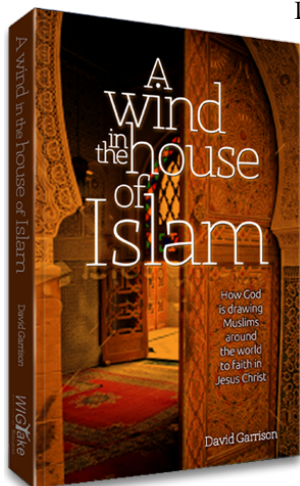


A Wind in the House of Islam: How God is Drawing Muslims around the World to Faith in Jesus Christ

by David Garrison.

Monument, CO: WiGTAKE Resources. 2014. 314 pages. \$19.



David Garrison's book is different from many similar books and articles on methodology and conversions of Muslims. These other books often highlight some new effective approach such as spontaneous people movements, disciple-making movements, Insider Movements, dreams, visions & miracles, using the Quran for witness or 'just share Jesus' relational evangelism. They are sometimes over-hyped, pop-missiology that worked in one part of the world and are offered to encourage success-starved workers among Muslims scratching away and chipping at the edges of the Muslim world. I admit that after reading those books, or going to such seminars, I have often excitedly rushed off to try the new approach.

However, typically I have wound up disappointed with my inability to implement the new approach and frustrated by the poor results. I have found myself asking: 'What am I doing wrong that it is not working?' I confess that sometimes I have given in to jealousy followed by dismissive scepticism of the methodology, questioning of their veracity and even maligning the people involved! Alas, I eventually repent, then rejoice with my fellow workers who are enjoying success and ask God to show me what I might learn. This book by David Garrison goes a bit deeper, surveys the movements more broadly and offers a host of factors contributing to movements. It is written neither as sensationalism nor as an academic study. It does not adequately verify the reports of some of the movements but significantly appears to be a systematic attempt to get a handle on what is happening in terms of movements among Muslims and why.

The data discussed in *A Wind in the House of Islam* is based on hundreds of interviews by David Garrison and his team. It represents the analysis of the answers given by local believers (those from Christian background, Muslim background and those who self-identify as Muslim Followers of Christ) involved in ongoing people movements among Muslims over the last few years. The goal was to distil some contributing factors from the reported phenomenon of movements. A movement is defined as 1,000 believers and/or 100 new churches of conversions of Muslims to Christ in a decade or two. It is not clear what

definition of church he is using, probably a house church/fellowship in most cases though some of the accounts involve using redeemed mosques. Although all nine regions are presented as having movements, it seems clear that the movements he really features are those which have significant depth—the movements in Eastern South Asia, Indo-Malaysia, and East Africa. Consequently, he gives less comprehensive coverage to most of the other regions.

The thesis is that there is a movement of Muslims coming to Christ in each of the nine regions of the Muslim world. For each region, he gives some ethnic, historical, linguistic and political context. The acknowledgement that there are variations in the Islam practiced and manifested in each of the nine regions is a useful contribution to this field of missiology among Muslims. We should be more aware of the varying contexts rather than assuming that Islam is monolithic across regions. Results of a particular approach will vary when ‘franchising’ a methodology as a tool for use everywhere in the Muslim world. However, David Garrison is not posing a one-solution answer to reaching Muslims. Instead, he lists numerable factors influencing and affecting why and how movements are starting in the Muslim world. In some regions, the evidence for a movement is very thin or too immature to measure. In other places such as South Asia, where the start of the movements dates back to the 1970s, there is much known about such movements, including the existence of what are normally considered traditional churches, in some of them.

Now I want to discuss some of the more controversial stuff; contextualisation – particularly the point about Muslims not changing religion or converting to Christianity or adopting a Christian identity. These Muslim followers of Jesus are counted in the movements that Garrison discusses. Garrison accepts that some practitioners use high contextualisation missiology, that a Muslim can become a follower of Jesus in their heart, but not immediately (or ever?) quit their identity as Muslim. He states that true conversion will eventually cause someone to change religion. However, how much should we retard the rate of transition of identity from Muslim to Christian in order to intentionally influence others towards following Jesus? Some missiologists and field workers have perhaps been doing too much loose experimentation for the last thirty years, trying to justify, test, evaluate, measure, analyse and further experiment with this approach in hopes of sparking large-scale movements of Muslims to Jesus. Garrison, in keeping with his pattern of adroitly straddling the line on high-contextualisation and not stating where he stands on critical issues, does not offer conclusive evidence for or against any particular approach but instead offers a range of contributing factors to movements.

I offer critiques of parts of the book to promote better investigation of the phenomenon of movements. If Garrison’s aim was to do academic research, then I question whether the methodology of using interviews and reports of

movements by outsiders as the basis for analysis can be legitimately viewed as sufficiently objective to withstand scrutiny. Many of the personal accounts of believers are very touching, amazing, inspiring and sometimes tragic, but is this valid evidence when an interview with only one person is considered proof of the existence and characteristics of an entire movement?

How sceptical should I be of the validity of information gained from interviews? Telling an interviewer what they want to hear, putting the most flattering spin on events and being optimistic about numbers are all too common in missions, not just in Muslim cultures. I am mindful that it was a safe interview environment for the interviewees who were responding to questions given by westerners. Their answers might not however coincide with what they say when challenged by a hostile local interrogator. Were the interviewees 'cherry-picked' for the book or are they truly representative of the entire movement?

The characteristics of some of the reported movements are very questionable because the reporting seems extremely sketchy, rife with unverified claims and the numbers claimed have been seen by few if any outsiders. See, for example, the note given about a movement in West South Asia, p.280, note 6. If the workers in that region are unconvinced about the veracity of the reports then how is the reader to conclude if it is really a movement? Verification of the existence of the groups, the depth of commitment and the numbers reported are difficult to obtain. In this case, is it because the proponents of these movements feel that closer examination jeopardises the fragile existence of the movement and thus they prefer to keep them isolated relying on second-hand reports? Are these singular interviews representative of the movement and is it even worth reporting if it is so disputed? I wish the team had asked more probing questions at times, gotten better independent verification of the numbers, observed first hand more of the group meetings and had included criticisms from detractors in those same regions. Certainly not all nationals or workers are convinced of the genuineness or the size of these movements. However, Garrison's metric of doing interviews with hundreds of people is a step in the right direction to discover commonalities leading to effectiveness and goes beyond simply telling a few anecdotal 'glory stories' and then making grandiose conclusions about universal applicability in the Muslim world.

Additionally, in an apparent attempt to probe deeper, the interviewing team occasionally asked follow up questions to test key areas of belief about Jesus son of God, the Bible, Muhammad and the role of the Quran. If we can trust the answers given, then most seem orthodox in their beliefs. Interviewees from older movements are thus more mature. However, newer believers, particularly in more contextualized fields, when confronted on these same points were vague, incomplete, and nuanced in their answers. Their replies were non-offensive and non-committal to either Christian or Muslim audiences. I suspect that perhaps their contextualization-trained mentors had already influenced these

believers. It seems that some of these highlighted movements have been happening for so long and with such unclear results, I wonder if they are still moving towards orthodoxy and in what way they see a connection and reconciliation of practices with the rest of the Body of Christ?

Not to undermine his analysis or conclusions but it seems obvious that in many cases of movements there were large-scale upheavals causing Muslims to question their faith thus disrupting the status quo. War, major political changes, revolution, natural disaster, etc. created an opportunity for some daylight to come between Islam's hegemony over their situation and their lives thus giving Muslims an opportunity or increased motivation to make their own religious choices. Nonetheless, the factors Garrison lists as contributing to movements, capitalized on the situation or crisis God allowed to come about and thus assisted the resulting movement.

Turkey is not specifically represented and is a huge challenge, not very closely associated with the rest of the central Asian Turkic world. Why isn't Iran better represented? David Garrison is not alone in failing to dig deeper into the Iranian movement. Somehow, the Iranian movement is rarely held in the same regard as more contextualized movements among Muslims. In the Persian world movements are less contextualized and are perhaps dismissed as old fashioned and not so missiologically intriguing as the more highly contextualized movements, even though their numbers are greater and their depth and breadth are well documented.

The book's grand historical analysis seems solid – that there are more movements to Christ in the last 12 years than the previous thousand plus years! The rate of movements of Muslims turning to Christ seems to be accelerating as well. Credit is due to the earlier missionaries upon whose shoulders we stand to enjoy such fruit. Credit is due as well to the innovators in Muslim outreach the last thirty-five years whose work, although often controversial, has helped to sow seed among Muslims and foster discussion of using different and better approaches to reaching Muslims.

Garrison's book inspires, personalises, documents and offers analysis of these movements over history which makes it a must read for missionaries among Muslims and those studying missiology. Wishful and sceptical thinking aside, there seems to be some genuine significant evidence compiled from many of the regions that movements to Christ truly are afoot in the Muslim world thanks to *many* contributing factors.

Reviewed by Rob A

Rob and Iris worked in a war torn country from 1992 to 2012, doing NGO work and leading four teams with Frontiers and EPC (Evangelical Presbyterian Church). They continue to focus their ministry to the region from New England. They have 3 field-born kids. Rob has an MA in World Christianity from Denver

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Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity

by Nabeel Qureshi

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2014. 296 pages

This is a beautiful seamless narrative biography of how a young, devout, brilliant Muslim young man, raised in a Pakistani, God-fearing Ahmadiyya family in America, is befriended by a Christian classmate, and through years of struggle and much researching, and finally through dreams that were answers to prayers, comes to genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also of interest to note that Nabeel lived through the horrifying events of September 11th, 2001, which shattered his assumption that Islam was a religion of peace.

In the Introduction, Nabeel states his three purposes for writing this book. The following are the lead sentences in each paragraph (pp. 17-18):

1. To tear down walls by giving non-Muslim readers an insider's perspective into a Muslim's heart and mind.
2. To equip you with facts and knowledge, showing the strength of the case for the gospel in contrast with the case for Islam.
3. To portray the immense inner struggle of Muslims grappling with the gospel, including sacrifices and doubts.

At the very beginning of this well-crafted narrative, the author candidly states certain liberties that were taken with the material. "The words I have in quotations are rough approximations. A few of the conversations actually represent multiple meetings condensed into one. In some instances, stories are displaced in the timeline to fit the topical categorization" (p. 19).

From the Prologue and throughout Part One, the reader is taken inside Islam as practiced by this devoted and affectionate family. For non-Muslim readers, unacquainted with the intimacies of a devout Muslim's day to day routine, the author shares how God-oriented every aspect of their family routine is. Arabic phrases uttered during their prayers are shared with their

