

30 Days 2010

of Prayer for the Muslim World

August 11th
through
September 9th



Loving Muslims through Prayer

Inside cover

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 which follows a lunar calendar (in 2010 this is from August 11th through September 9th). 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 and (2) to call upon God's sovereign intervention in the lives of Muslims during a time of the year when they are particularly religious. Please note that 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 emphasizes 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 direct each reader as he or she intercedes for the Muslim world. However, it is far from being completely informative. 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 to encourage your faith as you pray. God loves Muslims. He wants them to come to know Him.

The Editors

See our main web site at www.30-days.net



2010 Subjects and Prayer Topics

Each year in the "30 Days" prayer material we try to inform our readers more about Islam. This year we have a special focus concerning the Qur'an, Islamic Eschatology and the Arab World. In addition, we are trying to focus much of our prayer efforts on some of the most remote and largely unreached Muslim peoples especially in India and Sudan. God has not forgotten them. As the Psalmist said long ago, "Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You" (Ps. 67:5).

Subjects and prayer topics in this edition of 30 Days:

The Grace and Truth Affirmation

Prayer for peoples, cities, tribes, tongues and nations

Special Friday Prayer Focus

Special focus on 200 unreached peoples without any committed Gospel witness

Testimonies of people who have found new life in the Messiah

Maps on pages 24 and 25

Is God really interested in all the peoples of the world?

“In you all the families of the earth will be blessed”



When thinking about proclaiming the Messiah to all the world's ethnic groups most people will often think of Matthew 28:18-20. That text is important but actually the Biblical basis of God's desire to reach the nations goes back much earlier.

Many might be surprised that we find it in the book of Genesis. God speaks of blessing all the nations through Abraham's seed and the promise is repeated several times. God always had a plan which included all the nations (in some texts the phrase “all the families of the earth” is used). Look at the following passages:

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, And make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses

you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3, See also Genesis 18:18 and 22:18).

The same promise was passed on to Abraham's descendants. God spoke to Isaac: “I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; (Gen 26:4). God also spoke to Jacob (Israel): “Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen 28:14).

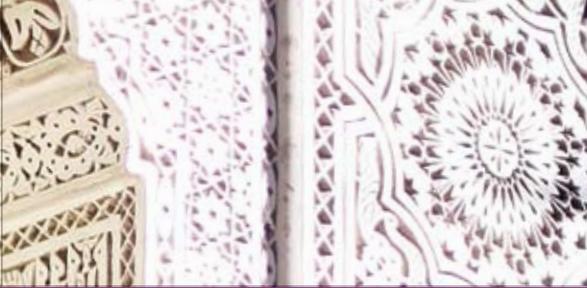
The early Christians saw that Jesus also carried the blessing of Abraham. We read after Pentecost: “Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your

iniquities” (Acts 3:24-26). Certainly God has fulfilled his word concerning Abraham's physical descendants, but there is more. The Gentiles who believe in the Messiah are also included in God's 4,000 year old promises to Abraham.

In Galatians 3:16 and 3:28-29 we read, “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ. ... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Those who are in Christ are Abraham's seed, we are in the seed of Abraham, the Messiah. We are blessed and we are to be a blessing. Our prayers during this month of Ramadan are part of God's ancient desire to bless all the nations, even all the families of the earth. Do we share his heart? Are we willing to go beyond our own comfort to bless the nations? Let us pray with faith knowing that God wants to bless the nations through his servant Jesus.





How should we use this booklet?

A Challenge

The last of the unreached

Jesus said, “This Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end of the age will come” (Mt 24:14). Last year in the “30 Days” materials we underlined that there are about 220 Muslim peoples around the world with over 100,000 members each, and these peoples have no local committed Christian witness. The numbers are better this year. Right now there are only about 200 Muslim peoples of over 100,000 people who do not have a witness. Among the 20 or so peoples who have been adopted this past year certainly none have been fully evangelized but at least a little progress is being made. This year in the “30 Days” booklet we will continue to mention several groups which have not yet received the Good News and for whom there is no known witnesses. A list of the 200 Muslim peoples mentioned above is available on our web site: www.30-days.net. (There are hundreds of smaller peoples as well.)



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 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 in this prayer focus. Jesus gave special promises of blessing for Christians who pray and agree as a group (Mt 18:20).

Please use the Bible as much as possible in prayer. We have included various Bible references throughout the booklet. It would be good to meditate on these texts and speak them out in prayer. Proclaim them before God; ask Him to inspire you. This will build your faith and God can give you new insights for prayer based on His Word.

You could organise some weekly or twice weekly meetings over the 30 day period with your church, your youth group, cell groups, or children’s groups. 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, 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. 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). God is creative, and has made us in His image, so we can expect creative ideas and prayers as we seek Him. The Holy Spirit will lead you (Rom 8:26).

Basic Islam

According to Muslims Islam began with the very first human beings, Adam and Eve, who were supposed to submit themselves to God. The word Islam means submission. Muslims believe that Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus were all prophets of Islam. Many Muslims even believe that Adam built the original Beit Allah (the house of God) in Mecca, the Kaaba. This stone structure, covered with a black cloth, has existed for a very long time. It existed even during the life of the most famous Muslim, Mohammed.

No one can possibly understand Islam without knowing something about the life of Mohammed. This man is revered by all Muslims as the last and greatest prophet. 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).

The Early life of Mohammed: The prophet of Islam was born in AD 570 in Mecca, a city in Saudi Arabia. He was a member of the Hashim clan of the powerful Quraysh tribe. During much of Mohammed’s lifetime pagan idol worship abounded in Arabia. An estimated 360 gods and goddesses were adored by the Arabs in Mecca, which was a major centre of idolatry in the region. Muslim historians think 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, in AD 610 that Mohammed supposedly began to receive revelations and instruction that he believed were from the archangel Gabriel (Gibrail in Arabic). These “revelations” form the basis of the Qur’an. Mohammed proclaimed that his revelations were the final and superior message from the One Supreme God, although at the beginning Mohammed even doubted that he was a prophet. He banned the worship of idols and established civil and religious order in Medina and eventually Mecca. 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 were at least nominal Christians. He also learned many religious ideas and customs from Jewish clans that were living in the region of Mecca and Medina. Mohammed’s role as prophet was not accepted by the Jews, leading to serious conflict. Jewish and Christian ideas, practices and history are very present in the Qur’an, although they are often distorted.

MUSLIMS BELIEVE IN ...

One God, the Creator of all things

Angels and evil spirits

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

Mohammed, the last and greatest prophet

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.



Jesus says, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

Are my ideas and attitudes toward Muslims shaped by this commandment?

MUSLIM IDEAS ABOUT JESUS

- Jesus was conceived miraculously by God in the womb of the virgin Mary.
- Jesus is only a prophet, he is not divine (not the Son of God, not God in the flesh).
- Jesus was actually a good Muslim and he taught an earlier form of Islam to the Jewish people.
- Jesus did not die on the cross. He went directly to heaven. Judas had his face transformed and died in the place of Jesus as a judgement from God.
- Jesus will come again one day, he will marry, he will have children. He will correct the errors which Christians have said about him. He will die, he will be buried in Medina and be judged like all men at the Last Judgement.

Above: Images of Jesus from the 2005 Iranian Islamic film about Jesus, The Messiah.



JESUS IN THE QUR'AN

You can find out more about the Islamic perspective on Jesus by reading about him in the Qur'an. Various chapters (suras) and verses are indicated below. Jesus is usually referred to in the Qur'an by the name Isa. Various titles, roles and activities are attributed to Jesus. Here are a few examples:

Jesus is the word of God:

Sura: 3:45; 5:46, 110 and 57:27

Jesus is Messiah:

Sura: 3:45; 4:171; 5:17, 72, 75

Prophet or a Messenger from God:

Sura: 3:49; 6:85; 19:30; 57:27

Raised the dead and healed the sick:

Sura: 3:49; 5:110

Pure, sinless:

Sura: 19:19

Even if the Qur'anic ideas listed above are the same or similar to Biblical ideas, Muslims never think of Jesus as being divine or as saving us through his death and resurrection.

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.*

Below and on the facing page: The Abraj Al Bait Towers, a massive hotel and shopping complex, being built in Mecca near the Kaaba. The central tower, measuring 595 metres, will be the second tallest building in the world on completion in 2011.



The “Grace and Truth” Affirmation:

Toward Christlike Relationships with Muslims (Introduction)

30Days International has decided to actively participate in a worldwide affirmation of believers called “Grace and Truth: Toward Christlike Relationships with Muslims.”

We ask our prayer partners to seriously consider the statements in this text and to pray this for yourself, your congregation and the body of Christ. We encourage believers to repent concerning all un-Christlike attitudes toward Muslims which are unworthy of our crucified and risen King. We have shortened the text a bit in order to make it fit into the “30 Days” format. We encourage people to download the whole signed text from our web site www.30-days.net (Grace and Truth).

The following is the “Introduction of the Grace and Truth Affirmation.” Days one and two of this year’s prayer guide contain points from the Affirmation.

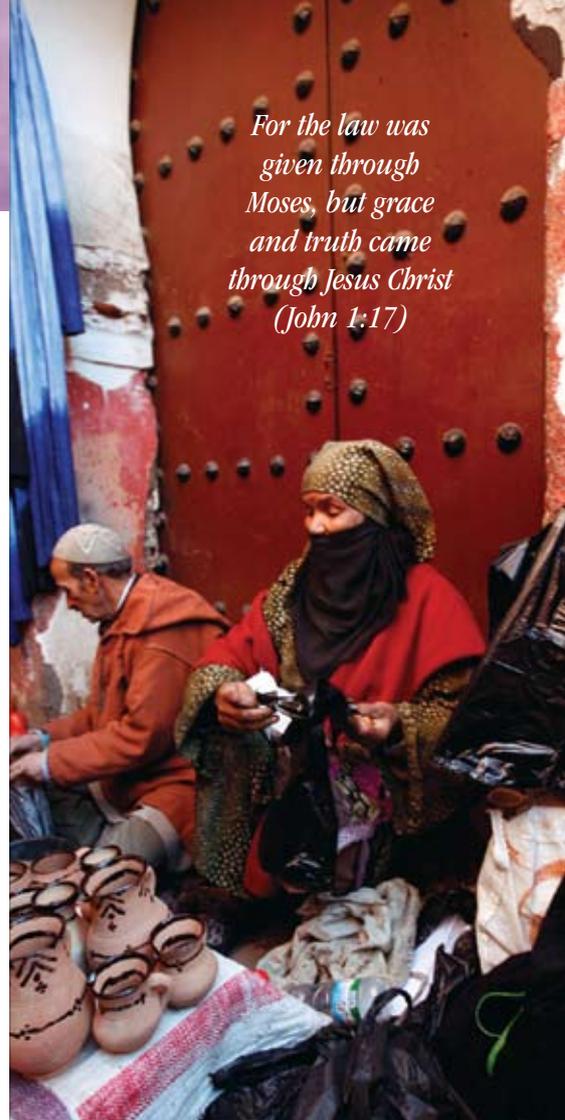
GRACE AND TRUTH - DOCUMENT

This is an Affirmation from a Global Network of Christians who love Muslims and many who live and serve among them. Jesus calls his followers to experience and live out the love of God. This love is made accessible to all people through Christ, who came to the world “full of grace and truth.” However, because of cultural differences, threats of terrorism and negative stereotypes of Muslims, many of God’s people shrink back from fulfilling Jesus’ command to love all people.

We note that the Islamic World contains significant theological and ideological diversity. The spectrum of Muslim perspectives and practice ranges from secularists, modernists and some traditionalists, to extremist Islamists who promote militant jihad. Recognizing this great diversity, we affirm nine biblical guidelines that can enable Jesus’ followers to serve as his representatives in relationship with Muslims of every persuasion.

Continued on the next page (Day 1)

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17)



Grace and Truth:

Toward Christlike Relationships with Muslims (Part 1)

The prayer subjects for today were introduced on the previous page. We as believers need to search our hearts and pray through the following points. Again we encourage believers to repent concerning all un-Christianlike attitudes toward Muslims which are unworthy of our crucified and risen King.

1. Be Faithful to God's Truth – the Whole Truth

We seek to relate to Muslims on the basis of the core convictions of Christian faith, not by hiding or diminishing them. Relating to Muslims with respect, understanding and love includes bearing faithful witness to essential truths of the gospel. Jesus is Lord. Forgiveness, salvation and eternal life are free gifts of God's grace available to any person through repentance and faith in Jesus' death and resurrection. We seek to obey the whole will of God, with its implications for every part of our lives in this world (Matt 22:37, 39; 28:20; Micah 6:8).

► *Pray these things for yourself, your congregation and the body of Christ concerning our relationships with Muslims.*

2. Be Jesus-Centered in our Interaction

Our focus is Jesus because he is the essence of the gospel. (1 Cor 2:2). We affirm a Jesus-centered approach to Muslims because it highlights the treasure of the gospel. It does not confuse the good news with Christendom, patriotism or our civilization. Jesus is our model, and we seek to embody his life in all we say and do.

► *Pray these things for yourself, your congregation and the body of Christ concerning our relationships with Muslims.*

3. Be Truthful and Gracious in our Words and Witness

We seek to be accurate when we speak about Muslims and their faith. Overstatement, exaggeration and words taken out of context should not be found among followers of Jesus (Matt 12:36, Ex 20:16, Matt 7:12, Matt 22:39). We affirm that proclaiming the Good News is a higher priority than defending our culture.

► *Pray these things for yourself, your congregation and the body of Christ concerning our relationships with Muslims.*



4. Be Wise in our Words and Witness

God's Word calls us to share our faith wisely. "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity" (Col 4:5, James 3:17-18). We need to embrace that which is impartial and sincere, neither glossing over vital truths nor telling only one side of a story.

► *Pray these things for yourself, your congregation and the body of Christ concerning our relationships with Muslims.*

See Part 2 Tomorrow

(The complete document is available on our web site. This document is a shortened version without the signatures of representatives of various organizations and church affiliations).

Grace and Truth:

Toward Christlike Relationships with Muslims (part 2)

The prayer subject for today were introduced on the previous pages. We as believers need to search our hearts and pray through the following points. Again we encourage believers to repent concerning all un-Christlike attitudes toward Muslims which are unworthy of our crucified and risen King.

▶ **Prayer** REQUESTS

▶ *For each subject pray these things for yourself, your congregation and the body of Christ concerning our relationships with Muslims.*

5. Be Respectful and Bold in our Witness

In the spirit of the Prince of Peace, respectful witness focuses on giving a positive presentation of the gospel. It does not attack the other or avoid presenting truth. (1 Peter 3:15). Numerous biblical examples (i.e. Acts 4:31; 9:27-28; 13:46; 14:3; 17:30-31; 19:8) invite us to emulate the boldness of early believers in sharing the good news. In obedience to the Scripture, we seek to be both respectful and bold in our witness.



6. Be Prudent in our Google-ized World

In the past, when leaders in a religious community spoke, it was only heard by their own community. But today our words ricochet around the world. When we try to explain who we are, what we believe, what we do, and why we do it, our words may reach beyond our primary audience. After saying something controversial, an outspoken leader may try to clarify his statement. But the damage is already done. Prudence is required. (Prov 17:27).

7. Be Persistent in our Call for Religious Freedom

We affirm the right of religious freedom for every person and community. We defend the right of Muslims to express their faith respectfully among Christians and of Christians to express their faith respectfully among Muslims. Moreover, we affirm the right of Muslims and Christians alike to change religious beliefs, practices and/or affiliations according to their conscience (2 Cor 4:2). Thus we stand against all forms of religious persecution toward Muslims, Christians, or anyone else.

8. Be Peaceable and ... Uncompromising in our Dialogue

Dialogue between Muslims and Christians provides us with opportunities to understand Muslims, build relationships, engage in peacemaking and share our faith. We seek to share the gospel respectfully and boldly, without compromise – as Paul “reasoned with” people (dialegomai - Acts 17:2, 17).

9. Be Loving toward All

The world’s Muslims are our neighbours, as Jesus used the term (Luke 10:29-37). The command of God to his people stands for all time: “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Lev 19:18; Luke 10:27b). Both peacemakers and those who love their enemies are described as “sons [or daughters] of God” (Matt 5:9, 44; Luke 6:35). They are called children of God because they are acting like their Father: the God of Peace (Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23). Responding to enemies with self-giving, sacrificial love demonstrates the gospel (Rom 5:10; cf. Col 1:21).

Grace and Truth:

Toward Christlike Relationships with Muslims (commitment)

The Conclusion of the Grace and Truth Affirmation

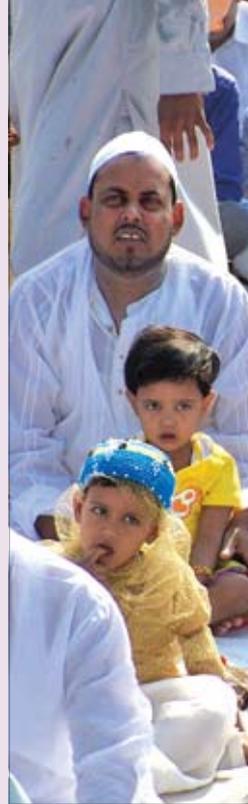
We have been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18, 19). The commission to “make disciples of all nations” has not been rescinded. Neither have the commands to demonstrate sacrificial love and to work toward peace. There is no separate gospel for wartime and peacetime. The message of God’s love in Christ is for all times, places and peoples. We affirm the nine biblical guidelines presented here for all followers of Christ, that we may remain faithful to him and become more fruitful in our relationships with Muslims.

We have prayed through the nine points during these last two days. May God continue to help us to develop good attitudes toward Muslims during the coming weeks of Ramadan.

Just one last thing. Are you willing to sign the Affirmation? You can do so here in this booklet and also online if you like on Facebook under: Grace and Truth Affirmation.

I, the undersigned, by the grace of God will live my life in accordance with the principles above. I will endeavour to pray for Muslims this month with these principles in mind. May the blessing of God come to all peoples through the Messiah Jesus.

Signed _____ Date _____



2009 Muslim Demographics Video

The following is an example of the damage that can be done in a “Google-ized World (point six in the declaration). In 2009 many people around the world saw the Muslim Demographics video presented on “You Tube.” The video was centred around demographic statistics and changing cultures. While possibly being motivated by good intentions and even presenting some interesting statistics, this video did have several important problems. Some people became fearful as the result of viewing the video.

There were several very significant errors in the video. Notably the figure for Muslims in the United States was given as about nine million using a very high estimate from Islamic groups. In reality the number of American Muslims is significantly smaller, just over two million. The film also gave projected numbers of Muslims in the USA in about 2035 as possibly 50 million. This figure has no basis whatsoever in demographics, birthrate, or immigration statistics.¹ It was based entirely on some exaggerated Muslim estimates.

The video was meant to motivate Christians to proclaim the Messiah and possibly it accomplished its goal. However the untruths and the fear generated by the errors were not helpful or necessary.

¹ *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey - can be downloaded at this address: www.pewforum.com*

The Call of the Muezzin

Friday Prayer Focus

Each day across the entire Islamic World men called the muezzin call the faithful to prayer five times per day: at dawn (fajr), noon (dhuhr), in the afternoon (asr), at sunset (maghrib) and nightfall (isha'a) On Fridays all male Muslims are supposed to attend the noon time prayers which are usually accompanied by a sermon. So today, Friday August 13, 2010 literally hundreds of thousands of muezzin are calling the faithful to prayer. Many millions of Muslim men will go to the mosque as their local muezzin pronounces the call to prayer. Below are the words which are repeated day after day (Shiite Muslims use slightly different phrases for some lines).

In most places the call to prayer is given by loud speakers located on a minaret attached to the mosque. Sometimes recordings are used but most people prefer a live voice. Some muezzin have become very famous for the dignity, professionalism and the beautiful vocal and musical quality

The Call to Prayer:

- Say two times: *Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest)*
 Say two times: *I bear witness that there is no deity except God*
 Say two times: *I bear witness that Mohammed is the Messenger of God*
 Say two times: *Make haste towards worship*
 Say two times: *Come to the true success*
 Say two times: *Prayer is better than sleep (said only at dawn)*
 Say two times: *Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest)*
 Say two times: *There is no deity except God*

of their calls to prayer. Recently a documentary film by Sebastian Bramshuber named "Muezzin" was released about individual expression and competition between muezzin in Turkey (www.muezzindocumentary.com). One muezzin says in the film "The more people I can attract to the mosque with my voice, the more successful I am."

In Western and non-Islamic countries muezzin often cannot make the call to prayer except on the radio or in the courtyards of local mosques because of laws restricting loud and intrusive noises. In Africa Christian preachers sometimes give the Muezzin competition early in the morning using their own loud speakers to preach while the Islamic call to prayer is given. Whatever our reaction to the call to prayer God calls us to love the muezzin.

► Prayer REQUESTS

- *Pray for the muezzin in your own country and around the world.*
- *Pray for the hundreds of thousands of muezzin around the world. Pray to many of them will encounter the living God through Jesus, the Messiah.*
- *Sometimes muezzin become very centred on their role in society. As with any public figures like pastors and politicians some muezzin are tempted to place their own honour and prestige very high on their list of priorities. Pray that all muezzin would be brought to humility before God and truly confounded by His majesty in order that they may truly say "God is great."*



The poster from the film "Muezzin"

Below: The famous minaret in Switzerland which inspired a national referendum in 2009



Syria

In Jesus' day the "news about him spread all over Syria" (Matthew 4:24) and large crowds came to him and followed him. Some of the oldest churches in Christendom are found in Syria and are evidence of the extent of Jesus' impact in the region. Today, the Good News of the Kingdom is not all over Syria. The vast majority of the Syrian people (more than 90% Muslim) do not know Jesus. What happened?

The people of Syria are a diverse people. Just as the carpets in the ancient market are full of different colors, textures and designs – each with a story behind the pattern, Syria has many different people groups, each one with its own distinct characteristics and history known by God.



Islam has a long history in Syria, with Damascus as a former capital of the Umayyad caliphs (AD 661-750) bordering with the Byzantine Empire. The Christians of that time were weakened in their faith and gave in to the constant mistreatment and temptation.

Praise God for the precious few believers who live in Syria! Most are from a culturally Christian background, from peoples who kept their faith, even though greatly weakened. They have a passion for Jesus but are strongly restricted in proclaiming their faith by the Muslim majority. They face historical and cultural barriers and possible imprisonment for evangelistic efforts. The very few Muslims who have believed in the Messiah face persecution from family and government and the difficulties of isolation.

One predominately Muslim people group is responding to Jesus. The Kurds have reached an identity crisis. After a long history of persecution by their Muslim neighbours, they have been given freedom by the "Christian" West. Several are believing in Christ and even meeting in their own Kurdish fellowships.

Syria has had some very hard years of oppression and corruption under the reign of dictator Hafez Alasad. However, his son, Bashaar, has a different style. He is opening up the country inside and outside, both economically and politically. But, he is not alone in the

government and it is not easy to turn a big ship. The scars of oppression are very noticeable in the people, who are often suspicious and fearful.

Syrians love to make visitors feel welcome. Hospitality and respect for guests is one of their highest priorities. They are a friendly and hard working people. May the love of Christ touch this people to make them beautiful as they should be.

▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Please pray that the Good News of Jesus would again be heard all over Syria.*
- ▶ *Pray that Muslims may come to faith and start meeting and encouraging each other.*
- ▶ *Praise the Lord that Muslim Kurds are turning to Jesus. May God continue to draw more Kurds to himself and deepen their faith.*
- ▶ *Pray that God would raise up local evangelists from Christian and Muslim backgrounds to reach out.*
- ▶ *Pray for the government, that the Party and Islamic authorities would reign so that believers may live peaceful and quiet lives (1 Tim 2:1-3).*



Saudi Arabians in the oil business

Saudi Arabia has the largest share of oil of any nation with over 260 billion barrels of proven oil reserves. The Saudis are currently developing their reserves even further with the addition of the large Khurais and Shayba oil fields. By comparison the United States has only 21 billion barrels of proven reserves and Russia has possibly 60 billion barrels. The Saudis are currently exporting about 12 million barrels of oil per day. The Saudi Aramco Corporation is the world's richest company. A few years ago Saudi Aramco topped the Non-Public company list with an estimated value of \$781 billion USD.

The Saudis have developed a huge infrastructure to facilitate the drilling, processing and exportation of petroleum. They have some of the very best technology in the oil industry. Engineers manage the entire operation from the Aramco headquarters command centre, which has banks of computers and even a 3.5 by 65 meter digital display showing all the operations. Every facility and every valve on the pipelines and all operations are centrally controlled. It is interesting to know that the CEO of Saudi Aramco says "oil is a gift from God but the recovery of oil is the work of men."

Historically significant numbers of foreign workers and engineers were involved in the oil industry, but now about 85 percent of the official Saudi Aramco work force of 54,000 is Saudi. There are also thousands of foreign contractors. Westerners in Saudi Arabia have become a small minority. Besides Saudi Aramco, there are many other companies working in various aspects of the oil industry throughout Saudi Arabia.

Saudis are largely Sunni Muslims, and from their perspective they are all Muslim by birth. Many of them have never had any opportunity to hear a presentation of the Gospel in a way that would incline them to obey the risen Lord Jesus. The Qur'an and the traditions concerning Mohammed are the foundations of Saudi law. Shi'a Muslims are persecuted, but they are permitted to practice their faith in their villages and towns. Proselytizing is not punishable by death, but by jail and deportations (the loss of a job for some is as bad as death). While the Saudi government has not executed anyone for believing in the Messiah, in August 2008 a Saudi believer was martyred at the hands of her brother. He was not imprisoned for the homicidal act. Conversion is forbidden by the Qur'an and the penalty is death.



Prayer REQUESTS

The Scriptures say that the whole earth will one day be "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab 2:14).

▶ *Pray for the thousands of Saudis involved in the oil industry that they could come "to know the glory of God in the face of Jesus the Messiah" (2 Cor 4:6). Many of them live in the following cities, towns, ports and drilling settlements: Dhahran, Ras Tanura, Jubail, Dammam, Al-Khobar, Hofuf, Abqaiq, Udhailiyah and Shaybah. (Please know that you are among only a small group worldwide who has ever prayed for these cities by name.)*



The Fulani in Nigeria

There are possibly more than 30 million Fulani in Africa, but the vast majority do not know the Gospel. They are spread out from Senegal to Sudan across the southern border of the Sahara Desert (the Sahel). In Nigeria many of the 15+ million Nigerian Fulani stay in small settlements and cities in Nigeria's predominantly Muslim northern region. There are numerous sub-tribes and clans of the Fulani but in Nigeria they generally fall into five large groups: The Adamawa (1.1 million), the Haabe (2.6 million), the Sokoto (2.7 million), the Torobe (7.5 million) and the Mbororo (2.3 million).

Historically, the nomadic Fulani centred their lives around cattle; times have changed. Some Fulani have abandoned herding and are now even fishermen! Others are educated, urban dwellers who have little or nothing to do with cattle. The vast majority of the Fulani in Nigeria are no longer nomadic. The Fulani described below are mostly the rural Mbororo Fulani of Nigeria. Fulani trace their origins to this type of pastoral lifestyle. Fulani households consist of a male leader, one or more wives, six to 12 or more children and other family members.

Morning: The adults awaken for Islamic prayers about 4:30 a.m. The men spend the morning milking their cows

and preparing to pasture them in the bush. The women prepare a meal, consisting of a corn mush with meatless gravy, eaten about 10:30 a.m.

Midday and Afternoon: After eating, the younger men go into the bush with their cows. A typical family will have 10 to 100 cows, as well as sheep and goats. The young men keep their cows out of fenced areas and farms and help them find forage and water. Older men may go to town or visit their friends. During planting and harvesting, some men work hard tending their crops. The women often carry the milk to town in gourds to sell. They also collect firewood and carry the day's water for their families.

Evening: In late afternoon the cows return and are tied up for the night. The family eats their evening meal at about 8:00 p.m. They chat around their fires until an early bedtime. Women, children and older men usually sleep in huts while the teenagers often sleep outdoors.

While the Jesus film and gospel portions have been put into the Fulani language (Fulfulde), there are still very few Christians who are reaching out to this people. Even so, God has done marvellous things in bringing some Fulani to himself. See the www.morethandreams.tv site for an example.



▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for labourers. There simply are not enough Messianic believers proclaiming the Good News to the Fulani.*
- ▶ *Ask the Lord to touch Fulani leaders and imams that they may become obedient to the Lord Jesus (Acts 6:7).*
- ▶ *Pray for increased understanding among the followers of Jesus and Muslims in Nigeria. Peacemaking and repairing the decades of strife and civil unrest between Muslims and those who follow Jesus is a major necessity.*



Muslims of Rajasthan in India

Muslims living in the state of Rajasthan, in Western India, consist of about 60 different peoples. These groups include the Pathan, Shaikh and Sayyid ethnic groups that are the best known. Out of the estimated 61 million Rajasthani population, Hindus account for 88.8%, Muslims make up 8.5%, Sikhs 1.4% and Jains 1.2%. There are about five million Muslims living in this Indian state dominated by the Thar Desert. Rajasthan covers 342,000 km² (1/2 of the surface of France and basically the same population).

The Muslims mainly speak Hindustani, a mixture of Hindi and Urdu; however, most read from the Hindi script. This means materials must be translated into a Muslim-friendly script for them to understand. There is a full Urdu Bible but a full Bible in Hindustani is still needed in order that the Muslims may more easily understand what the God is saying to them through the Scriptures. Young children often learn Urdu in religious schools (Madradas), but as they get older they generally only read the Hindi script (not Urdu, which is their traditional religious language).

Representative populations of all of the Muslim people groups live in the capital, Jaipur. Rajasthani

Muslims have a variety of jobs. Some are engaged in tourism, others as bicycle and auto rickshaw drivers, stone cutters, tailors, butchers, shopkeepers and other trades. Those in rural areas are often involved in agriculture.

Believers in the Messiah have been reaching the Muslims using a simple “kurbaan story,” which describes the major sacrifices in both the Old and New Testaments. This method shows that the death of Isa Al-Masih (Jesus the Messiah) was the final atoning sacrifice. Jesus obtained salvation for them by his death and resurrection. New believers are now worshipping the Lord in home groups called “jamats.”

Several Rajasthani believers are also learning to share their testimonies and life changing experiences using the Bible. Some are capable of telling by word of mouth the story of God and man based on the Bible in an organized way. This is very helpful for the illiterate believers and seekers. It is exciting to hear about the changes in their lives since they have come to know the Messiah. As you seek the Lord in prayer, please also lift up the Rajasthani Muslims to Him.



▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for the Rajasthani Muslims who have discovered the Messiah in His fullness to be obedient to the only true and living God. Please pray for a deepening faith as they enter more and more into a daily experience of dying and rising with Christ. To do this, a complete Bible translation in Hindustani is very desirable.*
- ▶ *Continue to pray that as they witness boldly to others, Jesus is exalted above all. There is opposition (Acts 4:27-31).*
- ▶ *Pray for the Rajasthani Muslims from each of the major peoples (the Pathan, Shaikh and Sayyid ethnic groups): That they will call on Jesus for salvation (Acts 4:12).*

Sudan

Prayer for the Peoples

Sudan is a nation made up of hundreds of ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups and clans. One researcher has identified about 2,200 groups including local clans. The following is a list of the 15 of the 36 people groups of over 100,000 people considered by some believers to be those most in need of the Gospel in Sudan. In fact, none of these groups has an established, long-term, native-language outreach involving either foreigners or local Sudanese believers. Altogether, these 15 groups number possibly more than 20 million people, with no known believers.

1. *Daju*
2. *Damaagla/Kamuuz*
3. *Darfur Region NSA* (Northern Sudanese Arabs)
4. *East Region NSA*
5. *Fellata: Fulani-speaking*
6. *Fellata: Hausa-speaking*
7. *Kanuri*
8. *Kordofan Region NSA*
9. *Masalit*
10. *Nile Region NSA*
11. *North Region NSA*
12. *Rasbaida*
13. *South East Region NSA*
14. *White Nile Region NSA*
15. *Zaghawa*

A “people group” can be defined as: “The largest group of those who perceive themselves to have a common affinity with each other, and within which the Gospel can spread without encountering significant barriers of understanding and acceptance.’ The barriers could be (1) Religious (2) Language (3) Social Interaction and (4) Geography (Sudan is the biggest country in Africa).

The Daju People

Living in Western Sudan and Eastern Chad, the Daju (number one in the list) are mainly farmers and their economy is primarily based on grain production. Staple crops include millet, sorghum and corn. Some hunting is also done. Altogether, the Daju number about 150,000 in Sudan (260,000 in Chad and Sudan).

The Daju have been a Muslim people since the fifteenth century. They revere the Qur’an, and all oaths and commitments are made according to its writings. Although the Daju are Muslim and follow Islamic teachings daily, they do not do so in the strictest sense. Friday prayer at the mosque is not attended by all, and the restriction of alcohol is often ignored. In addition, many of their traditional animistic beliefs have been retained and mixed in with their Islamic beliefs. In their animist religion, cults are formed, good and bad spirits are believed in and witchcraft is practiced. For their health and protection, newborn babies are sometimes given water that has been used to wash a board with Qur’anic scriptures written on it.



▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for the Daju and the other groups in the list that the Gospel might reach them (Mt 28:18-20).*
- ▶ *Pray that Bible-based communities of believers with local leadership could be established in each group (Titus 1:5-9).*
- ▶ *The Bible has not yet been translated into the Daju language. No Christian resources such as the Jesus film or Christian radio programs are available to them. However, gospel recordings are available in their language.*

This article is from material provided by the IMB and the Joshua Project.

Understanding the Qur'an

by Gordon Nickel, Vancouver

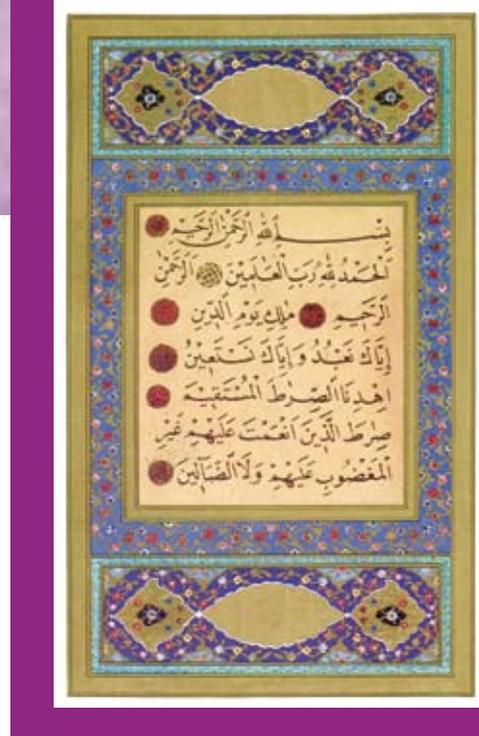
The Qur'an is the scripture of the Muslim community. Muslims around the world look to the Qur'an for direction in both faith and life. They have given their book authority to determine their thinking and their behaviour. In its pages they claim to find the true account of many stories well known from the Bible. The doctrine of scripture that Muslims have developed for the Qur'an is unique among the world's faiths. A respect for Muslims prompts Christians to seek to understand the message that Muslims read in the Qur'an and the authority that Muslims grant to their scripture.

The Qur'an is made up of 114 chapters, called *suras*, arranged approximately in order of length from the longest chapter (*sura* 2) through the shortest (only a single line for *sura* 108). Acting as a short introduction to the scripture is the first chapter, called "The Opening", *al-Fatiba*, which is a prayer-like segment used within the Muslim *salat* (prayer) ritual. Each chapter is divided into verses, *ayas*, the total number being reckoned somewhere between 6204 and 6236, differing according to various schemes of counting. The Qur'an is roughly the same length as the New Testament.

One of the main themes running through the Qur'an is that God is the Creator of the universe and is known by the name Allah. In the Qur'an, God has given his law in the past and continues to give his law through "the messenger." God expects his creatures to obey His law, and the Qur'an promises rewards or punishments for humans on the Judgment Day. About one third of the Qur'an's verses deal with the theme of judgment.

Another major theme is polemic with groups of listeners who seem to be hearing the messenger's recitations but not accepting the messenger's claim to be speaking from God. Especially in the opening long *suras* of the Qur'an, the tone of disputation with Jews and Christians is striking. Into this polemic, as well as into many other parts of the Qur'an, are woven stories of prophets from the past. The story of Moses, in many different versions, is given by far the most attention.

The Qur'anic material on Jesus—called "Isa" in the Qur'an—is concentrated in the third, fifth and 19th *suras*. The greatest amount of attention is given to the circumstances of Jesus' birth, some of which resemble those of the first chapter of the Gospel according to Luke. Jesus



is presented as a miracle worker who heals the blind and the leper, and who raises the dead "by leave of Allah" (Q3.49). The Qur'anic report that Jesus created a bird from clay and blew life into it (Q5.110) resembles a story in the apocryphal *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*. When it approaches the death of Jesus, the Qur'anic material appears ambiguous, ranging from verses that seem to assume his death (Q3.55,

A special page of resources on the Qur'an and the gospel is offered at the author's web site:

www.quranandinjil.org

Muslim site with Qur'anic texts: www.quran.com

(This site contains an extensive list of the Qur'an in various languages).

A respect for Muslims prompts Christians to seek to understand the message that Muslims read in the Qur'an and the authority that Muslims grant to their scripture.

19:33) to an explicit denial that the Jews killed Jesus (Q4.157). However, there is little ambivalence in the Qur'anic denial of Jesus' deity. The Qur'anic Jesus is emphatically not God, not the Son of God, not to be "associated" with God, and not the "third of three." On the other hand, Jesus is given the name "Messiah" (Q3.45) and is mysteriously called the "word" of God and "a spirit" from God (Q4.171).

A number of passages in the Qur'an seem to reflect battle situations, notably *suras* 8 and 9, but also parts of the important opening *suras* and elsewhere. In these *suras* are found 12 commands to fight and five commands to kill.

The Bible shares with the Qur'an a common belief in a Creator God to whom humans are accountable. However, beyond this are a number of differences that go to the heart of the Gospel. Along with its denial of Jesus' deity and its apparent denial of his death on the cross, the Qur'an is weak in its description of the holiness of God and its analysis of the depth of human sin. It presents no divine plan of salvation and no need for a saviour—indeed offers no saviour. There is no Incarnation to show us what God is like (John 1:14-18). As a result, the Qur'an describes the love of God for humans as conditional, and contains no command for humans to love either God or each other.

Muslims believe that God revealed the contents of the Qur'an to Muhammad in segments between the years AD 610 and 632. They believe the recitations were later recorded word for word and are today found in the Arabic text of the Qur'an in precisely the manner God intended. One of the best-known Muslim traditions about the collection of the Qur'an gives credit to Zayd ibn Thabit and the third caliph, 'Uthman. Muslims believe that the edited text was written out in full and distributed to the major centers of the expanding Muslim Empire within 25 years of the death of Muhammad.

Muslim scholars developed the doctrine that the Ara-

bic Qur'an which Muslims canonized contains the very same words and arrangement as a golden tablet kept safe in heaven. Scholars also claimed that the words of the Qur'an are inimitable—that is, no human could create language of this beauty and perfection—and therefore proven to be divine. Muslims also used this claim as a proof of the prophethood of Muhammad.

The Bible shares with the Qur'an a common belief in a Creator God to whom humans are accountable. However, beyond this are a number of differences that go to the heart of the Gospel.

The global Muslim community will continue to look to the Qur'an as its source of truth and authority. Christian respect and appreciation for Muslims will mean taking seriously the way in which Muslims speak about the contents of the Qur'an and its authority for them. It will also mean—in settings of friendship and trust—engaging the truth claims made within the Qur'an itself and for the Qur'an by Muslims. Blithely nodding or smiling when Muslims make truth claims that go against the clear message of the Gospel shows neither respect nor love. Love goes the distance with our friends in taking a firm stand and making our best case for the saving truth.

Understanding more about Islam

The following texts were taken from a presentation about Islam produced by a Muslim. The texts are found in the Qur'an and the Hadiths.

► **Islam claims to be the original religion:** "... Your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their seed and made them testify as to themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes! We testify." (Qur'an 7:172).

► **Islam claims all humans are born Muslims:** (Bukhari, [funerals] Volume 2, Book 23, Number 441) Allah's Apostle said, "Every child is born with a true faith of Islam (i.e. to worship none but Allah alone) but his parents convert him to Judaism, Christianity or Zoroastrianism, as an animal delivers a perfect baby animal. Do you find it mutilated?"

► **Islam claims that Abraham taught Islam:** "Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but he was ever inclined to God and obedient to Him, and he was not of those who associate gods with Allah." (Qur'an 3:68)

► **Islam claims that Muslims should honour previous prophets and their books:** Say, "We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us, and what was

revealed to Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob and his children and what was given to Moses and Jesus, and what was given to all other prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them; and to him we submit ourselves." (Qur'an 2:137)

"O ye who believe ! believe in Allah and his messenger and in the book which he had revealed to his messenger, and the book which He revealed before it. And whoso disbelieves in Allah and his angels, and his books and his messengers and the last day, has surely strayed far away" (Qur'an 4:137).

► **Islam claims that Mohammed was foretold of in previous books:** "And call to mind when Jesus, son of Mary, said, 'O children of Israel, surely, I am Allah's messenger unto you, fulfilling that which is before me of the prophecies of the Torah, and giving glad tidings of a messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad (Mohammed). ... (Qur'an 61:7).

► **Muslims believe that only in Mohammed certain Bible prophecies are fulfilled.** The primary prophetic passages are, in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 18:15* and, in the New Testament, John 14:16.** "Those who

follow the Messenger, the Prophet, the Ummi (the prophet who can neither read nor write) whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel which are with them." (Qur'an 7:158).

**(Note: In the New Testament it is written that Jesus is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18:18-19 (see Acts 3:22-23 and 7:37). It is evident from the context that the Deuteronomy passage is speaking about a fellow Israelite not an Arab "cousin / brother." See also the same phrase "from among your brothers" in Deuteronomy 17:15. It is obvious from the text that the king of Israel cannot be a foreigner (even a cousin).*

***The Holy Spirit is the one referred to in John 14:16-24. The text states very clearly the "Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you." It would be difficult for Mohammed to abide in someone. He never made such a claim.*

Testimony from France

I grew up in a traditional Tunisian Muslim family. I was not very happy and, like many others, I thought that I would get married in order to escape my family and find a new life. A man who was living in France asked my parents to marry me. At the beginning of my new life in France, it appeared that things would go well, but soon the marriage turned into a nightmare. I divorced and took care of my three children on my own. After several years I married again, only after insisting that my new husband become a Muslim. We have also had two children together.

One day, as I was taking my children to their sports activities, I met a woman, a believer in the Messiah, who invited me to a group for women and children concerning the Bible. Her invitation really pleased me and I decided to attend. In one meeting I heard a North African woman describe her faith in the Messiah and it moved me to tears. I was afraid to say anything about this for fear of my family and others. Finally I decided that she must only be in error, but it seemed to



me that believing her actually brought me peace. Verses like Hebrews 4:7 about “not hardening our hearts” kept coming back to my mind. I opened the Bible and saw verses about Jesus being God in the flesh (John 1:1). Finally, many of my questions were answered in an Arab Christian broadcast (Al Kanat Al Hayat). I cried out to God in my distress when I felt the presence of evil spirits and I knew the peace of God according to John 14:27. God has done some wonderful things in my life. I am not the same. I am no longer alone facing difficulties. I have been baptized; God is with me.

Right: List of European countries with a Muslim population of over 2%. Russia alone has about 16.5 million (11.7% of 142 million people). Statistics vary widely concerning Muslims in Europe and it is possible there are errors in this list.

| Country | Total Pop. (Millions) | % Muslim | Muslim (Millions) |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Austria | 8.4 | 4.1 | 0.34 |
| Albania | 3.2 | 70 | 2.2 |
| Belgium | 10.7 | 4 | 0.4 |
| Bosnia Herzegovina | 3.8 | 60 | 1.5 |
| Bulgaria | 7.6 | 11.9 | 0.91 |
| Croatia | 4.4 | 3 | 0.13 |
| Denmark | 5.5 | 5 | 0.27 |
| France | 62.3 | 8.5 | 5.3 |
| Germany | 82.5 | 3.6 | 3 |
| Italy | 59.9 | 2.4 | 0.825 |
| Kosovo | 2.2 | 90 | 2 |
| Liechtenstein | 0.04 | 3.4 | 0 |
| Macedonia | 2.1 | 30 | 0.63 |
| Montenegro | 0.6 | 17.7 | 0.11 |
| Netherlands | 16.4 | 5.8 | 0.95 |
| Norway | 4.8 | 3.1 | 0.15 |
| Russia | 142 | 11.7 | 16.5 |
| Serbia | 7.4 | 4 | 0.3 |
| Sweden | 9.2 | 3.1 | 0.3 |
| Switzerland | 7.6 | 4.2 | 0.31 |
| United Kingdom | 61.3 | 2.8 | 1.65 |

Muslims in Norway

Some estimate the Muslim population in Norway at around 150,000 people out of a total population of 4.8 million. In 1980 there were about 14,000. The vast majority of Muslims have arrived in Norway through immigration. By 2008, about 1,000 Norwegians had become Muslims, mainly as a result of marriage. It is possible that about 50,000 Muslims live in and around Oslo. Muslim immigration only started after World War II, but was not noticeable before 1970. The largest groups have come from Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran, Turkey and Kosovo.

The first mosque was built in 1974 and today there are Sunni, Shi'a, Ahmadiyya mosques and also mosques related to specific ethnic groups coming from various countries. More than 80,000 Muslims are registered members of almost 100 Muslim congregations, but the Muslim community is not unified; it is highly fragmented. The mosques have been important places for members from minority ethnic groups to meet each other. Some mosques also run community projects. Most of the mosques in Norway were not originally built as traditional mosques, but are part of the regular city-buildings. The first mosque built especially for the purpose of Islamic worship was constructed in 1995, and it was the only one until 2005.

A more multicultural society

Today, Norway appears, as the rest of Europe, as a multi-cultural society. During the last few years, religion has become more of a topic in media, in political rhetoric and in regular conversation. A few years ago, the terms “immigrant” or “foreigner” were used for people coming to the country, but more recently the term “Muslim” has often been employed instead of foreigner. However, not every foreigner coming to Norway is a Muslim; possibly as many as 60% are Christians or come from other faiths.

The discussions after 9/11, “the war on terror” and the “caricature controversy” have all played a part in making Islam a subject of conversation. After a Danish cartoonist drew and published several caricatures of Mohammed a few years ago, a Norwegian newspaper also become famous worldwide for publishing them. The discussions after this divided both the Christian and secular opinion on the importance of freedom of speech contrasted to sensitivity to Muslims’ religious feelings.

The vast majority of Norwegians are members of the Lutheran Church (over 80%) but relatively few are active members and many have beliefs which actually do not reflect Biblical faith. Possibly 225,000 Christians are in smaller denominations of several types. According to



one poll 32% of Norwegians indicated that “they believe there is a god/God,” whereas 47% answered that “they believe there is some sort of spirit or life force” and 17% responded that “they do not believe there is any sort of spirit, god, or life force.”

Some churches have been ministering to Muslim communities for many years. There are several groups and churches with Farsi-speaking Christians, mostly immigrants from Iran. Unfortunately, there are not any significant Arabic-speaking groups gathering to worship. However, there are Arab Muslims



who are coming to faith in the Messiah and being baptized. For several, following the Messiah has meant persecution from close friends and relatives. During Ramadan for the last few years there have been arranged interdenominational prayer meetings in several cities. Muslims who have found life in the Messiah have participated, bringing witness about life changing meetings with Jesus. In prayer meetings, Norwegian believers have heard believers from Iran telling about great revivals in their country. Seven thousand “30 Days” booklets were distributed in Norway in 2009. In addition, more groups than ever before gathered to pray.

▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for all the Christian individuals and churches reaching out to Muslims. For boldness and revelation of His will.*
- ▶ *Pray for all Muslim immigrants, that they will meet believers wherever they settle, and that these neighbours will show them Jesus. That Jesus will be their comfort and help in times of need.*
- ▶ *Pray that Jesus will be revealed in Norwegian society, in media and through the churches and believers.*

Above: The national flags of the five main Nordic countries. From the top: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway. All these nations have the cross in their national flag but, unfortunately, the actual number of practicing believers in these countries is relatively small.

In the spring of 2009 I arranged a faith exploration course with 12 participants, including newly arrived immigrants, both from Christian and Muslim backgrounds. It was an exciting experience. In June, one of them, a Muslim from the Middle East, was baptized. One other man is presently doing voluntary work in a local congregation. A third man from this group continued to study the Bible with me this past autumn. “Ali” clearly stated that he was a Muslim, however he had a lot of critical questions about Islam and he was eager to get to know more about Jesus. In November he came to one of our sessions, explaining why he was now ready follow Jesus. He was baptized two weeks later, deeply touching the members of the church. He explained his difficulties with Muslims locally and with his family back home because of his choice to follow the Messiah. Nevertheless, when I raised him up from the baptismal water, he threw himself around my neck, stating that the church is now his new family. His joy about his new life is greater than the loss of friends and family. Do we really understand what we possess in Jesus? May the Lord give us Muslim friends, neighbours and colleagues! When they meet Jesus, they will see life with new eyes. Let us continue to pray! It works!



Preparations for Prayer

Friday Prayer Focus

Today, even perhaps at this moment, Muslims worldwide will be preparing themselves for Friday prayer. Indeed, all week long practicing Muslims do ritual washing in order to be pure for prayer. Right intentions and a focused attitude toward God are specifically encouraged concerning prayer in Islam. However, it is certain that ritual cleansing, as well as the specific times, order and outward forms of prayer, definitely occupy most of the literature and instruction concerning Islamic prayer. This is a very significant difference with Christian teaching about prayer.

In Christian circles, specific times, order and obligatory wording are much less important aspects of prayer instruction and experience. Many believers in the Messiah actually dislike fixed forms of prayer. Attitudes and intentions play a central role in Christian prayer. Ritual cleansing with water, as is found in Islam, is unheard of for normal, everyday Christian prayer. Catholics and Anglicans do dip their fingers in the holy water and make the sign of the cross when entering a church building, but it is intended only as a reminder of their baptism not as an actual purifying act.

In Islam it is impossible to pray correctly without the ritual cleansing by water, or in the absence of water with sand. Islamic instruction about prayer is filled with long passages on exactly how to accomplish the cleansing process. None of the steps can be sidestepped or done in an improper way, otherwise Islamic prayer loses its merit and validity.

Here is a typical Muslim text about doing Wudu (the ritual cleansing):

1. *A Muslim begins every action with intention. To yourself, make the intention to cleanse yourself for prayer, for the sake of Allah.*
2. *To yourself, say "Bismillah ar-Rabman ar-Rabim" (In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful).*
3. *Wash your hands three times, making sure the water reaches between the fingers and all over the hands.*
4. *Bring a handful of water to your mouth and rinse it thoroughly three times.*
5. *Sniff water into your nose three times to clean it. Use your right hand to bring up the water, and your left hand to expel it.*
6. *Wash your entire face three times.*
7. *Wash your arms, up to the elbows, three times. Start with the right.*
8. *Use your wet hands to wipe over your head once, from front to back and front again.*
9. *Use your wet fingers to wipe the inside and outside of your ears, once.*
10. *Wash your feet up to the ankles three times. Start with the right.*
11. *Dry off.*



► Prayer REQUESTS

While some aspects of the ritual washing may be helpful as a reminder about how sinful we are as human beings, ultimately the ritual cleansing does not lead Muslims to true righteousness or holiness.

► *Pray for Muslims to discover the depths of sin and God's holiness so that they may forever be freed of the idea that water can ever make them fit to meet God. Pray this for people that you may know, pray for Muslims in your city and elsewhere (Heb 8:9-12).*

► *Pray for the Muslims who will be praying at the Jama Masjid in Delhi, India (above). There are possibly 1.5 million Muslims in The Delhi/New Delhi urban area (11%). Followers of the Messiah are less than one percent. Pray for believers to seize opportunities to proclaim the Gospel.*

Pain in Basrah, Iraq

Al Basrah, (also called Basorah) is the capital of Basra Province in Iraq with an estimated population of about 3,800,000. Basra is a significant port, although most of the deep water maritime traffic is handled at the port of Umm Qasr nearer to the Arabian (Persian) Gulf. The city is located near the historic location of Sumer which was one of the world's first civilizations. It is not far from the ruins of Ur of the Chaldeans where Abraham was born. The city began in AD 636 as an encampment for a Muslim army stationed in the area. It is Iraq's second largest and most populous city after Baghdad.

In the 1970s, the region along the Shatt al-Arab waterway near Basrah had between 17 to 18 million date palms, an estimated one-fifth of the world's palm trees. However by 2002, war, salt infiltration, and pests had wiped out more than 14 million of the palms, (9 million in Iraq and 5 million in Iran). Many of the remaining trees are in poor condition.

Basrah is awash in petrol. It is estimated that at least 90% of the city is build on oil fields. The gas and petrol fumes are part of the daily life of Basrah's residents.

The fumes and city's brackish water have contributed to very large numbers of childhood cancers and other illnesses. Local sewage systems and garbage pickup have long been overwhelmed by the growth of the population so many people live in very unpleasant circumstances among heaps of garbage, stinking sewage and petroleum fumes.

While the city is very involved in the petroleum industry many of its inhabitants actually do not profit directly from oil. Relatively few are employed in the oil industry. Hundreds of thousands live in the villages surrounding the oil fields while knowing that they are not qualified or else they do not have enough money to bribe someone to get a job (bribes sometimes amount to 2,000 - 5,000 dollars US).

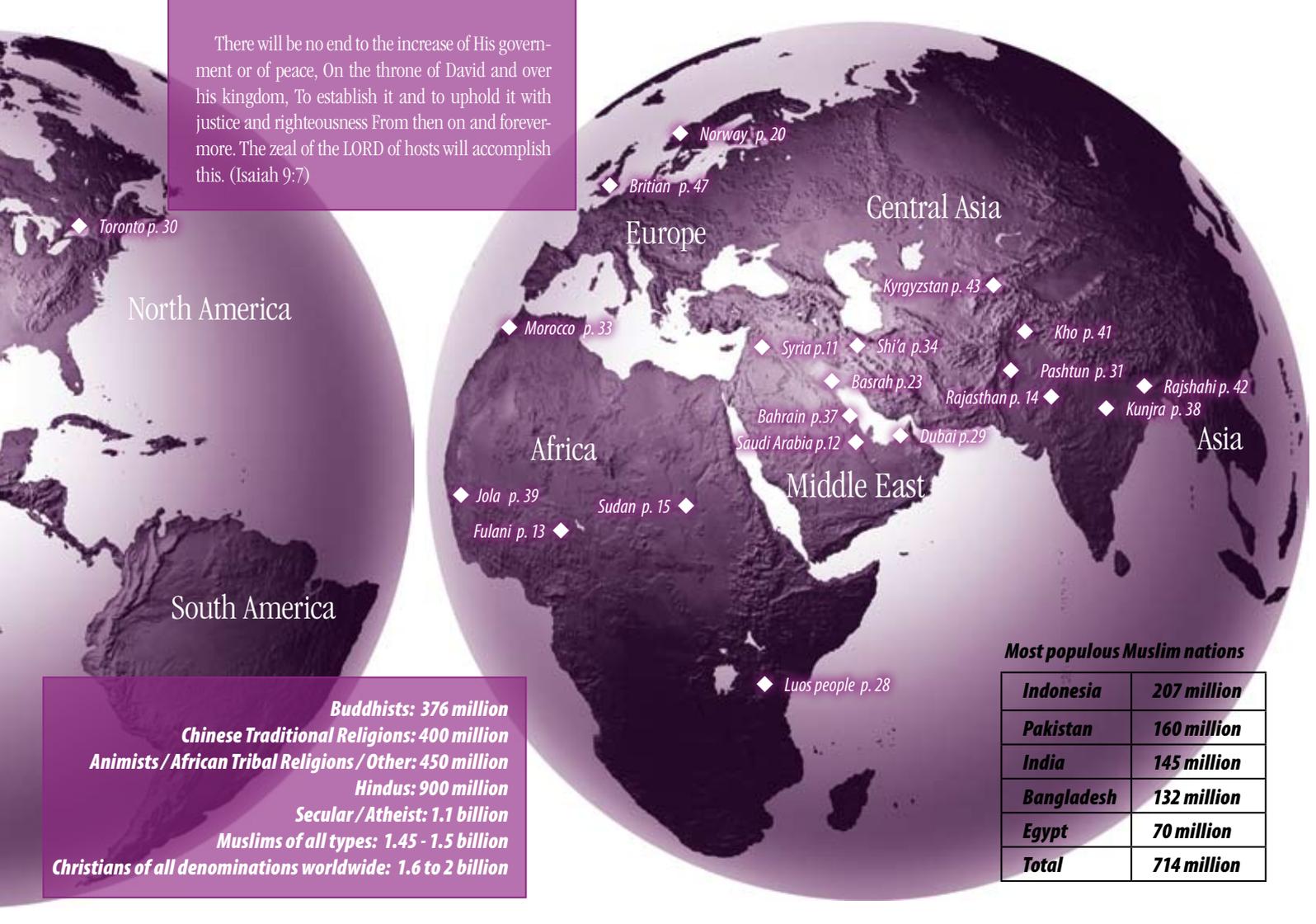
In Basrah 99.9% of the population are ethnically Arabs from dozens of tribes. About 20% of the population are Sunni Muslim but the vast majority are Shiites. There is a very small number of believers in the Messiah and gnostic Mandaeans.



▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that God would raise up officials and community leaders who seek the well being of their people more than their own prosperity and self indulgence.*
- ▶ *Pray especially for leaders to have inspiration, wisdom and courage to take the urgent steps necessary to solve the many health, garbage collection and sewage problems. The people of the city are suffering greatly.*
- ▶ *Pray for breakthroughs in the area of education and jobs. Some schools a very overcrowded and lack basic facilities like toilets.*
- ▶ *Many people live in fatalism and can see no future. Pray that many of Basrah's Muslims would encounter the Messiah, the giver of hope, through television, radio and personal witness.*

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:7)



◆ Toronto p. 30

North America

South America

Buddhists: 376 million
Chinese Traditional Religions: 400 million
Animists/African Tribal Religions/Other: 450 million
Hindus: 900 million
Secular/Atheist: 1.1 billion
Muslims of all types: 1.45 - 1.5 billion
Christians of all denominations worldwide: 1.6 to 2 billion

◆ Norway p. 20

◆ Britain p. 47

Europe

Central Asia

◆ Morocco p. 33

◆ Kyrgyzstan p. 43

◆ Syria p.11

◆ Shi'a p.34

◆ Kho p. 41

◆ Basrah p.23

◆ Pashtun p. 31

◆ Rajshahi p. 42

◆ Bahrain p.37

◆ Saudi Arabia p.12

◆ Dubai p.29

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◆ Kunjra p. 38

Africa

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Asia

◆ Jola p. 39

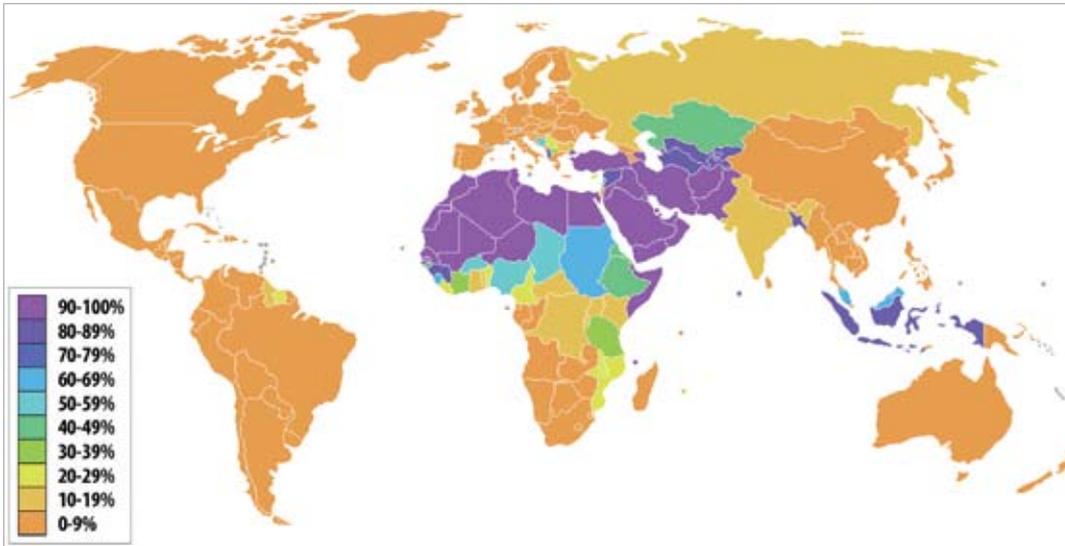
◆ Sudan p. 15

◆ Fulani p. 13

◆ Luos people p. 28

Most populous Muslim nations

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Indonesia | 207 million |
| Pakistan | 160 million |
| India | 145 million |
| Bangladesh | 132 million |
| Egypt | 70 million |
| Total | 714 million |



There are probably about 1.5 billion Muslims around the world. All the figures in the table below are approximate. It is very difficult to get accurate figures for some countries. The Muslim population estimates for the United States and Europe vary significantly. We made significant efforts to have good figures for the European countries for this edition of “30 Days”. It is possible there will be errors despite our best efforts.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Africa</i> | <i>400 million</i> |
| <i>Middle East</i> | <i>250 million</i> |
| <i>Asia</i> | <i>800 million</i> |
| <i>Europe (Russia Included)</i> | <i>38 million</i> |
| <i>Americas</i> | <i>5 million</i> |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>1.5 billion</i> |

Muslim Population Worldwide



Conspiracy Theories in the Arab World

Reading the Bible it is obvious that many of the world's problems are due to hidden unseen forces that are largely hidden from our eyes. As John the Apostle writes: "We know ... the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:19). Hidden forces are at work!

If one reads Middle Eastern newspapers, watches Arab television or simply talks with people fairly quickly one can hear things like: "September 11th was organized by the Americans and Israelis. The Arabs had nothing to do with it." The Syrian journalist, Hassan Hamada, has said that the January 2010 Haitian earthquake was obviously something which the Americans had brought about by their technology in order to take possession of that poor island nation. Happily he was not taken seriously by most people! Some Middle Easterners have also been fascinated with a document about a Jewish world domination conspiracy called the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" which made its first public appearance in 1903. Several people have shown that the protocols are not true yet many people believe they are actually based on reality. Some Arab journalists and commentators have been active in recent years trying to unmask some of most greatly exaggerated theories.

While one could be critical of Arabs concerning the conspiracy theories like those cited above, it is true that every Arab nation in the Middle East has been dominated by Western and Turkish colonial powers during the last 175 years. Often there were secret deals between countries which led to the division and occupation of territory. Sometimes, as has happened in many countries elsewhere, Arab leaders collaborated with the occupiers to obtain wealth. This has given many Arabs cause to be suspicious of the Western powers, their own leaders and Israel. Real exploitation and scheming has taken place in the past and is still present. This makes it easy to believe in conspiracy theories.

Yet conspiring is not just at the level of politics or foreign affairs in the Middle East. At home women conspire with amulets and potions to manipulate their men. Men threaten to take a second wife in order to get their way. One sibling conspires against his / her siblings for parental attention. Officials conspire with a manipulated news media. For many Arabs this is part of daily reality. Indeed such experiences are not unknown in other regions of the world! When mixed with the daily frustration of sometimes difficult living circumstances,



stressed family relationships and disappointments with government, job, and neighbours, many people start longing for a better life. Being aware of the scheming in their own circles, sometimes they will react by blaming others for their difficulties. Like all peoples around the world, Arab Muslims need the one who delivers from the ultimate schemer (John 14:6 and 10:10-11).

▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for profound healing where people have experienced injustice and exploitation (Isaiah 61:1-3).*
- ▶ *Pray that the increasingly more numerous communities of believers in the Arab world would become havens of rest, healing, love, truth and honesty in the scheming world of manipulation and darkness.*
- ▶ *Pray that there would be significant casting down of the numerous exaggerated lies and half truths which have become reality for many Arab Muslims (John. 8:31-32, 2 Cor 10:4-5).*
- ▶ *Pray that many would place their hope for ultimate world justice in God's Messiah (Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:10, 42:1).*

Khadijah bint Khuwaylid

خديجة بنت خويلد

Considered by the prophet Mohammed to be one of four perfect women, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (daughter of Khuwaylid) was Mohammed's first wife. Widely known to be a very virtuous woman, she earned the title "Al-Tahira" (The Pure One) because of her kindness and generosity. Throughout her life she never believed in, nor worshipped, idols. She was also known to use her vast material resources to help family members who were in need, as well as those who were less fortunate than her. Her resources were indeed vast; in fact they earned her another title "Ameerat-Quraysh" (Princess of the Quraysh tribe). According to some Islamic traditions when all the Quraysh caravans gathered to begin their long journeys to Syria in the winter or Yemen in the summer, the caravan of Khadijah was equal in size to all of the other caravans combined.

It was actually through these trade caravans that Khadijah first met Mohammed. Having been married twice before, she was quite determined never to marry again. She did not believe that she would find another man who was worthy of her. When she was looking for an agent to send along with her caravans, a family member

recommended a distant cousin named Mohammed. He was a young man of 25 years with no experience in this type of business, but Khadijah chose to give him the opportunity. He took her caravan and earned more profits than she had expected. Khadijah was appropriately impressed by his success and decided to initiate a marriage proposal.

While Mohammed was married to Khadijah, he took no other wives out of his love for her. She was equally devoted to him. When he received his first revelations, she played an important role in convincing him that he was becoming a prophet. She even used her wealth to help promote Islam, to the point of being persecuted for her support of her husband. The year of her death so marked Mohammed that it is called the Year of Sorrow.

Khadijah was the mother of Fatima (born in AD 605), who was the mother of Hussein and Hassan through Ali. The dates of Khadijah's birth and death are not clear but it is probable that she was born in AD 555 and she probably died in AD 619. It is believed by some that her death partly motivated Mohammed to move to Medina.



A caravan near Aqaba by the Red Sea

► Prayer REQUESTS

Around the world literally hundreds of thousands, even possibly well over a million, Muslim women are named Khadijah. Many of them know very little about the wife of Mohammed or her positive example in many aspects of life.

► *Pray for the living Khadijahs that they will discover the Messiah through friends, radio, literature, television and other media.*

► *Pray for those among your acquaintances, or who live in your area, that they may discover and apply the traits of a virtuous wife described in Proverbs 31 and come to know the purity which is from the Messiah.*

Luos people

Omar grew up in the Western part of Kenya near Lake Victoria. His family belonged to the Luos people and they lived as a small Muslim minority among the many Christians in their village. During his school years Omar was torn between the two religions. On one side, his father did not allow him to eat with Christian boys because he was afraid of ceremonial pollution, and besides – “these are not the right friends for Omar to play with.” On the other hand, Omar liked the Christians and he happily ate with his friends when there was no food at home.

There are about 39 Million people in total in Kenya. The Luos are the second largest ethnic group with about 5 million people (the biggest being the Kikujus with about 7.5 million). Traditionally, they live in the area near Lake Victoria, but like most other groups they are also found scattered throughout the country, particularly in the urban centres.

Since there was no religious education for Muslim students in his school, Omar took part in the Christian religious education class – and he enjoyed it. Sometimes he attended church services with his relatives (his mother came from a Christian family). However, when Omar



attended secondary school in a typical Kenyan boarding school, his sympathy for the Christian faith quickly gave way to a hostile attitude. He attended the Muslim student group supported by local businessmen and distanced himself from the Christian students.

Muslims in Kenya and East Africa in general do not only come from ethnic groups in which Muslims are a majority, but they are found as minorities in many tribes. There is hardly any information available about Muslims among the Luos, Luhyas, Kikuyus, Kalenjin or Kambas in Kenya – ethnic groups which have a tribal majority of Christians. However, it is estimated that at least a third of the approximately three million Muslims in Kenya have such a background. They grow up with an interesting mix between open familiarity and hostile rejection to the Gospel and believers.

The shocking experience of seeing his brother dying as a result of an occult curse and sensing that he was himself also in serious danger was the catalyst that led Omar to trust in the Messiah. The positive experiences with believers in his childhood and youth encouraged him to take this step. Today Omar is active in a group of believers and seeks to proclaim the Messiah to Muslims through song.

► Prayer REQUESTS

- *Many Muslims have had positive experiences with believers in their childhood. Pray that they would remember these experiences and seriously consider the possibility of encountering the Messiah for themselves.*
- *Pray that believers find inspiration to live out their faith and proclaim the Good News in such a way that Muslims could be attracted to the Messiah.*
- *Pray for the bodies of believers in East Africa, that they would not overlook Muslims around them, but meet them in love.*

Conversation in Dubai

Recently a believer got in a taxi on his way to the Rairport in Dubai. After a few minutes he asked the taxi driver which country he was from. The driver responded “Pakistan” and then he continued, “Pakistan is really a bad country, the government is corrupt, people are corrupt and the economy is bad. That is why I am here in Dubai.” He continued, “I have four children: three boys and one girl. The girl was born nine months after my last visit to my home almost a year ago. Here I work practically every night driving for 12 hours just to survive and to send money home to my family.”

As the conversation continued he said he was from Peshawar on the Afghan border which is a real hotspot for militant and violent Islamists. He described himself as a Pashtun, one of the great tribal peoples of South Asia. He had developed enough language ability to speak some English, Arabic and Hindi in addition to Urdu. One of his last comments was striking. “Working all night I see a lot of things which I would prefer not to see. There are too many prostitutes here. Too many Ruskies (Russians), too many illegal things at night.”

Dubai is a small city state in the United Arab Emirates. In recent years, however, it has become a world class city of gleaming towers and walled villas. Dubai’s shopping centres even have a ski slope, an aquarium and under water zoo along with luxurious shops. But unfortunately the city is not only made of outward beauty. About 85% of the inhabitants are non-Emiratis. A majority of the foreign workers come from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and other Arab countries. Many live in substandard or crowded housing and work terribly long hours. Muslims, including the local Emiratis, make up about 50%+ of the 1.6 million population (In all the United Arab Emirates - population 5 million - the figures are: Muslim 65%, Hindu 17%, Christian 9% Buddhist 4% other or unknown 5%). While the vast majority of foreign workers are men, women from various countries have also arrived mostly working in housekeeping and service jobs while some are employed in Dubai’s night life as indicated by the Pakistani taxi driver. The city definitely has its dark side. The large amounts of money in Dubai’s financial and real estate markets attracts all kinds of legal and illegal activities (1 Tim 6:10).



Prayer REQUESTS

Many of the foreign workers who consider themselves Christian are actually fairly nominal in their faith. Some are true and committed believers in the Messiah.

▶ *Pray that these believers may really provide an example to Muslims and non-Muslims about what it means to walk in God’s ways (Mt 4:16, John 8:12).*

▶ *Pray that the knowledge of God could come to the Emiratis, other Arabs, the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis. Emirati society is especially closed to outsiders. The actual contact between Emiratis and non-Emiratis is fairly limited. Pray for openings so that all these peoples could discover the Messiah.*

Muslims in Toronto

Much of the Muslim world, from Asia to the deserts of Morocco, is hot and crowded. However, today numbers of Muslims are taking root in much colder places. Greater Toronto, probably the most multicultural city on earth, is now possibly home to more than 300,000 Muslims from many nations (statistics vary).

Canada's immigration rate is growing 4 times as fast as the birth rate and well over half of all new immigrants land in Toronto. Three of the city's most densely populated high-rise apartment clusters, Thorncliffe Park, Crescent Town and Dixon Park, are overwhelmingly Muslim. Comprised of people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Somalia, each square kilometre of these neighbourhoods, has as many as 20,000 people stacked on each other. The local schools scramble to find space for the children of the newcomers. One public school now has over 1900 students from Kindergarten to grade 5. Funds have been released for an unprecedented second school, dedicated entirely to 30 kindergarten classes! In the 2006 census the largest demographic group was children aged 0-4 years old.

These neighbourhoods have been formed by low rent housing, strong family ties, halal shops and the hope for a prosperous future. For many families the pressures are intense. Shocking advertising campaigns assault their sense

of propriety, their kids seem to live in a different world after only a few months of adaptation, the winters are long and employment poses a huge challenge. Many from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India are foreign trained professionals. Those from Afghanistan or Somalia are usually seeking refuge from the effects of long bloody conflicts. Many have huge gaps in their education, because of the years lost as they literally fled for their lives. For all, opportunities are few and the barriers to work and provision are many. The frustrations of bringing up a large family in a new land are profound. (For more information see www.torontomuslims.com)

When deciding to come to Canada, few, if any, of Toronto's Muslims would have been thinking about the increased opportunities to meet or to follow Jesus Christ. In recent years, some believers have been able to proclaim to their friends the hope that they have in the Messiah. In many cases Muslims are invited for the first time to enter a Christian home. During their visits stereotypes and perceptions are either hardened or melted away. As Muslims start to see Jesus, some turn away, others are strongly attracted to him! For Muslims and Christians living alongside each other, there exists a huge potential for mutual respect, appreciation, reconciliation and love to flow between the two communities.



► Prayer REQUESTS

- *Pray that through the sharing of their lives and the Word of God, that the Messiah would be honoured by believers who are seeking to proclaim the Good News among Toronto's Muslims.*
- *Pray that Canada's Muslims would find jobs, peace and a sense of belonging in their new country.*
- *Pray that Toronto's Muslims who are discovering the living Messiah would become a source of life and inspiration for their fellow countrymen in Canada and in their homelands.*

The Friday Sermon

Friday Prayer Focus

Each Friday just after noon several hundred million Muslims find their way to mosques around the world. In some places, almost the entire male population goes to the mosque and hears a sermon given by a religious leader. Often the sermon is given by the prayer leader (the imam), but this is not always the case. Sermons can be on a multitude of topics. Typically the sermon will consist of moral and spiritual guidance for everyday life using references to the Qur'an, the traditions concerning Mohammed and examples from Islamic history. In some countries Muslim preachers use their sermons to speak about how to not let the television and Internet dominate in the lives of children. Some references are sometimes made to international events, the Palestinians and others. Governments often give instructions to religious leaders in order to prevent using the pulpit for radical purposes.

Today, in the big cities of Peshawar and Quetta, Pakistan as well as hundreds of villages and towns in between those cities thousands of largely illiterate Pashtun men will hear sermons. Their Pashtun cousins will hear similar messages in Afghanistan. Many of them are shepherds and farmers. It is possible that many of them would respond positively to the parables of Jesus if they could hear them. Unfortunately many of them also participate in the drug trade just to earn enough to live.

The 25 million Pashtuns have seen war, the drug trade, and Islamic fundamentalism for decades. They are in the quicksand of evil. Pashtun women generally work hard with daily chores, they faithfully prepare meals and care for their children. They submit themselves to their husbands and are veiled in public. Knowing that they need help with many practical aspects of life they involve themselves in occult practices hoping to survive and prosper within a world of unknowns. They seek solutions but darkness clings to them. There are very few believers in the Pashtun homeland in Pakistan and Afghanistan.



In many major mosques the sermon is given from the top of the "minbar." From this elevated location the preacher can usually see the entire assembly. This is a beautifully crafted minbar in Damascus, Syria.

► Prayer REQUESTS

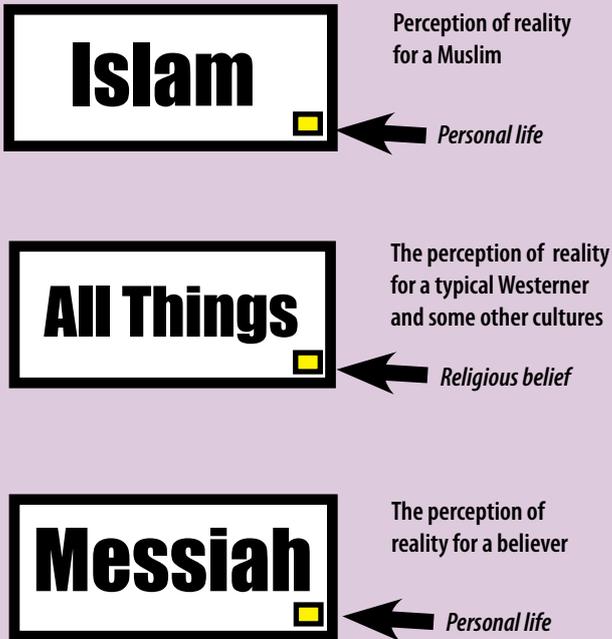
- *Pray for the leaders of mosques who are giving sermons today. May their zeal for God become rooted in real knowledge of God (Romans 10:1-4). May God reveal himself in the lives of Islamic preachers (pray for the men who give sermons in your area as well).*
- *Pray for the Pashtun people. This people lives in great darkness and pain. Pray for divine intervention so that real salvation can come in Pashtun communities. May the mountain villages where Al Qaeda has sought refuge be transformed by the Messiah. He is the hope of the world. He is the true Saviour. He brings real peace (Isaiah 9:6-7).*

Understanding Muslims

Perceptions of reality



Prayer Journeys



This diagram came to "30 Days" from a Palestinian Arab who now believes in the Messiah.

During the next year one very practical way to bring God's presence to Muslim peoples around the world is to take a small prayer team (5-8 people are normally a good size) to one of the areas or countries where Muslims are and to pray for them. The idea is not about teams that will do compassionate outreach or evangelize. The concept is that some teams will only pray, nothing else. Prayer would be their only goal. In some places evangelism efforts are immediately stopped by the police anyway. In addition, many of us on short term outreaches do not know enough about local customs, languages and culture to be very effective.

On such a "prayer only" journey people can do some "prayer walking" in different parts of the city and spend some days in prayer and even fasting. Participants should walk around and pray in a non-offensive way. Pray that God will reveal Himself to the people. Do some research about the city or nation that you will visit so that you can

pray in an informed way. Do research on unreached people groups in that nation, and see if you can travel to the area where they live and to pray for their salvation.

Again just to underline a point above: a prayer journey is not for evangelism or compassionate outreach. Prayer is valuable. Praying "on site" can give many new insights and open doors for God to establish His authority in ways that we may not realize.

Further Resources :

The following web sites with give you more information on unreached people groups:
www.30-days.net ; www.joshuaproject.net ;
www.win1040.com .

You will find information on prayer journeys and prayer walking on : www.waymakers.org.

You can also connect with Project Macedonia if you want more information on prayer journeys at: www.macedonian.org.za

Morocco

Morocco is the only kingdom in North Africa. Mohammed VI, who became king in 1999, is the highest political, military and religious authority. He is called: “The Commander of the Faithful” Consistently, he tries to improve the social and economic situation of the population. He encourages cooperation and collaboration between of all kinds of people and various organisations without distinction of race or religion, as long as they work for the good of the community in general.

In spite of his efforts a large proportion of the population is very poor, as often rich and powerful persons work for their own advantage and are inconsiderate of the rights and needs of their compatriots. Here some examples:

A woman lives in a shanty town with her family. Unfortunately she is the only one who is able to work. She works at cleaning houses, helping with preparations for celebrations and the cleaning up afterwards, making bread dough for bakeries, ironing in factories and other odd jobs. Often she does not have any work for several days. The people employing her sometimes do not pay her in the

evening, but ask her to come back another day, promising her that she will be paid later.

Another man has long hours of work and low pay. He and many of his co-workers wait for weeks for their promised salaries. They need to borrow money to support their families or even borrow for special expenses such as the beginning of the school year, the added food needs during Ramadan and the feast of the slaughtering of a sheep during the Aid El-Kabir. They must accept the unjust treatment, because their employer can send them away whenever he likes.

Another very skilled person easily finds people who will employ him. However, employers with villas and big cars tell him repeatedly that they do not have the money to pay him and he must come back several times before receiving his salary.

An additional concern for people without regular jobs is that they do not have any health insurance, any pension or unemployment benefits. Some hope for political solutions to these problems but the ultimate solutions to injustice are in the hands of the Lord.



▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that the king may continue to lead his country in a wise and godly way. Some authorities have persecuted Moroccan believers, many have been threatened and some jailed. Many more Moroccans need to discover the forgiveness and new life which is found in the Messiah.*
- ▶ *Authorities and employers need to consider God's wisdom in dealing with employees: “Pay the hired man his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and counting on it. ...” (Deut 24:15 and Col 4:1). The employees need to discover God's plan for their lives and do their jobs faithfully and well (Col 3:22-25).*



August 29, 2010

Day 19

The Shi'a expectation of the End Times



Both the Iraqi and the Iranian national flags have the phrase "Allah Akbar" (God is Great)

Shi'a (Shi'ite) Muslims are a minority within the Muslim community, making up about 10-15% of all Muslims worldwide. They separated themselves from the mainstream Muslim community soon after Mohammed's unexpected death in AD 632 because they held a different position concerning who should succeed Mohammed as leader of the Muslims. The majority, which came to be called the "Sunni Muslims," wanted the successor to be the most capable military leader who was also a member of Mohammed's tribe, the Quraysh. The minority, later called the "Shi'a Muslims," wanted the successor to be a close relative of Mohammed. However, at Mohammed's death there was no son or nephew who could be appointed as Mohammed's successor since his sons had all died previously and his two grandsons (Hassan and Hussein) were only children at that time.

The first three caliphs (successors) of Mohammed were Sunni caliphs, the fourth one was Ali, Mohammed's nephew

and son-in-law who had been married to Mohammed's daughter Fatima many years before. Ali was able to maintain his position briefly before he was murdered in AD 661. The Shi'as believe that the rightful rulers of the Muslim community worldwide were actually Ali and his eleven descendants through Mohammed's grandson Hussein who died as a martyr in Iraq in AD 680. A majority of Shi'as believe that Hussein's line of succession continued till his descendant Mohammed al-Mahdi, the twelfth "rightly guided Imam," mysteriously disappeared beginning in AD 874 at the age of five. He was supposedly accessible to certain people till AD 941. After that the Shi'a hope for ruling the Muslim community was totally transferred to the unseen world

from which a hidden spiritual guide – called the Hidden Imam (leader) or Mahdi (the one who guides), will eventually return.

This sinless leader, the Mahdi, will establish an Islamic empire of peace and justice at the end of time. According to most Muslims (including Sunnis), the Mahdi will be aided by Jesus who is also supposed to return to earth when the Mahdi appears. Both the Mahdi and Jesus will be opposed by the Masih ad-Dajjal, an evil, one eyed, anti-Christ figure, who will eventually be slain and the whole world will submit to Islam. Some time after the victory of the Mahdi there will be a general resurrection of the dead followed by the last judgement.

Muslims generally have a strong belief in a future life consisting of a paradise for believers and eternal punishment for unbelievers but their ideas differ very profoundly from Christian belief. Shi'a Muslims generally have a much more concrete and intensive expectation of the end times to come than the Sunnis.

In Iran

The Shi'as generally believe that the Mahdi is presently living even though hidden and that he is guid-





ing the community of Shi'a believers. The hidden Imam transfers his knowledge to the most famous and learned Shi'a men of today so they can teach the ordinary members of the community. Before the rise of the Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini the Shi'a community held the opinion that righteous leadership could not be established on earth before the return of the Mahdi, the rightly guided one. Khomeini himself claimed to be the representative of the hidden Imam (Mahdi) who had told him to establish this empire of peace and justice on earth by fighting against the enemies of Islam. The Shi'a Muslims were motivated to determine their own destiny instead of just passively waiting for the return of the hidden Imam. Waiting for the returning Imam, was replaced by action, in the form of revolution. Khomeini openly encouraged Shi'a clerics to become involved in the political struggle. He

was enabled to do so by his new interpretation of Shi'a tradition. The expectations of a nation under Islam appeared to have been fulfilled in the person of Khomeini. The present Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a follower of Khomeini and he seems to have comparable ideas.

Photos:

Far left: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
Middle left: The Jamkaran Mosque near Qom, Iran. It is widely believed among Shi'as that the Hidden Imam (Mahdi) will appear again at this site sometime in the future to establish Islam across the world.

Above: The Samarra "Golden Mosque" (Iraq) built in the city where Mohammed Mahdi (the Hidden Imam) was born.
Right: The Ayatollah Khomeini who was a key figure in the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

**(Photos from Russian Info Service and the US military)*

▶ Prayer REQUESTS

▶ *There are possibly 200,000 Shi'a mullahs (religious leaders) in Iran alone and many thousands more in Iraq. They have a significant role in their communities and in society as a whole. They are teaching their people to place their confidence in the future Mahdi and to practice Islam with zeal. Pray for these leaders to come to know the living Messiah, Jesus (Acts 6:7).*

▶ *The Messiah is the ultimate hope for a world of peace and justice. Indeed the Bible promises us that one day the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the water covers the sea (Isaiah 11:9 and Habbakuk 2:4). There will be a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). Pray that the millions of Shi'a Iranians and Iraqis discover the living and reigning Messiah who is the true hope of the world.*

Aisha

Mohammed's favourite wife

Commonly referred to as Mohammed's favourite wife, Aisha bint Abu Bakr (the daughter of Abu Bakr) was formally engaged to the Prophet at the age of six. The betrothal was initiated through Aisha's father after he and his daughter had returned from a brief period of time in Ethiopia where they had gone to escape the persecution which they had been experiencing from the idolaters in Mecca. Mohammed and Aisha were betrothed for several years before the marriage was consummated at age nine (Mohammed was 52 at that time). Many Muslims are very embarrassed about this marriage with such a young girl (many do not know that it happened). Some have even left Islam when they discovered this fact. Some sources say that after the marriage Aisha would still play with her toys and Mohammed would play with her. Aisha was Mohammed's only virgin bride. Aisha, herself, was not able to give Mohammed a physical heir and she remained childless all her life. Her name means "she who lives" or "alive". Her name is also written: A'ishah, Ayesha, A'isha).

There are conflicting views about Aisha's status among Muslims. Aisha expressed jealousy towards

Mohammed's other wives, especially Khadijah, Mohammed's first wife who died before Mohammed and Aisha were even betrothed. Sunni Muslims hold her in very high esteem as they consider her to be Mohammed's favourite wife and one of the foremost women of her time. The Shi'a (Shiite) Muslims on the other hand, regard her in a more negative light. This is largely due to her role during the first Islamic civil war in which Mohammed's grandson Hussein and his father Ali died. The Shi'a branch of Islam has significant roots in the events surrounding the deaths of Hussein and Ali.

Aisha is one of the foremost Islamic authorities of the early period. She is reputed to be the source of many sacred traditions about Mohammed (Hadith). When Mohammed was approaching death, he spent his last moments in the company of the 18 year old Aisha and died with his head in her lap. She remained unmarried for the rest of her life (Qur'an 33:53). Aisha died in the year AD 678 at the age of 65 during the month of Ramadan.

عائشة



Prayer REQUESTS

As we have prayed for the living Khadijahs around the world on Day 13 we can also pray for the living Aishas, who take their name from Mohammed's favourite wife. Worldwide, they certainly number in the hundreds of thousands.

- ▶ *Ask God to open doors of opportunity for the living Aishas to hear the traditions and accounts concerning the life of the Messiah and believe in Him.*
- ▶ *Pray for the Aishas that you may know or that you may have heard about. Ask the Lord to reveal himself to them that they might find life in the resurrected King.*

Note: *It is not helpful to accuse Mohammed of being a paedophile (Although this marriage is shocking). Ask Muslim friends what they know about Aisha. Say: "I have heard that Mohammed married Aisha at a very young age, what do you know about this?" Let them discover the truth themselves.*

Bahrain

As he sat in the Starbucks coffee shop, away from the bustle of the surrounding shopping mall, Hans* considered the difficult choice he had to make. Should he continue being a successful businessman here in his native Bahrain, or should he emigrate with his wife Maria* and their young son to a place where they could worship Jesus the Messiah, freely and without harassment from his family? Five years ago, after a time of seeking spiritual answers and reading the Bible, Hans was visiting the holy city of Mecca, and he dreamed of a person, the Lord Jesus, telling him that this city was the wrong place to be seeking Him! Soon after, a believer explained the gospel message to Hans and he decided to place his faith in the Messiah. Now Hans thought about how he might proclaim the Messiah to others.

Some believers have been present in the island kingdom of Bahrain, situated between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, for about 100 years. Their teaching and loving service over time has made the Gospel attractive to many Bahrainis.

The half-million Bahrainis are descended from a mixture of indigenous peoples and settlers from the Arabian peninsula and Iran. Some tensions exist between the poorer Shi'a Islamic majority, and the politically-dominant

Sunni minority, and between the Arab and Persian background inhabitants. However, the country's traditional dependence on trading, plus the necessity of living closely together, have led towards the generally tolerant attitudes found among Bahrainis today.

About 250,000 foreigners are also resident in Bahrain – professionals from Europe, the Far East and South Africa; technicians and skilled workers from India and Philippines; and manual labourers and domestic servants from Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, and more recently, China. Because of a lack of comprehensive laws to protect foreign workers, construction workers and domestic servants often have to endure physical abuse, sexual harassment, confiscation of passports, non-payment or delay in payment of salary and long hours of work.

The government presently demonstrates a good level of tolerance towards foreign believers as they worship and practice their faith. However, Christ followers may be more restricted in the future, as competition occurs between Saudi-inspired government ministers and Shi'a parliamentarians to show which of them is the most “Islamic”.

** Names are changed to protect the identities of the individuals.*



Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Bahraini believers like Hans* and Maria* need daily courage as they follow the Lord, in the face of family and community hostility.*
- ▶ *Bahrainis sometimes have opportunities to hear the Gospel through foreign believers and to see their example, but these opportunities need to be multiplied by at least a thousand! Pray for the opening of minds and hearts (Luke 24:32 and Acts 16:14) .*
- ▶ *Poorer foreign workers need support and justice; and Bahrainis need courage to address the sins and injustices of their own society.*

India

Prayer for the Peoples

As part of our effort to pray for the least reached peoples of the world we ask you to pray for the people groups in the list to the right. This list contains the 25 Indian Muslim people groups with a population over 100,000 who have no known Gospel witness which is seeking to establish local communities of believers. These peoples have not only not heard the Gospel, they do not have any messengers actively seeking to bring the Gospel to them. The Kunjra people in the next paragraph are fairly typical of many of the other groups.

The Kunjra People

The Kunjra people live in the Indian state of Bihar, which is one of the most caste-conscious states among Sunni Muslims. Religiously, the Sunni caste system is significantly different from the Hindu caste system. The Muslim caste system not only assigns social status based on birth, it also generally restricts a person to a traditional occupation or role. Within this caste system, the Kunjra are, in general, of a lower caste and have historically been fruit and vegetable sellers or farmers. They are also mostly illiterate. They are a significantly large group and prefer to marry among themselves.



From what can be discerned, there are no known believers among the Kunjra. They have not rejected the Gospel; they simply have never heard it. Very little is known about the Kunjra people, so prayer will be critical in bringing the Good News of the Messiah to them.

(This information was supplied by Frontiers)

▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for more information to be learned about the Kunjra and the other peoples in the list.*
- ▶ *Ask God for committed workers to live among the Kunjra and the other groups to share the love of Christ with them.*
- ▶ *Ask the Lord to raise up prayer teams for these peoples.*

*May your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.*

Let the peoples praise you, O God;

let all the peoples praise you! (Ps 67:2-3)

| People group | Population |
|--------------------|------------|
| Kunjra | 822,140 |
| Turk | 530,187 |
| Makhmi | 469,871 |
| Sudhan | 446,757 |
| Rawther | 682,072 |
| Bhatiara | 259,188 |
| Mahur | 243,687 |
| Yashkun | 235,511 |
| Bhatia | 190,957 |
| Jhojha | 175,779 |
| Nikari | 147,684 |
| Baloch | 129,950 |
| Molesalam | 128,738 |
| Shaikh (Marathi) | 2,429,481 |
| Shaikh (Marwadi) | 1,541,534 |
| Shaikh (Gujarati) | 1,057,975 |
| Shaikh (Maithili) | 774,017 |
| Shaikh (Magadi) | 322,135 |
| Shaikh (Oriya) | 235,524 |
| Shaikh (Mewari) | 151,368 |
| Shaikh (Konkani) | 116,051 |
| Pathan (Marwadi) | 215,895 |
| Shaikh (Dhundari) | 404,463 |
| Shaikh (Nimadi) | 110,046 |
| Shaikh (Shekhwati) | 222,665 |
| Total | 12,043,675 |

The Jola People of West Africa

A group of young children sat in a huddle, listening to the story of Noah and the ark. Perhaps some of them had heard of the prophet Noah before, but none of them knew his story in detail. Behind them some of the mothers sat, chatting or greeting others who walked past. Soon the story ended and the children ran off to play, but the women stayed behind. “Tell us another story!” said one of the women, indicating her desire to hear more. Most Jola have never heard any of the stories about Jesus and the kingdom of God from the Bible, but many of them are willing to listen.

Location - About 560,000 Jola people live across three countries in West Africa (Senegal, the Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau). The largest number of Jola are located in the Casamance region of Southern Senegal. In Gambia, many Jolas live along the southern bank of the Gambia River, while others have moved to a regional city for employment opportunities and / or education. Some Jola people also live in the northern part of Guinea Bissau and small numbers in other West African countries

Catholicism has had a presence in Senegal for centuries and even now some Jola families are traditionally

Catholic; however, during the last century there has been a major shift toward Islam because of influences from the north. Most people – both Muslims and Catholics – maintain various degrees of the traditional animistic beliefs and practice, including the fear of witchcraft, evil spirits, and curses. At the present time over 90% of Jolas claim to be Muslim. In contrast, only about 2% claim to be believers in the Messiah but the committed ones are even less numerous.

Culture – The Jola people are known for their relaxed, friendly manner and hard work. In their bush villages the farmers grow rice, millet, peanuts, and some vegetables. They have no caste-type system, all are considered to be equals. Families are large and fiercely loyal to one another. Many families are polygamous – men often have up to four wives. The women of a household are responsible for gardening, cultivating rice, food preparation, household chores, and care of the children. Men build the houses and fences and cultivate crops (especially peanuts) which are sold to provide resources for the family.



► Prayer REQUESTS

- *Pray that the light of God will shine into the Jola villages and towns. Pray that they will have dreams and visions of Jesus and will trust in Him.*
- *Pray that chiefs, religious leaders, and elders will follow the Messiah. Pray that local and non-native believers will be able to get the Word of God to all the Jola by various means.*
- *Bible Translation that is happening in Gambia. Three gospels are complete and the rest of the New Testament is being corrected. Pray that God will prepare the Jola to hear the Word in their language, understand it, and believe. Pray for the Gambian translators as they seek to express the gospel clearly in their own language.*

Testimony from East Africa

Zeynuba is a woman in her late twenties who is married and has two children. She grew up in an area of East Africa where Muslims live in a close community with little contact to non-Muslims. When she finished secondary school she came to the capital to help in the household of her uncle. Since her uncle did not support her for further studies, she was glad to accept an opportunity in the neighbourhood to do computer studies in the home of an expatriate Christian family. As she got to know these people better, Zeynuba was surprised to realize that these believers in the Messiah were friendly and accepted her, quite different from what she had expected. They prayed before meals and displayed a positive lifestyle. In the following months she began to study the faith of these believers.

When her own family became aware of her new interest in the Messiah they took her back home and tried to strengthen her Islamic beliefs. Zeynuba escaped and went back to the capital, however, her bus got stuck and she feared that now she would have to stay at home. In this desperate situation she prayed to God to help her for the first time in Jesus' name.



A moment later the bus continued its journey. This experience made a deep impression on her.

Back in the capital she continued learning about the Messiah which eventually led to a discouraging confrontation with her relatives when she refused an arranged marriage. It seemed like her life was coming to an end. Many questions worried her: "What will happen to me? Will I ever get a husband?" Her Christian friends encouraged her to trust Jesus who had a good plan for her. She responded positively and trusted the Messiah. The lifestyle and prayers of her believing friends convinced her to follow Jesus, coupled with her family's rejection. For a while she had doubts about her decision, sometimes even praying the Islamic prayers at night. Over a year later Zeynuba was baptised. This brought a significant change because only after her baptism did she really understand the gospel. She finally understood what Jesus had done for her. Today Zeynuba has a believing husband and they both serve the Lord.

Muslims in the East African Region

| Country | Population (Millions) | Muslim Population |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Burundi | 9.5 | 780,000 |
| Comoros | 0.75 | 725,000 |
| Djibouti | 0.73 | 750,000 |
| Eritrea | 5.6 | 2,300,000 |
| Ethiopia | 85.2 | 28,100,000 |
| Kenya | 39.0 | 3,900,000 |
| Madagascar | 20.65 | 1,440,000 |
| Malawi | 15 | 1,920,000 |
| Mayotte | 0.21 | 200,000 |
| Mauritius | 1.3 | 220,000 |
| Mozambique | 21.6 | 3,980,000 |
| Reunion | 0.80 | 20,000 |
| Rwandan | 10.7 | 420,000 |
| Seychelles | 0.10 | 1,000 |
| Somalia | 9.8 | 9,700,000 |
| Tanzania | 41 | 14,350,000 |
| Uganda | 32.3 | 3,870,000 |
| Zambia | 11.8 | 1,790,000 |
| Zimbabwe | 11.4 | 130,000 |

Friday Prayers

Friday Prayer Focus

Muslims do not think of communion with God, knowing God or hearing from God, as being part of their normal prayer experience. In Islam normal daily prayer is a focused ritual exercise which is an expression of worship and honour toward Allah. Personal requests are possible in Islam but the formal ritual prayers are definitely the most important prayer activity for Muslims.

Prayer in Islam is generally not meant to bring one's self into direct personal contact or communion with Allah. Even when Muslims speak of prayer as communication with Allah they are never thinking that Allah will actually speak back to them. The communication is always one way. In the very small Sufi Muslim minority one can speak of meeting God. However, beliefs and practices among Sufis place the emphasis more on being submerged in the divine than knowing God in a communication oriented and relational sense. Among believers in the Messiah knowing God in a relational sense is a key aspect of the faith (John 17:3). According to orthodox Islam God never speaks to humans directly and actually he has not even spoken to anyone indirectly (through angels) since the time of Mohammed. Muslims universally believe that Mohammed was the last and the greatest of the prophets. According to them Mohammed brought the final spoken revelation from God which eventually became the book we know as the Qur'an.

Prayer is encouraged as a means of restraining Muslims from social wrongs and moral deviancy. According to a traditional saying, Mohammed when asked, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To offer prayers at their fixed times." When asked again, "What is next in goodness?" He replied, "To be good and dutiful to your parents." When asked again, "What is next in goodness?" He replied, "To participate in Jihad in Allah's Cause." Prayer is often seen as a meritorious activity in Islam.



The Kho People

Toward noon today thousands of Kho in the high mountainous region of Northern Pakistan will be praying in their local mosques. Almost none of them will have even ever asked the question "Does God ever speak to man today?" Many will think that their prayer will earn them merit before God.

This people group numbers about 320,000 people. There are no known believers in this people group. No one is seeking specifically to reach them at the present time. The Kho appear to be very resistant to the Gospel. Most of them live in the upper valleys, where farming is very difficult due to the dry, rugged mountain terrain.

The heart language of the Kho is Khowar. It is spoken in homes and villages, and through it, children receive their informal education about the customs, traditions, values and beliefs of Kho society. Khowar's oral tradition is full of well-loved poems and songs, passed down from generation to generation.

See The Kho people of Pakistan on Youtube.com

▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Ask the Lord to soften the hearts of these people who are very resistant to the Gospel.*
- ▶ *Pray that the Lord will raise up believers who are willing to invest long-term service for the tribes of northern Pakistan.*
- ▶ *Pray that the Kho people will receive dreams and visions of Jesus.*

Rajshahi, Bangladesh



According to popular legend, a Sufi Muslim saint named Shah Makhdum rode a crocodile up the river and brought Islam to Rajshahi. His shrine in the city is visited by many Muslims in the area seeking a cure for infertility, sickness and other problems.

Situated on the banks of the Ganges a few miles from India, Rajshahi city is home to about half a million Bengali Muslims. The region has been successively dominated by waves of Aryan, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, British, and finally Pakistani control before the country finally gained independence in 1971. Rajshahi city itself became prominent during the British Raj, and although once predominantly Hindu, the city is now 90% Muslim. Rajshahi Muslims are generally quite liberal and open-minded, but the main university campus is controlled by the Islamist Jamaati-Islam student party, and the city has been a hub for some minor terrorist activity.

Rajshahi is an educational hub for the country, with over ten large universities, colleges and medical schools. Rajshahi University alone has over 25,000 students. Rajshahi is also a medical hub for the country, with a Christian Mission Hospital as well.

Almost a hundred years ago the Gospel first began to bear fruit among Muslims in the region, when Scriptures were distributed in the Muslim dialect of Bengali. Hundreds came to faith, but unfortunately these believers were encouraged to abandon their traditions and dialect and merge into the Hindu-background church culture, and so the movement died and was forgotten.

In the early 1980's, a brave young Muslim-background businessman moved to Rajshahi and began witnessing to Muslims, encouraging believers to remain within their families and culture. As a result, there are now three house fellowships in the city, with more fellowships in the surrounding villages. These fellowships are growing, vibrant and bold in outreach, but much depth in discipleship and knowledge of God's Word is needed to sustain the movement.

In the past, the ministry has been forced to focus on the men, with the women and children being much less accessible. That is beginning to change. However, women are still less literate and more limited in travel opportunities and free time.

▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for the small house fellowships of believers to grow in maturity, obedience and knowledge of God's Word. Pray for godly elders to be appointed who are committed to holy living and service (1 Tim 3:1-13).*
- ▶ *Pray that believing husbands would teach their wives, maintain family devotions and take responsibility for their children's faith. Pray that more women would find opportunities to grow in maturity.*
- ▶ *Some people in the city have begun to sell Bibles in the Muslim dialect of Bengali. Pray that seekers would buy, read and understand God's Word.*
- ▶ *In the larger Rajshahi district, there are many seekers and young believers who meet together sporadically. Pray that believers would see the need for regular weekly worship.*
- ▶ *Pray for a significant witness on Rajshahi campuses among the thousands of students. There has been some witness in recent years.*

Finding a Bride in Kyrgyzstan

In the mountains, hills, valleys, cities and villages of Kyrgyzstan many young women suddenly and unexpectedly find themselves married. This happens in a way which needs to change. Just as many Western, African, and Asian societies need to be freed from their pornographic addictions and sexual promiscuity, Kyrgyzstan has a significant social problem in the area of marriage.

About 40% of the brides in Kyrgyzstan are simply kidnapped and married by force. This is a tribal custom from many generations ago, so for many it is “traditional”, but it actually breaks one of the ten commandments “You shall not steal”. During the Soviet era the practice was suppressed but not altogether eliminated, however, it has grown in scale in recent decades. Happily a small majority of marriages are arranged, negotiated and mutually agreed upon. Bride kidnapping is illegal but most violators are not prosecuted. Islam is also against forced marriages.

In most cases the young girls do not consent to the kidnapping and often the “marriage” is consummated by simple rape. Some give their consent to avoid difficulties, others genuinely decide to simply accept their “destiny,” their families are invited and a marriage takes place. Many girls stay with their new husband but others seek to escape, a minority of young women commit suicide or

are simply murdered if they do not cooperate. Above all the psychological trauma is very important.

Typically a young man may make efforts to “date” girls although typical “Western dating” is practically impossible in Kyrgyzstan.¹ Kyrgyz society greatly limits the amount of time that young men and women may spend together. Perhaps a family will seek to negotiate a match. Sometimes this works, and a marriage is arranged. However, many young men find themselves in difficult circumstances where they are not able to get married for various financial, family, social or personal reasons. In those cases they will often kidnap with the active participation of their friends (80-90% of the cases) and their extended families (parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins). The good and bad qualities of the perspective brides are debated and plans are devised.

Young women are abducted just about anywhere or anytime. It can happen at home, in public or even while working in the fields. The kidnapped bride is often brought to her future husband’s family and his women relatives are enrolled to seek to persuade the girl to accept her destiny and joyfully receive her new husband. Many will say “I too was kidnapped, we all were kidnapped. This is our way.”



The couple above was featured in an advertising campaign urging people to marry by mutual consent.

▶ Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ *Many Kyrgyz Muslims are involved in seeking to change this situation by various means. Ask God to bring the Kyrgyz people to a real heart change in this area.*
- ▶ *Pray for healing for those who have suffered.*
- ▶ *Ask the Lord to bring further revelation to the Kyrgyz people about the true nature and meaning of marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33).*

¹One could seriously question whether or not typical “Western style dating” is actually a good solution to the problem of finding a mate!

Muslims in Korea

Provided by Hyunsoo Lee

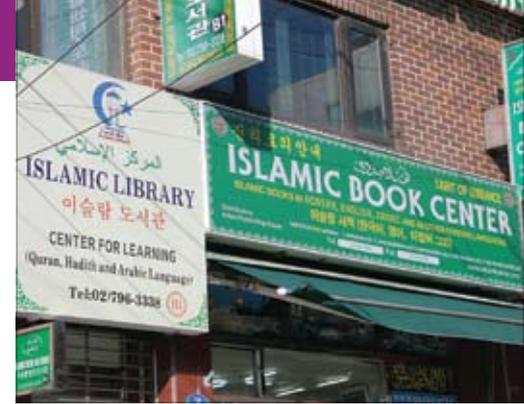
The presence of a small community of Muslims in Korea can be traced back to the 13th to 14th centuries. Contacts with Muslims in that period were probably linked to the active trading and commercial exchanges between Korea and China. This small Muslim presence can be shown in Korean history until the time of the Japanese colonization in the 1920s. At that time, thousands of Muslim Kazaks came to Korea and settled under the Japanese colonial government.

In 1950 the Korean War broke out. The UN sent troops to Korea to fight against the North Korean communists. As part of the war effort the nation of Turkey sent a battalion of soldiers to Korea. This was the beginning of modern contact between Koreans and Muslims. Two Turkish imams came with their fellow soldiers and began propagating Islam to war weary Koreans through education, in the Chung Jin private learning institute. Within a couple of years two Koreans became Muslims through their efforts. It is said that there are now more than 35,000 ethnic-Korean Muslims since the first two Korean converts in 1955. Korean Muslims built their first mosque, called Central Masjid, at Itewon in Seoul with financial help from Muslim countries. Now there are more than 10 mosques and 40 prayer centres throughout the country.



Korean Muslims have started to get attention from society because of their gradual growth in Korea. Although full statistics are lacking, Korean Muslims have started to get attention from society in recent years due to the gradual growth in their numbers. In addition more foreign Muslims are making their appearance in Korea. By 2007 there were about 110,000 expatriate Muslims in South Korea (see chart). Note: The Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are mostly illegal labourers.

Due to the lack of Korean understanding of Islam and its culture, Muslims seem to be mistreated and discriminated against culturally in factories and schools. Culturally eating pork seems to be almost unavoidable while living in Korea. For example, one Muslim Uzbek worker who came to Korea as a trainee worker under a South Korean government's training program for Asians. He was unfortunately assigned to a pig farm for training even though Muslims are forbidden to raise pigs for slaughter according to their religion.



Prayer REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for a greater awareness and understanding of Islamic religion and culture in Korean society in general. This will facilitate greater social integration of Muslims in society.
- ▶ Like Korean society in general, Korean churches are also lack of the understanding of Islam. Because of the negative impact of various incidents involving Koreans in Afghanistan and elsewhere, animosity and fear toward Muslims and Islam have crept into the hearts of some Korean believers. Believers will need to overcome fear (1 John 4:18 and 2 Tim 1:7). Pray for Korean believers to have a renewal of vision and desire to reach out to Muslims.

Testimony from Indonesia



“No one from my family will ever become a Christian!” shouted Ali with angry face. “I will not allow her to become Christian!” His anger reached a feverish pitch when he discovered that his sister named Lia had become a Christian and had recently been baptized. With a loud and accusatory tone Ali said, “It must be because of Ahmad” (a local believer who would frequently visit Lia and her family). “He made her become a Christian!” His anger boiled over and he began to beat Lia and then he cut the electric cable to her house. At the height of this anger, Ali threatened to kick her out of the village. All of these events made Lia become very sad but God gave her the grace to survive and she continued to stay in the village.

After hearing what happened to Lia and her family, Ahmad went to visit them. He met with Lia and her husband and using God’s word he encouraged them to endure. Suddenly, when they had just finished, there was a loud noise like some one had just fallen outside. Many people ran out to see what had happened. A young child had fallen down from high place and lay uncon-

scious and motionless but the onlookers kept hearing him passing gas. Everyone was shocked at his condition. Ahmad offered to pray for the child and the family granted him permission. Ahmad lovingly laid his hands on the child and prayed. After his prayer the child began to come to consciousness and he stopped passing gas. It was evident that Jesus had healed the child. Many people witnessed the miracle, including Ali, but because of his anger, he stormed off.

Later Ali’s adult son Budi contracted a mysterious illness. Ali had a dream in which he saw that the only person who could help his son was his sister Lia, however, he was too ashamed and embarrassed to visit her and ask for her help because of all the problems he had caused her. As his son’s disease continued to worsen, Ali knew he had to tell Lia about his dream. As new believer, Lia doubted that Budi could be healed by her prayers, but the Holy Spirit gave her the courage to pray boldly in the name of Jesus. After Lia prayed, Budi arose from his bed and began to recover from his illness. Just like his father, Budi also hated Christianity, however, he became very open and willing to hear the Gospel. It wasn’t

long before Budi came to faith in the Messiah and was baptized. Shortly afterwards he found a job after many years of unemployment.

Knowing that Budi had been baptized, Ali decided to meet with Ahmad. During their time together Ali expressed his desire to trust in the Messiah. Ahmad thoroughly explained the Gospel to him and after some weeks of practical instruction, Ali made the decision to be baptized. The deep hatred towards Christians that had lived in Ali’s heart disappeared because God’s Love had changed him.



Sabah and Sarawak, East Malaysia

Population of Sarawak: 2,176,800

Population of Sabah: 3,387,880

Known as 'The Land Beneath the Wind', Sabah is dominated physically by Borneo's highest mountain, Mount Kinabalu (13,450 ft.). Sabah has a larger population of Muslims than Sarawak, but the same number of Malays. The larger population of Muslims, of various ethnic groups, is due to the influx of illegal immigrants and refugees from Indonesia and the southern Philippines - the Badjau, Bisaya and Bonggi peoples, as well as others.

Sarawak is better known as home to the headhunting tribes of Borneo, many of whom are still living upriver in traditional longhouses. Sarawak's Malays are found in coastal villages involved in agriculture and fishing, while in the towns Malays dominate government service sectors. Although the Malays are a minority in Sarawak, there are other important Muslim people groups often counted together with the Malays. The Melanau, one of Sarawak's larger minority groups has many serving in high positions in the state government; also the Kadayan; Tatau; and Sebob peoples.

The jungles of Borneo are reckoned to be among the most pristine on the planet, and have been the scene of many recent protests against indiscriminate logging that has resulted in the destruction of jungle habitat and deforestation. Sarawak, a land of fast-flowing rivers, is also witnessing a massive program to develop and harness hydro-electric power through the creation of dams impacting wildlife and fauna. But the island of Borneo still holds a certain natural mystique and increasing numbers of its inhabitants are becoming involved in preservation efforts.

Among the majority Muslim population there exists one of the more vibrant and growing communities of believers in Southeast Asia. The communities of believers among the indigenous tribal peoples in East Malaysia have experienced sovereign works of God in revival. Several bodies are having a marvelous impact throughout Sabah. In the 2000 census in Sarawak, 43% of the population indicated a belief in the Messiah with large numbers of indigenous tribal peoples embracing faith in Christ. Breakthroughs among the Malays could have a significant impact on the larger Malay population on the Malaysian Peninsula.



► Prayer REQUESTS

► *May God inspire believers to become more intentional in reaching out to their Muslim neighbours and fellow workers.*

Pray that God would raise up people with various spiritual gifts to help the believers and help Muslims to discover the Good News.

► *Pray for the establishing of culturally-relevant, indigenous communities of faith in each Muslim community.*

► *There are challenges for congregations which seek to welcome Muslims who discover the Messiah. Pray for them as they seek to help new believers.*

Britain

Britain has a long and varied history in relation to Muslims from around the world. In the 13th and 14th centuries British traders came into contact with Muslims as they sailed through the Mediterranean and around the coast of Africa into the Arabian Gulf. Some of the first Muslims to settle in Britain were sailors from Yemen. Britain later became friendly with Islamic nations during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I who asked the Ottoman Sultan Murad for naval assistance against the Spanish Armada. Later, Britain colonised many Muslim lands which created a totally different relationship between Britain and many Muslims.

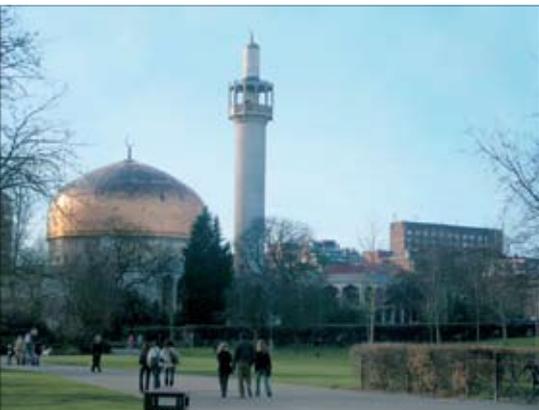
As the British Empire began to change after WWII and many of the colonies gained their freedom, a large immigration began from these former colonies with

many from South Asia making a new home in the cities and towns of Britain. Today there are roughly 2.4 million Muslims living in Britain. They come from all over the world and include second and third generation immigrants as well as converts from the white British population.

Events of recent years have made it difficult for many Christians to build relationships with Muslims in their neighbourhoods. Cultural misunderstandings and the isolation of Muslim communities have made it challenging for many British Christians to know where to begin in making friends with Muslims. Education is key on both sides, for addressing fear and creating a platform where relationships can develop in shared schoolyards, workplaces and neighbourhoods.

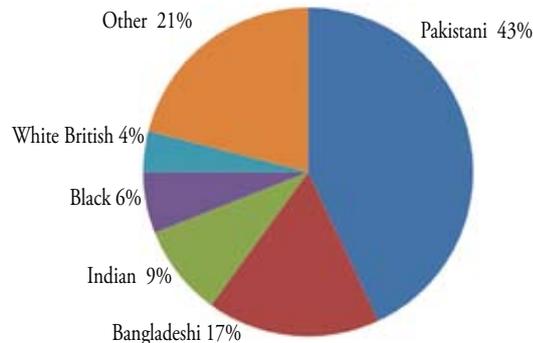
► Prayer REQUESTS

- *Pray against the fear which many British people have about Muslim culture.*
- *Pray for genuine friendships to develop across the cultural barriers and for real love to characterise the relationships between Muslim and Christian.*
- *Pray that the church would be a hospitable place for new Muslim immigrants and other alienated Muslims, and that programs to assist them would demonstrate the love of Christ.*
- *Pray that ongoing dialogue between Christian and Muslim leaders in this nation would be fruitful.*



British Muslims Ethnic Categories Census 2001

69% of UK Muslims are from the Indian Sub-continent. There are also significant numbers from other parts of the world (31%). The Census ethnic category 'Black' (6%) applies to 'Black Caribbean, Black African, Other Black'. A new census will be taken soon. It is certain that the South Asian percentages will continue to be very high.



A Last Word

from the “30 Days” Chairman

During the last nine years I have had the responsibility of putting together the international version of the “30 Days” prayer materials. I want to thank you for praying. Many of you have participated for several years. Much progress has been made in making the Messiah known to Muslims around the world. “30 Days” has played a role in the effort. God is doing marvellous things.

Recently I became familiar with the life of a man named Mahesh Das, who was later known as Birbal (1528-1586). This man became a chief minister in the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar the Great in India. Birbal embodies something which should really be appreciated in Muslim cultures. He had wit and wisdom which was remarkable. Here is an example (There are several versions of this story):

One day Akbar was strolling in his palace gardens with Birbal. Many crows were flying around. The king enjoyed watching them. He asked Birbal “How many crows are there in my kingdom?” Birbal thought a moment, then said, “They are ninety-five thousand, four hundred and sixty three (95,463) crows in your kingdom, My lord.” “How do you know that for sure?” the king asked. “You can have them counted, My lord.” Birbal said. The king asked again, “And if there will be less than that, then?” Birbal replied immediately, “That means that the rest of them have gone to see relatives in some neighbouring kingdoms.” “Or if there were more than that, then?” “Then it means that other crows are visiting your kingdom, My lord.”

The wit and wisdom of this man won Akbar’s heart. It is said that many years later when Birbal died in a battle in Afghanistan Akbar was in mourning for several months. He deeply missed his friend. Many years before, at a happier moment, apparently one day a wild elephant was chasing Birbal, who was on foot, during a hunt.



Akbar

Birbal



Birbal was close to being killed by the huge beast. Yet at the last moment Akbar rode his horse in front of the enraged elephant. The animal was so amazed by the Akbar’s courageous stand that he turned and fled. Risking his own life Akbar had saved his friend. We, as believers, know someone who gave his life for us.

Friendships are needed to make the Gospel known. I want to encourage you to become a friend of Muslims in your heart. Tomorrow will be Friday. Will you join me in praying for Muslims on Fridays during the coming weeks, perhaps for the coming year? In this way you may continue to be involved in saving their lives for all eternity. On our web site you can find some tools to help you to pray on Fridays.

► **Prayer Request:** *Today I would like to ask you to pray for the coordinators of “30 Days” around the world. You can see a complete list of our offices on our site (www.30-days.net). Many of the coordinators and other volunteers have served in producing and distributing this prayer literature for many years. Some do this with significant personal risk, several are my personal friends. They face numerous spiritual and practical challenges. You might also think of participating financially in this prayer effort by giving to your regional “30 Days” office. We are planning to do “30 Days” again in August 2011. It will be our 20th Ramadan prayer effort. We hope you will join us at that time.*

Victor, the Chairman of the “30 Days” Coordinators

Inside cover

UK & MIDDLE EAST

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"30 Days International" maintains a positive attitude toward Muslims. Our prayer effort is not interested in denigrating or criticising Muslims or their beliefs and practice. 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.

30 Days International does not necessarily endorse or agree with all the arguments, ideas or attitudes presented by the web sites listed on this page. These sites contain at least some valuable material. They may have some negative and unhelpful content as well. It is possible that they are not the best sites available but the editors are simply familiar with them.

Web sites about Muslims and Islam:

Christian Sites about islam:

www.answering-islam.org
www.islam-christianity.com
www.quranandinjil.org
www.carlmedearis.com

Muslim Sites:

Wikipedia: Islam Portal
www.quran.com
www.answering-christianity.com
www.islamfortoday.com
www.islamicity.com
www.al-islam.org
www.muxlim.com
www.topmuslimsites.com
www.salat-time.com
www.talkislamic.com
www.understanding-islam.com

Muslim - Christian Discussion:

Search Christian Muslim Dialogue in Dubai on YouTube.com
<http://cmcu.georgetown.edu/>
(Prince Alwaleed Center)
www.peace-catalyst.net
www.acommonword.com

Testimonies:

www.morethandreams.tv
www.muslimjourneytohope.com

The Messiah for Muslims:

www.isaalmasih.net
www.kalimatullah.com
www.the-good-way.com
www.fatherzakaria.net
www.injil.org

People Groups / Mission

www.joshuaproject.net
www.missionfrontiers.org
www.lausanne.org

Other Sites:

<http://www.iraqprayer.org>
(Prayer for Iraq)
www.cryoutnow.org
www.pray-ap.info
(Prayer for Middle East)
www.memritv.org
(News from the Middle East)
www.barnabasfund.org
(Persecuted believers)
www.oxfordislamicstudies.com
(About Islam)

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

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