

INTERCEDE

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Let's Magnify Jesus

By Dick Brogden

Cairo traffic is terrible. Noisy, loud, crammed, crazy drivers and traffic jams from eight in the morning until eight at night. Cairo taxi drivers are entertaining and varied: some are out-of-work professors, some are toothless peasants, some are gentlemen, some are creepers. Almost all of them are Muslims. We have found that taxis are incredible places to talk about Jesus.

The other day I got in a taxi and noticed the ubiquitous Quran on the dashboard. "I notice you have a Quran," I said to the driver, "Have you ever read the Bible?" He smiled and told me that he never had. "Have you ever heard about the gospel?" I continued. He shook his head "no." "I have a covenant with God that I will try and spend five minutes in every taxi ride and tell the driver about the gospel," I told

him, "Can I take five minutes and share with you the good news of what God has done?"

He nodded his head and turned down the radio. I had played the God card—what could he do? And off we went talking about Jesus.

Almost invariably when I start to talk to Muslims about Jesus they tell me: "We love and respect Jesus." After twenty years of experience in the Muslim world, I learned that similarities with Muslims are not where we should spend our time. We agree with Muslims on the non-transferrable aspects of who God is (omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent), but we do not agree on several crucial points about God—the premier one being the nature of Jesus Christ.

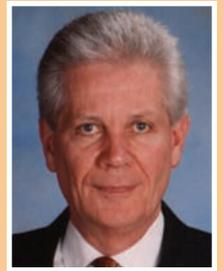
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Until All Have Heard

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 the lead article of this issue, the author makes a revealing statement about prayer—Islamic prayer! He states, “Cairo has over 4,000 minarets—this equates to 20,000-plus daily prayer calls.” Some years ago I was sitting in my home in a Middle Eastern country and could hear simultaneous “calls of prayer” from four mosques—all within a short walk of my front door. Islam believes that no one should be outside the sound of the call to prayer. The obligation to pray five times a day is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is not a suggestion or an option; it is an obligation. By the age of seventy a Muslim will have been “called to pray” at least 127,750 times.

The Holy Spirit has recently refocused our attention on intercessory prayer. I am reminded daily that we are wrestling not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers and rulers of darkness. The result we seek—to see all Muslims have an adequate witness of the

truth about Jesus Christ and the opportunity to accept Him as Savior—will come only with groanings of spiritual intercession. There just is no substitute. There is no “easier solution.”

Regularly, people ask, “How can I pray for Muslims?” Here are three practical thoughts:

- **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. Ask team members to visit Muslims in your area. Access sites like globalinitiativeinfo.com, JumaaPrayer.org and joshuaproject.com for information about praying for Muslims, especially for Muslim Unreached People Groups.
- **FACILITATE** the beginning of Jumaa Prayer Fellowships among your praying friends. Ideally, Global Initiative encourages believers to pray an hour on the Muslim holy day of Friday (*Jumaa* in Arabic) and to fast the Friday noon meal, if possible.

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

- **SIMPLIFY.** Don't make it overly complicated. In the beginning, simply implore the Lord to “reveal Himself to Muslim peoples.” He may do that through sending a messenger, providing a vision, extending the gift of healing, or by some other supernatural way.
- **SUBSCRIBE.** 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.
- **SIGN UP.** Please visit [Facebook.com/JumaaPrayer](https://www.facebook.com/JumaaPrayer), JumaaPrayer.org, or Twitter at [JumaaPrayer](https://twitter.com/JumaaPrayer) and indicate your intention to become a part of Jumaa Prayer Fellowship. It greatly encourages us to know you are becoming an intercessor!

Join thousands of believers around the world who fast and pray on Fridays for Muslims. Prayer is the key to reaching Muslims, and we ask you to be an integral part. 





Muslim World News

Syria

Syrian Christians caught in crossfire

Syrian Christians are the victims of disproportionate violence and abuse as sectarian violence continues to engulf Syria, says a new report.

Christian women are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse, while Christian men are facing pressure from both sides to join the battle, according to Vulnerability Assessment of Syria's Christians, coordinated by the World Watch List's Dennis Pastoor with analysis from political commentator Nicholas Heras.

Vulnerability Assessment of Syria's Christians acknowledges that many of the struggles facing Christians in Syria are shared by the entire population, but says Christians are "soft targets" and "particularly vulnerable" to some things, including hostility in refugee camps, targeting by Islamist groups and criminals, and confiscation of land. Christians are "caught in the crossfire of the strife between government and opposition forces and suffer violence from both parties," writes Pastoor.

Meanwhile Syria's Christians are called victims of "systematic militarization" which Heras predicts will become a "significant trend" in the near future.

Vulnerability Assessment of Syria's Christians predicts four possible outcomes to the conflict, the most likely being the eventual overthrow of the government by opposition forces "dominated by Islamists".

The other potential outcomes predicted are: the al-Assad regime prevails, but violence continues in the short-term; opposition forces take complete control of Syria and form an Islamic state—the "worst-case scenario for Syria's Christians"; or the civil war continues, but the sectarian element of the conflict is reduced.

Whatever the outcome, Heras predicts a bleak future for all Syrians, and this includes Christians.

"Christians face the prospect of never being able to return to their homes and businesses, or of returning to a civil order that is less pluralistic and accepting of minority rights than before the war," he says.

— *World Watch Monitor*

Pakistan

Rimsha living in Canada

Rimsha Masih, the teenage Pakistani girl who once faced the possibility of the death penalty because she was accused of insulting Islam, is living in Canada with her family, a Canadian religious-rights organization says.

Rimsha was arrested in August 2012 and accused of burning the pages of some Islamic texts. She was jailed after angry crowds threatened to burn Christian homes in the sector of Islamabad where her family lived, according to press reports at the time. Her detention sparked international outcry about the application of Pakistan's anti-blasphemy laws, and prompted Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari to order an investigation of the case. The case against Rimsha collapsed after police were informed the cleric of the mosque in Rimsha's area had planted the burned pages on her. Pakistani courts eventually threw out the charges against the girl, citing a lack of evidence.

— *World Watch Monitor*



When it comes to talking with Muslims, I want to super exalt Jesus and share who Jesus claimed to be. When a Muslim tells me that he loves and respects Jesus, I slap them on the knee and say: “That is marvelous! I am so glad that you believe Jesus is God! This is wonderful news!” They are usually surprised and quickly state that they do not believe Jesus is God. I point out that they do not really respect Him then—for that was His express claim and we sally forth into a wonderful and respectful conversation about who Jesus claimed to be in the Scriptures. Our conversation is centered on what makes Jesus unique: His deity. Dissimilarities are more important than similarities in witness to Muslims.

To love Muslims is to share with them (in the first conversation) about Jesus and His word. We don't believe in 'friendship evangelism' if it means to hang around an Arab Muslim for two years before you get around to sharing the gospel. We believe in being friendly to all, and telling everyone about Jesus and the Bible—and then spending our time (pursuing deep friendship) with those who are interested in learning more about Jesus. Every encounter with a Muslim therefore is an opportunity to talk about Jesus—and we intentionally talk about Jesus as He is. Jesus is God, and this is a crucial point in evan-

gelism of Muslims. We should not talk about Jesus in a way that Muslims want to confine us to—they are very pleased to talk about the non-threatening, make everyone happy Jesus—but that Jesus does not exist. We must talk about Jesus as He is revealed in the Bible and the earlier the better.

I have repeatedly found that to super exalt Jesus to my Muslim friends by proclaiming His divinity never closes the conversation. It inevitably leads to deep, powerful, intimate discussion on who Jesus really is—not just on who we want Jesus to be. Our witness to Muslims is most effective when it is based on who the Scripture reveals Jesus to be. And Jesus is clearly, quickly, and comprehensively extolled as divine in every Gospel and epistle.

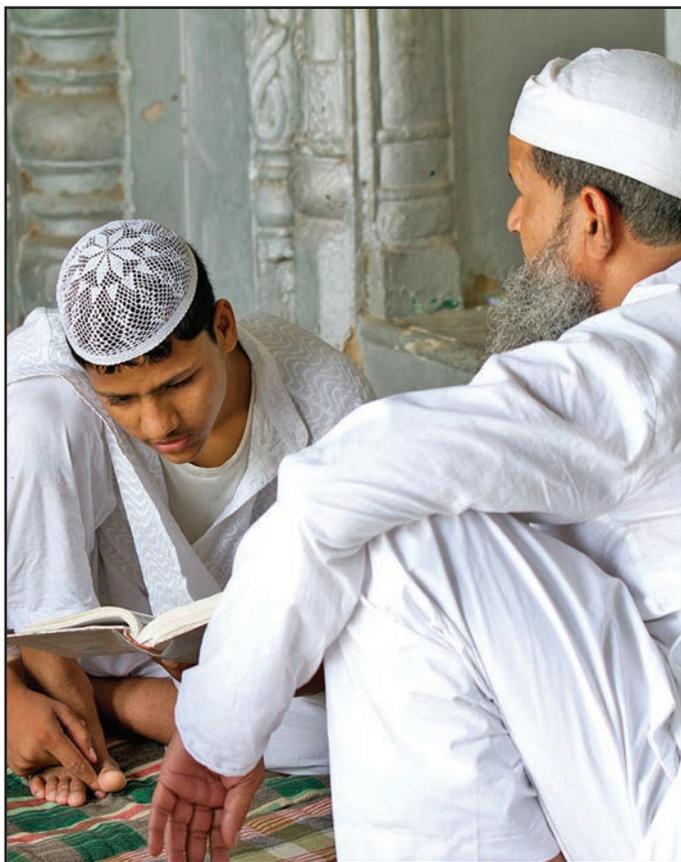
Dave Bish points out that you can not avoid talking about the Trinity or the divinity of Jesus, if you are going to be faithful to the Biblical witness. You start from the Gospel of Matthew: Jesus is called Immanuel in 1:23, and then God's son (2:15). The first verse in Mark refers to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Luke 1:35 tells us Mary's child will be the “Son of God”. John 1:1-5 and following pulls no punches and establishes Jesus as divine. The gospels resound with the deity of Jesus. Jesus' favorite

gnify Jesus

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title for Himself was “Son of Man,” a reference to deity (not humanity) as he was referencing the revelation of God in human likeness as described in Daniel. “Son of God” is a messianic title: Kingship over all the nations forever. Bish affirms: “Trinity is unavoidable if we want to know who Jesus is ... avoiding Trinity means avoiding who Jesus is and what he came to bring us into. If I do that with a Muslim I may as well just become a Muslim because my 'good news' is going to sound more like 'fear God and behave' than receive Jesus and enter into relationship with his Father as we share in Jesus' death and his resurrection.”

Understanding the Islamic and Quranic view of Jesus helps us realize why the immediate, compelling, and open proclamation of the divinity of Jesus is so important. Central to Islam, central to the Quran, is the refutation of the deity of Christ. The cardinal Islamic theology is *tawheed*—it means the indivisible unity of God. The central Islamic Creed is called *shahada* and it can be translated: “There is no deity but God (Allah), and Mohammed is the messenger of God (Allah).”



At first blush, “indivisible unity” and “no deity but God” seem fairly innocuous and even consistent with Christian theology. Nothing could be further from the truth. Both are a denial of the deity of Christ—and without a divine Christ Christianity falls apart. Christ has to be both fully man (only man can die) and fully God (only God can rise from the dead). *Tawheed* denies the deity of Jesus. The *shahada*—“There is no deity but God” is also a denial of the divinity of Jesus. The *shahada* is in essence proclaiming “Jesus is not God.” When the Islamic creed declares—“Mohammed is the messenger of God”—it is essentially saying: “Jesus is not the God/Man. He is not the intermediary between God and Man. He has no right to advocate for man before the Father.”

Every time the prayer call sounds—five times a day—voices are lifted to the heavens that deny and insult Jesus. Cairo has over 4,000 minarets. This equates to 20,000 plus daily Islamic prayer calls, which are defiant shouts to the heavens: “Jesus is not God.” When we understand that the essence of Islam is anti-Christ, that all the forces of Islam are arrayed to deny Christ's divine claim, we can see both why there is so much pressure to downplay the deity of Jesus, and so much importance on boldly lifting up our voices and declaring Jesus is God. Should not the heavens receive in Muslim lands the fearless assertion “Jesus is very God of very God!”

I have never experienced the exaltation of Jesus in witness as a hindrance or an obstacle to Muslims. When we clearly, firmly declare that Jesus is God, it always leads to extended conversations. Have some Muslims been offended? Yes. But let us not equate denial and rejection with misunderstanding. You can understand the claim that Jesus is God and still be offended at it. The gospel is offensive. The deity of Christ is offensive to Muslims. Have many Muslims listened and some (eventually) fallen at the feet of the Divine Savior? Yes. Jesus is worthy of worship by all peoples.

Your starting point in witness to Muslims informs your methodology. If you think that Islam is benign, a neutral ideology and system that can be redeemed, you approach Islam one way. Those who consider Islam kindly see truths in the religion and the religion's text that can be built on and redeemed. If however, you think that that Islam in essence is evil, demonic and uses small truths to

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intentionally distort the deity of Jesus, you approach Islam very differently. Recently elected Pope Francis had this to say in his first homily: “When we do not profess Jesus

Christ, the saying of Léon Bloy comes to mind: 'Anyone who does not pray to the Lord prays to the devil.' When we do not profess Jesus Christ, we profess the worldliness of the devil, a demonic worldliness.”

Let us magnify Jesus in the ears of our Muslim friends. We believe Jesus is God. The Bible reveals Jesus is God. Islam denies that Jesus is God. We have two choices. If we are over-worried about offending Muslims we will align ourselves with Islam's central goal: the suppression, rejection, and rebellion to the deity of Jesus. If we are overjoyed at the supremacy of Christ in all things, we will open our mouths and declare Jesus as divine. I affirm from experience that you can boldly, winsomely, clearly, freely declare to Muslims the deity of Jesus. It is being done daily in Cairo. It is being done around the world by believers that Jesus has rescued from Islam. Nik Ripken interviewed Chinese believers who suffered terribly in communist prisons for their devotion to the divine Christ. They exhort us, “Don't give up in freedom what we would never have given up in persecution.”

We profess Jesus is God. This is our testimony. This has always been the undiluted testimony of the Church. The declaration of the divinity of Jesus is how we magnify Him. Let's magnify Jesus. 

Prayer Strategies for Muslim People

- **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 the 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 growth of the church among Muslims.



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Friday, September 6, 2013. Please pray

...for millions of Muslims attending mosques today. Pray that the Lord would reveal His love to them in miraculous ways.

...for Chinese Kazakh Muslims to have opportunity to learn about Jesus.

...for approximately 10 million Ansari Muslims in India. Pray that Indian Christians would reach out and witness to the Ansari.

Friday, September 13, 2013. Please pray

...for Somali's Muslims to be free from the yoke of the Al Shabaab Islamic militia. Al Shabaab continues to wreak havoc across Somalia.

...for Christian missionaries across the Muslim world. Pray for their protection and encouragement.

...for Christians engaged in prison ministry to Muslims in the U.S. prison system.

Friday, September 20, 2013. Please pray

...that God would continue to strengthen the underground Church in Iran.

...for Muslims living in the West. Pray that through their conversions and testimonies, the gospel of Jesus Christ will be spread into the Islamic world.

...for expatriate Christian workers in Kuwait to gain opportunities to witness about Jesus. A large percentage of Kuwait's population is comprised of foreign workers.

Friday, September 27, 2013. Please pray

...that Muslims in Turkey will hear witness of Jesus Christ, despite hardline Islam that is threatening the political balance.

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

...for MBBs (Muslim Background Believers) in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Christian persecution continues and was very harsh in 2012.

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Friday, October 4, 2013. Please pray

...for millions of Muslim families in Europe. Pray that the gospel would reach the hearts of so many hungry people.
...for Muslims in North Africa. Pray that the gospel of Jesus Christ would sweep across this stretch of countries.
...for the Muslims of Zanzibar. Muslims make up 97 percent of the population, and tension is consistently high between the Islamic community and the Christian minority.

Friday, October 11, 2013. Please pray

...for indigenous Christian pastors in Central Asia. Many toil under intense danger.
...for Muslims in Russia. By itself, Moscow is home to three million Muslims, most without official registration.
...for Muslims in Turkmenistan, which is currently the most closed country in Central Asia.

Friday, October 18, 2013. Please pray

...for the four million Muslims of Thailand to have an opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.
...for government leaders across the Muslim world. Pray that through divine intervention, windows of opportunity would open, allowing millions of Muslims to truly have the chance to learn about Jesus Christ.
...for God to move in the lives of Indonesia's 180 million Muslims.

Friday, October 25, 2013. Please pray

...for God's protection over the Church in Egypt.
...for refugees across the globe. Approximately 80 percent of the world's refugees are Muslim.
...for Nigeria's more than 60 million Muslims. Pray for peace despite the presence of Boko Haram and other terror groups.

Intercede is a bimonthly publication of Global Initiative: Reaching Muslim Peoples
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