

Preface

We stand on the edge of a great immensity when we write about ministry among Muslim women. Recognizing the godfearing spirit of many Muslims, the sacrificial service of generations of Christian witnesses and the great grace of God, we approach humbly.

We want to follow the spirit of Raymond Lull, Kenneth Cragg and J. Dudley Woodberry, who have shown large-hearted appreciation for Muslim peoples and for the beauty of their cultures.

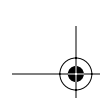
We want to follow in the steps of Liliás Trotter, Mildred Cable and Maud Carey, who trekked deep into the heart of the Muslim world—southern Algeria, the Gobi desert, interior Morocco—to share their delight in Christ with women and men.

We want to follow the thinking of Samuel Zwemer, Constance Padwick and Don McCurry, who used their heads as well as their hearts to construct a comprehensive overview of Muslims, priority issues, and systematic strategies that would serve sound stewardship.

Finally, we want to follow on to find the joy of the Lord as our strength. Justin, Daniel and Derek, men from Africa who studied at Regent College, have modeled this for me. Along with their wives, Grace, Anne and Gladys, they showed me that witness to Muslims is a relaxed and joyous business, even in the face of pain and danger, because it is always and altogether God's work before it is ours.

The burden of this book, ministry among Muslim women, is not new.





What is new in our time is vastly increased opportunities and resources. Samuel Zwemer and Constance Padwick, Liliias Trotter and Maud Carey did not begin to have available the resources that lie at our fingertips, nor the comparatively easy access to all parts of the globe.

To whom much has been given, from them much is required.

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Why write a women's book? Many well-researched books on Muslim ministry have rolled off the presses of the world. Much of the wisdom in these books applies to women. I would be a fool to try to duplicate the wealth of history, theology and ecclesiology available already. For balance, the reader must dig into sources listed in the footnotes.

However, secular research on Muslim women also sparkles with gems. Anthropological books, films, articles and curricula about Muslim women abound. Unfortunately, few lay Christians or even mission executives read this material. Drowning in faxes, reeling from international political explosions, hungry for funds, the overworked mission leader may value data about Muslim women in theory yet never get around to pursuing it in fact. Then, sadly, strategy decisions that affect women are made in ignorance.

For teaching and speaking, I regularly tap into ethnological resources on Muslim women. An urge emerged: Why not make this material accessible to Christian witnesses? Why not gather data on Muslim women's multifaceted worlds and present it in a user-friendly package? Why not integrate and apply it?

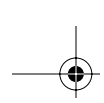
That is my aim in this book. To educate about important parts of Muslim women's lives. To elucidate some mission strategies. To offer examples. And to encourage.

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Daughters of Islam features five chapters of case studies, each containing roughly three cases. Each is the story of a Muslim-background woman for whom Jesus is Lord. These chapters introduce us to sisters who are Arab, Iranian, Malay, Indonesian and African. In other chapters we meet Muslim-background followers of Jesus who are Indian or Pakistani, Turkish or Uzbek.

Interspersed with the case study chapters are a brief introduction to





Muslim women; a chapter on women's diversity, featuring Arabs; and chapters on themes important for ministry among Muslim women: ethnology, family relations, teaching and learning styles and finances.

All of us missiologists come to our subject groping, like the fabled blind men who stumbled on an elephant. One man was encircled by the elephant's trunk. Another felt the leg. Still another grasped the tail. So, too, a missiological New Testament scholar may sense the trunk of our common subject. A missiological historian may palpate the leg. A missiological theologian may clutch the tail. The danger lies in assuming that any one of us has grabbed the whole elephant.

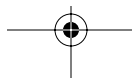
Since I am an anthropologist, my feel for the elephant of missiology is anthropological. Loving the Lord with my mind means studying culture patterns and applying my findings to mission. This book reflects that. Anthropological awareness has given birth to chapters like "Money Matters," "Learning Styles" and "Sex, Singles, Husbands, Children"—Christianity below the neck, where women always have had to apply it.

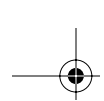
How thrilling it would be if complementary books on ministries among Muslim women would be penned by Old Testament and New Testament specialists, theologians, ethicists, evangelists, church growth consultants, Christian educators and counselors. Geographical focus would increase the value of the works, particularly if they were composed in the Urdu, Arabic, Swahili, Malay and Uzbek languages.

Still, "of making of many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Making mission strategies never seems to end either. And with all our talk about tentmakers and the Two-Thirds World and nonresident missionaries and multi-individual decision-making units, weariness can set in, as the writer of Ecclesiastes noted. At bottom, what really matters?

Surely in the end what counts is the perennial necessity of mission: human beings witnessing, discipling and serving in the appropriate language. And the perennial disciplines: Bible study, prayer, fellowship, holiness, love, perseverance. Anthropological, theological and strategic insights have their place. We would be poor stewards if we ignored them. But in our zeal to be contemporary, we must be careful not to bypass the basics.

There are many awesome stories that are not told in this book. In vari-





ous countries today, thousands of former Muslims follow Jesus Christ as Lord. Many are rural or village people. Others are well-educated professionals. In one country they still call themselves Muslims, completed Muslims. Elsewhere there are mobile churches of Muslim-background nomads. We cannot tell all those stories here. This book is just a beginning. It is our hope simply that the cases, data and strategies in this volume will spark dialogue, research, more storytelling and better mission work.

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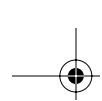
Finally, what is truth in reporting? Biographers agonize over this. While writing this book I traveled to Africa, Asia, France and Russia, and I interviewed former Muslim women in all those places. Other women I interviewed in North America. Some stories came secondhand through church or mission people who had brought Muslim women to faith in Christ and walked beside them.¹ I interviewed in English, occasionally through translation. English was not the first language for any of these women, though many handled it competently.

Most of the women I interviewed are educated. Many are cosmopolitan. A few are rural or village women. One was a nomad. One is a poor urban working woman. Some live in their home countries, others in Europe or North America. The chapter on five kinds of Arab women sensitizes us to these differences.

It also alerts us to women who may be neglected by Christian witnesses. Take political radicals, for example. Given their strong group support and the motivating energy generated by commitment to a cause, such women probably are not particularly open to a new Lord. We assume that. But do we know? Who has reached out to them? A contextualized apologetic tailored for such women never has been developed, as far as I know. Yet strong potential bridges exist. The political radical hungers for justice and righteousness. The fundamentalist thirsts for God's kingdom values expressed in community. As women, they may be sensitive to the vulnerable and experienced in nurturing concrete needs. Where is the bridge builder who can take these girders and suspension wires and cast an evangelistic span across the rivers on whose banks these women live?

As a rule, I have changed the women's names in order to protect confi-





dentiality. Where possible I have used a woman's own words, as is evident from the contrast in style between one woman's remarks and another's. In various spots I have invented dialogue to tell the story shared with me in narrative form. Where I have been able to check my account with others who were present at an interview, or who know the woman, we have found accuracy high.

Do these women remember their stories accurately? Do they unconsciously overemphasize certain elements in such a way that historical reality is distorted? At best, we see through a glass darkly. All our tellings are incomplete. Whether on the woman's or the author's part, misrepresentations occasionally will occur. For these inadvertent errors I apologize in advance.

What I can assert is that no woman was a new convert. Each had been seriously committed to the Lord Jesus Christ for more than a year, in many cases for more than a decade. And each had a good reputation with several other mature Christians. This "cloud of witnesses" testifies to each woman's authenticity.

Since the interviews, spanning seven years, a couple of women have gone through dark nights of the soul, according to word-of-mouth reports. Others have blazed gloriously through dire problems. In other words, these women are as complex and as common as the rest of us: treasures in jars of clay.

