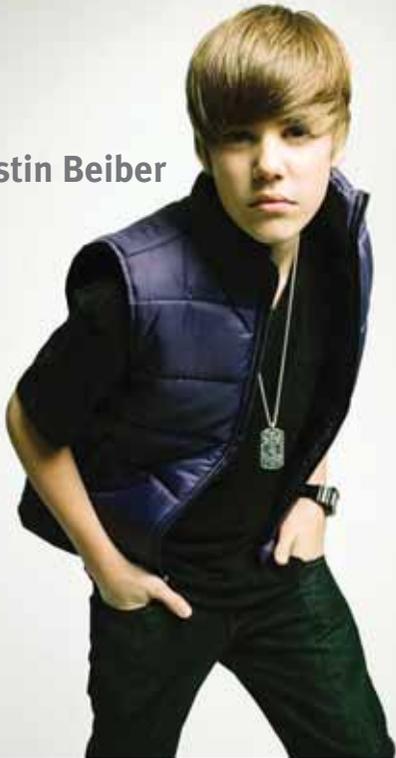


# My Muslim neighbour loves Justin Beiber!

The first thing the girl downstairs asked me was if I loved Justin Beiber! Believe it or not, on the surface, most Muslim young people look just like you and me. They listen to the same pop music and often dress and talk the same way. But in another sense they are so very different. For instance we've recently been told that our Bible is changed, untrustworthy, and that because we're Christians we're going to go to hell. I see thousands of men and women sincerely striving to do all that Islam asks. They hope that their good works are enough, all the while never knowing if they'll get to heaven.

Justin Beiber



When I first arrived here, I never thought that I could get used to the call to prayer. Every morning, I was awoken from my blissful sleep to hear the mosque's loudspeakers informing the Muslims it was time to pray. How much I disliked that call!

Nowadays I've become so used to hearing the call to prayer that I generally don't notice it. But it's the times that I do hear it that are special to me because it is a constant reminder of what God's sent us here to do. No matter how similar people might seem to us they all need to hear about Jesus. So how about it youth... ready for a challenge?



Rachel, a teenager who lives in the Middle East and enjoys songwriting, reading a good Jane Austen and watching old musicals with her family.



Rachel

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## Hunger for change in the Middle East

### Matt Perry ponders things Arabic

Unlike the standard military coup d'état, what's happening in the Arab world today are *People*-uprisings. This is significant and exciting. It's significant because the impetus for change is not coming from a few high ranking military men with guns at hand, but from millions of young men and women with mobile devices in their pockets. It's exciting because ordinary people are achieving extraordinary things because they're hungry for change!

What makes millions of people stand up to their corrupt and well armed leaders? I suggest it comes from a deep sense of shame and disempowerment. This new generation of Arabs feel ripped off! The promises their grandparents passed on to them that very soon they would reap the rewards of wealth and self rule have failed miserably. Vast numbers of Arab people are poor and weak, subject to rich and powerful dictatorships. The dream that the *average* Muhammad and Fatima would feel some sense of self-rule has died. The hope that the Arab nations under Arab leadership would be run for the people has been dashed. At the same time, the iron-fisted aggression of these governments has now been exposed as meek revolutionaries upload incriminating evidence to Facebook or *tweet* the details to their compatriots. This convergence of desperation and technology has empowered the wave of revolution to just keep on rolling in.

So far two governments have toppled, and several others are being shaken. The word "democratiyya" (democracy) is heard in the Arab world more today than ever before, but not only will it sound different in Arabic, it will look different too. These nations are Muslim, and if they establish new governments truly elected by the people for the people, they will be new *Muslim* democracies. *Muhammad on the street* sees presidents like *Ben Ali* and *Mubarak* as secularised leaders, and he longs for a good Muslim head of state to usher in security and prosperity. I suspect the people will demand greater Islamic government from their new leaders, meaning the church is not necessarily in for an easier ride. However, the good news is that the revolutionaries are not extremists and (in Egypt at least) have shown their solidarity with their Christian neighbours in some very encouraging ways. One incident in Alexandria saw thousands of Muslims acting as "human shields" for Christians at Coptic New Years Eve celebrations in January. "We either live together or die together" was their slogan. Millions of Egyptians also changed their Facebook pictures to the image of a cross within a crescent – symbolising an "Egypt for all." (source: ethnologue.com)

So, as we continue to reach out to this hungry generation, pray for Muslim and Christian relations to be blessed, there is much to be hopeful about.

### ▼ inside

- Muslims in New Zealand
- 10 ways to love our Muslims
- My Muslim neighbour loves Justin Beiber!

# Farheen's story

This true story happened on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2011 and has not finished yet. I was sitting in an English airport ready to fly to India for the first time. A youngish looking lady started speaking with me about her first time flying alone, and the anxieties that came with that. Eventually she unraveled what seemed like her whole life story to me as I listened intently – wondering where this was all heading.

We boarded the plane together, ending up with seats a row apart. We entered Dubai airport together, still talking. She found out to her horror that her plane to Pakistan had left without her! I don't think it was a coincidence that we both had 6-7 hours waiting for our next flights. The next 6 hours were spent sitting in a café together, talking pretty much non stop. Farheen poured out her heart to me, her fears and hurts from life.

Born in Pakistan, her religion was Islam. She had recently started a new life in Birmingham, having married a British Muslim guy, and life was hard. She shared insights into what life was like; each day living in fear of what her husband might do to her and wondering how she might strive to please him. She was not even looking forward to heading back to Pakistan that day I met her, for her own family would treat her with contempt.

God let me be a part of this lady's journey as I shared with her God's power to heal our hurts from others and to bring us peace – not what the world offers but perfect peace which casts out all fear. I was able to pray with her at the end and as she lifted her head, I saw real peace flood into her eyes. She acknowledged that she felt peace and was thankful that someone actually prayed with her! She even took the Mark's gospel I had on me and after exchanging emails we still keep in touch today.



Susannah, completing study at Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies, recently had her first experience of a non-Western country.



**Susannah**

# Muslims in New Zealand – things are better than we think

Matt Perry, immediate past WEC NZ director, reflects on his own research for his MA in Intercultural Studies.

When you drive down the road and see men in Arabic garb and women in headscarves do you immediately think: There go possibly the friendliest people in the neighbourhood? Even though I already knew that Middle Eastern hospitality rivals any in the world my recent research has confirmed to me that Arab Muslims living in New Zealand are consistently friendly, hospitable and approachable people. In fact, Arab Muslims are literally asking Kiwis to make friends and get to know them.

I interviewed numerous Muslims studying or living long term in New Zealand and when given the opportunity to say anything to their Kiwi neighbours their response could be summarised like this: Arab Muslims are good people, not bad, we are humans just like you, please get to know us.” Wow! If that isn't an invitation to friendship, what is? Furthermore, Arab Muslims feel respected by New Zealanders and generally liked and accepted in society.

So what do New Zealanders think? Well, apparently we don't think a lot about our Muslim neighbours. When I surveyed New Zealanders' opinions of Arab Muslims I found that while many do respect Muslims and see them as a benefit to New Zealand society, the largest group of answers were “no opinion” or “indifferent.” On an encouraging note, most Kiwis who had Muslim acquaintances were quite positive in their replies. It was, by and large, those without contact with Muslims who sat on the fence.

Other research of the four largest immigrant receiving regions of the world (USA, Western Europe, Canada and Australia) found that immigrants eventually transform the dominant culture, to various degrees, reducing its Western character. This transformation may mean host nations become “less European, less Anglo-Saxon,

and less Christian”. As the immigrant impact increasingly alters the way of life in the host country, the host society takes notice and begins to care more and more.

This insight could well explain our situation in New Zealand. It is quite possible that the number of Arab and Muslim immigrants has not yet reached a point where New Zealand society experiences any significant transformation, and Kiwis therefore don't really care. New Zealanders do not feel their way of life is impacted enough to form and express a particularly strong opinion either way.

While some in the church may express concern at the increasing number of Muslims in New Zealand, our peaceful coexistence to date and lack of serious controversy on New Zealand soil says to me that we in New Zealand are at a significant place in our multicultural history. Now is the time to reach out and make the most of our good relationships. I happily believe that when the Bible says “in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28) migration is among “all things”.

So, next time you see a Muslim close up, I lovingly suggest you introduce yourself, welcome them to New Zealand and see where it goes.

Matthew's research report is available on demand: email [divinecoffeenz@gmail.com](mailto:divinecoffeenz@gmail.com)

Other references: Jan Pieter Van Oudenhoven, Colleen Ward, and Charles Judd , Social Psychology and Immigration relations between immigrants and hosts societies. Available from [http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/3588/Van-Oudenhoven-Judd-Ward\\_Social-Psychology-and-immigration-relations-between-immigrants-and-host-societies.pdf](http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/3588/Van-Oudenhoven-Judd-Ward_Social-Psychology-and-immigration-relations-between-immigrants-and-host-societies.pdf)

# 10 ways to love our Muslim neighbours

by Flora Davies

When asked which was the greatest commandment, Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' He then went on to say: 'And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself."' (Matthew 22: 37, 39)

In our multi-cultural society, many of us face the reality that our neighbours are not like us. Differences in language and culture can prevent us getting to know and love those who live around us. Sadly, this may be particularly true of Muslim neighbours, as much of what we see and read in the media can generate mutual fear and misunderstanding, rather than respect and love.

A more subtle barrier might be a certain underlying British reserve, which holds us back from attempting to make friends with a complete stranger, let alone trying to share the gospel. The first step to crossing cultures is a conscious choice on our part to get out there and meet people: shop where they shop; greet them as we pass them on the street; take the opportunity to talk with people from other backgrounds. They may be surprised at our interest in them — and we may be pleasantly surprised to find how willing they are to engage in conversation.

### Here are some suggestions:

- 1 Be a friend: invite people to your home or to a café, but don't suggest going to the pub. It is also best to only approach someone of the same gender as yourself. Be ready to accept offers of hospitality in return — for a Muslim, it is a matter of honour to be able to serve a guest.
- 2 Spend time with them: share in their joys and sorrows. Being willing to share our time can be a measure of our love for them.
- 3 Offer hospitality to foreign students during holidays or for the duration of their course. If you can't have people to stay, invite them for a meal at Christmas or some other special time. Make it clear you won't serve pork or alcohol, otherwise they may be nervous about accepting.
- 4 Listen to what they have to say, without responding negatively: you don't have to judge their values or their religion, but show respect and try to develop thought provoking and stimulating conversations.
- 5 Don't be shy about talking about your beliefs and Christian ways of doing things. Be ready to answer any questions they may have. Most Muslims love to engage in debate, but try instead, to show them it is possible to connect with God spiritually and live a life that truly honours him, without focusing on theological detail.
- 6 Don't forget about offering practical help, such as filling in forms, help with moving or decorating, tidying gardens, or providing transport. Help is always welcome!
- 7 Many Muslims are keen to improve their English. Why not use this as an opportunity for conversation? You could even offer to swap English lessons for lessons in their language: learning someone's language can be a way of showing love.
- 8 As you get to know your neighbours, begin to pray for them. Pray for them regularly and ask God to break down the barriers of religious prejudice and pride, cultural, historical and political barriers, and to reveal himself to them.
- 9 Pray with them whenever they share a problem and ask them if they have anything they would like you to pray for. Genuinely expect answers from God.
- 10 Share stories of God speaking to you and to others and answering prayers in Jesus' name. Many Muslims believe God is not interested in their daily lives and that they must perform religious duties and rituals to earn salvation.

## How it can work.....

I got to know Henry through answering his advert on www.gumtree.com, asking to swap English and Arabic lessons. I soon discovered he was interested in knowing what Christians believe. He had met a Christian and been frustrated that this person didn't seem confident in answering his questions. Over the months that we met, I was able to explain the good news to him. Sometimes we talked mostly in English as I wanted to answer his questions accurately, but he said this was fine as sticking to a strict timetable was not important in friendship! I was also glad to invite him to a BBQ and help him with finding a television.



he and his brother attended an evangelistic meeting, where they heard a couple of powerful testimonies, enjoyed the songs in Urdu, the food and meeting Christians from an Asian background. They are asking 'When is the next party?'

I was reluctant to talk to a Muslim friend about my prayer life, because I didn't want it to sound like spiritual pride, but the subject came up naturally. She had no idea that Christians believed in God and actually prayed, as this was not what she had been taught.



I am learning more and more that the physical and the spiritual are very much connected with each other. I can see the faith level rising in my Muslim friends and contacts as we pray for and with them.

We prayed for a local barber, whose business and health were going downhill, and he has seen a clear improvement in both areas. As a result,



This article was compiled with help from WEC workers among immigrants in the UK. Flora Davies, Editor

Neighbours Worldwide is a ministry of WEC International, bringing the good news of Jesus to people in minority ethnic group and communities. This growing team works alongside existing churches in the Midlands in the UK and has a vision for expansion.

Read more at [www.wec-int.org.uk/neighbours](http://www.wec-int.org.uk/neighbours)

### Photographer

Location: MiddleEast

Minimum period: 14 days

Description: Quality NEW images are needed by the Bible Correspondence Course (BCC). At the same time you can visit and get involved in different aspects of the work here.

Qualifications: Photographer

### Marketing and Advertising and/or Website designer/redesigner and/or Graphic Designer

Location: MiddleEast

Minimum period: 14 days

Marketing and Advertising: The Bible Correspondence Course (BCC) would like to advertise more widely through google, adwords, facebook, and elsewhere!

Website designer/redesigner: The BCC has projects that need a professional touch in website design.

Graphic Designer: Help the BCC with new images, stock photos etc

Qualifications:

Marketing and Advertising: Some experience with marketing online

Website designer/redesigner: Joomla, SQL, MySQL, HTML, CSS, Ajax, etc.

Graphic Designer: Demonstrated abilities with photoshop and/or GIMP

### English teacher

Location: Central Asia

Minimum period: 1 month

Description: Teach English for one month in a BAM business, and have daily contact in the work environment with local believers and non-believers. This is a good taster, giving many insights into cross-cultural living, the pressures of a CAN situation and CP, as well as making a valuable contribution to the team / ministry by teaching English.

Qualifications: A TEFL qualification is preferred, but (for one month) another teaching qualification may be okay. Native speaker preferred.

WEC is serving in a huge variety of church planting focused ministries and professions in over 70 countries. These are just a few random examples among numerous other possibilities. Visit [www.wecnz.org](http://www.wecnz.org) and click on Opportunities to search out more. Better yet, pick up the phone, call 0800 GO INTO, and get the full picture.

More Info

One of our new workers heading overseas to work among Muslims was in a New Zealand music shop recently. He was asked whether he is a missionary. Expressing surprise and caging his answer, he was assured, "With a beard like that you are either a missionary, a drug dealer or a user".

What is essential in preparation to reach out to Muslim people? A beard? Head covering? One core component is to better understand the way people think, and how their worldview is formed. There are two courses at Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies to help new workers. *Learning Another Culture* explores the relationship between language and culture. *Folk Islam* studies the roots of folk religion with an emphasis on folk Islam. It will help express the Gospel of Jesus in a way that speaks to the worldview and needs of folk Muslims.

The task of communicating the Gospel effectively, accurately and appropriately across cultures is an extremely demanding cause. Put it in the context of a spiritual battle and it is an even greater challenge. But Paul said, "woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (2 Cor 9:16) adding "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (v. 22). He also asked, "Who is equal to such a task?" (2 Cor 2:16) and then later adds that "competency comes from God" (2 Cor 3:5) who has made us ministers of a new covenant.

It is this blend of competencies that we seek – competency from thorough and determined preparation combined with God equipping, gifting and refining. No-one is competent in themselves – we all need the competency that comes from God. If you want to talk about the possibility of serving in reaching least reached peoples (even though you feel hopelessly inadequate) get in touch and join others also on this journey.

Jock & Cathy have 8 children and 6 grandchildren. Happily married for 30 years, they still like dinner dates, family, reading and Bethany the dog.



Jock & Cathy

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Do you like cafes? Enjoy meeting new people?  
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We are looking for a NZ mobiliser(s). This is a voluntary position as part of the WEC New Zealand team.  
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Contact Jock & Cathy Brunskill, (NZ Directors)  
[director@wecnz.org](mailto:director@wecnz.org)

