



EFCA The Reality of Islam May 2011

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Dear Pastors and Church Mission Leaders,

At the Lausanne conference last October, the reality of Islam was listed as one of the major challenges facing the global church in the next decade. Here is what they wrote about it:

The Reality of Islam. Islam is a missionary faith with a global vision. With a very deliberate strategy, Islam's mission and impact has spread beyond the Arab world to significantly influence universities and governments in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. The church must develop an equally deliberate strategy that enables us to live in fidelity to the gospel, influence public institutions and faithfully witness to men and women in all WORLD FAITHS.

According to the book Operation World, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today by birthrate. There are between 1.5 and 1.6 billion Muslims in the world today. Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world. In the US most of the conversions to Islam are coming from the African American community. There is news from Africa which says that 6 million Muslims are converting to Christianity annually.

How should we as Christians respond to the growing religion of Islam? First of all we should pray for our Muslim neighbors. The Crescentproject.org is asking Christians around North America to pray specifically for Muslims each Friday at noon. One very helpful book that I read recently was Inside the Revolution by Joel Rosenberg. He shows that there are major differences within the Muslim religion today.

One of the best resources for local churches is the 30 Days Muslim Prayer Guide:2011. This booklet can be ordered from WorldChristian.com for \$3. They also have the 30 Days Muslim Prayer Guide:Just for Kids 2011 for \$3.50. Ramadan begins in 2011 on August 1st. These prayer books coincide yearly with Ramadan. They can be ordered beginning in May. These are excellent books to use in your family or in your church. Their website states that "...a new illustrated prayer guide booklet is published in dozens of languages and locations around the world. The booklet contains daily reading pages with prayer points, informative background articles, and resources for further study and involvement. While it is primarily produced for use during Ramadan, many individuals and churches use it also at other times throughout the year."

Make this the year to inform your congregation about the Muslim religion.

Blessings,

Steve Austvold