

Divine Appointments Spark Jesus Discussions in Muslim Lands

At an early age, Kassef* was saved from a life-threatening condition by doctors in a Christian hospital. As he grew up, his mother would remind him that Christians had saved him from certain death. His religion, however, taught him that the Christians had departed from truth. Yet this caused conflict within him, since he knew that his only experience with them had literally saved him.

One day, as he walked the street, he encountered a 15-year-old boy selling Bibles—something beyond belief, which he had never witnessed before or since. Kassef bought one and began to devour it, later coming to Christ as the result of this process.

Witness of Love

A transformed life and the witness of love and integrity is the single greatest factor in influencing people. A young Muslim boy, Omar*, while walking to school fell into line with a Christian woman who walked the same route to her office. They would chat, and her kindness made an impression. Later, she visited his family and brought gifts.

As the young man grew, he became disillusioned with Islam and forsook it. Over time, he had a desire to seek truth and then remembered the love of this woman for his family. This was instrumental in his decision to explore Christianity.

People of the Book

A Filipino pastor received a visa to minister to Filipinos and other expat non-Muslims only. He wondered how to reconcile

this with his passion to connect with the local people. He interacted socially with his neighbor, who asked what he did and why he was in the United Arab Emirates. He replied that he was a pastor. This delighted the neighbor, since the Quran says that if someone has questions about Jesus, he should go and ask people of the Book. He said, "You are a man of the Book; now I can come to you with questions about Jesus." And he has had questions—many questions.

Dialogue With Dignity

Focused outreach among university students is carried out in similar fashion as anywhere else. Young Arab believers, once trained in sharing their faith, can be quite bold and creative. For the last decade, they have held a biannual Muslim and Christian dialogue in the university, a nearly four-hour event that attracts more than 800 students.

A well-known and respected Muslim speaker and a moderator were happy to participate in the discussion, which is carried out with dignity and respect on both sides.

Two weeks before the event, the Interior Ministry canceled permissions. The event organizers approached them and asked, "What shall we communicate as the reason why you have done this?" Two days later, permission was granted.

Two hundred Bibles to follow along with were brought in for students. None were returned! The event was broadcast on the Internet to eight surrounding countries with more than 1,000 connections as various groups followed along.

Conversation With Respect

In a main city, one couple sought to offer a conversation club in local cafes, as there is great interest by many to improve their English. This often provides opportunities to talk about spiritual matters and life in general. They asked a manager in one shop if they could display their sign and use an area, to

which he agreed.

Soon after, security personnel in the mall objected, and the couple had to contact the owner for permission. He at first was resistant, but as they explained the purpose he became excited and suggested they visit all 24 cafes in the chain throughout the area.

The owner then said, "I also want to improve my English but not in public. Would you be willing to come to my home?" Several other upper-class people expressed the same desire.

This is a huge step forward in the ultimate purpose of the conversation clubs: engaging people in their homes and returning hospitality as a way of loving and respecting them in Christ's name.

Excellence in Education

How could a Muslim-owned private school employ a Christian principal and teaching staff? In the Arabian Peninsula, thinking outside the box of the possible is normal. The owner, passionate about excellence in education, searched widely to find examples of exceptional schools and thus became linked with an ex-pat believer who has operated several private schools overseas. Wisely, he put results above other considerations, and the new principal was given freedom to recruit high-quality teachers from abroad for this English-medium school, which quickly gained an outstanding reputation and whose staff are equally passionate about creating a loving Christian environment.

Students are a mix of ex-pat and local children, ages 4-18. At no other school in the area does the principal greet the students as they enter, and the sense of calm, respect and efficiency has made an impression on local parents who are opening up with staff. There are plenty of opportunities for teachers in this school.

Pray for those serving in the Arabian Peninsula. Pray for the Lord to provide divine appointments and meaningful connections amongst the local communities where they serve.

** Name has been changed*

This is just one article in a series that explores what God is doing in the Middle East. [Click here](#) for more articles in this series.

Greg Kernaghan, a writer for OM International, traveled through the Arabian Peninsula in November. He observed and listened to the hearts of Christian workers who have invested decades in understanding and loving their Arab neighbors. Greg writes this collection of stories from the United Arab Emirates from the perspective of OM workers in the Middle East, in their own words, fastidiously avoiding using real names and places so that the story itself may be told widely.