

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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THE FIRST ISLAMIC MISSION IN THE U.K. ESTABLISHED 1913 C.E. AS THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION

*Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (U.K.)*

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### May 2002 C.E. Meeting

*Assalamu alaikum*

**Venue:** *Dar-us-Salaam*

**Date:** Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2002

**Time:** 3 pm

**Topic:** The concept of rulership in Islam

by

Dr. Zahid Aziz

### Regular Activities

**Radio programme** Every Friday at 2 pm on Panjab Radio (Astra Digital Satellite ch. 880).

**Dars-i Quran** Third Sunday of every month at 3 pm.

**Meeting of the Executive** First Sunday of every month at 2 pm.

**Meeting of the Jamaat** First Sunday of every month at 3 pm.

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## The Future of Inter-religious Relations

by Jallal ud Din

Secretary AAILL (Fiji)

The points of commencement of almost all religions differ. Whilst some religions have proof in their scripture, tracing their origins to Adam and Eve, others do not. Yet some other religions claim to begin with identified people of more recent times. Islam traces its origins to the genesis of Adam and Eve. The Holy Qur'an requires a belief not only in

its own truth but also in the truth of previous scriptures delivered to the prophets of different nations of the world. The Holy Qur'an accepts the truth of the sacred books of the world, and hence it is again and again spoken of as a book verifying that which is before it. The basis of the relation in which the Holy Qur'an stands to other scriptures is, therefore, that they are all members of one family; they all have a Divine origin. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are broadly regarded as Abrahamic religions, as all three are extended developments from the sons of Prophet Abraham.

**The basic principle of Islam is faith in all other prophets of the world, and this builds bridges of understanding over differences between other religious traditions.** Prophet Muhammad was the final prophet and his demise sealed off prophethood. The finality of Prophet Muhammad also sealed off any further descent of Archangel Gabriel with prophetic revelation. The commonality amongst Judaism, Christianity and Islam is so close as

to be without much difference. In fundamental principle, all three preach and believe in the existence of One God. All three believe that God is Superlatively Supreme and that God never had a beginning, is always Present and will always continue to be infinitely Present. They all believe that God is the Beneficent and the Merciful. However, there are many other religions in the world today that are not directly of Abrahamic descent, and there are many differences both in belief, principles and practice. Their differences are many and variable. Activities such as object-worship of planets, trees, fire and idols are neither present in Islam nor in its either related religions of Judaism and Christianity. **The differences in the three religions are not so great as politicians and other pressure groups make them to be. They take extreme views to suit their hidden agenda of extending political mileage.**

There is a very general and deep-rooted misconception that the Qur'an

(Continued on page 3)

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preaches intolerance, and that Prophet Muhammad preached his faith with the sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other. **Misrepresentation can go no further than the work of mischievous minds that use the sensitivity of religion to advance their political mileage. Islam preaches equal love for all, equal respect for all, and equal faith in all. Intolerance cannot be ascribed to a book which altogether excludes compulsion from the sphere of religion.** The Holy Qur'an states at 2:256 in clearest words "There is no compulsion in religion — the right way is clearly distinct from error."

It is sometimes asserted that the Holy Qur'an forbids relations of friendship with the followers of other religions. The Holy Qur'an permits inter-religious marriages with people whose religion is based on a revealed Book. This ordinance is given at 5:5. The loving relationship between husband and wife is the friendliest of all relations, and, when this is expressly permitted, there is not the least reason to suppose that other friendly relations are forbidden.

The fact is that, whenever there is prohibition against making friends with other people, it relates only to people who were at war with the Muslims. This is plainly stated in the Qur'an at 60:8-9: "Allah forbids you not respecting those who fight you not for religion, nor drive you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly. Surely Allah loves the doers of justice. Allah forbids you only respecting those who fight you for religion, and drive you forth from your homes and help (others) in your expulsion, that you make friends of them; and whoever makes friends of them, these are the wrongdoers."

Besides being a religious centre, the Muslims' mosque is also the cultural and educational centre of all Muslim communities. Here the Muslim community is educated on all questions of its welfare. The Friday sermon (*Jumu'ah*) is a regular weekly lecture on all such questions,

but besides that, whenever it becomes necessary to inform the Muslim community on any matter of importance, a sermon or lecture is delivered in the mosque. In addition to this mass education, there are also arrangements for the education of those who want to acquire learning. People can be trained to be missionaries for the spread of light and learning in distant parts of the country. These people not only receive their education in the mosque but also get lodgings in an attachment to the mosque called *Suffa*. The fact is that those who want to acquire knowledge of the Qur'an and the religion of Islam are lodged there. It is out of such institutions that missionaries are sent on outreach assignments. The religious school adjunct to the mosques is called *Madrasah*. **The rights of women are never denied in Islam, but most strongly upheld. A woman must receive religious education as she will become her child's first teacher about God and other religious matters.**

(Continued from the last issue)

## Introduction to Christianity

by Hussain Wilson

### The Protestant Churches

#### THE AMISH

The Amish are a conservative group of the Mennonite sect, founded in 1690 by Jakob Amen in Switzerland. In the 18th century, members settled in the United States. Literal interpretation of the bible leads their communities to reject all forms of modern living, including petrol engines and electricity. They wear old-style clothes, plough with horses and observe the Sabbath with strictness.

#### ANABAPTISTS

The Anabaptists, or Re-Baptisers, are a radical Protestant group of the Reformation that sought a return to

primitive Christianity. They were created by dissatisfied followers of Ulrich Zwingli, formed in Zurich in 1523. They deny the validity of baptism, re-baptising adult converts. They stress the dictates of individual conscience and urge non-violence and separation of the church from the state. Despite widespread persecution, notably at Münster, their doctrine spread, inspiring the Mennonites in the Netherlands and the Hutterites in Moravia.

#### BAPTISTS

These are the largest denomination of Protestant churches. Baptists believe that only an adult who can make their own decisions should be baptised. It began in Holland in 1609, rapidly spreading to England and America. The churches are self governing but collaborate through conferences and unions on some issues.

#### CALVINISTS

Calvinism is the name given to the theological system of John Calvin. Its key principal is that God, not man, is central and supreme, thereby scripture is the only source of doctrine. John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is a systematic account of biblical teaching, with much in common with early Lutheranism, including justification by faith, his views of predestination with the assurance of salvation and denial of free will since the fall. One distinguishing feature is the view that in the Holy Communion the believer participates in Christ in heaven by faith. Calvinism became the doctrine of the Reformed Churches which developed Calvin's doctrines into a scholastic doctrine elevating Presbyterianism to a major principle, with emphasis on divine decrees and covenants. Calvinism has been influential in the Church of England, among the Puritans, the Reform Churches, the evangelical revival and the Non-Conformist.

#### CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS

Founded by Mary Baker Eddy

(1821–1910) and teaching that all physical aspects of life, especially illness, are illusory and require the simple acknowledgement of this fact to banish them, and members of the church reject the death of Christ upon the cross. The book *Science and Healing with a Key to the Scripture* by the church's founder, is read alongside the Bible at their prayer meetings.

#### *CHURCH OF ENGLAND*

The Church of England is doctrinally Protestant but its ceremony and church hierarchy are rooted within the catholic tradition. Adopted when England broke from Rome in 1534, and troubled by Puritan agitation in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Church of England is the established church of England. The Church of England gave birth to Anglicanism. Anglicanism is broadly followed by members of the Anglican Community, including the Episcopal Church that was formed by the remnants of the Church of England in the former territories and the United States.

#### *CONGREGATIONALISTS*

Congregationalism is the name given to those Protestant churches that hold that each congregation should have complete autonomy over its running, although the congregation may form loose associations. First founded by Robert Browne in the 16th century in America, the Congregationalist churches merged to form the Evangelical Church in 1957.

#### *THE DUNKERS*

The Dunker Church is the name given to any of several groups of Brethren or German Baptists, beginning in 18th-century Germany and spreading to America. Theologically rooted in 17th-century Lutheran pietism. Pietism is the name of the 17th-century evangelical revivalist movement within the Lutheran church, attacking orthodox prevalence and stressing individual

piety in devotion, but tending towards mysticism and anti-intellectualism; it has influenced both the Moravians, Methodists and American Lutherans. The Dunkers got their name from their practise of triple immersion baptism.

#### *EVANGELICAL REFORM CHURCH*

The Evangelical reform church, however, is the theological movement found in most Protestant denominations that emphasises the primary authority of the bible. It stresses Christ's atoning death, human sinfulness, justification by faith and the necessity of personal conversion and expository preaching. It opposes both Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism.

#### *HUTTERITES*

The Hutterites, or Hutterian Brethren, originated in 1533 as a branch of the Anabaptists, taking their name from Jacob Hutter, martyred in 1536. They are a sect like the Mennonites who believe in common ownership of goods, pacifism and a strict and simple lifestyle and worship. The sect originated in 1533 as a branch of the Anabaptists

#### *JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES*

Charles Russel founded the Jehovah's Witnesses in 1872. There is no formal church hierarchy or organisation, with their principal doctrine being that the Second Coming (of Jesus) is at hand. Witnesses avoid participation in secular government, which they view as demonically inspired, and actively carry out preaching and missionary work. The Witnesses are very similar to Presbyterianism, having locally elected officials, ministers and elders.

#### *LUTHERAN CHURCH*

Lutheranism, the state religion of many Scandinavian and northern

countries, holds the Bible as the only source of doctrine. Lutherans stress Justification by Faith Alone and recognise two sacraments, Holy Communion and Baptism. In the beginning, Lutheran Churches were state churches ruled by local princes. National Lutheran churches also formed in the Scandinavian countries. In 1817, Frederick William III of Prussia enforced a union between the Prussian and Reformed Churches, provoking the first of several schisms to form the Free Lutheran Churches. A United German Lutheran Church was formed in 1949. Lutheran migrants to the USA and Canada formed numerous churches, now merged into three: the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church.

#### *MENNONITES*

The Mennonites are a Protestant sect originating amidst the Anabaptists of Zurich, Switzerland. They are named after the Dutch reformer Menno Simons. The Mennonites became particularly influential, especially in the Netherlands. They base their faith solely on the Bible and, like Anabaptists, believe in the separation of the church from the state. They are known for their simple and strict lifestyle and worship. They also believe in pacifism and baptism solely for adults who renounce sin. Despite persecution, the Mennonite sect is strong in both Canada and the United States.

#### *METHODISTS*

The Methodist Church originated in the 18th-century evangelical revival, led by John and Charles Wesley. Influenced by the Moravian church, Methodism began as an evangelical movement in 1738, led by the Wesleys and George Whitefield, who took the movement into Wales, where it predominated. Methodism stresses conversion, holiness and social welfare. After the death of Wesley

in 1791, the church split from the Church of England and became the Wesleyan Methodist Church. In Great Britain the Methodists are Presbyterian in their doctrine, and in the United States evangelical.

**THE MORAVIANS OR BRETHREN**

The Moravians, or The Church of the Brethren or *Unitas Fratrum*, were formed in 1457 by Bohemian followers of Jan Hus. Its doctrine is that of simple worship and strict Christian living, with the Bible as their rule of faith. The church broke with Rome in 1467 and, during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), they were persecuted almost to extinction, but revived in Silesia in 1732 and began missionary work, for which they are still known.

**MORMONS**

*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* holds to the scripture of the Bible as well as *The Book of Mormon*. The Book of Mormon is a sacred text written down by the Prophet Mormon around 420 CE. It tells that the Native American Indians are the Lost Tribes of Israel. The Book of Mormon was re-discovered by the prophet Joseph Smith (1805–1844) in 1823, engraved on plates of gold and buried on a hillside in New York, America. He received a revelation telling him that all of Christianity was corrupt and he should found a new religion: Mormonism. Mormonism states that human beings begin from a spiritual state before life, to life on earth and then to an afterlife where salvation depends on being a member of the Mormon Church. They place great emphasis on genealogical research as ancestors can be baptised by proxy.

**NON-CONFORMISTS**

Those who dissent from the doctrine and/or the practice of an established church, especially the Protestant dissenters from the Church of England (mainly Puritans) are termed Non-



Dar-us-Salaam, the central mosque of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam (Lahore) Guyana, in George Town, Guyana.

Conformists. They were expelled from the Church of England by the

Act of Uniformity (1662). They include Baptists, Brethren, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Quakers.

**PRESBYTERIANISM**

Presbyterianism is the third most influential faction of Protestantism after Lutheranism and Calvinism. It is a form of church governed by elders, midway between episcopacy and congregationalism. It was espoused by the reformed churches in the Reformation, viewing it as the rediscovery of the apostolic practice of government by presbyters. There is a hierarchy of church courts: the *kirk-session* — the ministers and elders elected by the local congregation; the *presbytery* — the representative ministers and elders from a given area; the *Synod* — members chosen from several presbyteries; and the *General Assembly* — the supreme body consisting of ministers and elders from all of the presbyteries. Presbyterian doctrine is biblical

Calvinism, usually with the

Westminster Confession as a subordinate standard. The Westminster Confession is the subordinate creed to most reformed churches produced by the Westminster Assembly in 1643–1646 and in essence a detailed statement of Calvinism.

Worship is simple and dignified.

**PURITAN SECTS**

The Puritans are the English reformist Protestants who aimed at reforming the Church into a simplified form of worship warranted by scripture, devout personal and family life, with the abolition of a clerical authority and hierarchy. They stressed self-discipline and work as a vocation, whilst Christianising all aspects of life. Most of the puritans were strict Calvinists. The English Civil War led to the establishment of Presbyterianism and most Puritans left the church after the 1660 Restoration of the Monarchy.

**RASTAFARIANISM**

Predominantly a black church from the West Indies. Rastafarians believe that Ethiopia is the *Promised Land*, Rastas are the *Chosen People* and everywhere else is *Babylon*. Rastafarians get their name from the title of the last Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Salassie, Ras Tafari (Lion of Judah), and believe him to have been the promised Messiah sent by Jah (God).

#### REFORM CHURCHES

The Reform Churches are the group of Protestant churches emerging from the Reformation and adhering to Calvinist doctrine. They are Presbyterian in church policy and therefore distinctive from the Lutheran Churches and the Church of England. Reformation Churches are established throughout Europe and appear in Scotland as the Church of Scotland, where it is Presbyterian in doctrine. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Scottish Presbyterians pledged to defend their religion by covenant against Anglican influences, calling themselves the Covenanters. Each Reformation Church has its own simple liturgy and acknowledges the reformed confession. The earliest reform church is that of the Waldensians, created by Peter Waldo, a travelling preacher in Italy in 1184, advocating the giving up of wealth.

#### THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (THE QUAKERS)

The Quakers, or Society of Friends, are known for their pacifism, like Anabaptists and Mennonites. The Quakers emphasise inner quiet and humanitarian works. The Society of Friends was created by George Fox in the 17th century in England, where they were persecuted for their rejection of organised churches and any dogmatic creed. They have no formal creed or clergy and put their faith in God's guidance. Their

meetings for worship are held in meeting houses (like Jehovah's Witnesses' Kingdom Halls) and follow a traditional pattern of beginning in silence with no set service or single speaker.

#### THE UNIFICATION CHURCH

Founded in 1954 in Seoul, South Korea, by Sun Myung Moon, claiming that God has always sought to re-create the perfect family but been thwarted on many an occasion by Satan, thus the fall of Adam and Eve and Jesus' death before he could provide a family. Reverend Moon and his wife are held by believers to be the new godly family, who believe that they can become members of the Divine Family. Named 'Reunification' because it unites all Christian churches.

## Women in Christianity

by Hussain Wilson

The various sects of Christianity have debated the argument for centuries, being rooted in Judaistic teachings, on the question if *woman* can obtain the same spiritual standing as *man*.

*"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is s a v i o u r o f t h e body ..."* (Ephesians, 5:22-23)

The extract from the bible is the basis for many churches' belief that women are inferior to men, and is used to reinforce the inherent sin of woman from Genesis.

The central and crucial concept of Christianity in regard to womanhood is the fact that Jesus Christ died on the cross to destroy the sin that was brought into the world by *Eve's* transgression in the Garden of Eden. *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to purge your*

*conscience ... and for this cause is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that where under the first Testament ... they that are called may receive eternal inheritance."* (Hebrews, 9:14-15) The story of creation and subsequent fall appear in Genesis, 1-3, and is the most influential Old Testament text relating to a woman's position in society, with her husband and ultimately God. In the beginning of Genesis, there is no distinction between man and woman, both are good, as God himself states at Genesis, 1:31: *"God saw everything he had made, and it was good"*. The image of God is not tied to the male at this point, it is equally divided between the two sexes.

The creation is used to illustrate both the subordinate status of woman, that to be male is the normal, to be feminine is the submissive, inferior and weaker of the two. That is the traditionalist view of early Christianity (and still in effect in some churches). It is also used to illustrate the wickedness of women. It was the female, Eve, who tempted man, that resulted in Adam's sin and the concept of Original Sin, as well as getting them thrown out of paradise. It was the woman who did the deceiving: *"Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."* (1 Timothy, 2:14) The two accounts have become conflated and thus it has been necessary to understand that women were made in the image of God, but as they were made second, they are inferior. Eve is the one who sinned, it was her who introduced sexuality to man. It is understood that the knowledge gained by eating the forbidden fruit was carnal knowledge. Woman is a temptress and purveyor of the greatest evil in the church's eye: sex; especially for the Catholic faith, based upon Paul's teachings, who, throughout his writings has a decidedly anti-



A historical photograph of The Promised Messiah with some of the early members

1. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib of Qadian (middle row, centre)
2. Hakim Nur-ud-Din Sahib (middle row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left)
3. Ghulam Hassan Niazi Sahib (middle row, 3<sup>rd</sup> from left)
4. Maulana Abdul Karim Sahib of Sialkot (middle row, 3<sup>rd</sup> from right)
5. Sheikh Rahmatullah Sahib (middle row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from right)

female bent.

The combination of men's fear of women's sexuality and their cleverness at acquiring skills such as healing, that led to accusations of witchcraft and the terrible persecutions that ensued. It was acceptable for a woman to be well educated, well versed in the scriptures, but it was not acceptable for her to teach men or to produce her own theology. *"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach..."* (1 Timothy, 2:11-12) The attitude of women, in the bible, depends largely on what part of the bible one is reading and how much bearing one lends to the textual context it was written in. The Old Testament is recognised to be solely male dominant, both in writing and interpretation, whereas the New Testament's positive attitude towards women is widely overlooked. As more freedom is gained in the 'West' for women, and the attitude towards sexuality has dramatically changed, more and more women are calling for equality and greater freedom within their church, sending a challenge to the traditionalistic views of the patriarchal hierarchy.

The appointment of female ministers, bishops and priests that has created such a controversy of late is not a new idea. The Quakers, Methodists, Baptists and some churches of the Anglican Communion already treat women in the church as the equal to men, forming no distinctions. Others, such as the Roman Catholics still demand an all-male, celibate priesthood; one of the first articles that Martin Luther drew to the attention of the world in his 95 theses nailed to the door: celibacy of the priesthood.

Some churches allow a degree of freedom for women, such as control over their bodies, whilst others regard contraception and abortion as sinful. Equality for women is not a new issue. In England, in the 17th century, a group of dissenters held radical views about the church and women's roles within it. Under the leadership of George Fox they challenged the traditional views and eventually founded the Quaker movement. **The principal doctrinal challenge was that men and women were equal, both created in the image of God. The inequality brought about by the sin of Adam and Eve had been**

**restored for the believers by Jesus' death upon the cross. In a Quaker marriage, a woman does not promise to obey her husband, they both promise to obey God.**

It is from Peter, Timothy, Ephesians and Titus that women have been kept in a secondary, passive role, within the church. They should be under their husbands, quiet, domesticated, chaste, virtuous, submissive and denied any authority to teach or preach to men. Paul names several women as active within the church. The Lutherans, United Reform and Methodists all have women clergy; however the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches maintain the traditional teaching about women. The women's argument is nothing new, but today it is easier to listen and understand and to hear in our more liberal world. Women are increasingly involved in positions of importance within secular work now that some of the old, traditionalist beliefs that woman is inferior have disappeared, but the church is ingrained in its doctrine and cannot change to reflect the circumstances around it.

The Quakers started the Reformation of the attitude towards women. It was their firm belief that women and men are equal within the eyes of God that led them to emancipate slaves and liberate women during the 19th and 20th centuries. The movement to gain acknowledgement of equality within the church has gained speed during the 20th century, so that now the status that women are men's equal has become widely accepted amongst Christians. Women have always been able to gain spiritual standing as their male counterparts, it just has never been widely practised or allowed.

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