

The Shadow of the Crescent



The Growth of Islam in the United States

by Ron Peck

The Shadow of the Crescent

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INTRODUCTION

“In the next 50 years, we will capture the Western world for Islam. We have the men to do it, we have the money to do it, and above all, we are already doing it.”

When these words were spoken at the dedication of an Islamic Center in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1983, they were not an idle threat. From its beginning, Islam has been a religion with great missionary zeal. Its adherents have, for centuries, been known for their missionary fervor.

Now Islamic nations in the Middle East have targeted the West, and they are spending a great deal of time and millions of dollars to “capture the Western world for Islam.”

In the decade of the 1990s, Islam made inroads into several Western societies. The number of Islamic adherents in the Western Hemisphere—especially in the Caribbean, Canada and the United States—has at least doubled in the last 10 years. And if current trends continue, there is certainly a possibility that Americans could, at some point, live



under the shadow of the Islamic crescent.

Because of this possibility, we believe that a brief look at the history and the progressive growth of Islam in the West will help you better understand why this growth is occurring and what it means to American citizens.

It is our prayer that this knowledge will encourage true believers in Jesus to reach out in love and share the life-changing gospel of Christ with Muslims God has brought to our shores. We also pray it will challenge Christ's followers to take a stand against the missionary efforts of Islamic governments overseas as they endeavor to Islamize our nation.



—Ron Peck, *director*
Center for Ministry to Muslims



Mosque in Columbia, Missouri

HISTORICAL DATA — IMMIGRATION

Some records indicate that adherents of Islam may have arrived in America even before Christopher Columbus. However, most historians agree that the first great influx of Muslims occurred during the years of the African slave trade. It is estimated that as many as 30 percent of the blacks brought to America as slaves came from nations predominantly controlled by Muslims and the teachings of Islam.

The second major wave of Muslims immigrated to the United States in the 1860s, leaving their homelands of Syria and Lebanon to escape military service in the Turkish army. Immigration continued until Turkey sided with Germany against the Allies in World War I.

In the 1940s, great numbers of Muslims came to the United States to avoid the civil war in their nations of India and Pakistan. And after the 1950s, many Muslim Turks again fled to the United States because of the political and economic troubles that plagued Turkey.

Though the number of Muslim immigrants has fluctuated through the years, since the 1960s there has been a steady rise in the number of Islamic peoples entering our borders primarily because of the Johnson Administration's relaxed immigration requirements. Today about 15 percent (or 100,000) of all U.S. immigrants each year are followers of Islam. In his article *Islam in the West—U.S.A.*, Richard P. Bailey estimates that in addition to the number of legal Muslim immigrants, there are approximately 45,000 who enter illegally each year.

Most Islamic immigrants who came to the United States prior to



1960 adopted our nation's ideals and her values. The majority have only a cultural identification with Islam. However, Muslims who have come to our shores over the past 40 years have more strictly adhered to the religious duties of Orthodox Islam that are set forth in the Qur'an.

HISTORICAL DATA — BLACK MUSLIM MOVEMENT



Wallace D. Fard founded the Black Muslim movement in the early 1930s. Fard appeared in the “Paradise Valley” of Detroit, Michigan, claiming to be the leader of the “Nation of Islam,” declaring that he had remedies for the social and economic problems facing Americans of African descent. He proclaimed that he had come to obtain freedom, justice and equality for them.

Fard made his living as a door-to-door salesman, selling silks and other artifacts. Claiming that the clothing and fabrics he sold were like those worn in Africa, he easily gained access to the homes of Blacks and began to propagate his Muslim teachings.

Because his audience was generally familiar with the Bible, Fard used it as a beginning point,



slowly introducing the text of the Qur'an to his listeners. His message was essentially this: *Christianity is a tool in the hands of the white slave masters to control the minds of Black people. White people are devils, the embodiment of evil; the only hope for Black people in America is total separation and self-reliance.*

The first Nation of Islam temple was founded in Detroit. Between 1930 and 1933, Fard recruited 8,000 followers from among Detroit's Blacks. Because of this rapid growth, Fard enlisted several ministers to help him lead the group. Among those he trained was Robert Poole, an unemployed autoworker.

Poole was the son of a Baptist minister and his knowledge of the Bible made him a very suitable protege for Fard. Eventually he became the chief minister of the Nation of Islam and Fard's successor.

After considerable conflict with the police, Fard eventually withdrew from the Nation of Islam and mysteriously disappeared. At that time, Elijah Muhammad, as Poole became known, became its leader.

Elijah Muhammad believed that Fard was God incarnate. He used his familiarity with the Scriptures to present Fard as the fulfillment of prophesy and asserted that Fard was the *Mahdi* [another Messiah] spoken of in the Qur'an—a *messiah* who had come to rescue his people, the Black Americans.

Elijah Muhammad taught that the ultimate solution to the problems facing the Black community was total separation from white society. He advocated the establishment of a Black Muslim nation (the Nation of Islam) somewhere in North America. He taught that “the offer of integration is hypocritical and is made by those who are trying to deceive black people into believing that their 400-year-old enemies of freedom, justice and equality are, all of a sudden, their *friends*.”

Many of his allegations against Christianity—including the fact that it had been used to subjugate Black people—held some truth. Thus, his preaching often fell upon the eager ears of those who were waiting for a claim to dignity and self-sufficiency.

Most of his converts were predominantly male, lower and working class Black Americans. The majority were between 17 and 35 years of age and had, at one time, been nominal Christians.

Elijah Muhammad's teachings were, by no means, the teachings of

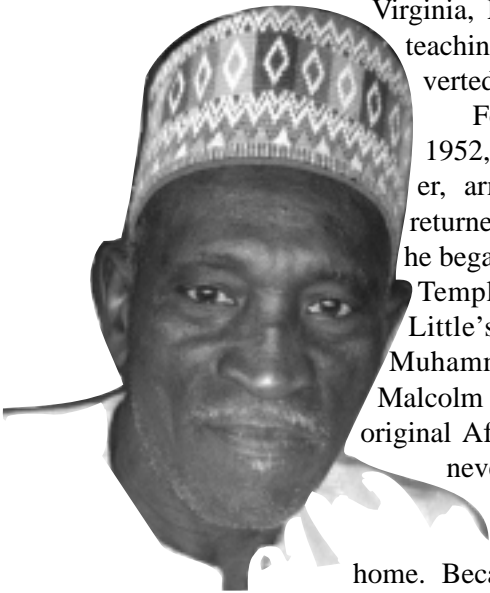
Orthodox Islam. His teachings were heard, for the most part, by a largely uneducated group of people who were totally unfamiliar with Islam. Just as he twisted passages of the Bible to suit his purposes, his version of Islam was also tailor-made to address what he believed were the needs of Black Americans. In fact, he taught that the universe was created for and owned by Black people. He declared that a mad scientist named Yakub, an exile from Mecca, had created the White race only 6,000 years before through crude genetic engineering.

Elijah Muhammad's Black Muslim organization experienced growth not only because of his teachings, but also because of his program for economic development. With money donated by Nation of Islam members, he purchased land for farms, stores, bakeries, apartment buildings and schools. Thus the economic base of the organization increased along with its numerical growth.

The greatest period of growth in the Black Muslim movement, however, came through a young man by the name of Malcolm Little. While serving a prison sentence at the Norfolk State Prison Colony in Virginia, Little became acquainted with the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and converted to the Nation of Islam.

Following his release from prison in 1952, Little—a former pimp, drug pusher, armed robber and numbers man—returned to Detroit. Almost immediately he began to aggressively recruit for Detroit Temple Number One. Recognizing Little's efforts and abilities, Elijah Muhammad changed Little's name to Malcolm X—a name he said symbolized the original African name which Malcolm X had never known.

Malcolm X frequently visited Elijah Muhammad at his Chicago home. Because of his aggressive recruiting, new ideas and unyielding devotion to Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X was appointed national spokesman for the Nation of Islam.



Traveling across the United States, Malcolm X became instrumental in establishing most of the temples in North America. Membership grew to 40,000 within a few years.



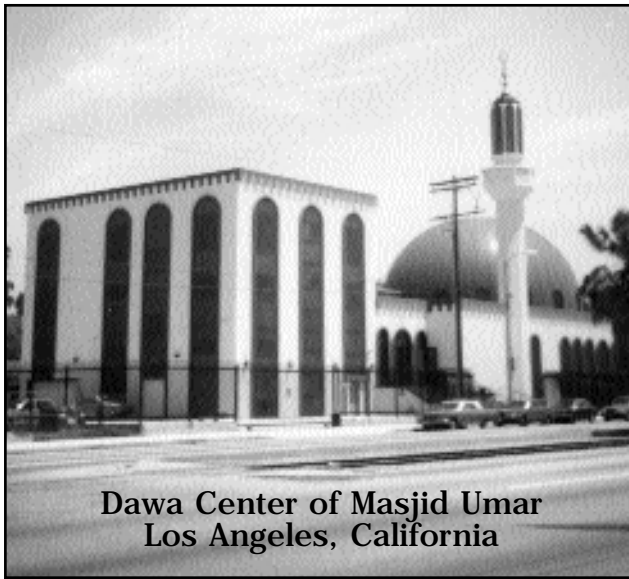
In addition to being a lecturer at universities, mosques

and churches throughout the United States, Malcolm X also became an international figure. His fast development and prominence made many leaders in the Nation of Islam begin to view Malcolm X as a threat to Elijah Muhammad's leadership.

The tension reached its peak in 1963 when two of Elijah Muhammad's former secretaries accused him of committing adultery. Finding his beloved leader had, indeed, been sexually immoral, Malcolm X became very disillusioned. His personal investigation into the affairs of Elijah Muhammad caused Malcolm X to lose favor with the top leadership in the Nation of Islam and he was suspended from the group for a period of time.

Along with his close friend Wallace D. Muhammad, Elijah Muhammad's son, Malcolm X began to research many of the standard teachings of Black Islam and concluded that they were incorrect. Both men began to lean more toward Orthodox Islam, broadening their scope of Black nationalism in America to include human rights issues concerning people throughout the world.

On March 8, 1964, Malcolm X left his leadership role at Temple Number Seven in New York City under pressure. He founded another



**Dawa Center of Masjid Umar
Los Angeles, California**

organization, which he called the Muslim Mosque, basing its teachings on the principles of Orthodox Islam.

In April 1964, Malcolm X left the United States to make his *hajj* [pilgrimage] to Mecca. His experiences during that journey were life changing. His wife later commented that

“he left as a Black Muslim and he returned only as a Muslim.”

However, Malcolm X’s new ideas really did not have a chance to take root. On February 21, 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated while speaking to an audience of about 500 people in New York City. The confessed assassin and the four men who helped him were all active members of Elijah Muhammad’s Nation of Islam.

In 1970, Elijah Muhammad’s son, Wallace D. Muhammad, was restored to the Nation of Islam. Following his father’s death in 1974, Wallace Muhammad was chosen to lead the Nation of Islam.

Under his leadership, the former Nation of Islam has become an Orthodox community of Muslims. He did away with the racial superiority doctrine of his father and began encouraging Black Muslim participation in the political process rather than separatism.

After a while, Wallace Muhammad changed the name of the organization to the “World Community Al-Islam in the West” (WCIW). Its members are known as *Balalians*, after the Ethiopian Muslim Balal, a man who was among the original companions of the Prophet Muhammad in the early 600s.

Although the organization is open to people of all races, its membership is still predominantly black.

Due to disagreement with the changes that Wallace Muhammad was making, a reactionary group formed. With a current membership of about 30,000, this group continues to adhere to the early, radical teachings of Elijah Muhammad. Louis Farrakhan, a man who refers to himself as the national spokesman for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, heads it. Farrakhan's radical Black separatist organization has taken the name of Elijah Muhammad's original group, "The Nation of Islam."

Of these two groups that can be traced back to the original Black Muslim movement under Elijah Muhammad, only the "World Community of Al-Islam in the West" is consistent with the teachings of Orthodox Islam and the Qur'an. In fact, because of its loose Islamic base and its radical, Black separatist teachings, most Orthodox Muslims do not even consider Farrakhan's "Nation of Islam" to be truly an Islamic organization.

ISLAMIC PRESENCE IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY

MUSLIM GROWTH

It is estimated that between 5 and 7 million Muslims now live in the United States. This means that already Islam has more followers than two of our most influential denominations—the Presbyterian Church and the Episcopal Church—and they outnumber the U.S. Assemblies of God members and adherents by more than two to one!

By 2018, it is projected that the Muslim population will double. This growth, while most affected by Muslim immigrants, can also be attributed to three other factors.

Because so many immigrants come from third world nations, their birth rates are much higher. It is not uncommon for Muslim families to have four or more children...more than twice the average of most North American families.

Another factor that affects Islamic growth is marriage between



American women and Muslim men. Quite often Muslim men come to the United States as students, on business or on tourist visas, intending to marry American women. As many as 7,000 American women marry Muslims each year and many will convert to Islam.

Finally, the growth of Islam can be attributed to the number of converts to this religious system. Most statisticians agree that in the

United States there are about 25,000 converts to Islam every year; the majority come from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish backgrounds.

According to Carl Ellis, one of the founders of *Project Joseph*—a ministry designed to slow the conversion rate of blacks from

Christianity to Islam—“America’s mosques are loaded with people who grew up in church.” Ellis says that many converts to Islam are African-American males who see traditional churches as male unfriendly and as failing to address their *real* needs.

Other experts cite racism in America and in the Church as another reason for the conversions. They also believe people are drawn to Islam because it demands its followers to have a deep personal discipline.

Whatever the reasons, those who study the growth of Islam in the United States agree that of the total Muslim population, the percentage that are converts is rising.

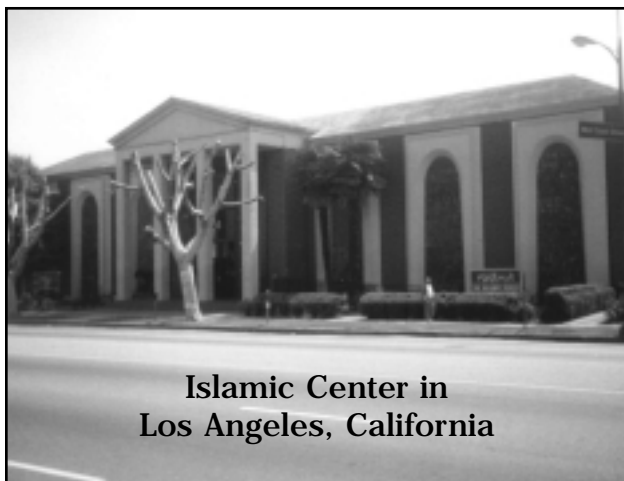
ETHNICITY OF “AMERICAN” MUSLIMS

Muslims in the United States are ethnically a highly diverse population. The greatest number of Muslims—almost 33 percent—are of Arab descent. Muslims of African-American origin follow close behind at almost 30 percent.

About 29 percent of Muslims in our country come from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Maldives Islands. Just over 5 percent are Turks, and a little less than 3 percent are Iranians.

Those having Albanian, Bosnian, West Indian, Latin American and Kurdish backgrounds total only about .5 percent. However, recent statistics reveal that a growing number of Latinos are embracing Islam.

Immigrants in these groups bring to the United States their cultures and their customs...often hold-



**Islamic Center in
Los Angeles, California**

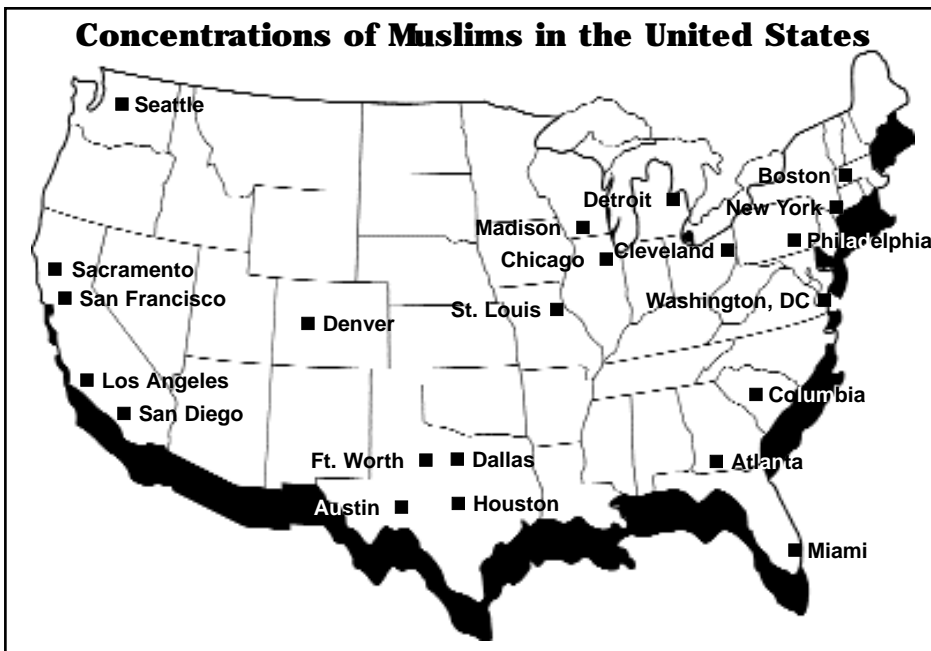
ing onto both with great tenacity.

Though they are separated by language and cultural differences, Muslims remain united by their religion.

WHERE MUSLIMS LIVE

The largest concentrations of Muslims live in California, New York, Illinois, Texas, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Michigan. Because of ease of assimilation, most Islamic adherents tend to settle in larger cities—New York, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Houston, Austin, Dallas, Miami, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. However, many are moving into non-urban communities—seeking better employment opportunities, better living conditions and a safer, more conservative environment for their children.

Many Muslims have also been encouraged by their religious lead-



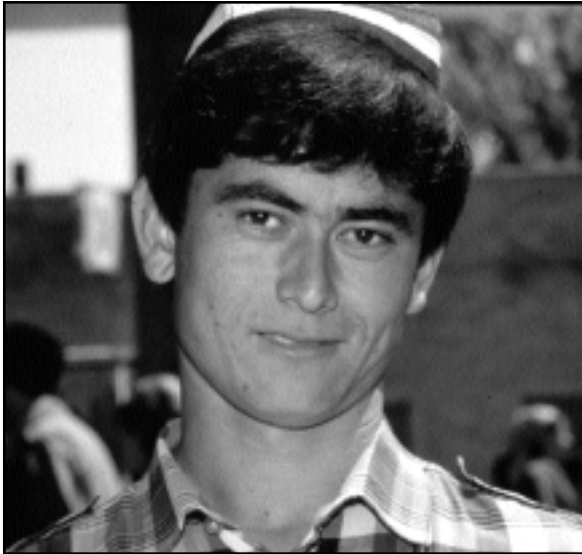
ers to move from the cities to “suburbia” to enhance their opportunities to further Islam’s missionary efforts.

ISLAMIC NATIONS SEEK TO SPREAD ISLAM IN THE UNITED STATES

Islamic countries, especially those in the Middle East, have targeted the United States for Islamic expansion. These nations are pouring millions of dollars into their missionary endeavors here in America.

Though some of their efforts to Islamize America are not blatant, many are certainly what we would term as “evangelistic” in nature.

Saudi Arabia donated \$5 million to the Harvard School of Law to establish a center for Islamic legal studies. This donation was accompanied by a stipulation that Islamic



professors would have to be hired to teach these legal study courses.

University of Arkansas officials also received millions of dollars from the Saudis to fund a Middle Eastern studies program at its Fayetteville campus. This program includes the study of Islam, and again Muslim professors must teach the classes on Islam. Qualifying U.S. and Middle East students are encouraged to apply for thousands of dollars in undergraduate and graduate scholarships for this program.

NATIONAL ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS GAIN PROMINENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Until the turn of the century, there were no Muslim organizations in America. However, after World War I, local communities of Muslims began to establish mosques and Islamic centers in several major cities.

Today there are more than 1,500 mosques in America—at least 1 in every state. Eighty percent have been built during the past decade with funds received from Islamic nations in the Middle East.

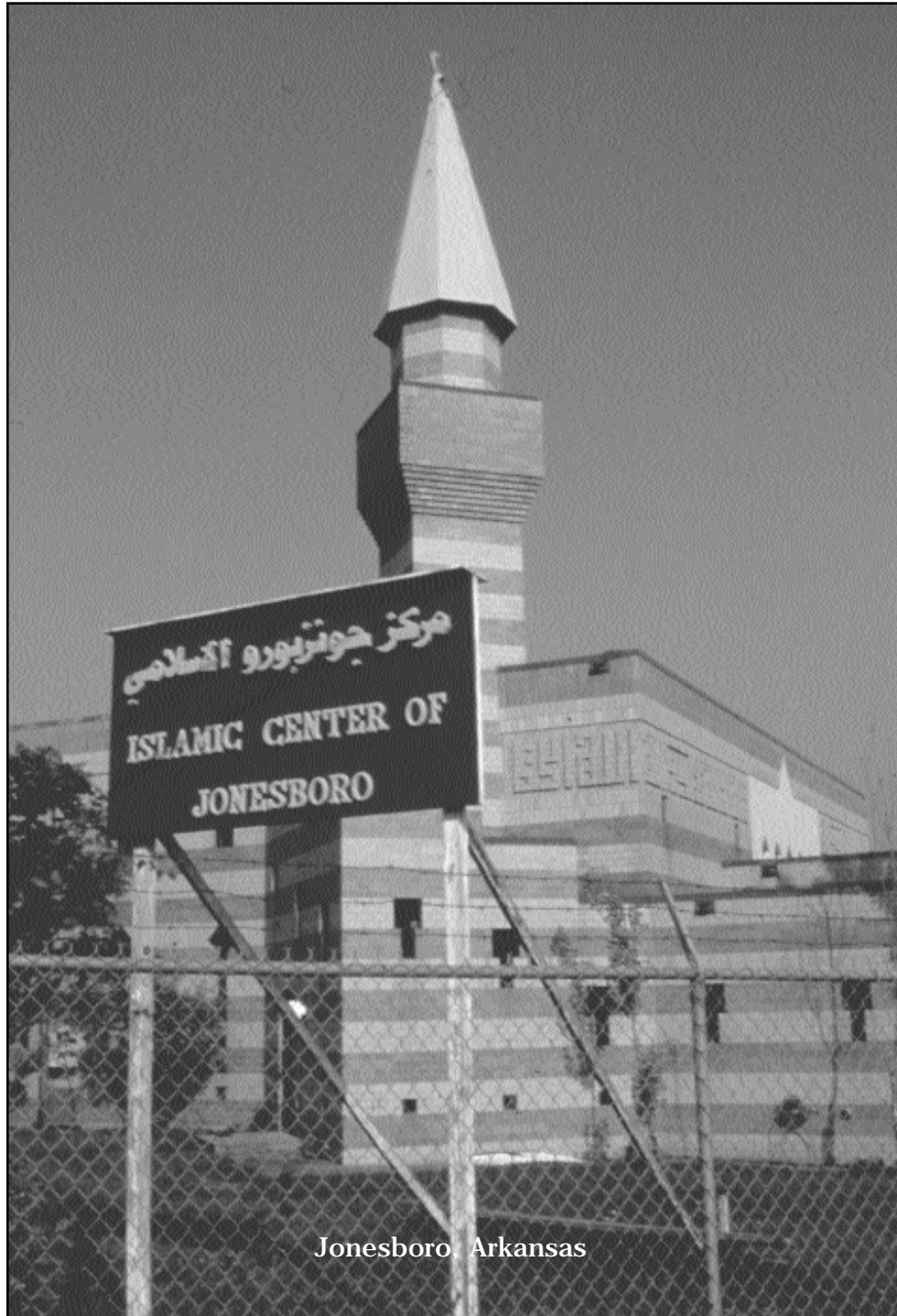
There are close to 200 Islamic schools, 450 Islamic associations, and between 90 and 100 Islamic publications in the United States, most of which are also funded by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other oil-rich Islamic nations whose ultimate goal is *to Islamize the United States*.

After World War II, national Islamic organizations began to develop. One of these organizations is the American Muslim Council.

The stated purpose of the American Muslim Council [AMC], established in June 1990, is to “fill a void and provide an indispensable service to the American-Muslim community.” The AMC’s objectives are to serve as “a catalyst for American Muslims to become a more powerful political force in mainstream American life,” to “identify and oppose discrimination against Muslims and other minorities,” and to “serve as a resource for interethnic and cross-cultural cooperation.”

Though historically Muslims in the United States have tended to steer clear of politics, in recent years they have been organizing themselves and endeavoring to increase their influence in American politics. A list of current priorities of the American Muslim Council includes “empowering American Muslims to educate, lobby and exert pressure on the U.S. Administration and Congress on issues of concern to American Muslims, and to register a million American Muslims to vote.”

A letter from the American Muslim Council states: “*Our American democratic system of government allows us to work together as interest groups and gives us the opportunity to lobby our decision-makers.*”



Jonesboro, Arkansas



Islamic Mosque - Kansas City, Missouri

Other ethnic groups have succeeded in influencing American policy. We can do the same.”

Is this happening? An article in the January/February 1999 *Islamic Horizons* magazine stated:

“Muslim victories are coming as a result of involvement in public affairs...democracy only works for those who participate. To make a difference, you must vote and let your elected representatives know where you stand. [A] new AMC [American Muslim Council] web site is designed to help keep Muslims abreast of the issues facing policy and decision makers, and keep Muslims in touch with those who serve them at the national and state level. In the November 1998 elections, the Muslim presence and Muslim support led to several House and Senate victories, such as the hotly-contested Senate seat in New York.”

The North American Islamic Movement, founded in 1996, is a goals-oriented Islamic movement that was organized to lead the Muslims of America in their efforts to “complete their historic mission of moral leadership, as ordained by the Qur’an.” The preface of their *Manifesto*, adopted in March 1998, states:

“As the human civilization is entering a critical phase in its history, Muslim presence on the American soil has assumed equally critical importance. America now stands at the zenith of its economic and military power. Its political, economic and cultural influences extend to almost all human beings on earth. The so-called globalization process, which has a direct bearing on value systems, is forcing many to merge into one dominant culture, which, in many respects is deviant from the universally recognized norm. The situation, made more serious by the abdication of moral authority by the traditional Judeo-Christian religious institutions is touching the consciousness of many decent human beings who are looking for deliverance and leadership. Muslims now find themselves on the center stage, with a unique opportunity to complete their historic mission of moral leadership, as ordained in the Qur’an. The North American Islamic Movement is launched to organize and lead the Muslims of America in this mission.”

The American Muslim Council and the North American Islamic Movement are only two of at least 12 very active Islamic organizations in America that are making great strides in the goal they have set...to Islamize the West.

WILL THE CRESCENT REPLACE THE CROSS IN AMERICA?

ISLAMIC EXPANSIONISM

As Christians in the United States sleep...Muslims are taking seriously the Qur'anic teaching: "*We sent you not, but as a mercy for the world*" (21:107).

This verse demands that Muslims "illumine the human mind, reshape human behavior and materialize in peace and tranquility for all on this earth." And in the minds of some Muslims, this means that they are to take control and govern every nation on earth.

Thus, when Islamic nations in the Middle East began to seriously target the West for Islamic expansion in 1983, it wasn't just to spread their "religious beliefs." Their goal was to "capture the Western world for Islam"...to govern the West. And since that time, those nations have spent a great deal of time and millions of dollars to move toward their goal. Each year they hold a *Dawa* [Witnessing] Conference in the United States to discuss ways they can accomplish their goal.

One Muslim authority on Islamic expansionism relates that "*Most of our urban centers will be predominantly Muslim by 2020.*"

The fact is, Muslims *have* gained significant ground in many areas of the United States in the past 16 years! Without doubt, Muslim "evangelism" strategies are working!

CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

The rise of Islam in the United States is bringing mixed responses from Christians.

Most Christians are seemingly indifferent. They are too busy with their own lives, too secure in their own beliefs. They are confident in the rightness and the longevity of their democratic system of government. Why should they care about what an Islamic minority is or is not doing?

Other Christians are welcoming Muslims with open arms. And

well they should. Muslims are people for whom Christ died. They have great worth in the eyes of God. His plan of mercy is extended to Muslims just as it is to all humankind. Thus, Christians should reach out in love and share the good news.



However, Christians must also understand that the guidelines and religious practices of Muslims are not just those of “another religion.” The all-encompassing governing laws of Islam are totally opposed to Christianity and to the freedoms and rights all Americans—both male and female—enjoy under our democratic system of government.

We only have to look at the actions of the leaders of Islamic governments in other nations to realize that the governing laws of Islam have definite negative aspects. In the majority of the world’s Islamic nations there is great persecution of Christians, particularly those who convert from Islam. In fact, many Christians in Islamic nations have been martyred for their faith.

The negative effect of Islam on women who live in Islamic nations is another issue that is coming to the attention of the world and must be addressed. Muslim women have written many books and articles disclosing the adverse treatment of women in Islamic nations. Some of these authors have been given death sentences because of their writings.

Though Muslims should be respected for their strict moral standards and their upright living, we must recognize that their religion and their missionary goal to *Islamize* America are very wrong.

Christians can no longer close their eyes to Islam in America. Daily



it is becoming more of a dominant force in our society that must be reckoned with now.

Therefore, once again I pose the question:

Will the crescent replace the Cross in America?

I believe that question can only be answered by asking another:

Are Christians in America willing to let this happen?

If we remain content to complacently sit by and do nothing, then the possibility *definitely* exists for Christianity's Cross to be overshadowed by the Islamic crescent.

MUSLIMS IN AMERICA ARE REACHABLE

Looking at the growth of Islam in America is somewhat alarming. However, the important fact that Christians today should consider is not whether Muslims are converts or immigrants. Nor is it relevant if they are born into a Muslim family or marry a Muslim. Neither should Christians be concerned whether Muslims are white or black...Asian or Arab...male or female.

The most important issue that Christians should be concerned about is the eternal lostness of these followers of Islam.

God wants Muslims to hear the gospel. In the United States, they can receive this message if Christians will obey Christ's command.

The vast majority of Muslims in our nation are not terrorists; they are fundamentally good people.

Muslims are concerned about the drugs and immorality that are prevalent in the United States. On moral issues, true Christians and practicing Muslims stand united in their strong sense of family values—opposing alcohol, feminism, homosexuality and sexual promiscuity.

Yet though Muslims are basically good people, they are still eternally lost. Though they are people for whom Christ died, they will spend eternity separated from Him because they do not know that salvation comes only through a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

For many years, thousands of Christians have been praying that Muslims might receive an opportunity to hear the truth of the gospel and be saved. I believe those prayers are being answered.

God is bringing thousands of Muslim immigrants to our shores every year. These people are coming from Islamic nations where they could not be evangelized before. Yet here in America, they are free to listen and respond to the gospel. In this “land of the free” they do not have to fear horrible consequences if they believe the gospel and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The Bible is very plain: *God is not willing that any should perish*—including the Muslims who live in our communities.

If we will just reach out to them with a loving witness of the gospel, we can be sure that Muslims will accept God’s plan of mercy and many souls will be added to the Kingdom.

Will we accept the responsibility of Christ’s Great Commission and share His gospel with the Muslims who have become our neighbors?

Will we reach out in love to those whose roots are in Islam, seeking to become their friend—desiring to introduce them to the one true Friend who will make an eternal difference in their lives?

Or will we decide that the challenge of befriending and witnessing to these people is too great, or that it is not worthwhile?

Again I pose the question: *Will Americans some day live under the shadow of the crescent?*

The answer is up to us, and it is a decision that Christians in the United States must make today!



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Photos in this booklet provided by Rick Davis and Dr. LeRoy Gruner.

For further information about Islam, or for obtaining materials about how to share your faith with your Muslim neighbors, please contact us at

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