

The Future of *Da'wah* in North America

Larry Poston

In recent years, the subject of *da'wah* has become a topic of considerable interest among Muslims in North America. A plethora of articles and books have appeared, both in English and Arabic, that deal with this subject from a variety of angles.¹ Western writers, both scholarly and popular, have noted the steady increase in the number of converts to the Muslim faith. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* proclaims in its headline that "Islam is Growing Fast in the U.S., Fighting Fear and Stereotypes."² *U.S. News and World Report* has observed that "Islamic worship and lifestyles are becoming an increasingly familiar part of the American tableau. It is said to be the nation's fastest growing religion . . ."³

But what may be said of the future of Islamic *da'wah* in North America? Will Muslim *dā'īs* become increasingly successful in their missionary work, or do the reports mentioned above represent only a temporary advance?

As we attempt to answer these questions, it is important to note at the outset the differences in orientation and focus of Muslims living in the West. In seeking to classify the five million Muslims currently resident in the United States and Canada with respect to their beliefs as to how Muslim missionary activity should proceed, two general philosophies of *da'wah* can be

Larry Poston did his doctoral dissertation on Islamic *Da'wah* in North America at Northwestern University. He currently chairs the Department of Missiology at Nyack College in Nyack, New York.

¹Particularly recommended are the following: Sādiq Amīn, *al Da'wah al Islāmīyah: Farīdah Shar'īyah wa Darūrah Bashariyah* (Amman, Jordan: Jam'iyah 'Ammān al Mata'ibī' al Ta'āwuniyah, 1987); Ihsan Bagby and Steve Johnson, *al Da'wah bayna al Amrikān* (Plainfield: Muslim Student Association, 1987); *Christian Missions and Islamic Da'wah: Proceedings of the Chambesy Dialogue Consultation* (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1976); Ahmad von Denffer, *Key Issues for Islamic Da'wah* (Delhi: Hindustan Pub., 1983); Anwar al Jindī, *Afāq Jadīdah li al Da'wah al Islāmīyah fī 'Alam al Gharb* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al Risālah, 1984); Muhammad Khurshid, *Da'wah in Islam* (Houston: Islamic Education Council, n.d.); *Manual of Da'wah for Islamic Workers* (Montreal: Islamic Circle of North America, 1983); Khurram Murad, *Da'wah among Non-Muslims in the West* (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1986); Ahmad Sakr, "Islamic Da'wa: Some Problems," *Muslim World League Journal* 8 (1979): 14-6.

²R. Gustav Niebuhr, "American Moslems," *The Wall Street Journal* (5 October 1990): 1.

³Jeffrey L. Sheler, "Islam in America," *U.S. News and World Report* (8 October 1990): 69.

distinguished. These may be called, respectively, the "defensive-pacifist" and "offensive-activist" approaches.⁴ The first characterizes the attitude of those Muslims who are concerned solely or primarily with the retention and maintenance of their own Islamicity and not with the extension of that Islamicity to the non-Muslims around them. The second applies to those who are desirous of converting non-Muslims to Islam and of transforming the surrounding non-Muslim society so that it will reflect Islamic values and beliefs.

The defensive-pacifist orientation is a consequence of the factors which spurred the early waves of Muslim immigration to the United States and Canada. The ideological and theological hindrances to the residence of a Muslim in *dār al kufr* were mitigated by pragmatic considerations such as the need to escape the increasingly chaotic conditions of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Muslim immigrants quickly adopted the spirit of American individualism, and this enabled them to blend into the communities in which they chose to reside. Organizations were established which mainly reflected the various national origins, ethnic backgrounds, and sectarian beliefs of the different Muslim populations. There have been few concerted efforts to subsume these differences under a larger Islamic umbrella.⁵

The adherents of the activist group consist primarily of a minority of earlier immigrants who have resisted absorption into the melting-pot and have thus become only minimally assimilated into American society. These individuals are convinced that assimilated Muslims are incapable of bearing a credible witness to the society around them. It is believed that it is impossible for them to offer an alternative to prevailing social conditions because identification with and acceptance of those conditions are implied in their own lifestyles. Activists maintain that they must distinguish themselves in specific ways from American society so that their lives present a contrast to the lifestyles that surround them.

Other activists are found among the new immigrants who are being injected into North American communities at the rate of twenty-five thousand to thirty-five thousand per year. While many of these would have been considered

⁴The use of hyphenated terms such as "offensive-activist" and "defensive-pacifist," while admittedly clumsy, is necessary because of the varying usages of the terms in contemporary English-speaking societies. The word "offensive," for instance, can have the meaning seen in the phrase "taking the offensive," which communicates the idea of "taking the initiative" (the meaning I am using here). It can, however, also be used as a term signifying derogation, such as in the phrase "what he said is offensive to me," which is not the way I am using the term. Adding "activist" to "offensive" gives the former the meaning that I intend.

⁵The Islamic Society of North America is certainly the most ambitious attempt to produce a larger unity, and it has enjoyed limited success. There are, however, several issues which remain to be resolved even within this organization. See, for instance, the chapter by Steve A. Johnson entitled "Political Activity of Muslims in America," in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad (ed.), *The Muslims of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

nominal Muslims in their home countries, an interesting psychological phenomenon occurs when they enter a non-Muslim country. Yvonne Haddad and Adair Lummis have observed in their extensive study of Muslim communities that "many have found their consciousness about religious identity enhanced in the American context as people question them about the basic tenets of their religion."⁶ A considerable number of Muslims, then, become activists when they become aware of their minority status in the midst of a predominantly Judaeo-Christian country. Such an awareness results in a reexamination of the tenets of their inherited faith. But such an evaluation is often not grounded in a clearly-defined Islamic ethos and thus lacks coherence. This results in an inability to distinguish between ethnic, nationalistic, and truly Islamic concerns. Very few have thus far succeeded in attaining to a supracultural form of Islam not identified with a specific ethnic or national background.

Muslim organizations that can be classified as activist are multiplying and increasing in size, but for the most part they are still small, unorganized, poorly staffed, and poorly funded. An article appearing in the December 1986 edition of *Arabia: The Islamic World Review* traces the origin of organizations concerned with *da'wah* to Muslim immigrants influenced by contact with or the writings of Mawlānā Mawdūdī, Sayyid Quṭb, Sayyid Nūrsī, and other such personages. But few of these organizations have been able to maintain their emphasis on outreach and have instead succumbed to the nationalistic and ethnic interests noted previously:

Because of the fact that these organisations failed to grasp the nature of western society and its dynamics they have yet to leave any significant imprint on their new countries. Most of these *da'wa* organisations have now become ethnic groups with an emphasis on preserving their specific cultural and social identity.⁷

The author criticizes even those few organizations that have retained an activist focus for their failure to evolve a "da'wah language" which could attract Westerners, their corresponding failure to produce literature suitable for educating Westerners about Islam, their lack of a competent and properly educated leadership, their failure to provide programs for training Islamic workers, and their failure to encourage self-evaluation, criticism, and discussion of their goals, objectives, strategies, and methodologies. Perhaps the most deadly observation made is that because of the preeminence of national and

⁶Yvonne Haddad and Adair Lummis, *Islamic Values in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 22.

⁷"Muslim Organisations in the West: An Overview," *Arabia: The Islamic World Review* (December 1986): 24.

ethnic interests, the organizations often work in isolation from, and occasionally in opposition to, each other.

It appears that it has been the inability of Muslim groups in North America to establish a commonly accepted hermeneutic for the contextualization of Qur'anic precepts in Western societies that has led to such a divided front. Simply stated, there are some who refuse to adapt *any* Qur'anic precept to Western ways, requiring instead that Western society be transformed to accommodate Muslim law. Others are willing to bend in certain instances, recognizing the exigencies of a technologically oriented and pluralistic society. A case in point that relates specifically to the subject of *da'wah*: some Muslims feel themselves constrained by Qur'anic injunctions (i.e., Qur'an 2:256) not to compel others to adopt their faith. But they have begun to understand that in a pluralistic society such as that which exists in America, it is the religion that is the most visible and forceful in presenting its claims that gains the most publicity and, hence, the greatest number of converts. At the same time, others are repulsed by the idea that Muslims must join the carnival atmosphere of American evangelicalism if they are to compete successfully for the souls of men and women. Until the issue of a common hermeneutic is resolved (assuming that it is capable of resolution), the Muslim community in the West will most likely continue to subdivide *ad infinitum*.

Due to the Muslims' preoccupation with such issues, at least two windows of opportunity for effective *da'wah* activity have already closed. The first opened in the 1960s and was analyzed by Jacob Needleman, an authority on contemporary religious movements in America. In a book entitled *The New Religions*, Needleman identified the features deemed by Westerners to be the most attractive elements of Zen Buddhism, Subud, Transcendental Meditation, and other religious groups new to the American scene. He discovered that young Americans were searching primarily for religious faiths that were self-centered in the sense that they supplied solutions to individual as well as societal difficulties. Buddhism, for instance, was perceived as providing release from one's personal suffering and was therefore appealing. Needleman noted that Judaeo-Christian religion certainly contained such individualistic aspects, but that these dimensions of Western religions had been "overlaid" or "neglected."⁸ Second, the new religions accentuated the mind as opposed to the emotions. Traditional Christianity and Judaism early on abandoned reason to the secularists and thus lost their appeal. As Needleman says:

The exclusion of the mind from the religious process is one of the central characteristics of our religious forms. It was not always

⁸Jacob Needleman, *The New Religions* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970), 13.

so, but by and large it is so now. We may be willing to grant religion the power to move us and stir us to the 'depths' of our emotions, but we reserve the autonomy of our reasoning for ourselves.⁹

Closely associated with this observation was the fact that, surprisingly, the liberated young people of the 1960s were seeking a faith which involved ritual, discipline, and method. They were attracted to the rigor and discipline of meditation exercises and willingly submitted themselves to the commands of their gurus. According to this observation, the movement of Reformed Judaism and traditional Christian denominations away from liturgy and ritual – which was perceived by Christian and Jewish leaders to be necessary because of the informality and “looseness” of the times – turned out to be their undoing and resulted in the loss of a significant number of young people to Eastern religions. The third source of appeal was found in the fact that Christianity and Judaism were perceived as being religions which underestimate or denigrate human potential. The Pauline teaching concerning the sin nature as inherent in all humanity by virtue of Adam's original failure in Eden and the Jewish concept of the *yezer ha-ra* serve only to remind people of their inability to progress spiritually beyond a certain point. The possibility of attaining “sinless perfection” is essentially heretical in these religions and is relegated to sects beyond the pale of orthodoxy.

The new religions, on the other hand, emphasized the possibility of individuals attaining tremendously advanced states of being in the here and now. Needleman shows how the Western concept of the “holy man” was (and is) essentially flawed in that such a one was holy only in a strictly spiritual sense. The Eastern religions, said Needleman, “with their practical methods involving work with the body, the attention, the intellect and memory, and the training of the emotions” essentially supplanted the Western view of holiness and opened whole new worlds of possibilities for human beings to improve themselves. The fatalistic ideas inherent in Oriental religions were carefully excised before their transference to the West, and so there remained no pessimistic doctrines involving such negative theological concepts as those mentioned above. Needleman contends that this was to the liking of the Woodstock generation who sang of their longing for a return to “the Garden.”

Measuring Islam by these three characteristics, one would conclude that it had a great potential for expansion in the Western context. Research by this author has shown that conversions by Westerners to Islam from the late 1800s through the 1980s have been motivated by five specific factors. These are as follows:

⁹Ibid., 15.

- a) The perceived *simplicity* of Islam as opposed to the complexity of Christian and Jewish systems of belief.
- b) The perceived *rationality* of Islam as opposed to the alleged irrationality of such Christian beliefs as the trinity, the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus, the prevalence of the miraculous and the supernatural, and so on.
- c) The perception of Islam as an essentially *this-world* religion as opposed to the *other-world* orientation of (in particular) Christianity.
- d) The perception of Islam as a religion espousing the *universal brotherhood of humanity* as opposed to the racism and segregationism so characteristic of Christianity.
- e) The perception of Islam as a religion *without human mediators* as distinguished from the priestly concept found in the Christian and Jewish faiths.

How do the above-mentioned characteristics accord with Needleman's observations regarding the attractiveness of the new religions he investigated?

As the Muslim faith acknowledges no mediators between the individual and God, it may certainly be considered self-centered. Islam's emphasis upon reason is apparently also very attractive, and this accords well with Needleman's observations regarding the new religions' preoccupation with the mind as opposed to the emotions. And finally, Islam stresses the ritual of prayer and the disciplines of fasting and almsgiving and deems the memorization of Qur'anic verses and the traditions of the Prophet to be important. Thus it would seem that this religion contains all of the characteristics that were found to be appealing to Western young people.

The problem is, of course, that Needleman's observations were made in 1970 during what was the culmination of the wave of spiritual experimentation begun in the 1960s. And as Jackson Carroll observed in his study of religion in America, "in the 1970s there [was] a marked change. The upheaval and turmoil of the 1960s [gave] way to what appear to be disillusionment, cynicism, and a groping for direction."¹⁰ Already in 1976, Martin Marty, the University of Chicago historian of modern Christianity, wrote that:

The New Religions now have their cultic place under the sun and they will continue to influence and suffuse other religious groups. But even as I write they draw less attention than they did. Their most effervescent period may well be past.¹¹

¹⁰Jackson W. Carroll et al., *Religion in America: 1950 to the Present* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 7.

¹¹Martin E. Marty, *A Nation of Believers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 206.

The observations of Needleman, Carroll, and Marty taken together imply that had Muslims mobilized in force and espoused a specific strategy for *da'wah* during the 1960s and early 1970s, they might well have attracted large numbers of followers due to the social and spiritual dynamics present during that period of time. Certainly the Muslim Student Association realized significant gains during these years, but this organization appears to be exceptional. For the most part, Muslims in America failed to analyze and/or were unprepared for this situation, the majority of them being assimilated into their surrounding culture and unmindful of any personal responsibility with regard to *da'wah* activity. Ethnic concerns, and not matters which involved the ummah as a whole, were given priority. Consequently, we find that today when awareness of the importance of *da'wah* is increasing, the culture of America has changed in a way which makes what would previously have been attractive elements of Islam less relevant or not relevant at all.

The second recent window of opportunity for Islamic *da'wah* was the eight-year Reagan administration (1980-1988). During this era, there arose a new emphasis upon conservative ethics and morality on the part of a sizeable element of American society. Reagan's outspokenness with regard to the issues of abortion, homosexuality, chemical dependency and the like were both due to and accompanied by an increase in conservative religious values. Here Islam again had an advantage over traditional Christian and Reformed Jewish denominations which, during the 1960s and 1970s, had adopted relatively liberal moral values. Even Christian evangelicals recognized the possibilities inherent in an appeal to the Shari'ah. Kerry Lovering, the publications secretary of the Sudan Interior Mission (now SIU International), wrote in 1979 that "Christianity . . . has failed miserably . . . it is now Islam that offers salvation from the drunkenness, sexual license, political corruption, violence, blasphemy and corrupt lifestyles that afflict 'Christian' nations."¹²

This was the evaluation of a Christian writer who understood the potential of an Islamic appeal to morality better than Muslims did, for Muslims did not grasp this opportunity to demonstrate their distinctiveness. Instead, America saw the rise of Christian Reconstructionism (also known as Theonomy), a movement derived from conservative elements of Protestant Christianity which advocates the return of the nation as a whole to the laws and standards of the Mosaic Covenant. This movement continues to advance because of its emphasis upon conservative moral ethics, social justice, and law and order, all of which are appealing to citizens frustrated with the apparent failure of civil rights legislation and current techniques of law enforcement.

But now that the Reagan era has drawn to a close, the direction which American society will take is unclear and the Muslims of America find

¹²Kerry Lovering, "Tough at Home, Aggressive Abroad: Islam on the March," *Muslim World Pulse* (August 1979): 6.

themselves still faced with the problem of a constantly moving target. In order to become or to remain appealing, they must be able to adapt the precepts of their faith to the constantly changing trends of thought in America. Such adaptations would require planning and strategies which are consistently updated and which would allow Islam to maintain unadulterated its supracultural aspects while simultaneously emphasizing various facets of the religion in accordance with contemporary culture. Capable, creative, and brilliant leadership is essential here, but this is an area in which by its own admission American Islam suffers a vital lack.

Although the elements discussed by Needleman may no longer exercise a significant appeal and the conservatism of the Reagan era may be on the wane, there yet remain certain traits within the American ethos which Marty believes have become so ingrained into the people as a whole that there is no danger of them disappearing in the foreseeable future. These traits include pluralism, experimentalism (the willingness of Americans both to seek and to practice spiritual alternatives), scripturalism (adherence to a written revelation), a positive view of Enlightenment thinking with regard to reason, and voluntarism ("the principle or tenet that the Church and educational institutions should be supported by voluntary contributions instead of by the State").¹³

Each of these characteristics is to an extent favorable to the growth and expansion of Islam in America. Pluralism and experimentalism are generic traits, assuring Islam of a hearing as a religious alternative. The Muslim emphasis upon and adherence to the Qur'an as the revelation of God accords well with the ideas inherent in the concept of scripturalism. The emphasis of the religion upon reason makes it a viable alternative for those who are repulsed by the emotional emphases of contemporary Christianity, and its lay-orientation endows it (at least in theory) with characteristics of voluntarism. It can thus be concluded that the Muslim faith still has the potential for exercising a profound influence upon American society. But it is the contention of this writer that these advantages will avail Muslims nothing unless they are able to effect certain changes within the ethos of American Islam.

First, unless Muslims develop an indigenous American leadership, Islam will retain a distinctly foreign character which in the 1990s will not be advantageous for its growth and expansion. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the guru from the Indian subcontinent or Sri Lanka was appealing due to the exoticness of his identification with things foreign to America. But this preoccupation with exoticness is, for the most part, a thing of the past, and one sees a renewed emphasis in the spiritual sphere (even as it is seen in the area of economics) upon indigenous or "home-grown" ideas and personages.

¹³See Martin E. Marty, *Religion and Republic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 36-48.

This fact, combined with the essentially negative image which Islam retains due to its portrayal in the American media, leads us to believe that unless American converts are trained as quickly and thoroughly as possible for positions of leadership (which would in itself serve to begin the transformation of the perception of the religion by the masses as foreign), Islam will continue to be categorized as an essentially foreign cult.¹⁴

Second, Muslims would have to tremendously increase their efforts to transform the stereotypical image of Islam as consisting mainly of Iranian and Libyan terrorists, Black activists, male chauvinists and the like. That many are aware of this need is evidenced by the emphases of organizations such as the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). But the approach of these agencies is often flawed. The philosophy of the IIIT, for instance, is predicated upon a belief that the most influential persons in America are the college-educated, and hence one of the chief objectives of this organization is the preparation of college-level textbooks.¹⁵ But this assumption is only partially true. The mass media (i.e., television, motion pictures, and even paperback novels) exert an even greater and more lasting influence than does a college education due to the on-going nature of the former. A single college course in Islam (assuming that one is offered and that students enroll) enjoys a duration of perhaps ten to fifteen weeks, while a television program or paperback bestseller can occupy the minds of Americans for months or even years. Thus a transformation of the image of Islam can only be effected through the above-mentioned media and not through academia.

Third, if the anti-Christian polemic of writers and speakers seeking to imitate the rhetoric of such personages as Ahmad Deedat does not cease, Muslims may well create a situation precisely the opposite of that which they wish to produce. Historians have noted the role played by the Christian missionary movement of the nineteenth century with its sometimes inflammatory rhetoric in sparking the renewed vigor seen among the major world religions today. The potential exists for Islam to duplicate this phenomenon in the reverse. Direct attacks upon Christian teachings such as the divinity, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus may indeed cause some persons to forsake the Christian faith (just as Christianity was able to attract a number of converts from Islam), but such attacks will more than likely serve to increase the interest of nominal Christians in the precepts of their

¹⁴A concrete example of this is the fact that little (if any) consideration has been given to the practice of adopting an Arabic name upon conversion. While this may have merit within the community itself, it serves to maintain and even increase the aura of foreignness which characterizes Islam. As long as converts continue publicly to use Arabic names, their credibility will suffer.

¹⁵This thinking is expounded in Ismā'il al Fārūqī's work entitled *The Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Workplan*, published by the International Institute of Islamic Thought.

culturally-inherited faith and, in so doing, solidify their commitment to the Christian religion. Public debates such as those staged between Ahmad Deedat and Jimmy Swaggart and Josh McDowell—seen by an increasing number of Americans on videotaped recordings—have made Christians and Jews increasingly aware of Muslim *da'wah* activity in the Western world. Evangelical Christians in particular are beginning to discuss ways in which this activity can be mitigated. Evangelicals will not surrender secularized Americans to Muslim *dā'īs* and will seek to stem the rising tide of conversion to Islam both by renewed efforts to proclaim their own message and by efforts to reclaim as many converts as possible.

Fourth, Muslims would do well to realize that despite the observation that nationalistic and ethnic interests have served to hinder *da'wah* efforts, the pursuit of the kind of unity envisioned by nearly all of the Muslims concerned with this subject is a vain pursuit. As long as individuals and organizations continue to strive for a national or international union of Muslim organizations, they will be frustrated in their personal ambitions; the very limited success of Christian ecumenicists in their endeavor to create a World Council of Churches serves to illustrate this point. It is admittedly troublesome that such diversity exists within religious faiths, but this must be accepted as an irreversible and inevitable historical development. Time and effort would be better expended upon more achievable goals at local levels of social interaction.

Finally, an internal and personally oriented missiological approach espoused by such thinkers as Khurram Murad¹⁶ would have to be adopted by a majority of Muslims and would have to be expanded and continually developed. The ambivalence regarding the Qur'anic and traditional advocacy of an external and institutional strategy¹⁷ would have to be resolved once and for all, and the mass of Muslim laymen would have to be mobilized

¹⁶The internal-personal approach to missionary outreach is predicated upon the belief that salvation is obtained only by individuals making deliberate and conscious choices with regard to their religious allegiances. Such choices are made "internally" in the sense that they consist of intellectual and emotional activity (involving "the heart" and "the mind"). Thus external rituals, liturgies, or similar practices are deemed unnecessary to *effect* salvation, although they may be useful in *expressing* salvation attained through an intellectual/emotional decision. Accordingly, the goal of missionary work is to elicit such internally-made choices from individuals. For a more complete discussion of this concept, see Larry Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 1992.

¹⁷The external-institutional approach to missionary work is the opposite of the internal-personal approach (see above). It is predicated on the belief that salvation is primarily obtained through an external conformity to a particular status or set of regulations or religious practices (i.e., baptism, circumcision, obedience to legal precepts, "good works," and so on) and thus seeks to elicit outward conformity to whatever practices or forms are deemed essential.

through instruction regarding the responsibility of each individual to be involved in *da'wah* and through training in the principles and techniques of outreach. While it is doubtful that the majority will ever become convinced that the only justification for their continued residence in *dār al kufr* is to function as missionary agents (an idea espoused by al Fārūqī, among others), unless a concept similar or analogous to this is promoted Muslims in America will continue to become assimilated into and secularized by the surrounding culture.

The dream of a Muslim America is deeply embedded in the minds of many Muslims. With regard to the present influence of Islam upon the American ethos, Ismā'īl al Fārūqī wrote just prior to his assassination that:

The Islamic vision endows North America with a new destiny worthy of it. For this renovation of itself, of its spirit, for its rediscovery of a God-given mission and self-dedication to its pursuit, the continent cannot but be grateful to the immigrant with Islamic vision. It cannot but interpret his advent on its shores except as a God-given gift, a timely divine favor and mercy.¹⁸

On a tour of the United States in 1977, Dr. 'Abd al Ḥalīm Maḥmūd of al Azhar University was asked if American Muslims might one day try to replace the Constitution with the Shari'ah. He answered: "We cannot deny such a possibility."¹⁹ Mūsā Quṭub of the Islamic Information Center of America is fond of quoting an ancient tradition that in the latter days Islam will spread from the West to the East, and he intends to make his center a training institution to prepare workers for this task.²⁰ Sulayman Nyang concurs with this idea when he surmises that "American Muslims could one day be one of World Islam's major pillars of support" and that "U.S. Muslim centres . . . will play an important role in the cultural development of their brethren elsewhere in the Muslim world."²¹ But unless the changes outlined above are effected or occur at some future point, these goals will never become reality, and the dream of an Islamic America will remain only a wistful dream.

¹⁸Al Fārūqī, "Islamic Ideals in North America," 270.

¹⁹Reported by Lovering, *op. cit.*, 6.

²⁰Quṭub is likely referring to the following tradition as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Bāb al Imārah 177: لا يزال أهل الغرب ظاهرين على الحق حتى تقوم الساعة.

"The people of the West will assist [in spreading] the Truth when the Hour comes."

²¹Nyang, "The Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of," 26.