

INTERCEDE

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What is Prayer?



By Samuel Zwemer

During his lifetime, Samuel Zwemer (1867-1952) was alternately called the "Apostle to Muslims" and the "Apostle to Islam." Zwemer was one of the founders and pioneer missionaries of the Arabian Mission in the Arabian Gulf. He was a prolific author, writing mainly on the subjects of missions to Muslims, Islam, evangelism, and theology.

The following chapter from his book "Prayer" allows the reader an insight into the source of Zwemer's passion for reaching Muslims with the gospel — his prayer life. L. Bevan Jones said of Zwemer: "Back of all this intense activity was his own quiet walk with God. He was a man of much prayer. That was the secret of his buoyancy of spirit, infectious laughter, fund of good stories, clasp of hand and sparkling eyes; all were eloquent reminders of his love for men born of his love

for his Saviour." And J. Christy Wilson states of Zwemer: "One particular point should be noted here as a key to later great accomplishments: While in seminary, Zwemer formed the habit, in addition to his other devotions, of spending the noon hour from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. in prayer."

We print this article believing the Lord will use it to precipitate increased prayer on behalf of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims, who desperately need to receive an adequate witness of Jesus Christ. This article is slightly abbreviated from its original length.

Prayer is the most ancient, the most universal and the most intense expression of the religious instinct. And yet of all the

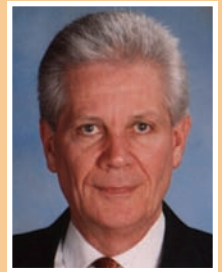
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Until All Have Heard

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



Samuel Zwemer (1867-1952), the “Apostle to Islam,” was a man of passionate prayer. To all who knew him, either personally or through his many literary achievements, Dr. Zwemer was greatly beloved. For 40 years he was a missionary in the Middle East, working chiefly among Muslims. Just before his death at the age of 85, he penned the last of his 45 books — on the subject of prayer. It is our conviction at Global Initiative that intercessory prayer is the bedrock foundation for ministry to Muslims. Our hope and intention in the lead article of this issue of *Intercede* is that by highlighting this godly man’s thoughts on prayer it will encourage our readers to increased levels of intercession for the salvation of Muslims. The following is a powerful excerpt from Zwemer’s book “What is Prayer?”

Private prayer to be real seeks solitude. The suppliant desires to be alone with God. “Thou when thou prayest enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy Father which is in secret.” The saints of all the ages have sought and found God in solitude: Abraham when the horror of great darkness fell upon him and he kept lonely vigil over his sacrifice; Moses at the burning bush in the desert waste; Elijah on the top of Carmel and at the mouth of the cave; Isaiah in the temple court; Daniel on his knees alone, facing Jerusalem; Peter on the housetop at Joppa; Saul after the vision on the road to Damascus; John in the

Spirit on the Lord’s day on lonely Patmos; David Livingstone on his knees in the hut at Chitambo’s village praying until God called him home. But most of all, Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours, praying alone in the desert place, alone on the mountain top, alone in Gethsemane, alone when they all forsook Him and fled, praying for the soldiers who nailed him to the Cross. The secret place of prayer is alone with God.

Please pray for the ministry of our team members. Training sessions have occurred recently in many countries; including El Salvador, Indonesia, the Philippines, Romania, Ukraine, England, Ethiopia, and Argentina. Eager students are asking how they can participate in reaching the world’s 1.5 billion Muslims with an adequate witness of Jesus Christ. We believe it starts with a strong network of intercessors! Visit www.jumaaprayers.org to find out how you can effectively pray for Muslims.

Correction: In the last issue of *Intercede* our lead article contained the incorrect statement “Islam teaches that God and Mary had a physical relationship from which their son Isa was born.” This statement actually reflects the misunderstanding that some Muslims have regarding Christian views of the birth of Jesus and the Christian claim that Jesus is the Son of God.





Muslim World News

Turkey

Historic property seizures reversed

Turkey made a historic U-turn in state policy, issuing an official decree inviting Christian and Jewish communities to reclaim long-confiscated properties. The decree comes 75 years after the Turkish government seized land and buildings owned by its Greek, Armenian, Syriac and Jewish citizens.

Acknowledging injustices inflicted on those of different faith groups, Prime Minister Erdogan vowed, "Those days are over. In our country, no citizen is superior to another." In a deliberate clarification the next day, Foreign Minister Davutoglu emphasized that the decision was "not a gesture toward minorities, but the return of the rights of legally equal citizens."

The decree is a significant step toward eliminating decades of unfair practices imposed by Turkey against its non-Muslim citizens. The return of these extensive properties has been a key demand of the European Union (EU), to which Turkey is applying for full membership. — *Compass*

Tanzania

Climate of fear in Zanzibar

On Tanzania's semi-autonomous island of Zanzibar, Christians live in a climate of fear. It's a place where a young man has fled the island to escape death threats from his Muslim family. Yusuf Abdalla, 23, fled to Moshi, mainland Tanzania, after his family threatened to kill him for converting to Christianity in 2010 after hearing the gospel on the radio.

The beating he then received from family members left him with injuries to his head, hand and torso, as well as a serious mouth wound and substantial loss of blood, said an area pastor who requested anonymity.

As soon as he had recovered enough to leave, Abdalla found refuge on the premises of the pastor's church. Within two months, reports had reached Abdalla's family that he was staying at the pastor's house, and his family soon threatened to kill him, the pastor said.

The church arranged for his escape to Moshi. — *Compass*

Somalia

Christian convert beheaded

A kidnapped Christian convert from Islam was found decapitated on the outskirts of Hudur City in Bakool region, in Somalia. Juma Nuradin Kamil was forced into a car by three suspected Islamic extremists from the al Shabaab terrorist group. Kamil's body was found dumped on a street.

The kidnapping and subsequent manner of murder suggests that al Shabaab militants had been monitoring Kamil. Muslim extremists from al Shabaab, a militant group with ties to al Qaeda, have vowed to rid Somalia of Christianity, and they control the area stretching some 400 kilometers from Mogadishu.

A Christian said the area community initially did not bury the body out of fear of al Shabaab extremists seeing them associated with a newly discovered convert to Christianity. "The community feared burying him, and his body lay in the open for two days before unknown people buried him secretly," he said. — *Compass*

What is

Continued



acts and states of the soul it is the most difficult to define — it escapes definition and is broader, higher, deeper than all human language. “Prayer,” says a mystic of the sixteenth century, “is to ask not what we wish of God, but what God wishes of us.”

Two years before his death, Coleridge said to his son-in-law: “To pray, to pray as God would have us — this is what at times makes me turn cold to my soul. Believe me, to pray with all your heart and strength, with the reason and

the will, to believe vividly that God will listen to your voice through Christ, and verily do the thing He pleaseth there-upon — this is the last, the greatest achievement of the Christian’s warfare upon earth.”

According to the deep thinker and earnest disciple, the act of prayer enlists all the powers of the soul and requires the whole panoply of God. Did not Paul teach the same truth when he made prayer the climax of the great passage on the weapons of our spiritual warfare? (Eph. 6:10-18).

What is the essential nature of prayer, what various elements must be included in it and what takes place in the soul when man prays to God? Undoubtedly, prayer includes more than petition; yet petition is at the heart of prayer. “Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you” — that was one of Christ’s first lessons in the school of prayer.

There are many definitions of prayer. James Montgomery crowds fourteen into a single hymn of six stanzas. Prayer is sincere desire; prayer is often inaudible; prayer is hidden fire; prayer is a sigh, a tear; prayer is the upward glance to God; prayer is simple as the lisp of a



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child; prayer is sublime as God's majesty; it is the cry of the prodigal, the breath of the soul, the mountain-air that invigorates, the watchword at death, the key to heaven and the pathway of our Saviour. To meditate on these definitions alone would lead us into all the wealth of the Scriptures on prayer.

In the sixty-fourth chapter of Isaiah (one of the five great chapters on prayer in the Bible) we have a definition of prayer that surpasses all others in its boldness, simplicity and psychological accuracy. After saying that "men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen ... what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him," the Prophet confesses his own sins and those of his people. "Our righteousnesses," he says, "are as filthy rags." Then follows Isaiah's definition of prayer in the seventh verse: "There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee." It is a bold definition. Literally (in the Hebrew text) he says that prayer means to rouse oneself out of sleep and seize hold of Jehovah. Of course, it is not a carnal touch like that of the heathen who embrace their idols or beat them to obtain their answers. Yet we have here the pathos of a suppliant who is in deadly earnest; the arms, the hands, the very fingers of the soul reaching out to lay hold of God; man's personal, spiritual appropriation of deity!

No wonder Paul calls Isaiah very bold! The human soul is poor and needy — yet can take hold of the infinite and eternal Spirit.

"Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit may meet. Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

This is the psychology of prayer — the outreach, the communion and union of the whole soul with God as revealed in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the ladder of Jacob by which we climb to God. Anything less than this is not real Christian prayer. Prayer is not only "the highest exercise of the human intellect"; but it is also the highest exercise of the affections, the will, the memory, the imagination and the conscience. All the powers of the human soul find an adequate ethical field of action only in prayer. The person who never prays is literally godless. He who does pray is godly in proportion to his inner prayer-life.

First of all, we must take hold of God with our

thoughts. The things which the angels desire to look into we may contemplate on our knees. "Wherefore," as Peter tells us, we must "gird up the loins of our mind," and on our knees study to know God with all our mind; not nature, which is His garment; nor man only, although made in His image; nor the saints who are only His servants; but God Himself. By the exercise of our intellects, illuminated by His Spirit, we must strive to understand His being and attributes; to adore Him for our creation and preservation and daily providence. This is what David said, for example, in the one hundred fourth Psalm: "O God, Thou art very great, Thou art clothed with honour and majesty."



Many chapters in the Book of Job and many of the nature Psalms consist almost entirely of this intellectual adoration of God. Our mind also takes hold of God when we remember His goodness. Thanksgiving is the exercise of our memory in the presence of the source of all blessings. Our imaginations are kindled when we contemplate the marvels of creation, the ocean of the fulness of His love, the firmament of His glory, and the exceeding greatness of His power. When we think of these things we shall regain the lost art of meditation. "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches." Lean souls may be restored to health and vigor by the exercise of this lost art. How little time we really give to this element in prayer!

The psychology of prayer also includes taking hold of God with our emotions, our passions and our deepest feelings. We find them all in the prayers of David — awe, fear,

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sorrow, joy, love, hatred, jealousy, passion. All these emotions exercised in the right way find their place in secret prayer. Here they need not be stifled. The only cure for hypocrisy is to lay hold of the source of all sincerity — secret prayers. This is what David meant when he said, “Pour out your heart before Him.” The scum, and the dregs! Paul makes reference in his Epistles once and again to his tears. In his Private Devotions, Bishop Lancelot Andrewes has a remarkable prayer for tears:

“Give tears, O God, give a fountain of waters to my head. Give me the grace of tears. Bedew the dryness of my desert heart. Give me tears such as Thou didst give David of old — or Jeremiah, or Peter, or Magdalene. Give me tears which Thou mayest put into Thy bottle and write into Thy book.”

But prayer is even more than this. It is indeed the highest exercise of the intellect and the noblest use of the emotions, but it is also the largest arena for the use of the will. This power of contrary choice God has given us. It is not merely subjective and submissive, but objective and active.

The will of God is not only a pillow on which we may rest our weary souls, but a power-house to give us strength for service. The will of a Christian in prayer is far-reaching because it is heavenly in its origin and earthly in its potentiality. When Daniel prayed, archangels were set in motion. True prayer sets in motion divine forces (and restrains evil forces) in a way we shall never understand until we stand in the Kingdom of Light.

True prayer will achieve just as much as it costs us. It is the little further that costs — it is the little further that counts. “He went a little further and prayed the same words.” Gethsemane. Gabbatha. Golgotha. The Resurrection morning.

The ministry of intercession is a great battlefield. We need the whole armour of God — for we wrestle in the trenches against all the powers of darkness. On our knees we are kings and priests in God’s universe. Napoleon or Alexander never had such an empire. George Muller and Hudson Taylor were ambassadors plenipotentiary of their King. 

Somalis: Unreached People Group

Ten million Somalis live scattered across eight countries in the northeastern portion of Africa and in the Middle East. Over 2 million live in Ethiopia. The Somalis share a common language, adhere to a common faith (Islam), and share a cultural heritage that is an integral part of their nomadic lifestyle. Unstable governments and internecine warfare have created chaotic conditions in the country of Somalia.

- Pray for warfare to subside; especially so that food might reach those who are starving.
- Pray for the small number of Somali Christians, who are despised by their people.
- Pray that Ethiopian Christians would share God’s love with Somalis in their country.
- Pray that God will reveal Himself to Somalis through dreams and visions.

For further information on Somalis, visit www.joshuaproject.net.



JUMAA PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

*Jumaa Prayer is now on
Facebook. Please join today.*



Friday, November 4, 2011. Please pray

...that proposed sharia legislation would not be passed in Uganda. Laws are being considered that would give sharia courts legal jurisdiction.

...for churches in Algeria. Many churches were ordered to close earlier this year, but have since been allowed to remain open pending necessary authorization. Pray that these believers in Jesus Christ would be able to continue meeting.

...for Christian prisoners held in Eritrea. Their number is estimated to be over 2,000.

Friday, November 11, 2011. Please pray

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

...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 Muslims in the country of Georgia. They number almost 500,000 and have had very little Christian witness since the fall of communism.

Friday, November 18, 2011. Please pray

...for Saudi Arabian nationals who are Christians. The government refuses to acknowledge a single one.

...for Muslims in the 'closed' country of Libya during a time of upheaval and chaos.

...for Muslims in India to have opportunities to hear about the love of Jesus Christ. India is home to 140 million Muslims, the second highest number of any country on earth.

Friday, November 25, 2011. Please pray

...for God's love to reach hundreds of thousands of children in Muslim madrassas (Quranic schools). Each day, these children spend long hours of indoctrination through rote memorization of the Quran, usually reciting the verses in Arabic; a language most will never understand.

...for Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) in Chechnya. Muslim Chechens cannot change their religion publicly.

...for Christian believers in Senegal to be filled with wisdom and the vision to share Christ with friends and neighbors.

***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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Please join today.*



Friday, December 2, 2011. Please pray

...for the 28 million Muslims of Afghanistan. Despite a change in government, prospects appear dim for permanent change regarding religious freedom. Pray for God's protection of MBBs in Afghanistan.

...for Muslims in Egypt. Pray that through the recent change in government, opportunities for Christian witness may arise.

...for Muslims in Mali. Despite a 90 percent Muslim majority, the government does allow conversions to Christianity.

Friday, December 9, 2011. Please pray

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

...for expatriate Christian workers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to gain opportunities to witness about Jesus. Approximately 80 percent of the UAE's population is made up of foreign workers.

...for thousands of Muslims in Latin America. Pray that the Gospel would reach the hearts of so many hungry people.

Friday, December 16, 2011. Please pray

...for Muslims in Central Asia. Pray that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would sweep across this stretch of countries.

...for the tense situation in Muslim areas of the Philippines. The past 40 years of violence have seen thousands of deaths.

...for MBBs across the Islamic world desperately seeking discipleship and fellowship.

Friday, December 23, 2011. Please pray

...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.

...for Muslims in Syria as unrest continues and the potential for major upheaval remains.

...for indigenous Christian pastors across the Muslim world. Many toil under intense danger.

Friday, December 30, 2011. Please pray

...for Muslims in Russia. By itself, Moscow is home to 3 million Muslims, most without official registration.

...for the country of Yemen. It is illegal for Yemenis to become Christians and Yemen remains one of the least evangelized countries in the world.

...for the 4 million Muslims of Thailand to have an opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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

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