

INTERCEDE

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In 1982, leaders from Assemblies of God World Missions met to discuss the lack of focus and evangelism among the world's 700 million Muslims. A task force was commissioned to develop a strategy for mobilizing and training workers among Muslim peoples. The result was a new entity aptly named the Center for Ministry to Muslims (CMM). David Irwin, who had previously served as a missionary in Egypt and Malawi, was asked to be the leader of the newly formed CMM. In an article written by Irwin, he lamented that the field of Islam remained largely "unplowed and unplanted."

From 700 million in 1982, the Muslim world has now grown to encompass 1.9 billion people. David Irwin's initial challenge still resonates in our hearts: "The task is now before us and we must keep our hand to the plow until the great challenge is accomplished." The good news is twofold. First, there has been great fruit since CMM (now Global Initiative) began its ministry in 1983. Missiologists agree that more Muslims have come to Christ in the last 40 years than in all of previous history. It is encouraging to note that CMM/GI has trained over 60,000 pastors, missionaries, and workers since its inception in 1983. It is noteworthy that many missionaries presently serving in the Muslim world received their training in GI equipping sessions. Second, the global Assemblies of God Fellowship now numbers approximately 70 million adherents—comprising a huge body of potential witnesses to Muslim peoples. At GI we regularly hear of an Assemblies of God constituency somewhere in the world that has started a focused ministry toward Muslims in their country. Many international Assemblies of God constituencies are now sending missionaries to the Muslim world.

Great strides have been made in penetrating the Muslim world, but the global Church must again prioritize the many "yet unplanted fields" of Islam. We dare not rest on our laurels when over 80 percent of all Muslims still do not know a Christian and have not received an adequate witness of Jesus Christ. After reflecting on 40 years of Global Initiative's ministry, I would like to highlight three keys to seeing a greater harvest among Muslims than ever before.

Intercession: The Catalyst to the Harvest

David Irwin asked this question: "Lord, what is the key for reaching Muslims?" The Lord spoke into his heart a simple phrase that became the foundation of this ministry: "Fast and pray for Muslims on Friday." Friday is important because it is the weekly "holy day" for Muslims, and the Arabic word for Friday is *Jumaa*. Thus, Jumaa Prayer Fellowship was born, and today literally thousands of intercessors around the world fast and pray for Muslims each Friday. For further scriptural underpinning, the Holy Spirit spoke Matthew 17:20 into Irwin's heart: "For truly I say unto you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you." Irwin was convinced that spiritual breakthroughs among Muslims would come through faith, fasting, and intercession.

Here is how a veteran missionary to Muslims highlights the importance of Jumaa Prayer Fellowship: "I believe the increased intercession for Muslims has been the game-changer in the last few decades." This powerful focus on prayer for Muslims has resulted in more workers being called to Muslim fields, increased access to restricted areas, a marked increase in the supernatural intervention of God in

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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
Global Initiative:
Reaching Muslim Peoples



I just returned from a trip to Asia where I joined with two national churches to provide training to pastors and Bible school students. In one pastoral seminar, it was so encouraging to hear the testimonies of pastors who were former Muslims. They shared of their struggles in leaving Islam and of being disowned by their families. Persecution to them was not something to be avoided, but rather an inevitable passage in their new walk of faith with Christ. One worker quoted Christ's words from Luke 9:26: "If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

A lady shared a testimony that while witnessing she had been taken to the police station, beaten, and told not to witness any more. She spoke as if it was not a big deal to be intimidated for her faith; she even rejoiced that she could stand for Christ in the police station. Another pastor shared how he has baptized over 200 converts from Islam. He related that it was God's time for Muslims to come to Christ and encouraged the pastors to act with boldness and intentionality—while the door is open.

At the end of the seminar, the leaders asked the participants to commit to five areas in their outreach to Muslims in the coming year: (1) intercede for Muslims (Jumaa Prayer Fellowship), (2) witness to 100 Muslims in the next year, (3) learn how to use a contextualized Bible for Muslims, (4) give financially to further ministry to Muslims, and (5) join with other churches in outreaches in their city. The response was overwhelming! All the pastors agreed to take on these five commitments for the next year. God is building His Kingdom among Muslims in Asia. How about you? Would you take on these challenges? The Scripture reminds us to "work ... while it is day, for the night comes when no one can work" (John 9:4).

In closing, I would like to recommend an excellent book. Fred Farrokh, a Global Initiative team member, has written *Prepare for Persecution: Lessons from Acts*. Jesus warned that believers' lives would be marked by rejection, trials, and persecution. In this timely and strategic book, Farrokh issues a "Get Ready" warning to equip Christians to stand for Christ in the midst of persecution. The book is easily accessible online.

Prayer Profile - Muslim Unreached People Group The *Jawa Mancanegari of Indonesia - Population: 21 million - 98.5% Muslim

The Jawa Mancanegari live predominantly in the province of East Java and their main language is Javanese. They are predominately farmers, having been blessed with extremely fertile land. They are known for their openness, straightforwardness, and their indomitable spirit. Many of Indonesia's leaders, including the first president, were Jawa Mancanegari.

The majority of Jawa Mancanegari are Muslim. However, most mix Muslim beliefs with pre-Hindu beliefs. For example, during their Reog and Kuda Lumping dances, the dancer will go into a trance by inviting spirits to enter his body in order to perform extraordinary acts. Many Jawa Mancanegari learn to read the Quran and vocalize prayers and quranic recitations in Arabic. However, they seldom understand the meaning of what they are reading or vocalizing.

Pray for

- Wide distribution of the Scripture in Javanese
- Protection for the 1% Christian population
- Anointing and favor on mission efforts by Indonesian Christians
- Breaking down of spiritual strongholds among Jawa Mancanegari
- Positive responses to showings of the Jesus film in Javanese

*For further information on the Jawa Mancanegari people, see www.joshuaproject.net

Muslim World News

China Using Spies to Ensure Uyghurs Don't Fast During Ramadan

Beijing – Chinese police have been using spies to ensure that Uyghur Muslims do not fast during Ramadan.

The spies, which Chinese officials call “ears”, are drawn from ordinary citizens, police, and members of neighborhood committees, Radio Free Asia reported.

China started banning Muslims in Xinjiang from fasting during Ramadan in 2017 when authorities started arbitrarily detaining Uyghurs in “re-education” camps amid efforts to diminish Uyghur culture, language, and religion, as per the news report.

The restriction announced by Chinese authorities was partially relaxed in 2021 and 2022, permitting people above the age of 65 years to fast and police even reduced the number of home searches and street patrol activities. This year, the Chinese government has banned everyone from fasting irrespective of age, gender, or profession. Radio Free Asia reported citing a political official at Turpan City Police Station. – *NDTV.com*

Quebec Muslim Leaders ‘Outraged’ Over School Prayer Room Ban

Muslim community leaders from across Quebec are up in arms over Education Minister Bernard Drainville’s move to ban public schools from setting up prayer rooms on their premises.

In a joint press release representatives of several mosques that are members of the Registry of Cooperating Muslim Organizations expressed their “indignation” at the minister’s decision.

“We are also indignant that this decision is made in the middle of Ramadan, a month of blessings, fasting, meetings with all fellow citizens and prayers for Muslim citizens of Quebec,” they wrote.

The authors represent the Islamic Cultural Center of Quebec, the Islamic Association of Rimouski, the Islamic Cultural Association of the Eastern Townships, the Association of Muslims of Greater Levis, Mac-Quebec, the Socio-cultural Islamic Association Louperivoise and Bel-Agir-Quebec. – *The Canadian Press*



Training Seminar · Mark Brink · Benin, Africa

From Unplanted Fields to

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the lives of Muslim people (often through dreams, visions, and healings), and the destruction of satanic strongholds over various parts of the Muslim world. The *Fire Bible* notes that intercession is the battleground: “Prayer is not to be viewed just as another spiritual weapon, but as the very act of battle itself as we work together with God to gain the victory for ourselves and others” (NLT, footnote, p. 1,927). Another of Irwin’s convictions further underscores the challenge: “Islam will be cracked by people praying intercessory prayers.” I encourage each of us to ask ourselves: “Do I know how to intercede? How to carry a burden? How to pray all night? And how to groan in the Spirit?”

David Irwin tells the story of how he met an influential Muslim convert in the Middle East who, in spite of death threats, continued to stand for Christ. This man and his wife would spend up to four hours a day interceding for the Muslims of their country. He shared the following insight: “The only answer for penetrating the stronghold of Islam is for people to learn to pray in the Spirit, to pray that the Holy Spirit will go all over the world where there are Muslims with inquiring minds and hearts.” I believe that if thousands of people keep interceding, thousands of souls will come into the Kingdom of God. Just as the prayer of faith will raise up the sick, so the prayer of faith will open the hearts of the spiritually blind. By faith, we believe that weekly Friday intercessory prayer is opening the hearts of thousands of Muslims to the Good News of Jesus.

National Schools of Mission: Opportunities for Collaboration

One of the most encouraging advancements in reaching Muslims across the world is the establishment of Schools of Mission, whose specialty is to equip workers to reach Muslim peoples. Historically, missionaries from the West have had a strong influence in convincing Muslims around the world to follow Christ. However, in the last two decades, non-Western national churches have increasingly focused their mission efforts on the Muslim world. Specialized Schools of Mission are an integral part of their strategy. National churches are hearing the call to reach all peoples, whether in their own nation or in other nations. For instance, as Islam advances in Africa through radicalism, financial enticements, and *dawah* (evangelism by invitation) activities, the Church recognizes that it must respond. The great need is to equip and send workers to witness and plant churches, even in resistant Muslim areas. These workers need specialized training for cross-cultural ministry, as well as apologetic training in order to respond to Islamic questions and arguments. One prominent School of Mission in Africa has students from national churches, including former Muslims, who are regularly being called as missionaries to unreached Muslim peoples. As I write this article, I just received news that a new School of Mission is forming in yet another African nation. The African Church is encouragingly rising to

the challenge. It is a great honor for Global Initiative to help establish and partner with many Schools of Mission, not only in Africa, but around the world.

Imran was born into a Muslim African family. He was indoctrinated into Islam and extensively studied the Quran. After leaving the *madrasah* (Islamic school), he started to propagate his faith in the local mosque and community. He decided to go to the local church and listen to the sermons so he could learn how to defeat the Christian’s objections. The church welcomed him and, after a couple of visits, the church gave him a Bible. The pastor asked him to read the Bible and come back with questions so they could discuss the parts he did not understand.



Training Seminar · Mark Bri

During this time, Imran had a vision in which a white-robed man appeared to him and said, “Follow the path that is in this book and you will find that I AM the way to forgiveness and paradise.” He later heard an evangelist preach that the “I AM,” who appeared to Moses, was Jesus, who proclaimed, “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6). Imran responded to the message and confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. When he told his family he had become a Christian, they rejected him, and he was kicked out of the mosque as an infidel. The pastor invited him to live with his family and continued to disciple him. Imran has now graduated from a School of Mission in his country and is ministering to Muslims in a local village. The School of Mission gave him a solid foundation in Bible and theology and prepared him to more effectively reach his own people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Media: The Seeker is Searching for Answers

While print, radio, and TV have been available for a long time, the advent of the internet, combined with easy access on smartphones worldwide, has created unique online evangelistic opportunities, often with face-to-face follow-up. The

Unprecedented Harvest

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impact of media opportunities cannot be underestimated! In times past, identifying individuals who were seeking for God was a significant challenge. Now, with the use of online evangelism, seekers reach out to Christians rather than Christians searching for hungry seekers! This has led to unprecedented breakthroughs! The director of Network211, an online ministry providing answers to seekers, states:

People go online to search for answers to the dilemmas of their lives. This is impactful, especially in the Muslim world ... where one cannot worship openly for fear of reprisal or persecution. Muslims will share openly online the aspects of their lives that they would rarely, if ever, share in person. This opportunity to share Christ is followed up online with discipleship content and even



Frank & Mel Rogers · Sri Lanka

church services. This is a spiritual lifeline for many Muslims around the world.

Face-to-face discipleship is still the best option, but technology has made it easier than ever to link the seeker with biblical content and a personal discipleship mentor. To reach a growing Muslim audience with the gospel, we must utilize all media options in our evangelism strategy.

Ministry to Muslims includes great challenges, such as limited access by outside workers, an increase in radicalism, the contextualization of Islam into Western contexts, and a lack of workers. Persecution, secularization, and the geographical gap also create significant challenges in ministry to Muslims. We must not allow these challenges to deter us from completing the task. Below, I will highlight three of those challenges.

The Challenge of Increasing Persecution: Deterrent or Stimulus?

The number of martyrs for Christ in Muslim lands is increasing. The Church of Jesus Christ, as well as individuals

leaving Islam, regularly endure attacks from the radical elements within Islam. While radical Islam does not represent the majority of Muslims, it is obvious that certain Islamic governments and organizations are funding an intensification of persecution of their Christian populations. Even most secularized Western governments often leave the issue of persecution by Islamists unchecked. Open Doors, in their annual World Watch List on persecution, estimates that 360 million Christians live under some form of persecution. Persecution tactics range from arrests, threats, imprisonments, physical assaults, and expulsions, to outright martyrdoms.

As Christians, we are in a war for the souls of people. We have been given the promise that the devil and the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church. However, that does not mean that casualties will not occur. Demonic forces manifest spiritually and physically in the persecution of Christ-followers. Hatred of the person and mission of Christ will always be normative in an ungodly world (John 15:18), and the lifestyle of godly Christians can lead to suffering and persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). The encouraging part of this is that suffering or persecution ultimately results in the expansion of gospel witness, the growth of the Church, and the deepening of faith, as illustrated in the Acts of the Apostles.

The Challenge of Islamic Secularization

Initially, when we hear of increased secularization in Islamic countries, we view this as a positive development. With increased internet access and new ideas infiltrating these countries, we tend to think that this will create an openness to the gospel, but in some cases just the opposite is taking place. A worker among Muslim peoples shares this insight:

One growing challenge to reach Muslims is secularism that is now rapidly infiltrating Islamic societies and especially Muslim youth. Most Muslims we meet now under 30 are not asking the traditional apologetic questions regarding the deity of Christ, the incarnation of Christ, or the death of Jesus on the Cross. Now they are asking secular apologetic questions about the origin of man, morality, the meaning of life, man's destiny. A secularized Muslim has often rejected all religion and is not necessarily disposed to accept Christianity as valid after rejecting Islam. Secularism, particularly Islamic secularism, is the rising challenge in the Muslim world.

A Gallup International poll found that 19 percent of Saudis consider themselves non-religious. This number is even higher than the same poll among Muslims in the United States and Italy. The same poll found that Richard Dawkins' book, *The God Delusion*, is the most downloaded book in the Middle East. In many Islamic countries, this growing secularism stands in stark contrast to the apostasy laws that

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are punishable by death. The road to disbelief for secularized Muslims begins with questions regarding the dilemmas they face in daily life, coupled with personal doubts. A key question we must ask is: Are we prepared to share the gospel with a secularizing Muslim population? To answer that question, we must take seriously the importance of providing a strong biblical underpinning for the Church, with a special emphasis on apologetics.

The Challenge of Geography

Many unreached Muslim peoples live in areas geographically isolated from Christians. They may be hard to access due to strict visa requirements, harsh living conditions, and/or cultural animosity toward outsiders. The majority of Muslims have never conversed with a true Christian or come in contact with a Bible or a church. This isolation factor creates a significant barrier to their hearing the Good News of Jesus. Nevertheless, God's sovereign hand is at work in today's world! The shrinking proximity of Christians to Muslims

pleas across the globe in order to advance his kingdom for his glory. Whether through believers transferring jobs and finding themselves in new locations or unbelievers moving to cities of refuge where they may first come face-to-face with the message of Jesus, the migrations of peoples do not happen as an afterthought in the heart of God. The church may be oblivious to such workings of the Spirit, but the seasons and times of life are part of the King working out his plan to redeem the peoples of this world from the bondage of the wicked one. (Payne, *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration and Mission*, 2012, 22)

The geographic gap remains a challenge, but the migration of Muslims globally has closed that gap substantially. Are we ready to strategize creatively in our mission organizations and churches in order to further mitigate this geographic challenge?



has increased significantly as refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants come from war-torn Islamic countries to settle in other nations. Journeys of desperation, trauma, fear, and loss mark their search for freedom and a new life. Other Muslims come for education or a better financial future. The world is experiencing an Acts 17:26-27 moment:

From one man he [God] made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. *God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him: though he is not far from any one of us.* (emphasis added)

J. D. Payne notes that God uses migration to fulfill salvation history—whether it is because of sinful behavior or obedience to God's direction:

The Sovereign Lord orchestrates the movement of peo-

ple. God has moved mightily over the past 40 years. There can be no doubt that He is answering the fervent prayers of Christians for the salvation of Muslims. Prayer ministries such as Jumaa Prayer Fellowship, Praying for Muslims, Praying Through Ramadan, and PrayerCast have all helped to change the landscape. God is calling national believers, equipping them through Schools of Mission, and using media as a platform—all to reach Muslims who are seeking the truth about Jesus. While challenges definitely remain, we must continue to intercede and surrender to the call of God in order to reach Muslims with the gospel, whether at home or abroad.

As never before, we have an incredible opportunity to show the love of Jesus to Muslims who have never heard the gospel. May we hear the clarion call to partner with the Holy Spirit to see what God will do to establish His Church in the parts of the Islamic world that still beg the description of an "unplanted field."



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Facebook. Please join today:
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Friday, July 7, 2023. Please pray for

...protection for Christians in the country of Libya. Of Libya's population of 6.7 million, 97% are Muslim. 2.4% of the population are adherents of Christianity and feel constant pressure.

...security for house groups in Iran. A leader says, "Pray for us. In one area the increase in house churches and the decrease in mosque attendance has unnerved the Islamic authorities. They feel threatened and their reactions are unpredictable."

...spiritual growth for Afghan converts from Islam in India. An Indian pastor says, "Afghan converts are so 'moved' by the Lord's Supper, they ask to receive it earlier than scheduled."

Friday, July 14, 2023. Please pray for

...wisdom for cell group pastors in Kyrgyzstan. A pastor says, "Many are arrested by the Islamic authorities, but there are always more children of God who grow from our branches."

...protection (from her family) for Muna, in Egypt. Raised as a Muslim, Muna was given a Bible by a friend. She says, "I thought I was cursed by Allah, but I have found freedom in Jesus."

...the Holy Spirit's anointing on workers who minister in Muslim countries. Pray that they will be able to discern God's voice to lead them to the right people, at the right time, on every occasion.

Friday, July 21, 2023. Please pray for

...55 new Christians from Muslim backgrounds who recently attended a discipleship retreat in Malta. A spokesman said, "We are ready to return to our homelands to spread God's Word."

...protection for Miriam in Burkina Faso. Islamic militants killed her husband Emmanuel, who was active in proclaiming the gospel along the country's borders with Mali and Niger.

...safety for a Bible distribution ministry in Malaysia. The director says, "Our goal is to see every seeking Muslim here with a Bible." Of Malaysia's population of 34 million, 53% are Muslim.

Friday, July 28, 2023. Please pray for

...strength for Pastor Paschal in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Islamists attacked a prayer meeting at his church, set the church on fire and shouted, "There will be no church in this area."

...a worker in Indonesia who says, "God is working powerfully among Muslims here. We must not waste these years that God has given us to expose the truth to Muslims in Indonesia."

...a Bible distribution ministry in North Africa. A spokesman says, "We keep depleting our stock. This is good news because it means more North African Muslims are receiving Bibles!"





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Friday, August 4, 2023. Please pray for

...*the Lord's favor on outreach ministries in Cyprus* that are seeing transient Muslim Kurds and Iraqis turn to the Lord; so much so that a church has been started among them.

...*an Arabic social media ministry in the Middle East* that reports, "We have received hundreds of inquiries from Muslims who have converted or are seeking more information about Jesus."

...*God's provision for Christian ministries in both Syria and Turkiye* that continue to aid mostly Muslim victims of the devastating February earthquake.

Friday, August 11, 2023. Please pray for

...*good health for Murat, a 75 year-old worker in Turkiye*. Muslims "swarmed" him as he distributed Turkish tracts in a local bazaar. He said, "Let them jail me. With my remaining years I will tell the prisoners about Jesus." Afterwards, the Muslims sent him home.

...*the Lord's blessing on an evangelical church group in Bangladesh*. They have created, within their organization, a ministry that is fully dedicated to Muslim outreach.

...*Abdu and family in Uganda*. After their conversion to Christ, Muslims beat them and burned their home. Abdu's request: "Pray for quick healing so we can continue sharing Jesus."

Friday, August 18, 2023. Please pray for

...*Pastor Jabir, a convert from Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. He says, "One thing that never needs updating is the Lord's Supper. Our former Muslim congregants say, 'It is new each time.'"

...*The Gambia*. Of its population of 2.6 million, 89% are Muslim. Pray for the salvation of those who have been listening to Scriptures and clips from the Jesus film contained on SIM cards.

...*a new ministry in the Odisha State of India*. Their vision is to reach the 1.1 million Muslims of Odisha State with the gospel. They have started a Jumaa Prayer meeting each Friday.

Friday, August 25, 2023. Please pray for

...*wisdom for Chinese pastors along the Silk Road*. A large number met recently to strategize about how to help the families of imprisoned Muslim Uighurs in the Xinjiang Province.

...*Zohre, a Bible distributor in Afghanistan*. He relates, "Once I was moving 40 Bibles when the Taliban stopped our car. Miraculously, they did not search the car and I was able to deliver the Bibles. In a country like Afghanistan, carrying even one Bible is risking your life."

...*witnessing opportunities for Christian nurses in Arabian Gulf hospitals*. Gloria says, "One patient is an imam. When I talk about Jesus, his daughter, Fatima, listens carefully. Recently she privately asked me for a Bible. Pray for her, as I feel she is close to accepting Jesus."

**All personal names used herein are pseudonyms.*

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