

...Women reaching Women.... Challenges and Opportunities...

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Some years ago during a big Christian Broadcast campaign I met Fatuma over the phone. I shall never forget her sobbing desperate voice saying: "I watched your program every night... I know this is the truth and I do need Jesus to get forgiveness of my sins, but I live with my brother and his family, he would never allow me to accept Christ... he would rather kill me. I'm scared. I can only phone you now, because nobody is in the house... I can't give you my phone number...! Please don't ever try to reach me, otherwise I'm in trouble... What shall I do???" I prayed with her while she wept uncontrollably on the other side. I never heard from her again. But her voice kept ringing in my ears. Where are the Christian neighbours, colleagues or customers who could share with a woman like this?

It became clear to me once more: we can not just try to reach the Muslim families via the head of the house...often the men are barricading the access for the women in the family.

Some missiologists say *that Muslim women are the biggest unreached people group, because they are shunned, watched and denied free access to the gospel.*

Challenged by this experience, we decided to try new ways to create awareness among Christian women about the spiritual need of Muslim women. We called ourselves: ***Friends of Fatuma*** - with the aim to motivate as many Christian women as possible to reach out to their workmates and neighbours, befriending them, becoming part of their lives and sharing the Gospel with them. As a fellowship we embraced the goal to learn together, pray for each other and hold each other accountable to purposefully reach out to Muslim women around us.

In our excitement of getting other Christian women involved in Muslim women's lives we got quite a few awareness seminars going, with dramas, interviews and biblical challenges.

One Sunday afternoon we had an interesting introduction to a Ladies meeting. In preparation of an opening play two of our team members dressed up in Muslim outfits in the big sanctuary, waiting for us to call them to start the program. Suddenly a young man entered the church hall, saw these ladies and asked very directly: "What are you two doing here?!" Our ladies felt challenged and answered: "We came here to pray! Is this not okay?" "No, not for you. You might be of the Bin Laden group trying to spy out how to blow up our church!" "Oh, surely not! We came here because we thought the Church is for everybody. Is this not so?" "Not for someone like you. Wait, this gets out of hand. I get the pastor!" Off he went locking the sanctuary so that they could not escape. My colleague was finally searching for these two "lost women", when she bumped into the pastor who ran up the stairs, disturbed, that terrorists had entered his church! When they opened the sanctuary, the pastor recognized one of his church-member behind the black Tschador and all had a good laugh.

But was this really a reason to laugh? Should it not rather move us to tears that Christians are so fearful, so antagonistic and so far separated from their fellow Muslim citizens, that they don't even allow them to come into their churches to pray?

Since the different terrorist attacks from 1998 onwards the rift is growing bigger. Small Children in a Vacation Bible School last week told the teachers: "I hate these Muslims". Parents or Christian women with such an attitude will surely not share the Good News with their Muslim neighbours or colleagues.

A. Why focus on reaching Muslim Women?

1. There are "Lydia's" in every Muslim community, who long for more than for a "religion of laws" or "Do's and Do not's"! (Think of Fatuma on the phone.) We need to find them.
2. God has prepared some hearts of ladies, whom he wants to use as strategic bridges to reach other women, esp. women in traditional settings, where missionaries can't get to so easily.
3. The Gospel does not naturally follow along the male bridges to get to the women in their households and families. Men are often less receptive to spiritual matters than women.
4. We can't leave the job to the men, because many don't see the need to reach out to the women in their family. Excuses of disrespect like: "she is a woman, she wouldn't understand" portray their

thinking, whereby they fall into the trap described by an African proverb: “A woman has no religion” (which is by no means applicable to Muslim women)

5. A Muslim woman’s affiliation is closer to her own family, than to her husband. Usually she will rather run home to save face, avoid the shame and humiliation, than to follow her husband into the Christian life. This makes it difficult for her husband to reach out to her. She needs a female witness to show her Christ as Friend, Saviour and Lord at the same time.
6. We need to recognize the great influence Muslim women have in their families... “The Hand that rocks the cradle rules the world...” We need to sow in hope for a harvest in the next generation.

B. What are some of the Hindrances in reaching a Muslim woman?

1. Her understanding of her religious role: Being a good Muslim means being a good wife, daughter or sister. While a man’s religiosity ties him directly to God (being in submission to God) – a woman’s religiosity ties her to the men in her life.
2. Her strong submission to her father, husband, brother, cousin or uncle, leaves her with little or no freedom of own choices. And if her prophet Muhammad promised paradise to those women who obey their husbands always, better make sure not to fall short.
3. Her deep need for social recognition: Her **self worth depends** on what others think and express about her, her **significance** comes through her appearance and clothing (some spend the whole salary on clothes and hairstyles!) and her **security** through what she can produce and contribute to the society (how much she is on demand and needed).
4. Her pride and self-confidence (some call it daemonic pride) hinder others to approach them: If the Qur’an says: *You are the best of People...* Why consider anything else? Also strong family ties barricade women to look for help and fulfilment outside.
5. Women are very conscious that they “carry” the honour of the family. Fear of spoiling the family honour by showing interest in the Gospel prevents many from deeper search for the truth.
6. Fear of ostracism of the community, of her husband, her family, as well as economic pressure and educational disadvantages of the children suppress her “quest”.
7. Fear of revenge, spiritual retaliation or curses from family, in-laws or community frightens them.
8. Involvement with the spirit world. (Men consult Marabus for greater wealth) Women consult them for their *love live* and having children or to gain power over other women, who are in their way. (This spiritual bondage veils the light of the Gospel).
9. Strict separation between genders hinders women to participate fully in the Mosque, which minimizes their exposure to religious teachings. Talks about religion seldom happen between men and women. (Among themselves, women rather speak about children or other family issues)

C. Challenges African Muslim women are facing:

1. Women are often left to themselves to look after their home and children. Their struggle for daily survival (getting enough food on the table) leaves little time for new thoughts and ventures.
2. Only married women have really status in the society... single women and divorcées have a hard time. They are either overprotected by their male family members, or left to survive on their own, which often leads to “unrespected businesses” (Drug sale or prostitution)
3. A woman is married for who she will be – a good wife- a good mother (pressure of society). A mother gets a lot of respect from her children – esp. from her sons, by which she often compensates the disrespect from other males of the family or community. If she has no sons, she feels cursed, left alone, vulnerable and with little protection.
4. Women do not feel they can trust their men and look for help from other sources. They try to get financially independent through conducting the spirit world, finding a *spiritual guide* whom they can trust (Female witchcraft is believed more powerful than men!!!)
5. Fear of the evil eye and of jealousy curses. Pregnant women especially are scared of Jinnis, who can spoil their happiness by making them lose their babies and with it the love of the husband etc.
6. The high rate of illiteracy in some tribes and areas (97 % of the Digo women are illiterate) does not allow them to venture out for themselves to gather new information by reading magazines, tracts or books. They are used to just follow trustworthy people in the community who teach them what is right and wrong. Conformity is highly valued and there is a great fear of leaving the comfort zone. Don’t disturb me with new ideas: *I’m born a Muslim, I’m going to die a Muslim*

Example of Conformity: Veneration of Muhammad: *he is my prophet and no one else...*

7. Christians are not really welcoming Muslims in their midst and Muslims are seldom invited into Christian homes. This gives them little chances to watch Christian families closely. Muslim women would much easier come to Christ, if they would see Christian husbands love their wives, provide for their needs and live exemplary lives. (A challenge to help Christians!)

D. Helping forces and Bridges in sharing with Muslim women?

1. Up-rootedness from war – disconnection from families, moving into the West or in countries with greater freedom (Somali Refugees, Students studying at Universities in USA, England, big cities)
2. Urbanisation – weakens family structures, brings chances to mix easier with other cultures and provides greater accessibility for the gospel (Tumaini Sewing project –sharing of different tribes)
3. Longing for Education, respect, a better future with no fear of polygamous homes! (Ex.Ghana)
4. Desire to explore something new, having doubts, start questioning the Qur'an and its content.
5. Longing for inner healing from painful experiences, which Islam has inflicted on them like: polygamy, easy divorce, inferiority of women, female genital mutilation, forced veiling, honour killing.
6. Love and fellowship of Christians, their singing and happiness in their church meetings.
7. Dreams, Visions, answered prayers over solved problems...
8. Keen interest in reading, lending Christian books – encourage Bible correspondence course
9. Addiction to TV – lending them Christian Video - (Passions film was surely a helping force!)

E. Meaningful strategies in Women reaching Women:

1. **Establish friendships.** Every woman needs a friend and a Muslim woman is no exception. Use your natural talents as a woman to reach out to other women. As women we have similar joys, fears, problems, pains, sickness and difficulties. Stay trustworthy about her entrusted secrets.
2. **Become a good communicator.** Women usually thrive on being able to share with other women, finding out family matters, birthdays, deaths, weddings and other feasts to celebrate and meet together. Talk about films - Passion film gave many wonderful opportunities to share the Gospel.
3. **Get yourself acquainted with good, easy topics to talk about:**
How to raise young children, how to cope with independent teenagers,
How to keep the husband faithful, how to cope with the “in-laws”,
Gossip and revenge, Shame and honour, Lies and Truths –
The effect of words and backbiting,
Forgiveness! If I can't forgive and forget?
Why do I live? Purpose and Aim of my life!
Share about women in the Bible: Hagar, Sarah, Hannah, Samaritan woman...
4. **Don't just communicate Truth by logic or by concepts,** but by poetry, proverbs, stories and, illustrations. Develop songs and poetry: Muslims love poetry and the Qur'an is full of poetry. Some of my Muslim friends wrote whole poetry books and travel all over the world with it... On special occasions or festivals a written poetry on a card is very welcome and calls for attention. Sister Rebecca teaches the wives of the Emirs in Northern-Nigeria biblical songs and poetry she writes herself. Through them these women keep singing and storing eternal truths and values in their heart. The women ask her many questions on her return visits.
5. **Learn from Jesus - our master communicator**
He arose the interest of his listeners through riddles, parables, stories, and everyday life illustrations. He was surely concerned, that women would hear the Good News of salvation and forgiveness too:
Woman at the well: “I'm the living water” - The adulterous woman: “Did nobody condemn you?”
He challenged the traditions and the “keepers of the Law” to rethink their values and beliefs:
The blood streaming woman: “Daughter, your faith has healed you...”
About the crippled woman, whom Jesus healed on the Sabbath he said:
“... should not this woman, a **daughter of Abraham**, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free from what bound her?” (Luke 13:16)

Many of these topics can be shared in one-to-one personal relationships, by building friendships. But in Africa we have the advantage that people live in communities and like to be taught as communities. Watch out where for their meeting points and how you can best enter in.

6. Find the needs of the community – what would the people like to know or to learn?

According to the educational level the opportunities vary a lot. While some of the more educated Somalis and Boranas like to learn English “fast” to be able to move to the USA soon, others like to join “Aerobic classes” or Basketball teams or like to learn to swim or cook etc.

Most of them have basic needs in knowing how to raise a healthy family and health topics on Baby-care and basic hygiene could be offered with mobile clinics and HIV-Aids teaching. The list and opportunities can be continued endlessly: Birth-control, Women’s diseases or gynaecological problems, agricultural advices, handicraft-, sewing- and literacy classes.

The secret is to have something to offer, which they really want and do not like to miss in their community, than even hostile people want you to stay.

In all activities we want the Gospel to take root. But 60 % of sub-saharan Africa is still illiterate and many more are functionally illiterate.

We need to learn how to share the Gospel with Oral-Communicators.

7. Include the method of Chronological Bible storytelling (CBS) esp. for oral communicators.

As literates we learn in an analytical form through lists, points, steps and “preaching essays”. But an oral communicator learns through stories and events. The Story form is the vehicle for oral cultures to collect, retain and pass on information. They are learning their values and traditions from their elders and relatives through stories.

Chronological Bible Story-telling is presenting “God’s story to Men” in a form, which Oral communicators are able to comprehend, remember and share again with others... and it starts, where God starts: in the beginning, telling us “Who God is, who man is, what sin is, and how man can be reconciled with God”!.

Although CBS is for everybody, women are especially drawn to storytelling groups, because they easily identify with other women, their sorrows, their pains and joys and get naturally involved in life events. CBS is a gentle way to touch a woman’s heart, starting from the *Known*, leading her to the *Unknown*, without direct confrontations.

Each story has the purpose to touch some Worldview aspects and explaining new biblical truths. By using enough stories, the worldview and religious view can become transformed and a longing for the gospel can grow. Because it is in the “right format” CBS gives also Christian Oral Communicators the opportunity to become Bible teachers long before they are literate themselves (it diminishes the hierarchy between literate and illiterate Evangelists.)

Acknowledgement: I want to recommend here the Southern Baptist Mission CBS department and New Tribes Mission, who have help me intensively to get started with CBS supplying material and regular advice over the years.

There is a handbook (CD) and a video (DVD) produced by LCA for those who want to learn how to do *Chronological Bible Storytelling* in their own area.

Illustrate your teaching by using Dramas, Object lessons, Quiz, Picture books (make your own pictures) Recommended pictures: “*Look, listen and live*” by Language Recording International. *Chronological Story-telling picture set* by New Tribes Mission or Southern Baptist Mission Board.

8. Chronological Bible teaching for educated and literate people. Start with them where the Bible starts too...Open the Bible, start from Genesis – read the stories, discuss them... The Bible is so different from the Qur’an, that the readers are usually amazed how easy one can understand the Bible. A very good tool for topical foundational teaching is the “*Al-Kitab*”-Bible correspondence course for Muslim seekers or new believers, published by LCA and Biblecor in South Africa.

This course can be studied alone, together with a mentor or in a group of seekers or new believers

9. Touch and penetrate whole communities through CBS:

In Literacy classes, sewing classes, agricultural projects introduce the CBS program. If it is announced as a Christian project, it can be made compulsory to attend the Bible lessons. In a project they can talk, share and help one another to understand the stories better. It has a community effect. (Example of Kibera 20-30 Ladies get taught through CBS every week)

Over the years we noticed, that a fair literacy capability is necessary for the women to succeed with their businesses. If they are totally illiterate others take easily advantage of them and they fail. We are now running new literacy classes for those who want to venture out into their own businesses and have more positive results.

10. Start Schools – If you want to reach communities – reach children. Mothers and children belong to each other. Although we have free primary school education in Kenya, parents look for good private schools. You have a great advantage to install the Word of God into these children over 5-6 years, esp. if you use the CBS program. (Parents might ask for literacy classes, when they see the progress of their children.) During holidays **VBS classes** are usually welcome even by Muslim parents, esp. in the poorer areas. As long as the children are occupied, excited and happy, Mothers are happy too. (Kariobangi –School- 125 children... 90 % from Muslim background, some Muslim mothers come early to ask for an entry for their younger children, because they see such a difference in character by their older ones who attend this school).

11. Pray for a “Door” or a “Gate”... others call it a “Person of Peace”

One person from the community can either close or open the whole community for you. My *Lady of Peace* was Sarah. As community leader she made sure everyone attended the CBS classes, even when she was sick and not able to come herself. When she died, the class cut immediately into half, but continued.

Rebecca in Nigeria, who moves from village to village prays before entering a village for a “Gate-person”, who will welcome her and introduce her to the chief and other authority figures to get free access to share. If she has this gate-person, she is usually welcome and experiences less opposition.

12. Pray with women in times of pain, sorrows, loss or after giving birth and other joyous occasions.

Devout Muslims and Christians are people of prayer and people of faith. Therefore the challenge for us Christians is to be seen as people of prayer and to pray with and for Muslims whenever appropriate. Let them see and experience: God is near (right here), God hears, God answers, God is my personal friend through Jesus Christ and He wants to be their friend too. Do not point them to a religion but to a person.

F. Getting others involved:

Interestingly, wherever you go you find women at work... some are on very lonely places, some work in very difficult places and some feel their task is too overwhelming, because they are the only ones doing it... How can we all do the job together?

- 1. Create Awareness in your immediate surroundings** by visiting as many churches, pastors, women’s groups and Ladies meetings as possible to share about the spiritual plight of a Muslim woman. Encourage Christian women to build friendships with Muslim women at their workplace in their neighbourhoods and in their shops and offer training through seminars, books or literature and provide tools to help them to start conversations with Muslims.
- 2. Build Support groups** like “**Friends of Fatuma**” or “**Daughters of Abraham**”. Through awareness seminars newly inspired Christian women can form support groups in their church or city to meet together, to pray, to learn, to grow and to team up together. These groups become like a **shelter** in the stormy and sometimes lonely outreach to their workmates, neighbours or friends. To be able to meet together with likeminded women, who understand the disappointments and the joys of sharing, who can cry with one another, who can rejoice with the other and hold each other accountable helps to keep the zeal and the activity going. (Jesus formed the expression *Daughter of Abraham* in Luke 13:16 himself therefore it looked very appropriate to us to use it as our ministry name. Abraham Father of Muslims too)

Groups of “*Daughters of Abraham*” are meeting in East Africa but also in Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone.

In Kenya and Uganda we see reluctance in commitment to meet regularly and pray for valuable contacts over a longer period of time. Usually it depends on the push to really reach out...!

Example: Emily: “Since I have the new Muslim contact I can’t miss one of the group-sessions. I want to learn anything and everything possible to really lead this person to Christ!”

And the excitement surely pulls others along and rises every time someone shares of a new contact with a Muslim neighbour or friend.

During a seminar in Lagos, Nigeria, I taught about 10 women in the *Daughters of Abraham Concept*. When I returned six months later, 6 of these 10 women came back and each one had led a Muslim woman to Christ already...

In Lagos 50 ECWA church women got trained and many of them are actively involved in sharing with their Muslim neighbours. The leader is so excited and tirelessly inspires others to persevere.

In Monrovia – Liberia - 18 “Daughters of Abraham” meet regularly to pray and go out to reach the “other Daughters of Abraham” too. They have built a leadership team of three devoted ladies.

3. Keep the Support groups alive through regular Inspiration and Training

These group leaders receive books and Video tapes from LCA to help them to make their meetings interesting, to vary their training sessions with new inspirations and further input to pass on.

A very helpful tool is the 12part Video Tapes series on “*Battle for the Hearts*” – which gives tremendous insights on Islamics, Apologetics and practical Approaches, done with experts from all over the Christian world, with Dramas, Interviews and real professional “Know-how” from TWR, LCA and a virtual studio in South Africa. By now it is also available as DVD and in French.

More videos and DVD’s from LCA are: *Mission to Muslims impossible*, *Women in Islam*, *Storytelling* and various Testimonies, which can encourage the teams to keep going.

We also try to get bulk orders of different resources from other organisations:

“CBS materials from Southern Baptists – various manuals for different storytelling groups

“Daughters of Islam” by Mirjam Adeney, USA, very helpful to study with group leaders and

“Partners or Prisoners” – *How Christians can reach out to Muslim women* by Ida Glaser + John Napoleon

G. Build a Network through:

1. Arranging Women conferences for Encouragement

Nigeria 2003: 40 women from the North of the country, from different backgrounds... brave, excited and full of zeal, came together for learning and encouragement. During their evening sharing time several ladies broke down over the pain and burden for their people they were working with. How much did they need to be ministered to. As we got around these women, crying, praying lifting them up to the Lord, the women got renewed... Their burden was lifted and they became the most exciting strategists during our meetings on the following day, going home with new zeal. Some husbands asked: Can’t you come to our area, sit with our women, allow them to cry, encourage them with new ideas, books, materials etc.?

2. Attending women’s conferences with other organisations and get speaking appointments with PACWA, Women Aglow, Homecare and others to make women arise into actions. It’s a Challenge to live 5 days in the bush with some women, learning how many get trapped by Islam and it’s financial promises

3. Developing an E-mail network with the leaders:

Keeping in touch with the leaders through e-mails, write small episodes and encouragements of what’s happening on our side... testimonies of co-workers... of stories in our own families or direct news from *Ali in Darfur* showing God’s individual love and care! Women get excited and feel they can go on again.

4. Re-visiting the leaders: What is the purpose?

Listening to problems and difficulties in their groups, trying to share the objectives and goals of DOA all over again. Having time for questions and answers; developing programs to run an own group.

Conclusion:

The crux of the matter is: Are we contagious in our passion to reach out and touch Muslim women with our love, our time and the everyday life that we can inspire Christian women around us to do the same? In Sub-Saharan Africa the task can never be accomplished by a few specialists. The Christian Church is challenged, to use their daily contacts to share Christ to the vast Muslim community. God has given the Church the gifts to finish this task. Does the Church around you see the “other Daughters of Abraham” “kept bound by Satan” with their burdens, their problems and little hope and assurance for the future?

Last August I participated in the “4th Women’s consultation” in Dallas. Two Arab Ladies and one Turkish Lady shared their testimonies. It challenged me, that none of these women had heard about Christ through

“Specialists”, (through missionaries or pastors), but through their colleagues at work, their friends or far relatives. Through these ordinary Christians and their thoughtful witness, friendship and participation in the lives and struggles of these women, they got to know the best Friend of all... Jesus Christ HIMSELF.

Christel Eric, September 2005

Discussion – Paper:

I. Challenges Christians face in sharing with Muslim women:

Vivienne Stacey in her study course on *Muslim Women* says: In reaching Muslims we are faced with

1. The Challenge of the programmed mind:

- **programmed through education – the rote learning system** (structure of education in many parts of the world) stresses memorization more than comprehension. The Islamic teaching has at its core the rote learning and leaves little or no room for questions and answers or independent thinking.
- **programmed through Islamic attention to details** with regulations for every aspect of life bringing imprisonment of thoughts and actions (for women esp. rituals for “Cleanliness”)
- **programmed through the emphasis on the memorization of the Qur’an** – no need of understanding the content, just reciting (they automatically know what to say and what to do)
- **programmed through the debate form** – the debate form is part of the cultural and literary heritage of Arabic and Urdu which has contributed to a certain mind-set which greatly influences interactions between Muslims as well as between non-Muslims (in the 1850ies the debates started in Pakistan and Afghanistan and later made their rounds through the Arab world)

Vivienne Stacey says that although the classic debate form has dropped away, a stereotyped agenda for discussions was fossilized with set themes, set answers to set questions.

Her recommendation: What is needed is a new agenda with new initiatives. If we accept the programmed mind analysis, we must then ask how Christians may regain the initiative. We need to ask: What are the new agendas through which we can regain the initiative and stimulate them to think in new areas and rather seek spiritual responses than reactions?

The fact that the minds of Muslim women are less programmed than those of Muslim men indicates a great opportunity for Christian witness.

In taking back the initiative she gives a list of possible agendas: (Open for discussions)

2. The Challenge of a different logic... The Muslim religious mind does not follow a chronological line. The Qur’an itself has no chronology. Stories are written in fragmented forms in different Surah’s without a time setting. A Muslim gets trained from early childhood to “high spiritual and intellectual acrobatics” to accommodate the teachings of the Qur’an. Also Muslim women are jumping from topic to topic, without deeper reasoning in finding the truth the logical way.

Example of Missionary Mortrekker in Somalia: Two famous Questions he asked his students:

“Was Muhammad forgiven?” Answer: “Of course he was...”

“Did Muhammad ever sin?” “Never...”

How do you reconcile these two obvious contradictions?

3. The challenge of a different worldview... political and historical developments are seen with different glasses... Big issues are wars in Africa, Palestine and other Muslim countries. The big discrepancies: Why it happens and the different opinions how these countries should be restored or re-build again. Big number One enemy – USA – their greed for oil reason made them attack Iraq. Helpful balanced articles by Christine Schirmacher on Violence in the Qur’an, suicide bombers.

4. The Challenge to break through the wall of denial – esp. educated women are living in denial about the teachings of Islam and the *Rights of women in Islam* – by disbelieving or neglecting the negative verses about *Women in the Qur’an*. They keep proclaiming, how much liberation Islam brought to women. (Share some Newspaper articles!) Some of the Asian women here are celebrating Fatima’s birthday, because she has brought so *many rights to Muslim women*. Hypocrisy...?!

The Challenge of sowing doubts - learning the art of asking good questions, which can shake the very foundation of their faith. Doubts are eye openers! Doubts are not only created through questions, sometimes even more through shock-therapy! Compare: Faith is accepting—doubts are “questing”.

5. The Challenge of their receptiveness to lies:

To stay out of trouble, little “white lies” have become a survival mode for many Muslim women. They teach their children early how to tell lies over their whereabouts, or their friends about their achievements! Samuel Zweemer said in one of his books about the Arab Muslims: *There are no other people who train their children so early and intensively in religion, but on the other hand neglect to train them also in moral values..*

Truth and lies can easily live next to each other. Published lies in newspapers are easily believed:

One missionary from the Middle East writes about the Newsweek article on the degraded Qur’an: “There is no people on earth who are more susceptible to a lie and more easily agitated by a lie than Muslims....

- "Neil Armstrong heard the call to prayer when he first sat foot on the moon and immediately converted to Islam." (The moon is sacred to Muslims)
- "There were no Jews killed in the 9/11 attacks which proves that the CIA and Israel were behind them."
- "The US is the direct cause of all the bombings and beheadings in Iraq."
- "All Americans soldiers in Iraq are Jews."
- "The CIA killed Rafik al-Hariri."
- "All medical treatment and education is free in America."

These and hundreds more are heard and immediately believed by most of the Muslims we know. (My more educated women friends shared the same with me) Why? Just because it is in the internet? The crux of the matter is that Muslims believe and insist that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross. Even most atheists do not contest Jesus' death. For anyone to deny Christ's death, they have succumbed to the greatest lie conceived by the father of all lies since he first hissed in Eve's ear. More than a billion people boldly proclaim this lie. As much as I love my Muslim friends I have to admit: When the cornerstone of their faith is a lie, the whole structure of their lives follows suit.

6. The Challenge of modern communication with the spirit world... “Reiki-meditation-method” (from Japan), shall help others to relax, get into harmony with the world around you, get connected with the spirit world, wanting to find peace. My Muslim hairdresser and her twin sisters have become a medium for revelations and direct answers from “the guide” for others. It challenges me greatly, sitting in their saloon, while they are sharing their “request and answers” with others over the phone!

Discussion Question:

II. How to find the balance between doing Evangelism and Evangelism training?

Last year I met LaNette Thompson (IMB) for the first time. I’m a big admirer of the way she developed the CBS material and how intensively she has done Storytelling herself in West-Africa.

She is incredibly straight forward and had something to say about networking and involving others.

- *Never work with one woman, if you can be involved with 5 or 10 at the same time.*
- *And if you can be involved with 50 create prayer groups...pray for the Muslim world*
- *We need one another because the task is overwhelming.*
- *We need renewed commitment to prayer - the battle is won through prayer.*

Her recommendations:

1. *Don't do the job alone...in every activity team up with local Christians.*
2. *Involve nationals with oral communication methods tapes and videos, personal testimonies.*
3. *People bond with whoever leads them to Christ. Missionaries please leave this to the national Christians and get out of the picture as quick as possible. As long as the missionary is the community, they do not venture out into their own community.*
4. *Missionaries must be mentors and trainers in the 2nd row and partner with the national co- workers.*

Discussion Question:

III: Helpful approaches, starting points, concepts, stories, Bible studies, topics to share?

Some new insights and most helpful books?

Recommendations: Reading books by well respected Islamic writers like Fatuma Mernissi, (Morocco) Nawal Sadaawi (Egypt), Biographies of Muslim women or Ex-Muslim women (but not because of conversion to Christian Faith...)