

Why are Young People Attracted to Islam?

I am asked this question often by many as I travel the country speaking on Islam. Why are young people attracted to Islam?



We heard of reports of two beautiful, young Austrian girls who left the peace and prosperity of Europe to join ISIS. Both Samra Kesinovic and Sabina Selimovic were tragically raped and died violent deaths when they tried to leave ISIS and return home.



Then there is a case of Justin Sullivan from Morganton, North Carolina. He plotted to kill his parents and 100 other Americans for ISIS on July the 4th but was arrested by the FBI on weapon charges before he could carry out his plot.

During the investigation, we learned that he was the one who murdered his neighbor six months earlier as he was practicing for his future assault. The judge just sentenced him to life in Federal prison.

I am no psychologist but I did study some psychology in college. Also with thirty years of ministry experience, I have gathered some skills in discerning why people behave the way they do. I believe the greatest motivation for young people to follow Islam is that they are seeking *attention by being different* rather than seeking for *truth*.

Experimentation

Young people are on the quest to stand apart from the crowd. They are carving out their niché in this big confusing world. They want to be noticed, non-compliance to the crowd is adopted, and they turn to experimentation with styles or even non-styles. They also experiment with odd or far-out ideologies to be unique. (I am always amused at this factual statement... ‘You are unique, just like everyone else.’)

It is this experimentation with ideologies that is leading some into Islam. It is different and foreign. Although 1.7 billion people in the world are following this ideology, it is rare and even feared in North America and it has its appeal.

Gullibility

There are reasons why certain things are legally not permitted to children who are under age. We restrict driving privileges to people until they are at least 15 or 16 years old. We restrict the age to get married to 18 years old. These activities require sensibility and good judgment. As a society, we believe that children have not developed the sensibilities or discernment to make wise choices, they are gullible.

This is the case of these young girls and many others like them who seek to be different. Their folly and desire to find a niche for themselves has led them down the path of heartache and ultimately their own death.

Their ignorance of the real Islam becomes a shattering reality to them after they have become trapped. Hardly a month goes by that my wife & I don't hear of a sad story of a daughter, grand-daughter or niece who married a Muslim and is now regretting the decision. My wife's cousin married an Arab Muslim, which was short lived. The horror stories we could tell you would break your heart of all the accounts we have heard.

The Badge of Rebellion

For others, the reason they find their way into Islam is they seek to be tough and not someone to messed with. This is the case of Justin Sullivan. I met his parents briefly, and his story is one of a lonely teen who was relocated away from his home and friends while in High School. He became quiet, withdrawn and lonely. With no friends at school, he spent his time playing violent video games and surfing the internet unsupervised. He was bullied because he was a recluse and did not fit in.

Even though young people want to be different, they don't want to be mocked or bullied for it. They want to be admired and followed for their uniqueness. Justin used his conversion to Islam to look tough and not to be a person to messed with.

When I lived in England, there was an epidemic of youth violence and vandalism throughout the country. The Labor government thought that the solution was to shame these tyrants with slapping an 'ASBO' (antisocial behaviour order) on them. It backfired; the *asbo* became a badge of honor

to the rebel who wished to be seen as a tough guy. It came to seen that you were not tough enough or someone to be feared if you did not have an *asbo* added to your name.

ISIS has become the new badge of rebellion to the teen who wishes to be the tough guy to be feared. ‘Fear me and respect me or I will chop off your head’ is the message we get from someone who is with Islam.

Rebellion

In short, it is not about the *religion* of Islam; it is about being different. Standing out is why young people are falling into Islam. If we were to peel back all the layers and get down to the real issue, it is rebellion. A heart full of rebellion is going to lead youth into the arms of Islam.

The Youth of Western Civilization could be described with one word: Hurt! They are hurting as their life is full of misery. Many come from broken families and they are hurt. Their hurt turns into anger, anger to hate; and before you know it, their heart is filled with rebellion against any authority.

Islam is a natural fit. The message of Islam is that the Western way is faulty and Islam is the answer. Islam rebels against our Western values and is at war with our Western values. A hurting teen has no discernment and filled with foolishness and is also at war with established system. The two join up, but both are on a path to destruction.

There Is Hope

Much of what we uncovered are the results of our society turning from God's precepts. If we follow God's word, we will find peace for our lives (James 1:25).

One of the big problems with our society is the broken home, which has left behind a carnage of hurting, angry children. If we followed the Biblical model, Moms and Dads would stay married (Matt. 19:5-6). Children would be properly disciplined (Prov. 29:15) to respect authority and grow up to be productive members (Prov. 22:6).

I firmly believe that we can correct our course and return this nation to being a God-fearing nation once again. I wish we would recognize our mistake and make the necessary corrections voluntarily, as I do not wish to experience the dreadful correcting hand of judgment. We have a choice, to clean up our house and find His blessing, or wait for Him to clean up our house. If we wait for him to do it, it will be painful.