

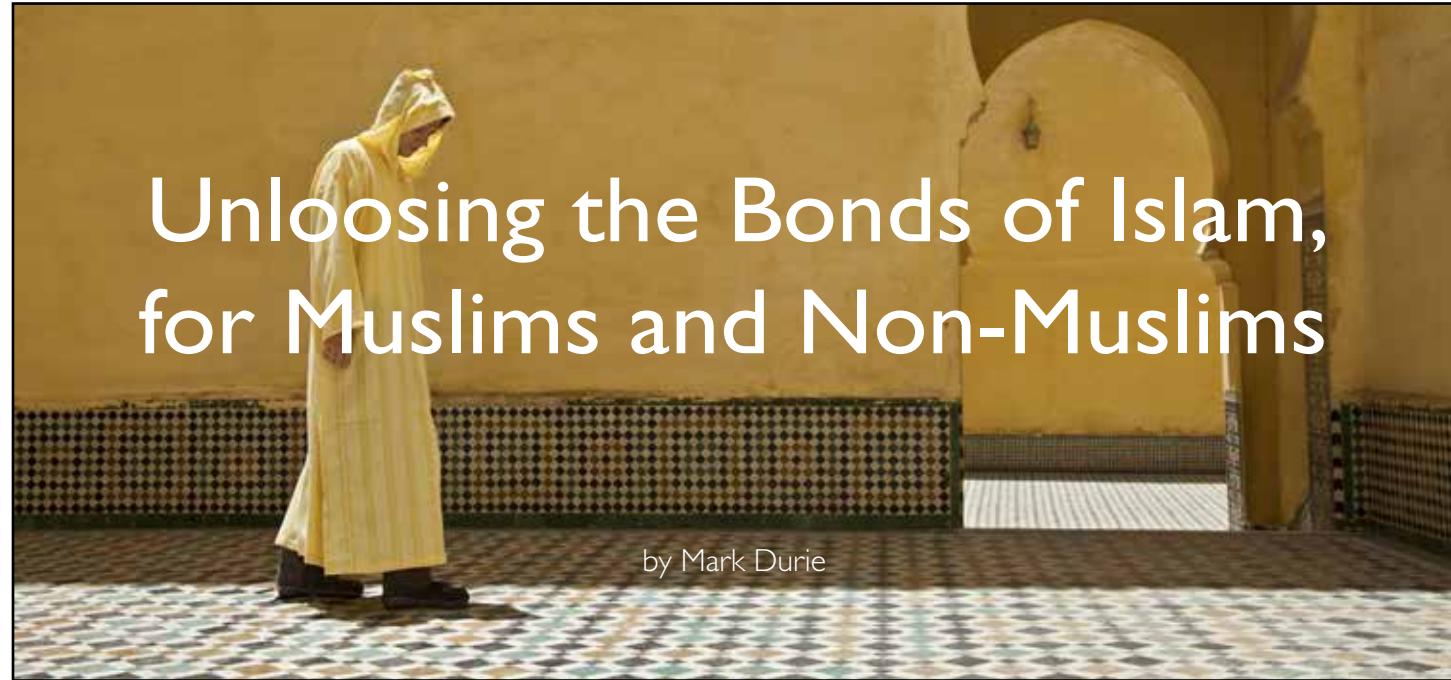
# INTERCEDE

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## Unloosing the Bonds of Islam, for Muslims and Non-Muslims

by Mark Durie



*Editor's note: Intercede is grateful to Dr. Mark Durie for providing this article. For further understanding of this subject, we refer you to his book *Liberty to the Captives*. Dr. Durie's books, blog, and other materials may be accessed at [www.markdurie.com](http://www.markdurie.com).*

In Daniel's prophetic visions, there is a description of a ruler who arises out of the wreckage of previous kingdoms. He will be "a stern faced king, a master of intrigue, who will consider himself superior, and by causing deceit to prosper, will succeed in whatever he does, causing astounding devastation to the saints. He will become very strong but not by his own power and will destroy many when they feel secure" (Daniel 8:9-12, 23-25). Daniel prophesies that this king will be overcome, "but not by human power."

The part I wish to draw the reader's attention to is the reference to an overcoming which is "not by human power." In respect of Islam, how can the spiritual power of Islam be countered? What are the keys to understanding Islam's power and addressing it? This is not just a theoretical question. Many missionaries to Muslims and Christians who have lived and labored under Islamic conditions know the spiritual pressure all too well. The key question in response to this pressure is: How does the power of the Cross set the believer free from the legacy of Islam's own "stern faced king," Muhammad?

There are two aspects to this question. One is the need to uncover the covenantal structure of Islam and its potency to cause spiritual disruption to disciples of Christ. It is necessary to inquire carefully and discerningly into the nature of the spiritual power that stands behind Islam and works through it. The second aspect is to know and apply biblical principles of freedom.

My own background in pastoral ministry has included discipling people coming to Christ out of the occult, witchcraft, and Satanism. For such people, there is a very real and compelling need to specifically renounce old allegiances and break ties such as initiation rituals. This is an instance of the requirement to "renounce Satan and all his works," as an ancient baptismal formula put it. Again and again, in ministering to new believers, we have found that specific renunciations can be very helpful to facilitate a disciple of Christ's effectual transfer from one Kingdom to another. Indeed it is true for every new disciple, wherever they have come from, not just for people coming out of occult backgrounds. A decision to follow Christ means deciding to turn away from other paths and reject other lords.

Around 17 years ago I began to embark on a long quest to understand the spiritual structure of Islam. I found that its spiritual power is built upon two covenants, one for non-Muslims, which we will refer to as the *dhimma*, and

*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

Mark Brink

International Director  
Global Initiative:  
Reaching Muslim Peoples



## A Prayer for Muslim Peoples

Individuals who have lived in Muslim lands or near a mosque readily recognize the echoing call from the *minaret*, summoning Muslims to their five times of daily prayer. From sunrise to after sunset, the call to prayer for Muslims goes out around the globe. By the age of 70, a Muslim will hear the call to prayer 127,750 times! To some people, the spectacle is fascinating as Muslims perform their prayer ritual. However, when Muslims pray to a god who cannot answer, these forms and repetitions are just words that fall to the ground.

*Intercede* is all about “going beyond” ourselves to petition the omnipotent and compassionate God of the universe, who hears and answers prayer, to meet the needs of other people. It is impossible for the heart of man, including the Muslim, to be transformed without the supernatural work of God through the Holy Spirit. It is God who saves—but we

have the high privilege to join with Him via our intercession to see Muslims come to Christ.

In his book, *Islam and the Cross* (p. 153), Samuel Zwemer, the famous “Apostle to Islam,” offers a powerful prayer on behalf of Muslims. As we regularly intercede for the 1.6 billion Muslims who are without Christ, I suggest that you may wish to incorporate elements of Zwemer’s anointed prayer:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who hast made of one blood all nations and hast promised that many shall come from the East and sit down with Abraham in thy kingdom: We pray for thy prodigal children in Muslim lands who are still afar off, that they may be brought nigh by the blood of Christ. Look upon them in pity, because they are ignorant of thy truth.

Take away pride of intellect and blindness of heart, and reveal to them the surpassing beauty and power of thy Son Jesus Christ. Convince them of their sin in rejecting the atonement of the only Savior. Give moral courage to those who love thee, that they may boldly confess thy name.

Hasten the day of religious freedom in Turkey, Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Africa. Send forth reapers where the harvest is ripe, and faithful plowmen to break furrows in lands still neglected. May the tribes of Africa and Malaysia not fall prey to Islam but be won for Christ. Bless the ministry of healing in every hospital, and the ministry of love at every church and mission. May all Muslim children in mission schools be led to Christ and accept him as their personal Savior.

Strengthen converts, restore backsliders, and give all those who labor among Muslims the tenderness of Christ, so that bruised reeds may become pillars of his church, and smoking flaxwicks burning and shining lights. Make bare thine arm, O God, and show thy power. All our expectation is from thee.





# Muslim World News

## Blasphemy Appeal in the Works?

Pakistan

Pakistan's top judge says he will hear Asia Bibi's appeal personally – and "soon." Pakistan's chief justice says he will decide the fate of Aasiya Noreen, a Christian woman whose 2009 conviction on blasphemy charges has fixated world attention on the country's treatment of religious minorities.

On April 21, Chief Justice Saqib Nisar told attorney Saiful-Malook, that he would hear Noreen's appeal. Noreen, popularly known as Asia Bibi, has been imprisoned since 2009. A Catholic mother of five children, Noreen was arrested for allegedly making derogatory comments about Islam's prophet, Muhammad, during an argument with a Muslim woman. She has been in prison ever since and was sentenced to death for blasphemy a year later. — *World Watch Monitor*

## Church Closures

Algeria

Authorities in Algeria have closed down two more Protestant churches, amidst growing pressure on the country's Christian minority.

Police sealed off two churches in the northeastern province of Kabylie. One church is in Ait-Mellikeche, a district of Tazmalt, in the Bejaia region. It was established in 2005, and more than 200 attended its weekly service. It has been affiliated with the main umbrella organization for Protestant churches, Eglises Protestantes d'Algérie (EPA), since 2007.

The government has been criticized for discrimination against Algeria's Christian minority. Churches and individual Christians have faced increased restrictions in recent months, raising concerns that these pressures signal a "co-ordinated campaign of intensified action against churches by the governing authorities," according to Christian advocacy group Middle East Concern. — *World Watch Monitor*

## Contempt of Religion

Egypt

A Coptic teacher, Magdy Farag Samir, has been found not guilty of contempt of religion, after he was charged for including wordplays in a set of questions about Islam's prophet, Muhammad.

Samir, 49, a social studies teacher at Barot Preparatory School for Girls in Beni Suef Governorate, had asked his students: "Where was the prophet Muhammad born?" Samir then suggested three options: (1) Yathrib, in Saudi Arabia; (2) Mecca, also in Saudi Arabia; and (3) Hafiza Abo Tartour, a village in Egypt, but also the word for cone hat.

He also asked: "Who was the nurse of the prophet Muhammad?" The two options: (1) Halima Al-Saadie, the correct answer; and (2) Halima Bta'at El Ta'amiya, which means "a seller of falafel," a Middle Eastern dish.

On March 14, Samir was arrested and charged with contempt of religion. He was detained for 15 days, pending investigation. — *World Watch Monitor*

# Unloosing the Bonds of Islam,

continued from page 3

another for converts to Islam, which we will call the *shahada*. Missions to Muslims can be impacted spiritually by both these covenants, sometimes in subtle ways. Effective discipleship, however, can lead to freedom from both these covenants and their characteristic influences.

## The *Dhimma* Covenant

The *dhimma*, or covenant of surrender to Islam, is often not as well understood by Christians as it could be. It represents a powerful spiritual contract, which is constructed in a way which works to contain and frustrate Christian witness. In Islamic jurisprudence, the *dhimma* is the covenant of surrender, which permits Christians (and Jews) to live under Islamic rule while retaining their faith—provided they render grateful service to Islam, in humility for having their lives spared. This service used to include an annual payment of tribute, known as *jizya*. The evocative *jizya* payment ritual—to which, according to classical Islamic law, adult Christian men were to be subjected annually—enacted a ritual slaying of the *dhimmi* male by striking him on the side of the neck. This blow symbolized his fate, should he break any of the rules or principles of Islam, including the prohibition on witness to Muslims.

The *dhimma* imposes many spiritual difficulties upon non-Muslim communities. It is a blood-oath, a covenant with death—a kind of self-cursing enacted under threat—which says, in effect, “Kill me if I break any of the rules which establish the dominance of Islam over me.” This concept, of previously agreed-to fatal violence, is reflected in one of the paragraphs in the Pact of Umar, an early example of a *dhimma* covenant. In it the Christians of Syria undertake that, “These are the conditions that we set against ourselves and followers of our religion in return for safety and protection. If we break any of these promises that we set for your benefit against ourselves, then our *dhimma* is broken and you are allowed to do with us what you are allowed of people of defiance and rebellion.”

The *dhimma* comes with dire baggage. Let us consider some examples. One of the *dhimma*’s persistent spiritual impacts is the mimetic tendency, according to which tolerated non-Muslim *dimmis* seek to look like Muslims, in order to blend into the *Umma* (the Muslim community) and avoid the stigma and risk associated with *dhimmi* status. Classical Islam vigorously opposed the mimetic tendency by enforcing legal regulations designed to prevent *dimmis* from appearing similar to Muslims. Muhammad himself is reported to have insisted that Muslims should look different from non-Muslims or else be counted as among the unbelievers:

“I have been sent with a sword in my hand to command people to worship Allah and associate no partners with him. I command you to belittle and subjugate those who disobey me, for those who look alike are of the same.”

Another spiritual fruit of the *dhimma*, stemming from the enforced psychological trait of gratitude (for being allowed to live), is a misplaced attitude of praise for Islam. Paired with this is self-rejection, a tendency to doubt and criticize oneself and one’s spiritual inheritance as a Christian.

Another potential spiritual impact of the *dhimma*, also reflected in the Pact of Umar’s conditions, is an agreement not to pass critical commentary on Islam. This is why, even today in many countries, speaking or writing critically about Muhammad, Allah, or the first caliphs attracts a blasphemy charge, with severe penalties. In communities who live under the shadow of the *dhimma*, self-imposed silence about Islam and its teachings is matched by a tendency to be distrustful of and disassociate oneself from those who are critical of the religion. This is an attitude driven by fear, which thrives under *dhimma* conditions.

Yet another impact of the *dhimma* is an agreement forced upon *dimmis* to suppress visible public religious practices (no bells, loud singing, crosses worn or displayed on churches, etc.). Under conditions set by Islamic law, all practice of non-Muslim faith has to be hidden, invisible to the public eye, lest Muslims be drawn away from Islam, in what Islamic scholars have called *fitna* (“testing” or “temptation”).

A spiritual covenant, the *dhimma* pact can exert a profound influence even where it no longer exists as a legal instrument. An example: the Yale theologians’ 2007 response to the “Common Word” letter addressed by 138 Muslim leaders to the Christians of the World. This Yale response included various remarks that conveyed gratitude and humility in ways that aligned with expectations of *dimmis*. Examples: “We ask forgiveness of the All-Merciful One and of the Muslim community around the world” and “It is with humility and hope that we receive your generous letter.” The point is that humility and gratitude are two key psychological characteristics Muslim jurists have identified as expected of *dimmis*. The 14th century exegete, al-Khasin, explained that *dimmis* should pay the *jizya* head-tax in a way which manifests gratefulness: “they pay it with gratitude, confessing the graciousness of Muslims in accepting *jizya* from them.”

Jovan Cvijic, writing a century ago about Balkan *dimmis*, described the debasing psychological effect of living

# for Muslims and Non-Muslims

From page 1

under *dhimma* conditions. He reported that Balkan Christians under Islam had become “accustomed to belonging to an inferior, servile class, whose duty it is to make themselves acceptable to the master, to humble themselves before him and to please him. These people become closemouthed, secretive, cunning; they lose all confidence in others.” Closer to home, what might the spiritual impact of such *dhimmi* conditioning be upon missionaries or their disciples if, to some degree, they come under its spiritual influence?

One symptom of the spiritual condition of *dhimmitude* could be an increase of secretiveness and suspicion toward others due to fear. Symptoms could also include standing apart from other Christians and stigmatizing the “Christian” identity, while exalting the “Muslim” identity, as manifestation of the mimetic tendency. The mimetic tendency could also be reflected in Bible translations that avoid reference to the Fatherhood of God or to Jesus as the “Son of God.” Instead more “Muslim-friendly” terms could be preferred so as to clothe Christian witness in language that helps it blend in and conform to Muslim expectations. There might also be a tendency to adopt hostility to anything perceived as critical of Islam, and a preference to avoid difficult discussion or analysis of damaging Islamic teachings.

I can testify of one missionary who used highly contextualized forms of ministry to reach Muslims very successfully for a time. He explained that one of the side effects of this period of ministry on his character was a growing suspicion of others, to the extent he used to play his cards very close to his chest. He found this was damaging his capacity to work well in teams. Later, after he left the Islamic environment, he realized this character trait was making him less effective in ministry; fortunately, he was set free from this problem by a sovereign intervention of God. Although the psychological characteristics of *dhimmi* can impact Christians who work among Muslims, the spiritual impact of the *shahada* is equally, if not more, important for discipleship.

## The *Shahada* Covenant

What is the nature of the *shahada* covenant, which binds a person to follow Islam? It has two key affirmations: (1) There is no God but Allah, and (2) Muhammad is his Messenger. The first part of the *shahada* declares that Allah is the one true God, and his attributes are as revealed in the Quran. This spiritual package includes the Quran’s rejection of *shirk*, the idea that God “partners” with anything or is like anything. The spiritual effects of this declaration are manifold. They include assent to the characterization of the nature of God as presented in the Quran, a declaration which is

incompatible with the gospel message of the incarnation and conflicts with the message of salvation through the Cross.

As a spiritual constraint, just as powerful and important is the second part of the *shahada*, “Muhammad is his Messenger,” which controls the interpretation of the first part. As a covenantal declaration, this means, at the very least, that the Quran, “sent down” via Muhammad, is the inspired word of God, including its assertion that Jesus is not the Son of God, its rejection of the crucifixion, and its declaration that Muhammad is the “seal of the prophets” (i.e., the last and final messenger of Allah). It also means that the Quran’s statements about Muhammad are true, including many statements that Muhammad’s example and commands must be obediently followed. This declaration also binds a Muslim to be subservient to the *shariah* (system of law), which is built upon the foundation of the example of Muhammad.

Declaration of the *shahada*, in effect, affirms Muhammad as the perfect example to follow, and this opens up the soul of a Muslim believer and practitioner to the attributes of Muhammad himself, as recorded in the Islamic canon. This is problematic because Muhammad’s example and teaching include a great deal of dark spiritual baggage. Islamic practices are not merely cultural, but are expressions of submission to Muhammad’s example as the Messenger of God. Even simple acts, like putting the right foot forward when entering a room or covering one’s mouth when yawning, can be acts of conformity to Muhammad’s example, because they ultimately are based upon and indeed demanded by Muhammad’s *Sunna* (his manner or way of life, including his teaching and example). There are unhelpful traits, which run deep in Muslim cultures, and are conditioned by the influence of Muhammad’s character. Examples are deception; an orientation towards feelings of victimhood and abandonment; behavioral attributes grounded in rejection, such as a readiness to take offense, or an attitude of superiority; fear; suspicion; violence; and open doorways to the occult.

This last point, openness to the occult, is something of considerable significance for missions work. The occult plays a big role in the lives of many Muslims. What is not always understood is that the Quran opened a doorway to the occult by teaching that some *jinn* (spiritual beings) are Muslim believers (Surah 72:1-2). This opens up the possibility of Muslims connecting with and partnering with *jinn* as part of Islamic practice. The Quran also teaches that people have attached to them a personal spirit-companion known as a *qarin* (Surah 50:23). Given this, it is hardly surprising that Muslim

continued on page 6

# Unloosing the Bonds of Islam

continued from page 5

Background Believers often have an occult history, which needs to be renounced if they are to come to full freedom. The key point about these aspects of Folk Islam is they come under the spiritual license and authority of the *shahada*.

## **Renouncing the *Dhimma* and *Shahada* Covenants**

A verse of Scripture to which I have kept coming back to in implementing a pathway of discipleship that leads to freedom for Muslim background believers is Colossians 2:8-15. Paul understood his mission in terms of transferring people from Satan's power into the Kingdom of Christ. He speaks about this in Acts 26:18, when he describes his commission from Christ himself, "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God." In Colossians 2, he reveals his understanding of how this works in practice. Although humans can be "held captive" by human traditions (v. 8), we have come to fullness in Christ (v. 10). The key, decisive event was the erasure of the record that stood against us, the record of our sin (v. 14). Paul speaks of these "legal demands" being nailed to the cross. I like to think of the *dhimma* and the *shahada*, with all their dark claims, in this way. They have been nailed! Paul explains the spiritual consequences, using an image from the Roman victory marches. The "rulers and authorities," which are personal demonic powers, have been publicly humiliated and triumphed over (v. 15) through the Cross because it is the Cross that sets us free from dark spiritual bonds. The challenge for every Christian, including those who disciple others, is to apply this directly to the soul.

As I grew to understand the power of the *shahada* and the *dhimma* to limit the spiritual growth of followers of Jesus, I began to develop prayers for renouncing the covenants. Two different prayers were needed: one for the *dhimma* and another for renouncing the *shahada*. These prayers are included in my book *Liberty to the Captives*.

Both prayers have their place. I have seen Christians whose ancestors lived for generations under Islamic rule and who wanted to reach out to Muslims, but found themselves inhibited, constrained, and held back by unseen bonds. I have also repeatedly seen these same brothers and sisters enter into a new-found freedom, experiencing fresh power for ministry after renouncing the *dhimma* and its curses. I believe this is a crucial key for releasing the church "under" Islam into its birthright of freedom in Christ.

At the same time, I have observed powerful transformative effects in new believers' lives after they make formal acts of renunciation of Islam. One convert, after reciting the

prayer to renounce the *shahada*, declared: "The prayer is more than wonderful and I used to feel as a caged animal that has been set free." Another person wrote, "I felt as if a dark spirit has left me and gentle rays of light penetrated my inner being and wiped out all traces of darkness."

Over the past six years, it has been my privilege to lead many converts from Islam through a process of renunciation as part of their basic discipleship, and then to take them through a period of further proactive discipling to address areas of former bondage. The purpose of this process is to build strong healthy Christian character. Without careful attention to establishing new believers in freedom, they can easily stumble, their pathway of growth becoming obstructed with resentments and frustrations.

Many believers who have tried to reach out to Muslims with the gospel have experienced the pain of seeing people they invested in become shipwrecked on the shoals of character failings, including competitiveness, perfectionism, and taking offence. One brother comes to mind. He came from a strong Islamic family and had been a militant, killing many people. His conversion was dramatic, and his devotion to Christ sincere and intense. However, he found it very difficult to get on with other Christians. The churches he attended would welcome him initially, but found him to be hypercritical, demanding, argumentative, and ready to take offence. Jesus he loved: Christians he found lacking. This brother found it impossible to like other Christians, let alone love them, and sustaining membership in a church was an impossibility. Now he lives an isolated life in a Western nation, a solo Christian with deep unhealed wounds of the soul.

In our times, with more and more Muslims turning to Christ, discipleship is the big challenge to be faced. Those who work among Muslim background believers need to be equipped for this discipleship challenge. There must be an understanding of spiritual warfare, and of such topics as deliverance, prayer ministry, and inner healing, including healing from trauma. Generational spiritual bonds are real and require skillful engagement to be addressed and spiritual foundations rebuilt. The equipping needs to be two-fold. On the one hand, we need a deep understanding of the power of the Cross to set us free, including skill in *how* to apply this knowledge. On the other hand, we also need to understand the spiritual structure of Islam so that this structure can be intentionally dismantled and replaced by a biblical worldview, including a healthy emotional worldview. These are essential keys to the future growth of the church among Muslims as they turn in increasing numbers to follow Jesus.



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[Facebook.com/JumaaPrayer](https://www.facebook.com/JumaaPrayer)*

## **Friday, July 6, 2018. Please pray for**

*...equipping classes being taught at a U.S. seminary July 9-13. Cry out to the Lord to anoint the teachers and call forth students to reach Muslims with the truth about Jesus.*

*...Ivory Coast, Africa. Since 2010, 4 million Muslims have moved into this West African nation. It is now 44% Muslim. Especially pray for pastors in the north, where it is 90% Muslim.*

*...a Muslim marabout (holy man) and his wife, in a Muslim-majority country, who have accepted the Lord, been baptized in water, and are being discipled.*

## **Friday, July 13, 2018. Please pray for**

*...the Lord's blessing on a new book issued by Global Initiative entitled "Journey to Understanding: Equipping Christians to Engage Muslims With Faith."*

*...many Egyptian Muslims who are disenchanted with the harshness of Islam and are seeking instead the truth found in God's Word. Of Egypt's population of 95 million, 86% are Muslims.*

*...outreach ministries to Muslim immigrant families from Afghanistan in the Australian island state of Tasmania. Tasmania's growing Muslim population has reached several thousand.*

## **Friday, July 20, 2018. Please pray for**

*...Syrian Christians who, in the midst of war and chaos, are often sharing the love of Christ with Muslims. Of Syria's population of 17 million, 89% are Muslims.*

*...Amina, captured by the Muslim terrorist group Boko Haram in Nigeria. Amina sent this message to her mother: "I am confident that one day I shall see your face again. If not here, then there at the bosom of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

*...evangelism literature projects underway in the Amharic and Somali languages – targeting Muslim peoples within these language groups.*

## **Friday, July 27, 2018. Please pray for**

*...a group of Afghan Hazara Muslim men who immigrated to Australia and "have begun participating" in a local church.*

*...more than 23 million Muslims living in China, mostly in Xinjiang, but also in Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai. The largest ethnic groups are the Hui (10.6 million) and the Uyghur (10 million).*

*...provision of blankets, warm clothes, clean water, and access to medical care for the people of Yemen. Civil war has decimated the country. Of Yemen's population of 28 million, 99.6% are Muslims.*

*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, August 3, 2018. Please pray for**

- ...*Bahasa and Javanese radio programs* being broadcast daily in Indonesia (Pop. 262 million, 82% Muslim).
- ...*the country of Djibouti*, where all laws and policies are shaped by Islamic *sharia* law (Pop. 900,000, 98% Muslim).
- ...*Christians in Iraq* to remain courageous, despite the circumstances around them (Pop. 38 million, 95% Muslim).

#### **Friday, August 10, 2018. Please pray for**

- ...*the Central African Republic (CAR)*. Violence has wracked the country led by a Muslim rebel group called Seleka. Of CAR's population of 5 million, less than 30% are Muslims, but wield disproportionate influence in the country.
- ...*more workers to join outreach ministries* to the 350,000 Muslim Turks who live in London.
- ...*Yasser in Kuwait*, a new believer. He is isolated and needs wisdom in how to handle relationships with his family.

#### **Friday, August 17, 2018. Please pray for**

- ...*wisdom and safety for Dina*, who for three years has worked in a "safe house" for converts from Islam in Afghanistan.
- ...*victims of war in Syria*. For physical and psychological healings for those who have been through injuries and trauma.
- ...*Aisha in Ghana*, who converted to Christ after hearing the gospel. Her family forbade her to return home.

#### **Friday, August 24, 2018. Please pray for**

- ...*Omani students* studying abroad to meet believers and come to know Christ as Savior. (Pop. 4.6 million, 90% Muslim).
- ...*the Bible college in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan*, which trains evangelists to share the gospel with their communities.
- ...*the Rohingya, a stateless Muslim people group* who are considered one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. Denied citizenship in Myanmar for decades, they have been forced to flee into Bangladesh to escape mass killings.

#### **Friday, August 31, 2018. Please pray for**

- ...*Idit, a convert from Islam*, who recently escaped Iran via a mountainous route through Turkey.
- ...*a group of Iranian Muslims in a Scottish city*. They are showing increasing interest in spiritual matters and some are now attending home-based Christian fellowships.
- ...*the Christian community in Turkmenistan*. Christians are seen as dangerous extremists, especially those who evangelize. Of Turkmenistan's population of 5.4 million, 93% are Muslims.

\*All personal names used herein are pseudonyms.