

INTERCEDE

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"Why should God choose to have me pray for lost Muslims who live half way around the world? Many of them are labeled as terrorists, or at the least have strange ideas and customs. Only the Lord knows if they can really be saved."

PRAYER



THE FOCAL POINT FOR OUTREACH TO THE MUSLIM WORLD

by Paul Parks

Have you ever said something like this, or at least thought it?

Let me tell you about a person who might have been so labeled because she belonged to a people group that would be unlikely to even hear the gospel, let alone respond to it. Yet one day she came to Christ.

A pastor called the Center for Ministry to Muslims and asked, "How am I going to reach the Muslims who are flooding into our community?"

When we receive calls like this, the CMM staff encourages people to begin to pray for Muslims at noon on Fridays because that is when Muslims around the world go to the mosque to pray.

Since the Arabic word for Friday is *Jumaa* (the day of assembling), Muslims refer to those times as "*Jumaa* prayers." CMM started the *Jumaa* Prayer Fellowship in 1985 as a time when Christians around the world took specific time to pray for Muslims. As Muslims pray that they will know *God's will*, Christians are praying that Muslims will really come to know *God*.

Thus when the pastor called CMM, he was told that the best way to begin was to gather his people together on Friday for special prayer. Encouraged by the simplicity of this, the pastor started a *Jumaa* Prayer Fellowship at his church.

A few weeks after the group began meeting for prayer, a Muslim woman from Iran came to a Sunday service as a guest of one of the church ladies. She listened intently to the message, and as the pastor prayed in closing, he heard movement and glanced up to see that the Muslim lady was leaving her seat. He was discouraged, thinking he had offended her. But his sorrow turned to joy as the lady turned and walked to the altar. Raising

continued on page 4

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, Director
Center for
Ministry to Muslims



Here are three other practical thoughts regarding prayer and follow-up with Muslims:

Like you, I was left stunned and distressed last September over the heinous acts of terror committed in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC. Our first reaction at CMM was to pray for the families of those who died, and for strength and protection for those involved in dealing with the aftermath.

Because this tragedy was perpetrated by terrorists claiming to be Muslims, our task...*to assist the Church worldwide to provide an adequate witness of Jesus Christ to every Muslim, by every means possible...*has quickly become very important in the minds of believers around the globe. I am grateful for the many calls, emails and other expressions of concern that have come to our office, and for the hundreds of requests for materials to help believers learn more about Islam and how to pray and witness to Muslims.

The prayer theme of this issue was in place before the events of last September. But I believe the Holy Spirit has chosen a critical time to refocus our attention on the most important part of what we do: *prayer and intercession.*

I am reminded daily that *we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers and rulers of darkness.* The result we seek—to see Muslims accept Christ as Savior—will come only with *groanings of spiritual intercession.*

Regularly people ask me, “How can I pray for Muslims?” Let me suggest that reading Paul Park's lead article in this issue of *Intercede* would be a good place to begin. Then take advantage of the seven “general prayer strategies for Muslim peoples” in the sidebar on page 5.

Because this tragedy was perpetrated by terrorists claiming to be Muslims, our task...to assist the Church worldwide to provide an adequate witness of Jesus Christ to every Muslim, by every means possible...has quickly become very important in the minds of believers around the globe.

● **FIND** out more about Muslims in your area, and throughout the world. Gather a group of believers who will commit to pray for their needs.

● **FORM** a data-gathering team. If possible, ask team members to visit Muslims in your area.

● **FACILITATE** the beginning of *Jumaa* Prayer Fellowships among your praying friends. CMM encourages believers to pray an hour on the Muslim holy day of Friday (“*Jumaa*” in Arabic)..and to fast the Friday noon meal.

Last, consider two further things that will assist you in praying for Muslims:

1. Don't make it overly complicated. If necessary, especially in the beginning, simply implore the Lord to “reveal himself to the Muslim people.” He may do that through sending a messenger, providing a dream or vision, extending the gift of healing, or by some other supernatural way.

2. If you are not already a subscriber to this free magazine, request to be placed on our mailing list. *Intercede* will inform you in a structured way about prayer needs in the Muslim world.

Thank you for partnering to pray with us and for us.
We're counting on you!

NIGERIA

Nigeria's presidential constitutional review committee has advised the federal government to halt the adoption of Islamic law, or "sharia," in the northern states. Section 10 of the 1999 constitution — which prohibits the adoption of any religion as an official religion by government at all levels — should be retained, states the committee's report obtained by Compass in Abuja. The committee noted that the adoption of sharia in several northern states has led Nigerians to question whether sections of the constitution have been infringed. It said Nigerians believe that freedom of religion is a fundamental right and clearly provided for in the constitution. The committee asked the leaders of the nation's two dominant religions to see their religions as instruments of cohesion and development in the country.

—Compass Direct

SAUDI ARABIA

Nigerian Christian Afobunor Okey Buliamin, 40, was arrested without explanation on August 19. Buliamin is the only Nigerian among 12 foreign nationals known to be detained since last July in a series of religious police raids in Jeddah. The crackdown is thought to be an effort to identify Saudi nationals in contact with foreign house churches meeting secretly throughout the city. Saudi officials didn't acknowledge the Nigerian consulate's request for a diplomatic visit until the first week in October. The Christian prisoners include at least six Ethiopians, as well as an Indian national, several Eritreans and a Filipino citizen. All are members of small expatriate churches meeting privately in homes in Jeddah.

—Compass Direct

SUDAN

A Sudanese student who converted from Islam to Christianity was severely beaten and tortured by security police in Khartoum last September, apparently at his own family's instigation. Mohammed Saeed Mohammed Omer, 26, confirmed to Compass on October 8 that his uncle had threatened to kill him on September

19. Omer's family determined to force the young convert to stop attending church and meeting with Christians. Security officials picked him up on September 22. "He was tortured and beaten," a source said, "and he lost three fingernails pulled out with pliers." The convert reportedly was forced by security police to sign papers promising not to attend any church or Christian gatherings again. Omer has refused, however, to renounce his faith in Christ. "Right now he is recovering," a local source said. "But he does not know what to do next."

—Compass Direct

TURKEY

The first modern Turkish translation of the complete Bible was released in early October to the Turkish public. The new millennium edition represents the first complete Bible translation since the 17th century in the Turkish language. The formal Istanbul presentation of the newly printed Bible at the initial October 6 press conference was addressed by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of the Greek Orthodox Church in Turkey, as well as representatives from the United Bible Societies and the Bible Society in Jordan. "It is important that everyone learn the Holy Bible clearly and accurately," said Patriarch Bartholomew. "This is assured by correct, accurate translations."—Compass Direct

ZANZIBAR

According to the authorities, people on this Tanzanian island are free to follow their faith without restriction. Yet five church leaders from different denominations recently painted a picture of ongoing harassment, bureaucratic roadblocks, religious opposition and violence against the growing church in Zanzibar where it is estimated that 98 percent of the people are Muslims. Christians encounter the most opposition when they want to establish a place of worship. Whenever the local



people hear that a pastor is planning to build a church, even if he owns the land, they will do whatever they can to prevent it. Another church leader said that every church built in the last 10 years was built without official permission. "What can you do?" one Christian pastor asked. "They will not give us permission to build a church. ... So we just have to go ahead regardless. The local Muslim people fear Christianity, that it will influence the people to join us."

—Compass Direct

AZERBAIJAN

Islamic revival has caused many Azerbaijanis to be less open to Christianity. Few countries have experienced eroding of religious freedom as Azerbaijan did in 1996 and 1997. Through direct and indirect means, the government has warred against Christians. Some have lost their jobs, a street library was threatened with closure and a Baptist pastor was shot.

—Pulse

KAZAKHSTAN

Kazak health officials have issued their second warning that Kazakhstan is on the verge of an AIDS epidemic, reports the Slavic Gospel Association's magazine Insight. The country has 1,700 registered as HIV-positive, more than the other four former Central Asian Soviet republics combined. The reason behind the high number of cases may be the rise in the number of drug addicts to 300 percent in the last five years.

—Pulse

PRAYER...THE FOCAL POINT FOR OUTREACH TO THE MUSLIM WORLD

continued from page 1

her hands and with tears in her eyes she repeated one word over and over again, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus."

At the end of the service the pastor learned that this Muslim woman knew very little English, so she had not



understood his message. But in a vision, Jesus had appeared to her in a flowing white robe and beckoned her with the words, "Come, Come," so she came to Jesus.

The prayer group at that church is but one example of many that are involved in intercessory prayer for Muslims. God has chosen to allow us to participate in the great cosmic struggle with Satan for the souls of men and women, and through our prayers, He is making it possible to change the destiny of many. Over and over we are receiving reports of how the power of darkness is being broken and Muslims are making commitments to Christ as Savior.

When we consider the place of prayer in the work of missions and accomplishing the mission of God on earth, we can view it in one of two ways. We can consider it as an "add on" to our programs, our organizational skills and cross-cultural strategies. Or we can make it the focal point of everything we do, realizing that it is the power of prayer that allows our feeble efforts to accomplish the mission of God as He intended. For reasons beyond our understanding, God has chosen to work through redeemed individuals to accomplish His plan of redemption for humankind. Intercessory prayer is the ingredient that empowers our human efforts to accomplish God's will.

Let us consider why, as followers of Christ, we should be involved in intercessory prayer.

First prayer is based on **biblical precedence**.

Why does God require the intercession of man, since He himself is all-powerful? It appears God has never taken away the dominion over the earth that was promised to man in Genesis 1. As redeemed people, we can use this God-given authority to influence and change events on earth by engaging in prayer.

In Matthew, Jesus promised the disciples, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." These two references—Matthew 16:19 and 18:18—must certainly refer to prayer that accomplishes the supernatural. If these verses are viewed in conjunction with John 20:23, where forgiveness of sin (or salvation) is the issue, it appears that through prayer we have an even greater part in the salvation of souls.

There are a number of examples of intercessory prayer in the Old Testament. In Genesis 17, Moses held his hands up with the assistance of Aaron and Hur during a battle against the Amalekites. As long as Moses' hands were lifted, Joshua was victorious in the battle. His raised hands represented prayer that brought victory against the forces that were trying to destroy God's people. Without prayer, they would have been defeated.

In 2 Chronicles 20, when threatened with invasion, Jehoshaphat called all the people of Judah together for worship, prayer and fasting. They looked to the Lord saying, "Our eyes are upon you," and they found deliverance. They did not even have to fight, for the Lord responded, "The battle is not yours, but God's."

In the New Testament book of Acts, prayer is mentioned more than 30 times. Usually it occurred just before a major expansion of the church or some victory over the powers of darkness.

Before the day of Pentecost the believers were all together in one place in prayer, waiting for the Promise Jesus had spoken about. As a result, on the day of Pentecost more than 3,000 people came into the kingdom.

Acts 2:42 relates that the believers "devoted themselves to prayer," and after prayer the "place was shaken and they spoke the word with boldness" (4:31).

When there was a problem in the church in Acts 6, the apostles chose deacons to deal with it so the apostles

could continue to "give attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (6:4).

Interestingly, it was prayer and fasting that preceded the sending of Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3).

Second, prayer is based on **historical precedence.**

Throughout the history of the Church, God's people have followed the biblical example of prayer, especially when the issue involved reaching a lost world for Christ.

The process we see in Church history that is repeated over and over again, can be stated as follows: *Prayer, which begins among God's people, including students, brings Revival, which gets the church where it should be spiritually and generates a Concern for the Lost.*

This is God's greatest concern, and results in new **Outreach and Mission.**

The modern missionary movement had its roots in Pietism—a revival movement based on prayer. The Moravians, who were involved in the early missions to India, were propelled down that route in 1727 by a prayer movement.

In 1806, when students from Williams College were caught in a rainstorm, they found refuge under a haystack. While there, they decided to use the time to pray for the nations. That time of prayer is looked back on as the birth of the American Mission.

Jonathan Goforth tells how revival began in Korea and China at the beginning of the 20th century when small bands of believers decided to pray for an outpouring of the Spirit. The records show that each new outreach and concern for the lost began, not with new programs, but with a return to prayer.

How will the Muslim world hear the gospel?

It will occur when God's people develop a strong desire to know God and to fulfill His will. This desire will inevitably drive God's people to prayer.

Jesus' answer to a lack of workers still works today. He said, "Pray the Lord of the harvest... to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:38).

Will you join CMM and our thousands of prayer partners every Friday in our *Jumaa* Prayer Fellowship?

Talking about prayer will never accomplish anything. But doing it will.

Will you covenant to actively persevere in

PRAYER STRATEGIES FOR MUSLIM PEOPLES

Thank God and praise Him for the privilege of cooperating with Him through prayer in changing the Muslim nations.

Pray that fervent Christian prayer will release countless Muslims from the power and principalities of darkness.


Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to reach out and share the love of Christ with Muslims.

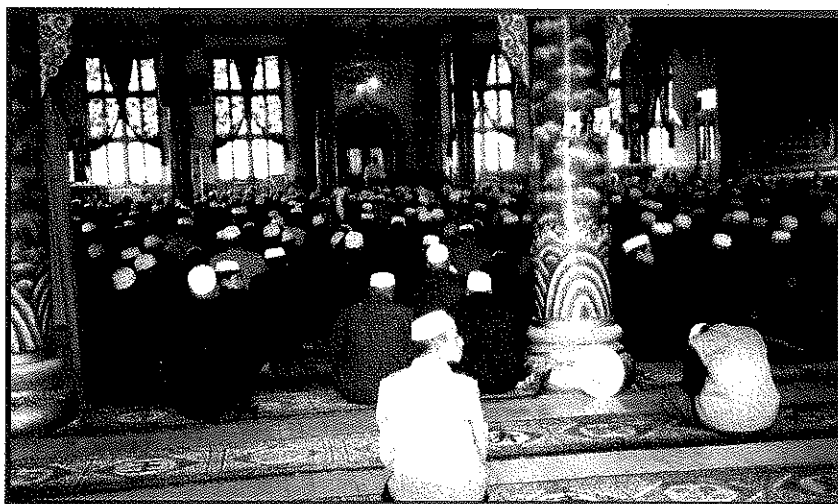
Ask the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of Muslims toward true Christian believers so that they will be receptive to the gospel.

Pray that God will continue to reveal himself to Muslims through dreams and visions.

Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches in the midst of Muslim people groups.

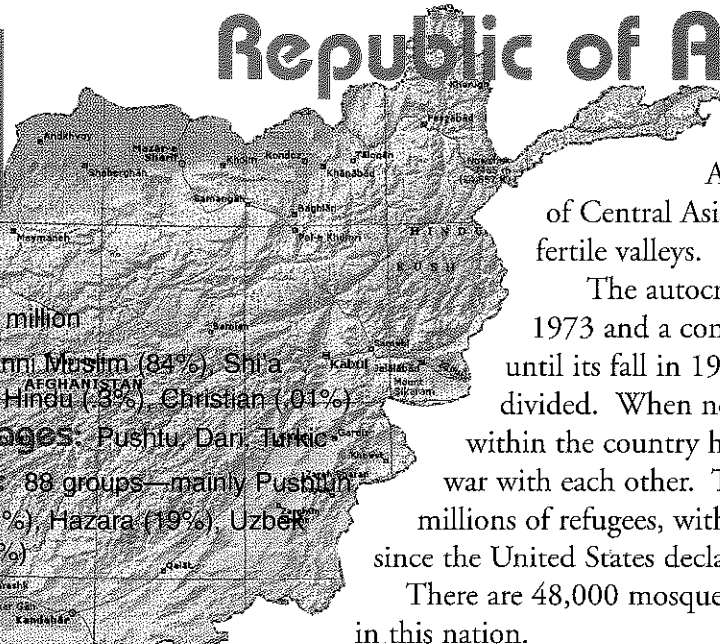
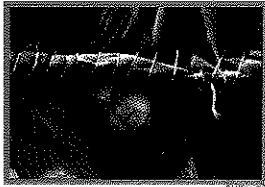
Pray against spiritual forces that are hindering the establishment and growth of the church among Muslims.

prayer? INTERCEDE can help you focus on specific needs and countries. And as we join our hearts together before the throne, we will be making a real difference in missions work because GOD'S POWER IS RELEASED THROUGH PRAYER! 



Country Profile:

Republic of Afghanistan



Population: 26 million
Religions: Sunni Muslim (84%), Shia Muslim (15%), Hindu (3%), Christian (0.1%)
Official Languages: Pushtu, Dari, Turkic
Ethnic Groups: 88 groups—mainly Pushtun (38%), Tajik (25%), Hazara (19%), Uzbek (6%), other (12%)

Afghanistan, called the “Crossroads of Central Asia,” is a dry, mountainous land with fertile valleys.

The autocratic monarchy was overthrown in 1973 and a communist regime filled the vacuum until its fall in 1992. Afghanistan is fractured and divided. When not at war with outsiders, groups within the country have almost permanently been at war with each other. The years of war have resulted in millions of refugees, with the number increasing greatly since the United States declared war on terrorism.

There are 48,000 mosques but not a single church building in this nation.

Unreached People Group The Teymur of Afghanistan

Location: Northwestern Afghanistan

Population: 120,000

Religion: Hanafite Muslim, 99.9%; Christian, less than 1%

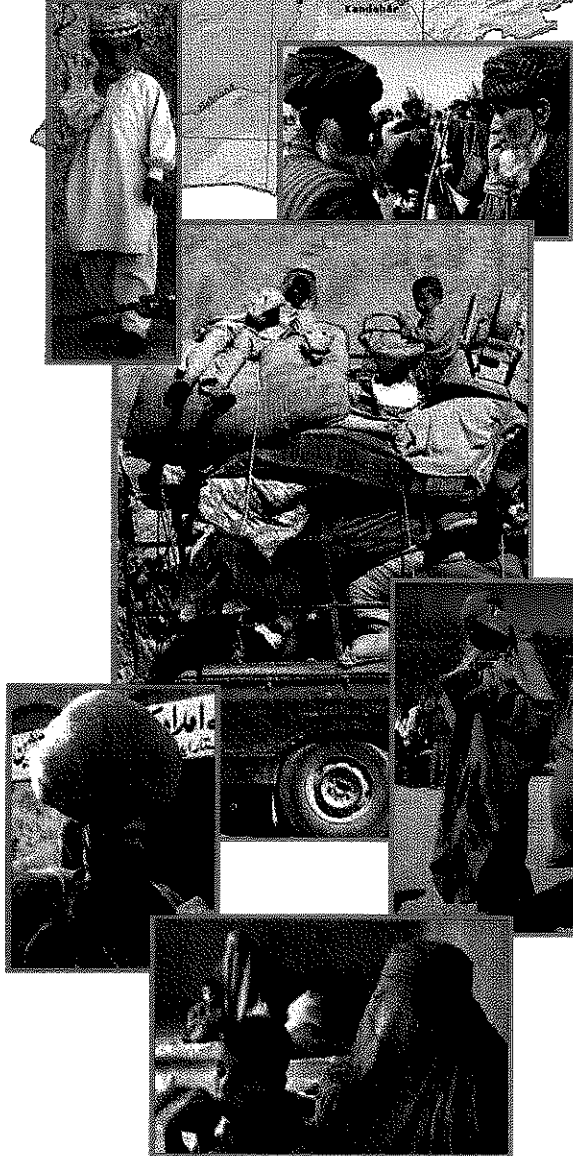
The Teymur are a small semi-nomadic minority tribe that belongs to a larger cluster of peoples known as the Aimaq, who live scattered throughout western Afghanistan and northern Iran. The Teymur speak a form of Persian called Farsi, with some Turkic (Aimaq) vocabulary. Though the Teymur have become farmers, they are dependent on their herd to supply meat, milk, fat and cheese. The animal skins are used for making tents. While farming, they stay in towns and live in brick huts, but during the spring and summer,

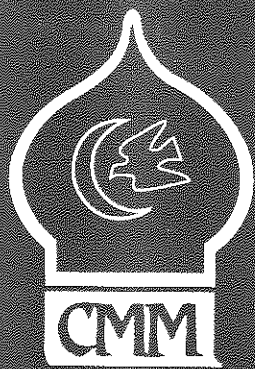
they wander through the mountains, living in tents. Their women may help watch the flocks, but their primary occupation is weaving carpets.

The remote location and wide dispersion of the Teymur have made them hard to reach with the gospel. There is no Christian witness available to the Teymur. Prayer is the first step toward reaching them.

Pray that...

- God will begin mending the lives of these war-torn people.
- Christian broadcasts will soon be made available to the Teymur.
- God will reveal himself to these precious people through dreams and visions.





Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...

Praying for Muslims
Around the World!

Friday, January 4, 2002. Please pray

...for peace in Indonesia, wisdom for Indonesia's leaders facing the prospects of escalating activity by Islamic extremists, and grace for the Indonesian Church as they seek to show the love of Jesus.
...for Martin and Gracia Burnham who were kidnapped on May 27 by a radical terrorist group, Abu Sayyaf, in the Philippines. Pray for their soon and safe release.
...for the many Christians who have increased their interest and burden for Muslims since the World Trade Center bombing. May the Lord use this horrible event to increase their involvement and further His kingdom, especially among Muslims.
...daily for God's overruling and His intervention in the tragic country of Afghanistan. Pray that God will bring the light of the gospel to the suffering masses.

Friday, January 11, 2002. Please pray

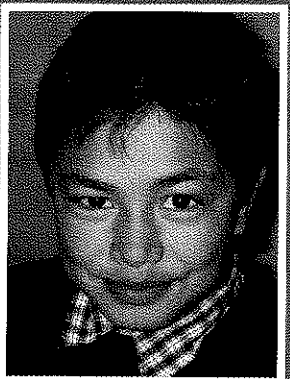
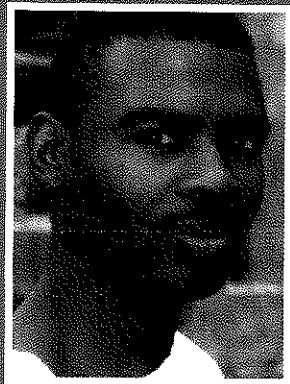
...for local churches throughout Malaysia, especially those creatively engaged in serving and reaching their communities with the love of Christ. A Christian community center was recently set on fire.
...for Christians in northern Nigeria as violence generated between Muslims and Christians continues. Pray God will protect our workers and use them to exalt Christ during these difficult days.
...for the Afghan people who are enduring the trauma of war and famine conditions as well. Pray that God will intervene and provide for their needs, especially for the children.
...for leaders meeting for the Helsinki Consultation on January 15 to 17. Pray that God will guide in these planning sessions.

Friday, January 18, 2002. Please pray

...for several Iranian Christian families seeking refugee status, especially for the E. family in Turkey. This family, that had been threatened with deportation, is now in the process of being approved for immigration to Canada. Pray for a speedy approval.
...that the Church in Bangladesh will be given safety and boldness in ministry. Radical Muslims threaten Christians and prey on unemployed youth for terrorist activities. Cry out to God to protect the hearts and minds of young Muslims in Bangladesh and other Muslim countries.
...for the meeting of the North Africa Consultation on January 22 to 24. Pray that God will guide in these planning sessions.
...for the Islamic class being held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from January 23-30. Pray for God's anointing on the CMM team member who is teaching the class and for receptive participants.

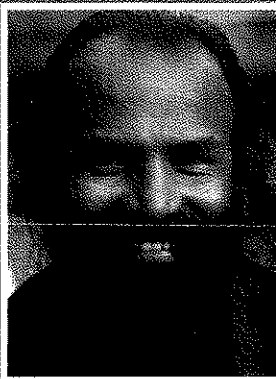
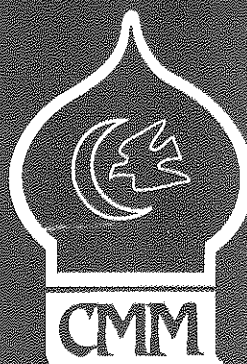
Friday, January 25, 2002. Please pray

...for believers being detained and held in the Jerudong prison in Brunei, as well as in other prisons because of their faith. Pray that God's sustaining, encouraging hand will be felt by them.
...that good progress will continue to be made on the new Persian translation of the Bible begun in 1995. The growing Iranian Church is in desperate need of an accurate quality translation.
...for wisdom for Muslim-background believers (specifically for A.) as they interact with their Muslim family and friends. Many of them find themselves in situations where human understanding is not sufficient to meet the need or solve the problem.
...that the Bible in modern Turkish that was launched last October will be viewed favorably by the government. Pray that God will plant a hunger for His Word in the hearts of Muslims throughout Turkey.



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

Jumaa Prayer Fellowship



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—(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)

Friday, February 1, 2002. Please pray

...for the Islamics class in Burkina Faso being held February 3-16. Pray for safety and the Lord's guidance for the CMM team member teaching the class.

...for the orphans who are increasing in number because of AIDS and anti-Christian violence. There are an estimated 20,000 in Indonesia. Many other countries have similar statistics.

...concerning the conflict that continues to rage between India and Pakistan over the control of Kashmir. Though twice as many Muslims as Hindus live in Kashmir, it became a disputed part of India. Pray that the Kashmiri people will turn to the Lord and have true peace.

...for CMM team members as they travel to Argentina and Nigeria to teach Islamics beginning February 4. Pray that the students will assimilate the teaching that will help them relate to Muslims.

Friday, February 8, 2002. Please pray

...for Christians in the town of Beit Jala, near Bethlehem. They have been reduced to desperate poverty as they are caught in crossfire between Israelis and Palestinians. Many have been forced to flee.

...for Christian teachers who are teaching in secondary schools in Muslim countries. Pray that their lives will shine with such integrity that doors will open for them to share the gospel.

...that ethnic unrest in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan will drive many Muslims to seek the peace that can only be found in Jesus Christ. Pray believers will be bold and wise in their witness.

...for the Christian minority in Pakistan who are enduring retaliation against them because of what is happening in Afghanistan. Pray God will continue to protect and encourage the Church there.

Friday, February 15, 2002. Please pray

...for Lebanon where Islam has grown to an estimated 70 percent of the population. Pray that the tide will turn and many Lebanese will respond to the gospel.

...that God will overrule and make it possible for Christians to get permission to build new churches in Mali. The Muslim authorities are receiving outside pressure to declare Mali a Muslim state.

...for the Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims of Pakistan that are caught up in escalating violence as they retaliate against each other. Pray that Christians may be used by God to bring reconciliation and peace.

...for the missionary candidates who will be learning about Islamics in a class being taught by a CMM team member from Feb. 17 to March 2, in Romania. Pray that these future workers will become better prepared for ministry among Muslims.

Friday, February 22, 2002. Please pray

...for Christians in the Philippines who are being targeted by the Abu Sayyaf, a terrorist group. Members of this group dragged 35 national Christians from their homes.

...that God will protect the Christian who is leading a Bible study in a Muslim home in Tanzania. Pray for the salvation and spiritual growth of this Muslim host who is considering Christianity.

...for a recently established church in Tanzania with eight Muslim-background believers. Pray the gospel may be effectively shared and this church become the catalyst for many coming to Christ.

...that Muslims studying in the United States will be extended friendship and love by born-again Christians and have their lives radically changed by an encounter with the Lord.