Dear Center for Creative Ministry,

This eLetter provides you with the latest version of Contemporary Comments.

In the right sidebar you can also secure the Sharing Scripture facilitator guides for 1st Qrt. January-March 2014 on “Discipleship.”

These excellent discussion sheets are designed to enhance your Sabbath school class or small group. Suitable for photocopying, Sharing Scripture contains thought questions and exercises that transform ordinary study times into dynamic learning adventures.

Grace to you!
Center for Creative Ministry

Contemporary Comments

"Discipling Through Metaphor"
January 11, 2014
The Day of Judgment has come to a Pennsylvania woman who was sentenced to 10 years in prison for conspiring to kill a Swedish cartoonist. Colleen LaRose, who called herself "Jihad Jane" told the judge she was obsessed with participating in a Muslim holy war.

The fifty-year-old woman became caught up in jihad when she met a Muslim man on vacation in Amsterdam. One attorney described her as lonely and vulnerable. When she connected with an "online handler" in Pakistan to participate in "killing a foe of Islam" she was flattered.

Federal investigators say she participated in a 2009 conspiracy to target artist Lars Vilks, a Swedish cartoonist who depicted the Prophet Muhammad with the body of a dog. Muslim extremists in Iraq had offered a $100,000 reward for anyone who killed Mr. Vilks, who was never attacked.1

While Judge Tucker has no doubts that Ms. LaRose, who was stalking Mr. Vilks online, would have killed him if she had the opportunity, Mr. Vilks himself thinks her sentence is a little harsh. He has been threatened by others and has around-the-clock protection. "This is a person who has been through a lot of difficulties in her life and needs mental care more than anything else," he said. Ms. LaRose grew up in an extremely abusive home where there was rape, incest, hunger, and alcoholism. She told the court, "I don't want to be into jihad no more."

Our Sabbath school lesson this week looks at stories Jesus told that give us a window on discipleship. Christ spoke of two sons who were asked to work in their father's vineyard (Matthew 21:28-32). He illustrated the kingdom of heaven through the story of a great supper (Luke 14:16-24). Jesus explained His rejection by religious leaders through a story about wicked vinedressers. Stories can powerfully teach spiritual truths about being a disciple.

What biblical messages do we see in today's news? What themes do we find in stories like the one about "Jihad Jane" that show God's wish that we become disciples? Perhaps these: There is a great war between good and evil in our world; an enemy seeks to lure us into destructive practices; we are all vulnerable and come from broken backgrounds; there is a law and a judgment day coming; and there is also grace. Like Mr. Vilks, the Lord Jesus (who we have attacked) wants to extend compassion on all who turn to God and say, "I don't want to be into sin no more."

~cr

1. nytimes

About Us

Since 1988, the Center for Creative Ministry has been serving local church leaders and individuals around the world. Formerly known as the publishers of ABBA Newsletter and the Baby Boomer Ministries Resource Center, we have now broadened our generational/ministry
focus to include our children. The Center for Creative Ministry took on its new name on June 1, 1996.

The Center for Creative Ministry, formerly Baby Boomer Ministries, is a privately funded and managed para-church ministry fully recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. We are dedicated to supporting the local church in outreach and nurture ministries by providing resources, information, training, and consulting.