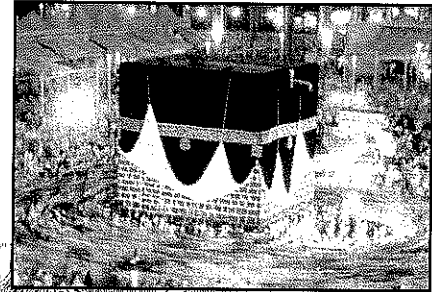
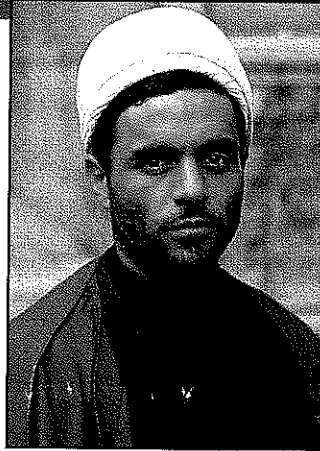


INTERCEDE

VOL. XIV, NO. 1

JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1998

The Birth of Islam



My name is Abdul Mutallib. I was born in Mecca in the year 592 to a very wealthy family.

My family was wealthy for two reasons. First, my father was one of the leading businessmen in town. The caravans coming from the seaport of Aden to the ancient city of Damascus passed right through our city. They had to pay duties to our tribe on all their goods and they always spent a few days resting in one of our numerous caravan-sarais (inns where you could stable camels, too).

The second reason my family was wealthy was even more interesting. For as long as anyone could remember, our city was the pilgrim center for all the tribes of Arabia. Nestled among the hills surrounding Mecca was a cubicle building called the *Kaaba*. This building was filled with the various idols, which represented each of the tribal gods. Again, all the pilgrims were our customers. They bought amulets, charms, holy water, and, like the

caravan men, they also had to have a place to stay and food to eat. My family controlled it all.

In the corner of the *Kaaba* was a beautiful meteorite stone that God had sent from heaven. This stone had magical power. The pilgrims would walk around the *Kaaba* (the house of their gods) seven times and then kiss or touch this special stone of blessing.

When I was a young boy, I remember one time when the stone had fallen out of the wall. Tribal leaders quarreled over who would have the privilege of putting it back. There was a young man whose name was Muhammad who suggested that all of the tribal leaders lay the stone on a blanket, then each would take a corner of the blanket and lift it to its rightful

by Dr. Don McCurry
Founder and President of
Ministries to Muslims
Colorado Springs, Colorado

place. Everyone was impressed with this young man's wisdom.

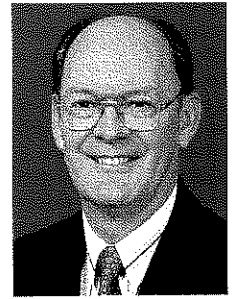
Because of the death of so many warriors in the frequent inter-tribal wars, there were far more women in our city than men. Some people



Speaking on Behalf of Muslims

*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)*

**Ron Peck, Director
Center for Ministry to Muslims**



Islam is the only religion apart from Christianity whose adherents believe they have a mandate from God to share their faith with the whole world. As I travel internationally, I find the evidence of Islamic expansion in such widespread places as Argentina, Fiji, South Africa, Great Britain, and the United States.

In England, 300 former Christian churches have been purchased by Muslims and turned into mosques. In buildings where the name of Jesus used to be praised and glorified, Muslim people now prostrate themselves toward their holy city of Mecca and recite their ritual prayers.

In downtown Buenos Aires, a large central location has been purchased for the construction of an Islamic Center. In Fiji, Muslim missionaries from Saudi Arabia are preaching their message not only among the large South Asian emigrant population but also among the indigenous Fijian peoples. Converts are being made.

In the Central Asian Republics, such as Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, new mosques are being constructed and ancient Islamic shrines are being refurbished at the cost of hundreds of millions of dollars as Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia compete for influence in this area.

Islam is on the move. Muslims believe they have a mandate from God and a message for the whole world.

What do all of these facts mean? Islam is on the

move. Muslims believe they have a mandate from God and a message for the whole world. Their goals are large, as is indicated by some of the published statements from their leaders:


"In the next 50 years, we will capture the Western world for Islam. We have the men to do it, we have the money to do it, and, above all, we are already doing it."

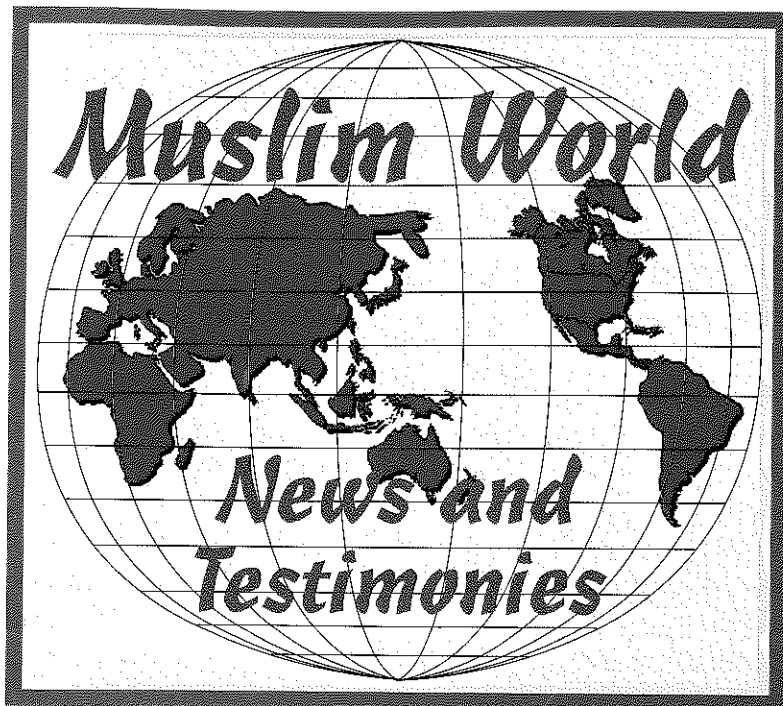
"We must convert 50 to 75 million Americans. It is possible, especially since the lower stratum of society has been suffering from the bankruptcy of the social order. They are groping for salvation, and you (the Muslims) can give them that salvation."

Now is the time for the Muslims of our world to receive a positive witness of God's great love for them.

Jesus gave His order to the Church long ago. It was clear and to the point. It included "all nations" and "every creature." It is to be fully realized before His Second Coming.

Now is the time for the Muslims of our world to receive a positive witness of God's great love for them. Now is the time for the Church to turn from neglect to obedience. Let us turn with a renewed commitment to the unreached of our world.

With prayer, faith, and sacrifice, let us demonstrate the love of Jesus to the lost and hurting Muslims of our world. 



Del Kingsriter Honored By NCBC

Paul said, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor—especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." Delmar Kingsriter, long-time Africa missionary and former director of the Center for Ministry to Muslims, is such an elder. North Central Bible College (NCBC) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has bestowed "double honor" on Del by renaming the building that houses the missions department the "Del Kingsriter Centre for Intercultural Relations."

During the Heritage Days at NCBC, October 6-7, 1997, tribute was paid to Del, who passed away last April. The kick-off for the fund-raising campaign that is being conducted to pay for renovations at the Centre that will bear Del's name was held at that time also.

Many of Del's materials and works, as well as the original works of David Irwin, a pioneer in ministry to Muslims and the first director of the Center for Ministry to Muslims, will be housed at the Centre when it is completed.

—CMM

CMM Team Member Teaches Class at Elam

During September 1997, Paul Parks, a member of the CMM team, spent 3 weeks in London teaching at the Elam College. The purpose of this school is to provide ministry training for young people from Iran who will be returning to their nation to minister to their people.

Most of the 13 students at Elam are from Muslim backgrounds, so this Christian ministry training is vital to them.

Parks taught a class on "Teaching Ministry in the Church." He used many historical and culturally-relevant illustrations from Iran which helped students relate

what they were hearing to actual events or situations in their homeland.

Outside the classroom, Parks was able to talk with the students and pray with them about their future. We are thankful that God continues to open ministry doors, such as this time of teaching at Elam, to the CMM team.

—CMM

Northern Iraq

Last September the Grace Community Church, under construction in the northern Iraqi city of Dohuk, was attacked by a mob of stone-throwing Muslims. Four armed men also threatened to kill the Iraqi pastor if he did not leave immediately.

The police chief informed the pastor that local authorities could offer him no protection, and urged him to leave the region. Not only is the pressure coming from the Muslim community, but the Chaldean Catholic Bishop has also registered an official complaint against

the church. Consequently the damaged church property remains closed, and Pastor Matti and his family have gone into hiding.

—Compass Direct

Azerbaijan

Religion freedom is under pressure in northwestern Azerbaijan. A congregation of 100 members has come under attack from their Muslim neighbors. Pastor Zaur Balayev was imprisoned twice in 1997. During his imprisonment, he shared the gospel with his 13 cellmates. On his release, he was a changed man, having grown in his faith.

Most Christians who were working as civil servants or teachers, have been made redundant and now have no resources to live on. They have sent letters of protest to Azeri president Geidar Aliev asking for help.

—Islam Development Brief

Turkey

One person died and 25 were injured when a grenade exploded at a Christian bookstand during the Gaziantep Industrial Trade Fair in southeast Turkey last September. The bookstand was operated by the Turkish Good News Publishing Company. Threats had been received by fair organizers prior to the attack, even though civil police had determined that the Christian bookstand's activities and publications were legal.

Right now there is a lot of anger among Muslims because the government closed down the religious schools and is attempting to close down the Islamic Welfare Party.

—Compass Direct



570

"The Year of the Elephant"
The year of Muhammad's birth
and an attack on Mecca by
Abraham.

595

The Prophet marries
his first wife Khadijah.

608

The Ka'bah is rebuilt.
Muhammad is chosen
to put the Black Stone
in the new Ka'bah.

610

The beginning of the
Prophet's mission.
Revelation of the
Qu'ran descends on
him during Ramadan.

613

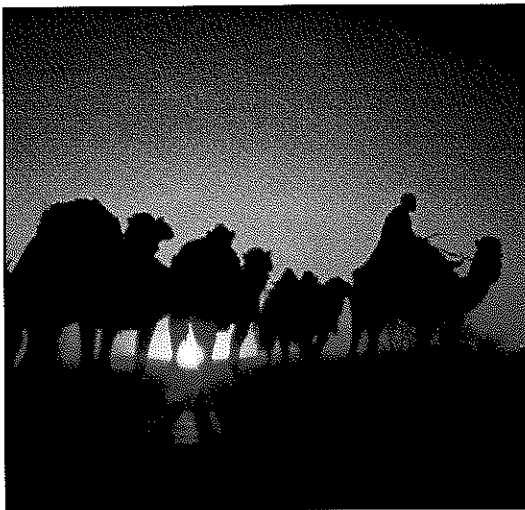
The public preaching
of Islam begins.

The Birth of Islam

continued from page 1

tried to solve the problem by burying their baby girls alive out in the desert as soon as they were born. The wise, young Muhammad felt this was wrong and said so. He thought that life was a gift from God. He loved children, too, and they loved him.

Even though Muhammad was from the most powerful tribe of merchants, the *Quraysh*, he did not approve of their love of money, nor



of their neglect of the poor, the widows, and the orphans. He was also faithful in all his business dealings and was, therefore, called *al-Amin*, "The Faithful One."

Perhaps the most striking thing about Muhammad was his contemplative nature. Whenever he could, he would retreat to a cool cave on Mount Hira to meditate.

After the wealthy widow, Khadijah, asked to marry him, Muhammad had even more time to think about God and the plight of the Arabs. He talked a lot to

Christians and Jews, and then would retreat to meditate. He felt God should do something for the Arabs.

Certain things bothered Muhammad. In fact, they bothered us all. We Arabs were looked down upon as "nobodies." We were surrounded by powerful neighbors: Greek Christians to the northwest, Zoroastrian Persians to the northeast, and wealthy Jews in our midst and to the south. Each group had their own religion. Each group also believed in their "High God." Whereas we Arabs had multitudes of "little" local gods.

The other religions all had prophets. There were no Arab prophets. That bothered us, too.

I'm sure these things weighed heavily on Muhammad's mind. He belonged to a minority group of the *Quraysh* Tribe who were monotheists. They said they were neither Jews nor Christians. They called themselves "Hanifs" (dissenters from idolatry), and said they followed the religion of Abraham.

One day Muhammad returned from the cave on Mount Hira in a greatly agitated state of mind. Later, Khadijah told us that a great angel had appeared to Muhammad and appointed him a prophet to the Arab people. This was the year 610.

Muhammad had many subsequent experiences in which "revelations" were given to him. It was three years before Muhammad would share these things with us.

Then Muhammad began to

preach against all the social evils of our day, including idolatry. A small group of believers built up around him. I was one of them.

By the year 619, the leaders of Mecca were beginning to get very upset with Muhammad. Not only did he attack the shrine trade connected to their idol worship, but also he uncovered the greed and dishonest business practices of the leaders of Mecca. By the year 622, plots were afoot to kill Muhammad. Threats were made against the rest of us, too.

Two hundred miles to the north, the leaders of five Arab tribes from the city of Yathrib, later called "Medina," appealed to Muhammad to come and live among them, to moderate their feuds and to be a "prophet of God" to them. I was one of those who was sent on ahead. Soon Muhammad joined us. Quickly, everyone recognized Muhammad's leadership ability, as well as his total commitment to serve the one true God, "Allah."

It was in Yathrib that Muhammad became the prophet-leader for all of us. His life became our example. He claimed the words he was receiving were eternal words taken from beside the throne of Allah. And he became the complete and final interpreter of how to live out Allah's divine instructions.

There were eight years of war between the pagans of Mecca and we believers in Yathrib. Eventually, under Muhammad's leadership, we triumphed. Mecca submitted to

619

620

622

630

632

"The Year of Sadness" death of Khadijah and of Abu Talib, Muhammad's uncle and protector.

The "Night Journey" in which the Prophet is taken in one night from Mecca to Jerusalem on a steed provided by the Angel Gabriel.

Emigration to Mecca and later to Yathrib (Medina) to escape assassination.

Conquest of Mecca; the Ka'bah is purified of idols.

Final revelation of the Qu'ran (March 10) to Muhammad; death of Muhammad; succeeded by Abu Bakr as Caliph (June 8).

Muhammad as the "Prophet of Allah."

The *Kaaba* was then cleansed of all of its idols. With control of the *Kaaba*, Muhammad was soon able to unite most of the tribes of Arabia for the first time in history.

Muhammad introduced many reforms. His was a highly ethical religion. It became mandatory to give to the poor and to care for widows and orphans. Unbridled polygamy was brought under control. Women's inheritance rights were introduced. Baby girls were no longer killed.

We prayed five times a day. Fasting was reduced from four months to one month. Everyone was united around one creed, namely, that Allah alone is God and Muhammad is his Prophet. And finally, Muhammad purified the pilgrimage of its pagan customs. As pilgrims, we commemorated the great events in the life of our forefather Abraham and his wife Hagar and their firstborn son, Ishmael.

Jews and Christians often argued with Muhammad. Christians tried to say that God was "Three." The Jews disagreed. The Jews argued that only Jews could be prophets of God. Christians and Jews argued over the crucifixion. Christians even argued among themselves over the nature of Jesus.

In the midst of all of the controversies, Muhammad was given words that established Islam (*Submission*) as the final religion and Muhammad as

the final prophet to mankind. From that point on, believers were to be called Muslims (*those who have submitted to Allah and to Muhammad as his Messenger*).

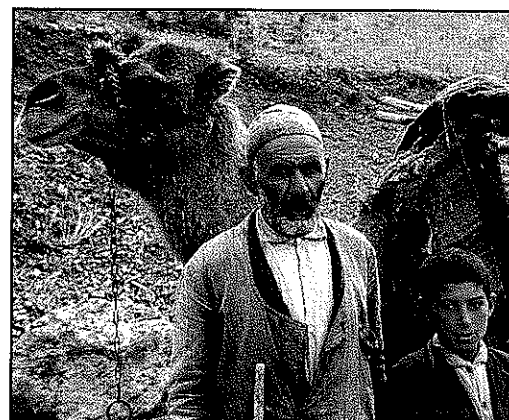
In the beginning, I saw Muhammad as a wonderful gift of God to the Arab people—an Arab Prophet with a "revelation" coming in the Arabic language. Gradually I realized that Muhammad was a prophet for the whole world, and that the Qur'an (*the Recitations given to Muhammad by Allah through the angel Gabriel*) was the final Revelation for all mankind.

On looking back, it was easy to see that the turning point was the year 622, when we all migrated to Yathrib to start life over under Muhammad's leadership. There we had freedom to practice all that Muhammad taught. There we got organized as one Arab nation. There, even Jews and Christians had to submit to Muhammad's rule.

It was a huge shock for all of us one day when we learned that Muhammad had suddenly fallen ill. In a few short days, he was gone. The year was 632.

I wondered if Islam would survive without him. However, in no time at all, his best friend and father-in-law, Abu Bakr, was chosen as his successor. Everything Muhammad had taught had been burned into our daily lives so indelibly that we carried on, just as he had taught us.

The Caliph (*Successor*), Abu Bakr, further consolidated all Arabs



into one nation, carried Islam forward, and launched us into the great military-missionary campaigns that swept both the East and the West. We saw Islam firmly established as the final and greatest religion for the human race.

I felt myself very fortunate to have been born at such a time as to see the birth of the last and greatest expression of monotheistic faith, Islam, through the greatest of all men, the Prophet Muhammad—Prophet of Arabia, Prophet for all mankind.

[As a veteran missionary, I have written this story in an effort to describe the birth of Islam through the eyes of a young Arab man, living in Mecca, and later in Medina, especially during the critical years of 610 to 632 and beyond. If the events described had been written through the eyes of a Christian living in Mecca and Medina at the time, the interpretation would have been quite different.]



This article was taken from a new book by CMM called "Through Muslim Eyes." You can receive a copy of this book, by sending \$3 to CMM, 2032 E. Kearney, #205, Springfield, MO 65803.

From PLO Member to Lover of Jews

When God comes into a life, He completely overhauls it. How else can you explain the great change in my life—a former PLO member who now loves and prays for Jews? This is my story.

Born to an Arab family in the Gaza Strip, I rubbed shoulders with many Jews. Later, my devout Muslim family moved to Saudi Arabia where my Grandma would take me with her when she traveled from Jeddah to Mecca for Friday prayers.

In 1967, when the war broke out between the Arabs and Israel, I was furious and determined to join the PLO. Knowing my father would not approve, I forged his signature for an exit visa. For 2 years I trained in Jordan with the Fatah until my parents located me and brought me back home.

I then lived in a state of continual rebellion for 3 years until my parents agreed to send me to the United States to study. Here I met and married an American and we began our family.

Though my wife went to church occasionally, she was not a strong Christian. Sometimes she would take the children with her, but I was insistent that they be raised as Muslims.

One day my daughter approached me to teach her about Islam. I gave her a Qur'an to read, but her questions prompted me to begin to think more seriously

about spiritual things. Thus began the journey that would eventually lead to the healing of my heart.

Involved in the restaurant business, I had many ups and downs. At a particularly low point when we were losing our lease, Charlie, a kind business friend, reached out to me in a special way, telling me about a vacant funeral home. I had already looked at the place and told Charlie that I really wasn't interested because the place gave me the creeps.

Charlie laughed and said, "That's because you don't have the fear of God in you. But I can fix that. I have connections."

I was annoyed that he would say that I, a good Muslim, didn't fear God. But from that moment, his words "I have connections" pierced my heart.

After many delays, Charlie finally took me to his home and talked to me about Jesus Christ. I had no interest in hearing this. I thought I knew Jesus, but all I really knew were a few Qur'anic facts about Him.

When Charlie read from the Gospel of John and brought me to the Christ of the Bible, my life was transformed.

A few days later, I signed a lease with a Jewish landlord for a new restaurant facility. When I realized my normal hatred for Jews was not there, the Lord said to me, "*You have been changed and cleansed, even though you were*


trained to hate these people. How can you worship Me and hate My people? The Jews were on My mind from the beginning."

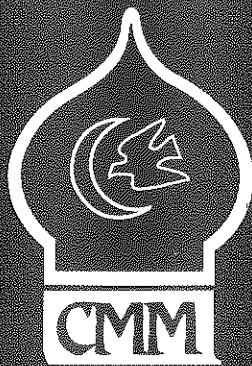
Since then I have prayed for the Jewish people, for peace in Jerusalem, and for God to restore them to their land. My contacts with them in the restaurant gave me many opportunities to share my testimony, and they responded to my changed life.

I also came to understand about Islam. I had believed that Islam was a religion from heaven; now I realized it wasn't. I realized my extended family was not in line with God and began praying intensely for them.

My relationship with my family also changed. Though my wife was skeptical, she noticed the difference in my behavior and attitude and she too accepted Christ as her Savior.

My teenage son was overjoyed when he heard I was a Christian. His prayers had been answered. He had already accepted Christ, but had wisely withheld that information from me. Within a year, my changed life won my daughter as well.

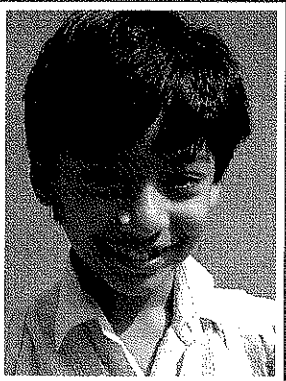
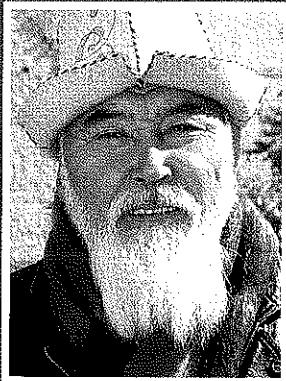
I believe God will someday take me back to the Middle East to minister in the Muslim world. I am eager for this to happen, but I have a lot to learn. For now I am content to work with the local Muslim community and the hurting people in northeast Missouri. 



Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...



Praying for Muslims Around the World!



Friday, January 2, 1998. Please pray

...that the Church in Bangladesh will seize every opportunity to reach out to the Muslim majority that is exhibiting a great openness toward the gospel.

...for a small group of believers that meets monthly in a city in the Netherlands near the German border. Pray that they will grow in love, unity, and the knowledge of the Lord.

...for the thousands of Assyrian Christians who live among the Kurds in northern Iraq. This is an extremely tense time as they are being threatened and persecuted by fundamentalist Kurds.

Friday, January 9, 1998. Please pray

...that God will help with the follow-up from the two children's camps which were held last July in Turkey.

...for a just and lasting solution to the present conflict in Afghanistan. Wherever the Taliban, the ultra-fundamentalist Muslims, are in control, there are threats against Christian workers.

...for the protection of the handful of Christians on the island of Lombok, located east of Bali in Indonesia. May they not lose heart, living with a Muslim majority of 3 million on this island that has 30 Muslim missionaries seeking to establish mosques all along the road.

Friday, January 16, 1998. Please pray

...that Bible studies being translated into the Azerbaijani language will be effectively used to disciple new believers. There are an estimated 1,000 Azerbaijani believers.

...that Niger will remain open to the gospel and that God will break down the social, religious, and spiritual barriers that exist there.

...that the constitutional revision being planned in Malaysia will not go through. It will completely forbid apostasy from Islam, thus making a difficult situation even more difficult.

...for Christians in Juba, Sudan to stand firm in their faith, despite all troubles, pressure, and persecution.

Friday, January 23, 1998. Please pray

...that in the present climate of openness among the Lebanese, the gospel will have a great impact, especially through radio broadcasts.

...for the Irwin Chair of Islamics at North Central Bible College in Minneapolis that is being led by a CMM team member next week.

...for a young Christian in Uzbekistan who has been charged with pastoring an unregistered church. The church applied for registration in 1995, but was refused because its members were said to be "involved in religious missionary activity."

Friday, January 30, 1998. Please pray

...for the CMM team member who is teaching a class at Addis Bible College in Ethiopia during the next 3 weeks.

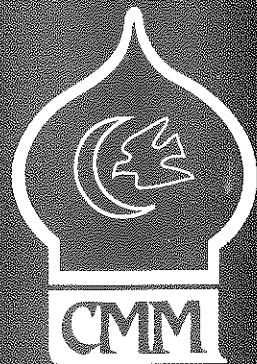
...that God will bless the efforts being made by Christians to reach out to the Kurds from northern Iraq who have been resettled in 75 cities in the United States. Since late 1996, 7,000 Kurds have come to our shores.

...for the tens of thousands of Moroccan families who received a Gospel when they returned to Morocco from the European holidays. Pray that many will come to know the Lord through the Word.

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 6, 1998. Please pray

...for the CMM team member who will be teaching an Islamics course in a Bible college in Central Asia.

...for the indigenous congregations in Central Asia who are under increasing pressure by their respective governments. Pray that they will remain steadfast in difficult circumstances.

...for outreach to Yemen. Radio continues to play an important role in "seed sowing" and nurturing of scattered believers. Christian satellite broadcasts now reach Yemen. Pray that the population will find easy access to these TV programs.

...for Indonesia's Presidential election that is scheduled for next month. There have been growing tensions and resentment which has generated a series of nasty riots, claiming hundreds of lives.

Friday, February 13, 1998. Please pray

...for peace in Albania and a continued proclamation of the gospel.

...for those involved in the translation of ICI University courses into Turkish and the implementation of an effective home-study Bible training program for Turkish believers. Several courses have already been developed and several more are scheduled for the months ahead.

...for unity among the fragmented and often disunited Church in Algeria. Pray for more cooperation and for protection of the tiny Christian community.

...for the many Muslims who are studying the Scriptures via correspondence courses in response to radio broadcasts. Pray that they will grow in their understanding and make commitments to Christ.

Friday, February 20, 1998. Please pray

...for more churches and Christian groups to partner with unreached people groups in order to see strong local churches established.

...for protection of converts in Iran. Pray that the new government will not make an attempt to crack down on the Church in order to give proof to fundamentalists that they are also loyal radicals.

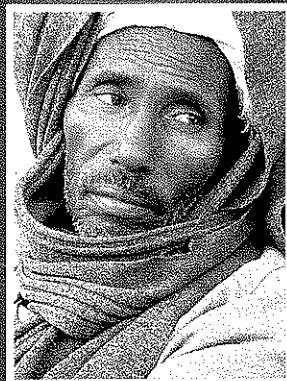
...for S.C. and his sister, young Muslim converts in the Philippines who need spiritual wisdom and strength to stand against the pressures from their family to revert. Continue to pray for local Christians to minister to their needs until they become well established in their new faith.

Friday, February 28, 1998. Please pray

...that God will intervene in the situation concerning the new law on religion that was passed by the Russian Parliament, the Duma, and the Federation Council. This law says that religious groups must be present in Russia for 15 years before they can publish and distribute religious literature, or invite foreigners for preaching activities. It also curtails many other religious activities of these groups.

...for the tens of thousands of Maguindanao Muslim villagers who fled from the riots to Cotabato, Philippines. Many heard the gospel for the first time through the outreach of the local Christian community in Cotabato. Pray that the Muslim refugees will make a lasting commitment to Christ and be properly nurtured.

...for the 200,000 Muslim refugees from Myanmar (formerly Burma) who are now living in Bangladesh.



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

—(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)