

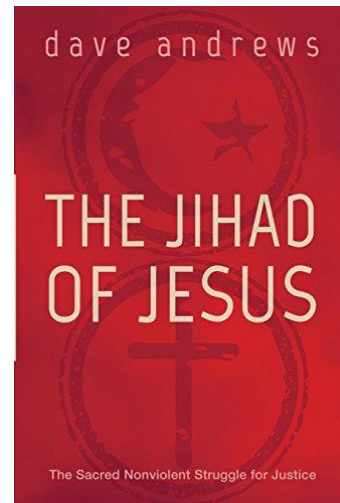


Dave Andrews, Dave. *The Jihad of Jesus: The Sacred Nonviolent Struggle for Justice*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2015.

Review by John Steward and Bernie Power. Response by Dave Andrews.

John Steward

In Dave Andrews' book, I found many surprises in the creative approach to this sensitive and challenging subject. First of all, could one ever link these two words: Jihad and Jesus? Secondly, how could they possibly be the basis of, in the words of the book's sub-title, a 'Sacred Non-violent Struggle for Justice', especially when the common hypothesis seems to be that Christians and Muslims are so far apart that there is little or no likelihood of a solution? 'Not so', says Dave Andrews – there is common ground on which they both can stand: the ground of the struggle for justice.



Both the pages of endorsements when we open the book and the extensive bibliography before we close it suggest that these questions are taken seriously in this book. They combine to give the feel that the body of the book treats the topic seriously and respectfully. After my first reading through I thought: This is a book about looking for solutions in the wrong places – because the places we expect to find the answer [to the problem of Muslim-Christian relations] are not where the answer lies. This reflection comes from the common, but mistaken, approach to conflict in Christian-Muslim relations – where we look for (and tend to find) the causes of the problem in the behaviour of the 'other'.

In a carefully crafted journey Dave Andrews takes us on a steep learning curve, which winds around both sides of the mountain. He writes as a Christian who is in regular conversation with Muslim friends, and he writes for both Christian and Muslims. That potentially rules some of us 'out of bounds' – for we are not normally on that playing field. Dave himself describes this work as 'somewhat provocative interfaith reflections'. That is why we can listen and gain from Dave's position – which may be so different to ours.

We are asked to look at the contribution of both sides to the dilemma of a clouded history. The first major section, 'The Jihad of Dajjal', constitutes half of the book. Dajjal is the

deceiver. Here Dave hovers around Christian developments in power, coercion and holy wars over 2,000 years. As a peace-maker I found these 20 pages to be confronting and discomfiting: to see for how long a church, whose founder was committed to non-violence, could believe in the rightness of violent behaviour to achieve its purposes and desires. At this point I reflected on a possible reason for the difference between the modelling of Jesus and the church's behaviour over time. I wrote my response in the margin: *we as individuals also carry 'wars', of idealism and self-superiority, into our relationships with other Christians [and other faiths]. We have treated all wars as either God-ordained or Christ-justified, but have not come to him for the healing of our wounds. We have not understood Jesus' teachings, as they were given and applied in his culture.*

Then follows the other 'side of the coin': 27 pages reviewing Muslim 'Holy wars', their massacres, conquests, persecution and aggression over the 1,400 years from 620 CE to the recent creation of ISIS.

This sets the scene for Dave's rich and solid reflection on the 'not so holy' nature of so-called 'holy wars'. As I began reading this part and feeling my eyes being opened, I was flying near Dubai, which was shrouded in dust thrown into the air by swirling, warm, desert winds. I reflected: *we are all great theorists, with foggy glasses.* It was as if Jesus had said: 'let me clean your glasses, so you can look with your eyes open'.

Dave bases his discussion on a key concept of life: whether our view of our faith and mission is determined by an enclosed, confined view (Closed Set) or a generous and hopeful view (Open Set). Both alternatives are well described and the consequences are clearly stated. In relation to the question of Christian-Muslim relations, I valued the honest discussion he presents of the strengths and weaknesses of each view.

At this point my reflection is: to be open we must first deal with our lack of personal unity (from whence do wars come...?) – our inner divisions, our internal wars. Rwandans have taught me that personal healing and change always precedes relational or inter-personal change.

Part Two assumes I have made that inner change, as it moves to the 'Jihad of Isa'. This abnormal, surprising conjunction of words becomes clearer as Dave reframes Jihad, based on a theology of the 'Bismillah' – in the name of Allah, the One True God.

He reminds us of the similarity in approach to killing in both the wars of the West and in Jemaah Islamiyah (the East), in that both soldiers and terrorists are systematically socially conditioned in order to behave as Killers. This is achieved by limiting the freedom of the individual and re-framing their perspective towards the 'other' (enemy) using a closed set ideology for controlling behaviour.

Dave sets out a contrast in how Bismillah offers an open set approach to relations – one that reflects and expresses 'the amazing grace and compassion of God' and, ironically, the human propensity to conscientiously object to, and avoid, killing another.

The strength of this section lies in the wide range of absorbing quotations, which Dave takes entirely from Islamic teaching and sources (both Qur'an and scholars). Particularly poignant is the insistence of the scholar Rane that peace, not war, is the purpose of Islam. In the Qur'an the term 'jihad' is used ambiguously twenty times, while 11 times it is used unambiguously in terms of peace, but only in four uses is it unambiguously in terms of war.

A study of the uses of jihad in relation to a just war in the Qur'an leads Rane to state eight rules of engagement for the conduct of jihad in war, while Dave points to eight similar criteria which were developed by Ambrose and Augustine. He points out that no current wars in the world meet these criteria.

Qader Muheideen suggests 'the purpose of jihad ultimately is to put an end to 'structural violence'. The trail of hope then really begins to warm, for Muheideen offer eight Islamic reasons to reframe jihad as a nonviolent struggle.

Then follows a chapter that seeks to reclaim Jesus as a model of nonviolent struggle, even as a supreme example of jihad. This requires us to focus 'on those beliefs about him that Christians and Muslims have in common...as sacred ground on which we can stand and speak to one another'. Surprising me with how much one can find on this theme in Islamic scholarship, Dave also draws on the Gospels to colour the presentation of the non-violence of Jesus in the face of violence done to him.

Dave identifies 5 phases in Jesus' non-violent approach to expressing love and bringing justice. With stunning clarity he suggests that the way Jesus related, as a Jew, to the Samaritan woman is the way people of different religions should/could relate to each other. Jesus' passion for people of all backgrounds and statuses showed his passionate commitment to, and respect for, the people in his life.

The final, challenging and surprisingly practical section consists of four nonviolent examples of how this life is lived, from both Christian and Islamic life. He selects someone 'old' examples from each side [St Francis and Badshah Khan] and someone 'new' from each side [Leymah Gbowee and Muhammad Ashafa]. Each person's contribution is summarized by a list of both the inner and outer dynamics of jihad in their actions. They show us what the Jihad of Jesus can, and does, look like in real life. Here ideas and thoughts step aside in favour of action, evidence and consequence.

What did I gain by reading this book? Clarity, correction, fresh understanding, new challenge, hope and possibility. This book breathes life as it broadens a discussion, which often relies more on rhetoric and emotion (of fear and prejudice) than on substance. It is not an easy read but it is accessible, stimulating scholarship that while it is confronting is also refreshingly open. It is a book for the serious student who wants to live out the best of their faith, because it is by someone who authenticates what he propounds by the way, and with whom, he lives. Clearest of all is that the path to finding ways to relate with others of a different faith begins with me – and my willingness to take the opportunity to find the blockages within, before looking outside of me. That is – it requires a work of God within, changing and re-humanizing me in the image of Bismillah.

Bernie Power

The Jihad of Jesus is a fascinating book and very well researched. The bibliography is impressive.

I liked the generally balanced approach. Dave does not hold back on exposing our at times sad and bloody Christian history, which is widely known and documented and often talked about. At the same time, he is willing to hold Islam's bloody and violent history up to the spotlight. Not many people are courageous enough to do that. In some circles, such an act can easily expose a writer to accusations of racism or bigotry or Islamophobia.

I like the spirit of the book: its desire is to face up to the very real divisions that exist in our world today between Muslims and Christians. It takes a positive approach and holds out hope for the future. This is very much needed.

Finally it holds up Jesus as a model. You can't do better than this. It is the example of Jesus and the words of Jesus and the actions of Jesus that are the only real hope for our world. No one else can save us and nothing else can suffice.

However, there were several points throughout the book at which I had occasion to pause. The book starts on page 1 with the terms 'greater jihad', the supposed 'inner struggle' which is non-violent; and the 'lesser jihad' or 'physical struggle', which can be violent or non-violent. This distinction is based on an alleged saying of Muhammad as he was returning from one of his 27 or 28 military campaigns: 'I am going from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.' 'What is the greater jihad?', they asked. He is supposed to have replied: 'The struggle against one's own soul.' However, academic and TV personality Waleed Aly contends that:

This famous 'greater jihad' report is of highly questionable historical authenticity. It does not occur in any of the most authoritative collections of narrations of the Prophet, and probably surfaced for the first time among ascetic movements just before al-Ghazzālī's time.[1]

Al-Ghazzali died 5 centuries after Muhammad. No serious academic accepts the authenticity of this saying – it was put posthumously into Muhammad's mouth by later writers who were probably embarrassed by Islam's violent history. So that was not a good foundation to build on.

I also questioned the use of the word 'jihad' when attached to Jesus. Jihad from an historical Islamic perspective has always involved violent struggle by Muslims to assert their religion. Trying to rehabilitate the word 'jihad' is problematic due to its negative history and connotations. It would be like naming a book 'The Genocide of Jesus' or 'The Inquisition of Jesus'. We could try to put 'genocide' or 'inquisition' in a good light by presenting them as a struggle against evil and injustice, but some words just don't fit. They carry too much historical baggage. One is reminded of Humpty Dumpty: 'When I use a word... it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less.'^[2]

Throughout the book, Muhammad takes a low profile. There is only three-quarters of a page on him (p.27). However, any visit to a mosque, reading of the Qur'an or perusal of Islamic documents will indicate that, from a Muslim perspective, Muhammad is the most important person who has ever lived. Muhammad's history of violence is hinted at but not detailed. The single event highlighted is the beheading of up to 900 men from the Jewish Banu Qurayza tribe. However, this is footnoted with a comment from prominent Australian Muslim Nora Amath that 'this event is not mentioned in the Qur'an at all' (p.27). Yet it is mentioned in the

Qur'an - in Q. 33:25-27 and 8:55-58. Amath also notes that some other scholars considered Ibn Ishaq, the source of this story, to be a liar. This kind of accusation is not unusual in Islamic scholarship, or even western scholarship. However, accusation is not proof. Moreover, this event is also recorded by al-Bukhari, Abu Dawud, Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari and Ibn Hisham, among others. Nor is it correct to say that the judge judged according to the laws of the Torah. The Torah nowhere tells anyone to behead prisoners of war who surrendered, as was the fate of the Jews of Bani Qurayza. But it is a shame that more was not made of Muhammad's military history as the *sunna* or example for all Muslims to follow. Certainly, those who are violent, such as the Islamic State fighters, claim they are following him. The book states that Christians and Muslims don't tend to deny 'Holy War atrocities' (p.52). Yes, they do. The examples of the Bani Qurayza pogrom and the Armenian genocide are cases in point.

There are many attempts to draw a moral equivalence argument between the histories of Islam and Christianity. The book argues that Timur Lane of the 14th century massacred Hindus clearly in the name of Islam, and Adolf Hitler massacred Jews apparently in the name of Christianity (p.54). Is that true? Did Hitler believe that he was acting on behalf of the German Church when he did this? Dietrich Bonhoeffer did not think so, nor did Martin Niemoller. Actually, there are remarkable similarities between the attitudes of Muhammad and Adolf Hitler towards Christianity. Initially they were both positive. The Qur'an described the Christians as 'nearest in love to the Muslims' (Q. 5:82). Hitler said in a speech in 1928: 'We tolerate no one in our ranks who attacks the ideas of Christianity ... in fact our movement is Christian.'^[3]

However by the ends of their lives both Muhammad and Hitler had turned against the Christians because the Christians did not give them the full support they were demanding. In Q. 98:6, Jews and Christians, the people of the book, are described as the worst of creatures who will abide in the fire of hell. In 'the last moment of his life', Muhammad cursed the Jews and the Christians for building places of worship on the graves of their prophets.^[4] By the early 1940s, Hitler's sayings revealed a scorn and disdain for Christianity. In 1942 he said:

Had Charles Martel not been victorious at Poitiers [defeating a Muslim army in 732 AD] - already, you see, the world had already fallen into the hands of the Jews, so gutless a thing Christianity! - then we should in all probability have been converted to Mohammedanism, that cult which glorifies the heroism and which opens up the seventh Heaven to the bold warrior alone. Then the Germanic races would have conquered the world. Christianity alone prevented them from doing so.^[5]

Hitler also stated in private:

The Mohammedan religion too would have been much more compatible to us than Christianity. Why did it have to be Christianity with its meekness and flabbiness?[6]

Hitler was hardly an archetypal 'Christian' leader, acting on behalf of his religion.

There were a couple of other occasions in the book that caused me to take a deep breath. Quoting Muslim Professor Bassam Tibi post 9/11 is OK, but in the 1990s he was less than politically correct. This was his analysis of Islam in 1996:

At its core Islam is a religious mission to all humanity. Muslims are religiously obliged to disseminate the Islamic faith throughout the world: 'we have sent you forth to all mankind' (Saba 34:28). If non-Muslims submit to conversion or subjugation, this call (dawa) can be pursued peacefully. If they do not, Muslims are obliged to wage war against them. In Islam, peace requires that non-Muslims submit to the call of Islam, either by converting or by accepting the status of a religious minority (dhimmi) and paying the imposed tax, jizya. World peace, the final stage of the dawa, is reached only with the conversion or submission of all mankind to Islam.[7]

Tibi has become much more pluralist since then.

Someone who is not at all pluralist is Yusuf Qaradawi. Halim Rane quotes Qaradawi as seeking 'the benefit of mankind' which includes 'welfare, freedom, dignity and fraternity' (p.100). Qaradawi is known as the godfather of the Muslim Brotherhood. He has called for the deaths of apostates, and he endorses suicide bombings and the beating of wives. He says:

...my only hope is as my life approaches its end, that Allah will give me an opportunity to go the land of jihad and resistance, even if in a wheelchair, and I will shoot Allah's enemies, the Jews.[8]

He is the subject of an Interpol international arrest warrant for incitement to murder. He is a very unsavoury character.

Occasionally there is a misunderstanding or misquotation of Qur'anic passages. On p.97, the quote from 4:113 should actually be 3:113, 114. The quote in the book leaves out the important words 'the People of the Book'. The major commentaries (tafsirs) about this verse all agree that this is not about pluralism towards other religions and ideologies that are different from Muslim traditions, but rather a commendation to Jewish and Christian people who converted to Islam.

Moreover, many of the exegetes quoted in this book, people like Farid Esack, Ziauddin Sardar and Wahidudin Khan, are not mainstream on the Muslim street. They are boutique commentators who write for a Western palate. They are unknown or ignored or pilloried by the majority of Muslims. Important modern commentators like Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi and al-Albani are more widely read and accepted, and they present a different version of Islam from the first three.

Another concern would be our view of ourselves, i.e. our self-identity. On p.107, Dave makes the comment: 'I am one of the 'People of the Scripture.'" It may be a problem allowing Islam to define who you are, particularly when remembering the eternal judgement pronounced on the People of the Book given earlier in this review. It would be much better to accept the much fuller biblical picture of yourself – as a child of God, accepted in the beloved, forgiven, redeemed, justified, etc. This question of Christian self-identity is very important, and should not be out-sourced to the followers of another religion.

Likewise the identity of Jesus is raised. On p.107, it is said that 'Isa never asked anyone to worship him.' Certainly the Qur'anic Isa never did – he denied that he had done so (Q. 5:116). However the biblical Jesus freely and openly accepted worship from a wide range of people. These included 'those who were in the boat (Mt. 14:33), the blind man who was healed (Jn. 9:38), the women at the resurrection (Mt. 28:9), the disciples at the mount of ascension (Mt. 28:17; Lk. 24:52) and Thomas in the upper room (Jn. 20:28). Remarkably, Jesus never rebuked anyone for doing this. It is prophesied that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. (Phil. 2:10,11), which is a quote from the Old Testament about Yahweh (Isa. 45:23) And of course the Lamb seated on the throne in heaven (Rev. 5:11-14) receives the worship of all.

Walter Wink's comment that 'Son of man' simply means 'human' (p.107) does not do justice to the testimony of all of scripture. Daniel 7:13,14 speaks of the majestic 'Son of Man' who has authority, glory and sovereignty. All nations worship him, and his dominion will never pass away and his kingdom never be destroyed. When Jesus speaks of himself as the 'Son of man', it is often in the context of power and authority. The 'Son of man', according to Jesus:

- has gone into heaven and came from heaven (Jn. 3:13).
- will ascend to where He was before (Jn. 6:62).
- has authority to forgive sins (Mk. 2:10; Lk.5:24).
- is Lord of the Sabbath (Mt. 12:8; Mk. 2:28/Lk.6:5).
- has authority to judge (Jn.5:27).

- sends out his angels for judgement (Mt.13:41).
- will come on the clouds with his angels ...with power and great glory' (Mt.16:28; Mt.24:30).
- rewards each person for what he has done' (Mt.16:27).
- will be sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One (Matthew 19:28; 26:64).

This is no ordinary human being.

There is often a temptation for Christians to water down their representation of Jesus, so that he becomes more acceptable to others. This could be the inoffensive 'nice guy/good teacher' modernist version or the anaemic Isa of the Qur'an instead of the full-blooded Christ of the New Testament. The Jesus we present must be the full version, not just a more palatable 'lite' version that will gain public acceptance. It is a bit like a medical team jettisoning all the equipment and drugs from an ambulance so they can get to the accident scene a bit faster. But when they get there, they do not have the wherewithal to resuscitate, stabilise, treat and transport the patients. If we do not present the full Jesus, we come with little to offer. So these were a few of the 'stop and pause' moments I came across as I read the book. However, having said that, I found the book to be well-researched. It certainly presents an innovative approach. The heart of the gospel beats through it. It seeks to uphold Jesus as our model. The desire for peace and reconciliation and forgiveness never wanes. This is very commendable and very necessary. No-one can doubt Dave's sincerity nor his passion in seeking to present a way forward in what I believe is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today, and I thank him for it.

About the Reviewer

John Steward has post-graduate degrees in agriculture and divinity. His PhD is in soil science. He lectured in theology and rural development in Java, Indonesia for nine years, and then over 14 years he trained aid workers from 50 countries. From 1997 he mentored Rwandan peacemakers, before writing this book.

About the reviewer

Bernie Power is the Missiologist at Melbourne School of Theology and a lecturer with the Centre for the Study of Islam and Other Faiths. His doctorate compares early Islamic and Christian texts, and he has lived most of his working life in Muslim majority countries.

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- [1] Waleed Aly, *People Like Us: How Arrogance is Dividing Islam and the West* (Sydney: Picador, 2007), 153.
- [2] Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There*, 1871, Ch. 6.
- [3] Speech in Passau on 27 October 1928, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Zehlendorf, quoted in Richard Steigmann-Gall, *Holy Reich: Nazi conceptions of Christianity, 1919–194*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp.60–61
- [4] Al-Bukhari 1:427, 428; 2:414, 472; 4:660; 5:725, 727; 7:706.
- [5] Adolf Hitler at midday on August 28, 1942, 'Hitler's Table Talk; 1941-1944', translated by N. Cameron and R.H. Stevens, Enigma Books, 1953, p. 667, <http://vho.org/aaargh/fran/livres10/HTableTalk.pdf>, accessed on 16th April 2016.
- [6] Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs*, Reissue edition, Simon and Schuster, 1997, p.96 ff.
- [7] Bassam Tibi, 'War and Peace in Islam', in Terry Nardin, ed., *The Ethics of War and Peace: Religious and Secular Perspectives*, Princeton University Press, 1996, p.130.
- [8] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HStliOnVI6Q&feature=related>

Response to Bernie Power's review of *The Jihad of Jesus*

Dave Andrews

Bernie has number of criticisms of *The Jihad Of Jesus*. And, as my only claim to fame is that I have Muslim friends, and Dr. Bernie Power is the Missiologist at Melbourne School of Theology and a lecturer with the Centre for the Study of Islam and Other Faiths, it would be foolish not to treat his criticisms seriously.

Bernie states that the Jesus I present is not 'the full-blooded Christ' but 'a more palatable 'lite' version that will gain public acceptance'; that naming my book *The Jihad of Jesus* is like 'naming a book *The Genocide Of Jesus*'; that my critique of the violence in Muhammad's military history is inadequate; and that I would do better by comparing Muhammad's attitudes to Christians with Hitler's. The Islamic scholars I cite who would suggest contrary views, Bernie dismisses as 'boutique commentators who write for a Western palate' like mine.

One criticism Bernie makes of my book is that I base it on a questionable quote from Muhammad about '*jihad*'. He says it's 'not a good foundation to build on.' But, in point of fact, I don't base my discussion on the 'greater *jihad*' and 'lesser *jihad*' on any quote from Muhammad, but simply on the fact that most Muslims I know believe in the 'greater *jihad*' and 'lesser *jihad*' and that informs their faith.

By the way all the Muslims I know would be as appalled at Bernie's proposition that '*jihad*' is 'genocide' as they were at bin Laden's same diabolical suggestion.

Bernie says I don't pay enough attention to 'Muhammad's history of violence', but when it came to giving an account of violence in my book, I tried to be fair in giving the same amount of space in the text to the acts of violence on both sides. I think it is completely unfair and totally inaccurate to compare Muhammad with Hitler. It would be much more reasonable to compare Muhammad with Moses.

Bernie, like many Christians, has difficulty accepting the complicity of Christians with Hitler in the Holocaust, citing the example of Martin Niemöller as a Christian leader who opposed Hitler. But in my book I quote Martin Niemöller himself saying: 'Christianity in Germany bears a greater responsibility before God than the Nazis, the S.S. and the Gestapo. Are not we Christians much more to blame, am I not much more guilty, than many who bathed their hands in blood?' (See Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Knopf, 1996, 114).

Bernie notes that Muhammad 'takes a low profile' in my book. That's right. That's because my Muslim friends have told me that there is much more in the *Qur'an* about Jesus than Muhammad and we should concentrate more on Jesus. My approach to talking about Jesus has not ever been to 'soft-sell Jesus lite' but to take Jesus' own approach to calling people to be with him, without imposing any theological prerequisites, creating a safe space for dialogue and debate about his identity as the Christ, trusting that the Spirit would lead them into all truth.

Bernie points out that on, p.107, I say that 'Isa never asked anyone to worship him', and says in response that 'Jesus freely and openly accepted worship from a wide range of people. These included

'those who were in the boat (Mt. 14:33), the blind man who was healed (Jn. 9:38), the women at the resurrection (Mt. 28:9), the disciples at the mount of ascension (Mt. 28:17; Lk. 24:52) and Thomas in the upper room (Jn. 20:28).' All of which is true. But it misses my point. Jesus didn't ever ask people to worship him. Rather he asked people to follow him. And it is in following him that we can get to know who he is and what he expects of us.

In my book I cite many Muslim scholars who critique militant, bigoted, vigilante *jihad* and argue for the compassionate, nonreactive, nonviolent *jihad* I advocate. Bernie dismisses these Muslim scholars as 'boutique commentators who write for a Western palate'. I think it is problematic to portray Maulana Wahiddudin Khan, whom I quote most often, as a 'boutique commentator' who 'writes for a Western palate', when the Maulana is one of the most well known Muslim leaders in India, who writes typically if not exclusively in Urdu. And I think it is shortsighted to dismiss the critical perspectives of Muslim scholars based in the West as 'not mainstream', when it is only because they are based in Western democracies that they are free to critically engage the 'mainstream'. I believe Western Muslim scholars such as Shayk Abdal Hakim Murad, Tariq Ramadan, Mohamad Abdallah, Halim Rane and Farid Esack are all making significant contributions to the conversation about the future of 'mainstream' Islam.

I want to thank Bernie for reading the book, writing the review and picking up the typos on p.97. Hopefully we can make corrections in the next edition.

(PS. You can check out other reviews at jihadofjesus.com.)