

Evangelists Use the Quran as a Tool To Preach Jesus Among Muslims

Critics say using Islam's holy book to prove Christianity can blur the differences between the two faiths

Many Christians denounce the Quran's teachings, but some believers have taken the controversial approach of using Islam's holy book to bring Muslims to Jesus. They say by communicating the gospel in a manner Islamists can understand, many receive Christ. Their converts are called "Messianic Muslims," partly because they are encouraged not to abandon some Islamic traditions

"I use their own book of precepts to validate the authenticity of Christ," said Patricia Bailey, who has ministered in many Arabic nations. "If Muslims embrace the Quran as their holy book, then it is the ultimate tool to reach them and at least to provoke them to question what is written in their own book of the law. The Quran makes references to the Bible. The Bible never refers to the Quran for truth or authenticity."

The founder of Georgia-based Master's Touch Ministries, Bailey said more than 4,000 Muslims have been converted via one-on-one ministry, her TV appearances, and leadership-training centers and conferences in countries such as Kuwait, Egypt, Sudan and Turkey.

Bailey is not alone in her provocative way of reaching Muslims. John Taimoor is an itinerant preacher and founder of Crossbearers, a California-based ministry that presents Christianity within an Islamic context. Born and raised a

Muslim in an area near Pakistan and southern Afghanistan, Taimoor seeks to establish new communities of Messianic Muslims throughout the Middle East.

A Messianic Muslim is an Islamist who has accepted Jesus but refuses to be referred to as a Christian and chooses to stay within the Arab community.

“Ethnically I am a Pushtun or Pathan who never had a church among them, and I was probably the first-known convert to Christ in the last 50 years,” Taimoor, 46, explained. “Christ visited me supernaturally while reading the Quran in a mosque, and later the New Testament changed me into a new person.”

Jeremiah Cummings, who studied Islam with Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, is now on a mission to bring the gospel to Muslims. He does not use the term Messianic Muslims, but Cummings, 53, said more than 40,000 Islamists have converted to Christianity through his appearances on Christian television, including Daystar and the Trinity Broadcasting Network.

However, some leaders of Arabic missions organizations question the way Bailey, Taimoor and Cummings evangelize Muslims, especially when it comes to using the Quran.

“I teach courses on Islam in various parts of the world. I do not believe the Quran is the Word of God,” said Don McCurry, president of Colorado-based Ministries to Muslims who served for 18 years in Pakistan as a missionary. “In fact, at every cardinal point of the gospel, it contradicts the Word of God.”

David Goldmann, missions consultant with Frontiers, an

organization that plants churches among Muslims in more than 40 countries, agreed.

“Using the Quran to prove Christianity can emphasize Quranic authority over the Bible,” said Goldmann, 73, who spent 24 years ministering to Muslims in North Africa.

“Emphasizing the similarities between the Bible and the Quran can confirm to Muslims that the Quran is truly the final part of progressive revelation,” he added. “Pointing out the differences between the Bible and the Quran can bolster Muslims’ belief that the Bible has been corrupted.”

McCurry, 77, said he has “a big problem” with the name Messianic Muslims. “In the dictionary, ‘Muslim’ simply means someone who is submitted,” he said. “Muslims will tell you that it means someone submitted to God. But the bottom line is that ‘Muslim,’ in a Muslim’s eyes, means someone submitted to Muhammad and his version of God.”

Goldmann concurred, noting that “a Christian who calls himself a Messianic Muslim will only confuse people.”

“The biblical approach is for a Christian to associate himself with Jesus Christ of Christianity,” he said, referring to Acts 11:26.

Taimoor admitted that some Christians do not understand his strategy. “If some do accuse me of compromise or heresy, it is because they do not understand the linguistic and cultural significance, or they expect the gospel to be Westernized before it is preached,” he said.

“Unless we become boldly creative, we will keep doing what others have done before and failed,” he added. “Muslims are desperate to find the truth. They pray to God five times a day to find it. Christians must be like Paul, who became a Roman with the Romans and a Jew with the Jews without compromising the gospel.”

Bailey echoed his point. “Though I do not condone or embrace the religion philosophy or doctrine of Islam, I do passionately love the people,” she said. “You will never aggressively reach out to a people that you don’t have an affinity toward. You cannot see all Arabic or Islamic people as your enemy.”

Eric Tiansay