



# Muslims leaving Islam for Jesus

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**Warren F. Larson** 

Columbia International University, USA

## Abstract

This article discusses the chaos Muslims are experiencing all over the world and suggests that in some cases Islam is imploding. Strife and violence exist between ethnic/religious factions and brutal blasphemy laws are increasing. Floundering economies, refugees on the run, women leading protests, and Islamic radicals wreaking havoc fill the news. Amid great instability, some are leaving Islam as atheists, secularists, or nones, but many are finding their way to Christ. Building on the author's personal research on how extremist Islam has caused some Pakistani Muslims to come to Christ, this study suggests a similar pattern in Iran, Afghanistan, and beyond. The author believes we are seeing the beginning of a great harvest among Muslims, but that Christians need fresh vision and special commitment to reach them with the gospel.

## Keywords

Muslim, Islam, Jesus, conversion, trauma

## Muslims in turmoil

The world is in a mess, with Muslim nations seemingly experiencing more than their share of struggles. Not long ago, news focused on the utter devastation and death caused by a massive earthquake in Southern Turkey and Northern Syria. In Turkey, loss of life numbered in the tens of thousands, with millions displaced, but in Syria the situation was even worse. Over 5 million were reported homeless, suffering from freezing temperatures, while most aid was held up over diplomatic quarrels (*Guardian*, 2023). The grief and sorrow were palpable, yet even before this turmoil, a deeper crisis

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## Corresponding author:

Warren F. Larson, Columbia International University, 7435 Monticello Rd, Columbia, SC 29230-3122, USA.

Email: warren.larson@ciu.edu

existed. The article suggests that the hardships Muslims are suffering from are drawing them away from Islam and toward the gospel in many cases. As Christ followers, our concern for Muslims is not only for earthly hope and peace but to know the assurance of an eternal destiny in Heaven.

### *Political, economic, and social troubles*

In much of the Arab world, there are long lines where people queue up for the necessities of life, poverty haunts the streets, and many are not even sure what it means to be ethnically “Arab” (Carlson, 2021). The frustration of common people was seen clearly 10 years ago, through the eyes of a poor vegetable vendor in Tunisia. Trying to eke out a decent living, he immolated himself in what family members said was a “quest for dignity” (Fisher, 2011). In the town of Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, local police took special delight in harassing vendors by taking their fruit without paying for it. When Mohamed Bouazizi resisted, officers beat him and overturned his cart. Finding the shame of the constant abuse of power intolerable, he set himself ablaze. This one act triggered the Arab Spring across North Africa and the Middle East (Fisher, 2011). Demonstrations that followed toppled several Middle Eastern authoritarian regimes, and for a brief time, people across the Arab world anticipated an end to widespread corruption (*The Economist*, 2020). What was most shocking during this time of resistance was that women in Arab nations took to the streets, demanding social justice, democratic reform, and equality (United Nations, 2013). Protestors longed for democratic reform and economic progress, but brutal crackdowns put an end to their hopes. Soon, an Arab Winter descended on the region as new authoritarian leaders replaced old ones (Byman, 2022; Soufan, 2012). Newly formed Islamist-led governments attempted to establish reforms but were unsuccessful and, at times, even worse.

### *Internal strife*

Deep divisions have plagued the Muslim world since the death of Muhammad over the question of who should rule the community. Sunnis felt the leader should be the person most qualified for the job and decided by consensus. Shi’ites said it must be the man connected to God through the family line of Muhammad. The person they initially had in mind was Ali, Muhammad’s son-in-law, whom the Shi’ites viewed as divinely chosen for the office. Over time, what began as a simple theological inquiry developed into serious political differences and outright animosity. Owing to their minority status in most of the Middle East, Shi’ites have usually suffered under the heavy hand of Sunnis. Thus, Shi’ites eagerly await the coming *Mahdi*, a Messianic figure who they will believe will make all things right and bring justice (Blankinship, 2008). Differences between these two sects play out all over the world, including in Norway, a Nordic country with a small number of Muslim refugees (Linge, 2016). The hatred can be so intense that one regularly hears Sunnis state that Shi’ites are not true Muslims. In Pakistan, Sunnis have leveled an even more serious charge against the Ahmadiyya, an Islamic group that claims their leader, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was

a prophet (*The Economist*, 2022a; Felbab-Brown, 2018; Meservey, 2019; Mir, 2022). This belief flies in the face of the cardinal doctrine that recognizes Muhammad as the “seal of the prophets.” Consequently, this tiny group has been persecuted more than Christians in Pakistan. Not considered part of the *ummah* (community of believers), they are not allowed to have mosques or give the call to prayer.

### *Terrorism, brutality, executions*

The 2021 Taliban takeover in Afghanistan has buoyed extremists in Pakistan to think they can do the same, and undoubtedly, some Pakistanis have been complicit for many years by supporting terrorism in their own country as well as Afghanistan. How else could Osama Bin Laden have remained hidden for so long? Remember that the Taliban in these two contexts were trained in the same hardline Islamic seminaries along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Over the last several years, dozens of terrorist attacks against minorities were conducted by Muslim extremists in Pakistan. Yet, some violence also causes fear and confusion among the majority, such as a recent attack on a mosque in Peshawar, where over 100 worshipers were killed, most of whom were police officers (Khan and Constable, 2023). Unfortunately, such carnage is part of Pakistan’s legacy. While it is true that the violence is largely Muslim on Muslim, quite often it is against minority groups. Now, a new wave of terrorist attacks in Africa’s Sahel region has made the area the “world’s terrorism hotspot.” Extremists have permeated nations such as Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Somalia. Logical reasoning suggests that jihadists are targeting this area of the world because they can get away with it. The region is poor, neglected, and spread out. Over 20 years have passed since al-Qaeda brought down the World Trade Center and the West’s attention has turned to Ukraine, Russia, China, and North Korea. Africa has been forgotten, and Islamic radicals have staying power (*The Economist*, 2022a). Also, terrorist groups see themselves as protectors of Islam.

### *Blasphemy laws*

In Pakistan, blasphemy (see Nickel, 2021) against Muhammad is of far greater concern than blasphemy against God, as clearly spelled out in the nation’s penal code:

Use of derogatory remark etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet: whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine (Act XLV, 295-C, 1860).

This statute was introduced in 1986 by the military regime of Zia ul-Haq as part of the *shariah* (Islamic law). It was endorsed in 1992 by the government of Nawaz Sharif, and in 1993 extended to include names of the Prophet’s family, such as Fatima. Later, the Lahore High Court ruled that the anti-blasphemy law embraces all prophets, which

would include Noah, Moses, and David. This is especially ominous for Christians, who believe Noah drank wine, Moses murdered, and David committed adultery. Hence, though blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad was meant to assuage the “faithful,” it has often been used as a vicious vendetta against minority groups: between 1986 and mid-1994, more than 100 Ahmadiyya were accused of violating this decree, four Christians were charged and murdered, and others died in mysterious circumstances (Kuru, 2023). In 1988, *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie was published. The following year, the Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa condemning Rushdie to death for insulting Muhammad. For years, Rushdie lived in the United Kingdom and received special protection. In 2022, when he traveled to the United States to deliver a speech, he was attacked and lost the sight of one eye. Clearly, many have suffered under this brutal law.

Reliable sources claim that from 1953 to 2012 there were 434 “blasphemy offenders” in Pakistan, including 258 Muslims, 114 Christians, 57 Ahmadi, and four Hindus. Even officials such as the first Minister of Minority Affairs and the Governor of the Punjab Salmaan Taseer were among those killed (*Morning Star News*, 2013). Later, Prime Minister Gilani announced, “We are not going to amend” blasphemy laws, and President Perwaiz Musharraf added, “doing away with the blasphemy law is not at all possible” (*Morning Star News*, 2013). Nobody wants to be considered disloyal to Islam, especially the Prophet. One of the most publicized cases in this regard was Asia Bibi, a courageous Christian woman who was arrested and languished in prison for 10 years because of what some have called a trumped-up blasphemy charge. At one point, Bibi was on death row, but thanks to international pressure she was released and is now living in Canada. Allegedly, she was tortured by a painful neck brace but was sustained by her faith and the prayers of God’s people. Bibi forgave her persecutors and has since reported that she holds nothing against them (Bibi and Tollet, 2011).

### *Assault on women*

Honor killing, the horrendous practice common in some parts of the Muslim world such as South Asia and the Middle East, persists despite opposition (Aqueel, 2016; Ashfaq, 2015; Chesler, 2009; D’Souza, 2011; *Guardian*, 2016). Cathy Hine (2010) devotes an entire section of her PhD thesis to this topic, noting that, “In Pakistan, it is not ‘murder’ when a man kills a woman and claims he did it because she was guilty of immoral sexual behaviour; it is an honour killing.” Hine recounts a tragic incident in which a family cooperated in brutally killing their daughter while authorities stood by and did nothing. Relatives then celebrated the murder because the family had defended their honor. Hine explains that, with the introduction of “Islamisation”—a repressive interpretation of Islam—in the country by Zia-ul-Haq in the late 1970s, an honor killing could stem from more than alleged adultery. Rather, it could be the result of any autonomous decision or action taken by a woman. In other words, women are not free to make independent decisions and, sometimes, they are even used as scapegoats between warring parties. The fate of Mukhtar Mai, a peasant woman in Pakistan, was almost worse than an honor killing. A village council condemned Mai to be gang

raped, expecting that it would lead her to take her own life. Instead, she became an activist, leading a revolution against such unspeakable abuse (Mai and Cuny, 2006). Other instances of the assault on Muslim women include Uyghurs in China, who endure forced sterilization and rape by military police (Hill et al., 2021). In Iraq, ISIS treats Yazidis as apostates from Islam and deserving of harsher treatment (*The Economist*, 2021). As a result, Yazidi women are considered justifiably subjects to rape and be sold by ISIS soldiers (Murad and Krajeki, 2017; Ochab, 2021). Hill et al. (2021) relate that 3000 women and children are still missing.

Hillary Clinton once said, “The subjugation of women is a threat to the common security of our world” (*The Economist*, 2021). Nowhere is this more evident than Afghanistan. In order to understand the plight of Afghan women, we need to review a little history. Shortly after the only church building in Afghanistan was destroyed in 1972, the monarchy fell. After a period of instability, the Soviet Union invaded and occupied Afghanistan (1979–1989). Then came the Taliban (1996–2001) and a terrible time of suffering. Notably, at that point, the number of Jesus followers began to grow, mainly due to disillusionment with Islam (Antonucci, 2021). After the Taliban were defeated, there was a heavy American involvement, and the international community spent hundreds of millions of dollars on reconstruction, including better education for men and women (Antonucci, 2021). Reports have it that in primary schools alone, enrollment for girls went from zero in 2001 to 2.5 million in 2018, meaning four out of 10 students in primary school were girls. In higher education, the numbers went from 5000 in 2001 to 90,000 in 2018 (Ahmadi, 2022).

When the Taliban once again seized control in the summer of 2021, all that changed. Initially, they banned younger girls, and then college girls, from studying. Later, they forbade females from working in aid organizations. Afghanistan is the only country in the world with an outright ban on women’s education, leaving half the population deprived of learning, and it has had a terrible effect on society. Some women have given up hope and ended their own lives; many feel abandoned by the international community (Abdul-Ahad, 2022). With untold numbers of men killed in war, many households depend on what these poor women can earn to help feed their families. Moreover, Afghans recently faced the worst winter in decades, with some families forced to sell their children to stay alive (Guler and Sadat, 2021). Is it any wonder women are defying the risks and leading protests against extremism? The Taliban are now even veiling female mannequins, presumably for fear that seeing the face of a mannequin could lead men to commit moral offenses (Noroozi, 2023). This rigid interpretation, they maintain, is what the Qur’an clearly teaches, citing Surahs 4:24 and 33:59, among verses.

In Iran, intense news coverage began several months ago over the death of a 22-year-old Kurdish woman who died in police custody. The woman, Mahsa Amini, was arrested in the fall of 2021 for failing to wear the hijab properly. Her death, caused by the severe beating of prison security guards, sparked the biggest protests Iran had seen in years with thousands arrested. Yet, despite the crackdown, some have reported that prison terms have given demonstrators greater opportunity to come together and discuss their grievances. In this way, people of all faiths have begun to unite throughout

the country. No doubt, they have felt oppressed for years, but what is most remarkable about this uprising is that opposition has been largely empowered by young women between 15 and 25 (the Z generation). It was surprising enough that women participated in the Arab Spring, but now young, unmarried Iranian women are leading processions and openly showing their disdain for religious clerics.

Another troubling issue in Iran is Khamenei's reputation as the Ayatollah who "never backs down" (*The Economist*, 2022b). Indeed, the uprisings over the last several years have become increasingly bloody. Killings have climbed ever more steeply, and police wages were recently doubled as part of the country's effort to enforce law and order (*The Economist*, 2022b). In the most recent government response, four protestors were executed: the first was executed apparently for blocking a street and causing bodily harm to the militia (Rebane et al., 2022); the second one was executed for what the regime said was "waging war against God." This man was a British-Iranian, whose torture and death the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called a "callous and cowardly act, carried out by a barbaric regime" (Wintour, 2023). Later, two others were executed in the same manner, with many more on the waiting list (Daly and Besley, 2023).

Yet, even more egregious are accounts of female protestors being fired upon. In contrast to male protestors in Iran, the women are allegedly being shot in the legs, hips, or backs—even their genitals—with birdshot pellets (*Guardian*, 2022). The obvious intention is to do permanent damage, ruining these young women for marriage and destroying their beauty forever. It is hard to imagine the extent of violence and ruthless oppression, with credible accounts of the regime using chemical weapons to poison young, female protestors (Gambrell, 2023; Yazdari, 2023). This kind of brutality will make Iranians of all ages hate the faith of their fathers and the result will be the opposite of what religious clerics anticipate. People will increasingly turn from Islam as they blame hard liners for extremism, intellectual stagnation, and religious bigotry.

## Muslims choosing Jesus

Samuel Zwemer (1867–1952), often called the "Apostle to Islam," is arguably the greatest missionary America has ever sent to the Muslim world. Though Zwemer himself won few converts, his vision inspired others to accept the challenge. Today, we are seeing the fruit of faithful witnesses, particularly during the last 30 to 40 years (Woodberry and Shubin, 2001). One example is Yassir Eric, formerly a radical Muslim in Sudan who says he came to Christ after he witnessed a missionary praying for a sick child. He had heard that Christians did not believe in God and did not pray. Eric now works with Muslim-background believers and identifies in his opinion five reasons why Muslims are coming to faith: globalization, violent Islam, new ways to spread the gospel through media outlets, displacement of Muslims, and global prayer (Stiller, 2022).

When the Zwemer Center was inaugurated in 2004 at a Columbia International University chapel, I interviewed Dudley Woodberry. As a boy, Woodberry had been

impacted by Zwemer. When asked what Zwemer's message to a new generation of Christian young people might be, Woodberry replied:

Since his constant theme was that the evangelization of the Muslim world was the greatest challenge facing the church, he would repeat this. Since much of the Muslim world is still resistant to the gospel, he would doubtless quote as before the disciples' response to Jesus, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless, at your word, we shall let down the nets." But as there is today a major Muslim response to the gospel, I would expect Samuel Zwemer to continue the biblical account with the words, "When the disciples had let down the nets, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break, so they signaled their partners in the other boat to help them." Then I would anticipate that the old apostle to Islam would add the challenge, "Will you answer the call to go and help them?"

As Woodberry suggests and this article now argues, Muslims are responding now more than they did in the days of Samuel Zwemer. There are several reasons for this encouraging reality. One appears to be growing concerns in their Islamic faith and practice.

### *Theological questions*

I will never forget the observations of a simple villager in Pakistan about 40 years ago who compared Jesus with Muhammad. He said:

I can tell you why your prophet is greater than our prophet: your prophet was one from birth; ours became a prophet at the age of 40; your prophet did miracles, but ours did none; your prophet is alive, but ours is dead and his grave is in Medina.

Space does not allow this study to go into detail on Muhammad but will instead focus on theological questions facing both sects of Islam.

First, a troubling aspect for Sunnis is their emphasis on the theology of success. It is in the call to prayer, resounding from both Sunni and Shi'ite mosques ("come to success"), but Sunnis have always had the upper hand by their sheer numbers. Yet, while they have touted success as God's favor, the fact is, most Muslims in the world are not doing well. Bernard Lewis (2002) argues that for 1000 years, Islam led economically, militarily, and culturally, but then for the last 500 years has lagged far behind the West economically, much to the confusion and consternation of Muslims. Some Sunnis claim Islam offers the solution to this predicament by establishing *Shariah* law. For example, this is the approach of the Pakistani party Tehrik-i-Taliban (Rashid, 2001). They are not the only ones. Islamic ideals of control include the dogma that men must control women. In this approach, Islam must enforce, and there can be no dissent, no room for other faiths, and no separation of religion and politics. In Saudi Arabia, for example, Wahabis coerce strict adherence to their interpretation of Islam.

Second, Iranian Shi'ites have also adopted a "control complex." The ayatollahs feel they are losing power, and so have become more repressive (Hamid, 2022). Every



aspect of life must be dictated, including strict rules on women's dress. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the impulse to resist such authoritarianism is being led by young, unmarried women who fear for the future. Their slogan is: "Women, Life, Freedom." Shi'ite theology also has an apocalyptic mentality; they have been waiting for a Mahdi, a savior, and feel let down when leaders are cruel, despotic, and unjust. After the Shah of Iran was expelled and the Ayatollah Khomeini took over, Iranians were initially optimistic. Yet, the mood soon shifted to deep disappointment. Many decided Khomeini was much worse than the Shah, and some Christian leaders (Cashin, n.d.) said they were thankful for the boost to Christian mission Khomeini proved to be: "He showed people what true Islam was really like!"

### *Christian service*

We must never forget that behind the scenes, God has used the service Christians have rendered to the area. For example, we may have assumed that because the American military operation in Afghanistan ended in disgrace, all was lost. In this regard, I read a discussion (Lee, 2021) by Christian aid workers who are well acquainted with the region entitled, "Was Afghanistan worthwhile or wasted? Christians lament, pray, and learn as Taliban retakes control." With one voice, participants concluded that efforts in Afghanistan were valuable because of the demonstration of Christian love and good works. Afghans heard the gospel from foreigners, and through loving acts of service Christ was lifted up. There is great suffering in Afghanistan now, and the country is regressing. There is lament for the loss of freedom, terrible injustice, and abuse of women. Western nations have seemingly abandoned Afghanistan, yet we can be grateful for a period of openness and for faithful witness. Patrick Krayner, who formerly served in Kabul during its reconstruction, explains how aid workers helped out in eye care throughout the entire country. He relates how Kabul, after being bombed between 2002 and 2012, was totally rebuilt (Hopkins, 2021). Stories of such service, conducted in the name of Christ, must not be forgotten (Lee, 2021).

The same could be said about other situations in the Middle East. We might think that since military efforts failed, such as in Iraq, missionary efforts were in vain. Not so. Muslims are coming to Christ in the Middle East due to the love shown by local believers and service rendered by global Christians. The millions of dollars spent on security-based solutions failed, but evangelical work in the Arab world has not failed. Testimonies relate that people had a change of mind, and that some were won over—not by apologetics and arguments—but by love and kindness. A pastor ministering among Syrian refugees in Lebanon shares how his once-small group of believers grew to 1500, mainly through refugees who embraced Jesus. Some Muslims say that at first, they hated Christians and wanted to kill them, but reconsidered when they saw their sacrificial service. Of course, not all believe, but some do, including radicalized militants. One article (Casper, 2021) describing such a change of heart, ends this way: "Love is the real weapon against terrorism."



## *Power of forgiveness*

Persecution comes in various forms (Casper, 2022) and the following are a few examples of what Christians have faced. The All Saints Church in the Pakistan city of Peshawar was attacked in 2013. Twin bomb blasts followed the Sunday morning service, killing 98 souls and injuring another 141; many had splinters in their bodies long after the explosions. All told, 125 families were affected, 53 were orphaned, and 23 lost a spouse. Although the victims do not know for sure who conducted this horrendous massacre, 93% of them chose to forgive the perpetrators. A Christian worker in Pakistan who wishes to remain anonymous (April 2017) described the reason these Anglican believers gave for their response: “Jesus teaches us with his life model to forgive our enemies, and we remember his prayer on the cross, ‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do’” (Luke 23:24).

There are many similar stories coming out of Egypt, where Coptic Christians have forgiven radical Muslims. One powerful example happened on a Palm Sunday when a suicide bomber attacked St. Mark’s Cathedral. A courageous Christian by the name of Naseem Faheem sacrificed his own life to save others. With their children by her side, his widow responded: “I’m not angry at the one who did this; I’m telling him, ‘May God forgive you, and we also forgive you. Believe me, we forgive you.’” All this was on live television in Egypt, leaving the talk show host speechless for 11 seconds. Finally, in a voice racked with emotion, he said: “How great is the forgiveness you have. If it were my father, I could never say this, but this is their faith and religious conviction” (Casper, 2017).

Although my experience pales in significance to the above examples, one personal act of forgiveness many years ago gave a clear witness to my Pakistani Muslim friends. While serving as missionaries, our family was attacked by an angry mob in 1979. Believing a false rumor spread by Khomeini that Americans and Jews had seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Muslims all over the world reacted. In Islamabad, the American Embassy was burned to the ground. In our city, local students burned our vehicle, destroyed our equipment, and smashed our furniture. When I explained that I was Canadian (not American), they said, “There is no difference.” By the grace of God, we suffered no bodily harm, and three days later news came out that what had happened at Islam’s most holy site was the work of radical Muslims led astray by the claims of a false messiah. Astounded by the forgiveness we offered the attackers, our neighbors told me, “Mr. Larson, now we see the difference between you and us. When we are treated unfairly, we tend to take revenge, but you have forgiven your enemies.” I said, “this is what Christ commanded us to do.” After this, we stayed on for many years, and saw more fruit.

## *The good news*

As we have seen above, there is a lot of bad news coming out of the Muslim world, especially in relation to Afghanistan and Iran. But God works in the darkest hour. For example, there are now stories of Afghan and Iranian believers supporting one another

through prayer, including the launch of a new social media initiative that connects Christians and churches in Afghanistan (SAT-7, 2022). Before the American pullout in Afghanistan, it is believed that there were groups of believers in all 34 provinces throughout the country (30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World, 2023). We know persecution has increased since the Taliban seized control again, but we believe in the power of the gospel to continue spreading. Although it is not possible to give exact figures on the number of Afghan converts, there are credible reports of thousands of Afghan seekers all over the world (McDade, 2021). We also recognize that severe times of persecution have led people to question their Islamic faith. Young people, and women in particular, want to follow Jesus. They are saying things like, “We don’t like Islam. We don’t want that kind of religion” (McDade, 2021).

In Iran, it was reported that out of a population of 83 million, there were 1 million converts to Christianity (Afshari, 2013). The regime maintains that over 99% of Iranians practice Islam, but a 2020 survey (Zylstra, 2021) showed that only 40% call themselves Muslims. Frankly, many in Iran are disenchanted with Islam, and some new converts are boldly testifying of faith in Christ (Zylstra, 2021). The rise in atheism in Islamic areas is not necessarily good news (Pipes, 2021a), but one *Newsweek* article on Iran (Pipes, 2021b) quotes Shay Khatiri of Johns Hopkins University: “Islam is the fastest shrinking religion there, while Christianity is growing the fastest.” The article also quotes an Iranian pastor from 2019: “What if I told you no one follows Islam inside Iran?” Another Christian agreed in 2008: “It’s a mass exodus from Islam.” The article goes on to report that former Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said his main priority was to “stop Christianity in this country.” Apparently, it is not working.

The good news is extending to other parts of the world as well. God has been at work among the 17 million migrants to Europe since 2013. Many churches have welcomed immigrants by providing needed services, and this is opening doors to the gospel. Some are asking questions about Jesus, and churches are growing because of Christian service and outreach. We know that many immigrants come from Muslim countries and are hearing the gospel for the first time. Some are attending church (Chitwood, 2022). We are also aware of similar stories coming from Turkey where there are 4 million Muslim immigrants, among whom 300,000 are Afghans.

Finally, a recent edition of *Mission Frontiers* came out with the title, “Cascading Gospel: Movements Starting Movements” (Wood, 2023). The entire magazine details where Muslims are turning to Jesus—places such as Niger, India, and Iraq among the mistreated Yazidis (DuBois, 2023 [2018]; Hassane, 2023; Mukul, 2023 [2018]). Dave Coles (2023), an authority on people movements and discipleship, says 80–90% of movements were started by existing movements: “Movements multiply movements.” Article after encouraging article in this edition speak of house church movements taking place among people groups such as the Fulani and the Tuareg (Corley and Corley, 2023; Hassane, 2023). “Cousin connections” are spreading the light in Africa (Corley and Corley, 2023). The whole report helps us to “think big” and to “ask largely.” It builds on Jesus’ words: “And the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 15:14).

In conclusion, this article has discussed the turmoil and suffering many Muslims are experiencing. It focuses on how Muslim women are rebelling against harsh treatment at the hands of patriarchal systems. Trouble is brewing globally, but Islamic contexts seem to be particularly hard hit. Muslims tend to interpret such failure and stagnation as punishment from Allah. In the midst of such turmoil, God is drawing Muslims to himself all over the world. Immigrants are arriving on our doorsteps in the West, mainly due to dire conditions at home. Sadly, it is true these immigrants are not always treated well. When we welcome them in the name of Christ, we are joining hands with our Lord Jesus. But much more needs to be done. Samuel Zwemer, the Apostle to Islam, would surely press home the challenge to us today as he did then: "Will you answer the call to go and help them?" In many cases, all we have to do is walk across the street and get started.

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### ORCID iD

Warren F. Larson  <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5404-0385>

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## Author biography

Warren F. Larson, Senior Research Fellow and Professor, Zwemer Center for Muslim Studies. Warren Larson joined the Columbia International University faculty in 1996. Previously, he worked among Muslims in Pakistan for twenty-three years (1968-1991). While church planting was the main task, he also conducted a reading room (1968-1976), and administered a Bible Correspondence School (1976-1991). For ten years, he was field director of Christar in Pakistan (1978-1988). He is former Director of the Zwemer Center for Muslim Studies, and currently teaches online courses; he also helps students with their writing projects. Due to his understanding of Islamic radicalism, he has been quoted widely in both Christian and secular publications. He and his wife Carol live in Vancouver, where they are blessed to have two sons, and seven grandchildren living close.