

Muslim Ministries – InterAct Canada

Project Evaluation - August, 2017

Overview

InterAct began a ministry to Muslims living in Canada in 1997 after a year of research and strategy development by Wes Schellenberg. The Schellenbergs and the Starks were the first missionaries in this new ministry venture in Calgary. They both had returned 'home' because of health concerns after involvement in Muslim ministry in Belgium and the UK respectively. They were joined two years later by David and Marlene Nelson. The Nelsons had planned on going to the Middle East but health concerns changed those plans. Fayez and Vivian Narooz, who were just beginning the True Love Arabic church plant at the time, joined in 2008. The foundation of the True Love church plant community was Coptic and Orthodox believers. Ron and Taya Browning (Calgary), and later on, Dave and Alice DeHaan (Edmonton) joined the Muslim ministry for 1-2 year terms.

The team started with a focus on developing relationships. It became obvious that starting relationships was not as difficult as keeping them long term. The vast majority of Muslims they started relationships with moved away and gradually lost contact.

In 2000 the team started the Isa's Story mailings as another way to find Muslims interested in learning about Jesus. A letter telling some of Jesus' story and offering literature or DVDs was mailed two or three times a year at seasons like Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving. The mailing went to an average of 1500 homes in Calgary (2500 maximum) for 8 years. The response to these letters was greater than other similar programs around North America. A fair bit of literature was given away but very few long-term relationships came out of it. It is hard to measure the seeds that were planted or fruit that came out of the Isa's Story mailings but a few anecdotal stories were heard that indicated the mailings were being read and thought about. One significant benefit was the involvement of Calgary churches and individual believers who paid the postage and, more importantly, prayed for each letter they put in the mail. This involvement opened Christian's hearts to care for the Muslims around them.

The team also sponsored the airing of Muslim friendly, Christian drama programs on a local multi-cultural cable TV channel. Two different series were aired from 2006 to 2008. The stories aired illustrated people's need for the Gospel and how relationship with Jesus makes a difference in people's day to day lives. Again, the seeds and fruit are hard to measure.

Until 2008 the team put a lot of effort into training events in churches and with individuals who requested it. They were initiators in a collaboration between several ministry agencies, including Wycliffe, Frontiers, and SIM to develop a curriculum that trained believers to reach out to their Muslim neighbours and co-workers. This training was used by the Lord to bring significant change in several churches and in believer's hearts. The team saw people move away from fear and ignorance of Muslim people to understanding, welcome, and relational outreach.

In 2007, at the initiative of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, a Canada-wide Muslim ministry network – the Canadian Network of Ministries to Muslims (CNMM) began forming. InterAct missionaries were a significant voice at the table of those initial meetings.

Today, two couples, Fayez and Vivian Narooz and David and Marlene Nelson, continue ministering to Muslims in Calgary. These couples continue to have great passion for reaching Calgary’s Muslims but David’s deteriorating health due to MS, Vivian’s full-time job working with new immigrants, and Fayez’s passion to develop Arabic theology curriculum and to teach it in the Middle East are all factors that are slowing InterAct’s work among Muslims in Calgary. Fortunately, churches, other ministry organizations, and individuals have picked up the ministry baton and are working among specific cultural groups of Muslims in Calgary. InterAct has not seen any new workers join our effort in well over 12 years.

There are currently several Muslim background believers (MBBs) scattered throughout evangelical Caucasian churches across Calgary. Canadian believers are far more aware of Muslim people and the MBBs in their congregations. A good number are praying for Muslims and actively reaching out to their Muslim neighbours and co-workers. This was not the case when InterAct initiated Muslim outreach 20 years ago. We can be thankful that God has used InterAct to bring about some of this change.

I am very thankful that with the extra help in the office, Wes is going to be able to give two days a month to supervising Naroozs and Nelsons. He will also be able to take time to think about ways to revitalize the Muslim ministry, if that is where the Lord is leading InterAct. The population of Muslims in western Canada continues to increase so there is a need for more ministry workers. God is working in other ministry organizations and churches, giving them a burden to share the Gospel with Muslims in their country and their neighbourhoods. SEND International has recently started a “Diaspora Ministries” department to reach new immigrants in Canada. They are already recruiting and placing missionaries. Other organizations like SIM are initiating similar ministries. It feels like InterAct’s leadership teams (FLT and CLT) need to wrestle with the question “Is God still calling InterAct to envision and pursue strategies for reaching Muslims in western Canada?”

The chart below outlines summary of the Muslim ministry to date. The outputs and outcomes columns report on what has been accomplished while the impacts are forward looking to project where this ministry is heading in the next 3-5 years.

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	FUTURE IMPACTS
Statement of the overall purpose of the project	Specific statements of what the project sets out to accomplish	Specific tasks to complete through implementation of the project	Immediate results (direct products of project activities for the past year)	Intermediate results (direct products of project over past 1-3 years)	Long-term results (desired results in next 3-5 years)
<p>Vision: To see Muslim people coming to Christ, growing in their faith, and testifying to their faith.</p>	<p>PRE-EVANGELISM</p> <p>Preparing for ministry (Ongoing equipping)</p> <p>Over half of the InterAct missionaries who have ministered among Muslim people came to InterAct with previous experience/exposure. Training of ministry workers has happened through attendance at broader Muslim ministry conferences/events as well as ongoing training and mentoring by the more experienced missionaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battle for the Heart – Muslim outreach video training. <i>(not currently in use)</i> • Participate as member of Coalition of Ministries to Muslims in North America (COMMA). <i>(InterAct was a voice in the development of COMMA)</i> • Attend COMMA bi-annual conference. • Canadian Network of Ministry to Muslims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new recruits to train. • Keeping current on issues related to reaching Muslims in North America via email conversations among members. • Network with other organizations doing Muslim ministry • Continued learning about Muslim ministry strategies and opportunities. • N/A – InterAct has not attended last two conferences. • Continued learning for ministry workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new recruits to train. • Ongoing equipping of missionaries. • Continual networking with other Muslim ministry workers and Muslim background believers (MBB). • InterAct missionaries are further equipped in evangelism and discipleship of Muslims. • N/A – InterAct has not attended last two conferences. • Visible increase in Calgarians and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine long term ministry direction so that recruitment and training needs can be identified. • Encourage ongoing participation in COMMA cyber discussions about reaching Muslims in North America. • Encourage attendance at the conference. • Support local CNMM chapter

		(CNMM) regional conferences and workshops (<i>InterAct missionaries heavily involved in the forming of CNMM</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipping local believers to reach Muslim neighbours • ‘recruiting’ ongoing prayer for Muslim peoples. 	Canadians who are aware, reaching out, and praying for their Muslim neighbors and people around the world.	through InterAct personnel involvement.
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	<p>Establishing Relationships</p> <p>A significant part of the missionary’s ministry energy is spent on relational ministry. This includes serving people and bringing Jesus and His Gospel message into those relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missionaries building relationships with Muslims – spending time in their homes and businesses – connecting with needs they have. Particularly Iraqi women and Middle-eastern/Arabic speaking people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrants and refugees have been befriended, served, and ‘given a cup of water’ in the name of the Lord. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missionaries have growing connections with Muslim people in Calgary. All the while they are looking for those whose hearts God is opening up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of these ‘service’ opportunities will open doors for sharing the Gospel and discipleship.

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<p>Vision: To see Muslim people coming to Christ, growing in their faith, and testifying to their faith.</p>	<p>EVANGELISM</p> <p>Presenting the Gospel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one evangelism in the context of relationship. • Training other believers to share the Gospel with Muslims around them (CNMM events & other training opportunities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing list of Muslim people in Calgary who are hearing the Gospel. • Two Ramadan prayer meetings with about 40 people in attendance. • A training day for believers interested in reaching out to Muslims with about 35 attending. • Monthly prayer meetings for Muslim individuals in Calgary who are hearing the Gospel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories of Muslims in Calgary coming to Christ and growing in their faith. • Growing number of MBBs attending various evangelical churches in Calgary. • More believers in Calgary are aware of Islam and have initiated relationship with Muslims. • More believers in Calgary are praying for Muslims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large enough group of MBBs that they feel safe to fellowship among themselves?? • Ramadan prayer meeting participation and Muslim training attendance grow significantly.

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<p>Vision: To see Muslim people coming to Christ, growing in their faith, and testifying to their faith.</p>	<p>DISCIPLESHIP Developing Reproducing Believers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one discipleship • True Love Arabic church – Coptic/Orthodox believer’s gatherings ... weekly services, Bible studies, and prayer meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible studies and conversations about relationship with Christ as it impacts everyday life. • Prayer for specific needs – both with the MBBs and with others who are praying for these MBBs. • Addition of Syrian refugees who have become believers and are being discipled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued spiritual growth in handful of disciples – some who now live in other parts of Canada and the world. • MMBs attending various Calgary churches. • Coptic/Orthodox believers welcoming Muslims & MBBs into their community of believers. SIGNIFICANT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproducing disciples. • An Arabic church that is reaching out and evangelizing Muslims as well as discipling MBBs

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<p>Vision: To see Muslim people coming to Christ, growing in their faith, and testifying to their faith.</p>	<p>LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT Developing the church (True Love Arabic Church)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring leaders within the church. • Leadership team being developed within the church for decision making and direction setting. • Searching for candidates for pastoral leadership transition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men who are being coached and then preaching when missionary is absent • Team is participating in and having a voice in leadership decisions. • Consideration of immigrating a candidate from the middle East (Egypt) • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arabic church is growing and gaining vision and capacity to accept MBBs into their fellowship. • Leadership team has formed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A self-sustaining church that is reaching out and making disciples among MBBs from multiple ethnicities. • A team of men who are spiritually qualified to be elders in the church. • A self-sustaining church paying full pastoral salary with a team of elders giving direction to the pastor. •
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<p>Vision: To see Muslim people coming to Christ, growing in their faith, and testifying to their faith.</p>	<p>ESTABLISHING AND DEVELOPING CHURCHES The multiplying Church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not happening at this point. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maturing disciples in the church have greater vision for church reproduction.