

cher: „Dank eurer demokratischen Gesetze werden wir euch überwältigen, dank eurer religiösen Gesetze werden wir euch beherrschen ... die Herrschaft hat schon begonnen mit den Erdöldollars, die nicht dazu verwendet werden, in den armen Ländern Nordafrikas oder des Nahen Ostens Arbeitsplätze zu schaffen, sondern um Moscheen und Kulturzentren in den

christlichen Ländern mit einer hohen Quote an muslimischen Einwanderern zu bauen ... wie können wir darin nicht ein klares Programm sehen, das auf Eroberung und Expansion ausgerichtet ist?“ (http://www.frauen-answehr.de/Im_Blickpunkt/im_blickpunkt.html).

Does Islam Practice „Mission“ and „Conversion Work“? – Some International Developments

The Muslim accusation of “purchased conversion” directed against Christian mission throughout the last centuries is very popular among Muslims. Even if many Muslims deny that Islam practices “mission”, this does not mean that promotion of Islam and efforts toward conversion do not take place. In the first place, there are in several countries the remnants of the Dhimmi regulation – a kind of discriminatory rule of toleration for religious minorities - which, through the centuries of Muslim rule, drove those of different religion to conversion. The ban – in Saudi Arabia or Qatar, for example – on the free confession and practice of one’s own, non-Muslim religion, the disadvantages in criminal and family law, in the right to study, or in one’s career are certainly for many a non-Muslim in numerous Islamic countries just as much a reason to change religions as is the marriage with a Muslim woman who constantly demands the conversion of her husband to Islam.

Additional to that, a number of Muslim countries support “Da’wah” work (propagation of Islam) outside their own territory. In 1972, the „The World Assembly of Muslim Youth“ (WAMY) has been founded in order “to introduce Islam in its purest form as an overall system and a way of life and in order to support

Muslim organisations worldwide by teaching, exchange and coworking” (www.wamy.co.uk/bd_about.htm). There is also a list of how many mosques were built worldwide by this support.

Along with this, Islamic states today increasingly practice or support “Da’wah” (promotion, invitation) beyond their own borders. This type of missionary work aims not only at the missionizing of non-Muslims, but also at the “conversion” of Muslims of a different tradition and faction, or at those who, in the view of conservative Islam, “neglect” their Islamic faith. Thus, it is reported, for example, about traditionally moderate Islamic Morocco: “Rabat [received] subsidies from Saudi Arabia, in reaction to which numerous mosques and Koran schools of a radical character on the model of Saudi Arabian Wahhabism [the strict Saudi interpretation of Islam] were built here, too. Today, the Islamistic groups appear here, just as in the Near East, as charitable associations and recruit their adherents among the impoverished and unemployed youth at the edges of the cities” (*Die Welt*, August 20, 2003). “Deutschlandfunk” reported on July 3, 2003, that, in Morocco, women in „unislamic“ (western) clothing increasingly were being intimidated, and spoke of a creeping Islamism. “Deutschlandfunk” also reported on August 12, 2003, that

numerous mosques, Islamic organizations, and associations in France are financed, for example, by Saudi Arabia or non-governmental Islamist organizations in the relevant home countries (above all Algeria and Morocco), and that preachers are sent to these organizations who are distinguished by their fundamentalism and anti-democratic statements. They preach in Arabic and call for "Jihad" [commitment which can extend to armed struggle] against Christians, Jews, and "capitalists".

The FAZ [*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*] reported on October 10, 2001, about funds from Saudi-Arabia which, in Bosnia, underwrote the building of mosques, aid organizations and, apparently, so-called "sleepers" [extremists willing to commit acts of violence and who wait for such instructions from their organizations]. In Algeria, according to the FAZ from August 2, 1995, the bodies of young people were found who were murdered if they dressed in an "unislamic" way or spoke against Islam and fundamentalism. The TAZ [*Tageszeitung*] reported on August 5, 2003, about Pakistani and North Indian funds and missionaries used in the expansion of a fundamentalist Islam in Northern Mali. The FAZ reported on September 20, 2001: "*Movements from the Islamic world also receive generous contributions from the personal fortunes of rich Gulf Arabs. With their patronage, they support Muslims worldwide who live in poverty or rebel against foreign rule. The givers do not ask what happens with their money. In their understanding of themselves as good Muslims, it is much more important that they are charitable and give to others. Charity means, for example, financing mosques in new hospitals and schools in Central Asia or in Kosovo, over which they then do not want to have any influence.*"

It is not always obvious how this money is to be used, but it is widely suspected that it is at least partly used for "Da'wah"-work. *Die Zeit* reported: „*For centuries, the rulers [of Saudi-*

Arabia] were aiming at reconciling religion and politics. The price is billion [of dollars] payed to support militant Islam ... The mixture is very old indeed. It is a mixture of an aggressive, puristic form of Islam, Wahhabism, and the wordly claim to power of the Saudi dynasty. With this state religion, the rulers - kings and Imams in personal union – have conquered the whole Arabian peninsula ... No other country has sent so many billion of Dollars and such militant manpower to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Tchetchenia and Bosnia like this state with its 22 mill. inhabitants" (*Die Zeit*, Dossier 47/2000, Die Saud-Connexion). In „Islam in Afrika“ (see www.infoplease.com) it is reported that Islam records more converts in Africa than does Christianity (www.nahost.de/content/aufsaetze/aufsatz_001.shtml).

Islam as a provider of concrete material aid certainly has a great attraction for many. But, along with this, there are repeated reports about conversions resulting from practical considerations or from compulsion. In Sudan, for example, according to FAZ from November 23, 1996, the churches and international organizations make the following complaint: "*When the government in [Khartoum], which exerts control over the residential areas through the well-proven model of the people's committee, does something, then it does so at first or exclusively for Muslims. This is true even in the public health system: If the poorest of the poor, who are dependent upon the state welfare system, would appear and ask for help, then they would be given the choice of either converting or receiving no medical assistance at all. Abel Alier [lawyer and dissident] comes to the conclusion: 'Sudan's policy of social development, as it is conducted by the Ministry for Social Planing, means essentially the Islamisation and Arabisation of the civilian society in southern Sudan.' This development is pushed forward by different institutions: from the youth organizations to the three secret services in the country and fi-*

nally to the Islamic Non-Governmental Organizations active throughout Africa. From the southern half of the country there are reports about a new slavery and about genocide committed against the tribes of the Nuba. In the nunciature, there is talk of 'ethnic cleansing' practiced by the 'Arab master race' against Africans and Christians. ... The 'Society for En-

dangered Peoples', also 'Caritas International' [report] ... that Khartoum's soldiers assault villages in the Nuba Mountains and kill men and women; that they abduct school children in order to recruit them or to sell them to buyers in foreign countries; that the names of Lybia and Saudi Arabia are mentioned in this context."

Islamische „Da’wa“ in Schwarzafrika: Interview mit Prof. Obiora Ike, Nigeria

In der jüngsten Vergangenheit breitet sich der Islam besonders in Schwarzafrika rasch aus. Wie in zahlreichen anderen Ländern wird die Islamisierung auch in Nigeria von außerhalb personell unterstützt und finanziell gefördert. Zur derzeitigen Situation und Entwicklung in Nigeria gab Prof. Obiora Ike am 01.10.2003 dem „Institut für Islamfragen“ das folgende Interview.

Der katholische Priester und Generalvikar der Diözese Enugu, **Obiora Ike**, promovierte an der Universität Bonn mit einer Arbeit zur Sozialethik, ist Direktor des „Catholic Institute for Development, Caritas, Justice and Peace“ (CIDJAP) und lehrt als Professor of African Studies and Social Ethics in Enugu, Nigeria. Er ist ein engagierter Entwicklungs-, Friedens- und Menschenrechtsaktivist und arbeitet u. a. eng mit der „Internationalen Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte“ (IGFM), Frankfurt, zusammen. Er wirkt an vielerlei Projekten zum islamisch-christlichen Dialog mit und publizierte zahlreiche Schriften und Bücher zu diesen Themen. 1996 erhielt er den Shalom-Friedenspreis für seine Arbeit im Bereich der Gefangenen- und Seelsorge. Gegen Obiora Ike ist bereits ein Attentat geplant worden. Er selbst ist davon überzeugt, dass ihn ein Wunder gerettet hat. Sein Kommentar: „Gott hat mich beschützt. Aber wir leben gefährlich.“

Gibt es in Nigeria islamische „Mission“ (Da’wa) – Und wenn ja, wie geschieht sie?

IfI: „Kann man in Nigeria islamische „Missionen“-aktivitäten verzeichnen? Ist der Islam überhaupt eine missionarische Religion?“

Prof. Ike: „Der Islam ist ebenso wie das Christentum eine missionarische Religion. Der Islam kam in die meisten Länder südlich der Sahara erst in der Neuzeit und brach sich dort besonders ab dem 17. Jahrhundert Bahn. Über 700 Jahre lang wurde er mit Gewalt ausgebreitet.“

In Ländern wie Sudan, Nigeria, Südafrika oder Somalia hat in den letzten 20-30 Jahren – seit Ausbruch der Iranischen Revolution 1979 – eine Erneuerung und ein Vormarsch des Islam eingesetzt. Den Islam in Nigeria konnte man bis dahin mehrheitlich als einen sunnitisch-gemäßigten, toleranten, auf Ausgleich bedachten Islam bezeichnen. Seit Ausbruch der Iranischen Revolution und der Zuspitzung des Palästina-Konflikts verspüren bestimmte kleine islamische, fundamentalistische Gruppen den Drang, den Islam zu verteidigen, auszubreiten und auch gemäßigttere Glaubensgenossen zu bekämpfen. In mindestens 100 kleineren Grup-