

Jesus the Healer

By Harry Morin

Why is it so difficult to share Christ with Muslims? When I try to tell them that Jesus is the Son of God, they accuse me of believing that God had a wife. When I try to explain to them that Jesus is God, they accuse me of believing in two separate deities. Worse still, when I speak of Jesus as the third person of the Trinity, they accuse me of believing in three separate gods — God the Father, God the Mother, and God the Son! I can't seem to make any headway. What's the problem? Have you encountered similar moments of frustration? Before we give up on Muslims, let's see if there is another way to present Christ to them.

First, it may be helpful to know that when Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, came on the scene in the seventh cen-

ture, the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula were pagans deeply entrenched in polytheism and idolatry. They believed in a multiplicity of spirits, gods, and goddesses. Muhammad took stern action to firmly establish the belief in one God (known as Allah in Arabic), the Creator God, the God of Abraham, and reacted vehemently against any suggestion that violated the concept of absolute monotheism. Chapter 112 of the Quran, entitled *Surat-ul Ikhlas*, reflects the bedrock of the Islamic faith:

1. Say: He is Allah, the One and Only.
2. Allah, the Eternal, Absolute.
3. He begetteth not, nor is He begotten.
4. And there is none like unto Him.

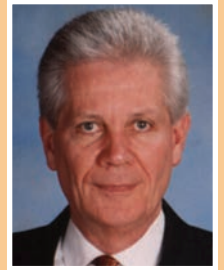




Until All Have Heard

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

Jim Bennett
Global Initiative:
Reaching Muslim Peoples



This issue of *Intercede* emphasizes the role of healing in witnessing to Muslims. Jesus instructed his disciples to engage in a holistic ministry of healing and announcing God's rule, of demonstration and proclamation in which healing is a sign of the kingdom.

The writer of our lead article has also authored the book *Muslim Ministry in the African Context*. Here is a powerful excerpt about the healing and subsequent salvation of a Muslim:


“Faruq lay awake through the whole night in his hospital bed. He was still burning with fever and his entire body was writhing in pain. For six months, he could neither eat nor sleep. He was so weak that he could barely move. He was just a young man and already he appeared

to be destined for the grave. Clearly, Faruq was confused. He was a practicing Muslim who had learned to say his prayers and memorize parts of the Quran. Why did God bring such misery into his life? Why couldn't the doctors find a cure?

Faruq was born in West Africa to a mother who was a shaman; however even her powers couldn't help her son. One Sunday afternoon, a group of local Christians (which made regular visits to the hospital to pray for the sick) offered to pray for Faruq as he lay in his hospital bed. Faruq was so desperate that he consented. Although he felt awkward seeing these Christians gather around his bed, he recognized the name of Jesus in their prayer. He had read about Jesus' power to heal in the Quran.

Nothing unusual happened that day; however, one night Faruq actually fell into a deep sleep and had a dream. In his dream, he saw Jesus on a cross and himself kneeling at the foot of the cross. Suddenly he saw torrents of blood flow down from the cross onto his body. In his dream, it felt like a gushing river washing over him that brought vitality into his body. Faruq then awoke and found himself waving his arms and legs in the air. For the first time in months he could move his arms and legs without pain because he had been completely healed. He knew it was the power of Jesus that had touched him because Jesus spoke to him in the dream and said, 'Faruq, you are to be my servant.'

Faruq began to serve the Lord by sharing his remarkable miracle with Muslim people. Although he suffered much persecution for his decision to follow Christ, God honored him to plant a church that is filled with fellow Muslims. They, too, have experienced the transforming power of the Savior.”

In Acts 4:29-30 the believers united in this prayer: “...enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” May those who work among Muslims today embrace the same prayer! 



Muslim World News



Turkey

Syriac Christians granted land

Three years after a Syrian Orthodox foundation applied to build a church in Istanbul, the Greater Istanbul Municipality has granted them a large plot of land and a building permit.

Banner headlines in the Turkish media praised the decision as “a first in the history of the Republic,” declaring that never before had Turkey allowed a non-Muslim minority to build an official new house of worship. Still, Christians were far from pleased. The land they were “granted” by the municipality is, in fact, a Latin Catholic cemetery.

“We don't want a Syriac church on top of a cemetery!” the website *suryaniler.com* stated. “This is a big scandal.” So Syriac Christian leaders are insisting that the cemetery land newly designated for their church be returned instead to its rightful owners — the Latin Catholic Foundation.

“It is clear that (the authorities) want to cause conflict between the minority communities,” said Syriac layman Sabo Boyaci. — *Compass*

Nigeria

Ten killed as churches burn

Ten people were killed and four churches burned in two separate attacks in northeast Nigeria by gunmen suspected to be members of the Boko Haram Islamist group.

The victims included nine Christians and one Muslim, who were killed in Kwaple village, Chibok Local Government Area of Borno state when the Islamic group members went on rampage and burned 20 houses and a church in the area. Three other churches were burned in Gamboru Ngala.

“I have just received a message from my people at Chibok and Gamboru Ngala that four of our churches were attacked by the militants this morning and 10 people killed at Kwaple in Chibok LGA,” the Borno State chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Rev. Titus Pona, said in a text message to the association's president.

Nuhu Clark, a former Chibok local area council chairman, said the attackers entered the village at about 9 p.m., then torched houses before

using guns and machetes to kill their victims. “Most of the victims were buried today,” Clark said. “It is unfortunate that such could happen in such a peaceful village.”

Sunday Oibe, spokesman for the northern group of the Christian Association of Nigeria, decried the attacks on Christians, which he said were not getting enough attention from the government. “What people get to hear is just a fraction of the attacks Christians are subjected to,” Oibe said.

“It is unfortunate that when the (Christian Association of Nigeria) president comments on the issue, they accuse him of not being sensitive or raising false alarm. We cannot continue to keep quiet in the face of provocative attacks like last Saturday's attack in Borno.”

Borno State is the headquarters of the Boko Haram group that has launched various terrorist attacks in the country, killing hundreds. Last month the International Criminal Court determined that the Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria constitute crimes against humanity. — *Compass*

What follows are Quranic indictments against Christian beliefs and practices that appeared to contradict the Islamic oneness of God:

- *Surah 5:31. They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One Allah. There is no god but He. Praise and glory be to Him: (Far is He) from having partners they associate (with Him).*
- *Surah 5:72. They do blaspheme who say: “(Allah) is Christ the son of Mary.” But said Christ: “O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.”*
- *Surah 9:30. The Jews call Uzair a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth!*
- *Surah 19:35. It is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it, “Be”, and it is.*

Unfortunately, during the time of Islam's emergence in the 7th century, Christians were still divided over the issue of the Trinity and the nature of Jesus. In fact, the Arabian Peninsula was home to a variety of Christian heresies that included the deification of Mary. Some Christians claimed that Jesus was totally divine and that his divinity necessitated his mother's divinity.

This conclusion led to the belief in a trinity of God the Father —and Mary the Mother, who bore Jesus the Son. There were other Christians who claimed Jesus was totally human. Still others insisted he had two separate natures —divine and human. It could be that the continuing influence of Christian heresy and conflicting dogma contributed to Muhammad's failure to understand the Biblical depiction of Jesus as it relates to his divine nature.

This similar misunderstanding is reflected today when Christians attempt to share their faith with Muslims. Anything having to do with what we perceive as the mystery of Jesus' divinity is an extremely sensitive topic for them. We understand now that the moment we broach the subject, we are deemed guilty of associating another god



with God, which is the unpardonable sin of blasphemy in Islam known as *shirk*.

How can we avoid this roadblock? Is there an alternate route that can lead us to the simple message of Jesus the Savior in whose name there is forgiveness of sin? That is the core message of the gospel which the scriptures lead us to preach: *This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem* (Luke 24:46-47).

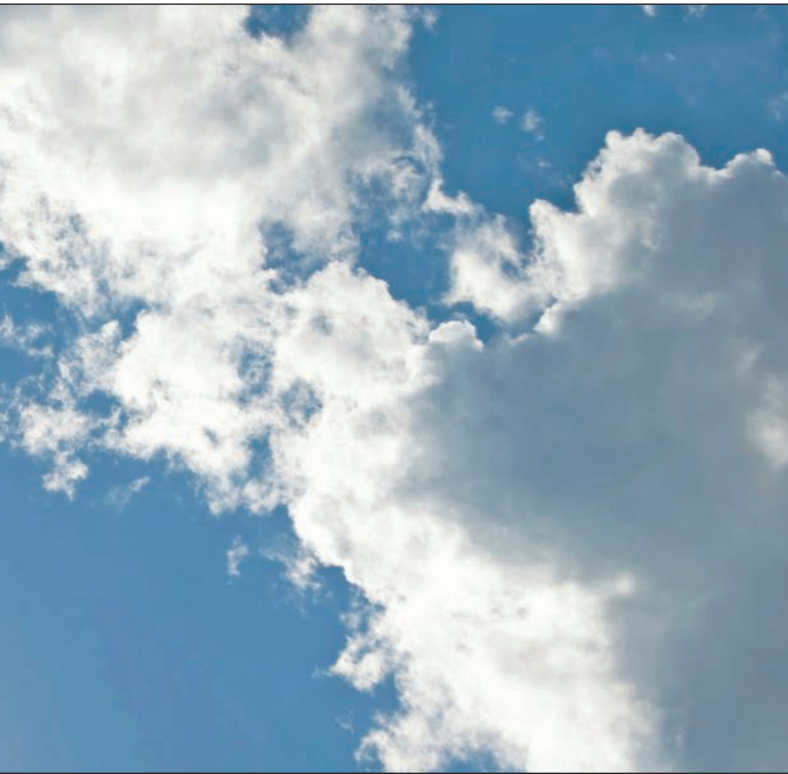
In review, here is what the Quran leads Muslims to believe about Jesus:

1. He is not another god besides the One True God of Abraham.
2. He himself is not God, but is rather a prophet sent by God.
3. He is not an offspring of God because God does not give birth to gods and goddesses.
4. He is not the third god of a trinity of gods because God is one.

Because of the Muslim's predisposition based on the above denials, it is sometimes best not to begin a discus-

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sion with terminology that relates to the divine nature of Jesus. In most cases, such an initial approach will lead down a collision course that could abruptly terminate any ongoing discussion. How then can we talk about Jesus in a way that will resonate with Muslims?

Fortunately the Quran has more to say about Jesus. In the following references, we discover two amazing passages that speak of Jesus' healing power:

- Surah 3:48-49. "And Allah will...(appoint him) an apostle to the Children of Israel, (with this message): 'I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave: And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by Allah's leave; and I declare to you what ye eat, and what ye store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you if ye did believe.'"
- Surah 5:110. Then will Allah say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Recount My favour to thee and to thy mother. Behold! I strengthened thee with the holy spirit, so that thou didst speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. Behold! I taught thee the Book and Wisdom, the Law

and the Gospel and behold! thou makest out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave, and thou breathest into it and it becometh a bird by My leave, and thou healest those born blind, and the lepers, by My leave. And behold! thou bringest forth the dead by My leave. And behold! I did restrain the Children of Israel from (violence to) thee when thou didst show them the clear Signs, and the unbelievers among them said: 'This is nothing but evident magic.'"

In both accounts, Jesus is depicted as possessing great power to heal incurable diseases — not just the blind, but those born blind; not just the sick, but those with leprosy; and not just those close to death, but those already dead! These two accounts are the only places in the Quran that speak of divine healing, and they both point to Jesus. Wow! We just discovered a bridge. Rather than begin with a theme that builds a wall, such as "Jesus is God," let's begin with a theme that builds a bridge — a bridge that will get us from Jesus the Prophet to Jesus the Savior (in whose name there is the forgiveness of sins).

The Quran clearly attributes extraordinary healing power to Jesus, even the power to raise the dead. Yes, Jesus has the authority to heal the body. Notice that the Quranic passages refer to the healings as signs. For us, this is significant because they are a sign that point to something greater about Jesus. They point to the discovery that Jesus also has the authority to heal the heart! Muslims will know what we mean when we speak of the disease of the heart — it is the disease of sin. And so what we want Muslims to understand is that just as Jesus healed the blind, he can also heal spiritual blindness. Just as Jesus healed the leper, he can also heal the corruption of sin. And just as Jesus raised the dead, he can also breathe new life into people who are spiritually dead and apart from God. God empowered Jesus to divinely heal the body of affliction to prove that he can divinely heal the heart of sin.

In his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed that God confirmed Jesus' earthly ministry by signs and wonders. God used the healing miracles of Jesus to confirm his mission of redemption for the sins of humankind. One of those miracles occurred when Jesus was healing the sick in a private home. Some religious leaders were there only to discredit Jesus and his God-

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given authority. And so when a crippled man was laid before him, Jesus spoke out to both his critics and the cripple, *But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, get up, take your mat and go home* (Luke 5:24). The man walked away fully healed and the onlookers marveled.

Still today, God uses supernatural miracles in the name of Jesus to confirm and establish the fact that Jesus has the authority to forgive the sins of those who put their trust in him. Remember the words of Jesus: *It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners* (Mark 2:17). Clearly Jesus is speaking here of spiritual sickness — sin! That's the primary disease Jesus came to heal, the spiritual disease that leads to spiritual death.

Elsewhere, in 1 Peter 2:24, we read, *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.* Reference is made to healing, but again, it is spiritual healing — dying to sins and living for righteous-

ness. Yes, Jesus has the authority to heal the heart; he has the authority to forgive sin. And this authority is confirmed by his power to heal the body, which is even spoken of in the Quran.

Now we are ready to build the bridge. As God brings Muslims to your attention and into your life — try to establish a friendship relationship with them. Get to the place where you are free to share one another's problems. And be alert for any need for divine healing. Such a need provides the opening for introducing Jesus as the great healer. Pray audibly with your Muslim friend in the name of Jesus for divine intervention and then believe God for a miracle.

When Muslims experience for themselves the healing power of Jesus, then often, their faith is ready to expand to accept Jesus as the healer of the heart — the Savior in whose name there is forgiveness of sins. Yes, Muslims know Jesus is a great prophet. But that's not enough. They must come to believe in him as Jesus the Savior. That can happen when they experience him as Jesus the Healer! 🕊

Prayer Profile:

Arian Muslims of Pakistan

The 9,787,000 Arian Muslims primarily live in the Punjab, a region straddling the border between India and Pakistan. The Arians are an agricultural caste that over the years has reached the echelons of lawmakers and politicians. During the time of the British Raj or rule, the Arians were chiefly employed to cultivate the land around the cities. They were favored over the other tribes because they were diligent in their work. They used their newfound wealth to further education, which has left them with a legacy of extensive contributions in the field of politics and the practice of law. Claiming to be of Arab descent, they pride themselves of “the unbroken practice of Islam.” There are no known believers among the Arian Muslims. Pray that:

1. Pakistani believers would have a vision to reach



the Arian Muslims.

2. God will reveal Himself to the Arians through dreams and visions.
3. Prayer teams will be raised up to intercede on behalf of Arian Muslims.
4. Mission agencies would be wise in how they focus ministries toward the Arians.
5. Christian teachers and compassion workers would be used to reach the Arians.



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Friday, March 1, 2013. Please pray

...for the Muslims of Mali. While ultraconservative Muslims have control of northern Mali, the French military is intervening and the country's future remains in question.

...for house churches in closed Muslim countries with no window to outside ministry.

...for the Lord's protection over refugees fleeing the political conflict in Syria.

Friday, March 8, 2013. Please pray

...for the leaders of Iranian churches and cell groups. Many are laymen without any leadership training.

...for secret believers in the world of Islam and for those who try to help and disciple them.

...for millions of Muslims attending mosques today.

Friday, March 15, 2013. Please pray

...for the national leadership of Malaysia. Pray for wisdom for the prime minister. Tension remains high within Islam in Malaysia.

...for the Church in Jordan as it attempts to witness and help Syrian refugees.

...for Christians engaged in prison ministry to Muslims in the U.S. penal system.

Friday, March 22, 2013. Please pray

...for the Muslim youth of Europe. Pray that despite troubles, Christian workers would rise up and witness to these individuals.

...for Christian witness to China's Dongxiang Muslims. They are the fourth largest group of Chinese Muslim peoples, and among the poorest and least literate ethnic minorities.

...for churches in Iraq. Despite threats and oppression, the gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached.

Friday, March 29, 2013. Please pray

...for the Muslims of Morocco. Pray that church leaders would continue to have limited freedom, enabling Muslims to hear the gospel.

...for the Muslims in Guyana. Despite being located in South America — 10 percent of the population in Guyana is Muslim.

...for Muslims living in Western countries. Pray that through conversions and testimonies, the gospel of Jesus Christ will spread into the Muslim world.



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Friday, April 5, 2013. Please pray

*...for God's love to reach millions of children in Muslim madrassahs (Islamic schools).
...for Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) in Chechnya. Muslim Chechens cannot change their religion publicly.
...that mature and vibrant churches would be planted among Muslims in Africa.*

Friday, April 12, 2013. Please pray

*...for the forgotten Christian community of Somalia. MBBs face grave danger and tremendous risks.
...for millions of Muslims tuning in to Christian media programs each day: Internet, radio and television. Pray that God will minister through the different types of programs.
...for children in the Islamic world. More than a quarter of the world's two billion children live in Muslim countries.*

Friday, April 19, 2013. Please pray

*...for persecuted MBBs who do not have a surrounding community of believers to help and encourage them.
...for Christian teachers working in the Palestinian West Bank. May doors open for them to share the love of Jesus.
...for young believers in Lebanon to be filled with wisdom and the vision to share the gospel with friends and neighbors.*

Friday, April 26, 2013. Please pray

*...for efforts to witness to 200,000 Muslim immigrants in Japan.
...for the repeal of the grossly unjust and widely abused blasphemy laws in Pakistan. The laws make it extremely difficult for the gospel to be preached.
...for thousands of forlorn individuals confined in slavery throughout several countries in the Muslim world. Modern-day slavery continues to exist with tacit government approval in Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Sudan.*

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