



USING FEAR AS A WEAPON

It is now a well-established fact that radical Islamist groups use fear as one of their main tactics. They know if they can render a community fearful and cowardly, then they will have won a strategic foothold within that community or even a whole nation.

As you will know chronic fear is deadly. It corrodes your confidence in God's goodness, in his protection and his miracle-working power. It unleashes a swarm of doubts and it dulls your recall of his promises. Twenty-one times throughout the gospels Jesus says, "Do not be afraid". He knows that we are very prone to fear.

To be honest with you, after spending the last six months immersed in reading and learning about Islam, watching what's happening in our world almost on a daily basis especially since 29 June¹ last year is nothing short of frightening.

To that end it is entirely understandable that many New Zealanders are already gripped with fear as we see terrible, almost unbelievable atrocities committed by ISIS and other Islamic terrorist groups. For Christians however, there is a much better response.

In inviting Dr Mark Durie to New Zealand,² it's neither Mark's nor my intention to add to the fear that already pervades our culture; far from it. Rather, our goals are as follows:

- 1) To share information that is both reliable and well researched
- 2) To help all Christians to think through their own response to the radical Islamic agenda
- 3) To bring hope and remind all Christians that "perfect love drives out **all** fear" 1 John 4:18
- 4) To help us to quietly and thoughtfully reach out to our Muslim neighbours and share with them the good news of the gospel.

It is my conviction that we must know the truth about radical Islam and not some sanitised or popular version. Having understood the truth we, as the '*nation of the cross*', are neither intimidated nor gripped by fear. Rather, we will "stand firm and having done all to stand firm against all the strategies of the evil one". Ephesians 6:11

Alan Vink
CEO WillowNZ
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¹ The day al-Baghdadi announced that ISIS had established a caliphate, and that he was now successor of Muhammad and the global leader of Islam.

² *Which God? Understanding Islam* National Tour with Mark Durie is 15-19 June 2015. For more information and registration details please go to www.willowcreek.org.nz.