

The Gospel for Muslims, in the Hands of Christian Women and Children

By Lynda Hausfeld

Say Hello: *Serving Muslim Women* invites Christian women into Christ-like friendship with Muslim women, and helps to equip them for God-willed relationships (Mt. 28:19-20). We address women specifically because of Islam's gender-related modesty beliefs and practices that segregate women from men. Although we recognize that cross-culturally these modesty practices vary, the most honorable relationships outside of marriage contexts will respect Islam's woman-to-woman, man-to-man friendship boundaries.

This means that the world's 800 million Muslim females (1/10 of the world's population) must depend on Christian women to share Jesus with them. In this very real sense, *the Christian woman becomes the Muslim woman's only hope for heaven!* Our message to women everywhere is that God vests his good news in us, and *we get to share it* with our Muslim neighbors, both near and far, wherever they and we live.

The message is one that Christian women everywhere are receiving! These days both *near* and *far* are as close as our backyards, whether we reside where religious freedoms

abound, or where they don't. In places like Madrid, Munich, Stockholm and Skopje – Cape Town, Auckland, Dearborn and Moscow, where new neighbors are showing up overnight, Christian women are becoming aware that Muslim women need friends who will introduce them to Jesus. In places like Singapore, Sydney and Cyprus, Christian women are learning that Muslim guest-workers – sometimes including the keepers of their homes and caregivers to their children – need friends who will introduce them to Jesus. In places like Havana, Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires Christian women see that female Muslim students, mothers and entrepreneurs need friends who will introduce them to Jesus. In many of the world's 51 Muslim-majority nations, Christian women, often an oppressed minority, are grasping that Muslim women need friends who will introduce them to Jesus.

Scripture affirms that today's unprecedented migrations of peoples toward greater access to the truth of the Gospel, resident in the lives of Christ-followers, is God-ordained. In the words of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles: "From one man [God] made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed

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



Accounts of large numbers of Muslims coming to Christ in some of the most restrictive locations in the Muslim world are becoming more and more common. Amazing stories tell of the supernatural ways God is using to draw Muslims to the cross, including dreams, visions and other miraculous encounters with Christ. At the same time, these new believers are being tested for their faith, almost inevitably facing various kinds of persecution. Should these movements to Christ among Muslims surprise us? And what is all this teaching us about Christ and his kingdom?

As I was dwelling on these questions, I turned to Matthew 16:13-20 and noted the first confession in the gospels of Jesus as the Christ, as well as the first mention of the “keys of the kingdom”. This passage focuses on the importance of the missionary confession – who Jesus is – and the building of his kingdom, even among the least-reached Muslim peoples of today.

“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” (Matt. 16:18-19)

Three key points can be drawn from this passage about the nature of what God is doing in these days among movements of Muslims to Christ. First, I see the sovereignty of God in what is taking place. Two times in this passage Jesus states “I will”. Today Christ is sovereignly stirring hearts in Muslim harvest fields – and as a result his kingdom is being built. Yes, “the harvest is plentiful” while “the laborers are few” (Matt. 9:37), but we are reminded to go forth as “laborers together with God” (I Cor. 3:9). We must be obedient to go and proclaim the good news, recog-

nizing that Christ is not willing that any should perish. We trust his sovereignty!

Second, I see the Christocentric nature of our message and task in Muslim harvest fields. In the preceding passage, Jesus asked the disciples “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” Many answers were offered, but Jesus narrowed the question and asked “Who do you say that I am?” The centrality of Christ for the Christian worker and his task is crucial. The settled fact must be “You are the Christ.”

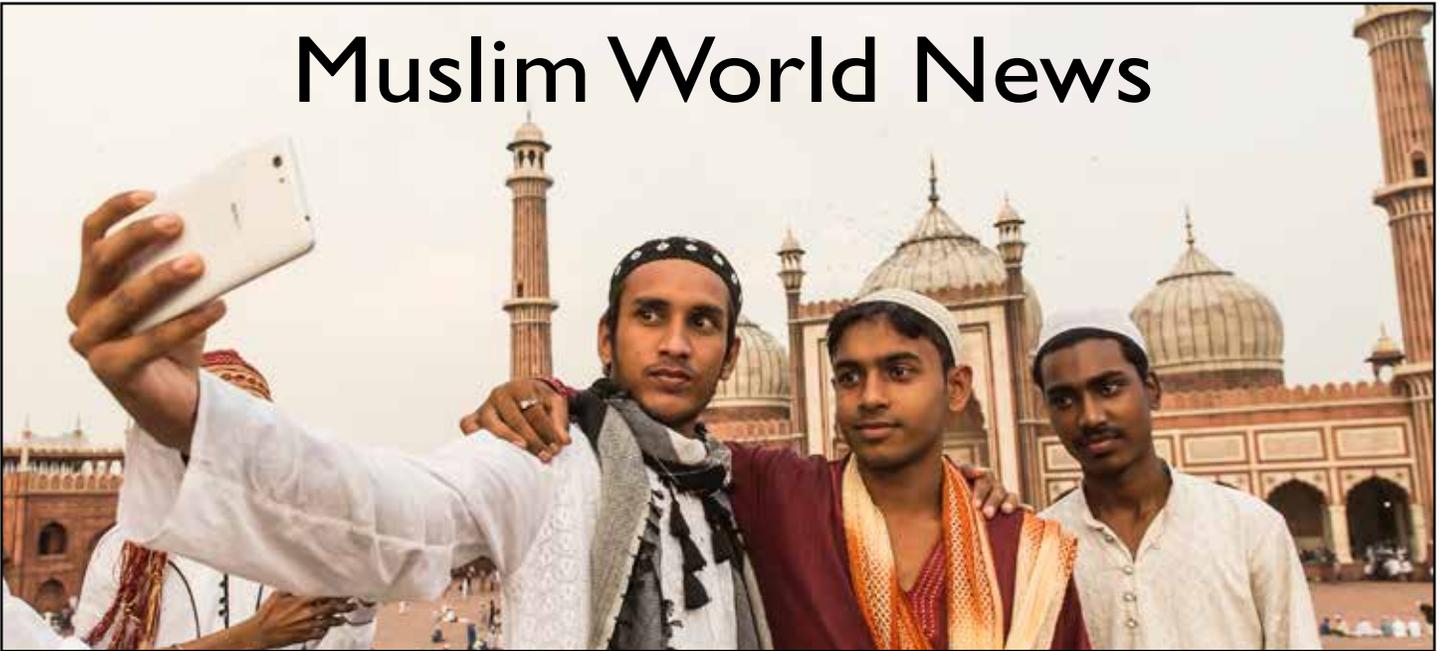
We must preach Christ only in his uniqueness and sufficiency for the sinfulness of man. It is through the “foolishness” of preaching (the setting forth of the truth about Christ) that the sinner is converted. It is not clever words that reveal this truth to the Muslim, but “the Father who is in heaven.” We must point people to Christ – and we do that by preaching a Christocentric message.

Finally, we see the provision and protection of the Savior in movements of Muslims to Christ. Yes, persecution among new followers of Christ in Muslim contexts is often severe, but the protection of Christ is also evident. Christ states in Matthew 16 that “the gates of Hades will not overpower” his church. Satan attacks, but Christ’s church will not be overpowered. This is not only a promise, but a statement of fact. For the protection of his church Christ has provided a two-fold provision: the authority of his word and the promise of his presence.

These are days of great advances of Christ’s kingdom in Muslim lands. The way forward requires renewed commitment to intercessory prayer. We would ask that you pray with us at Global Initiative as we pursue Christ’s mission to build his church. Our clear mission and conviction is that “every Muslim must know the truth about Jesus Christ”.



Muslim World News



Writer Killed for Facebook Blasphemy

Jordan

A Jordanian writer charged with offending Islam after sharing a satirical cartoon on his Facebook page has been killed. Nahid Hattar was hit by three bullets outside the court in the capital, Amman, where he was standing trial, the *BBC* reported. The cartoon shows Allah catering for the whims of a man joined by two black-eyed girls in bed. The man, who has a thick, unruly beard, asks Allah for more treats in “paradise”.

It seems to draw on the concept of “houris”, or black-eyed virgins, promised in the Islamic tradition among the rewards given by Allah to the “pious” (Suras 52:17-24, 55:54-74, 56:10-24).

Jordan, a country in the anti-Islamic State alliance, had filed the case against Hattar for offending Islam, through what media reports described as an anti-IS cartoon. The country’s highest official religious fatwa authority criticised Hattar for what it said was an “insult to the Divine Entity, Islam and religious symbols”.

Hattar, born into Jordan’s small Christian minority but known for his left-wing secular views, had shared the cartoon on his Facebook page, prompting outrage in the predominantly Muslim country.

Hattar was outside the Palace of Justice courthouse on Sept. 25, having remained in custody for 15 days in August, when a “bearded imam” shot him dead. Family and supporters of the assassinated writer said police did not shoot the attacker, while an ambulance took too much time to arrive. – *World Watch Monitor*

16-year-old Arrested Over Kaaba Blasphemy

Pakistan

A 16-year-old Christian boy has been accused of committing blasphemy by “liking” and sharing a post on Facebook which “defamed and disrespected” the Kaaba in Mecca, the building at the center of Islam’s most sacred mosque.

Most of the Christians in the boy’s village have since fled their homes for fear of an angry backlash against them. On Sept. 18, several police vans raided Nabeel Masih’s house in Dina Nath village – 30 miles southwest of Lahore. There are at least 300 Christian homes in the village.

The complainant, Akhtar Ali, filed this accusation at the nearby Phoolnagar Police Station: “On 18 September, I was with my friends Bakht Khan and Saddam ... We took our friend Waqar’s mobile phone and started seeing pictures of his various friends on Facebook. But when we opened Nabeel Masih’s profile, there was a picture posted in which the Kaaba is defamed and disrespected. Seeing that picture, our religious feelings were hurt.”

In several instances in the past, Christian neighbourhoods in Pakistan have been targeted following blasphemy allegations, resulting in the looting, ransacking and burning of Christian homes. In 2009, more than 100 Christian homes were ransacked and set on fire in Gojra, near Faisalabad, while in March 2013 another 150 Christian homes were set on fire in Lahore’s Joseph Colony. – *World Watch Monitor*

The Gospel for Muslims, in the Hand

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times in history and the boundaries of their lands...so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him" (Acts 17:26-27).

We know that where Muslim women spend eternity hinges upon the loving outreach of Christian women, and in our minds we welcome the new neighbors God gives us. We want to help them find the truth about Jesus. But so often we don't know how.

Akan is a Nigerian Christ-follower who lived childhood and many of her adult years among Muslims in her country. She attended a women's conference where I had just finished sharing *Say Hello's* message – and had invited many women to consider initiating friendships with Muslim women. In the session I assured listeners that the Muslim woman "is more like you than you think," and I told them stories about Christian women whose obedience to step out had initiated friendships with Muslim women who had privately longed for such a thing, but never thought it could happen. "Every conversation starts with *hello*," I reminded them, and I challenged them to try saying hello to the next Muslim woman they saw.

I had not met Akan at this point, so when I noticed from across a hotel lobby that she was headed in my direction, I didn't know what to expect. The drawn, perplexingly intense look on her face made me wonder if something I had said that day had offended her.

And it had. Akan looked straight into my eyes, and declared: "I am from Nigeria. I have lived all my life around Muslims in my city." She paused, as if the words in her mouth were hurting her. Her wide eyes moistened, but they never blinked. It was as if she were looking beyond me into a past that was suddenly full of regret. Her chin quivered and through pursed lips she confessed her lament: "Never once before today did I ever think I could say hello to even one of them." After another pause, Akan pled: "Please teach me how to do this."

Akan's plea is one we have responded to ever since we launched as a component of *Global Initiative: Reaching Muslim Peoples*. We outreach globally to help leaders, university students and seminarians, lay workers, moms and their kids know how to build upon the significance of their friendships with Muslim women.

Currently we are creating an interactive guide for Christ-like friendships with Muslim women, and a companion discovery kit that will help Christian children develop redemptive friendships with their Muslim neighbors. The products, as stand alone or combined, will be versatile in or-



der to accommodate individual and/or group study, and will resource Christian women and kids for ongoing questions they might have as they interact with Muslim friends. We are working to make this an exceptional blessing not only to the church and to Christian women and children who share friendship with Muslims, but to the Muslims these relationships impact, as well. This tool will guide friendships beyond our initial 'hellos' – and suggest ways for individuals and small groups to network with other communities, to inform and grow a movement of women and children who make it their passion to love their Muslim neighbors into a relationship with Jesus.

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The justification for this friendship guide reaches beyond its mission to help Christian women know how to reach their Muslim neighbors. Christian women aren't the designated friends for Muslim women just because Muslim modesty code prevents the mingling of unmarried, unrelated



men and women. The fact is that their friendships with Muslim women make them vessels of hope for all Muslims, and according to biblical premise, the world beyond.

Very importantly, this friendship guide will help Christian women understand how it can be that when they invest in a Muslim woman's life, they get to invest in her family and how their friendships can grow to involve husbands, and others. What a joy it is to see whole families come to faith, because of friendship that begins between a Christian and a Muslim woman. It happens, and will happen more as Christian women courageously engage their Muslim neighbors.

There are other factors that motivate the creation of this outreach tool. They are external, and very sobering.

We should remind ourselves that Islam tragically fails when it comes to accepting and proclaiming the truth about Jesus – that he is the Savior of the world in whose name there is forgiveness of sins. It is also important to know that Islam is the only religion which issues a mandate (*dawa*) that somewhat resembles the Jesus-followers' commission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel." The best defense against the spiritual advance of Islam occurs when Christians who are passionate about Jesus share the Gospel with Muslims.

Dawa is an Arabic word that might be compared to the English word "evangelism." It means "to summon, or invite" – and every good Muslim, man and woman, should be prepared to invite unbelievers into *Islam*, or "submission to Allah". In Akan's home continent of Africa, people groups often became Christians or Muslims based on whether Christian missionaries or Muslims reached them first. We need to take advantage of the opportunity to share the Gospel with Muslims everywhere we and they are neighbors.

In this era of globalization, Islam has intensified its *dawa* strategies. We don't have to look far to recognize Islam's often covert infiltration into politics, media, the marketplace, and school systems. Women and children are certainly targets of Islam's deliberately syncretistic messages meant to put a kinder, gentler face on Islam in the West. Even in all its *dawa* efforts, Islam will always fall short of the truth because it does not recognize the real Lord Jesus Christ, who himself is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is our privilege to introduce Muslim women to this wonderful Jesus.

A brief spotlight on three very mainstream products will illustrate Islam's *dawa* tactics. The first is Houghton Mifflin's undated release of *It's Ramadan, Curious George*, in which the friendly monkey learns about Ramadan (the Muslim fasting month) as if it were just another holiday adventure. He helps his human friend keep his fast, and participates with the children in the mosque community food drive.

In the name of diversity, *Marvel Comics*' newest superhero is Ms. Marvel, featuring Kamala Khan, a teen from Pakistan whose special gifts put her in the crosshairs of con-

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servative faith practice. Her *burkini* (modified swimwear covering) becomes her superhero costume, and her *imam* (religious teacher) an interesting commentator. Interestingly, it's not likely that Ms. Marvel would be allowed on the shelves of bookstores in many Muslim countries.

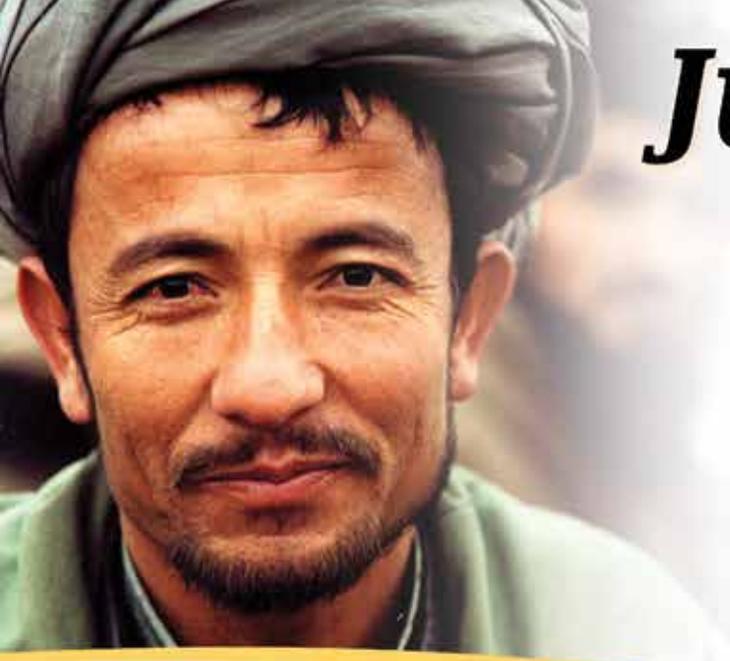
The author of the Ms. Marvel character is Willow Wilson, a convert to Islam who has garnered substantial praise in Western Muslim media as a successful, imitable *Muslimah* (Muslim woman). Yet *Azizah*, the very lovely magazine in which she and other model *Muslimahs* are featured, is little more than an Islamic version of Western women's magazines. In reality, it is only the Lord Jesus Christ who can provide Muslim women with the love, forgiveness and esteem that so many of them long for. At *Say Hello*, we seek to equip Christian women to be the connecting points for their Muslim women friends to Jesus. This is the reason we are so excited about our new training materials.

Islam's expansionist strategies give good reason for one of the most critical components of *Say Hello's* outreach tools: prioritizing strong reliance on the Holy Spirit for our

relationships with Muslim women. It's the fruit of the Spirit in us that draws Muslim women to Jesus, evident in the lives we live before them. And the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8-10), including the ability to discern truth from deceit, equip us for the battle that is not against the flesh and blood of Muslims whom God calls us to love, but against principalities and powers of Satan's dark agenda for humanity at large: eternal lostness. And it is "not by might nor by power, but by (his) Spirit," (Zech. 4:6) that any such battle is won.

Finally, we equip Christian women and children for Christ-like friendships with Muslims because we know that the journey we undertake with a Muslim friend is a mutual one. We draw closer to Jesus together. Every step of the journey, although not always easy, can be a lovely step forward in faith.

We plan to launch our full resource by the fall of 2017. In the meantime, you may freely access a helpful one-week challenge *Say Hello* guide at www.sayhelloinfo.com/resources. And for an introduction to our children's discovery tool, see <https://vimeo.com/110524134>. 



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

Friday, Nov. 4, 2016. Please pray for

...*a new film entitled 'Jesus, Son of God?', designed for Muslim audiences, and now dubbed into various languages of the Muslim world.*

...*the persecuted Yazidis of Iraq.* Yazidi religious practices include elements of Sufi Islam and Zoroastrianism.

...*Christian compassion ministries* to recently arrived Muslim refugees in Greece.

Friday, Nov. 11, 2016. Please pray for

...*discipleship efforts among the 235 Christian converts* from Islam who have been baptized in Finland since the influx of refugees last fall.

...*Shireen (pseudonym),* a Muslim background believer in Christ who has been in an Iranian prison for 3 years.

...*the 90,000 Marsh Arabs* of southern Iraq; 100% Muslim.

Friday, Nov. 18, 2016. Please pray for

...*ministries to the 1.5 million Muslim immigrants in Italy;* 70% are North African.

...*outreach ministries to Muslims in Kenya.* Kenya's population of 45 million includes 3.5 million Muslims.

...*Christian believers in Diyarbakir, Turkey,* as they respond compassionately to Muslims fleeing from the Kobanne area of Syria.

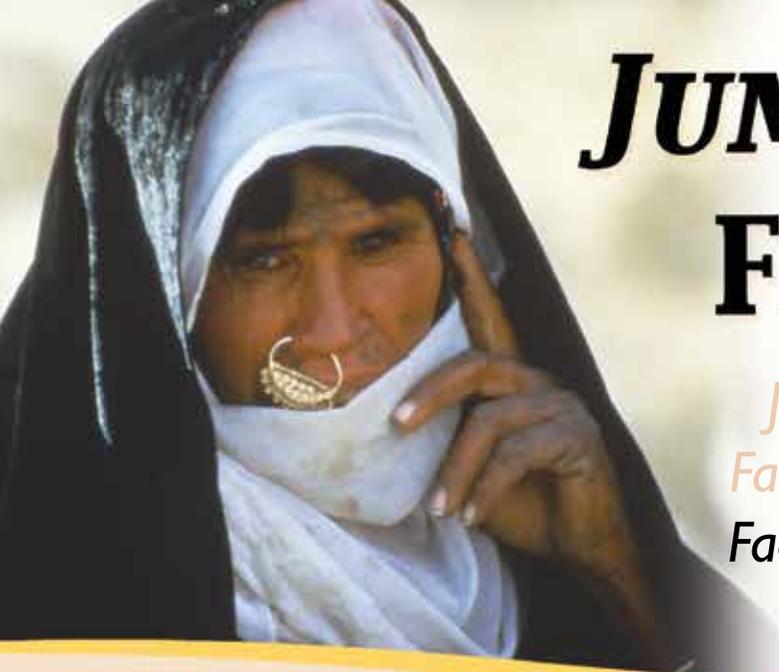
Friday, Nov. 25, 2016. Please pray for

...*the expatriate Christian community in Kuwait,* a country of 3 million, where proselytizing Muslims is forbidden.

...*600,000 Muslim Turks* in the eastern European country of Bulgaria.

...*Filipino Christians* who work in the predominantly Muslim countries of the Arabian Gulf.

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

Friday, Dec. 2, 2016. Please pray for

...British Christians who are sharing Christ with Turkish, Kurdish, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims who have come to their country.
...Christian schoolchildren in Pakistan, who often face discrimination and hostility at government schools.
...the 40,000 Muslims living in South Korea.

Friday, Dec. 9, 2016. Please pray for

...more open doors for ministry among Muslim Unreached People Groups in China, especially the 11 million Uyghurs in Xinjiang Province.
...workers among Muslims who seem to have many additional stresses. Some are forced to leave the field prematurely because of physical or emotional problems.
...the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. 97% of its 49 million people are Muslim.

Friday, Dec. 16, 2016. Please pray for

...spiritually hungry Muslims who feel trapped in Islam because of fear of persecution by governments and families.
...the growing number of Ethiopian Muslims who have become followers of Christ.
...more Christian believers to become involved in sharing Christ with the 1.2 million Muslims of Canada.

Friday, Dec. 23, 2016. Please pray for

...Christian radio broadcasts geared to the needs of Muslim women, many of whom live very secluded lives.
...ministries to Iranian Muslims throughout the continent of Europe.
...Noura (pseudonym), a Libyan Muslim background believer who recently fled to a neighboring country. Her family declared her an apostate worthy of death.

Friday, Dec. 30, 2016. Please pray for

...more open doors for preaching the gospel to over 10 million predominantly Muslim nomadic Fulanis in West Africa.
...the Russian republic of Dagestan. Of its 3 million people, 80% are Muslims.
...outreaches to Muslims by churches in cities across the world with large refugee populations.

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