

WHO ARE WE?



For seven years John & Karen Elias served in London ministering in Muslim communities. Prior to this John had been on the pastoral staff at Cedar Crest BFC for ten years. Their work in London involved personal evangelism, literature outreach, and mobilizing local churches and Christians for outreach in their own areas. They are available to churches to help assess area needs and opportunities, develop strategies for outreach, and provide training and resources for effective outreach.

WHAT IS AN MBU?

A Meeting for Better Understanding is a cooperative community event between a local church and a mosque. The format sees two speakers addressing an agreed upon topic and presenting what their faith believes concerning it. It is not a debate or confrontation, rather it is an effort to accurately inform others of their position. It is followed by a moderated time of questions and answers. It concludes with a light snack and opportunity for informal discussion and contacts.



John C Elias
info@bridgesoption.org
www.bridgesoption.org

THE BRIDGES OPTION

*A cooperative effort with
local churches*



*Promoting Biblical Christianity with a
cross cultural focus*



Many communities are experiencing great change these days. An influx of ethnic groups is changing the make up of schools, shopping malls, and communities. The unknown is often a cause of fear and distrust. This can be the experience of long term members of the neighbourhood as well as the new residents.

The Muslim population continues to grow. Many are confused by the lifestyle of those they consider Christians. Some Christians do not understand Islam and fear that all Muslims are radical and different. Christianity is not a culture or ethnicity that one has because of where they were born. It is not something that one has just because their parents may have been Christians. Christianity is rightly understood as an individual's personal relationship with God through trusting in Jesus Christ. Individuals become Christians one by one as they believe God, not by being citizens of a nation. Because culture and religion are so intertwined in Islam, many Muslims have a hard time realizing that all Westerners are not Christians. The West has a Christian cultural heritage, but in the main our culture and society have left that heritage to pursue a more secular course.

We believe there is a great need to embrace Biblical Christianity and live in a way that demonstrates we are a part of the Kingdom of God and not just members of an earthly kingdom. As members of The Bridges Option, our goal is to enhance peace and harmony between the Islamic and

Christian communities by helping each to gain a better understanding of the other's historic faith. Not all who call themselves Christians or Muslims are true followers of their historic teachings. There are many current aberrations of both positions which are causing fear, disharmony, and strife. As Christians better understand the teachings of Islam, it will remove fear and promote trust. As Muslims can see Biblical Christianity, many of the misunderstandings which have promoted strife will be removed and respect will grow. As all better understand the teachings of Biblical Christianity, they will be led to find true peace.

Further, we desire to assist local churches in recognizing the spiritual needs and opportunities for ministry of the Gospel that these changes make possible. We bring a diversity of experience in ministering cross culturally, and we would like to offer our help to your church. Since all situations are different, we can tailor our involvement to your needs with some or all of the following:

- * Assist in performing a demographic study of your area to identify cultural shift, particularly towards an Islamic presence.
- * Help the Pastor and leadership to challenge their congregation re:
 - their changing community and its needs
 - evangelistic and growth opportunities
- * Aid the Pastor as he begins a Sunday AM teaching series on "Missions from your front door".
- * We can provide resources and ideas, the goal is to bring church leadership and members on board with the process:

- Facilitate a 6 session DVD course on reaching Muslims with the Gospel
- Provide guidance and training to start a prayer meeting focussed on Muslim outreach
- Provide literature for training and outreach
- * There may need to be the presentation of special sessions on:
 - The background of Islam and other religions
 - evangelism techniques
 - answers to questions re Christianity
 - understanding your own culture and other cultures
 - the body of Christ - how to care for a convert from another culture
- * We will be ready to enable the church to host a Meeting for Better Understanding by providing :
 - guidance to the Pastor on identifying and contacting a Mosque
 - training on how to organize an MBU
 - help in getting speakers
 - literature for distribution
- * The on-going involvement of The Bridges Option could see us:
 - providing Discipleship materials designed for Muslim converts
 - establishing Training and Mentoring for those caring for Believers from a Muslim Background
- * Being a continuing resource for the Pastor and congregation.