

How to Stay Motivated in the Long Term Work of Muslim Evangelism For CCM Leadership Consultation October 2002

Looking back to my life I believe there are both spiritual and practical reasons for staying motivated over a longer period than some others.

It all started with a **crucial Aha-experience** ("Schlüsselerlebnis" = Key event). That was my trip to Marocco in 1974 where I encountered the Muslim world for the first time. I have retold this experience over and over again. How shocked and utterly disillusioned I was visiting that first missionary home in one of the big cities and finding a missionary who was totally discouraged and frustrated about his ministry and zero success. It's interesting how you can have Muslims in your home country and never notice them or feel much concern for them, but once you are thrust into a new culture it impacts you and you never forget it again. I believe such an experience is a great motivating reminder to keep going. I left the place convinced that if any people need to hear the gospel than it is these Muslims.

The second aspect is a **strong sense of calling** into this kind of ministry. You know that both Christel and myself independently felt led into M ministry long before we joined a mission society. All our preparation went into it; reading, visiting, etc - we had firmly set our mind on M2M. I often watch the video TOUGH ASSIGNMENT where I ask Gerhard Nehls whether he ever felt like giving up? There is a deliberately pause, then Gerhard responds in a sober and emphatic way: "No, never. That - I would have been unfaithful to my calling." Why don't you watch that part of the video and listen what he has to say in regard to 'success' in M2M.

Our calling has never been to a specific place or country, although we were so much geared towards Pakistan on the outset of our calling; but we have always been very open to the Lord to be moved on to the next chapter of our life story in some new setting. In fact, I would be surprised if we were to stay in Nairobi for the rest of our days in Africa. With our children back in Germany, the Team here working quite well without us helping in the office I believe the time is ripe to start afresh and invest ourselves in a setting where we might be of greater service and help, and could be instrumental to equip God's people in other areas.

A third component that meant a lot to me was the great privilege to **work in a Team** right from the start till today. Certainly teamwork is not always sweet like sugar and honey cake, but without a moments hesitation I would want to do it again. It's just such an encouragement to learn from others, share in their joys and struggles, agonize together what would be the best approach, work on a joint project such as the recent CLA magazine which none of us could have done single-handed; and eventually invest your own life and experience into others and see them grow and overtake you in various areas that they now can do much better than I ever could. You need to grow with the task and grow with the Team.

Another major aspect for me is '**variety**'. I could not do the same door-to-door visitation for 20 years. The same few questions, same arguments, same tricks folks play on you. Unless I have new challenges, new variety of tasks I grow very tired and would feel sick of continuing the same old rut. So changing into Team leadership, liaison role towards SIM in 86, developing a new outreach Team together with the Jolleys in PE, develop and write new literature, starting the Training of Trainers and the Partnership focuses here in East Africa, planning and producing videos, stimulating towards new initiatives such as the WOMEN ministry/consultation, getting into Ethiopia, Rwanda, Nigeria and so many new countries has been very stimulating, extremely rewarding and fascinating. I would like to get more involved in radio program development that could serve continent-wide; seeing the INSIGHTS magazine started and maintained; Theological institutions mobilized and equipped; starting with more indepth training modules in our new center here in Nairobi ... I love to make plans, dream, share a vision with others that are open to be inspired, bond with new folks like Challenge Bookshops in Ghana and so much more. No doubt, this has been a major factor to stay motivated.

Lastly, I would believe that I am reading widely on many **new books** that are being **published** on ME. This has especially been true over the last year or so, since I have been involved in writing Book Reviews for BOOKNOTES in AFRICA and JETS; and, of course, in 1998 when I worked towards my MA for Columbia International University. Without interaction with other workers, reflection on what and how I am doing it in comparison with others, my work can so easily become stale and I find myself in a dead end section. Now that I have so many more opportunities to share the findings of such reading with others during training or Team sessions this becomes a much more worthwhile activity than in the early years of ministry when you primarily did it for your personal benefit.

Well, have a wonderful Leadership Consultation - and let us know how all of you are doing in your challenges. We are keen to be part of the Team.