

# **The Apostate and those Who Dare to Leave Islam**

**A Discussion with Dr. Mark Christian of Global Faith Institute Ministries**

by [Jerry Gordon](#) (September 2022)



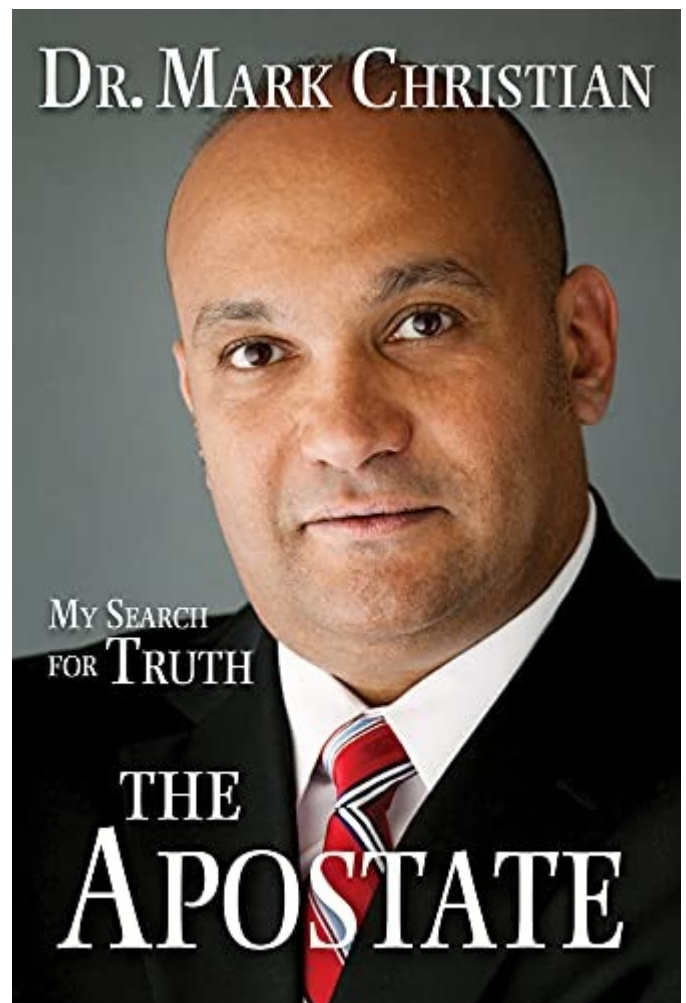
*Salman Rushdie (The Moor)*, Bhupen Khakhar, 1995

An August 12, at approximately 11 AM, 24-year Hidar Matar, wearing a black mask, rushed onto the stage at the Chautauqua Institute in Western, New York, and [brutally stabbed](#) and severely wounding controversial world literary-acclaimed author British-Indian 75-year-old Sir Salman Rushdie also injuring 73-year-old Ralph Henry Reese. Ironically, they were in the midst of a discussion about the necessity of providing protection asylum to threatening authors. Rushdie was

airlifted to a major trauma facility in neighboring Erie, Pennsylvania. Matar, ostensibly a mild-mannered young man from Fairview, New Jersey, had recently come back from Lebanon where allegedly he came in contact with Iran's proxy, Hezbollah. Matar at his arraignment before the Chautauqua County Court, in Melville, NY [plead](#) not guilty to attempted murder, assault.

Rushdie has survived this latest ordeal, but with significant life-threatening injuries including the use of one eye. Rushdie had authored *The Satanic Verses*, which has been condemned as an act of heretical apostasy and a fatwa issued by the Iranian Shia Ayatollah Khomeini in 1988 with a reward of \$3.5 million for his death. Since then, Rushdie's Japanese translator of [Satanic Verses](#) was killed, and others were attacked. Rushdie had to assume a new identity and was provided with protection by the British government. That did not stop his authoring other acclaimed works including a memoir about his protective experience under the assumed name, [Joseph Anton](#).

Given these developments, we reached out to Dr. Mark Christian—an assumed name—founder and executive director of Global Faith Institute Ministries. He is by training a medical specialist in obstetrics and gynecology who attended to the wife of current Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. He is the author of a recent book, [Apostate: My Search for Truth](#),



who survived a similar near-death experience in a bombing attack after he left Islam and converted to Christianity. The attack was prompted by a death Fatwa issued by members of his family. His father and uncle are prominent leaders of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as well as medical specialists and lawyers.

In this discussion we delve into his perilous experience leaving Islam and what triggered his own spiritual transformation and adoption of Christianity as well as his vigorous defense of Israel. We also address the impact of the Abraham Accords in the Middle East, the necessity of Palestinians confronting the facts on the ground regarding Israel, the surprising Sunni Middle East and Gulf emirates concerns about US defense in the face of Iranian nuclear hegemonic ambitions and the rising coalition of Putin's Russia, Iran and China, the latter significantly involved with using investment in infrastructure across Eurasia, Africa, and Israel.

What follows is our discussion with Dr. Mark Christian.

Jerry Gordon: I'm Jerry Gordon, the senior editor at *New English Review*. We have on this occasion, Dr. Mark Christian. He is the founder of Global Faith Institute Ministries. He is the author of an interesting historical memoir called *The Apostate: My Search for Truth*, which tells the story of his spiritual journey from Islam to Christianity and a God of love. Dr. Christian, we've recently had the outrageous, shocking, attempted murder of author Salman Rushdie by a 24-year-old Lebanese from New Jersey who recently traveled to his home country and engaged with the Hezbollah. What is behind that?

Mark Christian: What's behind that? Thank you for much for having me, with you and your readers. It has been so long, and I always enjoy our discussions together. I appreciate the opportunity and hopefully we will do it again soon. What is



behind this is very simple. Sharia law dictates that if anybody offends the prophet Muhammad, offends Islam, and leaves the faith, he should be killed. There are verses in the Quran that state whoever is fighting Islam and Muhammad should be killed. And there is a very graphic description of how that person's supposed to be killed.

The Hadith—the sayings of Muhammad outside of the scripture—says whoever leaves the religion is supposed to be killed. Salman Rushdie, by the way, mentioned a story that actually is documented into the teachings of Islam and Islamic history and books about an incident when Muhammad had an encounter with some of the non-believers. Rushdie wrote the novel about that which is declared as an apostasy and an act of offense to Muhammad and a challenge to the faith, especially as he came from a Muslim background himself. They effectively declared him non-Muslim who committed the act of apostasy and committed all the crimes I mentioned. Rushdie offended the Prophet Muhammad and Islam. He offended Allah—God—according to Islam. He offended and challenged the legitimacy of the Quran.



Witnesses react to attack on author Salman Rushdie at Chautauqua Institute, August 12, 2022

As a Muslim criticizing Islamic doctrine, he was declared an apostate and now he has the punishment to endure. That is the kind of fatwa, which is like an edict or a verdict coming from an Islamic leader. The head of the Shiite Muslims in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, issued a Fatwa in 1988 after the publication of *The Satanic Verses* to take the life of Salman Rushdie. Salman Rushdie endured a lot of pain, hiding and threats of assassination attempts on him throughout the years because of that. Last weekend, a young Shia Muslim from New Jersey, Hadi Matar, decided that it was about time to follow on the Fatwa verdict to attack him and kill him as an act of abiding with Sharia law in an act of Islamic jihad. This is what is behind it. But the assassin himself has a very interesting background. He grew up in the United States, having been born here, in New Jersey, and was respected and loved by many of his peers and friends.

People said that he is a very polite, very soft spoken and seemed like a regular guy. But then his mother said that he went back to Lebanon and when he came back, and he did what he did. Well, we have to look at what is going on. Is it really following only Islamic Sharia law? Why did he do this act today? And what is the relationship to Hezbollah, which is a Shiite military proxy of Iran in Lebanon try to prove themselves by fighting with Israel at any cost confronting the United States? Hezbollah funding and legitimacy comes largely from Iran. Lebanon itself is in turmoil. It seems something happened to Rushdie's assassin while in Lebanon, according to the mother of the perpetrator. He had some kind of encounter there and that changed him. He may have received a commissioning from somebody within Hezbollah to undertake this heinous act. I don't know. You don't know. I don't think anybody knows for sure. He came from Lebanon and ended up in a planned assassination attempt on the life of Rushdie,

violating United States law committing an act of terrorism on United States soil. While he is claiming that he is not guilty, he committed this act, backed by Islamic Sharia law.

Jerry Gordon: Has anything happened in your past background equivalent to that?

Mark Christian: If you read my memoir, you'll understand that the act of apostasy is the worst act in Islam. I grew up a Muslim in Egypt, spent almost 20 years as a very religious Muslim child and young man. Then I left Islam and I became a Christian in 2003, after 11 years of wandering between Islam and Christianity. In my book, I mentioned what happened to me when I decided to challenge Islam. I did not challenge Islam out of arrogance or out of need to get publicity. As a matter of fact, I was challenging Islamic religious history and legitimacy and because I was so religious and so adherent to Islam that I wanted to bring it to everybody who is not Muslim. So, I faced the consequences of doing that as well. In my book there is a specific incident in 2003 that I faced similar attack on my life and even worse actually. By the grace of God, I'm alive today. And it's a miracle, to be honest with you. The worst thing about it was it was one of the closest people to me who committed the attack on me. So, it was not somebody who went to Lebanon who did this. I knew who attacked me from a very personal perspective.

Jerry Gordon: That is an amazing, background for our listeners to ponder what is going on in our midst. Why is Iran going out of its way right now, trying to build an assassination team here in the US, giving threats against former Trump officials, whether it's former national security advisor, John Bolton, or former Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo? The FBI have also captured Iranians on their way to kill dissidents and US citizens here. Why is Iran doing this?

Mark Christian: I know everybody's busy looking at the turmoil and polarization that is happening in the United States while

not learning from recent history. I would like to give the background of where we are at today. During Obama years, the Iranians were living in their heyday. Iran was very happy with the nuclear deal that they struck with the United States and Europe because it was going to open their market. It was really a very lucrative deal for the Iranians. It was a very prosperous thing, from different perspective. The reality was that it was not in the best interest of anybody other than their Iranians. And they know that, and they were so happy with the JACOP deal. Then Trump came in and he tossed this deal out of existence. On top of that, he ordered the assassination of Iranian Revolutionary Guards Commander, General Soleimani. This shocked Iran beyond belief. All of a sudden, they were facing a different kind of the United States. And they were put in place during the Trump administration for those four years, but without making and creating a lot of noise. Today, with Trump out of office, there were celebrations in Iranian streets—even before the US election of 2020—because Trump is gone. I'm not talking about if Trump was good or bad. However, he was the very worst-case scenario for the Iranians. They hated him because he slashed this lucrative deal—that, and the assassination of Soleimani. You have to understand Soleimani was not just a regular military leader. He was very confident and he was doing a lot of damage to the West and the United States behind the scenes. He had the legitimacy of being part of the Iranian Islamic regime. In many ways he was worse than Osama bin Laden. While he was officially acting as a legitimate leader of the Iranian regime, he was a terrorist. So now the Iranians are looking at the current circumstance of the United States and celebrating.

They want to retaliate for many reasons. Primary among them is continuing their grip on their own people in Iran. They want to attack the United States that killed their top military leader. The message they to convey is "We are not weak. We are strong, We will retaliate." So, this is why they announced their assassination program targeting American officials who



were involved with the killing of Soleimani at Baghdad airport. At the top of the list was former President Trump. They included Mike Pompeo, the previous Secretary of State, whom I loved dearly, and John Bolton, who was national security advisor to Trump at the time. They think that John Bolton and Mike Pompeo were the ones who orchestrated the assassination of Soleimani. They effectively said, "You killed our Soleimani, we will kill everybody who did this," and they're trying to intimidate the United States. We put out the "deck of cards" of the top leaders of Islamic terrorism, after 9/11, including Al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden, and anyone who commit acts of terror against the United States. And we offered rewards for information leading to "neutralizing" them. So, Iran is trying to do the same. *"If United States is so powerful, we are powerful too! And we put the names on the Iranian deck of cards calling for their heads: Trump, Mike Pompeo, and Bolton."* And this is what they're trying to do. And now, they are engaged in the new nuclear talks with the United States and Europe and know they're coming to the table from a position of power.

Their nuclear program advancement is vast. Iran knows that Europe is dying to have a relationship with the Iranian regime because they are looking at Iran as an amazing opportunity for Europe to expand their financial and economic power and benefit from expansion of markets in Iran that has been behind the curtain for years. So, they look at this as an unbelievable financial opportunity for Europe. The Iranians know that they are beholden to the Chinese. Just a year ago, China announced they were going to invest \$400 to \$800 billion in Iranian infrastructure, primarily in their oil and energy sectors. So, they are coming to the table with a lot of power on their side, and they want to prove themselves as regional leaders.

The Iranians want to position themselves to thwart Trump's legacy of the Abraham Accords, where you had Arab nations like

United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and possibly Saudi Arabia normalizing and trading with Israel. Even Egypt, that had a long cold peace with Israel, has improved its strategic relations with the Jewish nation. All of those nations that were sworn enemies of Israel, are building their relationship with Israel. In the eyes of Islam that looks like a weakness. All of sudden Sunni regimes are working with the archenemy of Islam: Israel, and the Zionists. These are the top Sunni governments and regional leaders. So, the Iranians want to prove themselves as the legitimate leaders of Islam today because all other Muslims are dealing under the table with their enemies and losing their faith.

Iran is trying to project itself as a leader in the Islamic world by posing the biggest threat to Israel, while opposing other Muslim countries trying to keep a strong grip on their own people. They know they are coming into the table from a position of strength because they have what Europe and the United States needs. That is their perspective at the Vienna negotiations table. They have no regard toward this current administration in the United States whatsoever. They know that Obama was appeasing them and now Biden is bending backward to do whatever it takes to make them happy so they can sign the deal with him. That is what is going on the Middle East that may impact global oil and gas prices including the United States today.

Jerry Gordon: We had an incident recently concerning President Mahmoud Abbas, a corrupt leader by every stretch imaginable, accusing Israel of committing "40 Holocausts" against the Palestinian people. That was roundly criticized criticism by the German Chancellor Scholz and Secretary of State Blinken. Abbas quickly backtracked. What does that say about the increasing irrelevance of the Palestinian authority in context of normalization Israel's relationships with the Sunni emirates and Kingdoms who signed the Abraham Accords?

Mark Christian: I want to highlight something. You said that

he's a corrupt leader. Abbas is not only corrupt, he is a terrorist as well. He was the one who financed the Munich Olympic attacks that took the lives of 11 Israeli athletes in 1972. He may be the only President who was elected for a four-year term now serving in his 17th year in office. He may appear with foreign officials on TV, travel the world, and speak at the UN, (but if) he financed the Munich terrorist attack and never regretted that, then he's a terrorist in my opinion. Go back to history and look at what's happening in Israel and the Palestinian authorities: the continued fight between the Palestinian leadership between Abbas, the head of the PLO, and Haniyeh and others who are leaders of Hamas and the two split factions of Palestinians. Abbas is trying to be relevant. After years of oppression and being marginalized by even Saudi Arabia and by the Trump administration, Abbas is in a weak position. President Biden during his recent visit to Israel decided he was going to visit Abbas without any commitments from Israel. Biden's visit gave Abbas the legitimacy that is not deserved. Biden complicated matters by announcing he was going to resume funding that Trump administration cut off for the PLO because it was not going to the Palestinian people, it was going into the pockets of terrorist leaders. Biden announced \$400 million dollars of funding for humanitarian aid, on top of resuming other assistance. All of a sudden Mahmoud Abbas starts feeling like he is legitimate and relevant again. Even Muslim leaders like Mohammed bin Salman told him you have to join with us, or you are out. Now he is trying to act like he is the legitimate. Incredibly, Mr. Biden—President of United States—told Abbas in a press conference that, I sympathize with you. He said that he is from an Irish background. And he thinks that the sufferings of the Palestinian people are very similar to the suffering of the Irish people in Northern Ireland under the leadership of UK Prime Minister Thatcher. That may have emboldened Abbas to say, "Well, I think we have suffered multiple holocausts." He's trying to make Israel—the Zionist movement and the Jewish people—criminals and trying to

criminalize every act Israel is doing. It is irresponsible and very offensive. I think him as an illegitimate leader with a terrorist background. I think if the Palestinians need a future of peace and acceptance, they need to elect and appoint new leaders who will speak for their own good and legitimacy of the time that we live in by accepting the facts on the ground. That means striving for a real peace and not a fake one filled with hate that causes nothing other than bloodshed. Palestinian leaders, whether PLO or Hamas, only advocate fighting for more bloodshed and nothing else.

Jerry Gordon: There's been a revelation in a new book that President Trump may have drafted a letter permitting Israel to annex sections of the West Bank. There were three areas designated under the failed Oslo Accords of 1993, A, B, and C. A was allocated for the Palestinian authority, B was a mixed area, and C was completely Jewish. Now there are well in excess of 500,000 to 600,000 Israelis living in what a lot of us call Judea and Samaria. Is annexation of those areas of the West Bank something that was lost with the end of the Trump administration?

Mark Christian: I'm not very familiar with the specifics you're talking about. In theory, the idea of giving out land for peace or violating the lives of Israelis has proven to be a failed policy that has not worked. Since the Palestinian leaders want nothing other than elimination of Israel altogether, there is no amount of land that will ever satisfy their call other than the complete destruction of Israel. That is not, in any case, a deal that can be struck. I think this is the theory behind giving land for peace. It does not work and it never worked and it will never work. It did work, by the way, actually only in Egypt, because Egypt was not calling for the end of Israel. They were calling for control of Sinai. So, it did work in that case. Looking at ending the Israel and Egypt conflict giving back Sinai to have peace was completely different. The Egyptians wanted to have control of Sinai so

they can have peace with Israel. The Palestinian leaders—whether Gaza or Hamas—they're asking for one thing, complete elimination of Israel. There is no land that will satisfy their hunger for blood.

Jerry Gordon: Do you think the solution for the Palestinians lies across the Jordan River?

Mark Christian: I do believe a hundred percent that the solution for the Palestinian people, who have suffered a lot, would be for them is to elect honest leadership that looks out for the best interests of the Palestinian people, not for their own selves. It has to be based on what is really happening today on the ground—not what happened in '48, '56, '67 or '73—but on Israel, the Arab world, and the current status of the Palestinians. If they have leadership that is looking after them then you may see this problem resolved.

The Trump administration was attempting to go beyond Abbas, Hamas, and Haniyeh to present the facts on the ground, by settling the status of Jerusalem, the status quo of everything going on, and to try to push the Palestinians to pick a new leader to bring real peace. It's time for them to stop this bloodshed, stop the extravaganza of funerals and display of dead bodies. It is about time for them to concentrate on education, healthcare, prosperity, business, and trade. Things that actually matter in this life because the Palestinian people are talented people, Palestinian people can actually contribute to the world that we live in a very positive way. Enough of the bloodshed. It is time to look for real peace.

Jerry Gordon: You've written extensively and talked about the rise of the Chinese threat. Not only with regard to Iran, as you said previously, but also in a number of less-developed countries, particularly in Africa. How dangerous is it for US national security interests?

Mark Christian: I'm not sure if we actually have lost the



battle or we still have any hope left. The Chinese example is a very inspiring, but I do hate it at the same time because they are threatening the very existence of the United States as a deciding factor in the world that we live today. I find solace and I find peace into the leadership of America in the world. Let me make that clear. America is the best that humanity has ever had. Doesn't mean that it is perfect, because humans are not perfect, but it is the best country in the world. The leadership of China is not going to be equal or even close to the leadership of the United States in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Chinese Communist Party has a plan to achieve global economic supremacy. They are working very hard and tirelessly to execute their plan Their objective to control the sources of raw materials for their industrial revolution, technology, markets, and trade.

They are doing an unbelievable job in succeeding in every front. It has taken only 40 years for China to become competitive with the US. I think it's about time for the United States to realize try to put America back in its former global leadership. If China was able to do it in 40, to 50 years, I think with the national commitment to get back of track, we may be able to regain that former leadership in less than 10 to 20 years. This is what we need to do today. To answer your question, China today has enormous control of Africa. They are in control of mining, natural resources, and influencing regimes. They are not doing it the old way by occupying or sending aid. No, they are doing it as investors. They are pouring their money to control without shedding blood, but they know how to do things and they are doing it right. They have so much control right now over the Middle East.

As you know, China just issued a warning, a warning to Israel yesterday. Saying that, "If you are going to abide with the United States directives, we going to pull our investment out of Israel," Israel doesn't want that to happen. To see that

much control and boldness of China today, it tells you where the Chinese are. The Chinese are not only powerful and controlling of Africa, but the Middle East, and Europe. They have investment, enormous investment in United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Turkey. The list goes on. Even before the fall of the Afghanistan to the Taliban last August, China invested in mining in the Hindu Kush region, something that we should have taken advantage of. Afghanistan has unbelievable treasure of minerals like rare earths and lithium in high demand for manufacturing batteries for electric vehicles and electricity storage.

I wish that we could stop the divisions in the United States of America, and to try to look at the future of generations to come, instead of looking for a fight over agendas. We should start looking at how we can pick up the pieces, put a plan together and resume our leadership because every American needs it. The whole world benefit from it as well. American leadership is the best that humankind ever had. We should resume our leadership instead of leaving it in the hands of Socialist and Communist dictatorships that will devour nations and spill more blood than we can imagine.

Jerry Gordon: Putin has tripped himself up with his war in Ukraine. Iran is providing him with resources and technology at this point in time. Is that going to be a fool's errand for him?

Mark Christian: No, it's not. As a matter of fact, he's making a fool out of the United States. The United States is the one who's suffering the most from this war. The Russians are not. We and the West are suffering the most from all the sanctions. To make it clear, it is not only the Iranians who are helping the Russians. The Saudis, Egypt, and Israel are also helping the Russians. When Biden went on his Middle East trip, begging the Arab nations to take the side of the West and the United States in this fight, they told him a resounding "No." That message was conveyed behind closed doors. The Arab nations do

not look upon the United States today as a country that has their backs on security issues. In the world of reality, if you're not powerful enough economically and militarily, you have no say in the game. Western media outlets are trying to portray Putin fighting for his life, fighting cancer. That has nothing to do with the reality.

Unfortunately, Putin is going to fulfill his plan in Ukraine. Both China and Iran back him. Most European nations are finding it difficult to implement the sanctions against Russia proposed by NATO alliance and the US. NATO member Turkey is buying Russian oil in rubles. Saudi Arabia is working hand-in-hand with the Russians in communications. This is the emerging coalition opposing the United States and Europe. The coalition working against the United States and Europe consists of most of the key players in the Middle East, China, Iran, and Russia. The US-led NATO alliance is being challenged by this emerging coalition that presents a big problem threatening the world that we live in.

Jerry Gordon: Before we end this discussion, I'd like you to address a topic that is in your book, *Apostate*. It is the key moment that led you on your search for truth. It was your father's retelling in the presence of his brother, your uncle, and you about an experience he had on a train with a skeptical European. How was that significant in terms of igniting your search for truth about Islam and directing you towards a God of love?

Mark Christian: Yes, thanks for bringing this up. My dad was coming back from Europe, where he was visiting a few countries, and we had a regular talk between the three of us. My uncle and dad were talking about his experience over there. I was always very interested in what was happening on matters of politics and religion. I joined this setting as a person who was on fire for his own faith in Islam. I heard the story of this man that my father met on the train who questioned Islam. I don't know his name. Hopefully, maybe one day I would

love to meet him who challenged my father and our faith. I was angry that my father did not respond back with vigor and truth to convince this man that he was wrong, and Islam was right. That challenged me to personally investigate the foundation of doctrinal Islam and Sharia Law that my dad never did.

By undertaking my personal investigations into the origins and doctrines of Islam, I thought I would find the basis to convince them of the truth of Islam, Muhammad, and the Quran. The outcome was completely opposite of what I thought. I learned a lot from that experience, and I continue learning. I would encourage people to read my spiritual transformation story in my memoir, *Apostate*. Because you never know what difference you can make when you stand up for the truth. You have no idea what kind of impact it will have on a person in front of you or someone thousands of miles away. And what kind of future that it will bring encouraging others to fight hard for what they believe in. Not by bloodshed, but by reason in the marketplace of ideas, and advocacy for peace, love, and a better future for all.

Jerry Gordon: Having said that, where can our readers find more information about you and the Global Faith Institute Ministries?

Mark Christian: They can go to our website, Global Faith Institute and [globalfaith.org](http://globalfaith.org) where they can find all the information they need. Or they can go to Google, just search on Dr. Mark Christian, and they can get some more information. We used to have a weekly radio and TV program. We are in the process of making that happen again—not as a radio program, but as a podcast and TV show. I would love people to tune in to work together to present our ideas and do better things. You can find my book *The Apostate: The Search for Truth* at major outlets like Amazon or Barnes & Noble or any bookstore near you.

Jerry Gordon: On that note, Dr. Mark Christian, thank you for

this important discussion. Thanks very much.

Mark Christian: Thank you very much for the opportunity.

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Jerry Gordon is a Senior Editor of *The New English Review*, author of [The West Speaks](#), NERPress, 2012 and co-author of [Jihad in Sudan: Caliphate Threatens Africa and the World](#), JAD Press, 2017. From 2016 to 2020, he was producer and co-host of [Israel News Talk Radio-Beyond the Matrix](#).

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