

# Algerians Turning Away from Islam

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By Jacob Thomas

The early Islamic Futuhat resulted in the disappearance of the Christian Church in North Africa. That tragedy took place in a part of the world that, prior to the rise of Islam, had a strong Christian presence. One of the greatest North African Christians was Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430). It was his legacy that contributed to the rise of the Protestant Reformation.

Early in January, 2009, I read on the online daily aafaq, a report datelined Algiers that dealt with a growing number of young Algerians turning away from Islam, and embracing the Christian faith. Here are excerpts, followed by my comments:

“Some Amazigh .1 websites have disclosed that many Algerian young people have left Islam and adopted Christianity. They confessed that they did so due to the ugliness of the crimes perpetrated by the Salafist ‘Da’wa and Combat Movement’ against civilians. They were tremendously disappointed and disenchanted with Islam, claiming that it was responsible for nurturing these Jihadists who have been terrorizing and murdering innocent people.

“The website noted that the spread of Christianity in Algeria has even reached areas that were entirely under the influence of the Islamists, such as in eastern Algeria. Furthermore, the Christian expansion in the country was not due exclusively to missionary organizations, as certain Islamic groups claim. The reason is to be found in Islam itself. It has been associated in the minds of the youth with Irhab, assassinations, and crimes against innocent people. They remember that many of the crimes were committed during the 1990s, and occurred in distant villages of Algeria when young women were abducted, taken to the mountains as “captives,” gang-raped, and then killed by having their throats slit. Such horrific scenes took place in Algeria over several years and resulted in the very word “Islamic” becoming synonymous with Irhab!

“The report added that in Islam a woman is regarded as an enemy that must be fought with all means. She must be punished for the simplest mistake, while men go unpunished when they commit similar misdeeds. Thus, a woman is held responsible for the simplest act, and is liable to be put to death, since she is by nature a “Shaytana” i.e. a female Satan. This seriously misguided and misogynist view of women causes young men to worry about their own sisters, and be anxious about their future daughters as well.

“It went on to explain that the Irhabis who committed those awful crimes against women held to a view of Islam that took for granted that discrimination between the sexes is normal. They believe in the notion that the bed is the sole reason for a woman’s existence. In northern Algeria alone, 5,000 women were raped. This Amazigh source

regards these radicals as ‘Allah’s guards on earth’ who refuse to act as civilized human beings.

“The website ended its comments on the alienation of Algerian youth by stating that as long as Islam is unable to get out of its closed circle, and evolve according to the requirements of a civil society that is open to love, tolerance, and coexistence with others; it will continue to alienate more young people. Ultimately, it is the actions of the Irhabis that have been responsible for the Christianization of more than 20,000 Algerians during the bloody and dark decade of the 1990s.”

It was really a great piece of news, especially because it appeared on a widely-read Arabic-language site. Within 5 days (by 27 January) 17 comments were posted on the aafaq website. Five demanded that the Sharia Law of Apostasy be applied to the converts; and should they refuse to revert to Islam, they must be put to death.

A few comments claimed that Islam was not responsible for the acts of the Islamists. Two comments quoted from the New Testament, these words of Jesus taken from the Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the peacemakers...” Other comments criticized severely those who asked for the killing of the apostates.

While the major media in the West are replete with reports about the activities of the Islamists and Jihadists groups throughout the Muslim world, news about the growing dissatisfaction of many young people with Islam are never or seldom reported. We need to learn about these movements in order to refute the Muslim propagandists and their Western allies who keep chanting that Islam is a religion of peace and harmony. The experience of the Algerians growing up during the last two decades contradicts this claim. Some of them are turning to Christianity showing their utter dissatisfaction with a faith that has been to a great extent, responsible for the horrific acts of the Islamists of Algeria who have never hesitated to murder innocent people in their attempt to take over the reins of power!

1. Amazigh is the name preferred by the original people of North Africa. The Arab invaders called them Berber. During the French colonial era, their region in Algeria was known as the Kabyle, a word derived from the Arabic, ‘Qabila,’ a tribe. After independence, non-Arab Algerians began to use their ancient name, ‘Amazigh.’ It is especially among them that Christianity is spreading nowadays. There is growing awareness of the fact that their ancestors were Christian, prior to the Islamic invasions of the 7th and 8th centuries A.D.

To read the Arabic text of the article from Algiers, please go to:  
[http://www.aafaq.org/print.aspx?id\\_print=7858](http://www.aafaq.org/print.aspx?id_print=7858)