

"I had the most amazing dream," our Arabic tutor exclaimed as she walked into class the morning after Ash Wednesday. She is usually very businesslike about our Arabic studies, but this was quite personal, and we wondered what she was going to say.

"In my dream I had Jesus in my room, and I was protecting him from the Jews. They were banging at my door, and they were saying, 'Give us Jesus,' but I kept saying, 'You can't have him. He's not in here.'"

"But he was. Jesus was lying on my bed, as if he were dead. But he couldn't have been dead. Of course, he wasn't dead! But he looked like he was dead." Here she reflected a common Muslim belief that Jesus did not die on the cross, but was taken up to heaven.

Witnessing to Muslims is against the law in this country, and transgressors can be imprisoned or deported, so I was limited in what I could say. I decided to venture a modest first response: "This is a very special dream, and on the night of Ash Wednesday, no less! You must write it down!"

Our tutor continued, "Jesus just lay there on my bed, and beside him lay the book of the Gospel, and it was glowing with light." Muslims think of the Gospel as a single book revealed to Jesus from heaven but corrupted by Christians. They normally are not encouraged or even permitted to read it for this reason. The Qur'an, on the other hand, is everywhere present and popularly pictured as glowing. "I was there by the body of Jesus, and I was putting dates around it," our tutor said. "He sort of flickered his eyes open, and he looked over at me, and he offered me one of the dates."

At this point I ventured my second appreciative response. I said to her, "You were so much like the women at the tomb when they came to take care of Jesus' body. You in your Middle Eastern dress remind me exactly of them!" [She is what she calls a religious Muslim, wearing a face veil and long sleeves and dress. We have seen only her eyes.] "You were just like the women at Jesus' grave!" I said again. "You must write it down!"

In the ensuing conversation, I told her that I was getting ready to preach in chapel that morning, and that I would be sharing the Gospel.

"Well, you tell them about this!" she urged. I had prepared a serious Lenten meditation on Romans 5:12-19, but this was too much. It was almost like God himself had given this Lenten dream to a dear one outside his fold, and wanted it known. So, before I entered the pulpit, I felt I had to tell the story of our Arabic tutor and her dream. A week later she was still in the students' prayer concerns.

Muslims all over the world by the thousands are having dreams of Jesus, according to our visiting professor who has been lecturing these past three weeks. We heard of imams in Cameroon twenty years ago for whom this occurred, and it hasn't stopped. This Lenten season we invite you to pray for God's dear ones of Muslim faith who are

dreaming of their Lord. Ask God that the living Christ might reveal himself to them in this and other ways. And ask God that we Christians might be ready to be faithful interpreters of dreams when the moment comes. What will you say?

A blessed Lenten season to you all.

Sincerely in Christ,
Your Overseas Pastor and Wife