



www.merf.org

MERF News

Middle East Reformed Fellowship—"Declaring the Whole Counsel of God"

March 2016



Ready for Freedom!



Recording a gospel message addressed to Muslim women

Yes, Muslim women are ready for freedom. This is not about Western world feminism. It is far more basic. It is longing to be treated as human beings. Oppression of women is codified in Muslim "Shari'a Law." Koranic teachings and well-honored, deeply ingrained traditions at best treat women as perpetual children and at worst as personal property. The Koran allows a man to marry up to four women or girls as young as nine years of age, treated equally. He ends a marriage at his whim by three pronouncements of: "I divorce you." A husband is enjoined to

beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his little finger! As a legal witness or heir of property, a woman is considered half a man. In many rural and urban Muslim communities, a woman without a male escort or traditional covering is fair target for serious abuse.

Muslim Women Rebel

Muslim women from as far east as Indonesia and as far west as Morocco are leading a rebellion in urban areas. Urban Muslim women are exposed to different ideas and lifestyles. More of them can read and write or

receive higher education than their sisters in rural areas. Uneducated Muslim women generally grow up believing that what Shari'a law dictates is best for them. Yet, even these have educated female relatives and can listen to the radio, watch

TV, and a growing number are literate enough to use smartphones and surf the Internet. So the mullahs, oppressive rulers, and family members can no longer keep the lid on the thinking and questioning of women, even in closed societies. For example, in the extremely locked-down country of Saudi Arabia, women are daring to express their quest for freedoms—like being allowed to drive a car and go shopping on their own.

Sin and Grace

MERF staff interact daily with Muslim friends on social media. This is very helpful in preparing audio recordings presenting the Gospel to urbanized Arab women. Issues discussed include polygamy, emotional, psychological, physical, and even sexual abuse of women by fathers, brothers, and husbands. Subjects like unjust marriage, divorce, and inheritance laws are also addressed. We are blessed by so many opportunities to present God's own satisfying and sufficient answer in Christ.

For example, a recent Dardasha 7 radio episode



dealt with the rebellion of wives against oppressive husbands. As always, it is written with the purpose of presenting the bad news—manifested in the symptoms of sin—followed by the good news of God’s saving grace in Christ. This is the objective of all our productions.

This episode included a dramatized segment of the real-life story of a man, given the name Maarouf, who was blessed by a very loving wife, Soaad. He much enjoyed her many admirable qualities for 28 years of married life. She even earned almost as much money as he did from her teaching job. Then Soaad contracted cancer which required expensive treatment. At the urging of his male friends, Marouf decided not to spend his resources on expensive cancer treatments for his wife Soaad, but rather to use the money to get another wife to satisfy his manly needs.

The episode was first broadcast live online and allowed for interactive participation of listeners. Here are two sample reactions:

“...the problem is that we women are contented to be religiously treated as dispos-



able instruments and tools”

“I fully agree and feel ashamed as a man to think that our religion would allow such degrading and selfish behavior...”

This Arabic audio episode ended by pointing to Christ’s teaching that in marriage man and woman become an indivisible one body.

In God’s Image

Fatima Na’outh, a prominent Egyptian journalist active in opposing Shari’a laws related to the treatment of women, has recently been sentenced to prison. She was accused by

Islamists of belittling Islam and instigating rebellion against religious norms. The court was headed by an Islamist judge. Na’outh appealed the sentence, saying, *“my imprisonment is the seed of women freedom!”* It is probably not by coincidence that this echoes a historic Christian saying: *“the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church.”*

She goes on to say: *“...the God I know is a truly good God... He is far better than they want us to think. And He wants women to be liberated and dignified because they are also created in His*

own image, just like men...” She has been receiving strong support from women and men across Arab and Muslim lands.

Fatima is well-known for her public quotes of Christ’s sayings in her online blogs, newspaper and magazine articles, and in interviews with TV and radio journalists. Speaking at a Christian gathering in Alexandria, Egypt, she was asked why she, a Muslim woman, promotes Jesus’ teaching so much. Her answer was unambiguous: *“...who else truly speaks such profound and liberating truths!”*

Top: Brainstorming about reaching Muslim women; **Bottom:** Driving illegally with thumb up



MERF-Canada

Thank you for your faithful support! Please make cheques payable to MERF-Canada and send them to the address at the bottom of the page.

Online donations can be made to Middle East Reformed Fellowship (Canada) Inc. through www.canadahelps.org

“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

—John 8:36