmission Characteristics' (June 1972), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 24, Broadcasting Division, Audience Survey Statistical 1955-1972.

<sup>155</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>156</sup> 'Transcript of Meetings', p. 5.

### 7.3.2 MSA, Colloquial Arabic, and Amazigh

In May 1966, ELWA organized a series of meetings in Monrovia concerning the differences between North Africa and the Middle East and their audiences. Beside representatives of ELWA, like Zarifa, there were people representing program producers like Warren Gaston and Don Harris of RSB, and Madany of BTGH.<sup>157</sup> Madany pointed to the cultural division between the two areas in the Arab World, but mentioned that the ‘tendency now is toward unity’.<sup>158</sup> During the meetings someone stated that the ‘Arabic language is not [the] sole property of Islam’.<sup>159</sup> These comments about Arabic unity and its language give the impression that in the 1960s, the popularity of Pan-Arabic thinking affected ELWA and its program suppliers and suggested the usage of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

During an Arabic Department Meeting in August 1970, Zarifa commented that the Arabic language is ‘a possession, not a tool’, and that ‘it is the way a religious sermon is said which matters the most’. That was in defense of speaking MSA in religious programs. This did not deter the department from agreeing that in less formal programs, like dramas, Moroccan Arabic and even Amazigh programs could be used.<sup>160</sup>

On 9 October 1972, ELWA held a conference in Shuwayt (Lebanon) about improving ELWA’s broadcasting and outreach to Morocco. Those present were Zarifa, Wasserman, Habib, and some Moroccan converts who were studying in Beirut.<sup>161</sup> Some of the Moroccans rejected using Moroccan Arabic, and suggested to stop the broadcasts in that dialect. According to them, Moroccan Muslims interpreted it as an insult to their intelligence and that it sounded like the program was making fun of the Bible. Moroccan national radio only used colloquial programs for illiterates, they argued.<sup>162</sup> ‘The young people are educated and they prefer the not-too-high classical. The trend is to less and less colloquial as they consider colloquial for old people’, one of the Moroccans offered.<sup>163</sup>

The suggestion by these Moroccans to use only MSA was not implemented. ELWA broadcast to North Africa in a mixture of MSA, different colloquial Arabic languages and Amazigh. For broadcasts to the Middle East, MSA was preponderant. To overwhelmingly use MSA for the Middle East means that for that region, ELWA did not use the spoken languages of the people. Therefore ELWA only heeded RCR3, about the need to use the spoken languages of the targeted people, to a limited extent. ELWA did not follow the advice of the Moroccan believers to only use MSA, and thus it did not heed CW2, about contextualizing the programs within the church communities. This issue illustrates a conflict between the need

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 3. ‘Arabic Department Meeting’ (3 August 1970).

<sup>161</sup> ‘Report of a conference held in Shwait, Lebanon’ (9 October 1972), p. 1, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

to contextualize the Gospel by using the vernacular, and the need to heed the opinions of the local churches.<sup>164</sup>

By the 1970s the popularity of Pan-Arabism had peaked with Nâsir's death and no other Arab leader could move the masses with dreams of unity. In this context it was no coincidence that ELWA, after it decided in 1975 to focus on North Africa only, also decided that the language used in its programs should change. ELWA further gravitated to using the North African vernaculars and some Amazigh.<sup>165</sup> This was in line with the need to use languages that the North African audiences considered 'their own', so ELWA strove to better fulfill RCR3 after 1975. After 1975 ELWA had little influence on the languages used as it did not produce programs any longer. They broadcast programs of Madany in MSA, RSB's programs in a mixture of MSA and colloquial Arabic, and MMC's programs which tended to be in the Moroccan vernacular and Amazigh.

## 7.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

### 7.4.1 Contest with Nâsir

ELWA had a sense that a contest for the future of Africa was going on and that in that contest Nâsir played a major role. The number of radio receivers in North Africa was estimated to be a million in 1960, while the Middle East was assumed to have about three million radios. ELWA felt it had to play a role in the struggle for the soul of Africa. Reed wrote in 1968 that radio had 'been stepped up to a dizzying pace under Nasser's rule. His dream of a Pan-Islamic political Empire is more than an impractical vision'.<sup>166</sup>

Egypt did indeed spread an anti-colonialist, Islamic message in Africa through its radio broadcasts, but Nâsir's popularity was long past its crest when Reed wrote her book. It is not a sign of intimate knowledge of the Arab World among ELWA's leadership that there was any fear in the 1960s that Nâsir might actually create a political Islamic Empire. The feeling of being in a contest with Nâsir was real, though. Related to an increase in transmission power, a representative of SIM said in 1970: 'We got onto equal terms with Radio Cairo'.<sup>167</sup> That was an exaggeration but it shows the importance of Nâsir's broadcasts for ELWA.

The concept of a contest with Nâsir during the 1950s and 1960s could have been an incentive for ELWA to proclaim the Gospel and its implications for society. While the Egyptian leadership had its vision for developing Arab society, the Gospel should also have been used to address those issues. It will be seen that ELWA

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<sup>164</sup> The wisdom of taking Moroccan believers out of Morocco to study in the rather different context of Lebanon is debatable. The environment of a traditional Bible Institute in the Christian enclave was not a good *milieu* for developing Moroccan church leadership that could contextualize the Gospel for their own people. During the 1960s and 1970s there were probably no better options.

<sup>165</sup> Letter of George W. Thomas to Dr. R. Davis (4 April 1975), p. 2.

<sup>166</sup> Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, p. 148.

<sup>167</sup> 'Radio ELWA in Africa: It's Message and Ministry', p. 8.

decided to circumvent any reference to politics and Islam by proclaiming an individualized Gospel with micro-ethical applications only.

#### **7.4.2 Programming Philosophy Meetings: May 1966**

During the May 1966 meetings in Monrovia, those present discussed that for programs aimed at Muslims, the mainly Western hymns used in the churches in Egypt and Lebanon were not useful. It was decided that the more oriental hymns used in those churches were better, but the attendants at the conference agreed that the meaning was hard to understand.<sup>168</sup> ELWA decided it would try to avoid the Western style Arabic hymns and choir music in its programs. Instead, the policy was to use oriental, Arabic music. This means that ELWA tried to use music that was congenial and understandable for the target audience, in accordance with RCR4. In general, broadcasting church services was also ruled out, as that would not communicate the Gospel in terms that were understandable for Muslims.<sup>169</sup> ELWA was concerned about how it portrayed the community of Christian believers, in accordance with RCR5. It did not want to portray the Church in terms of John Travis' C1 and C2 Cross-Cultural Church-Planting Spectrums.

What music could be used? The *qânûn*, a zither-like instrument, was considered an acceptable instrument, and the recorder was 'quite acceptable'. The *ûd*, a sort of lute, was considered 'quite lovely'. The Spanish guitar was 'decent' for North Africa. Military Band music was rejected, as it was associated with Great Britain and France and was not Arabic. According to Madany, ELWA could not 'expect to attract an audience by music similar to rock 'n roll'.<sup>170</sup> This decision that the music of the churches in the Arab World should not be used was problematic as during the 1960s and 1970s there was hardly any other type of Christian music. This meant ELWA resorted to using mainly instrumental music.

There was general agreement that the focus should be on the spiritual understanding of the Trinity. Muslims assumed that Christians believed in 'the physical relationship between God and Mary' and in 'three Gods', and those misunderstandings had to be clarified. Madany said that neither the Bible nor the Trinity was the point of contact between Muslims and Christians. It was 'the human predicament, we are all in the same boat. We are all sinners and we need a Saviour.'<sup>171</sup> Madany's approach underlined that in ELWA, there was no fear of forgetting the 'confession of absolutes' in accordance with CW1.

The issue of whether or not to have news programs on ELWA, in order to use that as 'bait' for attracting a larger audience, elicited much discussion. Madany spoke out strongly against using news programs. 'News is OUT! [sic] Too hot to handle.'<sup>172</sup> He argued that 'we exist for the Gospel', not for politics. 'Many think missionaries are agents of CIA'. He was obviously worried that news broadcasts, in the Arab World always propaganda instruments of governments, would give the

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<sup>168</sup> 'Transcript of Meetings', p. 2.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> 'Transcript of Meetings', pp. 2-3.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

audience the impression that ELWA had political backing from the USA. 'SIM is neutral, ELWA also', according to Madany. Zarifa said that 'Arabs know no neutrality', and news would make ELWA suspect of being biased. Madany agreed. 'Arabs can't be objective, they see everything in a subjective light.' Gaston supported Madany, and argued that as the 'Arab is highly sensitive', news broadcasts were 'bound to offend many because of [the] nature of people.'<sup>173</sup>

Madany also warned that upsetting Arab governments with news broadcasts could negatively affect the follow-up mail between the station and its audience. He received his mail in Khartoum. The only news ELWA could broadcast was news about sub-Saharan Africa that was relatively uninteresting to the Arab audience.<sup>174</sup> A minority in the meetings had a more holistic view of the implications of the Gospel. They argued that news should be part of the public service of radio to its audience and that a 'radio station has responsibility to report the news, the truth.'<sup>175</sup> With the decision to not broadcast news in Arabic, ELWA made an exception to its general policy, as broadcasting news programs was an important part of ELWA's programming and their view of their role as a Christian broadcaster.<sup>176</sup> The decision was regrettable. If Arabs were indeed so politicized, news programs were what good Christian radio needed in order to be truly contextualized in accordance with RCR2 that says that broadcasts should entail the real context of the audience. By not doing so, CW5 regarding the Gospel being good news for the individual and for society, was ignored. As the Gospel does have a message for society and how it organizes its political life, news programs would have been an excellent tool to give the audience a Christian view of society. To purposely avoid the realm of news for the reasons given meant that ELWA decided to not let the Gospel play its prophetic role in society either, thus ignoring CW4.

During the 1970s, the Beirut studio seems to have reversed its opinion on the broadcasting of news programs. According to Salisbury, he wanted to broadcast news programs while he was in charge of the studio, but only 'by national Christians who had sufficient insight, understanding and wisdom to present news in an appropriate way'. The main reason why it was not possible for ELWA to create the team needed to do good news programs was financial.<sup>177</sup>

Part of ELWA's programming strategy was to never make derogatory remarks about Islam. Gaston commented that instead of being 'negative' and 'trying to dispel darkness', it was better to be 'positive' and 'turn on the light'. If negative things had to be said about Islam, 'follow-up can be more specific', he argued.<sup>178</sup> Attacking other religions in mission is not a wise approach but to not be critical about any elements of other religions was not good either. Islam had overwhelming personal, social and political implications. ELWA did broadcast programs in which Islam and Christianity were explicitly compared but by aiming not to criti-

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> See Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>177</sup> Salisbury in an email to the author (19 September 2005).

<sup>178</sup> Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, pp. 95-96.

cize Islam, the same Contextualization Warnings were ignored by not broadcasting news.

For Arabic Christian broadcasts to not mention the religion of 95 percent of all Arabs and to ignore the news and politics of the area could only result in programs that sounded detached from the realities of the Arab World. Audience research in the Arab World has shown that news is the main reason why people listen to SW broadcasts. Graham Mytton, audience researcher of the BBC, concluded in 1993 that audiences of international broadcasters are 'relatively large in Arab countries because many people seek alternative sources of news'.<sup>179</sup> Serious audience research in the Arab World only began in the 1980s, but the Christian broadcasters in the 1960s were aware of the importance of news in SW broadcasting.

ELWA's avoidance of politics in its programs harmonized with the attitudes of the churches of the Arab World. During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the churches in the Arab World carefully avoided criticizing their political leaders to create no offense, and most tried to confine the Gospel and its implications to personal matters and church-life. Only in Lebanon, where Christians formed a majority of the population, churches displayed less hesitancy to play a critical role in the political discourse.

The implication of the different approaches among the national churches in the Arab World as regards relating to political life makes it difficult to generalize about ELWA's wisdom to not include politics in its programming. To not do so was in harmony with the attitudes of most Arab churches. CW2's warning to contextualize within the community of the church meant that no politics should be treated in the programs. That, however, contradicted CW4 and CW5 about the importance to allow the Gospel to speak prophetically and to treat the societal implications of the Gospel.

#### **7.4.3 Acord's Philosophies: 1966-1969**

Shortly after these meetings where the programming policies were discussed, the Hellweges left the studio in Beirut and Acord took over its management. Acord diversified the programming of ELWA, steering it away from preaching programs only and he led ELWA further into contextualizing the Christian message for the Muslim audience. 'If there is no meaning to the listener because of our fears of the contextualization of our message into terms and ideas that they can grasp, then [...] few will listen, fewer still will understand.'<sup>180</sup> Acord described the changes in programming policies that were introduced when he began his work:

Our target audience was the Muslims in North Africa and the [Middle East] The chap who was working there before me was programming mainly Christian programs to the Christians in Egypt. I changed the format to catch the ear of Muslims. They would not listen to simply the Word read to them, so I got a converted Muslim sheik to chant the Scriptures as they chanted the Koran. We started getting re-

<sup>179</sup> Graham Mytton and Mark Eggerman, 'International Radio as a Source of News', in Graham I. Mytton (ed), *Global Audiences: Research for Worldwide Broadcasting 1993* (London, 1993), p. 200.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 379.



sponses. Many letters asked where we were reading in the Koran? I got a Syrian 'Ud player who took stories from the Bible and sang them while playing the 'Ud. They loved them. We did not use Western hymns singing with the Western music. The Arabs love poetry so we used the Psalms, the Psalms of Nebi Daoud, and when we got requests for them we coupled the Psalms with a copy of the Gospel of Luke. As a result we started getting lots of mail, mainly from North Africa and a bit from the [Middle East].<sup>181</sup>

Acord purposely used Islamic forms and practices for his programs. He defended his chanting method during meetings with other Christian broadcasters in Beirut in 1969. 'Now most Christians abhor this type of thing, but when I was a missionary in Aden in South Arabia I used to do this from our mission compound on to the street and into our dispensary through a tape recorder with various speakers on it [and] people listened well.'<sup>182</sup>

Not all Acord's radio colleagues appreciated the method of using Islamic styles of delivery of the Christian message. William Bell of RSB spoke out against it, Ya'qûb Hûrânî of NECC did not like it, Mûrîs Yaḥshân of MELM said he was against it. Reasons given ranged from the idea that to read the Bible in a *Qur'ânic* manner would suggest that as in Islam, the beauty of the language of the holy book *per se* could impart blessings or that the church was trying to mimic the mosque. It was also said that radio programs should impart content, not emotions.

Dick Olson of TWR was less negative; he mentioned the need to think of the different audiences that the programs tried to reach. Wasserman, whose co-worker al-Shirâkî was the chanter of Acord's programs, defended the style by saying that many Muslims 'will not be able to read and to think and to understand in the way we are doing', and therefore the emotional approach was also important.<sup>183</sup>

Acord wanted to portray a Christian community that would be relevant to Muslims, in accordance with RCR5. Acord's view of how to portray the church was close to C4 on Travis' scale of contextualization. ELWA endeavored to speak to Muslims in a manner that was understandable to them, using linguistic and cultural forms that were common to Arab Muslims, in accordance with RCR4, but by doing so, it transgressed in the realm of CW2. The community of the Arabic Churches was not in favor of this approach to contextualization. Comments that chanting the Bible as Muslims do with the *Qur'ân* might lead the listeners to think they could receive a blessing from just listening, were *a propos* and reflected CW6 about the impossibility to extract form and function. That warning was not heeded by ELWA.

<sup>181</sup> Acord in an email to the author (27 May 2003).

<sup>182</sup> 'Effective Methods in Reaching Muslims by Radio. Report by Fred Acord, ELWA, Beirut', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 45.

<sup>183</sup> 'Transcripts of responses to Effective Methods in Reaching Muslims by Radio. Report by Fred Acord, ELWA, Beirut', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 48-53.

In 1978, Acord spoke quite critically of the Arabic Christian broadcasters and program producers. He spoke of people spending 'precious time and precious funds working toward a goal that is nebulous and ill-defined so that evaluation is well nigh impossible.'<sup>184</sup> He also said that most producers he had met told him that they did not know their audience and its needs. Maybe he referred to the missionaries working in radio productions, as it is unlikely that the Arab program producers would have denied knowing their audience. Acord advised to do on-the-ground research in North Africa and the Middle East to study the actual context of the audience, and to base broadcasting strategies on that.<sup>185</sup>

#### 7.4.4 Salisbury's Philosophies: 1970-1975

When Salisbury took over the management of the studio, he followed Acord's goals and approach. A contextualized approach was used in the programming to reach young Muslim students.<sup>186</sup> The Shuwayt Conference in October 1972 confirmed the opinions shared in May 1966 that more oriental Christian music was needed in the broadcasts.<sup>187</sup>

The main programming policy in the 1970s was to start from 'what the listener wanted to hear', called 'bait' programs. That was a term often used in radio, but because of the negative connotations a better term should have been used. The daily hour of programming also included 'what the listener needed to hear', which meant preaching and Bible study in a Muslim context.<sup>188</sup> It is problematic that those programs that were supposedly more interesting for the audience were considered less important for communicating the Gospel. It seems that behind this lay the concept that Christian truth and content could only, or best, be communicated through preaching and Bible study.

In the early 1970s, a formal programming policy for the recording studio in Beirut was written. In line with earlier policies, ELWA decided it should use descriptions for Jesus like *Word of God*, *Son of Man*, *Savior*, but only use the term *Son of God* when properly explained. The Islamic name for Jesus was used to 'not cause the Muslim to turn off the radio':

We use the name *'Isa* which is the Muslim name for Jesus instead of the term *Yasua* which is Biblical Arabic. The reason being that for the most part, the Muslims do not know who *Yasua* is, but they do know who *'Isa* is; we try to endeavor to take them from the *'Isa* they know to the truth of the Christ of Scripture.<sup>189</sup>

Salisbury wanted to follow Acord's vision of using the chanting of the scriptures, but he called it a Greek-Orthodox way, which according to Salisbury was 'very similar' to *Qur'anic* chanting and Arabic music.<sup>190</sup> He realized that it 'was

<sup>184</sup> Acord, 'The Current Status of Radio Broadcasting to Muslim Peoples', pp. 380-1.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>187</sup> Report of a conference held in Shwait, Lebanon', pp. 3-4.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Salisbury in an email to the author (19 September 2005).

frowned upon by the majority of national Christians. They felt we should use only the translated Western hymns with the Western music used in the churches at the time'.<sup>191</sup> Salisbury's own words give the impression that what he perceived to be chanting 'in a Greek-Orthodox way', was seen by the Arab Protestants as an Islamic approach. This suggests that the Orthodox style of delivery of the Gospel is closer to Islam than the traditional Protestant methods. This idea warrants further study. Salisbury was convinced that this approach was effective:

We used to receive letters which said, that what they had heard on the radio 'spoke to their heart' and 'where in the Koran could they find the words spoken'. We also heard from another missionary that the chanting of scriptures had opened the hearts of many in the Middle East to the Gospel.<sup>192</sup>

The churches in the Arab World rejected this approach of ELWA. This attitude was understandable in the light of the past 14 centuries in which the churches had continually lost ground to Islam. ELWA in its programming policy stated that this would not stop it from doing what it felt it should be doing:

We are not bound by the thoughts and concepts of various church groups, but believe that the Holy Spirit is leading us in the production of these programs so that the lost sons of Ishmael can hear with the understanding the truth as it is found in Jesus Christ, and in knowing HIM [sic] they will have life.<sup>193</sup>

In its programs, ELWA portrayed church-life in a manner that the Arabic Churches did not like, and it used linguistic forms that were also rejected by the Arabic Churches. In order to be contextually relevant in the usage of linguistic and cultural forms and in its portrayal of Christ and the Church, as demanded in RCR4 and RCR5, warnings CW2 and CW6 were ignored by ELWA. By doing so, ELWA also conveyed an image of Church that was purposely distinct from any actual Church in the Arab World, both in the present and in the past. This meant that CW3 was not heeded. Contextualization should never be at the expense of the Ecumenical unity of the church.

This choice of ELWA and some Western missionaries meant that they chose to elevate their missiological views above sound ecclesiology with a focus on the primacy of the local church and the unity of the Church as a whole. That might not be an issue in Arabic countries without local churches, but most Middle Eastern countries did have national churches with their own linguistic and cultural traditions.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> 'The fact is that the church and missions had more of an emphasis of reaching people from a Christian background and not much was done to reach those from a Muslim background. Therefore, little was understood in how to reach Muslims. [We] were breaking, for the most part, new ground', according to Salisbury in an email to the author (19 September 2005).

#### **7.4.5 Dependence on Program Suppliers: 1975-1990**

ELWA's programming philosophies for North Africa did not change between 1975 and 1990. ELWA did not produce programs of its own after the studio in Beirut was handed over to FEBA and Zarifa moved back to Canada in 1976.<sup>195</sup> ELWA continued to receive and broadcast programs from others and within the parameters of ELWA's policies, these suppliers were at liberty to decide what they wanted to broadcast.<sup>196</sup>

### **7.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS**

#### **7.5.1 Early Years: 1956-1966**

In ELWA's early years, Carl Agerstrand of MELM provided 45 minutes of programs per week from MELM's studio in Beirut. The airtime was provided free by ELWA.<sup>197</sup> MELM had been producing its TLH programs since 1950 for Lebanese national radio.<sup>198</sup> Tawfiq Khayyât of the Lebanon Bible Institute (LBI) also produced programs for ELWA.<sup>199</sup> Stevenson had a studio in Râs Beirut where he recorded various Arab speakers for broadcast by ELWA. When ELWA first contacted him, he was already making programs for his own prison ministry.<sup>200</sup>

In 1957 ELWA had propelled Madany into a broadcasting career. In November 1960, the daily broadcasts of Madany's programs began.<sup>201</sup> Soon Madany had two hours per week on ELWA. BTGH paid for the airtime of those programs.<sup>202</sup>

In 1960, NAM took its first steps to produce programs in Morocco for broadcasting by ELWA.<sup>203</sup> NAM began with a studio in Immûzâr (Morocco) and provided ELWA with 15 minutes per week in Moroccan Arabic from 1961 or 1962. Initially, NAM did not have to pay for the airtime for its programs.<sup>204</sup>

From 1962 or 1963 Aubrey Whitehouse of LEM was involved in producing a radio program for broadcasting by ELWA, RVOG and later also for TWR. This weekly program of 15 minutes entailed a discussion between five people who were

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<sup>195</sup> Suhail Zarifa in an email to the author (12 June 2004).

<sup>196</sup> Shea in an email to the author (10 June 2004).

<sup>197</sup> Document with overview of 'Boards, Missionary in Charge & Address, Languages, Weekly hrs. Financial' (n.p., n.d.), p. 1, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, The Beginnings 1956-1969.

<sup>198</sup> 'Program Department Meeting' (25 September 1958).

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Letter of A. G. Thiessen to R.G. de la Haye (4 May 1960), p. 3.

<sup>201</sup> Reed and Grant, *Voice under Every Palm*, p. 147.

<sup>202</sup> 'Boards, Missionary in Charge & Address, Languages, Weekly hrs. Financial', p. 1.

<sup>203</sup> During their Program Department Meeting on 20 September 1960, the aim of NAM was discussed. 'Mr. Harris wants to broadcast on ELWA. [...] He will head up a recording studio. 'Program Department Meeting' (20 September 1960), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes 1954-1962.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

either graduates from LBI or people closely associated with it.<sup>205</sup> Whitehouse retired in June 1972, after which the radio work of LEM ended. He described the programs as follows:

[A] weekly Bible study discussion in which five people [...] discuss books of the Bible in a regular systematic way. [...] It is designed particularly with Muslims in mind and most Muslim difficulties have been dealt with at one time or another in the course of these discussions.<sup>206</sup>

Due to a lack of information about the actual programs produced during this period, it is not possible to draw anything but tentative conclusions. There is no evidence that the programs broadcast by ELWA during these early years were aimed at a concretely defined target audience, as demanded by RCR1. RCR2 proposes that programs should speak to people in their actual context but in reality, the programs were most likely of an individualist type. This means that CW5, the need to take a stand against societal evil, was ignored. By doing so, the Gospel became inoffensive to socio-political life and it did not play the prophetic role it should play in public life in accordance with CW4.

The programming probably avoided referring directly to the Church, as was the habit of almost all producers and broadcasters in later periods. The content of these programs mainly reflected Arabic Protestant church life, for instance in how they spoke about Jesus Christ, and as far as contextualization was concerned, this was not done in a manner that was disliked by the Arabic Protestant churches. This means that CW2, as far as relevant, was not trespassed against. The programs were most likely in a Biblical and Evangelical jargon that was hard to understand for Muslims, so RCR4 was not fully implemented, though CW6, about the impossibility to separate form and meaning, was heeded.

The languages used in the programs were MSA and Moroccan colloquial Arabic. It is unlikely that any other colloquial Arabic language was used. RCR3 suggests that broadcasters should use languages that the target audience considers their own. During the early 1960s, many Arabs may have considered MSA 'their own', and the usage of MSA can be defended in that context even though many people had difficulty understanding it. A radical choice for the colloquial languages might have been more impacting.

RCR6 suggests that the impact of programs is influenced by the media environment. As the programs of ELWA were broadcast through their own transmitters, the immediate context of the programs was static on the frequencies that were used, or other-language broadcasts of ELWA. In that sense, the media environment was neutral. In general, the fact that the programs were broadcast from Liberia and not from any Western country was probably positive in the sensitive political climate of the early 1960s. On the other hand, SW broadcasts coming from outside

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<sup>205</sup> Interview with anonymous producer in *Lebanon on the Highway*, pp. 55-56. Bourne confirmed that this was Aubrey Whitehouse. Phil Bourne in an email to the author (2 November 2004). LEM was responsible for the LBI that had begun in the 1930s and was re-opened in 1952, for the training of evangelists and pastors. In 1971 LBI was closed.

<sup>206</sup> *Lebanon on the Highway*, p. 56.

the Arab World must have given a 'foreign' element to the broadcasts, irrespective of the content of the programs. Further study on the general perception by the Arab audience of Arabic Christian SW broadcasts that come from outside the Arab World, is recommended.

### **7.5.2 Years of Acord and Salisbury: 1966-1975**

In the late 1960s ELWA continued to receive these and other programs from its program suppliers, but the ELWA studio in Beirut was also responsible for producing an average of 22 programs of 15 minutes per week by itself. In 1969, Acord explained to radio colleagues the sort of programs that were produced in the ELWA studio:

1. Guidance for Youth. These were Bible readings for young people by Wasserman and al-Shirâkî in which the Bible portion was chanted and then the exposition was done by al-Shirâkî in the style of Islamic *shaykhs*.
2. Discussions on the Faith. These programs were written by Wasserman. Al-Shirâkî answered faith questions from the Islamic perspective while a pastor gave the Christian viewpoint.
3. Book of Proverbs. Al-Shirâkî read this Bible book in a *Qur'ânic* style.
4. Al-Shirâkî's Live Story in 45 parts, written by the *shaykh* himself.
5. My Life. The life story of an Iranian convert.
6. Bible Stories in Song. Jûrj Shadîd would come from Syria to Beirut to sing Gospel stories almost straight from the Bible.
7. Flowers from Every Garden. These were variety programs with jokes, some music, and good stories.
8. Oriental Bouquet. Programs quite similar to Flowers from every Garden.
9. Poetry programs with secular and Christian poetry.
10. Drama Programs. These were basically dialogues, mainly due to a lack of personnel.
11. Good News. Programs that contained preaching.
12. Arab History. Readings in secular Arab history.
13. What's New. This program contained selected Arabic prose from newspapers and books about novelties.
14. My Choice for You. This was a catch-all program.<sup>207</sup>

From Acord's description, it is clear that Wasserman and al-Shirâkî played a major role in the programming of ELWA.<sup>208</sup> Al-Shirâkî was an MBB co-worker of KM. This organization's co-operation with both ELWA and later FEBA supplied these broadcasters with six programs of 15 minutes per week for 15 years during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>209</sup> These programs were likely more suitable for Muslims than most other programs. Research about KM and al-Shirâkî would create a wealth of information on German mission work in the Arab World and is recommended. The programs they produced in the ELWA studio used Islamic jargon and forms to ex-

<sup>207</sup> 'Effective Methods in Reaching Muslims by Radio', pp. 45-46.

<sup>208</sup> It was not possible to get information about *Karmel Mission* from the organization itself as it preferred to maintain silence for the sake of its ongoing work in the Arab World.

<sup>209</sup> Interview with Derek Knell by the author (13 August 2003). Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

plain the Gospel and in accordance with that, church life was pictured in terms of Travis' C4 spectrum of contextualization.

The list of programs gives the impression that the ELWA studio produced a good diversity of programs, and that the organization tried hard to produce programs for Muslims and not for the churches of the Arab World. Not all of ELWA's programs had the same approach as KM. Based on the vague descriptions above, it is more likely that most of these programs used the language of the historic Protestant churches of Lebanon, with an effort to be understandable for Muslims. However, compared to the early 1960s, ELWA's programming had shifted within the RCR4 and RCR5 realms. There was a greater effort to use linguistic and cultural forms that was congenial to Muslims. This seems to have been at the expense of not heeding warning CW6, about the impossibility to separate form and content and CW2, about the need to contextualize in the church community which was also trespassed against.

By the end of the 1960s, the studio produced only 40 percent of the Arabic ELWA programs so the majority of its programming was dependent on other organizations.<sup>210</sup> This made it difficult for Acord and Salisbury to fully implement their programming strategies. The overall impression of the programs must have been more culturally Christian than Acord wished them to be. This potentially diminished the impact of programs like those of KM as these might have worked better if they were not enveloped in obviously Christian programming. The immediate media environment of these programs was not taken into account as RCR6 prescribes. So whereas it is unlikely that, in the context of the ELWA programming environment, these programs in an Islamic style would have attracted more Muslims to the broadcasts, they did however result in upsetting the Arab churches.

### **7.5.3 Years of Dependency: 1975-1990**

In 1975 ELWA became fully dependent on program suppliers as it had stopped its own productions. ELWA continued to receive programs from BTGH, RSB and MMC and some other producers for broadcasts to North Africa. The programs of those producers are assessed elsewhere. Generally speaking, it can be said that none of these producers wanted to use Islamic linguistic and cultural forms. Thus, CW6 was heeded.

RCR2, the need to address the audience in its actual context, was only partially implemented, as all programs avoided discussing the concrete socio-political implication of the Gospel for the Arab World. This means that no stand was taken against corporate sin. CW4 and CW5 were therefore only partially heeded. The programs of the main program suppliers also tried to avoid any reference to the actual churches of the Arab World and elsewhere in an effort to make the programs more contextualized for North Africa. This was in contradiction to CW3; contextualization should confirm the unity of the church of all cultures and not ignore the actual body of Christ.

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<sup>210</sup> 'Report of Meeting to Discuss Beirut Situation' (16 March 1969), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

## 7.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

ELWA received only three letters from listeners in 1959 and 1960. When it began using a stronger SW transmitter with better antennas in 1960, the audience response immediately rose. Within a year, 473 letters were received from different parts of the Arab World, but mainly from Egypt.<sup>211</sup>

The meager information extant about ELWA's audience response figures is summarized in *Figure 7.1*. These figures must be treated with caution as they are deductions from audience response figures during some of the months in each of the given years.

In 1966 ELWA assumed that it had about 60,000 listeners in the Middle East each day in an area with an estimated three million radios. It seems that of the 270 letters received from the Middle East in 1966, most came from Christians, even though the target audience was Muslims.<sup>212</sup> The Christians that wrote were from all age groups and classes. The Muslims who responded were mostly students.<sup>213</sup> In 1967, over 80 percent of all 558 letters came from Egypt alone. Iraq followed in a distant second place.<sup>214</sup>

By 1969, the situation had changed dramatically. Of the total response of 1,884 letters, about 40 percent came from respondents in Morocco, 15 percent from Algeria, and 25 percent from Egypt.<sup>215</sup> 95 percent of responders were Muslims.<sup>216</sup> In 1970, and estimated 1,634 letters of first time respondees were received. Morocco and Algeria had become even more important in 1970, with barely any responses from Egypt.<sup>217</sup> According to Acord, this shift was the result of political circumstances in Egypt, and of his new programming policies:

<sup>211</sup> 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'. Ray G. de La Haye wrote to Reginald Townsend, the Liberian Director of the Liberian Information Service, about the countries where responses came from. He mentioned Aden, Saudi Arabia, Arabia [meaning those parts that later became the United Arab Emirates], Israel, and Syria. No Arabic countries in North Africa were mentioned as he generalized by saying that letters had come in from 'practically every country in Africa'. Letter of Ray G. de La Haye to Reginald Townsend (29 September 1960), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 24, Broadcasting Division, Audience Survey 1968. See also Reed and Grant, *Voice under every Palm*, p. 147.

<sup>212</sup> 'Transcript of Meetings', p. 3. Salisbury in an email to the author (14 May 2003).

<sup>213</sup> 'Transcript of Meetings', p. 3.

<sup>214</sup> Of those 45 letters received in 1966, 39 came from Egypt, from each of the countries Morocco, Algeria and Syria one letter was received, two came from Iraq, and one from Brazil. Of those 45 letter writers, three were Muslims. Of the 93 letters received in 1967, eight came from Muslims. From Egypt, 71 letters were received, and 11 from Iraq, 6 from Morocco. 'March 1967 ELWA statistics', from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 24, Broadcasting Division, Audience Survey Statistical 1955-1972. 'December 1966 ELWA Statistics', from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 24, Broadcasting Division, Audience Survey Statistical 1955-1972. 'February 1967 ELWA Statistics', from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 24, Broadcasting Division, Audience Survey Statistical 1955-1972.

<sup>215</sup> This figure is based on the receipt of 157 letters in December 1969. See 'Beirut ELWA Recording Studio' (5 January 1970), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>216</sup> Acord, 'The Current Status of Radio Broadcasting to Muslim Peoples', p. 382.

<sup>217</sup> 'Beirut Report August 1970' (n.d.), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972. 'Beirut Report October 1970' (n.d.), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972. For 1970, ELWA published that it received a total of 2,514 letters, of whom 35 percent had written to ELWA before.



Mail for security reasons is cut off from Egypt. We used to get a good response but it has stopped altogether. However we used to get ten to 15 letters a month mostly from Christians and within the four years of the Acord's tour of service in Beirut we now get more than ten times that number of letters per month and 99% of these come from Muslims. The Lord has enabled him to completely change the picture around although he has lived in an area where the Christian have a conviction that Moslems cannot be saved!<sup>218</sup>

It is hard to measure the effect of the change in programming on the audience response as there were also other factors at play. The new antenna that ELWA had put to service in 1968 was beamed specifically to North Africa with a very good signal creating a whole new audience in North Africa.<sup>219</sup> In 1969 ELWA was broadcasting one hour each day to the Middle East in Arabic and initially also in Greek, but twice as many hours to North Africa in Arabic and French.<sup>220</sup>

Salisbury reported that during the first half of the 1970s the letters ELWA received peaked at about 250 per month. Most of that mail came from male Muslim students aged between 15 and 30 years and mainly from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, but also from Egypt and Libya.<sup>221</sup> During these years ELWA's programs were also broadcast by FEBA. After the FEBA broadcasts were added in 1971, the response from Egypt increased with letters also coming from Yemen, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Iraq.<sup>222</sup> As the number of letters from North Africa exceeded others, it is apparent that the broadcasts by ELWA's transmitters in Monrovia elicited more response from North Africa, than the broadcasts of FEBA from the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East.<sup>223</sup>

In 1975 the reception of the broadcasts to North Africa became so bad in the evenings that those evening broadcasts were cancelled. This must have meant that overall audience response decreased noticeably.<sup>224</sup> 'Some days [reception in North Africa] was better than other days. Some months you were able to get through clearly and other months you were not getting through at all', recalled Zarifa. This means that deductions regarding annual audience response based on the scarce in-

<sup>218</sup> 'Beirut Permanent File' (5 August 1970).

<sup>219</sup> Entz in an email to the author (20 May 2004). 'The loudest dog gets heard. Partly that is due to the fact that the mass produced receivers are of very poor quality. Some SW receivers will pick up little more than the loudest station in each band'. The power of the transmitter and the direction are also of major importance. This new antenna used a low angle take-off and thus was able to go over the desert, rather than trying to bounce off it. [...] Reflection off sand and rocks causes great attenuation.[...] However ELWA by sophisticated design can get a low take-off angle and hit the ionosphere (which is about 200 miles high), at about 1000 or 1200 miles distant. Then the reflected Wave will hit the ground at 2000 or 2400 miles - the target area. Now the surface in between is not relevant. Libya is too far away to reach in this manner. This explains in part the North Africa response and the Libyan lack of response'. 'Beirut Permanent File' (5 August 1970).

<sup>220</sup> 'Transmission Schedule ELWA, Expiration Date 6 October 1968' (n.d.), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Schedules 1968-1972. 'Transmission Schedule, Effective October 1969' (n.d.), from the ELWA Archives Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Schedules 1968-1972.

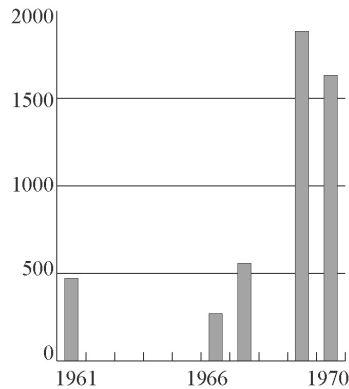
<sup>221</sup> Ibid. 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'.

<sup>222</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>223</sup> Suhail Zarifa in an email to the author (12 June 2004). The archives of SIM were accessible up until 1975. Information on audience response could possibly be found in later files by future researchers.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

formation available must be treated with caution. Zarifa also mentioned that ‘powerful radio signals [came] out of Russia, Algeria and other countries that tried to jam and interfere with our broadcast’. As Zarifa realized that TWR had an excellent reception with its MW broadcasts from Monte Carlo and Cyprus, he decided that TWR was able to do what ELWA was not. Zarifa’s decision to return to Canada in June 1976 was directly related to that assessment.<sup>225</sup>



*Figure 7.1 ELWA's Total Arabic Audience Repsonse: 1961-1970*

Salisbury’s enthusiasm for using radio in evangelizing the Arab World was related to the relevance of the medium in the 1970s:

The Middle Eastern countries relied on Shortwave broadcasting to gain an unbiased assessment of world news and Christian Shortwave broadcasting was certainly a valuable tool in order to reach many people with the Gospel. All radio [...] stations in Arab countries were government owned and controlled. Therefore Arabs wanted to receive news from outside and often came across missionary radio transmissions ‘by chance’. In the mid 1970’s Mediumwave broadcasting was beginning to really take off with Radio Monte Carlo in Cyprus and other high power Mediumwave transmitting sites.<sup>226</sup>

The fact that for his enthusiasm Salisbury pointed to the broadcasts of TWR through RMC-ME, and not to ELWA’s broadcasts, confirms that ELWA’s self-assessment was not very positive at the time when it stopped its Arabic broadcasts to the Middle East. Salisbury believed that RMC-ME in those years was avidly listened to, and that the effectiveness of radio in those years was related to the Arab-Israel war of 1967:

It would seem that one of the biggest factors for so many Muslims to become open to the Gospel was the 1967 Arab Israeli War. According to the propaganda, Muslims had to win. Yet the war was over in just six days. Certainly after the war many

<sup>225</sup> Zarifa in an email to the author (12 June 2004).

<sup>226</sup> Salisbury, ‘Our Memories’.

young Muslims were questioning whether Islam met their spiritual need and many found that need was met in Jesus Christ.<sup>227</sup>

It is not possible to assess to what extent the increased audience response during those years was the direct result of the war of 1967 and subsequent interest in the Gospel. It may have been due to the fact that ELWA had filled more airtime.

Only a rough calculation of the effectiveness of the broadcasts to attract audience response is possible. The 1,884 letters that were received in 1969 were responses to the programs that ELWA produced, not to programs of program suppliers. Those attracted their own response. As ELWA produced 40 percent, or 72 minutes, of the three hours of programs it was broadcasting daily, this means that for every 14 minutes broadcast, it received one letter. This measure of the success of the broadcast was the yardstick ELWA itself used.

The Beirut studio was responsible for the follow-up of letters from listeners who responded to ELWA's programs. According to Acord, the programs ELWA produced were 'all with the aim of getting the listener to write to us so we could send back to them a copy of the Gospel and hopefully enroll them in correspondence courses'.<sup>228</sup> This approach to the usage of radio was quite narrow and was not a stimulant for producing programs that propounded the Gospel in its holistic width. The reasons why ELWA defined its goals that narrowly was because its main goal was to lead individuals to Christ. It assumed that with that goal in mind it had to rely on literature, not on its own broadcasts.

During its Shuwayt Conference in 1972 one of the Moroccan MBBs studying in Lebanon, reported on research he had done about 'the effects of radio and literature outreach.' He interviewed people in Lebanon who had become Christians after having written to addresses given in Christian radio broadcasts. They would then be contacted by Christian organizations in Lebanon.<sup>229</sup> 'However, it was found, that they were not saved through radio but rather through literature.'<sup>230</sup> Salisbury had a similar approach. 'It is thought that [our] programs were used of the Lord to open the doors for the Gospel in these areas for others to build on and we have heard of many who came to the Lord in those days.'<sup>231</sup>

ELWA could not financially afford to use 'bait type materials' like free cassette tapes for getting people to write to them, like some organizations used. According to Salisbury, most people wrote in 'because they had a felt spiritual need.'<sup>232</sup> Regarding literature follow-up, suggestions were made never to send more than a handful of letters to the same village at any single day, because of authorities trying to block Christian mail. Envelopes should also not be thick, as the censor or

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Acord, 'The Current Status of Radio Broadcasting to Muslim Peoples', p. 389.

<sup>229</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid. Salisbury refers, for instance, to the fact that Wasserman used the mailing lists of ELWA for contacting people and offering *Karmel Mission's* BCC's. 'We did not have the resources to do so'. Salisbury in an email to the author (19 September 2005).

<sup>232</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

the post office might open those. One of the Moroccans at the Shuwayt conference said that the authorities in Morocco had always opened his mail.<sup>233</sup>

During the 1970s, the ELWA studio in Beirut mailed thin booklets to its audience. At that time, the Lebanese Bible Society in Beirut produced the New Testament in a dozen or so small booklets with small print. The smaller portion made it more likely that the recipient would actually receive it, and also read it. ELWA regularly changed the types of envelopes it used, and wrote return addresses by hand on the envelopes in order to stop the material being confiscated and in order to avoid problems for their respondees with authorities. Salisbury described the efforts to contact the audience:

Follow up was mainly by the writing of personal letters. Shadi [Habib] spent many hours pounding away at his Arabic typewriter (which was quite a feat to use). Our main emphasis was putting as much of the Bible into people's hands as possible, but only a portion at a time (it became clear that the Lord was really using it). Booklets produced by Walter Wassermann's group were used to answer many of the common questions Muslims asked. When a good link was established with a listener and it seemed they had come to the Lord, we had them to do a type of correspondence course using translated Navigator material. If they advanced beyond this, we would then introduce them to the North Africa Ministries folk during correspondence courses.<sup>234</sup>

Some program producers used their own addresses and did their own follow-up, like Madany. It is unknown what sort of response he and others received for their broadcasts on ELWA. ELWA used the Emmaus BCCs for the respondents from the Middle East.<sup>235</sup> The studio took direct responsibility for answering letters from the Middle East and the Peninsula but mail from North Africa was sent to RSB in Marseille for follow-up. This arrangement continued after FEBA took over the Beirut studio from ELWA for the broadcasts by FEBA. In 1977 MMC handled the audience response for ELWA in North Africa.<sup>236</sup>

ELWA decided in 1975 to focus on improvement of follow-up in North Africa, with more personal contact with the target audience. There was dissatisfaction with the follow-up that had been done in the Middle East. According to Thomas, the 'development of a follow-up system and the task of relating the ministry to the church has long been relatively minimal and undesirably ineffective'.<sup>237</sup> In the context of ELWA's main aim of enrolling people in correspondence courses for follow-up, this conclusion of Thomas was highly self-critical.

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<sup>233</sup> 'Report of a conference held in Shwait, Lebanon', p. 4

<sup>234</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'.

<sup>235</sup> 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'.

<sup>236</sup> Salisbury, 'Our Memories'. 'ELWA Arabic Ministry'.

<sup>237</sup> 'Report of a conference held in Shwait, Lebanon', pp. 2-3.

## 7.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS

### 7.7.1 *Indigenization*

When the idea of a missionary radio station in Africa was conceived, and when WABA was founded in 1951, it was a purely North American venture. Two of its first leaders, Watkins and Howard, had grown up in Africa, and some of the American organizations that were consulted must also have had some experience of mission in Africa, but there was no consultation with native African church leaders. The opening of ELWA in Monrovia in 1954 was led by American missionaries. Liberians were merely present as spectators.

For its Arabic broadcasts, ELWA followed its general policy to only have indigenous speakers on radio. ELWA approached missionaries of SIM and other organizations to find Arabs for its broadcasts. Instead of trying to enlist missionaries, some of whom undoubtedly spoke Arabic rather fluently, the only speakers in the ELWA programs were native Arabs. ELWA had speakers from Palestine, Lebanon and Syria working in its studio in Beirut.

ELWA showed its serious commitment to managerial indigenization by having Zarifa manage all matters pertaining to the Arabic broadcasts in the central studio in Monrovia. However, in order for SIM to appoint Zarifa to that position, he was obliged to do Bible college training in Canada, to find a Canadian church to support him as its missionary, and to become a Canadian citizen. This structural approach to its Arab missionaries, which was related to the financial support systems in SIM, was detrimental to true indigenization of the leadership in ELWA.

ELWA's Arabic studio in Beirut and its program production there was always managed by non-Arabs. During the late 1960s, ELWA considered the idea of a Lebanese Christian or a Lebanese church taking over the operational management of the studio. This was thought possible as during the civil war that began in 1975, many local Christian-managed studios and FM broadcasts had mushroomed. Lebanon abounded with able Christian leaders who had proved that they could run a studio. However, the conclusion of Davis, that there would not be any person 'sufficiently capable of running the studio on their own', was a reflection of ELWA's problem to find someone willing to apply with SIM, to go to North America, and to find a supporting church. Zarifa's comment that 'the concept of the "full-time Christian worker" [was] almost non-existent in Lebanon', should be seen in that light. RVOG was also able to have an excellent, locally managed studio.

In 1970, ELWA had decided it wanted to hand over the Beirut studio to the Egyptian *Khalâṣ al-Nufûs* societies. That was decided at a time when SIM had encountered problems in finding personnel to manage the studio, but it also underlines ELWA's target of Arabizing its studio. Since the option to hand over the facilities to Lebanese churches or individuals seemed small, it meant that at least some other Arabs would manage the studio. However, Zarifa's effort to convince Salwá of *Khalâṣ al-Nufûs* in Alexandria to work in Beirut did not succeed. Salwá was told that he should apply with SIM, or *Khalâṣ al-Nufûs* could finance him and send him to Beirut directly. Zarifa's hope that he would follow that second route, outside SIM, was because that would be the faster method for getting Salwá in

Beirut. In either case, Salwá would have to arrange his own finances. The eventual handover of the studio to the European management of FEBA in 1975 was not ELWA's first choice and should be seen in the light of ELWA's urgent financial problems.

### **7.7.2. Contextualization**

#### **7.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

ELWA was keenly aware of the differences between its Middle Eastern and the North African audiences, and tried to take that into account in its broadcasts, even though many of the programs that were made by Middle Easterners and with the Middle East in mind were also broadcast to North Africa.

Only briefly did ELWA endeavor to focus on a homogenous target audience, namely in the late 1950s, when its signal was aimed at Sudan and Yemen, and in the late 1960s, when its signal could best be received in Morocco. However, this targeting of a rather homogenous audience was a function of ELWA's technical abilities and not one based on a missiological choice. The organization tried, until 1975, to reach the whole Arab World with its broadcasts, and it therefore only implemented RCR1 to a limited extent. The focus on the whole Arab World as a target area was mitigated somewhat by ELWA's focus on students.

#### **7.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

Most programs of ELWA were aimed at individuals in their personal context. As topics like politics and Islam were purposely ignored, for instance by refusing to broadcast news programs, ELWA only spoke to a limited extent to its audience in its actual context. Given ELWA's initial broad focus on the whole Arab World, it would have been hard to implement this in any case. The effect of only speaking to its audience in a highly individualized manner means that ELWA did not heed CW5 and take a stand against societal or political evil. Hence, it did not allow the Gospel to play the prophetic role it should play in public life in accordance with CW4.

The avoidance of political, Islamic and socio-economic topics was in accordance with the desires of the churches in most countries of the Arab World. Only Lebanese churches participated in the political arena, as in that country Christians formed a majority. However, even in Lebanon the small Protestant churches that formed ELWA's natural constituency, did not involve themselves in the political discourse. Therefore, ELWA's avoidance of political comments in its programs fulfilled CW2, about the need to contextualize the Gospel in the community of the national churches. This reveals a dilemma. Implementing RCR2, and heeding CW4 and CW5, meant that CW2 could not be fully heeded.

#### **7.7.2.3 Language**

The programs ELWA produced were mostly in MSA. That made them difficult to understand for most Arabs as only a minority was able to use that language. Many students all over the Arab World shared an appreciation for being addressed in MSA as the language of upward mobility and Pan-Arabism, irrespective of whether

they understood the language very well. The term *Arab World* was a geo-political construct and not so much a cultural reality. It can be argued that those Muslims that adhered strongest to the concept of Pan-Arabism and the usage of one common language were also the most satisfied with the political regimes or the dominant Islamic culture. They would also be the least inclined to take a contrarian decision towards accepting a counter-cultural Christian worldview. It is arguable, therefore, that the purposeful usage of colloquial Arabic could have had a much larger impact than the usage of MSA. Colloquial Arabic was the heart language of students and as that would have drawn an audience of those that were dissatisfied with the prevalent philosophies, without them gravitating to Islam

ELWA agreed after 1975 that they had to concentrate on broadcasting in the spoken languages of North Africa. For their broadcasts they used North African colloquial Arabic and Amazigh. These programs were not produced by ELWA. However, it continued to also broadcast programs in MSA to North Africa. This was most likely due to economic reasons: ELWA was paid to broadcast those programs and needed the income.

#### **7.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

Until the mid 1960s ELWA's programs used the sort of Christian language that the Protestant churches of the Arab World were used to. The programs were made with an effort to speak in a language that was also understandable for Muslims. The producers of programs in the early 1960s and after 1975 did not endeavor to present the Gospel in Islamic terms, so warning CW6, about the impossibility of separating form and content, was heeded.

During the period of 1966 to 1975, ELWA continued producing programs as it did before, but it also produced some of its programs with Islamic Arabic linguistic and cultural forms. The churches in the Arab World were strongly against that, so by this approach ELWA did not heed CW2. Given its lack of appreciation for the opinions of the majority of Christian Arabs regarding how to contextualize the Gospel, it seems ELWA's management tended to also absolutize its own missiological views. It also did not heed warning CW6 about the impossibility to separate form and meaning.

#### **7.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

Throughout its existence, ELWA broadcast programs in which Christ was portrayed in the traditional Christian manner. In the period of 1966 to 1975, ELWA also made programs with a different approach. In some of its programs, Christ was spoken of by using his Islamic name, *'Isá*. This choice corresponded with ELWA's policy to use more Islamic terms and cultural forms during those years. CW2, about the need to contextualize within the context of the national church, and CW6, about the impossibility of separating form and meaning, were not heeded.

Although it is not clear how ELWA described the audience's need to participate in church-life, it is likely that the word *church* was avoided altogether. This means that CW1 went partially unheeded. Also, CW3, about the need to proclaim the Gospel in an Ecumenical manner that portrays the unity of the Church, worldwide and historically, was therefore not heeded in the programs.

As with the usage of Islamic linguistic and cultural forms, this approach regarding the portrayal of Christ changed after 1975, when ELWA stopped producing its own programs and when it focused its transmission on North Africa. The producers that bought airtime did not agree with the idea to use Islamic terminology for Christ.

#### **7.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

ELWA broadcast its programs on its own frequencies so the only issue of its media environment was the general question of how Muslims perceived Arabic Christian broadcasts by SW in general. In respect to ELWA's programs with a more 'Islamic' portrayal of Christ during the period of 1966-1975, it should be concluded that ELWA did not take the impact of the immediate environment of those programs seriously enough. As these programs were packaged within more conservative Christian programs, Muslims who listened to them would immediately realize that these were in fact Christian programs. It is therefore hard to see how these programs contributed positively to the proclamation of the Gospel. Muslims could easily assume that Christians were trying to play tricks by using Islamic language.

#### **7.7.3 Christian Witness**

ELWA's focus on audience response and follow-up is understandable in the context of its goal to lead as many Muslims to Christ as possible, in the shortest possible period. Especially in areas where there was no visible national Church yet, as in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa, this effort to use radio for getting in touch with potentially interested people, was understandable. In such circumstances, where churches were not allowed to work publicly, Christian radio could play an important role in creating the beginnings of church through its *kerygmatic* witness.

As ELWA itself made audience response and the enrollment of respondees in BCCs its highest target, it cannot have been satisfied with receiving one letter for every 14 minutes of airtime in 1969. The conclusion of Thomas in 1975 that ELWA's follow-up systems were 'highly ineffective' is a devastating conclusion, given ELWA's expressed goal.

The focus on eliciting individual audience response of people with an interest in the Gospel had the disadvantage that it did not lead to the type of programming that could give the audience a broad view of the whole Gospel and its implications. ELWA broadcast its Arabic programs during a period of severe political repression, wars, and upheavals in the Arab World. These issues ought to be mentioned in Christian radio that purports to proclaim the full counsel of God.

As regards the Christian witness, ELWA was strong on the side of the Christian *kerygma* regarding the death and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. The programs did not reflect much of the Church's *koinonia*, due to the stress on the need for individuals to accept the kerygma. The *diakonia* of the Church was also not reflected in the programs, as the role of the Church in society, socio-economic and political issues were not treated. The lack of these elements in the programs of ELWA negatively affected the value of the witness of the Christian *kerygma*.



## 8 Trans World Radio (TWR)

Trans World Radio (TWR) played an important role in the Christian witness through radio broadcasts to the Arab World. It began broadcasting Arabic programs in 1965 and it has continued to do so. TWR's importance is mainly due to its long-standing relationship with Radio Monte Carlo (RMC). Its Mediumwave (MW) transmissions to North Africa were broadcast from the Monaco facilities and the Middle East broadcasts were from the Cyprus station.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, an exclusive relationship with RMC made TWR the only broker of airtime that could reach the Arab World by MW. The organizations that broadcast their programs through TWR were assured of a better audience response than those that broadcast over the Shortwave (SW) signals of the other Christian broadcasters. The other Christian broadcasters did not begin MW broadcasts to the Arab World until the 1990s. This began when strong transmitters in former Communist countries began to sell airtime.

TWR has not been forthcoming with information for this study probably due to its assessment of the security risks to its operations. Fortunately it has been possible to describe the early history of TWR's Arabic broadcasts and its studio in Beirut (Lebanon) as that was not seen as an infringement of TWR's security concerns. However more recent details will continue to remain scant until the archives of TWR are opened and interviews with the TWR personnel are made possible.

TWR was, in the first place, a broker of airtime. Consequently some of those who broadcast over TWR throughout the years have been a source of information, as they have not had the same hesitations in describing their work. As a result it has been possible to give a fairly accurate description of the target audience, the linguistic choices, the programming strategies and the actual broadcasts of TWR in this research.

TWR has been helpful in supplying all Arabic programs as broadcast from 20-26 September 2004 in digital form. For the sake of space, only the programs that were broadcast from Cyprus to the Middle East, have been studied and described in this chapter. TWR's broadcasts to North Africa from Southern France await further study.

### 8.1 HISTORY

#### *8.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Broadcasts: 1948-1964*

##### **8.1.1.1 Paul Freed's Preparation for Christian Ministry**

Paul Freed (1918-1996) grew up as a *Mission Kid* in Palestine and Syria, where he often accompanied his father, Ralph Freed, on missionary visits to small villages.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Until around 1945, Ralph Freed used his original German surname Fried. He was a German Jew from Budapest who emigrated to the USA in 1913. He married a non-Jewish girl, Mildred. Mainly through

Ralph Freed (1892-1973) and his wife Mildred went to the Middle East in 1926 with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). He was the only missionary serving about 300 villages.<sup>2</sup>

Freed sr. decided to go back to the USA when violence in Jerusalem and Palestine increased to ever-higher levels in 1946. The Freeds decided to leave when a bomb destroyed a government building beside their home. Their home was damaged and Mildred was slightly injured. Her psychological condition became poor. 'With heavy hearts we left our chosen field of labor'. At that time, Freed was in charge of all the work in Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon as C&MA's field director.<sup>3</sup>

Paul felt a similar call to his father to be a minister of the Gospel. 'We could reach only a few [Arabs] in person as we sat about the fire in the village. And the question started to shape in my mind, 'what about all the others who have never had a chance'.<sup>4</sup> After schools in Jerusalem and Beirut, Paul Freed went to Wheaton College in the USA in 1936. After graduation in 1940, with a major in anthropology, he went to C&MA's Missionary Training College in Nyack in Western Canada. Among the speakers he listened to was Clarence W. Jones, the pioneer of HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings') missionary radio in Ecuador.<sup>5</sup>

After being ordained as a Southern Baptist Pastor in 1949, Freed briefly served as pastor. He then became the Greensboro, North Carolina (USA) director of Youth for Christ (YFC), an organization led by Billy Graham since 1945. Graham was the main speaker at an international YFC conference in Beatenberg (Switzerland) in 1948. Freed was present at that conference and while there, he accepted the request from two Spaniards to visit Spain to consider opening a YFC chapter there. At that time Spain was a Roman-Catholic country ruled by the fascist General Francisco Franco.<sup>6</sup>

### 8.1.1.2 Freed's Vision for Evangelizing Spain by Radio

Freed was touched by the poverty and the spiritual hunger in Spain and the need for evangelism. 'I gradually realized that these people, in whom I had never had any personal interest, were burdened with needs equally as great as the Arab people I had grown up with and whom I had longed to serve'.<sup>7</sup>

Freed was frustrated by the restrictions put on evangelism by the Spanish government. He started a YFC chapter but the Spanish law forbade Protestants to

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her and her friends, he 'accepted Christianity' in 1917, and in 1921, he was 'born again of the Spirit of God'. These details were found in a handwritten letter of Ralph Freed (1 February 1925), from his personnel file 'Ralph Freed' at the C&MA National Archives, Colorado Springs (USA). This letter seems to have been part of their application for acceptance as missionaries with C&MA.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Freed, *Reaching Arabs for Christ* (Chatham, 1972, first edition 1947) p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> Freed, *Reaching Arabs for Christ*, pp. 138-139. Freed also describes this bomb attack in Rev. Ralph Freed, 'Kept from Harm in Palestine', in *The Alliance Weekly* (13 September 1947), pp. 585-587.

<sup>4</sup> Paul E. Freed, *Towers to Eternity* (Nashville, 1967, 1994), p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes of an interview with Paul E. Freed by Galen R. Wilson (23 October 1981), from the Archives of Billy Graham Center, Collection 382T1, kept at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois (USA).

<sup>7</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 15. See also Paul E. Freed, *Let The Earth Hear* (Nashville, 1980), pp. 27-34.

evangelize outside their places of worship, it denied them access to the national media and prohibited them from operating schools.<sup>8</sup> Spain also gave only short-term visas to missionaries.<sup>9</sup> Freed was convinced that ‘closed’ countries like Spain could be reached through radio. Freed resigned from YFC in order to begin working for radio broadcasting to Spain.<sup>10</sup> He was convinced of the need to use the mass media:

Today I am looking for a complete new era in Christian missions. [...] I believe it is high time in foreign missions [...] that we stop living in the Dark Ages. We are still living in the past century with many of our methods. The message never changes from one century to another. That hard plodding, going down into the village, talking face to face with people, establishing the local church, must never stop. But we do need to catch a vision that we are losing ground – every day, every week, every month, every year. [Winning] people to Christ will need methods, the personal touch and the mass media. [...] Compared to the rest of the world’s progress, Christendom is dragging at a snail’s pace. I must make it clear though, that winning people to Christ will require methods, the personal touch and the mass media.<sup>11</sup>

In 1951, during a trip to Spain, Freed’s Spanish interpreter pointed him to the option of broadcasting from Tangier at the Moroccan coast not far from Spain. He decided to investigate the options when he heard that two Spanish Christians were living in Tangier and had been praying for a radio ministry to Spain.<sup>12</sup> Freed quickly became convinced that Tangier should be it and he initiated negotiations to buy a former mission school before he returned to the USA.<sup>13</sup>

Freed founded International Evangelism in 1952. In his autobiography, he later admitted that the goals of that organization were less than clear. ‘We believed something needed to be done that was not being done, but we did not fully know what direction we should go.’ One of the co-workers with Freed was Ben Armstrong, his brother in law, who later became the executive director of National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) in the USA.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Pedro C. Moreno (ed), *Handbook on Religious Liberty Around the World*. This handbook of the Rutherford Institute is available on [www.religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu](http://www.religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu) (27 April 2003).

<sup>9</sup> Franco seized power in 1939 as a fascist dictator. He re-established Roman-Catholicism as the state religion, closed Protestant churches and schools, required children to study Catholicism in school, forced members of the military to participate in ceremonies honoring Catholicism, and reestablished canonical marriage for Catholics. Franco later moderated his policies on the oppression of religious minorities. In 1945, the state allowed limited freedom of religion as it promulgated the Charter of the Spanish People. Article Six of the Charter stated: ‘[The] profession and practice of the Catholic religion, which is that of the Spanish state, will enjoy official protection. No one will be molested for his religious beliefs, nor for the private practice of his religion. No external ceremonies or manifestations other than those of the Catholic religion will be permitted’. Moreno, *Handbook on Religious Liberty Around the World*.

<sup>10</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* These two men were Ruben Lores and Peter Harayda, see Freed, *Let The Earth Hear*, p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

In 1953 Freed went to Tangier and upon arrival immediately started the process to obtain permission to build transmitters and antennas. Shortly after he began, an American stopped him in the streets. ‘Good morning, Mr. Freed. My name is Southworth. I understand you’re trying to build a radio station. I have a simple proposition. I’d like to suggest that your station be put up under my permit’.<sup>15</sup> The man was Herbert Southworth, one of the broadcasters in Tangier.

Freed flatly refused. ‘It was more gratifying for me to think of winning this battle all by myself, than it was to accept the offer of a man whom God had chosen to share in the building of His station’. Next day, Freed had changed his mind as he realized that the offer of Southworth would enable broadcasts to start far quicker as he would not have to wait for permission. Financially too it was a good arrangement as no capital investments would be needed and Freed could lease the transmitter. Freed accepted the offer. Southworth built the station using American army surplus transmitters and antennas on his own land and with his own permits and engineering crew.<sup>16</sup>

### 8.1.1.3 Radio Voice of Tangier (VOT): 1954-1959

#### **Broadcasting**

Freed sr. seems to have been the driving force behind his son Paul. ‘Paul always looked to me for advice. [...] “Father, how will I get started? Even apart from funds I would need just the right person to go to Tangier while I present the need here in the States.” Then he suddenly turned to me, “Father, I would rather have you and Mother start such work in Tangier than anyone else I know.”’<sup>17</sup> Freed sr. thus turned down an offer to become the director of the Nyack Missionary Training College and instead sailed to Tangier in January 1954 to take charge of the operation as the general director. Shortly thereafter he purchased the mission school that had been offered for sale in 1951.<sup>18</sup>

On 22 February 1954 Freed sr. broadcast the first Christian message of his organization over the 2.5 kilowatt (kW) SW transmitter. The initial broadcasts were one hour at night during the week and one hour in the afternoon on Sundays.<sup>19</sup> The first programs were in Spanish and English, but German and other European languages soon followed.<sup>20</sup> The formal, registered name of the station was WTAN.<sup>21</sup> Freed seems to have initially used the name *Radio Voice of International Evangelism Tangier*, but it later came to be known as *Radio Voice of Tangier* (VOT).<sup>22</sup> The station was a latecomer in the city among the other stations; it began broadcasting in an environment of growing violence against the occupation.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 60-61.

<sup>16</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>17</sup> Freed, *Reaching Arabs for Christ*, p. 141.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> Henrik Klemetz in an email to the author (29 March 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 75.

<sup>21</sup> See [www.181.pair.com/otsw/QL2/gallery131.html](http://www.181.pair.com/otsw/QL2/gallery131.html) (11 December 2002).

<sup>22</sup> Klemetz in an email to the author (29 March 2005). Klemetz quoted from the actual VOT stationery.

Financially, these first few years of operations were very difficult. Funds came in very slowly. Two months after he had started broadcasting, Freed sr. wrote to his son in the USA: 'Paul, if we don't get some real encouragement, some real help this week, I've made arrangements to give up the broadcasting business and come back.'<sup>23</sup> Money arrived just in time to save the operation.<sup>24</sup> Freed sr. wrote of that early period: 'I was now under no mission board and had no pledged support. Paul [...] would send all gifts coming in. [...] For some months we were sorely tested, but the Lord was faithful and the work grew.'<sup>25</sup>

On 1 January 1956 the station added a ten kW SW transmitter to the existent one of 2.5 kW in order to expand its broadcasting. Shortly before its expansion VOT was broadcasting in eight languages. In 1959, a few years after its expansion, it was broadcasting in 26 languages to Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Among those 26 languages, Arabic was not included, neither were any of the Amazigh languages of North Africa.<sup>26</sup>

Helmut Gärtner was responsible for the German broadcast department of VOT. Freed called him 'the real key to the entire German development'.<sup>27</sup> Gärtner had to communicate with different mission agencies that were working in Germany. These agencies would produce their programs in Germany and mail them to Tangier where Gärtner had to control the tapes before broadcasting. He was unhappy that in one hour four different programs were broadcast in which each agency advertised its own books and follow-up materials with their individual addresses. Gärtner feared that this 'eventually gave the impression that the broadcaster was more a market place than a Temple of God', and that was reflected in the audience response. It could not be changed though. The organizations had bought the airtime and were able to spread the Gospel as they deemed fit.<sup>28</sup> This method of selling airtime to other ministries would remain the hallmark of TWR.

### ***Political Instability***

Moroccan armed resistance against the French Occupation Forces had reached serious levels in the meantime. In 1956 France decided to grant Morocco its independence so as to concentrate on not losing the full-scale war in Algeria. Tunisia also became independent in 1956 and Mauritania in 1960. This further encouraged the resistance movement in Algeria with the result that President Charles de Gaulle had to give up that province of France in 1962.

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<sup>23</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71. Most radio mission organizations that started in the 1950s would see the provision of money as one of the main 'proofs' of God's blessing.

<sup>25</sup> Freed, *Reaching Arabs for Christ*, p. 142.

<sup>26</sup> On a QSL card mailed to Roger Legge on 30 March 1959, VOT wrote: 'Broadcasts are in the following languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Norwegian, Czech, Polish, Yiddish, Estonian, Lithuanian, Slovakian, Russian, Hungarian, Yugoslavian, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Ukrainian, Italian, Albanian Greek, Armenian, Hebrew, Finnish, Latvian, Dutch.' This card was available on [www.181.pair.com](http://www.181.pair.com) (11 December 2002).

<sup>27</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 121.

<sup>28</sup> Rolf Strasser, 'Die Entstehung der ERF' (1997) on [www.erf.de](http://www.erf.de) (10 January 2003). Quote of Gärtner translated from German by the author.

Spain decided to grant independence to Spanish Morocco when French Morocco became independent. King Muhammad V did not lose time and incorporated the former Spanish Morocco into his independent Kingdom. In October 1956 Tangier was also given to Morocco by international agreement.

Morocco became independent on 2 March 1956. That was two months after VOT had invested in larger broadcasting facilities and seven months after the International Broadcasting Association (IBRA), a Pentecostal broadcaster from Sweden, had built studios and antennas to begin their first broadcasts through a permit of Radio Tangier. It seemed that the mission community did not see the signs of the times. Freed wrote that 'most unexpectedly' Tangier became part of Morocco.<sup>29</sup>

On 29 October 1956 Morocco announced that all radio broadcasting in Tangier would fall under normal Moroccan legislation. The only concession Morocco was willing to make was that radio stations would be allowed 'to function as heretofore during a reasonable period of time in order to permit the Government or interested parties [to] make individual arrangements with the Moroccan government [or] to request sufficient postponement of action in order to allow for the necessary adjustment procedure required.'<sup>30</sup> Unofficially, in 1956 the 'reasonable period of time' was assumed to mean six months.<sup>31</sup>

Freed began to investigate the possibility of moving his station to Europe after the announcement by Morocco. In his book *Towers to Eternity* he explained: 'In the spring of 1957 [...] I had no reason to feel any problem. Everything was in order at the Tangier station. [...] But almost subconsciously the Lord impressed me that I ought to be investigating alternate possibilities for a station location on the continent.'<sup>32</sup> Later, in his book *Let The Earth Hear*, Freed again underlined that he had this 'tug' in his heart 'before we had any idea Tangier would be closed'.<sup>33</sup> Was he unaware of Morocco's announcements in 1956? In any case, as Morocco took no immediate action then, it seems VOT and others decided not to worry too much.

In April 1959 Morocco announced that on 1 January 1960 all radio stations in Tangier would be nationalized. VOT was not prepared for this. Freed later justified VOT's lack of preparation: 'Suddenly Morocco became independent and the political picture began to shift rapidly. [All] radio in the country was to be nationalized by the end of 1959. It was then April. It seemed black as midnight when the news first came to the staff in Tangier.' In VOT's headquarters in the USA 'we felt as though the bottom had dropped out of everything'.<sup>34</sup>

The end of private radio broadcasts from Tangier had come. This did not mean that the Moroccan government forbade all Christian broadcasts in Morocco. Dur-

<sup>29</sup> Freed, *Reaching Arabs for Christ*, p. 142.

<sup>30</sup> 'Adjustments Being Made in Tangier', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. V No. 1 First Quarter 1957), pp. 27-28.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 69.

<sup>33</sup> Freed, *Let The Earth Hear*, p. 39.

<sup>34</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 90.

ing the 1960s it permitted brief Protestant and Roman-Catholic services to be broadcast by national stations for the benefit of the foreign communities.<sup>35</sup>

#### 8.1.1.4 Negotiations and Contract with Radio Monte Carlo: 1957-1960

In 1957 Freed had already started talking to Radio Monte Carlo in Monte Carlo (RMC-MC) as he was interested to perhaps start broadcasting from that station on the south coast of France.<sup>36</sup> RMC-MC managed a 100 kW SW transmitter on Mount Agel, high above Monaco. E. Bosio, one of RMC-MC's executives, was very positive about Freed buying airtime.<sup>37</sup> Between 1957 and 1959, while Freed was working on a doctoral thesis in New York, he corresponded with Bosio and dropped in at RMC-MC several times to keep the issue of a contract with RMC-MC alive. At the same time VOT was discussing further expansion in Tangier.<sup>38</sup> This gives the impression that for Freed the negotiations with Bosio were only for adding some broadcasts to what was also done from Tangier. He did not realize the urgency of the matter.

The day after Morocco announced it would nationalize all radio stations, Freed flew from New York to Monte Carlo. Bosio knew that Freed had no options. The offer to lease the broadcasting facilities of RMC-MC involved Freed paying for the total cost of the installation and equipment required in advance. The equipment was to belong entirely to RMC-MC thereafter. In exchange for this, Freed had a free ten-year lease on the facilities.<sup>39</sup>

'Since we desperately wanted the opportunity to share their franchise, it was not unreasonable to expect a difficult and high price tag to be attached', Freed concluded. The price was US\$500,000. Christian business people in Germany, hearing about the details of the contract thought the contractual arrangements were 'absolutely crazy'.<sup>40</sup> In spite of that, in October 1959 the contract was signed by Trans World Radio (TWR), as the ministry was now called. The Norwegian Haanes family paid the first installment of US\$83,000.<sup>41</sup> The largest single amount, about US\$250,000, was raised by Hermann Schulte, who in October 1959 founded *Evangeliums Rundfunk* (Broadcaster of the Gospel, ERF), the German counterpart of TWR.<sup>42</sup>

One way in which TWR raised the money to pay the steep fee to RMC-MC, was by convincing American radio ministries to make advanced payments in lump sums in exchange for free airtime later. Some established organizations like Back to the Bible (BTTB), Billy Graham's Hour of Decision, Charles Fuller's The Old-Fashioned Revival Hour, Light and Life Hour, and Temple Time, which was later

<sup>35</sup> Jessie C. Stalley, *No Frontiers: The Story of the Radio School of the Bible* (Highgate, 1969), p. 46.

<sup>36</sup> In 1971 RMC-MC also began a station in Cyprus, aimed at the Middle East. In order to avoid confusion between these stations, this study speaks about RMC-MC (for Monte Carlo) and about RMC-ME (for the Middle East).

<sup>37</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 81.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>39</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94. 'Rolf Strasser, 'Die Entstehung des ERF'.

<sup>41</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110. See also Hansjörg Biener, *Medien Aktuell: Kirche im Rundfunk* (No. 109, January-February 2003), p. 11.

called Words of Hope, agreed and paid in advance.<sup>43</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, there was great interest among American organizations to broadcast the Gospel to Europe.

Part of the contract of TWR with RMC-MC was that TWR was to be the exclusive broadcaster of Christian programs on the station. This meant that any Christian organization that wanted to broadcast over RMC-MC was now forced to negotiate with TWR.<sup>44</sup> This impacted organizations that had been broadcasting over RMC-MC for years. Freed sr. was aware that they were forcing existent Christian organizations to now work through TWR. In 1959, when Morocco had not given its final deadline yet, he had published his surprise about 'a very few broadcasters who have substantial funds' that were broadcasting the Gospel on Radio Luxembourg and RMC-MC, while according to him, VOT was so well received in Europe, and so much cheaper.<sup>45</sup> One such organization was The Lutheran Hour (TLH). This organization had been broadcasting its programs into Europe since the end of World War II.<sup>46</sup> Eric Hutchings, who had set up YFC in Great Britain in 1947, had also aired his preaching on RMC-MC from October 1953.<sup>47</sup> During that same period the German mission *Neues Leben* (New Life) of Anton Schulte began its first broadcasts over RMC-MC.<sup>48</sup>

It is often alleged that RMC-MC was founded and funded by Hitler as a means of spreading Nazi propaganda around the Mediterranean.<sup>49</sup> Paul Freed repeated that myth, as it had good public relations value: 'The station had been built during the Nazi regime as a propaganda station. [...] It literally made chills run up and down my spine when I thought about the Gospel going forth every day from the same structure Adolph Hitler had designed to spread Nazi propaganda.'<sup>50</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 109.

<sup>44</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 176.

<sup>45</sup> Ralph Freed, 'The Voice of Tangier', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. VII, No. 1 January-March 1959), p. 19.

<sup>46</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 173.

<sup>47</sup> [www.revivalmedia.org/revival/history.html](http://www.revivalmedia.org/revival/history.html) (27 April 2003).

<sup>48</sup> [www.medien.neues-leben.de/radio.html](http://www.medien.neues-leben.de/radio.html) (27 April 2003).

<sup>49</sup> This is described in chapter 5.

<sup>50</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 98. The French media Moghul Jacques Trémoulet helped the Vichy regime build RMC during World War II. After the war he was accused of collaboration with the Nazi's and escaped to Spain and Switzerland. During this time he bought some radio stations in Tangier outside the realm of French law. In 1946 Trémoulet was sentenced to death in absentia for collaboration. In 1949 he was acquitted after the main witnesses of the original court case withdrew their statements. As a result of the war and the accusations of collaboration, Trémoulet lost his media Lebanese Evangelical Mission in France as France and Monaco nationalized the station in Monte Carlo. Through its ownership, France was indirectly able to ensure that RMC-MC would not broadcast programs that were critical of its policies. Initially, RMC-MC could only be heard beyond the Côte d'Azur. In the late 1950s, RMC-MC decided to build SW transmitters and thanks to its contract with TWR it was able to invest in SW extensions in 1959. As a result of these improvements, RMC-MC was able to broadcast throughout Europe and North Africa. In 1974, it extended its SW transmission facilities to Roumoules on France's south coast, so that by then, it was set to play a major role with its international broadcasts in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. In 1998, France and Monaco privatized RMC-MC. This led to some changes of ownership and different efforts to popularize the broadcasts aimed at France. (9 December 2005). M. Kerslake and F. Lhote (eds), 'Radio Andorra: A Brief History', in *Offshore Echos Magazine* (No. 38, May 1981), pp. 20-22. James Wood, *History of International Broadcasting* (London,



On 31 December 1959 VOT went off air. On 16 October 1960, TWR began broadcasting on RMC-MC after a break of more than nine months. The first broadcast was The Old-Fashioned Revival Hour.<sup>51</sup> Initially TWR used the SW facilities of RMC-MC that were directed at Europe only. TWR's Arabic broadcasts did not begin until 1965.<sup>52</sup> In *Let The Earth Hear*, Paul Freed wrote that TWR was able 'in 1961 [...] to translate our concern into action by broadcasting to the Middle East', but there is no confirmation that TWR began any Arabic broadcasts in 1961.<sup>53</sup> Freed was probably referring to other languages beside Arabic.

### 8.1.2 Arabic Broadcasts: Since 1965

#### 8.1.2.1 SW Broadcasting: Since 1965

It was the 'dream' of Freed sr. 'to see the Near East penetrated with the Gospel by means of radio', according to Paul Freed who shared that same vision.<sup>54</sup> Father and son had never lost their interest in the Arab World in which they had lived so long:

The Middle East, of course, is of great personal concern and interest to us, since our family lived there for so many years. We were particularly eager to get started on Arabic language broadcasts because we could so easily visualize the people who would hear. [...] Our vision for the Arabic people was vivid, for they were in a special way our own, and it gave us such a burden as we attempted to raise support for the airing and production of these particular broadcasts.<sup>55</sup>

In the obituary flyer for Freed sr., produced by TWR-USA after his death in 1973, he was described as a man who had a 'great love for the Arabs [as the] motivating factor throughout his life'.<sup>56</sup>

In February 1965, TWR went on air with its own 250 kW SW transmitter that it had built on Bonaire, an island of the Netherlands Antilles in the West Indies. Although the Bonaire station was meant to serve the Americas, TWR also used the facility to back up broadcasts from Monte Carlo. According to Dick Olson who was involved in building the facility, the first Arabic broadcasts of TWR came from Bonaire in 1965.<sup>57</sup>

In 1966, TWR broadcast 15 minutes per day in Arabic or Armenian, so initially the Arabic broadcasts were not daily.<sup>58</sup> In 1970 the Arabic and Armenian airtime increased to 30 minutes, and in 1971 it was between 30 minutes and one hour each

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1994, first edition 1992), p. 199. [Www.100ansderadio.free.fr](http://www.100ansderadio.free.fr) (9 December 2005). [Www.aquiradioandorra.free.fr](http://www.aquiradioandorra.free.fr). (18 February 2004).

<sup>51</sup> Freed, *Let The Earth Hear*, p. 48.

<sup>52</sup> From 1 April 1966 TWR was granted permission to use RMC-MC's 400 kW Mediumwave (MW) transmitter after 22.00 PM for broadcasts that were aimed at Europe.

<sup>53</sup> Freed, *Let The Earth Hear*, p. 142.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 140.

<sup>56</sup> 'Promoted to Glory', brochure of TWR-USA (1974) in commemoration of Ralph Freed: Received from the C&MA National Archives.

<sup>57</sup> Dick Olson in an email to the author (10 May 2005).

<sup>58</sup> Jens M. Frost (ed), *World Radio TV Handbook 1966* (Hellerup, 1965), p. 224.

day.<sup>59</sup> The Arabic transmissions continued until the early eighties, when TWR Bonaire started to drop SW broadcasts to other areas than the Americas. The final entry in the *World Radio TV Handbook* of 1981 lists three 15-minute programs per week in Arabic.<sup>60</sup> During that year, the SW broadcasts of Arabic programs were moved to RMC-MC, where TWR began a daily program of 15 minutes on SW to the Middle East. This Arabic broadcast on SW was dropped in 1988.<sup>61</sup>

In the initial stages of its Arabic broadcasts, TWR did not produce any programs itself. In 1965, North Africa Mission (NAM) with its Radio School of the Bible (RSB) was among the first to have its Arabic programs broadcast by TWR. A year later, Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) with its Malaga Media Center (MMC) began broadcasting over TWR. Bassam Madany of the Back to God Hour (BTGH) used some of the airtime from 1967 and during that year one program of 15 minutes per week was also broadcast for the Near East Baptist Mission (NEBM) in Lebanon.<sup>62</sup>

In 1971 Radio ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa') was broadcasting one hour each day to the Middle East and two hours to North Africa. FEBA (Far East Broadcasting Association) began its broadcasts from The Seychelles in 1971 and immediately aired one hour in the morning and repeated that later in the day. This confirms that TWR was not a large SW broadcaster of Arabic programs in the beginning of the 1970s. Its most important contribution to broadcasting to the Arab World was to be its MW broadcasting.

Even though TWR's MW broadcasts to North Africa and the Middle East were much more effective than its SW broadcasts, particularly after 1977, TWR continued its SW broadcasts in Arabic. This was because of the limited airtime available on MW, and also because TWR maintained some optimism regarding the size of the audience for its SW broadcasts.<sup>63</sup>

After the fall of Communism in Albania in 1991, Radio Tirana had to cut back its foreign language broadcasts from 23 to nine. The forces responsible for the continued decrease in Radio Tirana's foreign language broadcasts were the pitiful state of the economy and the current decision of the authorities to focus more on Albanian broadcasts. TWR began broadcasting Arabic programs over Radio Tirana's 100 kW SW transmitters in 1992. These were the first Christian programs ever transmitted from an international high-power radio station in a former Communist country.

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with an anonymous program producer in *Lebanon on the Highway* No. 2 (n.p., 1971), pp. 55. Letter of Bud Acord to Abe Thiessen (20 November 1970), from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 12, Folder 20.

<sup>60</sup> Jens M. Frost (ed), *World Radio TV Handbook 1966* (Hellerup, 1966), p. 306.

<sup>61</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 187-188.

<sup>62</sup> Letter of R.J. Davis to Rev. W.G. Crouch (14 June 1969), p. 3, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>63</sup> David Adams in an interview with the author (27 July 2005).

### 8.1.2.2 MW Broadcasting: Since 1967

#### ***From Southern France: Radio Monte Carlo – Monte Carlo: RMC-MC***

In 1966, TWR was offered MW airtime on RMC-MC in exchange for co-financing the expansion of the facilities. Despite the financial burden, TWR agreed and started using RMC-MC's MW in the late evening. At that time, TWR had just six 15-minute programs of Arabic on SW.<sup>64</sup> In 1967, TWR continued those SW programs, but it had added two Arabic programs of 15 minutes per week on MW.<sup>65</sup> More research regarding the effect of these first ever MW broadcasts of Christian radio to the Arab World is needed. BTGH concluded that these broadcasts resulted in a much better audience response than the broadcasts from Bonaire.<sup>66</sup> NAM, which had changed its name into Arab World Ministries (AWM), GMU and BTGH used that opportunity until the mid 1990s. These organizations all testified to the good audience response that they received because of these broadcasts to North Africa.

When beginning in the late seventies more and more European languages were withdrawn from TWR RMC-MC schedule, North African languages got all the more important for TWR. The winter schedule of 1980-1981, for example, lists up to 90 minutes per evening in English and 30 to 60 minutes in Arabic and Amazigh. Ten years later, the winter schedule of 1990-1991 has 50 to 80 minutes in English and 45 to 60 minutes in Arabic and mostly 30 minutes in Amazigh. The schedule of winter 2000-2001 lists 15 to 30 minutes in English and 60 to 120 minutes in Arabic and mostly 30 minutes in Amazigh.<sup>67</sup>

RMC-MC continued to enlarge its facilities. In 1987, its new station in Roumoules, 100 kilometers west of Monaco was opened. This station had a one-megaWatt (mW) transmitter for MW.<sup>68</sup> TWR broadcast its programs over this new facility. By the early 1990s TWR was broadcasting about 90 minutes each evening to North Africa. In 2003 this had decreased to one hour each day.<sup>69</sup>

#### ***From Cyprus: Radio Monte Carlo - Middle East (RMC-ME)***

From 1 May 1974 TWR began broadcasting over a RMC transmitter aimed at the Middle East (RMC-ME) in Cyprus. TWR had a similar contract with this station to the station in Southern France. For TWR this was very helpful as RMC-ME had built an audience of millions of mainly young Arabs in the Middle East since its beginning in 1971. Like in Monte Carlo, TWR started to use airtime far outside the daytime listening hours of the commercial service. In the beginning TWR had a one-hour time slot in the evening, which included up to 45 minutes in Ara-

<sup>64</sup> Frost (ed), *World Radio TV Handbook 1966*, p. 126

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>66</sup> Bassam Madany, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee' (12-13 February 1976).

<sup>67</sup> Information from Biener in an email to the author (2 April 2007).

<sup>68</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 176. 'Trans World Radio', in *Radiozendingskrant* (2001).

<sup>69</sup> Document titled 'Religious Broadcasters in the Middle East', written by Ya'qub Hürâni in the late 1970s, and received from Hürâni by the author during an interview (13 July 2004). Steven Vishanoff in an email to the author (17 December 2002). 'TWR Europe Broadcast Schedule 30 March – 25 October 2003': schedule as mailed with the magazine *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 24 No. 1, February 2003).

bic. In 1979 this block was split into an early morning and late night evening broadcast. The winter schedule of 1990-1991 lists 80 minutes per day in Arabic. It was in 1998 that the official schedule started to list regional dialects beginning with weekly broadcasts in Iraqi and Sudanese.<sup>70</sup>

These broadcasts to the Middle East attracted a greater audience response than any other Arabic Christian broadcaster. This was mainly due to the fact that they were on MW with a strong signal of 600 kW. In 2003 TWR was broadcasting about 30 minutes in the very early morning and 90 minutes each night in Arabic to the Middle East.<sup>71</sup>

### **8.1.2.3 Studio's in Beirut, Monte Carlo, Cairo, and Amman**

#### ***Studio in Beirut: 1965-1976***

An Australian missionary in Beirut, Keith Stevenson, had contacted TWR in 1960, suggesting that he could produce Arabic programs for broadcasts. During that same year, he also offered his services to Radio ELWA. Stevenson had a literature ministry, but was also producing audio recordings to take around to prisoners. Paul Freed probably met him during a trip to Beirut in 1960, and mentioned his 'real gift for planning programs and his high standards of production' and that he, together with 'several gifted Christian Arabic speakers', produced 'programs with a superb quality and positive message'. Freed negotiated with him, and wrote that Stevenson's Gospel Recordings was to become the TWR branch for the Middle East. 'He furthermore volunteered to establish the complete studio facility in Beirut for the production of programs in Arabic, Armenian and Turkish.'<sup>72</sup>

Freed was too optimistic, and things worked out differently. Stevenson did become involved with TWR but not in any formal capacity. Ray Henry, an engineer with TWR's studio in Beirut since 1969 and who had worked with TWR in Monte Carlo and Bonaire prior to coming to Beirut, described Stevenson's work for TWR:

He recorded a number of messages on a voluntary basis, which were submitted, to TWR and some were aired either in whole or in part. Mr. Stevenson was not a TWR missionary nor did he represent TWR in any manner but he provided valuable volunteer assistance. [...] TWR provided some recording equipment for his use. [...] Suffice it to say that although he was not officially associated with TWR (his actions were his own), his vision and efforts did much to aid the ministry of TWR. His communication of his desire for radio programs for the Arabs was sufficient to perhaps lead some to assume that he WAS [sic] TWR!<sup>73</sup>

In 1965 Olson and his wife Jeanne went to Beirut to head up the work there after the transmitters in Bonaire had been finished. Olson was assisted by the Palestinian Christian Yad Dally.<sup>74</sup> Len Salisbury of the Lebanese Evangelical Mission

<sup>70</sup> Biener in an email to the author (2 April 2007).

<sup>71</sup> 'TWR Europe Broadcast Schedule 30 March – 25 October 2003'.

<sup>72</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 143.

<sup>73</sup> Ray Henry in an email to the author (10 June 2003). For a further description of Stevenson's role in Beirut, see also chapter 7 on ELWA.

<sup>74</sup> Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 144. Len Salisbury in an email to the author (4 June 2003).

(LEM) helped TWR to wire its studio, which was in a top floor apartment in the Christian Ashrafiyah quarter of Beirut. Most of the equipment was secondhand and had been used by TWR in Monte Carlo but it was still in excellent condition.<sup>75</sup>

At the beginning of the Six-Day War in June 1967, Olson was evacuated from Beirut by the American air force as fear for a spillover of the war to Lebanon was great:

I drove to the Embassy the night before to get information and instructions. They advised everyone to remain in the Embassy compound as they could not guarantee safety outside of it. However, with family still at home, that was impossible so I drove back home through dark and deserted streets. At three A.M. we bundled the family into the car and drove to the airport. We were on one of the first flights out. The sheer number of people simply overwhelmed the airport personnel and facilities, but they managed to get everyone out. Four thousand Americans were flown out of Beirut in one day! Flights had different destinations, mostly in Europe. Our flight took us to Ankara, Turkey, where we were welcomed by personnel from the U.S. airbase, given lunch and wonderfully assisted to find hotel accommodations for the night and arrangements for continuing flights the following day. We made our way to Monte Carlo where we stayed for about six weeks and then returned to Beirut.<sup>76</sup>

In 1968, the TWR studio produced its own Arabic, Turkish and Farsi programs. In the early 1970s, 'Adlî Fam Fanûs from Egypt took over the leadership of the studio. Fam had moved from Cairo (Egypt) to Beirut in 1960 after being invited by LEM to become the principal of its High School in Beirut. Within five days of his arrival in Beirut, he was visited by Walter Wasserman, the German leader of the *Karmel Mission* (KM) who was based in Lebanon, by Stevenson, and also by Paul Freed, who happened to be in Beirut at that time.<sup>77</sup> Freed asked Fam whether he would want to be the Arabic speaker on TWR and Fam responded enthusiastically:

My first question was this: 'And to Saudi Arabia'? And he said 'Yes'. Well, I jumped at the occasion. I knew why God brought me to Lebanon – to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Arab World – to Saudi Arabia for which I had been praying for 25 years.<sup>78</sup>

Before Fam became the 'resident speaker', there were 'several speakers who came in from time to time to record one or two messages for which they received a small honorarium' according to Henry. 'Prior to the construction of the Beirut studios, TWR did use suitable program material from wherever such material could be obtained. In the early days there was a great dearth of any kind of Christian material and anything suitable was used.'<sup>79</sup> Among the early speakers in TWR's pro-

<sup>75</sup> Salisbury in an email to the author (4 June 2003).

<sup>76</sup> Dick Olson in an email to the author (9 August 2005).

<sup>77</sup> Adly Fam, 'Afternoon Session with Adly Fam' (Marseille, 22 February 1974), pp. 1-2: transcript of a meeting, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 30.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ray Henry in an email to the author (10 June 2003).

grams was Tawfiq Khayyât of the Lebanon Bible Institute (LBI).<sup>80</sup> Eventually Fam became the main speaker in TWR's Arabic programs and he also took on the responsibility for audience response follow-up. Fred 'Bud' Acord of ELWA, which had had its own studio in Beirut since 1963, spoke of him as a 'top man'.<sup>81</sup>

On 29 June 1975, Fam's living room was destroyed by rocket fire due to the Lebanese civil war. An hour after the attack, he suffered from acute glaucoma, losing the sight in his right eye. Two days later he walked to a hospital amid sniper fire and was there for nine days. Three months later, Fam and his wife Birlantî often still had to stay inside their home and not go to the studio. When they found out that they could reach the airport, they made a 'frenetic dash' and took the first airplane out and via Cairo, went to Monte Carlo. The other workers of TWR were also forced to evacuate from Beirut. The studio was left behind and was later confiscated by one of the warring parties.<sup>82</sup>

### ***Studio in Monte Carlo: 1976-2002***

Because of the outbreak of the civil war in Beirut, the whole TWR operation moved to Monte Carlo in 1976. However, during that same year, Fam emigrated to Wall, New Jersey (USA), close to TWR's headquarters in Chatham. He did that because he wanted to be close to his two daughters who were studying in the USA. Fam initially remained responsible for TWR's Arabic broadcasts. He and his wife recorded the programs in the TWR studio in Chatham every week, which were then shipped to Monte Carlo. This continued until Fam's death in 1983.<sup>83</sup>

In 1978, Fam's brother Wiliyâm Fam and his wife Muná moved to Monte Carlo to take over the leadership of the Arabic department. Wiliyâm, a former banker in Egypt, also handled all audience response.<sup>84</sup> The Jordanian Ḥaná Labîb became the director for the Arabic department after Wiliyâm retired in 1989. Labîb had come to Monte Carlo in 1984 with his Egyptian wife Ivâlin. They resigned in 2004 and another Arab replaced him.<sup>85</sup>

During the 1960s and 1970s, TWR's facilities in Monte Carlo were very busy producing mainly for Eastern Europe. In the 1980s the Monte Carlo studios became quieter as TWR's German sister organization ERF took over many of those productions. Since then, most of the productions created there have been in Arabic. David Adams, TWR's director for Europe and Arab World from 1985 to 1990, discussed the option of moving all Arabic production to Cyprus to be closer to the Arab World but that was not implemented.<sup>86</sup>

Shadi and Selwa Habib worked with ELWA and FEBA in Beirut until they emigrated to the USA in 1982. In June 1983 they were accepted by TWR to work

<sup>80</sup> Freed, *Let The Earth Hear*, p. 142.

<sup>81</sup> Henry in an email to the author (10 June 2003). Letter of Bud Acord to Abe Thiessen (20 November 1970). Paul M. Voix, 'Notes Re. Transworld Radio: Beirut Studio' (18 October 1967), from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd - Beirut Studio.

<sup>82</sup> Freed, *Let The Earth Hear*, pp. 151-155.

<sup>83</sup> Samuel Fanous, son of 'Adli Fam Fanûs, in an email to the author (3 August 2005).

<sup>84</sup> Freed, *Let The Earth Hear*, p. 157. Shadi Habib in an email to the author (23 August 2005).

<sup>85</sup> Shadi Habib in an email to the author (23 August 2005). Ḥaná Labîb was the radio name, not the actual name of this person referred to.

<sup>86</sup> David Adams in an interview with the author (27 July 2005).

in Monte Carlo and by February 1985 they had arrived there after having raised their own support. The Habibs were responsible for some daily programs but after eight years in Monte Carlo, Shadi's health forced them to return to the USA.<sup>87</sup> Organizationally, the Arabic department went through some difficult years. 'The TWR administration passed through many changes within the [...] years [...] we were there. So we did not really feel secure. The Administration also was not clear in terms of defining each of the Arabic staff job descriptions', according to Shadi. 'We felt the administration like any other mission, put more emphasis on transmitters, antennas, and ignored the needs of the individuals.'<sup>88</sup>

Shadi recruited Elie Talih, a Lebanese man. He joined TWR in October 1989. Elie worked in programming and took the responsibility of follow-up after Wiliyâm retired. Elie resigned from TWR in 1993 and stayed in France.<sup>89</sup>

### ***Studios in Cairo and Amman: Since 2002***

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the studio in Monte Carlo was closed and TWR began its own studios in Cairo and Amman (Jordan). There were varied reasons for this: It was much cheaper to work in the Arab World itself, it had become increasingly more difficult to get visas for Arabs to enter the European Union, technical developments like broadband internet had made it unnecessary to be close to the actual uplink of the signal and finally, the security assessment of working rather publicly in the Arab World had changed. This had not changed however to such an extent that TWR was comfortable to have more details of its work published. Therefore, a fuller description of these two studios must be postponed.

## **8.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH**

TWR is a conservative, interdenominational Evangelical organization. In its 'Doctrinal Statement' it said:

1. We believe in one Holy, Almighty God, eternally existing in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.
2. We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Old and New Testaments; that they are infallible, inerrant in the original writings, and the final authority for faith and life.
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, without ceasing to be God, became man by the Holy Spirit and virgin birth; that he lived a sinless life on earth; that he died at Calvary as a satisfactory substitutionary sacrifice for sinners; that his body was buried in and arose from the tomb; that he ascended to

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<sup>87</sup> Shadi Habib, 'Profile; Shadi & Selwa Habib, Arabic Broadcasting Service In Cooperation with HCJB world radio' (n.d.), mailed to the author by Shadi Habib (9 September 2003). The names Shadi and Selwa Habib were pseudonyms as used in the programs for this couple.

<sup>88</sup> Shadi Habib in an email to the author (23 August 2005).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

Heaven and was glorified as a man at God's right hand; that He is coming again for His own and then to set up His Kingdom.

4. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that He is that supernatural agent in regeneration by whom all believers are baptized into the body of Christ; that he indwells and seals them until the day of redemption.
5. We believe He is the divine teacher and helper who guides believers into all truth; it is the privilege of all believers to be filled with the spirit.
6. We believe that God created man in His own image and in the state of innocence. Through Adam's transgression sin entered the world, and death through sin, and consequently, mankind inherited a corrupt nature, being born in sin and under condemnation. As soon as men are capable of moral action, they become actual transgressors in thought, word and deed.
7. We believe that salvation is a gift of God brought to men by grace and received only through personal repentance for sin and faith in the person and the finished work and atoning blood of Jesus Christ.
8. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to everlasting punishment. That the souls of the redeemed are, at death absent from the body and present with the Lord where, in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord.
9. We believe that the Church universal is a spiritual organism composed of the regenerated who are baptized into that body by the Holy Spirit at the time of the new birth and that the local church, the visible manifestation of the body, has the responsibility to provide for the fellowship and edification of believers and to propagate the Gospel into the world.<sup>90</sup>

In this statement TWR spoke out against Pentecostal doctrine by saying that 'all believers are baptized into the body of Christ'. With the term 'conscious bliss' of Christians who died and await the 'first resurrection', TWR turned against those who believe in the temporary sleep of the soul of Christians who died and await resurrection. To state that in a creed was uncommon. Both statements have an antagonistic character, though the rest of the statement of faith was more apologetic. The phrase about the 'first resurrection' hints at TWR's premillennialist view although it does not spell it out. There is hardly any reference to mission in this statement, and it does not suggest that TWR is interested in a contextualized approach to mission.

After the late 1970s, most European partners of TWR wanted to allow Charismatic organizations to broadcast their programs over TWR but ERF and the TWR office in the USA remained adamantly anti-Charismatic.<sup>91</sup> However, in 1993, TWR changed its policies and accepted programs from the Pentecostal organization IBRA. In order to be accepted by TWR, 'IBRA had to sign for not having speaking in tongues in their programs. They also had to pledge to never say in their programs that all people who are sick will be healed', according to Bengt Bengtson,

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<sup>90</sup> [www.twr.org](http://www.twr.org) (12 April 2005).

<sup>91</sup> David Adams in an email to the author (27 July 2005).



director of IBRA's Arabic ministry since 1994.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, TWR only allowed IBRA to participate in the TWR block from Monte Carlo as 'those broadcasts were focused on North Africa only, where there was no ancient church' that would be upset by IBRA's programs.<sup>93</sup>

TWR's doctrinal statement was probably effective in its Western context as it helped TWR to select people and organizations that it considered to have an acceptable theology. As an instrument to help find personnel that would be good at contextualizing the Gospel for witnessing in the Arab World, this Western creed was not helpful. Contextualization Warning CW1, regarding the need to recognize the existence of absolute truth as revealed in the Bible, the belief in the uniqueness of Christ and the importance of participation in the Church, was heeded by TWR.

### 8.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

#### 8.3.1 Focus on the whole Arab World

TWR assumed it was reaching the whole Arab World through its SW broadcasts from Bonaire. The MW broadcasts from RMC-MC were focused on North Africa while those of RMC-ME reached the Middle East. Organizationally, it seems TWR did not show a special interest in any particular part of the Arab World. Through its broadcasts it sought maximum coverage of the whole area.

TWR's organizational strategy was to a large extent the outcome of its efforts to match available airtime on RMC-ME and RMC-MC on the one hand with program suppliers and their ability to pay for that airtime plus some overhead of TWR on the other hand. Program suppliers like NAM and GMU, with their focus on North Africa, bought airtime on TWR's RMC-MC outlet while program suppliers interested in the Middle East used the RMC-ME transmitter. TWR described itself as 'primarily a service organization, providing technical production facilities and assistance which covers as many countries as we can'.<sup>94</sup>

Many TWR program suppliers wanted their programs to be heard as widely as possible across the whole Arab World so they chose to broadcast their programs on both RMC-MC and RMC-ME. Some suppliers also used TWR's SW broadcasts. One good example of this was Madany's BTGH program in MSA. There were many other organizations that had 15 minutes each week, often in Egyptian or Lebanese Arabic. The effect of this was, according to one producer for North Africa, that the programs broadcast by RMC-MC that targeted North Africa were 'often [...] not very sympathetic to the audience of North Africa'.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Bengt Bengtson, director for IBRA's ministry in the Arab World, in an interview with the author (25 January 2003).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Quote from a certain Mr. Stewart of TWR, during meetings in Marseille: see Phil Butler, 'Meeting chaired by Phil Butler' (Marseille, 21 February 1974), p. 10: transcript, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 29. This was probably Allen Stewart, a Canadian missionary who served with TWR in Bonaire and Monte Carlo in the 1960s and 70s. He married Anna Lee Erickson – the first missionary who served with Ralph Freed in Tangier.

<sup>95</sup> Steven Vishanoff, formerly with AWM, in an email to the author (17 December 2002).

These examples of broadcasts to North Africa, which were produced by Christians from the Middle East, did not meet the demands of RCR1. This means that RCR2, about the need to address the audience in its actual context, was also only partially implemented.

### **8.3.2 Initial preference for MSA, later Colloquial Arabic**

TWR began its Arabic ministry with a preference for MSA. That was mainly due to the choices made by Fam during the 1960s. Henry remembered that ‘Classical Arabic rather than vernacular was the language, [with] an “acceptable” accent [like] Egyptian’.<sup>96</sup> That approach remained the formal preference for TWR’s Arabic programs, according to Adams:

From Fam we inherited a preference for Classical Arabic, and after he left that was followed to a large extent. Only for North Africa there was a realization that colloquial Arabic was needed. But Radio Monte Carlo began to use more colloquial Arabic, so we followed that approach. We had ongoing fights about using Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic, and about the accuracy of the Classical Arabic that was used. Formally our policies never changed, but there was clearly a shift.<sup>97</sup>

In 1994 Madany summarized the language requirements of TWR for programs in MSA. He did this as part of his handover to a successor upon his retirement, based on guidelines given by the head of the Arabic department of TWR:

The proper writing and delivery of an Arabic script depends heavily on a good and sound knowledge of the Arabic grammar. According to the head of the Arabic department of TWR in Monte Carlo, Monaco: ‘One either learns it or does not.’ He means that the intricate rules of Arabic are learned in school (prior to entering a university) after a great amount of drills and memorization. Another quote: ‘We do not allow tens of mistakes in a single program.’ [...] Standard Arabic (known also as Classical Arabic) has certain letters that must be properly pronounced and not in the way they are often pronounced in regional dialects. [...] All broadcasters over TWR in Monte-Carlo [...] must comply with these universal standards of pronunciation. They are observed by speakers on radio stations in the 20 Arab countries as well as by the Arabic language speakers on the BBC, VOA and other international broadcasts beaming their programs to the Arabic speaking world.<sup>98</sup>

Madany’s description of TWR’s preference for proper MSA reflected his own opinions, and by 1994, he probably overstated TWR’s position. Due to the changes in the program formats during the 1980s, a more relaxed style that included the usage of colloquial Arabic had become common. That process had

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<sup>96</sup> Henry in an email to the author (10 June 2003).

<sup>97</sup> David Adams in an interview with the author (27 July 2005).

<sup>98</sup> Bassam Madany, ‘Standards Required by Christian Radio Stations for Arabic Language Broadcasters’ (n.d.). According to Shirley Madany, Bassam’s wife and co-worker, this document was prepared by the end of 1993 or the beginning of beginning 1994, for the successor of Bassam Madany prior to his retirement in June 1994.

been initiated by TWR's North Africa broadcasts as the Moroccan vernacular had been used since 1966 in GMU's programs.

By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century TWR did not only broadcast programs in MSA but it was also airing programs in the Arabic vernaculars of Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, Iraq, Sudan, and also in the non-Arabic languages Tarifit, Tashelhayt, Tamazight, Kabyle and Kurdish.<sup>99</sup> As TWR was mainly a broker of airtime, it is likely that the choices by the program suppliers played an overriding role in this shift from using MSA to the vernaculars. This issue is worth further study.

The disadvantage of using MSA was that it did not address anyone in his or her own language. In that respect, the move to using the colloquial languages of the Arab World was commendable. However, the assumption that it was suitable to address the whole Arab World in Egyptian or Lebanese Arabic, was a denial of the need to address people in their own vernacular. In that respect, RCR3 was only partially heeded. The advantage of the Egyptian and the Lebanese vernacular was that in any case northern Egypt and Lebanon could hear programs in their own languages.

## 8.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

### 8.4.1 Conservatism of the Freeds

The Evangelical theology of the Freeds was conservative. Freed sr. considered the missionary work of C&MA in the Middle East 'a last united attack on the giant enemy of the Cross: Islam'.<sup>100</sup> In 1929 he described that the work among the Muslims 'calls for the greater part of our time'.<sup>101</sup> However, all conversions that he described in his autobiography were about people from the historic Churches of the Middle East. Greek-Orthodox and Roman-Catholics were described by Freed in very negative language. He regularly used terms like 'corrupt' and 'idolatrous' in describing the theology and the practices of these ancient churches.<sup>102</sup> Freed described these Churches as being in a 'deplorable moral and spiritual state' with 'bigoted opposition to the Gospel'.<sup>103</sup> He called Islam 'fanatical' and ruthless'.<sup>104</sup>

Freed sr. was also quite negative about much of the Protestant work that was done in the Arab World. He divided missionaries into four categories. The first were those who were 'working for the union of nominal Protestants with some of the idolatrous Oriental churches'. The second category was those who were 'not

<sup>99</sup> 'TWR Europe Broadcast Schedule 30 March – 25 October 2003'.

<sup>100</sup> Ralph Fried, 'First Fruits in Dera'a and Vicinity', in *The Alliance Weekly* (20 April 1929), p. 249.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Freed, *Reaching Arabs for Christ*, p. 28, footnote of 29, 50, 132.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 29. It should be realized that the opposition of the local Arabic churches was often aggressive and those who left those churches to become Protestants were often fiercely persecuted by their families and fellow villagers. Freed for instance describes how the handful of protestant believers in a mainly Greek-Orthodox village suffered 'a year of fiery trials and persecutions'. Ralph Fried, 'Harvest Time in Jebaib', in *The Alliance Weekly* (23 August 1930), p. 551.

<sup>104</sup> Freed, *Reaching Arabs for Christ*, p. 30.

preaching the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation'. The third category was the 'representatives of many false sects of the west whose work is worse than nothing'. He favored the fourth category describing them as the 'true, Evangelical missionary forces who are carrying on constructive, aggressive, soul-winning work', but according to Freed, their numbers were 'very small indeed'.<sup>105</sup>

Paul Freed obtained a doctorate in mass communication from New York University in 1960.<sup>106</sup> His thesis was about the receptivity of Europeans to what he called 'American-produced religious radio programs prepared for broadcast in Europe'.<sup>107</sup> Freed's studies made him conclude that there was one important factor for successful communication:

The broadcasts must be related to everyday experience, everyday life, everyday problems. The key to the Christian life is not necessarily the spectacular appearance of God in the burning bush, but His abiding presence in the disappointments, the struggles, and joys of the home, the office, the shop, the foundry, the sporting arena.<sup>108</sup>

This approach was also considered practical by Freed. He thought it would safeguard TWR from political trouble with Islamic governments:

Programming should be around the Bible and the Christian message – the Christian truths related to [the] family situation, [or] personal problems. If we are interested in people [and] their needs, which start first with their heart needs, and [if we] care about the family situation as individually related to the Gospel [...] we would not be involved implicitly or explicitly in these problems. They should apply it themselves. Then we don't get into political problems.<sup>109</sup>

TWR's approach meant that RCR2 was only partially heeded. As socio-economic and political matters are important elements in the actual context of the audience, to not mention those matters meant that RCR2 was not fully heeded. In this context it is interesting that Paul Freed supported the USA's international role against Communism. 'I'm not interested in politics', he said in a promotional tape for TWR, 'but I believe it is most important that our country be sure to be in the forefront of what's happening in world events and I feel this goes hand in hand with missionary work'.<sup>110</sup> This statement can give the impression that TWR's spiritualized message may have had a political undercurrent. To not address societal

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>106</sup> Transcript of an interview with Paul Ernest Freed by Galen R. Wilson (23 October 1981), in the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 382-T1.

<sup>107</sup> 'A Study of the Extent to which Indicated Objectives of American-Produced Religious Radio Programs Prepared for Broadcast in Europe would be Achieved According to French, German and Spanish Religious Leaders', PhD Thesis by Paul E. Freed, referred to in Freed, *Towers to Eternity*, p. 88.

<sup>108</sup> Freed, *Towers of Eternity*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>109</sup> Reginald Kennedy, 'The Word Senders: A Personal Assessment of the work of the major Protestant, Evangelical Missionary Radio Stations' (n.p., 1980), chapter 6, p. 11. This unpublished reflection on the Christian broadcasters was found in the library of the World Alliance for Christian Communication (WACC), document A 302.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., chapter 6, p. 10.

matters meant that CW5, that the Gospel is not only for the individual, but also for society, was only partially heeded. Likewise, to not apply the prophetic role of the Gospel to society meant that CW4 was only partially heeded.

#### 8.4.2 Period of the Beirut Studio: 1965-1976

Henry, who worked in the Beirut studio from 1969, never saw any written program policies. There were 'procedures followed and not actual written policies'.<sup>111</sup> Fam said in February 1974, during a conference about contextualization in Marseille (France) in the premises of RSB, that he wanted the program suppliers of TWR to be aware that in their programs they were addressing nations with four main problem areas. These were overpopulation, social inequality, political problems, and a religious crisis. 'Many people, especially the educated type, have had the old shaken and they are living in what you might call a religious vacuum today, and they are asking many questions, and they are seeking after the answer.'<sup>112</sup> These issues were not addressed in the programs though.

One of the guest speakers during the Marseille conference was Charles H. Kraft, an anthropologist with Fuller's Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California (USA) from 1969. Kraft mentioned the problem of radio *per se* being perceived as a foreign medium to the audience. 'The medium employed greatly affects the way the message comes through', he argued.<sup>113</sup> This was in line with RCR6, which argues that the media environment of programs impacts on how the audience understands the program. Kraft warned that the Gospel also has an intrinsic foreignness to it:

It is not a message that is indigenous to any culture in the sense that it sprang from that culture. It has come from outside. So that we have a certain amount of foreignness of the message that we always have to deal with and take account of. Now if you put a foreign message in a foreign medium, there are all kinds of possibilities for miscommunication.<sup>114</sup>

Kraft focused on the Arab World as a security-oriented society, where 'the individual is the abstraction; the group is the reality'. One difference between those cultures and individualist Western culture is that in Western Christianity, the focus has come to lay on individual feelings of guilt. The equivalent in Arab culture is shame, Kraft argued.<sup>115</sup> Because of the group orientation of Arab society, Kraft urged the broadcasters to appeal for 'group conversions'. As one example he said:

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<sup>111</sup> Ray Henry in an email to the author (10 June 2003).

<sup>112</sup> Adly Fam, 'Untitled Speech' (Marseille, 19 February 1974), p. 2: transcript of a speech, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28..

<sup>113</sup> Charles Kraft, 'Guidelines for Developing Message Geared to Horizon of Receptivity' (Marseille, 19 February 1974), p. 5: transcript of a lecture, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 5

‘How about fomenting a Christian movement among the Kabyles, centered around allegiance to a God who is not too proud to learn their language?’<sup>116</sup> He called for:

[a] redoubling of our efforts to assist in the raising up of a people of God who are genuinely saved by faith but who remain culturally Arab or North African, [...] or Berber [...] or Egyptian; not to replace the present Christian churches. These must continue. They serve a need, especially among the Westernized or Westernizing. But in addition to them.<sup>117</sup>

For Kraft, to ‘remain culturally Arab’ entailed remaining within the confines of Islamic culture:

I would press hard for a faith relationship with God and for a faith renewal movement starting within Islam as a culture, based on the faith of Abraham [...], pointing to the Qur’an, Old Testament and New Testament as sources of our information concerning this faith, and issuing in a renewal and distinct People of God, who retain their Muslim cultural allegiance, worship forms and self-respect. I would press further for this faith renewal movement to use all three books as its basis.<sup>118</sup>

Kraft defended the right of converts from Islam to create their own theology. ‘The more he accommodates his theology to the cultural expectations of Western churches, the less likely he is to be able to effectively witness to his own people.[...] It raises the specter that he may have to be theologically heretical to communicate to his own people.’<sup>119</sup>

Kraft discouraged participants in using terms like *Father*, *Son of God* and *Trinity*, as these were misunderstood by Muslims.<sup>120</sup> In that context he also suggested to not speak of Jesus’ death.<sup>121</sup> He challenged the broadcasters to not bring sensitive issues like the deity of Christ up too early on. ‘You break the relationship, and you cut them off from even the possibility of discovering later on the truth, as the disciples discovered it after a considerable period of contact with Christ’.<sup>122</sup> He also suggested to use the Islamic name for Jesus, and to describe Him as a prophet and not as the object of faith:

Thus, if the Muslim asks if I place my faith in ‘Aissa [sic], I cannot answer ‘yes’ or even if he says, do I place my faith in Jesus, I cannot answer ‘yes’, for his ‘Aissa, Jesus, cannot save and, contrary to some opinions, I believe we must start with informed Muslims at least with his ‘Aissa, if we ever hope to effectively communicate with him.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Charles Kraft, ‘Distinctive Religious Barriers to Outside Penetration (Marseille, 19 February 1974), p. 10: Transcript of a lecture, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

TWR rejected Kraft's suggested approach. Fam did not want to broadcast programs that preached the Gospel by using the *Qur'ân*. 'It is upon the confession of Peter that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, that Christ will build his Church, and upon no other foundation. [...] The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only foundation on which I must attempt to build.' Fam was prepared to use the Islamic expression *Subhâna Ta'âlâ* (Praise to the Most High) to captivate the ear of the audience, but for Fam these were only 'points of contact', not an admission that his God was similar to the God of Islam.<sup>124</sup>

When ELWA suggested a year later that TWR could broadcast some programs in which Bible readings were done in the Islamic style of chanting the *Qur'ân*, William Mial, field director of TWR, made it clear that this would not be acceptable for TWR:

Concerning the type of programming that you mentioned, you said you had several different broadcasts and indicated that one particular program was a Bible reading done in the style of the Koran. I would appreciate your holding off on that particular program until we would be able to discuss the matter personally. It seems that this could be slightly problematic based on some similar experiences which we had in the past.<sup>125</sup>

About the usage of oriental music Fam was positive: 'Why should we not use the eastern instrument? Any honest observer must admit that we have failed deplorably there. We have introduced, or tried to introduce into their culture, Western church music', he complained in 1974 in Marseille. 'Some Arabic believers were taught by missionaries that it was more holy to have Western hymns translated as if the Arabic genre of music was polluted', Henry remembered.<sup>126</sup> TWR tried to ensure that if translated hymns were used, these songs were performed with Arabic instruments rather than a piano or organ.<sup>127</sup> In 1974 TWR had made a start with taping some newly composed oriental Christian music and it had a stock of 35 songs.<sup>128</sup>

The broadcasters at this conference all agreed to avoid the usage of the word *Israel*. This problem was especially sensitive at that time as it was less than six months after the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. Instead, some groups used 'people of God', 'descendants of Abraham', or 'the ancient people'. Some commented that Muslims had problems with the name *Israel*, but less so with 'children of Israel' or

<sup>124</sup> Adly Fam, 'Untitled Speech' (Marseille, 19 February 1974), pp. 5-6: transcript of a speech, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

<sup>125</sup> Letter of William Mial to Barton Bliss (20 March 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1975-1991.

<sup>126</sup> Henry in an email to the author (10 June 2003).

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Adly Fam, 'Untitled Speech' (Marseille, 19 February 1974), pp. 7-8. See also Fam's comments in Phill Butler, 'Untitled Speech' (Marseille, 20 February 1974), p. 12: transcript of a speech, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

‘children of Jacob’, as those were *Qur’ānic* terms. Others disagreed and said that any reference to Israel was sensitive.<sup>129</sup>

TWR’s decision that it wanted to use music that was congenial to its Muslim audience was in fulfillment of RCR4, which prescribed the usage of linguistic and pastoral forms that are understandable to the audience. TWR did not want to use Islamic terminology as suggested by Kraft and in so doing did not trespass against CW6 which suggests that the Islamic language and cultural forms cannot be emptied of their original, Islamic meaning in order to explain the Gospel. TWR’s approach also meant that in the realm of RCR5, about the portrayal of Christ and the Church, TWR followed the traditional Christian manner of speaking about Christ.

Phil Butler of Interdev, an organization that endeavored to stimulate cooperation between Christian organizations, warned the participants of the Marseille conference sharply that they should not work ‘supra the church’, but within the context of the churches of the Arab World:

We see ourselves doing a job which a) the church cannot do, and b) the church is so reactionary it will not do; therefore we have taken on the task to evangelize with this great medium of radio [...] We are doing something the church will not do, and by function we isolate ourselves from the church by this very statement. We establish the group rules with this kind of mentality. We are serving the great Universal Church, that Invisible Church [...] and because of [that] it is almost impossible for us to come to grips with the reality of the local, visible elements, which make up the church. [...] We are not committed, now let’s face it. The practical realities are that we are not committed, in mass media, to building a local, visible church. We do not have a theology and a strategy which is committed to a local, visible church. And this is a blasphemous thing. [...] We have a very superficial view of evangelism.<sup>130</sup>

Butler said that the effect of Christian radio not being focused on the actual local churches was that radio did not bring believers together in community. This was a plea for ensuring that the *koinonia* of the Church would be part and parcel of the programming. According to Butler, by not being focused on the actual local churches, Christian radio was actually weakening those local churches:

Typically what our media do is to in fact build up isolated individuals, which we already have acknowledged almost universally is a dilemma, particularly within Islam, with the strong family, society and government structures. [...] In this fragmentation, what we practically do is weaken, rather than strengthen, an already struggling minority.<sup>131</sup>

This criticism of Butler was also directed at TWR, as that was one of the main broadcasters present. His general comments reveal that CW2, about the need to

<sup>129</sup> Fû’ād ‘Aqqād, ‘Discussion: Amplifying the Problem - [meeting chaired by] Fuad Accad’ (Marseille, 19 February 1974), pp. 14-16: Transcript of some discussions, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

<sup>130</sup> Butler, ‘Untitled Speech’ (Marseille, 20 February 1974), pp. 36-38.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.



create a contextual message in communion with the Arabic churches, was not heeded.

At the end of the Marseille conference, Fam was instrumental in creating the final resolutions and recommendations. These were not binding on any of the participants, but they reflected the 'spirit of the conference'. These must have also reflected to a large extent, the thinking within TWR. Of Kraft's rather radical suggestions not much reverberated in these final resolutions and Butler's warning to be Church-focused was not heeded. The Church was not even mentioned in the final resolutions and Christian Arabs were only mentioned for pragmatic reasons: they were needed by the missionaries to better proclaim the Gospel to the Muslims. These resolutions confirm the above conclusions about TWR's approach to contextualization:

We, the delegates to the seminar on Media in Islamic Culture (Marseille, France, February 19-22, 1974), in light of what was exposed in terms of our communication responsibilities for Christ to Islam, do hereby covenant:

1. That in obedience to the command of Christ to communicate the Gospel to Muslims, through the media entrusted to us, namely radio, print, films, and any means by which we may contact [them], we shall consider the cultural, as well as the spiritual nature of Islam, with certain sensitivities to our message, which if ignored, can create offense and ultimately, weaken the credibility of the message.
2. That as an internal [integral?] part of our trust in the Holy Spirit to guide and enable our efforts, despite our weaknesses, we recognize the need to examine the idiom, form, and content of our communication, being willing to adjust, refine, and change its structure while maintaining its truth. So that there will be no hindrance to its receptive qualities, all of which we believe constitutes responsible stewardship.
3. That while the Western Missionaries' Fellowship and Partnership are commendable, we recognize that the communication's effectiveness rests finally with the National, whose knowledge, identification, and sensitivity to the target audience provide greater effectiveness and acceptability. Therefore, we plan to discover Nationals committed to Christ, and provide them with the necessary training so that they may assume the major role in communicating to their own people.
4. That having become more aware of the need for creativity, and experimentation with a view to increasing receptivity, we seek to develop an attitude and an atmosphere within the media, where gifted communicators are free to develop models for the target group. And if tested positive, to utilize these for the glory of God.
5. That while the media is [used] to pre-evangelize or evangelize, we also recognize the critical need to disciple, to follow-up, and develop the vehicles that will nourish and bring to maturity every individual who responds, no matter how feebly or uncertainly [they seem to be in relationship] to Jesus Christ.
6. That in all our use of the media we are aware of the need to integrate the various forms, so that we become more conscious of each other's individual role in communication, and thereby recognize the totality of impact on the target group. And that this awareness must lead to a greater exchange of information.
7. That because of the growing complexity in communication, caused by technological advancement and powerful competing ideologies, we seek every opportu-

nity to develop our own expertise in the use of the media, by further training and study.

8. That we hereby affirm our dedication to the task of making the message of Jesus Christ known to the world of Islam that God may perfect his work in it.<sup>132</sup>

#### **8.4.3 Period of the Monte Carlo Studio: 1976-2001**

According to David Adams, TWR's Director for Europe and the Middle East, the 'missiology of TWR was very traditional. 'Adli Fam's approach was to see the mike as the extension of the pulpit. People like Kraft woke us up to the fact that we should worry about the audience first.'<sup>133</sup>

Adams encouraged more diversity in TWR's programming. One example of that was how he invited Life Agape, one of TWR's program suppliers, to produce new programs. 'In the early 1980's Life Agape's programming was based on a short series linked to their discipleship training syllabus and repeated endlessly. I challenged Mounir Faragallah to do something more imaginative suggesting that they try some drama. [This] gave Faragallah the impetus to begin his career in radio, and later, television drama.'<sup>134</sup>

Yûsif Manşûr of Life Agape described the change in program formats within TWR since the 1980s: 'In 1984, radio entailed preaching, songs and interviews but no drama. [...] In 2004, the *reportage*, drama, *vox pops*, and a more colloquial relaxed style are more common.'<sup>135</sup> This means that the programs became more interesting to the audience but this did not mean that TWR had changed its views on contextualization. It rather reflected a general trend among Christian organizations to follow the manner in which secular radio was developing program formats.

Adams wanted to better use the 'substantial resources and significant opportunities with a large audience that we inherited every day from RMC. [We] lost that audience within 30 seconds. That's why I wanted to have a bridge program'.<sup>136</sup> As a result, Adams refused to sell the first 25 minutes of the output to program suppliers and re-designed the broadcasting schedule that TWR used from RMC-ME. He did that in order to capture the RMC audience:

I challenged Selwa Habib to present a daily programme of music and comments designed for people with no Christian background. This was a daily TWR produced (and sponsored) programme. It opened the door to some tough challenges for TWR, including the business model that had sustained its finances for many years.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Adly Fam, 'Afternoon Session with Adly Fam' (Marseille, 22 February 1974), pp. 49-50.

<sup>133</sup> David Adams in an interview with the author (27 July 2005).

<sup>134</sup> David Adams in an email to the author (12 July 2005).

<sup>135</sup> Yûsif Manşûr, an Egyptian producer with Life Agape since 1984, in an interview with the author (2 December 2004).

<sup>136</sup> Adams in an interview with the author (27 July 2005).

<sup>137</sup> Adams in an email to the author (12 July 2005).

This decision to maintain the RMC-ME audience by using instrumental music in the bridge programs opened Adams to criticism. To some people it was seen as ‘wasting precious time in which Christian words could be used’.<sup>138</sup>

According to Adams, TWR had inherited from the Freedys’ close relationships with the Protestant Churches of the Arab World. The fruit of these close relationships was that TWR had some of the best preachers in its programs.<sup>139</sup> These preachers however, were not representative of their own Protestant denominations, let alone of the much broader community of the Church in the Arab World. Thus, in that sense, the important role of these preachers for TWR’s broadcasts does not contradict earlier conclusions that CW2 was not heeded.

For understanding the approach of TWR during these important years of Arabic Christian broadcasting, more study needs to be done. That awaits TWR’s decision to become more open about its past. Programming policies were ‘often discussed between the Arab producers, but there were no formal policies. Most in TWR were very satisfied with the approach of GMU and AWM, so in a sense you could say that their policies were ours’, according to Adams.<sup>140</sup>

#### **8.4.4 Philosophies during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In 2003 Ḥaná Labīb, as director of TWR’s Arabic broadcasts, published what was called *Project Endure* and what he perceived to be TWR’s main task for the years ahead. This new strategy was a drastic change from TWR’s former approach:

[TWR has] a new strategy [...] for discipling and encouraging new believers in Arab lands. [...] Despite the evangelical success of [our] efforts, the sad facts remains that only a fraction of those who make an initial confession of faith in Christ ever join a local body of believers. We must not only present the Gospel to our Muslim friends and win them as individuals, but we must also help to establish local community churches from among them, where their new faith in Christ can strengthen and be nurtured. We must provide not only the truth to these new believers, but a way to fellowship with other believers as well. It is harsh fact that many of those who come to Christ [are] ostracized by their friends, family and community. Having lost their sense of support and belonging, these brothers and sisters run the risk of falling back. [...] Project Endure [...] is to initially help Arab-speaking believers sustain and grow in their new faith by complementing our on-the-air ministry with a new on-the-ground ministry. As part of this we plan to build and develop community churches where this need has not been met. [The project] also has a second purpose: that of sustaining and assisting Christian above-ground churches in the Middle East, composed of individuals who come from a traditional Christian background. TWR plans to establish home mission groups in areas of Egypt, Palestine/Israel, and North Africa, which will work to meet the needs of struggling Christians in those countries.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Adams mentioned Manīs ‘Abd al-Nūr and Riḍā ‘Adlī from Egypt. Adams in an interview with the author (27 July 2005).

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> ‘An Enduring Endeavour in the Middle East’, in *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 24 No. 2, May 2003), pp. 18-19.

Labīb herein recognized that TWR's approach was individualistic and without reference to the actual churches. He wanted to involve TWR in church planting schemes for MBB's and in also sustaining and assisting existent churches. The fact that Egypt and Israel/Palestine were specifically mentioned indicated that TWR had some concrete plans at that time for implementing its goals. It is not clear what TWR meant with 'home mission groups' and to what extent these plans were made in coordination with those existent churches.

Labīb left TWR in 2004; subsequent strategy statements did not mention the same church orientation again, possibly indicating that TWR had pulled back from Project Endure. This does need more research. In 2005 TWR International's Mission Statement said:

The purpose of Trans World Radio is to assist the Church to fulfill the command of Jesus Christ to make disciples of all peoples, and to do so by using and making available mass media to:

1. Proclaim the Gospel of salvation to as many people as possible.
2. Instruct believers in biblical doctrine and daily Christ-like living.
3. Model our message through our corporate and cooperative relationships.<sup>142</sup>

This Mission Statement gave priority to reaching as many people as possible with the Gospel. Teaching Christians was seen as a secondary goal. As its Key Strategies for the Arab World, TWR published that it wanted to:

1. Assist Muslim-background believers [MBB's] who live in hostile conditions in spreading the Gospel.
2. Offer chronological Bible story programs for oral societies in North Africa and the Middle East.
3. Expand outreach to children, youth and women with programming in new languages.<sup>143</sup>

It is not clear what TWR meant with assisting MBB's. The focus was, in any case, not on building up local congregations but on preaching the Gospel. TWR's interest in chronological Bible story programs for the oral societies of the Arab World was a choice to contextualize its programs. This was a good effort at implementing RCR4. TWR did not say in which new languages it wanted to expand its outreach to children, youth and women.

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<sup>142</sup> From TWR's magazine *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 24 No. 2, May 2003), p. 3.

<sup>143</sup> [www.twr.org](http://www.twr.org) (4 April 2005).

## 8.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

### 8.5.1 History: 1965-2004

#### 8.5.1.1 Beirut: 1965-1976

TWR was only able to implement its own programming strategies to a limited extent due to its system of selling airtime. It was able to create some broad parameters but that did not lead to a balanced grid. While TWR was still called VOT, Gärtner criticized the effect of that system and, almost fifty years later, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, another program supplier made similar comments:

Each program was either 15 minutes or half an hour. Each program had little in common with the programme featured either before or after them in the bloc. They had to be recorded at least 4 weeks in advance and sent to Monte-Carlo on tape where they were collated for final broadcast. Each programme gave its own address (Spain, France, Switzerland, Cyprus.... etc). From a media perspective, this was probably not too good for the audience, however over the years thousands wrote to the various addresses.<sup>144</sup>

This problem was not just TWR's. All radio ministries that depended on selling airtime experienced this.

TWR had its own studios where it produced its own programs but most programs were supplied by other organizations. Between 1965 and 1969, TWR was broadcasting a maximum of 15 minutes of Arabic programs per day. RSB, BTGH, GMU and the Lebanese Baptists were among the first program suppliers for TWR.<sup>145</sup>

Towards the end of the 1960s, TWR's own studio in Beirut became functional. Fam produced his programs there but scant information is available regarding these earliest programs. Olson produced some programs for the Near East Council of Churches (NECC). TLH and Questions and Answers of Middle East Lutheran Mission (MELM) were also produced in the Beirut studio by MELM's Mûris Yahshân.<sup>146</sup> It is unlikely that NECC's programs were broadcast on TWR, given TWR's negative attitude toward organizations that were part of the World Council of Churches (WCC) but it is interesting enough that on a practical level, TWR was prepared to cooperate with NECC. MELM's programs were more likely to be aired on TWR as it was a rather conservative organization of the Missouri Lutherans from the USA.

One of the programs recorded in the studio was a popular panel discussion, scripted by Aubrey Whitehouse of LEM. Basically the format was one 'dumb guy' on the panel who did not understand a topic, while all others in the panel tried to explain the topic. This program was interesting from the point of view that there

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<sup>144</sup> Alex Ison in an email to the author (10 December 2002).

<sup>145</sup> Letter of Davis to Crouch (14 June 1969), p. 3.

<sup>146</sup> Paul M. Volz, 'Tour Report: Confidential Notes' (25 November 1968), p. 4, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – Beirut Studio.

were two female speakers and that it was not a straight preaching program.<sup>147</sup> This was uncommon in Arabic Christian programs in the 1960s.

Fam described his own program production in the previously mentioned conference in Marseille, 1974. He described six different formats that were being produced and broadcast, some on SW and some on MW, at that time. Days to Remember was a program series which had by then been broadcast for about three years. It covered important days such as the day of creation and the day of redemption etc. In Questions and Answers Fam answered audience mail. He had already answered over 1500 questions by then. This 'had proven to be very helpful to people', he commented. Sciences and the Scriptures was for students at high school and university. Key Words treated Christian words like *redemption, regeneration, altar* and *sacrifice* with the focus on a Muslim audience. 'I take these words and explain to them the meaning of the words in our Christian concepts.' What the Bible Teaches was a Bible study series. Finally, A Personal Message was a program for a higher educated audience. Fam called these also *From God's Heart to your Heart*.<sup>148</sup>

Based on the meager information extant about these programs, it is not possible but to tentatively conclude, that TWR's programs were mostly religious, with a strong focus on the central *kerygma* of the Gospel. They did not treat social, economic or political issues. This confirms earlier conclusions regarding RCR2, CW4 and CW5. The *diakonia* and the *koinonia* of the Church were not reflected in the programs. This would not change in later years.

#### 8.5.1.2 Monte Carlo, Cairo, and Amman: 1976-2004

In 1985, the Habibs began to work with TWR in the Monte Carlo studio. In 1993 they returned to the USA. During those eight years, they produced a daily program of 20 minutes titled *Evening Trip*. This was a bridge program to transfer the listeners from the secular daily Arabic broadcast of RMC to the Evangelical programs of TWR. The program focused on many daily issues of concern to young adults.<sup>149</sup> The program suppliers were not interested in such bridge programs as they wanted to have their own programs broadcast, so TWR had to produce those programs by itself. Besides Evening Trip, Shadi listed the other programs he and his wife were involved in:

*Words and Meanings*, [...] for a Muslim audience especially in North Africa, to explain the Christian terminology that was used in Christian Radio programs. For example: New birth, the Law, Holy Spirit, Gospel, atonement, etc. I did 52 episodes for one year.

*Symbols and Truth* [...] explained Old Testament events, stories, characters, and how these were symbols of New Testament fulfillments. I did also 52 episodes for one year.

*Quarter of an Hour with Hanna Labib*. This was a preaching program presented by our colleague brother Hanna [...] He needed some material, so I wrote 21 episodes

<sup>147</sup> Henry in an email to the author (10 June 2003).

<sup>148</sup> Phil Butler, 'Meeting chaired by Phil Butler' (Marseille, 21 February 1974), p. 11.

<sup>149</sup> Habib, 'Profile; Shadi & Selwa Habib, Arabic Broadcasting Service in Cooperation with HCJB world radio'.

for him. These were about different topics in addition to some answers to questions asked by listeners.

*Let us Sing* was a weekly music program with comments. We played listeners' requests.

*Five Minutes of Inspiration* was a daily program of five minutes on a thought or wisdom, or a verse, to be an opening for the evening broadcast from Cyprus to the Middle East, after Evening Trip was stopped. We produced 69 episodes.

*My Journey in Life* was a program for Arabic women by Selwa. She translated the programs from a book by Nora Freed with some changes to better fit Arabic culture. Selwa produced around 50 episodes.

*Proverb and Expression* was taken from the book of Proverbs. Selwa wrote the dialogue on each proverb, and was read by Selwa and Evelyn Labib.

*Daily Continuity Announcements* were presented by Selwa with Evelyn Labib.<sup>150</sup>

Of interest here is to mention that the programs that were meant to explain Christian language for Muslims, were the result of TWR not being prepared to use Islamic jargon in its programs. These programs with explanations of Christian terms and cultural forms were an effort to implement RCR4 without trespassing against CW6.

Throughout the 1970s to the 1990s, MMC, RSB, Thru the Bible (TTB) of Vernon McGee, Radio Bible Class, and BTGH filled much of TWR's airtime on RMC-MC but there were also many smaller producers who used this facility. The Middle East broadcasts over RMC-ME however, attracted a larger number of ministries. Many of these organizations produced programs for their own Christian constituencies in North America. Those that also endeavored to broadcast to the Arab World gravitated towards having their English programs translated or adapted into Arabic. TWR wrote about that:

We translate and then culturally adapt the material of many of the Bible teachers and ministries that are familiar to Christians here in America. In this way these excellent teachings can be heard and easily understood worldwide in more than 180 languages and dialects.<sup>151</sup>

There is good reason for being critical about this approach as from the perspective of contextualization. In 1980, Freed published the following in reference to the main program suppliers:

[They] recognize the importance of having their programs translated and adapted to fit the cultural needs of people in the countries they are reaching, and this is done by nationals in these countries. Therefore, in most instances the programs are also translations of the broadcasters' messages with illustrations changed where necessary.<sup>152</sup>

This is a rather simplistic view of producing proper, suitable programs for a target audience; only changing some 'illustrations where necessary' does not make

<sup>150</sup> Shadi Habib in an email to the author (23 August 2005).

<sup>151</sup> Glenn Sink, 'Straight from the Heart', in *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 24 No. 1, February 2003), p. 6.

<sup>152</sup> Freed, *Let the Earth Hear*, p. 52.

programs culturally suitable. According to Adams, this approach to program translation can be traced back to the successful business model that Freed developed for TWR. By positioning TWR as a broker of airtime, the organization expanded fast in the 1970s and 1980s. However, this forced TWR to accept the desires of its customers. According to Adams, this model ‘was only sustainable by selling more airtime. The result of this was that the American board of TWR eagerly sold airtime to Radio Bible Class and Thru the Bible. [...] Scripts of those successful American broadcasts were literally translated, including the many Texan examples of McGee’.<sup>153</sup> This meant that these programs would have been hard enough to understand for TWR’s Christian Arab audience, let alone for Arab Muslims. This made a good implementation of RCR2 and RCR4 unlikely, as well as CW4 and CW5 in regard to the societal aspects of the Gospel.

Many of TWR’s programs were produced by a group of pastors and church leaders from Egypt. Among those who regularly traveled from Egypt to Monte Carlo to tape programs were the pastors; Manis ‘Abd al-Nûr, Riḍâ ‘Adlî, and Munîr Ḥakîm. Yûsif Riyâḍ also recorded many series. Munîr Farajallâh, Yûsif Mañşûr and their team of Life Agape often came to Monte Carlo as did the singers Najîb Labîb and Nâsîf Subḥî. Ya‘qûb ‘Ammârî, a Jordanian pastor, was another regular guest for taping programs.<sup>154</sup> More study into the actual programs that the many North American ministries and the Arabic preachers produced throughout this period is needed. Further research awaits TWR’s decision to open its archives.

#### **8.5.2 Programs of 20-26 September 2004**

For reasons of space, this section only describes the programs of TWR that were aimed at the Middle East through the MW broadcasts from RMC-ME, not the programs for North Africa. The programs for the Middle East consisted of two blocks; one was a very early morning broadcast from 3.55-4.30 GMT; the other was a block at 19.30-21.00 GMT. The programming of that block during the week of 20-26 September 2004 is given in *Figure 8.1*.

The early morning programs were repeated verbatim in the evening, so these do not need separate treatment here. The only addition in the early block was a brief Bible reading from the letter of the Apostle Paul to the Romans. Whole chapters were read each day without any explanation. Even for a Christian audience these readings were hard to follow as they were from difficult passages from the Bible. The evening program block was called *Around the World*. Each night, the audience was advised to also listen to TWR’s audio channel on a Hotbird satellite and to go to [www.arabicprograms.org](http://www.arabicprograms.org) where the same programs could be listened to. Most programs were in Egyptian or Lebanese Arabic.

<sup>153</sup> Adams in an interview with the author (27 July 2005).

<sup>154</sup> Habib in an email to the author (23 August 2005).



### 8.5.2.1 Biblical Topics

#### *Don't Forget an Important Word*

Each night, the very brief one-minute program Don't Forget an Important Word attracted the audience's attention to another important word.<sup>155</sup> In one program, the verb *save* (*yukhallis*) was explained. The program began with a story of a Vietnamese factory worker who fell in a two meters deep fish barrel. 'He died for no reason and no-one saved him'. The lesson: 'Christ (*al-Masîh*) can save your life from a sure death. Do you accept Jesus or do you leave your fate in the hands of the fish barrel. Come to Jesus now.' The audience was promised a book if they would write to PO Box 5696 in Beirut.<sup>156</sup> In another program the word *serve* (*tikh-dim*) was treated. The audience was asked who they serve, as no one can serve two masters. It was introduced by a brief drama about a husband who was asked by his wife to do some chores. He concluded: 'It is good that I cannot marry three wives like you.'<sup>157</sup> Another program in this series dealt with the word *commitment* (*iltizâm*) and advised the audience that marriage is a commitment between two people and God, and that it is for better and for worse.<sup>158</sup>

#### *Treasure of Wisdom*

Treasure of Wisdom was a half hour program broadcast five times during the week. This series was a translation of the programs of TTB. In the first program, Suhayl Mûsá discussed Luke 22:63-71, the trial against Jesus. The different responses to the Jews' accusation against Jesus were discussed in detail, in particular the actions of Herod and the fact that Pilate held Him innocent. It was made clear that Jesus was fully innocent and that there was no ground for the execution of the Son of God (*Ibn Allâh*). If the program was intended for a Muslim audience many unknown terms and names required more explanation. 'My listener and friend, Jesus stands today in our midst as if he waits in court for us to issue our judgment on him. It is better for us to issue our judgment on Him, than that He judges us.' According to Suhayl, the trial of Jesus is repeated every day in our world, as many people judge God to be dead. They have banished him from their mind. 'So why blame the Jews and Pilate? Why don't we blame ourselves? Where is God for us?' The fact that Simon of Cyrene carried the cross of Jesus to Golgotha was used to invite the audience to consider whether they would remain bystanders, or whether they would carry the cross behind Jesus.

Jesus chose to die, Suhayl explained, as He wanted to take the punishment that we deserved on Him. As God is just, He could not forgive sinners without punishment. 'Pilate and the chief priests were just instruments to achieve God's goal, which was his eternal plan [of] the salvation of mankind.'

Suhayl then applied Jesus' statement to the audience that one of the men crucified with him would be with him in paradise. 'If we confess our sins before God

<sup>155</sup> This program is not mentioned in *Figure 8.2* for stylistic reasons. It was broadcast during the last minute before 20.00 GMT.

<sup>156</sup> TWR broadcast 20 September 2004, Don't Forget an Important word.

<sup>157</sup> TWR broadcast 22 September 2004, Don't Forget an Important word.

<sup>158</sup> TWR broadcast 23 September 2004, Don't Forget an Important word.

and Jesus, and admit that we deserve to die because of our sins, if we accept that Jesus died for us, then we can apply his promise: “Today you shall be with me in paradise”. The audience was also asked to write to the program, either to PO Box 911421 in Amman, PO Box 1333 in Cairo, PO Box 4804 in Aleppo (Syria), or to PO Box 49 in Monte Carlo. A fax number in Amman was also given.<sup>159</sup> These contact details were given after each of these programs by Suhayl.

In another Treasure of Wisdom program, Suhayl continued his study on Luke 23-24. The program was introduced by a reflection on the fact that outside the gate of Jerusalem, the hill called Golgotha is visible for all passers by, as a witness to the truth of the crucifixion of Christ. Suhayl then explained that his goal was that the audience would hear the voice of God (*ṣawt Allâh*) through the Bible. He spoke of the awful death of Jesus on the cross and of the two criminals that were crucified together with Jesus. One of them asked Jesus for mercy and confessed his sin. ‘In other words, when a sinner asks forgiveness from God he must know that he is guilty and that he deserves to be punished as a sinner.’

Suhayl also stressed that God’s mercy and forgiveness are not unconditional. His justice forces Him to not let sins go unpunished. ‘This is the secret of the cross, where God joined his love and forgiveness with His justice, as Jesus paid the price for our sin’

When Jesus died, the curtain that separated the Holy from the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Temple was torn. Suhayl explained that when Jesus died, he sacrificed his life and blood to open the way to God for all people. For non-Christians this was difficult to comprehend. ‘So my listener, if you are eager and if you aim to enter into God’s presence (*ḥaḍrat Allâh*), there is no way except the way of Jesus’ cross’.

Jesus’ death. They could also not deny the reality of his resurrection. Luke describes that even the disciples of Jesus did not understand God’s plan: that Jesus would rise from the dead. He was dead and buried securely in a tomb with a large stone rolled in front of it. But when some women, and Peter, went to the grave, they found it empty. ‘Jesus had risen and he is alive today at the right hand of almighty God’.<sup>160</sup> For the people in those days, it was impossible to ignore the events surrounding

Suhayl continued his series of Treasure of Wisdom with another program about Luke 24. The program reminded the audience that thousands of people saw how Jesus died and thousands saw Him after He had risen from the dead. The writers of the Bible were trustworthy witnesses who even shared their own initial doubts about Jesus’ resurrection. The audience was told that to doubt was not wrong as long as they considered these matters with an open mind for finding out the truth.

The story of Jesus’ post-resurrection meeting on the road to Emmaus was read. It was explained that the two men who met Jesus on the road did not recognize Him as they were saddened and thought He was dead. ‘Today human ambitions have disappeared as people think that God is dead and detached from the events of mankind.’ Jesus explained to the two men that the Old Testament predicted that the

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<sup>159</sup> TWR broadcast 20 September 2004, Treasure of Wisdom.

<sup>160</sup> TWR broadcast 21 September 2004, Treasure of Wisdom.

the Christ had to suffer death, but that he would then be raised from the dead. Suhayl said that doubt about the veracity of the death and resurrection of Christ was not just doubt regarding the truth of the Bible but also doubt regarding ‘Gods eternal plan for freeing man from sin’.

20-09-04	Whispers of Wisdom	Stations and Situations	Healing Touches	Words from the Heart	Meditations of Modernity	Treasure of Wisdom
21-09-04	Words of Gold	Song of Hope	Days of ‘Alā’	How are You?	Do you know him?	Treasure of Wisdom
22-09-04	Look at the end of their life	I need You	Woman Today	Triumphal Procession		Treasure of Wisdom
23-09-04	With the Small Ones	Light of Life	Friends of the Way	Together on the Road		Treasure of Wisdom
24-09-04	Opinion and Thought	Unshackled!	Stories and Amusements	Together on the Road		Treasure of Wisdom
25-09-04	You ask and we answer	Bread of Life	Good News	Together on the Road		Window on Life
26-09-04	Dialogues		Evidence of Life	Together on the Road		Window on Life

Figure 8.1 Content of TWR’s Arabic Programs: 20-26 September 2004

Suhayl also stressed that the two men on the road believed that Jesus was ‘a prophet (*nabī*)’ only. When they urged Jesus to stay and eat with them, He did so. He broke bread and then they finally recognized him:

My listener, has God revealed himself to you? Did He open your eyes? Do you know who He really is? [...] Have you invited Jesus and urged him to enter into your life and rule (*yamluk*) over you?

The program also treated the last part of Luke 24 where Jesus met his gathered disciples after his resurrection and how he discussed his appearances to them. The people that met with Jesus were the church (*al-kanīṣah*):

The church is not the building [...] but the meeting of believers in Jesus as He is God and Savior in all places and times. They are spread around the world just as there are countries, cities and villages, and believers gather in houses, under one roof or even under a tree.

Jesus stood suddenly in their midst so they thought he was a ghost, but he showed that his body was real by eating some food. According to Suhayl, the reason why Jesus put so much stress on his physicality was that He knew that there would come a time 'when people would deny his physical resurrection just as they would deny his literal death'. This remark obviously referred to Muslims who are the only group which deny Christ's death of on the cross.

The disciples were told that they were to proclaim the message of repentance (*tawbah*) and forgiveness of sins (*maghfirah al-khaṭāyā*) to all nations. God's plan of salvation (*al-khalās*) and freedom (*taḥrīrah*) from Satan is for people all over the world because God loves all people. 'This is the core of the Biblical message.' The audience was exhorted to speak to others about God and Jesus in their lives and to have communion with other believers. They were also invited to write to the program.<sup>161</sup>

The next program in the Treasure of Wisdom series was about Deuteronomy 1. The program began with asking the audience whether their religion protected them from the anger of God (*ghaḍab Allāh*) that was caused by human evil. 'There is only one strong umbrella that is able to protect you from the last judgment; that is the death of Jesus on the cross. I hope to be sheltered in Him.'

Suhayl first explained that Deuteronomy is the fifth book in the Bible, and that it was not repetitious, even though the name means *Second Law*. 'The Bible from its beginning until the end does not contain any word, not even a sentence, be it short or long, that is not in the right place and does not have a special meaning.' Suhayl underlined that Deuteronomy teaches that 'obedience is the reaction of man's love for God, [...] obedience that is joined with the spirit of love and respect for God'. The law that God gave is good but it is not able to save man as we have a problem inside ourselves. Only through God's mercy can we be saved. Deuteronomy was given to the generation of Israelites that had not experienced God's revelation at Mount Sinai. This new generation stood on the east bank of the River Jordan, ready to enter the land. They needed to receive the Law of Moses afresh, just as presently the new generation in homes, schools and churches is in need of learning the Word of God afresh. Here Suhayl addressed Christians, not Muslims.

After reading Deuteronomy 1:1-13, Suhayl said that the journey from Mount Sinai to Kadesh, the entrance to the Promised Land, lasted 38 years even though it could be traveled in 11 days. This was because God made their journey long because of their lack of faith. Even Moses was not beyond sinning. Interestingly Suhayl believed that Moses sinned when he installed a board of leaders over the Israelites. God allowed him to do so but the same elders would later, as the Sanhedrin, be involved in killing Jesus. 'Because he was depressed, Moses forgot that

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<sup>161</sup> TWR broadcast 22 September 2004, Treasure of Wisdom.

God could carry the load of the public on His shoulder. [...] Moses was the leader who was appointed by God, and he could not have been in need of a board of trustees or elders, even though the load was heavy, for God in his mercy is sufficient to satisfy the need [so he can choose] either only one man, or 70 people, in order to do some specific work, and the result would be the same’.

Then Deuteronomy 1:19-23 was read and treated. The fact that Moses sent spies to the Promised Land was also considered wrong by Suhayl. God had told them the land was flowing with milk and honey but they did not have enough faith to accept that. The Israelites were afraid of giants in the land and so Suhayl asked:

How can we face giants in our life today, the giants of circumstances, weakness and experiences? [...] The problem is inside ourselves, and it is our lack of faith that can blind our heart. This is the cause of our problems, as there is nothing that can satisfy God’s heart except strong faith.

Among the spies, Caleb and Joshua had that strong faith. They believed in God even though they saw the giants in the land therefore God gave them the land. The audience was then exhorted to not just sit and pray and wait for what God had prepared for them. We must sit and pray but also stand and walk like Joshua and Caleb did. This application was not explained further. The program ended with focusing on the fact that those under 20 years of age were allowed to enter the land while their elders were not allowed to enter due to their rebellion against God during their desert journey of 40 years. Suhayl concluded that this means that children, who die young, are not held accountable by God and are saved. The audience was then asked to write to the program.<sup>162</sup>

Treasure of Wisdom again used the book of Deuteronomy the next day. The continuing story of the Israelites, who traveled the desert for 40 years, was said to show how God ‘guarantees our basic needs’ though that does not mean that He promises us riches. Moses’ prayer of Deuteronomy 3, to be allowed into the Promised Land, was briefly discussed. Moses was not allowed to enter because of a former sin. In spite of Moses’ position as a beloved and trusted servant of God and as the leader of the nation, ‘he was not ashamed of standing in front of the nation and show his penitence regarding the sin he had fallen in. It never decreased Moses’ position, but it increased his status.’ This Biblical approach to confessing sins was counter-cultural in the context of Arab society, which is honor and shame oriented. Suhayl also believed that Moses was not arrogant. Moses draped his own mantle over Joshua’s shoulder encouraging him to take upon himself the sacred job of leading the nation into the land.

Deuteronomy 4 was then briefly treated. Moses gave his final instructions to the nation who were about to cross the Jordan River. He summoned them to carefully follow the laws of God. ‘God gave us his word neither to discuss, nor to think about it with our own imagination, but in order to obey it.’ If we do so, Suhayl believed we will enjoy a light life, in which we experience and enjoy what God has prepared for us in Jesus. The Jewish nation, however, failed to study the law:

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<sup>162</sup> TWR broadcast 23 September 2004, Treasure of Wisdom.

In front of God no-one is innocent of the law. The problem is not with the law, nor in the person of God (*shakhs Allâh*) but it is in our body (*jasadnâ*). [...] A Christian is not under the law by any means, either for living, salvation or holiness, as the Christian is not from this world, he is not in the body and not in sins. He is separated from all wrongdoing (*sharr*). The deep basis for this great position is then complete salvation that Christ fulfilled for us.<sup>163</sup>

These programs of Suhayl studied the Bible in an interesting manner. Though he sometimes gave the impression that he was aware that he had Muslims among his audience, he mostly addressed Christians. Muslims would have difficulty understanding the Christian jargon. No application was made to socio-economic or political life, so RCR2 was only applied in a rather abstract, personal manner. This means that CW4 and CW5 were only heeded in respect to the most personal aspects of the faith. In accordance with RCR5, Christ was portrayed in a traditional Christian manner. For a Christian audience that was clear, but Muslims needed much more explanation than was given. This means that in regard to Muslims, RCR4 was not implemented. The church was portrayed as a gathering of believers, as opposed to a building. This gave the impression that Suhayl assumed that Muslims or converts from Islam were listening who needed an exhortation to meet in small groups. This approach did not recognize the Church in its factual apparel, so CW2 and CW3 were not heeded. It also gave the impression that the programs hoped to speak to both Christians and Muslims which was not wise as it contradicted RCR1 about the need to have a homogenous target audience.

### ***Words of Gold***

Words of Gold was about the prophet Nahum. He predicted the destruction of Nineveh. The program said that republics (*jamâhîr*) rise and fall, not only for natural political, economic, military or social reasons, but also as part of the judgment of God. The fall of Nineveh came because of the disobedience of the people to God. ‘So we clearly see the destiny of the person who forgets the law and who laughs at what God says and who believes that the opportunity God gives for conversion lasts forever.’ Though Nahum spoke about a nation, the application was individualized. God wants the good for humanity, but sin is the cause of destruction in the world:

So Jesus came [...] to open the way between the Holy God and ourselves as our sin [...] separated us from God. So He came and built a bridge through Jesus in order to make peace with God and be forgiven by His free mercy: salvation in Jesus Christ. [...] So we will share in the eternal inheritance, and receive a new nature, and become members of God’s family.

The audience was then called to ‘come to Him’ in a holy and spiritual relationship, as He is the Truth, the Way and the Life. Finally, the listeners were asked to

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<sup>163</sup> TWR broadcast 24 September 2004, Treasure of Wisdom.

write to PO Box 1987 in Jadīdah al-Matn (Lebanon), PO Box 20 in Fajāllah (Cairo), or PO Box 11095 in Khartoum (Sudan).<sup>164</sup>

### ***Do You Know Him?***

This program treated the life of Jesus. It began with the story of Jesus when He entered the synagogue where He read the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2. It was said that Jesus came to heal the sick and that He was holy and sinless as well. The audience was told that Jesus knew the Old Testament very well and that He used it in times of temptation by Satan. He had an intimate relationship with God the Father through his life of prayer and was also an example for us regarding how to pray. In this program the common Evangelical view of Christ was presented and was presented in Christian terms.<sup>165</sup>

### ***Look at the End of their Life***

Look at the End of their Life treated a part of the Old Testament story of Joseph in the form of a drama. This week's program only treated one part of the story of Joseph, namely when his brothers did not like his dream as described in Genesis 37. It was said that as a result of this that it was necessary to find new grasslands for the sheep of the family. This segment could not have meant much to Muslims who did not already know the whole story. The approach was an effort to use storytelling as a method to convey truth, in accordance with Arab culture. PO Box 1987 in Jadīdat al-Matn, PO Box 20 in Fajāllah and PO Box 11095 in Khartoum were given as response addresses.<sup>166</sup>

### ***I Need You***

In I need You, Samīr Waḥbâ began with the question: 'Are you saved by the mercy of God? Are you cleansed by the blood of Jesus? Have you been cut from every sin and has your relationship with God returned? Are you born again?' This program was evidently aimed at Christians. It posed the question how it is possible to know that you are born again. Some Christians do not read the Bible, or pray. They are not real (*mish ḥaqīqī*) Christians, but Christian in name only (*bi kalām faqāf*). There are also people who pray, go to church, do good things, help poor people and participate in charitable projects. These may be people who just outwardly imitate real Christians. So the burning issue is: how does someone know whether he is a real believer (*mu'min ḥaqīqī*)?

The program then explained that a true believer is a son of God (*ibn Allāh*) and that he has received new life from God. He has the divine nature (*al-ṭabī'ah al-ilāhīyah*) by which he can do things that satisfy God (*yirdī Allāh*). Because a true believer has this divine nature:

[We] can do the will of God (*irādah Allāh*) and do what God wants from us. [...] There is nothing difficult for us as He gives us great power. We obey (*nikhḍa'a*) our heavenly God, we make him happy (*nibsīṭuh*) and we satisfy Him (*nirḍīh*).

<sup>164</sup> TWR broadcast 21 September 2004, Words of Gold.

<sup>165</sup> TWR broadcast 21 September 2004, Do You Know Him?

<sup>166</sup> TWR broadcast 22 September 2004, Look at the End of their Life.

The program continued to ask the audience whether they were true Christians or only imitation Christians and called them to choose the Way of Life. ‘My dear listener, please come to God now as He is waiting for you. [...] Do not be too late. Come to Him and He will be with you.’ The program was evidently aimed at Christians, and for Muslims the content was hard to follow. PO Box 1333 in Cairo and PO Box 923267 in Amman were given and people were invited to write.<sup>167</sup>

### ***Light of Life***

The program *Light of Life* discussed the story of Cain and Abel. First, Genesis 4:1-16 and John 3:11-12 were read. The speaker said that Cain was the first pious man mentioned in the Bible, but that his religiosity was not pleasing to God. His brother Abel sacrificed from his animals but Cain took the produce of the land, which symbolized his own work. True religion is not about doing good things but about doing what God wants with a good heart. Cain was used as an example of apostate Christians who have ‘rejected the blood of his body’ while they aim for the satisfaction of God (*tardīyah Allāh*) through their human efforts. People who try to reach God by their own efforts effectively reject His mercy (*ni‘matuh*) and the value of Jesus’ death on the cross, including the value of His blood.

The audience was asked to choose between the way of Cain and the way of God. ‘Do you come before God based on the full work of Jesus, where you can find salvation and eternal life?’ The Christian jargon was not explained and the story of Cain and Abel was assumed to be common knowledge. The program was aimed at Christians and rather incomprehensible for Muslims. The audience was promised a book if they would write to PO Box 349 in Monte Carlo.<sup>168</sup>

### ***You Ask and We Answer***

*You Ask and We Answer* was a program in which pastor Manīs ‘Abd al-Nūr answered listeners’ questions. In this program, the question raised was: What is your definition of a real Christian? Manīs used Ephesians 1:10 as his basis. He began with saying that sin separates man from God. Therefore, by his own efforts, no one is able to please God. Someone who is drowning cannot save himself by pulling his own hair. But God offers salvation in Jesus Christ, as his death on the cross is an expiation for the sins of those who believe in Him. Those who believe in Jesus are changed by God into a new creature who, as an outcome of his faith, does good works. The audience was asked whether they had opened their hearts to Jesus. ‘So now it is the time to open your heart to Him in order that He forgives your sins and to make you new with Him.’ This program seemed aimed at Christians. People were asked to write to PO Box 1333 in Cairo or PO Box 60 in Amman.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>167</sup> TWR broadcast 22 September 2004, *I Need You*.

<sup>168</sup> TWR broadcast 23 September 2004, *Light of Life*.

<sup>169</sup> TWR broadcast 25 September 2004, *You Ask and We Answer*.



***Bread of Life***

Bread of Life treated Matthew 22:29-46. The Sadducees asked Jesus about the resurrection from the dead which they did not believe in. Jesus warned them that they were mistaken because they did not know the Scriptures nor the power of God. The program said that ignorance of the Bible leads to perversity and only the Bible can preserve us from that. Also, God is powerful enough to create the earth and to raise people from the dead. In eternity we will not have physical but spiritual bodies. This belief in the rising of the dead is the essential belief of the Christian faith and the audience was therefore asked whether they had assurance of where they would be in eternity.

Jesus proved to the Sadducees that the belief in a resurrection from the dead was Scriptural by quoting from Exodus 3:6. He used that verse because the Sadducees held that only the five books of Moses were divinely inspired. In this passage God said: 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob', yet these men had died years earlier. Jesus made the point that if they were indeed annihilated, the statement should have been in the past tense. But 'He is not the God of the dead but of the living'. The presenter of the program also concluded that Jesus' answer proves that there are treasures in the Bible that were deeply hidden and that can be found by 'seeking and searching'.

Then Jesus asked a question of the Pharisees: 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?' (Matthew 22:42). The answer was: 'The son of David'. Jesus asked them how David could then speak about the Christ as 'my Lord' in the Psalms. Jesus asked how the Christ could be the son of David and his Lord at the same time. Jesus did not answer the question at that time. The presenter said that it is impossible for human understanding to solve this issue, but it is clear that David called the Christ, God. The program also quoted further examples from the New Testament where people had called Jesus Lord and God. The presenter concluded that this is beyond the human mind but it is accepted by faith. The program ended by asking the audience to make up their own mind about Christ. 'This is an important question for now and for eternity, as knowing Jesus gives eternal life.' A book was then offered to those who would write to PO Box 349 in Monte Carlo.<sup>170</sup> This program's theme was very suitable for Muslims however the treatment of it was more Christian than Muslim. The various Bible stories needed much more contextual explanation to make them comprehensible to Muslims.

***Evidence of Life***

Evidence of Life was a drama about the Bible story of Jacob and Esau. Jacob escaped from the anger of his brother Esau whom he had cheated. In desperation Jacob prayed to God for forgiveness and protection. He then had a dream in which he saw angels on a ladder to heaven, comforting him:

God is the shadow for every good person, to protect him at night and during the day from the stroke of heat and the moon, as He is the guardian of all, and in the shadow of his wings He protects his own.

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<sup>170</sup> TWR broadcast 25 September 2004, Bread of Life.

Jacob woke up and was encouraged that God was with him. He called the place Bethel, house of God. The program used the Arab style of storytelling for conveying the truth that God forgives and protects his people, even if they are not perfect. The audience was asked to write to PO Box 90 in Jadidah al-Matn, PO Box 20 in Fajallah or PO Box 11095 in Khartoum.<sup>171</sup>

### 8.5.2.2 Arabic Churches and Ecumenical Issues

Stories and Amusements by Uncle Ḥanāwî recorded a meeting of three friends. These men realized that they had not met for a while. ‘Satan tries to separate us, as our combination is strong. [...] Jesus formed the church, his body, in order for that body to gather together.’ The men agreed that ‘when the body meets, God is glorified [and] when Jesus is there, the head of the body is there, and blessings will come.’ They therefore agreed that the time of the meeting should be seen as sacred and that from that time on they would endeavor to meet more regularly. They also agreed to invite some others to their meeting. The meeting of the three men was presented as a meeting of a House Church.

Another segment of the program discussed that God wants our hearts, and that true prayer does not need a rug. As God wants to listen to our voice, the issue is not in body movements (*ḥarakât al-jasad*), but in the heart. This was an obvious reference to the Islamic prayer movements, though it could as well be understood to be against many of the habits in the Oriental churches.

The program also made sure that the audience understood that they should speak about the Gospel to other people because it was the message of eternal life: ‘According to the justice of God, the sinner will die in his time, but in the cross of Jesus, mercy entered to give the sinner a chance.’ In one final piece of drama toward the end of the program, the audience learnt what prayer to pray in order to be saved:

Jesus, thank you for [...] your death on the cross because of my sins. God I confess that I am a sinner. Forgive me and cleanse me with your blood, clean my heart and come and enter into my life and my heart. Rule over my thoughts, my feelings, and all of my being. I thank you God for listening. Amen.

The program clearly endeavored to be suitable for Muslims or MBBs through a choice of themes that related to them, but the language used for treating these themes was full of Christian jargon. The content was therefore hard for Muslims to understand. The audience was asked to write to PO Box 1333 in Cairo or PO Box 923267 in Amman.<sup>172</sup>

### 8.5.2.3 Christian-Muslim Relations

The Church of the Nazarene in Amman had its own program, titled *Stations and Situations*. Pastor Ya‘qûb ‘Ammârî interviewed two guests, ‘Amru Qaşâş and Mu‘âwîyâ. ‘Amru was asked to give his testimony. He explained that he had participated in some revival meetings in his church in al-Karâk in southern Jordan

<sup>171</sup> TWR broadcast 26 September 2004, Evidence of Life.

<sup>172</sup> TWR broadcast 24 September 2004, Stories and Amusements.

when, on the fourth day of listening to sermons, he ‘felt that something pushed me to really be a son of God (*ibn ḥaqqīqī Allāh*) and God to be the King of my life’. ‘Amru then said that His friends thought that his enthusiasm would not last, but it did, even while he served over 12 years in the army. At this point the interviewer, ‘Ammârî, commented: ‘serving in the army, it is wonderful to serve your country.’ ‘Amru then continued saying that he was no longer in the army, but that he was now involved in delivering medical aid to Christians and Muslims in Irak. ‘Wonderful’, was ‘Ammârî’s comment:

I am really proud that I also belong to a Jordanian family. In Jordan we, Muslims and Christians, live together in love. We have relationships. Nothing can separate us. We present a wonderful example for any nation that wants to know how to live in unity with each other. [...] I am attached to my belief but this does not prevent me from loving the other, and the closer I come to God, the more my love for others around me increases.

‘Ammârî finished his interview with ‘Amru by saying that Iraq with its many communities from different nations and religions, is ‘really a nice bouquet of colorful flowers’.

The second interview, with Mu‘âwiyá, ended with a similar focus on the unity of Muslims and Christians in Jordan. First Mu‘âwiyá explained that the devout Christian community he grew up in did not attract him a lot but during a youth rally he gave his life to Christ because he was touched by the concept that God loves the world so much that Jesus died on the cross for our salvation. He did think that this decision would lead to a life of seclusion in Jordan, but that fear was unfounded:

I live in a wonderful society, with unity, love and peace. The last thing we talk about is religion. We do speak about relations, our common history that all religions and sects [in Jordan] share. [...] I go to the Evangelical Nazarene Church [in al-Karâk]. That is the Moab Church now. We have changed its name and call it the Evangelical Nazarene Church of Moab, because I think we belong to Moab. This is our history and our life.

This program was an excellent effort of a denomination in Jordan to make programs that testified to their faith in Jesus Christ, while at the same time trying to strengthen national unity in the country. In the pride shown in being Jordanians, this program seemed to have a concrete target audience, Jordanians, as prescribed in RCR1. The effect of locating the program in the context of Jordan made the program more concretely contextualized than the other programs researched here. The program contained personal as well as societal applications of the Gospel, so it spoke to the audience in its concrete context in accordance with RCR2. As a denominational program, it heeded warning CW2, about the need to develop the contextualized message as a process within the community of the church. The audi-

ence was asked to write to a PO Box 963107 of the Nazarene Church in Amman, or its email address nazvoice@go.com.jo.<sup>173</sup>

#### 8.5.2.4 Pastoral Care

##### *Whispers of Wisdom*

Whispers of Wisdom discussed the desire of people for freedom. Christian believers understand that true freedom is found in relating to the Spirit of God. The presenter outlined that since the Lord is the Spirit then it follows that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. True freedom is therefore found in liberty from the authority of sin (*sulṭān al-khaṭīyah*), from religious observances (*‘ibādāt*, as in Islamic Law) and also from fear (*makhawf*). Most people think of freedom in terms of either political liberty, the full gratification of all desires, ownership of property or financial independence. The program stressed that the search for the fulfillment of these desires does not lead to freedom but to bondage to matter and to our own impulses. True freedom is related to obedience to Jesus Christ. The Gospel of John was quoted: ‘If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’, as well as: ‘If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.’

The program explained that the freedom that God gives is a free gift. Christ became incarnate (*tajassud*) and his death on the cross opened the door for us to enjoy that freedom. Our deep rooted sin makes us do what is wrong and prevents us from going up on the mountain of freedom but ‘God incarnated in the person of Christ to present to us salvation and give us the ability to reach Him when we surrender our life to him (*nusalimmuh ḥayâtnâ*).’ The program continued to discuss that the death of Jesus paid the price for our sin. Without further explanation the program referred to the Samaritan woman (John 4). It then stated that Jesus also gives the believer power to be free from bad habits like smoking, drinking, drug abuse, homosexuality, anger, and too much talking. Finally, it said that God also liberates believers from fear as He controls the world and its future. The audience was then advised to pray this prayer:

My God, I am a sinner. Free me from my sin and the habits that hold me. Please remove fear from my heart. I believe that your cross removed the cause for fear. I want you to enter my heart and clean it. Thank you. Amen.

The program seemed to be aimed at Christians rather than Muslims as the language used was generally for insiders. The audience was asked to write to the program. PO Box 1987 in Jadidah al-Matn, PO Box 20 in Fajallah, and PO Box 11095 in Khartoum were given.<sup>174</sup>

##### *Healing Touches*

In the program Healing Touches by Basma a letter from the audience was read and then discussed by Dr. Imîl Jûzâf, a consultant in psychological medicine and

<sup>173</sup> TWR broadcast 20 September 2004, Situations and Stations.

<sup>174</sup> TWR broadcast 20 September 2004, Whispers of Wisdom.

the manager of a Christian counseling center. The person who wrote the letter said she suffered from extreme shyness when she was with her fiancée. She said that her fiancée had all the characteristics that she likes but that he is also a quiet person. The problem therefore was that when they meet they do not know what to say. It did not take Emil long to come to the point: The shyness of the letter writer was because she made her feeling of dignity dependent on other people. ‘My dear listener, can you take your evaluation and know that you are loved from your personal intimate (*al-ḥamîmah*) relationship with God? [...] God says to you: “You are so dear in my eyes”, and if you believe him, you do not wait for people to be satisfied with you.’

On a more practical note, Emil then explained how the writer could begin a good conversation. He also advised people to set aside the romantic idea that a good marriage never has a good fight. He advised engaged couples to spend enough time together talking about all the important issues of life, but to be careful to not enter into a physical relationship. ‘There are boundaries in touching, [and I am not speaking about] hands touching, which is out of bounds’ ‘Take care of the boundaries, keep yourself innocent and pure, and God will bless your home.’ Listeners were then encouraged to write, to PO Box 1333 in Cairo or to PO Box 923267 in Amman.<sup>175</sup>

#### ***Words from the Heart***

In *Words from the Heart*, a Christian definition of the ‘spiritual dimension’ was given by the Egyptian counselor Dr. Ihâb al-Kharâṭ. He first quoted some Western experts in this realm, explaining that this dimension concerned concepts of God, religious experiences, and the effect that these have on the character of the religious person. The program then quoted the Bible and said that the inner experience through the Holy Spirit leads people to profess that Jesus Christ is Lord. He also convicts people of their sin. Each time when people come closer to God through Christ, it is because of the work of the Holy Spirit in them. The language used in this program was suitable for rather intelligent Christians, while it was quite incomprehensible for Muslims. The audience was invited to write about their psychological problems or anything that they were facing, to PO Box 1333 in Cairo or PO Box 60 in Amman. They were also promised a book.<sup>176</sup>

#### ***Meditations of Modernity***

In the program *Meditations of Modernity*, MELM from Beirut gave solutions based on the Bible for youth problems. The program first explained that as science invents more and more to make life pleasant modern man thinks that he does not need God. The program then explained that Jesus came to this world in order to fulfill the plans of God for the salvation of humanity. Jesus died and rose again, conquering Satan, sin and death. After this, in spite of fierce persecution by the Roman Empire Christianity spread. The Christians had kept their eyes focused on the invisible and on eternity and were therefore able to bear the suffering.

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<sup>175</sup> TWR broadcast 20 September 2004, Healing Touches.

<sup>176</sup> TWR broadcast 20 September 2004, Words from the Heart.

The program then used the Jesus' parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were prepared with oil in their lamps for the coming of the bridegroom. When the five that had not enough oil endeavored to enter the wedding banquet, they were not let in:

The Apostle (*Rasûl*) of heaven came to earth to save the world, the light of the world, the door, the way, the truth and the life, the good shepherd, the bread of life, the living water. All of us on earth are invited to this wedding that means eternal life. Life on earth will end.

The program explained that after death, either heaven or hell awaits us. Mankind has made great progress and is even able to travel in space, but there is still no solution for crime, poverty, divorce and selfishness. 'Only Jesus Christ is the solution for the problems and challenges of humanity throughout all ages'. Belief in Him does not solve all problems but he gives us power and he is our friend with whom we can discuss all things. The audience was then challenged to be like St Paul (*al-Qadîs Bûlâ*), and count all things loss for knowing Christ Jesus. The program seemed aimed mostly at Christians as the language was hard to understand for Muslims. A book was promised to those who wrote to PO Box in 60307 in Beirut or PO Box 75 in Fajâllah.<sup>177</sup>

### ***Song of Hope***

Song of Hope was a drama program in Sudanese Arabic about some men in the army. The officer Samîr treats his men very badly. Ayman and Shanûdah are threatened by Samîr that he will make their lives miserable. Ayman wished he was not born. 'My father and mother swore at me that I was a useless boy, that there was no hope in me. [...] In college, I had one set of trousers and one t-shirt.' Shanûdah explains that Ayman is valuable: 'Your price, Ayman, equals the life of Jesus'.

Ayman decided that he was going to kill officer Samîr for humiliating him. Shanûdah however told him again about the love of God for him. 'You are valuable and loved by Jesus Christ, he loves you personally. [...] Because of that, he left heaven and came to live with us. He was poor, oppressed, hated, and crucified on the cross in order to die and save you from your sins and not go to hell.' Shanûdah also guaranteed:

Ayman, if you open your heart to Jesus, you will enjoy the forgiveness of your sins. You will change. He will give you new life, and he will replace the feelings of revenge and anger [...] with feelings of love and forgiveness for your enemies.

Ayman then prayed the sinner's prayer and decided immediately to go to Samîr to hug and kiss him. This was a rather sudden turnabout and quite incredible. The program seemed aimed at Christians as it used considerable Christian jargon. The audience was asked to write to PO Box 1333 in Cairo.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> TWR broadcast 20 September 2004, Meditations of Modernity.

<sup>178</sup> TWR broadcast 21 September 2004, Song of Hope.

***Days of 'Alâ'***

This was a youth program, presented by 'Alâ'. The program began with a piece of drama. Some teenagers decided to help their poor old neighbor Umm Ḥaṣan. It was winter and her water tank on her roof had burst and so her roof was leaking. Umm Ḥaṣan was very thankful for their help 'as God gave me no children, but He gave me children like you.' The program then proceeded to explain to its listeners that to render some small help to someone in need may bring hope in their lives again. The listeners were reminded that they themselves may be in need of help in the future but at that time, 'God may ignore your cries because you ignored the cries of others while you had the ability to help them'. Jesus was used as an example of someone who always helped others. 'Think about others. Take positive steps and help others'. The audience was then asked to write to PO Box 811879 in Amman or PO Box 1333 in Cairo. They were also pointed to the website [www.aladiary.com](http://www.aladiary.com).<sup>179</sup>

***How are You?***

How are You? was a program for women by Dr. Rimûnah al-Khaṭî. She discussed, in rather complicated medical terms, what the appendix does and what appendicitis is. She explained the symptoms of acute appendicitis and the dangers of that, and that immediate medical attention is then required. After a long medical treatise, Rimûnah created a bridge to talk about God: 'All of this causes pain, and we cannot understand God's will at the time, but we will understand later. We can be sure that God's love is a superior love, and He will not leave us.' The program also promised that Jesus will support us and raise us up in all circumstances. Moreover, the troubles we face have to do with Satan who battles against people who obey the word of God, but 'God watches us and his eyes are upon us'.

The program ended with some tips of what to do when your child has intense pain in the abdomen. Also, a book titled *What about your Spiritual Health* was offered to those who wrote to PO Box 1333 in Cairo or PO Box 60 in Amman.<sup>180</sup>

***Woman Today***

Woman Today by Rubá Sâlim was about the importance of good marriage counseling before marriage. On that issue, Rubá interviewed Jûn Zalifû. Jûn said that after she married she found out that marriage was distorted in Arab society. One main cause was that people are ashamed as families to discuss the issues. Jûn mentioned sex education as one of the most important needs. Her pastor and his wife discussed that with Jûn and her fiancée before their marriage. She also learned much from Christian books on the issue as well as from Christian satellite television broadcasts. One final advice Jûn gave was to read the Bible and pray every night as a couple and solve any disagreements before going to sleep. The advice given was very relevant for most Arabs across the entire Arab World as sex education is considered taboo and married couples usually do not get any advice before marriage. Rubá invited the audience to write to PO Box 930101 in Amman

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<sup>179</sup> TWR broadcast 21 September 2004, Days of 'Alâ'.

<sup>180</sup> TWR broadcast 21 September 2004, How are You?

or to [info@arabwomentoday.com](mailto:info@arabwomentoday.com). She also referred her audience to the website [www.arabwomentoday.com](http://www.arabwomentoday.com).<sup>181</sup>

### ***Triumphal Procession***

This was a program of Charles Stanley of Intouch Ministries in Atlanta, Georgia (USA). The program was aimed at Christians and explained how the Holy Spirit is a helper in prayer. We often do not know how to pray, but the Spirit intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. Even the apostle Paul struggled with things in prayer. He for instance had a thorn in the flesh. Stanley did not explain what that meant, but continued that Paul went through three periods of prayer in which he asked God for a change. God told him that he would not change the problem but that Paul had to accept that the grace of God was enough for him.

It was said that just as the apostle Paul faced problems that were not solved, so do we. One reason why God does not always give us what we ask for is because if we have all we need, we may not feel we need God any longer. 'God wants us to be intimate and close with Him.' That is the reason why He wants our prayers. Stanley ended his programs with three pieces of advice. First, if people do not feel like praying, they should do it anyhow. Secondly, if during prayer the presence of God is not felt, this should not depress the person. Thirdly, if one feels that a wall separates one from God during prayer, he should insist and continue in prayer as that wall is a work of Satan. PO Box 1333 in Cairo and PO Box 212850 in Amman were given and people were encouraged to respond with any problem or comment they had.<sup>182</sup>

### ***With the Small Ones***

This was a program for children, but there was no child in the program. Mama Sâmiyah told a story of Şanâ', a girl in Africa who was very sick but who refused to take her medicine and threw it away. Her mother did not realize this, and wondered why her daughter became sicker each day. In the end, the daughter confessed what she did and took her medicine again. She explained to her mother that she became convicted of her wrongdoing because of her sadness. The lesson drawn was that disobedience makes a child suffer and beside that, disobeying the loving God who sent his Son to die on the cross to pay for our disobedience makes God sad and it makes us suffer. 'Please mama, forgive me if I get better and get up again, I will not deceive you again and I will obey the words of God and of you.' Mama prayed beside the bed, and Şanâ' was healed. 'My dear [listener], as you understand, Şanâ' took the medicine from that day regularly and she also obeyed [her mother and the Bible] in everything and each time'. The children were asked to write to PO Box 1987 in Jadidah al-Matn, PO Box 20 in Fajallâh or to PO Box 11095 in Khartoum.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> TWR broadcast 22 September 2004, Woman Today.

<sup>182</sup> TWR broadcast 22 September 2004, Triumphal Procession.

<sup>183</sup> TWR broadcast 23 September 2004, With the Small Ones.



***Friends of the Way***

In Friends of the Way Bâsim answered the question of an anonymous teenager of 17 years who was in love with a girl who was his neighbor and who he also knew from school and church. She was also in love with him. The writer asked whether their feelings were right or wrong, what the will of God was, and whether they should become engaged. In order to answer these questions, Bâsim had invited a psychologist 'Aşâm 'Azzat into the studio. 'Aşâm explained that at the age of 17, emotions are excitable and intellectually teenagers are not able to evaluate their feelings well. He doubted that what teens call love, should be seen as true love. He argued that their feelings for each other were the result of them seeing each other so often.

'Aşâm thought engagement at the age of 17 would be 'dangerous, as desires are aroused and to control them is difficult'. He was also worried that a relationship that was too emotionally deep, might create problems if they were to later marry someone else. He warned against the idea that the young people would be able to know whether God would want them to marry as that would be much later anyhow. Instead, he advised the writer to concentrate on his study and to disentangle himself from too deep an emotional attachment. If the girl was meant to become his wife, they should be able to wait. The program reflected Christian middle class values and seemed to be aimed at Christians. PO Box 1333 in Cairo was given to the audience and they were invited to write to the program.<sup>184</sup>

***Together on the Road***

Together on the Road was a program from Michael Youssef of Leading the Way in Atlanta, Georgia (USA). This dual-language program was produced by Nabil Yûsif. The speaker was Michael Youssef, whose English speech was literally translated by Bâqî Şadâqah.<sup>185</sup> The program of 23 September 2004 addressed the worries of the audience. It began by saying that people worry about many things, but they should trust God who told them not to worry as He cares for them. Worries about the future are not necessary as the future is in the hands of the God who we can trust. When we worry about the future, we should look at God and his promises for us so that our worries change into more love for God. Worries of failure paralyze many people, but failures help us learn new things, so after a failure, we should pray to God to make it into a spring board. Men also often suffer from fear of being found weak or of not achieving what they think others expect from them. To admit weakness is liberating and makes us experience the power of God who enables us. The program ended with 'a word for those who do not know Jesus as their personal savior':

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<sup>184</sup> TWR broadcast 23 September 2004, Friends of the Way.

<sup>185</sup> These programs were written and spoken by the Rev. Dr. Michael Youssef, priest of the Evangelical Anglican Church and founder of Leading the Way in Atlanta, Georgia (USA) and translated by pastor Bâqî Şadâqah from the Coptic-Evangelical Church in Asyût (Egypt). The first of these programs began on 4 June 1996. See [www.leadingtheway.org](http://www.leadingtheway.org) (15 April 2007). Joshua Youssef in an interview with the author (13 April 2007).

Your life will be full of fear and worry, [...], emptiness [...], feelings of guilt. [...] Do you come? Will you say to Him: 'Jesus, forgive me my sins and accept me in your Kingdom', and God promises to give you eternal life and He will forgive all your sins.

The audience was invited to write to the program and they were promised a book. PO Box 55 in Asyût (Egypt) was given, as well as PO Box 349 in Monte Carlo. They were also invited to visit [www.togetherontheroad.com](http://www.togetherontheroad.com).<sup>186</sup>

In another program of Together on the Road *knowing Jesus* was the topic. The program focused on His sufferings, which enabled Him to empathize with mankind. 'No-one can say "how can God know what I am passing through", as Jesus can immediately say: "I have experienced what you are passing through"'. As Jesus experienced physical pain, rejection, loneliness, persecution, He can empathize with those who do likewise.

Jesus suffered all this misery for our sake. As the scapegoat was sent into the desert annually, so Jesus once and for all carried away our sadness, suffering, and pain. 'We were the cause of his punishment.' The program explained that in God's mercy, he sent Jesus to die and carry the punishment that mankind deserved for its sins. The audience was finally advised to remember that Jesus understood their pain and that He stands beside them and helps them bear that pain. The best thing to do with pain was to use it, and the experience of Christ's nearness to comfort others in their pain and be a blessing. A book was offered and the response addresses were given.<sup>187</sup>

The next Together on the Road program was about the prophet Jonah. The theme of the program was compassion, a 'noble characteristic'. Jesus was compassionate. The program suggested that when compassion is only seen as an emotional inclination however it can be dangerous as it can make evil look acceptable. Real compassion is rooted in God's compassion, as shown in the book of Jonah. The program further introduced the book of Jonah by asking the audience whether they were traveling in the will of God, or opposite to the will of God. It was said that there were 'two types of believers, there is no third type'. The question was deemed relevant as the 'God of Jonah is our God', and he may be patient with us but eventually, He will act as He did in the case of Jonah.

The Word of the Lord came to Jonah, and we should be joyful that we also have the Word of God, the Bible, as a possession and thanks to the Bible and prayer, believers can know the will of God for their lives. Jonah though did not heed God's Word and he ran away. It was said that likewise many believers nowadays think that 'God loves them; whatever kind of life they lead'. Most people want the mercy of God (*ni'mat Allâh*) without conversion (*tawbah*). People like to hear of God's blessings, not of his demands and our need to be obedient in the areas of money, the usage of time and of hobbies. The audience was advised to pray: 'God, my Lord, help me to hear your voice and help me to obey your voice'. They were promised a book if they wrote to the program.<sup>188</sup>

<sup>186</sup> TWR broadcast 23 September 2004, Together on the Road.

<sup>187</sup> TWR broadcast 24 September 2004, Together on the Road.

<sup>188</sup> TWR broadcast 25 September 2004, Together on the Road.

The fourth program of Together on the Road continued the series of programs on Jonah. Jonah was told by God to go to Nineveh and call the people to penitence because of their wickedness. Jonah did not want to go, as he considered his own nation the only nation deserving God's mercy. He preferred that Nineveh would be punished. The program showed sympathy for Jonah: 'No-one can blame you if you have sympathy for Jonah. [...] You don't want to witness to your colleague at work or to your neighbor, for similar reasons. [...] If fear is an obstacle for you to witness about your Savior, how shameful. Pray that God will give you boldness and courage, and He will do so.'

Jonah knew that the wicked Ninevites would be saved from peril if they converted. The program asked the listeners whether they would like to witness for Christ to a shopkeeper that had deceived them or to a colleague that had prevented their promotion. That was the situation Jonah was in. 'It is so easy to pray for the salvation of your family members. [...] It is not easy to pray for those who hate you...' So Jonah went by ship to Tarshish, which was in Spain. How foolish for Jonah to think that it is possible to escape from God. The listeners were asked to wonder whether they were walking in the will of God, or whether they were walking in the opposite direction. They were also offered a book if they would write to the program. The same address was given as before, but now PO Box 926389 in Amman was added and the fax number 00-962(6)5674912, as well as [www.togetherontheroad.com](http://www.togetherontheroad.com).<sup>189</sup>

These four Together on the Road programs were mostly aimed at Christian Arabs. They only focused on the personal relationship with God, so in the realm of RCR2, they only endeavored to speak to that part of the actual context of the audience. The societal component of the Gospel was not treated, so CW4 and CW5 were not heeded.

### ***Unshackled***

The Arabic version of Unshackled by Pacific Garden Mission (PGM) was produced by the Egyptian Mufîd Waḥbâ.<sup>190</sup> It was a drama program about an American cou-

<sup>189</sup> TWR broadcast 26 September 2004, Together on the Road.

<sup>190</sup> TWR broadcast 24 September 2004, Unshackled. In 1979, TWR began broadcasting the Arabic Unshackled program of Pacific Garden Mission (PGM) from Chicago, Michigan (USA). During that year, sons of the family of pastor Samû'il Waḥbâ from Alexandria (Egypt) asked PGM to enable them to create an Arabic version of the English Unshackled programs. Throughout the years, the four brothers Mufîd, Viktûr, Wafîq and Hânî, were responsible for creating these programs. They recorded them with the help of amateur Arabic-speaking actors in the USA. Hânî Waḥbâ was on staff with PGM for the Arabic programs, while the other brothers were volunteers. From the beginning in 1979 the stories were taped in the recording facilities of KTIS Radio of North Western College in St. Paul, Minnesota (USA). The Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization allowed the free usage of its WMIT-WFGW radio studios in Black Mountain, North Carolina (USA) to PGM's Arabic production team for editing. Initially, TWR allowed the programs to be broadcast at no charge for the airtime, but this subsequently changed. Later, FEBA, HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings'), and HAM would also broadcast the programs. The programs were broadcast locally in Australia and in the USA as well. Unshackled elicited response from the audience. 'The letters come, as many as 50 or 60 a month, giving evidence that Muslims are taking the message of Unshackled seriously, causing some listeners to trust the Savior rather than Islamic beliefs', PGM published in 2001. Dudley Donaldson, 'Arabic 'Unshackled! Reaches Milestone' in *PGM News* (January 2000), pp. 1-2. 'What Happens when Muslims hear 'Unshackled' ... Letters show God is using this unique Gospel outreach', in *PGM News* (April 2001), p. 2.

ple, Julia and Art DelaCroix from Crystal City in Texas (USA). After having served in the American army Art had become an alcoholic and was verbally and physically abusive. He promised his wife that he would stop drinking and that he would not see his old Vietnam buddies any longer and that he therefore wanted to move to Washington. Julia wanted to stay in Crystal City where she had her family, friends, and work. 'Art, the problem is not in Crystal City. The problem is inside us'. Art decided to leave for Washington anyway so Julia resigned from her work. Her fears proved right as in their new environment, Art continued his drinking and abusive behavior.

A colleague of Art, Cass, visited the family and asked them whether they had accepted Jesus in their hearts. Cass explained that Jesus had died on the cross and had risen from the dead for their sake. He explained that all people are sinners and deserve death but that Jesus had died for their sake. The program ended with a promise of a present to those who wrote to PO Box 6823 in Beirut.<sup>191</sup>

### **Good News**

In Good News the Biblical concept of the *world* (*al-'âlam*) was discussed. God loves the world in the sense that He loves his creation. However, the Bible also teaches that we should not love the world. In that context, the world means carnal thinking and materialism. Material concerns are an enemy of the believer and the opposite of our love for Jesus. What does this quarantine (*al-in'azâl*) from the world mean for Christians? It does not mean a withdrawal from our work or our responsibilities. It also does not mean that we separate ourselves from sinners, just as Jesus did not withdraw but participated in meetings, like weddings. And it does not mean that our only interest is in the religious. The believer must be interested in learning, literature, politics and the arts. It also does not mean a rejection of the habits and traditions of one's culture. Withdrawal from a group of believers is also not good, even though they may not be perfect.

We are not to withdraw from life because Jesus also commanded us to 'go into the entire world and preach the good news to all creation'. He expects us to be a light and salt in the world with a 'calm and happiness on [our] face, loving others and seeking for their reconciliation (*muşâliḥah*) with God.'

So what is this isolation from the world? It is a refusal of all standards and worldly principles that are not in accordance with the Spirit and the principles of the Bible. The believer should not enjoy the world's appetites and its pleasures. These should not occupy him as he must also spend time in prayer, contemplation and the reading of the Bible. Believers must also leave every amusement that can lead him to evil (*sharr*). It also means choosing one's intimate friends and certainly one's spouse, among other believers.

If believers understand the realities of heaven and hell, and the love of God in Jesus, they are renewed by the Holy Spirit. They have a new heart so they are able to be victorious over the world with its lures. They will reject anything that can slow their spiritual life even though they are living in the midst of the world as a witness to Christ. 'By this we are true children for God (*ibnâ' ḥaqîqîyîn lî Allâh*)

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<sup>191</sup> TWR broadcast 24 September 2004, Unshackled.

and a special nation (*sha‘b khâs*) for Him’. The program was aimed at Christian believers. They were asked to write to. PO Box 90 in Jadidah al-Matn, PO Box 20 in Fajallah or PO Box 11095 in Khartoum.<sup>192</sup>

### ***Window on Life***

The Lebanese Baptist pastor Shârliz Qustah had a program titled *Window on Life*, about the practical Christian life. Psalm 15 was read and used as the basis for the program. Qustah began by saying that the sanctuary and the holy hill that are mentioned in the opening of the Psalm, are expressions that refer to the presence (*ḥuḍûr*) of God and intimacy (*ḥamîmah*) with Him. The Psalmist gives characteristics of the person who enjoys that intimacy with God.

People, who know Jesus Christ as their savior, have an inheritance obtained by mercy and they are a new creation. These eternal facts cannot be changed as God forgave our sins and liberated us from the power of sin and death. These facts can not be felt, as we do not feel forgiveness or acceptance but all this is revealed in the Word of God which is trustworthy.

When someone is a new creation in Christ, the Holy Spirit lives in him. We then become hungry for the Word of God and the work of the Spirit in our lives leads to love, joy, happiness etc. We learn how to witness and develop spiritually through prayer and the intimate relationship with God, the Father (*Allâh al-Âb*). Sin can slow these developments down, but it has no effect on our eternal salvation. Qustah ended the program with a description of the practical characteristics of Christian behavior. These comments were quite relevant to Arabic culture. The audience was then asked to write to Qustah using the PO Box 1135696 in Beirut, as well as his email address, nafithaifal@aol.com.<sup>193</sup>

In another program of *Window on Life*, Qustah used Psalm 15 again as the basis for discussing the practical Christian life. The characteristics of the devout man as mentioned in the Psalm were treated one by one. Each of these moral characteristics was also quite contextually suitable for an Arab audience as they reflected the Semitic morality of the Old Testament. Costa also used the example of Daniel in Daniel 6:1-4 to explain that because of his transparent life, Daniel came to play a role in the political life of Babel, the enemy of his people. It is hard not to think that Costa was telling Christians to lead an exemplary life and to play a political role in society. In the context of Lebanon, that was not strange.

The audience was then asked to honestly reflect on their life and see whether there were obstacles that hindered a life with God in his sanctuary. He also invited those who had not put their trust (*thiqah*) in the Lord Jesus Christ yet, to now surrender (*tasallim*) their life to Him. He advised them to say:

I am giving you my heart to control everything in my life. I want to share in your life and to rest and be comforted in your house and to stay on your holy mountain.

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<sup>192</sup> TWR broadcast 25 September 2004, Good News.

<sup>193</sup> TWR broadcast 25 September 2004, Window on Life.

The audience was asked to contact Qustah. After a song, the audience was once again invited to surrender their whole life to God if they had not answered the call of God (*nidâ' Allâh*) yet.<sup>194</sup>

### **Dialogues**

The program Dialogues (*Ḥiwâr*) of Yûsif Mañşûr was about personality disorders. In the program Mañşûr had four guests and a live audience consisting of students from the Cairo University. The guests were Rabâb al-Ḥusaynî, a Muslim of the National Center for Social and Criminological Research in Cairo, Makram Shâkir, a psychologist at 'Ayn Shams University, Mâhir al-Dab', a psychologist at the American University in Cairo (AUC) and Jûn Vîktûr, a Christian counselor.

Beside much general talk about the characteristics and causes of personality disorders, one of the speakers underlined the value of each individual as the basis for a healthy self-esteem. 'God [...] made me wonderful and very precious. [...] He shed His blood for us on the cross, for the sake of me personally, and for the sake of us altogether.' People also need to be loved by others as a precondition for being satisfied with themselves, someone said.

The audience asked the guest speakers about how to deal with anger. That matter was then discussed by the panel. The use of a live audience was unique in the context of Arabic Christian radio. Even more unique was that a Muslim was one of the guest speakers in the program. This was probably possible because of the psychological nature of the program. The listeners were asked to call +20(2)2917268 in Cairo, or to write to PO Box 4 in Sarâ'î al-Qubbah (Cairo). The email hewar@hotmail.com was also given for responses.<sup>195</sup>

### **8.5.2.5 Cultural Issues**

Opinion and Thought was about superstitions. This made it the only program in the TWR programming to deal mainly with a cultural topic. The topic was treated through an interview with Samû'il Waşfî, a teacher at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo. He showed his concern that children should not be brought up with beliefs in 'giants, genies, the evil eye, and magic (*al-'afârît, al-jinnî, al-ḥasad, and al-sihîr*)'. He believed that mothers especially played an important role in building their child's beliefs. He continued that schools also play an important role and in his opinion these were in need of new thinking and new curriculums since their graduating students continued to believe in superstitions. Samû'il called this 'cultural illiteracy' and believed that these superstitions separated people from the Creator and also from their own creativity. Samû'il wanted the churches to also play a role in educating the people against superstitious ideas, to 'have victory over these superstitions and to teach them to be dependent on God and trust in Him alone'. The program ended with words to comfort those in fear of the evil eye and that the escape from it could be found in Jesus who gives us His

<sup>194</sup> TWR broadcast 26 September 2004, Window on Life.

<sup>195</sup> TWR broadcast 26 September 2004, Conversations.

peace. People were asked to write to PO Box 1987 in Jadidah al-Matn, PO Box 20 in Fajallâh or to PO Box 11095 in Khartoum.<sup>196</sup>

#### 8.5.2.6 Socio-Economic and Political Issues

The programs did not discuss socio-economic or political matters. These topics were not even touched upon in any program. This was probably due to TWR's view of what the Gospel entails. It means that the programs did not discuss important areas in the life of the audience and a Christian perspective on those matters.

### 8.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

Some of TWR's impact in North Africa can be assessed by a description of the importance of radio broadcasts by Greg Livingstone, the founder of the mission organization Frontiers and formerly the North American President of AWM. He described an anonymous local congregation in North Africa, where according to Livingstone, a 'number, if not most, of the believers in the church initially were contacted through radio and Bible correspondence courses.'<sup>197</sup>

The program suppliers of TWR in this study reported very satisfactory audience response figures during the 1970s and 1980s. During those years the interest in responding to Christian radio was at its peak in the Middle East and North Africa. Steven Vishanoff, a former missionary with AWM, remembered that 'according to statistics, over 30% of the population in Morocco had listened to TWR at some point' during the 1980s. Television was not well developed yet, and there were not many local stations or radio broadcasts in Arabic yet. TWR had a captive audience.<sup>198</sup>

TWR's audience response figures for its own broadcasts are not available and it is hoped that those figures will be made available in the future for further study of the impact of this broadcaster. Only scant information is presently available such as that TWR's own Arabic translation of the Emmaus Bible Correspondence Course (BCC) in 1974 had 2,000 students.<sup>199</sup>

According to Adams, one of his main concerns during his years of leadership in TWR was its 'lack of commitment to research – no funds were allocated to audience research and the station rarely turned up on the more general surveys.' Adams helped bring a consortium of Christian broadcasters together in the early 1990's called the International Communication Research for Evangelism (ICRE), but TWR remained 'a reluctant participant'. This consortium was 'able to buy research from the BBC but TWR never really committed seriously to independent audience research and the consortium has subsequently died'.<sup>200</sup> According to Ad-

<sup>196</sup> TWR broadcast 24 September 2004, Opinion and Thought.

<sup>197</sup> Greg Livingstone, 'Sarabia: An Indigenous Arab Church', in Ralph. D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (eds), *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Pasadena, 1999, first published in 1981), p. 689.

<sup>198</sup> Steven Vishanoff in an email to the author (17 December 2002).

<sup>199</sup> Says 'Adli Fam in Butler, 'Meeting chaired by Phil Butler' (Marseille, 21 February 1974), p. 12.

<sup>200</sup> Adams in an email to the author (12 July 2005).

ams, most of TWR's audiences for its Arabic broadcasts were Christian.<sup>201</sup> That was probably true for the audience in the Middle East but not in North Africa.

FEBA and TWR participated in some BBC audience research in Yemen in 1992. InterSearch, an institute of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan (USA), provided an analysis of the outcome. This research showed that one percent of the urban population regularly listened to TWR's broadcasts from Cyprus. TWR's programs were evaluated as lively, imaginative and entertaining by the audience. Robert S. Fortner of InterSearch concluded:

The two missionary stations [TWR and FEBA] do seem to attract different audiences. This is due to a variety of factors, among them transmitter placement, propagation methods (MW vs. SW), and programming strategies. They are not merely duplicating one another in their broadcasts into Yemen.<sup>202</sup>

Shadi said that during the period of the second Gulf War of January 1991, the programs of TWR to the Middle East were 'very effective'. According to Shadi, he 'knew later on that there were hundreds of thousands of listeners each night'.<sup>203</sup>

During his period of work with TWR, from 1985-1993, Shadi stated that TWR's Arabic department was receiving 'more than 6,000 letters each year'. This did not include the response that the program producers received at their own addresses.<sup>204</sup>

The TWR's program suppliers who were broadcasting to North Africa reported a strong downward trend in audience response during the 1990s. Not enough information was found to assess TWR's audience response for broadcasts over RMC-ME to the Middle East. It is likely that it increased initially due to the Gulf War of 1990-1991, but that it decreased around the mid 1990s as this generally happened to other broadcasters also.

The response to the 20-minute daily program Evening Trip was considered 'great' by Shadi. He did not offer presents, as TWR could not handle the mail, but in 1990 616 letters were received. 'Many Muslim listeners wrote in and asked questions, while others got converted to Christianity.'<sup>205</sup> Shadi's comment that TWR could not handle the Arabic mail was worrying, as TWR considered follow-up an important part of its ministry. TWR received about 30 letters per month for its Healing Touches programs in 2004.<sup>206</sup> For Days of 'Alâ' only about 100 letters and emails were received in 2005.<sup>207</sup> Further research into TWR's audience response figures is recommended.

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<sup>201</sup> Adams in an interview with the author (27 July 2005).

<sup>202</sup> Robert Fortner, *Media Use and Audiences for International Broadcasting in Yemen – Based on Research Conducted in February 1992 by the Market Research Organization for the BBC* (n.p., 1993), p. 1.

<sup>203</sup> Shadi Habib in an email to the author (23 August 2005).

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> 'Healing Hurting Hearts', in *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 26 No. 2, 2005), p. 6.

<sup>207</sup> 'Revolution', in *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 26 No. 1, 2005), p. 5.



## **8.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

### ***8.7.1 Indigenization***

The North American organization, TWR, began its work as a fully non-Arabic organization in Tangier during the 1950s. When it decided to broadcast programs as a witness to the Arab World, it immediately looked for native Arabs for producing its programs. The leadership of the Arabic program production soon came in the hands of Arabs. If one holds Pan-Arab views, it can be concluded that TWR indigenized its management to a high degree. On the other hand, it is also a reality that Moroccan or Algerian listeners would not consider a Jordanian or Egyptian manager of TWR's Arabic department to be 'indigenous'.

### ***8.7.2 Contextualization***

#### **8.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

TWR aimed to reach the whole Arab World with its broadcasts. TWR treated the Arab World as two separate audiences as it was able to offer different packages of programs to North Africa and to the Middle East. This was better than seeing the whole Arab World as one audience, though it did not come close to aiming at homogenous audiences. The focus of this study was TWR's broadcasts to the Middle East. In so doing this it was found that not only did TWR endeavor to reach all the countries therein, but in its rather brief blocks of airtime, Muslims, Christians, men, women, children and students were aimed at. Only a few programs were seemingly aimed at Muslims. This broad orientation was the result of TWR's dependence on program suppliers and may also have been because of its own views regarding the wide audiences it wanted to reach.

#### **8.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

Because of TWR's cluster of target audiences, it was impossible for TWR to address these audiences in their actual context. TWR avoided speaking about Islam, politics and human rights issues. Though Christians were the main target audience, churches were hardly mentioned and the focus was on individual believers. This meant that important elements of the context of the audience were not treated. Warning CW4 and CW5 about the prophetic role of the Gospel and the importance of the Gospel for both personal and societal life, was therefore only heeded in the personal realm.

The avoidance of socio-political and macro-ethical matters was in accordance with the approach of most Arabic churches. Only in Lebanon did churches participate in the political arena as there they formed a political majority, though even there, Protestants churches tended to not speak about these matters. TWR's approach was therefore not in accordance with the desires of most churches in Lebanon but it was precisely in line with the desire of most other Arab churches. This dilemma is related to the programs not having a homogenous target audience. It also revealed the dilemma that in implementing RCR2, and heeding CW4 and CW5, it was not always easy to heed CW2 at the same time. Contextualizing

within the community of churches in the Middle East meant avoiding criticizing corporate evil and resulted in the proclamation of a purely personal Gospel. That was at the expense of the full witness to the Gospel.

### **8.7.2.3 Language**

TWR's initial choice for MSA was in accordance with the Pan-Arab political ideologies and the habits of all Arabic radio. A better alternative would have been a countercultural approach involving the usage of the vernaculars of the different countries in the Arab World. This radical choice would have meant that the programs would have been interesting to those Arabs who did not agree with Pan-Arabism and the Islamic direction of the Arab World.

MSA was not well understood by the masses of the Arab World. When Pan-Arabism waned, in the 1970s and 1980s, most programs of TWR moved towards using Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic and eventually many other Arabic vernaculars also. The advantage of Egyptian Arabic was that many Arabs could understand it, though it was not the correct contextual choice for non-Egyptians.

### **8.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

TWR's goal of reaching Muslims was not implemented in its linguistic and cultural forms. The programs were more suitable for Christians who were born and bred in an environment with knowledge of the Bible and Christian beliefs. Most programs assumed this and the Biblical and Evangelical jargon used was rather overwhelming. Many of the programs did not endeavor to explain the meaning of that jargon but assumed that it was clear. TWR disagreed with the usage of Islamic language and forms in Christian radio. This meant that it heeded warning CW6 about form and function not being separable.

### **8.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

TWR spoke about Christ in traditional Christian words and theological constructs. It upheld the veracity and the uniqueness of Scripture and Jesus Christ. He was presented as the incarnated Son of God who died and rose from death for the forgiveness of sins. The need for participating in community with other believers was regularly repeated. However, the church was generally described in idealistic terms as the meeting of true believers and not in its historic garb. This was at the expense of the *koinonia* of the Christian witness. To ignore the historic churches of the Middle East in Christian programs meant that CW1 was not fully implemented; the lack of reference to the actual churches of the Middle East also meant that the programs of TWR were not conceived in the churches, so CW2 was not heeded. The programs also did not demonstrate efforts to strengthen the unity of the Church in its history and international garb, so CW3 was not heeded.

### **8.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

TWR was in a good position to attract an audience as its programs were broadcast shortly after the popular secular programs of RMC-MC and RMC-ME on that same frequency. This attracted a large audience, and it also created a level of credibility for TWR. As those broadcasts of RMC attracted a large audience with an interest

in news programs, it is reasonable to assume that these audiences would have been more interested in TWR's programming if it had included programs that had dealt with the Gospel's view of all of life, including societal life.

The impact of broadcasting programs in different Arabic languages in rather short blocks of airtime is unknown. More study into this must be done from a mass communication angle to understand the impact of these mixed blocks on the audience.

### **8.7.3 Christian Witness**

The excellent contracts with RMC-MC and RMC-ME meant that TWR had good MW frequencies and therefore attracted a large audience. From the records of organizations like AWM, GMU and BTGH it can also be seen that the programs of TWR enjoyed a much larger audience response than any other Christian SW broadcaster to the Arab World. It is likely that in the Middle East, TWR's audience response was mainly from Christians. The two reasons for this assumption are that the programs were suitable mainly for Christians and secondly that in this region there were sizable Christian minorities. This conclusion is tentative though and hopefully in the future TWR will allow more study into its history and broadcasts as it has played an important role in the Christian broadcasts to the Arab World.

Because of TWR's dependence on selling the expensive airtime that it had available, it did not have much influence on its overall programming. For the audience, this had the effect that almost every 15 minutes, they were invited to accept Jesus and to write to yet another PO Box. The programs focused on the Biblical *kerygma* related to Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection and the personal implications of that for the audience. This made the broadcasts of TWR repetitious and rather one-sided. TWR's Christian witness was clear in the realm of the *kerygma*, but its programs did not reflect the Church's *koinonia* nor its *diakonia* as references to the Church and socio-economic and political matters were almost non-existent. This weakened the *kerygmatic* witness of the programs.



## 9 Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA)

The Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) began broadcasting Arabic programs from its own station in The Seychelles in 1971, and it has been broadcasting Arabic programs ever since. The organization was unique among the other Arabic Christian broadcasters because of its focus on the Arabian Peninsula and Yemen in particular. FEBA grew out of the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC). As FEBC was the *milieu* in which FEBA was conceived, the history of FEBC is briefly treated first in this chapter. Then, FEBA's early history is treated.

Until 1975, ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa') managed the programming for FEBA, so FEBA initially only sold airtime to ELWA. In 1975 ELWA handed over its studio in Beirut to FEBA, which from that year had to take responsibility for its own programming. During that same year, the civil war in Lebanon began. Because of the dramatic impact of that war on the Christian witness by the Arab broadcasters and program producers, this chapter describes in some detail the history of FEBA during those years until the end of that war in 1990.

Those in FEBA who were in charge of the Arabic broadcasts have been helpful in gathering archival materials for this chapter. FEBA has maintained rather detailed audience response figures since 1980. This chapter therefore describes the ups and downs of that response throughout the years, and analyses those figures in some detail.

An analysis of FEBA's programs as broadcast from 20-26 September 2004 is given in this chapter. The focus in that description is on issues related to contextualization. Finally, this chapter draws conclusions about the manner in which FEBA indigenized its organization and contextualized its programs on radio for the sake of its Christian witness.

### 9.1 HISTORY

#### *9.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Broadcasts: 1934-1971*

##### **9.1.1.1 Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC): Vision for Reaching China and the Soviet Union**

FEBC started when two men in the USA agreed to cooperate to implement their vision for mission radio. Robert Bowman began studying at the Southern California Bible School in 1933. Students discussed the 'miracle' of the human voice traveling at the speed of light and how this could be used as an instrument for spreading the Gospel. Even those who were uneasy about radio being 'of the devil' began to see its potential for evangelism:

Radio is one of the few missionaries today capable of taking the Gospel to the 'ends of the earth'. Radio is intimate and personal. Programmers are able to reach across great distances to meet with listeners at their private locations.<sup>1</sup>

Bowman, a good baritone singer, participated in a quartet, Haven of Rest, which hosted a regular radio program. They first went on air in 1934 on KMPC in Beverly Hills, California (USA), and later on KNX, one of the network stations of the large Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in Los Angeles, California (USA). The listener response was phenomenal.<sup>2</sup> Bowman realized the value of radio to reach the masses with a message. The evidence of thousands of letters from the audience proved to Bowman that 'God's Word sent over the airwaves could reach the listener's hearts where they were, whatever the need'.<sup>3</sup>

In 1936, John Broger, who had been in commercial radio in New York, became a Christian and he went to Southern California Bible College during that same year. Broger and Bowman became good friends. Both were interested to produce radio programs to create a vision for missions in the USA. Bowman later wrote that this vision had begun 'around 1938'.<sup>4</sup>

Sometime during those long happy discussions, the vision took shape. The Lord changed our desire to produce missions programs for the stateside radio to the much more challenging and sacrificial vision of building radio stations in the Orient ourselves.<sup>5</sup>

Bowman and Broger were both from the west coast of the USA. That must have influenced their orientation to reaching Asia with the Gospel. In the USA some others were also advocating setting up a missionary radio station in Asia. One of those was the wealthy businessman R. G. LeTourneau.<sup>6</sup> World War II interrupted their dreams. Bowman continued in radio broadcasting in the USA. Broger entered the navy in 1942 to become an instructor and a writer of radar textbooks. He also served as a radio technician aboard the aircraft carrier *Bon Homme Richard* in the Pacific.<sup>7</sup>

After the war Bowman and Broger met again. The Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) was incorporated in California on 20 December 1945, with the Rev. William Roberts as the third person necessary for incorporation.<sup>8</sup> Roberts was on-air daily in The Family Bible Hour.<sup>9</sup> FEBC was incorporated as a non-profit, non-

<sup>1</sup> Eleanor G. Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon* (Nashville, 1991), pp. 35, 174.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Bowman, *God of Wonders: A Lifetime of seeing God do the Impossible. The Story of Robert (Bob) Bowman* (La Mirada, 2002), pp. 51-52.

<sup>5</sup> Eleanor G. Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Lois Neely, *Come up to this Mountain: The Miracle of Clarence W. Jones & HCJB* (Colorado Springs, 1994, first edition 1980), pp. 129, 131.

<sup>7</sup> Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Peter and Pam Cousins, *The Power of the Air: The Achievement and Future of Missionary Radio* (London, 1978), p. 27. See also Gleason H. Ledyard, *Sky Waves: The Incredible Far East Broadcasting Company Story* (Chicago, 1963), p. 15-19.

profit, non-commercial and interdenominational organization that would cooperate with all evangelical organizations. They had ‘nothing in their hands but a vision’, according to Bowman’s wife Eleanor Guthrie.<sup>10</sup> She probably referred to FEBC not having any money yet, because in terms of human capital, FEBC made a strong start. Not only did the men that founded the organization have a vision, but they also had some knowledge of and experience in the broadcasting industry.

In March 1946, Broger set sail for Shanghai (China), seeking permission to build Christian stations there. The original goal of FEBC was to broadcast the Gospel to China.<sup>11</sup> FEBC hoped to be able to set up a Shortwave (SW) station in central Hankow, as from there they would be able to cover all of China.<sup>12</sup> At that time there were already some Chinese Christian stations covering China with their broadcasts. The plan was interrupted as China was on the brink of a Communist takeover. The Nationalists, still in power when Broger tried to get permission for a strong SW broadcasting station, only wanted to give permission for stations with weak, 500 Watt, signals. Permission was asked, in conjunction with the China Christian Broadcasting System, for six 500-watt stations in populous cities. While waiting for the permissions, Broger felt it would be good to also investigate the possibilities of broadcasting from the Philippines. Broger moved on to The Philippines in July 1946, two days after that country had received its independence from the USA.<sup>13</sup>

The Philippines was a safe haven for American Christian radio. It was the only predominantly Christian nation in all of Asia due to 300 years of Spanish Catholic and American rule. Like in the USA, radio was private and commercial.<sup>14</sup> Manila had a pro-American elite and the population of the Philippines as a whole was also quite pro-American.<sup>15</sup> The Japanese occupation since 1941 and the liberation by the armies of General Douglas MacArthur in 1945 solidified those close ties with the USA. The Japanese treatment of the Philipinos had underscored for the average citizen the relative benevolence of American rule.<sup>16</sup> When Broger entered the harbor of Manila, he saw the protruding masts of the sunken Japanese fleet everywhere. The city of Manila was badly destroyed by the war in 1945 when the retreating Japanese army engaged in street fights with the returning American army all over the city.

Broger, with the help of attorney Leon O. Ty, was able to meet with the Secretary of Justice who was responsible for radio control in the new republic.<sup>17</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup> Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> David Huntley, ‘The Far East Broadcasting Company’, in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. XIII No. 4, December 1966), p. 10. Huntley stated that FEBC was ‘born in Shanghai as a seed thought in 1945’, but that is incorrect.

<sup>12</sup> Bowman, *God of Wonders*, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, pp. 47-49. Ledyard, *Sky Waves*, p. 22-23.

<sup>14</sup> Fraser Weir in an email to the author (20 January 2003). Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 74.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred W. McCoy, ‘The Philippines: Independence without Decolonisation’, in Robin Jeffrey (ed), *Asia: The Winning of Independence* (London and Basingstoke, 1981), p. 56.

<sup>16</sup> Hampton Sides, *Ghost Soldiers: the Epic Account of World War II’s Greatest Rescue Mission* (New York, 2001), p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, p. 50.

Philippines' government readily granted Broger a franchise and FEBC Philippines was incorporated in 1946 with the support of Ty and some other Filipinos who grasped the vision.<sup>18</sup> In Manila a property of about 11 acres was purchased from two Christian businessmen for US\$20,000. When filing the final documents for the franchise, FEBC requested permission for two ten-kiloWatt (kW) transmission stations. In those days with only a few SW broadcasters in Asia, that was enough to transmit all over Asia. Someone in the radio control office however, crossed out the request for ten kW of power. In pencil, that person wrote 'unlimited power!' and that was the permission FEBC received. Broger returned to the USA and the real work began. Bowman described how the work was divided:

John [Broger] came home [to the USA] and we both continued extensive deputational work. He began to organize our office and prepare for returning to build the stations while I continued to speak in pulpits of many different Christian denominations. I was welcome because they knew me from my 12 'Haven of Rest' years. God had been giving the inspiration for the task to a vast number of His faithful ones in the United States, in the Philippines and in other parts of the world. A small brave group of 16 missionaries sailed with John to begin the building. I wanted so much to go with them but it was my duty to continue to raise interest in FEBC among American and Canadian churches. The broad base of prayer and support began to grow.<sup>19</sup>

Only one road was open from the harbor out to the new radio station. Reconstruction of Manila had priority for The Philippines, so it was difficult for FEBC to buy building materials. In spite of that, FEBC's first station DZAS was able to go on air in 1948 in Manila and the surrounding areas. They were in a great hurry, as they would lose their license if they did not begin with some sort of broadcasting. Radio broadcast equipment was almost unobtainable because of American war-regulations, and it was therefore very expensive. The initial components of the station were salvaged from war surplus depots.<sup>20</sup>

The first broadcast was in English and was a reflection of American Christian and cultural life. 'If the nations of the Orient need anything in this day and hour, it is faith, - faith in themselves and their own strength, to arm themselves against the problems of this chaotic epoch, but even more, faith in an eternal and loving heavenly Father.' Two hours later, the broadcast was broken off because of an electrical shortcut in the transmitter.<sup>21</sup>

By 1966, FEBC had been instrumental in starting studios in Hong Kong, India, Japan, Singapore, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Indonesia, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Burma and Ceylon. FEBC encouraged these studios to become financially self-supporting entities. FEBC's programming policies in general dictated that in each language, 50 percent of all airtime should be filled with religious

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<sup>18</sup> Two young Filipino's, former guerrilla fighters against the Japanese, attended some of the founding meetings of FEBC in the Philippines. These two, Max Atienza and Greg Tingson, had been praying for Christian radio stations to be built in their country. See Bowman, *God of Wonders*, p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Huntley, 'The Far East Broadcasting Company', p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 74-75.



programs. Of those, programs for Christians and programs for non-Christians should get about the same time. The other 50 percent of programs were supposed to be 'enjoyable and wholesome listening for the entire family'. No criticism of any church or religion was allowed on FEBC. Communism could be criticized, though, but for its atheism, not in as far as it was an idealist theory. It is hard to see what difference this could have made in practice. Newscasts were part of FEBC's programming, and FEBC believed, naively, that its news programs were 'the only non-political ones in East Asia'.<sup>22</sup>

Broger decided to go back to the USA in 1954, when the Korean conflict began. The USA military authorities asked Broger to come to Washington, where he eventually occupied the post of director of Armed Forces Information and Education in the Pentagon.<sup>23</sup>

In its broadcasts FEBC did not always avoid the impression that it was the religious arm of the general battle of the USA with Communism. FEBC in its programs used terms like *anti-Christian religion* and *church of the devil* when describing Communism. The west was described as the *free world*. 'The battle against Communism is a spiritual battle, because the soul of man is at stake', was the sort of language FEBC employed.<sup>24</sup>

In his book *Sky Waves*, about the early years of FEBC, Gleason H. Ledyard described how the army of the USA regularly helped FEBC in the shipment and construction of equipment. The army for instance invested manpower and equipment to help FEBC construct its station in Okinawa, then a military protectorate of the USA. That station was built for broadcasting to mainland China. The American general involved, called that help 'a matter of duty':

We can boast ourselves of atomic power to grind nations to dust; but if we do not reach their hearts and minds, we will change nothing but the map. [...] If you intend to hit the beaches of China with the message of freedom and democracy, we may not have to land our men on them later.<sup>25</sup>

From the perspective of ecclesiology and missiology it was understandable that FEBC chose to support the churches and other social and political outcasts in the countries it targeted. FEBC's criticism of atheist Communism was understandable, but to believe that this would not entail political choices was naïve. FEBC did not realize that cooperating with the US army created a conflict of interest for

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<sup>22</sup> Huntley, 'The Far East Broadcasting Company', pp. 11-13. Reginald Kennedy, 'The Word Senders: A Personal Assessment of the Work of the Major Protestant, Evangelical Missionary Radio Stations' (n.p., 1980), chapter 5, pp. 18-20, quotes some examples of news broadcasts of FEBC that were purposely biased against Communism and its leaders. Kennedy worked for some years as a journalist with FEBA in The Seychelles. His unpublished reflection on the Christian broadcasters was in the library of the World Alliance for Christian Communication (WACC), document A302

<sup>23</sup> Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, pp. 65-66. Bowman, *God of Wonders*, pp. 162-164.

<sup>24</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>25</sup> Ledyard, *Sky Waves*, p. 164. In 1975, Japan forced FEBC to close its station on Okinawa. By then, FEBC had already built some other strong transmitters around China. During the years of the presidency of Jimmy Carter FEBC played a role in convincing the American authorities to not withdraw its troops from South Korea. Bowman was honored for his role by the Korean prime minister. Bowman, *God of Wonders*, pp. 131-141.

the Christian broadcaster. FEBC should have kept more distance between itself and Washington but the organization gave the impression of not being aware that it was transmitting the message of Christ in the garb of North American culture including its political choices.

When FEBC began, the idea was to never allow program sponsorship to determine program content, and good programs could be broadcast, even if the program supplier had no money to contribute. This approach soon changed. 'Well, after a while, we began to realize that everybody else in the religious world was charging for time and asking for contributions [...] so we did too', according to Bowman. He admitted to seeing 'many conflicts to faith', in that system though, but FEBC would never change that system again.<sup>26</sup>

#### 9.1.1.2 Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA): Vision for Reaching India

In Great Britain, a group of Christians began meeting in 1959 to pray for their friends John and Alice Wheatley and John's engineering work with FEBC in Manila. In 1960, this group of friends with Douglas Malton at the helm began FEBA in Great Britain, for prayer support and for obtaining some funding for FEBC.<sup>27</sup> FEBA stood initially for *Far East Broadcasting Associates*.<sup>28</sup>

Wheatley's main task had been to look for a good location for broadcasting to India. After years of searching, he decided that the island Mahe of The Seychelles would be a perfect location. In 1967, FEBC decided to go ahead with that project, but it asked its associates in Great Britain to take on the building, staffing, management and funding of the new station, beside the full responsibility for all broadcasting. FEBA had been urging FEBC to take on more broadcasting to India, but FEBC did not want to expand at that time. FEBA agreed and Wheatley became its first field director. The organization was incorporated in the United Kingdom and the word FEBA came to stand for *Far East Broadcasting Association*.<sup>29</sup> FEBC and FEBA were legally and financially fully independent. Bowman's autobiography *God of Wonders* describes FEBA incorrectly as if it were owned by FEBC.<sup>30</sup>

Simple housing and studio space was constructed; by 1969 the three kW SW transmitters in The Seychelles were fully operational for test broadcasts.<sup>31</sup> The antennas were anchored in the coral reefs offshore with 4,000 tons of reinforced concrete; that was, from an ecological perspective, rather unwise. FEBA would become the main employer on The Seychelles, both employing the largest number

<sup>26</sup> Quotes of Bowman in Kennedy, 'The Word Senders', chapter 3, p. 9a.

<sup>27</sup> Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, p. 78. Cousins, *Power of the Air*, p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> Derek Knell in an email to the author (4 September 2003). Knell was the Middle East coordinator of FEBA (1975-1978, 1980-1982, 1989-1996), and later the director for the Arab World and Central Asia. Knell has supplied the author of this thesis with his personal newsletters as well as with other documents of FEBA. Hovig Nassanian, who became the director for the Arab World in 1996, has been similarly forthcoming with information.

<sup>29</sup> Hovig Nassanian in an interview with the author (11 February 2003). Nassanian supplied the author of this thesis with many of the documents that are cited. Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, pp. 79-80. Knell in an email to the author (4 September 2003).

<sup>30</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 126. Bowman, *God of Wonders*, pp. 164-168.

<sup>31</sup> Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon*, p. 80. Tony Ford in an email to the author (16 May 2003).

of native inhabitants, and also the largest number of expatriates. Beside that, FEBA became the main user of electricity on the islands.<sup>32</sup>

It was soon realized that a larger transmitter was needed, so FEBC offered a spare transmitter it had in Manila.<sup>33</sup> This transmitter was created from some American Army telegraphy equipment from World War II, left behind in The Philippines.<sup>34</sup> On 10 May 1970 the tests were finished and FEBA began to officially broadcast its programs. FEBA began with broadcasts to India, as that was originally why the station was started. In 1973 FEBA installed its first transmitter of 100 kW, but it would be years before FEBA received permission to use that at full power, due to the fear of the authorities for its impact on aviation on The Seychelles. With the addition of two more 100 kW transmitters additional target areas were developed.<sup>35</sup>

### 9.1.2 Arabic Broadcasts: Since 1971

#### 9.1.2.1 'Service Mission': 1971-1975

The Seychelles was not only very suitable for broadcasts to India, but also for aiming at East Africa and the Arab World. For FEBA it was logical to think of broadcasting in Arabic. FEBA transmissions could be heard in the countries of the Middle East covering the area from Egypt across to Central Iran, with a strong signal reaching Yemen, Sudan and the Northern sections of Ethiopia and Somalia.<sup>36</sup> The leaders of FEBA believed that broadcasting Arabic programs from The Seychelles might entail a security risk from the side of radical Muslims, but they 'courageously considered that the job to be done warrants the risks involved', the Middle East coordinator of FEBA, Derek Knell, commented later.<sup>37</sup>

In early 1971, FEBA began discussions with ELWA about Arabic broadcasts.<sup>38</sup> Bill Thompson, the general manager of ELWA, and Geoffrey M. Cook, program director of FEBA, met at a Christian communications congress in Limuru (Kenya). They decided to cooperate in reaching the Middle East.<sup>39</sup> Cook underlined that FEBA did 'not intend to establish a mission work of its own in the Middle East

<sup>32</sup> According to Christopher Singh in an interview with the author (5 June 2005). Singh worked in The Seychelles with FEBA during the early 1980s as a newsreader in Hindi and English.

<sup>33</sup> Cousins, *Power of the Air*, p. 45.

<sup>34</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 166.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167. Cousins, *Power of the Air*, pp. 45, 53-55. Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (12 April 2007).

<sup>36</sup> Letter of Geoffrey M. Cook, FEBA Program Director, to Bill Thompson, General Manager of ELWA Radio Village (1 April 1971), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972.

<sup>37</sup> Transcript of a speech of Derek Knell at the Arabic Broadcasting Convention (ABC) on 7 November 1990, received from Knell. ABC was a loose organization that arranged meetings of missionaries, donors and Christian Arabs involved in radio broadcasting. It was an opportunity for fellowship and coordination. In 1996 it amalgamated with the Arabic Literature Convention (ALC) to form the Arab Media Convention (AMC). People playing an important role in that merger, were Keith Fraser-Smith of Arab World Ministries (AWM), Terrence Ascott of SAT-7, and Derek Knell of FEBA.

<sup>38</sup> More of this is described in chapter 7 on Radio ELWA.

<sup>39</sup> Letter of Cook to Thompson (1 April 1971).

area'.<sup>40</sup> Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), the owner of the ELWA studio in Beirut, had, in Cook's words, 'an extensive work in the Arabic language.'<sup>41</sup> As both organizations shared a 'conservative evangelical basis of its operation' and also a 'balanced programming' philosophy it was not difficult for these organizations to cooperate.<sup>42</sup> By a 'balanced programming philosophy' they meant they did not want back-to-back religious preaching on their channels. One reason why FEBA did not want to set up its own Arabic studios was because it considered itself 'a "service" mission providing technical facilities for cooperating churches and missions in [FEBA's] target areas, to enable them to supplement their ministry by means of radio'.<sup>43</sup>

There is no indication that FEBA's decision to start broadcasting in Arabic was made in consultation with Christian Arabs. The decision to do Christian witness to the Arabs was made by the British leadership of FEBA. For getting the programming FEBA needed, it began negotiations with the North American management of ELWA, thus the strategic decisions of FEBA and ELWA about these Arabic broadcasts were made by non-Arabs. FEBA invited ELWA to 'fellowship in Arabic programming and to assume full responsibility for the entire Arabic block to be transmitted from FEBA-Seychelles'.<sup>44</sup>

ELWA became fully responsible for program production, audience follow-up and also pledged to pay the actual overhead operating costs of FEBA. At the time of the agreement that was US\$20 per hour. Initially, FEBA wanted to broadcast half an hour of Arabic in the morning and two hours in the evening.<sup>45</sup> Arabic broadcasts of FEBA began on 18 October 1971.<sup>46</sup>

ELWA delivered one hour per day to FEBA in The Seychelles, and that was broadcast twice during the day.<sup>47</sup> The Back to God Hour (BTGH) programs of Bassam Madany formed the backbone of the programs in those early years.<sup>48</sup> The programs in the one-hour block were mainly evangelistic monologues, something both organizations had agreed they did not really want.<sup>49</sup>

For organizations that sell airtime, like ELWA and FEBA, it was difficult to avoid back-to-back religious preaching, because sponsors of programs were usually mostly interested to support broadcasts of straight and simple Gospel preaching,

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Later, Derek Knell would question that FEBA was a service mission. 'We've never been a service mission like TWR. We have always maintained that we retain editorial control of the broadcast product. Obviously, you do get to a point where you trust the suppliers and delegate the responsibility for content to them', according to Derek Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>44</sup> Letter of Cook to Thompson (1 April 1971).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October/December 1991). FEBA originally first stood for *Far East Broadcasting Associates*. On 14 October 1968 it became *Far East Broadcasting Association* when the company was incorporated. On 3 July 1992 it formally became Feba Radio, as the *Far East* part in the name came to be considered unhelpful. Knell in an email to the author (4 September 2003). In this thesis the name FEBA is used for describing the organization throughout its existence.

<sup>47</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October-December 1991).

<sup>48</sup> Nassanian in an interview with the author (11 February 2003).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

and because program suppliers, who often did not produce more than 15 or 30 minutes of programs per week, often specialized in sandwich programs, with a song, a sermon and a song. For Christian broadcasters to be critical of that sort of programming was hard, as they did depend on these program suppliers for buying the airtime and covering an important part of their overhead.

As SIM felt that ELWA should concentrate on broadcasting programs for North Africa only, it handed over its Arabic production studio in Lebanon to FEBA in 1975. For FEBA, that decision of ELWA came as a surprise. Malton, FEBA's chairman, wrote to George Thomas, SIM's area director, that 'this new responsibility has been thrust unexpectedly upon us'.<sup>50</sup>

FEBA asked Derek Knell, who had been in The Seychelles for less than two years as the business manager and who supervised the construction of a studio and the building of the control room, to immediately move to Beirut to take charge of the newly appropriated studio. That meant the beginning of FEBA's own production of Arabic programs, and it also meant FEBA did not consider itself as just a 'service mission' any longer.<sup>51</sup> Shadi and Selwa Habib, the Arabic personnel of ELWA, stayed on and ensured the continuity of the productions.<sup>52</sup>

#### 9.1.2.2 Studio in Hadath Renewed and Under Siege: 1975-1985

Knell was asked to go to Beirut to be the Middle East coordinator for the Arabic language service of FEBA. He originally went for a year.<sup>53</sup> FEBA wanted to immediately build a larger studio than what they had inherited from ELWA, one that would ensure an improvement in the quality of the programs, and where music and drama productions could be made.<sup>54</sup> In order to reconstruct the existent studio on the roof of the building in Hadath, FEBA used a 'small, temporary studio' for the Habibs to produce all their programs. Knell described that in one of his newsletters:

Our small temporary studio has no ventilation and since many of our productions these days incorporate two voices, the steam and aroma of that small box in temperatures of 80 to 90 F are best not experienced. All the more credit to this great staff who do it in the service of the King.<sup>55</sup>

Shortly before FEBA took over the ELWA studio, in 1975, the Lebanese civil war had begun. It would last, with periods of different intensity, until 1990. FEBA did not foresee how bad that war would turn out to be. The area where the studio

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<sup>50</sup> Letter of Douglas Malton to George Thomas (13 August 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia, Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1988, Arabic Program Beirut, 1973-1976.

<sup>51</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October/December 2003). Douglas P. Malton to George W. Thomas (8 September 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia, Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1988, Arabic Program Beirut, 1973-1976.

<sup>52</sup> Nassanian in an interview with the author (11 February 2003). Shadi and Selwa Habib: These names are pseudonyms, at the request of this couple. Shadi Habib in an email to the author (10 December 2004).

<sup>53</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (8 October 1975).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

was, Ḥadath, was about ten kilometers south of the Beirut city center. It was a stronghold of the Phalangist party, one of the main warring Christian factions.<sup>56</sup>

Between December 1975 and April 1976, Knell and David Mason, another engineer of FEBA, worked in Beirut. ‘There was shelling going on while we were working on construction. We managed to go on with that, even though the Green Line was about 100 meters away from our studio,’ according to Knell.<sup>57</sup> It might have been wiser to decide to build the studio elsewhere. Knell had to stay indoors during the evenings, but was going on with his work. He encountered some major problems. Nūr al-Dīn al-Shirākī, a Muslim-Background Believer (MBB) was a major speaker in FEBA programs. He could not come to the studio in the Phalangist area, as most Christians considered him a Muslim. Follow-up was at a standstill as no mail arrived for months.<sup>58</sup>

The war became worse in February 1976, and Mason and Knell were told to leave Lebanon immediately. When they left on 10 April 1976 they were abducted, blindfolded, and taken to a secret location by a Muslim militia. Knell recalled: ‘It was dodgy; they let us go that same night, while others in the same situation were killed’.<sup>59</sup> He traveled to Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Cyprus, Syria, Ethiopia, and Djibouti in 1976, to explore alternative locations should the situation in Beirut become impossible.<sup>60</sup> He also used the trip for finding program producers and for signal reception tests.<sup>61</sup>

One reason why FEBA also sent Knell on this extended trip through the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula was to acquaint him with the area. ‘When I came to the Middle East in 1975, I had no interest in Islam or the Middle East, I was interested in a technical mission as an engineer’, according to Knell. ‘That’s why I was asked by FEBA to use the time I had to be outside Lebanon, for getting more insight in Islam and the region.’<sup>62</sup>

During meetings in The Seychelles in June 1976, FEBA decided it should ‘provide an effective service that the national groups can use in the presentation of the Gospel to their own people.’ Therefore, Knell was to encourage believers in the Middle East to themselves take the responsibility of production instead of FEBA building more studios in the region.<sup>63</sup> That was an indication of FEBA’s desire to indigenize program production in the Arab World.

The Habibs used this period of turmoil in Lebanon to go to Bible College in Belfast (Northern Ireland). While there, they produced some programs in a Christian studio. Selwa continued to answer audience response. After they finished Bible College, the Habibs signed a contract with FEBA. Shadi was appointed as the program supervisor and Selwa was to be the supervisor of all follow-up. They

<sup>56</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (1 January 1976).

<sup>57</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>58</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (1 January 1976).

<sup>59</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>60</sup> Knell was able, during an interview with the author on 13 August 2003, to reproduce his itinerary of those days in detail as he made it his hobby to keep all airline tickets he ever bought.

<sup>61</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (1 July 1976).

<sup>62</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>63</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (1 July 1976).

returned to Beirut in May 1977, when the situation had stabilized somewhat. Knell had returned a few weeks earlier.<sup>64</sup>

Knell wrote in June 1977 that he was glad that ‘the contrast [...] with the production of two years ago is very pleasing. I was very concerned with the dull sound our material [initially] had’. It was at this time that Knell and the Habibs decided they wanted to be ‘the first friendly Arabic radio station’.<sup>65</sup> On 7 June 1977 FEBA was shut down, due to a *coup d'état* in The Seychelles. The new government cited ‘reasons of security’ but reopened the station on 27 June.<sup>66</sup>

In March 1978, all staff was evacuated from the office and studio premises in Ḥadath for two weeks. The war had entered into a new phase with the direct involvement of the Syrian army. The size of the weapons used was much larger than during the previous years. The Phalangists became the target of the Syrians so all staff except for Yola Patio escaped to safer places. Yola was 21 years old and stateless at that time. Originally from Kirkūk in northern Iraq, her family had escaped from persecution to Syria, and eventually to Lebanon. Yola had joined FEBA to help Selwa in audience follow-up. She could not leave for a safer location with the rest of the FEBA staff as she had to take care of her mother and siblings.

The building where FEBA had its premises, received four direct rocket hits, and innumerable bullet scars. Two rockets went straight through two walls of the office and the studio, creating much damage but not to the equipment. After the fighting in Ḥadath ended, Knell returned, even though all around fighting could be heard. ‘This task must be done, and in the Middle East would you expect it to be easy?’, Knell asked his critical supporters who thought he should leave Beirut.<sup>67</sup>

In July 1978, fighting broke out again in Ḥadath and rockets hit the premises of FEBA again. All staff had to move to Râs Beirut, the western parts of the Lebanese capital. The studio and the office had to be left behind and in October 1978 Knell wrote to his supporters that the ‘existence of much of our furniture, files, assets and recording and follow-up materials is today uncertain’.<sup>68</sup> The Habibs were able to continue delivering programs to The Seychelles, so that no programs had to be repeated. ‘We did all our work during the fighting, day in day out. We lived in fear all the time’, according to Shadi.<sup>69</sup>

By the end of 1978, Knell went on furlough. Before he left, he handed over to John and Marcia Tender, who were sent from England by FEBA.<sup>70</sup> Knell went to London Bible College from December 1978 until July 1979. While in the United Kingdom, Knell married Andri Ghûri from Lebanon, who at that time studied at All Nations Christian College. After their marriage they left for Jordan where Knell studied Arabic for a year in the language school of George Kelsey. During that

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Knell in an email to the author (3 September 2003).

<sup>66</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (28 June 1977). ‘Seychelles Station Resumes Broadcasts’, in *Action* Number 21 (July-August 1977), p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (7 August 1978).

<sup>68</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (15 October 1978).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. Habib in an email to the author (10 December 2004).

<sup>70</sup> The names Eric and Marcia Tender are pseudonyms at the request of the couple.

period from 1978-1980, the Tenders were responsible for the work in Beirut. Marcia Tender remembers those days in the Lebanese capital:

We arrived in Beirut in 1978 as new members of the mission and were given the job of over-seeing the radio work and of repairing and finishing the construction of a new studio which FEBA had decided to build on the roof of a 3 storey building virtually on the Green Line in Beirut. The partially built structure had already been damaged by mortar or shellfire and had holes in the walls. Our living accommodation and the office were located in the same building. From the start it was a very dangerous place to live. Despite the situation and constant outbreaks of fighting during which the building frequently came under sniper and shell fire, the studio was finished in 1980.<sup>71</sup>

At one point, the Tenders were kidnapped at the roadside at gunpoint by Palestinians and their vehicle was confiscated. They spent a day being interrogated in one of the infamous refugee camps in West Beirut.<sup>72</sup>

The Habibs continued working for FEBA. Selwa was the main voice on FEBA during the 1970s and the early 1980s. She trained Yola how to present programs. Shadi's brother Bâsil volunteered for many years as a program presenter. Others working with the Habibs were Tûnî al-Gharîb and Pawlah Karîm. These were all trained by the Habibs.<sup>73</sup>

Knell returned to Beirut in 1980. In April 1981, after having had to shelter in the basement of their building because of continued nearby shelling and fighting, he moved with some production equipment to an Armenian youth camp in the mountains.<sup>74</sup>

In 1981, The British Embassy suggested that all British passport holders with no compelling reason to be in Lebanon should leave. 'We are still here because we feel secure in His hands and while there is an opportunity to carry on, we will get on with the job', Knell wrote in his newsletter.<sup>75</sup> Shadi had often suggested moving the studio to Cyprus. In 1982 he and his wife emigrated to the United States. They described what motivated them to leave:

In 1981, during the civil war in Beirut, [our] rented apartment was hit for the second time by mortars shells, and was partially damaged. So [we] prayed for the Lord's leading in [our] lives. [We] wanted to get out of the country, but did not know where to go. The chance of immigration was very slim. At that time, Selwa learned that her mother in Damascus had [gained] her American citizenship, which was a real answer to prayers. So [we] decided to leave Lebanon, and immigrate to the United States in December 1982.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Marcia Tender in an email to the author (18 February 2003).

<sup>72</sup> Marcia Tender in an email to the author (9 October 2004).

<sup>73</sup> Habib in an email to the author (10 December 2004).

<sup>74</sup> *Newsletter Knell Family* (26 April 1981).

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Shadi Habib, 'Profile: Shadi & Selwa Habib, Arabic Broadcasting Service in Cooperation with HCJB world radio' (n.d.), given to the author by Shadi Habib (9 September 2003).



The Habibs played an important role in the history of ELWA first, and also in FEBA. Although technical personnel from the United Kingdom managed FEBA in the Arab World, its Arab personnel were indispensable for their program production. In that respect the organization knew a high level of indigenization during the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>77</sup>

Yola was able to develop the approach Knell wanted. He thought her radio personality was ‘incredibly attractive to the listeners’ and that she played the main role in implementing FEBA’s aim to be ‘the first friendly Arabic station’.<sup>78</sup> He also believed her personality was largely the reason why the audience of FEBA considered it a trustworthy broadcaster.<sup>79</sup> Yola would work with FEBA until 1999 when she married and left for the United Kingdom.

### 9.1.2.3 Offices and Studio in Cyprus: Since 1983

In 1983 Knell left for The Seychelles for five years. Tender became the Middle East coordinator. The war continued and in April 1984 the Regional Planning Conference of FEBA in Addlestone (England), decided to open a new base in Cyprus for part of the coordinating work, at the urgent request of Tender.<sup>80</sup> The grave situation in Beirut had convinced the leadership of the dangers to their personnel. Marcia Tender about that period:

During the early 80's the situation gradually worsened but the building survived. There was one occasion for instance when a Syrian tank shell hit and destroyed the apartment on the floor below ours. We stayed in the building almost all the time, having been warned by the landlord that if we left the premises the studio, [the] office and our home would be looted by the neighbours! The Israeli invasion of 1982 turned the area into a battlefield where tank and artillery fire were a daily occurrence. Work went on in the office and studio during the day, but at night the shooting would start and many nights were spent in the underground shelter.<sup>81</sup>

The Cyprus center in Limassol was set up to coordinate all work. A studio was also installed. Initially, these facilities were not legally registered. The Beirut facilities continued to be the satellite supplier of the programs, though that studio would be closed for over a year in 1983 and 1984 due to the dangers of the war. The long-term view was that the Cyprus base should develop into a recording cen-

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<sup>77</sup> The Habibs’ decision to leave Lebanon and FEBA came at a time when the relationship between them and Knell was at a low ebb. According to Shadi Habib, it mainly concerned Yola’s role. According to Knell, the difference of opinion was about the approach of the Habibs to program production. Knell thought that it was too ‘academic’ as he wanted an approach that was more personable. Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003). Habib in an email to the author (10 December 2004).

<sup>78</sup> Transcript of a speech of Derek Knell at the Arabic Broadcasting Convention.

<sup>79</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>80</sup> Internal memo of Tony Ford in FEBA, titled ‘ARF Memo’ dated 13 April 1984. This document was still in the possession of Derek Knell. Tony Ford from the FEBA head office in Worthing, England, wrote in an email to the author (16 May 2003): ‘We [in FEBA-England] have a fairly ruthless policy on throwing away old documents so 1984 materials would have gone ages ago. That leaves my memory, which has never been good.’

<sup>81</sup> Tender in an email to the author (18 February 2003).

ter for music and speech while also compiling the programs. Beirut was to remain the main studio.<sup>82</sup>

#### **9.1.2.4 Hadath Studio Evacuated and New Studio Built in Beirut: 1985-1990**

Early 1985, the staff in Beirut again deemed the situation too dangerous to continue in Ḥadath. Most of the essential program and music tapes, files and some equipment had already been brought to a safe apartment north of the city.<sup>83</sup> This decision proved to be wise when during an escalation of the fight between Muslim and Christian militias in August 1985 the studio was totally destroyed by a random shell.<sup>84</sup>

FEBA considered it important to maintain a presence in Beirut, in spite of the war. At that time, Lebanon was the only country where FEBA could legally produce its programs and FEBA also wanted to continue using a Lebanese postal address for its audience to respond to. So four months after the studio was destroyed, Charles Randall, a British engineer with FEBA, went to Beirut to design and build a new studio in the offices FEBA had rented north of Beirut.<sup>85</sup> Tender was setting up the office and running the production work in this new office. He was also shuttling back and forth between Lebanon and Cyprus:

During that same period, many essential programme and music tapes were systematically copied in Beirut and taken over to Cyprus by the suitcase load and stored in safety there in a rented flat, which became a mini office and "bolt hole". Files were also copied to Cyprus, as a contingency because we knew there was no guarantee that the new studio would survive.<sup>86</sup>

The new Beirut studio was designed for maximum flexibility. Equipment and cabling could be taken out in one hour. By August 1986 it was fully functional. During the year without a studio, FEBA used the excellent studio of the Near East Baptist Mission (NEBM) of the Southern Baptist denomination from the USA in Maṣṣūrīyah al-Matn, in the hills east of Beirut. In the FEBA office kitchen a voice booth was made of cardboard boxes. In this way FEBA could continue to keep its own programs on air.<sup>87</sup>

Tender said in 1987 that he was 'encouraged that the work is on its feet again. As always in Lebanon, there is no guarantee there will be any tomorrow, but we hope and pray God will keep the door of ministry open to us.'<sup>88</sup> FEBA also officially opened its central office and studio in Limassol in 1987. This dislocation was problematic due to the difficulty to travel between Beirut and Cyprus. Marcia Tender remembered:

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<sup>82</sup> Letter of John Tender (11 December 1984). *Newsletter Knell Family* (June 1993). *Newsletter Knell Family* (July 1994).

<sup>83</sup> Tender in an email to the author (18 February 2003).

<sup>84</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October-December 1991).

<sup>85</sup> Brochure: 'On Our Feet Again – FEBA's ministry to the Middle East' (March 1987).

<sup>86</sup> Tender in an email to the author (18 February 2003).

<sup>87</sup> 'On Our Feet Again – FEBA's ministry to the Middle East'.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

The port and airport were permanently closed. The only way out of the country was by sea on a fairly unreliable ferry service, which ran intermittently between Jounieh and Larnaka [in Cyprus]. The boat could only dock during cease-fires and in good weather and was therefore often cancelled. This and the many other practical difficulties arising from trying to set up the work in 2 countries at the same time, as well as long-winded legal complications in Cyprus were the reasons for the delay in getting FEBA registered with the government so that an office could be officially opened.<sup>89</sup>

Cyprus became the center of coordination of all FEBA-Middle East activities, a studio, and a training facility. The new Beirut studio would continue production, while the Beirut offices remained responsible for all audience relations and follow-up.<sup>90</sup>

On 4 February 1990 the new studio and offices in Beirut became the battleground between the army of General Mishâl 'Ûn and the Lebanese Forces of Samîr Jâjâ.<sup>91</sup> 'Ûn had decided to start his fight to liberate Lebanon of its Syrian occupiers by militarily uniting the country. His first goal was to unite the Christians in one Christian enclave. He only controlled parts of Christian East-Beirut, including the Presidential palace. Jâjâ controlled larger areas of East-Beirut. By the end of January 1990, 'Ûn demanded that the Lebanese Forces disband as a militia and some of 'Ûn's units attacked positions of the Lebanese Forces. Jâjâ counterattacked. Heavy fighting ensued in the densely populated city, a struggle more destructive than any fighting in the previous 15 years. Most of that was over in March, but intermittent and inconclusive fighting continued into the summer.<sup>92</sup>

This short war left an estimated 2,500 people dead and 7,500 wounded. Most victims were Christians. The economy was more paralyzed than ever before, with water, electricity and telephone systems beyond immediate repair. An unprecedented number of Lebanese decided to escape the country during those months.<sup>93</sup> FEBA was caught in the middle. In 1985 only the FEBA studio was destroyed but now, in 1990, the offices were destroyed too. That meant the loss of follow-up materials, listener records, the administration, and legal and financial files. The most important files had been brought to Cyprus during the late 1980s, though.<sup>94</sup>

The whole team of FEBA workers was pulled out to Cyprus later that year. The Cyprus coordinating center now also became the main production facility of FEBA.<sup>95</sup> The war in Lebanon was about finished then. On 13 October 1990 Syrian forces had attacked the Presidential palace, forcing 'Ûn to escape to the French Embassy. His troops quickly surrendered. Syria had taken over the country.<sup>96</sup> Three weeks later, on 7 November 1990, Knell told the Arabic Broadcasting Con-

<sup>89</sup> Tender in an email to the author (18 February 2003).

<sup>90</sup> FEBA's 'International Leadership Conference Middle East Report' (October 1986).

<sup>91</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October/December 1991).

<sup>92</sup> Ronald D. McLaurin, 'Lebanon: Into or Out of Oblivion?' in *Current History, A World Affairs Journal* (Vol. 91 No. 561, January 1992), p. 31.

<sup>93</sup> 'The End of Aoun?', in *The Middle East* (No. 186, April 1990), p. 14.

<sup>94</sup> Tender in an email to the author (18 February 2003).

<sup>95</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October-December 1991).

<sup>96</sup> McLaurin, 'Lebanon', p. 31.

vention (ABC) that he did not foresee what the future of the Christian witness in Lebanon would be. '[We] wait to see how much control Syria will exert in Lebanon and how much freedom there is for Christian mission work there.'<sup>97</sup>

The number of broadcasting hours over the station in The Seychelles did not change much between 1987 and 1991, and dipped slightly after the Gulf War, from 19 hours per week in 1987, to 17 hours in 1991.<sup>98</sup> This was mainly because FEBA's financial position for its own productions became precarious.<sup>99</sup>

### **9.1.2.5 Developments after the Gulf War: Since 1990**

On 2 August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait. The Arab countries were hurting and holding their breath, and an Arab and Western coalition was quickly built up to prevent Iraq moving further into Saudi Arabia. This coalition eventually drove Iraq out of Kuwait in January 1991.

In 1994 part of the FEBA staff left Cyprus to return to Lebanon again, after they were sure the civil war was truly over. Initially FEBA used the Baptist studio in Maṣṣūrîyah al-Matn again, both for offices and for recording programs. The Baptists themselves did not use the studio any longer. In 1997, one of the Christian satellite TV broadcasters in the Arab World rented another part of those studios from the Baptists. FEBA continued using the audio studio until 2002 when they then decided to create a studio in the office they had bought in 1995, exactly opposite the Baptist studio. That decision was made by Hovig Nassanian, who had become the director for FEBA's Arabic work in 1996. 'It was getting a bit too crowded there', Nassanian commented.<sup>100</sup>

Nassanian was from a family of Lebanese Armenians. Because of the war in Lebanon, the family had moved to Cyprus. Nassanian had just finished high school in Limassol, in 1989, when he heard Knell speak about the work of FEBA. He was about to go to Bob Jones University in the USA, to study radio broadcasting. Nassanian took the opportunity to visit the FEBA studio whenever he returned home for his summer holidays. After graduation in July 1993, FEBA employed him, and as of 1 January 1996, he was appointed as FEBA's area director.<sup>101</sup> The appointment of someone from the Middle East in that function underlined FEBA's interest in indigenization.

In 1996 FEBA decided to participate in the block of airtime of International Broadcasting Association (IBRA), which was broadcasting a 30-minute program six evenings each week on the MW transmitters of Radio Moscow. FEBA decided to fill the seventh evening's block. In 2003, that program was 90 minutes.<sup>102</sup> This cooperation led FEBA in 1997 to open an office in Jordan, together with IBRA and a local Assemblies of God (AOG) church. Nassanian hoped the office in Jordan would develop into a production centre to add variety to their mainly Lebanese

<sup>97</sup> Transcript of a speech of Derek Knell at the Arabic Broadcasting Convention, 7 November 1990. .

<sup>98</sup> 'On Our Feet Again – FEBA's ministry to the Middle East'. *FEBA Radio News* (October-December 1991).

<sup>99</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October-December 1990).

<sup>100</sup> Nassanian in emails to the author (11 February 2003 and 30 April 2003).

<sup>101</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>102</sup> Nassanian in an interview with the author (11 February 2003).

programs. ‘That proved difficult and the office became more of a follow-up operation. That was less important for us. It was also difficult to manage the office with three organisations’.<sup>103</sup> FEBA discontinued its involvement in Jordan after a while and consolidated its production work in Lebanon and Cyprus.<sup>104</sup>

In the meantime, broadcasting time on The Seychelles continued to increase. In 2003, FEBA was broadcasting 2¾ hours of Arabic programs per day from that station. In 1998 they cancelled their evening broadcast, adding that airtime to the afternoon broadcasts. This was because Trans World Radio (TWR) and IBRA also had evening broadcasts.<sup>105</sup>

FEBA had six staff in Lebanon by 2003, and some volunteers. They worked in the FEBA offices and studio under director Jūrj ‘Atīyah. The local Lebanese board was chaired by Admūn Ghūrī, Knell’s brother-in-law. After Yola married and left for England in 1999, the Lebanese studio was once again responsible for most of FEBA’s own productions, and the offices there were again the primary center for follow-up. This meant that by the 1990s these facilities in Lebanon were fully indigenously managed. It is interesting to note that ELWA had felt unable to find Lebanese management for its studio during the 1970s. Cyprus remained the regional headquarter where FEBA continued to do some production work. In that center, some non-Arabs played administrative roles.<sup>106</sup>

On 29 March 2003, FEBA stopped all broadcasting from The Seychelles as it closed its facilities there. The main reasons for this were a land reclamation project at the antenna site, the high cost of operating from The Seychelles, and that it was cheaper and more effective to broadcast the same programs on commercial stations.<sup>107</sup> This change in FEBA’s policy regarding ownership of the broadcasting facilities became financially possible because many broadcast facilities in formerly ex-Communist countries offered very cheap airtime. It was also a reflection of a change in many evangelical organizations. While in the 1970s, when FEBA began, the ownership of assets like transmitters was still preferred, during the 1990s many organizations came to realize the economic and managerial advantages of divesting of capital assets.

In 2003, FEBA hired airtime in the evenings on a SW transmitter in Kigali (Rwanda) for broadcasts to Yemen. It also broadcast programs from Krasnodar (Russia) on SW to the Middle East in the mornings and on MW to the Middle East in the evenings. Due to co-channel interference from a newly established high power transmitter in the Gulf area broadcasting programs of the USA to Iran, those MW broadcasts were stopped in October 2004.<sup>108</sup> FEBA’s three transmitters of

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<sup>103</sup> Nassanian in an email to the author (2 May 2003).

<sup>104</sup> Nassanian in an email to the author (30 April 2003).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Nassanian in an interview with the author (11 February 2003).

<sup>107</sup> *Broadcasting Hope* (Vol. 8, No. 1, February 2003) p. 1.

<sup>108</sup> Biener in an email to the author (12 April 2007). The station that created the interference was *al-Dhabbiyah* (Abu Dhabi) that was also using 1170 kHz. Emirates Media Inc. has been broadcasting from the new station on 1170 kHz since May 8, 2003. The station is used for the external service of the USA to the Arabic world, Radio Sawá. Information from Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (18 April 2007).

100 kW each were sold to a station in the USA. One of them was to be shipped to Liberia, the other two to the USA.<sup>109</sup>

## 9.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

FEBA has had the following Doctrinal Statement since the incorporation of the organization in the United Kingdom in 1968. This Doctrinal Statement reflected almost *verbatim* the creedal statement of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA) of Great Britain:<sup>110</sup>

1. Belief in the Bible as the inspired and only infallible authoritative word of God.
2. Belief that there is one God eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. Belief in the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. Belief that for the salvation of lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. Belief in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. Belief in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. Belief in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.<sup>111</sup>

In February 2002 the international council of FEBA, comprising of eight national associations, adopted a new international version, though it allowed the eight associate councils to use their own statements as long as those were in harmony with the international version. That new version expressed that those in FEBA believe:

1. In one God, who exists as almighty and loving Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
2. In the Bible as the true, inspired and authoritative word of God;
3. In the value and dignity of all people, created in God's perfect image but separated from Him by sin and subject to His punishment;
4. In Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, and fully human and fully divine. He lived a sinless life on earth; He bore the punishment due to sinners by dying in our place by crucifixion and by this saves all who repent of their sin and believe in Him;

<sup>109</sup> Hansjörg Biener, 'Abschaltung von FEBA-Radio schon zum 30. 3. 2003' in *Medien Aktuell: Kirche in Rundfunk* (März-April 2003), p. 3.

<sup>110</sup> Jan A.B. Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science and Theology of Mission in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. A Missiological Encyclopedia Part 1: The Philosophy and Science of Mission* (Frankfurt am Main, 2002, first edition 1995), p. 161

<sup>111</sup> Received from Angela Brooke of the British office of FEBA in an email to the author (31 January 2005).

5. He was physically raised from death to life and returned to God the Father;
6. In the Holy Spirit, who gives new spiritual life to believers in Jesus Christ and lives in them, giving them power to live a holy life of obedient service;
7. In the spiritual unity of all believers, the church;
8. In the future personal return of Jesus Christ as judge of all people, the saved spending eternity with God and the lost banished to eternal condemnation.<sup>112</sup>

Both versions of FEBA's creedal statement underlined the organization's Evangelical, interdenominational character. The statements were apologetic, and broadly inclusive of different streams of thought in Evangelicalism. They did not express an opinion regarding millennial issues. The statements did not refer to mission either, and they were not contextual for an Arab environment.

The newer version of FEBA's creedal statement was less formal, as it used less technical theological terms. It also seemed less categorical in certain areas. For instance, whereas in 1968, FEBA stated that the Bible was infallible, in 2002 it did not use that term. Both statements show that FEBA demanded its personnel, who were supposed to proclaim a message that was relevant for the Arab World, to adopt a description of their faith that was framed in terms and theological concepts from a Western theological tradition. The suitability of that criterion for finding the right personnel to contextualize programs for the Arab World was doubtful. There was no doubt that FEBA adhered to the truth of the Bible and the uniqueness of Christ, so Contextualization Warning CW1 was heeded in this respect.

### 9.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

Because of the location of The Seychelles, FEBA deliberately decided to focus on the Muslim audiences of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and Sudan.<sup>113</sup> 'We are of course happy if our listenership extends further north [i.e., to other Arab countries with a sizable Christian minority] but we have taken the thought of Romans 15:20 to our hearts where Paul says: "I make it my aim to preach Christ where he has not been named"', according to Knell.<sup>114</sup>

A practical reason for FEBA to focus on those specific Arabic countries was also that SW radio was relatively popular there. In the Arabian Peninsula, normal car radios had SW reception facilities.<sup>115</sup> In the Middle East, listeners tended to tune in to MW and FM, and could not receive FEBA's broadcasts from The Seychelles.<sup>116</sup> According to Nassanian, FEBA was unique in this focus on the Arabian Peninsula:

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Transcript of a speech of Derek Knell at the Arabic Broadcasting Convention.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 197. Residents from the Gulf 'appear to be enthusiastic listeners to international Shortwave and Mediumwave radio broadcasts from non-Arab countries', according to Douglas A. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Middle East* (Ames, 1999, first edition 1993), p. 121.

<sup>116</sup> Nassanian in an interview with the author (11 February 2003).

Our primary focus is the Muslim listener. We are happy with Christian response but they are not our main focus. The Arabian Peninsula is our main focus, and that's how we will probably keep it. The way I see it, TWR's focus is the central Middle East, that is the area of Egypt to Lebanon, with large Christian minorities. IBRA is more focused on North Africa.<sup>117</sup>

This choice to target Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula means that FEBA narrowed its target down to an audience that was not totally homogenous, but that was much more homogenous than if FEBA had also tried to speak to Arabs outside the Peninsula and to Christian Arabs. This means that FEBA to a certain extent implemented RCR1 that prescribes that broadcast must have a homogenous target audience.

It was hard for FEBA to find radio voices in the vernacular of the Arabian Peninsula, due to the small number of local Christians, so FEBA decided from the beginning to broadcast as much as it could in MSA. That was considered the best median language for broadcasting to its target audience. So initially, all FEBA's own productions were done in MSA by its mainly Lebanese staff.<sup>118</sup> The choice to use MSA was in line with the habits of other Christian broadcasters, and especially with ELWA and its producers there was a high level of continuity. However, it contravened the need to speak to people in their own spoken languages, as prescribed by RCR3.

'Research in Yemen in 1999 proved that the Yemenis would rather listen to Lebanese Arabic than to MSA. That liberated our Lebanese producers. Much is done in Lebanese now, but we still do MSA too', said Nassanian. 'All this is only related to our own programs of course. Producers deliver us programs in other dialects of Arabic too, like Egyptian.'<sup>119</sup> The preference of Yemenis for Lebanese Arabic above MSA is probably because Lebanese Arabic is closer to their own vernacular than MSA. It may also be due to the popularity of Lebanese satellite TV broadcasts in Yemen and elsewhere in the Arab World. This decision by FEBA was a step toward implementing RCR3, as it took the linguistic wishes of the target audience to heart. FEBA's shift to producing programs in the vernacular was wise as no-one in its audience spoke MSA at home. As the vernacular is part of the actual context of the audience and allows radio to target a particular audience, using the vernacular is important for producing truly contextualized programs. The fact that FEBA was forced to also use programs in Egyptian Arabic, despite it knowing that this was less appreciated and understood by its audience, shows the power that program suppliers have over Christian broadcasters.

In 2004, FEBA was also working on producing programs in the local dialects of the Arabian Peninsula, and it succeeded in beginning Yemeni broadcasts in one of the Yemeni vernaculars.<sup>120</sup> This had become possible because, by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, FEBA was partnering 'with colleagues living in the country' in producing locally produced programs by Yemeni MBBs, some of whom had come

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Annie Hall of FEBA Limassol in an email to the author (13 January 2003).



to faith through the FEBA programs. During this time FEBA also installed its first producer of programs in Baghdad.<sup>121</sup> These two actions demonstrate that FEBA has endeavored to increase its implementation of RCR3.

The Yemeni programs that were broadcast to Yemen were especially good from the perspective of aiming at a homogenous target audience in its own vernacular. Being this focused is a precondition for producing programs that also speak to the audience in their actual context, as RCR2 describes, and also for making programs that use the right linguistic and cultural forms, as RCR4 demands.

#### 9.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

From its inception FEBA had three rules for deciding what programs it wanted to broadcast. Those formed the framework for the Arabic department. These ‘Station Regulations and Guidelines for Programme Suppliers’ were summarized by Peter and Pam Cousins, who were asked by FEBA to write a book about its ministry in 1978.

First of all, every programme must be in sympathy with the FEBA doctrinal basis. [Even general interest programmes] may be edited if they contain material contrary to FEBA policy. Secondly, doctrinal arguments and controversy about topics outside the FEBA basis must be avoided [...] Third, a positive attitude must be maintained. There should be no negative attacks against people or organizations, whether political or religious. [...] One programme supplier was surprised to find he was not allowed to use FEBA facilities to mount a vigorous attack on Communism.<sup>122</sup>

The choice to not allow concrete political criticism meant that the audience of FEBA’s programs could not expect a concrete application of the Christian faith in the realm of society and politics. For the audience, this meant that part of what was important in their lives was not touched upon in these programs. This was in contradiction to RCR2. CW5 was at stake here, regarding the need to take a stand against corporate evil. Not doing that narrowed the Gospel to less than what discipleship entails and it also narrowed the prophetic role of the Gospel to the personal life only, thus not fully implementing CW4.<sup>123</sup>

When FEBA was discussing cooperation with ELWA in 1971, the two organizations agreed about the need for *balanced programming*. That was defined by FEBA as ‘a schedule comprising music and general interest programming together with

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<sup>121</sup> Hovig Nassanian in an email to the author (7 October 2004).

<sup>122</sup> Cousins, *Power of the Air*, p. 78. According to Knell, FEBA was not happy with the book. It was ‘too honest’. Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003). According to Cousins, ‘this book [...] was undertaken on the clear understanding that it was not going to be a white-wash job’. Cousins, *Power of the Air*, p. 141.

<sup>123</sup> In 1980, Reginald Kennedy spoke about the ‘lie’ of FEBC’s goal to ‘serve the whole of man’, as the Program suppliers that filled the airtime ensured that the message of the Gospel was always ‘in quarantine’ in the FEBC broadcasts. He made similar comments about the programs broadcast by FEBA. Reginald Kennedy, ‘The Word Senders’ pp. 20, 26 of chapter 2.

Gospel programmes with both indirect and direct approach'. Because of political circumstances in the Arab World, it was acceptable to FEBA that no political news programs would be produced.<sup>124</sup> That was a poor choice, as most Arab listeners to SW did so because of their interest in news. This means the audience was not approached in its actual context, while this was also a missed opportunity to show the prophetic impact of the Gospel on society.

From 1971 to 1975, ELWA took care of FEBA's Arabic program needs. It seems that ELWA's program policies for the Arab World were basically continued by FEBA. The fact that ELWA could convince FEBA that the Arabic programs should not contain political news programs was exceptional for FEBA, as FEBA had from its beginnings in 1969, decided to incorporate news broadcasts in its programming for other language broadcasts. From 1971 to 1976 the news of the BBC World Service was used. After that, FEBA opened its own news department. Some qualified journalists worked in The Seychelles; they read their news reports live.<sup>125</sup>

FEBA considered missionary radio to be 'an ambassador, breaking down barriers to Christianity and encouraging faith in Christ in the Muslim heartland of the Middle East'.<sup>126</sup> FEBA in the Arab World never banned quoting the *Qur'ân* or discussions of *Qur'ânic* issues. 'In FEBA-Pakistan that would be impossible. We have the freedom to do it. FEBA does not have worldwide policies that dictate matters like this', according to Knell.<sup>127</sup>

Shortly after Knell came to work in Beirut, he decided he wanted FEBA to use *storytelling* as the main way of conveying Christian truth instead of lecturing, as that was seen as the most effective way of reaching Arab Muslims.<sup>128</sup> The focus of FEBA on a Muslim audience led to a choice to not translate Western programs, but to produce them from scratch as much as possible. This in itself did not guarantee that the programs would be relevant to Muslims, according to Knell:

We do struggle with the relevance issue because our team are all from Christian background...When we make a particular effort to broadcast to Muslims we find the proportion of letters from them to increase, we find that when we take less care, the proportion of Christians who write, increases.<sup>129</sup>

According to Knell, who had not been involved in the productions of FEBA during the 1980s as he was in The Seychelles then, there was a major shift in emphasis from the 1980s to the 1990s in the programming of FEBA. 'On air we always implied that the Saudis needed Jesus, but we also mentioned that they would suffer and be all-alone. That was our implied message in the 1980s.' That approach was changed. In the 1990s FEBA had another, more community-oriented

<sup>124</sup> Letter of Cook to Thompson (1 April 1971).

<sup>125</sup> Cousins, *Power of the Air*, pp. 72-74.

<sup>126</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October-December 1990).

<sup>127</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* Knell in an email to the author (4 September 2003).

<sup>129</sup> Transcript of a speech of Derek Knell at the Arabic Broadcasting Convention.

emphasis, according to Knell. 'We now said that there were others believing in Jesus and that there were similar people in Saudi Arabia.'<sup>130</sup>

In the 1990s, we could not get Saudi's talking in our programs, but we did get their mail. FEBA could use that mail for creating communion between Saudi believers in Jesus. A Saudi man, Khalid, writes to us about being beaten by his father for having a Bible. We read that letter on air. Another Saudi believer, Ali, writes to us that he will pray for Khalid because of the problems they share. This created a fellowship of believers and showed to the Saudi listeners that there were Christians among them. Believers are not alone anymore.<sup>131</sup>

Knell was convinced that 'the growth of the church in Saudi Arabia has been impacted substantially' by this better contextualized approach that was embodied in Yola's program answering listener mail.<sup>132</sup>

Knell described in a newsletter in 1990, after the Iraqi invasion into Kuwait, that FEBA produced programs that were 'relevant to the emotional needs of the people in the region', and he believed that FEBA's own experience in Lebanon enabled them to show an understanding of the pain many were going through:

Radio is both the tool of the mass media and of one-to-one communication. We speak as if to an individual, but we recognise that our message is appropriate to hundreds of thousands of others. I believe that God will prove himself to people who reach out in faith to the one who is there. He cares about them in their difficult circumstances. He is a Lord who heals where we are hurting.<sup>133</sup>

This issue of physical and emotional closeness to the audience was also not part of the Travis' scheme of contextualization, as it is typically an issue for media communication. The more communal approach can certainly be seen as an effort to contextualize the Gospel in terms of the actual context of the audience, in accordance with RCR2.

When Nassanian took over the leadership of the Arabic department of FEBA in 1996, together with his team he created a new mission statement for FEBA Radio Middle East. FEBA wanted to 'attract Arabs [...] to a growing interest in Jesus Christ, culminating with their commitment to follow and worship Him in their own indigenous communities together.'<sup>134</sup> FEBA aimed to do that by producing and broadcasting 'relevant and attractive programs' as well as by developing an 'ongoing and personalised follow-up' with their listeners.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October–December 1990).

<sup>134</sup> 'FEBA Radio Middle East, Mission Statement', received from Nassanian (11 February 2003). The general mission statement of FEBA international says: 'We are here to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ, principally through the use of radio and programme follow-up, in Africa and Asia. The desired effect is that through the power of the Holy Spirit individuals and families may be reconciled to God, become followers of Jesus Christ, grow in Christian understanding, and become responsible members of His Church.' See [www.feba.org](http://www.feba.org) (30 July 2003).

<sup>135</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

The goal of having Arabs ‘worship [Jesus Christ] in their own indigenous communities together’ was a loaded statement, in line with popular missiological thinking among evangelicals interested in reaching Muslims. It contained the idea that Muslims who want to follow Jesus must contextualize their new-found faith in Jesus Christ by developing forms of Christianity and worship within the context of their own Islamic culture. That usually also means a choice for not trying to integrate those new believers in the existent churches, which were often seen as dead, deviant, or ‘too Western’ at best.

For FEBA, with a focus on the Arabian Peninsula and with Yemen and Saudi Arabia in the first place, the hope to develop new believers in ‘indigenous communities together’ should not be seen as a statement against the unity of the church, though. In the countries their programs were aimed at, there were hardly any indigenous Christians, let alone local churches in the sense of recognized Christian communities.<sup>136</sup> FEBA’s Yemeni programs were produced in conjunction with some Yemeni MBBs. To that extent, it can be said that FEBA developed its contextualization in the Peninsula ‘within the community of the Church’, so it did not trespass against CW2. The sort of churches it tried to develop there, probably fell in the C3 spectrum as described by John Travis.

After the early 1990s, the theme of contextualization was not widely discussed by FEBA, except in the context of the Arab Media Convention (AMC). According to Nassanian, in AMC it was discussed ‘with passion’. This was not a venue for radio producers only, but for publishers and television producers as well. Radio producers and broadcasters have not often met as radio organizations only since the 1990s, so the theme of contextualization has not been substantially furthered between them.<sup>137</sup>

## 9.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

### 9.5.1 *History: 1971-2004*

FEBA would broadcast its programs in blocks of about one hour each, in the morning, afternoon and evening. About 40 percent of FEBA’s programs were produced by its own personnel; the other 60 percent was supplied by the independent producers. Nassanian about those percentages:

There was never any policy decision about how those percentages should be. [...] The dilemma for us is, that accepting programs that are offered by other producers, help us in paying for our running cost. But what should we accept, and what is unacceptable?<sup>138</sup>

The Habibs were the main program producers of FEBA between 1975 and 1982. They started many programs that according to Habib were ‘very popular among

<sup>136</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>137</sup> Hovig Nassanian in an email to the author (13 December 2006).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

listeners'.<sup>139</sup> These were series with titles like Listeners Mail, Station Magazine, Songs and Impressions, Short Stories, Words from the Heart, We are with You, Pictures of Life, and others. The Habibs created drama programs, and they began a choir to sing for programs of FEBA. After they left, Yola continued with some of those programs.<sup>140</sup>

Since 1975 FEBA had to maintain its own relations with the different program producers. FEBA had a guideline that encouraged cooperation with any group that recognized Jesus Christ as Lord and proclaimed him as the only Savior, and that agreed with FEBA's Statement of Faith. That decision allowed Pentecostals or Charismatic organizations and speakers to be part of the programming of FEBA.<sup>141</sup>

FEBA did not want to cooperate with High Adventure Ministries (HAM), the broadcasting organization that was begun by George Otis in the 1970s. 'They were based in Southern Lebanon first, under Israeli occupation, and they are now in Israel. We could not cooperate because the Israeli connection was not good for relationships in the Arab World' according to Knell. He also mentioned a theological reason. He did not go along with 'some of their views on health and wealth'.<sup>142</sup> This choice of FEBA was an effort to implement RCR6, which prescribes broadcasters to be on guard against negative media environments that influence the understanding of the program's message by the audience.

FEBA has broadcast programs of producers like the Lebanese Baptists, the Lebanese Bible Society, BTGH, Youth for Christ, Pacific Garden Mission (PGM) with its Unshackled program, Fund for Christian Service, Wycliffe, Arab World Ministries (AWM), TWR and IBRA. *Karmel Mission* (KM) produced six programs of 15 minutes each week for broadcasts by FEBA for over a decade.<sup>143</sup> Many of those organizations had also put their programs on FEBA through the ELWA connection in the past. After the Gulf War of 1990-1991 some more American organizations began broadcasting their programs over FEBA.<sup>144</sup>

The programs of KM were those of al-Shirâkî, who as an MBB produced programs that used Islamic linguistic and cultural forms in his broadcasts. This was an implementation of RCR4, although at the expense of CW6; the programs assumed that people could differentiate between form and function, but it is argued that they cannot. These programs created an image of church-life as described in Travis' C4 spectrum. The attitude of the churches of the Arab World was mostly negative about programs of this sort, but as FEBA's expressed target audience was Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula, it cannot be said that FEBA contextualized against the wishes of the Christian community. The communities in the target area were probably not unhappy with this style of proclamation.

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<sup>139</sup> Habib in an email to the author (10 December 2004).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>142</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. Nassanian in an interview with the author (11 February 2003). Marcia Tender in an email to the author (24 February 2003).

<sup>144</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

### 9.5.2 Programs of 20-26 September 2004

During the week of 20-26 September, FEBA broadcast its programs daily from 04.00-05.30 and from 19.03-19.57 PM GMT. That was close to 2½ hours per day. The block of 90 minutes as broadcast each morning during this week, has been re-searched here. These programs, called *Voice of Forgiveness (Ṣawt al-Ghufrûn)* were broadcast on 15525 MegaHertz (MHz) on SW. In most programs, Sâmi was the sound engineer, and Tinâ presented the whole block. The programs as broadcast per day are given in *Figure 9.1*.

#### *Let's Sing*

One strategy used to create interaction with the audience was through the program Let's Sing of 23 September 2004, presented by Rabî'. The audience was able to suggest a person to whom the program could be dedicated. This program was dedicated to Tawfiq Masâ'dî from Algeria, who had celebrated his birthday four days earlier. In the program his address was given to the audience, as he liked to correspond with other listeners. After the program, FEBA's PO Box 123 in Manşûriyah was given, with an invitation to ask for special music or suggest someone to whom a Let's Sing program might be dedicated. The telephone number of Rabî' in Lebanon was also given: +961(4)530220.<sup>145</sup>

#### 9.5.2.1 Biblical Topics

##### *Dew Drops*

On 20 September 2004, the program Dew Drops was preceded by a pastoral prayer:

I thank you Lord because you love me and you want me to get to know the great Person that you are (*Shakhṣak al-'azîm*). I need you and your great love. I open my heart to you, seeking your forgiveness. O God, enter my heart and possess it. Please, save me from hell and give me eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

Then, Genesis 49 was read in its entirety using the Van Dyck translation. No explanation was provided. The audience was promised a Bible if they needed one and to write to FEBA's PO Box in Manşûriyah.<sup>146</sup>

The following day, before Dew Drops began, the same PO Box was given first, as well as FEBA's mobile phone number in Cyprus. Then a prayer followed:

Lord, I hide my face in the dust because I am embarrassed of myself, of my hypocrite heart. [...] I wasted my life that belongs to you, for the sake of sin (*khatîyah*) and desire (*shahwah*). [...] I am lazy and negligent; I did not humble myself at your feet; I did not submit my heart to your hand, therefore my soul remained lost and my spirit tortured with shame. Lord, may Your Spirit reveal to me the way to the

<sup>145</sup> FEBA broadcast 23 September 2004, Let's Sing.

<sup>146</sup> FEBA broadcast 20 September 2004, Dew Drops.

life that is full of Your Spirit so that I will not be ashamed of myself on Judgment Day (*al-yawm al-ḥisâb*).

Probably by mistake, Chapter 49 of Genesis was read again, as the previous day. After that, the audience was asked to write their questions to FEBA's PO Box in Maṣṣûrîyah. This address was also given in the following Dew Drops programs.<sup>147</sup>

On 22 September, Dew Drops was preceded again by a prayer:

I want to be changed from the inside. [...] I need your power to control me, the anointing (*mashah*) of your Spirit to sanctify (*tuqaddis*) my mind, purify my thoughts and strengthen my steps. [...] Teach me God to respect every person.

Then, Exodus 1 and 2 were read. The audience was asked to write to the PO Box in Maṣṣûrîyah.<sup>148</sup> The prayer before Dew Drops on 23 September was for courage to draw near to God, and the power of the Spirit for revealing the listener's impurity as well as God's love: 'Make me bold so that I do not compromise the truth and do not give away my principles, that I do not become weak when tempted, and that I do not allow any injustice to be done or that I neglect any of my duties.' Then, Exodus 3 and 4 were read.<sup>149</sup>

20-09-04	Dew Drops	Persecuted yet not Abandoned	You ask and we Answer	Unshackled	In the Shade of the World	You and Me on the Road
21-09-04	Dew Drops	Message through the Bible	A verse and Story	Unshackled	In the Shade of the World	Weapon of Love
22-09-04	Dew Drops	Dialogue		Unshackled	In the Shade of the World	Message of Grace and Truth
23-09-04	Dew Drops	Let's Sing	Listener's Mail	Unshackled	In the Shade of the World	Arab Woman Today
24-09-04	Dew Drops	Meditations on the life of the Lord Jesus Christ	It Happened this week	Unshackled	In the Shade of the World	Persecuted yet not Abandoned
25-09-04	Dew Drops	Radio Magazine		Unshackled	Good News	Spiritual Principles
26-09-04	Dew Drops	Spiritual Songs	Meditations of life	Unshackled	Harvest Time	Message of Grace and Truth

Figure 9.1 Content of FEBA's Arabic Programs: 20-26 September 2004

<sup>147</sup> FEBA broadcast 21 September 2004, Dew Drops.

<sup>148</sup> FEBA broadcast 22 September 2004, Dew Drops.

<sup>149</sup> FEBA broadcast 23 September 2004, Dew Drops.

On 24 September in Dew Drops Exodus 5 and 6 were read, after an introduction about the importance of humility and a prayer:

True humility does not mean that you think about your own badness, because we have to forget about ourselves completely. Man is too bad to think about. God is the only one who deserves to be the center of all our thoughts and attention [...] Let us ask God this morning to draw us close to him to serve him humbly. [...] Lord, we come to you, the source of life. We ask you to pour your Spirit on our thirsty souls, to nurture our dead lives, to enliven our mortal souls.<sup>150</sup>

The next day, Dew Drops was preceded by a prayer that thanked God for beautifully creating man, and that asked God for inspiration by the knowledge of God. 'Show me the way back to your heaven, bring me back repentant, you who guide (*tuhdî*) the lost.' Exodus 7 and 8 were then read.<sup>151</sup>

Dew Drops on 26 September was preceded by some statements concerning all people being like lost sheep, deserving divine punishment for their sins. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the divine solution. 'Lord, I confess (*a'atarrif*) your ownership of my life. I call upon you to cleanse me (*tutaharnî*) and make me whole. [...] Reveal to me, O Lord, your clear path. Sustain my powerless hand.' Exodus 10 and part of 11 were then read.<sup>152</sup>

If these prayers were aimed at Muslims, they were certainly hard to understand as they used considerable Christian jargon. RCR4, about the need to use linguistic forms that are suitable for the audience, was therefore not fully heeded. The value of the long Bible readings without any explanation is questionable.

#### ***You ask and we Answer***

You ask and we Answer was a program of KM, also known as *Call of Hope*. The program treated the question why the crucifixion of the Christ (*al-Masîh*) was not a taboo (*ḥarâm*) though he was a good and righteous Prophet (*Nabî*). Jesus could have decided to not die on the cross, but he willed it to happen because this was the way of attaining forgiveness (*al-ḥuṣûl al-ghufrân*) for mankind. Jesus purposely wanted to die, in line with the will of God, who so loved the world that He gave his only Son (*Ibnuh al-wahîd*).

The program then asked the rhetorical question whether our sins could not be forgiven because of our good deeds. 'Some say that if the weight of our good deeds is heavier than that of our evil deeds, we go to heaven, and if not, we go to hell.' Good deeds are necessary indeed, but they are not the compensation (*al-ta'wîd*) for what we have done wrong, or sins committed. To prove that good deeds do not carry us to heaven, the example of the giving of alms to the poor was used. The money we give to the poor was first given to us by God. How can we then claim merit from giving away what was never ours in the first place? They also do not counterbalance our sins. 'Sins we commit are against God himself and

<sup>150</sup> FEBA broadcast 24 September 2004, Dew Drops.

<sup>151</sup> FEBA broadcast 25 September 2004, Dew Drops.

<sup>152</sup> FEBA broadcast 26 September 2004, Dew Drops.



cannot be erased or counterbalanced by any good deeds.’ If a murderer stands in court, the fact that he has done good deeds does not make the judge set him free. He must be punished. Jesus Christ bore your and my sins and he was punished because He himself wanted that.’

Then the program answered the question why God cannot forgive the sins of people if He simply decides to do so: ‘Man became an opponent to God’s will and he has deliberately broken and violated God’s expressed commandments. So it is impossible that God will forgive people who oppose his will.’ The program then summarized the Gospel:

Jesus came to our world to save the sinners and to offer healing (*yashf*) and salvation (*khalâs*). He paid the penalty of our sins in our place, on our behalf, on the cross. He paid the full price to erase our sins. Christ’s salvation is characterized by removing the sins and redeeming and healing man from sin. So whoever accepts Jesus, his life begins to change and is renewed. He becomes a new man.

The audience was then invited to participate in the sinner’s prayer. Finally, they were asked to write any questions to Call of Hope, PO Box 100827 in Stuttgart (Germany).<sup>153</sup> This program was clearly aimed at Muslims, as it answered an Islamic question in a suitable manner. It implemented RCR4 as the choice of words and examples was in line with the language Muslims use. It did so without using explicitly Islamic jargon, so CW6, about the fact that linguistic forms and their meaning cannot be separated, was not trespassed against. Christ was portrayed in a clear, conservative way, and in a manner that was meaningful to the intended audience, so RCR5 was also implemented in regard to the presentation of Christ.

### ***In the Shade of the Word***

In the Shade of the Word was an American ‘Mini Bible College’ program by Pastor Dick Woodward from Virginia Beach, Virginia (USA) that was translated literally into Arabic. This program treated Genesis 3 and the issue of sin (*khatiyah*). In Paradise mankind had all it needed and could ever want. Because they decided to eat the fruit of a tree that was explicitly forbidden by God, everything went wrong. Nowadays, we have the same choices that Adam and Eve had. We have many needs, more than we are even aware of. As to man in Paradise, God speaks to us: ‘If you obey my commandment, you will live.’ That was not what Adam and Eve did. They looked at the forbidden tree and wanted the forbidden fruit. That did not refer to their sexual relationship, the program assured. The issue was that they did not trust God to supply them with all their needs, and instead they took what they should not have taken. The program then applied this to the sexuality of a young man in the age of puberty.

You know that God has put the sexual motive in you; when you discover that you have this motive, what will you do? Nowadays, the common philosophy amongst young man is to satisfy their needs as long as that gives pleasure. But according to

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<sup>153</sup> FEBA broadcast 20 September 2004, You ask and we Answer.

God's Word, if you satisfy your sexual needs, you don't get life but death. Death here is the result of your choice. You should come to God as a young man and say to Him: 'God you created this so what does your Word say about the importance, the aim and the function of sex, I will follow your Word and what it teaches'. By doing that, you will get more pleasure and satisfaction than what sex will ever be able to give.

The real sin and the real crisis in Genesis 3 is that mankind says that it is not in need of a God who tells them what to do. But the same chapter ends with hope. God did not reject man, but went looking for him. 'All religions of the world can be summarized as efforts of man looking for God. In Christianity and Judaism, God is looking for man, and that makes a great difference.'

The audience was then advised to wake up early and to have a quiet time to meditate on the questions God asked of Adam and Eve when He looked for them in Paradise. 'Where are you? [...] Did you eat from the tree you should not have eaten from? What have you done? Who told you? To whom do you listen? To the world or to Me?' They were asked to send comments or questions to FEBA's PO Box in Mañşûrîyah. Telephone calls and text messages were welcomed on FEBA's phone in Cyprus.<sup>154</sup>

The following program of *In the Shade of the Word* focused on the questions God asked of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. The first question of God to man, after he had sinned for the first time, was: 'Where are you'. The answer was: 'I have heard your voice as I am not far from you, but when I heard your voice I was afraid because I knew that if I listen to you, my nakedness will be exposed to you.' The method of God was to ask a question, helping man to come to true knowledge about himself in the process of answering. According to the program, this matter was of utmost importance as many people nowadays have lost direction:

I remember when I was a kid, I always had constants and everything I did was in reaction with those constants. As a pastor who counsels youth today, I have discovered that many of them do not have any moral ethics, and without those ethics they do not know where they come from or where to go, and consequently where they are.

When Adam answered that he was lost and naked, God asked him: 'Who let you know this?' The implication of the question was that man had begun to listen to another source of true knowledge than God. 'Can you be sure that God let you know something? Yes you can.' He then compared the church with some ships that do military exercises guided by an admiral who is sending out his commanding signals:

The church (*al-kanîsah*) is [...] a group of ships lost in this world and among these ships there is the battleship of the admiral, Jesus. [...] Jesus is alive and present in our world. He rose from the dead and He is now alive. [...] He is continuously sending us signals and I think that the special people in the Body of Christ are those who have received some of those signals. [...] If you did not catch the signals,

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<sup>154</sup> FEBA broadcast 20 September 2004, *In the Shade of the Word*.

God's work still continues in a coordinated manner but you will be going round in empty circles.

The audience was advised to always fix their eyes on the admiral, Jesus. God wants to guide man's steps. The third question God asked was: 'Have you eaten from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?' The purpose of God is for us to follow his plans, not our own. If people follow their own plans, they will become unhappy and miss out on the abundant life God wants them to have. 'That is why God speaks to us and says: "Follow my priorities and you will have life, you will have a tree of life". But Adam and Eve did not follow God's priorities at all and hence they did not have life but death.'

The fourth question: 'What have you done', guides man to confession (*al-i'tirrâf*). According to the program, the word *al-i'tirrâf* is derived from two words, meaning 'together agreeing about something'. This is a literal reference to the English word *confession*. The disadvantage of translating programs comes out here, as the statement is true in English, but not in Arabic. The Arabic word for confession, from the root '*arafa*', is not a composite word. 'Confession is agreeing with God. [...] He already knows what we did, but He wants us to realize what we did, and tell Him about it.' The program ended as the previous day, with reference to the same contact address and telephone number.<sup>155</sup>

The next day's program of In the Shade of the Word was about Genesis 4. The program was introduced with an explanation of the value of the book of Genesis. As God wanted to help us understand our world and ourselves as we are today, many issues as they began historically are presented in the book of Genesis. These are issues like marriage and sin. Then, the program explained how the navy uses the compass and help airplanes that are lost over the ocean to find their way back. This was then compared with the directions that God gives to us:

God wants us to have a spiritual compass when we get lost, as happened to Adam and Eve. He wants us to admit that we are lost, and then fly in his direction and when we do this we will find that He in turn is moving toward us. When we are lost, God also wants us to economize in taking decisions. Never take a major decision when you think you have lost your way. [And] call for God, for He wants you to communicate with Him. When He speaks to you, submit to Him.

As Adam and Eve followed this guidance, things turned positive. Genesis 3:15 is the first prophecy about Jesus, where Genesis says that the head of the snake will be crushed. That was in the future though, as Adam and Eve were cast out of Paradise. The way to the tree of life was guarded by a flaming sword. According to the program, this symbolized Jesus, or the Bible, as no one can return to God without Jesus and the Bible.

Genesis 4 was about the sacrifices by Cain and Abel, and how Cain killed Abel when God did not accept his sacrifice. The program spent some time explaining the difference between the Greek words *exegesis* and *eisegesis*. Good Biblical *exegesis* tries to extract the full meaning from the Bible, whereas *eisegesis* describes

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<sup>155</sup> FEBA broadcast 21 September 2004, In the Shade of the Word.

the opposite process of adding meaning to the text that was not originally intended by the author. This issue was discussed here as the program denied the often heard idea that Cain's sacrifice was not accepted because he did not sacrifice an animal, as Abel did. 'God was not pleased with Cain as a person and that is why his sacrifice was not accepted.' The story in Genesis 4 does not say why Cain was unacceptable for God. But when he saw that God accepted the sacrifice of Abel, he was so angry that he killed his brother:

Try to find applications in this story that could help those who live in anger and frustration. And as you read the story ask yourself what it says. What does it mean? And what does it mean for me personally. If you have feelings of anger or frustration or both, try to find in this story something to help you overcome those feelings.

After this, FEBA's phone number in Cyprus was given for calls and text messages.<sup>156</sup>

In the Shade of the Word continued the next day and again dealt with Genesis 4. Cain was not a good man in the eyes of God, while Abel was. One day, Cain killed Abel. What is the aim of that story?

I think the vital message of this story is: Are you an angry man? Are you a frustrated man? And when you get angry do you feel frustrated? And if you get angry, what is the cause of your anger? What is the source of your anger?

In Genesis 3, the question God asked of Adam and Eve was: 'Where are you?' Now he asks Cain: 'Where is your brother?' God wanted Cain to understand that there was nothing wrong with his brother, but that he himself was the cause of his anger. Here is the solution to that anger: 'If you behave, will you not become an accepted person; if you do what is good, will you not be accepted by God and by yourself? Then you won't have to beat your brother Abel to death.'

According to the program, psychiatrists say that the problem with Cain was that he was angry, maybe towards himself, but that he blamed others for it. He was not accepted and that made him angry. He had two options, either to become an acceptable person, or to take vengeance. 'What is important for every person is to feel secure and safe before God. Walk before God safely and you won't have to live your life in such circumstances' as Cain.

The following chapters of Genesis were quickly glanced over. The story of the Great Flood teaches us something about the nature of man and the nature of God. God can be both loving and angry at the same time. A story of a loving father, whose daughter of seven years is raped, was used to explain that this combination of love and anger is possible. The father loves the daughter, but is quite able to kill the rapist:

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<sup>156</sup> FEBA broadcast 22 September 2004, In the Shade of the Word.

This is what we find in the Flood story. God loves man but when He looks from above and sees how sin and the forces of evil destroy the subject of his love and ruin his great plans for humanity, God is then capable of showing anger.

The audience was then invited to write to the program with any questions. The PO Box in Mañşûrîyah was given as well as the mobile phone number in Cyprus.<sup>157</sup>

On 24 September, In the Shade of the Word treated Genesis 11 and 12, concerning Abraham. Abraham is considered very important as his life story shows what faith (*al-imân*) means. 'Without faith it is impossible to please [God], without faith you cannot be near God.' Originally the name of Abraham was Abram. That name means 'father of many children'. Until Abram was 90, he used that name even though he did not have any children. Then God changed his name into Abraham, meaning father of many nations. For many years after this people would ask him where these children and nations were but Abraham would answer that God had promised that the number of his children would be like the sand on the seashore and the stars in the sky. That is what faith is.

Romans 4:3 says that Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. What is righteousness (*birr*)? 'God defines the righteous man as follows: "I told him something and he believed it." Therefore Abraham is considered a living definition of faith.' The story of Abraham shows that it is God who always takes the initiative in relating to people. He appeared to Abraham:

God is always the one who makes the first step when man draws near Him to know Him. Paul in the New Testament says: 'There is no one that seeks after God'. But it is God who seeks after man, so man only responds to God's calling.

God's appearances (*zuhûrât*) to Abraham were at his initiative; the altars that Abraham built were his response to God. He was not immediately obedient though. The first command of God was for Abram to leave his land, his people and the house of his father. He did not obey. 'Consider how many times God has appeared to you, trying to reach you and pull you towards Him and you did not respond.'

Abram did not respond to God's call until his father had died. He then built his first altar, in the Plain of Mamre. The program said that the word Mamre means 'learning' or 'seeking after something'. The symbolic meaning is that Abram was saying to God that he wanted to learn from Him. The second altar Abram built was between the cities of Bethel and Ai. 'The word Ai death, destruction and misery; The Bible says that the wages of sins is death, the results of sin are misery and despair and this is what Ai signifies.'

Before the first altar Abraham asked God to teach him what he should know to be in the place where he should be. Before the second altar, God answered him that his problem is that he is an unsteady person and he has not finally decided where he wants to be. The Bible tells us many times that we should be either hot or cold but not lukewarm.

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<sup>157</sup> FEBA broadcast 23 September 2004, In the Shade of the Word.

The program was over; the presenter promised that the third and fourth altar of Abraham would be treated in the next program. In the meantime, the audience was advised to read about those altars in Genesis to ‘try to find out the meanings of the third and the fourth altars’. They were also asked to write to PO Box 2302, al-Riyâḍ al-Şulḥ in Beirut.<sup>158</sup>

As these programs were translated from English and as they were originally produced for American Christians, they did not target the intended Muslim audience as they should have done according to RCR1 and RCR2; they neither targeted a homogenous audience, nor an audience in its actual context. The linguistic and cultural forms that were used were a reflection of the American original and were not congenial to the Arab audience, so RCR4 was not well heeded. It therefore seems that the main reason why FEBA broadcast these programs was financial. Moreover, the warnings CW4 and CW5, about the Gospel being a prophetic message for both the individual and society, were not heeded. The programs restricted the Gospel to the individual and his personal relationship with God.

#### ***Message through the Bible***

Message through the Bible was a drama production. This particular program was titled ‘A Message on Unburnable Paper’. The program contained a dialogue between the prophet Jeremiah in prison, and his scribe Baruch, based on the book of Jeremiah from the Old Testament. Jeremiah was in prison because he delivered a message from God to the king and his people. The name of Israel is never mentioned in the program, probably in order to not distract the Muslim audience.

Baruch is upset that God did not use an angel for sending his message to the king, because now Jeremiah suffers in prison. Jeremiah disagrees with that: ‘No Baruch, God’s Word is truth and truth should be announced and spoken without fear or trepidation, no matter the results. And who are we to give advice to God on what to do, to send an angel or a prophet.’ Jeremiah also explains that even in prison, he is victorious. ‘What you see with your eyes is temporal and transient but what you cannot see, but believe in, is eternal and firm. As for me, I believe in Gods promise in the spirit, by faith not by sight, as the Word of God is living and active.’

The king who heard Jeremiah’s message had obviously disagreed. Baruch describes how when he heard the first few lines of the message of Jeremiah, he cut the scroll in pieces and threw it in the fire. ‘Of course God will punish the resisting unbelievers’, Jeremiah responded, ‘and I am upset about God’s book being burned’. However, this was just a matter of a paper scroll. The real Word of God and His plans can never be destroyed. The program then proceeded to say that all true Prophets of God do miracles:

God supports His prophets with His wonderful miracles (*mu’jizât*) and fulfilled prophecies. Therefore anyone who pretends to be a prophet from God [and shares prophecies] that do not come true afterwards is a false prophet and his end is very bad. Everyone has to examine the prophecies.

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<sup>158</sup> FEBA broadcast 24 September 2004, In the Shade of the Word.

These claims by Jeremiah were directed at the Muslim audience as Islamic theology claims that the Prophet Muḥammad did not do any miracles and that his only miracle was the *Qur'ān* itself. Islam also does not know any other 'verified prophecies' of its prophet. The same Muslim audience was addressed then by Jeremiah:

Those who are listening should examine what they hear without prejudice to a certain peoples or to certain traditions. They should rather pray to God asking Him to open their eyes and show them His laws and His miracles. I am sure that whosoever seeks truth will reach it and whosoever opens his heart to God's Spirit in humility and honesty will be touched by God and guided to His true message.

The audience was asked to send their questions to FEBA in Maṣṣūriyah.<sup>159</sup> This program was made for a Muslim audience. It dealt with a number of differences in how Christians and Muslims view prophethood. It did so in a language that was clear for Muslims. RCR4 was implemented, without transgressing against CW6.

### ***A Verse and a Story***

In *A Verse and a Story*, Matthew 7:24ff was read. This is the story of Jesus who spoke about a man who built his house on a rock, while another man built it on sand. When storms came, the house on the rock survived while the house on sand collapsed. After these verses were read, the program contained a drama. The setting was clearly in Egypt, as the pyramids in Gizah were mentioned, as well as the weather forecast in Cairo and Alexandria. In the drama, someone built a spacious, gorgeous house on the sand, while another built a much less fanciful house on a rocky surface. The people living in the house on the rock became jealous of the people in the larger house built on sand, and moved in with them to enjoy life. When the storms came they were swept away. The house built on the rock was still standing, but empty. No one was living in it.

The program ended with a question to the audience: 'What is the foundation man should build his spiritual life on to keep it from falling down when faced with the pressures of life?' The audience was invited to mail the answer to Life of Love, PO Box 166567 in Beirut.<sup>160</sup>

For Muslims the Bible verses read were understandable, and the drama that followed was suitable and enjoyable. The drama was, however, in Egyptian Arabic, so not entirely suitable for the target audience in the Arabian Peninsula. Thus RCR3, which says that the spoken language of the target audience should be used, was not followed. The linguistic forms used were comprehensible for Muslims, though, so RCR4 was followed, while this was not done at the expense of CW6.

### ***Message of Grace and Truth***

This program treated chapter 14 of the Gospel of John. In that chapter Jesus told his disciples to not be troubled because He was about to leave them. Instead, they should believe in God and in Jesus. 'The secret of peace is faith. Faith takes fear away and fills the heart with peace.' Christ did not say that He would leave and

<sup>159</sup> FEBA broadcast 21 September 2004, Messages through the Bible.

<sup>160</sup> FEBA broadcast 21 September 2004, A Verse and a Story.

that his followers should be like an army and fight their enemies as His focus was on heaven. Jesus' purpose was to die on the cross and to enable us to dwell in heaven, the dwelling place of God (*maskin Allâh*). That should have removed all fear and sadness from the hearts of the disciples:

Dear listener, do you know that Christ went to the cross to prepare a place for you, so that with His death, if you believe, you can be sure that you go to heaven and be with God forever. [...] Unfortunately many people do not know what will be in heaven. It definitely is not a place for man's physical desires, but a place for righteousness, peace and joy.

The program spoke briefly about the fact that some believers are persecuted, whipped, and tortured, but assured that these people do not withdraw from Christ because they know that the present life of misery is temporary, while they will immediately go to heaven where Christ is after death. He left the world to prepare a place for His followers in heaven. That heavenly abode is the focus of Christians:

Christians tolerate persecution and do not hold swords and spears (*al-suyûf wa al-rimâh*) [...] in their hands to kill their enemies. In fact the nations (*shu'ûb*) who are called Christians might be the strongest nations on earth, but Christianity does not teach us this. When nations wage wars this is only done for selfish purposes, not for serving God because God is not served with swords and spears or by bombs [...] but with a loving heart that serves with a humble and meek spirit. A heart that is ready to make sacrifices for others.

The program ended by stressing that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and that no-one comes to the Father other than through Jesus, 'no matter how many religious duties (*farâ'id*) one performs, whether praying, fasting or other things. If one does not believe in Jesus Christ who died for us, then one will not know God'. Finally the address of the program, PO Box 2302 in Beirut, was given.<sup>161</sup>

Later during the week another Message of Grace and Truth was broadcast. It was an exegesis of 2 Timothy 2:1-13. Some thoughts shared in the program: Real strength is not found in weapons, but in the divine grace in Jesus Christ; Like Paul was persecuted, so many believers in our days suffer for the Gospel; Servants of God are compared with soldiers and should not be disturbed by worldly concerns like finances; Christians only win the fight if they fight by the Book, that is, in accordance with the laws God has given. The secret of the power to do all this is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Faith in Him enables Christians to endure hardship:

Actually we have experienced this in our program very clearly. We have received many letters from so many societies where they try to chain the Word of God. But the Word of God reaches us everywhere. They believed as a result of listening to this Good News. Why? Because the Word of God is not in chains.

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<sup>161</sup> FEBA broadcast 22 September 2004, Message of Grace and Truth.



The audience was finally encouraged that the Gospel carries the good news of salvation from sin and its power. It also carries good news about eternal life and God's love who wants to grant us forgiveness. The audience was then asked to write to PO Box 2302 in Beirut.<sup>162</sup>

These programs were made to answer some questions that are relevant to Muslims, for instance about the fact that Christians do not use weapons to defend their faith, and rather suffer as servants of Christ. The linguistic forms used seemed suitable, in accordance with RCR4, while Christ was also portrayed in an understandable manner for the intended target audience of Muslims, so RCR5 was also implemented in that regard. However, the programs give a rather one-sided view of why Christ came; mostly to die on the cross and help us to get into heaven. This means that CW4 and CW5, that warn that the Gospel must be presented in its prophetic power for individuals and society, was not heeded.

### ***Meditations on the Life of the Lord Jesus Christ***

Meditations on the Life of the Lord Jesus Christ was a program of Call of Hope. In this program, some events in the last period in Jesus' life were treated, namely the cursing of the fig tree and the purification of the Temple. These stories were retold in a manner that assumed a great deal of knowledge of the Bible from the audience. The tree that Jesus cursed was green and leafy but did not bear fruit, so it represented the hypocrites (*al-munâfiqûn*) who pretend to be good. In this way Jesus taught his disciples to bear fruit (*ityân bi thamar*).

The cleansing of the Temple was the second time Jesus did this. 'The effect of the act of purification He did three years ago was getting weaker, and the bad habit had returned'. Parts of the Temple were, for instance, used by business people who had set up their stalls. The temple was to symbolize Christ as a mediator between God and man because mankind can only approach God through Christ, and therefore Christ had to cleanse the Temple again. After Jesus drove the merchants out, the Jews asked Him with what authority (*sulṭānah*) He did that, and they tried to kill Him. 'Christ had purified the temple because He is the God of the Temple and He wants His service to take place in it.' By the end of the program, the audience was invited to mail its questions to Call of Hope, PO Box 100827 in Stuttgart.<sup>163</sup>

The linguistic forms used in this program did not seem very suitable for a Muslim audience, as much Biblical knowledge was pre-supposed. Thus, RCR4 was not well implemented. This program also seemed to be mainly suitable for Christians; as the producers and FEBA hoped to reach Muslims, they were not heeding RCR1 about the need for the broadcasts to aim at a homogenous audience.

### ***Good News***

Good News was a program by Pastor Samîr. It was announced as a program for the Arab World, the 'source of civilization and history'. It answers 'a multitude of intriguing questions of our brothers the Arabs [...] and it welcomes their participa-

<sup>162</sup> FEBA broadcast 26 September 2004, Message of Grace and Truth.

<sup>163</sup> FEBA broadcast 24 September 2004, Meditations on the Life of the Life Jesus Christ.

tion and opinions'. These words were a clear reference to Muslims. The question treated in this program came from a person in Libya: 'What is sin (*al-khaṭīyah*) in the light of Christian teaching, and how can we overcome it?'

Sin was defined by pastor Samīr as 'every man's iniquity against God's holy will or against any of his human brothers'. It is 'breaking the law (*ta'adī* of God)'. Sin can be committed by speech, by actions, and by thoughts. As examples of sinning with words, the misuse of the name of God was mentioned, and also the cursing of other people. Sinful thinking could be when man surrenders to ugly thoughts, desires, lusts, ungodly imaginations, fantasies, and the like:

It is worthy noting that the real sin (*al-khaṭīyah al-fa'īlyah*), meaning committing sins (*'amal khaṭāyā*), is preceded by a sinful thought in the planning stage. Accordingly, sinful thinking gives birth to real sin.

If sin is all that, that means everybody is sinful. Man inherited sin from his ancestors, Adam and Eve. 'The Bible showed this when it says: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".' The Bible says that as God is holy, he hates sin. The wages (*ujrah*) of sin is death. As all people are sinful, all must die because of God's holiness. But God is love as well:

He forgives [people] in case of honest repentance (*tawbah ṣādiqah*) and when they turn back from their evil ways. God showed his willingness to wipe out (*maḥā*) sin through his love and grace in the Bible. No matter how many your sins are, God wipes them out through his grace. [...] Jesus was hung on the cross instead of sinners. He has made redemption by his blood to forgive sins.

The conclusion of the program was that 'we have to confess our sins, repent, and God the most glorified (*lahu kullu al-majd*) will forgive us our sins be they large or small. He forgives us and tells us: "You can go, your sins are forgiven".' The audience was then given the website of Pastor Samīr where they could listen to programs online, [www.inarabic.org](http://www.inarabic.org).<sup>164</sup>

This program explained the Biblical concept of sin for a Muslim audience. It tried to answer questions Muslims have and it did so by using linguistic forms that were suitable for that target audience. Thus, RCR4 was implemented, without the program resorting to Islamic jargon. Thus CW6 was not trespassed against. Sin, however, was defined in purely personal terms without reference to societal sins. Thus, CW4 and CW5 were not fully heeded.

### ***Spiritual Principles***

*Spiritual Principles (Mabād'i Ruḥīyah)* was a production of the Mass Media Section of the Church of God in Lebanon. It was produced by their pastors and recorded in the FEBA studio.<sup>165</sup> It was 'a weekly program treating man's problems and presenting Jesus as a fundamental solution to them'. In this program, the value of the Bible was the theme. The path of life is dark and perilous, and we

<sup>164</sup> FEBA broadcast 25 September 2004, Good News.

<sup>165</sup> Hovig Nassanian in an email to the author (5 June 2006).

need God's enlightening Word to guide us on the road. Jesus himself gave the example of that. When He was tempted by the devil, Jesus 'threw a lethal arrow at him with God's Word'. Jesus did not depend on a personal philosophy, but only on God's Word.

God's Word is the real food of the soul. 'My brother, if your soul does not feel hungry to the divine truth, it could be ill. Look for food in God's Word.' It is also the source for strength in difficult circumstances. The apostle Paul was persecuted and faced death many times. He however was aware of God's Word and knew that he would cross from death to resurrection. He was sure of that because Christ also rose from the dead 'as it was written, on the third day'. Finally, the Word of God was also presented as the best assurance for success in life. 'It works in us to assure the health of our soul and to remove all stress that exhausts us and weighs on our shoulders.' The organization used its own PO Box in Beirut for audience response mail.<sup>166</sup>

As knowledge of the Bible was taken for granted, this program seemed to be generally aimed at Christians, not at the Muslims FEBA wanted to target. It did not progress toward the goal of the broadcasts having a homogenous target audience, so RCR1 was not heeded.

### ***Meditations of Life***

Meditations of Life was a program presented by an organization called *Source of Love*. It began with a long reading of Acts 3:13-26. The following explanation was difficult for those not steeped in Christian thinking. The program gave the impression of being a literal translation of an originally English program.

The apostle Peter was used by God to heal someone. Peter explained that this was 'not by our power and not by our own merits.' This did not mean that Peter suffered from inferiority, but his language was the language 'of someone who believes in God's salvation'.

Peter explained to the Jews that they had disowned Jesus. They refused Him to rule over them, in spite of the fact that he was the 'owner of the vineyard' and the Son of God (*Ibn Allâh*). Jesus was righteous (*bîrr*), without sin (*bilâ khaṭīyah*), and the Most Holy (*Quddûs*). It is a reality that all men are sinful, but Jesus was blameless. When Peter said to the Jews that they had disowned 'the Holy and the Righteous One', he made clear that Jesus is divine.<sup>167</sup>

This program was aimed at Christians, and probably originated from the USA. For a Muslim audience, the program was so full of Christian linguistic forms, that it was unintelligible. As FEBA wanted to target Muslims, RCR4 was *not* implemented in this program.

### ***Harvest Time***

This program was about the story of Martha and Mary who were visited by Jesus, as told in the Gospel of Luke. Martha was upset that her sister Mary was talking with Jesus while she was preparing food in the kitchen. Jesus understood her prob-

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<sup>166</sup> FEBA broadcast 25 September 2004, Spiritual Principles.

<sup>167</sup> FEBA broadcast 25 September 2004, Meditations of Life.

lem. She was too worried. ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things.’

It is interesting that Martha in fact wanted a good thing; she wanted to serve the Lord as well as possible. However, the work became more important than the Lord himself. She began with good intentions, but she was eventually serving herself. According to this program, what made Martha really angry was that she did not get the attention she hoped for. ‘She forgot that the lunch was to the honor of Jesus, not to the honor of Martha.’ This is a common problem:

The devil did not take Martha away from the kitchen but from the purpose. Likewise, he does not take you away from your service (*khidmah*) but he changes your original goals.

The program then told the audience that God does not care too much about the kind of service they do. ‘He cares only about your attitude toward this service. [...] He doesn’t care about our service if it lacks love. Only one thing is needed. Let us put that one thing always in front of us, like Mary.’ The audience was then advised to balance activism with the right attitude of the heart. They were also asked to write to the PO Box of FEBA in Manşûrîyah or to call or text message the FEBA phone number in Cyprus.<sup>168</sup>

Like most of the previously described programs, this program presented the Bible and its message to the audience without any reference to the context of the audience. The treatment of the Bible story was so generic, that much of the power of the application was lost. RCR2 was not well implemented. The story as such was treated well and could be understood by the intended Muslim audience, so RCR4 was well implemented. The program had a very individualist approach; it said that the most important aspect of the Christian life was the right attitude of the heart. The program did not touch upon the prophetic societal implications of the Gospel that CW4 and CW5 make reference to.

#### **9.5.2.2 Arabic Churches and Ecumenical Issues**

There was no program that dealt with these issues. This implies that CW3 was not heeded. The programs did not in any way help the audience to understand that the churches, historically and worldwide, are the united body of Christ. Actually, the word *church* was seldom used.

#### **9.5.2.3 Christian-Muslim Relations**

There was no program that dealt with this issue, even though questions about this matter are a very important part of the context of the audience. This was mainly because FEBA and its program suppliers endeavored to avoid any contentious and politically sensitive matters in their programs.

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<sup>168</sup> FEBA broadcast 26 September 2004, Harvest Time.

### 9.5.2.4 Pastoral Care

#### *Daily Prayer*

Voice of Forgiveness had a daily time in which prayers were said for those who had a birthday during this week.<sup>169</sup> Some names of people in Syria, Tunisia, Algeria Morocco and Egypt were mentioned, and special prayers were also said for listeners in Iraq who had to go ‘through such a difficult time’. This was a reference to the American occupation after the ousting of the Iraqi President Ṣaddām Ḥusayn that led to a low intensity civil war during that period. This gave the programs a personal touch. As the birthday greetings used on the first five days of these broadcasts were similar, it can be assumed that not many listeners wrote in concerning their birthdays to Voice of Forgiveness.<sup>170</sup>

#### *Listeners’ Mail*

Another program on Voice of Forgiveness that was mostly intended to attach the audience to the broadcasts, was Listeners’ Mail, presented by Rabî‘ Ḥabîb and Tînâ. The rather light-hearted program treated mail from Mu‘ammar and Aḥmad Maṣṣûr, both from Yemen. These two listeners were thankful for the broadcasts. One spoke about the love of God as revealed in the Bible (*al-Kitâb al-Muqaddas*), while the other asked for a Bible. This was used to encourage other listeners in Yemen that they were not alone:

After reading [your kind words] we have nothing to say but to express our deep thanks to you, Aḥmad and our great pleasure to have you as a friend. We have the same feelings of love and loyalty for you and we ask God Almighty (*Allâh Ta‘âlâ*) that [our program] stays a source of joy and knowledge for you, for all people in your village, and for the kind people of Yemen. We also wish to inform you that we have already sent you a copy of the Bible (*al-Kitâb al-Muqaddas*) and we hope you have received it by now.

Another letter from Muḥammad Qâ’îsh from Algeria was referred to. He had sent some Arabic proverbs about friendship. Then Rabî‘ read a funny story that seemed to be situated in an Egyptian coffee-house. Finally a letter from Jûzâf in Lebanon was shared. He had sent a poem to the program and it was read. At the end of the program FEBA’s PO Box 123 in Maṣṣûrîyah was given with an invitation to write.<sup>171</sup>

#### *It Happened this Week*

Another ‘light’ program that was mostly intended to draw an audience was It Happened this Week presented by Nûr. The program contained some newsworthy stories. One such story was an idea that originated in Great Britain, to put photos of infected and diseased body parts on cigarette packs to warn people against

<sup>169</sup> Only on 24 September 2006 this was not included in the broadcast.

<sup>170</sup> FEBA broadcast 20-23, 25, 26 September 2004, Happy Birthday. On 26 September a new cycle began, with people in Algeria, Morocco, Jordan and Egypt mentioned

<sup>171</sup> FEBA broadcast 23 September 2004, Listeners’ Mail.

smoking. Another story was about some research in Italy that showed that the usage of caffeine increases one's alertness but at the cost of some other brain functions. The third item concerned some Spanish research that proved that obesity in pregnant women is the main cause of birth defects in children. The last item of the program treated research done in the USA. The study showed that excessive work harms the bones. Finally, mail was elicited to FEBA's PO Box in Maṣṣûrîyah.<sup>172</sup> Nûr could also be contacted on FEBA's mobile telephone in Cyprus: +357(99)865965.

### ***Persecuted yet not Abandoned***

Persecuted yet not Abandoned followed the life of Joseph from the book of Genesis. The focus was on 'the difficulties and troubles he faced caused by his closest relatives'. The program hoped that if the audience was in a similar situation, the story of Joseph would be encouraging 'so that you won't lose your faith in God. Joseph was portrayed as a totally righteous man. He grew up in a family beset by problems, mostly because his father Jacob 'was not a wise father and a good leader for his sons' and because there was much immorality in the family. Joseph was hated by his brothers who were jealous because of the special treatment by Jacob. For that reason, they sold him into slavery to Egypt. 'In spite of their jealousy, [Joseph] never became a proud or an arrogant person, nor did he desire vengeance. His heart never bore hatred or rage against his brothers.'

After Joseph was taken to Egypt, he was unjustly put in jail because he was accused of wanting to sleep with the wife of his owner. 'In spite of this all, Joseph did not defend himself but he remained silent, depending on God.' Eventually he was saved after he interpreted the dreams of two other inmates. Word came to Pharaoh that Joseph could interpret his dreams as well, and as Joseph did that, he was released.<sup>173</sup>

This program, which was broadcast on 20 and 24 September, was probably intended to encourage MBBs who were suffering persecution from their families. The story of Joseph was indeed very suitable for that. It was told in an understandable manner for Muslims, so RCR4 was implemented. It is questionable, however, whether the supposed unblemished sanctity of Joseph encouraged them much; it was not easy for the audience to empathize with his seemingly superhuman response to his persecutions as he was portrayed as such an accomplished saint.

### ***Unshackled***

Unshackled was a daily program by PGM. The programs were translations of the original English dramatized true stories of people, 'showing how their lives were changed completely [...] Chains of sin (*khaṭîyah*) and darkness (*zalâm*) were broken when they came to know the Lord Christ (*al-Sayyid al-Masîḥ*) personally (*shakhṣî*). This first episode was the fourth in a series on Jack Forester from Ohio (USA). Jack led an evil, sinful life in the hippie drugs scene. Through an old

<sup>172</sup> FEBA broadcast 24 September 2004, It Happened this Week.

<sup>173</sup> FEBA broadcast 20 and 24 September 2004, Persecuted yet not Abandoned.

school friend, Mark, he came in touch with many former classmates who had left the hippie environment to 'live a new, holy, pure life through God's grace'. After participating in a meeting with these former friends, Jack was impressed and explained to one of his non-Christians friends John:

They have a personal relationship (*ma'rifah shakhshiyah*) with the Lord Jesus Christ. They have confessed their sins and did true repentance (*tawbah haqiqiyah*). Now they are living a life full of hope, happiness and peace. [...] In their meeting, there were not any nasty words or jokes. Can you imagine that nobody smoked or drank any liquor? [...] We were praying and singing and reading parts of the Bible. We had tea and cake.

Jack explained to John that he was 'ready to leave the whole world with all its belongings behind me if this can make me happy like they are'. However, Jack experienced that giving up on drugs was not easy. A week later he went to Mark, who explained that the conflict he was experiencing was a good thing. The rest of the story would be broadcast the next day. In the meantime, the presenter of the program, wondered whether Jack will continue in this ferocious battle? He also wondered how Mark would help Jack to get to know the Lord Jesus as the only Redeemer (*Mukhallis*) for all people through his blood shed on the cross (*bi damm salibuh*).

The audience was asked to write ten lines about the meaning or importance of being serious and responsible in life, and mail that to the Egyptian producer, Mufid Wahbâ, PO Box 6823 in Beirut. Those who would do so were promised a special present. Finally, the audience was advised:

My dear sisters and brothers, walk with God every day in a blessed companionship (*ishrah*) with that faithful friend; read your Bible; obey His commandments and believe His promises. Be happy with those who are happy and wipe the tears of those who grieve make each face that you meet smile with hope; sing loudly with me every new beautiful morning: 'In Jesus the chains are broken'.<sup>174</sup>

The next day, Unshackled continued the story of Jack. Mark explained why it was so good that Jack felt a great struggle inside. He said that sinners have a conscience that is dead. 'They can sin very easily without feeling guilty.' He compared that, among other things, with a dead fish: 'The dead fish goes with the current without feeling anything at all. [...] The living fish, however, can swim against the current which causes a struggle.'

Jack also mentioned that he felt so completely helpless and defeated. 'I cannot get rid of my agony, my confusion and my struggle'. Again, Mark saw that as a great proof that God was at work in Jack:

We are humans, we are deficient, we are weak, incapable and helpless. There is no hope at all in ourselves or from ourselves. [...] God is our only hope. [...] Only God can defeat Satan who is fighting us. Only God can give us power over ourselves

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<sup>174</sup> FEBA broadcast 20 September 2004, Unshackled

and our weaknesses.[...] All you have to do, Jack, is to come to the Lord Jesus with an honest heart (*bi qalb ṣâdiq*) and a good conscience (*bi ḍamîr ṣâlih*) and pray and ask Him to receive your heart.

Mark then prayed a vicarious prayer for Jack, which Jack repeated verbatim line by line. The program ended with some teaser for the audience. ‘Do you think Jack will feel good after this prayer? Will his problems be solved? Will his struggle come to an end? Will he enjoy God’s peace that passes all understanding?’ The answer to these questions was promised in the next episode. The audience was again asked to write about the question posed the previous day, and mail that to the PO Box in Beirut. ‘I will send a gift to all who write to me.’ Then exactly the same advice that was given in the previous program was given, about walking with God and more.<sup>175</sup>

The final program of Unshackled about Jack was to a large extent a repetition of the content of the previous days. As an addition, the dialogue between Mark and Jack picked up after Jack had prayed the sinner’s prayer. He wondered whether it makes a difference, and Mark assured him that ‘you will feel that God is granting you a new heart, a new mind, and a new life, as if you were born again’. Jack then addressed the audience:

After praying to God on that historic day of my life I cried a lot out of regret and sadness for my past miserable life, which was full of sins and so distant from God. Then I was filled with sure faith and amazing peace. [...] My faith in having a new life was increasing with time. I was really sure of this because of the power I found within myself. [...] It was God’s power that helped me to overcome my drugs addiction and all my other sins, with God’s grace. Now my life has meaning, and purpose [...] The merciful and loving God (*Allâh al-muḥibbah wa al-raḥîm*) has accepted my repentance according to his generous promise in the Bible: ‘Whoever comes to me, I will never drive away’.

The audience was again asked to write about the question posed the previous day, and mail that to the PO Box in Beirut. Then exactly the same advice that was given in the previous program was given, about walking with God and more.<sup>176</sup>

Next program of Unshackled was about the 19<sup>th</sup> century Edward Mote, the author of the well-known English song *Christ is my Rock* with the chorus: ‘On Christ the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand’. The program began with the rhetorical question: ‘My dearly beloved, didn’t you all go to the sea-shore when you were children? Didn’t you all play with sand and water building houses and castles?’ Most Arabs did not actually. This shows the disadvantage of literal translations of foreign programs. ‘Which one of you listeners was not caught by the sight of a big rock on the seashore, or even inside the sea?’ Then some words from Jesus were quoted, about the need to obey the His words. He said that he who does not obey Him, is like someone who builds his house on the sand. Those who obey His words, are like someone building his house on a rock.

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<sup>175</sup> FEBA broadcast 21 September 2004, Unshackled

<sup>176</sup> FEBA broadcast 22 September 2004, Unshackled



Edward Mote was born in 1797 in a very poor family. His father was the guard at a small hotel. When Edward was 15 or 16, he found a job at a carpentry workshop in London. He was an irreligious boy, but his patron in the workshop was a faithful Christian. He explained the Gospel to Edward: that there is a loving God who created the universe, that sin separated man and God, but God gave his only Son (*Ibnuh al-wahîd*) who incarnated (*tajassud*) in a man, Jesus Christ. He died on the cross instead of sinful man, so that anyone who believes in Him can have eternal life. The rest of the story of Edward Mote was to be treated in the next program. The audience was asked to answer the following question: 'If the rock symbolizes Jesus Christ and the sand symbolizes everything else but Him, write us three advantages of the rock and three disadvantages you see in sand.' They were asked to send mail to the usual address, with the promise of a 'special gift'. The program ended with the same exhortation as each of the previous programs.<sup>177</sup>

The next program of Unshackled continued with the story of Edward Mote. The owner of the workshop began to encourage Edward to go to church (*al-kanîsah*) regularly after he had accepted Christ:

At church, he had the chance of listening more and more to the Gospel message and to know more about the Lord Jesus, his death on the cross and his precious blood that was shed to clean and purify man's heart from every sin. At church also, Edward got to really know the Lord Jesus personally and he committed his whole life to Him, and he began a new covenant (*'ahd jadîd*) with Him.

Edward became good friends with the pastor of the church; he also began to develop his creative abilities by writing short stories and articles that were quite popular when published. He began to study theology, and became a well-loved preacher. Aware of the fact that God had changed his life totally, he wrote his song about Christ being the rock, and all else being shifting sand. The program then ended with the same question and contact details as the previous day. The audience was also asked to listen to the next program, as that would be the last one on Edward Mote.<sup>178</sup>

The following Unshackled on Edward Mote told the audience that after he had composed his song about Christ being the rock, he was called by a pastor to pray for his wife who was sick. He did so, and she began to feel better. He then sang the words of his song, and 'the wife's morals were lifted up, she was filled with such zeal! Edward discovered how God blessed her with this song, so he decided that the biggest number of people should be able to hear it to the praise of God.' Edward printed a thousand copies of the text of the song and gave that to as many people as he could. The present music was written years later by the musician William Bradley, and we do not know how Edward sang the song for the sick pastor's wife. Bradley printed the music to the song in a book that was published in 1864. It spread quickly through England and the USA and was translated into many languages. The program ended with an application to the audience:

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<sup>177</sup> FEBA broadcast 23 September 2004, Unshackled

<sup>178</sup> FEBA broadcast 24 September 2004, Unshackled

It is true, dear audience, all the world is perishable. Tell me what beauty can do and how long it lasts. What can money do and how long does it stay? [...] On whom can we really rely? [...] Who is the everlasting one on who we can build our lives with trust? He is the Christ, the God, Jesus Christ alone, the complete and only rock. [...] He does not change. He remains forever. Amen Amen. He does not betray. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Finally, the usual exhortations as well as the question of the week were given, and the audience was asked to write to the Beirut contact address for the program.<sup>179</sup>

Unshackled on 26 September was about Joseph Kortan who had been innocently imprisoned in Czechoslovakia for 12 years. Born in 1920 in a Christian family, he decided to be a witness of Christ when he was 15. In 1940 he married and he had three children. In 1948, his country was taken over by Communism. One day, he was arrested on false accusations and was sentenced to 12 years of hard labor. Kortan described the awful torture he and his fellow prisoners had to endure. He was injected with some toxin that influenced his nerves and was slowly losing his mind. But a miracle happened and that was to be discussed in the next program.

The audience was asked to write in not more than seven lines about the verse from Psalm 23: 'The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.' The usual contact details were given with the promise of a gift for those who would write to the program.<sup>180</sup>

The fact that the Unshackled programs were a direct translation from the American originals, made them generally unsuitable for the intended Muslim audience of FEBA. If they targeted a homogenous audience, it was that of North-Americans. They were therefore unable to speak to an Arab Muslim audience in its actual context. The programs used Christian jargon that was not congenial to Muslims either. This means that RCR1, RCR2 and RCR4 were not implemented. In that context, it is hardly surprising that CW4 and CW5 were also trespassed against; each of these programs dealt with an individual and his soul only, without any reference to the role of the Gospel for society.

### ***You and I on the Way***

Selwa Habib presented her program *You and I on the Way*. In the introduction she made clear that she targeted women. The program began with Selwa reading parts of an article from an Arab newspaper with the headline 'The backbone of youth is endangered'. The article was mostly about back problems and their causes. Some concrete advice like the usage of pillows in the right place was given, as well as sitting in a better chair and not sitting too long behind the computer and in front of television. Selwa advised her audience to 'follow the instructions that we have just mentioned to avoid body pain which later on will be transferred to the soul. This is because anything that affects the body affects the soul, and vice versa.' Selwa said that man consists of body, soul and spirit. 'What about your spirit,

<sup>179</sup> FEBA broadcast 25 September 2004, Unshackled

<sup>180</sup> FEBA broadcast 26 September 2004, Unshackled

dear friend, yes our spirit. [...] I wonder whether we take care of our spirit as we do to our body and soul. Are we keeping our spirit in a close loving relationship and partnership with Him (*'alá 'ilâqah wa sharikah ḥubbuh*)?' She reminded the audience briefly of the content of Genesis 3. Man lived in Paradise and had a good relationship with God, but man became disobedient. God then looked for them but they were afraid:

Sin (*khaṭīyah*) had broken their relationship with God. But because of God's great love, he would not leave them alone without rescue (*inqâdh*) or salvation (*khalâṣ*) from his sins that had disconnected him from God. [...] So he has sent Jesus Christ to all people, irrespective of their gender, race, or religion. He came to take the penalty of their sins by dying on the cross to atone (*yukaffir*) for man's guilt and the sins of all mankind. He crushed Satan by his resurrection from death.

Finally, Selwa promised her audience that if they would believe in what Jesus has done for them on the cross, this would make them 'feel amazing peace', because of the forgiveness of sins. The audience was invited to write to the program with questions and for receiving a present. FEBA's PO Box in Manṣûriyah was given, as well as its website [www.arabicradio.org](http://www.arabicradio.org).<sup>181</sup>

The spinal problems treated in this program were *a propos* for FEBA's target audience of Muslims and the audience was therefore to a certain extent approached in its actual context, in partial fulfillment of RCR2. The brief spiritual talk afterwards used Biblical and Evangelical jargon entirely. As FEBA wanted to target Muslims, this was in opposition to the demands of RCR4.

#### ***Arab Woman Today***

Arab Woman Today by Rubá Sâlim discussed how rumors can be harmful and how to deal with them. The guest in her program was Trîz Karam, a member in the Honorary Association of Women of God's Battalion in Lebanon. She had been the victim of rumors. Rubá introduced the issue by saying that rumors can be deadly. 'Therefore, we as believers should fully ignore such rumors and even not listen to them. [...] We should teach our children about the issue and advise them that if a friend tells them a rumor or news about another, to stop talking about the subject.' The program also taught that the reasons for rumors are often jealousy or envy or gossip, and all that is warned against and forbidden in the Bible.

Trîz then told her story. She worked in an office, some people were jealous of her promotion, and began to fake stories about her that resulted in problems at home. During that time she was pregnant with her first daughter. She should not have taken medicine, but she had to because of stress. That resulted in harm to the baby. 'This is how rumors have led me to pay a price.' This bad experience was 17 years prior to the broadcast, and Trîz would deal with it differently now:

I have found that there is a solution to this problem, which is to return to our God who created us, to ask him to support us and give us wisdom in everything we do.

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<sup>181</sup> FEBA broadcast 20 September 2004, You and I on the Way.

In everything we do you will be confronted with problems, so you need to leave things as they are and pray to God asking for his wisdom and He will never fail you.

Tríz also explained that she now applies the words of Jesus who said that we have to turn the other cheek and not resist evil. She also wants to forgive those who treat her badly. 'I ask God to forgive the person who began to spread the destructive rumor.' She also advised to try not to respond to false rumors. 'At that time, I think it is better to keep silent.' She finished with her motto in life: 'All who received Him, to those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God (*awlâd Allâh*).' That was interpreted to mean that if one has come to the Lord, nothing can shake him and he is 'always victorious in the name of Jesus'.

Rubá invited the audience to be patient if they had suffered injustice. 'The truth about you will be revealed some day and God will make it up for you'. She also advised her listeners to not start rumors. 'No matter what your motive is, you should repent right now.' The audience of Arab Woman Today was asked to write to PO Box 930101 in Amman (Jordan), where Rubá lived.<sup>182</sup>

This program spoke about a concrete problem in the life of many women in the audience; for Muslim women this was suitable and comprehensible. Only the talk about receiving Christ and becoming children of God was full of Biblical and Evangelical jargon and incomprehensible to Muslims. Therefore in general the program followed the advice of RCR2 and most of the language was appropriate for Muslims in accordance with RCR4, however the Christian jargon used was incomprehensible when the program became religious.

### ***Radio Magazine***

This was a half hour magazine-type program by Rabî' and Tînâ. It began with some wisdom about the need to be careful in speech with some quotes from the Bible about the power of the tongue. 'Let us ask ourselves, do we use our tongues to praise and thank God, do we talk good about our neighbor, do we address a nice word to whoever needs it? Or instead of praise we curse?' As an application, the program said that it is not ethical to demean a rival team that loses a sports event. 'It does not give you the right to disgrace others.'

The program had some advice, specifically aimed at women, about raising children. It specifically told mothers to not say demeaning things to their children. 'It lowers his self-esteem, it makes him feel he is not approved, it makes him feel resentful and guilty.' It is important to make the child feel appreciated and accepted. The cornerstone in the child's development is that he asserts himself. That may at times be irritating, but it is normal and we should allow them to do this. Mothers were also told to allow their children to make friends, and to dress and behave like their friends, as that is normal part of their socializing. Mothers were also told to invite the child's friends to their home, for having lunch together, go on trips, and do other nice things with these friends, as that makes their children feel appreciated by their friends.

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<sup>182</sup> FEBA broadcast 23 September 2004, Arab Woman Today.

Then it was time for advice to married couples, again addressed at women. 'My dear friend, always praise your husband! Most men don't openly ask for praise. So women usually don't get the message that men really want this.' Some practical tips were given:

Praise and flatter him, but be reasonable [...] because men may suspect that you have hidden motives. Exaggeration will stimulate his suspicion. [...] Instead of telling him that he looks like a Hollywood actor, tell him he has beautiful eyes. Then he will feel warmth instead of reservation.

Another suggestion was to be detailed in praising the husband, not ambiguous, as that suggests that the woman does not really know the husband. Also, focus should be more on the deeds of the man than on his appearance, as men tend to compete in what they do. 'Your praise to your husband for what he successfully realizes makes him feel better than your praise for his curly hair.' Another suggestion was to commend him for how he protects you as a woman. That is a great support to his personality. Make sure that you do not say positive things about matters that he considers his weaknesses. 'You may try to persuade him that his defects are not bad but honestly, he will not believe you, so just stick to what he wants to hear.'<sup>183</sup>

The program then moved on to treat the issue of beauty. True beauty is not external. 'Many bad fruits are good-looking but harmful.' Bodies perish in spite of their beauty, but true beauty has an eternal value and is internal:

My friend, sin killed man as it broke his relationship with God. He became just a cold mass of a mute stone. Lifeless! His beauty was deformed, lifeless. In order to recover his original beauty he needs a new heart instead of that dead, stony one. It is a divine renewal operation performed in the lost man's heart. When he is recreated, he is given a new spirit.

The program then ended with a prayer:

God, you are the absolute beauty (*al-jamâl al-muṭlaq*), a beauty that has no boundary. You are the Creator of this universe, the creator of beauty. You created man beautiful [...] until sin desecrated him. [...] Our hearts became stony so our souls died in us. We knew you no more. We could not perceive beauty any longer. Enlighten us inside that we may see the beauty of life, [...] save us from the ugliness of sin. Let your soul be in us, put your name on our forehead.

The audience was asked to write to FEBA's PO Box in Mañşûrîyah or to make a phone call or send a text message to the telephone number in Cyprus.<sup>184</sup>

This program was lively and easy to follow for Muslims. However, the short prayer in the end was solidly Biblical and Evangelical in its jargon. As FEBA

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<sup>183</sup> The author likes to underline that whereas this information may be relevant for Arab men, it cannot be applied without further research to men of other nationalities, specifically not those from The Netherlands.

<sup>184</sup> FEBA broadcast 25 September 2004, Radio Magazine.

aimed at a Muslim audience, that meant RCR4 was not heeded. The practical advice given in the program related solely to the individual and her family. A program like this could treat more economic and societal issues to underline that the Gospel does entail a message for society. It did not heed CW4 and CW5 about the need to let the Gospel speak prophetically to individuals as well as to society.

### 9.5.2.5 Cultural Issues

#### *Weapon of Love*

The program *Weapon of Love* tackled the issue of vengeance, a very common cultural concept in the Arab World. The program began with a brief drama about a poor blind man who was killed by his nephew. 'It is the circle of revenge; no-one can forgive each other these days', the drama concluded. A 'wise man' then spoke and said that the root of the problem is that the heart of man is full of hatred and anger, as Jesus had said:

When you hate a person and get angry of him in your heart, you are thus killing him', was the message of Jesus according to the wise man. 'The people cannot see his heart yet God does and such person will be judged [with] death in hell.

The wise man said that hatred and the desire for vengeance destroys the person himself. If we respond with hatred to those who hurt us, 'the circle of hatred and malice will increase; but if we try God's forgiveness, it is like pouring water over a fire. You will be a means for peace and blessings for those around you'. Then an example of this was given. In the late 1990s, a Christian in Algeria was worried that he would be kidnapped and murdered by terrorists. Most of the churches in Algeria were afraid, but one Christian insisted on continuing preaching the Gospel. He was killed indeed. In his will, he had written:

I expect to be a victim of terrorism [...] but I wish that all of society is reminded that I gave my life to God [...] and as from now, I have started to ask God's forgiveness for the person who will kill me. I do not want to die this way because I am not happy that the Algerians, whom I love dearly, will be accused of killing.

The program ended with a call to all in the audience who were thinking about revenge, to not fill their life with torture and darkness. 'Try to forgive and to love and you will then be able to sleep in peace.' They were also invited to write to the program, and 'we have many nice booklets and gifts for you'. The PO Box 123 in Manşûrîyah was given.<sup>185</sup>

This program treated an issue that was very *a propos* in Arab society, so RCR2 was heeded. The program was intelligible for Muslims, so RCR4 was also implemented, not only when the program spoke in general about revenge, but also when Christian concepts were treated. Even though the focus of the program was personal, it also criticized the societal habit of taking revenge, suggesting a Christian

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<sup>185</sup> FEBA broadcast 21 September 2004, *Weapon of Love*.

alternative as well. Therefore this program can be said to heed CW4 and CW5 in their societal aspects.

#### 9.5.2.6 Socio-Economic and Political Issues

##### *Dialogues*

The program Dialogues (*Hîwâr*) was presented by Ihâb Şubhî and produced by Yûsif Manşûr. It began with a brief drama that set the stage for a forum discussion. The theme of the drama was the generation conflict and that young people want to do many things their parents don't approve of. The program opened by summarizing its view of the generation gap: Parents are focused on reality, while children have illusions and dreams. 'It is the eternal conflict between what we are ambitious to get and the capabilities we actually possess, and this is how the conflict of generations continues'.

The panel consisted of the Rev. Dr. Ikram Lam'î, chairman of the Synod of the Evangelical (i.e., the Presbyterian) Church in Egypt, lawyer Labîb Mu'awwadî, Dr. Majdî Hîjâzî, professor and head of the Sociology Department at Cairo University, and Yûsif Şabrî, intellectual and writer on youth issues. Of these four panel members, Hîjâzî was a Muslim, while the others were Christians. The program was taped with an audience of students from Alexandria University.

Hîjâzî explained that to find the balance between man's needs and his capabilities is the basis for the advancement of society. 'As much as one can subdue nature to his interest, he will be able to progress.' He mentioned three basis needs for each man, those for food, sex and respect, and each of these needs has its corresponding values that people should live by.

There followed a discussion with some students about the increased desire amongst young people for the luxuries of Western countries because globalization has made them more aware of them. The students were advised to work hard and dream of changing their circumstances, but they were also told that they should increase their capabilities but decrease their dreams so as not to be disappointed. 'Youth should learn the meaning of satisfaction. Ambition is a good thing but it should not be excessive or it will destroy us'.

Someone criticized the Arabic tradition that students never work but fully depend on their parents until they finish their studies. As they cannot easily find work after their studies, they begin to blame their parents for not supplying them with enough money. 'In the West we find that no matter how rich parents are, their children begin to work at the age of 13 or 14, while continuing their studies, thus building their future with their own hands, without anybody's help.' Some students suggested that parents should be taught how to raise children, and others said that the government also plays a role as the educational system does not allow students to work, as they are obliged to attend all lectures.

Lam'î was asked to give a Biblical perspective. Guided by Jesus' statement that it is not good to win the whole world at the expense of the soul, he suggested:

The issue here is how to fulfill my ambition without losing myself. This is possible when every person has a good relationship with his father, and realizes quite well

what his financial circumstances are. He should keep his eyes on his ambitions and begin to pursue them without breaking himself internally by abandoning his principles and faith.

In line with these words was the advice of Ṣabrî when commenting about the words of a female student whose father did not allow her to have a job:

We must not enter into a debate (*munâqashah*) with a father who can support his daughter financially and does not want her to work. But if he is unable to sufficiently support her and he does not want her to work, this is another issue. This is surely a type of dominance (*tasalluṭ*). However, the type of work is also important here, as parents are always worried about the education of their children.

The program ended with some information about the extreme poverty in the world. Then some Bible verses were quoted about the need to be satisfied with simple things like food and clothing. The audience was also told to work hard and develop oneself, even if that is not easy. They were invited to write to PO Box 166567 in Beirut or to call FEBA's mobile telephone number in Cyprus.<sup>186</sup>

This program was easily comprehensible for Muslims and Christians alike. It was, however, hardly aimed at the Arabian Peninsula, but very concretely at Egypt. The program spoke to that audience in their actual context and in their own language, Egyptian Arabic. But as this program was broadcast to Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula, RCR2 and RCR3 were not implemented. The program, however, was an example of how the Gospel does have something to say about societal issues, in line with CW4 and CW5. It was broadcast to the wrong society, however.

## 9.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

### 9.6.1 Hindrances of the Lebanese Civil War: 1975-1990

In 1975, when FEBA took over from ELWA, the civil war of Lebanon had just begun. Follow-up was at a standstill as no mail arrived for months.<sup>187</sup> KM agreed that FEBA could use its mail address in Jordan in the meantime, and Knell hoped for mail via that route.<sup>188</sup> It was soon clear that the Jordan address drew no response, so FEBA had to temporarily revert to using a postal address in Pakistan for audience response.<sup>189</sup>

One of the first things Knell tried to convince his organization that they should start using was a 100 kW transmitter; often the programs could not be heard well enough north of Beirut to attract casual listeners. South of Beirut reception was good, though.<sup>190</sup> In March 1976 Knell wrote that the 'signal barely reaches Beirut [...] and can only be heard here on a high performance radio. [And] because of cen-

<sup>186</sup> FEBA broadcast 22 September 2004, Dialogues.

<sup>187</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (1 January 1976).

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (Early September 1976).

<sup>190</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (1 January 1976).



sorship in some countries, and the recent troubles in Beirut, we have little or no mail from listeners'.<sup>191</sup>

A year later, in April 1977, Knell wrote that 'nearly all postal services of Lebanon are functioning again, [but] the situation remains unsettled and few commit themselves [...] to long term investment'.<sup>192</sup> In November 1977 he concluded that reception of the signal had become much better, and the audience response was on the increase. During that month, 26 letters were received. In December 1977, he again mentioned 'a large increase' in the audience response, as the response went up to 62 letters. In January 1978 FEBA received 120 letters, and 76 in February.<sup>193</sup>

In 1979, FEBA began broadcasting some of its own programs over TWR through Radio Monte Carlo's outlet on Cyprus that was aimed at the Middle East (RMC-ME). Almost all response to those broadcasts came from Christians in Egypt and Jordan. In 1980, FEBA also began broadcasting with IBRA through transmitters in Sines (Portugal). In September 1981, some of FEBA's programs were put on ELWA's broadcasts from Liberia.<sup>194</sup> These broadcasts resulted in responses from North Africa, Egypt and Jordan, but as that was not the target audience for FEBA, these figures will not be discussed in this chapter. Most response figures before 1980 were lost when the FEBA offices in Lebanon were destroyed in 1985.<sup>195</sup>

*Figure 9.2* shows the first-time and the total response to FEBA's programs as broadcast over SW for the period of 1980 to 2003. These figures are only for the mail addressed to FEBA's PO Boxes, not for mail in response to programs of those program suppliers who used their own addresses in their broadcasts in the FEBA block.<sup>196</sup> Therefore the figures do not represent the total response to the FEBA block of airtime.

In the early 1980s, audience response to FEBA was not high. During some years less than 600 letters were received. During the war, mail services in Beirut often collapsed for months, so more mail was probably sent than received.<sup>197</sup> There is also evidence that in some Arab countries postal authorities actively ensured that mail was not forwarded to addresses of Christian broadcasters.<sup>198</sup> This happened certainly in North Africa, but it is unclear, whether this happened in any of the countries that FEBA especially targeted. As these different influences cannot be quantified, it is imperative to not draw too many conclusions from the in-

<sup>191</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (8 March 1976).

<sup>192</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (14 April 1977).

<sup>193</sup> *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (1 November 1977). *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (20 December 1977). *Newsletter of Derek Knell* (21 March 1978).

<sup>194</sup> 'Arabic Mail Report 1980 and 1981'. Much information was lost due to the destruction of the FEBA premises during the civil war in Lebanon. *Newsletter Knell Family* (11 December 1980).

<sup>195</sup> The response figures have been taken from FEBA's 'Arabic Mail Reports' from 1980 to 2003. The one for 2003 ended in July, but on that basis the total audience response for 2003 was extrapolated.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> No mail at all was received at the Beirut address from July-October 1982, in September and October 1983, February, April, May, July and August 1984, May, June, August and September 1985. In April and May 1987 and in August and September 1988 no mail was received. In 1989 no mail was received in April, May, July to October and November. In 1990, no mail was received in January, March to May, July and August.

<sup>198</sup> Knell in an email to the author (4 September 2003).

crease and decrease of the received audience response during those years of the war. After 1990, the mail services of Lebanon resumed uninterrupted again.

Between 1984 and 1987, audience response to FEBA's broadcasts increased clearly, and especially the response from Yemen was remarkable. The relative good reception of the programs probably played an important role in Yemen's response figures being higher than those of any other place.

In 1988 a 200 kW transmitter was added in The Seychelles to the 100 kW transmitter that had been built in 1979. The original transmitter of 1970 was retired. Knell returned to Cyprus to be the area director of FEBA for the Arab World and Central Asia after this new transmitter was built.

### **9.6.2 Effects of the Gulf War: 1990-1995**

By September 1990, audience response finally increased again. A month earlier, the Gulf War had started with Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. That would for a while hinder contacts with listeners, according to FEBA.<sup>199</sup> The figures for 1990 and the first half of 1991 were still not very high, but FEBA comforted itself that the 'quality' of the letters was high:

Because it is costly in terms of potential danger to write to us, the large majority of the letters is of high quality. Listeners will not write just to pass the time of day. [...] More than 85% specifically ask for printed matter or Bibles.<sup>200</sup>

On 14 September 1989, while driving his car from Limassol to Nicosia, Knell experienced God asking him some questions. 'How many people are in [the Peninsula of] Arabia? How many of those can you trust me for?' Knell replied that he had faith for 'a quarter'. He began praying that nine million Arabs would come to Christ in the 1990s. The Gulf War proved to be a turning point. 'Now all is changing. [...] The Gulf War has forced the seemingly impenetrable world of Islam to open its doors to other influences', FEBA published in 1992.<sup>201</sup> 'I did see significant changes in the 1990s. The experience was real. I did my faithful bit, and prayed', recalled Knell in 2003.<sup>202</sup>

This conclusion of changes ahead was based on the growth of audience response after the Gulf War. One program supplier of FEBA, using its own address for receiving mail came to a similar conclusion: 'How wonderful it is to see a definite increase in mail from the Gulf area and Saudi Arabia, and to observe a genuine openness to the Gospel.'<sup>203</sup>

The upturn in response began in July 1991, when 263 letters were received. Three out of four were first time writers and the same high proportion was from Muslims. In FEBA's October 1991 newsletter it was wondered that, 'Many of the

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<sup>199</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October/December 1991). Transcript of a speech of Derek Knell at the Arabic Broadcasting Convention.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October/December 1991).

<sup>202</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

letters reveal a heart-felt spiritual search; many request copies of the Bible and Gospels. Spiritually, is this God's time for the Middle East?<sup>204</sup>

Expectations of audience response ran high. The Arabic team of FEBA decided to start praying that by the year 1995 at least 10,000 letters would be received annually. They also issued a prayer request that by the year 2000, nine million people in the Arabian Peninsula would have come to faith in Jesus, in accordance with the prayer goal of Knell.<sup>205</sup> In 1990, the audience response to FEBA had been very low with only 79 first-time respondees. These figures rose to 277 in 1991, 648 in 1992, 777 in 1993, 973 in 1994 and to 1,169 in 1995, as can be seen in *Figure 9.7* and *Figure 9.8*. These increases were initially mainly due to letters from Yemen and Saudi Arabia, although response from all countries increased. By 1995, the responses had peaked with Yemen leading, Iraq increasing and Saudi Arabia slowly decreasing.

In 1992, the BBC did some research in the urban areas of Yemen about the audience for BBC, RMC-ME, FEBA and TWR. In 1992 Yemen had a total population of about 12.3 million. Of those, about 3.1 million were men over 15 years old, who, according to BBC, were the main listeners. Based on their findings that two percent of those listened to FEBA, it seems that about 63,000 men in Yemen had listened to FEBA during the week before the inquiry. It must be noted however that this figure assumes that the urban population had similar listening habits as the rural population. According to Knell, the BBC research also showed that the majority of those listening to FEBA considered FEBA to be an 'honest station'.<sup>206</sup>

The question regarding the growth of audience response between 1991 and 1995 is hard to answer. After the Gulf War, FEBA's broadcasts were advertised wider than before. In 1991, a major cooperative effort called *Operation Desert Springs* ensured that together with 250,000 Scriptures, an Arabic program guide of the Christian broadcasters was distributed in the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>207</sup> It is therefore possible that FEBA received more mail because it had a growing audience between 1991 and 1995.

Secular on-the-ground audience surveys have shown conclusively that in times of crises, Arabs turn to their radios for news from international broadcasters. It is therefore likely that during the Gulf War period more Arabs than before became aware of the broadcasts of FEBA. This is confirmed by the noteworthy increase in audience response from Saudi Arabia and Yemen, two countries that were in the forefront of the Gulf War as the main enemies and the main supporters of Iraq. Further support for this position was evidenced in Yemen's response figures increasing during its own civil war in the early 1990s. Nonetheless, Iraq's expected increase in audience response did not materialize between 1991 and 1995. It is unclear whether this meant that the audience did not grow or whether perhaps sending mail abroad was discouraged, or that post stamps were too expensive for the impoverished population.

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Nassanian in an interview with the author (11 February 2003).

<sup>206</sup> Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>207</sup> *FEBA Radio News* (October/December 1991).

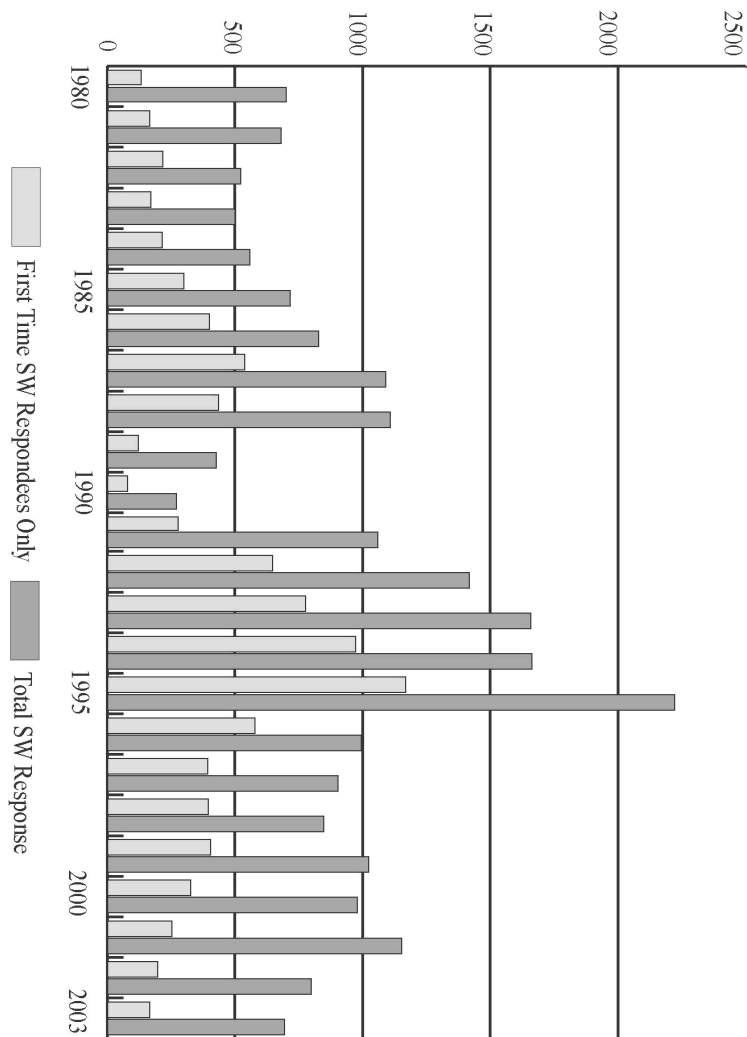


Figure 9.2 FEBA's Arabic Audience Response to SW broadcasts: 1980-2003

If the dip in response in 1987-1990 was indeed due to mail not being delivered in Lebanon, then it is equally possible that mail *had* actually been sent. In that case, the dramatic increase from 1990 to 1991 was not due to more letters being sent, but to more letters being received. That also means that the increase between 1980 and 1995 was much more incremental than FEBA assumed it was. In 1980 FEBA received 132 letters from first-time respondees and 1,169 in 1995. This means a growth rate *per annum* of 15.5 percent.

### 9.6.3 Audience Response: Since 1995

Patrick Johnston wrote in 1999 that 15 percent of the population in the ‘southern part’ of Yemen listened regularly to broadcasts of FEBA.<sup>208</sup> In August 2000, FEBA published that a more recent survey gave FEBA the indication that they now had a listening audience of 200,000 in Yemen.<sup>209</sup> That would mean a substantial increase compared with the 1992 findings of 63,000. Tony Ford of FEBA in England published in 2000 that 400,000 Yemeni’s were regular listeners to Christian radio broadcasts.<sup>210</sup> Given the fact that in all of Yemen around the year 2000 only six percent of all people owned a radio, these figures sound highly unlikely.

After 1995, FEBA’s audience response began to gradually decrease. In 1997 FEBA began using a Jordan postal address along with the Lebanon address for its SW broadcasts but FEBA discontinued after a couple of years. ‘[The number of] letters coming in was minimal. It seems that the listeners preferred to keep using the Lebanon address’, Nassanian concluded at that time.<sup>211</sup>

*Figure 9.3* shows the data for the MW broadcasts in the IBRA block on Radio Moscow from 1996. *Figure 9.4* gives more details of that response, but these were only available as from 1997. Response to these broadcasts was rather stable, though it began with peak response from Yemen, while Iraq peaked in 2001, as it likewise did for the SW broadcasts. In 2002 and 2003, FEBA only received 197 and 150 letters respectively from first-time respondees.

After 1996 the method of soliciting audience response changed, as people could now respond by email and telephone. The number of letters received dropped while the number of e-mails, telephone and text-messages received greatly increased. In 2004, according to Nassanian, only 20 percent of the total response was from letters. FEBA attributed the overall higher response to its new practice of soliciting text-messages. However, due to the nature of a traditional letter response being so different from either e-mail, telephone or text-message responses, it is not possible to compare figures yet. The ‘quality’ of the response by text message or telephone is likely to be different from that of a letter response. In general it would require more motivation to contact FEBA in writing than to pick up a telephone. In contrast however, people using a phone need not be literate.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>208</sup> Patrick Johnstone, ‘Covering the Globe’, in Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (eds), *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Pasadena, 1999, first edition 1981), pp. 549-550. Johnstone based his comments on research done in Yemen by FEBA and others, according to Nassanian in an interview with the author (11 February 2003).

<sup>209</sup> ‘Recent Survey Findings’ in *AMC Communicator* (August 2000), p. 4.

<sup>210</sup> Tony Ford, ‘Crossing Boundaries, Penetrating Barriers’, in *Mission Frontiers* (December 2000), as found on [www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org) 16 October 2004).

<sup>211</sup> Nassanian in an email to the author (18 August 2003).

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

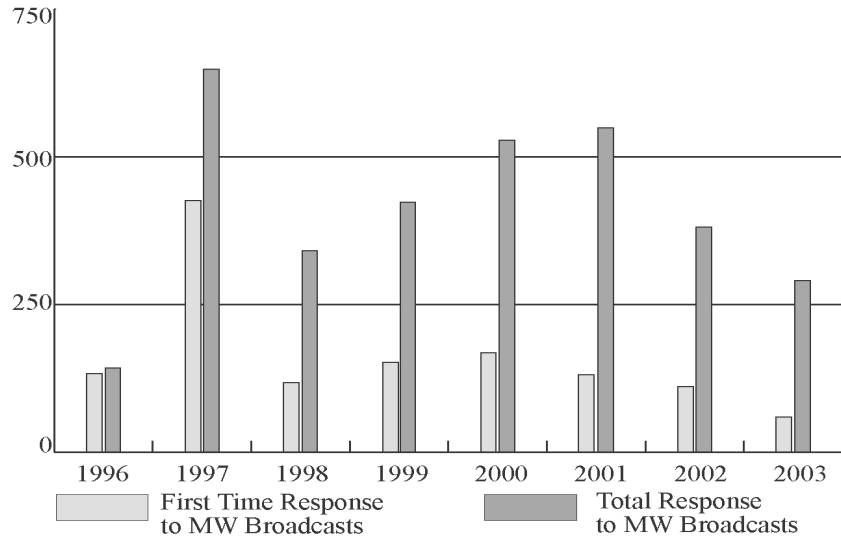


Figure 9.3 FEBA's Arabic Audience Response to MW broadcasts in IBRA block: 1996-2003

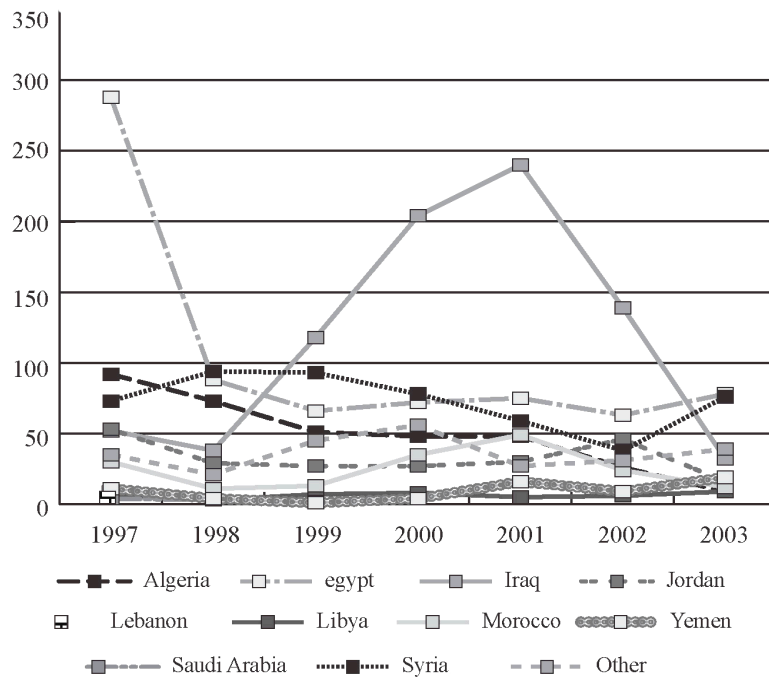


Figure 9.4 FEBA's Total Arabic Audience Response to MW broadcasts in the IBRA block per country: 1997-2003

Since the mid 1990s, the Arab World has witnessed a fast growth in satellite TV broadcasters, including news channels. Arab ownership of satellite dishes for receiving those programs has increased likewise. It is unlikely that this has not influenced the radio listening habits in the whole Arab World.

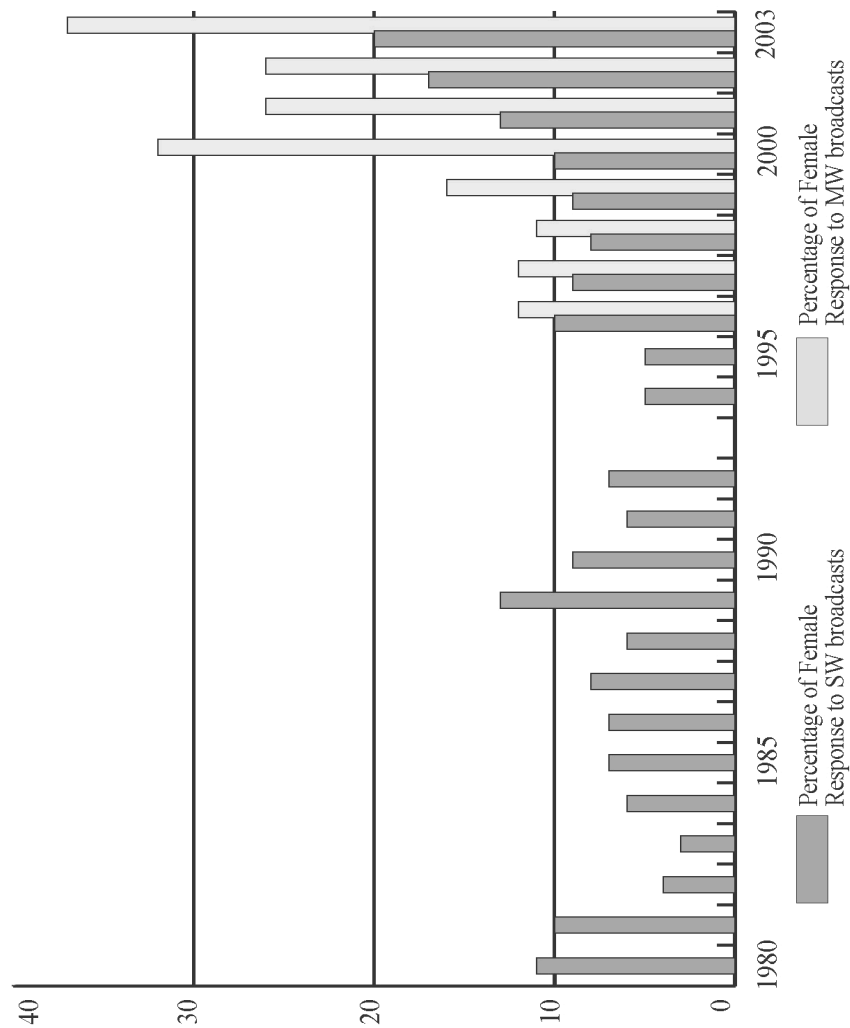


Figure 9.5 FEBA's Female Arabic Audience Respons: 1980-2003

The Iraqi crisis of 2003 illustrates this hypothesis that radio audiences are adversely impacted by increasing satellite viewers. When the USA with some other nations invaded Iraq and ousted Şaddâm H̄usayn, audience response from Iraq almost stopped completely for a few months. When it resumed it did not reach the

heights of prior to the crisis.<sup>213</sup> This downturn can be explained in terms of Ṣaddâm Ḥusayn's communications policy that banned satellite dishes. After his fall Iraqis were finally able to have dishes and they quickly began to install them. The decrease may have been made up for by telephone, text-message and email response. Conclusions about this await further study.

The one hour that FEBA broadcast each week as part of the MW broadcasts of IBRA, resulted in a response that was high compared to the response FEBA received from its daily SW broadcasts from The Seychelles. This suggests a much larger audience for these MW broadcasts than from FEBA's own SW broadcasts.

The number of female respondees to SW programs has traditionally been low, in the realm of 5-12 percent of all audience response, as can be seen in *Figure 9.5*. However, since the early 1990s the percentage of female respondees to SW broadcasts has increased remarkably from less than ten percent to 20 percent in 2003. The percentage of female respondees to MW radio can also be seen to be consistently higher than that of SW broadcasts. It increased from 11 percent in 1998 to 37 percent in 2003.

The reasons for this remarkable increase in the percentage of women responding to FEBA's MW and SW broadcasts remain unclear. Female literacy has improved but not in a manner commensurate with these results. It is also possible that Arab women may have become more assertive in writing to broadcasters but again this does not fully explain the figures. An alternative explanation for the increased percentage of female response could be simply that as the overall letter response to FEBA has decreased, the male responders have lost a disproportionate amount of interest while women have continued writing as before. It is not known why this might be so, there was no increase in special women's programs on FEBA.

#### **9.6.4 Audience Response and Literacy**

FEBA considers the Arabian Peninsula its main target area thus the literacy figures and the population size of those countries are relevant in assessing the impact FEBA is having on the region. *Figure 9.6* shows that the total population of the target area of FEBA grew from 28.2 million to 75 million between 1975 and 2002. From 1977 to 1997-9, literacy among those who were 15 years and older also increased remarkably. As about half of the total population of the countries on the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq were over 15 years old between the 1970s and the 1990s, it can be deduced that in 1975 2.9 million people were considered literate. By 2002, that number can be assumed to have risen to about 26.8 million.<sup>214</sup>

Between 1980 and 1995, FEBA's audience response saw an annual growth of 15.5 percent. Assuming a linear growth of the population and literacy rates in that area, it is reasonable to think that in 1980, there were 4.3 million literates, and in 1995 approximately 14.6 million. The average growth *per annum* of the number of literate people during those years was 8.5 percent. In that light, the growth rate of

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<sup>213</sup> Nassanian in an email to the author (7 October 2004).

<sup>214</sup> Linear growth in population and literacy figures are assumed. .



audience response of 15.5 percent was good. FEBA thus can be judged as having had an increasing impact in the area.

	Literacy per 100	Literacy per 100	Population in millions	Population in millions	Radios per 100
	1977	1997-9	1975	2002	1997-9
Iraq	26	53.7	11	24	20
Kuwait	60	81.9	1	2.11	55
Qatar	35	80.8	0.2	0.79	32
Bahrain	50	87.1	0.3	0.7	52
Oman	20	70.3	0.9	2.7	59
UAE	18	75.1	0.5	2.5	33
KSA	18	76.1	7.3	23.5	27
Yemen	25	45.2	7.0	18.7	6

Figure 9.6 Literacy, Poplation and Radio's in FEBA's target area: 1977-2002

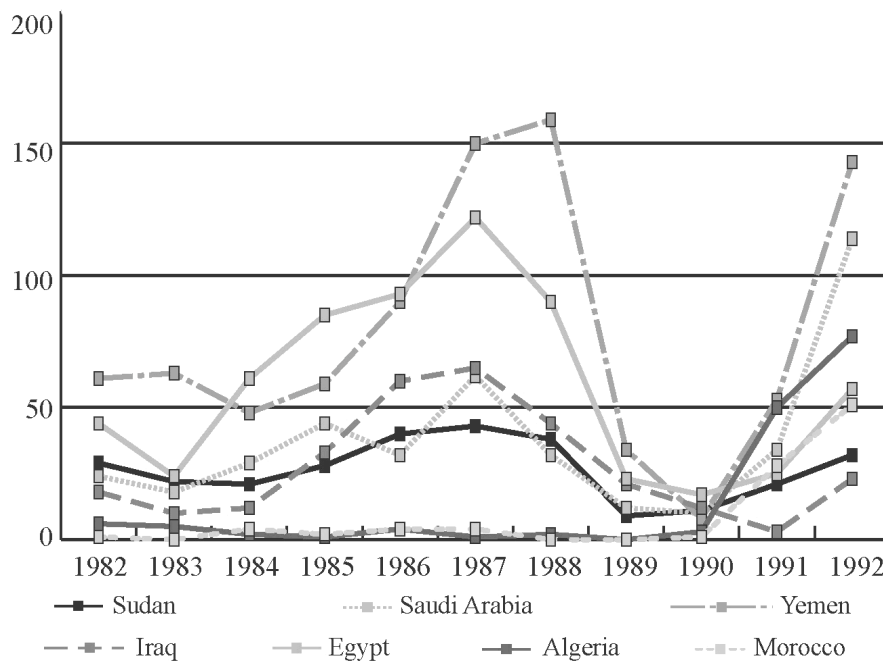


Figure 9.7 FEBA's First Time Arabic Response: 1982-1992

After 1995 the letter-response to FEBA decreased. Comparing the figures of audience response by letter in 1980 with those in 2002 indicates an overall decreasing impact of the programs of FEBA. In 1980 it received 132 letters from

first-time respondees at a time when the literate population of its target area was about 4.3 million. This meant that for every 32,575 literate people, one wrote a letter to FEBA. In 2002 however, FEBA received 308 letters from first-time respondees for both SW and MW broadcasts combined. The total literate population among the target audience was about 14.6 million. Thus in 2002 FEBA received a response of one letter from every 43,400 literate people.

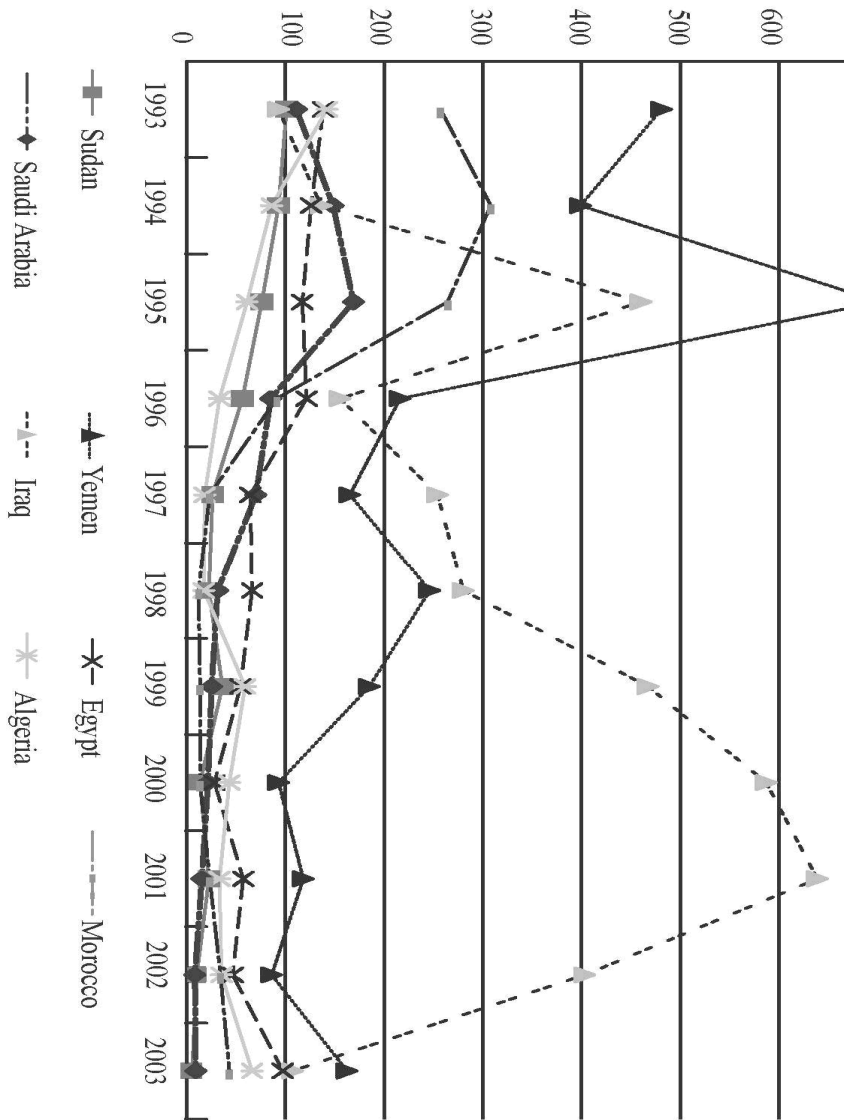


Figure 9.8 FEBA's Total Arabic Audience Response: 1993-2003

Therefore, if we accept the premise that response figures are a good indicator of impact we must conclude that in spite of FEBA's substantial increase in mail, the total impact on the targeted area decreased. The impact of the SW broadcast from The Seychelles alone, with 197 first-time respondees in 2002, and therefore one letter for 136,000 literate people in the target area, shows an even steeper downturn in impact on the targeted area. This comparison does not take the new forms of audience response into account; this would certainly create a more positive picture of FEBA's impact on the region.

It is important to note that in the countries mentioned, the expatriate population grew quickly during the 1970s and 1980s because of oil wealth. Many of these states have refused to publish the actual size of their expatriate populations as they see this as a matter of national security. A large part of their expatriate population are Arabs from poorer countries, and though FEBA did not give information on the nationality of its respondees, it is reasonable to assume that some if not many responses from its target area were from the foreign Arab labor force such as Egyptian Christians.

## **9.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

### ***9.7.1 Indigenization***

FEBA's leadership in the United Kingdom was in the hands of Brits. That is also how the work in the Middle East was initially led, but it was handed over to Nasanian. This meant that the management was indigenized to the extent that a Lebanese Armenian citizen of Cyprus can be considered indigenous to the Arab World. Moreover, whereas the main studio of FEBA in Beirut initially fell under British management, it later came under the responsibility of a wholly Lebanese board with a Lebanese director.

### ***9.7.2 Contextualization***

#### **9.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

FEBA's focus on Muslims alone was a good choice. It is not possible to please both Muslims and Christians with the same programs. The choice to focus on the Arabian Peninsula and especially Yemen was important in regard to the implementation of RCR1. In this chapter the programs that were specifically aimed at Yemen were not researched, but instead the focus was on those that were more generally targeted at the Peninsula.

FEBA broadcast a good number of programs that specifically targeted Muslims. However, most were more suitable for the Christians of the Middle East based on the content and the jargon used. The implementation of the aim of targeting Muslims in the Peninsula was therefore only partially met.

### **9.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

The majority of FEBA's programs were purely religious without an application of the Gospel to the audience's concrete context. This was a result of the programming policies that dictated that any controversial issue should be avoided, so that Islam and politics were not touched upon. Some programs had excellent social themes that were truly contextual, though sometimes more for Egypt or the Middle East than for the Arabian Peninsula. The presence of such programs gives the impression that FEBA would have liked to have broadcast more contextually suitable programs for the Peninsula, but that their availability was problematic.

By not treating socio-economic and political themes related to the Peninsula, a opportunity to show the prophetic role of the Gospel for society as a whole was missed. Hence, CW4 and CW5, about the need to proclaim a message that included the Gospel's prophetic role for social and political life, were not heeded.

### **9.7.2.3 Language**

FEBA initially broadcast mainly in MSA, but it gradually moved to broadcasting in colloquial languages. This is commendable. The programs in Yemeni Arabic that are broadcast from Kigali to Yemen are a clear implementation of RCR3. The general broadcasts for the Peninsula however are in a combination of MSA, Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic, which is not desirable. To a large extent this is because there are so few Christians in the Peninsula making it difficult to produce programs in the languages of the area. As long as that does not change, it is not clear how FEBA can move toward a further implementation of RCR3.

### **9.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

FEBA endeavored to have a more communal than an individualist approach in its programs. The inserts with birthday greetings were a good example of that. The choice by FEBA to make programs that used storytelling instead of theological exposés was also strategic.

FEBA tried to convey biblical truth without an overlay of a Western style theology, thus enabling the audience to integrate the propositional truth in their own cultural thought forms.

FEBA often used linguistic forms and examples that were appropriate for the intended Muslim audience. This occurred intentionally when the programs were truly aimed at Muslims but also when the programs were generic enough to be fully understood by both Christians and Muslims. The broadcasts, however, also contained many programs that used linguistic forms that were typically Christian and often incomprehensible for Muslims. FEBA did not trespass against CW6 as it did not use Islamic jargon in explaining the Gospel.

### **9.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

FEBA's broadcasts about Christ were broadly Evangelical and theologically conservative. FEBA presented its message about Christ as the truth that must be believed for salvation, so CW1 was heeded in this regard. The portrayal of Christ in the programs was however one-sided. The focus was generally on how God sent his Son to save anyone who believes in Him through His atoning death on the cross

and His resurrection. The concept of Christ as the Lord of all of life who has certain precepts for society was not presented and thus CW4 and CW5 went unheeded.

The programs focused mainly on the purely individual relationship of the listener with Christ. The role of the church was hardly mentioned. Interestingly in its initial Statement of Faith, the church was not mentioned at all. Later however this was corrected but it was not reflected in the programs. Therefore, RCR5 was only implemented to a limited extent.

#### **9.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

Suitable programs for Muslims within FEBA's time slot were surrounded by programs that presented the culture of Middle Eastern Protestant Christianity. These Christian programs were often incomprehensible for Muslims. It is likely that this diminished the potential impact of these more contextually suitable programs. More study in that realm is needed. To assess FEBA's general media environment more study regarding the programs surrounding its time blocks is required.

#### **9.7.3 Christian Witness**

It has been helpful for studying the impact of FEBA's broadcasts to have detailed audience figures available. Some tentative conclusions can be drawn from those figures, but they are limited as there are too many unknown factors and variables. General issues such as the quality of the postal systems and the political friendliness of the Arab regimes toward Christian broadcasts are hard to quantify but are definitely important in assessing the size of the audience response. The strength and the quality of the reception of the programs also impacts the response. The location of the address given for response plays a role too. The availability of the right radios in the target area is also eminently relevant. Having said all that, it seems that as a rule, response tends to increase in times of international tension, especially from the area that is in the eye of the storm. Furthermore, from the available data it was established that MW broadcasts elicit more response than SW broadcasts, and that women respond more to MW than to SW. Overall, it showed that female response has increased in recent years.

All the above statements are about response, not the actual size of the audience; that can only be assessed by surveys on-the-ground. However, if audience response figures could be used as a reliable method of determining audience size and impact, then the FEBA audience broadcasts would have increased in real terms in the Peninsula. However audience response and size cannot be correlated since the rate of growth in population literacy is greater than the increased response to the programs. Indeed based on the increase in literacy rates one would predict that the impact of the broadcast on the whole of the population would actually have decreased.

The broadcasts of FEBA sometimes used the contact addresses of the program suppliers, but more often than not only the few contact addresses of FEBA in Lebanon and Cyprus were used. That was a wise choice, as the announcer of FEBA was

was then able to create some cohesion between the five or six separate programs that were broadcast each morning.

In the history of FEBA's studio and audio production in Lebanon from 1975 to 1990, the Arabic staff played a very important role in keeping the office and the production studio going. This continuation is a witness to the perseverance of missionaries of FEBA, who continued to work in dangerous situations for the sake of the Gospel. From the perspective of acceptable personnel management or *Member Care* as it is called now, it was probably unwise of FEBA that it allowed its personnel to continue working in Lebanon during those years.

The programs of FEBA focused on the *kerygmatic* side of the Gospel; they contained a clear proclamation of the core truths of the Christian faith. Most programs gravitated to an explanation, in different guises, of the Gospel and reduced it to an individualistic message of personal sin, salvation offered by Jesus Christ, the need for personal repentance, and the expectation of eternal life. They only reflected the *koinonia* and the *diakonia* of the Church of Christ to a very limited extent, as reference to the Church and socio-political themes were avoided. This negatively affected the impact of the proclamation of the Gospel.

## 10 Family Radio (FR)

Family Radio (FR) is a unique broadcaster of Arabic Christian radio programs. It began broadcasting Arabic programs in 1974 and has continued to consistently do so. In 2005 it filled more airtime with what it perceived to be its Christian witness in Arabic programs than any other Christian Arabic broadcaster. The content of these Arabic programs was dominated by the teachings of Harold Camping who founded the station in 1958 and has continued to direct it. By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Camping had completely isolated his radio station from other Christian broadcasters and from the churches in the United States due to his eschatological and ecclesiological views.

FR's isolationism was probably the reason why it was not prepared to grant access to its archives or to discuss its Arabic ministry. General information from its website was helpful in establishing its unique theological views.<sup>1</sup>

Before the mid-1990s, FR mainly used other program suppliers for its Arabic programs. The main supplier was Bassam Madany of Back to God Hour (BTGH). However, since the mid 1990s, the Arabic programs of FR have been the literal translations of the English programs that were being produced for the USA. As those programs focus on the unique ecclesiological and eschatological views of Camping, this chapter describes those views extensively.

### 10.1 HISTORY

#### *10.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Broadcasts: 1958-1974*

FR was set up by Harold Camping (b. 1921) as *Family Stations Inc.* in Oakland, California (USA) in 1958. Camping finished his studies in Civil Engineering at the University of California in Berkeley, California (USA) in 1942 and thereafter began his company Camping Construction. He later sold that successful business and devoted himself fully to the FR ministry.<sup>2</sup>

Camping was a member of the Christian Reformed Churches in North America (CRCNA) when he founded FR. He left that denomination in 1988 when he was no longer allowed to teach his eschatology to his local congregation. He described FR as 'a nonprofit, nondenominational, educational organization dedicated to obeying our Lord's command to preach the Gospel to every creature.' It was 'not

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com) (18 February 2005), where Camping's books and brochures are all made available.

<sup>2</sup> [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com). See also the transcript of 'Interview with Harold Camping' by Stephen C. Meyers (8 June 1994), on [www.bibleandscience.com/otherviews/camping.htm](http://www.bibleandscience.com/otherviews/camping.htm) (30 September 2004). Meyers wrote that Camping married in 1942 to Shirley Vander Schuur whom he knew from Alameda Reformed Church. Many in the Reformed churches in the USA have Dutch ancestry.

associated with any organization, religious or political. It is a faith-based ministry'.<sup>3</sup>

Camping continues to be the president and general manager of FR but regards himself as a 'full-time volunteer'. He receives no salary from FR and has been supported throughout by the sale of his construction company. Camping regarded 'the Lord Jesus Christ as FR's Chief Executive Officer because it operates altogether under the authority of the Bible'.<sup>4</sup> FR certainly heeded part of Contextualization Warning CW1 as it adhered to the absolute truth of the Bible and the uniqueness of Christ. It later, however, proclaimed that true Christians should not go to any church, in direct opposition to CW1.

In the beginning of his ministry, Camping allowed many, mostly Reformed, organizations to broadcast their programs on FR on the condition that he fully agreed with their message. FR refused to receive payment from any program suppliers and this allowed them to exercise financial independence from all external producers. This commendable position is a precondition for any radio broadcaster desiring to implement its own programming strategy.

FR was best known for the programs of Camping himself who taught the FR Bible Study program and hosted the Open Forum. This was a semi-live weeknight call-in program. On the Open Forum, Camping gave 'Biblical responses to [...] questions and comments and in this way continues to present the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in the marketplace of the world'.<sup>5</sup>

On 4 February 1959 FR aired its first broadcast over radio station KEAR FM in San Francisco. Since then, FR has built a number of powerful AM and FM stations in the USA and around the world. In January 1973, FR bought airtime on a SW station in Scituate, California, and in October 1973 Camping bought that station. FR's International Department used that SW station in 1973 to broadcast English and Spanish programs. In 1974 Chinese, Russian, German, Hindi, Italian, Portuguese, Turkish and Arabic were added to the bouquet of languages.<sup>6</sup>

### **10.1.2 Arabic Broadcasts: Since 1974**

In 1974, FR began broadcasting 30 minute Arabic Christian programs on SW. The choice to do so was simply because, according to David Hoff of the International Department of FR, Arabic was spoken by many people.<sup>7</sup> It is likely that the organization's interest was also awakened to the importance of the Arab World in the political arena and the media due to the October War in the Middle East in 1973. It is not known what role Christian Arabs played in FR's decision to start broadcasting in Arabic but given the context of FR's management style, it is unlikely that Arab Churches or Christians were consulted.

<sup>3</sup> [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com). Mr. A. Camping of the Arabic Department in an email to the author (8 April 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Harold Camping, 'Who or What is Family radio', on [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com) (30 September 2004).

<sup>5</sup> [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 105. Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (3 July 2003).

<sup>7</sup> David Hoff in an email to the author (6 August 2004).



Like all non-English programs, the Arabic programs were initially broadcast from Scituate on the west coast of the USA. In 1976 FR started building its own SW facility WYFR in Okeechobee, Florida (USA), and began broadcasting its foreign programs from there after November 1977.<sup>8</sup> In 1979 that location had four 100 kW transmitters. The former facility in Scituate was then closed down.<sup>9</sup>

FR cooperated with Radio Free China of Taiwan, by exchanging transmission facilities after 1982. This reciprocal arrangement involved Radio Free China broadcasting from Okeechobee to reach the Chinese in the USA and FR in turn broadcasting from Taiwan in English, Chinese and Hindi.<sup>10</sup> This cooperation with a secular broadcaster contrasted sharply with Camping's refusal to cooperate with Christians who he disagreed with but was in line with his anti-Communist views which he shared with the Taiwanese broadcaster.

In 1984, FR owned in total eight 100 kW and two 50 kW SW transmitters with a large field of antennas. This made FR the largest owner of broadcasting facilities among international Christian broadcasters and a notable one amongst SW broadcasters. The Arabic broadcasts from Okeechobee could be heard with excellent reception in the Arab World.<sup>11</sup>

In 1996, FR agreed to an exchange of transmissions with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and its transmitters in the United Kingdom. This cooperation had led to a stronger signal for the Arabic broadcasts of FR.<sup>12</sup>

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century FR continued to expand its SW transmissions; in July 2001 it began, for instance, to use Radio Abu Dhabi's facilities for its transmissions to Asia.<sup>13</sup> Since 2004 the programs have also been broadcast via the audio channels of some satellites and through the internet. By 2004, FR was broadcasting in seventeen languages.<sup>14</sup> This expansion of its ministry came at a time when FR had isolated itself totally from the Churches and most Christians in the USA.<sup>15</sup> It is tragic that the Christian missionary radio organization with the largest broadcasting facilities and the strongest combined transmission power remains non-cooperative and exclusivist. This unfortunate state is due to the unique opinions of Camping who is considered heretical by his traditional Reformed milieu as well as most other North American Christians.

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<sup>8</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 105-107.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (12 April 2007).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 108. 'Reaching Out to the World', in *Family Radio News* (Vol. 36 No. 4, October-December 2001), p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Reginald Kennedy, 'The Word Senders: A Personal Assessment of the Work of the Major Protestant, Evangelical Missionary Radio Stations' (n.p, 1980), chapter 2, p. 44. This unpublished reflection on the Christian broadcasters was found in the library of the World Alliance for Christian Communication (WACC), as document A 302.

<sup>12</sup> Biener in an email to the author (12 April 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Biener in an email to the author (3 July 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Hoff in an email to the author (6 August 2004). [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com) spoke of English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, German, French, Hindi, Arabic, Italian, Portuguese and Turkish. Polish, Korean, Indonesian and Vietnamese were 'in the process' of being produced.

<sup>15</sup> Because of this isolation FR had financial problems and was forced to sell some of its facilities in the USA. See Biener in an email to the author (12 April 2007).

From 1974 to 1990, FR broadcast one hour per day in Arabic in the evening to the Arab World.<sup>16</sup> On Easter Sunday 1991, FR added a second daily hour of Arabic that could be received in North Africa in the morning. Madany had convinced Camping to do this which would seem to imply that Camping's relationship with Madany was still good during the early 1990s. However this was to change later when Camping's theology became unacceptable to almost all people and organizations he had ever worked with.<sup>17</sup>

Week Days	Frequency	Time (GMT)
1234567	9355	04. 00-05. 00
1234567	9930	05. 00-06. 00
1234567	11580	05. 00-06. 00
1234567	11530	07. 00-08. 00
1234567	18930	16. 00-17. 00
1234567	13720	17. 00-19. 00
1234567	15165	19. 00-20. 00
1234567	21525	20. 00-21. 00
1234567	13855	20. 00-21. 00
1234567	15695	20. 00-21. 00
1234567	18930	22. 00-23. 00
1234567	17845	22. 00-23. 00

Figure 10.1 Family Radio's Arabic Broadcasts: 20-26 September 2004

FR continued to expand its Arabic broadcasts to one hour in the morning and three consecutive hours in the early evening in 1996.<sup>18</sup> By then, it depended entirely on its own Arabic staff since no external program supplier was willing to make its programs available any longer. Details of these Arab employees have been withheld by FR as a matter of policy.<sup>19</sup> In the period of 20-26 September 2004, FR broadcast 13 hours in Arabic each day as shown in *Figure 10.1*. Of these hours, the two-hour block from 17.00-19.00 GMT contained the unique broadcasts for each day while the other hours contained repeats of these. Some of these broadcasts were aimed at North Africa, others at the Middle East. These 13 hours of broadcasts per day made FR the largest Christian broadcaster in terms of hours on air.

## 10.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

'At Family Radio we empathically teach that the whole Bible is the Word of God. [...] The Bible alone, and in its entirety, is the Word of God', according to the organization.<sup>20</sup> Because of that belief, the organization refused to create a formal Statement of Faith. Camping rejected all creedal statements. The idea that FR operated fully under the authority of the Bible, in the King James Version, was an important concept in Camping's theology. In order to understand the theological

<sup>16</sup> A. Camping in an email to the author (8 April 2003). Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 105. Bassam Madany, *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (January 1977).

<sup>17</sup> Bassam Madany in an email to the author (4 July 2003).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Hoff in an email to the author (6 August 2004).

<sup>20</sup> [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com).

lines of thought of FR, it is therefore necessary to study its publications and broadcasts.

Camping's personality and theology have been preponderant in FR. He has written a number of books, including *Adam When, What God Hath Joined Together* and *God's Magnificent Salvation Plan*. The topics of creationism, Christian marriage and 'how not to go to hell' have always been paramount in FR's programming.<sup>21</sup>

FR has always held conservative Evangelical views on issues such as the role of women in the church and family, what music is acceptable, Sunday as a day of rest, and the authority of the King James Version of the Bible. The station is known for its half-hour uninterrupted readings from the Bible. It is characterized by its fiercely anti-Charismatic position and prescribes to a traditional Reformed view of free will. Its dispensationalist-style approach to eschatology is however at odds with Camping's claim that he has an amillennial theology. Nevertheless eschatology has played an increasingly important role in the programs of FR.<sup>22</sup>

While the domestic stations of FR included programs from major conservative broadcasters, from the beginning the SW broadcasts of FR mostly relied on programs pre-produced at the FR headquarters and sent to the SW site on tape. There were two, later three hours of English repeated several times throughout the broadcast day: extensive Bible reading, Harold Camping's Open Forum and Bible Study, Unshackled, Science, Scripture and Salvation, The Stones Cry Out, and Mailbag.<sup>23</sup> BTGH was among the organizations that placed their programs on FR. The American counselor Jay Adams has had a program on the English broadcasts for many years. Adam's conservative approach, using the Bible as the only tool in counseling and rejecting any scientific psychological knowledge, fitted well with Camping's 'Bible only' approach to solving problems in life.<sup>24</sup>

FR did not participate in the World by 2000 (Wb2000) project in 1985. This initiative sought to bring all international Protestant broadcasters together to devise a common strategy regarding language to broadcast programs in. The reason why FR abstained from cooperating with the project was related to its exclusivist views. However during the 1980s, its theology was still largely within the parameters of the Reformed tradition.<sup>25</sup>

Camping's most exclusive views had to do with his eschatology. He believed that as 'we must be close to the end of time, the meaning of a great many Biblical passages should become revealed to the minds of careful, diligent students of the Bible'.<sup>26</sup> Camping obviously believed in his own ability to explain those parts of the Bible that were considered unclear by most theologians.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> See for instance Harold Camping, *The End of the Church Age...and After* (Oakland, 2001). Kennedy, 'The Word Senders', chapter 2, p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Biener in an email to the author (12 April 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Biener in an email to the author (3 July 2003). James R. White, 'Dangerous Airwaves: Harold Camping's Call to Flee the Church', in *Christian Research Journal* (Vol. 25 No. 1, 2002), as published on [www.equip.org/free/DC989.pdf](http://www.equip.org/free/DC989.pdf) (30 September 2004).

<sup>25</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 108.

<sup>26</sup> Camping, *The End of the Church Age...and After*, pp. 210-212, 216- 217.

In 1992 Camping predicted the return of Christ between 15 and 17 September 1994.<sup>27</sup> According to him, the time of the Great Tribulation had begun on 21 May 1988. The sign of that event was that true Christians were being excommunicated from the churches that did not preach the Gospel as Camping understood it.<sup>28</sup> This reflected Camping's own experience after the Reformed Churches did not accept his esoteric exegesis any longer. In 1988, he was asked to stop teaching his unique eschatology in the Christian Reformed Church of Alameda in California, so he began his own Alameda Reformed Bible Church.<sup>29</sup>

Camping based his prediction of the return of Christ on his numerological and allegorical hermeneutics of the Bible. On that same basis he was able to pinpoint creation to the exact year 11,013 Before the Common Era (BCE).<sup>30</sup> He realized that consistency in numerology was difficult. He sometimes took figures literally and at other times did not but he explained that it was 'the prerogative of God to use numbers as He desires'.<sup>31</sup>

Camping's date-setting for the return of Christ made the classes and synods of some Reformed denominations in the USA feel obliged to write reports rejecting his theology as heretical and calling him to repent. This was seen as an urgent necessity as Camping had considerable influence in those churches.<sup>32</sup>

The exclusiveness of FR came to a head when Camping announced in 2001 that Christians should no longer go to church. According to him the 'dispensation of the church age had ended'. He believed that after centuries of patience with the sinful Churches, God had now left them and Satan was in charge of the Churches. In his critique he often focused on issues that were of special interest within the Reformed community such as female pastors, the teaching of universal atonement, baptismal regeneration, faith as an instrument of salvation, the future millennium and the allowance of divorce in certain cases. He saw those as grave faults in the Churches which in turn made God's judgment come in 2001.<sup>33</sup> He especially decried the manner in which money was spent in churches:

What is going on? [...] On the one hand we see churches everywhere becoming more and more apostate. Yet on the other hand we see a ministry like Family Radio becoming more and more useful to the Lord in sending the true Gospel to the world. [...] Virtually every one of us, as we look at the church we attend, and as we look at the other churches in our city, deplore what we are seeing. The worship service has increasingly become a time of entertainment. The preaching seldom, if ever, warns for the immanence of Judgment Day. Church after church feature signs and wonders. Little or no money is available for mission work because of increasing obligations to pay for newer and finer buildings and greater and greater pastor's salaries.

<sup>27</sup> Harold Camping, *1994?*, (New York, 1992), p. 531.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 218.

<sup>29</sup> Stephen C. Meyers, 'Interview with Harold Camping'.

<sup>30</sup> Camping, *1994?*, p. 295.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 403.

<sup>32</sup> President Robert Grossman of the East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States condemned Camping for his false prophecies and arrogance. See Rev. Robert Grossman, 'Y2K and False Prophecy Today', in *Reformed Herald* (Vol. 56 No. 7, March 2000), p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> James R. White, *Dangerous Airwaves: Harold Camping Refuted and Christ's Church Defended* (New York, 2002), p. 40.

Perhaps one of the most shocking experiences of the true believer within these churches is the rejection he will experience if he contends too strongly for greater purity in doctrine.<sup>34</sup>

The fact that all Churches had creeds and confessions was Camping's important proof of their wickedness. 'Even though many churches and denominations insist that the Bible is the only infallible Word of God, they cling to a number of doctrines of men rather than submit entirely to the truth of the Bible', Camping wrote in 2001. He believed that the adoption of a creed was the negation of the sufficiency of the Bible. He also held that all Churches would be 'destroyed during the Great Tribulation', and that 'we are living in the period of the Great Tribulation'.<sup>35</sup> In his book *The End of the Church Age...and After*, Camping wrote:

God has commanded that the believers must depart out of their churches. No matter how faithful their church appears, God has commanded His people to leave the church. [God gives] this commandment to believers today. [...] God has given no exceptions to this command. He has commanded each and every believer to leave the church. [...] The believers must leave the churches because the Holy Spirit has left them and has given the rulership to Satan. [...] Thus, we have learned that the time has now come when we must leave our churches and congregations even though we are to continue to gather together to fellowship with other true believers outside of the church.<sup>36</sup>

According to Camping, people that have come to faith in churches since the end of the Church age in 2001 were not truly saved as the Holy Spirit was no longer present in those churches anymore. He advised believers to meet together on Sundays in small groups, sing hymns and listen together to the broadcasts of FR. These groups were to be careful not to call themselves a church or appoint leaders and should not celebrate baptism and Holy Communion.<sup>37</sup> This rather sectarian approach of Camping, made his followers into a separate denomination, in spite of the fact that he would abhor that statement.

One of the proofs that Camping used to show that the time of the Great Tribulation had begun was that, in his opinion, the 'great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindred, and people, and tongues', had become a real possibility through radio:

God has provided means by which the true Gospel can be heralded forth all over the world. This is particularly true as the Gospel is sent out by radio, by satellite, by

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<sup>34</sup> Quote in J. Ligon Duncan and Mark R. Talbot, 'Camping's Folly: A Response to Harold Camping's Erroneous Teaching on the Church', on [www.alliancenet.org](http://www.alliancenet.org) (30 September 2004).

<sup>35</sup> Harold Camping, 'Has The Era of the Church Age Come to An End?', in *Family Radio News* (Vol. 36 No. 4, October-December 2001), pp. 7, 14.

<sup>36</sup> Camping, *The End of the Church Age...and After*, pp. 210-212, 216-217. The idea that believers should gather among themselves without calling that a church meeting, seems to closely resemble the congregational style of the Brethren Churches. The refusal to administer the sacraments also reflects habits in the Salvation Army.

<sup>37</sup> White, 'Dangerous Airwaves: Harold Camping's Call to Flee the Church', describes these matters *in extenso*.

Internet. Never before in the history of the world can a whole continent come under the umbrella of the Gospel. Because we witness this phenomena [sic] by a ministry such as Family Radio which in no sense is under the authority of the church and which tries to be as faithful to the Bible as possible, we can know that we are in that time of the Great Tribulation.<sup>38</sup>

According to Camping, Churches no longer played a role in God's schemes whereas FR's importance had only increased. When a listener to the Open Forum asked Camping whether the people listening to FR who had come to Christ in churches since 2001 were actually false converts, Camping denied that, but he made listening to FR a criterion for knowing their salvation:

Well, but you see...the problem is that if they're listeners to Family Radio... in order to be an intense listener you have to be ready to accept a lot of things that you're not getting in churches. In Family Radio you hear that when you become saved you become a brand new person. You receive a brand new resurrected soul. You don't hear that in the churches. If you're listening to Family radio, you hear that we cannot...trust in... that faith is a instrument that brings us to Christ. We can't accept the idea that baptism is a ...seal of any kind and you don't hear that in churches. In other words you have to have a different mindset to be an avid listener to Family Radio.<sup>39</sup>

Camping believed that avid listeners to FR showed their true state of regeneration by their willingness to listen to FR and accept his teachings. Camping always stressed that he resisted all authority that might be placed above the Bible, be that the Roman-Catholic pope, the Creeds of the Church, or Charismatic visions.

With Camping's opinions, it was clear that it would be impossible for FR to create a contextualized message within the context of the Church community. He trespassed against part of CW1 with his rejection of any church. CW2 could thus of course never be heeded. CW3, regarding the need for the message to serve the unity of the church, was disregarded as well.

### 10.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

FR differentiated between North Africa and the Middle East for the reception of its signal, but not as recognition of the cultural and linguistic differences within the Arab World. This meant that a homogenous target audience, as demanded by RCRI, was not aimed for. As Madany was the main supplier of programs from the beginning of the Arabic broadcasts to the 1990s, his views regarding the best target audience and language were dominant in FR's broadcasts. This meant that during those years, it targeted the educated elites of the Arab World as a whole, both Christian and Muslim, and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) was used.

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<sup>38</sup> Camping, 'Has The Era of the Church Age Come to An End?', pp. 14-15.

<sup>39</sup> Question of Chris Arnzen and answer by Camping on Open Forum on 27 December 2001, as quoted by White, *Dangerous Airwaves*, pp. 117-8.

To use MSA for programs to speak to Christian and Muslim Arabs all over the Arab World was a choice that did not take into account that most Arabs did not understand it and that it was no-one's heart language. FR however did differentiate between target areas in the Arab World with various broadcasts and thus could have chosen to target areas with their specific Arabic vernaculars. This would have resulted in the programs being better understood in those areas and would have been particularly easy to implement in the 1990s when the Arabic programs were literal translations of the English. Thus, RCR3 regarding the need to address people in their own languages, was not implemented.

In the early 1980s Reginald Kennedy, himself a Christian radio broadcaster, labeled the FR programs as boring, with a mainly Christian audience as those are the only ones that might 'tolerate an intolerant message and blessed boredom'.<sup>40</sup> Ten years later Hansjörg Biener's conclusion about FR's programming was similar: 'For non-Christians and non-fundamentalist Christians, these programs are hardly interesting'.<sup>41</sup>

After Madany stopped working with FR the only Arabic programs broadcast were the translated versions of the Open Forum, Bible readings and Western hymn programs. These programs were clearly not aimed at Muslims and it would be just as hard to argue that they were aimed at Arabic Christians. The literal translation of the American programs, including all their North American ideas and examples, guaranteed that RCR4 could be implemented only to a very limited extent. FR had no awareness that its programs used linguistic and cultural forms that were unsuitable for an Arabic audience.

#### 10.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

During the first two decades Madany's strategies dominated FR as the main Arabic supplier. After the mid 1990s, FR was responsible for its own strategy and had to create its own Arabic programming. FR's statement of faith was 'the Bible alone and in its entirety', and that was interpreted in such a manner that specific program policies were considered unnecessary. It is possible that it considered formal program strategies as undesirable as any Creedal statement.

Camping was aware of the problem of proclaiming an American Gospel to the world. He wanted to ensure that he would bring the 'Gospel of the Bible, and not the Gospel of Europe or the Gospel of the United States or the Gospel of Mexico or any other perverted Gospel'.<sup>42</sup> He also expressed the hope: 'May it never be that the Gospel we present is resisted by the political authorities because we are preaching the culture and politics of a political nation. Such a Gospel cannot be the Gospel of the Bible'.<sup>43</sup> He also believed that 'as we focus on the basic fundamentals, the true Gospel is absolutely common to every nation. It makes no difference what nation we are in, we all have the exact same spiritual need for the

<sup>40</sup> Kennedy, 'The Word Senders', chapter 2, p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 107

<sup>42</sup> Harold Camping, 'What is the True Gospel', on [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com) (30 September 2004).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

exact same spiritual antidote.<sup>44</sup> This approach made it easy for FR to justify simply translating its programs into Arabic, but it contradicted the basic preconditions for good contextualization and communication.

Camping obviously held that what he proclaimed was the ‘true Gospel’. He seemed unaware that what he considered the ‘true Gospel’ was actually pervaded by his own interpretations based on his own context. His theology is quintessentially North American for instance in its individualism. It espouses that the Church is no longer needed and that the technology of FR can do the work of mission in the world. ‘No missionaries, no public confessions, no submission to the body, no community, no pastors, no ordinances, and no obligations. Just me, Jesus, my Bible, and Family Radio’, is how J. Ligon Duncan of Reformed Theological Seminary and Mark R. Talbot of Wheaton College summarized the hyper-individualist ethos of Camping. In that context, they speak of a ‘non-incarnational view of Gospel ministry’.<sup>45</sup>

## 10.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

### 10.5.1 History: 1974-2004

Initially, FR did not have its own Arabic staff or productions. During the 1970s and 1980s, some Arabic program suppliers, like Arab World Ministries (AWM), had a few programs on FR. However, during those years, Madany’s programs were the main Arabic programs broadcast by FR. As he was from the Reformed Churches, like Camping, his relationship with FR was a natural one:

I began to send them copies of my Bible Studies, Sermons, and special programs. For many years, I was the only one on WYFR in the Arabic language. They aired [BTGH’s] Arabic, French and English, Spanish, and French programs free of charge, as they are not a commercial station.<sup>46</sup>

Madany was also FR’s announcer. To tape the program introductions and follow up addresses, he went to the FR studios twice a year.<sup>47</sup> Madany also produced some programs especially for FR:

Harold Camping wanted me to record the Word of God in Arabic. I did that, beginning with the New Testament. I used the Revised Version that was prepared for the Bible Society by Professor Butros Abdelmalik, of the American University in Cairo. I did also parts of the Old Testament, including Genesis, and Exodus 1-20. Then I did all the Wisdom Literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job). Also Isaiah. They urged me to do all the other books, but I suggested that they could be misunderstood by Arabs today if they did not have some introduction. They did not

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Duncan and Talbot, ‘Camping’s Folly’.

<sup>46</sup> Madany in an email to the author (4 July 2003).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



agree with me, claiming that those books did not have to be introduced or given some notes at the beginning.<sup>48</sup>

According to Madany, it was his refusal to produce these programs that moved Camping towards working with an Egyptian announcer in the 1990s.<sup>49</sup> He ‘did what I refused to do, recording all the historical books of the Old Testament, with all the battles of Israel.’<sup>50</sup> Madany believed that these readings would sound Zionist in the ears of Arab Muslims and therefore give a wrong view of the Christian message.

Madany’s other programs continued to be aired for a while. He stopped working with FR altogether because of its theological shifts during the 1990s. ‘[When] Harold Camping began to show heretical tendencies [...] I decided to stop my cooperation’, according to Madany.<sup>51</sup> Since the mid 1990s, Camping has generally filled the Arabic broadcasts with his own programs, although he has not completely discontinued broadcasting Madany’s programs.<sup>52</sup> FR began using its own Egyptian announcer during the early 1990s.

As Camping believed that his message was the ‘true Gospel’, he did not need to think of contextualizing his message to the Arab World. The Egyptian producer working for FR translated its English programs verbatim into Arabic.<sup>53</sup> The programs broadcast from 20-26 September 2004 were basically filled with Bible readings of 30 minutes, Camping’s Open Forum, his Bible Study program, and longer programs with some American hymns.

#### ***10.5.2 Programs of 20-26 September 2004***

During the week of 20-26 September 2004, FR broadcast two unique hours per day. The total airtime on SW was 13 hours per day. The unique block of two hours, called Voice of New Life (*Ṣawt al-Ḥayâh al-Jadîdah*), contained the programs that are given in *Figure 10.2*.

The first block of three programs lasted an hour and the last block, Open Forum, also lasted one hour. Each day, one Arabic Christian song was used at the opening of the first hour and a few non-vocal Western Christian hymns were used during the programs. All the other programs were literal translations of English programs by Camping for his American audience. These programs were all read by one anonymous Arab man, while some inserts and the questions in the Open Forum programs were read by one Arab woman. The reading and the lack of diversity gave these programs a very dull sound. The Open Forum programs on 22 and 25 September 2004 were actually similar. The tape of 22 September was probably by accident used again on 25 September.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> For instance, on 22 September 2004 FR broadcast Madany’s Hour of Reformation, lesson 302 on Matthew 25:14-30.

<sup>53</sup> Madany in an email to the author (4 July 2003).

In the broadcasts FR encouraged its listeners to go to its website [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com), and to write to [apq108@aol.com](mailto:apq108@aol.com) or to postal addresses in Oakland, California (USA), and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (USA). The email address was very difficult to understand for an Arabic audience.

Arabs listening to FR would have been disturbed by the positive view of the modern state of Israel that Camping often shared in his programs. They would also have been unimpressed by the description about Islam on the FR's website. 'A Muslim [...] may wish to live as a good Muslim. So he carefully consults the Koran, a book in which Muslims believe God has spoken. The Koran, therefore, is the written authority that establishes the Islamic Gospel, that is, the Muslim religion.'<sup>54</sup> This does not give the impression that FR understands Islam or the Arab World in a manner that would qualify the organization to broadcast Christian Arab programs. It is distant from the reality of Islamic religious life and self-understanding and thus incongruent for a suitable message in the context of the Arab World.

### 10.5.2.1 Biblical Topics

#### *Bible Readings*

The Bible readings on FR were old programs by Madany. He read from Genesis, but skipped Genesis 30. This may be a programming mistake, but it may also be due to its content as Madany refused to read chapters that could be misunderstood by his Arabic Muslim audience.<sup>55</sup> He used the Van Dyck Bible and read it in a very solemn, classical manner.

The long Arabic Bible readings on FR were remarkable and were the result of FR's belief in the spiritual effect of listening to the Bible without any exegesis.<sup>56</sup> The fact that Camping insisted on having Old Testament books read which could easily have been misunderstood as Zionist by an Arab audience was another example of his lack of interest in contextualization. The language of the Van Dyke Bible and the lack of any exegesis made these Bible readings largely incomprehensible to most Arab Muslims and to Christian Arabs.

#### *Family around the Bible: Genesis 27*

In the two programs of Family around the Bible, Genesis 27 was discussed. FR stressed that God kept his promise. This was illustrated by Jacob being given the blessing that was his birthright instead of Esau. It was not acceptable to cheat as Jacob and his mother Rebecca had in order to implement the plan of God.<sup>57</sup> Rebecca and Jacob proved how weak their faith was. 'They never thought of depending on God, or taking this problem to Him.'<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Camping, 'What is the True Gospel'.

<sup>55</sup> The chapter described how Jacob, married to both Rachel and Leah, had children with servants of both wives.

<sup>56</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 106.

<sup>57</sup> FR broadcast 20 September 2004, Family around the Bible.

<sup>58</sup> FR broadcast 24 September 2004, Family around the Bible.

This Bible story was excellent for an Arab audience as Arabic culture favors storytelling as a manner of conveying truth. However, these programs were clearly made for a non-Arab, Christian audience. They quoted verses from other parts of the Bible that were meaningless to people that were not raised in a Biblically educated environment and they also contained statements that were unnecessarily problematic for an Arab Muslim; Abraham was called the first father of the State (*dawlah*) of Israel, Israel would inherit the land forever and Isaac was called a son of God (*ibn Allâh*).<sup>59</sup> For a Muslim audience, these statements were unnecessarily upsetting and could have been avoided with no difference to the programs' meaning.

20-09-04	Bible Reading	Family Around the Bible	Open Forum	
21-09-04	Bible Reading	Outline of the New Testament	Bible Study Program	Open Forum
22-09-04	Bible Reading	Practical Subjects	Reformation Hour	Open Forum
23-09-04	Bible Reading	Outline of the New Testament	Bible Study Program	Open Forum
24-09-04	Bible Reading	Family Around the Bible	Open Forum	
25-09-04	Bible Reading	Reading and Listening	Reformation Hour	Open Forum
26-09-04	Bible Reading	Reading and Listening	English Bible Reading	Open Forum

Figure 10.2 Content of Family Radio's Arabic Programs: 20-26 September 2004

### **Outline of the New Testament: Colossians 2**

This chapter of Paul's letter to the Colossians is full of assertions about who Jesus Christ is. FR highlighted all of these in the two programs without giving any explanation as to their meaning. The audience learnt that Jesus has all power and authority exactly like God (*Jahu kullu al-qâwah wa sulṭân Allâh tamâman*) because He himself is God totally (*huwa Allâh bi akmaluh*). The programs also spoke of him as Savior and Redeemer (*Mukhalliṣ wa Fâdî*) as 'He paid the price of the sins of all those who believe in Him' (*yidfa'a thaman khatâyâ kulli man ya'min bihu*). For a Muslim audience these were difficult concepts that needed careful introduction and explanation but none was given.<sup>60</sup>

Camping consistently focused on the issue of authority (*sulṭân*). Only the Bible had authority for him. He mentioned in these programs that people 'should not listen or follow other false authorities [like] the worthless religious books that are based on human authority'. Likewise, he told the audience not to listen to anybody who orders them to participate in 'physical rituals' (*marâsîm jasadîyah*). These rituals cause mental confusion and take man away from the knowledge of

<sup>59</sup> FR broadcast 20 September 2004, Family around the Bible.

<sup>60</sup> FR broadcast 21 September 2004, Outline of New Testament: Colossians.

God'.<sup>61</sup> In the context of FR's theology, this may have referred to baptism and Holy Communion which Camping rejected as rituals of the church-age. However, Arab Muslims could have heard a direct attack on the *Qur'ân* and their ritual prayers in these words.

***Bible Study Program: Genesis 3***

FR taught that the sin of Adam and Eve in eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was not just a personal matter; it had universal ramifications as they were the first parents. For Muslims who do not believe in hereditary sin, this needed explanation. The study focused on the effort of Adam and Eve to hide from God, and on how Adam blamed Eve. 'They felt extremely guilty.'<sup>62</sup> The application was made to the audience:

When we stand before God, He will be aware of each one of our sins. We will not be able to blame anyone for our sins because each one must give an account for his entire life. [...] We cannot fool God. He knows everything. [...] So each one must give God an account of his sins. This is God's law in the Bible.<sup>63</sup>

Islam has a very different view of guilt and sin than Western Christianity. It comes from a culture where honor and shame are the paradigms, not personal responsibility and guilt. Denying mistakes, as Adam and Eve did, is very Middle Eastern but the idea of personal guilt is not. Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent in Paradise. 'Remember that Satan is the angel who rebelled against God, and he is the one who came to Eve in the form of a serpent and tempted her to rebel against God. So Satan should be punished too.'<sup>64</sup> This punishment for all people will happen when all those who have died will hear God's voice and be raised. According to FR:

They will stand alive before God who will judge them for all their sins. The Bible teaches us that the outcome of our sin is an eternal condemnation and spending eternity in a place called hell, where there will be awful, horrible and eternal torture.<sup>65</sup>

Camping's stress on the horrors of hell are quite understandable to Muslims who share his vivid and painful view of the negative side of the afterlife. He often spoke about this theme in his programs.

***Reformation Hour: Matthew 25:14-30***

Madany told his audience that man should be completely ready with a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before He returns to earth on the Last Day. 'In other words, today is the day of salvation, and if you have always neglected the subject

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> FR broadcast 21 September 2004, Bible Study Program: Genesis 3.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> FR broadcast 23 September 2004, Bible Study Program.

of your salvation, you are jeopardizing your life. You will be unprepared to meet Jesus on the last day.’

For those who believed in Christ, Madany had other advice based on the Parable of the Talents. Christ gave his believers spiritual abilities, and they had to use those through their daily efforts to serve Him and ‘work for their Lord, and tell the good and joyful news of His Kingdom to everyone. They must work hard in doing well and in manifesting the salvation gift that they have taken freely from God’. Madany’s words came from his Christian environment but they were well chosen in order to also speak to Arab Muslims.

Madany ended his program with a quote from Matthew about the person in the parable who did not serve his Master well. He was cast into the outer darkness where men wept and gnashed their teeth.

### ***Open Forum***

In the Open Forum Harold Camping answered questions from listeners live in the USA. These were translated literally into Arabic. These questions were often of a rather esoteric character, even in the context of North American evangelicalism, and so were the answers. For Arab Muslims, they were mostly unintelligible. Some examples of this will suffice.

Camping often spoke in his program on questions related to his Calvinistic theology of salvation. Issues like the total depravity of man, predestination and election were often discussed.<sup>66</sup> Central in his thinking was the concept that as man is spiritually dead in sin from his birth he cannot therefore do anything to be saved. ‘If God wants to save someone from his sins, He will be the one to do that for him. We cannot prevent or refuse that. We cannot even stand in the way against that salvation [...] Can a dead body resist God?’<sup>67</sup> For Arab Muslims, most of the discussions in Open Forum regarding these issues were incomprehensible.

The other theme that Camping often touched upon was eschatology. He quoted the Biblical book Revelation regularly often using his own unique and rather incomprehensible explanations. When Camping was asked a question regarding Daniel 10:13 he gave an answer that was hard to follow for his American audience, let alone for Arab Muslims:

Michael here is Christ himself. He is called here ‘one of the chief princes’. There are three princes. God proclaims himself as God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This one God is three in person [...] Christ is the second person. This Holy Trinity is a mystery that we can not unravel. [Camping then proceeds to Daniel 12:1-2]. There is another person in this scene. He looks like an angel. [...] He is Gabriel. The word Gabriel means God’s Man. Most likely this name is another title for Christ and not for an angel at all.<sup>68</sup>

Irrespective of the theological oddity of Camping’s exegesis, this type of discussion was also very unwise in an Arabic context. Muslims are already confused

<sup>66</sup> FR broadcast 24 September 2004, Open Forum. FR broadcast 26 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>67</sup> FR broadcast 22 September 2004, Open Forum. FR broadcast 23 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>68</sup> FR broadcast 20 September 2004, Open Forum.

about the Christian concept of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Saying that Michael and Gabriel (*Jubrâ'il*), the one according to Islam who mediated the text of the *Qur'ân* to Muḥammad, are two other names for Christ was an unnecessary complication.

### 10.5.2.2 Arabic Churches and Ecumenical Issues

#### ***Reading and Listening: What is the True Good News of the Gospel?***

These two programs contained readings from Camping's book entitled, 'What is the True Good News of the Gospel?' (*Mâ hiyâ Bishârah al-Injil al-Ḥaqîqah?*) In these programs, Camping placed Muslims, Jews, Roman-Catholics and Charismatic Protestants in one category. According to him the later two groups are guilty of adding to the Bible. The Roman-Catholic Church reads the Apocrypha and also holds 'that the words of the Pope are infallible' while, on the other hand, the Charismatics believe in 'the holy revelations that are given to its believers through dreams, voices and tongues'. As 'every Gospel is defined by its own authority' the station taught that 'when the authority changes, the Gospel will change too'. FR had a sharp conclusion about any church that did not limit its beliefs to 'the Bible and the Bible only':

[If] we follow a narrower or a wider authority than the one of the Bible, we cannot call ourselves followers of the Good News of the Gospel. Regardless of how holy this authority seems, it will never lead us to salvation.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, FR relegated all churches and their followers who had any sort of creedal statement, to eternal perdition. From an ecumenical viewpoint that was an *anathema*, and from the perspective of broadcasts to the Arab World, it was just as problematic.

#### ***Open Forum***

Churches did not play any role in Camping's view of salvation. Everything revolved around the individual and his personal choice and his relationship with Jesus Christ. The Open Forum programs added their support to this position and made it clear that churches were considered a hindrance to salvation. This made Ecumenism irrelevant for FR. Camping preached that all Christians should stop going to church because the Holy Spirit had left the 'Corporate External Church' (*al-Kanîsah al-Mu'assasîyah al-Khârijîyah*) since 2001. This subject was discussed in each *Open Forum* program of the cited week. Camping warned people that they should leave the Churches:

We, the real believers in Jesus Christ, are not found in the denominations of the synods of the Institutionalized External Church. [...] I know that one day the believers will gradually wake up, their eyes will be opened by God, and they will realize that they have to leave the Institutionalized External Church, because the Holy

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<sup>69</sup> FR broadcast 25 September 2004, Reading and Listening: What is the True Good News of the Gospel?

Spirit of God is not working there any longer. So when the Last Day comes, there will not be any genuine believer in that church. All of them will have stopped attending it, and whoever goes there will be under God's wrath and judgment.<sup>70</sup>

One listener told Camping that he stopped going to church and that he felt good about it. He asked Camping whether God does not discipline those whom He loves when they do something against His will. Camping agreed with the caller's argument; the fact that he felt good about not going to church, confirmed that he had made the right choice:

Well, you must remember that in his new and risen spirit, he doesn't want to sin again. So he will be uncomfortable and more and more confused. And he will start wondering whether or not he should have done whatever he did. He will start reading his Bible carefully and ask himself if his action pleased God or not. But if he goes on doing what is wrong, God will discipline him at a certain time.<sup>71</sup>

Camping often used that circular argument in his programs. He defined being a good Christian by not going to church, studying the Bible, and living in accordance with the Bible. If people felt comfortable with this, they proved that they were good Christians and that Camping's message was right. However as someone who always spoke against subjective feelings in relationship to salvation, Camping seems somewhat contradictory in this.

Through some exegetical juggling Camping tried to make his point that the Bible taught that one day, before the return of Christ, the Church-age would end. He quoted Mathew 24:2 where Jesus predicted that the Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed and that no stone would be left upon the other. According to Camping, the 'Temple that Jesus is talking about, are the Institutionalized External Churches and Assemblies, and the living stones are the real believers in Jesus Christ. But a day will come when there will not be left one stone upon another, meaning the end of God's use of the Institutionalized External Churches and Assemblies.<sup>72</sup>

Camping often condemned the faults he saw in the Churches and he especially lashed out against Charismatics. He rejected preachers that made people fall backwards and called it an act of Satan:

Satan is doing this miracle. God gave him permission to do that supernatural activity. You should know that everyone of those who fell down is under God's condemnation and his fearful judgment. They were prey and slaves of Satan who is the main source of destruction and devastation.<sup>73</sup>

An 11-year-old boy asked Camping where the Bible teaches that it is wrong to speak in tongues. Camping answered that the 'Bible is very clear about this subject. Do you live in the time of the Bible when it had not been completed yet?

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<sup>70</sup> FR broadcast 23 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>71</sup> FR broadcast 20 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>72</sup> FR broadcast 21 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>73</sup> FR broadcast 23 September 2004, Open Forum.

[...] At the moment when the Bible was completed, God declared that we should not add or take away any word from the prophecy of this book'.<sup>74</sup> Camping called people involved in Charismatic churches 'spiritually blind' as they did not realize that Satan was the origin of these 'messages' or 'strange languages'.<sup>75</sup>

FR also spoke out against Churches where the pastor or priest, in his capacity as a servant of God, pronounced forgiveness of sins over the congregation. 'We cannot be positive that this person is really a son of God (*ibn Allâh*). Consequently, all this play that is going on in these Churches is completely disgraceful and it has nothing to do with the Bible or what it says.'<sup>76</sup>

Camping taught that all Churches had become independent of God. They had rewritten regulations for marriage and divorce and he disputed their concepts concerning the nature of salvation.<sup>77</sup> He blamed them for allowing women to be elders or pastors in churches and he mentioned that the Churches 'don't preach condemnation. And this is why the Bible says that their preaching is useless'.<sup>78</sup> His conclusion was radical:

The Bible says that Satan has taken his seat in the Temple which represents the Institutionalized External Churches and Assemblies. The church has become the spiritual Babylon that is under God's wrath now.<sup>79</sup>

Camping asserted that the time of preaching the Gospel had not ended but that the responsibility was now with individuals and organizations like FR and no longer with the 'Institutionalized External Churches'. He also told his audience repeatedly that as tithing was a good thing during the Church-age it should now be applied to organizations such as FR for proclaiming the Gospel.<sup>80</sup>

As Camping rejected all Churches the concept of Ecumenism was clearly irrelevant to him. To broadcast this message to Christian Arabs and Muslims was not what Christian Arabic broadcasts should be transmitting. Besides which, it was also totally incomprehensible to listeners in the Arab World.

### 10.5.2.3 Christian-Muslim Relations

In the period investigated the programs of FR never discussed the issue of Christian-Muslim relations. This was directly related to the fact that all programs of FR were translated from Camping's American programs, but also to his view that the Gospel should be preached without any effort to contextualize the message.

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<sup>74</sup> FR broadcast 24 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>75</sup> FR broadcast 26 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>76</sup> FR broadcast 24 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>77</sup> FR broadcast 21 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>78</sup> FR broadcast 22 September 2004, Open Forum. FR broadcast 26 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>79</sup> FR broadcast 21 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>80</sup> FR broadcast 21 September 2004, Open Forum. FR broadcast 22 September 2004, Open Forum. FR broadcast 24 September 2004, Open Forum. FR broadcast 26 September 2004, Open Forum.



#### 10.5.2.4 Pastoral Care

##### ***Practical Subjects: Alcoholism***

According to FR, there is no hope for an alcoholic who is not related to Jesus Christ ‘because away from Him, everybody looks at the issue as if it is a disease or something genetic. But [...] the Bible considers it a sin.’ According to FR, that was exactly why there was hope for alcoholics. ‘Jesus Christ did not come to treat our genetic life, nor did he come to remove our diseases [...] but he actually came to treat our sins.’<sup>81</sup>

The advice given to people dealing with alcoholism was to trust in Christ and his work of salvation in His death and resurrection. This was the first step. ‘When he really believes in that work, then, at this very moment, his sins are forgiven and the Holy Spirit dwells in him.’ For the person who was a Christian now, the next step was to be ‘filled with the Spirit’, based on Ephesians 5:18:

For the drunkard, the answer is not to stop drinking alcohol or to break that habit. Most of the people who tried to help alcoholics by making them break that habit and give up, or even those who tried to help themselves by doing that, failed. It is not a matter of breaking a habit.<sup>82</sup>

Being filled with the Spirit meant, according to Camping, that ‘exactly as the wine used to fill his life and take over every part of his body, he [had] to let the Spirit fill every corner of it’:

He must do what the Bible tells him about his relation with his wife, his children, and his body. So he begins to find time in order to have enough sleep. He must also decide what kind of friends he wants to be with everyday. Whether or not he should go to church! Read the Bible! Pray! Doing his job properly!<sup>83</sup>

The program ended with a prayer for alcoholics and their families. ‘Lord, [...] please help all of them to turn back to Christ and find in Him the power that can change man’s whole life.’<sup>84</sup> This was a rather un-pastoral approach for anyone with an alcohol problem. It assumed that, for a Christian, to break the addiction was mainly a mental choice to live a proper, Christian life.

##### ***Open Forum***

Camping was not against drinking alcohol *per se*. ‘You could have a glass of wine with your supper. It can help you in releasing the tension and alleviate your nerves in addition to digesting your food in a better way. It is a gift from God, but unfortunately, the world is misusing it.’<sup>85</sup> In the context of North American Christian culture, this was a remarkably liberal viewpoint. In the context of broadcasting to

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<sup>81</sup> FR broadcast 22 September 2004, Practical Subjects: Alcoholism.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> FR broadcast 21 September 2004, Open Forum.

an Arab audience, it was not a particularly wise statement since Muslims see the drinking of alcohol as one of the foremost vices of Christians.

Camping rejected any outward phenomena or feelings related to the moment of salvation. ‘I do not trust in any outward phenomena or inward feelings or anything likewise, and especially your presence in a church where you were told that “brother you have been saved from your sins”.’ FR, with its Reformed background, stressed that God is the one who does all the work to save people from sin.<sup>86</sup> However, another criterion was proposed:

What you need to ask yourself is that when you read the Bible, do you have a desire to obey God? Read the following from 1 John 2:3: ‘And by this we may be sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments.’ What are His commandments? All the Bible.<sup>87</sup>

This matter was often brought up in the Open Forum. Camping insisted that as a Christian is someone who had received a new spirit from God, that new spirit in his inward being drives him to ‘have a genuine and ardent desire to do the will of God’.<sup>88</sup> It is questionable whether pastorally that was wise, as for many Christians that desire does not seem to come naturally. With Camping’s approach, the assurance of faith does not lie in the salvific acts of Christ, but in the extent to which the Christian desires to do well. This is closer to the Islamic approach than to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A woman called in and asked Camping whether she could re-marry her ex-husband who had divorced his second wife. They wanted to be married again. ‘My answer is that you cannot marry again, even if he divorces his wife or if she dies. Read the first verse of Deuteronomy 24 and you will find the explanation.’<sup>89</sup>

The issue of divorce was brought up often in Open Forum. Camping was adamant that divorce was only allowed in the case of the wife being the adulterer. A woman could not divorce her husband if he was an adulterer.<sup>90</sup> According to Camping, if someone was divorced and married to another woman, he was still married to the first person in the eyes of God. The person that was left behind was not entitled to remarry. ‘Then you should remain unmarried.’ That person should say, ‘Okay Lord, if this is the case I will never think any romantic thoughts. I want to serve you and do your will.’<sup>91</sup>

One caller, who said he was a faithful Christian but also a homosexual, was told by Camping that it was ‘an awful sin’, in the same realm as adultery, murder or robbery. ‘The idea could be approved by a man or a woman, but it will never help them when they find themselves before the throne of God’s judgment on the Last Day.’ Camping also encouraged the listener that ‘all practitioners of sexual de-

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<sup>86</sup> FR broadcast 20 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> FR broadcast 26 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>89</sup> FR broadcast 21 September 2004, Open Forum. FR broadcast 24 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>90</sup> FR broadcast 26 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>91</sup> FR broadcast 24 September 2004, Open Forum. FR broadcast 26 September 2004, Open Forum.

bauchery and deviation [...] can cry out to God in order to have mercy on them, and to save them from their sins.<sup>92</sup>

Camping told the caller that it was impossible that he was a son of God. 'According to the Bible, if I am a drunkard, then I am not a son of God. If I am an adulterer, or a sexual pervert, then I am not a son of God. I am only deceiving myself.'

In another word, dear brother or sister, there is hope, a great hope. Today you may become normal again. Now, you cannot do that by your own strength. You just cannot say that I will not practice homosexuality again, because later you will feel dishonest about that. [...] But you turn back to God confessing your sins and you cry out for mercy, then there is a possibility to be saved.<sup>93</sup>

The caller was not satisfied with the answer. 'I disagree with you in this matter. I am struggling with that issue and I prayed for many years that the Lord would keep this sin away from me, but that did not happen.'<sup>94</sup> Camping's response was sharp and non-pastoral, and as elsewhere, he equated his own interpretation of the Gospel with the Gospel itself:

When you say that you disagree with me, it is like you disagree with the Bible, because I read from the Gospel itself, not my words. So when you disagree with these words, it is as if you disagree with the Most High, the Holy God. Your disagreement has no value at all.<sup>95</sup>

Another caller asked Camping whether he should pray for a miracle for his son who had severe brain damage. Camping answered that God will never forsake his children, but also that he chastises those whom he loves so that they 'learn to depend and trust the Lord.' Camping stressed that whenever anyone is healed from any disease, God is behind it. 'No-one is healed of his disease unless God has put his hand on that disease. The healing could be fast, but sometimes it could be very slow. And there are people who are never healed at all, or they die.'<sup>96</sup>

Camping told the father of the sick son that it is impossible to know what God will do, but that in all cases, 'He is in control of everything in this world and in my life. We know that He wants our best interest.'<sup>97</sup> He advised the caller to leave the matter in the hands of God:

There might be some kind of healing but don't expect or wait for a miracle, and don't insist that God should heal your son because you should not dictate Him [to fulfill] your desires. You could pray to God saying 'Lord, give me wisdom to take my son to the right doctor who can give him the right medicine. If this medicine helps him, this is great. If not, it's great too.'<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> FR broadcast 22 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> FR broadcast 22 September 2004, Open Forum

<sup>96</sup> FR broadcast 23 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

These examples of Camping's pastoral approach show that his main concern was theological, not pastoral. He did not show much empathy with the people and their problems. His answers were certainly not relevant to an Arabic audience.

#### **10.5.2.5 Cultural Issues**

Cultural issues were never addressed during this week of FR programs. That was a reflection of the fact that all programs were translated from Camping's American programs. It also reflected Camping's efforts to proclaim what he considered a 'pure' Gospel that was not tainted by cultural matters.

#### **10.5.2.6 Socio-Economic and Political Issues**

##### ***Reformation Hour: Economy***

In the context of the other programs broadcast by FR, this program of Madany was quite different as it was of a more intellectual and philosophical level. Madany spoke about the importance of macro-economics for the personal life on man and the importance of ethics for the economy.

I am not led by the modern atheistic philosophies that inspired many of the economic theories, but I clearly state that my starting point is that God is the owner of the whole universe, and that man who is considered the crown of all creation, is God's steward on earth. [Therefore] I connect economics with ethics.<sup>99</sup>

Madany stressed the ownership of God of all there is, and that He made man into a steward. This was not only Biblical language, but it was also the language of Islam that the 'stewardship he gave is for the good of humanity in its entirety and not for any distinctly chosen people'. That entailed, according to Madany, that 'those who are in charge of the economic process have to take into consideration the well-being of everyone around them, and not their own utilitarianism or selfishness that deprives others of what God has given them'. He referred firstly to the need to preserve rainforests and secondly to not use harmful additives in agriculture. 'If we apply the philosophy of separation of economics and ethics, we will bring incomparable disasters to our world and to our children and grandchildren.'<sup>100</sup> Madany therefore stressed the duty to have an ethical approach to macro-economic life:

Our tortured world is eager for the dawning of a new day where you find equality among people and where all the contradictions of modern life disappear. But this day will never come unless we confess our detachment from God, and repent and turn back to walk on the right path (*al-ṭarīqah al-mustaqīmah*). Amen.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> FR broadcast 25 September 2004, Reformation Hour.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

These last few words reflect the Opening Chapter (*Sûrah al-Fâṭihah*) of the *Qur'ân*, containing a prayer to lead the believer on the 'the Right Path' (*Sûrah al-Mustaqîm*).

This message dated from a time when Madany felt he had to speak against atheist economic philosophies. It is likely therefore that this program was from the 1960s or 1970s, as by the 1980s the Marxism he referred to was no longer an issue in the Arab World. Without using specifically Christian language, he used concepts that were known to Muslims but he used them with a broader, less sectarian meaning than Islam did.

### **Open Forum**

A caller asked Camping how to relate the most urgent need to preach the Gospel with the need to earn a living. The issue at stake was whether Christian should not spend all their time doing spiritual things. Camping answered that God gave the Sunday to Christians as a day to focus on spiritual things, to 'keep our spiritual balance straight as we live here on earth.' For him, more earthly things were just as much for glorifying God:

On the other hand, as we are buying things, getting busy in earning our living, preparing for a summer vacation, or anything else, we should glorify God exactly as He teaches us. We do all things whether it is drinking or eating for God's glory.<sup>102</sup>

That was a Reformed comment by Camping. It is surprising that, if this was his opinion, nothing of it was elaborated upon in any other of his programs. In all of FR's programs, issues under discussion were always religious and personal, with no reference to the socio-economic or political implications of the Gospel. On one occasion only did Camping make a political reference, based on Romans 13, with respect to the role of government and its right to use force against crime and external enemies. 'The government has to prepare a proper army to protect the nation.' This also entailed that individuals did not have the right to revenge, but that they had to leave that to the proper institutes of government.<sup>103</sup>

## **10.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE**

Madany, whose programs were paramount on FR for two decades, said that he never received any response 'that could be attributed to this short wave station'. He also maintained that he never heard about any response sent to the address in Philadelphia where the Egyptian announcer of the station was based.<sup>104</sup> Even though FR's airtime increased greatly after 1996, it is unlikely that its response increased notably as during the same period most other broadcasters saw a sharp decrease in audience response.

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<sup>102</sup> FR broadcast 24 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>103</sup> FR broadcast 22 September 2004, Open Forum.

<sup>104</sup> Madany in an email to the author (4 July 2003).

FR has not published any audience response details with respect to its Arabic broadcasts. Neither has it responded to requests for information from the author other than a letter from Mr. A. Camping of the Arabic Section of FR in 2003 who wrote that they had received ‘many, many responses and from all over the world from Arabic speaking people, from Africa, the Middle East and as far as the four corners of the world.’<sup>105</sup> It is unclear what A. Camping meant by ‘many, many responses’, and for a lack of factual information it is not possible to be definite about FR’s Arabic audience response. It seems reasonable though, to assume that FR received very little response from the Arab World per hour of programs broadcast.

## **10.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

### ***10.7.1 Indigenization***

The management of FR and its Arabic broadcasts were in the hands of Camping and other North Americans. Between 1974 and the 1990s, however the Arabic broadcasts of FR were, for all practical purposes, managed by Madany. The fact that his programmatic advice was overruled regarding certain books of the Bible not being broadcast, would give the impression though that there was no serious effort at indigenization by FR.

The minimal role Arabs played in the program production of FR is illustrated in two ways. Firstly, only one or two Arabs were involved in the translation work and secondly, they had no ability to adapt the programs. Camping was so convinced of the supra-cultural truth of his message, including his delivery style, that he did not need the advice of Arabs.

### ***10.7.2 Contextualization***

#### **10.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

FR broadcast the same programs to all parts of the Arab World. It had no formal strategy for reaching any particular audience. As it assumed that its Gospel message would be suitable for any audience, it did see a need to target any audience in a different manner.

#### **10.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

Without a clear homogenous target audience it is hard to speak to any audience in its actual context. In reality, as most programs of FR were translations of the English originals, FR had made a decision not to care about its audience’s context. The programs did not contain any special message regarding the socio-political environment of the Arab audience either. Thereby CW5 was partially unheeded. The programs did not contain a Gospel application for society and therefore they did not contain a prophetic witness into Arab society. Thus CW4 was not heeded. Camping propounded a thin, hyper-individual message to his audience. His non-

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<sup>105</sup> Mr. A. Camping in an email to the author (17 April 2003).

contextualized message was of no offence to the Muslim audience, except probably to their intelligence. For Christians, the programs were very offensive.

#### **10.7.2.3 Language**

MSA was the only language chosen for the programs to reach the Arab World. This was a logical choice for a broadcaster that purported to reach the whole Arab World with the same programs. The disadvantage of this approach was that most Arabs would have had difficulty understanding it and it was not the mother tongue of those who did understand it.

#### **10.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

As the programs of FR were largely literal translations from its English programs made by a Christian Arab, the linguistic forms used were those of the Protestant churches of the Arab World. However, the messages in the programs were structured according to their American originals, and in regard to the cultural forms used in the programs, American examples abounded. This therefore meant that the programs were not congenial to the audience.

CW6, concerning the impossibility to separate form and meaning in language and cultural expressions, was heeded by FR as no Islamic forms were used in the programs. However, Camping assumed that North American forms, habits and examples, as used in his programs, could be understood and applied to the cultures of the Arab World. That was just as much an infraction of CW6. Camping should have realized that North American forms carried their own meaning which did not need explanation for an American audience, but were lost in translation into Arabic. He was not aware of the fact that his own message was, to a large extent, an expression of his North American cultural garb. His examples, his applications, his thought patterns were all culturally biased. To translate those literally into Arabic meant that those programs did not speak to an Arabic audience in terms of their own cultural context.

#### **10.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

Christ was portrayed in a traditional Christian manner in the FR programs; He was presented as the Son of God who died and rose again for the sins of the believers. In this respect RCR5 was implemented. However, his views of the Church were very non-conventional. Camping did not portray the Church in a meaningful manner to his audience and he purposely had a message that contradicted what any church would proclaim, so he did not heed CW2 or CW3. He proclaimed that salvation was in one way or another related to Christians leaving the Church and thus directly contradicted CW1 as well. For the churches in the Arab World, FR's message that their time was over and that God had left the churches was just absurd.

#### **10.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

FR broadcasts its programs on its own frequencies and the Arabic programs are therefore surrounded by the identical programs although in other languages. The immediate media environment does not impact the audience's understanding of the programs. It does, however, impact the ability of Arabs to by accident find

these Arabic programs. If at any time they come across the other language broadcasts on the frequencies used, they would not tend to listen along until the Arabic broadcasts would begin.

### ***10.7.3 Christian Witness***

FR, with its forest of strong transmitters, is in an excellent position to play a role of importance amongst Arabic Christian radio broadcasters. No other organization has had the technical facilities that FR has at its disposal. FR's isolationist stance is therefore exceedingly deplorable.

The value of broadcasting half an hour of plain Bible readings each day was questionable. In the context of the Arab World, as elsewhere, the Bible needs explanation. The naïve idea that the Holy Spirit could use the Word when Arabs just listened, without further explanation, was an argument against the need for Camping to explain the Bible at all.

In the programs of FR, the heart of the Gospel, regarding the saving acts of Jesus Christ, was mentioned but the programs spoke much more about the negative views of FR regarding all Churches. FR repetitively told its audience that it should leave the Church. This denial of Christian communion, including the Eucharist, means that the *koinonia* of the Church of Christ was directly denied. The programs also did not reflect the Church's *diakonia* in the world, as hardly any subjects with a *diakonal* angle were treated. The conclusion can therefore only be that in regard to a Christian witness in the public domain of the Arab World, FR does not succeed.

The conclusion with respect to the content of the Arabic programs of FR may be negative but at least FR had its own clear message and style. This was possible because it had no need to sell airtime. This financial independence is the main precondition for any broadcaster to be able to fully implement its own program philosophy. FR succeeded in doing this and in that sense, it is an important example for all Christian broadcasters. However, the theological oddities and the cultural irrelevance of the programs of FR, must lead to the conclusion that if FR is not able to dramatically change its programming, it has no future in the Arab World.



# 11 International Broadcasting Association (IBRA)

The Swedish Pentecostal radio and television organization, International Broadcasting Association (IBRA) was founded in 1948. By 2004, IBRA had approximately 1000 co-workers who produced radio programs in 60 languages targeted at 110 different countries. The organization was broadcasting 200 hours of programs each day. It claimed to have a daily audience of 100 million people. 5,000 letters were received on a daily basis and according to IBRA, every day 700 to 800 people came to faith in Jesus Christ through this ministry. Presently, IBRA is one of the larger international Christian radio broadcasters.

A brief general history of the organization will be outlined in this chapter and a more detailed history of its Arabic ministry given. This later ministry began in 1975, and has continued uninterrupted until this day. This chapter focuses on IBRA's rather unique decentralized approach in which programs were sourced from four major studios while it also actively supported many smaller efforts of production in different countries of the Arab World. This method of operation facilitated its witness in a variety of Arabic dialects.

A description of IBRA's Statement of Faith, target audiences, linguistic choices and programming philosophies are also treated in this chapter. Much attention is given to the programs that were broadcast by IBRA during the week of 20-26 September 2004. For the sake of space, only the medium wave (MW) broadcasts aimed at the Middle East were studied. The impact of these programs was assessed using the audience response figures supplied by IBRA.

This chapter ends with some final observations. Conclusions are drawn regarding IBRA's indigenization and the contextualization of the programs. Based on the actual programs as studied in this chapter, IBRA's Christian witness is also discussed.

## 11.1 HISTORY

### *11.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Broadcasts: 1948-1975*

#### **11.1.1.1 Founding: 1948-1949**

In 1948 the Swedish Pentecostal churches were excluded from broadcasting over Swedish Radio.<sup>1</sup> The reason for their exclusion was that during the broadcast of a meeting from the Pentecostal Filadelfia Church in Stockholm (Sweden), it was mentioned that God had healed a person who had been very ill. In an earlier program the person in question had been prayed for and nobody within the Government radio monopoly had reacted in a negative way. Eskil Johansson, one of the early pioneers of IBRA, concluded: 'Apparently it was permitted to pray for a sick

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<sup>1</sup> Bengt-Ake Bengtson in an interview with the author (23 January 2003).

person, but to then come back and claim that God had answered that prayer was going too far, or so was the opinion of the powers that be.<sup>2</sup>

The presiding pastor of the Pentecostal Filadelfia Church was Lewi Pethrus. During his time of leadership the church grew to over 6,000 members. In 1949, at the annual Swedish Pentecostal conference, Pethrus presented his vision for a Christian radio ministry, which entailed the ownership of a station. From its inception, the idea was not only to broadcast to Sweden, but overseas in other languages too. Pethrus had seen the possibilities of using radio in Christian outreach during his visits to the USA.<sup>3</sup>

From its start, the radio ministry was part of the Pentecostal *Dagen Group* which, besides this radio ministry, also published a Christian daily newspaper *Nya Dagen* and later operated a television ministry TV-Inter. Other divisions in the *Dagen Group* included an insurance company and a rehabilitation ministry. The Pentecostal churches were slow to formalize themselves as a denomination and only united together in 2003. On 1 January 2006 IBRA formally joined that denomination.<sup>4</sup>

#### 11.1.1.2 Searching for a Station: 1949-1955

The Radio Voice of the Swedish Pentecostal Movement began its test broadcasts on 13 August 1949 over Radio Luxembourg. Reception in Sweden was poor, so this attempt was soon abandoned.<sup>5</sup> Another option was to place broadcasting equipment on a ship anchored in international waters. If anchored thirty kilometers offshore, there seemed no restrictions or radio monopolies. The project was technically feasible and work proceeded toward making it a reality. In 1953 the Pentecostals bought a ship, the s/s *Aeolus*, with a capacity of 471 passengers for 'coastal mission'. They purchased a house at Baggefjärden in the Stockholm archipelago, which was equipped with seaport facilities. In this house there was to be a recording studio.<sup>6</sup>

The churches however wanted not only to broadcast to the coasts of Sweden but as a missionary endeavor they also wanted to expand their broadcasts. It was soon discovered that broadcasting from a ship would not provide the desired international coverage because it was impossible to install directional antennas. There were also legal issues that deterred them from proceeding with this option.<sup>7</sup>

While Pethrus was doing the preliminary work on his ship project, he received an offer from a radio station in Andorra. One of the station's owners, the Frenchman Jacques Trémoulet, was willing to lease airtime to Pethrus. Trémoulet could run Radio Andorra as this mini-state had rather liberal media laws.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Eskil Johansson, 'History of IBRA radio', on [www.ibra.org](http://www.ibra.org) (20 April 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Eva Skog in an email to the author (30 November 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Johansson, 'History of IBRA radio'.

<sup>6</sup> Article titled 'Pingströrelsens flytande radiostation verklighet' from the Swedish newspaper *Afton-tidningen* (2 September 1953). Received from Henrik Klemetz (31 March 2005). Henrik Klemetz, 'Jubiläum: 50 Jahre IBRA Radio', in *Radio Kurier – Weltweit Hören* (No. 8, August 2005), p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> Johansson, 'History of IBRA radio'.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

The initial discussions between Trémoulet and the Pentecostals went so well that Pethrus decided to set a date for test broadcasts. Programs were produced in Sweden and sent to the station but they never reached their destination. New tapes were mailed from Stockholm, but they did not arrive at the station either.<sup>9</sup> According to Johansson, Trémoulet informed Pethrus that ‘certain religious authorities in Andorra had decided to prevent these Protestant broadcasts from being aired’. Johansson concluded that the simplest and most effective way to torpedo this new ministry was to use the post office to facilitate the tapes silently disappearing.<sup>10</sup>

It is unclear whether Trémoulet discussed with IBRA that France wanted to close his station. France had closed the borders of Andorra to prevent the delivery of any tapes to Radio Andorra during certain periods. These actions were taken with the intention to end all private broadcasting in French. Moreover, Trémoulet had been accused of collaboration with the Nazi’s under the Vichy regime. He had been acquitted, but he was not popular among the French authorities. These two reasons were the most likely explanations for the disappearance of the tapes.<sup>11</sup>

Trémoulet suggested that the Swedish Pentecostals could broadcast through another of his stations in Tangier. He added that the station in Tangier, Radio Africa Tangier, could be easily expanded for strong broadcasts to Sweden with all the equipment they desired.<sup>12</sup>

#### 11.1.1.3 Broadcasting from Tangier: 1955-1959

Radio Africa Tangier was a well-known station to the Swedes. The Swedish broadcaster Radio Dux had been broadcasting from that station to Scandinavia since 1952 and continued to do so until its closure on 31 December 1959.<sup>13</sup> By using the license of RAT and by investing in its production facilities, general manager Karl G. Ottoson, a Swedish industrialist from Pethrus’ church, got two SW transmitters of ten kiloWatt (kW) each and the full use of their directional antennas. A powerful MW transmitter was made available to them as well on a part time basis.<sup>14</sup>

The first broadcast of IBRA was on 26 July 1955. The broadcasts were initially in Swedish, Danish, Finnish and Norwegian, and were soon followed by English, French, German and Dutch. IBRA’s reception was much better in Europe than Voice of Tangier (VOT), the predecessor of Trans World Radio (TWR). Neverthe-

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> [www.pri.pingst.se/english/spmarticle.asp](http://www.pri.pingst.se/english/spmarticle.asp) (4 January 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Jean-Marc Printz, historian of Radio Andorra, in an email to the author (19 January 2003). Printz wrote: ‘In the 1950s, the French government had effectively closed the borders with Andorra, and sequestered all tapes and mail destined for Radio Andorra. The reason was simple: the French government wanted to close down this station as its owner, Jacques Trémoulet, had been condemned to death in absence for collaboration with the Nazi’s (even though he was innocent). [Beside that] the French government did not accept that any private station that was not under its control, would address a French audience.’ Quote translated from French by the author.

<sup>12</sup> Johansson, ‘History of IBRA radio’.

<sup>13</sup> Hansjörg Biener’s *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit; Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 131.

<sup>14</sup> Klemetz, ‘Jubiläum: 50 Jahre IBRA Radio’, p. 43.

less, IBRA would have preferred to have placed its programs in the total package of what VOT was broadcasting since 1954. However, VOT was not prepared to allow Pentecostals in its programming.<sup>15</sup>

In October 1955 IBRA availed itself of the usage of a 100 kW transmitter, for broadcasts to Spain, Portugal and Italy. IBRA also wanted to broadcast Arabic programs and began preparation for that but due to pressure from the local authorities of Tangier, these broadcasts were cancelled.<sup>16</sup>

IBRA expanded fast. It was soon broadcasting 4½ hours per day in 23 languages. All over Europe local studios were set up for producing programs in those languages. Initially all broadcasts were aimed at Europe, but in 1956 IBRA began its first broadcasts aimed at Africa, in Kiswahili.<sup>17</sup> In 1958 IBRA broadcast five hours per day over a 100 kW SW transmitter, beside one hour per day on MW. By then IBRA was broadcasting in 24 languages. Among its programs were Billy Graham's Hour of Decision, and a program of the American Assemblies of God (AOG) denomination.<sup>18</sup>

From its inception, IBRA's presence on the SW was noticed. In 1956 the organization International Shortwave Radio in London ranked IBRA 15<sup>th</sup> in popularity among the 2000 or so SW broadcasters, based on opinion polls done by that organization.<sup>19</sup>

The growing unrest in Morocco did not deter IBRA from investing in Tangier. Johansson, the technical engineer of IBRA, was aware of the sensitive situation but his leaders in Sweden did not want to hear about moving away from the city. In April 1959 all broadcasters in Tangier were told that their stations would be nationalized by the end of the year. IBRA's final broadcast from Tangier was on 22 December 1959. Immediately thereafter the transmitter was secretly brought to the harbor. Unknown to his Swedish leaders and to the Moroccan authorities, Johansson had personally ensured that 'not one screw' was left in Tangier. He had shipped the whole studio and the broadcasting facilities away.<sup>20</sup> For the friends and partners of IBRA, the loss of the Tangier ministry seemed an 'unmerciful and inexplicable' occurrence.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> In 1993 TWR changed this policy, but IBRA had to sign that it would not do any speaking in tongues on air, and that it would never say that all sick people will be healed, according to Bengtson in an interview with the author (23 January 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Klemetz, 'Jubiläum: 50 Jahre IBRA Radio', p. 44. According to Klemetz, IBRA did broadcast some Arabic programs on a MW transmitter between 1956 and 1959. He received that information from Gösta Åkerlund. Henrik Klemetz in an email to the author (12 July 2005). No other indications of actual broadcasts have been found, so this needs further study.

<sup>17</sup> 'From Tangier to Mission Fields', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. IV No. 2, Second Quarter 1956), p. 28.

<sup>18</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 134.

<sup>19</sup> Eskil Johansson, *IBRA Radio Reaching the World* (n.p., 1988), p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Bengtson in an interview with the author (23 January 2003). Klemetz, 'Jubiläum: 50 Jahre IBRA Radio', p. 45. According to Klemetz all studio equipment, tape recorders and microphones were shipped to South America. Only the diesel generators at the Tangier transmitter site were left. After a legal process some money was received in compensation from the Moroccan state. Klemetz in an email to the author (12 July 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Johansson, *IBRA Radio Reaching the World*, pp. 53-55.

#### 11.1.1.4 New Search for a Station: 1960-1970

In February 1960, shortly after IBRA lost its station in Tangier, Johansson and some other leaders went to Liberia to see whether they could broadcast from there. Johansson described the options IBRA had:

There were three options in Liberia: we could buy time on either ELWA or [on] the state radio, or we could build our own station. The mission owned some land in northern Liberia, and in a meeting with President Tubman we got permission to build whatever we wanted. IBRA had also owned for a long time, a couple of transmitters that were located in Germany. The idea was to prepare the land in northern Liberia and put [those] transmitters there. Since the leaders of those days wanted to build [their] own station the other two options never were considered properly. And then for various reasons the IBRA station never materialized either.<sup>22</sup>

ELWA's influence in Liberian government circles was evident in the way that they blocked the Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) from starting their own station in Liberia in the 1970s. It is possible that ELWA had also ensured that IBRA could not get their own station in Liberia due to ELWA's very conservative stance, which in the 1950s and 1960s included an anti-Charismatic theology. However, according to Johansson, the ELWA staff was 'very friendly and open to cooperation, so the lack of cooperation in those days was not on their part'.<sup>23</sup> Further study to investigate the reason why IBRA did not obtain the permission required, would be worthwhile.

Until 1971 IBRA had no option but to concentrate on supporting local Christian broadcasters globally as they did not have their own facilities.<sup>24</sup> The responsibility of those broadcasts between 1960 and 1971 would usually be with the local counterparts of IBRA, while IBRA would make money and *know-how* available. It is clear from IBRA's effort to build its own station in Liberia that it would have preferred to own one central facility for broadcasting, but being forced to have a totally decentralized approach, was not highly problematic for IBRA. With hindsight, Johansson concluded that this approach was ideal:

Purchasing air time on many radio channels, rather than tying up considerable resources in property, allows Evangelical broadcasts to reach a much greater audience. This policy, carefully chosen by IBRA, has so far proven to be both fruitful and rewarding.<sup>25</sup>

Between 1960 and 1970, IBRA tried to lease airtime on TWR which had begun broadcasting over Radio Monte Carlo in Monte Carlo (RMC-MC) after 1960.

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Eskil Johansson by Gösta Åkerlund in August 2003, and sent by Åkerlund in an email to the author (25 August 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 134. Hansjörg Biener in email to author (3 July 2003).

<sup>25</sup> Johansson, *IBRA Radio Reaching the World*, p. 13.

However, as before, TWR continued to refuse cooperation with the Pentecostal organization.

#### 11.1.1.5 Broadcasting from Portugal: Since 1971

Trémoulet had promised IBRA in 1960 that he would have a new alternative after his station in Tangier was nationalized. It took him a lot longer than anticipated but Radio Trans Europe (RTE) in Sines (Portugal) went on the air in 1970 with test transmissions. Trémoulet had a contract with Deutsche Welle (DW), the German owner of the facilities, to lease the airtime of one of the three 250 kW SW transmitters to private customers. IBRA became the preferred partner for DW by being the first to sign a contract.<sup>26</sup> The broadcasts from Sines did not mean the end of IBRA's broadcasts elsewhere, but it began broadcasting over RTE on a regular basis on 2 April 1971 in 21 languages.<sup>27</sup>

Like in Tangier, IBRA became a broker of airtime for the time it had available. Initially, they leased four hours per day. Pentecostal groups that could not buy airtime from TWR were especially welcomed by IBRA, but conservative Evangelical missions like *Licht im Osten* (Light in the East), Underground Evangelism, and Voice of the Martyrs also bought airtime from IBRA. For these organizations with a focus on Eastern Europe, it was logical to use the transmitters of DW. These transmitters were fully focused on the east and had created their own audiences in Eastern Europe.<sup>28</sup>

#### 11.1.2 Arabic Broadcasts: Since 1975

##### 11.1.2.1 Broadcasts

IBRA's Arabic programs were broadcast from Sines between 1975 and 1992. During the early 1980s, the Arabic broadcasts were 30 minutes each day.<sup>29</sup> Johansson was reportedly personally responsible for the decision of IBRA to start broadcasting Arabic programs. On his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, in 1975, the IBRA staff asked him what present he wanted. According to Bengt Bengtson, IBRA's director for broadcasts to the Arab World since August 1994, Johansson replied: 'I want Arabic broadcasts'.<sup>30</sup>

Between 1975 and 1992, IBRA also broadcast programs from the DW SW relay station on Malta, as the airtime was cheaper on Radio Mediterranean than in Portugal. Arabic broadcasts were not allowed on this station after 1979, though. Trémoulet was responsible for the lease of the airtime in Malta.<sup>31</sup>

Until the World by 2000 (Wb2000) project began in 1986, IBRA was not allowed into the fold with the non-Charismatic Evangelical broadcasters. The only exceptions were the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) and the Far East

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Johansson by Åkerlund. Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>27</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 145.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>29</sup> Ibra Broadcasting Schedules 1980, 1981, 1988 and 1989 as received from Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (16 April 2007).

<sup>30</sup> Bengtson in an interview with the author, 23 January 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Gösta Åkerlund in an email to the author (13 June 2005).

Broadcasting Association (FEBA), which accepted programmes from IBRA. Once Wb2000 accepted IBRA, the door was opened for bi-lateral cooperation with TWR, HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings') and others.<sup>32</sup>

RTE and Radio Mediterranean closed in 1992 as DW did not want to continue its broadcasts to Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism. In April 1992, IBRA therefore stopped broadcasting from those stations and it also decided to cease aiming any SW broadcast in the Eastern Europe area. Like DW, IBRA's director Gösta Åkerlund stated that IBRA 'did not feel it worth the money to use Short-wave for these countries after perestroika'.<sup>33</sup>

As IBRA realized that the DW transmitters were to be phased out, it began to prepare for that by placing its programs with other broadcasters. In the late 1980s it moved some of its Arabic broadcasts to the MW Voice of Hope (VOH) and the SW King of Hope (KOH) broadcasts of the American organization High Adventure Ministries (HAM).<sup>34</sup> IBRA did not seem concerned that the transmitters were based in Israeli-occupied Southern Lebanon, and that the station was explicitly pro-Zionist in its programs. For IBRA, who wanted to broadcast contextualized programs to the Arabs, this was not a wise choice. It contradicted RCR6 regarding the need to have a proper media environment for programs to be contextualized. In media evangelism, the technical carriers of the message and the surrounding messages on the same channel are not considered neutral.<sup>35</sup> IBRA also began broadcasting its programs on a small scale on TWR's RMC-MC signal for North Africa, and in 1995 on a much larger scale from Radio Moscow for the Middle East.<sup>36</sup>

In 2001 IBRA decreased its airtime to the Arab World considerably for financial reasons. *Figure 11.1* gives the weekly hours of broadcasts of IBRA to the Arab World from 1993-2004. Since 1 January 2001 IBRA's main Arabic broadcasts have been aired on SW by the transmitters from the *Deutsche Telekom* facilities in Jülich (Germany).<sup>37</sup> IBRA continued to broadcast a daily program of one hour to the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula simultaneously on different wavelengths from Russian transmitters in the regions of Krasnodar and Samara. With a focus on North Africa, IBRA was airing two programs of 15 minutes and two programs of 30 minutes as part of HCJB's SW broadcasts from London. It also aired 15 minutes each week on MW through TWR's broadcasts on RMC-MC.<sup>38</sup>

In November 2004, IBRA was broadcasting 32 hours of Arabic programs to the Arab World. That included one hour per day to North Africa on SW from Jülich, 1½ hours on MW from Radio Moscow to the Middle East, and 1½ hours per day on SW from Radio Moscow with a focus on Iraq. Beside that, IBRA had about four hours in the blocks of the SW and MW programming on TWR, HCJB and FEBA.

<sup>32</sup> Biener in an email to the author (3 July 2003).

<sup>33</sup> Åkerlund in an email to the author (13 June 2005).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 146.

<sup>36</sup> Åkerlund in an email to the author (13 June 2005).

<sup>37</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Medien Aktuell: Kirche im Rundfunk* (No. 109, January-February 2003), p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> 'Around the World with IBRA; Frequency Schedule', in *The IBRA Signal* (No. 1, May 2001), p. 15.

Beside these MW and SW broadcasts, IBRA also had 1½ hours each day on the audio channel of HCJB, Eutelsat's Hotbird Satellite.<sup>39</sup>

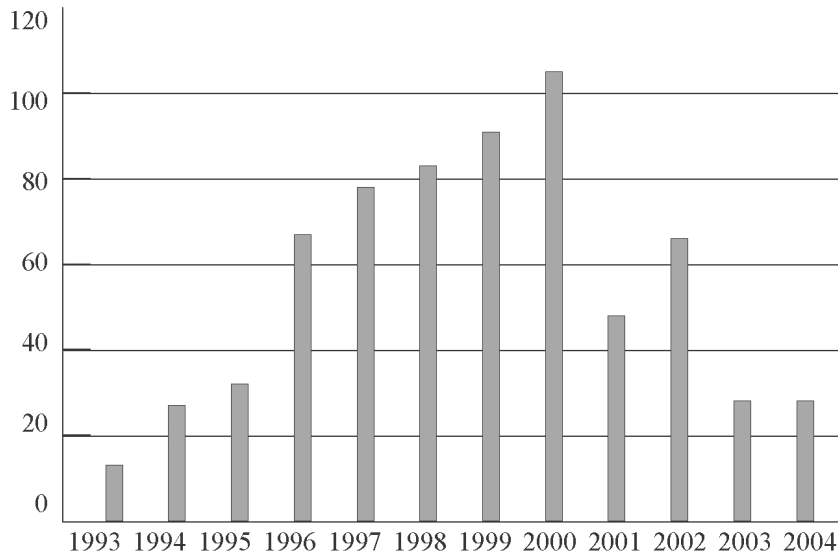


Figure 11.1 IBRA's Arabic Broadcasting Hours per week: 1993-2004

#### 11.1.2.2 Studios

##### *Egypt*

The Arabic programs that IBRA broadcast were produced in the program production studio that it opened for this reason in Alexandria (Egypt) in 1975. Sune Elofson was the first manager of that studio. Until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, IBRA was still producing programs in Alexandria. More study in IBRA's pioneering work in Alexandria would be useful as it has become foundational for much of its later media ministry in Egypt and the Arab World. It was beneficial to its radio production that IBRA based its studio in an Arabic country. This proximity to its audience was important from the perspective of contextualization.

##### *Cyprus*

Since 1990, IBRA has had its central offices and studio, called *ScanMedia*, in Lissol (Cyprus). This office was for program production and broadcasts for the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East, Egypt and Sudan. By 2003 ScanMedia was also responsible for the Lebanese programs and for programs in some Iraqi dialects.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> 'Around the World with IBRA, Broadcast Schedule' (July 2003, November 2004).

<sup>40</sup> *IBRA Around the World* (2002): Brochure. 'The Lighthouse of the Arab World', in *The IBRA Signal* (May 2003), pp. 13-14.



**Malta**

Since 1999 IBRA has had central offices and a studio for productions and broadcasts for North Africa in Malta, called *Lighthouse*. From Malta, production teams were set up in Morocco as well as in Mauritania, where programs were also locally broadcast.<sup>41</sup> *Lighthouse* was a cooperative effort with HCJB and some other organizations. HCJB also broadcast all the North African IBRA programs.<sup>42</sup> IBRA would have preferred to broadcast these programs also on RMC-MC, but for financial reasons they were unable to do that to a large extent.<sup>43</sup>

**Sudan, Palestine, Jordan**

IBRA has also had personnel in Khartoum (Sudan) for radio production since 2001. These programs were initially used by the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) on its weekly radio broadcast of one hour per week by the only national radio station of Sudan. In Palestine, IBRA also had its own production team, as did Jordan. The scale of production in Sudan, Palestine and Jordan was much smaller than the productions done in Egypt, Cyprus and Malta. The usage of these local studios in the Arab World ensured that the program production of IBRA was important from the perspective of contextualizing the Gospel as it ensured a certain level of proximity to the audience than production done in non-Arabic locations like Cyprus or Malta.

**11.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH**

IBRA's Statement of Faith placed the organization among the conservative Evangelical radio organizations. Though IBRA was a denominational organization of the Pentecostal churches in Sweden, its Statement of Faith did not reflect its Pentecostalism; it was broadly Evangelical. This statement was IBRA's own creation. 'IBRA has a work that [is] broader than just the Pentecostal movement, and [therefore] our statement is more inclusive than exclusive', according to Eva Skog, IBRA's information officer.<sup>44</sup>

We believe the Bible to be the divinely inspired and authoritative Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

We believe in one God, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, who eternally exists in the three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. His virgin birth, sinless life, redemptive death, bodily resurrection, present exaltation at God's right hand and the blessed hope of His personal return.

We believe that all men have sinned and therefore are guilty before God and are under His condemnation.

We believe that through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, God in love provided an atonement for sin, so that through repentance and saving faith in Christ, man is delivered from the judgment of God and is born again into life eternal.

<sup>41</sup> Bengt Bengtson in an email to the author (10 December 2002).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Bengtson in an interview with the author (23 January 2003).

<sup>44</sup> Eva Skog in an email to the author (30 November 2006).

We believe in the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, who works in men to bring them to salvation through Christ and who dwells in believers, equipping and empowering them for lives of holiness and fruitful service.

We believe that the Church is comprised of all true believers and that the mission of the Church, with Christ as its head, is to communicate the Gospel of Christ to the entire world.

We believe in the resurrection of the body, the everlasting punishment of unbelievers and the everlasting blessedness of believers in the presence of Christ.<sup>45</sup>

This statement was not polemic but more apologetic. It did not speak about millennial issues, though the denomination IBRA was part of, held premillennial opinions. Personnel that wanted to work with IBRA had to wholeheartedly agree with this expression of the faith. This shows that IBRA heeded warning CW1, regarding the need to profess that there is absolute truth in the Bible and in Jesus Christ, and that faith in Him and participation in the Church were necessary for salvation.

The creedal statement mentioned the importance of mission, but overall, it was not a particularly missionary statement. It was not contextually suitable for the Arab World either. This creed was not a good tool for finding personnel who were able to contextualize the Gospel into Arabic culture. Nevertheless IBRA's Pentecostal theology was a good basis for contextualization, as it entailed a stronger focus on experiential theology than on a precisely verbalized formal theology. This combination created the liberty for allowing Swedish missionaries and Arabic Christians to experiment liberally while endeavoring to witness to the Gospel in ways that were suitable for Arabic Muslim society.

### 11.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

When IBRA began its Arabic broadcasts in 1975, it first opened a studio in Alexandria. The language of most of the programs was MSA. Later, IBRA decided to focus more on North Africa while still maintaining their commitment to producing for the Middle Eastern. This choice to broadcast to North Africa was both because of the lack of churches and Christians in North Africa, but also because the other Christian broadcasters were targeting other areas.

In 1997, IBRA started a series of programs in Moroccan Arabic.<sup>46</sup> Two years later, IBRA published that Lighthouse would be the place 'where the production of Christian radio programmes in 12 of the different dialects and languages spoken in North Africa, will be supported and developed. [...] Most Christian programmes heard in North Africa are broadcast either in classical or Egyptian Arabic, neither of these being their own mother tongue'.<sup>47</sup> Under Lighthouse's guidance IBRA trained Tunisian Christians for a year, and it produced a series of programs in Tu-

<sup>45</sup> Received from IBRA through Eva Skog, IBRA's director of information (13 April 2005).

<sup>46</sup> Bengtson in an email to the author (10 December 2002).

<sup>47</sup> 'The Lighthouse of the Arab World', pp. 13-14.

nisian Arabic which began after 2000. IBRA also trained Mauritanian Christians in radio production and likewise Algerians in 2003 and Libyans in 2004.<sup>48</sup>

The decision to focus on 12 different Arabic and Amazigh languages of North Africa shows IBRA's decision to produce Gospel programs in the actual spoken languages. That was of major importance for contextualizing the Gospel for North Africa, in accordance with RCR3 that prescribes that good contextualization must be done in the languages that people consider their own. By producing those programs in the countries of North Africa itself, IBRA ensured that the native Christians of those lands would be able to make programs that were suitable for their own people groups.

IBRA's goal was, through Lighthouse, to produce a one-hour daily block of programs in North African dialects and languages. These were to be broadcast on SW from Jülich to North Africa. The goal was to have two programs of 15 minutes in Tunisian Arabic, one program of 15 minutes in Moroccan Arabic, and the rest in other North African languages.<sup>49</sup> By 2004 that North African block still included programs in MSA, Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic. This illustrates how hard it was to consistently produce programs in the North African languages.<sup>50</sup> The choice to produce programs in many colloquial languages was admirable and in line with RCR3. Unfortunately though, the fact that it resulted in a mixture of different languages broadcast in a short block of airtime was unfortunate and detracted from the efforts made to contextualize the programs. It meant that no homogenous audience was reached, as should be in accordance with RCR1 and this also made it impossible to implement RCR2 to speak to the audience in its actual, concrete context.

#### 11.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

IBRA's policy statement showed how it purposely followed a decentralized approach due to the local Arab committee being responsible for the direction of program production:

1. IBRA does not own any transmitters, but buys air time on Christian, commercial or government owned stations.
2. Production, follow up and training should be done, if possible, in the area where the listeners live. If this is not possible, the ministry should be located as close to the target area as possible.
3. IBRA works together with indigenous churches and organizations who wish to use radio, TV, audio and video cassettes, along with appropriate follow up materials in their presentation of the Gospel message.
4. In each country where IBRA works, the ministry is to be coordinated by an indigenous committee who has the respect and trust of the local churches.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>50</sup> Bengtson in an email to the author (10 December 2002).

5. Where needed, IBRA provides the necessary equipment for program production and follow up. The technical equipment is available as long as the production is carried out according to the agreements signed between IBRA and the local workers. IBRA also provides training, technical know-how and coordination for an effective media ministry.
6. IBRA is affiliated with World by Radio, a fellowship of the major worldwide Christian radio organizations. The focus of this united effort is to reach all the major language groups with the Gospel through cooperation and coordination.<sup>51</sup>

The points 2, 3 and 4 were clear proofs of IBRA's desire to produce contextualized programs in coordination with the local churches and under indigenous management. It was an effort to make programs that were right for the actual context of the audience, in accordance with RCR2. These policies also show that IBRA wanted to heed warning CW2, as it wanted to produce its programs together with the indigenous churches and under a committee that was respected by those churches. In its programs, IBRA's organizational programming policies were applied. These were summarized by IBRA:

1. The programs shall be listener oriented.
2. The programs shall be positive in their nature. Negative opinions about people or organizations, whether political or religious, shall be avoided. Programs shall not be used to solicit contributions.
3. All program content shall have the Bible as its basis and be based in the overall message of the Bible. The truths of Scripture should be reinforced by giving living examples of what God is doing today. IBRA accepts and fully supports the doctrinal statement of the Lausanne Conference.
4. The programs shall show how God cares for the entire person - body, soul and spirit. Where needed, and if resources permit, the programs may contain information and teaching about health care, agricultural, environmental and other social matters.
5. The programs shall maintain a high technical, cultural, Christian and moral level.
6. The producers of and participants in the programs shall come from the same language and cultural background as the expected listeners. The translation of program material from other languages is acceptable only if that material has been adapted to the listener's culture and manner of communication.<sup>52</sup>

The intended listener orientation, the approach, and the goal to produce programs with people of the same language and culture as the intended audience, were excellent decisions that pointed to IBRA's desire to make contextually suitable programs. They endeavored to speak to the audience in its actual context, as prescribed by RCR2; they wanted to do so in the spoken languages and the actual cultural forms of the people as asked by RCR3 and RCR4.

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<sup>51</sup> [www.ibra.org](http://www.ibra.org) (20 April 2004).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

Elsewhere, IBRA wrote that its programs contained the ‘message of salvation as well as its social implications’.<sup>53</sup> Besides evangelistic programs, IBRA claimed that it also broadcast programs on topics like peace, forgiveness, drugs, healthcare, tree planting, AIDS, and children affected by war.<sup>54</sup> Maybe IBRA did this in its non-Arabic broadcasts, but this intention was not implemented in the programs as described later in this chapter. The fear to make programs touching on controversial political and religious issues was disappointing, and was in contrast with IBRA’s goal to produce contextualized programs, as those issues were very important for the audience. By excluding politics from its programs, IBRA gave the impression that only micro-ethical issues had social implications for the Gospel. It would be interesting to research whether the local churches of the Arab World agreed with this exclusion of controversial political and religious issues. In any case, because of the exclusion of religious and political controversies, RCR2 was only partially implemented. Warning CW5 and CW4, referring to the need for the Gospel to be applied to society and not only at a personal level, and the necessary prophetic role of the Gospel on a societal and national level as well, were thereby only partially heeded.

The goal of IBRA was to ‘see people come to personal faith in Jesus Christ, help new believers grow in faith and practice’ and to ‘lead new believers to existing congregations and plant churches where there are none’.<sup>55</sup> This makes clear that the organization wanted to be more than a radio mission. It felt organizationally responsible for planting new churches, and it could do so as it was a denominational organization with missionaries on the ground in the countries IBRA was broadcasting to.

For IBRA, church planting was the main goal of its Arabic radio broadcasts. ‘Building upon experience in the former Soviet Union, China and India, IBRA Radio, in partnership with other organizations [...] implemented a full strategy for church planting in North Africa and the Middle East’, Bengtson wrote in IBRA’s magazine *The IBRA Signal* in May 2001:<sup>56</sup>

The Arab World has been penetrated by Christian radio broadcasts for many years. It is well known that the radio ministry has produced thousands of single believers, the majority of them being isolated from other believers, without fellowship. Many times, they are not even aware of other Christians in their country.<sup>57</sup>

IBRA considered the home the most culturally accepted meeting place in the Arab culture, both for Christians and for Muslims:

[Radio] is an excellent medium in helping individual converts lacking Christian fellowship to form a House Church. A radio program can also provide an attractive atmosphere for worship and spiritual growth. The program gives the listener a sense of belonging and fellowship. It is not a replacement for fellowship but an en-

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<sup>53</sup> *IBRA Around the World*.

<sup>54</sup> *IBRA Reaches the Unreached with the Gospel* (2003): Brochure.

<sup>55</sup> *IBRA Around the World*.

<sup>56</sup> BÅB, ‘Church Planting in the Arab World’, in *The IBRA Signal* (May 2001), p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

couragement for isolated believers. [...] In a short time, we have seen hundreds of new churches being planted in Yemen, Morocco, Iraq, Egypt and many other Arab countries.<sup>58</sup>

This approach to make the home the targeted *locus* of its programs, implied that IBRA did not endeavor to contextualize programs to the *milieu* of the mosque and Islam, as favoured by some missiologists. In this respect, IBRA heeded CW6 about Islamic forms and their meaning being inseparable.

For countries with no historic Churches or church buildings, the approach of Christians meeting in homes was a good, contextualized method, and in line with RCR5 that demands a meaningful portrayal of the Church. However, for countries with historic Churches, it meant a denominational choice that was rejected by the majority of existent Churches, including the Protestants. IBRA's approach was in direct contradiction to what these local churches wanted, and that seemed to militate against IBRA's expressed desire to work together with local churches and under committees of local Christians. This matter, however, highlights the fact that there were many different churches to cooperate with. IBRA could, with some justification, claim that it *did* work together with local churches, in accordance with CW2. This matter underlines the need to see the Arab World not just as one cultural and religious unit, but as needing different approaches for each people group. It also indicates that IBRA allowed its own ecclesiology and missiology to be prevalent over the ideas of the vast majority of Christians, including most Protestants, in the Middle East.

During the 1980s IBRA was involved in interagency discussion about contextualization but this ceased in the beginning of the 1990s. IBRA claims that in its own work, it 'went from talks into practice'. According to Bengtson, 'it was hot stuff in the beginning of the nineties, and after that we started to act on it'.<sup>59</sup> IBRA organized its own workshops regarding contextualization between 1993 and 1997. Throughout this period contextualization was always included in IBRA's training of recruits.

## 11.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

### *11.5.1 History: 1975-2004*

During the 1990s, IBRA's own production facilities produced around 60 different programs, with 40 producers and with approximately 400 people involved in the production. Some of these programs were series of 52 programs each. Other programs ran much longer. For instance, Nabil Bashit produced more than 500 Uncle Gram in a World of Crimes (*'Amm Jirâm fî 'Âlam al-Ijrâm*) programs from 1994 to 2002.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Bengt Bengtson in an email to the author (10 December 2006).

<sup>60</sup> Received from Eva Skog in an email to the author (12 September 2003).

IBRA's cooperative approach was outlined in one of its brochures as it stated 'It encourages [...] ecumenical efforts by cooperating with other partners wherever this will promote the spread of the Gospel'.<sup>61</sup> This cooperative approach led to a variety of producers, languages and programs. This can be assessed from *Figure 11.2*, which lists IBRA's Arabic programs, their producers and the languages used during 2003. Some of the producers were also the main speakers in the programs.<sup>62</sup>

The dominance of Egyptian and Lebanese programs on IBRA was a result of the fact that most Christian Arabs were from those two lands. It seemed that all producers of these programs were born in Christian families. With IBRA's goal of mainly reaching Muslims, this was a disadvantage as Middle Eastern Protestants had some linguistic and cultural gaps to bridge in their programs. It is surprising that IBRA did not use programs by former Muslims from the Middle East. The usage of mostly Egyptian and Lebanese Christians militated against IBRA's expressed goals and against RCR2, RCR3 and RCR4.

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<sup>61</sup> Brochure: *Around the World with IBRA Radio* (n.d). How IBRA stimulated external program producers was visible in the work of Rûbâ Salîm. IBRA encouraged her to produce her own radio programs, so she began Arab Woman Today (AWT) as a weekly program of 15 minutes in 1999 in Amman (Jordan). She did this 'for the purpose of reaching and encouraging Arab women with the love of Jesus Christ through the "unseen missionary" called radio.' Rûbâ was married to the pastor of a Baptist church in Jordan, and built 'a strong women's ministry in the church'. She studied Mass Communication at Yarmûk University in Jordan. Between 1987 and 1994, Rûbâ lived in the USA with her husband as he studied at Dallas Theological Seminary. 'Arab Woman Today is the only Christian radio program designed to reach Arab women with the Gospel of Jesus Christ', Rûbâ claimed. She targeted young women: 'Although many women in the Arab World are educated, the vast majority are not. Most cannot read and are forbidden to leave their homes without a chaperon. They have virtually no chance of hearing the Gospel, unless they hear it via radio.' As AWT targeted uneducated women, the idea to aim for women in all 22 Arab countries was not helpful. Uneducated women all over the Arab world would not be able to understand the language Rûbâ used. According to Rûbâ, mail came from 'Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Jordan, Syria, and few from other countries'. That mail did not come from the uneducated women the programs targeted, as those would not have been able to write back. The programs addressed 'social issues that Arab women face, but based on a Biblical viewpoint.' Many of the programs were about marriage, parenting and children, the emotional life, relationships, and health needs. Those topics indicated a conservative approach to what women in the audience might need, though it is likely that these programs were more suitable for Arab Protestant Christian women than for Muslims. In 2003, these programs were broadcast twice a week on TWR through RMC-ME, and also twice a week by IBRA through Radio Moscow. Both organisations repeated the same programs during the week. New programs of AWT were first used by TWR before IBRA broadcast them. The reason why Rûbâ produced 15 minutes per week and not more was budgetary. 'TWR charges full rate. Due to the high cost, I am limited in budget, time, and staff.' IBRA financially supported Rûbâ's ministry in order to help her pay the airtime expenses on TWR. That was interesting proof that for IBRA, the broadcasting of good programs and the stimulation of new producers was more important than organizational competition. AWT received about 200 letters by email and mail in 2002. That was not a high number, as the programs were broadcast four times each week, of which two broadcasts were on MW. The organization did not use a phone number, only a postal address in Jordan beside its email address. For the broadcasts over Radio Moscow, IBRA also used its own address in Malta. Rûbâ offered books and the Bible to her audience. 'Arab Woman Today, Reaching & Encouraging Arab Women through Radio' (Amman, n.d.): brochure. Rûbâ Salîm in emails to the author (20 May and 4 June 2003).

<sup>62</sup> Skog in an email to the author (12 September 2003). If it was not known whether producers wanted to be identified, only their first names were used. The names of Shadi and Selwa Habib are pseudonyms.

Rif'at Zakī was IBRA's main Egyptian program producer. His programs modelled the House Church movement that IBRA liked to encourage in the whole Arab World. For some years during the 1990s, he personally led such a House Church movement in Egypt. In 1996 IBRA began producing its weekly series of half-hour programs called Church in My Home in Moroccan Arabic but it was produced by Rif'at.<sup>63</sup> These programs were broadcast by IBRA on its SW wavelength from Jülich, and also by TWR from Monte Carlo and HCJB from London. Two years later, a series of programs of one hour, titled Church without Walls, was taken into production. This was also for the House Church movement although in Egyptian Arabic.

Yūsif Manṣūr, since the 1980s the radio producer of Life Agape, was another major supplier of Egyptian programs. He was also in charge of all of IBRA's productions and studio in Alexandria at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The main Lebanese program producer for IBRA in 2003 was Elie Karam, a Pentecostal speaker. His programs focussed on miracles. Karam promised his audience *health and wealth* as the natural outcome of true faith. Irrespective of the theological validity of these viewpoints, it should be recognized that in the Arab World, Muslims and Christians have a great interest in experiential religion. In that sense Karam's focus on faith healing was contextually suitable.

Program Title	Language	Producer
Youth to Youth	Egyptian	John
Weapon of Love	Egyptian	'Abd
Hour for Decision	Egyptian	Rif'at Zakī
Church in My Home	Egyptian	Rif'at Zakī
Church without Walls	Egyptian	Rif'at Zakī
Church in My Home	Moroccan	Rif'at Zaki
From House to House	Moroccan	Hamīd
Unknown Title	Moroccan	'Abd Allāh
All Problems have a Solution	Tunisian	John
Victorious Life	Tunisian	John
Our Neighborhood	Tunisian	John
Every Question has an Answer	North African Dialects	Yūsif
You and I on the Way	MSA in Palestinian and Syrian dialects	Shadi and Selwa Habib
Eye Witness	MSA in Egyptian dialect	Nabil
Bible Stories	Middle Eastern Dialects, including Iraqi Arabic	Many Different Voices
Biblical Characters	Egyptian	Manīs 'Abd al-Nūr

Figure 11.2 Programs on IBRA in 2003 (Continued on next page)

<sup>63</sup> Bengtson in an email to the author (10 December 2002).



Program Title	Language	Producer
Woman Today	Jordanian	Rūbā Sālim
College Life Club	Jordanian	Rajā'ī
Lift up the Praise	Lebanese	Jūrj, Madūnā and Elie Karam
Listeners Greetings	Lebanese	Jūrjīt
Great Leaders	Lebanese	Elie Karam
Miracles and Wonders	Lebanese	Elie Karam
God and Money	Lebanese	Elie Karam
Redeemer of the Soul	Lebanese	Elie Karam
Gifts of the Spirit	Lebanese	Elie Karam
Jesus Invites You	Saidi	Jamāl
Bāsim and Janīt on the Internet	Egyptian	Nabīl Bashīt
Dialogues	Egyptian	Yūsif Maṣṣūr
White Page	Egyptian	Yūsif Maṣṣūr
Healing Touch	Egyptian	Abūnā Daniyāl and Yūsif Maṣṣūr
Bold and Strong	Egyptian	Abūnā Daniyāl and Yūsif Maṣṣūr
Open Mailbox	Egyptian	Ramsīs

Figure 11.2 Programs on IBRA in 2003 (Continued from previous page)

Some Tunisian Christians in 2000 created a series called *All Problems have a Solution* after a year of training with IBRA. The program was mainly pre-evangelistic. During the same period, these Tunisian producers also made a similar size series called *Victorious Life*, focused on discipleship.<sup>64</sup> These programs were, as far as can be assessed, the first Christian radio programs in Tunisian Arabic. Since they were produced by Tunisian Christians, these programs were probably quite suitable for the Tunisian audience. Likewise a number of Moroccan believers read the Moroccan programs and thus these were probably contextually suitable for Moroccan Arabs. It was not possible to get more information on the producers and participants of these programs due to the security considerations for North African Christians.

#### 11.5.2 Programs of 20-26 September 2004

During the week of 20-26 September 2004, IBRA broadcast a total of four hours each day to the Arab World. Of that, 1½ hours each day were aimed at Iraq through SW, one hour at North Africa by SW, and 1½ hours on MW to the Middle East over six days each week. On Tuesdays, FEBA leased the airtime on the same

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

frequency, for broadcasting its own program in the grid. Details of these broadcasts can be found in *Figure 11.3* which also contains information about the broadcasts of IBRA's programs in the context of other Christian broadcasts. In total, IBRA broadcast 3¾ hours of its own programs on TWR and HCJB during the week of 20-26 September 2004.

The daily broadcast of one hour to North Africa consisted of three or four separate programs. On Tuesday, FEBA filled the whole hour with its programs, as it did in the MW frequency of IBRA. *Figure 11.4* gives details about the programs in the block for North Africa. In this block IBRA asked its audience to write to PO Box 56851 in Limassol (Cyprus). For a North African audience that was not a logical choice and it may have deterred some people from writing to the programs.

Week Days	Frequency	Target Area	Time (GMT)
1234567	5935 SW (Samara)	Iraq	19.00-20.30
1234567	7340 SW (Jülich)	North Africa	20.00-21.00
123-567	1170 MW (Krashnodar)	Middle East	20.00-21.30
--3-5--	15530 SW		05.15-05.30
123--6-	12025 SW	On HCJB	21.30-22.15
-2-----	1467 MW	On TWR	21.15-21.30
-4-----	1233 MW	On TWR	21.00-21.15
1-----	1233 MW	On TWR	03.00-03.15

*Figure 11.3 Broadcasts of IBRA to the Arab World: 20-26 September 2004*

The daily SW broadcasts of 1½ hours for Iraq basically contained what was also transmitted to the Middle East on MW with some additions. IBRA asked its Iraqi audience to write to PO Box 57420 in Limassol or to PO Box 911526 in Amman (Jordan). This study researched the content of the MW broadcasts of IBRA. These broadcasts formed the backbone of the SW broadcasts to Iraq and North Africa and as such used languages that were generally understood throughout the Arab World. *Figure 11.5* lists the programs as broadcast on MW from 20-26 September 2004.

### 11.5.2.1 Biblical Topics

#### *Biblical Characters*

In his program *Biblical Characters*, Manîs 'Abd al-Nûr discussed the story of David and Goliath by re-telling the Bible story. He focused on 'how strong David's faith was in the living God'. The program ended with a quote from Psalm 44 written by David: 'I do not trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame.' People were then asked to write to Call of Hope, at an address in Stuttgart (Germany) which was the address of *Karmel Mission* (KM).<sup>65</sup> The method of storytel-

<sup>65</sup> IBRA broadcast 22 September 2004, *Biblical Characters*.

ling was an effort to contextualize the Gospel to the Arab and especially the Muslim audience. The program was in MSA so it did not heed RCR3 regarding the need to use the colloquial of the audience. The linguistic and cultural forms were taken from the Christian environment, but they were intelligible for Muslims. There was no effort to use Islamic jargon, so CW6 was heeded.

### **Open Mailbox**

In Open Mailbox, pharmacist Bâsim and his wife Doctor Sâmiyah discussed letters from the audience. In this program they treated a parable of Jesus who compared the Kingdom of God with a man who found a treasure. First, they explained what it means that God is a King, and then that a King must also have a Kingdom. ‘When Jesus Christ (*Yasû‘ al-Masîh*) was living in this world, He often spoke about the Kingdom of God (*Malakût Allâh*)’, Bâsim said. He then explained that the Lord Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray: ‘Our father (*Abânâ*) who art in heaven [...] Your Kingdom come’.

20-09-04	Host Linda	Come and See	Home to Home	
21-09-04	Café Maghrib	Every Question has an Answer	Arab World Today	
22-09-04	FEBA			
23-09-04	All Problems have a Solution	Jesus invites You		Signs and Wonders
24-09-04	Victorious Life	Every Question has an Answer	Lift up the Praise	Biblical Characters
25-09-04	Weapon of Love	Bâsim and Jânîr on the Internet		Great Leaders
26-09-04	Church in My Home		Woman Today	Miracles and Wonders

Figure 11.4 Programs of IBRA as broadcast to North Africa: 20-26 September 2004

The importance of God’s Kingdom was then shown through the parable of the man who found a treasure in a plot of land, and who sold everything in order to buy that land. After introducing the importance of the Kingdom of God, Bâsim and Sâmiyah began to explain God’s Kingdom from creation:

We want to start with the history of this great Kingdom as it was declared by the Holy Spirit in the Bible (*al-Kitâb al-Muqaddas*), in both the Old and the New Testament (*al-‘Ahd al-Qadîm wa al-‘Ahd al-Jadîd*).

They began at Genesis, explaining that the earth that was created by God was without form and void, because the Devil (*Iblîs*) had destroyed God’s good creation. They used complicated verses from Isaiah and Ezekiel as proof-texts for this idea. The program proceeded to explain that God created Adam and Eve to rule over the earth, but again Satan came to spoil creation. Cain and Abel were mentioned, the Great Flood and Abraham. Isaiah’s prophecies about a coming savior

were quoted. In conclusion the audience was asked to ‘pray and thank God because he shone upon us with His light and with Christ’s coming to earth.’ A prayer was then read addressing Jesus as the only Son of God (*Ibn Allāh al-wahīd*) and it contained similar Christian language. The program ended with IBRA’s phone number +357(99)447768, and PO Box in Limassol as well as the website of www.radioibrahim.com and a related email address.<sup>66</sup>

### 11.5.2.2 Arabic Churches and Ecumenical Issues

#### ‘Isá, son of Maryam

‘Isá, son of Maryam, was a program of elder (*shaykh*) Farīd and brother Nādir. The program was on the person (*shakhs*) of the Lord Christ. ‘Our goal of this program is to know the person of the Lord Christ correctly. We want our lives to reflect Christ’s light exactly as the moon reflects the light of the sun.’ First, the program discussed the meaning of the term Kingdom of God (*Malakūt Allāh*). ‘There are two Kingdoms in this world, the Kingdom of evil ruled by Satan and the Kingdom of goodness ruled by God. The man, who chooses to get out of the Kingdom of evil in order to join the other Kingdom, can only do that through believing in Christ.’ The program then discussed why the Jews did not understand the teaching of Christ when he said that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. They understood this to mean the liberation from the Roman armies and the restoration of the political Kingdom of Israel. This misunderstanding was because of ‘their blind fanaticism for their beliefs and religion’.

20-Sep-04	Christ is the Answer	We are your people	Reading from Injil al-Sharif	
21-Sep-04	FEBA			
22-Sep-04	Open Mailbox	Biblical Characters	You and I on the Way	
23-Sep-04	Isá, son of Maryam,	Miracles and Wonders	Praise Loudly	Prayers and Bible Reading
24-Sep-04	Great Leaders	Dialogues		Listeners Mail
25-Sep-04	Weapon of Love	Miracles and Wonders	Jesus is Calling You	Woman Today
26-Sep-04	White Page	Youth to Youth	Bāsim and Jānīt on the Internet	

Figure 11.5 Programs of IBRA as broadcast to the Middle East: 20-26 September 2004

<sup>66</sup> IBRA broadcast 22 September 2004, Open Mailbox.

The program also criticized the churches, and it seems even the church as founded by the apostles. 'The disciples understood the meaning of Christ's calling, but they also understood it from a narrow perspective because they thought they were the only ones who had the right to follow Christ, and who were going to become members of God's Kingdom.' The followers of Christ, who were soon called Christians, thought that Christ's words that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand meant that Christ was 'calling them to establish a new religion, a religion that is called Christianity':

So Christ's calling for God's Kingdom [...] was turned into a limited calling to establish a new religion for Christ, limited to His disciples and to all those who would follow Him in the coming generation. [...] Christ did not want his disciples to go and establish a new religion at all.

After some music, the audience was invited to call IBRA's phone number in Cyprus, to ask any questions, or tell about visions or dreams they had had. The program then continued saying that the Kingdom of heaven 'exists in man's conscience (*dhamîr*)'; it is a Kingdom into which man enters with a pure soul (*nafs ṭâhirah*) and a genuine inner desire (*ḥaqîqîyah raghbah dâkhilîyah*). [...] No one can say that the Kingdom of God started here or there, today or in any particular time, because the Kingdom of God is inside you (*fî dâkhilak*). Brother Nâdir interjected: 'I thought that the calling for God's Kingdom was a calling to establish the religion of Christianity. And I thought that only Christians are allowed to be its members. I think a lot of people have the same belief.' Farîd said:

Unfortunately, this is the wrong concept that made Christians block the door toward this Kingdom. They neither got in themselves, nor did they let others get in. And the worst thing is that they issued some preconditions (*shurûṭ*) for people, conditions that were based on false teachings (*ta'âlîm khâṭ'îah*). These prohibited many people to join the Kingdom of God because it was too difficult for them.

These Christians were compared with the Scribes and Pharisees of whom Jesus said that they had placed themselves on the throne of Moses, preventing people to follow Christ:

You can say the same about many teachers (*mu'allimîn*) and interpreters (*mufasssîrîn*) today, who are sitting on the church's seat (*kursî*) and have taken its authority, and who are teaching principles that Christ had never said or taught.

The conclusion of the program was that Christ called people to repentance and that this was his only condition for people to enter the Kingdom of God. 'After that, the invitation is available for all people on this earth, and from all nations. It is an invitation for wicked people as well as for religious ones'. After some music, nominal (*bi al-ism*) Christians were invited to enter the Kingdom of God, not by deeds but by faith. 'When you enter you must be absolutely willing and determined through the correct faith in Christ'.

This effort to distance a true understanding of the Gospel and the intentions of Christ from the actual churches of the Middle East entailed a negative portrayal of

the church, diametrically opposed to RCR5. CW2 and CW3 were not implemented. If this was an effort to contextualize the Gospel for Muslims, the program used too much Christian linguistic and cultural forms, against RCR4. As the program directly addressed nominal Christians, it seems more likely that the main target audience were Christians.

Finally, PO Box 220 in Ḥadâ'iq Shubrâ (Cairo) was given to write to with the promise of a free Gospel (*Injil majânî*) in the version of the Book of Life (*al-Kitâb al-Ḥayâh*).<sup>67</sup>

### 11.5.2.3 Christian-Muslim Relations

#### *Reading from the Noble Gospel*

At the end of the 20 September 2004 broadcasts, Matthew 22 was read without further explanation. The reading was introduced by a statement thanking God for 'the existence of different Arabic versions in the beautiful and rich Arabic language'. The reading was done from the Noble Gospel (*al-Injil al-Sharîf*), an Arabic translation of the 'true book'. This was a very loose Bible translation that endeavored to use Islamic language. The audience was forewarned that after the reading of that passage a question would be asked. The question was: 'What is the greatest commandment in the Law according to *'Isâ al-Masîḥ*? Here the Islamic name of Jesus Christ was used.

Finally, people were told that if they would send the answer to the question to IBRA's PO Boxes in Cyprus or Jordan or to the email address, they would get a printed copy or an audio version of the Gospel. IBRA's telephone and fax in Cyprus were also given for response. At the end of the broadcast, Manâl Salîm, Râmî Khuzâm and engineer Jûn Şamû'îl signed of.<sup>68</sup> The usage of the *Kitâb al-Sharîf* and Islamic jargon made it clear that Muslims were seen as the target audience for this program. The usage of *Kitâb al-Sharîf* must especially be seen as an infraction of CW6; it is rejected by most churches in the Arab World and thus CW2 was not heeded either.

#### *Weapon of Love*

The program Weapon of Love began with a short drama in which Sharânî, who impersonated a Muslim, questioned Mihâwid, a Christian, about the fact that he overheard him pray to 'our Father in heaven'. He asked: What does that mean, Mihâwid? Do you speak with our Lord as if He is our Father and we are his children? Fatâwî, another Muslim, reacted angrily:

Ask forgiveness from God! How dare you speak with the Almighty and High God (*Allâh al-Jabbâr wa al-Muta'âlî*) as if He is a human father?

The response that these terms are 'just a sort of comparison (*tashbîh*)' made Fatâwî even more upset. 'He is far from our human comparisons (*tashbîhâtnâ al-*

<sup>67</sup> IBRA broadcast 23 September 2004, 'Isâ, son of Maryam.

<sup>68</sup> IBRA broadcast 20 September 2004, Reading from the Noble Gospel.

*basharīyah*). He is above any kind of simile'. Fatâwî called Christians 'ignorant people who are boldly talking about issues related to the Creator without actual knowledge'.

The program then explained that God is a Father in the sense that He is the creator who loves mankind, his creation. The Muslim's interjection that 'there should be a distance between God and us' was denied:

We fear God, which means, we do not want to make his heart sad. We don't want to break his commandments. He is our heavenly Father and he created us. He commanded us to love Him, therefore, there are no barriers (*ḥawâjiz*) between Him and us. [...] God says to every man: 'I created you because I love you. I know you and everything about you. I know you by your name. You are mine and not Satan's.'

The program then proceeded to explain that God first owned man when He created him. Man became lost, however, so He then 'redeemed us (*fadânâ*) through the sacrifice of love on the cross'. Therefore the Gospel says: 'But to all who received Him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.' The program ended thus:

In the past people said that we must be afraid of God, for his Omnipotence (*bi Jabarûtuh*). My friend, God is great (*Allâh 'azîm*) but He is also a compassionate Father. He created us with love and only with love can we draw close to Him.

A 'lot of printed materials and beautiful presents' were offered and the audience was invited to write to the program. The address used was PO Box 930101 in Amman.<sup>69</sup> This program was evidently written to explain some Christian thinking for Muslims, in a manner that Muslims could understand. RCR4 was implemented because the program used language, thought-forms and formulas that were congenial to Muslims. That was however done in a manner that did not trespass against warning CW6. Biblical jargon was used, and explained, without shrouding the Gospel in an Islamic garb.

#### 11.5.2.4 Pastoral Care

##### *Christ is the Solution*

In the program Christ is the Solution (*al-Masîḥ huwa al-Hall*) brother Sâmiḥ began by addressing the tired, sick, and confused people who had been looking for answers and solutions to their problems. 'Christ is the answer [...] and that is not just a slogan but a fact of life. Millions around the world have also experienced it.' The audience was then pastorally prayed for in a prayer addressed to the Master Christ (*al-Sayyid al-Masîḥ*) who was also addressed as 'the Merciful (*al-Karîm*)'. 'You are God and came to earth and incarnated (*tajassud*) to give us salvation, life, joy and peace.' The prayer thanked Him also for blessings, healings, and miracles.

<sup>69</sup> IBRA broadcast 25 September 2004, Weapon of Love.

The program proceeded to explain that God created the heavens and the earth, and that He incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ to show his personal love:

He loves you just like you are, with all your sins (*khaṭāyâk*). His love is the only thing that can change man. [...] When we fell and committed sins, He came down to us [...] and saved us from the authority (*sultân*) of sin and [...] of Satan.

It further explained that man gets lost when he loses the road map and when he lacks a guide (*murshid*) or any kind of guidance (*irshâd*). Christ was therefore presented as the Way (*al-Ṭarîq*) and as the one who wants to guide us on the way. He searches for lost people to give them salvation. The vocation of the apostles as described in the Gospel of Mark 1:16-20 was then used as an example for the audience:

When Christ saw them, He spoke very clear words. 'Follow me, I am the Way, Peter. If you are looking for happiness, value and security, I am your happiness, I am your value, and I am your security. I can change your poor and broken life and turn it into a meaningful and valuable one. A life that is full of peace.

This was then applied to the audience. They were told to leave everything that kept them busy and away from Christ. 'Leave the way of sin and start all over again by repentance (*tawbah*).' The program continued to focus on Christ as the one to make people happy. 'This is why Christ came to our earth, to tell each person: I am the way to happiness, I am the way to salvation, I am the way to security.' The program then ended with a prayer for the audience to accept Christ. The audience was finally invited to write to brother Sâmiḥ with the promise of 'valuable presents' for the first ten letters. After a musical break, the offer was extended to all people who wrote. They could write to the IBRA addresses in Cyprus or Jordan, as well as to the email address.<sup>70</sup> The program seemed aimed at Christian Arabs as it was full of Christian language that would have needed explanation for Muslims. That explanation was not given.

### ***We are your People***

This program was full of prayers for 'our Arab Nation (*Ummatnâ al-'Arabîyah*):

We pray to God that He will bless our Nation (*ummatnâ*) including all its countries (*kullu bilâdnâ*) we ask Him to bless our rulers and bless all our people as well [...] We want to praise and worship God with our Arab people.

The program announced that prayers would be said for the church around the Arab nation, that God would 'pour out the spirit of prayer and supplication [...] until we see with our own eyes the divine visitation to our nation'. The audience was told:

We will ask God to bring men and women, youth and elders, who are recruited in the spiritual warfare against Satan and the evil spirits until we cast out each evil spirit and abolish every false authority of Satan over us.

<sup>70</sup> IBRA broadcast 20 September 2004, Christ is the Solution.



People were told to get their Bible, as the program would refer to it for its 'promises that will definitely be accomplished'. After some music and the reading of some parts from the Bible, the audience was led in a prayer that asked for forgiveness for the lack of prayers for the sick and the sad people, and for the political leaders of the Arab nation. Then a fiery prayer was said, asking God to make the Churches in the Arab World truly prayerful. The prayers were full of Charismatic jargon, including terms like *spiritual warfare* (*al-junûd al-muḥaribûn*) and *praying army* (*jaysh muṣallî*). The audience was asked to read some verses from the Bible that spoke of God's judgment over the nations and their leaders and of the need for the Church to dress itself in the whole armor of God.

Finally, the listeners were encouraged to continue praying throughout the week. A booklet on prayer was offered to those who would write to the usual addresses of IBRA that were given.<sup>71</sup> The program was aimed at Christians, and some of the language could be interpreted rather belligerently by a Muslim audience. Therefore, RCR4 was not well implemented. It is interesting that the program put stress on the unity of the Arab Nation. That may have been an effort to show Muslims that Christian Arabs have a 'proper' Pan-Arab view.

#### ***You and I on the Way***

In the program *You and I on the Way*, Selwa Habib discussed the problem of some women who go shopping when they are depressed. She used the story of a Lebanese woman who explained that after a day of shopping, she felt good as she had 'done something to irritate my husband and his pocket'. Selwa advised women against shopping for things they did not need as a remedy against their feelings of depression. She told them that the real remedy was that 'God can deliver you from your state of grief and depression'. Selwa claimed that shopping was only a temporary remedy and that it does 'not help you get rid of your depression and your inner sorrow. The real solution for you is to draw near to God through Jesus Christ, the only Savior (*al-Mukhalliṣ al-wahîd*). So what do you think, my lady?' Selwa ended by pointing the audience to her website [www.arabicbroadcasting.com](http://www.arabicbroadcasting.com) where they could listen to more programs.<sup>72</sup>

#### ***Miracles and Wonders***

In *Miracles and Wonders* Elie Karam began with stating that Christ came to 'heal all that were oppressed by the devil. He healed every disease. [...] Everyone who touched Him was healed'. And as 'Christ is still the same yesterday, and today and forever', the audience was told to expect similar miracles today. In his program, Karam welcomed pastor Nâjih:

He was paralyzed and could only move his eyes and he was connected to artificial respiration. But the Lord healed him when he was in his twenties, and he became a gymnastic teacher.

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<sup>71</sup> IBRA broadcast 20 September 2004, We are your People.

<sup>72</sup> IBRA broadcast 22 September 2004, You and I on the Way.

Nâjih did not say a word about that event during the program, but he spoke about how he accepted Christ. Though he was born in a Christian family, deep inside he had a feeling that there was something wrong in his relationship with God ‘although my parents taught me to constantly attend the masses (*qudâsât*) in our church. I even used to ring the church bells and joined in the choir.’ Nâjih explained that he was not sure that he had eternal life at that stage. But he prayed a simple prayer and everything in his life changed. ‘I had a special thing dwelling inside me, it was the Holy Spirit.’ God ‘promised us, and I believe His promise that all that accept Him (*qubûluh*), Jesus Christ, were given the authority to be called sons of God (*awlâd Allâh*).

Karam then invited the audience to put their hand on the part of their body that was sick, and he prayed for them:

Lord, in Jesus Christ’s name, take care of everyone who is listening to us at this moment. Let him receive your healing through Christ’s wounds and blood. Satan we command you to let go of our listeners. I ask for blessings to come upon the righteous’ head, in Christ’s name. We thank you Lord because you have answered this prayer. Amen.

People were told to write to IBRA’s PO Box in Limassol for a free copy of the Bible, and then the program continued. Nâjih told the audience that irrespective of their religious background, to pray and be honest with God by telling Him: ‘God, if you really exist, declare yourself to me, show me the way of your salvation. Tell me how I can receive eternal life.’ He also said that if people come to God with a simple and honest heart (*bi basâṭah qalb wa ṣarâḥah*) and seek God’s face (*yaṭlub wajh Allâh*) He will ‘definitely declare Himself to him, because it is a divine promise’. Karam then prayed a final prayer:

My dear listener, if you also want to know and experience Christ in your life as your savior, wherever you are, and whoever you are, pray with me and see God. Let Him take the opportunity to enter into your life. Say with me: ‘Lord I am a sinner. Save me in Jesus Christ’s name. Give me eternal life now’.

Once again the postal address in Limassol was given, now with the promise of a sticker for those who would write. Then after some music, the address was given again, now with the promise that lots would be drawn for those who would write. A cassette recorder, a CD, a videotape on the life of Jesus, Christian music cassettes and spiritual books were to be won. A gold coin was also promised to one among the first 100 who would write. Finally, a phone number +357(99)980299 in Cyprus was given. ‘Pastor and Dr. Elie Karam is glad to answer all your phone calls on his private cell phone.’<sup>73</sup>

In another program of Miracles and Wonders, Karam opened with the same assurance as in the previous program, that Christ came to ‘heal all that were oppressed by the devil. He healed every disease. [...] Everyone who touched Him was healed’. And as ‘Christ is still the same yesterday, and today and forever’, the

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<sup>73</sup> IBRA broadcast 23 September 2004, Miracles and Wonders.

audience was told to expect similar miracles today. In this program he focused on the idea that believers should not 'surrender to failure'. 'Rely on the Lord and He will change your situation. And today if you know any sick person, bring him to listen to the program.' Karam then read a letter by a 20 year old woman who was engaged to a man of 32 with much lower education than she had. He used her young age sometimes against her. 'When I try to encourage him, advise him, or give him some information, he gets nervous and tells me: "You are still young and you don't know anything. You don't understand anything in this life"'. Karam responded that there was no problem with the educational difference, as the man could educate himself by reading, but he advised the woman that there was a serious problem if he 'clings to his thoughts that you are nothing, and keeps satirizing you so that he can feel superior to you'. Karam advised her to reconsider her engagement. 'If the Lord tells you to break it up, then do it.'

Karam then prayed for his audience. 'Put you hand on the sick place and lift up your other hand to the Lord. [...] If you suffer from evil dreams, put your hand on your head and let me pray for you.' He proceeded:

Lord, in Jesus' name, I break every suffering, and I proclaim healing for everybody, in Jesus name.[...] I pray that every curse ('*anâ*') will be removed right now in Jesus' name. [...] We pray for our sister that God will give her wisdom regarding her decisions and in everything she does.

The audience was then offered a free Bible, and IBRA's PO Box in Limassol was given to write to. Karam proceeded to discuss the need for the audience to 'go beyond the impossible limits, because there is nothing impossible for the Lord':

When you go out of your world and see a better one, a world that goes beyond your mind, your way of thinking and eating, and your style of living, you will learn new things. You are at this mental level today because you left some people, because you left ministries, and because you left countries. [...] You cannot remain as you are in the Kingdom of God, because you either grow up and move forward, or go back to your previous state. [...] The best way to grow up is to attack Satan and his possessions, and to be in constant spiritual war against him

Abraham was used as an example of someone who in faith left his own land to travel beyond his boundaries. Karam then said a short prayer for those who did not know Christ as savior yet. Then, a sticker was offered to those writing to the program, so the PO Box in Limassol was given again. After some music, that address was given again, now with the promise that lots would be drawn for the same presents as mentioned in the previous program.<sup>74</sup>

The presents that Karam offered were unrelated to the content of his programs and made the programs vulnerable to charges of 'buying' responses. There is no evidence that these programs had any particular target audience in mind, so RCR1 was not heeded. However, the language and cultural forms used, suggest that the

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<sup>74</sup> IBRA broadcast 25 September 2004, Miracles and Wonders.

programs were mainly relevant for Christians. In accordance with RCR5, Christ should be portrayed in a meaningful and relevant way for the audience. In the programs of Karam, Christ was mostly portrayed as a therapeutic miracle worker. For the audience, that was important, especially as many Arabs are poor and cannot afford medical doctors. However, this created a one-sided image of Christ.

### ***Praise Loudly***

In Praise Loudly Bûlis and his wife Muná aimed to ‘help you sing your praises and your new song to the Lord’. The programs also aimed to help the audience to ‘enter into God’s presence (*maḥḍar Allâh*) and receive salvation, healing, and all heavenly blessings’. Bûlis began to explain that his ‘ministry (*khidmah*) is a ministry of faith’ and that God ‘is using partners to support the ministry financially’. He then shared how one day he needed money for renting an apartment and someone promised one thousand dollars. The person then traveled however and so they did not have the money in time; they were stressed. Bûlis then told his wife:

Why don’t we enter into the Lord’s presence because there might be some evil spirits (*arwâḥ sharîrah*) that are trying to attack us. We are the Lord’s soldiers and we can fight against the power of Satan. So we prayed for two hours, crying, binding and releasing the power of evil, and suddenly I started singing: ‘glory to the Lord, glory to the Lord, glory to the Lord. Blessings are on the way’. And I started laughing and laughing. I stopped yelling and shouting because God’s Spirit interfered and He started comforting me.

Bûlis explained that when we are tempted, God will make us stronger through it and build our faith. After some music, he further explained that the Lord is aware of our trials:

Cry out to Him. And if you don’t know the Lord as a personal friend (*ṣadîq shakhṣî*) or savior, cry out with me: ‘Lord save me. Lord have mercy on me.’ Believe that the Lord has answered and from now on, don’t just call Him Lord, but also call Him ‘my heavenly Father’.

IBRA’s PO Box in Limassol was then given for anyone with an interest in the songs of the program sung by Muná, a Bible or other printed materials. Then, Bûlis explained that after he became a Christian, he no longer became drunk at parties on New Year’s Eve but that he spent those nights praising God, ‘standing on my feet in the Lord’s presence, the Holy of Holies’. He encouraged the audience to always praise God for the life He has given. And ‘if you do not know the true Lord (*al-Rabb al-ḥaqîqî*) tell Him in prayer: “Lord, show yourself to me”. He will show you that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He will show you that there is someone called Jesus Christ and that no-one comes to the Father but through Him.’ This program was mostly suitable for Christians, as the linguistic forms were unintelligible for Muslims, and this jargon was not explained.

Bûlis asked the audience a few times whether they would want to participate musically in praising God, with their voice or with instruments. At the end of the program he invited people to write to him about their musical abilities, or whether

the Lord has ‘put upon your heart the desire to become a partner in this ministry financially or through prayers.’ The PO Box for audience response was given twice more, as well as the telephone number of IBRA in Limassol.<sup>75</sup>

This program was the only one among those of all broadcasters in which there was a suggestion that the audience might want to pay money to the program producer. In none of the other programs was there any hint to do so.

### ***Pastoral Prayer***

Pastor Şamû’îl Abû Jâbir prayed with the audience on 23 September at the end of IBRA’s programming. The prayer focused on the idea that Christ was knocking on the door of the heart of the listener. In a long pastoral prayer, full of Christian and Charismatic jargon, the audience was led to open its heart and to believe that Christ would enter. The audience was then asked to write, but no address was given. After some music, 1 Corinthians 7-8 in the *Kitâb al-Ḥayâh* translation was read without any comment. Finally, IBRA’s web address [www.radioibrahim.com](http://www.radioibrahim.com) was given.<sup>76</sup>

### ***Great Leaders***

Great Leaders was another program by Karam. At the opening of his program he immediately gave his phone number in Cyprus. He said that this program ‘helps you become one the great leaders (*al-qâdah al-‘uḏâm*) who conquered Kingdoms, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fires, escaped the edge of the sword [...] and changed history by building God’s Kingdom through our ages and generations’. The program ‘helps you become the great leader that the Lord wants you to be. So listen carefully to God’s servant (*khâdim*), pastor and doctor Elie Karam’.

This program dealt with the thought that Christian leaders should rest. Leaders are burdened with hardship and must learn to trust God. In order for people to rest once a week, God ordained the Sabbath day. ‘You must rest on this day.’ If people suffer from anxieties, are very concerned about many things in life, and are always tired, they are in a state of depression and they should rest’. Karam listed many signs of being overworked:

Satan is the one who puts a great deal of stress on your shoulder. You should overcome that in Jesus’ name. [...] My brothers and sisters, leaders, take care of yourself and don’t neglect [the signs]. It is time to look up to the Lord and ask Him to heal and treat you. I will pray for you.

Karam then gave IBRA’s PO Box in Limassol, and promised free books and printed materials. He then continued and warned again: ‘If you are serving in one meeting after another, running from one service to another, and from one job to another, in addition to taking care of your home [...], in the end you will definitely be exhausted.’

Karam said that exhausted people have a tendency to exaggerate everything. They tend to easily cry, especially women. Arab men also cry. ‘Don’t forget that

<sup>75</sup> IBRA broadcast 23 September 2004, Praise Loudly.

<sup>76</sup> IBRA broadcast 23 September 2004, Prayer and Bible Reading.

Christ himself cried.’ Karam warned that excessive crying is a sign of frustration. He then prayed for the audience:

If you are frustrated, put your hand on your head, and let’s pray for you. Lord, in Jesus name, break up every spirit of frustration of our listeners. Let the blessings of Jesus Christ and the blessings of our father Abraham be upon them. In Jesus’ name I thank you because you have answered.

Karam invited people to accept Christ if they had not done so and he prayed for them. The program ended with an offer: ‘My friend, listener, if you want to become one of the international great leaders and receive a certificate from pastor and doctor Elie Karam, send us a letter with your name as you want it to be on the certificate, and we will send it back to you with some lessons.’ The PO Box of IBRA was repeated twice, with the promise of a lottery in which CD’s, videotapes, books and other ‘valuable presents’ were offered.<sup>77</sup>

### ***Dialogues***

*Dialogues (Ḥiwâr)* was produced by Yûsif Mañşûr and presented by Ihâb Subḥî. The program was aimed at young people:

We acknowledge that they are important for reviving and awakening our nation. On the other hand, the enemy also admits their dangerous and important role. So he tries to steal and destroy them.

This program was about addiction to drugs. The program was taped with students in the studio and a forum consisting of Egyptian experts. The panel consisted of Dr. Naşîf Faḥmî Mañqariyûs, professor in the Faculty of Social Service of Ḥilwân University, Dr. Nâşir Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mu’iz Nâşir, head of the Addiction Section of al-Ma’mûrah Hospital for Psychological Health, Dr. Aḥmad Taymûr, professor in Medical Physiology at al-Azhar University, Dr. Namîs Nâjî, an expert in addictive behavior and general health, and pastor ‘Izzat Shâkir of the Coptic Evangelical Church in Heliopolis (Cairo). After a rather long and factual discussion about the important role of media and education in warning youth against using drugs, pastor ‘Izzat said that ‘God wants us to play a positive role in our country, and churches and our homes’, and that young people should not feel as foreigners in their own society or church. He also said that for those addicted to drugs, the first step to healing was admitting that they have a real problem. He advised drug addicts to ‘confess boldly: I have a problem, Lord, stretch out your hand that the right institution will provide the proper help for my recovery in this crisis’.

Phone numbers in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and France were then given for the audience to respond to. Then the audience in the studio was given the chance to comment. One of them, a former addict, commented that ‘today in Egypt there are many programs that help addicts to be revived and that help them to live happily’. The presenter responded:

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<sup>77</sup> IBRA broadcast 24 September 2004, Great Leaders.

What you have talked about is the first step to treatment. Be assured that God is still working and that there are still programs for helping addicts to achieve real happiness, which all of us are looking for.

The program then discussed that helping addicts is both a physical matter, but foremost a psychological one. It also stressed that not only the addict but also his or her family must be part of the process of healing. Namis outlined briefly an American Christian program based on the addict's admission of his need of God. The program ended with an invitation to the audience at home:

Christ's power in doing miracles is marvelous and absolute. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, recovered the crippled [...] All you have to do is believe in the Lord Jesus. Ask Him to set you free from the bonds of addiction. Seek help of specialists and doctors, but first of all, put your trust in the Master of doctors [...] Come on, be free now from your addiction and get ready to move toward the genuine freedom that is in Jesus Christ.

The program ended with an invitation to ring the telephone number +20(2)2917268 in Cairo, to send mail to PO Box 4 in Sarâyah al-Qubbah in Cairo, or to email [emailhewar@hotmail.com](mailto:emailhewar@hotmail.com).<sup>78</sup>

This program had a well-targeted audience and was mostly suitable for young people in Egypt, so RCR1 was implemented to a large extent in as far as Egypt was the target audience. It also addressed that audience in a rather practical manner, in accordance with the need to speak to the audience in its actual context, as requested by RCR2. As the program was mostly social and not religious, the linguistic and cultural forms were suitable for both Muslims and Christians. The inclusion of Muslims and Christians among the experts also ensured that this program was acceptable to a broad audience. The brief Christian ending of the program was done in terms that were intelligible for Muslims. The treatment of the theme showed how the Christian faith had something to say about social problems in society, so the program heeded warning CW5 to some extent.

### ***Listeners' Mail***

The program Listeners' Mail began with presenter Jûrjît giving the PO Box of IBRA in Limassol as well as its email address. 'My dear listener, the choice to be happy is available for you today', Jûrjît began. She advised the audience to not be ruled by circumstances, but to be 'looking upon the Lord who strengthens us and who makes us walk over the mountain of our difficulties'. Vîrul from Egypt wrote that her sister had died, while Hânî had written to encourage the producers of the program. 'Abbâs wrote from Iraq, telling Jûrjît that he always listened. The full address of 'Abbâs was given as he was interested in corresponding with other listeners. The programs ended with asking the audience whether 'you are trying to live as God wants you to. [...] We ask you to give yourself to God'. Finally, the audience was asked to visit [www.radioibrahim.org](http://www.radioibrahim.org).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> IBRA broadcast 24 September 2004, Dialogues.

<sup>79</sup> IBRA broadcast 24 September 2004, Listeners' Mail.

***Jesus is calling You***

Jesus is calling You was ‘a program that tells us more about the character of Jesus Christ and about His calling for our life’. The miracle of a deaf and mute man by Jesus, as described in Mark 7:31-37, was used to deal with the ‘psychological disease of introversion (*inṭuwâ*)’. The program explained that a normal person is measured by the degree of his interaction with society. ‘When a man isolates himself from other people and prefers to sit alone, then there is a problem.’ Jesus met the deaf and mute man who had decided to be ‘withdrawn from society’:

Definitely, the Lord knew his state of distrust toward people and entire society. [...] My dear listener, I want to say that I don’t know exactly your condition and I do not know what made you reach it. Anyway, the reasons are not important because what matters is your awareness of Jesus’ personal interest in you. He is ready to come to you personally and spend time with you alone. He will completely and totally treat your psychological introversion.

Mail was solicited and people could write to PO Box 143 in Asyût (Egypt) and to PO Box 06101 in Nice (France). Some books were promised to those who would write.<sup>80</sup>

***Woman Today***

In *Woman Today*, Rûbá Sâlim explained that adolescents need people to treat them with love and care as they go through a difficult stage towards maturity. Parents have the exclusive duty of helping their children to grow up toward successful adulthood. She interviewed the Iraqi Saḥar Sirsim, a specialist in family counseling. She explained the importance of listening to young people. If parents don’t do that, their children may listen more to their peers, or get answers from movies and be badly influenced. Saḥar gave an example of the importance of listening to adolescents. She mentioned how a young woman was attracted to a man but that her mother had refused to listen and had silenced her because ‘this is improper (*’ib*)’. Saḥar said: ‘This happens a lot in our society.’ The effect of this was said to be that young people stop sharing their ideas and feelings with their parents. ‘We all know that every hidden thing will lead to worse for this girl who might meet that young man and get hurt by him.’ Saḥar ended by stressing that the most important thing for adolescents was to grow up in an environment of acceptance and forgiveness. ‘This will encourage him to feel safe to go back to his parents when he makes mistakes.’

Rûbá finally invited the audience to write to PO Box 930101 in Amman, to visit [www.arabwomentoday.com](http://www.arabwomentoday.com), or to email to [info@arabwomentoday.com](mailto:info@arabwomentoday.com).<sup>81</sup> As the program focused on the rather concrete issue of child rearing, its advice was relevant to the female audience it was intended for. Thus, RCR1 was heeded to a certain extent. The title of the program, however, suggested that the program was intended for all Arab women, which thus did not recognize the substantial differences between women all over the Arab World.

<sup>80</sup> IBRA broadcast 25 September 2004, *Jesus is calling you*.

<sup>81</sup> IBRA broadcast 25 September 2004, *Woman Today*.



**White Page**

White Page was written by Munûr Zakhârî and produced by Yûsif Manşûr. The program began with a drama about people who made promises but who did not keep them. This general problem was quite relevant for most Arab listeners. After the drama, the clue of the drama was explained. 'Honoring promises reflects man's integrity and his righteousness.' It is better not to vow if you already know that you are unable to do the thing:

Ask yourself: 'Am I able to keep my promises and commitments or no?' If you cannot, learn how to say no. It is better to say no than yes and never be able to keep what you promised. [...] If you ever failed in the past to keep your promises, ask God and the Holy Spirit right now to help you always fulfill what you promised God and others. Then God will lift you up and you will be known to others for your faithfulness and honesty. Do that right now, at this moment, and the Lord will help you.

The program ended with a request for mail. IBRA's PO Boxes in Cyprus and Jordan were given as well as its email address.<sup>82</sup>

**Youth to Youth**

Youth to Youth was a program by Rif'at, Ghâdah, Hânî, 'Abîr and Mâhir. In each program they endeavored to answer one psychological problem or a problem with family and friends of university students. This particular problem focused on the feeling that 'something is missing in my life'. It opened with a drama that focused on loneliness, and after the drama, that issue was further discussed:

My dear listener, is there any kind of loneliness in your life [...]? And don't you know where it is coming from? In spite of the presence of all your friends, still you feel lonely? [...] Nobody understands you or sympathizes with you? [...] We want to tell you that the emptiness in your life can only be filled by our Lord Jesus Christ. [...] He is the only friend who is never too busy to be with you. [...] Today He is calling you. He invites you to be his friend. He wants to fill the emptiness of your life. So will you accept His invitation today? Accept Him into your life and invite Him into your heart. Take a decision.

A pastoral prayer was then said, inviting Christ to fill the void in the life of the listeners. People were then invited to write to the program and a free copy of the Gospel of Christ (*al-Injîl al-Masîh*) was offered. IBRA's PO Boxes in Cyprus and Jordan as well as its email address were given.<sup>83</sup> This approach to Christ as the one who can fill the gaps in the lives of the audience was a rather Western individual approach to the Christian faith. This portrayal of a therapeutic Christ was rather one-sided and only a partial fulfillment of RCR5. The linguistic forms used for this presentation of Christ were full of Christian jargon, so this program was not very intelligible for a Muslim. It certainly did not give the impression that the

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<sup>82</sup> IBRA broadcast 26 September 2004, White Page.

<sup>83</sup> IBRA broadcast 26 September 2004, Youth to Youth.

Christian faith had a prophetic message for society, so CW4 and CW5 were not heeded.

***Bâsim and Jânît on the Internet***

Bâsim and Jânît on the Internet was produced in Cairo and was about Bâsim and Jânît who used the internet to gather interesting information. After a long dramatic introduction, the program focused on the need to be careful with speech, especially gossip. Some Bible verses about that issue were quoted and the malicious effects of gossip were treated. Various reasons why people gossip were then given. According to the program, the main reason was that people had too much free time. 'There are other reasons too, such as bearing a grudge, envy, an inferiority complex, ignorance, but the most important reason is free time':

Think with me of a woman who does not work and who has nothing to do. The only thing she is good at, is talking about the reputation of others over and over again. The man who is busy with his work, the woman who is occupied with her husband's and her children's demands, and the student whose target is to study, will find it very hard to talk about others. [...] They have no time at all.

The cure to gossip was also given. 'First of all, ask the Lord to fill the spiritual emptiness in your heart. When our Lord dwells in the heart, He changes your behavior. [...] Gossip is a disease that needs to be treated, and God is the only one who can treat it and heal us.'

After this a letter from a woman in Tunisia was answered. The woman was raised in a strict family where any talk of her body parts, let alone about sex, was taboo. These inhibitions made her wonder whether God had made a mistake in creating mankind with its sexual instincts as it caused many problems. The answer given to her question was that sexual instincts are created by God, that they are good and not unclean or to be despised. They are 'a good gift from God', but can be misused and only then does this lead to sin. This last statement assumed that the Muslim woman from Tunisia would understand the concept of sin.

The audience was asked to call IBRA's telephone number in Cyprus or to write to [salam@radioibrahim.com](mailto:salam@radioibrahim.com). A prize was offered to the one who could answer a question related to something mentioned in the program. As this was the last broadcast of the night, the PO Boxes of IBRA in Limassol and Amman as well as two telephone numbers in Cyprus were also given, while the email address was repeated.<sup>84</sup>

**11.5.2.5 Cultural Issues**

No specifically cultural programs were produced by IBRA, and no cultural issues were treated either. This was probably not considered important enough by the program producers who were strongly focus on what they considered the plain and pure explanation of the Bible. This was at the expense of the broadcasting of contextually suitable programs.

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<sup>84</sup> IBRA broadcast 26 September 2004, Bâsim and Jânît on the Internet

### 11.5.2.6 Socio-Economic and Political Issues

No socio-economic and political issues were treated in IBRA's programs, so the audience was not addressed in its actual context. This also meant CW4 and CW5 were not heeded. Important elements in the context of the audience were not touched upon by the programs.

## 11.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

IBRA considered its Church in My Home and Church without Walls programs to be very successful. IBRA reported that the programs attracted many non-believers, even though the intended audience was isolated converted people without fellowship. 'People are being saved through the program.'<sup>85</sup> How these programs served both goals was described by IBRA in *The IBRA Signal*:

Somewhere in the mountains of northern Africa, there is a strong underground church, formed by a group of young men who gather in the forest to worship Jesus Christ. [...] The church leader was saved through IBRA's radio programs some years ago. He began to teach his friends and family about the Gospel, and one year later 30 people in the village had accepted Jesus into their lives. As Islam is the official religion of their country, the newly planted church has to hold its services in secret. The radio ministry is very important to them, as IBRA's programs give them a deeper knowledge about the Bible and the Christian faith. [...] In the same village, a group of girls has also formed a church, holding their own meetings in secret. In North Africa, there are actually hundreds of underground churches, some of them with up to 500 members.<sup>86</sup>

IBRA was convinced that its programs were 'extremely successful' as 'each day Muslims are being saved, and each week IBRA is involved in establishing at least one new House Church somewhere in the Middle East or North Africa.'<sup>87</sup> IBRA did not give any evidence of that last claim. The organization also claimed 'that millions of people listen to our Arabic transmissions'.<sup>88</sup> That seems a high number and as hardly any actual audience research has been possible for organizations like IBRA in the Arab World, the figure cannot be substantiated.

In 1995, IBRA's audience response began to grow remarkably, from 154 responses in 1991, to 3,726 in 1995 and 5,444 by 1996. In 1998 the audience response grew to 9,077, and in 2000 and 2001, it peaked at 15,061 and 15,050 respectively as *Figure 11.6* shows. It seems that these were first-time respondees, as IBRA also published other, higher figures for that same period.<sup>89</sup> Bengtson believed that the increased response was due to better programming and efficient

<sup>85</sup> BÅB, *Church Planting in the Arab World*, p. 9.

<sup>86</sup> 'Underground Church Planted in the Mountains', in *The IBRA Signal* (May 2001), p. 9.

<sup>87</sup> 'Arab World; One New Church Each Week, in *The IBRA Signal*, (May 2003), p. 3. 'The Lighthouse of the Arab World', p. 12.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Document *Lyssnarkontakter i Arabvarlden* received from Skog in an email to the author (12 September 2003).

follow-up. This follow-up by local offices and teams started in 1997.<sup>90</sup> The remarkable increase can perhaps be partially explained by IBRA increasingly offering people the option to write, make a phone call, or send a text message. As IBRA's figures are unspecified, this awaits further research, but as these figures are remarkably higher than those of the other broadcasters during that same period, there reason to question whether IBRA uses similar manners for calculating its response as those other broadcasters do.

In 2001 the audience response figures for first-time respondees decreased and the trend continued downward. Bengtson spoke of a 'dramatic drop'.<sup>91</sup> In analyzing these figures in conjunction with the broadcasting hours of IBRA, *Figure 11.1*, it appears that the growth and decline of IBRA's unique audience response followed, to a large extent, the increase and decrease of the number of broadcasting hours on SW and MW. More information would be needed to be definite about that, as from the figures it is not clear what sort of radio broadcasts were stopped after the year 2000. If they were SW broadcasts only, it would not have had such a dramatic impact on the audience figures. However, if IBRA had mainly stopped MW broadcasts by TWR, then that could explain the decrease in audience response.

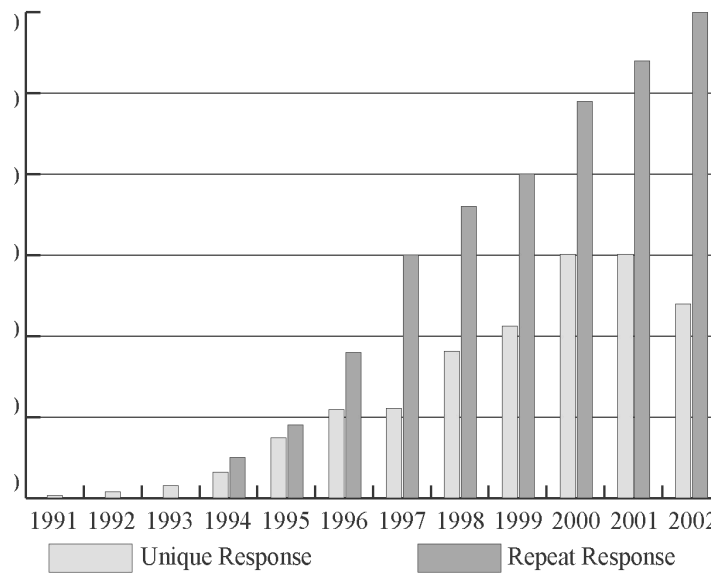


Figure 11.6 Audience Response to IBRA: 1991-2002

IBRA received audience responses for its broadcasts into two main regions using different mediums. North Africa and Iraq were reached using SW transmitters and the Middle East was covered by the MW broadcasts. The response figures

<sup>90</sup> Bengt Bengtson in an email to the author (23 September 2003).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

therefore need to be studied separately in order to draw meaningful conclusions. IBRA however has not published such detailed information. More study into this topic is needed. Based on the scant information available it seems that the increased audience response, between 1995 and 2000, roughly reflected the increase in airtime of IBRA.

## **11.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

### ***11.7.1 Indigenization***

IBRA's leadership remained in the hands of Swedes, not only in Sweden but also in its work in the Arab World. However, due to its decentralized approach to program production, IBRA depended to a large extent on its indigenous Arabic staff. The studios in the different countries of the Arab World, Malta and Cyprus were responsible for their own management and program production. This was done by Arabs, though sometimes Swedes were also involved. IBRA's management style entailed allowing Arabic staff to develop their own concepts and they were able to implement these without undue interference from the Swedish staff.

### ***11.7.2 Contextualization***

#### **11.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

IBRA wanted to approach many different people groups in the Arab World through its broadcasts. Its choice to broadcast to Iraq specifically was good from the perspective of targeting a specific audience, if IBRA would be able to use only programs in the Iraqi languages in that broadcast. The choice to treat North Africa and the Middle East as separate areas also went somewhat toward being audience-specific. However, the programs broadcast to North Africa still contained many programs in Egyptian and Levantine Arabic, while the broadcasts to Iraq were mainly in those languages. In the one-hour block aimed at the Middle East, some programs targeted Muslims, most targeted Christians, and some were aimed at women, while others at youth. They were mostly in Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic. This means that IBRA's broadcasts as a whole did not address a homogenous audience.

#### **11.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

In its programming policies, IBRA affirmed that it wanted to produce programs that were aimed at the entire person; body, soul and spirit, and that it was interested to not only have programs on what it termed 'the message of salvation' but also on social issues. In practice though, IBRA's programming was mostly religious and controversial issues of religion and politics were avoided altogether. By excluding these themes, important parts of the context of the audience were ignored. This also made it impossible for IBRA to heed CW4 and CW5, about the need to proclaim a message that included the Gospel's prophetic role for social and political life.

### 11.7.2.3 Language

IBRA produced programs for the Arab World in a variety of spoken languages. That was a good choice as it meant that audiences could be addressed in their native tongue. However, as IBRA used a variety of languages in its rather short blocks of airtime, in practice it meant that people from diverse language-groups were addressed in many Arabic languages. The programs aimed at North Africa in particular contained an amalgam of languages, both North African and others. The result of this was that the target audience of North Africa was generally not addressed in its own language, in spite of IBRA's desire to do so.

### 11.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms

In most of IBRA's programs, the language and examples used reflected their Christian producers' *milieu*. For Muslims these were often incomprehensible programs due to their usage of Christian jargon that were unexplained. In some programs IBRA used language and examples that were appropriate for the intended Muslim audience, usually without trespassing against CW6, which warns that Islamic word forms cannot be separated from their original meaning. The usage of the *Kitâb al-Sharîf* Bible translation in one program did not heed CW6.

### 11.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church

IBRA's Statement of Faith regarding Christ and the Church was broadly Evangelical. It recognized absolute truth and therefore clearly heeded CW1. Christ was presented as the Son of God who was incarnated in Jesus Christ, who died and rose again from death. However, in IBRA's programs he was often portrayed as a therapeutic Lord who would meet the needs of the audience. Those needs were often described in terms of *health and wealth* on a purely personal level. The prophetic role of the Gospel for all facets of society was not heeded and thus neither was CW4 and CW5. The programs focused mainly on the purely individual relationship of the listener with Christ.

IBRA intentionally chose to portray the church as a rather informal gathering of Christian believers in the home, according to its policies in which it supported the House Church model. In countries with no legalized church of national believers, this was often the only model used by the native Christians. For North Africa for instance, this model worked well. For the programs aimed at the Middle East, this was problematic. It entailed a clear denominational choice for the House Church movement. However, in the broadcasts studied here, the House Church movement was not evidenced. This may have been a coincidence of IBRA's programming, but it may also be a reflection of its changing views of what is suitable for the Middle East. In any case, the existent churches of the Middle East were not spoken about in IBRA's programs either, except in a rather negative manner. From the perspective of proper contextualization, this was inadequate, as it meant that warnings CW2 and CW3 were not heeded.

The C1-C6 scheme of Travis describing levels of contextualization was not adequate to explain IBRA's portrayal of the church. The model of the House Church that IBRA used was organizationally close to what Travis termed C4. However, if the linguistic and cultural forms used in IBRA's broadcasts were IBRA's ideal view

of the linguistic and cultural forms to be used in the House Church, then they could be better described as C2.

#### **11.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

To assess IBRA's media environment on both its SW and MW transmitters, more study regarding the preceding and following programs is needed. Many programs on IBRA's grid were so evidently aimed at Christians and thus only understandable by Christians, that the impact of the excellent programs that were very suitable for Muslim audiences, was arguably diminished.

#### **11.7.3 Christian Witness**

IBRA's need to sell airtime to program suppliers also made it accept programs that were not effective from the perspective of contextualization. The efforts in some programs to invite the audience to respond by promising excessive presents were unwise as they suggested that Muslims would be rewarded for responding to Christian radio programs.

In its broadcasts, IBRA ensured that the *kerygma* of the Gospel was clear; the audience heard about the central facets of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The fact that any reference to socio-economic or political matters such as human rights issues were absent, means that overall, the *diakonal* parts of the Christians witness were missing in the programs. The interest in the audience's health and general wellbeing was a good choice in the context of the Arab World, and can be seen as part of the *diakonal* role of the Church. However, this focus on Christ's healing abilities was at the expense of a broad presentation of the Christian faith.

IBRA's choice to generally work with the House Church movement in countries like Egypt could hardly be defended as an implementation of the lofty principle that it wanted to work through committees that were respected and trusted by the local churches. In North Africa and the Arabian Gulf, where hardly any churches with legalized church buildings existed, this approach was suitable. However, in the Middle East the established churches did not support the development of a House Church movement. This choice of IBRA was not in accordance with the need to show Christian *koinonia* as part of the witness to the Gospel. To the audiences in the Middle East the choice for House Churches must have sounded like a choice against the existent Churches.





## 12 Bible Voice Broadcasting (BVB)

This chapter begins with a history of Bible Voice Broadcasting (BVB). BVB began its Arabic broadcasts on the Shortwave (SW) in 2002. The organization was not new to broadcasting, as it had grown out of High Adventure Ministries (HAM). HAM was an international radio organization with its headquarters in the United States of America (USA). It fell apart in 2000, but some of its former partners in Canada and the United Kingdom then regrouped as BVB. HAM did not continue with its own SW broadcasts but changed its goals by focusing on educating the American audience about news and views from Israel.

Between 1981 and 2000 HAM broadcast the Gospel from Israeli-occupied Southern Lebanon. It openly supported Israel in its wars with the Arabs as a Christian-Zionist organization. These views were influenced the degree to which HAM, and also later BVB, were able to produce contextually suitable programs for the Arab World. Particular attention has been given to this issue in this chapter.

In addition to the above the Statement of Faith, the target audiences, the preferred languages, and the programming philosophies of both HAM and BVB are explored. The unhappy break-up of the organization between 2000 and 2002 was probably the reason why HAM's office in the USA was not forthcoming with organizational information about these policy matters. It is also possible however that the organization never had formal policies in these realms as HAM was mostly driven by its Charismatic and entrepreneurial leader, George K. Otis. Nevertheless, in practice HAM had some criteria and those are described in this chapter. As BVB began its Arabic broadcasts in 2002, it has received only marginal attention regarding these policy issues.

Next, BVB's Arabic programs as broadcast from 20-26 September 2004 are studied. The description of these programs is followed by an examination of their audience response. This chapter then concludes with some observations. These focus on the level of indigenization and contextualization of BVB and its programs. They also discuss to what extent the Christian witness of HAM and BVB reflected the *kerygma*, the *koinonia*, and the *diakonia* of the Church of Christ.

### 12.1 HISTORY

#### *12.1.1 Organizational History of High Adventure Ministries (HAM) before Arabic Broadcasts: 1974-1981*

##### **12.1.1.1 Christian-Zionism and Preparing for Broadcasts: 1974-1979**

George K. Otis of HAM began organizing study trips to Israel in 1974 and, on account of these visits, often met with Israeli politicians. Otis was introduced to these Israeli leaders by his first tour guide, Isaac Gronberg, with whom he developed a strong friendship. One of the goals of Otis, a Christian-Zionist, was to

show Israel the unwavering support and friendship of Christians. The Israeli leaders he met told him that they did not have much interest in the talk of Christians about their love for Israel, if they did not even support their own Christian friends in Lebanon. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin asked Otis in 1975:

Just this, Mr. Otis. Genocide is being perpetrated on the Christians of Lebanon. But I am not aware of a single Christian [...] who is doing anything to lend a hand to their Christian brothers [...] so why should I expect the Christians [...] to be trustworthy friends of Israel in a time of future crisis.<sup>1</sup>

Two years later, Prime Minister Menachem Begin scolded Otis for the same reason.<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 1979, Otis was brought in touch with the Lebanese Major Sa'd Ḥaddād, through Gronberg.<sup>3</sup> During Otis' first meeting with Ḥaddād in Southern Lebanon, Otis told him that he was 'doing a courageous thing at a critical time', and he offered him the help of his organization. Ḥaddād asked for two things. 'Pray for me and my people. Ask the Christians to pray. We feel so isolated.' Ḥaddād also asked for a radio transmitter. 'We do not have any telephones or postal system, [...] no way to communicate. We're scattered across sixty miles of territory. It's hard to keep coordinated and to keep up the people's hopes. [If] only we had some way that I could speak to our people from time to time. So, I sometimes dream about a little radio transmitter.'<sup>4</sup> Gronberg remembered Otis' response:

When Otis went to Lebanon for the first time, he looked people in the eyes and saw that their eyes were dead. Their land was devastated because of the Israelis and the Lebanese mutually bombing each other. People were afraid to go to work. When he was asked by Haddad to build a radio station, he came to me and said: I want to bring hope to the people. They need something else to listen to than those explosions. They need to hear the voice of God.<sup>5</sup>

Otis caught a vision. He asked Ḥaddād whether a little transmitter could not be 'a real big one', without wondering whether even 'a little radio transmitter' in a situation of war, would be considered a military item.<sup>6</sup> Due to Otis' solid Christian-Zionist perspective he deemed the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to be the cause of all the problems in Lebanon.

In his book *Voice of Hope: A Daring Mission of Courage and Peace* (1983), Otis described how HAM started its broadcasting from southern Lebanese soil. He painted a picture of Ḥaddād as a major fighter for the independence and freedom of Lebanon. Ḥaddād did that by holding out against the PLO that in 1970 'tried to destroy Jordan' and was subsequently driven out of that country into Lebanon.

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<sup>1</sup> George Otis, *Voice of Hope: A Daring Mission of Courage and Peace* (Van Nuys, 1983) p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>5</sup> Isaac Gronberg in an interview with the author (20 February 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Otis, *Voice of Hope*, p. 24.

Otis described how the PLO wanted to drive the Jews into the sea, but ‘even if they succeeded their appetites would never be satisfied’.<sup>7</sup>

Ḥaddâd was depicted as a devout Christian of Greek-Catholic background, who through the ministry of Otis prayed the ‘sinner’s prayer’.<sup>8</sup> At different places in his book, Otis discussed the prayers and Christian attitudes of Ḥaddâd. Otis was aware of the views of the American media about Ḥaddâd: ‘They placarded him as a renegade, a villain, a traitor, a warlord, a bloodthirsty killer, and the like.’<sup>9</sup> For Otis, Ḥaddâd was a man of ‘unusual integrity’.<sup>10</sup> He related how he was told off more than once by the State Department of the American President Jimmy Carter for meddling in political waters by cooperating with Ḥaddâd and for even possibly damaging the Middle East peace efforts of Carter.<sup>11</sup>

In 1979 Otis began setting up his radio station, in Marja‘yûn in Southern Lebanon. The PLO tried to destroy the station by shooting at it from the nearby Beaufort Castle that it had occupied. Around that old Crusader castle, Otis noticed a ‘satanic aura [...], an aura of doom’.<sup>12</sup> He related many stories about the efforts of the PLO to destroy the station and how it was miraculously saved. Salvation came when the Beaufort Castle was destroyed by Israel in autumn 1979, and when the Israeli military invasion in 1982 drove the PLO out of Lebanon.<sup>13</sup> According to Otis, PLO gunners attacked his station 39 times between 1979 and 1983.

The Christian-Zionist theology of Otis was so overriding in his worldview, that he ‘prayed about Haile Selassie of Ethiopia because of his growing anti-Israel stance’, and consequently ‘he was overthrown’ in 1974.<sup>14</sup> Ironically, the imprisonment of Haile Selassie and the takeover by Marxists also led to the closure of the Christian broadcasting organization Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) in Addis Ababa in 1977.

Otis published his book when he had decided to build another SW broadcasting station, this time in the Simi Valley in Southern California (USA). Israel had just invaded Lebanon, and the bloodbath in the Palestinian camps Şabrâ and Shatîlâ in Beirut was world news. Otis described how Israel gave access to these camps to the Phalangists, who had said they wanted to look for some terrorists. They went in and killed hundreds of women and children in cold blood:

Then, once [the Phalangists] had committed their ‘avenging’ they sought to lay the blame for it on Major Haddad of all people (Haddad was in Beirut on this day to attend Bashir Gemayel’s funeral). They managed to embarrass their Israeli friends and cause a serious crisis for the government of Israel.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

According to Otis, the invasion of Israel was not a real invasion, because the Lebanese Army did not defend its land and because the peace-keeping troops of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) did not shoot at the Israelis. Israel had expected significant cooperation of the Phalangists whom they had been helping for years, and Israel assumed Lebanon would begin peace negotiations as Egypt had done four years earlier. Otis found the criticism of Israel even more incredible as the Israeli so-called Peace for Galilee campaign uncovered a 'massive PLO arms build-up' that was supposedly there for a 'full-scale military operation' against Israel. 'Indications were that it would have been a joint PLO-Syrian operation with Soviet backing'.<sup>16</sup> Otis related how one of his friends warned him for the criticism he could face in the USA for his stance.

The thing they'll really attack you for, is your close association with Haddad and the Israeli's. Too political. I doubt that some organizations will have anything to do with you on account of that. In fact, one big outfit has been harping for several years on the notion that we've compromised our witness to the Moslems by our enthusiasm and support for Israel.<sup>17</sup>

Otis must have been under much pressure, but he was not convinced. 'You can't be anybody's friend if you resolve to be entirely neutral. It's impossible', Otis concluded.<sup>18</sup> He was right in that assessment, though his choice of supporting Israel and Ḥaddād through thick and thin, was a poor one. However, his choice to show political opinions should be respected; at least, Otis wanted to apply his views of the Gospel to society. That engagement, however mistaken, was closer to implementing CW4 and CW5 than many of the organizations that believed they should avoid any social and political engagement.

#### **12.1.1.2 Broadcasts from Israeli-Occupied Southern Lebanon: 1979-1981**

Back in the USA, Otis began to raise financial support and enlist people for his vision for radio station Voice of Hope (VOH). He was able to quickly enlist Paul Hunter, the chief engineer of a secular radio broadcaster in Toronto (Canada), after telling him about Lebanon and his love for the Jews. Hunter became the manager of the broadcasting station in Southern Lebanon. The money needed for the project came in just as fast.<sup>19</sup>

Together with Hunter, Otis went back to Lebanon for choosing the right piece of land. This was only six weeks after he had first met Ḥaddād. A little concrete pumping station was found that could be used for the ten kilowatt (kW) medium wave (MW) transmitter, a field suitable for the directional antennas was found, as well as a former building of French customs from the 1920s for the studios. This was all in a radius of one mile of each other. The field in between was filled with landmines. The Israeli army was prepared to clean that up.<sup>20</sup> The Israeli army was

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 50-52.

also helpful in providing VOH with cement trucks, a generator, and with many other services that gave the impression that for Israel there was a potential military or political advantage in allowing VOH to be based in Southern Lebanon.<sup>21</sup> Otis considered the Israeli help to his station ‘clearly supernatural and heartwarming’.<sup>22</sup>

Ḥaddâd offered the services of the Lebanese technician Sharbâl Yûnis, the man who was responsible for Ḥaddâd’s radios and communication equipment.<sup>23</sup> Otis enlisted Gary Hull as a program presenter. He had been a disk jockey for a Christian station in the USA but had lived in Jerusalem for a year, praying that a Christian radio station might come about around Mount Hermon.<sup>24</sup> Otis also found Charles ‘Chuck’ and Kathy Pollak, two radio presenters from Crane, Texas (USA) willing to come to Southern Lebanon.<sup>25</sup> In September 1979 VOH began its broadcasts.<sup>26</sup>

### **12.1.2 Arabic Broadcasts: 1981-2000, and since 2002**

#### **12.1.2.1 HAM: 1981-2000**

##### ***Catching the Vision: 1980-1981***

In February 1980, Otis caught the vision for beginning Shortwave (SW) broadcasts from the site of VOH:

In February 1980, while passing through Heathrow Airport, I saw a small radio in a duty-free shop, with ‘in addition to the usual AM and FM bands [...] all three bands of Shortwave broadcasts. [...] I was very skeptical. Shortwave equipment had always been big, bulky and expensive, and had required an elaborate outside antenna. [...] I was about to discover something profoundly new.[...] I had worked in the world of technology long enough to suspect that I had stumbled onto a revolution in communications. [What] the transistor had done for the radio, the micro-chip had accomplished for shortwave receivers. The new boom in shortwave sales worldwide was staggering. It was the wave of the future. Shortwave could soon reach more people than ordinary radio and TV combined. What a tool this could become for Jesus! [...] The more I discovered, the more excited I became. I began to see that the Holy Spirit was bringing to our attention an opportunity of unparalleled proportions. The field lay wide open to us, but a relatively few had noticed it yet.’<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 61-63. Charles Pollak was the Vice-President and responsible for Broadcast Operations from 1979-1985. In 2007 he was serving as the Director of Radio for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization. Dr. Charles ‘Chuck’ Pollak, ‘Welcome to a Death-Threat’, Press Release of Assist News Service (ANS) on 24 July 2007.

<sup>26</sup> In a press release, Otis then spoke about 30 kW AM dual transmitters. See ‘New Christian Radio Station goes on air in Holy Land’, World Evangelical Fellowship Communication Report (October 1979). It is not clear what the actual power of the transmitter was, as Otis speaks in his book about a ten kW transmitter.

<sup>27</sup> Otis, *Voice of Hope*, pp. 138-139.

Otis discussed the issue with Hunter, who explained to him that a transmitter and sophisticated antenna array in Southern Lebanon would enable them to cover the entire eastern hemisphere. The initial cost would be high, but the cost of programming was even higher, as they realized they would need programs in many new languages. Otis was convinced that he could find Christians that would provide them with the right programs.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Broadcasting Arabic Programs: 1981-2000***

By the end of January 1981, the King of Hope (KOH) SW station was opened and Arabic broadcasts began. The pump house that was also used for the two MW transmitters, housed the new SW transmitter as well. The old French customs house that was used for the MW studio, could also house the studios for the broadcasts in different languages. A new antenna was created in a nearby field.<sup>29</sup> During the same period, an FM station was installed as well. HAM was quickly able to find people to work in Russian, Farsi, Turkish, French, Finnish and other languages. HAM's English and Arabic program producers that were already doing their work for VOH could do the SW broadcasts too. International Broadcasting Association (IBRA Radio) from Sweden was one of the few organizations that placed its programs on KOH. After 1993, Gospel Radio Outreach (GRO) joined them and became one of the major buyers of airtime. Altogether though KOH did not sell much airtime but filled most time with the programs that it produced itself.<sup>30</sup>

VOH possessed two MW transmitters; the second one was for 'just in case'. In September 1981, the decision was made to start using both transmitters at different frequencies, thus basically creating a second station. This enabled VOH to aim for more specific audiences and resulted in one channel being for Arabic and the other for English programs.<sup>31</sup>

On 17 October 1985 a *Shi'ite* suicide team blew itself up in the broadcast room. Nine people died, but half a day later the broadcasts were on air again.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 139-140. Otis 'heard from God' that he had to also set up a television station in Southern Lebanon while preparing for the MW radio station. Ḥaddād helped him to negotiate the rights for using a hill on a piece of land that fell under the jurisdiction of a Muslim village chief. According to Otis, 'Cynics would say that he had no choice. After all, one wrong move by the Shiite Moslems of [that village] and Haddad would send them all packing. But if that were really the case, I think I would have sensed it in some measure, at least'. On 14 February 1981, the television station Star of Hope began its test broadcasts. Later during that year, Otis began to think that he should maybe hand the television ministry over to the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) of Pat Robertson. CBN received the station for free, with no debts and no strings attached. According to Otis, '[The] Star of Hope wasn't ours to sell. It was the Lord's station'. The transfer was completed on 10 April 1982. Probably the high cost of running a television station, made HAM decide to focus on radio only. Otis, *Voice of Hope*, pp. 121, 134, 143, 166.

<sup>29</sup> Otis, *Voice of Hope*, pp. 143-144.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 144. Gronberg in an interview with the author.

<sup>31</sup> Otis, *Voice of Hope*, p. 164.

<sup>32</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* [Christian Radio Broadcasters Worldwide: Radio Broadcasting Ministry in a Climate of Competition] (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 207. In a shoot-out, one of the terrorists was wounded and arrested by Ḥaddād's army. According to Gronberg, two years later Otis wanted to see the terrorist. 'I went to the brigadier general of the Israeli Army and he asked Ḥaddād to bring the prisoner to the Israeli army

After the attack, the Israeli army invited HAM to take its transmitters and antenna's out of Southern Lebanon to the Hill of Doves (*Jabal al-Hamâm*), a hill that had been annexed by Israel. However the studio was repaired and continued to work from Lebanese soil, as the Lebanese program production staff needed to have access to the place. By then, all production staff was Lebanese.<sup>33</sup>

As HAM was now transmitting from an area that was considered Israeli soil, the Israeli army was being criticized by Orthodox Jews for supporting a Christian missionary channel. Uri Lubrani, the Israeli coordinator for Lebanese affairs during those years, showed Gronberg significant amounts of mail with complaints from Orthodox Jews, but according to Gronberg Lubrani showed great contempt for that.<sup>34</sup> The Israeli government was disposed kindly to the work of HAM as throughout its ministry, HAM continued to support Israel and its friends in Lebanon.

Otis, aware of the vulnerability of his broadcasts from South Lebanon, created parallel broadcasts for these programs, to avoid being off air in case of serious problems. In 1986 an old SW transmitter was bought from HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings') in Quito (Ecuador), and installed in the vicinity of Van Nuys, California. The organization also looked for a Shortwave facility in the Far East and after several failures established a station on Palau in 1992. HAM began broadcasting from Deutsche Bundespost's transmitters in Jülich (Germany) from 1 August 1998 as well.<sup>35</sup>

By 1999 HAM in the USA managed its ministry in Israel and Lebanon with financial support from independent organizations in Canada, the United Kingdom, Singapore and Australia. When George Otis retired in November 1999, Jackie Mitchum Yockey was appointed as director; she had been Otis' executive secretary from the beginning of the work.<sup>36</sup> She was not able to hold the organization together.

#### ***End of HAM's Broadcasts and Organizational Changes: After 2000***

On 23 March 2000, HAM was forced to evacuate from South Lebanon including the Hill of Doves, when the Israeli military withdrew from the area. The Israeli army formally announced its withdrawal 48 hours ahead of time but it had given one week warning to HAM. HAM was told to keep quiet about it. All Lebanese staff were forewarned and promised compensation. Those who wanted to stay in Lebanon were to be paid their severance but they were also offered the chance to live in Israel. According to Gronberg, 'The army agreed to treat those who were afraid to stay in Lebanon as if they were South Lebanese army, and in that way they could come to Israel.'<sup>37</sup> This can be seen as a kind gesture on behalf of Israel but it also showed how the Lebanese Christians who worked for HAM were seen

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post in Marja'yûn. Otis gave the man a candy bar, a Bible, and he told him that he forgave him.' Gronberg in an interview with the author.

<sup>33</sup> Gronberg in an interview with the author.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 207. Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (15 April 2007).

<sup>36</sup> [www.tvbn.com/Charisma/CharismaNewsUpdate20010213.html](http://www.tvbn.com/Charisma/CharismaNewsUpdate20010213.html) (6 august 2004).

<sup>37</sup> Gronberg in an interview with the author.

as a fifth column by the Lebanese Muslims. That was damaging for the impact of the programs of VOH and KOH.

Among the *escapees* from Lebanon were Gaby and Tony Nammour, who had been engineers with HAM in South Lebanon for many years. Yockey spoke in the context of the destruction of its facilities in 1985 and its forced withdrawal from Southern Lebanon in 2000 in terms of 'the blood of the martyrs'.<sup>38</sup>

HAM had 48 hours to dismantle its studio, transmitters and six antennas. Five trucks with 12 containers were carried out without the help of the Israeli army. The materials were stored in Israel until they were sold and shipped to some African countries. Israel did not allow HAM to broadcast from Israel's soil. The forced withdrawal from Lebanon meant an end to all broadcasts of HAM through its own transmitters in the Arab World.

HAM was temporarily able to continue broadcasting by SW from some of the other transmitters it used, but money ran out. The retirement of Otis, the cost of moving out of Lebanon and the fact that HAM could no longer sell airtime on its own frequencies, had been a costly loss for HAM.<sup>39</sup> According to some of the partnering organizations with HAM, there was also an issue of mismanagement.<sup>40</sup>

HAM was able to get some free airtime for its programs on the Sky Angel satellite network after September 2001. These broadcasts were now called Voice of Jerusalem.<sup>41</sup> Through Sky Angel, HAM was not reaching the Arab World but only those people in North America who had a subscription to Sky Angel. Those were mostly Christians. By February 2006, these broadcasts had also ceased. By that stage, HAM supplied 321 Christian stations in the USA three times daily with news from Israel, while it also broadcast its programs over the internet. In February 2006, HAM also began broadcasting four programs of 15 minutes every day on a Christian FM station in Bethlehem.<sup>42</sup>

#### **12.1.2.2 BVB: Since 2002**

Due to financial problems of HAM in the USA and also because of organizational disagreements over money matters and control issues, the national offices of HAM in Canada and the United Kingdom decided in 2001, that they would no longer cooperate with the HAM headquarters in the USA. On 1 July 2002, High Adventure Gospel Communication Ministries (Canada) and Bible Voice (United Kingdom) formed Bible Voice Broadcasting (BVB) to begin SW broadcasts again.<sup>43</sup> These broadcasts covered the Middle East, Europe, Africa, China, India and South East Asia. Bible Voice USA was formed in January 2003 and joined the group.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Jackie Yockey, *High Adventure Ministries* (April 2003): Newsletter.

<sup>39</sup> Gronberg in an interview with the author. Don McLaughlin in an interview with the author (20 February 2006).

<sup>40</sup> McLaughlin in an interview with the author.

<sup>41</sup> 'Sky Angel welcomes three new channels; Superchannel TBN, Voice of Jerusalem, and The Liberty Channel join Christian satellite system': Press Release of Sky Angel (28 September 2001), on [www.skyangel.com](http://www.skyangel.com) (30 October 2001).

<sup>42</sup> Gronberg in an interview with the author. [www.voiceofhopejerusalem.com](http://www.voiceofhopejerusalem.com) (28 June 2005).

<sup>43</sup> Yuval Shomron, Jerusalem Bureau Chief of HAM, in an interview with the author (20 February 2006).

<sup>44</sup> [www.biblevoice.com](http://www.biblevoice.com) (20 February 2006). McLaughlin in an interview with the author.



In 2002 BVB began broadcasts in 23 languages. According to its Canadian director Don McLaughlin, its focus had changed compared to HAM. It put more effort into broadcasting in the right languages at the right times. Also, Hebrew broadcasts had become possible, which Israel had not previously allowed when HAM had worked on its terrain. For BVB, some of the main program suppliers were Global Radio Outreach (GRO), Voice of the Martyrs USA, Voice of the Martyrs Canada, and a retired Southern Baptist missionary from Yemen.<sup>45</sup>

In 2006, programs were aired for over 80 hours per week in 15 languages. They were broadcast from Jülich, from Krasnodar in Russia, and from Merlin's former British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) transmitters in Rampisham, Dorset (England).<sup>46</sup>

## 12.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

### 12.2.1 HAM

It has not been possible to obtain a formal statement of faith from HAM, and possibly the organization did not have one. For HAM, its Charismatic theology and its premillennial support for Israel incorporating the imminent return of Christ to restore the nation of Israel, which would be preceded by the so-called *Battle of Armageddon* in the Middle East, were important characteristics. In 1996, Otis wrote in a newsletter to his constituency:

The Bible promises us that each of us will be blessed as we bless the Jewish nation and her people. God requires us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and promises to prosper us when we do.[...] Israel is in great turmoil and deeply divided over the late Prime Minister's 'land give-away' in Judea and Samaria in return for a shaky peace. Today, when you walk through the streets of Jerusalem, your heart is broken over the evidences of the approach of Armageddon. Prime Minister Rabin was a long-time friend who helped High Adventure launch our first Gospel stations, but giving away land God covenanted to Israel violates the Word and has inspired turmoil among the Muslims.<sup>47</sup>

Under Yockey, the beliefs of the organization did not change. She saw her work as the work of John the Baptist. 'Just as he was a forerunner for the ministry of Christ, we have now taken a role in preparing for the millennial reign of Jesus Christ in proclaiming the Word from Jerusalem', Yockey said. '[HAM] sees its daily live satellite feeds of the Gospel as fulfilling the prophecy from Micah 4:2, which says: "The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> McLaughlin in an interview with the author.

<sup>46</sup> [www.biblevoice.com](http://www.biblevoice.com). McLaughlin in an interview with the author.

<sup>47</sup> George Otis, *High Adventure Ministries Global Broadcasting Network Voice of Hope Newsletter* (February 1996).

<sup>48</sup> [www.highadventure.org](http://www.highadventure.org).

In 2004, Yockey published that HAM had three goals: To ‘encourage Israelis that American Christians will not forget them, to exhort Christians in America to stand with and for Israel, [and to] keep the Word going forth from Jerusalem.’<sup>49</sup> She also believed that ‘we must dispossess the diabolical evil that has had a stronghold in those [Muslim] countries and threatens the very existence of the nation of the Holy Land.’<sup>50</sup> She also said:

Satan has chosen to use Islamic religion as his earthly army. The extreme arm of Islam believes they are to destroy all Jews and Christians. We can fight the march of Islam with our Shortwave radio. [...] American and coalition troops went into war and the Hussein regime was dispersed. Gods grace was shed on our troops. Miraculous rescues were witnessed by the world. Terrorists lost an ally. Arab nations learned the truth. [...] We are in a spiritual battle and the wall of Islam will be torn down.<sup>51</sup>

By then, HAM did not have its own SW facilities any longer. However, these views of Yockey at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century do give good insight into the style of theological and missiological thinking of HAM during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For contextualizing the Gospel to the Arab World, these Christian-Zionist views were unhelpful as they created unnecessary stumbling blocks for an Arab audience; it is not clear though to what extent the Lebanese program producers of HAM included pro-Israeli and Christian-Zionist statements in their programs. This would need further research. According to Gronberg HAM endeavored not to broadcast programs that directly attacked Islam.<sup>52</sup> From the perspective of producing programs that were suitable for the Arab Muslim audience, this hardly mattered, as the pro-Zionist views of HAM and the location of its studios and transmitters were just as much a stumbling block to them. In its broadcasts, HAM was not tempted to disregard CW1, as it was convinced of the absolute truth of the Biblical revelation about Christ, and the need of people to have faith in that for salvation; it also agreed that people should participate in a church.<sup>53</sup>

### **12.2.2 BVB**

BVB had a formal Statement of Faith:

1. We believe the Bible to be divinely inspired, infallible and the authoritative Word of God and the source of Christian doctrine.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracle working power, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed Blood, His

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<sup>49</sup> Jackie Yockey, *High Adventure Ministries* (October 2004)

<sup>50</sup> Jackie Yockey, *High Adventure Ministries* (May 2003)

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Gronberg in an interview with the author.

<sup>53</sup> Jackie Yockey, *High Adventure Ministries* (October 2004)

- bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential for the salvation of lost and sinful man.
  5. We believe in the present day ministry of the Holy Spirit and that Christians are enable to live a godly life by the indwelling of His Spirit. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, empowering us to be victorious and bold witnesses to all the world.
  6. We believe that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is both evident and relevant for today.
  7. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; that they are saved unto the resurrection of life; and that they are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
  8. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ. We believe that the church is the body of Christ and is composed of all those who, through belief in Christ, have been spiritually regenerated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
  9. We believe in the great commission of Christ to the church. We believe that the church has a dual mission; to worldwide evangelisation and to the discipleship and nurturing of Christians.
  10. We believe that God has not forgotten His promises to Israel. We believe in the complete fulfillment of God's prophetic programme for this world.<sup>54</sup>

This Statement of Faith was apologetic. BVB was interdenominational, and Pentecostal or Charismatic. It had a similar Israel-oriented eschatology as HAM previously had. This testified to BVB's premillennial views. Major part of this statement came verbatim from the doctrinal statement of the British Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA).<sup>55</sup> BVB added those parts that reflected its Charismatic and Christian-Zionist beliefs.

For an organization with an interest in broadcasting a contextualized Gospel to the Arab World, this view of the role of Israel was not helpful. However, as BVB did not produce its own programs but only sold airtime to its program suppliers, these views of BVB did not necessarily have an impact on the Arabic programs it was broadcasting. It is likely that these views were much clearer in the English and the Hebrew programs that were also broadcast in BVB's blocks of airtime. If so, this was not a good media environment for the Arabic programs of BVB. Thus, RCR6 was not taken into account by BVB. CW1 was certainly heeded, as BVB underlined the absoluteness of the Christian revelation. The last point of the Statement of Faith also made it clear that for BVB, the opinions of the churches in the Arab World did not generally matter. These churches did not agree with the Christian-Zionist approach. Thus, CW2 was not heeded.

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<sup>54</sup> [www.biblevoice.org](http://www.biblevoice.org).

<sup>55</sup> Jan A.B. Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science and Theology of Mission in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. A Missiological Encyclopedia Part 1: The Philosophy and Science of Mission* (Frankfurt am Main, 2002, first edition 1995), p. 161

## 12.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

### 12.3.1 HAM

In 2005, BVB published its goals on its website, and it is likely that these were similar to HAM's goals with its Arabic programs from its inception:

Our ministry's mission is to proclaim God's Word to those who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as provide spiritual growth to Christian listeners. High Adventure is dedicated to communicating hope, healing and restoration to all nations of the world. [...] The ministry can reach countries that keep their door closed to the Word of God, as well as isolated villages where there are no churches or missionaries.<sup>56</sup>

HAM began with broadcasts that could only be heard in the direct environment of Lebanon, both by FM and by MW. As its program producers were mostly Lebanese who lived in Lebanon, the programs were in Lebanese Arabic and MSA or a combination thereof, but it has not been possible to verify whether HAM had any policy in this regard or what its actual practice was.

When HAM began SW broadcasts, it targeted the whole Arab World. It continued to do so with the same program producers that it also used for its FM and MW broadcasts. The choice to speak to both Muslims and Christians was problematic from the viewpoint of contextualization, as was the idea to broadcast in Lebanese and MSA to the whole Arab World. The approach meant that RCR1, that demands a homogenous target audience, was not heeded. That made it impossible to heed RCR2, regarding the need to target the audience in its actual context. HAM did not try to implement RCR3, as there is no sign that it tried to reach its target audience in its own colloquial languages.

The FM broadcasts that aimed at Southern Lebanon were arguably best from the viewpoint of contextualization, as the programs were produced by Lebanese who lived in the same context as their audience and who spoke the same language. The role of this FM station in Lebanon is worth further study.

### 12.3.2 BVB

BVB wanted 'to proclaim God's Word to those who have never heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, to teach the Word of God and encourage Christian listeners throughout the world. From powerful radio stations Bible Voice Broadcasting can reach countries that are subject to political control and are closed to the Word of God, as well as isolated communities where there are no churches or missionaries'.<sup>57</sup> This closely resembled the mission statement of HAM in the USA. On the issue of language, BVB decided:

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<sup>56</sup> [www.highadventure.org](http://www.highadventure.org).

<sup>57</sup> [www.biblevoice.org](http://www.biblevoice.org).

Wherever possible we support indigenous broadcasters – those who can speak the language and understand the cultural nuances that make programming effective into a target area. We also air English programs into regions where it would be a second language to many, but encourage programmers to be culturally relevant and sensitive.<sup>58</sup>

In the context of the Arab World, BVB did not define what it meant by ‘indigenous languages’; it may have simply meant MSA as the indigenous language of the Arab World. Conclusions await further study.

BVB did not define specific target areas within the Arab World. Its goal was to reach Muslims and Christians simultaneously, so it did not aim at a homogenous audience and as a result it could not speak of a target audience in its actual context. RCR2 and RCR3 were thus not implemented purposely.

As BVB did not produce its own programs but only aired programs from program suppliers who paid for the airtime, these program suppliers effectively decided what audiences were targeted and what Arabic languages were used.

## 12.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

### 12.4.1 HAM

Though ‘detractors’ considered HAM ‘stooges of the Israelis and Haddad’, Otis believed they were not, and he pointed to the freedom they had to broadcast whatever they wanted. ‘I knew we enjoyed freedom to broadcast truth – even if it was unfavorable to our own country and our friends.’ That may be so, but with their Christian-Zionist opinions and favorable views of Ḥaddād, it was unlikely they would easily recognize truth in news that was unfavorable to Israel and Ḥaddād.

From the outset, Otis wanted to be clear to Ḥaddād about the goals of VOH. It had to be clear that the station would be Christian, and Otis says that they would ‘with increasing boldness, proclaim the message of peace and God’s Word as the only real source of hope to all of the listeners’. According to Otis, Ḥaddād ‘nodded with a slight look of puzzlement’.<sup>59</sup>

Otis himself was also ‘perplexed’ by the issue of programming for the station. ‘The more I thought about it, the more complex the question seemed.’ According to Otis, one of the main functions of HAM was to encourage and strengthen the people ‘in the face of enormous savagery and violence. Hope is what you gain when you start to believe that what you desire may be possible after all.’<sup>60</sup> Otis was aware, though, that Lebanese culture needed other programs than the USA’s:

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Otis, *Voice of Hope*, p. 46.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

Their culture operated in a way that left us with a number of things in common, but with a larger number of differences. Certainly our religious expression did not constitute a point of communality.<sup>61</sup>

The question Otis was faced with was how far he was willing 'to go to accommodate the Moslems, the Jews, U.N. troops, the Phalange, the Christians?' Otis was aware that with Bible reading, preaching and hymns, it would be unlikely that his station could build up an audience.<sup>62</sup>

It has not been possible to find formal programming strategies of HAM. In this realm, further study is needed, but it seems HAM's formal and informal policies were rather broad. This became clear from the manner in which HAM under Yockey endeavored to entice people to have their own programs on its broadcasts:

Do you sense that God is calling you to minister to spiritually hungry souls in other nations? You may have gifts and abilities that suit you for this task but perhaps you lack the ability to go. Even if you were to go abroad, what exactly would you do - - - where would you start? High Adventure Ministries can open new doors to those with a burden and calling to world evangelism! We have Gospel radio stations placed strategically around the world that broadcast the good news of Christ. New listeners are tuning to our stations daily!

For less than the cost of traveling abroad, your church or missions group can broadcast your own program to the outermost parts of the earth! High Adventure is expanding its network opening more international communities to the Good News of Christ. To those who are called for this purpose - pastors, evangelists, a church mission's outreach, or simply those with a desire to help fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can help you in missions partnership.

You may say: 'But I am not a trained broadcaster. I have no experience. How can I be a part of this mission's opportunity?' It's easier than you may think. If you have a heart for missions and a message to share, our experienced professionals can help you with the support needed to get started.

How Do I Get Started? High Adventure's Voice of Hope Global Broadcasting Network has worldwide coverage! Our stations deliver the Gospel to every continent on earth and our specialty is the 10/40 Window. What part of the world has God called you to? High Adventure Global Broadcasting Network can get you there - - - at the speed of light!<sup>63</sup>

The lack of programming policies of HAM suggests that the organization did not try to steer its program suppliers to producing contextually suitable programs for the Arab World. It sold airtime and accepted almost all sorts of Evangelical programs.

#### **12.4.2 BVB**

BVB published that it wanted all of its program suppliers to comply, among other things, with the following rules:

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-58.

<sup>63</sup> [www.highadventure.org](http://www.highadventure.org).

[...] We reserve the right to edit or not play any programming not adhering to our Statement of Faith or quality standards.

[...] The programs shall be listener oriented.

The programs shall be positive in their nature. Negative opinions about people or organizations, whether political or religious, shall be avoided. Programs shall not be used to solicit contributions.

All program content shall have the Bible as its basis and be based in the overall message of the Bible.

The programs shall show how God cares for the entire person – body, soul and spirit. Where needed, and if resources permit, the programs may contain information and teaching about health care, agricultural, environmental and other social matters.

The programs shall maintain a high technical, cultural, Christian and moral level.

The translation of program material from other languages is acceptable only if that material has been adapted to listener culture and manner of communication. [...]

The program content shall contain nothing which is defamatory, obscene or illegal or which will be in breach of any applicable laws and/or regulatory codes, including, without limitation, any laws, codes or standards which would be applicable if the supply of the program was to be licensed by the Radio Authority as a local service.

From the perspective of contextualization, it is noteworthy that BVB was interested in programs on health care, agricultural, environmental and other social matters, and that it wanted programs that were listener oriented. This was an effort to approach the audience in its actual context, in line with RCR2. It may also have been a strategy to open the airwaves to more program suppliers.

The recognition that the programs should be adapted to the local culture and that the style of delivery had to be suitable was acknowledgement of the need to use suitable linguistic and cultural forms, in accordance with RCR4. However, the statement regarding the translation of programs into other languages assumes that some programs were originally English. Contextualization goes further than adapting programs; it encourages programs to be produced by people from the target audience. The idea that programs could be ‘adapted’ to the culture of the listener was naïve and was written from an Anglo-Saxon worldview.

It is also clear from the above guidelines that ‘negative opinions’ about politics and religions had to be avoided. This decreased the scope for program suppliers to make programs that were about the actual context of the audience, as demanded by RCR2. It will be seen later that as far as Islam was concerned, this rule was not strictly implemented, as some programs openly attacked Islam.

## **12.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS**

### ***12.5.1 History: 1981-2004***

#### **12.5.1.1 HAM: 1981-2000**

The initial program format chosen by HAM for its English programs was surprising. It decided to become a station known for its American Country music. The reasons used for that were that no-one else in the Middle East was broadcasting

that music style, and that folk music is often about God and the Bible. Every American country singer also had a religious album. Using that music was considered a natural bridge to reading and teaching from the Bible, and to other sorts of hymns. Otis also decided to ‘give God a commercial about every fifteen minutes. [A] minute of reading from the Bible, mostly from the Old Testament – probably with an emphasis on messianic passages’.<sup>64</sup> Every hour VOH broadcast five minutes of news, while during each day a longer block of 15 minutes looked more in-depth into the news. ‘We will seek to be evenhanded in our reports, not favoring either side’, Otis said.<sup>65</sup> However, VOH did also broadcast the speeches of Ḥaddād.<sup>66</sup>

The American disc jockeys were soon tired of the program format, as they did not want to be like technicians just making sure that music got played and announcements made. They were also tired of the ‘secular sound’ with which they began in the early days. Otis agreed with this: ‘I wanted Spirit-led ministry over the air in which the disk jockeys would pray and speak to the needs of their listeners with words of knowledge and wisdom imparted supernaturally by the gift of the Holy Spirit.’<sup>67</sup>

Because of the unusual hazardousness of life in our region, the Voice of Hope staff soon resolved to begin praying aloud on the air [...] for the safety and protection of their listeners. They began to pray for the sick and injured, the families separated or in discord, for the basic needs of food and clothing and shelter of their listeners. Likewise they prayed for the leaders of Lebanon, Israel, Syria, and Jordan [...] always as they felt led by the Spirit.<sup>68</sup>

When VOH began, the goal was to broadcast 16 hours per day, and quickly move to 24 hours. At the outset, the goal of HAM was to also broadcast in Arabic in the evenings.<sup>69</sup> In 1979, shortly after VOH had gone on air with its English programs, the station employed some more Lebanese staff. Fransîs Rizq, a school teacher with good English, was introduced to the station by Ḥaddād. Salmá Yûnis, a Lebanese woman with faultless English, came from a nearby village. Ḥaddād also brought another woman, Nâdiyah, to the station. These three people received some training in the art of broadcasting.<sup>70</sup>

The first Arabic broadcasts were the result of interviews that Râjâ’ Ghanûm did in the villages around the radio station. He was also trained to do live broadcasting by the American staff. Ghanûm had heard VOH while in Beirut, and decided, with his wife and baby, to travel to South Lebanon. As a young medical student he was tired of the civil war in Beirut and wanted to live in freedom, according to Otis. He risked the dangers of passing through the checkpoints of the warring fac-

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<sup>64</sup> Otis, *Voice of Hope*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>65</sup> ‘New Christian Radio Station goes on air in Holy Land’, World Evangelical Fellowship Communication Report (October 1979). This report calls the area of southern Lebanon ‘Free Lebanon’.

<sup>66</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>67</sup> Otis, *Voice of Hope*, p. 90.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>69</sup> ‘New Christian Radio Station goes on air in Holy Land’.

<sup>70</sup> Otis, *Voice of Hope*, p. 98.



tions, including those of the PLO. Not long after he began working for VOH, Ghanim was killed by a trip-wired bomb in one of the southern villages.<sup>71</sup>

The Arabic staff increased, though, and before long, VOH was able to broadcast five hours per day in Arabic. The programs contained Arabic music, news, weather, and readings from the Old and the New Testament in Arabic. The Arabic programs were broadcast during prime listening hours in Lebanon, such as in the early afternoon when many Lebanese would take a nap.<sup>72</sup> It is commendable that HAM did broadcast news programs, as that was in line with RCR2, the need to make programs that spoke to people in their actual context.

#### 12.5.1.2 BVB: 2002-2004

Little is known of the programs broadcast by BVB since 2002. Something of the programs' approach can be discerned from some examples that BVB has published. In 2003, it began to broadcast special Arabic messages for Iraq, called *Encouraging Iraq*. In March 2004, BVB broadcast 12 consecutive days of messages to Iraq. This was an effort to implement RCR1 regarding the need to have a homogenous target audience, and it was also a good example of RCR2, as this was an effort to speak to a particular nation in its concrete time of need.

The organization claimed that during those days in the first half of March 2004, there was a marked decrease of violence in Iraq. '[There is] a demonic attack on Iraq and on the free world who wish nothing but blessing and freedom for this ancient nation.' English programs to 'coalition forces' were also broadcast. 'One thing that has been [learned] from international reports, is the depth of compassion that Coalition Forces are extending to Iraqis. [...] We must pray for them – they are God's instrument of mercy at this crucial time.'<sup>73</sup> It must be asked whether the English programs that supported the invading American army, were at the expense of how the Iraqi Arabs understood the Arabic programs. Many Iraqi listeners would have also understood the English programs.

A unique program that was not found with any other Christian broadcaster was Rabbi Moshe Laurie's Shofar ben Zion Ministries in Groton, Connecticut (USA). He made English programs to encourage Jews to 'return' to Israel. 'Rabbi Moshe has agreed to use our entire short wave radio resource to reach out across the world and call out to the Jews [...] and tell them "its time to come home"'.<sup>74</sup> This did not create the media environment needed for contextually suitable programs for the Arabs. Thus, RCR6 was not heeded.

#### 12.5.2 Programs of 20-26 September 2004

BVB did not broadcast Arabic programs on Saturday or Sunday during the week of 20-26 September 2004. Its broadcasts in Arabic were heavily concentrated on Friday, the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula's holy day, as recorded in *Fig-*

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 104, 131.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>73</sup> McLaughlin, Don, *Bible Voice Broadcasting; High Adventure Gospel Communication Ministries* (April 2004).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

ure 12.1. Figure 12.2 shows the actual programs broadcast on each of these days.<sup>75</sup> This in itself gives the impression that the focus of BVB was more on the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula than on North Africa. Throughout the week, the broadcasts were carried by five programs that were broadcast more than once. Of those, Voice of Forgiveness (*Ṣawt al-Ghufrân*) of Abû Kathîr (that is, Timothy Ibrahim) of GRO was the most important as it was a daily broadcast of 30 minutes.

Days of the Week	Frequency	Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)
-23456-	15460	05.00-05.30 (1)
----6-	17595	08.45-10.15
-23456-	15235	16.15-17.30 (2)
-23456-	17860	17.00-17.15 (3)
----5--	13710	18.00-18.45

(1) On Friday from 05.00-05.45

(2) On Tuesday and Thursday from 17.00-17.30

(3) On Monday from 17.00-17.30

Figure 12.1 BVB's Arabic SW broadcasts: 20-26 September 2004

### 12.5.2.1 Biblical Topics

#### *Hello Morning*

Hello Morning was a program by Nabîlah, explaining the truth of God's love and forgiveness for 'repentant and broken souls (*al-nufûs al-tâ'ibah wa al-muqassirah*)'. The program began by saying that all people fear death, but that was not needed:

The Bible (*al-Kitâb al-Muqaddas*) makes clear that death is just the beginning of the real life for every repentant sinner (*tâ'ib 'an athâmuḥ*) who has put his trust in Christ (*al-Masîḥ*) for his eternal salvation (*khalâṣuh al-âbadî*) [...] Living on earth has only one purpose: to give a message and to get ready for death.

In a flurry of Christian language the program then explained that there is a vast difference between the death of a believer in Jesus and one who does not believe in Him. 'Christ, to whom be the glory (*Jahu al-majd*) assures us that He has overcome death and that He has broken its sting through His death on the cross and through His resurrection.' Christ does not want anyone to perish eternally, but:

He wants each person to repent honestly (*al-tawbah al-ṣâdiqah*) and to 'believe in the living Christ who came for the redemption (*fidâ'*) of humanity from eternal destruction. The Bible tells us that man's soul is immortal and will live forever [and that] this immortal soul will either end up living in the Kingdom of the Most Holy God (*Malakût Allâh al-Quddûs*) or in hell (*al-jahannam*).

<sup>75</sup> These programs are not listed sequentially, but in a manner that shows how some series were broadcast and that on Friday, a greater diversity of programs was on air with BVB.

In fiery terms the dangers for the person who is not a ‘real Christian (*Masîhî bi al-haqq*) were painted. Him awaits the bottomless pit (*al-hâwîyah*) and the lake of fire (*buhayrah al-nâr*). ‘Hell is the destiny of every man who deliberately refuses to accept Christ as his Savior, Redeemer and Lord (*Mukhalliṣ, Fâdî wa Rabb*).’ However, for the born again Christian believer (*al-mu’min al-Masîhî al-mawlûd min jadîd*) death is like a ‘spring breeze’ as he enters his happy home, God’s Kingdom.

Then followed a long invitation to the audience to let go of sin and to believe in Christ for escaping from hell and for enjoying eternal life. Finally, the listeners were asked to confess their sins and pray along with Nabilah. In the end of the program the address for audience response was given: PO Box 220 in Leeds in the United Kingdom.<sup>76</sup>

This program was seemingly aimed at Christians, as the language used was full of Christian jargon without any explanation of that. The linguistic and cultural forms used were typically those of Protestant Christians in the Arab World. The program did not speak to its audience in its actual context, so RCR2 was not implemented. The program did not discuss any socio-economic or political issues, and the Gospel’s prophetic message was not applied to society as a whole. Thus, CW4 and CW5 were not heeded. These comments are also valid for the other programs of Hello Morning.

20-09-04 Monday	21-09-04 Tuesday	22-09-04 Wednesday	23-09-04 Thursday	24-09-04 Friday
Hello Morning		Hello Morning		Hello Morning
Abraham's Descendent		Abraham's Descendent		Abraham's Descendent
Voice of Forgiveness	Voice of Forgiveness	Voice of Forgiveness	Voice of Forgiveness	Voice of Forgiveness
Light and Truth		Light and Truth	Where is Truth?	The Word of God
Come to Me	Come to Me		Come to Me	Come to Me
				River of Love
				Gate of Heaven
				Road to Emmaus
				Voice of Preaching

Figure 12.2 Content of BVB’s Arabic Programs: 20-26 September 2004

The next Hello Morning was about prayer. The Bible (*al-Kitâb al-Muqaddas*) was quoted much, in the first place about Jesus and His prayers. ‘If the Lord Jesus Christ (*al-Rabb Yasû’ al-Masîh*) needed to pray, so how much more we, His followers.’ The program proceeded:

<sup>76</sup> BVB broadcast 20 September 2004, Hello Morning.

The Christian believer's sins are forgiven after believing in Christ's death on the cross and in His resurrection. His sins are forgiven because he is justified by Christ's blood. [...] The spiritual relationship (*al-ṣilah al-rūḥīyah*) with the Creator will motivate him to pray everyday. Actually, he lives in a state of constant prayer.

The program advised people to begin prayer not with a wish list from God, but with a search of the soul and confession of sins (*khaṭāyā*). 'First of all, ask Him to forgive your trespasses (*zalātiq*) in the name of Christ and His blood, the blood of forgiveness.' It also advised people to find a quiet place where nothing stresses them or bothers them, and to then tell Him 'about the things that torture you and make you tired and nervous'. This repentant beginning of prayer was needed as:

God is most interested in the humble and repentant heart. Repentance is able to uproot sin, and make the believer feel free to practice the vast aspects of prayer such as glorifying (*al-tamjīd*) and praising (*al-tasbīḥ*) [God], asking [Him] for the salvation of the family and for the other lost souls, and [petitions] for the churches and for the country in which we live, for our neighbors and even for our enemies.

The program said that whether we kneel, stand or sit, and whether we pray in the morning or the evening, these are 'just outward matters (*shaklīyât*) that are not important for God' as God looks at the heart. With many other exhortations the audience was explained to about the importance of prayer, for instance in the fight against Satan's efforts to make them sin. Prayer however, is a mighty force in the believer's hand. It represents an open line that connects man with the 'throne of grace (*'arsh al-ni'mah*)'. To pray means to be a 'partner (*sharikah*)' with the Lord.' This is a statement that deeply upsets Muslims; the worst sin in Islam is *shirk*, that is, to assign partners to God.

Finally, the address of the program in Leeds was given for those who 'want to know more about the love of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer (*Fâdi*) and [who] want to know about eternal life and salvation through grace (*al-khalâṣ bi al-ni'mah*).<sup>77</sup>

On 24 September 2004, Hello Morning was again on the importance of prayer. First, prayer was defined as 'the conversation between man and his Creator'. Then, Nabīlah explained that people should pray when they begin the day, when they eat, when the end the day, and in general before any major decision. She quoted many Bible verses to show the many aspects to prayer, and invited the audience to accept Christ:

Today if you are suffering from depression, if your heart is broken because your hopes were lost, and if you have struggled but you could not survive the difficulties of life so you were overcome by temptations and fell into the pit of pain and failure, do not be sad and do not get depressed because there is hope. Go to the Savior who redeemed you on the cross. Go to Him through prayers and supplications (*bi al-ṣalâh wa al-du'â*). Christ (*al-Masīḥ*) came to hurting people like you. 'I came not to call the righteous (*al-abrâr*), but sinners (*khuṭâ*) to repentance (*ilâ tawbah*).' Come to Him. He has the only treatment for your problem. Come to the Savior Je-

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<sup>77</sup> BVB broadcast 22 September 2004, Hello Morning.

sus Christ. Tell Him: 'I surrender (*asallim*) my life to you and I am pleased to do your will'.

The program continued to stress that the Lord Jesus Christ loves people with an eternal love, and that He is capable of forgiving people. 'He is the Savior who came to this earth for the salvation of humanity from eternal destruction (*al-halâk al-âbadî*).' The program used many typically Christian words and terms for encouraging people to a life of prayer and reading the Bible:

When you believe and become committed to the tools of grace, like prayer and studying the Bible, you will never fail (*lan tafshallû*) because the One who calls you is faithful to give you the desire of your heart.

The program gave much attention to the need for forgiving others, as a precondition for God answering prayers. 'God, to Him all honor (*Allâh lahu al-jalâl*), hears the prayer that comes out of a strong faith and a pure and forgiving heart.' Before the address of the program in Leeds was given, the program ended with another long plea for the audience to accept Christ, including a prayer in Christian jargon:

We come to the throne of grace and stand before God. Lord, we enter into your divine presence. [...] Cover [the audience] with your mercy and with the cloud (*sahâbah*) of your Holy Spirit. [...] Set them free from Satan's authority over their lives. Lord, you paid the price on the cross for redemption. Today I come to you in repentance. I committed sins before your eyes. Forgive me and set me free. Save me by Christ's blood. I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>78</sup>

#### ***Abraham's Descendant***

Abraham's Descendant was prepared by Dawûd Jabrá and presented by Râmî Ibrâhîm. 'The purpose is to study the Bible (*al-Kitâb al-Muqaddas*).' The temptation of Jesus in the desert by the devil was treated in this program. The verse in which Jesus was tempted by the devil to change a stone into bread 'if you are the Son of God (*in kuntu Ibn Allâh*)' was treated. The program discussed that as God takes care of our physical sustenance through food, so He also satisfies the hungry soul. He does so on earth, but more so, eventually, in heaven:

In the meantime our life on earth is not perfect because people, including their governments and their organizations (*hukûmâthum wa munazzamâthum*) are not perfect. One day there will be a perfect Kingdom, and we desire to be part of it. We want to be partners (*shurakâ'*) of God's Kingdom when He reigns over this earth and when God's Son Jesus Christ comes and truly rules the earth.

Ibrâhîm explained that Jesus was tempted but that did not mean that He sinned, just as Christians may be tempted and have bad thoughts, but that is not a sin if these ideas are not implemented. Jesus was able to defeat the temptations from the devil because knew the Bible, He quoted from it, and He applied it. 'It is very

<sup>78</sup> BVB broadcast 24 September 2004, Hello Morning.

important for us to know what is written.’ The program then read the part of the Old Testament Jesus used when overcoming the temptation, from Deuteronomy 8. ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.’ It is important to be fed physically, but it is more important to know what God tells us, and to abide by that:

We ask God to keep these ideas in your hearts and to help you remember them so as not to be defeated by the enemy of good (*‘adūwah al-khayr*), but to be righteous people (*ṣāḥīyīn*) and recite repeatedly the verses (*ayât*) of the Holy Revelation (*al-Waḥī al-Muqaddas*) by which we can overcome the enemy of good.

Then the address of the program was given: PO Box 842, Alhambra, California (USA).<sup>79</sup> This same address was given after each of the programs of Abraham’s Descendant. In this program Christians were addressed so they were seemingly the target audience. The program assumed that the Christian religious language could be understood by the audience, as it was not further explained. The program did not speak to the audience in its whole context, so RCR2 was not implemented and thus it precluded the program from applying the prophetic message of the Gospel to society. Thus CW4 and CW5 were only partially heeded.

If indeed Christian Arabs were the target audience of this program, then RCR4 was implemented meaning that the audience was addressed using its appropriate linguistic and cultural forms. For that audience, Christ was portrayed in a suitable manner, as required by RCR5. These comments are also valid for other programs in this series.

Next program of Abraham’s Descendant continued the study of ‘the holy inspiration of the Good News (*al-waḥī al-muqaddas min al-Bashārah*) as revealed by God to Saint Luke’. Satan tempted Jesus Christ to sin, but Jesus resisted that by quoting a verse from Deuteronomy 8:3: ‘Man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.’ By his speech God orders the whole universe, and He also ‘gives each of us the Bible (*al-Kitāb al-Muqaddas*) in which He proclaims Himself. [...] If you want to live, you must study the Bible. You must acquaint yourself with it and always remember the verses from the Bible. Not just remember them but also keep them in your heart.’

The program underlined that the Bible does not just contain thoughts about God, but it was, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:16, actually inspired (*mūḥā*) by God. That word *inspired* in the New Testament means actually breathed into (*nafakha fī*) by God. God make the Word come ‘out of his depth and from his essence (*min ā‘māquh wa min jawharuh*)’ and had it put in the Bible so that we can study and use it to resist Satan when tempted. The audience was then asked to send letters to the PO Box of the program in Alhambra.<sup>80</sup>

The next program of Abraham’s Descendant was again on the temptations of Christ; this one was on the words of Luke 4:5 that says that the devil showed Jesus all the Kingdoms of the world, and offered those to Jesus if only he would worship the devil. Jesus answered: ‘It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God,

<sup>79</sup> BVB broadcast 20 September 2004, Abraham’s Descendant.

<sup>80</sup> BVB broadcast 22 September 2004, Abraham’s Descendant.

and Him only shall you serve”’. The program continued: ‘Satan has authority (*sulṭân*) over this world. [...] The whole world is in the power of the evil one.’ The program related that to the fact that ‘in the last 2000 years, people have been frustrated by their rulers who are absolutely far away from God and by the fact that Satan is behind everything that is happening today’.

The program then stressed that Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, and that consequently all powers, including Satan, evil spirits (*al-arwah al-sharîrah*), and every king and ruler in this world, will be subjected to Him. The earthly glory Satan promised Jesus when he tempted Him, was nothing compared to the real glory of Jesus Christ, who is the second person (*al-shakhṣ al-thâni*) for the Trinity (*li al-Thalûth*), and the Creator (*Khâliq*), the existing one (*al-Kâ’in*) from of old (*mundhu al-qadîm*). Then the contact details for the program were given.<sup>81</sup>

### **Light and Truth**

Light and Truth was presented by Nizâr Shahîn and Mâjid al-Shafâ’î. The first was from a Christian family in Palestine, while the second was an MBB from Egypt. Both lived in Canada. Mâjid answered questions of Nizâr. The program was intended for ‘many Arab brothers from different backgrounds and religions’. That made clear that the program actually aimed at speaking to Muslims. Mâjid was a Muslim-Background Believer (MBB). He first clarified why he was a Christian:

The person I am following on earth, I know He is my God and my Lord, the person I have chosen to be my personal Savior, is the person with whom I will spend eternity. Therefore I looked for the person. I searched for the one whom I entrust myself to, both now and for eternity. I found the Lord Jesus Christ (*al-Rabb Yasû’ al-Masîh*).

Next, the word *Christian* (*Masîhî*) was explained. It means ‘to follow the Lord Jesus Christ as the personal Savior (*Mukhalliṣ shakhṣî*) for my life as my Master and Lord. I obey Him and I live according to his commandments and teachings. I also wait for His word to be fulfilled; He comes again to take me to live with Him in eternity.’

Mâjid explained that when he was 17, he became a believer as he had been thinking much about life after death. He was scared of the torture (*‘adhâb*) of hell (*al-jahîm*). In order to escape from that, he said he ‘searched a lot among many characters, social and religious reformers, and finally I found out that the character of the Lord Jesus Christ is unique’:

I was willing to follow any person, any religion, and any reformer. I sought everything that could fill the emptiness in my life and give me joy and peace. [What] Christ achieved in my life was a personal experience. I found that this great person could give me everything I need in this life and in my eternal life. So this is why I could do nothing but accept Him and thank Him

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<sup>81</sup> BVB broadcast 24 September 2004, Abraham’s Descendant.

Without ever mentioning Islam or its Prophet, the program made more references to Islam. ‘No man, no social reformer or prophet spoke and taught like the Lord Jesus Christ.’

The program discussed Christ’s unique birth from a virgin without involvement of a man. He existed even before He was incarnated (*tajassud*). That is important because all descendants of Adam are sinners. If Jesus had been born from a father and a mother, He would be a sinner as all men, and that would disqualify Him as a redeemer who had to be without sin. He did not inherit the corrupted human nature (*fasâd al-ṭabî’ah al-bashariyah*). According to Mâjid many details of the birth of Christ had been predicted in the Old Testament thousands of years before His birth.

Finally, the address of Light and Truth was given for those who wanted to share something personal or who wanted a Bible. That was PO Box 809 in Amman (Jordan). Reference was made to a website with a difficult name that was not easily understood by the audience, and also to PO Box 692 in Marquette, Michigan (USA).<sup>82</sup>

This program aimed at Muslims. It used Christian terms in the program, but it explained those for the audience. So, RCR4 was heeded. This was done without trying to explain the Gospel in Islamic terms, so CW6, about form and meaning not being separable, was not trespassed against. Christ was presented as the Son of God who incarnated and who died and rose from death for the forgiveness of sins, so RCR5 was partially heeded. The audience was not addressed in its actual social context however, so RCR2 went unheeded. This made it also impossible to heed CW4 and CW5 regarding society. Because these programs were part of broader programming that also aimed at Christians, their impact was affected. RCR6, about the right media environment, was therefore not well heeded. These comments are also true for the next program of Light and Truth.

The next program of Light and Truth was again about the uniqueness of Christ. It focused on his blameless life. ‘He lived a sinless life without committing any sin. [...] He did not inherit (*yarith*) the corrupted human nature (*al-ṭabî’ah al-bashariyah*); He said of Himself that He was sinless; even his enemies said the same.’

A certain Nâjî stressed that Christians believe that Jesus is ‘God who appeared in the flesh (*Allâh zahara fî al-jasad*)’, but that He was, at the same time, ‘a perfect (*kâmil*) and normal (*ṭabî’î*) man’. All prophets sin, but Jesus did not. For Him to be a normal man though sinless, was the precondition for Him being able to redeem us. Nâjî then invited the audience:

Turn to the person of Christ because He is the holy man who never sinned in his life. He can help you prevent yourself from sinning. The person who has the right to ask people to be holy is the one who has never sinned. [Jesus] can give you the power to overcome your desire to sin.

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<sup>82</sup> BVB broadcast 20 September 2004, Light and Truth. The web address was based on the Arabic word for window, *nāḥiyyah*, but how to spell that for the web address was not clear.



The program then explained that Jesus, because of his sinlessness, was able to intercede (*yatahafā'a*) for us with God. 'He stood before God for entire humanity and for the forgiveness of their sins.' Before the audience response address for the program was given, Nâjî suggested a prayer to the audience:

My Lord Christ, I was born with sin and I am tired of it because it humiliates my life. I do not know how to get rid of it. We all know that we can never do that but you said: 'Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' I am so tired of doing sin. I feel guilty [...] I have no eternal certainty or eternal life. You have presented yourself as a sacrifice and redeemed me. [...] I ask you to come into my life and fill it. I ask you to change me from the inside.<sup>83</sup>

### ***Come to Me***

Come to Me said that each man is born with a sinful nature (*al-ṭabī'ah al-khât'iah*) which is the seed of selfishness that motivates man to only look for his own interest. Even Abraham, the friend of God (*khalīl Allâh*) and the man of faith, was not infallible. He lied to the Egyptians about Sarah being his sister.

When Abraham entered the land God had promised him, he divided the land between himself and his nephew Lot in order to not have trouble. Abraham allowed Lot to take the better part, as Abraham was a peace loving man. Lot's choice for the best land also meant a choice to live near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Those were wicked cities. Abraham received great promises of God, that his posterity would be like the sand of the sea and the stars of the sky, and therefore Abraham thanked God by building an altar:

What a wonderful life to be in constant fellowship with God, so that you can ask His advice and instruction before starting any new project. How wonderful to put your hand in God's hand and to live with Him as if you are living with one of your best friends. Would you also like to be God's friend like Abraham?

The program then read from a letter of Aḥmad from Morocco; He also longed to know God and walk with Him like Abraham. Aḥmad described how he was searching for salvation, but he could not find it. One day, a cousin told him that he had received a Bible from people in Spain, and that he wanted to burn it. Aḥmad asked him for it, and began reading. 'I was so touched by its style, and soon I began corresponding with a missionary center and receiving lessons by mail. I became convinced that Christ is the saving Lord.' Aḥmad then began to attend a meeting with other believers and that was very helpful:

I saw Christ on their faces even though they were sinners, but justified by the grace of the crucified Christ. They were renewed in the power of His Spirit. My faith also increased and the Holy Spirit empowered me. I accepted Christ as my Savior. I believe in His humanity and his divinity (*bi tâ'nusuh wa lahûtuḥ*).

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<sup>83</sup> BVB broadcast 22 September 2004, Light and Truth.

Finally, the program's addresses were given. Those were PO Box 95802 and PO Box 98105, both in Seattle, Washington (USA).<sup>84</sup>

The next day, Come to Me continued the story of Abraham and Lot. The program first said that Jesus invites all who labor and are heavy laden to himself in order to give them rest. 'No other prophet said: "Come to me and I will give you rest" except Jesus Christ (*Yasû' al-Masîh*), [who is] '*Îsâ ibn Maryam*, because Christ is not just a prophet (*nabî*).'

Lot went to live in the city of Sodom, and he was taken captive when Sodom was conquered by the kings of some other cities. Abraham heard of that and took his 313 men and liberated Lot and the other captives of Sodom. Abraham refused to receive any remuneration for that as he did not want people to be able to say that he won his assets through war. 'He wanted to be blessed only from the hand of God (*yad Allâh*)'. Abraham then received a blessing from Melchizedek, a priest of God Most High (*Allâh al-'Alî*). Abraham gave this priest ten percent of all he had:

The true Christian pays ten percent of his income [...] to do good. [...] God can bless hundredfold the one who gives, so do not think that your money will decrease if you give to the poor people around you.

God then blessed Abraham; He promised him posterity, even though he was old. Abraham believed that, and 'he reckoned it to him as righteousness':

People from all religions are trying hard to please God through their good works (*'amâl ṣāliḥah*), like giving money for charity, fasting, praying and doing good deeds. All these are good, but God preferred faith to good works. [...] Abraham did many good things [...] but his faith will forgive his sins. Good works can never mend the relationship between God and us because the right relationship is based on believing and trusting in God. Believing that everything He said about Himself is true and that He will do everything He says. That belief will justify (*yubarrir*) man before God.

The program then explained that Jesus died for our sins, and that this made it possible for God to forgive man, if only they believe in Him. 'But if you don't, you will stand guilty in front of God no matter how many good works you have done.' As Abraham believed God, He made a covenant (*'ahd*) with Abraham that was unconditional (*bi dîn shart*). Abraham could break that covenant but God would never do that. He promised many descendants who would spread from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. Before the PO Box in Seattle was given, the program ended with a prayer:

Our God and heavenly Father, we thank you because while we were still sinners you gave us free forgiveness through 'Îsâ the Christ (*al-Masîh*). I ask you to give faith to every listener in order to believe and be justified by faith, for the sake of the name of Jesus. Amen.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> BVB broadcast 20 September 2004, Come to Me.

<sup>85</sup> BVB broadcast 21 September 2004, Come to Me.

On 22 September 2004, Come to Me spoke about the mistake of Abraham in assuming that God's promise of posterity would be implemented through his slave Hagar instead of his own wife Sarah. This idea had actually come from Sarah:

The Bible says: 'The man is the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the man', so women should listen to their husband's words, and he, at the same time, should listen to the Word of God.

Hagar became pregnant after Sarah convinced Abraham to sleep with her maid. Hagar showed pride and did not treat Sarah well after that, so Sarah blamed Abraham:

The good thing about the Bible is that it tells us true stories, exactly as they had happened. The people who say that the Bible has been changed do not realize that if the Jews had changed the Torah (*al-Tawrah*), their book, they would have removed the stories that do not honor their prophets. And if Christians had changed their Gospel (*al-Injil*), they would have removed the stories that talk about their weaknesses and sins. [...] God's Book (*Kitâb Allâh*) has never been changed.

Sarah treated the poor pregnant slave so badly that she fled. 'The seed of sin had been running in Sarah's blood exactly as it is running in your blood and mine.'

The audience was then asked whether they feel badly treated like Hagar. They were then assured that God keeps watch over them. An angel said to Hagar that she should return to Sarah and serve her well. 'Running away from problems will never solve them. The better thing we can do is to confront them and to accept God's promise for us that He will always take care of us and will help us to act wisely according to His will and not according to our personal will.'

An example of that was used from the life of an Egyptian woman who had emigrated to the USA and who was not treated well by her boss because of her weak English. She was able to gain true friendship with her boss by baking cakes and being nice to her. This was an unwise example as it focused on the fact that this program was actually produced in the USA. This was also underlined when the PO Box 95802 in Seattle that was finally given.<sup>86</sup>

The next day, Come to Me contained the testimony of Hanân, an Arab woman. She told her own story. Hanân was raised by an old *shaykh* in an Arab country that she initially did not mention. She was a fanatic Muslim who was fully veiled. She married and soon had a baby. Her husband behaved a bit strangely, and one day he was imprisoned for being a Christian. A friend came to tell Hanân but she did not believe him and kicked him out of the house. When her husband was released from prison, he was in very bad shape. He admitted that he was a Christian even from before they had married one and a half years earlier. Hanân was very angry that he had put her in this situation and asked him for a divorce. Her husband refused that as he said he loved her and because as a Christian he did not want to consider divorce. His words touched Hanân as she had always feared marrying a Muslim who would apply Islam and its *sunnah*:

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<sup>86</sup> BVB broadcast 22 September 2004, Come to Me.

I would definitely suffer. I mean I would feel a broken woman. I was in a terrifying inner struggle, but I could not open my mouth because I was a strict girl in observing the teachings of my religion, and in obeying God and his messenger, Muḥammad. [...] The God of Muslims is of course different from God in Christianity. God in the *Qur'ân* is the Almighty (*Jabbâr*). So I always thought that this God who created us cannot be a loving God. Otherwise how could He ask us to do something that we deeply refuse?

Hanân testified that even before she was aware that her husband was a Christian, she realized that he treated her much better than most Muslim men did:

Women in Islam are not respected or appreciated. For men, she represents a cheap object. I had been struggling with myself to accept this point, and of course I could not tell anyone about my thoughts, so I decided to keep silent. I started thinking about the way [my husband] had been treating me. [...] After I knew about his desertion (*mu'ânah*), I got so angry and mad at him. I asked him to divorce me, but at the same time I knew that I loved him so much. He was an educated person. He had a high rank in the government. He came from a respectful, good family.

Hanân decided to not get a divorce, but she stopped relating to her husband. Both of them prayed:

At night I would hear him crying out in his room and say: 'Lord Jesus, Jesus, I love her....' Then I would go into my room and pray to my God and say to Him: 'Lord, if he is right, let me know. And if he is wrong, let him know his mistake.' [...] I felt that there had to be something very powerful that made [my husband] become a Christian.

The program finished here and promised that the story would be continued the next day.<sup>87</sup>

The next day, Hanân recounted that she separated totally from her husband for three or four months. She was miserable, and prayed on her balcony: 'Lord have mercy (*irham*).' Then she had a vision in which she saw Christ: 'I saw the sky turning into a paradise [...] and I saw Christ coming out of it.' Next day she told her husband who was very glad, but she told him that she would not give up on the religion of her grandfathers. 'I was so stubborn.'

One day Hanân asked her husband why he changed his religion, and he told her that it was because of reading the *Qur'ân* as that was declaring 'the divinity of Christ (*lahût al-Masîh*)'. He also discussed the position of women in Islam, including polygamy. He then read some words of Jesus from the Bible from Matthew 5:28: 'But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'

I was so surprised after reading these wonderful words. Christ here prevents the cause that can lead to committing the crime. On the other hand, in Islam you need four witnesses to establish the crime of adultery; thereby it is impossible to prove it

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<sup>87</sup> BVB broadcast 23 September 2004, Come to Me.

because no one will commit adultery in front of four witnesses. Even animals never do that. In Islam this crime happens and you can never prove it, but Christ dealt with this problem from its roots. I felt that his words were so clean and pure. I felt that my husband was following a God who was different from ours. My God tells men to marry whoever they please. [...] Of course the prophet's *ḥadīths* are full of disgusting stories. Woman in Islam has no dignity. She is like a vessel for menial use. But in Christianity she is a vessel for beauty. In the end I was convinced and I decided to surrender (*asallim*).

Immediately, persecutions became worse. The State Security officers came in the middle of the night to their house and arrested her husband while she was pushed over and had to go to hospital where she lost her twin babies. They experienced 'different kinds of torture and persecution'.

Hanân's husband was imprisoned for three months, charged with using the *Qur'ân* to preach and talk about Christ. 'We lost our two babies but we also won 35 Muslims to the Lord.' They were then told to leave Egypt within a month, as they were considered dangerous. Germany gave them a visa, but there they suffered even more, living in a small room with five other refugees. They were able to lead many to Christ. Germany did not grant them citizenship so they moved on to the USA where they also experienced suffering, but where they also led 20 people to Christ. The program ended with Hanân telling about the anger and sadness of her own mother, as they had become Christians. Hanân felt comforted that while she had given up very much, God had 'truly made up for me through love and through many brothers and sisters'.<sup>88</sup>

These programs *Come to Me* were clearly aimed at Muslims. They tried to use linguistic and cultural forms that Muslims could usually understand. It seems, however that the presenter of the program was an ethnic Christian, as he assumed a great deal of Bible knowledge and difficult terminology was not always explained. RCR4 was therefore implemented to a limited extent. This was done without using Islamic theological language, so CW6 was heeded.

Christ was portrayed as the Son of God who incarnated in Jesus Christ and who died and rose again, for the sake of offering forgiveness to those who believe; this was in accordance with RCR5. The actual context of the audience was not dealt with in most programs, though the last program with Hanân spoke openly about the problems many Muslim women have to deal with. In the other programs, RCR2 was not implemented. This also means that the last program went a long way heeding CW4 and CW5, as it spoke openly about the Gospel's impact on social life. That cannot be said of the rest of this series of programs. In respect to RCR6 it can be said that as some of the programs that surrounded *Come to Me* were aimed at Christians, the media environment was not ideal.

### ***Voice of Forgiveness***

*Voice of Forgiveness* was a program of Abû Kathîr (Timothy Ibrahim) of GRO. The program on 20 September 2004 concerned 1 John 3:20, 'Whenever our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts.' Abû Kathîr suggested two manners

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<sup>88</sup> BVB broadcast 23 September 2004, *Come to Me*.

of reading that verse. The first manner was to understand it as a warning. Sometimes people feel that something is wrong with them; they should realize that God condemns them even more. People have a tendency to compare themselves with those who are worse than they are, and by doing so, they often feel good about themselves. However:

God has totally different measures than we do. [...] He compares us with Christ and with the perfection (*kamâl*) of God himself. Therefore, if our wicked hearts condemn us for our sins, then God who is much greater than anything, knows our hidden sins, He will definitely condemn us more. There has to be a greater divine judgment that we will be subject to. This will happen if we do not believe in Christ. Therefore we have to put our trust in Him and ask Him to forgive us when we repent from our sins.

Abû Kathîr then told his audience that they should seek a deep knowledge of God, and he invited them to write to him irrespective of their religion. He offered as free presents a Bible and spiritual books, for instance on comparative religion, and he gave his PO Box 607 in Bunn, North Carolina (USA). The program then continued with a discussion on the ‘second meaning’ of the verse:

We think John is talking to the believers (*al-mu'minîn*) and telling them: ‘If we, the believers, are being condemned by our hearts, this does not mean that God condemns us too.’ Why? Because He is greater than our hearts. [...] He knows about our struggle with sin and temptation even before we fall. He also knows that since we put our trust in Christ and we got washed (*ightasalnâ*), then the blood of Jesus cleanses us from every sin. The tragedy of many believers is that after they put their trust in Christ’s atonement (*kafârah*), they are still living under the burden (*al-thikl*) of sin and they are still suffering from guilt. Their hearts condemn them and they think that if their hearts condemn them, then God must be doing the same.

The program then stressed that if God has forgiven our sins, He also forgets about them. Christ, through his sacrifice on the cross, has once for all wiped out all memory of our sins. Believers ‘will never lose their eternal life; God will never ever see any sin in them. Therefore [...] we do not have to feel guilty.’ The reality is, many believers *do* feel guilty. That is according to Abû Kathîr because Satan tries to make the believers ‘oversensitive in an unhealthy way. Satan makes him constantly feel that he is a sinner. He makes him think of sins and trespasses all the time. He wants him to always feel the heavy burden of sin, the burden that has already been lifted up by Christ.’

The program proceeded to give some examples when Christians easily feel guilty, for instance, when they are praised for something they have done, or when God overwhelms us with his blessing and gifts, or when they partake in the Lord’s Supper (*al-‘Ashâ’ al-Rabbânî*). This is natural, because we feel that we are not worthy of receiving these blessings that are given by God. Satan uses these opportunities to make our hearts condemn us in an unhealthy way. He makes us feel guilty and therefore deprives us of our peace and our confidence in our salvation.’

The contact address in Bunn was given once again, as was PO Box 86 in Hadâ’iq al-Shubrâ in Cairo (Egypt) and also PO Box 692 in Marquette, Michigan

(USA). The audience was asked to share anything with Abû Kathîr that troubled them.<sup>89</sup>

Abû Kathîr was an MBB and aimed at reaching Muslims with his programs. Generally speaking, he used linguistic and cultural forms that could be understood by Muslims, so RCR4 was heeded. Some of his Christian jargon could have been better explained, however. He did not use Islamic jargon for explaining the Gospel, so CW6 was heeded. Christ was portrayed in a meaningful, theologically conservative Evangelical manner, so RCR5 was also implemented as far as Christ was concerned. The programs did not touch upon daily life of the audience so the audience was not approached in its actual context. RCR2 was not implemented. This also means that CW4 and CW5 were not heeded in regard to the prophetic message of the Gospel for society. These comments are also true for the other programs of Abû Kathîr.

The program of 21 September 2004 opened with thanking those who sent letters 'from our beloved Arab World'. Two Christians who had written to Abû Kathîr were personally thanked. The programs then proceeded to discuss the story of Martha and Mary who were visited by Jesus, from Luke 10. This was introduced by a meeting Abû Kathîr had with a young woman who thought Martha was often unjustly criticized by those preaching on that story. The program then used the points this young woman made to show that Martha's character deserved praise.

To begin with, Martha received Jesus in her house. That was a good thing, and it reflected that she had first received Jesus in her heart. John 1:12,13 was quoted in this context without further explanation: 'All who received Him, who believe in His name, He gave power to become children of God; who were born, nor of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.'

Martha worked hard to serve Jesus and his disciples. 'Honoring our guests is absolutely unavoidable in our society.' Martha made a mistake, however, when she assumed that Jesus did not care about her service, because he *does* care. The other mistake she made was that she asked Jesus to order her sister to help with serving. 'She should have asked His help instead of asking her sister's help'. Psalm 121 was quoted: 'My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'

Jesus told Martha that she should not be so anxious and troubled. The cure for that is to do as Mary did. She listened to the Word of God, just as reading the Word of God daily should be our priority, according to Abû Kathîr. The audience was then invited to write to the address in Bunn for a Bible or for spiritual books such as how to prepare for the Last Day or on comparative religion. 'Whatever your religion or background, do not hesitate to write to us.'

The next lesson from Martha is that she sought Christ at the time of problems. She immediately shared them with Jesus. She did likewise when her brother Lazarus had died. While Mary stayed in the house, Martha went ahead to meet Jesus on the way and ask for His help. In the context of this death of Lazarus we learn about the amazing faith of Martha. Though her brother was dead, she believed Jesus could raise him from the dead.

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<sup>89</sup> BVB broadcast 20 September 2004, Voice of Forgiveness.

Shortly thereafter, the house of Mary and Martha was again the scene of a dinner, and we read again that Martha served, but she now ‘served with a joyful and glad attitude; she served the one who gave her brother his life back; she served without complaining [...] because she had learned the lesson of seeking Jesus and asking for His help alone. Martha deserves our praise’, according to Abû Kathîr. ‘Her life and attitude are worthy of deep meditation. I wish that every sister who is listening now would behave like her.’

Finally, Abû Kathîr read:

We, the Christians, believe that ‘Isá who came to us in the flesh (*al-ta’nusî*) through the Virgin Mary, is God (*Allâh*); the Son of God (*Ibn Allâh*), and His Spirit (*Rûḥuh*). Adam disobeyed God and this sin can only be blotted out by the sending of His incarnated Son (*Ibnahu al-mutajassid*). He came and saved Adam and his descendants from the torture of hell. He healed him, opened his eyes, and raised the dead. This is the Christ of God, our Redeemer who was crucified by the Jews as a criminal. His human nature was hurt (*âlam*), but his divine nature was not.

The contact address in Bunn was given once again, as well as the addresses in Cairo and in Marquette.<sup>90</sup>

Another program of Voice of Forgiveness began with welcoming its listeners in Jordan; some individuals in Jordan were mentioned by name. Then, listeners from Syria, Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were also specifically welcomed. Abû Kathîr then said that he was going to speak on a subject that was important for all, ‘whatever your religion’. He began to speak about the need to ‘harden not your hearts’ toward God. If people do not harden their heart toward God, they will also not be hard toward other people, and present society had a lack of such people. A soft heart means listening to God. ‘He is calling you personally (*shakhṣî*) because He really wants you (*yurîdak anta*) and He desires a direct relationship (*‘ilaqah mubâsharah*).’ He continued:

Some of us might think that our belief in Christ comes as a result of being born in Christian families. But the important fact that I want to announce today honestly, is that your Christian family will not make you a Christian at all. This is the mistake that many people make. They think that just because they were born in a Christian family, they became Christians. Your Christian biological parents will not benefit you at all. The only good thing they do is that they provide you the opportunity to know Christ. But you are asked to open your heart to Him now, and to ask Him to become the Lord of your life. Reading Christian books, listening to Christian ceremonies, or fasting, will not help you if you are not really sure (*fi’alan muta’akid*) that Christ is the Lord and the Savior who rules in your life.

Without further explanation, Abû Kathîr said that those who believe in Christ are ‘set free from slavery’. They become ‘a free son and an heir in everything. God promises you to become one of the heirs in His Kingdom.’ The contact details for the program were then given, with the usual promise of books.

<sup>90</sup> BVB broadcast 21 September 2004, Voice of Forgiveness.



After that, Abû Kathîr continued to say that if the heart is hardened, God can break that rock and make it soft by His Word. He also warned that by continuing to harden the heart, no promises or warnings from the Word of God will help to soften it. The audience has to respond to the Word when they hear it:

My dear, I want to tell you today about the most wonderful book I have ever read in my life. It is the Bible, the Word of God (*kalimat Allâh*). As all of you know, I was born in a non-Christian family, and when I first read the Bible I felt that it truly was God's inspiration (*wahî Allâh*). [...] If God, Praise to Him (*subhânahu*) has given this Book (*Kitâb*) to the world, and promised its preservation (*hifzahu*), then no-one can ever change it.

Abû Kathîr explained that the words of the Bible are like a laser-beam, stronger than any surgical laser beam, and that it can break the rock of our heart. A Bible was promised to those who would write to the program, and the contact details in Bunn, Marquette and in Cairo were given.<sup>91</sup>

The next Voice of Forgiveness program continued about the need of man to not harden his heart. Whereas the previous program focused on how God uses his Word for softening man's heart, this program focused on our conscience (*dhamîr*) as a means for that:

The voice of conscience is a present and a gift implanted by God inside the heart of every human creature. It's like the thermometer that measures our temperature. God created it to be spontaneous and sensitive towards any wrong we do. When you make a mistake or when you live a life of sin, the voice of conscience will present itself to blame you like an inner crying voice.

Abû Kathîr advised his audience that if they had sleepless nights because of their conscience, and if they had not found salvation yet, they should now heed the voice of God. 'My dear listeners, God assures His love to you; He wants you to respond to Him so that He would open the door of repentance and hope into a better life.' He then invited the audience to write to him in Bunn, with the same promises as during the previous days.

Abû Kathîr then encouraged his audience to look at their many blessings and heed the voice of God. 'His gentle and compassionate voice is knocking on the door of your heart.' However, the voice from hell was also calling people to not heed the call of God. With many other words, the program encouraged the listeners to not postpone heeding the voice of God. What God was calling people to do, was not mentioned. The audience was, finally, asked to write to Bunn, Cairo, or to Marquette, with the promise of a free Bible.<sup>92</sup>

The next program of Voice of Forgiveness began by paying some attention to a letter written by someone from Jordan. The program discussed the so-called *Gospel of Barnabas*, because someone wrote to Abû Kathîr that he believed in that book that 'witnesses (*yashhad*) to our Prophet Muḥammad'. Abû Kathîr said that

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<sup>91</sup> BVB broadcast 22 September 2004, Voice of Forgiveness.

<sup>92</sup> BVB broadcast 23 September 2004, Voice of Forgiveness.

he also believed in it, until he carefully read it. He mentioned a few strange mythical stories from the book, like how the human navel had supposedly come into existence through an act of Satan, and that Satan had originally been a priest. He also said that some researchers believe that the author was an Italian monk who converted to Islam and who wanted to belittle priests. ‘Do you know that the priest (*kâhin*) is a man of God who serves his people?’ This was one of the few statements in all of BVB’s broadcasts that said something about the church, and it was a positive comment. The audience was finally asked to write to the program’s addresses in Bunn, Marquette and Cairo, with the promise of a free Bible and Christian books.<sup>93</sup>

### ***Where is Truth?***

This program was on the promise of Jesus: ‘My Peace I give to you’. It began by expressing the hope that all listeners would be ‘in the fullness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ (*al-Injil al-Masîh*)’. The peace that the Lord gives is unlike what the world understands peace to be:

The believer enjoys miraculous privileges from God, such as peace that fills the heart in all difficult circumstances. [The] children of the Lord delight themselves in abundance (*yatalazazûn*) and they enjoy peace while the entire world around them is in turmoil. They are not troubled or afraid because they have faith in the Lord, so they can lean on his mighty Hand.

As an example of a person who experienced this peace, the story of the Shunamite women from 2 Kings 4 was retold. This woman bore a son after the prophet Elisha had promised her one but then this only son died. God ‘supported her during her crisis and filled her heart with peace and tranquility’, according to the program:

What if this woman had not been a believer? How would she have reacted in that situation? I think that she would cry and yell for the death of her child. I think that her neighbors and relatives would gather around to comfort her. And I think that her husband would start arranging for her son’s funeral and burial. That is what the unbelievers do. They deprive themselves of God’s abundant blessings.

Another story was told of a Russian prisoner in Finnish captivity during World War II. While other Russian prisoners were cursing and beating their hands to pulp on the walls of their cells, this one sang songs of his faith in the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. This prisoner told his fellow prisoners:

I did not sleep yesterday because I saw the face of my mother in front of me, and I was reminded of this song. I felt that I needed to find the Savior and to be protected in Him. So I prayed for forgiveness just like the thief on the cross beside Jesus. I asked Him to forgive my sins and to purify my sinful soul.

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<sup>93</sup> BVB broadcast 24 September 2004, Voice of Forgiveness.

The story continued, and explained in rather Christian jargon, that all the soldiers accepted Christ and how that changed the atmosphere completely. Finally, the audience was addressed:

My dear listener, do you accept the peace of Christ? Can you say: 'Have mercy upon me for I am a sinner? To our God be the glory! The Word has become flesh and has dwelt among us. The Lord Christ is unique because He is the Word of God. [...] He is the only one who was called the divine Word (*al-Kalimah al-Ilâhîyah*). He is the only Word of God.

Then, the address of the program was given for those who wanted to know more about the truth, or with any question. The address was PO Box 71 in Kerava (Finland).<sup>94</sup>

This program was aimed at Christians; it used a heavy dose of Christian jargon, so in regard to a Muslim audience, RCR4 was not implemented. The same can be said in regard to RCR5. Christians may have felt attracted to this type of program, and may have understood its language, but for Muslims this was not suitable. As the program did not touch upon anything concrete in the audience's context, RCR2 was not implemented, and CW4 and CW5 were only heeded in respect to the individual's spiritual life.

### ***Gate of Heaven***

Gate of Heaven treated the subject of hell (*al-jahîm*). It was described as the 'eternal disconnection from being in the presence of God'. That also meant separation from joy, goodness and righteousness:

The Bible is full of scary descriptions that explain the first terrifying moment of your soul once you die. It also describes what happens after death to the spirit that has gained salvation.

The program then discussed how strange it is that people hardly prepare for death. That is important though, and confessing that one is a sinner and accepting the forgiveness of Christ is the condition for being assured of going to heaven. That had also great benefits for the present life:

When we live our life with our eyes focused on the eternal life, our pain and problems seem so small. And I can assure you that the Christian already experiences paradise here on earth. Why? Because he enjoys peace; peace of the soul and peace of conscience. He has peace with God. And in the midst of problems and troubles, he has an inner peace and joy.

Heaven will be a place of serving God, where we 'will be laughing and singing in the presence of God's glory'. The program affirmed that when we die, our soul goes to heaven, to immediately be in the presence of Christ, while we await the

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<sup>94</sup> BVB broadcast 23 September 2004, Where is Truth?

day of resurrection when our body and our soul will be reunited. Finally, PO Box 220 in Leeds was given for audience response.<sup>95</sup>

This program was aimed at Christians, and used Christian jargon. With regard to Muslims, RCR4 was not implemented. The program did not speak to the audience in its actual social context, so RCR2 was not implemented, and it also did not apply the Gospel in its prophetic role to society, so CW4 and CW5 were not heeded.

### ***Voice of Proclamation***

Voice of Proclamation (*Ṣawt al-Kirâzah*) spoke of the importance of the soul. When a man repents, when his soul is redeemed, and when he gets saved from eternal perdition, then heaven rejoices:

It delights the heart of God (*tufarraḥ qalb Allâh*) when it gets saved. He is not pleased with its destruction. The soul is valuable because if it has been redeemed, it can bring other souls to God. It is precious because it cost the blood of God's only Son.

The audience was admonished to believe in Christ and redeem their soul, and then to also work for the salvation of others. The address of the organization was then given, with a promise of a magazine and a New Testament.<sup>96</sup>

The program targeted Christians with its Christian jargon that was not explained. The religious language in the program was hard for Muslims, so RCR4 was not implemented for a Muslim audience. RCR2 was not implemented as the program did not speak to the audience in its actual context. It also did not heed CW4 and CW5 as the Gospel was not prophetically applied to society.

### ***Road to Emmaus***

This program was presented by Pastor (*Qassîs*) Filîb Khayrî. It was about 'why and how we believe in Christ and how we can bear witness to Him'. The title of this episode was: 'The blood that gives victory'. First, the role of Satan was described. From the beginning of history he enticed people to sin. He also thought that by the death of Christ, he won a victory for his evil Kingdom. 'He was wrong, Jesus rose from death. His resurrection was the sign (*'alâmah*) that proved that God accepted Christ's sacrifice.' This victory over death was possible because Christ entered into the Holy of Holies with his blood.

The program continued to talk in Christian jargon about the importance of the blood of the Lamb that liberates the believers from the grip of Satan and that forgives sins and saves people from eternal death. The program also said some negative things about the church (*al-kanîsah*) in the Middle Ages:

It drowned in superstitious thoughts (*afkâr khurafîyah*) which paved the way to 1000 years of darkness (*zulmah*). That period was full of thoughts and teachings that contradicted the Bible and God's thoughts. Nevertheless, Satan could not con-

<sup>95</sup> BVB broadcast 24 September 2004, Gate of Heaven.

<sup>96</sup> BVB broadcast 24 September 2004, Voice of Proclamation.

tinue [...] and after 1000 years of darkness and submission to Satan, the light appeared again and we discovered the value of the work of grace and the Holy Spirit. [...] With the dawn of the Reformation (*al-Nahdah*), new life started with victory by the blood of the Lamb.

The program ended with the email address of a pastor Sharîf, namely [sharaf@biblevoice.org](mailto:sharaf@biblevoice.org). PO Box 56701 in Limassol (Cyprus) was also given.<sup>97</sup>

The program targeted Christians with its language that was not explained. The religious language was hard for Muslims, so RCR4 was not implemented for a Muslim audience. RCR2 was also not implemented; the program did not speak to the audience in its actual context. It also did not heed CW4 and CW5 as the Gospel was not prophetically applied to society. In addition to that, this program trespassed against CW3 as it spoke in rather negative terms of the historic church; for the unity of the audience with the historic church this was not helpful.

### ***The Word of God***

The Word of God was a program by the Christian Arabic Bible Church in Long Beach, California (USA). In the first part of the program, youth of that church discussed problems of young people. They spoke of the Peace Offering (*Dhabîḥah Salâm*) as described in Leviticus 7, and applied that to Christ:

We had already said [in a previous program] that the burnt offering represents a picture of the Lord Christ who reconciled us to God through his death. The offering of peace, on the other hand, provides a relationship of peace with God. When you come close to Jesus and thank Him, He fills your heart with peace because He is the source of peace.

The program then said that in this ‘awful world’, there is much suffering, fear and loneliness. ‘Each person who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ knows no peace’. People are afraid of each other, of Satan, and death. With many Bible verses the program underlined that through Christ, the believers experience peace.

The next part of the program discussed the parable of Luke 16 in which Jesus told of a steward who was fired by his employer for squandering his assets. God was compared to that employer and mankind was like the steward, punished for underperformance. The steward in the parable dishonestly decided to buy himself the friendship of many of his customers by lowering their bills, at the expense of the employer that had fired him. The lesson of this story was therefore that if a dishonest man can use his money for buying friendship, how much more should Christians ‘obey Christ and make friends for ourselves by the money that He has given us’.

The third part of the program began by wondering why Jesus was born in the small city of Bethlehem:

The city of Bethlehem is still small even today. Nobody knows anything about it. Israel was even prepared to leave it for the Palestinians. In 2000, Yâsir ‘Arafât or-

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<sup>97</sup> BVB broadcast 24 September 2004, Road to Emmaus.

ganized a party in the city and invited music groups from different countries to sing there. That is about it.

The choice of Jesus to be born in Bethlehem was because ‘He was so loving and humble’. According to the program, this teaches the lesson: ‘Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will exalt you spiritually’.

Bethlehem is first mentioned in the Bible because Jacob buried his wife Rachel there. It was a place of ‘weeping, lamentation and wailing’, and the Lord Jesus liked that place. Herod killed the babies in Bethlehem in the hope to also kill Jesus. The program said that the birth of Christ forever divided history in BC and AD, and that it also divided mankind into a dead part and a living part. It seems that the celebration of Christmas was criticized:

Today, people celebrate [His] birth which they call Christmas (*al-Milâd*) by exchanging presents and by eating and drinking, and of course by throwing parties. They are dead (*amwât*). Jesus weeps over sinners and He feels sad for them. His soul was troubled for Judas Iscariot.

The program then applied the message to the audience:

My beloved, the subject is as clear as the sun. Today, are you being wept over, or are you buried with Christ? Have you become a son of God (*ibn Allâh*) and are you a new creation?

The following section was hard to follow; the program explained that Israel’s King Saul, who was from the tribe of Benjamin so posterity of Rachel, disobeyed God. He met the prophet Samuel at the tomb of Rachel, and was condemned as he was interested in earthly possessions. The Apostle Saul in the New Testament was also from the tribe of Benjamin but he was accepted by God as he searched for God and as he was eventually ‘crucified with Christ (*şuliba ma‘ al-Masîh*)’ and ‘raised with Christ (*qâma ma‘ al-Masîh*)’ as well. ‘Who are you and who am I compared to these two? Is God pleased with me? Am I glad for Christ’s birth? Is Christ happy with me?’

The story of Ruth from the Old Testament was also briefly told, as that story also revolved around Bethlehem. Many other references to Old Testament stories were used without explaining them. This made the program incomprehensible for Muslims, as well as for any Christian without solid biblical knowledge. The program ended with a reference to the wise men that came from the east to worship the child Jesus, and the audience was invited to come along with them to Bethlehem:

We have come to open our hearts to Him and present to Him the gold, for He is the King (*al-Malik*). We have come to present to Him the frankincense, for He is the Priest (*al-Kâhin*). And myrrh, for He is the Redeemer (*al-Fâdî*). We have come to tell Him: ‘Jesus, we are yours and you are our God. For yours is the glory.’<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> BVB broadcast 24 September 2004, The Word of God.

This program was incomprehensible for Muslims; its language probably reflected the language of the Christian Arabic Bible Church in the USA. It was suitable for Arab Christians, though even for Christians without good knowledge of the Bible, it was hard to follow. With regard to Muslims, RCR4 was not implemented. RCR2 was also not implemented, as the program did not address the audience in its concrete context. This precluded the program from heeding CW4 and CW5; it did not speak of the Gospel's prophetic claims for society. If the Christian Arabic Bible Church had intended these programs for Muslims in the Arab World, then this would indicate that Arabic churches were not always aware of the communicative problems involved. This may be a special problem for *émigré* churches in Western societies. The question to what extent Christian Arabs in Western societies lose the ability to address Arabs in the Arab World needs further study.

#### 12.5.2.2 Arabic Churches and Ecumenical Issues

None of the programs addressed these issues. This was probably due to BVB's lack of interest in these matters; the Charismatic theology of BVB may have played a role here. Like other Christian broadcasters BVB showed a reticence to mention the Church. Many organizations felt this might create barriers for the Muslim audience.

#### 12.5.2.3 Christian-Muslim Relations

Christian-Muslim relations were not addressed in these programs. BVB and its producers preferred to steer programs away from what they considered contentious matters. As Christian-Muslim relations were a highly politicized area, most Christian Arabs preferred to avoid publicly speaking out on this theme.

#### 12.5.2.4 Pastoral Care

##### *River of Love*

River of Love was a program by Nizâr Shahîn and Mâjid al-Shafâ'î. The program began with a long reading from Ephesians 6:10-19, about the armor of God (*ṣalâh Allâh*). The program was especially aimed at encouraging Iraq after the war of 2003. 'The conditions in that country are so bad. People are suffering every day.' Nizâr explained how the people of Iraq could be encouraged in their tribulations:

I want to tell them that we love them so much and we are praying for them. [...] the subject of faith is important, for if you don't cling to that faith, you will live a life of failure and defeat.

Nizâr proceeded to underline that 'God is not interested in bloody invasions and wars, but Christ came to open hearts'. He stressed that God wants to redeem humanity and that Christ came to forgive sins and to give eternal life. 'I want to encourage our people in Iraq to be strong (*yatashadad*) in the Lord and to cling to Him (*yatamassak*)':

Brother Mâjid, we need to realize that the war is a spiritual war, and that this is not against humans. This is why we have to take the whole armor of God, walk in love and cling to Jesus Christ. [...] We pray that they would trust Christ in facing their difficulties and their economic and spiritual hardship.

Nizâr then stressed again the need for faith, and that the biggest sin is unbelief (*'adam al-imân*). The Bible was quoted for underlining that he who believes in the Son (*al-Ibn*) has eternal life and that the wrath of God (*ghadhab Allâh*) rests on those who do not obey the Son:

But today I want to tell you to be filled with faith and with God's power and love. For God will be with you in the midst of your conditions and hard days. [...] Believe that He is going to bless your life and your family. [...] Sin and evil of this world result in wars and tragedies, but I want to encourage those who have lost beloved ones, not to grieve, but instead, to lift their eyes to the Lord. He can help them, encourage them, comfort the, bless them.

Finally the program invited the listeners to also watch the television programs of Light for all Nations, the Canadian organization of Nizâr. He said that many people watch these programs on satellite television, even in Iraq. The program ended with a prayer for the Iraqi people and an address people could write to, PO Box 56701 in Limassol (Cyprus).<sup>99</sup>

This program was aimed at Iraqi's, so it was to a large extent aimed at a homogenous audience as required by RCR1. It endeavored to be rather concrete in its approach to the audience by focusing on their troubles because of the war. That made this program also rather suitable from the perspective of RCR2. Since Iraqis were the target audience, it was unfortunate that the two presenters could not address the Iraqis in their own colloquial Arabic. The program was a mixture of Levantine Arabic, Egyptian Arabic and MSA. RCR3 was therefore not well implemented. The linguistic and cultural forms used were mostly aimed at Christians, so RCR4 was not well implemented for a Muslim audience. By spiritualizing the war, the program avoided applying the Gospel to the concrete circumstances, thus trespassing against CW4 and CW5.

#### **12.5.2.5 Cultural Issues**

The programs did not treat cultural issues. This was probably seen as wasting precious Christian airtime as the program producers wanted to proclaim the Gospel as they perceived it. The avoidance of cultural issues meant that the audience was not spoken to in its actual context, which was at the expense of the intended Christian witness

#### **12.5.2.6 Socio-Economic and Political Issues**

The programs did not treat socio-political issues, for the same reasons why cultural themes were not treated. The avoidance of these issues was at the expense of the audience, as socio-political issues were of paramount interest to the audience.

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<sup>99</sup> BVB broadcast 24 September 2004, River of Love.



## 12.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

### 12.6.1 HAM

In 1979, HAM said that its MW station had a radius of 120 miles by day and 600 by night. That was perhaps on the optimistic side, as it appears that in Beirut, the station could often not be received at all.<sup>100</sup> The station did receive mail from Lebanon, Israel, and Syria, but also from countries as distant as Iran and Saudi Arabia.<sup>101</sup> With respect to the response to the SW broadcasts of HAM, it has not been possible to obtain information.

### 12.6.2 BVB

According to McLaughlin, the audience response to the broadcasts of programs on BVB was minimal. 'Before [the terrorist attack by the organization of 'Usâmah bin Lâdin against the USA on 9 September 2001] one of broadcasters got 30 letters per month and 30 emails per day. After 9/11 no more response was received. Much of our work is in faith, as hardly any responses are received', McLaughlin said in 2006.<sup>102</sup>

## 12.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS

### 12.7.1 Indigenization

Due to the unique location of its production facilities, in Southern Lebanon, eventually all of HAM's own Arabic programs were produced solely by its Lebanese staff. This staff could be considered indigenous in as far as the broadcasts were aimed at Lebanon; in as far as other Arab countries were targetted, they were only indigenous to a limited extent. However, the management of the broadcasting operation itself remained in North American hands.

BVB has never developed its own programs. In 2004, it functioned solely as a broker of airtime. It is a shared British, Canadian and American organization with no Arabs in its management.

### 12.7.2 Contextualization

#### 12.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience

BVB aimed at reaching Christians and Muslims throughout the Arab World. This meant that its goal was much broader than a homogenous audience. This was problematic from the perspective of contextualization but most likely the result of BVB's desire to sell airtime to as many program suppliers as it could.

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<sup>100</sup> This was told to the author by people interviewed in Beirut in July 2004.

<sup>101</sup> Otis, *Voice of Hope*, p. 137.

<sup>102</sup> Don McLaughlin in an interview with the author.

### **12.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

The choice to target Arab Muslims and Christians in general made it impossible for BVB to address its whole audience in its actual, concrete context. Some of the individual programs targeted a homogenous audience concretely and these programs were to a certain extent speaking to the audience in its actual social context.

While BVB wanted to avoid attacking other religions, in reality, some of the programs were addressing Islam directly. That made these programs more contextually interesting, as they addressed very concrete issues that were important to the audience in its environment. These few programs came closer to letting the Gospel speak in its prophetic power to societal issues; however, in general, BVB's broadcasts did not heed CW4 and CW5. They addressed the audience in a rather individualistic way, focused solely on the audience's personal relationship with God and on individual salvation.

### **12.7.2.3 Language**

It is not clear what languages BVB wanted to use in its broadcasts to the Arab World, but in practice, Egyptian Arabic and MSA were preponderant. The effect of this was that the audience in Egypt could easily have thought that these programs were purposely aimed at Egypt.

### **12.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

As BVB broadcast programs that were aimed at both Christians and Muslims, it used different linguistic and cultural forms in its broadcasts. Some of the programs were quite suitable for Muslims. When they used Biblical and Evangelical jargon, it was explained. Some of those programs addressed issues for Muslims in linguistic and cultural forms that Muslims were used to. These programs were mainly produced by MBBs. The 'born Christians' usually made programs that were suitable for Christian Arabs but these were less intelligible for the Muslim audience. The programs for Muslims used terms and ideas that were common in Islamic speech, but these terms were not at the heart of the explanation of the Gospel; thus CW6 was heeded.

### **12.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

Christ's portrayal was understandable in the programs of BVB. In the programs that were specifically aimed at Muslims, He was presented in a manner that Muslims could comprehend. The programs produced by Christians portrayed Christ in the traditional Christian manner but because they usually did not explain the terminology and thought-forms used they were not intelligible for Muslims. The portrayal of Christ as based in the Bible always underlined the absoluteness of His claims and the need to believe in Him. Thus, CW1 was heeded.

RCR5 was not implemented in regard to the Church, as hardly any mention was made of the Church. The main description of the Church was even rather negative. Combined with BVB's Christian-Zionist approach, this leads to the conclusion that CW2 and CW3 were trespassed against. The program also did not impress on the audience the need to participate in Church, thus CW1 was also partially unheeded.

### 12.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs

Whereas HAM used Israeli-occupied Southern Lebanon for its broadcasts, BVB used the same transmitters as the other Christian broadcasters. This meant that the media-environment of the broadcasts in general became less offensive to the Arabic audience.

The Arabic programs of BVB did not show signs of Christian-Zionism, but the programs that surrounded the broadcasts, most probably did. This needs further research, but it seems that the media environment for the Arabic program blocks was compromised by Christian-Zionist programs in English and Hebrew.

BVB broadcast programs that were aimed at Christians and Muslims in the same blocks of airtime. This was not wise, as it created an environment that was not optimal for either of those audiences.

### 12.7.3 Christian Witness

BVB moved away from the original *milieu* of HAM in the USA by creating more formal programming policies. That process only began in 2002, so it is not clear where this will lead BVB, but it is likely that it will move closer in its goals and ethos to the other Arabic Christian broadcasters. It is therefore also likely that in the future, more cooperation between BVB and the other broadcasters will develop.

It is to be seen how BVB will develop its own views of how to best produce and broadcast programs to Arabs. In 2004, BVB was the only broadcaster of Arabic Christian programs that allowed programs to be directly aimed at Muslims, to address Islam and to speak of its desire to see Muslims accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This made BVB a unique broadcaster with a unique sound in its programs.

The central tenets of the Gospel were explained clearly in the programs, hence BVB's *kerygma* witnessed to the Gospel. However, this witness was highly problematic in the context of a Christian-Zionist broadcaster. It made the broadcasts vulnerable to the accusation of endeavoring to weaken the Arab World for the sake of the State of Israel, a line of arguing that is very common in the Arab World. This meant that BVB's witness was hampered from a lack of the *diakonal* element. It did not stand with the churches against the injustice of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Muslim and Christian land, but it supported Israel. In the context of a Christian witness in the Arab World, this is highly problematic.

The Christian-Zionist approach of BVB will continue to be the main hindrance for cooperation with the other broadcasters and with churches in the Arab World. It makes *koinonia* with the Arab Churches difficult if not impossible. The fact that in its programs, BVB does not reflect the unity and the communion of the Church in the Arab World is not surprising but it is at the expense of its Christian witness.



## 13 Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings (HCJB)

This chapter first describes the history of HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings').<sup>1</sup> It was the first international Protestant missionary radio organization and as such became an example to many Christian radio organizations that began later. HCJB took the initiative to bring international radio organizations together to start a cooperative project World by 2000 (Wb2000). Of all the large international Christian broadcasters, HCJB was the last organization to involve itself in broadcasting to the Arab World, namely in 1990.

After a description of HCJB and its history, this chapter treats the Statement of Faith of HCJB. Then, its target audience, preferred language, and programming philosophies of HCJB's Arabic broadcasts are described. A major source of information was the 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service: Radio Al Mahabba' (February 2001). Even though the audio service in that plan falls outside the parameters of this thesis, being an audio channel on satellite television, HCJB described its target audience, preferred languages and its programming philosophies in it. This was arguably not very different from HCJB's radio broadcasts on Short-wave (SW).

Next, HCJB's Arabic programs as broadcast from 20-26 September 2004 are described following which the audience response to HCJB's programs is given. This chapter ends with some final observations focusing on HCJB's indigenization and contextualization, as well as the question to what extent the programs of HCJB witnessed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Due to its views of the security of its missionaries and Arab co-workers, the organization was not prepared to cooperate much in preparing this study. One former director allowed himself to be briefly interviewed, but beside that, HCJB refused collaboration in the writing of this chapter. Thus this chapter is mainly based on information that was published by HCJB itself and on information about HCJB that could be found in publications and interviews of other Arabic Christian radio producers and broadcasters. If information could have been considered *sensitive* by HCJB, it was not used in this chapter. Further study of HCJB's work, at a time when their security assessments will allow it, would be beneficial.

### 13.1 HISTORY

#### *13.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Broadcasts: 1922-1990*

##### **13.1.1.1 Early Years: 1922-1931**

Clarence W. Jones, a high-school drop out and a gifted musician, played a major role in the nation-wide evangelistic campaigns of Rader, the pastor of the Chicago

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<sup>1</sup> Though HCJB is the call sign for the station in Quito, Ecuador, and HCJB formally has no meaning, the organization likes to have it stand for *Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings*.

Gospel Tabernacle. Jones had studied at Moody Bible Institute after feeling called to mission.<sup>2</sup> With his brass quartet he played in Rader's first broadcast in June 1922. 'We blew our heads off for several numbers, then Rader preached.'<sup>3</sup> Jones became the program director of Rader's broadcasts, receiving thousands of letters weekly. On Sundays they had a system of 20 telephone operators answering calls from the audience.<sup>4</sup>

Jones saw the power of radio broadcasting and felt called by God to start missionary radio in Latin America. At a missions conference he was convinced he heard God speak audibly: 'Arise and go south with radio.'<sup>5</sup> In 1930 he met Reuben and Grace Larson who had pioneered a mission in the jungles of Ecuador with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). The Larsons were interested in the concept of using radio in missions after hearing some people speak of the effectiveness of radio evangelism in the USA and Africa.<sup>6</sup> Larson agreed to cooperate with Jones, but first they needed permission from C&MA.<sup>7</sup>

Permission from C&MA was not difficult to get. Walter M. Turnbull was the foreign secretary of C&MA and responsible for Latin America at that time. He had previously been foreign secretary for other parts of the world including Palestine.<sup>8</sup> He had a vision even bigger than Larson and Jones: 'To reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we need strong transmitters in three locations: the Philippines for the Orient, somewhere in South America [...] and [one] in Palestine for Africa and the Moslem world'.<sup>9</sup> The dreams of these men were innovative, as it was only a decade before this that the churches in the USA had begun using radio for religious broadcasts.

C&MA played a very important role in the initial phase of the radio station. From the beginning, C&MA helped enormously through their personnel. Practically all those who took an active part in the early work of the new radio station in Ecuador were from this mission.<sup>10</sup>

Larson returned to Ecuador and thanks to his excellent contacts with the Ecuadorian authorities, he was able to get a broadcast permit for 25 years which included a duty free status for any equipment that would be brought in. Jones began

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<sup>2</sup> Lois Neely, *Come up to this Mountain: The Miracle of Clarence W. Jones & HCJB* (Colorado Springs, 1980, 1994), p. 30. Frank S. Cook, *Seeds in the Wind* (Miami, 1961), pp.18, 23, 25. Jones began his musical career when he was 12, playing in his father's Salvation Army band.

<sup>3</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.; Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 59.

<sup>8</sup> Rev. H. M. Shuman, 'An Appreciation of Walter M. Turnbull', in *The Alliance Weekly* (Vol. LXV No. 26, 1930), p. 402. Turnbull died of a car accident on 12 May 1930. He had been a missionary with C&MA in India between 1903 and 1909. From 1915-1921 he was the Dean of the Nyack Missionary Training Institute. See Rev. David J. Fant, 'In Memoriam', in *The Alliance Weekly* (Vol. LXV No. 26, 1930), p. 403. In his function as foreign secretary for Palestine, Turnbull was overseeing the work of Ralph Freed who in the 1950s pioneered the work of Voice of Tangier, later renamed *Trans World Radio* (TWR).

<sup>9</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, p. 154.

to raise money in the USA for the station which they decided to call HCJB.<sup>11</sup> All call signs for stations in Ecuador began with HC and the Larsons were allowed to choose the two letters that followed. In order to be able to use the acronym for the Spanish 'Hoy Cristo Jesus Bendice' (Today Christ Jesus blesses) they chose JB. The organization also liked to translate the letters as 'Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings'.<sup>12</sup>

Before starting his fundraising campaigns in the USA, Jones once more left for Ecuador in 1930. There he met some American engineers who discouraged him from the idea of broadcasting from Ecuador. 'Ecuador has too many mountains. The high mineral content with its strong magnetic force will seriously weaken, absorb, or scramble any signal hopelessly. Whatever you do, stay away from the mountains!'<sup>13</sup> A month earlier someone in the State Department in Washington had also warned him. 'Ecuador? Reception conditions are nil. You must get away from the equator. We would suggest you avoid Ecuador altogether.'<sup>14</sup> But Jones was absolutely sure that Quito, at 9,300 feet, completely surrounded by mountains, and only 15 miles south of the Equator, was 'God's place for his voice to South America'.<sup>15</sup>

The timing for the station to start could not have been worse. When Jones returned back to the USA in 1930, there was a letter waiting for him announcing that he had lost his job at the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle. Churches in the USA experienced financial misery during the Great Depression years after the Wall Street stock exchange crash in 1929.<sup>16</sup> Jones found himself another job in the radio work of a church in Oklahoma City. The pastor, Gerald Winrod, allowed Jones to use the mailing list of the radio programs and he also wrote fundraising articles in the *Defender* magazine of the radio ministry of Winrod.<sup>17</sup>

On 9 March 1931 the World Radio Missionary Fellowship (WRMF) was incorporated in Lima, Ohio (USA). Jones was the first president, his father-in-law Adam Weltry was the first treasurer, and his sister-in-law Ruth Churchill was the first secretary. Larson was one of the other board members.<sup>18</sup> This was how WRMF described its goals and ethos:

Our whole creed of service is: 'Use everything we can that God has given us in this Twentieth Century to speed the taking of the First Century Message.' Thus we restate Paul's challenge: 'By all means save some.' Even though Satan may have captured a good many devices, we can still reclaim them for Jesus' glory – cleaning them in consecrated usefulness and setting them apart to help us witness better to others of the saving grace of Christ. Thank God for the many advanced methods that today are at the missionary's disposal. Radio station HCJB with its 5000 watt

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>12</sup> See Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79. This economic crash negatively influenced Ecuador too, as world demand for cacao and other Ecuadorian export crops dropped precipitously. The total export crop value fell from US\$15 million in 1928 to US\$5 million in 1932, causing widespread unemployment and misery.

<sup>17</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 79.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

on Shortwave is in itself a most revolutionary step forward in missionary endeavour. This step calls for kindred steps all along the line as we seek to develop the many possibilities before us.<sup>19</sup>

### 13.1.1.2 Pioneering International Missionary Broadcasts: 1931-1945

In August 1931, Jones left for Ecuador with the new radio transmitter they had been able to buy. It was not the five kW he had promoted, but a tiny transmitter of 250 Watt.<sup>20</sup> In Ecuador, Larson had already rented a sizable compound. Jones installed the equipment in a renovated sheep shed and on Christmas Day 1931, transmitted the first program. They had actually hoped to start a day earlier, but the only power tube HCJB had left, had blown out shortly before the broadcast.<sup>21</sup>

HCJB was the first radio station of any sort in Ecuador. The new station was so revolutionary in its approach, that in order to have an audience on that day, HCJB gave away SW radios.<sup>22</sup> The first few years were financially very difficult for HCJB because of the economic situation in the USA. The Chicago Gospel Tabernacle went bankrupt so they stopped the funding for Clarence and Katherine Jones. He regularly had to work at odd jobs and for instance taught English in a boy's school and directed the Quito Municipal Band.<sup>23</sup>

In their initial presentation to the government of Ecuador, the founders of HCJB had stressed that the station would be first educational, second cultural, and thirdly religious. They pledged to broadcast news and programs on health, agriculture, music and religion.<sup>24</sup> With that holistic approach to radio mission, HCJB was surprisingly 'modern'. Jones ensured that the station stuck to this policy, avoiding back-to-back religious programs. About the religious programs, Jones said:

We decided on a very simple policy. Never meddle in politics, and preach a positive Gospel. [...] We weren't there to shove a new religion down their throats, but simply to share the revelation of God: that Christ Jesus came into this world, being born of the virgin, lived a perfect life, and then went to the cross where by his shed blood he paid for the sins of men who would believe on him; that now he is at the right hand of the Father and he has sent his people out to tell this plain, wonderful story that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.<sup>25</sup>

In 1937 Jones bought HCJB a one kW transmitter which enabled all of Latin America to be reached. Charles Fuller started offering his programs to HCJB. He only allowed Jones to broadcast these programs if he accepted payment for the airtime. The idea that the external producer of the program should pay for the air

<sup>19</sup> Quote from the April 1931 magazine *Defender*, quoted in Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 80.

<sup>20</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86, 88.

<sup>22</sup> Neely wrote that there were thirteen receiving sets in use at the time in Ecuador. Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 88. One manager with HCJB told the author, in an interview on 25 January 2003, that he doubted those figures. According to him there were a maximum of 6 SW radios in Ecuador in 1931. Biener speaks of 150 receivers. Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit; Rundfundarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 65.

<sup>23</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.



time was not originally conceived by HCJB. Up until then all the programs had been live programs of HCJB itself, produced in an annex to the living room of the Jones family. They then started to receive the seventeen-inch discs of Fuller's Old Fashioned Gospel Hour by mail in Quito.<sup>26</sup>

After HCJB, most international Christian radio broadcasters made it their policy to acquire programs and partially sponsor their work by allowing external Program Suppliers to lease airtime. This resulted in most broadcasts, including the Arabic ones, to become packed back-to-back by religious programs. Jones realized the problems associated with trying to please donors and program suppliers. He said that 'far too much Christian programming is designed with the supporters in mind rather than the people we say we are trying to reach.'<sup>27</sup>

During Easter 1940, HCJB began using its newly installed ten kW transmitter in Quito and letters began to pour in from all over the world. The new transmitter was paid for by Mr. R. G. LeTourneau.<sup>28</sup> This wealthy businessman gave at least 90 percent of his earnings to missions while living quite modestly. When Jones explained to him the need for a stronger transmitter in Quito, LeTourneau told him: 'What I'd really like you to do is to build a radio station in the Philippines. I'll underwrite the whole operation.' Jones refused, but received the check he needed.<sup>29</sup>

During World War II, HCJB was broadcasting in eighteen languages with five transmissions at the same time. One of those programs was Service Stripes Hour with military music and the Gospel dedicated to American soldiers all over the world.<sup>30</sup>

HCJB soon realized the need for Bible Correspondence Courses (BCCs) for Latin America. The Bible Institute of the Air combined radio Bible teaching with correspondence courses that were made for usage in Latin America. Thousands of listeners enrolled within the first year. They studied the lessons they received, answered questions, and mailed them back to HCJB.<sup>31</sup>

When the war began for the USA, on 7 December 1941, the American Embassy in Quito appointed Jones to head up Ecuador's Committee of Coordination. He traveled the country showing movies and slides of the military and economic power of the USA. German infiltrants were everywhere in Latin America, trying to entice the population to become pro-Axis.<sup>32</sup> The NBC network asked HCJB to become The Voice for Democracy in Latin America. NBC sent these programs to Ecuador on various platters. In exchange, NBC funded a new studio building for the station.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>27</sup> Quote by Reginald Kennedy, *The Word Senders: A Personal Assessment of the work of the major Protestant, Evangelical Missionary Radio Stations*. (n.p, 1980), p. 9 of chapter 3. This unpublished book was found in the library of the World Alliance for Christian Communication (WACC), document A302.

<sup>28</sup> Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, p. 46.

<sup>29</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, pp. 129, 131. Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, pp. 80-82.

<sup>30</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, pp. 135, 141.

<sup>31</sup> Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, pp. 96-100.

<sup>32</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 139.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

During these years, HCJB was clearly the voice for its own American government and its international policies, besides being the voice of the Gospel. The comment by Jones that HCJB ‘decided on a very simple policy. Never meddle in politics, and preach a positive Gospel’ did not deter them from making political choices.<sup>34</sup> Jones probably meant to assure the government of Ecuador that it would not interfere in its politics. If political and socio-economic engagement is important for those who proclaim the Gospel, then HCJB had no other choice but to take the side of the Allies and to speak out against the occupation of Europe by the Nazi’s oppressive policies.

During 1943, HCJB was invited to a meeting of radio technicians in New York. The station received compliments for having chosen the location of Quito for its broadcasting.<sup>35</sup> According to Neely, people in New York told Jones:

What a smart operation, to put a radio station on the equator, the very finest location for north-south broadcasting! With equal distance from the magnetic poles, it’s the one place in the world freest from atmospheric disturbance. And with your 100-foot tower sitting on a 9600-foot mountain, you virtually have a 10,000-foot antenna. The higher above sea level you can get your tower, the farther the signal will travel. Amazing how your engineers could have chosen the best site on earth!<sup>36</sup>

In 1943, HCJB decided to aim to install a 50 kW transmitter. However, due to wartime regulations and restrictions not much could be done and the transmitter could only be installed later.<sup>37</sup>

### **13.1.1.3 Growth and Role Model: 1945-1990**

#### ***Organizational Growth after World War II***

After the war, in 1948, the Congress of Ecuador renewed the concession of HCJB for another 25 years. This was done eight years earlier than necessary out of thankfulness for the positive role HCJB had played in Ecuador. It allowed Jones to feel secure in further investing in enlarging HCJB’s facilities. In 1948, a 50 kW SW transmitter was installed and a large piece of land, further away from Quito, was bought.<sup>38</sup> At the inauguration of the new transmitter, the national anthems of Ecuador and the United States were sung.<sup>39</sup> In 1957, a similar ceremony took place when another 50 kW transmitter was put into service.<sup>40</sup>

After World War II, HCJB began a medical service for its own personnel that grew into the Indian Hostel Clinic in 1950. In 1954, the modern Rimmer Memorial Hospital was opened in Quito as part of the service of HCJB to Ecuador. HCJB was also involved in setting up a hospital at Shell Mera, on the fringes of Ecuador’s eastern jungle. The medical staff of Rimmer Memorial Hospital had

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, p. 103.

<sup>38</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>39</sup> Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, p. 117.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

previously visited Shell Mera and had seen the need for a hospital.<sup>41</sup> HCJB however was not only interested in medical work for the sake of the physical health of its patients:

The whole thrust of the Gospel message is that by any and all means men and women should come to the knowledge of Christ as Saviour. [The] whole worldwide radio ministry of HCJB is dependent on a strong base in Quito. What better way to help to strengthen those ties that bind us to the country of Ecuador and its people than by helping them in their distress? Medicine [...] is a magnet to draw men to Christ.<sup>42</sup>

In 1967, four 100 kW SW radio transmitters were installed in Quito. In 1981, HCJB started using a 500 kW SW transmitter. In order to guarantee enough power supply for this growing operation, HCJB built its own dam and generating facilities. In 1982 it was producing 4.2 mW. This was twice as much power as was needed for their broadcasts so HCJB could even sell electricity.<sup>43</sup>

### **Role Model**

HCJB grew into one of the main international Christian broadcasters. HCJB served as an important role model for the Protestant organizations that were founded after World War II and that began broadcasts in Arabic. None of the North Americans and Europeans who after World War II thought of broadcasting Christian Arabic radio programs were ignorant of the example of Jones. His way of organizing the station, doing audience follow up, raising support for their venture and its programming policies, were exemplary for many new missionary radio efforts.

HCJB's role as a model and advisor to other radio stations was formalized by HCJB in 1946 when it took the initiative to form a fellowship of Christian radio broadcasters. At that time, HCJB knew of about ten to 20 new initiatives in missionary radio. Jones played the leading role in the foundation of the World Conference on Missionary Radio (WCMR) and he became the chairperson of the International Christian Broadcasters (ICB).<sup>44</sup>

Paul Freed, the founder of TWR, remembered how in the mid 1960s Jones had inspired him while he was studying at the Nyack Missionary Training College in New York during the early 1940s.<sup>45</sup> Larson, the co-founder of HCJB, was one of the advisors of the men who began Radio ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa')

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 130-131. Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF), Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) and the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA), Wycliffe Bible Translators and some Plymouth Brethren cooperated in the Shell Mera venture by offering land, equipment, or personnel. J. Christian Weiss, director of missions of the Back to the Bible (BTTB) broadcasts, visited the site and decided to support the project financially. Therefore the hospital, when opened in 1958, was called *The J.B. Epp Memorial Hospital*, in memory of the father of the director of BTTB. See Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, p. 134-137.

<sup>42</sup> Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, p. 139.

<sup>43</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 126.

<sup>44</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 171. Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, pp. 154-157.

<sup>45</sup> Paul E. Freed, *Towers to Eternity* (Nashville, 1994, first edition 1967) p. 43.

in Liberia in the 1950s.<sup>46</sup> Bob Bowman, the president of FEBC, spoke of Jones as the ‘dean’ of international Christian broadcasters.<sup>47</sup>

During the World Conference on Missionary Radio in June 1961 in Milwaukee, Tennessee (USA), Jones summarized what he believed were the main issues missionary radio was facing. It is fair to assume that this was a reflection of how Jones thought HCJB itself should develop:

1. We must be very conscious of and concerned for the cultural patterns of our audience in our preparing of the Christian message.
2. We must consider using much more music, news, drama and the like (and less straight speech) in getting our message across.
3. While courage and vision are necessary in buying up every valid opportunity, we should not over-reach ourselves and attempt more than we can do credibly.
4. It is wise to cooperate with other compatible groups, avoiding senseless competition and duplication.
5. Follow-up is a necessary pre-requisite in Gospel broadcasting and should not become a weak afterthought.
6. The training of capable nationals in all the phases of missionary radio is an absolute essential to the continuance of operations, present and future.
7. Liaison should be maintained with other [missionary radio] groups for mutual benefit, and to strengthen the total impact of the united [...] efforts.<sup>48</sup>

Of these seven issues, none is less relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than it was in 1961. Jones also told the radio broadcasters present, that they should not overlook television as the way forward in international evangelism. Jones challenged them that ‘TV must be considered an inevitable instrument for missionary labors sooner or later’ and with foresight, in 1961, he spoke of satellite television broadcasting:

One of the expected bonus values accruing to TV in missionary endeavor will eventually be the opportunity to transmit internationally via satellites now being constructed for commercial communication systems. This will give a truly unlimited reception aspect to television which it now lacks, and make it all the more practical as a missionary vehicle.<sup>49</sup>

These words of Jones were visionary, especially in the context of the Arab World. In 1962 he handed HCJB over to new leadership to concentrate on consulting for international initiatives in setting up new Christian broadcasting stations.<sup>50</sup> He continued to challenge churches in the USA and abroad:

As never before, there’s a battle for the airwaves. There are more than 400 million shortwave receivers in the world, twenty-six million in Russia alone. Giant trans-

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<sup>46</sup> Abe Thiessen, ‘The Beginnings of ELWA’ (undated) p. 1, from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, The Beginnings 1956-1969.

<sup>47</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 149.

<sup>48</sup> Summary of Jones’ speech in ‘Dr. Clarence Jones Looks Closely at World Missionary Radio’, in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. IX Nos. 2-3, May-September 1961), pp. 44-45.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>50</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit.*, p. 121.

mitters all over the globe are crowding the bands with their propaganda. Are we to let them drown out the Gospel of Jesus Christ? We'll never win the war with one gun. [...] We must get a whole barrage up there!<sup>51</sup>

***New Trends: Decentralization and Reflection***

In 1978 HCJB's president, Abe van der Puy, noticed with approval an international trend in radio mission to decentralize into more studios. HCJB had traditionally been a highly centralized organization, with its main studios for most language broadcasts in Ecuador. Towards the end of the 1970s, he saw great advantages in this trend:

Generally studios are located near the target audience and use national speakers for the programming. Sometimes the programmes are produced exclusively for a given station, but more often they are distributed to as many stations as possible.[...] One of the greatest advantages of studios is that they can be run for much lower costs than operating a station and more funds can go into quality programme production rather than administration, overhead, etc.<sup>52</sup>

Another advantage Van der Puy saw in the development of studios was that it created 'staffing needs and opportunities for more members of the Church to be involved in mass media production'. Van der Puy also saw the additional need for more training and orientation as a beneficial result.<sup>53</sup> Van der Puy also mentioned another trend he had observed amongst Christian broadcasters of redefining and re-evaluating what was going on in radio mission worldwide:

Christian radio sprang up spontaneously as men of vision grasped the potential for such a tool to help them carry out the call they received from the Lord to tell all men the Good News. It sprang up without much study or reflection or even the possibility of such, because it was such a new opportunity that there was not even any secular experience about the impact of radio. Now there is a sense of need to think through what is, or should be our theology of missionary radio and communication. Today there is an examination of our traditional categories and definitions.<sup>54</sup>

Van der Puy was self-critical about the role of Christian missionary radio. He recognized 'a special concern among Gospel broadcasters for reaching non-Christians with the truth of God. We are still talking mostly to ourselves'. He warned the broadcasters: '[We could] fool ourselves into thinking we are getting a job done which we are not.'<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, p. 181.

<sup>52</sup> Abe van der Puy, 'Radio Mission Worldwide', in *The Message in the Media* (Hilversum, 1979), p. 56. This book contains the transcripts of the plenary lectures of the first European Evangelical Communication Conference, held in Amsterdam (The Netherlands) from 20-23 October 1978.

<sup>53</sup> Van der Puy, 'Radio Mission Worldwide', p. 56.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 57-58.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

**Critique by Reginald Kennedy**

Reginald Kennedy, a British radio journalist who worked for Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG), the Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), was very critical of the content of the programs of HCJB and all other evangelical broadcasters. In the early 1980s he described the English programs produced by HCJB in Ecuador. According to him:

[They were] voyeurs, not participants in the life of Ecuador.[...] The radio missionaries remain Americans [...] who presume on programs that Thanksgiving Day is relevant for all and talk about peace in OUR [sic] land. I have heard on air the most condescending attitudes displayed by missionaries talking about their devastating culture shock on arrival in Quito.<sup>56</sup>

Kennedy was also critical of the fact that most programs were produced on site, and that the number of Ecuadorian staff was small.<sup>57</sup> Radio historian Donald Browne was much more positive about HCJB's programs in 1982. He wrote that 'programming practices of HCJB form a strong contrast to those of TWR [Trans World Radio]'. He mentioned that HCJB had a wide range of music programs, and not all were religious. He also mentioned several feature programs and newscasts. This difference with TWR was probably due to the fact that HCJB only had a limited number of programs produced by independent program suppliers that paid for their airtime.<sup>58</sup> Browne did not discuss the quality of HCJB's programs. Both Kennedy and Browne probably looked mainly at the English programs of HCJB.<sup>59</sup>

Kennedy thought that the real strength of HCJB was in its relatively small number of languages it was broadcasting in. When he wrote that, HCJB was broadcasting in 15 languages with its eight transmitters. This allowed for relatively long broadcasts in the same languages.<sup>60</sup> However, for its European language broadcasts, HCJB may have had much time per day available, but that was mostly used for repeating the same 30-minute programs.<sup>61</sup> During the 1980s HCJB was broadcasting 24 hours per day in 15 languages. Six programs could be broadcast simultaneously. A decade later, HCJB was broadcasting in over 40 languages.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Reginald Kennedy, *The Word Senders*, pp. 8-10 of chapter 2.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Donald R. Browne's *International Radio Broadcasting: the Limits of the Limitless Medium* (New York, 1982), pp. 304-305.

<sup>59</sup> According to Biener who has followed the station's history since the seventies HCJB did have many hours of back-to-back programming of the major American Evangelical broadcasters but also produced magazine style and less formal religious formats in Quito. Apart from Spanish most foreign language programmes were produced by missionary couples who had come from the respective target areas to serve at Radio HCJB. Biener in an email to the author (15 April 2007)

<sup>60</sup> Kennedy, *The Word Senders*, p. 10 of chapter 2.

<sup>61</sup> Biener in an email to the author (15 April 2007).

<sup>62</sup> Neely, *Come up to this Mountain*, pp. 193,195.

***World by 2000/World by Radio***

In 1985, the new HCJB president, Ron Cline, read a statistic that the station's broadcasts could reach 80 percent of the world's land mass. He described what he experienced: 'A voice, as clear as if someone had spoken the words right next to me, said, "What about the rest of the world?" Then I knew it was God's voice.' On a flight from Frankfurt to Chicago, on 17 July 1985, he drafted the initial concept of the World by 2000 Commitment.<sup>63</sup> Within weeks, on 10 September 1985, the presidents of HCJB, the Far East Broadcasting Corporation (FEBC) and TWR signed a commitment to aim at broadcasting the Gospel for at least 30 minutes per day in all of the world's languages spoken by at least a million persons by the year 2000:

We are committed to provide every man, woman and child on earth the opportunity to turn on their radios and hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a language they can understand so they can become followers of Christ and responsible members of His church. We plan to complete this task by the year 2000.<sup>64</sup>

ELWA, FEBA, Words of Hope (WOH), International Broadcasting Radio Association (IBRA), BTTB and others have joined the challenge. It was technically possible to reach every area of the earth with the shared broadcasting power of these organizations. Wb2000 has never been incorporated, but has remained a network. It opened an office in Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois (USA).

One reason why many Evangelicals were interested in the issue of broadcasts in as many languages as possible was that this had eschatological implications for some. They argued that a precondition for the return of Jesus Christ was that the Gospel had to be proclaimed to all tribes and nations. They based this on a Bible verse that spoke about redeemed people from 'every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne' of God.<sup>65</sup>

Wb2000 researched that 97 percent of the people of the world spoke 276 major languages. These were of people groups of a million or more individuals. In 1991, Eleanor Bowman of FEBC wrote: 'These organizations believe that, although it is an immense task, the goal can be reached as radio ministries, national churches and missionary organizations cooperate to accomplish this vision.'<sup>66</sup> She also concluded that the four major international radio broadcasters had broadcasts in 184 languages, and some of those languages were quite obscure. In 1991, 159 of the 276 major languages had no Christian broadcasts yet.<sup>67</sup>

The linguistic criteria of Wb2000 were not clear. In its beginning, it decided that the whole Arab World could be reached in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), without recognizing the many Arabic languages spoken in the Arab World. Derek Knell of FEBA was critical of the approach of Wb2000 to the Arabic language:

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<sup>63</sup> Arnold H. Remtema, 'World by 2000: A Model for Ministry Networking' (1997), on [www.ad2000.org](http://www.ad2000.org) (30 June 2003).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> See Revelation 7:9.

<sup>66</sup> Eleanor G. Bowman, *Eyes beyond the Horizon* (Nashville, 1991), p. 178.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

The organization was purely a meeting of the top guys. In 1985 Arabic was considered one language, so the box was ticked. Moroccan Arabic or Yemeni Arabic, they were all one and the same for World by 2000. As an organization they have never discussed a change to that viewpoint. The reason why Arabic dialects have since then been added to the list of World by 2000 was not because of a changed linguistic view, but because some organizations wanted to reach a specific language group, and it helped them if they could point to the language on the list of World by 2000. World by Radio really needs to re-categorize. My guess is that they will not do so, as they want to come to closure instead of opening new horizons.<sup>68</sup>

Wb2000 created an immense spurt of energy for the international radio organizations to expand their work. It stimulated HCJB itself to increase the number of broadcasting languages from 24 during the 1980s to 40 in 1990, and 120 by 2003.<sup>69</sup> However, Wb2000's approach, even by its own standards, was too optimistic. By the year 2000, as the goals were not met, the movement's name was changed to World by Radio.

### **13.1.2 Arabic Broadcasts: Since 1990**

#### **13.1.2.1 Initial Interest in Reaching the Arab World: 1956-1961**

In June 1956, the Board of WRMF discussed a proposal by Harold Van Broekhoven, a radio missionary in Guatemala. Van Broekhoven had founded TGNA, a Christian radio station in Guatemala City in 1950.<sup>70</sup> He had concluded that Asia, Africa and Latin America had their Gospel broadcasts, and 'yet we look into the vast continent of Europe and the Middle East and do not see such a testimony'. In 1956, there were no Christian broadcasts in Arabic to the Arab World. Van Broekhoven asked WRMF to sponsor his research into the possibilities for beginning radio broadcasting in Europe and the Arab World. Van Broekhoven was appointed the official representative of WRMF, with the stated goal:

To make a survey of Europe which we trust under the blessing of God shall be for the securing of a permit to establish a long wave and/or medium wave radio station for the propagation of the Gospel.<sup>71</sup>

Van Broekhoven looked into the situation in Europe and the Middle East. 'No one who might be of any help was neglected in trip after trip across Europe and the Near East', Cook wrote. In 1961 nothing had happened yet, and Cook concluded: 'The years have slipped by, and as yet the problems have not been solved nor the barriers swept away. The vision is still keen and the challenge remains. Not discouraged, and waiting upon God, we press on to meet the spiritual need of [Europe and the Arab World].'<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Derek Knell in an interview with the author (13 August 2003).

<sup>69</sup> See [www.hcjb.org](http://www.hcjb.org) (3 June 2005).

<sup>70</sup> Rollin van Broekhoven, the son of Harold Van Broekhoven, in an email to the author of this thesis (30 November 2005).

<sup>71</sup> Cook, *Seeds in the Wind*, pp. 171-173.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.



What is surprising is that WRMF, Van Broekhoven and Cook did not mention TWR's work in Europe. Probably they did not consider TWR the answer to their desire for a Christian station for Europe and the Arab World. Unlike HCJB, ELWA and FEBC, TWR was not the owner of transmission facilities. In the meantime, ELWA had begun Arabic broadcasts, but this was not mentioned by Van Broekhoven and Cook either. Further research into the work of Van Broekhoven during those years would be potentially very rewarding and give detailed insight into the situation of Christian broadcasting in Europe and possibly the Arab World.<sup>73</sup>

### 13.1.2.2 Broadcasting from Ecuador and Great Britain: Since 1990

#### *Latecomer in Arabic Broadcasting*

The beginning of Arabic broadcasts from Quito was connected to the occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces in August 1990. Like many international broadcasters, HCJB established a special program block aimed at the Arab World. On 10 September 1990 the station started a one-hour broadcast. On weekdays these were in English, but on Saturdays and Sundays these included 30 minutes in Arabic.

HCJB began its Arabic broadcasts after a Christian Arabic speaker had volunteered to come to Quito to make those programs. As HCJB had been discussing the issue of Arabic broadcasts before, it decided to accept the offer. It is not clear why HCJB assessed that beside the existent Christian broadcasts in Arabic, it had to also start Arabic broadcasts. This was especially curious because it already cooperated with some of the large international Christian broadcasters involved in substantial Arabic broadcasts. In 1990, Christian Arabic broadcasts amounted to about 70 hours of broadcasts per week.<sup>74</sup>

In 1991, HCJB broadcast 15 minutes per day of Arabic programs on Saturday and Sundays. In 1994 this had increased to 30 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays. In 1994 HCJB made a monitoring trip to North Africa and found that its SW broadcasts from Quito were not received well in North Africa.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, HCJB decided to lease airtime on a powerful former BBC World Service SW transmitter from London. According to a former manager of HCJB, that 'helped our propagation greatly'.<sup>76</sup> These transmissions were aimed at North Africa, and reached some areas that TWR's medium wave (MW) broadcasts from Monte Carlo could not reach such as Mauritania and southern Morocco.<sup>77</sup>

In 1995, HCJB increased its Arabic broadcasts remarkably, to one hour from 19.00-20.00 GMT on two frequencies, and half an hour from 21.30-22.00 GMT on one frequency. In 1996, the transmissions were from 19.00-20.00 GMT on one

<sup>73</sup> The files of Harold Van Broekhoven have been given to the Billy Graham Archives at Wheaton College after his death by his son Rollin Van Broekhoven. Van Broekhoven in an email to the author (30 November 2005).

<sup>74</sup> Douglas A. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Middle East* (Ames, 1999, first edition 1993), p. 297.

<sup>75</sup> A former regional director for North Africa and the Middle East of HCJB in an email to the author (12 February 2003). This manager requested to remain anonymous.

<sup>76</sup> A former regional director of HCJB in an email to the author (12 February 2003).

<sup>77</sup> Steven Vishanoff, formerly with AWM, in an email to the author (17 December 2002).

frequency, and since 1997 they were 90 minutes, from 20.00-21.30 GMT on two frequencies.<sup>78</sup>

In 1995 an Arab announcer and a program production team joined HCJB in its studio in La Linea (Spain), close to Gibraltar. They developed a program block of that included programs of Gospel Missionary union (GMU), Arab World Ministries (AWM) and IBRA. In October 1996, HCJB began broadcasting that block, called *Joyful News (al-Akhabâr al-Mufriḥah)* daily.<sup>79</sup> In 1997, HCJB added Arabic broadcasts to its partnering FM station Radio Vida in southern Spain; it was able to reach the northern coast of Morocco. Beside Arabic, its broadcasts included Spanish, English and French.<sup>80</sup>

Shadi and Selwa Habib, who had previously worked with ELWA and FEBA in Beirut (Lebanon) and with TWR in Monte Carlo, became constituent members of HCJB in 1997. They were based in the USA where they incorporated their work as independent program producers into Arabic Broadcasting Service (ABS) in Bakerfield, California (USA). Selwa presented many of the programs that were on HCJB and together they were responsible for the continuity and announcements of the daily HCJB block. Some of the programs they produced for HCJB were also broadcast on FEBA and IBRA.<sup>81</sup>

#### ***Audio Broadcasting by Satellite: Radio Al Mahabba***

In 1997 HCJB and AWM began to meet together to explore their dream of a 'Christian, continuous and live radio service in the region'.<sup>82</sup> It was to be a 24-hour per day service to the Arab World with programs that would interact directly with the audience about their own issues. In this way it would be seek to be contextualized.

This project was stimulated primarily by both organizations seeing the huge potential for live radio to reach the hearts of their audience. The second reason for exploring this concept together was that both organizations were unhappy with the high cost of broadcasting to North Africa on MW with TWR or through Radio Monte Carlo in Monte Carlo (RMC-MC). The cost of these broadcasts was about US\$1000 per half hour.<sup>83</sup>

The original dream of HCJB and AWM was to broadcast over a MW transmitter from Gibraltar. However, radio transmission via satellite became the primary focus.<sup>84</sup> The most likely reason for this was financial as leasing a complete audio channel on satellite was relatively cheaper than compared to MW broadcasting. HCJB took that step after research from North Africa showed that:

<sup>78</sup> Information from *World Radio TV Handbooks* (1991-1998) and schedule flyers of HCJB (1991-1998) as made available by Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (15 April 2007).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. Shirley Madany, 'Radio Missions Expand', in *Missionary Monthly* (December 1996), p. 20.

<sup>80</sup> [www.hcjb.org](http://www.hcjb.org) (3 June 2005).

<sup>81</sup> Shadi Habib, 'Profile; Shadi & Selwa Habib, Arabic Broadcasting Service In Cooperation with HCJB world radio' (n.p., n.d.), sent to the author by Shadi Habib (9 September 2003). The names Shadi and Selwa Habib are pseudonyms.

<sup>82</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service: Radio Al Mahabba' (February 2001). The author received this document in a Word format of 20 pages. As it probably circulates in different formats, it has not been deemed helpful to refer to page numbers.

<sup>83</sup> Alex Ison in an email to the author (30 April 2003).

<sup>84</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service'.

[There is] a high density of satellite TV receivers (Morocco and Algeria are thought to have the world's highest percentages) and surveys reveal that nearly 80% of the urban population in Morocco, for example, watch satellite TV weekly. There is already evidence from Algeria that domestic satellite receivers are also used to listen to audio services. [...] The most popular satellite TV stations are European, via Eutelsat and Astra satellites. There is a hunger for news and entertainment from outside the region.<sup>85</sup>

HCJB and AWM were also possibly influenced to use an audio-channel for broadcasting by a report that was published in 1993. It was a survey based on interviews done in 1992 among Christian Arab leaders and expatriate missionaries in the Arab World. The report concluded:

Comments from the central Middle East and North Africa indicated a very low interest and support for the continuation of short wave radio broadcasting. Both Arab nationals and expatriates felt that we need to monitor closely the changes in radio broadcast technology and be ready to exploit new opportunities on medium wave, FM and through radio-by-satellite, when such services begin.<sup>86</sup>

The report recommended that it should be 'a priority that Christian radio broadcasters make increasing use of medium wave, local FM and future radio-by-satellite opportunities to reach the Middle East/North Africa'.<sup>87</sup> The recommendation about the importance of audio-satellite broadcasts for the Arab World coincided with the desire of the editor of the report, Abu Wasiim, to begin a Christian satellite broadcasting ministry to the Arab World.

HotBird 4, a direct-to-home satellite platform of Eutelsat, was chosen for this project.<sup>88</sup> Preparations of the staff of HCJB and AWM started well before the broadcasts began. In June 1999, HCJB's manager of Satellite Communications Development, David Russell, assisted with the technical planning for the project and Alex Ison, a missionary with AWM, was the station manager for the project in Gibraltar. Ison continued as the manager until December 2002.<sup>89</sup>

On 1 August 2001 HCJB, together with AWM, started its first broadcast. These audio broadcasts could not be heard on radio but only on television for those who owned a satellite dish and a decoder. Full broadcasting began in early 2002. The station was called *Radio Al Mahabba* [sic] (RAM) and it broadcast 24 hours per day on this audio channel. *Mahabbah* is Arabic for *love*.<sup>90</sup>

RAM delivered its programs from the HCJB studios in La Linea to a facility in Gibraltar with a data-link to London.<sup>91</sup> The choice to work in these two locations

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Abu Wasiim (ed), *Christian Mission in the Arab World: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Arab World – and Priorities for Christian Witness Today* (n.p., 1993), p. 45.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>88</sup> David Russell on his website [www.dngrussell.net/Almahabba.htm](http://www.dngrussell.net/Almahabba.htm) (11 December 2002).

<sup>89</sup> Alex Ison in an email to the author (2 May 2003).

<sup>90</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service'.

<sup>91</sup> Ison in an email to the author (30 April 2003).

was mainly because land and office space was cheaper in Spain but Gibraltar had easier visa arrangements for North Africans than the European Union.<sup>92</sup>

RAM existed 'so that the people of North Africa can be continuously exposed to the Gospel of the grace through faith in Jesus Christ and to know what it is to experience God's love.'<sup>93</sup> Ron Cline, director of HCJB, enthusiastically described the satellite radio broadcasts:

North Africa [is an area] where millions and millions of Muslims live. Men, women and children who have no idea that Jesus is the Son of God and have never heard what He did on the cross. The "DO NOT ENTER" sign is posted for ALL missionaries. If a Muslim is caught reading a Bible, or listening to a radio pre-tuned to a Christian broadcast, or even caught sharing what they have learned about Christ, it can mean prison, complete rejection by their family or death. How will they hear that Christ is the only hope?<sup>94</sup>

Both founding organizations, HCJB and AWM, had appointed an equal number of members to a steering committee, to which the RAM station manager reported. Its members were to be selected and appointed by their own organizations and more organizations were invited to join this venture.<sup>95</sup> Organizations that qualified for partnership were those with compatible ministry goals, shared values and statements of faith that were acceptable to the other member organizations. A financial investment was also required that evidenced, to the other members, their willingness to stand together in investment, liability, and management.<sup>96</sup>

A year after the broadcasts began, in January 2003, AWM announced its withdrawal from the project. The main reason appeared to be AWM's disappointment regarding the lack of audience response.<sup>97</sup> In December 2005 however, HCJB published that based on a listener's survey, RAM assumed that it had hundreds of thousands of listeners.<sup>98</sup> Until supportive evidence is found, this figure should be considered an exaggeration. HCJB has not been able to find other formal participants to replace AWM.

### ***Production Facilities in North Africa***

From the beginning, HCJB and AWM realized that one of the major problems would be to get indigenous North African programs by Christians in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. 'Native Arabic speaking believers, ideally from a North African background will present the programming. [...] The station will sound as much as possible like it comes from within the countries of North Africa. [...] The intention is to facilitate North African nationals' responsibility in the development and

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<sup>92</sup> Ison in an email to the author (2 May 2003).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> [www.beyondthecall.org/ftz/default.asp?page=africamore](http://www.beyondthecall.org/ftz/default.asp?page=africamore) (12 February 2003).

<sup>95</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service'.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ison in an email to the author (2 May 2003).

<sup>98</sup> Quoted by Shadi Habib in his newsletter 'Habib's Highlights' (Pasadena, December 2005).

function of this ministry.<sup>99</sup> As soon as the technical preparations in Spain began, training sessions began in North Africa:

It is intended to source as much material as possible from North Africa. Small groups of volunteers are currently being brought together within Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia to produce short items for inclusion in the broadcasts. [...] Each group will be provided with simple but adequate recording equipment and they will be trained and encouraged to produce relevant and topical articles for use within the broadcasts. Longer term, it is anticipated that complete programs could be produced 'in country'. Dependent on individual circumstances, small financial remuneration may be made to these production groups.<sup>100</sup>

RAM's choice to encourage North Africans in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria to produce programs in those lands, was excellent. These local believers would be best placed to make programs that were right for the context of their own nations. It was also a good choice to let these people manage their own production work in an indigenous manner. HCJB, however, accepted that it might want to use Arabs from other Arab countries too. That was realistic, as it knew that not enough North African Christians would be available for its rather large plans. The disadvantage of this was that it would expose in the broadcasts to North Africa, that there were not enough Christians in those lands to make programs. This would communicate a rather negative message.

### ***Lighthouse***

RAM was highly sensitive to the security issues concerning the production of programs in North Africa. That resulted, among other things, in the decision that there 'will be several production centers inside the three countries, providing safety of numbers and variety.' In order to guarantee continuity, RAM also decided to have a 'core of presenters in a safe location outside the three countries.' One of the centers where HCJB hoped to generate productions and where training was coordinated was Lighthouse in Malta. Lighthouse was a cooperative project with IBRA, together with Frontiers and Missions of Grace. These four organizations decided in 1999 to cooperate to implement their shared vision. Destiny Ministries later joined the group. From that center, programs were uplinked weekly to RAM.<sup>101</sup>

The vision of Lighthouse was that indigenous teams from every nation in North Africa would produce programs in their own languages for reaching the masses by internet, satellite, radio and television. These programs would aim to evangelize, disciple and plant churches. The illiterate audience was especially targeted.<sup>102</sup> It therefore seems that HCJB and Lighthouse had some contradictory goals. The

<sup>99</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service'.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Bengt Bengtson of IBRA in an e-mail to the author (10 December 2002). Brochure: 'Lighthouse Malta, Training North Africans to plant churches in their own Nation through mass-media.' The center is mentioned in the Annual Report of 2003 of the Swedish Pentecostal Mission: 'IBRA Radio', *Verksamhetsberättelse Svensk Pingstmission 2003* (2004), p. 16. This document calls Lighthouse IBRA's 'regional office for North Africa'.

<sup>102</sup> 'Lighthouse Malta, Training North Africans to plant churches in their own Nation through mass-media.'

choice of audience was in direct contradiction to RAM's decision to target people who had at least entered secondary education and who could understand a medium level of standard Arabic. Illiterates would have difficulty with that language.<sup>103</sup>

### 13.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

WRMF minuted on 9 February 1945 that '[all] members and workers connected with the society are requested to sign the Statement of Faith annually'.<sup>104</sup> The statement which was still used in 2005, expressed WRMF's belief in:

1. THE TRINITY: We believe in one God, existing in a trinity of persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are eternal and of equal dignity and power.
2. THE BIBLE: We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, verbally inspired and without error as originally written, and that it is the only infallible rule of faith and practice for the Christian.
3. THE PLAN OF SALVATION: We believe in Jesus Christ, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, whose death on the cross for the redemption of sinners provided a sufficient and complete propitiation for their sins and guilt, and who rose again for our justification, ascended into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for all those who come unto God by Him. All who believe and receive the Lord Jesus Christ have eternal life; those who do not will be eternally lost. We wait for the "blessed hope -- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ", and we believe that all things shall finally be subjected to God through Him.
4. THE CHURCH: We believe that the true church, which is the body of Christ, is formed by the work of the Holy Spirit in all those who trust Christ as their Savior.
5. THE CHRISTIAN'S MINISTRY: In view of Christ's last command and recognizing the lost condition of all those who fail to accept the Gospel, we believe in the urgency of every Christian responding to the Great Commission of Christ. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

It is to the work of helping to carry out the plan of God in this age that World Radio Missionary Fellowship, Inc., is dedicated, in conformity with the last command of our Savior of "be my witness...to the ends of the earth". With the God-given means at our disposal, the message of the Gospel, which "is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes", is being literally carried to the ends of the earth. We also seek to carry out the command of our Savior to teach all nations, in addition to evangelizing them.<sup>105</sup>

This statement was an interesting combination of theological matters and of HCJB's self-perception. Parts of the statement were possibly taken from statements of other organizations, but as a whole, the statement was created by HCJB

<sup>103</sup> See later for HCJB target audience and preferred languages, in section 13.3.

<sup>104</sup> Published on HCJB's website [www.hcjb.org](http://www.hcjb.org) (9 April 2005). All references to Bible verses have been left out of the text.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

itself.<sup>106</sup> The statement about mission and WRMF made this a missionary creed, though with no effort to contextualize it for the Arab World. This theological statement placed HCJB in the broad interdenominational, Evangelical movement in the Western World. The statement was apologetic and did not attack any particular view. The language regarding the return of Christ indicated a premillennial view, though that was not made explicit.

This typical Western Statement of Faith may not have been the best criterion for deciding about the suitability of personnel that was supposed to contextualize the Gospel in the world of North Africa, but it made clear that HCJB heeded Contextualization Warning CW1. Central to HCJB's organizational life was the conviction that the Bible was God's revelation of truth, that Christ is unique and the importance of the individual's participation in the Church. It is interesting to note that the statement of faith contains no reference to a holistic understanding of the Gospel considering the organization, from its inception, involved itself in both the social and economic life of the nation where its first station was based.

### 13.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

HCJB's broadcasts from London were directed at North Africa. For its broadcasts on RAM, HCJB targeted the same area. Based on its own research in North Africa, HCJB concluded, among other things, that there were 'linguistic, cultural and political reasons to consider the five countries of the Maghrib Union (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya) as a unit for radio ministry purposes.'<sup>107</sup> Within the context of the Arab World, the region did indeed form a sort of unity, but at the same time it was a smorgasbord of very different languages, cultures, political and economic systems. This means that RCR1, that proposes a homogeneous target audience as a prerequisite for good contextualization, was only partially heeded by HCJB. HCJB's assessment that the area could be seen as a unit, seems to have been the basis for its desire to reach all of North Africa with each of its broadcasts:

It is essential that the programs must communicate to the whole of the target area. Therefore a 'medium' level of Arabic will prevail although the use of more regional dialects will be encouraged provided that the language is acceptable across the region. Likewise, we recognize that the use of Modern Standard Arabic will also have a role. In general the station will use Modern Standard Arabic in all quotations from the Bible and other major textual sources. The preferred Bible translations for use on air are: Kitab al-Hayat or Today's Arabic Version.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> According to HCJB's former president (1981-2001) Ron Cline, it was 'written long before I entered the picture. I would guess it was pieced together from a number of sources. That may be the best thing to say. No doubt some of it is original, but some of it is eternal (long before us) as well'. Ron Cline in an email to the author (30 November 2006).

<sup>107</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service'.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

HCJB did not want to use Amazigh languages in its broadcasts on RAM, as it wanted all of its programs to be comprehensible to all listeners from North Africa. The choice of a medium level of Arabic, with the possibility of using more colloquial Arabic when appropriate, probably meant that an Educated Standard Arabic (ESA) was intended.

For an organization that played a pivotal role in beginning Wb2000, it is surprising that the choice was made against the Amazigh languages on RAM. Three of those languages in North Africa, Tashelhayt, Tarifit and Tamazight, had more than one million native speakers and less than 30 minutes of radio broadcasts per day. It seems HCJB decided to ignore these languages, as it wanted to focus on the whole area of North Africa in each broadcast. That approach to broadcasting was shared by its partner AWM. It was detrimental to the ideal of producing truly contextualized programs that would focus on defined people groups and use their actual spoken languages. RCR3, about the importance of producing programs in the vernacular, was not heeded. However, in 2004 HCJB was broadcasting Amazigh programs in its SW broadcasts, so it apparently did not have the same language policy for RAM as it did for its SW broadcasts. It may also have changed its viewpoints for both RAM and SW broadcasts between 2001 and 2004. Information about this was not available.

The more precise target audience of RAM within the realm of North Africa was young Muslims between 15 and 25 years old in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, who had at least entered secondary education.<sup>109</sup> HCJB assumed that these young people would be 'open enough spiritually and intellectually to be willing to listen to something that is not Islamic in nature'. The assumption was that they would also be comfortable listening to the 'median Arabic' that HCJB had opted for. This was possibly a correct assessment, if the language was kept rather simple indeed. This did not mean that for that diverse audience of students across three countries, a language was chosen that they considered their own. HCJB decided that the teaching and encouragement of Christians of North Africa was also a goal, though a secondary one. This militated against the ideal of having a homogenous audience.<sup>110</sup>

### 13.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

HCJB wanted its listeners to understand that RAM was a Christian station, with 'content tied to an authentic faith in Jesus Christ as taught in the Bible'.<sup>111</sup> It is reasonable to assume that this was the same programming strategy for their SW broadcasts. HCJB described how it wanted to be seen from the perspective of the audience:

Content will address and confront tough issues of truth and honesty. An energetic, live sound that appears to originate from within their home country. Has an attrac-

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<sup>109</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service'.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.



tive worldview. Content is relationship centered. Not 'religious' in the sense of promoting a religious system. Culturally entertaining. Intellectually honest and stimulating. Interactive—phone, letters, e-mail, call-ins, requests, etc. Relevant. Easy to tune—available on a medium that is accessible. Popular—friends listen too.<sup>112</sup>

The goal to not be religious, in the sense of promoting a religious system, was in line with HCJB's creed that spoke of the true Church as 'the body of Christ, [...] formed by the work of the Holy Spirit in all those who trust Christ as their Savior'. HCJB wanted to focus on the personal relationship of the audience with God through Jesus Christ, as that was deemed most important. However, the goal to not promote a religious system probably also meant that HCJB wanted to ignore the existence of Churches as organizational entities. That was not wise from the perspective of contextualization. It means that HCJB did not heed CW3, which prescribes that programs should underline the unity of the worldwide Church.

As Muslims in North Africa were well aware of Christianity in its organized forms, ignoring that meant ignoring part of the context of North African Muslims. Moreover, the Christian religion does not exist separate from its systemic cultural expressions. From the perspective of the need to speak to people in their actual context, as demanded by RCR2, this was negative.

RAM did not fully close the door to treating issues like human rights. It wanted to do so with 'great sensitivity and wisdom'.<sup>113</sup> Many of the countries RAM began broadcasting to, had bad human rights records. Ison enunciated the dilemma RAM faced when he said that 'we would not want a Moroccan believer on air and severely criticising his Government' while admitting too that 'we would also not want to ignore the matter'.<sup>114</sup> It was positive that HCJB and AWM were open to discuss matters of human rights but it is difficult to envision it occurring in practice because in its program suppliers' guidelines, RAM stipulated:

The programming should be sensitive to everyday issues that face the people of the area. Whilst doing this, programmes should recognise and respect the religious faiths and practices of the region, they shall not include any material which denigrates or attacks any religion, Christian denomination or other religious body. Similarly, the programmes shall abstain from any political association.<sup>115</sup>

This choice made it hard to make programs that truly spoke to the audience and its context as for the Muslims of North Africa, religion and politics were important themes. To not take a stand in those matters also meant that the programs could not offer a practical application of the Christian faith in those areas. This resulted in an individualistic proclamation of a rather thin Gospel that only spoke to part of mankind. Warnings CW4 and CW5 were related to this matter. To not discuss matters of society and politics openly, meant to take away some of the prophetic power of the Gospel, as the Gospel *does* impact a society's structures. Teaching

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ison in an email to the author (30 April 2003).

<sup>115</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service'.

people how to use the Gospel in that realm, is also a matter of normal Christian discipleship.

HCJB did not want to have broadcasts with back-to-back preaching. A large proportion of broadcast time was to be dedicated to music. Christian music from North Africa and the Middle East was used, as well as both English and French Christian and secular music. 'Spiritual content will be communicated primarily through the lives of presenters rather than large amounts of overt teaching.'<sup>116</sup> This was a good approach for this a 24/7 channel by HCJB and also unique for Christian radio broadcasters in the Arab World. However, in contrast HCJB's SW broadcasts from London did contain back-to-back preaching and did not use much music.

In the context of RAM, HCJB stated that primary efforts would be made to get programs from within North Africa, but 'materials originating from other geographical areas that meet the appropriate criteria will also be used'.<sup>117</sup> On its SW broadcasts, HCJB had a similar approach. It used Egyptian, Lebanese and Jordanian programs, as well as programs in MSA, along with programs from North Africa. This undermined the North African atmosphere of the programs and was therefore detrimental to the goal of contextualization. RCR2, RCR3 and RCR4 could not be fully fulfilled; the usage of programs in languages other than those from North Africa made it impossible to speak to the audience in its actual context. It used languages that the audiences did not consider their own, and it contained linguistic and cultural forms that were not *a propos* to the audience.

HCJB and AWM felt obliged to specifically exclude partnering organizations with certain Charismatic convictions, as they did not want to broadcast their programs. In its 'statement of cooperation', RAM said:

[We recognize] the value of encouraging Christians to claim God's promises in His Word. However, any doctrine must be held in its right proportion in relation to other teachings in the New Testament as can best be seen in the emphasis given to it by Christ and the apostles in their teaching. [...] We believe and teach that:

- Sickness is not necessarily the result of an individual's sin.
- There is no universal promise that God will heal everyone if he only believes.
- The faith and trust of the listener is to be directed toward God and not towards the personality or prayers of an individual.
- The healing of sickness in this life is not an integral part of the atonement.
- Speaking in tongues is not a necessary evidence of a special work of the Holy Spirit and/or the fullness of the Holy Spirit.
- Economic prosperity is not necessarily an evidence of God's blessings.<sup>118</sup>

Although HCJB's Statement of Faith did not mention any of these issues, HCJB thought it had to express these matters unequivocally, as within the evangelical churches in the USA and Europe a theology that focused on *health and wealth* was gaining in popularity.

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service'.

## 13.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

### *13.5.1 History: 1990-2004*

It has not been possible to receive information from HCJB about the actual programs it has broadcast by SW since 1990. GMU, AWM and IBRA were among its program suppliers and thus it is safe to assume that the programs HCJB produced through its own staff were rather similar. Presumably therefore the programs entailed an effort to create a neutral homely environment as the *locus* rather than a mosque.

Islamic language was only used in the programs to explain the Christian message but not as the vehicle for the message. This was both in line with the desires of the local North African congregations and it was also an affirmation of the fact that it is not possible to use Islamic religious forms and think that these can be filled with Christian content. HCJB therefore heeded CW6 regarding the impossibility to separate Islamic religious language from its content.

### *13.5.2 Programs of 20-26 September 2004*

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, HCJB produced its own programs but it also used programs from ABS, GMU, AWM and IBRA. In the week of 20-26 September 2004, HCJB was broadcasting each night from 21.00-22.30 GMT on SW from London to North Africa.

HCJB's programs were called *Joyful News (al-Akhhâr al-Mufrihah)*. Each day, the programs were introduced by stating they were broadcast on SW from the United Kingdom. The 90-minute broadcasts consisted of four to six different programs which were all introduced separately and which all finished with an invitation to the audience to contact the program producers. The audience was also asked to visit [www.hayatak.org](http://www.hayatak.org) and [www.akhbarmufriha.com](http://www.akhbarmufriha.com) and to write to IBRA or HCJB itself at the end of each 90-minute block of broadcasts. IBRA gave both its email address as well as its address in Stockholm (Sweden). HCJB used its address in Malaga. Selwa Habib hosted the broadcasts, and she was also one of the main voices in the programs.<sup>119</sup> *Figure 13.1* contains the grid of the week of broadcasts that was researched.

#### 13.5.2.1 Biblical Topics

##### *Unshackled*

*Unshackled* was a three-part drama program based on the story of a sick woman as found in Mark 5. The drama focused on the fact that the woman had been sick for 12 years and that all the money that she had spent on the doctors had been in vain. It was at this point then that Jesus the Master (*Yasû' al-Mu'allim*) came to her town. The sick woman was excited as she believed that Jesus could heal her. The program underlined his miracle working power and that the woman believed in

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<sup>119</sup> HCJB broadcast 20 September 2004.

Him. She had once seen him from afar, and ‘his face was full of divine grace and radiating light (*wihshuh kân malyân ni‘mah illahîyah wa bi yusha‘a nûr*)’. His image was ‘something heavenly (*hâjah samâwîyah*)’. Whereas the drama was in Egyptian Arabic, the lessons drawn after it were in MSA. The lesson mentioned the problem of shyness, which can prevent many people from taking a golden opportunity when it is offered:

If your soul longs for God, my dear listener, you must keep your eyes on Him and only Him. God, the High One be praised (*subhâna Ta‘âlâ*), is forgiving, merciful, and kindhearted. He always answers those who ask Him, and He never refuses the repentance of the sinner.

The program then invited the audience to find out whether the Lord Jesus Christ (*al-Rabb Yasû‘ al-Masîh*) could heal the incurable disease of the woman, by listening again to the next episode on the following day. In the meantime people were encouraged to read Mark 5 by themselves.<sup>120</sup> The next day, the story continued, and amidst much crying and shouting the sick woman testified again to her faith that Jesus Christ, the Master (*Yasû‘ al-Masîh, al-Mu‘allim*) who was coming to town, would heal her. The audience was again reminded that it should read Mark 5, and return to HCJB the next day for the end of the story. In the meantime, people were invited to pray:

If you are tired, my brother, or you are grieving and worried and if you despair, rejoice that the Lord Jesus Christ is near to you, praise to Him (*subhânuh*). He is near to everyone who seeks Him in truth. So call upon Him now, my brother, as He listens to your prayer, the glorious Christ (*al-Masîh al-majîd*).<sup>121</sup>

The third program of Unshackled concluded the story about the woman. She repeated her declaration of faith in Jesus Christ who had the power to heal her. This final program emphasized her need to push through the large crowd that surrounded Jesus before she was able to touch him. Jesus immediately became aware of her touch and she was healed.<sup>122</sup>

The producers of these programs made it clear that they intended the programs to be for Muslims by using Islamic terms such as *subhâna Ta‘âlâ*, and *al-Masîh al-majîd*. Nevertheless, these three programs used mostly Christian language. The inclusion of a few Islamic terms probably did more to upset the Christian audience than to draw the Muslim audience toward a better understanding of the story and its message. However, as no efforts were made to use Islamic theological terms, CW6 was not trespassed against.

<sup>120</sup> HCJB broadcast 20 September 2004, Unshackled.

<sup>121</sup> HCJB broadcast 21 September 2004, Unshackled. During the program, people were also told to return the following week at the same time.

<sup>122</sup> HCJB broadcast 22 September 2004, Unshackled.

**False Suspicions about the Bible**

Manis ‘Abd al-Nûr, a pastor of *Qaṣr al-Dubârah* Presbyterian Church in Cairo, presented False Suspicions about the Bible. His goal was to explain seeming inconsistencies in the book of Genesis. For instance, the promise to Abraham that the land of Kanaan would forever be for him and his descendants, was to be seen in the light of the Bible’s teaching that the spiritual offspring of Abraham would go to heaven. He also explained that the three men, who appeared to Abraham before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, were really an appearance of God in angelic form. ‘God is able to choose the way He likes to appear to human beings’. ‘Abd al-Nûr mentioned that God at last appeared in the form of Christ incarnate. ‘Great indeed is the mystery of our religion.’ ‘Abd al-Nûr discussed these and other parts of Genesis in MSA and in a manner that was undoubtedly meant to encourage Christians who were under attack for believing the Bible. Much of what he taught was hard to understand for Muslims, although the program made clear to the Muslim audience that Christians, when attacked for the Bible, are able to stand up to the challenge and answer questions. Afterwards, the audience was invited to write to the address of *Karmel Mission* (also known as Call of Hope) in Stuttgart (Germany).<sup>123</sup>

20-09-04	Unshackled	You and I on the Way	Uncle Gram in the world of Crimes	White Page	False Suspicions about the Bible
21-09-04	Unshackled	Call of Grace	To Tell You the Truth	Searchlights	Songs and Thoughts
22-09-04	Unshackled	You and I on the Way	Message of Grace and Truth	Every Question has an Answer	Café Maghrib
23-09-04	Meditations of Life	Café Maghrib	Message of Grace and Truth	From House to House	
24-09-04	[Program in Amazigh]	Searchlights	Message of Grace and Truth	Church in my Home	
25-09-04	Listener's Mail	Every Question has an Answer	To Tell You the Truth	From House to House	
26-09-04	[Program in Amazigh]			Good News	Come and See

Figure 13.1 Programming of HCJB 20-26 September 2004

<sup>123</sup> HCJB broadcast 20 September 2004, False Suspicions about the Bible.

### **Call of Grace**

In the program Call of Grace, produced by HCJB's Arabic Department in Sydney (Australia), the story of Moses and the venomous snakes from Numbers 21 was used to explain the deadliness of sin and the need for forgiveness. The program underlined that all people have sinned against God, and that all deserve to die, for 'the wages of sin is death (*ujrah al-khaṭīyah hiyá mawt*)':

If sin has come to your life and your life has become unclean and polluted, there is hope and a solution in the blood of Jesus Christ who cleanses you from all sin. Judgment Day and hell is not for you. God has prepared life for you in his Son Jesus Christ who died in your place so that you escape from this Judgment Day.

The Arabic Department continued to explain how people in the time of Moses were saved from the deadly snakes by looking at the copper snake Moses had placed on his stick. Likewise, people today are saved by looking up at Jesus on the cross. There He, the Son of God (*Ibn Allāh*), was wounded and crushed for our sins. The audience was then asked to pray with the presenter:

God give me faith in my heart to trust in your love for me and that you came to give me salvation so that I do not perish like those who did not believe in you. Faith comes from you God and it is not an effort that I do Lord. I believe now and trust that Christ is the only Son of God (*al-Masīh Ibn Allāh al-wahīd*) who came for me to give me eternal life. I accept Him and I accept His redemption in my heart now. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.<sup>124</sup>

There was no effort to use Islamic jargon in this program, so CW6 was certainly heeded. The Christian theological terminology that was used for expounding the role of Christ was not explained making the program difficult for a non-Christian audience to comprehend. This means that RCR4 was not implemented well for a Muslim audience. Christ was presented in conservative Evangelical terms, as the Son of God who died and rose again for the forgiveness of sins of those who believe, so in that respect, RCR5 was implemented to a certain extent.

### **To Tell You the Truth**

To Tell You the Truth was a magazine-type program, with 'grace' (*ni'mah*) as the theme. It was presented by Nādīyah and Marwān. The program was generally in Algerian Arabic but with large inserts in other languages. The first segment of the program on the 21 September was an Egyptian Arabic drama by Ayman Luṭfi. It depicted two common mistakes people make regarding the Christian faith and good works. After the drama, it was explained to the audience that there are two different groups of people. Some people preach the truth but they do not live according to it while other people do much good but wrongly assume that this means that they can 'satisfy God with doing a lot of good deeds'. The program then explained that all people are sinners and that by doing good works, you will never

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<sup>124</sup> HCJB broadcast 21 September 2004, Call of Grace.

justify yourself (*tabrîr nifsak*) in front of God. As we have inherited (*warithnâ*) sin from Adam and Eve, the only solution is death:

But instead of us dying, Christ, the Word of God (*al-Masîh, Kalimat Allâh*) and His Holy Spirit, came to earth and He lived a pure and clean life and He died on the cross. By his death He gave us a chance to get rid of [sin] not by deeds (*mish bi 'amal*) or rites (*tuqûs*) but by our faith in Him and by proclaiming that we need Him.

The program proceeded to explain that grace saves us, through faith. It is a gift of God, not the result of our works. 'We will still carry the burdensome load of sin (*naḥmil al-khaṭî'ah al-thaqîl*) on our shoulders until we come under the cross (*taḥt al-ṣalîb*) and we ask forgiveness from Jesus Christ and this is possible by his blood on the cross (*bi dammuh 'alâ al-ṣalîb*).'

In MSA, Mûsâ from Tunisia spoke further on the issue that a good tree can be recognized from its fruit. He quoted the Gospel (*al-Injîl*) and spoke about Christ. He referred to the Egyptian drama in the program and advised the audience that the 'blood of Christ can purify our heart from all sins'. He called the audience to have faith in Him so that their hearts become 'a tree that bears a beautiful yield'.

Another Tunisian man then testified, in MSA, about the changes in his life. 'I met Christ (*al-Masîh*) and he became the friend that I had always wanted to have.' He then explained how he was not perfect but that Jesus was changing things in his behavior. Sister Şaliha from Algeria then sang a song as her musical testimony. The audience was then asked to write to AWM's PO Box in Marseille (France) or to the HCJB address in Malaga.<sup>125</sup>

The second program of To Tell You the Truth focused on forgiveness. The program contained a drama about 'Atrîs, a prisoner in Tunisia convicted of smuggling drugs into Europe. It was mostly in Algerian Arabic and it was indicated that 'Atrîs' story had been written and sent into the program by his cellmate. The audience learnt that while in prison 'Atrîs and this man had listened to Christian radio. 'God promised that He would be with us in our hard times and even in death.' The program said that loneliness, fear and the feeling of being unjustly treated hurt more than being in prison. During their time in prison the person who forced 'Atrîs to smuggle drugs entered into the prison himself and 'Atrîs forgave Him. 'Atrîs' cellmate was so impressed that after 'Atrîs was released from jail, he continued listening to Christian radio. He subsequently wrote and asked To Tell You the Truth how he could become as free as 'Atrîs was even while he was in prison. The presenters then explained the Gospel and how according to God's justice, all men are sinners and deserve condemnation. 'That is why God sent Jesus Christ to be the right guidance for mankind (*hudâ al-'âlamîn*) [and to] die on the cross to redeem (*yifdî*) the sin of mankind'.

There are many people who are physically free but not in their spirit because they are slaves to their pleasures and to the devil. I call everyone who listens to me, to

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<sup>125</sup> HCJB broadcast 21 September 2004, To Tell You the Truth.

open his heart to God. [...] Love God, declare your faith, trust that He will give you strength in your weakness, and even in your hard times, ask Him to help you.

The program ended with a testimony by Turkîyah from Algeria. She related that true happiness was a matter of the heart, and that it comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Food, radio, television, magazines and friends, money or wealth cannot give that happiness. The audience was then asked to write to the address of AWM in Marseille, the address of HCJB in Malaga was given as well.<sup>126</sup>

The usage of North African colloquial Arabic was commendable as it was in line with RCR3 regarding the need to address people in what they consider their own language. The use of the Egyptian Arabic drama was a strange choice in that context. However, other than this and in accordance with RCR4, the programs used linguistic and cultural forms that were a propos for the audience in North Africa. CW6 was heeded as well since a Christian, rather than an Islamic vocabulary, was used for explaining the Gospel. Terms like Word of God were purposely used in describing Christ because these were both common to Christians and to Muslims. In accordance with RCR5, both programs tried to explain the importance of Christ and who He is in terms that were understandable for Muslims.

### ***Searchlights***

In Searchlights (*al-Anwâr al-Kâshifah*) Selwa Habib discussed Galatians 6. The verse-by-verse treatment in less than 15 minutes meant that many topics of interest were touched upon but without the possibility to explain things for a Muslim audience. This made the program very hard, if not impossible, for the target audience to understand. It was full of Christian jargon that was not explained for Muslims.<sup>127</sup>

### ***Message of Grace and Truth***

The Message of Grace and Truth (*Risâlat al-Ni'mah wa al-Ḥaqq*) was produced in the United States by a Brethren organization called Fund for Christian Service (FCS). The program began by mentioning what had been treated in the previous programs. These issues covered sin and forgiveness (*al-khaṭîyah wa al-ghufrân*), heaven and the fire of hell (*al-samâ' wa jahannam al-nûr*) and the death of Christ (*mawt al-Masîh*). Upcoming programs were also announced and included the inspiration (*waḥî*) of the Bible (*al-Kitâb al-Muqaddas*), its security from distortion (*salâmah min al-taḥrîf*), the person of Jesus Christ and the unity of God. Regarding the death of Christ covered in the previous program, the audience was reminded that He carried our sins on the cross and that He had foretold his disciples many times that He would die but also that He would be raised from the dead.

After that introduction, the program mentioned the many post-resurrection appearances of Jesus as described in the Bible.

The Gospel is all about the Christ who surrendered to death for our sins. He was buried and on the third day he rose again. This is God's truth. Your final destiny

<sup>126</sup> HCJB broadcast 25 September 2004, To Tell You the Truth.

<sup>127</sup> HCJB broadcast 21 September 2004, Searchlights.



depends on this crucial truth, so it is not strange that Christians in Arab countries call Easter the Great Feast.

The program mentioned that all the prophets who died are still in the grip of death; only Jesus lives forever. His resurrection was a guarantee that those who believe in Him will have eternal life. People were advised not to doubt but to believe the Bible. ‘The best way to be sure about these facts is to read what is reported in the Holy Gospel (*al-Injil al-Muqaddas*) which proves to us these facts about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ’. People were offered a copy of the Gospel if they only wrote to the program. ‘The Gospel (*al-Injil*) is a part of the Holy Bible, the Speech of God (*Kalâm Allâh*) which is given by His will. It is pure from distortion and it cannot be changed’.<sup>128</sup>

In the following Message of Grace and Truth program, the inspiration of the Bible was treated. The program began with a brief introduction to the structure of the Bible and then proceeded to give proofs that the Bible was given by God’s inspiration (*wahî*). The program mentioned the prophecies in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It also used some of the prophecies in the book of Daniel that were supposedly fulfilled in Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire. Proof of the fact that the Bible has not changed was, among other things, found in the many negative things that were said about the Jews in the Old Testament, which were not edited out. ‘The Holy Bible is a miracle book and its miracle does not stop at its rhetoric’, the program told its audience. ‘If interpreted to another language it is still a beautiful book. [It] is inspired by God (*mûhî’ min Allâh*) and all its words are pure (*naqîyah*).’ The additional proof was the effect of the Bible on people who read it and accept it. Some testimonies of people who were changed were given. One of those was from ‘a young guy from a ‘different background’, so obviously a Muslim, who was deeply impressed when he heard some verses from the Bible and was totally changed.

The program then challenged its audience. It said that many communities do not have the Bible as the devil knows that if people listen to the Book of God and believe in it, they will be changed, forgiven and receive eternal life. The program referred implicitly to Muslim societies. It also said that the pagan societies that had accepted the Christian faith were changed:

The progress we find in each nation is the result of the effectiveness of God’s Word. The corruption which now spreads in these nations, where ethics used to prevail, and the deterioration that is present now, is due to their neglect of God’s words.

The program advised anyone with a Bible or parts of the Bible at home, to read it continuously, and it offered to mail a Bible to anyone who would ask for it. The HCJB address in Malaga was given.<sup>129</sup>

The final Message of Grace and Truth program treated the ‘false accusations of the perversion (*tahrîf*) of the Bible’. It began by quoting Moses, Solomon, the book of Revelation and Jesus who all warned against changing any word of what

<sup>128</sup> HCJB broadcast 22 September 2004, Message of Grace and Truth.

<sup>129</sup> HCJB broadcast 23 September 2004, Message of Grace and Truth.

God had revealed. It argued that if the Bible had been changed, the negative statements about the Jews abounding in the Old Testament would have been deleted first. It also claimed that the Jews would have edited many parts of the Old Testament that were interpreted by Christians as being the prophecies for Jesus Christ. Another proof given for the unchanged nature of the Bible was the existence of many old Greek versions as well as many translations from the first three centuries CE. These articles were considered a testimony to the fact that the original text had not been altered and that the present versions of the Bible are similar to those older ones. The program concluded that the Christians in the first few centuries often quoted from the Bible in their religious books and that these quotes were similar to what we find in our present Bible thus confirming that the Bible used by these early Christians was similar to our current Bible:

Now a question to those who say that the Holy Bible was changed. Should these accusers not present us with the evidence that what they say is true. [...] He should say who changed it, and why they did that, and for the benefit of whom? Did God allow the Bible to be changed?

The program ended with two reasons why people say that the Bible has been changed. The first reason was that they may find ‘many contradictions between what they read in the Bible and their [own] traditions. Therefore they either have to adapt their religion, or they can say that the Bible was changed’. The second reason given was that the Biblical narrative leads to the reconciliation of God and man and that the devil does not like this. ‘The Bible tells us that although all of us have sinned and that the wages of sin is death, but God has brought salvation by his Son Jesus.’<sup>130</sup>

These programs of FCS were clearly written to convince Muslims of the historicity of the death and resurrection of Christ, and of the veracity of the Bible. The themes were very suitable for the North African audience but the language of the program was not North African. The programs followed Western styles of arguing and used many Biblical thoughts and ideas without explaining them. For these reasons the programs must have been difficult for the intended Muslim audience to understand. Thus, especially in the realm of RCR4, which dictates the use of suitable linguistic and cultural forms for the targeted audience, these programs were not *a propos*. Christ was portrayed as the Son of God who died and rose again for the forgiveness of sins; thus, RCR5 was implemented in regard to the presentation of Christ. CW1 was clearly heeded though. There was no hint of any interest by FCP to apply the Gospel to societal affairs, so RCR2 was not well implemented. In line with that, CW4 and CW5 were not heeded.

### ***Meditations of Life***

*Meditations of Life* (*Ta'mulât al-Ḥayâh*) used the Old Testament book Song of Songs and gave a rather esoteric exegesis for applying that book to the spiritual life of Christians. The verse ‘Show me your face, let me hear your voice for your

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<sup>130</sup> HCJB broadcast 24 September 2004, Message of Grace and Truth.

voice is sweet and your face is lovely' led to an explanation of the love of God and that Christians do not need to fear, even if they have done evil. 'You have been crucified with the [...] Christ. Because of Jesus' crucifixion his blood covers you.' The program went further to speak about the verse that says: 'Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom'. It commented that Christians usually focus on the large foxes and that these are the major sins, like sex, stealing, or killing. However the small sins are also ruinous for our spiritual life. Those are the things that we have left undone:

Suppose you are walking on the street and you see a banana peel on the street, or you are sitting in your house and you throw a banana peel from the balcony, don't you know that this banana peel can hurt someone who is walking?<sup>131</sup>

For a Muslim audience, this program interpreted the Bible in such an esoteric manner and with so much unexplained jargon that it was hard to follow.

### ***From House to House***

From House to House (*Min Dâr ilâ Dâr*) wanted to model how believers can meet together in a home. The program focused on explaining whom Christ is and was conveyed in the form of talks between members of a home group. Terms used for Jesus were explained like Savior (*Mukhlis*), Christ (*al-Masîh*), and the Incarnated Word of God (*Kalimat Allâh al-Mutajassidah*) as well as other titles including the last Adam and the Lamb of God. His virgin birth was also touched upon. He was called the essence of God (*dhât Allâh*) who came to earth to help us to be saved, as we can't save ourselves from sin.

The program also answered the question why the words of Jesus were so simple. They were not philosophical or difficult to be understood. They were easy for all people to understand. They came 'from deep emotions and they were simple (*basâṭah*) but these simple words were meaningful.' Jesus also spoke in simple words as they 'were not addressed to the people of his time only, but to the whole world and those who came later. He wanted to be simple so anyone might understand Him.'

The program explained why Jesus is called the Nazarene (*al-Nâsirî*) and why Christians are called Nazarenes (*Naṣrânî*). That was because he came from the city that is called Nazareth. 'Nazareth is in Palestine, so Jesus Christ lived closer to our Arab countries than to the European countries. We are more worthy of Him than France, Spain and America.'

The program reminded the audience that Jesus Christ is God (*Yasû' al-Masîh huwa Allâh*) and Lord (*al-Rabb*). 'God appeared in Him in his complete form (*kâmil al-hay'ah*)'. As He was perfect and sinless, He was able to save man through his death on the cross.

Finally, people were encouraged to follow Jesus and to meet with their friends at home or anywhere where they felt free to pray and study the Bible together.

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<sup>131</sup> HCJB broadcast 23 September 2004, Meditation of Life. Message of Grace and Truth.

<sup>131</sup> HCJB broadcast 23 September 2004, Meditation of Life.

People were then asked to write to the program. If they could answer the question where Jesus was born, they would receive a present.

This program discussed topics of interest to Muslims as it explained Christian terms in an understandable language in accordance with RCR4. Christ was presented in the usual conservative Evangelical manner, so in regard to the presentation, RCR5 was implemented. The program did so without using Islamic jargon, in accordance with CW6. The program did not touch upon social or political issues, so CW5 and CW4 were only partially heeded. The context of a home church was suitable for most parts of North Africa and these programs were a good reflection of how those House Churches there wanted to be portrayed. This was in fulfillment of RCR5 and CW2.

The program used the House Church model. In terms of the contextualization spectrums of John Travis, that model resembled C3 or C4 in regard to the location of the meeting. However, it resembled C2 in regard to the Christian language used. This illustrates some of the shortcomings of Travis' model.

#### ***Listeners' Mail***

In Listeners' Mail, Selwa Habib answered some questions from Ayman who wrote from Tunisia. The first question was whether Mary was the wife of God since Jesus was the Son of God (*Ibn Allâh*). The answer was that God is a spirit (*rûh*). He did not marry and when we speak of Jesus as God's Son, 'we do not mean that the Virgin Mary got married to Him'. The story of the visit of the angel Gabriel to Mary was recalled, in which the angel announced to Mary that she would be pregnant by intervention from the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus became the Son of God. He is also called the Word of God (*Kalimat Allâh*) who became incarnate (*tajassud*). Another question was when was Jesus crucified and why. Selwa briefly explained when that precisely occurred and that Jesus 'wanted to be crucified as an offer for the sins of mankind'. This was not explained further. As regards to the portrayal of Jesus, RCR5 was well implemented through this denial that Jesus was the outcome of a physical liaison between God and Mary. This was an important issue for the Muslim audience.

Another question of Ayman was about the difference between Judaism and Christianity. Judaism was presented as a preparation for the coming of Christ, with its laws and symbols and promises of earthly blessings. 'We say that Judaism was dissolved (*hállit*) by Christianity', the program answered.<sup>132</sup>

#### ***Good News***

In the Good News (*al-Akhhâr al-Sârah*) program, Samîr Fahîm said that he had received 'many letters' and one of the questions from those letters was whether it was true that Jesus Christ washed the feet of his disciples, and why did He do so. First the Bible story was briefly related and then Samîr explained it. The main lesson was that in Jesus humbling himself, He also teaches mankind how to love and serve one another. 'Jesus Christ was not content to wash his disciples' feet only, but [...] He gave himself up for all men, and instead of mankind being pun-

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<sup>132</sup> HCJB broadcast 25 September 2004, Listeners' Mail.

ished, Jesus Christ received the sinner's punishment. They could be cleansed through His death.'

I tell everybody, wherever he is, in Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon or Syria, that our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to follow his humility and his love. The Lord said: 'You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world'; we are the lamp that must enlighten everyone. [Let us] be humble and never be proud of ourselves but to love and forgive and wash the feet of each other.

The story of the washing of the feet was contextually very interesting as it is still seen as very humiliating in the context of the Arab World. It helped the program to portray the aspect of the humiliation of Christ for a Muslim audience, in accordance with RCR5. However, this was done in traditional Christian terms without explaining those, thus not fulfilling the need to use linguistic and cultural forms that would be suitable for Muslims; hence, RCR4 was not well implemented.

CW6 was, generally speaking, heeded in the program. However, the program ended with an offer of the Noble Gospel (*al-Injil al-Sharif*) to the audience if they wrote to the address of HCJB.<sup>133</sup> This probably referred to the New Testament of the translation that purposely used Islamic jargon.<sup>134</sup> If so, this was an infraction of CW6, which says that the Islamic forms cannot be separated from their original meaning.

### ***Come and See***

The program *Come and See*, presented by 'Aziz, was about salvation (*khalâs*) from death, sin, sickness, and chains:

He wants to make us free to get salvation from Adam's sin which separated mankind and God. Adam was sent away from paradise because he ate from the fruit Eve gave him. Only the death of Jesus Christ on the cross could restore the relationship between God and man. As God wants everyone to be saved, 'we tell everyone who listens to us: God loves you and he wants to save you from sin'.

In the end of the program, the sinner's prayer was prayed:

My dear listener, if you want God to come into your life, pray with me: God thank you for your love, and that you want to save me from sin. Thank you that you accept me. God I confess that I am a sinner. I repent before you. Forgive me my sins. You promised that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come.

'My dear listener, if you have prayed this with me, congratulations for you are now saved', 'Aziz said. 'God wants to get you back to his love and into his presence. God is telling you: I want to save you today and He wants you beside Him

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<sup>133</sup> HCJB broadcast 26 September 2004, Good News.

<sup>134</sup> More on this Noble Gospel translation, see chapter 3.

because real life is in his presence. You can have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ [...] so accept Him now in your heart.<sup>135</sup>

The language of this program about Christ was traditional and was conveyed using Christian jargon. The program was full of concepts that were hard to comprehend for Muslims, so RCR4 was not well implemented.

### 13.5.2.2 Arabic Churches and Ecumenical Issues

In Listeners' Mail, Selwa Habib answered four questions from Ayman who wrote from Tunisia. One question was about the churches in the Middle Ages. 'Did they use religion for political and economic benefits and was that why they deviated from Christ? And why are there different churches?' The answer was that indeed Churches in the ages of darkness (*al-'aṣūr al-maẓlimah*) did so, and that is why the 'Evangelical Churches appeared'. The reason given for the differences between the churches was that they explained the words of the Bible differently.<sup>136</sup> No further comments were given regarding this matter, so this brief part on the Churches was not rooted in the unity of the worldwide Church as demanded by CW3. From the perspective of the need to focus on the Christian *koinonia* in the Christian witness, this was not good. It is noteworthy that in all the broadcasts of HCJB, this is one of the few occurrences of the word *church* (*al-kanisah*). The other direct reference to *al-kanisah* was in a pastoral program titled *Café Maghrib*. There it was also used with a negative connotation.

### 13.5.2.3 Christian-Muslim Relations

Christian-Muslim relations were not touched upon in these programs. The word Muslim never even occurred in any of the programs. This was probably an implementation of HCJB's views regarding creating programs that were not unnecessarily politically sensitive. However for the audience, Islam was an important part of their context, so to never acknowledge it, does not implement RCR2.

### 13.5.2.4 Pastoral Care

#### *You and I on the Way*

In *You and I on the Way* (*Anâ wa Anti 'alâ al-Ṭarîqah*), Selwa Habib discussed the theme of jealousy. She purposely addressed women only. Habib discussed the story of a teenage girl who misbehaved in school. The reason given for this was that her parents treated her younger, more beautiful sister with more love and they continuously compared the two.

Yes my lady. We, parents, commit many mistakes in raising our children without us even being aware. Therefore our children grow up suffering from great inferiority complexes. Discriminating treatment among siblings creates jealousy. And it is even worse when we discriminate between boys and girls, as all eastern countries and our societies do. Have you ever thought of this subject, my lady?

<sup>135</sup> HCJB broadcast 26 September 2004, Come and See.

<sup>136</sup> HCJB broadcast 25 September 2004, Listeners' Mail.

The teenage girl in the case study was healed of her confused behavior and her feelings of jealousy disappeared when her parents 'realized their mistakes and changed their method of dealing with her'. The girl's teachers were also encouraged to help restore the girl's self-confidence. The Bible story of Rebekka, who preferred her son Jacob over Esau, was then briefly treated in a manner that was only comprehensible to Christians with some Biblical knowledge. It spoke about the Bible being written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (*wahî bi al-Rûh al-Muqaddas*), hence the importance of the story for the audience:

Do you observe the way of treating our sons and daughters, my lady? Do we all love them equally? So why don't we repent and ask for God's forgiveness from the sins that we committed in raising our children? Do you realize, my lady, that you need God to lead you in every step of your life? So come to Him through Jesus Christ the Redeemer, who is the only mediator between God and us.

The program invited people to write to the address of HCJB and to listen again to the same program later during the week. Habib also gave her own website [www.arabicbroadcasting.com](http://www.arabicbroadcasting.com) along with the web address of HCJB.<sup>137</sup>

Another program of You and I on the Way focused again on inferiority complexes and how this can occur when children are raised. The ladies who are addressed are advised to love their children. Selwa had four steps for women to make sure they loved their children in order to avoid them developing inferiority complexes. 'If you have experienced the true love that comes from God himself, you will be able to love your children with that true love'. She spoke of God's love and how He sacrificed his Son. The second step was to show a similar love to their children and let them know how important they are. Thirdly, the women had to allow their children to express their own ideas, and fourthly, she advised parents to apologize to their children when they sinned against them. Selwa stressed that to admit those mistakes in front of their children was a good thing for parents to do. She believed that children will love their parents more for it and that they themselves will learn to apologize when they have made a mistake. The program ended with a request to the women to write to the program with a promise of a present to those who did so.<sup>138</sup>

These programs were *a propos* in the context of the Arab World where there is a dearth of good information on childrearing. The inclusion of comments about God offering his Son and the encouragement to parents to show a similar love was difficult to follow for a Muslim audience and needed explanation as RCR4 prescribed.

### ***Uncle Gram in the World of Crimes***

In Uncle Gram in the World of Crimes (*'Amm Jirâm fi 'Âlam al-Ijrâm*), the issue of veracity (*sidq*) was treated. Through a drama set in a lower class Egyptian environment and spoken in Egyptian Arabic, the audience learned that 'the honest man never swears'. The program continued on with this theme in MSA. One of the Biblical proverbs of the Prophet (*al-Nabî*) Solomon was quoted, as well as the

<sup>137</sup> HCJB broadcast 20 September 2004, You and I on the Way.

<sup>138</sup> HCJB broadcast 22 September 2004, You and I on the Way.

words of the Lord Christ (*al-Sayyid al-Masîh*): ‘Let what you say be simply “yes” or “no”.’ The program subsequently defended the habit of many doctors in the Arab World who do not tell their patients the full truth about their physical state:

Some people ask about the doctor who hides the truth of a disease from his patient. Should he be considered a liar? The answer for this question depends on the psychological state of the patient himself, because it plays a great role in healing him. The doctor has to be wise regarding what he says to the patient. He can tell the whole truth to the patient’s family.

The audience was then told that honesty should be a motto for their lives. ‘The Bible tells us that Satan is a liar and the father of lies, but God is the absolute truth. So if you are a liar, then you belong to Satan and if you are honest then you are of God, the High One be praised (*subhâna Ta‘âlâ*).’<sup>139</sup>

The program used some Islamic terms to make Muslims feel at ease but it did not use Islamic theological terms so CW6 was not trespassed against. To advise the audience that honest people never swear was rather extreme in the context of the Arab World where swearing is habitual. Likewise, the statement about liars belonging to Satan was not pastoral, but rather moralistic.

### ***White Page***

In *White Page*, written by Munîr Zakhârî and produced by Yûsif Manşûr, an Egyptian drama was used to explain to the audience that a suspicious attitude is not good, and that before suspecting anyone of something wrong, one should be very sure. ‘Suspicion is unbelief and a lack of trust and faith. Anything that isn’t of faith is a sin. [...] Satan is trying to make us suspect the truth of God’s word regarding salvation, redemption, incarnation, and the eternal life’. The audience was therefore encouraged:

My brothers, don’t listen to Satan’s words. He must have whispered into your ears, saying that there is no eternal life or an eternal punishment (*‘adhâb âbadî*). So don’t listen to him as he is a liar and the father of every lie. Depend on the word of God and trust his love.<sup>140</sup>

The advice not to be suspicious of people was important in the Arab context where conspiracy-theories abound. However, to link that to trusting God’s revelation was not completely logical. The terms used about the Christian faith in the program were not explained and thus indicated that the program had been made with a Christian audience in mind.

### ***Every Question has an Answer***

*Every Question has an Answer* discussed the question: ‘How can I live a victorious life?’ The answer:

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<sup>139</sup> HCJB broadcast 20 September 2004, *Uncle Gram in a World of Crime*.

<sup>140</sup> HCJB broadcast 20 September 2004, *White Page*.



It depends on only one thing. You must enjoy a good companionship (*sharikah*) with Christ and live with Him continuously, meditate on that day and night and continuously focus on Him. My friend, focus on the Lord Jesus and you will receive the victorious life of Jesus.

The program proceeded to explain to people that all sorts of problems would look very irrelevant and small if they only focused on God and His Word. ‘Give everything that you have to God, and God will give you tenfold, not only in heaven but also on earth’. This apparently included money. The program promised happiness to anyone who gave his all to God. The prophet David was then used as an example of being victorious. He was able to kill Goliath because he trusted in God. If the audience wanted to be similarly victorious it was advised to say: ‘I want to be a hero in the name of the Lord and leave everything for the sake of Jesus Christ. I want to leave my desires (*shahwâtî*); I want to leave my hidden sins.’ The program proceeded: ‘If there is a hidden sin in your life, confess it to the Lord Jesus Christ [and He will] forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness so that you could live the victorious life.’<sup>141</sup>

The program used Christian language that would have sounded esoteric and unclear to any Muslim in the audience and to the average Christian Arab as well. The same was true for the second Every Question has an Answer program. It discussed the same question of how to lead a victorious life and was substantially the same as the earlier program, to the extent of being repetitious.<sup>142</sup>

### ***Café Maghrib***

*Café Maghrib* was a program in one of the North African Arabic dialects. The program was about how to live without fear. Life without fear and worries is possible as God promises to protect those who follow Him. Psalm 23, about the Lord being a shepherd, and some other Bible texts about his everlasting protection for His people, were briefly treated. The audience was assured:

When God protects you, you don't have to fear anything because God likes to protect you and to guard you forever. If we are under the protection from God, nothing will make us worried as we live in His presence and according to His will, because He lives inside us.<sup>143</sup>

This program was encouraging for individuals living with worries and it was a good bridge for encouraging Muslims to be interested in the Christian faith. The program was clearly Christian but it focused mostly on those non-controversial aspects of the Christian faith that made the program also comprehensible for Muslims. Only the statement about God living inside us was difficult for Muslims and would have needed explanation.

Another *Café Maghrib* program was about two brothers who were Christian believers and went to Church (*al-kanîsah*) but they had a major fight and were not

<sup>141</sup> HCJB broadcast 22 September 2004, Every Question has an Answer.

<sup>142</sup> HCJB broadcast 25 September 2004, Every Question has an Answer.

<sup>143</sup> HCJB broadcast 22 September 2004, *Café Maghrib*.

on speaking terms. The message for the audience was that in order for people to have good relationships they need to be able to forgive (*tighfir*) and forget (*tinsá*). That was indeed difficult to do, the program said, but it is the way of the Christian life. The Lord Jesus taught people to forgive ‘as He carried the sins on the cross’. Forgiveness was also presented as the precondition for being forgiven by God and for prayers being answered, as well as for physical health.<sup>144</sup> For people struggling with the problem of forgiving others, the program may have sounded more moralistic than pastoral.

To speak of the Church as the context for a fight between two people, was unwise, especially in the context of broadcasts that never otherwise mentioned the Church. It reflected negatively on the Church as an institution. This meant that RCR5 was not implemented regarding the need to present the Church meaningfully to Muslims. The linguistic and cultural forms in the programs were also more suitable for Christians than for Muslims, and they were not explained; hence, RCR4 was not implemented in regard to Muslims.

#### ***Searchlights***

In Searchlights, Selwa Habib discussed the theme of gossip, babbling, disputes and other negative uses of speech. Selwa said that this was a widespread problem in Arab countries. She used the proverbs of King Solomon about the power of words. She also quoted Jesus Christ to show that evil speech comes from an evil heart:

You have to realize, my friend that you have to admit that you have an evil nature and that you are a slave to your bad habits. The first treatment for any problem is to confess they exist. We know that we are sinners according to our human nature, and slaves to our sins.

The program then proceeded to explain about the human need to receive forgiveness from God and how He therefore sent Jesus Christ to the world. ‘When we believe in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, we receive forgiveness from our guilt. We will be liberated from being slaves to our sins. We will become a new spiritual creation and children of God. We will be sure to inherit the eternal life.’ According to Selwa, liberation from any evil habit is only possible if people believe in the Savior. The real change in bad habits has to start with a change of heart.

The language of this program was suitable for Christians with a more than basic knowledge of the Christian faith. The abundance of Christian terms made this program hard for Muslims to comprehend, so in regard to them, RCR4 was not implemented.

#### **13.5.2.5 Cultural Issues**

In another program of Uncle Gram in the World of Crime, table manners were explained for women. The program informed the audience that they should not put their elbows on the table. It also told them that they should put the napkin on their knees under the table and that it was to be used for cleaning the remains of

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<sup>144</sup> HCJB broadcast 23 September 2004, Café Maghrib.

food from their lips, not for wiping their noses. The audience was told to chew their food silently and with their mouths closed. In the meantime, they should not speak with their mouths full and they were not to put an entire soup spoon in their mouths.<sup>145</sup> It is not clear what sort of audience the producers of the program had in mind when they included this theme.

### 13.5.2.6 Socio-Economic and Political Issues

The programs of HCJB did not contain references to socio-economic or political issues. Therefore in the realm of RCR2, Christian discipleship was only treated in the most personal sphere of life. This was therefore a missed chance at contextualizing the Gospel and letting the Christian witness resound in the socio-economic realm. It also meant that the programs of HCJB only reflected the Church's *diakonia* in a limited manner.

## 13.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

The policy of HCJB to not allow program suppliers on RAM to use their own addresses in their programs was wise as it avoided different addresses being repeated every 15 minutes during the broadcasts. This avoided the audience getting the impression that the broadcaster and the different program suppliers were not united but divided. However, in its SW broadcasts, HCJB allowed all program producers to use their own addresses. This created a rather disturbing impression of salesmanship, as almost every 15 minutes another organization requested the audience to contact the producers.

Since HCJB was not prepared to give information about its audience response figures, it is not possible to give figures here. However, based on information from the other participating broadcasters in HCJB's block, it is likely that for an average night of 90 minutes of SW broadcasts, not more than a handful of people contacted the different organizations.

The only concrete information that could be found was on HCJB's website. In 2001 its audience response was 280 letters from 11 countries.<sup>146</sup> It is likely that HCJB compiled all the audience response that was received for its broadcasts with that of its program suppliers to obtain this figure. This means that the broadcasts of HCJB generated about one letter for every 115 minutes of airtime. That was very meager.

The original assumption of HCJB was that the response to the RAM broadcasts would be much better. HCJB wrote that the broadcasts made the Gospel available to millions:

It's a major breakthrough...The broadcasts make the Gospel available to millions of people for the first time in an area where just 0.4 percent of population know Christ. Per capita, this region has the world's highest concentration of satellite dishes. [...]

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<sup>145</sup> HCJB broadcast 20 September 2004, Uncle Gram in a World of Crime.

<sup>146</sup> [www.hcjb.org](http://www.hcjb.org) (3 June 2005).

Our intent is to encourage Arabic-speaking Christians, helping them to get in touch with other believers, and also introducing many listeners to Christ.<sup>147</sup>

The RAM project papers assumed that this potential audience of millions would generate 'a significant number of contacts from the audience'. It was RAM's intention that those contacts would be 'sensitively nurtured and followed up, ideally to the point where they would be introduced to a local church'.<sup>148</sup>

The idea was that all correspondence would go to AWM in Marseille to be sorted centrally and passed back to the various producers. Copies of the letters were to be forwarded to the project's office in Spain or Gibraltar so that appropriate reactions could be given in the broadcasts. Correspondents were to receive a free copy of Luke's Gospel and were invited to receive traditional BCC's, audio-cassettes, and other forms of literature or personal correspondence. Material was to be sent from within North Africa as much as possible to reduce the problems associated with the mail censorship. Individuals in North Africa who wanted to be put into contact with believers in their home countries were to be cared for by existing inter-agency networks that already dealt with follow-up in North Africa.<sup>149</sup> The system seemed perfect and HCJB and AWM awaited a 'significant number of contacts', but the mail never came. The response to HCJB's RAM broadcasts was so minimal that AWM decided to withdraw from the project in January 2003.<sup>150</sup>

## 13.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS

### *13.7.1 Indigenization*

The managerial roles in HCJB's offices in Spain and Gibraltar were in the hands of North Americans and Europeans. They fully depended on their Arab production staff for the content of the programs. To what extent HCJB worked with staff from North Africa or from other parts of the Arab World, is not clear.

The effort of HCJB to enable North African Christians to manage their own production work in their own countries shows that HCJB as an organization supported the idea of indigenization. Due to a lack of more information, this conclusion must remain tentative though.

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<sup>147</sup> See [www.housesofprayer/news/news.asp?newsid=7](http://www.housesofprayer/news/news.asp?newsid=7) (11 December 2002) for this quote of HCJB's regional director for North Africa and the Middle East.

<sup>148</sup> 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service'.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> In the later half of 2002, Steven Vishanoff who had worked with AWM in Marseille, commented about the usefulness of audio-channels on satellite broadcasts. According to him, satellite radio 'would seem ideal for reaching specialized, small audiences with (for instance) training, where audio can even be accompanied by text. [B]ut setting it up would be a complicated business.' Steven Vishanoff in an email to the author (17 December 2002).

### 13.7.2 Contextualization

#### 13.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience

HCJB focused fully on North Africa. Its assumption that it could treat North Africa as one cultural entity was not in line with RCR1. This immense region consisted of many people groups with their own specific cultures and languages.

Within this broad target audience it was wise of HCJB to specifically target young Muslims of 15-25 years with a minimal level of secondary education. This goal unfortunately was not implemented in the actual programs. Many of the programs were not suitable for students nor were they very contextually suitable for Muslims.

#### 13.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience

In its goals, HCJB expressed that it wanted to produce programs with a personal, individual approach. The programs fulfilled this goal very well. However, the basic avoidance of taking a stand on societal matters like politics, Islam, human rights, and socio-economic issues, was a denial of the average North African person's interests which were wider than the well-being of his soul. The human person does not exist separate from his or her external relationships and interests. Hence, HCJB gave a spiritualized view of the Christian faith. This means that the Contextualization Warnings CW5 and CW4 were only partially heeded. The Gospel was proclaimed without its concrete prophetic message to society about God's will for society as a whole. This was at the expense of the *diakonal* witness of HCJB.

#### 13.7.2.3 Language

HCJB's decision to use a simple form of MSA as its preferred language for broadcasting to North Africa, besides using formal MSA and Arabic colloquial languages was good, as long as the vernaculars of North Africa formed the majority of the programs. This goal of HCJB was not attained. Beside MSA, Egyptian, Lebanese and Jordanian Arabic were also used. This is a questionable approach as people in Tunisia, Morocco or Algeria are entitled to hear the Christian message in their own mother tongues. It is likely that HCJB had problems obtaining enough programs in North African languages but that the habit of selling airtime must also have played a role in the creation of a smorgasbord of languages in a relatively short block of airtime.

#### 13.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms

HCJB avoided any reference to the *Qur'ân*, and it did not use Islamic forms and only very minor Islamic theological expressions in its programs. The program suppliers like ABS, AWM, GMU and IBRA had the same approach and cooperated closely with HCJB. CW6, about not assuming that form and meaning can be separated, was therefore heeded.

Nevertheless, in some programs a sprinkling of daily expressions common to Muslims were used but they were not fundamental Islamic terms. Perhaps the producers of those programs thought that Muslims would feel better about the programs if they contained some of these terms. However in practice these words usu-

ally sounded strangely out of place especially as these programs contained difficult Christian language and concepts.

In its avoidance of Islamic jargon, HCJB acted in line with the local North African congregations. This agreement with the local congregations in North Africa meant that CW2 was not trespassed against.

### **13.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

HCJB adhered to the absolute truth of the Bible, the uniqueness of Christ, and the need to believe in Him and participate in church, in accordance with CW1. Christ was presented in a conservative Evangelical manner; testimonies to Him being the Son of God, and to his historical death on the cross and his physical resurrection and the forgiveness of sins for those who believe, were repeated in the programs over and over again. In respect to Christ, RCR5 was therefore implemented. HCJB abounded in the *kerygmatic* witness to the Gospel.

In its representation of the church, the House Church model was upheld. That was a good choice for those parts of North Africa where any other form of Christian meeting was impossible. In terms of John Travis' C1-C6 scheme, HCJB presented the church in terms of C2 in regard to the content of the meetings, and as C3 or C4 for its location. This problem of describing the House Church model shows the deficiency of Travis' scheme.

In order to support the House Church model, the usage of the word *church* was avoided. When it was used, it was in a negative context. The avoidance of the word *church* was a denial of the actual context of the audience since the audience would have been quite aware of the churches in the Arab World and worldwide; it was also detrimental to the awareness of the unity of the one Body of Christ. Thus, CW3 was not heeded. This meant that the programs did not reflect the *koinonia* of the church very well which was at the expense of the Christian witness of HCJB.

### **13.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

The fact that the broadcasts of HCJB came from outside North Africa may have had an effect on the perception of the audience but the fact that they came on a SW wavelength that was broadcast from Great Britain probably did not hamper the programs. More important was that those programs, which tried to thoughtfully target the North African Muslim audience, were packaged between programs that were more suitable for Middle Eastern Christians. How that influenced the impact of the broadcasts, needs further study.

### **13.7.3 Christian Witness**

HCJB began its Arabic SW broadcasts during a period when most similar broadcasters experienced an upturn in their audience response, probably due to the Gulf War of 1990-1991 and its aftermath. By the time HCJB had arranged its SW frequency with BBC in London, most broadcasters had already begun to experience a sharp downturn in response. HCJB probably had similarly low audience response

figures but until HCJB is prepared to open its files, this conclusion must remain tentative.

As the organizer of the Wb2000 network, it is unclear why HCJB began its broadcasts to North Africa. It is possible that the closure of ELWA in 1990, with its broadcast to North Africa, played a role. However, North Africa was already well serviced by other broadcasters. With its broadcasts to North Africa, HCJB would have better fulfilled the goals of World by Radio if it had focused on the more or less unreached language groups, like Tachelhit, Tarifit and Tamazight. These languages had less than 30 minutes of programs per day on radio.

Some of the issues that Jones brought up in 1961 were still a problem for HCJB in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The cultures of North Africa did not play a major role in the programs, most programs were still 'straight speech', and the broadcasts were to a large extent a duplication of what others already did. Other problematic issues in 1961, were no longer so. HCJB was involved in training North African believers in radio production and it cooperated with other radio organizations.

HCJB may prove to be an early adaptor by having begun broadcasts on a satellite audio channel. It may be too early to evaluate the future for this type of broadcasting but HCJB has had very disappointing audience response to its broadcasts with RAM. It is unknown what the future of audio-channels on satellite TV will be, but for HCJB it may be advisable to consider developing RAM as a true *niche* channel.

In its broadcasts, HCJB focused on the *kerygmatic* side of the Christian witness. The Gospel message of the vicarious death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was repeated again and again. Christian *koinonia* was shown in the context of House Churches in North Africa, but not in relationship to other churches. This lack of focus on the unity of the Church worldwide was at the expense of the Christian witness of HCJB. The programs did not reflect the *diakonal* witness of the Church, as they were mostly individualized and as they avoided any reference to socio-economic or political matters that were important for the audience. It must therefore be concluded that the programs of HCJB missed some important elements of the Christian witness. This was detrimental to its *kerygmatic* witness as well.





## 14 Back to God Hour (BTGH)

This chapter begins with a description of the history of Back to God Hour (BTGH) and Bassam Madany. BTGH was a denominational ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). The Arabic radio work of BTGH was the ministry of Bassam and Shirley Madany.<sup>1</sup> Between 1957 and 1994, Bassam Madany's programs filled more time on Christian radio in the Arab World than anyone else's. Since Madany's retirement BTGH has maintained its involvement in Arabic radio broadcasting but only as a sponsor of programs.

The Statement of Faith of BTGH, as well as Madany's personal emphasis are examined in this chapter. Madany's Reformed faith influenced his views on contextualization. He was an outspoken opponent of the practice of communicating the Gospel in the garb of the Islamic language and culture. He also opposed the movement that encouraged converts from Islam to exist outside the churches of the Arab World in communities with an Islamic image.

Next, the target audience and the preferred language of BTGH are treated as well as the programming philosophies of the organization. Attention is also given to audience response. Madany was known for his large audience responses. This chapter examines his audience response figures in relationship to where and how often he had his programs broadcast, and in relation to some of the political events that occurred in the Arab World.

Finally observations regarding the issues of indigenization and contextualization are given. Conclusions are then drawn as to what extent the programs of BTGH reflected the triptych of the Christian witness, namely its *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*.

### 14.1 HISTORY

#### *14.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Productions: 1927-1957*

##### **14.1.1.1 Early Christian Reformed interest in Radio Broadcasting: 1927-1938**

In 1927, some Christian Reformed pastors began broadcasting their program Vesper Hour over local radio in Grand Rapids, Michigan (USA). A year later, in 1928, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA) decided that radio was a 'marvelous gift' from God. A committee was formed to investigate the possibility of radio mission. Among the committee members was William Eerdmans sr., a well-known Reformed book publisher. The final report of the committee was very positive about the need for CRCNA to become involved in radio broadcasting. They described 'modernistic-humanistic' trends and 'superficial evangelistic activity' in North American Christianity, and they believed there

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<sup>1</sup> BTGH did not have archives on its Arabic broadcasts. All papers and newsletters and other information used for this chapter were received from Bassam and Shirley Madany personally.

was a need for the Reformed faith to be presented on radio. Before the final draft of the report was written, the Great Depression began.

#### **14.1.1.2 BTGH before its Arabic Productions: 1939-1956**

In 1938, when the economy of the USA began to improve, the Synod of CRCNA appointed the first permanent Radio Committee; in 1939 the first programs of CRCNA's BTGH were broadcast.<sup>2</sup> Initially various speakers occupied the radio pulpit. However in 1946, Peter Eldersveld who was serving the Bethany Christian Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois (USA) was appointed as the full time radio minister. In 1947, BTGH went on the Mutual network, and a year later BTGH was on 252 stations in the USA. Eldersveld continued in his post until his death in October 1965.<sup>3</sup> It was under his directorship that negotiations with Madany began and he was appointed as the Arabic broadcast minister. This was the first foreign language minister of BTGH. According to the wife of Eldersveld, the appointment of Madany was the work of God: 'I think the Lord was nudging and shoving and pushing our denomination to become something besides an ethnic church.' CRCNA was a denomination that consisted mostly of Dutch immigrants in the USA.<sup>4</sup>

#### **14.1.1.3 Bassam Madany before his Productions: 1928-1956**

Madany was born in Seleucia, 1928, in the province of Antioch, then a part of Syria. His father Mîshâl was a convert from Greek-Orthodoxy and served as the mission school principal in Seleucia and later as a pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Alexandretta, near Seleucia. In 1939, the province was ceded to Turkey by France, the League of Nations' Mandatory over Syria. Being aware of the treatment allotted to the Armenians and other Christians in Turkey, the Madany family with many church members fled to Lebanon, the ancestral land of Madany's mother. During World War II the family moved to Latakia (Syria). Madany's education took place in British, French and Arabic schools. In 1948, Madany received the call to the ministry after the events that surrounded the birth of the State of Israel.<sup>5</sup>

In September 1950, Madany enrolled at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (USA). As a student he served in a church in Winnipeg (Canada) where he met Shirley Winnifred Dann. They married in 1953, shortly after his graduation and ordination as a minister in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and during that year they left for Syria as missionaries to

<sup>2</sup> David DeGroot, *Worlds Beyond: The Story of the Back to God Hour 1939-1979* (Palos Heights, 1979), pp. 4-8. CRCNA had about 300,000 members in 1,000 congregations in the USA and Canada by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>3</sup> Hal Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television in the United States, 1921-1991: The Programs and Personalities* (Jefferson, London, 1992), p. 31. See also the website of BTGH, [www.btgh.org](http://www.btgh.org) (28 April 2004). DeGroot, *Worlds Beyond*, pp. 10, 14.

<sup>4</sup> DeGroot, *Worlds Beyond*, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Bassam M. Madany, 'A Thirty Year Report of Saatu'l Islah (The Reformation Hour)' (1988). Shirley W. Madany, 'Martyrdom and Mission', in *Missionary Monthly* (February 1977), p. 7. Shirley W. Madany, 'Literary Treasures from Beirut', in *Missionary Monthly* (April-May 1983), p. 18. Shirley W. Madany, 'A Loving Tribute', in *Missionary Monthly* (January 1987), p. 10.

work in the Reformed Presbyterian mission schools in Latakia. They were supported by a group of friends but without any denominational or organizational support. ‘Our going was simply Bassam returning from Seminary training accompanied by a foreign wife! We literally sent ourselves’, according to Shirley Madany.<sup>6</sup> Later, the Madany’s were strong supporters of a denominational approach to mission.

While on their way to Syria, the Madany’s wrote a newsletter to their friends in the USA. They said that as soon as they could, they wanted to publish a guide in daily Bible reading in Arabic. ‘It will be mainly based on the Family Altar guide of the Back to God Hour’. In that newsletter they described their view of mission work in the Arab World:

Our ultimate goal in the Near East is the evangelisation of the Moslem World. [...] The Moslems have misunderstood Christianity for more than 1300 years. The many Eastern Christians who live among them have not given them a true picture of the Christian faith and life. In fact, these Christians have first to be won to the glorious principles of the Reformation, before we can work effectively among the Moslems. This is our immediate aim. But even this cannot be reached while the national Protestant Churches – ours among them – are not fully aware of their responsibility to win their fellow-Eastern-Christians to the Reformed Faith.<sup>7</sup>

While in Syria, Shirley wrote that her husband was thinking of ‘publications and radio work, and the beginning of a “Reformed” Christian church [...] It will take a lifetime – but we both look at life like that. So we have dared to dream all sorts of impossible things.’<sup>8</sup>

In Syria, the Madany’s became acquainted with CRCNA through reading the sermons of Eldersveld. They also read copies of *The Banner*, CRCNA’s denominational magazine.<sup>9</sup> Their stay in Syria did not last long:

[To] our great disappointment [Bassam] was never given a chance to preach in his home church of Latakia, [so he] did some work in outlying villages and returned temporarily to his old teaching job. Enormous roadblocks [were] occasioned by his family actually being ‘refugees’ from the upheaval of Alexandretta province being ceded by France to Turkey in 1939. [...] Family loyalties between [an] existing older minister and [his] ordained son-in-law allowed no room for [Bassam].<sup>10</sup>

Due to a coup in 1954 and the emergence of a leftist nationalist government which banned the teaching of the Bible to Muslim students at the mission schools, the Madany’s returned to Canada in July 1955. Bassam was an immigrant now.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Shirley W. Madany, ‘Memories of Happy Service’, in *Missionary Monthly* (June-July 2001), p. 6. Shirley Madany in emails to the author (11 and 12 September 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Bassam and Shirley Madany, *Newsletter* (12 September 1953). This newsletter is published in Shirley W. Madany, *Muslims Meeting Christ* (n.p., 2005), pp. 2-4.

<sup>8</sup> From a letter by Shirley Madany, quoted in Shirley W. Madany, *Muslims Meeting Christ* (n.p., 2005), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Shirley Madany, ‘Memories of Happy Service’, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Shirley Madany in emails to the author (11 and 12 September 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Madany, ‘Thirty Year Report’.

In 1957 they formally joined CRCNA and in 1958 they moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan (USA) where Madany took a Bachelor of Divinity degree at Calvin Seminary and where he was installed as a minister of the CRCNA.<sup>12</sup>

During his studies, Madany was asked by Loraine Boettner to translate his book *The Inspiration of the Holy Bible* into Arabic. Boettner gave Madany an Arabic typewriter and paid for his work. A copy of the book was given to Guy Playfair, the director of Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), who at that time was searching for someone who could prepare broadcasts in Arabic for Radio ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa').<sup>13</sup>

#### **14.1.2 Arabic Radio Productions: Since 1957**

##### **14.1.2.1 Pioneering Stage: 1957-1960**

In 1957 SIM approached Madany about the idea of producing radio programs for its Arabic broadcasts through ELWA.<sup>14</sup> For Madany, 'radio, and to a lesser extent, the printed page and personal correspondence [were] the most powerful and available means for the spread of the Gospel and the eventual birth of a true church of Jesus Christ in the Arab World', so he responded positively to SIM's request.<sup>15</sup>

After SIM approached Madany, he spoke with Eldersveld and with the board of BTGH. As the synod of CRCNA was responsible for BTGH it had to ratify Madany's appointment by the board of BTGH. Therefore Madany had to share his missionary goals with the delegates to the synod.<sup>16</sup> Later he recalled that he told the synod about his three goals that never changed throughout his ministry:

The evangelization of the Arabic-speaking Muslims of the Middle East and North Africa.  
The reformation of the old Eastern churches.  
The assistance of the Evangelical churches.<sup>17</sup>

In June 1958, Madany was appointed as minister for the Arabic broadcasts of BTGH. This was an important decision for BTGH as until that date it had only broadcast in English. Arabic was the first non-English language adopted.<sup>18</sup> Madany produced his programs at the BTGH recording studios in Chicago (USA), and he had 'complete freedom' to do so. BTGH financed Madany's salary and broadcasts but it did not interfere with the program content. Initially, a private studio was used but in 1965 BTGH built a proper studio and they made a radio en-

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Shirley Madany, 'Links in Gods Chain', p. 18. Shirley Madany, 'In Memoriam: Dr Loraine Boettner', p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Shirley W. Madany, 'Links in Gods Chain', in *Missionary Monthly* (November 1981), p. 18. Shirley W. Madany, 'In Memoriam: Dr Loraine Boettner', in *Missionary Monthly* (February 1990), p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Bassam Madany, 'Report 1975: Introduction' (1976), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Madany, 'Thirty Year Report'.

<sup>18</sup> Bassam and Shirley Madany, *Newsletter: Madany News* (April 2003).

gineer available. Since 1976 all program production has been done in the studios in Palos Heights, a suburb of Chicago.<sup>19</sup>

From 1958 to 1960, ELWA broadcast a weekly sermon of Madany.<sup>20</sup> He called his programs The Reformation Hour (*al-Sâ‘at al-Islâh*). In June 1960, ELWA asked Madany to produce a daily program of 15 minutes or half an hour.<sup>21</sup> ‘After reflection and consultation with the [BTGH] Board, it was decided that we would accept this challenge and great opportunity to broadcast daily.’<sup>22</sup>

After the end of their radio ministry Shirley Madany wrote in *Missionary Monthly*, a publication of the CRCNA, about the frustration of living far away from the Arab World. ‘[Being] a radio missionary has meant living in exile. It was technically efficient but hard on the spirit. We miss the advantages of living among the people with whom we were working.’<sup>23</sup> Madany realized the problems of working from the USA, but tried to mitigate the disadvantages:

[It] is incumbent that the speaker must remain in touch with the contemporaneous Arab World while being fully aware of its past. To reside outside the Arab World is necessary due to the lack of freedom and the growth of Islamic radicalism. But the fact remains that the speaker/writer must spiritually and intellectually remain part of the world even though he is physically living in exile. While it is very necessary to improve one's understanding of English, [...] the ‘soul’ must remain Arab, a Christian Arab! Thanks to modern means, Arabic books, periodicals are available; short wave stations carrying Arabic programs reach North America with relatively good signals. One can remain in daily contact with that world which is to be reached with the Good News of Jesus Christ. The Lord gives the grace to accomplish His purposes against all odds and in the midst of very unusual circumstances.<sup>24</sup>

Further study is recommended on the issue of the impact of emigration of Christian Arabs to North America in relation to Christian radio. It is useful to research the extent to which their linguistic abilities deteriorate compared to contemporary Arabic in the Arab World and also to what extent they are able to produce programs that are truly suitable for the context they aim at.

#### 14.1.2.2 Continuing Increase in Output: 1960-1994

##### *The Experimental Years: 1960-1975*

Madany increased airtime and coverage during 1960-1994 by experimenting with Shortwave (SW) and Mediumwave (MW) capabilities and site suitability. The main consistent station used was ELWA. Madany's programs were broadcast daily to the Middle East and North Africa until 1975 and to North Africa until 1990 by

<sup>19</sup> Shirley Madany in an email to the author (25 June 2003).

<sup>20</sup> ‘Program Department Meeting’ (21 August 1958), from ELWA/SIM Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes, 1954-1962.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Program Department Meeting’ (19 May 1960), from ELWA/SIM Archives, Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes, 1954-1962.

<sup>22</sup> Shirley W. Madany, ‘Planting, Watering and Growing’, in *Missionary Monthly* (October 1996), p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Shirley W. Madany, ‘A Pilgrimage’, in *Missionary Monthly* (August-September 1995), p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Paper by Bassam M. Madany written in early 1994 for the handover to his successor. It was sent to the author by email by Shirley Madany (24 April 2003).

ELWA's transmitters in Liberia. This period ended when the station was destroyed in the war.<sup>25</sup>

The Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) station, located in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), began broadcasting its programs to the Middle East in 1963. According to Madany, it refused to transmit his programs as BTGH was not supportive of the World Council of Churches (WCC). 'I was told once by a representative of the station way back in the early sixties that since the BTGH of the Christian Reformed Church was not connected with the WCC, we were not eligible to broadcast from the station in Addis.'<sup>26</sup>

Beginning in 1967, Madany also broadcast his programs on the SW broadcasts of Trans World Radio (TWR) from Bonaire (Netherlands Antilles) to the Middle East and North Africa. In 1969, Madany was still enthusiastic about these broadcasts from Bonaire.<sup>27</sup> However by 1976 he thought these broadcasts were 'not worth mentioning'. The lack of audience response suggested a very small listening audience.<sup>28</sup>

The breakthrough in audience response to The Reformation Hour came, when by the end of 1969, the program was also broadcast on TWR through MW broadcasts on Radio Monte Carlo from Monte Carlo (RMC-MC).<sup>29</sup> In 1969, Madany was also 'experimenting a bit' with SW broadcasts from the Far East Broadcasting Corporation (FEBC) in Manila (Philippines). These could be heard on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>30</sup> In 1971 coverage continued to expand when ELWA was asked by the Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) with transmitters in The Seychelles to take full responsibility for filling FEBA's Arabic airtime. Madany's programs were broadcast daily from The Seychelles until his retirement in June 1994.

From 1974, Madany's programs were broadcast on MW by the 20 kiloWatt (kW) transmitter of the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). They aired four programs a week, of 15 minutes each. The signal could be received in the coastal areas of Syria, in Lebanon, in parts of Jordan, Palestine, and on the fringes of Egypt.<sup>31</sup> However, due to Cyprus having been partly occupied by Turkey in 1973 the Greek Cypriots were anxious to avoid more problems. Demetrios Kyprianou, the marketing manager of CBC, therefore required an English translation of all Arabic programs aired for security's sake. At that time, Shirley Madany became actively involved in the broadcasting by typing the manuscripts that Madany had translated so that they could be mailed with the tapes. Prior to this she had done only small jobs for her husband as raising their six children had kept her busy.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Bassam Madany in an email to the author (12 June 2005).

<sup>27</sup> 'Creating Radio Programs for Muslims: Presentation by Bassam Madany - Back to God Hour, U.S.A., Arabic Broadcast', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed.), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 57.

<sup>28</sup> Bassam Madany, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee' (12-13 February 1976).

<sup>29</sup> Shirley Madany in emails to the author (11 and 12 September 2003).

<sup>30</sup> 'Creating Radio Programs for Muslims: Presentation by Bassam Madany', p. 57.

<sup>31</sup> Shirley Madany in an email to the author (30 April 2003).

'Later I boldly asked [...] Kyprianou if it was still necessary to supply the English. We got their permission to cease this rather time-wasting task.'<sup>32</sup>

After 18 May 1975 The Reformation Hour was also transmitted by TWR through Radio Monte Carlo's Middle East (RMC-ME) broadcasts from Cyprus. Initially, Madany had one 15 minute program each week on that station. After five months of broadcasting over RMC-ME, Madany was excited about the good response from the Middle East.<sup>33</sup>

Madany concluded that 'the performance of short wave broadcasting in the Middle East has been very disappointing.' During the summer of 1975, the Madany's were in Lebanon, and could not pick up the signal from Bonaire with their 'excellent super sensitive' radio. Madany decided to no longer use TWR's Bonaire broadcasts. That was implemented from 1 January 1976.<sup>34</sup> He continued to use ELWA's SW broadcast though. 'Both from an analysis of the mail and the information gathered [personally] in Morocco, we are convinced that short wave broadcasts to North Africa are still very important.' He assumed that 40 percent to 50 percent of the responses from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia were based on the SW broadcasts of ELWA.<sup>35</sup> After Madany stopped placing his programs on the SW broadcasts of TWR in 1976, he began to place them on the SW transmissions by Family Radio (FR) from the USA. Initially, these were daily programs in the early evening.<sup>36</sup>

#### **Consolidation and Growth: 1976-1994**

From January 1976, Madany broadcast three programs of 15 minutes each week with TWR over RMC-ME.<sup>37</sup> Response from North Africa became 'excellent' because of the usage of a stronger MW transmitter of TWR in RMC-MC in 1976. During that year, two weekly programs were broadcast over RMC-MC which sounded 'like a local radio station in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia'.<sup>38</sup>

In 1976, the total number of broadcasts increased to 31 programs per week over six stations.<sup>39</sup> In April 1977 this rose to 40 weekly programs over those six stations

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<sup>32</sup> Shirley Madany in an email to the author (29 April 2003). For Shirley Madany this involvement in the programs was a relief. The 20-year period before that, she 'was too exhausted to keep up any reading and [she] would have turned all the mirrors to the wall if [she] could'. Those years of hardship were over when she became seriously involved in the work, when obviously her six children were not small anymore. See also Shirley W. Madany, 'Memories of Happy Service', p. 7. She felt that when she began doing the translation work for CBC she had 'a foot in the door' of the ministry of her husband. Shirley W. Madany, 'Team Service for the Lord', in *The Outlook* (June 1994), p. 5. When later her husband allowed her to speak in churches about their work and the audience response, she also spoke in terms of having a 'foot in the door'. 'Bassam always talked about the challenge of Islam and loftier topics while I wanted to tell our supporting church about what we were actually doing.' Shirley Madany, 'Memories of Happy Service', p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Madany, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee' (12-13 February 1976). Madany, 'Report 1975: Introduction', p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Madany, 'Report 1975: Introduction', p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Bassam Madany, *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (January 1977).

<sup>37</sup> Madany, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee' (12-13 February 1976). Madany, 'Report 1975: Introduction', p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Bassam Madany, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee' (15-16 October 1975).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

and by the beginning of 1978, they were up to 48 programs per week. This meant they covered 12 hours per week.<sup>40</sup>

In 1980, Madany filled 18 hours of airtime each week on these six stations. In 1988 it had climbed to 21 hours, and in 1989 to 28 hours.<sup>41</sup> Until he retired, the number of Madany's broadcasts remained roughly unchanged. Madany ensured that the different Christian radio broadcasters, would at any given time, broadcast a different series of his programs. Only during Christmas, New Year, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, did Madany have the same programs on each of the stations.<sup>42</sup>

The destruction of the ELWA transmitter in Liberia in 1990 led Madany to explore other ways he could reach North Africa. Madany convinced FR to double its Arabic coverage by adding an early morning broadcast to its evening broadcasts. This began on Easter Sunday 1991 and resulted in two hours daily of Arabic programs for North Africa. Madany stopped cooperating with FR after its founder and president, Harold Camping, began to teach on radio that the return of Christ would be in 1994. Nevertheless, FR continued to use some of the programs of Madany that they had in stock.<sup>43</sup>

In 1991, Madany was also broadcasting a half-hour program every Sunday on TWR from RMC-MC as well as his broadcasts over CBC and TWR on RMC-ME. During that year Madany was also playing three times a day on FEBA with 15-minute programs.<sup>44</sup>

#### 14.1.2.3 New Direction of Madany and BTGH: Since 1994

In 1994 Madany retired from his work as Arabic Radio Minister of CRCNA.<sup>45</sup> Madany himself found a new focus in being a resource person for ministry to Islam. His work is called *Middle East Resources*. 'The purpose of our ministry and web page [...] is to approach the challenge of global Islam from a Christian and historical perspective. While the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was dominated by various ideologies, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will witness the revival of major world religions. It is therefore incumbent on us living in the Western world to be properly informed about these faiths – especially Islam.'<sup>46</sup>

BTGH continued paying for the airing of Madany's programs until 1999. The organization appointed a new Arabic Radio Minister after Madany retired, but according to Shirley Madany, he 'proved to be unsuited for the job' and after two

<sup>40</sup> *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1978). *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1981). Shirley W. Madany, 'Team Work', in *Missionary Monthly* (March 1977), p. 20.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* See also Letter of Shirley Madany to the author (6 July 2003). 'BTGH Arabic Broadcast Schedule (Summer-Fall 1989)'.

<sup>42</sup> Madany, 'Thirty Year Report'.

<sup>43</sup> On 22 September 2004, Madany's Lesson 302 (On Matthew 25:14-30) was heard on FR by the author.

<sup>44</sup> Shirley W. Madany, 'Radio Missions: A Ministry of the Word of God', in *Missionary Monthly* (October 1991), p. 19.

<sup>45</sup> Hovig Nassanian of FEBA in interview with the author (11 February 2003).

<sup>46</sup> Shirley W. Madany, 'God's Timing', in *Missionary Monthly* (November 2001), p. 6. The webpage mentioned is [www.unashamedofthegospel.org](http://www.unashamedofthegospel.org).



years BTGH no longer worked with that person.<sup>47</sup> It has not been possible to elicit more information concerning this matter.

Since the late 1990s, BTGH has participated financially in the Arabic ministry of Words of Hope (WOH), an organization affiliated with the Reformed Church in America and with a similarly strong Dutch background like CRCNA.<sup>48</sup> WOH in turn, supports the Arabic radio ministry of Victor Atallah and his Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF). MERF is based in Larnaka (Cyprus). In 2004, Atallah was transmitting a daily program of 15 minutes on TWR through RMC-ME which made him one of the main program suppliers for TWR's Middle East broadcasts. Further study about the work of MERF is necessary to explore its role among the Protestant churches in the Arab World and its programs.<sup>49</sup>

## 14.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

### 14.2.1 Statement of Faith of BTGH

As BTGH has always been a Reformed denominational radio mission, it adhered with CRCNA to the Belgic Confession, Canons of Dort, and the Heidelberg Catechism. It summarized its faith by saying that it considered this denomination to be 'one small part of Christ's church on earth'. BTGH affirmed its unity with other Christians by affirming 'as sisters and brothers in Christ those who believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and who confess that Jesus died for their sins, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. This includes believers from

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<sup>47</sup> Email of Shirley Madany to the author (11 September 2003).

<sup>48</sup> In 1944 Howard Teusink, pastor of the Trinity Reformed Church in America of Kalamazoo, Michigan (USA) became convinced of the need for a radio broadcast with a sound, well-balanced Biblical witness to the Reformed Christian faith. His ministry began under the name *Temple Time*. The first broadcast was on 22 July 1945, live from the Central Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. Within months of this first broadcast, the work of Temple Time was adopted by three regional synods as their official broadcast. Henry Bast, pastor of Bethany Reformed Church in Grand Rapids and later Professor of Preaching at Western Theological Seminary, served as radio minister from 1952-1972. In that period, Temple Time launched its first foreign language broadcasts: Japanese (1953), Chinese (1955), Russian (1958) and Spanish (1959). William Brownson, then Professor of Preaching at Western Theological Seminary, became the Temple Time radio minister in 1972. The name of the organization was changed in 1974 to *Words of Hope*. In 1981 Brownson traveled around the world, visiting TWR, FEBC and HCJB. His aim was to discover what the greatest needs were in missionary broadcasting and what overall strategy was in place to meet those needs. It became clear to Brownson that the various broadcast agencies were operating independently with no shared plan for world evangelization. Words of Hope began to work with these broadcast partners toward closer cooperation. Words of Hope played an active role in launching and managing World by 2000. In 1990 the organization began a major fundraising campaign for increased missionary broadcasting. This campaign, concluded in 1996, enabled Words of Hope to begin 18 programs in languages previously unreached by Christian broadcasters. Bill Brownson retired in 1994 and was succeeded by David Bast. By 2002 Words of Hope was producing programs in over 40 languages. Those were broadcast by the major international Christian broadcasters. See [www.woh.Gospelcom.net/history.php](http://www.woh.Gospelcom.net/history.php) (20 June 2005).

<sup>49</sup> MERF has not been forthcoming with information about its ministry. The author's experience is that MERF's main goal was to reform the Presbyterian churches of the Middle East by inviting Protestant pastors and elders to its conferences in Larnaka.

many churches.<sup>50</sup> Its view of the Bible and its Trinitarian theology was summarized as follows:

The Bible is our only reliable guide to what we believe and how we conduct our lives. It is God's unfailing Word to us. It shows us who God is by telling us the great things God has done. The Bible leads us to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

God is revealed in the Bible as a triune God, one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God saves us by grace, by his acts of kindness and love that we do not deserve. Our own efforts cannot rescue us from sin. We can be saved only by faith in Jesus Christ. Only Jesus' sacrifice on the cross can make us right with God. The good we do is the result of our salvation, not its cause.

The Holy Spirit equips believers to honor Christ in church, family, education, work, and every part of life.<sup>51</sup>

When relating to other Christians and organizations, Madany focused on this summary. However in his own ministry and programs, the historical confessions were emphasized. These confessions did not have components that made them 'missionary' statements; neither were they contextually specific for the Arab World. These statements were amillennial.

#### ***14.2.2 Madany's Personal Emphasis***

Madany preached the Reformed message of CRCNA and BTGH. His theological and missiological views were permeated by the conviction that 'saving faith, regardless of the cultural background of the hearer, comes into being in an atmosphere where Christ is proclaimed. This is not meant to aggrandize the role of the apostle or the messenger of the Gospel. This is simply the God-ordained way of missions across the ages, in all lands and among all cultures.'<sup>52</sup>

Madany's beliefs in the essential importance of the Reformed faith for Christian broadcasts to the Arab World did not deter him from cooperating with Christian organizations of other persuasions:

Since the Arabic Broadcast has not been the only radio ministry to the Arab World as other Evangelical groups have also joined in the effort, it has become the policy of the Broadcast not to duplicate or compete with fellow workers from other communions. Also, due to the fact that we have always been a 'lean' organization making our highest priority the broadcasting of the Gospel, we have avoided correspondence courses and all other activities that require a big staff. Others such as TWR in Monte-Carlo, Arab World Ministries in Marseilles, France and Gospel Missionary Union in Malaga, Spain, do such work. Each radio mission thus complements

<sup>50</sup> [www.backtgod.net/inside.html](http://www.backtgod.net/inside.html) (29 January 2005).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* Bible references have been left out of this quote.

<sup>52</sup> Bassam Madany, 'Re-Thinking Missions Today: Neo-Evangelical Missiology and the Christian Mission to Islam', in *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* (April 1996), p. 26. This article was based on the presentation of Madany at a 'Caucus on Missions to Muslims' held at Four Brooks Conference Center near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (USA) from 9-11 July 1985.

the work of another mission. We keep in touch and are aware of what others are doing; but we have not surrendered our Reformed identity nor surrendered our unique tradition.<sup>53</sup>

Madany held a high view of the 'one holy catholic and apostolic Church' as expressed in the Nicene Creed. According to him, 'respect and appreciation for the accumulated wisdom of the Church from earliest time to the present day is sadly lacking' among many mission agencies in the Arab World. According to Madany, part of the wisdom of the ancient Churches of the Arab World is evident in that they had helped Christianity survive in the Arab World:

[For] us, Eastern Christians, [the Church] was more than what Western Christians conceive of it. During the long years of Islam's presence in our ancestral lands, the Church was our 'Ethnarchy'. This was even recognized by the Ottomans who recognized the various Eastern Churches as distinct 'millets'. Without the continuing functioning of the Eastern Churches, none of us would have (humanly speaking) survived the rigors of dhimmitude.<sup>54</sup>

This gracious attitude towards the Eastern Churches of the Arab World did not exclude Madany's aim to reform them. Madany's respect for his own confessions and also for the actual churches in the Arab World made him an adversary of those missiologists who proposed far-reaching methods of contextualized evangelism. He especially opposed those that ignored the actual Churches and tried to use Islamic forms and language as a framework for the Christian message.

In regard to the Contextualization Warnings, it is clear that BTGH and Madany heeded CW1. The uniqueness of the Bible and Christ for faith and salvation were stressed, as well as the need to participate in Church. In his efforts to portray Christ and the Church in a meaningful way in his programs, as demanded by RCR5, Madany stressed the importance of adhering to the historic Creeds and he valued the historic churches of the Middle East. He heeded CW3 prescribing that in contextualization, the link with the churches worldwide and throughout history should be maintained.

### 14.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

Madany wanted to use Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), as according to him, 'that's what makes us Arabs. We are one nation. Maybe I sound [...] nationalistic [...] but when you go and live in the United States, you don't think of yourself simply as Lebanese and so forth, but as an Arab'.<sup>55</sup> These comments were made in

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<sup>53</sup> Bassam Madany, 'The Arabic Broadcast: The Back to God Hour: Methodology of Radio Programs and Literature' (1994).

<sup>54</sup> Bassam Madany in an email to the author (6 October 2004).

<sup>55</sup> Transcript of comments of Bassam Madany, in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 14.

1969 when the popularity of Pan-Arabism was already waning. In 2004, Madany defended his words of 1969 by putting them in the context of his mission:

Here, I was not speaking about myself, qua a Middle Eastern Christian who was no longer accepted by the larger Arab-Muslim community. I was speaking as an evangelist trying to reach the Arab-Muslims by being, in the tradition of St Paul, “all things to them, that I might win some” but without any theological compromise. In other words, I was trying to put my feet in their shoes, culturally and linguistically!<sup>56</sup>

It is more likely that Madany, like so many intellectuals in the Arab World, truly embraced Pan-Arabist convictions during the 1950s and 1960s. Irrespective of his motives, the proper usage of MSA was important for him. In 1994 he wrote instructions for the one who would take over as the BTGH Arabic minister:

While local dialects based on Arabic have developed, they remain the language of conversation and the market place. They have seldom been used in written form. It is very important to use this Standard Arabic language in broadcasting. All Arab countries use it in their broadcasting as well as the international broadcasters such as the BBC, the VOA, and Radio Monte-Carlo.<sup>57</sup>

It is true that all Arab countries used MSA in their radio programs, but the foreign Arabic broadcasters Madany mentioned, as well as most Arab radio stations, had also begun to use the vernacular. When Pan-Arabism began to lose its attraction, the language policies of many media groups in the Arab World came to better reflect the linguistic realities. MSA was, due to the high illiteracy rates in the Arab World, not understood by many, and it was also no-one’s mother tongue. After his radio-career was long past, in 2006, Madany reflected on the usage of MSA in broadcasting:

While the majority of Arabs cannot express themselves in standard Arabic, yet they can and do decipher that language. Perhaps Egypt may be an exception, since its radio and television use some colloquial Arabic, but the rest of the Arab World does not follow that. This forces us to use the language of textbooks, newspapers, and magazines. Theoretically, the best kind of contextualization would be to use the language of home, the marketplace, and the street. Some missionaries working in North Africa favored the translation of a North African Arabic version of the Bible. I have a copy that dates from the 1960s. But it was never used in broadcasting. This is a sad phenomenon in the Arab culture, but Christians are not supposed to pioneer in the use of vernacular Arabic. They tried once in Lebanon, and were accused by the “Others” of lack of patriotism!<sup>58</sup>

However, these are comments with hindsight. During his career, Madany used MSA only. He did so not only because of nationalistic reasons, but also because he wanted to reach an audience all over the Arab World. Egyptian Arabic would have

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<sup>56</sup> Bassam Madany in an email to the author (5 October 2004).

<sup>57</sup> Madany, ‘The Arabic Broadcast: The Back to God Hour’.

<sup>58</sup> Bassam Madany in an email to the author (18 April 2006).

been better understood by many Arabs and would have had the advantage that there was a large audience that actually spoke that language, but Madany spoke Levantine Arabic, not Egyptian. Madany mastered MSA formidably. His delivery was described by Suhail Zarifa of ELWA as ‘kind of half-way chanting and half-way singing [...] and it is very effective’.<sup>59</sup>

As late as 1975, Madany still spoke about ‘Marxism and existentialism and the destructive nature of their impact on the minds of the educated’ in the Arab World. ‘Young Muslims begin to doubt everything that has to do with the supernatural’ and they are ‘attracted to the modern, so-called scientific world-and-life views’, Madany concluded.<sup>60</sup> For Madany it was not clear how Pan-Arabism was waning towards the late 1960s, while in the 1970s it was not clear yet to what extent Islamic fundamentalism was already filling the minds of the educated and most youth. Most of Madany’s colleagues who lived in the Arab World also missed the changing paradigm. Madany later defended his views:

After the ‘hazima’ [defeat] of June 1967, Islamic radicalism began to grow everywhere. However, based on my continued studying Arabic books purchased during my visits to the [Middle East] and the perusal of two weekly Arabic magazines, ‘Al-Mostakbal’ and ‘Al-Hawadeth’ as well as the BBC ‘Huna London’, I was right in seeing that many educated young Arabs were beginning to doubt theism (which includes Islam).<sup>61</sup>

With hindsight, Madany defended his approach by focusing on the fact that in either case, his message was useful. He said that there was an important advantage of him addressing the growing ‘secularism’ that he perceived in the Arab World:

[It] demonstrated that Christians of my type were not to be confused with many Westerners. But the theism I defended was actually that of the historic Christian faith, based on the Scriptures, and summarized in the early ecumenical creeds and the [...] statements of the Reformation.<sup>62</sup>

Madany also argued that whether he was aware or not of the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism, was in fact not so important. He could not and would not address that issue directly in any case:

[Both] my convictions as to the futility of polemics as a method of missions, as well as broadcasting from host countries like Monte-Carlo and Cyprus did not allow any direct mention of the nascent and growing Islamic Salafism. To have ever mentioned directly Islam as a topic, or dealt polemically with it, would have meant the end of Arabic broadcasting. From the outset of the ministry in 1958, I had to observe that rule. Other colleagues in radio missions did the same. That was the *sine qua non* of our *modus operandi*. However, in expounding the Word of God as a redemptive message to an audience that was thoroughly steeped in legalism meant

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<sup>59</sup> Transcript of ‘Discussion’ (20 February 1974), p. 9, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

<sup>60</sup> Bassam Madany, ‘The Changing Situation in Islam Today’ (1975), p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Bassam Madany in an email to the author (5 October 2004).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

that I was engaged in 'hidden' polemics. That methodology was adequate to communicate the message to an audience, regardless of the degree of my awareness of the rising tide of Salafism.<sup>63</sup>

Madany did not choose a homogenous target audience, as demanded by RCRI since he aimed at 'Arab Muslims'. By placing the same programs on channels all over the Arab World, and by speaking MSA, Madany tried to reach the widest possible group of Arabs with the same message. This assumed that all Arab Muslims could be approached in one manner on radio.

Shirley Madany wrote in 1980 that it was their 'primary aim to expound God's Word to a people who have been denied it for centuries.' She added that response was received from 'every imaginable classification of persons. We hear from young and old and in between, from the very rich and very poor, from the professional and from the village workman.'<sup>64</sup> Given that the usage of MSA would have made it very hard for Arabs with less education to comprehend the programs it is highly likely that the vast majority of the actual audience of Madany's programs consisted of students and tertiary educated people. In general SW broadcasts attract a rather specific audience of students and tertiary educated men in their 20s but MW broadcasts attract a broader diversity of listeners.

RCR3 suggests that the language used should be the audience's own. In the 1960s Pan-Arabism was popular among students and they considered MSA their language. Literacy, and speaking the literate language, offered them the possibility for climbing society's ladder. However, even though MSA was the ideological preference for these students, it was not their actual mother tongue and the wisdom to use it for changing people's minds and lives was questionable.

#### 14.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

Madany always saw his work in the context of the general Protestant mission to Arab Muslims first begun in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was not surprising as his father's belief had resulted in him working in Syria as a missionary in one of the institutes that was a direct result of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mission work in Syria:

Arabic radio missions are a specific manifestation of a larger missionary endeavor among Muslims. [...] Throughout the 1400 years of the history of Islam, its followers have seldom had the opportunity to hear the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of the Christian subjects of Islam had very little knowledge of the Bible, and their Christianity was filled with unbiblical traditions such as the veneration of Mary and the saints. The liturgies of their various churches remained in ancient languages, which had ceased to be living vehicles of communication. [...] During the modern missionary era, work among Muslims began early in the 19th century when most of the lands of Islam were under Western colonial rule [...] It is to the credit of the

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. *Salafism*, from *al-Salaffiyah*, refers to the Islamic reform movement in Egypt, founded by *Mufti* Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905). *Al-Salaf* means ancestors. The movement wanted a 'return' to Islam as implemented and experienced during the time of the first four Caliphs.

<sup>64</sup> Shirley Madany, 'Beyond Imagination', in *Missionary Monthly* (February 1980), p. 8.

pioneer Protestant missionaries that they translated the Bible into Arabic [...] They opened schools and hospitals and engaged in works of mercy during times of war. They were instrumental in organizing Evangelical churches after their efforts to reform the old churches did not succeed.<sup>65</sup>

Madany rejected the prevalent focus among what he termed as 'neo-Evangelical' thinkers, to focus on contextualization or incarnational models as the way forward in mission to Muslims. That was in line with his Reformed theological views of the role of preaching, the role of the Holy Spirit in mission, and the unity of the Christian church:

Paul teaches us in a passionate way the importance of guarding the integrity of the Christian faith when it is being propagated. He must have been tempted to compromise in order to make the message more acceptable to the hearers. He knew very well that the basic presuppositions of the Greeks precluded any belief in the crucial doctrine of the resurrection of Christ. Furthermore, the Jewish tradition could not tolerate any teaching about a crucified Messiah. But Paul did not compromise. This is what he wrote: 'For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. [...] The implication of this apostolic teaching is tremendous. In God's sovereign disposition, He has ordained that all humanly originated attempts to find Him must fail; and they cannot but fail since man's heart is totally darkened by sin. The only God-ordained way of salvation is through the preaching of the Gospel. This great emphasis on proclamation may sound rather out of place in an age when dialogue is becoming very fashionable and when all kinds of gimmicks are being used to bring about conversions. [...]

The unique role of the Holy Spirit must be maintained in any teaching about missions. Unless and until the Spirit of God touches the hearts of those listening to the proclamation of the Gospel, the words of the missionary remain fruitless. [The] Holy Spirit [...] alone is the author of conversion. Regardless of the cultural or ethnic background of any human being, and no matter how hard we try to bring the message to his attention, the work of the Holy Spirit remains indispensable for his or her conversion.<sup>66</sup>

Shirley Madany defended her husband's approach to preaching. 'When using a mass communication method such as radio, we face the temptation to follow the secular rules about how to communicate effectively. Christians have to cling to the instructions they receive from Scripture and be willing to appear 'foolish' in the eyes of the world.' She stressed the need to rely on the Holy Spirit's power 'to create a desire in the hearts of our listeners:

'Just Preaching' is under attack. As a missionary method it is being scrutinized and found wanting. You cannot be effective and 'just preach', we are told. [...] Would 137,000 letters representing ten times that number of people, be in any way a vindi-

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<sup>65</sup> Madany, 'Thirty Year Report'

<sup>66</sup> Shirley W. Madany, 'Radio Missions: A Ministry of the Word of God', p. 23.

cation of 'just preaching' to a Muslim audience by means of mass communications? Do the reams of testimonies from Muslim listeners count for anything?<sup>67</sup>

Madany did not only preach in his programs. He preferred storytelling as 'a very important and helpful method. Biblical truths cannot be simply taught in an abstract way'.<sup>68</sup>

Some of those supporting concepts of contextualization, like C. George Fry and James R. King in their book *Islam: A Survey of the Muslim Faith* (Grand Rapids, 1982), went on record against any Gospel radio broadcasting. They regarded that as a denial of the incarnation, according to Madany.<sup>69</sup> To him it must have seemed that his own work was undermined and attacked. He also considered Phil Parshall's suggestion to 'build bridges' to Muslims by for instance allowing them to keep the fast during the month of Ramaḍān and to continue offering sheep, as far beyond the Biblical bounds of what mission to Muslims is supposed to do.<sup>70</sup>

For Madany, the usage of the Islamic name for Jesus, 'Īsá, was not acceptable. 'It is a loaded word, and I cannot empty it of its connotations. In other words, when you say 'Issa el Massih [sic], you are evoking the Quranic concept of the Messiah'.<sup>71</sup> Madany did not mind to use Islamic terms *per se*, as long as that would 'properly communicate the message of the Christian faith'.<sup>72</sup> This means that Madany wanted to use linguistic and cultural forms that were comprehensible to his Muslim audience, in accordance with RCR4, but he also heeded the warning that form and meaning of words and symbols cannot be separated, in accordance with CW6. Madany did not agree with what John Travis termed a C4 community where Christians use Islamic forms and practices. By taking this position, Madany directly opposed the popularity of contextualization in the Evangelical mission community that had focused on the C4 approach since the 1970s.

Though for Madany the issue of contextualization was in the first place a theological one, he also used pragmatic arguments against it. According to him, the emphasis on cultural anthropology in mission to the Arab World was based 'on the surmise that historic methods of missions have failed when they barely have been tried'.<sup>73</sup> Madany thought that was especially strange as most conferences on missions to the Arab World, were stressing that missionaries to the Muslim world were relatively few:

One wonders just how such meager efforts could have been judged as a failure calling for new methods. When really what was needed was more opportunity to proclaim the Gospel. [...] God opened up for us this marvelous new way of actually reaching

<sup>67</sup> Shirley W. Madany, 'Just Preaching', in *Missionary Monthly* (April-May 1986), p. 13. Shirley W. Madany, 'Radio Missions: A Ministry of the Word of God', p. 20.

<sup>68</sup> Bassam M. Madany, *The Bible and Islam: Sharing God's Word with a Muslim* (Palos Heights, 1981, 1992), p. 39.

<sup>69</sup> C. George Fry and James R. King, *Islam: A Survey of the Muslim Faith* (Grand Rapids, 1982).

<sup>70</sup> Frederick W. Evans Jr, 'An Explanation of "A Statement of Missionary Concern"' (30 September 1985), published on <http://www.unashamedofthegospel.org> (7 October 2007).

<sup>71</sup> Madany, *The Bible and Islam: Sharing God's Word with a Muslim*, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>73</sup> Shirley Madany, 'Biblical Foundations', in *Missionary Monthly* (April-May 1981), p. 7.



the Muslim with the preached Word of God, right in his home – that method being radio.<sup>74</sup>

Regarding the ‘cultural baggage’ that missionaries had supposedly taken with them when proclaiming the Gospel in the Arab World, Madany had a radically different view from those proposing new forms of contextualization. He felt that the term *cultural baggage* needed careful definition. Shirley Madany thought it could not in any way be applied to people like Samuel Zwemer, Temple Gairdner, Cornelius Van Dyck and countless others, who ‘all adopted their new countries as if they were immigrants’:

These pioneer missionaries studied and mastered Arabic and most of them lived there as everyone else did. In the last few decades there may have been too many pressure cookers, dishwashers, and Western trappings, plus too much haste in rushing to witness to Muslims, ill-equipped. But who cannot stand in awe of what the early missionaries accomplished in their devotion to God’s call?<sup>75</sup>

Madany was so impressed by the Presbyterian missionaries of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that he overestimated their ability to leave their own culture behind, in spite of their integration into Arab life. The institutes and churches they had begun in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were unmistakably Western implants. A century later, they were still not part of mainstream Arabic culture. Madany, however, rightly pointed to the need to define *cultural baggage*. In Evangelical mission there was often a naïve notion that it was possible for a missionary to leave his or her culture behind and adopt another culture as if changing a coat. This concept also harbored the notion that the Gospel of Jesus Christ could be dressed in an Islamic cultural garb without it affecting the understanding of the Gospel itself, disregarding CW6.

Madany thought that the ideal to ‘conserve culture’ should never be predominant over a concern for the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of the church.<sup>76</sup> ‘Viewing the missionary’s role as merely communicating Christ the Person with no regard for creeds or doctrines is a dangerous fallacy.’<sup>77</sup> Shirley Madany wrote that she and her husband rejected the movement of contextualization of the Gospel to the Muslim culture as it ‘[prevented] converts from benefiting from the great Christian heritage accumulated down the years simply because they would feel it was “Western baggage”’.<sup>78</sup> They heeded CW3, regarding the need to use methods that underline the unity of the church, and as regards creeds, they placed their ministry in the C2 spectrum of Travis’ scheme of contextualization. For Madany, the idea to contextualize the Gospel in apposition to how the Presbyterian churches of the Arab World would evangelize was unthinkable, in accordance with CW2 that says that contextualization should be a process within the community of the church.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Shirley W. Madany, ‘Christian Missions to the Muslims: Anthropological or Apostolic?’ in *The Banner* (2 August 1982), p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Shirley Madany, ‘Patron Saint and Kindred Spirits’, in *Missionary Monthly* (June-July 1984), p. 15.

Among the Arabic Christian producers and broadcasters, this ecclesiological view of Madany, was unique, and a counterbalance against the Western culture of individualism and anti-institutionalism that seemed to permeate much Evangelical mission work and also many of the Arabic Christian radio programs. Both concepts were alien to the cultures of the Arab World where it was inconceivable that someone would stand alone outside the confines of a clearly defined group. In the Arab World, the individual is an abstract concept, the community is the reality. For Madany, the idea to be a Christian in the Arab World without being part of the historic churches was therefore inconceivable. It touched upon warning CW1, which refers to the goal that new believers need to participate in the Church.

Madany often said that the reason why Muslims did not accept the Gospel easily was related to the fact that Islam was an anti-redemptive religion, denying the necessity of divine redemption. He stressed that the problem of mission to Muslims was not the lack of a contextualized method, but one of theological content. He also mentioned the oppressive political structures as a main reason why Muslims did not consider becoming Christians. He argued that even if converts from Islam would form alternative communities inside their own culture and seemingly within Islam, the Islamic authorities would not accept that. Citing the example of Aḥmadiyah Movement and Baha'i, he stressed that there should be no hope for the toleration of new entities of Christian believers in an Islamic garb.<sup>79</sup> Thereby Madany argued directly against the forming of C4 or C5 communities.

Madany's usage of Reformed creeds and books was criticized by some in the radio community. They considered the Reformed theology to be part of the Western cultural baggage that should not be used in witnessing to Muslims:

They believe that this is a stumbling block to conversion and would suggest that the convert be encouraged to continue with his own style of worship. In our experience we have found that the convert quite naturally wants to start his life afresh and wants it to be a break with all his old traditions, particularly when they were religious. He wants to belong to the body of Christ. He can no longer be identified with another body. We believe that the Holy Spirit is capable of guiding a convert, just as we have been guided, so that he will develop customs and habits that fit with the locality in which he lives. We have a common, basic Christian heritage which is trans-cultural, continually changing as we get to know other ethnic members of the international body of Christ.<sup>80</sup>

The last statement, referring to the 'trans-cultural Christian heritage' that continually changes when Christians from different ethnic backgrounds meet, shows that Madany had no problem *per se* with the Christian message being expressed in different ethnic garbs. That opinion in itself is part of the spectrum of contextualization. This shows that in Madany's resistance against contextualization, he critiqued the efforts of some to work towards creating C4 or even C5 spectrum churches. In his own programs he also endeavored to contextualize the Gospel.

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<sup>79</sup> Bassam Madany, 'Dangerous Trends', in *Missionary Monthly* (January 1988), p. 12.

<sup>80</sup> Shirley W. Madany in *Missionary Monthly* (October 1980), p. 15. This article had no title.

The Reformation Hour sought to acquaint the Arabic-speaking listeners with the contents of the Bible with the specific goal of emphasizing the redemptive mission of Jesus. While not engaging in any direct polemic against Islam, the programs took into account 'the Islamic misunderstanding of the person and work of our Savior.'<sup>81</sup> In the final analysis, Madany thought that 'all attempts to compromise the scandal of the cross and to make the Gospel more "culturally acceptable", were doomed to failure'.<sup>82</sup> This illustrates how Madany was interested to heed CW4 in that he was careful not to accommodate the Gospel in such a manner that it lost its prophetic and salvific ability.

Madany did not want to approach Muslims in the first place by proving that the Christian Scriptures were authentic or that God should be understood as a Trinity or that Jesus is the Son of God. Madany was convinced that the best bridge to reaching Muslims was by focusing on Islam's theology of man. He considered the Christian doctrine of man the greatest difference with Islam.<sup>83</sup> He therefore paid much attention to speaking about the depravity of man:

The best bridge to Islam is where we have our greatest difference. And this point is precisely the doctrine of man. Islam teaches that man does not need a Savior. In Islam, man is a weak being who needs only to know the will of Allah in order that by doing it he may please God. [...] To them, man suffers from ignorance.<sup>84</sup>

Madany hoped to show Muslims that their optimistic view of the nature of man was unrealistic as Islam's 'faulty anthropology precludes the necessity of redemption and fortifies the Muslim against the acceptance of the Biblical teaching of redemption through the work of the Messiah on the cross of Golgotha'.<sup>85</sup> Madany also believed that the Christian and Islamic problem with Western secularism could be a bridge between Christians and Muslims:

Since modern Western secularism has become globalized due both to Western colonialism and the mass media, it has become necessary to challenge this "neo-pagan" culture in specific programs that deal with the modern problems viewed in the light of a Reformed worldview. A special emphasis is made to show Muslims that Christians are very concerned about the challenge of secularism.<sup>86</sup>

In a paper prepared in 1994 for his successor, Madany stressed that 'preaching the Gospel based on the contents of one of the 66 books of the Bible is not to merely engage in the exposition of the text.' He would in all his programs choose a subject based on the Bible reading, and introduce that to the listeners in an attractive and sympathetic way. 'The introduction is very important as it acts as the means by which the Arab ear is "caught" and challenged to listen to the rest of the

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<sup>81</sup> Madany, 'Thirty Year Report.'

<sup>82</sup> Shirley Madany, 'Christian Missions to the Muslims: Anthropological or Apostolic?', p. 11. Madany, 'Thirty Year Report'.

<sup>83</sup> Madany, *The Bible and Islam: Sharing God's Word with a Muslim*, p. 42.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>86</sup> Madany, 'The Arabic Broadcast: The Back to God Hour'.

program. Usually, a contemporaneous topic is mentioned which has to do with an important issue. This would then lead to the Biblical text and its relevance to the topic.' Madany usually ended his programs with an exhortation for the audience to place its trust in Christ 'as Savior and Lord'.<sup>87</sup>

#### 14.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

Over the period of 1958 to the 1990s, Madany built up a library of 480 sermons, 636 Bible study programs, and hundreds of other programs.<sup>88</sup> This means that he produced about one program of 15 minutes per week in this period. From the perspective of audio production, this was not much, but Madany ensured that what he produced had maximum coverage. It also seems that he endeavored to have an even coverage over all the Arab World. This suggests that Madany assumed that his programs were equally suitable for every part of the Arab World.

In 1988 Madany reported about his work of thirty years for BTGH. In that celebratory report, he also summarized the programs he had produced throughout the years and which were still broadcasting in 1988:

*Sermon Program:* This is a 30-minute program broadcast on Sundays over five of the radio stations. A 15-minute version is used over the Cyprus outlet of Radio Monte-Carlo. These messages are of an expository nature and have covered both OT and NT books.

*Bible Study:* This is a Bible teaching ministry, which covers all the books of the NT. These 15-minute programs are aired Mondays to Fridays.

*Bible Doctrine:* This is a series of 72 fifteen-minute programs, which cover the Heidelberg Catechism and the Geneva Catechism of John Calvin. I have adapted it from the French book, *A L'École de Dieu* [In the school of God] by Dr. Pierre Marcel. It is an Arabized catechetical program in which I have substituted the Nicene Creed for the Apostles' Creed.

*Biblical Studies:* This consists of a series of 15-minute programs, which seek to elucidate some crucial doctrines, which are misunderstood by Muslims: the doctrine of Inspiration, the Atonement and the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Church History:* A series of twenty 15-minute programs based on the book of B.K. Kuiper, *The Church in History*.

*Reflections on Contemporary Life:* A series of over 100 fifteen-minute programs, which deal with the rise of neo-paganism (secularism) and the Biblical answer. This is aimed at high school and university students and is broadcast on a weekly basis.

*Questions of Listeners:* We deal in this weekly 15-minute program with the questions received from our listeners dealing with Biblical, doctrinal and ethical subjects.<sup>89</sup>

During his first eight years of program production, Madany mainly produced Biblical and expository programs, but during a meeting with ELWA in Liberia,

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Madany, 'Thirty Year Report'. These daily Bible Study series has been on air since September 1960. See Bassam Madany, 'The Arabic Broadcast: The Back to God Hour.'

Madany became convinced of the need to also produce programs about social and other issues. In the 'Reflections on Contemporary Life' Madany would criticize the 'emerging monolithic world culture which is very materialistic'. These programs were mainly philosophical or apologetic, but not religious.<sup>90</sup>

Madany's programs did not discuss Islam or concrete socio-political issues that could be considered a critique of Arab regimes. This meant that in that regard, the actual context of the audience was ignored in the programs, against RCR2's advice. However, this was probably in line with the CW2 warning; most Arabic churches were extremely careful to not be seen as against their governments, and they did not want to participate in any public debate about national Arabic politics. Only in Lebanon, where Christians formed a majority, did they take an active part in the political arena. However not speaking about these issues that were so important for the audience, not only diminished the attraction of these programs, but it also gave a one-sided impression of the Gospel. CW5 was not heeded with respect to the need to apply the Gospel to society, socio-economic and political issues. By not being explicit about that, the impression was given that the Gospel was mainly a personal issue and it thereby lost part of its prophetic power as warned in CW4. These comments do not mean that there was not an interested audience for Madany's programs. Based on the letters he received throughout the years in response to his broadcasts, he concluded in 1994:

The Lord is moving by His Word and Spirit. He is creating hunger and thirst among the Muslim masses for a message, which can be found only in the authentic Gospel. Our hope is re-kindled and we believe that the best days for missions among Muslims are ahead of us. Muslims will be converted through Christian testimony and through the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.<sup>91</sup>

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization published a paper in 1989, titled *Radio in Mission*. One thesis in that paper said that if 'monological Bible teaching seemingly provided a short-cut to evangelism (with few listeners) taking the longer way around by the use of drama and other creative forms may, in the long run, be more effective and impact many more lives'.<sup>92</sup> That statement was too general, it seems. Fred Plastow, a former director of Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) in Malaga (Spain) commented that 'the more contemporary radio experts thought the solid preaching Madany did, was somewhat old-fashioned, but his style fit the mindset of the Muslims who love to listen to a well-prepared and presented sermon.' Regarding the impact of those programs, Plastow said that '[many] North African Christians consider [Madany] the granddaddy of radio', as they became Christians through his programs.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> 'Creating Radio Programs for Muslims: Presentation by Bassam Madany', pp. 56-57.

<sup>91</sup> Madany, 'Re-Thinking Missions Today', p. 30.

<sup>92</sup> [www.Gospelcom.net/lcwe/LOP/lop26.htm](http://www.Gospelcom.net/lcwe/LOP/lop26.htm) (30 September 2004).

<sup>93</sup> Fred Plastow in an email to the author (9 February 2003) said: '[Madany] is an exceptionally diligent man and maintained intellectual pursuits all his life, and can be considered highly knowledgeable of both past and current Middle Eastern thought. One of life's pleasures is to have known men of this caliber.'

While some Christian broadcasters to the Arabs were trying to create program formats to attract more listeners, Madany did not budge from a sandwich format. Shirley Madany wrote about their ‘absolute reliance on preaching as the medium of bringing the Gospel to a group of people’ and she felt that it was ‘sad that some Christian broadcasts fall more into the category of “entertainment” rather than proclamation of the Good News’.<sup>94</sup> This apparent defensiveness of the programs may give the impression that preaching was generally all Madany did. It is true that he was not very interested in looking for new or creative formats, but during a conference of Christian broadcasters in Beirut, he said that he had become more and more interested in ‘straight talk’, citing the example of some of the radio stations in Chicago that had completely shifted to ‘talk programs’. Madany even tried to avoid the idea of a ‘program’ as he tried to have a ‘chat’ with his audience.<sup>95</sup> Thus in his own programs, he was not always ‘preaching’.

## 14.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

### 14.6.1 Formative Years: 1957-1973

Madany did not keep precise audience response statistics. The main reason was that he and Shirley were the whole Arabic department of BTGH, together with one helper who came in a few days each week, ‘We did not burden ourselves with the detailed analysis that many “faith” missionaries felt compelled to do, like tabulating men, women, children, religions etcetera.’<sup>96</sup> They did not have to, as BTGH generously supported the ministry financially, without demanding too much detailed reporting back. ‘No one was waiting on our reports’, Shirley Madany recalled.<sup>97</sup>

In 1958 Madany began broadcasting his programs on ELWA. However the first mailed responses began Christmas 1961. Soon, the number of letters increased. ‘Response from Egypt was amazing in the early days. We observed that it came from almost every city up and down the Nile’, Shirley Madany wrote in 2004.<sup>98</sup>

Madany considered his treatment of audience response as one of the most important parts of his work. ‘It is in this way that I get to know my audience in a personal way and to judge the impact of the broadcasts over Arabs living in a vast territory covering thousands of miles.’ Every letter was answered and in every answer Madany would inform the respondent of all the Christian radio stations that he or she could listen to in their own country.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Shirley W. Madany, ‘Faith Comes by Hearing’, in *Missionary Monthly* (April-May 1993), p. 7. Shirley W. Madany, ‘The Great Feast’, in *Missionary Monthly* (November 1994), p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> ‘Creating Radio Programs for Muslims: Presentation by Bassam Madany’, pp. 56-57.

<sup>96</sup> Shirley Madany in an email to the author (25 June 2003).

<sup>97</sup> BTGH does not have archived files on its Arabic broadcasts. All information received came from the personal files of Bassam and Shirley Madany.

<sup>98</sup> Shirley Madany in an email to the author (6 October 2004).

<sup>99</sup> Madany, ‘Thirty Year Report’.

From the beginning of the Arabic broadcasts, an address of a mission organization in Sudan was used for audience response. From there, all mail was forwarded to the USA. People writing to Madany would always receive a book, or some tracts. Within the tradition of BTGH, the Arabic Broadcast sought to prepare literature as part and parcel of its follow-up ministry. Madany used a total of 17 books. A daily devotional book, *Family Worship*, has been reprinted several times since 1960. A catechism book, *The Teachings of the Holy Bible*, and several books, booklets and tracts were published to meet the demands of the regular follow-up ministry.<sup>100</sup> Because of the size of the audience response and the growing mailing list, BTGH was forced to 'curb correspondence'. Shirley Madany described the systematic manner by which this was done:

[We] simply could not handle it. Being in the Arabic language, Bassam would have been the only person to take on the task and he had all that he could handle and then some. I did every piece of English correspondence that I possibly could, which means that when some listeners indicated that they could handle the English language then they got special treatment. This is why we designed cover letters to tell them what we were sending them in the way of books and unless they objected every listener immediately began to get all of our literature in a steady, methodical way. Two mailings per year.<sup>101</sup>

BTGH paid for all the expenses related to these mailings and up until the early 1970s, it was possible to send books by mail to most Arab countries. However since the 1970s this became practically impossible, as in most Arab countries postal authorities began to block the influx of Christian literature; only thin tracts slipped through the maze of the postal nets of most Arab countries.<sup>102</sup>

Madany stated in 1969 that he had 6,000 people that had responded to his programs on his mailing list. It is not clear whether these were unique contacts or whether the figure included repeat contacts. Prior to 1966 about 85 percent of his mail came from Egyptian Christians. According to Madany, due to the June 1967 war, mail from Egypt and the whole Middle East diminished sharply between 1967 and 1968. During that last year the number of Muslims that responded had risen above the number of Christian responses for the first time. This was not only because mail from Christians from Egypt and the Middle East diminished, but also because the number of responses from North Africa had increased.<sup>103</sup> In 1967, Madany's programs began to be broadcast to North Africa by TWR from Bonaire, and ELWA had installed a stronger transmission system for North Africa in 1968. This naturally increased the area covered and the percentage of Muslims reach.

<sup>100</sup> Madany, 'The Arabic Broadcast: The Back to God Hour.'

<sup>101</sup> Shirley Madany in an email to the author (6 October 2004).

<sup>102</sup> Madany, 'Thirty Year Report'.

<sup>103</sup> 'Creating Radio Programs for Muslims: Presentation by Bassam Madany', pp. 56-57.

#### 14.6.2 Years of Growth: 1974-1978

Madany was 'grateful for a steady response of over 2,000 letters' each year up until the early 1970s.<sup>104</sup> Between 1958 and 1972, a total of 20,500 letters had been received.<sup>105</sup> In 1974, the audience response grew remarkably to 2,747 and to 4,547 by 1975. More than 80 percent of all responses came from Muslims.<sup>106</sup> 'Possibly 500,000 listeners are hearing [our] programs', Shirley Madany thought in 1975.<sup>107</sup>

As Madany offered many books and brochures in his programs, it is reasonable to assume that many people wrote more than once. It is unknown whether the figures he reported included repeat responses, but assuming that the percentage of repeat responses throughout the years was consistent, the audience figures can be used for assessing trends, irrespective of whether they are for unique responses or those that include repeated responses.

In 1976 the audience response had grown to 9,382 letters with the peak occurring in 1977 with 12,876 letters. Madany believed that the growth of audience response after 1974 was due to The Reformation Hour being transmitted by TWR through RMC-ME. Madany had started a 15-minute program each week on RMC-ME from 18 May 1975. Five months after broadcasting began over RMC-ME, Madany spoke about the 'wonderful responses' received because of these broadcasts from Cyprus. 'The responses from the Middle East climbed to a record high. For the first time in recent years, we are getting an excellent coverage of the Middle Eastern countries. While in the area, we picked up the Cyprus outlet of Radio Monte Carlo on the smallest transistor radio'. Broadcast through RMC-ME gave 'a better coverage of the area, and a subsequent rise in the number of responses. Broadcasting on the [MW brought] our message within the range of the least expensive radio sets.'<sup>108</sup>

The audience response 'definitely [...] went up according to the quantity of air time and the quality of it', according to Shirley Madany.<sup>109</sup> Madany concluded: 'Medium wave broadcasting is the best tool for radio missions and short wave broadcasting is an auxiliary arm'. He considered the choice to broadcast over RMC-ME as the main reason why audience response went up.<sup>110</sup> An interesting side-effect of the broadcasting on MW from Cyprus was that women began to respond more to Madany's programs. This is in line with the general tendency of

<sup>104</sup> *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1978).

<sup>105</sup> Bassam Madany, 'Discovering Christianity (A Saudi Letter)', on [www.unashamedofthegospel.org](http://www.unashamedofthegospel.org) (7 October 2007).

<sup>106</sup> Bassam M. Madany, 'The Changing Situation in Islam: 1975 Conference at Reformed Bible College', in Shirley W. Madany, *Muslims Meeting Christ* (n.p., 2005), p. 14.

<sup>107</sup> Shirley W. Madany, 'Reformation and Rehabilitation', in *Missionary Monthly* (October 1975), p. 9. *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1978). 'Arabic Broadcast - Mail Reponse Form: Totals for 1978'. *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (March 1980). *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1981). The figure of 5,400 respondees in 1979 is deduced from a statement in the March 1980 newsletter which says: 'In the past five years we have received 45,000 letters.'

<sup>108</sup> Bassam Madany, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee. (12-13 February 1976)'. Bassam Madany, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee' (15-16 October 1975).

<sup>109</sup> Shirley Madany in an email to the author (25 June 2003).

<sup>110</sup> Bassam M. Madany, 'Form and Content in Radio Broadcasting', in *Missionary Monthly* (December 1977), p. 6.



women to listen more to MW than to SW. During the 1970s there was 'a noticeable increase in letters from Arab girls, compared with even ten years ago.'<sup>111</sup> At the same time, Madany also increased his presence on all stations he was using, which made it impossible to be precise in assessing the impact of RMC-MC on the overall growth of Madany's audience response.

*Figure 14.1* illustrates that in 1975, of the 4,547 letters received, 2,247 came from Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. Response from Egypt numbered 1,132. From Syria and Iraq combined it was 599, while the response from all other Arab countries together was 293 letters.<sup>112</sup> In 1977, of 12,876 letters 7,036 came from Egypt. From Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, 1,304 letters were received, and 2,013 from Iraq.<sup>113</sup> In 1978 response from Egypt had decreased by approximately 1,900 letters whereas other Arab countries had increased by approximately 900 letters. These figures for 1975, 1977 and 1978 confirmed Madany's idea that the growth of the audience was due to the broadcasts from RMC-ME. Response from the countries where RMC-ME was received had grown considerably while the responses from North Africa had remained stable.

A second reason for the growth in audience responses, according to Madany, was that the Arabs did not trust their own media. 'People are already listening to Radio Monte Carlo because they regard it as a reliable source of news. Fifteen minutes after the end of the regular programming over the Cyprus outlet, we go on the air with our Gospel programs. The image of reliability has already been set in their minds.'<sup>114</sup>

Madany's third reason had to do with his use of the Arabic language. 'Words are not so much used as a means of communication as they are used for their 'musical' impact. [Our] Arabic broadcast tries hard to avoid these cultural factors. The Gospel [...] must be presented as clearly as possible. Our audience soon realizes this after they discover *Saatu'l Islah* [sic].'<sup>115</sup> This argument was interesting, as it assumed that the response was good *because* Madany's delivery style was counter-cultural. The impact of his style was impossible to verify though in the context of this study.

Finally, Madany pointed to God using the Japanese as His tool by enabling them to put transistor radios into the hands of the Arabs.<sup>116</sup> What he could also have mentioned was the ever-increasing Arab population and the increase in literacy among that population. These two factors multiplied the number of people that could respond to Madany's programs during his radio ministry. Conversely, there was also an ever-growing number of Arabic station and programs, which spread out the potential audience thinly over many stations. These factors make it impossible to draw conclusions about the actual audience based on the audience response figures.

<sup>111</sup> Shirley Madany, 'Student Quotes', in *Missionary Monthly* (May 1976), p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> Madany, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee' (12-13 February 1976).

<sup>113</sup> *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1978).

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

	1975	1977	1978	1980	
Morocco	1237	1304	672	1601	
Algeria	742		805		
Tunisia	268		250		
Libya	104	852	50	5025	
Syria	362		789		
Egypt	1132	7036	5143		
Sudan	42	451	450		
Jordan	67	408	518		
Lebanon	47	168	264		
Iraq	237	2013	2037		
Arabia	37	405	564		
Other	272	239	265		318
TOTALS	4547	12876	11807		6944

Figure 14.1 BTGH's Audience Response Figures: 1975-1980

Shirley Madany proposed another reason why Muslims were so eager to listen to Christian radio and respond to it. She believed that it enabled them to learn about the Christianity of their neighbors who did not want to tell them. 'Because of centuries of dhimmitude, their Christian neighbors had learned to keep their faith to themselves. Thus radio was a great new way for Muslims to learn what neighboring Christians believed.'<sup>117</sup> This could certainly have been true for the Middle East but not for the Arabian Peninsula or North Africa where few Muslims have had Christian neighbors at all.

One reason for the good audience response to Madany's programs was that he always offered books and leaflets in his broadcasts. The benefit of placing Christian literature into the homes of people was great, but it cannot be equated with high spiritual interest.<sup>118</sup> International evidence from radio broadcasters shows that any program offering 'bait' can count on a good response. This generous offer of books was an important explanation for the good response to Madany's programs. It did not explain however the ups and downs of those responses.

In order to keep follow-up simple, as there was no large staff, the 'department' automatically mailed all new books and tracts that were produced to all people writing to the broadcasts. Standard letters were copied for different responses, and

<sup>117</sup> Shirley Madany, 'Iraqi Christians', in *Missionary Monthly* (February 1999), p.16

<sup>118</sup> Reginald Kennedy, in an unpublished paper titled 'The Word Senders: A Personal Assessment of the Work of the Major Protestant, Evangelical Missionary Radio Stations' (n.p., 1980), chapter 3, p. 14. Found in the library of the World Alliance for Christian Communication (WACC), document A 302.

short personal notes were added. In 1976, for instance, 10,000 books and 20,000 tracts were mailed to the audience.<sup>119</sup>

#### **14.6.3 Meager Years: 1979-1980**

After the peak of audience response in 1977 and 1978, responses suddenly decreased to around 5,400 letters in 1979. In 1980, it went slightly up again to 6,944 responses. In spite of the substantially decreasing response, 24,000 books and 46,000 tracts were sent out in 1980.<sup>120</sup> The brief dip in audience response can be explained by RMC-ME changing TWR's broadcasting time in the evening:

The basic reason for the loss of audience is the fact that Radio Monte-Carlo's outlet in Cyprus pushed Christian broadcasting to a very late hour of the night, and/or allotted very early hours in the morning for such programs. The Arabic Broadcast of the BTGH opted for the early morning slot, i.e., prior to 5:00 A.M. Cairo time. The early morning Arabic bloc consisted of one 15-minute program, preceded by an Armenian broadcast beamed to Armenia! Not many people listen at that hour, especially during the late spring and summer time, when the sun rises earlier, and MW propagation becomes weaker.<sup>121</sup>

In 1978, TWR's broadcasts were from 19.15-19.30 GMT daily, with 15 minutes before or after that program during five days of the week. In 1979, that block was one hour later, and in 1980 it was from 21.00-21.15 GMT, with 15 minutes added two days of the week.<sup>122</sup> It is indeed likely that this change in airtimes decreased the audiences. Shirley Madany also assumed that the downturn was related to 'the obvious clamping down on mail and [the] rise of radical Islam', but this was a less likely cause.<sup>123</sup> *Figure 14.1* shows that the downturn was largely due to a significant decrease in mail being received from the Middle East. The North African authorities began their clampdown on mail to the Christian broadcasters later in the 1980s, while in the Middle East there was never a consistent effort by the authorities to stop mail arriving at the radio broadcasters. The rise of radical Islam is an unlikely cause as radical Islam continued to increase in popularity while the Madany's audience figures increased again in 1981.

The downturn in audience response does not mean that the actual audience became smaller. Shirley Madany was convinced of its large size based on anecdotal evidence. In 1980, one of the letters that was received from a cultural group in a large Moroccan city said that 213 young people were listening to the BTGH broadcasts.<sup>124</sup> 'We can confidently believe that more than one million Muslim men,

<sup>119</sup> *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (January 1977). *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1978). 'Arabic Broadcast – Mail Reponse form Totals for 1978'. *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (March 1980). *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1981).

<sup>120</sup> *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1981).

<sup>121</sup> Bassam Madany in an email to the author (5 October 2004).

<sup>122</sup> Information from TWR broadcasting schedule flyers (1978-1981) as made available by Hansjörg Biener in an email to the author (15 April 2007).

<sup>123</sup> Shirley Madany in emails to the author (11 and 12 September 2003).

<sup>124</sup> *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (March 1980).

men, women and children are listening daily to the exposition of God's Word', she published in December 1979 in *Missionary Monthly*.<sup>125</sup> This confidence was based on a practice amongst Arabic Christian broadcasters to estimate actual audience size. Madany explained this method in a newsletter dated February 1978 as, 'you multiply each country's figures by 1,000 you will get an estimate of the total listening audience'.<sup>126</sup>

#### **14.6.4 Peak and Decrease: 1981-1986**

##### **14.6.4.1 Audience Figures**

Audience response figures collected from various publications and the Madany's personal files is shown in *Figure 14.2*. The *Arabic Newsletter of BTGH* published in 1983 stated that, between 1973 and 1982, 89,500 letters were received. Exact figures for 1974 -1980 are available.<sup>127</sup> It is therefore possible to calculate that in 1981 and 1982 together over 33,000 letters were received, if it is correct to assume that in 1973 about 2,500 letters were received. Shirley Madany published in 1981 that of all letters received until then, more than half were from Muslims.<sup>128</sup>

During the first month of 1983 1,000 letters arrived.<sup>129</sup> Given the uncertainties in North Africa, where the authorities tried to stop mail from going to Christian broadcasters, it is not clear whether that month of January was typical or not. Given the audience response in 1984 and 1985, when a total of 27,000 letters was received, it is not unlikely that the total number of letters received in 1983 was in the realm of 12,000. In 1986 10,000 letters were received.<sup>130</sup>

A random selection of 75 letters out of 700, received in December 1986, showed that of all the respondents at that time, 20 percent were female. Of all responses 85 percent came from cities, and 70 percent from Muslims. Of those writing from Egypt, 85 percent were Christian. A slight majority of 55 percent were under 30 years of age. Almost all mail was appreciative.<sup>131</sup> These figures indicate that the percentage of Muslims responding had grown, since until 1981, about half of all the mail came from Muslims. This could be attributed to the growth in audience response from North Africa compared to the response from the Middle East. In 1987, Madany wrote that of the 150,000 letters received thus far; 'more than half' were from Muslims.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Shirley W. Madany, 'The Muslim and the Bible', in *Missionary Monthly* (December 1979), p. 3.

<sup>126</sup> *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1978).

<sup>127</sup> Shirley Madany in an email to the author (6 July 2003). *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1983).

<sup>128</sup> Shirley Madany, 'The Biblical Approach', in *Missionary Monthly* (June-July 1981), p. 22.

<sup>129</sup> *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (February 1983).

<sup>130</sup> Shirley Madany in an email to the author (6 July 2003).

<sup>131</sup> Bassam Madany, 'Audience Response: What Can We Expect?' in *Missionary Monthly* (June-July 1987), pp. 8-9.

<sup>132</sup> Madany, *The Bible and Islam: Sharing God's Word with a Muslim*, p. 96.

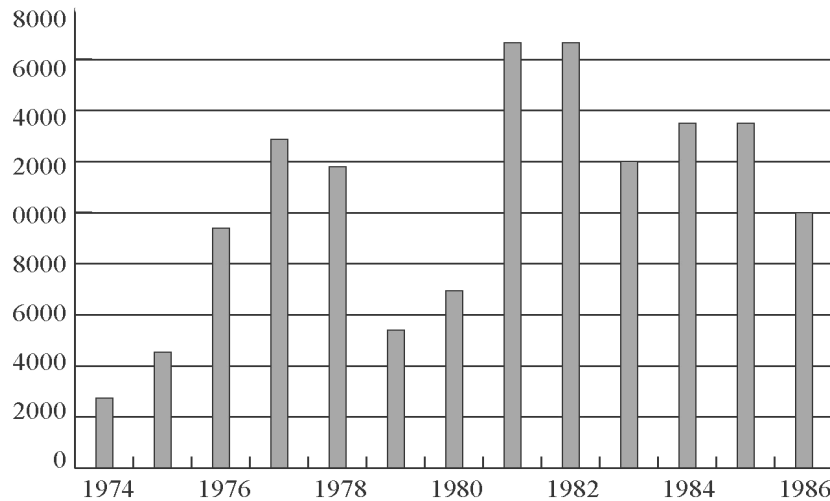


Figure 14.2 Total Audience Response Figures 1974-1986

#### 14.6.4.2 Temporary Support: Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF)

In January 1980, Victor Atallah joined the work in Chicago to begin a follow-up ministry. This involved extensive personal correspondence with enquirers and periodic visits to them on the field. Atallah had lived in Lebanon during some years of the Lebanese civil war as a missionary with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, of which Atallah was an ordained minister.<sup>133</sup> He had experienced an ‘obvious conversion to the Reformed faith’, in which the broadcasts of Madany had played a crucial role and from 1974 Madany had been in touch with Atallah. ‘Here is someone who is on fire for the Lord and tenaciously standing for the doctrines of the church. It is that desire to see converts gathered together into churches which is the driving force behind him now’, Shirley Madany wrote in 1980.<sup>134</sup>

In the early 1980s Atallah moved to Larnaka to open MERF. This was started as a center where BTGH could ship and store quantities of Arabic books for making follow-up trips to the surrounding countries easier. During one of those trips to Jordan, Atallah tried to bring Christian books of Madany into the country but they were all confiscated. The officer in charge told him that he was carrying out orders not to allow any Christian literature in and he showed a collection of books recently confiscated.<sup>135</sup>

Atallah visited listeners to the programs on his trips and he met with Christian pastors and leaders to enlist their help in the follow-up ministry.<sup>136</sup> In 1986 however Madany decided, upon an extended trip to Larnaka, that the experiment was

<sup>133</sup> *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (March 1980).

<sup>134</sup> Shirley Madany, ‘A Follow-Up Ministry’, in *Missionary Monthly* (June-July 1980), p. 19.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> ‘Middle East Revisited’, in *Missionary Monthly* (February 1981), p. 21.

not working. The board of BTGH reported to the Synod of CRCNA in June 1987 that it wished to discontinue its cooperation with MERF.<sup>137</sup>

#### **14.6.5 Final Period: 1987-1994**

After the Gulf War of 1990-1991, Shirley Madany was convinced that the audience for their programs had grown further:

We know that we are reaching a much larger audience than before the Gulf [War]. The Middle East has entered into a period of intensive 'listening'. [...] In the last decade, the manufacturers of [...] giant transmitters have sold to Middle Eastern countries as many as seven medium-wave 2,000 kilowatt transmitters and fifty short-wave transmitters of the 500 kW size. [Most Arabs] do not regard them as satisfactory sources of information. In other words, these stations lack credibility. This explains the popularity of [...] the BBC, the VOA, and Radio Monte Carlo.<sup>138</sup>

Audience response figures are not available for the broadcasts of BTGH after 1987 and as such it was not possible to verify these claims as to whether BTGH received more mail as a result of the Gulf War.

Madany was known for his good audience response. Throughout his ministry he received 200,000 letters from his audience. He placed his programs with six broadcasters, and on each station he had more than one program each week. In 1978, for instance, Madany filled 12 hours of airtime per week, and for that he received 11,807 letters. This means that for every hour of broadcasts during that year, almost 19 letters were received, and that the average program of 15 minutes attracted less than five letters. Since the end of the 1970s Madany has been broadcasting about 28 hours per week.

All broadcasters saw a remarkable downturn in response after the 1980s. If the audience response figures for Madany's programs during the 1990s were close to those in 1980, then each program of 15 minutes attracted less than two letters during the 1990s. As the response to the MW broadcasts was much better than SW response, it must be concluded that most of the time, the average response per program broadcast on SW, must have been far under one letter per 15 minutes.

'Due to the rise of a radical Muslim movement in the country and to the takeover of the government by a military junta that is totally committed to the Islamization of the whole country, our mailing address [in Khartoum] is in jeopardy', Madany reported in 1994, by the time he was retiring. Therefore BTGH began using the mailing addresses of TWR and FEBA.<sup>139</sup>

Madany's total response of 200,000 letters was based on over a thousand programs that he produced throughout his ministry. This means that each program produced, received a total response of close to 200 letters throughout those years. Many programs must have been used between 50 and 100 times.

<sup>137</sup> Information received from Shirley Madany by the author (11 September 2003). She commented: 'We would not care to give any more details.'

<sup>138</sup> Shirley W. Madany, 'Broadcasting Power', in *Missionary Monthly* (February 1991), pp. 14, 30.

<sup>139</sup> Bassam Madany, 'The Arabic Broadcast: The Back to God Hour'. Shirley W. Madany, 'Encouraging Signs', in *Missionary Monthly* (November 2000), p. 5.

## 14.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS

### 14.7.1 Indigenization

The North American organization BTGH was the owner of Madany's ministry to the Arab World. They employed Madany for implementing his own vision, and as he had full freedom to develop his ministry as he deemed fit, this work of BTGH could be termed indigenious in actual terms. It is, however, proper to say that only in relationship to Levantine Arabs, Madany was truly indigenious, as he did not speak any other vernacular. An 'indigenious Pan-Arab' never existed.

It is also not clear to what extent an Arab immigrant in the USA, after dozens of years, might still be termed 'indigenious' to any Arab country, and whether he or she would be able to produce radio programs that were *a propos* for their target audience. Madany's audience response suggested positive answers to these questions but further study regarding this issue is important as many Arabic program suppliers have lived outside the Arab World for decades.

### 14.7.2 Contextualization

#### 14.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience

Madany's decision to aim his programs at 'Arab Muslims' was too broad. He did not formally target a homogenous audience. This was to a large extent due to his Pan-Arab opinions. Within the Arab World, it seems Madany mainly targeted students and intellectuals.

#### 14.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience

Because of his choice to target Arab Muslims in general, it was impossible for Madany to address the audience in its actual, concrete context. As he came from Syria and Lebanon with its historic churches, he addressed his Muslim audience from the perspective that the Arabic churches were part of their context. His focus on the existent churches was also a result of his theology.

Even though Madany spoke on societal matters in his programs, he avoided speaking about Islam, politics and matters pertaining to the Arab States. This meant that these important facets of the context of the audience were ignored. The resultant message Madany propounded was therefore personal and did not exemplify the full impact of the Gospel on societal life. Thus warning CW4 and CW5 concerning the prophetic role of the Gospel and the importance of the Gospel for both personal *and societal* life, were mainly heeded in the personal realm. This was at the expense of the *diakonal* witness of the programs.

To not treat socio-political and macro-ethical matters was in accordance with the approach of most Arabic churches. This revealed a dilemma. Fully implementing RCR2, and heeding CW4 and CW5, meant that CW2 could not always be heeded.

### 14.7.2.3 Language

Madany's choice for MSA made his programs unintelligible for most Arabs as only a minority was able to understand that language. There was certainly an audience that appreciated being addressed in MSA but it was no one's heart language. The usage of MSA was therefore not the best choice in Christian communication. Conversely, Madany could have spoken in his mother tongue, Levantine Arabic, which millions of people would have understood in major parts of the Arab World. It is unlikely however that as an émigré in the USA, he would have been able to keep his Levantine Arabic current with how it was actually being spoken in the Levant.

### 14.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms

Within the context of his choice for using MSA, Madany endeavored to proclaim the Gospel in a language and in cultural terms that could be understood by his target audience of Arab Muslims. He used Biblical and Evangelical jargon, but endeavored to explain that, so RCR4 was implemented to a satisfactory extent. Madany disagreed with the usage of Islamic language and forms in Christian radio. This meant that in his efforts to use linguistic and cultural forms to explain the Gospel of Christ and the meaning of the Church, he heeded warning CW6 about form and function not being separable.

### 14.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church

Madany held staunchly to the truth and uniqueness of Scripture and Jesus Christ, and the need for Christians to participate in Church. Thereby he heeded CW1. He spoke about Christ in traditional Christian words and theological constructs; Christ was presented as the Son of God who died and rose again for the forgiveness of sins of those who believed in Him. In this regard, Madany implemented RCR5. He did that too in regard to describing the Church. The heart of the Christian *kerygma* was proclaimed in the programs of Madany. By showing respect for the Churches of the Middle East, and by underlining their intrinsic unity, Madany also reflected the *koinonia* of the Christian witness.

Madany presented the Church in his programs in terms of Travis' C2 or C3; His resistance towards Travis' C4 and C5 spectrums was the logical fruit of his belief that the Presbyterian churches in the Arab World were expressions of God's work in Arab history, and also of his respect for the ancient churches of the Orient in general. He did not see the need for an increase in denominations in the Arab World, and certainly not by one that could potentially harm the existent churches. In Arab countries without historic churches, Madany would probably agree with the C3 form of a Christian community, as long as its content would still be in harmony with the confessions of the Reformed churches of the Middle East and as long as these communities confessed unity with those of other churches.

Madany rightly stressed that a missionary method should never be allowed to contradict a Biblical view of the Church including its unity, in accordance with CW3, and he would not agree to methods that were resisted by the Arab Protestant churches, in accordance with CW2.



#### 14.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs

Madany was prepared to broadcast his programs on the secular station CBC and through the main Protestant stations, even if he did not agree with their view of contextualization. This means that Madany's programs were often surrounded by programs he was not satisfied with. Those programs to an extent impacted how the audience understood Madany's programs. The impact of his theological and missiological approach nevertheless must have been rather large as his programs were the main one's being broadcast between 1958 and 1994.

#### 14.7.3 Christian Witness

Madany's choice to use MSA and his tendency to treat topics philosophically resulted in his audience being mainly well-educated Arabs. The many books and brochures that were mailed out may not have been well read as even well-educated Arabs are not good readers. Nonetheless, the system of BTGH to ship books and brochures to its Arabic mailing list was possibly the only method of audience follow-up feasible due to the small staff. A better, more personable follow up system would have required more staff.

The practice of buying airtime from Christian Arab radio broadcasters by Madany made him the main speaker on most of those channels. This demonstrates the powerful role of the program suppliers in the ministry of Arabic Christian radio, if they were able to pay for their airtime. This system of selling airtime also made it difficult for any radio station to implement a unique programming policy.

Madany was a remarkable producer of Arabic Christian programs. He proved that with minimal staff, it was possible to have a broad radio ministry in the Arab World. His long-term ministry enabled him to create a large library of programs even though he only produced one program per week. Madany was also the main voice on Arabic Christian radio during those years, and the 200,000 responses from his audience during those years, testify to the impact of his programs.

Madany's programs and theology have been important for those Arabs that listened to Arabic Christian radio during the years of his radio ministry. The anecdotal evidence of Muslims turning to Christ because of his programs, testifies to that. His programs missed part of the *diakonal* witness of the Church as he refused to speak on sensitive political matters. His programs did reflect the *koinonia* of the Church, as he did not hesitate to speak positively of the historic Churches and the unity of all Christians. Madany's programs were also strong on the side of the Christian *kerygma*. The death and resurrection of Christ were central to Madany. The writing of a proper biography of this radio missionary is recommended.



## 15 Arab World Ministries (AWM)

This chapter begins with a history of Arab World Ministries (AWM). The organization has a long record of Christian mission work across the Arab World using radio production. In 1960, the organization produced its first Arabic radio programs and has continued to do so. While the first programs were produced in a studio in Morocco, the operation moved to Marseille in 1964. The studio in Marseille was called Radio School of the Bible (RSB).

Until 1987, AWM was called the North Africa Mission (NAM). This chapter uses the name of the organization as it was known at the time of reference. In 1987, NAM's media ministry, RSB, also underwent a name change to Arab World Media (AWM). In order to avoid confusion, the media department in Marseille will consistently be referred to by its original name RSB. For AWM, radio was the main means to enlist people into its Bible Correspondence Courses (BCCs). This chapter therefore describes the methods for enrolling people into these BCCs and the numbers of North Africans that progressed through them.

After a description of the history of AWM and its Arabic programs, the Statement of Faith of the organization is considered, as well as its target audience and its preferred language. RSB's choice to use Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as its preferred language is discussed in detail in this chapter. AWM's programming philosophies are also treated.

This chapter then describes the actual programs of AWM, and the audience response elicited. The factors pertaining to the rise and fall of the audience response figures to the radio broadcasts is examined with a particular focus on how the North African authorities tried to stop the relationship between AWM and its audience. In this description, the participation in the BCC's is also included.

Then, the final observation draws some conclusion regarding the indigenization and the contextualization as practiced by AWM. It ends with some conclusions regarding the Christian witness of AWM in the light of the *kerygma*, the *koinonia* and the *diakonia* as reflected in the programs.

### 15.1 HISTORY

#### *15.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Productions: 1881-1959*

##### **15.1.1.1 Mission Agency in North Africa: Since 1881**

The origins of AWM lay in the 1870s, when George Pearse (1814-1902), a successful stockbroker from the United Kingdom, went to Algiers. Although Pearse and his wife Jane Bonnycastle were originally interested in reaching French soldiers with the Gospel, Jane was struck by the plight of the Kabyle Imazighen of Algeria. In 1881, with a team of other missionaries, the Pearses started the first mission station near the village of Jama' Sahârij in Algeria. The work was called the Mis-

sion to the Kabyles.<sup>1</sup> In 1883 George Pearce, aged 69, handed the organization over to a council in Barking in the United Kingdom, while he and his wife moved to Algiers to continue their work with the Kabyles. The name of the organization was changed to Mission to the Kabyles and Other Berber Races of North Africa. In 1888 the name became North Africa Mission (NAM).<sup>2</sup>

NAM grew fast and had multiple posts in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Egypt within ten years. In 1884, for instance, the organization started medical work in Tangier, and shortly thereafter the organization opened the first ever hospital in Morocco in the same city. However, World War II created many problems for mission work in North Africa once it became part of the battlefield. These general problems included lack of communication with home countries and wartime regulations. After the war, NAM hoped to build up its work in North Africa again and in time, the size of the mission team increased.<sup>3</sup>

#### **15.1.1.2 Preparations to become a Radio Producer: 1955-1960**

In 1955 NAM began its first steps towards witnessing through radio productions for North Africa. When NAM held its annual Field Administration meeting in June 1955 in its headquarters in Tangier, field director Harold W. Stalley minuted that 'the situation of the Tangier [radio] station was reviewed. It was evident that even an experimental broadcast could not begin before January 1956, when the station would be in a position to cover the North Africa territories'. This radio station was Voice of Tangier (VOT), which had just begun its broadcasts to Europe. During the meetings the need for 'recording machines' was discussed. Though these were in the first place needed for language studies of NAM missionaries, it was recognized that they could also be used 'for the eventual preparation of radio programs'.<sup>4</sup> In October 1955, Field Administration discussed again the possibility of involvement with radio broadcasting:

The extension to [the station in Tangier] is expected to become effective before Christmas, and a close personal link is being kept with the Rev. Ralph Freed on developments. If we are to take advantage of the great opening offered us, we shall need to set apart someone as a programme director. Tom Wilson reports a personal contact with ELWA who have offered to broadcast tapes in Arabic beaming them to [North] Africa.<sup>5</sup>

By August 1956, NAM had been offered French evangelistic radio programs by the Belgian Gospel Mission. NAM could add its own credits and announcements to the tapes. This offer was accepted 'as an aid to beginning our own program of

<sup>1</sup> Francis R. Steele, *Not in Vain; The Story of North Africa Mission* (Pasadena, 1981), pp. 15-22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60, 135. The smaller Southern Morocco Mission decided to join NAM in 1961. The Algiers Mission Band, begun in 1888 by Isabella Trotter, grew to thirty workers, mostly single women, and merged in 1964 with NAM.

<sup>4</sup> Harold W. Stalley, 'Memorandum to Home Councils from Field Director, Report of Field Administration Meeting, Tangier (15-17 June 1955)', p. 3, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing (England). These files were kept in boxes without being ordered.

<sup>5</sup> Harold W. Stalley, 'Memorandum to Home Councils from Field Director, Report of Field Administration Meeting, Tangier (20-22 October 1955)', from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

radio evangelism to [North] Africa, from WTAN, Tangier', that is, VOT.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, NAM was thinking of producing its own 15-minute program in French, supplemented by a French BCC. The number of North Africans who were able to read and write in French was much larger than those that had mastered Arabic in those pre-independence days. Stalley reported about these developments to the home councils of NAM:

The [Field Administration] proposes a weekly 15 minute program over WTAN for a trial period of 6 months. The total cost, apart from the cost of tapes, will be just over \$300. We have nearly \$100 toward this, and need \$200 more. [...] We propose to get two months supply of programs from [Belgian Gospel Mission], and meanwhile [we] will complete the preparation for the remaining four months. We hope to start broadcasting in October [1956]. WTAN should have completed their technical tests for the area we want to cover, by then.<sup>7</sup>

The enthusiasm of the NAM missionaries in the field was not shared by the home councils in the USA, Canada and England. Stalley's wife Jessie wrote later that 'no steps were taken, as the time was not considered right for the new venture'.<sup>8</sup> This was probably a financial matter, not a matter of strategy, as the next Field Administration meeting again discussed broadcasting to North Africa. In March 1957 it 'reconsidered' the ideas and minuted, rather vaguely, that 'certain new arrangements [were] agreed for a further experimental period, this to be evaluated in June'.<sup>9</sup> In August 1958, the Field Administration discussed to 'keep provision of programs [...] under review'. NAM realized that someone needed to be set apart on a full time basis if advances in radio evangelism were to be made, but there was no one available yet for this ministry.<sup>10</sup>

Radio ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Arica') had in the meantime approached NAM as they had begun Arabic broadcasts and needed programs badly. NAM's Field Administration decided in August 1958 that ELWA should be contacted to find out what sort of Arabic tapes they would want to receive. However NAM was worried about the bad reception of the programs of ELWA and in January 1959 Stalley wrote that there was still no news from ELWA regarding 'developments that would make possible good reception in [North] Africa'.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> WTAN were the call letters assigned to the station by the authorities in Tangier. The 'W' has no meaning, while 'TAN' stands for Tangier.

<sup>7</sup> Harold W. Stalley, 'Memorandum to Home Councils from Field Director, Report of Field Administration Meeting, Tangier (30 July -2 August 1956)', p. 5, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>8</sup> Jessie C. Stalley, *No Frontiers: The Story of the Radio School of the Bible* (Highgate, 1969), p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> Harold W. Stalley, 'Memorandum to Home Councils from Field Director, Report of Field Administration Meeting, Tangier (4-5 March 1957)', p. 3, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>10</sup> Harold W. Stalley, 'Memorandum to Home Councils, Report of Field Administration (29 July-2 August 1958)', p. 3, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>11</sup> Harold W. Stalley, 'Memorandum to Home Councils, Report of Field Administration Meeting (13-14 October 1958)', p. 4, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing. Harold W. Stalley, 'Memorandum to Home Councils, Report of Field Administration Meeting (5-9 January 1959)', p. 3, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

In 1959 Gordon Beacham, then administrative secretary of NAM in the USA, came to Morocco for the International Council meetings.<sup>12</sup> Beacham had in the past been the field director for ELWA after having played a role in setting up that station. At that time, ELWA had just bought a new Shortwave (SW) transmitter and antenna, for the special purpose of better reaching North Africa.<sup>13</sup> It is not unlikely that Beacham played a major role in convincing the International Council to let the Field proceed with developing radio production facilities. His heart was obviously still in missionary radio broadcasting.

During his stay in Morocco, Beacham met Don Harris of NAM. In the British army Harris had been assigned to a radio squadron, so Beacham challenged Harris: 'If ELWA is going to broadcast to North Africa, we shall have to provide them with programs. How would you like to take on this work?'<sup>14</sup> Field Council of NAM was convinced by Beacham's arguments, and probably the prospect of better reception with ELWA's new transmitters and antennas was an added incentive. Harris was asked to set up a recording studio as a pilot project. Field Council minuted that 'a beginning had been made by inviting sample and practice recordings from National Christians with the aid of missionaries owning recording machines'.<sup>15</sup>

NAM's conviction to become involved in program production was through its contacts with North American Christians who worked with ELWA and VOT, not through suggestions of indigenous North African Christians. NAM decided from the beginning that indigenous believers should be the speakers rather than its missionaries in the actual programs. The missionaries were to help with tape recorders only. That was a rather simple view of radio program production, but it showed that NAM from the beginning realized that the North African believers should be the ones evangelizing their own people. That was a good choice from the perspective of indigenization and contextualizing the message for North Africa.

Harris was enthusiastic, as he had seen the effect of Gospel radiobroadcasts in the USA. He wrote in 1959 that it 'has long been the prayer of missionaries [...] that Gospel programs in colloquial Arabic might one day be heard in North Africa. God is answering that prayer'.<sup>16</sup> The number of radios in North Africa had steadily grown. Harris wrote towards the end of 1959, 'Missionaries, who have access to remote mountain villages, have noted that, even there, radios are to be found. These [...] are often up-to-date models. [...] North Africans everywhere are becoming accustomed to listening to short wave programmes'.<sup>17</sup> It is important to note here that NAM initially wanted to produce programs in colloquial Arabic, not in MSA.

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<sup>12</sup> In 1916, C. Gordon Beacham went to Nigeria as a missionary under the auspices of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM).

<sup>13</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>15</sup> 'Minutes of Meeting of Field Council held at Tangier (22-24 September 1959)', p. 3, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>16</sup> Don Harris, 'Gospel Broadcasts for Morocco', in *North Africa* (No. 29, October-December 1959), pp. 70-72.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

### 15.1.2 Arabic Radio Productions: Since 1960

#### 15.1.2.1 Radio Production in Morocco: 1960-1963

Early in 1960, ELWA started test broadcasts with its new transmitters and antennas for North Africa and the Middle East. Harris wrote in the magazine of NAM that action had to be taken now:

This then, presents us with an opportunity and a challenge to establish our own recording studios, that we may soon be able to send to ELWA suitable programme material in North African languages. To this end, the North Africa Mission envisages the setting up of perhaps four such studios in North Africa.<sup>18</sup>

These were ambitious goals of Harris. He probably wanted to set up the four studios in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, as they were the countries where NAM had workers. Harris underlined again that programs were to be produced in the languages of the countries. That means MSA was not chosen as the language for broadcasting. The first studio was set up in Marrakesh in Harris' noisy dining room that edged on a busy street. Harris had completed ten weeks with VOT to learn more about program production and how to build his own recording studio.<sup>19</sup>

The fact that Morocco announced in 1959 that by the end of that year it would nationalize all broadcasting facilities in the country did not deter Harris from developing his studio project. It was decided that he would move to Immûzâr, a mountain village close to Tangier, and combine his new studio with a rest house for missionaries. Harris and his wife Mary hosted that rest house.<sup>20</sup> In December 1960 Harris returned from an extended furlough, with production equipment he had bought in the United Kingdom. The Moroccan authorities allowed him to import that equipment, to everyone's amazement.<sup>21</sup>

The guardian's house on the premises of the rest house was rebuilt into a studio. In June 1961 the studio was opened and named the *Olga Weiss Studio* after G. Christian Weiss' recently deceased wife Olga. He had formerly been with GMU in Morocco and was now involved with the Back to the Bible (BTTB) broadcasts. It was with his donation that the equipment and its shipping had been paid for.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> 'RSB/AWM Media Historical Notes', received from Norm Le Duc of RSB in Marseille, in an email to the author (16 December 2002). Harris used the name 'Evangelical Broadcasts' as the name of the organization 'formerly known as The Voice of Tangier'. Don Harris, 'Gospel Broadcasts for Morocco', p. 71.

<sup>20</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, p. 49. 'Minutes of the Field Council Meeting held in Casablanca (6-8 April 1960)', p. 3, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>21</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 49-52. This extended furlough was for the benefit of one of the Harris' children who suffered from diabetes.

<sup>22</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, p. 51. Fred Plastow, a former director of GMU in Malaga, remembered Weiss: 'He was a phenomenal man. He only spent about two and a half years in Morocco, as he was called back to the USA to assume the responsibilities of GMU president. This he did for about thirteen years before moving to the Back to the Bible broadcast in Lincoln, Nebraska (USA). He became the mission radio voice for that organization for a number of years and was a well-known Bible teacher and conference speaker. He never forgot his missionary fervor and when he returned for a field visit to Morocco in the late 1960s when I had the responsibility for the Sunday morning Arabic services, I queried him if he would like me to translate for him in the morning service to which he had been invited to minister.'

Later, NAM described this studio as ‘a clandestine studio’, and that ‘the government was soon trying to search it out’.<sup>23</sup>

Harris produced one weekly program of 15 minutes that was broadcast on ELWA.<sup>24</sup> These early programs were produced with a young southern Moroccan Christian student, Yûsif, who worked with Harris during the school holidays as the ‘voice’. He decided to go to a Bible School in Lebanon.<sup>25</sup> In his summer holidays Yûsif would come back to Morocco to record Gospel messages with Harris.<sup>26</sup> ELWA broadcast this program twice every Monday, once to North Africa and once to the Middle East. It did not charge NAM for this airtime.<sup>27</sup>

### 15.1.2.2 Closure of the Studio in Morocco: 1961-1963

In late 1961 NAM began distributing a BCC that had been developed by Warren Gaston, NAM’s regional superintendent for Tunisia from 1957. These courses used French and MSA. They were initially developed in response to the growing need for a more systematic scheme of Bible study for the increasing number of inquirers and converts in North Africa.<sup>28</sup> During the Tunisia Industrial Fair in autumn 1961, NAM missionaries widely distributed leaflets advertising the BCC. In the years thereafter they had a booth during that fair in which they advertised their ‘Free Lessons on the Life of Jesus Christ and the Scriptures’. In Algeria, Operation Mobilization distributed the same leaflets. About 75,000 leaflets were distributed in total and 700 people asked for the first lessons. Later, most new students came because students told their friends about the courses.<sup>29</sup>

In 1969 William Bell, who worked for the BCCs of NAM, evaluated the success of the BCCs and commented that many young people enrolled because they were very eager to read anything they could lay their hands on. Only when Tunisia and Morocco became independent in 1956 and Algeria in 1962, did public education become available for all. Many of the ones doing the courses were teenagers of 13

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He replied ‘no’ and that he thought he could handle it. He gave a beautiful message in Moroccan colloquial Arabic and when I questioned a believer about Mr. Weiss’s Arabic, he replied, “Ah! He speaks like those in the high social strata.” A great testimony to a man who had just returned to a land that he had worked in thirty years earlier!’ Fred Plastow in an email to the author (9 February 2003).

<sup>23</sup> ‘Radio – Today’s Open Door’, in *RSB News* (No.1, 1973).

<sup>24</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Radio School of the Bible – History’ (n.d., but from the 1990s), from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing. Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>26</sup> Steven Vishanoff in an email to the author (14 December 2002).

<sup>27</sup> A brief description of Yûsif and his conversion and Christian life can be found in Muriel Butcher, ‘By Faith...’: *Character Cameos from North Africa* (Highgate, n.d.), pp. 73-81. This booklet dates from the early 1960s, as at the time of its publication, Yûsif was still studying in Bible College.

<sup>28</sup> ‘RSB/AWM Media Historical Notes.’

<sup>29</sup> Letter of Warren Gaston to Chris Ford (1 March 1994), from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing. Gaston wrote that ‘Arabic correspondence courses were duplicated in our apartment in Tunis on a borrowed duplicating machine in 1957’, but that date is most probably incorrect in the light of all the other publications that mention 1961 as the beginning of the first courses.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Effective Methods in Reaching Muslims by Correspondence Courses - Report by William Bell - Radio School of the Bible’, in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), pp. 27-28.



to 15 years old, who were the first in their family to be able to read and write. Bell realized that the 1960s were a special time for North Africa:

I don't believe we could have done it in the middle 50s. I am not sure that we could do it ten years from now. But in this decade this was what was accepted in North Africa. This is why we find that the movement had snow-balled when we get into the village or quarter of the city where one or two students started reading the lessons and their friends heard about it and they all wanted it.<sup>30</sup>

NAM's experience was that 18 percent of all people starting its first 'One God, One Way' course in the 1960s, would finish the 12 lessons. Initially in this period NAM was allowed to work openly in North Africa. It organized public meetings inviting students of the BCCs to discuss what they had been reading in the lessons and the students would come in good numbers. One goal of the organizers was to show that they were not attacking Islam. The approach would be 'simply basically to ignore Islam and to present the good news'. According to Bell, it worked 'very, very well in Tunisia'.<sup>31</sup>

By mid 1963 there were approximately 20,000 teenagers in Tunisia enrolled in the BCC. Because of complaints to the minister of education, NAM's work was investigated. Warren Gaston later said that according to the governor of the province of Tunis, NAM was on the verge of 'creating a Christian minority in the country'. Therefore in March 1963 NAM's Christian Center (*Centre Chrétien*) in Tunis was closed. Gaston and his house were placed under constant surveillance for months before they were finally escorted to a ship sailing for Marseille.<sup>32</sup> As a result of their *Centre Chrétien* being closed, NAM decided that the BCC with its office staff in Tunis and the radio production in Immûzâr should be taken out of North Africa.<sup>33</sup>

Shortly thereafter, NAM had to stop its work in Tunisia altogether. Bell thought that part of the trouble in Tunisia was caused by the fact that they had ministered to children that were too young. 'It was the parents that got upset about it, and we feel they get less upset if the child is around 13, 14, 15 or over.'<sup>34</sup> In a North African society, with its cohesive family structures, it was indeed unwise to approach children individually with the Christian message. This showed that it was not only important to ensure that the content of the Christian message was suitable for the North African context but that the method of delivery also needed to be contextually appropriate.

### 15.1.2.3 Move of the Studio to Marseille: 1964-1965

Before the decision was taken to move NAM's media operations to Southern France, Stalley had contacted Voice of the Gospel (*La Voix de L'Évangile*) in Marseille, an organization owned by BTTB. This group was eager to cooperate with

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 28, 41.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<sup>32</sup> Letter of Warren Gaston to Chris Ford (1 March 1994).

<sup>33</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 12, 26.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 29, 42.

NAM in producing Arabic programs for broadcasting on Trans World Radio (TWR), VOT's new name after it moved to Monte Carlo in Southern France.<sup>35</sup>

Stalley had been in touch with Paul Freed in Monte Carlo, who told him that TWR was planning to have antennas installed in Bonaire (The Netherlands Antilles), for broadcasting on SW to North Africa and the Middle East. TWR was very interested in building up a solid block of Arabic programs. 'It is understood that the offer of TWR implies that sponsors will be needed to buy time on the air when facilities are provided', Stalley explained to an Emergency Field Council meeting in Casablanca in September 1963.<sup>36</sup>

In the light of these findings and because of the critical situation in Tunisia, NAM decided to transfer its Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian BCCs to the vicinity of Marseille within three months. Gaston was appointed as the administrator for the new facilities in Marseille.<sup>37</sup> In January 1964 the radio production and literature ministries of NAM were registered in Marseille as Radio School of the Bible (*École Radio Biblique*, RSB). Some felt that this name was strange, 'We were neither a radio nor a school', Stalley wrote but 'that was the name they felt God had given them'.<sup>38</sup>

Harris went on furlough early in 1964, and stored his recording equipment before leaving Immûzâr. In January 1965, after his furlough, he moved to Marseille. Personnel from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia had already settled there. Harris worked in Marseille until 1968, and then in the NAM office in the United Kingdom until 1977. He then returned to Marseille for a new term of involvement in radio production.<sup>39</sup>

The move to Marseille in 1964 'turned out in some respects to be a step forward. When [the work] had to be transferred across the Mediterranean to the south of France the chief result was a wider scope of ministry', Francis Steele, the North America director of NAM, concluded. 'More work could be done with no political restraint and travel to all points of North Africa was much facilitated.'<sup>40</sup> In April 1964 Gaston explained to the supporters of NAM about his new location in Marseille: 'Some of you may have wondered if we were moving too far away from our students. The fact is, by the mail routes, we are closer to them than ever before! Mailings that sometimes took as much as ten days from Algiers now arrive in two or three.'<sup>41</sup> These advantages did not last very long. Steven Vishanoff, who worked with NAM in Tunis and moved to Marseille in 1975 to create a better program format, remembered the problems of the location:

When [our work] first moved to Marseille, there was a lot of coming and going between North Africa and Marseille. This was greatly reduced over the years as visas became more difficult to obtain. This reduction (call it a choking) of the flow of

<sup>35</sup> 'Minutes of Emergency Field Council Meeting held in Casablanca (10-11 September 1963)', pp. 1-2, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Letter of Warren Gaston to Chris Ford (1 March 1994).

<sup>38</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, p. 28.

<sup>39</sup> 'Radio! From Small Beginnings...', in *Frontline* (September 1978), pp. 4-5.

<sup>40</sup> Steele, *Not in Vain*, p. 76.

<sup>41</sup> Quote from Gaston in 'Radio School of the Bible – History'.

people became a great source of difficulty for the ministry. [...] This is of course related to the common border of the European Union.<sup>42</sup>

From the perspective of producing programs that were suitable for the context of North Africa, it was a disadvantage that the production facility was no longer in North Africa. A presence in the midst of the target audience is an obvious advantage.

In 1965 NAM bought a villa in a residential neighborhood in Marseille. It had an old cheese factory on the first floor and it became the permanent location for RSB.<sup>43</sup> In the fall of 1965, Gaston presented a long range plan for RSB to International Council of NAM at its meeting in Tangier. The multi-year plan outlined the personnel and financial resources that would be required for the continuing development of the RSB ministries. Some felt that the proposed plan was so radical that it did not deserve attention. Stalley persuaded International Council to accept the plan and to allow Gaston to implement it.<sup>44</sup> Throughout the years, both NAM and RSB sometimes wondered how wise it was to develop and maintain a media production organization within a mission organization.

#### 15.1.2.4 Years of Growth: 1965-1976

In 1965 RSB began supplementing the ELWA SW transmissions with Arabic radio programs on SW through TWR's Bonaire transmitters.<sup>45</sup> Harris had to initially work in Marseille under difficult circumstances, as he transformed a toilet in his home into his studio. In November 1966 RSB moved into the premises it had bought in 1965 and Harris began building his studio in the fourth location in six years. He assumed that the refrigerator room in the factory would be a good location for the studio.<sup>46</sup>

RSB initially did not have its own presenters and throughout its history the lack of Arabic program producers remained a problem. In 1965 and 1966 NAM used the services of a young Jordanian Christian, Ibrahim Marji. TWR allowed Harris and Marji to use its studios in Monte Carlo for recording their 'messages' while RSB's studio was not finished.<sup>47</sup>

Muhammad 'Shaf' Shafir, a Moroccan Christian who was studying in the Lebanon Bible Institute (LBI) in Beirut, came to Marseille during his summer holidays between 1966 and 1969. NAM produced programs with him on behalf of GMU. Each year Shafir worked for three months preparing 52 radio programs in Moroccan Arabic and he also helped with the BCCs. It was planned that Shafir was to join

<sup>42</sup> Steven Vishanoff in an email to the author (14 December 2002).

<sup>43</sup> At a total cost of FF612,000, to be paid in one year. This was more than the general fund budget for NAM during that year. See 'RSB/AWM Media Historical Notes'. Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>44</sup> 'Radio School of the Bible – History.' Hobe Dearborn in an email to the author (30 August 2003).

<sup>45</sup> 'RSB/AWM Media Historical Notes'. J. Maynard Yoder, 'A History of the Moroccan Radio Program (Arabic).' This document was received from the GMU office in Malaga. It is undated but must be from the late 1960s.

<sup>46</sup> *RSB News* (No. 2, 1972). Letter of George Rider (director of RSB at that time) to Christine Ford (17 March 1994), from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing. The studio of RSB in the old refrigerator room was totally torn down and rebuilt in 1972, as it was considered 'unsound'. TWR had one of its people design the new studio for RSB.

<sup>47</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 53-55. 'Radio School of the Bible – History.'

RSB fulltime in September 1969, but this was postponed as initially he had problems getting his visa in France. The Moroccan consul in Paris did not want to renew his passport, according to Shafir to force him to stop his Christian work.<sup>48</sup>

In June 1966, two weeks after Marji had joined his parents in the USA, a Lebanese ex-Roman Catholic priest, Tawfiq Ghûrî, arrived in Marseille. Missionaries in Beirut had recruited him. He was a seminary professor in Arabic and Semitic languages and had been working in a Christian literature ministry in Lebanon. In Marseille he handled the Arabic correspondence and prepared and spoke the broadcasts.<sup>49</sup> He also produced a quarterly paper called *Key of Knowledge (al-Muftâh al-Ma'rifah)*. Ghûrî was a major voice in the RSB programs until the 1980s.<sup>50</sup> In the early 1970s Jûzâf Sîkâlî, a Syrian Christian, came to work with RSB. He took over the responsibility for writing the Key of Knowledge from Ghûrî, to free him for program production.<sup>51</sup>

RSB had excellent Arabic personnel in Shafir, Ghûrî and Sîkâlî. However from the perspective of RSB's wish to produce programs suitable for the North African context, it was not wise to have programs dominated by voices from Syria and Lebanon. Irrespective of their ability to speak excellent MSA, the accents of Ghûrî and Sîkâlî were always apparent and made the audience aware that they were not from North Africa.<sup>52</sup> Additionally and more importantly though, MSA was not the vernacular of North Africa. This created a distance to the audience and was not in line with RCR3 that demanded that contextualized programs should be in the mother tongue of the audience.

In 1966 RSB produced six weekly programs of 15 minutes. Gaston aimed at doubling those broadcasts.<sup>53</sup> This aim to grow and the fast increase in personnel and output in the previous few years must have created grave worries in NAM. By the time of its meeting in the fall of 1967, International Council wondered whether NAM should retain its relationship with RSB.<sup>54</sup> It was not without some difficulty that Stalley and Gaston were able to persuade International Council that both ministries would be enhanced by complementing each other within the same umbrella organization.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>48</sup> 'Mohammed Shaffir [sic]', in *Forward* (November 1969), p. 85. Muḥammed Shafir's name created problems among Muslims and among Western and Middle Eastern Christians alike, so he changed it legally into Shaf Shafir. See Shaf Shafir, 'What is Your Name', in *Frontline* (November 1975), pp. 6-7.

<sup>49</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 56-58.

<sup>50</sup> *Muftâh al-Ma'rifah* started with 10,000 copies in Arabic. It was typeset in Lebanon and printed in Marseille. The French counterpart, *Clef de la Connaissance* was produced by the Vietnamese staff member of NAM, Tran Thuyen, from April 1966. 'RSB/AWM Media Historical Notes'. Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 13, 15, 60-61, 66. Vishanoff in emails to the author (13 September 2003 and 14 December 2002). 'The French Connection', in *North Africa Mission* (May 1975), p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> 'The French Connection', p. 9. By the end of 1996 the last issue of Key of Knowledge was published. This was both due to the retirement of the editors, and also because of the difficulty of getting it to the target audience of BCC students in North Africa. See Johanna Ruffin, 'Piercing the Heart', in *Contact* (April 1996), p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> The reason for RSB's choice for MSA will be treated under 15.3.2.

<sup>53</sup> 'Transcript of Meetings (10-11 May 1966)', pp. 6-7, from the ELWA Archives at SIM, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programs, Beirut 1960-1972. Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 43, 61.

<sup>54</sup> 'Radio School of the Bible - History'.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* According to Dearborn, Stalley was only prepared to allow NAM to let go of RSB 'over his dead body'. Dearborn in an email to the author (30 August 2003).

As far as RSB was concerned, more growth was needed. In 1969 Stalley wrote that for ‘an adequate radio ministry to the Arabic-speaking Muslim world, two hours broadcasting time per day seems a minimum. This should be done in collaboration with other evangelical agencies working in the same language’.<sup>56</sup>

In 1973 RSB still produced 15 minutes per day, and the way forward was difficult, a lack of funds even threatened a cutback on productions.<sup>57</sup> In 1975 RSB’s daily program of 15 minutes was broadcast on TWR, ELWA and Family Radio (FR).<sup>58</sup> During that year RSB also placed its programs as ‘a trial run’ on the SW broadcasts of International Broadcasting Association (IBRA) from Sines (Portugal).<sup>59</sup>

RSB wanted to be a professional media organization and therefore it was worried about how NAM would meet its personnel needs. In 1975, there was some tension as RSB had to ‘insure all members of the mission that it [had] no intention of taking major independent action’. RSB was to stay dependent on NAM, but ‘full use of RSB resources will be impossible in the above relationship unless the NAM becomes more aggressive in expansion. [...] NAM must be in a position to supply long-term personnel needs’.<sup>60</sup>

The issue of personnel was an important one for RSB. It urgently needed technically and qualified personnel, including secretarial staff. RSB spoke of a ‘mismatch of personnel qualifications to our work load requirements’. NAM had the habit of accepting missionaries for ‘spiritual’ skills, while in RSB the main need was for people with professional skills. RSB felt that there were hardly any attempts ‘to recruit personnel for specific needs’. RSB suggested that the NAM recruitment policies should be changed enabling RSB to obtain qualified personnel. This was to keep RSB from ‘drifting away from NAM’ and it would also ensure that RSB ‘maintained a true missionary spirit’.<sup>61</sup> In subsequent years, NAM did advertise for concrete job-openings in RSB through its publications.

#### 15.1.2.5 Light upon Light: 1977-1990

As of September 1977, TWR had a daily block in prime time on MW available for broadcasts to North Africa from its transmitter at Radio Monte Carlo’s station in Monte Carlo (RMC-MC). Until then, TWR had only broadcast to North Africa over SW from Bonaire, with minimal MW broadcasts at low-audience hours from 1969 using RMC-MC. Steele encouraged NAM to not let go of the opportunity, in spite of the high cost. ‘Until now it has been impossible to procure a fixed time

<sup>56</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, p. 85.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Radio School of the Bible – History; Radio – Today’s Open Door’, in *RSB News* (No. 1, 1973). In 1982 most of the individual language services of any international broadcaster lasted between 30 minutes and two hours per day, often with repeat broadcasts during that same day. See Donald R. Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting; the Limits of the Limitless Medium* (New York, 1982), p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> ‘The French Connection’, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Vishanoff in an email to the author (13 September 2004).

<sup>60</sup> ‘F. W. M. Regional Superintendent’s Report to the Field Council (November 1975)’, p. 3, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>61</sup> ‘F.W.M. Regional Superintendent’s Report to Field Council Appendix I (November 1975)’, pp. 2-3, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

slot in prime time for North Africa'.<sup>62</sup> Hobe Dearborn, director of RSB from 1976-1979, was instrumental in getting this MW airtime for North Africa on TWR.<sup>63</sup> He discussed with TWR, and TWR's German partner *Evangeliums Rundfunk* (Broadcaster of the Gospel, ERF) agreed to give up of its airtime. NAM and GMU agreed to take equal responsibility, both for programming and the increased cost of airtime.<sup>64</sup> Each produced three programs of 30 minutes per week. The programs were called *Light upon Light (Nûr 'alá Nûr)*. Harris, who had returned to work in RSB, considered that with these broadcasts RSB had entered into the 'heart of the current radio ministry to North Africa'.<sup>65</sup> Together with Ghûrî, he produced the programs. The productivity of RSB did not change with the cooperative approach with GMU, as instead of six programs of 15 minutes, it now produced three of 30 minutes per week.

In 1980, Sîkâlî and his wife Mûnâ became RSB's hosts for *Light upon Light*, and they also produced these programs. On radio they were called Yûsif and Hûdá, names that could be Islamic. Sîkâlî's real name Jûzâf was recognizably Christian. This program was produced throughout the 1980s.<sup>66</sup> Sîkâlî was not satisfied with the status quo, though:

We have helped create a regular daily block of radio time with Trans World Radio. But what is one half hour in 24 hours. Some goals are [to] increase our radio time. We must grow in this highly potential ministry. [...] An increase in personnel is also necessary. We need dedicated Arabic-speaking personnel to support those presently with the RSB.<sup>67</sup>

In 1980 RSB not only broadcast its three programs of 30 minutes on MW by TWR, but it also had a 15-minute program each week on SW through ELWA and Family Radio. This 15-minute program was produced by Tâlib Barwânî, an ex-Muslim from Zanzibar and a technician with RSB. RSB also contributed some materials for a weekly program of the Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA), while IBRA was broadcasting two programs of 15 minutes each week from the transmitters in Sines. Radio Logos in Sicily (Italy) was broadcasting the same programs that RSB put out on TWR, but through FM. Some local channels in France also carried the RSB programs.<sup>68</sup>

By 1981, RSB had 28 personnel.<sup>69</sup> This was a very large number, considering RSB's output of approximately two hours of radio programs only per week. The

<sup>62</sup> Francis Rue Steele, 'Breakthrough in Radio', in *The Cross and the Crescent* (Fall 1977).

<sup>63</sup> Hobe Dearborn in an email to the author (30 August 2003).

<sup>64</sup> More on this cooperation is described in chapter 18 on GMU.

<sup>65</sup> William Bell, 'Radio! From Small Beginnings...' in *Frontline* (September 1978), p. 5.

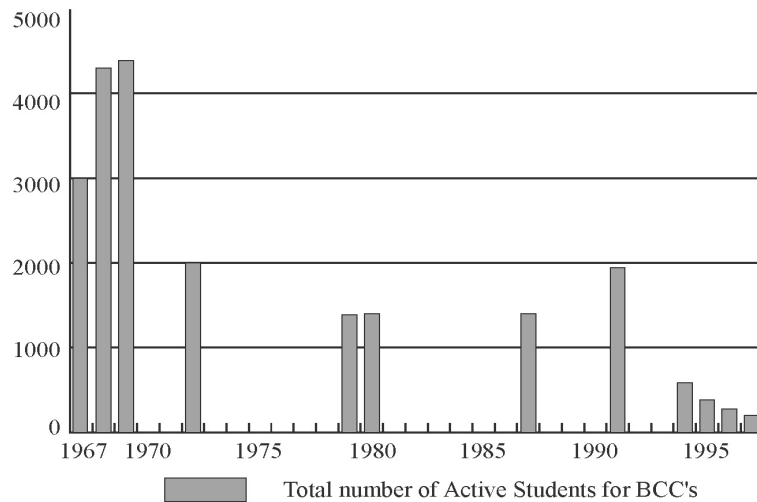
<sup>66</sup> '1964-1989 Acorns to Oak Trees', in *Contact* (April 1989), p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> 'Awakening them By Radio!', in *Frontline* (September 1978), p. 6. Don Harris and Joseph Sikaly, 'What's Happening in 1980?', in *Frontline* (September 1980), p. 5. In 1985 NAM had its first programs broadcast in Toulouse. In 1986, RSB was also involved in local broadcasts in La Grande Combe, Valence, Grenoble and Strasbourg. This had become possible after France deregulated its broadcasting. See 'On the Air in France', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1985), and 'Goal Reached in One year', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1986), p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> 'Radio School of the Bible', in *Cross & Crescent* (Winter 1981), p. 12.

BCCs however received about 250-300 new applications every month whilst there were also about 1400 active students. Thus it is probable that the BCCs created the need for this many personnel. If this is true then, it follows that this work was mainly done by non-North Africans, as the majority of RSB personnel were non-Arabs. *Figure 15.1* depicts the numbers of active BCC students since the 1960s.



*Figure 15.1* Number of Active Students of the AWM's BCC's

The few Arabs that worked in Marseille were treasured by the organization. '[The] gifts of our North African and Middle Eastern brothers and sisters are the backbone of many of our ministries. Without them there would be no radio programmes', Field Director Keith Fraser-Smith wrote in 1985. 'We urgently need further native-speaking Arabic personnel to join our team.'<sup>70</sup> That same need was expressed again and again throughout the years. RSB's desire to have more Arab coworkers was mainly hampered by its system of missionaries having to be self-funded and, related to that, its lack of general funds for paying salaries to Arabic staff.

NAM changed its name into Arab World Ministries (AWM) in 1987. RSB at the same time changed its name to Arab World Media.<sup>71</sup> According to one staff member, RSB changed its name because 'the ministry covers more than radio, and it isn't really a formal school'.<sup>72</sup>

In 1988 RSB increased its broadcasts over ELWA by broadcasting the same programs they also supplied to TWR. This six-fold increase in airtime on ELWA was considered justified after research in Morocco showed that many people lis-

<sup>70</sup> Keith Fraser-Smith, 'Looking Ahead with the RSB Director', in *Frontline* (March 1985), pp. 4-5.

<sup>71</sup> In order to not confuse the names, this thesis uses AWM for Arab World Ministries, the mission organization. For the offices in Marseille, this study only uses the name RSB.

<sup>72</sup> 'Arab World Media', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1986).

tened to ELWA and that the signal was strong in the early morning and the early evening. ELWA also reached southern Moroccan areas where TWR was weak.<sup>73</sup>

### 15.1.2.6 New Directions for Media Ministries: 1990 and beyond

#### *Co-Productions with GMU*

From April to September 1990, RSB and GMU reduced their programs on TWR to 15 minutes per night, in order to use the production time for developing a new program format. The 15 minutes of airtime that became available on TWR for North Africa during those six months was used for broadcasts of Kabyle, Tarifit and Tashelhayt programs. RSB was involved in arranging cooperation between different agencies for those broadcasts but not in their production. In October 1990, RSB and GMU were back on TWR with an improved program of 30 minutes.<sup>74</sup>

Sikâlî returned to work at RSB after several years in 1989. He became responsible for all broadcasting of RSB. In October 1990 Sikâlî began with the new program format. The program was called *Walking Together (Nimshî Ma'ân)*. The personalities and abilities of the Sikâlîs were very important for RSB in the 1990s. Vishanoff about that:

[Sikaly and his wife] gave cohesion of vision and personal presence to the program. He is a respected counselor in his family, effective in pastoral and evangelistic ministry on the personal level, and he has something of the poet in him. He also has very good literary Arabic (being university trained in law), and generally prefers it, yet he has shown sincere appreciation for the value of the dialectical elements in the program and would even attempt to use a little dialect from the country of North Africa where they had lived for a while.<sup>75</sup>

Just as Light upon Light during the 1980s, Walking Together was a cooperative effort between RSB, GMU and TWR. RSB and GMU decided to have a different production schedule now. Each organization would produce all the programs during a three-month period, and then rotate. RSB produced from October-December 1990 and from April-June 1991.<sup>76</sup> Sikâlî was not happy with the three-month rotation:

I have had to make six half-hour programs a week, and I always feel rushed. I don't have time to really put something of myself, something deeply personal, into the programs. This makes me sad.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>73</sup> 'Electronic Worship for the Arab World', in *Frontline* (June 1988), p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> 'Berber Programs on the Air', in *Contact* (April 1990), p. 1. 'Arabic Programming', in *Contact* (April 1990), p. 1.

<sup>75</sup> Steven Vishanoff in an email to author (29 September 2004).

<sup>76</sup> 'Walking Together', in *Contact* (February 1991), p. 1. 'Triple Partnership', in *Contact* (February 1991), p. 1. 'Arab World Media - in Action', in *Contact* (April 1991), p. 2. 'For information & Intercession', in *Contact* (September 1991), p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> 'Team Effort', in *Contact* (February 1991), pp. 1-2.



In October 1991, RSB and GMU decided to change the rotational system and tried a new system of real co-producing.<sup>78</sup> During the early 1990s there was an 'increased ownership of the media ministries by North African believers'. The first materials produced by AWM in North Africa, were used in 1993.<sup>79</sup> After more than five years of co-producing *Walking Together*, RSB concluded that the complexity of the joint production with GMU exceeded its ability to accomplish what it set out to do.<sup>80</sup> This decision was taken during a period when RSB's leaders were avidly trying to set RSB on a new course with its media ministries.

### *New Media Strategies*

RSB had some clearly defined ideas about how radio would develop in the years ahead. They believed that until the year 2000 radio would remain the predominant mass medium in the developing world. Fraser-Smith, Director of RSB from 1988-1993, published in the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (EMQ) in 1993 that SW broadcasting would decline and MW broadcasting would be relegated to 'an information only role'. RSB assumed that FM and satellite radio stations would expand to become the main entertainment sources.<sup>81</sup>

Those comments about the future role of SW, MW, FM and satellite radio reflected the results of a survey and interviews done in 1992 among 90 Christian Arab leaders and 60 expatriate missionaries in the Arab World.

Comments from the central Middle East and North Africa indicated a very low interest and support for the continuation of short wave radio broadcasting. Both Arab nationals and expatriates felt that we need to monitor closely the changes in radio broadcast technology and be ready to exploit new opportunities on medium wave, FM and through radio-by-satellite, when such services begin.<sup>82</sup>

The report recommended that it should be 'a priority that Christian radio broadcasters make increasing use of medium wave, local FM and future radio-by-satellite opportunities to reach the Middle East/North Africa'.<sup>83</sup> The report noted that Arab nationals, in general, appreciated Christian radio as being an effective medium to reach non-Christians, especially in places with no official church.<sup>84</sup>

In 1993 RSB decided to add video production to its media work in Marseille. It seemed the role of radio in AWM was decreasing. The first step in RSB's involvement in video was when John Tender, formerly with FEBA in Beirut, was seconded to work at Middle East Christian Outreach (MECO) in 1993. This video ministry was in Larnaka (Cyprus). A taskforce was also set up to come with a ten-

<sup>78</sup> Keith Fraser-Smith, 'Media: Reaching the Arab World', in *Frontline* (December 1991-January 1992), p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> 'An Eye to the Future', in *Contact* (February 1993), p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> For a more detailed discussion concerning the reasons for the breakup of this partnership see chapter 17 on GMU.

<sup>81</sup> Anonymous, 'The Mass Media and Church Planting in Restricted Access Countries', in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (July 1993), pp. 279-280. This anonymous writer was Keith Fraser-Smith.

<sup>82</sup> Abu Wasiim (ed), *Christian Mission in the Arab World: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Arab World - and Priorities for Christian Witness Today* (n.p., 1993), p. 45.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

tative proposal in January 1994 about what the role of RSB should be in video.<sup>85</sup> As there was also a large expected turnover of personnel, David Milligan, then Media Director of RSB, thought that the years ahead were a 'timely opportunity to review [RSB's] identity, structure and ministries'.<sup>86</sup>

The first decision regarding RSB's video ministry was taken in May 1994 by AWM's International Council. It approved the establishment of a Video Unit in Marseille to complement the other parts of RSB.<sup>87</sup> At that time RSB underlined that radio would continue to play an important role. It published that '[in] spite of the increasing importance of television and video, radio still proves to be a powerful means of communicating the Gospel to limited access countries of the Arab World'.<sup>88</sup> Not long before this, Fraser-Smith had spoken in defense of why radio broadcasting would remain of eminent importance for North Africa:

Even though television and videos are the main source for popular entertainment, listening to foreign radio stations remains the most popular means of obtaining information. During the first three days of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Saudi Arabian stations in the Arab World gave no news of the action. As a result, the shops were quickly emptied of short-wave transistor radios. People were hungry for unbiased international reports.<sup>89</sup>

To its donors, AWM had to also defend why it went into video production. 'Satellite television, video and the more recent electronic information superhighway are media trends which are finding their way into the mainstream of life in the Arab World.[...] The medium of video [...] has established itself as a significant entertainment medium in modern Arab culture.'<sup>90</sup>

#### ***Continuation of Radio Productions***

RSB's radio program that replaced Walking Together after it stopped cooperating with GMU's Malaga Media Center (MMC) was called *Path of Life* (*Tarîqat al-Ḥayâh*). It was broadcast from April 1996 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings by TWR in the same time slot as Walking Together had previously been. The Sikâlîs continued presenting the programs.<sup>91</sup>

In 1998, RSB decided that audience response for radio was decreasing and that it would no longer broadcast over TWR's MW signal. That step to downgrade its radio ministry was a defining moment in RSB's radio ministry:

<sup>85</sup> 'Video Clip', in *Contact* (September 1993), p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> Dave Milligan, 'Musings from the Media Director', in *Contact* (November 1994), p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> 'The Time-line of the RSB', in *Frontline* (September 1994), p. 2. AWM wrote in November 1988 that it had 'moved into the world of video' when the literature center of RSB in Marseille began distributing the Jesus film in Arabic. To call that the beginning of RSB's video ministry was stretching it. See 'Into a New World', in *Contact* (November 1988), p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> 'Partners through Giving', in *Contact* (February 1995), p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Fraser-Smith, 'Media: Reaching the Arab world', p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> 'Partners through Giving', p. 2.

<sup>91</sup> 'Path of Life', in *Contact* (April 1996), p. 2. 'A Modern Nicodemus', in *Contact* (February 1997), p. 1.

If today's Arabs mostly watch satellite TV and surf the internet, we can hardly expect them to take in the Gospel if we only broadcast it over the radio! Inevitably, we need to have our own media revolution in AWM. [...] It has become increasingly clear AWM should give video film and TV production top priority. At the same time, we'll stop using medium wave radio from October this year. But we've not finished with radio! We're going to continue using short-wave radio and look into satellite radio.<sup>92</sup>

Jim Geisler, director of RSB from 1996-2003, defended this choice by saying that AWM did 'pull back from one very expensive medium, in order to devote more resources to other less expensive and potentially more effective media'.<sup>93</sup> RSB continued to broadcast its programs on SW through FEBA, IBRA, and also on HCJB. That was cheaper but response declined further.<sup>94</sup> RSB handled all audience response for HCJB.<sup>95</sup>

RSB became involved in radio broadcasting over an audio channel of Eutelsat's Hotbird satellite towards the end of 1998 when a partnership was formed with HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings'). RSB seemed to believe that audio broadcasting by satellite would attract a good audience. 'Together, we believe that radio will continue to play a crucial role in the evangelisation of North Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Radio Al Mahabba [sic] (RAM) is an exciting new project which has grown from this partnership.'<sup>96</sup> The test broadcasts began on 21 March 2001, with contemporary Christian music. The audio channels of satellite broadcasts are able to deliver excellent, crisp audio, but as of 2004, they were not attracting an audience. RAM did not generate the response RSB had hoped for and it withdrew from the project in 2003.<sup>97</sup>

### ***Commitment to Churches of North Africa***

By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, RSB had decided that the 'most important thing is to train Arabs to reach their own people'.<sup>98</sup> In 2001, it summarized the changes that had occurred in North Africa and how that influenced the direction of its work:

The most significant change to have taken place is undoubtedly the re-birth of the Church in North Africa. Those who have pioneered in the use of media, and most of those who have followed, have experienced ministry almost exclusively in the context of evangelism. The main activity was that of seed sowing; communicating the Gospel. Occasionally, they experienced the deep joy of seeing individual Muslims profess faith in Christ.

Today, however, we are privileged to serve at a time when [...] there are strong and vibrant churches across North Africa. [Christian media] are increasingly involved in ministries of discipleship and leadership training of national believers. AWM

<sup>92</sup> Jacky Brister, 'Media: What's the Story?' in *Frontline* (September 1998), p. 1

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> 'Development', in *Vision* (Vol. IV, 1998), p. 2

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> 'A live radio station', in *Frontline* (April 2000), p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> For details about Radio Al Mahabba, see chapter 13 on HCJB.

<sup>98</sup> 'AWM Media; Why is Training a Priority', in *Vision* (Vol. 1, 2003), p. 2.

Media continues to play a major role in evangelism but increasingly in also meeting needs of advanced discipleship and training. We are in a significant period of re-thinking what we do with media, and how we do it.

Throughout the years, we have known the participation of individual Arabs on our media team, filling roles they could better fill than Westerners. The nature of mass media means that we need to continue our efforts from outside the Arab World, through television, radio, the Internet and literature (and so will continue to need gifted Arab individuals). However, as we continue we need to be doing so as an extension of the national Church. In doing so, our role will increasingly be to equip and train national churches in North Africa for media ministry. We need more Arabic speakers on our team than ever before but they will come as representatives of national churches and we will train them as trainers of others.<sup>99</sup>

RSB thereby stated unambiguously that it took the local churches of North Africa seriously and that it wanted North Africans to work with them. This meant that it no longer needed Middle Eastern Christians to work in their radio programs. The churches in North Africa had now grown to such an extent that RSB could find North African believers to broadcast programs to their own peoples. RSB now held that its work should be an extension of the indigenous churches of North Africa whose representatives would be the producers of the radio programs. This was a total turnabout in the approach of RSB.

Given the viewpoints of the churches of North Africa, this choice to be their mouthpiece included that RSB underlined its choice for presenting the Churches in terms of the C3 spectrum of John Travis' scheme. This also entailed that the Contextualization Warnings CW2 and CW6 were heeded. The churches of North Africa were to be the community deciding on RSB's manner of contextualization.

The changed approach of RSB had become possible as the churches of North Africa were maturing and probably also because RSB's main producers, the Sikâli's, had retired. This also enabled AWM to reconsider its commitment to using MSA and a return to producing programs in the North African vernaculars, in line with RCR3. To what extent that will be implemented is yet to be seen. In 2005, AWM expressed its 'commitment to indigenous national churches' as follows in its Mission Statement and Vision Statement:

Mission Statement: Our purpose is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to Muslims of the Arab World, wherever they may be found, and to help those who believe to be integrated into local churches.

Vision Statement: Our vision is to see mature and vibrant churches among Muslims of the Arab World. We believe in the need for those coming to faith to be integrated into autonomous local fellowships. Where there are no churches, they need to be formed through those who come to faith.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> 'AWM Media; Past, Present & Future', in *Frontline* (April 2001), pp. 1-2.

<sup>100</sup> 'Mission Statement and Vision Statement', received from Alasdair McLaren (of AWM in the United Kingdom) in an email to the author (10 March 2005). McLaren wrote that this statement could possibly date from the 1950s.

AWM did ‘not expect or encourage organizational control over the churches or other ministries that have resulted from efforts of AWM missionary personnel’. It sought to establish churches that ‘subscribe to the Biblical Christian faith, with the freedom to discern appropriate theological distinctives within that framework’. For the rather conservative organization that AWM was, this meant a clear commitment to the concept that the newly emerging Arabic churches in North Africa had to develop their own theology within the framework of their own context.

AWM also expressed its support for the existent churches of the Middle East and North Africa, and thereby expressed that it was not interested in starting new congregations beside existent ones. It said in its Vision Statement that ‘[w]here the church does exist, we seek to support and encourage its ministry and outreach efforts and to work in partnership.’<sup>101</sup> In the context of the Middle East this meant a commitment to the existent Protestant churches, which entailed a C2 or a C3 approach in terms of Travis’ spectrums.

## 15.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

Candidates who wanted to be accepted as missionaries with AWM, and all who were to work in radio production in Marseille, had to sign a doctrinal statement. Since the 1980s AWM has used the following Statement of Faith:

We believe the historical Biblical faith:

The full inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; their authority, sufficiency, and inerrancy, not only as containing, but as being themselves the Word of God; and the need of the teaching of the Holy Spirit for a true and spiritual understanding of the whole.

The unity of the Godhead and the divine co-equality of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The utter depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall, and the necessity for regeneration.

The absolute Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; His virgin birth; His real and perfect manhood; the authority of His teaching and infallibility of all His utterances; His work of atonement for the sin of mankind by his vicarious suffering and death; His bodily resurrection and His ascension into Heaven; His present high-priestly intercession for His people; and His Lordship over His church as its supreme Head.

The justification of the sinner, solely by faith on the ground of the merits and vicarious sufferings, death, and bodily resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in conviction of sin, regeneration, and sanctification, as well as in ministry and worship.

The resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and the eternal punishment of the wicked.

The personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> ‘AWM Media; Past, Present & Future’, pp. 1-2.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

This was the sort of statement most conservative Evangelical or Reformed organizations could agree with. AWM created this statement itself; it did not adopt it from other organizations.<sup>103</sup> The interdenominational character of AWM was not specifically reflected in this statement, and it did not show any millennial preference. This apologetic creed was not a particularly ‘missionary’ statement, and it was not contextual for usage in the Arab World.

AWM certainly heeded *caveat* CW1, as it confessed the absolute truth of the Bible, the uniqueness of Christ and the importance of the Church. The choice of words, like ‘inerrancy’, and the selection of issues that were mostly related to personal salvation, were deeply rooted in how the Christian faith had been contextualized in a Western cultural context. For an organization that wanted to find missionaries that were able to communicate the Gospel into the cultures of North Africa, this Western expression of the Christian faith was not sufficient as a criterion for selecting candidates.

### 15.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

#### 15.3.1. *Focus on North Africa*

As NAM only worked in North Africa when it began its broadcasting ministry during the 1950s, it was obvious that the organization was to produce programs for North Africa. By default therefore it seems that no formal decision regarding its intended target audience was taken.

In 1974 George Rider, director of RSB at that time, was convinced they were reaching the educated people of North Africa, and he was satisfied with that. ‘I still feel that we are reaching [...] the educated people. A number of letters are coming in; we are reaching the educated people through an educated presentation of the Gospel.’<sup>104</sup> That was logical, as RSB used MSA as the language of the programs which could only be understood by the educated elite. Moreover, those who were able to write back to RSB were also those who could read and write.

In 1980, RSB was speaking in much broader terms about its intended audience. ‘Our objective is to reach as many Muslim people as possible. We try to transmit in a manner which will attract as wide an audience as possible rather than just a few people,’ Harris and Sikâlî published in 1980.<sup>105</sup> This statement was probably for public relations only, as RSB knew its main audience was better educated.

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<sup>103</sup> According to Hobe Dearborn, Associate U.S. Director, in an email to the author (30 November 2006). ‘I was actually present in some discussions where parts of it were discussed and some wording changed.

It was in existence in almost its present form when I joined the mission in 1965. What other documents those who originally framed it might have consulted are unknown by me. I don't know when it was adopted. But AWM doesn't have a long history of adopting the statements or forms of other organizations!’

<sup>104</sup> Transcript of a speech by George Rider, ‘Demonstration of Media Solution – Case Histories’ (20 February 1974, Marseille), p. 3, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

<sup>105</sup> Harris and Sikaly, ‘What’s Happening in 1980?’, p. 5.

Ken McBride, the director of RSB from 1979-1984, described the target audience of Light upon Light in 1982:

Target audience of Nour ala Nour (Light upon Light) in standard Arabic is Arabic speaking North Africans 18-26 years old with at least 3-4 years of secondary education. They can use standard Arabic. We believe they are open to change because of confusion over values (traditional vs. modern secular) and frustration in their search for more education, work, marriage etc. It is also a time of life when people check out the options before making or confirming their major life commitments.<sup>106</sup>

McBride's assumption that North Africans with three or four years of secondary schooling would be able to meaningfully use MSA, is treated hereunder.

### ***15.3.2 Preference for Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)***

In August 1958, when Field Administration meetings in North Africa discussed the issue of becoming involved in program production, the term 'North African colloquials [sic]' was used. This gives the impression that from the beginning of NAM's interest in broadcasting, it wanted to do so in the spoken languages of North Africa. This was in line with RCR3 that prescribes that broadcasters use the vernacular of the target audience. This may have meant that NAM considered broadcasting in Amazigh languages or colloquial Arabic. If NAM had intended to broadcast in MSA, the minutes would have spoken about 'Arabic', not 'North African colloquials'.<sup>107</sup>

NAM's Field Council decided in 1959 that a start had to be made with simple Scripture readings in Arabic, colloquial, and Amazigh dialects. Later other types of programs were developed and included 'Classical Arabic' and French.<sup>108</sup> This underlines that NAM's initial preference was for broadcasting programs in colloquial Arabic, not in MSA. Harris wrote in 1959 about the hope 'that Gospel programs in colloquial Arabic might one day be heard in North Africa'.<sup>109</sup> The first programs he produced were in Dârġjah, the colloquial Moroccan Arabic.<sup>110</sup>

In 1963, at the time when the studio was being transferred from Morocco to Marseille, Field Council steered the radio work into a new direction. It emphasized its intention to give 'precedence to literary Arabic over dialect, with efficient field-wide coverage'.<sup>111</sup> This was not a wise decision, as MSA was not the spoken language of anyone in North Africa. It meant a choice to reach the small, educated elites of North Africa. In the 1960s the number of North Africans able to read and write, and therefore to understand MSA proficiently, was still very small. It can be argued that in order to contextualize for that small, educated elite, MSA was a

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Harold W. Stalley, 'Memorandum to Home Councils, Report of Field Administration (29 July-2 August 1958)', p. 3, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>108</sup> 'Minutes of Meeting of Field Council held at Tangier (22-24 September 1959)', p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Don Harris, 'Gospel Broadcasts for Morocco', pp. 70-72.

<sup>110</sup> Vishanoff in an email to the author (14 December 2002).

<sup>111</sup> 'Minutes of Field Council Meeting held in Casablanca (8-12 July 1963)', p. 4, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

good choice, though any message in their heart language would probably have had a deeper impact.

The minutes of the Field Council meeting did not describe the discussion that led NAM to take this decision, but the term ‘efficient field-wide coverage’ gives the impression that the decision was related to the fact that NAM’s missionaries worked all over North Africa. As long as there was a chance that Harris’ goal of setting up *four* studios in North Africa could be achieved, NAM’s field personnel favored colloquial programs. Once the decision was taken to have *one* studio in Marseille, the missionaries must have been aware of the difficulty to get speakers for programs to Marseille, so they decided that MSA would be the best choice to serve all. This analysis is supported by the fact that GMU, with workers in Morocco only, decided to use colloquial Moroccan Arabic only in their radio broadcasts. If this analysis is correct, NAM’s decision to use MSA in its broadcasts was probably taken in order to maintain unity among its missionaries and to have maximum support for its project, and to a lesser extent for missiological or linguistic reasons. This decision was detrimental to the full implementation of RCR3.

In Marseille, the first Arab worker was the Jordanian Marji. In 1965 and 1966 he made programs in MSA. ELWA requested NAM to also continue with the programs in Moroccan colloquial Arabic because of the tremendous lack of programs, so Marji not only produced two MSA programs each week but one in Moroccan Arabic too.<sup>112</sup> He probably read the MSA programs while he used a Moroccan believer, maybe Shafir, for the Moroccan program. Ghûrî, who arrived at RSB when Marji left, ‘presented [the messages] in a solemn and reverent manner, in excellent but simple literary Arabic’, according to Vishanoff.<sup>113</sup>

Though RSB produced programs in MSA, during the 1960s Gaston would also have liked to have added French programs for Muslims in North Africa, and ‘maybe Berber languages also’.<sup>114</sup> This underlined that in RSB there was a realization that MSA was not completely suitable for the whole audience. However, RSB never produced Amazigh programs, and it always focused on MSA. McBride’s assumption that North Africans with three or four years of secondary schooling would be able to understand MSA as used in *Light upon Light*, as mentioned above, was too optimistic. It is contradicted by research throughout the Arab World.<sup>115</sup>

In the 1980s there were various Arabs involved in the production of the magazine-style programs. That change in program style created discussions and disagreement over the merits and usage of various levels of the Arabic language. At times there was acute conflict about the choice of language. Vishanoff, who was involved in these productions at that time, described the choice RSB made:

In general, [in RSB our] rule was that the nature of the item determined the level of language: for instance, anything in the nature of an essay or set piece would be done

<sup>112</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 53-55. ‘Radio School of the Bible – History’.

<sup>113</sup> Vishanoff in an email to author (14 December 2002).

<sup>114</sup> ‘Transcript of Meetings (10-11 May 1966)’, pp. 6-7. Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 43, 61.

<sup>115</sup> This issue is treated in depth in chapter 3 about languages and literacy in the Arab World.



in standard Arabic, while interviews etc. would be in whatever the interviewee could handle best.<sup>116</sup>

This did not indicate a major shift in RSB's approach. The format forced RSB to allow some colloquial Arabic for short parts of the program, and only if the person interviewed was not able to speak in MSA. It seems that RSB's choice to allow some colloquial Arabic was partially because the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was also going through some policy changes related to the usage of language. Vishanoff described these changes in BBC:

Incidentally I have the impression that during the same period the Arabic Service of the British Broadcasting Company seemed to shift away from the dominance of standard Arabic, as more and more reporting from various areas included elements in non-standard Arabic (dialectal and "middle" levels), and even a few non-Arabs speaking imperfect Arabic in their areas of expertise.<sup>117</sup>

In the early 1990s, RSB began recruiting and training national believers to produce materials for the programs in North Africa. This created a greater variety in voices and dialects, and a richness of materials produced in North Africa itself.<sup>118</sup> MSA remained the linguistic standard though, which is clear from the agreement RSB made with GMU for their co-produced programs. The organizations agreed that the overall format was to be in MSA with inserts in North African colloquial Arabic. That arrangement did not work well, but it reflected RSB's linguistic choices. In RSB's magazine *Contact*, published in 1991 it stated that for the Walking Together programs, they would continue to focus on MSA broadcasts with Moroccan Arabic inserts they received from GMU, while GMU would use Moroccan Arabic with MSA inserts they received from RSB and TWR.<sup>119</sup>

#### 15.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

From the beginning of NAM's thinking about producing radio programs, it decided that 'national Christians' were to be used as speakers and announcers whenever possible. There should be 'a careful editing of material extra to the Scriptures', and the 'place of singing and music in programmes' was to be 'carefully considered'. NAM agreed that 'message [sic] to believers could provide a good though indirect approach to unbelievers'.<sup>120</sup> All these 'resolutions' were made years before actual production began. The idea to broadcast messages that seemed intended for a Christian audience was probably the result of NAM not wanting to aim directly at Muslims for reasons of security.

Throughout its existence, NAM has been formally and informally involved with the other Christian producers and broadcasters for the Arab World. The organiza-

<sup>116</sup> Vishanoff in an email to author (29 September 2004).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> 'An Eye to the Future', in *Contact* (February 1993), p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> 'Team Effort', in *Contact* (February 1991), pp. 1-2.

<sup>120</sup> 'Minutes of Meeting of Field Council held at Tangier (22-24 September 1959)', p. 3.

tion has therefore been consistently discussing practical issues related to how to best produce programs for Arab Muslims. Unfortunately though it seems that NAM has never produced its own internal documents stating what strategy it wanted to pursue.

Gaston, the first director of RSB, described during a 1966 conference of ELWA in Liberia, why NAM was interested in being involved in radio broadcasting to North Africa.<sup>121</sup> In general, Gaston considered Arabs the 'elite of Islam' and therefore the key to the whole religion of Islam. He considered the Christian Arabs as the key to witnessing to Arab Muslims.<sup>122</sup> He was probably thinking of the Christians of the Middle East, as the church in North Africa was virtually non-existent. It seemed NAM had an instrumentalist view of these Middle Eastern Christians. The language Gaston used, gives the impression that the Christian Arabs were seen as tools for NAM to reach Muslims.

The interest of Gaston in Christian radio to North Africa was related to the fact that missionaries had been expelled from countries like Tunisia and Libya. In 1966, according to Gaston, there were only four missionaries in Libya left, 20 in Tunisia, 75 in Algeria, and 200 in Morocco. Gaston was glad that radio could be used in evangelism to reach closed countries, to reach a high number of illiterates, even in distant locations, and that it could speak to people every day in the seclusion of their homes.<sup>123</sup> The idea that NAM reached illiterates with radio was an illusion as the language of the programs, MSA, was not understood by illiterates.

The difficulties North African converts were facing was another reason why Gaston considered radio so helpful. It could encourage and help them in hard times, which often entailed suffering from physical attacks, threats, poisoning, stoning, stabbing, the loss of jobs, and imprisonments.<sup>124</sup> There was 'not yet a visible church in North Africa', and radio could encourage these young, isolated Christians.<sup>125</sup> This effort to address both Muslims and the small Christian community of North Africa, was a complicating factor in trying to reach a homogenous audience, and militated against RCR1.

Shafir, one of the main speakers in NAM programs, stressed that radio was just the initial step in a process of changing people's mind about Christ. He believed the actual change of mind would occur through more personal contacts:

Personally I prefer to speak to people face to face. But I do believe I get through better to my own people by radio than I do face to face, especially in first contacts and with groups. They cannot argue with radio. They usually listen to the end. They may get angry and turn it off, but they cannot argue with the speaker. And [...] the idea often is that anything coming over the radio just must be true. [...] Radio alone is not enough. It is just a medium to contact people, to get them interested, hungry, desiring to read and study the Gospel. Along with radio, we need the

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<sup>121</sup> 'Transcript of Meetings (10-11 May 1966)', pp. 1, 5-7.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

literature, Bible correspondence courses, follow-up and personal contact with those who respond to the radio programmes.<sup>126</sup>

In 1969, Bell reported that in Tunisia and Algeria the only places where converts from the radio broadcasts and BCCs were beginning to organize in groups, was where missionaries lived. 'I know of no place, where we have students in a village and where there is anything like the beginning of a group, where there is no missionary who is able to visit them'.<sup>127</sup> This meant that for RSB, radio was an effective tool supporting its missionaries in starting churches, and not a medium in its own right. For RSB, Christian radio was the 'indispensable first phase of evangelism which stirred interest and developed contact for the missionaries in North Africa', according to Steele in 1980.<sup>128</sup>

Vishanoff wrote in 1981 that radio could awaken interest and communicate basic information, but 'then literature and correspondence courses enter the scene'. Thirdly, 'personal correspondence bridges the gap to the local church'. For those who became Christians and wanted to study further, RSB had a Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program.<sup>129</sup>

Think about the automobile ads on radio. They don't say: 'Send us your cheque for £3000'. They say: 'See your local dealer'. [...] I mean that radio's natural role is to awaken interest. We encourage our listener to make personal contact with the 'local dealer' – that's us! We invite people to write and ask for literature. And when they do, among other things, we also send them the first lesson of a Bible correspondence course.<sup>130</sup>

This approach of RSB seemed to be in line with the opinions of James F. Engel, a missiologist who held that 'the basic role of the mass media is to change existing beliefs and attitudes, thus moving a person closer to decision. The actual decision, however, is usually stimulated through face-to-face conversation'.<sup>131</sup> In its *Frontline* magazine, NAM described in 1980 how that face-to-face contact was usually created with those who respond to the RSB radio programs.

Our ultimate goal is to see churches established in North Africa. [When BCC students] realize that groups are worshipping together, they may get involved. [...] The initial contact is very important [and] is usually made by a letter from a missionary on the field or at RSB. If the response is positive, a meeting place is established or addresses or contacts are sent to the student. In general, the response has been good. Every worshipping group [in North Africa] has maturing Christians who were initially BCC students, either with NAM or other groups.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Shaf Shafir, 'The Programme!', in *Frontline* (September 1978), p. 10.

<sup>127</sup> 'Effective Methods in Reaching Muslims by Correspondence Courses - Report by William Bell - Radio School of the Bible', p. 30.

<sup>128</sup> Steele, *Not in Vain*, p. 161.

<sup>129</sup> Ken McBride and Steven Vishanoff, 'Radio School of the Bible', p. 16.

<sup>130</sup> 'Awakening them By Radio!', p. 5.

<sup>131</sup> Dr. James Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communications: Theory and Practice* (Nashville, 1979), p. 44.

<sup>132</sup> 'Contact!', in *Frontline* (September 1980), pp. 7-8.

RSB and AWM were in a good position to awaken an interest in people by radio and with follow up using BCCs and other materials. Their missionaries on the ground in North Africa could further the process by corresponding by mail and visiting interested people in North Africa.

For RSB, its radio ministry was a tool for beginning personal interaction with the Muslims from North Africa. The lack of a visible Christian church and the need to create the beginning of churches in North Africa were the reasons for this approach. The disadvantage was that this led to the production of programs that mainly aimed at soliciting response mail. This did not create the broad programming that radio and its audience deserved however for an organization like RSB that produced a maximum of 90 minutes of programs per week, that was probably a wise decision. Moreover, the responsibility to create broad programming lay in the first place with the broadcasters, not with the producers.

In order to attract its audience in competition against other radio stations, Vishanoff believed that if 'we talk about what they are interested in, they may be willing to listen to something they hadn't thought about. If we tell them the truth about things they can check out, perhaps they'll believe us about other things. If we work hard to stay close to them, and give them an honest picture of God at work in North Africa, they may begin to believe that someone loves them.'<sup>133</sup> In order to keep in touch with what the audience was interested in, the workers of RSB visited North Africa regularly. Shafir was always listening to other Arabic broadcasts to know what was happening in that 'hotly competitive marketplace'. Vishanoff himself had studied communication in Tunis for two years.<sup>134</sup>

### 15.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

The first programs Harris produced in Morocco were 15 minute programs that consisted mainly of Bible readings, sermons and speeches in colloquial Moroccan Arabic. These were produced with Yûsif, a southern Moroccan Christian student.<sup>135</sup> After moving to Marseille, the programs changed. In 1965, while RSB built its own studio in Marseille, TWR helped Harris by providing him with tapes in MSA. TWR allowed Harris to edit those tapes by adding RSB's announcements.<sup>136</sup>

From 1966 Ghûrî prepared and voiced the broadcasts. Rider described his style:

Toufic Khouri's [sic] strongest point [...] when he speaks on the radio [is that] he pictures himself [...] as a teacher, as even a sheikh, presenting the message of the Gospel in the same way as the Muslim speaker in the mosque would present the message of Islam.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> 'Awakening them By Radio!', p. 6.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, p. 53. Vishanoff in an email to the author (14 December 2002).

<sup>136</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, pp. 53-54. Letter of William Bell to Christine Ford (14 March 1994).

<sup>137</sup> Rider, 'Demonstration of Media Solution – Case Histories', p. 2.

This gives the impression that Ghûrî was able to create a style of program that took the context of the Muslim audience into consideration adapting his delivery style to what Muslims were used to in the mosques. It is unlikely, though, that RSB ever used a style that could be termed Islamic. Ghûrî's style, with his perfect and reverent usage of MSA, was probably just like the sermons in Protestant churches of the Arab World. RSB would certainly not have allowed the usage of Islamic jargon and TWR would likewise never have allowed broadcasts of that sort either.

The intended *locus* of RSB's programs was the neutral living room, not the mosque. In its efforts to use linguistic and cultural forms that could be understood by its audience, in accordance with RCR4, CW6 was heeded by RSB. It did not want to use forms and words that were filled with Islamic meaning. By doing so, RSB followed the approach of the small Christian communities in North Africa, thus heeding CW2 about the need to contextualize the Gospel within the community of the Church. This meant, among other things, that there was no effort to portray the church in a manner that entailed Islamic elements as Travis' C4 spectrum did. RSB endeavored to portray the Church in a meaningful manner, and it did so in the linguistic terms and symbols of Travis' C2 and C3 spectrums.

Ghûrî's initial programs were based on one of the BCCs. Later, he explained the Gospels, theological doctrines, and he answered audience questions. He would in most of his programs offer BCCs, Key of Knowledge or some books. In the early 1970s, he sometimes included segments of programs of questions and answers by 'Adlî Fam of TWR in his programs.<sup>138</sup> Fam was an Egyptian Christian.

Many Christian materials were available for broadcasting from the Middle East, but they were considered unsuitable. Stalley wrote in 1969:

Very little Christian material in Arabic or French is suitable for broadcasting to the type of Muslim listener we are reaching in North Africa. They have little knowledge of the Christian church. Arabic broadcasts prepared with the Middle East in mind take account of their much greater familiarity with the Christian church.<sup>139</sup>

This shows RSB was well aware that there was a large difference between the Muslims in the Middle East and those in North Africa, and that a Pan-Arab approach was not useful as it assumed a similarity among the Arab Muslims throughout the Arab World that did not exist to that extent. RSB aimed for an approach that took the differences between the Arabs seriously, although they did not change their linguistic choices or personnel because of that.

The programs RSB and GMU agreed to produce after 1977 had a new format as compared to those produced previously. Vishanoff had been asked by RSB to create a new program format and he advised the use of a magazine format. The need for a magazine format had been suggested by a NAM missionary in Algeria, according to Vishanoff:

[It] became apparent to the people in Marseille that a magazine format program dealing with subjects of general interest would attract more listeners among the

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>139</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, p. 60.

youth. They owed this partly to comments from friends in North Africa; it was one of the advantages of an agency that was involved mostly in direct work on the field.<sup>140</sup>

The program *Light upon Light* that began in 1977, contained a continuing story, a human-interest item, music, a short message or an interview, and it answered listener letters. It invited the audience to write to the producer personally and it offered some literature, often the Gospel of Luke.<sup>141</sup> This was a great change compared to the programs that had been produced before but Vishanoff was not very satisfied:

This sounds good, but the program itself was unsatisfactory. [...] There were a number of participants, and a host from Morocco, but not one of them was fully committed to the program. I assembled programs using pre-recorded announcements and transitions, messages, songs, interviews, articles, book readings or whatever, using short musical transitions to reduce the clashing between disparate elements, but the program remained a patchwork without a pervading vision, atmosphere, and [intrinsic] message [though] the Gospel was always presented.<sup>142</sup>

From 1980, the *Sikâlîs* produced *Light upon Light*. 'The programs [...] emphasize friendliness, openness and a smooth and beautiful presentation, easy listening in the late hours of the evening, all the while speaking about Christ in short talks, stories, music', RSB wrote in 1981.<sup>143</sup> *Sikâlî* himself said that these programs were 'not the classical method of presenting the Gospel. [...] We present ourselves as friends of the listener – who is usually aged between 16 and 25 – in order to win his attention and to build a bridge of friendship. We try to show him his priorities in life, to be a mirror to show him who he is, and to help him set priorities in life.'<sup>144</sup> The magazine format introduced by Vishanoff, was not retained. Vishanoff described the change:

In 1980, the program format had been changed. It was no longer the magazine format used before. Most programs began with a welcome and an editorial written by *Sikaly* regarding world events. One program would consist mainly of the *Sikaly*'s answering questions from listeners, the other two programs contained 'messages' by *Khouri* and a discussion panel of three Egyptian Christians. *Shafir* would often have an interview with a North African Christian.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Vishanoff in an email to the author (13 September 2003). VOA was the first broadcaster to use a magazine format. They began their *Breakfast Show* in their English-language service in 1962. That show contained popular music, news reports, features, interviews etc. Compared to other international broadcasts, the show gave the impression of being informal and unstructured. The program rapidly acquired a sizable and devoted audience. See Browne's *International Radio Broadcasting*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>141</sup> *Shafir*, 'The Programme!', p. 7.

<sup>142</sup> Vishanoff in an email to author (14 December 2002).

<sup>143</sup> Ken McBride and Steven Vishanoff, 'Radio School of the Bible', in *NAM 1881-1981: Our God is Faithful* (1981), p. 16.

<sup>144</sup> 'Electronic Worship for the Arab World', in *Frontline* (June 1988), p. 1.

<sup>145</sup> Harris and *Sikaly*, 'What's Happening in 1980?', p. 5.

The unmistakable Middle Eastern atmosphere of these programs, with presenters from Lebanon and Syria, and sometimes a panel of Egyptians, was not a good choice for a program aimed at North Africa. This impacted the extent to which the programs could speak to the audience in its context. For the listeners, these non-North Africans were foreigners. RCR3 regarding the usage of the vernacular, was not implemented. In spite of this, NAM could write in 1985, that individuals ‘all over North Africa – some who have never met a Christian believer – have trusted Christ as a result of the Light upon Light broadcast. Several of the church leaders of North Africa were first drawn to the Gospel by the [Light upon Light] program. [And] we are convinced there are many others who have not written us about their faith.’<sup>146</sup>

By the late 1980s RSB decided to broadcast over ELWA again. It decided to create worship programs for those unable to have communion with other believers. These programs were to contain hymns, prayers, and Bible readings. RSB was working on two pilot programs of 15 minutes and two of 30 minutes for evaluation purposes. These programs were done in MSA and colloquial Arabic. The first worship program broadcast by ELWA was on 26 December 1988. This was a 30-minute weekly program in MSA and colloquial North African Arabic.<sup>147</sup> This project was cut short by the destruction of ELWA in 1990.<sup>148</sup>

Sikâlî’s program, *Walking Together*, used different people in each program with a linguistic mixture of MSA and colloquial with a rotation of presenters. The broad goal of the programs was to change the listener’s negative attitude towards Christianity and to encourage the listener to correspond with RSB and to engage in BCCs. The program was not ‘preachy’ but had a ‘low key’ approach.<sup>149</sup>

*Path of Life*, the programs RSB produced from 1996, maintained the target audience and the program format of *Walking Together*. Its aim continued to be ‘to attract Muslim listeners who are not yet ready for extended Bible exposition. The programme was designed to interest them in the person of Christ and allow them to discover that the Bible offers true and satisfying solutions to the problems that trouble them’, RSB reported. The *Sîkâlîs* continued presenting the programs.<sup>150</sup>

Christ was presented in a manner that was understandable for Muslims, in accordance with RCR5, without using typically Islamic jargon to do so. While NAM’s radio program format and name has changed several times since 1965, the purpose and intent remained largely the same. That was, ‘to present listeners with a Biblical view of life so as to make following Christ a viable and understandable option for their lives’.<sup>151</sup>

This ‘Biblical view of life’ of NAM and later of AWM did not entail the idea that the Gospel had a socio-political component. All of RSB’s programs were focused on the individual, his relationship with God, and on micro-ethics. Therefore, in its programs, RSB did not address important parts of the context of the people

<sup>146</sup> ‘Airwaves for North Africa’, in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1985), p. 1.

<sup>147</sup> ‘News in Brief’, in *Contact* (November 1988), p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> ‘Electronic Worship for the Arab World’, p. 1.

<sup>149</sup> ‘New Arabic Broadcasting!’ in *Contact* (September 1990), p. 1.

<sup>150</sup> ‘Path of Life’, in *Contact* (April 1996), p. 2. ‘A Modern Nicodemus’, in *Contact* (Feb. 1997), p. 1.

<sup>151</sup> ‘Walking Together’, in *Contact* (February 1995), p. 2.

they were speaking to, as requested by RCR2. Therefore, RSB did not heed the warning of CW5, to let its programs expound the Gospel as it relates to all of life, including socio-political life. Thereby RSB also disallowed the Gospel to play its prophetic role for individuals as well as society, as warned against in CW4.

## 15.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

### 15.6.1 *Formative Years: 1960- 1977*

#### 15.6.1.1 Radio Response

Since radio pervaded the Arab World, NAM was encouraged by its large potential audience. In 1969, Jessie C. Stalley, a missionary with North Africa Mission in North Africa during the 1950s and 1960s, described the importance of the transistor radio in the Arab World:

With the advent of the transistor, places previously closed to the Gospel are now open to the voice of God. Each new transistor becomes a prospective missionary. No family appears too poor or too isolated to possess one. To a remarkable degree the transistor radio had become the status symbol of the Arab World. It is not unusual to hear the sounds of radio coming from a Bedouin tent or from the back of a donkey traveling down a country road or even from the side of a beggar on the pavement, as well as from a modern apartment.<sup>152</sup>

The audience response for RSB's radio-broadcasts since 1967 is summarized in *Figure 15.2*. During the month of Ramaḍān 1972, RSB received 101 letters from North Africa based on its radio broadcasts. RSB was glad with that response. From Morocco it received 31 letters, from Algeria 11, from Tunisia 45 and from Libya 14. The response from Tunisia made RSB speak about a 'revival of interest' as Tunisia had a much smaller population than Algeria and Morocco. The response from Libya was also considered high.<sup>153</sup>

1975 was 'one of the best years for radio response', RSB wrote. Until October 1,200 letters were received. Assuming that from October to December the ratio was similar, it is safe to assume RSB received 1,500 letters based on its radio programs in 1975.<sup>154</sup>

During 1975 some financial cutbacks were discussed. It was decided that it was unwise to save money by doing fewer broadcasts over TWR, 'Such a measure would probably reduce listener response to almost zero since most of our response come from [those].'<sup>155</sup> It can therefore be concluded that NAM knew that it received hardly any response for its SW broadcasts on ELWA, Family Radio and IBRA.

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<sup>152</sup> Jessie C. Stalley, *No Frontiers* (London, 1969), p. 59.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> 'F.W.M. Regional Superintendent's Report to Field Council (November 1975)', p. 1,

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.



### 15.6.1.2 BCCs

For NAM, the main goal of its radio programs was to enroll people in BCCs. During the 1960s, the BCCs were popular in North Africa. ‘God is at work in the area today, there is a moving of the Spirit of God’, Gaston reported in a conference of ELWA that he attended in May 1966. Through the radio programs and through handing out brochures in North Africa, RSB received an ‘overwhelming response’ for its BCCs, with over 50,000 students enrolled since November 1961. All correspondents were put in touch with a missionary in his or her neighborhood. Since 1961, 2,870 students have completed the BCC courses. NAM had begun offering these courses through their missionaries in Tunis from 1961 and in Algeria from 1962. These were in French and MSA; most students preferred to use the French courses. ‘Some 2000 students indicated they made a decision to follow Christ’, according to RSB in 1966.<sup>156</sup>

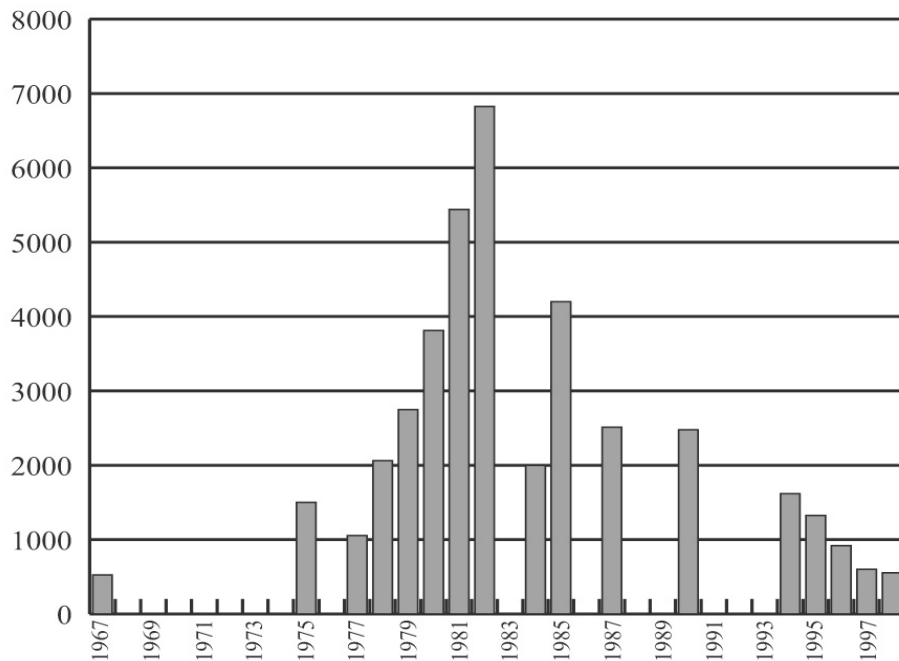


Figure 15.2 RSB's Radio Audience Response: 1967-1998

In 1967, RSB had 3,000 active BCC students.<sup>157</sup> In 1968, the total number of North African people that had received a first lesson of a BCC had risen to 65,000. Much of this growth in the BCCs was unrelated to the radio programs of RSB. In

<sup>156</sup> ‘Transcript of Meetings’, pp. 6-7. ‘1964-1989 Acorns to Oak Trees’, p. 1.

<sup>157</sup> Johanna Ruffin, ‘Piercing the Heart’, in *Contact* (April 1996), p. 1.

its first report about audience response in 1967, RSB said it had received 525 letters.<sup>158</sup>

By 1969, NAM had mailed the first BCC lesson to 80,600 North Africans. Until 1969, of all the students 11,170 had finished at least the first course. Of the five different courses that they offered only one was specifically designed for Muslims; the others assumed that the students had become Christians. Of all students, 95 percent were Muslims.<sup>159</sup>

In 1969, NAM was the main organization working with BCCs. *Figure 15.3* outlines the different organizations that were working in the Arab World with BCCs at that time. These details were supplied by the organizations themselves, in the context of a conference in Beirut where among other things, follow-up through BCCs was studied.<sup>160</sup>

In 1970, RSB received 9,722 new requests for BCCs. Most people who enrolled did not finish the course, and many did not correspond after the first lesson. This was evident as RSB reported that 4,384 students had returned lessons in 1970 and during that year, 2,813 courses were completed. Between January and October 1970, RSB faced a reduction of 50 percent in student enrollment 'because of the censoring of mail' in North Africa. In November and December enrollment picked up again. RSB wrote 'envelopes were now hand addressed and mailed from several different post offices. Reports have come from North Africa of arrest, destruction of Bibles and all manner of persecution'.<sup>161</sup>

In its *News* magazine in 1972, RSB reported that about 600 new students began BCCs every month, but that the same number also discontinued. The average student was in touch with RSB for about five months in this period.<sup>162</sup> The situation must have been confusing for RSB. The fact that it received no mail back from some students, did not mean students had not filled in their lessons and returned the mail. RSB wrote in 1973 that 'BCC students are called to police stations for questioning and find that officials have regularly been reading their letters. They are warned not to continue. Some wish to continue but no longer get any mail'. Active student enrollment dropped from a peak of 4,300 in 1969 to 2,000 by January 1973.<sup>163</sup>

An interesting conclusion regarding the BCCs in 1975 was that there was an 'unmistakable shift toward Arabic as the preferred language for those enrolling'.<sup>164</sup> This was a reversal of the situation at the beginning of the BCCs of NAM. RSB had always offered its BCCs in MSA and French. The shift to MSA in 1975 showed how after decolonization, students were now more Arabized. In Tunisia and Morocco two generations had now gone through Arabic public education since

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<sup>158</sup> Stalley, *No Frontiers*, p. 59.

<sup>159</sup> 'Arabic Bible Correspondence Courses March 1969', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 81.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> *RSB* No. 1 (1971).

<sup>162</sup> *RSB News* No. 2 (1972).

<sup>163</sup> 'Radio – Today's open doors', in *RSB News* (No. 1, 1973).

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

independence, while in Algeria one generation had finished Arabic public education. French was no longer the first language of instruction in schools.

### **15.6.2 Years of Increase: 1978-1982**

#### **15.6.2.1 Radio Response**

In September 1977, RSB began its new broadcasts over TWR, with three programs of 30 minutes each week instead of six programs of 15 minutes. From the beginning of these broadcasts, RSB noted an increase in audience response. During the whole year, a total of 1,055 letters were received. In May 1978, 196 letters were received, 174 from North Africa, six from the Middle East, 16 from Europe.<sup>165</sup> RSB also saw how in Europe and the USA the telephone was used for audience relationships. 'The members of the radio department [of RSB] desire to have this kind of contact with listeners throughout the Arab World, but circumstances are such that direct contact through telephone is not possible', NAM published in its *Frontline* magazine.<sup>166</sup>

A comparison between the figures as given by RSB and those of MMC show how carefully all interpretation should be done. As all mail received for the common series of programs went to Marseille, and MMC received roughly 50 percent of that, the figures of both organizations should be about equal. Both were convinced that almost all the responses they received, came through the common TWR broadcasts. It could be that RSB used the total number of letters it received, both for its own and for MMC's programs, for reporting purposes. That is possible as RSB figures are, roughly speaking, twice as high as the figures given by MMC. It may also mean that RSB included their repeat responses, while MMC may have only reported their unique ones. It has not been possible to clarify this matter. It shows that it is unwise to pay too much attention to the finer details of the figures. Their value is in understanding the general trends.

In 1978 RSB received 2,061 letters. Vishnanoff assumed that the magazine format program he had started had 'hundreds of thousands of listeners'. That was impossible to know however. In 1979 2,748 letters were received. Hundreds of those writers wanted to meet with a Christian, NAM wrote. The nightly Arabic programs over TWR on RMC-MC were seen as 'almost too successful'. NAM reported that there were not enough people to follow up these enquirers in North Africa.<sup>167</sup>

It seems that the increased response to these programs compared to the response of the six programs of 15 minutes that RSB had had before, was due to the switch from SW to MW broadcasting in prime time with TWR. Maybe the new format was also better at eliciting responses.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>165</sup> 'They said it!', in *Frontline* (September 1978), p. 11.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> 'Radio School of the Bible', in *Cross & Crescent* (Winter 1981), p. 12. William Bell, 'Radio! From small beginnings...', in *Frontline* (September 1978), p. 5.

<sup>168</sup> Francis Rue Steele, 'Breakthrough in Radio', in *The Cross and the Crescent* (Fall 1977).

	Response Address	# Courses Offered (*)	# of Persons Enrolled	% of Muslims	# Persons finished a course	% of Muslims
Middle East Lutheran Mission	Beirut	3	50,000	2,5%	4,500	5%
Baptist Publications	Beirut	2	6,000	60%		
Manārah Society	Beirut	6 (1)	10,000		5,000	
Assemblies of God	Beirut	5	28,000	60%	6,200	60%
Gospel Literature Service	Beirut	2	3,300		650	
Mideast Baptist Mission	Beirut	2	360	80%		
Operation Mobilization Lebanon	Beirut	1	11,000	30%	900	30%
Trans World Radio	Beirut	6 (1)	245	10%	80	
Lebanon Bible Institute	Beirut	3	120		12	
Youth for Christ	Beirut	1	375		85	
Evangelistic Center	Beirut	1	600		200	
Fellowship Baptist Church	Tripoli	1	2,000			
The Conversion Center	Beirut	1	1,900			
Anonymous	Beirut	1				
Radio School of the Bible	Marseille	5 (1)	80,600	95%	11,170	95%
Gospel Missionary Union	Malaga	6 (5)	43,000	100%		
Mideast Baptist Mission	Alexandria	2	2,400			
Operation Mobilization	Amman	8 (2)	500	10%		

(\*) the figure in brackets signifies the number of courses specially designed for Muslims

*Figure 15.3 BCCs in the Arab World in 1969*

In 1980 3,813 letters were received. Most responses came from Algeria, closely followed by Morocco, then Tunisia, with a few from Libya, Egypt, France and

Europe. Some letters came from the Middle East. The letters were mainly from young men between 16 and 25 years old. Only five percent came from women.<sup>169</sup>

In 1981, the total number of letters received by the radio programs was 5,440, so the increase continued.<sup>170</sup> In 1982, the mail response went up further to 6,826 letters. Ken McBride, director of RSB from 1979-1984, said in 1982 that NAM's strategy was 'not to maximize letter response [...] but to maximize total impact in the target area. This means longer broadcasts, more listening hours, and good follow through.'<sup>171</sup> This was a unique idea for an organization involved in Christian radio in the Arab World. All organizations measured their success by the number of letters received. This may however have been the only manner of measuring the impact for these organizations, but the medium of radio should not have been seen as a method to elicit mail only. Nothing was done with McBride's idea, though.

### 15.6.2.2 BCCs

In 1980, RSB published that since it began with BCCs in the early 1960s, it had received 160,000 applications for enrollment in its BCCs in MSA. Furthermore, RSB had 1,150 'active students' in Arabic and 240 in French in 1980 with 250-300 students applying, each month. Many of these however, never became 'active students'. Of those that applied, 25 percent responded to radio programs while the majority applied because some friends recommended the BCCs to them.<sup>172</sup> In its *Frontline* magazine, NAM said:

On a day when postage stamps cost the price of a loaf of bread, when there is so much unemployment in North Africa, when a certain percentage of our letters seem to get lost, it is amazing that so many young people can continue Bible studies.<sup>173</sup>

In 1981, the total number of active BCC students was around 1,400. Of those, over 60 percent were from Morocco.<sup>174</sup> During that year, the response to the radio programs had gone up remarkably; this increase in radio response without a concomitant increase in active students of the BCC might indicate that there was an increase in audience that wrote to RSB without an interest to study the Gospel. It is also possible that an increasing number of letters sent to the audience were intercepted by the authorities. Without more information, it is not possible to draw any conclusions.

The increase in radio mail may have been due to RSB receiving 'free advertising' in the media of North Africa. During 1981, the various ministries of the RSB were 'repeatedly attacked in the Muslim press'.<sup>175</sup> This was probably related to King Ḥasan II of Morocco's fear of a radical Muslim backlash after *Ayatollah* Khomeini took power in Iran. King Ḥasan II invested heavily in presenting an

<sup>169</sup> Mary Harris, 'But Who Hears Us?', in *Frontline* (September 1980), pp. 6-7.

<sup>170</sup> 'Radio Mail Hits 5400', in *NAM-Media* (Spring 1982), p. 1.

<sup>171</sup> Ken McBride, 'Missionary Project', in *Frontline* (July 1982), pp. 10-11.

<sup>172</sup> Tom and Fern Wilson, 'Why Marseilles?' in *Frontline* (September 1980), pp. 10-11. GMU had 90,000 students that had requested its colloquial Arabic BCC until 1980.

<sup>173</sup> Wilson, 'Why Marseilles?' pp. 10-11.

<sup>174</sup> 'Radio Mail Hits 5400', in *NAM-Media* (Spring 1982), p. 1.

<sup>175</sup> Ken McBride, 'Radio School of the Bible', in *Frontline* (May 1982), p. 14.

orthodox Islamic image. He sent Moroccan missionaries to Europe and increased the number of Islamic programs on radio and television. NAM-Media quoted an article in 'a North African Magazine' titled *The Christian Attack on North Africa*:

The nations of the Arab Maghreb are being exposed to a vicious evangelistic campaign in the form of radio in the Arabic language... This attack also takes the form of thousands of letters and postal calendars in Arabic and French, which are sent to all who ask and those who do not ask ... in the rural areas and in the cities, large and small.... [This mail is] directed to the parts of society that are weak and poor and young, of limited culture...The letters which reach our country [come] to our Muslim citizens by thousands, and our brethren the postal workers noticed this.<sup>176</sup>

### **15.6.3 Years of Resistance and Decrease: 1983-1994**

In autumn 1983, RSB reported that less mail came in from North Africa. The postal resistance, the heat of summer and Ramaḍān may have stopped people from responding. Perhaps more importantly, RSB had decided to no longer offer certain gifts on radio to those writing to RSB. 'RSB learned that only a few of the books we sent were reaching the listeners. [...] Getting good material into the hands of a few people isn't worth losing the trust of many more listeners. Offers were scaled down, sometimes stopped.'<sup>177</sup> NAM had researched the matter and concluded that of all the books that were mailed to North Africa, only five percent arrived. Of all the normal letters, 50 percent never reached the listeners.<sup>178</sup> The increase in radio response without a similar increase in active students may have therefore been due to the fact that the mail reached Marseille, but that BCC mail sent back to Morocco, did not reach the audience.

In 1984, the situation for Christians in North Africa became harder. In Morocco, Christians were questioned by the police nationwide. RSB reported that North African governments were stepping up their efforts to block Christian materials in the mail. In June 1984, only 131 letters were received in Marseille. This was considered disappointing, so before June, the mail response had probably been better. After June however, the number of letters received went up 'steadily' to 442 letters in May 1985.<sup>179</sup> RSB therefore received at least 2,000 letters for its radio programs in 1984.

Before 1984, policies to intercept Christian mail were an uncertain, regional phenomenon in Morocco. 'Now it is determined and widespread – though not total', RSB reported in 1985.<sup>180</sup> This problem continued throughout the 1980s. In 1987, for instance, RSB reported that Christian books were being confiscated, as

<sup>176</sup> 'Reactions', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1982), p. 1.

<sup>177</sup> 'Lighter Mailbag', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1983), p. 2.

<sup>178</sup> 'Rise in Radio Mail', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1985). One reason given by RSB for the downturn in audience relationships was the 1983 postal strike in France which lasted seven weeks. See 'Postal Problems', in *NAM-Media* (Summer 1984).

<sup>179</sup> 'Rise in Radio Mail', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1985).

<sup>180</sup> Ibid. 'RSB Mail', in *NAM-Media* (Winter 1983), p. 2.

they were not allowed in Morocco.<sup>181</sup> *NAM-Media* described how many of RSB's students in Morocco were arrested in 1984:

Increasing interference from postal authorities in Algeria and Morocco continues to endanger our lifeline to curious young Muslims. In an attempt to intimidate the numerous Moroccan young people investigating the Bible, hundreds of BCC students were arrested and interrogated by Moroccan authorities last May [1984]. Now, 6 months later, the number of Moroccan young people requesting to study the Bible is back to previous levels and climbing.<sup>182</sup>

In January 1985, the total number of 'active students' of the BCCs was 846, of whom 640 did the MSA version. During that month, 712 first lessons were sent out. Radio received 337 letters. 'These radio letters represent thousands of listeners', according to NAM. In the autumn of that year, RSB wrote that radio received 350 letters per month. That assured RSB that there were 'more than 25,000 who listen'.<sup>183</sup> There was no way for RSB to know these audience figures, but they were at least not inflating their assumed figures.<sup>184</sup>

In 1985, 500 to 1,000 introductory lessons were sent out each month. Of those, 80 percent were in Arabic and 20 percent in French. There had been a shift in how people got in touch with the BCC, for about half of these first contacts came from radio, while the other half were introduced to the courses through friends.<sup>185</sup> RSB was convinced of the effectiveness of the BCCs and wrote in 1985:

Bible correspondence courses have been sent into North Africa for over twenty years. Most, if not all, of the North African believers in these countries have at one time or another, been BCC students. The Church in Algiers is said to have got off the ground when young men, graduates of BCC, came forward able to teach the Bible to others.<sup>186</sup>

Similar testimonies to this effect have been heard by many missionaries involved in North Africa. One of those said in 1989 that out of the seven former Muslims he was working with, only one had not at one time in his pre-Christian or early Christian life, been in touch with RSB and its BCC.<sup>187</sup>

As for RSB the audience follow up had high priority, it had been involved in 'inter-mission follow up' since 1986. RSB joined other organizations working in the same area to pool resources. This was urgent because of the faltering mail systems, but it also allowed the agencies 'to avoid duplication in contacting people that respond to different missions programs'.<sup>188</sup> Some North Africans had learned

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<sup>181</sup> 'Waiting', in *Contact* (September 1987), p. 2.

<sup>182</sup> 'Transition: In Retrospect', in *NAM-Media* (January 1985).

<sup>183</sup> 'Will the Mail get through?', in *NAM-Media* (January 1985). 'People and the Media', in *NAM-Media* (May 1985), pp. 1-2. 'Airwaves for North Africa', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1985), p. 1.

<sup>184</sup> 'Rise in Radio Mail', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1985).

<sup>185</sup> Dave Robinson, 'Persuading the Muslim Mind - By Mail', in *Frontline* (March 1985), p. 7.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> 'Fruits', in *Contact* (November 1989), p. 1.

<sup>188</sup> 'Follow-Up', in *Contact* (November 1987), p. 1.

that by writing to the different Christians broadcasters, they could receive Bibles, books and other materials.

In mid-1986, RSB published that it had received 30,000 letters since Light upon Light began in 1977. These were, according to RSB, 'mainly based' on that program which was broadcast three times a week by TWR.<sup>189</sup> Fraser-Smith was careful in his estimation of how many North Africans listened to Light upon Light during the 1980s, 'It is very difficult to make even guesstimates at the numbers listening to Christian broadcasts in the area, but recent indications are that every evening there could be five-figure audiences; and over the period of a year, the number of at least one-time listeners could be in the order of 100,000. Reports further suggest that the greatest concentration of listeners are in cities like Rabat and Casablanca.'<sup>190</sup>

The response to the programs was 90 percent from men. Men 'have been more likely given a chance to finish secondary schooling. But even the ten percent of women responding is higher than the average for other radio programs' according to Vishanoff who was responsible for audience research. He found that most response was from urban men, with an average education until they were 17 years of age, and who were avid listeners to foreign radio broadcasts. They were 'frustrated' in their own country, with a 'desire' for anything Western. According to Vishanoff's findings, many were unemployed or dissatisfied with their job.<sup>191</sup>

In 1987, 2,513 radio letters were received.<sup>192</sup> In the years after that, Algeria faced many problems. Due to the civil war and possibly as a campaign against the Christian broadcasters, the postal authorities in Algeria could not be trusted to deliver the mail during those years. In 1990 things were better again and RSB received 2,477 letters.<sup>193</sup> In order to see whether relationships with old contacts could be restored, RSB did a test. Of those who replied positively between 1962 and 1971, 200 were selected. They received a Gospel of Luke as a test to see whether contact could be reestablished.<sup>194</sup> It has not been possible to find information about the results of this test.

In 1992, RSB had 1,942 'active students' for the BCCs in MSA. There were 810 students doing the lessons in French. These students together would send 500 to 600 letters and lessons per month to Marseille. Of all students, 82 percent lived in North Africa, ten percent in the Middle East, and the rest in Europe. Of the students from North Africa, 54 percent were from Algeria, 40 percent from Morocco, and six percent from Tunisia.<sup>195</sup> It was apparent that the programs were listened to in North Africa from an article in a newspaper in 1992:

<sup>189</sup> 'Bombs, Radio and the RSB', in *NAM-Media* (Autumn 1986), pp. 1-2.

<sup>190</sup> David Porter, *The Man Who Was Q: The True Story Of Charles Fraser-Smith, The 'Q' Wizard Of World War II. Appendix two: Open Doors – Media for Islam* (Carlisle, 1989), p. 178.

<sup>191</sup> 'Cry for Hope', in *NAM-Media* (Spring 1987), p. 3.

<sup>192</sup> Keith Fraser-Smith, 'Special Report', in *Contact* (March 1988), p. 1.

<sup>193</sup> Keith Fraser-Smith, 'Media: Reaching the Arab World', p. 2.

<sup>194</sup> 'Newsbriefs', in *Contact* (February 1991), p. 2. This booklet was called 'Skinny Luke', as it was printed in such a manner that it could be mailed in a normal envelope without attracting undue attention from the postal authorities.

<sup>195</sup> 'BCC at a Glance', in *Contact* (April 1993), p. 2. 'Partners in Prayer', in *Contact* (April 1993), p. 2.



Beware of the programmes on Trans World Radio... especially the programme Nemshi Maan [sic], which is prepared by persons who have learned the art of trickery and playing on people's minds – especially the youth who face many problems in life. They lead them to believe that Christ is the Saviour and that without Him there is no salvation. This is a false belief. [...] So beware of these destructive programmes and don't let their beautiful words deceive you, nor their songs, which carry poison.<sup>196</sup>

In May 1993, AWM published extracts from an article that had appeared in a prominent Algerian newspaper. It described how 'preachers of Christianity are knocking at the doors of Algeria [...] through correspondence courses. Many Algerian youths have begun to follow religious courses by correspondence with foreign societies and broadcasts.' The article mentioned that many Algerians participated in these courses and that 'many women were won over' by BCCs. The tone of the article was mainly factual, without animosity.<sup>197</sup> In Algeria the situation for Algerian Christians and for receiving and sending mail to Christian organizations seemed to become easier.

The situation in Morocco remained confusing. In 1993, AWM's director for the area of North Africa concluded after a visit to Morocco, that there was an increasing openness and freedom in the country, and that there were hundreds of listeners to the Christian radio broadcasts and hundreds of BCC students. 'Inadequate follow-up resources are stretching the capabilities of Christian workers to the limits.' But as 'millions of people have not had a chance to hear and understand the Gospel', he also concluded that 'effective use of radio, video, literature, correspondence courses and personal witness by both expat [sic] tentmakers and national Christians needs to be vastly expanded.'<sup>198</sup> For an organization that believed that radio was the first step to create a more personal relationship with its audience, it must have been disappointing to conclude that the follow-up was inadequate.

During that same year, the police in Morocco began another campaign against Christians and BCC literature. On 8 November 1993 a French newspaper in Morocco carried an article about the police arresting students of BCCs in Casablanca. The article mentioned some of the materials RSB had sent to a certain Muṣṭafá, and how he had become a Christian:

On 25 October 1993, the police summoned a group of young Moroccans who had been in touch with the Monte Carlo station. All nineteen appeared, including Mustafa. The police asked them to sign a document in which they agreed to stop communicating with the missionary station. Eighteen out of the nineteen agreed, but only Mustafa refused, and was arrested.<sup>199</sup>

Muṣṭafá was sentenced to three years in prison but he was released after a few months when he returned to Islam and agreed to no longer receive BCCs. 'It is

<sup>196</sup> 'Radio Feedback', in *Contact* (February 1993), p. 2.

<sup>197</sup> 'Christ stays as a Guest in Algeria', in *Frontline* (May 1993), p. 1.

<sup>198</sup> AWM's West Area Director, 'Hunger in Morocco', in *Frontline* (June 1993), p. 2.

<sup>199</sup> Newspaper article quoted in 'Prosecuted for receiving Bible Correspondence Courses', in *Frontline* (March 1994), p. 2.

reported that other police stations in Morocco have been instructed to summon and investigate BCC students', NAM reported.<sup>200</sup>

In 1994, RSB received 1,618 radio response letters. RSB handled 9,714 pieces of mail from BCC students.<sup>201</sup> RSB did not clarify how many of those were 'active' students, or how many were newly enrolled. Of interest is that of that mail, 75 percent was in Arabic and 25 percent in French.<sup>202</sup> The high level of students in North Africa still preferring to use French should, within the context of the active efforts of the governments to *Arabize* society, be seen as a token of resistance to that.

The situation remained difficult in Morocco. In 1994 *Frontline* wrote that 'postal authorities continue to confiscate Bible Correspondence Courses being mailed into the country, and police attempt to intimidate those involved and imprison those not willing to drop their interest'.<sup>203</sup> Even in 1998, AWM was still aware that in some areas of Morocco people faced problems receiving mail. In other areas there ceased to be a problem anymore. There was, it seems, no longer a national policy to work against the Christian broadcasters and their mail.<sup>204</sup>

In 1994, RSB celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. *Frontline* published that since 1964, 3,700 programs had been produced, and 90,000 radio listeners had written to RSB and had received a reply. RSB also published that many North African church leaders, some of whom had suffered in prison for their faith, spoke of the evangelistic and discipleship contribution that the radio had made in their lives.<sup>205</sup> It also confidently wrote that 'based on secular research' it knew that 'for every listener letter, there are 800-1,000 listeners'.<sup>206</sup> This 'secular research' referred to, was probably the often-heard but unsubstantiated claim that every letter received meant 1,000 listeners.

Throughout these 30 years of RSB's existence, about one million BCC lessons had been mailed out. Until 1994, the total enrollment of the BCCs was 287,200 students.<sup>207</sup> The number of people that had finished these courses was not mentioned. As the total number of radio respondees during this time had been 90,000 it is clear that only about a third of all BCC students asked for the first lesson as a result of having listened to the radio. The other two-thirds thus came from advertisements in newspapers or magazines, friends, or from missionaries handing out invitations to participate. In total, RSB had produced eight different Arabic BCCs.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> 'Media Report of RSB' (December 1995), from NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>202</sup> 'Partners Through Giving', in *Contact* (November 1995), p. 2.

<sup>203</sup> 'Dispatches from the Arab World', in *Frontline* (July/August 1994), p. 3.

<sup>204</sup> Ted Fisher, 'Seeing the man at the top', in *Frontline* (May 1998), p. 2.

<sup>205</sup> 'The Effectiveness of the Radio School of the Bible', in *Frontline* (September 1994), p. 1.

<sup>206</sup> Letter of Janet Tower to Chris Ford (10 June 1994), from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing. 'The Facts of the RSB', in *Frontline* (September 1994), p. 2.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

#### 15.6.4 Continued Decrease: Since 1995

In 1995, the radio programs elicited 1,324 letters.<sup>209</sup> The Arabic BCCs had an average number of 'active students' of 359. The French courses were done by an average of 225 students. Of those responding to radio, 55 percent were from Morocco, 12 percent from Algeria, three percent from Tunisia, 12 percent from the Middle East and 18 percent from other countries. The active students of the Arabic BCC were 31 percent Moroccan, 54 percent Algerian, eight percent from Tunisia, one percent each from Libya and the Middle East, and five percent from other places. Of the 'active students' doing the French BCCs there were 22 from Morocco, 13 from Algeria and three from Tunisia. Most courses were done by students living in West Africa and Europe.<sup>210</sup>

The trend continued downward in 1996. Radio received only 917 letters. The average number of active students in the Arabic BCCs was 281, while French BCCs had an average of 100 active students. Of the respondents to radio 31 percent were from Morocco, 52 percent from Algeria, 11 percent from Tunisia, one percent from Libya, and six percent from other countries. Of the active students doing an Arabic BCC, 56 percent were from Morocco, 13 percent from Algeria, one percent from Tunisia, nine percent from the Middle East, and 22 percent from other countries. For the French BCC, RSB had 26 active students in Morocco, eight in Algeria and one in Tunisia.<sup>211</sup>

In 1997, RSB published in *Frontline* that radio programs received 'over 200 letters per month'.<sup>212</sup> In reality, during the first eight months of the year, less than 400 responses were received in total.<sup>213</sup> The total figure for the year must have thus been in the range of 600 letters. This radio response consisted of 34 percent from Morocco, 51 percent from Algeria, ten percent from Tunisia, one percent from Libya, and four percent from other countries. The Arabic BCCs had an average of 196 active students and the French had 79 active students. Of the students of the Arabic BCCs, 49 percent were from Morocco, nine percent from Algeria, two percent from Tunisia, 13 percent from the Middle East, and 27 percent from other countries. The French BCCs had an average of 20 active students in Morocco; five in Algeria, and one in Tunisia.<sup>214</sup>

The information extant for audience response in 1998 only covers five months of the year. During those months, 231 letters were received. Assuming that these are representative for the rest of the year, RSB received 554 letters in 1998. This figure is probably high however due to RSB's cessation of broadcasting over TWR

<sup>209</sup> 'Media Report RSB' (December 1995).

<sup>210</sup> These figures were collated by the author based on the 12 monthly reports entitled 'Media Report RSB', January 1995 to December 1995, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>211</sup> Based on all 12 monthly 'Media Report RSB', from January 1996 to December 1996, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>212</sup> 'Marseille Calling', in *Frontline: Introductory special issue* (n.d), but published in 1997, p. 3.

<sup>213</sup> Based on the monthly 'Media Report RSB' of January, February, and April-August 1997, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing. During those seven months, 340 letters were received.

<sup>214</sup> Based on the monthly 'Media Report RSB' of January-August 1997, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing. During those eight months, RSB had an average of 196 active students in Arabic, and 79 in French.

in September 1998. RSB had throughout the years received most of its response for its MW broadcasts. In 1988, based on the information of the five months, the number of active students of BCCs grew slightly, to an average of 202. The French BCCs however declined greatly and had only 60 active students. That loss was mainly outside North Africa, as RSB still had 17 active students in Morocco, five in Algeria and one in Tunis. The radio response was 35 percent from Morocco, 46 percent from Algeria and nine percent from Tunisia, while 12 percent of the letters were from other countries.<sup>215</sup>

After that year, when RSB no longer broadcast over TWR on RMC-MC, the audience response to the radio programs almost came to a halt. The SW broadcasts to North Africa barely elicited audience response. The efforts of RSB to broadcast through an audio channel on satellite, together with HCJB, led to such a minimal response that RSB withdrew from the project in 2003. AWM announced that, after two years of testing, it was glad of the cooperation with HCJB, and also that many North Africans were trained in radio production, but that 'the number of people listening was still so low that it was felt it did not merit the amount of money spent.'<sup>216</sup>

## **15.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

### ***15.7.1 Indigenization***

The beginning of NAM's involvement in radio production was conceived by the Western missionaries of NAM. The management of its media organization, RSB, was always fully Western. The dependence of RSB on its small Arabic production staff ensured that in major managerial decisions their opinions were always taken seriously although indigenization of the management did not take place.

Initially, NAM and RSB endeavored to have North African speakers for their programs, but from 1966, the main speakers were Arabs from the Levant who also worked fulltime in RSB. These people were invited to work for RSB as it was difficult to find staff from North Africa. From a Pan-Arab viewpoint that could be termed indigenization of the program producers, but from the perspective of the audience in North Africa, these Arabs were not indigenous. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, RSB has worked mostly with North Africans in its radio programs, as some of the Middle Eastern staff have retired.

### ***15.7.2 Contextualization***

#### **15.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

RSB focused its radio productions on North Africa, both for Christians and Muslims. The fact that it did not endeavor to also target the whole Middle East was wise and in line with the need to target a homogenous audience. However, the dif-

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<sup>215</sup> Based on the monthly 'Media Report RSB' of January-April and June 1998, from the NAM/AWM files in Worthing.

<sup>216</sup> 'Prayer', in *Vision* Vol. 2 (2003), p. 4.

ferences within North Africa were still very large, and to target both Christians and Muslims was problematic.

#### **15.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

The content of the RSB programs was, in general, focused on individuals and their most direct needs, without any reference to a Christian view of political matters such as dictatorships or human rights. This meant that RCR2's goal of addressing all spheres of life was not fulfilled. Thus, CW5's warning was not heeded either. In association therefore RSB did not allow the Gospel to be prophetic in the context of society, as CW4 prescribed. This was a loss for the audience as it made the programs less interesting. It also meant that the *diakonal* elements of the Christian witness were not well developed in the programs. However, as the churches in North Africa avoided involvement in socio-political issues on a national scale, RSB's approach to remain silent about politics or Islam was in harmony with CW2. This shows a conflict between producing fully contextual programs, and the desires of the local churches to not do so.

#### **15.7.2.3 Language**

NAM's initial choice to broadcast programs in colloquial Arabic and Amazigh was a choice to speak in the languages of its audience. The later choice to broadcast in MSA was made in order to reach all of North Africa as NAM had missionaries in all these countries. The choice to use Middle Eastern speakers and MSA for radio broadcasts to North Africa created unnecessary distance with the audience. Not only did these speakers use a language that was not the mother tongue of anyone in North Africa, but they also had an accent that was not North African. The culture of these Middle Eastern speakers was Levantine and Christian, presenting an added hurdle for producing programs that were contextualized.

Immediately after independence, only a small minority of North Africans could read and write Arabic, and so understand MSA. This problem for RSB's audience was clear from the fact that initially the majority of the audience was interested in doing the French BCCs, not those in MSA. Irrespective of the question of whether people could understand MSA, it was not their vernacular and therefore not the best of languages to speak to the mind and hearts of the people.

During the 1980s and 1990s, RSB was prepared to use brief inserts of colloquial Arabic in its programs but MSA continued to create the framework for the programs. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century RSB underlined that it wanted to take the desires of the churches of North Africa seriously. This latest position could possibly change RSB's future language policies towards a focus on the vernaculars of North Africa again.

#### **15.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

In its programs, RSB tried to use language and examples that were suitable for the audience in North Africa. It did not use Islamic terminology or examples for doing so, in line with CW6. Islamic terms and forms cannot be separated from their meaning. Using Islamic jargon would have been unacceptable to the Levantine Christians in RSB, but in not doing so it was also respectful to the Christian com-

munities within North Africa. These converts from Islam wanted to distance themselves from the mosque, not perpetuate its forms. Not using Islamic jargon in contextualizing the Gospel was therefore also in line with warning CW2, about the need to do the work of contextualization within the community of the local church.

#### **15.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

AWM's Statement of Faith, that had to be accepted by all its missionaries including the Arabs working in RSB, was rather detailed and a Western expression of the evangelical faith. It did show RSB's adherence to absolute truth as revealed in the Bible and Christ, and its conviction that people should be integrated into the Church for salvation. RSB therefore fulfilled CW1. In its programs, Christ was portrayed in the traditional Christian manner, as the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity who died and rose again for the forgiveness of those who believe in Him. Hence, the *kerygmatic* witness to the Gospel was present in AWM's programs.

The Church was described in terms of Travis' C2 and C3 spectrums; the Church was described as a community of believers that met regularly, not in church buildings but in the homes, as suggested in C3. The language used was the traditional language of Arabic Christianity though, in line with C2. This was done without reference to Islamic terms or habits. The programs did not speak of the actual churches of the Arab World or elsewhere, so the *koinonia* of the Church was not well reflected in the programs.

#### **15.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

RSB's programs were mainly broadcast by TWR from RMC-MC, within the context of other programs that were aimed at North Africa. Whether that was a good context for these programs can be assessed by studying TWR's blocks of airtime. The influence of the fact that the programs were transmitted from France, the former colonizer of North Africa, has not been researched but deserves further study.

### ***15.7.3 Christian Witness***

RSB's broadcasts to North Africa contained a clear *kerygmatic* witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His substitutionary death and resurrection were clearly proclaimed. This was effective in creating an interest in the Gospel and was instrumental in encouraging people to take the decision to become Christians. AWM's missionaries on the ground in North Africa, even after formal missionary work had become illegal, played an important role in nurturing the small groups of believers that developed in North Africa.

RSB's policy to use its programs for only creating personal relationships with people was a rather restrictive usage of the radio medium. However, with only 90 minutes per week of programs, the goal to mainly use radio for getting contacts was probably the best RSB could do in the context of its aims in North Africa. This was, however at the expense of the width of the testimony. The programs did not contain much reference to anything societal; hence the *diakonal* witness to the Gospel was mostly absent. The same is true for the *koinonia* of the Christian wit-

ness. The focus of AWM on small meetings of like-minded Christians without any reference to other churches amounted to a denial of the legitimacy of those churches. This was not good for the testimony to the communion of Christians.

During the 1990s, the audience response for RSB's programs declined steeply. This probably reflected the diminishing general interest in radio and the development of satellite television for entertainment and for gathering information in the 1990s. AWM did envision dramatic changes in the media landscape and made some strategic choices to diminish its radio production and to invest in video production and satellite radio broadcasting. However it appears, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that RSB has still not been able to decide about its new direction.

It is commendable that the organization, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, expressed its belief in the need for the churches of North Africa to develop their own theology for their own context. It remains to be seen whether that means that RSB will accept North African co-workers if they refuse to sign AWM's Statement of Faith.

AWM has a tremendous history of over a century as a mission agency, and over half a century as a media organization. Its pride in that history is not reflected in its treatment of its historic records; it is to be hoped that AWM will gather its historic materials in an archive that enables future generations to study its work.





## 16 Near East Council of Churches (NECC)

The Near East Council of Churches (NECC) with its related studios was the only Ecumenical organization involved in producing Protestant Christian radio programs in Arabic. Before 1962 the acronym NECC meant Near East Christian Council. In 1974 NECC was reorganized and it changed its name to Middle East Council of Churches (MECC).<sup>1</sup>

In 1948, NECC decided to involve itself in radio production, but it would take until 1963 before it began to have its programs broadcast. Between 1963 and 1977, NECC/MECC had three hours of airtime each day on the Ethiopia-based Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). As NECC continuously interacted with RVOG, this chapter pays attention to RVOG and LWF in as far as that enables an understanding of the development of NECC's policies, studios, and program production.<sup>2</sup>

In 1977 RVOG was taken over by Ethiopian Marxist rebels. MECC lost its airtime on RVOG and subsequently tried to set up its own broadcasting facilities. That did not work but MECC was able to maintain airtime on Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) until MECC's radio ministry ceased in 1980.

The Lebanese Presbyterian Ya'qûb Ḥūrânî was a major personality in the development of NECC's studios and program production; his work and ideas therefore play an important role in this chapter.

NECC's views made it unique in Christian broadcasting. They determined a different view of what the Gospel entailed and how it should be presented on radio. This chapter researches the question to what extent this resulted in differences with other Protestant broadcasters and producers as regards their Statement of Faith, target audience, preferred language, and its programming philosophies.

This chapter closes with observations regarding the indigenization of NECC and MECC and the contextualization of its programs. To what extent the programs of NECC and MECC witnessed to the Gospel through their *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia* is the final subject in this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 4 on the history of Christianity of the Arab World has treated the background to these changes.

<sup>2</sup> As this chapter's focus is on NECC's role, not on RVOG, this last organization is not described here in detail. For a dissertation on RVOG, see Robert E. Van Deursen, *A Study of a Church-Related International Broadcasting Project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia* (Washington DC, 1968).

## 16.1 HISTORY

### 16.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Broadcasts: 1948-1963

#### 16.1.1.1 In Search of a Location: 1948-1958

It was first recommended that NECC explore the possibility of starting its own radio station in 1948 at a conference on audio-visual aids in Cairo. In line with that, the Executive Council of NECC decided in 1950 to authorize the establishment of a program production studio in Beirut.<sup>3</sup> The studio was initially placed in the Beirut College for Women. In 1953 Harold A. Fisher, a Presbyterian pastor from the USA and a radio professional, was seconded to NECC to head up a training centre in the Beirut studio.<sup>4</sup>

In the early 1950s, some Middle Eastern governments were prepared to broadcast a few Christian programs on their national channels. In 1954, the Protestant churches of Lebanon had two half hour blocks each month on Radio Lebanon. The Armenians had 15 minutes per month. The Lutheran Hour (TLH) of Middle East Lutheran Mission (MELM) also had a 15-minute block for its Arabic program with a hymn and a message and also on each fifth Sunday of the month TLH had a half hour block. In Cyprus on Near East Radio (*al-Sharq al-Adná*), TLH had five minutes per month. Radio Damascus and Radio Jerusalem also, irregularly, allowed Arabic TLH programs.<sup>5</sup> TLH possibly had had its first Arabic broadcasts in Tangier during the late 1940s.<sup>6</sup> More study about the extent to which Arab governments allowed Christian broadcasts on their public channels and the content of those programs, is needed.

Fisher did not think that the national Arabic stations would allow more broadcasts. 'With the lone exception of Radio Lebanon [...] virtually all stations are under Moslem surveillance, and regular, extensive Christian broadcasting is practically an impossibility.'<sup>7</sup> As Near East Radio was becoming commercial, Fisher assumed it would try to be acceptable to a Muslim audience first, and therefore refuse extended Christian programming.<sup>8</sup>

Fisher realized that with this meager airtime, the Protestants already exceeded their proportionate allotment of time, so a further extension for evangelistic and other overtly religious programs was not deemed likely. He did see other ways of being present in the media, though:

These same stations, however, are ready to accept good dramatic materials, so that the medium of the drama – with its indirect way of teaching Christian truths – may

<sup>3</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* (Stuttgart, 1994), p. 157. Manfred Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World; The Experience of Radio Voice of the Gospel: 1957-1977* (Geneva, 1983), pp. 13-14.

<sup>4</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Harold A. Fisher, 'Christian Radio in the Near East', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. III No. 3, Third Quarter 1955), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Hansjörg Biener, *Christliche Missions sendungen von der arabischen Halbinsel*, in *Materialdienst: Zeitschrift für Religions- und Welt-anschauungsfragen* (No. 1, 2002), p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Fisher, 'Christian Radio in the Near East', p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

well yet be the door of opportunity for Christianity in Moslem lands. [...] Radio Lebanon still indicates a readiness to accept educational programs with high moral teaching values in addition to the more directly evangelistic formats now used by the church groups. [...] Such programs would have a high moral tone, great educational value, yet would not be openly evangelistic or directly religious.<sup>9</sup>

Fisher wanted to produce these ‘pre-evangelistic’ programs but he did think this would fall short of what was really needed. Fisher wanted nothing less than a full Arabic Christian radio station, based outside the Arab World.

What is needed is a constant stream of Christian ‘propaganda’, in the best sense of the word – evangelistic messages, music, drama, religious news, etc. that will be available to the listener *at all times*. Just as the good Moslem prays five times daily and the Communist drums his message into waiting ears, so must we Christians persist. Only with a strong transmitter set in free territory so that the broadcast schedule may be uninhibited and uncensored will a continuous flow of the direct Christian message be possible. Without it, we can never hope to give the churches the encouragement they need. Without it, many will never hear the message of Christ in the Mediterranean world.<sup>10</sup>

Fisher was not the only one with this dream. In the early 1950s, NECC tried to find a good location for a radio station. Tangier, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Cyprus were all considered, but none of those locations seemed right. In 1952 NECC decided to not pursue having its own station but to explore the option of using existent local stations. NECC could not hire airtime though, and even the Lebanese authorities refused NECC airtime.<sup>11</sup> Thus in 1956 the search for a station continued in Tangier, Cyprus and Ethiopia. The matter was now considered so urgent that the Executive Secretary of NECC, Harry Dorman, was authorized to call an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee as soon as action was needed.<sup>12</sup>

In 1958, the *ad hoc* radio committee was made a permanent unit in the NECC structure, called *NECC Radio and Audio-Visual Committee* (NECCRAVCO). The options of a station in Tangier and Cyprus were not pursued, but NECCRAVCO decided to send a committee of inquiry to Ethiopia, Jordan, Sudan and Iraq.<sup>13</sup> In 1958, NECC submitted its papers for a station to Ethiopia, with the help of the Lutheran Mekane Yesus Church of Ethiopia. NECC’s decision to do this came one decade after it had decided it wanted to broadcast programs.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

### 16.1.1.2 Efforts to be a Broadcaster Thwarted: 1959-1963

#### *Lutheran World Federation works towards a Radio Station in Ethiopia*

The idea of a Lutheran radio station for Africa was first presented in 1955 at the All African Lutheran Conference in Marangu (Tanzania).<sup>14</sup> The vision for LWF to have its own radio ministry came mainly from Fridtjov Birkeli. He had been a missionary of the Norwegian Lutheran Free Church in China and Japan, but moved to Geneva (Switzerland) as the director of the LWF Department of World Mission. When traveling in Africa in 1956 he 'saw a group of people clustered under a tree, listening to the magic box.' This showed to Birkeli how important radio was for Africa.<sup>15</sup> He challenged the LWF General Assembly in Minneapolis in 1957:

Can we really justify the fact that we, as a world family of churches and missions, have thus far not done anything substantial to reach much wider than our men and women can – for instance by radio? [...] We simply cannot afford to go on using only the old methods. The Lutheran Church must also conquer the air! We must try to assist every mission and every church in Africa and Asia with an extensive radio service. I am tempted to say, that we must do so, no matter how much it might cost.<sup>16</sup>

The idea of beginning a radio ministry was attractive to the Lutheran missionary strategists of that time, as they feared that many nations on the threshold of independence would be attracted to Islam or Communism.<sup>17</sup> In 1961, while LWF was preparing for its station, Sigurd Aske, the first station director, mentioned Islam and Communism as the main enemies in Africa:

Almost anywhere in Africa today you can pick up the Voice of Moscow or the Voice of Cairo. Shall we not also find a way to broadcast the Voice of the Gospel? The Voice of Peking or Moscow may give people something to live for. But only the Voice of the Gospel can enable us to face not only the problem of life but also the dread of death with peace and hope. [...] In a showdown battle for the soul of Africa Islam, Communism and Christianity are 'fighting it out' in the towns and villages. Unless the old-fashioned pagans are reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a new generation of modernized pagans will populate the continent.<sup>18</sup>

Birkeli's vision did not entail the concept of owning a radio station. He thought of a decentralized structure with the usage of existent facilities. The deci-

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.svenskakyrkan.se/lutherhjalpen/lh50eng/lh50eng8.htm> (16 July 2004).

<sup>15</sup> The last director of RVOG, Manfred Lundgren, tried to set RVOG and its 'visionary' apart from the other international Christian broadcasters. He argued that there was 'no doubt that Birkeli had "a vision" and that he was faithful to it', but Lundgren also stressed that 'there is no evidence that one single experience at any particular time or place gave [Birkeli] the idea or "the vision" of an LWF radio ministry. He has admitted himself that he was not sure if the hopes of an LWF involvement in active radio evangelism came to him in 1955 or 1956'. Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> From the press release of LWF on 15 December 1999. Frank Imhoff, 'Radio Voice of the Gospel Former Director Dies'. See [www.wfn.org/1999/12/msg00125.html](http://www.wfn.org/1999/12/msg00125.html) (2 April 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Sigurd Aske, 'Radio Evangelism and Africa', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. IX No. 1, January-April 1961), pp. 9-11.

sion to aim for a station came in 1958, when Sovik took over from Birkeli as the director of the LWF Department of World Mission.<sup>19</sup> There were many reasons why LWF decided to aim for a radio station of its own. The most important factor was that to raise financial support for one large project was easier within the structures of the Lutheran institutions than to raise support for a multitude of smaller, decentralized projects. This meant that the contours of the project were, to a certain extent, donor-driven from its inception. However, in support of this option it was also recognized that there were not enough local stations available to be a viable alternative to the one station model. Two additional benefits were that the project would be much easier to administer with a central broadcasting facility and that the ownership of a station would give more flexibility in broadcasting strategies, which would in turn better enable LWF to build up its own audience.<sup>20</sup>

Ethiopia was considered a good option, because of its location in Africa and because of its relative proximity towards Asia and the Middle East. The country did not have a colonial past, and it was a Christian nation with a strong, growing Lutheran church.<sup>21</sup> An added advantage was that Emperor Haile Selassie personally wanted a radio station on his soil. According to Lundgren, the emperor regretted that he had missed an opportunity with Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) when they built Radio ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa') in Liberia after Ethiopia had refused permission. He did not want to miss such an opportunity again as an international radio station would give him a good position in Africa.<sup>22</sup> Aske also considered the location good because it was 'a bridgehead in Muslim territory'.<sup>23</sup>

Shortly after NECC had requested permission to set up a radio station in Ethiopia, Arne Sovik, the then director of the Department of World Mission of LWF, also approached the Mekane Yesus Church for help in applying for a Christian radio station in Ethiopia. NECC and LWF were not aware of each other's efforts. When they found out about each other, they decided to wait and see who would get the permission and to cooperate irrespective of to whom the Ethiopian authorities would grant the permission.<sup>24</sup>

#### ***Cooperation between NECC and LWF***

When LWF and NECCRAVCO realized that they had both requested permission for a radio station in Ethiopia, they decided to let the requests run their course and prepare for close cooperation. The parties met on 8 and 9 June 1959 in Geneva for consultations about how to cooperate in case one of the two parties would get the permission. Each party hoped it would get the franchise, and if not, then in any case it would be allowed half of the broadcasting time, with a responsibility for 'sharing in the annual operating budget, including depreciation charges in ratio to its share in the programming.' Later the wording of this document created much tension between the parties, as they interpreted it differently. They had agreed,

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<sup>19</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, pp. 31, 33.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> Aske, 'Radio Evangelism and Africa', p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

though, that ‘final responsibility for interpreting [...] shall be vested in the owner of the station’.<sup>25</sup>

On 25 November 1959, Fisher wrote to LWF that the proposed arrangement was accepted by NECCRAVCO and that they assumed that the Executive Committee of NECC would also agree. Two days later, the emperor of Ethiopia gave the franchise to LWF.<sup>26</sup> A few days after Ethiopia announced its decision, Aske met in Beirut with Fisher, Nadīm Maqdisī, who would become NECC’s first program productions director, and with Wiliyām Ḥaddād, acting secretary of NECC.<sup>27</sup> A report of these meetings showed that they were not yet aware of Ethiopia’s decision. They must have sensed in what direction the decision would go though as Ethiopia’s government had close links with Israel and would not have been particularly inclined to sign an accord with an Arabic body of churches.<sup>28</sup>

In accordance with the Geneva Agreements of 1959, NECC was to be the preferred partner of LWF in the project. They agreed to call the radio station Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG). NECC was supposed to represent all non-Lutheran churches in RVOG, including the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC), and NECC would be allowed to buy as much airtime as LWF.<sup>29</sup>

#### ***NECC forced to be a Program Supplier***

From the inception of the cooperation, it was clear that the African and Asian churches would not be satisfied with being represented by NECC. In 1960, one of NECC’s main donors, the Foreign Mission Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America through its Radio, Visual Education and Mass Communication Committee (RAVEMCCO), clarified that it did not like that the African and Asian churches would not play any formal role in NECC’s decision making about their programming.<sup>30</sup> Beside that, NECC did not have the financial means for its representative role. RAVEMCCO considered it ‘good stewardship’ as a main donor, to ensure that the African and Asian churches would get a formal say in the programming decisions.<sup>31</sup>

Initially NECC was not supportive of changing the arrangements. ‘Shouldn’t NECC have, by virtue of its privileged partnership [...] greater authority than the

<sup>25</sup> ‘NECC/LWF Consultation Re. Proposed Christian Radio Station in Ethiopia’ (Geneva, 8-9 June 1959), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – LWFBS Executive Committee.

<sup>26</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 42. Letter of Harold A. Fisher to Rev. Allan Thompson and Dr. Sigurd Aske (25 November 1959), pp. 1-2, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC.

<sup>27</sup> Fisher became the Program Coordinator and Liaison Officer of NECC at RVOG in 1960. In November 1962 he moved from Beirut to Addis Ababa. Soon he was appointed Associate Program Director, until he left RVOG in 1965. See Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, pp. 14, 58.

<sup>28</sup> Allan G. Thompson, ‘Problem Study: Joint Operation NECC/LWF Radio Station’ (3 June 1959), p. 2, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC. Sigurd Aske, ‘Preliminary Report on Conversation with NECC’ (Beirut, 30 November-2 December 1959), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Letter of Edwin M. Luidens to Dr. Virgil A. Sly (25 March 1960), p. 2, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC. Luidens was Executive Secretary of RAVEMCCO.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

African Councils and Lutheran Hour', was one of the issues NECC discussed with LWF in 1960. During that year NECC accepted that TLH became the third partner in the agreement, though.<sup>32</sup>

In May 1962, during consultations in Addis Ababa, NECC and LWF tried to clarify their relationship. NECC continued to insist that it was the privileged partner that should be able to buy about half of all airtime for its Arabic broadcasts and for all non-Lutheran programs from Africa and Asia. The staff of LWF pointed out that not all national councils of churches in Africa and Asia wanted to work with NECC, and that the staff and the budgets of NECC were too limited to properly fulfil the task they had agreed to.<sup>33</sup>

In July 1962, RAVEMCCO used its powerful position as NECC's main sponsor to persuade NECC to agree to a redefinition of its role. Barnerd M. Luben, executive secretary of RAVEMCCO, wrote to his predecessor, Edwin M. Luidens, who was the general director of NECCRAVCO since 1961.<sup>34</sup> Luben first clarified that the only reason why RAVEMCCO was willing to invest much in the radio project of NECC, was its Ecumenical character. He also underlined that to insist on being the 'privileged time-buyer' would be detrimental to the Ecumenical approach of RVOG. It would place RVOG on the level of ELWA, the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) or HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings'), Luben argued.<sup>35</sup> He also apologized that RAVEMCCO had had difficulties raising enough money for NECC to fulfill its originally agreed obligations, and he warned NECC not to expect to raise much money for the Asian and African projects it was still hoping to keep under its wings.<sup>36</sup> Luben's threat was clear. RAVEMCCO used its role as a donor to force NECC to comply. Within days, NECCRAVCO agreed that a radio project committee should be formed to handle relationships between the Christian Councils in Asia and Africa as well as the Near East.<sup>37</sup> In January 1963 this

<sup>32</sup> 'Possible Questions for NECC to consider with LWF' (20 June 1960), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC.

<sup>33</sup> 'Resume of the NECC/LWF-BS Consultation' (Addis Ababa, 21-29 May 1962), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – LWFBS Board of Directors.

<sup>34</sup> In 1962, the Executive Committee of NECCRAVCO consisted of Ishâr Maqdisî, pastor and director of education of the Synod of Syria-Lebanon, Farîd 'Awdah, pastor and head of the Supreme Council of Protestants of Syria and Lebanon, 'Ayâd Zakhârî, secretary of the Sunday School Union of Egypt and Sudan, 'Aql 'Aql, pastor of the Arab Episcopal Church in Jordan, and Fû'âd 'Aqqâd, Secretary of the Levant Bible Society. The NECC Radio Project Committee Staff, 'Report of Near East Christian Council Radio Project Committee to Radio Voice of the Gospel Board of Directors' (received by RVOG on 11 July 1962), p. 1, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC.

<sup>35</sup> HCJB are the call letters of a Protestant radio broadcaster in Ecuador. The letters were also used for *Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings*.

<sup>36</sup> Letter of Barnerd M. Luben to Rev. Edwin M. Luidens (New York, 16 July 1962), pp. 1-7, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC. 'Position Paper of the N.E.C.C.' (29 May 1962), pp. 1-4, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC. In February 1963 Luben challenged LWF to not let RVOG become a Lutheran venture but to continue on an Ecumenical course. He complained that NECC and its role had been belittled, and that the Ecumenical climate in RVOG had worsened. See Dr. Barnerd M. Luben, 'Presentation on "Relationship" to the Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service' (Addis Ababa, 28 February 1963), pp. 5-6, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB.

<sup>37</sup> This is clear from the minutes of an informal meeting, held in Paris (France), where participants in RVOG rejoiced that NECCRAVCO had agreed that such a committee should be set up. See 'Radio Voice of the Gospel & Christian Councils – 16-17 August 1962', pp.

Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting (CCIB) was founded. CCIB would 'assume the responsibilities and privileges in relation to RVOG now carried by NECC in accordance with the 1959 agreement'. That placed NECC on par with the Asian and African Churches in its relationship with RVOG, so it no longer had a privileged role.<sup>38</sup>

This was a complete change from the situation in 1959 when NECC still hoped it could be the legal owner of a radio station in Ethiopia. In 1963 it was forced to accept that it was a program supplier like the other councils of churches in Africa and Asia, and that CCIB mediated between the broadcaster RVOG and NECC as a Program Supplier. In 1965 CCIB was restructured and called the Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting (CCCB). That committee dissolved in 1968 to become part of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC).

### **16.1.2 Arabic Broadcasts: 1963-1980**

#### **16.1.2.1 Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG): 1963-1977**

On 26 February 1963 RVOG began with three hours of Shortwave (SW) broadcasts per day over its 100 kiloWatt (kW) SW transmitter.<sup>39</sup> On 5 May 1963 the second SW transmitter of 100 kW began broadcasting, allowing the total airtime per day to go up to 10½ hours in six languages. From 1972, RVOG broadcast 20½ hours per day.<sup>40</sup> The transmitters and antennas were built on 120 hectares of land 30 kilometers outside Addis Ababa. The studios and living premises for the staff were just ten kilometers outside the capital city, on 16 hectares of land.<sup>41</sup> Most of the money needed for building and running the station was donated in North America, West Germany and Scandinavia.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the years, RVOG has broadcast 13 languages each day, with each language having at least 30 minutes of airtime per day. The Arabic language had 180 minutes of broadcast time per day.<sup>43</sup> On medium wave (MW), RVOG broadcast in Amharic, English and French.<sup>44</sup>

The civil war and the Communist takeover of Ethiopia in 1974 made it hard for RVOG to function well. Shortly after the *coup d'état*, the government announced that it considered that radio and television would be the exclusive activities of the government. Officials told Lundgren orally that this would not affect RVOG.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>38</sup> 'Exhibit to Minutes LWF BX Board of Directors Meeting' (30 August 1962), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – LWFBS Board of Directors. 'Agreement Covering Cooperation of the LWFBS and the CCCB in the use of Station RVOG: Proposed 1965 Revision Presented for Consideration' (1965), p. 1, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB.

<sup>39</sup> The call letters ETLF were assigned by the Ethiopian authorities and stood for Ethiopia and Lutheran Federation.

<sup>40</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> These languages were Amharic, Arabic, Farsi, Fulfulde, Hausa, Hindi, Malagasy, Mandarin, Swahili, Tamil, Telegu, English and French. Three languages were used for one or a few years only. These were Afrikaans, Nyanja, and Oromo.

<sup>44</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 109.

<sup>45</sup> 'Social Awareness in Ethiopia Gives RVOG New Challenge', in *Action* (No. 3, October 1975), p. 1.



However, on 12 March 1977, the station was nationalized, as it was supposedly ‘an instrument of Imperialism’. Hours later it began to broadcast as Radio Voice of Revolutionary Ethiopia.<sup>46</sup> From 25 to 27 March 1977, two weeks after RVOG had been closed, LWF, WACC and AACC met in Ferney-Voltaire, near Geneva, to discuss how to proceed. They decided to place on record:

[...] our resolve and determination that nationalization of the RVOG will not be regarded by us as the termination of our radio ministry in the areas served by the RVOG, and that the functions discharged by the churches through the RVOG in proclaiming the Gospel and contributing to education, information and development will find new outlets within the general framework of Christian Communication.<sup>47</sup>

The chairman of the LWF Committee on Communication (LWFCOC), John Bachman from the USA, suggested that programs of the RVOG feeder studios could now be broadcast on the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), ELWA and the Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA).<sup>48</sup> Arrangements were quickly made, and many of RVOG’s programs, including some of the Arabic ones, were broadcast by these and other stations within a year after the demise of RVOG.<sup>49</sup>

RVOG concluded that they could ‘thank God for the closing of their station’ as it freed them to now develop ministries they were unable to develop as long as they had their commitments as owners of a station.<sup>50</sup>

#### 16.1.2.2 Studios of NECC: 1963-1980

##### *Lebanon*

Luidens was the general director of NECC’s radio project from 1961 to 1963, after which Haddâd was appointed to that post. For a smooth handover, Luidens became the associate director.<sup>51</sup> This meant a formal indigenization of the project. The first Program Director of NECC was Salîm Ghûrî, a graduate of the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Near East School of Theology (NEST).<sup>52</sup>

During the whole period of broadcasting of RVOG, NECC always had three hours per day available on SW.<sup>53</sup> After a few months of broadcasting in 1963 it

<sup>46</sup> Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 160.

<sup>47</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 284.

<sup>48</sup> ‘RVOG to be resurrected in new form Bachman, tells LWF’, in *Action* (No 21, July-Aug. 1977), p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> ‘RVOG Tradition Alive and Well’, in *Action* (No. 29, April 1978), p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted by HCJB’s president Abe van der Puy, ‘Radio Mission Worldwide’, in *The Message in the Media* (Hilversum, 1979), p. 56. *The Message in the Media* contains the transcripts of the plenary lectures of the first European Evangelical Communication Conference, held in Amsterdam, Holland, from 20-23 October 1978.

<sup>51</sup> Wm. N. Haddad and Edwin M. Luidens, ‘Report of the NECC Liaison Officers to the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental broadcasting’ (Beirut, 8-10 January 1964), p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB.

<sup>52</sup> Ulrich Fick, ‘Handover Discussion Notes’ (1 June 1967), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – Beirut Studio.

<sup>53</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 109.

became clear that NECC could not produce enough though.<sup>54</sup> From November 1965, NECC, together with its feeder studios, was able to produce 90 minutes per day. That same block was broadcast twice each day. During the first years of broadcasting, because of the bad signal to the Mediterranean Arab countries, some experimenting with the morning broadcasts took place.<sup>55</sup>

Ḥūrānī, a Lebanese Presbyterian, was the first audience relations manager of the Beirut studio. While he was working on a Doctoral thesis in Philosophy of Education at Columbia University in the USA, NECC asked him to return to Beirut for working in the studio. On 1 January 1967, he became the program director.<sup>56</sup>

In 1968 there were some managerial problems in NECC's studio. Albār Istīrū, the general secretary of NECC, fired some of the program staff as he deemed them unsuitable at a 'Christian witness' level. Another problem at the time was that Ḥūrānī aimed at becoming the executive director of the whole radio project, but Istīrū thought that he lacked theological education for that, so Istīrū decided to handle research, public relations and follow-up work through his own office.<sup>57</sup> The fact that Istīrū called himself the *Director of Communications* and made all decisions on communication, while Ḥūrānī was the professional radio executive, created 'internal tension', according to Neville D. Jayaweera of WACC.<sup>58</sup>

One missionary of the Lebanese Evangelical Mission (LEM) described the broadcasts of RVOG to the Arab World as 'the first sizable and organized outreach' of Arabic Christian radio. He considered the studio of RVOG as much better than anything done before in Beirut. 'About that time there were also a few programmes recorded on a small scale non-professionally, for TWR [Trans World Radio] and perhaps there were some other isolated programmes recorded by other groups. But none of them was very regular or co-ordinated.'<sup>59</sup>

In 1968 NEST told Ḥūrānī that it wanted the studio space in its building to be dismantled as soon as possible as it wanted to sell its facilities. Ḥūrānī saw the advantage of that as he hoped for a much larger space. NEST allocated the basement of its new building to the new studio.<sup>60</sup> It would take until 1973 for NEST to finally move to its new premises in the Ḥamrā business district of Beirut. NECC built a fine studio in that basement, with modern equipment.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>55</sup> Yacoub Hourani, 'Director's Report, A Decade in Review: 1963–1973' (submitted to the Near East Council of Churches, Central Committee, Khartoum, Sudan, 26–28 February 1973), p. R8c. This document was given to the author by Ya'qūb Ḥūrānī during an interview in his office in the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut (13 July 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Fick, 'Handover Discussion Notes'. Ḥūrānī in an interview to the author (13 July 2004).

<sup>57</sup> Paul M. Volz, 'Tour Report: Confidential Notes' (25 November 1968), p. 2, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – Beirut Studio.

<sup>58</sup> 'The Issues involved in the Visit to the MECC', p. 2, Appendix 3a to N.D. Jayaweera, 'Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team to Visit the Middle East January 8–30, 1977', from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

<sup>59</sup> *Lebanon on the Highway* (n.p., 1971), p. 55. This brochure was the second part of the Focus on LEM series.

<sup>60</sup> Yacoub T. Hourani, 'The NECC Division on Radio, Report on Program Production' (1968), p. 3, received from Ḥūrānī by the author on 13 July 2004.

<sup>61</sup> When the author visited the premises of NEST on 13 July 2004, most of the equipment was still there, unused since 1980. Ḥūrānī, who accompanied the author, complained that all audio reels from

In 1973, Hūrânî had 12 personnel, of whom two were part-time. One reason for the growth in personnel was an effort to make better programs, but the new studio of NECC also began producing programs that were not used by RVOG. These were three programs of 30 minutes each week for TLH, two programs of 30 minutes for the Assemblies of God (AOG), one 30-minute tape especially for the NECC-broadcasts on CBC, a 30-minute tape for the Presbyterian Synod of Syria and Lebanon, and one program of 15 minutes for Armenians. The total weekly production amounted to 23 hours, which was quite substantial, given the fact that the studio had only one room for taping the programs.<sup>62</sup>

At one point in time, 14 or 16 producers were involved in the Beirut studio. By the time the civil war in Beirut began in 1975, the studio had one director for audience relations and two program producers, Hūrânî and Wadî‘ Jabrâ, as well as seven supporting staff.<sup>63</sup>

NECC’s studio in Beirut produced throughout the years about 85 percent of the Arabic programs for RVOG. The other 15 percent came from the studio of TLH in Beirut and from NECC’s feeder studios in Kuwait, Khartoum, Cairo and Juba.<sup>64</sup> This illustrates that the Arabic broadcasts on RVOG were, to a very large extent, Lebanese broadcasts.

In 1975 the studio in Beirut became dysfunctional due to the civil war. Tapes could no longer be shipped to Ethiopia and production was also stopped. RVOG did not receive tapes from Beirut after September 1975 and had to repeat the same Arabic programs again and again. Therefore its Danish program director Knud Jørgensen invited Hūrânî to come and work in Addis Ababa together with perhaps one other producer.<sup>65</sup>

Hūrânî went to Addis Ababa in April 1976 with Jabrâ and was followed one month later by the Sudanese Presbyterian audio producer Rînâ Mus‘ad who had worked with Hūrânî in Beirut since 1973. However, Istîrû ordered Hūrânî to transfer the radio production to Cairo. He travelled to Cairo in order to convince Istîrû to allow production to continue in Addis Ababa, but in June 1976 he had to telex RVOG that Istîrû had not changed his mind. Hūrânî therefore requested that Jabrâ should come and work with him in Cairo, while he asked Mus‘ad to move back to Khartoum.<sup>66</sup>

In April 1977 Hūrânî returned to Beirut again, as at that time there was a sense that the civil war was over. Jabrâ also returned to Beirut, but he resigned and be-

those days were probably thrown away. For a short time after 1980, some efforts were made to do some video production in the studio, but that idea was quickly abandoned, though the space in itself is quite suitable for both audio and video production.

<sup>62</sup> Hourani, ‘Director’s Report, A Decade in Review’, p. R8e.

<sup>63</sup> Jayaweera, ‘Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team’, p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 80. Hourani, ‘Director’s Report, A Decade in Review’, p. R8h.

<sup>65</sup> Letter of Knud Jørgensen to Yacoub Hourani (30 January 1976), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Studios, NECC, Beirut 3. ‘LWF/COC 1976 Minutes’, p. 58, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.0.5.4 - Information Services/Office of Communication – Committee on Communication.

<sup>66</sup> Knud Jørgensen, ‘Report on Arabic Production’ (7 July 1976), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East, Beirut Studio 3. ‘RVOG Cabinet Minutes’ (16 June 1976), p. 5, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.1.1 - RVOG Cabinet Minutes.

gan to work with MELM.<sup>67</sup> Due to a year of neglect the studio of NECC was found in bad shape. Humidity, a lack of general maintenance and power surges had damaged much of the equipment. A year later Ḥūrânî reported that the studio was restored again, but the main problem was to find volunteers or free-lancers. Many Christians had fled from Beirut, and it was often too dangerous to move around freely in the city.<sup>68</sup>

### ***Kuwait and Bahrain***

In 1962 NECC had fully equipped a studio in Kuwait and one in Bahrain. The first one was set up by Don MacNeill of the Arabian Mission, the second by Jeff Garden of the same mission. The director of program production for the Gulf area was Alîs Sim'ân, a graduate of mission schools in the Gulf and Lebanon. She was based in Kuwait. The American engineers and a group of volunteers were preparing programs while Sim'ân followed British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) production courses in London. In May 1962, NECC assumed that the studio in Kuwait would produce 30 minutes per day as from September 1962.<sup>69</sup>

The first Arabic message broadcast by RVOG was produced in the Kuwait studio in 1962; it was closed again in 1962 or 1963 after MacNeill was reassigned to work in Beirut. Sim'ân had in the meantime also left Kuwait, to work with the National Evangelical Church in Bahrain of pastor Fû'âd 'Aqqâd. She would later work for Bahrain Television.<sup>70</sup>

In 1973, Ḥūrânî reported that some members of the church in Kuwait were interested to open it again but it never happened.<sup>71</sup> In January 1977, Jørgensen was told in Kuwait that the reason for the studio not reopening was the 'general Muslim climate in the country'.<sup>72</sup> The studio in Bahrain was closed toward the end of the 1970s when Jeff Garden decided to devote his energy to agricultural development in Bahrain. There is no evidence that it ever played a role in producing tapes for NECC's broadcasts.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Rev. J. Stelling & M. Jahshan, 'Background Material for LWF/MELM Discussions Re: Mass Communication in the Middle East' (August 1978), p.4, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

<sup>68</sup> Yacoub Hourani, Arabic Program Director's Progress Report January 1, 1978 – June 5, 1978, pp. 1-2, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

<sup>69</sup> The NECC Radio Project Committee Staff, 'Report of Near East Christian Council Radio Project Committee', p. 2. 'Resume of the NECC/LWF-BS Consultation (Addis Ababa, 21-29 May 1962)', p. 15.

<sup>70</sup> Appendix to Knud Jørgensen, 'Middle East Survey' (November 1976), p. 1, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East - Middle East Survey, RVOG Studios, Beirut.

<sup>71</sup> Hourani, 'Director's Report, A Decade in Review', p. R8d.

<sup>72</sup> Knud Jørgensen and Bernhardur Gudmundsson, 'Travel Log' (Addis Ababa, January 1977), p. 47, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

<sup>73</sup> Lewis R. Scudder III, *The Arabian Mission's Story; in Search of Abraham's Other Son* (Grand Rapids, 1998), pp. 214-215.

**Egypt**

In Egypt, NECC initially agreed that a studio on the premises of the Coptic-Orthodox Institute in Cairo would provide programs for RVOG.<sup>74</sup> That seems to have not worked well. NECC then endeavored to set up a joint studio, but no progress was made and it is unknown who the counterparts were supposed to be. Eventually, Ḥaddād wondered whether a joint studio was actually needed, as some existing studios were in the process of obtaining better equipment.<sup>75</sup>

In 1966, NECC received its first reels from the Christian Center for Audio-Visual Services, a Coptic-Evangelical studio in Cairo that had been set up in 1962 by Robert L. Grupp, a Lutheran missionary from the USA. This studio was set up in the downtown Azbakīyah American Mission building.<sup>76</sup> The studio was originally made for slides and filmstrips, but after NECC requested its help, it also began to produce radio programs.<sup>77</sup>

In 1968, pastor Ḥabīb Ḥakīm, secretary of the Outreach and Witness Department of NECC in Egypt, and Farīd Manjāriyūs, pastor of Azbakīyah Evangelical Church, supplied the studio in Lebanon with 116 tapes.<sup>78</sup> A year later Ḥakīm left for the USA, so the studio could only deliver 85 tapes in 1969.<sup>79</sup> In 1970, Grupp also left Egypt and another American missionary, Richard Gibson, took over the management of the audio-visual center.<sup>80</sup>

In 1971 Manjāriyūs was able to supply NECC with 38 tapes, while Fāyiz Rīyād produced ten tapes. Ḥūrānī was clearly dissatisfied with that small production.<sup>81</sup> In 1973, the total production of the studio was 45 tapes of 25 to 28 minutes.<sup>82</sup> In 1975, the studio had one part-time producer, Ibrāhīm Jādallāh, beside two part-timers for audience relations.<sup>83</sup> Further research of these early developments of Christian media in Egypt is recommended.

Jørgensen was unhappy with Ḥūrānī's move to Cairo in 1976. The studio facilities were insufficient and the cost of tapes was excessive in Cairo. Beside that, shipping tapes from Egypt to Ethiopia involved Egyptian censorship.<sup>84</sup> In November 1976, Jørgensen wrote that the programs were produced in Cairo in what he

<sup>74</sup> 'Resume of the NECC/LWF-BS Consultation (Addis Ababa, 21-29 May 1962)', p. 15.

<sup>75</sup> William N. Haddad, 'Report to the CCCB at its meeting in London (April 18-20, 1966)', p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB.

<sup>76</sup> Albāt Istîrû in an interview with the author (6 June 2005).

<sup>77</sup> 'Minutes of the Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting (Baden, Austria, 27-29 April 1967)', p. 9, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB. Min□s 'Abd al-N□r in an email to the author (7 June 2005).

<sup>78</sup> Ḥūrānī in an interview with the author (13 July 2004). Hourani, 'The NECC Division on Radio, Report of Program Production', p. 4. 'Abd al-Nūr in an email to the author (7 June 2005).

<sup>79</sup> Yacoub T. Hourani, 'Arabic Programming Department Progress Report (Nicosia, 20-22 January 1970)', p.6, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ1.0.7 – RVOG Related Production Studios – Asia.

<sup>80</sup> Jayaweera, 'Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team', p. 19.

<sup>81</sup> Y. Hourani, 'Division of Radio Broadcasting Progress Report', p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ1.0.7 – RVOG Related Production Studios – Asia.

<sup>82</sup> Hourani, 'Director's Report, A Decade in Review', p. R8f.

<sup>83</sup> Jayaweera, 'Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team', p. 9. Jørgensen and Gudmundsson, 'Travel Log', p. 16.

<sup>84</sup> Letter of Knud Jørgensen to Yacoub Hourani (23 June 1976), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

called ‘a small audio-visual center under extremely difficult circumstances’.<sup>85</sup> A month later, he had to conclude that ‘due to breakdown in shipment of programmes’ the arrangement was ‘unacceptable’.<sup>86</sup> In January 1977, he reported that since September, only two weeks of programming of NECC had arrived at RVOG in Addis Ababa, so that in four months time, the programs had to be repeated three times.<sup>87</sup>

### **Sudan**

In North Khartoum (Sudan), Mus‘ad was the area secretary of NECC. She had a room in her home, with egg boxes on the walls for soundproofing, where she produced her programs. She was a good scriptwriter and involved many young people in her programs. One of her series was called *The Court (al-Maḥkamah)*.<sup>88</sup> In 1968, 36 tapes were produced and 80 tapes in 1969.<sup>89</sup> In 1971, she produced 67 programs of about 30 minutes and in 1973 she produced 81 tapes.<sup>90</sup>

Mus‘ad moved to Beirut to produce her programs in NECC’s studio in 1973. Due to the civil war there, she moved to Addis Ababa in 1976 and then later back to Khartoum. In 1977, Mus‘ad worked alone in Khartoum with only one part-time helper. The studio was ‘woefully inadequate’ and Mus‘ad had to work in ‘appalling’ conditions, according to a report of WACC.<sup>91</sup> In 1977 she resigned.<sup>92</sup>

It was commendable that NECC endeavored to have productions from different Arab nations by supporting the development of national production studios. This was probably however, more a result of Ecumenical relations than missiological concerns of contextualizing programs. The NECC studios never deviated from a Pan-Arab view and the usage of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as their preferred language.

In 1976, RVOG was instrumental in, together with the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), starting a studio in Juba in southern Sudan. NECC was not involved in that studio. Talks about setting up production for Southern Sudan had begun as early as 1972. Initially the idea was to produce programs in English and Juba-Arabic, the pigeon-Arabic that was the *lingua franca* in southern Sudan. These plans were related to problems of refugee populations in Southern Sudan,

<sup>85</sup> Knud Jørgensen, ‘Middle East Survey’ (November 1976), pp. 1-2, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East - Middle East Survey, RVOG Studios, Beirut.

<sup>86</sup> Memo of Programme Director [Knud Jørgensen] to Technical Director, DARP Director and Chief News Editor, ‘Revision of Shortwave Broadcast Schedule’ (2 December 1976), p. 8, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.2.4.1 - RVOG Program Department - Broadcast Schedules.

<sup>87</sup> Jørgensen and Gudmundsson, ‘Travel Log’, p. 15.

<sup>88</sup> Ḥūrānī in an interview with the author (13 July 2004).

<sup>89</sup> Yacoub T. Hourani, ‘Arabic Programming Department Progress Report (Nicosia, 20-22 January 1970), p. 7, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ1.0.7 – RVOG Related Production Studios – Asia.

<sup>90</sup> Hourani, ‘Director’s Report, A Decade in Review’, p. R8f. Hourani, ‘Division of Radio Broadcasting Progress Report’, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> Jayaweera, ‘Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team to Visit the Middle East January 8-30, 1977’, pp. 9, 20. Ḥūrānī in an interview with the author (13 July 2004).

<sup>92</sup> Knud Jørgensen, ‘Report of Visit to Beirut, Lebanon, May 9-11, 1977’, p. 6, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

due to civil war.<sup>93</sup> The studio began producing a daily program of 25 minutes in Juba-Arabic. RVOG had trained five producers and a technician of SCC. WACC and LWF sponsored the building of the studio, which took three years.<sup>94</sup> By the time the studio became functional, RVOG was closed down.

### 16.1.2.3 Areas of Tension between NECC and RVOG

#### *Problems of Reception*

In 1962, during test broadcasts, there had been grave worries in RVOG about the quality of the audio reception in the Middle East. 'We get no signal in the Middle East', Luidens warned. He predicted: 'We will get our most immediate criticism from several elements within NECC and from most supporting Boards in America if the signal cannot be heard clearly in Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran, Syria, Jordan and Turkey.'<sup>95</sup>

From the beginning of the Arabic broadcasts, major parts of the Arab World had difficulty receiving the programs. Ḥaddād and Luidens reported to CCIB that the bad reception in Egypt and Lebanon resulted in discouragement for those involved in production as their own communities were not reached.<sup>96</sup> Luben immediately warned RVOG that the bad reception in the most important Arab areas, was 'straining the goodwill of CCIB sponsors'. He also said that 'strong negative reaction [had] set in among Christian Arabs in this area which had severely handicapped audience relations work'.<sup>97</sup>

The signal strength was not the problem. There was heavy interference on the RVOG wavelength almost half of the time. In 1965 Ḥaddād complained that the radio signal suffered from 'propagation interference by nearby stations, and by direct jamming - a situation which calls for continual review and alteration of frequency'.<sup>98</sup> In 1965 reception improved for a while but in early 1966 the reception of the West Arab Beam into the Mediterranean Arab states deteriorated again. At the same time the East Arab Beam to the Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq had

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<sup>93</sup> Sigurd Aske, 'Possible Special Programs by RVOG for the Sudan' (Geneva, 15 June 1972), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ.0.0.2 - LWFBS Officers. Ernst Bauerochse, 'RVOG Southern Sudan Broadcasts', Exhibit 7 of LWFBS 1973 Board Agenda, Directors Annual Report 1972, pp. 1,5, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ.0.0.2 LWFBS - Board of Directors.

<sup>94</sup> 'RVOG Expands Broadcasts', in *Action* (No. 10, May 1976), p. 7. 'Sudan Studio Opens', in *Action* (No. 17, February-March 1977), p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> Letter of Ed Luidens to Sigurd Aske and Hal Fisher, (n.d., but 1962), p. 4, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd - NECC.

<sup>96</sup> Haddad and Luidens, 'Report of the NECC Liaison Officers to the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental broadcasting', p. 6.

<sup>97</sup> 'First Joint Meeting of the Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service Executive Committee and the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting (Beirut, 13-14 January 1964)', p. 21, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd - Joint Meetings.

<sup>98</sup> 'From William N. Haddad's Near East Area Report to the Executive Committee of World Association for Christian Broadcasting (WACB)' in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. XII No. 2, July 1965), p. 41.

decreased in reception quality for the first time. Much jamming, static and interference was reported.<sup>99</sup>

### ***Denominational Problems***

NECC and RVOG had some church-political tensions from the beginning of the project, and even more so after the broadcasts began. Editors in Addis Ababa were for instance criticizing some of the Coptic-Orthodox references to the Virgin Mary in NECC's programs. This added to problems between NECC and RVOG pertaining to linguistic issues. George W. Carpenter, who would later be the chairman of the CCCB, had helped mediate between the parties in 1963 and supported NECC's criticism that the editing done by RVOG in the Arabic programs was 'too detailed and meticulous'. He concluded:

It does not seem to give sufficient weight to the knowledge, judgment and experience of the producing staff. And there seems to be some lack of awareness that a style of language which is appropriate in one culture and language will often appear uncouth or inadmissible when translated into another and viewed by people of a different culture. In these circumstances it becomes presumptuous for an editor outside the original culture and working on the translation, to pass judgement on the original.<sup>100</sup>

These comments indicate that the non-Arabic staff in Addis Ababa did not have enough eye for the context of the Arab World. What they endeavored to do, was in fact, the de-contextualization of the Arabic programs. NECC was entitled to be upset.

CCIB met in January 1964 in Beirut and the issue of the place of Coptic-Orthodoxy in the programming came up again. A joint meeting was proposed to study Orthodox liturgies and expressions of faith. In an earlier stage, the Coptic church of Ethiopia had agreed to omit from broadcasting those segments of the mass that were objectionable to Protestants.<sup>101</sup> In January 1964 Haddad and Luidens reported to CCIB:

The several groups have been willing to accept self-discipline with respect to those matters of dogma and faith which are not an essential part of the Biblical statement of the Gospel in order to participate in the proclamation of the Gospel according to the Scripture as the only means of salvation for humanity in the Near East. It may be that this project now has developed the broadest Ecumenical cooperation of any specifically evangelistic effort in the Near East since the early days of the Church.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>99</sup> William N. Haddad, 'Report to the CCB at its meeting in London (April 18-20, 1966)', p. 4, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB.

<sup>100</sup> Letter of George W. Carpenter to Dr. Sigurd Aske (New York, 16 August 1963), p. 1, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB. Letter of Frederick B. Wilson to Dr. George Carpenter (New York, 15 August 1963), p. 2, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB.

<sup>101</sup> 'Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting (Beirut, 8 January 1964)' p. 8, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB.

<sup>102</sup> Haddad and Luidens, 'Report of the NECC Liaison Officers to the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting', p. 2.



As NECC and RVOG were Protestant organizations, it was understandable that not all expressions of the Orthodox faith were allowed on radio. They were for instance worried that the role of Mary in the Orthodox faith might confirm the mistaken Islamic view that Christians believe in a Trinity of the Father, the Virgin Mary, and their Son Jesus Christ.

NECC was criticized by RVOG for allowing non-Protestant elements, but it was criticized by the Coptic-Orthodox in Egypt for being too Protestant, according to Ḥūrânî. Churches in Egypt also probably did not feel very well represented as most programs were produced in Lebanese Arabic. In Lebanon, there was also criticism. The Syriac-Orthodox Churches there were not interested in the programs as the archbishop, according to Ḥūrânî, ‘only wanted programs in the Syriac language’.<sup>103</sup> The Maronite Patriarch was also unhappy about the programs NECC produced. ‘The programs are too liberal for our youth; they do not come to church anymore’, he told Ḥūrânî.<sup>104</sup>

### ***Different views of Evangelism***

An added problem was that many Christians were not satisfied with the programs of NECC as they did not appreciate that they were aimed at Muslims. Ḥaddâd and Luidens mentioned in their report of 1964:

Scores of Christians have been deeply disturbed that the NECC programs do not sound as though the studio was in a church. Their philosophy of programming assumes that the best evangelism is done in the sanctuary; their experience of witness to the non-committed is minimal, it seems. Curiously, the method in which the radio ministry expresses its evangelistic motivation puts it into conflict with those who should be its most hearty supporters. The projects faces a serious problem in attempting to maintain its informal approach to the non-committed multitudes of the Near East in order to win them without losing the confidence of the convinced Christians for whom it speaks.<sup>105</sup>

The radio producers of NECC wanted to present a view of Christ and the church that was understandable for the Muslim audience, in accordance with RCR4 and RCR5. The Churches in the Middle East, however, wanted the radio broadcasts to portray the Gospel in a manner that mirrored their actual church worship.

### ***News Programs***

One other area of tension between NECC and RVOG was the issue of newscasts. At the beginning of its broadcasts, NECC had not been able to find a Christian Arab newsreader for placement in Addis Ababa. However, in 1964 Suhaylah Marzûq was found and so in 1964 and 1965 Arabic news programs were broad-

<sup>103</sup> Hans W. Florin, ‘Report of Discussion with Near East Christian Council Staff (19 March 1962)’, p. 1, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC.

<sup>104</sup> Ḥūrânî in an interview with the author (13 July 2004).

<sup>105</sup> Haddad and Luidens, ‘Report of the NECC Liaison Officers to the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting’, p. 4.

cast.<sup>106</sup> RVOG had full control over the content of these broadcasts. NECC was unhappy about the reporting, as it considered some of it anti-Arab and pro-Israel, and NECC therefore demanded full control over the Arabic news broadcasts through Marzûq. The management of RVOG thought this was unacceptable as the news should be a 'beam of truth, and fear of authorities should not lead to other news'.<sup>107</sup> The result was that NECC decided it did not want any more newscasts at all, as they might endanger their relationship with the Arab authorities.<sup>108</sup>

The fact that NECC did not continue newscasts was deplorable given that the SW audience was interested in political and other news. It was also a missed chance at showing in practice how Christians, based on the Gospel, view news events and report about them. This missed chance was because of RVOG's policies. Its idea that it could centrally write its news items as if they were objective truth was a modernist illusion. Its refusal to allow the Arabic newsreader to write the Arabic newscasts was paternalistic too. RVOG did not allow contextualization in this case.

#### ***International Joint Study Team: 1967***

In February and March 1967, Carpenter made a study tour through the Middle East. His International Joint Study Team was financed by RAVEMCCO. Carpenter reported to NECC in March 1967 that the response to the SW broadcasts of RVOG was 'very small' and that results were 'poor'. That was a questionable conclusion that was maybe based on unrealistic expectations. Carpenter assumed the broadcast had a small audience due to poor reception. Carpenter therefore suggested that the NECC project should now 'concentrate on finding local and alternative outlets' for its programs. He pointed to the need to have MW and FM transmissions for the Christian programs, and also that NECC should become much more involved in having a 'hidden' ministry on the national channels of the Arab World, by supplying good programs without a Christian imprint. Carpenter mentioned that ELWA would be prepared to take some NECC programs, and suggested also that the feasibility and desirability of broadcasts from Cyprus should be researched.<sup>109</sup>

For some in NECC, these conclusions and recommendations of Carpenter confirmed their own views. Leonard Lee, an American missionary who was the associate audience relations director in Beirut, was 'very much convinced that SW broadcasts to the Arab World are useless', according to a report from 1967.<sup>110</sup> The audience response figures dropped from 2,815 to 2,046 between 1965 and 1967,

<sup>106</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 18.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 190. Haddad and Luidens, 'Report of the NECC Liaison Officers to the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental broadcasting', p. 3.

<sup>108</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 127.

<sup>109</sup> George W. Carpenter, the Rev. 'Aql 'Aql (chairman of the Commission on Radio Broadcasting of NECC), G.T. Durand (program director of a radio station in the USA and the Rev. John Poulton (Research Secretary of the World Association of for Christian Broadcasting) together made the study tour and submitted their report to NECC: 'Report of a Joint Study Team on the Christian Use of Radio in the Near East (15 March 1967)', from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB.

<sup>110</sup> Hûrânî in an interview with the author (13 July 2004). Fick, 'Handover Discussion Notes'.

which probably added to the bad feelings about RVOG. The countries where response was very disappointing were Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.<sup>111</sup>

According to RVOG's Technical Department in Addis Ababa, Carpenter's findings were 'highly subjective' as their own monitors in Beirut, Tehran, Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf indicated that the RVOG signal 'came in most satisfactorily even in the presence of moderate interference'. The anger of the people in Addis Ababa must have been great, commensurate with their fear of the loss of funding. They reported:

It is indeed distressing that the committee did not have as a member of its party a professional engineer [...] who could intelligently assess reception conditions. This would have avoided the subjective, emotional, unscientific, statements made and widely circulated by individuals whose engineering competence in these matters is highly questionable.<sup>112</sup>

The RVOG Technical Department also discredited the plan of NECC to find a MW broadcaster able and willing to reach the whole Arab World, even though this did not fall within the realm of the department's work. The department ensured that there would not be any Arab government prepared to make its MW transmitters available, and that even if they would, the power of those to reach the whole Arab World would not be enough. The department concluded that 'the committee's report badly confused the technical, political and other non-technical problems. Any SW station broadcasting into the Near East would face similar problems. Since no other realistic alternatives are presently available, it would seem that a maximum effort should be put into adequately publicizing and monitoring the broadcasts.'<sup>113</sup>

***NECC considers stopping all broadcasts with RVOG: 1967-1968***

On 21 April 1967, the Arabic leadership of NECC in its Triannual Assembly decided to discontinue its participation in RVOG 'at the earliest possible date'. This decision was taken with 12 against ten votes. In accordance with contractual arrangements, this meant that as from 1 May 1968, NECC would not need to pay for airtime on RVOG any longer.<sup>114</sup>

Ḥūrānī seems to have disagreed with the decision of the Triannual Assembly. He wrote in his report on a Transistor Contest, held in April and May 1967, that 'it is interesting to note that surveys conducted in the past for various radio broadcasts in the area, revealed that middle easterners prefer to use the medium wave. [...] However, this contest showed that [RVOG] has succeeded in motivating a

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<sup>111</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>112</sup> 'Annual Report RVOG Technical Department 1967', pp. 3-5, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – LWFBS Executive Committee.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> 'Minutes of the Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting (Baden, Austria, 27-29 April 1967)', p. 14.

reasonably good size of listeners throughout the area to tune to its short wave broadcasts'.<sup>115</sup>

Luben summarized why NECC took its decision to stop working with RVOG. He said that it was not for financial reasons, not because Carpenter's International Joint Study Team had recommended it, not because NECC's Committee of Radio Broadcasting wanted it, not because of the Executive Committee of NECC, and not because a special subcommittee of NECC reviewing the project proposed to stop with RVOG. All had favored continuation, with some modifications. According to Luben, the only reason was related to ecclesiastical politics and administrative problems. The project had become a source of tension and disunity.<sup>116</sup>

Luben also underlined the link between the areas where audio reception was weak and where the Churches were most critical of RVOG as a whole. The signal reception was poor in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Lower-Egypt and representatives in NECC from those countries voted for quitting. Representatives from Iraq, Iran and Sudan wanted continuation. Those countries enjoyed better reception of the signal, and were also more dependent on SW broadcasts in general.<sup>117</sup>

In 1968 the Central Committee of NECC reversed its earlier decision and was no longer in a hurry to distance itself from RVOG. It said that 'in view of the fact that the Radio Division has not yet made effective studies of the medium wave broadcasting possibilities, the Central Committee finds that it is essential to continue broadcasting through RVOG until the time when other channels can be developed.'<sup>118</sup>

The reasons for the continued usage of RVOG were: that the audio signal in the Middle East had become clearer so the Churches had requested urgently that the programs continue; the realization that large areas of the Arab World could not be covered by MW; programs had improved; and the political situation after the war of 1967 had created a larger audience.<sup>119</sup>

On this very embarrassing situation for NECC Aske commented mildly: 'Not a very enviable situation' for NECC. He wrote in early 1969, less than a year later, that those involved in NECC's broadcasts were enthusiastic about its work. He mentioned that churches in the Arab World had over the years of RVOG broadcasts come into more meaningful contacts with their Muslim neighbors than in the whole century before. He believed that the radio broadcasts were the only area of NECC work where the Protestants and the Orthodox, including the Coptic-Orthodox, were fully cooperating.<sup>120</sup>

In North Africa, reception of RVOG's Arabic programs had become 'fair', except for the years 1969 and 1970, when it was considered 'poor'. In the Middle

<sup>115</sup> 'The NECC Commission on Radio Broadcasting Transistor Contest (April 23–May 20, 1967)', p. 1, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – Studio Directors Conferences.

<sup>116</sup> 'Minutes of the Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting (Baden, Austria, 27-29 April 1967)', pp. 61-62.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 130.

<sup>119</sup> 'Report on Annual Meeting of CCCB, Exhibit D (London, 9-14 February 1968)', p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – CCIB/CCCB.

<sup>120</sup> Sigurd Aske, 'LWFBS General Director's Report to the Commission on World Mission (Asmara, 24 April 1969)', p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – LWFBS Executive Committee.

East, reception was also 'fair'. 'Fair', according to Ḥūrānī, meant that the programs were audible and understandable, but never 'fluent'.<sup>121</sup> In 1973 he reported that it is 'true, shortwave is not the best medium [but it] can be reported today that reception is very good. [There] has been a substantial improvement in the reception.' He mentioned that reception was particularly good in Iraq, Sudan and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>122</sup>

In 1976 the reception quality on the West Beam was described as very good to excellent. The lack of response from the East Beam area had led the RVOG staff to recommend to cancel those broadcasts altogether. Because of that advice, a fact-finding team traveled throughout the Arab World in January 1977.<sup>123</sup>

#### ***WACC-LWF Fact-Finding Mission: 1977***

This fact-finding team, consisting of some representatives of WACC, LWF and RVOG, was asked to study the communications department of MECC, with a view to its finances, its structure and its administration. It was also commissioned to study the effectiveness of RVOG's Arabic transmissions. Among this group were Jayaweera of WACC and Jørgensen of RVOG. The study was done in January and by the time Jayaweera wrote the report, RVOG had been nationalized to broadcast a Communist message.

One reason why WACC wanted this study done, was that it felt that MECC was less than cooperative in giving information on its financial operations. 'As a result of MECC's persistent inability to supply the information required', WACC had decided to cut its support for MECC's radio production by 33 percent in 1975. As no information was supplied, the same cut was sustained in 1976. The sponsors of RVOG and MECC were also worried about the effectiveness of the Arabic transmission 'due to the paucity of feedback'. 'Like the WACC, [LWF] felt that its activities in the Middle East had been for too long based on speculation and uncertainty'.<sup>124</sup> Jayaweera began his report by stating that the 'need to strengthen and step up the communication capabilities of the MECC acquires a critical urgency':

The work of numerous Evangelical missionary groups working within strongly Moslem territories, the operations of RVOG from Ethiopia, and of TWR from Cyprus and the activities of MECC as a whole, in combination with a number of other factors, seem to have brought on a new aggressiveness on the part of Islam directed primarily against Christian proclamation and evangelism. [...] Plans have been finalised to establish a massive radio complex in Saudi Arabia to be called 'The

<sup>121</sup> Ḥūrānī in an interview with the author (13 July 2004).

<sup>122</sup> Hourani, 'Director's Report, A Decade in Review', p. R8b.

<sup>123</sup> 'Shortwave Broadcast Schedule – 7 March-1 May 1976', from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.2.4.1 - RVOG Program Department - Broadcast Schedules. Memo of Programme Director [Knud Jørgensen] to Technical Director, DARP Director and Chief News Editor, 'Revision of Shortwave Broadcast Schedule' (2 December 1976), p. 8, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.2.4.1 - RVOG Program Department - Broadcast Schedules. LWF/COC 1977 Agenda Exhibit 9b/3 RVOG Technical Department Report, p. 5, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.0.5.4 - Information Services/Office of Communication – Committee on Communication.

<sup>124</sup> Jayaweera, 'Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team', p. 2. This report was quite open about the problem WACC and LWF had had for years in meeting with the General Secretary of MECC.

Voice of Islam', to be beamed to the world. And backing up this new militancy are the enormous reserves of surplus dollars now available to the Moslem countries. Sadly in contrast to this new militancy on the other side, one has to reckon with a major withdrawal on our side – the silencing of RVOG in March 1977.<sup>125</sup>

Because of this situation, Jayaweera did not want to conceal MECC's shortcomings, but on the other hand, 'the global Christian community [...] and principally, the funding organisations, should treat the infirmities of the MECC with a great understanding and tolerance. We must do nothing to rock the boat'.<sup>126</sup>

Jayaweera's report criticized the fragmentation of MECC's communication departments. That was to a large extent the result of MECC's efforts to distribute responsibilities evenly over the Coptic-Orthodox, the Syriac-Orthodox, the Greek-Orthodox and the Protestant churches.<sup>127</sup> Strongest criticism was reserved for the fact that the general secretary, Istîrû, was also the acting director of the radio department. Relationships with the related studios had not been maintained, the majority of staff had deep grievances, and the 'lack of confidence in the General Secretariat was almost total'. Jayaweera suggested the immediate appointment of a new, fulltime director of communication.<sup>128</sup>

Jayaweera criticized the small size of the production staff for the Arabic programs. By January 1977, there were three fulltime producers who produced 500 hours of programs each year. These producers were not professionally trained. He considered that 'absurd, if not laughable', and he doubted that quality could be maintained in this way.<sup>129</sup>

The report said concerning the reception of RVOG's signal in the Arab World, that both beams were 'unstable, susceptible to flutter and interference, and for some of the time hardly audible. Further, the weak RVOG signals are squeezed out by the prevalence of FM and MW transmissions on an intensive scale throughout the whole of the Middle East'. Of all the radios in the Middle East, only a small number were even able to receive SW broadcasts. Jayaweera concluded that 'listening to the RVOG SW signal was minimal' so he proposed a 'final and irrevocable break with involvement with SW broadcasting'.<sup>130</sup>

#### **16.1.2.4 NECC's Outlets for Broadcasting beside RVOG**

##### ***Early Efforts of NECC to find other Outlets***

NECC and many of its supporters had realized early on, that the SW broadcasts from RVOG were not ideal for reaching the populations of the Arab World. In 1967, a few years after RVOG began its broadcasts, Carpenter visited the program suppliers and national radio stations in the Arab World in order to ensure that the program suppliers of RVOG would produce programs suitable for broadcasts over

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-11.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

their national channels. The Christian producers were urged to investigate any possible opening in their own media 'as a way of service and co-operation in the life of their nations'. The tensions in the Middle East, leading to the war of June 1967, 'underscored even more heavily the need for identification with the nation on the part of Christian Arabs'.<sup>131</sup>

Carpenter's ideal did not have much chance of success. Even in Lebanon, the one Arab country with a Christian majority during the 1960s, public radio only broadcast 15 minutes per day of Gospel readings by a Maronite monk. Hūrānī explained the reason for this as it was 'because they also gave 15 minutes each day to the Muslims'. In the few other countries that allowed Christian broadcasts, like Sudan and Egypt, these were limited to Christmas and Easter only.<sup>132</sup>

Four days before Hūrānī had to submit his annual report to the Executive Committee of NECC in February 1969, the committee asked him to try CBC as an alternative option beside RVOG. Hūrānī went to Nicosia to discuss the cost of airtime, the signal strength, and available timeslots. He spoke with Demetrios Kyprianou, head of the commercial section of CBC, who explained that CBC had a 20 kW transmitter for MW broadcasts, and that the signal reached 400-450 miles around Cyprus. Time would be available between 09.00-12.00 AM and 21.00-24.00 PM. One hour of airtime would cost 200 pounds per broadcast, based on 300 broadcasts per year. That price put Hūrānī completely off and he reported four days later to the Executive Committee that it was 'impossible to buy time or to use local stations' facilities regularly'.<sup>133</sup>

Kyprianou told Hūrānī that a similar style of censorship as in Addis Ababa would be needed. For CBC matters were sensitive, as Cyprus was facing grave problems between their Greek-Orthodox and Muslim communities. Those problems would in 1973 lead to the Turkish invasion and the division of the island.

#### ***NECC and the Middle East Communications Fellowship (MECF)***

In December 1969, all Christian literature and radio ministries in Lebanon met to discuss some common concerns. These meetings were held in the TWR studios in Ashrafiyah, and they were chaired by Fred 'Bud' Accord of ELWA. The radio ministries decided that they wanted to work towards further cooperation. A few weeks later, in January 1970, all Christian radio organizations in Lebanon met, and the idea of a more formal fellowship was born. Beside TWR and ELWA, the participants were MELM, NECC, and the Near East Baptist Mission (NEBM) of the American Southern Baptists' International Mission Board (IMB).<sup>134</sup>

<sup>131</sup> John F. Poulton, 'Christian Broadcasting and the Near East', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. XIV No. 2, August 1967), p. 35.

<sup>132</sup> Hūrānī in an interview with the author (13 July 2004). Yacoub Hourani, 'Middle East Communication Consultation Nicosia 1970' (18 September 1970), p. 3, received from Hūrānī by the author on 13 July 2004. Y. Hourani, 'NECC Division on Radio Broadcasting: Cyprus Mediumwave' (25 February 1969), p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> Hourani, 'NECC Division on Radio Broadcasting: Cyprus Mediumwave', pp. 1, 3-4. The idea that CBC could reach as far as 400-450 miles was a grave exaggeration.

<sup>134</sup> 'The Middle East Communications Fellowship', pp. 1-2, Appendix to Knud Jørgensen, 'Report on Visit to Beirut, May 9-11, 1977' (14 May 1977), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

Acord was chosen to be the chairman, and he served in that capacity until he left Beirut in October 1970. Dennis Hilgendorf of MELM then became the chairman until John Stelling, also of MELM, took over in 1978. In 1971, the fellowship expressed its purpose thus:

[That] the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ be spread throughout the areas in which we are working, mainly the Near East and North Africa, in the most effective way possible by radio and TV and other means so that those who do not know the Gospel may have a chance to hear and believe. The Gospel is defined as: The Good News of the incarnation, the vicarious atonement, the resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that salvation is available in him to all who will by faith accept him as Savior.<sup>135</sup>

MECF wanted to 'see projects implemented and accomplished which can prove beneficial to all and further the purpose of the Fellowship'. The members agreed that any 'joint project must be by consensus of agreement'.<sup>136</sup> The first main project of MECF was that in December 1970, it began a working relationship with CBC on behalf of MELM, NECC and NEBM. In October 1971, ELWA and TWR 'temporarily resigned' from membership in MECF. In one of its public documents, MECF said that this withdrawal was especially 'because most matters in the MECF were concerned with the working relationship of the other three member organizations with the CBC project'.<sup>137</sup>

The fact that ELWA and TWR decided to 'temporarily' withdraw was possibly to allow MECF to take its decisions related to CBC by consensus, as it had agreed that this was needed for all joint projects. ELWA and TWR may have felt that to enable program suppliers to air their programs on CBC was not in their interest as they were themselves selling airtime. ELWA and TWR also had some theological problems with MECF.

Hilgendorf wrote in 1972 to Abe Thiessen, one of the founders of ELWA but in 1972 the director of the magazine *International Christian Broadcasters* (ICB): 'We don't see much of [Len] Salisbury [of ELWA] or the TWR people since they dropped out of MECF for "personal reasons" (I guess we're too conservative for them).'<sup>138</sup> That last statement was meant as a joke, but pointed to the fact that ELWA and TWR had major problems with participating in one body with NECC because of its links with the World Council of Churches (WCC).

In 1971, MECF began broadcasting 15-minute programs six days a week through CBC.<sup>139</sup> In 1972, these broadcasts became daily, with NECC filling three weekly slots of 15 minutes, while MELM and NEBM each filled two slots. In July

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Letter of Dennis Hilgendorf to Abe Thiessen (received 16 March 1972), from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 12, Folder 25. More on ELWA's relationship with MECF in chapter 7 on Radio ELWA.

<sup>139</sup> *Lebanon on the Highway*, p. 56.



1972 the Faith Mission from Egypt joined MECF.<sup>140</sup> They probably joined the group just to have their programs aired on CBC, and it seems MECF came to be defined mostly in terms of those broadcasts. In 1978, Stelling said that MECF existed to ‘aid all members to obtain financial advantages in purchase of broadcast time on CBC, to do common research projects and to train radio production staff from each studio’.<sup>141</sup>

Due to the Lebanese civil war, much of the work of MECF became difficult to implement, but it had had a Pre-Program Planning Committee since 1970 to ensure that the programs to be broadcast were both Christian and also suitable for the target audience. In 1973 a Post-Program Evaluating Committee was set up. Until the war began, it met four times a year. The eight members of the committee, two non-staff representatives of each organization, discussed the Arabic language and style, theological content, technical issues, and the suitability for youth. In 1974 and 1975, three writers’ workshops were held.<sup>142</sup>

The most interesting development in MECF was that follow-up was coordinated by a part-time coordinator for all incoming and outgoing mail. He was based in Lebanon but worked closely with an Egyptian counterpart. ‘The result was shared correspondence of all letters, agreed policies of answering letters and follow-up, and a high level of Christian concern and ministry through correspondence.’ In 1977, the four participants in MECF’s broadcasts on CBC used the same PO Box for audience response. This was also cut short by the Lebanese war.<sup>143</sup>

The 15-minute MECF slot was broadcast as part of a larger, secular Arabic youth program. CBC had its own programming policies for religious programs. CBC wanted to avoid ‘bombastic’ presentations, programs longer than 15 minutes had to have at least two voices, and a ‘hot Gospel’ approach was not allowed. The programs should avoid undue proselytizing and offence, and they should respect the culture and customs of the audience. CBC was therefore somewhat hesitant about the sermons of the Faith Mission programs.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> ‘The Middle East Communications Fellowship’, pp. 1-2, Appendix to Knud Jørgensen, ‘Report on Visit to Beirut, May 9-11, 1977’ (14 May 1977), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

<sup>141</sup> John Stelling ‘Minutes of the meeting of Middle East Communication Fellowship’ (10 January 1978), received from Hūrānī by the author on 13 July 2004. MECF was sometimes also called *Middle East Christian Communicators Fellowship* or *Middle East Communications Fellowship*.

<sup>142</sup> ‘The Middle East Communications Fellowship’, pp. 1-2. The first meeting of the Post-Program Evaluating Committee advised all program producers in MECF to use terminology that could be understood by Muslims and to not begin each program with ‘fancy formal openings’ but to ‘blend very quickly into the previous program’. See letter of Dennis Hilgendorf to all acting members of MECF and the members of the MECF’s evaluation committee (Beirut, 23 March 1973), p. 2, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ.1.6.1 – LWFBS other Activities – Asia - LWFBS – Board of Directors. Hilgendorf evaluated the programs that MECF was broadcasting from Cyprus as ‘very weak’. Letter of Dennis Hilgendorf to Dr. Sigurd Aske (Beirut, 29 March 1973), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ.1.6.1 – LWFBS other Activities – Asia - LWFBS – Board of Directors.

<sup>143</sup> ‘The Middle East Communications Fellowship’, pp. 1-2.

<sup>144</sup> Jørgensen and Gudmundsson, ‘Travel Log’, p. 8.

In 1977, NEBM, MECC and MELM had two weekly programs of 15 minutes each in the MECF block on CBC, while Faith Mission had one program.<sup>145</sup> Beside that daily MECF block, Bassam Madany's Back to God Hour (BTGH) programs were aired twice a week and Elie Karam's Middle East Gospel Outreach (MEGO) began broadcasting two programs a week by the end of January 1977.<sup>146</sup>

NEBM was planning to pull out of MECF in 1977. They wanted to use TWR's broadcasts to North Africa on RMC-MC, and to the Middle East on RMC-ME. When NEBM realized that there was a possibility that CBC would boost its power, they decided to continue their participation in MECF.

***MECF's Efforts to become a major Broadcaster on CBC: 1977-1980***

In January 1977, Jørgensen had spoken with Kyprianou of CBC. Kyprianou had indicated that CBC could increase the transmission power of its MW broadcasts from 20 kW to 250 kW. Their precondition was that MECC would do a capital investment of US\$500,000 in exchange for a daily block of for instance two or three hours during a negotiable number of years. The increase in transmission power would mean that CBC could broadcast far beyond its present 50-60 mile radius.<sup>147</sup>

Radio Monte Carlo had a transmitter on Cyprus with a 600 kW MW transmitter that was used by TWR. 'This transmitter could very well be the vehicle for the MECC's future broadcasts into the Middle East, affording a more than adequate substitute for the loss of the RVOG, at least in respect of signal strength', according to Jayaweera who suggested starting negotiations with CBC and RMC-ME immediately, but with a preference for CBC.<sup>148</sup>

CBC was considered a better partner than RMC-ME, as TWR had a monopoly on religious broadcasts on that station, and as MECF realized that with its program policy it would not be accepted by TWR. MECF was also aware that TWR's audience would be a 'pre-selected Christian audience due to the image and policy of the TWR programming, whereas the CBC audience is largely non-Christian'.<sup>149</sup> That was a strange argument, as MECF would have a similar position on CBC as TWR had on RMC-ME.

MECF decided to coordinate their efforts to ensure CBC would strengthen its transmission power to 250 kW, and also to work closer together with a more integrated structure. At the same time, MECC also approached CBC independently for added airtime of 15 minutes per day. WACC agreed to pay for the airtime. This independent approach of MECC and the financial support given by WACC for this was severely criticized by the other members of MECF. Jørgensen described the problem:

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<sup>145</sup> Jayaweera, 'Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team', p. 7.

<sup>146</sup> Jørgensen and Gudmundsson, 'Travel Log', p. 6.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., pp. 5, 66.

<sup>148</sup> Jayaweera, 'Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team', p. 13-14.

<sup>149</sup> Knud Jørgensen, 'Report of Visit to Beirut, Lebanon, May 9-11, 1977' (Nairobi, 14 May 1977), pp.1-2, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

The independent approach of the MECC to CBC was [...] rather strongly criticised by the other three MECF partners, since it had been agreed some years ago that no individual partner should 'go it alone', but negotiate with CBC within the framework of MECF. In addition, two of the other partners (MELM and the Southern Baptists) are also members of the WACC, and the question could therefore be raised why WACC should fund special MECC programming outside the MECF framework.<sup>150</sup>

MECC argued that this extra 15 minute program was a substitute for the airtime it lost on RVOG, and that MECF should not be considered MECC's primary outlet anyway. Mūrīs Yaḥshân of MELM, however, complained that there was 'a certain member of the MECF [that was] playing with hidden cards trying in a way or another to play a dominant role, or trying to see the MECF come to an end'.<sup>151</sup> Jørgensen concluded that MECC 'clearly have broken the agreement with the MECF and that this could jeopardize the attempt to move towards a more integrated operation within the MECF framework'. He saw some positive sides as well as the separate programming from MECF could possibly calm some of the, mainly Orthodox, criticism of MECC's partnership with MECF.<sup>152</sup>

Difficulties of cooperation within MECF lead to its members deciding that it was better to maintain a loose structure. Jørgensen described the MECF programs as 'too Protestant' in the eyes of the Orthodox, and that they had on several occasions, expressed their criticism. Some voiced their desire to cut relationships with MECF altogether while others in MECC were reluctant to be too closely associated with NEBM and Faith Mission. On the other hand these later two organizations feared Orthodox dominance in the event of further integration in MECF.<sup>153</sup>

After RVOG was nationalized in 1977, Ḥūrânî returned from Cairo to Beirut. This allowed him to again play a role in managing the NECC radio studio, and in the final efforts of MECC to become a serious broadcaster on CBC. He realized that to use the opportunities offered by state radio in the Arab World would simply not do. Around 1977 Ḥūrânî described the airtime on radio for Christian programs in the Middle East: In Lebanon, Christian programs filled 11 hours and 15 minutes per month, namely 15 minutes of daily Bible readings, beside about four hours per month for all denominations together. Only with Easter and Christmas was some extra time made available. Jordan, Egypt and Syria, all with sizable Christian minorities, scheduled minimal religious programs as did some North African countries. Without being specific, Ḥūrânî said that 11 countries allowed no broadcasts at all, while six permitted them with severe restrictions.<sup>154</sup>

The coordinating committee of WACC and LWFCOC met in March 1977, and upon discussion of the findings and recommendations of the January 1977 Survey, decided to recommend 'that Radio Monte Carlo be approached about the possible

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>151</sup> Letter of Moris A. Jahshan to Mr. Marc Chambron (Beirut, 26 October 1977), p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East - Arabic MW.

<sup>152</sup> Jørgensen, 'Report of Visit to Beirut, Lebanon, May 9-11, 1977', p. 3.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>154</sup> Document titled 'Religious Broadcasting on Local Channels', written by Ya'qûb Ḥūrânî in the late 1970s and given to the author by him on 13 July 2004.

purchase of air time on its Cyprus MW relay station'. CBC was seen as a secondary option.<sup>155</sup> The committee probably assumed that this would be the cheaper option of the two stations but it was soon ruled out. RMC-ME had a contract with TWR to not allow any Christian broadcasts outside the airtime of TWR. TWR would not allow programs of MECC, and MECC did not want to be aligned with some of the TWR broadcasts.

On 10 January 1978, MECF met in Beirut with Lundgren, who now represented LWFCOC, and with Jayaweera. The MECF participants present were William 'Pete' Dunn of NEBM, Yaḥshân and Stelling of MELM, Jubrâ'il 'Gaby' Ḥabîb (the new secretary general of MECC) and Ḥûrânî. Derek Knell of FEBA was present as an observer. The issue MECF wanted to discuss with LWF and WACC was the option of a long-term strategic connection with CBC.<sup>156</sup>

WACC, due to its policies, could only work through MECC. Jayaweera suggested that if MECF was willing to work on that basis, WACC could offer its support for a project for reaching an agreement with CBC. Both LWFCOC and WACC made clear that the option to own a station was not acceptable. The experience of RVOG being nationalized and the troubled political situation in Cyprus had made them rule out such an option. Only just a few years earlier Turkey had occupied the larger part of the Island.<sup>157</sup>

The meeting agreed to try to get a guarantee from CBC for a block of daily programming in compensation for a fixed amount of capital for building a new transmitter. CBC would then own, build and operate the transmitter. MECF would seek to get a maximum of four hours of prime broadcast time. As MECF was not a legal entity, the meeting agreed that MECC should be the negotiating party. It was agreed that an internal formula of cooperation be worked out and signed by the MECF members and that airtime would in principle be allotted within MECF and not by MECC. The group expressed the assumption that by the end of the year, this new transmitter could be functional.<sup>158</sup>

That same afternoon of 10 January 1978, Jayaweera, Lundgren, Ḥûrânî, Yaḥshân and Stelling flew to Cyprus. Next day, in Nicosia, they met with CBC's general director, the chief engineer, and with Kyprianou.<sup>159</sup> By the end of the day, they agreed that further negotiations would be on the basis of a ten-year contract, with CBC building and running a 600 kW transmitter and MECF broadcasting four hours per day. CBC would require the capital down payment for the new transmitter, which was four million dollars. Beside that, the total running cost for

<sup>155</sup> Report from LWFOC/WACC Coordinating Committee to the LWF Committee on Communication (March 24-27 1977), IX B4a, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.3.5.1.1 – Information Services/Office of Information – LWFOC/WACC Coordinating Committee.

<sup>156</sup> Stelling, 'Minutes of the meeting of Middle East Communication Fellowship'. In its meeting of 27 April 1978, MECF welcomed FEBA as an observer and decided to redefine its objectives and its definition of membership, as they liked to include FEBA. In the meantime FEBA was allowed to participate in the activities of MECF like its staff training, research, audience relations and programming concepts. See John Stelling, 'Middle East Communications Fellowship' (27 April 1978), p. 1, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

<sup>157</sup> Stelling, 'Minutes of the meeting of Middle East Communication Fellowship'.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> John Stelling, 'Summary of the Negotiations with CBC (Nicosia, 11 January 1978)', p. 1.

broadcasting four hours per day during the ten-year period would be two million dollars. CBC promised that if a contract could be signed in June 1978, transmission could begin in January 1980, a year later than MECF had hoped.<sup>160</sup>

In April 1978, LWFCOC, WACC and MECC met and decided that the proposal of CBC was ‘unrealistic [...] because of the heavy investment’.<sup>161</sup> LWFCOC discussed the issue again in 1979, but nothing was done, as MECC had not prepared the master plan it had been asked for. In October 1979 a task force of the parties involved met and underlined that the responsibility for a plan rest with MECC. In spite of the decision that the initial proposal was unrealistically expensive, the taskforce continued discussing the need to raise over six million dollars.<sup>162</sup>

Habib underlined the importance of the project. According to the minutes of LWFCOC he ‘identified the MECC’s mission to bring the Gospel to the people in that part of the world through a Christian voice from within the cultural context and structure and to create a new relationship between Christianity and Islam’.<sup>163</sup> Habib spoke of programs that were truly contextual. In spite of that, he did not come up with the requested master plan.<sup>164</sup>

Though the ideal of MECF to have a large block of airtime on CBC was never implemented, shorter broadcasts over CBC continued during the discussions with CBC and after. In 1977, MECF was broadcasting 15 minutes each day. In 1978, that increased to 30 minutes as LWF added its support for an extra 15 minutes per day for MECF. LWF did this ‘in order to provide continuity in broadcasting until the question of a permanent outlet [had] been solved’.<sup>165</sup> NEBM used 15 minutes per day of this airtime.<sup>166</sup> WACC and LWF decided that not MECF but MECC should be the responsible partners for the broadcasts, as MECC was an Ecumenical, legally registered body whereas MECF was not a legal entity. MECF was therefore told that after 1980, they would not receive funding any longer.<sup>167</sup>

CBC came up with a new proposal with somewhat better financial arrangements than previously. This proposal was discussed in Beirut in March 1979 in a consultation with some of the involved parties. WACC and LWFCOC announced that they were prepared ‘to become joint supporters of this strategically important project’. LWFCOC and WACC decided to not consider the proposal if MECC did not directly request them to be involved. MECC was advised by WACC and

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 3. Manfred Lundgren, ‘Notes from Meetings with CBC, Cyprus, on January 10 and 11, 1978 (Cairo, 12 January 1978), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

<sup>161</sup> ‘Minutes of LWF Committee on Communication (Cartigny, Switzerland, 16-23 April 1980)’, p. 111, from WACC Library A 232.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., pp. 111-112.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>164</sup> Hürâni in an interview with the author (13 July 2004). ‘Minutes – LWFOC/WACC Coordinating Committee Meeting, October 1978’, p. 5, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.3.5.1.1 – Information Services/Office of Information – LWFOC/WACC Coordinating Committee.

<sup>165</sup> ‘Minutes of LWF Committee on Communication’ (16-23 April 1980), p. 113.

<sup>166</sup> Knud Jørgensen, ‘Meeting of Middle East Task Force, Geneva, October 5, 1979’ (6 October 1979), p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

<sup>167</sup> ‘WACC-LWFOC Minutes, October 1979’, p. 10, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.3.5.1.1 – Information Services/Office of Information – LWFOC/WACC Coordinating Committee.

LWFCOC to see whether the Maronites could also become involved. In the meantime, WACC and LWFCOC discussed how they could possibly raise the money needed, and also what production facilities would be needed to fill four hours of programs each day.<sup>168</sup>

In April 1980, Jayaweera and Jørgensen reported to the WACC/LWFCOC Coordinating Committee that the ‘inordinate delay on the part of MECC in submitting their project proposal [had] effectively foreclosed any possibility of negotiations with any major funding organisation’.<sup>169</sup> MECC never created the requested master plan and decided to stop its broadcasting ministry altogether in 1981 because of the high cost of the project and according to Ḥūrānī, because the general secretary of MECC was not motivated for the project.<sup>170</sup> This also resulted in MECF’s demise after 1981, as that was the last year in which money was made available for airtime by LWF. This was an important lost opportunity, as this meant the end of a truly indigenous Christian voice on Arabic radio.

In the meantime, BTGH and possibly other Evangelical program producers, continued to use CBC for broadcasts to the Levant. At least until 1991 BTGH continued its broadcasts over CBC; the role of CBC in Christian broadcasting in the Arab World deserves further study

## 16.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

In 1974 NECC was reorganized and renamed into MECC. It was an Ecumenical body of denominational member Churches so it did not have its own Statement of Faith. By constitutional definition, its faith was summed up in the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed. No other Creeds could be referred to, as that would have excluded the major historic Churches of the Arab World. The Constitution and By-Laws of NECC, adopted in 1967, also echoed the basic statement of the World Council of Churches (WCC):

The Near East Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches of the Near East which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the one God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Jørgensen, ‘Meeting of Middle East Task Force, pp. 1-2. ‘Report WACC/LWFOC Coordinating Committee April 20-21, 1979’, p. 12, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.3.5.1.1 – Information Services/Office of Information – LWFCOC/WACC Coordinating Committee. Manfred Lundgren, ‘New Proposal for Broadcasting Facilities in the Middle East’ (Geneva, March 1979), Exhibit 5.1.9.1.1. LWF/COC 1979 Agenda, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.0.5.4 - Information Services/Office of Communication – Committee on Communication.

<sup>169</sup> ‘Minutes WACC/LWFOC, April 1980’, p. 10, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.3.5.1.1 – Information Services/Office of Information – LWFCOC/WACC Coordinating Committee.

<sup>170</sup> Ḥūrānī in an interview with the author (13 July 2004).

<sup>171</sup> Article II of Constitution and by-laws of the Near East Council of Churches, as adopted by NECC’s 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly, April 19-22, 1967. See ‘Minutes of the fifteenth General Assembly, action 9 and 10’ (Beirut, n.d.), p. 1, as received from NEST’s librarian David Kerry (11 April 2005). For references to the texts of WCC, see David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York, 1991), p. 460.

The Constitution and Bylaws of MECC of 1994-1995 contained a similar statement describing its Christian faith:

The Council includes within it the four ecclesiastical families [...] which believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and as articulated in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinian Creed. These churches strive together to realize their common calling to praise God, one in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>172</sup>

These Creeds, and MECC's bylaws, were apologetic, and they did not refer to any millennial theology. These Statements of Faith were not 'missionary' documents. They did make clear that NECC accepted the absolute truth of the Bible and the uniqueness of Christ, and also the need of people to participate in church. The first warning related to contextualization, CW1, about the need to confess to those absolutes, was therefore heeded.

As most member churches of NECC and MECC have existed long before Islam came into being, and as they have always been present in the region, their creeds and their interpretations thereof, were naturally part of life and culture in the world of the Middle East. In that sense, these churches were in a good position to contextualize the Gospel for Arab Muslims. They were to a large extent part of the same context.

The reality is also that centuries of tense relationship had created a rather wide separation between Christians and Muslims. The churches were usually not prepared to adapt their language and cultural forms to make their message better understood by those Muslims who had conquered their Christian lands and who had ruled over them for centuries by systemic discrimination. In respect to RCR4, regarding the need to use linguistic and cultural forms that could be understood by Muslims, these churches tended to use their own Christian jargon instead of looking for a language that was easier to understand for Muslims. Regarding RCR5, they wanted to portray Christ and the Church in a traditional manner, in accordance with what John Travis termed C1 and C2.

The expressed desire of the Coptic-Orthodox and the Maronites to have their mass broadcast was logical, given the theology of those churches. For them, the ultimate moment of God's self-revelation is during the Eucharist, the focal point of Christian *koinonia* with each other and with God. Much of the missionary understanding of those churches was expressed in the commensurate incarnational theology of the Church's *diakonia*. That communal approach was much closer to Arab Muslim culture than the individualism of Protestantism with its focus on the *kerygma*, but it was also harder to translate into radio programs with the ingrained individualism of that medium. This may be the reason why the Orthodox and the Catholic churches of the Arab World have been slower at using radio and television than Protestants. This issue deserves further study.

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<sup>172</sup> Article II of The constitution and the by laws of the Middle East Council of Churches as approved on 15-21 November, 1994 and 16-20 February, 1995 (Limassol, 1998), p. 2. Received from NEST's librarian David Kerry (11 April 2005).

## 16.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

### *16.3.1 Target Audience: Rural, illiterate Muslims*

LWF and NECC both used the same description for their intended target audience of the RVOG broadcasts. NECC's Purpose and Policy Statement of 1959 said that NECC's radio ministry wanted to reach 'the widest possible audience', exactly what LWF also expressed.<sup>173</sup>

In 1961, before NECC began broadcasting its programs, Gudmund Gjeltzen, a Norwegian Lutheran pastor and a journalist who was the audience relations officer at RVOG from 1960-1964, suggested that NECC should focus on people in industrial areas, farmers, educated people, and women. He also pointed out that NECC would be mainly addressing illiterate Arabs by its radio programs. Gjeltzen himself realized that almost all potential listeners were included in those groups.<sup>174</sup> A year later, NECC added that its broadcasts would be aimed at 'people with a variety of needs and that the Gospel had to say something to their condition whether they were Christians or not'.<sup>175</sup> Thus NECC underlined formally that it would target both Muslims and Christians.

Each description of the target audience for NECC before it actually began broadcasting, spoke of the desire to reach the largest possible group. For a contextualized approach that was inadequate, as this broad approach did not allow for targeting a homogenous audience as demanded by RCRI. As NECC had this broad audience in mind, it decided that its Arabic programs should begin each day with a 30-minute program for Christians, including a devotional, then a story, followed by some music. A short block of world news would be the interlude for 30 minutes aimed at a specific target audience. The Sunday slot would mainly focus on Christian Arabs. Monday would be for intellectuals, Tuesday for youth, Wednesday for women and children, Thursday for the whole family, Friday for 'the urban labouring class' and Saturday for farmers.<sup>176</sup> This practical approach was good as it endeavored to speak to the different segments of the target audience in a suitable manner. It also assumed that the different segments of the audience would once a week tune into their own program. That was too optimistic, as NECC did not have any idea of the listening habits of its target audience.

During training for NECC's scriptwriters in 1963, they were told to assume that the majority of their audiences would be Muslims and people with a rural background. The average listener was described using terms like simple tastes, unsophisticated, physically tired, conservative, with a sense of humor, practical,

<sup>173</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 150. Letter of Fisher to Thompson and Aske (25 November 1959), pp. 1-2.

<sup>174</sup> Gudm. Gjeltzen, 'An Attempt to Point out some Priority Needs in the Heart Areas of Radio Voice of the Gospel' (Addis Ababa, November 1961), pp. 2-4, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – LWFBS Executive Committee. Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 57.

<sup>175</sup> Letter of Ed Luidens to Sigurd Aske and Hal Fisher (n.d., but 1962), p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC.

<sup>176</sup> Letter of Hal Fisher to Sigurd Aske (13 March 1962), p. 4, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC. The actual target audience for each day was presented in another sequence in Letter of Luidens to Aske and Fisher (n.d., but 1962), p. 2.



down to earth, fond of stories, beset by problems he cannot solve alone, and having needs of which he is not aware.<sup>177</sup> In early 1964, Ḥaddād and Luidens repeated that the target audience should be ‘the village or rural person’, as in cities the competition from other radio broadcasters and television was heaviest. This suggestion was also based on the first audience response NECC received which came mainly from rural areas.<sup>178</sup> This was an important refinement of the target audience, but it did not meet the requirement of a homogenous target audience. The difference between people with a ‘rural background’ from Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon or Iraq was vast.

The choice to mainly focus on a Muslim audience was wise, as it is hard to envision how contextualized programs could be produced for both Muslims and Christian at the same time. The actual programming shows that NECC did not implement this choice though as it tried to please both Christians and Muslims.

### 16.3.2 Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

Even though Fisher had left for Addis Ababa before the programs of NECC were first broadcast, he had laid down some of the guiding principles for radio production in the context of the Arab World. In 1957 he wrote that with the burst of nationalistic pride, the Arabs had the tendency to only accept ‘what is presented in the best language’. He meant that only MSA should be used in the programs.<sup>179</sup>

It has not been possible to find any references to discussions within the community of Arabic program producers of NECC about what Arabic languages or dialects should be used, or about what languages were actually used. This suggests that NECC gravitated to using MSA throughout the 1960 and 1970s, as that was the politically correct choice for NECC with its Pan-Arab and nationalist approach.

Given NECC’s efforts to play a role in Middle Eastern society, this choice for MSA was predictable, but not wise, as it had also decided that illiterate Muslims with a rural background should be the target audience. For them, MSA was mostly incomprehensible. This meant that NECC’s choice to use MSA was not in line with the need to contextualize the Gospel in terms of the languages that its target audience considered its own, as demanded by RCR3. It would have been better if NECC had decided to use the major colloquial languages of its target area.

The churches participating in NECC would not have appreciated the usage of colloquial Arabic languages, as they were eager to show their allegiance to Pan-Arab nationalism as a secular dream for Arab society. On the other hand, some churches would also have preferred the usage of their church languages, like Assyrian or Coptic, in the programs. It was hard to please all Churches.

<sup>177</sup> *Syllabus: Summer School for Directors of Radio Writing Workshop* (Beirut, Lebanon, 1 July-10 August 1963), pp. 2, 4, received from Ḥūrānī by the author on 13 July 2004.

<sup>178</sup> Haddad and Luidens, ‘Report of the NECC Liaison Officers to the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental broadcasting’, p. 6.

<sup>179</sup> Harold Fisher, ‘From Camel to Cadillac in the Near East’, in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. V Nos. 2-3, April-September 1957), p. 19.

As most of NECC's programs were produced by Lebanese Christians, it is likely that in some programs, like drama productions, the North Levantine Arabic colloquial dialect, spoken in Lebanon and Syria, was also used. Egyptian Arabic and Sudanese Arabic may have played a minor role only as relatively few programs were produced by the studios in Cairo and Khartoum. It was most likely that these studios produced most of their programs in MSA. For a lack of information, these are only tentative conclusions.

## 16.4 PROGRAM PHILOSOPHIES

### 16.4.1 RVOG's Shifting Goals

Faithfulness to the revealed truth in the Bible was considered the basic broadcast criterion by the founder of RVOG.<sup>180</sup> RVOG's radio ministry existed:

1. To proclaim to the widest possible audience the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, as the only means of salvation.
2. To strengthen the life of the Christian churches within radio reach by providing programs that nurture believers in their Christian faith, and to keep the challenge and responsibility of evangelism constantly before the churches.
3. To promote education and culture through the broadcast of educational and cultural programs.
4. To assist the churches in follow-up work.
5. To train radio workers.<sup>181</sup>

According to Lundgren, 'Like other missionary radio stations, LWF's vision grew out of a zeal for world evangelization and there was a strong conviction that effective evangelism could be done by radio'.<sup>182</sup> He also underlined the realm where RVOG differed from the other international Christian broadcasters:

It is certainly appropriate to say that the RVOG radio ministry was from the beginning based on a conservative, biblical theology of mission and had at the same time adopted a more contemporary, holistic interpretation of the Gospel. It was the combination of these two fundamental principles which made up the RVOG theological profile and characterized its programming.<sup>183</sup>

In 1969, in a report to the LWF Executive Committee, Aske compared two types of radio evangelism. One he called 'hard-sell' evangelism, 'a fundamentalistic, American model [...] rather dominant in missionary use of mass media'. The other was the 'climate creating programming [...] with a long range goal and

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<sup>180</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 150.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid. Letter of Fisher to Thompson and Aske (25 November 1959), pp. 1-2.

<sup>182</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 31.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

which are simply geared to produce good-will.’ Aske considered RVOG to be ‘somewhere between’ these two extremes.<sup>184</sup>

It is unclear what type of radio evangelism Aske had in mind when speaking about ‘climate creating programming [...] to produce good-will’. It seems that he tried to create a theoretical model of two opposite styles, to be able to position himself ‘somewhere in between’ and to be seen as a moderate. He probably needed to be that circumspect as he was changing the goals of RVOG. Lundgren commented that ‘we note here, for the first time, a certain “play-down” of the understanding of RVOG as an instrument in world evangelization’.<sup>185</sup>

This confirms that initially, the view of RVOG of world evangelization by radio was not very different from those that Aske called ‘hard-sell fundamentalists’. Interesting in that respect is, that some of the producers who sent their programs to RVOG, were also involved in broadcasts of ELWA, FEBA and TWR.<sup>186</sup> That happened not just after RVOG went off air, but also while it was fully functional.<sup>187</sup> For instance, *Karmel Mission* (KM) was, during the 1960s, broadcasting its Arabic Bible reading programs almost daily over both RVOG and ELWA.<sup>188</sup> This gives the impression that the program suppliers of RVOG may have remained closer to RVOG’s initial Evangelical goals that RVOG itself had.<sup>189</sup>

Jørgensen wrote three months after the closure of RVOG that there was ‘a surprising openness towards Ecumenical cooperation in Christian media communication’, and he mentioned ELWA and FEBA as some of the concrete examples:

Willingness to cooperate in such areas as broadcasting, training, research, and small scale media has been detected within a variety of churches, but especially the Evangelicals have now realised that a public proclamation/communication of the Good News to the whole man requires a closer coming together. We see this trend as extremely important and as a practical example that Ecumenicity does not primarily grow out of theological discussions, but becomes a must where we are called upon to give a public account of the hope that is within us.<sup>190</sup>

Without denying the Ecumenicity of these broadcasters, this cooperative approach should also be seen in the light of the fact that the differences between the Program Producers were smaller than RVOG’s leadership assumed.

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran Church with its studios in Tanzania is one example mentioned in Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>187</sup> Languages like Tamil and Mayalam went to FEBA in 1977, Biener, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit*, p. 160.

<sup>188</sup> ‘Transcript of comments made by Walter Wasserman’, in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 43.

<sup>189</sup> Research into two issues is recommended: the increased divergence between western Ecumenical institutes and their historical partner-organizations in the two-thirds world and secondly, the impact that should have on western donor agencies like WACC.

<sup>190</sup> Knud Jørgensen, ‘Preliminary Report from the LWFOC/WACC/AACC Survey and Planning Teams to the LWF Committee on Communication (Dar es Salaam, June 16-17, 1977), p.5, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.6.6 – RVOG Transition/Handover.

Jørgensen, believed that by creating credibility and receptivity, Christian media communication can at best be a ‘preparatio evangelica [sic]’, not more than that.<sup>191</sup> Reginald Kennedy, formerly RVOG staff and a BBC reporter, agreed with that and wrote that ‘despite true vision and mighty faith, the “harvest of souls” is but a fantasy.’ According to him, the non-Christian audience, which the church was out to evangelize, was never reached.<sup>192</sup> This is not totally true for the Arab World. In the Arab World, Christian radio was not just a ‘preparation’ or an introductory stage. Indeed, to speak of a ‘harvest of souls’ would be exaggerated, but the broadcasts did not only have a Christian audience and were instrumental in leading people to Christ and in sustaining their faith.

At the heart of RVOG’s self-understanding was that it did not want to ‘bombard targets’ with programs created elsewhere to form an electronic church. Rather, it wanted to be a tool ‘at the disposal of the churches and their own ministry’ to provide them with a public voice where they had none. The studios of NECC had to supply RVOG with its message, and audience relations were to be under the national churches as well.<sup>193</sup>

All programs of RVOG had to serve the mission of the church. They were to be contextual, true to life, and culturally relevant. They were also supposed to be of a technical quality, have a biblical orientation, be truthful, and uphold Christian moral and ethical values. No objectionable or obscene language would be tolerated, and not all music was acceptable.<sup>194</sup> No formal policy documents were adopted though. That makes it difficult to evaluate how RVOG wanted NECC and other producers to implement the goal of producing contextual programs.

The lack of formal programming policies forced RVOG and its studios to often engage in lengthy discussions. What was acceptable music? What was technical quality in the context of Asia or Africa? The contract of RVOG with Ethiopia stipulated that religions or churches would not be attacked. What constituted an attack?<sup>195</sup> According to Lundgren, this ‘absence of a defined program policy’ was positive as it ‘provided a personal engagement among the producers’.<sup>196</sup>

RVOG adopted what it called the 30/70 formula, which dictated that 30 percent of programs should be evangelistic and pastoral, and that 70 percent should be educational and informative. The station did not want back-to-back preaching.<sup>197</sup> That was one reason why it would not accept syndicated programs from Europe or America, though from the outset it had close links with the TLH broadcasts.<sup>198</sup> Lundgren concluded later that the formula did not work too well. Though it was intended to ensure a ‘holistic’ programming schedule, the formula itself was im-

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<sup>191</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 226.

<sup>192</sup> Reginald Kennedy, *The Word Senders: A Personal Assessment of the Work of the Major Protestant, Evangelical Missionary Radio Stations* (n.p., 1980), chapter 7, p. 1. This unpublished book was found in the library of the World Alliance for Christian Communication (WACC) as document A302.

<sup>193</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. ix.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p xi

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 123.

plicity ‘non-holistic.’ The reality was also, that most churches producing for RVOG, gravitated to producing evangelistic and devotional programs.<sup>199</sup>

#### **16.4.2 NECC’s Philosophies**

##### **16.4.2.1 Fisher’s Views**

In *The Christian Broadcaster*, Fisher wrote in 1957 about the goals of NECC’s studio in Beirut:

Here, as everywhere, the Christian broadcaster’s goals should be to build the community’s conscience and educational level, to teach the Christian faith and its values, to awaken the need for a personal faith in Christ and to give explicit guidance on how to live a vital Christian life.<sup>200</sup>

Practically, he had some suggestions about how to reach that goal. Because of the nationalistic spirit in the Arab World, broadcasters should ‘take warning [and] steer absolutely clear of politics (they might be reversed 180 degrees next week) and to underplay the attention to the Jew and to Western history that is so much a part of our Christian faith.’<sup>201</sup>

Because of the ‘cultural chaos and confusion’ in the Arab World in the 1950s, Fisher believed that the masses wanted guidance in trying out new ideas. ‘They need someone who can help them build confidence in themselves’, he wrote rather patronizingly. ‘The masses do not know how to interpret the rapid changes breaking in upon them.’ Fisher believed NECC could play an important role in helping the masses, if it would ‘prove to the listeners that [it had] their own best interest at heart, and that they can put their trust in him’.<sup>202</sup>

Fisher suggested that Christian broadcasts in the Arab World should ‘be very careful to present a positive message in such a way that he will not injure sensitive Moslem feeling. He knows too that [...] Moslems are willing to listen - and hear eagerly – the positive message of Christianity, just as long as the listeners do not feel they are being evangelized.’ Practically, Fisher suggested to ‘never make direct reference to the Gospel – at least until the process of educating to Christian ideas [had] gone on for some time.’<sup>203</sup>

Fisher wrote these words when NECC could only broadcast its programs over national radio in Lebanon, which created strict parameters for what NECC would be allowed to say. He realized that it would be easy to succumb to making purely educational programs and nothing else. He wanted the broadcasts to exemplify Christian virtues like honesty, truth, kindness, without speaking openly of the Gospel. These limitations were necessary in order to make the programs attractive for Muslims. He believed these programs to be the ‘bait that was so good-tasting

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>200</sup> Harold Fisher, ‘From Camel to Cadillac in the Near East’, p. 19.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

that the listeners never suspected the “hook”. That method might open closed minds, change biases and lead to a confrontation with the Gospel.<sup>204</sup>

In 1962, NECC was broadcasting its programs on Radio Beirut. Walter Wasserman of KM was very negative about NECC and warned that there was a real danger that the ‘positive Lutheran identity’ of RVOG might be lost before it even began. According to Wasserman, NECC’s leaders had an approach of ‘lukewarm co-existence’ with Islam, and he suggested that the ‘whole staff of NECC’ were freemasons and lacked therefore the proper missionary zeal. Ḥaddâd held similar views, and the Jordanian Lutheran Pastor Shadîd Baz condemned the ‘unnecessary softness’ of NECC’s programs on Islam.<sup>205</sup> These were sharp accusations that are not substantiated and should therefore be rejected. They are only repeated here to give an impression of the widely different views of what good Christian radio entails.

#### 16.4.2.2 Initial Evangelical Views

In the context of broadcasts over RVOG, NECC aimed to produce evangelistic programs. In its Purpose and Policy Statement of 1959, NECC said *verbatim* what RVOG had also adopted in its broadcasting strategy as given above. By choosing to be both evangelistic and to also produce educational and cultural programs, NECC tried to speak to the actual context of the target audience, in fulfillment of RCR2.

The fact that NECC prided itself in being part of the Ecumenical movement, as against the other Christian Arab radio broadcasters, did not exclude an Evangelical approach to reaching Muslims during the 1960s. Ḥûrânî for instance reported in 1969 to a gathering of Christian Arab broadcasters:

I felt that one of the main things we have to do is to give [Muslims] the Bible or the New Testament, and let them read it for themselves. They are able to make their decision when they are able to understand it. That is why, whenever we received a letter from a new listener, the first thing we do with our little budget is to send some portion of Scripture. [...] I believe, if we can put the New Testament into our audience’s hands and let them read it for themselves, that, along with our broadcasts and correspondence courses and literature outreach, we can break the rock finally! Sometimes when we get mail from Saudi Arabia I feel as if there is a revival down there and in Yemen and in Hadramaut and all those areas! People in tens and scores are writing ‘Please send us the Gospel and pictures of Jesus Christ. We are not ashamed to call ourselves Christian!’ [...] I think we must remember that there is in these lands [an] invisible church [of people that] recognize the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they have accepted Him and live and abide by His teachings. We are sure that the Word of God never returns void.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>205</sup> Hans W. Florin, ‘Report of Discussions with Pastor Wassermann, Probst Malsch, Pastor Shdid Baz Hadad [sic]’ (5 April 1962), p. 1, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC.

<sup>206</sup> ‘Report from Yacoob Hourani – Radio Voice of the Gospel’, in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 48.

NECC heeded warning CW1, regarding the belief in the absolute truths as revealed in the Bible and the need for people to believe in them and to participate in Church for salvation.

#### 16.4.2.3 Problems with the 30/70 Formula

NECC struggled with the 30/70 formula and its implementation. Its goal was to speak to people in their actual context, as RCR2 prescribes, and the aim was to also certainly heed CW5, about the need to apply the Gospel to both individuals and society as a whole. The formula did not work well, though. In 1968, Hūrânî criticized the formula:

Christians as well as the non-Christians need a 100% proclamation. There is no such thing as secular and religious. We believe in a well-rounded program that tastes Christian. [...] Christ is the heart of our philosophy in programming. Christ is the redeemer of the whole world. Every sphere of life is theologically appropriate in a broadcasting program. Therefore, when we talk of Christ we talk in a secular way and in a secular context.<sup>207</sup>

Until 1970, the programs produced by NECC were mainly religious, and it created the back-to-back preaching RVOG wanted to avoid. Hūrânî pointed his staff once again to the 30/70 formula, but they had difficulty understanding the issue. ‘But how can we draw the line between the two? So my staff messed the whole thing up! Instead of giving a well-rounded program they were almost inclined to give 100% general or secular.’<sup>208</sup>

This issue was important from the perspective of contextualization, as it had to do with the question of whether the audience was approached with programs that gave the impression that the Christian faith was a matter of religiosity, or with programs that gave a more holistic view of the Gospel, pertaining to all parts of human life. NECC was not able to implement RCR2, even though it wanted to speak to people in their whole context. Therefore warning CW5 about the importance of addressing individuals as well as society was not heeded in practice. That also made it impossible to heed CW4 about the need to speak prophetically to society.

#### 16.4.2.4 Focus on Development

In 1970, Hūrânî published a report in which he introduced more focus on programs for development. ‘We feel we are part of this area, responsible as any national or international agency engaged in developmental projects in order to help the peoples of the Middle East to stand on their feet again and regain their dignity.’<sup>209</sup> He

<sup>207</sup> Y. Hourani, ‘The Near East Council of Churches Beirut’ (n.d., but 1968), pp. 2-3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – Beirut Studio.

<sup>208</sup> ‘Report from Hourani – Radio Voice of the Gospel’, p. 46. NECC’s staff was not the only ones misunderstanding the 30/70 formula. John Poulton wrote that the reason for the 70-30 ratio was that 70 percent of the programming would be digestible for non-Christian listeners. John F. Poulton, ‘Christian Broadcasting and the Near East’, in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. XIV No. 2, August 1967), p. 36.

<sup>209</sup> Y.T. Hourani, ‘1970 Development Plan for Arabic Programming’, p. 2.

described in his report how the staff had acquainted itself with the demographic, economic, social and cultural situation in the Arab World. He referred to the Egyptian President Jamâl ‘Abd al-Nâsir and nationalism that spurred governments to develop their countries. Arab Nationalism ‘reduced to its essentials embodies three main urges’, Hûrânî wrote. These urges were ‘for freedom and independence, for social and economic progress [and] for unity’.<sup>210</sup> He recognized modernization, urbanization, education, literacy and emancipation as distinctive features of his day, and he was wise to include those issues in his programming.<sup>211</sup>

According to Hûrânî, ‘[the] new generation is rebellious, facing important questions and becoming more inquisitive. They are angry and resentful to everything traditional’.<sup>212</sup> He mentioned the slowness of change and attributed that to the ‘rigidity of traditions’ and ‘war conditions’.<sup>213</sup> These war conditions refer to the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, and probably also to the increasing tensions between Israel and Jordan. Hûrânî mentioned that the modernization of society was largely due to radio and that the development of communication in the Middle East was only just beginning. He correctly foresaw that the ‘explosive effect of widened educational opportunities’ would be felt in the years ahead.<sup>214</sup>

In another report in 1970, Hûrânî spoke of the ‘rapid secularization process in the whole area’ and that ‘Arab youth are challenged by the Liberation movement’.<sup>215</sup> Similar expectations of secularization were common among the Christian broadcasters during that period. During meetings of broadcasters in Beirut in 1969, Wasserman said that ‘students in the schools and the universities are so filled up with socialistic ideas [...] that they are no longer real Muslims’.<sup>216</sup> He commented during these meetings that ‘there are new ideas infiltrating into the Arab World for which we should thank God, even if they appear atheistic. [We] should not be afraid of Communism [...] or existentialism for in the long run they can all lead to Christ.’<sup>217</sup>

At that time, it was not clear yet that the days of nationalism and socialism were passing, and that Islamic fundamentalism would become a much more potent ideology in the region. Both the increase in literacy and education in general and Islamic radio and television broadcasts would play a major role in the *fundamentalization* of Arabic society.

Hûrânî was aware that the ‘rigidity of traditions’ might defeat the progress towards development and modernization of society. ‘The externals of social life may change while the inner spirit remains as it was. The whole future development of the Arab countries depends on the change [in the] spirit of Islam: not its theoretical formulations but the living creative spirit which moulds the life of the Islamic

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> ‘Middle East Communication Consultation Nicosia 1970’ (18 September 1970), pp. 4-5.

<sup>216</sup> ‘Transcript of comments of Walter Wasserman’, p. 12.

<sup>217</sup> Transcript of comments of Yacoub Hourani, in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 15.



community.<sup>218</sup> As the Arab World had been liberated from foreign oppressors, he believed that now ‘the Man of the Middle East is the main problem. [...] We feel that the development of man must be our business in our Radio Ministry. The Gospel of Christ for a dignified man and a loyal citizen is the kind [of] message that we shall try to convey to our audience in the area.’<sup>219</sup>

Ḥūrânî defined religious programs as programs ‘dealing with the history of the church, the faith, church progress over the ages, means of worship and the lives of saints and believers [...] as well as its relations with the world around it, its efforts towards unity and establishing a constructive dialogue with the non-Christian believers leading to better understanding and peaceful co-existence and harmony’. He also wanted his religious programs to contain a ‘clear explanation of prevalent Christian beliefs’ and to ‘cater to the life of the listener itself’. He listed the priorities he wanted to stress in his religious programs:

1. Awakening and enhancing the understanding of man in order to make him appreciate better the great secrets of life, determine his personal relationship with existence and his responsibility towards our present world.
2. Presenting the reality of the historical person of Christ and stressing His continued presence and his effective might within the church as well as the world around us.
3. Continuation of the dialogue between the Church and the world.<sup>220</sup>

The sequence of these points was important. Whereas RVOG and NECC in their original goals said first, that they wanted to ‘proclaim to the widest possible audience the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, as the only means of salvation’, Ḥūrânî relegated that to the second place, and used totally different language that did not indicate that the conversion of Muslims was his goal.

Ḥūrânî listed the elements from the Christian faith that he preferred to speak about in his programs. These were Christian values, values of heritage, education, the sanctity of work and respect for the laborer, the best qualities of modern civilization, the fight against heresies and harmful social traditions, a permanent call for human rights including the freedom of worship. These were the ‘constitution’ of the work of NECC’s radio department. According to Ḥūrânî, all programs would always be permeated by invention, innovation, evolution and improvement.<sup>221</sup>

#### 16.4.2.5 Ḥūrânî’s views of Islam

Ḥūrânî believed that the attempts by missionaries in the Arab World in the past had been mainly unsuccessful because of the views Christians had of Islam. He cited John of Damascus, who considered Islam a derivate of Christianity, to show that Christians should not be too negative about Islam. He also believed that the Thomistic view of general revelation on a lower plane, through man’s rational

<sup>218</sup> Ḥūrânî quoted the historian Albert Hourani here, Y.T. Hourani, ‘1970 Development Plan for Arabic Programming’, p. 4.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Yacoub Hourani, ‘Congress of Middle East Churches. Broadcasting Section Programs Department. Arabic Programs: Their Identity, Their Aims, Their Horizon, Their Philosophy’ (1970), p. 2.

<sup>221</sup> Y.T. Hourani, ‘1970 Development Plan for Arabic Programming’, pp. 4-5.

abilities, and God's higher revelation through Jesus Christ was unhelpful, as man's rational abilities could not understand God 'at all'. He 'surpasses human understanding and is beyond recognition by man'.<sup>222</sup> That seems to have been his reason for not trying to convert Muslims, beside the reality that a Muslim had primary allegiance to his *ummah* (community), and that it was 'very difficult to separate [him] from his [ummah]'.<sup>223</sup>

Ḥūrānī believed that the historical existence of Christ did not need proof, as He was even mentioned in the *Qur'ān* where he was referred to as *Word of Truth*, *Prophet* and *Messenger*. These references testified, according to Ḥūrānī, that Christ is God and part of God. He also saw this as clear proof that God was also working in Islam. For Ḥūrānī, these ideas were the basis for dialogue with Muslims.<sup>224</sup> For some Evangelical missiologists, these latter ideas were their arguments for justifying far-going efforts at contextualization, for instance by using the *Qur'ān* as a tool in evangelism.

#### 16.4.2.6 Changing Emphasis

In 1973, Ḥūrānī reflected on the ten years of work of the studio and broadcasts of NECC. He described the change in approach between the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1960s the programs were 'direct message and straight talk', and 75 percent was aimed at Christian audiences. That changed in 1970. As from then, Ḥūrānī decided to produce programs that were 'Ecumenical, developmental, and controversial'. He clarified the change as the impact of Ecumenical thinking on NECC:

Later on with the rise of ecumenism, the message became partly developmental, curbed to hit all men and to meet their physical needs as well as their spiritual. At the same time to shoulder, or support developmental plans in the area. Ecumenism on the other hand meant to us, in programming, open dialogue not only with non-Christians, but among the different Christian sects for understanding and exchanging views. Participation of non-Christians in programming has been welcomed too.<sup>225</sup>

The changes that NECC aimed for after 1970 were a good effort to better implement what RCR2 says about the societal context of the Gospel broadcasts. NECC thereby also wanted to better heed CW4 and CW5 in as far as these warn against forgetting to allow the Gospel to be a prophetic message for society as a whole. However, it is questionable whether Ḥūrānī's approach was still within the limits of the missiological goals of the founders of RVOG. His focus on the role of the Gospel for society seemed to be at the expense of allowing the Gospel to also be a message for conversion and transformation of individual Muslims in the audience. In an interview in 2004, he said:

Our goal was mostly to reinforce Christians where they [were]. I do not like to change Muslims into Christians; I prefer to make them better Muslims. Once a man

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Hourani, 'Director's Report, A Decade in Review', p. R8c.

in Jordan came to me and asked me how to become a Christian. I told him: 'I want you to become a better Muslim'.<sup>226</sup>

If this indeed reflected Ḥūrānī's ideas in the 1970s, it seems that he had drifted from the original goals of RVOG and NECC, namely to proclaim the Gospel in its personal and societal implications. Whereas many Evangelicals in radio broadcasting had a blind spot for the structural, societal implications of the Gospel, Ḥūrānī seemed to have moved from a holistic theology, to a theology where some of the personal implications of the Gospel had evaporated. If this is so, and if it impacted on NECC's programming, NECC was no longer a representative of the Churches in the Arab World and it had trespassed against CW2. Its programs were no longer contextualized in the community of the Church. RCR2, CW4 and CW5 were just as much at stake as among those broadcasters that only focused on the individual implications of the Gospel.

It is unclear whether Ḥūrānī's opinions had indeed moved away from the original goals of NECC. He may have only used the language that his Ecumenical donors wanted to hear. In his reports about audience response in the 1960s and 1970s, Ḥūrānī selected the most meaningful letters for translation, and those were often from Muslims who showed a real interest in adopting the Christian faith. It would appear therefore that the general attitude of those involved in the Beirut studio during those years was strongly aligned with the original goals of NECC.

#### 16.4.2.7 No Direct Evangelism

In March 1979, MECC brought communicators from different Arab countries together for a consultation in NEST. The meetings were held while distant shelling and nearby bursts of machine guns were audible. Kamāl Qustandī, the executive secretary for Radio and Audio-Visuals of MECC, suggested that Christians 'should not insist on direct evangelism which, in an area like [the Middle East], is comparable with direct confrontation'. He suggested that Christians should by their deeds and actions prepare the way for love, real peace and the proclamation of truth.<sup>227</sup> It seems that Qustandī was describing MECC's goals of Christian communication in similar terms as Fisher had done in the 1950s. There circumstances were similar in one respect: they did not have their own transmitter for broadcasts available as NECC had had between 1963 and 1977.

#### 16.4.2.8 Impact of the Coptic-Orthodox

When the Protestant NECC changed into the broader MECC, the Orthodox Churches got the upper hand. Bishop Samû'îl, one of the presidents of the General Assembly of MECC since 1974, felt that the main objective of the RVOG broadcasts should be to make 'the existence of the Orthodox Churches, and its theologies and doctrines known to the rest of the world and thereby to make up for cen-

<sup>226</sup> Ḥūrānī in an interview with the author (13 July 2004).

<sup>227</sup> Don Roper, 'Middle East Churches Study Communication Needs', in *Action* (No. 39, April-May 1979), pp. 1, 5.

turies of neglect'. He, together with the whole council of the MECC, thought the programs were too secular and lacking in doctrine and theology.<sup>228</sup>

The new leaders in MECC were seriously interested in the broadcasts, and had appointed a committee to evaluate the broadcasts. The committee reported in August 1975, and its findings and recommendations were reported and summarized by Jayaweera:

1. The Arabic productions are far too secular and music oriented and lacked a 'religious' component.
2. The distribution of programme segments did not represent proportionately the distribution of membership [of] the Council [and of the] sizes of the Christian communities within the MECC.
3. A subcommittee for broadcasting should be constituted for editing all scripts and programmes before they are broadcast.
4. [...]
5. [...]
6. More full-time producers should be employed instead of relying on volunteers and semi-professionals.
7. The programme director should not take up so much of the broadcast time for his own voicing and presentation.<sup>229</sup>

The historic churches of the Arab World wanted the programs to better reflect their actual Church-life. That was a request to portray the Churches in terms of Travis' C1 and C2 spectrums. In its efforts to contextualize the Gospel, NECC had not taken the desires of its constituency enough into consideration, against warning CW2.

Jayaweera agreed with the choice of the program producers and stressed that MECC should never use radio as a vehicle for theology and doctrine, as that would lead to a loss of audience. Jayaweera rejected the idea of a subcommittee to censor scripts and the idea to allot programming on the basis of the size of denominations, as both ideas would interfere with the creativity of the producers who wanted to make holistic programs. He also defended the concept of RVOG that 'secular' and 'religious' should not be seen as distinct in programming as RVOG wanted to reach the 'total man'. He was worried that programs would become 'narrowly evangelical and irrelevant to the needs and demand of contemporary living'.<sup>230</sup>

## 16.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

During the 1950s the NECC studio produced programs such as a series on the lives of great men and women in history, titled *In the Processions of Light (Fi Maw-wākib al-Nūr)*, by program production director Nadīm Maqdīsī. The program was

<sup>228</sup> N.D. Jayaweera, 'Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team to Visit the Middle East January 8-30, 1977', p. 15, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

‘very well done’ and ‘reportedly the most popular programme [...] in Beirut’, Aske reported in 1959. He noted that no follow up work was done at all and also that ‘talent seemed easy to get at in Lebanon’. All people involved in the productions were volunteers, except for Maqdisi and a technician. The studio of NECC also produced a weekly Protestant worship program for broadcasting on Lebanese national radio.<sup>231</sup>

Of the daily total of 81 minutes that the Beirut Studio of NECC delivered to RVOG during the week of 14-20 November 1965, 18 percent was classified as ‘direct evangelism’, 50 percent as ‘indirect evangelism’, and 32 percent as ‘educational and informational programs’. This was almost exactly the opposite of the 30/70 formula. Music filled 23 percent of these 81 minutes, while 77 percent was used for speech.<sup>232</sup>

Ḥūrānī tried to ensure that the programs would not be monotonous. In his Annual Report of 1968 he said that ‘[the] program is divided into different items to break the monotony of a long talk, and a “package” program of four to five minutes is now used. Church services, lectures and interviews are made in the field.’<sup>233</sup> NECC was unique in this respect as the other Christian broadcasters depended much more on studio-based programs.

In 1968, the Beirut studio delivered 26 different programs each week to RVOG. Ḥūrānī himself wrote and produced many, and he presented five programs. The studio had six other permanent personnel, of whom two worked part-time.<sup>234</sup> During that year, Reidulf Molvaer, the broadcast editor of RVOG, complimented NECC. ‘The production from your studio(s) is probably the best we receive from any of our area studios. You have much valuable relevant material’.<sup>235</sup>

In 1968, 30 percent of all NECC’s programs were direct proclamation, 36 percent contained indirect proclamation, and 34 percent were other programs. Of all programs delivered to Addis Ababa by the Beirut studio, 40 percent had been prepared in Cairo and Khartoum.<sup>236</sup> That was relatively high, as throughout the years, these studios delivered 15 percent of RVOG’s Arabic programs.

In 1969, Ḥūrānī reported that he and his team wanted to produce a few programs that were directed especially to Muslims, to create dialogue. That was interesting, as NECC initially wanted to mainly focus on Muslims. In practice that evidently did not happen. Ḥūrānī said that he preferred the idea of using radio to

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<sup>231</sup> Harold Fisher, ‘Good News on the Air: Vision to Reality’, in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. VIII No. 3, July-September 1960), p. 9. Sigurd Aske, ‘Preliminary Report on Conversations with NECC, Beirut (30 November-2 December 1959)’, p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – NECC.

<sup>232</sup> Lundgren, *Proclaiming Christ to His World*, p. 177.

<sup>233</sup> Hourani, ‘The NECC Division on Radio, Report of Program Production’ (1968), p. 2.

<sup>234</sup> Yacoub T. Hourani, ‘The NECC Division on Radio, Report on Program Production’ (1968), p. 5, received from Ḥūrānī by the author on 13 July 2004.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2. Ulrich Fick wrote that the programs of NECC showed the greatest variety and were the most professional of RVOG, in Fick, ‘Handover Discussion Notes’.

<sup>236</sup> Y. Hourani, ‘The Near East Council of Churches Beirut’ (1968?) pp. 3-4.

disseminate information instead of preaching at people. *Figure 16.1* gives the programs that NECC produced in 1969.<sup>237</sup>

The fact that NECC had programs with conversion stories from Muslims shows that the organization wanted to convert Muslims. This confirms that NECC's goals remained more evangelistic than Ḥūrānī's words suggested. Its program explaining Christian terminology for Muslims showed that NECC was aware of the need to do so. This actually suggests that in its other programs, NECC did not try to use Islamic language for explaining the Gospel, for then this program would have been superfluous. Warning CW6 was heeded, as NECC did not try to garb the Gospel in Islamic forms. Instead it chose to explain the Christian jargon. It was a good choice of NECC to enable its Muslim audience to better understand its programming by giving this explanation and it was a proper effort at contextualization of the programming.

	Title	#	Minutes	Description
Educational	Our Youth Today	2x	19	Special program for young people
	Friends of Children	2x	15	Special program for children
	My Fair Lady		15	Special program for women
	Modern Education		15	Special program for parents and teachers
	Play of the Week		15	Drama (pictures from life)
Social	Ounce of Prevention		19	Health and hygiene
	From Every Field		15	Academic talks on special topics (scientific, social, economic)
	Fruits of the Press		15	Selections from secular and religious magazines
	Panel Discussion		19	Touches upon some of the most common problems and dangers threatening Arab society today
Audience Relations	Abu Habib		15	Audience and public relations program

*Figure 16.1 Programs produced by NECC in 1969 (Continued on next page)*

<sup>237</sup> Yacoub T. Hourani, 'Arabic Programming Department Progress Report (Nicosia, 20-22 January 1970), p. 11, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ1.0.7 – RVOG Related Production Studios – Asia.

	Title	#	Minutes	Description
Devotional	Meditation		5	Opening of daily broadcast
	Let's Worship Together		27	Sunday Service
	Praise the Lord	2x	15	Church choirs
	Listeners' Choice	2x	14	Hymns
	If you Wish		15	Learn a new hymn
	Daily Bible Readings		4	Systematic reading covering the Bible in two years
	Scripture Readings		6	Daily selections from scriptures
Dogmatic	In the Steps of Christ	2x	15	Life of Christ (narrative)
	Word of Life	2x	15	Exegesis panels
	What I Believe		15	Christian beliefs (teachings and dogma)
	The Church in History		15	The establishment of the church in the world
Informative	Church World News		15	The contemporary church in action
	Question and Answer		15	Answers to listeners' questions
	From the Minister's File		15	Counseling

Figure 16.1 Programs produced by NECC in 1969 (Continued from previous page)

In 1970 Hūrânî listed the programs that his studio prepared. Of the 11 programs he described, nine seemed to be traditional Christian programs: sermons, Bible studies, Christian history, pastoral and Ecumenical programs, and programs of Christian hymns.<sup>238</sup> In his report of 1973 he explained that the new tendency was to make shorter programs than before. Whereas initially, the studio produced blocks of 15 and 30 minutes, that had changed that to blocks of 12, 10, five and three minutes. They also produced one-minute spots. This was done 'to satisfy all tastes and ages'.<sup>239</sup> That was unwise, as to aim for all also meant missing most in radio broadcasting. From the perspective of reaching people in their actual context, it was better to be focused.

Hūrânî said that the programs he would produce in 1973 complied with the 30/70 formula. For unknown reasons, he supplied two separate and slightly different lists of programs to prove his point. Both lists, given in *Figure 16.2*, show that at least half of the programs were clearly religious and not 30 percent as he suggested.<sup>240</sup>

After RVOG was closed, NECC broadcast its programs on CBC. It did so in the context of MECF. After the closure of RVOG, MECC produced and broadcast

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., Appendix, no page numbers.

<sup>239</sup> Hourani, 'Director's Report, A Decade in Review', p. R8c.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, pp. R8d, R8l. Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding by the author.

fewer programs and thus on that basis, no further conclusions can be drawn about the contextualization of these programs.<sup>241</sup>

	Minutes p/week		Minutes p/week	
	List 1	%	List 2	%
Devotional	90	16	68	13
Doctrinal, Bible Study	75	14	106	20
Hymns	105	19	105	19
Drama	75	14	52	10
Educational and Cultural	120	22	128	24
Social and Domestic	52	10	52	10
News	15	3	15	3
Public Relations	15	3	15	3

Figure 16.2 Types of Programs NECC produced in 1973

## 16.5 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

From the beginning of NECC's broadcasts over RVOG, mail response was elicited through the radio programs. *Figure 16.3* gives the available response figures. Those who wrote in would get a personal letter in return, usually with a Bible, a New Testament, or some other Christian literature. No information is available about audience response figures for 1963 and 1964, except that during the last six weeks of 1963, 183 letters were received. Of those, 65 percent came from Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

In 1965, NECC received 2,815 letters. In 1966, that number dropped slightly and in 1967 it decreased further to 2,046, if we do not include the 771 respondents to the Transistor Contest that was held during that year. In 1968 about the same number of letters were received and it increased to 2,220 in 1969.

These ups and downs of audience response figures during the 1960s cannot be explained by any singular cause, but the quality of the reception, always problematic during the 1960s, probably played an important role. The response to the Transistor Contest showed how easily audience response could be manipulated by the offer of presents. This demonstrates the difficulty of interpreting audience response figures of any broadcaster as there are too many variables impacting the figures.

<sup>241</sup> 'Notes on the MECF Program Production', (1 September 1977), from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East. Jayaweera, 'Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team to Visit the Middle East January 8-30, 1977', p. 7.

<sup>241</sup> Knud Jørgensen and Bernhardur Gudmundsson, 'Travel Log' (Addis Ababa, January 1977), p. 8, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios - Middle East.



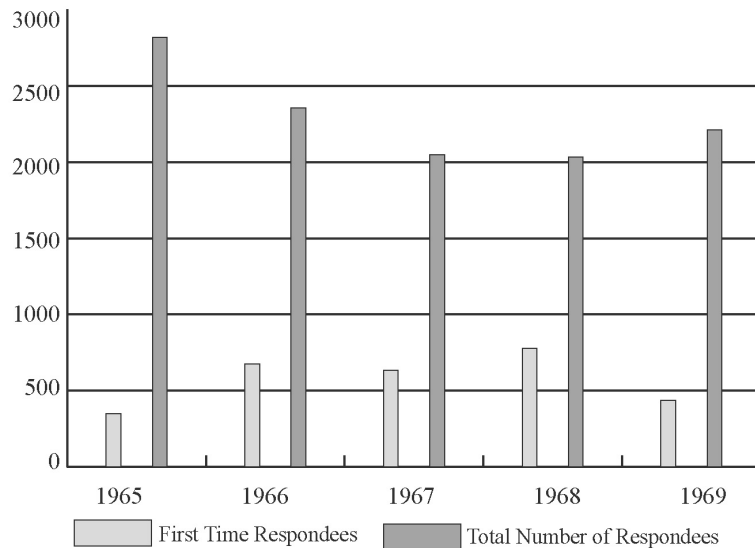


Figure 16.3: Audience Response to NECC broadcasts on RVOG: 1965-1969

About the response in 1966, Haddâd and Luidens reported that the numbers went down, though not the quality:

Be that as it may, we have come to realize that in our area the mailbag alone cannot be an accurate criterion. From personal contacts we learn that there must be tens of thousands who are listening from whom we would never expect a written response.<sup>242</sup>

In his report of 1968, Hûrânî mentioned the problems of political instabilities, censorship, irregularity in mail, poverty and the struggle for survival of many poor in the Arab World, as influences on the number of people writing to NECC:

In spite of all these factors, our average [audience response] was maintained high. Our mail bag carries witnesses daily from people who listened to our broadcast or read the scriptures sent to them by us. Many have expressed their desire to give themselves to Christ, or to know more about him, and asked us how to do it. In fact, scores of letters are received daily from all over the area, especially from the Stronghold cities and Capitals of Islam and from their officials and commoners as well.<sup>243</sup>

Of those who wrote to NECC in 1967, most came from Egypt, followed by Sudan, Iraq and Syria. A 'listeners choice' music program received most response,

<sup>242</sup> Haddad and Luidens, 'Report of the NECC Liaison Officers to the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting', p. 2.

<sup>243</sup> Hourani, 'NECC Division on Radio, Report of Program Production' (1968), p. 8.

followed by a program for children.<sup>244</sup> In 1968 and 1969, most mail came from these same countries. From countries like Jordan and Lebanon hardly any response was received.<sup>245</sup>

The percentage of Muslims responding to the programs was almost 30 percent in 1967, 22 percent in 1968, and 18 percent in 1969. This decrease was due to the fact that between 1967 and 1969, the number of responses from Egypt increased significantly. This is shown in *Figure 16.4*. Most response from Egypt was from Christians if those who wrote in for the Transistor Contest were representative of all respondees.

In April and May 1967, NECC did some audience research through its Transistor Contest. This contest entailed those listeners who answered a set of questions, made a chance to win a transistor radio.<sup>246</sup> Of the 771 respondents, 80 percent were from Egypt and Sudan. Interestingly only 14 percent of the response from Egypt came from Cairo and Alexandria, the main population centers. Most response came from Upper Egypt probably because of the better signal reception in the countryside than in the northern cities. From Syria nine percent of response was received with the remainder coming from 12 different countries. Of all respondents 85 percent were Christian, 70 percent were male, 61 percent were single, 40 percent were students. The most popular program was a journalistic segment, *Fruits of the Press*, with 23 percent of the votes. Also quite popular were programs with titles like *Scripture, Meditation, and Lets Worship Together*.<sup>247</sup>

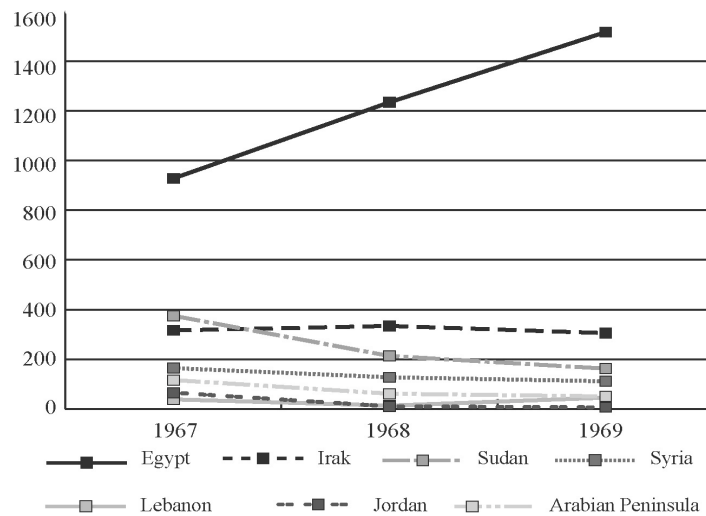


Figure 16.4 Countries of Origins of Audience Response: 1967-1969

<sup>244</sup> 'Audience Mail analysis Incoming Mail as from Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 1967', document received from Hürânî by the author on 14 July 2004.

<sup>245</sup> Hourani, 'NECC Division on Radio, Report of Program Production' (1968), p. 10. Hourani, 'NECC Division on Radio Broadcasting; Semi-Annual Report, (Jan. 1 – June 30, 1969)'.

<sup>246</sup> 'The NECC Commission on Radio Broadcasting Transistor Contest', p. 1.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

In 1969 Ḥūrānī concluded, based on the audience response, that NECC had a ‘better class of listeners, more educated and professional, with large numbers of students’.<sup>248</sup> That conclusion could not be drawn from any audience response. Only the better educated were able to read and write, so per definition all response came from that group of listeners. Ḥūrānī was probably right though, as only literate Arabs would be able to understand the programs in MSA. Of those who responded in 1969, 70 percent were between ten and 20 years old. Of all letters, 13 percent were written by girls and women, and of the total number of 2,220 letters, 18 percent came from Muslims, while of all mail, 78 percent included requests for a Bible or for other Christian literature.<sup>249</sup>

Between 1969 and 1971, hardly any mail came from Egypt. NECC suspected that all mail coming from its studio, and all mail addressed to its studio, was confiscated by the Egyptian authorities. TWR and ELWA had similar suspicions.<sup>250</sup>

The short 15-minute daily broadcasts from CBC, which began in 1971, were effective in attracting audience response. During the first four months of 1971, NECC received 128 letters for its few programs on CBC. Of those, 88 were from Lebanon and Syria and 21 from Egypt. Most mail came from Christians.<sup>251</sup> Though other figures are not available, Ḥūrānī reported in 1973 that the ‘audience reaction to Cyprus broadcast indicated a vast area of listenership and a large audience of young listeners’. The programs broadcast over CBC were ‘carefully produced to appeal to young people and to deal with their interest’.<sup>252</sup>

In November 1975, a RVOG consultation in Addis Ababa recommended to terminate all East Arab Beam broadcasts, ‘in view of the complete lack of response from that area and of a non-existent local follow-up’. For the West Arab Beam, RVOG complained about a lack of data, and it urged Ḥūrānī to submit information regarding the evolution of listener’s response throughout the years. RVOG was especially interested to see to what extent response was generated by its own broadcasts, and by the broadcasts over CBC. This gives the impression that Ḥūrānī had not reported on actual audience response for some years.<sup>253</sup>

At the beginning of the civil war in 1975 the mail in Lebanon was very unreliable and less mail was received in 1976 than before. Between June and December 1976, Ḥūrānī reported the mail figures as given in *Figure 16.4*.<sup>254</sup> During that period of seven months, NECC received 291 letters for its daily broadcasts of 170 minutes on RVOG. Response to the two weekly programs of 30 minutes each

<sup>248</sup> Hourani, ‘NECC Division on Radio Broadcasting; Semi-Annual Report’, (1 January-30 June 1969).

<sup>249</sup> Hourani, ‘NECC Division on Radio Broadcasting; Annual Report’ (1969), pp. 4-6.

<sup>250</sup> Ernst Baueroche, ‘Report on my Travel to the Middle East and Europe’ (June-July 1971), p. 4, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ.1.0.2 – RVOG Programme Department.

<sup>251</sup> Y. Hourani, ‘Division of Radio Broadcasting Progress Report’, p. 3, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, CCZ1.0.7 – RVOG Related Production Studios – Asia.

<sup>252</sup> Hourani, ‘Director’s Report, A Decade in Review’, p. R8c

<sup>253</sup> ‘LWF/COC 1976 Minutes’, pp. 24-25, from the LWF Archives in Geneva, GSZ.0.5.4 - Information Services/Office of Communication – Committee on Communication.

<sup>254</sup> Jayaweera, ‘Report of the WACC-LWFOC Team to Visit the Middle East January 8-30, 1977’, p. 21.

broadcast on CBC to a rather restricted area, gave NECC about 35 letters per month, according to Hūrânî in January 1977.<sup>255</sup>

Egypt	143
Sudan	96
Iraq (mainly Kurdish)	34
Southern Yemen	8
Saudi Arabia	6
Jordan	2
Ethiopia	1
India	1

Figure 16.4 NECC's Audience Response: June-December 1976

In his annual reports, Hūrânî included letters sent to NECC by the audience of the broadcasts. These samples did not differ at all from the sort of responses that the other Protestant broadcasters prided themselves in. That may indicate that these broadcasters had, roughly speaking, the same audience; that for the audience, there was not much difference between the stations; that NECC made a similar selection from the audience response as the other stations did, or any combination of these factors.<sup>256</sup> The materials sent back to respondees were also similar to what the other stations would send: Bibles, New Testaments and other Christian literature.<sup>257</sup>

## 16.6 FINAL OBSERVATIONS

### 16.6.1 Indigenization

The history of the indigenization of the radio production of the NECC studio reflects the history of NECC as an organization. Whereas NECC and its desire to witness to the Gospel on radio was initially a project of Western missionaries, by the time NECC had to start actual productions for broadcast on RVOG in 1963, it was a Lebanese organization under Lebanese management. The feeder studios of NECC in Cairo, Khartoum and Juba were owned by indigenous churches and the management was Arab. NECC's and in its footsteps MECC's broadcasts can therefore be called a truly indigenous enterprise. Foreign missionaries acted in support roles only.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Donald Browne describes in Donald R. Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting; the Limits of the Limitless Medium* (New York, 1982), p. 311, that audiences for channels like FEBC, HCJB and RVOG are roughly similar. Studies have indicated that they are less than 40 years old, moderately educated according to local standards, urban, and male. Program preferences are news broadcasts and religious music.

<sup>257</sup> Hourani, 'NECC Division on Radio, Report of Program Production' (1968), p. 10.

## **16.6.2 Contextualization**

### **16.6.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

NECC endeavored to witness to a broad audience of people in a rural environment all over the Arab World. They wanted to speak to Muslims in the first place but also to Christians. That target audience was too broad as the context of that audience varied too much. However, as most programs of NECC were produced by the NECC studio in Beirut and by Lebanese Christians, in reality most programs gravitated to being suitable for an urban Levantine Christian audience.

### **16.6.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

NECC wanted to produce programs that spoke to the audience in their whole context. It wanted to speak both about personal faith issues, but also of how to relate Christian faith to society. NECC's expressed programming philosophies and its actual programs that included news programs, suggests that it was interested in the application of the Gospel to the whole of man and the whole of society. NECC was wise to not allow RVOG to dictate the content of news programs in Arabic. RVOG's prevailing belief that news reporting had an absolute truth to it was incorrect.

Until 1970, NECC gravitated to programs with a personalized Gospel only. After 1970, it leaned more to treating societal issues. More study is needed before definitive conclusions can be drawn about this although it does seem that this shift was at the expense of the more personal implications of the Gospel. If this is so, then CW5 was only heeded to a limited extent and NECC's studio toward the end of the 1970s would have no longer truly represented its member Churches. This would mean that CW2 was not heeded. This may have played a role in MECC's decision to terminate this ministry.

### **16.6.2.3 Language**

NECC allowed the Pan-Arab mood amongst its own producers to lead to programs in MSA. That was logical from the perspective of NECC's desire to fully participate in the social and political life of the Arab World. Given the history of the Churches in the Arab World, it was also understandable that they did not choose to use the colloquial languages of their audiences. During the 1960s, when Nâsirism was still popular, the usage of colloquial languages would have been seen as an effort to divide the Arabs. But this choice to use MSA also entailed siding with the political leadership and the cultural elites.

From the viewpoint of contextualizing the Gospel for the educated elites, the choice for MSA could be defended. From the perspective of NECC's expressed goal to reach rural, illiterate Muslims, that choice was counter-productive. Those illiterates could not understand MSA. Using MSA meant speaking to the audiences in a difficult literate language that was hard to understand for Arabs that were not tertiary educated; it was not their mother tongue in any case and therefore not a wise choice.

#### **16.6.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

NECC and MECC used rather Biblical and Evangelical language for the presentation of the Gospel. It endeavored to make its programs accessible to Muslims by explaining the jargon it used. Whether that was done properly, cannot be assessed. It is clear though that NECC did not use Islamic language and forms to explain the Gospel, thus heeding CW6.

#### **1.6.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

There were no differences among NECC's and MECC's members about the truth of the Bible and the uniqueness of Christ as confessed in the early creeds. There was also no disagreement on salvation with regards to it entailing participation in Church, so CW1 was not trespassed against.

In the programs, Christ was portrayed in a theologically conservative manner as the Son of God and the second person in the Trinity who was incarnated and died and rose again for the salvation of those who believe in Him. It seems that in the opinion of the MECC leaders, representatives of very conservative churches, this spiritual side of the Gospel was not presented well enough during the late 1970s.

The Church was probably hardly presented at all in the programs, at least not in Travis' C1 and C2 spectrums, to the dismay of the Church leaders in the late 1970s. The problems between MECC's studio and its church leadership during the later part of the 1970s, suggests tension in the implementation of CW2. This reflected to a certain extent the changing membership within MECC; whereas it used to be a Protestant organization, after 1975 the Coptic-Orthodox and other Oriental Churches came to play an important role.

This issue shows that the warning, to contextualize with the Church community, is a complicated one. The program producers were never in agreement with the Churches' wish for more Church-focused programming. This continuous tension underlined the general difficulty for Christian radio broadcasters to contextualize the Gospel for a Muslim audience while at the same time heeding the desires of the national Churches. Heeding CW2 became even more complicated when the views of all Church families had to be taken into account as they were at times contradictory.

#### **16.6.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

Until 1976, the programs of NECC and MECC were broadcast on RVOG. This means that the direct media environment of the programs reflected NECC's approach to programming. The fact that RVOG was known for broadcasting from Ethiopia was probably an advantage over those Christian organizations that broadcast from Europe or the USA. It is not clear what programs surrounded the broadcasts on CBC, and the question of how the Arab audiences perceived broadcast from Cyprus awaits further study. It is not possible therefore to draw conclusions on the impact of the media environment of the broadcasts from Cyprus.

### 16.6.3 Christian Witness

The goals of RVOG and its feeder studios during the 1950s and 1960s in regard to the Christian witness were more or less similar. They were all interested in speaking of the Christian *kerygma* by radio and they defined this *kerygma* more or less similarly. These definitions included terms like the salvation of individuals for eternity and reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus Christ alone. The *koinonia* and the *diakonia* of the Church were considered important, but the *kerygma* was seen as central.

RVOG's views changed throughout the 1960s as a reflection of the shifting views of mission in Ecumenical Western Protestantism during that period. Though at the Willingen conference in 1951 the Ecumenical movement still defined the Christian witness in terms of *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*, the focus for many Western Churches shifted evermore to the *koinonial* and *diakonal* witness, with less focus on the Christian *kerygma* as a salvific message for individuals and their personal relationship with God.

The viewpoints of NECC and MECC and their Arab feeder studios did not change to the same extent as parts of Ecumenical Christianity in the Western World; they remained conservative, Bible-oriented, and overall, Evangelical as regards the *kerygma*. The effect of this was that, despite the changing broadcasting philosophies and theological views of some of the leadership of RVOG and as it seems, of the program director of NECC and MECC, the *kerygmatic* content of the programs of the Arabic broadcasts of NECC did not change much. In fact it remained to a large extent similar to broadcasts such as those of TWR, ELWA and FEBA. The cross-over of program suppliers between these broadcasters after RVOG closed, testifies to that, as do the similarities in the content of the audience response. NECC and MECC stressed the unity of the Church of Christ and the societal impact of the Gospel more than any other broadcaster. Therefore, NECC and MECC were more successful in broadcasting programs that contained a balanced *kerygmatic*, *koinonial* and *diakonal* witness to the Gospel than others.

NECC's relationship with its donors has often been a sensitive one. Sometimes the donors misused their financial powers to manipulate NECC into adopting certain positions. This relationship became more problematic due to theological changes among some of the Ecumenical churches in the Western World that did not occur in a similar manner among the Arab churches.

More study is needed regarding how Ecumenical donor agencies dealt with the studio of NECC and MECC, how they impacted the structure, the personnel and the programs of that studio, and how the studio and its owner, NECC and MECC, viewed those donor agencies and their impact. This would form an important case study from a missiological viewpoint. Those who receive donor money must be aware that to adopt the linguistic and cultural forms of the donors for the sake of becoming eligible for donations, will inevitably influence the goals and views of the recipients of the money. They may believe that they can hold on to their own views, while using donor-driven language, but that is unlikely in the long term, as the usage of the linguistic and cultural forms of the donor agencies cannot be separated from the original meaning of those forms, in line with CW6.





## 17 Gospel Missionary Union (GMU)

Gospel Missionary Union (GMU), with its headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri (USA) began producing its first Arabic programs in 1966 and its first Amazigh programs in 1969. Throughout GMU's broadcasting history, it has mainly aimed its programs at Morocco using Moroccan Arabic and different Amazigh languages. GMU changed its name to Avant Ministries in 2004 but will be referred to as GMU throughout this study.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter reviews GMU's history from its inception in America, to Morocco, its subsequent development of Arabic radio productions within the country, to the later formation of its radio production department Malaga Media Center (MMC) in Malaga (Spain). Then, GMU's Statement of Faith is examined in this chapter. Important factors in MMC's direction were the choice of Moroccan target audiences and therefore their languages. The challenges and tensions that MMC faced in remaining focused in this way are described in detail as its internal policies and project alliances developed.

MMC spoke out against contextualization in as far as that entailed the use of Islamic language or quoting from the *Qur'ân*. GMU had a long relationship with many of the small Christian communities in Morocco and rejected the idea of creating so-called 'Jesus Mosques'. It was thought that these would divide the Christian communities of former Muslims in Morocco. These matters are treated in the section regarding MMC's programming philosophies.

This chapter then treats the actual programs, and the audience response to these programs. It endeavors to relate the audience response figures of MMC to their broadcasts and the political situation in North Africa. MMC used its programs mainly for generating responses that could lead to new students for its Bible Correspondence Courses (BCCs). Attention will therefore be given to the actual numbers of students in the BCCs throughout the years.

Finally, some observations are given regarding the indigenization of MMC and the contextualization of its programs. Also, the Christian witness of MMC's programs will be evaluated by looking at the question to what extent the programs reflect the Christian *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*.

### 17.1 HISTORY

#### 17.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Productions: 1888-1966

##### 17.1.1.1 Before Morocco's Independence: 1888-1956

GMU traces its beginnings to the 1888 Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) convention in Abilene, Kansas (USA). During this conference, partici-

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<sup>1</sup> In 2004, GMU changed its name to *Avant Ministries*, but as that name had not become commonplace by the time of the writing of this thesis, this chapter uses the name *Gospel Missionary Union*.

pants were challenged by the need to proclaim the Gospel in those parts of the world where there was no Gospel witness. George S. Fisher was YMCA's state secretary for Kansas and in charge of the convention. During the convention many young men of YMCA felt called to mission work. In 1890 nine of those sailed to Sierra Leone where five soon died. The YMCA International Committee stated the deaths 'the result of unbounded zeal for the cause, precious lives lost that ordinary caution might have saved'.<sup>2</sup> Fisher realized that if he wanted to stay in YMCA, he had to temper his zeal, however he felt compelled to pursue his calling and in January 1892 he resigned from YMCA together with some of his associates. They started an independent organization called the World's Gospel Union (WGU).<sup>3</sup>

In 1894 Fisher sent his first group of missionaries to Tangier in Morocco. They consisted of a one-armed preacher named Henry Hammer and a Jewish convert, Albert Nathan. Nathan was accompanied by his wife and four children as well as their maid Hettie. In Tangier they were welcomed by two missionary groups; the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), which had begun work in the city in 1882, and the Mission to the Kabyles and Other Berber Races of North Africa. This second organization had begun their work in Tangier in 1883 and later became known as the North Africa Mission (NAM).<sup>4</sup>

In 1895 more missionaries of WGU arrived in Tangier. After a brief period of language study, the group left to open a mission station in Meknes. The government did not allow the missionaries to enter the Muslim section of town during the first few years and they were only allowed to rent a house in Mallah, the poor and unsanitary Jewish quarter. Ila Marie Davis, an American missionary with GMU in Morocco from 1946 to 1989, described life in Morocco at the time when the first GMU missionaries arrived:

On the coast, a certain amount of civilization might be found, but inland travel was perilous. The Arab conquerors had never subdued the Berbers, the original inhabitants of the land. With several strong Berber tribes constantly at war, the Arab King used barbaric methods to put down the tribes. It was not unusual to see the heads of conquered tribesmen hanging in the city square. Slavery still existed, especially with the selling of women and children. Slave traders assembled their victims in the marketplace and sold them like cattle. [...] Traders sold not only black slaves from south of the Sahara, but also white women and children, captured from English and other European ships.<sup>5</sup>

For GMU, as WGU was called after 1901, the political situation in Morocco became better after Morocco and France signed a treaty in 1912 making the country a French protectorate. The main reason why the Moroccan *sultân* wanted this treaty was to get a French 'police force' to subdue the warring Amazigh tribes. According to Davis, 'France changed Morocco from a Barbary Coast nation to a

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<sup>2</sup> Ila Marie Davis, *A Gleam of Light; The Trials and Triumphs of a Century of Missionary Work in Morocco* (Kansas City, 1998), pp. 14-15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

modern civilization'<sup>6</sup> and 'subdued the tribes by cultivating their skills and educating their children, and for several decades, peace prevailed'.<sup>7</sup>

The French built highways, railroads, hospitals, schools, libraries, and they established law and order in the country. Many Imazighen found work in the French agricultural ventures. The French role in Morocco also gave the missionaries considerable freedom. 'Under French rule, we registered as Evangelical missionaries and went about our witness, all the while enjoying favor with the government' according to Davis.<sup>8</sup> In her book Davis expressed GMU's appreciation of the freedom to evangelize Morocco that French colonialism gave.

During that time of peace and freedom, which lasted until World War II, the GMU missionaries saturated large portions of central Morocco with the Gospel. Bible translation was a priority and the four Gospels were translated into Tamazight, one of the Amazigh languages, by Davis. Sadly, they were lost before they were printed.<sup>9</sup> Concurrently the Bible also began to be translated by Eric G. Fisk, a Plymouth Brethren missionary. He used a combination of colloquial Moroccan and Algerian Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).<sup>10</sup> The female missionaries of GMU visited *harîms*, sold Scripture portions, held classes and spoke in public to large crowds. This mainly took place in the coastal city of al-Qasâr, inland in Meknes, in the mountain town of Safrû, and every now and then in the large city of Fez. The GMU men lived with Amazigh families and also went about teaching and preaching with the inland markets being their regular pulpits.<sup>11</sup> Davis described however that towards 1940 GMU's outlook was bleak:

For all of their effort, though, they saw few converts. In time the missionaries aged, died, or left the field because of illness. The solid foundation of talented, undaunted, energetic young missionaries making up the Morocco staff had dwindled to two – and they were women.<sup>12</sup>

After World War II however the interest in ministry to Moroccans grew in American Christians. Davis arrived in 1946 followed by John and Alice Barcus, Sarah Peck, Verna Janz, and Bob and Doris Schneider.<sup>13</sup> Because of the fast growth of the team in Morocco, GMU's President G. Christian Weiss spent several months of 1947 in Morocco. The atmosphere in GMU was upbeat. The annual report of 1947 says that '1947 was the best year our Morocco Mission has passed in a long time.'<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Davis, *A Gleam of Light*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Sam Heldenbrand in an email to the author (16 June 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Fisk describes the translation process of this Union Bible in his book, Eric G. Fisk *The Cross versus the Crescent* (London, 1971). It was published in 1960.

<sup>11</sup> Davis, *A Gleam of Light*, p.17.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 64. John and Alice Barcus worked solely as evangelists to the Moroccan Jews. There were about 350,000 Jews in Morocco at that time. John Barcus in an email to the author (17 June 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Annual Report of GMU 1947, quoted by Davis, *A Gleam of Light*, p. 66.

After World War II nationalist resistance against the French presence in Morocco gained in strength. Imazighen, with their good relationships with the French, had gradually moved into supervisory, industrial and government jobs. Davis remembered ‘many marketplace speeches by Arabs protesting what they saw as favoritism.’ The conflict grew steadily worse. Morocco moved into a state of revolution as the Arabs tried to oust the French and all foreigners.<sup>15</sup>

In 1955 France banished the nationalist *Sulṭān* Muḥammad V to Madagascar. In spite of that, bloodshed continued and therefore in 1956 France awarded Morocco its independence. France wanted to concentrate on retaining Algeria. The *sulṭān* returned to Morocco as King Muḥammad V and the country celebrated. For the missionaries, the situation was very worrying as radical Muslims and nationalists wanted to now rid the country of all foreigners.<sup>16</sup> Davis described the confusion:

A new flood of religious fervor swept over the country. The [king] deplored the continuing acts of violence and terrorism. [...] The king, a moderate [implored] tolerance toward Christians and Jews, but his fanatical subjects focused on ‘the traditions and principles of Islam’ as a mandate to persecute Christians and Jews. [In] Meknes, [...] many Europeans [were massacred] and many more injured. Almost 400 European farms around the Meknes region were burned. [...] God protected the missionaries, and order was finally restored around Meknes. Bitter hatred toward all foreigners, however, could be felt for a long time.<sup>17</sup>

The Moroccan authorities restored order. Morocco joined the United Nations and signed the Bill of Human Rights, guaranteeing individuals the right to worship and to change religion.

#### 17.1.1.2 Challenge to become a Radio Producer: 1956-1966

Schneider began the first BCC of GMU in 1958 called *Search the Scriptures*. Schneider modeled it on a course that had been effective in India and began with the Gospel of Luke as the basis for the study. By 1960 he had about 100 students who all received mimeographed copies of the material; GMU did not have a functional printing press prior to 1960.<sup>18</sup>

In 1958 GMU was challenged to get involved witnessing to Christ through radio program production. Voice of Tangier (VOT) asked James Taylor of GMU to take charge of the French programs to be broadcast to North Africa. NAM offered

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<sup>15</sup> Davis, *A Gleam of Light*. pp. 76-77.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-84.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>18</sup> This is information given by Schneider in 1974. It contradicts information GMU later published, found in ‘GMU 100 Years in Morocco’ (1995), that Clem Payne began a printing press for GMU in Khamisât in 1956 and that he printed the first BCC as written by Schneider in 1957. This article from an unknown publication was found in the MMC Archives in Malaga where it had not been filed yet. Schneider’s own recollections were found in the transcript of a meeting of Mr. Phil Butler, (21 February 1974, Marseille) p. 14, the Billy Graham Center Archives at Wheaton College in Wheaton (USA), Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 29.

its support and where possible cooperation.<sup>19</sup> GMU had already, towards the end of the 1940s, shown its interest in using contemporary media:

Mehdi Ksara, a believer who preached and sang, prepared Gospel recordings in Arabic that were played over a loudspeaker. Jelali, [a] young man [who] was baptized in 1947, also had a good voice and was a fine speaker. Bob Schneider made recordings of messages [which one of GMU's missionaries] wrote out for Jelali to read. Bob also recorded several messages by G. Christian Weiss while he was visiting. And Joy Ridderhoff had begun her Gospel Recordings ministry, giving us a few other records in Moroccan Arabic, which we played as well.<sup>20</sup>

Maḥdî and Jalâlî, who were mentioned above, may have been the very first converts from Islam to ever have been involved in any recordings of the Gospel in Arabic of any sort.

The development of GMU's radio ministry began during a period of increasing tension in Morocco. In 1962 the country adopted some articles in its penal code that threatened all missionary work. The section on Violations of the Exercise of Worship read:

Whoever uses enticements for the purpose of undermining the faith of a Muslim or of converting him to another religion, whether by exploiting his weakness of needs or by using educational or medical establishments, asylums, or orphanages to this end, is subject to [...] punishment [and] the closing of the establishment. [...] Whoever [...] causes a disorder which disturbs the peace is punished by imprisonment [...] and a fine.<sup>21</sup>

These laws were so vague that the Moroccan authorities could use them against any missionary work.

In 1960, at a commercial fair in Casablanca, leaflets offering a BCC on the life of Jesus were distributed and in a short time approximately 10,000 people had enrolled. By 1963, over 50,000 Moroccans were involved in a BCC.<sup>22</sup> The enrollment continued at a pace of 6,000 to 8,000 each year during the sixties. There was such a large interest from young teenagers that Schneider had to create a policy of not accepting teenagers under 15 or 16 years old if they did not have the written permission of their parents.<sup>23</sup> This impact on the young people did not go unnoticed and became a political issue. 'I still remember during the sixties, (my wife and I

<sup>19</sup> Howard W. Stalley, 'Memorandum to Home Council, Report of Field Administration Meeting held October 13-14 1958' (15 October 1958), p. 4, given to the author without a reference to its file.

<sup>20</sup> Davis, *A Gleam of Light*, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> Chapter 2, section 2 of the Moroccan Penal Code (Dahir 1-59-413 of 26 November 1962), as quoted by Fredrick Plastow, 'History of The GMU Expulsion From Morocco 1969' (n.p., 1996), pp. 2-3. This unpublished paper was found at the MMC Archives and was not filed. Plastow was a GMU missionary who was among those forced to leave Morocco in 1969. He worked as a missionary in Belgium from 1970-1981.

<sup>22</sup> Papers of Robert Schneider, in the Billy Graham Center Archives at Wheaton College in Wheaton (USA), Collection 391, Tape 4 side 1.

<sup>23</sup> See Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 31.

arrived the spring of 1964) that we lived under the pressure that we might be expelled from the country at any time', recalled Fred Plastow, who later lead all the media ministries of GMU.<sup>24</sup> 'Other things were happening such as uninformed but zealous European believers who came in and distributed anti-Islamic tracts outside of mosques. This greatly offended the government and so they began to deal directly with the problem.'<sup>25</sup>

### ***17.1.2 Arabic Radio Productions: Since 1966***

#### **17.1.2.1 Pioneering Stage in Morocco: 1966-1969**

##### ***Developing the first Radio Programs***

J. Maynard Yoder, GMU's field leader for Morocco, went to Casablanca in February 1966 where he ran into Warren Gaston, regional superintendent of NAM for Tunisia.<sup>26</sup> Gaston was on his way to a conference on radio work at Radio ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa') in Liberia. 'In our conversation together [Gaston] said that he thought we [of GMU] should sponsor a radio program in Moroccan Arabic.' Gaston said that he had a promise from Trans World Radio (TWR), the new name of VOT, that there would be several blocks of time available.<sup>27</sup>

A week after Yoder had been challenged by Gaston to start a broadcasting ministry, GMU held its annual Field Council. Yoder discussed the proposal to take responsibility for a weekly spot of 15 minutes for Moroccan Arabic programs with his missionaries in Morocco.<sup>28</sup> He was especially enthusiastic that the broadcast would not be on Shortwave (SW) but on Mediumwave (MW):

Short wave broadcasts so often require special sets and careful tuning [...] Pocket transistors, and ordinary sets don't usually pull in short wave. That's why Trans World Radio's offer of time on the regular broadcast band seemed to be an opportunity of a lifetime.<sup>29</sup>

Plastow was present in the meeting in February 1966. 'This indeed was a big step for us because we were beginning from nothing. No knowledge of the field of radio, no finances, no available personnel and no assurance that a Moroccan would be willing to risk having his voice on the radio. Yet all fell together in a relatively

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<sup>24</sup> Fred Plastow in an email to the author (9 February 2003).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Plastow about Yoder: 'He was one fine missionary and was one of my language teachers when my wife and I undertook our Arabic language study in Morocco. He was an excellent Arabist and an Islamicist as well. He could have taught on any College or Seminary faculty with his knowledge of Islam and Arabic. It was my privilege to have him, not only as a colleague, but friend over many years. He was not only a visionary, but had a sincere love and compassion for the Moroccan peoples. He passed away at a much too early age while director of GMU's work in Spain. I assumed his position after his home going.' Plastow in an email to the author (9 February 2003).

<sup>27</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'A History of the Moroccan Radio Program (Arabic)'. This unpublished report was written during the late 1960s, and given to the author by MMC without a reference to its file.

<sup>28</sup> Yoder, 'A History of the Moroccan Radio Program (Arabic)'.

<sup>29</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Kalimat al-Hayat' (Autumn 1966). This unpublished report was given to the author by MMC without a reference to its file.

short time.<sup>30</sup> Yoder reported later: ‘There was a unanimous agreement among the members of the Field Council that we should take this “step of faith”. It was really more like a “leap” into the unknown. The only real “known” was that if God was in this move, He would supply the needs as we trusted Him.’ A resolution was passed that GMU would begin broadcasting a 15 minute program in Arabic on TWR. In September 1966 GMU had its first programs broadcast.<sup>31</sup>

GMU was in a unique position to make radio programs for Morocco as its missionaries were based inside the country. The physical proximity to the audience was important as it enabled a better understanding of the context of the audience through actual participation in that same context.

The expectations of Yoder and the other missionaries must have run high. Shortly after the first broadcasts began in 1966 he wrote that the Muslims of North Africa had ‘long been denied accurate knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ’.<sup>32</sup> He saw two reasons for that:

Christians have failed to give them a clear, positive witness [...] and mistaken ideas about the Gospel have arisen in Islam, which the Muslims need to have clarified. But the influence of the few missionaries is so limited. How can we penetrate the walls around the families to rectify these mistakes? Christian radio programs in the language of the people on the wave lengths available to their sets is one means to help solve the problem.<sup>33</sup>

However the broadcasts were originally in SW, from TWR’s transmitters in Bonaire (Netherlands Antilles). It is possible that GMU had its first programs on TWR’s MW broadcasts to North Africa in 1967, but in 1969 this was certainly the case.<sup>34</sup>

Radio School of the Bible (RSB) in Marseille (France), which was NAM’s radio ministry, offered to record the messages of GMU and send them to TWR. One of GMU’s contacts was Muḥammad ‘Shaf’ Shafir, a Moroccan Christian studying at the Lebanese Bible Institute (LBI) in Beirut at that time. He came during the four summers of 1966-1969 to Marseille to prepare all the broadcasts for the year ahead. A Moroccan believer was the right choice to make these programs as he was best placed to know what the audience needed.

The programs of GMU were called Voice of the Word of Life (*Ṣawt Kalimat al-Hayâh*). They contained Bible teaching for the scattered Moroccan Christians with a strong evangelistic appeal in almost every program. Back to the Bible (BTTB) sponsored 25 percent of the broadcasting cost during the first few years.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Plastow in an email to the author (9 February 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Yoder, ‘A History of the Moroccan Radio Program (Arabic)’.

<sup>32</sup> Yoder, ‘Kalimat al-Hayat’.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> In April 1966 TWR began MW broadcasts but those were directed at Europe only. According to Dick Olson of TWR, the MW broadcasts to North Africa ‘were certainly quite a bit later’. Dick Olson in an email to the author (10 May 2005).

<sup>35</sup> Yoder, ‘A History of the Moroccan Radio Program (Arabic)’. Harry Genet, ‘Penetrating the Muslim World’, in *Reaching Out* (n.p., 1974?), p. 55. This was No. 3 in the Focus on LEM Series.

***Missionaries Deported from Morocco***

In January 1967 Morocco began implementing its anti-mission laws. GMU's main worry was its BCC that had tens of thousands of students. Schneider decided to stop the courses for a while in early 1967, as several missionaries all over Morocco had been called in to the police and questioned about their relationship with his BCC. In April Schneider went to Malaga (Spain) to see whether he should move the BCC and the print shop of GMU to that city which was only a five-hour boat trip away from Tangier. On the day that he traveled to Spain, Schneider heard that a shipment of Bibles had been turned back by the Moroccan authorities. For Schneider this confirmed that he had to move the BCC to Spain, as he could not continue in Morocco without the Gospels needed for the courses.<sup>36</sup> General Francisco Franco of Spain had just given Protestant missionaries more liberties so GMU decided to move its publishing activities from Morocco to Malaga.<sup>37</sup> In November 1967 GMU chose to buy property in Malaga in what was called the *Dutch Settlement*.<sup>38</sup>

Yoder spoke with Ahmad Barghash, minister of Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs on 28 April 1967. The minister underlined the importance of religious freedom in Morocco but denied that Muslims were free to even read the Bible. He wanted GMU to give him a date by which all missionary activities would cease. He told Yoder: 'If you fail to take the necessary action, we will take it.' Yoder concluded in his report of the interview that the government would find any action against missionary work embarrassing at a diplomatic level, but he was also sure that Morocco was ready to take the necessary measures to stop mission work.<sup>39</sup>

A week after Barghash made the intentions of the Moroccan government clear, some missionaries tried to enlist the help of the British Ambassador. He however said that 'any request for clarification would most certainly provoke reactions definitely unfavourable to missionaries and their activity'. He was also convinced that the government 'had found Christian broadcasts, linked with the personal contacting of individuals inside the country to be particularly provocative'.<sup>40</sup>

Weiss of BTTB visited Morocco in 1969. He was unhappy that the few radio programs to Morocco were 'an insignificant allotment of time each week for the common people of Morocco, and it was principally late at night when few could listen'. In February 1969 BTTB gave up its Friday evening English broadcasts on TWR to enable GMU to broadcast two programs of 15 minutes in Arabic, and one in Tamazight. These were GMU's first MW broadcasts from TWR's outlet of Radio Monte Carlo in Monte Carlo (RMC-MC) instead of Bonaire. All GMU's broadcasts on TWR after 1969 were through RMC-MC.

<sup>36</sup> Fredrick Plastow in an email to the author (26 April 2005).

<sup>37</sup> Plastow, 'History of The GMU Expulsion From Morocco 1969', pp. 5-6. Evelyn Stenbock, 'Miss Terri!' *The Story of Maude Cary, Pioneer GMU Missionary in Morocco* (Reading, 1970), pp. 139-140.

<sup>38</sup> Minutes of the Morocco Field Council Meeting (Meknes, 27 November 1967), given to the author by MMC without a reference to its file.

<sup>39</sup> Bernard Collinson and Maynard Yoder, 'Report on an Interview with Mr. Barghash, Minister of Habous on 28 April 1967 - 10.00 a.m.', from the MMC archives, Foreign Attitudes.

<sup>40</sup> Bernard Collinson, 'Memorandum to Home Councils and Field Council about the situation in Morocco' (5 June 1967), cited in Plastow, 'History of the GMU Expulsion from Morocco 1969', pp. 8-9.



Mildred Swan had lived with the Tamazight in Morocco from 1944 until she had to leave.<sup>41</sup> While later living in Corsica she wrote the Tamazight programs with the help of a former Moroccan guard of one of the GMU facilities in Morocco. For several years Swan came to Malaga once or twice a year to record these programs. An American woman speaking in Tamazight on radio was certainly not ideal but there was evidently no one else to do it at that time. The guard was not considered a proper reader. Between May and November 1969, Morocco expelled most of the GMU missionaries as well as those from other organizations.<sup>42</sup>

### 17.1.2.2 Malaga Media Center (MMC): 1970-1975

#### *Personnel*

In 1970 GMU opened its Malaga Media Center (MMC) for radio production and BCCs. Clem Payne was the first director and Yoder was the manager of the radio department. Later Yoder became director of MMC.<sup>43</sup> BTTB donated money for the radio studio building.

In 1971 MMC enlisted two missionaries from the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society (BCMS) in the United Kingdom. This rather conservative organization of Anglicans had pioneered evangelism in the Atlas Mountains of Southern Morocco. The Christian Brethren from the United Kingdom placed personnel in Malaga too. The radio team consisted of Yvonne and Gordon Fyles (producer), Mildred Swan, Yoder and his wife Margaret, and Herman (engineer) and Mary Ann Hartzler. For the BCC, MMC had Janz, Honor Humphreys, the Schneiders, Betty Siedschlag and one Moroccan believer.<sup>44</sup>

Between 1972 and 1974, the number of Moroccans working with MMC increased. In its annual reports MMC mentioned eight men and two women from Morocco who were helping them. Among those were Shafir, Bassam and Ali. These last two would continue to work with MMC until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the reports, Swan, Fyles, Harry Ratcliffe, and Daisy Marsh were also mentioned.<sup>45</sup>

During these years, the programs of MMC were produced in a variety of locations: A Moroccan man taped programs in the Lamorlaye Bible College studio in France; two others Moroccans translated and recorded programs in Beirut at the Baptist Recording Studio of the Near East Baptist Mission (NEBM), and of course programs were produced in Malaga itself.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Plastow, 'History of the GMU Expulsion from Morocco 1969', p. 20. Hartzler in an email to the author (13 June 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Plastow, 'History of The GMU Expulsion From Morocco 1969', describes in detail how GMU's missionaries left Morocco. Plastow was personally responsible to oversee the selling of GMU's houses and other assets. Stenbock, 'Miss Terri!', p. 140. 'Malaga Media Center – Get the Message. Hear the Truth' (2004): brochure.

<sup>43</sup> 'Does Jesus Love Muslims? The answer to that question is what the Malaga Media Center is all about', in *The Gospel Message* Nr. 3 (1993), p. 8. Herman Hartzler in an email to the author (13 June 2005).

<sup>44</sup> 'The Team ... How it Evolved', from MMC Archives, Islam/Morocco Miscellaneous Info.

<sup>45</sup> The names Bassam and Ali are pseudonyms.

<sup>46</sup> 'Financial Report for the Radio Department September 1972', from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports. 'Statistical Report for the Ministry to Muslims Radio Department Malaga Spain, Fiscal Year September 1, 1972 to August 31, 1973', from MMC Archives, Radio De-

**Broadcasts**

In 1971 MMC had a total of seven programs of 15 minutes each week on TWR's RMC-MC broadcasts and on ELWA. The only resident producer during those years was Shafir who later left for the USA in 1972. His former productions continued to be used as there was not enough new material for broadcasting. During 1972-1974 the number of programs broadcast decreased slightly to three programs each week on TWR and two on ELWA.<sup>47</sup>

In 1974-1975, MMC increased the number of programs broadcast again. It produced five programs each week for TWR and delivered two of those also to ELWA. One Moroccan believer produced programs in Southern Moroccan Tashelhayt. These were probably the beginning of Christian programs in that language. MMC wanted to develop this man into its 'national voice' in those programs.<sup>48</sup>

**17.1.2.3 Strategic Choices: 1975-1981****Personnel**

In 1976 MMC invited Ali, an Amazigh who also spoke Dârîjah (the Moroccan colloquial Arabic), to become a fulltime staff member. He agreed and thus had to raise his support in the USA. He planned to arrive back in Malaga in January 1977. The need for him to return was urgent. In 1975-1976 MMC had only been able to produce 86 programs. This unfortunate situation was caused by the Arabic and Amazigh free-lance producers not being able to give too much time to MMC. During this time MMC still continued to broadcast five programs each week on TWR and two on ELWA but it had to repeat many old programs.<sup>49</sup>

According to Herman Hartzler the decision that Moroccans had to be missionaries like those from the Western world was because of a bad experience with one of its normally employed Moroccans:

There had been a breakdown of relationships with [this Moroccan employee] because he was the only one on the team that was an employee. The rest were supported missionaries. It put him on a 'lower' level. So we decided we wanted new national personnel to be supported missionaries. Financially it worked well and also relationship wise. The down side of it was that it put the Moroccans on our team on a different economic level from the budding Christians inside Morocco to whom they ministered.<sup>50</sup>

For the indigenization of the MMC's ministry this approach, that even the Moroccans had to raise their own support, was not helpful. It meant that Ali had to be-

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partment, Radio Department Reports. J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report on the work of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims September 1973 to August 1974', from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, Technician, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1975 to August 31, 1976', from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>50</sup> Hartzler in an email to the author (13 June 2005).

come part of church life in the USA in order to be a fulltime Christian worker for reaching his own Moroccan nation.

During 1977-1978 MMC invited Bassam, a Moroccan Arab, and his wife to become full time associate missionaries with GMU with a view to becoming career missionaries.<sup>51</sup> Bassam had had a good radio business in Morocco before he moved in 1978 to the GMU headquarters in Kansas. Like Ali, he too had to raise support in the USA. Another couple was also invited but they decided to work with *Karmel Mission* (KM) instead.<sup>52</sup>

In 1979 Ali and his wife were officially appointed as career missionaries with GMU. In 1980, Bassam and his wife were accepted and returned to Malaga in November of that year. Ali and his wife however returned later from their furlough in the USA in 1981.<sup>53</sup> MMC was now in the excellent position of having two native Moroccans to proclaim the Gospel to their own nation.

### **Broadcasts**

Bart Bliss, director of ELWA, and Suhail Zarifa, ELWA's Arabic program director, visited Malaga in February 1975 and offered 30 minutes per day to MMC and RSB for North African programs. ELWA had a new focus on North Africa as it was to hand over its studio in Beirut to the Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) later during that year. In 1975 Yoder reported that ELWA, RSB and MMC 'drew up some loose plans for an association [...] called Media Association for North Africa (MANA)'.<sup>54</sup> Eskil Johansson, the director of International Broadcasting Association (IBRA) also visited Malaga as he was interested in beginning with Arabic programs on his SW broadcasts from Sines (Portugal). He offered time as from October 1975.<sup>55</sup>

During 1976-1977, MMC had three Voice of the Word of Life programs on TWR per week, beside one program in either Tamazight or Tashelhayt, and one in Kabyle. On ELWA, MMC repeated one of its Arabic programs twice every week. MMC began to research whether it could also buy airtime on Southern Spanish stations. Initially it thought of Radio Algeciras but this station had only a superficial reach into Morocco. MMC also expressed an interest in broadcasting from Ceuta and Mellila, two Spanish enclaves on the Moroccan mainland. Radio Algeciras accepted the idea of Christian broadcasts to Morocco but they offered only a daily slot of 15 minutes. Bassam Madany of the Back to God Hour (BTGH) was

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<sup>51</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1977 to August 31, 1978', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>52</sup> Hartzler in an email to the author (13 June 2005).

<sup>53</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department of Malaga Media Center Fiscal Year September 1, 1979 to August 31, 1980', from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>54</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1974 to August 31, 1975', from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

immediately prepared to take two timeslots each week. RSB seemed slightly disinterested while MMC wondered whether it could finance the broadcasts.<sup>56</sup>

As from January 1977, ELWA began to use the MMC address for audience responses in all its programs for North Africa. ELWA had 30 minutes per day available for RSB and MMC from the beginning of 1977. The MANA association seemed to be getting into shape. Yoder met with RSB in Marseille and discussed the plans for the daily 30-minute program that they were to produce and sponsor jointly.<sup>57</sup>

In March 1977 MMC and RSB decided to take a half hour block six times per week on TWR, beginning in October 1977. This decision was taken in spite of their initial discussions about doing exactly this with ELWA. ELWA responded graciously but with surprise and disappointment.<sup>58</sup> RSB agreed to take Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday's broadcasts on TWR, while MMC took Thursday, Friday and Saturdays. MMC decided to drop all other broadcasts it was involved in on TWR. The Tashelhayt and Tamazight programs were integrated into the half hour programs on TWR on Fridays.<sup>59</sup>

MMC continued to broadcast two programs on ELWA and one on IBRA. Due to the increased cost of broadcasting on TWR, MMC's plans to broadcast on commercial radio in Spain came to a standstill. Pietro Lorefice, the director of the small Christian FM radio station Radio Logos in Ribera, Sicily (Italy) offered half an hour of airtime each day. These broadcasts could reach Tunisia. MMC, RSB and Madany accepted the offer.<sup>60</sup> From the perspective of contextualization this was not ideal. Tunisians could understand Moroccan Arabic but it was not their language.

#### **17.1.2.4 Search for more Channels: 1982-1986**

By 1982, MMC finally had two fulltime resident indigenous speakers for its programs. They wrote the programs and produced them together. This ensured MMC's indigenous sound. MMC continued to supply TWR, ELWA, IBRA and Radio Logos with the same number of programs as in the previous years.<sup>61</sup> It had 11 half hour broadcasts on four stations during the week.<sup>62</sup> In 1982, MMC decided

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<sup>56</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1976 to August 31, 1977', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>57</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, Technician, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1975 to August 31, 1976', from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports., pp. 1-3.

<sup>58</sup> For more on this, see chapters 7 and 15, on ELWA and AWM.

<sup>59</sup> Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1976 to August 31, 1977', p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'GMU Annual Field II 1981', p. 3, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994. J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department Malaga Media Center Fiscal Year September 1, 1981 - August 31, 1982', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports. J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department Fiscal Year September 1, 1980 - August 31, 1981', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>62</sup> Fred Plastow, 'GMU Annual Field II 1982', pp. 1-3, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

to cancel all its broadcasts on ELWA. It had calculated that the cost per response letter was eight times higher than those received from TWR. This left MMC with seven weekly broadcasts on three stations by 1983.<sup>63</sup>

In 1984 IBRA had financial troubles so it asked MMC to cut back from 30 minutes to 15 minutes of programs per week. ELWA received the other 15 minutes from MMC. Some missionaries with Frontiers approached MMC for broadcasting from the Canary Islands (Spain). Hartzler took that idea seriously and in July 1984 he discussed the issue with Jose Luis Navas, the director of news reporting for Radio and Television of Spain. This Evangelical Christian suggested that time could be bought on Radio Cadena Española on the Canary Islands. This 20 kW station could be heard in Morocco.<sup>64</sup> In October 1984, Radio Algeciras offered airtime but that the signal would only reach as far as Casablanca and thus would therefore only duplicate what they already did through TWR. Buying airtime was feasible because many stations were in financial difficulty and were glad to sell airtime. The social and political climate seemed favorable for airing Christian Arabic programs on Spanish stations.<sup>65</sup>

By the end of 1984, Alfred J. Jessup, the regional director of GMU's field Muslim Ministries and Spain, wrote a memo to Yoder advising him to begin the practice of gathering the department managers for regular consultations and discussion.<sup>66</sup> The habit in MMC until then had been to call all missionaries together when any substantial decisions had to be taken. This flat management structure, which was common in GMU, did not work well for a media organization, Herman Hartzler recalled:

[The] main thrust of the change, as I recall, [had] to do with trying to force a media center with staff into the mission mold of a field. Mission 'fields' in other places typically were made up of several missionary families living at various outposts. There was a field director assigned who would now and then get these individuals (or some of them) together to conduct business that related to the mission as whole and get reports from the outposts. This model did not fit MMC very well, but it was all we had. So this reorganizing led to trying to separate MMC daily staff business from business that was strictly related to the mission headquarters and the mission as a whole.<sup>67</sup>

On 25 March 1985 MMC was to begin broadcasting three programs of ten minutes each week in Tashelhayt over Radio Cadena Española. The radio station also invited MMC to broadcast Arabic programs. RSB was also to be involved. In order to assess the response, MMC wanted to offer a Spanish-Arabic dictionary. MMC was to use an address on the Canary Islands. Plastow reported that MMC

<sup>63</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'GMU Annual Field II 1983', pp. 2-3, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>64</sup> Memo of Herman J. Hartzler to various interested people [including Yoder, Al Jessup, Abe van der Puy] (3 July 1984), p. 1, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>65</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'Progress Report on Radio Broadcasting Expansion, November 27, 1984', from MMC Archives Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>66</sup> Memo of Alfred T. Jessup to Director of Malaga Media Center (n.d., but towards the end of 1984), from MMC Archives, Staff FEC '85 thru 1990.

<sup>67</sup> Herman Hartzler in an email to the author (3 June 2005).

thought it had ‘a firm contract for broadcasting’ but at the last minute plans were cancelled when ‘some higher official’ learned that the broadcasts were to be aimed at Morocco. Radio Cadena Española indicated that the broadcasts could be renegotiated when Spain joined the European Economic Communion (EEC) on 1 January 1986.<sup>68</sup>

#### **17.1.2.5 Matters of Personnel and Money: 1986-1989**

In 1986 Yoder left as he was seriously ill and Plastow was appointed director of MMC. Ali and Bassam were still the main program producers and voices in the broadcasts. There were some problems with personnel and recruitment, though. Hartzler suggested a new method of recruitment for GMU as a way to solve the problem:

We are short staffed. With just a few people more, so much more could be done. I believe that one of our high priorities for the future should be the recruitment of capable people for the specialty areas that we have need of here. I believe that we should be looking for those among the Arab-speaking world who could be trained. [...] In the area of recruiting, I think we should be open to other possibilities than to what we have been accustomed. For example, there are Christians, possessing the needed skills we require who are now in mid-life and would probably not be able to go to a Bible School to get the required credentials, but who have grown to maturity and Scriptural understanding through ministry in their local church. I am thinking of Christian Arabs in the USA who may be from a Brethren background and have a heart to serve the Lord in the area of their language skills.<sup>69</sup>

Plastow suggested asking NAM and Frontiers for personnel for MMC to solve the acute personnel problems.<sup>70</sup> In 1986 MMC also lacked finance. The value of the dollar had dropped by 30 percent, which created grave financial problems for both RSB and MMC. The incomes of both these organizations were mainly in dollars and their expenses were primarily in European currencies. Keith M. Fraser-Smith, director of RSB, wrote on 7 August to Plastow, that if the income of RSB did not radically improve, they could only conceive of reducing their programs to six programs of 15 minutes, or one or two weekly programs of 30 minutes.<sup>71</sup>

Fraser-Smith asked David Adams of TWR for advice. He wrote that he hoped that cuts in airtime would not have to be made, as that would mean the ‘cessation of the proclamation of the Gospel in Arabic to North Africa’. It would also mean the loss of their main source for new contacts for the BCC Department, literature and ultimately, on-the-field face to face follow up. Fraser-Smith asked what he

<sup>68</sup> ‘Canary Island Radio – Report of RSB Director’s visit to MMC 22-26 March 1985’, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports. Fred Plastow, ‘GMU Annual Field II 1986’, pp. 1-3, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>69</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, ‘Radio Department Annual Report Malaga Media December 1986’, p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Annual Reports. This was the first report that used the January-December period for the Fiscal year.

<sup>70</sup> Fred Plastow, ‘MMC Director’s Annual Report 1986’ (January 1987), from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>71</sup> Letter of Keith M. Fraser-Smith to Fred Plastow (7 August 1986), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Possible Cutback ’86-’87.

would have to do if he decided to suspend or reduce the length or frequency of the Light upon Light (*Nûr 'alâ Nûr*) programs.<sup>72</sup>

The financial situation of Arab World Ministries (AWM) as NAM was now called was more problematic than the one of MMC. Plastow asked RSB not to decide to cut back on its programs. 'We would at this time be reluctant to cut back. We realize that you are in a tighter situation than we are, but we could be there soon. Can we hold back any decisive action until the end of the year? This will give us time to see what the mind of the Lord is and allow us to share the burden with others'. He also enclosed a letter he was about to mail to his donors. GMU mailed that letter to a select group of supporters of its radio programs arguing that radio is 'like the base of a pyramid in our ministry'.<sup>73</sup>

However MMC's financial position did deteriorate and GMU told them that their deficit was unacceptable and that they had to take action. Plastow and Hartzler phoned Fraser-Smith and together they decided that if their finances did not dramatically change by the 15 December 1986 they would, on the 19 December, inform TWR of a proposed trial period. This six month trial period was to begin in March 1987, with six programs of 15 minutes instead of 30 minutes. They also decided to then review the situation in June 1987.<sup>74</sup>

On 11 November 1986, Plastow called Felix Widmer of TWR about the situation. Widmer promised that there would be no increase in programming cost for 1987. For those who wanted to use the new antenna of TWR, the increase would be 10-20 percent. He also urged RSB and MMC not to take any decision before consulting with him again, as 'they might be able to help at least in part with the financial situation'. Widmer also mentioned the possibility of using SW rather than MW for the Amazigh broadcasts. He mentioned a BBC survey that indicated a high usage of SW in Morocco.<sup>75</sup> Adams encouraged MMC that some party was interested in funding Amazigh programs.<sup>76</sup>

MMC had to cut back on its programs though as money was not forthcoming, so TWR was informed that, as from 1 March 1987, MMC and RSB could only broadcast six programs of 15 minutes each week. On 2 February 1987 Widmer called Plastow and asked whether the time of the cutback could not be postponed to 29 March when the summer broadcasting would begin.<sup>77</sup> On 13 February Widmer called Hartzler, telling him that TWR were inviting MMC and RSB to continue to produce their half hour programs. He stated that for the six month period

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Mailing of September 1986, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Possible Cutback '86-'87.

<sup>74</sup> Keith Fraser Smith to MMC, 'Draft RSB/Finances and Radio Airtime' (28 October 1986), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Possible Cutback '86-'87. 'Resolution RSB/Finances and Radio Airtime' (11 November 1986), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Possible Cutback '86-'87.

<sup>75</sup> Fred Plastow, 'Telephone Conversation with Felix Widmer of TWR' (10 November 1986), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Possible Cutback '86-'87.

<sup>76</sup> Fred Plastow, 'MMC Director's Annual Report 1987' (January 1988), p. 7, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>77</sup> Fred Plastow, 'Minutes of Call from Felix Widmer of TWR' (2 February 1987), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Possible Cutback '86-'87.

TWR would subsidize the extra 15 minutes per day. Widmer confirmed that by mail on 17 February. He requested that RSB and MMC pay more than the 15 minutes if they could as TWR itself was also going through some financial problems. Widmer explained TWR's decision by mentioning their longstanding relationship but also that another organization interested in that timeslot had opted out as they could not raise the money.<sup>78</sup>

In 1987 MMC decided to air a daily program for six months on ELWA as a test after reports from Madany that he received significant response from his broadcasts on ELWA. If successful, MMC wanted to add this to the programs already being broadcast.<sup>79</sup> IBRA in the meantime asked to increase the broadcasts from 15 to 30 minutes per week. ELWA received one program of 15 minutes per week.<sup>80</sup>

During this period some criticized MMC for drawing Moroccan Christians from Morocco to Malaga. Instead some believed that strong believers should be advised to return to Morocco for serving the local churches. Plastow disagreed with this:

While we may be open to criticism by both missiologists and national brothers, I personally believe that the Media Center ministries offer a practical place of service for North African Christians with qualifying gifts. I see the potential of an Arabic department where the networked skills of various ones could be coordinated to enrich our ministries of radio and publishing. These folk could be from North Africa or the Middle East and would be a greater depth and breadth to our present ministries. While there are those who strongly feel that trained Moroccans should return to their homeland to build the church, I believe that we should be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives and to realize that the Center can also be a 'frontline ministry' for them. Presently those who advocate a return to Morocco do not have a defined strategy of how the Biblically trained Moroccan is to carry on his indigenous outreach. This is the greatest weakness of its philosophy.<sup>81</sup>

In September 1989 Peter Cottingham of BCMS became responsible for MMC's radio department. Bassam was responsible for follow up and Jim Geisler for the Bible and Literature Production (BLP) department.<sup>82</sup> Again a test was done to see whether ELWA was effective but the indicators were negative again. On IBRA, MMC continued to broadcast 30 minutes per week.<sup>83</sup>

#### **17.1.2.6 Co-Production with Radio School of the Bible (RSB): 1990-1995**

In October 1989 and February 1990, Interdev, an organization stimulating networking and partnerships between mission agencies, organized a conference that

<sup>78</sup> Letter of Felix Widmer to Fred Plastow (17 February 1987), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Possible Cutback '86-'87.

<sup>79</sup> Fred Plastow, 'Muslim Ministries Filed Update 1987', from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. Fredrick Plastow, 'BCC Course Revisions' (2 January 1985), pp. 7-8, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>81</sup> Fred Plastow, 'MMC Director's Annual Report 1986' (January 1987), pp. 7-8, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>82</sup> Fred Plastow 'MMC Director's Report 1989', from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>83</sup> Peter Cottingham, 'Malaga Media Center Radio Department Report for 1989' (19 January 1990), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.



encouraged RSB and MMC to co-produce their six programs on TWR. GMU saw advantages and disadvantages. Cottingham, who was to be the program coordinator for the project, listed that greater coordination would lead to a better sense of unity for the listeners, more efficient use of people and their gifts while at the same time stimulate the producers and help fundraising. He also foresaw some problems: greater complexity in production, some donors might not understand the loss of the unique MMC programs, Moroccan Arabic would no longer be the framework for the programs but only inserted, and that it would necessitate more travel and thus time away from families.<sup>84</sup>

In order to prepare for the co-produced programs and the new method of working, MMC and RSB only broadcast six 15-minute programs on TWR from April-September 1990. During that period MMC did not broadcast any Amazigh programs. During the remainder of the year, North Moroccan Tarafit programs were produced in co-operation with Frontiers however that mission organization could not continue as it lacked personnel and money for this project.<sup>85</sup> The two other Amazigh programs MMC produced were done with funding from the International Mission Board (IMB) of the American Southern Baptists, while KM helped develop indigenous talent and music.<sup>86</sup>

In 1991, after having co-produced *Walking Together (Nimshî Ma'ân)* for one year, MMC held its first evaluation of the project:

Working together like this has given more variety and continuity to the programs and has stimulated all those involved. Although the practical difficulties of working together when you are located a 1000 miles apart can be considerable, we think it is worth it. [...] We want to see more features for the radio programs recorded inside North Africa and sent out for inclusion in the programs. This means finding, training and motivating suitable people living in the countries involved.<sup>87</sup>

In January 1991, MMC and RSB met again and concluded that the content of the programs was better and that the audience had responded favorably to the changes. MMC noted that the format was more time-consuming, as more inserts like interviews were needed, and that that had financial ramifications. The producers of MMC and RSB met every four months for evaluations, planning, and to make some actual programs together.<sup>88</sup>

During 1992, MMC hoped to increase the amount of material produced in North Africa itself. 'This will be done by equipping a few people living there with portable recorders and training them to get on the spot interviews and other material.'<sup>89</sup> That was a good idea as it would have led to more indigenous program-

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid. Fred Plastow, 'MMC Annual Report 1990' (January 1991), p. 1, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994. Peter Cottingham, 'Malaga Media Center Radio Department Report for 1990' (29 January 1991), pp. 1-2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>85</sup> Plastow, 'MMC Annual Report 1990', p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Information sheet titled 'Malaga Media Center' (March 1992), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>88</sup> Cottingham, 'Malaga Media Center Radio Department Report for 1990', pp. 1-2.

<sup>89</sup> Peter Cottingham, 'News From Malaga Media Center Radio' (December 1991).

ming for people who lived in the context of that audience. Due to financial problems however MMC and RSB could only afford five broadcasts of *Walking Together* during most of 1992. Beside these programs, TWR carried two weekly programs of 15 minutes in Tashelhayt from MMC. The Southern Baptists continued to support these broadcasts.<sup>90</sup>

Once ELWA was destroyed in 1990, IBRA was the only international broadcaster beside TWR carrying MMC's programs. IBRA broadcast an adapted version of *Walking Together*. IBRA stopped its broadcasts from Portugal in the early summer of 1992, but that did not concern MMC. 'Response had been very low to this programme, which had cost us nothing, so that this closure has little impact on our ministry.'<sup>91</sup>

In his Annual Report for 1992, Cottingham briefly mentioned the impact of television and video programs on the radio ministry of MMC. He used defensive language. 'There still is a place for evangelism by Medium Wave radio into [North] Africa, despite increasing competition from TV and video programming. We need to be continually sensitive to God's will for the future.'<sup>92</sup>

In 1993 cooperation between MMC and RSB became more difficult. This had to do with personalities, issues of language, and production styles. Ali and Basam, the main speakers for MMC, were becoming frustrated by the logistics of the co-production and by a lack of proper direction. They wanted to be able to produce what God had been laying on their hearts for their own people without so many distractions.<sup>93</sup>

In March 1994 MMC stopped producing Tashelhayt programs, as the Southern Baptists had stopped sponsoring the broadcasts. Production began again however in October 1995. In contrast the production and broadcasting of the Tamazight programs continued through 1994 and 1995 at a rate of 15 minutes per week.<sup>94</sup> It was clear though that program production in the Amazigh languages was still rather minimal. This is disappointing as these programs were targeting people groups that were not reached on any scale by other means.

In 1995 MMC and RSB decided to stop the co-production of *Walking Together*. Cottingham wrote a paper on his views regarding the difficulty of the cooperation. He believed that there 'was always some tension between the different producers about how the general programme policy and the language policy should be implemented'.<sup>95</sup> Producers apparently did not stick to agreements that were made

<sup>90</sup> Peter Cottingham, 'Malaga Media Center Radio Department Report for 1991' (15 November 1991), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports. Peter Cottingham, 'Malaga Media Center Radio Department Report for 1992' (6 January 1993), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports. Peter Cottingham, 'MMC Berber Language Update' (28 December 1992), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Cottingham, 'Malaga Media Center Radio Department Report for 1992'.

<sup>93</sup> 'Minutes of MMC staff Meeting with Jim Taylor and Gordon McRostie, (brainstorming session)' (14 October 1993), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department. Peter Cottingham, 'Further thoughts on the end of AWM/MMC Joint Radio Production' (15 December 1995), p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Committee or daily/current JX Minutes.

<sup>94</sup> Peter Cottingham, 'MMC Radio Report 1995' (4 December 1995), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>95</sup> Peter Cottingham, 'Further thoughts on the end of AWM/MMC Joint Radio Production', p. 2.

over the phone or by mail or fax. There were cultural issues and there were misunderstandings, which were the result of production meetings being held in English since some missionaries involved did not know enough Arabic.<sup>96</sup>

There was also some irritation on the side of MMC about the coordination of the follow-up of responses by RSB who received all program mail. One cause of that was that listeners were often not clear as to which program had stimulated their letter, making it difficult to sort the mail.<sup>97</sup>

Cottingham mentioned that the project had actually needed an executive producer, but neither the Arabs working at RSB nor those working at MMC liked the idea of someone having a final say over their texts:

My own view is that the real reason that the idea of an [executive producer] was not acceptable is that none of the producers are willing to submit to others. This may spring from culture, partially from training, and partially from their being the type of character that becomes a missionary. It is however, I believe, a very real problem that we are going to continue to face if we believe that people engaged in the same ministry should be able to work more effectively as a team. There seems to be a widespread feeling that guidance from God comes directly to each individual – almost to the exclusion of input from other team members.<sup>98</sup>

Cottingham would have preferred to continue with some looser cooperation rather than the complete cessation of cooperation. He felt the value was that Christian unity of Arabs from North Africa and the Middle East would be shown and that it would leave the door open for another attempt at joint production in the future.<sup>99</sup>

During the period of adjustments with RSB, some at MMC felt that MMC itself needed more visionary leadership. In August 1995, Geisler wrote a paper for the MMC team about his view of the leadership changes that were needed. His main concern was that the director of MMC did not need to be a ‘meticulous administrator’, but needed to ‘see the overall picture, in long term planning and in setting priorities’<sup>100</sup>. By 2000, that advice was implemented by appointing new personnel and structural adjustments.<sup>101</sup>

#### **17.1.2.7 Diminishing Role for Radio: Since 1996**

As from 1996, when MMC no longer produced *Walking Together*, it continued with its own three 30-minute programs each week on TWR. The programs were renamed *Friends Talk (Ḥadīth al-Aṣḍiqâh)*. Beside this, MMC continued with two programs of 15 minutes in Tamazight and Tashelhayt on TWR. This period

<sup>96</sup> Cottingham, ‘Further thoughts on the end of AWM/MMC Joint Radio Production’, pp. 2-4.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. pp 5-6.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Memo of Jim Geisler to MMC Team, Gordon McRostie, and Harold Peters: ‘Thoughts on leadership at MMC’, (August 1995), pp. 1-5, from MMC Archives, Islam/Morocco Miscellaneous Info.

<sup>101</sup> Bob Ehmann in an email to the author (15 June 2005).

continued to experience problems with respect to obtaining new materials for the broadcasts and low finances.<sup>102</sup>

In 1997, MMC also broadcast from the Spanish enclave of Ceuta in Morocco.<sup>103</sup> It would be interesting to know how Moroccans viewed these broadcasts from territories they considered as illegally occupied by Spain. These broadcasts possibly militated against the need to broadcast programs within a media environment that is appreciated by the audience, as prescribed in RCR6.

During this period, GMU recruited a Palestinian Christian to help with the audio production. He was able to contribute toward a better quality program and he developed the Moroccan music ministry.<sup>104</sup>

By 2000 it became clear that the responses from the radio programs were getting less every year and the number of those writing to the BCC was diminishing. The situation became so critical that GMU made some major administrative and personnel changes to facilitate the growth of the traditional ministries and expand into new avenues. The decision was made to cut the TWR programs to two a week, to broadcast on the weekends and to monitor any change. In 2001 MMC began airing these same two programs on HCJB's ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings') SW radio program for a one year trial to assess the effectiveness of these broadcasts. With fewer programs to produce, this allowed for the redeployment of one of the Moroccans into television production.

MMC ventured in the direction of television productions in July 2000, when it built a video production studio on its premises in Malaga. 'MMC Media plans to [produce] dramas, music videos, women's programs and Bible teaching in North African Arabic. MMC Media will also produce digitally animated programs', the organization announced.<sup>105</sup>

In 2002, as the result of monitoring its radio programs, MMC wondered whether to proceed with radio at all. Satellite television had taken over as the instrument for Arabs to gain the latest news. These questions were asked at a time when MMC continued to witness a major drop in listener response. In 2003 MMC stopped providing programs to HCJB as during a period of one year they received only one letter mentioning their program. MMC also stopped broadcasting its two programs of 30 minutes each week on TWR. Instead, in order to stimulate listener loyalty and add interest, it began broadcasting five programs of 15 minutes per week on TWR as from April 2004. The name *Friends Talk* did not change. Response increased immediately. MMC concluded: 'Radio continues to be an effective medium of missions. It is not obsolete. God can, and does, still use it.'<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Peter Cottingham, 'Malaga Media Center Report for 1996' (10 March 1997), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>103</sup> 'Prayer News MMC' (May/June 1997), from MMC Archives, Report Statistics from Radio/ BCC Departments.

<sup>104</sup> Ehmann in an email to the author (15 June 2005).

<sup>105</sup> Brochure MMC Media: 'Communicating the Message through Media' (n.d.).

<sup>106</sup> 'Radio Obsolete?', in *Communicate* (No. 2, 2004).

## 17.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

During the 1950s, when GMU began its involvement in media, GMU had a very brief doctrinal position that expressed a general Calvinistic theology, as well as the need for its members to have a premillennial eschatology in accordance with the Plymouth Brethren background of the organization:

We believe in one God, who is revealed in Scripture as subsisting in three equal persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given; in the substitutional atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; in salvation only by faith in Him; in the eternal punishment of the unsaved; and in the personal and premillennial coming of our Lord. We adhere in general to the Calvinistic interpretation in Christian theology.<sup>107</sup>

After 1970, missionaries of GMU had to adhere to a much stricter Statement of Faith. They had to 'fully adhere' to the statement that said that they believed in:

The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scripture of the Old and the New Testaments as originally given, God's written revelation of Himself and His will, the sole authority for all faith and practice.

God, who is revealed in Scripture as subsisting in three distinct Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet One in being, essence and power.

The deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is very God, the express image of the Father, the One by whom and for whom all things were created and consist.

The supernatural birth of Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, the incarnate Son of God, Immanuel, God with us.

The personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, who at the moment of conversion, baptizes and seals the believer into the body of Christ, immediately and fully indwelling and constantly energizing him for a consistent Christian walk without the necessity of subsequent visible or physical manifestations.

The reality and personality of angels, both good and fallen, including Satan, the great enemy of God and man, whose opposition is ever increasing but whose ultimate doom is sure.

The fall of man and his resultant total depravity, sin as universal in men and exceedingly heinous to God, their being guilty before Him and everlastingly condemned apart from Christ.

Salvation uniquely by the substitutionary atonement of Christ by grace through faith in His shed blood to accomplish man's redemption from sin and reconciliation to God.

The sonship of all born-again believers in the family of God, their justification, sanctification and eternal redemption being fully provided for in the finished work of Christ on Calvary and in His continued intercession above.

The physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and His glorified bodily presence at the right hand of God as our only High Priest and Advocate.

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<sup>107</sup> This creedal statement is printed in *The Gospel Message* (Vol. 59 No. 3, August 1950), on the inside cover opposite page 1. During the 1950s, missionaries applying with GMU had to write their own Statement of Faith in the application process (Bunnie Foster in an email to the author, 26 May 2005). However, after 1970 GMU asked its missionaries to agree to the longer, more formal Statement of Faith, according to Bunnie Foster in an email to the author (29 March 2005).

The imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air to receive His universal church to Himself.

The subsequent, visible and premillennial return of Christ, with His church, to establish His promised worldwide Kingdom on the earth.

The physical resurrection of all men, each in his own order: the saints to everlasting joy and bliss; the wicked to conscious and everlasting torment.

The great commission as the primary mission of the church, i.e., the preaching to all the world of the Gospel of the grace of God, teaching converts to obey the Lord in baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to remember Christ's death till He come, in observance of the Lord's Supper, to be always careful to live godly lives in the world, and to pursue fellowship and seek ministry in visible, organized churches.<sup>108</sup>

This statement was remarkable in that as a mission organization, GMU deemed it necessary to express its belief in the imminent rapture of the Church, premillennialism, and that believers are baptized in the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion. GMU took a stand against Pentecostalism. These statements gave a rather exclusive, polemical impression. Calvinism was not mentioned any longer. The Lord's Supper is also mentioned, which is rare in Statements of Faith. The Great Commission is mentioned as the primary mission of the Church, thus giving the statement a missionary character. It did not contain any reference to the need to contextualize the Gospel, and it was not contextually suitable for the Arab World. In 2004, this statement of 1970 was further refined:

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, God's final written revelation of Himself and His will, and the sole authority for all faith and practice.

We believe in God, who is revealed in Scripture as subsisting in three distinct persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet one in being, essence and power.

We believe in the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, the incarnate Son of God, Immanuel, God with us.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is very God, the express image of the Father, the One by whom and for whom all things were created and consist.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, that He died as a perfect substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all men, and that the believer's justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to the right hand of God, where He is the High Priest and Advocate for His people.

We believe in the imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air to receive His church unto Himself.

We believe in the subsequent, visible and premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ, with His church, to establish His promised worldwide Kingdom on the earth.

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<sup>108</sup> Statement used by GMU since 1970, date-stamped 28 April 1970 at the headquarters of GMU. Foster in an email to Ehmann (28 March 2005) and forwarded by Ehmann to the author (29 March 2005).

We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, who convicts of sin, who is the supernatural agent in regeneration, and who, at the moment of conversion, baptizes and seals the believer into the body of Christ, immediately indwelling him. We believe that it is the duty and privilege of the believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit, who illumines, guides and energizes the believer, enabling him to maintain a consistent Christian walk.

We believe that the ascended Christ gives gifts through the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit for the edification and unity of the body of Christ.

We believe in the reality and personality of angels, both good and fallen, including Satan, the great enemy of God and man, whose opposition is ever increasing but whose ultimate doom is sure.

We believe the purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, that he was created by a direct act of God, that he fell into sin and thereby became depraved and guilty before God.

We believe in salvation uniquely by the substitutionary atonement of Christ by grace through faith in His shed blood to accomplish man's redemption from sin and reconciliation to God.

We believe in the sonship of all born-again believers in the family of God, their justification, sanctification and eternal redemption being fully provided for and assured in the finished work of Christ on Calvary and in His continued intercession in heaven.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all people, each in his own order: the saints to everlasting life in God's presence, the wicked to conscious and everlasting condemnation in hell.

We believe in the Great Commission as the primary mission of the church; i.e., the preaching to all the world of the Gospel of the grace of God, teaching converts to obey the Lord in baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; to remember Christ's death till He comes, in observance of the Lord's Supper; to be always careful to live godly lives in the world; and to pursue fellowship and seek ministry in visible, organized churches.<sup>109</sup>

This Statement of Faith of 2004 created some balance against the anti-Charismatic statements of the earlier statement, while further refining GMU's conservative beliefs. Both statements were a good description of the belief of churches with a Plymouth Brethren background, or non-Charismatic Baptist churches with a dispensationalist theology. GMU, as an interdenominational mission, mainly attracted its missionaries from these backgrounds.

This creedal statement was undoubtedly helpful to ensure that people of similar faith were selected. Warning CW1, about the existence of absolute truth in the Bible, the uniqueness of Christ, and the importance of participation by Christians in Church, was heeded by MMC. As a criterion for selecting missionaries who were good at witnessing to the Gospel for the Arab World in a contextual manner, this statement was not especially helpful. It pre-selected missionaries for their acceptance of a particular Western theology including a premillennial viewpoint. That usually entailed theological opinions about Israel that were considered offensive by most Christian Arabs.

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<sup>109</sup> 'Avant Ministries: We Believe' (2004), received from Foster in an email to Ehmann (28 March 2005) and forwarded by Ehmann to the author (29 March 2005).

### 17.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

#### *17.3.1 Focus on Morocco*

The work of MMC in the Arab World was to a large extent focused on Morocco where GMU had placed its missionaries since the late 1800s. MMC not only produced programs in Moroccan Arabic for the native Arabic speakers but it tried to reach the Amazigh populations separately by programs in their languages. GMU's partner in MMC, BCMS, had previously worked in the Atlas Mountains of Southern Morocco and therefore contributed a Tashelhayt language focus. MMC therefore had a precise target of language groups in Morocco and in addition aimed for young people less than 30 years of age. This was good from the perspective of contextualization and it fulfilled the demands of RCR1 regarding a homogenous target audience. This meant MMC could aim to make programs with a concrete, narrowly defined context of its audience in mind.

The programs of MMC could be heard not only in Morocco, but also in Algeria, Tunisia and other Arab lands. This resulted in audience response not only coming from Moroccans, but also from many others. MMC agreed to do all audience response for ELWA and later also for HCJB. The broadcasts of MMC by IBRA and by Radio Logos could not even be received in Morocco, but mainly in Tunisia.<sup>110</sup> MMC therefore created special BCC's for non Moroccans. In 1996, Hartzler expressed MMC's goals thus:

To share the Gospel with the Muslims of North Africa thus drawing them to believers in North Africa toward maturity in Christ [and to] train Christian leaders [and to] build the church, the body of believers in North Africa. [...] Our focus in order of priority is [the] people who live in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia [and] Muslims who live in other closed lands.<sup>111</sup>

To focus on Muslims and Christians was difficult in regard to the need to have a homogenous target audience in accordance with RCR1, but MMC was not distracted from its focus on Morocco. It did not pay for the broadcasts on IBRA and Radio Logos, but it was prepared to pay for broadcasts of some small stations that reached parts of Morocco, like the ones in the Canary Islands and Ceuta.<sup>112</sup> MMC was also prepared to set up response systems inside Morocco but not inside the other North African countries.<sup>113</sup> The only exception to this approach was in

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<sup>110</sup> Herman J. Hartzler Technician, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1975 to August 31, 1976', p. 3, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>111</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'MMC Bulletin No. 2 – Objectives of MMC' (19 March 1992), from MMC Archives, MMC Bulletins (01/1985-04/1996).

<sup>112</sup> 'Memo of Herman J. Hartzler to various interested people [including Yoder, Al Jessup, Abe van der Puy]' (3 July 1984). J Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department Malaga Media Center Fiscal Year September 1, 1981 - August 31, 1982', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>113</sup> 'Malaga Media Center – Get the Message. Hear the Truth.' (2004).



MMC's support for the Kabyle programs of Marsh. However, these could be understood by many in Morocco.

The only period when MMC seemed to deviate from its Moroccan emphasis was when it co-produced its programs with RSB. During that period, the Moroccan segments were integrated into programs that were basically in MSA.<sup>114</sup> It was not a coincidence that the cooperation faltered mainly due to disagreements over the target audience and the languages to be used. For an organization that stressed the right of Moroccans to hear the Gospel in their mother tongue, the choice to integrate these Moroccan languages into the framework of MSA, was not wise. Framing Moroccan Arabic or Amazigh languages within MSA had political, religious and linguistic overtones that were inconsistent with MMC's own view of mission in Morocco.

### 17.3.2 Moroccan Arabic and Amazigh Languages

When the radio work of GMU began in 1966, Yoder and Shafir made their first programs in Dârġjah. In 1969 Swan produced programs in Tamazight, the very first Christian programs in that language.<sup>115</sup> In the early 1970s MMC began the first Tashelhayt programs, while the first mention of Tarifit program production was in 1990. In 1973 GMU had involved itself in Kabyle programs too.<sup>116</sup>

Yoder stressed that for radio, he would not use 'the classical language of the Koran, or even the literary language of the professor or of the statesman, but a simplified version of Arabic spoken in the streets, in shops and in the homes'.<sup>117</sup> In a radio message in the USA he argued his case:

[Radio broadcasts] in their own tongue will do much to break down [...] barriers and reveal to [Moroccans] the message of salvation. [...] We feel that our broadcasts in the colloquial dialect of Arabic and in the Berber will make the Gospel relevant to them in the simplest terms. We believe that the Gospel should be communicated to them in the language in which they make love, the language in which they buy and sell, the language, even in which they fight.<sup>118</sup>

In 1969, Jessup said that he did not know of any Moroccan contact of GMU that would be able to do a BCC in MSA. This meant they could not understand MSA verbally either. Most of GMU's contacts were Amazigh, but even of the

<sup>114</sup> Robert C. Culton and Jim W. Geisler, 'North African Arabic in Nemchi Ma'an' (23 March 1993), from MMC Archives, file Radio Department, folder Colloquial vs. Classical. Geisler denied that he was involved in the writing of this report, and did not believe Culton was involved either, as he was from the Spanish department of MMC. According to Geisler, Hartzler wrote the paper. Jim Geisler in an email to the author (16 March 2005).

<sup>115</sup> 'Malaga Media Center – Get the Message. Hear the Truth.'

<sup>116</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1976 to August 31, 1977', from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>117</sup> Yoder, 'Kalimat al-Hayat'.

<sup>118</sup> Yoder, 'Message 1', pp. 1-2, received from MMC with no reference to where it was filed. This was the script of a short radio advertorial for MMC in the USA. It is not known on what channel this was used.

native Dārġjah speakers, few were literate in MSA. Morocco had begun to develop a national curriculum in MSA in 1958 and the number of students that had gone through that curriculum were still small. Major parts of primary and secondary education in 1969 were still in French. Jessup predicted some changes though. ‘I think the colloquial will probably have less and less use as the days go on, and we will soon reach the point of needing to know how to meet the university student’s need’.<sup>119</sup> Jessup was speaking about the BCCs, not about the language to be used on radio.

MMC’s radio programs and BCCs initially used the so-called *Fisk Bible*, often called the *North Africa Version*, or the *Union Bible* as it used words from the vernacular of Morocco and Algeria.<sup>120</sup> The translation was completed published in 1960. From the outset, many missionaries in Morocco disliked this version because it was neither pure colloquial nor good MSA. It was a mixture of both that nobody spoke. Most missionaries used the Van Dyck Bible translation, or later the Book of Life (*al-Kitāb al-Ḥayāh*) translation. They used Dārġjah to explain it.

By the 1980s, Morocco had a more Arabic-literate population. ‘Thus, what once was a viable language strategy [for the BCC’s], had outlived its usefulness’, Plastow concluded.<sup>121</sup> In 1984, GMU stopped using the Fisk Bible altogether, and decided to change some BCCs from Dārġjah into MSA. In view of its past attachment to colloquial this was a historic moment for GMU. It was defended by pointing to the ‘present higher level dialect which might be considered as “literary colloquial”’. Since 65% of our students come from outside Morocco [...] it seems logical to use the language most widely accepted. The present courses will be retained and used with those students needing or preferring it.’<sup>122</sup> Geisler was responsible for the change of the BCCs.<sup>123</sup> He decided to use the Book of Life as the Van Dyck translation was considered too hard.<sup>124</sup>

GMU remained dedicated to using Moroccan Arabic in its radio broadcasts even though other Christian broadcasters in the Arab World focused more on using MSA. MMC created an interesting paper for internal usage regarding the language issue:

A distinctive of the Malaga Media Center is its use of North African colloquial instead of literary Arabic. [...] Classical, formal language in religion is the genius of Islam; colloquial speech is the genius of Christianity. Their distinct concepts of de-

<sup>119</sup> ‘Effective Methods in Reaching Muslims by Correspondence Courses- Report by William Bell – Radio School of the Bible’, in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 42.

<sup>120</sup> Plastow in an email to the author (26 April 2005). Fisk describes the enthusiasm among the missionaries of the *North Africa Mission* in Morocco for this translation upon its completion. He wrote that when the Bible arrived during a prayer meeting, ‘they immediately stood up and sang the Doxology’. Fisk, *The Cross versus the Crescent*, p. 144.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Fredrick Plastow, ‘Annual Report August 1984 Bible Correspondence Course MMC Malaga Spain’, p. 3, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>123</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, ‘Radio Department Annual Report Malaga Media December 1986’, p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>124</sup> Fredrick Plastow, ‘BCC Course Revisions’ (2 January 1985), pp. 1-2, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

ity are reflected in their languages.[...] Christians believe in ‘a God who condescends to the low and commonplace, who involved himself in all of life. Everyday language suits this concept. [...]

If communication is the game, colloquial is the vehicle. [...] The fact of the matter is that everyday speech is also understood speech. [...] Despising your mother tongue is a form of despising yourself. [...] North Africa is a land of great illiteracy and semi-literacy. [...]

A people movement should be in the language of the people not of the elite. Jesus spoke Aramaic, not Hebrew. Paul wrote in Koine not in classical Greek<sup>125</sup>

MMC’s choice to use Moroccan Arabic and Amazigh had theological aspects, as it saw a reflection of proper theology in its usage of Dârġjah. It also had socio-political overtones as MMC chose to speak to the common people, not to the literate elites of Morocco. The choice to use Dârġjah was clearly a matter of contextualization, and it was a good one. By using the language, MMC spoke the heart language of the people it wanted to reach, in accordance with RCR3. The same should be said for MMC’s choice to produce in the Amazigh languages.

In the 1990s, MMC ran into disagreements with RSB regarding the usage of Dârġjah. Both had agreed that the Walking Together programs they co-produced would be 50 percent MSA with inserts of Moroccan and Amazigh. They also agreed that each organization would be responsible for every alternate three months of production. This meant that the Moroccan MMC staff was forced to do parts of their programs in MSA. It is hard to understand why MMC was willing to enter into this agreement that seemed to undermine its linguistic and theological views. In 1993, Hartzler wrote a paper entitled ‘North African Arabic in Nemchi Ma’an [sic]’, regarding the tendency for the shared programs with RSB to gravitate to much more than the agreed 50 percent MSA. This showed MMC’s linguistic views and the sensitivities involved in the choice between Dârġjah and MSA:

There seems to be a conspiracy and it may cost our unity. [...] The basis of it seems to be the assumption that Standard Arabic is good, and Darija [sic] is bad. Our Moroccan brothers are experiencing battle fatigue and are at the point of giving over the struggle. Have our Middle Eastern brothers not been in the scene long enough to appreciate the tongue of those to whom they minister?

Certainly, Standard Arabic is good. [...] It is a valuable important tool even though it may always be for North Africans a second language. His first language is Darija. Standard Arabic is beautiful and useful. But for radio communication, Darija is more than that, it is vital. It’s the mother tongue. Our goal here is not art, but communication. Language is neither good nor bad in itself. It is only good as it is useful for communication and bad as it’s not. Our North African brothers are very experienced in personal follow up and they know from childhood as well as from recent experience in follow up that Darija must be used in communicating the Gospel to their people. [...]

There seems to be lip service to Darija. People say they agree. But it is not showing in practice. [...]

Statistics seem to show that the need for Darija will increase not decrease in the years to come as the increase in educational facilities cannot keep pace with the

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<sup>125</sup> ‘Why Colloquial?’ (n.d.), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, folder Colloquial vs. Classical.

population growth. In the industrialized world formal education is a sign of prestige and is the key to material and social success. But this does not de-humanize the person who has not had the opportunity to get this kind of training which in a real sense is artificial and is being forced by the world onto him. Education or lack of it does not in any way negate the dignity of a person's mother tongue, nor discredit the obvious very efficient effectiveness of it as a vital communication medium.[...]

Spoken Darija is a living viable entity vital to audible communication. The reasons for using it in media such as audio and video tape are the same reasons for its continued use in radio.

As we look at the magazine format of [Walking Together], some material lends itself better to Standard Arabic, such as readings and more formal material, and other more to Darija such as interviews, and panel discussions

As we think about Standard Arabic and Darija being on the same programme, one point of view may say that the listener lends more credibility to the Standard Arabic material than to the Darija material. But an equally valid point of view says that the listener sees the Darija speaker as understanding him better, loving him more, willing to meet him where he is at in the market place, and not concerned with trying to impress him with his level of education. [...]

In thinking of [using MSA and Darija] 50/50, it was assumed that in general the contributions would be Darija from [Ali, Bassam] and David [all three of MMC], and Standard Arabic from Joseph, Mona and Hanna [from RSB]. From either we might find other [...] free-lance contributors. [...]

Our agreement on paper is 50/50. Please don't undermine this in practice. Are there some who hate Darija so much that they are plotting to smash it at any cost? Especially the cost of Unity? Is it really worth that?<sup>126</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Steven Vishanoff of RSB wrote to Cottingham, in an obvious effort to appease the parties. He said that the MSA of the staff of MMC was somewhat artificial and agreed that the joint production team should be allowed to gravitate back to producing programs in Moroccan Colloquial Arabic. He did that in a manner that would not be appreciated by MMC with its own view of language:

[Ali's Arabic is] a very simple, clear Arabic which is the same across North Africa (and the Arab World)... Because [he] is being very careful, his delivery is exceedingly clear and distinct. So far so good. But we pay for this by a certain amount of artificiality and added distance from the Moroccan listeners who share [his] dialect. There is a loss of naturalness and spontaneity. Is it worth the price? I really don't know! [...] If on balance it seems best to move back to dialect, this must not be thought of as a defeat! We have made some experiments and must continue to do so.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Culton and Geisler, 'North African Arabic in Nemchi Ma'an' (23 March 1993). Geisler denied that he was involved in the writing of this report and did not believe that Culton was either as he was from the Spanish department of MMC. According to Geisler, Hartzler wrote the paper. Geisler: 'In fact, I tended to sympathize more with RSB at that time in their Arabic approach. The radio department at MMC knew this, and therefore never asked my opinion!' Jim Geisler in an email to the author (16 March 2005).

<sup>127</sup> Letter of Steven Vishanoff to Peter Cottingham (18 April 1993), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, folder Colloquial vs. Classical.

Vishanoff also made Cottingham aware of some grammatical errors of Ali. He told him that he would ask Jûzâf Sikâlî, the Syrian resident speaker at RSB, whether these mistakes were frequent and big enough to cause real problems with listeners who find mistakes irritating. 'I leave it to your discretion as to how much (if any) of this should be shared with Ali. He certainly has my affection and my respect for the fine Christian person he is, and for undertaking a difficult switch to standard literary Arabic in the interest of better communication with listeners across the field.'<sup>128</sup> This term 'across the field' showed that RSB really wanted to address all of North Africa; this was probably its main argument for wanting to use MSA, beside the fact that RSB had Middle Eastern Arabs working in Marseille, and no speakers of North African Arabic vernaculars. RSB did agree to MMC producing programs in Dârîjah again, while however stressing their viewpoint that grammatically perfect MSA was the best language for communicating with the audience of North Africa.

In 1995, both organizations agreed to stop the cooperative production altogether. Cottingham wrote a paper on his view of why the cooperation with RSB did not succeed. Regarding the language issue, he mentioned that there 'was always some tension between the different producers about how the general programme policy and the language policy should be implemented.' He mentioned that different people had different opinions about what the best language for communication to North Africa was. 'Radio and TV generally use standard Arabic, but apparently the King [of Morocco] uses colloquial when he wants to make sure everyone understands him', Cottingham concluded.<sup>129</sup>

## 17.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

### 17.4.1 Rejection of some Forms of Contextualization

MMC used an internal document written by Plastow that described its 'Philosophy of Missions to Muslims'.<sup>130</sup> The document was written 'in view of the increasing amount of literature produced advocating new approaches to evangelizing Muslims that call for a new appreciation on the part of Christian missionaries for the religion of Islam and the prophet Mohamed'. Plastow reaffirmed the following:

As regarding the religion of Islam, we reaffirm our conviction that Islam is a false religion, based upon the words of man and malevolent supernatural powers and maintained by a religio-political system that is antichristian in its teaching and in its view of Christ. [...]

We believe that the followers of Islam, however sincere they may be, are yet lost in their sins and in need of the salvation that has been provided by Christ alone. [...]

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Peter Cottingham, 'Further thoughts on the end of AWM/MMC Joint Radio Production' (15 December 1995), from MMC Archives, Radio Committee or daily/current JX Minutes.

<sup>130</sup> 'Philosophy of Missions to Muslims' (n.d.), from MMC Archives, Islam/Morocco Miscellaneous Info. Plastow told the author in an email that he wrote this paper (26 April 2005).

[We] reaffirm our position to avoid commentary on Mohammed as much as possible so as to avoid unnecessary controversy and to abide by our responsibility to announce Christ. We further counsel that the Qur'an be not used in any way as that would give the impression that we treat it as an inspired book or that it is a tool or bridge to bring Muslims to Christ. [...]

[We] affirm our commitment to seek to put the message of the Gospel in the cultural context of the receptor people as much as possible so as to avoid the impression that Christianity is a Western religion only. [...] However, we resist the adapting of Islamic worship forms into Christian worship services as well as the participating in Islamic religious [feasts] such as fasting (Ramadan) and keeping the feast of the sacrifice. [...]

We believe that present day emphasis on contextualization has failed to discern the influence of European culture on North Africa and its resulting change in cultural patterns and has wrongly interpreted indigenous Christianity as Western. [...]

We reject the suggestion by certain missiologists to by-pass the existing churches to establish 'Jesus mosques' for 'Jesus Muslims' and thus create a division in the North African church.<sup>131</sup>

Plastow also argued that the home should be the *locus* of contextualization, not the mosque:

We ought to be about making disciples, teaching the Bible and then allow the nationals to build their churches as they see fit. We tend to hover over them and dominate the program for too long a time. The present day growth of the church in Morocco is taking place in the homes of Christians. That is about as contextual as one can get! The home ought to be the focus of contextualization and not the mosque that encumbers the Christian with a lot of old baggage and unprofitable symbols. Christians are God's children and not slaves. The mosque symbolic forms do not reflect this relationship.<sup>132</sup>

Shafir used two main rules for contextualization. 'We should observe the following rules: (1) Never act as though you accept the Apostleship of Muhammad or that the Qur'an is the word of God. (2) Refrain from using Qur'anic words to establish Christian doctrines.'<sup>133</sup> In its 'Literature Guidelines for MMC publications' the organization expressed a similar approach:

We believe also that our materials should be apologetic without being polemic. We do not want to engage in controversy or in anti-Islamic arguments. We do not cite the Qur'an for apologetic or proof purposes. In general we abstain from any reference to Islam, Mohammed or the Qur'an. We choose, rather, to teach and explain the Bible from the Bible, believing it our sole authority in teaching the ways and revelation of God.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>131</sup> 'Philosophy of Missions to Muslims' (n.d.), pp. 1-3.

<sup>132</sup> Plastow in an email to the author (26 April 2005).

<sup>133</sup> M. Shafir, 'Why? And How!' (1971), p. 5. This unpublished paper was given to author by Bob Ehmann, director of MMC (18 December 2004).

<sup>134</sup> 'Malaga Media Center, Bible Literature and publications Department, Literature Guidelines for MMC Publications' (January 1986), p. 1, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

Thus, MMC made clear that it wanted to use linguistic and cultural forms that were congenial to its audience, in accordance with RCR4. It, however, heeded CW6 that warned against the idea that Islamic forms could be separated from their meaning. MMC did not use Islamic language to explain the Gospel and kept far from even referring to the *Qur'ân*. MMC had a conservative Evangelical approach to Islam as a false religion. It therefore did not want to give any indication to its audience that it took the sources or the feasts of that religion seriously.

In regard to RCR5, MMC's portrayal of Christ was done in accordance with its Statement of Faith; this was done without using Islamic language or cultural forms. The Church was portrayed in a manner that was described by John Travis as C3 as far as the location of the meeting was concerned. The Church was presented in terms of C2 as far as the language and other content matters were concerned.

The efforts of some missionaries to create communities of believers in Jesus within the context of the mosque, was rejected by MMC. MMC defended the existent Christian church-communities in North Africa as fully legitimate local expressions of the Christian faith. It rejected any efforts to create disunity among those communities by introducing other forms of Christianity. With this approach, MMC heeded CW2; it took the existent Christian communities in North Africa as the criterion for how it proclaimed the Gospel.

During the 1990s and later, there were no interagency meetings of radio organizations where contextualization was discussed. According to people who worked with GMU, the theme had created so much tension between people and organizations that they preferred to discuss the theme 'in house' only. Generally speaking, the radical forms that were proposed by some missiologists also created a backlash against discussing the idea at all.<sup>135</sup>

#### ***17.4.2 Radio as the First Phase of Evangelism***

In 1970, when MMC began in Malaga, MMC felt that its radio broadcasting was crucial as North Africa was experiencing rapid change. Yoder expressed that thus:

There is an information hunger among the youth of [...] North African countries. [...] Hundreds of thousands of young people are going to schools. They are wanting to learn. They are listening to all kinds of radio programs. Their minds are more open as they listen and as they read. [...] For centuries Islam has built a barrier around the thinking of these people so that they do not know what the Gospel really teaches or who Christ really is. Radio voices in their own tongue will do much to break down those barriers and reveal to them the message of salvation.<sup>136</sup>

The medium of radio was also considered particularly strategic for North Africa because many people in that area were difficult to reach in person because of

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<sup>135</sup> Jim Geisler in an email to the author (11 December 2006). Sam Heldenbrand in an email to the author (11 December 2006). This absence of interagency meetings is confirmed by John Dorr in an email to the author (13 December 2006).

<sup>136</sup> Yoder, 'Message 1', p. 2.

physical and social barriers. 'Muslim inquirers can listen to the radio in private without arousing suspicions [and the] cost per person reached is a real bargain', according to Hartzler.<sup>137</sup>

For MMC, radio was the first tool in its efforts to develop personal relationships with its audience. The BCC was considered the main way of creating lasting relationships with interested listeners.<sup>138</sup> When MMC had to consider making cuts in its programming due to financial problems, Plastow wrote in an internal note that 'to cut the radio time would also cut into our BCC and ultimately our follow-up which is the most crucial of our work.'<sup>139</sup>

MMC reported year upon year to its headquarters in the USA that few listeners made a profession of faith solely as a result of radio broadcasts. 'BCC, personal follow up and workers in North Africa add to the input given by radio.'<sup>140</sup> Plastow wrote in 1991 that all at MMC believed follow up to be 'the vital link between our radio and BCC ministry and church planting in North Africa and a bridge between new believers and the existing church'.<sup>141</sup> Personal contact with people in North Africa was MMC's goal.

Christian radio as a medium can and should be used more broadly than to just create personal contacts. One advantage nevertheless of this approach by MMC was that it did not create an electronic church but a local community of believers in Morocco itself. This was probably also the best way to bring about the creation of Christian communities that MMC wanted to see established in Morocco where very few Christians existed. For that reason, Bassam and Ali were encouraged to make many trips to Morocco. This was good for follow-up and it also guaranteed that the programs they produced were tailor made for the Moroccan context within the limits of MMC's programming strategies.

In 1990, for instance, four such trips were made. Over 140 BCC students were contacted, many of them for the first time. Over thirty made it clear that they were Christians while the majority was open to the Gospel. A few of those who 'accepted Christ as Lord and Savior' were introduced to local Christians and missionaries to disciple them.<sup>142</sup> MMC ensured that in its programs it always focused on the development of an actual community of believers.<sup>143</sup>

## 17.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

The first broadcasts of GMU during the 1960s were quite simple. They were 15 minutes long, in Dârījāh and they contained a theme song, a Bible message, an

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<sup>137</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'Ministry To Muslims - Radio Broadcasting Project' (March 1986), from MMC Archives, file Radio Department, folder Radio Department Reports.

<sup>138</sup> Yoder, 'Kalimat al-Hayat'.

<sup>139</sup> Memo of Fred Plastow to Herman Hartzler (23 August 1986), from MMC Archives, file Radio Department, folder Radio - Possible Cutback '86-'87.

<sup>140</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1992), p. 3, from MMC Archives, file Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>141</sup> Plastow, 'MMC Annual Report 1990' (January 1991), p. 1.

<sup>142</sup> Fred Plastow, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1990), p. 1, from MMC Archives, file Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>143</sup> Hartzler in an email to the author (13 June 2005).



appeal to personal faith and an offer of a free BCC.<sup>144</sup> MMC continued with these 15-minute programs, called *Voice of the Word of Life*, until 1977. They were invariably sandwich programs with a Gospel presentation at the center.

Beside programs in Dârġjah, short programs in Kabyle, Tashelhayt, Tamazight and Tarifit were produced. Due to a lack of staff, lack of indigenous Moroccan Christians and finances, MMC was never able to produce more than 30 minutes of programming per week in any of the Amazigh languages.

In 1977, MMC began its cooperation with RSB under the banner of MANA. During most of those years until 1990, MMC had three blocks of 30 minutes on TWR, covering Thursday, Friday and Saturday while RSB covered three other days. MMC endeavored to use a magazine format with interviews, testimonies and dramas. These programs were conducted in Dârġjah. On Fridays, short Amazigh programs were incorporated into these broadcasts.<sup>145</sup>

During the early 1980s, the programs on Thursday were a Bible lesson with a dialogue about the biblical subject. On Friday there were two messages in Tamazight and Tashelhayt followed by some topics for believers in Dârġjah. On Saturday, there would be a story of a person from the Bible with a question and answer session based on audience responses or on general Muslim questions.<sup>146</sup> Ali and Bassam were the main Dârġjah speakers in these programs.<sup>147</sup>

In 1986 the Saturday program was changed into a panel discussion with three voices. Before that, due to a lack of personnel, MMC could never use more than two voices. An important change in the production style of MMC was that the panel would 'not be using a word-for-word script, but [...] rather [had] abbreviated notes for reference. This [was] to give more spontaneity'.<sup>148</sup> A year later, the Saturday format was changed again, into a magazine program. It contained a Daily Bread devotional, a prayer, the discussion of a Bible character, a short Bible reading with some songs interspersed.<sup>149</sup>

In 1990, MMC began its experiment of co-producing its programs with RSB. The main difference from MMC's perspective was that from then on, it did not produce Moroccan programs. The new series, *Walking Together*, was in MSA but with Moroccan inserts.<sup>150</sup> Cottingham cited the original description of *Walking Together*:

<sup>144</sup> Raymond H. Joyce (ed.), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969), p. 31.

<sup>145</sup> Yoder, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1980), p. 3, from MMC Archives, file Annual Reports 1981-1994. Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1976 to August 31, 1977'.

<sup>146</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department Malaga Media Center Fiscal Year September 1, 1981-August 31, 1982', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>147</sup> 'Minutes of MMC staff Meeting with Jim Taylor and Gordon McRostie, (brainstorming session)' (14 October 1993).

<sup>148</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'Radio Department Annual Report Malaga Media December 1986', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>149</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'Radio Department Annual Report Malaga Media Center December 1988', p. 1, from Radio Department, folder Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>150</sup> Peter Cottingham, 'Malaga Media Center Radio Department Report for 1989' (19 January 1990), p. 3, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

Nemchi is a magazine style programme aimed at Muslim (at least moderately) North African young men, aged 16-30, with at least secondary education. It is primarily sowing and watering, encouraging the use of complementary media (e.g. correspondence course). It is clearly evangelistic in nature, explaining the relevance of the Gospel to life and the individual. However it is not a preaching programme, or a 'hymn sandwich'. It rather encourages friendship, trust and dialogue; challenging existing beliefs and ways of life.<sup>151</sup>

According to Cottingham, there 'was always some tension between the different producers about how the general programme policy and the language policy should be implemented'. He mentioned that there was disagreement about to what extent the Gospel should be proclaimed, and the Christian content of the inserts. There were ongoing problems related to the perceived importance of hosting versus supplying inserts. 'I do not think we ever got to the stage where producing a good feature for "someone else's" programme was seen as being important as producing and hosting "my" programme.' Both organizations did not want to refuse each other's features, and the producer of the program did not want to ask for specific features.<sup>152</sup>

After 1996, when the cooperation with RSB had ceased, MMC produced its Friends Talk programs. By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the number of broadcasts of that program on TWR had decreased from three to two 30 minute programs each weekend.<sup>153</sup> As the audience response for those programs had declined sharply, MMC decided in 2004 to broadcast five programs of 15 minutes on weekdays. The arrangement was that on Monday the program contained a Bible study, on Tuesday listener's questions were answered, Wednesday was a music program, Thursday's program contained testimonies and Friday focused on current social issues with a biblical perspective.<sup>154</sup>

MMC endeavored to present the Gospel within the context of programs that treated topics of interest to its audience. Those programs, however, majored in the area of the individual realm while politics, Islam, human rights and political issues were carefully avoided. This meant that as far as RCR2 was concerned, MMC's programs focused on only part of the actual context of its audience. This was, among other things, to avoid upsetting the authorities both for the sake of the small Christian communities in Morocco but also because MMC's highest goal was to enter into personal relationships with the audience. This required the smooth delivery of mail inside Morocco, the Achilles Heel of MMC's work.

By not treating the Gospel's implications for the State, for politics and for religion in the programs, GMU modeled a narrow, individualist form of discipleship to the audience. Thereby, CW5 was only partially heeded. CW4 was also not fully heeded, as the Gospel was not expounded as the prophetic beacon that it should be for society.

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<sup>151</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1976 to August 31, 1977', pp. 1-2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>152</sup> Cottingham, 'Further thoughts on the end of AWM/MMC Joint Radio Production'.

<sup>153</sup> 'Malaga Media Center – Get the Message. Hear the Truth.'

<sup>154</sup> 'Radio Obsolete?', in *Communicate* (No. 2, 2004).

It is likely that the small Christian communities in Morocco were glad that these socio-political topics were not treated. This makes clear that CW2, about the need to contextualize programs within the community of the native churches, can sometimes militate against issues that are important in contextualization.

## 17.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

From 1971 to the late 1990s, MMC kept the response data for both its radio programs and BCCs. The BCC information included those who were enrolled and those that had completed them. This information is presented in *Figure 17.1* and *Figure 17.2*.<sup>155</sup> These figures were compiled from separate reports by the Bible Literature and Publication (BLP) department and by the radio department and highlight inconsistencies. For radio, the figures differed for 1973 and 1981-1984. These differences are possibly due to the fact that the BLP department only counted new responses for adding names to BCC mailings lists, while the radio department also counted repeat responses. These differences, and the uncertainty about criteria, make it hard to draw definite conclusions from the response figures. In spite of that, MMC often tried to do so. MMC's director Bob Ehmann decided at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when the audience response had become very low, to stop the 'counting', which he called 'numbers-fetishism'.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> The numbers in *Figure 17.1* and *Figure 17.2* come from the following documents in the MMC Archives. From the file Annual Reports 1981-1994: Herman J. Hartzler, 'GMU Annual Field Report – II' (1994), pp. 1, 3. Jim Geisler, 'GMU Annual Field Report – II' (1993), pp. 1, 3. Herman J. Hartzler, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1992), p. 1. Herman J. Hartzler, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1991), p. 1. Fred Plastow, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1990), p. 1. Fred Plastow, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1989), p. 1. Herman J. Hartzler, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1988), p. 1. Fred Plastow, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1987), p. 1. Fred Plastow, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1986), p. 1. Fred Plastow, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1985), pp. 1-3. J. Maynard Yoder, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1984), pp. 2-3. J. Maynard Yoder, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1983), pp. 2-3. J. Maynard Yoder, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1981), p. 3. Fred Plastow, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1982), pp. 1-3. J. Maynard Yoder, 'GMM Annual Field Report' (1980), p. 3. J. Maynard Yoder, 'GMU Annual Field Report' (1979), p. 3. The MMC Archives also contained the 'Annual Bible Correspondence Course Statistics' from 1977-1985, in the file Annual Reports 1981-1994. Information also came from the following documents from other files in the MMC Archives: 'Prayer News' (January 1999), p. 2, from MMC Archives, Bi-Monthly Report - Prayer Sheet. 'Prayer News' (January 1998), p. 2, MMC Archives, Bi-Monthly Report - Prayer Sheet. 'BCC Stats for Summary', received from Bob Ehman (18 December 2004). 'Relation of Radio to BCC Enrollments 1972-1984', in the file Radio Department, Radio Department. J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department Malaga Media Center Fiscal Year September 1, 1981 - August 31, 1982', p. 2, from file Radio Department, folder Radio - Annual Reports. 'Monthly Report Bible Literature & Publication (BLP Department)' (December 1996), from file Report Statistics from Radio/BCC Departments. Statistical Report for the Ministry to Muslims Radio Department, Malaga, Spain, Fiscal Year September 1, 1972 to August 31, 1973', from file Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>156</sup> Bob Ehmann in an interview with the author (18 December 2004).

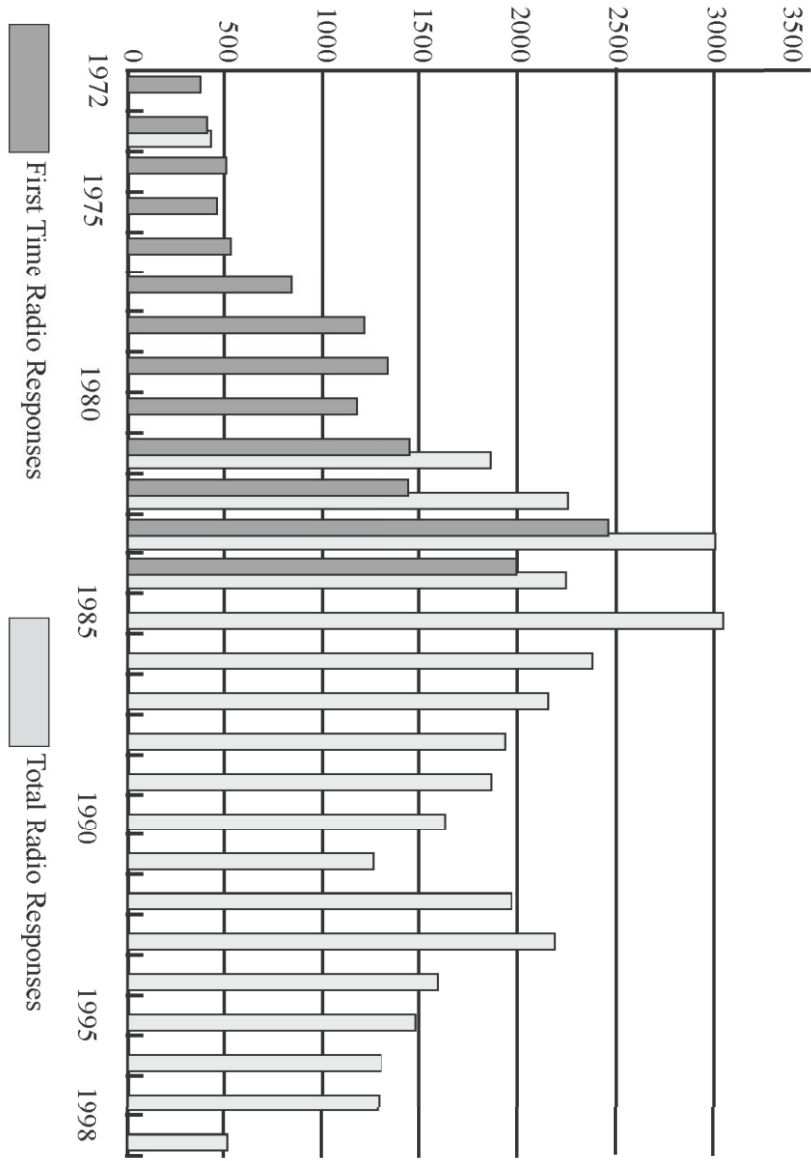


Figure 17.1 MMC's Radio Reponse 1972-1998

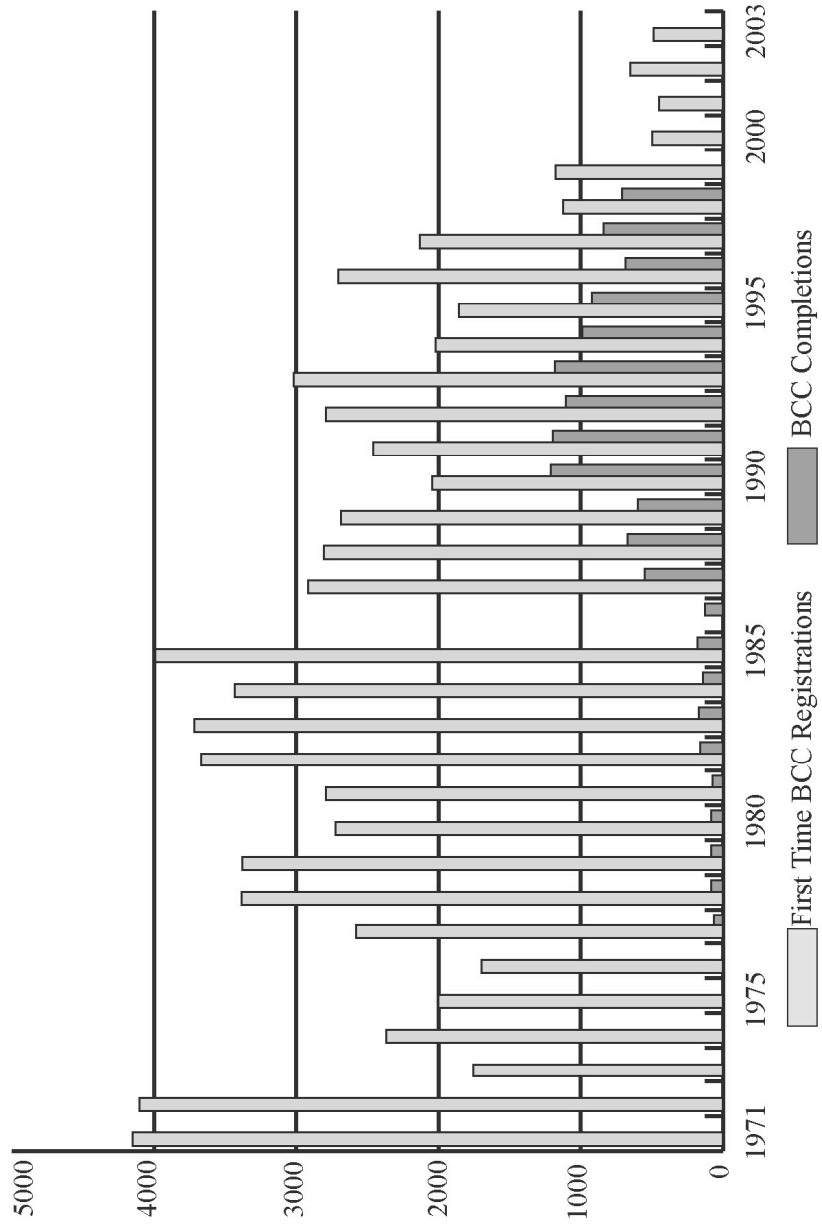


Figure 17.2 GMU's BCC Students: 1971-2003

The first serious increase in radio audience response was in 1977. In 1976, MMC reported that it received 228 letters from Morocco and 220 from Algeria.<sup>157</sup> A year later the total response almost doubled with 466 letters from Morocco and 530 from Algeria. In the programs a book had been offered.<sup>158</sup> The increase in response may have been partially explained by this incentive but it also coincided with MMC beginning to broadcast over RMC-MC on MW at a better time of night. It is surprising that MMC never mentioned, in any of the explanations for the increase of audience response, the fast population growth in Morocco and Algeria, which coincided with a similarly fast percentile increase in literacy.

It is unclear what effect the ongoing campaign in the Moroccan media against Christian mission work had on the audience. Missionaries were seen as agents of their governments that wanted to infiltrate Morocco. They were called neo-colonialists for bringing Western penetration. Newspapers and magazines referred to the radio broadcasts of MMC and RSB, and to their BCCs. At one stage in Morocco, one such article appeared about each week in the media during 1974. The main source was the opposition Istiqlâl Party, a party that used an Islamic platform for attacking the King who in their opinion did not do enough against mission work.<sup>159</sup>

These articles often mentioned that the missionaries were 'hitting us at our weak point'. They often said that in reference to 'the personal aspect, the communication of warmth and personal interest'. Some articles acknowledged the existence of a vacuum in Morocco in this respect. One spoke of an ideological void in Algeria. According to RSB's Islamologist Sam Schlorff, this was 'an indication to us of the direction in which we should be heading.'<sup>160</sup>

In the years 1980-1982, the audience response did not increase further. Maybe that is why Yoder felt obliged to explain how important any mail response was, 'Many of those who listen [...] are illiterate and can't write. Others are fearful because of family or religious opposition. Postal conditions are very poor in some areas, so we believe our response is significant. Many ask for booklets offered. Some show outstanding spiritual hunger. All who write are sent the current book offer. They are enrolled in the BCC.'<sup>161</sup>

MMC felt that the dropout rate from those who began the BCCs was too high. It concluded that the booklet sent upon completion of the first lesson might be too small and therefore not enough incentive to continue with the rest of the BCC. Also, the time between the lessons, which occurred over five mailings, was consid-

<sup>157</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department of Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1976 to August 31, 1977', p. 1, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>158</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department Ministry to Muslims, Malaga, Spain, September 1, 1977 to August 31, 1978', p. 1.

<sup>159</sup> Transcript of a meeting led by Dr. Fuad Accad, 'Discussion - Amplifying the Problem' (19 February 1974, Marseille), p. 17, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

<sup>160</sup> Transcripts of 'Questions to Mr. D. Anderson and Mr. D. Hilgendorf, and Comments', (20 February 1974, Marseille), pp. 3-4, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

<sup>161</sup> Yoder, 'GMU Annual Field II' (1981), p. 3.

ered too long and could potentially result in a loss of fervor on behalf of the student. Solutions discussed involved offering a diploma and a nice book upon completion as well as placing a time limit on the course to encourage students to work faster. Mailing the courses from other places other than Malaga but preferably from inside Morocco, was discussed by MMC as well as sending the whole course at once.<sup>162</sup>

From April-September 1982 a pilot project was initiated. All lessons were sent in one bundle from locations other than Malaga. Only 18½ percent of those that received the lessons mailed the first lesson back. That was not much better than before. But of those that responded, more than half returned all lessons at once. That made a 12½ percent completion rate which was much better than the completion rate of the previous year of between one and three percent. It was also clear that the best completion rate was from those that received their mail from inside Morocco. MMC decided to mail as much as possible from inside Morocco from then on, and to mail all the lessons at once.<sup>163</sup>

In 1983, the audience response increased again. Yoder thought that might have been 'due largely probably to the improved time slot', as TWR broadcast the programs one hour earlier in the evening. Other possible factors mentioned by Yoder were that more people may have been aware of the programs, there might have been a reduction in the prejudice against writing to Christians or perhaps the improvement in the format of the programs had played a role. As all of these are valid factors it is not easy to attribute a clear reason to the increased response. Of all the responses, 38 percent came from Morocco, 45 percent from Algeria.<sup>164</sup>

In 1984, letter responses declined. Hartzler was unsure why that had happened but he did not think it could be 'attributed to the recent persecutions' in Morocco. It 'is difficult to accurately specify reasons for response variations', he concluded.<sup>165</sup> In 1984, the Moroccan government began to probe the activities of believers throughout the country. Police sought out believers, examined them and cast them in jail. It was a nationwide action by the authorities that began after 'the king had been rebuked for tolerating Christian activities in the land'.<sup>166</sup> The aims seemed to be to stop BCC courses being studied by Moroccans, to find the sources of literature distribution within Morocco, to interrogate the local believers and Western missionaries and to identify the relationship between all of those.<sup>167</sup>

In 1972, of the 4,105 first-time receivers of BCCs, only 368, or nine percent, received the BCC because they responded to radio. Others received brochures or

<sup>162</sup> 'Planning Goals for 1982', pp. 1-2, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>163</sup> 'Pilot Project as of the end of September '82', from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994. 'Pilot Project Progress Report' (30 September 1982), from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>164</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Report of the Radio Department Malaga Media Center Fiscal Year September 1, 1982 - August 31, 1983', from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>165</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'Report of the Radio Department Malaga Media Center September 1, 1983 - August 31, 1984', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>166</sup> David, *Gleam of Light*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>167</sup> This is how Gordon McRostie, a GMU missionary in Morocco at that time summarized the government's actions in a letter to the GMU headquarters. See Letter of Gordon McRostie to Jim Taylor (Rabat, 11 May 1984), from MMC Archives, Foreign Attitudes.

were referred to the BCCs by other students. In 1984, of the 3,434 first time receivers of BCCs, 2,032 or 59 percent had responded to radio programs.<sup>168</sup>

Plastow compared the completion of the first series of the BCC programs between MMC and RSB. In spite of both organizations having about 4,000 to 5,000 active students, MMC had 77 people finishing its first course while RSB had 331. Of the advanced courses, RSB had 167 completions, MMC 107.<sup>169</sup> MMC concluded that it had to upgrade the language of its courses to something closer to MSA as 65 percent of all its students were from outside Morocco.<sup>170</sup>

In 1985, the audience response was much higher again. Yoder commented that this was 'maybe because we used a write-in address in Italy unknown to North African authorities. Of course many write requesting the offer of the month.'<sup>171</sup> Yoder was enthusiastic. 'As we realize that each letter represents hundreds or even thousands who didn't write because of illiteracy, fear or lack of means, we are convinced that our listening audience reaches into the hundreds of thousands of North Africans.'<sup>172</sup>

In 1986, a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) survey indicated that in Morocco alone, MMC had a weekly audience of about 50,000 people, as two percent of the radio audience was listening to TWR. As more mail came from Algeria than from Morocco, Hartzler concluded that MMC's audience was 'quite considerable'.<sup>173</sup> Plastow spoke of a total weekly audience of 100,000 to 150,000 people.<sup>174</sup>

Responses in 1985 from the IBRA broadcasts were 'very scanty' and from ELWA, 'minimal' according to Hartzler.<sup>175</sup> Almost all the responses were based on the broadcasts of TWR. The increase in mail in 1985 proved to be unique. Between 1986 and 1991 the response figures decreased each year.

Plastow had suggested in 1985 that new mail systems were needed to beat the postal systems in North Africa that tried to prevent mail from reaching MMC's audience.<sup>176</sup> In January 1986, MMC held an internal meeting to discuss how to solve the mail problems to Morocco. The meeting advised the radio department to at least announce every now and then that there were problems with mail getting through so that the audience would not be annoyed if they did not receive the books they requested, for instance. Discussions centered on using different types

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<sup>168</sup> 'Relation of Radio to BCC Enrollments', from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>169</sup> Memo of Fred (Plastow) to Maynard (Yoder) (3 September 1984), from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>170</sup> Fredrick Plastow, 'Annual Report August 1984 Bible Correspondence Course', p 3, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>171</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'Radio Department Report Malaga Media Center August 1, 1984 - July 31, 1985', p. 1, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports.

<sup>172</sup> J. Maynard Yoder, 'MMC Director's Overview [over 1985]', p. 1, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>173</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'Radio Department Annual Report Malaga Media December 1986', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>174</sup> Plastow in an email to the author (26 April 2005).

<sup>175</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'Radio Department Annual Report Malaga Media December 1986', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports, p. 1.

<sup>176</sup> Fredrick Plastow, 'BCC Course Revisions' (2 January 1985), pp. 1-2, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.



of envelopes, lighter mail, and mailing from inside Morocco. In spite of the success of the earlier tests in 1982, this later solution had not been implemented.<sup>177</sup>

In January 1986, MMC celebrated that 100,000 students had received their first lesson since the BCCs had begun in 1960. The organization was worried though about the low completion rate and decided it should be 'more innovative' in its approach.<sup>178</sup> The BCC department decided to again test the effect of mailing its lessons from inside Morocco in 1987 by sending a proportion of the BCCs from inside Morocco. Those sent from inside saw a completion rate of 20.8 percent, while those from outside had a completion rate of 3.8 percent. For MMC, this was conclusive evidence that the BCCs were 'hindered significantly' by the Moroccan authorities. Also in Algeria most courses did not reach the addressees. MMC decided to produce thinner and lighter versions of its BCCs.<sup>179</sup> It is interesting to note here, that the Moroccan authorities did not seem to block outgoing mail to the extent it did the incoming mail. That makes any comments about fluctuations of response to radio broadcasts due to government interference, questionable.

MMC experienced a 'most significant' year for follow up in 1987 even though the audience response continued to decrease. There was increased cooperation between mission organizations and missionaries in Morocco. Reports from Morocco said that 'about 90% of all in-depth contacts [were] coming through radio and BCC'. Of the letters received at MMC radio, 55½ percent were from Algeria, 32.3 percent from Morocco, and 6.8 percent from Tunisia. BCC completions showed a different picture. Of all completed BCCs, 173 were from Morocco, 51 from Tunisia, and only eight from Algeria. MMC had reasons to believe that mail going into Algeria was not delivered to the BCC students.<sup>180</sup> MMC began using a Paris address instead of the one in Italy during 1987. The slight decrease in response was explained by Hartzler: 'We know that people have had trouble spelling [the response address of] St Denis.'<sup>181</sup>

Hartzler was aware that letter response could be affected by different factors. At MMC they saw the effect of the school examination periods and vacation, and the type of book being offered for free, the manner of presenting that offer, the month of Ramađân, the simplicity of the write-in address, and the actions taken by the postal services in North Africa against Christian radio mail.<sup>182</sup>

In 1989, MMC mailed its BCCs for Moroccan addresses from inside Morocco. That made the number of active students much larger, so MMC expected 1990 to become a record year for course completions. More important, the pool for follow

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<sup>177</sup> Fred Plastow, 'Seeking Solutions to Mail Problems in Morocco, Resume of meeting held in Fred's Office' (28 January 1986), from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>178</sup> Fredrick Plastow, 'BCC Course Revisions' (2 January 1985), pp. 1-2.

<sup>179</sup> Jim Geisler, 'Annual Report: Bible Literature and Publications Department, 1987', pp. 1-2, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'Radio Department Annual Report Malaga Media December 1987', p. 2, from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>182</sup> Herman J. Hartzler, 'Radio Department Annual Report Malaga Media Center December 1988', p. 2, from Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

was anticipated to grow.<sup>183</sup> The BCC figures for Algeria remained ‘very disappointing’ and Geisler suspected that censorship in Algeria had even increased.<sup>184</sup> A year later, the situation in Algeria had not changed, but the expected growth of BCC completions in Morocco did indeed occur. In 1990, 487 Moroccan students finished the BCC contrasting markedly with only 71 in Algeria and 23 from Tunisia.<sup>185</sup>

The fact that there were fewer problems with mail in Morocco than in Algeria, did not mean the situation for the church was any better. In 1990, King Hasan II of Morocco appointed a commission to investigate human rights abuses in his country after Amnesty International had published an embarrassing report on political prisoners in Morocco. The king delineated in a speech on 8 May 1990 that Morocco would not accept criticism of its treatment of Muslim converts to the Christian faith:

Is there a Muslim who might travel through the country saying: ‘Embrace another religion than Islam?’ Before changing his mind, this one should be submitted to a medical examination of his mental condition by specialized doctors. If he persists in his call to conversion to another religion than Islam, which is the religion of God, he will then be judged and whatever the sentence pronounced at his trial, he will not be classified as a political prisoner.<sup>186</sup>

The co-production of the programs with RSB did not change the decreasing response to the programs. In 1991 the downward trend continued. All mail response to the programs of RSB and MMC were sent to RSB and then RSB sent roughly half of that to MMC for answering. Listeners could also phone in from 1991. MMC’s proposed reasons for the continued decrease were related to three issues; fewer books were offered, the Gulf War occurred, and the programs were scheduled an hour later by TWR. In 1991, MMC registered 1,054 new students for its BCCs from Algeria, 795 from Morocco, and 105 from Tunisia. Completions of courses continued to show the reverse: 525 students from Morocco finished their BCCs, 83 from Algeria, and 30 from Tunisia. It was ‘obvious that the mail hindrance still continues’ from Algeria, according to Geisler.<sup>187</sup>

During 1992, the audience response was finally on the increase again in spite of *Walking Together* being broadcast five, not six times per week for most of the year. MMC assumed that the mail increase was due to a more consistent use of book offers, maybe also listeners getting used to the program, and perhaps because the ‘negative effects’ of the Gulf War were decreasing.<sup>188</sup> It is also possible that,

<sup>183</sup> Fred Plastow, ‘MMC Director’s Report 1989’, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>184</sup> Jim Geisler, ‘BLP Annual Report 1989’, pp. 1-2, from MMC Archives, Annual Reports 1981-1994.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Translated from the Moroccan newspaper *Le Matin*, 12 May 1990 by Fred Plastow, in Plastow, ‘History of The GMU Expulsion’, p. 43.

<sup>187</sup> Jim Geisler, ‘Annual Report of BLP for 1991’, pp. 1-3, from MMC Archives, file Annual Reports 1981-1994. ‘Radio Department Information Sheet’ (May 1991), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio Department Reports. Peter Cottingham, ‘Malaga Media Center Radio Department Report for 1991’ (15 November 1991), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio-Annual Reports.

<sup>188</sup> ‘Minutes of MMC staff Meeting with Jim Taylor and Gordon McRostie, (brainstorming session)’ (14 October 1993).

in line with Arabic radio listening habits, the Gulf War had created an increased audience for TWR's broadcasts on RMC-MC and that this increased audience was reflected in more audience response after 1992.

By 1994 the response began to decrease. MMC's initial response was that it was 'probably largely due to a lack of book offers in the January-March programmes hosted by AWM'.<sup>189</sup> That is unlikely, as the audience response continued to decrease. It is more likely that the radical increase in satellite television audiences negatively affected the radio audiences throughout the Arab World, including North Africa.

As MMC and RSB worked so closely together during the period of 1977-1995, with similar broadcast hours and quite similar programs, similar response figures could be expected. It is interesting to see that these figures showed less parallelism than might be expected. This may make further, more detailed study of the audience response of MMC and RSB worthwhile. That research will be more valuable if in Morocco and Algeria research can be done in the behavior of the postal authorities during the period to be studied.

After the break-up of the cooperation between MMC and RSB, audience response continued to decrease. In 1997, 569 responses were received from Morocco, 418 from Algeria, and 93 from Tunisia. Of the 673 BCC completions, 519 were from Morocco, 34 from Tunisia, and only 27 from Algeria.<sup>190</sup> While the numbers of those responding went down, Geisler drew some positive conclusions about the role of MMC's ministry:

When I began working at Malaga Media Center 15 years ago, only a handful of people each year made decisions to receive Christ through the radio programs and literature we sent out. Today, dozens of people make [such a] decision each month. Just a few years ago we did not have enough contacts to give to the people who wanted to follow up interested people in North Africa. Today, we have so many people asking us for a visit to discuss spiritual questions, we can't possibly visit them all with our present staff. [...] All over North Africa, in areas previously unresponsive, today there are the beginnings of a national church.<sup>191</sup>

Not satisfied with the response levels, Ehmann decided to introduce some changes in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, 'the low number of responses we received indicated they weren't listening to us or our programs were not worthy of a response'. Some conclusions were drawn: 'Daily programs attract regular listeners. Shorter programs hold attention. A variety of subjects with a common theme stimulates interest.' In line with this, MMC decided to replace their two 30 minute programs during the weekend with five weekly 15 minutes programs on TWR. This new schedule began in April 2004. 'Almost immediately we detected a difference. People began calling, e-mailing and writing.' The April to June 2004 response was

<sup>189</sup> Peter Cottingham, 'Malaga Media Center Radio Department Report for 1994' (26 April 1995), from MMC Archives, Radio Department, Radio - Annual Reports.

<sup>190</sup> 'Prayer News MMC' (September 1997), p. 2, from MMC Archives, Bi-Monthly Report-Prayer Sheet.

<sup>191</sup> Jim Geisler, 'The Emerging Arab Church - Who will nurture it?', in *The Gospel Message* (No. 2, 1995), p. 5.

380 percent higher than during the previous year. Telephone response increased remarkably, from two to 55 phone calls during those three months.<sup>192</sup>

## **17.7 FINAL OBSERVATION**

### ***17.7.1. Indigenization***

GMU's ability to obtain non-Western personnel was hampered by its 'employment' policy. It required that Moroccan and other Arab personnel working in a fulltime and long-term capacity must conform to Western mission procedures as did all missionaries of GMU. As a result of this policy the main Moroccan personnel were Ali and Bassam who had been involved from the beginning in program production. The leadership of MMC continued to be in non-Moroccan hands and so formally there was no indigenization of the organization.

As regards to the actual production content, MMC was fully indigenous. Because of the important role of the Moroccan producers and the difficulty to find Moroccan staff, there was a symbiotic relationship between management and production staff. The Western managers could never have taken decisions viewed as having unfavorable consequences by the Moroccan co-workers of MMC.

### ***17.7.2 Contextualization***

#### **17.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

GMU and MMC were unique in choosing to focus on Morocco only, and from the perspective of contextualization, this was a good choice. MMC was aware of the large differences within the Arab World and aimed at the rather homogenous target audiences of Morocco. The awareness that their programs could also be received elsewhere did not deter them from their goal to reach out to Muslims in Morocco.

#### **17.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

MMC's policy to avoid touching upon topics such as Islam, politics and macro-societal issues means that in its programs it ignored an important part of the context of its audience. This resulted in a loss for the audience. It also disqualified MMC from being able to disciple people in important realms of their lives that the Gospel speaks about. It thereby did not heed CW5, as the Gospel *does* have a message for society and State. It only allowed the Gospel to play a prophetic role in the individual lives of its listeners and not in the realm of society, thus not fully heeding CW4 either. However, by doing so, MMC followed the habits of the Moroccan Christians who avoided any political involvement. In this sense it can be said that MMC heeded CW2.

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<sup>192</sup> 'Radio Obsolete?', in *Communicate* (No. 2, 2004).

### **17.7.2.3 Language**

MMC's programs were produced in Dârījāh and in the Imazighen languages of Morocco. These were the spoken languages of the people in Morocco and were, to a much larger extent than MSA, their own languages. MMC's insistence to not address Moroccans in MSA was wise. It was not a spoken language, it was not widely understood, and it also had all the connotations of Middle Eastern Pan-Arabism and Islam. Those who were potentially interested in the message of GMU were arguably the most distant politically and theologically from Pan-Arabism and Islam and its language.

### **17.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

In its programs, MMC used Biblical and Evangelical jargon explained in the linguistic and cultural forms that were common to the people in Morocco. This was possible because the organization had Moroccan program producers. They did not use Islamic terms and forms for expounding the Gospel. They were aware of the impossibility of their listeners to separate Islamic terms and cultural forms from their content. Thus, MMC heeded CW6.

### **17.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

Christ was portrayed in a traditional Christian manner by MMC, as the Son of God who was incarnated and died and rose again for the forgiveness of those who believe in Him. The Church was portrayed in terms of Travis' C2 and C3 spectrums, with the home of the believers as the locus of the church meetings but with Christian language and cultural forms.

With this approach, MMC heeded CW1 about the importance to hold on to the absolutes of the Bible and Christ and the need for people to participate in Church. MMC rejected the idea that the Christian faith and the Church could be presented in an Islamic garb, and it thereby closely followed the opinions of the Christians in Morocco. With this approach, MMC heeded CW2 and CW3. It contextualized its Gospel in communion with the local churches of Morocco, and it refused methods that could create separate communities of Christians that were so different from the existent communities that Christian unity would not be served.

### **17.7.2.6. Media Environment of the Programs**

Most of GMU's programs were broadcast within the context of similar programs on TWR's RMC-MC broadcasts so the direct media environment of GMU's programs was appropriate from GMU's perspective. Research should be done regarding the question of how the Moroccan audience perceived broadcasts from RMC-MC's transmitters, given that they were based in the land of their former colonizer. Similar questions could be asked regarding broadcasts from the Spanish territories, especially from Ceuta, as it was held by Spain against the will of Morocco.

### **17.7.3 Christian Witness**

MMC had a powerful position as a program supplier during the late 20th century. This was evident in its negotiations with ELWA and later with TWR concerning

possible cutbacks as a result of MMC's financial problems. Irrespective of the evangelistic motives of broadcasters and program producers, their relationship contains a business component, and as in secular business, in Christian business the customer is treated royally.

The fact that GMU's missionaries, including its Moroccan workers had to agree to GMU's Western Statement of Faith, including its premillennialism, was not helpful in the process of finding personnel that would be best at broadcasting a contextualized message. Likewise, the requirement that Moroccan believers had to leave their own context, go to a Bible College in the USA and then raise their own support before they could be accepted as full co-workers in Malaga was just as problematic. In the North American context they were taught theology in Western theological terms and in the thought-patterns of Western, Evangelical individualists. Whether that was reflected in the programs they produced has not been researched.

GMU's programs focused on the Christian *kerygma* and as a mission agency with people working with local congregations in its target area Morocco, the programs were made in close communion with those congregations. However, the programs did not reflect a more general *koinonia* of the Church of Christ as any reference to other churches in the world were avoided. The societal aspects of the Gospel were not treated, so the programs lacked some *diakonal* aspects of the Christian witness. Overall, it must therefore be concluded that whereas GMU's witness was strong on the *kerygmatic* side, it did not touch upon the other important parts of the triptych of the Christian witness.

## 18 Global Radio Outreach (GRO)

Global Radio Outreach (GRO) was founded in 1991 by Michael Bond. It began producing Arabic radio programs in 1993 and has done so ever since. GRO is a loose community of producers of programs in Arabic and other Muslim languages. It supports its program producers with equipment and small financial incentives, and it buys the airtime for broadcasting these programs. GRO has been successful in encouraging radio productions for the Arab World and it has been very productive compared to the other organizations studied here. This chapter focuses on GRO's Arabic productions but a brief overview of GRO's productions in some other Muslim languages is given in order to better describe the entrepreneurial atmosphere within GRO.

The Statement of Faith of GRO is also examined. This statement was adopted from the Fellowship of Christian Assemblies (FOCA), a network of Pentecostal churches in the USA and Canada. Bond raised GRO's money mainly from within this network of churches. His programs were mostly broadcast through High Adventure Ministries (HAM) and its successor Bible Voice Broadcasting (BVB).

The target audience and the preferred language of GRO are described, as well as its programming philosophies. Next, the actual programs of GRO and its audience response are described. Whereas all organizations studied in this publication had strong ties to the Arab World, GRO had a lack of organizational knowledge and understanding of it. GRO was, to a large extent, Bond and his family. Little energy was spent on refining the targeted audience or on matters pertaining to Arabic dialects used in the programs or even its programming policies. Scant documentation and information were available about these topics.

Finally, this chapter focuses on questions of indigenization and contextualization of GRO and its programs. Also, some conclusions will be drawn about the extent to which GRO's programs reflected the Church's witness with regard to its *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*.

### 18.1 HISTORY

#### *18.1.1 Organizational History before Arabic Productions: 1984-1993*

##### **18.1.1.1 First Experiences in Broadcasting: 1984-1991**

In 1984, seven years before Michael Bond founded GRO, he and his wife Joyce went as missionaries to Papua New Guinea (PNG). They went there to assist Christian Radio Missionary Fellowship (CRMF) and its radio communications network. CRMF was founded by Claude D'Evelynes, an Australian Christian, who during World War II served with the allied forces in PNG. While there, he became convinced that the Lord had called him to create a radio communications network

for assisting missionaries in their work as well as for broadcasting the Gospel within PNG and across the border into West Irian Jaya, nowadays part of Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> D'Evelynes went back to New Guinea after the war. He established CRMF to fulfill his vision. He was immediately successful with the communications network that he based at Rugli, a small village in what is now the Western Highlands of PNG. The broadcast work to PNG thus began in the 1950s and spun off under the name of Christian Radio. CRMF continues to administer this network which meets the daily needs of 600 mission stations and produces Christian programming under the name *Christian Media Productions*.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of his interest to broadcast the Gospel to West Irian Jaya, D'Evelynes' dream did not materialize, even though he had taken the transmitting equipment to PNG partly for that purpose. 'The equipment had been cannibalized by the time I arrived in 1984', Bond remembered later.<sup>3</sup> D'Evelynes passed away in Australia in 1985.<sup>4</sup> Bond and his wife Joyce had gone to PNG to assist CRMF with the work of the communications network. Bond never met D'Evelynes, but felt that he had inherited the prophet's mantle and from 1986, Bond tried to convince CRMF to catch the vision that D'Evelynes had once had for international broadcasting.<sup>5</sup>

Bond first received his 'call to do broadcast' at Seattle Bible College in Seattle, Washington (USA). He spent his summer after college studying and obtaining a broadcast engineering license and in reading books about existent international Christian broadcasters. While working in PNG as an engineer for the communications network he experienced that the 'Lord did stir up old thoughts of broadcasting the Gospel'. In 1986, this call became more specifically for broadcasting to the Muslim world.<sup>6</sup> In a church in PNG, he listened to lectures of Michael Abel, then a missionary with Gospel Recordings in Pakistan:

[Abel] spoke of the desperate needs of reaching Muslims in their home countries, the difficulties in doing so, the hard lives of many Christians in those countries and their needs. The Lord broke my heart that day for Muslims and confirmed that that was the purpose of the stirring for radio. As I approached CRMF with this, then I began to learn of Claude [D'Evelynes'] old burden for West Irian (part of Indonesia, largest Muslim nation in the world). I studied, researched, prayed, fasted and liaised with CRMF about this until early in 1990 they decided that it was no longer a part of their vision. So by then we knew more about what the Lord wanted us to do and left PNG at the end of that year to found GRO to do the work. So I guess I walked away with an expanded version of Claude's original vision.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Michael Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Later CRMF moved to Goroka in PNG.

<sup>3</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Mike Bond in an email to the author (3 May 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003). [www.pcseattle.org/interviews/gro](http://www.pcseattle.org/interviews/gro) (25 July 2004).



CRMF could not be convinced to become involved in international broadcasting. Bond wanted to work in that ministry though. He therefore left CRMF and returned to the USA in 1991.<sup>8</sup>

#### 18.1.1.2 Early Years of Global Radio Outreach (GRO): 1991-1993

Bond founded GRO in Marquette, Michigan, in the USA in order to begin Christian witness through international radio broadcasting to the Muslim world. He became the chairman; his wife the treasurer and the secretary.<sup>9</sup>

Starting a new thing is always hard, but many aspects of our ministry are so radical that they send missions committees away scratching their heads. Where do you go for advice as you explore uncharted territory? Where do you find support for an unestablished work using an unproven strategy?<sup>10</sup>

GRO continued to see its ministry as an extension of D'Evelynes' original vision, thus tracing the origins of GRO to the period of World War II. With this approach to GRO's history, Bond places its inception in the same period as some other international broadcasters like ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa'), Far East Broadcasting Corporation (FEBC), and Trans World Radio (TWR).<sup>11</sup>

Bond was convinced of the uniqueness of his work as GRO was the only broadcasting ministry to be 'dedicated solely to Muslims'.<sup>12</sup> He considered the lack of mission to Muslim lands as the 'greatest shortcoming' of the church. He believed that reaching Muslims had been hard, mainly because of the Crusades which had created a 'deep-rooted animosity'. One of the reasons why Bond believed radio was needed in the witness to Muslims, was that missionaries could not go into Muslim countries 'and expect churches to be planted. They would all be killed'.<sup>13</sup> This view probably reflected genuinely held opinions and was not just a statement for public relations and fundraising. In either case, these were uninformed statements.

GRO initially focused on using former Muslims who had migrated to Western countries for taping evangelistic radio programs. Ideally, GRO wanted to add one new language each year:

Our vision [is] to continue to train up new program teams to reach other needy languages of people. We hope to continue adding programs in new languages as long as the Lord empowers us, and until the Great Commission to the Middle East people is complete.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Mike Bond, 'Joy', in *GRO Newsletter* (Summer 1995), p. 1. All newsletters and reports of GRO have been made available from the archives of GRO by Bond.

<sup>9</sup> Bond, 'Joy', p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> ELWA are the call letters assigned by the Liberian authorities to the radio station, and officially stand for Liberia and West Africa. The organization liked to explain the letters to mean *Eternal Love Winning Africa*.

<sup>12</sup> [www.pcseattle.org/interviews/gro](http://www.pcseattle.org/interviews/gro). (30 July 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> [www.globalradiooutreach.org](http://www.globalradiooutreach.org) (13 February 2005).

GRO 'takes advantage of [...] two God-given resources of our day: The windfall of Christians coming as immigrants' into the USA and the 'availability of hundreds of radio and television transmitters which are available to broadcast the Gospel. These stations blanket the globe dozens of times over, reaching every nook & cranny and potentially every person alive today!'<sup>15</sup> Bond described his 'GRO method' thus:

First we locate Christian immigrants who are already fluent in the languages of the people we desire to reach. They're also eager for an opportunity to reach their own people. Then we train our team of national Christian workers in the use of the basic studio equipment needed to record Gospel radio programs and in the necessary elements of programming. We also train them how to follow-up inquires, answer questions, administer Bible studies, etc.

When this is all in place and a sufficient number of radio programs have been prepared, we find one or more transmitters that can effectively target the needy country [or people group] in question and then get a contract for airtime on the transmitter[s]. Then we begin to broadcast those programs there. A post office box is set up in an acceptable city and our trained national workers follow-up on the letters that come in response to the programs.

Failsafe and monitoring systems are set up to ensure the ongoing quality, effectiveness and doctrinal purity of the programs that are broadcast. Through these systems we keep a regular check on the work. When it's all operating smoothly in one language, we move on to another. In this way we touch the lives of multiplied millions of people in countries we can't enter as missionaries and whose languages we can't speak.

[The] many immigrant national workers [...] are the backbone of our ministry. Indeed, there would be no ministry without them! They represent not only themselves, but also their lost families, friends and countrymen at home whom they work to reach.<sup>16</sup>

From the perspective of producing at low cost, this approach certainly worked. With meager means and minimal organizational development, programs could be produced and broadcast. Technology was not given priority, as often happens in Christian media ministries but the focus was on the person needed for voicing the program. This approach also had disadvantages. For instance, this method could only lead to sandwich programs, in which the 'speaker' filled the programs mainly with his or her own voice. It also underestimated how time-consuming audience follow up could be.

Another disadvantage of using Arab immigrants into the United States for the broadcasts was that they possible became quickly out of touch with the societies they had left, and worse, that they could be negative about their former countries. Using Arab immigrants could therefore be at the expense of a contextually appropriate approach. This matter needs further study.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

GRO was so convinced about the dangers for certain Arab converts to be on radio, that in 1994 it published about the need for ‘voice masking’.<sup>17</sup> GRO wanted testimonies of Arab converts from Islam but because ‘of the persecution they may face if they are identified, we have been asked to mask the voices of those believers who speak’. Lee Hartman, GRO’s technical director, bought special software for this reason.<sup>18</sup> In his report in 1995, he wrote that ‘thanks to this [multi effects processor] we were able to air three ex-Muslim testimonies.’<sup>19</sup>

One person that was very important to Bond in establishing GRO was Virgil Rasmussen. In 1992 he was the interim pastor of the Marquette Gospel Tabernacle (MGT) in Marquette, Michigan (USA), the church Bond was a member of. Rasmussen was a ‘super supporter’ of missions, particularly to Muslims. According to Bond, he ‘lit a fire under us about moving ahead with the work’. Rasmussen continued to be Bond’s ‘main mentor, an officer and board member of GRO’.<sup>20</sup>

In 1993, Julie Thompson joined the Bond’s for research work. Thompson had been with Operation Mobilization on its Doulos ministry ship. Her research was aimed at the target audiences of GRO and at finding ‘voices’ in the USA for the programs to be produced. She also coordinated GRO’s publications.<sup>21</sup> Thompson stayed until 1995. After that, Amy Bond, a daughter of Michael and Joyce Bond, became an interim replacement, but after a few months she moved to Seattle and her mother took over as publications coordinator. No replacement was found for Thompson’s research work.<sup>22</sup>

Hartman joined GRO as technical director in 1992. In 1993 he completed a temporary studio for GRO in the MGT. People involved in that church rendered some administrative support to GRO and GRO also used some office space. One way to donate to GRO was through MGT. In return, GRO helped MGT. Hartman for instance installed the sound system in the church.<sup>23</sup>

### **18.1.2 Arabic Radio Productions: Since 1993**

#### **18.1.2.1 Arabic Productions and Producers**

Arabic was the first language GRO used. In January 1993 it began broadcasting its Arabic radio programs through HAM with its stations in Israeli-occupied South Lebanon. Through its Mediumwave (MW) broadcasts, South Lebanon and North Israel were covered by HAM. The Shortwave (SW) broadcasts of those programs reached the whole Arab World.<sup>24</sup> GRO never seemed to have questioned organizationally the decision to try to proclaim the Gospel to Arabs from an Israeli-occupied area or through an outspokenly Christian-Zionist broadcaster. This choice to work from an Israeli platform was unwise for a broadcaster that wanted

<sup>17</sup> ‘Stories to Tell’, in *GRO Newsletter* (Third Quarter 1994), p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Lee Hartman, ‘Technical Department Report’ (2 August 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>21</sup> *GRO Newsletter* (March-April 1993).

<sup>22</sup> ‘Support Staff Changes’, in *GRO Newsletter* (Summer 1995), p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Lee Hartman, ‘Technical Department Annual Report’ (19 May 1993).

<sup>24</sup> Mike Bond, ‘Zowie! GRO goes on Air in Arabic’, *GRO Newsletter* (November 1992).

to contextualize its message. The immediate media environment of any broadcast, does impact on how the audience understands the program in accordance with RCR6. In the perception of the receptor of a message, the content of the message is intricately interwoven with the carrier of the message.

In the beginning, GRO supplied HAM with one 30 minute program each week.<sup>25</sup> The Arabic program block of GRO were titled *Voice of Forgiveness (Ṣawt al-Ghufrân)*, a name that the Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) had used from 1971, as ELWA did before that. The first programs were produced by Yousef S. Habibi, a Palestinian pastor of an Arabic church in Dearborn in the greater Detroit area in Michigan (USA). He was born in Haifa (Palestine). In 1948 his mother escaped with him to Egypt, where the Lilian Trasher Orphanage in Asyût took care of him and his mother. There, in Upper Egypt, Habibi used to listen to Christian radio broadcasts:

Throughout my childhood we listened to Shortwave Christian radio, Trans World Radio and ELWA. Egypt is a country with limited access for Christian ministry. It enriched our lives knowing there were Christian voices coming from abroad.<sup>26</sup>

In 1994, GRO got in touch with an Egyptian Christian, Timothy Ibrahim. He had been raised as a Muslim and grew up as an ardent supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwân al-Mûslimîn*). Through contacts with an American Christian via a pen-pal program in an Egyptian magazine, he became very interested in the Christian faith. He began to listen, in secret, to Arabic Christian radio programs. That played a major role in his conversion. After some years of study, he prayed to God to show him the truth. He then had a dream in which Jesus appeared to him:

Though Ibrahim tried to keep his conversion a secret, word soon spread throughout his village. His family disowned him, even having a funeral for him. Many times he was beaten and at one time he fled to Cairo to find refuge among some Christian friends. He was only able to stay a few days, because his presence put them in danger. He had no place to go so he returned to his village. Ibrahim was met by the entire village. The mosque officials demanded to know if he was a Muslim. Thanks to the advise of an underground pastor who said the definition of the word Muslim is a person submitted to God, he could truthfully answer 'yes'. [...] The last time Ibrahim was arrested, he was threatened with death if he continued to spread the Gospel.<sup>27</sup>

Ibrahim eventually decided to find refuge in the USA. Anis Shorosh, a Palestinian Evangelist from Alabama, arranged for Ibrahim to enter the USA as a student. He went to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest,

<sup>25</sup> Bond, 'Zowie! GRO goes on Air in Arabic'.

<sup>26</sup> 'Arab World Impacted From the Heart of USA', in *GRO Newsletter* (December 1994), p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> 'Unshackled Features Timothy', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 7 No. 1, March 1997), p. 2. Brochure of GRO titled 'Ibrahim Arafat Seliman' (n.p, n.d). 'I secretly listened', in *GRO Newsletter* (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1994), p. 1.

North Carolina.<sup>28</sup> It is questionable whether that environment was conducive for Ibrahim to develop a contextual theology.

In 1995, while Ibrahim was a theological student, Hartman set him up with the equipment necessary to record Arabic programs. 'We have received many programs already. I was able to train [him] over the phone in using this equipment.' In general, Hartman was very satisfied that 'the programming has gotten considerably better from an audio perspective. The recordists are doing a terrific job and I commend them in the quality that they are showing'.<sup>29</sup>

Ibrahim sent his first programs to GRO in the summer of 1995. That enabled GRO to send extra tapes to the broadcaster. It was deemed necessary to create a stock of programs, as Hartman was leaving and Bond himself was obliged to learn how to do the job.<sup>30</sup> GRO also wanted to start broadcasting two programs of 30 minutes each week, thus doubling its output. This began in 1998. GRO was then also broadcasting on a local FM station in Bethlehem (Palestine). In 1998, the broadcasts of HAM were expanded to an audio channel of the Amos satellite, thus giving GRO somewhat more exposure.<sup>31</sup>

By 1998, Ibrahim was producing six programs per month for GRO. He was still a student at that time. As he was finishing his studies, Bond decided to invite Ibrahim to work full time for GRO.<sup>32</sup> Bond proposed to his board in September 1999 to buy more airtime on HAM and on the FM in Bethlehem. He wanted Ibrahim to produce the programs needed for that extra 30 minutes of broadcasting time each week. Concurrently, new Egyptian producers, Nahamiah Gendi and his wife Safaa from Fairfax, Virginia (USA), were beginning to deliver Arabic tapes to GRO. It was planned that the Gendis would be produce enough to fill the third day of broadcasting on HAM and from Bethlehem and Bond wanted to add a fourth 30 minute program each week, to be produced by Ibrahim.<sup>33</sup>

In November 1999, the third weekly program was added on HAM while GRO was already receiving enough programs to broadcast five each week. At the same time however the station in Bethlehem was closed down by the Palestinian Authority, but GRO continued to broadcast on another FM station from Ramallah (Palestine).<sup>34</sup>

In March 2000, the Board of GRO allowed Bond to add a fourth weekly program to the Arabic broadcasts on HAM. During a banquet, the money needed for that fourth weekly broadcast was raised. Bond told the banquet speaker, Ralph McDevitt, vice-President of HAM that he actually dreamt of a fifth day of broadcasting. McDevitt 'offered for [VOH] to sponsor that fifth day until the fall when we're ready to consider taking on the extra financial burden ourselves', Bond wrote thankfully.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Lee Hartman, 'Technical Department Report' (2 August 1995).

<sup>30</sup> 'Annual Report 1995 to Board of GRO' (1996).

<sup>31</sup> 'GRO's Programs Go on Satellite', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 8 No. 2, July 1998), p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> 'Timothy to Join GRO', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 8 No. 1, April 1998), p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 'Meet the Gendis', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 9 No. 3, December 1999), p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> 'Arabic Now On Air Three Days Per Week!', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 9 No. 3, December 1999), p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> 'Arabic On the Air Five Days Per Week!', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 10 No. 2, June 2000), p. 1.

On 23 May 2000, HAM had to escape with its equipment and personnel over the border to Israel as the Israeli Army withdrew from the parts of Southern Lebanon it had occupied. The staff of HAM moved its studios to Jerusalem. HAM had in the meantime assured airtime on the SW facilities of Deutsche Telekom in Jülich (Germany), so the programs of GRO were able to be continued uninterrupted. HAM had also begun broadcasting on an audio channel of Eutelsat's Hotbird satellite.<sup>36</sup>

In July 2001, a hacker entered the computer of Ibrahim. Much personal information and photos were put on a website with a 'hit list' and after this Ibrahim received threats by phone and email. GRO involved the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in researching the matter. Ibrahim and his wife considered moving to another location since their address was placed on the 'hit list'.<sup>37</sup> A few months later the threats stopped after the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001.<sup>38</sup>

By this stage HAM had financial and organizational problems and it stopped all of its SW broadcasting. It moved its programs in 2001 to the Sky Angel Satellite Network that had an audio channel on a satellite that covered the USA. This enabled GRO's programs to be received all over the USA for people with a dish and a subscription to the network. As the Sky Angel Network was a Charismatic Christian channel, it mainly preached to the converted. More relevant to GRO's goals was that its Arabic programs were also broadcast from WWTL, an Arabic MW channel broadcasting from Washington D.C., with a rather large reach. The airtime was being paid for by the St Mary's Coptic-Orthodox Church in Washington D.C.<sup>39</sup> It is surprising to see how GRO, with its Charismatic Protestant background, could find favor in the eyes of a Coptic-Orthodox church, but their common desire to proclaim the Gospel to Muslims through a convert from Islam must have created this community of purpose.

As HAM's broadcasts had stopped, GRO looked for new options to broadcast its programs. In 2002, the Pentecostal Finnish organization International Russian Radio and Television (IRR/TV) decided to broadcast the Arabic programs of GRO.<sup>40</sup> GRO was at that time also talking to HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings') and TWR for putting the programs in their airtime.<sup>41</sup> Bond chose TWR over HCJB 'because their signal is better for the areas which we want to target'.<sup>42</sup> However, nothing further happened, probably due to the high cost of airtime on TWR. It is, moreover, unsure that TWR, with its non-antagonistic programming strategies, would have agreed to broadcast the programs of Ibrahim.

Most likely, all the efforts to find a new station were halted when Bible Voice Broadcasting (BVB), a new broker of SW airtime of some of the former HAM sup-

<sup>36</sup> 'Israeli Pullout – Big Chances for GRO', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 10 No. 3, September 2000), p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> 'Arabic News From Ibrahim and Angela', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 11 No. 3, October 2001), p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> 'Ibrahim & Angela News', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 11 No. 4, December 2001), p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> 'Arabic Goes on Sky Angel!' in *Outreach News* (Vol. 11 No. 3, October 2001), p. 2. 'Arabic Goes on the Air in Washington, DC!', in *GRO Newsletter* (May 2001), pp. 1, 3.

<sup>40</sup> 'Arabic Radio Expansion', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 12 No. 1, March 2002), p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> HCJB is the call sign for the organization that originally began broadcasting in Ecuador. They began to broadcast to the Arab world in 1990. The organization likes to use the name HCJB for Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings.

<sup>42</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

supporters, began its broadcasts in July 2002. GRO brought its programming to BVB and was one of the major customers for BVB.

### 18.1.2.2 Organizational Changes

In 1994, Tim Schouten joined GRO as the program coordinator for the Arabic and other programs, even though he did not speak Arabic.<sup>43</sup> However, his personal fundraising support did not go well, so he took a job as an engineering technician at a local company to supplement his income.<sup>44</sup> In 1995, GRO announced that Schouten had also become responsible for the bookkeeping and for writing grant proposals.<sup>45</sup> Due to his workload however he never did the bookkeeping. In 2001, when GRO moved to Seattle, he resigned.<sup>46</sup>

In June 1996, Hartman left GRO to be an associate pastor elsewhere. During the months before he left, he trained Bond to operate the new equipment in the studio. Bond, who did not speak Arabic, took over the taping and copying of programs. Hartman also improved the techniques of the program recorders elsewhere in the USA so that Bond would have less work finishing the tapes in Marquette. To free her husband from some administrative roles, Joyce Bond resigned from her job and began to work for GRO three or four afternoons each week in 1996.<sup>47</sup>

On 4 April 1995, Bond proposed to his board that GRO should become an integral part of MGT.<sup>48</sup> The primary reason for Bond to suggest this change of 'ownership' of GRO was to lower his personal income tax. This change would likewise benefit the other staff too and result in them needing to raise less for their personal support. An additional advantage of the proposal was that of accountability and stability for GRO. The proposed arrangement was to create an 'umbrella' for GRO for instance against possible future Internal Revenue Service (IRS) actions against non-profit organizations.<sup>49</sup> The disadvantages seen by Bond however were that MGT may then 'interfer' and that, if in the event that the IRS were to take action and target churches, GRO could be harmed by being part of the church.<sup>50</sup> GRO kept its independence from MGT.

In 1998, GRO decided to expand to using television for reaching Arabs with the Gospel. The organization continued to hope it could develop this new part of its ministry as Bond believed television to be 'the most effective means to reach Arabs today', but no programs were produced.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>43</sup> 'Program Coordinator Joins Staff', in *GRO Newsletter* (Third Quarter 1994), p. 1. Schouten would be called *Director of Programming* shortly thereafter.

<sup>44</sup> Tim Schouten, 'Annual Report Director of Programming' (2 August 1995).

<sup>45</sup> 'Increased Responsibility', in *GRO Newsletter* (Summer 1995), p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>47</sup> 'Annual Report 1995 to the Board of GRO' (1996).

<sup>48</sup> 'Report of Michael Bond to Board Meeting of GRO' (4 April 1995).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> 'GRO Commits to Arabic TV!' in *Outreach News* (Vol. 8 No. 2, July 1998), p. 1. GRO and an Assemblies of God church equipped Yousef S. Habibi from Dearborn, nearby Detroit in the USA, with a small, older production studio. By 2003, Habibi was airing his TV programs in Dearborn. 'However the quality which we'd hoped for, in order to use these for international distribution, has not been realized', according to Bond, 'so while this continues, we are assembling a new studio in Seattle to be used by a team of Arabs [...] here. Our best prospect for a host is an Egyptian former missionary to Yemen

GRO moved the whole ministry to Seattle in July 2001.<sup>52</sup> The Philadelphia Church there had been the home church of the Bonds in the past, and it allotted office space to GRO. Seattle was considered a better location than Marquette as it brought GRO closer to its supporting churches, people groups whose languages they were interested in, volunteers and technological support. In his July 2001 newsletter, Bond thanked MGT and its pastor 'for all they've done for us. They gave GRO a great start. They're sending us off to the field again!'<sup>53</sup>

In 2002, the Philadelphia Church gave GRO more office space; that was necessary as two of Bond's daughters, Amy and Laureli, joined the staff on a part-time basis. Their work included the production of publications, email news, prayer letters, pamphlets, mailing list, and handling of both program distribution and general office responsibilities.<sup>54</sup>

Though GRO has had different fulltime and part-time co-workers since its inception in 1991, they never stayed very long. By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century GRO's management depended basically on the activities of Bond family members. Admirable as that may be, with Bond and his wife also as the main functionaries of the Board, this was a questionable construction, both in respect to accountability but also for the continuity of the ministry. The lack of knowledge of the Arabic language and its culture was also problematic.

Formally, GRO did not have any policy of indigenization of its organization, but in reality, it is fair to say that Bond gave far-reaching liberty to the Arabic program producers he worked with. This created a situation whereby it was easy to perceive Bond as the fundraiser for the productions and the broadcast of a group of rather independent Arabic program producers.

In 2002, a decade after GRO had begun, the organization announced that it had discovered that there were numbers of 'small organizations and ministries in target countries that are either already using radio or desire to use it to reach their people. We're automatic allies'. Bond added:

The problem is that many of them are struggling due to lack of money, guidance, technical expertise and have logistical or other problems that are keeping them from being effective. This goes beyond the idea of employing someone [...] to

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who was forced to leave because she was reaching Muslims.' Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>52</sup> Bond wrote to the author to explain why GRO never became part of MGT: 'The threat of interference [...] from strong leadership at MGT kept me looking for other answers. There was also the inevitable fact that GRO would outgrow (as it now has) MGT. We would then put a strain on their resources and systems. The main reason for considering it had been that there were certain provisions in the US tax codes that favored "pastors" over directors of Christian mission organizations. It would have saved support money. I could come on staff at the church, but we found that there were other ways to operate so that we could get those benefits without abandoning the non-profit corporation. Ultimately, GRO moved to Seattle anyway to solve the logistical problems created by trying to operate a quickly growing missions organization from up in the isolated backwoods of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. This would have been complicated if we'd come under the church. MGT remains our "sending church" as missionaries. Joyce and I are still responsible to them.' Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>53</sup> 'GRO Gets A New Address' in *Outreach News* (Vol. 11 No. 2, July 2001), p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> 'GRO Grows Again', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 12 No. 2, August 2002), p. 3.



alone produce programs and answer mail from the US. These people are on the ground in their country, and usually already have a staff and an established ministry. They just need a partner and some help to carry it ahead.<sup>55</sup>

Bond's realizations and discoveries sounded somewhat naïve as if the idea that there might have been Christians in Arab lands only occurred to him after some years of broadcasting. It is surprising that it took GRO more than a decade to realize that in the Arab World, ministries were already working in radio production. This gives the impression that GRO did not know the Arab World or the Muslim World in general very well, and that GRO functioned isolated from churches and Christian organizations in the Arab World. Irrespective of GRO's actual broadcasts, this lack of contact with the Christian community in the Arab World did not augur well for GRO's ability to heed Contextualization Warnings CW2 and CW3. GRO could not devise programming strategies together with the community of the Arab churches nor create strategies that confirmed the unity of the church, as it did not have those contacts.

### 18.1.2.3 Non-Arabic Language Programs

GRO has been producing radio programs in languages other than Arabic. Turkish programs went on air in April 1994, Farsi programs in 1997 and Urdu programs in 2002. GRO has also worked on Uighur and Malay programs but these projects did not get off the ground. As the history of the different language broadcasts gives insight into the functioning of GRO and its choice of broadcasting stations, the development of these broadcasts is treated here briefly.

#### *Turkish Programs*

In July 1993 GRO began working towards Turkish broadcasts so that, as from 17 April 1994, the first Turkish programs titled *The Believers Voice* could be aired by HAM on SW.<sup>56</sup> The rate of production of these programs was low and thus many repeats were needed.<sup>57</sup> This problem was solved in 1995 when Murat Kuntel, pastor of a Presbyterian church in Vancouver (Canada), and a 'fiery Charismatic [with a] good reputation throughout the Turkish Christian population' began recording messages for GRO.<sup>58</sup>

In 1998 GRO decided to start producing programs especially for Radio Mujde FM in Istanbul (Turkey), with Guney Gul as a new host. These programs were initially aired twice a week in 1999.<sup>59</sup> Gul's address in the USA was used for audience response.<sup>60</sup> In 1999 Gul became the only producer in Turkish for GRO. 'We're now receiving regular responses to the programs', Bond reported in Sep-

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. This new phase began in 2002. Bond mentioned contacts in Kenya, Cameroon, and Niger.

<sup>56</sup> 'Praise the Lord!', in *GRO Newsletter* (May/June 1994), p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Tim Schouten, 'Annual Report Director of Programming' (2 August 1995).

<sup>58</sup> 'Report of Michael Bond to Board Meeting of GRO' (4 April 1995).

<sup>59</sup> 'Turkish Program to Go On the Air in Istanbul' in *Outreach News* (Vol. 8 No. 4, December 1998), p. 2. Michael Bond, 'President's Report to Board Meeting' (16 September 1999).

<sup>60</sup> Michael Bond, 'Presidents Report' (2 December 1998). Bond discussed the problem of not knowing what response Gul received for the radio programs since he used the same address for his other ministry to the Turks.

tember 1999. Response came both to the SW broadcasts and to the FM broadcasts from Istanbul.<sup>61</sup> How many responses were received throughout the years, was not published by GRO.

In early 2000, Radio Mujde FM agreed to allow GRO to broadcast the programs of Gul six days a week for one hour. GRO did not need to pay more than it had been doing for two programs of 30 minutes per week. 'It is a huge jump! Guney [Gul] will be spending a lot more time in the studio now!' Bond mentioned the good audience response as the reason why this extra airtime was given at no extra cost. HAM agreed to accept programs of one hour instead of 30 minutes, also without raising the cost for GRO. This enabled Gul to continue using the same programs on both Radio Mujde FM and on HAM.<sup>62</sup>

In 2001, GRO took all Turkish programs off air. 'We chose [to stop broadcasting] Turkish because there were some changes we already had planned to make and this allowed us to take time to study the changes', according to the newsletter of July 2001.<sup>63</sup> One problem with the Turkish broadcasts was that Gul was not able to keep up with the high production rate needed to fill the airtime. 'There had always been a problem getting enough programs from the host to keep fresh programs on the air. [...] In the meantime finances fell off somewhat.' There were also reasons of a more personal nature that made Bond decide to discontinue working with Gul.<sup>64</sup> Those last reasons must have been paramount in the decision to stop the Turkish broadcasts altogether, as the slight decrease in finances for these programs could, arguably, have led to the decision to broadcast less programs instead of stopping them altogether.

### ***Farsi Programs***

In 1995, Bond got in touch with Mohamed Nikoo, an Iranian Christian studying at the Bible College of New Zealand. Nikoo used to be a Mullah and was married by *Ayatollah* Khomeini himself. In New Zealand, he became a Christian and founded a Farsi church which he also pastored.<sup>65</sup> Nikoo taped some pilot programs in a studio in Dunedin, New Zealand, and these were 'the best we'd heard from a recordist', Bond wrote. Copies of these tapes were sent to a Farsi speaker in the USA who liked Nikoo's work 'but thought that he'd been out of his culture long enough to have picked up some Western and Christian idioms and expressions'.<sup>66</sup> Nikoo would do the follow up himself; he used the contact address of HAM in Cyprus.<sup>67</sup>

On 3 March 1997, the first Farsi broadcasts, titled *The Holy One*, took place.<sup>68</sup> Nikoo was producing so many programs that GRO could actually broadcast two or

<sup>61</sup> Bond, 'Presidents Report to Board Meeting' (16 September 1999).

<sup>62</sup> 'Turkish Program Soars to One Hour Daily!', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 10 No. 1, March 2000), p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> 'Financial Needs Force Turkish Off The Air', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 11 No. 2, July 2001), p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>65</sup> 'Mohammed Visits GRO', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 8 No. 1, April 1998), p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Michael J. Bond, 'Reports - General Information' (1995). 'Annual Report 1995' (1996).

<sup>67</sup> 'Good News From Down Under', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 6 No. 2, August 1996), p. 2. As that address was shared with Voice of Hope, it was not clear what response the GRO programs really received. That is why a Farsi Christian in Dearborn rerecorded the program endings to include a USA address. See Michael Bond, 'Presidents Report' (2 December 1998).

<sup>68</sup> 'Board Meeting Minutes' (3 March 1997).

three programs per week from the start. Lack of money withheld them from doing that.<sup>69</sup> As from 1998, the programs were also broadcast on an audio channel of the Israeli Amos satellite.

TWR checked the SW signal of HAM by listening from Tehran in 1998 during two consecutive broadcasts, but could not hear anything. GRO decided that the broadcasts might need to be moved to another time of the day, or to another broadcaster altogether.<sup>70</sup> By September 1999, Bond said that the problem was solved, and even in Afghanistan the programs were reportedly received now. In spite of that, there was no mail response to the programs whatsoever.<sup>71</sup> During 1999, some 'tentmaking missionaries' in Afghanistan were involved in 'bootleg transmission' of these Farsi programs of GRO. As soon as Voice of America's (VOA) broadcasts were finished, this 'underground' transmitter used VOA's frequencies for Christian Farsi broadcasting. This same group of people would also broadcast these programs in a Dari translation.<sup>72</sup>

Frustrated by the lack of response, Nikoo decided to stop his work for GRO. Bond asked an organization in England to listen to the tapes. 'Farsi speakers in England had discovered a lisp in his voice that was indiscernible to a non-Farsi speaker, but may have lead to the lack of response', concluded Bond.<sup>73</sup> It seems unlikely that 'a lisp' would result in no audience response whatsoever. It is more likely that other matters like the choice of the SW medium of HAM impacted upon the lack of audience response. Bond wanted to stop broadcasting the old tapes altogether 'until [he could] regroup and find a suitable host'. He thought the money saved could then be used for a third weekly program in Arabic.<sup>74</sup>

HAM however decided it wanted to continue using the old tapes of Nikoo since they did not want to lose their Farsi broadcasts altogether. They proposed to GRO to broadcast these programs at their own cost, until GRO was ready for broadcasting new Farsi programs.<sup>75</sup> Bond was already in touch with some Farsi speaking Christians in Canada for the new productions.<sup>76</sup> GRO had come across Massood Mostofi, a gynecologist who had escaped from Iran due to persecution related to his conversion from Islam. He was pasturing a Farsi church in Toronto (Canada). In 2001, a FOCA church in Toronto allowed GRO to record the Farsi programs in its studio and the pastor of the church also worked as the studio technician. This Canadian church wanted to take full financial responsibility for the cost of recording Mostofi's programs.<sup>77</sup>

In December 2001, GRO reported that there were enough programs by Mostofi to start broadcasting but that there was no money for buying the airtime.<sup>78</sup> By the end of that month, GRO had received some major financial support so the Board

<sup>69</sup> 'Farsi Program Began to Air March 3<sup>rd</sup>!', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 7 No. 1, March 1997), p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Bond, 'President's Report' (2 December 1998).

<sup>71</sup> Bond, 'President's Report to Board Meeting' (16 September 1999).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 'Networking to Reach a Billion Plus', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 12 No. 2, August 2002), p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>74</sup> Bond, 'President's Report to Board Meeting' (16 September 1999).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> 'Farsi Update', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 11 No. 2, July 2001), p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> 'Voice of Love Update', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 11 No. 4, December 2001), p. 2.

allowed Bond to go ahead with two broadcasts in Farsi each week. GRO also felt confident to start airing the Urdu programs at this time and to commit to a contract for Uighur broadcasts.<sup>79</sup>

On 9 February 2002, GRO was on air again with two Farsi Voice of Love programs each week. Bond wrote in March 2002 in *Outreach News*, 'We'd dearly love to get it on daily in order to increase its impact. This will depend on the Lord blessing us financially for that purpose'.<sup>80</sup> By 2004, the program was still on air twice a week.<sup>81</sup> Whether these programs resulted in greater audience response figures than the initial broadcasts by Nikoo is unknown as no actual figures have been released by GRO. The fact that Mostofi began giving medical advice in his programs reportedly gained him a larger audience, according to Bond.<sup>82</sup>

### **Urdu Programs**

In 1994, GRO began work to produce Urdu programs. It was not until 1998 though, that serious progress was made. An Urdu speaking Christian, Asif Sharaf, was in one of the churches in Seattle where Bond spoke. Bond challenged him to produce a series of pilot programs. A PO Box was opened in Pakistan and mail that was received there was forwarded to Sharaf in Lynnwood in the state of Washington (USA). On 6 April 2002, the Urdu programs, Voice of Truth, went on air once a week.<sup>83</sup> By 2003, this had grown to one program of 30 minutes and one of 15 minutes each week.<sup>84</sup> By 2004, the handling of letters was still done by Sharaf but in cooperation with a Bible College in Pakistan. Bond said in 2004 that he hoped that students from this college could go to the villages where mail came from to 'plant churches there'.<sup>85</sup> GRO never published its actual audience response figures for these programs.

## **18.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The work of GRO functioned within the context of churches in the USA and Canada that were aligned with FOCA.<sup>86</sup> GRO was also affiliated with Calvary Ministries International from Fort Wayne, Indiana (USA), and with Vision Ministers Fellowship of Seattle, Washington (USA).<sup>87</sup> Both MGT and the Philadelphia Church that served as a basis for Bond and GRO were part of FOCA. That fellowship described itself as a 'family of autonomous, evangelical churches with histori-

<sup>79</sup> 'Board Meeting Minutes' (21 December 2001). 'Financial Status Update', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 12, No. 1, March 2002), p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> 'Two New Programs Begin to Air', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 12 No. 1, March 2002), p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> [www.pcseattle.org/interviews/gro](http://www.pcseattle.org/interviews/gro).

<sup>82</sup> 'Farsi Program Expands', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 14 No. 2, July 2004), p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> It has not been possible to verify where these programs were broadcast from.

<sup>84</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>85</sup> [www.pcseattle.org/interviews/gro](http://www.pcseattle.org/interviews/gro)

<sup>86</sup> This fellowship group is a 'family of autonomous, evangelical churches with historical roots in the modern Pentecostal movement'. See [www.foca.org](http://www.foca.org). (30 January 2005).

<sup>87</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

cal roots in the modern Pentecostal movement'.<sup>88</sup> GRO adopted the exact Statement of Faith that FOCA held. That statement said:

Global Radio Outreach Believes. . .

1. The Bible to be the only inspired, infallible and authoritative Word of God.
2. That there is one God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. In the deity of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
4. In Jesus' virgin birth.
5. In Jesus' sinless life.
6. In Jesus' miracles.
7. In Jesus' vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood.
8. In Jesus' bodily resurrection.
9. In Jesus' ascension to the right hand of the Father.
10. In Jesus' personal return in power and glory.
11. That justification by faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for the salvation of the lost and sinful man.
12. The prime agency for the work of God's Kingdom is the local Christian church functioning under the sovereignty of our Lord, Jesus Christ. To the church have been entrusted the ordinances of the believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
13. In the present ministry of the Holy Spirit which includes: the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, as an experience distinct from regeneration; Jesus' indwelling, by which the Christian is enabled to live a godly life; Jesus' supernatural gifting and empowering of the Church for its work, life and worship.
14. In the return of Jesus Christ, to consummate His Kingdom in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; those who are saved unto the resurrection of life, and those who are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
15. In the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord, Jesus Christ.<sup>89</sup>

Besides the conservative theology expected in any Evangelical Statement of Faith, GRO believed that the 'prime agency for the work of God's Kingdom is the local Christian church functioning under the sovereignty of our Lord, Jesus Christ'. The expressions in its Statement of Faith regarding the Holy Spirit placed GRO squarely in the Pentecostal movement. Though the statement was taken from the FOCA denomination, GRO was an interdenominational agency. The premillennial viewpoints of FOCA and GRO were not reflected in this creedal statement. It had a rather apologetic character as it mainly stated its own views without directly attacking other views. Mission is not mentioned in this statement, and it is not contextualized for usage in the Arab World.

For selecting speakers for its Arabic broadcasts, this Statement of Faith of GRO created a broad enough framework. GRO was glad to work with Arabic speakers from different denominations. This creed was unhelpful in assessing the ability of its speakers to produce contextually suitable programs, however.

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<sup>88</sup> See [www.foca.org](http://www.foca.org).

<sup>89</sup> [www.globalradiooutreach.org](http://www.globalradiooutreach.org).

This Statement of Faith made clear that GRO could not be criticized for not taken warning CW1 seriously. GRO believed in the absolute truth of the Bible and in the uniqueness of Christ, as well as the urgency of all people to participate in Church.

If the local church was indeed the ‘prime agency’ in Christian work, it is not clear why GRO did not endeavor to have direct relationships with the churches in the Arab World. This seeming lack of an interest in the Arabic churches means that the programs of GRO were not in accordance with the need to contextualize programs in communion with the churches of the target audience. CW2 was therefore not heeded.

### 18.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND PREFERRED LANGUAGES

From its beginning, GRO wanted ‘to reach the world's largest people group with the Gospel of the Lord, Jesus Christ, wherever they live and in their own languages. Likewise, we endeavor to minister to the spiritual needs of Christians living in the Middle East and beyond. This is, and will be accomplished using radio, television, satellite, the internet and whatever technical means the Lord may, in the future, see fit to put at our disposal’.<sup>90</sup>

In the context of the Arab World, GRO had no specific target audience beyond ‘Arabs’, without any further qualification as to whether its focus was on North Africa, the Middle East, or the Arabian Peninsula. GRO was initially ‘dedicated solely to Muslims’.<sup>91</sup> Before long however Bond realized that through effective broadcasts Muslims would become Christians and that ‘we needed to begin to minister to them as well’.<sup>92</sup> He also became aware of the need of the existent churches:

I later remembered what Michael Abel said about the needs of Christians in those lands also. I finally realized that the key to reaching Muslims would be a strong presence of the Church in their lands. So we began broadening the emphasis of the programs to include ministering to Christians as well.<sup>93</sup>

GRO’s assumption that they could broadcast to all Arabs and have a meaningful message, was overly optimistic. Ibrahim did his best ‘to address audiences of all kinds’.<sup>94</sup> This approach by GRO was not in line with the need to aim at a homogenous target audience, as prescribed by RCR1. By not defining a precise target audience, it was difficult to truly contextualize the Gospel for any specific audience.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>94</sup> Ibrahim in an email to the author (8 November 2005).

Ibrahim used the Egyptian vernacular mixed with MSA.<sup>95</sup> Probably Habibi and the Gendis did the same, but it has not been possible to verify this. From GRO's perspective, that linguistic choice was coincidental and based on the preference of the speakers. GRO in its publications never gave the impression of an awareness of the differences in languages and dialects throughout the Arab World. This lack of purposefulness regarding the choice of language was not wise as, according to RCR3, the choice of language is important in respect to contextualization.

The fact that all of GRO's programs were a mixture of MSA and the Egyptian vernacular meant that many Arabs could understand them. For at least 40 million Egyptians, GRO produced programs in their own mother tongue. Though it seems that this choice for the Egyptian vernacular was not a policy decision by GRO but more a coincidence, the effect was that its programs were, at least for an important part of the Arab World, rather contextual language-wise, in accordance with RCR3.

#### 18.4 PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHIES

GRO did not have a formal written programming philosophy but it worked with a basic set of unwritten rules for contextualizing its programs. The programs were to be theologically sound and beyond that, GRO wished to use a contextual approach and allow the usage of terminology from Islam. 'These things are worked out in direct relationship with the program host', explained Bond. He considered GRO 'a little more daring than the [other Christian] broadcasters'. As an example he mentioned that GRO allowed quotations from the *Qur'ân*. 'We will also refer to false teachings which Mullahs and Imams have used to misrepresent Christianity, but we usually blame those false teachings on "someone out there", [on] "those who teach that..."', so as not to needlessly attract the fire of those parties.<sup>96</sup>

Ibrahim used the name '*Îsâ*' as well as '*Yasû*' for Jesus. 'I use both. I never know who is listening. I don't want an average Christian to think we are a cult. Sometimes I say just "Al-Masih" that is, the Christ, and everybody knows who we are talking about, thus avoiding controversy or confusion.'<sup>97</sup> He spoke regularly on themes like the Trinity and the divinity of Christ.<sup>98</sup> It seems therefore that GRO's preparedness to explain the Gospel by using Islamic terms was mostly related to its efforts to use linguistic and cultural forms that could be understood by the audience in line with RCR4. It was done for clarifying Christian ideas and words only and not as the main vehicle for explaining the Gospel. Thereby GRO stayed within the limits of CW6, which says that in proclaiming the Gospel, linguistic forms cannot be separated from their original meaning.

Bond believed that to use Islamic language would also be helping Christians in the Arab World: 'We continue to use contextualization for Muslims, but this not only serves the Muslims, but also better equips the Christians who learn to speak

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Michael Bond in an email to the author (2 February 2005).

<sup>97</sup> Timothy Ibrahim in an email to the author (7 November 2005).

<sup>98</sup> Ibrahim in an email to the author (8 November 2005).

“Muslimese” which better enables them to relate to Muslims.’<sup>99</sup> Bond was not aware, it seems, that generally speaking, the churches in the Arab World did not favor the usage of Islamic jargon in the propagation of the Gospel at all, so this choice was in direct contradiction of CW2, about the need to contextualize within the Arabic church community.

As regards GRO’s approach to the churches of the Arab World, Ibrahim avoided using the term *church* (*al-kanîsah*) in his programs. ‘I refer instead to the “living body of believers” as they “assemble”. I emphasize fellowship and connectedness in the Body.’<sup>100</sup> This approach was based on Ibrahim’s view of his audience and its needs: ‘People hear [my] programmes in order to get a word of encouragement that builds them in their faith, not ecclesiologically.’<sup>101</sup> He did not endeavor to link his message to the churches of the Arab World, or to the historic Church, thus not heeding CW3. This was possibly a result of the fact that he had become a Christian in Egypt in a context of persecution. After he became a Christian, he stayed outside the institutional churches of Egypt.

John Travis’ C1-C6 spectrums for describing contextualized church communities, only helps to a certain extent in pinpointing how Ibrahim described the community of Christians. He did not want to go as far as adopting Islamic jargon and forms, so C4 was not applicable. Probably a mixture of C2 and C3 is a good description. The informality of C3 and the Christian language of C2 were combined by Ibrahim.

Ibrahim also avoided any reference to politics, human rights, or social issues in his programs. ‘I avoid it like the plague. Religion and politics don’t go well together. The furthest I [am willing to] go is to use phrases of Arabhood and human brotherhood.’<sup>102</sup> This indicates that in GRO’s broadcasts, CW5, referring to the Gospel having personal as well as societal demands, and CW4 about the need for the Gospel to challenge individuals as well as society prophetically, were only partially heeded. The Gospel that GRO proclaimed was individualized with no reference to politics, society, or issues of justice. The concept that a stand had to be taken against corporate evil was absent. This undermined part of the prophetic task of Christian communication. As the Gospel addresses people in their full environment, this choice of GRO was not in the best interest of the audience and it diminished its effectiveness in truly contextualizing its message. In contrast however this choice was in line with the desire of the churches of the Arab World that also tended to limit the Gospel to individuals and life within its church walls.

Some insight into GRO’s attitude to its audience can be learnt from Bond’s response to the terrorist destruction of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York on 11 September 2001. He wrote that his first reaction was ‘to identify as an American and classify the “thems” and “uses”, good guys and bad, white hats and black. [...] And it’s true that it was desperately wicked. [...] However, my first response failed to take into account that I, too, once lived my life completely in sin’ He wrote:.

<sup>99</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>100</sup> Timothy Ibrahim in an email to the author (7 November 2005).

<sup>101</sup> Ibrahim in an email to the author (8 November 2005).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.



What I fear is that condemnation, based on fear and anger, will distract us from our real purpose upon earth. What's at risk is that we'll lose our sense of purpose as Christians. [...] Having lost this eternal perspective we'll paint all Muslims, and all so-called 'foreigners' with the same brush. It's not only unfair, inaccurate and impractical, but it also makes us forget our job as ambassadors.<sup>103</sup>

In the context of the American nationalistic and anti-Muslim fervor, Bond's words were wise and principled. At that time, these words could have cost him sponsors as the negative feelings for Muslims ran deep in the USA in 2001. It seems not to have created problems for GRO. The heightened attention to the Arab World possibly also affected GRO's own understanding of the Arab World.

As Bond attracted program producers who, generally speaking, shared his views on how programs should be produced, it is informative for understanding the Arabic programming strategies to also see how producers of other Muslim languages faced the same questions. Mostofi, the producer of GRO's Farsi programs, had the following to say about his programming strategies:

My first goal in these programs in Voice of Love is to tell [the audience] that Jesus is not a foreign God, but that He is the only God, and that He is the God of the Universe.

Secondly, I try my best to separate Christianity from Western culture. [...] as Christianity is about the love of Jesus. [...] So the theme of the programs is about the love of Jesus, the person of Jesus, who He was, why He became a man.

Also, I want to give the people of the Middle East a break. God loves them, and He is not an angry God who is sitting somewhere high in the sky waiting for us to cross the line and go to the other world for Him to tear us apart.<sup>104</sup>

According to Mostofi, the people of the Middle East should 'get rid of the hatred and the bitterness that is in them'. He conceded that some of that 'may be legitimate because of the political situations in those countries and the [impact] of the West, but they should forgive and forget and receive Jesus and enter the eternal life.'<sup>105</sup>

Mostofi felt that his work was in a sense, fighting terrorism and Islamicism, as, 'the spirit behind terrorism is the spirit of Islam and very much the teachings of that religion'. In order to reach Muslims, Mostofi 'never talked about Islam directly', however 'I do believe that when the Love of Jesus and his Gospel is preached and when that love enters into the hearts of the people, and when they know the truth, the truth shall set them free. It worked for me and it works for them too.'<sup>106</sup>

Though it would have been better for GRO to have formal programming strategies, it seems that Bond was able to stimulate the production of programs that were quite interesting for Muslims in the Arab World within the framework of the

<sup>103</sup> Mike Bond, 'The Director's Chair; White Hats vs. Black', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 11 No. 3, October 2001), pp. 1, 3.

<sup>104</sup> Masood Mostofi in an email to the author (14 February 2005).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

of the limitations as mentioned above. This was foremost due to the fact that his main Arabic speaker, Ibrahim, came from a Muslim background himself. The freedom GRO gave Ibrahim for producing programs as he wanted to, ensured that he could speak directly to people from his own former context in a language that was suitable for Arab Muslims.

### 18.5 ACTUAL PROGRAMS

GRO's main program producer, Ibrahim, brought a distinctly unique style of broadcasting to GRO, as he, as an ex-Muslim, spontaneously contextualized his message.<sup>107</sup> Spontaneity seemed to be his hallmark. Ibrahim could not give much insight into the actual programs produced throughout the years:

I have been working on the programs for at least 10 years now, and I haven't kept track of any of them. I know that I have done many studies, on different subjects, such as the Sermon on the Mount, or on whole books such as Revelations. I have kept no records. [...] I speak on what the Lord lays on my heart, what He teaches me through my own readings or I do organized studies as the Lord leads. I merely follow the Lord's direction. I am not one to lay up files in storage of what I have and haven't done. I merely do as the Lord teaches me myself. [...] But, as to having something to go through for more details, we just don't work this way. [...] We just don't have file cabinets full of notes.<sup>108</sup>

In all its publications, the only concrete detail given about the programs of Ibrahim was that he had translated an English program made by BVB in 2003. The program was aimed at Iraq after it was invaded by American troops. BVB had taken the initiative 'regarding a program to reach out to Iraqi people with the love of Jesus'.<sup>109</sup> This one program was an exception to how Ibrahim usually operated. He usually did not translate programs and as the program was directed at Iraq it had political implications.

The only other concrete information about the actual programs produced was that the Gendis had made 'story telling programs'.<sup>110</sup> This approach was suitable from the perspective of contextualization and was suggested by some missiologists as the method for getting the content of the Gospel across without putting it into a Western theological framework.<sup>111</sup>

This meager information about the Arabic programs of GRO was the result of the freedom of the program producers. GRO was unable to generate more information about the content of the programs broadcast. This symbolizes the extent to

<sup>107</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>108</sup> Timothy Ibrahim in an email to the author (14 February 2005). All tapes of Ibrahim's were stored at GRO, but in the context of this study it was not possible to study them, beyond what was broadcast on BVB between 20-26 September 2004 as described in chapter 12.

<sup>109</sup> 'Encouraging Iraq', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 13 No. 2, August 2003), p. 3.

<sup>110</sup> 'Meet the Gendis', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 9 No. 3, December 1999), p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> See David J. Hesselgrave, 'Great Commission Contextualization', in *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (Vol. 12 No. 3, July-September 1995), pp. 141, 143.

which GRO had placed the onus for its programs content onto the Arabs producing them. It also reflected the entrepreneurial atmosphere in GRO where the filing of information was considered of lesser significance.

## 18.6 AUDIENCE RESPONSE

'The Lord has given us the most effective and efficient way in the world to reach Muslims en masse, and they're ripe!' Bond wrote shortly before the Arabic broadcasts in 1993 began.<sup>112</sup> 'We know that thousands of our Arabic brothers and sisters will be saved as a result of your broadcasts', HAM wrote to GRO at the time when GRO supplied HAM with only one half hour program each week.<sup>113</sup> This initial exaggerated optimism about the effect of the programs was soon replaced by a more sober attitude. During the board meetings of February 1994, the board discussed why TWR reportedly received about a thousand letters per month, while GRO did not. 'What are they doing to receive such feed back', Joyce Bond minuted. They also decided that beside the response address in the USA, a PO Box in Egypt should be opened.<sup>114</sup> There seemed no comprehension at that time from GRO of the difference between the size of the audience of the SW broadcasts of VOH compared to the MW broadcasts of TWR from Monte Carlo and Cyprus. Beside signal strength, the location of the station probably played a major role in lower response figures for broadcasts over HAM.

Mail began to arrive finally during 1995.<sup>115</sup> In his *President's Report* for 1995 Bond described that the outstanding event during that year was that the first responses to the Arabic programs were received. They started coming in February 1995, and soon they received eight letters from Jordan, six from Egypt and one from Syria, Israel and Saudi Arabia. According to Bond, these responses moved GRO 'from a category of being a theory to being a proven outreach to Muslims'.<sup>116</sup>

In December 1996, GRO estimated that about 40,000 Arabs listened to its broadcasts on HAM. It is unclear on what basis they could come to this conclusion, but this figure seems realistic.

In 1998, the broadcasting of GRO was expanded to an audio channel of the Amos satellite.<sup>117</sup> During that year, the response address in Egypt was facing disruption 'due to crackdowns'.<sup>118</sup> However, Bond reported in September 1999, that

<sup>112</sup> *GRO Newsletter* (November 1992), p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> Bond, 'Zowie! GRO goes on Air in Arabic'.

<sup>114</sup> 'Minutes of Annual Meetings' (14 February 1994). Mike Bond, 'From the Director's Chair', in *GRO Newsletter* (January 1995), p. 4.

<sup>115</sup> 'Look What God's Done!' in *GRO Newsletter-North American Edition* (Vol. 5 No. 6) (December 1995), p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> Michael J. Bond, 'Presidents' Report 1995' (1996). Actually, the very first response to GRO's Arabic programs, was of a woman in New Jersey who heard the program on her SW radio. She reported hearing the program to her daughter, who was one of the team producing the programs. 'Voice of Forgiveness Heard in New Jersey!' in *GRO Newsletter* (December 1993), p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> 'GRO's Programs Go on Satellite', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 8 No. 2, July 1998), p. 3.

<sup>118</sup> Michael Bond, 'Presidents Report' (2 December 1998). 'GRO to Sponsor Abraham', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 6 No. 3, December 1996), p. 1. 'Arabic Second Day On The Air', in *Outreach News* (Vol. 8 No. 1, April 1998), p. 1.

there was 'a dramatic increase' in the mail Ibrahim was receiving. The response was mainly coming to his address in the USA, but also by email. In 1999, the first response to the Amos audio channel was received, from Kuwait.<sup>119</sup>

By 2003, Bond said that GRO had 'received literally thousands of letters and emails, from over 25 countries, some letters in response to the radio broadcasts and some from websites, since we have begun to use the Web'.<sup>120</sup> These 'thousands' of responses were possibly mainly emails to Ibrahim's website and not mail directly based on his broadcasts. After its enthusiasm about the reception of 17 letters in 1995, GRO never published exact audience response figures. This was according to Bond, simply because he did not have them. He received 'only translated texts of some of the "best" ones' from his producers and these producers did not give GRO more details.<sup>121</sup>

GRO's lack of detailed insight into the results of its broadcasts should have worried its leadership. They did not have much factual information to make strategic choices about the value of their broadcasts. Due to the lack of information available it has been impossible to come to any conclusion about the audience response to GRO's programs. Based on the audience response figures of other Christian broadcasts to the Arab World on SW, it is unlikely that Ibrahim's five programs of 30 minutes each week on the BVB SW broadcasts, elicited more than 50 responses each month.

## 18.7 FINAL OBSERVATIONS

### *18.7.1 Indigenization*

The management of GRO was fully in the hands of Bond, his family, and his North American board. GRO did not employ any Arabs or natives from other Muslim countries. Formally, there was no measure of indigenization at all in GRO. With some justice GRO could be described as an organization that basically raised the money that was needed to enable its rather independent program producers to develop their own ministries.

GRO's approach made the organization dependent on its Arab and other program producers. GRO fully entrusted them with producing their own programs and did not interfere in matters of content - to the extent that it seemed hardly aware of the concrete content of the programs. This would seem an unwise practice but it indicates the commendable trust of GRO in the Arabs that it worked with. With that in mind, it is justifiable to conclude that there was a high level of indigenization in the informal community that GRO represented.

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<sup>119</sup> Michael Bond, 'President's Report to Board Meeting' (16 September 1999).

<sup>120</sup> Bond in an email to the author (11 July 2003).

<sup>121</sup> Bond in an email to the author (12 July 2003).

### **18.7.2 Contextualization**

#### **18.7.2.1 Homogenous Target Audience**

The formal target audience of GRO were ‘all Arabs’ and there is no evidence that the management of GRO realized the large differences within the Arab World. This means that organizationally, GRO did not have a homogenous target audience. It is generally accepted in such circumstances without clearly defined target audience guidelines that producers will tend to gravitate to making programs that are mostly suitable for their own cultural context. Therefore as GRO used Egyptian program producers only, such as Ibrahim, it seems fair to conclude that in reality, Muslims and Christians in Egypt were the main targeted audience. That is still too broad for being able to speak of a homogenous target audience though.

#### **18.7.2.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience**

Due to the fact that both Muslims and Christians were targeted in the programs, it was not possible to speak to the audience in its actual context, even if the focus in reality was on Egypt. Besides that, any subjects related to the socio-political circumstances of the audience, were avoided. For an organization that wanted to make contextualized programs, this was not a good choice. By avoiding societal issues, warnings CW4 and CW5 were not heeded since they demanded that the Gospel should be allowed to speak on societal issues in a prophetic manner, not just about personal issues of the soul. The avoidance of discussing the socio-political and macro-ethical implications of the Gospel for the Arab lands was a missed chance. GRO should have addressed corporate evil as well as personal sin. By not doing that it gave a one-sided view of what Christian discipleship entailed.

#### **18.7.2.3 Language**

Ibrahim, a former Muslim, used the Egyptian vernacular mixed with MSA. This meant that the programs were specifically suitable for Cairo and north Egypt although tens of millions of other Arabs could also have understood these programs. If Habibi and the Gendis also used this language in their programs it could be claimed that GRO did speak a language that was suitable for the northern Egyptian audience. However, it would be a mistake to assume that Arabs from all over the Arab World were thus truly ‘reached’ by using such a language.

#### **18.7.2.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms**

Organizationally, GRO lacked a clear view of its audience and of the issues pertaining to contextualizing the Gospel for the Arab World. Some agreements about linguistic and cultural forms did exist though, and these pointed to GRO’s desire to contextualize the Christian message by the careful usage of Islamic language without being confrontational and without assuming that the Gospel could be explained in Islamic jargon. Therefore, GRO heeded warning CW6 regarding the impossibility to separate Islamic terms and forms from their original meaning.

**18.7.2.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church**

Christ was portrayed in the historic Christian manner, as the Son of God who died and rose again for the forgiveness of sins of those who believe in Him. In that respect CW1, regarding the need to recognize certain absolute truths, was heeded.

In an effort to speak in a meaningful manner to Muslims, GRO avoided using the word *church* and reference to the institutional side of the Body of Christ was purposely avoided. This was not in line with CW3, about the need to contextualize the Gospel within the Church community and in a manner that is rooted in the unity of the Church.

This approach was also not created within the community of churches in the Arab World; the fact that neither GRO nor Ibrahim had ongoing contacts with churches in Egypt was not ideal and GRO therefore did not heed CW2.

**18.7.2.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

GRO's Arabic broadcasts to the Arab World were done through a broadcaster that was known for its links with Israel and for its Christian-Zionist leanings. This meant that GRO's programs were broadcast in a media environment that was considered part of the enemy camp by most Arab Muslims and Christians. It was not a wise choice for GRO to place its programs with HAM and BVB as that impacted on the interpretation of the programs by the audience.

**18.7.3 Christian Witness**

The entrepreneurial climate within GRO, where issues were solved and matters thought through when they occurred, embodied something refreshing compared to some of the older and larger mission organizations involved in producing Arabic programs. These other groups have sometimes been hampered by their outdated production methods and bureaucracies. Many of these never had the weekly output of five Arabic programs of 30 minutes with a speaker like Ibrahim, let alone all the other programs GRO generated.

A great advantage in the approach of GRO was that they were able to produce many Arabic programs at low cost. It was doubtful whether, in the long term, they could maintain this low-cost approach. It was entirely dependent on a sandwich program format and it could not respond readily to any potential change in the financial and personnel support needs of its main speaker, Ibrahim, with respect to programming and audience follow-up.

It would be interesting for GRO and the other Christian Arab producers and broadcasters, to study the impact of life outside the Arab World on the abilities of their Arab program producers in regard to their ability to produce culturally and linguistically relevant programs for those living within the Arab World. The Arabic speakers of GRO had all lived in the USA for a considerable period of time. It is highly likely that the longer that they had lived there, the more out of touch they had become with the languages and cultures of the Arab World. It is predictable that the abilities of these speakers to produce programs that are suitable for the context of their audiences would diminish. GRO would be wise to also look for program producers living in the Arab World.

The programs of GRO were focused on the *kerygma* of the Christian witness. GRO purposely avoided mentioning the Church, so in its programs it did not witness to the unity of the Church. It also did not show interest in producing programs with a focus on the societal life of its audience. Hence, the *koinonial* and the *diakonal* elements of the Christian witness were not present in GRO's programs.





## **19 THE ARAB WORLD: UNITY AND VARIETY OF CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING**

This chapter summarizes the extent and effectiveness of the indigenization and contextualization of the Christian radio broadcasting industry for the Arab Muslim World. This is achieved by reviewing its progress using the historical framework similar to the one used for describing the development of public radio in the Arab World. Before 1953, there were some initial efforts to begin Christian Arab Radio; from 1953 to 1970, the number of organizations involved in Christian broadcasts and their airtime increased much; between 1970 and 1990, the number of organizations continued to grow, but their airtime increased only marginally; after 1990, there was not much organizational development, but the airtime grew much. The general increase in airtime for Christian Arab radio is described in this chapter, and summarized in *Figure 19.1* and *Figure 19.2*.

Next, the perspectives of the Ecumenical and the Evangelical broadcasters regarding contextualization are treated. This is followed by conclusions about the case study of the broadcasts of 20-26 September 2004 that were studied in depth in previous chapters. The programs are evaluated based on the six Radio Contextualization Realms (RCR1-RCR6) and the six Contextualization Warnings (CW1-CW6) as presented in the Introduction to this study.

This chapter ends with some final observations. These include an evaluation of the usefulness of John Travis' C1-C6 spectrums for describing contextualization on Christian radio.

### **19.1 INDIGENIZATION IN THE ARAB WORLD**

#### ***19.1.1 Period of Early Arabic Broadcasting: 1928-1953***

Christian Arab radio was initiated by North American and European missionaries. In 1944, Samuel Zwemer called for the usage of radio for the apostolate to Muslims in the Arab World. This was exemplary for missionaries who had an interest in radio. The experience during World War II in the USA and Europe of the power of propaganda radio coupled with the example of the evangelistic Shortwave (SW) broadcasts by HCJB ('Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings') in and from Latin America was of great encouragement. The missionaries understood the potential for radio in the Arab World, even though it was still rather under developed and under utilized in the Arab World at that stage.

In 1948, the Near East Christian Council (NECC) decided to begin developing radio production; the first concrete step was the creation of a radio studio in Beirut in 1950, by Western missionaries. Around that same time, the Middle East Lutheran Mission (MELM) in Beirut, which was the Arabic branch of The Lutheran

Hour (TLH) of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (USA) began producing its own Arabic programs. MELM began to broadcast on Lebanese national radio in 1950. MELM was mainly driven by Western missionaries.

These early initiatives to develop Christian Arab radio were of a denominational or an Ecumenical character. The first developments were concentrated in Lebanon, a country with a Christian majority that had unusual freedoms compared to the Christians in the rest of the Arab World.

All earlier broadcasts of Protestant programs were done over Arabic national stations which only allowed programs aimed at Christians. It is possible that TLH had done some Arabic broadcasts during the late 1940s by SW from Tangier, but this needs further study.

### ***19.1.2 Period of Egyptian Predominance: 1953-1970***

#### **19.1.2.1 Context**

This period saw an important increase in Christian Arab broadcasts. This increase was related to the desire to witness to the Gospel amongst Arab Muslims and to build up the local Churches of the Arab World. Each of the new organizations that began broadcasting did so against the backdrop of the Cold War and the impact of Nâsirism and Communism in the Arab World. During this period, these philosophies were seen as the main competitors for the hearts and minds of the Arabs. Those revolutionary ideologies were popular among the Arabs as they had played an important role in the campaigns for independence from the Western colonial powers. During this period, there were some major upheavals in the Arab World. These included both the war of Israel against Egypt, Syria and Jordan in June 1967 and the civil war in Yemen (1962-1970) between the Royalists supported by Saudi Arabia and the Republicans backed by Egypt.

The economy of the USA was booming during the 1950s and 1960s. Christians saw the threat of atheist enemies spreading all over the world and therefore money was made available for this first growth spurt of Christian broadcasts to the Arabs. In spite of the fact that Europe had still not recovered economically from World War II, NECC received some German and Scandinavian Lutheran sponsoring for its Arabic broadcasts.

#### **19.1.2.2 Organizational Developments**

##### ***Broadcasters***

The period of 1953-1970 saw a great increase in organizations that were involved in broadcasting and producing Christian Arab radio programs. The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDAs) in Beirut began developing radio programs in Arabic and these were broadcast from 1953-1955 from Sri Lanka over SW. These were probably the first-ever transnational Protestant radio broadcasts in Arabic.

In 1956, ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa') in Liberia added Arabic SW broadcasts to its bouquet of languages. This happened because its parent organization, Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), had missionaries in the Arabic-speaking countries of Sudan and Southern Arabia. SIM and ELWA were non-denominational

organizations, with a very conservative Evangelical theological view of the Christian faith. North American missionaries took the initiative for starting ELWA. Between 1956 and 1959, ELWA had rather irregular Arabic broadcasts. By 1960 it had enough programs for more regular broadcasting to the Middle East and the Peninsula region and to North Africa as well. Until 1963, these were the only regular broadcasts of Christian Arab programs on SW. ELWA began its own production studio in Beirut in 1963. It also had some production in Aden, but that stopped in 1965.

In 1963, Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) began broadcasting three hours of Arabic programs per day on SW from Ethiopia. The organization was jointly owned by Lutheran Churches in the USA, Germany and Scandinavia. Whereas ELWA and the organizations it propelled into producing programs were conservative and anti-Ecumenical, RVOG was initially also rather conservative as regards its views of Jesus Christ, the Bible and the need for personal salvation of its audience, but it also participated in the Ecumenical movement. For its Arabic broadcasts, RVOG used the programs that were produced in Beirut by its partner organizations NECC and MELM.

In 1965, Trans World Radio (TWR) began Arabic SW broadcasts from Radio Bonaire in the Netherlands Antilles. These were initially 15 minutes per day. Compared to the broadcast of ELWA, TWR added some airtime, but no different programs. TWR was a non-denominational, theologically conservative Evangelical organization. It was set up in the USA for broadcasting the Gospel to Europe but it also received substantial funding from Germany. It had begun in 1954 from Tangier and after 1960 moved its broadcasting to Monte Carlo. During the first years, TWR filled its Arabic airtime mostly with programs from Back to God Hour (BTGH), Arab World Ministries (AWM) which was then called North Africa Mission (NAM), and Gospel Missionary Union (GMU). These were all broadcasting through ELWA as well. TWR began building its own studio in Beirut in 1965. In 1967, TWR began its first medium wave (MW) broadcasts from Radio Monte Carlo in Monte Carlo (RMC-MC) to North Africa, while it continued its SW broadcasts from Bonaire.

As TWR and ELWA were rather similar in their theological outlook, it is not clear why they created their separate production facilities. It is likely that this was related to the importance that was given to the ownership of broadcasting facilities during those years, beside the need for uniqueness in regard to fundraising.

### ***Program Producers***

ELWA played a major role in propelling other organizations into developing their own production facilities for Arabic radio programs. Different Protestant institutes in Beirut, including the Baptist denomination, became involved in radio production during the 1950s and 1960s. ELWA was also foundational in encouraging organizations outside Lebanon to begin Arabic program production. The two most important of these due to their productivity and longevity were the Back to God Hour (BTGH) and North Africa Ministries (NAM), which was later called Arab World Ministries (AWM).

BTGH began producing Arabic programs in Chicago (USA) in 1958. BTGH was a theologically conservative Reformed organization owned by the Christian Reformed Churches of North America (CRC-NA).

NAM began productions in 1961, first in Morocco and after 1965 from its Radio School of the Bible (RSB) in Marseille (France). NAM was a non-denominational Evangelical organization with a conservative theology.

NECC had further developed its own production studio that it had initiated in 1950 in Beirut, in order to be able to fill the three hours per day that RVOG made available for Arabic broadcasts. This resulted in RVOG broadcasting mostly Lebanese programs. Although there was some cross-over in programming between ELWA and RVOG, for instance in the programs of MELM, the stations developed increasingly different approaches to what Christian programming entailed. Until 1962, missionaries had been the main members of NECC, but in 1962 NECC's name came to mean Near East Council of Churches. As the organization then became an Ecumenical organization with the Protestant Churches of the Arab World as its members, full Arab ownership of the radio ministry of NECC was accomplished.

In 1968, the Southern Baptist denominational mission from the USA formalized its interest in radio productions in Lebanon by setting up its Baptist Center for Mass Communication (BCMC) with its own radio studio. This studio was owned by the Near East Baptist Mission (NEBM), a subsidiary of the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptists. BCMC represented the formalization of earlier programs produced by the Baptists in Lebanon.

TWR's plan to start broadcasting on MW encouraged Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) in Morocco to become involved in radio production. GMU was a non-denominational Evangelical organization with a conservative theology, gravitating to the views of the Plymouth Brethren. GMU began productions in 1966 through the help of AWM in Marseille. In 1970 GMU inaugurated its own facilities in Malaga (Spain), called the Malaga Media Center (MMC). It developed into a similar production organization as RSB in Marseille; GMU's focus was on Moroccan programs in the spoken languages of Morocco, while AWM's focus was on North Africa as a whole and used mostly Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

### **19.1.2.3 Airtime**

Between 1956 and 1966, the number of hours of Arabic broadcast per week went from nil to 3¾, as can be seen in *Figure 19.1*. This period was a timely start for Christian Arab broadcasting because radio became a very important medium in the Arab World; the number of non-Christian Arabic SW broadcasts increased greatly and the ownership of cheap transistor radios multiplied among the Arabs.

### **19.1.2.4 Indigenization**

Management of most organizations involved in broadcasting and producing Christian Arab programs was in the hands of North Americans and some Europeans during this period. Western missionaries provided most of the technical know-how and the daily management. They were also the guardians of the content of the programs, both by imposing their Western creeds and also by looking for suitable Ara-

bic speakers from their own denominational *milieus*. The missionaries also often wrote the messages *verbatim* that were to be read by their Arabic staff or by volunteers. NECC and BTGH were two exceptions. NECC enjoyed the help of missionaries but always in support roles and as counterparts to the national leadership. In BTGH, the production work was solely done by its radio pastor, Bassam Madany, a recent Syrian immigrant to the USA who had convinced BTGH to begin this Arabic ministry.

It is interesting to note that, whereas in secular Arab radio the role of Egypt and Egyptians was preponderant, this was not the case in Christian Arab radio, even though Egyptian Christians formed the largest group of Christians in the Arab World. During this period from 1953-1970, Christian from the Levant played the major role in the Christian radio developments.

### **19.1.3 Period of Increase of Transnational Broadcasting: 1970-1990**

#### **19.1.3.1 Context**

This period saw major upheavals in the Arab World. These included Jordan's low-scale civil war in 1970, the October War of Egypt and Syria against Israel in 1973 and the civil war of Lebanon (1975-1990). From 1975, insurgents from Polisario fought a guerilla against the inclusion of the Western Sahara (the former Marueccos Espagnol) in Morocco. In 1977, the USA was instrumental in Israel and Egypt signing the Camp David Peace Accords. In 1988 the Palestinians began their uprising against Israel. Throughout this period, Sudan fought a civil war.

These wars in the Arab World created insecurity among the Arabs. Since none of the Arabic governments were willing to allow free media, their citizens depended to a large extent on SW radio broadcasts for an alternative perspective of the actualities. This created a large audience for international SW radio, and in turn increased the audience for the Christian broadcasts.

The mood in the Arab World changed from an interest Nâsirism and Socialism to an interest in Islamism as the framework political thought. The secular Arab governments that had been able to liberate their nations, had not been able to deliver on their promises, which in many Arab countries led to a swing to religion as the main source for renewal of society. In Egypt, President Anwâr al-Sâdât was killed by Islamic radicals in 1981.

In the USA, Christian radio continued to grow during the 1970s, thus proving to American Christians that radio was a useful medium. This, combined with the growth of the American economy and a general interest in events in the Arab world, made Christians responsive to requests for further developing the evangelism by radio to the Arab World. In Europe, the economy began to boom in the mid 1960s and continued until the late 1970s. This enabled European investments in Christian radio broadcasts in Arabic. Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) and International Broadcasting Association (IBRA) began Arabic broadcasts during this period. They were wholly European ventures while Adventist World Radio (AWR), which likewise started broadcasting in this period, was also set-up with major European investments.

	1957	1962	1966	1972	1976	1980	1983	1988	1992	1996	1999	2004
ELMA 1956-90	7	10½	10½	21	10½	15¼	16¼	17½				
RVOG 1963-76			21	21	21							
TWR 1965-			1¼	5¼	13	28	28¾	34¼	32½	27	41	26¼
FEB 1971-				14	14	14	17½	19	16¾	11¼	14	17½
IBRA 1975-					?	1¼	3½	3½	16	65	82	28
FR 1990-					7	3½	7	7	21	28	35	91
AWR 1976-					1¾	2	½	2¼	½	77	77	22
HAN/BVB 1979-						?	?	?	?	?	?	12
HCB 1990-									½	7	17¼	21
TOTAL:	7	10½	33¼	61¼	67¼	65	70	80	87¼	215¼	266¼	217¾

Figure 19.1 Hours of Christian Arab Broadcasts per organization per week: 1957-2004<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The figures as given in Figure 19.1 and 19.2 are based on research of the author as described in the preceding chapters, and on figures of Douglas A. Boyd. Boyd was professor for the Department of Communication at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky (USA) and an expert in Arabic

### 19.1.3.2 Organizational Developments

#### **Broadcasters**

The period of 1970 to 1990 saw further growth among the organizations that were broadcasting to the Arab World. The growth in broadcasting hours per day was not linear. In 1975 and 1976 however the Christian Arab radio industry suffered two major setbacks: firstly, ELWA's decision to stop its broadcasts from Liberia to the Middle East and to focus on North Africa and secondly, RVOG's closure in 1976. These events seriously diminished the hours broadcast to the Arab World for some years.

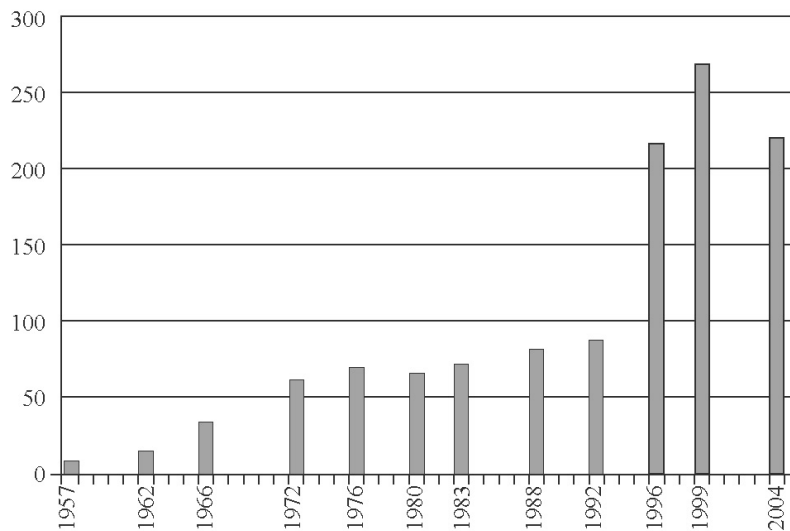


Figure 19.2 Hours of Christian Arab Broadcasts per week: 1957-2004

In 1971, FEBA began Arabic broadcasts from its own SW station in The Seychelles. FEBA was a British non-denominational organization with a conservative Evangelical theology. This station, that was especially good for reaching the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East, was actually begun with the intent of reaching India. Initially, ELWA's studio in Beirut was responsible for the program content on FEBA's broadcasts. In 1975, ELWA withdrew from that studio, as it wanted to concentrate on broadcasts to North Africa. FEBA took over the ELWA studio in Beirut and developed it further.

In 1974, TWR started MW broadcasts to the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula from Radio Monte Carlo's relay station for the Middle East (RMC-ME) on

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SW radio. Douglas A. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Middle East* (Ames, 1999, first edition 1993), p. 297. He updated some of those figures in Douglas A. Boyd in an email to the author (6 July 2006). Boyd omitted any reference to IBRA and HAM/BVB. As his figures are for SW only, he did not include the transnational MW broadcasts that were also taken into account in *Figure 19.1* and *Figure 19.2*.

Cyprus. These were important steps as this gave much better reception and a larger audience for the programs than the SW broadcasts ever had.

In 1974, Family Radio (FR) in the USA began to broadcast Arabic programs. FR was a ministry of Harold Camping, who was, initially a member of one the Churches of CRC-NA. From its beginning, BTGH played an important role in creating the Arabic program content for the broadcast of FR.

The SDAs picked up their Arabic broadcasts in 1975, after 20 years of absence. This time, the programs were produced in a studio in France and they were broadcast through the Adventist broadcaster AWR that used the SW station Radio Mediterranean from Malta. The focus of these broadcasts was on North Africa. European SDAs led this development even though Christian Arabs produced the programs.

In 1975 IBRA, the radio ministry of the main Pentecostal denomination in Sweden began broadcasting in Arabic. It initially depended on BTGH, AWM, GMU and some of the other established producers but it also began its own program production in a studio that was inaugurated in Alexandria (Egypt) in 1975. This signaled a shift of program production away from Lebanon. This shift was made urgent because of the Lebanese civil war that began in 1975.

In spite of the civil war that had begun in 1975, FEBA insisted on keeping its studio in Lebanon working. In 1976, TWR decided to close its Beirut Studio. NECC closed its studio in Beirut in 1980.

In 1977, the revolutionary government of Ethiopia nationalized RVOG. This meant the end of an important Christian Arab broadcaster. These setbacks in Lebanon and Ethiopia were the first serious problems that the Christian broadcasters and producers in the Middle East had to face. Until then their growth had been rather linear.

High Adventure Ministries (HAM), reorganized in 2002 as Bible Voice Broadcasting (BVB), began Arabic broadcasts on MW from Israeli-occupied Southern Lebanon in 1979 and on SW in 1981. HAM was a non-denominational Christian-Zionist organization with a Charismatic persuasion. It was set up as a direct answer to a concrete need for a means of communication by the pro-Israeli Southern Lebanese Army (SLA).

During the 1980s, there were no further organizational developments that impacted the general history of Christian Arab broadcasting. It is tempting to assume that this period of organizational stabilization reflected the rather strong economic crisis in the USA and Europe during the 1980s, but this would need further study.

### ***Producers***

The number of program producers continued to grow. Many Arab individuals became involved in producing programs including some pastors from churches in Egypt and Lebanon. An organization called Life Agape began to develop a serious role in Arabic program production in 1978. In 1979 Pacific Garden Mission (PGM), known in the USA for its programs titled *Unshackled*, began to translate its English programs into Arabic. Many other Christian organizations in the USA decided to do likewise, and had their programs translated literally into Arabic.



### **19.1.3.3 Airtime**

During this period the hours broadcast per week on SW and MW increased from 61¼ in 1972 to 80 in 1988. This last figure is tentative as it has not been possible to assess the number of hours HAM broadcast in 1988. Broadly speaking this period was characterized by three phases; an initial period of growth (1970-1971), stagnation (1972-1981) and then further growth (1982-1990).

### **19.1.3.4 Indigenization**

During this period, many of the organizations involved in Christian radio broadcasts continued their habit of having Western missionaries for their technical management and they were also held responsible for the content of the programming. However, there was a noticeable shift to indigenizing the management of the production studios.

At the beginning of this period, ELWA had concluded that there was no suitable Lebanese Christians to run their studio in Lebanon but during the 1970s, ELWA tried unsuccessfully to appoint an Egyptian as its studio director. In Liberia ELWA's Arabic a Palestinian Christian, Suhail Zarifa, managed broadcasts. BTGH's Arabic department continued to be managed by Madany. NECC continued to have its studios managed by Lebanese Christians, among whom Ya'qûb Ḥûrânî played an important role. In TWR's Beirut studio, management was handed over to 'Adlî Fam, an Egyptian.

In the other organizations, Arabs also played important roles, even when they did not have managerial tasks. With the increase in airtime, the role of native Arab producers became more important. This gave them more leverage in the ministries they worked with, even though formally the Western missionaries were still the major managers. During this period, the relative importance of Egyptians in the Christian radio milieu increased remarkably; this is likely the result of an increased freedom and self-assertion of the Church in Egypt, and also of the civil war in Lebanon which shifted the attention of the radio broadcasters and producers away from Lebanon to Egypt.

## ***19.1.4 Period of Arabic Radio after the Second Gulf War: Since 1991***

### **19.1.4.1 Context**

In 1990, Iraq annexed Kuwait and in 1991, a large USA-led coalition defeated Iraq and drove it out of Kuwait. New impetus was given to the peace-process between Israel and the Palestinians and resulted in the historic Madrid Accords in 1992. These events attracted tremendous interest in the media of the Western world. The continuing problems between Israel and the Palestinians and the spectacular invasion in Iraq in 2003 and its subsequent occupation, mainly by troops from the USA, were major news items in the Western media. This renewed interest in the Arab World since 1990, came at a time when the Western economies were recovering from the economic crisis of the 1980s.

The fall of Communism created new opportunities for the Christian broadcasters. In 1992, cheap airtime became available on many of the former Soviet Union's strong SW transmitters. Deregulation in Western Europe also made airtime avail-

able on transmitters in the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria and elsewhere. In the meantime, technical changes had taken place and there were now very strong MW transmitters available in the former Soviet Union and Europe that enabled powerful broadcasts to the Arab World. Many of the Christian broadcasters began to buy airtime from these newly available transmitters.

The falling apart of the Soviet Union and Communism gave many Western Christians the idea that Islam was now the real enemy. Christian radio broadcasts to the Communist world decreased while broadcasts to the Arab World increased. The growth in airtime was paid for by an increasing number of Western organizations that were willing to support the broadcasting of programs in the newly available airtime.

#### **19.1.4.2 Organizational Developments**

Since 1977, ELWA had totally depended on program suppliers for its broadcasts to North Africa. During this period, it broadcast programs from AWM, GMU, BTGH and some others for ten to 18 hours per week. However, in 1990 ELWA's broadcasts to North Africa ceded as the station was destroyed in Liberia's civil war. The loss of ELWA was painful. It had played such a pivotal role in the early years of broadcasts.

During the same year in which ELWA was destroyed, HCJB began Arabic broadcasts. It was based in Spain, where it had its own studio. As regards its theological views, HCJB did not contribute anything new to the amalgam of broadcasters; it was Evangelical and theologically conservative. With its broadcasts from the United Kingdom by SW, HCJB reached North Africa best, and it endeavored to focus on that area. HCJB could be seen as a replacement of ELWA, though it played a much more active role in developing programs.

The other major change was that HAM's broadcasts from Southern Lebanon were stopped as Israel withdrew from the area in 2000. This greatly added to the financial problems of HAM and it stopped its SW and MW broadcasts altogether. Some of the former participants in HAM regrouped to become the SW broadcaster BVB in 2002. That organization shared the same Christian-Zionist, Charismatic theology as HAM had.

#### ***Producers***

One of the large additions to the bouquet of program suppliers was Global Radio Outreach (GRO) that began producing Arabic programs in 1993. GRO operated within the Fellowship of Christian Assemblies (FOCA), a Pentecostal umbrella organization in North America with a conservative theology. This organization quickly grew to be one of the largest Arabic producers as regards its output, though, interestingly, it was one with probably the smallest staff.

In 1994, Madany retired from working with BTGH. The organization continued, though in a reduced capacity; some of Madany's programs were still broadcast regularly. To a certain extent, the broadcasts of Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF) of Victor Atallah, who began radio broadcasts on TWR during the 1990s, can be seen as a continuation of Madany's radio ministry. Atallah began broad-

casts at approximately the same time as when Madany stopped and he also received financial support from the same Reformed constituency.

In 1996-1997, the radio production work of BCMC came to a standstill. The IMB in the USA decided to divest itself of all of its assets as it wanted to concentrate on Church planting only. This meant an end to over 30 years of involvement by the Lebanese Baptists in Christian broadcasting. The fine studio they had was rented to a Christian satellite TV broadcaster, SAT-7. This was rather symbolic of the shifting interest in media ministries in the Arab World from radio broadcasting to television broadcasting by satellite.

#### **19.1.4.3 Airtime**

The broadcasters increased their airtime rather spectacularly. By 1992, the total airtime was over 87¼ hours per week. In 2004, this had increased to 217¾ hours per week, with a peak of 266¼ hours in 1999. The distribution of airtime between 1999 and 2004 must be noted. Whereas FR continued to increase its airtime, AWR and IBRA cut deeply in their airtime. Irrespective of this, compared to 1992, all broadcasters had increased their airtime by 2004. The fact that for this period not all information is available for the number of hours HAM broadcast, does not impact these overall figures much.

#### **19.1.4.4 Indigenization**

Most of the studios of the Christian broadcasters and producers were now generally run by Arabs, both for program writing as well as for the technical and overall management. There was a perceptible increase in independent Arabic producers during this period, both inside and outside the Arab World. This development was encouraged by the broadcasters and the tremendous increase in airtime to fill. The broadcasters sometimes gave these independent producers financial and managerial support, but they acted rather independently. One example of such an organization was Arab Woman Today (AWT) that was begun by a Jordanian national in 1999.

In contrast to the beginnings of Christian Arab radio production, Lebanon as a production base had decreased in importance. Some studios began to function again after the civil war was over but a massive shift had taken place in productions to Egypt and Jordan. In the 1990s, programs were also produced in Khartoum, Yemen, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Malta, Cyprus, France, the USA, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. This reflected the increased interest in reaching people groups in their native languages with the Gospel, and also the increased interest of emigrated Christian Arabs in witnessing to the nations they originally came from.

## 19.2 CONTEXTUALIZATION AND CHRISTIAN WITNESS

### *19.2.1 Period of Egyptian Predominance: 1953-1970*

#### **19.2.1.1 Ecumenical Perspectives**

##### ***NECC 1957***

Harold Fisher of NECC wrote the programming goals of NECC in 1957. This was the first example of a carefully developed philosophy regarding how to produce Christian programs for a Muslim audience. NECC's approach was developed in the context of NECC's broadcasts over national radio in Beirut.

NECC felt it had both a function in developing the national community and also in teaching the Christian faith. It wanted to steer absolutely clear of politics as the political direction in the Arab World could change overnight. This attitude that politics should be avoided in Christian programs has been a continuing refrain among the Christian broadcasters and programs producers. In a society where politics are so important, this decision was an early blow against contextualization and especially in the rather liberal climate of Lebanon, not wholly understandable.

NECC also wanted to underplay the role of Jews and Western history even though these were important in the Christian faith. NECC wanted to strengthen the self-confidence of the listeners, which was greatly needed in the midst of the chaotic changes in the Arab World. This was necessary for the audience, but it was also seen as a manner to gain its trust.

The Christian message had to be presented in a manner that would not injure the sensitivities of Muslims. Practically, NECC wanted to educate the Muslims first in some Christian thinking about matters like honesty, kindness, truth, before presenting the Gospel in its fullness. The line of thought was that if these Christian virtues would be presented, this could work as the *bait* for the audience; they would never realize that they were being hooked by the Gospel. This method might open closed minds, change biases, and lead to a confrontation with the Gospel.

Fisher made these comments in the context of NECC only being able to broadcast its programs on national radio in Lebanon in 1957. Evangelism was impossible. When NECC began its broadcasts on RVOG, where it had more liberty than on national radio in Lebanon, his ideas were only partially implemented. However, his concrete suggestions as well as his philosophy of Christian broadcasting in the Arab World would be major issues in programming discussions among all Christian broadcasters in the decades to come. Especially his comment that the sensitivities of the Muslims should not be hurt in the presentation of the Gospel was a recurring theme in discussions about contextualization.

##### ***NECC 1963***

NECC wanted to present the Biblical Gospel and its implications for the individual and society as best as it could to the Muslims of the Arab World. This entailed inviting Muslims to become believers in the Christian message. In order to avoid back-to-back preaching in its programs, and also in order to guarantee that its over-

overall broadcasts would have a holistic approach to the Christian faith, RVOG adopted the 30/70 Formula. This formula prescribed that in all broadcasts, including those of NECC, 30 percent of airtime should be filled with evangelistic and pastoral programs, while 70 percent should contain educational and informative programs.

When NECC first began broadcasting its programs over RVOG in 1963, the 30/70 Formula was not implemented. The majority of NECC's programs contained the back-to-back preaching that it said it wanted to avoid. It seems that the program producers had difficulty making the shift from how the Church communicates to its own flock, to communication by radio. It took NECC a major effort to shift its broadcasts to more educational and informative programs.

### ***NECC 1969-1970***

At a conference of the Christian radio broadcasters in Beirut in 1969, Hūrānī said that one of the main things NECC wanted to do was place Bibles in the hands of Muslims to let them read it for themselves. He testified to the Bible's power to convince Muslims to become Christians and he said that NECC received many letters from former Muslims testifying that they had become Christians, even in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. This is noteworthy, as NECC seems to have changed its course rather dramatically in the following year.

In 1970, Hūrānī concluded in his *Development Plan for Arabic Programming* that the 30/70 Formula was not very helpful in creating holistic programs. The formula was intended to create programming that was contextually suitable but in practice it did not have this effect as many program producers assumed that it meant that 30 percent of the programs should be religious, and 70 percent secular. That was the opposite of a holistic approach. The formula created a sharp division between what was perceived to be *Christian* and *secular* in the broadcasts. Hūrānī did not agree with this division and argued that there is no such thing as religious or secular, as Christ is the redeemer of the whole world. He should therefore be at the heart of all programming of NECC, whether programs are pastoral or educational. This approach introduced a major shift in NECC's broadcasts.

Hūrānī reported that NECC was to place more focus on programs for development after 1970. His main reason for this was that he and his team felt that they were part of the Arab region and, like any other agency involved in developmental projects, they wanted to play a role in helping the peoples of the Middle East to stand on their feet again and regain their dignity. He lauded the Arab's urge for freedom and independence, for social and economic progress, and for unity. 'The Gospel of Christ for a dignified man and a loyal citizen is the kind [of] message that we shall try to convey to our audience in the area.'

The choice of NECC to participate in the development of the Arab World through its programs should be seen as a serious effort to contextualize the Christian message. It was an implementation of the *diakonal* witness of the Church. However, NECC's diakonal witness was done at the expense of its *kerygmatic* witness. This focus on the societal implications of the Gospel was an underestimation of the importance of religion for individuals, thus overlooking an important part of the actual context of its audience. It also made the Christian *message* subservient

to the needs of the audience, thus sidelining the idea that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is salvific truth that must be proclaimed to all mankind. NECC therefore only implemented RCR2 partially, and it only heeded CW4 and CW5 partially. RCR5 was also not well implemented. Even though NECC was an organization of Arabic Churches, its programming policies were not appreciated by the majority of Church leadership in the Arab World, hence CW2 was also trespassed against. This meant that the witness of *koinonia* was not as strong as could have been expected from an Ecumenical broadcaster.

Ḥūrānī believed that the efforts of missionaries in the Arab World had been relatively unsuccessful because of their negative view of Islam. He proposed to treat Islam as a religion that was closer to the Christian faith than was usually held by the Christians of the Arab World and by missionaries. He was also impressed by the allegiance of the Muslims to their *ummah*, which made it hard for them to become Christians. He therefore proposed to not convert Muslims to the Christian faith, but to rather show them how their own *Qur'ān* proves that Jesus Christ is both God and part of God. He wanted these Muslims to stay within the fold of Islam, as better Muslims. Among the Christian broadcasters, this approach of Ḥūrānī was new; a similar approach would also be advocated in 1974 among the Evangelical broadcasters by Charles H. Kraft, an anthropologist at Fuller's Theological Seminary.

The theologically conservative Evangelical radio producers took many more decades to accept the idea that Christian broadcasting also entails more socially oriented programs and also involves participation in the socio-economic development of their target area. By 2004, these organizations faced the same problems that NECC did in the 1960s; they seemed unable to create programming in which religious and social programs were truly integrated.

### 19.2.1.2 Evangelical Perspectives

#### *ELWA 1966*

ELWA wanted to present the Gospel as best as they could to Muslims and to invite them to become believers in the Christian message. They defined the Gospel differently than NECC and RVOG; the main difference was that for ELWA, the full focus was on the individual and his relationship with God, whereas NECC also had an eye for the societal aspects of the Gospel. In communication terms, both perspectives agreed about the objectivity of the truth of the Gospel and the necessity to present it; they differed about the full implications of the Gospel.

The vast majority of Protestants in the Arab World saw their views reflected in ELWA's approach to the Gospel; they were used to acting as outsiders to any societal developments. Hence, they tended to speak about the Gospel in mostly personal and individualistic terms. This did not only reflect their minority position in Arab society, but probably also the theology of the missionaries from the USA and Europe who founded these Arab Protestant Churches.

In May 1966, after ten years of Arabic broadcasts, ELWA brought some of those involved in their broadcasting and program production together in Liberia to discuss how to make their programs suitable for Muslims. It is interesting to note

that these meetings did not discuss the programming philosophy or program formats as such. ELWA and its producers seemed satisfied that the programs reflected the Church's communications to its own members, that is, with music, a sermon and a prayer. In this respect, ELWA and RVOG were rather similar in the practical implementation of their different ideals.

In these meetings, Madany of BTGH played an outspoken role. There were discussions about the need to only use suitable music. Church music, even the oriental Church hymns, was deemed unsuitable as it could not be understood by Muslims. There was no other Christian music existent at that time, so the only option left was the usage of conservative instrumental music, like the guitar or the cither.

The participants in the meetings agreed that the broadcasts should focus on a proper understanding of what Christians believe regarding the Trinity. There was also a realization that the point of contact with Muslims was not in proper theology, but in the shared human predicament of being sinners and being in need of a Savior. The broadcasting of Church services was ruled out as that was deemed unintelligible for Muslims. Some present suggested that they should not portray the Churches as they existed in the Middle East. This was probably because the broadcasts also reached North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula that only knew House Churches. It is possible that some of those present felt that for the Muslims in the Middle East these Churches were not good examples either. No alternatives were discussed though. These ideas showed that the *kerygmatic* witness of ELWA was preponderant, while a witness of *koinonia* was lacking.

News broadcasts were ruled out as they were deemed too controversial in the context of the Arab World. Some disagreed with this decision as they considered news broadcasts to be part of the public responsibility of any radio station. This issue was related to the *diakonal* witness of ELWA; the choice against speaking the Gospel with a socio-political dimension meant that for ELWA, the *kerygmatic* witness was prevalent.

There was awareness that North Africa and the Middle East were culturally quite different, but there was also an expectation that these differences would diminish, in accordance with prevalent Pan-Arabic ideals in the Arab World. The idea that the Arab World would further unite culturally, proved to be only partially true. This pre-supposition was held by all Christian broadcasters and impacted some of their programming choices. It was, for instance, a reason why there was almost universal agreement that the language of Pan-Arabism, MSA, should be used.

### **Major Organizations 1969**

A rather large group of representatives of the major organizations involved in radio broadcasting met in Beirut in 1969. There were representatives of ELWA, TWR and RVOG, as well as of many producers such as AWM and GMU. This was the very first time that such a large representative group of people involved in Christian Arab radio, met together.

In the meetings in Beirut, the traditional Evangelical perspective continued to be defended; program producers endeavored to present the Christian message as it was done in the Churches but with some slight adaptations in order to make their

message more comprehensible for their main target audience, the Muslims. The vast majority of programs fell into this category. In general the program producers assumed that the main reason why Muslims did not respond positively in vast numbers to the Gospel was theological (they did not agree with the message) and socio-political (they were not allowed to become Christians).

An alternative perspective was defended by Acord and Wasserman. They believed that Muslims did not come to Christ in large numbers because the message was not presented well. The presupposition in this approach was that this problem could be solved by adapting the medium, that is, the manner in which the Gospel message was communicated. The ideal was to use terminology and cultural forms for presenting the Gospel that reflected the Muslim audience.

During these meetings, ELWA's studio manager, Fred 'Bud' Acord defended ELWA's usage of programs in which a Muslim-Background Believer (MBB) chanted Bible portions in an Islamic manner, even though he admitted that most Christian Arabs 'abhor' the approach. Acord had used similar methods when he made programs in the early 1960s in Aden; he was probably the first to try this form of contextualization in Christian radio. Wasserman was the actual producer of the contested program and defended it. According to him, Muslims had a different manner of thinking and needed an emotional approach in order to make them understand the message. He underlined that for good communication not only the message, but also the means of delivery, is important for the recipient to understand the message. Wasserman implied that the usual manner of presenting the Gospel through Church-like sermons was not a good way of communicating the Gospel's content.

Many of the participants in the conference spoke out strongly against this approach. They argued that Christian radio should focus on content and not on emotions. Moreover, the impression should not be given that the Church was trying to mimic the mosque or that the reading of the Bible would impart blessings on the audience, as Muslims thought of the *Qur'ân*. NAM, MELM and NECC shared these opinions. Dick Olson of TWR was more open to the chanting of the Bible as he agreed that a Muslim audience did need its own approach. TWR refused to broadcast programs of this sort, though.

Ḥūrânî noted that Communism, atheism and existentialism were infiltrating into the Arab World. Wasserman saw the same developments; he met with many students in the schools and universities who had become so filled up with socialist ideas, that they were no longer 'real Muslims'. These statements were made during a period when Pan-Arabism and socialism were already waning in-popularity. This failure to assess the mood in the Arab World is problematic, as contextual programs ideally interact with actual developments in the Arab World.

It is interesting to note that in NECC, the *audience* orientation led to programming philosophies that aimed at participating in the political and social discourse of society. This resulted in what could be called a *secularization* of the programs. In the environment of Acord and Wasserman, this increased *audience* orientation led to programming strategies that, if implemented, would have led to an *Islamization* of the programs.



In its programming choices, ELWA only implemented RCR2 partially since their programs practically negated man as a social being; man was presented as separate from his whole social environment, divorced from his context. This made it impossible to heed CW4 and CW5 fully. RCR5 was also only partially implemented, as Christ was only presented in a rather individualist manner, as a Savior for the soul. The Church was hardly mentioned. This meant that the programs were not conceived in communion with the Church, so CW2 was not heeded.

Those who wanted to contextualize the Gospel by giving it an Islamic grab, underestimated how their approach would lead to a mistaken understanding of the Gospel, in accordance with warning CW6. 'There is no logic in assuming that terms from Islam and its culture can be used to understand Christian concepts in their depth or breadth. They are by definition intrinsically different and therefore will convey inaccuracies. This approach was based on the presupposition that contextualization of the Gospel should mean contextualizing it to the existent *religion* of the target audience. This seems to assume that for the target audience the Mosque and its culture is the only important and defining context. This approach was also in direct contradiction to CW3, which underlines the importance of the global *koinonia* of the Church.

### ***19.2.2 Period of Increase of Transnational Broadcasting: 1970-1990***

#### **19.2.2.1 Ecumenical Perspectives**

##### ***MECC 1975***

In 1974, NECC changed its name to *Middle East Council of Churches* (MECC) and it changed its constitution to enable the orthodox Churches of the Middle East to become members. This led, in 1975, to MECC questioning the course of its hitherto solely Protestant radio ministry. A committee of the General Assembly found the programs to be too 'secular' and too 'music oriented', and lacking a 'religious' component. The committee also found that the Churches in MECC were not represented proportionally in the programs and suggested the need to change this.

This new approach would mostly favor the Coptic Orthodox Church, as this was by far the largest member Church in MECC. During the previous year, the Coptic Orthodox Bishop Samir, one of the presidents of the General Assembly, had stated that the main objective of the broadcasts of RVOG should be to make the existence of the Orthodox Churches and their theology, known to the world, to thus make up for centuries of neglect.

MECC's Western donors made clear that this was not how the airtime should be used. It can be argued, though, that as one of the goals of NECC had always been to nurture the life of the Churches in the region, this request of the MECC committee was an effort to present the Churches of the region in more concrete terms to the Christian audience. From that perspective, this was an issue of producing more contextually suitable programs for the Christian target audience and maybe even for the Muslim audience. Islamic radio programs invariably broadcast Friday prayers and sermons, so to broadcast Christian worship services resembled how Muslims believed religion should be communicated on radio. It was in any

case a request of the Church for the producers of MECC's programs to heed CW2 and CW3 better.

### **MECC 1979**

In March 1979, MECC brought communicators from some Arab countries together in Beirut. Kamâl Qustandî, responsible for the studio of MECC, suggested that Christians in the Middle East should not directly evangelize Muslims, as that was comparable to direct confrontation. He suggested that Christians should by their deeds prepare the way for love, peace, and the proclamation of truth.

This suggestion of Qustandî was an approach that sounded like what Fisher proposed in 1957. The difference was that Fisher wanted to make programs that would carefully prepare Muslims for the Gospel, while Qustandî wanted to make programs that reflected Church-life. Fisher's ideas were developed in a context where state radio in Lebanon would not allow any other broadcasts. Qustandî developed his ideas in a context where the religious communities in Lebanon were at each other's throat.

This proposal by Qustandî was an effort to present the Gospel in a manner that was suitable for the actual context of those days; he focused on the need to live together as different religious communities in Lebanon. This was part of the *diakonal* witness of the Church but at the expense of the *kerygmatic* witness. The idea to not directly evangelize Muslims meant also that the presentation of Christ and the Church was to be one-sided, so RCR5 could not be fully implemented. Warnings CW4 and CW5 could not be heeded with this approach since the prophetic message for Muslims, as individuals and for the Arab nations, was not to be broadcast.

These perspectives of MECC petered out, first when RVOG was closed in 1976, then when MECC stopped its broadcasts over the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1981.

While the MECC meeting was being convened in March 1979, distant shelling and nearby gun-bursts could be heard. In contrast to the discussions that took place there, elsewhere in Beirut John and Marcia Tender of FEBA were enabling their Arabic staff to make radio programs that proclaimed the Gospel as understood by Evangelicals to the Christians and Muslims of Beirut. They also endeavored to make the programs suitable for the context of that place and time.

### **19.2.2.2 Evangelical Perspectives**

#### **ELWA 1972**

At a conference on programs for Morocco held in Shuwayt in October 1972, some of ELWA's producers interacted with some Moroccan MBBs who studied in Beirut. These Moroccans argued against the usage of colloquial Moroccan Arabic; they said that students in Morocco preferred to hear MSA as colloquial Moroccan was considered a language for illiterates and elderly people.

For the Middle East, ELWA mainly used MSA but for North Africa, it used a mixture of MSA, colloquial Moroccan Arabic, and Tamazight. This was especially due to GMU's input. Since GMU had begun its program production in 1966, it had

fully focused on producing in colloquial Moroccan, while in 1969 it produced the first-ever Christian programs in Tamazight

The conference spoke about the need to have ‘bait’ programs that would attract the audience and to also have programs with preaching and Bible studies for conveying the Gospel. This was a rather traditional view of how Christian content could best be communicated; the ‘real’ message was obviously communicated in the serious preaching programs. This approach to Christian communication is highly limiting to contextualized programming, as it presupposed that contextualization can only take place in the context of a sermon and Bible study.

ELWA had decided that it should avoid using the term *Son of God* as much as possible and that it should use descriptions for Jesus like *Word of God*, *Son of Man*, and *Savior*. The Islamic name of Jesus, ‘*Îsá*, was to be used so that Muslims could be taken from their concept of ‘*Îsá* to the Biblical view of Christ. ELWA was aware that the Churches in the Arab World were against this approach. It is noteworthy that while ELWA had these views, almost all other organizations disagreed with this approach. In 2004, hardly any programs on Christian radio in the Arab World followed these suggestions of ELWA.

#### **Major Organizations 1974**

Most of the major organizations working in Christian Arab radio sent representatives to a conference on contextualization that was held in the premises of AWM’s Radio School of the Bible (RSB) in Marseille in February 1974.

During the meetings, Fam of TWR mentioned that the Arab World suffered from overpopulation, social inequality, political problems and a religious crisis. His main worry was that these issues were not treated in the programs that were broadcast. This showed Fam’s interest in having a concrete and contextualized message on TWR but there is no sign that he was also able to implement this in the actual programs of TWR.

Kraft was the major guest speaker. He pointed to the fact that radio is a medium that is intrinsically foreign to the Arab World and that anything said on radio is open to being misunderstood because of that medium *per se*. There is no sign that the Christian broadcasters and the program producers were ever seriously interested in general communication theories. The focus has always been on the sender and his message, to a lesser extent on the recipient, and hardly on the medium used.

Kraft also pointed to the need to incite group conversions instead of individual conversions, as Arabs are social beings, and not individualistic as Westerners. He argued that the *Qur’ân* should be used as a basis for presenting Christ, who should be called ‘*Îsá*. He should be presented as a prophet and not as the object of faith. Terms like *Father* and *Son of God* should be avoided. He also suggested to not speak of the Trinity or of the death of Christ as that would break the relationship with Muslims. Kraft argued that Jesus maintained a relationship with his disciples even though they needed a few years before they began to understand the truth. Kraft also suggested that the ideal should be to allow Muslims who believe in ‘*Îsá* to retain their Muslim cultural allegiance and worship forms.

Kraft received much criticism, especially for his suggestions that the Gospel should be preached from the *Qur'ân* and that MBBs should stay within their Islamic environment. His suggestions were never accepted, let alone implemented by any of the broadcasters or program producers.

It seems that those present agreed that the usage of some limited non-theological Islamic terminology, like some doxologies, would be acceptable to make the programs sound interesting to Muslims. However, they agreed to not use Islamic and *Qur'anic* jargon instead of the commonly accepted Christians terms.

In the discussions about producing suitable programs two particular issues were addressed. Attention was focused on the need to use oriental Christian music although hardly anything existed since the Arabic Protestant Churches used mostly translated Western Church music accompanied by organ and piano. The other issue that received much attention was how to avoid using the word *Israel* in the programs.

Another main speaker, Phil Butler of Interdev, challenged those present to work within the context of the Churches of the Arab World. He feared that by not being focused on the actual local Churches and working in their midst, the broadcasts would weaken those Churches. Butler called it blasphemous that the Christian broadcasters were not committed to the local, visible Churches, and he called this a very superficial view of evangelism. Butler's suggestions touched a core issue of good contextualization as suitable programs cannot be made outside the *koinonia* of the Churches within the target audience if they want to testify to the Gospel. His statements did not seem to reverberate among the participants who were used to functioning rather independently from the Churches in the Arab World.

The resolutions that were adopted after the conference did not mention the Arab Churches, just as the recommendations of Kraft were not adopted. The participants agreed to 'consider the cultural as well as the spiritual nature of Islam, with certain sensitivities to our message, which if ignored, can create offense and ultimately, weaken the credibility of the message'. They also agreed to 'examine the idiom, form, and content' of their programs, 'being willing to adjust, refine and change its structure while maintaining its truth'. These statements were distant from the contextualization suggestions of Kraft and Butler, and broad enough to please all.

### ***BTGH 1980***

Madany was the most outspoken critic among the Christian Arab radio broadcasters of the ideas of contextualization such as Kraft's as presented in Marseille in 1974. From 1980 Madany regularly presented conference papers and he and his wife Shirley wrote books and articles in which they published their views of contextualization. They rejected the tendency to make anthropology and sociology major factors in deciding how the Gospel had to be presented on radio, they argued that theology should be decisive.

Madany rejected the idea that MBBs should be allowed to follow the Islamic regulations for fasting, and for him the usage of the Islamic name for Jesus, '*Īsá*', was also unacceptable, as that name evoked *Qur'anic* concepts of Him. He purposely stood in the tradition of the missionaries of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century

who built the Reformed Churches in the Arab World by calling people to a radical change of life and beliefs. He was convinced that MBBs wanted such a radical change from their former religion and that they wanted to be participating in the Churches.

According to Madany, the fact that few Muslims were responding to the call of the Gospel was, in the first place not related to matters of contextualization but to the lack of political and religious freedom in the Arab World. According to Madany, the heart of the matter was that Islam was an anti-redemptive religion and Muslims, as all men, naturally rejected the redemptive death of Christ. This would not change if Christian radio would use programs with an Islamic flavor.

Madany considered the proclamation of the human predicament, of being sinners and distant from God, and the Gospel as God's initiative to save man, as the real bridge to the heart of Muslims. He considered the proclamation of that message, undergirded by the work of the Holy Spirit, the way forward in Christian radio mission.

It seems that Madany responded mostly to the general discussions about contextualization among Evangelical missiologists in the USA. The innovative contextualization, as suggested by Kraft, had not been well received among those who worked in the Christian Arabic radio organizations. During the 1980s, the Christian radio organizations in the Arab World did not discuss matters related to contextualization on the scale in which this was done during the 1960s and 1970s. The absence of such discussions was probably related to the vast increase in audience response since the mid-1970s and the new increase in airtime during the 1980s. It is likely that most organizations felt encouraged that their programs were suitable for their audience because of this steep increase in response. The economic downturn of the 1980s probably precluded organizations from organizing expensive conferences that were not deemed urgent; they preferred to invest their money in buying more airtime and producing more programs.

### ***19.2.3 Period of Arabic Radio after the Second Gulf War: Since 1991***

In 1981, MECC broadcast its last programs. Since then, there has been no other Ecumenical radio broadcasts in the Arab World and therefore Ecumenical Christians have not been involved in discussing contextualization of the Gospel on radio. The issue has not been discussed much among Evangelicals either even though they have further increased their radio broadcasts.

In 1990, the Christian Radio broadcasters and producers started the Arab Broadcasting Convention (ABC) as their main venue for meeting each other. Every 18 months, broadcasters from around the Arab World and beyond were to come together in Cyprus or Lebanon for meetings. In 1996, they amalgamated with some other organizations in the Arab Media Convention (AMC). The start of ABC at a time when the economies of the Western world enjoyed an upturn after a decade of problems was not coincidental. It also reflected the felt need of these broadcasters and producers to meet for consultations every now and then. These meetings of the Christian radio broadcasters have not evidence a renewed interest in the approaches outlined by Acord, Wasserman and Kraft thus far.

The programs broadcast from 20-26 September 2004, testified to the fact that all broadcasters and producers, had settled in the views of contextualization as modeled in the programming that ELWA had created in its earliest years. Even though some, like IBRA, claimed that they were implementing rather far-going forms of contextualization in their programs, the actual programs did not testify to that.

Whereas among missionaries in Muslim lands, these far-going ideas of contextualization continued to be discussed and implemented during the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Christian radio broadcasters to the Arab World never accepted these as valid methods of radio evangelism. This was probably because these proposals for contextualizing the Gospel in the Arab World invariably came from Western, mostly North American missionaries and missiologists. The Christian broadcasters and producers in the Arab World were to a large extent Christian Arabs, including some MBBs, who seldom showed sympathy for these Western proposals. It seems that this perspective of contextualization reached its zenith at the conference in Marseille in 1974 and they would never again be as strongly defended in the circle of radio broadcasters.

### **19.3 CASE STUDY: PROGRAMS OF 20-26 SEPTEMBER 2004**

#### ***19.3.1 Homogenous Target Audience***

To make programs that are suitable for an audience in their actual context, it is important for Christian radio broadcasters to target homogenous audiences. The Arab World as such is not a homogenous audience; the spoken languages, cultures and religions of the peoples are rather different. Socio-economically, there are also important differences. Christian radio broadcasters must therefore resist the temptation to automatically assume that the area covered by their radio signals dictates who they consider to be their target audience. Transmission techniques and the maximum potential audience must not take precedence over missiology. The seven Christian radio broadcasters studied had rather different target audiences.

AWR said that it aimed at Muslims all over the Arab World, not at Christians. This aim to reach people all over the Arab World was too broad; it did not recognize the large differences within the Arab World.

TWR wanted to reach both Muslims and Christians throughout the Arab World, and it also defined men, women, children and students as their special interest. This was an amalgam of target audiences, mitigated by the fact that TWR had separate MW broadcasts to North Africa on the one hand and to the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula on the other hand, in which the major differences between those areas were taken into account.,

FEBA beamed its programs specifically at one country, Yemen. It did so by SW broadcasts from Kigali (Rwanda). This was an excellent choice from the perspective of contextualization. Beside this, FEBA also aimed to reach the Arabian Peninsula through other transmitters. These broadcasts were solely aimed at Muslims.

FR approached the Arab World as if it was one unified audience. It did not differentiate between Christians and Muslims. It used its different SW frequencies to broadcast exactly the same programs all over the Arab World; it had the least homogenous target audience of all broadcasters.

IBRA aimed at North Africa with some of its frequencies, while with another frequency it aimed at Iraq, and with another at the Middle East as a whole. North Africa and the Middle East were too general as target audiences but the daily broadcast to Iraq via Russian SW transmitters, was good from the perspective of contextualization.

BVB wanted to reach Christians and Muslims all over the Arab World. That target audience was too wide. The organization did express its desire to produce programs for different people groups in the Arab World so it recognized the existent differences.

HCJB aimed at Muslim students of 15-25 years in North Africa. That was a relatively homogenous target audience, even though there were important, tangible differences between the people groups in North Africa.

These broadcasters were all to a large extent driven by the footprint of their broadcasts. They wanted to witness to as many people as possible in the region that was reached by their one or two hours of broadcasts per day. This often resulted in a salad mix of many different languages and target audiences being served in a very brief period of time contrary to their ideal broadcasting goals. For some, this was a matter of the urgency of the Gospel; others probably considered it a precondition for selling airtime to potential program producers. In general, it seems that most organizations suffered from a lack of power to implement their own strategies, because they needed to sell enough airtime in order to cover their costs.

### ***19.3.2 Actual Context of the Target Audience***

Contextualization of the message of the Gospel for the peoples in the Arab World regularly focuses on adapting Christian worship and language to that of Islam. Christian radio has often discussed matters related to the usage of Islamic words or styles of delivery as the core of contextualization. However, for proper contextualization issues of content are more important. The first question to ask is: If the Gospel is to root among the Muslims of the Arab World, what issues must be addressed? The second question is: How can that be done in a manner that is comprehensible?

Truly contextual Christian programs allow the Gospel to speak to the audience in its actual context. The Gospel of Jesus Christ entails a message for man and his personal relationship with God, as well as for man in his societal relationships, and these two can never be seen apart from each other. Thus, to avoid speaking about Islam, politics, socio-economic issues, culture, history, human rights etc., means that part of the Gospel and its implications are ignored. A Gospel that does not speak to man in his concrete circumstances is an abstraction of the *Good News* of Jesus Christ, a 'Gospel in the air'.

As the programs of FR were all literally translated from their American originals, they did not address the Arabic audience in its actual context. In as far as the

programs were *a propos* for their American audience, they were not for any Arab audience.

Most of the programs of TWR, IBRA, AWR, FEBA and HCJB were produced by Arabs who endeavored to speak to those who live in the Arab World, but their programs contained no references to Islam, politics, socio-economic issues, human rights issues, and they seldom mentioned the Church.

BVB was the only broadcaster that openly discussed Islam, conversion from Islam to Christianity, the low place of women in Islam and human rights abuses in Egypt. This made BVB address its audience more concretely in its actual context than the other broadcasters did.

In 2004, the Christian broadcasters were able to fill more than 200 hours per week with Christian Arab radio programs. This was both a privilege and a challenge. The vast majority of programs did not proclaim the 'full counsel of God'. If someone would listen to all programs broadcast between 20 and 26 September 2004, he would only get a very limited insight into the message of the Gospel. The majority of programs stressed man's individual sinfulness, God's redemptive act in the cross and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the forgiveness of sins that can be received by personal faith in Him. This was repeated *ad nauseam*, and it was almost always applied in the most individualistic manner, focusing on the listener and his relationship with God, the need to pray the sinner's prayer, and the importance of writing to the broadcaster, often with the promise of a gift.

This approach, as if the only thing that matters in the Gospel is the relationship with God of the individual and his heart and mind, means that the Gospel is not presented as Good News for all of life, let alone that the Gospel's prophetic message of change for society can be heard. Hence, CW4 and CW5 were only partially heeded. The implication of this is that the *diakonal* witness to the Gospel was almost completely neglected.

There are many reasons why the vast majority of programs contained no reference whatsoever to the concrete circumstances in the Arab World and why the Gospel was delivered in such an individualistic manner without any references to the actual context of the audience. In the first place, it seems that the broadcasters and producers themselves often adhered to this rather narrow view of the Gospel. Historically most Christians in the Arab World have been careful to never speak about societal matters in public. This was often for fear of their dictatorial governments or the Muslim populace. The history of Christianity in the Arab World has vindicated a careful approach.

Another set of related reasons are more systemic. Most broadcasters are forced to sell airtime in order to pay for their operations; this makes it very hard for them to implement holistic programming that focuses on the audience personally as well as on Arab society. Among those who buy airtime, many only produce one program of 15 minutes each week. Those producers have a tendency to not 'waste' any airtime with content that is not directly related to their individualistic understanding of the Gospel. Related to this is that donors for these programs are usually more interested in paying for a 'pure' Gospel presentation, than for a program on matters which are secondary in their opinion. Much airtime is also bought by North American organizations who want their programs to be translated into Ara-



bic. That makes any references to the actual context of the audience in the Arab World impossible. Likewise, many of the Arabs that produce programs live outside the Arab World. This is also detrimental for the production of programs that truly speak to the audience in its concrete context. These systemic causes all militate against the application of *CW2*; the programs thus produced, are distant from the Church communities in the Arab World.

Compounding the difficulty of relevancy in programming is that they are often produced for being repeated; this makes any concrete reference to actualities problematic, as it diminishes the possibility for repeat broadcasts. Related to this is the fact that most programs have to be delivered to the broadcasters long before they are actually broadcast. This also makes reference to actualities problematic.

Another reason for the lack of programs aimed at the audience in their context is that the producers of the programs do not have a concrete target audience in mind. Without a homogenous target audience, it is impossible to apply the Gospel to the audience in its context, so that all programs tend to become rather generic. Program producers easily revert to speaking about those issues all audiences potentially face, like personal fear, or loneliness, or feelings of guilt.

### ***19.3.3 Language***

If Christian radio wants to broadcast the Gospel in a manner that suits the context of its homogenous target audience, it has to do so in the language of that audience. Whereas MSA is the formal language of all Arabs, most of them have difficulty understanding it, as it is not their colloquial.

MSA is the language of the mosque and of Islam, as well as of the political and cultural elites of the Arab World. If Christian broadcasters want their programs to speak to Islamic, political and cultural leaders of the people group they are targeting, they could use MSA in which case the MSA would need to be absolutely flawless.

Colloquial Arab languages are the languages of the people. This is what they speak in their homes, with their families, and in daily life in almost all of their conversations. This is the language that defines their culture. If Christian broadcasters have another target audience than the elites, and if they want their programs to incarnate among this audience, programs must generally be produced in the spoken language of that target audience.

By 2004, there were 23 languages with over one million native speakers in the Arab World. They consisted of 17 colloquial Arab languages and six other languages. Based on World by 2000's targets, each of these languages should have had at least 30 minutes of programs per day by the year 2000.

Since the early days of Christian broadcasting, there has been a perceptible change in the languages used on radio. Initially, most broadcasters and producers believed MSA to be the best language to use. This was at a time when Pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism was at its peak. In the programs of 2004, many broadcasts were also in colloquial Arabic and in the Amazigh languages of North Africa.

In 2004, FR used MSA only. AWR used mostly MSA. Therefore, these two broadcasters with over half of all Christian radio airtime in Arabic ensured that MSA was still the majority language used in all broadcasts. BVB also targeted the whole Arab World, and did that in a combination of MSA and Egyptian Arabic.

In their broadcasts to the Middle East, IBRA and TWR used preponderantly Lebanese Arabic and Egyptian Arabic, though both also used MSA and Jordanian Arabic; TWR contributed Iraqi and Sudanese Arabic also. The broadcasts of TWR and IBRA to North Africa have not been assessed here. IBRA's broadcasts to Iraq closely resembled those that were broadcast to the Middle East.

FEBA used mostly Lebanese Arabic and Egyptian Arabic for reaching the Arabian Peninsula; it also used MSA in those broadcasts. HCJB's programs for North Africa were in Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight, MSA, Egyptian Arabic, Lebanese Arabic and Jordanian Arabic.

The vast majority of languages used by the broadcasters were MSA, Egyptian Arabic and Lebanese Arabic, irrespective of the target audiences of the broadcasters. This is rather disappointing; MSA is not well understood among the Arabs, and though Egyptian Arabic and Lebanese Arabic are relatively well understood all over the Arab World, they are not the spoken language of most Arabs.

A program in Egyptian Arabic is not contextually suitable for a Moroccan Muslim and a program in Lebanese Arabic is not contextually suitable for a Muslim in Egypt. This is especially so if those programs have been produced as they should: with a homogenous target audience in mind and by speaking to the audience in its actual context.

The reason why so many programs are produced in Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic is because the Christians in the Arab World are concentrated in those countries. MSA is used because producers think it is a respectable language and because they believe that they are thereby understood by a wider audience. For reaching the Christians of the Arab World, this preponderance of Egyptians and Lebanese is a reflection of Church life, and therefore this is good. However, for reaching the Muslims of the Arab World, this is not balanced.

Among the Christian broadcasters and producers, historically the majority of Arabic personnel have been Egyptians and Lebanese Christians. They have been the speakers in programs since the beginning of Christian radio broadcasting. The system of selling airtime perpetuates this role of Egyptian and Lebanese programs. Many Egyptian and Lebanese Christians, either in the Middle East or in the Western world, have caught the vision to produce their own programs and to find sponsoring for having those programs broadcast.

#### ***19.3.4 Linguistic and Cultural Forms***

There is a chasm between Western culture and its thought-forms, and the cultures of the Arab World. Western Christians often face problems in communicating with Arabs due to these cultural differences. The same is not true for the Christian Arabs, as they are born and bred in Arab society, even though they are a minority that tends to steer away from fully participating in Arab culture. Arab Protestants are more distant from mainstream Arab society than Christian Arabs from the historic

Churches as they form a minority within the Christian minority. Arab Protestants tend to reflect their Western co-religionists in how they use Biblical and Evangelical jargon in their Church-life.

In order to communicate the Gospel to Arab Muslims, it is important that the Protestant program producers adapt to the linguistic and cultural forms of the recipient audience. This does not mean that a certain measure of Biblical and Evangelical jargon cannot be used. In order to present the Gospel, Biblical concepts need to be explained and it is impossible to not use Biblical language for that. This must be done carefully, and difficult terms or ideas need to be explained by using words and examples from the recipient's environment. That environment is broader than Islam, and the explanation of terms and ideas should try to avoid using Islamic religious language.

FR's programs were literal translations from the original American programs. Linguistically, they were a reflection of the Arabic Protestant Churches, as they used considerable Biblical and Evangelical jargon, without explaining its meaning; culturally, they reflected the American origin of the programs.

The programs of AWR reflected the jargon and culture of the SDA Church in the Middle East, mostly of Lebanon. TWR's programs for the Middle East were mainly in the Biblical and Evangelical jargon of the Protestants of the Middle East. Most of HCJB's programs for North Africa used that same Biblical and Evangelical language of the Protestants of the Middle East. These programs of TWR, AWR and HCJB did not explain this terminology to their Muslim audience.

FEBA and IBRA had some programs that used linguistic and cultural forms that were suitable for a Muslim audience. If typical Biblical and Evangelical jargon was used, it was explained. However, the majority of programs of both broadcasters reflected the Middle Eastern Protestant Churches' language with its Biblical and Evangelical language that often went unexplained. In IBRA's programs the *Qur'anic* name for Jesus, *'Īsá*, was sometimes used; IBRA also sometimes used The Noble Book (*al-Kitāb al-Sharīf*) as its Bible translation.

BVB had programs that were suitable for Muslims. They used a language and cultural styles that were congenial to Muslims and they often explained Biblical and Evangelical jargon. In the programs, some typical Islamic theological terminology was sometimes used, like the name *'Īsá*. However, BVB also broadcast programs full of Biblical and Evangelical jargon that went unexplained.

Given the language and cultural *milieu* in the programs of FR, TWR, AWR and HCJB, it must be concluded that those broadcasts were mainly suitable for a Protestant Arabic audience. For Arab Muslims, most of the programs were hard to understand as they did not use the linguistic and cultural forms that they were used to and understood.

FEBA and IBRA both carried programs that were mainly suitable for Protestant Arabs, but they also had programs that were *a propos* for Muslims. In the broadcasts of BVB, the number of programs suitable for Muslims were proportionally larger than in FEBA and IBRA.

In the broadcasts researched, the language was generally speaking so much a reflection of that of Evangelical Church life in the Arab World that the warning of CW6, to not use linguistic and cultural forms that are permeated with Islamic the-

ology and *mores*, was certainly heeded. Only the usage of *al-Kitâb al-Sharîf* by IBRA trespassed against this warning. Most Churches disagreed with this Bible translation, so CW2 was not heeded by its usage.

It seems that, generally speaking, Protestant Christian Arabs have difficulty producing programs that are suitable for Muslims. Some of the best examples of programs that *were* suitable for Muslims were produced by MBBs. This was to be expected; generally speaking, program producers are best at making programs for people from their own language group, religion, and social stratum, and they will always gravitate to doing so.

This leads logically to the conclusion that if the Christian radio broadcasters are seriously interested in producing radio programs for Muslims, they must use people with that background. Inside and outside the Arab World there is no lack of suitable MBBs for producing programs.

### ***19.3.5 Portrayal of Christ and the Church***

The Christian broadcasters' goal is to gather Christians in Christ-oriented communities. To achieve this, the heart of their message must be a description of Jesus Christ and His Church in a manner that is meaningful and relevant to the audience. This entails on the one hand a description of Christ and His Church that is true to the Bible, and on the other hand that this is presented in a manner that is *a propos* for the target audience.

In all broadcasts researched, Christ was portrayed in theologically conservative, Evangelical terms in a manner that left no doubt that CW1 was heeded. Christ was presented as the incarnated Son of God and as God Himself, although the concomitant term *Trinity* was seldom used. The focus was mainly on his vicarious death and resurrection for the sins of the audience. In the programs of IBRA, Christ was also often described as a therapeutic Lord; He heals and helps, even with the attainment of wealth. The broadcasts stressed this *kerygmatic* witness to Christ, though with a one-sided focus on His work for and relationship with the individual believer.

FR was the broadcaster that mentioned the word *church* (*al-kanîsah*) most frequently in its programs. This was always in a negative sense, as FR preached that God had left the Church and that true believers should not go to Church. The other broadcasters seldom used the word *church*. Most programs were focused on the direct relationship between the listener and God, though in some programs people were advised to meet with other believers.

Another reason why the word *church* was seldom mentioned was the general opinion of the broadcasters that the Muslim audience had negative ideas about the Churches of the Middle East and of the Western world; therefore any reference to that was avoided. Some programs seemed to endeavor to clarify to the audience that true Christian faith had nothing to do with the actual Churches as the audience knew them. IBRA also avoided the word *church* but it tried to use its programs to encourage the creation of House Churches.

The incarnation and the death and resurrection of Christ, are the heart of the Christian faith; these dogmas about Christ were well presented in the programs.

His ascension and His authority over all creation, were only treated in the most personal context, for instance in regard to His ability to answer prayers and help people now. The implication of this for the world and for society, were not touched upon in line with the fact that the Christian faith was hardly applied to the actual context of the audience. This was a meager, one-sided view of Christ; the audience was entitled to the full counsel of God. A Christ 'for the heart' only, was much less attractive for a Muslim audience, than a Christ for all of life. Muslims are not only interested in what one should believe, they are even more interested in how one should live personally and in society and in how society ought to be arranged.

The individualist approach in the presentation of Christ finds its culmination in the fact that the Body of Christ, the Church, was avoided in most programs. Christ works in this world through His Body, the Church. To not speak profoundly about the Church as it actually exists, means that part of the actual context of the audience is not treated. Muslims know about Churches and they have questions about those Churches. It also means that the vehicle for Christ's work on earth is not spoken about. The witness of *koinonia* was therefore neglected in the broadcasts. .

For the Churches in the Arab World, it is painful that the Protestant broadcasters show no interest in how Christ has chosen to be present in the midst of the Arab World, even during many centuries of *dhimmitude*. The fact that the Churches are not mentioned, and that the actual Church life of the Arab World is not portrayed, is not in line with CW2 and CW3. Evangelizing Muslims at the expense of honoring the actual Church, both in the Arab World and elsewhere, of past and present, is unacceptable.

### **19.3.6 Media Environment of the Programs**

Communication theories and practice assert that the manner in which an audience understands a message from a sender, is impacted by the communication means that are used. This is true of radio and its transmissions. This study includes matters such as where programs are transmitted from and what other programs form the environment for the message that is transmitted.

FR had its own SW transmitters in the USA; the immediate environment of the Arabic broadcasts was FR's other-language broadcasts. These programs in other languages were identical to the Arab programs. This environment probably did not impact the understanding of the Arab programs by the audience, as they probably could not understand them.

TWR broadcast its program over MW through RMC-ME and RMC-MC. These were popular radio stations with a large Arabic audience during their secular broadcasts. TWR probably benefited from being transmitted from these stations. The TWR broadcasts were preceded by a brief period of static but it is likely that this linkage to RMC not only gained TWR some audience, but also some credibility.

FEBA, IBRA, HCJB and AWR bought airtime on some powerful SW and MW transmitters in Western Europe, the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe, and in Africa. Given the nature of SW propagation, SW broadcasters usu-

ally choose and change frequencies according to changing SW conditions, interference and availability of transmitter sites. Therefore, it is not possible to assess the languages of the other Christian programs that these Arab broadcasts may have been embedded in. For a lack of information, no conclusions can be drawn about the impact of the environment of the broadcasts of FEBA, IBRA, HCJB and AWR from such stations.

The broadcasts of the Arabic programs on BVB probably suffered from being surrounded by Christian-Zionist programs in English and Hebrew. This was truly problematic, as the Arabs are easily tempted to think that if a broadcaster has pro-Israeli sympathies his attempts to convert Muslims are related to that. The accusation that the Western world and missionaries want to make the Arab nations weak for the sake of Israel, is often heard in the Arab World. From the perspective of true contextualization, the Arab broadcasts of BVB have a very problematic environment.

Most of the blocks of Christian Arab broadcasts of one or two hours constituted a hotchpotch of rather different programs of 15 and 30 minutes. This meant that each program was likely to be surrounded by programs in another Arabic language and for another target audience, using different linguistic and cultural forms because of a lack of a homogenous target audience.

The effectiveness of the excellent programs for Muslims by FEBA, IBRA and BVB, were probably diminished because they were surrounded by programs that reflected the Protestant Christian Church-life of Egypt and Lebanon. This meant they would have been understood differently by a Muslim audience. This issue needs further study.

Further study is also needed concerning the general impact on the Arab audiences of SW and MW broadcasts that come from outside the realm of the Arab World. As the Arab World has a tendency to distrust anything from outside its realm, the foreignness of the location of the transmitters and the non-Arabic response addresses that are used, are likely to impact the understanding of the audience.

In general, RCR6 is not given much attention by the broadcasters and programs producers. This reflects a general lack of discourse on communication theories among these agencies. That is disappointing, as the Good News deserves the best vehicle.

## **19.4 FINAL OBSERVATIONS**

### ***19.4.1 C1-C6 Contextualization Spectrums of John Travis***

As the Christian Arab broadcasters avoided describing the ideal Church or actual Churches altogether, the C1-C6 spectrums have not helped greatly in this study. IBRA was the clearest with respect to its vision of the Church by enacting House Church meetings. None of Travis' Spectrums could be applied to the Church as portrayed in these programs. IBRA's House Church programs used a wealth of Biblical and Evangelical-Charismatic language without explanation, as seems to be

described by Travis' C2. The neutral meeting space of the House Church in IBRA's programs is best described by C3 or C4.

For describing the Christian radio broadcasts or parts thereof, the C1-C6 scheme was not useful. It focused on matters of form and appearance while generally ignoring issues of content, which is exactly the area where radio excels. In general, the presupposition of Travis, that contextualization means adapting to the habits, imagery and language of the Mosque and Islam, is the main problem of his approach and should be rejected because it conflicts with heeding CW2, CW3 and CW6. The method is not conceived in communion with the Church in the Arab World and thus it creates lasting division in the Church. It also does not take into adequate account that by importing Islamic terminology and imagery into the Christian community, it is impossible to avoid importing the content of these Islamic terms into the Christian faith as well.

#### ***19.4.2 Audience Response***

##### **19.4.2.1 Eliciting Audience Response**

From the beginnings of Christian Arab radio broadcasts, the programs were seen as a manner to elicit audience response. Audience response served different goals. It enabled the broadcasters and producers to evaluate their signal strength and they used it for fine-tuning their program content. It was also used to prove that people were actually listening to the programs, something that was not only encouraging but also necessary for maintaining financial support for the programs.

For most broadcasters, audience response was more important as it was the beginning of the process of audience follow-up. The broadcasters wanted their Muslim audience to become Christians and this was, in the opinion of the broadcasters, done best in a relational process. Audience response was the first step in that process, as it enabled the broadcasters to contact the listener with a Bible, books, or Bible Correspondence Courses (BCCs). If these contacts developed well, ideally a personal meeting with a Western missionary or a Christian Arab was arranged. This was a process that needed long-term commitment of personnel and money.

##### **19.4.2.2 Actual Audience Response Figures**

###### ***Period of Egyptian Predominance: 1953-1970***

Toward the end of the 1960s, ELWA received between 1,500 and 1,750 letters each year from its audience. That response was based on its own programs which formed 60 percent of the 10½ hours of broadcasts each week. ELWA therefore received about five to six responses per hour of airtime. RVOG received around 2,000 letters per year, for 21 hours of broadcasts per week. This meant about two responses for each hour of airtime.

###### ***Period of Increase of Transnational Broadcasting: 1970-1990***

During the mid 1970s, BTGH, AWM and GMU noted a remarkable increase in their audience response. This increase continued until the early 1980s when it

peaked. Much of this increase seems to be attributable to the MW broadcasts that TWR began during this period. In 1982, BTGH received over 16,000 letters, for about 19 hours of airtime each week. This meant about 16 responses for each hour that it broadcast. AWM received almost 7,000 letters with 2½ hours of broadcasts each week, or 53 letters per hour of airtime, while GMU received 3,000 letters based on two hours of broadcasts each week, or 29 letters per hour.

In the early 1980s, audience response for all organizations peaked. Even though they increased their airtime after that, the numbers of responses steadily diminished until in the 1990s they were as low as in the 1970s. There is no proof that the size of the audience decreased during that period but it seems likely. While the size of the Arab populations and its literacy continued to expand, less mail was received, even though there were more Christian broadcasts. This change occurred at a time when television was introduced in the Arab World, when the total number of SW broadcasters in the Arab World also continued to grow, and when Islamic fundamentalism was on the increase.

#### ***Period of Arabic Radio after the Second Gulf War: Since 1991***

Many organizations experienced an increase of audience response figures shortly after the Gulf War of 1990-1991, underlining the impact of radio during periods of crisis in the Arab World. This increase was only temporary, as during the late 1990s, figures continued to decrease further. There were some exceptions; IBRA had hardly any audience response in the early 1990s, but in 2000, it reported around 15,000 letters from first time respondees. This high number was probably related to the fact that IBRA used over 100 hours of airtime per week to broadcast its Arabic programs in the year 2000. This meant 29 responses per hour of airtime. After that, the response figures decreased dramatically, parallel to its decrease in airtime. It is not possible to make detailed comparisons between the broadcasters as regards their audience response, given the many variables. As the audience response figures of all; broadcasters declined sharply, the figures of IBRA seem questionable.

AWR received an average of 2,400 letters per year between 1996 and 2000. This must be seen in the light of AWR having 77 hours of airtime per week during these years. This means AWR received 0.6 responses per hour of airtime.

The downward trend in audience response was problematic for the Christian radio broadcasters; they had always claimed that their *raison d'être* was the audience response that enabled them to create personal contact with the listeners. It therefore encouraged them to look for new ways to gather audience response. The introduction of the telephone, email and the referral to websites in radio broadcasts should be seen in this context. The impact of the introduction of these means deserves later study. Presently, there are indications that these new means of contact have increased the audience response again.

#### ***Audience Response Figures and Actual Audience***

Audience response figures do not tell much about the actual audience of the broadcasters; the reason why response figures can never be used to assess the actual audience of the radio programs is that there are too many variables in the equation.



Some of the variables that together influence the response that is received are summarized here:

*Gifts:* What does the program promise to those who write? Books, the chance to win a gold coin or a DVD, spiritual advise?

*Opportunities to respond:* If the program does not give an address to write to, no-one will write. When more addresses and phone-numbers are given, more people respond. Are these addresses comprehensible for the Arabic audience? Are they in countries that are considered secure to write to?

*Literacy:* How many people in the audience are able to write a letter?

*Delivery Systems:* Can the broadcasts be received easily and with a strong signal? Related to that is the questions whether they are on SW or MW.

*Format and content of the Programs:* Are the programs interesting to listen to? Do they speak to the audience about matters that the audience deems important?

*Insecurity:* Is the listener constrained from writing because he or she has family members that resist that? Does the post office destroy mail addressed to Christian broadcasters? Are there functional postal services in the country? Is there a war going on that makes it impossible to write?

*Stamps and Phone Cost:* Is the audience able to afford a post stamp or an international phone call? How many people actually have a telephone?

*Hours:* How many hours does the broadcaster transmit the program each week? Is the program broadcast at a time of the day when people are able to listen?

#### **19.4.2.3 Audience Research**

In 1979, Acord wrote a quite critical article about the Christian broadcasters and producers in the widely distributed book of Don M. McCurry, *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium* (1979). His main critique was that the broadcasters did not know their audience. He said that with no knowledge of the audience, the Christian broadcasters could not set themselves measurable, concrete goals, so their effectiveness could not be assessed. He suggested doing on-the-ground audience research to study the actual context of the audience and to base the broadcasting strategies on these findings. On the other hand, it should at least be mentioned that audience research is difficult when it comes to international broadcasting and only the major players in the field can afford regular surveys.

In the early 1990s, FEBA and TWR participated in some rather limited audience research that was done by a secular research organization in Yemen. It has not been possible to find more serious audience research done by and for the Christian Arab broadcasters. This means that Acord's critique in 1979 was still valid at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This lack of research is on the one hand caused by the difficulties encountered in researching the audience of Christian programs in the Arab World. It is also a matter of cost; serious research is expensive compared to the cost of producing and broadcasting radio programs.



## 20 Christian Witness in the Arab World

In this final chapter, attention is given to the conflicting processes toward uniformity and pluriformity in the Arab World. If the Christian Church with its media in the Arab World wants to be free to witness to Jesus Christ through its *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *kerygma*, it is necessary that the Arab societies and their governments allow their countries to develop more towards pluriformity.

On the one hand, the demand for pluriformity is increasing in the Arab World, for instance by those who ask for the further liberalization and democratization of society and politics; on the other hand different processes, for instance those generated by the *fundamentalization* of many Arab countries, are moving Arab society toward more uniformity.

The Church and its media have an important role to play in witnessing to their Christian *koinonia* as a model that supersedes the dilemma of uniformity and pluriformity. This chapter argues that the Christian media have an important role to play in Arab society, by witnessing to the unity of the Church in spite of its pluriformity. It concludes by identifying areas of revision in programming which would achieve a *tritych* approach to the witness of Christian radio ministry.

### 20.1 THE ARAB WORLD: UNIFORMITY AND PLURIFORMITY

The history of the Arab World has witnessed an increasing tendency to uniformity. Whereas the region was once mainly Christian at the time of the first Islamic conquests, through the process of Islamization, the population of the Arab World and the roots and structure of society have gradually become overwhelmingly Islamic. Parallel to the process of Islamization, the languages of the region have also changed dramatically and thereby also the cultures that are to a large extent 'housed' in those languages. Most people in the Arab World are now speakers of one or another form of Arabic and the literary form of Arabic has become the main vehicle for literary communication.

After the successful struggle for independence of the Arab World during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the educational levels of most countries increased rapidly. This added in more than one way to the unification of the Arab societies. In the first place, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) was adopted in all Arab countries as the medium of literary communication. This was related to the strong sense of belonging together as Arabs in a unifying Arab World. Secondly, the higher educational levels combined with the introduction of newspapers, books, and radio and television, have enabled the religious authorities of the Arab World to standardize the Islamic religious expressions to an extent that was never reached in history. Thirdly, the increased educational levels combined with the modern media have allowed a strong Fundamentalist movement since the 1970s to add to the uniformity of Islam. Fourthly, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the individual satellite

television programs are being watched all over the Arab World at the same time and by vast audiences. This also reinforces uniformity. Finally, most Arab countries have since their independence been organized as one-party states under dictatorial presidents and kings.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has also witnessed a strong trend to pluriformity; this trend is growing in the same soil that feeds the trend to uniformity. The realms of language, education, media and religion are the basis for a trend to more pluriformity in the Arab World. Whereas during the mid 1900s, most people in the Arab World considered themselves Arabs in the first place, many now openly express that their first identity is related to the Islamic World as a whole, or to the countries they live in. The increased educational levels and the socio-economic development of important segments of the population has amplified their desire to not let others dictate what to think and believe; an increasing number of Arabs are able and prepared to oppose long-held views, even in the realms of politics and religion. Though most Arabs use MSA for expressing themselves in writing, the Imazighen and the Kurds are stressing their own languages more than before, and in that context, their cultural differences as well. Among the Arabs, the usage of the colloquial languages is as widespread as ever, in spite of the general usage of MSA for literary expressions. The modern media, and presently especially satellite television and the internet, are offering the Arab World a multitude of worldviews and choices, even in the realm of religions. Not only is the Christian faith presenting itself more publicly in the Arab World than ever before, but secularist views are also shared widely. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the demand for multi-party representative political systems is also heard more than ever before. Perhaps the most important contributing factor in the years ahead towards pluriformity amongst Arabs is the increased tension between *Sunni* and *Shi'ite* Islam.

For Islam and its leaders, it is not easy to resolve the tension between the opposing trends of uniformity and pluriformity, as Islam is clearly a participant in the conflict. From the beginnings of Islamic history, the '*ulamâ*' decided that the door to *ijtihâd* should be closed. They do not allow a liberal reevaluation of the sources of Islam for developing society along modern lines. Most Fundamentalists are prepared to reinterpret Islam for modernity, but just as the conservative '*ulamâ*', they aim at uniformity in Islam and society; pluriformity is considered the result of insufficient Islamization and Arabization.

The political authorities in the Arab World have, overall, tried to balance both tendencies; they have allowed a modicum of freedom of political, social, cultural and religious expression, in order not to become estranged from the modernizing segments in society and from international developments including economic ones. At the same time, in order to accommodate the growing masses of Fundamentalist Muslims, the Arab governments have set strict boundaries of what is religiously allowed in their societies. The Churches of the Arab World have often been the victims of these balancing acts by the authorities as most Fundamentalist Muslims want to keep the role of the Church in society as marginal as the *Shari'ah* prescribes. This means, among other things, that the Churches are severely curtailed in their public witness to the Gospel. There is hardly any space for Christian mass media in the Arab World. Most radio and television broadcasters beam their pro-

grams into the Arab World from external transmitters. If present trends continue, it is unlikely that the Churches of the Arab World will receive more space in the public domain for their public witness.

## 20. 2 CHURCHES IN THE ARAB WORLD: UNITY AND PLURIFORMITY

The Churches of the Arab World have historically resolved their linguistic, cultural and liturgical pluriformity by agreeing to a geographic division to define their spheres of influence, as evidenced in the agreements of the Ecumenical Councils concerning the patriarchates. These geographic arrangements became outdated when Creedal differences became unresolved bones of contention and different denominations came to exist side by side in the same geographic realms. They were further undermined with the founding of Roman-Catholic and Protestant Churches in the Arab World. Whereas the Churches of the Arab World are still not satisfied with the growth of those Churches in 'their' lands, they have done likewise during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The mass emigration of Christians from the Arab World has led to the growth of hundreds of their Churches in the West.

As participants in their Arab societies, the many Churches of the contemporary Arab World are familiar with the opposing trends of uniformity and pluriformity *within* their own Church communities. Most Churches have adopted MSA as their liturgical language, though they stress the need to maintain elements of their historic languages in their worship. The higher educational levels of the clergy and their Church members and the availability of the mass media have helped the Churches to standardize their teachings. This has led to more uniformity within the Church communities. At the same time however, pluriformity is being illustrated by educated Christians who can read their Scriptures and who watch a variety of Christian and non-Christian uncensored media and who are more critical when assessing the views of their Church leaders.

The Churches in the Arab World are presently as pluriform as the societies they are part of. At the same time, the Ecumenical movement of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) shows that this pluriformity does not need to break the *koinonia* of the Church. This is not to say that the Ecumenical movement has been able to resolve all matters that separate the Churches of the Arab World. Nevertheless, the very fact that these Churches are talking at all and have been able to find ways to express their *koinonia* in spite of their differences of opinion is in itself a testimony to the Gospel. The Churches can show Arab society that unity and uniformity are not equivalent and that differences in religious expression do not need to break the *ummah* (community). Arab societies however struggle to balance their desire for uniformity with the realities of pluriformity because accepting pluriformity requires a reinterpretation of the historical understanding of *tawhîd* (unity). Given that its views of societal unity and uniformity are linked to their views of the *tawhîd* of God it is yet to be seen whether Islam will be able to allow this transformation to occur. This change is urgently needed in modern society as part of a globalizing world.

The witness of the *koinonial* unity of the different Churches of the Arab World is not only a direct witness to Jesus Christ, but it is also a *diakonal* witness that helps Arab society to come to grips with radical societal changes. For the Church to help Arab society adopt pluriformity as a mode of organizing societal life, is not only in the interest of Arab society as a whole, but it would also directly benefit the Church. It would create more space for its *koinonial*, *kerygmatic* and *diakonal* witness to Jesus Christ in the public domain of the Arab World where it presently can not even be sure of its continued existence.

### 20.3 'GOSPEL IN THE AIR': CHRISTIAN WITNESS ON RADIO IN THE ARAB WORLD

#### 20.3.1 *Koinonia, Kerygma, and Diakonia on Christian Radio*

The Christian witness, understood as *koinonia*, *kerygma* and *diakonia* can be expressed through radio even though the full expression needs to be within the context of Church and its physical community. Ideally to proclaim the Gospel the speaker must place himself or herself in a vulnerable position, which is difficult on radio due to its lack of immediacy. Beaming the Gospel from outside the Arab World into the Arab World is to a certain extent like hurling arrows from afar at a heavily defended castle. This problem can be mitigated somewhat by producing the programs inside the Arab World and through the possibilities of audience communication by telephone or (e-)mail with the speakers in the programs.

The Christian *koinonia* can be modeled on radio through a focus on the different Churches and their unity-in-pluriformity and on Christian community life in general. The heart of this *koinonia*, the celebration of the Eucharist, can be described and explained on radio although the Church is the place where this *koinonia* is ultimately celebrated. Radio can never be the place where the audience experiences this *koinonia* to its full extent.

For the communication of information, which is central in the Christian *kerygma*, radio is a useful medium. The distance from the actual Church with its *koinonia* and *diakonia* coupled with the lack of direct interaction with the speaker, diminishes the power of the *kerygma* to some extent. Programs offering the opportunity to communicate with the program producers could partially resolve this tension. If programs refer people to the actual Church and offer actual diakonal support, the *kerygmatic* witness on radio is strengthened further.

If the Christian *diakonia* is understood as serving people in need, it can be modeled in programs. However, just like *koinonia* it cannot be fully experienced through radio programs, so *diakonia* can only be presented to a limited extent on radio. Programs that offer concrete help to the audience through follow-up systems strengthen the *diakonal* witness on radio. If the Church broadens its understanding of *diakonia* to encompass speaking out on human rights issues for those without a voice, radio could become a good means to do this.

The Christian media studied in this publication focused almost entirely on the Christian witness through the *kerygma*. The *kerygma* was presented in a rather

unbalanced manner as the focus was almost solely on the individual aspects of the Christian faith. That individualist approach to the faith was also reflected in the almost complete absence of the *koinonial* and *diakonal* aspects of the Christian witness. This is disappointing as the *koinonia* and the *diakonia* of the Church are both highly relevant as part of the Christian Gospel and also urgently needed in Arab society. In Islamic societies, where much importance is attached to the practical implications of faith, the Christian *koinonia* and *diakonia* are especially important and attractive elements of the Christian witness. They offer an alternative to the prevalent Arab views of the uniform *ummah* and the disrespect for *minorities* that disturb the uniformity of the *ummah*.

It is inconceivable for Christian radio, which pretends to present a contextualized message, to be totally silent about those events in the Arab World that captivate the attention and sometimes even threaten the lives of the populations. While the Arabs have been continually at war with outsiders and with each other, Christian radio has only spoken of the forgiveness of sins through personal faith in Christ. The Israeli occupation of Gaza and the Westbank including East Jerusalem, and the Israeli policies for maintaining that occupation, were never even initially mentioned in Christian broadcasts. The USA-led occupation of Iraq in 2003 was not mentioned either, except in a program that wanted to give some spiritual encouragement to the population. For the Churches of the Arab World, these Western military and political actions are often highly problematic; they are often blamed for these Western, hence 'Christian' deeds. Likewise, Christian radio has not mentioned human rights abuses perpetrated by Arab authorities against opposition groups and has not even defended the position of the Churches in the Arab World.

### **20.3.2 Uniformity and Pluriformity**

This study has been restricted to Protestant Arab radio. The only other regular Christian radio broadcasts in Arabic were those of Radio Vatican, and these were dwarfed by the over 200 hours of Protestant broadcasts. The fact that all Christian broadcasts were overwhelmingly Protestant makes clear that these broadcasts did not present the pluriformity of the Christian faith in the Arab World. Not surprisingly the programs avoided any reference to the fact that different denominations exist since the concept of *church* itself was usually carefully avoided. The programs endeavored to give the impression of uniformity of the Christian faith parallel to the Islamic aspirations of a uniform Islamic society. They did so by focusing on the core elements of the Christian *kerygma* as applied to the individual listener.

Within the limited realm of the Evangelical Protestant radio broadcasts, the programs never gave the impression that different understandings of certain Biblical ideas were possible. This underlined the image of Christian uniformity in the programs. This was usually done by speakers, often pastors, who positioned themselves in the programs as the never-doubting mediators of pure knowledge and as mediators between the audience and God through their vicarious prayers. In the Arab World knowledge has traditionally been presented using this educational model by those who believe in the need to maintain religious and societal uniform-

ity. Those who believe in the need to develop society in a more pluriform manner have adopted other educational models. This program format was therefore a missed chance at helping the audience to think for themselves and to understand that Christians, though expressing their faith in many ways, are united in *koinonia* through Jesus Christ. This testimony to the Christian ability to be united in spite of differences is also the *diakonal* testimony that the Arab World is in need of.

The area where the Christian broadcasters did show some pluriformity was mainly in the realm of how they believed Muslims should be addressed. Most broadcasters carefully avoided mentioning Islam as they did not want to give the impression that they were targeting Muslims. Only a few programs directly addressed Muslims and made clear that the intention of the broadcasts was to convert Muslims.

It can be concluded that the Christian broadcasters showed a high level of uniformity in their broadcasts; whether the audience also interpreted this as a sign of unity needs further research. It is possible that the great number of different response addresses and telephone numbers given in many programs was not a positive symbol, as it suggests a lack of unity and cooperation among the broadcasters and the program suppliers.

### ***20.3.3 Christian Arab Radio towards the Future***

Christian Arab radio depends only partially on liberties granted by the Arab governments. All broadcasts are transmitted from outside the Arab World and most program production can be done outside the Arab World as well. Political problems for the Churches and their media therefore do not threaten Christian radio very much. In a sense, Christian Arab radio has always thrived on political problems in the Arab World. They have created an increased interest among Western donors and at the same time a listening audience among the Arabs. This audience, however, seems to be disappearing.

Two good reasons to suspect that the audiences for Christian Arab radio have steeply declined since the mid 1990s are that FM radio has become popular and satellite television has replaced SW and MW radio as the primary source for independent political information and for entertainment in general. These forces have been reflected in the audience response figures for Christian radio, which have declined while Christian satellite television has increased. However, as Christian Arab radio does not depend on the size of its audience but on the interest of financial sponsors in other parts of the world, it is feasible that it could continue with its work in spite of this decline until the various sponsors lose their interest.

Christian broadcasting without the presence of the Arab Church and Arab society in its programs, is presenting a 'Gospel in the Air'. It is not attached to concrete life in the Arab World and is consequently close to redundancy. However, Christian radio with its individualist approach can make itself relevant by no longer avoiding truly societal and political themes. The witness to Jesus Christ would be greatly strengthened through thoughtful programs that reflect the *koinonia* and the *diakonia* of the Church in a manner that helps society as a whole.



During the past decade, Arabic Christian radio has endeavored to keep its decreasing audience response figures acceptable by increasing its airtime rather dramatically, by offering presents to those who respond, and by offering many new response methods. However, Arabic Christian radio needs more radical changes and not 'more of the same', if it wants to maintain a role in Christian media in the Arab World. Presently, it is losing the competition with FM radio and satellite television for an audience. In order to maintain, even gain an audience, Christian radio needs an extensive overhaul. It must adopt the *triptych* of the Christian witness in order to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it has to do that with a radical view of what it means to present the Gospel in a contextualized manner.

Without reference to potential technological changes, such a triptych approach might entail programming in which:

1. the community of Christian radio broadcasters and producers ensures that a proper Biblical theology (including ecclesiology) always has precedence over missiological methodology.
2. the policies and the actual implementation of those policies are regularly discussed with real representatives of the main Churches in the targeted people group and that any comments are then integrated into subsequent programming.
3. the idea of making airtime available in blocks of 15 minutes is abandoned as this militates against the balanced programming that is needed. Broadcasters who manage airtime should think in terms of blocks of one hour; programming policies must have priority over the need to sell airtime. Translated or 'adapted' programs should never be acceptable.
4. Each block of airtime should contain the 'full counsel of God', i.e., a Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ through faith for individuals, as well as the message of the Bible for society as a whole.
5. the audience is encouraged to participate in the actual Church in their society, in whatever form or shape it exists in that society.
6. positive references to the actual Churches in the people group are included showing unity and pluriformity and pride in the existence of all Churches. If the non-Protestant churches are important in the context of the people group, those must be positively featured in the programming.
7. different Churches of the Arab World are highlighted to depict how they are united and cooperate in spite of their differences.
8. pride is shown in Christian Arab history of pre-Islamic times and that in early Islamic history, Christians were highly important in creating the dynamic culture of the 'Abbasid period. Furthermore it should also include discussion on how the Church fared throughout Islamic history, with its ups and downs and also refer to the Church and its contribution to contemporary society. As much as possible this should be related to the people group that is targeted.
9. the modern Arab World is never treated as one political or cultural block. This would reinforce its *Islamicness* and as such undermine the uniqueness of the audience.
10. narrowcasting is used and preferred and where Christian broadcasts to the Arab World are passé. Programs should be radically aimed at a specific segment within a people group. Blocks of airtime with *niche*-programs are urgently needed aimed at: the training of pastors in Kabylia or in Kurdistan; issues related to raising children for an Egyptian audience; how to organize and lead a House Church for Yemeni MBBs.

11. MSA is never used as the framework for programs. It should be used sparingly to prove to the audience that the choice for the vernacular is purposely done and not for a lack of knowledge of MSA. People groups would only be addressed in their own spoken language and by natives from that people group.
12. presenters would speak to the audience as insiders, not as outsiders of society. The programs would be, as much as possible, produced inside the area where the targeted culture is mainly based.
13. cultural elements of the people group are incorporated and where proper pride in its uniqueness is communicated.
14. Christians born in Christian families produce programs for Christians and Muslims produce programs for MBBs only.
15. the Gospel speaks prophetically about how it impacts individuals and society. This should include a critique, when needed and relevant, of policies and social habits that are supported by the authorities of the state and of Islam.

#### **20.4 CHRISTIAN ARAB RADIO AND THE CHURCH OF THE ARAB WORLD**

Christian Arab radio has to a large extent ignored the Churches of the Arab World. This has ignored the premise that a contextualized Christian message must be rooted in the *koinonia* of the Church of the Arab World. Christian Arab radio must uphold unity with all Churches, in line with Jesus' prayer for the unity of His flock. This means, for instance, that from the perspective of Biblical ecclesiology, it is not acceptable to create new communities of followers of Jesus without positive links to existent churches in the same culture.

For many Evangelicals, church unity is something almost exclusively *spiritual* and an attribute of the *invisible* church. Where visible unity is mentioned, it tends to be stressed for the sake of more effective evangelism and not as a non-negotiable theological premise. Member churches of the Ecumenical movement are giving expression to the notion that is fundamental to the Christian faith: the indissoluble link between unity and mission.

The Evangelical mission movement in general, and those involved in Christian Arab radio, must confess with the Ecumenical movement, that the loss of Church unity is a sin. The Lord Jesus prayed for the unity of the Church; radio missionaries must be careful not to participate in the creation and proliferation of new Churches in apposition to the existent Churches. How this is to be concretely done will be different in each Arab country and perhaps in each region of a country, but the principle is important. The Christian witness to Jesus Christ must testify to the unity of all parts of the Body of Christ; missionary methods that do not do this, are questionable for the Churches of the Arab World: the Coptic-Orthodox, Greek-Orthodox, Maronite, Presbyterian, the Pentecostal Church and others all participate in the one Body of Christ in their lands. These diverse groups adhere to the verbal inspiration of the Bible and share, broadly speaking, the same historic confessions. They have leadership and members with a faith in the crucified and risen Christ. Many of these Churches desire to see the Gospel proclaimed to all. In all Churches the clergy and lay-people are involved in evangelism.

Proper contextualization is an ongoing, purposeful *dialogue* between the national Arabic Church-communities, local Arab culture and Biblical revelation. If Christian radio wants to participate in that process it should do so as part of the Church community and not as *lone rangers* and outsiders. The Churches of the Arab World may not be all that Western missionaries would like them to be, but they ought to be respected for having developed a basis of Christian theology and for having kept the faith during 14 centuries of Islamic domination. During those years, they have played an important role in shaping the history of the Arab World. During those centuries they have also learnt precious lessons about how to relate to Muslims socially and also about how to present the Gospel in a manner that is not self-destructing. It is therefore a sign of *hubris* for foreign missionaries to think that they 'know better' than these Churches. This is not to say that Christian radio cannot at times be instrumental in serving to awaken Churches of the Arab World to the need of presenting the Gospel in a more appropriate manner to their Muslim compatriots. It also does not mean that media do not have their own prophetic role to play but they can only do so if they are embedded in Church life in the Arab World. Christian radio has much to contribute but it cannot ignore the expressed viewpoints of the national Churches.

The Churches of the Arab World and the Christian media must cooperate closely in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and focus on supporting the development to more pluriformity in the Arab World. Time is running out for the Church; Christians continue to emigrate from all Arab countries to the West fearing the uniformity that Fundamentalist Muslims want to impose on society. Without drastic societal and political changes, it must be feared that the cradle of the Christian faith will, in the decades ahead, lose most of its public witness by the Church both because of the emigration of Christians and because of the shrinking public space for the witness to Jesus Christ.



# Bibliography

This bibliography lists the sources used for this publication based on the themes and organizations treated. Under the heading of these themes and organizations, the sources are differentiated according to whether they were publications (books and articles), archival materials (letters, memo's, internal documents, personal newsletters), interviews (both oral and by mail), or websites. Scientific articles found on the internet were categorized under publications.

Part I of this bibliography list the primary and secondary sources used for this publication. These are the publications, archival materials, interviews and websites as they relate to the organizations researched. These are given in the sequence as treated in this study. After that, the general sources for Arabic Christian radio are given. Part I also lists the sources used for the chapters on the radio industries in the Arab World, the United States of America (USA) and Europe.

Part II lists the general literature as used in this study. It gives the sources used for the chapters on the Arab World and Islam, and on the Arabic language and literacy. It also lists the sources used for the description of Christianity in the Arab World, as well as the more general Christian literature, e.g. those on Church history and missiology.

In this bibliography, a translation has been added to the titles of non-English articles and books. That translation has not been repeated in the footnotes of this study.

## I PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

### 1 CHRISTIAN ARAB RADIO: ORGANIZATIONS

#### 1.1 Adventist World Radio (AWR)

##### *1.1.1 Publications*

'Adventist World Radio Receives Permit to Build a Bigger Voice', Press Release (16 July 2000) by the *Adventist Press Service*, Switzerland, on [www.wfn.org](http://www.wfn.org). (20 October 2004)

'Adventist World Radio, Programme Schedule March 2003 to October 2003' (2003)

'AWR Programme Schedule October 2002 to March 2003' (2002)

'AWR Program Schedule: Winter, 31 October 2004 to 28 March 2005' (2004)

Biener, Hansjörg, *Materialdienst; Zeitschrift für Religions- und Weltanschauungsfragen* [Materials Service; Magazine for Religious and World View Questions]' (No. 1, 2002)

'A brief history of AWR'. (n.p, n.d.): a brochure given to the author by Bert Smit

- Elmadjian, Alex, 'Adventist Media Centre: Quinquennial Report 1996-2001'
- Folkenberg, Robert S., 'From the G.C. President' (16 January 1996), on [www.folkenberg.net](http://www.folkenberg.net) (28 May 2005)
- 'Passport to Mission: Adventist World Radio Travels the World' (2004): AWR's Annual Report 2003
- Peterson, Adrian M., 'Wavescan 303' on [www.181.pair.com](http://www.181.pair.com) (20 May 2004)
- Peterson, Adrian M., 'Wavescan 364' on [www.181.pair.com](http://www.181.pair.com) (16 December 2005)
- Smit, Bert, 'Adventist Radio for the Middle East!', in *Adventist Media Centre Middle East News* (January 1992)
- Smit, Bert, 'Adventist Media Centre for the Middle East', in *Adventist Media Centre Middle East News* (January 1992)
- Smit, Bert, 'The Challenges of the Middle East', in *Adventist Media Centre Middle East News* (January 1992)
- Smit, Bert, 'Mission Statement', in *Adventist Media Centre Middle East News* (January 1992)
- Steele, Allen, *Loud Let It Ring! Adventist World Radio: Twenty-five Years of Miracles* (Boise, 1996)
- 'United Arab Emirates: New Adventist Radio Superstation Begins Broadcasts', Press Release by Geoff Patterson of Adventist News Network (7 August 2001), on [www.news.adventist.org](http://www.news.adventist.org) (20 October 2005)

### ***1.1.2 Archival Materials***

Arabic Radio Programs of Seventh-day Adventists of 19-25 September 2004

The denominational archives of General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists are available through the internet on [www.adventist.org](http://www.adventist.org). The formal side of the process of decision making regarding the start-up and the functioning of Adventist World Radio (AWR) can there be found. In chronological order these were some of the documents used:

- 'Spring Meeting, 1 April 1970', Document 70-1976
- '30 December 1971', Document 71-786
- 'Minutes of meeting of GCC, 6 April 1972', Document 72-931.
- 'Minutes of meeting of GCC of 13 July 1972, Document 72-1017 'Adventist World Radio: Minutes of GCC, 27 March 1975', Document 75-81
- 'Minutes of Annual Council of GCC, 16 October 1975', Document 75-398
- 'Minutes of Annual Council of GCC, 19 October 1977', Document 77-388
- 'Minutes of Annual Council of GCC, 13 October 1978', Document 78-282
- 'Minutes of Annual Meeting of GCC, 10 October 1979', Document 79-255
- 'Minutes of Meeting of GCC, 14 February 1980', Document 80-51

Some other archival materials were made available to the author:

- Administrative Structure: Historical Background' (April 1993)
- 'Adventist World Radio Programming and Production Guidelines: D. Program Content Requirements' (April 1993)

**1.1.3 Interviews**

Elmadjian, Alex, in emails to the author (11 February 2003, 21 April 2003, 28 November 2003, 12 and 18 April 2005, 30 May 2005)  
 Biener, Hansjörg, in an email to the author (2 April 2007)  
 Faraj, Salīm, in an interview with the author (14 July 2004)  
 Manoujjan, Hagop, in an interview with the author (14 July 2004)  
 Smit, Bert, in an interview with the author (21 July 2003)  
 Smit, Bert, in an email to the author (16 January 2003, 27 November 2003, 31 May 2005)

**1.1.4 Websites**

Www.radiodx.com (20 May 2004)  
 Www.adventist.org (20 October 2005)

**1.2 Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA)****1.2.1 Publications**

‘Constitution’, in *SIM Manual: 1967 version* (Toronto, 1970), from the ELWA Archives, Box MM-2  
 Hanks, Geoffrey, *60 Great Founders* (Fearn, 1995)  
 ‘Principles and Practice’ (Toronto, c.1947)  
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 ‘Radio ELWA in Africa: It’s Message and Ministry’, in *Pro Veritate* (Vol. 1 No. 5, 1962)  
 Reed, Jane, and Grant, Jim, *Voice under every Palm: the story of how Radio Station ELWA was brought into being to meet the challenge of Africa* (Grand Rapids, 1970, first edition 1968)  
 ‘The Talking Book Gives Encouragement to ELWA Listeners’, in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. V No. 1, First Quarter 1957)  
 ‘West African Broadcasting Association Inc: Christ for Africa’s Lost through Radio’ (Wheaton, 1951), a brochure from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, W.A.B.A. Correspondence

**1.2.2 Archival Materials**

Hundreds of letters, memos and other documents from the ELWA Archives in Fort Mill, South Carolina (USA) have been used in writing this chapter. These came from the following boxes:

Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, The Beginnings 1956-1969  
 Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Department Head Meetings 1967-1972  
 Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1966-1974  
 Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1975-1991  
 Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Department Minutes 1954-1962  
 Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, ELWA Program Department Minutes 1963-1969  
 Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Radio Briefing Session Minutes 1969-1971

Liberia Box 16, Broadcasting Division, Program Schedules 1968-1972  
 Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Programming, Beirut 1960-1972  
 Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1968, Aden Studio  
 Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, 1960-1988, Arabic Program Beirut, 1973-1976  
 Liberia Box 18, Broadcasting Division, North Africa Broadcasts, 1955-1997  
 Liberia Box 18, Broadcasting Division, World by 2000, 1986-1997  
 Liberia Box 24, Broadcasting Division, Audience Survey 1968  
 Liberia Box 24, Broadcasting Division, Audience Survey Statistical 1955-1972  
 Suhail Zarifa Personal File

Materials from other archives:

'Discussion (20 February 1974)', Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28 in the *Billy Graham Center Archives* at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois (USA)  
 Salisbury, Len and Helen, 'Our Memories of ELWA Recording Studio in Beirut Mid August 1970 to end of 1975' (Amman, 2004): unpublished document produced for the author of this thesis  
 Steely, Merle, 'Merle Steely in an interview with Kimberly Smith (20 November 1984)', Collection 290T1 in the *Billy Graham Center Archives* at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois (USA)  
 Steely, Merle A. 'The Founding of ELWA in 1950' (2003): unpublished document produced for the author of this thesis

### **1.2.3 Interviews**

Acord, Fred, in an email to the author (27 May 2003)  
 Anderson, Douglas, in an email to the author (30 May 2003)  
 Arnold, Bob, in emails to the author (2 May 2003, 9 September 2003)  
 Biener, Hansjörg, in an email to the author (2 April 2007)  
 Bliss, Orbra, in an email to the author (1 May 2004)  
 Entz, Lewis E., in an email to the author (20 May 2004)  
 Habib, Shadi, in emails to the author (13 September and 16 December 2003, 24 September 2004)  
 Hungerpillar, Henry, in an email to the author (18 May 2004)  
 Reed, Dick, in an email to Mary Naff with a copy to the author (9 February 2004)  
 Reed, Dick, in a letter to the author (3 June 2004)  
 Salisbury, Len, in emails to the author (14 May 2003, 16 and 17 December 2003, 19 September 2005).  
 Shea, Jon, in an email to the author (10 June 2004)  
 Zarifa, Suhail, in emails to the author (29 April 2004, 12 June 2004)

## **1.3 Trans World Radio (TWR)**

### **1.3.1 Publications**

'Adjustments Being Made in Tangier', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. V No. 1, First Quarter 1957)



- Biener, Hansjörg, *Medien Aktuell: Kirche im Rundfunk* [Media Presently: Church in Broadcasting] (January-February 2003)
- ‘An Enduring Endeavour in the Middle East’, in *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 24 No. 2, May 2003)
- Fant, David J., ‘In Memoriam’, in *The Alliance Weekly* (Vol. LXV No. 26, 1930)
- Freed, Paul E., *Let The Earth Hear* (Nashville, 1980)
- Freed, Paul E., *Towers to Eternity* (Nashville, 1994, first edition 1967)
- Freed, Ralph, ‘Kept from Harm in Palestine’, in *The Alliance Weekly* (13 September 1947)
- Freed, Ralph, *Reaching Arabs for Christ* (Chatham, 1947, 1972)
- Freed, Ralph, ‘The Voice of Tangier’, in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. VII No. 1, January-March 1959)
- Fried [sic], Ralph, ‘First Fruits in Dera’a and Vicinity’, in *The Alliance Weekly* (20 April 1929)
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- ‘Healing Hurting Hearts’, *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 26 No. 2, 2005)
- Jones, Harold R., *The Development of a Series of Culturally Sensitive Radio Discipleship Programs for Broadcast in the Middle East by Life Agape of the Middle East* (Honolulu, 1988): unpublished MA thesis for *International School of Theology* in Hawaii
- ‘Promoted to Glory’ (1974): brochure of TWR-USA in commemoration of Ralph Freed
- ‘Revolution’, in *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 26 No. 1, 2005)
- Shuman, H. M., ‘An Appreciation of Walter M. Turnbull’, in *The Alliance Weekly* (Vol. LXV No. 26, 1930)
- Sink, Glenn, ‘Straight from the Heart’, in *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 24 No. 1, February 2003)
- Strasser, Rolf, ‘Die Entstehung der ERF [The Emergence of ERF]’ (1997), on [www.erf.de](http://www.erf.de) (5 January 2003)
- ‘Trans World Radio Wereldwijd [Trans World Radio World Wide]’, in *Radiozendingskrant* [Radio Missions Newspaper] (2001): publication of the Dutch office of TWR
- ‘TWR Europe Broadcast Schedule 30 March – 25 October 2003’: schedule as mailed with the magazine *Trans World Radio* Vol. 24 No. 1 (February 2003)
- ‘Untitled Article’, in *Trans World Radio* (Vol. 24 No 2, May 2003)

### **1.3.2 Archival Materials**

Arabic Radio Programs of TWR of 20-26 September 2004

- Acord, Bud, ‘Letter to Abe Thiessen’ (20 November 1970), from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 12, Folder 20
- Adly Fam, ‘Afternoon Session with Adly Fam’ (Marseille, 22 February 1974): transcript of a meeting, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 30

- Adly Fam, 'Untitled Speech' (Marseille, 19 February 1974): transcript of a speech, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28
- Davis, R.J., 'Letter of to Rev. W.G. Crouch' (14 June 1969), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division, Arabic Program Beirut 1960-1972
- Fortner, Robert S., *Media Use and Audiences for International Broadcasting in Yemen – Based on Research Conducted in February 1992 by the Market Research Organization for the BBC* (n.p., 1993)
- Fried, Ralph, 'Application Letter of 1 February 1925', found in the CAMA National Archives, Colorado Springs (USA), Personnel Files, Ralph Freed
- Mial, William, 'Letter to Barton Bliss' (20 March 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 14, Broadcasting Division, Directors Correspondence 1975-1991
- Voix, Paul M. 'Notes Re. Transworld Radio: Beirut Studio' (18 October 1967), from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Archives in Geneva, WM ix.1.dd – Beirut Studio
- Wilson, Galen R., 'Interview with Paul E. Freed' (23 October 1981), from the Archives of Billy Graham Center, Collection 382T1, kept at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois (USA)

### **1.3.3 Interviews**

- 'Abd al-Nūr, Manīs, in an email to the author (7 June 2005)
- Adams, David, in an email to the author (12 July 2005)
- Adams, David, in an interview with the author (27 July 2005)
- Bengtson, Bengt, in an interview with the author (25 January 2003)
- Biener, Hansjörg, in an email to the author (2 April 2007)
- Fanous, Samuel, in an email to the author (3 August 2005)
- Habib, Shadi, in an email to the author (23 August 2005)
- Henry, Ray, in an email to the author (10 June 2003)
- Ison, Alex, in an email to the author (10 December 2002)
- Manşūr, Yûsif, in an interview with the author (2 December 2004)
- Olson, Dick in an email to the author (10 May and 9 August 2005)
- Sâlim, Rûbâ, in emails to the author (20 May and 4 June 2003)
- Salisbury, Len, in an email to the author (4 June 2003)
- Vishanoff, Steve, in an email to the author (17 December 2002)
- Youssef, Joshua, in an interview with the author (13 April 2007).

### **1.3.4 Websites**

- Www.twr.org (12 April 2005)

## 1.4 Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA)

### 1.4.1 Publications

- Biener, Hansjörg, 'Abschaltung von FEBA-Radio schon zum 30. 3. 2003 [Disconnection of FEBA-Radio already on 3 March 2003]' in *Medien Aktuell: Kirche in Rundfunk* [Media Presently: Church in Broadcasting] (March-April 2003)
- Bowman, Eleanor G., *Eyes beyond the Horizon* (Nashville, 1991)
- Bowman, Robert H., *God of Wonders: A Lifetime of seeing God do the Impossible. The Story of Robert (Bob) Bowman* (La Mirada, 2002)
- Broadcasting Hope* (Vol. 8 No. 1, February 2003)
- FEBA Radio News* (October-December 1990)
- FEBA Radio News* (October-December 1991)
- FEBA Radio News* (October-December 2003)
- Ford, Tony, 'Crossing Boundaries, Penetrating Barriers', in *Mission Frontiers* (December 2000), as found on [www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org) (16 October 2004)
- Huntley, David, 'The Far East Broadcasting Company', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. XIII No. 4, December 1966)
- Ledyard, Gleason H., *Sky Waves: The Incredible Far East Broadcasting Company Story* (Chicago, 1963)
- McCoy, Alfred W., 'The Philippines: Independence without Decolonisation', in Jeffrey, Robin (ed), *Asia: The Winning of Independence* (London, Basingstoke, 1981)
- On Our Feet Again – FEBA's ministry to the Middle East* (March 1987)
- 'Recent Survey Findings' in *AMC Communicator* (August 2000)
- 'Seychelles Station Resumes Broadcasts', in *Action* (No. 21, July-August 1977)
- Sides, Hampton, *Ghost Soldiers: the Epic Account of World War II's Greatest Rescue Mission* (New York, 2001)

### 1.4.2 Archival Materials

Arabic Radio Programs of FEBA of 20-26 September 2004

Much information was lost due to the destruction of the FEBA premises during the civil war in Lebanon. The FEBA office in the United Kingdom only keeps its archival materials for 15 years. The FEBA office in Cyprus made parts of its files available, especially those related to audience response figures:

'Arabic Mail Reports' (1980-2003): these were monthly reports about the number of letters and others responses received

Derek Knell made the personal newsletters of him and his wife available. The ones used were dated:

8 October 1975, 1 January 1976, 8 March 1976, 1 July 1976, Early September 1976, 14 April 1977, 28 June 1977, 1 November 1977, 20 December 1977, 21 March 1978, 7 August 1978, 15 October 1978, 11 December 1980, 26 April 1981, 19 February 1990, June 1993, July 1994

Some other archival documents were used as well for describing FEBA:

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- Ford, Tony, 'ARF Memo' (13 April 1984): internal memo given to the author by Knell
- 'International Leadership Conference Middle East Report' (October 1986): received from Knell
- Knell, Derek 'Speech at the Arabic Broadcasting Convention (ABC)' (7 November 1990): speech notes received from Knell
- Malton, Douglas, 'Letter to George Thomas' (13 August 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division 1960-1988, Arabic Program, Beirut, 1973-1976
- Malton, Douglas P., 'Letter to George W. Thomas' (8 September 1975), from the ELWA Archives, Liberia Box 17, Broadcasting Division 1960-1988, Arabic Program, Beirut, 1973-1976
- 'Mission Statement of FEBA Radio Middle East' (n.d.): received from Nassanian (11 February 2003)

#### **1.4.3 Interviews**

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- Ford, Tony, in an email to the author (16 May 2003)
- Habib, Shadi, in emails to the author (13 September and 16 December 2003, 24 September 2004)
- Hall, Annie, in an email to the author (13 January 2003)
- Knell, Derek, in an email to the author (3 and 4 September 2003)
- Knell, Derek, in an interview with the author (13 August 2003)
- Nassanian, Hovig, in emails to the author (30 April and 2 May 2003, 7 October 2004, 13 December 2006)
- Nassanian, Hovig, in an interview with the author (11 February 2003)
- Singh, Christopher, in an interview with the author (5 June 2005)
- Tender, Marcia in an email to the author (18 and 24 February 2003 and 9 October 2004).
- Weir, Fraser, in an email to the author (20 January 2003)

#### **1.4.4 Websites**

- Www.feba.org (30 July 2003)

### **1.5 Family Radio (FR)**

#### **1.5.1 Publications**

- Camping, Harold, *1994?* (New York, 1992)
- Camping, Harold, 'Has The Era of the Church Age Come to An End?', in *Family Radio News* (Vol. 36 No. 4, October-December 2001)
- Camping, Harold, *The End of the Church Age...and After* (Oakland, 2001)

- Camping, Harold, 'What is the True Gospel', on [www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com) (30 September 2004)
- Duncan, J. Ligon, and Talbot, Mark R., 'Camping's Folly: A Response to Harold Camping's Erroneous Teaching on the Church', on [www.alliancenet.org](http://www.alliancenet.org) (30 September 2004)
- Grossman, Robert, 'Y2K and False Prophecy Today', in *Reformed Herald* (Vol. 56 No. 7, March 2000)
- Meyers, Stephen C., 'Interview with Harold Camping' (8 June 1994), on [www.bibleandscience.com/otherviews/camping.htm](http://www.bibleandscience.com/otherviews/camping.htm) (30 September 2004)
- 'Reaching Out to the World', in *Family Radio News* (Vol. 36 No. 4, October-December 2001)
- White, James R., 'Dangerous Airwaves: Harold Camping's Call to Flee the Church', in *Christian Research Journal* (Vol. 25 No. 1, 2002), as published on [www.equip.org](http://www.equip.org) (30 September 2004)
- White, James R., *Dangerous Airwaves: Harold Camping Refuted and Christ's Church Defended* (New York, 2002)

### **1.5.2 Archival Materials**

Arabic Radio Programs of Family Radio of 20-26 September 2004

Madany, Bassam, *Arabic BTGH Newsletter* (January 1977), from the personal archives of Madany

### **1.5.3 Interviews**

- Biener, Hansjörg, in emails to the author (3 July 2003, 12 April 2007)
- Camping, A., in emails to the author (8 and 17 April 2003)
- Hoff, David, in an email to the author (6 August 2004)
- Madany, Bassam, in an email to the author (4 July 2003)

### **1.5.4 Websites**

[www.familyradio.com](http://www.familyradio.com) (18 February 2005)

## **1.6 International Broadcasting Association (IBRA)**

### **1.6.1 Publications**

- 'Arab Woman Today, Reaching & Encouraging Arab Women through Radio' (Amman, n.d.)
- 'Arab World; One New Church Each Week, in *The IBRA Signal* (May 2003)
- 'Around the World with IBRA; Frequency Schedule', in *The IBRA Signal* (May 2001)
- 'Around the World with IBRA; Broadcast Schedule' (July 2003, November 2004)
- BÅB, 'Church Planting in the Arab World', in *The IBRA Signal* (May 2001)
- Biener, Hansjörg, *Medien Aktuell: Kirche im Rundfunk* [Media Presently: Church in Broadcasting] (January-February 2003)

- ‘From Tangier to Mission Fields’, in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. IV No 2, Second Quarter 1956)
- IBRA Around the World* (2002): brochure
- IBRA reaches the unreached with the Gospel* (2003): brochure
- Johansson, Eskil, ‘History of IBRA radio’, on [www.ibra.org](http://www.ibra.org) (20 April 2004)
- Johansson, Eskil, *IBRA Radio Reaching the World* (n.p, 1988)
- Klemetz, Henrik, ‘Jubiläum: 50 Jahre IBRA Radio [Anniversary: 50 Years of IBRA Radio]’, in *Radio Kurier – Weltweit Hören* [Radio Courier – Listening World Wide] (No. 8, August 2005)
- ‘The Lighthouse of the Arab World’, in *The IBRA Signal* (May 2003)
- ‘Pingströrelsens flytande radiostation verklighet [Pentecostal Floating Radio Station a Reality]’ in the Swedish newspaper *Aftonidningen* [Evening News] (2 September 1953)
- ‘Underground Church Planted in the Mountains’, in *The IBRA Signal* (May 2001)

### **1.6.2 Archival Materials**

Arabic Radio Programs of IBRA of 20-26 September 2004

‘Lyssnarkontakter i Arabvärlden [Contact with Listeners in the Arab World]’: received from Skog in an email to the author (12 September 2003)

### **1.6.3 Interviews**

- Åkerlund, Gösta, ‘Interview with Eskil Johansson’ (Lisbon, August 2003)
- Åkerlund, Gösta, in an email to the author (13 June 2005)
- Bengtson, Bengt, in emails to the author (10 December 2002 and 23 September 2003, 10 December 2006)
- Bengtson, Bengt, in an interview with the author (23 January 2003)
- Biener, Hansjörg, in emails to author (3 July 2003, 10 and 16 April 2007)
- Klemetz, Henrik, in an email to the author (12 July 2005)
- Mañşūr, Yūsif, in an interview with the author (2 December 2004)
- Printz, Jean-Marc, in an email to the author (19 January 2003)
- Singh, Christopher, in an interview with the author (5 June 2005)
- Skog, Eva, in emails to the author (12 September 2003, 30 November 2006)

### **1.6.4 Websites**

- [www.ibra.org](http://www.ibra.org) (20 April 2004)
- [www.pri.pingst.se](http://www.pri.pingst.se) (4 January 2003)

## **1.7 Bible Voice Broadcasting (BVB)**

### **1.7.1 Publications**

- McLaughlin, Don, *Bible Voice Broadcasting, High Adventure Gospel Communication Ministries*: quarterly newsletters from October 2003-August 2004
- Otis, George, *Voice of Hope: A Daring Mission of Courage and Peace* (Van Nuys, 1983)

- Otis, George, *High Adventure Ministries Global Broadcasting Network Voice of Hope Newsletter* (February 1996)
- Pollak, Dr. Charles 'Chuck', 'Welcome to a Death-Threat', Press Release of Assist News Service (ANS) on 24 July 2007
- Sky Angel, 'Sky Angel welcomes three new channels: Superchannel TBN, Voice of Jerusalem, and The Liberty Channel join Christian satellite system' (28 September 2001): press release on [www.skyangel.com](http://www.skyangel.com) (30 October 2001).
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- World Evangelical Fellowship, 'New Christian Radio Station goes on air in Holy Land', World Evangelical Fellowship Communication Report (October 1979).
- Yockey, Jackie, *High Adventure Ministries*: monthly newsletters January 2003-October 2004

### **1.7.2 Archival Materials**

Arabic Radio Programs of *Bible Voice Broadcasting* of 20-26 September 2004

### **1.7.3 Interviews**

- Biener, Hansjörg, in an email to the author (15 April 2007)
- Gronberg, Isaac, in an interview with the author (20 February 2006)
- Ibrahim, Timothy, in emails to the author (14 February 2005, 7 and 8 November 2005)
- McLaughlin, Don in an interview with the author (20 February 2006)
- Shomron, Yuval, in an interview with the author (20 February 2006)

### **1.7.4 Websites**

- [www.biblevoice.com](http://www.biblevoice.com) (20 February 2006)
- [www.highadventure.org](http://www.highadventure.org) (26 June 2005)
- [www.voiceofhopejerusalem.com](http://www.voiceofhopejerusalem.com) (28 June 2005)

## **1.8 'Heralding Christ' Jesus Blessings' (HCJB)**

### **1.8.1 Books and Articles**

- Bowman, Eleanor G., *Eyes beyond the Horizon* (Nashville, 1991)
- Cook, Frank S., *Seeds in the Wind* (Miami, 1961)
- 'Dr. Clarence Jones Looks Closely at World Missionary Radio', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. IX Nos. 2-3, May-September 1961)
- Habib, Shadi, 'Habib's Highlights' (Pasadena, December 2005): newsletter
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- Madany, Shirley, 'Radio Missions Expand', in *Missionary Monthly* (December 1996)
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- Arab Radio Programs of HCJB of 20-26 September 2004  
 'Project Plan for North Africa Audio Service: Radio Al Mahabba' (February 2001)

### **1.8.3 Interviews**

- Bengtson, Bengt, in an email to the author (10 December 2002)  
 Biener, Hansjörg, in an email to the author (15 April 2007)  
 Broekhoven, Rollin van, in an email to the author of this thesis (30 November 2005)  
 Cline, Ron, in an email to the author (30 November 2006)  
 Habib, Shadi, in emails to the author (13 September and 16 December 2003, 24 September 2004)  
 Ison, Alex, in emails to the author (30 April and 2 May 2003)  
 Knell, Derek, in an interview by the author (13 August 2003)  
 Vishanoff, Steve, in an email to the author (17 December 2002)  
 A regional director for North Africa and the Middle East of HCJB in an email to the author (12 February 2003): this director wanted to remain anonymous

### **1.8.4 Websites**

- [www.hcjb.org](http://www.hcjb.org) (3 June 2005)

## **1.9 Back to God Hour (BTGH)**

### **1.9.1 Publications**

- DeGroot, David, *World Beyond; The Story of The Back to God Hour 1939-1979* (Palos Heights, 1979)  
 Evans Jr, Frederick W., 'An Explanation of 'A Statement of Missionary Concern' (30 September 1985), published on [www.unashamedofthegospel.org](http://www.unashamedofthegospel.org) (7 October 2007)  
 Madany, Bassam, 'Audience Response: What Can We Expect?' in *Missionary Monthly* (June-July 1987)  
 Madany, Bassam M., *The Bible and Islam: Sharing God's Word with a Muslim* (Palos Heights, 1992, first edition 1981)  
 Madany, Bassam, 'Creating Radio Programs for Muslims: Presentation by Bassam Madany - Back to God Hour, U.S.A., Arabic Broadcast', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed.), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969)  
 Madany, Bassam, 'Dangerous Trends', in *Missionary Monthly* (January 1988)



- Madany, Bassam M., 'Form and Content in Radio Broadcasting', in *Missionary Monthly* (December 1977)
- Madany, Bassam, 'Re-Thinking Missions Today: Neo-Evangelical Missiology and the Christian Mission to Islam', in *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* (April 1996)
- Madany, Shirley W., 'Christian Missions to the Muslims: Anthropological or Apostolic?' in *The Banner* (2 August 1982)
- Madany, Shirley W., *Muslims Meeting Christ* (n.p., 2005)
- Madany, Shirley W., 'Team Service for the Lord', in *The Outlook* (June 1994)
- Olechowska, Elzbieta, and Aster, Howard (eds), *Challenges for International Broadcasting* (n.p., 1995)

Articles by Shirley W. Madany in *Missionary Monthly*:

- 'Reformation and Rehabilitation' (October 1975)
- 'Student Quotes' (May 1976)
- 'Martyrdom and Mission' (February 1977)
- 'Team Work' (March 1977)
- 'The Muslim and the Bible' (December 1979)
- 'Beyond Imagination' (February 1980)
- 'A Follow-Up Ministry' (June-July 1980)
- Untitled Article (October 1980)
- 'Middle East Revisited' (February 1981)
- 'Biblical Foundations' (April-May 1981)
- 'The Biblical Approach' (June-July 1981)
- 'Links in Gods Chain' (November 1981)
- 'Literary Treasures from Beirut' (April-May 1983)
- 'Patron Saint and Kindred Spirits' (June-July 1984)
- 'Just Preaching' (April-May 1986)
- 'A Loving Tribute' (January 1987)
- 'In Memoriam: Dr Loraine Boettner' (February 1990)
- 'Broadcasting Power' (February 1991)
- 'Radio Missions: A Ministry of the Word of God' (October 1991)
- 'Faith Comes by Hearing' (April-May 1993)
- 'The Great Feast' (November 1994)
- 'A Pilgrimage' (August-September 1995)
- 'Planting, Watering and Growing' (October 1996)
- 'Encouraging Signs' (November 2000)
- 'Memories of Happy Service' (June-July 2001)
- 'God's Timing' (November 2001)

**1.9.2 Archival Materials**

BTGH did not keep archives of its Arabic broadcasts. All papers and newsletters and other information used for this chapter have been made available by Bassam and Shirley Madany personally:

- Madany, Bassam, 'The Changing Situation in Islam Today' (1975)

- Madany, Bassam, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee (15-16 October 1975)'
- Madany, Bassam, 'Report 1975: Introduction' (1976)
- Madany, Bassam, 'Arabic Broadcast Report for Radio Committee' (12-13 February 1976)
- 'Arabic Broadcast – Mail Response Form: Totals for 1978'
- Madany, Bassam M., 'A Thirty Year Report of Saatu'l Islah (The Reformation Hour)' (1988)
- 'BTGH Arabic Broadcast Schedule (Summer-Fall 1989)'
- Madany, Bassam 'Standards Required by Christian Radio Stations for Arabic Language Broadcasters' (1993-1994?): document prepared for the successor of Bassam Madany prior to his retirement
- Madany, Bassam, 'The Arabic Broadcast: The Back to God Hour: Methodology of Radio Programs and Literature' (1994)

Some Personal Newsletters of Bassam and Shirley Madany were also used. These were dated:

12 September 1953, January 1977, February 1978, March 1980, February 1981, February 1983, April 2003

### **1.9.3 Interviews**

- Biener, Hansjörg, in an email to the author (15 April 2007)
- Madany, Bassam, in emails to the author (5 and 6 October 2004, 18 April 2006)
- Madany, Shirley, in emails to the author (29 and 30 April 2003, 25 June 2003, 11 and 12 September 2003, 6 October 2004, 12 June 2005).
- Madany, Shirley, in a letter to the author (6 July 2003)
- Plastow, Fred, in an email to the author (9 February 2003)

### **1.9.4 Websites**

- Www.backtogod.net (29 January 2005)
- Www.btgh.org (28 April 2004)
- Www.unashamedofthegospel.org (7 October 2007)
- Www.woh.gospelcom.net (20 June 2005)

## **1.10 Arab World Ministries (AWM)**

### **1.10.1 Publications**

- Bell, William, 'Effective Methods in Reaching Muslims by Correspondence Courses - Report by William Bell - Radio School of the Bible', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969)
- Butcher, Muriel, 'By Faith...': *Character Cameos from North Africa* (Highgate, n.d.)

- 'The French Connection', in *North Africa Mission* (May 1975)
- Harris, Don, 'Gospel Broadcasts for Morocco', in *North Africa* (No. 29, October-December 1959)
- 'The Mass Media and Church Planting in Restricted Access Countries', in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (July 1993)
- McBride, Ken, and Vishanoff, Steve, 'Radio School of the Bible', in *NAM 1881-1981: Our God is Faithful* (1981)
- 'Mohammed Shaffir', in *Forward* (November 1969),
- Porter, David, *The Man Who Was Q: The True Story Of Charles Fraser-Smith, The 'Q' Wizard Of World War II. Appendix two: Open Doors – Media for Islam* (Carlisle, 1989)
- 'Radio School of the Bible', in *Cross & Crescent* (Winter 1981)
- 'Radio School of the Bible – History; Radio – Today's Open Door', in *RSB News* (No. 1, 1973)
- 'Radio – Today's Open Door', in *RSB News* (No. 1, 1973)
- RSB* (No. 1, 1971)
- RSB News* (No. 2, 1972)
- Stalley, Jessie C., *No Frontiers: The Story of the Radio School of the Bible* (Highgate, 1969)
- Steele, Francis Rue, 'Breakthrough in Radio', in *The Cross and the Crescent* (Fall 1977)
- Steele, Francis R., *Not in Vain; The Story of North Africa Mission* (Pasadena, 1981)

Many articles from different publications of AWM have been used. These magazines and newsletters have been accessed in the premises of AWM of part of AWM's media ministries in Worthing (England). These articles are listed here, sorted by publication and sequentially:

#### Articles in Frontline:

- Shafir, Shaf, 'What is Your Name' (November 1975)
- 'Radio! From Small Beginnings...' (September 1978)
- 'They said it!' (September 1978)
- Shafir, Shaf, 'The Programme!' (September 1978)
- Bell, William, 'Radio! From Small Beginnings...' (September 1978)
- 'Awakening them By Radio!' (September 1978)
- Harris, Don, and Sikaly, Joseph, 'What's Happening in 1980?' (September 1980)
- Harris, Mary, 'But Who Hears Us?' (September 1980)
- Wilson, Tom and Fern, 'Why Marseilles?' (September 1980)
- 'Contact!' (September 1980)
- McBride, Ken, 'Radio School of the Bible' (May 1982)
- McBride, Ken, 'Missionary Project' (July 1982).
- Fraser-Smith, Keith, 'Looking Ahead with the RSB Director' (March 1985)
- Robinson, Dave, 'Persuading the Muslim Mind – By Mail' (March 1985)
- 'Electronic Worship for the Arab World' (June 1988)

Fraser-Smith, Keith, 'Media: Reaching the Arab World' (December 1991-January 1992)  
 'Christ stays as a Guest in Algeria' (May 1993)  
 'AWM's West Area Director, 'Hunger in Morocco' (June 1993)  
 'Prosecuted for receiving Bible Correspondence Courses' (March 1994)  
 'Dispatches from the Arab World' (July-August 1994)  
 'The Facts of the RSB' (September 1994)  
 'The Time-line of the RSB' (September 1994)  
 'The Effectiveness of the Radio School of the Bible' (September 1994)  
 'Marseille Calling' *Introductory special issue* (1997)  
 Fisher, Ted, 'Seeing the man at the top' (May 1998)  
 Brister, Jacky, 'Media: What's the Story?' (September 1998)  
 'A live radio station' (April 2000)  
 'AWM Media; Past, Present & Future' (April 2001)

Articles in NAM-Media:

'Radio Mail Hits 5400' (Spring 1982)  
 'Reactions' (Autumn 1982)  
 'Lighter Mailbag' (Autumn 1983)  
 'RSB Mail' (Winter 1983)  
 'Postal Problems' (Summer 1984)  
 'Transition: In Retrospect' (January 1985)  
 'Will the Mail get through?' (January 1985)  
 'People and the Media' (May 1985)  
 'Rise in Radio Mail' (Autumn 1985).  
 'Airwaves for North Africa' (Autumn 1985)  
 'On the Air in France' (Autumn 1985)  
 'Bombs, Radio and the RSB' (Autumn 1986)  
 'Goal Reached in One year' (Autumn 1986)  
 'Arab World Media' (Autumn 1986)  
 'Cry for Hope' (Spring 1987)

Articles in Contact:

'Waiting' (September 1987)  
 Fraser-Smith, Keith, 'Special Report' (March 1988)  
 'Into a New World' (November 1988)  
 'Follow-Up' (November 1987)  
 'News in Brief' (November 1988)  
 '1964-1989 Acorns to Oak Trees' (April 1989).  
 'Fruits' (November 1989)  
 'Berber Programs on the Air' (April 1990)  
 'Arabic Programming' (April 1990)  
 'New Arabic Broadcasting!' (September 1990)  
 'Walking Together' (February 1991)  
 'Triple Partnership' (February 1991)  
 'Newsbriefs' (February 1991)

'Team Effort' (February 1991)  
'Arab World Media - in Action' (April 1991)  
'For information & Intercession' (September 1991)  
'An Eye to the Future' (February 1993)  
'Radio Feedback' (February 1993)  
'BCC at a Glance' (April 1993)  
'Partners in Prayer' (April 1993)  
'Video Clip' (September 1993)  
Milligan, Dave, 'Musings from the Media Director' (November 1994)  
'Partners through Giving' (February 1995)  
'Walking Together' (February 1995)  
'Partners Through Giving' (November 1995)  
'Path of Life' (April 1996)  
Ruffin, Johanna, 'Piercing the Heart' (April 1996)  
'A Modern Nicodemus' (February 1997)

Articles in Vision:

'Development' (Vol. IV, 1998)  
'AWM Media; Why is Training a Priority' (Vol. 1, 2003)  
'Prayer' (Vol. 2, 2003)

***1.10.2 Archival Materials***

The following documents were found by browsing through the boxes and binders in which AWM kept its archival materials. These were kept in a storage room in Worthing:

Bell, William, 'Letter to Christine Ford' (14 March 1994)  
'F. W. M. Regional Superintendent's Report to the Field Council (November 1975)'  
Gaston, Warren, 'Letter to Chris Ford' (1 March 1994)  
'Media Report RSB': all monthly reports for January 1995 to February 1997, April-August 1997, January-April 1998, and June 1998  
'Minutes of Meeting of Field Council held at Tangier (22-24 September 1959)'  
'Minutes of the Field Council Meeting held in Casablanca (6-8 April 1960)'  
'Minutes of Field Council Meeting held in Casablanca (8-12 July 1963)'  
'Minutes of Emergency Field Council Meeting held in Casablanca (10-11 September 1963)'  
'Radio School of the Bible – History' (1990s)  
Rider, George, 'Demonstration of Media Solution – Case Histories' (20 February 1974, Marseille): transcript of a speech, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28  
Rider, George, 'Letter to Christine Ford' (17 March 1994)  
Stalley, Harold W., 'Memorandum to Home Councils from Field Director, Report of Field Administration Meeting, Tangier (15-17 June 1955)'  
Stalley, Harold W., 'Memorandum to Home Councils from Field Director, Report of Field Administration Meeting, Tangier (20-22 October 1955)'

- Stalley, Harold W., 'Memorandum to Home Councils from Field Director, Report of Field Administration Meeting, Tangier (30 July -2 August 1956)'
- Stalley, Harold W., 'Memorandum to Home Councils from Field Director, Report of Field Administration Meeting, Tangier (4-5 March 1957)'
- Stalley, Harold W., 'Memorandum to Home Councils, Report of Field Administration (29 July-2 August 1958)'
- Stalley, Harold W., 'Memorandum to Home Councils, Report of Field Administration Meeting (13- 14 October 1958)',
- Stalley, Harold W., 'Memorandum to Home Councils, Report of Field Administration Meeting (5-9 January 1959)'
- Tower, Janet, 'Letter to Chris Ford' (10 June 1994)

Other Archival Materials:

- LeDuc, Norm, 'RSB/AWM Media Historical Notes' (Marseille, 2002): prepared by LeDuc for the author (19 December 2002)
- 'Mission Statement and Vision Statement' (1950s): received from Alasdair McLaren of AWM in the United Kingdom (10 March 2005)

**1.10.3 Interviews**

- Dearborn, Hobe, in emails to the author (30 August 2003, 30 November 2006)
- Plastow, Fred, in an email to the author (9 February 2003)
- Vishanoff, Steve, in email to the author (13 and 14 December 2002, 13 and 29 September 2004)

**1.11 Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)**

**1.11.1 Publications**

- Aske, Sigurd, 'Radio Evangelism and Africa', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. IX No. 1, January-April 1961)
- Biener, Hansjörg, *Christliche Missionssendungen von der arabischen Halbinsel* [Christian Mission Broadcasts from the Arabian Peninsula], in *Materialdienst: Zeitschrift für Religions- und Weltanschauungsfragen* [Materials Service; Magazine for Religious and World View Questions] (No. 1, 2002)
- 'Description of a tape of Lutheran Hour' in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969)
- Fisher, Harold A., 'Christian Radio in the Near East', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. III No. 3, Third Quarter 1955)
- Fisher, Harold, 'From Camel to Cadillac in the Near East', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. V Nos. 2-3, April-September 1957)
- Fisher, Harold, 'Good News on the Air: Vision to Reality', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. VIII No. 3, July-September 1960)

- 'From William N. Haddad's Near East Area Report to the Executive Committee of World Association for Christian Broadcasting (WACB)' in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. XII No. 2, July 1965)
- Hūrānī, Ya'qūb, 'Report from Yacoob Hourani – Radio Voice of the Gospel', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969)
- Imhoff, Frank 'Radio Voice of the Gospel Former Director Dies': press release of LWF on 15 December 1999, on [www.wfn.org/1999/12/msg00125.html](http://www.wfn.org/1999/12/msg00125.html) (2 April 2005)
- Lundgren, Manfred, *Proclaiming Christ to His World; The Experience of Radio Voice of the Gospel: 1957-1977* (Geneva, 1983)
- Poulton, John F., 'Christian Broadcasting and the Near East', in *The Christian Broadcaster* (Vol. XIV No. 2, August 1967)
- Roper, Don, 'Middle East Churches Study Communication Needs', in *Action* (No. 39, April-May 1979)
- 'RVOG to be resurrected in "new form" Bachman tells LWF', in *Action* (No. 21, July-August 1977)
- 'RVOG Tradition Alive and Well', in *Action* (No. 29, April 1978)
- 'RVOG Expands Broadcasts', in *Action* (No. 10, May 1976)
- 'Social Awareness in Ethiopia Gives RVOG New Challenge', in *Action* (No. 3, October 1975)
- Sonnenberg, Gerald, 'Middle East ministry celebrates golden anniversary' (Press Release No: 00-15 by *The Lutheran Hour* (Beirut, 1 January 2001)
- 'Sudan Studio Opens', in *Action* (No. 17, February-March 1977)
- Wasserman, Walter, 'Transcript of comments made by Walter Wasserman', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969)

### **1.11.2 Archival Materials**

The Archives of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Geneva (Switzerland) were a great source of materials for describing the radio work of NECC. Here the sources for these materials in the LWF Archives in Geneva are listed:

- CCZ.0.0.2 - LWFBS, Officers
- CCZ.0.0.2 - LWFBS, Board of Directors
- CCZ.1.0.2 - RVOG Programme Department
- CCZ.1.0.7 - RVOG Related Production Studios, Asia
- CCZ.1.6.1 - LWFBS other Activities, Asia
- GSZ.0.5.4 - Information Services/Office of Communication, Committee on Communication
- GSZ.3.5.1.1 - Information Services/Office of Information, LWFCOC/WACC Coordinating Committee
- GSZ.6.1.1 - RVOG Cabinet Minutes

GSZ.6.2.4.1 - RVOG Program Department, Broadcast Schedules  
 GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Studios, NECC, Beirut 3  
 GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios, Middle East  
 GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios, Middle East, Middle East Survey,  
 RVOG Studios, Beirut  
 GSZ.6.3.0.3 - Related Production Studios, Middle East, Arabic MW  
 GSZ.6.6.6 - RVOG Transition/Handover  
 WM ix.1.dd - Beirut Studio  
 WM ix.1.dd - CCIB/CCCB  
 WM ix.1.dd - Joint Meetings  
 WM ix.1.dd - LWFBS Executive Committee  
 WM ix.1.dd - NECC  
 WM ix.1.dd - Studio Directors Conferences

‘Audience Mail analysis Incoming Mail as from Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 1967’  
 Hourani, Yacoub, ‘Congress of Middle East Churches. Broadcasting Section Programs Department. Arabic Programs: Their Identity, Their Aims, Their Horizon, Their Philosophy’ (1970)  
 Hourani, Yacoub, ‘Director’s Report, A Decade in Review: 1963 –1973’  
 Hourani, Yacoub, ‘Middle East Communication Consultation Nicosia 1970’ (18 September 1970)  
 Hourani, Yacoub ‘Religious Broadcasting on Local Channels’ (late 1970s)  
 Hourani, Yacoub T., ‘The Near East Council of Churches Division on Radio: Report of Program Production’ (1968)  
 Hourani, Yacoub T., ‘The NECC Division on Radio, Report of Program Production’ (1968)  
 Hourani, Y.T., ‘NECC Division on Radio Broadcasting; Annual Report 1969’  
 Stelling, John, ‘Minutes of the meeting of Middle East Communication Fellowship’ (10 January 1978)  
*Syllabus: Summer School for Directors of Radio Writing Workshop* (Beirut, Lebanon, 1 July-10 August 1963)

The following documents have been collected from other sources:

‘Article II of The constitution and the bylaws of the Middle East Council of Churches as approved on 15-21 November, 1994 and 16-20 February, 1995 (Limassol, 1998)’  
 Hilgendorf, Dennis, ‘Demonstration of Problem’ (Marseille, 20 February 1974): transcript, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.  
 Hilgendorf, Dennis, ‘Letter to Abe Thiessen (received 16 March 1972)’, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 12, Folder 25  
 Hilgendorf, Dennis ‘Necessary Considerations in Follow-Up to Media Penetration’ (21 February 1974, Marseille): transcript of a speech, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 29



- ‘Minutes of LWF Committee on Communication (Cartigny, Switzerland, 16-23 April 1980)’, from WACC Library A 232
- Minutes of the fifteenth General Assembly, action 9 and 10’ (Beirut, n.d.): received from NEST’s librarian David Kerry (11 April 2005)

### **1.11.3 Interviews**

- ‘Abd al-Nûr, Manîs, in an email to the author (7 June 2005)
- Biener, Hansjörg, in an email to the author (15 April 2007)
- Ĥûrânî, Ya‘qûb, in an interview to the author (13 July 2004)
- Istîrû, Albârt, in an interview with the author (6 June 2005)

## **1.12 Gospel Missionary Union (GMU)**

### **1.12.1 Publications**

- ‘Avant Ministries: We Believe’ (2004)
- ‘Creedal statement’, in *The Gospel Message* (Vol. 59 No. 3, August 1950)
- ‘Communicating the Message through Media’ (n.d.) brochure
- Davis, Ila Marie, *A Gleam of Light; The Trials and Triumphs of a Century of Missionary Work in Morocco* (Kansas City, 1998)
- ‘Does Jesus Love Muslims? The answer to that question is what the Malaga Media Center is all about’, in *The Gospel Message* (No. 3, 1993)
- Fisk, Erik G., *The Cross versus the Crescent* (London, 1971)
- Geisler, Jim, ‘The Emerging Arab Church – Who will nurture it?’, in *The Gospel Message* (No. 2, 1995)
- Genet, Harry, ‘Penetrating the Muslim World’, in *Reaching Out* (1974)
- ‘Malaga Media Center: Get the Message. Hear the Truth’ (2004): brochure
- Marsh, C. R., *Too Hard for God?* (Bath, 1978, first edition 1970)
- Marsh, Daisy M., *There’s a God in Heaven: Life Experiences among North Africans* (London, 1997)
- Newman, Elsie, *The Touch of Love: A Biography of Mildred Swan* (Baltimore, 2005)
- ‘Radio Obsolete?’, in *Communicate* (No. 2, 2004)
- Stenbock, Evelyn, ‘Miss Terri!’ *The Story of Maude Cary, Pioneer GMU Missionary in Morocco* (Reading, 1970)

### **1.12.2 Archival Materials**

GMU’s Malaga Media Center (MMC) keeps its historic archives in its offices in Malaga (Spain) in two packed filing cabinets. Most of the archival materials used in this publication come from the following files:

- Annual Reports 1981-1994
- Bi-Monthly Report - Prayer Sheet.
- Foreign Attitudes
- Islam/Morocco Miscellaneous Info
- MMC Bulletins (01/1985-04/1996)
- Radio Department, Colloquial vs. Classical

Radio Department, Radio Annual Reports  
 Radio Department, Radio Department Reports  
 Radio Department, Radio - Possible Cutback '86-'87  
 Radio Committee or daily/current JX Minutes  
 Report Statistics from Radio/ BCC Departments  
 Staff FEC '85 thru 1990

Materials received from MMC without reference to their file:

'BCC Stats for Summary'

Collinson, Bernard, 'Memorandum to Home Councils and Field Council about the situation in Morocco' (5 June 1967)

'Minutes of the Morocco Field Council Meeting' (Meknes, 27 November 1967)

Plastow, Fredrick, 'History of The GMU Expulsion From Morocco 1969' (1996)

Shafir, M., 'Why? And How!' (1971)

Stalley, Howard W., 'Memorandum to Home Council, Report of Field Administration Meeting held October 13-14 1958' (15 October 1958)

Transcripts of 'Questions to Mr. D. Anderson and Mr. D. Hilgendorf, and Comments', (20 February 1974, Marseille), from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28

Yoder, J. Maynard. 'A History of the Moroccan Radio Program (Arabic)' (1960s)

Yoder, J. Maynard, 'Kalimat al-Hayat' (Autumn 1966).

Yoder, J. Maynard, 'Message 1': script of an advertorial for MMC in the USA

Some materials were received from other sources:

Marsh, Daisy, 'Demonstration of Media Solution – Case Histories' (Marseille, 19 February 1974, Marseille): transcript of a speech, from the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Collection 86, Box 27, Folder 28.

'Les Programmes radio en Tamazight seront diffuses' (n.p., 2002): unpublished information sheet

### ***1.12.3 Interviews***

Arhab, Ali, in an interview with the author (26 January 2003)

Da'wû, Sharbâl in an interview with the author (15 July 2004)

Barcus, John in an email to the author (17 June 2005)

Dorr, John, in an email to the author (13 December 2006)

Ehmann, Bob, in an email to the author (18 December 2004 and 15 June 2005)

Foster, Bunnie, in an email to the author (29 March 2005)

Geisler, Jim, in emails to the author (16 March 2005, 11 December 2006)

Hartzler, Herman, in an email to the author (13 June 2005)

Heldenbrand, Sam, in an email to the author (16 June 2005, 11 December 2006)

Marsh, Daisy, in an interview with the author (4 September 2004)

Marsh, Daisy, in a letter to the author (12 March 2003)

Plastow, Fred in an email to the author (9 February 2003 and 26 April 2005)

### 1.13 Global Radio Outreach (GRO)

#### 1.13.1 Books and Articles

No books or articles have been written about GRO. This study has heavily depended on GRO's quarterly newsletters:

*GRO Newsletter* (November 1992-December 1995)

*Outreach News* (August 1996-July 2004)

#### 1.13.2 Archival Materials

These documents have been made available by GRO with no reference to files:

'Annual Meetings Minutes' (14 February 1994)

'Annual Report 1995 to the Board of GRO' (1996)

'Board Meeting Minutes' (3 March 1997)

'Board Meeting Minutes' (21 December 2001)

Bond, Michael J, 'Reports - General Information' (1995)

Bond, Michael, 'Report to Board Meeting of GRO' (4 April 1995)

Bond, Michael J., 'Presidents' Report 1995' (1996)

Bond, Michael, 'Presidents Report' (2 December 1998)

Bond, Michael, 'President's Report to Board Meeting' (16 September 1999)

Hartman Lee, 'Technical Department Annual Report' (19 May 1993)

Hartman Lee, 'Technical Department Report' (2 August 1995)

Schouten, Tim, 'Annual Report Director of Programming' (2 August 1995)

#### 1.13.3 Interviews

Bond, Mike, in emails to the author (11 July 2003, 2 February 2005, 3 May 2005, 8 November 2005)

Ibrahim, Timothy, in emails to the author (14 February 2005, 7, 8 November 2005)

Mostofi, Masood, in an email to the author (14 February 2005)

#### 1.13.4 Websites

Www.foca.org. (30 January 2005)

Www.globalradiooutreach.org (13 February 2005)

Www.pcseattle.org/interviews/gro (25 July 2004)

## 2 CHRISTIAN ARAB RADIO: GENERAL

### 2.1 Publications

Acord, Fred, 'Effective Methods in Reaching Muslims by Radio. Report by Fred Acord, ELWA, Beirut', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969)

- Acord, Fred D., 'The Current Status of Radio Broadcasting to Muslim Peoples', in McCurry, Don M., (ed), *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium* (Monrovia, 1979)
- 'Arabic Bible Correspondence Courses March 1969', in Raymond H. Joyce (ed), *Message to Islam. Report of Study Conference on Literature, Correspondence Courses & Broadcasting in the Arab World including Panel Discussions on Communicating the Gospel to the Muslim* (Beirut, 1969)
- Biener, Hansjörg, *Christliche Rundfunksender Weltweit: Rundfunderarbeit im Klima der Konkurrenz* [Christian Radio Broadcasters Worldwide: Radio Broadcasting Ministries in a Climate of Competition] (Stuttgart, 1994)
- Bourne, Phil, 'Creating the Right Impression: Western Christian Perceptions of Mission Structures with Reference to Middle East Christian Outreach' (1995): unpublished MA thesis for All Nations Christian College
- Cousins, Peter and Pam, *The Power of the Air: The Achievement and Future of Missionary Radio* (London, 1978)
- Fry, C. George and King, James R., *Islam: A Survey of the Muslim Faith* (Grand Rapids, 1982)
- Johnstone, Patrick, 'Covering the Globe', in Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (eds), *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Pasadena, 1999, first edition 1981)
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## Summary in Dutch

### Samenvatting in het Nederlands

#### PROBLEEMSTELLING

Protestantse organisaties hebben sinds 1956 christelijke radioprogramma's geproduceerd en uitgezonden naar de Arabische wereld in de talen van dat gebied. Dit deden ze via de kortegolf en in minder mate via de middengolf. Die organisaties beoogden in de eerste plaats moslims te bereiken met het Evangelie door hun programma's en in de tweede plaats ook christenen. In deze studie *Gospel in the Air* biedt de schrijver een overzicht van alle protestantse organisaties die dit soort programma's hebben uitgezonden, en een representatieve selectie van organisaties die zulke programma's produceerden.

Aanleiding voor deze studie naar de geschiedenis, de aard en het werk van deze vorm van protestantse zending in de Arabische wereld, is dat dit ruim 50 jaar geleden begon zonder dat er serieuze wetenschappelijke aandacht aan is besteed. Van de organisaties die van 20-26 september 2004 programma's uitzonden, zijn bijna al hun Arabische programma's hier beschreven. Daarbij is vooral gelet op hoe die programma's aandacht gaven aan bijbelse onderwerpen, de Arabische Kerken, oecumenische kwesties, pastorale zaken, culturele, sociaal-economische en politieke zaken, en de relatie tussen christenen en moslims.

Het inleidende hoofdstuk 1 bespreekt dat deze studie is gedaan vanuit een driedelige vraagstelling. De eerste vraag is in welke mate deze organisaties Arabisch zijn wat betreft formeel en informeel management. Voor die kwestie wordt de term *indigenisatie* gebruikt.

De tweede vraag is in welke mate de doelen en programma's van deze organisaties *contextueel* zijn. In deze studie wordt de term *contextualisatie* gebruikt voor de poging om het bijbelse Evangelie op een zodanige manier te communiceren dat het betekenis heeft voor Arabieren in hun eigen context. Om de contextualiteit te beoordelen, is gekeken naar de volgende aspecten van de organisaties en hun programma's: homogeniteit van de doelgroep; een holistische kijk op die doelgroep in haar context; de taalkeuze in de programma's; de linguïstische en culturele vormen die worden gebruikt; de manier waarop Jezus Christus en de Kerk worden geportretteerd; en tenslotte de onmiddellijke media-omgeving van de programma's.

Voor het beantwoorden van de vraag naar contextualiteit hanteert deze studie ook een zestal *caveats*: radioprogramma's dienen de uniciteit te erkennen van de openbaring van God in de Bijbel en in Jezus Christus, alsmede de noodzaak van geloof in die openbaring en participatie in de Kerk voor verlossing; contextualisatie is een proces dat binnen de kerkgemeenschap dient plaats te vinden; het mag de eenheid van de wereldkerk, zowel die van het verleden als het heden, niet ondermijnen; het geeft ruimte aan de profetische rol van het Evangelie; het Evangelie is goed nieuws voor individuen en voor de gehele samenleving; tenslotte moet worden onderkend dat vorm en betekenis in communicatie niet uit elkaar kunnen worden getrokken.

De derde vraag is in welke mate deze programma's een helder *getuigenis* van het Evangelie van Jezus Christus geven. Dat getuigenis wordt gedefinieerd door de termen *kerygma*, *koinonia*, en *diakonia*. Die termen worden respectievelijk gebruikt voor de verbale verkondiging van het Evangelie, de gemeenschap van de gelovigen met God en elkaar, en de dienstverlening van de Kerk in de samenleving.

Aangezien onder veel evangelicale zendingswerkers in de islamitische wereld een schema van John Travis voor het definiëren van contextualiteit wordt gebruikt, is in deze studie gepoogd dat schema te gebruiken bij het beoordelen van de organisaties en hun programma's. Travis definieert contextualiteit louter op basis van de mate waarin voormalige moslims en christelijke gemeenschappen in de islamitische wereld de vormen en de taal van de islam blijven gebruiken om hun identiteit mee te duiden.

De onderzochte organisaties gebruikten de hoeveelheid reacties van hun luisteraars vaak als bewijs voor het belang van hun uitzendingen. Daarom onderzoekt deze studie ook de hoeveelheid reacties en hoe en waarom die door de tijd fluctueerden. Dat is echter geen bewijs voor de mate waarin de programma's contextueel en een duidelijk getuigenis van het Evangelie zijn.

## CONTEXT VOOR PROTESTANSTE ARABISCHE RADIO

Voor het begrijpen van de rol van protestantse radio in de Arabische wereld, wordt in de hoofdstukken 2-5 eerst de nodige achtergrondstudie gedaan. Hoofdstuk 2 bespreekt de geschiedenis van de Arabische wereld en de islam, en de plaats van de Kerk in die geschiedenis. Kort na de veroveringen door de islamitische legers had de Kerk aanvankelijk nog veel gelegenheid voor haar getuigenis in de publieke ruimte; naarmate het aantal moslims toenam, nam die ruimte voor de Kerk af, omdat de islamitische leiders de naleving van hun religieuze regelgeving in toenemende mate konden afdwingen. Dit leidde tot een situatie waarin de Kerk uiteindelijk alleen binnen de kerkelijke gemeenschap haar kerygma en koinonia tot uiting kon brengen; diakonia kon slechts in beperkte mate buiten de Kerk worden beoefend.

Het moderne gebruik van de term *Arabische wereld* suggereert dat binnen die regio grote gelijkheid bestaat wat betreft etniciteit, religie en taal, maar dat is onjuist. Wel is er sinds het begin van de islam niet alleen een proces van islamisering gaande, maar ook van arabisering. Juist in de moderne tijd bestaat veel spanning binnen de Arabische samenlevingen tussen het streven naar uniformiteit enerzijds en toenemende diversiteit anderzijds. Het streven naar uniformiteit werd in de postkoloniale periode aanvankelijk vooral door Arabisch nationalisme gekenmerkt, maar het kreeg sinds omstreeks 1970 steeds meer een islamitisch karakter. De islamisering van de publieke ruimte sinds die tijd is zeer problematisch voor de Kerk en haar getuigenis.

Hoofdstuk 3 bespreekt de talen van de Arabische wereld en het probleem van *diglossia* en analfabetisme. Deze studie suggereert dat *Klassiek Arabisch* en *Modern Standaard Arabisch* (MSA) teveel gebonden zijn aan de islam en het Arabisch nationalisme om vruchtbaar gebruikt te worden door christelijke radio. MSA wordt bovendien maar zeer beperkt begrepen, namelijk vooral door mensen met



een tertiaire opleiding. Voor het christelijk getuigenis dienen de Arabische spreek-talen te worden gebruikt, omdat die beter worden begrepen door de luisteraars en omdat het gebruik ervan respect toont voor de mensen in hun eigen culturen.

De geschiedenis en de *status quo* van de Arabische Kerken worden behandeld in hoofdstuk 4. Deze studie laat zien dat er geen grote culturele verschillen bestaan tussen moslims en christenen in de Arabische wereld. De Arabische moslims waren aanvankelijk een kleine minderheid tussen de christenen, en begonnen aan een proces van inculturalisatie toen ze met hun nieuwe religie binnensijpelden in de toenmalige christelijke wereld. De Kerken hebben op hun beurt de Arabische taal geleidelijk overgenomen. De verschillen tussen de moslims en de christenen in de Arabische wereld zijn vooral theologisch van aard. Wel is een diepe sociale kloof ontstaan tussen de aanhangers van beide religies, vooral door de manier waarop de islam de positie van de christenen juridisch regelde; christenen werden permanent een minoriteit met beperkte rechten.

De geschiedenis van de Kerken in de Arabische wereld laat ook zien hoe vanuit de Westerse wereld voortdurend is gepoogd de Arabische kerken te veranderen. De rooms-katholieke kerk heeft haar claim op het primaat van de historische patriarchaten nooit gewijzigd en stuurde daarom vanaf de Europese middeleeuwen zendelingen naar de Arabische wereld om de kerken daar te overtuigen hun inheemse leiderschap in te ruilen voor dat van Rome. Protestantse zending heeft sinds de 19de eeuw christenen uit de inheemse kerken overtuigd hun kerken te verlaten om onderdeel van nieuwe protestantse Kerken te worden. Het is niet verwonderlijk dat de historische Kerken van het Midden-Oosten met argusogen kijken naar elke vorm van Westers zendingswerk. Westerse christenen behoren deze vrees van de historische Kerken te respecteren; ze moeten bovendien als uiting van *koinonia* de integriteit van deze Kerken van de Arabische wereld als lichaam van Christus erkennen.

Hoofdstuk 5 beschrijft de ontwikkeling van Arabische radio. Het behandelt de Arabische transnationale uitzendingen door niet-Westerse landen, evenals de ontwikkeling van radio in de Arabische wereld zelf. De formatieve periode van radio in de Arabische wereld was tussen 1928 en 1953. In die periode stonden de meeste Arabische landen onder koloniaal toezicht; radio ontwikkelde zich bij uitstek als propaganda-instrument in handen van die koloniale machten. In deze periode zette de oecumenische organisatie *Near East Christian Council* (NECC) de eerste stappen in de ontwikkeling van Arabische christelijke radio door in 1948 te besluiten radioprogramma's te gaan produceren. In 1974 veranderde deze organisatie haar naam in *Middle East Council of Churches* (MECC)

Sinds Jamâl 'Abd al-Nâsir in 1953 president werd in Egypte, ontwikkelde Egypte zijn radio-industrie als een sterk propagandawapen om zijn rol in de Arabische wereld te versterken. De overige Arabische landen liepen ver achter met het ontwikkelen van een eigen radio-industrie. De kleurrijke verbale oorlogen via de radio, samen met de komst van goedkope transistorradio's, zorgde voor grote aantallen radioluisteraars in de Arabische wereld. Kort na het aantreden van Nâsir begonnen de eerste protestantse organisaties met transnationale radiouitzendingen in de Arabische taal. Pioniers waren de Libanese *Zevende-dags Adventisten* die in 1953-1954 Arabische uitzendingen via de kortegolf vanuit Sri Lanka verzorgden.

ELWA ('Eternal Love Winning Africa') volgde in 1956, en zou tot 1990 onafgebroken Arabische programma's uitzenden. Diverse andere evangelicale radio-organisaties begonnen in deze periode met de productie en het uitzenden van Arabische programma's, zoals *Back to God Hour* (BTGH), *Arab World Ministries* (AWM), *Gospel Missionary Union* (GMU) en *Trans World Radio* (TWR).

Tussen 1970 en 1990 raakte Egypte zijn enorme superioriteit op het gebied van radiouitzendingen kwijt, vooral omdat andere Arabische landen hun eigen radio ontwikkelden. Gedurende deze jaren bereikte de populariteit van radio haar hoogtepunt. NECC, de enige oecumenische radio-organisatie, stopte in deze periode met programma's te produceren, maar het aantal evangelicale organisaties dat Arabische programma's produceerde en uitzond, nam verder toe. *Far East Broadcasting Association* (FEBA), *Family Radio* (FR), *International Broadcasting Association* (IBRA) en *Bible Voice Broadcasting* (BVB) zijn de belangrijkste voorbeelden van deze ontwikkeling.

De Golfoorlog van 1990-1991 was een belangrijk keerpunt in de Arabische moderne geschiedenis omdat de Westerse naties voor het eerst sinds de koloniale periode, weer grootschalig militair intervenueerden. In 1990 staakten de Arabische uitzendingen van ELWA omdat haar zenders in Liberia door rebellen werden overgenomen, maar *Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings* (HCJB) begon juist in deze tijd met Arabische uitzendingen. *Global Radio Outreach* (GRO) illustreerde de voortgaande groei van het aantal organisaties dat Arabische producties verzorgde. De Golfoorlog speelde een belangrijke rol in de ontwikkeling van satelliettelevisie in de Arabische wereld, wat de betekenis van radio als bron van informatie sterk verminderde. Dit had een negatief effect op de hoeveelheid reacties die van luisteraars werd ontvangen. Tegelijk zorgde de liberalisering van radio in Europa ervoor, dat goedkope zendtijd op de kortegolf en middengolf beschikbaar kwam. Dat stelde de protestantse radio-organisaties in staat om beduidend meer zendtijd te kopen voor uitzendingen naar de Arabische wereld, wat het verlies aan reacties van luisteraars overigens niet compenseerde.

## ONDERZOEK NAAR 13 ORGANISATIES

In de hoofdstukken 6-18 worden de acht protestantse radiozenders en de vijf protestantse radioproductanten die hierboven zijn genoemd, in detail beschreven. Van elke organisatie wordt eerst de geschiedenis beschreven van voordat het met Arabische uitzendingen en producties begon. Vervolgens wordt de geschiedenis van de Arabische uitzendingen en de producties bestudeerd, alsmede de geloofsbelijdenissen van de organisaties. Daarna wordt onderzocht welke talen en dialecten de organisaties in hun programma's gebruikten, en wat voor programmafilosofie ze hadden. Er is aandacht voor de feitelijke programma's die door de organisaties zijn geproduceerd, met als speerpunt de programma's die van 20-26 september 2004 zijn uitgezonden. Tenslotte wordt aandacht gegeven aan de hoeveelheid reacties die van de luisteraars is ontvangen. Elk hoofdstuk eindigt met conclusies over de *indigenisatie* van de bestudeerde organisatie en de *contextualisatie* en het *getuigende karakter* van de programma's.

## CONCLUSIES

In hoofdstuk 19 worden conclusies getrokken naar aanleiding van de driedelige vraagstelling uit hoofdstuk 1, tegen de achtergrond van de context van de Arabische wereld zoals beschreven in de hoofdstukken 2-5, en op basis van het concrete onderzoek zoals beschreven in de hoofdstukken 6-18.

Wat betreft *indigenisatie* concludeert deze studie dat het vooral westerse zendelingen waren die met christelijke Arabische radio begonnen zijn, maar dat Arabieren gaandeweg een steeds belangrijker rol zijn gaan spelen in deze vorm van zending. Aanvankelijk werd niet alleen de techniek van de radiuitzendingen maar ook de inhoud van de programma's vooral door westerse zendelingen bepaald. Tussen 1970 en 1990 was een verschuiving waarneembaar; hoewel westerse zendelingen de eindverantwoording hielden over de producties en de inhoud van de programma's, namen Arabieren de dagelijkse verantwoordelijkheid over programmaproductie over. Opmerkelijk is dat tot de burgeroorlog in Libanon begon (1975) vooral Libanese christenen betrokken waren bij protestantse radio, maar dat daarna die rol meer door Egyptenaren werd overgenomen.

Na 1991 was het management van de meeste studio's in handen van Arabieren, zowel op technisch gebied als programma-inhoudelijk. Opmerkelijk is de toename van het aantal onafhankelijke Arabische producenten, vooral in Egypte. Naast Egypte bleef Libanon van belang voor de productie van programma's, maar in de 1990er jaren werden ook programma's geproduceerd door Arabieren in Soedan, Jemen, Tunesië, Algerije, Marokko, Malta, Cyprus, Frankrijk, de Verenigde Staten, Canada, Australië en Groot-Brittannië.

De bestudeerde radio-organisaties hebben zich door de jaren uitgesproken over contextualisatie en gerelateerde thema's. Daaruit blijkt dat sprake is van drie hoofdstromingen onder de organisaties wat betreft dit thema.

De meest constante stroming, die sinds 1956 tot nu toe de protestantse Arabische radio beheerst, benadrukte dat het Evangelie zo goed mogelijk moet worden gepresenteerd aan moslims met als doel dat die daarin gaan geloven en christen worden. Nadruk lag zeer sterk op de individu en diens persoonlijke relatie met God; omdat moslims verkeerde ideeën zouden kunnen hebben bij het begrip *kerk* werd dat woord meestal vermeden. Politieke uitspraken of uitspraken over de islam waren taboe. Contextualisatie werd in deze stroming gezien als de poging om rekening te houden met de gevoeligheden van moslims. De centrale *kerygmatische* thema's als de dood en opstanding van Christus en het thema van de Drie-eenheid stonden centraal. Er werd geen gebruik gemaakt van de *Qur'ân* of van specifiek islamitisch jargon om die boodschap te verduidelijken. In deze stroming staat het *kerygma* centraal, terwijl de *koinonia* en de *diakonia* worden verwaarloosd als aspecten van het christelijk getuigenis.

Een tweede stroming binnen de protestantse radio koos de weg van *islamisering* van de programma's. Deze stroming had dezelfde individualistische benadering van het Evangelie als de eerste stroming, dus de *koinonia* en de *diakonia* van het Evangelie kwamen ook bij hen niet aan bod. Ze verschilden van de eerste stroming omdat ze het gebrek aan succes van die stroming beschouwden als gevolg van een verkeerde presentatie van het Evangelie, dat verder op dezelfde manier werd begre-

pen als door aanhangers van de eerste stroming. Om moslims het Evangelie uit te leggen moesten islamitische vormen worden gebruikt, zoals het reciteren van de bijbel op een islamitische manier, en het gebruik van islamitisch jargon, zoals de naam 'Īsá voor Jezus, terwijl bijbelse termen als *Zoon van God* werden vermeden. Deze ideeën hebben weinig aanhang gekregen en werden vooral tussen 1966 en 1974 gehoord.

Een derde stroming was de oecumenische; gedurende de 1960er jaren wilde die stroming in zijn radioprogramma's op een evangelicale manier nadruk leggen op de individu en diens relatie met God, maar niet ten koste van aandacht voor de gemeenschap van de Kerk en de sociale rol van de Kerk in de samenleving. Daardoor zou, in ieder geval in theorie, een balans ontstaan in de radioprogramma's tussen het *kerygma*, de *koinonia* en de *diakonia* van het Evangelie. Dit werd echter verhinderd doordat binnen de oecumenische stroming de aandacht al snel geheel verschoof naar de *diakonale* aspecten van het Evangelie. De sociale en politieke doelen van de Arabische wereld moesten de agenda voor de radioprogramma's bepalen, onder meer om de Kerk en haar boodschap relevant te maken voor de Arabische samenleving. Dit was dus een vorm van contextualisatie door *diakonia*, maar ten koste van de andere aspecten van het christelijk getuigenis. Dit leidde tot een *secularisering* van de programma's. Vooral tijdens de eerste helft van de 1970er jaren was deze kleine stroming vertegenwoordigd onder de protestantse radioproductanten.

De radioprogramma's die zijn onderzocht in deze studie, uitgezonden van 20-26 september 2004, laten zien dat de eerstgenoemde stroming de enige is die aan het begin van de 21ste eeuw op radio kon worden beluisterd. Aangezien contextualisatie is gedefinieerd als de poging om het bijbelse Evangelie op een zodanige manier te communiceren dat het betekenis heeft voor Arabieren in hun eigen context, moet worden geconstateerd dat de meeste programma's tekortschieten; met de echte context van de luisteraars wordt nauwelijks rekening gehouden.

De meeste zenders hebben geen concrete doelgroep op het oog, en daarnaast liggen hun formele doelen vaak ver van de feitelijke programma's die ze uitzenden. Met hetzelfde programma denkt men verschillende doelgroepen in een verscheidenheid van Arabische landen aan te spreken.

Sommige zenders hebben in theorie het doel om niet slechts te spreken over de individuele ziel en diens relatie met God, maar in de praktijk blijkt dat geen van de protestantse zenders de doelgroep in zijn context benaderd. Door niet te spreken over de islam, politiek, sociaal-economische kwesties, cultuur, geschiedenis en mensenrechten, wordt een deel van het Evangelie het zwijgen opgelegd. Een 'evangelie' dat niet spreekt tot en over de mens in zijn concrete omstandigheden, is een abstractie van het Goede Nieuws, en is dus te 'luchtig', een 'Gospel in the Air'.

In veel programma's wordt MSA gebruikt, hoewel in de meeste programma's de spreektaal van de Arabische wereld worden gebruikt. Daaronder nemen het Egyptisch en Libanees-Arabisch de voornaamste plaats in. Als de programma's in die talen ook echt op Egypte en Libanon gericht zouden zijn, ware dat contextueel gepast, maar door een gebrek aan duidelijk homogeen doelgroepen, is dat niet het geval. De meeste zenders programmeren diverse talen in korte uitzendblokken, die

geen duidelijke doelgroep hebben. Daardoor worden de luisteraars dus niet in hun eigen spreektaal aangesproken.

De meeste programma's die zijn bestudeerd, gebruikten linguïstische en culturele vormen die een directe weerslag waren van het evangelicale jargon van protestanten in de Arabische wereld. Hoewel sommige programma's geschikt waren voor moslims door zorgvuldig taalgebruik en omdat christelijke woorden werden uitgelegd, waren de meeste programma's onbegrijpelijk voor islamitische luisteraars.

Jezus Christus werd in programma na programma gepresenteerd als de vleesgeworden Zoon van God, die stierf en opstond uit de dood voor de vergeving van de zonden van de luisteraar. Aangezien de programma's geen maatschappelijke implicaties van het geloven in Christus bespraken, werd Hij dus eenzijdig als de verlosser van de ziel geportretteerd. Hierdoor werd de context van de luisteraar veronachtzaamd.

De Kerk werd in de programma's nauwelijks genoemd. Daarmee negeerden de programma's de bijbelse notie dat God zich door de Kerk in de wereld manifesteert. Dat de Kerk werd genegeerd is bovendien pijnlijk gezien de lange geschiedenis waarin de Kerk in de islamitische landen is gemarginaliseerd. De manier waarop Christus en Kerk in de programma's werden geportretteerd, betekent dat de *koinonia* en de *diakonia* van het Evangelie niet aan bod kwamen, terwijl het *kerygma* eenzijdig was.

De invloed van de media-context waarin de programma's werden uitgezonden, en hoe dat invloed had op de manier waarop de luisteraars de programma's begrepen, verdient meer studie; het lijkt dat de zenders er niet veel aandacht aan besteden: Programma's die redelijk geschikt zijn voor moslims werden uitgezonden temidden van programma's die vooral voor christenen geschikt zijn; de meeste programmablokken bestonden uit programma's in allerlei talen; programma's worden uitgezonden vanuit Europa; andere programma's worden gevolgd door Hebreeuwse of zionistische programma's.

John Travis vooronderstelt dat contextualisatie een aanpassing is aan de taal en de vormen van de islam en de moskee; zijn schema is teveel gericht op de vorm waarin gelovigen samenkomen. Daardoor bleek zijn schema ongeschikt om radio-programma's te classificeren. Het schema zou eventueel bruikbaar zijn om de kerkvormen te classificeren die in de programma's voorkwamen, maar zoals gezegd, de Kerk kwam in de programma's nauwelijks voor. Bij de beoordeling van de programma's was het schema van Travis dus niet behulpzaam.

Vanaf de eerste uitzendingen van protestantse radioprogramma's tot 2004, steeg het aantal uitzendingen gestaag, van zeven uur per week in 1957, naar 70 uur per week in 1983, tot 217 uur per week in 2004. De hoeveelheid reacties op die programma's bereikte een piek rond 1983, en begon daarna weer te dalen, ondanks het toenemende aantal uitzendingen. Ondanks de toename van het aantal uitzendingen kan dus op grond van het eigen criterium dat de zenders vaak gebruiken, worden gezegd dat protestantse Arabische radio een hoogtepunt bereikte in de jaren '80 van de vorige eeuw.

Hoofdstuk 20 beschrijft hoe de Arabische wereld momenteel in toenemende mate lijdt onder de spanning tussen de beweging naar uniformiteit enerzijds en die

naar pluriformiteit anderszijds, en hoe de Kerken in de Arabische wereld, als onderdeel van hun samenlevingen, diezelfde spanning beleven. In de MECC hebben die Kerken er echter blijk van gegeven dat de pluriformiteit echte *koinonia* niet onmogelijk maakt. Het feit dat ze ondanks grote verschillen in staat zijn uitdrukking aan die *koinonia* te geven, is op zich een getuigenis van het Evangelie in de context van de Arabische wereld. De Kerken kunnen laten zien dat eenheid en uniformiteit niet hetzelfde zijn en dat verschillen in religieuze expressie de *koinonia* van de Arabische wereld, de *ummah*, niet hoeft te breken. Het is de vraag of de islam deze gedachte wil aanvaarden; het accepteren van pluriformiteit vereist een heroverweging van de historische visie van islam op de ene samenleving onder de eenheid (*tawhîd*) van God.

Het getuigenis van de eenheid van de verschillende Kerken van het Midden-Oosten is niet alleen een *koinoniaal* getuigenis van Jezus Christus, maar ook een *diakonaal* getuigenis dat de Arabische wereld kan helpen om met radicale maatschappelijke veranderingen om te gaan. Voor de Kerk zelf is dit van levensbelang, want zo'n verandering schept ruimte in het publieke domein voor haar volle getuigenis van Jezus Christus in een wereld waar zij momenteel zelfs niet zeker is van haar voortbestaan.

Christelijke *koinonia* kan door de protestantse radio gestalte worden gegeven door te gaan spreken over de Kerk en de kerken, en door te laten zien dat christenen kunnen samenleven in eenheid ondanks verschillen. Zulke programma's zullen ook zoeken naar manieren om de *eucharistie*, hart van de christelijke *koinonia* met God en elkaar, gestalte te geven. Het *diakonale* getuigenis kan in radioprogramma's vorm krijgen door de nazorg van programma's, maar evengoed door in de programma's over politieke en sociaal-economische kwesties en mensenrechten te spreken.

Protestantse radio heeft zich totaal op het *kerygmatische* getuigenis gericht, en het heeft dat op een zeer individualistische manier ingevuld. Het draait om de individu, diens ziel, en diens relatie met God. Dat is teleurstellend omdat het een eenzijdige verwoording is van het Evangelie, en omdat de Arabische wereld het *koinoniale* en *diakonale* aspect van het getuigenis van Jezus Christus even hard nodig heeft als het *kerygma* van het Evangelie.

## Curriculum Vitae

Jozef Martinus Strengholt was born in Beverwijk, The Netherlands, on 7 February 1959, as the eldest son of Daniel Martinus Strengholt and Aafje Geertruida Lips. His primary education began in Beverwijk, at the Bethel School, and was finished at the Da Costa School in Soest where the family moved to in 1966. From 1972 to 1977 he was a student at Corderius College, a gymnasium in Amersfoort.

From 1982 Strengholt studied at the University of Utrecht, specializing in the history of Islam and the Middle East. His Master's thesis addressed the questions of how and why, between 1939 and 1942, the Zionist movement rejected the bi-nationalist dreams that the majority of the Zionist movement had held until then. In 1987 Strengholt graduated *cum laude*.

In 1982 Strengholt married Adrienne Ingrid Rosina Ester; they were blessed with three daughters, Stephanie (1988), Rosemarie (1990) and Justine (1994). In 1988 he and his wife and baby daughter moved to Ma'âdi, a suburb of Cairo (Egypt), where he began work as a journalist for the Dutch national radio and some newspapers and magazines. In 1992 he was instrumental in beginning a day care centre for intellectually challenged children attached to a Coptic-Orthodox Church in Ma'âdi. Between 1994 and 1997 the family lived in Amersfoort again, where Strengholt was a partner in a media company.

In 1997 the Strengholt family moved back to Egypt, where they settled in their former neighbourhood of Ma'âdi. Strengholt started a television production organization, in Egypt and some other countries, which he has continued to manage. Also in 1997, he and his wife were instrumental in setting up a primary school in Maadi. In 1998 he started an organization for developing rural villages, in cooperation with a Coptic-Orthodox bishop.

On the 17th of March, 2007, Strengholt was ordained deacon in the Anglican Church by the Rt. Rev. Derek Eaton, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Egypt, with North Africa and the Horn of Africa. He was acting for the Most Rev. Dr. Mouneer Hanna Anis who is the Diocesan Bishop and President Bishop of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. Strengholt serves as an Assistant at the Church of St. John in the Desert, Maadi, as well as All Saints' Cathedral, Zamalek, Cairo.

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