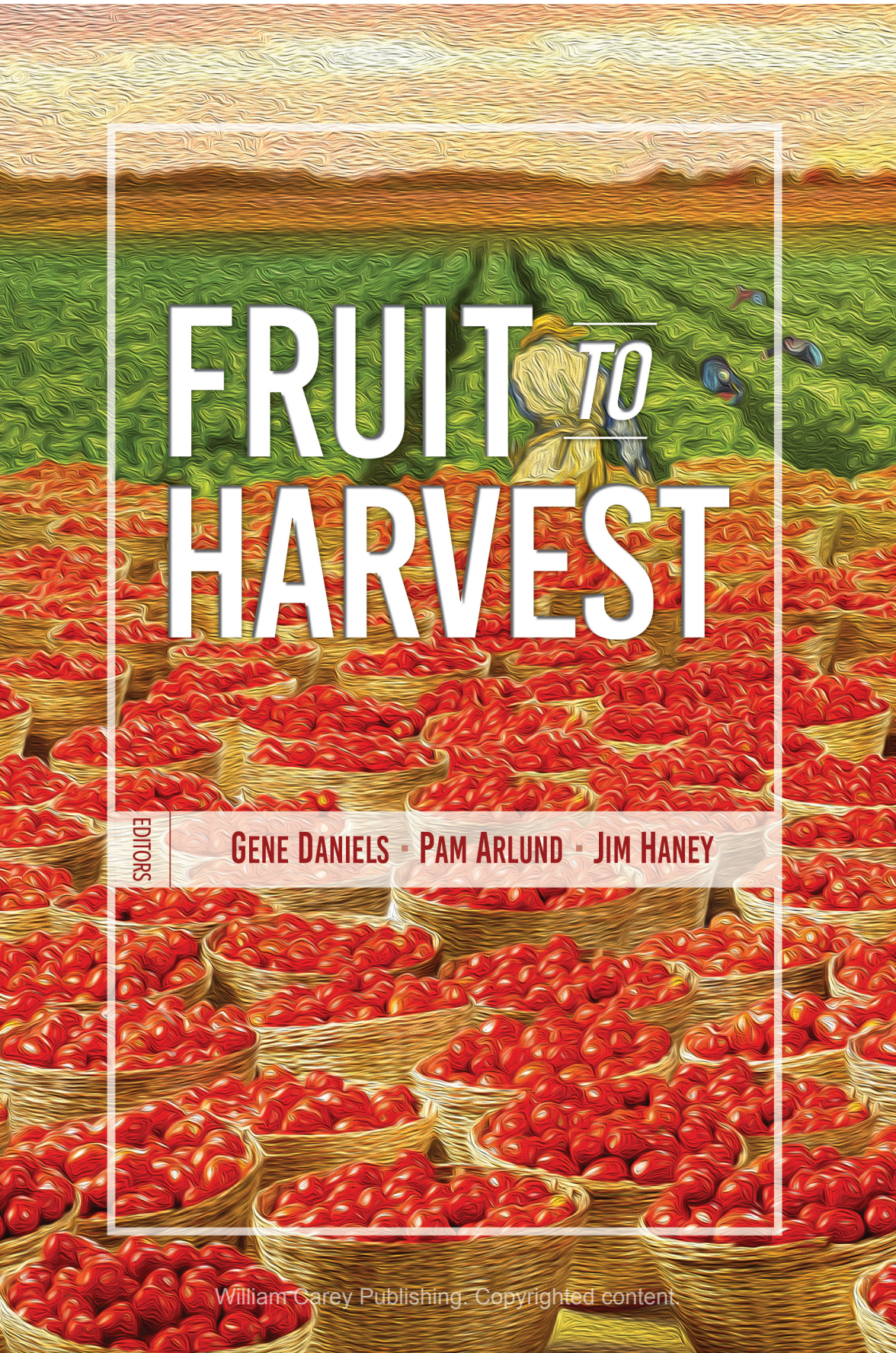


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Fruit to Harvest: Witness of God's Great Work Among Muslims

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1 EXTRAORDINARY BOLDNESS TO MUSLIM PEOPLES

Global Trends Task Force Plenary Presentations, Abide, Bear Fruit Global Consultation*

Jim Haney served as Director of Global Research for the International Mission Board, Richmond, Virginia, and coordinator for Vision 5:9's Global Trends Task Force from 2005 to 2018. Before that, Jim planted churches among Muslims peoples in West Africa for eighteen years. Jim has written and spoken widely on missions and missiology.

MAIN POINTS NOT TO MISS:

- Today's teams can learn from the hopes and disappointments of those who came before them.
- Today's teams must engage the Muslim world with new, sacrificial, and extraordinary boldness to give Muslims an opportunity to hear the gospel. If not, millions of Muslims will perish without a single opportunity to find hope in Christ.

* Jenn Brown, Jeff Liverman, Jeff Neely, and Jim Haney led "Global Trends" plenary sessions at Abide, Bear Fruit, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2007

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I would like to invite you to a conversation in this chapter.

I've brought a few guests with me today, from the past and present, and I've told them that God is sending you to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to Muslims. They have agreed to meet with you in this chapter. So sit with us and have some tea.

The reason my guests want to speak with you is simple—they want to encourage your faithfulness to the calling God has placed on you. While countless teams have gone to Muslim peoples in the past, many teams have experienced great challenges and Satan has frustrated them. In fact, "Throughout history, Christianity has found Islam to be its most persistent, and often most successful, rival."[1]

You, the reader, are the focal point for this conversation because you live in this generation. Take counsel from the words of history because there remains a huge gap between the reality Muslims face each day and the plan God has for them through Jesus Christ. We need you and your team to be faithful to the calling God has placed on you. Ready to hear?

MUAWIA AND YEZID

My name is Muawia, and this is my son Yezid. My son and I lived many years ago. We knew the Prophet Muhammed—we saw him with our eyes. We speak to you today from words that were written about us at the time of our death. We are condemned because in our lifetime we did not believe in the name of Isa al Masih. We did not follow his way.

In our time, we knew Allah to be unique, with no relations or affection for any creature. We knew Allah as absolute sovereign and his omnipotence as impersonal.[2] There were stories of a man who came to Arabia who had the truth, but we heard that he returned to Damascus.[3] We do not know where he went. We did not hear his message. After this, but before the Prophet, some Arabs in Hirah and Kufa[4] heard a message of Isa al Masih and followed in the way. They were serious followers, and one of them named Noman abu Kamus proved the sincerity of his faith by melting down a golden statue of the Arabian Venus, worshiped by his tribe, and then he distributed the proceeds among the poor. Many of the tribe followed his example and were baptized.[5]

But even though some Arabs had become Christians by the time of the

1 Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 214.*
2 Samuel Marinus Zwemer, *Arabia: the cradle of Islam (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), 171–72.*
3 Galatians 1:15–18.
4 Al-Hirah, south of Kufa in modern Iraq, was a significant city in pre-Islamic Arab history.
5 Zwemer, *Arabia, 301–5.*

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Prophet, Arabia became 'the mother of heresies.' Christians were to bring the gospel to us, but they were consumed with bitter quarrels. Instead, there were bishops, pastors, and missionaries who brought immorality, hypocrisies, and heresies.[6]

Then came the Prophet. We followed him, looking for power, meaning, and truth. The Prophet taught us that we were superior to immoral people like Christians through the mercy of Allah, but our lives were full of uncertainty under the absolute sovereignty of Allah. In fact, we were destitute, lost, and without hope. None of us knew the God who has called you; none of us knew the good news.

One by one we passed from the earth. As we passed, I told my son Yezid, 'When I die, take some of the hair and nails of the Prophet and place them upon my eyes and in my mouth and throat; then spread the Prophet's shirt along the coffin; if anything could bring a blessing this would.'

At my funeral, my son Yezid said, "If the Almighty forgive him, it will be because of his mercy; if he take vengeance upon him, it will be for his transgressions."[7]

Many others who followed the Prophet were lost, just as we were lost. To be Muslim is to be uncertain and hopeless.

So what does an old Muslim and his son who have since passed many years have to say to you, a new missionary of Isa al Masih? We do not know who you are. We don't care who you are. But if you have the cure for sin, don't turn away from us or spend your time in meetings. Instead, come. Stay with us; speak the truth of Isa al Masih clearly to us so that we will hear and believe.

RAYMOND LULL

As Muawia told his story, a man began to weep as he looked down at the floor. This man, a brilliant but humble Franciscan missionary to North Africa during his lifetime,[8] had come prepared to share his counsel with you, the reader, but he is overtaken with grief for lost Muslims. Finally, he looks at you and speaks quietly.

6 Ibid., 306.
7 Elwood Morris Wherry, Samuel Marinus Zwemer, and James L. Barton, The Mohammedan World of Today: Being Papers Read at the First Missionary Conference on Behalf of the Mohammedan World Held at Cairo April 4th–9th, 1906 (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1906), 15–16.
8 Following a vision, Raymund Lull (1232–1315), from Majorca, dedicated his life to the peaceful and prayerful conversion of Muslims to Christianity.

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> I am Raymond Lull.[9] When I came to the seventy-ninth year of life, my friends wanted me to stay in Europe to teach, but my resolve was to die as a missionary and not as a teacher of philosophy. So when the time of my departure was at hand, I prayed, "As the needle naturally turns to the north when it is touched by the magnet, so it is fitting, O Lord that thy servant should turn to love and praise and serve thee; seeing that out of love to him thou wast willing to endure such grievous pangs and sufferings. Men are wont to die, O Lord from old age, the failure of natural warmth and excess of cold; but thus, if it be thy will, thy servant would not wish to die; he would prefer to die in the glow of love, even as thou wast willing to die for him."[10]
>
> Dear follower of Jesus, be urgent to leave the praise and honor that men would give you to volunteer. Earnestly and urgently surrender your life to share and suffer for the salvation of Muslims. This is the kind of volunteer we need—not just believing but doing.[11]

There are many others who engaged Muslims from the time of the seventh century. Their words are recorded in many books. Let us now build on their testimonies with voices from the last century. Their words are offered here for the benefit of your calling and that of your team.

H. H. JESSUP

> I would like to add to the conversation. My name is Jessup. I helped to lead the Missionary Conference on Behalf of the Mohammedan World in Cairo, Egypt, in 1906. I joined with others in Cairo to understand the extent of darkness in the Mohammedan world and to do something about it. We estimated 233 million Mohammedans in the world in that day. We can only assume that many of them have passed through the gates of hell to be condemned forever.
>
> "Very few even among Christians are aware of the great spiritual needs of Islam. Nor is the Church at large awaken to the fact that the Mohammedan world has suffered this destitution because of her past neglect, and that present open doors are a challenge to her faith and faithfulness."[12] So I'm glad to pass on to you some encouragement for what you are undertaking, if you are truly serious about your calling to reach Mohammedans.

9 Other spellings used, depending on language and translation.
10 Samuel Marinus Zwemer, *Raymund Lull: First Missionary to the Moslems* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1902), 132–35.
11 Raymund Lull was stoned to death in North Africa on June 30, 1315, after boldly entering a marketplace to share the gospel one last time.
12 H. H. Jessup's introductory paper, in Wherry, Zwemer, and Barton, *The Mohammedan World*, 14.

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As those of us who attended the Cairo conference see it, you should focus in earnest on three things:[13]

1. Set apart more special laborers and give them specialized training. More than anything, they should hear the devastating stories of people like Muawia and Yezid. They must understand that Mohammedans are spiritually destitute. Unless workers know this and feel it deeply in their heart, they will not see their calling as a matter of life and death. You must train laborers to meet hostility with patience, kindness, and the presentation of Christ as the only Redeemer.
2. Organize more efficiently the production and distribution of literature for Mohammedans. During our conference in Cairo, we heard that in 1905, forty-six million pages of the Arabic were printed at the press in Beirut. Wonderful! But you and your team must find ways to get the Word of God to Mohammedans so that they can read it, hear it, and be transformed by it.
3. Raise up teams for the fresh occupation of important center. Listen to me—you cannot run from Mohammedan cities. Are you a Jonah? You cannot run from them! You must go and give your all until God raises up Mohammedan scholars, enlightened, renewed by God's Spirit, thoroughly converted to faith in Jesus, the Son of Mary, as the only Redeemer, who proclaim that the set time to favor Islam has come and that they are all called to accept Christ.[14]

Finally, challenge churches who neglect the realities that hold Mohammedans in bondage—polygamy, suppression of women, devastating divorce, hatred, and suspicion. These and other features have been ignored or even defended. My friend, Mohammedans are lost, lost, and lost, and they must see in you and your family the love of Christ that proves your discipleship.[15]

S. M. ZWEMER

Yes. Amen to that part about loving as Christ loved, Mr. Jessup. I am Zwemer. My counsel comes from those of us who gathered at the great World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910. Clearly, as was the case then, the church is at a turning point. If the church will not turn toward Muslims—239 million as of 1910—or if there is further delay, can there be any outcome other than absolute judgment for every Muslim? Also, what awaits the church for neglecting Muslims?!

13 J. Brown, "Families Engaging Muslims in Grace and Truth" (presentation, Abide, Bear Fruit, Chiang Mai, Thailand, October 13, 2017).
14 Jessup, introductory paper, 14–20.
15 John 13:34–35.

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