

During Ramadan, Christians Must Show Love as This Burgeoning Worldwide Ministry to Muslims Does

The Muslim holy month of Ramadan began at sundown on June 5 and ends at sundown on July 5. Until a few years ago few of us even heard of Ramadan. But since the rise of Muslim immigrants to the United States and other countries, plus the rise of Islamic terrorism, suddenly it seems all of us are more aware of what is happening with Islam.

At the same time, fear is growing among many Christians—so much that most Christians are even afraid to witness to Muslims. That's wrong, and there's a better way—showing love to Muslims. It's getting results in England and many parts of the world, according to Gordon Hickson, an engaging man I met in London. Hickson has started an exciting ministry called Mahabba, which means love in Arabic.

I met Hickson at the Empowered 21 meeting in London last month. As he talked about his ministry, I grabbed my iPhone and recorded a quick interview, which you can listen to here on the Charisma Podcast Network. In the interview, Gordon tells his story in his own words.

The bottom line: Christians should not be afraid of Muslims. As they share love (*mahabba*), Muslims are coming to Christ. His friendship network is being used successfully in various parts of the world. And after having a significant spiritual experience, he now has faith for 30 million Muslims to come to the Lord!

How did Hickson, a very proper Englishman, gain such a love for ministering to Muslims? It happened during the six years,

he served as the international crusade director for Christ for all Nations in Africa and Asia. It was at that time that he “fell in love with Muslims,” reaching thousands of them in Muslim cities on both continents. In 1990, he and his wife, Rachel, returned to their home country of England in hopes of discovering the same love for Muslims, but all they encountered was “a complete terror and fear of Muslims.”

“I was horrified at the lack of response by pastors and ministries when it came to trying to reach Muslims,” he said.

In 2005, Hickson, an Assemblies of God pastor, said he received a word from God to leave the denomination and become an Anglican vicar at Center City Church in Oxford. He didn’t go willingly, though.

“I have to admit I thought it was a demon and tried to rebuke it,” Hickson said. “But actually it was God and He, more and more, continued to make it known to me for 11 months that ‘this is Me; you must go to Oxford. I brought you here to start praying for Muslims and reaching Muslims.’”

Hickson and Tim Green (whose father, Michael Green, was very influential in the charismatic movement in the U.K. in the 1960s and ’70s) started a prayer meeting every Tuesday morning. Soon students from many churches began to join them in their cause. Hickson said they found “complete unity” in Oxford in prayer for Muslims, so much so that they formed a community called Mahabba, which, in Arabic, means love.

“We did this with the idea that it would break this wicked fear that is paralyzing the church,” Hickson said. “We began to pray every week, and it began to change things. We started training our students them with a program called Friendship First, simple material that helps ordinary Christians to reach Muslims. We were mobilizing hundreds of Christians to break through the fear barrier. We started to see Muslims come into the kingdom one by one. The key is unity in prayer. If there

is no unity, it won't work. It was the punching power that broke through in the spirit realm to connect with Muslims."

Hickson said the movement was so strong that significant people in the Muslim world were renouncing Islam and coming to Christ. One of them was an Imam's daughter from Turkey, who Hickson said led 120 people to Christ last year. An Imam from Kampala, Uganda, whose father was a Mufti—a Muslim legal expert who is empowered to giving rulings on religious matters—became born again through a vision. Hickson said he was chased out of Uganda and joined Hickson's organization in Oxford.

The Mahabba movement began to grow and now has outlets in 42 cities in England. After six years, Hickson left the Anglican church in Oxford and set up Mahabba as a charity.

To understand the impact of Mahabba across the U.K., check out this article from the *Evangelical Alliance Magazine* calling Mahabba a "New U.K. phenomenon." You couldn't pick a more strategic time to spread Mahabba through Western nations.

Hickson says Mahabba is now working in another 25 cities to develop further strong networks, with its online community on "The City" supporting the communication across the network. All have seen significant growth in Muslims coming to Christ through many different initiatives.

Because his work for the kingdom is so significant, Hickson said God shook him to his core during a recent revival he attended in Wales. The message he received involved the salvation of millions of Muslims.

"The fire of God fell on me. It was extraordinary, Hickson said. "For an hour, the fire of God burned through me and I was shaken from side to side. Incredibly, God was saying to me, "Why won't you believe Me for 30 million Muslims? I kept shaking my head, and I was so tired with the fire burning through me that I just gave out and shouted, 'OK, 30 million,

30 million!’

“As soon as I shouted that out, the presence of God lifted off me and I knew I had faith. The surprising thing was, I got off the floor and realized, ‘Wow, 30 million, that’s not many.’ I wish I had asked for more. In that extraordinary moment, I had faith deposited in my spirit that we are about to step into the most remarkable landslide and we’re going to see millions of Muslims turn to Christ. It’s already begun. We’ve seen 6,000 to 7,000 Iranians in England do so; the church I’m working with in Norway has baptized more than 1,000 migrants. In Stockholm, they’ve baptized more than 500 migrants; in Germany, you see a lot of Syrians coming to Christ.”

Hickson says the Spirit of God is moving upon Muslims, and it’s time for all believers to participate in the harvest.

“This is God’s time; this is our time,” he said. “It’s something supernatural that’s opening up to us. You either look at the giants, the terrorism and ISIS or you think, wow, let me at them. This is one of the most fantastic moments of our lives.”

To learn more about Muslim holiday of Ramadan, Hickson says people can visit the Mahabba website at www.mahabba.org and get an email each day with the 30 days of prayer focus, and some extra material called “Love fast” to inspire not only prayer but also action.

For those who want to know even more about Mahabba, here’s a dropbox with a few presentations.

I hope this inspires you as it did me. Share this good news on social media, check out the resource materials and share your own experiences witnessing to Muslims. {eo}