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### PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

September 11, 2001, changed the world. For one thing, Christians can no longer ignore the worldwide challenge of Islam. It is this challenge that assures the future of books like *Answering Islam*. Never in our wildest imagination did we believe this book would hit the front page of *The Wall Street Journal* (Nov. 26, 2001) which declared:

Religious publishing houses have produced a vast library of how-to books on recruiting Muslims. One of the best known is “Answering Islam,” co-written by Norman Geisler, president of Southern Evangelical Seminary, in Charlotte, N.C., and Abdul Saleeb, a Muslim convert to Christianity. Published in 1993, the book had sold more than 42,000 copies.

What *The Journal* failed to say was that over half of these were sold in the first two months after September 11, a pace that remains unabated to date. Actually, the book was gradually dying before the towers fell. To put it mildly, the interest in the threat of Islam to Christianity was minimal before 9/11. That is understandable, since we had just survived the Communist threat, the Humanist threat, and were still undergoing the New Age threat. American Christians were simply not ready for another threat.

Today the tide has turned. Sales of the Qur’an are soaring. Not because Muslims are becoming more devout nor because converts to Islam increased dramatically as a result of the terrorists aerial bombing of the New York Trade Center. Rather, it is because non-Muslims suddenly realize that the religion of Islam, as embraced by millions of radical Muslims, has become

a real threat, not only to Christianity but to freedom of religion in general and to our very way of life as Americans.

We have taken the occasion of these recent events to revise what has suddenly become a very popular book. Changes have been made throughout by updating, adding, and revising the entire manuscript. In addition, the section on Jihad has been amplified considerably by adding an entire Appendix on “Islam and Violence.” We have also used the opportunity to add new material in crucial places to strengthen the Christian response to Islam.

Like many other battles in history, we believe that the pen is sharper than the sword. The real war will be won with words, not weapons. The success of Christianity over Islam as a world religion rises or falls on the battlefield of ideas.

Today, Islam is the second largest religion in the world, with over one billion adherents. That is one out of every five persons on earth. Indeed, Islam is now reputed to be the fastest growing religion in the world. This and recent events make it necessary for us to refocus our efforts to defend the Faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). As Thomas Aquinas is credited by history with answering Islam in the thirteenth century (in his *Summa contra Gentiles*), even so we must renew efforts to thwart the efforts of militant Muslims to destroy Christianity. This revised volume is offered as a humble beginning in this direction.

## INTRODUCTION

Islam has rapidly grown to become the second largest religion in the world, with over one billion adherents—nearly one in every five persons on earth. In the United States there are presently more Muslims than Methodists. The most rapid growth is in the African American community.

What is more, Islam claims to be the true religion for humankind. It affirms that Muhammad is the “Seal of the Prophets,” the last and the greatest of all prophets who superseded all prophets before him, including Jesus. The Qur’an is believed to be the verbally inspired Word of God, dictated to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel from the eternal original in heaven. It is said to contain the full and final revelation of God, surpassing and completing all previous revelations. By any measure these are outstanding claims that challenge all other religions and deserve careful scrutiny by any sincere seeker of truth.

In this book we propose to do three things. First, in Part One we will attempt to state, as clearly as we can, the fundamental beliefs of Islam concerning God, creation, prophets, Muhammad, the Qur’an, and salvation. This will be expressed primarily through Muslim sources such as the Qur’an, Muslim tradition (the *Hadith*), and Islamic commentators.

In Part Two we will attempt to respond to basic Muslim beliefs in God, Muhammad, and the Qur’an. Here we will analyze criticisms that have been offered and attempt to come to a conclusion as to whether there is support for the validity of the Islamic claims. Particular attention will be paid to the factual basis for and internal consistency of these claims.

Finally, in Part Three we will examine the evidence for the Christian counterclaim. Here arguments offered in support of Christian claims will be scrutinized in order to determine their veracity. The appendixes will deal with special topics such as Muslim sects, religious practices, the *Gospel of Barnabas*, Muslim use of modern biblical criticism, Islam and violence, and Black Islam.

My coauthor, using a pseudonym, was reared as a Muslim in an Islamic country. His familiarity with Arabic and Muslim beliefs and practices has added a very significant dimension to this book. Together with my background in Christian

theology and philosophy, we have made an attempt not only to understand the Muslim and Christian views, but to examine them carefully in light of the evidence. We are in agreement with the Socratic dictum that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” And we believe as well that the unexamined faith is not worth believing. Since both orthodox Islam and Christianity claim to be the true religion, it is incumbent upon thinking persons to examine carefully the evidence offered by both and to make their own decision in view of the evidence.

Norman L. Geisler