

## 'A humble Christian face'

### -call at Pakistan Congress

CHRISTIANS should be Christian in their approach to the world of Islam. Too often they had not been.

This was the conviction of Dr Charis Waddy, from Oxford, speaking in Pakistan, at last month's First International Congress on Seerat (the life of the Prophet Muhammad). Many of the Congress delegates are now in London for an International Islamic Conference here.

'In the course of the troubled history of relationships between Islam and Christianity,' said Dr Waddy, 'too seldom have we Christians had the courage to show a humble face. The saying of Jesus, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," has been disregarded, and usually we have judged ourselves by our ideals and others by their failings.'

### Essential bridges

One of only two overseas women delegates, Dr Waddy spoke in the Intercontinental Hotel, Lahore. The Congress was inaugurated by Prime Minister Bhutto.

The *Pakistan Times* reported that she 'called for mutual understanding and co-operation between the People of the Book at this critical juncture of history when mankind was facing a spiritual and cultural crisis. This co-operation was needed to feed the hunger and heal the hates of the needy millions of mankind.'

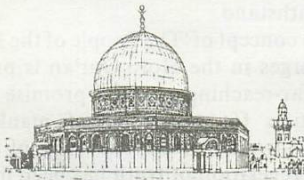
The Pakistan radio and press interviewed Dr Waddy. *Dawn* commented wryly that her interest in Islam was there well before 'the more general oil-inspired interest' of many in the West. It quoted her belief in the need for 'building bridges between races, religions, nationalities — all the different bridges which are essential for human communication'.

All 150 Congress delegates went in convoy to Islamabad, Lahore, Azad Kashmir, Peshawar and Karachi. They included Ministers of Religious Affairs, Shaikhs, Mullahs, and professors from 43 countries.

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NEW  
CHAPTER

by Dr Charis Waddy



Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem

**NEW  
WORLD  
NEWS**  
FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

## Africa's freedom

by Teame Mebrahtu

The film 'Freedom' has been shown in more than eighty countries; hundreds of copies of the film are circulating in 13 languages including Arabic and Malayalam. In the last three years it has been shown widely in Papua New Guinea in Pidgin on the invitation of government ministers and MPs who felt it could help bridge tribal differences on the eve of independence. It is now being shown in Rhodesia (see last week's NWN).

Released 19 years ago, it was the first full-length feature film written and acted by Africans. It deals with political jealousies, ideological intrigues and mob violence, and shows dramatically how new motives can be found to unite the leaders who will shape the future of Africa.

'Freedom' has just been shown in the Westminster Theatre, London. It was introduced last week by Teame Mebrahtu, who was Director of the Teacher Training Institute in Asmara, Eritrea, Ethiopia, before he was appointed Head of the Faculty of Education in Asmara University. He is now doing post-graduate studies at Bristol University.

We print below his introduction.

THE HISTORY OF MANKIND is full of gross tyrannies which, time and again, have masqueraded under the banner of freedom. Throughout the world hideous crimes have been committed, and are still being committed, in the name of freedom. What is worse, world peace seems to be threatened by man's failure to build a new social order — a world community that is founded on honesty, unselfishness and love. One that reverses the existing lop-sided relationship between the poor and the rich nations. Unless humanity succeeds in building this new social order, whatever else we build, we are bound to build in vain.

Fortunately there is a determined force of men and women throughout the world who are fighting for the actualisation of the desired world community. *Freedom* is an example of the efforts of a committed group of Africans who wanted to see Africa the answer, and not the problem, continent — an Africa with a new vision and a new role in a united world. Mankind is not limited to the narrow choice between tyranny and anarchy.

The film does not confuse freedom with the narrow and selfish laissez-faire notion of the licence to do what one likes, at both the individual and national levels. It demonstrates that true and lasting national freedom

cannot and should not be based on either leaving the weak at the mercy of the strong, the minority at the mercy of the majority, or allowing a single group to lord it over the others in a multi-ethnic society.

The film questions the commonly accepted meanings and nature of freedom and leadership. It clearly shows that self-interest, personal ambition and personal glory are precarious bases upon which to build a just and free society — and consequently should not be taken as the be-all and end-all of human endeavour.

A government that does not command the support and respect of its subjects, forfeits its own liberty and sense of peace just in the measure that it denies liberty and sense of peace to its subjects. The film expresses the need to assert freedom which is inspired by a fundamental philosophy of life, freedom that proceeds from obedience to the inner voice inside every individual, and one that liberates the individual from vices which blind him to his essential brotherhood with all mankind.

*Freedom* subtly but forcefully invites us to question what we are living for. The crucial issue which the film raises is that freedom from a colonial power must of necessity be

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1976  
WORLD ASSEMBLY  
FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT  
Caux, Switzerland  
July 10 - September 2  
Special Mediterranean session  
August 2 - 10

# A New Chapter

by  
Dr Charis Waddy



**An International Islamic Conference is now taking place in London and a three-month World of Islam Festival has also just begun. To mark the occasion we are printing extracts from a paper read by Dr Charis Waddy last month in Pakistan at the First International Congress on Seerat (the life of the Prophet Muhammad). Dr Waddy was the first woman to study Arabic at Oxford. She is an author and writer on Middle East affairs. Next month her book 'The Muslim Mind' will be published by Longmans. She foresees 'a partnership between practising believers which no injustice and no materialism can withstand'.**

HUMANITY FACES grave dangers. In every sphere — international, economic, environmental — Muslims and Christians are already working together. If this relationship can truly become that of 'The People of the Book' — a partnership between convinced and practising believers, in a common obedience to God and in common tasks for mankind — they will become together a force for good which no problem, no injustice and no materialism can withstand.

The concept of 'The People of the Book' as it emerges in the Holy Qur'an is profound and far-reaching, in its promise of co-operation for the good of mankind. It springs from a prophetic view of history. God's revelation of truth has been inscribed in the Holy Books that He has at different times entrusted to men, and all who believe in Him and have received such a trust should be united.

## *Stimulating experience*

I speak as a practising Christian, who values the faith of her father and her family, and who also has had the privilege of knowing many Muslims and learning much from them. Recently, I decided to study afresh the teaching in the Qur'an on 'The People of the Book', and in particular on the Christians. I have found this study a moving and stimulating experience.

The Qur'an criticises both Christians and Jews for neglecting the truths their Scriptures teach, and misunderstanding them. It can be admitted with humility that there is truth in this criticism. Neither in the Prophet's day, nor at present, were, or are, we Christians what we ought to be. We fall far short, and I for one accept the challenge to cleanse and deepen my own faith and practice, and to seek a greater understanding of what total surrender to God means.

In the course of the troubled history of relationships between Islam and Christianity, too seldom have we Christians had the courage to show a humble face. The saying of Jesus, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged', has been disregarded, and usually we have judged ourselves by our ideals and others by their failings. The story has been one of confrontation, or argument embittered at times by bloodshed.

## *Not untroubled*

There have been good chapters too, as when Muslim scholarship enriched the early growth of European science and civilisation. Even at the times of sharpest clash, the Christian conscience has not been untroubled. There has always been a train of thought that considers an understanding approach more in accordance with the Gospels, and which perceives the work of the Spirit of God far beyond the limits of the Church.

One example of such thinking is given by the great Egyptian Saint Antony, who lived in the fourth century AD, some two hundred years before the days of Muhammad. 'Not at



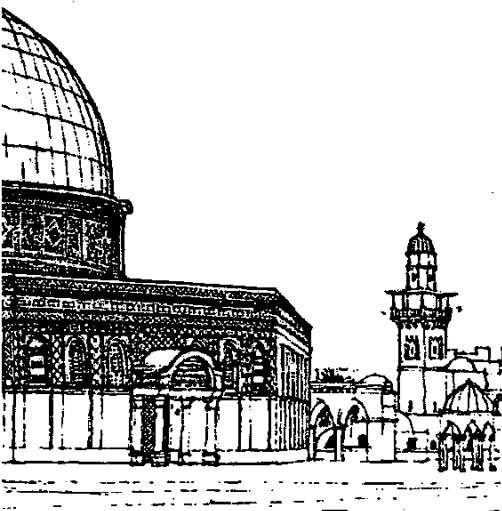
one time only,' he says, 'did God visit His creatures; but from the foundation of the world, whenever any have come to the Creator of all by the law of His covenant implanted in them, God is present with each one of these in His bounty and grace by His Spirit.'

Nearer to our own times, John Wesley, who strove to revive Christianity in England at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, said: 'The thing which I was greatly afraid of... and which I resolved to use every possible method of preventing... was a narrowness of spirit, a party spirit... that miserable bigotry which makes many so unready to believe that there is any work of God but among themselves.'

One of the most fruitful experiences so far between the Muslim and Christian worlds was that of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the Christian era. It was one of the great ages of scholarship and culture, and saw the beginnings of modern science. It was also, it must be said, the age of the Crusades, and history has perhaps tended to over-emphasise their importance at the expense of other aspects of the interchange of ideas, trade and scholarship in the Mediterranean world of the time, especially in Spain and Sicily.

A recent book, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe* by Norman Daniel, looks at Europe just before the First Crusade was preached. The idea of a holy war for the holy land was present, but it was by no means inevitable that it would be approved. In 1076, a vigorous, reforming Pope, Gregory VII, could write to a Muslim ruler in terms of co-operation. 'We believe in and confess One God, admittedly in a different way, and daily praise and venerate Him, the Creator of the worlds, and Ruler of this world.' He concludes with a reference to 'the most holy

## *Upon strengthened which Islam and the future of wo*



patriarch Abraham', and the whole letter is based on the assumption of common ground.

The road thus opening was not the direction history was to take. But it is possible that it might have done so. For an instant, the curtain is lifted on a moment of choice. Instead of the hardening of enmity, could there have been a melting of prejudice, new channels of co-operation? The opportunity passed. Twenty years later another Pope, Urban, preached the First Crusade, with results that still embitter Muslim-Christian relationships.

A few years later, one of the leading figures in Europe, Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, commissioned a Latin translation of the Qur'an, and openly criticised the direction of the Crusades. God does not will murder and slaughter, he said. The Church should wield, not the sword of a king, but the staff of a shepherd.

A few years ago, there was an echo of this controversy in an interview that took place between a distinguished group of Iranians and a Frenchman, bearer of a name well known in the history of the Crusades. This gentleman said, 'My ancestors took part in the Crusades and my family has always been very proud of their courage and prowess in arms. But I have come to realise how far it is from the teachings of my Lord and God, to set out to enforce the will of the Prince of Peace by arms and weapons. I am sorry for our misconceptions then, for our family pride since, and for all the consequences for the world.'

The Muslims present were deeply moved. One of them rose to his feet and said, 'None of us ever expected to hear such words from you. We do not want anything from you except the practice of the teaching of your Master. One saying of Jesus, "Turn the other cheek", if you put it into practice, would

transform the world and draw us all to you.'

We live today in the midst of an encounter between Christianity and Islam as historic as any in previous centuries. The relationship is perhaps more open to change than ever before. We must try to understand our own moment of choice. Could there today be a decisive move from confrontation to co-operation? Is it possible that the issue is in the balance, as it may have been in the years before the Crusades? If so, the concept of 'The People of the Book' takes on new relevance, with fresh hope that men of faith may find a common destiny and common task.

It may be said that the emphasis on the relationship in the Qur'an is one on ideological accord, rather than theological difference. The differences are stated without hesitation or compromise. But the scope and importance of what is held in common is not thereby lost. And it is exactly those great truths held in common that are under attack in the modern world.

Take family life, for instance. The basic agreement on its importance as a God-given way of life, and the very foundation of a healthy society far outweighs differences of detail. The fact is that today in the Christian and Muslim worlds we face the same challenges, and the same attempts to undermine family life. We must ensure that future generations are not robbed of their heritage of family life through our failures. With this in view, we need to strengthen the best in each other, not criticise and despair over each other.

### Help fulfil obligations

There are many signs of a greater appreciation, and desire to know about Islam. This interest has many causes and many aspects. The 'World of Islam Festival' in London is one sign of it. Its activities give an opportunity to many groups to make their own contribution.

The British Council of Churches has issued (February 1976) 'guidelines', written by the Bishop of Guildford, for Christian churches, in which the Bishop, the Rt Rev David Brown, criticises the churches for their ignorance of Islam, from which he says, there is much for Christians to learn. Christians and Muslims worship the same God, and Christians should count it a privilege to help Muslims in Britain to fulfil their religious obligations.

A new alignment seems to be emerging in the present world situation: not only between rich and poor but between North and South. Now for centuries the axis on which

thinking has turned has been East in relation to West: sometimes East and West, sometimes East against West, but always in those terms. The new alignments have the same effect as do maps of air routes on the minds of those brought up on the familiar shapes of Mercator's projection in school atlases. The terrain is the same, but the shapes, the distances, the relationships are seen in a different perspective.

### Significant crescent

In this perspective, for instance, the lands of the Mediterranean are becoming more closely linked than they have been for centuries. And the existence of the great crescent of the Muslim world takes on a new significance. It both stretches halfway round the world from East to West; and also binds North and South. If the world is to avoid a confrontation more dangerous than any in history — a polarisation of forces which can only end in mutual destruction — the immense strength and stability of that Muslim belt has untold importance.

Here I would like to note two men whose influence has in different ways been formative in the thinking of this century: Toynbee, the historian, and Buchman, the initiator of Moral Re-Armament. Toynbee wrote much on Islam's place in history. In his book, *Experiences*, he speaks of the hope for the world that lies in the renewed strength of the great religions: if only they can lay aside their temptation to tear each other to pieces. It is, he says, one of the encouraging surprises of the second half of the century, that they are reviving in influence. He also wrote elsewhere that Islam's uncompromising stand against race prejudice and alcohol could play a key part in combating those evils.

Buchman, in a speech made in 1955, speaks of his vision for the potential of the 'far-flung Muslim world' which can, he says, become 'a girder of unity for all civilisation'. Re-reading this 20 years later, it is interesting to see the setting in which he puts so far-sighted a statement. He quotes three Muslim statesmen, one of whom speaks of the need for 'turning the world into one integral camp, with no western or eastern camps'. Another talks of the secret of a change of heart that 'will lift men everywhere above the hates and jealousies fostered by selfish interests and recall them to the creative inspiration which comes from obedience to the will of God'.

### Fresh focus

The title of the whole speech is *The Electronics of the Spirit*: its theme links the modern miracles of scientific communication with the greater wonders of the working of God in the hearts of men.

These are a few of the indications of attitudes that can bring the concept of 'The People of the Book' into fresh focus. I would like to see more research devoted to it, to the ideological concepts that we have in common,

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ing the moral and spiritual values  
Christianity hold in common,  
ld civilisation may well depend

## FREEDOM contd from p1

complemented by the liberation from selfish leaders whose motives and actions neither nurture nor guarantee freedom either for themselves or for their peoples.

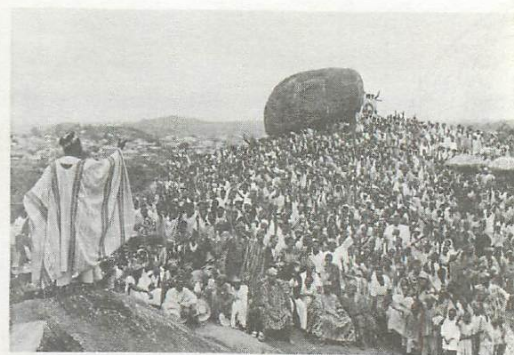
The film vividly shows the way to be free. I know very well for myself what it means to be freed from bitterness. It has something to offer to all of us — poor as well as rich, young as well as old, black as well as white and Marxist as well as capitalist.

The significance of the film lies not only in its provision of an alternative to purposelessness in life, bloodshed, corruption and the

insatiable quest for power, but also in the crucial message it communicates. Man's true freedom lies in his power to choose not to be governed by tyrants who may draw their inspiration from the dehumanising profit and power motives of capitalism and totalitarianism respectively, but by men who combine freedom with obedience to the will of God.

This is the message of *Freedom* and hence the message of Africa to the world.

*'Freedom' can be hired from MRA Productions, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF Price: £6*



The opening scene from the film 'Freedom'

## Speedily acceptable truths

by Sheikh Surur

An extract from the pamphlet *'Moral Re-Armament and the Modern World'* (Alameya Press, Cairo) by Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed Surur, from Asmara, Eritrea, Ethiopia.

THE MAGAZINE *Al-Azhar* published an article with the title 'Islam and Moral Re-Armament' (1956). It describes the effect of Frank Buchman's work on society, and says that he aimed at changing individuals. This he did by arming each person with standards which he must apply drastically to himself. These depend on turning to God, listening to His orders and obeying Him. Each man ought to make a full reckoning of his sins. He ought to decide to be done with all impurity, and to co-operate with others in applying the standards of MRA so that they become operative in society. 'Division,' said Dr Buchman, 'is the mark of our age. Unity is our instant need.' Division is the result of arrogance, hate, lust, fear and greed. It creates confusion and is the hallmark of collapse.

This is an accurate summary of Moral Re-Armament. The writer also quotes another article, in the *Islamic Review*, published in England. It gives a close comparison between Islam and what Moral Re-Armament is out for. It says that in Islam repentance is the means of changing individuals, and is a great moral weapon.

Dr Buchman himself said, 'These truths are readily perceived and speedily acceptable to the far-flung Moslem world which can be a girder of unity for all civilisation.'

Dr Buchman saw that principles would be of no use to a man unless his heart was touched and he was ready to undergo a radical change, and then advance towards new levels of perfection. It is as though he had drawn his inspiration for this idea of change from that honoured verse in the Qur'an, 'God will not change what is in a people until they change what is in themselves.'

His way of spreading his message was a call to integrity. This he explained as listening to the Voice of God, asking His protection, and relying on Him alone. He

said to himself, God will certainly not bring about a change in men until they change their own attitude. When he resigned his post he devoted his whole life to building a force of changed men in every country.

Basically, Moral Re-Armament calls for change. One cannot look for change in other people, and neglect it in oneself. Nor can one demand it in any particular section, for that would be prejudice. Change is needed in every individual and every society, in ruler and ruled, in the common man and the responsible leader equally. When it becomes general, and everyone begins to feel the pricks of conscience about what is unfair to others, a new generation will come into being, strong, united and ready to sacrifice for the common good. They will totally reject selfishness and hate. For in the field of character the reactionary is the man who demands benefits from society, and yet maintains a stony selfishness himself.

Moral Re-Armament is a moral and social ideology. It is not a sect, party or organisation seeking members, but it is an idea to be lived. It brings the realisation that there is enough in the world for everybody's need, but not for everybody's greed. For this reason, Moral Re-Armament cannot under any circumstances be exploited or used for the benefit of any particular section. By its nature and its orientation it offers a solution to problems on the basis of *what* is right, not *who* is right.

If every single person would straighten out his life and then strive to change others, we would quickly build a formidable force — a force which would give men the motive for following the highest examples of human conduct, and for eliminating hatred, vice and corruption.

*Copies of Sheikh Surur's pamphlet from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, SW18 Price 20p each plus 6½p postage.*

## A NEW CHAPTER contd from p3

and to multiplying and proclaiming successful experiments in co-operation.

There are many of these already. I myself could recount examples between neighbours in Britain's cities, between colleagues in international offices, between diplomats, between those who take part in honest commerce and creative industry.

There are stories which deserve wider recognition, where the widespread desire for peace has been transformed into the actual will to achieve it.

## Growing points

There need to be many more, and people by the thousand will be encouraged to create them, if the idea can be spread that they are relevant; not isolated protests in a hostile world, but growing points of the future, the first signs of a new springtime and harvest of good will in God's world.

Such agreements will never come easily. There is a high cost to pay. Some years ago, I spoke with a respected Muslim leader, the late Rajah of Mahmudabad. He said to me, 'I want to be a bridge between Christianity and Islam. There are Christians who have betrayed their mission. And there are also Muslims who have betrayed their mission. But let those who have not betrayed their mission work together.'

## Key in the lock

A full-hearted co-operation between convinced men and women of faith could, I believe, be the key in the lock of the door to a new age. It is not the indifferent, but the passionate, who will win this generation's victory in the timeless war between good and evil, who will work together to feed the hunger and heal the hates of the needy millions of mankind. Against such a unity no problem could stand.

Already Muslims and Christians are involved together in every major question facing mankind. We have much to do together if we truly 'come to an agreement' — to serve and worship none but God.