

International Association for Mission Studies
Children, Youth and Mission Study Group

Changing Faith: Dimensions of faith change in young Muslims exploring faith in Christ

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Keith White asks the question

What is the gospel of Jesus Christ for a girl-child in a Muslim country and context, who is still living with her family, unable legally [to] go to church, or become a Christian without upsetting her parents, her extended family, and her community? What, if anything, does the gospel mean, in essence and in practice, for this child?¹

This paper examines the dynamics of religious and faith change which might result from Christian witness towards Muslim young people (under eighteen years of age). Faith is understood in terms of socio-cultural, religious and 'spiritual' *belonging*, theological *belief* and socio-religious *practices*. Religious change is described in terms of *conversion*, *modification* and *transformation*. It is argued that it is important for Christian youth leaders not only to understand the implications of their activity within the context of their ministry, but that having a more nuanced understanding of the type of faith change they are seeking with young people they are ministering to, will be beneficial for the long term viability of their mission activity. A framework or matrix which recognises that different elements of a young person's existing faith system [identity, belief and practices] will change in different ways [conversion, modification, transformation] as a result of faith in Christ is developed highlighting the uniqueness of each faith change experience. The themes developed within this paper are as a result of doctoral research carried out within the context of Beirut Lebanon.

¹ Keith White, *Theology, Mission and Child*, ed. by B. Prevette, K. White, R. Velloso-Ewell and D.J.Konz (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), p.3.