

Rev John Dickinson's questionable and disturbing Radio Ulster 'Thought for the Day' – 25 September 2013

On a daily basis on the local morning radio 'Good Morning Ulster' program there is a short 'Thought for the Day' slot broadcast just before 7.00 am and then repeated live one hour later. On 25 September 2013 the contributor was Rev John Dickinson the minister of Carnmoney Presbyterian Church. In former times this would have been viewed as an 'evangelical' church but over the last 10 years or so, through involvement in an ecumenical fraternal, through participation in ecumenical prayer-meetings and through the regular holding of 'Alpha Courses that sadly would no longer be an apt description of the ethos of the church.

Back in 2003 the local Roman Catholic priest, Dan Whyte was the subject of an outrageous death threat by a local 'loyalist' paramilitary group and it was rightly condemned by many local churches. However this was how their reaction was worded as reported on the following web site and the 'Presbyterian minister' who would have been a party to the statement was John Dickinson http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/3108814.stm

'Protestant clergymen in Newtownabbey united to condemn the loyalist death threat against Father Whyte. Newtownabbey Clergy Fellowship, which includes Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist ministers, said they were "shocked and saddened" by vandalism at Carnmoney cemetery and the disruption of a service there. "Over the years we have enjoyed a warm friendship with Fr Whyte and value his Christian witness and wisdom," they said'

Confirmation of the ecumenical prayer involvement can be found on the very last line of page 16 of the document located on <http://www.downandconnor.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/Ecumenical-Directory-of-Good-Practice-February-2007.pdf> The role that the Alpha Course can play in fostering ecumenism is also identified on page 34 of this Roman Catholic document. A fuller treatment (in 2 parts) outlining my concerns with, and that highlights the deficiencies of the Alpha Course, can be seen by going to these links <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6DjxpYR7mk> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ll0A00LqKeM>

As I come to analyse Mr Dickinson's 'Thought for the Day' I want first to let you hear what he said in his two presentations that morning. As you will note he made a rather unfortunate geographical error early in his first presentation which was corrected when he delivered the second. To listen to his presentations please click on this link <http://youtu.be/Sp5nECRse6g>

QUESTIONABLE

There's a popular expression which says 'let's cut to the chase' which basically means that, without further ado, let's get straight to 'the heart of the matter'. I want to do that now and 'the heart of the matter', when it comes to Mr. Dickinson's 'Thought for the Day', was his obvious admiration of and approval of the actions of an American pastor called Steve Stone. This pastor was confronted by the reality that an Islamic Centre was going to be built next to his own church building – so how did he react?

Firstly he erected a sign in his own church grounds stating **‘Heartsong Church welcomes the Memphis Islamic Centre to the neighbourhood’**

Secondly friendship between the two groups was fostered by **(a) Holding joint BBQ’s with ‘Halal’ meat (b) Encouraging children of both groups to play together (c) Both groups engaging in joint charitable activities**

Thirdly, **as the Islamic Centre was not fully built when ‘Ramadan’ came round the Church premises were offered to house the Islamic celebration** (probably the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr – the "festivity of breaking the fast" which marks the end of Ramadan).

I want to consider biblically these 3 reactions displayed by Pastor Stone and his congregation – firstly ‘the welcome sign’.

In **Matthew 22:34-40** we read these words –

But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, *which was a lawyer*, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying, Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

In these verses we read of how a mischievous Pharisee tried to trip the Lord up by asking him to identify the greatest act of obedience to be observed by God’s people. Back came the Lord’s answer **“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”**. The Lord then added – **“And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”**.

The greatest act of obedience for a Christian today is to **“love the Lord *his* God with all *his* heart, and with all *his* soul, and with all *his* mind”**. This is very much the Lord’s summary of the first 4 of the Ten Commandments and this **‘first’** act of obedience **is to take precedence over** the **‘second’** act of obedience mentioned concerning our attitude to our neighbours, which is basically the Lord’s summary of the last 6 of the Ten Commandments.

So firstly,

how should we view this erection of ‘the welcome sign’ put up by Pastor Stone? To the on-looking world this was no doubt viewed as Christians ‘loving their neighbour’ in action. But how does it stack up with the **‘first’** and **‘greatest’** of the commandments to be obeyed by God’s people namely a **‘love for the Lord thy God’** - and we must not forget that this commandment **takes precedence over** the **‘second’** commandment that relates to neighbourly relationships.

The first of the Ten Commandments states **“I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me”**.

God first identifies Himself as the God who has delivered His people from bondage and today, as Christians, we know that our God, the only true and living God, has delivered us from the bondage of sin and its consequences and condemnation through the saving work of our Saviour on the Cross of Calvary.

For that reason, our God, who has written His laws upon our hearts (Hebrews 10:16) says to Christians **“Thou shalt have no other gods before me”**. We should also remember that, ‘in context’, this commandment was originally delivered to people who had personally experienced first-hand the worship of many false, pagan and useless ‘gods’ by the people of the land of Egypt where they had been enslaved for many years.

Was God Himself ‘welcoming’ of these other ‘gods’ in the land of Egypt? In **‘The Bible Knowledge Commentary’** there is a very interesting table set out on page 120. It gives details of the 10 plagues that God afflicted the land of Egypt with (Exodus 7 through to Exodus 11) and shows how each plague that was sent by God was a direct challenge to the various ‘gods’ the Egyptians worshipped – just 2 examples – when the Nile water was turned to blood this was a direct challenge to various Egyptian ‘gods’ associated with the Nile such as **‘Hapi or Apis, the bull god, god of the Nile; Isis, goddess of the Nile; Khnum, ram god, guardian of the Nile’**. Then when darkness covered the land this was a direct challenge to various Egyptian ‘god’s associated with the sun and the sky such as **‘Re, the sun god; Horus, a sun god; Nut, a sky goddess; Hathor, a sky goddess’**.

Clearly, the God of His enslaved people in Egypt, put up no ‘welcome sign’ where the presence and worship of other false and pagan ‘gods’ was concerned.

Perhaps just at this point we should remind ourselves that the ‘god’ of this Islamic Centre, Allah, supposedly revealed to his ‘prophet’, a man called Mohammed, that the Lord Jesus Christ was not divine and did not die on the Cross of Calvary – you can’t get much more false or pagan than that!

I would contend that the erection of the ‘welcome sign’ by Pastor Stone was a violation of the first commandment because it set supposed ‘love for neighbour’ above ‘love for God’. I like what Matthew Henry wrote in his commentary -

‘The first four of the Ten Commandments, commonly called the FIRST table, tell our duty to God. It was fit that those should be put first, because man had a Maker to love, before he had a neighbour to love’.

Somehow I can’t see Elijah putting out any ‘welcome sign’ for the building of a centre for the worship of Baal, especially after his encounter with Baal’s ‘prophets’ on Mount Carmel.

Somehow I can’t see the apostle Paul putting out any ‘welcome sign’ for the building of a centre for the ‘god’ and ‘gospel’ of the Judaisers who were perverting the pure gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Galatians 1:6-9).

Somehow I can't see the Apostle John putting out a 'welcome sign' for the presence of an Islamic Centre to be built anywhere in the world in the light of the inspired words penned by him in **2 John: 9-11** "**Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ** (please remember – Islam denies the deity and death of Christ) **hath not God.. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine** (the truth about Christ) **receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed; For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds**".

I don't think it's stretching the meaning too much to say that by putting up a 'welcome sign' for the Islamic Centre Pastor Stone was in effect wishing them 'Godspeed' – he would probably deny that but I would suspect that is how it would have been understood and interpreted by those connected to the Islamic Centre. To conclude this section let me repeat what I wrote earlier – 'I would contend that the erection of the 'welcome sign' by Pastor Stone was a violation of the first commandment because it set 'love for neighbour' above 'love for God'.

Then secondly,

how should we view the interaction of the two groups through the likes of joint BBQs, joint children's play groups and joint charitable endeavours?

Once more I want to refer to God's instructions in the Old Testament to His people who had been delivered by Him from their bondage in Egypt and who had personally experienced, first-hand, the worship of many false, pagan and useless 'gods' by the people of Egypt.

Moses, who was used by God to bring the Ten Commandments to His people died without entering the Promised Land and Joshua succeeded him as leader. Now in **Joshua 23-24** Joshua himself is on the verge of death and he gives final important instructions to the people who are now settled in that Promised Land. In **Joshua 23: 6-8** Joshua says to God's people –

Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left; That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.

Pagan cultures and false religious systems were still present in the Promised Land as Joshua was about to die; so he called the people to show courage by remaining faithful to the one true God and especially to His commandments as given to them by God's servant, Moses – in **Deuteronomy 12:29-31** we read this

When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; **for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.**

In his book, 'Global Jihad', Dr Patrick Sookhdeo writes on pages 325-333

'Suicide killings are described as martyrdom (*istishad*). To fight for Islam, and more particularly to die in *jihad*, is considered a testimony (*shahada*) a term more normally used of the Islamic creed as verbally professed: hence the use of the term *shahid* to mean a martyr. **The cult of martyrdom has always been strong amongst Shi'a extremists, but the concept has now spread also to Sunni groups, motivating their members to acts of violent martyrdom.** Suicide bombings are an important component in their arsenal of weapons as demonstrated by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian groups in Israel and the suicidal plane attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York by Al-Qa-eda members...

The concept of suicide killings has received support not only from radicals but from many mainstream Islamic leaders as well... A congress of 50 Islamic scholars from seven countries meeting in Lebanon in January 2002 also affirmed the legitimacy of suicide attacks against Israel... **To die in *jihad* is to die a glorious and noble martyr and to ensure oneself an immediate place in paradise, with all sins forgiven.** A martyr will not have to face examination in the grave by the two "interrogating angels" or any temporary punishment in hell... *Shahids* are heroes. They are honoured and admired and held up as ideals to be imitated and followed...

A Palestinian suicide bomber is given a large, prestigious funeral. His family (who would have known nothing about his mission until he was dead) are feted and honoured in public... The organization which recruited trained and sent the bomber provides his family with ongoing financial support. **King Fahd of Saudi Arabia also sends funds to the families of martyrs, as did the former Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein.** Gifts may also come from Arab charities. A bomber's family can receive in the region of \$25,000 in cash.'

I remember seeing on a number of occasions TV interviews with the parents of some suicide bombers from Gaza and whilst they may not have known of their son's intent to be a 'suicide bomber' they were nonetheless proud of him and what he had done – they obviously approved of him being '**burnt in the fire**' for Allah.

Returning now to what Joshua said, not only was there this call to the people to remain faithful there was also a clear outline of the consequences for the people if they disobeyed this call as we read in **Joshua 23:13-15**

"Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any* of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you"

And in selected portions of **Joshua 24:1-23**

"Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity... And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve... If ye forsake the Lord and serve strange gods then he will turn and do you hurt... Now therefore put away said he the strange gods which are among you and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel"

As the so-called Christian West has increasingly turned its back upon its Christian heritage and the God of the Bible, there has been a significant influx into these Western countries of the followers of Islam. For anyone to try and deny that the increasing influence of this Islamic ideology and culture is not proving to be **'snares, traps, scourges and thorns in the sides'** of non-Muslims, including Christians, is quite simply to be in a state of denial about the reality of what is happening.

Matthew Henry says this in his commentary on these verses –

Joshua states the fatal consequences of going back; know for a certainty it will be your ruin. The first step would be, friendship with idolaters; the next would be, marrying with them; the end of that would be, serving their gods. Thus the way of sin is down-hill, and those who have fellowship with sinners, cannot avoid having fellowship with sin. He describes the destruction he warns them of.

Pastor Stone no doubt believes that organising joint social events like BBQs etc, that encouraging the children of each group to play together and that co-operating in joint charitable ventures carries no risks for the spiritual well-being of the members of his church, but God's Word clearly states otherwise.

And not only does God's Word outline the dangers ('snares.. traps... scourges... thorns') of 'intermingling' but practical experience in recent years, particularly in America, has shown the inherent 'spiritual' danger of such intermingling of 'the faiths' as the emergence of what has come to be known as **CHRISLAM** has demonstrated.

Back in 2011 I wrote an article entitled **'The menace of CHRISLAM'** and it can be viewed on http://www.takeheed.net/Take_Heed_2011/Current_Concerns/March_2011/The_menace_of_Chislam.htm

Interestingly, I gave quotes from what at that time were online articles – when I checked those sources whilst writing this article I see that they are no longer available online – I wonder why.

Current links that give details of this **'CHRISLAM'** can be found on <http://www.chislam.org/> on <http://www.gotquestions.org/Chislam.html> and on <http://www.exposingchislam.com/> - **in relation to this last link I would disassociate myself completely from the favourable article praising Jack and Roxella van Impe but I am supportive of the articles for instance identifying the role of Rick Warren in encouraging Islamic-Christian co-operation.**

I just wonder how Pastor Stone would react that if, as a result of the course he is advocating his members to follow, some of the children of his group who may have become Christians (and even if they're not) and some of the children of Muslims become attracted to each other and decide they would like to marry. Is he then going to stand firm against such a marriage on the basis of God's Word as found in **2 Corinthians 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"**. I believe he would be in a very difficult position through having been the one who instigated and encouraged such social interaction. **Proverbs 14:12** truly states **"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death"**.

Pastor John MacArthur in his Study Bible notes on **2 Corinthians 6:14** writes -

'Christians are not to be bound together with non-Christians in any spiritual enterprise or relationship that would be detrimental to the Christian's testimony within the body of Christ'.

Matthew Henry also comments –

'True pastors will caution their beloved children in the gospel, not to be unequally yoked. The fatal effects of neglecting Scripture precepts as to marriages clearly appear. Instead of a help meet, the union brings a snare. Those whose cross it is to be unequally united, without their willful fault, may expect consolation under it; but when believers enter into such unions, against the express warnings of God's word, they must expect must distress'.

The favourable inter-action advocated by Pastor Stone is a violation of the clear teaching of God's Word. Some years ago The Metropolitan Tabernacle published a helpful booklet called **'Separation and Obedience'** and whilst it was mainly focused on the modern unscriptural false ecumenical movement I do think this short portion has application to the issues that we have just considered –

'It must be emphasized that the prophets never co-operated with false teachers. They denounced idol-worship and set themselves against evil kings. We may think of Elijah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the suffering that such prophets endured for their independent stand. All the prophets of old stood against the prevailing evils of the people and suffered the consequences. None of them made peace with ungodly leaders nor with the prophets of Baal, and the idea that they had spiritual fellowship with such people, or that they co-operated in any way, cannot be regarded as a serious exposition of the Bible'.

And thirdly,

how should we view the 'loaning' by Pastor Stone of his church building to enable the Muslims to presumably celebrate the end of **Ramadan**? Well, let me begin by saying that a church building is just that – it is simply bricks and mortar, where The Church (the 'called-out' people who comprise 'The Church') meets to worship God. Paul outlines this truth in **Acts 17:24** –

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands";

So, if God does not dwell in buildings made of bricks and mortar, but in fact dwells within His regenerated people by His Spirit as we learn in **John 14:23** and **1 Corinthians 6:19** is there a problem with allowing your 'meeting house' to be used for spiritual purposes by those who deny the deity and death of the Lord Jesus Christ? Well I think there is a very serious problem and such co-operation is forbidden with a correct understanding of **2 Corinthians 6:14-18** which reads -

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”.

The background to and context for these verses is of course that some professing believers in Corinth were not putting obvious ‘**clear water**’ between them and the pagan ‘spirituality’ around them. Corinth was home to a large Temple dedicated to Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. It is clear from these verses that there was to be no, perhaps mistakenly perceived, spiritual interaction with these neighbouring pagan (and in this case immoral) ‘spiritual’ groups. Verse 15 refers to ‘Christ’ [true God] and ‘Belial’ [a false ‘god’]; he that ‘believeth’ [truly spiritual] with an ‘infidel’ [falsely spiritual]. Verse 16 refers to ‘the temple of God’ [a believer] with ‘idols’ [unbelievers].

If this prohibition applied to, perhaps mistakenly perceived, spiritual interaction with the followers of ‘Baal’, it has equal application against similar, perhaps mistakenly perceived, spiritual interaction with the followers of Allah.

In closing this section let me give an apt quote from Geoffrey Wilson’s commentary on **2 Corinthians 6:16 (a) ‘What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?’** Mr. Wilson writes -

‘The climax is reached in **the final question** which provides the premise for what follows. For it **exhibits the utter sinfulness of attempting to find a place for the images of false gods within the imageless sanctuary of God**’.

DISTURBING

In my title for this article I described Mr. Dickinson’s ‘**Thought for the Day**’ as both ‘**questionable**’ and ‘**disturbing**’. I have in the first section written as to why I consider it ‘**questionable**’ and I want now in this final section to explain why I consider it ‘**disturbing**’. I want to ‘make my case’ under 3 points.

So firstly,

I believe it was ‘**disturbing**’ because it demonstrated Mr. Dickinson’s obvious ‘**approval**’ of the actions of Pastor Stone. The whole message was saturated by his ‘**approval**’ and that is ‘**disturbing**’ because Mr. Dickinson is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and yet the biblical points that I have made in the first section of this article as to why Pastor Stone’s actions violated the teaching of the Bible never seem to have entered into Mr. Dickinson’s thinking. However, considering the other unscriptural activities that I have already mentioned in relation to Mr. Dickinson and his role as a minister at Carnmoney perhaps this ‘**approval**’ by him really shouldn’t come as any great surprise.

Then secondly,

I believe it was **'disturbing'** because it demonstrated Mr. Dickinson's obvious **'admiration'** for Jim Wallis, the man who originally related the story of Pastor Stone and his welcome for the Islamic Centre. So, just who is Jim Wallis?

Over the years I have on a number of occasions made reference to Jim Wallis in various articles. Back in January 2008 I posted an article called **'Joel Osteen and Rick Warren: The heretics are pastoring the church'**. It can be viewed on http://www.takeheed.net/Assorted_Articles/Contemporary/Heretics_pastoring_church.htm and in it I wrote –

'Megachurch pastor Rick Warren attended a large Reform Jewish gathering last week to share tips on how to build a community. Warren - who saw his church expand from seven people meeting in his house to 22,000 people worshipping in an expansive treasure island-like campus – said the key to holding onto visitors is involving them in a small group... "We don't really feel like people are in the congregation until they're in small groups." The "Purpose-Driven" pastor spoke to thousands of Jewish leaders Thursday night at the Union for Reform Judaism's biennial convention in San Diego... **"There are some principles that apply regardless of our faith, if it's Jewish or Christian,"** he said at the convention. One of his principles: "Just be nice to people. Smile."

After Warren spoke a few minutes at the podium, he sat alongside two popular Southern California rabbis for a casual talk about strengthening congregational life. Other advice given by Warren included looking at everything from an outsider's viewpoint, such as **simplifying worship terms, making strangers feel welcome, and encouraging interaction...** The biennial meeting of the largest Jewish denomination in North America began Dec. 12 and concluded on Sunday. **Other guests at the conference included the Rev. Jim Wallis of Sojourners and Dr. Ingrid Mattson, president of the Islamic Society of North America'...**

Earlier in this report I highlighted this from the San Diego meeting – 'Other guests at the conference included the Rev. Jim Wallis of Sojourners and Dr. Ingrid Mattson, president of the Islamic Society of North America' – Jim Wallis was another of those who signed the letter to Muslim clerics. It is very clear that politicians and supposed 'evangelicals' like Rick Warren, Jim Wallis and Bill Hybels of Willow Creek are pushing an agenda for 'social cohesion' between differing religious groups rather than seeking 'soul conversion' through faith in the only Saviour of men, The Lord Jesus Christ'.

Just as an aside, a fuller treatment of Rick Warren's appearance to speak to the leaders of Judaism, to tell them how to 'grow their congregations', can be found on http://www.takeheed.net/Assorted_Articles/Contemporary/Rick_Warren_Judaism.htm

Even further back, in December 2002, in my **'News from the Front'** I included an article called **'Reflections on Power to Change' – 'Power to Change'** had been a heavily funded and heavily advertised 'ecumenical evangelistic effort' held in Ireland. In that article which can be accessed on http://www.takeheed.net/News_From_The_Front/news24.htm I wrote the following –

In the light of other actions Evangelical Alliance has clearly forfeited any right to describe itself as 'Evangelical' as was evidenced by their contribution to events under a title of 'Face Values'. Their invited guest was Jim Wallis of a ministry called Sojourners based in Washington DC. On the web site of Sojourners it states 'Sojourners includes evangelicals, CATHOLICS, Pentecostals and Protestants; liberals and conservatives; blacks, whites, Latinos, and Asians; women and men; young and old. WE ARE CHRISTIANS who want to follow Jesus, but who also sojourn with others in different faith traditions and all those who are on a spiritual journey'.

A very enlightening article detailing the spiritual 'pedigree' of Jim Wallis can be accessed on <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=4545> and it truly makes for '**disturbing**' reading.

The article on the following link also details some of the very high political circles in which Mr. Wallis (and just like Rick Warren) moves <http://www.thebereancall.org/content/presidents-spiritual-advisor>

For Mr. Dickinson to so clearly and publicly display his '**admiration**' for **Jim Wallis** is for me a very '**disturbing**' matter.

And thirdly,

I believe it was '**disturbing**' because it demonstrated Mr. Dickinson's obvious '**agreement**' with the conclusion drawn by Jim Wallis that the actions of Pastor Stone had done more for beleaguered Christians in Kashmir, Pakistan than all the drone strikes in the war against terror. Let's analyse that conclusion by examining what actually happened according to the story told.

1. Muslim men in Kashmir, Pakistan apparently became aware of events in Memphis through seeing the story broadcast on CNN.
2. These Muslim men apparently concluded that 'God' had spoken to them.
3. One of them apparently phoned Pastor Stone to tell him that he had gone to a local Christian church and personally cleaned it.
4. These Muslim men had now 'befriended' their Christian neighbours.

So, the conclusion drawn by Jim Wallis and included in the broadcast by Mr. Dickinson was, as I said earlier, 'that the actions of Pastor Stone had done more for beleaguered Christians in Kashmir, Pakistan than all the drone strikes in the war against terror'.

Well, to begin with, what is the purpose of a drone strike? Obviously it is to kill those who pose a threat to others, whether they are Christian or not. So, we have to ask ourselves, were the Muslim men, who heard the story when it was broadcast on CNN, were they people who posed a threat to others including Christians? Well I don't think anyone can answer that definitively unless they were to be intimately acquainted with the men in question. Were they 'militant Muslims' or what I might term 'benign Muslims'? My guess is that they were probably the latter and if that were to be the case then the actions of Pastor Stone cannot be compared to the purpose of using drones for these men most likely posed no threat to others and in particular Christians. In many countries, where 'Militant Muslims' are on the rampage and are bent on butchering professing Christians, as events in recent years in countries like Indonesia, Philippines, Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria, Sudan, Darfur, Egypt etc have demonstrated, the Christians depend upon 'military means' to protect them from these murderous groups, so this message and its conclusion would have been very much 'cold comfort' for them.

Then these men claimed that apparently 'God' had spoken to them – well, the question has to be asked – which 'God'? Presumably these men are still committed Muslims worshipping Allah and so, if that is the case, then it was not the only true and living God who spoke to them and to believe otherwise is to fail to understand the God of the Bible.

Finally, these Muslim men now say they have befriended their Christian neighbours. Well, if that is the case, they are actually going against the teaching of their own holy book, the Koran. **Surah 5:51** reads **'O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors; they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them, Verily, Allah guideth not a people unjust'**.

If the actions of Pastor Stone have genuinely led to a friendship-building exercise in Kashmir then, from a community-relations point of view, that is fine, but to claim they have 'done more for beleaguered Christians in Kashmir, Pakistan than all the drone strikes in the war against terror' is quite frankly ridiculous, indefensible and betrays an abysmal ignorance of true militant 'Islamic Ideology' as taught by the Koran, the Hadith and by the life and example of Mohammed.

Final thought

Back in 2007 I gave a talk to a Presbytery of Ruling Presbyterian Elders and I address the subject of Islam and you can read the full report in an article I posted on http://www.takeheed.net/Assorted_Articles/Islam/Islam_cc.htm

In that article I make reference to an Interfaith lecture that I attended given by a Muslim spokesman and I refer to a question posed in a session that followed his talk. The question was posed by a former, now retired Presbyterian minister called Maurice Ryan and this is how I reported the matter in my article –

Near the end of the 'feedback' section another member of the Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum council, retired former Presbyterian [Crossgar] Minister and former Stranmillis College lecturer, Maurice Ryan, asked this question of Mr Mobayed – **'When can we expect to see the Northern Ireland skyline be-graced with a Mosque?'**

Mr Mobayed's response to the question was that it was not a matter of 'if' but simply a matter of 'when' and that of course would depend very much on planning permissions and economics.

Such naïveté and blindness from Mr Ryan and next day, having tracked down a telephone number for him, I rang him and had quite a lengthy conversation with him. I then wrote to him next day [31st March] and herewith is the text of that letter –

Dear Mr Ryan,

Following on from our telephone conversation I would just like to make a few additional comments on a couple of points that you made.

You stated that tolerance was a 'Christian virtue'. I would state, in the light of God's Word, that Christians should never exercise tolerance, which is at the expense of God's glory. Our God is never 'tolerant' when His glory is at stake.

The first commandment is 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me' – literally '*in my presence or sight*' – and interfaith activity by professing Christians, whereby they 'respect' other faiths and claim that they contain divine truth, violates this first commandment. God's 'truth' could be summed up by the old saying – 'Ruined by the fall and redeemed by the blood' and that truth is anathema to all the false religious cults and non-Christian religions that truly are, as the Iron Hall correctly advertised, 'Strongholds of Satan'.

The Lord Jesus could say to His Father in John 17 that He had glorified Him on earth and that included incidents such as using a whip to drive out the money-changers from the temple and publicly identifying the false religious leaders of the day as being "of your father, the devil". When it came to God's glory Christ was totally intolerant and of course asserted that He alone was the way, the truth and the life and that no one could come to God except by Him. He pronounced that it was the strait and narrow way that led to life and not some broad interfaith highway that led to God.

God says in Isaiah "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another". Professing Christians who participate in 'the mutual-respect interfaith movement' are giving God's glory to other 'gods'. They are affording divine 'credibility' to visible or mental dumb idol 'gods' and the Lord passes His verdict on such in Psalm 115. The only incarnate 'truth' was Jesus Christ and the only inscripturated 'truth' is the bible. There is a great gulf fixed between the 'biblical gospel' and the 'Robert Runcie gospel' that you have favourably quoted in times past and that I personally rebutted many years ago in the enclosed little booklet called 'Syncretism'. Christians are not to 'cultivate interfaith' but to 'contend earnestly for the faith'.

The second point is your obvious hope that Islam will establish and expand its presence in Northern Ireland, even to the point where in your own words 'a mosque will be-grace the skyline of Northern Ireland'. You claim that you have been greatly influenced over many years by the moderation of the speaker at the recent lecture, Dr Mamoun Mobayed. On this matter of moderate Muslims, former Muslims, some of who have been gloriously converted to Christ would warn against such naïve and dangerous aspirations.

In 2006, in a letter that I had published in the Belfast Telegraph, I wrote the following

In his book "Why I Am Not a Muslim", former Muslim Ibn Warraq wrote "There may be moderate Muslims, but Islam itself is not moderate. There is no difference between [the aims of] Islam and Islamic fundamentalism...Islamic fundamentalism has global aspirations [namely] the submission of the entire world to the all-embracing Shari'a, Islamic Law...designed to control every single act of all individuals.'

Honest public expression of this aspiration was voiced when Omar M. Ahmed, chairman of the board of CAIR [Council on American-Islamic Relations] said at a banquet, "I urge Muslims not to shirk their duty of sharing the Islamic faith with those who are on the wrong side....if you choose to live here [America], you have a responsibility to deliver the message of Islam. Islam isn't here to be equal to any other faith but to become dominant".

In a recently produced documentary one section deals with 'The House of War' and states "Islamic theology divides the world into two spheres locked in perpetual combat, dar al-Islam, House of Islam - where Islamic law predominates, and dar al-harb, House of War - the rest of the world. It is incumbent on dar al-Islam to fight and conquer dar al-harb and permanently assimilate it".

The reality is that fundamentalist Islam is true Islam and, as regards Christians, the Koran is quite clear that those who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God are 'liars' [Sura 18:4-5] and that those who believe in The Trinity are not destined for 'the garden' [paradise/heaven] but for 'the fire' [hell] [Sura 5:72].

In 1980, the Islamic Council of Europe published a book called *'Muslim Communities in Non-Muslim States'*. The book set out very clearly the Islamic agenda for Europe. The strategy was that Muslims in European Nations should organise themselves into communities, setting up mosques, schools and Islamic centres. This would occur little by little until eventually entire European Nations would be turned into Islamic republics. This is clearly at the embryonic stage in Northern Ireland but is being aided greatly by groups such as your Interfaith Forum.

When that happens rest assured that the 'role-models' of the likes of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia or Uzbekistan will become nightmarish realities and 'the troubles' that [God willing] we have just passed through will seem like a 'teddy-bear's picnic' in comparison to what will happen when Islam seeks to impose Shari'a law – if you don't believe me just look at what is happening in Northern Nigeria, in the Darfur region of Sudan, in Egypt, in Somalia and in countless other places where 'true' Islam has grown in numbers, strength and influence.

Robert Spencer in his book on Islam wrote correctly that when Islam gains control in an area, the choices for unbelievers are either [1] Accept Islam or [2] Pay the jizya tax or [3] War against Islam – he then astutely and again correctly added 'peaceful coexistence as equals in a pluralistic society isn't one of the choices'.

In closing I would refer to our brief discussion on Romanism and it has been responsible, more than any other so-called 'Christian' grouping, for failing to inform Muslims of the truth of the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I sought to redress that deception by publishing a special leaflet for Muslims and a copy is enclosed herewith for your consideration.

My closing wish is that the Spirit of truth will touch your heart and mind and understanding for the good of yourself, those taken captive by Satan in false religions and cults and supremely for the glory of the One true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Cecil Andrews

My own '**concluding thought**' is this – would Mr. Dickinson look forward, like his former ministerial colleague, Mr. Ryan, to the day when '**we expect to see the Northern Ireland skyline be-graced with a Mosque**' and if that Mosque happened to be built next to Mr. Dickinson's church in Carnmoney, would he, like Pastor Stone, put out a 'welcome sign'?

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 9 October 2013