

PART 3: BOOK REVIEWS

The six books reviewed here all tie into the theme of Islamist violence and how we respond to it and deal with it in ministry.

- *Secret Believers* presents some intriguing models of how to respond to extremist intimidation and persecution.
- *A Deadly Misunderstanding* and *Muslims, Christians and Jesus* are both attempts by Evangelicals to try and bring the two religions must closer together in order to reduce tensions between Christianity and Islam, and to help make Jesus attractive to Muslims.
- *The Universal Hunger for Liberty* is an intellectually robust attempt to provide some answers to help moderate Muslims transform their Muslim societies away from politicized Islam.
- *A God who Hates* is an attempt, by a former Muslim, to call upon Muslims to see the repulsiveness and danger of what Muslims teach about humans and about God.

I trust that these reviews will further help us understand and respond appropriately to Islamism, both on the abstract level, and in our day to day ministries.

SECRET BELIEVERS: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MUSLIMS BELIEVE IN CHRIST

by Brother Andrew and Al Janssen

Grand Rapids: Revell, 2007

Brother Andrew, known as a man who cares for believers being persecuted, is well qualified to write this intriguing fictionalized account of what it is like for believers to live and work in Middle Eastern environments under the often oppressive Muslim regimes that dominate the region. Brother Andrew and Al Janssen create an account of believers from both Christian and Muslim backgrounds who launch out in courageous ministry in an unnamed generic Arab world country. They write the story as a novel, and something of the life and challenges facing believers from Muslim backgrounds is compellingly portrayed in *Secret Believers*.

In a sensitive way, born of years of ministering to persecuted and oppressed believers, first in the communist world, and now for 20 years in the Muslim world, Brother Andrew paints a vivid, accurate and very sobering account of what happens when Muslims seek to follow Christ in an environment characterized by

pervasive social oppression and the unhindered militancy of Islamist activists who oppose, and even kill, believers from Muslim backgrounds and those working to help them.

This book, more than any other reviewed in this SEEDBED, provides valuable models and counsel for people living and working in such environments and much encouragement to bold yet wise obedience in such oppressive contexts. Everyone living and working in such Muslim contexts will find much to instruct and encourage in this book. I encourage you to read this 'novel' and from it take lessons and inspiration for wise and effective discipling and church planting. You will be challenged, encouraged and well taught.

What is more, as I learned in our recent time with our supporters and churches, this book is also an excellent book for our supporters and prayer backers to read, as it gives, in a very easy and compelling read, truly significant insight into the nature of the lives and ministries of those who live in and serve on behalf of believers from Muslim backgrounds across the Arab world and beyond. The book can easily be procured through such sources as Amazon.com and I encourage you to send a gift copy to your main supporters. Their understanding of your ministry and capacity to pray into the realities of your lives will be greatly increased as they read this story of Muslims coming to faith and being discipled and encouraged in their Arab world communities.

One of the main components of ministry in the Arab world that is not portrayed in *Secret Believers* is the life and role of expatriate workers, of tent makers and others, in these contexts. At first I was not happy with this omission, but then it occurred to me that by omitting this aspect of ministry in the Arab world the authors are in fact doing us a great service. Not telling this aspect of the story means that Muslim authorities and Islamists who read this book – and we can be sure that many such people will read it – will be deprived of a significant source of insight that they would love to use against us. Thus, this likely deliberate omission serves to protect all such ministry being carried out by workers across the Muslim World.

Get and read *Secret Believers* and give it to those who care about you and the ministry God has called you to.

Reviewed by Don Little