

Islam Global Outreach

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today. Almost one in every five persons is Muslim. In the third millennium for the first time in history, Muslims will outnumber Christians. Islam is a religion of worship. Five times every day, each devout Muslim throws himself or herself down before God up to 34 times and prays. His or her head will touch the floor and repeat a declaration of faith which says:

“I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”

These committed people are growing and multiplying in number faster than any other religion in the world. And, surprisingly, Islam is growing fastest in the Western world. In the United States today, Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity. There are more Muslims today than Christian Methodists. The number of Muslims is growing at twice the speed of Christianity.

Since 1900, the number of Muslims has doubled every 24 years (maximum speed), or every 30 years (minimum speed). The first doubling took place from 1910 to 1944; the number doubled from 200 million to 400 million. The second doubling took place between 1944 to the year 1979; the number doubled from 400 million to 800 million. And the third doubling is happening right now. By 2003, the number had doubled from 800 million to 1.6 billion.

In the case of Christianity, sadly the story is different. Since 1900, the number of Christians doubled every 47 years (maximum speed) to every 65 years (minimum speed). The first doubling took place from 1900 to 1960. The number of Christians doubled from 560 million to 1.12 billion. The second doubling happened from 1960 to 2005, when the number of Christians doubled from 1.12 billion to 2.24 billion.

What does it mean?

First: It means that every time the number of Christians doubles, the number of Muslims doubles twice. Between the years 2027 and 2031, the number of Muslims will be more than the number of Christians.

Second: It means that the challenge ahead for the church is the greatest in history in the coming millennium. It seems that God is still giving us a chance to work harder for His Kingdom in the coming years.

Many people consider the growing numbers of Muslims, and the fast spread of Islam, to present a threat to the Church and Christianity. Some go so far as to think it threatens the Western world or even the whole world.

Time magazine, in April 16, 1979, said about the growing number of Muslims in the world: “Islam is the world’s youngest universal faith and the second largest, with 750 million adherents, to about 985 million for Christianity. Across the eastern hemisphere but primarily in that strategic crescent that straddles the crossroads of three continents, Muslims are rediscovering their spiritual roots and reasserting the political power of the Islamic way of life. Repelled by the bitter fruits of modernization and fired by a zealous pride in its ancient heritage, the Umma (world community) of Islam is stirring with revival. The West can no longer afford to ignore or dismiss the living power of the Prophet’s message.”

Alarmed, some went too far and wrote alarmist books and magazines warning the world to beware of Islam and the Muslims. Some tried to cast all Muslims as terrorists and fanatics who have come to kill and destroy the non-believing world.

Many people fall for that, because we want to believe what the media and other people say. However, Islam does not represent a threat to the Church. It represents a CHALLENGE to the Church of Jesus Christ and for every believer who takes the Great Commission seriously.

When you think that more than a fifth of the world today are Muslim, and look at them with the eyes of Jesus Christ, we feel love and compassion toward them. More than a fifth of the world deserves a chance to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We can not convert anybody to Christ, because conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet, our obligation is to share the Good News with every one and pray that the Holy Spirit will open their hearts.

Why Share The Gospel With Muslims?

The answer is JESUS, Jesus loves the whole world including the Muslim world. When the Bible tells about the love of the Father in John 3:16 the Bible says: “For God so loved the world that He gave His One and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but will have eternal life.”

God loved the WORLD, the first world, the second world and the third world. And we are obligated as His children to share His love with everyone in the world. And when Jesus died on the cross, He died to save the whole world. The Salvation of Christ became available to everyone in the whole wide world who can believe in Salvation by the grace of God. Jesus came to the world to save the lost, and as He loves you and me, He loves all our Muslim brothers and sisters. He died for them as He died for us. Not only that, but He commanded us in the Great Commission to go to the whole world and proclaim the Good News.

We, as Christian believers, enjoy free Salvation by the blood of Jesus. We have to share what we have tasted with others. As we experience the forgiveness of God through the work of Christ on the Cross, we have to tell others who are searching for the right path.

Looking at the world through Jesus’ eyes, it will look different. Start looking to the Muslim world in a different way. Look at them with the love of Jesus. Think what is going to be their eternal fate if they do not accept Christ, for how can they listen without someone like you or me sharing with them?

Surprise!!

Most people think that all Arabs are Muslims and all Muslims are Arabs. This is not true. Six out of every seven Muslims are NOT Arabs. And not all Arabs are Muslims, because a large number of Christians live in the Arab world, especially in Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

More than half of all Muslims live in Asia. Countries like Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran and the former Soviet Union have more Muslims than the Arab world. Most of these people are found in what we call the 10/40 window. They are the most needy people in the world for hearing the message of Salvation and Forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Why Is Islam Growing?

As I have demonstrated, the number of Muslims is increasing more rapidly than the number of

Christians. In some cases and some countries, the number of Christians is in decline and the number of Muslims is rising. The question comes to mind, WHY?

I want to share with you two reasons for this growth. Islam is growing faster than Christianity not only in the Arab world, or in Asia, but also in places like Europe, America, Latin America and Australia for two simple reasons:

The first reason is BIOLOGICAL. As we know, Islam allows polygamy. A man in Islam has the right to marry up to four women at the same time!! The Qur'an, the Muslim Holy Book, says:
“Marry women of your choice, two, or three or four” (Surah 4: 3)

I always wonder why it did not start with one wife. The verse says “Two, or three or four.” The permission of the Qur'an encourages the number of Muslims to increase rapidly.

We also need to understand that according to this verse, a man can marry four women and divorce them, and marry another four, or divorce two and marry another two, but he cannot keep more than four at one time. This of course increases the number of children of every Muslim man, as well as the size of the Muslim family. Simply put, more wives generate more children.

The second reason is EVANGELISM. Islam is not growing only because of the biological rate, but also because many people are accepting and converting to Islam. According to the Los Angeles Times, in Southern California alone, there are one million Muslims and 55% are African American!

More people in the United States are converting to Islam or choosing Islam today than ever before. When we think of that large number of noted African Americans who have converted to Islam, we need to ask why?

I find four reasons.

- Some think that Jesus was a white prophet to the whites and that Muhammad was a black prophet to the blacks. This is not true!! Jesus was not white! Jesus only looks white in the movies, but in the real life, Jesus was from the Middle East. He had dark skin, not white and not black. In the same way, Muhammad was not black. He also was from the Middle East, and he had a dark skin but not black. But, many people still believe in the myths.
- Some would say that Christianity is the religion of the white people, and we need not forget that the white people took the Africans as slaves. This is partly true, but we have to understand that according to history, the Arabs were the first people to take Africans as slaves. I am not defending the white people for what they did, but I am saying that this has nothing to do with Christianity. But many African Americans believe it.
- American churches failed to open the door and present the love of Christ to the African Americans, which made them not only leave the church, but leave Christianity. A long time ago many churches were white only congregations with no blacks allowed inside the church. Even today, if you visit most of the big churches in America, look around. They are mostly white. This made many African Americans (and now some other ethnic groups as well) feel left out, so they left Christianity.
- Liberal teachings in the church today compel more people to leave the church and join Islam. As of now many churches are not preaching Christ and salvation. They preach social teachings and liberal theology. The Bible does not have authority in these churches, and they ignore the Word of God. This has offended many African Americans.

These four reasons drove many African Americans from the Church and Christianity into Islam. Of course not only African Americans but also people of all kinds have left the church and Christianity for Islam. Moreover, many Muslim countries spend great money to spread Islam, while many churches

have stopped supporting mission work.

As a result of the four reasons just mentioned (and some others) we have now in the United States “The Nation of Islam,” or the Black Muslim cult.

Aren’t Muslims Fanatical?

This is one of the questions many people frequently ask, and to be honest, I cannot understand why people keep asking this question. We need to overcome the stereotype. Everyone has heard about the Arabs and Muslims. The media, in the West often portrays the Arabs and Muslims as full of aggression and hatred. Because of that, many Christians think that all Muslims are fanatical and totally resistant to the Gospel, and therefore it isn’t worth trying to evangelize them.

But, let me answer that by saying it’s nonsense! There are over one billion Muslims on earth today. This figure alone suggests a huge opportunity even if only a small percentage are found to be receptive. It’s harvest time in the Muslim world!

The fact is that even though most of them live in societies in which sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a crime, more Muslims are coming to know Jesus Christ than at any previous time in history.

Islam is a religion that was founded by the warrior “prophet” Muhammad in the seventh century A.D. (the term translated “prophet” associated with Muhammad is better rendered “messenger” or proclaimer). The word Islam means “submission to Allah” (God).

Islam is a religious system that totally ignores the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Having been twisted out of Judaism and Christianity and having all the appropriate characteristics, Islam is unquestionably a huge and curious cult.

The Holy Book of Islam is the Qur’an. Many people assume that it is a sort of Arab version of the Bible, but it is far different from the Bible. Unlike the Bible, it has very little historical background within it. The Qur’an is also not prophetic and contains little of the apocalyptic writings associated with Christianity.

Five Important Facts

1. The Muslim Is A Human Being.

The Muslim is a human being that has spiritual, social and informational needs. Muslims are very devoted people who like to worship God. As with any human being, they have a gap in their hearts that can only be filled by Christ. Our task is to meet their spiritual need. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can fill this gap.

The Muslim needs to be loved and to love. No other religion can provide the love of Christ. That means that the communicator and every Christian should love his Muslim brother.

Dr. McGavran opens our eyes to an important point. He says:

“The great obstacles to conversion are social, not theological. A great turning of Muslims and Hindus can be expected as soon as ways are found for them to become Christian without renouncing their brethren, which seems to them a betrayal.”
(1970:215-216).

2. The Muslim is Born In The Image of God.

The Muslim is born in God’s image. He or she belongs to the same great grandfather, “Adam.” God

created the Muslim in His image and God wants him or her to be found.

Jesus came to earth to save the lost. Muslims are not our enemy; they are created in God's image and need more love and mercy. You need to deal with them as those to whom God sent His Son. God loves them, and wants them to be His sons. God wants them to be saved because He created them in His image and wants them to have relationship with Him.

3. The Muslim Is Active Not Passive.

The Muslim is active not passive. Sometimes we deal with Muslims as passive. We often think that they have to hear what we are saying and accept it without any obstacles or resistance. The Muslims interact with the message even if they choose to reject it. This means that they are active not passive. Charles Kraft has said,

“Receptors are active, even when they seem to be ‘just sitting there.’ They are not simply passive recipients of whatever is sent their way. They interact in a transnational process in which the results are negotiated on the spot rather than predetermined. Nothing compels receptors to interpret the message in the way intended by the communicator, though mutual trust and goodwill help a lot.”

They also give feedback, which can help in improving the message.

4. The Muslim Has Beliefs and Attitudes.

In dealing with Muslims as Muslims you will find them religiously oriented. They have beliefs which they have learned from childhood. And they practice them every day. These beliefs affect their attitude as well as their experiences. Their attitude can be positive or negative depending on their past experience and feelings.

5. The Muslim Has a Filter.

Every human being has a “filter” in his or her mind. This filter distills the knowledge and the message, so that he or she can accept it or refuse it. Every Muslim has a filter working, like a water filter. To communicate the gospel effectively, we have to consider the Muslim's filter.

Let us meet Tass, a former PLO leader.

Problems Facing the Great Commission Work in the Muslim World:

1. The price the Convert pays from his or her family and community
2. Dissipating the new convert in closed countries
3. Dealing with the convert who has more than one wife
4. The Muslim's world view, learning experience, beliefs, attitude and personality - all of them affect his or her way of accepting or rejecting the message