

How God Is Moving With Dreams and Visions in the Muslim World

Saeed Abedini, who is serving an eight-year sentence in a brutal Iranian prison for his Christian faith, came to Christ at age 20. A devout Muslim at the time, he had found a Bible and started reading it. One night, he was awakened three times by a voice that said, "Saeed, I am coming soon. Go preach My Gospel." The third time, the voice was accompanied by a bright light shining through Saeed's bedroom window. Trembling and sweating, Saeed said, "I will do it." At that moment, the light moved away, and he saw what appeared to be the back of Jesus exiting through the window.

Saeed's wife, Naghmeh, recounts her own family's arrival in the United States when Naghmeh and her twin brother were 9. The two siblings had wondered how to find God, and one day Naghmeh's brother came to her, shaken and moved. "I've found the God we've been looking for," he said. He had seen a vision of Jesus.

More and more, Christians are hearing stories of Muslims, especially in the Middle East, coming to faith in Jesus Christ partly as a result of having a vision or a dream.

"I can't explain it," Franklin Graham said to a group of pastors meeting at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association on March 25. "I'm not even going to attempt to explain it. I just tell you: It happens. God is at work in that part of the world in a great way."

Missions expert David Garrison, a former missionary to Libya and author of *A Wind in the House of Islam: How God is Drawing Muslims Around the World to Faith in Jesus Christ*, sees this phenomenon as part of a larger move of God in the Muslim

world.

"We'd be very hard-pressed to nail down specific numbers," Garrison told *Decision*, "but certainly hundreds of thousands have walked away from Islam and come to faith in Jesus Christ. We're even getting reports from the war-torn areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan, that many of the Taliban and mujahedeen, who for generations have been embroiled in warfare in the name of Islam, are simply saying, 'This cannot be God's perfect will for people, for mankind.'"

As a result, Garrison said, when they encounter Christ through a dream or vision, followed by hearing the gospel explained on a radio or satellite broadcast or through Scripture translation, many come to salvation.

Naeem Fazal, pastor of Mosaic Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, says a supernatural experience played a role in his coming to faith. He grew up in a Muslim family in Kuwait, and he had come to the U.S. to attend college. While he was mainly interested in meeting girls, his older brother, who had come to the States earlier, had put his trust in Jesus Christ.

Naeem made it clear to his brother, Mahmood, that he was not about to convert to Jesus Christ, but he did agree to accompany Mahmood to meetings of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at the college. After one meeting, Mahmood challenged Naeem to pray that God would reveal Himself to him. Three nights later, as Naeem lay in bed, he was suddenly aware of the room becoming unnaturally dark, and an evil presence seemed to sit on his legs and grab his shoulders. The door creaked open and a second, even more fearsome, presence entered. Naeem felt sure these were demons who meant to kill him, and he cried out, asking Jesus to save him. The beings disappeared.

Some time later that night, he felt someone shaking his shoulders and at first feared it was the demons again.

Instead, he saw Jesus and understood Him to say, "I am Jesus. Your life is not your own."

What should Christians make of such spectacular stories?

"Believe them," says Aileen Coleman, a nurse who has served for nearly 60 years at the Annoor Sanatorium, a hospital for lung diseases, in Mafraq, Jordan. "I feel very strongly that God is using supernatural experiences with people here as a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to them. Right from the days of the Old Testament, God spoke through visions and dreams. So it's not something new."

Experts add that if God gets someone's attention through a dream or vision, it does not in any way diminish the responsibility of believers to communicate the gospel.

"The tragic thing," Garrison said, "is that unless someone is there to tell them what the dream or vision means or to present to them a Scripture in their own language so they can read it and hear it and understand it and then find the Jesus of the Bible, they're left with this haunting sense of, who was this? What does this mean?"

Coleman tells the story of a man who came to the hospital in Mafraq some 20 years ago and said he had seen a vision of someone telling him: "If you want to know the truth, go to Mafraq, find the white-haired lady and she will tell you the way of truth." Coleman's co-worker, Dr. Eleanor Soltau, had white hair. She called a male evangelist on the hospital's staff who led the man to Christ.

"As literate, believing Christians, we don't need dreams and visions," Coleman said. "We have the written Word. But so many of these people who have a dream or a vision or a supernatural experience have never read the Word. So it's very important that we take them to the Word of God."

Nabeel Qureshi, a former Muslim who now works with Ravi

Zacharias International Ministries, said during his college years he diligently studied both Islam and Christianity in an attempt to discern which was true, and three dreams helped to push him toward Jesus. Still, his Christian friends played a crucial role in his conversion. Qureshi has this advice for believers:

“Love the Lord Jesus with everything you have, and love your Muslim friend as yourself. Not as an acquaintance, not as an evangelism project, but as yourself. Let them see your love for God and what He has done for you. Most Muslims who are devout do not love Allah per se, but rather are devoted to the system of Islam. Show them the difference.”

©2014 BGEA. *Click here to read this article on .*