

INTERCEDE

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INSIDE A MUSLIM HOME

The television camera panned the crowd of lively concert-goers, all of whom were chanting and waving banners as they waited for their idol to appear on stage.

I searched my screen for a female face. All ages, from 10-year-olds to their grandfathers, were represented at this particular concert—but they were almost all male.

If you go out to dinner in that same city, or to a ball game, you will find almost the same situation: it's the men and boys who go out in public; the women and girls gather at home for their entertainment.

In much of the Muslim world, the society is neatly divided into *male* and *female*. And that is really the way they like it!

Women and girls gather in the afternoons to sip tea, chat, and relax with their needlework—enjoying the time away from the demands and restrictions placed on them by the presence of men.

Knowing their womenfolk are thus occupying their time, the men can move about, unhindered by the heavy responsibility of protecting their womenfolk from unwanted attention and harassment.

The very core of Muslim values is the concept of family honor. And the core of family honor is the reputation of its female members.

Marriage, then, is a contract between two families. Both are concerned with keeping their honor above reproach.

It is because of this that many marriages are still arranged. Everyone knows that the adults in the family will have a much better-developed sense of this honor than will teenagers whose emotions and impulses are still so unpredictable. (The Turkish word for an adolescent male means "crazy-blooded.")

The idea of protection and security may



by
Marie Russell

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Speaking on Behalf of Muslims



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

**Ron Peck, Director
Center for Ministry to Muslims**

I have met many Christian women who have experienced personal tragedies and heartbreaks because of marriages to Muslim men. Thus, I believe it is important to speak a word of caution.

The Bible is very clear that followers of Jesus should marry fellow believers. *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers...what fellowship can light have with darkness?”*

This is not a statement regarding race or culture, it is a statement about spiritual experience with Jesus Christ. It could apply to a partnership in business, but it surely applies to the intimate relationship of a man and a woman joined in marriage.

When Muslim men come to the United States for higher education, they are often shocked by the openness of Western culture and the socializing of young men and women. They find themselves experiencing friendship and social contact with girls that probably would never have happened in their home country.

American girls are greatly impressed by handsome young men from a different culture; especially when the handsome young men are, by their background and training, very charming individuals. Such friendships can be exciting and easily lead to romance. And while all this is happening, the potential for problems is overlooked.

Having lived in a Muslim country for several years, I have often had a Muslim man say to me, “There is no hindrance for a Muslim to marry a Christian.”

This is a true statement from a Muslim perspective, but it means that a Muslim man can marry a Christian woman. The opposite is never true. No Muslim woman can ever marry a Christian man.

In Islam, marriage is a contract between two fam-

ilies. It is always understood that if a Christian woman marries a Muslim man, the children will be raised Muslim.

Several years ago, I met a young American lady who was a college student in my hometown. She had become friendly with some young Muslim men at the local university who were from the Middle East. She would hang out with these young men in a casual and friendly way.

As an American student she thought nothing of dressing in shorts and a sleeveless blouse. She had no idea how they viewed her warmth and friendliness. I felt certain that she was opening herself to misunderstanding and possible hurt.

My words of concern and pleas for caution fell on deaf ears. At best I was a well-meaning old man of another generation. How could I really understand?

Five years later this young lady came to my office and I learned from her “the rest of the story.” She had been married to one of those Muslim students for some time. She had a little girl and the marriage had ended in divorce.

She was one of the lucky ones. She still had custody of her daughter.

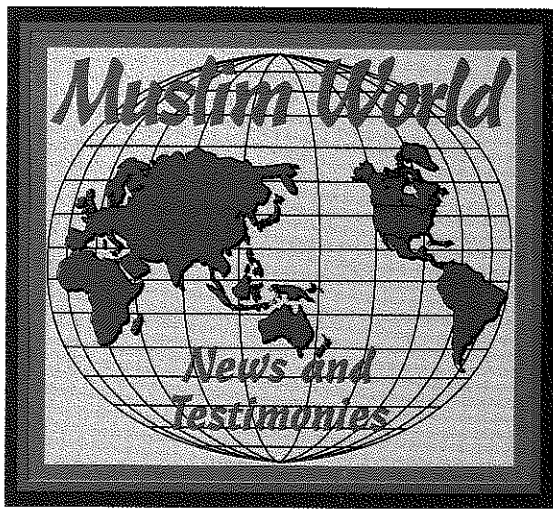
Yet because she did not understand the culture and practices of Islam, she was a young woman who experienced many deep hurts and disappointments.

How could she have avoided those personal hurts and spiritual tragedy? By realizing the valuable biblical principle for a lasting marriage. The only appropriate mate for a Christian is someone who is also committed to Jesus Christ.

Marriage is one of life’s most serious and long-term decisions...one that must be based on the solid principles of God’s Holy Word.



In Islam, marriage is a contract between two families...if a Christian woman marries a Muslim man, the children will be raised Muslim.



United States

Palestinian-born Yehia Hendi, a qualified *ustaz* (Muslim teacher-preacher), was among the first to have been appointed by the U.S. Navy in April 1997 to give weekly lectures on Islam at U.S. naval bases and to write a weekly article on Islam in the Navy's newsletter.

There are around 13,000 Muslims in the U.S. armed services; 6,000 of them in the Navy. Yehia Hendi points out that many high-ranking officers in the U.S. Army are Muslims. His employment is a recognition of the growing presence of Muslims in the U.S. armed services. Originally it was comprised of large numbers of black Muslims, but now it includes growing numbers of white Muslims and women converts. What pleased Yehia Hendi most was that the Islamic crescent was added to the Seal of the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps in the summer of 1997. Previously the Seal bore just the Cross and the Star of David over the two tablets of the Law.

—*Religious Freedom Today Digest*

Sudan

Proceedings were suspended until late January in the military trial of two Catholic priests charged with masterminding a bombing plot against the National Islamic Front regime in Khartoum. The court had maintained an injunction stopping the military trial begun in October against Father Hillary Boma and Father Lino Sebit. The leading defense counsel objected to the trial

ing an illegal organization and disturbing civic peace. A Sudanese Christian journalist has termed the trial a "kangaroo court," calling it a "direct affront to the Catholic Church in Sudan and worldwide."

—*Compass*

Sweden

Stockholm will soon get its first mosque after authorities agreed to give Muslims permission to build the house of worship in the Swedish capital. The permission came after about two decades of efforts to appease the authorities who considered the building to be foreign to the architecture of the city. An estimated 300,000 Muslims reside in Sweden, which has a total population of 8.5 million, making Islam the second largest religion in the country after Protestant Christianity.

—*Islamic Horizons*

Berlin

A Berlin court has given the go-ahead on Islamic instruction in government schools for the city's 35,000 Muslim children. The city has 70 mosques and 220,000 Muslims, 70 percent of whom are Turks. Other communities are from Bosnia and Lebanon.

of the civilian priests by a military court. Under the military tribunal, a guilty verdict against the defendants could carry the death penalty. The 26 civilians accused in the case, most of whom are Christians from South Sudan, have been charged with trying to overthrow the state, joining

While most of the country mandates religious instruction in the schools, Berlin and two other states have made religion a voluntary subject. Berlin had disallowed Islamic instruction, despite a 10-year campaign by the Islamic Federation. "We had been forced to send our children to mosques" after hours, stated an official with the federation. "The problem is that the media have often portrayed us as radicals, although our ideals are tolerance and understanding."

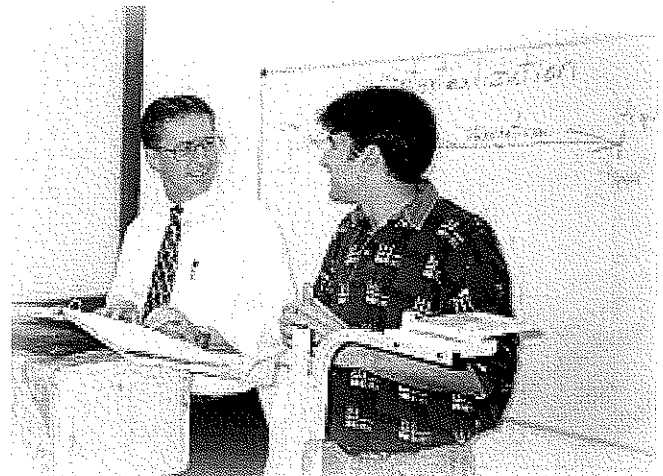
—*Pulse*

Bulgaria

During a ministry to trip train pastors and Christian workers in the nation of Bulgaria last fall, CMM team members Dale and Judith Fagerland were privileged to take part in the moving of the Sofia Bible Institute into newly-renovated facilities.

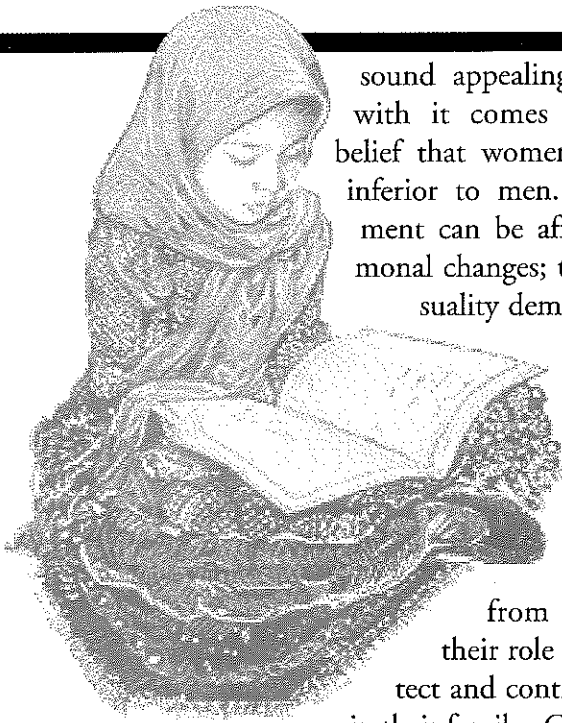
After years of struggles, spiritual conflicts and much fasting and prayer, God rewarded Bible school staff members and students by opening a door for the school to relocate in a building that sets on prime property in the capital city.

"Staff and students are believing God that this breakthrough will be symbolic of a spiritual breakthrough for reaching Muslims in the Balkans," Dale Fagerland relates.



INSIDE A MUSLIM HOME

continued from page 1



sound appealing. But along with it comes a generalized belief that women are basically inferior to men. Their judgment can be affected by hormonal changes; their deep sensuality demands that rigid

standards of modesty in dress and behavior be imposed on them.

Boys learn from infancy that their role is to both protect and control the women in their family. Conversely, girls

quickly learn to gain approval by seeing to the comfort of their brothers.

Women address men in a different tone of voice. Whereas women in Western cultures relate to men and women alike, as simply "people," everyone in Muslim society is constantly aware of the clear distinction between male and female.

This distinction can lead to oppression in some Muslim homes. And, in turn, oppression can make family members resort to deceit and manipulation in order to achieve some small measure of personal freedom.

There is much to be admired, though, about good Muslim families.

They understand the importance of a strong, tightly-knit unit. They place high value on mutual responsibility and accountability. There is a genuine concern for the well-being of each family member, and parents pour their lives into their children.

They know that westernization won't bring happiness into Muslim homes. They have watched enough American soap operas to understand that.

What Muslims need are truly Christ-centered families that will model godly attitudes.

As one author says, "There is no

comparison between Islamic obedience of wives and scriptural submission. One is external and easily exploited, and hence breeds contempt, hate, desire for revenge and deceitfulness; while the other voluntarily embraces an inner attitude and fosters trust, respect, mutual understanding, care and loyalty."

Who will point young husbands and wives to the Man who chose a wedding as the setting for His first miracle?

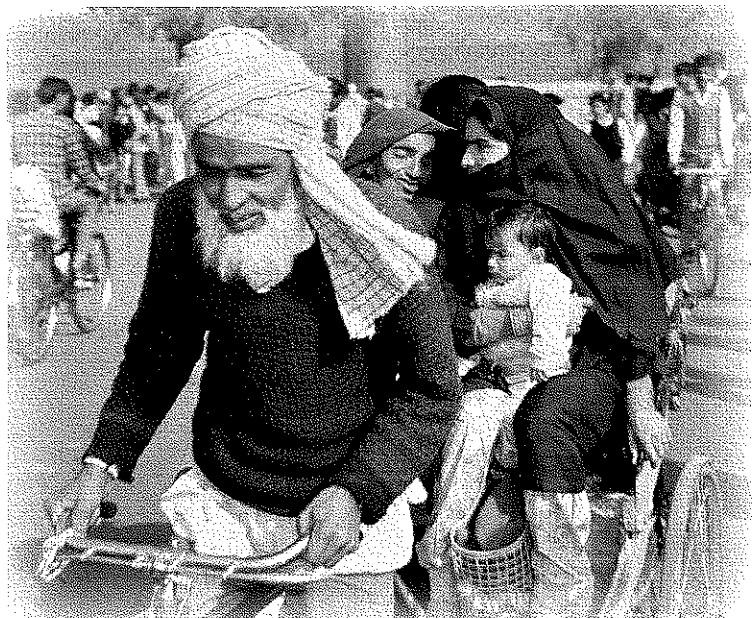
Who will point young parents to the One who, with His dying breath, arranged for the care of His mother?

Who will introduce Muslims to the One who received as worship a woman's reckless act of washing His feet with costly perfume?

Through your prayers, you can bring Christ into Muslim homes and families.


In the weeks ahead, I encourage you to join me in praying for the following:

- ❑ *Pray for CHRISTIAN WORKERS who will model healthy, Christ-centered marriages to their Muslim neighbors.*
- ❑ *Pray that God will inhabit the homes of Muslim converts and teach them His pattern for marriage.*
- ❑ *Pray that God will allow YOUR home to be a model of wholeness to a Muslim family that you know.*



FROM LAW TO GRACE

by a pastor in India



Islam is a religion of worship and prostration. Understanding that the word *Islam* means *to submit*, I increased my dedication to Islam by worshipping God 34 times every day.

I learned that a Muslim is never free; he is a slave of Allah. If a Muslim tries to leave Islam, he or she will be harshly punished or even killed.

Because Muslims believe that righteousness comes from their good deeds, my father wanted me to be a Muslim priest. Thus I began my religious education at the age of 5 and continued it until I was 12.

My mother always kept busy in the kitchen, preparing meals for the family. After she set the table, she would put sugar cane next to my father's plate. My father would beat her with it if he wasn't satisfied with her cooking, even for something as simple as insufficient salt.

My mother explained to me that a woman is the property of her husband. She said that according to the *Qur'an*, the husband is the *god* of the wife.

She also told me that a woman has no soul; only *Maryam*, the mother of Jesus, will enter heaven.

Though Allah decrees justice for men, there is no such justice for women.

My father was very short tempered. One day, when I was a teenager, he killed my mother with a knife right in front of me.

Because of this, I felt that the teachings of Islam were unjust and I began seeking for truth.

My father was sad about what he had done and he often cried and prayed "Lord, please save me from the everlasting fire."

I asked my father about his good deeds, knowing that they should save him.

But He answered, "No, salvation is only by the grace of God." But sadly he did not know how to find the grace of God.

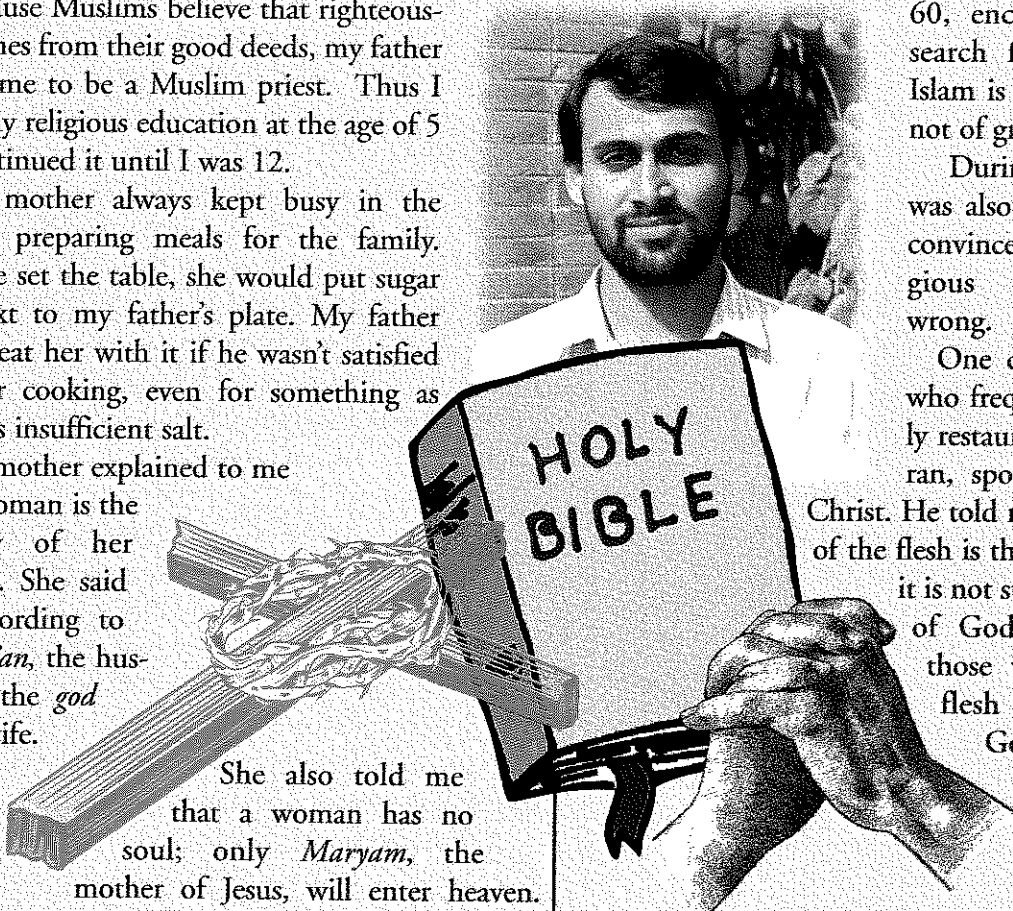
He died at the age of 60, encouraging me to search for God's grace. Islam is a religion of law, not of grace.

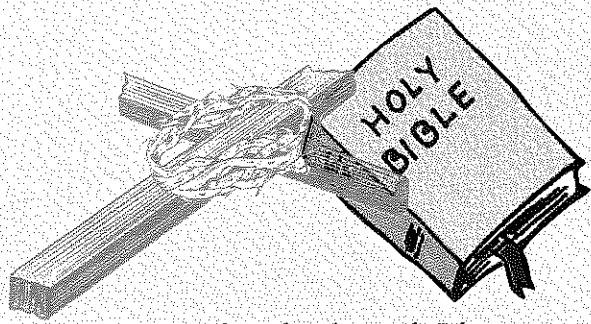
During my early 20s, I was also sorrowful, being convinced that our religious practices were wrong.

One day an evangelist who frequented the family restaurant and bakery I ran, spoke to me about Christ. He told me that the mind of the flesh is the enemy of God; it is not subject to the Law of God. He said that those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

His words echoed in my heart for several years. Finally

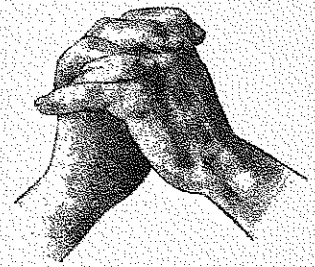
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From Law To Grace

continued from page 5



convinced by what he said, I began to realize that I was a sinner like my father, even though I had not murdered anyone.

One day this evangelist presented me with a Bible in my language. But I refused to take it. I was afraid if any Muslim saw me with it, I would be killed. I used the excuse that the black-covered Bible was a curse for Muslims.

I read in John's Gospel 1:12, 'To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.' This was a great revelation to me. Right then I felt the burdens lift off my shoulders. I felt like I was born-again by the power of the Holy Spirit.

in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. ... For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."

These words caused me to realize that I was wicked, having insulted the evangelist and his Bible.

The evangelist answered that the black cover represented the judgment of God and that the red letters represented the blood of Christ, which can cleanse all sins. The white pages in the Bible, he related, are a sign of peace.

Taking the Bible from him, my body started trembling. I realized that I was a sinner with a Holy Book in my hands. Immediately a struggle ensued in my heart. I couldn't decide whether I should throw the Book away or read it.

Eventually I opened the Bible and my eyes fell on Psalm 1 where it says: "*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand*

Then the wind of a fan caught the pages of the Bible and flipped them to John's Gospel. There I saw the words, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that was made.*"

This was the first time I had seen Jesus' pre-existence in the Bible. I already knew that Jesus is divine because even the *Qur'an* says that Jesus is the Word of God. But the *Qur'an* but does not acknowledge His divinity.

As my spiritual darkness began disappearing, the Bible began to make sense.

I read in John's Gospel 1:12, "*To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.*"

This was a great revelation to me.

Right then I felt the burdens lift off my shoulders. I felt like I was born-again by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reading verse 14, I had a vision of Jesus Christ on the cross, just as though I were seeing Him on a movie screen.

When I read verse 16, "*From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another,*" I was filled with joy.


As I read, "*For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,*" hope was born within me.

Then I remembered my father who had died searching for the grace of God.

Reading John 3:16, I realized that God has given us His only begotten Son who is most precious to Him. His love is an unconditional love. Through faith, we have salvation.

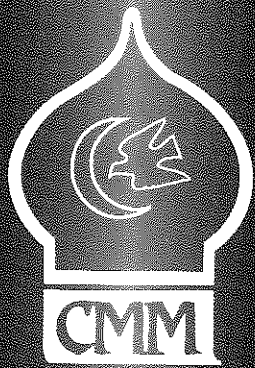
First John 5:12 says, "*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*"

That night, at about 3 a.m., I got down on my knees, confessed my sins, repented and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

I have been serving Him ever since. 

Jumaa Prayer Fellowship

Praying for Muslims
Around the World!



Friday, May 7, 1999. Please pray

...throughout this month for the Institute of Islamic Studies at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in Baguio, Philippines. Pray students will be energized to use the teaching they are receiving.

...for the SAI-7 broadcasts for Christians in the Middle East and North Africa. Pray that regular viewers will be successful in retuning the newly-launched satellite and many more people will dial in.

...for the training program being conducted this month by CMM team members in Brazil. Pray participants will be challenged to bring the gospel to the Muslim world.

...that the Jesus film will continue to find its way into many Muslim nations where missionaries are not free to proclaim the gospel, that many more Muslims may hear the truth and respond to Jesus.

Friday, May 14, 1999. Please pray

...that God will grant favor concerning a recent medical clinic permit which was received in Indonesia. Pray that this clinic will become a means for many Indonesians to find Christ.

...for Christians in Somalia who are fearful for their future in light of the resurgence of Islam in that nation and the dire circumstances of Christians in nearby Sudan. Pray that God will encourage them and give them wisdom in witness.

...for the training programs for lay pastors in Upper (south) Egypt. Pray that these pastors will be fruitful in ministry in the villages of Upper Egypt.

...that Muslims living in the West will encourage their government and religious leaders to provide minorities in their home nations the same freedoms they enjoy here.

Friday, May 21, 1999. Please pray

...for a fellowship of believers in Turkmenistan. Pray that they will be strengthened in their faith and become instrumental in church planting.

...that God will continue to minister to those who are listening to Christian radio programs and who do not have the opportunity to fellowship with other believers.

...for peace and safety of Christian workers in Tajikistan. A powerful general is trying to take control of this volatile country.

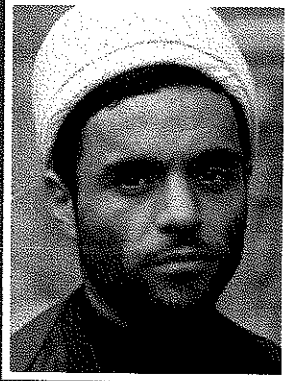
...that the enforcement of recent U.S. legislation will not trigger increased persecution overseas in response to sanctions being imposed on non-Christian nations.

Friday, May 28, 1999. Please pray

...that Egyptian believers who are being persecuted will stand firm and that many Muslims will come to Christ. Pray for the sensitivity of Christians in reporting incidents of persecution since false or exaggerated reports only strengthen the oppressors.

...for the ongoing emigration of Christians from Iraq, which has increased much in recent months. Pray that God will give wisdom to church leaders and that the Christians will stay to encourage each other and spread the gospel in their country.

...for the Muslim Cham people who are found in Cambodia and Vietnam. Pray that someone will be willing to go and share the gospel with them.

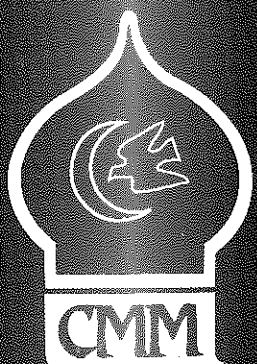


*I urge, then, first of all
that requests, prayers,
intercession and
thanksgiving be
made for everyone.*

—(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)

Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...

Praying for Muslims
Around the World!



Friday, June 4, 1999. Please pray

...for Christians in Indonesia. They are suffering acutely because of the economic collapse and the blame that is being heaped on them.

...for Ruth Hussein, the widow of the Christian bookstore manager who was killed in Kurdistan. She is grateful for the prayer support and encouragement she has received.

...that Christians throughout the Middle East may remain faithful in serving the Lord. Muslim extremists have resorted to degrading Christians and their religion to break their dignity rather than to kill them because of the negative view of Islam portrayed by killing.
...that as thousands of young Malaysians search for identity and meaning for life in these troubled times, many will open their hearts to the gospel.

Friday, June 11, 1999. Please pray

...for peace and harmony between Christians and Muslims in Pakistan. Christian leaders feel that the growing violence is being fostered by decisions being made by Muslim extremist forces.

...for an Arab man who has developed an alcohol problem among other health concerns. Pray for complete freedom in Christ for him.

...for more freedom of religion in Morocco. Pray God will open the door for the legal import of Scriptures in Arabic and other languages spoken locally.

...that many Tajik people will rediscover their Christian roots and will return to the God of their ancestors and worship and honor Jesus.

Friday, June 18, 1999. Please pray

...for Christians in Iran who are caught in a precarious position because of the present conflict between the hardline Muslim clerics and the reformist agenda of President Khatami.

...for peace in Nigeria. News has come of increasing conflict between Muslims and Christians, especially in northeast Nigeria.

...that the Church in Indonesia will get a vision for planting churches among their own people.

...that the Muslim teaching concerning apostasy (punishment of people who leave Islam) will be relaxed as a threat or reality against converts from Islam.

Friday, June 25, 1999. Please pray

...for two young Albanian converts to Christ recently baptized. One believer has outraged his family by his conversion. Pray that his entire family will come to Christ.

...that God will provide some income-generating projects for Sudanese Christians from an Islamic background. Many are unable to find jobs and most are totally excommunicated by their people.

...for the release of Ayub Masih, who has been in a Pakistani prison since October 1996 and has been accused of blasphemy. Pray for the release of two other victims, Shafiq Masih and Ranjha Masih, as well.

I urge, then, first of all that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone.

—(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)