


Signs and Wonders Among Muslims

By Harry Morin



Muslims know that they are not the only creatures on earth. Among the many other forms of life, they believe in spirit beings. They refer to these beings as the *jinn*. They also believe that some of the *jinn* are good and that others are evil. It is the evil *jinn* that Muslims fear the most. According to Islamic teaching, the evil *jinn* serve as Satan's cohorts or legions. Their aim is to continue their rebellion against God by inflicting harm on people. Muslims regard these spirits as far more powerful than themselves because the spirits can breed sickness, play tricks on the human mind, bring misfortune and cause fatal accidents. The *jinn* can possess people, drive them mad, and, as a result, terrify Muslims with their powers.

The Western mind is prone to dismiss all of this as superstition or to rationalize such mysteries with scientific theories. While the Western mindset aims for people to subdue the powers of the universe, the Muslim mindset is different. Muslims believe that they are subject to these unseen spiritual powers because they acknowledge their own human limitations. Thus, they live in hopelessness and fearful resignation to the spirits. They also live in dire need of a power that can set them free from the powers of evil.

Muslims respect possessors of power

Muslims recognize a *hierarchy* (a spiritual body organized into ranks, each one subordinate to the one above it) of spiritual power. The most powerful of all beings is God who wields the greatest power in the universe. Angels, who occupy the next rank, exercise the power to do what God wants. However, because such spirits live in heaven, Muslims believe they are not accessible to people. The *jinn* occupy the next rank in the hierarchy of power, and after the *jinn* come people. Generally, Muslims don't compare people to others in the hierarchy because, in their view, people are subordinate to these other powers; still, there are exceptions.

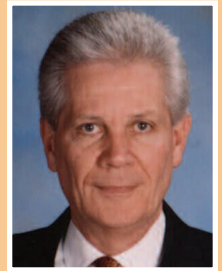


Until All Have Heard

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




A few days ago I received an inspiring phone call from Pastor Muhammad, who leads a strong evangelistic ministry in a large Asian nation. He called to request prayer for his family’s security. Pastor Muhammad went on to say, “Muslim children are hungry for the Lord and come regularly to our children’s outreaches. Every phase of our ministry to Muslims is growing, but there is great resistance.” Both Pastor Muhammad and his wife were born and raised as Muslims. They came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through a series of supernatural events. He said, “My knowledge of the true light came through Jesus Christ.”

In this issue we are again emphasizing the supernatural role in the salvation experience of Muslims. In facing the spiritual barriers posed by Islam, it is critical that the church embrace the role of the supernatural. Debates and dialogue have a place, but nothing can penetrate spiritual darkness like the light of the Holy Spirit. In his powerful Day of Pentecost sermon, Peter quoted the prophet Joel:

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun

will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:17-21).

The hearts of many Muslims are prepared by supernatural encounters. In an attempt to find out what factors most influenced them to follow Christ, a major seminary conducted a survey of 1,000 ex-Muslims. The survey determined that, “Although dreams appear to play a minor role in the conversion of Westerners, over a quarter of those interviewed [as former Muslims] emphatically confirmed that dreams and visions played a vital role in their conversion, and helped them in difficult times.” Others have found the percentage higher. A missionary in South Africa reported that among African Muslims, “42 percent of the new believers [from a Muslim background] come to Christ through visions, dreams, angelic appearances and hearing God’s voice.” A missionary who works with media in the Middle East said, “Muslim listeners often call to tell us about dreams and visions of Jesus, wanting to know what that means for them.”

The unprecedented occurrence of the supernatural among Muslims is not just a “phenomenon.” It is part of the sovereign move of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the prophet Joel’s statement – “*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*” Glory and honor to his name! 

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Muslim World News



Tanzania

Acquittal for 'illegal preaching'

A Tanzanian court has acquitted two evangelists of "illegal preaching." After 10 months of hearings, a Kariakoo area court in Dar es Salaam closed the case against Anglican Christians Eleutery Kobelo and Cecil Simbaulanga, who were arrested in October 2009 after Muslims invited them to participate in a religious debate at which the opponents did not appear, but authorities did.

The two evangelists maintained that no Muslims showed up to the neutral site of the supposed interfaith debate until Islamists arrived with government security agents who charged them with "using religious sermons to incite Muslims and Christians into viewing each other with suspicion."

The accusers claimed that the Christian evangelists' message that Jesus is God had annoyed Muslims — therefore disrupting a peaceful coexistence between those of the two faiths. — *Compass*

Maldives

Religious freedom dims

After Saudi Arabia, the Maldives is the only nation that claims a 100 percent Muslim population. But the Indian Ocean archipelago has more than 70,000 expatriate workers of various religions.

Abdulla Yameen, brother of the former dictator of the Maldives and leader of an opposition party ally, said that a 37-year-old Maldivian citizen, Mohamed Nazim, was attacked after he said he was not a Muslim. Before a crowd of around 11,000, Nazim told a visiting Indian Muslim televangelist, Zakir Naik, that although he was born to a practicing Muslim family, he was "struggling to believe in religions."

Many called for Nazim's death while others beat him. "See how the public went after his throat," said Yameen, proud of their "passion" for Islam. Asked if such passion was good for a society, he replied, "Yes. We are an Islamic nation, and our religion is an important part of our collective identity." — *Compass*

Somalia

Church member killed

Another member of an underground Christian movement in Somalia was murdered by Muslim militants in a continuing campaign to eliminate converts from Islam.

Al Shabaab militants entered the house of Osman Abdullah Fataho in Afgoi (19 miles from Mogadishu) and shot him to death in front of his wife and children. Fataho was a long-time Christian deeply involved in the activities of the small, secret Christian community, sources said.

Area Christians said they suspected someone had informed the militants of Fataho's faith.

The assailants abducted Fataho's wife and children, later releasing her on the condition that she surrender the little ones to be trained as soldiers, sources said.

"We know they have taken the children to brainwash them, to change their way of life from Christian to Muslim and to teach them the Quran," said one source. — *Compass*

Signs and Wonder

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Throughout the centuries of Islamic history, certain Muslims — primarily Sufis — were known to possess extraordinary power. These exceptional Muslims were miracles workers, known to heal the sick, cast out demons, walk on water, and even levitate (to rise, float or travel in the air in defiance of gravity) from one city to another. Over time, Muslims elevated these isolated individuals to sainthood. Some of these saints have become legendary figures because of the amazing miracles they are believed to have performed.

Frankly, some educated Muslims claim that such miracles are only myths. Some cultures permit special people to be honored by attributing supernatural powers to them. In the case of Muslim saints, it is possible that Muslims exaggerated their miracles in order to honor them. Still, many of the alleged miracles may indeed be true because Satan is the great counterfeiter who can perform such exploits. Even the Bible bears record of unbelievers with power to heal people and to expel evil spirits.

Muslims revere their saints as very special people. Since the saints did what ordinary people couldn't do, Muslims believe their marvels and wonders were possible only because they had a special connection with God. Muslims viewed these miracles that benefited people as signs — as definite proof — of God's favor. These signs also showed clearly God's approval for the miracle-workers. Because of these things, Muslims revere and respect these saints as God's friends and servants. How does this information about Muslims relate to us and the Church?

God and the strategy of miracles

The book of Acts describes the amazing growth of the early Church. Thousands of men and women joined the original followers of Jesus. Even hard-to-reach people like the Jewish priests and Samaritans became believers. Several factors contributed to this astonishing growth.

1. The disciples became apostles, recognizing that they were sent specifically to do God's work. Jesus commissioned them to go throughout the world; so, they became people with a vision for missions (Acts 1:8).
2. The apostles were filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8 and 4:31).
3. The apostles preached the word of the gospel with boldness (Acts 4:31).
4. The apostles performed miracles of healing and exorcism (Acts 5:12-16).

The book of Acts provides an important model for us today. In order for Christians to reach Muslims, they must get involved in God's work. Like the disciples of Jesus, they must strive to become apostles, and they must be filled continually with the Holy Spirit. In addition, they must proclaim the Word with boldness and they must pray and believe for miracles.

While the apostles preached many sermons about Jesus, it was the miracles they performed that melted the hearts of people to believe. The miracles were a sign of



God's approval and a confirmation of Jesus' mission. The apostle Peter said, "Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know" (Acts 2:22).

God continues to use this method to reach difficult, skeptical unbelievers — and Muslims fall into this category.

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Christian workers in Muslim areas must believe that they are engaging in the ministry of the apostles (Ephesians 4:11). They must also realize that God will use miracles in their ministry to confirm the truth of their message. When a Muslim feels the impact of a miracle, his heart opens to the words of Scripture. A miracle will often expand his faith to accept Christ as Savior and Lord of his life.

Christians and the strategy of miracles

The fact that Muslims believe in miracles is a given.



So, too, is the fact that God purposely uses miracles to confirm Jesus' ministry among people. These two facts lead to an important conclusion: Christians who long to reach Muslims effectively with the gospel must think seriously about miracles in Jesus' name. Divine miracles should be a major part of the Christian mindset. They should be seen as a means of bringing people to the lordship of Christ.

Christian workers need to build a Muslim's faith in the power of Jesus' name. Even the Muslim's Quran confirms the miraculous power of Jesus (3:49 and 5:110). In fact, Jesus is the only prophet in the Quran associated with physical healing of the sick. Christian workers must proclaim the good news that this healing power is still available today. They must also make clear that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8). Jesus did not come simply to appease, manipulate or trick the *jinn*; instead, He came to destroy completely Satan's influence in people's lives and to set them free from fear and bondage to evil spirits.

Christian workers must remind Muslims that Jesus is alive in heaven and that God never withdrew His favor from Jesus. Muslims need to know that Jesus still heals and blesses people today. Furthermore, they need to know that Jesus ordered His followers to continue the ministry of healing and exorcism and to believe for His miracles by praying in His name.

Christian workers should be available to pray for Muslims and to lay hands on those who are sick and demon-possessed. They must demonstrate faith that Jesus still does the impossible. In addition, they must see all this as a Biblical strategy for impacting Muslim people.

The miracles of dreams and visions

Dreams and visions also make a major impact on Muslims since they believe that these experiences relate to the spirit realm. In an Islamic view, dreams come from either God or Satan. Muslims believe that dreams relating to prophets are especially ordained by God. Most people in the West rationalize dreams as purely human phenomena that remain a mystery. In any case, they don't link dreams to the spirit world. Nor do believers tend to speak about God impacting and directing people through dreams and visions.

The Bible, however, provides many examples of God speaking to people in dreams and visions. One notable example is the experience of Saul of Tarsus, a Jew, who was also a strict Pharisee. He was like the fundamentalist Muslim of today who is concerned about preserving religious tradition. Saul was determined to destroy the new religious movement that centered on Jesus, for he saw this movement as a serious threat to the existing religious

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establishment. As a result, he gave his nod of approval that led to the martyrdom of Steven. He was also responsible for the imprisonment and persecution of many of Jesus' followers. Would Christians in that setting have thought that someday Saul would become one of them? Yet, God completely transformed his life through a vision — a “vision from heaven” (Acts 26:19) — that featured a bright blinding light and the voice of Jesus.

The following are examples of people whom God encouraged or spoke to in dreams:

- Jacob, Genesis 31:11
- Joseph (Old Testament), Genesis 37:5
- A stranger (in the story of Gideon), Judges 7:13
- Solomon, I Kings 3:15
- Daniel, Daniel 7:1
- Joseph (New Testament), Matthew 2:13


God also used dreams to speak to unbelievers, such as the following:

- Abimelech (king of Gerar in the story of Abraham), Genesis 20:3
- Laban the Syrian (story of Jacob), Genesis 31:24

- The butler and baker (story of Joseph), Genesis 40:5
- Pharaoh (story of Joseph), Genesis 41:7
- Nebuchadnezzar (story of Daniel), Daniel 4:18
- The Magi (story of Jesus' birth), Matthew 2:12
- Pilate's wife (story of Jesus' trial), Matthew 27:19

Today God continues to use dreams and visions to stir people's hearts, including Muslim people. More and more testimonies are emerging about Muslims embracing Christ as a result of dreams. Christian workers must take note of this fact and pray specifically for God to touch the life of a Muslim acquaintance through a dream or vision.

Conclusion

The Christian worker needs to remember that signs and wonders are not an end in themselves. Signs and wonders must lead to something more: They must lead Muslims to the truth of the gospel. They must lead Muslims to the lordship of Christ and to a transformed life that frees them from witchcraft and sinful habits. Christian workers must focus continually on these objectives in order for signs and wonders to accomplish great things for the Kingdom of God. 

Unreached People Group: *Chinese Uyghurs*

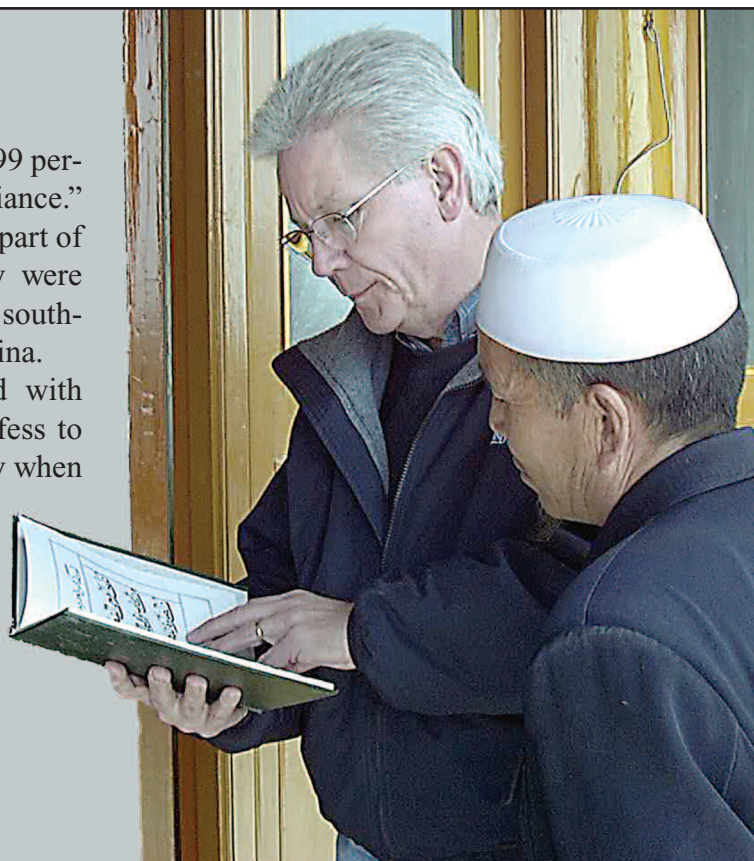
There are 10,833,000 Chinese Uyghurs. 99.99 percent are Muslim. Uyghur means “unity” or “alliance.” In the mid-eighth century the Uyghur inhabited part of present-day Mongolia. Around A.D. 840 they were attacked from the north by the Kirgiz and fled southwest to their current homeland in northwest China.

Most Uyghur follow a folk Islam mixed with superstition. Although almost all Uyghurs confess to be Muslims, few are aware of the time in history when the majority of Uyghur were Christians.

Pray for:

- The small number of Uyghur believers.
- Church planting teams to be raised up.
- A solution to political unrest.
- Successful entry platforms for those trying to minister to Uyghurs.

For further information on the Uyghur people, please visit: www.joshuaproject.net.





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Friday, November 5, 2010. Please pray

...for religious freedom in the Maldives, where the government claims a 100 percent Muslim population. Pray for the protection of secret believers in Jesus Christ.

...for the 25 million Muslims of Saudi Arabia. Pray they would receive a true witness of Jesus Christ.

...for the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan. The opportunities for Christian witness continue to diminish as political tensions mount.

Friday, November 12, 2010. Please pray

...for Muslims in the Arabian Gulf. Pray for Muslims secretly seeking Christ and attending clandestine meetings.

...for MBBs (Muslim Background Believers) across the Muslim world. Pray they would receive true shepherding and encouragement from fellow Christians.

...for Christian witness in Myanmar. Bordered to the west by Bangladesh, Myanmar is home to 2 million Muslims.

Friday, November 19, 2010. Please pray

...for Christian workers and missionaries in Muslim communities. Pray for spiritual, mental, emotional, and financial support, and for a strengthening of the vision they have been called to.

...for an Iranian Christian imprisoned almost 90 days. He has been released on \$200,000 bail, but has not yet been officially charged with any crime.

...for the Muslims of Senegal. Located south of Morocco in Africa, Senegal is home to 12 million Muslims.

Friday, November 26, 2010. Please pray

...for Nigeria's 65 million Muslims. Pray they would receive a witness of Jesus Christ despite the turmoil and carnage often present in Nigeria.

...for France's 4.5 million Muslims. France now has a higher Muslim population than Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman or Qatar.

...against the fear that often grips Muslims and hinders many from making a commitment to Jesus Christ — as they are fully aware of the consequences of conversion to Christianity.

***I URGE, THEN, FIRST OF ALL THAT REQUESTS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSION AND
THANKSGIVING BE MADE FOR EVERYONE. — 1 TIMOTHY 2:1, NIV***



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Friday, December 3, 2010. Please pray

...for Muslims in Turkmenistan. Christian witness is opposed by the government; pray that believers would be able to share Jesus Christ despite the harsh circumstances.

...for the 4 million Muslims of Uganda to have an opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

...for 15 MBBs in Iran. They were arrested and held for seven days before 13 were released on bail; two remain imprisoned. None of the 15 has yet been charged.

Friday, December 10, 2010. Please pray

...for Oman. Pray that Christian radio would penetrate Oman, where there is little opportunity for Christian witness.

...that through dreams, literature or Christian witness, Muslims would have an opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ.

...for persecuted Christians in Libya, only a tiny, unofficial percentage of the population.

Friday, December 17, 2010. Please pray

...for the Christian community in Morocco. The number of Christians recently deported has risen to 128.

...for secret believers in Iraq. They often risk betrayal or death from their own families and kin.

...for Muslims in Mozambique. Despite its location in southeastern Africa, Mozambique is home to approximately 5 million Muslims.

Friday, December 24, 2010. Please pray

...for Shia Muslims throughout the Islamic world. Pray that Shias would receive a true revelation of Jesus Christ.

...for Muslims in Central Asia. In 1991, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan became independent countries following the break-up of the Soviet Union. They are home to 60 million people; most are Muslim.

...for the Muslims of Niger. Landlocked in western Africa, Niger is an impoverished country with 15 million Muslims waiting to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Friday, December 31, 2010. Please pray

...for the families and church of a martyred Pakistani pastor and his brother. The two men were shot and killed after accusations of blasphemy. Pray for God's protection over the families and church members.

...that mature and vibrant churches will be planted across the Muslim world.

...for young believers in Tunisia to be filled with wisdom and the vision to share the gospel with friends and neighbors.