



RECONCILIATION REPORT

Avoiding Muslims

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African American Missionary Census

Wanted: African American missionaries currently serving, or intending to serve for at least two years in cross-cultural missions.

We're taking a census of these pioneers. Please let us know who and where they are by visiting www.RMNI.org

Thank you!

The Chattanooga Beer Board heard arguments opposing the sale of beer at a nearby convenience store. It probably would not help the community, and the increased traffic could become a magnet for drug dealing, as at a convenience store a block away that had been recently shut down. The applicant's name was "Jihad," further alienating me. He won the license by one vote, and although I've passed Jihad's store for many months, I didn't stop until recently. How can I advocate mission to Muslims and neglect this man? I don't like jihadists, but I don't reach out to non-violent Muslims either, who are probably ninety percent of the total.¹ I'm part of the problem.

Islam is the second largest religion, after Christianity, with 1.4 billion adherents as of mid-2008. It's growing at 1.8 percent annual rate, compared with Christianity's 1.3 percent growth (due to a higher birth rate).² There may be only 25,000 missionaries³ (about 5% of the total missionary force) trying to reach 1.4 billion Muslims, which translates into 5.7 missionaries per million Muslims. For comparison, Kenya receives 177 missionaries per million Kenyans.⁴ Of the twenty least-reached people groups in the world, fifteen of them are Muslim (the most-reached of them is .1% Christian).⁵

Why are Muslims considered so resistant to the Gospel? As former Muslim radical and now Christian evangelist Reza Safa has written, Muslims are not being converted because the Church has simply neglected that harvest field. It has not tilled, seeded and watered that ground.⁶ The head of a large Christian foundation that supports Muslim outreach says that Muslims have become open to Christ in the last twenty years in ways never seen before, even in countries such as Iran, where there are 100,000 converted Muslim Christians.⁷ It's perhaps because the Church has so neglected Muslim evangelism that Muslims coming to Christ as a result of dreams and visions is now commonplace.

The motive for reaching Muslims closest to heart is perhaps to neutralize fundamentalists and terrorists, thwarting their plans for global Islamic dominion. We could return our troops and decrease Homeland Security spending, helping our economy. Christ never commended evangelism to make the world a safer, more comfortable place. Christ warned us that we will be hated by all men for His sake (Matt. 24:9) and that He came to bring a sword which may divide one's family (Matt. 10:34). The peace He offers today is an inner peace.

Why has the church largely ignored Muslim lands? Historically, it has been an extremely difficult field. How do you lead people to Christ if, for their decision, they can be disowned by their family, beaten, jailed, raped and even killed for the honor of the family? Muslim doors have closed to "missionaries," and the Church has sent 72% of her missionaries to lands that are already evangelized. What movement

sends 72% of its force to controlled areas, while sending only 28% to some of the most difficult spiritual combat?

Avoiding Muslims

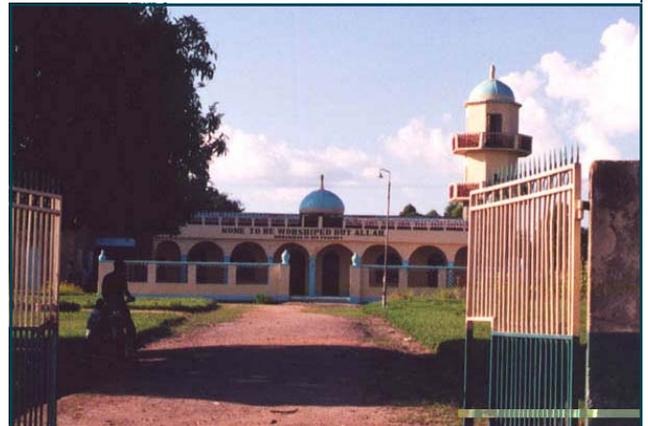
Particularly a Western/American missionary may be seen as an agent of a decadent, arrogant and unjust society.⁸ Islam lost its glory and was dominated by the West by the start of WWI.⁹ Today the technological and military gap is far greater between the West and Muslim countries than ever before. Muslims tend to blame the West for their low status and for supporting of Israel.¹⁰ How can a Western missionary gain a hearing? We may have to support non-Western missionaries, such as Father Zacharia, or support Western missionaries in promising tasks such as Internet and TV evangelism by satellite, such as the Al Hayat network in Egypt. Media allows anonymity to seekers. About 80% of Muslims live outside of Arab lands¹¹, and may be found in one of 52 countries¹², in some of which being Western is not as much of a liability as in the Middle East. I know of productive pioneer evangelism and church planting among African Muslims, involving Western missionaries.

What can we do to focus Christian resources to share Jesus Christ with Muslims? I want to try to befriend Jihad. In Safa's experience, we must love Muslims with the fear-destroying love of Christ, and we must be patient.¹³ On a local-church level, the options are many. First analyze where your mission dollars go. You may find, as I did, that the average foreign missionary our church supports serves in a country that is over 90% evangelized. We are in the process of re-focusing upon the unreached and the least reached, as we support new missionaries. Another church that supports almost fifty missionaries has reappraised her mission force and is now going to focus upon the 28% of the world that is unevangelized, as new missionaries are supported. Is your church reaching Muslims—or ignoring the mosques?

Here are some web resources to assist in reaching Muslims:

- <http://www.frontiers.org/>
- <http://www.pioneers.org/>
- <http://www.arabicbible.com/christian/missions.htm>
- <http://www.thequran.com/default.aspx?t=2>
- <http://islameyat.com/english/issues/issues.htm>
- <http://www.fatherzakaria.net/>
- <http://www.truthnet.org/islam/>
- <http://www.lifetv.tv/>
- <http://www.iam-online.net/>

Jim Sutherland



- 1 David Zeidan. "Sword of Allah: Islamic fundamentalism from an Evangelical perspective," p. 8, ISBN:1884543804
- 2 World Christian Database; David Barrett, Todd M. Johnson & Peter Crossing, "Missiometrics 2008: Reality Checks for Christian World Communions," *Int'l Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Jan. 2008, p. 30.
- 3 If there will be 458,000 foreign missionaries globally by mid-2008, there were only a total of 57,300 missionaries in 2005 to majority Muslim countries and to eight countries with at least 10 million Muslims. This is 12-13% of the missionary force. However, 41,000 of these missionaries work in those eight countries, and only "a very small percentage" of those 41,000 actually work among Muslims. If 20% of those 41,000 missionaries do work among Muslims (8,200), then the total would be about 25,000—a very rough estimate. See Todd M. Johnson and David R. Scoggins. "Christian Missions and Islamic Da'wah: A preliminary quantitative assessment," p. 4-5, in *Islam and Christianity: Contemporary mission insights*. Selections from the *Int'l Bulletin of Missionary Research*.
- 4 World Christian Database
- 5 World Christian Database
- 6 Reza F. Safa. *Inside Islam: Exposing and reaching the world of Islam*, p. 120, ISBN: 9780884194163.
- 7 http://www.iam-online.net/White%20Papers/IRAN_key_to_%20middleeast.pdf

8 Zeidan, pp. 15-16.

9 Heather J. Sharkey. "Arab Antimissionary Treatises: Muslim responses to Christian evangelism in the modern Middle East," p. 10. Selections from the *Int'l Bulletin of Missionary Research*.

10 Zeidan, p. 16.

11 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam>

12 Johnson & Scoggins, p. 4.

13 Safa, p. 136.



Friends and colleagues JC & Jan Upton have been missionaries to Papua New Guinea and South Africa, and were formerly at Cedine Bible Mission/Institute (Jim's Dean). Serving with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, they would love to assist you or your church with mission opportunities and counsel. Contact them at: jupton@pobox.com , 423-298-7421.

Missions Mobilizing Help



Greater Friendship MISSIONARY Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee (Pastor Reggie Poindexter) hosted her third annual missions conference in May. Richard Coleman, Director of Mobilization for The Mission Society, presented an excellent missions seminar. He can be reached at Richard@themissionsociety.org, 678.542.9040. Richard is partnering with RMNI in completing the African American Missionary census/survey.



Assistant Professor of Church History and friend Kevin Smith, of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY preached and lectured at Resurrected Baptist Church's first annual missions conference! Pastor Eddie D. Jacks, Chattanooga, Tenn., has led the church into missions for 11 years. RMNI assisted with conference planning. Rev. Smith also pastors at Watson Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville. He finds time for a wide conference ministry and can be reached at ksmith@sbs.edu

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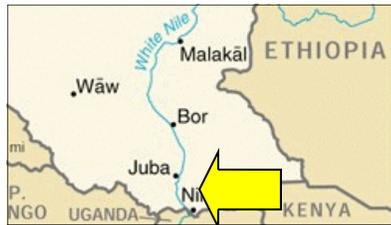
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Mobilizing the African American Church for Global Mission

www.RMNI.org

Southern Sudan/ Uganda Ministry, June 2008

1. We still have room on this ministry trip to Southern Sudan, if you hurry! Christians with gifts in teaching, preaching, evangelism and service are especially needed, as well as Christians with vocational medical skills. We'll also serve for three days in Uganda.
2. The fee is \$3,900. Please go to www.RMNI.org/1/sudan.html for complete information, and you may call 423-822-1091.



North India Ministry, September 2008

1. Our third India trip partners with a highly regarded ministry in Uttar Pradesh, NE India. Christians are 1.4% of the Uttar Pradesh population. Eighty percent of the populace is Hindu (World Christian Database). This too is an intensive ministry opportunity. Needed are Christians with teaching, preaching and service gifts, as well as those with medical competencies. Our Teams focus upon unity and intercultural friendship. Many take multiple trips with RMNI.
2. The trip fee is \$3500. See www.RMNI.org/1/india.html for more information.



Prayer and Praise



↑ We're very grateful for your help to make a way by prayer. Monique (Westside) was so pleased to tell us that she and her children joined a church in May! Please continue to pray for Christie to find a church. We also have three volunteers. Please pray for much wisdom as inner city evangelism and discipleship proceeds.

↑ To date we have five headed for Sudan and five to India. Please pray for missionaries, as there is still time to join either trip.

↑ Editing was completed in a timely way on the text mentioned in the last

Report—thanks!

↑ Two financial counselees are reporting very good progress.

↑ The Board gave solid direction at our brainstorming session. We'll continue to provide resources to African American mobilizers, to offer mission trips to under-served areas and develop our website.

↑ RMNi continues on a steering committee planning for the next African American Missions Strategy Seminar, Jan. 22 -24, 2009. Consider attending and pray for a

very helpful conference.

↑ Please pray that several of us will this year be able to locate all current African American missionaries serving for at least 2 yrs. Progress is quite slow so far.

↑ Please pray for Sudan ministry preparations, for the Spirit's anointing and covering, for energy, health and enduring fruit.

↑ Both sons-in-law face work-related challenges.

↑ To stay focused upon Jesus' priorities, for teaching opportunities and adequate prayer time.