

Editorial: Reaching the Neglected Muslim World

One of the greatest challenges of world missions is reaching the thousands of Muslim peoples, and millions of Muslim individuals, who to this day remain unreached and unevangelized. We're reminded of "The Lausanne Covenant" that makes the following confession: "More than two-thirds of mankind have yet to be evangelized. We are ashamed that so many have been neglected; it is a standing rebuke to us and to the whole church."

The good news is that, "There is now in many parts of the world an unprecedented receptivity to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are convinced that this is the time for churches and para-church agencies to pray earnestly for the salvation of the unreached and to launch new efforts to achieve world evangelization... The goal should be, that by all available means and at the earliest possible time, every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand, and receive the Good News."

Later on, speaking more specifically to our Western affluence we're reminded that, "We cannot hope to attain this goal without sacrifice. All of us are shocked by the poverty of millions and disturbed by the injustices which cause it. Those of us who live in affluent circumstances accept our duty to develop a simple life-style in order to contribute more generously to both relief and evangelism" (From "The Lausanne Covenant" drafted by the participants, from more than 150 nations, of the International Congress on World Evangelization, July 1974).

What was said then is totally applicable today—including reaching the Muslim world. We should still be ashamed that so many individuals, clustered in thousands of unreached people groups, the majority of whom are Muslim, still have not been evangelized. Truly it remains a standing rebuke to all of us today. And this in light of the fact that today as never before we see

"unprecedented receptivity" among the unreached nations, including Muslim peoples, as well as unprecedented mission know-how and skill to help us complete the task, not to say anything about unprecedented opportunities for mission service, even placed right at our doorsteps. The goal is still the same: using "all available means and at the earliest time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand, and receive the Good News."

Perhaps the crux of the matter lies in our refusal to sacrifice. "We cannot hope to achieve this goal without sacrifice." As Christians we must be able to give a "reasonable answer" to the haunting question why so many individuals and whole nations remain unevangelized to this day. As Robertson McQuilkin, we too must come to grips with the inescapable reality regarding the Great Omission of the Great Commission. Why are so many in our world still unevangelized when there are more than sufficient resources to win them, when we have unprecedented opportunities of open doors everywhere, when we have the needed skills to do the job at hand, etc.? Is it due to the condition of our hearts? Is it because we haven't been willing to "accept our duty to develop (and live) a simple life-style in order to contribute more generously to relief and evangelism" among the people who are still unreached?

There is no easy answer nor a quick fix. The unreached peoples of the world remain unreached, to this day, due to a variety of reason. Although explainable, there are serious unjustifiable reasons that still give us "a standing rebuke." Perhaps we should all read (or reread) Robertson McQuilkin's powerful booklet *The Great Omission*, in which he explains five reasons for the great mission omission in the past and present. McQuilkin would say that it's due to: 1) Our general blindness to God's mission purpose and plan

clearly revealed in the Scriptures. We're pretty blind. We don't really see the Great Commission in Scripture all that well... 2) Our deafness to God's call to us for missions to the lost, especially to those without any access to the Gospel. We're pretty deaf to God's call to go with Him to reach the nations (biblical Gentiles) who still haven't heard... 3) Our general lack of love and concern for the unreached (and distant lost) peoples of the earth. We don't care all that much... 4) Our bad theology that fosters the lie that there must be more than one way. If plan A fails plan B will kick in... and 5) Our prayers are peripheral, that show we have a real power failure.

The above is directly to the point to what you will find in this second special edition of the Journal (Islam II) dedicated entirely to evangelizing the hundreds and thousands of unreached Muslim peoples. The forthcoming articles will not only manifest our mission neglect, but also our past failures and mistakes that in a real sense haunt us to this day. Truly we need to own up to our past and correct our failures. In the power of the Spirit we need to bear witness of Christ to our Muslim friends and neighbors—who are waiting to hear the Good News, who have "an unprecedented receptivity to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Our attitudes towards Muslims need to be corrected. We need to see Muslims as our friends, who stand in need of the Lord's *and our* compassion. We need to lay aside our misconceptions, our prejudices and maybe even our silent hatred towards Muslims.

Not only do we need to pray for them but *with* them as well. As Christians we have much to learn from them (as they from us) especially if we correct our attitudes. Their obedience and zeal, their dedication and commitment, and above all their desire and search for surrender to God, that forms the bedrock

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