The Secret World of God: Aesthetics, Relationships, and the Conversion of ‘Frances’ from Shi’a Islam to Christianity

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Abstract

On a relatively sunny, summer morning (for Scotland) I met with Frances at a coffee shop in what I will call Castle City. We had met through a mutual acquaintance at a university and the local Episcopal parish. She is a slight woman possessing a strong if introspective personality and at ease with words that made conversation enjoyable. She looks completely at home in the UK (and this would also have been the case 100 years ago) reminding us that the nation’s name Iran is related to the English word Aryan. I do not claim that this is a complete picture of her conversion, which as with many conversions out of Islam—whether to Christianity, atheism, or humanism—took place over many years and I try to give due weight to the various phases in this complex process. Moreover, it must be noted that this is the account of a diaspora conversion, because many of the key events took place outside of Iran.

Francis Beckwith, a scholar of Christianity, makes several arguments that are paradigmatic of modern Christian responses to the Bahá’í faith. Using mostly, though not exclusively, biblical sources, Beckwith critiques Bahá’í doctrine and beliefs, devoting chapters to "The Bahá’í Use of the Bible" and the "Truth of Christianity." The interactions of these three faiths over the past 150 years have settled into the pattern of hostility from Islam, a grudging tolerance by Christianity, and a slightly positive acceptance by Judaism. This can be explained by the threat the Bahá’ís purportedly posed to each religion, a hypothesis which finds parallels in the relations between the first three Abrahamic faiths. Christian converts from Islam. Beginning in the 1970s some Protestant pastors started to hold church services in homes in Persian, rather than in one of the ethnic Christian minority languages such as Armenian or Syriac. One of the key leaders who spearheaded this movement was the Assemblies of God bishop Haik Hovsepian Mehr. "The Secret World of God: Aesthetics, Relationships, and the Conversion of 'Frances' from Shi'a Islam to Christianity"(PDF). Global Missiology. 9 (3). Conversion to Christianity primarily involves belief (faith) in God, repentance of sin, and confession of... Shia Islam. Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism. Conversion to Christianity is the religious conversion of a previously non-Christian person to some form of Christianity. It has been called the foundational experience of Christian life.[1] Conversion to Christianity primarily involves belief (faith) in God, repentance of sin, and confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. While conversion to Christianity may simply involve a personal choice to identify with Christianity rather than with another religion, many Christians understand it to mean that the individual attains eternal salvation by a genuine conversion experience or act—a "ra