

Guidelines for Church Adoption of a Muslim UPG

Church Adoption

If you want to expand your effort from an individual Camel rider to a Camel caravan, there is no better place to start than with your own church or small group. As you gain confidence sharing with Muslims in your own community, allow God to stretch your vision to adopt a Muslim people group in their own homeland. That's right, missions is not just for the missionary anymore. More than ever before churches today are embracing the challenge of taking the gospel to Muslims both at home and around the world.

Pick, Profile, Pray and Partner

Your first step in the adoption process is to pick a Muslim people group to profile. You should also choose a missionary that you want to partner with.

Here are some of the Muslim people groups that you might want to consider for adoption.

Step One: Pick, Profile and Pray for a People in South Asia

South Asia is home to more than 400 million Muslims. This is more Muslims than the Middle East and North Africa combined. There are Sunni, Shia, and Sufi Muslims. Hundreds of Muslim people groups await your adoption.

Here are some further tips:

- Narrow your selection to a bite-sized segment of a people group. For example, rather than take on all 100 million Urdu-speaking Muslims of India, zero in on the 100,000 Urdu-speaking Muslims of Belgum district in northern Karnataka state. This will keep your task manageable and your progress measurable.
- Go for a rural people group. Most churches want to start with a city, where there are good airports and hotels, but we've learned that church-planting movements among Muslims more typically begin in the rural areas before moving to the cities. So, find a city that you like and start looking a few miles away from it!
- Choose a people group that has a missionary Strategy Coordinator (SC) assigned to it. Ask the SC if you can adopt a population segment of his/her people group. For first time adoptors, this is a great way to get started. The SC will benefit your strategy greatly.
- Look for places where God is already at work among Muslim people groups, and try to spread the fire to unreached areas. For example, you might adopt a district across the border from a church-planting movement among a Muslim people group. Your church would focus its strategies on mobilizing Isahi resources in the neighboring harvest field to cross the border into your adopted district.

Step Two: Present Your Profiles

Develop a profile of the people group you have chosen. Inside your church or small group, share your findings, sharing both the Muslim people group profile and the missionary (Strategy Coordinator) profiles that you have developed. Ask your church to join you in prayer for wisdom and divine guidance as you choose both a Muslim people group and a missionary partner. Your

own example of faith and commitment will validate your vision and embolden others to join you. Be sure to leave a prayer profile in the hands of those with whom you share. It may take a while for them to respond to the vision that already captured your heart.

Step Three: Petition the Church to Pray and Participate

Church members who catch your vision can participate at several levels. They may agree to pray, the more ambitious may be willing to join you on a prayer walk among the Muslims in their own community – during which time you may be able to demonstrate for them the Camel Method.

Challenge those who hear your vision to adopt the Muslim segment by joining you in forming an adoption team. Your team should consist of several key players:

- **A Team Leader** – who will call team meetings, lead the team in strategy formation, track progress, hold team members accountable for their individual tasks, solve problems, and serve as spokesman for the team.
- **A Prayer Mobilizer** – who will create a network of prayer warriors, providing strategic prayer requests, and leading the church to support mission teams or individuals who travel to the adopted area with prayer. The prayer mobilizer can work with the research coordinator to collect pictures of Muslims from your adopted area, along with strongholds and maps to be used for prayer mobilization.
- **A Research Coordinator** – who will spend time collecting information about the adopted area, people group or population segment. The research coordinator can read online local or national newspaper from the adopted area, contact and interview missionaries, mission agencies, or local national church planters working in and around the adopted area; look for needs, opportunities and insights that will help the team reach its goals. The research coordinator can also develop a map that tracks gospel saturation efforts, helping the team identify overlooked areas that need to be covered with a gospel outreach.
- **Camel Riders** – are those team members who have worked through Camel training and are prepared to go to the field to share the good news with Muslims there. They should also prepare to train local Christian and Muslim-background believers to use the Camel Method to share the gospel with the adopted Muslim peoples. These individuals should also be prepared to do whatever it takes to widely distribute gospel literature, Muslim-friendly Scripture, and *Jesus Films* among the target people.

Step Four: The Adoption

The adoption team should prepare a written adoption covenant. Set the period of time for the adoption at two years. Some may think that two years is not enough time for establishing a church-planting movement, but developing a two-year strategy will encourage urgency in executing strategies.

Present your written adoption covenant to the pastor and then to the church body. The church body should be made aware that they will be asked to involve themselves through prayer, contributing funds, and actually traveling to the adopted area. Communicate that the adoption team will not be carrying out the strategies alone, but rather leading the church to be on mission in the adopted area.

Step Five: Prepare a Plan

Your plan is aimed at a vision. Your vision should include the following elements: 1) Joining in what God is already doing among your adopted people group, 2) Saturating your adopted area with prayer and the gospel, 3) Finding God's person(s) of peace in your adopted area, and 4) A church-planting movement.

Each year your team should evaluate the progress of their efforts. Modify your plan constantly as needed to fulfill your vision of gospel saturation, finding a person of peace and launching a church-planting movement. At the end of two years, you can look back and see if you are on track or if changes are needed.

Don't be afraid to invite outside help. One church that needed funds for a distribution project in their adopted area called on a sister church to help fund the project. You can also find expert advice from missionaries who are using effective practices on the mission field. After drafting your adoption strategy, invite your prospective missionary partner to shape it with his input.

1. Whenever you don't know what to do, pray for your people and your missionary partners,
2. Avoid creating dependency on foreign resources. Though mission work is costly, it needn't create dependency by subsidizing pastors or constructing local church buildings; these types of activities only weaken local initiative and give a foreign flavor to the gospel.
3. Do whatever it takes to promote gospel saturation through Muslim-friendly Scripture distribution, distribution of *Camel* tracts, the *Jesus Film* and other means of gospel witness.
4. Practice precision harvesting by searching for persons of peace who will multiply witness among their people once you have trained them,

Conclusion

Will churches rise to the challenge of reaching Muslims at home and around the world? Can churches function as missionaries themselves, igniting church-planting movements in remote corners of the world? This question has yet to be fully answered, but more and more churches are saying yes to the challenge. New breakthroughs in communications, travel and information are radically changing the world of Christian missions. What was impossible only a decade ago is now not only possible, but long over due. What is impossible for man is possible with God.

If God's people can foster new church-planting movements deep in the heart of the Muslim world, it will truly usher in a new era in missions. Soon churches in developed countries will not only support missionaries on the mission field, but they will become full missionary partners.