

“THE POWER OF IDEAS”

Jay Lockhart

Quite a stir has occurred over the Danish newspaper cartoon depicting Mohammed wearing a missile as a headdress. The people of Islam take this as an insult to their founder as it portrays Mohammed as a man of violence and destruction. As a result, riots by the most radical Muslims are taking place in many places. Please understand that I would never agree with making light of anyone's religion. However, neither do I concur with the kind of violence that supposedly has come about because of the cartoon. One can only wonder if the riots are the result of the cartoon or if the cartoon is only an excuse to riot. When one feels his religion is under attack, is being made fun of, or is being unfairly portrayed, there are peaceful ways to combat the real or imagined cause. When that so called artist in New York added his contribution to the art gallery depicting Jesus with human waste, those who believe in Jesus did not burn the museum down. When the television industry brought the *Book of Daniel* to the TV screen, a series that portrayed a so-called Christian family as dysfunctional, we didn't torch the local TV station. When Hollywood lauded the homosexual movie, *Brokeback Mountain*, we didn't picket the theater. What do we do when we feel our religion is being attacked or portrayed unfairly? We speak out and we refuse to participate in the activity. Because so many have spoken out, the *Book of Daniel* lasted only four episodes and *Brokeback Mountain* is far from a financial success. The power of words fitly spoken and of voices united for a cause can hardly be overstated. When churches move in what we believe is the wrong direction, we

do not set fire to the buildings or assassinate the character of the people involved. We simply speak calmly, firmly and with conviction about those matters that trouble us. In the arena of ideas, truth always wins. Radicalism, violence and hatred always show the weakness of one's position. Radicalism will always drive thoughtful people away and can never win ... in the world or in the church.