BOOKS I HAVE READ: A WIND IN THE HOUSE OF ISLAM

Posted on January 7, 2015 by Eddie

Dr. David Garrison's long-awaited global survey of Muslim movements to Christ reveals that we are in the midst of the greatest turning of Muslims to Christ in history. David Garrison, PhD University of Chicago, traveled a quarter-million miles throughout the Muslim world investigating movements, each one with at least a thousand baptisms that have occurred over a two-decade period, some containing tens of thousands of Muslims who are now followers of Jesus Christ. Garrison's core question: "What did God use to bring you to faith in Jesus Christ? Tell me your story." The result is the most extensive survey of Muslim movements to Christ ever achieved. (Publishers blurb)

Category: Observations

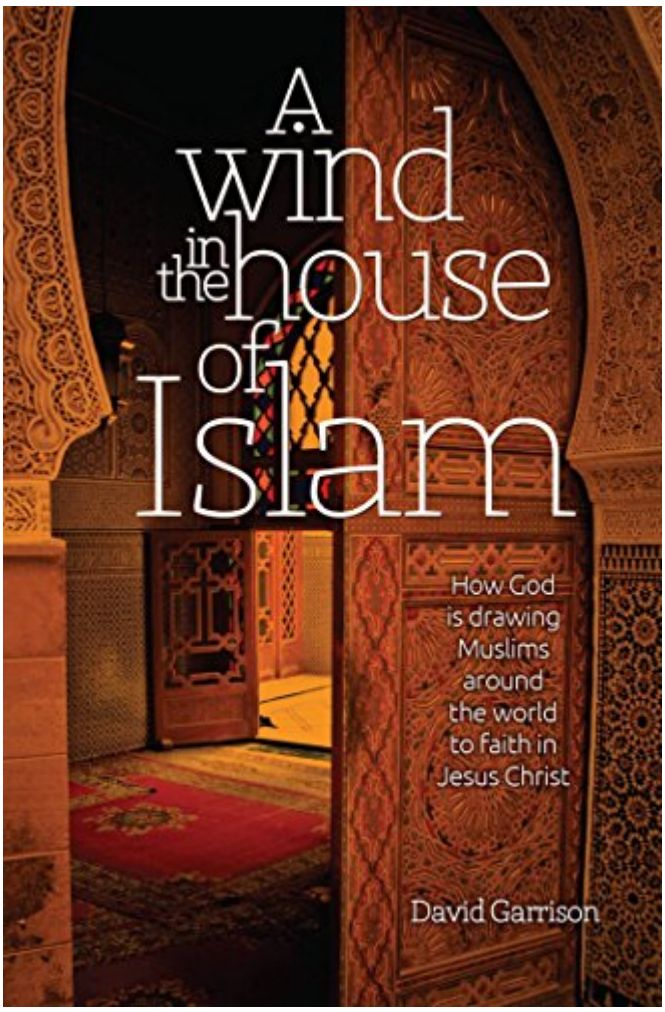
At a time when we are hearing increasing reports about the persecution of Christians by Islamic radicals in the Middle East, this book, which documents movements of people across the Muslim world turning to Christ, makes for interesting and encouraging reading.

A Wind in the House of Islam: How God is drawing Muslims around the world to faith in Jesus ChristÂ by David Garrison basically does what it says on the tin. It takes you on a long walk through the Islamic world showing ways in which people are coming to faith in Christ.

It is important to note that this book is not looking at isolated, individual conversions, but at movements.

> *Movements are corporate in nature and possess their own internal momentum. The corporate expression, for this study, is limited to turnings of at least 1,000 baptized believers over the past one or two decades or 100 new church starts over the same time frame within a given people group or ethnic Muslim community.*

Garrison divides the Islamic world into nine regions, or rooms, and across these he identifies 69 distinct movements to Christ. I have to admit that I tend to be a little sceptical about the statistics in books like this. However, the book starts with a lengthy section devoted to the methods used for data collection which seem to be robust. It also shows a healthy scepticism about some of the wilder claims made by other researchers, which is something I find reassuring!



Overall, it is a very encouraging book, especially given the prevailing narrative of the decline of Christianity and the rise of Islam. Without trying to go through the book in detail, here are a few points which struck me.

- These new movements of Muslims to Jesus are a very new thing in world history. We have seen nothing like it in the past.
- Islam is not as monolithic as it is sometimes presented. There are large variations across the world and within a region. The way God is drawing Muslims to himself also varies from place to place. You really can't draw generalisations.
- Though encouraging, the numbers are still small, especially compared to the huge number of Muslims worldwide.
- Like many books of its type, the statistics and stories start to feel a little repetitive. After a while it is hard to remember whether you are reading about West Africa, East Asia or somewhere in between. This isn't really a complaint. You probably can't avoid this with a well researched, global project.

- I was not entirely convinced by some of the history and background in the book. This isn't my field, so I may be wrong on this.
- People coming to Christ from a strongly Islamic background do not easily fit into a Western concept of Church or expression of Christianity.

> *...believing Christians must acknowledge that religion and religious identity are not the same as a personal and saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Christian history is replete with devout followers of Jesus Christ who were at odds with the predominant expression of the Christian religion in their day. In the same way, many sincere Muslim-background followers of Christ may not fit into the predominant expressions of the Christian religion today. This is not to say that the Muslim-background follower of Christ can religiously practice both faiths, but rather that these movements may be forming new expressions of Christian faith that are distinct from the various other branches of Christianity around them.*

This is controversial stuff and may upset some readers. My own take on the subject is that Christians from the compromised and syncretistic churches in the West should be slow to tell people in other parts of the world (especially those facing massive persecution and hardship) what an authentic expression of the faith is in their culture. This applies at all ends of the missiological spectrum.

It isn't entirely easy to get hold ofÂ A Wind in the House of Islam: How God is drawing Muslims around the world to faith in Jesus ChristÂ in the UK and paper copies can beÂ expensive, but you can get it at a reasonable price if you shop around. I have linked to the Kindle edition.

If you are interested in the spread of Christianity or current affairs, or if you fear that Christianity is being wiped off the map, you should read this book.