

Coincidence or Providence?

In March 2012 one of our Adventist “insider” leaders, who we’ll call Roger, was in Europe for a conference held to encourage Christians of different denominations who are working with “insider” Muslim movements. Each day there was a breakout session to study the Bible. In one of the sessions Roger attended, he became aware of a man named Zaki, who was also attending.

When the congress was nearly over, Roger walked into the cafeteria and noticed that Zaki was huddled with an Australian man over a computer. Roger was a bit surprised when he was beckoned over since he hadn’t interacted previously with either of these men. The Australian was showing photos and short video clips that he had taken on a recent trip to an eastern country. He explained that he had gone there after reading an impressive book about miracles taking place there. He had made the trip to verify the claims of the book. There were video clips of many Muslims and even Muslim leaders being baptized. He enthusiastically told of wonderful things that he had seen on his trip.

The three men marveled at God’s miracles. The Australian asked Zaki to tell a little about himself and how he had come to attend the conference. Zaki responded, “Well, I’ve done different things. I’ve worked for several NGOs, one of which was the well-known organization called ADRA.”

Roger’s heart raced wondering what his connection with ADRA might have been. “Just maybe he is one of us,” he surmised. Within a few minutes the Australian picked up his computer and left the room. Roger took the opportunity to inquire, “You mentioned that you have worked for ADRA. What do you know about those people?”

Zaki responded, “I know ADRA is Adventist owned, but they didn’t know I was a believer when I worked for them.”

“Zaki, guess what? I’ve worked for ADRA myself,” Roger confided.

“Where was that?” Zaki wanted to know.

When Roger continued naming the various countries that he had worked in, Zaki jumped out of his seat giving Roger a massive bear hug. When they sat back down after the emotional hug, Zaki confided, “I’m a *real* believer.”

Now Roger was even more curious. “What do you mean? Are you by chance a Sabbath keeper?”

“I am, I am! I’m a Sabbath keeper!” was his enthusiastic response.

“Zaki, tell me. Do you know of Adventism?” Roger queried.

“Yes, I do; but when I worked for ADRA they were afraid to talk to me.”

Zaki went on to give a bit of his background. He had been a very conservative and devout Muslim who was truly seeking to live out Allah’s will in his life. He had had a series of dreams and visions about Jesus over a period of three years. Finally, one day while totally awake in his room, Jesus appeared to him saying, “Zaki, this is the last time I will call you. Will you follow me or not?” Without any hesitation Zaki declared, “Yes, Jesus. I’ll follow you with my whole heart.”

It was because of these experiences that Zaki had begged the ADRA officers to tell him more about Jesus and to study the Bible with him, but they were working in that country with the understanding that they were forbidden to do any proselytizing. Interestingly, the well-informed non-Adventist accountant had shared much of the Adventist message with him including the Sabbath.

Through the twists and turns of life, he came across the materials of Jerald Whitehouse including his Barakatala Bible studies while on a trip outside his native homeland. Armed with these materials, he returned to his country determined to start a movement for Jesus among his people. Though he believed that he was all alone in the world with a unique mission, he was able to raise up a group of believers in Jesus in one of the most closed regions of the country. God abundantly blessed his efforts. Person after person gave his life to Jesus. Group after group started following the truth.

Two weeks before attending the conference, Zaki unexpectedly had met two other “Hanif” believers (converts living in the Muslim context) in his own mosque in his home town. To his amazement, he realized that he wasn’t alone. There were other believers in Jesus and His truth right in his own mosque! And then, on meeting Roger at the conference, he learned that he was a part of something even larger.

To his utter astonishment, Zaki learned that evening, as he sat at the table in the conference with five others, that two of them were “Hanif” leaders like himself. He just couldn’t believe it. He and Roger cried for joy at his thrill of meeting other like believers that were working under the same difficulties and with the same goal – that of spreading belief in Jesus and His truths for these last days.

The story doesn’t end there. Over the next three days Zaki and Roger spent many hours consulting together. They talked most of that Saturday night, strategizing about how the work that he was involved in could be strengthened and how he could meet other workers in his area. This is now happening.

Something kept nagging at both Zaki and Roger as they continued their dialog on Skype in the following weeks. They didn’t believe it was by chance that they had seen those photos shown by the Australian on his computer at the time of their meeting. They felt that Zaki should follow up on this lead and try to find the people that were experiencing these great miracles.

Soon it became necessary for Zaki to travel to that country to visit family members that had moved there. After tending to family business, he spent days hunting for a lake that he and Roger remembered seeing in the photos. After ten days of intense searching, on Friday the 8th of June 2012, he found a lake that he was sure he had seen in some of those video clips. He went back into the closest town praying that God would help him find the people of the Jesus movement that he was convinced lived in that area. As he entered the town, he noticed a mosque with an unusual sign that read, *Jesus the Messiah Mosque*. He prayed out loud, “O Lord, is this what I’ve been searching these ten days for?”

As he entered the mosque, he cautiously asked, “Is there a reason why the mosque has such an unusual name?”

The people responded confidently that they indeed were followers of Jesus. He learned that 251 baptized men, not

counting the women and children, were members there. Zaki said with wonder as a group of people crowded around, “I’ve been searching for ten days to find you!” This revelation created an excitement in the group. They soon ushered him to the front of the mosque to share his testimony and story.

He spent all the next day, which was the Sabbath, preaching, talking with, and training the congregation. The instruction continued on Sunday also.

The members told Zaki about similar groups all over their country. They had knowledge of like groups in several countries even back in Zaki’s home country, as well. After receiving additional truths from Zaki, someone grabbed the phone to call the next closest leader and sent him on his way to instruct another group. On that very Sunday, the 10th of June, the excited Zaki called Roger saying, “You must come. This is bigger than I can handle.” Since that date Zaki has received constant invitations to speak to one group after another.

From the reports we can say that we’ve never seen anything so huge. As far as we can tell, it’s the most massive outpouring of the Holy Spirit ever seen in the Muslim world. All these groups are very open to Zaki. He continued in that general area for another ten days, and then returned home. We are excited to see how God will lead this movement in the future. The current plan is for Zaki to return soon to that area to see how these groups are progressing in their understanding and practice of the new truths that they are learning.

An interesting side note is that Zaki’s tribe is a Sabbath-keeping tribe that traditionally refrains from secular work on Saturday though they have lost the reason and the meaning behind this observance.

Certain names and places have been changed to protect this infant ministry.



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