

“Why the Multiplicity of Mosques?”

“Limadha al-Masajed?”

Posted by [Jacob Thomas](#) on 3/26/09 • Categorized as [Op-Ed](#)

By Jacob Thomas

Due to the prosperity that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States experience because of the rich gift of oil in the sands beneath them, and for which the world’s oil guzzling countries pay very high prices, there is much money in the coffers of those Arab states living above such a valuable resource. Not surprisingly then, the building of mosques has increased throughout the region. In some places such as Kuwait, where land is scarce, many citizens are puzzled by the number of unnecessary mosques that keeps mounting, while the government seems to be unable to control their proliferation.

On 15 March, 2009, the Kuwaiti daily, *Al-Jarida*, published an article with the headline, “*Why the Multiplicity of Mosques.*” The writer is a well-known Kuwaiti lady; her columns have dealt recently with such issues as “*Credibility and Conflicting Values,*” and “*Realism versus Dreams.*” Some readers of FaithFreedom.org may remember that last summer, I commented on two articles by the same author, which dealt with the reasons why some Kuwaiti youth are leaving Islam, and embracing religious unbelief.

In her column published on 15 March, 2009, she wrote:

“My house is close to three large mosques. Each one is situated within one block of the other. The *Muezzins* .1 compete with one another as they chant the *Adhan* .2 each one pronounces the words in his own accent — none of them in a genuine Arabic diction! After the *Adhan* has summoned the worshipers to the mosque, no more than ten worshipers would have gathered, almost half of them non-Arab single men. They went there primarily to get a warm meal at the end of the worship hour. It was ironical that the number of the Imam’s family members exceeded that of the worshipers!

“As for the Friday morning worship services at the mosques, I wouldn’t wish them on anyone. The sermons are delivered in many strange languages and accents. As to those few services near my home that are held in Arabic, most of them are lead by radical Kuwaiti Imams who completely ignore the directives issued by the *Ministry of Awqaf* .3 regarding what subjects may or may not be broached in the sermons.

“On the other hand, what a pity to behold our young people walking aimlessly on our streets, having no place to gather, no clubs to attend, and no public parks to enjoy. Quite often, the scarcity of land is forcing three Kuwaiti generations to live in one crowded house!

“In fact, one mosque per section in Kuwait City would be perfectly adequate to meet the religious needs of the citizenry. And should someone be forced to walk some distance to the nearest mosque, it would accrue to him as a righteous act that carries its own reward. After all, a mosque filled with worshipers is more conducive to a meaningful Friday worship service, than a mosque where only ten people congregate!

“The *Ministry of Awqaf* should see to it that a realistic policy be adopted regarding the building and administration of mosques in Kuwait. That would lead to simplifying the setting of the budget for the mosques, their proper supervision, and the number of their staff. As for those individuals striving to earn credit from God by building a mosque, it would be far better for them to fund projects for building schools in third-world countries.

“The purpose of my article is to attempt to get the ear of our representative in the Kuwaiti Parliament. Perhaps he may initiate a bill calling for the building of a youth center, or a public park, or plans for fighting illiteracy and some other ills in our society. Nobody really benefits from the multiplicity of these mosques, except those parasitic people living on the margins of our society!”

Analysis

This liberal-minded author is drawing the attention of the Kuwaiti authorities to the illogical situation which exists because so many mosques are being built in close proximity to each other. This just exacerbates the housing shortages in the land, and further complicates proper development of an orderly civic life which could proceed if precious space could be appropriated for social uses rather than the overbuilding that is occurring with what she believes are unnecessary additional mosques.

Comments

One has to read between the lines to appreciate the impact this op-ed article will have on the readership of the daily *Al-Jarida*. Many eagerly follow her columns to learn what subject this fearless author will comment on next. She does not disappoint. No one could claim that she is against the building of mosques in Kuwait, but they would agree with her that there are plenty of them already. So the question arises: who is behind this phenomenon? If the *Ministry of Awqaf* has to issue the building permits, why does it not take measures against the erection of so many new unnecessary mosques? Could it be that this ministry finds itself incapable, at least publicly, to say no to such projects? Is there no control on how funds coming to Kuwait from elsewhere, say from Saudi Arabian sources, can be used?

After all, in Kuwait Sunni Islam is the official religion of the ruling family and of the majority of the population. Next door, in Saudi Arabia, radical Wahhabi Islam is the official version of Islam practiced by the Royal Family and the majority of the Saudis. My suspicion is heightened that it may be the Wahhabis who are involved in the proliferation of the number of mosques in Kuwait. This is because the author of the op-ed

made a telling remark when she noted the following: *“those few services near my home that are held in Arabic, most of them are lead by radical Kuwaiti Imams who completely ignore the directives issued by the Ministry of Awqaf regarding what subjects may or may not be broached in the sermons.”*

By ignoring the rules and regulations issued by the *Ministry of Awqaf*, is it not evident that the Kuwaiti authorities find themselves unable to stop the spread of radical Islam. The building of unnecessary mosques becomes a Trojan horse used by Islamists to bring about political changes in those areas of the Muslim world where they can operate.

It is good to remember that ever since Muhammad migrated to Medina in 622 A.D., the mosque has been much more than a house of worship; it was equally the headquarters of a political state that, by launching its *Futuh* in 632, inaugurated the era of three successive Islamic empires, of the Umayyads, the Abbasids, and the Ottomans.

It is possible that I have read too much into the tenacious Kuwaiti woman who wrote this article deploring the growing number of mosques in a small Muslim country with limited land mass. However, history informs us that by combining religion and politics in one entity, Islam has created a handy mechanism for bringing about political changes through the mosque. After all, it was only when the politically-motivated *House of Saud* joined their political and social aims with *Abd Al-Wahhab*, the radical Muslim leader who lived in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula during the 18th century that they ultimately succeeded in creating *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* in the 1930s.

The URL for the Arabic article is:

<http://www.aljarida.com/aljarida/Article.aspx?id=101363>

Notes

1. *Muezzin*, a Muslim man in charge of calling the faithful to engage in the ritual prayers, five times a day
2. *Adhan*, The call to prayer including the *Shahada* (Confession of Faith) and an exhortation to engage in the ritual prayers in Arabic.
3. *Ministry of Awqaf*, a department in Islamic countries in charge of funding and supervising mosques and their personnel. Quite often, wealthy Muslims leave endowments (known in Arabic as *waqf*, plural, *awqaf*,) to be used in the building of mosques.

To access the two articles on the Kuwaiti youth leaving Islam, please go to:

[“Why Do our Young Adults Become Apostates?” “Limadha Yulhidu al-Shabab?” Part 2](#)

Friday, September 05, 2008 (Modernism & Reformism)

[“Why Do our Young Adults Become Apostates?”](#)

Monday, July 28, 2008 (Op-Ed)
