

The Roots of Islamic Fundamentalism

Islamic fundamentalism is not of recent origin. Its roots go back further than the current attacks on the West or attempts at a Middle East peace settlement. In this article, we want to look at three categories of factors that caused the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the terrorism it has produced. These factors are historical, dealing with the history from Muhammad's time until today; anthropological, such as social, religious and political factors; and ideological, the ideas of specific, influential Muslims.

Historical Factors

The sources of this movement go back to the foundation and the nature of Islam itself. They are found in the behavior of the founder of Islam—Muhammad. The life of Muhammad

can be divided into two eras which are often called the Meccan and Medinan eras. In Mecca, Muhammad preached much like an Old Testament prophet calling people to live a pious life and warning in a “clear Arabic tongue” of an impending judgment on those who lived unrighteously and worshipped idols.

In 622 A.D., due to opposition, Muhammad fled for his life to the city of Medina, an event called the Hijra. In Medina his character and message seemed to change. While in Medina, he promised paradise to those who would die in battle and use the sword to advance Islam. He told the Muslims, “Kill the unbelievers wherever you find them.” This statement contradicted at least 125 verses given in Mecca that seemed to say the opposite. During his time in Medina, Muhammad functioned





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, Director
Center for
Ministry to Muslims



The primary purpose of *Intercede* is to call the body of Christ to informed intercession regarding the spiritual plight of Muslims—people who have more religion than most, but who have tragically erred in their Christology. We rarely use *Intercede* to call attention to the radical side of Islam. However, in light of current events and in keeping with our desire to inform and enlighten the body of Christ for effective intercession, this issue highlights the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism. The subject is vast, thus our lead article provides information on only one organization that has been a breeding ground for modern Islamic fundamentalism—the Muslim Brotherhood. Although the Muslim Brotherhood was born in Egypt, a number of Islamic fundamentalist groups trace their ideological roots to them.


Some years ago I was called to a federal prison to serve as an interpreter for a well-known Muslim fundamentalist who had been sentenced to life imprisonment for conspiring to blow up the World Trade Towers in New York City. The experience is indelibly etched in my memory. I clearly recall the demonic presence I felt encountering this man for the first time. I received an extraordinary education attempting to understand the mind of a radical fundamentalist.

First, I am convinced that the basic problem is spiritual; this man could quote the entire Qu’ran, but was incapable of speaking the truth. He was guided and blinded by a spiritu-

al power that was beyond himself—it was nothing less than demonic. Second, blind hatred rendered him incapable of objective truth. Reason, logic and common sense had long been abandoned. He was on a mission to destroy, nothing else mattered. Oddly enough, I must say he was not a lunatic; in fact, he was brilliant. He gave up family and country and dedicated himself to Islamic fundamentalism.

I must admit that the above encounter left me bewildered. I had lived for years in a 95% Muslim context in the Middle East. My neighbors were Muslim, many of my children’s friends were Muslims and some of the people who were most willing to help me were Muslims. Most Muslims I had encountered were people who wanted to live normal lives.

We must be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” While the great majority of Muslims would not engage in overt jihad, we cannot hide our heads in the sand and pretend that Muslim fundamentalists are just “religious folk with a bit of a grievance.” We know better. The evidence speaks for itself.

In Ephesians 6:12, the apostle Paul says, “*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*” Let us be filled with the Holy Spirit and continue speaking the truth about Jesus in the uttermost parts of the earth. 



Muslim World News



Bangladesh

According to Christian Freedom International, Kumkum Roy, who is living at a safe house in Dhaka, is concerned that an attempt will be made to kidnap her and take her back to the man who initially abducted and raped her. She fears this time she will be killed. Her situation is all too common in Bangladesh, where women who have converted to Christianity are abducted, raped and forced to marry and reconvert to Islam. Peter Khaleque, a convert to Christianity, is now working as a pastor. He is facing a possible prison sentence on trumped-up charges of sharing his faith with a Muslim driver. He is concerned that if he is sentenced to prison, his unprotected 12-year-old Christian daughter will be abducted, raped and forced to marry and convert to Islam.—*ASSIST News Service*

Egypt

An Egyptian convert to Christianity is being held in a Cairo mental hospital, where supervising doctors have told him he will stay until he recants his faith and returns to Islam. Gaser Mohammed Mahmoud, 30, was committed to the El-Khanka Hospital in early January by his adoptive parents after they learned he had become a Christian two years earlier. The hospital placed Mahmoud under the care of a female physician identified only as Dr. Nevine, whom sources describe as

a “fanatic Muslim.” Since his confinement, Mahmoud has reportedly endured beatings and potentially fatal injections. El-Khanka Hospital earned international notoriety in 1997, when an escaped patient claimed he had bribed his way out of the institution to launch a terrorist attack in Cairo that killed nine Germans.—*Compass*

Iran

An Islamic court in southern Iran acquitted Christian lay pastor Hamid Pourmand on apostasy and proselytizing charges, declaring, “Under sharia (Islamic law), there are no charges against you.” The judge at the May 28 hearing in Bandar-i Bushehr said he was acquitting Pourmand, a former Muslim who converted to Christianity 25 years ago, because he had “done nothing wrong” according to Islamic law. But the lay pastor has been sent back to Tehran’s Evin Prison to finish a three-year prison sentence under appeal before the Supreme Court for a separate conviction, also linked to his religious conversion. Protests have intensified in front of the Iranian Parliament demanding the release of prominent prisoners of conscience jailed with Pourmand at Evin Prison.—*Compass*

Nigeria

Unidentified arsonists set fire to Conquerors Chapel in the city of Kaduna, Nigeria, on April 10, destroy-

ing the sanctuary for the fourth time in five years. The Word of Faith Ministries’ congregation has rebuilt their meeting place after each attack. Rev. Ndubuisi Chiazor was holding an elders meeting at the chapel on the day it was burned. “We all left the church in my car after the meeting,” he said. “Just eight minutes after we departed, I was called on the phone [and told] that the church has been set on fire by some Muslims. The building was completely razed within 40 minutes.” The Rev. Chiazor said the arson attacks began with the introduction of sharia (Islamic) law in Kaduna state in the year 2000.—*Compass*

Saudi Arabia

Five East Africans arrested on April 29 and detained for a month for leading a private Christian service in Riyadh have been released and allowed to return to their jobs. Three weeks after their May 30 release, the five men have been given no indication that they will lose their jobs or be subjected to deportation. The men were interrogated extensively, initially while blindfolded the first seven days, but were not physically harmed. In the past two months, at least three groups of expatriate Christians meeting in Riyadh have been raided and their leaders put under arrest. Saudi Arabia prohibits the public practice and free exercise of any religion other than Islam.—*Compass*

much like an earthly prince and commanded his armies to advance his cause by the sword. Statements such as “Kill the unbelievers wherever you find them” and the accompanying behavior were the beginning of a long thread that wove itself through Islamic history—ultimately providing some of the ideological justification for the violence seen today in Islam, the religion proclaimed to be peaceful. The fundamentalists believe that the Prophet’s final words and actions in Medina are those that apply today.

Because of its early victories on the battlefield, Islam has often had a spirit of triumphalism, believing they are the final and true religion and will always be victorious. That belief began to unravel during the Crusades when “Christians” briefly ruled the Holy Land. Muslims believe “Christian intruders” came with the cross on their shields to kill and pillage.

Social and Political Factors

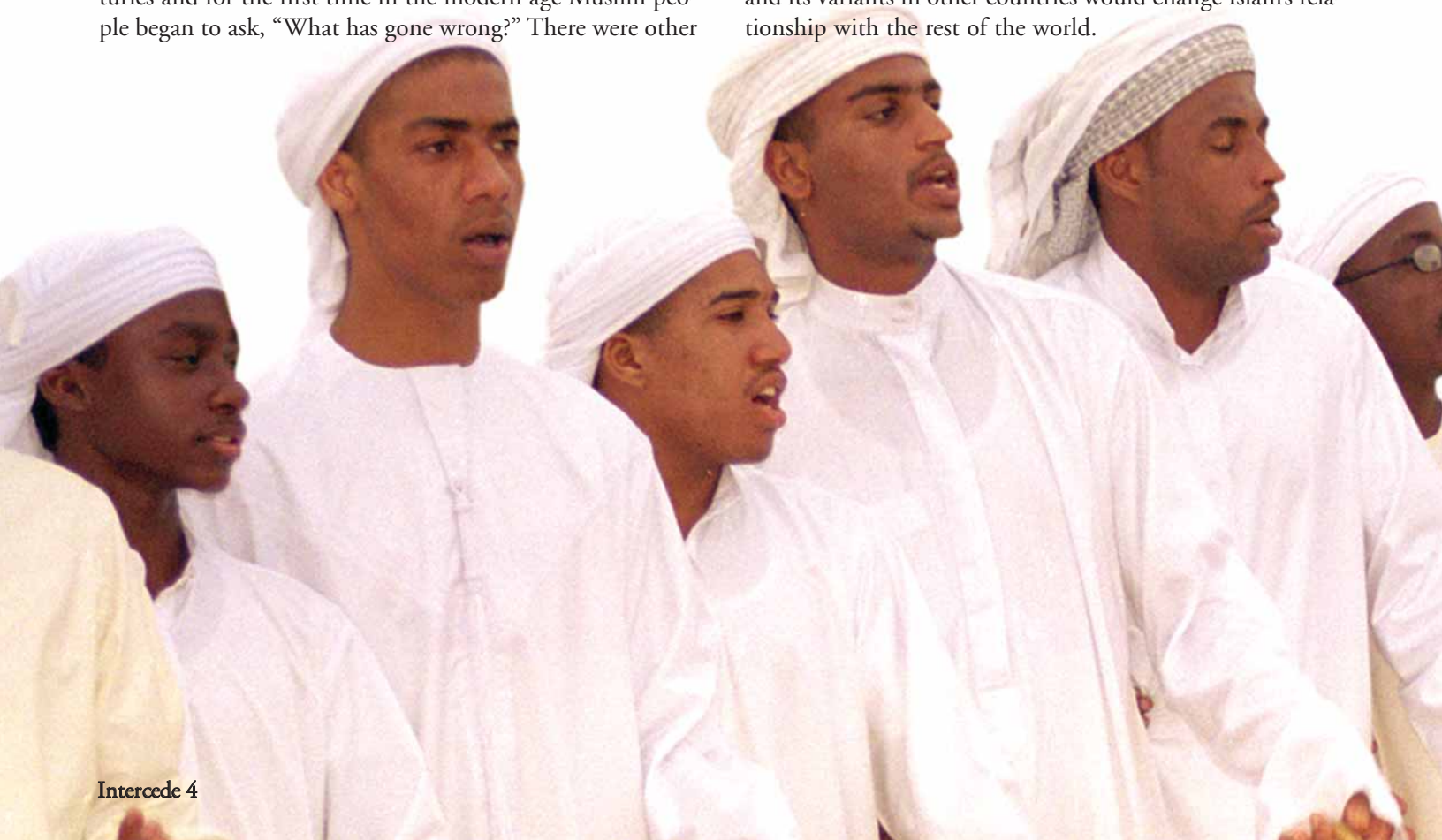
During the 19th century Christians again appeared in the Muslim world. This time they came to colonize. Under the Ottoman Caliphate (line of succession), Islam was no longer powerful enough to keep them out and had become only a minor force on the world stage. Finally, in 1924, the Caliphate was abolished in Turkey and there was no longer a visible leader for the Muslim world. The *umma* or the nation of Islam no longer existed as it had for so many centuries and for the first time in the modern age Muslim people began to ask, “What has gone wrong?” There were other

problems. Thoughtful Muslims were concerned about the social conditions of their people. Even with the increasing oil wealth, many Muslims were still living in poverty and political power was still held by a very few. Finally, with the end of World Wars I and II, most Muslim states became independent. Even so, Muslims found they were again on the losing side. The decline in political power was a powerful blow to Muslim pride.

Many Muslims, especially Arabs in the Middle East, began asking some very searching questions such as, “Why is God not making us triumphant when we deal with non-Muslims as he did in the past?” “Why are we being ruled by Christians when we are Muslims?” “Why is the Muslim world poor economically and unimportant on the world scene?” New voices began answering these questions—voices that would call Muslims to return to the roots of their religion, to return to fundamentalist Islam. They believed if they truly submitted to God, he would again bless them with victory and honor in the world.

Ideological Factors

The 20th century produced a number of Muslim fundamentalist movements—movements that would profoundly change Islam and highlight the divisions within it. The most influential movement, called the Muslim Brotherhood, began in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood and its variants in other countries would change Islam’s relationship with the rest of the world.



ic Fundamentalism

from page 1

To answer the questions Egyptian Muslims were asking, three leaders emerged challenging Muslims to return to the basics of their faith. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded by a young villager named Hasan Al-Banna. He began his career as a school teacher and during the summer traveled the country stirring up support for the movement he founded. He saw Islam as a complete way of life for the modern Muslim. He said Muslims should be like monks, praying at night, but during the day acting like knights, strong and involved in their culture and the world. His desire was to make traditional Islam relevant to the 20th century. His goal was to change society, aligning it with God's order. His method included the use of violence to reach what he felt were God's goals. He was a man of action and charisma to the extent that people were willing to die for the cause. Al-Banna was assassinated, probably by Egyptian government agents. The Brotherhood would become the source from which most terrorist groups would devise their ideology.

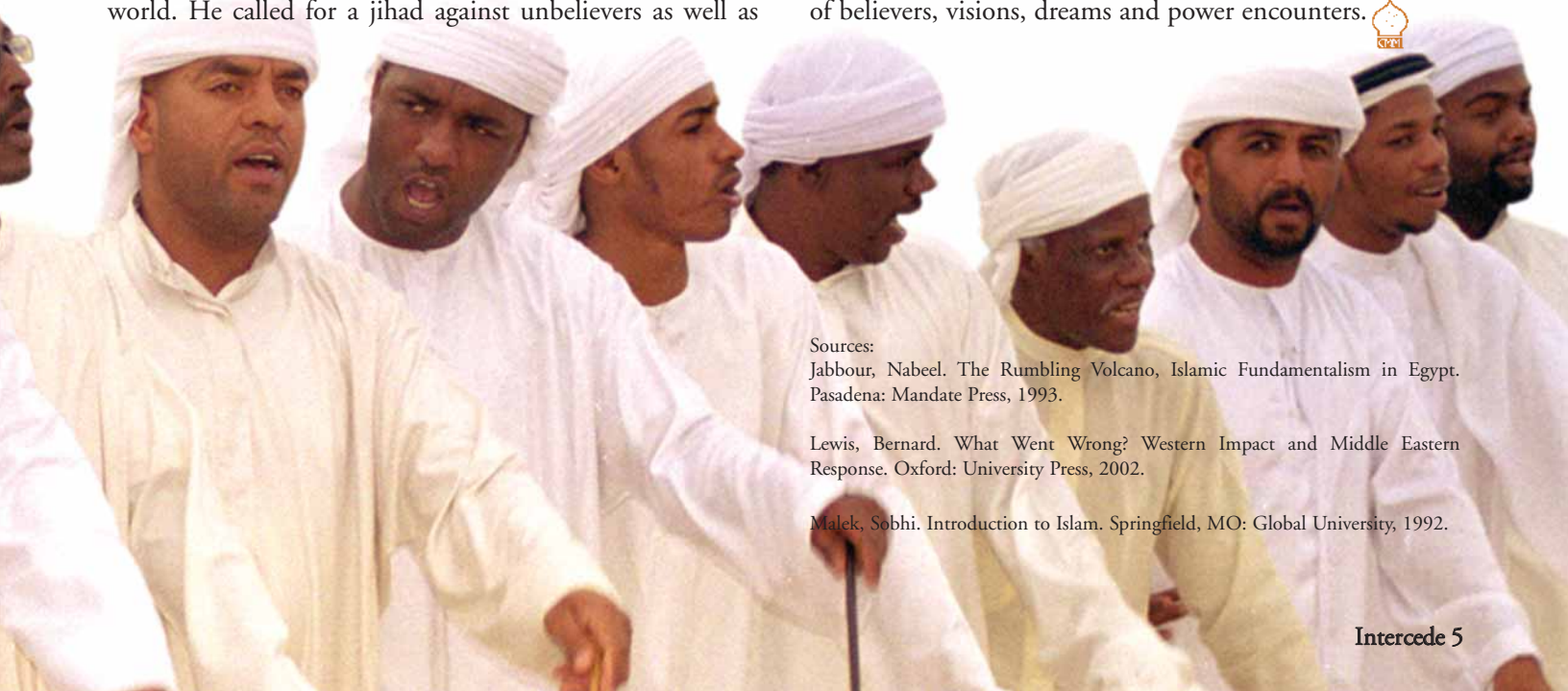
The leader who followed Al-Banna was Sayyid Qutb, also born in Egypt. For many years he lived a secular life and as a young teacher was sent by the Ministry of Education to study the American education system. During the trip he had a religious experience and became a dedicated Muslim. He admired American ingenuity, but he was repulsed by the materialism and lack of spiritual life he found. Returning home, he resigned his position and joined the Brotherhood. At first Qutb was well received by President Gamal Abdal Nasser, but was later imprisoned when the Brotherhood tried to assassinate Nasser. The rest of his life was spent writing in prison. His most famous work "Signposts on the Road," was a highly-motivating book training new disciples in the doctrines of the Brotherhood. He wrote that other philosophies had failed and it was Islam's turn to direct the world. He called for a jihad against unbelievers as well as

nominal Muslims. The jihad was to be directed against the devil and secular rulers who had made themselves gods. Once set free from tyrants, Qutb believed "pure" Islam could be proclaimed and people would follow its teachings. He was finally hanged by Nasser on conspiracy charges.

The third important leader in the Brotherhood movement was Shukri Mustafa. He joined the Brotherhood to push their agenda for the poor. He came into contact with Sayyid Qutb in prison and obtained what he thought was a true Islamic education. However, Mustafa viewed the older Brotherhood leaders as having turned liberal and set out to establish his own group, the Society of Muslims. His ideas can be summarized as follows:

1. First, he urged people to withdraw from society, radicalize and establish a model society under Islam.
2. The present Islamic society would be declared barbaric and its members non-Muslims.
3. He rejected the four orthodox schools of theology citing secularism and limited Qu'ranic interpretation.
4. He rejected overt religious symbols such as Friday prayer and claimed the mosques were run by apostates.

As believers we need to ask, "How should we respond to Islamic fundamentalism?" There are three possibilities. The first and easiest is to ignore it, but this becomes increasingly difficult in our present world. The second choice is that we can fear Islam and its people and withdraw from any attempt to reach them with the gospel. The third and only valid response is to exercise faith. Our faith should cause us to pray fervently for Muslims and engage them with an adequate witness of Jesus Christ. We must exercise faith that Muslims will encounter the living Christ, through the lives of believers, visions, dreams and power encounters.



Sources:
Jabbour, Nabeel. *The Rumbling Volcano, Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt*. Pasadena: Mandate Press, 1993.

Lewis, Bernard. *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. Oxford: University Press, 2002.

Malek, Sobhi. *Introduction to Islam*. Springfield, MO: Global University, 1992.

PHILIPPINES

Population: 85 million

Religions: Christian 93%, Muslim 5%, Traditional 1%

Official Language: Filipino (based on Tagalog)

Peoples: Tagalog 20.5%, Visayan 19%, Ilocano 11.1%,
Hiligaynon 9.3%, Waray-Waray 4.6%

The Republic of the Philippines is a country on an archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, west of the Pacific Ocean and south of the Chinese mainland.

The islands were a Spanish colony until 1898, then were ruled by the United States until 1946. This was followed by martial law to combat communism, a failed one-party republic, coups, guerilla wars and widespread poverty. The presidential election in 1992 was the first democratic change of government in 26 years.

The Philippines has religious freedom, and is Asia's only country with a Catholic majority. With the election of a Protestant president, the Roman Catholic church faces the possible end of its privileged position.

Unreached People Group... Magindanao

Location: Island of Mindanao, Southern Philippines

Population: 1.4 million

Religion: Muslim (Shafiites) 99.9%

Language: Maguindanaon

The Magindanao are one of many groups of "lowland" Filipinos. The name Magindanao, meaning "people of the flood plain," was given to both the people and the island on which they live.

According to legend, the Magindanao were converted to Islam by Sarip Kabungsuwan, a Muslim prince, who claimed to be a direct descendant of the prophet Muhammad. The legend states that he won his converts by a combination of his wisdom, the appeal of his message and certain supernatural powers. This prince married a local woman who is said to have been born miraculously from a stalk of bamboo.

Even though the Magindanao are the largest group of Muslim Filipinos, their belief system is more "folk Islam" than orthodox Islam. Muslim leaders and teachers (imams and panditas) preside over religious life.

The Magindanao are hard to penetrate with the gospel. Some Christian radio and television broadcasts are available in Magindanao, but there have been very few responses to them.

Pray That...

...God will raise up an army of intercessors who will faithfully stand in the gap for the Magindanao.

...the Holy Spirit will prepare the hearts of the people for the gospel.

...God will raise up qualified linguists to translate the Bible into the Maguindanaon language.



JUMAA PRAYER

FELLOWSHIP

***PRAYING FOR MUSLIMS
AROUND THE WORLD!***



Friday, September 2, 2005. Please pray

...for real efforts by Japan's Christians to cross cultural barriers to bring the gospel to the 200,000 Muslim immigrants in Japan.
...for a CMM member who will be teaching a class in the KARIOS training school in Brazil next week.
...for the Institute of Islamic Studies being held in Romania for the next four weeks. Pray that each student will be impacted with a new vision and understanding to reach Muslims with the gospel.

Friday, September 9, 2005. Please pray

...for Eritrean Christians as many are being imprisoned for their faith. Pray that God will open the hearts of the authorities responsible for these hostile circumstances as they see true Christianity being lived out.
...for Christians in Yemen to have wisdom and creativity in reaching their neighbors for Christ.
...for two Americans who were arrested earlier this year for distributing Christian material in Malaysia.

Friday, September 16, 2005. Please pray

...for the Australian pastors who were found guilty of blasphemy against Islam in Australian courts this year. Pray that the overbearing influence of Islam will be held in check in non-Muslim Western nations, such as Canada and the United States.
...for the CMM team members who will be teaching Islamic classes the next four weeks in Kyrgyzstan.
...that the new leadership in Iraq will seek to protect believers who are being attacked by Muslims.

Friday, September 23, 2005. Please pray

...that God will protect Christians in Saudi Arabia and allow them opportunities to share their faith. Several groups of expatriates have been arrested and taken into custody even though the law allows expatriates to worship in their homes.
...that God will intervene in the anti-Christian campaign in Uzbekistan. A final year medical student was expelled from his school after refusing to convert to Islam.
...for the people of Mecca and for the impact of Christian media. Saudi Arabia remains volatile. Some elements push for liberalization; others demand a stricter form of Islam.

Friday, September 30, 2005. Please pray

...that children in Kazakhstan will be free to attend church and Sunday school. They are being forced to fill out a questionnaire stating their religious belief and their church attendance. Pray that the plans of the enemy will be thwarted.
...for a Turkish Bible correspondence course that is available throughout Western Europe. Pray that advertisements about the course will reach inquiring hearts among the 10 million Turks living in this area
...for Chechen believers who often face discrimination, humiliation and oppression.

***I URGE, THEN, FIRST OF ALL THAT REQUESTS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSION AND
THANKSGIVING BE MADE FOR EVERYONE. -1 TIMOTHY 2:1, NIV***



JUMAA PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

**PRAYING FOR MUSLIMS
AROUND THE WORLD!**



Friday, October 7, 2005. Please pray

- ...for the Makassar people of Indonesia. There are no known Christians among this group.
- ...that the Lord will send Christians to Algeria who will live out a true faith among the Berbers and Arabs so that they will see righteousness in daily living.
- ...for work among the Iranian Muslims. An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Iranian believers meet in underground churches.
- ...that Muslims will not be able to establish Islamic law in their community in Ontario, Canada.

Friday, October 14, 2005. Please pray

- ...for the Church in the Arab world, as it struggles with shrinking numbers. Pray that Christians will be encouraged to stay in their homelands and that SAT-7 broadcasts will help Christians to grow in faith.
- ...for the Tajikistan people, most of whom live below the national poverty line. Pray for much wisdom for those who are working with socioeconomic projects.
- ...for Christian university students to reach out in friendship to Muslim students on campus. May their expressions of love open many opportunities for witness.

Friday, October 21, 2005. Please pray

- ...for the pastors and CMM team members who are visiting Ground Zero today and praying at that locale. Join with them in praying that out of the tragedy of 9/11, the ministry of CMM will expand to an even greater extent to reach the Muslim world.
- ...for the millions of Arabs and Farsi speakers in the Australian region who will now be able to tune into SAT-7 programs every day. Pray that God will minister to them through the various types of programs.
- ...that the gospel letters being sent to people in Turkey will reach those who are searching for the truth.
- ...for those who are trying to have Christian meetings in their homes in several countries. Many of these meetings are being attacked in various ways. Pray for protection for these groups.

Friday, October 28, 2005. Please pray

- ...for the Islamic sect, Ahmadiyyas. Many have come to the United States to escape persecution because they are thought to be heretical by Sunni Muslims.
- ...for the international churches (for expatriates) being established in metropolitan areas. Pray that Muslims who live close will become curious and search for the truth.
- ...for the refugees from Darfur, Sudan, who have been displaced. Some Muslim refugees have become believers because of the love shown by Christians. Pray that these new Christians will grow in faith.