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Fries and Whitfields' "Islam and North America" (book review)

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Book Review



Fries, Micah & Whitfield, Keith. (2018). *Islam and North America*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic. 184 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 9781462748419

Islam is often in the news – and Muslims are increasingly in our neighborhoods, work, and schools. Both the Christian and Secular interaction with Islam, exacerbated by 9/11 and now made worse by the collapse of Afghanistan, make this missional text relevant to the proclamation of the gospel to Muslims.

Fries and Whitfield, who both edit and contribute to this anthology, state: “We invited a group of people to write chapters who do have something to teach us about Islam and how to reach its followers. [They are] leaders in missions and cross-cultural engagement.” Essayists include pastors, Seminary professors, parachurch leaders, and missiologists. Kambiz Saghaey, a Moslem convert to Christ, encourages us in the Foreword to bring the gospel to our Muslim neighbors. This book gives us the impetus.

The text is divided into three main sections: Section One: The overview of Islam in North America; Section Two: Questions People Ask [About Islam]; Section Three: Great Commission Opportunities. Section One opens with an essay by well-known author on mission and evangelism Ed Stetzer of Wheaton College. He suggests that our interaction in North America must be a multi-faith dialogue. In that dialogue we must “1) Let each religion speak for itself; 2) Talk with and about *individuals*, not generic ‘faiths;’ 3) Respect others who hold to different beliefs, just as you would expect them to respect you for yours; 4) Grant each person the freedom to make his or her faith decisions.” This is clearly a hopeful, Western Christian approach; and these principles are elucidated by other writers throughout the book. Demographic trends show the growth of Muslims in our population, but like most North Americans, they are not monolithic in their beliefs. Islam has its own shades of variety – from the Sunni/Shia divide to Westernized progressives.

Section Two asks the hard questions concerning commonalities: Does Islam test our belief in unbridled religious freedom; do we worship the same God; is warfare an intrinsic part of Islam; and is Sharia law the inevitable result of growing Islamic populations?

Section Three presents essays on getting to know our Muslim neighbors and the challenges of sharing the Great Commission. An Afterward is offered on the pressing issue of Immigration.

The book has a usable set of Subject and Scripture Indexes, and a list of the contributors and their ministries. Good research, Biblical analysis, and commentary on Islamic sources fill the text. The variety of contributors allow for some optimistic and alternate sobering analysis. Reflection questions after each chapter make it usable for class and church book studies. As noted from the outset, the clash between the cross and the crescent is very much alive in our world. We need winsome books to aid us in our witness to Moslems. This book is one.

Reviewer

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