The Ahmadis of Islam:
A Mormon Encounter
and Perspective

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AS THE CHURCH MOVES INTO SOCIETIES AND CULTURES never a significant part of its historical past, it will encounter new configurations of religion that it must understand to achieve its prophetic promise. Countries that have little or no tradition of Christianity are particularly challenging since missionaries and prospective investigators seldom have a large fund of shared experience upon which to draw in constructive dialogue.

In the case of Islam, the new Mormon encounters have generated particularly confusing perplexities. Muslim communities have long histories of resistance to Christian intrusions. Unlike other great world religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, Islam was a bearer of civilization to far-flung regions of the world and its zealots almost brought Europe within its fold. Today's Muslims have not forgotten this glorious epoch (Cox 1981, 73–80). Currently, fervent re-Islamization is sweeping the Islamic world. Nearly 800 million followers — one out of six people — of this great faith are to be found in more than seventy nations, including the Soviet Union and China. Islam is the second largest religion in Europe with 1.5 million adherents in the British Isles alone. Its present rate of growth exceeds that of Christianity. In the last two decades, for example, the number of African Muslims has doubled; over half of Africa, at this rate of growth, will soon be Muslim (Jansen 1979, 16–19).

This emerging situation presents serious consequences for Christian proselyters in Muslim countries. There is often no separation of church and state

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(or a separation that exists only on paper) and hence no protection for religious groups that are seen as heretical and dissident. Furthermore, while proselyting is illegal in most Muslim countries, it can also be illegal for an individual to change his or her religion or marry outside Islam (Jones 1982, 80–81; Katz and Katz 1975, 679–81). "Apostasy [is] a form of treason" (Abbott 1968, 154; M. Z. Khan n.d.c.; Chaudhry 1983).

In this context, the history and status of a major dissident movement in Islam, Ahmadiyyat, presents some interesting parallels with Mormonism which, despite almost a century's serious attention to accommodation within the American mainstream, is still frequently characterized as a non-Christian sect or even cult ("Anti-Mormons" 1983; Barlow 1979; Kirban 1971). It is interesting that nineteenth-century Christians, seeking terms to convey their repulsion for the Mormons, so frequently compared them to "Mohammadans" (Kinney 1912; Green and Goldrup 1971; Green 1983).

Like Christianity, Islam is an expansion-driven religion, aiming at nothing less than global expression of its socio-religious beliefs. The actual warfare in pre-Renaissance days between the countries that espoused each faith determined our current political and national divisions. If the great struggles had ended only slightly differently, Europe would have come within the Muslim fold (Weeks 1978, intro.).

Similar to Christianity, Islam has generated many dissident mystery sects that have sometimes attacked the very fabric of the culture itself (Ayubi 1982/83; Jansen 1979). These include, among others, the Alawites, who emerged in the tenth century and whose chief tenet is the divinity of Ali, son-in-law of Muhammad and the first true caliph, according to the Shi'a. They have been identified as non-Muslims for centuries and are a powerful minority in Syria. The Druze, who arose about the same time, are prominent in Lebanon. The Wahhabi movement of the early eighteenth century emerged in the Saudi peninsula as a reaction to what was viewed as corruption within Islam, including the Sufi movement. Sometimes these reform movements remain as Islamic sects and sometimes develop as separate religions. The Ahmadis define themselves as Islamic, but Islam itself seems bent on rejecting them.

From my Mormon perspective, it may be instructive to compare Mormonism and Ahmadiyyat. In terms of historical context they are contemporaries. Both began with the visions of two remarkable charismatic leaders. The followers of both faiths have experienced prolonged and intense persecutions. Nevertheless, both groups have survived to be counted as significant modern socio-religious entities. They are institutions in the fullest sense — neither grouping being an institutional accident but rather a product of progressive socio-religious growth and development. Although small in numbers, each following has generated an influence far beyond its numbers. Somewhat ironically, in the Muslim world both Ahmadiyyat and Mormonism have been categorized as heretical by the orthodox. Both strive to establish separate states within states, follow prophetic leaders, have developed institutional organizations, emphasize achievement in this life, value education, and actively proselyte.

Also to many Christians, Mormons are not Christians; to many Muslims, Ahmadis are not Muslims.

Although both Christianity and Islam have had many socio-religious restorers and modernizers, they have seldom been welcomed or found their task easy. Social change is never an easy proposition. Religious change is especially painful.

By 1830, Islam was struggling against traditionalism and separatism. Factional rivalries were ripping Islam apart while expanding European imperialism steadily eroded its political and social base. The pattern was particularly evident in India, where the British rapidly consolidated their power after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, terminating the centuries-old Muslim Mughal dynasty. Because the British mistrusted the Muslim communities and used Hindus in sizeable numbers in their bureaucracy, Hindu influence gradually erased Muslim power. By openly fostering Christian proselyting, the British further reduced the Muslim power base.

A reaction was predictable. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, native Indian movements arose with the purpose of revitalizing Islam worldwide, but particularly in India. Ahmadiyyat was one such movement. Its founder, Ghulam Ahmad, began by trying to prove dialectically that no other religion could compare with Islam. In the process, he eventually aroused the hostility of Islamic fundamentalism which rejected his reforming efforts and branded his community of followers as an apostate cult.

Ahmad was born in the Punjab village of Qadian, probably around 1835 (M. Z. Khan 1978a; Dard 1948). His family, originally favored by the Mughals, had owned extensive estates in the region but had lost them to the newly powerful Sikhs. As a boy, he received no formal religious instruction but studied the Koran under private tutors. Urdu was his native language, but he also learned Arabic and Persian, acquired some elements of *Unani* medicine from his father, and, thanks to his father's influence, became a clerk in the office of the deputy commissioner at Sialkot where he spent four years (1864–68). He had little interest in a clerical career and spent much of his time reading religious literature. During this period, he also met and discussed Christianity with missionaries. When his mother died in 1868, his father asked him to return and help manage the family estates. His father died in 1876, leaving Ahmad free at the age of about forty-one to pursue his own religious inclinations.

Three years earlier Ghulam Ahmad had had the idea of proving the superiority of Islam by sheer logic. Subsequently, his thought was incorporated into a four-part work now entitled the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiya* (The Proofs of Muhammad).[1] The first two parts were published in 1880 and generally well

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[1] The four parts were published separately in the face of great difficulties, reminiscent of those plaguing the publication of the Book of Mormon. The first two parts were published in 1880, the third in 1882, and the fourth in 1884. A fifth part in 1905 is, for all practical purposes, an unrelated book. Ghulam Ahmad, a prolific writer, produced some eighty books — several of great length (Dard 1984, 70–81).

accepted by the Indian Muslim community. These two parts basically re-stated rational arguments which Muslim traditionalists commonly used.

This type of exposition does not violate the tenets of Islam, providing that the person acknowledges in his preface his acceptance of the true faith, which Ghulam Ahmad did. Within this context, a seeker after truth may bring forward and adduce religious verities from any scripture in any language, including any truth springing from his own intellectual endeavors.

Yet even in this first publication, the direction of Ghulam Ahmad's thought is evident. Islam espouses a belief of the second advent of great religious teachers. The Koran, Sura 62:4, predicts a second spiritual advent of the Holy Prophet (Muhammad) in the form of a *mahdi* (restorer) and a messiah. In explaining these provisions, a leading Ahmadi scholar, Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, writes: "There has never been any expectation that the Holy Prophet would return to earth in his physical body. His second advent was to be expected to be fulfilled through the appearance of one so completely devoted to him as to be a spiritual reflection of him" (Khan 1978a, vii). Furthermore, "the Holy Prophet indicated" that this person would be of Persian descent, which Ghulam Ahmad was (Khan 1978a, vii).

Muslims generally believe that God (Allah) will appoint a restorer (*mahdi* — Arabic) for the beginning of every century. Religious scholars have identified thirteen *mujadiddin* (restorers — Urdu) who have performed significant roles in preserving and spreading Islam (Kalem n.d., 10–11). The Islamic fourteenth century, roughly corresponding to the last decade of the Christian nineteenth century, was the most recent dispensation. Ahmadis note with interest that several Christian denominations also proclaimed the second coming of Jesus the Christ during this same time period (Norman 1983; Larsen 1971).

Ahmadi scholars claim that Ghulam Ahmad is the promised restorer, substantiating their claim by ancient prophecies and supernatural signs. As Khan writes: "Jesus had indicated that the signs of his second coming would be earthquakes, plagues, epidemics, wars and rumors of wars, and general tribulations. These signs have been manifested" (Khan 1978a, xii). Furthermore, Khan quotes "two signs" in the heavens attributed to Muhammad: "For our Mahdi there are appointed two signs which have never been manifested for any other claimant since the creation of the heavens and earth. They are that at his advent there shall occur an eclipse of the moon on the first of its appointed nights, and an eclipse of the sun on the middle of the appointed days and both will occur in the same month of Ramazan (Khan 1978a, xii). Islamic scholars agree that these two eclipses occurred according to the Western calendar 21 March 1894 (for the moon) and 6 April 1894 (sun).

Ahmadis also believe that the fourteenth century ended 7 November 1980, with the appearance of the Hilal of Muharram, the first lunar month of the Muslim era, and that the fifteenth century began on the following day, 8 November. Given this chronology, they pose several questions: Who is the *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century? Who is the restorer and who is the messiah? For the Ahmadis, the prophetic signs point to Ghulam Ahmad (Kalem n.d., 10–12).

However, this claim emerged only gradually from Ghulam Ahmad's writings and pronouncements. It was not until the third part of his work, published in 1882, that he claimed, "When the 13th century approached, I was informed by God Almighty, through revelation, that I was the *Mujaddid* of the 14th century" (Kalem n.d., 13). He compared himself to Shah Wali Allah Muhaddath Dehlavi of the twelfth century and Syed Ahmad Barelvi of the thirteenth century.

Ghulam Ahmad taught that Jesus had not died on the cross but rather was removed unconscious, was nursed back to health, and later went to Afghanistan and Kashmir where he lived to the age of 120 among the ten lost tribes. Ghulam Ahmad claimed by revelation that the tomb of a Muslim prophet called Yus Asaf at Srinagar in Kashmir was that of Jesus. (*Yus* was a corruption of Jesus and *Asaf* was the Hebrew verb, "together.") Ahmad also argued for this interpretation on theological grounds: if Jesus were alive in heaven waiting to return and save his people, then Jesus, not Muhammad, would be the real savior of Islam. Ahmad insisted that the second coming must therefore be spiritual and that he represented Jesus' spiritual nature. The position that Jesus did not die on the cross is considered orthodox by many Muslim scholars, but Ahmad's claim to represent Jesus' spirit led to outcries of heresy (Ayoub 1981; Khan 1978b; Larsen 1971, 26–27; Abbott 1968).[2]

Despite the radical nature of Ghulam Ahmad's claim, it did not seem to have unduly disturbed the Muslim theologians, possibly because the previous two parts of his work had been so well received. However, a few years afterwards Ghulam Ahmad took the drastic step of publicly stating that through divine revelation he was "the Messiah, whose advent among the Muslims had been promised from the beginning" (Kalem n.d., 13) and asserting that his own "excellence resembles the excellence of Messiah, the son of Mary and that one of them bears a very strong resemblance and close relation to the other" (Khan 1978a, 133).

In 1891 Ghulam Ahmad additionally claimed he was the great teacher of the entire world as prophesied in Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian writings, that he represented the incarnation of Krishna and the second coming of Christ, not in flesh but in spirit. "He was the promised Prophet of every nation and was appointed to collect all mankind under the banner of one faith." [3] In other words, God had spoken to other religious groups besides the Muslims concerning the last days. With Ghulam Ahmad's birth all of these prophecies were coming together.

On 4 March 1889, about five years after the publication of the fourth and last part of the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiya*, Ghulam Ahmad announced that he had

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[2] The Ahmadis were greatly interested in the recent investigations on the Shroud of Turin as possible support for the view of Ghulam Ahmad (Nasir 1982, Qadir 1981; N. Ahmad 1981; Berna 1975).

[3] Bashir-ud-Din in his "The Ahmadiyyat . . ." (Williams 1971, 244) writes: "Ghulam Ahmad [is] to be the Messiah for the Christians, the Mahdi for the Muslims, Krishna or Neha Kalank Avatar for the Hindus, and Mesio Darbahmi (the Saoshyant) for the Zoroastrians."

received a revelation from God authorizing him to accept *bai'at*, personal followers or companions who accepted his leadership and entered into a covenant fully supporting this new community of belief and its socio-religious practices (Lavan 1974, 36; Zaheer 1972; Walter 1918). This act marked the beginning of the organized Ahmadi movement, named not after Ghulam Ahmad but after the prophet Muhammad, who is also known as Ahmad. Ghulam Ahmad explained that Ahmadiyyat was not a new religion. "The name Ahmadiyyat is the name of a reinterpretation or a restatement of the religion of the Holy Quran . . . . The names Ahmadi, Ahmadiyyat, etc., are meant only to distinguish Ahmad Muslims from other Muslims" (M. G. Ahmad 1958, 7–8).

Bai'at thus represented no more than the initial effort in establishing any Islamic association (*jama'at*) based on the acceptance of God's messages. Yet opposition immediately arose in the Muslim community. In time, Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs also joined the persecution (Lavan 1972, 283–303). The Ahmadis have experienced virtually no periods of peace in nearly one hundred years of existence, yet stoically bear their difficulties and persecutions. They believe, "The purpose of God works itself out through miracles and through concerted hard work. [The path] is not easy. It needs sacrifice, self-denial and the ability to endure unjust accusations . . . . Take courage . . . and hold the bitter cup to your lips. Let us make ready to die, so that Islam may live" (H. Ahmad 1980, 98).

Westerners may find it difficult to understand why Ghulam Ahmad's teachings generate so much hostility. Admittedly, he made a number of unorthodox claims. However, these were not distressingly unique from those of other spokesmen of sects in the faith (Nyrop 1975, 9). Islam, like Christianity, has always had its controversial personalities (Binder 1963, 3–30).

Ghulam Ahmad was an exemplary religious figure, a seeker of truth who contributed much to the advancement of Islam. In fundamental beliefs Ahmadiyyat is a very compassionate and tolerant religion. Ghulam Ahmad required that his followers refrain from injuring any person, no matter what his or her religion (a denial of *jihad* by force). His son, Haji Mirja Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, writing as the second vice-regent of Ahmadiyyat, outlined twelve fundamental beliefs to illustrate to Muslim theologians that Ahmadis had not "strayed out of the orbit of Islam":

"We believe: (1) . . . that God exists . . . , (2) that God is One . . . , (3) God is Holy, Free from all defects and full of all perfections . . . , (4) . . . that angels are part of God's creation . . . , (5) God speaks to His Chosen servants and reveals to them His purpose . . . , (6) when darkness prevails . . . human beings sink into sin and evil[;] without help of God it becomes difficult for them to release themselves from the hold of Satan . . . (7) . . . divine messengers, who in the past have helped mankind . . . have belonged to different levels of greatness . . . . The greatest . . . was the Holy Prophet . . . , (8) God hears prayers of His suppliants and servants . . . , (9) from time to time God determines and designs the course of events . . . (10) . . . death is not the end of all existence . . . . Those who do good deeds warrant generous awards . . . , (11) . . . disbelievers in God and his enemies . . . , and unless forgiven . . . , will stay in a place called hell . . . , (12) . . . those, who believe in God, His prophets and His books . . . will go to a place called heaven." (H. Ahmad 1974b, 4–10).

Ghulam Ahmad claimed to have received both personal inspiration (*ilham*) and a prophetic message for humankind (*wahy*). He allegedly performed miracles through prayer, including raising the dead and commending evil persons to death (Arberry 1957, 1–10). But was he, in fact, a *nabi* (prophet), and if so what did he mean by it? This point is the most controversial aspect of Ghulam Ahmad's life and his movement.

Theologically, the debate involves the interpretation of "the seal of prophethood." Orthodox Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last of a long line of prophets through whom God has spoken to mankind. With Muhammad's death, the office of prophethood closed and *wahy* ended. In Sunni Islam, the largest of the two major Islamic divisions, many saints have received revelations which are not meditations or rational deductions, and which are global in their scope. However, the Sunnis have strictly regarded such revelations as *ilham*.

After the death of Ghulam Ahmad of natural causes on 26 May 1908, the Ahmadi *jama'at* elected Mawlawi Nur-ud-Din, a highly respected figure in the community and an early follower of Ghulam Ahmad, as the *khalifah* — vice-regent of God and supreme community authority. Although without the same dynamism and attractiveness of Ghulam Ahmad, he received sufficient community support to retain authority and leadership until his own death in 1914 after nineteen years of service.

However, soon after his death, the community split into two rival factions: the Qadiani and the Lahoris. The Qadiani recognized Ghulam Ahmad as a *nabi* and his twenty-four-year-old son, Hadrat Mirz Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, as the second *khalifah*. Upon his death 8 November 1965, the *khalifat* passed to his grandson Mirza Nasir Ahmad, who died 8 June 1982 and was succeeded, by election of the Qadiani *jama'at*, by another grandson, Mirza Tahir Ahmad.

The Lahori society accepted Ghulam Ahmad as *mujaddid* but not as *nabi* and has sought to keep the Ahmadiyyat within the mainstream of the dominant Sunni sect while the large Qadiani have opted for separatism. The Lahori actively proselyte, though they are more concerned with winning converts to Islam than to their particular group. They work to liberalize orthodox Islam by making it more modern and intellectual. In a Mormon context, they would occupy the position of the RLDS church in relation to mainstream Protestantism. The Qadiani, in contrast, have a policy of communal exclusiveness, occupying somewhat the position of the Utah Mormon church. In spite of their mainstream stance, the Lahoris are still considered apostates and non-Muslims by orthodox Muslims.

Although the Ahmadi's religious beliefs have generated intense hostilities, their socio-religious practices have contributed to even greater rancor. Like early Mormons, Ahmadis sought to establish a state within a state, a theocratic commonwealth headed by a prophet-regent (*khalifah*), who claims religious and secular supreme authority in the *jama'at*. This structure is a departure from other Muslim sects as is the claim, similar to that of the president of the LDS Church, to be a living source of spiritual inspiration and guidance. Its

members need not seek guidance through the impersonal corpus of revelation and tradition available to their fellow Muslims. They have in effect a living prophet, a concept which is anathema to Muslims. The *jama'at's* basic organizational structure and practice approach that of a tightly operated institutional church. Ahmadis have shown extraordinary ability to establish and maintain strong and centralized administration, unique among Muslim communities throughout history and hence feared. Islamic teachings are full of warnings against institutionalized religion, somewhat paralleling Book of Mormon denunciations of a "great and abominable church."

Membership is by birth to Ahmadi parents or by formal profession of faith and acceptance of duties. Members make substantial contributions, according to prescribed regulations, providing the movement with considerable sums which it uses in carefully planned ways. The movement has an internal judiciary based on traditional Islamic principles and a strong central advisory council, elected for the most part. All power is, nevertheless, vested in the *khalifat*, an office carefully conceived as a successor to the original founder (W. Smith 1960; Brush 1955). At an annual general conference, the faithful throughout the world assemble to hear the messages of their *khalifah* and other *jama'at* leaders. Because of persecution in Pakistan, the last general conference (1984) was held in England.

Although orthodox Muslims typically resist Western influence, particularly secular education, the Ahmadis selectively combine secular study with their religious beliefs, creating an extremely well-educated community. Only intermittent effort has been made to foster interest in Arabic and Islamic subjects. Urdu is the principal language of the community and the use of English is stressed, even though Punjabi is the language of the area where Ahmadiyyat originated. (It is too closely identified with the Shikhs.) The Ahmadis took the prohibited step of translating the Koran into English, with paralleled suras in Arabic and Urdu, and has also provided translations in German, Dutch, Danish, Sepranto, Swahili, Lugandi, and Yoruba (Johnson and Weeks, 1978; Trimingham 1968, 80–141).

In social practice Ahmadis allow women to join in congregational prayers and permit the bride to be present at her wedding to give consent. Orthodox Muslims do neither. In their prayers, the Ahmadis follow the Hanafi practice of folding the arms hand to elbow at the beginning of prayer while orthodox of the Maliki school leave their arms at their sides. These distinctions are no more trivial in a Muslim context than the various ways of administering the sacrament or communion in a Christian context.

Ahmadis refuse to pray behind a non-Ahmadi *imam* (person who leads prayers at a mosque). Even Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, a remarkable Ahmadi Foreign Affairs Minister of Pakistan, refused to compromise his religious beliefs by praying behind a non-Ahmadi *imam* at the funeral services of the father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnal in September 1948 (Fisher 1969, 131).

Another area of tension was Ahmadi support for British imperial rule. In 1903, three Ahmadis were killed in Afghanistan. One was Abdul Latif, an

Afghan national, who had lived with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in Qadian but had returned home. He was declared apostate by the *ulama*, put in the ground up to his waist, and stoned to death (H. Ahmad 1974, 237–39; S. Ahmad 1974). In criticism of the Afghan government, Ghulam Ahmad praised the British ability to keep order and exclaimed: "How different their strictly maintained impartiality, from the weak pliancy of Pilate and the Romans when the orthodox clamored for the life of Jesus! How splendid if the whole British Empire could be converted to Ahmadiyya." The British empire was a step towards a divinely willed world order, "one of the most mysterious ways in which God moves to perform his wonders" (Fisher 1969, 131).

From a Mormon perspective, this veneration of the empire somewhat parallels the belief expressed in the Twelfth Article of Faith: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, and in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." As one Ahmadi recently wrote: "For Islam enjoins upon its followers to live peacefully under a lawful government and to co-operate with it" (N. Muneer 1976, 211). Indeed, Ghulam Ahmad's image of the British Empire was not too far removed from the Mormon concept of the divine origin of the U.S. Constitution with its corollary belief, as Elder Mark E. Petersen is reported to have said, that "the flag of the United States is the flag of God" (Esplin 1981, 35).

In another Mormon parallel, Ghulam Ahmad launched an extensive, highly organized missionary effort (*tabligh*) to spread his version of the truths of Islam to all parts of the world. His organizational approach was very similar to that of conventional Protestant churches and even used some of the same terminology.

Although numbers of converts may not be impressive, pockets of believers have been established in Africa, Europe, Southeast Asia, and the United States. The American Black Muslim movement has diffused connections to the Ahmadiyyat, which is credited with tempering otherwise radical features of this movement (Lincoln 1973, 182–83; 244–45).

A significant proportion of the community's effort and energy are expended in missionary activities. If this effort were directed only toward non-Muslims, there would probably be no objections to it except possibly from a few orthodox *ulama* (theological leaders) who would complain that Ahmadiyyat represented a corrupted form of Islam. However, efforts to convert Muslims to Ahmadiyyat have aroused reactions including violence. The 1903 martyrs, for instance, were missionaries.

With the withdrawal of the British Raj in 1947 and the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, the Qadiani *jama'at* found its position untenable and moved from Qadian in India with its fine facilities and the ancestral home of Ghulam Ahmad to a desolate site in Pakistan located about ninety miles southwest of Lahore where they constructed a new city named Rabwah. This historical coincidence is a strong reminder of the western exodus of the Mormons. But unlike the Western Mormons, many of their bitter enemies were caught by the partition and also moved (Binder 1963, 1–9; Stephens 1957, 239–45). In historical hindsight, the Ahmadis probably would have

fared better in India, which sought to maintain the socio-political pluralism of the British Indian government. But even though the Ahmadi leadership had shown no enthusiasm for separatism, they believed their survival was threatened in a Hindu nation and hoped to contribute to the creation of a new Islamic Republic.

It is true that a short period of peace and socio-religious consolidation followed. Because of their education, Ahmadis have been attracted in significant numbers to both the civil and military bureaucracies. When Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, an Ahmadi of impressive intellectual stature, became Pakistan's foreign minister (1947), orthodox Muslims believed that he and other Ahmadis were not only propagating their faith but infiltrating strategic administrative and political positions (Sayeed 1967, 179). From early 1948 onwards the articulated pressures against the Ahmadis assumed a clear pattern. Fundamentalists would describe Zafrulla as an apostate and traitor and often justify the sporadic mob killings of Ahmadis in a series of events somewhat reminiscent of the Mormon experience in Missouri.

In the late 1940s, the rumor that the Ahmadis planned to convert the entire Pakistani province of Baluchistan by 1952 triggered violent hostility. The Baluchis are a proud and independent people with a long tradition of raiding and warfare. Wholesale conversion was obviously not feasible, but the Pakistan government and the larger Muslim society saw the possibility as a crisis.

On 21 January 1953, a deputation of *ilama* and *mullahs* called on the Pakistani Prime Minister Khwaja Nazimuddim and presented three demands: (1) The government must take steps within a month to declare the Ahmadis non-Muslim; (2) Muhammad Zafrulla Khan must be removed from office; and (3) other highly placed Ahmadis must also be removed from government office. If these demands were not met, the *ulama*, representing the All-Pakistan Muslim Party convention would call for "direct action."

The government rejected the demands and leaders of the agitation were arrested (Sayeed 1967, 178–80; Binder 1963, 251–54). This act was followed by anti-Ahmadi agitation throughout the Punjab in its most violent form. In such large cities as Lahore, Sialkot, Gujanwala, Rawalpindi, Lyallapur, and Montgomery, mobs numbering five to ten thousand attacked the police stations, burning private and public property and escaping to the mosques where *mullahs* delivered sermons against the Ahmadis and urged the people to continue their demonstrations (Sayeed 1967, 180; W. Smith 1957, 230–31).

The campaign had wide-spread support, particularly among lower level government clerks who even contributed to the murder of police personnel. Several higher government officials were also implicated in covert activities. On 6 March 1953, martial law was imposed. The chief minister of the Punjab resigned, and a new provincial government was organized, but over 2,000 persons perished, according to official estimates.[4]

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[4]The judiciary has great stature in Pakistan and its judges have taken strong and courageous positions protecting traditional civil liberties. The so-called Munir report of the Punjab riots was produced by a special court consisting of Muhammad Munir, chief justice

The rapidity, extent, and duration of the anti-Ahmadi riots tested the political viability of the new Pakistan government which was based on the modern ideal of a democratic Islamic state including religious freedom (D. Smith 1971, 190–211). In the first years of Pakistan's existence, religious tolerance was incorporated, with herculean efforts, into its constitution (Sayeed 1967, 101–26).

Yet the beliefs and practices of the Ahmadiyyat *jama'at* are so repugnant to traditional Islam in Pakistan that there is virtually no room for socio-religious accommodation. The Western-educated elites who retain control of the government may espouse the position of their nation's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah that "Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic state ruled by Priests with a divine mission" (Rosenthal 1965, 213); but over the years, they have experienced great difficulty in containing religious orthodoxy (Esposito 1980).

In the spring of 1974, the large Sunni community in Pakistan again officially demanded that the Ahmadis be declared a non-Muslim minority. Their comparative prosperity and influence had made them objects of envy in the abysmal poverty of Pakistan. On 29 May 1974, some 200 medical students traveling by train reportedly shouted abusive anti-Ahmadiyyah chants while passing through Rabwah, the Ahmadi religious center. When the same train returned, an estimated 5,000 angry Ahmadis attacked the students, injuring a dozen or so.

This incident triggered wide-scale rioting. Sunni Muslim mobs looted and burned mosques, homes, and businesses. Over seventy people were killed and several hundred were injured (Nyrop 1975; Keesing 1974a). The government took harsh measures to quell the disturbances. The *ulamas* reportedly agreed not to incite further violence but remained adamant about their demands. After two months of secret deliberations, the Pakistan National Assembly, again amended the Constitution to declare, among other things, that "for the purposes of the Constitution and law" the Ahmadis are not Muslim (Nasir 1977). With the act, Pakistan's 4 million Ahmadis were thus excommunicated from the Muslim world and the 6 million Ahmadis living elsewhere became religiously suspect.

The full impact of the 1974 constitutional amendment fell in early 1984. On 26 April 1984, under provisions of martial law, Pakistan President Muhammad Zia-Ul-Haq promulgated an ordinance to the Penal Code that prohibited Ahmadis from (1) calling themselves Muslims, (2) designating their houses of worship as mosques, (3) sounding the traditional call (*azan*) to prayer, (4) proselyting under pain of imprisonment up to three years, and (5) forbade any spoken, written, or visible expression of Muslim terminology under pain of a fine of unspecified amount ("Ord." 1984; "Ahmadis" 1984; "Zia" 1984).

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of the Supreme Court, and M. R. Kayani, former chief justice of the West Pakistan High Court, both men known for their honesty and integrity. Their investigation was published as the *Report of the Court of Enquiry Constituted Under the Punjab Act II of 1954 to Enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953* (Lahore, Pakistan: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1954).

Within forty-eight hours all Ahmadi mosques had their signs removed. Persecution and looting broke out again.[5]

Although "life, liberty and fundamental rights of all the citizens of Pakistan, irrespective of the religious communities to which they belong, shall be fully protected and safeguarded," Zia's action reduced the Ahmadis to less than citizens. Ahmadis have lower religious status than Christians and Jews, who as *dhimmis*, "people of the book," are accorded legal and social protection. Government quotas limit the representation Ahmadis have in the provincial assemblies. Intermarriage between Ahmadis and Muslims is not permitted. Several other Muslim states had even earlier enacted anti-Ahmadi legislation. Saudi Arabia had forbidden them entry even for the pilgrimage (*haj*) to Mecca (Keesing 1974b).

Like all national tragedies, the cost is born by individuals. One author wrote of "a young woman in a green sari," an Ahmadi whose husband had been killed in a military accident. Although extremely well educated and a government official, she had little prospect for advancement and had resolved to leave Pakistan with her children (Naipaul 1981, 107–226). Ghulam Ahmad was an exemplary religious leader. His followers, for the most part, are exemplary people. He has been greatly maligned because his opponents regard him as a *nabi* who usurps the place of Muhammad even though he never made that claim and the Muslim *mullahs* and *ulamas* testifying before the Pakistan court in 1974 could not agree what constituted a Muslim.

In theological terms and religious action, Ghulam Ahmad was a peaceful *mahdi*. Although forceful in thought, he never embraced the revolutionary role imposed on him by outside forces. For example, he took an extremely liberal position on *jihad* — the conduct of holy war. For the orthodox, *jihad* is an unending struggle between believers (the whole body of Muslims) and nonbelievers (the rest of humankind). In situations where an enemy actively seeks to destroy the Islamic religion by force or by changing Muslim beliefs, a *jihad* may be declared by the head of the believers. Persons who perish in the holy battle are guaranteed entrance to paradise. Since the British never sought to force religious change, Ghulam Ahmad stated that a declaration of *jihad* against them could never be justified. Moreover, he described *jihad* as "a state of mind in which after undergoing untold sufferings, a man is forced to resort in self defense to measures not necessarily warlike" (Rafig 1984; Haque 1971). In these terms, he was truly a peaceful leader who interpreted the Qur'an in such a way to repudiate the doctrine of *jihad* by the sword, not only for the present but also for the future. His interpretation was not in itself radical. Another Islamic group believes that under appropriate circumstances physical force in the form of *jihad* is justified, while still another believes that *jihad* does not ever properly include physical force, except in self-defense.

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[5] U.S. Ahmadiyyat headquarters has issued in its mimeographed publication *Ahmadiyya Digest* detailed accounts of human rights violations by the Pakistan government which have been incorporated in numerous newspaper stories published in the United States and Great Britain. For example, see Anderson 1984.

Ironically, the notion that it is the Qur'anic duty of believers to wage war upon those who do not accept Islam is increasingly being questioned (Cohen 1984, 98–103). A. K. Brohi, a leading Pakistani jurist and intellectual, calls *jihad* "a word which is untranslatable in English but, broadly speaking, means, 'striving', 'struggling', 'trying to advance the Divine causes or purposes'" (Malik 1979, ii). *Jihad,* therefore, may take many forms, with force being the most extreme and intense characterization. As the tradition of Islam holds, "The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the Martyr" (M. A. Khan 1968, 118). Today's world, characterized by violent and bloody revolutions, needs more socio-religious leaders with this sort of conviction and belief.

Ghulam Ahmad's position on the second coming of Christ was also not unknown to Islam. Religious scholars recognize that the Qur'an and the Hadith are not clear. Will the returning Messiah be Christ or Muhammad? Either view is thoroughly Islamic (Abbott 1968, 155). Nevertheless, the vast number of *mullahs* deemed this position heresy and branded Ghulam Ahmad *Djjal* (anti-Christ) (H. Ahmad 1974, 237–92; S. Ahmad 1974, 28–31).

Aside from the interesting parallels between the personalities and histories of Ghulam Ahmad and Joseph Smith, the reaction of larger society to their tightly knit and evangelizing communities, and the general pattern of their histories, what are some implications of Ahmadiyyat for Latter-day Saints? One social phenomenon is that the emphasis on education in both groups has produced large numbers of people qualified for governmental and economic power. While the comparative visibility of both groups has increased their public exposure, it has had the negative effect of creating paranoia and making Mormon/gentile, Ahmadi/Muslim alignments occur almost spontaneously. One important historical difference has been that the Mormons were able to establish themselves in relative isolation during the Utah period but then assimilate effectively into mainstream American life. The Ahmadis reject this position and are paying the price as socio-religious pariahs. In religions as different as Buddhism and Puritanism, the faithful have been obliged to move to more tolerant lands, and Ahmadi leaders are already living in Great Britain. Ahmadiyyat can no longer be a modernizer operating within increasingly radicalized Islam but rather must become an influential force operating on its borders — in effect, being effective marginal actors in complex social situations.

As the LDS Church attempts to penetrate established Muslim societies, its leaders will do well to examine the Ahmadiyyat experience. One Muslim scholar recently stated at a Brigham Young University symposium on Mormons and Muslims: "I do not believe you people will be any more successful in converting Muslims to Mormonism than any missionaries who were before you. But you could be successful in one important area; that is, to create an important dialogue that could lead to a fellowship of faith between you and us. I believe that truth is bigger than any concept of truth held by any nation or religious community or individual" (M. M. Ayoub 1983, 182).

In a way, this is what Ghulam Ahmad also believed and taught, a noble aspiration for any believer, even though the case of Ahmadiyyat shows how nar-

row of those limits of tolerance appear to be in the vise of fundamentalist Islamic revivals. Perhaps a more fruitful missionary field for both the Ahmadiyyat and for Mormonism is Africa where Muslims, Christians, and animists live together in generally secularized states.

For me, Ghulam Ahmad and Joseph Smith were both inspiring men who accepted without any equivocation their respective divine missions as restorers and prophets of their faiths. On our shrunken planet, it was inevitable that in time the socio-religious ideals and intents of these two remarkable persons would eventually be placed into the same broad categorization. The lives of restorers and prophets have never been easy but their contributions for the future well-being of their people have always been vital and irreplaceable — reaffirming the divine in all great religious movements.

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