



Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road: Exploring a New Path Between Two Faiths

By Paul-Gordon Chandler



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Historically, Christians have often taken a confrontational approach toward Islam, leading many Muslims to identify the Christian faith with the cultural prejudices and hegemonic ambitions of Westerners. Chandler boldly explores how these two major religions--which share much common heritage--cannot only co-exist, but also enrich each other. He illustrates his perspective with examples from the life of Syrian novelist Mazhar Mallouhi, widely read in the Middle East. Mallouhi, a self-identified "Sufi Muslim follower of Christ," seeks to bridge the chasm of misunderstanding between Muslims and Christians through his life and writings.

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Editorial Review

Review

Events of recent years have exacerbated mutual suspicion, fear and misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims. Yet Jesus Christ set in motion a unity that knows no boundaries; he broke all barriers. We must think beyond the present walls of the church to move forward. The issues dealt with in this timely book demonstrate God's divine embrace, providing a bridge in the gap. (Archbishop Emeritus Desmond M. Tutu)

Following Christ within Islam? As Paul-Gordon Chandler shows, the idea is neither absurd nor impossible. In his timely, refreshing and often surprising book, Chandler seeks to break down the seemingly enormous barriers that divide Christians from Muslims, and in the process offers a potent manifesto for waging peace on Islam. I hope the book finds a very wide readership. (Philip Jenkins, distinguished professor of history and religious studies, Pennsylvania State University, and author of *God's Continent*)

That Christians and Muslims don't understand one another is an understatement. Paul-Gordon Chandler knows both groups in detail and first hand. He pushes the rubble of stereotypes to the sidelines and in the cleared space tells the story of the novelist Mazhar Mallouhi, well-known in the Arab world. Incredibly, understanding emerges. This book couldn't be more timely. (Eugene Peterson, author and professor emeritus of spiritual theology, Regent College)

I consider this an important book. What a life Mazhar Mallouhi has lived! He stands in an almost singular position as a bridge between two worlds which, alas, seem to be separated by an ever-increasing divide. (Philip Yancey)

An important and exciting introduction to Mazhar Mallouhi's life and teachings. I commend this book to all who wish to understand Islam. (George Carey, (Lord Carey of Clifton), former Archbishop of Canterbury 1991-2002)

This very timely book is a must for anyone who would wish to understand Muslim/Christian dialogue. Mazhar Mallouhi has a unique insight which has largely been gained through personal suffering. He has much to teach us. (Terry Waite, CBE, former envoy for the Archbishop of Canterbury, hostage negotiator, author)

At a time when Islamophobia has gripped many Western Christians, Paul-Gordon shows what Christians and Muslims have often been, and can today still be: in a 'clasp' rather than a 'clash' of civilizations. Never has a book like this been more timely, or more necessary. (William Dalrymple, author of *From the Holy Mountain*)

More and more of us are waking up to our calling to be followers (or disciples) of Jesus, not simply adherents to a form of the Christian religion. For disciples today, that rediscovered identity is exciting, liberating, sometimes disconcerting, unpredictable, barrier-bridging, and wild?just as it was for the original disciples. Paul-Gordon's beautiful new book introduces us to a living example of what this way of life can look like in our contemporary world. Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road is inspiring, timely, potentially controversial, and desperately needed. (Brian McLaren, speaker, pastor, and author of *The Road We Make by Walking*)

Mazhar Mallouhi is a unique example of courage and a determined witness for truth. His life is among those of the first followers of Christ who risked their lives for him and for the salvation of their people. What Paul-Gordon Chandler has done with the writing of this book is a strong and inspirational act of faith. They are birds of the same feather and they fly together. (Archbishop Elias Chacour, Melkite Catholic Palestinian Archbishop of Galilee and the Holy Land; Nobel Peace Prize nominee; author)

Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road presents the story of the conversion of Mazhar Mallouhi, a Syrian, by exploring his Arab Muslim background and his exile and travels in many countries in North America and the Arab world. Mazhar's own voice comes through in the interview section, which is the last chapter of the book. Described as a man of letters and a child of many cultures, Mazhar Mallouhi offers important insights on Christianity among the Arabs as well as on issues of faith and community. His story is an object lesson on the religious principle in intercultural relations. (Lamin Sanneh, professor of World Christianity, Yale University)

Don't be fooled. This is not a book primarily about Islam. Rather it is a unique and surprising new way of looking at the Biblical faith, rescuing it from centuries of human Christian cultural and theological tradition, thus freeing it to become highly attractive to Hindu, Buddhist, and, yes, Muslim seekers. Moreover, it is superbly readable, employing as a 'teaching vehicle' the pilgrimage of a Middle Eastern Muslim who was first attracted to Jesus by the concept of Christ in Hindu garments, and has now for decades worn Muslim garments as a believer in Jesus Christ. This book is truly significant for missiology on a global level. (Ralph Winter, founding president, U.S. Center for World Mission)

The stunning story of Mazhar Mallouhi reminds us that God does not leave himself without a witness in any culture, that seemingly impervious soil can bear spiritual fruit, and that the Holy Spirit can do amazing things through humble instruments. Anyone who thinks Islamic culture is a spiritual wasteland simply must read *Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road*. (David Neff, editor and vice president, *Christianity Today*)

The subject of this book, Mazhar Mallouhi, has been my primary mentor in the Arab World since 1968. This Syrian Muslim, my shepherd, has been more committed to seeing me demonstrate Christ among Muslims than anyone else. Perhaps hundreds of 'Peacemakers' could echo my gratitude. This book is a must-read? though it won't tell the half. (Dr. Greg Livingstone, founder, Frontiers)

A fascinating and stimulating book about the life and work of Syrian novelist Mazhar Mallouhi. Relatively unknown in the English-speaking world, Mallouhi considers himself a 'Sufi Muslim follower of Christ'; he accepts Christ and Christian ideas without jettisoning his origins in Islam. . . . Chandler's book uses Mallouhi to ask new questions about Eastern and Western interpretations of Christianity and goes a long way toward fostering multicultural understanding as it restores 'Eastern-ness' to the image of Jesus. Highly recommended. (Library Journal)

What is the true Christianity? *Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road* helps answer that question. Innovative, readable and timely, it also suggests a way that East and West can be bridged. (Reader Views)

For readers who desire to get past statistics, arguments and methodology, *Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road* offers a vivid and living picture of a truly Arab Muslim disciple of Christ. (International Journal Of Frontier Missiology)

Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road, by Paul-Gordon Chandler, is a missiological biography that presents Mazhar as an example of a positive way for a follower of Christ from a Muslim background to live a life of witness in the Arab world. Not only is it a 'must read' . . . but I believe it is also a 'must discuss' book.

(*Seedbed*)

Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road is worth reading. Missionaries have much to learn from this 'insider' who follows a path of deep personal respect for his hearers and labors to communicate the good news in ways they can understand and even appreciate. Chandler is also to be commended for presenting such a clear example of humility, rather than hubris, to those who bring Jesus to where Muslims are. (*Evangelical Missions Quarterly*)

Much can be learned from this book....It is highly readable...for all interested parties in this important topic in today's world. (*Missiology: An International Review*)

Chandler is a priest in Egypt ? a great resource on the subject of religion in that changing country. (*The Christian Century*)

About the Author

Paul-Gordon Chandler is an Episcopal priest, interfaith advocate, art curator and social entrepreneur who has lived and worked in the Middle East and North Africa for many years. Having grown up in Senegal, West Africa, he has lived and worked extensively throughout the Islamic world in leadership roles within faith-based publishing, relief and development agencies and with the Episcopal Church. From 2003-2013 he was the Rector of the international Episcopal church in Cairo, Egypt. He is the Founder and President of CARAVAN, a peacebuilding non-profit, that uses the arts to build bridges between the creeds and cultures of the Middle East and West. The author of several books, his acclaimed book on Muslim-Christian relations is *Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road: Exploring a New Path Between Two Faiths* (Rowman & Littlefield). He can be reached via paulgordonchandler.com

Users Review

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