

EDITORIAL

Counting the Cost

Yesterday, here in Worthing, U.K., a number of colleagues had the privilege of attending the memorial celebration for that amazing ‘apostle’ to Algeria, Daisy Marsh. I never had the privilege of meeting her and have only heard about her exploits and her tremendous impact on the church in Algeria, but I was deeply impacted by hearing her father Charles Marsh speak when I was just getting started in ministry to Muslims thirty-seven years ago.

Charles was in his 80s and speaking to some of us in London who were just beginning to engage with Muslims. After recounting stories of countless converts in Algeria who were murdered by their family and friends within two years of coming to faith, that godly apostle to Algeria challenged us: ‘If you have not yet counted the cost, and are not prepared to die for Christ, then you do not have the right to speak to Muslims about Christ because the message you bring them could lead to their being killed for the sake of Christ, should they believe.’

This issue of SEEDBED offers a rich and varied series of reflections that both illustrate and wrestle with what it means to count the cost and remain faithful to God’s call on our lives when we face violence and unpredictable opposition and persecution. We who live and minister among Muslims are increasingly facing higher levels of risk that require deeper levels of commitment and wisdom.

Most of the colleagues writing in this issue know what it means to count the cost. Some were forcefully expelled from Morocco after many years of faithful ministry. Others share the heart-rending process of evacuating a country because of violence and civil war. Others wrestle with the challenges in developing an appropriate theology of suffering that can help us make wise decisions and recover from traumatic change. Still others suggest guidelines for teams and leaders about how to process safety and evacuation decisions in volatile situations and how to deal with the anxiety of living in volatile times. We include reviews of eight books that deal very personally with aspects of counting the cost and dealing well with suffering and persecution.

This SEEDBED contains rich fare about what it means, here in our 21st century, to count the cost of following Christ. May God give us all strength and grace to continue to follow the one who said ‘Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple’ (Lk 14:33).

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