

## Developing

# HONESTY

## A Key to Spiritual Growth for MBBs

by Fred Farrokh

Thanks to the prayers, sacrificial labors, and generous giving of many Christians, Muslims are coming into the kingdom of Jesus. As a Muslim-background believer (MBB) in Christ, I want to say a big “thank you” from all of us. The full fruit of your labor will be known only when we get to heaven.

MBB discipleship has emerged as a major challenge and opportunity confronting the global Church. In forty years of ministry, I have observed that the two most needed areas of character transformation for MBBs are humility and honesty. This article will address *developing honest character*.

I offer three main prayer points for readers of *Intercede* regarding the development of honesty. For MBBs, please pray that the development of honesty will (1) flow from connection to Christ; (2) contrast with Islamic and worldly norms, and (3) promote healthy and sustainable church planting. We appreciate intercession in each of these areas.

### Prayer Point #1: MBBs’ Connection to Christ

One difference between Christianity and Islam springs from their divergent views of the holiness of God. In the Bible, God is holy, and believers in Christ are transformed into the image of Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. In Islam, Allah remains absolutely sovereign. He cannot be bound morally, even by such a quality as holiness. The differing nature of either God or Allah naturally flows into the believers and adherents of these respective faiths.

As a disclaimer, not all Muslims are dishonest people. Some are wonderfully honest and trustworthy. Likewise, not all Christians are inherently and reliably honest. Nevertheless, many Muslims will readily admit that Christians are more honest than most Muslims. Frequently, the key to a mosque is left in the hands of a trusted Christian. On one occasion, I was with a team doing a Christmas Eve outreach in lower Manhattan. Since it was a Friday, we stopped by the Ground Zero. Personnel contracted by the mosque told us they were Christians.

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# Until All Have Heard

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? – Romans 10:14*

**Mark Brink**

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I recently returned from a training trip to two South Asian countries, where the church is deeply engaged in reaching the growing Muslim population. One missionary family, sent to an unreached people group within their own nation, has spent the past ten years serving in a single region of the country. For much of that time, they faithfully planted gospel seeds with little visible fruit.

Yet through a decade of perseverance, doors have recently opened to receptive hearts. One day, the missionary asked a strict Muslim man, “Have you ever heard about Jesus Christ?” The man replied that in his eighty-six years of life, he had never heard of Jesus Christ.

The missionary then shared the gospel, explaining that there is great power and eternal life in the person of Jesus Christ. He began in the Old Testament, describing the prophecies of the coming Messiah—His miraculous birth, His many miracles, and even His power to raise the dead. He explained how Jesus Christ came to bring forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who believe in Him.

The missionary asked, “Would you like to have forgiveness of sins and eternal life?” The man said yes.

He was then led in a prayer of confession of sin and acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior, who died and rose again to give him eternal life. Filled with joy, the man asked, “When can we meet again to hear more about this Jesus Christ and eternal life?” The discipleship process has now begun.

In missionary work, there is a seed-time and harvest principle that is especially evident when planting the church in Islamic contexts. Seeds may fall on hard soil, rocky soil, wayside soil, or good soil. Our calling is to faithfully plant the seed and water it with prayer and intercession, so that the enemy does not snatch it away.

After more than ten years of plowing and planting gospel seeds, this Asian brother has now seen thirty-eight people come to faith in a brief period of time in this Islamic context. If we stop planting, there will be no harvest. Faithfulness in sowing is essential.

As you read this edition of *Intercede*, you will be reminded that the work of the Holy Spirit is critical at every stage of evangelism, salvation, and discipleship if we are to bear fruit that lasts. Please pray for our ministry as we continue training workers who are planting seeds, watering them, harvesting, and discipling new believers.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Islam teaches that ...

- Jesus is a prophet but not the divine son of God?
- Jesus did not die on the cross, so Muslims have no forgiveness of sin?
- Jesus did not rise from the grave, so Muslims have no assurance of eternal life?

**Islam takes the heart out of the gospel!**

**Pray for Muslims to have a true revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died on the cross and rose from the grave so that their sins can be forgiven and they can have the assurance of eternal life.**

When the Son of God visited this world on His rescue mission, He said, “I am the Way, *the Truth*, and the Life” (John 14:6, emphasis added). The Greek term for “truth” used here, *alaitia*, is used 109 times by the New Testament writers, thus highlighting its importance for Christians.

Jesus’ death on the cross crucifies the sinful nature. Those who are grafted into the Vine will receive the infusion of life, resulting in the fruit of truthfulness. Should this process be hindered or delayed, the lifestyle of MBBs will contradict their testimony of being “in Christ.” Unaddressed and unconfessed sins of dishonesty also result in guilty consciences, keeping MBBs from experiencing the presence of the Lord.



When I do trainings about the importance of honesty in the lives of believers, I am careful not to moralize. No one is saved by being just a bit more honest. Yet, in the final two chapters of the Bible it states three times that chronic liars do not have the life of Jesus in them and will not inherit eternal life:

All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. “But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” (Rev. 21:7-8; emphasis added; see also 21:25-27)

In Revelation 22:14-15, the final passage of the Holy Bible, Jesus states:

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the

dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who *loves and practices falsehood*. (emphasis added)

We understand that no one is perfect in the area of honesty. Yet, those who love and practice lying demonstrate that they have not been born again by the Spirit of God. For MBBs, who come from societies in which dishonesty is rampant, these verses provide a sobering wake-up call to give urgent attention to truthfulness.

Please join us in prayer for MBBs. Our desire is to be like our Savior Jesus, who is the truth, and not like Satan, who is the father of lies. Specifically, we are asking for the grace to *uproot the intent to deceive, when doing so promotes self or injures others*. This focus on the intent to deceive simplifies a topic which can otherwise become quite complicated.

**Prayer Point #2:  
That a Contrast Will Be Seen between  
Disciples of Christ and Disciples of Muhammad**

Muslims fully understand the problems associated with dishonesty. The prophet of Islam endorsed deception and dissimulation, known as *taqiyya*.<sup>1</sup> The Qur’an states that one of Allah’s 99 Most Beautiful Names is *al-Makaar*, the Deceiver or Schemer. In the Qur’an, 3:54 and 8:30, Allah is said to outdo even disbelievers in their scheming and planning.<sup>2</sup>

War correspondent Megan K. Stack published her chronicles from the Iraq and Afghanistan theaters of conflict with the title *Every Man in This Village Is a Liar*. She states that American troops were so accustomed to the dishonesty of the Afghan warlords that they did not believe it when the Afghans told them Osama bin Laden had slipped away into the mountains at Tora Bora. Actually, the Afghans were telling them the truth, and Bin Laden evaded them!<sup>3</sup>

As Ayatollah Khomeini poised himself to overthrow the Shah of Iran in 1978, he was asked repeatedly if he would install a religious dictatorship. He insisted vehemently that the *mollahs* would not set up a dictatorship.<sup>4</sup> MBB Daniel Shayesteh, prior to conversion to Christ, was among the thousands of zealous young Muslims who helped Khomeini ride into power. He recalls:

Was it ever stated that the purpose of the Revolution was a religious one that would empower the Ayatollah Khomeini with authority to apply Shari’a law in Iran? Never. The intention was supposedly a socio-political revolution that would ensure the equal and just distribution of wealth among Iranians by vote of the people. Why would a righteous Islamic leader change his mind and

# Developing Honesty: A Key to

betray his nation? He did it obviously to gratify his lust for power even at the cost of his fellow Muslims and countrymen, aligning himself with the political philosophy of Islam. *Khomeini's manipulations were so subtle and clever that it never occurred to the people he was deceiving them.*” (emphasis added)<sup>5</sup>

Religious leaders are supposed to guide people, yet the highlighted text indicates the deep level of deception and dishonesty at work among leaders like Khomeini.

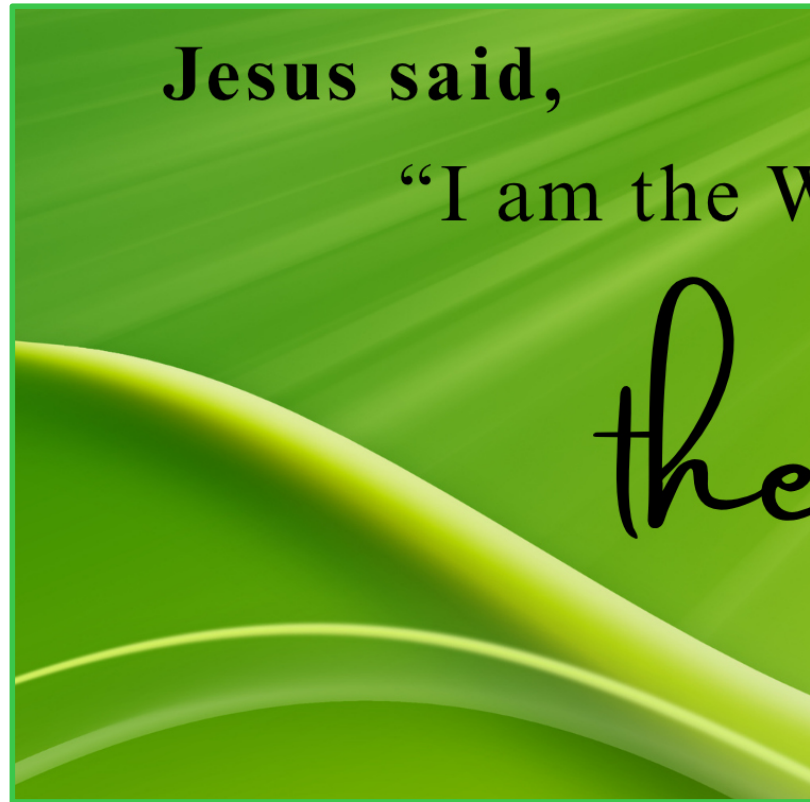
For these reasons, most Muslims will not feel the pangs of a guilty conscience if they tell a “white lie,” especially if it is spun to protect family honor. If Muhammad endorsed it, why feel bad about it?

## Human Problems that Islam Makes Worse

We often hear questions like, “Is polygamy an Islamic problem or a cultural problem?” The question is relevant since many non-Islamic societies, past and present, practice polygamy. Similar discussions attend issues such as slavery, female genital mutilation (FGM), wife-beating, warlikeness, and rampant dishonesty. Sometimes Islam “gets a pass” because people observe these same practices in non-Muslim communities. Others will say, “I have a very nice Muslim friend, and he is not like that!”

Like the other problems listed above, dishonesty is a problem impacting all humans because it is the fruit of the sin nature. *Instead of identifying the problem and seeking a remedy for it, Islam rationalizes and justifies the problem, thus making it worse.* Therefore, while the development of honest character is necessary for all disciples of Christ, it becomes even more urgent for those of Muslim background.

While dishonesty seemingly can be cured if everyone “just tells the truth,” the study of honesty quickly reveals a lot of complexities. For example, Rahab lied about harboring the Jewish spies, yet the Bible commends her for the faith she exercised at that time (Heb. 11:31). This episode raises the always-thorny issue of situational ethics—choosing the lesser of two evils. Corrie Ten Boom similarly hid Jews from the Gestapo in WWII and lied to the Nazis who pounded on her door.



As another example of these complexities, an MBB may show up late to an appointment after saying he would be on time. Was he being dishonest, or was this just a cross-cultural misunderstanding regarding timeliness? Or was it a face-saving mechanism that should be overlooked? Or should it be confronted?

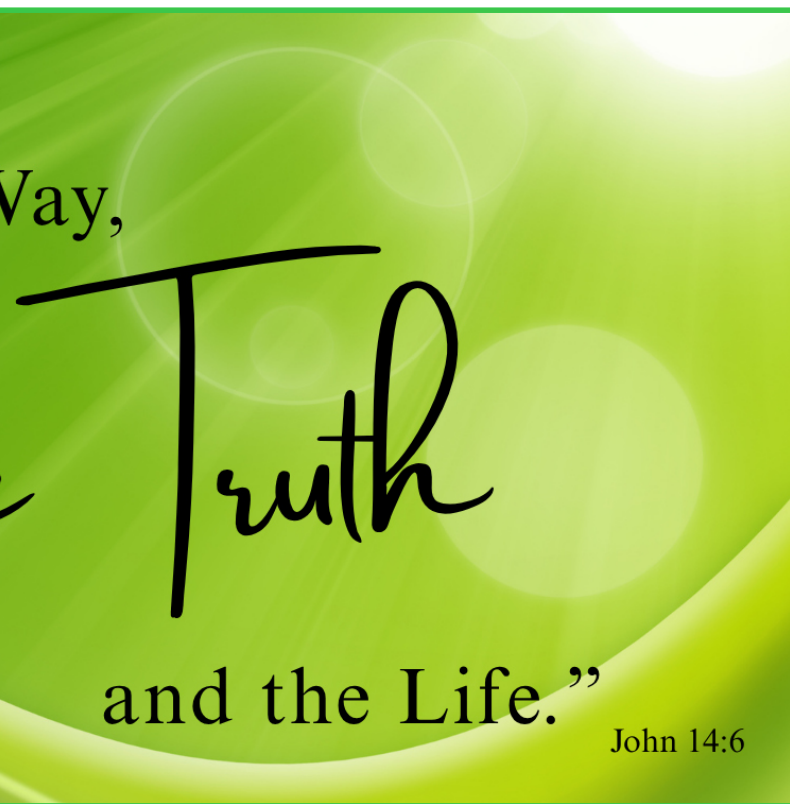
Furthermore, the long-standing principle that “honesty is the best policy” is quickly collapsing in the Western world. These realities may cause disciplers of MBBs to simply throw up their hands and focus on other areas of discipleship. However, several factors demand that uprooting dishonesty receive immediate attention, as well as prayer covering.

## A Glimpse into the Collapse of Honesty in the West

Philosopher Christian B. Miller of Wake Forest University has led an effort to study the problem of honesty from a secular perspective. He explains:

There is little controversy that honesty is a virtue. It is an excellence of character. It also promotes trust, fosters healthy relationships, strengthens organizations and societies, and prevents harm.

# o Spiritual Growth for MBBs



the mix and the problems mushroom. For all these reasons, the Church must provide a robust theology of honesty for its disciples, including those from Muslim background. In our case, we are focusing on uprooting the intent to deceive when doing so injures others or promotes selfish interests.

### Prayer Point #3: Church Planting among MBBs

#### Dishonesty Is a Relationship Wrecker

Trust provides the glue that holds all human relationships together. Consequently, where dishonesty is unchecked, trusting relationships can never fully develop. In such toxic environments, fledgling churches will split up or collapse. Anyone who has been part of a church in which honesty is lacking or in which a coverup has tragically occurred, can attest to the painful consequences of dishonesty.

Jesus is building His church. He always intended the church to be an honest bunch. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira sought to deceive the church, and then toppled over dead. Though God does not often strike people dead for dishonesty these days, the standard of honesty still stands as a banner over the body of Christ. Jesus is the Truth, so His disciples will naturally become more truthful as they behold their Savior.

#### Jesus Is Building His Church

As an MBB who has been in ministry for over 40 years, I am glad to report encouraging progress in the area of Christlike character development of MBBs and MBB churches. Iranians are now planting churches all over the world—both in Iran and wherever Iranians have emigrated. We observe a bubbling up of sincere, honest, self-effacing leaders in the Iranian church.

I have been working to address discipleship topics such as honesty with contributors to the Wasla Media Project. *Wasla* means “connection”; this online channel seeks to connect MBBs with God and with each other.<sup>7</sup> Serap (from Turkey), Lediana (Albania), Toktam (Iran), Naomi (Pakistan), Nasser (Saudi Arabia), Tariq (Pakistan), and Hassan (Kosovo) have unpacked biblical texts such as Aaron and the Golden Calf Scandal, as well as the Ananias and Sapphira episode. These offer excellent teaching opportunities for MBBs regarding honesty. Naomi Gull from Pakistan states: “The Spirit of the truth that is in you will never let you lie. If you are true to your salvation, and you have left

Sadly, though, honesty has gone missing in recent decades. It is largely absent from academic research. It seems to be rare in society. And it is not commonly found in discussions of how to become a better person.

What is honesty? How is honesty related to integrity, courage and tact? Is it always best to be honest? What are the ways of failing to be honest? These are important questions, but you will be hard pressed to find discussions of them among scholars. In my field of philosophy, for instance, outside of the work of my own team, *there have been only two articles on honesty published in the past 50 years.*<sup>6</sup>

When I read this quote, I was stunned. Honesty, as an academic topic, falls under the discipline of philosophy, yet it is being completely overlooked in modern times.

In summary, Islamic societies have long suffered due to dishonesty; post-Christian cultures that have drifted away from their biblical roots are now likewise struggling with the same problem. It is beyond the scope of this article to address digital deception. Who doesn't go a day without receiving a scam phone call, email, or text message? People are exasperated trying to know what is true. And now, add the challenge of AI to

your previous belief, and entered into the way to heaven, which is Jesus Christ, then pay attention to truth and honesty.”<sup>8</sup>

In her message, Naomi explains the inner struggle between the flesh and the Spirit in the lives of MBBs, according to Galatians 5. Please pray that the fruit of the Spirit will grow in the lives of MBBs and churches will be planted among MBBs.

### Conclusion: Honesty over Honor

The honor-shame priority system often fuels dishonesty. People who act to maximize personal and family honor and minimize shame will often lie to cover up almost any kind of sin. While the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, *dishonesty is used to try to cover up every type of sin.*

In many Muslim contexts, believing in Christ as Lord is the most dishonorable thing a Muslim could do. Apostasy casts shame over the convert’s entire family circle. Due to the courage of many MBBs, this stigma is starting to break down.

On one occasion, I was on a ministry trip in Minneapolis. The team there was reaching out to Somali Muslims. Up to that point, they had seen little fruit. Upon leaving town, I was taking an Uber ride to the airport. The driver was a Somali man named Muhammad. I asked if he was a Muslim or Christian. He said that he was a Muslim, of course. I asked if any Somalis were Christian. He pointed to his cell phone and said, “Yes, I have seen on the internet that over 200

Somali Muslims around the world have become Christians.” Praise God, the unthinkable is becoming a reality!

Please join us in prayer that MBBs will continually value the honor of the Lord Jesus above family, tribal, and national honor. Jesus is worthy. He is the One who endured the cross, despising the shame (Heb. 12:2). *To walk in dishonesty as a disciple of Jesus, who is the Truth, creates a disconnect.* Many MBBs are coming to understand this. Many MBBs are being discipled by godly and honest Christian role models who exemplify sincerity. Please join us in prayer that this trend will continue. Also, pray that MBBs’ connection to Christ will grow and that their godly lives will create a stark contrast with their past life that will be a witness to their family and community. Pray also for an increase of church planting in Muslim majority nations and for the discipleship of Muslim-background believers. ☺

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Book 49, Number 857, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2692>

<sup>2</sup>Quran Dictionary, <https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=mk>

<sup>3</sup>Megan K. Stack, *Every Man in This Village Is a Liar: An Education in War* (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 10.

<sup>4</sup>“Imam Khomeini: Islamic Supreme Leader vs Dictatorship,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GgbJQnQpbw>

<sup>5</sup>Daniel Shayesteh, *The House I Left Behind: A Journey from Islam to Christ* (Sydney: Talesh Books, 2012), 83.

<sup>6</sup>Christian B. Miller. “The Virtue of Honesty Requires More than Just Telling the Truth,” *Psyche*, December 13, 2021. <https://psyche.co/ideas/more-than-just-truth-telling-honesty-is-a-virtue-to-cultivate>

<sup>7</sup>Wasla Media Home page, <https://www.youtube.com/@WaslaMedia>

<sup>8</sup>Wasla Media, Naomi Gull, “Pay Attention to Truth and Honesty,” <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/IM4FeaAiILk> 2024.

## Muslim Unreached People Group

### Gorani of Albania

Population: 34,000; 95% Muslim

The Gorani are a small folk Islamic ethnic group whose name means “Highlanders” or “Mountain people.” They live in small villages in the rugged mountainous regions of what is now Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia. They converted to Islam when the Ottomans conquered them in 1388. Geographically, Gorani are claimed by the country in which they live; however, the Gorani maintain that they are independent and Muslim.

Herding and agriculture are their main form of livelihood. Their hard life, war, and determination to maintain their folk Islamic identity has caused many, especially the young, to migrate to other countries. Today, fewer than 10,000 remain in the Gora region, with diaspora communities in Serbia, North Macedonia, Turkey, Italy, Greece, and the United States. The Bible, in both text and audio, is available, as well as the “Jesus Film”.

### Prayer Points

- Pray for the authority of Christ to bind hindering spiritual forces and to lead the Gorani from darkness to light.
- Pray for signs and wonders among them and for great breakthroughs with a rapid multiplication of disciples and house churches.
- Pray for bold workers who are driven by the love of the Holy Spirit to go to the Gorani people.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ among the Gorani people.

*\*Profile adapted from Joshua Project. For more information about the Gorani of Albania, visit: [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/18765/AL](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/18765/AL)*





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for multi-lingual access to the weekly prayer requests  
and other resources in a secure environment.

## Friday, May 1, 2026. Please pray for...

...a GI team member to be powerfully anointed by the Holy Spirit as he equips participants to reach out to Muslims at a conference for Latin American leaders.

...a powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit on Global Initiative team members who will conclude the final week of equipping classes at a regional Asian seminary, May 1-8.

...*Khadijah, a young lady and a new convert out of Islam in Sri Lanka.* Her friends and family are encouraging her to return to her former life and reject Jesus. Pray that Khadijah and many other converts like her will stand strong in their new faith.

## Friday, May 8, 2026. Please pray for...

...a worker who has spent over 10 years in an Asian nation sharing Christ with Pushtun people. Recently, more than 38 people received Christ, and a church is being established among these previously unengaged people.

...for all those who have been affected by the recent turmoil in the Middle East and Iran. Pray for those who are grieving the loss of loved ones and for believers to share the love of Christ with the unreached Muslim majority. Pray that Christ will bring provision and peace amid economic crisis and regional conflict.

...the believing minority in Somalia who suffer great persecution and martyrdom. Pray for courage and strength for those boldly sharing their faith, and for safe fellowship and encouragement for isolated believers.

## Friday, May 15, 2026. Please pray for...

...for two outreach projects in four villages in Togo. Pray they reach Muslims and disciple those seeking to know Jesus. Pray for safety, health, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit as teams spread the gospel through house visits and outdoor meetings. Of Togo's population of 10 million, Muslims comprise 15-18% and the number is growing.

...believers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to stand firm in their faith amid persecution. DRF forces stole the robes of the priests and choir and used them to lure Christians, kidnapping 8 people and killing 3 others. The pastor said, "They may have stolen our robes and shed our blood, but they cannot steal our faith."

...Kevin Rideout, missionary pilot who was kidnapped in Niger in October 2025. Pray that God would supernaturally protect Kevin and bring him home safely.

## Friday, May 22, 2026. Please pray for...

...Muslims making the annual Hajj pilgrimage to the Kaaba in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. This is one of the five pillars of Islam required once in a lifetime for those who are able. Pray that during this intense spiritual gathering, Muslims from around the world would have dreams and visions of Jesus.

...Muslims worldwide who will celebrate Eid al-Adha (the Feast of Sacrifice) from May 27-30. This commemorates the belief that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son (Ishmael implied), but Allah provided a ram instead. Pray that Muslims would understand that God provided His Son, Jesus, as the Lamb of God sacrificed for them.

...Arabs and Jewish people to find meaningful reconciliation in the Prince of Peace. Pray for Palestinian Christians to boldly live out the gospel despite oppression, and for believers to show Jesus' love and concern for Palestinian exiles.

## Friday, May 29, 2026. Please pray for...

...the major Indonesian island of Sulawesi. Islam is the majority religion among roughly 80% of the island's 20 million inhabitants. Pray for gospel access to more than 30 distinct tribes across this complex multicultural island, many still untouched by the gospel.

...the 45 million Muslim college students in India's 58,000 higher education institutions. Pray for a young Indian woman who has sensed God's call to begin campus outreach in Indian universities.

...the ongoing genocide in Sudan. British intelligence estimates that in just over 3 weeks as many as 60,000 people in El-Fasher, Sudan, were slaughtered. Hundreds of Christian homes and churches have been targeted.



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for multi-lingual access to the weekly prayer requests and other resources in a secure environment.

## Friday, June 5, 2026. Please pray for...

...an outreach to the Hui Muslims of a large central city in China. After years of gospel seed-planting, a breakthrough has occurred. China has roughly 30 million Muslims, with the largest groups being Mandarin-speaking Hui and Turkic-speaking Uyghurs.

...recent elections have occurred in Bangladesh. Pray for the minority Christian community. Pray that the newly elected leaders will resist extremism and allow religious freedom.

...Christian girls in Pakistan who are forcibly converted to Islam. Once forcibly converted, they face extreme difficulties returning to their families. Pray for strength and discernment on ways for them to escape these situations and to encounter ministries that can help them.

## Friday, June 12, 2026. Please pray for...

...Pakistani youth who are answering the call to rise, serve and be sent into the harvest. Pray that they will boldly share their faith with Muslims and expand the Kingdom of God. Pakistan is 96% Muslim.

...Holy Spirit intervention in the lives of the 2 billion Muslims as they observe the Islamic New Year on June 16.

...believers using a newly acquired Print-on-Demand system in Côte d'Ivoire to strengthen theological education by providing high-quality, affordable, and culturally relevant resources for pastors and church planters.

## Friday, June 19, 2026. Please pray for...

...Muslims worldwide who will observe Muharram (Day of Ashura) on June 25. On this day, they mourn the death of Imam Hussein during the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD. Pray they will receive a revelation of Jesus whose blood was shed as a sacrifice for their sins.

...a new church plant with converts from Islam in the nation of Ethiopia. Recently, 11 people were baptized, and a new church building has been constructed in an area that is 95% Muslim. Of Ethiopia's 135 million people, about 35% are Muslims.

...more church planters to share Christ with the Muslim majority in Niger. Pray for believers to stand firm amid increasing persecution, oppression, and violence, and for jihadists who use abduction for financial gain to encounter Jesus.

## Friday, June 26, 2026. Please pray for...

...GI team members to be anointed by the Holy Spirit and students to be equipped for ministry to Muslims as they teach classes at a seminary in the U.S., June 29–July 10.

...God to open doors for global workers to enter a closed country in Africa. Pray that even while the doors remain closed, the gospel seeds that have already been planted in this country will deepen and grow.

...members of the Muslim Brotherhood to be transformed by Jesus' love and become zealously devoted to Him. Pray that the peace of Jesus will drive out the violence and extremism, and that those funding the Muslim Brotherhood will instead seek the Kingdom of God.

\*All names used herein are pseudonyms unless otherwise stated. Kevin Rideout is not a pseudonym.