

30 Days 2011

of Prayer for the Muslim World

August 1st through 30th



Faith, hope and love producing eternal life ...

20th Edition

Front inside cover

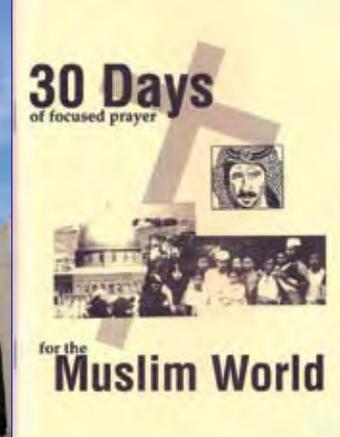
Introduction

This call to prayer for Muslims originally came during a meeting of several Christian leaders in the Middle East in 1992. Several believers involved in an international movement strongly sensed God's desire to call as many Christians as possible to pray for the Muslim world. A prayer movement was planned to coincide with the Islamic month of Ramadan which follows a lunar calendar (in 2011 this is from August 1st through 30th). It was intended that "30 Days" should be during the month of Ramadan for at least two reasons: (1) as a means for Christians to identify themselves with Muslims during a fixed period of the year and (2) to call upon God's sovereign intervention in the lives of Muslims during a time of the year when they are particularly religious. Please note that praying during the month of Ramadan does not mean that we conform ourselves to the Muslim practices of fasting and prayer. As believers in Jesus we disagree with Islamic ideas, theology and practice in several areas. However, the "30 Days" movement emphasizes God's love for Muslims. We encourage all believers in the Messiah to cultivate a spirit of humility, love, respect and service toward Muslims.

The goal of this prayer guide is to inspire and direct each reader as he or she intercedes for the Muslim world. However, it is far from being completely informative. We encourage you to seek further information and so gain a greater understanding of the Islamic world and God's activities among Muslims. Again this year we have included a number of testimonies to encourage your faith as you pray. God loves Muslims. He wants them to come to know Him.

The Editors

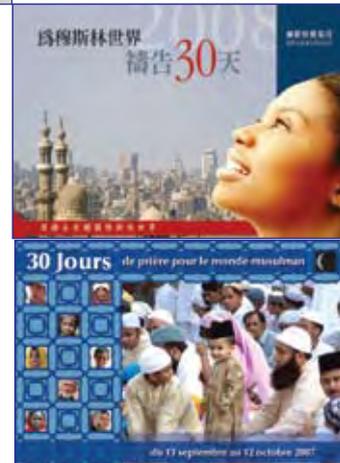
Our 20th annual effort of prayer for the Muslim World



Above: The very first 30 Days of Prayer cover which was produced for the 1993 version. Below more recent versions.

It is estimated that three to four million Muslims have come to faith in the Messiah in the last 20-30 years.

More Muslims have turned to the Messiah in recent years than during the entire last 1,400 years since Mohammed.



The 20th Edition of “30 Days”

Two decades of prayer with faith, hope and love for the Muslim world

What has changed during 20 Ramadans ?

So much has happened during these last 20 years. God is at work using many different means to make Himself known among Muslims. “30 Days” has played a part in raising awareness and promoting prayer for Muslims among believers worldwide. However “30 Days” is just one aspect of what God is doing! Lots of things have happened:

Positively:

- *Some estimate that three to four million Muslims have come to faith in the Messiah in the last 20-30 years. This is more than anytime during the entire last 1,400 years (Mohammed lived from AD 570 to AD 632).*
- *The number of ministries involving Internet, radio, satellite television and other media efforts directed toward Muslims has exploded.*
- *The amount of literature, CDs, DVDs, Bibles and downloadable resources that are available for Muslims has increased very significantly.*
- *The number of actual missionaries working in the Muslim world has grown significantly.*
- *Thousands of former Muslims are proclaiming the Messiah to their peoples.*

- *Also there are more prayer efforts toward the Muslim world than ever before.*
- *We know more about Muslim peoples than ever before (their demographics, their cultural affinities, their history and the progress of the Gospel among them).*
- *Efforts to establish believing communities in all ethnic groups is becoming a reality.*
- *Muslims are exposed to other cultures and religious beliefs more at the present time than at any point during the last 1,400 years.*

Negatively:

- *Muslim terrorists have become established in many places around the world. Their most famous attacks on September 11th 2001 shocked the whole world.*
- *These attacks and others inspired two very difficult wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as many other military and police interventions across the whole world with positive and negative repercussions. Muslims have not always been in agreement with the “war against terrorism.” Some situations are very complex.*
- *More Islamic television, Internet, radio and other*



Each year between 240,000 and 400,000 prayer booklets have been distributed worldwide in various languages.

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

Also on:



media is available now more than ever before.

- *The number of Muslims and mosques in most Western countries has grown significantly.*
- *The Islamic presence in Europe and in Western countries in general has become a menace for many nations. The largely secular societies in Western countries have difficulties knowing how to handle the increased Islamic presence. The fear of terrorism, the fear of the unknown, as well as, prejudice and bigotry toward Muslims have grown in most Western countries.*

Some people ask, “Why pray for Muslims?”



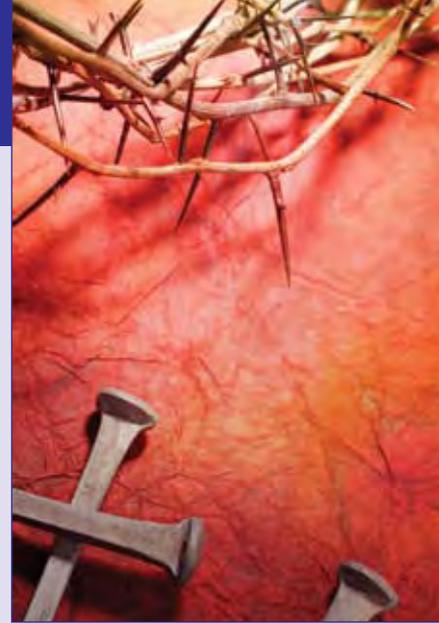
Muslims do not generally realize :

- ... that Jesus, the Messiah, is to be obeyed.
- ... that Jesus has the ability to forgive sins.
- ... that Jesus has conquered death through his resurrection.
- ... that Jesus has power over evil spirits.

“Worthy are You ... for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” (Rev. 5:9)

This is why we are praying.

- *Muslims think of Jesus as a great prophet who preached an earlier form of Islam. They believe that Jesus is God’s Messiah, based on the Qur’anic texts, but they usually have no idea that actually means that Jesus is God’s anointed King and Saviour for all humanity.*
- *Muslims generally believe that they can earn God’s approval through religious activities (prayers, fasting, giving money).*
- *Muslims do not think they can know God. They only think that they can know about Him.*



... for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).



Answer:

... because He shed His blood

Authority

- *We need to know who we are in God.*
- *We are in the heavenly kingdom.*
- *Jesus is the world's rightful King.*
- *We are praying in the name of the Lord.*
- *We are seeking His glory.*
- *We pray for His will to be established.*

Be Aware ...

We as believers have a wonderful privilege. God invites us to be part of making the Good News known throughout the earth. He even gives us the authority and the power to do the job. Please be aware that there are unseen spiritual forces which are opposing God's plan to bring the Good News to Muslims. While using this booklet you should also pray for your own personal protection. We are not to be afraid of the invisible world but to pray in faith and confidence aware of dangers and rejoicing in God's intervention in favour of all peoples. *Meditate on these texts: Ephesians 6:10-20, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8-9, 2 Kings 6:16-17.*



*Pray with faith in God,
the one who keeps promises.*

*Pray with hope
for a better future for Muslims*

*Pray with the love
that enabled Jesus to endure the cross.*

How should we use this booklet?

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

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

You could organise some weekly or twice weekly meetings over the 30 day period with your church, your youth group, cell groups, or children's groups. Have others join with you in a special meal using the prayer topic for that day. You could find out all you can about that particular culture, including food and dress, music, etc.

It is helpful if one person is chosen as the leader / facilitator of the group for that time of prayer. This person can give direction and cohesion to the group. It is helpful if the group focuses its prayers for one subject area at a time, rather than constantly changing focus. Each person should wait before moving on to a different topic, allowing each one to pray their prayers over the current subject area (1 Cor 14:40). God is creative, and has made us in His image, so we can expect creative ideas and prayers as we seek Him. The Holy Spirit will lead you (Romans 8:26).



*"I will bring to My holy mountain
And make them joyful in My
house of prayer. Their burnt
offerings and their sacrifices will
be acceptable on My altar; For
My house will be called a house of
prayer for all the peoples."*

(Isaiah 56:7)



Spiritual Realities (1)

"God is love" written in Arabic

Jesus has called his followers to be lights in a world of darkness. Like all other peoples around the world Muslims have to deal with evil, invisible spiritual realities which are manifested in various ways religiously and culturally. These negative spiritual realities are influencing and dominating Islamic civilization as well as Western and Eastern civilizations in general (1 John 5:19). These forces can often be overcome by people who do things the opposite way (or if you prefer, "in the opposite spirit"). Jesus has shown us his way to do this through the cross. In his weakness he actually manifested strength. At the cross the pride of Empire and religion tried to do evil to him, yet the end effect was that Jesus actually manifested his ultimate goodness toward all men. God has given us a commandment: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

In praying for Muslims and in living with them we need to exhibit the life of God. Our spiritual enemies push us as believers to be fearful and suspicious of Muslims. If we allow ourselves to be motivated by fear, self preservation, and suspicion instead of faith, hope and love we will not be able to bring the Gospel to Muslims.

Prayer ideas:

Today and tomorrow we ask you to worship the Lord. Draw near to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from us. Then pray for the following subjects for yourself and Muslims in your town, region or country:

▶ ***Where there is pride---humility:***

Pray: "Lord, root out any pride within me concerning my attitudes concerning Muslims. Liberate Muslims in my area from religious pride. Bring us all to humility before you." (Proverbs 8:13, 16:18, 29:23)

▶ ***Where there is religiousness---relationship:***

Pray: "Lord, help me not to be religious but to actually live and walk with you. Help any Muslims in my area to come to know you and not simply accomplish certain religious activities." (John 17:3)

▶ ***Where there is legalism---freedom:***

Pray: "Lord, help me to walk in the freedom of your Spirit. Help me to be someone who brings real liberty of the Spirit to Muslims." (Mt 7:3-5)

▶ ***Where there is suspicion---trust:***

Pray: "May we as believers be people who create trust so that Muslims may believe and turn to the Messiah." (Acts 16:14)



Testimony

*Algiers, the
capital of Algeria*

Nacima, whose family comes from an Algerian Kabyle background, was born and grew up in France. Her mother had some conservative and folk Islamic beliefs but her father was more open. Nacima learned from her mother that God exists but even so she lived with the fear of death.

Despite the very positive aspects of her family life, school and sports, Nacima found emptiness in her soul. At the age of 18 while in university she and her friends explored questions like “Why am I on this earth? Does my life have meaning? What happens after death?” However she did not hear anyone speaking about Jesus as being more than a historical figure. Even after two years of university studies it was clear to

Nacima that God exists but she still did not have real faith. Then during the following summer Nacima heard of Jesus in a new way. While visiting her family in Algeria for two weeks her older sister told her how Jesus had transformed her life. Nacima saw that God’s love was manifested through the Messiah, Jesus. In late July Nacima realized the depth of her personal sinfulness. With the help of her sister and the Holy Spirit she discovered the true light. Nacima believed that Jesus died and rose for her and faith took root in her heart. Death had been defeated by Jesus’ resurrection and Nacima’s fear of death was overcome. She found her reason for living; it was to serve the one who gave his life for her.

Spiritual Realities (2)

Continue praying along the same lines as yesterday. It is important to lay a good foundation for the remaining 28 days.

Prayer ideas:

Remember your spiritual identity. We are the children of God by the blood of the Messiah. We serve the one who has all authority in heaven and on earth. Proclaim these truths in worship. Pray for the following subjects for yourself and Muslim who may be in your town, region or country.

► **Where there is bitterness---meekness:**

Pray: “Lord, remove all bitterness from my attitudes concerning Muslims. Help Muslims deal with any bitterness in their own hearts.” (Eph 4:31; Hebrews 12:15)

► **Where there is fear/intimidation---love:**

Pray: “Lord, help us overcome fear. Your love casts out fear. Help me to live that way.” Muslims often live in fear of others, fear of evil spirits and fear of death. (1 John 4:18; 2 Timothy 1:7)

► **Where there is lust---purity:**

We and all Muslims need to escape the corruption which is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 2:16) Muslims are not free from pornography and covetousness. Knowing that we are also tempted, pray for yourself and for them.

► **Where there is violence---peace:**

Many Muslims really do not like the violence that they see in some aspects of Islam. Many reject it and refuse to live in that manner. Pray for them to know the way of peace. May God help us as believers to not be sources of violence and hateful attitudes toward Muslims. (Mt 5:9; Luke 1:78 and 10:5-6; Romans 3:17)

Mecca's Working Class

Praying for the people in Saudi Arabia's holy city

Mecca is the spiritual centre of the Islamic world. The religious sites participated in by the pilgrims make Mohammed's teaching and activities more real. Each day millions of Muslims turn toward Mecca five times each day during their daily prayers. Thousands of people work in Mecca managing, maintaining and cleaning hotels, working in restaurants, transporting food, selling food, working as guides, selling gold jewellery and souvenirs. Many more work in the transportation industry driving buses and taxis. The banking industry is important as well because the millions of pilgrims who arrive in the region need cash. All types of public health activities (doctors, nurses, inspectors, ambulance personnel and trash pick-up workers) are present trying to assure good health and safety for the millions of visitors. The general coordinator of "30 Days" even studied in university with some men who became public health administrators for the pilgrimage. In recent years the construction industry has been transforming the area around the Grand Mosque and the Kaaba in order to receive even more pilgrims. People who come to Christ in Mecca are rare but some have been known to find the Lord in this city of 1.7 million people.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ Use Rev. 4:11 and 5:4-14 to declare that Jesus is worthy to be worshiped by the people of Mecca (from the lowest labourer to the princes of the Saudi royal family).
- ▶ Pray for friendships, dreams, visions, internet, print and media exposure to multiply the gospel to the many workers listed above (cite them by name).
- ▶ Pray for new believers to be well integrated into believing communities.

Left: Abraj Al Bait Towers under construction in Mecca in 2010. The complex is scheduled for completion in 2011.

THE DATES FOR RAMADAN

The dates for Ramadan are established according to the Islamic lunar calendar of 354 days. Starting 11 days earlier each year, it takes about 33 years for the Islamic calendar to go through all the seasons. In 2011, Ramadan will be from about August 1st through 30th. This can vary slightly from country to country. The fasting period normally begins and ends with the sighting of the crescent moon. For more information consult the Islamic web site: www.moonsighting.com. Because of the changing nature of the Islamic year the 2011 booklet is actually our 20th edition. There have been 20

Islamic lunar years since the beginning of "30 Days" in March 1993. This is the year 1432 of the Islamic lunar calendar. (Note: The moon is not an object of worship in the Islamic religion.)



Saudi Arabian tribes

There are about 150 major tribes in Saudi Arabia. This year we are asking believers to pray specifically for the Utaybah tribe (also spelled Utaiba, Otaibah or Otayba). The Utaybah tribe has traditionally lived just north of the present Riyadh-Mecca highway in the desert between the Saudi capital, Riyadh, and Jeddah on the Red Sea. The residence of the tribal leader is Afif, a small town of 90,000 about 600 kilometres West of Riyadh. Many Utaybah are found in Riyadh, Jeddah and as far away as Kuwait. The Utaybah tribe has historically had an important role in the Saudi army dating to the early days of the reign of Abdul Aziz Al Saud, founder of the present ruling dynasty. The Utaybah tribe is composed of three major branches: the Barga (the largest branch), the Rwig, and the Banu Saad (Sons of Saad). Each of these branches are divided into many clans and families.

The Rwig clans and families are :
The Talhah clan includes the following families: Alasa'adah, Alhufah, Alsumarrah, Alhanateesh, Algharbiah, Alkarashemah, Alddalabehah, Alghawariah, Altheebah,

Alhamameed, Alhezman, Almaghaibah, Thoi Zarrag, Alghadhabeen and Alawazem.

The Mezhem clan includes the following families: Thoi Thubait, Alothyan, Alghubaiat, Almarshedah, Aljetha'an, Alseaheen, Thoi A'ali and Thoi A'tyah.

The Bano Saad clan includes the following families: the Albatnain, Allessah, Alsurairat and others.

Prayer ideas:

► *Worship God, the Lord of the desert. Read the Messianic Psalm 72:1-20. Proclaim God's sovereignty over the desert and the Utaybah tribe. Pray for the revelation of the Messiah among them and for their salvation. See verse 9: "Let the nomads of the desert bow before him, And his enemies lick the dust." Pray for at least one of the five sub-clans listed above. You are among some of the first persons to ever specifically mention these sub-clans in prayer.*

(See the site www.lovesaudis.com for additional information about Saudi Arabia).

The Tahrir Square in central Cairo which was the scene of the 2011 uprising that ousted Hosni Mubarak from power.



Libyan uprising

The Egyptian Revolution

Bahrain Protests

Freedom in Tunisia

Yemeni struggle

Unsatisfied in Algeria

The mosque where Mohammed is buried in Medina, Saudi Arabia



Seeking Freedom !

Friday Prayer Focus

Written in early March 2011

In the December 2010 first draft of the “30 Days” prayer booklet an article concerning prayer for the Egyptian elections under Mubarak was included (elections scheduled September 2011). Then came the Tunisian Revolution which was quickly followed by the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt. In early March 2011 we are preparing several versions of the “30 Days” material for printing. The Libyan revolt against Muammar Qaddafi is underway but the Dictator is still very dangerous and determined. Massive demonstrations are still taking place in many countries. The Muslim world is in great turmoil. The anointed King on Zion’s hill reigns (see Psalm 2). Who knows how He may guide the future?

The desire for freedom which the Tunisians, the Egyptians, the Libyans, the Yemenis and others have expressed in recent months is deeply embedded in the human heart. In an ultimate sense this desire can only be met by the Messiah. He is appointed to reign over the peoples of the earth with justice and righteousness (see Psalm 72 and Daniel 7:13-14). He will sit as judge and eventually correct all wrongs (Acts 17:31). The beauty of his righteous reign in the new heavens and on the new earth will be unequalled (2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1-4).

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Worship the Messiah who is delivers us from the guilt and power of sin. One day he will free us even from the presence of sin. The Messiah delivers us from the power of death, we shall rise again with bodies which will never die. The Messiah is opposed to all corruption, oppression and injustice. He has overcome the evil one and the attitudes, values and ways of this world.*
- ▶ *Pray for the Middle East and North Africa concerning current events.*
- ▶ *Muslims acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah without realising what that means or that he gives true freedom through his death and resurrection. Pray for many to meet the Messiah.*
- ▶ *Pray for the protection, encouragement and empowering of believers in this time of crisis.*

Kolai of Pakistan

Be among the first to pray for this group

Northern Pakistan, bordered by China to the north, Afghanistan to the northwest, and India to the east, has some of the most breathtaking sights in the world. It is there, nestled between five of the world’s highest mountain peaks, that Pakistan’s northern tribes can be found. Numbering around 410,000, the Kolai are one of those tribes (last year we prayed for the Kho people). Most people in this region work as farmers and shepherds. The northern tribes are isolated by mountain ranges and political borders. Many of the Kolai have various health problems due to poor water quality and poor nutrition. Drinkable water, sewage disposal, and drainage facilities are available for less than 8% of the population. Today, the vast majority of the people are Sunni (orthodox) Muslim, and some also practice shamanism. They believe that there is an unseen world of demons, fairies, and ancestral spirits, so they depend on shamans to cure the sick, communicate with the spirits, and control events.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Worship the Lord as the only true Deliverer from the power of sin, death and demons. Proclaim Jesus as the true Lord of the Kolai villages.*
- ▶ *Pray that the Kolai would extend favour to those who bring the Gospel.*
- ▶ *Ask the Lord to raise up labourers who can effectively deal with the spiritual forces at work in the Kolai area (Mark 6:13, Acts 10:38).*
- ▶ *People are needed to help with sanitation and nutritional issues.*



Muslims in New York City

God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)

In the summer of 2010 the whole world had its eyes directed toward New York City in the USA. A new mosque was being proposed just two blocks away from the “September 11th Ground Zero” site in lower Manhattan. Suddenly the entire planet knew that there were Muslims in New York City. Most Americans also discovered to their surprise that there are possibly 600,000 Muslims in the New York City area as well as over 100 mosques. In 1970 there were fewer than ten mosques. One mosque, located four blocks from “Ground Zero,” even lost several of its members in the famous terrorist attack in 2001.

No matter what people may think and feel about Muslims building a mosque near the “Ground Zero” site, we as believers are all called to pray for the accomplishing of God’s purposes among the Muslims of the city of New York. He is certainly calling many Muslims into His eternal Kingdom. Jesus’ blood was shed for them. Let’s pray for Muslims in the New York City area.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Search your own heart concerning September 11th. Has the event made you bitter, prejudiced and angry toward Muslims in general because of this attack? (Hebrews 12:15)*
- ▶ *Pray for the families who have lost loved ones in the September 11th attacks. Pray that they will be able to make peace with the past and be ready to move forward with the rest of their lives, leaving any bitterness behind. God is the only one who can bring help to the families who suffered these losses.*
- ▶ *Pray for members of the Muslim community in New York that have suffered prejudice and abuse simply for being Muslims as a result of the attacks.*
- ▶ *Remember that there is a spiritual battle in the heavens for the salvation of the many Muslims in the city who are still very much in the hands of the enemy.*

They need deliverance from the guilt and shame of sin, from the power of death and from fear of the evil one. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). Proclaim Heb. 2:14 over the city.

▶ *Pray for Muslims in the New York area to discover the truth about the Messiah, Jesus through friendships with believers, through supernatural intervention, and traditional radio, television, internet, books, tracts, DVDs and the Bible.*

▶ *Many new workers are needed. Believers from all New York are needed to proclaim the Good News in the Muslim community.*

Al Jadida, Morocco

Al Jadida is a port city on the Atlantic coast of Morocco with massive stone walls. The Portuguese established an important fortress city at this location called Mazghan in 1502 in order to suppress the local pirates. Moroccan Muslims took the fortress from the Portuguese in 1769. The Muslims gave the city the name “Al-Jadida” which is simply Arabic for “new.” The city now has about 150,000 inhabitants. Al-Jadida truly comes alive in summer. The many fine beaches in the area (Oualidia Haouzia, as well as Sidi Bouzid, Lalla Fatna and Jorf) attract primarily Moroccans on holidays, but there are also a few Western tourists. Holidaying Moroccans are about as relaxed and easygoing as one could wish for anyone to be!

For more info see the site: www.ariseshinemorocco.org



Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Over the decades many Moroccans in Al Jadida have heard and been influenced by the Gospel either through media or by direct contact with believers. Many need to commit/recommit their lives to the Messiah. Some need to reconcile themselves with other believers (See James 1:6-8 and 4:8).*
- ▶ *Pray for the handful of scattered believers in the area that they would grow bold and have a yearning in their heart to share their faith with others and meet together. The Moroccan believers often do not regularly meet together because of fear (See 2 Timothy 1:7).*
- ▶ *Pray for Moroccans on holiday to discover the Messiah. He is the only one who can bring real peace, joy and rest. Years ago the Apostle Peter was staying on the coast of Israel. Some dramatic events happened which led others to encounter the Messiah a little further up the coast (see Acts 10:1-48). Pray for God’s interventions!!!*
- ▶ *Pray for this coastal region from Azemour to Jadida to Safi to Essaouira. May the wind of the Holy Spirit blow in from the sea and further inland to the heart of the nation.*

JESUS IN THE QUR’AN

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

Jesus is the word of God:

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

Jesus is Messiah:

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

Prophet or a Messenger from God:

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

Raised the dead and healed the sick: Sura: 3:49; 5:110

Pure, sinless:

Sura: 19:19

Even if the Qur’anic ideas listed above are the same or similar to Biblical ideas, Muslims never think of Jesus as being divine or as saving us through his death and resurrection. They think of him as a prophet who brought a book called the “Gospel.”



Basic Islam



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

No one can possibly understand Islam without knowing something about the life of Mohammed. This man is revered by all Muslims as the last and greatest prophet. In Islam, Mohammed is considered the “ideal man.” Mohammed is in no way considered divine, nor is he worshipped, but he is the model for all Muslims concerning how they should conduct themselves. No images of Mohammed are permitted (in order to prevent idolatry).

The Early life of Mohammed: The prophet of Islam was born in AD 570 in Mecca, a city in Saudi Arabia. He was a member of the Hashim clan of the powerful Quraysh tribe.

During much of Mohammed’s lifetime pagan idol worship abounded in Arabia. An estimated 360 gods and goddesses were adored by the Arabs in Mecca, which was a major centre of idolatry in the region. Muslim historians think that even as a boy Mohammed detested idol worship and lived a morally pure life.

Initial Revelations: According to Muslims, at the age of 40, in AD 610 Mohammed supposedly began to receive revelations and instruction that he believed were from the archangel Gabriel (Gibrail in Arabic). These “revelations” form the basis of the Qur’an. Mohammed proclaimed that his revelations were the final and superior message from the One Supreme God, although at the beginning Mohammed even doubted that he was a prophet. He banned the worship of idols and established civil and religious order in Medina and eventually Mecca. Mohammed died in AD 632 in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

Relations with Jews and Christians: During his life, Mohammed met many people who were at least nominal Christians. He also learned many religious ideas and cus-

ISLAMIC BELIEFS

One God, the Creator of all things

Angels and evil spirits

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

Mohammed, the last and greatest prophet

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

The Day of Judgement for all people

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



tombs from Jewish clans that were living in the region of Mecca and Medina. Mohammed’s role as prophet was not accepted by the Jews, leading to serious conflict. Jewish and Christian ideas, practices and history are very present in the Qur’an, although they are often distorted.

ISLAMIC IDEAS ABOUT JESUS

- *Jesus was conceived miraculously by God in the womb of the virgin Mary.*
- *Jesus is only a prophet, he is not divine (not the Son of God, not God in the flesh).*
- *Muslims even believe that Jesus even spoke as an infant saying that he was a prophet.*
- *According to Islam Jesus was actually a good Muslim and he taught an earlier form of Islam to the Jewish people. One can find a Muslim account of the life of Jesus in the so called "Gospel of Barnabas." This document was probably come to be in its present form in the 14th - 16th centuries AD. It may have even been written at that time.*
- *Jesus will come again one day, he will marry, he will have children. He will correct the errors which Christians have said about him. He will die, he will be buried in Medina and be judged like all men at the Last Judgement.*
- *Jesus is not the Judge of mankind.*



ISLAM: JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

- Islam denies the need for Jesus to die for our sins. Many Muslims believe that the God of Abraham can simply forgive sins without an atoning sacrifice.
- Islam denies the fact of Jesus' death on the cross. Generally according to Islamic teaching Jesus went directly to heaven without dying. He was not crucified. Muslims often believe that Judas, the traitor, had his face miraculously transformed into the face of Jesus and died in the place of Jesus as a judgement from God.
- Islam denies the efficacy of Jesus' death to remove our sin and guilt.
- Islam denies Jesus' resurrection and his victory over death.
- Islam denies that Jesus has become the Messianic King, who is to reign over the whole world.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

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

1. *Reciting the Creed (shahada) "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet".*
 2. *Prayer (salat) - Five times each day.*
 3. *Almsgiving (zakat) - Both obligatory and voluntary giving to the poor.*
 4. *Fasting (saum) - Especially during the "holy" month of Ramadan.*
 5. *Pilgrimage (hajj) - At least once in a lifetime to Mecca, known as the Hajj.*
- Some Muslims add a sixth pillar:*
6. *Jihad: The struggle to propagate the faith of Islam throughout the world, either by force of arms or by actively seeking to propagate the faith by word and deed.*

What God has accomplished for us:

Jesus, the Messiah, resurrected from the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth ... has released us from our sins by His blood. (Revelation 1:5)

Awan of India

The Awan are an Urdu speaking people who number over 600,000 in India. The majority of Awans claim that they are descended from Qutb Shah, a general in the army of Mahmud of Ghazni, who was a descendant of Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law, Ali.

The Awans have a strong martial tradition and are renowned for their bravery. They were among those the British considered to be 'martial races' (a designation created by officials of British India to describe peoples that were thought to be naturally warlike and aggressive in battle and to possess qualities such as courage, loyalty, self-sufficiency, physical strength, resilience, and fighting tenacity). The British recruited heavily from these 'martial races' for service in the colonial army, and they formed part of the core Muslim group recruited during the First and Second World Wars.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Proclaim that the Lord is the Lord of Hosts (armies) over the Awan and that they should obey Him (Ps. 103:19-22).*
- ▶ *Pray for liberation from the chains of the enemy.*
- ▶ *Ask God to reveal Himself to the Awan through dreams, visions and other manifestations (Ps. 103:2-3).*
- ▶ *Pray for labourers to proclaim the Messiah among the Awan. (Article based on material from Frontiers)*

Balrampur

The district of Balrampur is located in northern India in the state of Uttar Pradesh, adjoining Nepal. The three main towns found in the district are Balrampur, Utraula, and Tulsipur (see all on Wikipedia). The main river flowing through the district, the Rapti, is notorious for annual flooding, bringing much hardship to the people living on its banks. Less than 10 per cent of the population have large land holdings while 90 per cent are subsistence farmers with small land holdings, or agricultural labourers. The majority of inhabitants are illiterate. Presently, the land is unable to sustain the population and many people migrate to other cities in India such as Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and Jaipur.

The main languages spoken in Balrampur are rustic dialects of Hindi known as Dehati and Urdu. It is estimated that over 40 per cent of the district is Muslim, and possibly 60 per cent is Hindu, with very few Messianic believers. The annual Muslim Muharam festival is famous -- many families originally belonging to the district return each year to celebrate with their relatives. There are mosques in every village, but no churches to be found. The Muslims and Hindus of Balrampur live in relative harmony and friendship. Few workers are focusing their efforts on the Islamic community and unfortunately the efforts are not sufficient for this largely unreached area.



The Muharam festival in an adjoining region.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Pray that God will send well equipped believers who can speak the local languages to work in Balrampur.*
- ▶ *Pray that God will open hearts to receive the Gospel, especially in the major towns listed above and in the numerous villages.*
- ▶ *Pray for the seekers currently enrolled in the Bible correspondence course. Some students have indicated that they are ready to believe in the Messiah.*
- ▶ *Pray for the safety of the believers, as well as the safety of future disciples.*



Palestinian Territories

West Bank: 5877 km²

Population: 2.4 million people

408 people per km²

19 refugee camps

Gaza Strip: 365 km²

Population 1.5 million

4.108 per km²

8 refugee camps



“The best way I can help Israel is by leading her enemies to Jesus Christ.”
- Brother Andrew

For the Palestinians living in the Gaza strip, Nablus (the old Shechem), Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah and elsewhere, life is hard. Economic survival is difficult for most Palestinian families in normal periods, but the conflictual relations between the Jews and Palestinians as well as the conflicts between the Palestinians themselves makes things much more difficult. Families, the elderly and the handicapped are especially suffering.

Despite their withdrawal from Gaza, the Israeli military presence at sea and on the borders of the Gaza strip is still commonly perceived by Palestinian Muslims as an Israeli occupation because of the difficulty of importing goods from the outside world into the overpopulated enclave. Gazans can only rarely leave the enclave to travel abroad. On the Egyptian side the difficulties of getting visas are enormous. Most Gazans have never even been across the frontier with Egypt or to Cairo, which is the biggest city in the Arab world, only 350 kilometres away. The West Bank is still under very strict Israeli control as well, however happily there are some isolated pockets of prosperity. While the Palestinians do get economic help from abroad, some countries also send weapons, shells

and rockets that often only make the situation worse. This incites further violence against Israel.

Enormous stress, bitterness and often actual hatred is felt because almost every family had a son, a nephew, a cousin, a father or a mother or sister who died during the wars, protests, armed insurrections, terrorist efforts and confrontations of the last 65 years. Even among the Arabs, factional fighting between their own political and military groups (Hamas and Fatah) have killed many hundreds of people (about 600 people died in 18 months in 2006 and 2007 alone). Ultimately only God's love can change the people and take away hate and resentment.

About 2,500 people in Gaza call themselves believers. However, the vast majority of them are not practising, although some committed believers have been martyred for their faith. Some have actively done things to help the widows, the handicapped and the elderly. The Gazan believers definitely need encouragement. Visitors to Gaza from the outside tell how their hearts are touched and they are moved to tears when they leave. “The believers in Gaza say ‘Do not forget us.’”

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Thank God that he has not forgotten his promises to the Jews or the Arabs. He is faithful to both; some Arab speakers (from Arabia) first heard about the Messiah on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11). God obviously wanted them to hear the Good News.*
- ▶ *Thank God for the Palestinians who have recognised the Messiah already. Ask for more!*
- ▶ *Pray for profound inner healing for many. The scars of decades of conflict destroy lives in the present.*
- ▶ *Pray for the Hamas and Fatah militants. May their hearts be changed. May they come to know the love of the Messiah. Simon the Zealot was among Jesus' disciples. Many zealots at the time of Jesus used violence to accomplish their goals (Mt. 10:4).*
- ▶ *Pray for the brave believers who live among the Muslim Palestinians that they may be a good witness (Mt. 5:16). May they be strengthened in their faith (Ephesians 3:16-17).*



Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa

Islam's third holiest site

According to Islamic tradition, during the year AD 621 Mohammed, the prophet of Islam, was in Mecca, and he had either a vision or an amazing bodily voyage called the "Night Journey." Supposedly the angel Gabriel came to him with a winged horse named Buraq, which had a human face. Mounted on this strange animal, Mohammed flew through the air to Jerusalem (1,200 kilometres or 750 miles). In Jerusalem on the Temple Mount Mohammed supposedly led other prophets who appeared such as Moses, Jesus, and Adam in prayer. (The Temple had been destroyed 551 years earlier in AD 70.)* Then supposedly Mohammed remounted Buraq and went up to the heavens into the presence of God, where he pleaded with God about having only five daily prayers. God had supposedly been demanding 50 daily prayers. After this it is said that Mohammed returned to Mecca and described his journey to others. Most people refused to believe him.

The site, on the southern extremity of the Temple Mount where Mohammed supposedly prayed during the "Night Journey," became known as the "farthest mosque," which is the Arabic meaning of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. The actual mosque was finished in AD 705 and it

was rebuilt several times following earthquakes. According to tradition the golden "Dome of the Rock," which is beside the Al Aqsa Mosque, now covers the site where Mohammed supposedly went up to heaven.

The Al Aqsa Mosque is said to be the third holiest religious site for most Muslims. According to one tradition, Mohammed himself said that an Islamic prayer done at the Kaaba in Mecca is worth 100,000 prayers; a prayer done in Medina is worth 1,000 prayers; and a prayer at Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is worth 500 prayers more than in any other location. (Of course, Christians do not think of prayer as having any value other than as a means of communion and communication.)

***Muslims prayed daily toward Jerusalem till AD 624 when Muslims began to pray toward Mecca.**



Friday Prayer Focus

Prayer ideas:

Several thousand Muslims attend the weekly Friday prayers at the Al Aqsa mosque, which has an interior capacity of about 4,000 (tens of thousands pray on the esplanade outside during major religious events). For security reasons, the Israelis have restricted the attendance at Friday prayers to only older men who have families (some of them are the patriarchs of their families).

- ▶ *Pray for the men who attend the Friday prayers. May God awaken their minds to want to know about what happened at Israel's ancient temple (especially Mt. 27:51). They need a revelation that only Jesus can truly lead men to the Father (John 14:6).*
- ▶ *Worship God, Declare Jesus, the Son of God, the King of Israel as Lord over the Muslim men who come to pray (John 1:49).*
- ▶ *Pray for their families to also come into the kingdom of God (John 3:3).*



Hezbollah

The present inhabitants of Gaza have very little if any relationship to the ancient Philistines. The name Palestine is a Roman Latin deformation of the word Philistine, however, the modern Arab Palestinians are not Philistines.

The name Palestine was given by the Romans for Judea after the Jewish revolt of 135 AD. In Arabic the word Palestine is actually spelled “Palastin,” which is similar to Philistine. There is no “p” in Arabic. Some Arab Palestinians say that they are Philistines knowing that there was war between the Israelites and the Philistines. Some do this to incite hatred, some are simply misinformed.

In reality the Philistines originally came from the region of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea and settled on the coast (Gen 10:14, 1 Chron 1:9-15). The Philistines were not at all from Arabia. There are several biblical texts prophesying the destruction of Philistines and their civilization (Jer 47:1-7, Ezek 25:15-17 and Joel 3:4-6). Before Christ the invasion by Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, the Persians and the Greeks under Alexander effectively decimated the Philistines. Later the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Crusaders, the Turks and the British occupied the area. The Philistine people, culture, government, language and religion have disappeared.

Hezbollah is a political, social and military organisation in Lebanon which began in 1982. The name Hezbollah actually means “The Party of God.” As a Shi’ite organisation, Hezbollah has received strong religious, financial, political and military support from Iran. Syria has also backed Hezbollah politically and practically. The organisation is very present in the Beqaa Valley, southern Beirut, and southern Lebanon. It is a significant political force and it has developed a very strong and active social services network.

Several world governments consider Hezbollah to be a terrorist organisation, including the USA, Australia, Canada, Israel and the UK. Hezbollah condemned the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, but it has been accused of other suicide attacks (or attempted attacks) in the past. Hezbollah denies involvement in any attacks. The Shi’ite Hezbollah movement has no ties to Al Qaeda (a Sunni movement). Among Arabs generally, Hezbollah is seen as a legitimate Lebanese resistance organisation that has consistently stood up to the Israeli armed forces (65 to 85 per cent were favourable to Hezbollah according to some surveys). However, several governments in the Middle East, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, oppose Hezbollah as an “irresponsible

and adventurous” organisation. Through its collaboration with Iran and Syria, Hezbollah has amassed great stocks of arms in Lebanon (perhaps four times as many weapons as it had before the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon). Hezbollah considers Israel to be an illegitimate state and justifies actions against Israel as defensive Jihad.

Prayer ideas:

► *Pray for the Hezbollah leaders: Sheikh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, Hassan Nasrallah, Naim Qassem, and other lesser leaders that they may discover the life that is only in Jesus (John 1:9-14, 1 John 1:4). These men need to discover God’s plan to really bless the world through Abraham’s seed (Galatians 2:13-14 and 26-29).*

► *There are possibly 7,000-10,000 Hezbollah volunteers and fighters who are ready for armed conflict with Israel. Pray that the light of God would come among them. May they discover the Messiah. Jesus is the only one who can ultimately fulfill their aspirations of a just world ruled by the true God of Abraham (Isaiah 65:17 and 2 Peter 3:13).*





The Pakistan Floods

Today is Pakistan's Independence Day 

Pakistan's worst natural disaster in July and August 2010 was described as a "slow-motion tsunami." The catastrophe rendered five million Pakistanis homeless and over 1,600 dead. Over 20 million needed humanitarian assistance -- food, shelter and emergency care. One-fifth of Pakistan was under water. Outbreaks of cholera and dysentery caused deadly waterborne diseases. The number of people reported to be suffering from acute diarrhea was in the hundreds of thousands.

Yet this disaster opened opportunities to show God's love to the Pakistani people and serve in the name of Jesus Christ. Many recognised that the help was from local Christians. One Pakistani district official commented, "I appreciate the efforts of Christian people; you always step in first to help in times of need and serve without any greed."

At the end of one distribution, a man from a local village said to Christian workers, "I'd never met any Christians in my life. This is my first chance to see a Christian; but you look like us." The team member told him that they follow Isa (Jesus). The man replied, "No person from my faith came to help us, but you came from a distant place. Surely you are true followers of Isa" (the Islamic name for Jesus). Another man said after working alongside a team for one month, "There is no salvation without Isa Masih (Jesus the Messiah)." He had been seeking the truth for two years.

However, it was not all good news in Pakistan. According to one leader, "Some Christian refugees were openly denied aid, while others are told to leave or convert to Islam. You can imagine that terrible choice: either you abandon your faith or you cannot feed your child."

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Pray for the long-term recovery work across Pakistan. Pray for all the flood victims -- the bereaved, the injured, and those who have lost their homes and livelihoods. Many have lost wealth, homes and businesses built up over generations. Pray that all will find adequate shelter, clean water and food. They need the hope that comes from God's promises.*
- ▶ *Pray for Christians in Pakistan, the majority of whom are desperately poor. May they know the comfort and provision of their heavenly Father.*
- ▶ *Pray for the many new believers who came to know the Messiah during the floods. They need discipleship and to understand the love of God the Father and the Messiah.*
- ▶ *Pray for the many believers who seek to bring hope, life and peace in difficult circumstances.*





Surat in Gujarat, India

This is the Indian Independence Day



*Dr. Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin,
a Dawoodi Bohras leader*



Worldwide the Dawoodi Bohras Muslims number about one million. They reside in India, Pakistan, the Middle East, East Africa and the Western Indian state of Gujarat. In India the Dawoodi Bohras are recognisable by their dress: men wear beards and white gold-rimmed caps with long white kurtas, and women wear colourful, embroidered two-piece bhurkas.

Surat, in Gujarat State, is typically known as the capital city for Dawoodi Bohras. Situated on the banks of river Tapi, the ancient port city of Surat is renowned for its fine silks, exquisite brocades, and spice trade. Surat was one of the most prosperous cities of India in the 17th and 18th centuries. The East India Company established its first warehouses in Surat in 1612. The word “Bohra” is derived from the Gujarati “vohorvu,” meaning “to trade.” Most Bohras are merchants in different arena of business.

The state of Gujarat has faced natural calamities such as droughts, cyclones, floods and earthquakes in the last decade. Surat was greatly affected by the earthquake and flood that destroyed so much of Gujarat, and has experienced communal riots several times. Surat is a volatile city -- tensions between Hindus and Muslims

are known to flare frequently in this area. Riots take place on the slightest pretext, properties are destroyed, and lives are taken without any qualms or pretense.

Surat is a very significant city to the Dawoodi Bohras since it is where all the religious workers for the Bohras are training for ministry. There is a well known Bohras university specifically equipped for this purpose in Surat. Top students come from all over the community and it is an honour to be selected and trained in this university. The Bohras community is set apart, isolated and unreached for the Gospel. For a few years a team has been praying and asking the Lord for people to be released to reach out to the Bohras and the Muslims of Surat. At the moment very little work is being done to proclaim the Messiah among the Bohras and the Muslims of Surat. Surat is a city badly in need of the light of the Gospel. May peacemakers sow a harvest of righteousness among the Muslims of Surat.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Worship the Lord our provider, Jehovah Jireh (Gen. 22:14). Pray against the spirit of materialism that permeates the lives of Bohras. Ask the Lord to reveal Himself as the Perfect Provider.*
- ▶ *Pray that God would move supernaturally among the Bohras in Surat. Pray that they would receive dreams and visions of the Living God.*
- ▶ *Ask the Lord of the harvest for more workers to come and live amongst the Bohras in Surat. Pray for wisdom for the leaders and that the right people would join the work.*
- ▶ *Pray for an attitude of humility among the Bohras.*
- ▶ *Pray that the Prince of Peace would calm the tensions between Muslims and Hindus in Gujarat. Both will need to learn the way of peace.*
- ▶ *Pray for new business approach to the community.*

Muslims Worldwide

And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away ... (Daniel 7:14)

Muslims by continent	Population
Africa	429 million
Middle East	250 million
Asia	800 million
Europe*	44 million
Americas	5 million
Total	1.5 billion

*(Russia Included)

The Main World Religions

Buddhists: 478 million

Chinese Traditional Religions: 410 million

Animists / African Tribal / Other: 311 million

Hindus: 959 million

Secular / Atheist: 938 million

Muslims of all types: 1.58 billion

Christians of all denominations : 2.2 billion

Rank by Muslim population

Country Name

Population (millions)

Muslim population (millions)

Religious tendency
Sunni / Shi'a

1	Indonesia	233	80.3%	187	Sunni
2	Pakistan	185	95.8%	177	Sunni/Shi'a
3	Bangladesh	165	89%	146.5	Sunni
4	India	1,215	14.2%	172.5	Sunni / Shi'a
5	Iran	75.1	98.6%	74.1	Shi'a
6	Egypt	84.5	86.6%	72.3	Sunni
7	Turkey	76	96.7%	73.2	Sunni/Shi'a
8	Nigeria	158.3	45%	71.5	Sunni
9	Algeria	35.5	97.3%	34.5	Sunni
10	Morocco	32.8	99%	32.7	Sunni
11	Iraq	31.5	96%	30.2	Shi'a
12	Afghanistan	29.2	99%	29.1	Sunni
13	Sudan*	43.5	61.4%	26.6	Sunni
14	China	1,331	1.9%	24.9	Sunni
15	Saudi Arabia	26.3	92.4%	24.3	Sunni
16	Uzbekistan	27.8	85%	23.6	Sunni
17	Yemen	24.3	99%	24.3	Sunni/Shi'a
18	Syria	22.5	90%	20.3	Sunni
19	Malaysia	28	63%	17.5	Sunni
20	Niger	16	97%	15.5	Sunni

*Southern Sudan is expected to gain independence in July 2011

◆ New York p. 10

North America

South America

In December 2010 a man working with Facebook did a graphic representation of Facebook connections around the world. Notice the vast number of connections in North Africa, Turkey, Lebanon, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the North India plain. There are an amazingly high concentration of users in Ma-



laysia, Indonesia and the southern Philippine Islands as well. While most of these connections are local It does show how that Muslims are integrating themselves more and more into the world community. Many young Muslims are very well aware of pop music stars and films that are known internationally. The world is changing.



North Africa



Middle East

facebook



Pakistan, India, Bangladesh



Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines



Libya *(This fictional story was based on real events)*

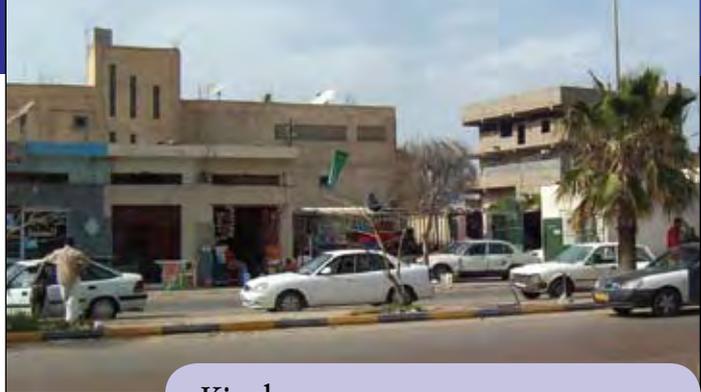
The original article was written before the Libyan uprising against Muammar Qaddafi.

Rashid sits looking out over the Mediterranean. At his back is the Sahara Desert. His five children are playing happily while his wife tidies up the barbecue. Rashid is worried. He normally enjoys barbecues in the warm spring weather, talking with his friends, drinking mint tea and relaxing after a hard week. This week was particularly difficult as a new law is requiring businesses like his to re-register, meaning hours in queues, and Rashid is unsure if he has correctly understood the new law. Progressive methods are new for his country, where corruption and favouritism have often meant the abundant oil wealth has not benefited the common people. A training trip to Europe had shocked Rashid -- the buildings and roads, indeed everything, seemed to be constantly repaired, not left to crumble as in his country.

But none of this is why Rashid is worried. The physical environment is not important -- what Allah wants will happen anyway. Rashid knows his name means Rightly Guided. He is proud to think of himself as one on the right path. Of course, one can never be sure with Allah, but Rashid is pretty confident that he is doing everything Allah wants: he prays, fasts, pays the tax, and at every opportunity he declares his faith in Allah. In

a year or two he should be able to pay to go to Mecca. But as he thinks back to his trip to Europe, and in particular one of his European teachers, all this certainty is clouded. The teacher hadn't lived as Rashid had expected, and he told Rashid in one of their many conversations over tea that he believed that God was not primarily interested in what we did but in our acceptance of what he had done through the Messiah! He seemed to be certain that he would live with God when he died! How could that be? He had suggested to Rashid that he watch an Arabic TV station. To be polite, Rashid had taken the details. Now at home he couldn't stop thinking about it, and finally, late one night when no one would see him, he found the channel and guiltily watched a few minutes, terrified of being found out.

Now Rashid has a bigger problem. The message attracts him, but for him it is all wrong. He has thought since childhood that Christians believe in three gods, that the original books of Jesus, Moses and David have been lost and/or changed by the Jews and Christians. How could this message, which they obviously take from the book, be the truth from God?



Kindness

The kindness of God leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4)

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *There are hundreds of thousands of Libyans who have suffered the loss of relatives and friends in the 2011 uprising. May they find help and consolation in the Messiah.*
- ▶ *Pray against corruption and that the country be better administered in the future (Ex. 23:8, Deut. 16:19).*
- ▶ *Pray for travellers and refugees from Libya to meet real Christians who testify to their faith (Acts 8:26-39).*
- ▶ *Pray for Libyans to tune into radio, satellite TV and Internet programs. These effective media aids have helped many find faith. God is revealing himself!*
- ▶ *Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to Libyans despite all their misconceptions and difficulties.*

See pray4libya.net for more information.

Testimonies from Turkey

A young woman from a conservative Muslim background is now a follower of Christ. Her brother heard of this, but was sure she would soon return to Islam. When he saw that she hadn't, he demanded that she renounce her faith and say the Islamic creed. She refused, and he grabbed a metal rod and threatened to kill her. The family stopped him, but her mother sobbed and pleaded with her to say the creed. She finally did, but deeply regretted it afterward. When she shared her sorrow with another Turkish believer, her friend explained that the Apostle Peter also denied Jesus, but was forgiven and restored. She has now experienced this same grace and says, "I never want to deny the Lord ever again."

A recently baptized believer just out of prison was greatly troubled by questions which another person brought up about the reliability of the New Testament. He said he was full of doubts and fell asleep with a Bible next to his bed. In the middle of the night he was awakened by a man who pointed to the Bible and said, "Don't be afraid. Read my book. I'm always with you." Later, he realized it was Jesus who had spoken to him, and he was greatly encouraged.



A family was concerned for Sait, a forty-year-old relative who was mentally disturbed and constantly paced the streets of their town. In a desperate attempt to find help, they rented a car and brought him to a community of believers in a larger city led by a Turkish pastor named Ali. Sait was filthy and had a long unkempt beard, urine-stained pants, and fingernails over an inch long. He couldn't talk and was obviously not in his right mind. The relatives asked Ali if he could do anything to help. He replied, "Jesus can, but you must believe He can." They said, "If we didn't believe He could help, would we have come five hours to see you?" This was a good enough answer for Ali, and he went up to the bearded man, gave him a big hug, and prayed for him. Sait then amazed them by becoming coherent and speaking for the first time in five years! A week later, Ali and the believers got a phone call from his family saying he was now cleaned up, eating well, no longer wandering the streets, and still in his right mind.

See the site: www.prayforturkey.com



Kangean people

Today is Indonesian Independence Day



The Kangean people (population 135,000) live on Indonesia's Kangean Island, located north of Bali. The island holds great tourism potential. Its beaches on the Java Sea are scenic and unspoiled, and the thick East Kangean forest contains many animals and beautiful birds. Monkeys, komodos, and snakes are in abundance. Local craftsmen sell wood handicrafts.

Since 1993 the islands have been the site of natural gas drilling. They are connected to East Java via a 430-kilometre pipeline, most of which runs underwater. Other economic resources on the islands include teak, coconut, and salt. In spite of the pipeline-related development, a lot of non-developed areas remain, and travellers looking for outdoor adventures could easily find themselves at home here. The Kangean are one of the last 200 or so Muslim people groups of over 100,000 with no organised effort to establish a community of believers.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *May God make Himself known! (Luke 10:21-24).*
- ▶ *Worship God, Proclaim Psalm 97:1 over the islands.*
- ▶ *Ask God to open doors of opportunity for the Good News to be seen, heard and demonstrated among the Kangeans (Mark 16:15-19).*
- ▶ *Pray for the Kangean people to have opportunities to read the Scriptures, see Gospel films and interact with believers in their language.*



Kerinci of Indonesia

God's wisdom (Proverbs 8:25): "Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills I was brought forth." Originally from the eastern coast of Sumatra, the Kerinci fled from local Muslim Sultanates in an ancient war and moved into their existing homeland high in the Bukit Barisan Mountains. They speak Kerinci and Bahasa Indonesian. Most of the 260,000 Kerinci are farmers harvesting rice, potatoes, coffee, cinnamon, and even resin and rattan from the jungle areas. Those living near Lake Kerinci and other small lakes are fishermen. The Kerinci have been able to resist assimilation with the stronger lowland peoples. Today their isolation is being changed by government-sponsored mass relocations of Jawa, Sunda, and Bali people for plantation

projects on their rich soil. In addition, a world-class national park is being developed by the World Wildlife Fund to preserve the rainforest, flora, and fauna. Islam is the majority religion of the Kerinci, but they still hold to animism, especially as it is exhibited by their use of traditional healers and magic to bless their crops.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Ask the Lord to give wisdom and favour to believers going among the Kerinci.*
- ▶ *Pray for God's wisdom and authority in dealing with the spiritual forces that have kept the people bound for generations (1 Cor. 1:30, 2 Cor. 10:4).*





Touba and the Mourides

Sufism is a movement centred on an inner, mystical dimension of spiritual experience in Islam. Often Sufis have sought to enter into the presence of the Divine and purify their inner self. Sufi movements are generally led by guides who are greatly revered. Some orthodox Muslims, including the main Islamic movement in Saudi Arabia, the Wahhabis, consider Sufis to be heretics.

Most Muslims in Senegal and The Gambia are affiliated with Sufi brotherhoods such as the Tijaniyyah, Xaadir (Qadiriyya), Mourides, and the Layene. Splinter groups have formed in each movement around specific leaders and special doctrines. The Mouride movement, headquartered in Touba, Senegal, was founded by Amadou Bamba in 1883. Amadou Bamba (1850-1927) was a Muslim mystic, a marabout, and a spiritual leader who gave instruction about meditation, Islamic rituals, work, and the study of the Qur'an. His emphasis on working has produced fruit and his disciples are known for their work ethic. Amadou Bamba did not support the French conquest of West Africa, but he resisted holy war. He encouraged what he called the jihad al-akbar, "the greater struggle," which should be fought through learning and the fear of God. The Mouride brotherhood in Senegal and The Gambia controls many sectors of the local economies. Followers often donate part of their income to the movement. Abdoulaye Wade, the current president of Senegal, is a committed Mouride. Immediately following his election in 2000, President Wade travelled to the holy city of Touba to seek the benediction of the spiritual leader of the brotherhood (the Grand Marabout).

Prayer ideas:

► *The Mouride leaders are the spiritual guides for 3 to 5 million people, and the principal leaders of Touba, the second largest city of Senegal (population 0.5 to 1.5 million). Pray for the Mouride leaders and adherents to really meet the living God. The economic, social and spiritual barriers are significant (you might pray based on Acts 13:4-12).*



Friday Prayer Focus



The great mosque of Touba, the burial place of Amadou Bamba. This is one of the most important religious sites in all of West Africa.

Pray for Muslims that will be gathering here for the regular Friday prayers today.

Malaysia

Malaysia is a federal constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government. The country is separated by the South China Sea into two parts, Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo. Located in the heart of South East Asia, Malaysia is surrounded by other countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei. Malaysia's capital is Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia's official religion is Islam. However, the freedom of religion is also guaranteed by the constitution. Of the 28 million Malaysians (Malays, Chinese and other ethnic groups), 60.4 per cent are Muslims. Malays (the largest ethnic group) are generally Muslims. There are also Indian Muslims and a small number of Chinese Muslim converts. Although the previous and present Prime Ministers have made proclamations that Malaysia is an Islamic nation, certain segments of the population have resisted this status,

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Pray for believers to open up their hearts to their Muslim neighbours and to be a blessing to them in practical, concrete ways.*
- ▶ *Pray for more divine encounters to occur among the the Malays (see Acts 10:17-48).*
- ▶ *Pray for believers to be courageous while extending the hand of fellowship and assistance to new people (it can be risky).*



pointing to the nation's secular constitution. Proselytising Muslims is prohibited by law and conversion out of Islam is also forbidden.

Believers from a Muslim background are few in number. Many worship in house churches and retain their traditional clothing and cultural customs. In many cases, they discovered the Messiah through a direct divine encounter. Though they are few in number, they are courageous in their witness and their faith.

Martyred in Saudi Arabia



In August 2008, a Muslim cleric and member of Saudi Arabia's Commission of the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, killed his sister 26-year-old Fatima Al-Mutairi, She had proclaimed her faith to her family, in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The Voice of the Martyrs contacts report Fatima's fellowship with other believers was mainly limited to Internet forums and phone correspondence. "As part of her testimony to the family, she proclaimed that the way of Christ is the most pure and most holy way of all. After sharing with her family, she found her brother in her room with her laptop open before him," VOM contacts said. "Her laptop contained notes about her spiritual journey, which he was searching in order to find more evidence against her. Her brother locked her in the room for four hours, during which time she wrote a final letter on the Internet. Fatima was killed soon thereafter," VOM contacts added.

This story is from the Voice of the Martyrs web site. You can find many other testimonies of suffering believers on the VOM site at: www.persecution.com

Muslims in Moscow

A wave from Central Asia

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. *John 9:4 (ESV)*

Russia is known for its rich history, the perseverance of its people through hardships, and its architectural masterpieces. Solemn paintings of icons, vast steppes, snowy forests, or cups of steaming tea and rosy, borsch soup may come to mind when you think of Russia. Yet the face of Russia is rapidly changing. Moscow, Russia's capital, has the largest Muslim population of any European city. Estimates range from 400,000 Muslims to 2-3 million (illegal aliens probably number in the hundreds of thousands).

Many of Moscow's Muslims come from the poor, former Soviet republics of Central Asia. Tajiks, Uzbeks, Afghans, Kazakhs, Tatars, and many others are coming in record numbers, looking for work of any kind. They often live together in cramped quarters and squalid conditions, saving as much as they can to send home to their families. They face beating, murder, even bombings and many are modern-day slaves to fearful, resentful and rough employers. Life in Moscow is not easy but it is sometimes far better than the bleak prospects back home.



Being away from their home country, familiar traditions, and family and cultural pressure presents new temptations for Central Asian Muslims but also a new openness to hear the truth of God's Word. "I used to hate Russia and didn't want to come back," said a Muslim-background believer (MBB). After seeing the potential for reaching Muslims from his home country, he became excited about the potential for ministry. "Now I feel like Russia is my second homeland," he says.

Although the Jesus film, Mary Magdalene DVD and CARS Bible (Central-Asian Russian Scriptures) are well received, there are only small numbers of believers specifically reaching out to Muslims. Since Muslims in Moscow are often immigrants, they are overwhelmed with life in such a big city, lonesome for family, and seeking friendship. It is a good moment to proclaim the Gospel to them.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Ask God to open the hearts of Muslims in Russia.*
- ▶ *Pray for the translation and printing of quality Christian literature for Russian-speaking Muslims and new believers learning to walk with the Messiah.*
- ▶ *Pray for unity, vision and wisdom for leaders throughout Russia to take the gospel to Muslims in Russia— making disciples of them in such a way that they are encouraged, enabled and equipped to do the same.*
- ▶ *Pray for concrete, practical steps by Russian churches to reach out to Muslims around them.*
- ▶ *Pray for the discipleship of young believers. There are few congregations for those coming to the Messiah, most are Kazakh only.*

Tajikistan

What does the future hold in store?



Zebo is 18 years old and wants to enter university. She dreams of an easier life for her family in Tajikistan. She desires to be free of the worries of putting food on the table and borrowing and bribing to get the education she desires. Like many other young people, she believes that if she can just learn English and find a good job with a foreign organisation, she and her family will be well provided for. She has little hope in her country, unlike the past confidence in the government under the Soviet system. Zebo even questions her family's strong Islamic beliefs. She knows that it will be difficult to obtain what she desires out of life. Her parents have recently been pressuring her to marry rather than pursue an education and a career. Life seems like a dead end street. She asks herself, 'Where can I find hope?'

Zebo represents thousands of young people who walk in hopelessness over their future life in their home country of Tajikistan. Landlocked between Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and China, this country of seven million people is the poorest former Soviet republic. Over 80 per cent of the population lives under the poverty line and the estimated average annual income is around 250 Euros per person. Women and children make up the majority of the population since many

men have gone to Russia for work. Some of them never return nor do they send the promised financial support home.

In recent years, Islam has become a stronger influence on the people as some have studied in more conservative Muslim countries and brought back their strict teachings. Ninety per cent of the people in Tajikistan are Muslims and only about one tenth of a percent are believers in the Messiah. While many are disillusioned by Islam, there are at the same time those who are genuinely seeking God.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *As young people think about their future, may they find their God-given purpose in Jesus, the Messiah. Pray for more workers in the harvest among the young people.*
- ▶ *The absence of fathers who work in Russia and elsewhere is making its impact on the foundations of Tajik society (Prov. 1:8, 3:12, 4:1, Eph. 6:4, Psalms 68:5, 27:10).*
- ▶ *Pray for strong disciples to be made and that they in turn might be prepared to lead others into the family of faith. Many are recent believers (1 John 2:12-14, Titus 2:1-14).*



The small city of Khorugh (possibly 20,000 inhabitants) and the towns and villages of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan are some of the most isolated places on earth. Located in the Pamir Mountains, the province makes up 45 per cent of the land area of the country but only three per cent of the population (about 200,000 people). See Khorugh with Wikipedia.

Jesus spoke of the Gospel being proclaimed to the "ends of the earth." Khorugh certainly qualifies for this title.

The Shuwa Arabs in Chad

1.5 million people who do not know the Great Shepherd

The Shuwa Arabs immigrated to Chad hundreds of years ago from the Sudan. Their language, is similar to the Arabic of the Qur'an. Islam is central to their identity and they consider themselves to be guardians of the faith. Being very suspicious of strangers, they are also afraid of the "evil eye," the influence of demons and the black magic of the neighbouring peoples. If, however, their confidence is won, their hospitality is abundant for outsiders.

The Shuwa are semi-nomads. Their life is focused on the welfare of the animals (cows, goats and sheep). Depending on the area, young families move in the dry season in search of food and water for the animals. In the rainy season they come back to manage the millet and maize fields. In general, they living in small communities, comprised mostly of relatives. When the water dries up and the animals can no longer feed off the land, or if the village has become too large, a group will simply wander on and settle in a new, uninhabited area. Some other families are heading for the cities where they are becoming successful traders and adopt urban habits.

In recent years primary schools have been established in villages although only a few children attend. Some of

the girls are circumcised at the age of 6-8 years. Often the girls are married in arranged marriages between 12 and 14 years to their cousins and usually become mothers by the age of 15. Many women have between 8 to 10 children although only 2/3 survive. Boys begin Islamic School around the age of six. These schools are often in other tribal areas so the boys grow up on their own, missing their parents and siblings. They must beg for their food and raise money for their teachers, some are accused of being thieves and are beaten.



Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Proclaim the truths of John 10:10-16 in prayer concerning this nomadic and shepherding people. See also 1 Peter 2:24-25.*
- ▶ *The Shuwa seem to have respect for "real" practicing Christians. Sometimes professionals are sent to the area. Some of them, while claiming to be believers, unfortunately have not always behaved in a manner which honours God. Pray that the few believers who live in the area can be true witnesses for the Messiah. May they live lives which are truly worthy of the Lord. (Colossians 1:9-12)*
- ▶ *There are no known Christians among these Arabs. A few individuals have asked for Bibles and cassettes. The "Jesus" film is useful for making known the Gospel among these people.*

The Back to Jerusalem Movement

Chinese believers want to honour their Messiah

History: In the 1940s God spoke to several Chinese believers about spreading the Gospel starting with the western Chinese province of Xinjiang through Muslim countries all the way to Jerusalem. They called themselves “The Preach Everywhere Gospel Band”; Western missionaries called them “The Back to Jerusalem Evangelistic Band.” Some of the spiritual roots of this movement can be traced to the 1920s “Jesus Family” group which targeted villages and preached the Gospel. They committed themselves to “sacrifice, abandonment, poverty, suffering and death” for the sake of the Gospel. The “Back to Jerusalem Movement’s” first priority was to reach the following Chinese provinces: Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu and Ningxia in Central, Northern and Western China. Also included as target areas were Asia’s border countries: Afghanistan, Iran, Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Palestine. Upon reaching these areas, they intended to establish new believing groups while shepherding and reviving existing efforts. They decided to completely rely on God for finances for all their endeavours. The movement did move into Western China in the 1950s and suffered great persecution and most of the believers were imprisoned. Simon Zhao, one of the early lead-

ers was jailed for 31 years. Though Zhao entered prison as a young visionary, later he was released into a very different China as a gray-haired, elderly man with no friends. News of Zhao’s release spread, but it was not until six years later that church leaders began to seek him out.

Initially, Zhao did not share his vision for the “Back to Jerusalem” ministry with others. Instead he sought to encourage Chinese Christian leadership and pray. It was not until the 1990s that Zhao began to share his vision with a group of Chinese Christians to inspire them to carry on the vision God had given him over 50 years ago. He died in 2001 after another 15 years of ministry. During this time, several believers became burdened to pursue the “Back to Jerusalem Movement” once again.

Today, many Chinese Christians have the vision to reach western China and Muslim nations all the way back to Jerusalem. They believe that in the last days before Christ’s return, it is the duty of the Chinese church to take the Gospel back to Jerusalem in order to complete a full circle of the Gospel which was originally brought to them from the West.

“Hundreds of Chinese families are desiring to relocate to unreached regions of China,” reported a Chinese

耶穌基督

Above: Jesus Christ in Chinese



house-church leader. Some leaders hope to send out thousands of itinerant missionaries to reach the non-Han peoples of China and plant new congregations. Cross-cultural outreach is still very young in China, yet some believers are praying continually about their role in reaching the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist nations with the Good News of the Kingdom.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Worship the Lord, Proclaim the truths of Isaiah 66:18-23 in prayer. May God open doors for many Chinese to proclaim his glory among the nations.*
- ▶ *Some Chinese believers have already made courageous efforts to proclaim their faith cross culturally but the results have not always been positive. There is a huge need for effective and in depth cross cultural outreach training for those who want to take the Gospel to other peoples. Training is a major priority. Zeal is not enough.*

Istanbul, Turkey

A city of 12.8 million people, most of whom are at least nominally Muslim

Istanbul is longing to be loved. And loving her is at least sometimes easy. Extremely diverse, the malls are some of the most modern in Europe yet some cobble stone streets go back to Byzantine times. Teens with pierced bodies mingle easily on streets with heavily veiled women. Reconciling religion and modernity are part of the multi-cultural makeup of Istanbul, the world's fifth-largest city, but the only city in the world on two continents. About 3,000 mosques are in the greater Istanbul area but the degree of religious commitment among Istanbulites varies significantly. Roughly 70% of the population live in the European section of Istanbul while 30% live in the Asian section. Istanbul is truly a city of different worldviews.

It is good to keep some things in mind when praying for Istanbul. Firstly, the culture is eastern; it is based on the honour and shame concepts rather than concepts of guilt and innocence. In relationships and religion Istanbulites seek to save face. This is one reason families often disown members who commit themselves to the Messiah. Family honour calls for it. Muslims are not supposed to leave Islam. To do so is shameful for the individuals and their families. Jesus spoke of leaving

everything for His sake. Certainly “leaving all” for His sake is a real choice for many young people in Istanbul. (Mark 10: 29-30)

Another important aspect of praying for Istanbul is breaking from the past. Although some of Istanbul is a “secular society”, strict Islamic practice, folk Islam and Animism are very much a part of everyday life for most people. Women were a blue bead to throw off “curses” and encourage fertility. Marriage and death have customs based on verses of the Qur'an. Everything is left to divine fate / destiny (called kismet), which often gives a mix of fear and anger while facing life's woes. Fear and frustration are natural consequences of the Islamic idea of the God of Abraham. In their way of thinking one cannot be assured being forgiven of sins or being freed from shame. Because of this mix of beliefs many believers in Istanbul attest to the difficulties of explaining how Jesus willingly gave up his life to bring us salvation. Muslim Background Believers (MBB's) testify to the fact that they must make a total break with their amulets and fatalistic worldviews in order to be totally free to serve the Lord. Prayer needs to include renewal for those who find Christ (Eph. 4:22-24).



Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *When we pray for Istanbul, let us try to see its people from God's perspective. Imagine the frustrations of men who work hard, often sixteen hours a day but whose salary is eaten by inflation.*
- ▶ *Pray for the youth for whom most promises and hope of a brighter future seem empty.*
- ▶ *Pray for women destined to give birth to boys and who are often abandoned when they don't. Let us pray in faith; that our prayers are being answered. (Eph. 3:18, John 14:13; 2 Peter 3:9)*

Learn more about Istanbul: MeetIstanbul.com

See: Turkey video on YouTube "Prayershorts" channel.



The Night of Power

Tonight in mosques all over the Muslim world millions of people will be praying asking for God's help. The so called "Night of Power" is a special night. Muslims believe that Mohammed received the Qur'an during the later part of Ramadan. The Night of Power commemorates this event. Muslims will do various religious activities during this night but many make special requests of God. Some Muslims rise well before dawn to make their requests, others pass much of the night in prayer. They are encouraged to ask Allah with sincerity and conviction for anything and everything they need that is religiously permitted.

Without doubt some people around the world will be seeking God's help for employment issues, marriages, the ability to have a child and other things. However, Muslims worldwide need help with their handicapped relatives. Many of the most difficult cases among the young and old find themselves rejected, hidden, abandoned and abused. Their social stigma is great because they are considered "the cursed of God." Families often hide them, tie those with mental disabilities up in back rooms or send them away to state-run institutions. Many institutions are over-crowded and unable to properly care for the needy ones. At one such facility in Turkey, there is a waiting list of 3,000 individuals. Parents or relatives who do not want or do not know how

Friday Prayer Focus

to care for their own disabled children believe that the government will do a better job of caring for their children. The result is slow, often hurt-filled death or mass housing in prison-like conditions. ***We can pray for a real "Night of Power" in the lives of many who suffer from the pain, hardship and rejection caused by disabilities and sickness.***

Testimony: Murat in Turkey was one such abandoned son, left by his father on the doorstep of the orphanage as a young boy with extreme cerebral palsy. I met him fifteen years later living in a metal crib too small for him in a ward for mentally and physically impaired children. After discovering that he could speak and was not mentally challenged I told him that God loved him only to be shocked with his clear response, "No He doesn't. The fact that I'm disabled means that God definitely DOESN'T love me." Murat let me pray with him that day. One week later when I went to visit him in his metal crib bed, I met a changed young man. The Lord Jesus had appeared to him and told him that He loved him. Murat was grinning from ear to ear. "I know God loves me!" he laughed with joy while I wept with profound gratitude for the message of the Kingdom. This "sign" had followed the proclaiming of the Kingdom of God.



See the site: www.prayforturkey.com

Prayer ideas:

We can certainly pray for people in many nations tonight, may God guide you. Many seek the Lord all night.

Here is a specific subject: About one sixth of Turkey's population of 73 million struggles with some form of sickness or disability. (See Mt 15:30; Mark 1:34 and 3:10)

- ▶ *Pray for the wonderful Turkish believers who are reaching out to people with Special needs. May they be strengthened and Spirit-led to the prepared-ones.*
- ▶ *Pray for societal change concerning the disabled and mentally afflicted. May many increasingly not be put-off by the poverty or social pariah attitudes of some.*
- ▶ *Pray for a new government policy to be implemented in Turkey, which would allow volunteers to regularly work within these state-controlled institutions.*
- ▶ *Pray for an increase of media in communicating the Good News to the disabled.*

The Changing Tide in Central Asia

The term “Central Asia” most often refers to the five former Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. However, sometimes the borders of the region called Central Asia can be stretched to include such countries as Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Iran and the Xinjiang Autonomous region in North West China. The ancient Silk Road, the famous trade route that Marco Polo and multitudes of others traveled, crosses the region from Xian, China to Istanbul, Turkey. Although the region is now separated by national borders, most of the ethnic groups are Turkic, having similar languages and cultures. For example, the Uighurs (in North West China), Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Azeri and Turks all speak Turkic based languages. However, the Tajik language is Persian based, similar to languages spoken in Iran and Afghanistan.

Following the fall of the Iron Curtain, a tremendous door for the Gospel was opened in Central Asia. In 1990 there were less than 2,000 believers from among the predominately Muslim peoples of the region. Today it is estimated that there are upwards of 80,000! Many congregations have been planted, pastors and leaders raised up. These assemblies are now sending their own people to other nations such as China, Turkey, Mongo-

lia, Afghanistan and Iran. The amazing story of what transpired during the fifteen years following 1990 is one of the great stories of our time.

Yet, the window of freedom for the Gospel in Central Asia was short lived. Turkmenistan was the first country to expel foreign “workers” in the late 1990’s, followed by Uzbekistan. Church registration became difficult, if not impossible to obtain. Other restrictions became law in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Even Kazakhstan, which was known to be the most open of all the Central Asian countries, is drafting a law in 2011 which imposes much greater restrictions on believers. The followers of Jesus in many areas now risk arrest, interrogation, and fines when they meet together. Pastors have been falsely accused and sentenced to prison terms ranging from a few weeks to several years.

Prayer ideas:

► *Pray for the believers in Central Asia according to Acts 4: 29-30, “Now, Lord, look on their threats and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”*



History shows that persecution and restrictions placed on believers cannot stop the Gospel from moving forward. Sometimes restrictions, imprisonment and even martyrdom have actually fuelled the flames of revival.



Turks in Berlin

Sometimes Berlin is called the largest Turkish city outside of Turkey. Most Turks in Berlin maintain their Turkish nationality while others have become naturalised German citizens. Since 2007 thousands more Turkish-speaking Bulgarians have been added to the mix. For the immigrants from Turkey, Bulgaria and elsewhere, life in Berlin means a huge culture shock and change. For many it is their first time in a big city so different from life in their villages back home. Often their dreams of economic success and security remain unreachable. Because of the world economic crisis today the unemployment rate among Turks in Berlin is still around 40%.

For decades Turkish migrants in Berlin have established themselves in the city. An entire Turkish Muslim community has been established so that even Turks with little knowledge of German can survive. Muslims in some neighbourhoods dominate the city streets, increasing their control over individuals. For example, should a Turk visit a Christian bookstand and take something, they are likely to be stopped just a few meters away and be spoken to by a Muslim onlooker.

Although Turks have lived more than 40 years in large numbers in Berlin, many churches overlooked them, but there have been some exceptions. Some have



prayed for opportunities to reach the Turkish community with the Gospel. Lots of literature has been given away through personal contacts and friendships. Over the years about 50 Turks in Berlin have come to know the Messiah. Some of these believers meet in house fellowships or gather often for Turkish-speaking services. Recently a new group has been established among Turkish Christians from Bulgaria.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Pray for closer contacts for believers in Berlin and the Turks so that they can learn of the love of God and hear clear testimonies of Turks who have come to Jesus.*
- ▶ *Pray for love, authority, and effective witness of the believers who actually have contact with Turks. Motivated believers are especially needed to reach out to the second and third generation Turkish migrants.*

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

In the West, young people are free to act as spontaneously as they want, as long as they are within the framework of right and wrong. They can be loud, boisterous and happy as long as they don't break things or abuse others. The rule in the West is "As long as you don't hurt someone else or their property, you are generally OK."

Young people in a Muslim setting are different. Wherever they go, they represent their families and tribes. Young people are not free to act as they want. They must always act honourably so that the honour of their family and tribe is upheld. If they damage someone else's property, it is bad because it brings shame on their own people, not primarily because it offends the victim. If no one knows who did it, there is no shame, or feeling of guilt. They feel guilt for bringing shame on their own people, but not for offending a third party.

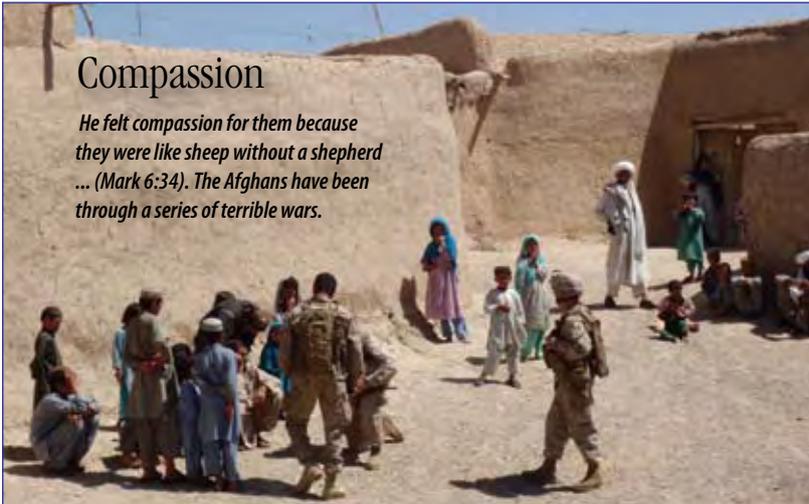
*From a book by Roland Müller, **The Messenger the Message and the Community**, Canbooks 2010, p. 148 (The e-book can be purchased online).*

WHO ARE THE SHI'AS (SHI'ITES)?

The first three caliphs (successors) of Mohammed were chosen from the larger Muslim community. The fourth one was Ali, Mohammed's nephew and son-in-law who had been married to Mohammed's daughter Fatima many years before. Ali was able to maintain his position briefly before he was murdered in AD 661. The Shi'as believe that the rightful rulers of the Muslim community worldwide were actually Ali and his eleven descendants through Mohammed's grandson Hussein who died as a martyr in Iraq in AD 680. A majority of Shi'as believe that Hussein's line of succession continued till his descendant Mohammed al-Mahdi, the twelfth "rightly guided Imam," mysteriously disappeared beginning in AD 874 at the age of five. He was supposedly accessible to certain people till AD 941. After that the Shi'a hope for ruling the Muslim community was totally transferred to the unseen world from which a hidden spiritual guide – called the Hidden Imam (leader) or Mahdi (the one who guides), will eventually return.

Compassion

He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd ... (Mark 6:34). The Afghans have been through a series of terrible wars.



Qizilbash of Afghanistan

Language: Dari Population: 316,000

The name Qizilbash, which is Turkish for “Red Heads,” is given to a wide variety of Shi’a (Shi’ite) militant groups who helped found the Safavid Dynasty of Iran (1501-1722). Their name is derived from their distinct headwear, with twelve points indicating their adherence to the “Twelver” branch of Shi’ite Islam (the main Shi’a group). The Qizilbash in Afghanistan are descendants of troops left behind by Nadir Shah during his ‘Indian campaign’ in 1738. They held important posts in government offices in the past, and today they engage in trade or are craftsmen. As Persian-speaking Shi’a Muslims, they constitute an important and politically influential element of society in the nation of Afghanistan. Exact population figures are hard to come by because they have taken a dual religious identity (called taqiyya) due to persecution from Sunni Muslims. There are no known believers among the Qizilbash.

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ *Worship the Lord in song. Proclaim Jesus sovereignty to the ends of the earth using Psalm 72:5-8, 12-14 (Think of the poverty and violence of Afghanistan).*
 - ▶ *Pray for open doors into the lives of the Qizilbash in order that believers might find opportunities to share Jesus with them.*
 - ▶ *Pray for workers from among the Afghani believers minister to the Qizilbash.*
 - ▶ *There are very few Gospel resources in their language. Ask God to raise up linguists to translate the Scriptures, literature and audio recordings into Dari.*
- (Information from Frontiers)*

The Tablighi Jamaat Movement

Islam's largest missional group



In recent years three to five million Muslims made their way to Tongi, just north of Dhaka, where the Bangladeshi government has set aside 160 acres (0.65km²) especially for the annual event. They came from over 80 countries for a three-day "Ijtema" meaning "gathering." After the Hajj, this is the biggest worldwide Islamic gathering. The 'Bishwa Ijtema' (global gathering) is sponsored by the Tablighi Jamaat movement (the society for spreading faith).

The gathering focuses on prayers and meditation. "Political discussion is not allowed at the gathering" claim the Tablighi Jamaat. Often referred to simply as TJ, the Tablighi Jamaat are the largest missional Muslim group worldwide (In Africa, North America, Europe, Asia and elsewhere). There are no exact figures on the numbers of TJ followers, but estimates put the number at 70 to 80 million people making it officially the largest single movement within Islam.

The Tablighi Jamaat focuses attention on "correcting" Muslim practice and doctrine. Part of that involves isolation from non-Muslims. "We tell our brothers and sisters living in secular societies that mixing with non-Muslims makes them weak Muslims," says Naem, a

spokesperson in Canada. "We tell them to separate, to build their own schools and spend their time with other Muslims. This is the only way to battle the forces of secularism."

The TJ have become hugely successful, partially since one of their six "Steps" requires that followers go away in groups for days or weeks at a time spend time rejuvenating their own faith. They are also involved in talking to other Muslims to increase religious practice. They are criticized by some Islamic groups as an exclusive sect "whose teaching exclude all other Muslims who do not follow its peculiar definition of what it means to convey the message of Islam.

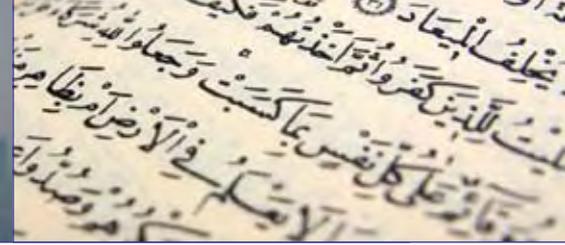
The TJ are self-professed pacifists who tend to stay off the Internet and away from the cameras. But their message has been very successful in places like Bangladesh, where natural disasters and conflicts have forced tens of thousands into refugee camps. "They are the only ones helping people," says Anwar. "The government has done nothing, but the religious groups have been there since the beginning. They are winning over the local people."

*The "Bishwa Ijtema" photos courtesy of the blog: dhakadailyphoto.blogspot.com
(An excellent and edifying site to see and understand life in Bangladesh)*

Prayer ideas:

- ▶ As the TJ members move throughout the world, pray they will meet Christians who will reflect the life and love of the Messiah to them. (Col. 4:3, Ps 9:20)
- ▶ Pray for Bangladesh, a country which is about 85% Muslim, and which suffers more than most in the world. Serious overpopulation, widespread poverty, and catastrophes including flooding, cyclones and famine have touched the country strongly. God is opening the hearts of Muslims to respond to the Gospel (See Acts 16:13-14).
- ▶ Pray that strong congregations can be established as God is working in the nation. Cross centred discipleship of those interested in the Messiah is needed.

Islam, Sharia and Globalization



There is much confusion in Christian circles these days about Islam. On the one hand, testimonies of the persecution of Christians, violence and discrimination keep pouring out of countries like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and others. The move to ban the full-face veil (niqab) in several countries in Europe also conflates extreme versions of Islamic law (Sharia) with Islam and Muslims in general. On the other hand, the slogan “Islam is a religion of peace” appears in the secular media alongside reports of new terrorism plots by al-Qaeda and associates. Where is the truth?

The truth is, Islamic history reveals a lot more complexity than Muslims themselves recognise. Islamic law, which only appeared gradually in the third century after Muhammad’s death, was developed over time by at least six schools, with significant disagreements among

Most Muslims have internalized the ideals of human rights and democracy, however, they have also become more religious and conservative at the same time.

them. This was “applied jurisprudence” (or fiqh), with the term “Sharia” usually referring to God’s ideal blueprint for a godly human society as drawn from the Qur’an and the Example (Sunna) of the Prophet. Precious few texts, however, touched on what we would call “constitutional law” today. In practice, from the early caliphates to the many little kingdoms that arose on the fringes of empires, to the last great empire of the Ottomans, the history of Muslim societies can be summarised in the ongoing tug-of-war between the legal specialists (ulama) and the political rulers. More often than not, they were at odds.

Today, Muslim nations are all modern nation-states, signatories to UN conventions now considered as “international law.” A majority of them are authoritarian. Yet, according to the landmark Gallup Poll conducted between 2001 and 2007 in 35 Muslim countries, a vast majority of Muslims consider Islam and democracy, gender equality and freedom of speech as the keys to a peaceful and prosperous society. They just don’t agree with the way these values are modelled in the West; they prefer to apply them according to their own traditions.

Globalisation -- the unprecedented flow of goods, capital, immigration and information in all direc-

tions -- has deeply impacted not only Muslim societies, but Western ones as well. Sociological studies chronicle the widespread phenomenon of religious revivalism and how globalisation has “de-territorialised” traditional religion. For Muslims in particular, through the Internet and increased migrations, this has meant a reworking of traditional Islam in several directions. Clearly, most Muslims have internalised the ideals of human rights and democracy. But they have also become more religious and conservative at the same time, especially in the

Globalization has deeply impacted Muslim societies ...

area of modesty for women. But for some, the stripping away of old cultural markers has meant a new religiosity focused primarily on what is “Islamic” and what is not. So there is a small but vocal minority (the “Salafis”) who even in the West militate for the “full application of Sharia.” Here “Sharia” means the medieval consensus of the legal schools on family status, the hudud (the five

continued ...



Helping Muslims discover the living ...

punishments, like hand amputations for thieves and death for “apostates”) and new additions, depending on the faction. The “jihadists” are one faction.

To be fair, however, it would be wrong to see all Muslims as “extremists,” when most are actually engaging with the rest of the global civil society to work for more peace and understanding between the peoples of our world. As Christians we are simply to befriend our Muslims neighbours, listen and learn from them, and share our Saviour’s love, by word and deed.



Messiah

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

General principles

- 1. Pray!!!:** We cannot emphasise enough our total dependence on the intervention of the Holy Spirit.
- 2. Have a specific goal:** God wants to use us to make the Messiah known to Muslims through the Gospel. Our goal should be to make the message understandable and accessible to our Muslim friends. Whether they accept the message or not we can maintain a God honouring relationship with them.
- 3. Be open to personal and human contact:** We must love Muslims sincerely, manifesting our love through kindness and respect in our relationship with them. As with all true friendships we need to take time to understand, appreciate and help our Muslim friends. We should want to learn from them and develop a real exchange in sincere enjoyable friendship.
- 4. Be patient:** While we can speak freely of our faith from the beginning of our relationship with a Muslim, we should keep in mind that most Muslims will need to hear us many times before they even begin to consider believing in the Messiah. Do not be discouraged by objections. Remember that it is the kindness of God which leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4).
- 5. Explain the Gospel in a very simple manner:** Use words and terms which will be understandable to Muslims. Explain your understanding of the meaning of terms such as sin, prayer, God, Messiah and faith. These terms often convey another meaning for Muslims.

Respect
Kindness
Gentleness

The qualities are essential to reach Muslims with the message of the Messiah.



Right: Muslim women at the Golden Gate Bridge near San Francisco in California.



6. Give your friend a New Testament or a Bible:

Encourage a regular reading of the Gospels in particular.

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

8. Speak of God's interventions in our own lives: Tell of His faithfulness, His love, His justice. Muslims do not understand God as one who gives and keeps promises. Your testimony of a real and active God fearing faith is very important.

9. Answer objections with kindness: Do not let yourself be carried away into passionate discus-

sions. We are called to make friends for Jesus not to win arguments.

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

11. Introduce Muslims seeking the Messiah to a community of believers. Muslims will sometimes be more interested in seeing our believing communities than hearing our best words about the Saviour. As they see our communities may God help us to be the weak and helpless ones who are strong in Him. We all need others. Loving others is right. (1 John 3:14-15) Muslims who coming to faith in the Messiah need others.

12. Depend on God, who is truth, to anchor people in reality. Sometimes we all have been or are deceived. We need clarification and liberation. Only God can give us and Muslims real eyes to see and ears to hear.

Caring, genuine hospitality may have more to do with helping a Muslim discover the Messiah than many logical proofs and arguments.

Helping Muslims discover the Messiah ...

What should we avoid?

- **Do not attack the person of Mohammed.**
We are called to help people discover Jesus, not to criticise others. Our message is Jesus.
- **Do not criticise the Qur'an.** People with an in-depth knowledge of the Qur'an are actively and effectively speaking to Muslims concerning this topic.
- **Avoid politically-sensitive subjects** like the Palestinian problem and praising Israel.
- **Insisting on calling Jesus "the Son of God" may make problems initially:** Many Muslims believe that such a belief implies that God the Father had sex with Mary and she gave birth to a son. Explanations are necessary. See recommended web sites for ideas.
- **Do not enter into discussions about pork and wine:** We, as Christians, are sent to proclaim Jesus not to establish dietary laws. It is good to insist that drunkenness is wrong. Do not serve alcohol to Muslims.

Specific guidelines

1. Initially focus on areas of agreement: In your first contacts with Muslims and even later it is useful to be in agreement as much as possible with Muslims about our common beliefs. They believe that there is one God, the God of Abraham. In Arabic the word used for God is "Allah" (Christian Arabs also use this word for God). Muslims believe that God made the world; He knows all

things; He is all knowing. Muslims do not believe in the Trinity. They believe in angels and in prophets such as Abraham, Moses, David, Noah and Jesus. They believe in the last judgment. In a general sense we can agree on these points, without forgetting the profound differences. Affirming our common beliefs enables them to listen to us with greater understanding and openness but one must not only agree.

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

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

4. Seek them out: Do not be afraid to visit them in their homes and invite them to your own home. It might be wise to simply invite them initially for a dessert to avoid the problems linked with serving meat.

5. Argument: You have little chance of convincing Muslims by reasoned argument. Western logic does not carry the same weight with Muslims. Love your Muslim friends and avoid getting into discussions which push them to defend Islam.



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

7. Men witness to men and women to women: Witness across gender lines is discouraged, even by correspondence. Believing women should avoid conversation with Muslim men.

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

9. Opposition to Christianity: When speaking to Muslims they will probably raise objections that our faith in the Messiah is unacceptable for them. Believers need to know about these objections and be prepared to deal with them correctly. Web sites exist for this purpose.

Back inside cover

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

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

Web sites about Muslims and Islam:

Christian Sites about Islam:

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

Muslim Sites:

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

Muslim - Christian Discussion:

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

Testimonies:

www.morethandreams.tv
www.muslimjourneytohope.com
www.albahethoon.com (The Seekers)

The Messiah for Muslims:

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

People Groups / Mission

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

Other Sites:

www.iraqprayer.org
(Prayer for Iraq)
www.cryoutnow.org
www.pray-ap.info
(Prayer for Middle East)
www.memritv.org
(News from the Middle East)
www.barnabasfund.org
(Persecuted believers)
Prayershorts channel on YouTube
(numerous prayer videos)

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

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