Here is our Danish brother, ABDUS SALAM MADSEN, who was born in a vicarage, whose grandfather was a missionary and father was a minister, and who was to become a minister himself. But God had ordained otherwise and the same person, who was being trained to be a Christian missionary, came into the fold of Islam. How it happened let Mr. Abdus Salam (standing in the picture below) tell the story himself :



I was born on the 28th of November 1928 as the first and only son of a minister of the Lutheran Church (State Church) of Denmark. The place of my birth was a parish with two churches, near the well-known Export-harbour Esbjerg. As a boy—I am told —I was inclined to preaching for my younger sisters—from a chair, standing on the seat and leaning on the chair. My family was a clerical one, my father being a priest, my uncle and grandfather missionaries. In the same year as I was born, the mentioned uncle went to Aden as a missionary for Muslims. He has served there since.

After completing the primary school, I attended the State Secondary School of Esbjerg, but after some time my father was appointed as chief minister of Sonderborg, a town in the south of Denmark, where I finished school with the Matriculation Examination in 1947. Immediately after the summer vacation I started my theological studies at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Copenhagen. The first year passed studying Hebrew, Greek and History of Philosophy. After two years I passed the Preliminary Theological Examination with the best marks. The subjects were Hebrew Bible, New Testament Greek, History of Philosophy, and History of Religions. My first knowledge of Islam, which I got at school in the usual perverted form, was not improved by the examination in the last-mentioned subject. It is no exaggeration to say that the priests have no knowledge of Islam, whatsoever, even when they leave the University. What they read in the small textbook of Religious History is nil, and what they study later in History of the Chucrh is worse than nothing.

When I spent my summer vacation in my home the following year, i.e. 1950, I was one day looking for reading-stuff among my father's books and there I found Rev. Rodwell's translation of the Holy Qur'an—a book, which had belonged to the first missionary in Aden, Oluf Hoyer of the Danish Church Mission. I started reading it, and soon continued as in fever. I went through it twice, and when I returned to the University in September I was beginning the third perusal. After the Preliminary Theological Examination I had begun attending some lectures on Christian dogmatics—where I found an army of problems that soon defeated my naive Christian faith and the professors were quite unable to furnish a seeking student with a rational theology after the break-down of the religion of his childhood. But here in the Holy Book of Islam I realised that religion need not be a bundle of irrational and stupid contra-

dictions. Here I found that the lesson which the professors tried to inculcate in dulled brains: namely that religion, i.e. revelation was per definition absolutely different from reason—that this lesson was a delusion, but of course the only way out of the intellectual bankruptcy of Chirstianity. In the Qur'an I found that there was no contradictions between reason and revelation: God had created the world with all its laws, He had created the human brain, too, so nothing in religion could go against the laws of nature and theological and empirical laws, established by the human brain. Religion was furthermore no tribal affair of Jews. God had at all times revealed Himself to different peoples and races. There was no people among whom a prophet of God had not been raised. God had never incarnated in a human being. That was not the way He communicated with men. No, He sent His revelation to chosen men, called prophets. But they remained men, patterns for other men All these thoughts, these eternal truths found a ready response in my mind, as I easily cleared it of traditional Christian thinking. Easily, I say. Yes, because here was nothing anti-Christian, in the true meaning of the word. Christ was a perfect man, a Holy Prophet of God. He was perhaps one of the greatest prophets ever raised. I think the dogma of Christ's divinity had already crumbled to pieces in my mind—in the light of scientific theology. At any rate, I hadn't to encounter hardships to bid it finally farewell.

In the meantime I had been chosen as the editor of the monthly "The Theological Student", which was the official organ of the students of our Faculty. After my return I wrote an article in the magazine "Islam and Christianity", where I implicitly took the stand of Islam and challenged the students to a discussion in the light of this article about the relation between reason and revelation.

But however close I was to the goal of becoming a Muslim then—it could not be. Joining a College where I came under the influence of Atheist and Marxist students who were very able debators, my knowledge of Islam, obtained from a Christian and rather biased translation, was not sufficient to ward off the onslaughts and soon I found myself a convinced atheist and Communist. But even in that state of mind my admiration for Islam did not die away: it may have faded to an insignificant spark at intervals, but it was all the time my sincere conviction that IF God existed, Islam was the only true religion, because, granted there was a God, He must of necessity be One and Unique, He must be the God of all He must be the Source of all religions etc. In 1952 I found a translation of the Quran by Ulmann. I brought it home and read it more than once with the result that my faith was just on the verge of becoming manifest. But it was first in 1955 when I joined the Teachers' College of Ribe that I came across an exposition of Islam which changed my wavering into a stable conviction. I got hold of the translation and commentary of the Holy Quran by Muhammad Ali and the books "Teachings of Islam", "Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya," Part I and "Fath-i-Islam" by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

Especially the books of the Promised Messiah aroused quite a new type of faith in me. Here were no more 'if's, here religion was a matter of personal experience and cogent proofs. About new year 1956 I started saying my prayers and in March the same year I declared myself as a Muslim. The following year I began correspondence with the Missionary-in-Charge of the Scandinavian Mission, M. Kamal Yousuf who then lived in Stockholm. At the same time I had a correspondence going with a representative of the Lahore group. I was now confronted with the question of the nubuwwat of the Promised Messiah and the question of the true nature of the khilafat of the Messiah. After many letters and perusal of many books, and especially prompted by what I regard as true visions I accepted the Promised Messiah as a prophet (dependant upon the Master Prophet Muhammad—SAWS and without a law) and his Promised son Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad as the true exponent and inheritor of the faith of the Promised Messiah (Alaih-i-Salaam) and as the Muslih-i-Maw'ud and rightful Khalifa. This happened in February 1958.

Since then I have been privileged to work together with the Ahmadiyya missionaries Abdul Latif of the German Mission, who was in-charge of the Danish Mission in the beginning and with Kamal Yousuf, who in April 1961 came to Copenhagen, when the Headquarters of the Mission was changed to here. These last 4 years have been a steady progress—al-Hamdu lillah—both for myself and the Community. As for myself I am a teacher of languages at the Hojby Central School. This summer my first class cleared their final examination with very fine results, and the whole class went to U.A.R. as the guests of the Government. I have a Muslim wife, Mubaraka Begum, and a son, the first born Ahmadi-Muslim in Scandinavia, Bashir Ahmad. As for the community, of which I am the Vice-President, it is increasing in numbers almost every month. We have now an Islamic Center in Copenhagen with library, prayer-hall and room for missionary. We have regular Jumu'ah-prayers and the 'Ids witness an ever increasing circle of worshippers. Last time about 60 Muslims joined the prayers ('Id-ul-Fitr). We have also regular study meetings every Friday evenings where fundamentals of Islam and Ahmadiyyat are being imparted to our converts. The Danish translation of the Holy Quran is appearing in small volumes with commentary. When I studied theology I had the opportunity to study the Arabic language at the University, wherefore I am now preparing this translation. Our last words shall be that all praise belongs only to Allah, Nourisher of all the worlds unto perfection.

There is none worthy of adoration except Allah, He is One and Unique and Muhammad is His servant and Prophet and the Seal of Prophets and their Master.