

30 DAYS 2008

of Prayer for the Muslim World

September
1st - 30th, 2008

Loving Muslims Through Prayer



Inside Cover

It is good to view this document in a facing pages mode.

Otherwise in a single page mode.

Introduction

This call to prayer for Muslims originally came during a meeting of several Christian leaders in the Middle East in 1992. Several believers involved in an international movement strongly sensed God's desire to call as many Christians as possible to pray for the Muslim world. A prayer movement was planned to coincide with the Islamic month of Ramadan. It was intended that "30 Days" should be during the month of Ramadan for at least two reasons: (1) as a means for Christians to identify themselves with Muslims during a fixed period of the year, (2) to call upon God's sovereign intervention in the lives of Muslims during a time of the year when they are particularly religious. Praying during the month of Ramadan does not mean that we conform ourselves to the Muslim practices of fasting and prayer.

As believers in Jesus we disagree with Islamic ideas, theology and practice in several areas. However, the "30 Days" movement emphasises God's love for Muslims. We encourage all believers in the Messiah to cultivate a spirit of humility, love, respect and service toward Muslims.

The goal of this prayer guide is to inspire and guide each reader as he or she intercedes for the Muslim world. It is far from being completely informative about the Muslim world. We encourage you to seek

further information and so gain a greater understanding of the Islamic world and God's activities among Muslims. Again this year we have included a number of testimonies in the prayer booklet to encourage your faith as you pray. God loves Muslims. He wants them to come to know Him.

30 Days Around the World

In recent years "30 Days" booklets and prayer information have been distributed in over 30 languages on five continents and in the islands of the Pacific Ocean. Booklets and other prayer materials were produced in English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Korean, Arabic, Swahili, Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Indonesian, Dutch, Finnish, Afrikaans and many other languages. About 300,000 copies of the printed materials were distributed in the various languages in 2006 and again in 2007. Our web sites www.30-days.net and www.30daysfire.net had over 200,000 visitors and over one million pages were viewed in several languages. Some of the editions of "30 Days" are somewhat different, but each reflects a common desire to help Muslims encounter the living Jesus.

The Editors



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Preparation for Prayer

July - August 2008

Extra Day 1 (July 25)

Supplement 30 Days +

Before the beginning of “30 Days” in September let us take time to prepare our hearts.

The prayer movement “30 Days” is really an effort to expand God’s kingdom. It is not a leisure activity. It involves real effort. Our prayers may only be as effective as the foundations of our life with God. Are we experiencing his best in our lives? Are we really looking for the manifestation of his kingdom? Do we say with our whole heart, “May your Kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”?

Preparation for “30 Days” in 2008: During the six weeks leading up to Ramadan, or possibly during several days just before the beginning of Ramadan, we invite you to reflect on the subjects listed on the following pages. It is our hope that this material will help us be better prepared for intercession during the “30 Days”. Some will want to pray on the six Fridays leading up to Ramadan. This is the Muslim day of assembly at local mosques. Just after noon on Fridays they gather to have their weekly ritual prayers. This could be a good moment for some of us to begin pre-

paring our hearts for intercession as well. The dates for the Fridays leading up to Ramadan are listed above the days of preparation articles. While this material is optional it is not unimportant.

Are we willing to spend time with God in preparation? Are we willing to arrange our lives for Him?

Apparently God has decided that our prayers should be involved in Muslims coming to faith in Christ (Luke 10:2). Am I willing to be part of His plan?

Let us prepare our hearts to meet God and to invite Him to act and accomplish His will among Muslims across the whole earth!

GRACE TO DO

The Apostle Paul said, “By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I laboured even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me” (1 Cor. 15:10).

Paul saw that his ability to accomplish God’s work came from God himself. As Paul said, his effort to proclaim Christ was really work; it was not a leisure activity. However his ability to work for and with God came from the Lord. Our work like Paul’s is believing in the Messiah (John 6:28-30). We are called to this work while it is still day (John 9:4).

We are told that being involved in God’s kingdom building project will be real food for our souls. Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work” (John 4:34). May this effort become food for us during the coming weeks. May God give us grace to accomplish his will. *Meditate on John 15:4-7.*



MUSLIMS ARE PEOPLE

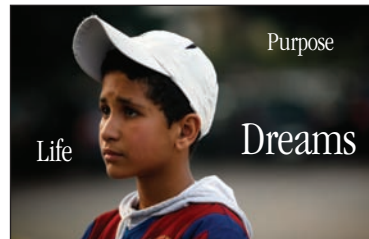
Negative media exposure abounds concerning Muslims and Islamic civilisation. This can build prejudice, fear and negative attitudes. Let us allow God to search our hearts. Let us repent over any unclean attitudes toward Muslims which are not worthy of Christ. He has called us to love Him and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Muslims are people. Above all else they are people. Certainly some are involved in violence and even actively persecute believers in Jesus, but wasn't this also true of the Apostle Paul? Muslims are also playing children, adolescents, newly weds, working adults, parents and retired people. Muslims are friends, lovers, businessmen, artists, singers, philosophers, farmers and shepherds. Muslims are factory workers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, bus drivers, religious leaders, soldiers and presidents. Muslims are our neighbours.

Muslims have hopes, fears, dreams and disappointments. Muslims like all of us are subject to the effects of sin, death, the evil world and dark spiritual powers.



***Questions:** Do we really want Muslims to also discover new life in Christ? What will we do so they can discover the joy, laughter, faith and love found in Jesus? Do we really want them to inherit the new heavens and earth which God has promised to those who love Him (2 Peter 3:13)?*



THINK OF THE PEOPLES, TRIBES AND TONGUES

Remember the plan of God concerning peoples, tribes and tongues. Some versions of Christianity are particularly oriented toward individualism (my salvation, my problems, my happiness, my future). We need "big picture" Christianity. The Bible speaks of ethnic groups (nations), peoples, tribes, and tongues. Jesus is to reign over all. As is written in the book of Daniel, "One like a Son of Man ... came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. To Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14).

***Questions:** Do I have the big vision of the Messiah's kingdom? Is God's kingdom of all peoples more important for us than our own personal desires, plans, projects, hopes and aspirations? (Meditate on Psalm 67:1-7, Mt. 28: 18-19, Rev. 5:9, 7:9, 10:11, 13:7, 14:6, 17:15 and 22:1-5).*



THE GOSPEL AND CULTURE

We cannot separate a person from their culture. Religious beliefs, values, clothing, food, education, work, leisure, governmental systems, home life, roles of men and women and many other things make up cultures. Our Lord intends to transform individuals, societies and cultures. People from every tribe and tongue will one day be before his throne (Revelation 7:9). Even now people from many nations are bringing their unique language and cultural expressions to worship the Lord of all the earth.

All which is truly good in cultures around the world is enhanced by new life in Christ. All aspects of cultures which are unjust, evil or incomplete will be transformed by our Lord. Some aspects of cultures are neither good nor bad, they are just different, (for example: some ethnic groups like rice while others prefer pasta, some like shirts and pants while others prefer robes).



While the religious differences between Christians and Muslims are significant, sometimes cultural differences can be even greater sources of misunderstanding and mistrust. Different perspectives can also be opportunities to learn from each other. Cultural differences may inhibit or enhance our ability to proclaim Christ, as well as a Muslim's ability to receive our message.

For Prayer:

The ability to understand and appreciate other cultures is a gift from God.

Am I able to appreciate other cultures?

Am I willing to lay aside prejudice, feelings of cultural superiority and nationalistic pride to welcome, appreciate and love people from other cultures?



Here are some basic differences between Western culture and many African and Oriental Islamic cultures. (These characteristics are generalisations. There may be many exceptions in various nations and regions):

Western societies:

Individualism, independence and initiative are encouraged
Time oriented (exact times, for example: one arrives on time)
Future oriented (seeing opportunities and foreseeing problems)
Performance oriented (ability and accomplishments are important)
Freedom to show weakness
Egalitarian relationships
Direct communication
Analytical thinking / concept oriented

African and Oriental Islamic societies:

Community / group oriented
Event oriented (general times, example: arrival when an event happens)
Present oriented (enjoy the present, take action when crises develop)
Status oriented (class, age, family and reputation are important)
Fear of showing weakness or admitting failures (shame cultures)
Indirect communication (seeking to not offend or to dishonour)
Holistic thinking
Experience / circumstance oriented

Day 5 (Friday August 22nd)

REMEMBER THE STRUGGLE



Bringing the Gospel to Muslims involves a real struggle against non human enemies. Spiritual forces of darkness are very active in opposing prayer, evangelism, Bible translation efforts, medical care, and social work against injustice, etc. We will probably find some spiritual opposition in our own lives in the coming weeks as we pray. Let us prepare ourselves for the struggle. Non human spiritual forces are very present on planet earth. They oppose the advancement of God's kingdom.

Meditate on these texts: Ephesians 6:10-20, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8-9, 2 Kings 6:16-17.

Day 6 (Friday August 29th)

COMMIT THE MONTH TO THE LORD

Remember that millions of Muslims around the world will be gathering for prayer today. Take some time to commit the next month of prayer to the Lord. The "30 Days" of intercession starts in a few days.

Possible prayer: *Jesus, there is no one too lost for you to love, no one is too low for you to serve, so give us the grace to change the world ... No one too lost for us to love, no one too low for us to serve, let us see your face, let us be your face ... (This prayer is the lyrics of a song by Sanctus Real).*

How should we use this booklet?

Over the coming weeks, you may pray and fast in a variety of ways. Some days five minutes may be all that God will ask from some participants in this prayer effort. However, participants will sometimes be guided to pray for much longer periods. You can use this booklet to pray during your own prayer times, or join with others to pray together. We would encourage you to find creative ways to involve as many people as possible with you in this prayer focus. Jesus gave special promises of blessing for Christians who pray and agree as a group (Mt. 18:20).

You could organise some weekly or twice weekly meetings over the 30 day period with your church, your youth group, leaders' meetings, home Bible studies, cell groups, children's groups — in fact, any occasion when your Christian friends and associates meet together. Take a social occasion and

turn it into a prayer event as well. Have others join with you in a special meal using the prayer topic for that day. You could find out all you can about that particular culture — including food and dress, music, sports, etc. It is helpful if one person is chosen as the leader / facilitator of the group for that time of prayer. This person can give direction and cohesion to the group. Ask and expect the Holy Spirit to lead you in prayer (Rom. 8:26).

It is helpful if the group focuses its prayers for one subject area at a time, rather than constantly changing focus. Each person should wait before moving on to a different topic, allowing each one to pray their prayers over the current subject area (1 Cor. 14:40). Look for ways to make your times of prayer varied and interesting. God is creative, and has made us in His image, so we can expect creative ideas and prayers as we seek Him.

THE DATES FOR RAMADAN

The dates for Ramadan are established according to the Islamic lunar calendar. In 2008, Ramadan will be from about September 1st through 30th. This will vary from country to country. The fasting period normally begins and ends with the sighting of the crescent moon. For more information consult the Islamic web site: www.moonsighting.com. Because of the changing nature of the Islamic year the 2008 booklet is actually our 17th edition. There have been 17 Islamic lunar years since the beginning of “30 Days” in March 1993. This is the year 1429 of the Islamic lunar calendar. (Note: The moon is not an object of worship in Islam.)



She is . . .

Testimony from Saudi Arabia

Her name is Noora. In her family, she is one of 10 children. She loves the same things as her other sisters in the human race. She loves fashion. She LOVES make-up though it too is covered by the burqa (face covering). She loves talking on the mobile phone and hearing the voices of her favourite girl friends. She loves chatting with her friends on the internet. She likes to go to the shopping mall! She did well in high school, even better than her brothers. Her mother is proud of her. Her father wishes his oldest son would have been smarter. She loved going to university. It was certainly more difficult than high school, but Noora discovered Someone whom she could rely on. Now a graduate, she longs for a job near her city.

*Noora discovered someone
whom she could rely on.*

She has great hopes. At 23 years of age, she longs for a man to love her. She has seen other friends married to men only to become broken hearted as sometimes a second wife enters the household. Noora fears to become only one of her husband’s several wives. Noora hopes that God will give her the right man who shares her beliefs. Her family, like the typical family, has already brought a few ‘suitable’ young men for her to meet. But actually she

longs for a gentleman, one full of Hope from above. She desires children, children of Faith. Her girlfriends have noticed a change in Noora. She often radiates the meaning of her name, which is light. Noora is Light to her friends and family. Sharing the Freedom and Hope she has discovered has become important to her.

The Book: Noora has a special Book which she must keep hidden. Its words convey power and strength. The Book is hidden on her MP3 player. When many others are drawn to the latest Arabian tunes, Noora LOVES to use her earphones to listen to the Words of the Book. Sometimes the Words help her through the challenges or painful moments of a day. They bring her JOY and PEACE and have taught her how to live. Noora has felt the Words touch her more deeply than she’s ever been touched.

Noora wanted her cousin to taste this Bread of Life. Her cousin heard just a few of the Words. She said they were interesting, but she was afraid of them, because they were so radical. “How can I love my enemy?” she said. “No one in our tribe has ever loved his enemies.” Noora is often alone, yet she feels a supernatural presence. She is ... a Saudi follower of Jesus.

MP3 Bible in Arabic: <http://www.ibs.org/bibles/arabic/>



Marriage in Tadjikistan

A Muslim Woman's empty dreams



Sept. 1, 2008

7

Day 1

LIMITED NUMBER OF WIVES

Tonight, the respected businessman Sharif is going to visit Nazira's family. On the telephone he said he wants to talk with her father about a new car, but Nazira knows the real reason for his visit. Nazira is already 24 years old and single. For quite some time her family has been looking around for a potential husband for her. However, that is not so easy. Farud, for example, who wanted to marry her three months ago, is an alcoholic, like many people in Tadjikistan.

Evening came and Sharif visited Nazira's family. Since the civil war of the 1990's, this Central Asian country is slowly recuperating and business is steadily growing. Sharif is one who is doing well economically. His house has running water with regular electricity and he drives a German car. In Tadjikistan the estimated average annual income is around 250 Euros per person, but Sharif is one of the exceptions. He already has two wives and Nazira will become his third. It seems obvious that Sharif is a good candidate. Quickly the parents agree and arrangements are made. The wedding will take place in the coming two weeks. Everyone



is happy, however Nazira realises that some of her cherished dreams will not come true.

It is estimated that the number of Tadjikistan workers in Russia number about one million. Since there are only seven million people in Tadjikistan, this means that a large percentage of the male population is away from home. Women and children are in the majority. In the villages the women live amid tensions between old traditions, atheism and a new wave of radical Islam.

Tadjikistan believers were few and far between even when there was freedom of religion. Now worries about radical Islam are being countered with new laws to restrict the rights of small religious groups. These laws also affect Christians.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- ▶ *Pray for increasingly healthy and Biblically oriented families among the followers of Jesus in this nation.*
- ▶ *Pray for the many Tadjik men in surrounding countries to be reached with the Good News.*
- ▶ *Pray that Tadjikistan believers can develop more and more their own style of worship in their own language.*

Mohammed limited the number of wives in Islamic marriage to four. Previously some men had been marrying many more women than they could support financially. According to Muslim scholars, women were better treated in Arabia following the rise of Islam than previously. Islam recognizes that men are especially weak in the sexual realm. The possibility of having four wives is seen as a limit on man's sexual urges and thus gives stability to society.



THE CLANS

We suggest that you actually pray through the list of names below. It is probable that you are among some of the first people to actually pray for these clans of the Shahran tribe in Jesus' name (Rev. 7:9).

Al-Rshaid	Al-Sarhan
Al-Koad	Banou Rash'hah
Nahess	Al-Remtheen
Al-alGhmer	Al-alSerh
Banou Manbah	Al-Mettair
Banou Waheb	Al-alSafq
Banou Bejaad	Al-Na'man
Banou Majoor	Al Jehrah
Banou Selool	Ahel AlHaqou
Al Zelal	Ahel AlSha'af
Al'Hejaj	Al Yanfa'
Al Garaeen	Banou Malek
Banou Qouhafah	

Sept. 2, 2008



Day 2

Be among the first to pray by name for the Shahran tribe

For the majority of Saudi Arabians, their association to a tribe is a significant part of their social and cultural identity. People from Western countries have lost much of the experience of belonging to a very large extended family. For example: few Westerners can recite the names of their ancestors for 5-10 or more generations, however, it is not rare for some peoples in the Middle East to have this ability.

The Shahran Tribe: The Shahran tribe has an estimated 250,000 members, and is one of the largest in Arabia. The leadership of the Shahran tribe has belonged to the House of Mushayt for several hundred years and the tribe's principal city is Khamis Mushayt. This is the largest city in 'Asir province in Southwestern Arabia, near the border with Yemen. Khamis Mushayt is the 8th largest city in Saudi Arabia with a population of about 630,000.

Beginning of Islam in Asir Province: In AD 632 Surad Ibn Abd Allah Al-Azadi led a delegation of people from the 'Asir region to declare their commitment to Mohammed and Islam. Mohammed made Surad ruler of the Muslims in 'Asir, urging him to spread the Islamic faith and fight the polytheists. Surad returned to the 'Asir region and conquered it for Islam.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *There are very few followers of Jesus, if any at all, in this tribe at the present time.*
- ▶ *Pray for opportunities for some of the Shahran to hear the Gospel through their travels abroad, through radio, internet and possibly satellite broadcasts.*
- ▶ *The vast majority of this tribe are very much cut off from any significant access to the Gospel. It is illegal to proclaim the Gospel in Saudi Arabia; Many Christian internet sites are blocked and very few followers of Jesus ever travel to or live in Khamis Mushayt and the surrounding area.*



Day 3

The colourful Bakhtiari people number between 750,000 – 1,000,000 and live in Southwestern Iran in the clean and beautiful highlands of the Zagros Mountains. The Chahar Mahal Province has plains, snow-capped mountains, valleys, rivers and dense forests. It is the habitat of leopards, sheep and bears, and grows wild pistachio, almond, walnut, plum and ash trees. The Bakhtiari are divided into tribes, sub-tribes and clans. About half of the people retain their traditional lifestyle of shepherding for the men, and carpet-weaving and home making for the women. The rest are settled and involved in agriculture and a variety of commercial activities.

Bakhtiari women enjoy a high degree of freedom in this patrilineal culture. They traditionally wear beautiful, bright coloured long full skirts, blouses and headscarves. For thousands of years they have undertaken a 4-6 week annual migration in the spring, moving from their winter quarters in Khuzistan to summer pastures in the Chahar Mahal region south west of Esfahan. Men, women, children and animals – thousands of them, travel across some of the most difficult mountain country in Iran in their search for grass.

The Bakhtiari language is used across generations at home and in commerce, but many Bakhtiari also speak Persian. There are about 350,000 monolingual Bakhtiari speakers, especially among older people and women.



Like the majority of Iranians the Bakhtiari are Shi'a Muslims. There are just a few very small cell churches and scattered believers throughout the region. In addition there are very small numbers of Bakhtiari believers in certain places around the world. Some initial Bible translation work has begun in another country.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *May God soften the hearts of the Bakhtiari people towards believers so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.*
- ▶ *Pray for the development of suitable ministry materials and means in the Bakhtiari language including: scripture translations, radio broadcasts and the "Jesus" film.*
- ▶ *Pray that Bakhtiari speakers who are already believers will develop strong ministry skills and become effective in reaching out to their people.*

GOSPEL FOR NATIONS ...

Jesus has told us that the Gospel will be preached to all the nations before the end of this present age (Mt. 24:14). In Greek, the word nations in the text is "ethnos," which is related to the English word ethnic, as in "ethnic group." These groups have common ancestors, history, language, customs and practices.

<i>Religious Affiliations: World Ethnic Groups</i>		
<i>Christianity</i>	5,923	37%
<i>Muslim</i>	3,109	20%
<i>Ethnic Religions</i>	2,963	19%
<i>Hinduism</i>	2,324	15%
<i>Buddhism</i>	481	3%
<i>Other / Undefined</i>	887	6%
<i>Total</i>	15,687	99%

Mission Frontiers Magazine, March / April 2007

There are over 245 Muslim people groups of over 100,000 population which are completely unreached and for whom no one is actually engaged in proclaiming the Gospel.

MUSLIM WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Muslim societies have traditionally encouraged their women to be well covered, even totally covered with clothes from head to foot. Originally there were practical physical reasons for such clothing in a desert environment. Yet now from an Islamic perspective the main reason for such clothing is to limit sexual temptation among men. The relative moral weakness of men in the sexual realm is also cited as a reason for the isolation of women at home and the need to accompany them in public.



Sept. 4, 2008



Day 4



Spain

Islam in 21st century Europe

Much of Spain was under Islamic rule for almost seven hundred years. Al-Andalus was the Arabic name given to those parts of the Iberian Peninsula governed by Muslims, or Moors, up until the fall of the last Islamic stronghold, the city of Granada, in 1492. Muslim Spain or “Al-Andalus” is still seen by some as a good example of how Christians, Jews and Muslims should live together. However, most scholars have demonstrated that this ideal of Al-Andalus is not realistic.

Muslims: Today’s Spain has around 800,000 Muslims, most of whom are fairly recent Moroccan immigrants. One of the largest mosques in Europe, which was built with financial help from Saudi Arabia, is located in Madrid. Although the Muslim North Africans have now become a significant minority in Spain, few Spanish Christians are actively seeking to proclaim Christ to them. This is also surprisingly true in the two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla which are actually on the northern Moroccan coast. In those cities almost half the population is Muslim.

Evangelism: Happily there have been large efforts, especially in the port cities of Algeciras and Malaga, to distribute literature, cassettes and DVDs to Muslims travelling to

and from Morocco. Unfortunately there are almost no Arab or Berber followers of Jesus who meet regularly for worship and mutual encouragement; some groups have made some attempts to do so but often in unfavourable circumstances. A few North Africans from a Muslim background are now studying in Spanish Bible schools. Their situation is not easy since they are often rejected by family and friends.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Committed Spanish believers are relatively few in number, however, there are increasing opportunities for them to reach out to Muslims living in Spain. Pray for greater wisdom, zeal and mobilisation of Spanish Christians for ministry among Muslims.*
- ▶ *Pray for the distribution of Gospel literature and DVDs in areas where there are Muslims.*
- ▶ *Pray for North African young people who come to study in Spanish Bible schools.*
- ▶ *Pray for the radio and TV programmes being produced in Spain for North Africa.*



The challenge: Winning the Bugis of Indonesia



The vast majority of the Bugis in Indonesia (over 3.5 million) live on the southwestern peninsula of Sulawesi Island. For the Bugis people, Islam is part of their ethnic, as well as their religious identity. They have a reputation of being fanatical Muslims with a history of violent persecution of the Christian minorities. In addition to following Islam, many Bugis people are involved in animistic spiritual practices such as seeking power from spirits of the dead, seeking help from dukuns (shamans), and using amulets and charms. Due to their links to dark spiritual forces, the Bugis people present a great challenge for those who seek to reach them with the love and truth of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah (Isa Al-Masih).

Gospel workers: So far there have been very few Gospel workers among the Bugis people. The few who have been working among the Bugis often invest years of time to win a single convert, or perhaps just a handful. If just 500 to 1,000 Bugis were won to the Lord this year, it would be an incredible miracle.

Day 5

Testimony: “Pramana,” a pseudonym, is a local believer in the Messiah from a predominantly Christian people group. He grew up in Makassar (provincial capital of South Sulawesi) and studied at university. Through his involvement in a group of believers at university, he understood the need to reach out to the Muslims around him. After graduation he enrolled at Bible school and eventually joined a group reaching out to Muslims. He took a local job to provide for his family of four. Workers such as “Wally” from other ethnic groups often face prejudice from the Bugis. Pray that God will cause Bugis Muslims to listen to these “outsiders”.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that the barriers of Islam and occult practices among the Bugis will be overcome by the Holy Spirit.*
- ▶ *Pray that the Good News will spread powerfully and that Jesus will be honoured among the Bugis people.*
- ▶ *Pray for more Indonesian workers who demonstrate great sacrificial faith to build God’s kingdom. May financial matters not become a distraction to their ministries.*

INDONESIAN STATISTICS

17,508 islands

Population: 234,694,000 (July 2007)

Largest Muslim population of any country around the world: 86.1% Muslim, Protestant 5.7%, Roman Catholic 3%, Hindu 1.8%, other 3.4%

Ethnic groups: Javanese 40.6%, Sundanese 15%, Madurese 3.3%, Minangkabau 2.7%, Betawi 2.4%, Bugis 2.4%, Banten 2%, Banjar 1.7%, other or unspecified 29.9%

Primary language: Indonesian Bahasa



Understanding Islam ...

The word “Islam” simply means submission to God, and a Muslim is one who follows the laws and practices of Islam. Muslims say Islam has its origins with Adam. According to them Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah and Jesus all taught and practiced earlier versions of Islam. Mohammed is revered by Muslims as the last and greatest prophet. His name actually means “The Praised One”.

The Early life of Mohammed: Mohammed was born AD 570 in Mecca, a city in Saudi Arabia. He was a member of the Hashim clan of the powerful Quraysh tribe. His father died before he was born, and his mother, Amina, died when he was only

six. Mohammed went to live with his grandfather, who was the guardian of the Kaaba, which is the most sacred building in Mecca. Two years later his grandfather also died, so from the age of eight Mohammed was brought up by his uncle, Abu Talib, who was a merchant working along the great camel trade routes.

Pagan idol worship abounded in Arabia during much of Mohammed’s lifetime. There were an estimated 360 gods and goddesses adored by the Arabs and Mecca was a major centre of idolatry in the region. Muslim historians indicate that even as a boy Mohammed detested idol worship and lived a morally pure life.



Initial Revelations: According to Muslims, at the age of 40, Mohammed became very concerned about the state of his fellow countrymen and spent much of his time in meditation. During the month of Ramadan, Mohammed often retreated to a cave on Mount Hira, several kilometres from Mecca. It was during one of these times in AD 610 that Mohammed supposedly began to receive revelations and instruction that he believed were from the archangel Gabriel. These “revelations” form the basis of the Qur’an. At the beginning Mohammed even doubted that he was a prophet. But eventually he became convinced. Mohammed proclaimed that the Qur’an was the final and superior

revelation from the One Supreme God. He banned the worship of idols. Mohammed died of natural causes in AD 632 in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

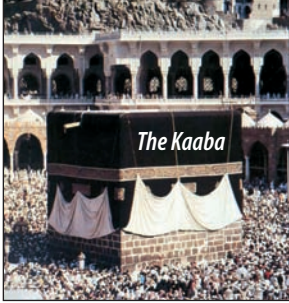
Relations with Jews and Christians:

During his life, Mohammed met many people who called themselves Christians, though it is debatable how many of them were really in the faith. Mohammed also learned many aspects of Jewish religious customs from various Jewish clans which were living in the region of Mecca and Medina. Mohammed’s role as prophet was not accepted by the Jews, leading to serious conflict. However, Jewish and Christian ideas, concepts and history are very present in the Qur’an, though they are often distorted.

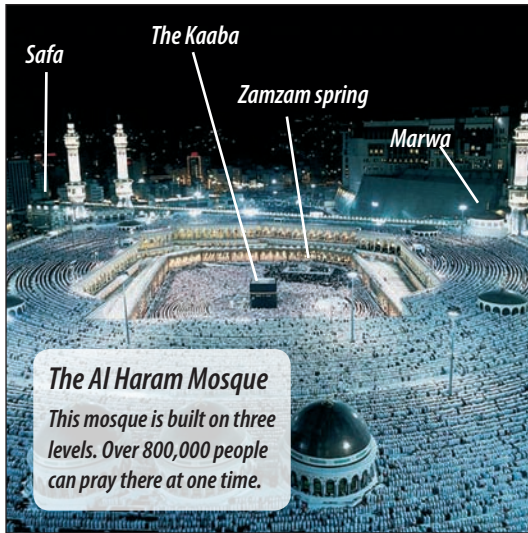
The Ideal Man

In Islam, Mohammed is considered the “ideal man.” Mohammed is in no way considered divine, nor is he worshipped, but he is the model for all Muslims concerning how they should conduct themselves. No images of Mohammed are permitted (in order to prevent idolatry). Mohammed’s non-Qur’anic declarations, his personal habits and actions serve as a guide for all Muslims. These are called the “hadiths.” The “way of the Prophet” helps Muslims discern what is good and right. However, the followers of Jesus would call their Lord the ideal human being.

Mecca and Various Biblical Characters



One can see pictures of all these things close up on various web sites. We recommend: <http://www.hajinformation.com> (The official Saudi site)



(Important: the Bible does not teach any of the following erroneous ideas about various Biblical characters.)

Muslims say that the original Paradise was in the heavens. According to Islamic tradition, when Adam and Eve were cast out of Paradise they fell to different parts of the earth; Adam on the island of Sri Lanka, and Eve in Arabia, near what came to be the port of Jeddah. Adam and Eve were separated from each other for 200 years. Finally God permitted them to come together again at Arafat, near the actual city of Mecca. According to Muslims, Adam supposedly built the small cubic building in Mecca called the Kaaba as a place of worship. The original Kaaba was eventually destroyed in the flood of Noah. Adam is said to have died and been buried in Mecca. Eve was supposedly buried at the place which still bears the name, Jiddah (Jeddah), meaning maternal ancestor in Arabic.

Muslims believe that Hagar and Ishmael went to the area of Mecca in Saudi Arabia after they had to leave the household of Abraham. It was there that Hagar discovered a spring called “Zamzam,” with the help of an angel as she wandered between two small hills named Safa and Marwa.

Pilgrims to Mecca retrace Hagar’s steps seven times between Safa and Marwa at the Al Haram Mosque. Abraham eventually came to visit his son. The two of them supposedly received a command from God to rebuild the Kaaba. Muslims even say that the imprint of Abraham’s foot is in a small shrine next to the Kaaba. When the Kaaba was finished, the angel Gibrael (Gabriel) brought the famous “black stone” to be included in the construction (a small object in one corner). Some speculate that this stone was a meteorite or a great white sapphire from the Garden of Eden. It was supposedly darkened by the sins of pilgrims.

God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Ishmael (not Isaac, according to Islam) in the area between the Kaaba site and Mount Arafat. Abraham supposedly threw stones at Satan when he was tempted to not obey God. Muslims still commemorate this temptation and Abraham’s obedience by symbolically “stoning” Satan and sacrificing an animal (usually a sheep) at a location several kilometres from the Kaaba. One can understand why Muslims see Mecca as central to their religion. Besides Mohammed, in Islamic belief many Biblical characters are also linked to the city and the region.

PERSONALITY CULT

Turkmenistan has one of the most oppressive regimes of the world. The former president instituted a bizarre personality cult. He erected gold plated statues of himself all over the country and his portrait hung in every public room and on the outside of every public building. He wrote a book called "Ruhnama." Its teaching rules much of the daily life. Today, an entire generation has already undergone extensive brain washing.

The new president, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, has promised to continue Niyasov's political heritage. School children are still required to memorise portions of the former president's "Holy Book," Ruhnama. There is no critical voice or opposition allowed and the government continues to control all media.



Sept. 6, 2008



Day 6

Population: 5,097,028 (July 2007 est.)

Muslim 89%, Eastern Orthodox 9%, unknown 2%

Turkmenistan is not often a subject of the international news media, but it did get some attention in December 2006 when its eccentric president, Saparmurat Niyasov, suddenly died. Turkmenistan is an independent nation between Iran and Uzbekistan. Almost 90% of its territory is sand or gravel desert, while the people live mainly alongside riverbanks and in various oases. The desert hides huge oil and gas deposits. Turkmenistan is the fifth largest supplier of natural gas worldwide. Even though the country receives large revenues from the hydrocarbon resources, inequality is rampant and most Turkmen struggle to survive. However, shiny marble luxury buildings pop up everywhere in the capital city of Ashgabat.

Persecution: Beginning in 1998, almost all missionaries were expelled by the Turkmen government. Since then all religious activities have been highly repressed. House group meetings of any kind are prohibited and people found attending secret religious meetings risk losing their home and their job. The Turkmen intelligence services carefully watch those known to be believers as well as all foreigners.

Turkmenistan

Surviving in Central Asia



Nevertheless, the church does continue to grow slowly in Turkmenistan. There are about 700-1,000 believers in the country and numbers of underground house groups that meet in secret. Two Russian speaking Christian churches have been given official permission to gather. Unfortunately the registered churches and most of the underground house groups are Russian speaking - believers are still praying for the emergence of an indigenous Turkmen speaking communities of believers. While a useable New Testament is available in the Turkmen language, the translation badly needs revision to correct some mistakes and make it more contemporary. The Old Testament translation is still in progress.

PRAYER REQUESTS

► *The Turkmen are disillusioned and are looking for the Truth. There is a huge need for people who can disciple believers and help form strong, multiplying communities of faith that speak Turkmen and are accepted as part of the culture.*

Turning to Christ

What are the challenges for new believers

Sept. 7, 2008

Day 7

15

TESTIMONY FROM FRANCE

As we follow Jesus, our identity and our sense of belonging are affected. Questions arise: Who am I? What are my values? New believers from Muslim backgrounds have similar questions. But in addition they also suffer intense psychological pressures that may include fear (of Allah, that He will punish them if they change, of family and relatives, of community, of death). They struggle emotionally dealing with difficult choices, especially when the laws are against them or when believers do not trust those coming to faith. Some experience rejection from their community or even the Body of Christ or both, leading to shame.

Obstacles: A huge obstacle for new believers from a Muslim background is the Body of Christ itself. Someone has said, "If we want to see Muslims coming to Jesus and growing in Him we must change our attitudes. A physical church building may be very near to new believers, yet culturally Christians can be extremely far away."

New believers need examples of what it means to follow Christ and worship Him in a way that honours their cultural identity. For many, there are no models of how to walk by the Spirit. Others struggle to find a safe place to gather for worship, fellowship, and prayer.

Relationships are primary in Muslim communities so new believers ask questions like: How can we honour Christ

in daily life, marriage, and raising children in a predominately Muslim society? How can new believers find a partner and celebrate their marriage as followers of Christ in the local community? Where and how can one be buried? Because of their commitment to Christ some lose property, job, family inheritance, life partner, children, and/or participation in family or special events. Many have had the experience of being perceived as traitors to their family and culture as they seek to follow Christ. Others have died.

At the same time, there are theological questions that new believers face. Their questions about the Bible, God, attitudes and practices may not be addressed or even understood by the wider community of believers.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for cultural sensitivity, awareness and respect among believers as we interact with new believers from Muslim backgrounds.*
- ▶ *Pray for wisdom, creativity and confidence for new believers and new communities of faith as they explore culturally appropriate ways to serve and worship Christ in the context of Muslim societies.*

I was raised in an open minded Muslim family and educated in a private Catholic school. My parents appreciated this well ordered school which encouraged morality and discipline. The cross was very present in the school but it remained a mystery to me. Even as a child I was interested by the existence of God. I made several efforts to change my heart through religious practices. Finally I heard the Gospel in a clear way from two families. Their friendship and kindness touched me greatly (Romans 2:4). Eventually I came to know the forgiveness of sins and I discovered later that several people were praying for me, even someone in North America!



LIVES TRANSFORMED IN GHANA

After rejecting the Gospel for years as an Islamic extremist, 'Malik' is now excited about the Lord Jesus. He has become someone who peacefully proclaims Jesus. Recently he obtained the "Jesus" Film which he showed in a village where Islam became established some 400 years ago. Illiteracy in this farming village of 5,000 is very high so the film was appreciated. Many heard the Gospel joyfully. Later it became clear that almost 100 people in the village had found new life in the Messiah. Having placed their confidence in Jesus who delivers from evil spirits, the new believers burned their talismans. They have also faced opposition from some people.



Sept. 8, 2008



Day 8

Population: 23,000,000

Christian 68.9% (all denominations)

Muslim 15.9%, Traditional (animist) 8.5%, Other / none 6.7%

In 2007 Ghana celebrated its 50th year of independence from Great Britain. The country has experienced a long period of political stability and economic growth – which unfortunately has yet to reach all segments of society. Long periods of drought have brought some poor harvests and even moments without electricity, because water rationing at the largest man made reservoir in Africa, Lake Volta, sometimes keeps the electrical turbines from functioning. In general, land in the North is much poorer and less productive than in the South (only one rainy season and one harvest in the North as opposed to two in the South). Great efforts are required by the government and the aid agencies in order to further development in northern Ghana.

The Divide: There is also a religious divide between the more Christian South and the largely Muslim North (although most tribes are still influenced by animist beliefs). Happily there are some communities of believers in the North however, Islamic countries have invested a great deal of money to bring Islam to the various ethnic groups. There is a race between Islam and Christianity in much of West Af-

Ghana

Peaceful despite religious and economic division

rica. While there is still a peaceful co-existence between the two groups, conflict exists between various Muslim sects in the region.

A stronghold of Islam in Ghana is the city of Wa in the northwest of the country. Its residents are mostly Muslim merchants. Some of the believers in Wa did see a few people come to Jesus during the last year. It is difficult for new believers to attend public worship services; for most, it would mean rejection from their families.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for the Ghanaians who are seeking to make Christ known to Muslims. They need encouragement and support in order to continue the work.*
- ▶ *Pray for the people of Wa to become open to the Gospel. Pray for the new believers to have courage and grow in their faith so others may be reached.*
- ▶ *May believers in Wa and other regions grow in God's strength and wisdom, developing good relationships with one another and encouraging one another.*

West African Testimonies:

At the end of 2004 a young man was baptised in Guinea (Conakry). The next day video of his baptism was shown on national television and Rachid (pseudonym) had to flee for his life. In the days that followed, Rachid saw that his father was determined to bring him back to Islam by force. However, Rachid and his brother had freely decided to follow Christ after reading the New Testament and experiencing healing (based on Matthew 15:21-28). Rachid and his brother understood the Good News about Jesus' death and resurrection. He did not want to abandon his King. Eventually

Rachid was imprisoned by the will of his father, but a judge later released him. Afterwards some men burned the home where Rachid was seeking refuge but he miraculously survived. The next morning, when he was able to climb out of the ruins of the house, his persecutors thought he was a ghost and fled. Eventually Rachid was able to meet Christians in another country who have given him shelter. He continues to serve the Lord despite the difficulties.



About 400 million Muslims live in Africa from Algiers to Cape Town and from Dakar to Mogadishu.

Aïcha was born into a family that was partially Christian and partially Muslim. Eventually, under the influence of her older brothers, Aïcha started practicing Islam. At 18 years of age she married a Muslim man and continued to practice Islam, including the fast of Ramadan and daily prayer. After the birth of her daughter, Aïcha had an amazing series of dreams. Various aspects of the first dream convinced her to stop doing her daily Islamic prayers. Her husband convoked her brothers and sisters to convince her to recommence her daily prayers, but she could not be convinced. In the second dream she

saw a man in the sky. Others were fearful of this man and ran but Aïcha was drawn to him even while he was still in the air. Strangely she found herself having an experience similar to the one recorded in Luke 7:36-50. Afterwards within a short time Aïcha met several believers in Jesus. She has given herself completely to the Lord. She suffered a divorce and many difficulties but she has seen the faithfulness of God in her life.

The general coordinator of "30 Days" worldwide has personally met both Aïcha and Rachid.



The forests of Africa have an amazing beauty. Millions of Muslims live in the forests, deserts and savannas of Africa.



MUSLIMS BELIEVE IN ...

One God, the Creator of all things

Angels and evil spirits

Prophets (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah, Jesus, Mohammed)

Mohammed was the last and greatest of the prophets.

Holy books (the Torah, Zabur (Psalms), Injil (Gospel) and the Qur'an)

The Day of Judgement for all people

The Bible has been corrupted and modified by Jews and Christians.



Sept. 9, 2008



Day 9

Total Population: 7 million
Muslim Population: 200,000

Hong Kong, often called the “Pearl of Orient” is composed of Hong Kong Island and some associated areas on the coast of China. Hong Kong’s Muslim population includes 90,000 native Hong Kong residents (Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Malaysian, etc.) and about 110,000 Indonesian migrant labourers.

Hong Kong (also written as HK) developed into a very important seaport as a British colony. Many Muslims came from India as part of the British army garrison and as sailors with the British East India Company as early as 1650. Meanwhile, Chinese Muslims also moved to HK and gradually formed their own community. The first mosque in HK was built in 1890. Today, there are five mosques in HK. There are also two Muslim grave yards, eight Muslim schools and kindergartens, and ten important Islamic organisations.

In the last ten years, significant numbers of Indonesian migrant labourers have come to Hong Kong, often as domestic helpers, and 80-90% of them are women. On their days off, they often gather near Victoria Park. Local Chinese believers have often befriended the Indonesians and several new congregations of believers have begun. However, the

China

Bringing God’s love to Muslims in Hong Kong



churches need more manpower and resources to effectively bring the Good News of God’s love to the Indonesians.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that Chinese believers in Hong Kong will make even more friends for Christ among Muslims. Pray that more Chinese believers will be willing to learn Indonesian languages in order to proclaim Christ.*
- ▶ *Pray that many Christians who have hired Muslims to work in their homes will treat them fairly and proclaim Christ through their daily life. It would be good for Christians to understand the rights of foreign labourers, and help them fulfil their contracts well.*
- ▶ *May God open Muslims hearts in Hong Kong to the Gospel, so they are willing to listen to the Word and be obedient.*

Beijing

Muslims in the ancient capital of China

Population: 15,380,000 (2005)

Ethnic Han Chinese: 96%

Major Muslim group: Hui people (approx. 2% or about 280,000)

There are about 12 million Hui in all of China.

Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. The city was founded more than 3,000 years ago, and was regarded as the capital of China for over 850 years.

The Hui people trace their ancestors back to Muslim traders, soldiers, and officials who came to China during the seventh through fourteenth centuries. These men settled and married local native (Han) Chinese women. The Hui have so well assimilated into the Chinese society that they are almost indistinguishable from the Han Chinese, except in dietary and religious practices. There is a wide range of devotion to Islam among the Hui. In north-eastern China, they are more liberal, they smoke, drink, and eat pork when away from home. Overall, the Hui are said to be among the least radical Muslims in the world.

One can find the Muslim Hui people all over the capital region, however, they tend to congregate in certain streets as well as a few towns and villages around the city. A significant Hui community lives in the Niujiie Street area of central Beijing. Slightly over 11,000 Huis live in this area of 1.5

square kilometres around the famous Niujiie Mosque, the biggest and oldest mosque in Beijing. It was built in AD 996 and was rebuilt and expanded later. It now covers 6,000 square metres. Its architecture blends the beauty of both ancient Chinese palaces and Arabian mosques.

Believers: There is very little if any Christian witness to the Hui Muslims in general. There are no known believers among the Muslim Hui in Beijing.

For more info: <http://www.joshuaproject.org>

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *May God open doors for Chinese believers in the Messiah to proclaim the Gospel to Muslims.*
- ▶ *May God cause the Muslim Hui people in the Beijing area to seek the true God.*
- ▶ *Pray that Chinese believers can be agents of blessing and positive change for the city and the Muslim population.*



Sept. 10, 2008

Day 10



Beijing Olympics 2008

PRAYER TIMES

Practicing Muslims all over the world pray memorised ritual prayers toward the city of Mecca five times per day. This is done at appointed hours which are constantly changing by a few minutes each day depending on the calendar. Here are the prayer times for Beijing today: 5:50 AM, 12:11 PM; 4:41PM ; 6:32 PM and 8:02 PM. Some people will pray an optional sixth time at 4:09 AM.



BRIDGING GAPS

Harvard educated, one of the Aga Khan's primary goals is to bridge the gap between Islamic faith and Western society. As one of the richest men on earth, he uses his wealth and influence to start humanitarian projects. The Aga Khan Development Network is a group of institutions concerned with education, health, economic development, and culture in Asia and Africa.



Sept. 11, 2008

Day 11

“We have the duty to make the World a better place!”— His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV. To his followers Prince Karim Aga Khan IV is more than just their leader; he traces his ancestry back to the Prophet Muhammad through the line of Ali and Fatima, the Prophet's daughter. The Aga Khan's 18 million followers reside in more than 25 countries, stretching from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe all the way to North America. Although most Ismailis have their roots in India, their major language today is English. The Aga Khan's grandfather had urged the community to become more Western oriented, and his grandson's headquarters has moved from India to Paris in Europe.

As Imam and spiritual leader of the Shiite Ismailis, he has absolute authority over his followers. The Aga Khan has been concerned about the well being of all Muslims and particularly the Ismailis in the face of challenges of modern life. Therefore he has dedicated his life to improving the quality of life for his multicultural and multinational family. He even calls his followers 'my spiritual children.' The feeling of family within the Ismaili community is so strong that the Aga Khan's picture is not only put up in every shop and office but a photo of him and his close family are in every Ismaili family photograph album.

The Ismailis

Devoted to their leader

The spiritual and much of the social life of the Ismaili community takes place in a 'Jamaatkhana.' It is more a community centre than a mosque. Ismailis pray three times instead of five times a day and don't use the general practice of Muslim worship postures; one even finds Indian and Hindu elements in their worship.

**PRAYER REQUESTS**

- ▶ *Pray for a spiritual hunger for the Ismailis, that they will discover life in Christ.*
- ▶ *Pray for culturally sensitive outreach towards the Ismailis, wherever they are, through friendship with believers.*
- ▶ *Pray for boldness and sensitivity for the few Ismaili believers who have mostly been ostracised from the community and sometimes from their families.*

Tunisian population: 10,280,000 inhabitants

Kairouan population: 120,000

The city of Kairouan has existed for about 1,300 years. Founded as part of the expansion of the Islamic Empire, it boasts the oldest mosque in North Africa, with the oldest standing minaret in the world – a tribute to the city’s original purpose: to be a base for the spread of Islam across the region.

The famous “Grand Mosque,” is a significant destination for tourists. Elsewhere, the Zaouia Sidi Sahab, tomb of the barber who allegedly cut the Prophet Mohammed’s hair, has gained a reputation as a being a place to pray for healing and for obtaining various blessings. If an appeal for favour seems to be granted, the recipient is obligated to bring a “gift” – usually food for the poor, in thanks for the answered prayer.

For many North Africans, Kairouan is considered the fourth holiest city of Islam. Its school trains religious leaders (Imams) for all of Tunisia. The city is known for the quiet conservatism, women stay in their homes more than in other parts of the country. Kairouan lacks the bustle of many Tunisian cities, with little industry to boost the economy. Young people long to leave for the West in search of employment.



An entrenched fatalism seems even to cling to new believers. The few people who have heard and responded to the Gospel in Kairouan often struggle with personal issues and some manifest little evidence of spiritual growth, perhaps due in part to the hidden spiritual influences over the city.

PRAYER REQUESTS

► *Some believers in Kairouan are convinced that God has asked them to raise a banner of praise over this city, just as he called the worshippers to lead the march around Jericho. By His grace, they claim the promises of Isaiah 62 for their city.*

PAIN NEAR KAIROUAN

Rachid (pseudonym) has stopped hoping for a better job, or a better life. At one time, it seemed possible, but today, as he trudges along a dusty road, he is hoping for a free ride to the city... and more sympathy from his friends.

His wife and two sons are asleep; when they wake up, they will find little to eat. His son was sick last week and the doctor kept his identity papers when Rachid admitted he could not pay the bill. He will hitch-hike the 20 kms to Kairouan, hoping to borrow funds from friends there. Life is a depressing cycle.

Rachid lives with his own family in one room of his father’s house, as does an older married brother. That brother has a steady job and helps pay the family utility bills. Rachid’s inability to contribute is a source of contention, especially with his unsympathetic stepmother, who has vetoed the use of a common kitchen.



Testimonies from Asia:

Testimony from Taiwan:

A woman named Ahfong was invited to a special Christian gathering. She especially caught the attention of the Christians because she came veiled and dressed in her own ethnic attire. At the end of meeting, people were invited to come forward to receive prayer. Ahfong received prayer but after the meeting she disappeared for six months. Finally she called a local Christian after having a few dreams. In one dream, she saw a large bright building with a cross on top of it. Waking up Ahfong wondered why she did not see a mosque or Mohammed in her dream. She decided to read the Bible and also compared it with the Qur'an. A few weeks later, she started attending Christian meetings. She was baptised on Christmas Day 2006.



Testimony from Southeast Asia:

Mary (pseudonym) had wanted to die. She was a victim of constant abuse, a teenager who had nothing to live for until one night she had a dream. In the dream a being clothed in white appeared to her saying, "I am your God, who died on the cross for you."

Shortly afterward Mary found a follower of Jesus who helped her to better understand the dream. However, when she sought to tell her family about her experience Mary's uncle tried to kill her several times! Local believers helped her escape, and to understand faith in the Messiah, the Word of God.

Eventually Mary was able to return home to see her family despite the threats of her uncle. When she arrived she discovered that her uncle had recently been arrested for gambling so at least she was somewhat safer. She had a joyful reunion with her family and they allowed her to continue walking with God with the help of the Messiah.

Mary is now part of a group of people who have started several groups for believers in an Asian country. They are studying the life of Jesus. They are applying the message in their own lives, as in the time of Acts. One of the new believers asked a question one day about why Jesus is called the Son of God. Mary encouraged the person simply to ask God for the answer. In the days that followed God gave the person His answer when unexpectedly a gently blowing breeze opened the Bible at the first chapter of John. In the beginning was the Word ...The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...



Some Asians use a gong to call people to prayer.

Afghanistan

The Aimaq people

700,000+ Aimaq in Afghanistan (estimate)

Possibly 200,000 Aimaq in Iran (estimate)

The name “Aimaq” (the Mongolian word for tribe) refers to the tribal peoples living in the largely barren and mountainous region of Western Afghanistan and Northeastern Iran. The Aimaq are actually a group of up to 20 smaller tribes which have historically linked themselves together through alliances and marriage. The most numerous tribes are the Taimani, Char Hazara, Jamshidi, Firozkuhi and Timuri (remember Revelation 7:9). Tribalism dominates so much that local customs and concepts of honour and shame are more important than Islamic or state law. Disputes tend to be settled by tribal rather than by government authorities.

Ethnic Backgrounds: As a result of various migrations and invasions, the ethnic make up of the Aimaq is one of the greatest mixture of people anywhere. The ethnic traits of Persians, Mongols, Turks, Greeks, Huns and Arabs are all present. The languages spoken by the Aimaq people could generally be described as Dari (Afghan eastern Farsi) which also contains Turkic and Mongolian words.

These semi-nomadic people spend the spring and summer in the mountains with their herds of sheep and goats. In fall and in winter they move to their villages where they weave carpets of traditional design, which differ according to each clan. They raise wheat, grapes, rice, barley, oats, melons, and vegetables, sometimes with primitive hoes

and wooden plows. Agriculture is still considered only a secondary activity in their culture, and a man’s wealth is determined by the size of his herds. Some Aimaq, like many other Afghans, have been significantly involved in the Afghan opium drug trade.

Women: Aimaq women have exceptional freedoms when compared with others in rural Afghanistan. Women sit with men while talking, even if strangers are present. Often girls are not married until about age 18 and are free to reject a groom proposed by their father.

The Aimaq are largely illiterate Sunni Muslims, yet the veneration of deceased Muslim holy men is significant. There are few if any known followers of Jesus among the Aimaq. Various Christian radio broadcasts have been done in Dari and Farsi, however, the extent to which these broadcasts are even received by the Aimaq in Afghanistan is not known.

PRAYER REQUESTS

► *Almost everything needs to be done to reach these people with the Gospel. Pray for qualified believers to take the message, various media tools and open doors (Luke 10:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:1).*



Sept. 13, 2008

Day 13

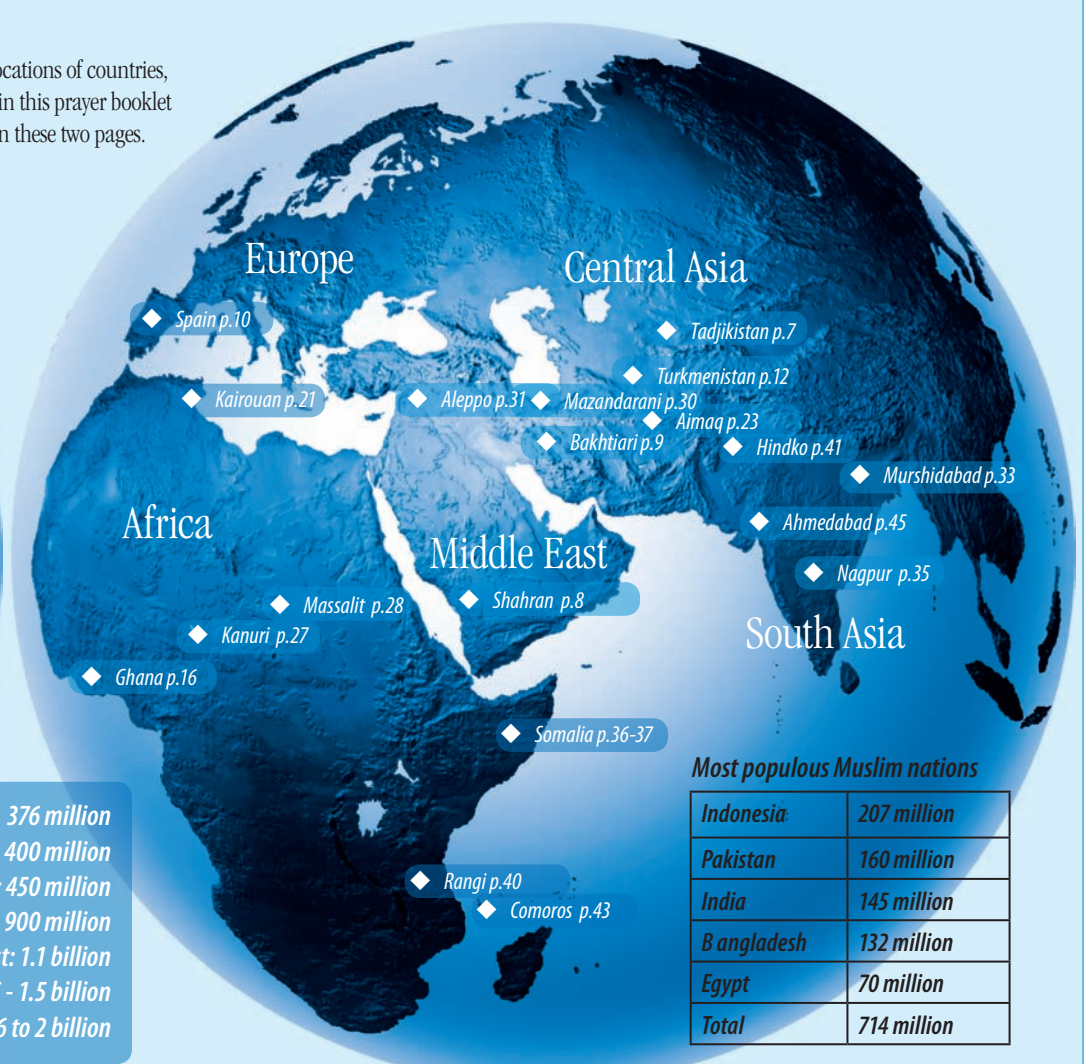
23

AFGHANISTAN'S PEOPLES

The great majority of Afghanistan’s 27 million people are Muslims. Most of them have little or no access to the Gospel. Of the 10 largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan, only four have portions of the Scriptures available in their native tongue. Very few ethnic groups have Christian broadcasts or the ‘Jesus’ film available in their language. Possibly 85% of Afghans have never heard the Gospel.

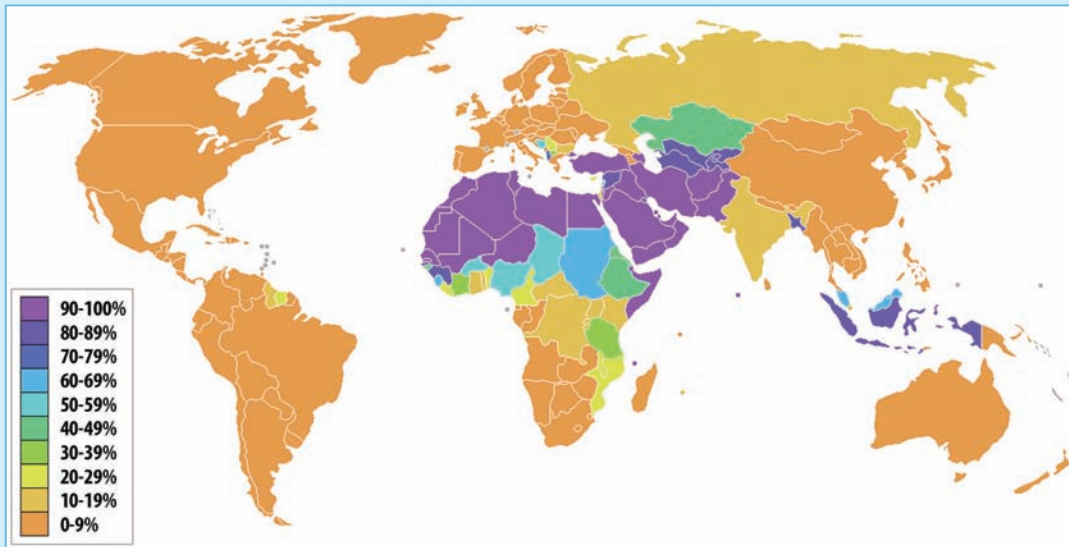


The geographic locations of countries, peoples and cities in this prayer booklet are indicated on these two pages.



Most populous Muslim nations

Indonesia	207 million
Pakistan	160 million
India	145 million
B angladesh	132 million
Egypt	70 million
Total	714 million



There are possibly 1.5 billion Muslims around the world. All the figures in the table below are approximative. It is very difficult to get accurate figures for some countries. For example: The United States does not have census records for religious affiliation. The Muslim population estimates for the United States vary between 1.5 to 7 million people.

<i>Africa</i>	<i>400 million</i>
<i>Middle East</i>	<i>250 million</i>
<i>Asia</i>	<i>800 million</i>
<i>Europe</i>	<i>25+ million</i>
<i>Americas</i>	<i>5+ million</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.48 billion</i>



Muslim Population Worldwide

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The Islamic religion is lived out according to five main “pillars” which are obligatory religious practices for all adult Muslims:

1. Reciting the Creed (shahada) - “There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet”.
2. Prayer (salat) - Five times each day.
3. Almsgiving (zakat) - Both obligatory and voluntary giving to the poor.
4. Fasting (saum) - Especially during the “holy” month of Ramadan.
5. Pilgrimage (hajj) - At least once in a lifetime to Mecca, known as the Hajj.



Sept. 14, 2008



Day 14

City Population: 10 million

The official Muslim population of Bangkok, Thailand is 262,023 people (2000 est.) but some estimate the number to be closer to one million. Over 160 officially registered mosques are located in the city. Many Muslims live along canals which were historically important transportation corridors (there were few or no roads into many areas until 30 years ago). The mosques and temples were all built along the canals for easy access, yet today many of the canals have disappeared.

Muslim communities: Muslims have lived in Bangkok for generations, often forming homogenous communities, largely closed to non-Muslims. The size of each community differs, but on average it is about 150 - 200 households. These communities have been able to develop their own mosques and religious schools, and maintain their social and dietary customs. Muslims tend not to move into areas where the residents are primarily Buddhist. However, because Bangkok has become such a huge city, there are many places where Muslims mix with non-Muslims - even though they prefer to both live and work together with fellow Muslims. While large areas in the eastern part of Bangkok used to be primarily Muslim, they are now a minority in these districts. However, in some areas, Muslim students still form the majority in public schools.

Thailand

A great opportunity in Bangkok

Language: Thai is the only language most of Bangkok’s Muslims speak, but occasional words of Malay are also used. Muslim sermons on radio include Arabic and sometimes Malay readings. Some religious schools teach Pattani Malay as well as Arabic, and many students from Bangkok study at religious schools away from the city.



Most emigration of Muslims into Bangkok has come from the southern part of Thailand, but there have also been sizeable groups of Cham from Cambodia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, India, Burma and Iran, as well as China.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that many Muslims in Bangkok will realise that life is not about religion; it is about having a relationship with God through the living and reigning Messiah (John 17:3).*
- ▶ *Pray that Thai believers will be able to build positive and beneficial friendships with Muslims.*

The Kanuri

Living in Nigeria, Niger and Chad



Sept. 15, 2008

27

Day 15

MUSLIM IDEAS ABOUT JESUS

Jesus was conceived miraculously by God in the womb of Mary.

Jesus is only a prophet.

Jesus was actually a good Muslim and he taught an earlier form of Islam.

Jesus did not die on the cross. He went directly to heaven.

Jesus will come again, marry, have children and die. He will be judged like all men at the Last Judgement.

Kanuri main tribes consist of the Yerwa Kanuri, the Manga Kanuri, and Kanembu Kanuri. The majority of the Kanuri live in Northeastern Nigeria, where they are the dominant people group. Smaller numbers are also located across the borders in the surrounding countries of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. This entire region was once ruled by the ancestors of the Kanuri. Aspects of Kanuri culture, language, and religion have been adopted by many of the neighbouring tribes. The Kanuri are tall and very dark in appearance, with a stately, dignified look. Many Kanuri speak Hausa and Arabic.

What Are Their Lives Like? Most of the Kanuri are farmers; however, they usually practice some other occupation during the dry season. Those who farm raise millet as their staple crop, and supplement it with sorghum, corn, and peanuts. They raise sheep, goats, and some horses. Kanuri settlements vary in size; but most contain walled-in compounds surrounding several mud or grass houses with thatched, cone-shaped roofs. These houses are very cool during the hot months. Farmland surrounds each settlement. Kanuri men marry while they are in their early twenties. Polygamy is common and a man may have as many as four wives. Young girls marry while they are in their teens. Ideally, a man wants his first wife to be a young virgin. However, the bride price for a virgin is quite expensive, so men often take divorced women as their first wives. The divorce

rate among the Kanuri is extremely high, with eight out of ten marriages ending in divorce.

What are their beliefs? The Kanuri have been Muslims since the eleventh century (about 1,000 years). Many superstitions and animistic beliefs are still practiced in conjunction with Islam. Charms and amulets are worn around the neck or in pockets for various reasons.

What are their needs? Some of the Kanuri tribes do not yet have a translation of the Bible in their native dialect; others tribes have only portions of the Bible. Among the nearly five million Kanuri, there are several hundred known believers.

Adapted from material at the Joshua Project online.

PRAYER POINTS

- ▶ *Ask God to call more people to proclaim the love of Jesus among the Kanuri.*
- ▶ *Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Kanuri and increasingly use the small number of Kanuri believers to share the Gospel with others.*
- ▶ *Pray that God will raise up people to translate the Bible into each of the Kanuri dialects.*





Sept. 16, 2008



Day 16

The Massalit are a group of some 400,000 people in Sudan (most in Darfur) and in Eastern Chad. They live as subsistence farmers in this dry region, totally dependant upon the annual rainy season for their survival. Millet is their basic food crop and peanuts is a cash crop for them. The Massalit are proud of their cattle, although large numbers of their animals have perished during various droughts. Massalit homes are rounded huts made from straw and grass. Even though their life is hard, they have generally been a happy people.

Unfortunately, many things have changed for the Massalit people in the last three years, because they have become one of the ethnic groups involved in the Darfur crisis where 200,000 people have been killed since 2003. The majority of the Massalit, in Darfur, have been forced to flee to refugee camps in Sudan, or across the border into Chad. The Massalit in Chad received their Sudanese relatives with typical hospitality but were soon overwhelmed. Now there are about 150,000 Massalit in refugee camps in Chad. During the last year the Sudanese rebels have crossed the border into Chad to murder and rape and plunder. They say, "You are slaves, the land is ours."

The Massalit People

Daring to question Islam in Darfur

Through the suffering brought on by those of their own Islamic religious background, many people in Darfur have dared to question their own faith and have even ceased to pray. Christian Evangelism is frowned upon, however, spiritual encouragement and testimonies are usually welcome. There are several followers of Christ helping in the region. In many refugee camps schools have been set up and many adults have become interested in learning to read.

PRAYER REQUESTS

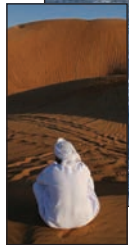
- ▶ *Please pray for an end to the horror of Darfur.*
- ▶ *Pray that the positive aspects of Massalit culture would not be changed due to the crisis, and that they will be able to truly differentiate between good and evil influences in their lives.*
- ▶ *Pray that God will open the hearts of the hurting Massalit to receive His Word and healing, creating vibrant new communities of faith from which Massalit believers can preach in their own language to those around them.*

The Middle East

Moving into the Technological Age

Currently in Dubai there are about 1,000 high rise buildings of more than sixteen stories which are planned, under construction or completed.

The Burj Dubai Tower (photo) will be nearing completion by Ramadan 2008. This building will have 162 floors (818 metres) and the tip of its tower will probably reach 1,000 metres.



The Dubai waterfront

The Middle East is a region of great contrasts. There is immense suffering in Iraq, Gaza, Israel, the West Bank, Lebanon, the slums of Cairo and in impoverished desert areas. At the same time the wealth of various Gulf countries cannot be ignored. Yet even in the modern surroundings of Dubai, Qatar and Bahrain striking injustice abounds. Poor Indian, Pakistani and Filipino guest workers in Gulf countries do not always have happy lives. Some would even compare their existence to slavery. Yet all, rich and poor alike, are made in God's image. All need to discover true life through the Messiah, the Lamb of God (John 10:10-11).

Anyone doing a simple Google search on the Internet concerning Dubai, Abu Dhabi,

Qatar, Iran, Iraq or Egypt will be amazed at the changes in these countries. The following web sites can help to better understand the Middle East. (The addresses are given for your information, some will be more valuable, accurate and useful than others.)

<http://english.aljazeera.net/English> (News)
<http://www.memritv.org/> (News)
<http://www.barnabasfund.org/> (Persecuted)
<http://michaeltotten.com/> (Life in Lebanon)
<http://www.fahad.com/> (Blog)
<http://www.dubai-tower.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.pray-ap.info/> (Prayer Site)
<http://www.iraqprayer.org/> (Pray for Iraq)
<http://www.icasualties.org> (Suffering Iraq)

About 50% of the Mazandarani retain the traditional lifestyle of farming, raising cattle and breeding horses, with some carpet weaving being done by the women. The others are engaged in various manufacturing and commercial enterprises. The Mazandarani are among the more highly educated and progressive of the peoples of Iran. In the 1970's, reforms brought in large-scale processing and distribution of agricultural products, manufacturing and investment. An oil boom brought new businesses in cement, cotton and textile industries. Fisheries developed on the coast.



Sept. 17, 2008



Day 17

The Mazandarani speakers of Iran number between three and 4.5 million people who live mainly in the Mazandaran province and neighbouring provinces bordering the Caspian Sea, in Northern Iran. (The Caspian Sea is actually called the Khazar Sea or Mazandaran Sea in Persian.) Mazandaran province is divided into beautiful natural landscapes: the coastal plain and the Alborz Mountain Range. The highest mountain in Iran is called Damavand (5,600 metres, located in the province). The Mazandarani language is related to the neighbouring Gilaki language and also to Persian (Farsi), which is the official language of Iran. The more educated Mazandarani can read Farsi well. These people are almost 100% Shi'a Muslim, and Islam has been present in this province for about 1,300 years. In Iran it is a capital offence to convert from Islam to another religion. The full weight of this law is seldom applied, but a Muslim convert can certainly expect persecution from family and the local community, as well as economic hardships as a result of exclusion from certain occupations, business options and government benefits.

Followers of Jesus: There are a number of small cell churches and scattered believers throughout the region. In addition, there are individual Mazandarani believers in many places around the world among the four million Iranians who have sought refuge in other countries. Most Mazandarani believers readily recognize the benefits of audio materials in their language and are eager to promote

Iran

The Mazandarani people



Scripture translation activity. This work is in the early stages and most of the four gospels are in first draft. It may be possible to use a computer adaptation to make a Mazandarani translation from Scriptures in a related language. Radio and satellite broadcasts are being planned. Training and discipleship of believers is being done discretely with small numbers of people in Iran.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for receptive hearts towards the Gospel.*
- ▶ *Pray for the few Mazandarani believers to grow in faith and develop ministry skills, becoming active and effective in witnessing discretely within their hostile environment.*
- ▶ *Pray for spiritual and physical protection of the believers (several have endured persecution).*
- ▶ *Pray for the Mazandarani Scripture translation team and their work.*

Aleppo

The second largest city in Syria



Sept. 18, 2008

31

Day 18

PHOTOS FROM ALEPPO

The second largest city in Syria, Aleppo, is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world, along with the capital, Damascus. With populations of around 4 million and 6 million respectively, about half the country's population live in these two cities.

Aleppo takes its name (Halab in Arabic) from the word for milk. The legend is told that Abraham and his flocks camped near the city during a time of great need, and he fed the city's inhabitants with the abundant milk that God caused to flow from his livestock. Today, the Muslims of Aleppo still live in great need for pure spiritual milk and God's miraculous provision through his servants.

Muslims in Aleppo: The people of Aleppo are predominantly Sunni Muslim and have a reputation for being conservative and devout. This is both a challenge and an opportunity; many are content and complacent in their religion, yet some are earnestly seeking God. Some Muslims, especially the young and educated, are growing dissatisfied with Islam but are drawn towards materialism, secularism and even atheism as the only alternatives they know. Very few Muslims in the city have ever heard a clear presentation of the Good News.

The local believers: Alongside the Muslims lives one of the most diverse Christian populations in the Middle East.

Many different flavours of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant are represented within Aleppo's Christian minority. Although there are peaceful relations between Christians and Muslims, it is largely a peace based on living separately and avoiding the topic of religion. Praise God that some believers are actively explaining their faith with anyone who will listen, including Muslims. Unfortunately the Muslims of Aleppo have largely been neglected in the proclamation of the Good News for centuries.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for peace and stability between conservative and less religious Muslims.*
- ▶ *Pray for Muslims dissatisfied with Islam to be drawn towards the Messiah, the King of all the earth.*
- ▶ *Pray for the different Syrian believers; for love, unity and a passion to explain their faith in Jesus to all.*
- ▶ *Pray for at least one extended family of Muslims in Aleppo to follow Jesus and share the Good News themselves with their Muslim relatives, friends and neighbours.*



In many countries popular “Folk Islamic” practices are often even more important than orthodox Islam in the daily life of millions of Muslims. Orthodox Islam does not usually have a real expectancy that Allah will actually intervene in difficult situations. He is basically inaccessible. Therefore many people search out Muslim holy men for help. In some countries the tombs of various Muslim holy men are reputed to be places of blessing where people can also seek help. Various things including talismans and the “Hand of Fatima” are often used against the “Evil Eye” and evil spirits.



Sept. 19, 2008



Day 19

The Minangkabau, numbering about 8,659,000, are the fourth largest ethnic group in Indonesia and exercise significant influence in the country. While some Minangkabau are scattered across the country on various islands, they originate from the province of West Sumatra.

Lina is a young Minangkabau woman from a large family, all of whom are proud of their culture and religion. They do everything that Islam requires of them, but they are also involved in other traditional practices. Instead of going to a doctor when someone is sick, they will often visit a dukun (a traditional healer). Lina especially believes that evil spirits are everywhere and she is very interested in all things supernatural.

Because of these beliefs, she is often tense and is afraid of almost everything. Even sudden loud noises make her jump, and she sleeps with a light on at night. Muslim's say, “Bismillah i-rahman-ir-rahim (in the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful)” before they eat; Lina says it before practically every bite of food she takes.

This life of fear even affects Lina's attitude toward her religion: she sees God as a faraway figure and she tries to do all her religious duties not out of a desire to be faithful and obedient, but because she is afraid of going to hell when she

dies. She seems resigned to the idea that she will never be in paradise, because her good deeds never seem to be enough to outweigh her sins.

Even though Lina has had many conversations with some followers of Jesus about the forgiveness of sins through Isa Almasih (Jesus the Messiah), she is still too afraid to even consider the possibility that it is actually truth. Unfortunately she only believes that Jesus is simply a prophet, and that He cannot protect her from evil spirits. Millions of other Minangkabau have never had the opportunity to learn about Jesus.

PRAYER REQUESTS

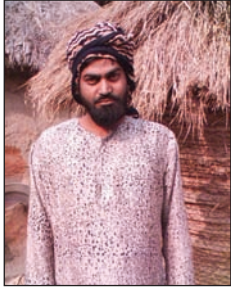
- ▶ *Pray that the Holy Spirit will open the hearts of the Minangkabau to the truth that only Jesus can bring salvation, and that He can free them from a life of fear.*
- ▶ *Pray that Minangkabau people, including Lina and her family, will no longer look to the dukuns to solve their problems but rather they will look to Jesus for help and healing.*
- ▶ *Pray that whole families of the Minangkabau will come to a trusting reliance on Jesus.*

Indonesia

Lina's fear of evil



Day 20



Spread across both sides of the Bhagirathi (Hooghly) River, a main tributary of the Ganges, Murshidabad district was the seat of Muslim power in the Bengal region after 1704. The greatness of Muslim rule is still visible in the museum of Hazar Duari (the Palace of a Thousand Doors), the Imambara, the Katra Mosque and a number of other monuments. This land was once famous for its Nawab dynasties (Muslim Moghol provincial governors). However, it has largely been forgotten in recent times. With its rich history of artisans and strong agricultural crops this district provides skilled workers to a number of trades across India. Murshidabad's industries include ivory-carving, as well as silver and gold embroidery, silk-weaving and fine crafts.

Problems: Unfortunately the region is also now known for its numerous problems, including cases of human trafficking, child labour, severe poverty and local political assassinations. It has largely missed out on the foreign influence and development that have been present in other parts of West Bengal.



There are approximately six million people in Murshidabad district with almost 90% of these people living in rural villages. While the majority of the population of West Bengal is Hindu, Murshidabad is 64% Muslim (3.8 million people). The number of Muslims in Murshidabad district rival that of the entire populations of nations like Albania and Lebanon. There is less than one full time minister for every million Muslims in this district.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that God will reveal Himself to the young and old Bengali Muslims in Murshidabad (Acts 2:16-21).*
- ▶ *Pray that Muslim background believers will be called, equipped and motivated to witness and teach the Way of Christ in unity with other believers (Matthew 28:20).*
- ▶ *May the Messiah's glory be revealed in the land of the Nawab dynasties.*

GOD IS ACTIVE IN MURSHIDABAD

Although there are only a handful of believers, their witness has already brought many Muslims to life changing faith. Many believers are now experiencing severe persecution in the transparency of village life, where nothing is hidden. On a recent trip one believer visited a Bengali Muslim family known to him through a common acquaintance. This family expressed interest in the Gospel and made a joint decision to follow the Messiah. There are many families like this one among the Bengali Muslims residing in the area, but many never have had an opportunity to hear the Gospel (Ingil) in their own language.



Sept. 21, 2008



USA

Day 21

Ford, Muslims and mosques in Dearborn, Michigan

- Muslims often believe that the Bible has been altered and corrupted. They will deny its authority because they see it as not being authentic.
- Muslims believe the Holy Trinity implies a belief in three gods. Many Muslims believe that the Christian Trinity is made up of the Father, Mary (the virgin) and the Son (Jesus).
- They believe it is blasphemy to affirm the divinity of Jesus and to give Him the title "Son of God". Many believe this implies that God had sexual relations with Mary and that a son was born physically through the union. (This idea is also unacceptable for Christians.)



Dearborn is the hometown of Henry Ford and the world headquarters of the Ford Motor Company. Many years ago Muslim immigrants to the United States were drawn to the relatively high-paying jobs associated with the auto industry in the area.

Dearborn, Michigan now has the largest single concentration of Arab Muslims in North America. There are 32,000 Arab Muslims from Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq living in East Dearborn, making up almost 1/3 of the population. In some districts it is common to see store signs and billboards written in Arabic.

Mosques: Mosques and Islamic Centres play an important role in the life of American Muslims. They are places of refuge and of rest; places where a Muslim can experience the Islamic community and learn about Islam. Many Muslims feel safer and more relaxed within the centres which are somewhat isolated from outside influences. Dearborn is one of the few places in the US where one can actually hear the call to prayer publicly over a loudspeaker. The Islamic Centre of America in Dearborn, a Shi'a mosque frequented mostly by Lebanese Muslims, is the largest mosque in the US. The Islamic Centre of America's attractive web site has several good photos: www.icofa.com/.

Making Jesus known: There have been a number of efforts to make Christ better known to Muslims in Dearborn. However, many believers say that in general, it can sometimes be even harder to discuss believing in Jesus with Muslims in Dearborn than elsewhere. Many Muslims in Michigan have a fortress mentality manifested in community pressure to conform to Muslim ideals.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that the Muslims in Dearborn will respond to the Gospel message they have heard (Acts 28:26-28).*
- ▶ *Pray for the Arabic speaking Muslim background believers who live in the area. May they have God's grace in the Yemeni, Iraqi and Lebanese neighbourhoods to start new communities of believers.*
- ▶ *Pray for the new adult male believers in the Messiah to openly profess their faith in the context of their families, as well as in the larger Muslim communities. Their influence and authority in the home and society will pave the way for the Gospel to be heard and obeyed by others.*

Day 22

The central Indian city of Nagpur (whose name means ‘City of Snakes’) has a population of over three million people. Nagpur lies on major north-south and east-west transportation routes. The city is at the geographic centre of India. While the majority of its inhabitants are Hindu, there is a sizeable Muslim minority of approximately 7.1% (215,000). Nominal followers of Jesus number around 5%, although practicing believers are much less numerous. In the region outside Nagpur city there are even less believers among the many Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and others. The governing political party in the area has a clear agenda to keep India as a Hindu nation and reject “foreign and Western” influences making life hard for the local followers of Jesus.

Misconception: It is a commonly held misconception in the region that followers of Jesus bribe downtrodden Muslims and Hindus to accept Christ in return for material benefit or social advantage. Therefore actions by local believers motivated by love for Jesus Christ and one’s fellowman are often misunderstood, presenting barriers for the Good News and discipleship. Often, those who do come to Christ are pressured into returning to Islam by various social, economic, emotional and even physical pressures. Yet even in this hostile environment, Jesus is calling Muslims from Nagpur to Himself.

Muslims usually speak Urdu and Marathi while Hindus and other speak Hindi and Marathi. Between 2004 - 2006, several newer translations utilising some “Muslim-style” terminology have been published. These have helped Muslims to understand, accept and obey God’s word. Nevertheless Bibles are not widely distributed nor are they easily accessible to the Muslim community. The “Jesus” film also exists but there are distribution problems. As far as we know, there is no group of believers that regularly reaches out to the Muslims in this city with the Gospel in an organised way.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for local believers to enter into their role as those who are part of God’s plan to bless all nations, tribes and tongues (Gen. 22:18 and Galatians 3:16,29).*
- ▶ *Pray for the effective distribution of these new translations of the Bible.*
- ▶ *Pray for the local believers who face real persecution due to the prejudices and misunderstandings.*
- ▶ *Pray for believers to be trained in how to proclaim the Messiah with wisdom and understanding in the Muslim community.*

MUSLIMS DO NOT BELIEVE ...

Muslims do not believe that it is possible to know God as in John 17:3. (They only believe that they can know about Him). Small numbers of Muslims called Sufis believe in a mystical union with God. However this group is often seen as heretical by many Muslims.



Traditionally 90% of the Somali population lived a nomadic pastoralist life (this has fallen to about 60% at present). Groups of men travelled through the desert with their camels and livestock. While travelling, they had to endure the hot sun, walk for months across vast distances and protect their animals from wild beasts. Somali men often possess great courage and boldness. Being a warrior has traditionally been one of their greatest ideals. It is in this setting that the Somali oral culture developed. Somali men are known for being poets and storytellers and they love to debate. These cultural aspects continue to be highly valued even in the growing urban centers.



Sept. 23, 2008



Day 23

Total Somali population: 9,119,000 (July 2007 est.)

Somalia has suffered from a complicated civil war for over 20 years. Traditionally, Somali men were the providers of their families' basic needs. However, when the war erupted there were several hundred thousand deaths. Thousands more were maimed or exiled. Over the past decade, more than half a million people fled the war - many of them men. This has devastated the family structure and left many families fatherless. The involvement in fighting, the trauma and the life in refugee camps have destroyed the vitality, vision and hope of Somali men.

Trying to escape: Some men have found a way to escape from the harsh realities of Somali life. Khat (Catha Edulis) is an evergreen shrub that grows in the highlands of Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen. Chewing the leaves of khat has a stimulating, narcotic effect, and like most drugs, khat is addictive and must be consumed daily. The majority of Somali men are addicted to khat, which has a huge influence on their life in Somali society. Men buy their khat at the market and then in the afternoon and evening, they meet with friends,

drink tea and chew khat. Kept awake by the drug, men often come home late. Many children grow up seeing little of their fathers. The women are left responsible for the household chores, raising the children and providing for the family. Khat chewers suffer from various health problems, yet those who really suffer the most are their families. Men often spend most of their money on khat, yet their families go hungry.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that the bondage of khat would be broken. Social pressure encouraging men to chew is huge. Strength, wisdom and courage are needed to break this national addiction.*
- ▶ *Pray for wives and children to know how to cope with the absence of men.*
- ▶ *Pray that Somali society will experience God's healing of families and come to know true fatherhood at home and the heavenly Father..*

Many Christians worldwide will be praying for Somalia in 2008 and 2009 as an organised prayer effort to see change in this troubled nation. See: <http://www.prayforsomalia.org/>

Somalia

Hard realities for Muslim men and families

Somalia

“To be Somali is to be Muslim”



Sept. 24, 2008

37

Day 24

TESTIMONY FROM SOMALIA

Among Somalis it is a commonly held idea that, “All Somalis are Muslim and if there are any Somalis who say otherwise they are only being paid to do so.” Even Somalis who are not particularly devout in their practice of religion will claim allegiance to Islam. Although there is a growing number of Somali young people being trained in Islamic theology, the main barrier to believing the Good News among the Somalis is not so much a theological barrier as it is the societal view that, “To be a Somali is to be a Muslim”. Many people in Muslim majority countries have similar ideas and attitudes.

Questioning: On the other hand, all of the infighting and killing going on across clan lines among the Somalis in recent years has led to some questioning Islam. Some ask, “Why has Islam not kept us from killing each other?” Other Somalis who have lived in Muslim societies, such as Saudi Arabia or the Gulf States, have experienced a certain amount of discrimination causing them to become more open to the Gospel. At the same time Somalis who were fairly nominal in their practice of Islam in Somalia (where they were “all Muslim”) often take more seriously their Islamic identity and practice when they come to the West. They do this as a means of coping with the feared loss of identity and

contamination by the evil aspects of Western society.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that Somalis could see the true value of the kingdom (Mt. 13:44-46). God’s forgiveness and abundant life in the Messiah are present realities of that kingdom.*
- ▶ *Pray that the Somalis who come to faith in the Messiah would not only be seen as rebels by their families. May they have opportunities to demonstrate that they can be culturally Somali and followers of Jesus at the same time.*



Libaan spent years outside of Somalia in several different countries. Eventually, he received a portion from the Injil (Gospel). He was impressed by what he read: The text was beautiful with a deep message. After two more years he fully believed the message and entrusted his life to Isa Al Masih (Jesus the Messiah). Afterwards he experienced deep joy and peace about his future. God’s forgiveness filled him with hope! Libaan’s relatives had heard that Libaan had become a Gal (Somali word for a pagan). Most Somalis can’t imagine that Christians may also be people who fear God, because they assume that Christians live a very worldly lifestyle (including drunkenness and immorality). Returning to see his family Libaan insisted that he not be called a Gal. In his view he was submitted to God, the Almighty. While his family received him well at first later they rejected him. This experience broke his heart. Somali believers are few in number. They experience loneliness and rejection even from their most beloved family members. Only encouragement and comfort from God helps them to overcome.

Testimony from Mumbai, India

I was born in a wealthy Muslim family. Both my father and mother belonged to families with a profound religious heritage. Unfortunately tensions in my parent's marriage, related to my father's marriage with a second wife, soon caused my parents to divorce. My mother and I moved several times but eventually we settled in Mumbai.

When I was very young I had a remarkable dream. I heard God calling me and as I looked towards the heavens, I saw the skies lit up with a powerful light. Later I began to study the Qur'an in English. I was disturbed by the Hindu - Muslim riots, and the hatred that Muslims had for the followers of Jesus and Jews. Eventually I stopped praying and practicing Islam. I still had a belief in God, but I was angry and I often contemplated suicide. One day when I was seriously considering killing myself I dozed off and had an amazing experience. I could see myself standing near a certain statue of Jesus at a place which I knew very well. I sensed a divine peaceful presence, but I still resisted God in my thoughts. About

a year later when I visited that place much to my surprise I saw the words of Jesus written below the statue, "I am the Resurrection and the Life".

Things went badly for me in business and in my relationships, so eventually I thought of killing various members of my family and joining the mafia or a jihad movement. But one night I woke from my sleep and I plainly saw the face of Jesus in my room. I heard His voice speaking, "From now onwards you don't have to be sad anymore; all your pains and sufferings are mine; that's why I went on the cross for you." Amazingly at that moment my anger, hatred, fear, sorrow and negativity left me. Joy and peace came into me and I awoke fresh and cheerful. Months of tension and pain left me. Soon I met others from a Muslim background who have had similar experiences to my own. I began to compose poems and songs for my Lord. Encountering Jesus has created a passion within me to worship God.



Quote: "The vast Ganges plains of North India contain the greatest concentration of unevangelized people in the world. North India will probably be the touchstone of our success or failure in completing world evangelization in our generation." - Patrick Johnstone

There are possibly 145 million Muslims in India. God loves them all. India has more Muslims than all the following countries combined: Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and Egypt.

Jesus in the Islamic holy book, the Qur'an:

The Qur'an affirms certain beliefs about Jesus that are actually true biblically: He was born of a virgin, he performed miracles of healing the blind, lepers, and raising the dead, he had disciples and experienced rejection from his people. Jesus is also given many great titles in the Qur'an including "Servant of God", "Prophet and Apostle of God", "Word of God", "Spirit from God" and "One of the Righteous". He is called "the Messiah" eleven times in the Qur'an but there is no explanation of what this means. He is most commonly called "Isa, son of Mary" in the Qur'an, emphasising his virgin birth. However, the Qur'an clearly states that he is not "God in the flesh" (He is no more than a prophet), not "son of God" and he did not die on the cross. Even if he had died on the cross the Qur'an denies the possibility of an atoning death, declaring three times that on Judgment Day, "None can bear the sins of another!"

Although there are some similarities to the Jesus we know from the Bible, the Qur'an also presents some strong theological barriers for Muslims to come to know him as the crucified and risen Messianic King. Muslims do not realise that the Messiah was sent to bring forgiveness of sins and deliverance from the power of death, Satan and injustice (2 Peter 3:13).

You might try reading the following text about Jesus from the Qur'an: Surah 3:45-51: Family of Imraan (Note that the Qur'an is divided into chapters called "Surah"s which have names and it also has verses). The Qur'an is readily available on many sites on the Internet.



A page from an ancient version of the Qur'an.



A Tunisian woman in a Kairouan graveyard

What is the Muslim experience of God?

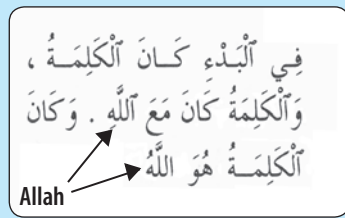
One Christian writer has described Muslim ideas and experience of God as follows:

"It is as though a person in the dim light of dawn should look at a distant building. He sees the building, he perceives there is only one building, but he is unable to tell whether it is a residence or a factory. He is sure it only has one story, and is built of brick. But when he comes nearer, and views the building in the clear light of day, he realises that it is built of stone, not of brick, and instead of having only one story it has three. He now knows the building as it really is. When a Muslim looks toward God in the imperfect light of Qur'anic revelation and his own reason, he sees God's power and will, but does not see God's love. He sees God's unity, but he does not see that he is Trinity in unity. Such true knowledge of God is possible only when one sees God in his Son Jesus Christ."

Taken from: A Christian's Response to Islam by William M. Miller, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. 1976, (STL reprint 1986, pages 75-76)

THE WORD ALLAH

Please note that the word Allah is used for the word God in the Arabic Bible. Very small numbers of Arabic speaking believers also use the word “Al Ilaah” for the God of the Bible.



The text above is John 1:1 in the Bible. “In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God.”



Sept. 25, 2008



Day 25

Tanzanian population: 39,400,000

Rangi population: 350,000

Since the early 1900s in the city of Kondo and the surrounding areas, more and more Rangi have turned to Islam. When the British took control of Tanzania in 1920, the Kondo region was already 90% Muslim. Only the Rangi in the Haubi Valley refused Islam. After some debate among the local chieftains, in 1937 the Rangi in Haubi became Catholic and built an imposing cathedral. Since then the 90% Muslim, almost 10% Catholic ratio has basically not changed. Although there have been evangelical congregations for several decades in the area, there are few Rangi evangelicals.

Life among the Rangi: The majority of the Rangi population live in villages and their identity is often wrapped up in village life. For a long time few non-Rangi Tanzanians wanted to live in Kondo and the 150 surrounding Rangi villages. The Rangi were often unloved and mistrusted by many because of their reputation of being active with evil spirits and witchcraft. Even today some Rangi are brought to trial for ritual murders associated with black magic. However, in the last ten years larger numbers of Tanzanians have started to live in Kondo with a noticeable rise in the number of cars and televisions. Mobile phones abound, business is booming, and hospitals and schools are being built.

Tanzania

Changing times among the Rangi people

Communications: A Rangi language Bible translation project began in 1996 and the translation is progressing well. Other work to help poor families is also under way. Recently some local believers opened a new school in the city. It is hoped that there will be good communication between all the groups, that old historical prejudices will be overcome, and that social as well as spiritual development will continue.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for the unity among the believers that Jesus prayed for in John 17:20-26 to become reality in the area. Muslims have sometimes pointed out that the Christians have often been divided.
- ▶ Pray for courage, creativity and wisdom for the Rangi Christians as they proclaim the Messiah to their Muslim neighbours.
- ▶ Pray for positive economical development, and that the Rangi will not forget God as they seek better economic conditions.



TROUBLED PAKISTAN

The entire world has become aware of the suffering of Pakistan. The Kashmir Earthquake, terrorist bombing and the assassination of Benazir Bhutto kept Pakistan in the headlines in recent years. It is possible there will be other events before this booklet is published. Remember to pray for this country.

Possibly five million people in Northern Pakistan are Hindko speakers. This is more than the population of Norway and about the same as Turkmenistan. Made up of several ethnic groups, mostly Pathans and Moghuls, the Hindko are more of a language group than a people group.

Lifestyles: Hindko speakers make their living as farmers or merchants in the foothills of the Himalayas. Corn and wheat are the most important crops. These grains are ground into flour and used to make a flat bread that accompanies every meal. The people lead very simple lives, but often go to great lengths to secure an education and a better future for their children. Only about 25% of Hindko speakers can read in any language.

Compared to their Pashto-speaking relatives, Hindko speakers are known for being gentle and peace-loving. They even tend to be more open-minded than their neighbours. Still, only a handful of Hindko speakers are followers of Jesus. At the same time, economic disparities and political disenfranchisement have led many of these gentle people to seek change through Islamic fundamentalism. The local school system has been largely taken over by fundamentalists which has sometimes even led young men from poor families into terrorist organisations.

Looking for Answers: The devastating earthquake of October 2003 caused deaths in nearly every Hindko-speaking family. Even today, many are still looking for a new livelihood, permanent housing, and answers to their deeper questions. Interest in reading the New Testament remains high, but the Word of God in Hindko is not yet available in print. Most have never had an opportunity to hear the Gospel.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that Hindko believers would overcome their fear of persecution.*
- ▶ *Pray for additional believers willing to lovingly serve Hindko speakers through practical means.*
- ▶ *Pray that God would reveal Himself through various means including dreams and visions among Hindko speakers.*
- ▶ *Pray that Hindko speakers would have access to God's Word in their own language through print, audio recordings, radio and the Internet.*



MUSLIM IDEAS OF CHRISTIANS

Very often Muslims unfortunately associate Christianity completely with Western culture. Muslims often believe that Christians are deceived and that they have an obligation to lead them to the truth of Islam. For many Muslims, the word “Christian” signifies materialism, a lack of spirituality and moral failure. Because of this they reject many things that come from Western society and which they consider perverted. For Muslims, alcohol consumption, pornography, a liberal lifestyle and a lack of religious practice are sure signs of the failure of Western countries (They often see and hear these type of things on Western television, films, books and music).



Sept. 27, 2008

Day 27

One hundred million children under the age of 15 live in the Arab world and at least half of them have access to satellite television. These children and youth represent the future of the region. Children living amid strife, lack of hope and difficulties often turn to TV as a place of safety where they can escape. Arab children now have the opportunity to watch Christian programming at all times of the day. In December 2007, the SAT-7 network launched SAT-7 KIDS – a 24-hour Arabic satellite television channel for children.

For about 12 years the SAT-7 network has been encouraging and strengthening believers as it makes available Christ’s message of hope to every home in the Middle East and North Africa. On SAT-7 KIDS, children can see programs with messages of love, forgiveness and turning the other cheek. The channel is broadcasting cartoons, dramas, Bible stories, game shows and many kinds of programs about how to walk with the Lord. From the beginning, programs for children have been among the most popular of the wide variety of shows available on SAT-7.

**Here are a few comments from viewers:**

- “I thank the Lord for your programs which spread the Word of God in the Arab world. I regularly watch your children’s program, although I am 27 years old and am a Sunday school teacher!” (Young man in Syria)
- “I am 9 years old. I have a question: How can I love the bad people who are mean to me?” (Girl in Egypt)
- “I want to tell you that I love your show very much. It helps me to understand and know things about God. (Egyptian girl living in Saudi Arabia)

See the web site at: <http://www.sat7.org/>

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for the children of the Arab world, that they may be blessed through watching SAT-7 KIDS.
- ▶ Pray for inspiration and creativity for those actively working to make SAT-7 KIDS an attractive and helpful channel for followers of Jesus and Muslims alike.
- ▶ Pray for additional funding for SAT-7.

SAT 7

A new TV-channel for the children of the Arab World



Comoros Islands

Proclaiming Christ is forbidden in the Comoros

Day 28

PHOTOS OF THE COMOROS

Population: 711,417 (July 2007 est.)
98% Muslim, 0.5% Catholic, 1.5% Other

Many years ago the Comoros Islands were known for their exports of perfume essences, as well as vanilla and cloves. Today, however, the Comoros are largely forgotten. The island chain consists of three main volcanic islands off the coast of Africa, 300 kilometres (200 miles) east of Mozambique. The Comoros Islands have endured 19 attempted coups since gaining independence from France in 1975. A fourth island, Mayotte, is still administered by the French. The islands are poor and underdeveloped with high unemployment. Most people are subsistence farmers.

The Comorans are a friendly, hospitable and artistic people. Many women engage in needlework and the men in woodworking. Comorans are generally descended from former African slaves, and some have Arabic roots.

Islamic Heritage: The Comorans are proud of their Islamic heritage, dating from the early 1500s, and Islam is the state religion. Approximately 1,400 mosques are scattered throughout the islands. Harassment and social discrimination against the followers of Jesus is widespread and evan-

gelism is illegal. The government has restricted the use of the three church buildings to non-citizens only. The Bible is available in French and Arabic, and portions of the scriptures in Comoran. However, due to the low literacy rate (near 60%), Gospel recordings are more useful. Some Comorans have recently entered the Kingdom.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that the Gospel would be made available to all the families of the Comoros Islands (Genesis 12:1-3).*
- ▶ *Pray that Christian music, Bible stories and other radio broadcasts will gain an audience and touch many lives for Jesus.*
- ▶ *Pray against fear, witchcraft, curses, and interaction with jinn (evil spirits). The Comorans are bound by these practices. Only the stronger power of Jesus Christ can set them free (1 Peter 5:8, Matthew 10:28-30).*



A mosque is a place of worship for followers of Islam. The Arabic name for mosque is “masjid.” The primary purpose of the mosque is to serve as a place where Muslims can come together for prayer but mosques sometimes have significant roles as a community centres where people can have celebrations, learn more about Islam and meet other Muslims. All mosques have prayer halls and some have domes and minarets. Mosques have an element called a “mihrab” which is often a niche, indicating the direction of Mecca.



Sept. 29, 2008



Day 29



of South America, 80% of which is tropical rain forest. It is not unusual to see monkeys traversing the trees and boa constrictors crossing well travelled roads. The interior region remains unspoiled and sparsely inhabited. Suriname is four times larger than the Netherlands and became a Dutch colony in 1667. After the abolition of slavery in 1863, agricultural workers arrived from India and the Indonesian island of Java. Suriname’s independence from the Netherlands was granted in 1975.

Diversity of peoples: Suriname has an amazing mix of peoples, languages and religions. East Indians make up 37% of the population, Creole (mixed white and black) 31%, Javanese 15%, “Maroons” (former African slaves who escaped into the interior) 10%, Amerindian 2%, Chinese 2%, white and other 3%. Eleven different languages are spoken in Surinam. Dutch is the official language but Sranang Tongo (Surinaams) is spoken by mostly everyone and many speak English as well. Religious affiliation is also quite varied: Hindu 27.4%, Protestant 25.2% (predominantly Moravian),

Suriname (formerly Dutch Guyana) is a small Republic on the northeast coast

Roman Catholic 22.8%, Muslim 19.6% (88,000), indigenous beliefs 5%. There are several mosques spread all over the country. Most of Suriname’s 439,000 people live in the capital, the “city of flowers,” Paramaribo. Here one finds a mosque, a Hindu temple, a church, a cathedral and a synagogue within a few hundred metres.

In other countries, Muslims are called to prayer from the top of the minaret (the tower) of a mosque. In Suriname, however, Muslims of Javanese origins follow their ancestral customs and respond to the sound of a drum.

PRAYER REQUESTS

► *There are several Christian denominations active in the country but the Gospel has been slow to take root among both Javanese and Hindustani Muslims. Pray that the “Jesus” film, and other media efforts can reach the Muslim population. The “Jesus” film has been extensively used in film showings and on television.*

► *Roughly a third of the population moved to the Netherlands after independence. One of the first mosques in Netherlands was built in 1981 by Muslims immigrants from Suriname. Pray for the Surinamese Muslims in Holland to be touched by the Gospel.*

Suriname

A country of vast diversity

In the heart of Western India's Gujarat State lies India's seventh largest city, Ahmedabad, which has a population of over five million people. Once famous for being the birthplace of Gandhi and his commitment to pacifism and tolerance, Gujarat has now developed into a major centre for Hindu religious zeal known as "Hindutva" which is seeking to preserve and expand Hindu influence in all of India to the exclusion of Islam and Christianity.

A divided city: Ahmedabad visibly reflects India's widening divergence of cultures, just as the Sabarmati River splits Ahmedabad into two distinctly different worlds. On the western side of the river is an increasingly affluent, modern and predominantly Hindu city. India's modern Hindu elite is present in the commercial district and shopping malls. To the east is an ancient, chaotic and predominantly Muslim walled city of narrow, winding alleys and confined neighbourhoods which reflects Ahmedabad's Islamic past.

More than one million economically marginalised Muslims live in the city. Often jobless or underemployed and unable to return to their villages, many live on by sheer force of will. They survive in the ghettos and slums and even the progressive Muslim elite now feel the segregation and the economic disparities with the Hindus. This profound human suffering does not have easy solutions.

Making Jesus known: As believers in Jesus, we acknowledge that the greatest need of the Muslims is Christ. Yet an extremely small amount of evangelistic work in Gujarat focuses on the unreached Muslim peoples of Ahmedabad which include the: Shaikh, Bohra, Memon, Khoja, Pathan and the Sayyid. Most local followers of Jesus openly acknowledge they are afraid to reach out into the Muslim community. Imagine over one million people in Ahmedabad who have practically no Gospel witness. Pray for labourers to bring the Gospel of hope to the Muslims of Gujarat.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that Muslims will realise their inability to meet the demands of God's perfect law.*
- ▶ *May a true and healthy fear of God come upon the Muslims (Proverbs 1:7).*
- ▶ *Ask God to increasingly establish faithful followers of Jesus among the Muslims of Gujarat so they might be examples of godliness and bearers of hope in difficult situations.*



Eid ul-Fitr:

Eid ul-Fitr or Id-UI-Fitr, is a three day Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting. Eid is an Arabic word meaning “festivity” and Fitr means “to break the fast.” Muslims are encouraged to dress in their best clothes (new if possible) and to attend a special community prayer event that is performed at mosques or open areas such as fields or squares. The festival has various names around the world including Suikerfeest (Netherlands), Kam Akhtar (Afghanistan), Bayramı (Turkey) and Hari Raya Idul Fitri (Indonesia). Muslims usually visit family and friends and give gifts (especially to children). They will also call distant relatives to give their best wishes for the holiday. Muslims are encouraged to give money and food to the poor as well at this time. It is usually a happy, joyous occasion somewhat similar to celebrating Christmas.

You might pray for Muslims that you know personally during this holiday. If Muslims invite you to participate in the festivities it is actually a great honour and usually a sure sign of their esteem, respect and friendship.



Recipe

Here is a recipe for Vermicelli Payasam, which is the name for a dessert often served at Eid ul-Fitr in India.

250 gms vermicelli (very thin pasta), broken into smaller pieces

1 cup of sugar

6 Cups of milk

2 Tablespoons broken cashews

2 Tablespoons of raisins

¼ Teaspoon of nutmeg

¼ Teaspoon of vanilla

5 Tablespoons of ghee or melted butter

Heat 3 tablespoons of butter in a frying pan to melt. Add the vermicelli and fry until golden. Add the milk and heat for 5 minutes. Add sugar, vanilla and nutmeg. Stir well and cook until the vermicelli is soft, but do not allow to boil. Heat remaining butter in another pan and fry the cashew nuts for 1 minute until golden. Add the raisins and sprinkle onto the payasam. Serve warm in small bowls.

Helping Muslims discover Jesus

When Muslims meet the Messiah they enter into the His kingdom and the life of the age to come.

Contrary to what is often thought, it is possible to help Muslims discover the living Messiah. Talking to Muslims about the Lord needs to take into account the context of Muslim culture and religion. In that sense our discussions with Muslims will be different from similar discussions with other people. The message is the same, the means of making it known are different.

General principles

1. Prayer: Pray for Muslim friends and acquaintances. We cannot emphasise enough our total dependence on the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

2. Have a specific goal: God wants to use us to make the Messiah known to Muslims through the Gospel. Our goal should be to make the message understandable and accessible to our Muslim friends.

3. Be open to personal and human contact: We must love Muslims sincerely, manifesting our love through kindness and respect in our relationship with them. Our goal should be to establish a genuine friendship and share our faith in that context. As with all true friendships we need to take time to understand, appreciate and help our Muslim friends. We should

want to learn from them and develop a real exchange in true enjoyable friendship.

4. Be patient: While we can speak freely of our faith from the beginning of our relationship with a Muslim, we should keep in mind that most Muslims will need to hear us many times before they even begin to consider believing in the Messiah. Do not be discouraged by objections. Remember that it is the kindness of God which leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

5. Explain the Gospel in a very simple manner: Use words and terms which will be understandable to Muslims. Explain your understanding of the meaning of terms such as sin, prayer, God, Son of God and faith. These terms often convey another meaning for Muslims.

6. Give your friend a New Testament or a Bible: Encourage a regular reading of the Gospels in particular.

7. Emphasise God's perfect holiness: God calls for righteousness. Man is generally unrighteous and in slavery to sinful attitudes. Neither education nor moral teaching can change this situation. Man needs to have a new birth.

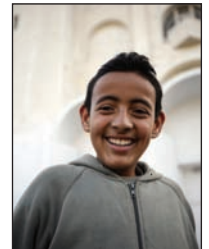
8. Speak of God's interventions in our own lives:

Tell of His faithfulness, His love, His justice. Muslims do not understand God as one who gives and keeps promises. Your testimony of a real and active God fearing faith is very important.

9. Answer objections with kindness: Do not let yourself be carried away into passionate discussions. We are called to make friends for Jesus not to win arguments.

10. Do not be naïve if our Muslim friends express a belief in Jesus Christ and the Bible: In one sense Muslims do believe in Jesus and the Bible; however, their faith is very different from what the Bible teaches us. They do not believe that it is possible to be in a real relationship with God as we believe. Jesus said that eternal life is to know God (John 17:3). It is not just knowing certain things about God, but to know Him personally.

Continued ...



Helping Muslims discover Jesus ...

What should we avoid?

1. Do not attack the person of Mohammed, but do not accept him as a prophet either. We are called to help people discover Jesus, not to criticise others.

2. Do not criticise the Qur'an.

3. Avoid politically-sensitive subjects like the Palestinian problem and praising Israel.

4. Do not insist on Jesus as being the Son of God: A Muslim will not understand or accept this affirmation. Later, when he has read the Bible or the Gospels, you can give him the necessary explanations.

5. Do not enter into discussions about pork and wine: We, as Christians, are sent to proclaim Jesus not to establish dietary laws. It is good to insist that drunkenness is wrong. Do not serve alcohol to Muslims.

Specific guidelines

1. Initially focus on areas of agreement: In your first contacts with Muslims and even later it is useful to be in agreement as much as possible with Muslims about our common beliefs. They believe that there is one God, the God of Abraham. In Arabic the word used for God is "Allah" (Christian Arabs also use this word for God). Muslims believe that God made the world, that He knows all things, that He is all wise and very powerful. Muslims do not believe in the Trinity. They

believe in angels and in prophets such as Abraham, Moses, David, Noah and Jesus. They believe in the last judgment. In a general sense we can agree on these points, without forgetting the differences. Affirming our common beliefs enables them to listen to us with greater understanding and openness.

2. Use stories: Tell stories about the life of Jesus and other men and women mentioned in the Bible. Most Muslims have never had an opportunity to read the Scriptures (many have never fully read their own book, the Qur'an). Learn to use parables, stories and examples from the Bible and daily life to share the message. In this way your Muslim friends will also retain your words better.

3. Use media tools: Keep an assortment of Gospels, the "Jesus" film, cassettes, CDs and DVDs available in various languages.

4. Seek them out: Do not be afraid to visit them in their homes and invite them to your own home. If you invite them for a meal buy your meat in a Muslim butcher shop or serve fish.

5. Argument: You have little chance of convincing Muslims by reasoned argument. Western logic



does not carry the same weight with Muslims. Love your Muslim friends and avoid getting into discussions which push them to defend Islam.

6. The Qur'an: You may read it, but do not necessarily use this as the unique basis of witness. Muslims need to meet the Jesus who is revealed in the Bible. If you read the Qur'an or visit a mosque it is advisable to pray for God's protection and understanding (Eph 6:10-18).

7. Men witness to men and women to women: Witness across gender lines is discouraged, even by correspondence. Muslim men have often tried to marry and develop romantic relationships with Christian women. Very often they believe that Christian women are sexually promiscuous and ungodly. Believing women should avoid conversation with Muslim men.

8. Prepare them for their first visit to church: Prepare Muslim friends for their first visit to a Christian church or gathering. Explain to them briefly what will happen and what they should and should not do.

9. Opposition to Christianity: When speaking to Muslims they will probably raise objections that our faith in the Messiah is unacceptable for them. Believers need to know about these objections and be prepared to deal with them correctly. Some of these objections have been discussed elsewhere in the "30 Days" booklet.



Inside Cover

It is good to view this document in a facing pages mode.

Otherwise in a single page mode.

Web sites about Muslims and Islam:

Christian Sites:

Muslim - Christian Dialogue:

<http://www.answering-islam.org/>

(see the links on the 'Answering Islam' site to access a long list of sites)

Sites for Muslims:

<http://www.injil.org>

<http://www.isaalmasih.net>

Muslim Sites:

Islamic religion:

<http://www.islamic.org.uk/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam>

<http://www.answering-christianity.com/ac.htm>

<http://www.islamicity.com/>

<http://www.al-islam.org>

<http://www.hajinformation.com> (Saudi Ministry of Hajj)

Other Sites:

<http://www.iraqprayer.org/> (Prayer for Iraq)

<http://www.cryoutnow.org> and www.pray-ap.info (Prayer: Middle East)

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/islam/islamsbook.html> (Islamic History)

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/> (Compendium of Muslim Texts)

<http://www.memritv.org/> (News from the Middle East)

<http://www.harunyahya.com/> (Islamic creationist)

<http://www.barnabasfund.org/> (Persecuted believers in Muslim context)

30 Days Online: <http://www.30-days.net>

Please note: Several new resources are available on the "30 Days" site.

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"30 Days International" maintains a positive attitude toward Muslims. Our prayer effort is not interested in denigrating or criticising their practices or beliefs. Islam is not merely a religion or a philosophy. Islam concerns people. Jesus said, "Love your neighbour as yourself." This prayer booklet is not designed to be used as literature for evangelism. It is produced to inform believers and encourage prayer.

