Dear Center for,

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Paul Richardson, Director
Center for Creative Ministry

Contemporary Comments

"The Call to Discipleship"
April 25, 2015

It's the best model of recruiting people into a group that you will ever find. After a call for members to join the cause, Abdi Nur knew the best methods: friend to friend, brother to brother. He left Minnesota last year, traveled to Syria, and joined ISIS. Federal prosecutors arrested six Minneapolis men who repeatedly tried to join him.

"Until now, most recruits have appeared to be self-starters, heeding a clarion call broadcast via propaganda videos on the Internet and representations of life in the ISIS caliphate portrayed on social media. But in bringing charges against the six men Monday, Minnesota U.S. Attorney Andrew Luger described a recruiter, American Abdi Nur, who succeeded in reaching Syria and then spent months encouraging his friends back in Minneapolis to join him in fighting with ISIS, during which time they allegedly made several unsuccessful attempts to do so."1

Most amazing are the multiple efforts made by friends and family (and even the FBI) to discourage the recruits from leaving for Syria. Nur knew his work. He had traveled the road and was familiar with the routes and contacts. He was the perfect foreign fighter recruiter. Law enforcement officers recognize the powerful trend of "peer to peer" networking. "There's a shift toward diffused, unorganized networking through social media and in groups of friends."

It kind of sounds like our Sabbath school lesson for this week. No, Jesus did not lead a terrorist organization (except that He was training disciples to do warfare against Satan). But the methods of calling people to become followers of Christ are principles used in many causes--good and bad.

Jesus did not seek the elite or well-trained. The Master Teacher was looking for humble people who came from simple backgrounds. Christ's approach was not to make public announcements or run bulletin inserts at the local synagogue. Jesus approached people one-on-one and provided real-time training.

If you study some of the disciples, you discover that family members joined in the Messiah's mission. "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which means "Christ"). Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus" (John 1:40-42, NLT).

Friends also led friends to Jesus. "The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Come, follow me.' Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown. Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which means "Christ"). Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus" (vv. 43-45).

Terrorist organizations also recruit friends and family. They challenge and demand people to give their utmost for a doomed cause. How much more we should invite those in our network to sign-up for a mission to change people's lives for the best. Let's not be afraid to send out the call--one person at a time.

~cr
About Us

Since 1988, the Center for Creative Ministry has been serving local church leaders and individuals around the world. Formerly known as the publishers of ABBA Newsletter and the Baby Boomer Ministries Resource Center, we have now broadened our generational/ministry focus to include our children. The Center for Creative Ministry took on its new name on June 1, 1996.

The Center for Creative Ministry, formerly Baby Boomer Ministries, is a privately funded and managed para-church ministry fully recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. We are dedicated to supporting the local church in outreach and nurture ministries by providing resources, information, training, and consulting.