

SUMMARY OF MTM SEMINAR HELD IN KARACHI **October 9 – 12, 1981**

(MTM 1981 Appendix A)

Aim: For people involved in MTM to exchange ideas, stimulate possible new attitudes and ways of working, to learn from one another, to deepen our understanding of one another's ministries, and to praise and pray together.

Delegates: Mostly from Pakistan, but also from India and Bangladesh, totalling 14 adults.

REPORT

The theme was Folk or Popular Islam, but this was a loose, informal theme. The schedule was relaxed, the food and living situation very pleasant, with time to reflect on the matters discussed. From the very beginning we sensed a good atmosphere of unity and mutual respect, based on the deep concern of all of us to see in which ways God is intending for Muslims to be more effectively reached and grounded in faith in Christ.

Practical experiences of Folk Islam were shared, which showed how relevant the effects of animistic and occult practices and demon-activities are to many Muslims, even well-educated city dwellers. This may not be apparent at first (nor for several years) to us, but it is nevertheless a strong influence in many people's lives. If Muslims believe that the Koran can heal, the rosary can guide, and that evil spirits are real, should we not be more open to seek "power encounters" that demonstrate Christ's power to heal, guide, and defeat evil spirits? Examples were given of some personal experiences of such power encounters in Pakistan, and of how strongly they spoke to the Muslims involved. We were reminded of the dangers of a preoccupation with such matters, but the general feeling was that there is a need for more experienced advice and help in such situations. The possible need for more ready, open prayer with non-Christian patients was also discussed. In spite of the danger of possibly cheapening prayer, or making it seem like magic incantation, there seems to be a need for more prayer, spiritual involvement and understanding, especially as Satan is a big factor in some diseases.

Some advice was given, based on practical experience, regarding dealing with evil spirits. This covered areas of diagnosis, the binding of evil, and the casting out of a spirit or spirits in the name and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. We were told of the importance of ordering a spirit to go "to the place prepared for it" and the value of praise, team involvement and sound Biblical teaching to fill any vacuums.

A recent survey of Muslim converts in Pakistan discovered that 50% had "power encounters", chiefly visions. These had played a significant role in their journey to faith. However, we were told of several Bible Correspondence School students who had had no such obvious experiences, but had come to a strong faith in Christ; and all of whom had made a "public declaration" of their faith, while most claiming "power encounters" had not.

Worship at the tombs of pirs (Muslim saints) was mentioned with reference to both India and Pakistan. This demonstrates certain needs felt by the pilgrims to these

tombs: (1) Need for a visible object of worship (shrine); (2) Need for a mediator between them and God (the pir); (3) Need to compensate for the lack of a personal relationship with God. We were reminded of how we can point to the living Christ as the true answer to these needs.

The role of living pirs, to whom people go for guidance, prayer and for some sort of blessing merely from being in his presence, was also discussed. It was said that sometimes people come to regard us as Christian pirs. Our Western background causes us to react against this, but we did consider that there might be a valid role for a Christian pir. The depth to which our Western background has influenced us was mentioned, with its stress on individuality, democracy, its scepticism (as well as over-fascination) regarding the supernatural, and its dislike of appearing "holier than thou".

It was agreed that holiness of life is vitally important and that we should be both manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in our lives and using the gifts of the Spirit, where appropriate, far more.

Our western background has also influenced most of the Christian seminary training in the sub-continent, these seminaries generally include little teaching on practical dealings with folk Islam, power encounters and the supernatural, especially where these matters relate to actual spiritual warfare. Often evangelism is taught as a logical presentation of a series of facts, and Christ's methods of story telling, real life examples and power encounters have little place.

The Muslim Church concept was discussed, both in regard to its Biblical validity and its practicality. It was agreed that problems can arise for a Muslim convert when the only Christian worship forms are Hindu- and/or western-based, and thus foreign and possibly offensive to him. A greater problem is the suspicion and lack of love for Muslims and Muslim converts by most established churches, resulting in lack of evangelism and lack of follow-up of converts. Thus there are many Muslim converts around, especially those who have come to faith through doing Bible Correspondence courses, who have not found acceptance and fellowship with any church.

It was agreed that the formation of cell groups for prayer, fellowship and Bible study should be encouraged. This has been seen to be very helpful and supportive to a small group of ladies (where, incidentally, a national from a Christian background is also included and is felt to be a help in building up trust and understanding between the cultures).

There was some disagreement whether these groups should be linked to established churches or not, but it was agreed there was potential for both alternatives, and that groups should be free to develop worship in the cultural forms they were happiest with. An example was given of a Muslim convert church with Muslim cultural forms that has recently developed very successfully in Bangladesh.

It was considered important to think through how much in Islamic culture should be rejected, how much transformed and what new elements should be introduced. The most unexplored potential seems to be in elements we can transform, eg

- 1) Fasting (made non-compulsory nor for merit) eg at Lent
- 2) Alms giving (again, not compulsory or for merit, but from love)
- 3) Pilgrimage (are the annual Christian conventions a parallel here?)
- 4) Prayer (Maybe it is possible to adapt some Islamic forms and timings of prayer, eg in stance and regularity.)

- 5) Festivals, celebrations of Easter, Christmas, Pentecost etc can all be occasion to invite people to church and home, and to give a clear Christian message. In a women's hostel in Lahore Christians shared the relevance of Easter and Pentecost by inviting Muslim lady friends to tea, during which gospel passages were read, and songs and testimonies shared. This, as well as other similar events known to us, have had a lasting impact. Such occasions seem to be very interesting and acceptable to Muslims, and communicate deeply.

Women and Family. Various ways of contacting women are being used eg Bible Correspondence Schools, some of which in future may have special women's courses; medical work; social work, work colleagues; friends of friends; living as a family in a socially responsive area of families. It was acknowledged that there are special difficulties in these works and that the witness of a family leading to the conversion of whole families would seem to be the best method. However, it would probably be a slow process and has not yet been seen in practice,

It was mentioned that a home of several single ladies can still be a family, though special care has to be taken to avoid misunderstandings.

Our family relationships should be seen to be loving, respectful and scriptural. One family has decided to have regular family prayers at set times, which a visitor can have the choice of attending. Thus it can be seen that our faith is serious and meaningful in our daily life. Our homes and life-styles should not be offensive or stumbling blocks to Muslims, but we can seek opportunities to use even birthday parties to be hospitable, and include a Christian content of witness.

It was shared how the use of certain forms of Christian-orientated art, drama, poetry and music can be highly effective in communication of the Gospel to Muslims. Poetry and music are already being used. We saw the potential for greater use of these and other art forms.

The whole seminar had a strong emphasis on praise, prayer and devotional times together. Each person shared about their ministries and about situations in different countries for joint intercession. It was encouraging to see how certain prayers seemed obviously Spirit-led in their relevance. The theme for our Sunday worship was Isaiah 42 v8 "*I am the Lord, my glory I give to none other*" This was a useful and relevant reminder that we can plan and work, but all credit for any results must go to God alone.

OPENINGS FOR MTM IN REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MTM 1981 Appendix B

BACKGROUND

The Asian population of South Africa number approximately one million, divided between Hindus (from India), Muslims (from India and Malaysia) and a small percentage of Christians. Most Asians have been in South Africa for several generations. The Asian community lives in segregated areas, the largest community being in Durban. Other large communities are found in Johannesburg and Capetown.

The Christian churches are drawn predominantly from the Hindu community, and carry out effective evangelistic work among the Hindus. The Muslims, though a minority in the Asian community and generally well-to-do, are acknowledged as leaders but are largely unreached with the Gospel. Individuals and small groups of Christians seek to witness to them. There are very few converts. Persons engaged in MTM include:

- GERHARD NEHLS A German missionary with DMG working in Capetown. PO Box 273 Claremont 7735
- JOHN GILCHRIST A lawyer and writer of several scholarly booklets on the Christian approach to Muslims. He lives near Johannesburg. PO Box 356, Benoni 1500
- Dr PAUL KRISHNA Head of the Department of Oriental Studies at Westville University (5,000 Indian students) Durban. Dr Krishna is a Brahmin convert, highly respected by all Christians in Durban.
- BETHESDA ASSEMBLIES AND BIBLE SCHOOL in Durban (Pentecostal) are active in evangelism in the Asian community.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO AEC

1. That BMMF open up correspondence with key persons in South Africa to ascertain the needs for MTM and whether or not help from Asia-based missions would be welcomed.
2. That BMMF members be requested to pray for the needs of unreached Asians in South Africa and East Africa

MTM IN SRI LANKA

MTM 1981 Appendix C

BACKGROUND

We understand that there are approximately 1 million Muslims in Sri Lanka and that very little evangelism and church planting is undertaken among them.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO AEC

That BMMF explore the possibilities of MTM in Sri Lanka and that the Bangladesh Conference of BMMF be requested to send one of their members to Sri Lanka on a fact-finding visit.

TRAINING FOR MTM IN CHURCH DISCIPLING TEAMS

MTM 1981 Appendix D

PREAMBLE

In the light of the proposals put forward by the MTM Commission for the establishing of church discipling teams in ministry to Muslims, it is necessary to review the training required for future team members. Team members must not only be grounded in Biblical studies but also be familiar with Islamic studies, missiology, and to have had their gifts tested in the light of first-hand experience.

Training should take into account the personal development of gifts and interests, the tailoring of studies to future assignments, the advances in studies of Church Planting, discipling and cross-cultural communications, the preparation for a new life style and the cost of a discipling ministry in a Muslim context.

Within BMMF Int. there are five basic groups requiring training, each with different areas and levels of studies. These groups are:

1. Those applying to BMMF Int for MTM
 2. Those within BMMF Int. doing MTM
 3. Those within BMMF Int doing MTM who transfer their sphere or location of service.
 4. Those within the mission who transfer into MTM
 5. Those within the mission who wish to be involved in MTM while involved in some other sphere of service. This would include those who are members of ISA, FPs and tentmakers.
1. Those applying to BMMF Int for MTM.
We suggest there are three areas of study that should be prerequisite for future MTM team members.
 - a. Bible and Missionary Training.
This is to include studies in the history and theology of mission, studies in church growth, church planting, cross-cultural communications, studies in the Holy Spirit and demonology, and studies in missionary lifestyle.
 - b. Islamic training
A comprehensive study of the faith and practice of Islam, preferably from a Muslim viewpoint. Some study of the Koran and Hadith. Dialogue with Muslims. Introduction to Folk Islam.
 - c. Firsthand experience
This is to encourage the development of gifts and/or provide experience of MTM. Special emphasis should be on church planting and evangelism.
 2. Those within BMMF Int. doing MTM
We suggest that all working within MTM will need a regular period of further training which must take into account three areas of study:
 - a. Feedback from experience
This is to answer questions arising from contact with Muslims as well as problems in strategy.
 - b. Input of new ideas.
This is to allow a forum and exchange of new ideas arising out of MTM.
 - c. Update of missiology and related studies.
New books and materials should be presented that have a bearing on MTM and church discipling.

3. Those within BMMF Int doing MTM who transfer their sphere or location of service.
We suggest that a transfer of location should be an opportunity for a fresh look at MTM as well as preparation for the new sphere or location of service. There should be study in the following two areas.
 - a. Area Study
This is to include culture, ethnic studies, local practices of Islam and Folk Islam, and local history of mission.
 - b. Missiology
This is to bring awareness that new areas and spheres of service may demand new approaches.
4. Those within the mission who transfer into MTM
This to train those who have been using some area of expertise in a cross-cultural situation but have not done direct MTM.
 - a. Addition to existing knowledge.
This in particular reference to Islam, Folk Islam and missiology.
 - b. First hand experience within a MTM church discipling team.
5. Those within the mission who wish to be involved in MTM.
 - a. Understanding of Islam and Folk Islam.

We recommend that time spent in training before arrival on the field is vital. If necessary, funds should be made available for additional courses after Bible School. The best period for training is before arrival, but apprentice-type training and update training are also important if members are not to grow stale.

Listed below are places of study which offer some of the afore-mentioned areas of study. Mainly those are in the UK. Also listed are some examples of training courses and seminars which illustrate part of the needed training.

1. Colleges
 - a. All Nations Christian College
 - b. Samuel Zwemer Institute, Pasadena, California, USA
 - c. Henry Martyn Training Centre, London
 - d. Selly Oak Centre for the study of Christian-Muslim relations, Birmingham
 - e. Islamics courses, ANCC (not seen as sufficient)
 - f. In Contact, London
ANCC: Internal one month per year church work.
2. Seminars
 - a. Planned seminar in Bangladesh prior to MTM Commission '82
 - b. Planned one month course for MTM in Pakistan, '82

It is also recommended that a bibliography for these five areas of study be compiled and updated, to enable planned preparation for all MTM training.