

"THEY WANT JESUS INSTEAD": WHY MUSLIMS CONVERT

by Chuck Colson; Monday, March 24, 2008

In church yesterday, as you celebrated Easter, did you notice anything — or anyone — unusual?

In churches all over the world, there were millions of people celebrating the resurrection of Christ, who were not there just a few years ago — because they were worshipping in a mosque instead.

It is thrilling evidence that God is doing a mighty work among Muslims.

According to the website Islam Watch, in Russia, some two million ethnic Muslims converted to Christianity last year. Ten thousand French Muslims converted, as did 35,000 Turkish Muslims. In India, approximately 10,000 people abandoned Islam for Christianity.

In his book *Epicenter*, author Joel Rosenberg details amazing stories of Muslims converting to Christianity. In Algeria, the birthplace of St. Augustine, more than 80,000 Muslims have turned to Christ in recent years. This, despite the stiff opposition from Islamic clerics who have passed laws banning evangelism.

In Morocco, newspaper articles openly worry that 25,000 to 40,000 Muslims have become followers of Christ in recent years.

The stories are even more amazing in the heart of the Middle East. In 1996, the Egyptian Bible Society sold just 3,000 video copies of the JESUS film. In the year 2000, they sold an incredible 600,000 copies.

In Sudan, as many as five million Muslims have accepted Christ since the early 1990s, despite horrific persecution of Christians by the Sudanese government. What is behind the mass conversions? According to a Sudanese evangelical leader, "People have seen real Islam, and they want Jesus instead."

In Iraq, "More than 5,000 Muslim converts to Christianity have been identified since the end of major combat operations," says Islam Watch. And just a few days ago, the first-ever Roman Catholic church was consecrated in Qatar, a Sunni Muslim state where the Wahhabi brand of Islam is practiced. This was the first time Christians in Qatar have been allowed to practice their faith openly. Ten thousand people attended the opening mass.

These conversions have not escaped the notice of Islamic leaders. In 2001, Sheikh Ahmad Al Qatanni, a leading Saudi cleric, delivered the disturbing news on Al-Jazeera: Every day, he said, "16,000 Muslims convert to Christianity ... every year, that is six million Muslims becoming Christians ... A tragedy has happened." It is possible the sheikh was inflating his numbers to incite a reaction against Christianity. But clearly, something is happening.

How thrilling to learn that so many Muslims have been set free from the chains of their sins — just as you and I have — by the power of Christ's blood! We must pray for these new brothers and sisters; many are being violently persecuted for their new-found faith.

These millions of conversions give us one more reason to rejoice this Easter season. Yes, we may be in a great clash of civilizations; battling Islamo-fascists who threaten to kill us. And the future may at times look bleak. But never despair: God is on His throne, bringing people into His kingdom from the very heart of Islam.

