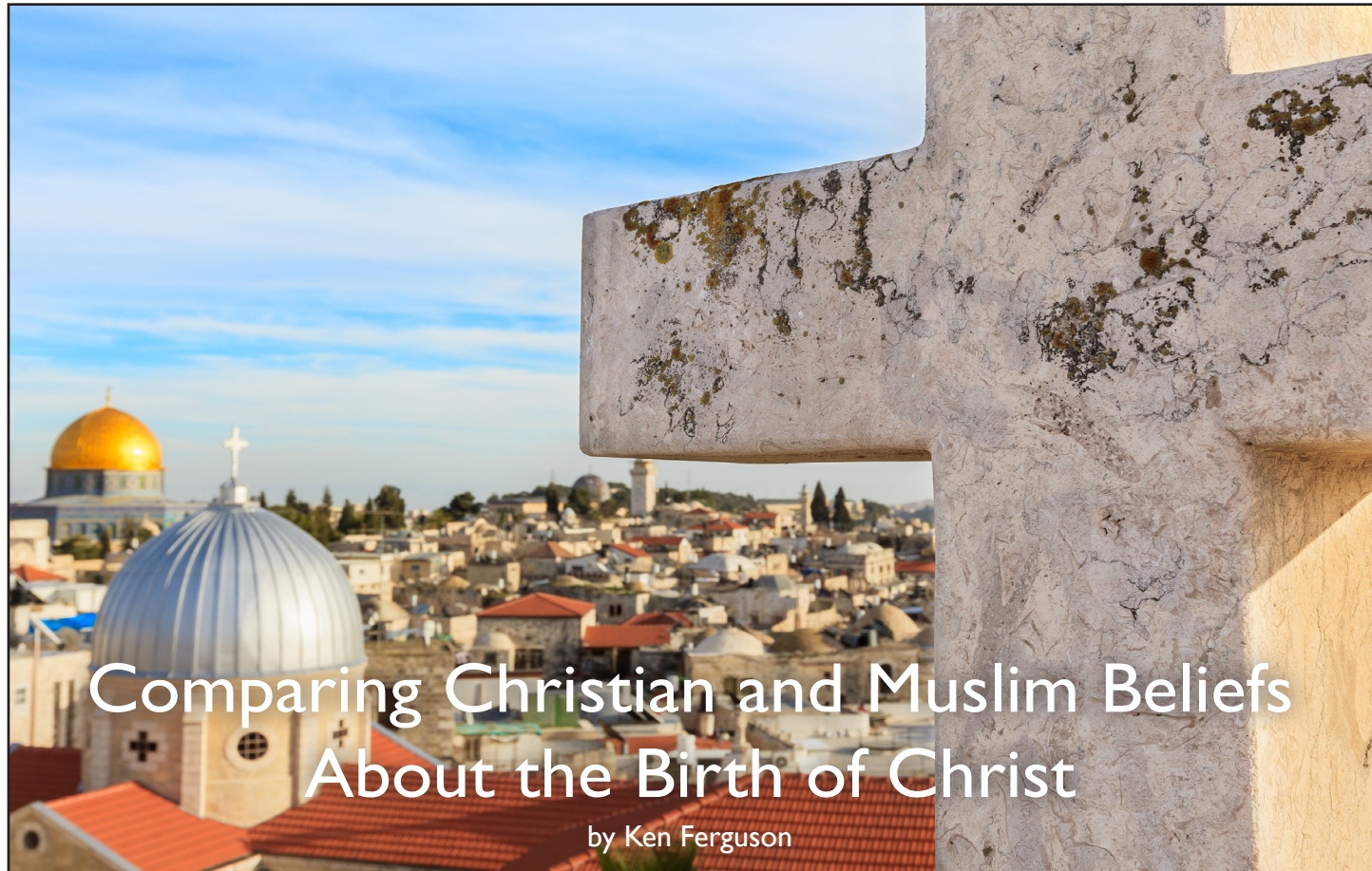


# INTERCEDE

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## Comparing Christian and Muslim Beliefs About the Birth of Christ

by Ken Ferguson

Christians all over the world will soon celebrate Christmas, signifying the Incarnation of the Son of God. It is a time of recognizing the beautiful truth of John 1:14 which says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14, ESV). Some similarities exist between Christian and Muslim beliefs concerning the birth of Christ, but there are also vast differences. In the following paragraphs we will explore the main differences between Christian and Muslim beliefs about the birth of Christ.

### **The Christian View of the Virgin Birth**

Christians believe that the virgin Mary conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit, apart from a human father. An angel of the Lord explained the pregnancy of the virgin to Joseph in the opening verses of the New Testament:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph,

before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 1:18-21, ESV)

In Luke’s account, the angel announces this news to Mary: “The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus’” (Luke 1:30-31). In verses 32 and 33, the angel gives Mary a glimpse into the divine nature, messianic mission, and Kingly reign of the Baby as well as the extent of His kingdom: “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob

*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



As we come to the end of this year, we look back and rejoice that during 2024 God has drawn many Muslims to Christ by His Spirit. We know this ingathering of Muslim souls is not the result of new strategies or cunning craftiness; rather it is a work of God's Spirit. Here are several testimonies from Islamic contexts that are both encouraging and critical:

- Due to the work of the Holy Spirit, believers started a church in a predominately Muslim area of a West African nation. Amid unrest and insecurity in this region, faithful believers held evangelistic services for three days. During the outreach, sick people received miraculous healings—and as a result many Muslims accepted Jesus. Even an *imam* attended and was touched by the gospel. He has now approved a church in the village. This outreach, accompanied by the miraculous hand of God, has established a solid foundation for the gospel to go forth in this area.
- In the same region of West Africa, radical Muslims gave Christians the following four choices: (1) become a Muslim and live peacefully; (2) pay a tax to practice your faith; (3) leave the region; or (4) take up your weapons and fight for your faith.
- In another Muslim-majority country, an Assemblies of God pastor requests the global church to pray intensely for peace to reign in his region. The area faces ongoing persecution and even loss of life by radical Islamists. The pastor states, “God is at work, even if we don’t see it!”
- In a Southeast Asian nation, an angry mob attacked two leaders who are converts from Islam. After they preached in a Muslim village local authorities put them in jail where they await a court hearing. In this area, persecution has helped build the church!
- An Asian church leader shares that “70 Muslims are now attending services, and we just baptized six new converts.” In the next two months, a *Global Initiative* associate trainer will teach seminars across this nation on practical approaches to reaching Muslims.

As we remember Christ's birth, we must remember that Jesus came to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10)! Nearly 2 billion Muslims around our world need the gospel, and it is our task to reach them before it is too late! As always, thanks for your prayer and concerns - and a special thanks for your concentrated prayer during this special time of the year.



# Muslim World News

## Christians Continue to Face Blasphemy Convictions and Violent Attacks

PAKISTAN—While Pakistan celebrates 75 years of independence, the Christian minority continues to face discrimination, harassment, and violence because of their faith. On August 8, a Catholic man was killed and three teenagers injured when two gunmen on motorbikes opened fire in a Christian colony in the town of Mastung, 45 kms south of Quetta, central west Pakistan. The victim, Wilson Masih, was the brother of Hendry Masih, a Christian member of Pakistan's Parliament who was killed by his bodyguard in Quetta in 2014.

On July 4, a 34-year-old Christian bicycle mechanic from the Green Town neighborhood in Lahore in northeast Pakistan was sentenced to death for blasphemy during an argument with a customer, Muhammad Irfan. In another blasphemy case, on June 8, the Lahore High Court upheld the death sentence of two Christian brothers who were found guilty in 2018 of posting blasphemous content on the internet.

The central-western region of the country, bordering Afghanistan, has seen an uptick in violence in recent months caused by separatist groups and Islamist militants. Meanwhile, despite the acquittal from the death penalty of Asia Bibi by the Supreme Court in 2019, the number of blasphemy cases involving Christians has been on the rise, according to the country report by Open Doors. "Blasphemy laws are well-known for being used to settle personal scores, make personal gains, or for satisfying grudges one neighbor may have against another," it said. – *World Watch Monitor*

## Teen ISIS Supporter Admits to Planning "Bloodbath" at Taylor Swift Concert

VIENNA—An Austrian teenager arrested over an alleged plot to strike a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna planned to carry out a suicide attack that would have caused a "bloodbath" and had vowed loyalty to the Islamic State (IS). The 19-year-old man made a full confession, an Austrian official said.

"He swore allegiance to the IS group's leader on the internet and had chemicals, machetes, and technical devices at his home," the official added. The suspect was planning a lethal assault among the estimated 20,000 "Swiftie" fans set to gather outside Vienna's Ernst Happel Stadium, said national intelligence head Omar Hajjawi-Pirchner. Two other Austrian youths aged 17 and 15 were also detained over the reported plot.

"The suspects had very specific and detailed plans...to leave a bloodbath in their wake." Authorities painted a picture of the main suspect having self-radicalized, transforming his appearance, and sharing Islamist propaganda online. He quit his job on July 25, telling people he had "big plans," according to authorities.

Event organizer, Barracuda Music, said it had cancelled Swift's three concerts in Vienna, due to start on Thursday, August 15, for a sold-out 65,000 audience at each event.

U.S. broadcaster, ABC, cited law enforcement and intelligence sources as saying Austrian authorities had received information about the Swift concert threat from U.S. intelligence. – *NDTV.com*

## Prayer Profile – Muslim Unreached People Group

**\*The Alaba in Ethiopia – Population: 429,000 – 97.4% Muslim**

The Alaba people of Ethiopia live on the central highlands of Ethiopia, about 250 miles southwest of the capital of Addis Ababa. The land is flat and dry with savannah type vegetation. The Alaba are primarily farmers, and their main crops are maize and peppers. The Alaba area has always been administered under the Kambaata regional government. Recently, the Alaba have asserted themselves as an independent administrative area.

The lifestyle of the Alabas is very modest. Most of the people in the rural area live in round-shaped, thatch-roofed houses, made of wood and mud. The homes do not include a ceiling, and they only have mud floors. Livestock spend the night in the house together with the people. Most of the people get their drinking water from rivers and ponds by carrying it long distances. More than half of the houses do not have electricity, so they use firewood and tree leaves for cooking. The Alaba administrators express their biggest needs to be schools and clinics for more villages, and wells for villages that are without drinking water. Their very self-confident nature causes them to reject outside influences, and in the rural areas, they are only now starting to allow their children to attend schools.

The Alaba are nearly all Sunni Muslims, with a few Christian believers among them. In recent years, the church has endeavored to plant a church in the area. The New Testament and the "Jesus Film" are available in the Alaba language.

### Prayer Points

- Pray for signs and wonders among the Alabas.
- Pray that Ethiopian Christians will take bolder steps of faith to further reach the Alaba people.
- Pray that the entire Bible will be placed into the Alaba language.
- Pray that Alaba Muslims will access Christian Alaba language radio and TV programs.
- Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will raise up intercessors for the Alaba people.

*\*For further information on the Alaba people, see [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)*

# Comparing Christian and Muslim

forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Obviously astonished, Mary then said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child will be called holy—the Son of God” (1:34-35).

## The Muslim View of the Virgin Birth

The Quran affirms the virgin birth of Jesus (Isa). Chapter 19 of the Quran describes the birth of John the Baptist, the Annunciation of the birth of Jesus by the angel, and the actual birth of Jesus, although the accounts are different than the record provided in the Bible. Muhammad believed in the immaculate conception of Mary, meaning that she was conceived without sin, and that she continued to be sinless (Q. 3:37). Jesus had no human father, but Allah breathed into the womb of the Virgin Mary (Q. 66:12). The Quran describes Jesus as the son of Mary and his birth as “glad tidings” (Q. 3:45). The title “Son of Mary” occurs twenty-three times in the Quran while it occurs only once in the Bible (Mark 6:3). The Quran never mentions Joseph. Muslims view the virgin birth as a miraculous sign of Allah’s power, but they understand Jesus to be the son of Mary and not the Son of Allah.

## The Christian View of the Incarnation

Closely associated with the Christian belief in the Virgin Birth of Jesus is belief in the Incarnation. This doctrine specifies that the Son of God became man, yet he did not cease to be God. God was not turned into man in the same sense that the water was turned into wine in Cana (John 2:1-11). There, the water ceased to be water when it was turned into wine. When Jesus became human, he never lost His deity. That means Jesus is completely God and completely man; He is not half God and half man: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1:1). Christians also affirm that God took on human nature: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14).

When the Prophet Isaiah prophesied the Virgin Birth, he also spoke of the unfathomable mystery of the Incarnation: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). The meaning of Immanuel in the Hebrew language is “God with us.” The New Testament affirms that God has revealed himself fully in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote, “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). He also wrote, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Col. 1:15). Then to underscore this point, Paul adds in verse 19: “For in him all the fullness of God was

pleased to dwell.” Jesus himself said, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Christians joyfully sing Christmas hymns, celebrating the Virgin Birth of the King and proclaiming the truth of the Incarnation:

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord:

Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin’s womb.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with men to appear, Jesus our Immanuel here.



Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King!”

## The Muslim View of the Incarnation

Although Muhammad denied the deity of Jesus, he held a high view of Jesus as a prophet. Islamic scholar Emil Esen posits. “Tradition reports that Muhammad once said that no one could love Jesus more than he did.”<sup>1</sup> The Quran speaks more highly of Jesus than any other prophet except Muhammad, showing Jesus to be as close to divine as possible for any mortal. Muslims view Jesus as an example of divine power. They believe he had no human father but was created as Allah breathed His Spirit into the womb of the Virgin Mary, who was without sin. Furthermore, the Quran names

# Beliefs About the Birth of Christ

Jesus as “Christ” and says that He will be “held in honour in this world and in the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to Allah” (Q. 3:45).

Although the Quran recognizes the uniqueness of Jesus, Islam stops short of recognizing His divine nature. Muslims reject the idea of the Incarnation because they consider association of the divine nature of Allah with human nature as blasphemy. Jesus was a son of a woman, and was, therefore, a man. Regarding Mary, the Quranic commentator Abdullah Yusuf Ali says, “She never claimed that she was a mother of God, or that her son was God. She was a pious and vir-

a spirit proceeding from Allah. Thus, Muslims reject the Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Son of God.<sup>5</sup> “Believe only in Allah and His Apostles (what they say). Do not say ‘trinity,’ because Allah is one. He is far above having a son” (Q. 4:171).

## The Christian Doctrine of the Son of God as Seen in the Nativity

The biblical narratives regarding the birth of Christ give us valuable information pointing toward the sonship of Jesus. Matthew informs us that “Mary was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit” (1:18-20), and an angel of the Lord announced to Joseph that all of this was from the Holy Spirit. Then the angel told Joseph, “And you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:22). All of this fulfills prophecy concerning his name, Immanuel, which indicates divinity (Matt. 1:22-23). In Matthew 2:11, we find the wise men worshipping him. Luke tells us that Gabriel announced the birth of Christ to Mary (1:26-38). Although a virgin, she will conceive and bear a son, and His name will be Jesus: “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.” He will receive the throne of his father David, reigning over the house of Jacob eternally (Luke 1:30-33). Verse 35 says that he will be holy, and he is the Son of God. In Luke 2:11, the angel identifies Jesus as “a Savior who is Christ the Lord.”

Although John does not record the birth narrative, he does shed light on what happened. Jesus did not become the “Son of God” because of the Virgin Birth or the Incarnation. Christians believe that He is eternally the Son of God: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). He was always the second person of the Godhead, or what Christians call the Holy Trinity. Christmas merely celebrates the coming of the Son of God to become a man and live among us, suffer, and die as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. John then repeats the eternal nature of the Word: “He was in the beginning with God (v. 3). John then describes Jesus as creator, life, and the light of men (v. 3-4). He alone gives the right to become the children of God to those who receive him and who believe in his name (v. 12). And then John declares the Incarnation: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (v. 14).

## The Muslim View of the Christian Doctrine of the Son of God from the Nativity

Muslims insist that Christians believe Allah fathered a child by natural means with Mary. The idea that Allah had



tuous woman.”<sup>2</sup> Badru J. Kateregga says that belief in the Incarnation denies the transcendence of God.<sup>3</sup> Muslims understand that as Adam was created by Allah without a mother, Jesus was created without a father, thus denying Christ’s preexistence and preserving the doctrine of transcendence or distance. Transcendence teaches that Allah is separate from man. The Quran teaches that Allah has no associates: “He begetteth not, nor is he begotten” (Q. 112:3). Yusuf Ali comments that this is to negate the Christian idea of the godhead.<sup>4</sup>

Ali says that Jesus is just the son of a woman, a man, implying that he was no more than an apostle, created by Allah’s word. He was not *the* Word (*logos*), as in John 1, but only a word of Allah that was given to Mary; Jesus was

a son in this manner offends Muslims: “It is not befitting to (the majesty of Allah) that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him!” (Q. 19:35). The Arabic word for “son” in verse 35 is *walad*, a word that always refers to a son born biologically. “Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous” (19:89)! Ali gives an idea of the revulsion with which Muslims view the Christian doctrine:

The belief in Allah begetting a son is not a question of words or of speculative thought. It is a stupendous blasphemy against Allah. It lowers Allah to the level of an animal. If combined with the doctrine of vicarious atonement, it amounts to a negation of Allah’s justice and man’s personal responsibility. It is destructive of all moral and spiritual order, and is condemned in the strongest possible terms.<sup>6</sup>

Christians reject this portrayal of the nativity and view the accusation as reprehensible.

The possibility exists that Muhammad did not originally deny Jesus as the Son of God. On one occasion, Jaafar, Muhammad’s cousin and one of the exiled followers in Christian Abyssinia, read the first part of Surah 19 to a group of Christians. The first part of the chapter relates the story of the birth of John the Baptist and the miraculous birth of Jesus. As previously shown, the latter part of chapter 19 denies Jesus as the Son of Allah. Perhaps Jaafar refrained from quoting the latter section for fear of offending the Christians, but some scholars offer another possibility. They suggest that Muhammad or someone else later added verses to some chapters of the Quran because of the growing antagonism toward Christians who had rejected Muhammad’s message. Chapter 19 of the Quran may serve as an example: “The remainder of the Surah has a different rhythm, style and rhyme and is more polemical in tone, and must have been added at a later date.”<sup>7</sup>

Early Muslims collected oral traditions, classified them,

and wrote them down. These stories, known as *Hadith*, record the sayings and deeds of Muhammad. *Hadith* means “that which is spoken,” and they reveal how Muhammad interpreted the Quran. There are six major collections of *Hadith*, and Muslims regard Al-Bukhari’s collection as the most reliable. Interestingly, Al-Bukhari says little about Jesus.

Some collections of *Hadith* address the sin of *shirk*, which is the association of anyone or anything with Allah. *Shirk* is the most severe kind of blasphemy and the most serious sin. “Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, ‘Whoever dies while still worshipping anything besides Allah as equal with Allah, will enter Hell (Fire).’”<sup>8</sup> Knowing that Christians ascribe deity to Jesus and view him as the Son of God, Muslims make every effort to avoid blasphemy, and they consider Christians to be polytheists.

### Concluding Thoughts

For Muslims, Christmas is merely the virgin birth of a holy prophet and nothing more; no celebration, no special emphasis, and certainly no recognition of or reference to his Sonship. Oddly enough, during the Christmas season, some nominal Muslims now erect a “tree” at their business establishments – but only as a means for commerce. But for Christians, Christmas is the cornerstone of all Christian doctrine—the marvelous truth of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Throughout the world, 2.3 billion Christians from dozens of different cultures will soon joyfully celebrate the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The popular Christmas song, written by Mark Lowry, announces who the Christ Child really is by posing these rhetorical questions to Mary:

Mary, did you know that your baby boy was Lord of all creation?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day rule the nations?

Did you know that your baby boy is heaven’s perfect Lamb?

This sleeping child you’re holding is the Great I Am.

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### Endnotes:

1. Emil Esen, *Mecca the Blessed, Medina the Radiant* (London: Elek, 1963; quoted in Walker, Benjamin, *Foundations of Islam: The Making of a World Faith*. London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1998; reprint, New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 1999), 198.
2. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, trans. *The Meaning of the Holy Quran* (The Islamic Foundation, 2016), 272.
3. Badru J. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 131-32.
4. Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*, 1806.
5. *Ibid.*, 234.
6. *Ibid.*, 762.
7. John Bagot Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979, quoted in Walker, Benjamin, *Foundations of Islam: The Making of a World Faith*. London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1998; reprint, New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 1999), 109-10.
8. Phil Parshall, *Understanding Muslim Teachings and Traditions: A Guide for Christians*. [Previously published as *Inside the Community: Understanding Muslims through Their Traditions*, 1994] (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002), 160.



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### **Friday, November 1, 2024. Please pray for**

...*the resolution of the crisis in Israel, Gaza, and Palestine.* Pray for the victims of war and terrorism—all in need of emergency aid as well as physical, spiritual, and emotional healing.

...*Ayyub, in Muslim-dominated Kashmir.* For years, Ayyub was a Wahhabi Muslim scholar. After reading a Bible, he became a fervent Christian, and today he works to distribute Bibles in Kashmir. He says, “Sometimes the physical attacks hurt, but the Spirit of God always encourages me.”

...*Matias Wayit in Nigeria.* Recently, Muslim Fulani extremists killed his father, a pastor. Matias says, “I am ready to preach the gospel and, if necessary, to die like my father.”

### **Friday, November 8, 2024. Please pray for**

...*believers in Afghanistan.* The Afghan church remains mostly isolated from the global Body of Christ. Pastor Hamid says, “Yes, we are severely restricted, but our house churches are full.”

...*safe havens for displaced Christians in Iraq.* After three years of displacement from their home near Erbil, the family of Roua al-Matli returned to find their house destroyed. A local church helped to rebuild their home, but many other Christians still await a place to live.

...*religious “disharmony” in Malaysia.* Tensions are high after the Mufti of Terengganu stated, “Muslims have the right to enter worship places of other faiths to spread Islam.”

### **Friday, November 15, 2024. Please pray for**

...*courage for Christians in Iran.* Pastor Karami states, “Until the power structure is changed, the future for Christians here remains bleak—even with a new president. Pray for us.”

...*protection for churches in Indonesia.* On July 31, Indonesia’s counter-terrorism squad arrested a Muslim radical who planned to detonate bombs at Christian places of worship in Malang.

...*the church in Diyarbakir, Türkiye.* Founded in 2019, the church has a congregation of 100 people. After receiving multiple requests from the church to build a worship center, Turkish authorities still refuse permission.

### **Friday, November 22, 2024. Please pray for**

...*witnessing opportunities for the approximately 1 million Christians* who work as expatriates in Saudi Arabia. Of Saudi’s population of 37 million, 92% are Muslims.

...*Pastor Saliboko in Uganda.* Saliboko was an *imam* at two mosques and actively participated in *jihad* activities. Upon hearing the gospel preached at the funeral of a relative, he surrendered to Christ. He says, “I could not live that way any longer. I chose to follow Jesus, and I will.”

...*Pastor Abdul in Tunisia.* Abdul left Islam and placed his faith in Christ after hearing the gospel on satellite TV. Since the time he started meetings in his home, neighbors have constantly created resistance.

### **Friday, November 29, 2024. Please pray for**

...*evangelism plans in the country of Côte d’Ivoire.* They plan to reach the tens of thousands of Lebanese people, most of them Muslims, who live in this country.

...*wisdom for the leader of a house cell group ministry* in the Middle East. He says, “We continue to produce Bibles in our underground printing houses. Since the beginning of 2024, many Muslims in our house meetings have been delivered through studying the Scripture.”

...*Christians in Dagestan* who are attempting to witness to their Muslim neighbors. Dagestan is a Muslim-majority Russian republic. Of Dagestan’s population of 3 million, 95% are Muslim.



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**Friday, December 6, 2024. Please pray for**

*...peace in the country of Burkina Faso.* Islamic extremist groups control between 50% and 60% of the country's territory. Of Burkina's population of 24 million, 55% are Muslim.

*...Christian converts from Islam in Muslim-majority Tunisia.* Some are rejected and ostracized by family and friends. A leader says, "We are sharing the gospel as much as possible."

*...courage and protection for Christians in Pakistan.* Muslims attacked several Christian communities in Jaranwala, Punjab, burning 26 churches and the homes of 200 Christian families.

**Friday, December 13, 2024. Please pray for**

*...churches to be re-opened in Algeria.* The Muslim government has closed more than 40 churches since 2017. Of Algeria's population of 46 million, 97% are Muslim.

*...wisdom for an evangelical church in New Zealand* that has taken humanitarian responsibility for a mother and two children from Afghanistan, and a Muslim couple from Iran.

*...peace and stability for Lebanon.* Severe inflation is running at more than 50% and has led to shortages of food and medicine. Of Lebanon's population of 5 million, 59% are Muslim.

**Friday, December 20, 2024. Please pray for**

*...Bible distribution among the 345,000 Muslims in the Yangon Area of Myanmar.* Chesa, a recent convert from Islam, says, "I am 46 and I had never held a Bible. It is now my treasure."

*...the 120,000 Christian Armenians* who were forced from their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh by the Muslim Azerbaijani government and had to flee to Armenia proper. A year later, most are living in poverty and struggling to find jobs.

*...the new government in Mozambique.* Since 2017, Muslim terrorists have killed at least 6,000 people, mostly Christians. Pray that the new government will deal effectively with this crisis.

**Friday, December 27, 2024. Please pray for**

*...40 church planters in Java, Indonesia.* A leader says: "We rejoice that many Muslims have come to the Lord." Of Java's population of 145 million, 96% are Muslim.

*...the Holy Spirit's strength for Sister Nabam* in the Plateau State of Nigeria. Islamic militants burned her home and killed her husband, leaving her with five children to raise.

*...the family of a 13-year-old Christian* who was beaten and killed by a group of Muslims in a Kyrgyzstan village. Muslims declared that "there should be no Christians in the area."

*\*All personal names used herein are pseudonyms.*

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