

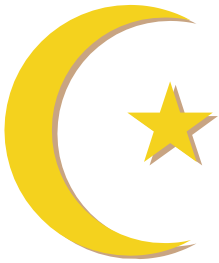
The Omega Letter

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Omega & Islam



Omega is reaching out in two predominantly Muslim areas of southeast Asia: Mindanao in the Philippines and Indonesia / Malaysia. For reasons of the safety of the workers involved, we have spoken very little about this aspect of ministry.

I want to encourage you to pray for this vital outreach by these workers. In both areas, Omega personnel are assisting nationals to reach their own people. The ministry in Indonesia / Malaysia, under the direction of Douglas

Montague and family, is focused upon strengthening the local churches, training workers, and assisting in church planting. Doug also cooperates with other ministries in those areas.

Those Muslims who convert to Christianity often face persecution from the community and their own families. Opportunities for fellowship, discipleship, and worship are often quite limited. Those who minister to them do so at great personal risk.

Without going into detail, I want to urge you to pray for this ministry. The Qu'ran does not offer the sure hope of salvation that the Gospel of Christ does. Muslims are taught that salvation is reached only by good deeds, and that the bridge to heaven is "as thin as a piece of hair" (from the sayings of Mohammed in the Hadith). Thus a Muslim can never know the peace and assurance that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Those Muslims who come to Christ often display a serene strength of faith that puts the Western Christian to shame. Having found the truth in "Isa" (the Qu'ran name for Jesus), they rest completely in the assurance that He gives.

We do not evangelize the Muslim because the Muslim is particularly evil, but because, like all men outside of Christ, they are lost. The motivation for evangelism among the Muslims is just the same as that for the "pagan American." While Islam, in many countries, imposes a harsh life upon its adherents, the greatest motivation is the lostness of mankind outside of Christ.

One of the great "tools" of evangelism among the Muslims is the quiet, godly life of consistent Christians living among them. We are familiar with stories of Muslims who came to Christ because they saw the change that Jesus brought in some of their friends. This kind of changed life opens the door for a clear witness.

One man said concerning a Muslim convert, "You must listen to him. You know what he was like before. He got drunk and beat his wife and children, and he no longer does that. He is a good man."

Others are touched by community development ministries, such as health clinics and agricultural projects. Where open evangelism is not allowed, they are most grateful for assistance rendered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Neighborhood Bible studies are an effective means of evangelizing. Muslims are often curious about what the Bible really says. Contrary to popular belief, most are not steeped in the teachings of the Qu'ran, but have a store of myths and strange stories from their teachers. The plain, simple teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ have a special appeal to them. They are open to hear about Jesus, and when they learn that He offers assurance of salvation, often gladly walk through that door.

They are especially touched by Jesus' words to the poor and downtrodden, by His compassion for the suffering of the world. That is one reason that the Jesus film has had such a remarkable impact; when exposed to the truth about Jesus, they are drawn to Him.

Your partnership with Omega enables us to continue to reach out in these Muslim communities with the story of Jesus and His love.

I Was Just Thinking . . .

J. Gene Adkins

The theme of my teaching last year for the seminars in the Philippines was "The Body of Christ." I'm working on a book by that title as well. It's a theme that I can't seem to get away from, no matter what I'm doing, or where!

When I received an announcement of a missions strategy conference a few days ago, I decided I'd prepare a paper for presentation at that conference on that theme. I'd like to share the basic thesis with you, and ask you to pray about it.

I believe that the Body of Christ world-wide is One Body. There may be many "manifestations" of that One Body, or many local "cells" of that One Body, yet it remains One.

Just as in a local congregation, there are "many members" to make up the One Body, so there are many local and/or national cells.

And — just as the many "members" of a local body contribute to the edification of the local assembly, I believe that the churches of a nation have particular gifts to help supply the needs of the One Body worldwide.

In other words, the particular gifts of the American church are not given of the Lord simply to enrich and bless the church in America; they belong as much to the church in Africa as to the church in America, since it is but ONE Body!

Paul clearly teaches that the gifts of each are given for the profit of all. I believe it is the Lord's will that this same thing apply right across all national borders.

Romans 15:25-27 tells how the Gentiles made a collection for the poor (largely Jewish) saints in Jerusalem. Paul in his letters tells how that the churches in one area were giving to help the churches in another area.

You may say, "Isn't that what missions is all about?" To a certain extent, yes.

Unfortunately, however, it is often viewed as *us* giving *our* money to help the poor in that other country.

There lies the first mistake: We are not giving *our* money. It is all His money! It belongs to the Body of Christ, and we are but stewards.

The second error in our traditional way of doing missions is that

“Just Thinking”, continued

we do not truly “release” the gift. We hold the purse strings. We are often fearful that the “foreigners” won’t know how to use the money wisely, or won’t use it as *we* think it should be used. Often there are “strings” attached to our gift; in which case, it ceases to be a gift at all!

And right there is the worst problem in our thinking: It isn’t *our* gift at all! It is the gift the Holy Spirit has entrusted to us to use for the benefit of the whole Body of Christ.

There is a growing recognition of the unity of the Body of Christ. As this awareness grows, so will our involvement in the lives and ministries of our brothers and sisters in other lands grow.

We must begin to view our stewardship of God’s blessings in the light of this unity. We must begin to look at the needs around us, not as the needs of others, but as the needs of the Body of Christ.

This involves a shift in our thinking about what it means to be a member of Christ’s Body on earth. It requires a shift in our thinking about what missions is, and how missionary ministry is done. We do not live in isolation, but are members “one of another.”

(The adjacent letter (right) is not from a stranger in the Philippines. It is from your sister in the Lord. She doesn’t attend the local congregation which you attend, but she is a member of the same church, the oneBody of Christ.)

It would be easy for me to be embarrassed by the richness of the resources at my disposal for ministry if it were not for these words of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 8:10):

“... Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

I can enjoy His blessings on my life, because by His grace I am “sending portions to those for whom nothing is prepared.”

Let us realize that *our* blessings are *their* blessings as well.

The Omega Letter

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A Year In Review

Adeline Timario

I was in the process of doing an important assignment of preparing literacy materials in (*a tribal language*) when I received an urgent message requesting me to come home. My mother suffered a stroke. I came home not knowing that her condition would alter the course of my life and my ministry.

I took a leave starting February in order to help in taking care of her. Some people were asking if somebody else could do the job instead of me. It was a difficult question for me to answer. Was helping my family contrary to God’s calling? I prayed about it and decided to be a caregiver and I have peace in what I did. For a year, I helped in taking care of her until the Lord took her home last March 15 this year.

While doing the daily routines, I also handle 2 hours of tutorial work on weekdays. My two tutees are half Japanese who have difficulties in coping with their schoolwork. On Sundays, I taught a children’s Bible class. Many of these children are our neighbors whose parents are not yet believers.

Last December, Aida and I were able to visit the work in Duit, Ifugao (*which began with a literacy project by Adeline and Aida-jga*). In spite of the problem that assailed the church, the work continues to spread in other villages. The number of outreaches had increased. Three of our literacy students before are now teachers of the word of God and helping the work. Two of the children whom Aida taught before are now members of the praise and worship team and are actively witnessing to their classmates in school. One had just finished her Bible School training and is now helping the church. It was a joy to see what God is doing.

Considerations

The desire to be involved in missions among the unreached remains in my heart. Aida and I are considering going to Indonesia where millions of Muslims are.

Indonesia is made up of 13,677 islands and split into 27 provinces. Its population is over 209,774,138, the fourth largest of any country in the world. There are approximately 350 distinct ethnic groups having their own language and customs.

About 87% of Indonesians are Muslims, making it the world’s largest Muslim population.

Nine percent are Christians and two percent are Hindu, living mainly in Bali. There are also Buddhists, mostly among the Chinese population. However, traditional animist beliefs such as ancestor veneration are as important as any of these religions in the daily life of the Indonesians. Although Islam is the dominant adhered religion, folk Islam is popularly practiced.

As part of my preparation, I hope to study at the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) in Baguio.

I covet your prayerful involvement as we engage in God’s work among them. As you have been with us in the past, we trust that you will continue to colabor with us in the future.

With you in His vineyard,

Adeline

DID YOU KNOW? —

It took 38 years for radio to reach 50 million users. It took 13 years for TV to reach the same number. Yet — the internet hit that number in only 4 years! Internet usage is doubling every 100 days, and 1.5 million new web pages are created *every day*!

Even in China, usage is up to the 10 million mark, and worldwide usage is expected to hit a billion within this decade.

The November 2000 Web Evangelism Conference has produced an 80 page manual, “The Web Evangelism Guide,” available online at ><http://www.webevangelism.com><. with a great deal of help for those who wish to use this 21st Century Evangelism tool.



Through Christian Dynamics, OWM is reaching out not only in this country, but around the world, in evangelizing, discipleship and equipping.

I am preparing a simple manual for those who would like to put their own personal testimony online, with helps to find a free site to locate your testimony, so that you may share it with the world.

It does not require a great deal of computer knowledge or equipment to make your own witness available to the world! I’ll announce its availability in the next Omega Letter, Lord willing.