

An Open Letter to Everyone:

Grace and peace in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus the Messiah, our living Lord and coming King in glory soon and very soon.

Transparency and integrity are qualities which we admire in people everywhere. Yet, they never come cheap or are ever achieved easily. We all have skeletons in our closets and if one digs deep enough the investigation will produce some rotten stories. Subsequently, because I am over 71 now I can tell you forcefully that one quality of our Heavenly Father which captivates everyone is forgiveness. How I wish that fellow believers in the Lord Jesus Christ would follow the admonition and advice of Proverbs 17:9, "*He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates the best of friends.*" One day when the Arabs and the Jews reach the point of forgiving each other, we may end up with peace in the Middle East overnight. Yet, we must ask "How can anyone experience peace without Jesus, the Prince of Peace in his heart?"

Although I am not writing a treatise here, I must explain to you my reaction to the latest critics of our ministry (and my own person) clearly, lovingly and historically. Satan is not satisfied in launching eleven attempts on my life since 1988, now I have to contend with fellow Christian's verbal assaults.

When the Lord saved me at age 18, as a homeless, hopeless and fatherless refugee from Nazareth, Palestine, I was filled with joy and excitement. The pastor in Ajloun, Jordan, informed me that the church members complained "Anis is too happy. He should be more conservative." The straight jacket which I wrapped around myself broke to bits and pieces in three days because I discovered God's Word proclaiming, "*The joy of the Lord is my strength.*" (Nehemiah 8:10) Additionally, the Apostle Paul encourages believers everywhere in his letter to the Philippians 4:4 to, "*Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice.*"

My second encounter with these legalistic believers was their complaint about how I combed my hair. It is astonishing to observe that over the years the major problem of Christian believers everywhere, but more so in the Middle East, is blatant babbling, waging tongues, unchristian attitudes and destructive criticism.

The third time I confronted this self-righteous bunch was their advice in 1973 of not going to the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. My group of 130 included a choir from Florida and I wanted to go and witness to the Israeli wounded soldiers of the October war. The Arab brethren felt that such a visit would entail showing too much love to our Jewish enemies and in the end may close the ministry door for me in the Arab world. But the Holy Spirit said "Go." And a door of opportunity opened as a result on radio and T.V. nationwide and worldwide. It was a momentous, memorable and magnificent expression of what Jesus taught us, "*It has been said of old love your neighbor and hate your enemy, but I say to you love your enemies. . . .*" (Matthew 5:43-44)

Next came the debate opportunities of 1985 in London and of 1988 in Birmingham, England. Not much support came from the Arab brethren or the British, except for Victor Hashwi. Yet, the Pakistani and Indian communities of England surrounded me with love, prayer, hospitality and support. Again, the criticism surfaced as Arab believers felt I was too aggressive and must use velvet, not boxing gloves! Yet, in forty years of debates, Deedat boasted that he had defeated every Christian debater and publicly assaulted our Bible and assailed our Lord Jesus with boxing gloves! That went on until the Lord raised up Anis Shorosh. Of course, none of the critics had debated before and they could not stand the scathing and acidic attacks by Muslim scholars like Deedat or Badawi, who needed to be silenced forcefully, formidably and publicly.

Then again, when the monumental project entitled The True Furgan was near completion, one of the most dedicated missionaries among Muslims overseas and in America became so upset that he even wrote several Christian leaders asking if they should sever fellowship with me. He was

intimidated by fears of Muslim retaliation because the Arabic-English book is a powerful challenge to the Quran. Once the situation was discovered he was not only apologetic, but even asked me for forgiveness via phone and letters. Now that the project has become a success, with four printings and major articles from Jakarta, Indonesia, to Cairo, Egypt to Jersey City, NJ and syndicated articles in the U.S.A., many of the critics have become aware that The True Furqan is a very valuable tool to evangelize our dear Muslim friends. It is indeed a shame that Muslim believers will obey the killing verses of the Quran by murdering others willingly by self detonation for what we believe to be a diabolical doctrine, while we Christians, who believe the truth of Jesus Christ, act timidly and at times cowardly in presenting the eternal message of the crucified and risen Messiah.

American's are familiar with the words of the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States which declares among other things, ". . . *All men are created equal*. . . ." This is true in the value of each human soul as far as God is concerned. Nevertheless, no one will argue the fact that we are not all created equal in the sense of weight, height and intellectual insight. God Almighty has an army of peacemakers. It is not made up of the same rank of privates or captains. He also has some major generals whose talents and singleness of purpose deserve attention and recognition. Therefore, if God has put you in such a lofty position, you must learn how to withstand the jealousy and criticism of other lower ranking officers. You are wise enough to understand what I mean for the Lord did not allow me to acquire two doctorates for being lazy or ignorant.

Now, as to the accusation that I have become a salesman, my response is, "And what is wrong with that?" Salesmen have to demonstrate a gracious attitude as well as an eloquent tongue. If every evangelist, preacher and pastor were endowed with such qualities, we would be used of God more powerfully. Besides that, we offer our books and tapes in churches most of the time at half price to promote education, information and inspiration. You see, experts tell us that we forget 90% of what we hear from a speaker within less than three days. However, a book, cassette or video will remain with you indefinitely whereby you can refer to it anytime you wish, as well as share it with someone else.

Have you ever wondered who covers the annual preaching trips overseas? We do! How many used vehicles have been given to other ministries by us?

It is very important to emphasize that in the 38 years of evangelistic ministry, we have tried to maintain financial integrity by supporting over 50 students, so far, from other countries, in their pursuit of an education at undergraduate or graduate level. We provided a nice home for Evangelist Varghese in Cochin, South India, a computer center at Nazareth Baptist High School in Israel, helped the church and orphanage in Rama of Galilee. In 1999, as a result of moving to a smaller home, we gave away half of my cherished library. After 9/11/2001 we provided every congressman and senator with a copy of Islam Revealed, The True Furqan and "Islam: A Threat or A Challenge" video at a cost of \$30,000.00. Our small organization undertook this project of "Informing Washington About Islam" as an expression of our love for America. In 1988 we mailed a copy of the book Love Covers by Paul Bilheimer to every Baptist pastor and missionary in America and around the world at a cost of \$50,000.00 as an expression of our Christian love in the pursuit of reconciliation among our brethren in the S.B.C. The Holy Spirit of God used this project of Christian love towards the entire Baptist denomination to heal some wounds and attitudes at a crucial time in their history.

To guard against greed, we have placed all of our income, whether from tapes, love offerings or royalties for books, as well as large purchases by Christian ministries such as T.B.N., into the Association account itself. Since this is an open letter, we should reveal to each reader that we also offer our material free for prisoners and overseas pastors, where we even cover the expensive postage. Furthermore, whenever missionary or evangelistic entities order large numbers, we give these items at one-third of the suggested donation. In other words, we are not in the business of buying or selling per se, but promoting the ministry of the Gospel through the media which God has seen fit to grant us. We praise Him for the capabilities and talents to

prepare, produce and provide a large assortment of materials as an extension of our Christian outreach in America and around the world. But the most important part is our decision many years ago to have a giving goal of 20 percent of our personal income to the Lord's work through His local congregations and beyond.

This week, along with the criticism by some, that I am aggressive and have become a salesman, comes a third assault that I have not led any Muslims to Christ. Although in the fifty years since God called me to His service, I have rarely written a response to criticism. This open letter should clear the air for some who have been misinformed. The Lord has allowed me to preach to Muslims and non-Muslims in 79 countries so far, and has used me especially in debates to lead many to Jesus. Since 1999, when The True Furqan was published, about 3000 Muslims in Israel have been converted and baptized. A good number of them saw the light when they read our book, which is very popular in any democracy due to freedom of religion. Our tenth book, Islam: A Threat or A Challenge, will include many stories of converted Muslims. The release date is September 2004.

Even via the internet the Lord has opened doors whereby Muslims have sought counsel and advice of how, as Muslims, they can come to faith in Christ Jesus. Personally, I have been blessed in counseling individuals and groups from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Pakistan, India, Israel, the Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand, England, Guyana, Trinidad, Kenya, South Africa, etc. But I cherish the experience of leading a precious engineer from Saudi Arabia to Christ when he visited with me in Los Angeles seven years ago. The debate video with Deedat prompted him to fly to America and learn the Truth of Jesus.

On a flight between Belfast, Ireland and London, England, five years so, the Lord used me to lead a middle-aged African lady to Christ, after she had made an initial commitment to Islam before we met.

Another family in London backed away from being baptized because they had been informed that Mr. Ahmed Deedat had won the Birmingham debate. The authentic version of the video "The Quran or the Bible: Which is God's Word" was given to them (not the Deedat-edited version). We followed through with a personal visit in their home and answered their questions honestly and clearly. Thereafter, we led them to a total commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their lives. Subsequently, they declared their faith by believer's baptism. Several years ago, upon arrival at Cleveland, OH, airport, two very excited young Muslim seekers met me. We talked non-stop for several hours and both gave their lives to Jesus and became powerful soul-winners in that city.

But only the Lord knows how many people have come to Christ through our ministry via T.V., radio, books, videos, cassettes, preaching and teaching. One of the joys of my life all these years is that I did not have to give an account to anybody of baptisms and dedications, of numbers and figures. We serve the Lord with gladness and leave the rest in His hands. The Heavenly Father values faithfulness more than fruitfulness. (Luke 18:8)

Lately, legalistic and self-appointed Christian judges and juries have leveled more criticism because of my association with Benny Hinn, Dr. Crouch and TBN. These deeply committed and talented Christian leaders have extended my horizon and outreach through their colossal T.V. programs. Besides, one is more effective working on the inside helping these friends with their perspectives and doctrines than on the outside leveling negative observations and criticizing their ministries. Let us love one another and encourage, rather than discourage, His servants whether they are weak or strong for "*Love covers a multitude of sins.*" I Peter 4:8

In His Majesty's service,

Anis Shorrosh, D.Min, D.Phil