

## Engel's Scale for Muslims

Level	Description	God is	Man's Task
-16	Islamic Orientation		Prayer
-15	Recognition of sinfulness, fear of God and judgment	Stirring	
-14	Positive experience with Christian believers	Directing	Contextualizing
-13	Change in attitude toward Christianity		Befriending
-12	Discovery of Jesus and the Word	Guiding	Testifying
-11	Attraction to the Historical Christ		
-10	Seeking Christ through questions and dialogue		Explaining
-9	Exposure to Biblical teaching		Teaching
-8	Experience of God's real presence	Visiting	
-7	De-emphasis of Qur'an, Muhammad, and Islamic Rituals		
-6	Accepting the Cross, Death and Resurrection of Christ as truth	Convicting	
-5	Continued exposure to Christian love, friendship, and acceptance		Accepting/Loving
-4	Believing in Christ as Savior	Forgiving	
-3	Belief in Preeminence Christ		Spiritual Warfare
-2	Receive an opportunity to commit life to Christ		Challenging
-1	Confession of Christ as Master/Lord		
0	Regeneration of Holy Spirit	Redeeming	
+1	Publicly identifying as Member of a Christ-believing community		Exhorting
+2	Functioning member of local Body		
+3	Water Baptism	Delivering	
+4	Freedom from religious spirit		Fasting/Praying
+5	Continued growth in character, lifestyle and service	Empowering	Discipling
+6	Part of Team Leadership	Calling	Releasing

## **Introduction**

There is no one kind of Muslim in the world. Variation of Islamic belief and practice varies depending on culture, experience, socio-economic status, education, and urban vs. rural environment. Anyone who identifies him or herself as a Muslim may fall anywhere on a scale of commitment that ranges from secular, to moderate, to devout, to extremist. Therefore it is virtually impossible to develop a scale that would reflect the norm for the process in coming from Islamic belief to a saving knowledge of Christ. This scale is a reflection on experience in working with Muslims in a moderate Islamic country in Asia. It should be considered in its context. However, in examining the typical process for South Asian moderate Muslims, one can still glean helpful insights to the process and make application to one's own context.

## **Islamic Orientation – (-16)**

Muslims at this stage believe in the preeminence of Islam, Muhammad and the Qur'an. No matter their degree of practice, they would identify themselves as Muslims and have been taught all the basic tenets of their faith necessary to be an accepted and functioning member of their local Islamic community and family nucleus. Islam is more than a religion or belief to them, it is an all-encompassing way of life that defines who they are and affects almost everything they do.

## **Recognition of sinfulness, Fear of God and judgment (-15)**

At this stage, a Muslim is thinking more and more about their spiritual condition. Being fully aware of the requirements of God laid out in the Sunna, there develops a more acute awareness of their sinfulness. This awareness also increases their fear of God and what will be faced in the afterlife. The primary fear is that of how much punishment for their failures, mistakes and falling short of the Islamic ideal they will face after death. It may be that this new awareness inspires a greater commitment to read the Qur'an, attend the mosque or perform salat. A witnessing believer should not see this new stance toward Islam in only a negative light. It is often a sign of spiritual hunger and awareness of need which God desires to build upon.

## **Positive experience with Christian believers (-14)**

This is a crucial stage to initially move the Muslim in the direction of Christ. Many Muslims have been told stories that reflect negatively of Christians. They also have preconceived ideas of their beliefs and lifestyle. Many have seen the influence of the West upon Islamic cultures and have assumed that everything from the West is Christian. Therefore one of the more important things that can occur is an exposure to a Christian that helps redefine their idea of what Christianity really is about. This causes the Muslim to allow room for something within Christianity that is outside

their frame of reference. It often helps to spark a new curiosity about what Christians actually are like and what they believe..

### **Change in Attitude Toward Christianity (-13)**

This is the stage where A Muslim progresses from having a negative view of Christianity to a more positive one. It is here where a Muslim is no longer antagonistic toward Christians. He has become a **SYMPATHIZER** toward them due to the first-hand experience with a Christian who built friendship, and who demonstrated the holiness, godliness and grace of Christ to them.

### **Discovery of Jesus and the Word (-12)**

At this stage, a Muslim's new curiosity toward the things of Christ causes a fresh exposure to what his own holy book teaches about Isa. At this stage, aversion to reading what has been considered and altered and corrupted book is broken down.

### **Attraction to the Historical Christ (-11)**

This new exposure to the Christ of the Gospels can develop a new respect and interest in Christ and His teachings. At this stage Christ is still a historical person who was sent by God, and lived and taught. Even though Islam teaches that Jesus was taken up to heaven and will return again, the mystery of the living Christ is still hidden from them. The excellence of Christ's character, the beauty of his teaching, and the power in His ministry revealed in the Gospels begins to break down walls of prejudice and develops a greater hunger and new respect for Isa al-Masih. There may be comparisons made internally with other prophets. As positive differences become more apparent, there can be an attraction to Christ and a desire to emulate his ideals. It is important that a Muslim be exposed to Scripture in his heart language.

### **Seeking Christ through questions and dialogue (-10)**

This is a very crucial stage where the Muslim progresses from being a sympathizer to a **SEEKER**. They will have numerous questions. These must be answered with patience and love by a Christian friend. Without this interaction, doubts and a heart still blinded by the veil of Islam will stop the seeker from progressing further in their journey. This can be a very long stage, with a great interest in the Bible and many questions leading the Christian to think that the Muslim is close to salvation and ready to receive Christ. But patience is needed here as lies are replaced with truth, which is beginning to be digested and taking root in the Muslim's heart.

### **Exposure to Biblical teaching (-9)**

The difference between this and the previous step is that here, a more systematic teaching is experienced by the Muslim seeker rather than being oriented only to his/her personal questions. This exposure can be through a contextualized non-threatening small group or one-on-one. As truth is explained line upon line and

precept upon precept, faith necessary for salvation is increased according to Romans 10:17. Also the reliability and “sense” of the Bible can be proven to the seeker as they are exposed to the breadth of Scripture. It is here that the seeker can see that there are many more similarities than differences between Judeo/Christian and Islamic beliefs and values.

### **Experience of God’s real presence (-8)**

The importance of this step cannot be overstated. The veracity of God’s Word and the claims of the Gospel must be backed up with signs following in order to bring most Muslims beyond sympathetic inquiry or curiosity. This experience with the present and risen Christ will propel the Muslim seeker past the doubts and accusations that will continue to plague him or her as they continue on their journey. It will be the thing they can always point back to in their process toward faith where experientially they understood that there was power in Jesus Christ and in the Word. This experience can range from feeling God’s manifested presence in a time of worship, an answer to prayer, witnessing a miracle, experiencing healing, coming in contact with the gifts of the Spirit in operation, or seeing a dream or vision of Jesus. It is here that the Muslim progresses from being a Seeker to being a **FOLLOWER** of Christ. This is in much the same way that Mary Magdalene began following Christ after his miraculous forgiveness of her past, or how others who were healed by Jesus began to not just attend his teaching sessions, but desired to travel with him and continue experiencing as much of Him as possible.

### **De-emphasis of Qur’an, Muhammad, and Islamic Rituals (-7)**

Very naturally this step begins when the new Muslim follower does not experience the same satisfaction in reading the Qur’an or attending the mosque as before. This de-emphasis originates with the seeker and not by being imposed by the Christian community. Many times, a comparison of the character of Christ with previously respected prophets or holy men results in a greater fidelity to Jesus. The living Word and the Living Christ begin to fill the spiritual void of the seeker so that previous pursuits wane in importance. This step is necessary for the heart to become single and united in a commitment to Christ.

### **Accepting the Cross, Death and Resurrection of Christ as truth (-6)**

The main stumbling blocks of the Gospel begin to fall in this step. Until and unless there is a lessening of allegiance to the hold of Islam and its accusations against the Bible and the cross, a full acceptance of the crucial truths of the Gospel’s claims will not happen. At this stage it is still possible that the Muslim will struggle with Christ being the Son of God or with the concept of the Trinity. However, the trustworthiness of the Gospel, and the authority of Christ have been established enough to believe in the basics of the plan of salvation: Jesus’ virgin birth, sinless life, death on the cross, propitiation for sin, resurrection in power over death and ascension to the right hand of God.

### **Continued exposure to Christian love, friendship, and acceptance (-5)**

The full ramifications of what this new belief will mean are beginning to be realized at this step. The commitment of local believers to stand by the Muslim Christ-follower is extremely important. The Muslim follower is counting the cost and determining if there is a viable emotional support system to carry them through to act upon this new belief with life decisions that are commiserate.

#### **Believing in Christ as Savior (-4)**

The follower of Jesus now becomes a bonafide **BELIEVER** at this stage. This belief is the first half of Romans 10:9-10, thus the Muslim has taken one of the most important steps to salvation. Understanding Christ as the acceptable sacrifice for sin is realized. An acknowledgement of Him as the Redeemer who had the authority and right to lay down his sinless life as a substitute for us, taking our penalty and punishment from a holy God is now believed and accepted. Though this step of heartfelt belief in Christ as Savior is crucial for salvation, many former Muslims who come to this step stay here and never progress to the step of confessing Jesus as Lord. However the new peace that is experienced through forgiveness of sin becomes such a reality that the authority of Christ becomes more evident.

#### **Belief in the Preeminence of Christ (-3)**

Jesus as Savior is easier to accept than the deity of Jesus. This can be a very difficult and time consuming step to lead the Muslim Background believer to. There is a very great conflict within the Believer's heart over the fear of committing the most serious sin in Islam, *shirk* – or believing that God has an equal. The belief that God has a Son has been vilified by his/her Islamic teachers, family and community all their lives. The oneness and immutability of God is such a very strong concept regarding the identity and nature of Allah that its giving way to believe in the Deity of Christ seems almost impossible to them. It is very important at this step to demonstrate patience and loving understanding to the MBB in this stage. Further supernatural experiences of Christ's reality are very helpful at this stage. Every effort should be made in prayer and opportunity to lead the MBB to experience more of Christ's power and authority. Lots of time should be taken to systematically work through the Scriptures to show the presence of Christ throughout the Old Testament and that He in fact did claim to be God in the Gospels. One must keep in mind Jesus' response to Peter's acknowledgment of Sonship – flesh and blood cannot convince of this. Only the Holy Spirit can bring this revelation as the veil of unbelief is removed.

#### **Receive an opportunity to commit life to Christ (-2)**

The process of steps toward salvation takes such time for most Muslims, that Christians forget that at this point a direct offer to commit one's life to Jesus as Lord is often needed. Without this lovingly direct offer of an opportunity to take this step with the MBB, they may feel that belief in Christ as Savior is sufficient. However, a verbal confession of Jesus as Lord is necessary for salvation according to Romans 10:9-10.

#### **Confession of Christ as Lord and Master (-1)**

This is where the Muslim Believer truly becomes a part of the Kingdom of God by switching allegiances from any other God, belief system or master to Christ alone. In this confession of Christ as Lord there is an implicit renouncing of any previous devotion or adoration of other prophets or religious leaders. Where submission to the will of Allah as revealed in the Qur'an was their previous life commitment, now Jesus has openly been acknowledged as not just Savior and Forgiver of sins, but rightful Master to whom exclusive and total submission is given. They are now in the lifelong process of becoming Christ's **DISCIPLE**.

### **Regeneration by the Holy Spirit (0)**

The spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit and subsequent indwelling should be a very real and felt experience. Scripture promises that the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirits that we are sons and daughters of God. The power of the Holy Spirit within the life of the believer to live a holy life, the hearing of His voice, the experience of His guidance, and feeling of His abiding peace is a watershed experience at this point that enables and inspires the MBB who may have previously been very careful and cautious to now be prepared to take the next necessary step toward onward growth in their Christian walk.

### **Publicly identifying as a member of a Believing Community (+1)**

This is the step where many MBB's stall. The real cost of identifying as a believer in Christ is weighed. The MBB could face being ostracized from his family or community, loss of employment, divorce, threats, violence, imprisonment and even death, depending on the context. Much prayer is needed for the MBB to come to the place of willingly identifying as a believer. There should have been sufficient time for the community to witness first hand the change in character and nature that this new faith in Christ has brought, without necessarily knowing or understanding the source. This undeniable positive change can often help soften the blow of disclosure somewhat, but nothing is guaranteed. It is suggested that the first disclosure be with his or her closest and most sympathetic family member or friend. If the Christian mentor sees that after loving encouragement to do so, the MBB is still reticent after a long period of months subsequent to salvation, then stronger exhortation and encouragement is needed. Along with this needs to be a readiness on the part of the Christian community to provide safety, protection and care for the MBB in case of any adverse response. The MBB who fails to take this step will eventually grow stagnant in their walk with Christ and runs the risk of eventually falling away.

### **Functioning member of local Body (+2)**

At this stage it is imperative that the MBB be willing to identify with the larger body of Christ. An understanding of the household of faith which transcends language, culture and background is needed. It is here that the difficulty to embrace this step will often correspond to the degree of contextualization and shielding from the Christian community which was experienced. It is important that the MBB recognize the Christian community as an ally and an asset as he or she moves forward to take a further imperative step in their progression of faith and walk with Christ.

### **Water Baptism (+3)**

Though not necessary for salvation, this step is imperative for the continued growth of the MBB. It is a point of no looking back. Family members may have been exhibiting patient tolerance up to this point in hope that there would be a return to Islam. Now there may be a sudden hardening of heart and aggression as this step signifies in their eyes a true permanent loss of the MBB to the Islamic community. This step is necessary for the MBB to be able to experience the wonderful process of sanctification. The power over the old self life and new ability to overcome temptation will prove so liberating for the MBB who all their life longed to live up to the righteous standards of God but realized they had no power to do so.

#### **Freedom from a religious spirit (+4)**

Water baptism brings the beginning of a freedom that eventually liberates the MBB from the spirit of religion that has often been so ingrained in their psyche. The sense of satisfaction through measurable obedience is a deep rooted motivation that requires prayer and much teaching to overcome. True repentance from dead works and a wholehearted belief in acceptance by God through grace alone is a needed step to truly progress onward in spiritual maturity. Paul's letter to the Galatians underscores the danger of a return to this orientation by those previously under law. It takes consistent teaching and a demonstration by a Christian mentor what true freedom from works really means and how it is lived out.

#### **Continued growth in character, lifestyle and service (+5)**

The baptism in the Holy Spirit which gives the power to be witnesses for Christ is not an option for MBB's. To the degree that a believer in Christ fails to share their faith with others, is the same degree to which they wither and stagnate spiritually. The challenges, fears and threats that MBB's will face, make imperative the boldness for sharing their faith that is promised through this experience.

#### **Part of Team Leadership (+6)**

MBBs already come from an orientation of submission toward and commitment to do the will of God at any cost. This can translate to an openness to ministry calling that often falls on more deaf ears in other contexts. MBB's should be encouraged to give their lives to serve God in obeying his specific call upon their lives. Usually their first desire is to reach their own community. But often there is a belief that their immediate family and close neighbors are unreachable because of previous antagonism. However they should be encouraged to not lose heart and to pray and believe for a harvest in this their most important mission field..

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