

FRESH VISION FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD: AN INCARNATIONAL ALTERNATIVE

By Mike Kuhn

Authentic Publishing, Colorado Springs, 2009, 273 pages.

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Fresh Vision is true to its name. True to its subtitle as well, the warp and woof of the book presents an incarnational alternative to understanding the Muslim world. This is fleshed out through personal anecdotes, illustrations, questions and diagrams.

The first eighteen pages, comprising Part 1, cast a new kind of vision for the Muslim world. Kuhn likens the Muslim world to a modern-day Samaria as a means to frame his book. In this chapter, the author confronts us with a choice: to choose the path of isolation, fear, alienation and self preservation, or to choose the path of empathy, self-awareness, deep listening and incarnation. In this way, Kuhn shows us that our ears can become our greatest ally; our empathy can help us avoid a response of fear. He posits that having a Kingdom-centered perspective and remembering Christ's example are both necessary for us to have joyful encounters with Muslims. He also says that we need to offer our Muslim friends security so they will not respond to us with fear. Having such a mindset requires 'careful evaluation of longstanding beliefs that may have become fetishes to a false tradition.'

Part II gives a brief, but good, historical perspective on Christian-Muslim relations. Kuhn touches on the idea of Christians' complicity by inviting his readers to examine themselves: 'Could it be that we (primarily, Christians) have been complicit in the development of religious tyranny in the Muslim world' (p. 19)? He talks about how Christians have viewed the holy land and points out some errors we have made in responding to Muslims. He also gives a pathos for how Muslims view Christians. He relates the effects of World Wars I and II, the two Gulf Wars, and 9/11 to the historical environment and describes how these conflicts have affected the way Muslims view the 'Christian' West.

Part III delves into the theological dimension of how the Islamic worldview is shaped by an understanding of God, humanity and revelation, all of which are at odds with the Christian worldview. Kuhn addresses the thorny question of the need to refine Western affinity for Israel. He discusses what Jesus' Kingdom looks like in the Muslim world today, giving several examples of personal testimonies of Muslims who have trusted Christ as their Savior. In addition, using the analogy of the shepherd boy, David, Kuhn dives into a discussion about the Israelis and the Arabs. He suggests that in order to foster a fresh vision for the Muslim world, we need to 'admit that our vision may have become skewed by

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our predispositions and our constant exposure to various teaching and views' (124). He challenges readers' perception of the present-day state of Israel, asking, 'Who are the Arabs?' He goes on to say, 'Christians need to understand that a clear ethnic association of Muslim people (and particularly Arab people) with Ishmael is inaccurate' (129). He goes on to explain why. Kuhn also delves into 'two contentious issues about which the church lacks consensus: the identity of the people of God and the Old Testament promises specific to the land' (136). He then asks what all this has to do with the Muslim world. He suggests that 'If we are prepared to think clearly and biblically about these issues, we will be better suited to discern the conflicting claims to the land in the Middle East' (158). In addition, he touches upon how two perspectives of history are being promoted: the Western Christian perspective and the Muslim perspective. He observes that 'Christ-followers must take a fresh look at the facts as best we can ascertain them. We should listen to both sides' (171). In doing so he addresses the plight of the Palestinians and suggests that this is a crucial issue for evangelicals to come to grips with if we are to have a viable witness among Muslims.

Part IV is called, 'A Reality Check.' In it, Kuhn presents us with the good, the bad and the ugly as it relates to the Muslim world today. He discusses reformation in Islam and the importance of Mohammad's role in jihad. At the same time, he warns that though Muslims are not blameless, 'the West has ridden roughshod over Islamic sensitivities' and, 'the list of Western transgressions is long' (208). Kuhn warns 'If Western Christians become overly identified with the interests of our government and societies, we will lose that which is most beneficial to our countries – our prophetic voice – what is most essential to Christ's kingdom in the Muslim world – the voice of Christ' (216). He says, 'So now Christians of the Western world and particularly the United States must ask how we can live as loyal citizens of the state and yet give radical allegiance to a crucified Lord' (219). This transitions to the last section of the book.

Part V is called 'Steps to Incarnation.' In it Kuhn discusses God on mission and human beings on mission. He outlines the necessity for a paradigm shift of missional living, poses a new paradigm for post-Christendom, discusses missional living in antagonistic cultures, and what the implication are for the Muslim world. In the final chapter of the book Kuhn talks about living the kingdom and extracting the empire. He compares and contrasts kingdom and empire, ending with some practical suggestions on how we can live the kingdom life.

Fresh Vision for the Muslim World is an excellent book. It contains many provocative and penetrating questions. I found it to be both challenging and refreshing at the same time. I couldn't help but talk with my Muslim friends about some of these questions and issues to test if the things Kuhn has mentioned are true. I would strongly encourage you to read it and 'go do the same.'

Reviewed by DK

DK served with AWM for 15 years in the Middle East; most of that time on the same team as Mike Kuhn. For the last 4 years he has been involved in ministry to Muslims in the US.

KEYS: UNLOCKING THE GOSPEL FOR MUSLIMS,

by Colin Bearup.

Gerrards-Cross: WEC Publications, 2009

Translated from French by Debbie Fahim & dedicated to Magdy Fahim,
1951-1999.

The book *KEYS: Unlocking the Gospel for Muslims* is a teach-yourself-guide or tool for reading Matthew's Gospel with a Muslim audience. The idea is to start with Matthew and familiarise yourself with it so that you can use it with skill and confidence when sharing its truths. The book is designed for people who are new to ministry among Muslims and who want to learn how to share the Gospel effectively with people of different religious views. However, I personally believe the second part of the book, the guide to reading Matthew, is excellent and useful for even those who are more experienced, because it helps us pay attention to key points and relevant issues.

The first chapter is an analysis and it summarizes the Gospel, which is good news; it answers the question 'what does this mean?' and explains how to express it so Muslims hear it as good news. The summary is comprised of the following four sentences:

1. God is holy and perfect, opposed to evil.
2. Man is a sinner, separated from God and is incapable of making himself acceptable to God.
3. Jesus was sent by God to save us: to pay for and conquer sin, to redeem us, to give us new life, and much more.
4. Through faith in Christ, we receive forgiveness, salvation, new life, the gift of the Spirit and we become children of God.

Displaying these sentences in table format creates a helpful visual aid:

GOD		MAN		JESUS		OUR PART
Is holy	→	Is sinful	→	Is the Saviour	→	To believe and be saved