

THE TALE OF TWO “BROTHERS” A TRUE-LIFE STORY

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Abdu is from a large Muslim family. His father was an Ardo, a traditional ruler of a Fulani clan who had two wives and 14 children. Abdu grew up in the bush helping his father to take care of the cattle for the Nigerian people.

Yohana is from a Christian family. His father was a farmer who had one wife and many children. Yohana grew up in the village helping his father on the farm, growing food for the Nigerian people.

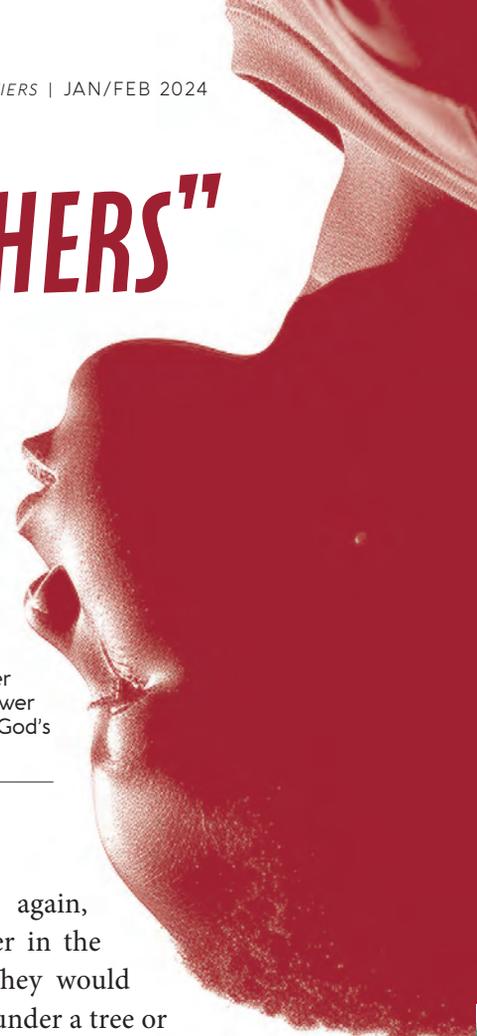
From a very tender age, these two boys met when Abdu's cows were near Yohana's farm. As their friendship grew, Abdu would visit Yohana in the village when he was not herding. If Yohana was not going to the farm, he would go to the Fulani camp and meet Abdu, and together they would follow the cows throughout the day. And that is how their friendship began; two small boys, one a farmer with his family, one a herder with his family, Yohana from a Christian background and Abdu from a Muslim background.

Neither boy had much schooling, but when he was 19, Yohana's father sent him to the Bible school in the next town. This school had a one-year pre-reading course so Yohana could learn to read before he did his Bible school certificate. Abdu really missed his friend when he was away, but during the holidays,

they would meet again, spending hours together in the bush with the cows. They would often hunt and then sit under a tree or in a cave to roast the meat. It was during these times that Yohana would read Bible tracts that he had from the Bible school for Abdu. Abdu was so excited listening to these stories from the Bible. He especially loved the stories about people who had animals or made their living with herding, like David with his sheep who was then called by God to be king, or Jacob with his large herds of animals, or the parable of the lost sheep.

When Yohana went back to Bible school, Abdu really missed him, and he missed hearing the stories, too. So, he asked Yohana to teach him. Slowly over time, Abdu became really great at reading.

However, he really had to keep this new skill a secret from his family, because they would consider it a great offense and embarrassment to know that he was involved in anything to do with “boko” (Western education). One day, when he was in the town with his brother, he was so excited to show him the books in the Bible school library, which he had been enjoying since the library was open to everyone. But this joy turned to pain when his brother told their father, who,



out of anger, restricted his movements and increased his work. But his father could not restrict his thinking. As he walked with his cows, Abdu contemplated the Bible stories he had heard. He became convinced they were true and he needed to give his life to follow Jesus. Yohana kept encouraging him, telling him the joy of being a Christian, and sharing stories of how people overcame persecution.

One day, Abdu went to the church in the town, but as he was coming out, he was seen by his stepmother who was selling milk near the church. She told his father, who became irate! He sat him down in the traditional seating place, the “Dad̄d̄o” and shouted at him, “Do you want to disgrace me and make me ashamed of my title? I have many cattle and many followers, and if you become a Christian, you’ll make me a laughing stock.” However, Abdu continued to grow in his faith and meet with Yohana to pray. Therefore, one of the brothers called a family meeting where they decided that one night, when Abdu was sleeping, they would pull him from his hut and kill him. One of his brothers felt pity for him and told him, “They are planning to kill you, I’d advise you to run away. I’ll take care of the animals. Go home and get your things and run away.” Abdu went back to the camp and packed a small bag of belongings. He went to his friend Yohana, who helped him escape.

Despite many challenges in the years ahead, Abdu went to Bible college and became an ordained reverend. Through him, many Fulani came to Christ. His fruitful ministry began with his interest in learning to read and write, which in turn helped him know the Word of God and accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

This true story shines with beautiful truths to inspire us in our ministry.

We see the **blessing of family**. First, Yohana’s family, who raised him with a strong Christian faith, taught him the skill of farming, and shared the Word of God with him. We also can learn from Abdu’s family, who worked together in harmonious relationships to keep their family together, who taught him the skill of herding, and who wanted the best for him.

We see the **blessing of friendship**, as Yohana and Abdu developed a “David and Jonathan” type friendship that transcended linguistic, cultural, and religious differences over many years together.

We see the value of **connecting Scripture with people’s day-to-day life**. Abdu loved the stories about animals and herding in the Old Testament because it connected with the work he was doing herding his cows.

We see the need for a positive attitude towards **Muslims and herders**. Yohana’s family permitted him to play with Abdu and their positive attitude led not only to Abdu’s salvation but to many more Fulani coming to Christ. It is so important that those who interact with herders reach out to them in love and friendship, such as those who have farms near where their animals graze, or those who buy milk products from them in the market. These positive interactions and precious friendships will go a long way toward peace in our societies, as well as the blessings of eternal peace for many.

We see the need for **patience and long-term friendship evangelism**. It took many years for Abdu to believe the stories he was hearing and reading from the Bible.

We see the **value of literacy**, the gift that helped Abdu to engage with Scripture for himself and further his studies at Bible college.

We see that **persecution did not stop Abdu from following Christ**. He spent many years outside his biological family because they wanted to kill him. He got another family; the Christian believers became his family. They loved and cared for him for many years until later in life when he reunited with his biological family. 