

Sharing Your Faith With Muslims

We often assume it is difficult to win a Muslim to Christ. But our doubts reflect a lack of trust in the Spirit's power.

There has been a sense of frustration, almost a feeling of defeat, among many who have made an effort to witness to Muslims. Even though one may find the Muslim people very friendly and even become close friends with some, it has been difficult to communicate the gospel.

Often Christians end up in fruitless, exhausting arguments with their Muslim friends. This leads many to believe that Muslims are hard to convert. But we must realize that the heart of man is the same everywhere.

Whether people are Muslims, Hindus, Mormons, atheists or humanists; whether they are black or white, Arab or Jew; they all possess the same nature and the same hardness of heart. Certainly the response of people to the gospel varies from one culture to the other. However, the needs of all people, despite their cultures and backgrounds, are the same all over the world—they need to be loved, forgiven and set free from the bondages that hold them captive.

Of course, it is easier for a person in the United States to respond to the gospel than an Arab in Saudi Arabia. People here in this country have heard the gospel many times, and the culture has been based on Christian values. It takes a longer time for a Muslim to be receptive to the gospel, which he has never heard. All his life he has been told lies against the

Bible, Christians and Christianity. He has been indoctrinated by the laws and regulations of a false religion.

Yet God has given us the awesome responsibility and privilege of bringing the glad tidings to the lost and the needy. We must take their hands and show them the salvation of our God. We must open their eyes and bring them out of prison (see Is. 42:7). We must speak the word of faith with authority and power.

As a former Muslim myself, I know that God can reach into the Muslim heart and reveal Jesus Christ. Here are a few keys I have learned as I have shared my new faith:

1. Trust the Holy Spirit's anointing

Winning Muslims to Christ is easy. We just need to know the way to each man's heart. We must listen to our Helper, the Holy Spirit, and find out the ways in which He touches the heart of each person.

The work of the Holy Spirit is the most vital part of Muslim evangelism or any other type of evangelism. The Holy Spirit will anoint you for the task. He will give you wisdom in how to witness. He will give you the right words at the right time. He will guide you and give you strength. He will help you show the love of Jesus to your Muslim friends.

He will bear witness of the Word of God with signs and wonders. He will open the eyes of their understanding so they can see the glory and the authority of Jesus. He will convict them of their sins. (You cannot do that!)

I was recently scheduled to preach at a church in Oslo, Norway. I had prepared my sermon in Swedish (which is very similar to Norwegian), but they thought I was planning to speak in English. They had arranged for an interpreter to translate from English into Persian for a large group of Iranian Muslims who were going to come to the meeting.

"I'm sorry," I said. "I cannot preach the sermon in English because I have done all my preparation in Swedish." I could tell they were disappointed. "Don't worry about it," I said. "The Lord will take care of it."

That night I preached in Swedish. A few times I turned to the Iranian visitors and said a few words in Persian to them because there was no interpreter for them. But they could not understand most of the service.

When I gave the altar call, I said in Persian, "All of you, come give your hearts to Jesus." A couple of them got up and came forward. Then a powerful conviction fell on them, and a large group got up and came forward weeping.

One woman was crying loudly, saying: "I don't want money; I don't want healing; I want Jesus." That night I witnessed God's power to save!

2. Trust the Holy Spirit to convict

I remember when my dad used to get drunk with his friends and party in our house until late into the night. Often he'd be so drunk he would lose control and start cursing and fighting.

But the time came when he repented of his worldly lifestyle and became a devout Muslim. He stopped partying with his friends and stopped drinking. Even his appearance changed, and he became very religious. He grew a beard, prayed often and read his Quran. He associated with fanatical Muslims and often attended their meetings.

Dad had changed tremendously, but only on the outside. On the inside he was the same man who got drunk and cursed and fought with my mother. The anger, temper and hatred were still alive and well in him. You see, he was converted, but not convicted. Islam does not have the power to convict sinners, nor does any other false religion.

We need to be dependent totally upon the Holy Spirit in reaching and witnessing to the Muslims. I would rather witness two minutes in the power of the Holy Spirit than two years without Him. If you labor among Muslims without the Holy Spirit, you labor in vain.

I know many people who have labored hard among Muslims with little results. Yet Jesus said, “‘By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit’” (John 15:8, NKJV). It is God’s will that we win many Muslims into His kingdom.

This is why Jesus commanded the disciples not to leave Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit had come upon them (see Acts 1:4-8). I believe many of us have undertaken missionary endeavors without taking the Holy Spirit and His power with us.

When it comes to evangelism among Muslims, the church’s methods come up short. Your technique is powerless. Only God

and the power of His Spirit can get the job done.

3. Use wisdom and sensitivity

Since the teachings of Islam and the traditions of Muhammad are so contrary to the teachings of the Bible, the way Muslims think and reason differs much from that of Christians.

The way we as Christians here in the West look at politics, the economy, friendship and many other aspects of life varies greatly from the view of Muslims. This is simply because our religion constitutes our thinking. Thus, our understanding is dissimilar to that of people from other religions. It is imperative that we realize this distinction or else we will not be able to communicate the message of the gospel to Muslim people.

Jesus knew the limitations of people's understanding, even though the majority of His listeners were people versed in the teachings of the Old Testament. That's why He spoke in parables so they could relate to and understand the kingdom of God.

Have you ever heard a preacher speak with a language so sophisticated that you could not understand what he was saying? Were you edified by him? I have heard this kind of preacher, and I tell you he might as well have spoken Chinese because I couldn't understand the message. It was too intellectual for me.

In the natural, we communicate the same information to different people in different ways. The way you talk to your child is different from the way you speak to your husband or

wife. You may pass on the same information to both of them, but not in the same way because they are at different levels of understanding.

As we have received the ability to help people understand natural things, God has also enabled us to make people understand spiritual things. A veil covers the minds of people's understanding. It is a veil of unbelief, and it is caused by Satan and the demonic forces.

Paul confirmed this: "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

This calling is for Paul and also for us who are witnesses for Christ—to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

4. Trust the power of God's Word

Islam is a blinding force. A Muslim can live in a total demeanor of sin, not realizing that he is a sinner.

"And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them'" (Matt. 13:14-15).

You may ask, how can we open their eyes of understanding? Through prayer and through the preaching of the Word.

The Bible says, "The entrance of your words gives light" (Ps. 119:130). God's Word penetrates the hearts and thoughts of men. It reveals the intentions of their hearts and opens their minds to understand. I pray you will trust in the power of God's Word as you share the gospel with the Muslims around you.

Reza F. Safa was a devout Muslim living in the Middle East when he became a Christian. Today he lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His book, *Inside Islam* (Charisma House), was recently revised to include new material about the radical Islamic agenda.