

INTERCEDE

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In Honor of a Great Man of God Remembering Don McCurry (1927-2024)

by Fred Farrokh

*Ministry in Pakistan

“By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he was attested to be righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.” (Hebrews 11:4, NASB)

In this issue of *Intercede*, we honor the memory of Rev. Dr. Don McCurry. Like Abel, “though he is dead, he still speaks.”

Don McCurry, a Presbyterian missionary to Muslims, had a profound impact on Global Initiative (GI) and the training offered through its Institutes of Islamic Studies (IIS), including the Summer IIS at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS). His books continue to be “must reads” for those preparing to minister to Muslims. In this article, various Global Initiative team members share their memories.

McCurry—The Consecrated Christian

God blessed Don McCurry with a long life. For perspective, he was born prior to the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression. Incidentally, he went home to be with the Lord on June 21, 2024, the longest day of the year. He had recently celebrated his 75th wedding anniversary with his wife, Mary Jo. The couple was blessed with six children, eighteen grandchildren, and twenty-eight great-grandchildren.

McCurry did not know Christ as a child or grow up in a Christian home. He received Christ while in medical school in January 1951. From that point on, he served the Lord with singleness of purpose. In 1957, the McCurry family set

out for ministry in Pakistan, only a decade after the country gained its independence. Over the next seven decades, McCurry would minister in over 70 countries.

McCurry disciplined and mentored many Muslim-background believers in Christ, including me. I can fondly recall sitting with him in places as diverse as Boston and Costa Rica, chatting about the currents of missions and listening to his sage advice. McCurry also served as the external reader for my doctoral project, providing helpful input. Combing through a 250-page academic document is rarely considered “easy reading,” but McCurry would often do that with an eagle eye and make important recommendations for its improvement.

Intercede editor Jim Bennett shares his recollection of Don McCurry’s consecration to Christ:

Don donated his wonderful library to Global Initiative. One day I was perusing the shelves and pulled out a small 123-page paperback book entitled *The Three-Fold Secret of the Holy Spirit*, by James McConkey, copyright 1897. Don’s name and the words “Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary September 1951 to June 1954” were penned on the inside front cover. Every page has heavily underlined passages that obviously spoke to Don. Titles and subtitles of the chapters include “The Abundant Life,” “Union with Christ,” “The Secret of His Incoming,” “Yielding to Christ,” and “Abiding in Christ.”

On page 82 is a statement entitled “My Consecration,”

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

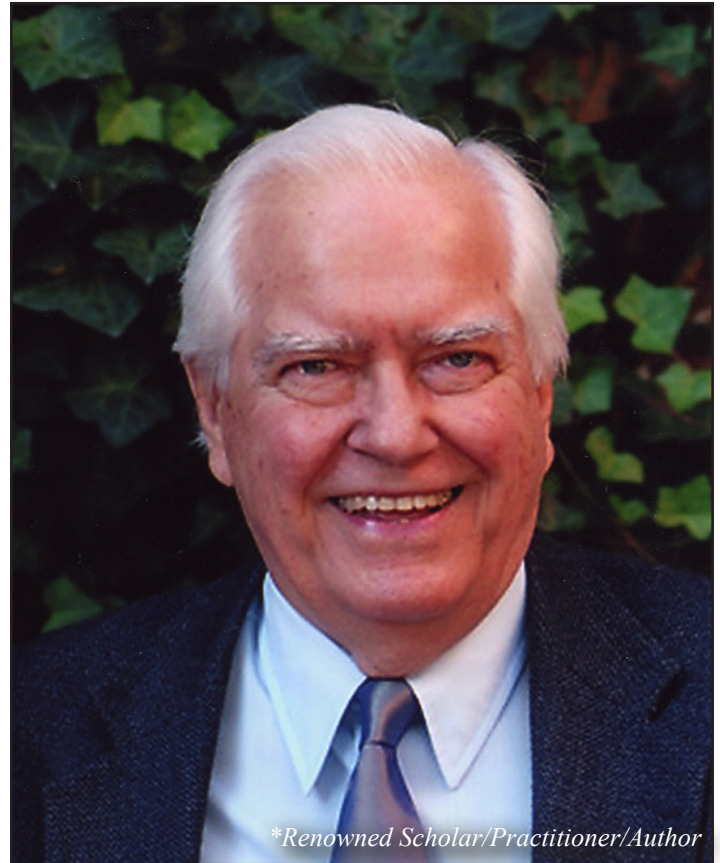
International Director
Global Initiative:
Reaching Muslim Peoples



I just returned from a Congress where missions leaders joined from around the globe. The theme of the three days of meetings was “By All Means Possible,” based on 1 Corinthians 9:12-27. Most sessions concluded with extended times of intercession for the lost and for laborers to be called to the unreached peoples of our world.

One person attending the meeting from Asia spoke of his project to distribute 750,000 tracts to Muslim homes over the Christmas holiday. Another missions leader spoke of the growing network of house churches of Muslim converts. Yet another key leader shared how through social media they establish contacts with Muslims, followed by individual meetings with each seeker. One missionary stated, “The Holy Spirit is walking among the unreached Muslims of our cities, and He is inviting us to walk with Him.”

In this edition of the *Intercede*, we honor Don McCurdy, who passed away last year. Brother Don was a pioneer in helping the church to focus on ministry to Muslims. His partnership with Global Initiative through three decades brought great inspiration to our team. His emphasis on training indigenous workers connected us well in terms of ministry goals. The extraordinary contribution of his library to our Global Initiative collections will ensure that his impact continues to the next generation. Don’s commitment to the Word of God as the cornerstone in ministry to Muslims has reinforced our commitment to the priority of preaching and teaching the Scriptures. His legacy continues in the lives of many workers around the globe. It is a singular honor to join my colleagues in honoring this great man of God.



**Renowned Scholar/Practitioner/Author*

Prayer Profile – Muslim Unreached People Group

***The Antankarana in Madagascar – Population: 221,000 – 80% Muslim**

The Antankarana (literally “people of the rocks”) occupy the northern part of Madagascar. They are cut off from the southern regions of Madagascar by the Tsaratarana mountain range.

The Antankarana were conquered during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the Sakalava, the Merina, and the French. Some believe that the Antankarana language and ethnography reflect the strong Sakalava influence in the area.

The Antankarana are mostly fishermen, although those in the interior raise cattle. At the center of their group identity is the story of their survival in the nineteenth century when they were being exploited and pursued by the Merina. On one occasion, King Tsimiaro I made a commitment that if his people survived the Merina onslaught, the Antankarana would embrace Islam. This vow was honored and today the Muslim religion is evident there, strongly intermingled with traditional Malagasy customs. This syncretistic and mostly nominal practice of Islam has inspired concentrated effort on the part of zealous Muslims to teach and impose traditional doctrinal beliefs.

Prayer Points

- Pray for signs and wonders among the Antankarana.
- Pray that the 5% Christian population will take bolder steps of faith to further reach their own people.
- Pray that the entire Bible will be placed into the Antankarana language.
- Pray that Antankarana Muslims will access Christian radio and TV programs.
- Pray that the Lord will raise up intercessors for the Antankarana people.

**For further information on the Antankarana people, see www.joshuaproject.net*



**Mentor & Friend: Don & Fred Farrokh*

My Consecration.

I believe Jesus Christ is dwelling in me by His spirit because God's Word says so. (II. Cor. xiii. 5)—(I. Cor. vi. 19.)

I believe He is seeking to work out His purpose through me. (Eph. ii. 10)—(John xv. 16.)

I realize that my life must be yielded to Him in order that He may accomplish this purpose. (Rom. vi. 13.)

I hear His call to me, "I beseech you * * * present your body a living sacrifice * * * to God." (Rom. xii. 1.)

I now heed that call.

This day I definitely consecrate my life to the Lord Jesus to trust, obey and serve Him as best I know while life shall last. And I pray that He may enable me henceforth to live such a life of faith, love and devotion to Him down here as I will wish to have lived when I see Him face to face up there.

Date *June 15, 1955* Signed *Don M. McCune, Jr.*

* * * * *

**Don's 1955 Statement of Consecration*



**Mentor & Friend: Don & Mark Hausfeld*

offering the reader the opportunity to read and embrace it. After a list of several consecration Scriptures is the statement below, followed by the date and Don's own signature:

This day I definitely consecrate my life to the Lord Jesus to trust, obey and serve Him as best I know while life shall last. And I pray that He may enable me henceforth to live such a life of faith, love and devotion to Him down here as I will wish to have lived when I see Him face to face up there.

Date: June 15, 1955

Signed: Don M. McCurry, Jr.

This book excerpt captures the essence of Don's life. He truly consecrated himself to the Lord—and he lived it out right up to the time of his homegoing.

McCurry—The Missionary

For many years Don McCurry taught a course at AGTS entitled Folk Islam and Power Encounter. The class was exceedingly popular and well attended. His material on the subject has been translated into Spanish and is used by Latin missionaries serving Muslims.

McCurry did not gain his expertise on folk Islam and power encounter in an ivory tower, but on the dusty roads of Pakistan. He recounts:

Before attending seminary, I had studied to be a medical doctor. I learned that we can diagnose every illness and attempt a scientific solution to any problem.... Nothing prepared me for what I saw in Pakistan. (*Tales that Teach*, p. 65)

He continues by recounting a gospel crusade meeting early in his ministry in Pakistan in which Dr. Akbar Haqq was preaching:

It was in my hometown of Faisalabad that we got a shock. Right in the middle of Dr. Haqq's first message, a young man came screaming down the aisle and then collapsed at the foot of the platform. Not knowing what to do, I picked him up and carried him into a counseling tent and called for a doctor. The doctor found nothing wrong with him.

When Dr. Haqq was free, he came into the mission house, saw the unconscious young man stretched out on a couch and said, "Don, come on over here. This man has a demon, and we are going to cast it out." ... I joined Dr. Haqq. In a stern voice he commanded the demons to come out. The young man became semi-conscious and began to speak with strange voices. One by one, Dr. Haqq commanded each demon to identify himself. Then, in Jesus' name, he commanded each one to leave. Finally, there were no demons left. The man came into his right mind. We carefully explained the Gospel to him and he duly repented and professed Christ as his Lord and Savior. (*Tales that Teach*, p. 66–67)

McCurry concludes: "In the seminary I had attended in the States, I received no instruction in this area" (p. 66).

I recall being in one of Don's AGTS courses on Folk Islam and Power Encounter in which missionaries serving in the Muslim world shared their newfound realization of the spiritual world. Some had experienced inexplicable illnesses, night terrors, spiritual attacks on their children, and

Intercede 4

the sense of being cursed by someone practicing magic. One man shared the feeling of having a heart attack, even though he had no medical evidence to support his physical symptoms.

As McCurry shared his deep knowledge of popular Islam, as well as biblical principles for gaining victory in Christ, one could "see the lightbulb go off" in the minds and hearts of his missionary students. He was able to help them make sense of their fears, traumas, and anxieties. All the while, he assured them that the Holy Spirit would help them overcome because Jesus' blood was more powerful than any evil.

McCurry—The Teacher

One may wonder how a Presbyterian missionary-scholar



might become associated with Pentecostal ministries such as the Assemblies of God. Mark Hausfeld, missionary and former director of Global Initiative, explains how God brought about this connection and how the relationship blossomed, right up to the time God called McCurry home:

As I traveled in Pakistan and the United States encouraging the Body of Christ to engage Muslim peoples with the gospel, people repeatedly shared one name with me: Dr. Don McCurry. The conversation time and again began, "Oh, Don McCurry was with us, and he said..." The more this occurred, the more I felt that the Holy Spirit was compelling me to meet this missionary-statesman and to sit at his feet.

I wrote Don and we set a time to talk on the phone. My heart was warmed at once when Don's clear, deep baritone voice cascaded into my ear. Love, transparency, conviction, and no time for anything other than

Great Man of God

the evangelism and discipleship of Muslim peoples was Don's call and conviction.

At that time, I was the director of the Center for Islamic Studies at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary. Each summer we hold the Institute for Islamic Studies, where four practitioner-scholars teach a graduate course in their expertise in Islam. I thought, "We must have Don McCurry." We did, and Don taught for many years in a row. I purposed in my heart to have Dr. McCurry teach each summer until he no longer could. His content was excellent. His knowledge of Scripture was vast. Students sat and drank the wisdom of a sage. Many guests who found out he was teaching crashed the seminary classroom and would spend the week receiving. He never read from his notes and never projected one



**Visiting the Global Initiative Team*

PowerPoint. The best of the gift of the teacher, by the empowering of the Holy Spirit, was on display to the glory of God.

The day came when Don's age-related health issues did not allow him to teach anymore. He retired, and his health continued to digress. The week before he passed away, I was at his hospice bedside. His body was frail, but oh his spirit! His voice was strong and clear, as was his cognitive clarity. I sat in tears as Don exhorted me in the faith. He quoted Scripture from memory without hesitation. His big grin lit up the room. With his wonderful sense of humor, laughter barreled from his throat. Don was there, just waiting to be with Jesus.

I'm so thankful that from Pakistan to other global contexts, people's lives were transformed by the wake of Dr. Don McCurry's exemplary life and ministry. I also had the honor of swimming in that honored wake.

McCurry—The Mentor

Don McCurry possessed a masterful grasp of the diversity within the Muslim community. This includes Sunni, Shi'ites, Sufis, Ahmadiyya, and Secular Muslims. He had a heart for Muslim men and youth, as well as Muslim women—often the world's most isolated mission field. McCurry also knew the importance of raising up Christian women to reach out to Muslim women.

Say Hello Director Lynda Hausfeld shares the inspiration Don McCurry was to her:

I recall the time my husband, Mark, and I were with Don and Mary Jo in their Colorado home. Don took me to his basement to show me his vast library, where he pointed me to a wall of shelves specifically stacked with books featuring Muslim women as the object and joy of mission.

As my eyes scanned Don's prolific collection of books about women in Islam, he talked about the utterly crucial role Christian women have in evangelism to Muslims. Don wholeheartedly believed that every Christian woman is every Muslim woman's best, if not only, hope for heaven. He was one of Say Hello's earliest encouragers and supporters.

Many of Don's audiences got to hear his hermeneutic comparison of the Samaritan woman's condition to that of Muslim women. Always with escalating passion, he would intentionally re-tell the well-known woman-at-the-well story to help his listeners discover how reachable and valuable Muslim women are to the mission of God. Indeed, what Jesus did for the Samaritan woman, He'll do for Muslim women! Likewise, in the same way that the Samaritan woman's testimony compelled her entire village to acknowledge and follow the Messiah, every Muslim woman's testimony has potential for Kingdom impact, to the glory of God!

In every one of my conversations with Don McCurry, I felt singularly called to the privilege of helping Muslim women know the truth about Jesus. The impetus of his life in mission and the fervent joy and optimism that laced every story he told continue to nurture my personal walk with Jesus in life and ministry.

McCurry—The Scholar

As Mark Hausfeld mentioned, Don McCurry was able to teach for hours from memory. McCurry stewarded God's giftings with a resolve to study. Steve Krstulovich, director of research at Global Initiative, shares about the generous gift of Don McCurry's entire library to GI:

There is so much one could say about this great author, scholar, disciple-maker, and friend, but here are just a few thoughts as a fellow researcher. Don's wonderful donation of his collection containing thousands of books to our Global Initiative library was made a double blessing by his personal notes written in the margins that are often more insightful than the book itself. As an author, his works had a profound impact on encouraging and enlightening Christians on how to share the gospel with Muslims, and he always emphasized memorizing Bible passages ahead of Islamic doctrine! His practical lectures are still among the favorite recordings sought after by students. Don McCurry, a dear, caring, and humble

continued on page 6

man with all the brilliance that the Holy Spirit gave him, blessed our lives, and we look forward to seeing him again someday!

McCurry—The Missiologist

People will long remember Don McCurry for his writings. He kept the love of Christ in front of his readers. His final book is entitled *God's Love for Folk Muslims*. His seminal work, *Healing the Broken Family of Abraham: New Life for Muslims*, reflects the author's desire for healing to flow in broken relationships between God and people, as well as in ruptured relationships between people themselves.

The missiology that informs ministry to Muslims went through roller coaster-type changes during the span of McCurry's career. The post-colonial era witnessed an emphasis on presenting the gospel through new, contextualized methods. These included greater use of the Qur'an as a witnessing tool (such as "the Camel Method") and the experiment of new believers in Christ staying inside Islam (i.e., "Insider Movements"). McCurry issued timely warnings about these experiments, as well as timeless advice for missionaries.

Regarding the new missions initiative on "Staying Inside Islam," McCurry states:

I find two reasons why I cannot agree with model five [Staying Inside Islam]. The first is that by retaining everything that is Islamic, the danger of old forms containing old Islamic meanings is so great, that syncretism is inevitable. The second is that there is too much room for deception in this model. The unconverted Muslims

can perceive these new "believers" as Muslims, while the new "believers" perceive themselves as Christians without the label. (*Healing the Broken Family of Abraham*, p. 338)

Students who have taken his courses can attest to the treasure trove of information he possessed about these subjects. He also coupled empathy with mature perspective.

We will remember Don McCurry as a top-flight scholar with a deep knowledge of the Bible as well as Islam. McCurry's prowess in this area is reflected in his probing study of comparative religions, as seen in his book entitled *The Trail of Blood: Sacrifice in the Quran and the Bible—from Adam to the Throne*. This dual knowledge enabled him to practice, write, and teach effectively on making the gospel understandable in Muslim contexts.

He Loved Jesus and Loved Muslims!

On one occasion, the Pakistani police called Don into the station. One policeman asked him, "What do you think about Muhammad?" He thought, prayed, and then responded kindly and without hesitation: "I have studied Muhammad, and I have studied Jesus. And I love Jesus." Perhaps stunned by the compassion and authority with which he spoke, the police simply nodded and let him go.

Don McCurry leaves behind a loving family as well as thousands of Christians he has trained for ministry to Muslims through his writings and teaching. His life impacted countless Muslims by the Christward direction of his life. *Well done, good and faithful servant!*

Dedicatory Prayer

Global Initiative Library: McCurry Collection July 20, 2021

Our Father in heaven, master of all knowledge, we ask You to accept our gratitude for this unique and select compilation of books and materials. Please shed Your blessing on these marvelous tools of evangelism.

Grant that all who come herein may be enlightened by the spirit of truth and the communion of the Holy Spirit according to John 14:17 which says, "...I will give you the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

Grant that all who gather here for work or study may grow in the knowledge of the only antidote to the darkness of Islam, the God/man Christ Jesus. Enable every missionary, every student, every pastor, and every lay person who uses these tools to leave this sacred place better equipped to set forth the divine person of Jesus as the only answer to the spiritual dilemma of the world's 1.9 billion Muslims.

Please preserve, bless, and anoint these volumes to that end. We offer this prayer to the glory of the Father and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

**Dedicatory Prayer - McCurry Collection at GI Library*



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Friday, January 3, 2025. Please pray for

...*the suffering people of Gaza, Israel, the West Bank, and Lebanon.* Especially pray for the children of the area, who are the innocent victims of war.

...*a new house-based church of Muslim Background Believers* in Kanpur, India. Pastor Samuel reports that Muslim neighbors are “curious to know the reasons for so many changed lives.”

...*the country of Lebanon.* Pastor Rami says, “Both Christians and Muslims live in constant fear of what is to come. In these moments, it is hard to know what to do. Please pray for us.”

Friday, January 10, 2025. Please pray for

...*Christian converts from Islam* in the northwest region of China. Believers there face an elevated level of government surveillance, causing more stress and fear.

...*Pastor Barnabas in Nigeria*—who serves as a “shepherd” in a camp for internally displaced villagers who have been brutally attacked by Muslim Fulani jihadists.

...*Qadri, a 24-year-old convert from Islam in Sudan.* In the midst of famine and war, Qadri rides a motorbike to remote Muslim villages and distributes Arabic Bibles.

Friday, January 17, 2025. Please pray for

...*healing and deliverance for Meryem*, a college student in Algeria. A friend led her to Christ—whereupon Meryem’s mother told her that conversion is a mental illness and is sedating her.

...*Bible distribution projects in Türkiye and Iran.* A leader says, “We called a strategy meeting of key workers in an isolated area of Türkiye—hoping that 20 people would show up. At the very first session, we counted 85 people, several from Iran, who risked so much to be there.”

...*Pastor Fouad in Syria.* He says, “In spite of the insecurity in our region, the church is growing. We are encouraged at the numbers of Muslims who are coming to our services.”

Friday, January 24, 2025. Please pray for

...*the release of Pastor Wang Ye*, an imprisoned Chinese Uyghur and a convert from Islam. Xinjiang officials imprisoned him for “spreading propaganda.”

...*Hawa, a convert from Islam in Somalia.* Her husband divorced her due to her conversion. Hawa runs a “farm” which houses 19 widows (Christians and Muslims) whose husbands have been killed by al-Shabab. Of Somalia’s population of 18 million, 98% are Muslim.

...*Holy Spirit conviction to come upon Muslims* throughout the world—as they observe *Lailat al-Isra & Miraj* on January 27—in commemoration of Muhammad’s ascent to the heavens.

Friday, January 31, 2025. Please pray for

...*new believers in the capital city of a Muslim-majority country* in the Middle East. A recent baptismal service included 16 former Sunni Muslims, including a former imam.

...*Nahid, a former Muslim young lady who was mute.* She attended the baptism of her friend. She says, “During the baptismal service the power of God came upon me, and I began to speak distinctly. My whole family began to cry and praise Jesus. We are all Christians now.”

...*Pastor Soray in Burkina Faso* who was driven out of his village after a third attack by Islamic militants. He says, “God was with us in the good times, and He is with us in these hardships.”



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

Friday, February 7, 2025. Please pray for

...*Abdul, an Afghan refugee and convert from Islam.* Abdul lives in the U.S. and is praying that his wife and children will be able to leave Afghanistan and join him.

...*Mustafa, a Christian from a Muslim background in the Arab Gulf.* At his baptism he said, “As a jihadist, I could have anything I desired. But I do not want the false comforts of Islam. I want to live for Jesus.”

...*outreach ministries to Muslims* in the greater Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas (USA) metro area. The Muslim population exceeds 250,000 individuals from South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

Friday, February 14, 2025. Please pray for

...*the growing numbers of indigenous believers in Konya, Türkiye.* A worker reports that, “in the darkest place in Türkiye the Holy Spirit is shining the light of the gospel. It’s a miracle.”

...*the Holy Spirit to grip the hearts of Muslims* throughout the world—who will celebrate *Lailat al Bara’ah* (The Night of Forgiveness) on February 15—when they especially seek Allah’s blessing and forgiveness.

...*new church planting efforts among Muslims* in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, where a combined 839 million Muslims live, which is 47% of all the world’s Muslims.

Friday, February 21, 2025. Please pray for

...*outreaches to Muslims in Cyprus.* A worker there says, “Cyprus is one of the most fruitful fields to evangelize Muslims. They are coming here from everywhere!”

...*complete healing for Narges in Iran.* As a Muslim, she was forced to marry a Muslim *imam*. Upon her conversion to Christ, she was disowned by her fanatical husband. Narges is now part of a caring house fellowship group in Tehran and is gradually healing.

...*an online Bible study and evangelism site* that has enrolled Muslims from Türkiye, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Cyprus, Syria, Israel, Germany, England, and the United States.

Friday, February 28, 2025. Please pray for

...*protection for the church in Iran.* Reports from the country indicate that the Christian church is thriving, with some experts calling it the fastest growing Christian community in the world.

...*Fatima in Central Asia.* She says, “My conversion began when I received a DVD about Jesus from a friend. There are thousands of girls my age imprisoned in the dark world of Islam. It breaks my heart that they do not know Jesus.”

...*a pastor in eastern Burkina Faso.* He reports, “Our area is almost 100% Islamic. The people who come into our church are almost all former Muslims. And yes, there is great persecution.”

**All personal names used herein are pseudonyms.*

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