

What About...Muslim Evangelism?

BY DR. DAVID A. DEWITT

I'm no evangelist. But I love evangelism. I try to eagerly support those who do evangelism any way I can. And I am encouraged by much of the evangelism I hear about happening among the Muslims. I hear exciting stories of Muslims who read the Quran, find it unsound, question its authority and viability, are rejected and persecuted, are given a Bible, read it repeatedly, talk to a Christian, and come to faith in Jesus Christ. It sounds to me like there are many new sincere Christian believers rising up in traditionally Muslim countries.

I also hear and read things about some Muslim evangelism that I find troubling. With some Muslim converts to Christianity, God is called "Allah," Jesus is called "Isa," a pastor is called an "imam," and churches are called "Isa Jamaats" [Jesus (Isa) Groups]. Now, I'm all for contextualization, not letting western culture get in the way of evangelism, but these are not just cultural differences. These are a different god and a different Jesus.

First of all, "Allah" is not the Muslim word for "God." "Allah" is the Muslim word for the **Muslim** god. The basic tenet of Islam is, "There is one god, Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." Therefore, the word "God" is distinct from the word "Allah." Allah is a combination of the words "the," meaning "only" and "god" (al-lah). When they speak of God in other languages, like English, Hebrew, German, or whatever, they do not use the

word for "God" in that language but the word for their god. So "Allah" is **only** the god of Islam. Also, Allah is the god who says, "Mohammed is his prophet." Therefore, it is unacceptable, and theologically incorrect, to allow a Muslim converted to Christ to call God "Allah." We should not proclaim what Paul called a *...different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed* (Galatians 1:6-8).

In a book on Muslim evangelism ("The Camel: How Muslims Are Coming To Faith In Christ"), Kevin Greeson writes this:

When asked about their religion, most of these Muslim-background believers replied, "I am an Isahi Muslim. Since the word "Muslim" does not mean "follower of Mohammed," but rather "one who submits himself to God," they could say this in good conscience—because they had submitted themselves to God by following Isa (Jesus); "Isahi" means "belonging to Jesus" (p. 37).

But "Muslim" means submission to the Muslim god **Allah**. And what Muslim would not themselves be a "follower of Mohammed"? The Bible tells us, *Repent,*

and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). And, *at the name of Jesus ever knee will bow* (Philippians 2:10). Isa is not just a translation of Jesus. Isa is the Muslim Jesus. According to Wikipedia:

In Islam, Jesus (Isa; Arabic: Īsā) is considered to be a Messenger of God and the *Masih* (Messiah) ... Like all prophets in Islam, Jesus is considered to have been a Muslim (i.e., one who submits to the will of God) ... Islam rejects the Trinitarian Christian view that Jesus was God incarnate or the son of God, that he was ever crucified or resurrected, or that he ever atoned for the sins of mankind. The Quran emphasizes that Jesus was a mortal human being who, like all other prophets, had been divinely chosen to spread God's message.

The Isa of the Quran is not the Jesus of the Bible. Isa is the messiah of Islam. Isa was a Muslim who was not divine, not crucified, not resurrected, nor did he ever atone for the sins of anybody. To convert Muslims to being a "Isahi Muslim" is not a form of Christianity, it's a form of Islam. In the same sense, a pastor is not an imam and churches are not Isa Jamaats (Isa Groups). Suppose a Christian in Detroit converted to Islam. Would the Muslim leaders allow him to call himself an Isa Christian, attend a Jesus Group, call his leader a pastor and refer to God as "God" rather than "Allah"? I don't think so! Why? Because then he would not be a Muslim.

