

## **MBB Discipleship Survey**

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### **Executive Summary**

At the request of the Middle East Majority Peoples Partnership and North Africa Partnership, 86 interviews were conducted in 2010 with Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) in two countries of North Africa and one country in the Middle East. The survey's purpose was to ascertain the needs for materials for new believers and training for those who are helping them. Interviews were conducted in Arabic, English and French. The average age of respondents was 33 years and they began following Christ an average of eight years before the interviews. Half live in a major city, two-thirds are male, half are married, and they represent all levels of education.

Respondents most frequently give the words "joy" and "happy" to describe their feelings at the time they began following Christ, ranging from 43% to 63% depending on the country. Other frequently given words included "peace", "love" and "forgiven." On their first thoughts about their family, 25% wanted to tell their families about Jesus so they could become believers also, although 15% said they would keep silent about their belief. Most thought their new belief would make their families unhappy (37%) or reject them (22%). They thought their friends would react more like their families, but they expected their communities to show more hostility. The number who thought about not telling their community ranged from 6% in one country to 68% in another. Those who chose to respond to the survey in Arabic expressed the most thoughts of being killed and those who chose to respond in English expressed the most thoughts of witnessing to their communities. All the believers in one country trusted Christ for their future and expressed confidence in service opportunities, while believers in another country varied widely from confidence in service to worries and confusion. Respondents generally expressed positive thoughts about other believers and the church, but one-fourth of them in one of the countries did not have a church available to them.

New believers in different countries expressed their greatest longings in significantly different ways. Those in one country tended to describe emotional longings. Those in another country most longed to witness to others and to serve God. Those in the third country tended to want greater understanding of biblical truths. Two-thirds faced problems with other people, over half expressed struggles in their spiritual, intellectual and emotional life, and one-third expressed problems in their economic life.

Almost all the respondents said their faith, emotions, confidence and self-identity have improved since they first started following Christ, with the greatest improvement among those who were initially confident about the future and trusted it to God. Even in the area of earnings, seven out of ten said they are better off now, with time since they started following Christ as the main

contributing factor. Only one out of ten overall said they are worse off financially, yet financial needs top the list that people in one country state they are still asking God to meet. Spiritual growth tops the list of needs in a second country, and salvation of specific individuals or the whole country tops the list in the third country. Despite unmet needs, the words respondents volunteered to describe their day-to-day feelings included peace/calmness/comfort (53%), happiness (36%), joy (36%) and love (36%). Their current relationship with God includes love/feeling valued (36%), and assurance/trust (36%).

The country in which people live, and the language they speak (as indicated by the language they chose to respond to the interview questions), have significant effects on many of their answers, suggesting different training and informational materials may be needed in different countries. Men and women responded differently to a few questions, as did single and married people. The age at which they began following Christ, children, education, employment, and the size of city had no effect.

Developers of materials and training for new believers in the Middle East and North Africa can use the findings of this survey in the following ways:

- Highlight the joy most MBBs feel upon realizing they are following Christ, and how this joy leads to trusting God with their futures and having confidence to serve God in the future.
- Assure believers who initially face problems with their jobs and finances, as most believers experience improvement over time.
- Provide men, especially, with information that will help them intellectually in their struggles with opposition, understanding the superiority of following Christ, and how to witness to others about their faith.
- The greatest need expressed by those who responded in Arabic was developing their personal relationship with God; the greatest need expressed by those who responded in English was to be able to share their faith; and the greatest need expressed by those who responded in French was for a better understanding of biblical truths. Consider these differences when determining the focus of training materials in different languages.
- Develop multiple ways to link new believers with other believers for encouragement and friendship (and sometimes marriage), particularly in areas where the Church speaking their language is not present or visible.
- People from different countries and who chose to speak different languages within the same countries showed different characteristics. Recognize that a “one size fits all” approach to training materials across the region may not be best and that additional research will be needed in specific areas to ensure that the material and training will be appropriate.
- When developing training curricula, refer to the detailed responses included in this report for specific areas that need to be focused upon and included in the training.
- Provide training to deal with persecution, especially for those with less formal education, as reaction of community was most severe for those with less schooling.

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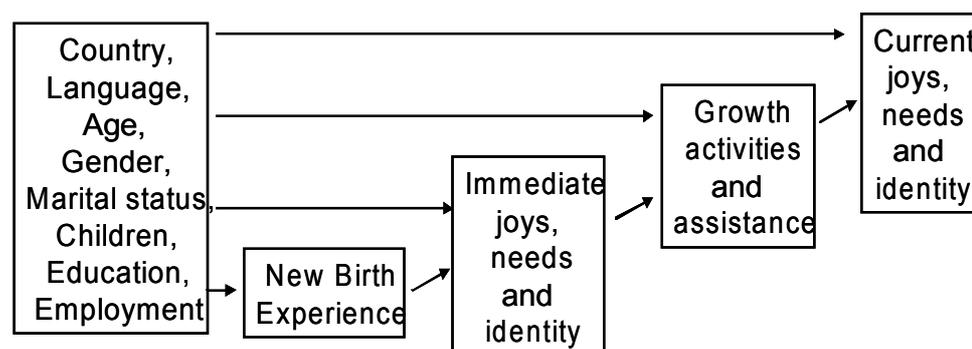
## Background

The Leadership Development Working Group of the Middle East Majority People's Partnership resolved in 2009 to conduct interviews with Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) in North Africa and the Middle East. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the needs for materials for new believers and training for those who are helping them. Currently, most discipleship materials, training materials and leadership curricula are prepared in and for the western church, and then translated into Arabic, or else prepared by and for local believers from a Christian background. These do not always meet the needs of MBBs who face questions on behavior under persecution or interrogation, when to "come out" to family after conversion, and questions of self-esteem, child bearing and child rearing that particularly affect women.

MBB leaders have only general ideas about what is needed. The study planned interviews with 500 MBBs from all over the region that would help them understand the needs for Christian growth and discipleship. They hoped to learn how to disciple new converts more effectively, and how to train others throughout the region to do so. The MBB Survey had four primary objectives:

1. To capture the early experiences of the MBBs as they chose to follow Jesus--how they came to believe, what issues they faced, and what helped them;
2. To discover the current issues they face in their own lives as believers, and the types of materials and training they think would help them;
3. To identify the types of materials and training that would help them as leaders to assist and guide others;
4. To understand how materials and training might need to differ for believers with different characteristics and living in different parts of the Muslim world.

Conditions in some of the countries kept the survey from being conducted as extensively as planned. The following analysis of 86 survey responses from three countries



**Figure 1.** Growth Model for Analysis

begins with describing the characteristics of those who responded. (See **Figure 1.**) It then presents their responses about their new birth experiences and about their reported joys, needs, and identity surrounding it. The third section analyzes the changes that have taken place in their lives since they first began following Jesus, and their current feelings and experiences.

## Methods

OC International developed a survey to begin to address this issue in 2006. The survey, *How can we help you?*, was piloted with 20 individuals attending a conference in Holland, with half of the respondents being MBBs and half being Christian background believers. It is summarized in a 2006 report, *Survey of MBB Discipleship Issues*. A meeting in February 2009 identified eight questions for which a survey could help find answers (Hart, 2009). In 2010, Bonham Research assisted in developing an English-version survey with 30 questions. OC International had it translated by two translators into Arabic, and by two translators into French. These were then translated back into English and differences resolved. The final surveys in each language were prepared as Adobe Acrobat files for printing, and entered into Lime Survey on the Internet.

Volunteers were recruited from various countries in the two regions. They were given a suggested quota matrix to guide them in interviewing about 30 believers with various characteristics. The quota matrix was defined by:

- Residential location (major city, minor city, rural)
- Minister occupation (yes, no)
- Gender (male, female)
- Marital status (single, married)

The volunteers conducted the interviews using surveys on paper without identifying information on them to ensure confidentiality, and brought the surveys back to the OC International regional office for data entry, or in the case of Country C, keyed into Lime Survey from within the country. Responses in Arabic and French were translated into English prior to or during data entry, and the translations verified.

The timing of the interviews was affected by the availability of the volunteer country coordinators and by the social and political situation in the countries. A total of 86 surveys were completed. Country A provided 35 surveys conducted in Arabic (11) and English (24). Country B provided 16 surveys conducted in English (13) and French (3). Country C provided 35 surveys conducted in Arabic (12), English (1), and French (23).<sup>1</sup>

The time it took to conduct the interviews was not recorded, but the starting and stopping times of data entry were automatically recorded. The surveys took an average of 19 minutes to key, ranging from 3 to 68 minutes. The surveys completed in Country A took 20 minutes on average to key, these from Country B took 27 minutes, and those from Country C took 15 minutes. The original language of the surveys did not have a significant effect on the time to key the data.

The small number of surveys means that some differences could occur by chance. Differences discussed in this report, however, are statistically significant, with less than a 5% chance of error ( $p < .05$ ). Statistical significance was determined using Chi-square, analysis of

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the samples in Countries A, B and C also turned out to include distinct ethnic groupings as follows: Country A – minority ethnic group in a Middle Eastern country, Country B – minority ethnic group in one North African country, Country C - the majority ethnic group in a different North African country. For simplicity, this report will refer to these three groups as Country A, Country B and Country C throughout.

variance, T-test, correlation and stepwise multiple regression, depending upon the nature of the responses.

## Respondent Characteristics

The majority (59%) of the respondents live in two countries of the North Africa region and the remainder (41%) live in one country of the Middle East. (See **Figure 2.**) Interviews were conducted in two or three languages within each country. Most respondents (55%) reside in a major city of their country, 26% reside in a minor city, and 17% reside in a village. No one lived in a rural area.

The respondents have an average age of 33 years, and are as young as 18 and as old as 57. One-fifth (20%) were younger than 25 years of age and one-fifth (19%) were 40 years and over. Those who chose to respond in English were six years younger (30 years of age) than those who chose Arabic (36 years of age) or French (36 years of age)<sup>2</sup>. Age at interview did not differ significantly by country.

About two-thirds (62%) of the respondents are male and one-third (36%) female, mainly due to the much higher representation of men among respondents in Country B (81%) compared to respondents in Country A (62%) or Country C (56%).

About half are single and half married, with female respondents more likely to be married than male respondents (58% and 43% respectively). Most of the married respondents have children: 70% of the men and 94% of the women. (The one divorced woman also has children.) Those with children had an average of 2.5 children.

The education of the respondents varies widely. One-sixth (16%) of the respondents has only a primary school

2 It is recognized that some interviews and perhaps most of the English ones, were not done in the mother tongue. This, however, does not negate the statistical significance of the differences between those who chose to be interviewed in each language. For simplicity, this report will refer to them as speakers of the language they used in the interview.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Total	86	100
<i>Country</i>		
Country A	35	41
Country B	16	19
Country C	35	41
<i>Language</i>		
Arabic	23	27
English	38	44
French	25	29
<i>Age</i>		
Less than 25	17	20
25-29	13	15
30-34	23	27
35-39	16	19
40 or over	17	20
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	53	62
Female	31	36
Not reported	2	2
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	42	49
Married	41	48
Divorced, not reported	3	3
<i>Children</i>		
No	50	58
Yes	34	40
Not reported	2	2
<i>Education</i>		
Primary school	14	16
Middle school	15	17
Secondary school	20	23
College diploma	14	16
University and higher	21	24
Not reported	2	2
<i>Employment</i>		
Working full time	33	38
Working part time	19	22
Seeking work	15	17
Not in labor force	15	17
Not reported	4	5

**Figure 2.** Characteristics of Respondents

education, while one-fourth (24%) has a university degree or post-graduate training. Two-thirds of both the male and female respondents have at least a secondary school education. Marital status and education have a relationship, with 57% of single men and 100% of single women having at least a secondary education, and 78% of married men and 44% of married women having a secondary or higher education. Language has a strong relationship with education: 52% of Arabic-speaking respondents and 54% of English-speaking respondents have a secondary or higher education compared with 96% of French-speaking respondents. Education also differed significantly by country. Half (50%) of respondents in Country B have a secondary or higher compared with two-thirds (64%) in Country A, and three-fourths (76%) in Country C.

The majority of the respondents are employed, 38% employed full time and 22% employed part time. Those not employed are evenly divided between those seeking employment (15%) and those not seeking employment (17%). Men are more likely to be employed than women (77% and 40% respectively), but men and women are about as likely to be seeking work. No married male is unemployed and not seeking work while 10% of single men are not seeking work. Among women, about the same percentages are not seeking work: 45% of single women and 39% of married women.

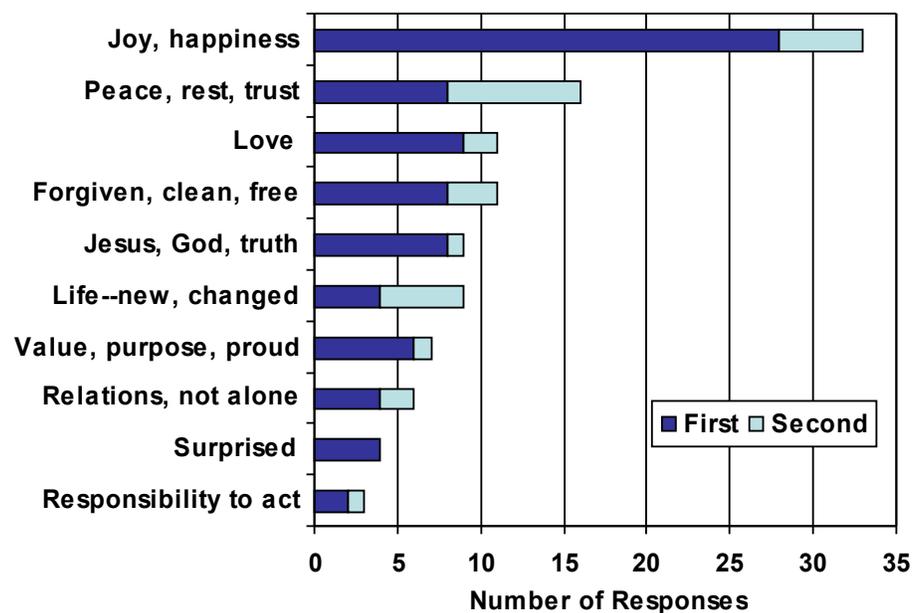
Eight respondents from Country A have ministry-related occupations, with half of them working full time. They comprise 23% of the respondents from Country A, but only 9% overall. No one from Country B or Country C reported a ministry-related occupation. Forty-four (51%) reported other occupations, with slightly over half working full time. The remaining 34 did not report an occupation, including five who worked full time. Four-fifths of those who are unemployed and looking for work did not report an occupation, and none of those who are not looking for work reported an occupation.

## Becoming a Believer

Almost all (80) of the respondents reported their family’s religious background as Muslim. Two reported that their families were Communist, one reported a Christian family background, and the remaining three did not report their religious background.

Respondents started following Christ an average of 8.1 years prior to their interviews, ranging from 1 to 34 years. Sixteen percent had been following Christ for less than three years, 16% for 3-4 years, 16% for 5-6 years, 22% for 7-9 years, and 29% for ten or more years. Respondents started following Christ at age 25.1 on average. The three countries did not differ significantly on either the age at the time they started following Christ, or in the time between then and the interview. However, a significant correlation was discovered between the language chosen for the interview and the age that respondents started following Christ. English-speaking respondents started at 22.3 years of age, on average, while French-speaking respondents started at 25.8 and Arabic-speaking respondents started at 28.8<sup>3</sup>.

When asked, “What words best describe how you felt when you first realized you were a follower of Christ?”, 53 people gave one key word in response to the question, and 28 gave two or more key words. The remainder described how they became believers rather than how they felt. Over one-third (33) of the respondents mentioned the words “joy,” “happy,” or “happiness,” with most of them giving it as the only word or their first



**Figure 3.** Words to Describe Beginning Feelings

word. (See **Figure 3.**) One-fifth (16) gave the words “peace,” “rest,” or “trust.” One-tenth (11) mentioned “love,” and one-tenth (11) mentioned the words “forgiven,” “clean,” or “free.” Nine respondents said they now knew Jesus, the real God, or the truth of what the Bible says. Nine said they had new or changed lives. Seven indicated that they now felt valued, had a purpose, or

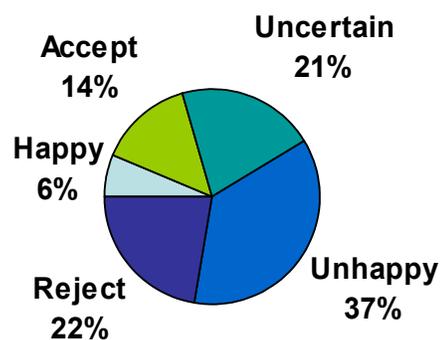
3 The statistical significance of this correlation was determined by the F-Test:  $F[2,83]=5.25, p=.01$

felt proud and privileged to be a follower of Christ. Six said they now had relationships with God or other followers and did not feel alone. Four just indicated how surprised they were about their feelings, and three felt the responsibility of acting like Christ would act. (See Appendix, Question 3 for verbatim responses.)

Believers in all three countries most frequently felt joy and happiness, although the percentages differed. Two-thirds (63%) of the respondents in Country B felt joy/happiness, and they next most frequently mentioned new life (38%). Two-fifths (43%) of the respondents in Country A said they felt joy/happiness, followed by new life (23%) and peace/rest/trust (23%). One-fourth (23%) of the believers in Country C mentioned joy/happiness, followed by value/purpose/proud (17%). (All who described only how they came to believe resided in Country C.) Differences by language were not as great. Arabic speakers (see footnote 2 on page 7) most frequently felt joy/happiness (35%) and then next most frequently mentioned awareness of Jesus/God/truth. English speakers felt joy/happiness (40%) most frequently, followed by forgiven/clean/free (13%). French speakers felt joy/happiness (20%) followed equally by love (16%) and value/purpose/proud (16%).

A series of questions asked respondents about their first thoughts relative to specific aspects of their lives. The first related to their families. Their responses ranged from their family becoming believers to their being thrown out of the family and considered an enemy. Responses were classified on two dimensions: 1) what they did or planned to do and 2) what reaction their families gave or were anticipated. On the first dimension, 25% expressed the desire to tell their families about Jesus so they could become believers also, most of whom did not say how their families reacted, or how they thought their families would react. Over one-third (37%) used words that implied they had or would tell their families about their new belief. A few (4%) said they told, or would tell, only a few family members, and 15% said they would keep silent about their belief. The remaining 19% gave no indication what they did or would do.

With the assumption that those who would keep their faith secret or tell only a few family members anticipated family rejection, three-fourths of the respondents indicated their families reaction. Among these, only 6% said their families would be happy, 14% said their families would accept them, and 21% said they did not know how their families would accept them with their new belief or that some would accept and others not accept. (See **Figure 4**.) Most of the respondents, however, expected negative reactions

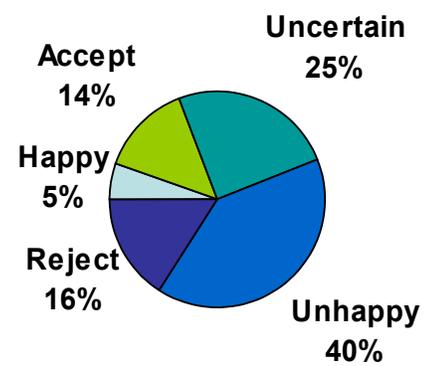


**Figure 4.** First Thoughts of Family's Reaction

from their families: 37% thought their families would be unhappy and 22% thought their families would be hostile and reject them. Family reactions differed significantly among the countries. Three-fourths (72%) of the respondents in Country C thought their families would reject them or at least be unhappy about their decision, compared to half (45%) of the respondents in Country A and none of the respondents in Country B. Family acceptance varied almost as much by language as by country: 83% of French-speaking respondents and 81% of Arabic-speaking respondents expected a negative reaction from their families, compared with 29% of English-speaking respondents<sup>4</sup>. Family reactions had no relationship with the respondent's age at the time he or she started following Jesus, gender, marital status, education, or employment.

The respondents thought about telling their friends much in the same way they thought about telling their families: 23% wanted to tell their friends so they could become believers also, 47% indicated they had told their friends, 4% had told some friends, 9% had kept silent, and 7% did not indicate what they did or thought they would do. Respondents viewed the reaction, or expected reaction, of their friends in much the same way as the reaction, or expected reaction, of family<sup>5</sup>. (See **Figure 5**.)

Some of the specifics differed. A number of respondents reported that their friends thought them strange or bizarre, and some were accused of converting for money or to marry an American. Unlike with family, country and language did not significantly affect how friends reacted, but education did. The reaction of friends became less negative (or more accepting) the higher the respondent's education<sup>6</sup>. Age, gender, marital status and employment had no relationship with friends' reactions.



**Figure 5.** First Thoughts of Friends' Reactions

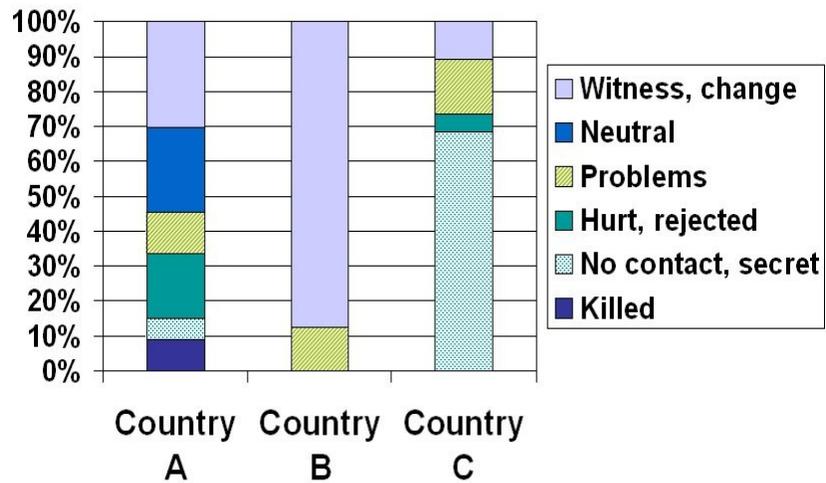
The new believers' first thoughts relative to their surrounding community, including the mosque, formed a continuum from fear of being killed by the community to wanting to bring the community to the light of Christ. A few (4%) said that the community wanted to kill them, and an additional 10% said that it would be very bad, they would be hurt, or they would be rejected. One-fourth (22%) had either no contact with their community any more, or the community did not know about their new belief, but the fact that they were keeping it secret suggests they expected some degree of resistance. One-eighth (13%) specifically said they would have some problems and 12% used words that expressed their community would not care much one way or

4 Chi-Square Test  $\chi^2$  [8df] = 23.702,  $p < .01$

5 Regression analysis:  $r^2$ [55]=.36,  $p < .01$

6 Regression analysis:  $r^2$ [56]=.28,  $p = .04$

the other. Over one-third (38%), however, did not talk about what the community might do for them but rather the witness they wanted to give to their community about the truth of Christ. Respondents in the different countries expressed very different thoughts about their communities. (See **Figure 6**.) One in eleven (9%) of the respondents from Country A thought that their communities wanted to kill them, and 18%

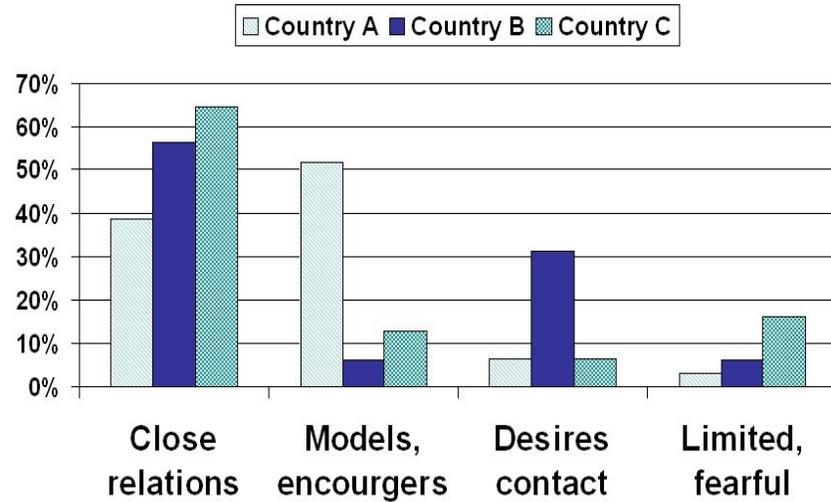


**Figure 6.** First Thoughts Related to the Community, by Country

expressed thoughts of being hurt, rejected, or having other bad things happening to them. Yet only 6% of persons from Country A said they had no relation with their community or that they kept secret their following Christ. In contrast, no one in Country C expressed thoughts of being killed, only 5% expressed thoughts of being hurt or rejected, yet 68% said they had no contact with their communities or that they had kept their beliefs secret. In Country B, 88% of the respondents expressed initial thoughts of wanting to witness for Christ in their communities and help change lives. Language differences were also significant. Arabic-speaking respondents had the most thoughts of being killed. English speakers were most likely to have first thoughts of witnessing to their communities. French speakers were most likely to have no contact with their communities, or to have kept their beliefs in Christ secret. Women were more likely than men to have no contact with their communities and to keep their faith secret (42% and 11% respectively). Gender and marital status also affected people's first thoughts relative to the community. Single respondents were twice as likely as married respondents to express the desire to witness to their communities (50% and 26%), with gender having little additional effect. Few single men (4%) had no contact or thoughts of keeping their faith secret from the community while 38% of single women had such thoughts. Marriage made men think much more cautiously, with 25% saying they had no community contact or thought of keeping their faith secret. Marriage made little difference for women, with 40% saying they had no contact or would keep faith secret from the community.

The first thoughts that respondents expressed about other followers of Christ were almost all positive. Half (48%) reported good and close relationships, using words like love, unity, family and friends. One-fourth (24%) mentioned positive characteristics of other followers: loving, kind, good, holy, encouragers, and different from others. One-tenth (11%) indicated a desire for contact, or more frequent, contact with other followers, while 8% had limited contact with other

believers, had mixed experiences, or were afraid to become involved. The remaining 9% did not respond or gave unclassifiable responses. Respondents in the three countries expressed their first thoughts about other believers in very different ways. (See **Figure 7.**) Four out of ten (39%) respondents in Country A said their first thoughts related to good and close relationships with other



**Figure 7.** First Thoughts About Other Believers, by Country

believers compared to six of ten in Countries B (56%) and C (65%). Most (52%) of the respondents from Country A mentioned characteristics of other believers that were models or encouragement to them. Few in Country A said their first thoughts were desires for contact with other believers, or that they had limited or poor experiences with other believers. One-third (31%) of those in Country B desired more contact with other believers. One-sixth (16%) of the respondents in Country C had limited, mixed, or fearful thoughts about other believers. Language did not make a significant difference in respondents' first thoughts about other believers, nor did age at starting to follow Christ, gender, marital status, or education.

Respondents generally expressed their first thoughts about the church in one of three ways. One-fourth (23%) used words like “love” and “family” to describe close relationships and support:

- They are my family; I am part of them.
- It's a nice place and got kind and loving people.

Another fourth (23%) wanted to be part of the church and active within it:

- How I can be the member in church?
- To be active person in church and expand the kingdom of God.

One-third gave other or more general positive responses:

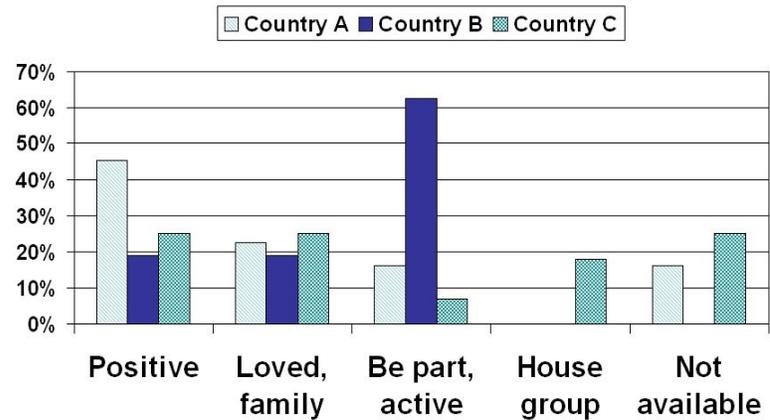
- Always looking forward for the meetings.
- A place where I can spend all my life.

The church had little meaning for 13% of the respondents, as they did not have one or could not go to one, and 9% recorded only the word “house group”:

- I felt it was important but I couldn't go because of my dad.
- I had no idea about the church's existence.
- House group.

Significant differences existed among the three countries in their first thoughts about the church.

Almost half (45%) of respondents from Country A expressed positive first thoughts about the church, although 16% said the church was not available to them. (See **Figure 8**.) About one-fifth in each country thought of the church as a family that loved them. In Country B, 63% said their first thoughts were to become a part of the church and be active. Respondents in Country C seldom thought about being an active part of the church, as the church was not available to 25% of them and only house groups to an additional 18%.



**Figure 8.** First Thoughts about the Church, by Country

Significant language differences also occurred, with interviews done in Arabic most likely to use words of love and family, and least likely to express that their first thoughts were to become a part and be active in a church. The interviews done in English never mentioned house groups.

The first thoughts that respondents recorded about the future after they started following Christ were classified into a continuum of five categories. One-fifth (20%) thought only of serving Christ and witnessing about him, such as “To share gospel with others” and “To be a useful part of God’s family.” The majority (52%) recorded a trusting faith in Christ. A few (8%) said they were so joyous in the present that they did not consider the future. However, some (13%) had questions or confusion about their future:

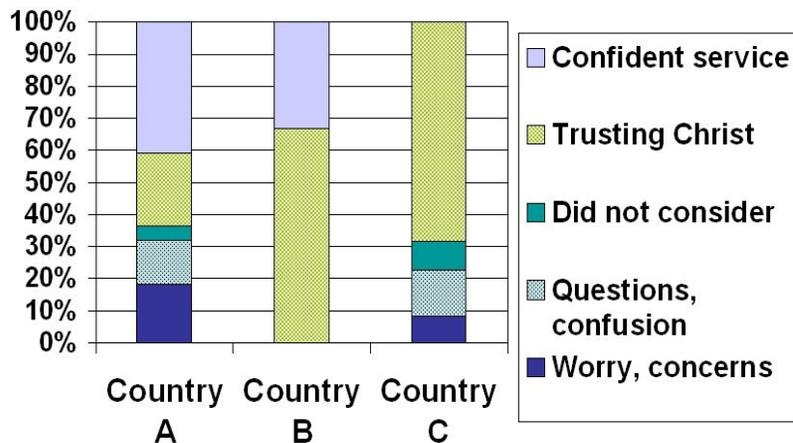
- I wondered how I could get married later, because I was anxious to live in my country, while there were no Christians in my city.
- How can I be a good believer and useful in ministry?
- Can I be a good believer in the future or can I understand Christ?
- I want to get baptized before I die.
- I always thought that the person who appeared to me in the dream will come.
- I was worried about my future and if the way I took was right.
- Even if I had friends among foreign Christians, I always wondered how we can continue to live our faith as believers.
- Confusion.
- Mystery.

Others (8%) had worries and concerns:

- I felt, “They are gonna kill me!”
- I was ready for everything to happen.
- I thought I would go through pain and finally people will bring me to a cross.
- I saw many persecutions in my life.
- I crossed from the optimism to the pessimism, because I do not know any mo. . . .

- I was a bit afraid.

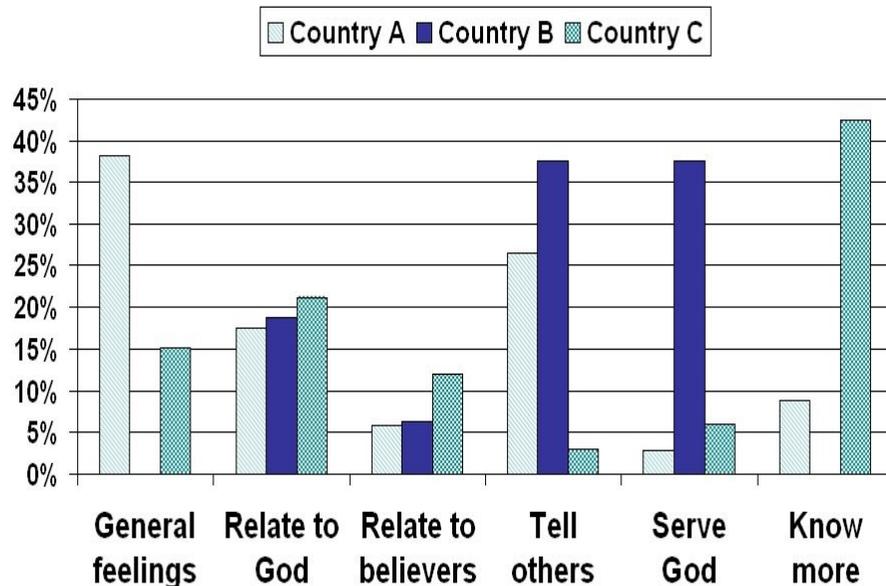
The country in which the respondent lived had a significant effect on their first thoughts about the future. (See **Figure 9**.) One-fifth (18%) of the respondents in Country A had worries or concerns about the future, and an additional 14% had questions or confusion about the future. Country C respondents expressed less worry (8%) and questions



**Figure 9.** First Thoughts about the Future

(13%), while no one in Country B said that their first thoughts about the future were worries or questions. Rather, Country B respondents' first thoughts were confidence of the opportunity to serve God (33%) or to trust Christ with their future (67%). A substantial percent of respondents in Country A (41%) also had confidence in their service to God, but no one in Country C expressed service thoughts about the future. The majority (60%) in Country C simply trusted Christ for their future. Language was less important than country.

The responses to the next question, "What was your greatest longing at the time you became a follower of Christ?" had six general themes. One-fifth (22%) identified general emotions or feelings, describing either feelings about what had just happened or the feelings they wanted. One-fifth (21%) longed for more knowledge, understanding and spiritual growth. One-fifth (20%) longed for a closer relationship with God. One-fifth wanted to tell others the good news and have them come to Christ. One-tenth longed to serve God and others, and one-tenth longed for closer relationships with other believers. Believers in different countries expressed their longings in significantly

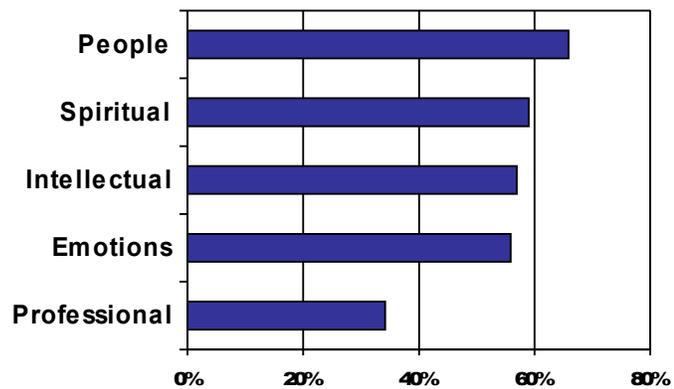


**Figure 10.** Greatest Longings, by Country

Believers in different countries expressed their longings in significantly

different ways. (See **Figure 10**.) Respondents in Country A tended to describe their feelings or emotional longings while respondents in Country C tended to want to know and understand more about the Bible, truth and living like God wants. Respondents in Country B were the most likely to want to witness to others and to serve God. Arabic-speakers were the most likely to long for a closer relationship with God. English-speakers were the most likely to long to tell others about Christ. French-speakers were the most likely to want to know and understand more.

People were asked about problems and struggles they had in five areas after they started following Christ. Two-thirds reported struggles with people, slightly over half reported spiritual, intellectual and emotional struggles, and one-third reported problems in their work or profession. (See **Figure 11**.) Problems with other people included physical attacks and threats, losing wives and children, being kidnapped, pressured to recant, thrown out by their families, being ignored and ridiculed by friends, and losing jobs or apartments. The words “rejection” and “trouble” each appeared six times.



**Figure 11.** Percent with Problems and Struggles

Over half (59%) described inner spiritual struggles that they had. The most frequent spiritual struggles came in the area of faith and discipleship, such as spiritual wars, doubts, and forgiving others. Others expressed struggles in specific situations, such as when persecuted, with conflicts with husband, and wanting prayers answered quickly. Some expressed struggles with basic theological questions, such as, “How can those who have never heard the gospel be saved?” Two were afraid they would abandon their faith in Christ and return to Islam. Some described spiritual struggles with the differences between Islam and Christianity. A few struggled with problems they saw in the church or other believers. (See Appendix Question 14 for detailed responses.) Faith and discipleship struggles occurred about equally in all three countries and with all three language groups. Theological questions, however, were concentrated among French-speaking respondents.

Over half (57%) described intellectual struggles or ideological conflicts that they went through when they started to follow Christ. Thirteen had a hard time understanding the opposition and persecution they received from their families and communities, and why Islam taught that they should be killed. Thirteen needed better understanding and arguments as to why Christianity was superior to Islam and other religions. Touching almost the same area, twelve struggled with the difference between the Bible and the Qur’an. Seven had specific theological or Christian practice

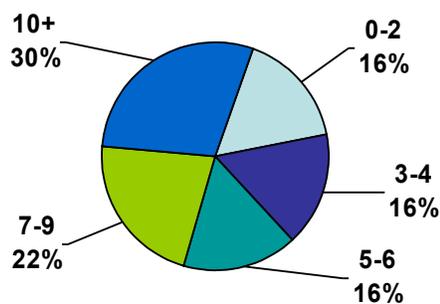
questions. The most specific involved the Trinity. Four recorded that they struggled with the divisions among believers. (See Appendix Question 13 for detailed responses.) Half (52%) of the struggles given by respondents from Country A, and by those interviewed in Arabic, related to rejection and persecution. In contrast, three-fourths (71%) of the struggles given by respondents from Country C, and by those interviewed in French, related to the comparison of the Bible and the Qur'an.

Over half (56%) described emotional struggles they went through when they began to follow Christ. They most frequently mentioned (17) the emotional difficulties of being rejected by family, feeling alone, and having little opportunity for friendships and romantic relationships. Next they (11) reported struggling with forgiveness and how to show Christ's love to others, especially those who were persecuting them. Also, six reported struggles with fear and anger. Ten described struggles with emotional stability, one of whom contemplated suicide. Four specifically mentioned emotional struggles and confusion with their Muslim background and previous habits. (See Question 12 in the Appendix for detailed responses.) Half (56%) of the respondents from Country B mentioned struggles with love and forgiveness, while only 6% mentioned family rejection and loneliness. The reverse was true for respondents from Countries A (10% and 48%) and C (0% and 55%).

Only three-fifths of the respondents answered the question about problems in their professional life as a result of choosing to follow Christ, and over half of them said they had no problems. Some that had no problems said God worked it out for them. Others worked for Christians or for themselves. However, twelve respondents (14% of all those interviewed) were fired from their job, or forced to work without pay, because they had chosen to follow Christ. An additional eight reported problems or difficulties in their work because of their choice. Seven reported family, community, or workplace rejection that made it very hard on them. One was kicked out of housing without any reference to losing a job (one lost a job and then housing), and one was refused entrance to the university. (See Question 15 in Appendix for detailed responses.)

### Current Life as a Believer

The people responding to the survey had been followers of Christ for an average of 6.3 years, ranging from less than one year to 34 years. They were fairly evenly distributed around the average. (See **Figure 12.**) The length of time following Christ did not differ significantly by country or language. Married respondents had been following Christ for an average of 9.9 years, significantly longer than the 6.2 years of single respondents. The difference was even greater between those in full



**Figure 12.** Years Following Christ

time employment (11.1 years) and part time workers (4.9 years). The length of time following Christ differed little by education up through a college diploma. Those with a university degree, however, had been following Christ for an average of 4.5 years longer than those with a college diploma.

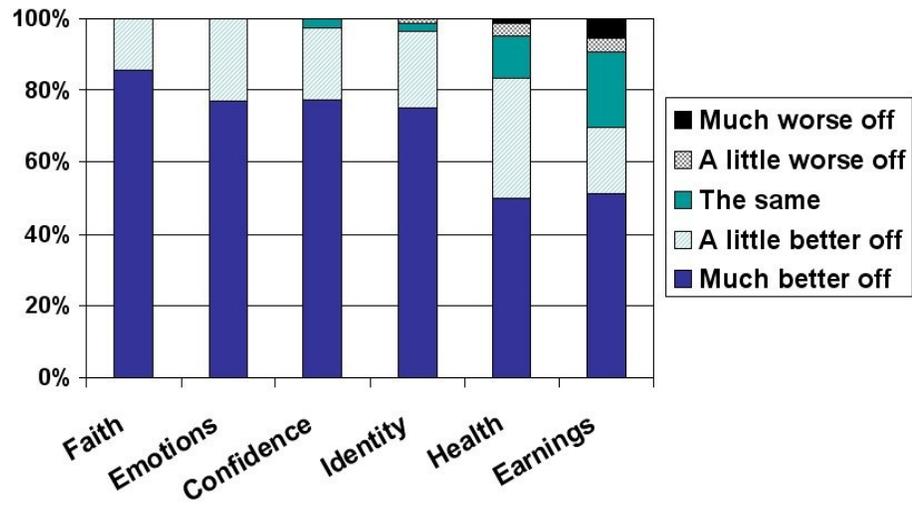


Figure 13. Change Since Initial Belief

A set of six questions asked respondents how their life had changed since they first became a follower of Christ. Almost all (86%) said the certainty regarding their faith was much better off now. (See Figure 13.) All the remainder said that it was a little better off. No one said their faith had stayed the same or that they had lost certainty in their faith since they first started following Christ. All also felt better off in terms of their emotions, with 77% feeling much better off. The same percent (77%) also said they were much better off in terms of confidence and peace now than when they started following Christ, but one respondent did not sense any change. Only half, however, said they were much better off now in their health (50%) or their earnings (51%) than when they started following Christ. A few (5%) said their health was actually worse now than when they first started following Christ, and a few (9%) said that their earning of a living was worse off now than before.

Although things are now better in most areas of life than when the respondents first started following Christ, they still have needs they are seeking God to meet. One-fourth (23%)

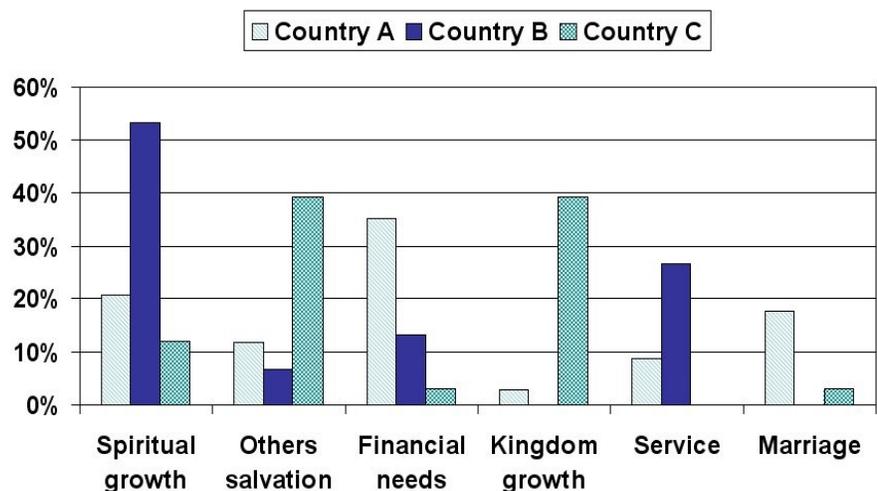
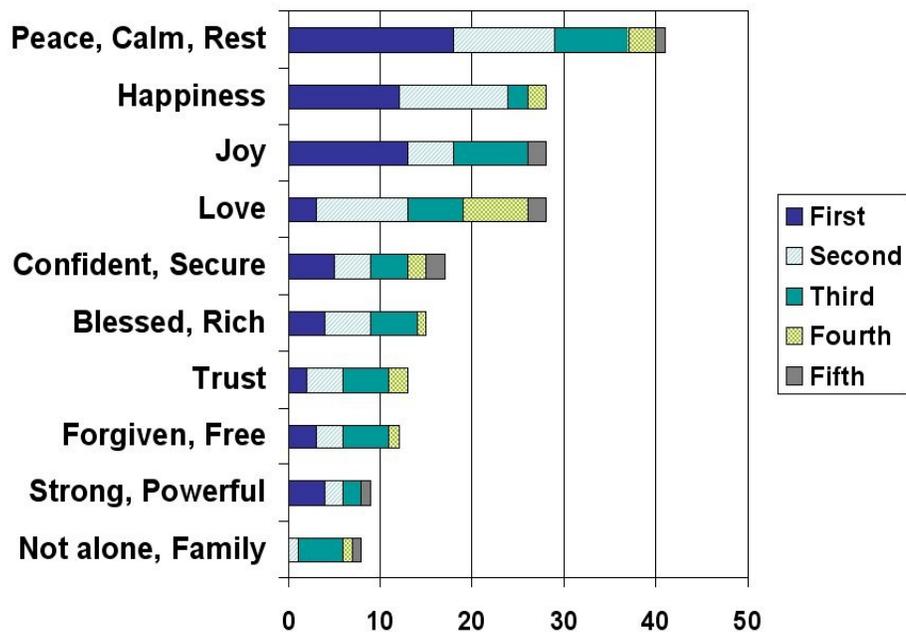


Figure 14. Needs Still Asking God to Meet

express the need for a closeness to God and spiritual strength. Another fourth (22%) is seeking God’s help in their witnessing to their families and other non-believers. Financial needs, including accommodations, are expressed by 18%. Kingdom growth through more churches and the conversion of the nation are mentioned by 17%. About one in ten (9%) have an unmet desire to serve and one in ten (9%) have a desire for marriage. A few (2%) mention other needs. Respondents in the various countries express very different needs. Half (54%) of those in Country B are praying for spiritual growth and understanding, and an additional 27% are praying for service opportunities. (See **Figure 14.**) Respondents in Country A primarily feel an unmet need in the area of finances (35%) and marriage (18%). Respondents in Country C primarily pray for the salvation of their families and specific people (39%) and for the broader kingdom growth through expansion of the church and the conversion of the nation (39%).

Respondents volunteered up to five words (or phrases) that describe how they generally feel day to day. The words “peace,” “calmness,” “comfort” and “rest” are given by 41 of the 77 respondents who provide words (53%), with 18 giving them as their first word. (See **Figure 15.**) The words “joy” and “happiness” may express about the same feeling, but they are so frequently given, and three respondents include both words, that they are tabulated separately. Each is used by 28 (36% of respondents), although “joy” is given more frequently as the first word. Twenty-eight people also give the word “love,” singly or in various combinations: Love, Loved, Surrounded in his love, Brotherly love, Love for God, Love for others, and Love his word. Seventeen (22%) give words related to confidence and security: Confidence, Secure, Self confidence, I know who I am, Proud, Confidence in love of God, Encourage, Courage, and Safety. Fifteen (19%) give words

related to blessings: Blessed, Better, Good, Lucky, Privileged, Rich, and Treasure. Thirteen (17%) give the word “trust” or “trustworthy”. Twelve (16%) give words related to forgiven and free: Forgiveness, Free, Righteousness, Salvation, Freedom, Mercy, Compassion, and From darkness. Nine (12%) mention words about strength and power: Daily strength, Strong, Strong in my faith, Power in my faith, and



**Figure 15.** Number Giving Words to Describe Day to Day Feelings

Powerful. Eight (10%) use words indicating they did not feel lonely, but felt they were part of a family: Not alone, I have many friends, He is always with me, Got a family, Feel the other believers, Intimacy with, and Communion. Words used less frequently, and not shown in the figure include: balanced/stable (7), hope (7), growing (6), prayer/praise (5), healing (4), and other positive feelings. Only four words were given by three people to describe negative feelings: fear, loneliness, risk, and tension.

Respondents in Country A most frequently give words of peace (55%), love (45%), and happiness (45%). Respondents in Country B also most frequently mention peace (75%), love (75%) and trust (63%). Respondents in Country C most frequently give words of joy (47%), peace (41%), and blessed (38%). Most words related to blessed come from Country C. Most words related to trust come from Country B. Most words related to forgiveness come from Country A. The greatest language differences occur in peace words: 66% of the English interviews, 52% of the Arabic interviews, and 27% of the French interviews mention words about peace.

The next question asked about five words that best describe their present relationship with God. The set of words most frequently given relate to love: Loved, God loves me, I've got a value, Love God, Love my

neighbor. These words come up 28 times among the 78 people who responded to the question (36%), and are the first words thought of by half of them. (See Figure 16.) The same number of respondents give words that related to assurance, trust and hope: Confidence, Assurance, In God's hands, Trust, Protected, He is in control, Hope, My refuge, God is near, God protects me, Ever-present, My provider, No fear, Ready

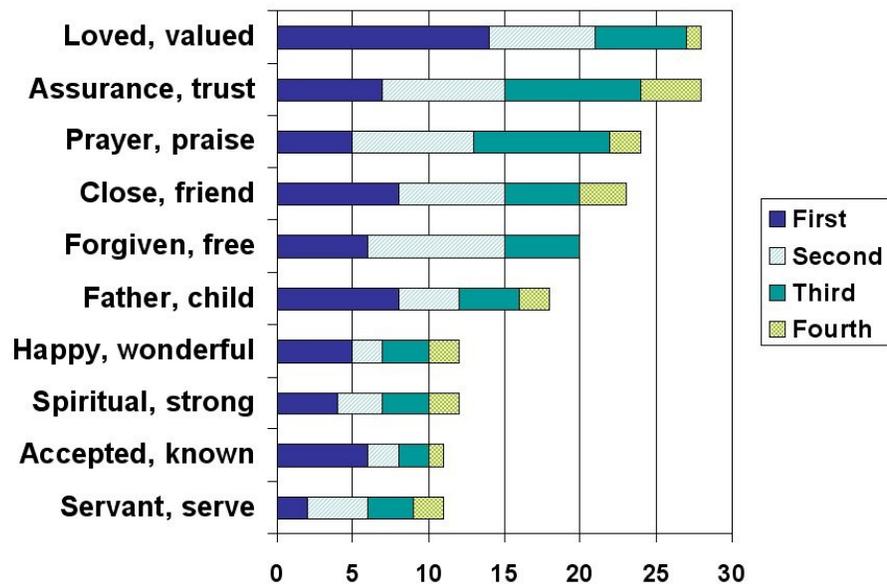


Figure 16. Number Giving Words to Describe Relation with God

to meet God, Have a future, I will go in heaven, and He fulfills my needs. The third set of words, given by 24 respondents (31%), relate to prayer and praise: Pray, Prayer, A time with God to pray, I can talk to God, Asking, Praise God, and Thanking. A fourth set of words given by 23 (29%) respondents relate to closeness and friendship: Close to God, Friendship, Good relationship, He is my best friend, He walks with me, I feel God near me, Intimate, and Warm. Twenty respondents

(26%) use words related to forgiveness, freedom and salvation: Forgiven, Freedom, Saved, Grateful, and Cleanness. Eighteen gave words of a parent/child or family relationship: Father, Eternal Father, Faithful son, God's daughter, I'm his girl, and His child. Twelve (15%) give words expressing happiness and pleasure: Good, Happy, Very great, Wonderful, Pleasure with him, and Joy. Twelve gave words relate to spiritual strength: More spiritual, Strong, Spiritual strength, I will not shy, Be fruitful, and Growing in faith. Eleven (14%) give words of acceptance and being known by God: Accepted, God knows me, I am considered, I am in his mind, and Thinking about me. Eleven give words expressing servanthood: God's servant, Gave him everything, Serve him, God wants to use me, Called to serve, and Dedicated to him. Other sets of words not shown on the chart relate to being directed or guided by God (9), being called or chosen (8), reading the Bible and understanding more (7), desiring to learn and become closer (6), blessed (5), and single words of God and King (4).

People in the three countries and speaking different languages differ some in the words they use to describe their relationship with God. One-third or more of the respondents in Country A use the words prayer/praise (48%), confidence/assurance (38%), friend (34%), and father/child (34%). One-third or more of the respondents in Country B also use the words prayer/praise (38%), confidence/assurance (38%) and friend (44%), but also use the words loved/valued (44%). One-third or more of the respondents in Country C give the word confidence/assurance (33%), loved/valued (45%) and forgiven/free (45%). Few in Country A use terms for forgiven/free (7%) and few in Country B use terms for father/child (6%). Words related to prayer and praise were expressed in 38% of the English interviews and 9% of the French and Arabic interviews. Language, like country, does not have significant relationship to the percentages giving words related to confidence/trust.

People were asked to describe how and when they meet with other followers of Christ. Most (82) of the people gave an answer, with 30% identifying a place, 50% identifying a frequency, 10% identifying both, and 10% giving responses identifying neither place nor frequency. Three-fifths (59%) of the people mentioning a place identified the church as where they meet other believers. An additional 18% meet other believers in both the church and in house groups, and 14% mention only house groups or believers' homes. One (2%) meets with other believers at his workplace, and three (6%) only meet with other believers when they travel. One-third (35%) of those who mention frequency say they meet with believers every day or "all the time." An additional 32% meet other believers several times a week or "often," 12% meet once a week, and 6% meet "sometimes." Five (15%) of those who report frequency say they rarely meet with other believers, especially in their own countries. About half of the respondents in Country A indicate where they meet with other believers, with 34% mentioning the church, 9% only at other believers' homes, and 9% at work or while traveling. About half also indicate the frequency with which they meet with other believers, with 27% meeting several times a week, 9% once a week, and 9% never. Only one respondent (6%) from Country B indicates where he or she meets other believers, and that is in a house group. However almost all in Country B mention how often they meet with

other believers: 75% met daily or several times a week, 6% weekly, and 13% met only sometimes. Almost all (94%) in Country C indicate where they meet others: 79% at the church, 12% only in believers' homes, and 3% while traveling. Only a few in Country C indicate the frequency: 6% every day and 6% never. Language also has a significant relationship with how people respond to this question. Only one-third (35%) of interviews in English mention where they meet other believers, compared to 80% of the Arabic interviews and 83% of the French interviews. On the other hand, 62% of English speakers mention the frequency with which they meet other believers, compared to 33% of Arabic speakers and 17% of French speakers.

## Discussion

Most of the background characteristics of the people responding to the survey had no effect on their responses. The age at which they began following Christ, their marital status, whether they had children, their education, their employment, and the size of place where they lived had no significant relationship to any of their answers. Men and women responded differently to three questions. Men more frequently than women said their first thoughts after they realized they were followers of Christ related to the salvation of their families and the salvation of their friends. Women more frequently than men thought only about informing their families and friends (Country A and B) or keeping silent about their following Christ (Country C). In expressing the current need they are waiting for God to meet, more women than men mentioned the salvation of family, friends and others, particularly in Country C.

The country in which people live, and the language in which they responded to the interview, however, did have significant effects on many of their answers. Country and language were inter-related. Twice as many interviews in Country A were conducted English than in Arabic, four times as many interviews in Country B were conducted in English than in French, and twice as many in Country C were conducted in French than in Arabic (and one conducted in English). Initial thoughts and struggles were regressed on country, language and gender to separate out the additive main effects and their interactions terms (See **Figure 17**). About 7% ( $R^2=.07$ ) of the variation among respondents in their using “joy” or “happiness” to describe their feelings upon realizing they were followers of Jesus can be explained by their country of residence, with

<i>Question</i>	<i>Country</i>		<i>Language</i>				<i>Co.B</i>		<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Male</i>	
3 Feeling joy	..	-.26	..	..	..	..	..	..	.07
4a. Witness to family	.36	-.50	..	..	.32	..	..	..	.52
4b Family accept	..	..	-.47	-.36	..	..	..	..	.22
5a Witness to friends	..	..	-.28	..	.44	..	.30	.36	.42
5b Friends accept	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
9 Witness to community	.46	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.21
6 Believers as models	..	..	-.31	..	.43	-.23	..	..	.16
8 Church as family	..	..	-.37	..	.53	..	..	..	.17
7 Future bright	.32	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.10
11 No people struggles	..	.46	..	..	..	..	..	..	.21
14 No spiritual struggles	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	-.28	.08
13 No intellectual struggles	..	..	.28	..	..	..	-.21	..	.12
12 No emotional struggles	-.31	.28	..	..	..	..	..	..	.25
15 No professional struggles	..	.32	..	..	-.21	..	..	..	.17

**Figure 17.** Effect of Respondent Characteristics on First Thoughts ( $\beta$ ,  $p \leq .05$ )

respondents from Country C less likely to mention these words than respondents in Country A (omitted category) or Country B. Language and gender had no independent effect.

Half of the variation in their first thoughts concerning what they would do with respect to their families can be explained by country of residence. Respondents in Country B were much more likely than respondents of Country A to think about witnessing to their families (and less likely to think about keeping silent), while respondents in Country C were less likely than those in Country A to think about witnessing and more likely to keep silent. Language and gender had no independent effect. Both Arabic-speaking and French-speaking respondents thought their families would be less accepting of them, and more likely to reject or harm them for following Christ, than English-speaking respondents thought.

Initial thoughts about friends differed from initial thoughts about family. Country affected telling family while language affected telling friends. Arabic-speaking respondents thought less than English- or French-speaking respondents about witnessing to their friends and thought more about keeping silent. However, none of the variation in how they thought their friends would react can be explained by country, language or gender.

Less variation in respondents' first thoughts about their communities can be explained by the variables than in their first thoughts about telling family and friends. Respondents in Country B thought more about witnessing to their community and mosque than those in Country A or C, with language and gender having no independent effects.

Country, language and gender all affected how new believers thought about other believers. The presence of the interaction term for Arabic-speaking respondents in Country A and French-speaking respondents in Country B says that French-speaking respondents in Country B were less likely than English-speaking respondents in Country B and French-speaking respondents in Country C to see other believers as models. In Country C, Arabic-speakers viewed other believers as models less than French-speakers, while language made little difference in Country A (the positive sign for Arabic-speakers in Country A cancels out the negative sign for Arabic-speakers in general). In summary, respondents in Country A speaking Arabic and English, those in Country B speaking English, and those in Country C speaking French first thought about other believers in much the same way, and more positively than did French-speakers in Country B and Arabic-speakers in Country C.

In terms of the church, Arabic-speakers in Country C were less likely to think about the church as a family since they had little knowledge or access to the church compared to French-speakers in their own country, or respondents in Counties A and B.

Only a little variation ( $R^2=.10$ ) in respondents' first thoughts about their future can be explained,

with new believers in Country B more optimistic about their future than those in the other countries, with language and gender having no effect.

In describing their greatest longing as they started to follow Christ, English-speaking respondents in Country A tended to describe their feelings or emotional longings, Arabic-speaking respondents in Country A tended to long for a closer relationship with God, respondents in Country B tended to describe a desire to witness to and serve others, and respondents in Country C tended to want to know and understand more about the Bible, truth and living like God wants. Language did not make a difference in Countries B and C.

Respondents from Country C were less likely than those from the other two countries to answer three of the five questions on struggles that they faced as new followers of Christ. There are three possible reasons: 1) they experienced fewer struggles than those in other countries, 2) they were less likely to talk about their struggles, and 3) the interview context did not encourage them to report. Respondents in Country B were the most likely to mention emotional struggles, and males in Country B reported more spiritual struggles than other respondents. Arabic-speaking respondents were less likely than English or French-speaking respondents to have intellectual struggles, and men had more intellectual struggles than women. The numbers are too small for statistical analysis of the effects of country and language on specific struggles within each category.

Interviews took place an average of 8.1 years after the respondents started to follow Christ. All said their faith and emotions are better now than at the time they began following, and even in the area of least positive change, over two-thirds said their earnings are better off now than when they started following Christ. Respondents in Country C reported less positive changes than respondents in Countries A and B in faith, confidence and identity since they started following Christ. (See **Figure 18**.) Arabic speakers reported less positive change in their faith than did

English or French speakers, independent of country. Married respondents reported greater increases in their confidence than unmarried respondents, independent of country. The more years respondents had been following Christ, the more improvement they reported in the areas of their faith, confidence and earnings. Nothing predicted improvement in respondents' emotions. Gender did not affect reporting of improvements since the respondents first started following Christ.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Country C</i>	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Yrs. Follow</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>
Faith better	-.35	-.23	..	.23	.23
Confidence better	-.28	..	.26	.40	.21
Identity better	-.38	..	..	..	.14
Emotions better	..	..	..	..	0
Health better	..	..	.23	..	.06
Earnings better	..	..	..	.25	.06

**Figure 18.** Effect of Respondent Characteristics on Changes (significant standardized multiple regression coefficients)

The initial model suggested that change might be affected by initial thoughts and experiences. To test the model, a number of scales were created using factor analysis to reduce the number of independent variables. The six change variables were combined into two scales, Internal Improvement (Faith, Confidence, Identity and Emotions) and External Improvement (Health and Earnings). Only one of the fourteen initial thoughts and struggles variables (future) made a significant contribution to Internal Improvement. Respondents who first thought about the future in terms of confident service were the most likely to report greater Internal Improvement, and those who had initial worries about the future reported the least Internal Improvement. No characteristics of the respondents had a direct effect on Internal Improvement independent of the respondents' first thoughts about the future. No initial thoughts or struggles affected respondents' External Improvements. Only increased length of time since the respondent first started following Christ significantly increased reports of External Improvements.

Respondents used a number of words to describe how they generally feel day to day, and to describe their relation to God and it is not possible to separate effects of country and language. They frequently described their feelings in terms of love, peace, happiness and joy. Their description of their relationship with God frequently included confidence and assurance. While many new believers experienced rejection and isolation from their families and communities, and did not always have a church to support them, they rejoiced in the forgiveness, love and purpose they have found in Christ and face the future confident in him.

This study showed significant differences among countries and speakers of different languages. This suggests that these findings may not apply to other countries or peoples of the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf States. Only half of the desired number were conducted in Country B than in Countries A and B, and so the findings of Country B may not be as representative of that country as the others. Since few respondents in Country B were women, this study can give little insight in whether women in Country B differ much from women in the other two countries. The language of the interview was related to the country in which the respondents lived, and none of the three countries had enough interviews in all three languages to clearly separate out the relative importance of country and language and their interaction. It may also be that language per se is not as important as whether the language is associated with the dominant or a minority group. This study does suggest that age at the time of following Christ, education, occupation and the presence of children had little if any effect on the initial thoughts and struggles of new believers, nor on the changes in their lives since they started following Christ. Men and women differed in some ways in their initial thoughts and struggles, and marriage had some effect on changes since they started following Christ. This study also showed improvement over time in the believers' internal thoughts and feelings, and in their external circumstances.

The findings from this study have a number of implications for the development of materials and training for new believers in the Middle East and North Africa. The following eight suggestions

are made:

- Highlight the joy most MBBs feel upon realizing they are following Christ, and how this joy leads to trusting God with their futures and having confidence in serving God, since joy is frequently expressed by new followers of Christ and initial feelings of joy predict subsequent improvements in faith, confidence, self-identity and emotions.
- Assure believers who initially face problems with their jobs and finances that most believers experience improvement over time.
- Provide men with information that will help them in their intellectual struggles over the superiority of following Christ and how to witness to others in the face of opposition, since men express intellectual struggles more frequently than women along with a greater boldness in sharing about Christ.
- The greatest need expressed by those who responded in Arabic was developing their personal relationship with God; the greatest need expressed by those who responded in English was to be able to share their faith; and the greatest need expressed by those who responded in French was for a better understanding of biblical truths. Consider these differences when determining the focus of training materials in different languages.
- Develop multiple ways to link new believers with other believers for encouragement and friendship (and sometimes marriage), particularly in areas where the Church speaking their language is not present or visible.
- People from different countries and who chose to speak different languages within the same countries showed different characteristics. Recognize that a “one size fits all” approach to training materials across the region may not be best and that additional research will be needed in specific areas to ensure that the material and training will be appropriate.
- When developing training curricula, refer to the detailed responses included in this report for specific areas that need to be focused upon and included in the training.
- Provide training to deal with persecution, especially for those with less formal education, as reaction of community was most severe for those with less schooling.

## Appendix

### Question 3. Words on First Feeling Verbatims

*(What words best describe how you felt when you first realized you were a follower of Christ?)*

#### Joy, Happiness

- Joy. (3)
- Happy, he changed my life.
- Happy because my life has changed.
- Happy because Jesus brightened up my life.
- Jesus brought a happiness to my life because it was empty.
- Was very happy. (2)
- Happiness. I cannot describe it.
- Happy.
- Very happy.
- Happiness.
- Happiest person in the world.
- Happy and peaceful.
- I became happy because I entered the new world and I had the second birth.
- I felt happiness - trust - comfortable - save.
- Full of joy.
- I was very happy because I've got the salvation.
- For a first time I felt a happiness from my heart, with peace, and I felt that I am free.
- I felt joy and peace and a desire to serve God.
- Much joy.
- Joy. Gratitude. Hope.
- Much joy, Proud.
- Very happy.
- I felt happy to have understood finally what my parents said to me since my childhood. I considered all the teachings as simple beautiful stories, but it became more and more true for me. Jesus became my friend and my Saviour.
- I consider myself happy to understand finally the secret of my husband, because he became more kind, seriousness, and responsible with regard to the domestic tasks. Both of us are finally united really, by the love of Jesus.

#### Peace, Rest, Trust

- Peace.
- Peace between the people.
- I was full of peace.
- I felt peace.

- Peace, heavenly loved and happiness.
- Peace, no more fear. Joy, God is my father and not only my judge. Now close to the real Lord.
- I found rest.
- Peace - Joy- Final solution for my complicated life.

#### Love

- Love.
- I feel in love, peace, family.
- I felt full of God's love, his peace and hope.
- I felt of his love. I felt that I am accepted. I am his child. His love ever lasting.
- Love for other people. Fear. Responsibility.
- God's love. My Father.
- God's love.
- I felt so loved, beyond my expectations, by a certain group of Christian friends. It is then that I decided to become like them.
- Love for other people because I am loved.

#### Forgiven, Clean, Free

- Sacrifice himself for our sin, it was his life and life is the important things for every human, but Jesus gave it for us.
- I'm set free.
- I felt I was clean and all my sin is gone.
- Forgiven.
- When I became a believer of Christ I felt that I have freedom and strength.
- The most that touch my heart was his words (Matthew 11:23-30). He took my burdens away fulfil it with joy and peace.
- (Jn.1:12-13) to whose who have received him...I am saved, forgiven, delivered.
- Freedom. Joy. Wealth. Strong. Change.

#### Jesus, God, Truth

- God's way, truth and life.
- I discovered that there were too many errors in the Koran, but the Bible was the truth.
- I was amazed to discover that there is truth outside the Koran. It is by chance that I got a television channel in a broadcast which compares regularly the Bible and the Koran. Alone, in front of my television set, I gave my life to Christ. It was a privilege.
- How Jesus is God, peace.
- He is the living God and I know why I'm on earth now (what my purpose is).
- I realized that God is my only savior, redeemer.
- Discover the real Lord.
- I finally found the good way that leads to God.

### Life

- I find a new life.
- When I was born I didn't know what happened and I didn't understand the world really, but when I was born again I got new life. I felt I had a chance to be good and to start again.
- I realized a very great renewing.
- I was dead but I am alive in Christ.

### Value, Purpose, Proud

- A great privilege.
- I was really satisfied to be able to bear the name of God, be called the girl of God and be forgiven for my sins.
- Even if I am the only Christian in all the country, I am proud of it and I shall continue. I did not know the other believers in that time, and it is true that there were not a lot.
- I felt that I really existed. I had some value in front of God.
- I was delighted at the fact that my life is in the hands of Lord Jesus, and that I can be a part of a conscious and useful generation for God, among the (my country's) youth.
- For the girl that I was, it was the best thing which I could expect. To be Christian, it was to find my real value and to have a direction for my life.

### Relationships, Not Alone

- It was the most great surprise which my husband was able to do for me, because it is him who put me in touch with people.
- Children of God.
- Member of the body of Jesus Christ.
- I discovered another world, world where people love each other and want to help. And so myself learned to love without interest. God loved me, and he gave me Jesus to save me, without paying something first.

### Surprise

- Surprise, joy, recognition of Jesus.
- I was surprised and full of peace.
- Surprised to be forgiven by God.
- I felt that I'm no longer alone. I was full of joy and I became more confident.

### Responsibility to Act

- Who slap you on the right cheek, give him the last one, and love your enemies.
- I felt the fire of Holy Spirit. Fire can be the best word to explain my emotion.

### Description of Process

- I worked in a foreign company where I could see clearly the difference between Muslims and Christians. I began to try to know the difference between both, and I eventually understood so many things. Now, I am happy to be part of serious, sincere people who love God with all their heart.
- I had often seen the Christians on the television, and I followed the biblical messages without knowing personally people. When I met the Pastor and his wife, it was as if God had sent me the angels. I felt so well in their presence.
- The first friends who spoke to me about Jesus, I knew them through the sport. I did not know that we could profoundly like football, love God, and serve him at the same time.
- It was difficult, but I finally arrived there. Before dying, my grand father had told me a wonderful story concerning Christians. This story followed me throughout my childhood and throughout my adolescence. I made everything to get in touch with the Christians all around the world by way of Internet. Fortunately, I eventually discovered that there was a church right by me, in my city. Every time I enter it, I feel in me a strong emotion. I feel in the presence of God.
- Before becoming Christian, I had the same dream during several nights: a person came to tell me to fetch a Bible and begin to read it. I asked my parents to explain it, but they could make nothing. They did not understand. They sent me at our neighborhood Imam, but he too was not able to explain to me. Since I met the Christians, they gave me a Bible. I began to read it, and I do not have any more the same dream.

### **Question 12. Initial Emotional Struggle Verbatims**

(Please describe any emotional struggles you went through:)

#### Family Rejection, Loneliness

- I was thrown out of my home by my own family; was neglected by the rest of the family.
- About my family if they find out, what will their reaction be?
- Fear-- what will happen if my family gets to know that I am a Christian?
- Felt bad when my brothers didn't let me to visit them.
- Feel my self alone in ministry problem.
- I felt my self alone and I'm alone in my family and nobody cares about me.
- I have emotional struggles with my parents because they call us unbelievers, particularly in special months that Muslims have.
- I wondered how I could get married, because I did not see Christian young men of my age a lot.
- Loneliness.
- Loneliness and my generation.
- Lost the love of my life.
- Missing the family and old friends.
- My father wouldn't let me go to church.
- My own people(family) turned against me.
- My single life found a stability and balance.
- My sister passed away, and she was a believer, and we became believers through her.
- We are very few believers and it is difficult to have friends, while, in the other countries, there are so many Christians.

#### Forgiveness and Love

- My community refused me--I had the power to forgive them always.
- Hard to forgive.
- I had a power to forgive others and love them.
- I had lots of emotional hurts, bitterness, lack of forgiveness and feeling inferior, the lack of love from my parents. I had a total healing which gave me confidence in God.
- It was so hard to forgive others.
- My struggle with ways to response with love.
- Was hard to forgive. (2)
- Was hard to forgive others.
- Wasn't easy to forgive others but I did.
- When I received salvation, I become very emotional towards people, and that is Christ's love.

#### Emotional Stability

- Always when I had emotional struggles, I was in peace by praying.
- Anguish.
- I always had suicidal ideas. I was tired of the life.
- I had no problem, but I tried my best to not think about anyone.
- I went through a tough time but Jesus helped me get over it.
- It takes time to find stability.
- Satan was attacking me several times through bad thoughts that I'm not longer accepted by God.
- Sometimes Satan was showing me the glories of the world to deny Jesus Christ.
- Spiritual warfare.
- When sometimes when my family is getting sick, I become sad, but by praying I feel peace.

#### Fear, Anger, Bitterness

- At the beginning I was afraid.
- How to face others.
- I wanted to answer those who were hurting me for my Christianity.
- It was very hard when I went through persecution, but after that I felt peace and joy.
- Rejection, anger, discouragement, and anxiety.
- They gave me lot's of hard time at work, in the community, with my own family.

#### Muslim Background

- As Muslim background, it was confusing.
- It took me some time to stop and forget the Islamic prayer.
- There is a struggle between my past in the society and present status in the community.
- To leave my old habits.

**Question 13. Initial Intellectual Struggle Verbatims**

*(Please describe any intellectual struggles or ideological conflicts you went through:)*

Opposition, Persecution

- Because I left Islam, everything became against me.
- Disagreement, ideological conflicts because of my beliefs.
- It wasn't easy to start practicing my new belief.
- Just from my family.
- My father said that I refused him by leaving Islam.
- My parents are not happy and do not agree with our faith. They forced me to marry with a non-believer. Sometimes I had struggles with my friend when am talking about Christ.
- My residency card was in trouble and I couldn't get it and for while. It make my mind busy, but finally I got it.
- People around us, they made a lot of troubles for us.
- The persecution has not applied yet.
- They don't want to accept, and I feared that maybe I choose the wrong way. They worry about me and don't think themselves. They don't think the importance of the salvation.
- They tried to throw us out of our village, but we stayed in our faith till the Lord got us through it as he promised.
- They wanted to kill me because I left Islam, and that what the Islamic religion commanded.
- When I am giving the good news to the people they don't like it and get upset.

Superiority of Christianity

- It was hard to change all my Islamic beliefs. Also how to show others a comparison of Islam and Christianity from Islamic view.
- A great doubt was coming to my mind, "Which one is true, Christ or Muhammad?"
- At the beginning I had some doubts, "What if I am mistaken?"
- Because I'm from a Muslim background, I found it hard at the beginning.
- Fear that I would go back to Islam like I left Islam.
- Feel to leave my faith for reasons.
- For a long time I struggled with the two beliefs (Islam, Christianity).
- I do not understand this principle which says that the one who was born Muslim has to stay Muslim. I believe that I have the right to convert myself to Christianity.
- I don't believe in any other religions any more, but I've still got few issues which are confusing me about my faith.
- It was between two idea (communist and Christ). It was a hard time, but I prayed and then God save me and gave me peace.
- Lots of people were saying that Mohammad religion is the true religion and Christianity is false, lots of things added and taken from it.

- My friends suggested to me that I get a divorce from my husband and return to Islam.
- Sometime other ideas make me think wrong, but nothing could ever bring me back from my faith in Christ.

#### Specific Theology

- Trinity; forgiveness; Jesus Son of God; salvation.
- The trinity. (2)
- I did not understand a lot how God can be 3 persons at once. God became a person for me. He is my Father.
- Struggle for my role, emotional, carnal.
- I had no answer for couple of questions.
- I was looking for some teachings about the Sentimental wounds.

#### Divisions Among Believers

- Confusion between Westerners and Christians.
- I hate some ideas from members of the church such as imposing.
- The difference between churches.
- The fight and problems between believers and churches.

#### Bible versus Qur'an

- Comparing the Bible and the Qur'an.
- Difference between the Bible and the Qur'an.
- For me, the Qur'an was full of poems and the Bible was full of stories. I was wondering why?
- How can the Bible contain the only truth?
- I had to change my mind and believe that the Bible is the word of God, not the Qur'an!
- I had to read the Qur'an at school, without believing in it at all!
- I use to read the Koran and the Bible at the same time, thinking that they could be additional information for a believer.
- I was always comparing the Bible, the Qur'an and the Science. I was more convinced my the Bible.
- Is the Qur'an, the word of God?
- It was difficult for me to start reading the Bible, since I believed that the Qur'an was only revealed book from heaven.
- It was difficult to believe in the Qur'an and replace it by the Bible, but it was clear to me that Christianity was.
- The difference between the Bible and the Qur'an: what is their real source?

#### **Question 14. Initial Spiritual Struggle Verbatims**

*(Please describe any inner spiritual struggles (in your soul) you had:)*

##### Specific situations

- Struggled to stop smoking, drinking and taking drugs, struggled between my old life and my new beliefs and some thoughts.
- I had trouble with my husband.
- Illness.
- Many times when I need to do something, I just want God replay my request quickly, but later I find out to wait.
- Specially when I was distributing the word of God.
- They tempted to kill me few times.
- To leave old habits (smoking).
- Was hard to leave my old life behind.

##### Faith and Discipleship

- Confusion, not worthy, neglecting love.
- All the time under spiritual attack.
- At first I didn't have a Bible or a church, the only thing I had was God's channels.
- At the beginning of my faith I had struggles, but bit by bit when I grew in Christ all the struggles got solved.
- Confused.
- Doubt.
- Doubt from time to time.
- Fear of future rejection.
- Feel the pain in front of the things that come to my mind,
- Hard to forgive others.
- I had when I was a new believer and didn't feel Jesus in my life. Satan tried to get me more disappointed.
- I wanted to hear God's voice clearly.
- I was an object inside me. It was difficult to realize that I was a normal human being.
- I've had lots of spiritual wars.
- Jealousy, pride.
- Learn how to forgive others.
- Lots of time I felt so depressed and dispirited because of what I was going through.
- My human nature struggling with my faith and life in the light.
- Our spiritual belief becoming stronger day by day.
- Sometimes peace was leaving me and living in trouble.
- Sometimes I was tempted to go back to the Muslim prayer, 5 times a day, thinking that it was the best way to be.

- Spiritual wars.
- Spiritual wars all the time.
- The thought of leaving Christ and leaving my faith.
- There were lots of conflicts in my mind and my heart.
- There were lots of spiritual struggles.
- Unforgiveness, rebellion, rejection.

#### Theological

- Those who have never heard about Jesus, how will they be saved?
- At the beginning I was worried, I was not sure it was right or not.
- Dream to be in a righteous world.
- I always have this question in my mind, “What prevents God from making a miracle so that my family can discover it.”
- I did not have enough information about the Bible, and it wasn't easy for me to accept each word.
- I thought that there was a space among us, but latter I discovered that God has called me to do that.
- Sometimes, I was confused. I could not understand.
- Why my family is not interested in the spiritual things? To know Christ is the best thing that happened to me in the life. Regrettably, my family does not understand and does not want to understand either, in spite of all my efforts to show them the truth of Scriptures.

#### Christianity versus Islam

- I had many questions wondering if the Koran is the truth.
- If the Christian teaching is true, why do many people obey the Islamic Ramadan?
- The differences between Islam and Christianity.
- Where is the origin of Islam?
- Why do Muslims hate Christians?

#### Other Believers

- Confusion at the catholic church.
- Sometime the act of other believers and their mistake make me sad.
- The mistakes of church leaders made me to feel pain.

**Question 15. Initial Problems in Professional Life Verbatims**

*(Problems in your professional life as a result of choosing to follow Christ)*

No Problems

- Did not have any problems. (13)
- Didn't have any troubles. I work for my self.
- I was not involved much with outsiders.
- I work with Christians. I do not have any problem.
- No problem. I've had encouragements!
- No problem. I work for Christians.
- No problem. I work in the private sector, but I pay attention every day, especially with Christian documents (Scripture). I can not offer it to a co-worker.
- No, when I came to Christ, he provided all.
- On the contrary, Jesus blessed me a lot in the work. I had no problems.
- The Lord keeps me. He defends me and I have no problem with the boss.

Lost Job

- Fired from city.
- Fired from my job.
- Fired from my job and then kicked out of my rented house.
- I lost my job. (3)
- I lost my job as police officer.
- Lost my job and was hard to survive.
- Lost my job because I believed in Jesus.
- Lost my job and I became unemployed.
- Worked for a few years with no wages.
- Worked for years with no wages.

Work Difficulties

- Being stigmatized.
- Hard works, favoritism at work.
- I was troubled for Jesus Christ.
- Rejection, incomprehension.
- There is a little difficulty in my job.
- They were aggressive towards me and called me names such as spy and humiliating names.
- Very hard.
- I was a hotel manager before I left it to follow Christ.

Refused Housing, University

- Been forced and kick out from our apartment.
- The university didn't accept me to enter because of my faith.

#### Other Rejections

- Became refused by my own people and society.
- I have problem with my friends and my parents In fact my friends more because they k...
- I lost all my friends.
- Lots of bulling from other children at school.
- No relationship with any of my relative.
- No problem for work, but I had problem with my neighbors.
- Rejection from my family.

## MBB Discipleship Issues Survey - English

The first questions are about your past.

1. How long has it been since you became a follower of Christ?

Years: \_\_\_\_\_  
or Months: \_\_\_\_\_

2. How many years old were you when you became a follower of Christ?
3. What words best describe how you felt when you first realized you were a follower of Christ?

First thoughts part A ----- (*screen 2*) -----

What were your first thoughts or questions when you realized that you were indeed a follower of Christ .

4. In relation to your family?

5. In relation to your friends?

First thoughts part B ----- (*screen 3*) -----

6. In relation to other followers of Christ?

7. In relation to your future?

First thoughts part C ----- (*screen 4*) -----

8. In relation to the church?

9. In relation to your surrounding community (including the mosque)?

Initial struggles part A ----- (screen 5) -----

10. What was your greatest longing at the time you became a follower of Christ?

11. Tell me about the troubles you had with other people:

Initial struggles part B ----- (screen 6) -----

12. Please describe any emotional struggles you went through:

13. Please describe any intellectual struggles or ideological conflicts you went through:

Initial struggles part C ----- (screen 7) -----

14. Please describe any inner spiritual struggles (in your soul) you had:

15. Please describe any problems you dealt with in your professional life as a result of choosing to follow Christ (i.e., in your job, in earning an income, etc.)

Changes ----- (screen 8) -----

The next questions are about the present

16. How have you changed since you chose to follow Christ? *Please choose the appropriate response for each item:*

	Much worse off	A little worse off	The same	A little better off	Much better off
Emotionally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Earning a living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In confidence and peace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comfort regarding your identify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Certainty regarding your faith	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Current needs ----- (screen 9) -----

17. What needs are you still seeking God to meet?

Current descriptive words ----- (screen 10) -----

18. Please give 3-5 words that describe how you generally feel from day to day.

19. Please give 3-5 words that best describe your present relationship with God:

Current meetings ----- (screen 11) -----

20. Please describe how and when you meet with other followers of Christ:

Region ----- (screen 12) -----

21. What region are you from originally? *Please choose only one of the following:*

- Gulf region
- Middle East
- North Africa
- Other, please specify

22. In what region do you now live? *Please choose only one of the following:*

- Gulf region
- Middle East
- North Africa
- Other, please specify

Background A ----- (screen 13) -----

23. In what type of place do you now live? *Please choose only one of the following:*

- Major city
- Minor city
- Village
- Rural area

24. What is your family's religious background? *Please choose only one of the following:*

- Muslim
- Christian
- Other, please specify

Background B ----- (screen 14) -----

25. Are you male or female? *Please choose only one of the following:*

- Male
- Female

26. What is your current marital status? *Please choose only one of the following:*

- Single
- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced

27. How many children do you have?

Employment ----- (screen 15) -----

28. What is your current employment status? *Please choose only one of the following:*

- Full time
- Part time
- Unemployed, seeking work
- Unemployed, not seeking work

29. What is your current occupation?

Education ----- (screen 16) -----

30. What is the highest level of education you completed? *Please choose only one of the following:*

- Primary school
- Middle school
- Secondary school
- College diploma
- University degree
- Post-graduate training

Thank you for your answers.

2010-Jan-22