

INTERCEDE

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Our Muslim friends accept that God is Almighty, having spoken the worlds into existence by His infinite power, but He is not Heavenly Father.

The Muslim View of God

The view of God through Muslim eyes is obscure. God has not revealed himself, therefore He cannot be perceived.

Their view of God is also double-edged. He is perceived to be utterly distant, yet the Qur'an states the God Most High is closer than one's juggler vein. God knows all things, but is, himself, totally unknowable. Only God can know God.

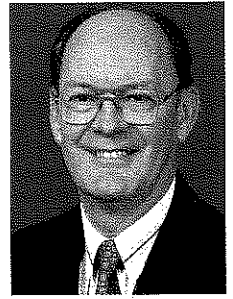
Our Muslim friends accept that God is Almighty, having spoken the worlds into existence by His infinite power, but He is not Heavenly Father.

Every *surah* (chapter) of the Qur'an except one opens with the phrase, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Yet He is perceived to be unpredictable and not obligated to make or keep promises. No one can know what God will do; for if they knew, then God wouldn't be God. Only God knows what He will do.

Belief in one God is the cornerstone of the religion of Islam. Multiplied millions of Muslims around the world, several times daily, repeat the Islamic creed, "*La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad rasul Allah.*" "There is no god but God, and

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*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)*



I recently returned from a ministry trip to Bangladesh, the nation where my wife Montiel and I served for 16 years. I went to minister in a pastors' conference that was conducted in the city of Chittagong and the meetings were held in the church building that I built thirty-one years ago. It was a truly rewarding experience.

Bangladesh is the third largest Muslim nation in the world with approximately 135 million people.

Bangladesh is the third largest Muslim nation in the world with approximately 135 million people. Eighty-seven percent of its population follow the Islamic faith. During the years I worked there the church struggled to maintain its existence. The number of churches was small and converts were few. Persecution was frequent and harsh.

Today, twenty years later the picture has changed significantly. The churches of our fellowship were approximately 25 in number, counting their preaching points and outstations in 1977. Today, the number is 158. The number of believers has grown remarkably as well, from 1,000 to 16,000.

During the pastors' conference the church was packed to capacity with pastors and workers. They were deeply concerned and open-spirited to the challenge of reaching Muslims. During one session, five young men stepped forward during a special prayer of commitment to indicate their willingness to devote their lives to reaching Muslims. I was reminded of Paul's words to the Corinthians, "*I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made*


it grow." And grow it has.

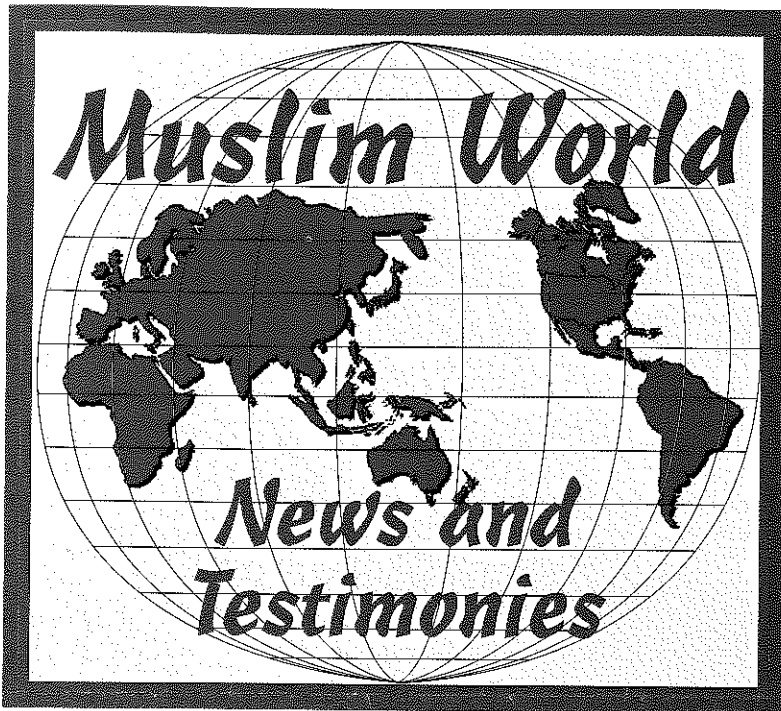
I find myself thinking of the faithful service by so many dedicated workers during these years of growth and progress. Bangladeshi pastors, Bible school teachers, missionaries, and dedicated laymen all working together to reach lost and needy people with the good news of God's kingdom.

Of course, the early years of hard work in preparing the soil was necessary. The planting of the good seed of God's Word was critical. The faithful watering of the seed was absolutely necessary. But we must never forget that it was God who made it grow. "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, *but only God*, who makes things grow." He is the great Harvest Master. We are all blessed with the opportunity to invest something of ourselves in reaching those in need.

I want to salute the workers, past and present, who have contributed to God's work in Bangladesh.

I want to salute the workers, past and present, who have contributed to God's work in Bangladesh. Many sacrificed much before our time and many others have worked so faithfully more recently. What a privilege to have been a part of a team venture for God.

It really doesn't matter so much where our work fits into the total picture of what God is doing. It is our faithfulness to God's call upon our lives that means the most. How pleased I was to return to a place of former service and be reminded of these principles of God's eternal harvest. 



Chechnya

President Aslan Maskhadov of Chechnya wants to adopt a new administrative system as an Islamic Republic. Chechnya was subject to a brutal war with Russia between 1994 and 1996 in its quest for independence.

If Chechnya becomes an Islamic state, it would be the first part of the former Soviet Union to do so. Several of the former Soviet republics have a majority Muslim population, but they have been fearful of the impact of political Islam and have sought to suppress it.

Even without constitutional change, Islamic influence is growing. The sale of alcohol is forbidden. Islamic courts now operate alongside civil courts. Women are encouraged to cover their heads with headscarves and their legs with trousers, though neither has ever been traditional in Chechnya. There are also moves to have gender-segregated classes in schools.

Maskhadov has denied that people are being kidnapped in Chechnya, though an estimated 150 are now believed to be held. Among the latest Christians

seized were two Hungarian relief workers, kidnapped in the Chechen capital of Grozny last October 23 by a group of armed men. There has been no trace of two Russians who were abducted last September near the border between Chechnya and the Ingush Republic after they had delivered aid supplies.

—*Compass Direct*

CMM Holds Seminar in North India

The North India Bible Institute in Hardoi, India, was the site of a recent Muslim Training and

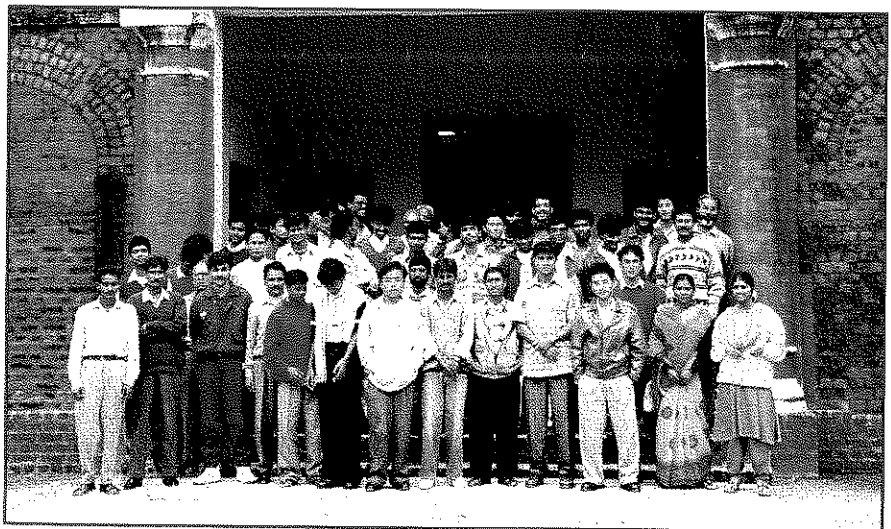
Awareness Seminar, conducted by a CMM ministry team. This is one of the older Assemblies of God schools in India. Dr. P.C. Samuel serves as its president.

The students responded enthusiastically to the challenge of reaching Muslims with the gospel. The Holy Spirit moved many to deep experiences of intercessory prayer in several of the services. Leadership of the school, along with a large segment of the student body, committed themselves to establish a *Jumaa* Prayer Fellowship on campus.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan's spiritual leaders have ordered the police to put a halt to business and traffic twice a day so Islamic prayers can be held undisturbed. Apart from this, they also told the police to force people from the streets into the mosques to follow the services there. Those who break the new rules may expect severe punishment. Since the start of this year the Afghan rulers of the fundamentalist Taliban movement have introduced a great number of measures to force people to abide by Islamic principles.

—*Islam Development Brief*



Students who recently attended the CMM seminar at the North India Bible Institute

The Muslim View of God

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Muhammad is His Apostle." It is the shortest creed in the world and repeated more often than any other. The bottom line of the Muslim faith is the absolute oneness of God. This rigid and inflexible monotheism allows no place for a partner.

Important similarities exist between the Islamic and Christian beliefs about God.

However, the crucial differences between the biblical and Qur'anic concepts of God cause Muslims and Christians to embrace contrasting views concerning the relationship between God and man.

We can gain an insightful glimpse into the Islamic concept of God and His relationship to people as we examine through Muslim eyes a simple phrase which expresses the essence of biblical truth:

"Jesus, God's Son, loves you and died for your sins."

THIS IS UNTHINKABLE!

To give God a partner is to commit the unpardonable sin of *shirk* in Islam. It is blasphemous and condemned throughout the Qur'an to join other gods with God. It is unthinkable for Muslims that Jesus should be considered God's Son.

The uncompromising emphasis on the absolute and indivisible unity of God stems from Muhammad's rejection of the

erroneous concept of the Trinity he had no doubt learned from heretical Christians in Arabia and the Middle East in the sixth century. He eventually rejected completely the numerous gods and goddesses of his own tribal Arabs, but received confusing and conflicting information concerning the God of Moses, Abraham and Jesus.

Unfortunately, the Prophet of Islam came to understand that the Holy Trinity consisted of God the Father, Mary the Mother, and Jesus the Son!

Young Muhammad considered it inconceivable that God was involved in some kind of sexual union to produce a son.

Missing the truth of the Trinity, our Muslim friends still today stumble with human logic over the idea that there exists in the Divine Godhead a mystery that defies human reason. The

Qur'an clearly declares that Jesus was the virgin-born son of Mary; but the concept of Jesus, the Son of God, is unthinkable.

Let us now look at another part of this biblically-based concept through Muslim eyes:

"Jesus, God's Son, loves you and died for your sins."

THIS IS UNRELATED!

Through Muslim eyes, the concept of God and the concept of love are unrelated. The significant focus of the relationship between God and man is *submission* and *obedience*.

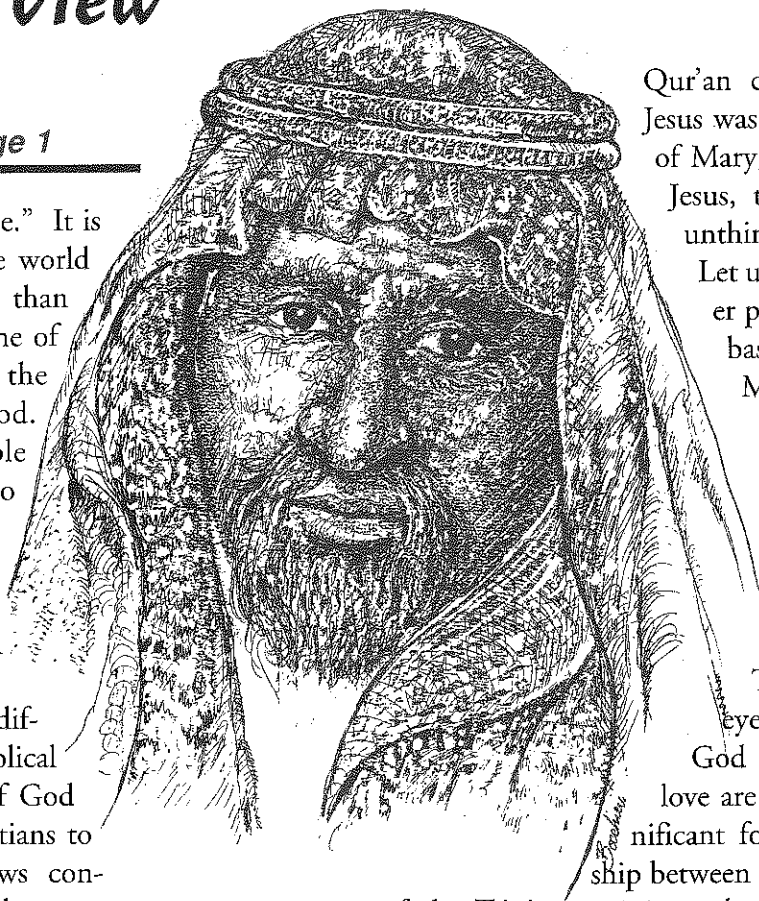
The controlling component in the relationship between a master and his servants is not love, but rather *submission* and *obedience*.

The master is always above the servant. He may give gifts to his servants, but he will never give himself. He is the master, not the father.

The dominant factor in the relationship between a military general and his soldiers is likewise *submission* and *obedience*.

An officer may give rewards to his soldiers for their achievements, but he doesn't give himself. He is the general, not the father.

The master-servant relationship and the military general-soldier relationship reveal perhaps the most significant difference between the Christian and Muslim concepts of God. In the Qur'an, God is presented as a Master who demands one be His



slave; the Bible presents God as a loving Heavenly Father who invites one to be His child.

The focus of the Muslim's life, then, is not to know God but to submit to Him.

Conformity to His character is not the goal, but obedience to His commands is the objective.

Through Muslim eyes, the concept of God and the concept of love are unrelated.

Now let us look at the final part of this statement through the eyes of our Muslim friend.

"Jesus, God's Son, loves you and died for your sins."

THIS IS UNTRUE!

Through Muslim eyes, the story of the Crucifixion is a hoax that is presented only to deceive the Christian community. It represents one of the main reasons why God sent down to Muhammad one last and final revelation, the Holy Qur'an, to correct this false doctrine. God

would never allow His great prophet Jesus to suffer such a shameful death as a public crucifixion.

Muslims accept that Jesus, by God's permission, experienced a miraculous birth and was supernaturally

raised into heaven. However, they cite the Qur'an as the basis of their denial of this crucial aspect of the gospel message.

There are many theories, none of which are found in the Qur'an, as to how Jesus was rescued from the cross.

Through Muslim eyes, the Crucifixion is simply untrue.

Through Muslim eyes, let's look still further at this statement that Christians believe:

"Jesus, God's Son, loves you and died for your sins."

THIS IS UNNECESSARY!

Through Muslim eyes, it is foolish to think God would require the innocent to die for the guilty. No one can take another's place before God. Each person must stand helpless and alone on Judgment Day. There can be no mediator between God and man.

Our Muslim friends are convinced that the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins



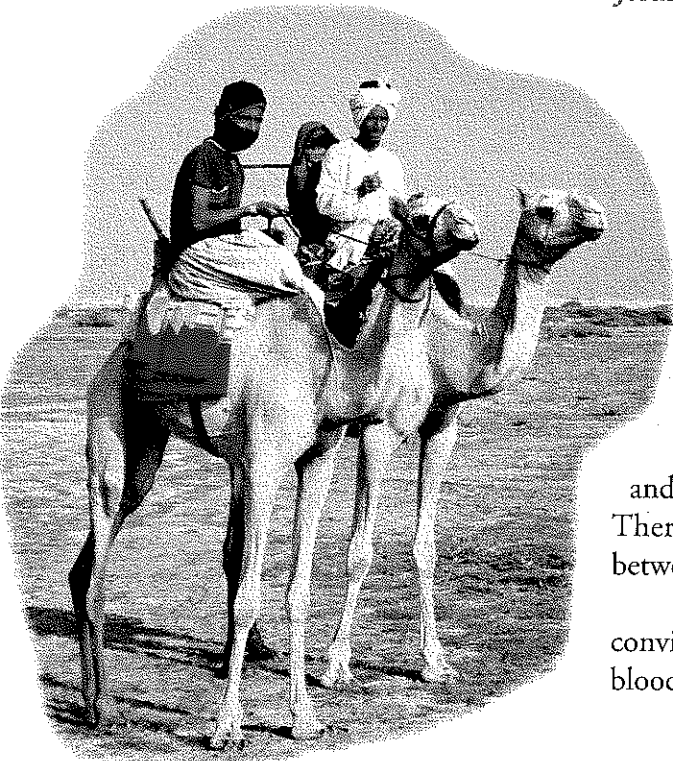
is totally unnecessary. An atonement is needless because God has the power and authority to simply forgive someone their evil deeds if they just ask Him in humble repentance. It would reveal a fundamental weakness in the character of God if He didn't offer forgiveness of sins without it costing someone's life in exchange.

Islam affirms belief in One Supreme God of the universe, but this rigid and inflexible monotheism prevents the consideration of the essential message of the gospel—*Jesus, God's Son, loves you and died for your sins.*

The message to our Muslim friends is that the New Testament plainly shows that the final victory over sin, death, and all the powers of Satan was gained at the Cross. In Jesus, you can be forgiven by God, you can become children of God, you can receive the Spirit of God, you can come to personally know God, and you can spend eternity in His presence.



This article was taken from a new book by CMM called "Through Muslim Eyes." You can receive a copy of this book, by sending \$3 to CMM, 2032 E. Kearney, #205, Springfield, MO 65803.



Testimony of a Martyr?

With tears in his eyes, Abdur once again described his vision of Jesus. As he explained this supernatural encounter to a Muslim village magistrate, Abdur tried to make him understand that he was not changing his religion for monetary gain. He pleaded with the magistrate to give him an affidavit that would officially document his decision to change his Muslim name to a Christian one.

Relentlessly, Abdur begged this court magistrate to sign the necessary document. To Abdur it

was a matter of life and death. He was convinced that if he failed to do this, he would become sick again. This time he would die. All of this because of this strange vision!

Abdur was a Muslim who believed in the supernatural. A vision of Jesus had appeared to him during a terrible bout of sickness. He had nearly been blinded by the brilliant light that surrounded the figure who had been revealed to him as Jesus. He understood that if he would follow the path of the prophet Jesus, he would be healed.

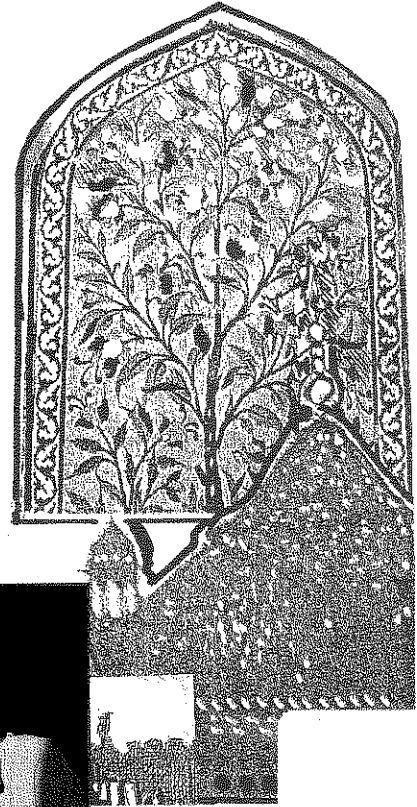
Believing the voice to be a

message from heaven, Abdur immediately decided to follow Jesus. As a result he had recovered from his sickness.

As time passed, however, Abdur reverted to Islam and once again found himself terribly ill. Again the prophet Jesus appeared to him in a vision. This time, Abdur promised that he would follow the Jesus way without fail. To confirm his decision, he went directly to a Christian missionary and requested to be baptized. He knew this was the ultimate sign of conversion.

The resident missionary was suspicious of his motives. He demanded that he should first obtain a signed document from the village magistrate to prove that he had taken a Christian name. This would show that he had truly made a decision to become a Christian.

After being denied consideration at several locations, Abdur finally located a magistrate who would consider his case—for a reasonable fee, of course. Having heard the story of the vision and Abdur's fear of becoming deathly ill again, this magistrate finally signed the document. With affidavit in hand, Abdur quickly



returned to the missionary to be baptized.

Fearful of reprisal and loss of his resident status, the missionary directed

Abdur to another mission.

There he met with the head of the mission, who was a national pastor. This pastor met with Abdur week after week to give him spiritual instruction. After several weeks, he began to show signs of spiritual growth and understanding. But then suddenly he stopped coming. He mysteriously disappeared and his whereabouts are unknown to this day.

Perhaps Abdur has joined the millions of martyrs who have lost their lives in this century because they dared to stand for Christ.

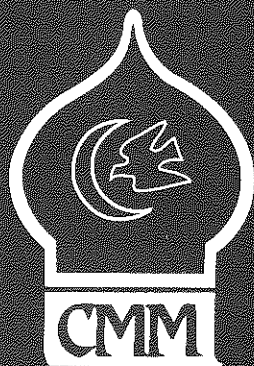
Abdur promised that he would follow the Jesus way without fail.



Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...



Praying for Muslims Around the World!



Friday, March 6, 1998. Please pray

...for the CMM team that has just finished sharing about ministry to Muslims with the pastors in Guyana this week and will be with the El Salvadorian pastors next week. Pray that many of the pastors will be challenged to give themselves to ministry among Muslims.

...for Dimitri Bellos, an Anglican Church administrator in Iran, who was arrested last August. Please pray for his release so he can join his Dutch wife and children in the Netherlands.

...for a pastor in Virginia who has cultivated friendships with 12 Turkish men and their families in his area. Pray especially for Ibrahim who is straddling the fence between Islam and Christianity.

...for the Bible distribution project in Upper Egypt. Some 5,000 Bibles are being distributed to Coptic Orthodox families in this area.

Friday, March 13, 1998. Please pray

...for a handful of Tunisian church leaders, who have been interrogated and are under surveillance. They have been asked to stop all relations with westerners residing in Tunisia.

...that God will call men and women to fill the numerous teaching opportunities for English language teachers with TEFL qualifications. These provide tremendous possibilities for friendships with students in limited-access countries.

...that the Holy Spirit will bring revival to every church and Christian community in Indonesia, so that the whole church will become involved in intercessory prayer and outreach to the unreached of all ethnic groups.

Friday, March 20, 1998. Please pray

...that the ministry of the CMM team at Trinity Bible College in Ellendale, ND, next week will be effective.

...that the four churches in Aden, Yemen, will serve a much wider circle than foreign guests. These are the only churches functioning in the entire country.

...concerning the violent conditions in Algeria which have resulted in the deaths of many innocent civilians. Pray that the Lord will protect His children.

...for a Turkish university student in Michigan who is open to the gospel and socially connected to many other Turkish students there. Pray for those who are ministering to him.

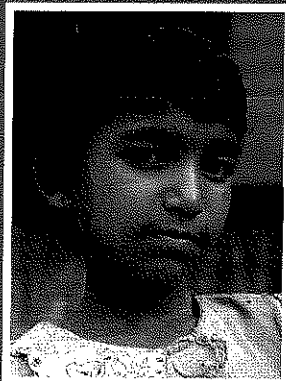
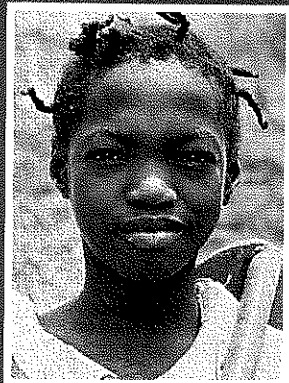
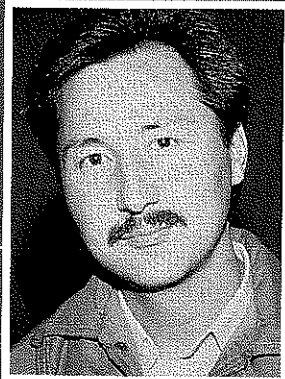
Friday, March 27, 1998. Please pray

...for the Muslim Awareness Seminar being conducted next week at Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri. Pray that many students will be motivated to become involved in outreach to Muslims.

...for Rene Camahort, who has been in a Saudi Arabian prison since August 1995. He has recently been transferred to another section of the prison and is afraid this move will hinder his ministry. There are only two other Christians in that section.

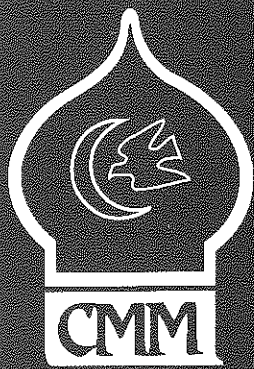
...that Christians in economic difficulty in Zimbabwe will withstand the temptation to turn to Islam for material gain. Unemployment is high and crime and social problems are increasing in the cities.

...that the Jesus film may produce fruit in the lives of the Bahraini people who have received copies of the video through the efforts of a bold local Christian and those he recruited to help him distribute it. Pray that God will turn the newspaper warning against the video to good, causing many more to inquire and see the film.



*I urge, then, first of all
that requests, prayers,
intercession, and
thanksgiving be
made for everyone.*
—(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)

Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...



Praying for Muslims Around the World!

Friday, April 3, 1998. Please pray

...for the CMM team members as they travel to Indonesia next week for Muslim training seminars in Indonesia. Pray that God will prepare the hearts of the participants.

...for Pastor Zaur Balayev, an evangelist of Georgian descent, who has been imprisoned in Azerbaijan. Because of a law on religion which was passed last year, the minister of justice has also demanded the closure of all missionary society activities.

...for Christians who were affected by the grenade attack on a Christian bookstand last September which killed one person and injured 25. Praise the Lord for the compassion shown by Turkey's 15 Protestant churches which collected about \$4,500 for the victims. The Good News Publishing Company continues to receive threatening phone calls.

Friday, April 10, 1998. Please pray

...for the scattered Afghan believers in areas controlled by Taliban. This radical Islamic fundamentalist government is trying to crush everything which is not basic Muslim.

...for N., a young woman who was baptized in June at the Turkish Believers' Conference in Colorado. Her family sent her to the States to turn her brother back to Islam, but he led her to Christ instead. Pray that they will both continue to grow in their relationship with the Lord and will lead many more Turkish friends and relatives to Christ.

...for the Ugandan church. Muslim extremism is increasing. Muslim terrorists were allegedly responsible for a grenade attack on Christians in Kampala in which four died.

Friday, April 17, 1998. Please pray

...for the Institute of Muslim Studies being held at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in the Philippines from April 20-June 12. Pray that this new graduate-level venture will be an important tool for preparing workers for a great thrust for ministry to Muslims throughout that area.

...for E.T., a young Turkish arm wrestler who is living in Missouri. He is showing interest in understanding about the Christian faith. Pray that God will give wisdom to the pastor who has befriended him.

...for Pakistani Christians being held in prison or hiding out as they await trial on alleged blasphemy charges. They are in constant danger from radical elements with no police protection.

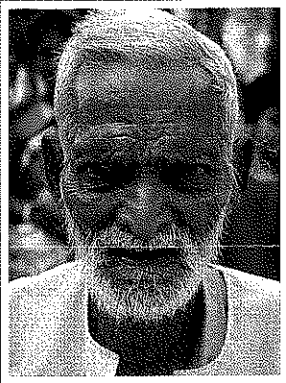
Friday, April 24, 1998. Please pray

...for a Kurdish refugee couple in Ontario that is having marital problems. The husband has expressed an interest in the gospel.

...for Christians in Chechnya. Since the end of hostilities between the central Russian government and the Chechen rebels, Chechnya has introduced *shariah* (Islamic law) and at least four people publicly executed. Christians have been arrested and their literature confiscated, but none has been killed yet.

...for the situation in the Republic of Georgia which has rekindled a debate concerning a law on religion. Georgia is the only former Soviet republic that has not so far adopted a law on religion. Almost without exception these laws have been used to hinder the proclamation of the gospel by Protestant groups.

...that God will continue to open doors of ministry to Muslims around the world. There are still more than 1.2 billion Muslims who need to receive a clear presentation about Jesus. Pray also that the Lord of the harvest will send forth more laborers into this very needy field.



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that requests, prayers,
intercession, and
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—(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)