

God Prepares Muslim Hearts for the Gospel in North Africa

"The Gospel is not bound in our own abilities," long-term worker Joshua* said. Joshua and his wife Debra* have been ministering among Muslims in North Africa for over 20 years.

In this region, it is very difficult to be a believer, especially for locals. Despite the obvious challenges, this couple has story after story of how God has worked in the hearts of people here.

"I personally see, especially in the Arab world, we don't do many of the things we're 'supposed' to do," Joshua said. "We just get to watch what God is doing."

One year, Joshua and Debra were struggling to get a grasp on the language and generally feeling as though they were not being useful. Then one day the pastor at a Korean church asked Joshua if he would be willing to preach for a few weeks.

A Korean girl had invited her Muslim friend to come to the service and offered to translate the message into Arabic as they went. As the Muslim girl listened to Joshua's message on the gospel in Korean, she discovered she could already understand every word.

The experience frightened her, but she came back the following week. This time, she actually helped her Korean friend to translate when she wasn't able to think of the Arabic words fast enough!

Three years later, the girl showed up at Joshua and Debra's home to tell them she had become a follower of Christ and she was leaving the country. Joshua calls their role

“facilitating.” They make connections and share, but it is God who prepares people’s hearts to hear the message and God who causes miracles to take place.

Dreams

One year, two boys were brought to Joshua and Debra’s home. They had stumbled upon a Christian bookstore whose owner brought the boys to Joshua to have some questions answered. Joshua began meeting with them weekly and one of the boys became a follower of Christ.

The previous night, the boy had a dream in which he was discussing something in a family home. All he could remember of the dream was that there was a family photograph on top of the TV. When he entered Joshua’s home that day, he recognized their family photograph as the one he had seen in his dream.

The same boy later became a policeman and he regularly shares his faith. He is very wise about when and how he shares, but he also takes risks that would make many afraid.

When he met the woman who would become his wife, the policeman gave her a New Testament and shared the message with her. She was troubled by it and struggled to leave behind her Muslim faith, but she had a dream. A man in a white robe came to her and told her, “The policeman is telling the truth. You should listen to him.” The second boy also became a believer and both are now active in leading the local church.

Difficult to Gather

For these local believers, meeting together is difficult, said Joshua. Sometimes people stop and question them when they come out of a meeting place. Other times, they are excluded from family and social life because of their faith in Jesus. Many are afraid of the police because Christians have historically been persecuted and even imprisoned in this North African country.

Joshua and Debra believe attitudes may be changing however, especially among the younger generations. Pray against fear for local believers and that God would prepare them to actively share their faith with wisdom. Joshua also encouraged foreigners to come to this region. Whether teachers, businessmen, or just “Christian tourists,” the most important thing is presence, he said.

*Names changed

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