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Caring for Seekers & Converts

“If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”

Mark 9:35

إِذَا أَرَادَ أَحَدٌ أَنْ يَكُونَ أَوَّلًا فَيَكُونَ آخِرَ الْكُلِّ وَخَادِمًا لِلْكُلِّ



www.issa-almasih.com

In God’s providence unprecedented numbers of Muslims express keen interest in learning about Christ and His ways. Most do so quietly or confidentially. Others more openly show interest, especially over social media.

It is not coincidental that Christians regularly cross paths with Muslims – shopkeepers, neighbours and colleagues. They too need the gospel. If we truly love our neighbours as we ought, we certainly desire to see them gathered into Christ’s fold. God called Abraham to bring blessing to all families of the earth in Christ, the promised Seed (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Galatians 3:16).

Slow and Steady

Muslims can have many reasons to show interest in the Christian faith -- admiration of Christian culture, desire for a mate, a good job or a visa. Some are just curious and some can be spies who want to identify and report true converts. It is impossible to be sure but God’s Word can also change hardened hearts. While welcoming inquirers, we must guard the sheep, especially other converts.

Honour and Respect

No Muslim would put the Koran near feet or anything dirty. Nor is

it appropriate to slouch or sit cross-legged when hearing and reading it or before important persons. We need to avoid adding offense to the gospel and take care to highly honour God’s Word and one another as well. Likewise, modest clothing avoids giving wrong moral impressions about the Christian life.

A Radical Change

Like all of us, Muslims are sinners who need Christ’s redeeming grace. They too receive the gift of faith through God’s Word and Spirit. Conversion is a work of God. To the praise of His grace, the number of Muslims who convert to

Christ is steadily growing. An Islamic background, however, adds different challenges and more obstacles to a convert’s Christian journey. Converts need much understanding and care. Our prayers, listening ears, encouragement and thoughtful patience are vital in the process of nourishing converts.

The most effective presentation of the Christian world and life view is in the *Sermon on the Mount*. This is helpful in teaching Muslim converts the meaning of “All of Christ to All of Man” It provides a radically different and liberating life view, including the worth and dignity of women.



Spiritual Nourishment

Living with and for Christ requires learning and feeding on His Word daily. God’s life-giving Word gradually deals with the many in-grown false assumptions. Converts take much longer to develop biblical views and to recognize the need for changed habits. They also need time to feel comfortable and safe as part of a Christian fellowship. Small group Bible studies are helpful to discuss questions. More and more this is done online. In time, proven converts can be safely introduced to mature believers and

other converts.

Centrality of Christ

It is key for converts to clearly understand that Christ is the centre of all Scriptures. He is also the objective of the divine direction of history. They need to understand that Old Testament Scriptures focus on preparing for the coming of Christ. This effectively answers many questions about his nature and earthly saving mission. It does away with the idea that God established a series of religions. It also sets aside the fallacy that Jesus is just a good prophet or even the best one.

Worship and Fellowship

Being called to be part of the body of Christ means steady commitment to sound biblical worship and to belong to a local fellowship. Christians teach this by example. Often being ostracized by family and community means that converts need us to invest our time in listening, loving and including them as well as teaching and prayer. However, another real risk is too much attention. Indulging or overly celebrating a convert seriously endangers their spiritual health.

True Christians follow Christ

Some suffering is part of being a faithful follower, so it is not helpful to encourage converts to run away from carrying Jesus’ cross. Still, they need to be counselled to be wise in dealing with friends and family. Becoming overzeal-

“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”

— Galatians 3: 29

ous and confrontational, some converts bring unnecessary difficulties on themselves. Christ’s meekness is strength, not weakness. Converts need to be taught to be thankful for the good in their culture, such as strong, caring families and warm hospitality and to avoid stirring animosity by speaking ill of Mohamed or the Koran. Instead, they can be long-suffering and winsome, humbly showing love for Christ and His ways by being self-giving, slow to speak and quick to listen. A quiet, respectful Christ-honouring life in the community is a powerful testimony.

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