

INTERCEDE

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IN SEARCH OF BARAKA

by David F. Arzouni

I was about twelve years old when I first saw the saint whom the Murids of Senegal call master, savior, and even god. I was just a city block away from our house, on my way to school, when out of nowhere a crowd of Muslims rushed toward the Murid mosque nearby. I learned later that word had gotten out that the spiritual leader

of the Murid Muslims had unexpectedly come there for prayer. Within minutes I witnessed a scene that is nearly as vivid in my mind today as it was then. Amidst shouting and shoving, people pushed past me; some even leaped over me in their attempt to get closer to an old man being hurriedly escorted to a waiting car. Everyone seemed to desperately want to touch him. Many others threw themselves down to kiss the ground he had walked upon. Others fought to pick up what they deemed to be holy sand under his feet.

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Though I had never seen anything quite this extraor-

dinary before, I needed no explanation. I knew that these men were seeking *baraka*. Islam encompasses the notions of blessing, power, grace, protection, favor and anointing into the single concept of *baraka*. To these Muslims in Senegal, members of the *Qadiriya Sufi* order (Islamic mystics), direct contact with their spiritual leaders is the highest form of *baraka*. In my family, *baraka* matters a lot. However, as Shi'a Muslims we seek it differently. We have no living saint to venerate, no dust to eat. Rather, we seek blessing and protection by reciting special Qur'anic verses or by wearing a white thread on our wrists.

Even as a child my father taught us that the *Muriddiya* form of Islam, especially the worship of a man as if he were God, was wrong.

"True Islam," my father said, "looks only to Allah for help."

It was not until much later that I understood that all Muslims of all sects and background sought help in many ways that are not approved by orthodox Islam.

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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



During the last few weeks, I had a wonderful time of ministry in Brazil. Over the last century Brazil has experienced significant revival and a strong evangelical church is now numbered conservatively at 30 million. Pentecostals make up 88 percent of this total. This places Brazil as a leader in the evangelical and Pentecostal Christian world. We must praise God for His outstanding blessings.

Significant numbers of Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia have come to Brazil, and they are actively propagating their message.

There is, however, a significant religious influence in Brazil that is often overlooked. Islamic mosques are being built throughout this nation. Significant numbers of Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia have come to Brazil, and they are actively propagating their message. I had an opportunity to visit one mosque on Friday during their community prayers. I found a congregation comprised not only of immigrants but also of Brazilian converts.

Two of my teaching assignments in Brazil were in missionary training colleges. In both schools I found highly-motivated and gifted young men and women. Not only do they have the desire to reach the unevangelized with the gospel, but they also have the gifts and abilities to do this. Many of these fine, young missionary candidates feel that God is calling them to a life of ministry among Muslim people. For this I am thankful.

This whole experience in Brazil reemphasized in my heart some things the Holy Spirit has been saying to me the last six years.

Wherever God is calling us to serve Him in this world, we are going to have face-to-face encounters with a growing Muslim community. This means that all Christians who have committed themselves to ful-


fill the “Great Commission” must be ready to wisely and effectively minister to Muslims. I am personally convinced that the broad geographical spread of Islam is more of a spiritual opportunity for God’s people than it is a threat. But we must prepare ourselves to seize these God-given opportunities.

In the next generation, should Jesus tarry, there are going to be thousands of new missionaries working around the world. A great majority of these will come from the new “sending nations” of the Church. What will this mean to the traditional sending churches—those in North America and Europe?

First, we should thank God that our prayers have been answered—that He is calling and sending “new laborers” into the harvest fields.

There will always be places of fruitful service for men and women who are willing to lead with hearts of genuine servanthood.

Second, we need to determine how this will affect the usefulness of missionaries from North America and Europe. Where, exactly, will we fit into this new “mix” of missionaries? I believe that long-term, career missionaries from the developed or “first world” are going to continue to have a significant place of fruitful service for the Kingdom—but only if they are willing to fill a servant’s role. We will not be successful harvesters if we base everything on our financial investment and control of money. Nor will we succeed just because of our advanced education. I believe we will only succeed because of our willingness to serve. There will always be places of fruitful service for men and women who are willing to lead with hearts of genuine servanthood.

I pray that God will continue to call and raise up qualified and gifted laborers for the world-wide harvest. I pray also that we will all be willing to commit ourselves to the challenge of truly becoming servant leaders. 

I AM FREE!

testimony submitted by Rasheed

In our modern world, the airwaves, the printed page, the amplified voice and the testimony of life all take their turn in standing up to witness.

As you might imagine, witnessing is a two-way street. It is not only the messengers of truth who are active in proclamation, but also messengers who know not the Truth.

There are Islamic schools of evangelism, Islamic missionaries and seemingly endless resources from Islamic countries to support their evangelism work.

Though some of their methods are similar to ours, other methods they use are not. Take the example of Samson*.

Samson is an evangelist. Further, he teaches at a school that trains Muslims how to evangelize Christians. He has made several trips to Christian areas and has participated in the 'evangelizing' of Christians.

However, this week Samson approached some pastors in desperation. With humility he approached them and said, "Please can you help me? No one else has been able to answer my question."

Sammy went on to explain that he has had a re-occurring vision of a man with a bright white robe, a white beard and a flaming sword in his hand.

In the vision this man appears to Samson and says, "You can not hurt my people any more!"

Samson asked the pastors, "Who is this man, and what does he want from me?"

He went on to explain to the pastors his involvement in Islamic evangelism. He related, "We would pull Christians aside and ask them to become Muslims. If they would, we gave them money. If they did not, we would kill them. I remember one instance when I killed 60 Christians in one day."

After a while, he returned to his nation's capital

and began to teach in this training school. It was there that his vision started.

The vision haunted him. It appeared whenever he prostrated himself to pray.

When he told his Muslim friends about the vision, they thought he was crazy. Thinking that perhaps they were right, he had gone to a hospital for the mentally afflicted, but they could offer no help.

Repeatedly this dream of a man in white with a sword haunted him. Always the man would say, "You cannot kill my people anymore." Finally, in desperation, Samson had made his way to these pastors.

The pastors opened the Book to Acts 9 and shared with Samson the story of Paul on the Damascus road.

Upon hearing the story, Samson lifted up his voice in a wail and collapsed on the ground.

"That is me!" he cried. "I have done terrible things against the Christ. What can I do to be saved?"

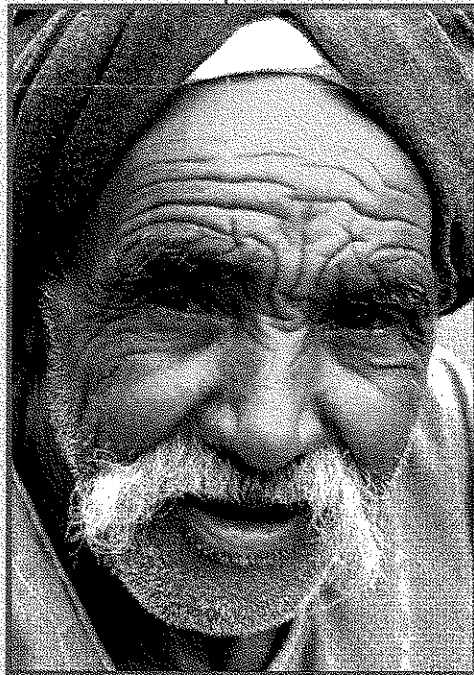
The pastors were able to gently lead him in prayer.

After the prayer, Samson rose to his feet and stripped off the Qur'anic amulet tied in leather to his upper arm. Casting it on the ground he declared, "I AM FREE!"

Yes, the road of evangelism is a congested one. There are lots of convert seekers, but only one Life Changer.

Please pray for Samson. His most difficult days are ahead of him. He too will have to suffer for the name of Christ, but oh what an impact he might have for The Way—the very way he tried to stamp out, just as his kindred spirit Saul did.

Would you pray with us that Samson will become a 21st century apostle?



* Samson is not his real name

CMM Ministry Reports

January - June 1999

"I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it" (Revelation 3:8).

God's Open Doors!

Without doubt, God has opened some incredible doors of ministry for CMM this year! Rejoice with us as we share with you some of ministry opportunities we have had this year!

PHILIPPINES

ROXAS CITY & MANILA: From January 1-15, Dale Fagerland and Jim Bennett held Muslim Awareness Seminars in these cities. Many of the 45 attending these sessions were overseas workers who are primarily employed in Middle East nations. During the last day of the seminar, delegates expressed

and for teaching them effective ways to reap.

BAGUIO: From April 12 to June 4, CMM partnered with the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary to hold the 1999 Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS). This year 31 students from 9 nations enrolled. These students represented eight different organizations.

"That the initiative and finances for this training institute came from an Indonesian Assemblies of God pastor and APTS alumnus is testimony to the fact that the Spirit of God is calling forth anointed leadership from all nations to all nations," associate director of IIS Dale Fagerland stated.

"Highly-motivated students invested 8 weeks of their lives in intensive training for a lifetime of effective ministry to Muslims," Fagerland continued. "These potential world-changers all testified that they are returning to their places of ministry with greater knowledge, transformed attitudes, clearer perspectives and increased vision and zeal to implement biblically-sound approaches to Muslims.

"Since two-thirds of the world's Muslims live in Asia, there are few outreaches more strategic for CMM than IIS. This field-initiated session strikes at the

heart of CMM's reason for being...to equip God's chosen for frontier service," Fagerland concluded.

In addition to Fagerland and Paul Parks, teachers for IIS included David Arzouni, Dr. Don McCurry, John Gilchrist, Dr. Greg Livingstone and Dr. Sobhi Maleki. Each of these highly-qualified teachers have spent decades in ministry to Muslims.

Already plans are being made for IIS 2000.

AFRICA

ETHIOPIA: From January 20 to February 4, team member Harry Morin taught a 12-day bloc course on *"Islam: Introduction and Approach"* to students at the Addis Ababa Bible College.

Harry relates, "My class of students was an especially keen group of dedicated young people who absorbed the class material with scholastic ability and spiritual fervor. Of the 34 students, 15 indicated a leaning toward ministry to Muslims.

"I sensed a wonderful enthusiasm for the class and a special work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of several students who recognized a need for changed attitudes.

"After completing the course, one student handed me a note which said, 'I have to testify about this because it takes more than a miracle to create this change in my life. I have received a call for the Muslim world, but it was very difficult for me to change my attitude toward Muslims. Because of this course, God has changed my heart. My outlook is changed and my heart is



thanks that God had brought CMM's team to open their eyes and their hearts to the harvest field of Muslims where they live and work,

filled with love. When I used to hear the Muslim prayer call, I was disturbed and would rebuke Muslims. But now that call is for me...a call to rescue. That work of the Holy Spirit took place during this class."

CAMEROON: From January 27 to February 6 Dale and Jim conducted an extensive Muslim Awareness Seminar in northern Cameroon.

Pastor Martin, the district presbyter in that area, had a sincere interest in Muslim evangelism, but admitted that there were very few Muslim converts in their churches.

"Our hearts were deeply moved as we listened to pastors and workers, one after another, lead out in heart-felt prayers of repentance as

Dale, whose missionary career began in Burkina, said, "Each day we conducted a 4-hour seminar at the Bible schools, followed by nightly services. In every session and every service we are pleased to report that our ministry was accompanied by a rich anointing from God and was well received in each of these venues."

NIGERIA: Team member Paul Parks was in Nigeria from February 1-10, teaching a bloc session on Islam at Evangel Theological Seminary in Jos. He reported that the 10 graduate students in his class were very interested in outreach to Muslims. Among the students were pastors, district officials and the national director of media.

NORTH AFRICA

In March, Ron Peck, Jim Bennett and Paul Parks were in three nations of North Africa.

One week Ron and Paul guided 18 student participants in CMM's first *Prayer Pilgrimage*. They spent seven days visiting and praying at some key spiritual locations in one nation.

"This was an incredible open door!" Ron relates. "The lives of all who participated in the Prayer Pilgrimage were changed. Only eternity will reveal the effect these students may someday have on people's lives in Arab lands."

RUSSIA

MOSCOW: From April 13 through May 7, Harry taught a bloc session entitled "*Cultural Communication in a Muslim Context*" to 20 students at Moscow Theological Institute. Four students came from predominantly-Muslim countries in the former Soviet Union. These students are planning to return to their nations to

share the good news with those who have never heard.

UNITED STATES

PENNSYLVANIA: Jim Bennett and Tommy Hodum (CMM's stateside representative) held a Muslim Awareness Seminar for pastors in the Pennsylvania-Delaware District. Over 130 pastors and workers attended.

Following the session, District Missions Director Harold Crosby wrote, "You have been a special blessing to our pastors and people. Your inspiration and vision have encouraged us to be more diligent in the ministry our Lord has called us to. More importantly, you have opened new doors of opportunity to us to reach a people we give little attention to. Please accept our thanks for sharing your hearts with us."

BRAZIL

From May 10-28, CMM Director Ron Peck taught Muslim Awareness Seminars on four Bible school campuses. More than 225 men and women, called by God for ministry, attended his sessions. As he has stated in his editorial, these weeks were very fruitful for training future ministers to Muslims.

During the remaining months of 1999, CMM team members will be ministering in the Ukraine, back in Nigeria and in India. Please pray that our ministry and teaching times will continue to be effective and that they will result in a greater harvest among Muslims.

Harry Morin was on target when he said, "The time is ripe and the Lord is truly raising up laborers who now look for training and direction to go forth into the harvest!"

CMM exists to train harvest laborers for the vast field of Muslims. We thank God our labors for Him are producing fruit!



they confessed apathy, lack of vision, misunderstandings, bitterness and even hatred toward Muslims," Jim relates. "With broken spirits they were pleading with God to forgive them and help them redeem the time—pledging to be available instruments in God's hands to bring Muslims to Jesus."

BURKINA FASO: At the invitation of General Superintendent Pawentaore Ouedraogo, Jim and Dale conducted seminars in four of the six Bible schools in Burkina Faso from February 7 to 20.

IN SEARCH OF BARAKA

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Baraka as “blessing” is needed to succeed in various enterprises. Sometimes the seeking of *baraka* is used in my family as an excuse for some sort of divination. Even to this day my father often asks my stepmother to perform *istikhâra*, the practice of randomly opening the Qur’an, and interpreting the contents to indicate whether Dad should undertake a journey or engage in a particular activity that week.

Baraka as “protection” is needed to offset the effects of various kinds of evil. Muslims teach that in the first month of the Islamic year not only does God decree what is to happen to men in the course of the year, but that it is also a time of great agitation in the unseen world among devils and *jinn* (spirit beings). So there was hardly a Shi’a Muslim family in my hometown that did not encourage their children to tie on their right wrist a white thread over which special prayers had been said for protection.

All kinds of fears permeated our lives as Muslims. Beyond the formal aspects of our religion, we practiced many things that stemmed more from personal needs and our view of the world than from our orthodox Islamic traditions. Even though we professed trust in Allah and His mercy, in reality no one could be sure that he was on our side. We could only hope that he would grant us favor.

There is nothing in the tenets of “true Islam” that is conducive to total trust in God, because Allah can decree good or evil for man at any time. Yet because we longed for real solutions to real life problems, we naturally seized upon every opportunity to alter our divinely-set fate by any means. Paradoxically, we would do so in Allah’s name.

Should the teaching of the Qur’an or the *Hadith* (the approved written Islamic Tradition) suggest even implicitly that *baraka* could be obtained in a certain way, then Muslims are quick to use it—often twisting whatever is said in those teachings to justify all kinds of practices that are essentially animistic.

In our home, when each of my 11 siblings were infants, we slept on a pillow to which was attached an amulet containing special verses of the Qur’an. This was done to ward off what is commonly called the “evil eye” among Muslims.

One of my sisters refused to step outside of the

house at certain hours of the day because of the strong possibility of being harmed by evil *jinn*.

None of these “helps” would be fully approved by orthodox Islam, but neither would objections be raised about them in most instances.

All of these practices expose the presence of some enduring felt needs of the Muslim heart.

What is one to do when confronted with the crises of life? Why are one’s prayers not answered?

Why does Allah seem so far away, even though Muslim teachers proclaim that he is closer to man than his jugular vein?

What if trouble is really brought on by the secret curses of one’s enemy?

The sad fact is, Islamic *baraka* is illusive and short lived. The average Muslim’s issues and struggles are never resolved by these practices. The fears, the longing for a good conscience, the thirst for a lasting peace, the silent cry for real help in time of need—none of these can be appeased by adhering to orthodox Islam.

Neither do these things deliver a person from evil or heal a person’s body and soul. If that were so, Muslims would not constantly return to *baraka* peddlers and special practices in times of crisis.

If a Muslim believer becomes aware of this, if the futility of it all finally dawns ever so slightly in his mind, it saps him of all hope and causes decay in his soul.

That is what happened to me. It led me to question everything. And it drove me to an unexplainable despair.

Then came the day when someone told me that I needed to be born-again. It was only when that occurred that I found deliverance and a lasting peace with God through the gospel of Christ. Now, so have two of my brothers and two of my sisters.

But who will tell the struggling multitudes of Muslims that the answer they are seeking is found only in Christ?

Who will take the time to *know* them and talk *with* them—not to them—about their needs and fears?

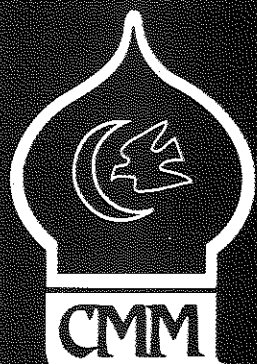
Who will tell them where true *baraka* is found?

Will you?



Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...

Praying for Muslims
Around the World!



Friday, September 3, 1999. Please pray
...for a CMM team member as he teaches an Islamics course at a Bible institute in Kiev *for the next 3 weeks*. Pray that the students who participate in this class will become highly motivated to share the good news with Muslims.

...that many Christian women will be engaged in prayer for Muslim women at all times, but especially tomorrow, September 4, which has been declared the International Day of Prayer for Women.

...for protection for women from Muslim backgrounds who have become believers and for solutions for meeting their special needs.

Friday, September 10, 1999. Please pray
...for Ahmed Abdul Rahman who has been sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment in Sudan. Pray that God will perform a miracle and set him free.

...that satellites, as well as the Internet, will be powerful tools used by God to penetrate the hearts of Arab peoples whose rulers have prevented their subjects from receiving outside news and information—keeping them ignorant of Jesus Christ and His redemptive plan.

...for Christian women, such as Vivienne Stacey, who are actively working on behalf of Muslim women. Pray that a large army of female missionaries will be recruited to bring the gospel to women.

Friday, September 17, 1999. Please pray
...for the many Muslims in Gaza and the West Bank who are requesting Christian correspondence courses, Bibles and other literature.

...that the Lord will raise up translators with a burden for the Hassaniya-speaking people of Western Sahara. Little of the gospel is available in this language and there are no Christian radio or TV programs. Pray that more powerful equipment will be available to bring the gospel by radio and TV from the Canary Islands.

...for wisdom for Christian fellowships of former Muslims who have been requested by the police to submit lists of all the attendees at their services and details of the meetings being held. Pray that these police threats will come to nothing and that religious freedoms will be upheld.

Friday, September 24, 1999. Please pray
...that permission will be granted for Christian literature to be imported into Iraq later this year. Many Iraqis have a hunger for spiritual literature because of the terrible situation in their country.

...for the children's clubs which are functioning in Tunisia. Pray that these will be used as a means to penetrate this country with the gospel.

...that partnerships will be developed for the production of quality programs in Turkish for SAT-7, a satellite television service for Christians in the Middle East and North Africa.

...for the Kosovar refugees who are being relocated in the Chicago area, as well as elsewhere. Pray that they will not be lost in the big city but that Christians will reach out to assist them in every way.

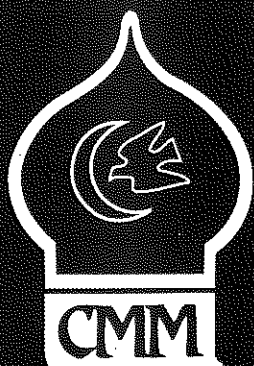


I urge, then, first of all that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone.

—(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)

Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...

Praying for Muslims
Around the World!



Friday, October 1, 1999. Please pray

...for the newly-elected civilian president of Nigeria. Pray for his protection and that he will be able to bring stability and religious freedom back to this country.

...for a Turkish fellowship that has been averaging one new convert per week. Pray that more people will take part in the follow-up of these new believers.

...that the leadership in Cyprus and Turkey will find an amiable way to end the ongoing dispute between the Greeks and Turks over Cyprus.

Friday, October 8, 1999. Please pray

...for CMM team members who are teaching classes in Islamics today at North Central University in Minneapolis. The team will also conduct a Muslim Awareness Seminar with area pastors Friday evening and all day Saturday. Pray that participants will be inspired to become involved in outreach to Muslims in their areas.

...for God's continued protection on the bookstore that was opened this year in Gaza. Pray that the literature available through this bookstore will provide a source for spiritual growth in the region.

...for the physical and spiritual health of the many poor Coptic Christians in Egypt.

Friday, October 15, 1999. Please pray

...for unreached tribes and areas in the Sudan. Many in western Sudan have not yet heard the gospel.

...that more Christians will realize the impact they can have in Muslim countries through teaching English as a second language (ESL) and prepare themselves for this ministry.

...that women will again be given the freedom to work in Afghanistan and that hope will replace the despair that has resulted in a high suicide rate among women in that nation.

Friday, October 22, 1999. Please pray

...for effective follow-up of people who have shown an interest in the gospel at a recently-organized Turkish church.

...for the students who will be participating in the Muslim Awareness Seminar being conducted October 28 and 29 at Zion Bible Institute in Barrington, Rhode Island, by CMM team members. Pray that these students will be challenged with the need of Muslims and clearly understand their personal responsibility to those who have never heard the gospel.

...for the outreach to Indian and Pakistani Muslims who drive taxis in the Chicago area.

Friday, October 29, 1999. Please pray

...for Christians in southern Sudan, especially in the Wau area, that they may become established in the Christian faith. Many weak Christians are turning to Islam for economic reasons because of food shortages.

...that God will bless the many media outreaches to Muslims in the Middle East. Pray that Arabic stories and other literature will be used by God to capture the hearts of these needy people.

...for protection for people involved in Bible distribution in Morocco.



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—(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)