

# INTERCEDE

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## Abdul and Mr. Johnson

By a Global Initiative affiliate



**M**y name is Abdul Muhammad. I grew up in an Islamic country in the Middle East. As a child I was proud to attend the local mosque with my devout father. He would tell me stories from our holy book the Quran. I was especially fascinated with the stories about the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). The miracles of healing he performed, as well as raising people from the dead, captivated me. What incredible power he possessed.

My father told me about people called Christians. They claimed to be followers of Jesus the Messiah, but they corrupted the very book, the Holy Enjil, he gave to the people of his day. I became curious about the followers of Jesus. I

wondered how they wandered from the true path, and why they did not accept our holy book the Quran and our prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Although my father did not have the opportunity to receive a formal education, he always encouraged me to study hard so that someday I could enter the university in our capital city. I had a hunger in my heart to learn and diligently applied myself to my studies.

The summer before I was to enroll at the university my father became suddenly ill and died. For weeks my heart was overwhelmed with grief. I promised myself that I would

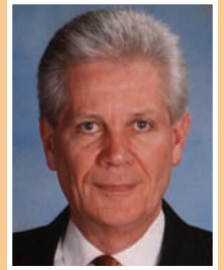
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# Until All Have Heard

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

**Jim Bennett**  
Global Initiative:  
Reaching Muslim Peoples



In a recent staff prayer meeting I was reminded that 60 percent of the world's poor and 80 percent of the world's refugees are Muslims. Then came a powerful reminder that of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims — 40 percent are children. With this knowledge comes a great responsibility. At the least, we should practice intercession for Muslims, especially Muslim children, on a regular basis. The helpful information in the following paragraphs is primarily from the website 30-Days.net.

Many people think of Muslims as rich oil sheiks or religious fanatics, as portrayed regularly by the world's media. However, most of the world's Muslims are actually poor and struggle to meet their daily needs. The majority of nations with the worst basic health conditions are also mainly Muslim.


Muslim women and children bear the brunt of the forces of poverty and malnutrition. However, there are many men who attempt to provide for their families under these harsh conditions and should not be forgotten.

Although there are many reasons for poverty in the Muslim world, a major reason is the hopelessness that often grips their lives. "Where there is no revelation the people cast off restraint" (Proverbs 29:18). As restraint is cast off many fall into the clutches of sin that affects their lives, their families, their community, and their nation. In the absolutely worst cases, men stop providing for their family and work only to provide for themselves. While on the other hand desperate parents sell their daughters for unimaginable exploitations such as prostitution and slavery. Often the eldest child is pushed out of the house at a young age, making the child extremely vulnerable to the elements of a corrupt society. Fearful parents marry their daughters at a young age to avoid the possibility of the girl not being a virgin on her wedding night and also so they do not have to provide for her any longer. The ugly face of poverty creates and contributes to a variety of woes so hideous that only our heavenly Father can bear their pain.

Yet even as we consider the incredible need among the poor and needy, we can still have immense hope, for in



Christ God has given us the answer. There is no doubt that the Kingdom of God can come to each and every poor Muslim community. God wants to release programs for every social ill, plans to solve every individual problem, and compassionate Christian workers for every people group! Pray to the Lord of the harvest for workers for each of these nations who have such immense needs.

There are many reasons why suffering occurs and a variety of responses. We, as Christians, must stop and listen to the cries of the poor and needy and be able to respond as Jesus would. Let us not be overwhelmed, but let us be moved with compassion. Relying on God's strength and motivated by God's heart we are to be people of mercy, a people of justice, and a people of faith! 

# Muslim World News



## **Azerbaijan**

### *Appeals judge decides fate of church*

A Christian congregation in Azerbaijan is waiting pensively to see if a judge will uphold a court order that banned its right to meet and “liquidated” the church.

“They are upset, but at the same time they continue coming out hoping for the best,” said Mehti Suleymanov, an elder at Greater Grace Church in Baku, which has been meeting for roughly 20 years.

Judge Tahira Asadova of Baku's Administrative Economic Court ordered the church to be “liquidated” after the State Committee on Work with Religious Organizations filed suit against it for failing to register. The liquidation rendered all activities of the church illegal.

The church appealed the decision in May and is waiting for another ruling, later in the year, from a judge at the Baku Court of Appeals.

Greater Grace's problems are part of a larger crackdown on religion in Azerbaijan, according to members of the church. — *Compass*

## **Somalia**

### *Extremists behead another convert*

Islamic extremists from the rebel al Shabaab militia beheaded a Christian on the outskirts of Mogadishu. The militants fighting the transitional government in Mogadishu murdered Zakaria Hussein Omar, 26, in Cee-carfiid village.

Omar had worked for a Christian humanitarian organization that al Shabaab banned last year.

His body was left lying for 20 hours before nomads found it and carried it into Mogadishu, a close friend said. “One of the persons who saw him said, ‘This is the young man who stayed in Ethiopia, and people have been saying that he left Islam and joined Christianity.’”

He converted to Christianity seven years ago while in Ethiopia, where he lived with relatives. He returned to Somalia in 2008 and completed his university education in 2009 with a degree in accounting.

Omar is survived by his wife, his parents, as well as a brother and four sisters. — *Compass*

## **Zanzibar**

### *The safety of jail*

Ramadhan Tuma, 28 years old, opted for jail by entering a plea of guilty to charges that he burned the Quran, rather than face an enraged mob calling for his death.

Tuma, whose landlady had ordered him to burn his trash after evicting him because he had converted to Christianity; was not aware that among the trash was a copy of a Quran used by students in madrassas. “Outside the courtroom, there was a mob buying for his blood in case he was set free,” said Leonard Massasa, Evangelical Assemblies of God pastor. The church is caring for Tuma's young family — his wife, 6-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter.

Tuma was sentenced to 18 months for “disrespecting a religious faith” and six months for “threatening public peace.” The judge said the punishment was to serve as warning to other would-be offenders. Prosecutors said they were not satisfied with the ruling and intended to appeal for a harsher sentence. — *Compass*

# Abdul and I

Continued

graduate from the university and fulfill my father's dream for me. "This I must do to honor him."

At the university I qualified for an advanced English course. I knew if I could become fluent in English it would open doors for me in the business world. My teacher was from America. "How fortunate," I thought, "to have an instructor with English as his mother tongue." I had never met a foreigner before. To my surprise he was only nine years older than I. I carefully observed Mr. Johnson. Of course I considered him an infidel and knew I needed to be careful. I was amazed at how at ease he was with a classroom full of Muslim young men, since he was the only non-believer. Mr. Johnson smiled often and spoke clearly but softly. His deep blue eyes and light skin were quite a contrast to our olive skin and dark eyes.

As the weeks rolled by I wondered why Mr. Johnson cared so very much about his students. I had never met anyone so patient. He never embarrassed us when we made mistakes. I was surprised to learn that he earned only a small salary as a volunteer with a humanitarian organization. I determined in my heart to get to know this unusual individual. He did not fit the picture that Hollywood movies portray. Mr. Johnson did not smoke, drink alcohol, eat pork or use bad language. He was always respectful to our culture and religion.

His wife taught English to a class of high school girls. The word was that she too was of high moral character. I was told that she always dressed modestly as our ladies did. She too wore a head-covering. Her behavior in public was honorable, and she did not go to the swimming pool for foreigners. The conduct of this couple caused me more than ever to wonder what they believed about God.

One day I saw Mr. Johnson entering a tea shop. He happened to see me and invited me to join him for a cup of tea and biscuits. I thought, "This is a lucky day for me." After much small talk I became courageous enough to ask Mr. Johnson about his religious beliefs. "Sir, I do not want to offend you, but could you please tell me what you believe about God?"

He responded, "Why, thank you, Abdul, for asking. I will be glad to tell you what I believe." In a most natural



way Mr. Johnson told me he was a follower of Jesus. His response caused me to ask many other questions. He thoughtfully tried to answer each question step by step. I studied his face for any negative reaction as I kept asking more pressing questions as well as giving my opinions. There wasn't any. One thing I knew for sure: Mr. Johnson was thoroughly convinced of what he believed and did not feel threatened.

I decided to take another bold step. After first glancing around, I quietly asked Mr. Johnson if he could find for me a copy of the Holy Enjil (the Bible) in my mother tongue. For a few moments he said nothing. Then he seriously asked, "Why do you want a copy?" I replied, "So I can read it for myself since it is a holy book even though it is corrupted." Mr. Johnson leaned forward in his squeaky chair and looked deep into my eyes. I hoped he could see my sincerity. Then he sat back as a smile slowly crept across his face. "Abdul, please come to my house tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. and I will have that special gift ready for you."

I was astonished. I knew he was taking a high risk.

# Mr. Johnson

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How did he know whether or not I would report this to the secret police? If I did, he could be arrested and deported. Why did he trust me? I did not know, but I would be worthy of his trust. The next afternoon I received that significant gift from my teacher and began to read it that night.

Mr. Johnson and I became very close friends. I could tell him everything that was in my heart and he would not tell anyone. He was at my graduation applauding me. I wished my father could have been there. The next day Mr. and Mrs. Johnson made the long bus trip with me to my village. I stood gazing at my father's grave with my cherished degree in my hand. My teacher's arm was around my shoulder. My eyes were wet. I whispered to my father, "I did it, father. I did it!"

Three years after my graduation my teacher with his petite wife attended my wedding. Even though we had become the dearest of friends, out of respect, I could only address Joe and Betty Johnson as Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. Within the next 10 years I became a very successful businessman in my country and God gave us three beautiful children. It was always a joy to have the Johnsons in our

home. I sometimes sent my driver to pick them up from the other side of the city.

The day came when the fundamentalists in my homeland came to power. I refused to join their party. My life was threatened. With a heavy heart I fled our homeland with my family. We lost everything.

When we arrived in the United States the Johnsons came to help. Mr. Johnson convinced an international company that I was right for them. He vouched for my integrity and experience. On his word they hired me.

After five years I was made a chief supervisor in my company. Now I was financially secure and my children were receiving a good education. Once a year Mr. and Mrs. Johnson came to visit us. Often we were on Skype together. They were not permitted to return to my homeland. This was heartbreaking for them. They took positions as English teachers in another university in the Middle East.

Once when I was on a business trip in Virginia I had a free Sunday morning. I thought about my teacher. I said to myself, "I will honor him and attend a church service this morning." About 500 people were present. No one seemed to notice me as I slipped into a seat on the back row. The music was lively. "This is a little different from a mosque," I mused to myself. After announcements, a baby dedication and another song, the pastor stood up to preach, a man in his fifties. His voice boomed through the speakers as he stated his topic: "The Dangerous Threat of Muslims to America!" He had my full attention. Every eye was focused on the man in the dark blue suit behind the glass pulpit. I took a deep breath. Speaking harshly, the pastor made one inaccurate statement after the other amid "Amen's." I wondered what my Jewish CEO who had recently had my family in his home for dinner would have thought.

After the closing prayer that pleaded for God to save America from the Muslims, I sat quietly stunned as the parishioners filed out into the large foyer. Finally I made my way through the chit-chatting crowd engrossed with each other. No one took time to greet me. On the way to

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# Abdul and Mr. Johnson

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the car I noticed emboldened on the marquee, “The Friendliest Church in Virginia.”

“How ironic,” I pondered as I started my rental car. I quit attending the mosque in my home city in California because of the negative messages against American infidels. I became disillusioned with the hypocrisy of most of the Muslims from my home country now in America. I could no longer stand the two-facedness of my own people due to their insoluble pride. Now I wondered if most professing Christians were also hypocrites.

Months later my teacher and his wife returned to the U.S. for another visit. It had been almost 30 years since I first met Mr. Joe Johnson. I considered him my best friend on Earth. Even after I rejected his Gospel because I could not accept the doctrine of the Trinity, he remained my faithful friend, always caring for me and my family. During this visit one afternoon my teacher and I took a long walk in the nearby forest. We came across a wooden

picnic table and sat across from each other. I never met anyone more loving and dedicated than my teacher.

I said, “Mr. Johnson, you have an extremely hard task trying to convince any Muslim to become a follower of Jesus.” Gently I went on to explained the reasons why the task was so difficult. I knew that after more than 30 years of living among Muslims my friend had seen no more than five of them become and remain followers of Jesus. Yet, he never gave up. I knew why. He loved them. Daily he prayed for his many Muslim friends.

As we conversed my teacher and I agreed there had to be an absolute truth. It amused us that those who believe there is no absolute truth absolutely believe that to be true. We chuckled as we talked about such an absurdity. Yet within my heart I knew I did not know which was truly the absolute truth. Was it the way of Islam — or the way of Christianity?

In the course of our discussion, with all seriousness, my teacher asked if I personally believed it was right for him to constantly try to persuade Muslims to be born anew and become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without hesitation and with great conviction I firmly answered, “Certainly you should, Mr. Johnson. Certainly you should!”

“Why?” he queried.

“Because you believe the Gospel with all of your heart and you live it. That is who you are. I wouldn't want you to be any different,” I earnestly responded.

I was unprepared for what happened next. Hot tears coursed down the slightly wrinkled, sunburned face of my beloved teacher. He could not speak.

I sat quietly and wondered if there were other authentic Christians like this man. Maybe I should read his holy book once again as well as my own. Maybe, just maybe I could find out which absolute truth is the absolute truth. Almighty God knows I truly want to know.

*(A created story based on experience)* 



# JUMAA PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

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Facebook. Please join today.*



## Prayer Focus: *Refugees and poor of the Muslim World*

- Pray for the 60 percent of the world's poor and 80 percent of the world's refugees who are Muslims.
- Pray for Muslims hungering physically and spiritually.
- Pray for those Muslims who are suffering physical hardship as a result of a lack of basic shelter, food and water.
- Pray especially for Muslim children — who make up 40 percent of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims.

### **Friday, September 7, 2012. Please pray**

*...for the people of Kuwait.* Parliament passed a blasphemy law with the death penalty for Muslim violators and a 10-year penalty for non-Muslim violators.

*...for an end to deadly clashes in Myanmar* between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims.

*...for God to work a miracle* in the lives of Algeria's 35 million Muslims.

### **Friday, September 14, 2012. Please pray**

*...for Christian pastors across the Muslim world.* Pray that through divine intervention, windows of opportunity would open allowing indigenous pastors to openly preach about Jesus Christ.

*...for Muslims in Turkey.* Prime Minister Erdogan's party is pushing against freedom of the press.

*...for refugees across the globe.* Approximately 80 percent of the world's refugees are Muslim.

### **Friday, September 21, 2012. Please pray**

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

*...for Muslim students in American universities* to receive witness of Jesus Christ.

*...for the Underground Church in Iran.* Persecution of Christians remains rampant in the Shia nation of 75 million Muslims.

### **Friday, September 28, 2012. Please pray**

*...for God to work a miracle* in the lives of Pakistan's 180 million Muslims.

*...for expatriate Christian workers* in the Muslim world to gain opportunities to witness to neighbors.

*...for Christian believers in Morocco* to be filled with wisdom and the vision to share Jesus Christ with 33 million Muslims.



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**Friday, October 5, 2012. Please pray**

*...for the Muslims of Mali.* Militants have taken over in the north and a political/humanitarian crisis is growing.  
*...for the approximate 2,000 Christians of Gaza,* living as a pressured minority with 1.7 million Muslims.  
*...for MBBs (Muslim Background Believers) in the Middle East.* Christian persecution continues in 2012.

**Friday, October 12, 2012. Please pray**

*...for God's protection over the Church in Jordan.*  
*...for India's 178 million Muslims* to freely hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.  
*...for the 1.2 million Alawite Muslims in Syria* who may soon be refugees as the political climate in Syria grows more chaotic and unpredictable.

**Friday, October 19, 2012. Please pray**

*...for millions of Muslims attending mosques today.* Pray that the Lord would reveal His love to them in miraculous ways.  
*...for Pakistani Muslims* to have opportunity to learn about Jesus.  
*...for Indonesia's 205 million Muslims.* Pray for their protection and encouragement.

**Friday, October 26, 2012. Please pray**

*...for Nigeria's 75 million Muslims.* Pray for peace despite the presence of Boko Haram and other terror groups.  
*...for Muslims living in the United States.* Pray that through their conversions and testimonies, the gospel of Jesus Christ will be spread into the Islamic world.  
*...for God to fill the hearts of Muslims in Egypt* with a strong desire for progress and liberty, so that the present trend towards Islamization might be reversed.

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P. O. Box 2730, Springfield, MO 65801-2730

1-866-816-0824 (toll free)

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