

Book Review

Ministry to Muslim Women: Longing to Call them Sisters. A collection of life experiences by women reaching Muslim women with the gospel: editors Fran Love and Jeleta Eckheart. Reviewed by a missionary woman, 15 years in the Arab World.

What a massive undertaking—ministry to Muslim women. The convergence of poverty, political systems, education, family and community structures, occult practices and Islamic tenets makes for an overwhelming task for missionary women seeking to bring the Gospel to women who have never heard. This compilation of papers and discussions, issuing from a conference on ministry to Muslim women, effectively stimulates us to evaluate and push forward to that which God has called us.

Thank you, women, for giving us "issues to think through." The book is worth it for these alone, although there is much more we can appropriate from it. The issues we are asked to evaluate in our given areas of ministry are worth our time and prayer. For missionary ladies, often preoccupied with coping with daily tasks and personal relationships in a foreign culture, it is a wake up call to look beyond our circumstances and proactively pursue the higher goal.

The women participating in this book have lived in tough places and seen much hardship. As they share their struggles, their strategies, and their results, one is reminded that our sisters and brothers are undergoing the same

trials and sufferings all over the Muslim world. They provide women missionaries with encouragement and thoughtful insights. They raise questions about the emerging church and the training of women leaders. Fran Love explains her own paradigm shift in her paper "Developing Women Leaders." We concur wholeheartedly when Fran says, "...it is even more important to provide a foundation of systematically teaching doctrinal truths about the Christian faith, an approach that benefits both the missionary and the MBB woman." This paper is a valuable read for anyone who is working with believers from Islamic background.

Along these lines, A.H. presents a paper on "storying" the Bible. This is an excellent tool and one that brings balance to understanding a Muslim woman's worldview in light of the teaching of truth. It could very well become a focal point of ministry to women for years to come. Her article is detailed and covers quite a bit of foundational information. However, this is vital to grasping the concept and thrust of "storying." It is worth the time to study.

There will inevitably be conflicting ideas in "doing" ministry. This book was no different. There were at least 16 women giving their experiences and opinions. I found it quite disturbing when C.M. Amal, upon speaking of our commonalties (struggles and challenges that all women face in life), stated, "...I am not claiming that

women have these problems because they follow Islam...when we step beyond -isms and theology to expose our human side...then we can touch each other's hearts and unite in our common search and journey on the straight path and goal of a love relationship with God." This statement, as well as others in the article, smack of syncretism and should warn us not to abandon Biblical truth in order to identify with Muslim women. Do our journeys and goals have the same end? No. Are we forgetting that we are in grace and our friends are lost? Are we keeping Biblical truth in the forefront of our minds as we adapt culturally?

Last, but not least, there is a wonderful section on relating to our sending agencies. Again, I believe that Mary Ann Cate has "hit a nail on the head"!

Mission agencies need to read her article and begin putting into action the shoring up of women missionaries so that they are reassured of, and encouraged in, the fact that they too are "capable, significant and influential." Thank you, Mary Ann, from one who comes through an agency to serve Him.

Ministry to Muslim Women was very stimulating and one which women who are working with Muslim women should read. May it bear much fruit for His kingdom in the Muslim world.

Check out these books:

A Passion for the Impossible by Lili Trotter

Producing Mature Fruit by A.H.

God and Woman by J.O. Terry