

In Others' Words

Editor's note: In this department, you'll find resources outside of the IJFM that we hope you'll find helpful: other journals, print resources, DVDs, web sites, blogs, YouTube videos, etc. We welcome suggestions, but cannot promise that we will publish each one we receive. Standard disclaimers on content apply.

The Art of Communication

Communicating into inter-religious tension is an art form today and some are better at it than others. With his usual open and very grounded manner of reaching Muslims in this tension-filled age, Carl Medearis is an artist with a passion to teach others his craft. Right on the heels of his highly acclaimed book, *Speaking of Jesus: The Art of Not-Evangelism*, Carl's earlier *Muslims, Christians and Jesus* was re-released with accompanying Study Guide and DVD (chosen by *Outreach* magazine as its "2012 Outreach Resource of the Year"). Carl has also launched a website called "The Middle East Experience." This site provides a sympathetic look at the complexities in the Middle East, with blogs, book reviews, videos, articles and links (www.middleeastexperience.com). It's a great way to bring people into the highly charged subject of Muslim-Christian relations.

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Muslim Demographics

The residual effect of the Arab Spring has led to so many interpretations, but underneath this inflammatory and revolutionary period of history is a steady stream of modern change in the Muslim world. The prescient interpretation of the prolific Philip Jenkins seems to be confirmed by some startling new statistics. Jenkins had suggested five years ago in his book, *God's Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis* (Oxford University Press: 2007), that any fear that Islam was changing Europe correlated with the fact that Europe was changing Islam. One area in which he predicted change was a drop in fertility as Muslims came under the sway of European values. Now, a new index clarifies this trend with devastating numbers (www.c-fam.org/fridayfax/volume-15/muslim-world-faces-devastating-fertility-decline.html). It addresses the widely perceived notion that Muslim countries are resistant to familial change by demonstrating the opposite. It shows that

22 Muslim-majority countries and territories were estimated to have undergone fertility declines of 50 percent or more during those three decades—ten of them by 60 percent or more. For both Iran and the Maldives, the declines in total fertility rates over those 30 years were estimated to exceed 70 percent.

But these modern demographic shifts can also be observed in the rise of "basic freedoms." Religious Institutions—such as Al-Azhar and Egyptian churches—are standing together with a common inter-religious voice for "freedom of faith, freedom of expression, and freedom to innovate and conduct scientific research" (www.egyptindependent.com/node/597791).

Contrast this with the typical and very traditional attempts of governments to control social networking (www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2012/03/internet-middle-east). Will they be able to hold back the tide of grass roots technological ingenuity capturing the minds of that large population of younger Muslim, which is so evident in this new social networking portal in Pakistan (www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/04/2012426323922782.html)?

The Ethics of Witness to Other Religions

A document entitled "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct" was released in June 2011 by the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), the Vatican, and the World Council of Churches (WCC). It was the fruit of five years of reflection and discussion, and "does not intend to be a theological statement on mission but to address practical issues associated with Christian

witness in a multi-religious world." The actual document can be read at www.worldevangelicals.org/pdf/1106Christian_Witness_in_a_Multi-Religious_World.pdf, but the WEA's commentary on the statement can be found at www.worldevangelicals.org/news/article.htm?id=3578&cat=main.

Translating God and Allah

Hart Wiens of the Canadian Bible Society discusses two translation issues currently of great interest: Using the name "Allah" in Bible translation, and how to translate the term "Son of God." Many will find this link a simple, but useful, introduction to these challenging topics: www.onebook.ca/resources/contextual-issue.

Our thanks to Leith Gray for his contributions to this IOW. IJFM