

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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.)

Dar-us-Salaam, 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, HA0 4JQ, U.K.

Imam & Head of Mission 020 8903 2689 President 020 8524 8212

Secretary 01753 692654 Book Depot 020 8903 2689

Fax 0870 131 9340 E-mail aaii@saziz.globalnet.co.uk

www.islamic-book-depot.org.uk and www.aaii.org/uk

Next Meeting

Assalamu alaikum

Venue: *Dar-us-Salaam*

Date: Sunday, 1st May 2005

Time: 3 pm

**Id Millad un Nabi & address by
Hazrat Ameer Dr A K Saeed Pasha**

Regular Activities

Dars-i Quran/Hadith: Every Friday at 2:30 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.

Contents

<i>News</i>	Page 1
<i>Hazrat Ameer</i>	Page 2
<i>Dr Faruq Abdullah</i>	Page 3
<i>Who is my neighbour by Jallal ud Din</i>	Page 5

News

Hazrat Ameer tour of UK

Hazrat Ameer, Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha, arrived in London on 4th April. Members and officials of the UK jamaat were at the airport to greet him.. From the airport he was taken to Dar-us-Salaam London where he had lunch and, despite a long and tiring journey, spoke to members about various matters. Mr Azhar-ud-Din then took Hazrat Ameer to Bedford to see his family.

On Thursday, April 7th, Hazrat Ameer left for the US (West Coast) where he toured the jammats and held special meetings with African American Muslims.

Programme in the UK

20 th April	Arrival in UK
22 nd April	Jummah
23 rd April	Meeting at Woking
29 th April	Jummah
30 th April	Meeting at Slough
1 st May	Meeting at Wembley
	Baiats
	Launching the project to translate Islamic literature into Italian
5 th May	Return to Pakistan

In addition Hazrat Ameer will visit some members in their homes. You can also ring him at Dar-us-Salaam and make an appointment to see Hazrat Ameer there.

Members are requested to make the best use of Hazrat Ameer's time and go to Dar-us-Salaam Wembley and see him to be spiritually uplifted by his khutbas and lectures.

Translation Project

We thank Allah for enabling us to undertake translations of Islamic literature into Italian. The first work to be translated was Islam - The Religion of Humanity. The original translation was by brother Guido Travaglian who on embracing Islam, took the name Abdul Jalil. He is the imam of a small congregation in Italy. May Allah give him time, knowledge and strength to continue with this task.

The translation was checked by a professional translator for accuracy and reformatted for printing by Mr Selim Ahmed and Dr Zahid Aziz. Mr Selim Ahmed also checked the accuracy of the translation from a Muslim's point of view. His valuable comments were accepted and incorporated into the final version.

An appeal for funds to print and distribute the booklet elicited promises from many members. Dr Mujahid Saeed was the first one off the mark and bore the total expense involved in the translation and printing. May Allah bless him and lead him to ever greater sacrifices in the cause of Islam.

Hazrat Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed

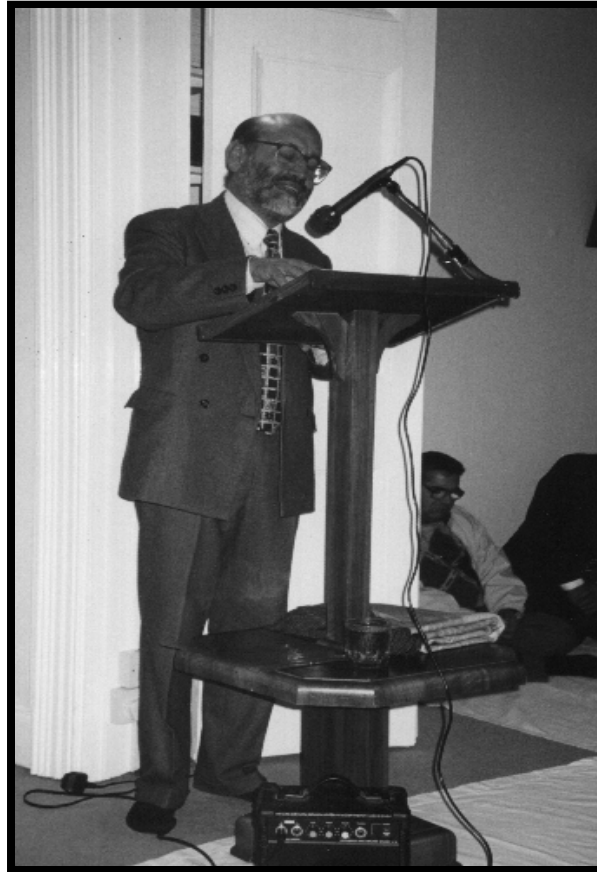
A Brief Sketch

Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed was born on 28 February 1945, at Dadar, District Mansehra in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. His father, the late Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan named him Abdul Karim. Hazrat Syed Asadullah Shah Sahib, who was very close to the family, lovingly called him "Pasha" when he was still a child. He is today more commonly known by that name in the Jamaat.

Dr. Saeed attended Burn Hall School in Abbottabad, and Forman Christian College in Lahore before joining medical school. He graduated as a doctor from King Edward Medical College Lahore in 1968.

Dr. Saeed was inclined towards religion from early childhood. He greatly benefited from the *Dars-i-Quran* and Hadith [discourses on the Holy Quran and Hadith] and readings from the books of Hazrat *Masih-i-Maoud* [Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib of Qadian] that his father conducted almost on a daily basis. He was also very much influenced by lectures and *Dars-i-Quran* by the late Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyartha Sahib, Naseer Ahmad Farooqi and Hafiz Sher Mohammad Sahib. As a student in a missionary school he did not hesitate to engage the Christian priests in discussions about the death of Jesus Christ or to explain the nature of the claims of Hazrat Mirza Sahib to fellow students and teachers. He has been continuously building on this firm foundation and is today considered one of the most learned members of the Jamaat.

Dr. Saeed started his medical career in Mayo Hospital Lahore and later moved to New Zealand, then he moved to U.K. where he obtained Membership of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) in 1979. He returned to Pakistan in April 1981 and took up a teaching assignment in Ayub Medical College Abbottabad. He was promoted as Professor of Medicine in 1987 and appointed



Our Ameer

Hazrat Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha, addressing members of the UK jamaat during his last visit to the UK.

He sacrificed a lucrative medical career, including job offers from the World Health Organisation, in order to be able to serve the cause of Islam.

May Allah bless his sacrifices and cause the jamaat to go from strength to strength under his leadership and grant us all the strength to follow in his footsteps.

Head of the Department of Medicine in 1991. In 2001 he was selected to become Principal of the college, but his appointment was cancelled by the government under pressure from the religious lobby because he was an Ahmadi. Dr. Saeed also has the distinction of being conferred the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians, London (1994) and Fellowship of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Pakistan in 2001. He is also serving as a member/chairman of a large number of professional committees and programmes. He has been a regular contributor to international and local professional publications and he has travelled widely to attend conferences and conventions.

He has remained a staunch member of the Jamaat, and has shown great patience and commitment to the Movement in the times of adversity. His love for the Holy Quran is exemplary. Dr. Saeed was elected a member of the *Mujlis-e-Motemideen* (The General Council) in 1992 and has served the Jamaat in that capacity ever since.

He commands great respect in the

Jamaat for his piety and sincerity. He has always made very positive contributions to the affairs of the Jamaat. He has been a regular speaker at the Annual Ahmadiyya Jalsa [the annual international gathering at Lahore] for over 20 years. He is fond of poetry and has expressed, in his poems, deep sentiments relating to the Jamaat and the hard times it has been through. He has served as a trustee of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore Missions International (AALMI) but resigned from this position when it became difficult for him to attend meetings of the Trust in London. He represented the Central Anjuman at the World Muslim Convention of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam (Lahore) Fiji in April 1985. He also performed the dedication ceremony of Masjid-i-Noor in Suva on behalf of Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan.

Dr. Saeed is married and has three sons. The older two are qualified doctors while the third is in the final year of medical school.

On 3rd November 2002, Dr. Saeed was unanimously elected as Ameer and President of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore. Being at the pinnacle of his

career, he has accepted this responsibility at a tremendous sacrifice.

May Allah give him the strength, wisdom and spiritual prowess to lead us successfully in propagating Islam to the corners of the world. Each of us is duty bound to join him in carrying out his duties. If Hazrat Ameer entrusts a task to us, we should consider it an honour and carry it out to the best of our ability.

FARUQ ABDULLAH

(BSc PhD MInst MC Ceng)

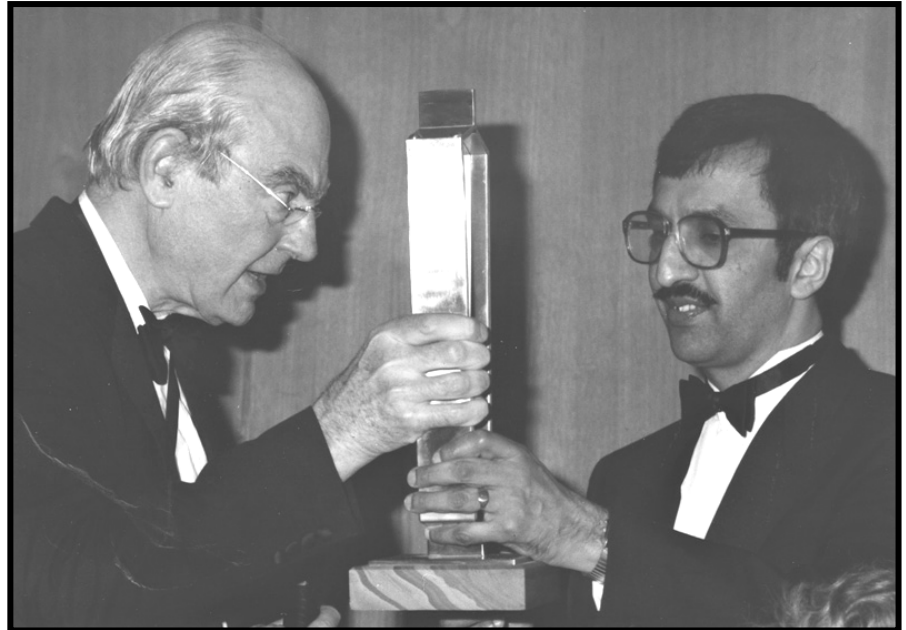
A Tribute By His Family

Faruq was born in Lahore in June 1944; the third child of Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and his wife Mahmudah. He was born and lived in Brandreth Road, Lahore for the first three years of his life. Lahore was then part of British India. His father was a brilliant student and had completed a PhD in Chemistry from Berlin in the 1930s. He had then given up a shining career had taken up missionary work as the Imam of the Berlin Mosque prior to the Second World War.

In 1946 Dr. Abdullah became the Imam of the Woking Mosque in UK and Faruq in the company of his mother and two brothers and sister travelled by ship from Bombay to Liverpool in the summer of 1947 to join his Father in the UK. He was then just three years old.

The Woking Mosque was part of a complex envisaged by the orientalist Dr. G. W. Leitner as an Oriental Institute for the study of oriental languages, cultures and religions and was located on Oriental Road in Woking, Surrey. Faruq spent the next 20 years of his life here.

He went to school at Monument Hill Primary School and completed his schooling at Monument Hill Secondary School. During these years no other families from the Indian subcontinent were resident in Woking. Faruq was an outgoing child and soon made many friends at school. He was mischievous and full



Dr Faruq Abdullah receiving an award for scientific achievement at the height of his career. May Allah bless his soul.

of ideas. The grounds of the Woking Mosque were a large playground for his activities.

The Mosque had become a center for Muslims in the UK and every Sunday was an open house when Muslims from London and other parts of UK travelled to Woking for afternoon prayers. In particular the Eid congregations twice a year attracted Muslims in the UK from all nationalities and walks of life. Faruq was thus exposed to many different cultures and languages at an early age and this left a lasting imprint on him.

His father died when Faruq was just 14 years old and still at school but the family continued to live at the Mosque until 1970. Faruq's mother had resisted the easy option of returning to Pakistan after the death of her husband and herself took up missionary work at Woking Mosque and enabled her children to pursue their educational careers in UK.

After his schooling in Woking and college at Guildford Faruq went to the Queen Mary College of London University in 1962 to study for a B.Sc. honours degree in Physics. He graduated from London University with a first class degree in 1965 and inspired by Prof. Abdus Salam began his studies for a PhD degree in

Elementary Particle Physics under the supervision of Prof. Dr. John Charap at Queen Mary College.

In 1968 Faruq, Khalid (the older brother) and their mother made a visit to Pakistan. Faruq's elder sister Rashidah had returned to Pakistan a few years earlier where she had married and settled. It was a visit to Pakistan after a lengthy gap of 14 years. The family had now begun to split up and live independently.

Faruq, after completing his PhD, left academia and joined GEC in Wembley. In January 1970 Faruq got married to Nasreen, the daughter of his paternal uncle and when she reached UK they began their married life in a flat in Wembley. Their first daughter Romana was born in December 1971.

Faruq joined City University after a few years and worked with Prof. Finkelstein on the design of sensors for use in industrial applications. He enjoyed his work and established himself as an authority on computer aided design of sensors and produced a number of PhDs at City University. He began work in the Dept. of Physics, which was later merged into the Dept. of Electrical Engineering. His work enabled him to travel abroad on many occasion; and a

number of awards and prizes gave recognition to his work. The Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers in London in 1992 awarded him an outstanding achievement award. His work was exhibited at the Design Centre in Picadilly, London and he was invited to lecture at the Nathiagali Summer College in Pakistan.

Alongside his professional work Faruq maintained a strong interest in alternative medicine and particularly in the treatment of the mentally ill. He felt strongly that mental health problems required an inter disciplinary approach involving Biology, Physics and Chemistry. One of his outstanding ambitions was to "empty the mental hospitals". His personal experiences with the mentally ill left a deep and lasting desire to achieve some breakthrough in this area. He felt that science had the answers but conventional science was limited in its approach. His interest in the relationship between Matter and Consciousness led him to explore many borderline areas like parapsychology, crop circles and the influence of magnetism on living organisms. This led to his involvement in the 'Alternative Natural Philosophy Association' (ANPA) of which he remained an active promoter and organiser. Regular conferences of this association were held in Cambridge. He was editor of the ANPA newsletter for many years and an enthusiastic participant in their activities and meetings.

In July 1978 Faruq and Nasreen's second daughter Sadia was born. They were now living in Enfield and Faruq was commuting to work at City University, London. Faruq's involvement in ANPA led him to study the writings of Krishnamurti and he became interested in the work of the Krishnamurti Foundation School at Brockwood in Hampshire. He had always taken great interest in the education of his daughters and this led him to get Sadia admitted in the Brockwood School.

Faruq has always been a very spiritual person although his

religious affiliations were not conventional. His feelings were that conventional religions had degenerated into dogmas and rituals and in the process they had lost their spiritual essence. He was a strong believer that spirituality was a common heritage of different religions and he was always prepared for dialogue on these issues.

He took early retirement in 1995 from City University. In June 2004 he celebrated his 60th birthday in the company of his two daughters in The Gardens nursing home. He died following a brief illness in Harlow hospital on 19th December 2004 and was buried in Arnos Grove Cemetery Southgate, London, N11 on 29th December in a funeral attended many of his students, relatives, friends and admirers.

Dr Faruq Abdullah

By Shahid Aziz

In the late 1950s my father was given a bursary by the Government of Pakistan to do research for a Ph.d at the Imperial College of Science and Technology. We arrived in the UK and went straight to the Woking mosque where we stayed for some months. Mrs Abdullah was the manager of the mission house and ran it with impressive efficiency. It was there that I first met Faruq and the rest of his family.

Mrs Abdullah looked after us very well and I remember her being very kind to us. Faruq was very mischievous. As I did not know how to ride a bike, Faruq offered his services. He told me to get on the bike and that he will support me by holding on to it from behind so that I did not fall over and I could practice by going round the mosque. When I went round the mosque the second time I found Faruq leaning against a tree whistling, waving and laughing.

We returned to Pakistan and came back to the UK in 1963 and settled in Southampton. Every time we went to London we stopped at Woking to see Mrs Abdullah and her family. My parents, who were both teachers, filled a coach with Muslims and non-Muslims and took them to celebrate

'Id at Woking many times. There we would see the whole Abdullah family, except Rashidah who had returned to Pakistan. Shortly after that they moved from Woking. Not too long after their move the mosque was taken over by anti-Ahmadis and we stopped going there.

We did not meet with Faruq again until the jamaat was formed in late 1970s. Early on he joined the Executive Committee and played a key and moderating role in its workings and deliberations. For some time Faruq was the Minutes Secretary of the jamaat.

He frequently rang and visited my mother for advice and discussion which he appreciated but did not always follow. When he was looking for a place we tried hard to persuade him to move to Langley so that we could be close by, but he preferred Enfield. After he had retired he would visit mum more often. He also talked to me about how he could utilize his time in the best possible way. I tried to get him to start giving private tuition and showed him how tutors in Slough were earning a good living by just working a few hours a day. He did start but did not pursue the business. I pray that Allah grant his soul peace and reward him for his services for Islam.

USA Convention

Theme: Islam in the 21st Century: Spiritual Foundation for a New World Order

Dear Ahmadi brothers and sisters

Assalamu Alaikum

You are cordially invited to attend the 25th Anniversary Convention of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore, USA. This event will be held on July 22-24th, 2005 in Columbus Ohio, at the Hilton Garden Inn.

Preceding the Convention there will be a three day course on Islam and Ahmadiyyat given by Dr. Zahid Aziz and Maulana Kamal Hydal. Members are highly encourage to attend the course .

We hope, by the Grace of Almighty

Allah, that you will honor us with your participation. It is extremely important that in these troubled times we meet and share ideas and co-ordinate efforts to project the true ideals of Islam to the world, as expounded by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, our great Founder.

May Almighty Allah give us the will and strength to accomplish this difficult, all important task.

Wassalaam

Mohammad Ahmad, M.D.

President AAII(USA)

Please contact Mrs. Samina Malik (Vice President) for Convention details at either:

- Email: aaii@aol.com
- Phone: 614-87-31030
- Fax: 614-873-1022

Fiji

We have received information from Fiji that Mrs. Nur Jan Wahid Khan wife of the late Mr. Wahid Khan is very sick and admitted in the hospital. She is in a very critical condition and prayers are solicited. Late Mr. Wahid Khan was a former President of the Fiji Jama'at.

Inter-Church Colloquium:

Who is My Neighbour?

Jalal Ud Dean

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam
(Lahore) Fiji Islands

Prefatory Statement:

Before analysing and commenting on presentations by leading Christian personalities to the Inter-Church Colloquium, it is considered compulsively essential to recognise salient commonalities between two of the best known and leading religions of the world – Christianity and Islam.

Both of these religions are very well represented in Fiji. Notwithstanding this fundamental fact, the discussions in the articles focussed only on the Christian viewpoint and impacts on indigenous Fijians' culture and their attitude towards others, especially

the Indians. The "Christian" is seen as the Fijian and the "Neighbour" as the Indian.

Fiji's ethnic population profile is clearly defined with indigenous Fijians and migrant Indians who constitute the bulk. The residual minority group is an attractive rainbow of mixed ethnic fragments. However, the religious population profile is clearly defined with Christians, Hindus and Muslims - in that descending proportion.

The author's comments are based on texts of presentations at the Fiji Inter-Church Colloquium 2003 by Father Kevin Barr MSC, Rev D McIlraith and Rev Kafoa Solomone.

The commentary below is written on the premise that it will not be limited to only Fiji's Christians reading it, but interested people of widely all races, religions and countries. In this regard, objective has been given to profile Judaism, Christianity and Islam by history.

In understanding the issue of "neighbour" from religious perspective, it is necessary to roll back history, to our patriarch Prophet Abraham and his two sons Ishmael and Isaac. From Ishmael descended the wider Arab population, and this continued to Prophet Muhammad, who gave Islam its glorious prominence. Prophet Jacob and his twelve sons, who became the 12 tribes of Israel, descended from Isaac and consequently the mainstream to Judaism.

Jesus, the apex to worldwide Christianity, was a Jew and Christianity therefore has direct history and linkage with Jews.

It is now necessary to analyse the three Abrahamic religions – in chronological sequence – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They are the principal neighbours.

It is also necessary to revisit their histories chronologically, to have a better understanding to the wider implications of the term "neighbour" into global neighbourhood, so that ordinances given in the scriptures about the "neighbour" are still

unchanged although some church leaders conveniently see otherwise.

Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people, the oldest of the world's monotheistic faiths. The essence of Judaism is the belief in one God. At daily prayers and services Jews repeat the words of Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One."

In Jewish beliefs, Abraham the patriarch made a covenant with God that he and his descendants would carry the message of the One God. This covenant, the burden of special service to God, is Judaism's reason for being, and the relationship between God and the Chosen People is the subject of the Hebrew Bible, the foundation of Judaism. The Torah, the first part of the Bible as the Five Books of Moses (the Pentateuch) contains the Ten Commandments and the ritual laws and ethical precepts that form the structure of the Jewish religion. In the centuries after the Bible was completed, its text was explained and adapted by a set of traditions and interpretations known as the Oral Law.

When the Temple of Jerusalem and the hereditary priesthood were destroyed in AD 70, the Oral Law was recorded in a work known as the Mishnah, the discussion and interpretation of which forms a commentary called the Gemara. These two works together make up the Talmud, second only to the Bible in its authority. Reform Jews believe that each generation has the right to adapt or discard traditions it finds no longer meaningful. Orthodox Judaism accepts the totality of the Bible and the Oral Law as divine revelation and holds strictly to all dietary laws and codes of conduct. Religious services are conducted solely in Hebrew, men and women sitting in separate parts of the synagogue.

The history of Judaism and its Jewish culture is more than 3,000 years old and begins from the time Abraham led his family from Mesopotamia to Canaan (Palestine). This passage also includes the time

Joseph (son of Jacob) led his brothers and their tribes into Egypt and they became enslaved to the Egyptians until Moses led them out in the Exodus. After 40 years of wandering, the Israelites re-entered Canaan (c.1200 BC). Subsequently when Prophet Solomon's kingdom was divided into Judah and Israel following their defeat by the Assyrians (721 BC) and Babylonians (587 BC), Solomon's kingdom's people were divided.

Those from Israel lost their identity, becoming the "Ten Lost Tribes." This became the cloning of the term Diaspora meaning settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside Israel.

The rise of Christianity brought increasing harassment of the Jews. During the Middle Ages in many countries the Jews were confined to ghettos and excluded from trades, professions, and ownership of land. At the time of the Crusades, a new wave of persecution began; one by one Western European nations expelled the Jews, until they were allowed to live only in parts of Germany and Italy. The Jews found refuge in the Ottoman Empire, in the New World, and in Eastern Europe, where they became increasingly trapped in a life of poverty and persecution in lands near Russian rule. Persecution against them continued until 1917 and the Balfour Declaration that guaranteed a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, but Jewish settlement there aroused hostility of the Arab inhabitants. This continued until the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

The laws in Islam that set injunctions for the general well-being of the wider society are not any lesser than the Laws of Moses, as given in the Bible. Islam firmly believes that the first five books of the Bible (Pentateuch) were authored by Prophet Moses. They are, namely as:

Genesis,
Exodus,
Leviticus,

Numbers and
Deuteronomy.

The above five books of the Bible provide the principle nexus between the Bible and the Qur'an (as the revealed book of Islam). The time span between the Pentateuch and Bible is 1,300 years. The Qur'an has been around for almost 1,500 years. This therefore concludes that injunctions from God have been enforced for almost 2,800 years. Society must therefore take inside assessment of its peoples and confidently accept the fact, that whatever God has given as His Ordinances in the Bible and the Qur'an, must be followed obediently.

Society at large does not have the legitimate authority to countermand the Divine Ordinances as given both in the Bible and in the Qur'an, to gainfully suit its political agendas, in the affairs of good governance of the country.

In widespread Christian doctrine, the Bible is written under the guidance of God and contains the moral and historical bases of the Christian view of the world. It is necessary to expound further, particularly for the benefit of non-Christians and non-Muslims. Without explanation of these parallel drivers, the commentary can become somewhat hollow and abstract.

It is common knowledge, that Christianity is a religion founded on the life and teachings of Jesus and acknowledged by all Christians and non-Christians. In AD 324, Emperor Constantine established Christianity as the official religion. In order to set doctrinal disputes and establish basic tenets, Constantine called the first ecumenical council at Nicaea in 325.

The Nicene Creed, adopted at this council, stated the basic truths of the Christian Church; departures from this statement of faith were thereafter regarded as heresy. The question of the papal authority in Rome led to the Great Schism (1054), when the Eastern Church broke its ties with the West. The popes emerged as influential rulers in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, contending

with the Holy Roman Emperors for temporal power as well as spiritual authority. Disputes arose concerning papal succession, and popes and antipopes, supported by rival kings and princes, fought for the right to rule with the authority of the Holy See. The entire structure of the Church was shaken by this dissention, and abuses such as simony and the sale of indulgences also cried out for reform. There were several reforms.

Since the 16th century there have existed 2 main currents of western Christianity. They are Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. In Switzerland the Reformation was led by Huldreich Zwingli in Zurich and John Calvin in Geneva. Calvinism, which teaches the predestination of the elect, forms the basis of modern Presbyterianism and the Reformed churches.

During the 18th century John Wesley who turned from Calvinism to a more traditional Christian view, founded the Methodist Church in England.

After the pope refused to annul his first marriage, King Henry VIII declared the Church of England to be free of papal jurisdiction. Under King Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth I, the Anglican Church became truly Protestant and its tenets were set forth in the 39 Articles of 1576. The Puritans considered these doctrinal reforms inadequate, however, and sought a form of worship based strictly on the Scriptures.

One of the most significant developments in the continued growth of the Christian church in the 20th century is the ecumenical movement. Although still in early phase, with its progress often slowed by organisational and doctrinal difficulties, ecumenism has caught the imagination of the majority of clergy and the faithful, who envision the future in which the Christian Church will once again be one universal body, as it was established by Christ.

When all Christians become a universal body, would the issue of

the non-Christians be universally considered, as the “neighbour inclusive” remains to be resolved?

It is now necessary to analyse the last of the three Abrahamic religions – in chronological sequence - Islam.

Islam is the highest of the 3 monotheistic religions after Judaism and Christianity. Islam means (in Arabic) submitting oneself to God. Its origins stemmed from Ishmael, the elder son of Prophet Abraham. Most of more than 700 million Muslims live around Middle East and many countries that radiate away from the Middle East are followers of Islam. There is hardly a country that does not have some Muslim population. Prophet Muhammad founded Islam and he was born in Mecca c.570 AD. It is recorded that the Archangel Gabriel delivered revelations to him. Prophet Muhammad began preaching in Mecca and totally denounced the worship of idols, statues, people and other lifeless objects such as planets and consequently angered many of the peoples of Mecca, who forced him to flee to Medina in c.622 AD. Prophet Muhammad returned to Mecca in c.630 AD when the people of Mecca formally accepted Islam.

Although Prophet Muhammad was totally unlettered, he authored by ear the sacred scripture of Muslims called the Qur’an, by listening to others recite the notes and rearranging the Chapters and verses under Divine Guidance, exactly the way they were revealed to him by Archangel Gabriel.

The Qur’an also sets forth the fundamentals of Muslims’ belief as revealed to Prophet Muhammad. These include the 5 basic duties of every Muslim and the rules that govern moral behaviours and social life. These are belief in One God; worship 5 times daily, charity, fasting and pilgrimage (or *Hajj*).

Prophet Muhammad’s teachings, called *Sunnah*, are recorded in the book called *Hadith* (traditions). Together the Qur’an and *Hadith* provide Divine instructions and set forth the fundamental beliefs of

Islam as revealed by God to Prophet Muhammad. A system of the law, the *Shari’a*, has been developed on the basis of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*. Public worship is held in mosques led by an *Imam* and personal worship at home or other private place. Before entering a mosque in performing any prayer, the Muslims perform ablution called *wadzu*. Muslims pray five times in 24 hours and face Mecca, the original house of worship of Adam and Eve.

Now that three of the greatest monotheistic religions of the world have been summarily profiled, their similarities and dissimilarities in the global neighbourhood become most conspicuous. All three religions preach monotheism, although the Christian version is quite complex with the philosophy about Trinity.

What is religion? Religion is a system of belief to which a social group is committed, in which there is a supernatural object of awe, worship, and service. It generally provides a system of ethics and a worldview that supply a stable context within which each person can relate to others and to the world and can understand his or her own significance.

Religions are found in all societies and are generally dominant (modern secularism being an exception).

Some form of religion seems to fulfil a basic human need. Some features are common to most religions: the recognition of a sacred realm from which supernatural forces operate, a mediating priesthood, the use of ritual to establish a right relationship with the holy (though ritual used to manipulate the supernatural becomes magic), and a sense of group community.

Some religions have no deity as such, but are natural philosophies (e.g. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism).

Notwithstanding commonality and uncommonly aspects of each religion to the other religions, people of the global neighbourhood are given Divine fundamental rights to practise

what they believe and no religion has the right to outcry and ostracise any other religion. In like token, no government of any country has Divine rights to be selective and favour only a certain religion or a certain denomination and outcry ostracising the rest, which are not of the same fold. The idea of legislating and incorporating any religion as the State religion can only be described “pipe vision” in isolating that religion only and not recognising the Divine rights of others in the global neighbourhood towards their practice of worship.

The purpose of the enquiry WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR was “to examine the perceptions of neighbour in the light of Gospel and Culture in Fiji.” The terms of reference become very narrow as it refers to just two issues (a) Gospel and (b) Culture.

Consideration of the Gospel automatically blocks out Jews and Muslims as the other two mainstreams of Abrahamic monotheistic mainstreams. Accordingly, there is hardly any mention of them falling within the focus.

Whilst Fiji was ceded to Britain as late as 1874, Missionaries began arriving in Fiji as early as 1830 with the London Missionary Society. It was not until 1835 that the largest Christian group in Fiji – the Methodists arrived. They were followed by the Roman Catholic Church in 1844 and the Anglican Church (or Church of England as it was better known then during the Colonial era) in 1870.

Culture again becomes rather narrow in focus as consideration limits to indigenous Fijians and migrant Indians; the latter being a victim of the circumstances of commonality in British Colonial administration in India, South Africa, Guyana, and Trinidad and later in Fiji.

Although indigenous Fijians and migrant Indians have very distinctive culture, there was never a “cultural bridge” constructed between them, but rather, the British Colonial

Administrator’s kept that gap

widened till 1970 when Fiji became a Dominion, as an independent sovereign nation.

Why was the cultural gap left widened? It was a Colonial administrative advantage to let natives practice what they believed and preserve their cultural heritage and let the Indians and others progress in the commercial, economic and administrative welfare of the country. The native system was well-provided for with a very rich culture of chiefly administrative system, complete with a Fijian court system. With Greenwich at zero degrees Meridian and Fiji at 180 degrees Meridian, Fiji was geographically the most distant colony Britain had ever managed by remote control.

The impact of this scenario also left the Fijians behind in commerce. From 1970, this realisation became real and accelerated efforts made to fast-track Fijians' progresses to par with other races – especially the Indians. Unscrupulous political leaders translated this social gap with Fijians into a “Christian” issue versus Indians seen as “non-Christians” and incidentally Indians are mainly Hindus. Amongst the Indian population there are also some Christians, some Sikhs and Muslims.

It is essential to note and underline the serious impact this ‘divide and rule’ British attitude has been left with Fijians. The continuous stress of stories on the plight of migrant Hebrews in Egypt (prior to the Exodus) and how the Hebrews ultimately controlled the entire commerce and service sector of Egypt has left Fijians with that indelible imprint of fear:

That Indians – the non-Christians – will also do the same in Fiji.

This situation of fear also served as a springboard for unscrupulous political leaders to take full advantage of the most sensitive feature in a person's life (religion) and brainwashed Fijians to believe that Indians are non-Christian and therefore anti-Fijian. It is important

to fully understand how this came about. The bulk of Fijians in urban Fiji came from villages before securing a good employment in the city and remaining in the city.

The village layout generally has a single church as the largest building in the village. All villagers are therefore members of the same church. Those persons who are not members of that same church are considered as alien or strangers in the district. Incidentally, Indians who live in close proximity to the village do not go to that same church as Fijians, even though they may be Christians. Whilst this may sound odd, it is true.

The main reason being that Fijian vernacular is used in the entire church service and all communications to the congregation and within the congregation. Hymns are always sung in Fijian language. That is the standard practice in almost every Church. Whether it is a wedding or a funeral, the congregation is always mixed with many other races and all communications and services are always in Fijian. This immediately erects a cultural wall that other ethnic groups do not have in Fiji. So who is the neighbour now?

People cannot be expected to go to church every Sunday and understand nothing. There is neither incentive nor driving motive for non-Fijian speaking communities to go to church and not understand what the service is about. It entirely defeats the fundamental purposes of going to church, people not only feel isolated because of language barrier but unable to participate in any of the church activities. The neighbour gets further distanced culturally.

The net result is a number of negatives such as total polarisation of race issues in church, all church and religious activities left to intensify more and more along ethnic lines. The general widespread view taken is that just because Indians do not participate in Fijian church activities, they are all anti-Fijian.

This is on the premise that Fijians

must always be Christian and thus the two powerful words – Fijian and Christian - become synonymous.

The above issues are further aggravated with household brainwashing when elders in the house speak insultingly of Indians as non-Christians. The innocent Fijian children in the household are exposed to such intense non-neighbourly situations in their formative years. Within a few years the children have become teenagers and later into adults.

The anti-Indian and non-Christian attitude has over the years become firmly cemented in the minds of young Fijians. To cure or overcome this sensitive situation is just not easy. The extent of psychological damage is so intense that it will take another whole generation change to bring about effective damage control. The Bible is the centrepiece in Fijian way of life and perhaps the Bible must become the conduit through which good neighbourly understanding of all races may succeed. The neighbour must be identified.

The question therefore arises about the “neighbour” as mentioned ever so widely in the Old Testament and parables in the New Testament texts by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In consideration of the above analysis, the whole issue of recognising the neighbour has now become a matter of personal convenience. Amongst the Fijian Christian communities, the Bible is upheld and quoted most emphatically when a situation is personally convenient; and it is completely disregarded and substituted with racialism and ethnic politics when a situation is personally inconvenient. The neighbour is still not identified.

**God so loved humanity
that he revealed to it
perfect guidance in the
Holy Quran and the
perfect guide in the Holy
Prophet Muhammad.**