

Convert to Christ, Traitor to Islam

Story by Debra Smith



Mohammed Kamel scrutinized the Egyptian Christians in the church he was visiting. The Muslim had been instructed to shut his eyes during their prayers, but he was certain the closed-eye time was a ruse—an opportunity for them to do, in secret, what he described as “bad things.” He had seen American television, and he believed all Christians practiced Hollywood-style immorality.

“I was waiting for them to start acting crazy,” Mohammed reflected—“to start cursing, becoming inebriated, and committing adultery! I kept watching, but nothing happened.” Disappointed at not being able to ridicule and expose the decadence he expected to see, Mohammed wondered if the Christians were holding back due to his presence. *I will keep coming till they trust me*, he thought. However, he realized: *What if they ask me to pray? What will I say? To fool the Jesus-followers into thinking he was one of them*, Mohammed asked a Christian friend to write out a Christian prayer. He would memorize it, just in case.

Sitting on his bed that night, 23-year-old Mohammed unfolded the paper from his friend. It contained the Lord’s Prayer from Matthew 6:9-13. “Our Father...” he read—then halted. *These people are crazy*, he thought; *God is not your father! He never married your mother!* “As a Muslim,” he later explained, “I had been taught that God was my Master, a frightful and distant overseer.” Such familiarity in address must certainly be blasphemy. And, he said, “Muslims take things literally”—so to him, the phrase implied literal sonship. Mohammed walked over to his window, threw it open toward the night sky, and said mockingly, “God, are You my Dad? Did You marry my mother?”

As Mohammed scoffed, “The Holy Spirit filled my room,” he said. “It was indescribable. I didn’t know yet about the Holy Spirit’s existence, but I felt God’s presence—and His love, for the first time in my life. I felt like a son being held by his father. And I heard a voice, so clear it was almost audible: ‘Yes, I AM your Father. I AM your Daddy.’”

“I started crying and crying,” Mohammed recalled. “I felt like a child who had been

estranged from his daddy and finally found.” In two days, he read all four biblical Gospels. There, he said, “I met the real Jesus. The Qur’an mentions Him, but not as the true Jesus of the Bible. There He is just a prophet. But the Bible says Jesus is the Word of God become flesh. He is God, Son of God, Redeemer, and Savior. He healed the sick and raised the dead.”

Today, Mohammed Kamel is Daniel Abdel Massieh—Arabic for “Daniel, the servant of the Messiah.” Since his conversion in 1979, Daniel has sought to share Jesus with 10 people a day. Most of these he currently witnesses to at his workplace in San Diego, CA. “Because of fear, many do not tell Muslims the Gospel,” Daniel said. “But with Jesus, you have all the security you need.”

To Prison and Back

In December 1981, Daniel proclaimed Jesus to fellow passengers in an Egyptian share-taxi—despite having been recently interrogated by secret police for discussing Christ in a taxi. After all other passengers had departed, the driver questioned Daniel: “Why are you talking to us about Jesus? We Muslims don’t change our religion. Did you ever meet any Muslim who [did]?”

When Daniel said he knew many, “He grinned and challenged me,” Daniel recalled. The man declared that if Daniel showed him just one, he would attend church. Smiling, Daniel replied: “Me.” The incredulous driver thought Daniel was lying or joking. “So I showed him my Egyptian I.D.,” Daniel continued. “The religion box was ticked, ‘Muslim.’ Then I gave him the address of the church meeting place.”

That evening during worship, the doorbell rang. *Maybe that’s the taxi driver!* Daniel thought excitedly. The church leader who answered the chime, however, soon reappeared—suggesting Daniel flee through the back door. The driver had reported him; the secret police had come. The concept of escaping surprised Daniel; “I am not scared of persecution for Christ,” he said. “I will talk to them.” The men told Daniel they needed him for 30 minutes. “And that half-hour,” Daniel reflected, “became eight months in

prison. Solitary confinement.” On one occasion, Daniel felt God gave him three questions to ask his interrogator: *Does Allah love you, Will you go to heaven or hell when you die, and Can Allah change you?* The official replied “Only Allah knows” to the first two, and said that Allah does not change people—they must change themselves—to the third. “These are good questions to ask your Muslim friends,” Daniel commented. “We as Christians know God loves us, that we will go to heaven, and that God changes us. God can use these questions to give Muslims a desire for the same assurance.”

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In prison Daniel was paraded from official to incredulous official, his consistent testimony astounding interrogators and guards alike: “I was Muslim, and I became a Christian.” He repeated it constantly, each time he was transported to a different cell or had rare contact with other prisoners. “This shocked them,” he said. “On TV, they hear exaggerated claims that many, many Egyptians are converting from Christianity to Islam. They do not know the truth.” He had no blanket, bed, or bathroom—only a coffee can with sharp edges. The cold was bitter; food was scarce. “But I was filled with the Lord’s joy,” Daniel said. “It was a good time for me to study the Bible”—which the guards had, to his surprise, allowed Daniel to keep. “I wrote some verses on the wall.”

Months after his release in 1982, Daniel married Samia. The couple immigrated to the U.S. in 1984 and soon planted an Arabic-speaking church in California. Eventually they felt led to worship, with their five children, at San Diego’s Maranatha Chapel. There they currently lead Open the Gates, a ministry they founded in 2008 to equip Christians to reach Muslims. ✨