

Conspiracy Theories in the Arab World

Reading the Bible it is obvious that many of the world's problems are due to unseen forces that are largely hidden from our eyes. As John the Apostle writes: "We know ... the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:19). Hidden forces are at work!

If one reads Middle Eastern newspapers, watches Arab television or simply talks with people, one will fairly quickly hear things like: "September 11th was organized by the Americans and Israelis. The Arabs had nothing to do with it." The Syrian journalist, Hassan Hamada, has said that the January 2010 Haitian earthquake was obviously something which the Americans had brought about by their technology in order to take possession of that poor island nation. Happily he was not taken seriously by most people! Some Middle Easterners have also been fascinated with a document about a Jewish world domination conspiracy called the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" which made its first public appearance in 1903. Several people have shown that the protocols are not true, yet many people believe they are actually based on reality. Some Arab journalists and commentators have been active in recent years trying to unmask some of most greatly

exaggerated theories.

While one could be critical of Arabs concerning the conspiracy theories like those cited above, it is true that every Arab nation in the Middle East has been dominated by Western and Turkish colonial powers during the last 175 years. Often there were secret deals between countries which led to the division and occupation of territory. Sometimes, as has happened in many countries elsewhere, locals collaborated with the occupiers to obtain wealth. This has given many Arabs cause to be suspicious of the Western powers, their own leaders and Israel. Real exploitation and scheming has taken place in the past and is still present. This makes it easy to believe in conspiracy theories.

Yet, conspiring is not just at the level of politics or foreign affairs in the Middle East. At home women conspire with amulets and potions to manipulate their men. Men threaten to take a second wife in order to get their way. One sibling conspires against his / her siblings for parental attention. Officials conspire with a manipulated news media. For many Arabs this is part of daily reality. Indeed such experiences are not unknown in other regions of the world! When mixed with the daily frustra-



tion of sometimes difficult living circumstances, stressed family relationships and disappointments with government, job, and neighbors, many people start longing for a better life. Being aware of the scheming in their own circles, sometimes they will react by blaming others for their difficulties. Like all peoples around the world, Arab Muslims need the one who delivers from the ultimate schemer (John 14:6 and 10:10-11).

▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for profound healing where people have experienced injustice and exploitation (Isaiah 61:1-3).
- ▶ Pray that the increasingly more numerous communities of believers in the Arab world would become havens of rest, healing, love, truth and honesty in the scheming world of manipulation and darkness.
- ▶ Pray that there would be significant casting down of the numerous exaggerated lies and half truths which have become reality for many Arab Muslims (John. 8:31-32, 2 Cor. 10:4-5).
- ▶ Pray that many would place their hope for ultimate world justice in God's Messiah (Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:10, 42:1).