

Why are Muslims Coming to Jesus Like Never Before?

PREPARED FOR THE GOSPEL

Devout Muslims pray Sura One¹ every day, reminding themselves of God's sovereignty, the day of judgment, and the importance of finding their Straight Path.² Most of the prophets they embrace are covered in more detail in the Bible than the Qur'an, and the Qur'an encourages them to seek additional insight from the "former books." As Christians reach out to Muslims with the love of God, praying for and with them, and utilizing stepping stones from the Qur'an, the Holy Spirit is working among them like never before.



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UNPRECEDENTED BREAKTHROUGHS

Elsewhere in this issue of *Mission Frontiers* (MF) David Garrison details the global scope of Muslims embracing Jesus, and Ben Naja reports on two specific movements.

I personally saw God working last summer as our family joined Greater Europe Mission (GEM). We helped catalyze a T4T (Training For Trainers)³ movement among Muslim refugees in one of Europe's gateway cities. Ten months later those continuing the work report that four spiritual generations of Muslims have entered God's Kingdom, learned to effectively share the Gospel, and won and trained others to do so as well.

As this MF goes to press our family is heading to another European country to introduce Any-3⁴ in a similar effort. Through such cross-pollination, Disciple-Making Movements are multiplying and being refined to bear much fruit.

Toward discovering the various factors involved, I have informally surveyed a wide variety of friends whose lives are devoted to ministry among Muslims. The following compilation invites your interaction on the MF website.

CONVERGENCE OF INFLUENCES

In God's providence, a variety of factors are leading Muslims to Jesus at an accelerating pace:

- **Intercession:** Christians are increasingly uniting to pray for Muslims.⁵
- **Qur'anic verses about Jesus & the Bible:** According to Ben Naja's article in this issue of MF, "Jesus" references are the primary factor in the movements he researched.
- **Exposure to Scripture:** Muslims are taking increasing advantage of their growing access to God's word.
- **Loving Initiative from Christians:** Friendship with Muslim neighbors is proving an important bridge for the Gospel.
- **Kingdom Focus:** Many Muslims are more open to meeting the King and entering God's kingdom than to identifying with the depravity of Western culture by becoming "Christians."
- **Miracles, Dreams, and Visions:** God is intervening sovereignly and powerfully in



the lives of Muslims, especially as Christians pray with Muslims for their needs in the name of Isa al Masih (Jesus the Messiah).⁶

- **Laborers:** God is raising up laborers from China, the Philippines, Brazil and Africa—as well as from North America.⁷ China’s “Back to Jerusalem” movement alone is attempting to field 100,000 laborers, with many heading to the Muslim world.⁸
- **Muslim-Background Believers (MBBs):** Thousands who have received the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus now carry a burden for their own people.
- **Disciple-Making Movements (DMMs):** Christians are learning to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in catalyzing DMMs rather than just winning a few individuals.
- **Discovery Models of Ministry:** Christians are also learning to enjoy fruitful interaction with Muslims through such effective, non-confrontational approaches as *Bible Storytelling*,⁹ *Discovery Bible Study*,¹⁰ *Any-3*, *Sowing God’s Kingdom*, and *Path of the Prophets*.¹¹
- **Boldness:** Fear of Islam is giving way to love and understanding through a variety of excellent training options.¹²

TERRORISM

When bin Laden orchestrated the 9/11 attacks, he had no idea how this would open the hearts and minds of Muslims who would be stirred to wonder: “Is violence at the heart of Islam?”

Many Muslims want to answer, “No,” and are troubled by Qur’anic passages advocating violence and by their terrorist cousins’ continuing attacks on innocent bystanders.

The zealots of Jesus’ day sought to advance God’s kingdom through violence, providing a stark contrast for Jesus’ teachings: “Love your enemy,” “Turn the other cheek,” “Forgive us ... as we forgive ...,” “My kingdom is not of this world [or] my followers would fight,” etc.

Many Muslims—even “fundamentalist” Muslims—now

welcome discussion of Jesus, and a growing number are becoming fervent followers of the Prince of Peace.


GLOBALIZATION

The Muslim world is torn between modernization and traditionalism.

Some Muslims seek refuge from the moral decay of the West in the religious clarity of Sharia law. But many Islamic countries have weak economies, totalitarian leaders, and a rigid social hierarchy incompatible with the aspirations of the educated, growing, Muslim middle class.

These tensions are moving unprecedented numbers of Muslims into historically Christian communities. God is orchestrating this migration: “so that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him” (Acts 17:27). When isolated peoples relocate, Christians have a fresh opportunity to show hospitality, befriend them and lead them into God’s kingdom.¹³

GOD’S TIMING

Paul observed in Rom 11:25 that Israel had “experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.” As we follow God’s spirit to start discipling movements among all the Gentiles, perhaps God is lifting a hardening from the spiritual descendants of Ishmael in preparation for a great turning among the Jews as well. May it be so! 

¹ “In the name of God, the most gracious and merciful. Praise be to God, the Lord of the universe, the most gracious and merciful, Ruler of the day of judgment.

You are the one we worship; you are he whose help we seek. Guide us on the Straight Path, the path of those whom you have blessed, With whom you are not angry, who have not gone astray.”

² Muslims are taught that Islam is the straight path, that God is angry with the Jews, and Christians have gone astray. But the Holy Spirit is using a variety of approaches, including *Sowing God’s Kingdom* as described on p. 24, to lead Muslims into studying the Bible to discover their straight path.

³ See overview in the Jan/Feb 2011 MF www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/training-for-trainers-process. Get the book from ChurchPlantingMovements.com/bookstore.

⁴ Covered elsewhere in this MF.

⁵ Join 100,000 Christians in the annual *30 Days of Prayer for Muslim World* which coincides with Ramadan (starting July 9th), available through WorldChristian.com.

⁶ Mt 10:8, Lk 10:9

⁷ According to Dudley Woodbury, “The most significant missions development since 9/11 has been the increased number of students who want to be missionaries to Muslims.” Woodbury, Dudley 2011 “Muslim Missions: Then & Now: How a terrorist attack reshaped efforts to reach Muslims” in *Christianity Today*. September. ChristianityToday.com/ct/2011/september/muslim-missions.html.

⁸ Wikipedia.org/wiki/Back_To_Jerusalem_movement

⁹ SimplyTheStory.org

¹⁰ MissionFrontiers.org/issue/article/small-groups-that-have-the-dna-of-a-disciple-making-movement

¹¹ Covered elsewhere in this issue of MF.

¹² See footnote 6 on p. 16

¹³ The Nov/Dec 2012 issue of MF explores this.