

Shame of Adoption Erased by Adoption into Christ's Family

Read time: 2 minutes 45 seconds

As a boy in Uzbekistan, Max begged for death as he cried himself to sleep every night. When he was 12 years old, he discovered he'd been adopted, something deeply shameful in the Islamic Uzbek culture. He felt abandoned and unwanted, every day was shrouded in darkness. Max no longer felt the will to live.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Muslim missionaries flooded Uzbekistan. Max began training with an imam who lived next door to him. Yet even as he was looking for hope and learning more about Allah, he never found the peace he craved. Instead, the more he grew in his knowledge of Islam, the more questions he had. But Max was told to accept Islam and its teachings, while questions weren't welcome or even tolerated.

As Max continued to wrestle on his spiritual journey, a friend told Max God loved him. Max had seen this friend's life change, and he yearned for the hope his friend offered. But Max struggled to believe God could love him when his own biological parents didn't. Eventually though, as his friend continue to faithfully share the gospel, Max came to fully trust Christ.

Instantly, Max felt different. He joyfully prayed to God in his own language, something he'd never been able to do under Islam, which only allows prayers in Arabic. He experienced peace in his heart for the first time since learning of his adoption. And his life changed as he continued to grow in his knowledge of Christ.

Max naturally began to share his faith with others. They could see how drastically his life had changed, and they wanted an

explanation. He carried a New Testament with him everywhere, and many mistook it for his passport. "This is a passport to heaven," he told them. "This is God's Word, it is alive and it has changed my life."

But as he shared his newfound faith, those around him became hostile. His father angrily told him he was following the wrong way, even though he could see the positive changes in Max's life. Then, the owner of a gym he visited frequently told him that a KGB officer had been asking questions about Max. Soon, Max's home was raided by officials; he was arrested as a terrorist.

Arrest only opened up new doorways to ministry for Max. He was interrogated by several police. It was a frightening experience; his legs shook with fear as the police questioned him and forced him to write a "confession" that would be used against him, dictating the words he was supposed to write.

Christians gathered outside the police station, praying for Max during the interrogation. The presence and prayers of his Christian brothers and sisters encouraged Max, and a holy boldness came over him. He turned the table on the police, asking them questions instead of answering theirs!

Later, after his release, Max came face to face with one of his interrogators—who told Max that he was now also a follower of Christ!

Today, Max works to train new believers in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan to withstand Christian persecution after they leave Islam to follow Jesus.

"Our time is short," he says, "so we should be ready to meet Jesus."

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Ruth Foster is the author of this article.