


# INTERCEDE

Vol. XIX, No. 1

January/February 2003

## The Need for Peace in Palestine

by Jim Bennett



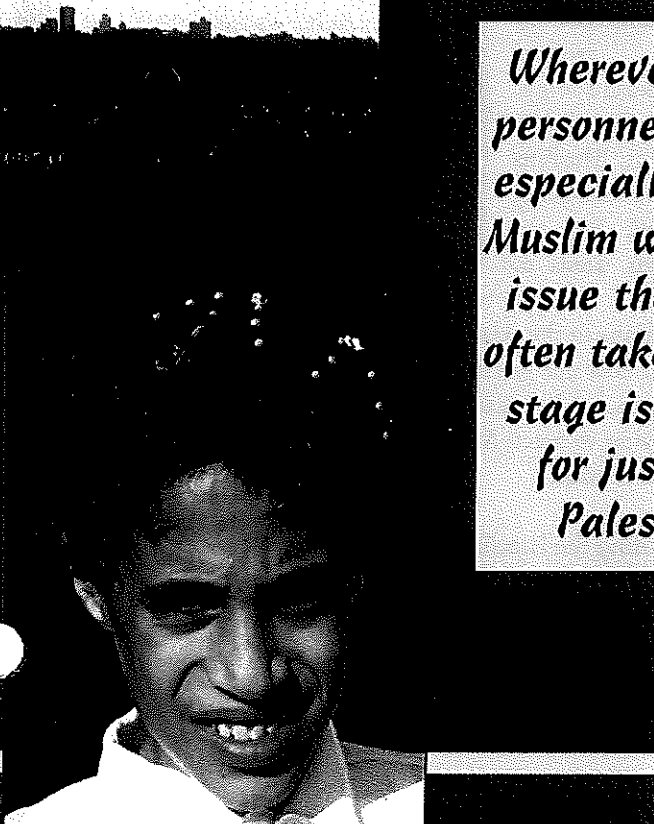
*For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things. No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments and speak lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil. ...*

*Their deeds are evil deeds, and acts of violence are in their hands. Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways. The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace. ...*

*So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead. ... We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away.*

*For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: rebellion and treachery against the Lord, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived. So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.*

*The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene (Isaiah 59:3-16).*



**Wherever CMM personnel travel, especially in the Muslim world, the issue that most often takes center stage is a need for justice in Palestine.**

While traveling last year in a rural Muslim area of China, a CMM team member heard the following plea from an elderly Chinese Muslim village leader: *Please tell your government to do*

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

**Jim Bennett, Director**  
**Center for**  
**Ministry to Muslims**



**W**hy have we chosen to feature the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in this issue of *Intercede*?

**First, is the matter of human suffering.** Israelis and Palestinians have suffered enough. All of us have seen the carnage on television. *World Pulse* reports,

*"Years of conflict and heightened attacks are taking their toll on Israelis' and Palestinians' mental health. Young and old alike suffer from early symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder: heightened depression, anxiety and sleep problems, and aggressive and anti-social behavior. Israeli trauma hotlines report a tripling of calls in the last two years, and camps in Gaza for traumatized children have waiting lists."*

**Second, is the issue of justice itself.** Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, provides an interesting perspective: *Suppose that the establishment of the modern state of Israel is indeed a fulfillment of prophecy. And suppose God wants Israel to prosper in the land, in preparation for the day when the Jewish people will acknowledge Christ as the promised Messiah. None of this exempts us from assessing,*

*and criticizing when necessary, the details of Israeli policies. The Old Testament prophets make it clear that the nation of Israel will never be truly blessed by God unless she pursues justice. To want present-day Israel to flourish as a nation is to want her to treat her citizens and her neighbors justly. We are not on the side of God's plan for Israel if we refuse to subject her actions to critical scrutiny in the light of revealed norms for what it means for a nation to please the Lord.*

The same critical scrutiny, I might add, should be applied to the Palestinian side.

**Third, is the matter of a non-negotiable commitment to evangelism.** According to *Operation World* there are 14 million Jews in the world (five million in Israel) and each of them should be given the opportunity to hear the gospel. On the other hand, there are 1.2 billion Muslims in the world, and they too must be evangelized. The *International Journal of Frontier Missions* reports there are 58.82 missionaries per million Jews. There are only 2.73 missionaries per million Muslims—the lowest among any religious group. Muslims comprise 35 percent of the world's unevangelized, yet only 3 to 4 percent of personnel and finances are earmarked to reach them with the gospel.

The Church in the West cannot afford to eliminate

doors of mission opportunity among Muslims by uncritically aligning herself with Israeli policy-making. This does not mean we embrace Muslim political policy or ideology or are not abhorred by their twisted methodology. Make no mistake about it, Muslims are lost and going to hell. But the Church needs to realize: 1. how our religio-political position affects 18 million Christians in the Arab world, especially Christian Palestinians, and 2. how our position either gives us leverage or hinders the enterprise of Muslim evangelism. Missionaries in the trenches are trying to reach Muslims with the gospel, and every advantage is needed.

Regarding the Israeli/Palestinian issue, if the Church does anything other than follow the path of scriptural justice, she will continue to jeopardize opportunities to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus among 1.2 billion Muslims. In the year to come, it could come back to haunt us.

**There are only 2.73 missionaries per million Muslims—the lowest among any religious group. Muslims comprise 35 percent of the world's unevangelized, yet only 3 to 4 percent of personnel and finances are earmarked to reach them...**



**A street tea seller**

# Muslim World News

## England

Al Muhajiron, a radical Islamic youth movement, is boosting membership among immigrant children. Scotland Yard estimates 3,000 Muslim Britons have joined Al Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. Many members are suspected to have come through youth movements like Al Muhajiron. The parents of most Al Muhajiron recruits eked out a living working in factories and driving buses, but they never really learned English and failed to assimilate. The second generation grew up confused. They didn't belong to their parent's culture or to the secular non-Muslim world.—*Pulse*

## France

With Islam the second most-professed religion in France, the government wants to increase dialogue with its Muslim population.

The 9/11 attacks have fostered fears that, unless Muslims are integrated, radical Islam may flourish. The country hosts Europe's largest Muslim community—about five million. Half are not French citizens; many are North African immigrants who live in run-down suburbs and complain of discrimination. The government is hoping the Muslim community's election of a council will help bring the Muslim community into the mainstream. Unfortunately moves to create the council have been hampered by bickering between conservative and liberal imams, and older and newer mosques. The government was pushing for elections to the council by last November.—*Pulse*

## Nigeria

The government of Kano state in northern Nigeria has apparently decided to continue its policy of church demolition until only fifty percent of the existing Christian congregations remain in the state. Last August, government officials told a church delegation that there were too many churches in the state and asked clergymen to approve the demolition of half of them. "The government's complaint against Christians was that there were too many churches in Kano and Muslims are not happy with the development," said Dr. Joseph Fadipe, chairman of the Kano state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria. Christians say the state government has demolished more than 20 church buildings since the implementation of *sharia* (Islamic law) three years ago. "We told them that we would rather have all churches in the state demolished than to support the demolition of some," Fadipe said.—*Compass Direct*

## Latin America

Many Latin Americans are answering God's call for cross-cultural missions endeavor, and CMM is helping prepare them. CMM conducted Muslim Awareness Seminars for the national missions conventions of the national churches of Peru and Panama. Several young people answered the call to minister in sensitive countries and were commissioned in Lima, Peru.

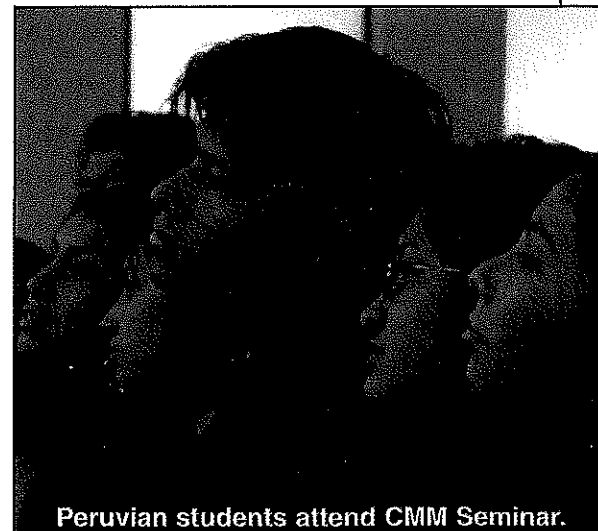
CMM also taught an intensive bloc course at a Bible school in Bolivia, where they learned of a graduate (with pseudonym Pablo) who was serving in a sensitive country in North Africa. There had been no communication from Pablo in over eight months. It is not known if he is in prison or even alive. Despite this, more than a dozen students stood ready to take Pablo's place. One young Bolivian prayed, "Lord, if Pablo is in prison, deliver him. If he has been killed for your sake, may his blood be the seed of the gospel in that land."—*CMM*

## Saudi Arabia

Citing the Qur'an as a basis, the government's internet filtering system prevents access to Web pages that it deems an insult to Islam. A new Harvard study found that beyond sexually explicit sites, religious, educational, women's sites and pages perceived hostile to Saudi Arabia were blocked. Limited access sites included <religious-tolerance.org> (an agency promoting religious tolerance as a human right), <answering-islam.org> (a Christian-Muslim dialogue), <women.eb.com> (the Women in American History section of Encyclopedia Britannica Online) and Amnesty International pages about Saudi Arabia.—*Pulse*

## Uzbekistan

Last August police searched a flat without a search warrant and seized religious literature including a Bible, claiming that Uzbek citizens were not allowed to have Bibles. The 13 Protestants present were subsequently fined between 5 and 10 percent of the minimum wage. The police chief later issued a denial that his officers had said that Uzbek citizens were not allowed to have Bibles. The Karakalpakstan authorities have adopted a harsh attitude towards Christians in Protestant churches. The authorities have made it all but impossible for communities to register, and many Protestant leaders have been subjected to fines.—*Keston News Service*



Peruvian students attend CMM Seminar.

# The Need for Peace in Palestine

continued from page 1

*something about the Israeli/Palestinian situation.* Rural China would seem to be an unlikely place to hear about the Israeli/Palestinian problem! But wherever CMM personnel travel, especially in the Muslim world, the issue that most often takes center stage is the need for peace in Palestine.

We cannot ignore a stunning reality: There are approximately 4.7 million Palestinian refugees scattered throughout the world. It is the planet's oldest and largest ongoing refugee problem, and has been on the agenda of the United Nations since its inception.

Many Christians in the West think all Arabs and all Palestinians are Muslims; yet, that is not true. Of the 275 million Arabs, some 18 million are Christians. Between 5 and 10 percent of the 1.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are Christians. Those who are truly born again are as much a part of the body of Christ as any other Christian. The apostle Paul says *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason cease to be a part of the body"* (1 Corinthians 12:13-15). And in the Book of Romans, Paul provides a sobering reminder that we have all been grafted into the same vine!

Recently an Arab pastor in the Middle East said to me: "Our local church is evangelical and Pentecostal, but we are in a predicament. Most churches in America are seen by our general population as being unjust in their approach to political issues, especially the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Muslim newspapers often link churches here with churches in the West. This means we are seen by our countrymen as taking an unjust political position against our own people. We become guilty by association. This places us in great danger as a possible target of radical groups based on the erroneous information they

read in our newspapers. Please ask the American Christian community, especially evangelicals, to view this area justly. This would help Middle-Eastern Christians enormously."

## Sin and Justice

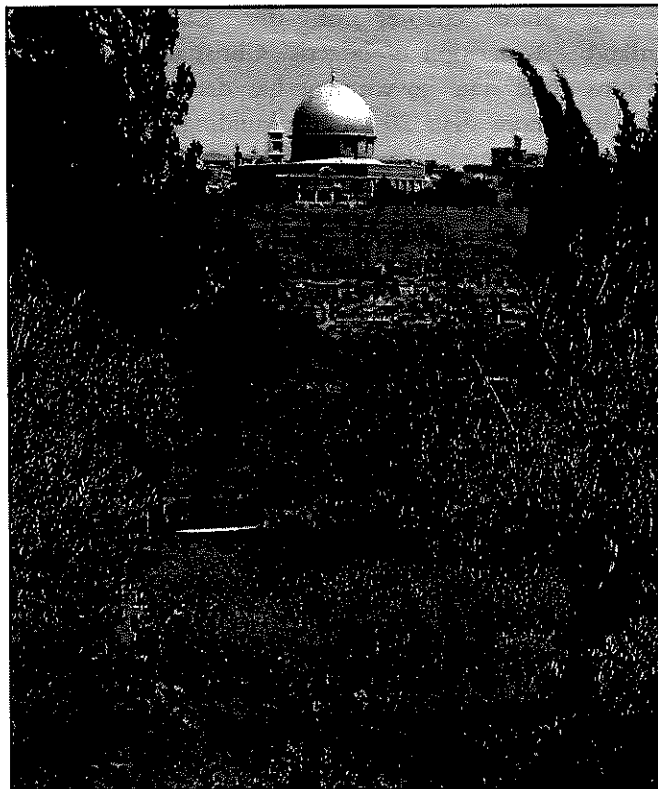
Both Arabs and Israelis are considered to be Semites, descendants of Shem, a son of Noah. The most anti-Semitic thing we can do is not call injustice sin. The Palestinian Arabs are guilty of unjust measures, and those should be called sin. The Israelis likewise are guilty of unjust measures, and they should be called sin. It is not enough to randomly recount who has done what to whom and when. Scripture requires us to look at what is sinful and call it sin. Sin requires repentance and a right application of scriptural justice. In Matthew 12:20, we are referred to Isaiah's description of the Messiah who would bring real justice: *He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.*

A colleague recently said: "There will be no peace in the land that does not include both the Palestinians and the Jews. You cannot pray FOR one and AGAINST the other. You cannot offer the land to one and not to the other. You cannot favor one with the gospel and withhold that same gospel from the other."

He continued by reading Ezekiel 47:21-23, where God says: *You are to distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who have settled among you and have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. In whatever tribe the alien settles, there you are to give him his inheritance.*

## An Evangelical Call for Justice

Recently 40 American evangelical Christian leaders signed a letter to President Bush. This letter, which follows, expresses many valid sentiments regarding the need for applied justice regarding the Israeli/Palestinian issue.





Dear Mr. President,

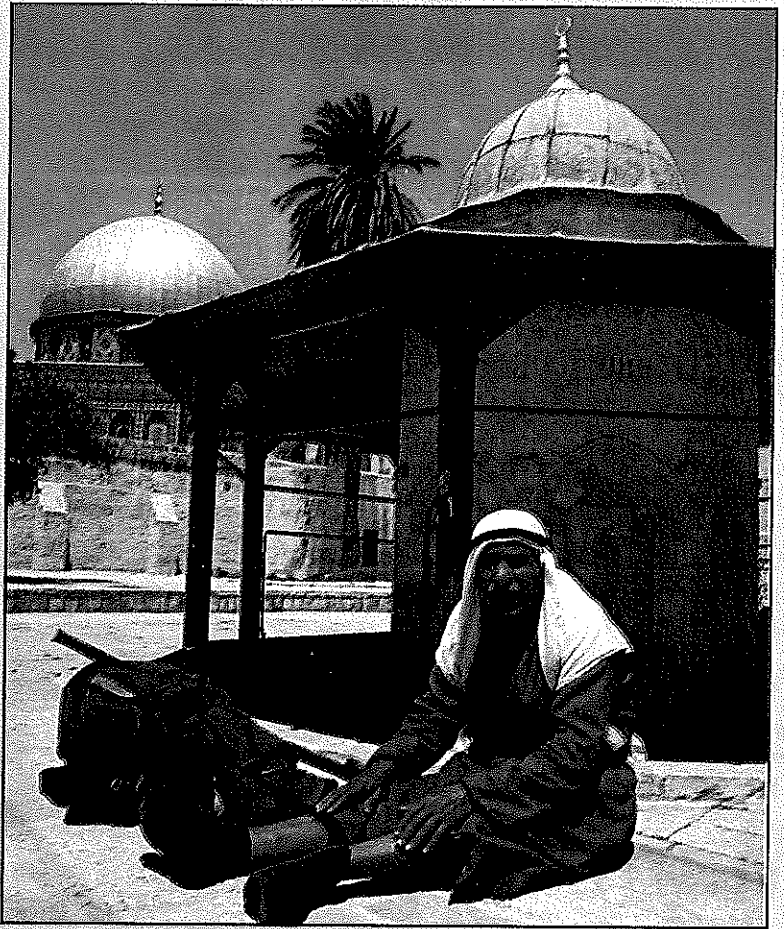
We write as American evangelical Christians concerned for the well-being of all the children of Abraham in the Middle East—Christian, Jewish and Muslim. We urge you to employ an even-handed policy toward Israeli and Palestinian leadership so that this bloody conflict will come to a speedy close and both peoples can live without fear and in a spirit of *shalom/salaam*.

An even-handed U.S. policy towards Israelis and Palestinians does not give a blank check to either side, nor does it bless violence by either side. An even-handed policy affirms the valid interests of Israelis and Palestinians: both states free, economically viable and secure, with normal relations between Israel and all its Arab neighbors. We commend your stated support for a Palestinian state with 1967 borders, and encourage you to move boldly forward so that the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for their own state may be realized.

We abhor and condemn the suicide bombings of the last 22 months and the failure of the Palestinian Authority in the first year of the Intifada to stop the violence against Israeli citizens. We grieve over the loss of life, particularly among children, and the suffering by Israelis and Palestinians. The longer the bloodletting continues, the more difficult it will be for both sides to reconcile with each other.

We urge you to provide the leadership necessary for peacemaking in the Middle East by vigorously opposing injustice, including the continued unlawful and degrading Israeli settlement movement. The theft of Palestinian land and the destruction of Palestinian homes and fields is surely one of the major causes of the strife that has resulted in terrorism and the loss of so many Israeli and Palestinian lives. The continued Israeli military occupation that daily humiliates ordinary Palestinians is also having disastrous effects on the Israeli soul.

Mr. President, the American



evangelical community is not a monolithic bloc in full and firm support of present Israeli policy. Significant numbers of American evangelicals reject the way some have distorted biblical passages as their rationale for uncritical support for every policy and action of the Israeli government instead of judging all actions—of both Israelis and Palestinians—on the basis of biblical standards of justice. The great Hebrew prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, declared in the Old Testament that God calls all nations and people to do justice one to another, and to protect the oppressed, the alien, the fatherless and the widow.

Finally, Mr. President, be assured of our prayers for you and your cabinet as you lead our nation in this troubled time. May the strength and peace of the Lord be with you.

# OMAN

**Population:** 3 million

**Religions:** Muslim 92.7%, Hindu 3% and Christian 2.5%

**Official Language:** Arabic

**Peoples:** Arab 67%, South Asian 21%, Mahra 5%, Iranian 2.8%



The Sultanate of Oman is a mountainous land on the southeast coast of Arabia. It controls the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Oman's oil reserves were developed later than those of other Arab nations and the wealth has been distributed wisely for the improvement of living standards.

Oman was a feudal monarchy until 1970, when it became an absolute monarchy. No political parties are permitted, but there is considerable personal freedom and political stability.

Islam is the state religion, thus the unreached consist of the entire Muslim majority. Oil wealth, rising education levels and opening to the outside have broadened the minds of Omanis, making them more receptive to spiritual change.

## Unreached People Group...

### Mahra

**Location:** Southwestern corner of Oman in a region called Dhofar

**Population:** 129,700

**Religion:** 99.9%

**Language:** Mahri

The Mahra have a tribal social structure. Each tribe is ruled by a sheik, who is considered an expert in Islam and in relating to the outside world. His responsibilities include administering justice, protecting the tribe, sustaining tribal status and providing grazing land for the herds.

The Mahra are divided into two main groups. The first group, the semi-nomads, can be found on the desert's edge in the far northeastern portion of Oman. During the winter grazing months, they stay out with the animals; and in the dry, summer months, they move into the villages. The second group, the settled Mahra, spend the year in small, semi-fortified villages, where they raise camels and goats. Some farming takes place in these villages, and domestic animals are kept to supply milk and eggs.

At present, there are few believers within their communities. A profession of faith in Jesus may cost a Mahra his family, his honor, his job and sometimes his life. Evangelization will be challenging due to the nature of the Mahra lifestyle and belief system.



## Pray that...

...the Holy Spirit will motivate people to be willing to go and share the love of Christ with the Mahra.

...Christian radio broadcasts, evangelical literature and the *Jesus* film will be made available to the Mahra.

...God will reveal himself to the Mahra through visions and dreams as they are watching their cattle.

...God will give the believers boldness to share Christ with their families and friends.

Information from Operation World, 2001 edition and Bethany World Prayer Center's "The Unreached Peoples Prayer Profiles."



# Jumaa Prayer Fellowship

Praying for Muslims  
Around the World!

Friday, January 3, 2003. Please pray

...for Ayub Masih, a Pakistani Christian who was acquitted on blasphemy charges. He has fled to a safe country. Pray that God will encourage him and help him in adjusting to a new way of life. Pray protection and God's care for his elderly parents and brother who are left in Pakistan.

...for protection for our Christian family in Indonesia from Islamic militants. In spite of peace agreements, villages continue to be raided and burned, leaving many wounded and homeless.

...for many who received New Testaments during a festival in Turkey last summer. Pray that the Word will powerfully impact them.

...daily for God's overruling and His intervention in meeting the needs of the people in Afghanistan. Pray that God will bring the light of the gospel to the suffering masses.

Friday, January 10, 2003. Please pray

...for all those who are visiting an ethnic coffee shop which was opened to service the needs of those strangers among us in a U.S. city. Pray that many friendships will be established and opportunities for witness realized.

...for Christians in northern Nigeria. Violence between Muslims and Christians continues. Pray that God will protect our workers and use them to exalt Christ during these difficult days.

...for the protection of those advised to leave the Kashmir region but have chosen to stay and minister to the thousands of refugees fleeing the tension on the Indian/Pakistani border.

Friday, January 17, 2003. Please pray

...for the E. family that has immigrated to Canada from Iran. Pray for God's provision for their needs and especially for healing of the wife and mother who has M.S.

...for God's guidance in planned ministry in Madagascar that is hindered by political unrest. Pray for perseverance in language studies by the workers in spite of the threatening situation.

...for T. as he seeks to bring encouragement, comfort and spiritual growth to a large group of believers in the Sudan who have been left homeless as a result of the conflict in that area.

...for the Islamics class being taught by a CMM team member at the American Indian College in Phoenix, Arizona, from January 22 to February 5. Pray for the receptivity of the participants.

Friday, January 24, 2003. Please pray

...for leaders meeting for the North African Consultation January 24 to 27. Pray that God will guide in these planning sessions.

...that God will keep his hand on the country of Malawi which has a Muslim president. Though only 13 percent of the population is Muslim, the religion seems to be officially favored and many mosques are being built with foreign funds.

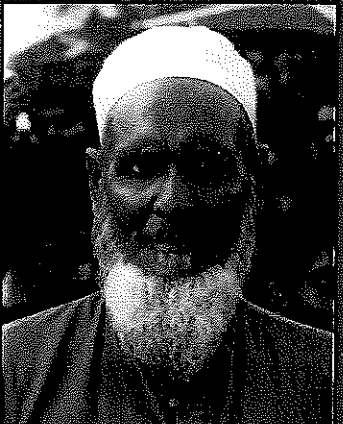
...for wisdom for Muslim-background believers as they interact with their Muslim family and friends. Many of them find themselves in situations where human understanding is not sufficient to meet the need or solve the problem.

Friday, January 31, 2003. Please pray

...for the Islamics class being held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from February 5-17. Pray for God's anointing on the CMM team member teaching the class and for receptive participants.

...that Christians in the Canary Islands will reach out with friendship and literature in Arabic to the traders from Western Sahara and Mauritania who come to sell their wares.

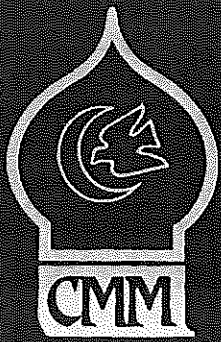
...for isolated believers in Somalia who must rely on radio programs for their church and fellowship.



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, February 7, 2003. Please pray

...for a believer in Washington DC who has begun a Bible study for Turkish women. Pray that the "right" women will come and that God will work in their hearts through this study. Pray that other Americans will be willing to reach out to Muslims living in the United States.

...for a young missionary and his wife who have been working to establish a church among Iranians on the East Coast. This ministry has been curtailed. Pray that God will guide them concerning their future involvement and ministry.

...for the missionary candidates who will be studying Islamics in a class taught by a CMM team member from Feb. 10 to 21, in Romania. Pray that these students will be spiritually, emotionally and academically prepared for the challenges of ministry.

...for a CMM team member who is attending a Church Planting Conference in Thailand and doing some exploratory work from February 11 to 21. Pray for God's direction to be evident.

Friday, February 14, 2003. Please pray

...that God will provide workers for outreach to Muslims on our college campuses. For example, more than 100 Turkish students need to be reached with the gospel on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison, but who will accept the challenge to focus attention on them?

...for Christian teachers who are teaching in secondary schools in Muslim countries. Pray that their lives will shine with such integrity that doors will open for them to share the gospel.

...that ethnic unrest in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan will drive Muslims to seek the peace that can only be found in Jesus Christ. Pray that believers may be bold in their witness.

...that God will provide Turkish, Arabic and Farsi speakers to plant house churches among Middle Easterners in Australia. There is a growing interest among the Muslims but workers are lacking.

Friday, February 21, 2003. Please pray

...for the Muslim Buduma people who make their home on the islands of Lake Chad. Pray for the translation of God's Word in their language so they may understand the Truth of the gospel.

...for the Christian workers who remain imprisoned in Saudi Arabia. Pray that the Lord will be with them providing comfort and protection and that they will soon be released. Since nothing is impossible with God, we ask that you pray for the salvation of the leadership of Saudi Arabia.

...for Christians in the Indonesian province of Papua (Irian Jaya) who are fearful as they see the buildup of Laskar Jihad militants in the province. Pray that the political, police and military leaders in Papua will enforce the law justly and that Christians will be protected from attacks.

...for a CMM team member who will teach Islamics at a Bible college in India from February 24-28. Pray that students will be influenced to reach out to Muslims in their community.

Friday, February 28, 2003. Please pray

...that Christians will faithfully reach out to their Muslim neighbors in villages in Sierra Leone.

...for refugees who have been left stranded since the United States has increased security checks, making it difficult for them to gain admission. This has left Canada as the last resort, but Canada will not process overseas refugees unless they have sponsorship. Pray that more sponsors will come forward to finance Christians who are in need of religious asylum.

...for believers in Pakistan and Indonesia who are grieving over loved ones killed in the recent terrorist attacks as well as those who are suffering from injuries and displacement.

...for Muslim-background Christians who have been rejected by their families. This is true even in Western countries such as England. Pray that a building in England will become available for a convert refuge.

**INTERCEDE** is a bi-monthly publication of the Center for Ministry to Muslims  
2032 East Kearney, Suite 205 • Springfield, MO 65803  
[www.CMMequip.org](http://www.CMMequip.org)

I urge, then, first of all  
that requests, prayers,  
intercession and  
thanksgiving be  
made for everyone.

—1 Timothy 2:1, NIV