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A Heart Changed

REACHING AN UNLIKELY PEOPLE GROUP

by Brent Vickery

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Trips to IHOP will never be the same. Really? Let me explain.

Dates elude me, but the events I am referring to occurred at IHOP more than a year ago. My scheduled meeting in Centreville was with [SBCV church planting strategist] Larry Black and a potential church planter who was working among the peoples of South Asia in the Metro DC area. The candidate was seeking a sponsor church, and I was desperately hoping Ramoth would be that church. The meeting occurred as planned, but there was no sense of clarity of vision or focus on the part of the candidate.

Larry's next missionary appointment had arrived before I left IHOP and, as I passed by the table where they were sitting, he invited me to meet the man and his dear wife. That couple was Anthony and Ana Kassim (name changed for security). Over the next few moments, I saw their love for God and heard a passion for the Gospel that continues to amaze me to this day. God started a work in me as Anthony shared their determination to reach the Arabic-speaking peoples of the world by

evangelizing them in the DC area. Sitting right in front of me was a couple who was willing to give their lives for a group of people that so many Americans hate, fear, or both. Sadly, I found a bit of both emotions in my own soul, and it convicted me to my core. I said goodbye to Anthony, Ana, and Larry.

Have you ever been consumed with something? Well, I confess that I had no direction from the Lord and no peace concerning the first church planter candidate I met at IHOP that day. The Kassims were another story altogether, as I found myself praying for them and actually entertaining thoughts of partnering with them for the glory of God alone. Then sleep became elusive at times. Excuses flooded my mind as to why my church would never follow my leadership if I suggested a church planting partnership with the Kassims and their target people. Looking back, I see that God began a work in my heart the very day I met Anthony, but the work God began was far more than leading me to embrace a church planter. God was leading me to an impossible place...a place of saying yes to evangelizing the last group of people I would ever

How to Be a PEOPLE GROUP ADVOCATE

Virginia has become home to more than 190 people groups from all over the world. Pastors like Brent Vickery and other Christian leaders all across our state have a burden to reach the nations here and are asking, “How?” Here is one approach:



PRAY. Ask God which people group He would have you reach and support.



ADOPT. Adopt the people group and either serve as the people group advocate (see resource box) or join a group that is focused on advocating for the people group.



DEVELOP. Create a church prayer plan for the people group.



SPECIAL DAY. Have a special day with your church or with a group of churches to hear a speaker from SBCV and a Christian leader from the people group.



SUPPORT. Determine with your church or the group of churches how you will support evangelism and church planting among your adopted people group.



RESOURCE

For information about people group needs or how to become an advocate for a people group, contact Larry Black at lblack@sbcv.org or your regional SBCV missionary

personally choose to reach out to. God began to burden my heart that day for the Muslim peoples of the world. I can't get away from the will of God.

My church [Ramoith Baptist Church] followed my leadership, and the call that God placed upon my heart is rapidly growing in our church family. We are a sponsoring church for Anthony and Ana and hope to be a sponsoring church in the coming year for additional planters to the Islamic peoples of the Greater DC area. God has burdened me and led me to be involved in reaching one of the most difficult people groups in the world. Muslims need Jesus!

There is one final story I want to share. We took a group of about 20 people from the church to witness at a large gathering of predominantly Muslim people. We were anxious, yet we were determined to be witnesses for Christ. During the course of

the day, I met two Muslim women who were apparently friends, though one was dressed in traditional attire and the other like a fairly typical American. Over the course of about 20 minutes, I was able to share the Gospel...but as the enemy would have it, the husband of the younger woman walked up and confronted me because he didn't want me talking to them. I spoke kindly, and he soon calmed down and left to continue cooking for his mosque. After a few more moments, the women had to go, but before they left, the younger woman said to me, "There is nothing for me in Islam. I would love to go to your friend's church and hear about Jesus." Her face and her words will be etched in my mind as long as I live because they were used by God to deepen my desire to reach those who follow Islam.

Won't you help us? Won't you join us? My prayer is the same as Jesus' in Matthew's Gospel—I am praying that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into His harvest.



Resource

WEBSITE

christforthecrescentworld.org