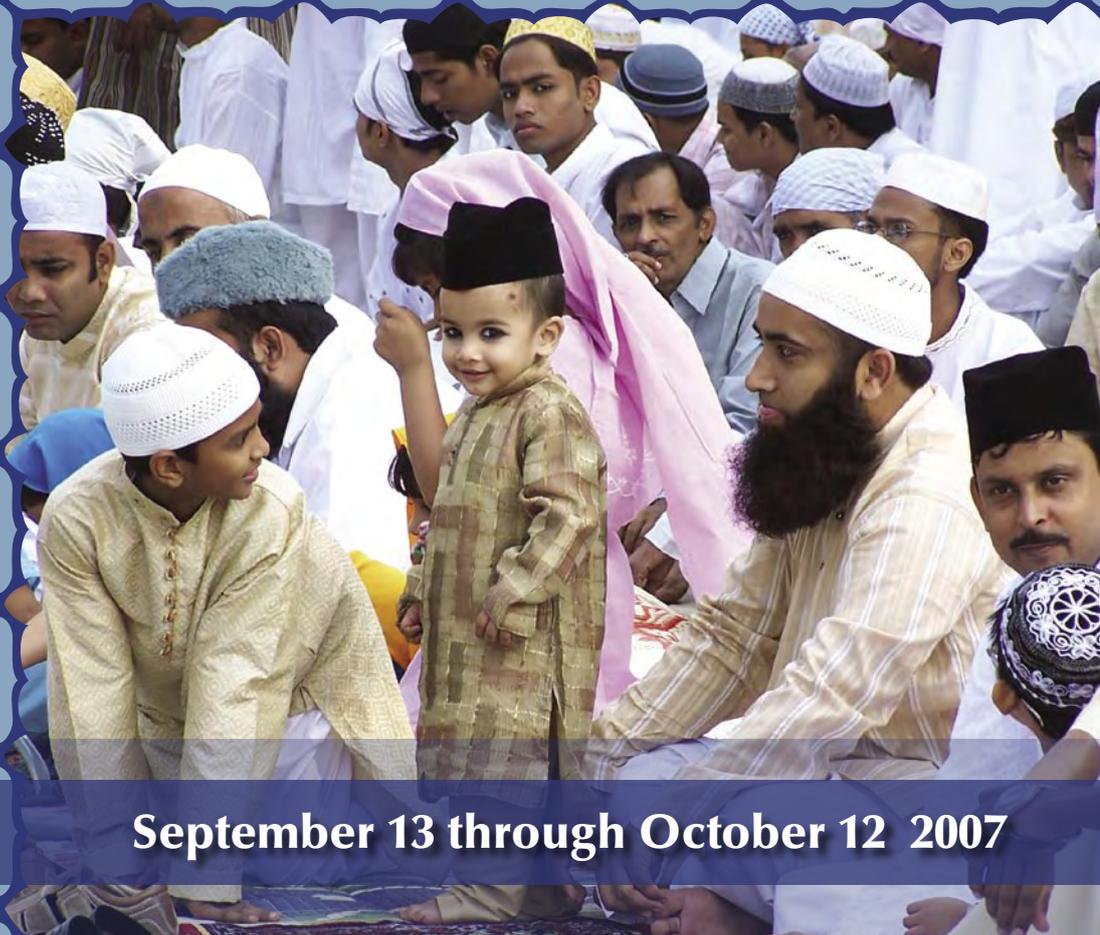


30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World



September 13 through October 12 2007

Inside Front Cover

Important:

It is best to view this document
in a “spreads mode” to see the
facing pages together.



Introduction

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This call to prayer for Muslims originally came during a meeting of several Christian leaders in the Middle East in 1992. These men and women strongly sensed God's desire to call as many Christians as possible to pray for the Muslim world. The prayer movement was planned to coincide with the Islamic month of Ramadan. The dates for Ramadan are established according to the Islamic lunar calendar. In 2007, Ramadan begins approximately on September 13th and ends on October 12th, although this may vary from country to country. The fasting period begins and ends with the sighting of the crescent moon. Because of the changing nature of the Islamic year the 2007 booklet is actually our 16th edition (There have been 16 Islamic lunar years since the beginning of "30 Days" in March 1993. This is the year 1428 of the Islamic lunar calendar).

Praying during the month of Ramadan does not mean that we conform ourselves to the Muslim practices of fasting and prayer. Rather it was originally intended that "30 Days" should be during the month of Ramadan for at least two reasons: (1) as a means for Christians to identify themselves with Muslims during a fixed period

of the year, (2) to call upon God's sovereign intervention in the lives of Muslims during a time of the year when they are particularly religious.

While being opposed to Islam "30 Days" emphasizes God's love for Muslims. The movement has always tried to cultivate a spirit of humility, love, respect and service toward Muslims.

The goal of this prayer guide is to inspire and guide each reader as he or she intercedes for the Muslim world. It is far from being completely informative about the Muslim world. However, each article will give you some ideas about the needs of Muslims. We encourage you to seek further information and so gain a greater understanding of the Islamic world and God's activities among Muslims (our list of recommended web sites might be a good place to start).

Again this year we have included a number of testimonies in the prayer booklet to encourage your faith as you pray. God is able to reach Muslims. He wants many of them to come to know Him.

The Editors

See the following web site for more information on the children prayer calendar: <http://www.30-days.net>
A special youth multimedia "30 Days" site can be found at <http://www.30daysfire.net>

Why Pray for Muslims?

The photo on this page is precious. Anyone looking at this photo is actually very privileged to witness a very personal moment in the life of several people. The editors of "30 Days" cannot express deeply enough how strongly we feel about this. There is an evident sincerity and real humanity in the photo (as far as the eye can see). This photo shows a moment during Islamic prayer when it is possible for Muslims to make personal requests (after their more formal prayers). By the time these men had finished praying that day they were in tears. They obviously needed and were asking for help. The believer who took the photo does not know what they were requesting at the end of their prayers. However one would have difficulty imagining that their request could have been evil or wrong. It seems to have been a truly human cry for help. May their most profound needs be met.

The Risen one, the Messiah Jesus, has the solution for needs of the men in the photo. But the Messiah wants to do much more for them. He wants to bring them into His kingdom.

The Gospel which has come to us as Christians is about a Great King and His Kingdom. It is Good News about God reclaiming his rightful place in His creation. It is the Good News about a King who has overcome and completely defeated, sin, death and the devil. This same Gospel is a call to

obedience to the true Lord of the world.

We, as Christians, have often come to think that the Gospel is uniquely about our personal needs, wants and desires. Personal peace and fulfilment seem like the goal of the Christian life for many. While God is concerned about these things His Gospel is actually much more profound. God has actually started a new creation through Christ Jesus. He is rescuing and recreating our world. God is calling all people to participate in His new world which began on Easter Sunday. The Gospel calls us to enter into the life of the world to come. There shall be a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (Isaiah 65:17 and 2 Peter 3:13). The zeal of the Lord will accomplish it (Isaiah 9:7).

Jesus has suffered for us. What are we willing to do for our King? What are we willing to do in order for His kingdom to come and for His will to be done on earth?

The "30 Days" movement is based on the idea that God

***"Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven."***



***Jesus has suffered for us.
What are we willing
to do for our King?***

desires to bring multitudes of Muslims into his kingdom. We believe that He has asked us to pray in order that this could take place. The "30 Days" project is simply part of fulfilling Jesus' command to make disciples of all the nations (Mt 28:18-20). He also told us to ask for labourers to be sent into the harvest (Mt. 9:37-38). Our Lord's desire is that all men would come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

God has promised that all the nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed (Genesis 12:1-3). Jesus is the full-est manifestation of that seed. Are we going to participate with Him in blessing the nations?

Getting Started

Ideas and suggestions for individual and group prayer

It is possible that God will ask many people to fast for prolonged periods during the 30 Days.

The leadership of “30 Days” has been challenged to persevere, to be diligent and to be alert in prayer like never before. We are convinced that God wants to do wonders in the Muslim World. Let us see God move mightily in the Muslim World! Let us push off all laziness and lack of zeal and ask for God’s will to be done among Muslims. Let us honour our King!

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

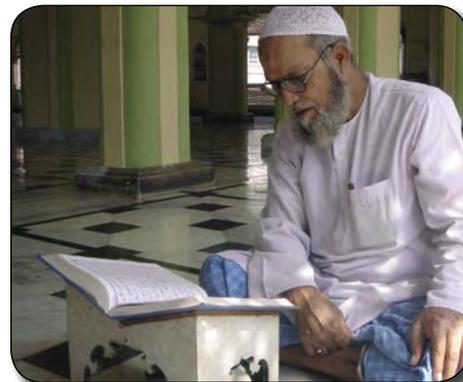
You could organise some weekly or twice weekly meetings over the 30 day period with your church, your youth group, leaders’ meetings, home Bible studies, cell groups, children’s groups — in fact, any occasion when your Christian friends and associates meet together. Take a social occasion and turn it into a prayer event as well. Have others join with

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

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

Additional materials

We strongly encourage you to consult the web site <http://www.30daysfire.net> to find videos, photos and music from the various countries, cities and people groups cited in this booklet.



The Muslim “Night of Power” is a strategic night of prayer which commemorates the moment when Mohammed supposedly first received the revelation of the Qur’an (it starts on the 26th day in the evening. We are actually encouraging people to pray on the 25th day in advance of the “Night of Power”). Consider setting aside this time for in depth prayer with your church or mission group. Some Muslims spend many hours at the mosque making requests to God during the Night of Power. Let us believe God for an outpouring of His Spirit on our Muslim neighbours worldwide.

Understanding Islam ...

Preparation for Prayer

The word “Islam” simply means submission to God, and a Muslim is one who follows the laws and practices of Islam. Muslims say Islam has its origins with Adam. But Mohammed is revered by Muslims as the greatest prophet of the religion. Mohammed is revered among Muslims. His name actually means “The Praised One”.

The Life of Mohammed:

Mohammed was born AD570 in Mecca, a city in Saudi Arabia. He was a member of the Hashim clan of the powerful Quraysh tribe. His father died before he was born, and his mother, Amina, died when he was only six. Mohammed went to live with his grandfather, who was the guardian of the Kaaba which is the most sacred building in Mecca. Two years later his grandfather also died, so from the age of eight Mohammed was brought up by his uncle, Abu Talib, who was a merchant working along the great camel trade routes.

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

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



◀ *The Hira cave on the mountain Jabal Al Nur near Mecca where Mohammed supposedly received his first revelations.*

rely on traditions called “Hadiths” about the life, teachings and practices of Mohammed. These traditions influence the daily life of most Muslims to one degree or another.

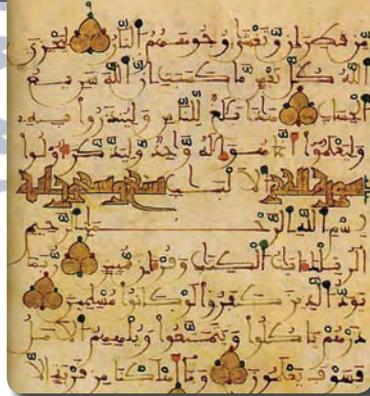
During his life, Mohammed met many people who called themselves Christians, though it is debatable how many of them were really in the faith. Mohammed also learned many aspects of Jewish religious customs from the various Jewish clans which were living in the region. Eventually he became the political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

Mohammed proclaimed that the Qur’an was the final and superior revelation from the One Supreme God. He banned the worship of idols, and taught that a Muslim’s life must be wholly committed to Allah, with ritual washing before the five daily times of prayer facing Mecca. Friday became the appointed day for corporate worship.

Before the end of Mohammed’s life Islam had become the religion for much of Arabia. Within one hundred years of Mohammed’s death Islam had spread as far as Spain in the West and to India in the East. Later it spread through out Southern and South East Asia. Mohammed died of natural causes in AD632 in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

**The name “Mohammed”
means “The Praised One.”**

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



Mohammed's Family:

Mohammed was employed in his early years by Khadija, a wealthy widow, to manage her caravan trade. He became known as “Al-Amin”, the trustworthy one. At the age of 25 he married Khadija. Their marriage produced three children including two sons who died in infancy and one daughter named Fatima who was very highly treasured by her parents. The three daughters of Khadija’s deceased sister also lived in the household. Shortly after Mohammed moved to Medina, Mohammed’s cousin Ali married his daughter Fatima. Ali would eventually become the fourth Caliph (successor of Mohammed). Ali and his son Hussein have a significant place in Shi’a (Shiite) Islam. The present rulers of Morocco and Jordan are from the Banu Hashim, or “clan of Hashim” (descendants of the great grandfather of Mohammed).

Khadija and Mohammed were married for 25 years. Later, after Khadija died, Mohammed practised polygamy. According to some sources Mohammed eventually married 15 women but only consummated his marriages with 13 of them (in addition there were some concubines). Apparently Mohammed never had more than nine wives at any one time. Mohammed said that God permitted him to have numerous wives but his followers were only allowed to have a maximum of four (depending on their ability to provide for their wives). While these numbers often sound shocking to modern Christians, Muslims are quick to point out that David, Solomon and many other famous biblical figures had many wives.

Islamic beliefs :

*One God, the Creator of all things
Angels and evil spirits
Prophets (Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, Mohammed)
Mohammed was the last and greatest of the prophets.
Holy books (Injil, Zabur, Qur’an)
The Day of Judgement
The Bible has been corrupted and modified.
Jesus was conceived miraculously in the womb of Mary.
Jesus is only a prophet.
Jesus was actually a good Muslim.
Jesus taught an earlier form of Islam.
Jesus did not die on the cross.
Jesus went to heaven.
Jesus will come again, marry, have children and die.
Jesus will be judged like all men at the Last Judgement.
Jesus is the Messiah and the Word of God in Islam.
(Yet Muslims do not really understand either concept).*

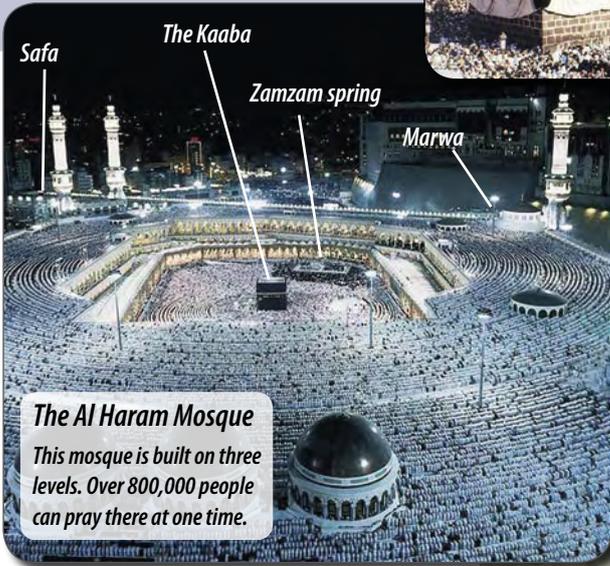
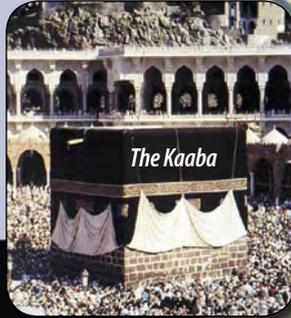
Muslims do not believe :

*That it is possible to know God as in John 17:3.
(They only think that they can know about Him).
God is a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Jesus is the Son of God.*



The famous Black Stone is surrounded by a silver casing. It is mounted on the lower Southeast corner of the Kaaba.

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



The Al Haram Mosque
This mosque is built on three levels. Over 800,000 people can pray there at one time.

Arab and Islamic traditions ...

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

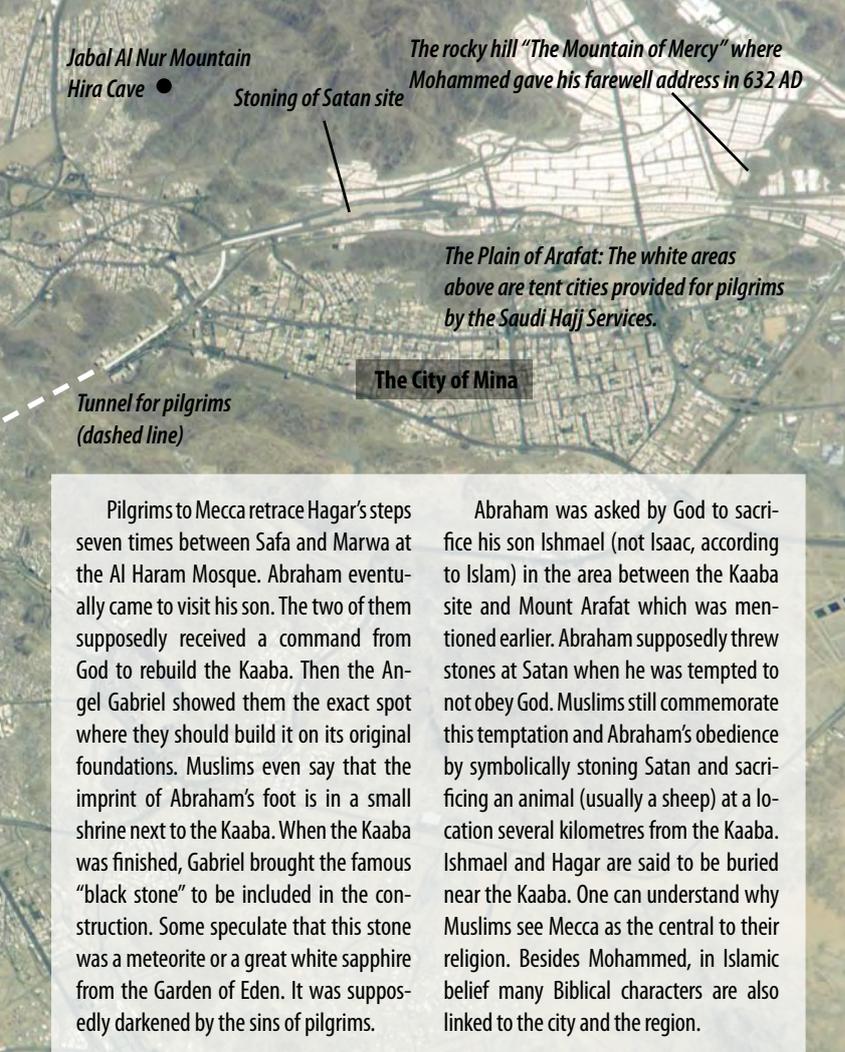
Muslims say that the original Paradise was in the heavens. According to Arabian traditions, when Adam and Eve were cast out of Paradise they fell to different parts of the earth; Adam on the island of Sri Lanka, and Eve in Arabia, near what came to be the port of Jeddah. Adam and Eve were separated from each other for 200 years. Finally God permitted them to come together again at Arafat, near the actual city of Mecca which was previously called "Becca or Bakkah" meaning "narrow valley". According to Muslims Adam supposedly built the small cubic building in Mecca called the Kaaba as a place of worship. The original Kaaba was eventually destroyed in the flood of Noah. Adam is said to have died and been

*Al Haram Mosque
(The location of the Kaabah)*

The City of Mecca

buried in Mecca. Eve was supposedly buried at the place which still bears the name, Jiddah (Jeddah), meaning maternal ancestor in Arabic.

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



The Roots of Islam ...

Christians often ask questions like the following: “Do Muslims have a true knowledge of God? Is Allah the same God whom we worship?” Various answers have been given to these questions. Many have insisted that Allah is a false god, and is quite different from the God and Father of Jesus Christ.¹ Others have not been so ready to take this position. It is certain that the origins of Islam are more complex than is commonly understood.

Islam has at least seven different and related origins:

(1) **True and false Arabic spiritual beliefs** which arose over thousands of years: Many of these beliefs came from the ancestors of the Arabs. This includes Joktan who lived before Abraham (See Gen. 10:26-29), as well as Ishmael and Abraham’s six other sons besides Isaac (Gen. 25:1-5). Some Arabs called “hanifs” followed these monotheistic traditions more closely than the general Arab population.

(2) **Various Jewish influences:** Significant numbers of Jews were living in Arabia at the time of Mohammed. It can be easily seen from the Qur’an, Jewish writings and Mohammed’s life that Jewish beliefs, practices, attitudes and actions influenced Mohammed both in positive and negative ways.

(3) **Various Christian influences:** Some Christians were living in Mecca and Medina during the life of Mohammed. It appears that many were not very holy or orthodox in their beliefs and / or practise. There may have been a number of true Christian believers present as well. One supposed Christian, related to Mohammed’s wife Khadija, even encouraged Mohammed as a prophet. *(see the rest of this article on page 8)*

Pilgrims to Mecca retrace Hagar’s steps seven times between Safa and Marwa at the Al Haram Mosque. Abraham eventually came to visit his son. The two of them supposedly received a command from God to rebuild the Kaaba. Then the Angel Gabriel showed them the exact spot where they should build it on its original foundations. Muslims even say that the imprint of Abraham’s foot is in a small shrine next to the Kaaba. When the Kaaba was finished, Gabriel brought the famous “black stone” to be included in the construction. Some speculate that this stone was a meteorite or a great white sapphire from the Garden of Eden. It was supposedly darkened by the sins of pilgrims.

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

Sept. 12, 2007



The first evening of Ramadan

In the book of Genesis we read, "There was evening and morning, the first day." Ramadan begins in a similar way.

Around the world Muslims will be looking to the heavens this evening. They will be interested in knowing if they will be able to see the crescent moon. If it is visible this will be the signal for the beginning of the month of Ramadan. (In most countries religious authorities will make a proclamation concerning the beginning of Ramadan). No fasting will take place till tomorrow morning. Muslims will rise up early to eat their breakfast before the day begins. Afterwards they will not have anything else to eat or drink till nightfall. This will be their daily experience during the next 29 - 30 days.

Important: The moon has never been an object of worship in Islam. No Muslim in the last 1,400 years has ever encouraged anyone to worship the moon. In fact the moon was not a symbol of Islam until the rise of the Ottomans about 700 - 800 years after Mohammed. In Islam the moon is simply used to determine the dates of the Islamic calendar. See our site: <http://www.30-days.net>

Arabic text of John 1:1

فِي الْبَدَءِ كَانَتِ الْكَلِمَةُ،
وَالْكَلِمَةُ كَانَتْ مَعَ اللَّهِ. وَكَانَ
الْكَلِمَةُ هُوَ اللَّهُ

Allah

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

(“Roots of Islam” continued from p. 7)

(4) Influences from spirits and paganism

(5) Influences from Persian Zoroastrianism

(6) Influences which come from the character, personality, and moral choices of Mohammed

(7) Moral and cultural choices of the early Arabian Muslims after the death of Mohammed

In addition Islam as we know it today has also been shaped by 1,400 years of history and a vast number of peoples and cultures on several continents.

“Based on this set of origins it can be said that Muslims (1) know much about God which is correct, (2) there is much that they do not understand about God, and (3) there are also many errors and misconceptions in their minds concerning the true God.”²

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

“It is as though a person in the dim light of dawn should look at a distant building. He sees the building, he perceives there is only one building, but he is unable to tell whether it is a residence or a factory. He is sure it only has one story, and is built of brick. But when he comes nearer, and views the building in the clear light of day, he realises that it is built of stone, not of brick, and instead of having only one story it has three. He now knows the building as it really is. When a Muslim looks toward God in the imperfect light of Qur’anic revelation and his own reason, he sees God’s power and will, but does not see God’s love. He sees God’s unity, but he does not see that he is Trinity in unity. Such true knowledge of God is possible only when one sees God in his Son Jesus Christ.”³

Quotes 1, 2 and 3 were taken from : A Christian’s Response to Islam by William M. Miller, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. 1976, (STL reprint 1986, pages 75-76)pages

Testimony from North Africa and France

An Algerian couple now living in France were born and raised in Kabylia in Northern Algeria. When the wife, named Djouzia, was eight years old she became furiously angry when she was told by other Muslims that God only speaks Arabic and that she must communicate with Him in that language only. (Many Kabyles, who have their own Berber language, hate Arabic because it reminds them of centuries of oppression). One evening as a little girl Djouzia went outside and looked up at the sky and saw the face of a man smiling down at her. She was so excited that she ran to get her mother and tried

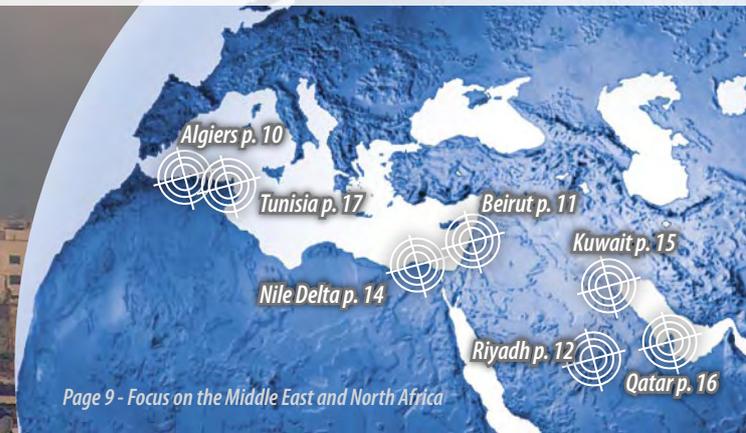
to show her the face, however, her mother did not see anything. This happened for three consecutive nights, until her mother forbade Djouzia to go out for fear that her daughter was losing her mind. But that gentle smiling face never left Djouzia's mind.

Years later, after her marriage, Djouzia asked her father-in-law, an imam (an Islamic religious leader), whether that face could have been Mohammed. He replied: "No, that could not have been Mohammed. It was surely Jesus because the Qur'an clearly states that Jesus is the only prophet who never sinned. And therefore, it could not have been Mohammed." Djouzia then asked how she could contact Jesus and her father-in-law replied: "That

would be wonderful, unfortunately, Islamic law forbids us to do that." This was extremely frustrating for Djouzia!

Several years later when both Djouzia and her husband arrived in France, they met some Kabyle Christians. Djouzia's husband was a practising Islamic fundamentalist who wanted to overthrow the Algerian government in order to establish an Islamic Republic. He was not interested in Djouzia's search for the "gentle face." However he did not want her to go to Christian meetings alone and without his protection and supervision. Therefore he accompanied Djouzia and it was during those meetings that they both believed in the Messiah.

The minaret of the Hassan II Mosque on the waterfront of the Atlantic Ocean in Casablanca, Morocco is over 200 metres high.



Call to Prayer in Algiers

The following story is based on real events.

Rachid loved to look out across the white buildings of Central Algiers. They reflected the dazzling sunlight back toward him perched on his fourth floor balcony near the Main Post Office. He strained to see a ship arriving from the Mediterranean Sea just beyond the harbour. To the south he could see the towering national Martyrs monument and to the north he could see parts of the casbah (old city). Traffic was jammed near the Central Post Office. Car horns got no rest as impatient drivers sought to escape the blocked street. Just before 1pm the muezzin (prayer crier) began his call to prayer over the local mosque's loud speakers. Soon dozens of mosques were echoing the same refrain in Arabic throughout the city.

Islam explained

* You can listen to the call to prayer in Arabic on our web site (<http://www.30daysfire.net>) Although the word "Allah" is used by Muslims and Arab Christians alike when referring to the God of Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus; there are profound differences between Muslim and Christian ideas concerning the nature and character of God. (See our "Understanding Islam" articles on pages 4-8).

The Muslim call to prayer :

"Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar (Allah is the greatest)*

I bear witness that there is no god except Allah (x2)

I bear witness that Mohammed

is the Messenger of God (x2)

Come to prayer (x2)

Come to prosperity (x2)

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar

There is no god except Allah"

Several men in the street below started to move toward the local mosque. Rachid was not in the habit of participating in the prayers, even on Fridays. However, the recent death of his uncle had made him start reflecting about his religious duties. He also needed to get married. His late evening party activities with his young friends in neighbouring Tipaza were probably going to have to end. Rachid knew that the seriousness of life would soon overtake him.

All over the world Muslims are called to prayer five times per day. In many cities it is possible to hear the call from dozens of local mosques at once. In the early morning the phrase "Prayer is better than sleep" is added to the call.



See more photos of Algiers on the web page:
<http://www.dziria.com/photos.htm>

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Over two million people live in greater Algiers. There are possibly several hundred Christians from a Muslim background among the Arabs and Berbers who make up the population. Several thousand new believers live among the Berbers of Kabylia a few hours to the east of Algiers. A 2006 national law essentially forbids any Christian evangelism efforts. Believers need wisdom and courage to deal with this new situation (Acts 5:27-29).
- ▶ Many of Algiers' young people are torn between western youth culture and their traditional roots. Pray that they will find the Father. (Luke 15:11-32).
- ▶ Pray that house groups will flourish in the city and suburbs of Algiers (Acts 20:20, 21:8, 28:30, Romans 16:5).

Preparing for Prayer in Beirut

Imagine a young Muslim man looking down on his shattered neighbourhood from his apartment in Southern Beirut. The Israelis certainly left their mark on the city. The young man's mind goes back to the air raid sirens and the falling bombs. Life has not been easy since the shop where

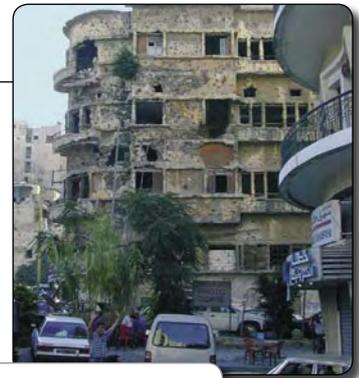
he worked was obliterated by a bomb. Not having regular work, he now does temporary work for friends and family. Even the thought of his present financial situation irritates him. He is frustrated, lacking peace of mind.

Outside, the muezzin finishes his call to prayer over the loud speaker. Instead of going to the mosque, the young man decides to pray in his apartment on his own prayer rug. But first he does the ritual cleansing. In his cramped bathroom he begins by declaring his intention to cleanse himself and pray by saying "Bismillah" (In the name of God). He then washes his hands up to the wrists, three times. He rinses out his mouth with water three times and cleans his nostrils by sniffing water into them, three times. He proceeds to wash his whole face three times with both hands from the top of his forehead to the bottom of his chin and from ear to ear. Finally he washes his arms three times up to the elbow and ends by washing his ears and both feet.

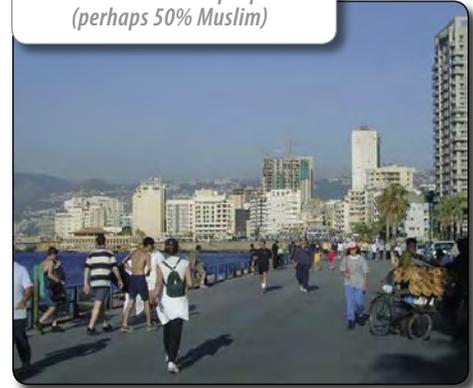
Then the young man remembers the previous night. He was near the bars of Gemmayzeh, an eastern Beirut "Christian" neighbourhood. So many pretty young women were there. The young Muslim had really desired to enter a bar himself, however he had no money for much of anything these days. His anger rose as he thought of the conflict with Israel and conflicts with Christians. No job, little money. No peace. Then he unrolled his prayer rug.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Beirut's Muslims cleanse themselves outwardly for prayer but many find that injustices, hurts, and temptations fill their minds. Finding real peace with God could liberate them to forgive and love others. Pray that they will discover the God who truly forgives and cleanses (Mt 18:23-35, Romans 5:1-5).*
- ▶ *Pray that the church in Lebanon will be "salt and light" in the city, and that God will be glorified in all that is said and done. There are high numbers of non-practising "cultural" Christians among the Lebanese (Mt. 5:14-16; Romans 12:1-2).*
- ▶ *God has his own purposes and plans for Israel, yet for Lebanon's Muslims (and often Christians) it is very hard to understand how to love or appreciate Israel. Pray that the God who loves both Arabs and Jews through the cross will be fully revealed (Eph. 3:6).*



Beirut 1.5 million people
(perhaps 50% Muslim)



Pray for regional needs as well ...

- ▶ *Pray for Iraqi orphans. Thousands have lost their parents during the last four and a half years of armed struggle in Iraq. Let us not be hardened to the pain on others. God remembers the widows and orphans (James 1:27).*

Praying in Riyadh the Capital of Saudi Arabia

As the sun sinks behind the beige clusters of low-rise buildings, muezzin call out across the city in advance of maghreb, the fourth prayer of the day. At the city's largest mosque, Al Rajhi, the parking lot fills with SUVs and new sedans. Prior to praying, Mutawa washes and then walks barefoot across the plush oriental carpet of the interior, which could easily fit a few thousand faithful. Chandeliers hang over the men - six rows deep of young and old.¹ (Imagine the scene):

All the men are lined up shoulder to shoulder facing in the direction of Mecca. With each one lifting his hands beside his ears their prayers begin:

*"Allahu Akbar (Allah is the greatest)
 Praise and glory be to you O Allah
 Blessed be Your Name,
 Exalted be Your Majesty and Glory.
 There is no god but You.
 I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the cursed one."*

Then the group recites quietly part of the Qur'an named Al-Fatiha (1st chapter called a "sura"):

"In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. You alone do we worship, and You alone do we ask for help. Show us the

straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, those whose portion is not wrath, and who do not go astray."

Each man continues to concentrate on his prayers as they all recite quietly another part of the Qur'an called the Sura Al-Ikhlās (Chapter 112) followed by: *"Allahu Akbar"*

The whole group then bows partially and repeats three times: *"Glory be to my Lord who is the most great."*

Afterwards with their bodies erect they say, *"God hears the one who praises him. Oh, our Lord, all the praise be to You."*

Then bowing with their foreheads to the floor all repeat three times: *"Allahu Akbar, Oh God, Glory be to You, the Most High."*

Finally all say in unison *"Allahu Akbar"* and raise their upper bodies while remaining on their knees. Prostrating themselves a second time they repeat three times, *"Praised be my Lord, Most High" and "Allahu Akbar"*.

This series of actions and repeated phrases is called a "raka'ah" (or a prayer round). In the course of the five obligatory daily prayer times Muslims usually complete 17 prayer rounds (2-4 for each prayer time). In 50 years a Muslim who prays regularly will repeat the entire prayer ritual at least 300,000 times.



Islamic prayer consists of a demonstration of respect for God. For Muslims the purpose of prayer is to formally remember Allah and show one's devotion to Him. Muslims believe that Islamic prayer purifies their hearts and helps them stand firm against moral wrongdoing. While Muslims are often sincerely seeking to honour God through their prayers, they are not actually seeking to meet God in the Christian sense. The communication is only one way. No Muslim is ever expecting God to speak back to him. This is a profound difference between Islamic and Christian prayer.

Formalised prayers make up a significant part of the Psalms in the Bible (See especially Ps. 119 and 136). Christian hymns and worship choruses often contain many repeated phrases as well. While formalised prayers can sometimes be very helpful in worship, Jesus strongly discouraged believers against using meaningless repetition and many words in order to be heard (Mt 6:6-7). Muslims equally



Riyadh is a very modern city. The Saudi Ministry of the Interior is in the photo on the left.

underline the importance of having good intentions in prayer. However, even though both Muslims and Christians speak of needing forgiveness for sins, only Christians affirm that God has provided an everlasting sacrifice for sins through Jesus, the Messiah. Praying in Jesus' name and based on his sacrifice is a distinct Christian privilege which Muslims need to discover. Jesus is truly "the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace" (cited above). May Muslims discover Him.

¹ 'Saudi Jeans' And Calls To Prayer In Riyadh, Modernity Bumps Against Religious Tradition by Michael B. Farrell Dec. 10, 2006 (Christian Science Monitor).

Photo above right comes from the site: Intérêt-général.info

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for the city of Riyadh. Although not all of Riyadh's 4.5 million inhabitants actually pray five times per day, a high percentage are regular in their prayers. May they all have an increased hunger to know the living God and to be in real communication with Him (Jeremiah 31:34 and John 17:3).*
- ▶ *A significant number of foreign Christians also live in Riyadh. Many of them are servants and workers, often from Asian backgrounds. Pray that they will be able to be witnesses for Christ like Joseph and Daniel who served in countries far from their homes (Genesis 39-41 and Daniel 1-2).*
- ▶ *Many Muslims are particularly sensitive to dreams. Pray for revelations of the risen Messiah.*



The Islamic confession of faith is on the Saudi flag.

Islam explained

Muslims believe in Allah, who is unique, all powerful, gracious and merciful to all Muslims. The Islamic faith is lived out according to five "pillars" that must be adhered to if one is to hope for salvation.

The Five Pillars are:

1. *Reciting the Creed (shahada) "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet".*
2. *Prayer (salat) - At five set times a day.*
3. *Alms giving (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.*

While a Muslim may observe each of these pillars, there is still no guarantee of forgiveness. There is no atonement for sin in Islam and Muslims generally believe that their religious acts can purify them from sin.

The Nile Delta Region

The Nile Delta is a fertile farming region in Egypt that extends from the northern edge of Cairo to the Mediterranean Sea. The three major cities marking the limits of the Nile Delta region, but not included in it, are Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said.

As one of most densely populated areas of Egypt and the Middle East, the Delta is home to approximately 32 million people living in several large towns and thousands of villages. The region includes twenty cities, each with populations of between 90,000 and 500,000 people. The local population increases by about 500,000 people each year. Covering 22,000 square kilometres this small area is home to 12% of the world's native Arabic speakers. (The total population of the 22 countries of the Arab world is 323 million but only 272 million have Arabic as their native tongue.)



The people of the Delta range from the poor, rural and uneducated to the wealthy and urban who have advanced degrees from western universities. There are also several universities in the Delta, but the overall literacy rate is low. Despite urbanisation, most Egyptians in the Delta are farmers. Egypt is one of the world's top rice producers, almost all of which is grown in the Delta.

The overwhelming majority of the people in the Delta are Muslims. However there is a significant minority (about 3%) who identify with the Coptic Church, which traces its origins to Mark the Evangelist, the writer of the Gospel. A tiny minority of Christians in the Delta are Evangelicals.

For more info see: <http://www.peopleteams.org/niledelta>

Also pray for ...

- ▶ Pray for the numerous Egyptians living in the UK. Many of them are Christians. Pray for them to be strengthened in their faith and to be effective witnesses to Muslim Egyptians and others. It is amazing to think that people from Egypt believed in the Messiah even on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for boldness for all believers (both current and new believers) resulting in the Gospel being shared thousands of times daily.
- ▶ The Delta is filled with a spiritual atmosphere of fear, confusion, fanaticism, and magic. Pray that people will get to know the real Jesus, despite any errors they may have been taught.
- ▶ Pray for entire families to come to Christ so that they will devote their homes, as well as their hearts, to the Lord.
- ▶ Pray for people to listen to and watch the Christian radio and satellite broadcasts which can be heard in the Delta.



Kuwait is a very small nation compared to the surrounding countries of Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Kuwait's oil wealth has attracted people from many parts of the globe and now half of its 2.5 million people are non-nationals! The earliest inhabitants of Kuwait were originally from the Al Aniza Bedouin tribes who migrated from central Arabia to escape drought in the early 1700s. Attacks from the Wahhabi tribes in the interior caused them to seek protection from Great Britain. Kuwait eventually became a British protectorate in 1897 and gained its independence again in 1961.

A hundred years ago, Christians came to Kuwait and helped the people by providing medical services. Positive Christian contributions to Kuwaiti society continue today. In addition, the Kuwaiti government not only allows Christianity to flourish, but also provides meeting facilities for Christian worship. In any given week, various congregations amounting to 40,000 people use the facilities to hold church services and other meetings. Christians have freedom to worship, as long as it is not outside of the church walls.

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *The Kuwaitis are very concerned about what is happening across their border in neighbouring Iraq. Pray for wisdom and courage for the Kuwaiti authorities concerning the situation.*

Kuwait

Kuwait Statistics

- *85% Muslim (of which Sunni are 70%, Shi'a 30%)*
- *15% Christian, Hindu and Parsi (The Parsi faith is Zoroastrianism)*

Many Christians in Kuwait believe that the Lord has called them to be a lighthouse to the surrounding nations. Some pastors say the Lord reminds them to be a Bethlehem – where salvation came to the world. One pastor in Kuwait writes, "We have seen that during the last nine years, the Lord started a deep process to fulfill the destiny of this country through gathering the pastors from many congregations. The pastors are not just concerned with their local congregation, but instead are looking for the godly transformation and blessing of Kuwait."



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Many Kuwaitis are discovering Christ mainly through watching satellite television. Local Christians need to be able to disciple, train and equip those who are discovering Christ. Pray that they will become imitators of God, as dearly loved children (Ephesians 5:1).*
- ▶ *Pray that the Lord will continue to build among believers a mentality which is centred on the Kingdom of God rather than on the activities of individual churches (Mt 6:33a).*
- ▶ *Pray for Christlike leadership of the churches (1 Timothy 3:1-13).*
- ▶ *Pray that Kuwaiti believers will exhibit godly values through their business activities with non-believers. (Colossians 4:5).*
- ▶ *Pray for committed godly Christian women to minister to Kuwaiti and non Kuwaiti women (Titus 2:3-5).*
- ▶ *Pray that God will reveal himself to the younger generations of Christians and non-Christians. Some have opportunities to meet committed Christians through travel and extensive studies abroad (perhaps a bit like the man in Acts 8:26-40).*
- ▶ *Thank God for the authorisations which have been granted to build some church buildings.*
- ▶ *In 1951 many Christian bookshops were shut down. It would be helpful if opening Christian bookstores would again be permitted.*



Shifting Sands in Qatar

We can give thanks for much that has happened in Qatar since we last prayed for it through “30 Days” in 1998. For example, in May 2005 representatives of several Christian churches signed an agreement with the Government of Qatar for a 50-year lease on a large piece of property in the capital of Doha, on which they will build six churches at their own expense. Also the new constitution explicitly provides for freedom of worship, association and public assembly, though there are some restrictions.

Qatar may be best known around the world today as the home of Al-Jazeera, the controversial news channel which broadcasts in the Arabic-language on satellite television. For centuries Qatar was simply a peninsula of sand jutting into the Gulf of Arabia where the local Arabs built ships and sustained themselves through pearl hunting, fishing and weaving. Oil was discovered in Qatar in 1939, and presently oil and gas account for more than 55% of GDP, roughly 85% of export earnings, and 70% of government revenues. Qatar has the potential to supply up to one third of the world’s natural gas resources. All this has transformed Qatar into one of the world’s richest countries.

Qatar Statistics

- 90+ % Muslim
- Population about 900,000 people (possibly 200,000 are citizens)

Qatar embraced Islam very early in the 7th century. Today Qatar is highly influenced on a political and social level by the interpretations of Islamic law arising from the Wahhabi Islamic reform movement. Wahhabis believe the role of their movement is to restore Islam from what they perceive to be innovations, superstitions, deviances, heresies and idolatries. It is a Sunni movement very opposed to Shi’a tendencies.

Non-Muslims may not proselytise, and the government regulates the publication, importation, and distribution of non-Islamic religious books and materials. No foreign missionary groups can operate openly in the country. The number of Christians from all denominations and levels of commitment in the country is estimated at 8-9%, primarily foreign workers.

Also pray for ...

- ▶ Pray for good and effective journalism through the Al Jazeera TV news channel. The Arab world is heavily influenced by this news channel.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ The Al-Thani family has ruled Qatar since the mid-1800s. Pray that the leading members of the family would know how to wisely lead the nation. The Emir has three wives and 15 children.
- ▶ Pray for the church building project in the capital of Doha. There have been delays and some Muslim media have complained about the project.
- ▶ Pray that nominalism, immoral and unspiritual behaviour would be greatly reduced in the Christian community. It is the only way that believers may gain respect from the Muslims and bring real godly change to the nation.
- ▶ Some Qataris and foreign workers are discovering Christ through the media and contacts with local believers. Pray for those who are discovering the risen Messiah as they grow in their faith.



Tunisia's Muslims

Tunisia makes its mark by staying out of the international news. Nestled between Algeria and Libya on the southern Mediterranean coast, security and unity are the hallmarks of this country of 10 million. Having had only two presidents in the past 50 years, Tunisia is marked by political stability and prosperity. It is also a country of mixed cultural values. Both Islam and secularism shape the minds and values of most Tunisians. Thanks to a strong and effective police force, peace and security reign, and millions of European tourists are welcomed each year. Islamists from neighbouring countries have made recent efforts to cause disruptions but have thankfully been thwarted.

It is relatively easy to talk with Tunisians about the Gospel, though many do not show interest in spiritual things. Some who have experienced healing and deliverance in the name of Christ acknowledge that Jesus has changed their lives, yet still do not commit their lives to him. Others profess

faith and then do not commit themselves. There are shining examples of committed individual disciples, but few truly indigenous house churches.

There is a small national church with a handful of recognised local leaders. The church consists mostly of well-educated people who are more westernised than most of the population. Most Tunisian believers live in the capital, Tunis (population 2 million). As of recent times a few believers are now living in least four cities which previously had little or no Christian presence. With so few believers, the role of media (especially Arabic satellite TV programmes) is still important in reaching vast parts of the country.

The fear of persecution rather than actual persecution is a major issue for most believers. Though direct persecution and arrests by the police are rare, many believers do fear being ostracised by their friends and families.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for unity and trust among local believers.*
- ▶ *Pray for healthy marriages and strong families. Some young adult believers sometimes have difficulty finding marriage partners.*
- ▶ *Pray for those who have experienced Christ in healings, dreams and deliverance to really commit their lives to him (Ephesians 5:11-20).*
- ▶ *Pray for effective discipleship of believers and 'near' believers (Mt. 28:20a). May the power of God and the truth of Christ to come to dominate and transform the lives of all believers (Colossians 1:28).*
- ▶ *Pray for more effective co-ordination and followup of media contacts (satellite, and radio broadcasts are done daily). Pray for God to work in the cities that have not had a resident witnesses for many years.*
- ▶ *Pray for wisdom for government leaders, especially in protecting the country from radical Islamists (Romans 13:1-5).*

Tunisia is an important destination for European tourists.





Testimony from Taiwan:

Ahlee, an Indonesia woman living in Taiwan was regularly attending some Christian worship services. Three years previously, she had gone back to Indonesia to visit her hometown. A neighbour encouraged her to obtain a special amulet from a sorcerer for her protection. As a result Ahlee still went to church and read her Indonesian Bible, but she grew very little in her faith. However, one day she met a former Buddhist in church. He explained to her how he had also had an amulet, but he eventually he threw it away when he realized that it was hindering his life with Christ. Afterwards his life was transformed. Ahlee followed his advice to throw away her amulet. She put her faith in Christ alone and found real life.

Two Testimonies from Xinxiang Province, China:

A Christian studying in Xinjiang in 2006 was housed with a local young man in a dormitory. His local roommate had just recently become a believer because he had met Jesus in a dream, however he did not understand the Bible. So the Christian became his mentor and teacher. Every day, they immersed themselves in the Truth. Then in 2007 the Christian went back to Xinjiang and he discovered that the man had already started a group of believers, however he was afraid that his Muslim family would find out about it and would kill him. Please pray for him!

A Christian met a Uyghur brother in Xinjiang. The Uyghur man said when he read Matthew 6:12 "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors," he gathered together his debtors and told them: "Since Jesus Christ forgives my debt, I will forgive all your debts too." Immediately all his debtors believed Jesus.

Testimony from Kyrgyzstan

A group of Christians was asked to pray for the sick at a Kyrgyz hospital. After some initial difficulties the group was allowed inside the gate. The administrator said, "I cannot allow you inside our hospital building, but I cannot pass up the opportunity that some of these people might be healed. Therefore many patients were brought out of the hospital and placed under large trees. Among them there was an old woman who attracted the group's attention. She pointed to a window on the 2nd floor and said, "That

is my room. One year ago I was laying in my bed and a man walked through the wall and came and stood by my bed. He said, "My name is Jesus. You don't know me now, but in one year, I will send my servant and he will tell you about me." The lady said, "Today is exactly one year ago and now you have told me about Jesus. But I am a Muslim. If I receive this Jesus, my only family left will turn against me." Someone in the group said to her, "But Jesus will give you eternal life." Finally the lady repented, turned to Christ in faith and was also healed.





The Dongxiang of China

The Dongxiang people are the fourth largest of China's ten Muslim peoples. Dongxiang literally means "eastern villages", hinting that the Dongxiang came from further west. In fact it is thought that they originally came from the Sarta people of Central Asia. Between the 12th and 13th century, Genghis Khan invaded Central Asia and captured the Muslim Sarta people - a term that once referred to Muslim traders in Central Asia. He brought them back to China and many intermarried with Mongol soldiers. Some of the Sarta became slaves to the Mongols and some were sent to Gansu province as settlers. They fought for the Mongols in war and farmed their land in peace time. The largest concentrations of the Dongxiang still live in rugged and dry mountains of Gansu province, others are found in Qinghai, Ningxia and Xinjiang provinces in north-western China, south of Mongolia and north-east of Tibet.

Over generations they also mixed with Han, Mongolian, Hui and Tibetan peoples. Due to their seclusion in the remote area of north-west China for several centuries, the Dongxiang people formed their own unwritten language which is related to the Mongol language. Even though they do not have a system of writing, they have rich oral traditions including legends, stories, folk songs, riddles and proverbs. Many of them also understand spoken Mandarin.

However, government statistics show that the Dongxiang are among the poorest and least literate of China's 55 ethnic minorities. Many of them have only had slightly over one year of schooling. Most Dongxiang children find it difficult to learn Chinese. Some international aid agencies have been spurred to act in collaboration with the Chinese government to begin solving this problem. A Dongxiang - Chinese dictionary was recently produced and is proving to be a great help.

The Dongxiang mainly engage in agriculture. Livestock rearing, especially sheep, plays an important role in their economic life. Their major products include potatoes, wheat, maize, hemp, rapeseed and other industrial crops. The Dongxiang's "three treasures", apricots, melons and other fruits, enjoy good reputation throughout China. There are possibly 200 Christians among the Dongxiang, however most of them are not organised in house groups or churches.

See an *International Herald Tribune* article by Jim Yardley: <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2006/03/07/news/china.php>

Islam explained

* *Iblis and Shaytan - These are the Qur'anic names for the fallen angel, the devil (Satan).*



Dongxiang Statistics

- *Population: estimate 514,000 (Year 2000 census)*
- *Religion: Sunni Muslim*

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Ask God to send Chinese Christians to live and proclaim the Gospel among the Dongxiang people. May there be opportunities to help them with medical, educational, social and agricultural projects.*
- ▶ *Pray that God will open the hearts of the Dongxiang in order that they may enter His kingdom.*
- ▶ *Pray for solid discipleship of the few Dongxiang believers, that they may produce fruit in their communities.*



The Muslim Kazakhs of Western Mongolia

Majestically the eagles circle while beating their powerful wings high above the gathered crowd. At the falconer's signal, an eagle suddenly swoops down, glides over the heads of the spectators and lands with a loud shriek on the thick padded gloves of its master. The "Festival of the Golden Eagle" in Bayan-Olgii in the western-most province of Mongolia is attended by the best falconers with their prize birds. The event beginning in mid-October signals the opening of the hunting season. The birds are trained to hunt for ground hogs, frogs and even wolves. The "Feast of the Golden Eagle" is a zealously guarded part of local Kazakh culture, and in recent decades the Mongolian Kazakhs have been able to preserve their traditions and skills much more than their brothers in neighbouring Kazakhstan.

Kazakh nomads have roamed the high mountains and valleys of Western Mongolia with their herds since the 19th century. Until 1930 they could freely move between Kazakhstan, Mongolia and the Chinese province of Xinjiang. However after the founding of the Mongolian People's Republic in 1924, many of them left their semi-nomadic lifestyle and began settling down in the western Mongolian highlands. Today the Kazakhs in the province of Bayan-Olgii number around 87,000 or about 88.7% of the provincial population while across the country they represent some 4% of the total Mongol population (about 110,000 people).

The Kazakh culture differs in several ways from the Mongol culture. Traditionally the Mongolian Kazakhs are Sunni Muslims whereas the rest of the population are associated with Tibetan Buddhism. In daily life, Islam actually plays only a minor part in the lives of most Mongolian Kazakhs. Years of atheistic indoctrination by the government and communist upbringing has left its mark on the people. Until the end of the 1990s there were practically no mosques at all in Bayan-Olgii. Places of Islamic worship only sprang up a few years ago in the villages and settlements. Some of these were paid for by foreign Islamic organisations. It remains to be seen if such efforts will actually win their hearts deeply to Islam again.

Since the 1990s, 35,000 to 50,000 ethnic Mongolians have submitted themselves to Christ. Previously only a few dozen were known to be Christians. The Kazakhs in Bayan-Olgii have so far remained untouched by these events.

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *Bradford in England has a very significant Muslim population (16+ percent). Pray for the Christians in the city to have a greater understanding of Islam and increased ability to witness among Muslims.*



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that the Gospel will be presented in a culturally sensitive way to the Kazakhs of Mongolia and that they will put their hope in the God (Isaiah 40:31).*
- ▶ *Pray that Mongolian Christians and others will make increased efforts to bring the Good News of the Messiah to the Kazakh minority in Western Mongolia.*



Day

10

Sept. 22, 2007

Balkh and Mazari Sharif

Cities in northern Afghanistan

Balkh province in northern Afghanistan has a population of 1.6 million that is dominated by Uzbeks and Tadjiks, although there are significant Hazara and Pashtun minorities. Mazari is the provincial capital with some 240,000 inhabitants. In the centre of the city one can visit the famous Blue Mosque (Rawze-e-Sharif) that was built in the 14th century based on a dream that Ali bin Talib, the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet Mohammed, is actually buried here. However, the vast majority of Muslims believe that he is buried in Najaf in Iraq. The city has become an important pilgrimage site for Shiite (Shi'a) Afghans and also for many Sunni pilgrims, especially during Nauroz (a 40 day New Year celebration which starts according the Persian calendar on 21 March).



Between May and July 1997 the Taliban unsuccessfully attempted to take Mazari, leading to approximately 2,500 Taliban soldiers being massacred. In retaliation for this incident, the Taliban returned in August 1998, prompting a six-day killing frenzy of Hazaras and other local people. Soon after, the city was occupied by the Taliban. Even now eyewitnesses are moved with emotion telling how the dead lay for weeks in the streets and the stench of the death hung over the city.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that pilgrims to the Blue Mosque who are seeking freedom, healing and wisdom would meet Jesus personally.*
- ▶ *Pray for the people of Mazari Sharif, especially the Hazara, who continue to live with the consequences of the trauma of the late 1990s. May they find life in Christ who alone can bring inner peace and the ability to forgive.*
- ▶ *Pray for the few believers in the area to build healthy and life-giving relationships to open doors for influence and witness. Pray especially that the city of Balkh (today Wazirabad) will have a Christian witness.*



Also pray for ...

▶ *The political and military situation in Afghanistan remains very unstable. National and local leaders need courage, diligence and wisdom to know how to govern well in the present circumstances.*

Today Mazari Sharif, the fourth-largest city in Afghanistan, is seeing the arrival of new streets, supermarkets and internet cafes. However there are only small numbers of Christians. Only 20 minutes away by car to the west of Mazari lies the famous town of Balkh (previously known as Bactria). This city was part of the Persian Empire and was conquered by Alexander the Great. Later it became a centre for Buddhism and finally, when the Arabs took control in the 8th century, it acquired the title, "Mother of Cities" because of its wealth and fame as a centre of learning. In 1221 it was destroyed by Genghis Khan and lay in ruins until the beginning of the 16th century when it was rebuilt. From its former glory Balkh retains only its citadel and a few other ruins. The new city, called Wazirabad, has a population of 70,000 people consisting mostly of ethnic Uzbeks. In Balkh today there is no known Christian witness.



Day

11

Sept. 23, 2007

The Uyghurs of Xinjiang

We featured material about the Uyghurs two years ago in “30 Days”. However, we want to encourage you to pray again with a somewhat different focus this year. The Uyghurs are a Turkic people group living in ancient oasis cities ringing the Taklamakan Desert of what is now Xinjiang, China. A population of 10 million is spread throughout an area the size of France, Germany, Spain and the UK combined, with an estimated 150 followers of Jesus.

Migration, trade and war over the centuries have spread Uyghurs throughout Central Asia, but Xinjiang is their heartland. Uyghurs were previously Buddhist, but Islam entered around the 11th century and has been firmly entrenched ever since. However, mystical folk practices are widespread and many people are arguably more concerned with the impact of “jinnns” (evil spirits) on their lives than they are with the Creator, the God of Abraham (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa) and Jesus (Isa).

The Uyghurs have a long and proud history of literature and the arts, especially music, and a clear sense of their cultural identity. However, despite periods of independence, they have been firmly under Chinese control – political, economic and social – for the past century, and strongly resent it.

There is considerable tension between the Chinese rulers and the Uyghur population, not least because of the atheist Communist attitude towards Islam. The Communist Government describes itself as a ‘liberator’ while the Uyghurs see the Chinese government as ‘the occupier’. Many Uyghurs passionately desire their political independence.

A key staging post on the ancient Silk Road, the city of Kashgar sits on the western most end of the Taklamakan Desert and is arguably the cultural and religious centre of Uyghur culture. It is known for being a hotbed for conservative Islam and Uyghur nationalist and separatist sentiment. Kashgar boasts one of the largest weekly bazaars in Central Asia with tens of thousands of people – almost entirely Muslims – coming to trade from the surrounding countryside and even from neighbouring Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tadjikistan.

Islam explained

* *Qiblah (qibla) - This is the direction of Mecca which one faces in Islamic prayer. The qibla is always indicated in mosques.*



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that God will break down the demonic principalities and powers. Ask God to break down ancient strongholds of fear and death and to release the Uyghur people into the freedom only Christ can bring.*
- ▶ *Pray for the city of Kashgar.*
- ▶ *Pray for the completion of the Uyghur scriptures, and their accessibility. The New Testament translation has recently been completed, but much of the Old Testament is yet to be translated and published. The Uyghur Bible is illegal in Xinjiang.*
- ▶ *Pray that God will raise an army of intercessors to stand in the gap for the Uyghur people of Xinjiang.*



Day

12

Sept. 24, 2007

Nuristan in Afghanistan

A place hard to access

The most inaccessible of the Afghan provinces, Nuristan forms the backbone of the Hindu Kush mountain range in north-east Afghanistan. Snow-capped mountain peaks rising to 5,500 metres are linked by deep valleys where stone, mud and wood houses compete for space on the mountain slopes.

Difficult access and the long-time enmity with the neighbouring Pashtun tribes has continued the isolation of the Nuristani peoples. The area remains almost completely undeveloped. There is no health care, very few functional schools and in many parts no vehicular access. Many villages are completely snowed in during the winter.

In 1865, two Pashtun believers risked their lives to take the Gospel to the Nuristanis. At the time Nuristan repre-

sented a lone island of animism in the seemingly unbroken sea of Central Asian Islam. Their message was greeted with enthusiasm and the Nuristanis extended a further invitation to teachers of the Good News to return and share more. Tragically, no one ever returned. Thirty years later, possibly using information given by the British, the Amir of Kabul invaded Nuristan, converting the people to Islam at sword-point. The "land of the kafirs" (unbelievers), as it was known, was renamed the "land of heavenly light".

In 2007, the area is still in dire need. Food production is insufficient, life-expectancy is low and the maternal mortality rate is amongst the highest in the world. Eastern Nuristan, a hiding place for the Taliban and al-Qaeda, is subject to frequent attacks, both on locals and on foreigners seeking to work there. Other areas are divided by distrust, blood-feuding, unforgiveness, banditry and the fear of spirits. The god of war, who was extensively worshipped in pre-Islamic times, still seems to have great sway over the valleys. Nevertheless, these people were never forgotten by our God of love who has planned great things for the Nuristanis (Isaiah 9:2).

Nuristan Statistics

Population :
Estimates range from 100,000 to 300,000



For more than 20 years, a desire to reach out to Nuristan has been growing. There is a vision to see feuding communities transformed by God's message of grace, love and forgiveness. Practical development projects are in great need. Difficult access has frequently impeded attempts of outsiders to visit the area, but there is a sense that God's time is coming for the Nuristanis. The challenge is great, but our God is much greater.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for access for more workers, especially medical personnel, willing to serve in a tough place. Pray for understanding, wisdom and protection for workers.
- ▶ Pray for contacts with people of peace and honour who can open doors for the Good News (Mt. 10:11).
- ▶ Pray for dreams and visions of Jesus to prepare the Nuristanis for his message.

Also pray for ...

- ▶ The Taliban fighters in Afghanistan need Christ. They are motivated by various things. However they all need to catch the heavenly vision of Christ's kingdom. May they come to see that God's good and righteous will can really be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10).



Day

13

Sept. 25, 2007

Muslim Foreign Workers in Taiwan

Islam first reached Taiwan in the 17th century when Muslims accompanied Koxinga on his invasion to oust the Dutch from Taiwan. But their descendants became assimilated into the local Taiwanese society, adopting the local customs and religions, and Islam did not expand.

In 1949, some 20,000 Muslims, mostly soldiers and civil servants, fled mainland China with the Kuomintang (non-communist government) to Taiwan. Two mosques were built in the cities of Taipei and Kaohsiung to meet the needs of the Muslim community. In 1989, in order to carry out 14 major construction projects, the Taiwanese government recruited foreign labourers to solve the labour shortage problems. Since that time the use of foreign workers has become a major source of cheap labour in Taiwan. They are mostly employed in manufacturing, construction and housekeeping activities (over 60% are women). They are legally allowed to stay for only six years.

No statistics are available about the number of Muslim foreign labourers, but a high percentage of the Indonesians are probably Muslims. They have not only contributed to the Taiwanese economy, but they have also shared their food, customs, traditions and beliefs with the Taiwanese. Unfortunately many of them and their children are facing harsh treatment and discrimination from the indigenous population.

Taiwan Statistics

- *Population: 22,850,660 (October 2006)*
- *Christians: about 3%*
- *Foreign labourers: 336,985*
- *Indonesian 79,650 (23.6%)*
- *Filipino 91,995 (27.3%)*
- *Thai 93,673 (27.8%)*
- *Vietnamese 71,618 (21.2%)*

Some Taiwanese churches and ministries have reached out to the different ethnic groups. Happily many Christian workers speak several languages. Some pastors are originally from the Philippines, Thailand and even Indonesia. They need Bibles and other resources in various languages. Many Taiwanese Christians also use foreign workers for domestic employment. Hopefully many of them will strive to bring the message of salvation to their employees. May many more Muslim workers discover the Lord before they return to their homelands. Many of them may play an important role in the growing church movements among their countrymen.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that the Lord will cause more Taiwanese Christians to reach out to Muslims around them.*
- ▶ *Pray that the Lord will raise up more local Christian workers who are willing to learn the languages and cultures of the foreign workers in order to establish relationships in the hope of bringing them to Christ.*
- ▶ *Pray that God will open the hearts of large numbers of foreign workers to the Gospel.*
- ▶ *Pray that needed Christian literature, brochures, tracts, audio and video material in various languages will become available.*

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *Some Muslims are establishing themselves in Korea as well. An estimated 40,000 migrant workers from various Muslim countries live and work in Korea.*



Three testimonies from the United States:

Haitham was a software engineer who married a woman from a Christian background, named Jessica. Even when she converted outwardly to Islam, Jessica's Christian family prayed for her and Haitham consistently. Jessica's father witnessed to Haitham regularly and modeled an authentic walk with Christ. As a result, Haitham became more religious. He chanted the Qur'an and started praying regularly again. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca 13 times, in search of peace, even crying out to God from a deserted hill in Saudi Arabia: "God of Abraham! If you are there, reveal yourself to me!"

And that is just what God did. As Haitham read the New Testament, he began to recognize the significance of Christ. What he read was confirmed by a series of dreams and visions. At that time, his wife had already left Islam and recommitted her life to Christ. One Sunday, she invited Haitham to join her at church. At the service, God spoke to Haitham, and he committed his life to Christ that morning. Now both he and his wife minister in their hometown.

Sunan was a 2nd-generation Muslim-American; her large family comes from Bangladesh. When Sunan began having a series of dreams about Jesus Christ, Her curiosity was stirred and this grew into a calling. In 2006, our she entered the Kingdom of Christ.

Maryam, a Shiite Muslim high school student, was longing for peace and acceptance — things she had not felt from her unstable home situation and her Islamic community. When her older sister began attending a local Christian youth group, Maryam was curious, but embarrassed that her sister would forsake Islam. At school, the other Muslim students berated her sister; Maryam tried to defend her, but she had no convincing arguments.

One day, Maryam asked her sister if she could go with her to the youth meeting. There, she met authentic Christians who loved her and showed her the true teachings of Christ. Others took time to carefully and thoroughly answer the questions they had about the life of Jesus and the teachings of the Bible. Eight years later, after a radical life change and facing opposition from her Muslim family, she is serving Christ in the Muslim world.



Kurds in Ontario p. 28



Muslims in Guyana p. 29



Mirpuris in the UK p. 27



Muslims in Georgia p. 26



The Republic of Georgia

With a Mediterranean-like climate along the Black Sea coast, the Republic of Georgia is actually mostly mountainous terrain. Peaks rising more than 5,200 metres separate it from the Caucasus and from Russia. Turkey, Armenian, and Azerbaijan border Georgia to the south. Grapes, citrus fruits, and hazelnuts are plentiful enough to be exported, but Georgia's reliance on importing natural gas hampers political and economic development. Absorbed into the Russian empire in the 19th century, Georgia proclaimed independence in 1991. Eduard Shevardnadze, who helped Russia draft new freedoms, presided over Georgia for five years.

Throughout history, Georgia was conquered by Muslim empires several times. Tbilisi (the capital) was conquered by Arabs in the 8th century, and a Muslim community remained. From the 16th century, Ottoman Turks and Iranian Safavids (Persians) controlled much of Georgia. Migrants, later known as Tatars, also decided to make the region their home.

During the Soviet era, Islamic law (Shari'a) and administration were abolished in 1926 but by 1930 a compromise was reached allowing Muslims certain freedoms. During the Second World War the Soviets set up Muslim Religious Boards to manage Muslims throughout the region. Some

Muslims were deported (depending on ethnicity) and the deportation actually continued into late in the 20th century. It is still a political issue today.

There are three main Muslim populations in Georgia: ethnic Azeris (in rural areas and Tbilisi), ethnic Georgian Muslims of Ajara (in the southwest), and ethnic Chechen Kists (in the northeast). Each of these main peoples has a distinct history.

Islam is still very much an influence in the region. There are several madrassahs (Muslim religious schools) in Georgia. Some are Shiite, financed by Iranian religious groups, while others are Sunni and financed by Turkish groups. Georgians are concerned Islamist ideology, coupled with outside influences, could cause internal violence. The Muslim Chechen Kists have also been a source of political tension between Georgia and Russia.

Georgian Statistics

- *Population: 4,661,473 (July 2006 est.)*
- *Orthodox Christian 83.9%*
- *Other Christian 5.5%*
- *Muslim 9.9%*
- *Atheist / Agnostic 0.7%*



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for the Azeri. The Bible and the Jesus Film are available in the Azeri language but the Gospel needs to be shared in culturally effective ways with an emphasis on discipleship.*
- ▶ *Pray for the Kists and the Muslims of the Ajaria area. Pray for wisdom, favour, and opportunities for Christians that are reaching out in the area. (1 Cor 16:9).*
- ▶ *Pray for Christians. Relations between the Georgian Orthodox Church and Protestant congregations have not always been positive. Love, mutual respect and greater comprehension are needed. May Christians be strengthened in their faith, work and witness (John 17:17-21).*



The Mirpuris in Britain

People originating from the Mirpur district in Pakistan form about 70% of the British Pakistani population of about 747,000. The percentage is even higher in northern cities and towns. In Bradford, an industrial town in North-west England, it is estimated that roughly three quarters of the foreign population are from Mirpur.

In the late 1950's & early 1960's, the Pakistani Government planned the Mangla Dam, which was to be built in the Mirpur area, and they asked several thousand locals to move. At that time, the British needed man-power mainly for their textile factories which opened the door for many Mirpuris to immigrate. Many of the displaced Mirpuris moved to Britain and started working in factories, mostly in the so called "black country" and the area of Bradford, England. More than half the population of some villages moved to the UK to settle in the industrial towns. This rural, impoverished district provided cheap, unskilled labour for Britain in the 60's and 70's.

Islam explained

* *Sunni Muslims claim to primarily follow the word of God in the Qur'an and the traditions concerning Mohammed instead of human leaders. (Sunnis number over 80% of all Muslims worldwide).*

Most immigrants were from subsistence farming communities and had had little or no schooling. One of the things they brought with them was the perception of a long history of dispossession and marginalisation. The partition of India brought terrible bloodshed along with the division of Kashmir between Pakistan and India. (This was the issue cited until very recently as the most pressing political priority in the UK by the majority of British Muslims). Three of the suicide bombers of the London underground bombings in the summer of 2005 were originally from this region of Pakistan.

Most Mirpuris speak Pothowari, a language related to Punjabi. The prominent clans among them include Rajputs (Janjua), Sudhans, Khokhars, Gakkhars, Awans, Jats, etc.

The Mirpuris are still a very unreached people group. There are only a handful of known believers among them in Britain. Some of them have experienced much persecution and suffering. The home of one believing family was even set on fire recently.

* *Shi'a (Shiite) Muslims: The Shiites believe that Mohammad designated his son-in-law, Ali, to succeed him as the leader of the Muslim faithful. They believe that the rightful leaders of Islam were the descendants of Ali. (Shiites make up about 15% of Muslims worldwide).*



Right:
A page
from the
Bible in
Urdu

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that more British Christians would see the need to reach out to the Mirpuris and that many would get involved in praying for them. Pray also that Christian workers from around the world would be willing to come and minister among them.*
- ▶ *Pray for the few cross-cultural workers who are ministering among the Mirpuris, that they would have wisdom to know how to effectively reach them. Pray that they would see a spiritual breakthrough among them soon.*
- ▶ *Pray for the few Mirpuri believers, that they would be protected, and that they would be able to share the Gospel with cultural sensitivity and insight. Pray also for the establishment of fellowships of Mirpuri Muslim background believers.*



Muslim Kurds in Canada

Kurds have been coming to the United States and Canada from Turkey, Iraq and Iran for decades. Thousands fled Iraq during and subsequent to Saddam Hussein's mass killings of Kurds through chemical and conventional warfare. Some of these refugees were Kurdish freedom fighters who were tortured under Saddam Hussein's regime.

Around six thousand Kurds now live in Southern Ontario, Canada - two thousand alone in Hamilton, a city of half a million people. Most of the Kurds in Hamilton come from Northern Iraq; all of them are weary of the violence, persecution and killing still continuing in Iraq today.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that Canadian believers can show their Kurdish friends how to follow Christ. May the Lord Jesus Christ be glorified as Kurds find the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6).*
- ▶ *Pray that God will send dreams and visions in order that the Kurdish community will see their spiritual need and God's provision through Jesus.*
- ▶ *Pray that Kurds will want to understand more of God's story through the Bible and Christian films.*

Over 90% of the Kurds in Hamilton are from a Muslim background, although some are communist or atheist and a few are Zoroastrian. Today, many Canadian Kurds have shed their Muslim identity, with a few even turning against it. Although still believers in God, they tend to be suspicious of any religion.

In Hamilton, many Kurds run their own pizza businesses, working long hours in small shops seven days a week. Kurdish refugees and immigrants love the freedom to gather freely and to speak their own language, a dialect called Sorani. However, materialism is creeping in and many are drying up spiritually. For the second generation there is also the pull of a different culture and language; to counter this, Kurds in Hamilton run a Kurdish language school for their children in order to maintain their cultural and linguistic roots.

In recent years some local Christians have made efforts to proclaim Christ among Ontario's Kurds, seeking to establish a movement of Kurdish house churches. However, although there is an openness to the Gospel and some Kurds have professed faith in Christ, many are reluctant to make a commitment. Please pray that the Lord leads many more Kurds to discover Christ and to live their new-found faith in a fully Kurdish manner.



An encouragement for prayer

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective (James 5:17-20)

Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.



Day

17

Sept. 29, 2007

Guyana, South America

Guyana (or “Land of Many Waters”), bordering the Atlantic Ocean, is home to enormous rain forests, rivers and waterfalls. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s 1912 novel “The Lost World”, a “Jurassic Park” type adventure story, was inspired by the table mountains found in Guyana’s interior. Tragically, the country attracted world attention in 1978 following the mass suicide and murder of 900 American cult members.

With just over three quarters of a million people, Guyana is a cultural melting pot made up of several different ethnic groups. Like the Africans who came as slaves, most of these people groups were labourers brought into the country to work on sugar and cotton plantations.

Guyana’s cultural diversity is reflected in its music, which follows the lead of other Caribbean countries and India. Radio stations play the latest reggae, dance-hall, soca and chutney music, as well as Indian Bollywood influences of bhangra and other Hindi music. Local television stations air American, British and Indian broadcasts.

Guyana statistics

- 10% Muslim
- 35% Hindu
- 50% Christian (all denominations)
- 5% Other

The first Muslims to Guyana were probably Fulanis from Africa. Today, Muslims account for about 10% of the population, most of them from South Asia (India, Pakistan and Afghanistan), but also increasingly from Africa backgrounds. Despite being a minority faith in a country where half the population identifies itself as Christian, Islam has managed to achieve a high profile. Former president Hamilton Green was reportedly a convert, and in 1998 Guyana officially joined the Organisation of Islamic Conference (CIO).^{*} Guyanese Muslims are involved in alms distribution (zakat) and other social welfare programs including help for widows. However, the Muslim community is split into traditionalist and reformist camps which have been in ideological conflict for decades.

Local organisations often host prominent Muslim scholars from South Asia and the Arab world and many

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *There are at least 1.6 million Muslims in the UK. That is the population of Birmingham (1 million) and Glasgow (600,000) combined. One in eleven Londoners is Muslim. Pray for increased Christian witness to Muslims in the UK. Through love and proper training all believers can become effective witnesses for Christ among Muslims.*



Guyanese Muslims identify strongly with the global “um-mah” (the worldwide Muslim community). They are also deeply interested in the issues affecting Muslims abroad, including the conflicts in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan.

^{*} See the CIO Guyanese web site at <http://www.ciog.org.gy>

PRAYER REQUESTS

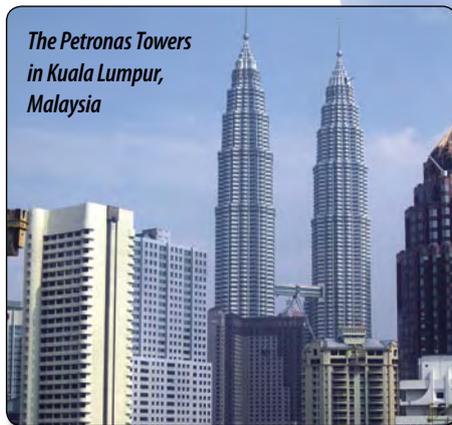
- ▶ *Pray for God’s peace and love to be proclaimed effectively to all the different ethnic groups. South Asians are often pitted against Guyanese of African origin.*
- ▶ *Pray that positive Christian music and TV broadcasts can be aired and that the Muslim youth will be influenced by them.*
- ▶ *There are a number of Bible colleges in Guyana. Pray for the training of godly people of faith who can also reach Muslims. Some Muslims have come to faith.*
- ▶ *Serious crime is a growing problem. Pray that God’s principles can be taught to young people and that the youth will be shielded from drugs and gangs.*

Focus on South East Asia

Days 18 - 20

Testimony from Malaysia

People from Islamic backgrounds sometimes find themselves in cult groups. "Rob" (a pseudonym) became involved in a cult called the "Sky Kingdom" which established itself in Northern Malaysia. This group proclaimed a type of unity between all religions. In February 2005 a Christian began to witness to Rob who specifically wanted to know the truth. From his youth Rob had been heavily involved in the cult and had even been trained in black and white magic (witchcraft), however he was not satisfied. Eventually in the summer of 2005 the cult was outlawed by the Malaysian government. Religious police searched for cult members in the area around the main cult headquarters. The group's members all fled, including Rob. Eventually surrounded by the police with their tracker dogs, Rob felt that his life was in danger. He tried to use his knowledge of magic to escape but he was not successful. Finally Rob called on Jesus Christ: "Isa (a Muslim term for Jesus) if you are God, deliver me now!" Within moments he felt as if he was being lifted and thrown clear from the police search team, and afterwards a young villager on his motorcycle took him far away. From that moment on, he began to believe that Isa was really Lord, and he wanted to learn more about him. In April 2006, Rob was baptised in water. Later many of his friends also believed in the Messiah, Jesus.



*The Petronas Towers
in Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia*



An Indonesian couple from a Muslim background invited some Christians to help them with their business. The Christians eventually began to share their beliefs with the Muslim couple. The husband and wife came to faith and even began to have Christian gatherings in their home. Later there was strong opposition from the village leader who forbid the couple to see the Christians. The husband and wife were forced to travel some distance to see their Christian friends at all. The entire village was Muslim and

soon others joined them in the opposition / persecution. The couple's business of marketing rice suffered. Soon no one wanted to buy rice from them and their faith was really put to test. For one month their income was greatly reduced but the wife's faith was strong and she believed that God was going to help them. However the next month the wife sold rice as she had never done before; the couple made more profit than in many previous months! They experienced God's faithfulness!



Singapore The Lion City

Singapore consists of 62 small islands and one large island (699 km²) just south of mainland Malaysia and north of Indonesia. While about 23% of Singapore's land area consists of forest and nature reserves, it is also the world's second most densely populated independent country. Singapore has one of the world's busiest ports and is a commercial, financial and technical hub for Southeast Asia. It has the highest standard of living in Asia (11th worldwide).

The city has a fascinating mix of cultures. It is known as the largest Chinese city outside of China, since 76% of its peoples trace their heritage back to the mainland. Other major ethnic groups include the Malays, 14% and Indians, 7%. Singapore is also a multi-religious country, due mainly to its location on one of the world's major transportation routes.

The Singapore government has established a religious harmony law with recommendations on how different faiths should interact and how they ought to be separate from politics. The law doesn't prohibit proclaiming the gospel

to the Muslim peoples, but it does discourage it. The fear is that there would be a public outcry within the community and from the surrounding nations if evangelism was encouraged.

The government maintains a semi-official relationship with the Muslim community through the Islamic Religious Council (MUIS). The council advises the government on concerns in the Muslim community, drafts the approved Friday sermons, regulates instruction in Islamic schools, and oversees a mosque-building fund financed by voluntary payroll deductions. It also supervises obligatory giving or "zakat" by a centralised and computerised collection.

Recently a Christian had the opportunity to pray for a Malay Muslim and share the Gospel with him. He was quite open to listen but stopped short of making a decision for Christ. This is characteristic of the young Muslims in this nation; they tend to be a little less traditional and a little

Also pray for ...

- ▶ Over half of the December 2004 tsunami victims lived in the area of Banda Aceh on the northwest coast of Sumatra Island in Indonesia. Only Jesus can bring healing and hope for those suffering the loss of loved ones, jobs and homes.



more open. Even so, a Malay Christian once commented that, in Singapore, the Muslims could easily become an unreachable people group through restrictions and their own indecision.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray that God will give local Christians opportunities, training and the ability to proclaim Christ to the Malay, Indian, Pakistani and other communities in an appropriate way (Isaiah 60:1-3).
- ▶ Pray that Christians will be able to forge relationships with Muslims and open the way for them to hear the good news (Romans 10:14).
- ▶ Pray that believers involved in business will be able to share Christ with their Muslim counterparts (Psalm 49:6-8).

Singapore statistics

- Population: 4.5 million
- 40% Buddhist
- 15% Christian (mostly Chinese and Indians)
- 15% no religion
- 13.9% Muslim (Over 500,000 people)



Day **19**

Oct. 1, 2007

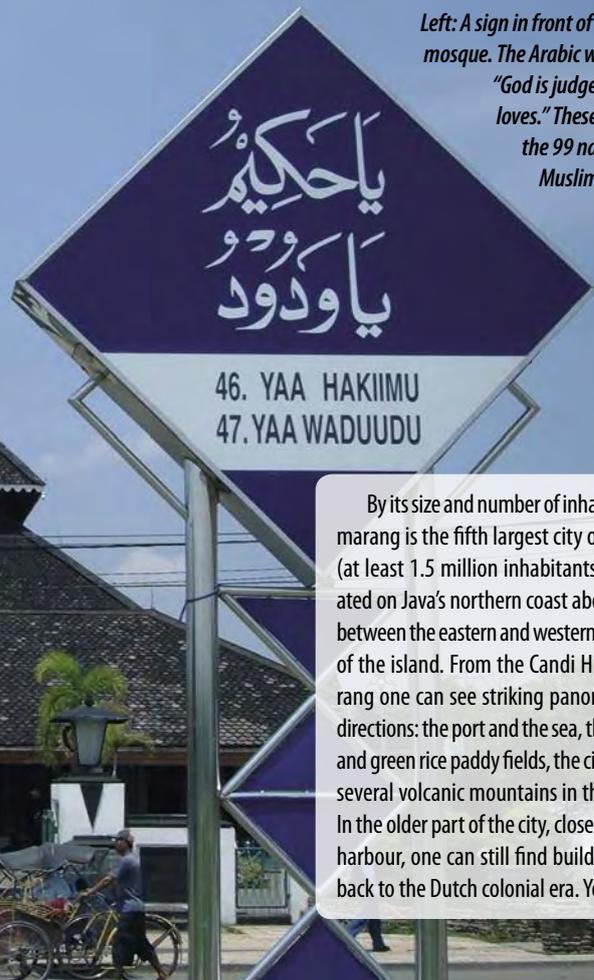
Semarang and the Northern Coast of Java

With a population of 124 million people, the Indonesian island of Java is the most populous island in the world. Over 90% of inhabitants of the island are Muslims – accounting for almost 10% of the Muslim population worldwide. The very first Muslim kingdom on the island of Java was founded in 1511 at Demak, about 24 km east of Semarang in Central Java, and Islam spread throughout the island from there. Demak's three-tiered Grand Mosque is a blend of Hindu and Islamic architecture and is considered very holy. Some Javanese Muslims even believe that seven visits to this mosque equals one visit to Mecca.

In the 16th century Islam was spread on the island of Java by travelling religious teachers. A group of nine men called the Wali Songo (“the nine ambassadors of Islam”). They were important religious teachers who supposedly did powerful and unusual miraculous acts across the island. The histories of these men are not always clear, but their tombs are often visited by local Muslims seeking supernatural help and blessing (especially the tombs of Sunan Kalijaga and Sunan Jafar Shodiq).

The famous Chinese Muslim admiral Zheng He visited the island with his great fleet in 1405. It is possible the name of the city of Semarang originated from the Chinese words “Sam Po Lang” meaning “the city of Sam Po” (Admiral Zheng He). The city has a significant Chinese population and a temple dedicated to the Admiral which is also considered a significant shrine by Muslims.

Left: A sign in front of the Demak mosque. The Arabic words mean “God is judge” and “God loves.” These are two of the 99 names which Muslims attribute to Allah.



By its size and number of inhabitants, Semarang is the fifth largest city of Indonesia (at least 1.5 million inhabitants). It is situated on Java's northern coast about halfway between the eastern and western extremities of the island. From the Candi Hill in Semarang one can see striking panoramas in all directions: the port and the sea, the lowlands and green rice paddy fields, the city itself and several volcanic mountains in the distance. In the older part of the city, close to its ocean harbour, one can still find buildings dating back to the Dutch colonial era. Yet the heart



Also pray for ...

- ▶ Please continue to pray for Aceh province in Sumatra. Possibly 100,000 people in the area are still very poorly housed following the Dec. 2004 earthquake and tsunami.

Above: A modern shopping centre in Semarang and the central market. Below: The shrine of Admiral Zheng He who was among the very first Muslims to visit the area.



of the city has moved to the area around the Simpang Lima Square which hosts a beautiful modern shopping centre, a huge mosque and cinema complexes. Events, activities and changes in Semarang affect the entire region.

The Jawa Pesisir Lor people living in and around Semarang are known as the Jawa Pesisir Lor. They are only one of the hundreds of ethnic groups found in Indonesia, but they are a very significant group because of their numbers and Islamic commitment. The Jawa Pesisir Lor population of about 18,600,000 are split into two main groups west and east of the coastal city of Semarang. Many Jawa Pesisir Lor view traditional Javanese culture as backward and are proud of what they consider to be their more modern world-view and stronger Islamic commitment.

The vast majority of Jawa Pesisir Lor are Sunni Muslims, though there are also some Sufis among them. Unlike many other Javanese ethnic groups, they traditionally tend to prefer Islamic music to Javanese music and Qur'an readings to watching traditional shadow puppet plays. However, occultism is still frequently practised by many Jawa Pesisir Lor, along with syncretistic elements of Hinduism and animism. However, for the younger generation, here as elsewhere, is being greatly influenced by the global youth culture.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ It is a point of spiritual pride locally that Islam was first established in this region in Java. Pray that appropriate humbling would take place so that people could see the glory of the Lord Jesus and live in awe of Him, the true Lord of all the Earth. (Daniel 4:37)
- ▶ Pray for men and women of peace to open doors into the Islamic community in Semarang and among the Jawa Pesisir Lor people. While Indonesian Christians live among large populations of Muslims, the two communities are largely separate and many Christians are fearful. Literally hundreds of church buildings have been burned and thousands of believers persecuted in Indonesia in recent years. Unfortunately Muslims often associate Christianity with the immoral behaviour of some nominal Christians. Pray that real believers would become more evident and find favour with the Muslims (Acts 2:42-47).
- ▶ Pray that more religious leaders and teachers will come to the Messiah, influencing their followers for the kingdom of God (Acts 6:7).
- ▶ Pray that the love and grace of our Lord Jesus the Messiah (Isa Al Masih) would become more and more evident, tearing down the proud arguments falsely set up against the Lord and His followers (2 Cor 10:4-5 and Mt 10:16).
- ▶ Pray that believers will be protected from curses sent from dukuns (practitioners of black magic). Spiritual darkness is very present (Ephesians 6).



Brunei

A rich nation which oppresses Christians

In Southeast Asia, the tiny country of Negara Brunei Darussalam, better known as Brunei, faces the South China Sea. It became a Muslim nation in the 15th century after the conversion of Sultan Awang Alak Beter, and the same family has ruled Brunei for over six centuries. It was a British protectorate for almost one hundred years until independence in 1984. Brunei is very rich in oil, and its sultan is one of the world's richest men. The government collects no taxes, but provides health care, pensions, education, and, for those without the means, assistance in making the Hajj to Mecca.

The national constitution states, "The religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be the Muslim religion". Islamic Shari'a law in Brunei supersedes civil law, and it regulates all aspects of life. Life is difficult for Christians in Brunei. Some have lost their jobs without any notice, while those seeking opportunities for higher education must leave the country to access universities. Evangelism is strictly forbidden, and some Christians have been arrested and detained for planning local outreaches. Expatriate schools must give instruction in Islam to all students and are not allowed to teach Christianity. Recently a foreign English teacher who simply prayed for blessings on a Malay family during the Eid al-Fitr celebrations (at the end of Ramadan) was given 48 hours to leave the country.

A number of Brunei Malays have believed over the years, but the conservative Islamic environment is hardly conducive to Muslim-background believers being open about their faith in the Messiah. Indonesian Christian broadcasting, which is easily accessible in Brunei has been helpful. Although it is not possible to buy Bibles or Christian books inside the country Brunei, Christian literature for personal purposes can be carried in from neighbouring Malaysia.

Brunei statistics

- Population 380,000 (July 2006)
Malay 67%, Chinese 15%, indigenous 6%, other 12%
- Muslim 67%, Buddhist 13%, Christian (all denominations) 10%, indigenous beliefs and other 10%
- 100% Islamic Law

Also pray for ...

- ▶ Thousands of men accustomed to the sea in the Banda Aceh area survived the Dec. 2004 tsunami but lost their wives and children. Many of them have found it very difficult to start their lives over again. Many suffer from depression and hundreds if not thousands are seeking new spouses but there are none.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for the sensitive situation of expatriate Christians who are serving in Brunei. May their lives be an example of Christ to those around them.
- ▶ May the foreign believers provide encouragement to local Christians as the Lord helps them to build meaningful relationships for the sake of the Kingdom.
- ▶ Pray for a stirring in the hearts among the people. May Jesus reveal Himself through dreams and visions. May God work in ways that only he can do to draw the people to himself.
- ▶ Pray for the royal family and their influence at every level. Remember the Sultan's 'second' wife, Azrinaz Makar Hakim; Crown Prince Billah and his wife, Sarah (Acts 16:31). The parliament is beginning to meet again after being closed for 20 years.

Focus on Africa

Days 21 -25

Testimony from Kenya:

"Imagine a Somali Muslim lady clothed in her traditional clothing would enter your church service just waiting for the first opportunity to come forward and surrender her life to Christ? What would you do?"

This is exactly what happened in a church in Nairobi at the beginning of Ramadan last year. No doubt many church members must have been more than surprised to see the Muslim clothing and they could have wondered: "Is this a terrorist infiltrating our church? What are we going to do if she causes trouble during the service? What, if...?" Instead this lady stepped forward to express her faith in Christ. She later told the local believers: "I have been waiting for an opportunity to become a Christian for a long time. I don't mind that this is the holy fasting month of Ramadan. I want to receive

Christ now." Expressing her joy to another Christian later she raised her arms up into the air exclaiming: "I am free. I am a free woman." Local Christians also helped her meet other Somali women that have received Christ into their life, and she was so surprised that there were indeed others besides her.

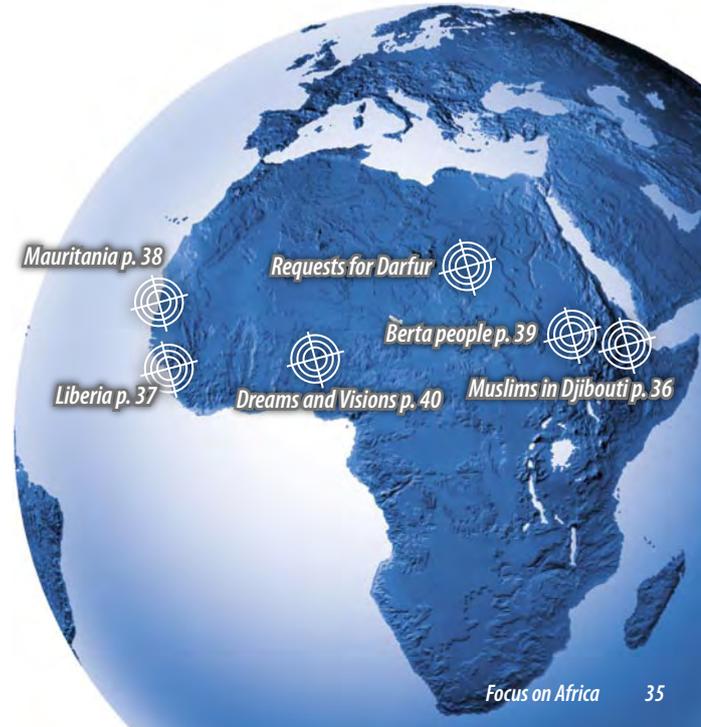
Recently this same Somali woman was diagnosed with a tumour in her uterus. She is undergoing treatment. Discovering her sickness she confided to a Christian friend: "I am so glad you told me right from the beginning that following Christ will actually not take all my problems away." She is in a Christian community with a Somali pastor. Please continue to pray for her as she continues her journey of faith. Some of her health problems persist.



Baptism of a former Muslim in the Gulf of Guinea on the West African coast in 2006



Dakar in Senegal



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Liberia p. 37

Dreams and Visions p. 40

Muslims in Djibouti p. 36



Djibouti in East Africa

The Republic of Djibouti, located between Ethiopia and Somalia, is the second-smallest country in Africa. This dry, desert enclave is plagued by drought, few natural resources and limited industry. The country suffers from at least 50% unemployment.

Djibouti is ethnically diverse due to its strategic location at the crossroads of trade and commerce. The Somali and Afar tribes in this region were among the first in the Africa to adopt Islam through their trading links with the Arabian Peninsula. Despite this over 1,000 year Islamic heritage, Djibouti is much more open and tolerant to Christianity than its neighbours. Foreigners can live and work in Djibouti with relative ease. There is a free press and open access to the

internet. The former Islamic Shari'a Court was replaced by the Family Court in February 2004.

The Afars are Cushitic, related to Somalis but culturally and linguistically distinct. There are between 1-2 million Afars scattered between Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, but only a handful have become believers. In the capital, a small fellowship of believers lives in a poor, overcrowded

Djibouti Statistics

- 94% Muslim
- 60% Ethnic Somali; 35% Afar; 5% French, Arab & other
- Population 486,000 (July 2006)

area with minimal services and difficult living conditions. There a group of Afar ladies are discovering the Bible in their own language.

Among the Somalis (mostly Issas), there are a few small groups of Christians that also meet together. They tell of wonderful dreams about how the Messiah handed them His Word while giving them water to drink and fruit to eat, and telling them that He will care for them. Dreams are very important to the Somali believers because often they cannot read.

Some believers among the significant Ethiopian Christian minority in Djibouti have a vision for reaching their Afar and Somali neighbours. They pray, sometimes for whole nights, for their fellow refugees and for the city of Djibouti. Let us believe together that united prayers will bring blessing to the city (Jeremiah 29:7).

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *In the past, tribalism, factions and leadership struggles have split the different ethnic groups. A civil war (1991-1994) officially ended in 2001. Mutual respect and vision for the future are needed.*
- ▶ *Pray that the city of Djibouti will become a haven of true peace and a lighthouse shining into Somalia, Ethiopia, and the Middle-East.*
- ▶ *Several Christians have been able to give practical help through education, literacy, agricultural and translation programs. Pray that these efforts will bear much fruit.*
- ▶ *Pray for the establishment of indigenous churches among the Afars and the Somalis. There are daily Christian radio broadcasts in both languages.*

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *According to Patrick Johnstone "The Darfur is one of the least evangelized areas on planet earth today." Out of over 6 million people in 35 people groups there are less than 500 Christians. Pray for revelations of Jesus to come in dreams, visions and by proclamation of the word of God.*





Day

22

Oct 4, 2007

Liberty in Liberia

“The love of liberty brought us here” was the motto of the freed American and Caribbean slaves who founded modern Liberia in 1822. This West African nation enjoyed relative peace until 1980 when food riots sparked the overthrow of the government. Unfortunately, since then, Liberia, “the land of the free”, has been largely destroyed by civil war (1989-1996 and 2002-2003).

Liberia is a religiously and ethnically diverse country. It is made up of sixteen principal tribes, and 5% of the population are referred to as Americo-Liberians. Many Muslims living in the capital, Monrovia, have come to Liberia from other countries. Their presence is highly visible with many mosques, Islamic schools and people wearing traditional Islamic clothing. Islam is definitely growing in Liberia.

The country is under-developed and the ethnic or inter-tribal struggles which led to civil war are still very present. The church is in its embryonic stages, both in terms of its size and its depth of Christian experience. Paganism is at an all time high.

Liberia statistics

40% Christian
40% Animist
20% Muslim

Many Liberian Christians know little or nothing about Islam. Some have bitterness towards Muslims because of the recent civil war. Charles Taylor’s government (1997-2003) encouraged Islamic practices, and, to further complicate

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Charles Taylor’s civil war (ending in 2003) always had religious undertones. Pray that God’s true message of peace can be proclaimed.*
- ▶ *A large number of foreign missionary groups work in the country. Pray that the seeds of truth which they have sown will bear fruit.*
- ▶ *The Poro and Sande secret societies teach young men and women to seek “supernatural power.” Pray for those locked into these societies to be freed from the chains of darkness.*
- ▶ *The beginning and ending dates of Ramadan cause conflict every year. Pray that the conflict would instead turn to a time to present the Gospel.*
- ▶ *The churches are not prepared adequately to reach out to Muslims nor to train new believers. Pray for practical training for Christians and for those coming to the faith.*



matters, the current UN Peacekeeping force is dominated by Muslims. Mosques are being built and renovated around the country.

“To maintain Christianity ... as an influence in Liberian society, the Liberian Christian community has to do a better job in attending to the needs of the poor, fighting against the systemic corrupt practices in government, condemning ritual killings, and above all fighting for economic and social justice for all. Failure to appropriately address these social ills will result in Islam filling the void and Christianity becoming the marginalised religion.”

J. Patrick Flomo, The Perspective.

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *Medical and humanitarian work in the Darfur region are extremely important at the moment. Pray for the security of such workers. Poverty and corruption encourage hopelessness and banditry.*



The Desert of Mauritania

Mauritanian Statistics

- 99% Muslim
- Population 3.18 million

Mauritania, an Islamic republic in West Africa, is a vast desert; constantly hot, dry and very dusty. Its legal system is a combination of Shari'a (Islamic law) and French civil law. Independent from France since 1960, Mauritania has suffered from a succession of military coups and ongoing tribal conflict. A severe drought over the past decades has devastated the country. There are more than 600,000 people living in the capital Nouakchott, and it has become a crossroads for many ethnic groups with nomadic roots.

A Christian who recently visited the country described the situation of Mauritanian believers. "You can have freedom of speech if you are a Muslim. You can have freedom of religion if you are a Muslim. It is in fact OK to be a Christian, but it is offensive to speak of Jesus as anything other than one of the prophets."



In this setting God is doing wonders, despite the guards who sometimes stand at church doors to ensure that Mauritanian citizens don't enter. God has given dreams to Mauritanians. In the interior of the country, an Imam showed the

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for revelation of the love of God for the whole Mauritanian population of over three million people. There are often tensions between tribal groups (Soninké, Fulani, Maures, Wolof, etc.) which can lead to violence. Corruption is endemic in all areas of society. Divorce is widespread, and women and children often suffer the most.*
- ▶ *Desperate poverty plagues the lives of most Mauritanians, causing a sense of hopelessness and despair. Pray for solutions to poverty in this country.*
- ▶ *Despite the grip of Islam on the country, animism is practised by most people. The deep-rooted fear of evil spirits (known as jinn) binds many people. Many seek supernatural help through divination and occult practices. Pray for God's merciful intervention to release people from the power of the occult, and for Christian believers to be "strong in the Lord and in His mighty power." (Ephesians 6:10)*

Jesus film in a mosque. The Imam later died and the results are unclear, but such seed-sowing needs to continue. By God's grace, there are now Mauritanians following Christ in many countries around the world.

Testimony from Mauritania:

Soon after coming to faith in Christ, Bokar told his Christian friends that he wanted to do away with a special undershirt, inscribed with Koranic passages and interwoven with dozens of amulets. This type of shirt makes the wearer impervious to any weapon. It is one of the most powerful enchantments known to the Hal-Pulaar (Fulani). Several Mauritanians were afraid and said the shirt could not be destroyed, that it would jump out of the fire. After much prayer, Bokar burned his shirt, and the result was tremendous spiritual growth in his own life. Many who heard of the incident gained a new respect for the power of the Gospel.

Islam explained

- * *A marabout is a spiritual leader in the Islamic faith as practiced in West and North Africa. Marabouts are often well versed in the Qur'an, and many make amulets for good luck. They sometimes preside at various ceremonies, and serve as spiritual guides.*

The Berta People

in Ethiopia and Sudan

Berta” or “Wetawit” are two of several names for a people group who live on both sides of the Ethiopian-Sudanese border, in an area known as the Benishangul. The region is one of the least-developed in Ethiopia. Some 160,000 Berta live there, and there are about the same number on the Sudanese side of the border. Most of the Berta live in rural areas. The largest town in the area has about 20,000 people and only one third of them are Berta.

The region where the Berta or Wetawit live was known by the ancient Egyptians as a gold reserve. Although they live mostly from agriculture and the sale of the fruits grown on their land, gold is still an important bartering commodity. In the past the Berta were under oppression from the slave trade. Even their own rulers kept and sold slaves from among their own people.



The Berta language is generally classified as a branch of Nilo-Saharan and is not related to the official Amharic language of Ethiopia nor the Arabic of Sudan. Children who do go to school are therefore taught in a foreign language. Many give up trying after just a few years and just 9.7% of the people are considered literate. It was only recently that the written form of the Berta language was introduced and now, thanks to government efforts and various organisations, Berta children can now take lessons in their mother-tongue.

Islam came to this region in the beginning of the 18th century, in particular from Northern Sudan. Until 30 years ago visitors to the region wrote that Islam was very superficial, however, today most Berta Muslims take their religion quite seriously, although it is mixed with indigenous beliefs and practices. There is no local group of Christian believers. A handful of Christians live scattered throughout the area and in nearby countries. The Christian believers in the neighbouring peoples are not very open or motivated to witness to the Berta, since evangelisation of other peoples can be very difficult. Bible translation did begin with some Old Testament passages but unfortunately that work was forced to stop two years ago when Muslim translators were forbidden to help on the project.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Christians from other people groups in the region need an outpouring of courage, love and wisdom to reach the Berta with the Gospel in an understandable and culturally appropriate way.*
- ▶ *Pray for the local believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:17-20).*
- ▶ *Pray that the work of Bible translation could begin again among the Berta.*
- ▶ *Pray for more Berta to learn to read so that, when the Bible is completed in their language, they can read it for themselves.*

Also pray for ...

▶ *The Christian and animist population in southern Sudan not far from the Berta homeland experienced the horrors of civil war for about 30 years. Even though peace has come to the area the marks of war abound. Pray for the Christians to know how to bind up the wounds of the many years of conflict and suffering.*

“The Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn ...” (Isaiah 61:1-2)



Dreams and Visions

During the next few nights many Muslims around the world will spend much of the night praying. Many will be seeking divine intervention for pressing needs.

The so called Night of Power, or “Laylat ul-Qadr” as it is known in Arabic, is one of the most significant nights of the Islamic year (It is the 27th night of Ramadan which varies from country to country, depending on when they start Ramadan). Muslims believe that groups of angels are sent out on the Night of Power to perform special acts. Some come down to earth to worship Allah, others come to bring about the requests of believing Muslims. Special angels are also said to descend to earth to make proclamations about the coming year. This night is also called the “Night of the Decree or Destiny” by some. This night of “blessing” is supposedly the same night of the month of Ramadan that Mohammed first received the revelation of the Qur’an. Muslims are often encouraged to stay awake during the entire night, and pray for blessings and forgiveness. This is one moment of the year when Muslims are perhaps a bit less fatalistic and have increased confidence that God will hear and act on their behalf.

The “30 Days” movement wants to encourage Christians around the world to especially pray for Muslims dur-

ing the next 48 hours, that many will really meet the Lord in visions and dreams.

Pray also for the success of a special web site which tells the stories of several Muslims who met the Lord in incredible ways (<http://www.morethandreams.org> in English and <http://www.dreamsandvisions.com> in Arabic).

This is a testimony from the site: Mohammed grew up in a Fulani tribe in Nigeria and started rearing cattle when he was six years old. As he grew up, Mohammed learned about Islam from his father. When he was about 16 years old he went to an Arabic school to study the Qur’an. Then after several years of schooling, he returned home.

One night he had a frightening dream and then a second and a third. Then for a further six nights, Mohammed had similar dreams. Each time, he saw himself in different places and, regardless of where he was, the same man in white came and helped him. In the ninth and last dream, Mohammed was sitting under a tree reading a book that he could not understand. The same man in white (Jesus) was sitting beside him. Jesus took the book and said, “This book comes from God and it has his message inside of it. In this book, I will show you verses which will help you.” Jesus read various scriptures to Mohammed, including John 14:6, which says, “I am the way, the truth and the life.”

The next day Mohammed told a Christian acquaintance about his dream. Afterwards Mohammed suffered greatly for his new-found faith. He was rejected by his father and several times he was in danger of death by persecution.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that God will break down all thoughts of self-righteousness through religious activity among Muslims who participate in the Night of Power. Pray that he will move them toward true humility (Dan 4:37).*
- ▶ *Pray that God will act during the Night of Power so that people may have a revelation of Jesus, the Messiah.*
- ▶ *Pray for those who are genuinely seeking the Lord’s help at this time. May he give them the help they need in such a way that they will understand that help comes through Jesus (Ps 34:18, Zech 9:9).*
- ▶ *Pray that the dreams and visions web sites (www.morethandreams.org and www.dreamsandvisions.com) will become well known in the Muslim world. Pray that many doors will be opened so that Muslims can have similar experiences and be encouraged by the testimonies on the site.*



Focus on South Asia

Days 26 - 30

Testimony from India:

My name is Rachid. I was born in a Muslim family. I married in 1999 and came back to live in my home city. I was earning money but I had no peace in my life. I smoked cigars, drank and played a type of card game called Juhua for money. In my family we always quarrelled even though I went to the mosque every Friday. When my second child was born I met a person named Ramchand. As our friendship developed he told me about Jesus. He explained to me that Jesus is really alive. While reading the Bible I had many questions in my mind about the true faith. Finally one day as I was praying and I asked God to help me stop smoking because I was a chain smoker. I believed in God and received his forgiveness through Christ. The Lord set me free from my addiction! Later I did a training program with a Christian group which helped me even more. Now I tell Muslims about how they can also discover Christ. I now have a small business and two Muslim men are also working with me. By trusting in Jesus I have experienced the peace of God. I have realised that God is really going to take care of me and my family.

Another testimony from India:

My name is Akbar. A verse from the book of the prophet Isaiah (chapter 65:1) means much to me Lord says “I was found by those who did not seek Me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.” This word of God has been true in my life and in the lives of my whole family. I am the sixth child of my parents.

My older brother Mustapha was walking on the road and suddenly he heard a voice calling him by his name “Mustapha, Mustapha I am the Lord your God.” It was a strange experience for him which had never happened in his life. Again the voice came a second time he recognized that it is coming from the sky. In the following hours Mustapha found himself in a Christian meeting and came to believe in Jesus, the Messiah. I and my other family members all rejected my brother’s conversion but eventually a person close to our family had a miraculous healing in our home. Mustapha prayed for her and cast out a demon in Jesus’ name. This really got my attention and I began reading the Bible myself. Eventually I saw the passage in Mark 16:16-18 where Jesus said

“those who believe will cast out devils and heal the sick in my name.”

Eventually I understood that God’s forgiveness is a free gift to all people through Jesus Christ and that man cannot achieve it by his good works. I believed in the Lord myself and slowly one after the other my family members also believed the Gospel. The Lord opened their hearts as He also opened the heart of Lydia (Acts 16:14). E-mail: peterakbar@rediffmail.com



Akbar’s photo is above. The chief editor of “30 Days” was in India during the month of January 2007. He had the privilege of meeting both Rachid and Akbar.

Chittagong, Bangladesh

The deep-water port city of Chittagong is Bangladesh's second largest. Hundreds of years ago Arab traders came to the port seeking silk and spices and left behind the message of Islam. Today this shipping centre is the cultural hub for the Chittagonian people group, estimated to be about 14 million people. They are set apart from the majority Bengali people through their clothing, food, customs, and most importantly, their language. Chittagonian, or Chatgaya Buli as they call it, has often been mistaken for a dialect of Bengali.

The growth of the Chittagonian church has been slow because the Bible is not available in the Chatgaya Buli language, and many do not understand Bengali. Chittagonians are the largest people group in the world without the Bible in their own language.

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *Hundreds of schools were destroyed by the October 2005 earthquake in Kashmir. Pray for efforts to rebuild the schools. About 850 teachers and staff died along with 18,000 pupils. Projects have been initiated to train thousands of new teachers.*

Several years ago God gave a group of Chittagonian believers a vision to translate the *Jesus* film into their language. The response to this ministry tool has been very positive. After seeing the film for the first time, one Chittagonian man said, "Jesus must be our prophet because he speaks our language."

Today the Chittagonian people are at a spiritual crossroads. Living in the poorest area of one of the poorest nations on earth, they have little opportunity for advancement and education. Conservative Muslim groups have taken advantage of this situation by building Muslim schools for the young people where they learn to read and write and to recite the Qur'an. In some cases they are also taught fundamentalist Muslim doctrine. The past decade has also seen a growth in conservative Islamic politics.

The next few years are crucial to seeing a strong Christian witness established. Only a handful of Christians are focusing on this people group, and the number of Chittagonian believers is estimated to be less than 300. Those who are working among this group need tools to present the Good News in the Chatgaya Buli language. Since Chittagonians have a very low literacy rate (less than 10% for village women) recorded scriptures, storytelling programmes, and video projects are vitally needed to present the Gospel.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for workers committed to reaching this group. Christians need to be committed to learning their unwritten language.*
- ▶ *Pray for the tiny group of Chittagonian believers as they bravely reach out with very limited resources. One Christian worker says that it has taken an average of six years for people to become believers after their first contact with the Gospel.*
- ▶ *Pray for the establishment of a Chittagonian Prayer Network among believers world-wide. There is a need for constant prayer for this large, long-neglected people group.*

Forgotten Firozabad



Photos:
Glass bangles

Firozabad, India, is a city of half million people about a 45 minute drive east of Agra (the home of the famous Taj Mahal). Firozabad is in some ways a forgotten city. It is the closest large city to Agra which is a major tourist attraction. When the rare tourist does come to Firozabad, traffic literally stops in the streets.

Firozabad has been called the glass capital of India. Local artisans and factories produce glass bangle bracelets, drinking glasses and other glassware, with dozens of shops in the markets selling nothing but glass bangles. Some have observed that the people of Firozabad do not breathe air but glass. Thousands of children work in poor conditions for low wages in the 300 glass factories, polishing and painting bangles. The city suffers from poverty and low literacy, and there is significant pollution linked to the glass industry.



Firozabad is still being researched for ministry purposes. Although a very large Jain temple is located on the outskirts of the city, the tallest building is the main mosque in the city centre. Several hundred Muslims attend Friday prayers at the mosque and it runs a Qur'anic school for large numbers of young boys. It is still not certain if the Muslims in this city are religiously Muslim or simply culturally Muslim. The Jains do not believe in a supreme being but in the natural laws governing the universe. They stress monistic spirituality, and have an emphasis on non-violence.

There are no known believers in this city. Some Christians who visited the city recently saw God open doors for the Gospel with four Muslim young men. They gave a Bible to one of them, who is now sharing it with the others. Through follow-up phone calls and e-mails it is known that they continue to read the Bible. The young Muslim men are discovering more about Jesus. These men are being prayed for daily. Hopefully Christians visiting the city in the future will continue to find men and women open to the Gospel.

Firozabad Statistics

- 50% Muslim
- 50% Hindu and Jain (believers in Jainism)

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for God to raise up workers to go to this city and share the Gospel message (both short term and long term workers). Pray for discernment as they do research and minister.*
- ▶ *Pray for God to speak to the city's youth through His Word and Christian television programs.*
- ▶ *May people become dissatisfied with Hinduism, Jainism and Islam and long to really meet God.*
- ▶ *Pray for the many children used as cheap labour in the glass factories and for real solutions to the pollution problems.*

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *More than three million people were left homeless by the October 2005 Kashmir earthquake. During the winter of 2006 about two million survivors still did not have adequate housing. Continue to pray for the reconstruction efforts.*

Muslim Universities in India

The evolving world of Islamic universities has become a major challenge for Christians. The mission of Islamic education is to establish Qur’anic values and promote Islamic rule and influence worldwide through university community life and studies.

The Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) is the largest Muslim University in Delhi with 10,400 students and over 1,500 faculty and staff. In the Urdu language, Jamia means University and Millia means National. JMI offers bachelors, masters and PhDs in 32 specialised departments, with specialised research centres partnering with universities around the world. Besides Indian Muslims, international students attend JMI from 38 nations in the Middle East, Africa, Central and South Asia. JMI students and teachers are predominantly strong Muslims, yet God is at work!

One JMI student recently had an encounter with Christ through a dream, and today he is a committed believer sharing his faith with others. Making disciples of Muslim

students and training them effectively to walk with God is vital to reaching Muslims worldwide for Christ.

The Jamia Markazu University near Calicut has recently become one of the major cultural and educational institutions in Kerala (Southwest India). Ten thousand students at the school study the Qur’an, the Hadith, Islamic law, Arts, Science and Technology. According to the university’s web site, “Its influence reaches far beyond the walls of communal and social barriers. Its work strengthens the moral character of the Muslim society. By developing the leadership capacities of leaders and the Muslim community, Jamia Markaz directly affects the cities, towns and even the rural areas ... Armed with renewed vigour and Islamic spirit, Markaz students return to the society with a new wholeness, a new sense of responsibility and practical skills to bring about a moral revolution.”

Many Indian Muslim students and university personnel are involved in or support the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) which is officially illegal. This group actively seeks to orient Indian society toward Islamic values in place of Hinduism and secularism. The movement encourages living according to the Qur’an, the propagation of Islam and jihad for the cause of Islam. SIMI and groups like them play a significant role in propagating fundamentalist Islam worldwide.



PRAYER REQUESTS

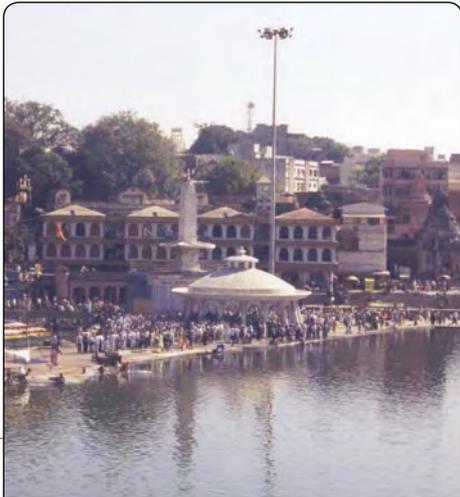
- ▶ *Pray that Muslim students and staff will have opportunities to meet Christians with godly lifestyles and servant attitudes. Pray for supernatural encounters with God through dreams and visions.*
- ▶ *Pray for students to be open to the Gospel and become followers of Jesus. May they plant churches among their own people when they go home after their studies.*
- ▶ *Pray for God’s wisdom for effective approaches and partnerships among those witnessing to Muslim university students and staff.*

Islam explained

* A “*madrasah*” is the name of the traditional Islamic school for children and youth. Such schools have generally centered their instruction around the memorisation of the Qur’an in Arabic.

Nashik, Maharashtra, India

Nashik (also Nasik) is a medium-sized, fast-growing city on the river Godavari not far from Mumbai. The temples and steps on the river banks make Nashik one of the holiest places for Hindus all over the world. Once every 12 years the city hosts millions of Hindus participating in the pilgrimage festival of Kumbh Mela (the Urn Festival). In Hindu mythology, Nashik got its name when the sister of the demon Ravana proposed to marry the god Rama. Hearing this, Rama ordered her nose - 'nasika' in Sanskrit - to be cut off. The Muslims in Nashik live surrounded by ancient Hindu tradition and culture.



It was not until the establishment of regional Muslim kingdoms in the 14th and 15th centuries and the arrival of Muslim missionaries that the Muslims in Nashik began to form a distinct community. The two leading Muslim missionaries in Nashik were Khunmir Hussaini (1520) and Syed Hussaini (1568). It is believed that both came with zealous preaching and the power to heal the sick, and so many Hindus readily converted to Islam. Devotion to these Muslim saints continues to this day.

The vast majority of Muslims in Nashik (as in all of India) are Sunnis who have been influenced over the generations by Hindu religion and culture. Some of the Muslim peoples living in Nashik district are the Sayyed, the Pathan, the Malik, Muslims from Rajasthan, the Lakharharas (or wood-sellers, a mixed population of Shaikhs), and a Shiite sect called the Dawoodi Bohra. The majority of Muslims in the city are from the Sayyed group.

Also pray for ...

- ▶ There have been repeated charges of corruption concerning the funds and goods given for the Kashmir earthquake reconstruction efforts. Pray for wise and effective supervision and distribution of relief funds and materials.

Nashik Statistics

- Population: 4 million
- Christians: Less than 20,000 people, 0.5% (all denominations combined)
- Muslims: 600,000 people, 6.7% (mostly city dwellers)

Many Muslims in Nashik live in congested areas with poor city infrastructure. At this time there are no known ministries reaching out to Nashik's Muslims with the Gospel. However this does not mean God is not at work among them. Many Christian believers in Nashik have been praying for the Muslim community. But some are fearful of Muslims as well, caught up in historical Indian prejudices between religious communities.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for God to send labourers into the streets, alleys, homes and families of Nashik to proclaim Christ to the Muslim community (Mt 22:9-10).
- ▶ Pray for God to help the Christians in the area to move beyond prejudices to really loving and caring for the Muslim community.
- ▶ Pray for God to pour out His Spirit, giving the Muslims a hunger and thirst to know God and His Word (Luke 24:27-32).

The Zikri Baluch of South Asia

The Zikri Baluch are concentrated in the Baluchistan Province of Pakistan. The Zikris number about 750,000 people, most of whom live in Baluchistan. A large number also live in the region around Karachi and in Iran. Most Zikris are fishermen working along the coast of the Arabian Sea, but some are involved in farming, basket weaving and other handicrafts.

The Zikri religious practices differ greatly from mainstream Islam and are based around the teachings of Syed Mohammad Jaunpuri, a 15th century South Asian Islamic Messiah figure (Mahdi). His teachings started as a reaction to the worldly pursuits of the Muslim elite. Zikris perform five daily prayer rituals called Zikr in which sacred verses, which differ from orthodox Islamic prayer, are recited. Zikris do pilgrimage to their most famous shrine at Koh-e-Murad, near the city of Turbat in Baluchistan, on the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan. It has been reported that the Zikris perform rites similar to a traditional Muslim Hajj when on pilgrimage to the shrine.

The name Zikri comes from the Arabic word dhikr (pronounced “Zikr” in South Asia) that refers to remembrance, usually of Allah. This reflects Zikri worship, which is focused on the recitation of Islamic credos. They have faced persecution, mainly from Sunni Muslims, but this usually has oc-

curred in areas where they are in a minority, or when they were in conflict with non-Zikri power groups.

The Pakistani and Chinese governments have been deeply involved in developing a deep-sea port in the city of Gwadar, which will be linked to the rest of Pakistan, China and Central Asia through a system of roads and pipelines. Gwadar’s population is about 50% Zikri. If the forecasted economic development based on the port actually takes place, all of Baluchistan and the region will be significantly affected.

In recent times two Zikri fishermen have reported that, while on a fishing trip, Jesus appeared to them in a storm and rescued them. Pray that many more Zikri fishermen would truly encounter Jesus, and become real fishers of men!



Above: The mountains of the Makran region.

Below: The small city of Gwadar on the Pakistani coast.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *A number of Zikris have become followers of Jesus. Pray for growth in faith and understanding of the ways of God for all of these new believers (1 Cor 13).*
- ▶ *Pray also that these new believers would make their faith known among their family and friends, and that whole families and clans would become followers of Jesus.*
- ▶ *Pray that the top religious leaders of the Zikris would come to know Jesus through the Scriptures, testimonies, films, dreams, visions, healings, etc., so that their followers would also embrace the Truth.*

Inside Back Cover

Important:

It is best to view this document
in a “spreads mode” to see the
facing pages together.

Web sites to better understand Muslims and Islam:*

Christian Sites:

Muslim - Christian Dialogue:

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

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

Sites for Muslims:

<http://the-good-way.com/>

<http://www.injil.org>

<http://members.aol.com/alnour/index2.html>

<http://www.isaalmasih.net>

Muslim Sites:

Islamic religion:

<http://www.submission.org>

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

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

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

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

<http://www.understanding-islam.com/>

Other Sites:

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

Muslim perspective on the Middle East : <http://www.memritv.org/>

General info about Islam: <http://www.oxfordimap.org/index.htm>

Viewpoints of former Muslims: <http://www.apostatesofislam.com/>

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

A prayer calendar designed for children and families is also available this year in some languages. Check our main site for details.

Al Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt

This prayer booklet is not designed to be given to Muslims. It is also not recommended to show it to Muslims for evangelistic purposes. They generally will not understand your motivations to intercede for them.

"30 Days International" maintains a positive attitude toward Muslims. We are not interested in denigrating or criticising them. Islam is not merely a religion or a philosophy. Islam concerns people. Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

New Multimedia Web Site: <http://www.30daysfire.net>

UK & MIDDLE EAST

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