

## American Missionaries Bring Christ to Egypt

By Gary Lane  
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EL MINYA, Egypt - Christianity has existed in Egypt six centuries longer than Islam, yet Christians are only about 12 percent of the total population.

Muslims are about 87 percent. The country's constitution gives preference to the Muslim majority and Christians are often treated as second-class citizens.

Some Christian teenaged girls have been abducted and forced to convert to Islam.

Others have been lured or enticed into renouncing their Christian faith by promises of wealth and a more prosperous life.

Such was the case for the daughter of peasant farmer Saber Sabeh Gadallah.

As the late autumn sun set over the fields of El Minya, Egypt, Saber placed his last few handfuls of hay onto a donkey cart and walked slowly back to his

house.

The teenage son of his Muslim neighbor asked to purchase some hay. A fatigued Saber instructed his 16-year-old daughter Suzanne to go and fetch the hay from the backyard. She never returned.

Saber explains how an official responded when he went to the police station to file a missing person report.

"He slapped my face and he yelled, 'what do you want us to do, put a guard at your house 24-hours per day?'" he recalled.

Saber believes Suzanne was abducted, forcibly converted to Islam and married.

Though police may know Suzanne's location, they have refused to reveal her whereabouts to her parents.

"She'd never do anything like this willingly. She's very kind, innocent and respectful of her parents," explained Saber. "if she did this willingly, why will they not let me ask her in person?"

Saber says his family has been torn apart. All he wants is for the truth to be revealed.

Another former Muslim, called "Rachel" to protect her identity, says she came to Christ after she fell in love and married a Christian man. Her family doesn't know she married a Christian, or that she has left the Islamic faith. She is now in hiding because she says family members will murder her if they find out.

"It is written in the Koran that they must kill me and take my child. They would do it," she said.

God is using His people to help persecuted believers like Rachel and to bring hope and opportunity to others.

These American Christians led by a missionary from Kansas teamed up with Egyptian evangelicals. They're partnering to reach suffering and needy Christians in villages throughout upper Egypt.

Children are given gift bags with paper, pens, treats and masks. Rice and chickens are distributed to widows who have little money for purchasing food.

Other poor Christians are given seed money to start micro businesses. One man has had difficulty finding a job because he cannot walk. He turned a grant of 1,000 Egyptian pounds into 1500 in seven months. He used the money to purchase three sheep. He fattened them up and sold them for a profit. He plans to buy four or five more to generate additional funds to support his family.

A classroom was empty as students enjoyed their summer vacation at home. When they returned in the fall, each child was given school supplies provided by caring American Christians. Few parents can afford to purchase a pencil for their children's writing assignments.

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Basxem Sabry says God has sent Christians from the U.S. to help change lives.

"They feel the love of God through the American people and through the Egyptian people who can help them," Sabry said. "This is true love. Not to talk to them, leave them and go. They see the actual love of God not God by words, but God by acts."

Rachel and other Egyptian Christians say they expect many trials in the days ahead. Their faith is strengthened through sorrow and tears but because of the help, prayers of Christians half a world away they are encouraged. They are reminded that God is with them in the midst of their troubles.

"The Lord tells us he cares for the sparrows," Rachel said. "Just think how much more he cares for us."

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