

From Islam to Christianity

Although my mother grew up in the church, she joined the Nation of Islam in the early 1970s. The news was heartbreaking to my grandmother, who was a woman of enduring faith.

Mama Birdie's natural eyes saw her daughter and grandchildren as Nation of Islam members, but her spiritual eyes looked through the mountain of Islam and saw us as born-again Christians on the other side.

My grandmother sowed good seed into our hearts. Then she allowed her faith to work by loving us and believing God for the harvest of our salvation. Her love enabled her to endure more than 10 years of witnessing her daughter and grandchildren living as Muslims.

As the years went by, we continued attending the Islamic temple while my grandmother attended the AME Zion church in New York City, where we lived. We were invited to all the family gatherings, even the holiday dinners that, in the Islamic faith, we were taught not to celebrate .

Mama Birdie never condemned us. Rather, she sought God for wisdom, prayed but never preached and wasn't ashamed to thank Jesus Christ openly for the blessings in her life.

When my family moved to Atlanta, my grandmother prayed that "co-laborers of the harvest" would be commissioned by the Holy Spirit to nurture the seeds she'd planted in our lives. And that's what happened.

After years of going to the Islamic temple, my mother sensed a spiritual void in her life and began visiting various churches. A friend invited my mother to a church service, where she discovered that Jesus alone could fill the void in her life.

On that day in 1985, Mama Birdie, who happened to be in town visiting from New York City, was seated beside her.

Mama's prayers for her daughter had prevailed. Harvest time had come, but it didn't end there.

In the summer of 1987, I was stricken with an illness that caused me severe fatigue and fear. I was still a Muslim, but a family member told me Jesus Christ could heal my spirit, soul and body.

I surrendered all the sickness and fear I had experienced that summer to Jesus Christ. Again, Mama Birdie was in town visiting us and was present in the service.

During the altar call I stood up, with Mama Birdie holding my trembling right hand and my mother holding my left hand. I prayed the salvation prayer as Mama Birdie shed tears of joy and prayed that God would heal me.

A few weeks later, I received my healing. The prayers of a righteous mother had availed much, and harvest time had come again!

Since then my father and sisters have all become Christians, along with other former Muslims in my family. In 1997, Mama Birdie went home to be with the Lord.

Today there are still Muslims in my family. Whenever I see them, before I open my mouth, I seek God's counsel and think of what Mama Birdie would have done. I pray that they, too, will feel a void in their lives, sense that someone is missing and then bow their knees to confess the lordship of Jesus Christ.