Migrant Mission and Muslims in Europe

Although Muslims have been living in some parts of Europe for centuries, they have become more visible in Western Europe in the past 30 years. With the current arrival of thousands of Muslim refugees, the number of Muslims will continue to grow. It is obvious that Islam has become part of Europe and will be for the foreseeable future. Many Christians have a hard time coming to grips with this new reality. In this session we will explore how churches and mission agencies can respond to the presence of Muslims in the cities, towns, and villages across Europe.

Bert de Ruiter is a staff worker of Operation Mobilization in Europe and the European Evangelical Alliance. He has been involved in Christian-Muslim relations in Europe for almost 30 years. He got an MA in World Evangelization and a D.Min. in Christian-Muslim relations. He has authored two books: *A Single Hand Cannot Applaud*, on the value of the book of Proverbs in evangelising Muslims, and *Sharing Lives*, on how Christians can overcome their fear of Islam and learn to share their lives with Muslims. He also has developed a course that is being taught in several European countries, entitled *Sharing Lives*, to help Christians share their lives with Muslims. Bert lives in Amsterdam, Netherlands, is married to Jenny, and they have two children and four grandchildren.

Jenny de Ruiter works and lives in Amsterdam, a city with people of more than 180 cultures. During the past 20 years Jenny has worked with Muslims in a variety of ministry settings. At the moment she is a nurse doing house calls to many Muslim families. She also spends a lot of her time in pastoral care both among Muslims as well as Christians. Jenny and her husband Bert have two children and four grandchildren.

I. Introduction

- Phases of Relations between Islam and Europe
- Muslim immigrants have become citizens in the West and revitalization of Islam in the East
- We can't speak of <u>Islam</u> in Europe, but only of <u>Islams</u> in Europe
- Key characteristics of Muslims in Europe
- Some statistics
- Statistics can be misleading

II. Europe's adjustment to the presence of Muslims is a bumpy road

A. Fear of Eurabia

B. Clashes of values

- Islam is considered a threat to secularism
- Islam is considered a threat to the freedom of speech
- Islam is considered a threat to our security

C. Rising Islamophobia

- Marginalization, Discrimination, and Exclusion
- Xenophobia and Resurgence of Nationalism

D, Gradual Europeanization of Muslim theology and practices

- New Umbrella groups
- The Emergence of Political and Civic Leaders and Associations
- Changes in mosques (functions, authority, and architecture)
- Changes in the role of religious leaders
- A Desire for Gender Equality
- Changed interpretation of shari'a
 - Islam's Status as a Minority Culture
 - Traditional law schools loose much of their meaning
- Individualization of Islamic practices

III. The response of the Church: bystander, follower or trendsetter?

- With a compassionate heart
- with an informed mind
- with an involved hand
- with a witnessing tongue

IV. Conclusion

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