

INTERCEDE

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FOSTERING FRIENDSHIP ON COMMON ETHICAL GROUNDS

Terrorism, suicide missions, the collapse of the twin towers, America strikes back, anthrax—these are all words and phrases that have haunted us ever since the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Even though these acts of terrorism reflect the most extreme interpretation of Islamic ideology to which most Muslims do not ascribe, many Americans have associated these acts with the Muslim community at large. As a result, even Christians have found themselves avoiding Muslim people, not realizing that the recent events have compelled many Muslims to seriously examine their own beliefs. This in turn has created a window of opportunity for Christian witness.

In regard to Christian witness, it is important to remember that the life we live in Christ and the attitudes we show speak louder than the words we preach. Muslims can only come to know who we are in Christ through close observation, which cannot happen until we as Christians are willing to befriend them. It is only through positive attitudes and personal relationships that we can ever hope to earn the respect and trust of Muslims. This could eventually provide an openness on their part to ask us about our faith and spirituality.

To nurture such a relationship, it is imperative to keep the lines of communication open. So often in our zeal to witness to Muslims, we immediately discuss our differences. This often leads to confrontation and broken relationships. Unfortunately, when that happens, Muslims never get to know us personally—which means they never get to know the Christ who loves us and the Holy Spirit who indwells us.

How, then, do we keep the lines of communication open with Muslim people? Do



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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



Since September 11 the CMM team has renewed its commitment to our mission statement: *To be a facilitating ministry to assist the Church worldwide in providing an adequate witness of Jesus Christ to every Muslim in the world by every possible means.* We have no illusions that every Muslim will be saved, but we do have a vision that every Muslim should and will hear the gospel! The apostle Paul's great statement of missionary theology still rings clear: *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? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? (Romans 10:14-15).

Islam is enormously diverse... Thus the challenge to reach Muslims with the gospel demands that we use a full-court press.

the challenge is a daunting one, but we are undaunted in our desire to fulfill Jesus' mandate to: *Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation (Mark 16:15).*

A missionary friend of mine has worked for many years in an almost 100 percent Muslim context. When asked about the approach we should be using to reach Muslims, he answered, "Use a full-court press." Through this basketball analogy he was saying to *employ every possible means to accomplish the task.* Islam is enormously diverse, with 1.2 billion followers from multiple cultures. Thus the challenge to reach Muslims with the gospel demands that we use a *full-court press.*

Developing grand strategies are sometimes necessary, but we should never overlook the success that can often come by using the more practical possibilities. In reality,

most Muslims come to the Lord as a result of someone befriending them and showing them genuine love.

A bridge of friendship can often be built by identifying common ethical concerns and then discussing appropriate ways of dealing with them. The author of the lead article in this *Intercede* states it well: *It is through these friendships that we pray and hope to introduce Muslims to the greatest Friend of all!*

While Muslims have different starting points and frames of reference about ethical concerns, they often come to the same ethical conclusions as Bible-believing Christians. Since most Muslims have never met a born-again believer, and certainly have never had sustained friendships with any, they often express surprise upon learning that genuine Christians do not believe in abortion on demand, homosexuality, euthanasia, adultery, decadent value systems, etc.

Turki, a "searching" Muslim, was my neighbor in Amman, Jordan. After many attempts to engage him in meaningful conversation, I finally learned that his heart warmed when we spoke of ethical matters. Thus we spent many hours discussing the evils of alcohol, the abhorrence of abortion and the breakdown of family values.

Turki mistakenly thought all Western Christians shared the value system he had observed when watching imported American television programs. When he realized this was an incorrect assumption, a lasting friendship developed between us. That friendship led to an opportunity to share the good news about Jesus Christ with him. Turki is now married and lives in France. I cannot say for sure that he has accepted Christ as Savior, but I know that he has heard the gospel. His "hearing opportunity" came as a result of a friendship born out of common ethical concerns.

Are you looking for an entry platform to approach Muslims in your area? I encourage you to read the lead article in this issue, then consider the "ethical" approach as a valid way to develop friendships with them—friendships that provide opportunities for sharing Jesus Christ.

Muslim World News



Palestine

Sharing the hope and peace of God's Word is vital to the Palestinian community, states Labib Madanat, executive secretary of the Palestinian Bible Society in the United Bible Society's (UBS) World Report. Last year, with UBS support, the society launched centers to make Scripture available. The Gaza Bible Center not only provides Scriptures, but also responds to hundreds of requests from non-Christians looking for information or answers to spiritual questions. In Bir Zeit, around 85 students a night drop in at the Living Stones Student Center to meet friends, watch Christian videos, surf the Web, do word processing or use the small Christian reference library. Thousands of Palestinian children have received their first children's Bible through summer camps sponsored by local churches. Palestinians are open to Christ, Madanat tells World Report.

—Pulse

Iran

Grand Ayatollah Youssef Saanei of Iran was among old-guard clerics who shaped Iran at the dawn of the 1979 Islamic revolution. He was also a confidant and student of the late Ayatollah Khomeini, who founded the revolution. But he has become more liberal as he has aged, stepping down from government in 1984, the *New York Times* reports. While he still believes women should cover their heads and the sexes must be segregated, he has denounced sexual, racial and religious discrimination and declared women should be allowed to take jobs from which they

have been barred since 1979—president, judge or supreme religious leader. He has not only allowed sex-change operations “under certain conditions” but also blessed first-trimester abortion for the mother's health or for fetal abnormalities. But according to the *Times*, Saanei's most controversial ruling has been that compensation for loss of life should be the same for men and women, “even though current religious law considers the life of a woman or a non-Muslim to be worth half that of a Muslim man.” The *Times* quotes Saanei as saying, “The soul that God gave women is no less than the soul God gave men.”

—Pulse

Iraq

The BBC reports that since the creation of a Kurdish safe haven with Western protection after the 1991 Gulf War, Iraqi Kurds have controlled two-thirds of their land. But in the 10 years since the war, Iraq's ethnic Kurd minority still aspire to create a greater Kurdistan. “The Kurds seem to be making genuine efforts to establish some form of civil society,” the BBC reports. “Words like democracy, civil liberties and respect for human rights are heard in political, intellectual and social circles.” Concerning openness, one Kurdish political leader tells the BBC, “Our people have for so long fought for freedom, we won't deprive them of it.” Internet access and satellite dishes are readily available without restriction, the BBC reports. Hundreds of newspapers and magazines in Kurdish and other languages are published in the main cities.

—Pulse

Turkey

The practice of men killing “dishonorable” female family members has moved from Turkey's villages to urban areas as the country's population has migrated to cities. It's also happening

in other developing countries “where massive migrations to urban areas have left families struggling to reconcile modern lifestyles and liberties with generations-old customs,” reports the *Washington Post*. As Turkey's young generation, especially girls, are becoming better educated and more exposed to the outside world through city life and television, more are rebelling against their families that hold to traditions such as prohibiting socializing with the opposite sex, choosing husbands and visiting freely with friends outside the home, the paper reports. One Istanbul human rights organization is pushing to change Turkish laws that discriminate against women. At least 200 women and girls are killed in Turkey each year by family members. Since the crimes often go unreported, the number is likely much higher, the *Post* reports. Worldwide, the UN reports that as many as 5,000 women and girls were killed in 2000 by family members, “many of them for the ‘dishonor’ of having been raped.”

—Pulse

Nigeria

Muslim extremists in Kano city of northern Nigeria killed a Nigerian truck driver last December for allegedly desecrating the Quran. The trouble began when Uche Nwama was off-loading a truckload of fruit he had brought from southern Nigeria to Kano. Hundreds of Muslims attending an open-air meeting nearby descended on the truck driver and clubbed him to death for allowing the exhaust fumes from the truck to pollute the air, thus desecrating the Quran. Nwama tried to fight his way to the Yan-Lemu police station, but police fled when they saw the mob. Men of Nigeria's Road Safety Corps brought Nwama to the hospital. He never regained consciousness. Three persons have been arrested in connection with the killing.

—Compass



FOSTERING FRIENDSHIP ON COMMON ETHICAL GROUNDS

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we have anything in common to talk about without arguing? Are there any areas of agreement that might provide opportunities for friendship?

Yes, there are! One of the most useful bridges in communicating with Muslims is the concern for ethical values that devout Christians and devout Muslims often share, particularly as they relate to moral values for community and family. Islam provides its followers with a comprehensive code of ethics. The Qur'an offers a wide selection of general guidelines that address various aspects of moral behavior. Notice the following examples:

1. It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West (for prayer); but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering), and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing (Qur'an 2:177).

2. For men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in God's praise, for them has God prepared forgiveness and great reward (33:35).

3. Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used

of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong (49:11).

4. And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities, nor use it as bait for the judges, with intent that ye may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of (other) people's property (2:188).

5. Give full measure when ye measure, and weigh with a balance that is Straight (17:35).

6. Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error; whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks (2:256).

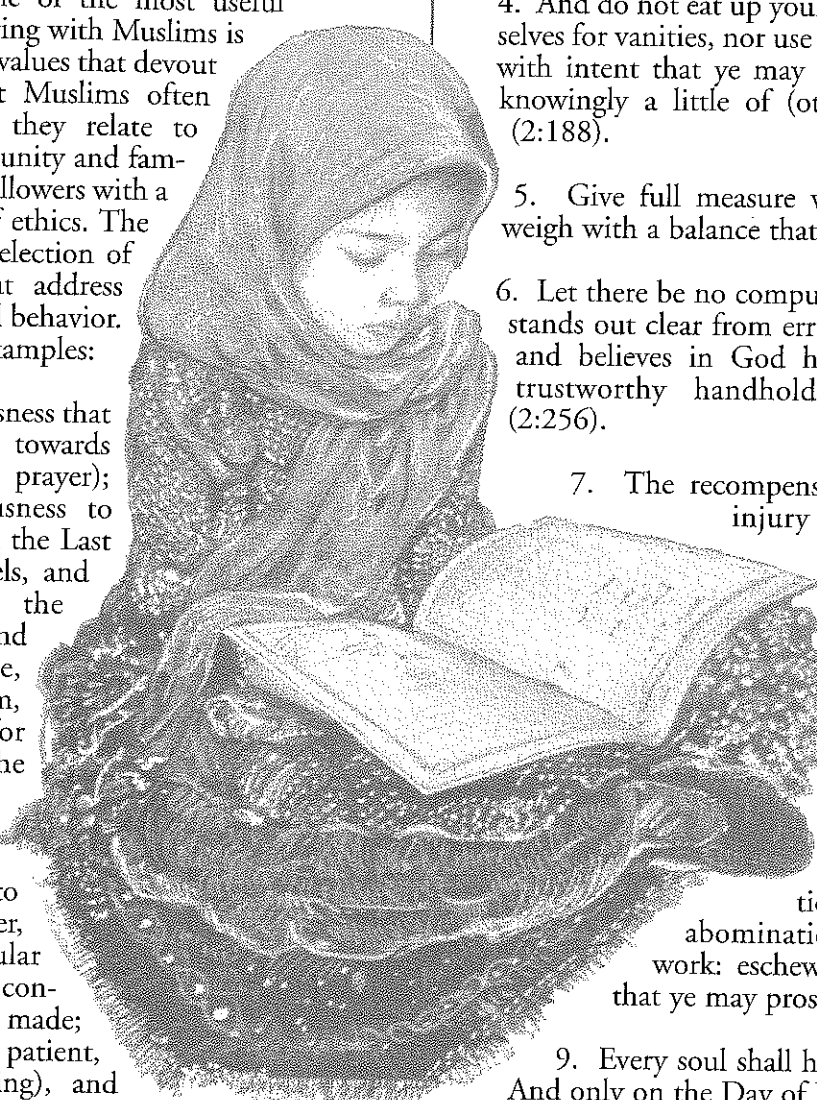
7. The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from God (42:40-43).

8. O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper (5:90).

9. Every soul shall have the taste of death: And only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved far from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have succeeded. For the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception (3:185).

Sincere and god-fearing Muslims are very concerned about today's moral issues. They are extremely sensitive about the appearance of godliness, cleanliness and modesty. The influence of secularism and permissiveness, which threatens to erode their family values and faith in God, also causes them great concern. When it comes to issues like abortion, homosexuality, sex education, pornography, adultery, music videos, drug addiction and alcoholism, devout Christians and devout Muslims share many of the same concerns.

For example, on the issue of abortion, orthodox

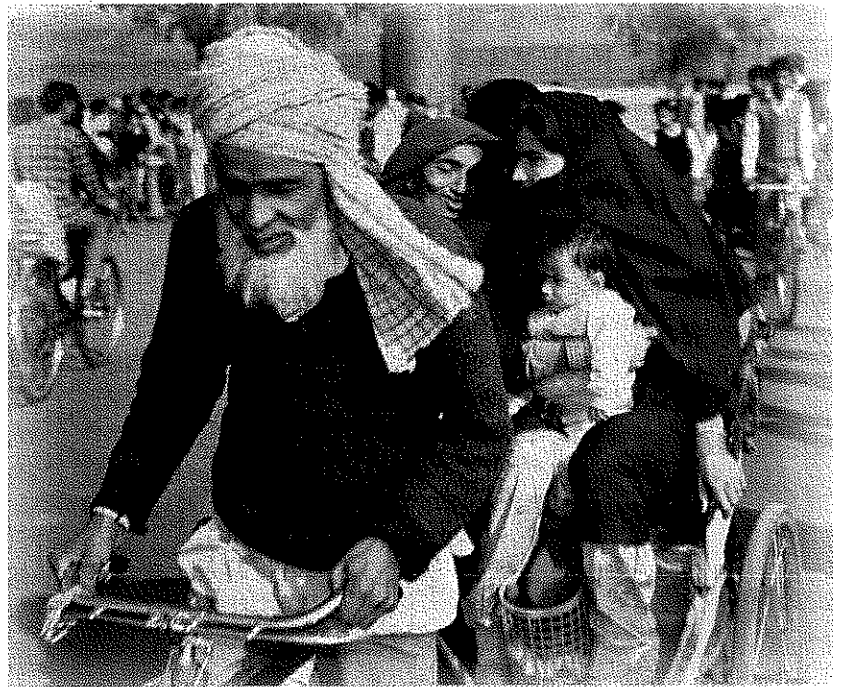


Muslims believe from their traditions that a soul is breathed into the fetus of the unborn child on the 120th day of formation. This divine gift of life, according to Muslim belief, transforms the embryo from a lump of flesh into a living human being capable of worshipping God. On the basis of this belief, orthodox Muslims regard abortion any time after the 120th day of fetal development as an act of murder and, therefore, forbid such a practice. However, abortions after the 120-day period are allowed in some Muslim communities if the mother's life is in jeopardy. While Bible-believing Christians would not fully agree with this position, they would agree on the absolute sanctity of the unborn fetus. In most Muslim societies, newborn children are seen as a special blessing from God. They provide the components for a strong family. The greater the number of children, the greater the chances are for the family to eventually enjoy social influence and economic security.

Strong family ties are a feature that is especially characteristic of devout Muslim communities. Marriages are seen as foundational to these family ties and are, therefore, regarded as binding legal contracts. Although divorce is permissible under certain conditions, severance of the marriage contract is strongly discouraged.

There is a reason for this. Unlike the Western view that promotes the strength of the individual, Islam promotes the strength of the community. In this regard, Muslims view the preservation of the community as dependent on the preservation of the family, which can only happen when a marriage remains intact. Families that grow out of faithful marriages are tightly bound by respect and honor for parents and elders. It is this element of honor that is primarily responsible for preserving centuries-old traditions, as each generation, out of honor, attempts to emulate the beliefs and practices of its ancestors.

One of the means of maintaining faithful marriages is to forbid anything that encourages promiscuous behavior between individuals of the opposite or same gender. In this regard, modesty in dress and social interaction is strongly prescribed for both men and women. In many strict Muslim communities, women cover



themselves from head to foot, so as to not draw attention to themselves in the company of men. Muslim men of these communities also adhere to certain rules. For example, they may wear long flowing robes, or long shirt tops that drape over loose fitting pants down to the knees.

Imagine the shock when Muslim people from conservative backgrounds migrate to America where scantily clad bodies are a common sight, not only at summer resorts and neighborhood parks, but right in the family room via television and video. For those god-fearing Muslims who cherish the sanctity of life, marriage and family, any expression of ungodliness and sexual permissiveness, which would include rock music and porno-

graphic materials, are dangerous enemies that need to be confronted and defeated. Devout Muslims oppose the decadent values of an immoral society just as much as born-again Christians do.

If we as Christians attempt to understand how devout Muslims stand on these issues, we may find opportunities for establishing relationships that could blossom into long-lasting friendships. And it is through these friendships that we pray and hope to introduce Muslims to the greatest Friend of all!

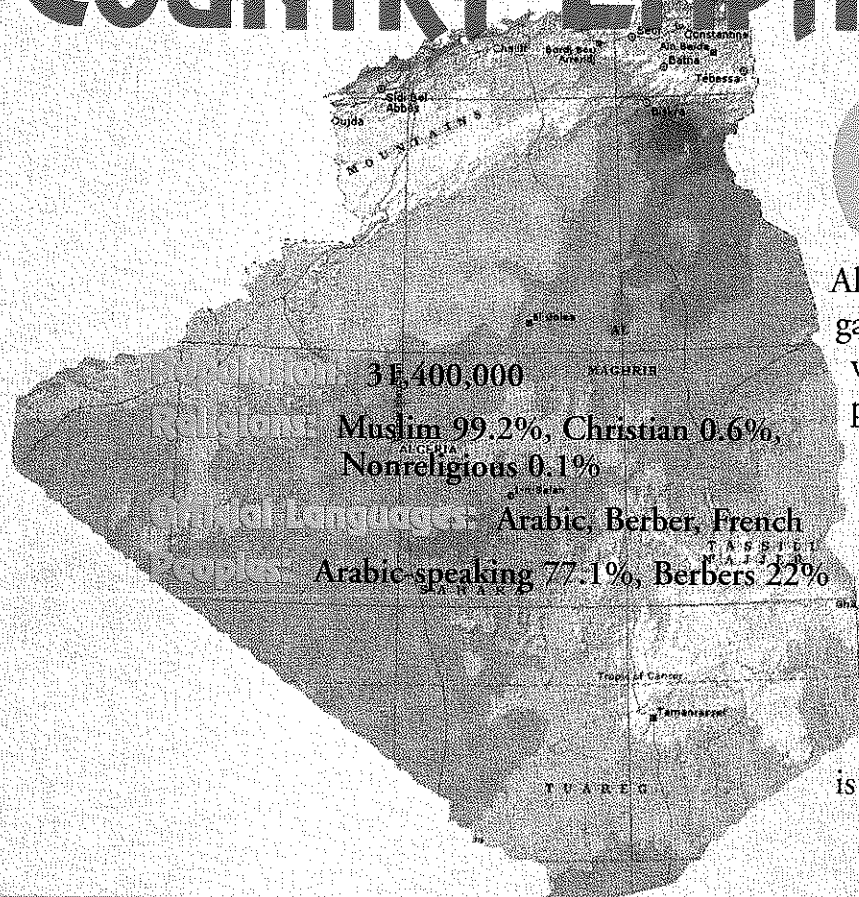


QUR'ANIC COMMANDMENTS

1. There is no god but He, the Creator of all things; then worship ye Him (6:102).
2. Shun the abomination of idols (22:30).
3. Shun such men as use profanity in His names (7:180).
4. On Fridays, hasten earnestly to the remembrance of God (62:9).
5. Be kind to parents, address them in terms of honor (17:23).
6. Nor kill yourselves (one another) (4:29).
7. Nor come nigh to adultery (17:32).
8. As to the thief...cut off his or her hands (5:38).
9. Shun the word that is false (22:30).
10. In no wise covet (4:32).

COUNTRY EMPHASIS...

ALGERIA



POPULATION: 31,400,000
RELIGION: Muslim 99.2%, Christian 0.6%, Nonreligious 0.1%
LANGUAGES: Arabic, Berber, French
PEOPLES: Arabic-speaking 77.1%, Berbers 22%

Algeria was a French colony for 132 years and gained its independence in 1962 after a bitter war of liberation. Economic failure and political abuses of power have provoked widespread agitation for change.

Democratic elections gave victory to an Islamic political party, but the results were annulled by the army. The government has actively encouraged the development of an Islamic Arab socialist state. Proselytism is not allowed.



UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUP... CENTRAL SHILHA

LOCATION: Central Morocco and Eastern Algeria

POPULATION: 1,137,300

RELIGION: Muslim (Malikite) 99.9%

LANGUAGE: Tamazight

The Central Shilha is one of three groups of Shilha Berbers. They are semi-nomadic shepherds, primarily raising sheep and goats, but they also keep other domestic animals. They move their herds to the warm plains during the winter months, then to higher pastures during the spring and summer months. Though on the move, all of them maintain permanent villages with fortified, community granaries and surrounding farmlands. A small number of people stay behind to guard the granaries and to plant crops such as barley, maize, wheat, rye, millet and vegetables.

Though the Shilha are Muslims, their religious practices are based more on tradition and the decisions of the community judges than on the Qur'an. Most continue their traditional worship of saints and are guided by "living saints," the *marabouts* who are believed to possess healing abilities and supernatural powers.

PRAY THAT...

...God will call forth prayer teams to begin breaking up the fallow ground in the hearts of the Shilha people.

...the Lord will protect the 204 known Central Shilha believers in Algeria and give them a voice to share the gospel with their own people.

...God will anoint the gospel as it goes forth via radio to the Central Shilha.

Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...



Praying for Muslims
Around the World!

Friday, May 3, 2001. Please pray
...that God will help SAT-7 to implement a web site for interaction between Arabic speakers to share testimonies and ask/answer questions. Thank the Lord for all the Arabic sites where the gospel is available and pray that many Muslims may understand the truth of Jesus.
...an increased number of intercessors and missionaries for Pakistan. Pray that God will release many in this needy country from their spiritual bondage and preserve and care for the Christians.
...for the family of Anahid Hovsepian-Mehr and the Church in Iran as they mourn the loss of this faithful servant of God and wife of the superintendent of the Assemblies of God. Only God knows the full impact this godly woman made through her life and ministry.



Friday, May 10, 2001. Please pray
...that Christians who have been released from detention in Brunei will not give up their faith. Pray that those who were negatively impacted by the trauma will find healing and restoration.
...for workers for the 52 unreached people groups on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. One worker has recently been trained. Pray that she will be a channel of grace among her own people.
...for the relief workers who are busy distributing food and other necessities to the Afghan people who are suffering due to war and famine. Pray that their caring attitudes will be a testimony of God's love.



Friday, May 17, 2001. Please pray
...for the Islamic bloc session being taught by a CMM team member at Zion Bible Institute next week. Pray that many students will desire to become involved in work among Muslims.
...for the repeal of Pakistan's infamous blasphemy law that is being abused against Christians to settle personal grudges and disputes.
...for the protection of Christian minorities in many Muslim nations. Pray that God will intervene in lives and replace the normal fear with a confidence in the presence of the Lord.

Friday, May 24, 2001. Please pray
...for the students at Sofia Bible College in Bulgaria as they take an Islamic course taught by a CMM team member. Pray that this course will encourage the students to reach out in friendship to Muslims in their community.
...that the Church in Malaysia will be the needed salt and light in that society, that fear, prejudice, resentment, and misunderstanding will not hinder Christians from reaching out in love to their Muslim neighbors.
...for continued wisdom and integrity for U.S. President George Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and all those involved in the war on terrorism.

Friday, May 31, 2001. Please pray
...that President Megawati Sukarnoputri will continue to have wisdom, courage and the military support to prevent further blood shed in Christian communities in Central Sulawesi. Pray that the Laskar Jihad terrorists will be eliminated.
...that the Philippines parliament will be successful in cracking down on the separatist rebel group, Abu Sayyaf. The country has recently passed laws against money laundering to thwart their activity.
...for seventh graders in a growing number of California public schools who are being indoctrinated with Islam, even playing Jihad. Pray that parents and teachers will speak out against this outrageous injustice of teaching Islam as a true religion while refusing to name the name of Jesus in the classroom.



Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...

Praying for Muslims
Around the World!

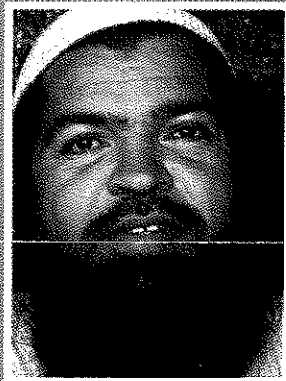
Friday, June 7, 2001. Please pray

...for two training programs for missionaries being held in Brazil throughout next week. Pray that many workers will respond to the challenge concerning outreach to Muslims being made by a CMM team member. Praise God for the many Two-thirds world missionaries who are going to Muslim countries.

...for the workers who will participate in a Muslim Awareness and Training Seminar in Macedonia next week. Pray God will anoint the CMM team member who will be teaching them.

...for the Christian expatriates who have been deported to their home countries from Saudi Arabia without charges and without legal counsel. Pray that they will find new avenues of ministry and livelihood. Pray for safety for "secret" national converts who may have been discovered by this exercise.

...for Turkish believers who are facing increased pressures because of Christian influences in Turkey.



Friday, June 14, 2001. Please pray

...for the pastors and their families in northern Nigeria who were left homeless last year as a result of conflict between Muslims and Christians. Pray that God will bring stability and allow them to rebuild their lives and churches.

...for Christians who are being tortured for their faith in Tanzania. They are faced with confiscation of their property and closure of their churches.

...for an end to the conflict between Pakistan and India over Kashmir. Pray that the threats and intimidation will only fuel their zeal to spread the gospel.

...that the interim government in Afghanistan may be able to bring a sense of stability to that land and the people may be brought to a place of physical and spiritual hope.



Friday, June 21, 2001. Please pray

...for the participants at an institute that has been established in Romania for training workers involved in ministry to Muslims. Pray God will anoint the CMM team member who will be teaching Islamics the next two weeks.

...that many educated Muslims will seriously consider the implications of a religion that condones violence and turn to the God of all peace.

...continually for those believers in Israel and the West Bank who have been affected by the ongoing violence and tension in that region. Pray that God will bring unity and peace.

...for a Uyghur family that has been declared outcasts by their neighbors because of their love for Christ. Pray that they may be strengthened in faith because of this ordeal and that their persecutors will be touched by God.



Friday, June 28, 2001. Please pray

...for the students at Elam College in England as they prepare for ministry among Persian-speaking people groups. They are actively pursuing ministry opportunities during the summer break.

...for the Maturata Berbers of Tunisia and Libya who live completely underground. Pray that God will call workers to this spiritual desert.

...for the Church in Kenya. Two churches in northern Kenya were burned down last September in protest to the increased security restrictions imposed on the Muslim minority in that country. Pray for more harmonious relations between Muslims and Christians.

...for John Walker, the young American caught fighting with the Taliban. Pray that someone will have an opportunity to share the gospel with him and he will realize his need of a Savior.