

*Reviewed by Ed Loewen*

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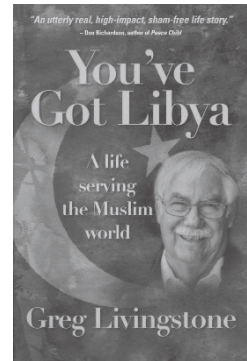
## **You've Got Libya – A Life Serving the Muslim World** by Greg Livingstone (his autobiography) Monarch Books, 2014

The book begins with twenty-nine endorsements by international mission leaders which prepare the reader for 'the whirlwind' that follows, which is Sally Livingstone's description of her husband. Greg tracks his frenetic life from his inauspicious birth to the present day with a relentless frankness which is refreshing, challenging and often very humorous.

Scene 1 is Greg's traumatic early years. Several foster parents and 'other arrangements' negotiated by his showbiz mum leave him with a deep fear of abandonment and a desire to be accepted and to belong; to be somebody. In this topsy-turvy world he eventually ends up in a loving Christian family and comes to faith in Christ at the age of sixteen.

Scene 2 is his years of early Christian discipleship. He attends Wheaton College and in 1959 becomes a member of George Verwer's Muslim world prayer group at Moody Bible Institute. Attracted by George's radical approach to Christian discipleship and evangelism, Greg attributes his call to apostolic ministry to Muslims from this date. Christian 'persons of influence' pepper this period of his life and instil in him the 2 Timothy 2:2 spiritual reproduction principle.

Scene 3 opens with his engagement and marriage to Sally and his inclusion on George Verwer's recently-birthing Operation Mobilization leadership team. One of his first responsibilities is to charter a plane for \$27,000 to fly 113 people to Paris for a summer OM European campaign. He gave the charter agent \$15 and then had to recruit the people! Next he had to transport a team from the UK to India in OM vehicles renowned for their unreliability. Predictably, unexpected incidents occur. This is followed by a three-year stint in Europe during which time the OM 'Operation University Team' was birthed. Greg describes himself as a 'sheepdog' at this time. A period of leadership in the OM European office in Brussels confirms that he is neither an evangelist nor a linguist, but his very strong mobilizing gifting has become blatantly obvious.



In Scene 4 he finally gets to the Arab world where he meets Mazhar Mallouhi, a Syrian believer from a Muslim background, with whom he has since had a lifelong friendship. He gets 'fired' from his role in Lebanon, and after establishing OM Canada, a stint as chaplain on the OM ship *Logos* and a three-year pastorate in Aspen, Colorado he is appointed in 1977 as the US Director for the North Africa Mission (later to be called Arab World Ministries). Things begin 'to roar' and, overwhelmed by the number of new candidates and Greg's vision of doing church planting in a more flexible way through self-mobilizing teams, he and NAM part amicably. On May 28, 1983 Frontiers is born.

Scene 5 is Frontiers and Greg goes into some depth regarding the early history including the six non-negotiables: Muslim focus, church planting, teams, field-governed, coaching, and grace orientation. We gain insights into the challenges of founding and sustaining a new mission. In 2000 he steps down from being the International Director and describes their subsequent experiences in Malaysia and the UK where he continues being a 'sheepdog for God.'

Greg weaves into the narrative definitions of leadership, comments on missionary kids (he and Sally have three boys), missional insights, his weaknesses, the challenges of team life, his vulnerabilities, thoughts on internationalization, his illnesses, his fears of failure and abandonment, his obsessions, his studies and writing, and his care for Sally in her times of depression. Throughout his life God's sovereign grace upholds him and his passion for Jesus sustains him.

As Bill Bell (the Director of North Africa Mission, USA, from 1969 to 1976) would probably say, 'This is tribal story-telling at its best.' This is a book of encouragement reminding the reader that God can use 'damaged' people, a term Greg uses to describe himself, to glorify God. He does not glorify missions but speaks of suffering for the sake of the gospel. He speaks of finishing well and the hope of eternal belonging in glory, welcomed by Jesus and by those whose lives he's touched.

An index would have helped and for the non-North American readership a glossary of unfamiliar words and terms would be useful. The Epilogue snapshot of Greg's itinerant life would have been enhanced by the actual dates of his sojourns.

The generation of leaders that Greg represents are exceptional people. They are connectors and 'super conductors' of God's missionary heart. I personally experienced this when Greg invited me to be a 'coach' to one of the Frontiers teams in the Arab world. He wanted the team to appreciate the role of media in church planting. It was a 'roller coaster,' week-long, ministry-packed itinerary.

These apostolic leaders were called to establish new missions in response to the cultural sea change of the 1960s and the boomer generation. Throughout my NAM/AWM ministry I was blessed by many men and women whom Greg had

mobilized. These pioneer visionaries made mission history and we need to read about them and learn from them because in every generation there are new opportunities to obey the Great Commission.

I leave our heavenly Father with the last word: ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations’ (Jeremiah 5:1).

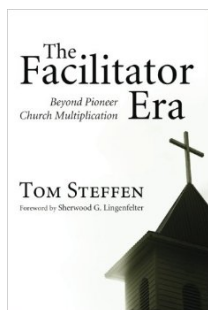
**Reviewed by Keith Fraser-Smith**

*Muslims of the Arab world have been Keith's focus for more than 40 years. He has served in a variety of leadership roles with AWM in Media, the Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Globalization and UK ministry and he recently retired after leading a local CPM team in the UK. Among his many interests is his pleasure in writing book reviews.*

## **The Facilitator Era, Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication**

by Tom Steffen

Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011



This book is a review of the changing nature of the missionary enterprise. It captures the current missiological environment as understood and taught by missiology departments in most North American seminaries. Tom Steffen, a professor at Biola, has written a short story that is similar to Lencioni’s “business parable” approach. In the story, two veteran missionaries return from the Philippines and seek deeper understanding of church planting. They meet and discuss missiology with a professor who leads them through a historical overview of missiological writing.

He categorizes the books into the following: urban church planting, house churches, North American church planting, the missional church, multiethnic church planting, Muslim-focused church planting, training and books that focus on individual congregations. I found it interesting that Church Planting Movement (CPM) ideas that have rocked the missions world in the past five years are largely absent from his list as their own category. Rather, they are part of a ‘catch all’ category that contains both his own book (*Passing the Baton*, 1997) and Garrison’s *Church Planting Movements* (2004). These two titles seem fairly distinct in their approach. Overall, however, it is one of the best summaries of church planting material I have seen.

The discussion then turns to eras and epochs of mission, suggesting that the fourth era is upon us. This era introduces the role of the non-western church and how the missionary enterprise must change to fully embrace partnership between