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INTERLINK MINISTRIES, INC.



Christen begegnen Muslimen

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Dear Friends,

We trust that this finds you well. In this letter I share two articles from MEOS' magazine about:

Bibles and Bible portions for our neighbors in 100 languages!

Excerpt from meinNächster article

MEOS is known for its large selection of bibles. Arabic, Persian, Dari, Tigrinya are the most frequently ordered languages. But language is also the key to the heart and very crucial for integration.

The perplexed Afghan

One special customer is still particularly remembered by media manager Markus Burri, an Italian. He speaks to people on the street, tells them about his faith and about salvation in Jesus Christ. When they listen, he offers to guide them in reading the Bible. One day, this Italian stands with four men in the entrance to the MEOS Medien warehouse, an Afghan, a Pakistani, and two Tibetans. First, the Tibetans receive a Bible. They are very proud to now have a Bible in their mother tongue. Then Markus Burri purposefully disappears between the shelves to fetch an Urdu Bible for the man from Pakistan. The Afghan looks shyly into the racks with questioning eyes. He thinks: "They certainly don't have a Bible for me. But he has made calculations without MEOS. Markus Burri puts a Dari Bible in his hand. Incredibly, he looks at the book. Dari? My language! Not Persian, Dari. Iranians speak Persian. The Afghans can understand it. Dari! The young Afghan can't believe it. A Bible in my language! His face begins to shine more and more and he asks: I may keep this Bible? He can! That's exactly why MEOS has so many different Bibles in stock!

When migrants no longer have a face

by Johannes Müller from meinNächster

"I'm nobody," it went through my head. While walking through the old town of Winterthur, I had not met anybody I knew and nobody had greeted me. A few weeks earlier we had returned to Switzerland after a fourteen-year mission in Guinea (West Africa). There I had been known as the white pastor, and many people spoke to me on the street. In short: I was a somebody.

That happened a few years ago. The migration back from Africa led us to an environment that we knew well from the past. We spoke the language and got back into everyday life relatively quickly and yet, since then I have often felt that I did not belong. Compared to our time in Guinea, I had no "face" in the Swiss environment.



Migration causes shame

People who come from community cultures and immigrate to Switzerland for the first time experience intensively that they have lost their network of relationships and their place. They feel that they do not belong to the community. The feeling of being

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excluded triggers shame.

This is typical. Many experiences of migration have something shameful about them. An Eritrean refugee who in Italy slept overnight on sewage grates because of the winter cold wrote: "I don't want to be seen, I want to hide and disappear into thin air, I am so ashamed. What should I tell my mother the next time I call? . . . No prayer helps to take away groundless shame."

Many refugees can hardly tell about their journey. Traumatic experiences like abuse, rape and powerlessness embarrass them too much. But also their situation as asylum seekers in the host country contributes to their shame. Lack of language skills and unemployment show them time and again that they do not meet the requirements.

Giving personal esteem

Recently my wife and I accompanied a young Ghanaian man to an international Christian church so that he could discuss with the pastor the rejection of his asylum application. The two of them immediately switched to an African language. I thought that they came from the same people. But the pastor explained to me in English that this was not the case. He spoke three Ghanaian languages, including the young man's. When I expressed my admiration for his knowledge of languages, he confessed to me that only German was not enough for him. Only when he felt my appreciation, he could admit this weakness.

But there is also another point of view: Every migrant is a professional. Their knowledge of their country of origin, their culture and their experiences are unique. If they can make constructive use of this knowledge, which rarely happens automatically in the Swiss community, it is very appreciative of them. Honor is the best antidote to shame.

Conveying visible recognition

Migrants from community cultures will gain a better foothold with us if they not only have individual contacts but also find their way into groups mixed together with Swiss people. On the soccer field this is always successful. But not all migrants play soccer. What can Christian groups and churches do?

An African who has been coming to the church I belong to for a while introduced me to his thirteen-year-old daughter. He asked if she could sing in one

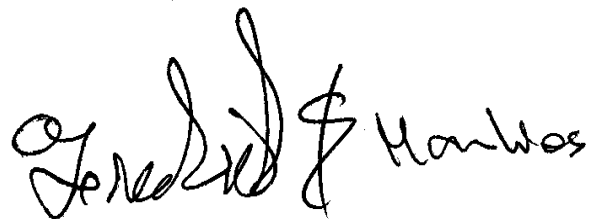
of the worship bands. It was clear to me that the girl's talents would be visible on the stage and that everyone would see that she and her family are part of the church. Unfortunately I could not place her in a band because she was clearly too young. What other activity could the church offer the girl and her parents where they would be noticed and recognized?

When Jesus was asked who the neighbor we should love was, he mentioned a stranger – a Samaritan. Loving strangers means putting a face on them again, showing them real appreciation and making sure that they are noticed in their environment. This is the expression of the love that God calls us to.

Moving Websites

With heightened concerns about privacy and data security, I have been asked to move all MEOS websites to web hosting located in Switzerland. The current annual web host subscription that MEOS has, that is not located in Switzerland, ends on 13th of April. A plan for new Swiss web hosting and transferring web sites has been approved, so between now and then, I will be working to transfer websites and web services to the new web hosting.

Thanks for your prayers and support of our ministry in Switzerland!



Frederick and Marlies Henderson

Prayer and Praise

- Pray for Oliver as he looks for work as a design engineer.
- Pray for Alice in her apprenticeship as a fine carpenter.
- Pray for wisdom regarding the transfer of MEOS websites to the new Swiss web hosting.