

## CHAPTER 17

### HOW CAN I WITNESS TO MY PERSIAN FRIEND?

I was not sure if I should include this chapter in the Farsi translation of my booklet. However, since many of you have English speaking friends who love the Iranian people or desire to witness to them, I decided to include this chapter. You can go to the web site at [www.farsinet.com/persiansinbible](http://www.farsinet.com/persiansinbible) and download the English translation of this chapter for your English speaking friend, or you can e-mail me directly at [al@imi.org](mailto:al@imi.org) and ask for the chapter or the entire book to be sent to you in the English language. I will be happy to do this for you by internet or send you a hard book copy.

Sharing Christ across cultures presents some challenges, one of which is language. Your Persian friend may speak English, but how well can he read it? Fortunately, Christian literature and several Bible translations have been published in the Persian language. (Note: Persians call their language Farsi but, for our purposes, "Persian" will be used.) Some organizations which sell these materials can be good resources for you in other ways as you befriend and share Christ with your Persian friends. Following are the answers to some questions you may have along with contact information for the resources mentioned above.

#### 1. Where can I find appropriate materials in English or Persian to give to a friend?

- a. Multi-Language Media Inc. [www.multilanguage.com](http://www.multilanguage.com) sells Christian books Bibles, Scripture portions, and several videos including the JESUS film in Persian. More than 25 books on understanding Islam and witnessing to Muslims are available in English. Literature is available in some 45 languages, including Persian. Scripture translations can be obtained in 90 languages and the JESUS film, in 300 languages. You can also contact them via regular mail: PO Box 301 Ephrata, PA 17522 or by Telephone: 717-738-0582.
- b. Iranian Christians International [www.farsinet.com/ici](http://www.farsinet.com/ici) has an exhaustive list of books, discipleship material for new believers, music tapes, and messages in Persian as well as other related material for English-speaking people. The organization also helps Iranian refugees settle in other countries and keeps up-to-date on the persecution of Christians and other groups by the Islamic government. Contact them at P.O. Box 25607 Colorado Springs, CO 80936 or Telephone: 719-596-0010. Also, Persian World Outreach at [www.farsinet.com/pwo](http://www.farsinet.com/pwo) has a similar list of books and materials. Contact them at Persian World Outreach, 7115 Shoup Avenue, West Hills, CA 91307.
- c. Some of the Persian Churches listed on [www.farsinet.com/icc/](http://www.farsinet.com/icc/) offer a free Bible or New Testament in the Persian language (Farsi) for those who request them. Also, the paraphrased edition of the Bible can be found at [www.gospelcom.net/ibs/bibles/farsi/](http://www.gospelcom.net/ibs/bibles/farsi/) and sections downloaded and printed.

- d. You could give a New Testament, Jesus film, or appropriate literature as a Christmas present to show the true meaning of Christmas
- e. Many Persians think that the Bible is a western book. Sharing what you have learned in Persians in the Bible such as some facts about their famous kings, Cyrus and Darius, will amaze them. It might peak their curiosity enough to want to see the scripture passages in the Bible which refer to these Persian kings.

## **2. To which church should I take my Persian friend?**

- a. If your friend is willing, take him to your home church. Although the service will be quite unusual and different for your friend, he may be curious about your church's worship style, singing, preaching of the Word of God, and the joy and friendliness of the Christian believers. After the church service, ask your friend what he enjoyed. Ask about what he didn't understand and what things he disliked.
- b. There are now 42 Persian fellowships in the USA and Canada are listed on the Internet at <[www.farsinet.com/icc/](http://www.farsinet.com/icc/)>. If you live near a Persian-speaking church, take your friend to a service. He might be amazed to find that thousands of born-again believers have turned to Christ from the Islamic religion. California alone has about 20 groups. The web site above also lists Persian churches in Europe, Thailand, Korea, Australia, and other parts of the world where Iranians have immigrated.

## **3. How can I learn about the beliefs of Persian Muslims?**

You can purchase literature about Islam from the sites mentioned previously. Most Iranians are from the Shiite branch of Islam, which differs from the major Sunni branch concerning the successor of the prophet Mohammed. Your friend may be a very devout Muslim or a very nominal one who doesn't know many of the teachings of his own religion. The core beliefs of Islam center on the performance of certain good works in order to attain salvation before Allah, rather than a simple trust in God who has provided salvation in Christ already.

## **4. How do I answer my friend's questions about Christianity?**

Why do you have three gods? How can God have a son? Isn't Jesus only a prophet? How can salvation be by faith alone? Why would God allow a holy prophet to be crucified? Hasn't your holy book, the Bible, been corrupted and replaced with our book, the Koran? Why did the Christian Crusaders war against Muslims and kill them? Who does Jerusalem belong to? These are the kind of questions you may be hearing from your Muslim friend. The web site <[www.answering-islam.org](http://www.answering-islam.org)> is an excellent resource to help you understand how to answer your friend's questions.

Never let your interactions turn into argument. Remember that your Persian friend will probably feel obligated to defend the Islamic faith. When his curiosity turns into objection, you may feel more comfortable giving him literature in Persian or English or referring him to a web site to help answer his questions. He might be more receptive to the gospel by reading a book or getting information from a web site.

**5. Where can I find testimonies of Persians who have come to Christ?**

- a. Before you testify about Persians coming to Christ, look in the mirror! Your testimony might be a more significant influence to bring your Iranian friend to Christ.
- b. The web site <[www.farsinet.com/dibaj](http://www.farsinet.com/dibaj)> has a written verbal testimony of Mehdi Dibaj. Because he was a believer in Jesus Christ, Mehdi spent eight years in jail and was brought to trial finally in Sari, Iran, in December 1993. He was charged formally with apostasy for leaving his Islamic faith. After being found guilty by the court, he was released temporarily, only to be martyred a few months later. (See chapter 15 Persecuted for Christ in Persia: Past and Present.) Several messages on cassette tape by Mehdi Dibaj which he preached before his martyrdom can be bought at <[www.farsinet.com/pwo](http://www.farsinet.com/pwo)>.
- c. If you want to hear live testimonies of Persian Muslims coming to Christ, take your friend to a Persian church or a Persian Bible conference. Persian believers are different from American believers. They don't have to be pushed to give a half-minute testimony of their salvation in Christ before a church or group. Most Iranians have such a great joy when they accept Christ that they cannot contain themselves. Their testimony might be fifteen or twenty minutes or even longer.

**6. Where can I find Persian Christian music?**

Contrary to Islam which has no praise music, Persian Christianity offers a variety of praise and worship music. The web site <[www.farsinet.com/ici](http://www.farsinet.com/ici)> or <[www.farsinet.com/pwo](http://www.farsinet.com/pwo)> provides a list of recorded music as well as songs that can be downloaded from the internet. There are many Persian Christians who are using their musical talent for our Lord Jesus Christ.