

Reaching Muslims Through Media



By Tommy Hodum

In light of COVID-imposed restrictions, I recently asked myself, “How can we better reach the world’s 1.9 billion Muslims with an adequate witness of Jesus?” The task has sometimes found us trying to move a mountain with a spoon rather than a shovel! The question, then, is, “Are we using all the right tools to deliver the truth about Jesus to Muslims?”

The obvious response to the question is that we must be willing to employ a full-court press and use every media tool available in order to deliver the Good News of Jesus to every Muslim. This article will highlight the roles of traditional and social media being employed by missionaries in fulfilling the Great Commission to preach the gospel to the world’s 1.9 billion Muslims.

The Role of Traditional Media

While reading an article entitled, “Media and Technology: The Rainbow, the Ark and the Cross,” the following statement caught my attention: “Noah used the Ark, Moses used the staff, Nehemiah used the city wall, Jesus used mud for healing the blind—and God used the rainbow, the dove and the cross.” Initially, I thought it strange to list these biblical

“symbols” as media. In modern parlance, media is described as “the means of communicating information—such as radio and television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet, that reach or influence people widely.” As I pondered that definition, the words “to reach or influence people widely” caught my attention. The biblical symbols mentioned above were indeed means of “communicating and influencing.” That is exactly our goal at Global Initiative—to communicate the gospel to the Muslim masses in a way that influences them to consider the truth about Jesus.

When we think of traditional media, our minds go first to radio and television programs. Due to space limitations, this article will share the stories of just two powerful ministries that fit the “traditional” use of media to reach Muslims.

Al-Karma Television

Dr. Alex Hanna was born and raised in Egypt. After beginning his medical practice in Egypt, the Lord gave him a vision of working among lost people around the world. He had no idea how that would ever come to fulfillment. Meanwhile, Dr. Hanna became known as the doctor who prayed

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Until All Have Heard

How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? – Romans 10:14

Mark Brink

International Director
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Reaching Muslim Peoples



And the gospel must first be preached (published) among all nations. (Mark 13:10)

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matt. 24:14)

The Church has severely neglected world evangelization since the ascension of Jesus Christ. Believers have been consumed with personal comfort and advancement in this world rather than with the necessary personal sacrifice for the evangelization of the world. Only over the last 200 years has the Church made a significant push to spread the gospel to all the nations of the world.

Keep the following statistics about our world in mind:



- Over 1,600 people groups do not have an established church; 6,000 people groups with over 2 billion people still need the gospel
- Over 1.9 billion Muslims are without Christ; 86% of them have never met a Christian or owned a Bible
- Ninety percent of missions money goes to evangelize areas that already have an established church.

Jesus says the Gospel “must first” be published among all nations. William Lane calls this “a divine constraint” (*The Gospel of Mark*, 593). In God’s eschatological plan, the preaching of the gospel to all nations “must” happen “first” before the end of this age. This phrase, “must first,” indicates two important aspects of this call to world evangelism:

1. **It speaks to the primacy of the task.** Taking the gospel to all nations is the primary task of the Church. It is the driving motivation behind the existence of the Church and serves as the divine “why” or calling of the individual Christian and the corporate Church. It compels us to take the gospel to the neighbor next door and the Muslim in Jakarta, Indonesia. All people and nations, whether locally or globally, are our scope of evangelism.
2. **It speaks to the urgency of the task.** In the corresponding text, Matthew connects the preaching of the gospel in the whole world with the end of the age. We do not know when the Lord will come for His bride, but we know it will be in connection with a great worldwide evangelistic thrust. Time is limited and there is urgency to completing the task. “Must” is the same imperative used of Jesus’ calling by the Father to suffer and die on the Cross (Matt. 16:21; Luke 9:51). Nothing would deter Jesus from His calling of dying for the sins of the world. *Likewise, we must not let anything deter us from the task of taking this gospel to all nations.*

The lead article of this issue recounts some of the amazing ways in which Christians are using media to help accomplish the task of world evangelism. May the “divine constraint” of our Lord drive us to prioritize our lives and mission because the gospel “must first” be preached to all nations. Let us pray for Muslims and prioritize evangelism to Muslims before our Lord returns!

Muslim World News



Saudi Arabia: Blogger Imprisoned

Saudi blogger, Raif Badawi, who created and managed an online forum, was arrested in 2012, charged for “insulting Islam” and, subsequently, sentenced to ten years in prison and 1,000 lashes. He received fifty lashes in 2015. Badawi was released from prison in March after spending ten years behind bars, but he is still banned from travel for another ten years.—*Reuters*

Afghanistan: Taliban and Sharia Irony

Taliban authorities vowed to uphold the “Sharia rights” of Afghan women as human rights groups expressed concerns about the dire situation for Afghan women and girls under their rule.

Marking International Women’s Day, the Taliban Foreign Ministry said it was committed to addressing the plight of Afghan women within the framework of “the noble religion of Islam and our accepted traditions.”—*MSN*

Uganda: Evangelist Nearly Burned

Muslim relatives of a Christian evangelist beat and tied him up to be burned to death after he returned home for a funeral in eastern Uganda.

Malingumu Bruhan, 34, returned to Kaliro District for his grandfather’s funeral, and then accepted his uncles’ request to stay and visit.

“My uncle accused me of embarrassing them by holding Christian evangelistic, open-air meetings, and debates with Muslims,” Bruhan told *Morning Star News*. “He accused me

of being an infidel by converting to Christianity, and that Allah will reward them in Jannah [garden paradise] if they kill me.”

“They started beating me up as others gathered firewood, while another was sent to go for petrol because they wanted to use it to burn me alive,” Bruhan said.

Bruhan was saved when a friend, another convert from Islam, happened upon the scene and called police. An evangelist well-known in Mbale, Iganga, Jinja, and Kampala for his debates with Muslims about Christianity and Islam, Bruhan has survived eleven murder attempts.—*Morning Star News*

Nigeria: Priest Abducted

Joseph Aketeh, a catholic priest; a woman and two children have been abducted by gunmen who killed two people in a March attack on Kudendan, a suburb of Kaduna.

The gunmen were said to have come in large numbers, well-armed, and operated for over an hour as they moved from one location to another within the community.

“The terrorists were firing shots indiscriminately around the community. They went from one location to the other,” a source in the community said.

“It is like St John’s Catholic Church was one of their targets. They broke into the church and abducted Rev. Fr. Joseph Aketeh at his residence.”

“The guard went into hiding when he saw them, but as they were leaving with the priest, they sighted him and killed him. ... A woman and her two children were also kidnapped.—*The Cable*

Reaching Muslims

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for his patients. Sick Muslims heard of his “ministry” and regularly sought his help. Muslims said that if his prayer did not work, then they would ask for a prescription. Dr. Hanna recalls that he made little money because prayer worked and it was always free!

Dr. Hanna, his wife, and two daughters immigrated to the U.S. in 1990. Shortly thereafter he was offered the opportunity to participate in an Arabic TV ministry. This was the groundwork that would lay the foundation for a powerful worldwide Arabic TV ministry. In 2009, the Hannas gained appointment as Assemblies of God U.S. missionaries. Dr. Hanna began programming on the Al-Karma TV network with a potential audience of 350 million viewers on fourteen different satellites streaming 24/7. Dr. Hanna faithfully preached the gospel and felt strongly that a part of his call was to pray for the sick, especially Muslim seekers. He says, “Muslims are very hungry for someone to pray for them.”

A Redemption Miracle for Mahmoud

Muslim response to the Al-Karma telecasts has been nothing short of miraculous. Dr. Hanna recalls the day he received a call from a Muslim viewer named Mahmoud. Somehow Mahmoud lost \$2,500 that belonged to his kind Christian employer. He had no idea where he had lost the money and lamented, “I had absolutely no way to pay the debt.” One night, he saw Jesus in a dream and heard Him say, “You will find the money in a suitcase in a hidden part of the trunk of your car. I AM PAYING THE DEBT FOR YOU.” Mahmoud recovered the money and returned it to his employer. He immediately asked Dr. Hanna, “Why did Jesus pay my debt?” Dr. Hanna explained to him about “the debt of sin” that we all owe and cannot pay. Then Dr. Hanna asked him if he wanted to accept the greater gift of salvation. Immediately, without question or hesitation, Mahmoud said yes and entered the Kingdom of God!

A Healing Miracle for Fatima

Dr. Hanna’s audience knew that he faithfully prayed in the name of Jesus for Muslims to be healed. Fatima, a Muslim lady in Egypt, had a stage 4 cancerous tumor on her vocal cords. She could not speak clearly or swallow normally. Her doctors told her, “Fatima, you have no hope to live. We advise you to write your will. You have only two to three months of life.” Fatima was devastated but remembered seeing Dr. Hanna praying for the sick and asking God for miracles on the Al-Karma TV channel. She announced, “Before I write my will, I will ask Dr. Hanna to pray for me in the name of Jesus. I know he prays for the sick and they are

healed.” Fatima was so weak and debilitated that she was unable to personally contact Dr. Hanna and request prayer. A Christian friend in Egypt agreed to do it for her and called Dr. Hanna at Al-Karma and explained Fatima’s desperate condition. The friend simply asked, “Will you pray for her to be healed?” Dr. Hanna prayed a powerful prayer of faith and, two weeks later, Fatima was able to call him and discuss her miraculous healing. She could now speak and swallow normally. The most glorious outcome from this miraculous physical healing is that Fatima asked how she could give her life to the Lord. Dr. Hanna led her in the sinner’s prayer and now Fatima is healed both spiritually and physically.

ABNSat Television

Joseph Habibi, a Palestinian by birth, lived and faithfully ministered in Egypt for many years. His future wife, Pat, an Assemblies of God missionary, arrived in Egypt in 1982. Joseph and Pat were married in 1983, relocated to the United States in 1985, and became Assemblies of God U.S. missionaries in 1987. Originally, they moved to the metropolitan area of Detroit, Michigan, to work among Chaldeans. However, they eventually landed in a Muslim neighborhood in nearby Dearborn. Joseph and Pat became known in the community through a “Friends of the Book” club and regular outreaches conducted in public schools. Soon the Lord led Joseph to start a weekly six-hour radio program. Encouragement came in the form of huge numbers of responses to his programs. Joseph exercised a step of faith and made the leap to TV on a local cable channel. Telecasts were straightforward, consisting of Arabic music, a clear and powerful gospel message, and prayer.

For thirty years, Joseph has faithfully preached the gospel via ABNSat Television. Incredible numbers of viewers, especially Muslims, have heard the truth about Jesus. Joseph recently shared the following comments:

What a year! During the pandemic, the Islamic world has been unexpectedly open. Like everyone else, they were limited in their ability to move about—but I was amazed at how many Muslims tuned into our programs. Excited converts often call us while we are doing live programs; they want to share their testimonies. We are now reaching the Middle East and soon will begin broadcasting in India with its enormous Muslim population.

Muslims, especially in the Middle East, are tired of killing and mayhem. They are asking questions

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like, “What is there to look forward to in this life?” Through our media telecasts, we are able to address their questions, even the difficult ones, and give them hope in the person of Jesus Christ.

A strong point of our telecasts is the use of personal testimonies of Muslims who have accepted Jesus. Sometimes their stories are heartbreaking, but always inspiring. One brother told how radical Muslims reacted to his conversion. He said, ‘They broke numerous bones in my body, but I have remained strong in my faith.’ Today, God uses him on our programs to explain the differences between Islam and Christianity, and then testify as to why he chose to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The Role of Social Media

When thinking of media, we usually think of radio and television programs, but, of course, media also includes social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, etc. Without a doubt, social media has an incredible influence on our world today!

Social media usually refers to the “websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.” As opposed to traditional media (especially radio and television), let’s consider the role of social media in communicating the gospel to Muslims and *influencing* them to consider Jesus as Savior. A paper, entitled, “What Was the Role of Social Media During the Arab Spring?” provides helpful insights into the role of social media *as an influencer*. The authors looked back a decade, analyzed the data, and drew some conclusions that have powerful implications for missions. Here is an abbreviated version of their conclusions:

1. Social media played a central role in shaping political debates in the Arab Spring.
2. A spike in online conversations often preceded major events on the ground.
3. Social media helped spread the fervor for freedom across international borders.

In other words, as a result of using social media tools and resources, fervor for freedom spread across North Africa and the Middle East. In the world at present, a successful missions strategy must embrace a range of social media tools that will create a fervor for truth about Jesus Christ in the Muslim world.

What forms of social media are now being or could be used to accomplish that purpose? The answer: Every form available! We need to use every possible means to accomplish the task. The following list will challenge us to see how social media can by-pass barriers and restrictions and enable Christians to spread the life-giving truth about Jesus.

Potential Social Media Tools

- **Podcasts:** As of 2021, there are over 2 million podcasts and more than 48 million podcast episodes (Podcast Insights, 2021).
- **Emails:** In 2021, 4.03 billion people around the world use email. 319 billion emails are sent daily.
- **Facebook:** 2.85 billion active users
 - India, first in usage, has 310 million users while Indonesia has 190 million users;
 - Facebook accounts for over 45% of monthly social media visits;
 - More than 4 billion video views take place on Facebook every day.
- **WhatsApp:** The most popular global messenger app worldwide with 2 billion monthly active users.
- **Instagram:** 500 million people visit Instagram stories daily. Fifty-nine percent of the content are photo posts. Kazakhstan and Brunei were jointly ranked first and second with a reach of 72% and 71%! Advertisements on Instagram can reach 1.16 billion people.
- **Pinterest:** 442 million active monthly users; 75% are from outside the U.S. While there are 2 billion searches on Pinterest monthly, 600 million of them are visual searches.
- **Twitter:** 353 million monthly active users worldwide. The total number of tweets sent per day is 500 million. India ranks third in Twitter accounts worldwide.
- **LinkedIn:** 772 million users worldwide with 310 million using it monthly. 2 million posts, articles, and videos are published on LinkedIn every day. An ad on LinkedIn can reach 12% of the world’s population over thirteen years of age!
- **TikTok:** 850 million users worldwide with 167 million using it daily. 60% of all users are GenZ. TikTok is available in 154 countries and seventy-five languages. There are 100 billion average monthly video views on TikTok; 34% of TikTokers shoot daily.
- **Snapchat:** 250 million daily users; 57% of content generated by video views.
- **YouTube:** The second most visited website in the world! 1.3 billion people use YouTube. 300 hours of video are uploaded every minute. Five billion videos are watched

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on YouTube every single day. Eighty percent of YouTube views are from outside the U.S. YouTube is navigable in 76 different languages (95% of the internet population).

- Zoom: Hosts 300 million daily meetings!

Here are current samplings of testimonies and reports of the role of social media in influencing Muslims to know the truth about Jesus Christ:

- A ministry called “Freedom to Captives” uses Facebook and Instagram to reach Muslim women in the Middle East.
- Ministry teams on the islands of Sulawesi and Java, Indonesia, report a marked increase in the use of online media in reaching Indonesian Muslims.
- Muslim Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians, and Libyans are regularly responding to Arabic gospel programs via the internet.
- An Arabic media ministry team in the Middle East reports: “We praise God for the huge number of Muslims who are connecting with us via social media.”
- Muslims are accessing online Arabic resources provided

by a Christian library service. Over a thousand Arabic digital books have been downloaded.

While social media can be debilitating and dangerous—consuming time and talent for the wrong reasons—it also has incredible potential to spread the gospel. Social media has been described as “a gift from God to be used to bring Jesus to hurting masses.” One example comes from the Philippines where the reach of social media is extraordinary. The latest Global Digital survey revealed there are 67 million internet and active social media users in the country, with 62 million Filipinos using social media on their mobile devices.

An anonymous website designer and social media manager for Philippine-based Areopagus Communications shares personal insights into the evangelistic tool of social media:

I felt a deep calling to online evangelism. The Lord let me know that the digital world is where the skills He gave me could best be used. As a web designer, I realized the huge potential of utilizing online technologies to reach out [with the gospel] to more people. With algorithms and analytics, the number of followers is not that important anymore. Reach is the key. As long as I reach and inspire even just one person online, it’s enough for me. God will do the rest. Yes, we should encourage young people to use social media not only for learning and entertainment, but for evangelization as well. The devil sows hate and lies in social media to destroy lives. To fight evil, we must put Christ in social media by proclaiming and living the truth.

Conclusion

I began this article with two questions: “How can we better reach the world’s 1.9 billion Muslims with an adequate witness of Jesus?” and “Are we using all the right tools to deliver the truth about Jesus to Muslims?” While we will always need missionaries to go into all the world, it seems inevitable that the answer to the two questions is to engage every possible tool, including traditional and social media, to get the water of life to spiritually dying Muslims.

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Friday, May 6, 2022. Please pray for

...God's protection on the estimated 5,000 Turkish Protestants in over 170 churches in the country. Converting from Islam is not illegal, but converts face opposition from family, friends, and employers.

...witnessing opportunities in the United Arab Emirates. Comprised of seven independent emirates, the UAE has a combined population of 10 million; 65% Muslim. Intercede for the few Emirati believers to grow strong in Christ.

...the flourishing ministry of Dr. Ambrose, a born-again Pakistani medical doctor. He works full-time at a hospital while regularly conducting medical evangelism among resistant Muslims in Pakistan.

Friday, May 13, 2022. Please pray for

...Aisha, a former Muslim in Indonesia. She shares, "In a dream a man with white clothes introduced himself as Jesus. He showed me two paths, one of destruction and one of life." The next day, she found a pastor and heard the gospel story.

...safe travel for a "batch" of MegaVoice players uploaded with Sudanese Scriptures for believers from a Muslim background living in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan.

...protection and favor on Pastor Ahmad in northern India. He now has seven congregations of converts from Islam with over 200 families. Of India's population of 1.3 billion, 193 million are Muslim.

Friday, May 20, 2022. Please pray for

...Holy Spirit anointing on the ministry of Radio Tahanint as they reach previously unreached Muslim communities in northern Mali. These villages are controlled by Muslim militias, yet they are hearing the gospel.

...the Sultanate of Brunei. Of its population of 420,000, 68% are Muslim. Even the sale of Bibles is prohibited in Brunei.

...SAT-7 programs broadcast into Afghanistan. Several thousand Christians remain in the country; many have moved to remote areas to escape the Taliban. An Afghan believer says, "These programs are a spiritual lifeline for us."

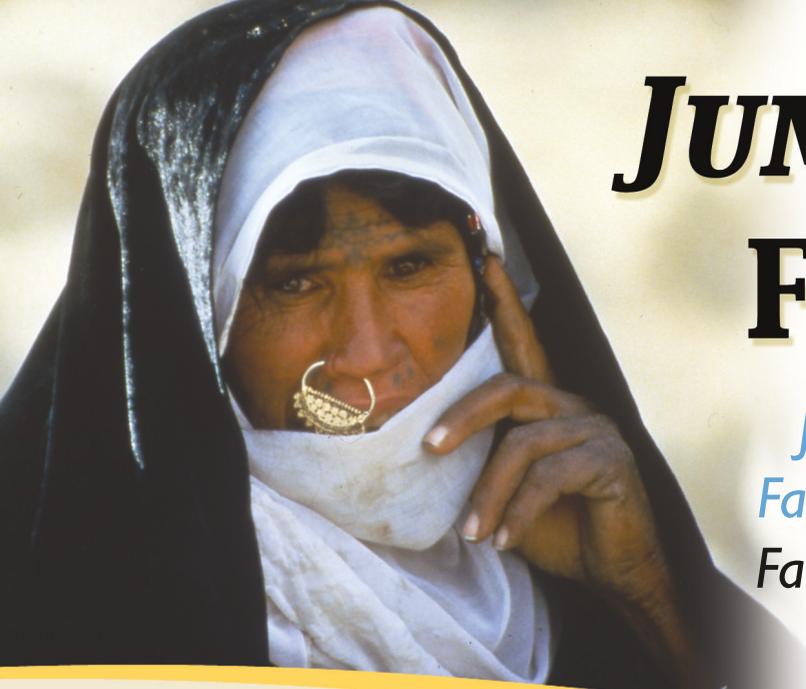
Friday, May 27, 2022. Please pray for

...the beleaguered country of Lebanon. Despite an economic crisis and being ravaged by an explosion that killed 200 people, a Beirut congregation has seen a large number of families join the church in the last few months.

...the country of Algeria, where sixteen Protestant congregations have been forcibly closed for two years. Of Algeria's population of 45 million, 97% are Muslim.

...protection for Mira Jirali, a Bangladeshi convert from Islam. At his trial for apostasy, Mira declared, "In Islam there is no salvation and no hope for heaven. Now I have Jesus, and not only am I forgiven, but I have real hope for heaven."

*I urge, then, first of all that requests, prayers, intercession and
thanksgiving be made for everyone. – 1 Timothy 2:1, NIV*



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[Facebook.com/JumaaPrayer](https://www.facebook.com/JumaaPrayer)*

Friday, June 3, 2022. Please pray for

...ministry outreaches to the predominately Muslim Gonja people of northern Ghana. Gonjas, including the few followers of Christ in the area, face daily shortages of water and food. Of the 385,000 Gonjas, 58% are Muslim.

...gospel workers in France who are seeing unusual openness among the normally resistant Muslim Soninke people group, who originally come from West Africa.

...the ministry of Pastor Fatima in Somalia. She reports 21 new house churches in southern Somalia in the past six months. Most attendees are from Muslim backgrounds. Of Somalia's population of 16 million, 99.6% are Muslim.

Friday, June 10, 2022. Please pray for

...a new ministry in Bahrain that assists families with disabled children—almost exclusively from Muslim families. The workers need financing for a building to house the ministry. Of Bahrain's population of 1.7 million, 84% are Muslim.

...media teams in Pakistan who are loading gospel messages in Urdu onto 700 SD cards, with the expectation of hundreds more, to share with Muslim seekers.

...people 18 to 30 in Turkey who are expressing increased spiritual interest in response to internet and media ministries.

Friday, June 17, 2022. Please pray for

...the grieving family and church of Pastor Shuaibo in Nigeria's northern Kano state. His preaching led many Muslims to follow Christ. Recently, angry Muslims hacked him to death with machetes, leaving family and converts in shock.

...the church in Burkina Faso. Islamic insurgents have forced the closing of many churches in the north, while a governmental coup has caused uncertainty and unrest.

...Sayyid Mahmoud, an Afghan Muslim religious scholar who listens to the Sadaye Zindagi (Sound of Life) radio program. He responds, "What you teach from the Gospel is life! I pray that many people would listen to it."

Friday, June 24, 2022. Please pray for

...112 of the 276 girls taken from their school in Chibok, Nigeria by Boko Haram Muslim militants in 2014 who are still in captivity. Pray that they would be released and restored to their families.

...victims of a scourge of suicide bombings by Islamist terrorists in Uganda. Islamic militants continue their assault on the government, as well as the church. Of Uganda's population of 48 million, 84% are Muslim.

...a gospel recording ministry in Pakistan that plans to record in fourteen languages in Kohistan; in the future they plan to produce recordings for the Burushaski people group. All these languages will target Muslim hearers.

**All personal names used herein are pseudonyms*

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