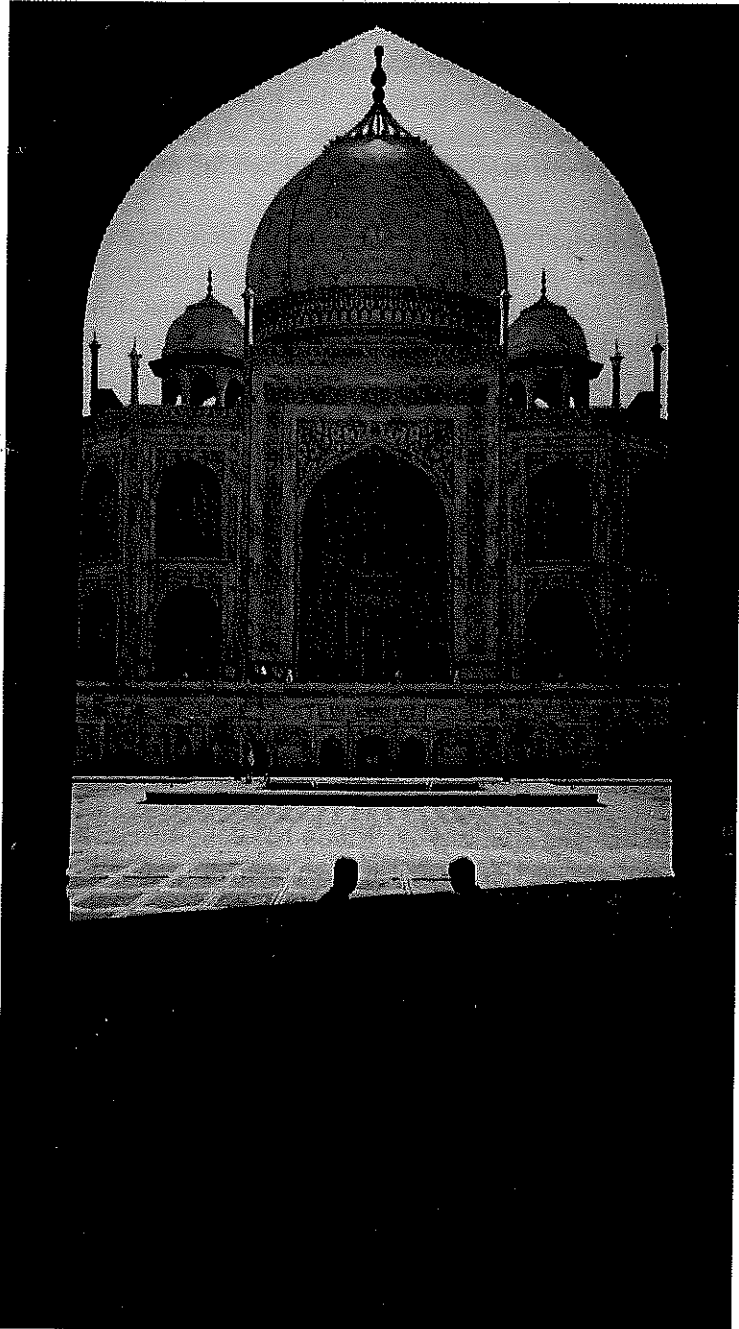


## Islamic Traditions

by Harry Morin



One significant difference between Muslims in general and Western Christians in particular is their time orientation. Westerners are basically future-oriented. Not only do we dream and plan for the future, but we delight to tread where none have gone before. We pride ourselves in being great explorers, inventors and innovators that lead to new discoveries, new methods, new fashions and new fads. We learn to live in a flux of constant change because change has become for us a mark of progress, and forward progress is viewed as good and necessary for human survival and improvement. The past becomes buried in the pages of history books and eventually forgotten. After all, who cares about the past. What's done is done. It cannot be changed. On now to the future. We glory in a future that represents for us an unlimited reservoir of untapped potential wherein we continually strive for bigger and better things!

In contrast to this mindset, Muslims glory in the past. Generally they are past-oriented people and therefore place great importance upon events of the past, people of the past and teachings of the past. With this deep regard for the past comes the necessity to preserve the past. That is why tradition plays such an important role in the lives of Muslims.

**A Matter of Honor:** This honor for the past is intricately interwoven with respect for parents, elders and ancestors. By showing honor, each generation is expected to live life as it was lived by its forefathers. As each succeeding generation does things exactly as its predecessors, the possibility for change from generation to generation is minimal. Change for most Muslims is viewed as an undesirable intruder.

This obsession for preserving the past becomes even more significant when we understand that for devout Muslims, more important than honor for parents and

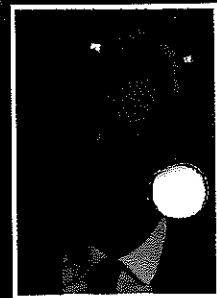


# Until All Have Heard

*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?*

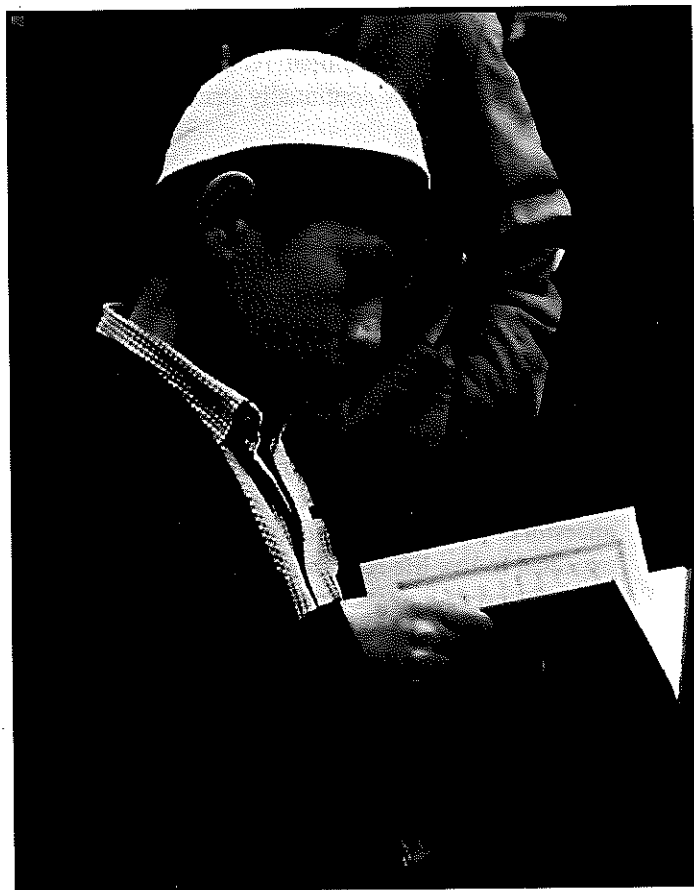
*Romans 10:14*

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



**Understanding Hadith Traditions:** The last issue of *Intercede* dealt with jihad. “Our Qur’an does not approve of that” has been a typical post 9/11 response by Muslim clerics. Much of their belief about jihad, however, does not come from the Qur’an, but from Hadith (tradition) literature. In this issue’s lead article, Harry Morin says, “Though most Muslims speak only of the Qur’an when explaining Islam to a western audience, it is important for Christians to become acquainted with this hidden aspect of Islam [Hadith].”

Phil Parshall writes in *Understanding Muslim Teaching and Tradition*, “For many years I had missed one of the key components to the attitudes and actions of Muslims... I was surprised to learn that only a minority of Muslims have ever encountered a book of Hadith. Their information is filtered to them through their Islamic teachers and oral tradition.”



Muslim theologians found that the Qur’an was inadequate as the sole guide for all occasions. Since Muhammad’s life had exemplary value and was held as the perfect model by the faithful, compilations of his words and actions addressing every conceivable situation evolved.

Hadith passages provide descriptions of the prophet’s mode of dress; his gestures; his manner of standing, sitting, walking, speaking; and the way he washed his hands, ate his food, used a toothpick and tied his turban.

Muhammad’s views on any subject were noted, and his personal opinions on community relationships, women, the family, society and warfare, and even his casual remarks about his preferences and prejudices on topics like poetry and music, provided guiding precepts and were considered legally binding.

In order to establish the authenticity of any particular Hadith, it was necessary to trace the text back to Muhammad himself. A Hadith might be phrased to indicate succession in this way: “It was told to us by Muadh ibn Hasan, who received it from Abdullah ibn Ali, who heard it from Abdul-Rahman to whom it was related by Abu Huraira (one of the companions of the prophet) that Muhammad said, ‘The wearing of silk is unfitted for God-fearing men.’”

In the lead article Harry Morin has done an excellent job of defining Hadith and how the gathering process functioned. It is surprising for many to learn of the immensity of Hadith literature. Just my nine volume Arabic-English collection of Al-Bukhari’s Hadith is 4,705 pages! Please refer to page three for Hadith examples from Sahih Al-Bukhari’s Hadith.

Acquaint yourself with Islam’s Hadith literature and you will be amazed at how much of the Islamic belief system has its roots there. May the Lord Jesus give us the patience and wisdom to delve below the surface and prepare ourselves to understand more precisely “where Muslims are coming from.” We can then meet them with an anointed, powerful and informed presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



# Muslim World News

## Afghanistan

For the first time since 1992 when Muslim groups took the capital and restricted women's activities, the government is letting women take tests for drivers licenses. In April, 30 women began the driving course, but most failed the test on car repair and traffic signs. The remaining 12 took the final: driving a haggard Toyota 75 feet along an L-shaped course forward and in reverse.—*Pulse*

## Malaysia

Muslim authorities have loosened polygamy laws to dissuade men from sneaking abroad to marry new wives. Under Malaysia's current law, a Muslim man can have up to four wives, but must get signed permission from existing wives and the state religious department. Spousal consent has now been abolished, making existing wives' permission irrelevant to the legal process.—*Pulse*

## Egypt

An Egyptian court issued a long-awaited retrial verdict in February, which virtually acquitted the accused murderers of 21 Coptic Christians massacred in southern Egypt in January 2000. During a three-day rampage, Sohag province's predominantly Christian village of El-Kosheh was looted and burned by uncontrolled mobs. In addition to the 21 Christian victims, another 33 were wounded, some maimed for life, and 260 of their homes and businesses were looted or destroyed. A year after the carnage, the Sohag Criminal Court found four of the 96 suspects guilty—not of murder, but of vandalism and illegal possession of weapons. The Coptic Al-Keraza magazine called the verdict "a source of disappointment to all Copts." Al-Keraza declared that the court decision "left a deep wound in their souls and a scar in their memory that time will not erase."—*Compass*

## Indonesia

Indonesia's first Islamic court opened in the northwest province of Aceh as thousands celebrated. The legislature has instituted *sharia*, the Islamic legal code based on the Qur'an. The new court can punish Muslims who propagate beliefs other than Islam, fail to attend Friday prayers three times in a row, or sell food, cigarettes or drinks in daylight during the fasting month of Ramadan. Officials said the court will eventually handle murder, adultery and theft cases. 5,000 people in the city of Banda Aceh marched, sang Muslim songs and chanted to mark the inauguration of the court, which coincided with Islamic New Year celebrations. The government of Indonesia has tried to maintain religious neutrality. However, the country's estimated population of 220 million is 80 percent Muslim, making it the world's most populous Muslim nation.—*Compass*

## Hadith Examples from Sahih Al-Bukhari:

Narrated Abu Huraira: (regarding the names of God)

Allah's Apostle [Muhammad] said, "Allah has ninety-nine names, one-hundred less one; and he who memorizes them all by heart will enter Paradise." To count something means to know it by heart.

Narrated Ibn Abbas: (regarding gender)

The Prophet cursed effeminate men and those women who assume manners of men and he said, "Turn them out of your houses."

Narrated Abu Said al-Khudri: (regarding preparation for prayer)

The Prophet said, "*Ghusol* [full bath] on Friday is compulsory for every Muslim reaching the age of puberty."

Narrated Hudhaifa: (regarding forbidden items)

The Prophet forbade us to drink out of gold and silver vessels, or eat from them, and also forbade the wearing of silk.



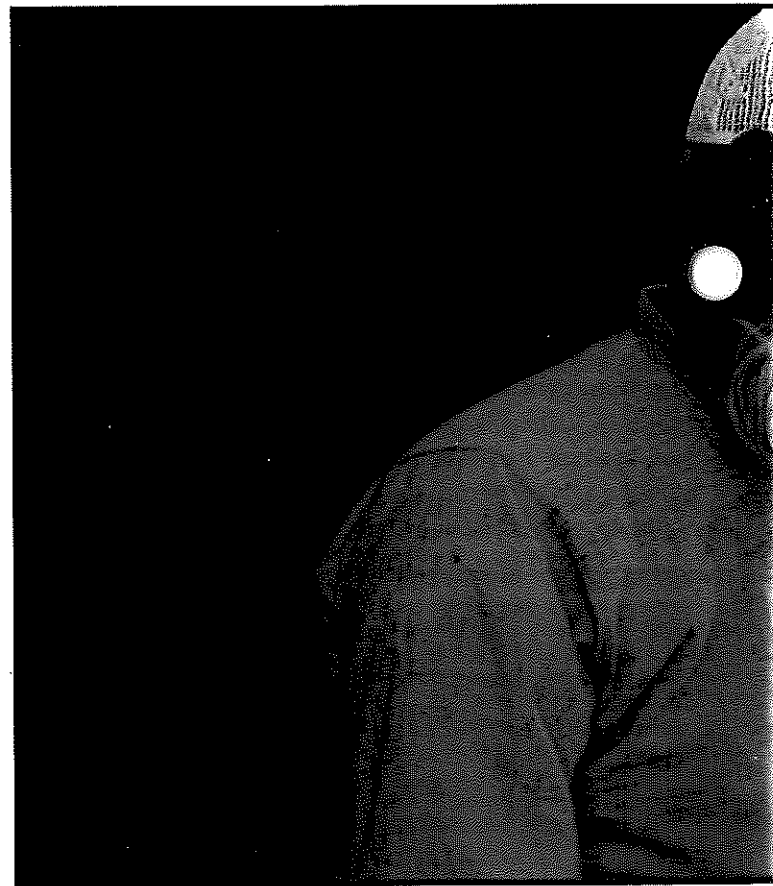
ancestors is honor for their God and their prophet, Muhammad, who lived 1,400 years ago. Muslims believe that as sole creator of the universe, God has instituted laws that govern the working order of everything that exists, from the huge planets of the solar system to the minutest particles of the atom. And for harmony to prevail, every existing body must function in strict accordance to the design criteria of the Creator. Muslims believe every act of every individual must be performed according to God's laws for the community of humankind to function properly and harmoniously.

**Divine Law for Every Aspect of Human Activity:** This premise leads to the belief that God has prescribed a divine law for all aspects of human activity. That is why the life of a devout Muslim is deeply intertwined with his religion. It is his religion that provides intricate regulations covering the whole gamut of human experience, such as rules for human conduct, interpersonal relationships, bodily functions, body care and ritual worship. When a Muslim speaks of Islam as "surrender to God," he takes it in a comprehensive and literal sense. For him, every act related to human life must be surrendered to God's will, which is, of course, defined by God's laws. These laws become critical because they serve as divine guidance, which represents for the Muslim the only means of salvation and peace for the human race.

**Qur'an—The Primary Source of Divine Law:** Where do we find a collection of such detailed instructions? Our first guess is the Qur'an, Islam's holy book. But the Qur'an mainly speaks in terms of broad principles. The Qur'an establishes prayers, but offers few details regarding ablution, posture and content. The Qur'an talks about giving to the poor, but doesn't specify how much. The Qur'an prescribes the pilgrimage to Mecca, but says little about its ceremonies.

**Muhammad—Pattern for Conduct:** There are many issues that beg detail. How should a Muslim greet a non-Muslim? How should a Muslim eat? What clothing can be worn? How should the body be maintained? How should the dead be buried? What are the rules for interaction with the opposite gender? The questions are endless, and where does the Muslim find responses to these questions? The Qur'an points him to the answer, "You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah (prophet Muhammad) a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the final Day and who engages much in the praise of Allah" (33:21).

Coupled with other verses admonishing Muslims to obey and follow Muhammad, Muslims have taken this verse to mean the life of Muhammad is the one and only ideal model for human conduct and therefore the one to be emulated by all believers. They believe in imitating Muhammad in every detail of human activity to follow the divine laws of God. That is why Muhammad's loyal companions were careful to remember his deeds and memorize his words.



**Hadith—Repository of Divine Prescriptions:** In the death of Muhammad, and the eventual deaths of his companions, this information became extremely critical, for it provided the sole repository of divine prescriptions for the religious community and the world at large. Consequently, individuals took it upon themselves to collect every iota of this information and record it in writing for the sake of preservation for future generations. These written compilations became known as Ahadith (sing. Hadith), meaning narrations, and



since multiple individuals undertook this task, there is more than one Hadith. As many as eight major Hadith provide thousands of pages of detailed sayings and instructions attributed to Muhammad. One major Hadith, entitled *Sahih al-Bukhari* and compiled in 879 A.D., has over 7,000 entries.

Though most Muslims speak only of the Qur'an when explaining Islam to a Western audience, it is important for

Muhammad's wives and how did he treat them? What are the details of Muhammad's night journey into heaven? The Qur'an speaks of Jesus as "the Sign of the Hour," but what will Jesus do when he returns to the world? The Qur'an says that God will punish the apostate from Islam, but should he be punished by Islamic authorities as well? Why do orthodox Muslims avoid pictures in their homes and dogs as pets? Why do they practice circumcision when the Qur'an is silent on this issue? What do they recite when they finger through their string of prayer beads? What should be the Muslim's view regarding abortion and homosexuality? Why do they blow into their hands and rub their faces when they pray? What is significant about the braying of a donkey and the crowing of a rooster? Why is a wedding feast such an important event? The answers to these questions, and many more, are not in the Qur'an, but in the literature of the Hadith!

**Importance of Christian Understanding:** Why is it important for Christians to know about a Muslim's attachment to Islamic tradition, and the Hadith literature? The answer goes back to the issue of honoring the past and people of the past. Muslims honor God by honoring the one whom they perceive to be the messenger of God—the prophet Muhammad. Muslims honor Muhammad by following his example with zealous devotion. For Muslims, the traditions that revolve around Islam and its prophet are sacred and must be preserved at all costs! To allow any change would amount to compromise worthy of divine retribution. Therefore, Westerners, including well-meaning Christians, who are viewed as the leading proponents for change, are regarded as enemies to the institutions of the Islamic faith, which are believed to be absolute.

As Christians, can we gain anything from this understanding of the Muslim's perspective on tradition and his regard for the laws of Islam and the example of Muhammad? Perhaps this discussion can help us to reconsider our position regarding absolutes in terms of ethical standards and moral conduct. Perhaps it can cause us to reflect upon our own passion to follow the example of Christ. Perhaps it can prod us to consider the depth of our commitment to the things of God and our concern for biblical holiness. Perhaps it can remind us of the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who said, "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20)



Christians to become acquainted with this hidden aspect of Islam. The Hadith helps the devout Muslim to follow the example or "*sunnah*" of his beloved prophet. Aside from recording the deeds of Muhammad, the Hadith also records the sayings of Muhammad. These sayings, and not the Qur'an, provide the detailed material found in Islamic folklore, history and beliefs. These components of Islamic tradition provide the missing pieces not found in the Qur'an. For example, who was the mother of Ishmael? Who were



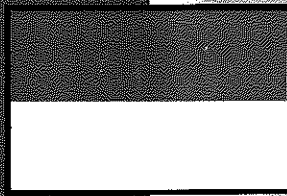
# I N D O N E S I A

**Population:** 212,730,600  
**Religions:** Muslim 80%,  
Christian 16%, Hindus 2%,  
Traditional 1%  
**Official Language:**  
Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia)  
**Peoples:** Javanese 26%, Javanese  
Indonesian 10%, Sudanese 10%,  
Madurese 10%



The Republic of Indonesia is located in Southeast Asia on an archipelago of more than 3,000 islands. These islands, located across the equator, command vital sea routes between Australia, Europe and the Asian mainland, and are the principle link between the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Formerly a part of the Netherlands East Indies, Indonesia proclaimed its independence on August 17, 1945, after more than 300 years of Dutch control. Indonesia is the fourth most populous nation and continues to grow rapidly. It has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the world, with more than 300 distinct people groups, many of whom are Muslim.



Unreached People Group...

## The Lampungese

**Location:** Southern tip of Sumatra  
**Population:** 2,071,000  
**Religion:** Muslim (Shafiites) 100%  
**Language:** Lampung

The Lampungese are made up of three groups: the Abung, the Paminggir and the Pubian. The Abung are mountain people who have a history of headhunting and raiding. The Pubian and Paminggir are lowlanders whose livelihood includes fishing and shipping agricultural goods.

The Lampungese belong to the same linguistic group as the Komering, another Indonesian tribe living in Sumatra. The groups do not associate with each other, however, and do not share the same customs.

A typical Lampung village consists of houses built on poles or stilts. The houses center around one municipal building called a *sesat*. The *sesat* is generally a one-room house divided into small rooms where people of different classes sit and where the government holds its meetings.

Because of the Indonesian government's unfavorable migration policy, many Lampungese feel mistreated and resentful. This bitterness has led to civil unrest and conflict with the Javanese newcomers. Tragically, the Javanese Christians are the main source of evangelical witness and are not well received. There are only about 50 known Lampungese Christians.

## Pray that...

...the Holy Spirit will open the hearts of the Lampungese towards Javanese Christians so that they will be receptive to the gospel.

...God will encourage and strengthen the 50 known Lampungese believers. Pray for His protection and guidance over them.

...God will reveal himself to the Lampungese through visions and dreams.

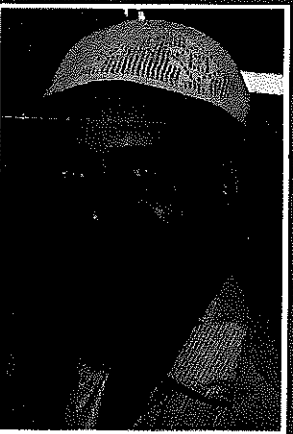
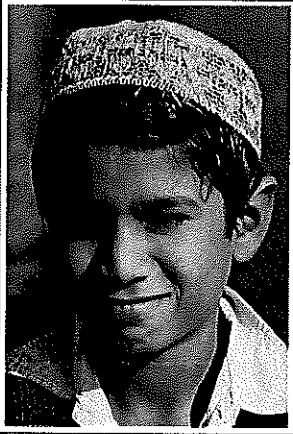
...God will call loving Javanese to reach out and share the gospel and love of Jesus Christ with the Lampungese.

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!



Large, then, first of all  
requests, prayers,  
intercession and thanks-  
giving be made for  
everyone.  
(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)

Friday, July 4, 2003. Please pray

*...that missionaries who attend the workshops being presented by CMM at the annual School of Missions next week will accept the challenge concerning outreach to the Muslim populations* of the countries where they reside.

*...for the social and political stability of Turkey in the aftermath of the war in Iraq* and for God's protection of the people in the strategic Iraqi cities of Mosul and Kirkuk.

*...that Muslim peoples throughout the Muslim world will have a greater opportunity to hear the gospel* and respond.

*...for peace in Jerusalem.* Pray that the Lord will reveal himself to Muslims in the city and throughout Israel and Palestine.

Friday, July 11, 2003. Please pray

*...for the Christians in Sulawesi, Indonesia, who continue to suffer violence at the hands of the Laskar Jihad forces.* Pray that the Lord will intervene and bring consolation and healing to those who have been injured and bereaved.

*...for the existing believers in Thailand who live among Muslims.* Pray that they will grow strong in their faith and possess a boldness in sharing their faith with their neighbors.

*...for Algerians many of whom are becoming more open to the gospel because of prayer.* Pray that they will continue to grow in their understanding of Christianity and make sincere commitments to follow the Lord.

*...for the Sultan of Brunei and his family* as the key figure for that country. In February he divorced his second wife and married another.

Friday, July 18, 2003. Please pray

*...that young Muslim readers in restricted-access countries can find websites where they will find truth* and the only source of true love in Jesus.

*...for God to raise up more workers* to bring the message of peace, repentance and salvation to Middle Eastern nations.

*...that God will lift the veil of ignorance and suffering in Sudan.* Rape, torture, enslavement, disease and displacement are rampant. Aid is being denied many starving people.

*...for needy Muslim women around the world.* Many struggle against illiteracy, ignorance, abuse, poverty and spiritual darkness.

Friday, July 25, 2003. Please pray

*...for the 3,000 Mauritanian refugees in the United Kingdom.* Pray that Christians will reach out to them in love to help them overcome culture shock and find new life in Christ.

*...for a small Berber church in Morocco.* Pray for the growth and protection of these new believers.

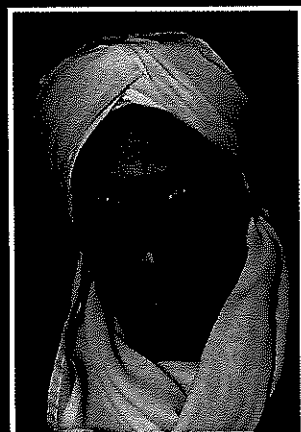
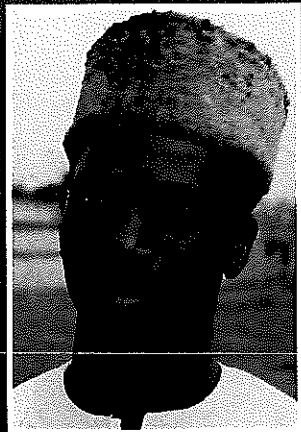
*...for the Christian community in Qatar.* Because of the visible operation of the war command center, Americans may be at added risk there as well as other strategic Middle East locations. Pray for wisdom and protection for those involved.

*...for two workers in Uzbekistan who are in trouble for hosting gatherings in their home.* Pray that God will protect and vindicate them.



# Jumaa Prayer Fellowship

Praying for Muslims  
Around the World!



*I urge, then, first of all that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. (1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)*

**Friday, August 1, 2003. Please pray**

*...that the growing number of Muslims receiving Christ as a result of the showing of the "Jesus" film will have adequate follow-up to disciple them in the Christian faith.*

*...for a new believer in Tunisia* who is being threatened with psychiatric care by her parents because of her turning to Christ. Pray for her and others in great difficulty.

*...that local Christians in the Canary Islands will reach out in witness* to traders from Western Sahara and Mauritania who come for business.

**Friday, August 8, 2003. Please pray**

*...that God will bring political stability to the Ivory Coast* after the conflict earlier this year and enable workers to once again live and proclaim the gospel there freely.

*...for better enforcement of laws against human trafficking in Nigeria* and for those who have become entrapped in Gabon, Cameroon, Italy and other places.

*...for God's intervention in the Central African Republic.* Libyan support is propping up an unpopular regime. Pray for the oppressed, especially Christians, living there.

**Friday, August 15, 2003. Please pray**

*...for the house churches that have begun in Afghanistan.* Pray that the openness since the Taliban's removal may cause many to follow Christ.

*...for the many persecuted Christians who have fled from Iran.* Few are being accepted as refugees by Western countries. Pray that doors will open.

*...that the group leaders working among Fulanis in an Islamic Republic in N.W. Africa will be taught and disciplined to be effective leaders of the new groups being formed.*

**Friday, August 22, 2003. Please pray**

*...for African-Americans who continue to convert to Islam both inside and outside the prison system.* Pray that they may be confronted with the gospel message shared in love.

*...for the government in Bosnia* to be willing to attract investment from outside the country to create new jobs and stop the brain drain of youth emigrating.

*...for the church in Albania.* Many young men who came to the Lord in the 90s are refusing leadership roles in the church and are falling away.

**Friday, August 29, 2003. Please pray**

*...that God will work in the hearts of the Evangel University students who are taking the Introduction to Islam class for the next two weeks.*

*...for the 1,500 Muslim Iranians who attended a Christmas outreach in California.* Pray for Iranian churches in three cities as they follow up these people.

*...for an outreach to Iranians living in Peru and for wisdom and grace.* Pockets of Asians and Arabs can be found in many parts of Latin America.

*...for the 75,000 Bangladeshis in New York City, Uzbeks all over the northeast and the families of the nearly 200 Yemeni Arabs who died in the World Trade Center.*

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