

# Voices: Is the kingdom of God enough?

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In mid-2017, while traveling in Somalia to visit with a network of underground believers on behalf of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Wilberforce Initiative, I was profoundly impacted by the testimony of Iman. Several years ago - though he had never met a Christian or seen a Bible - Iman's reading of the Quran led him to the conviction that God was revealing God's love to humanity through the person of Jesus Christ.

When Iman shared this understanding with his family, they feared he had lost his mind and beat him in hopes of driving out the "demon of Christianity." This pattern continued twice a year for the next six years, until after exhausting local options, the family took Iman to a specialist in Ethiopia who tied Iman's hands and feet and tortured him in a locked room from Friday through Sunday. Throughout this ordeal, Iman prayed a specific request: would the Lord allow his hands and feet to be untied?

After a round of beating that Sunday, his prayer request was answered and he was unbound and left in that locked room. Late that Sunday evening, something that only could be described as miraculous happened as the door to the room swung open. Realizing no one else was present, Iman walked out to his freedom. Finding a nearby farm, he traded his watch for a ride to a refugee camp. Accepted as a refugee, Iman met his first Christians, received his first Bible and began the process of discipleship.

Today, several years later, Iman is pastoring two churches, one in Ethiopia and one in Somalia.

Reflecting on this experience, Iman described his journey in light of Psalm

126:3-5 as one who sowed in tears and reaped a harvest of joy. He continued:

*“We need to accept and receive the crucifixion, and that what Jesus passed through, we also need to pass through. They kill your flesh, but they are not able to kill your soul. Do not be afraid of those who try to kill you. Your life does not belong to you. It belongs to the Lord. He said in his word - which always gives us hope - that I am with you to the uttermost ends of the world. Yes, we are persecuted. Yes, we do not have freedom. *But we have the kingdom of God and that is enough for us.*”*

In our fast-paced, technology-driven, material-calling world, can we join with Iman in declaring in honesty and authenticity that the kingdom of God is enough for us? More than anything else, can the kingdom of God be our vision and passion? With some 1.5 billion people continuing to live in areas where they have less than a 50 percent chance of ever hearing the gospel, can we lean into the example of Iman and the calling of Scripture to faithfully share the hope of Jesus Christ wherever it may lead?

As I begin this journey with you as the general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, I am deeply honored and humbled. Together as we head into this New Year, my prayer is that no matter where we are today, we will once again affirm that the kingdom of God is enough for us.

*Elijah Brown is the General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, a network of 235 member bodies in 125 countries. A native of Texas, he tweets [@ElijahMBrown](#) with additional information at [bwanet.org](#).*

*This article first appeared on the [Baptist World Alliance](#) website.*