

ISLAM - jwm notes - 1974

There is an edge in Islam, but it is in individuals not sects or national groups. The edge is not organized into any renewal movement as yet. It will likely be found more often in the "slu'as" rather than the "sunnis" and most likely the tradition of sufiism will be the most useful tool in transposing Islamic thought into the post-modern world and the conquest of technology. But it is 25 or 50 years behind the impact on the Christian Church.

Signs of the presence of secularism have indeed appeared - among the city dwellers and affluent. But because folk are still thrilled by higher living standards and the convenient fruits of technology, no one is yet concerned much. The emptiness of affluence minus spirit has not yet struck. Mojtabai believes that because the sickness started in the west it will come to the east with technology. More important, he thinks the solution must come from the west. They caught first and must recover first and aid others. This common problem is the basic ground for future relations between Islam and Christianity. No more will we do the intellectual -- comparing doctrine. It will be seeking the practical solutions. In the world it is now the spiritual (not creeds) versus the technological. We will find collegiality around the spiritual -- that is phenomenological interpretation of life and service of mankind and the holy life.

Existentialistic Christianity and Islamic sufiism are one, I believe, at this point. This is not mysticism as this is usually understood. The Muslims here were willing to work together. A key context for such are their three statements of unity: the unity of God, the unity of man and the unity of Religion. We assume here and then move to the practical, the missional, the service of humanity.