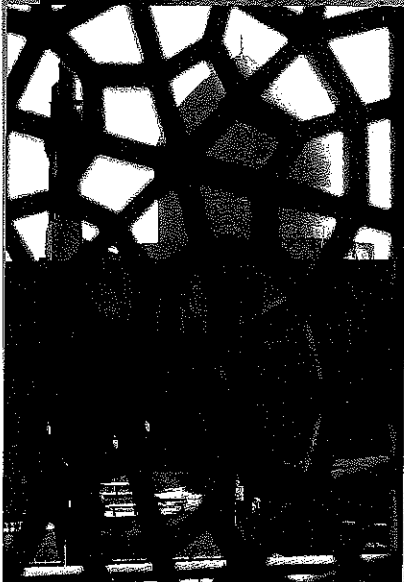


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HEAVEN AND HELL....



...THROUGH MUSLIM EYES

by
Ronald S. Peck
GMM Director

For the Muslim, end-time events and life after death are clear and understandable. There are similarities to biblical teaching, but there are also distinct differences.

In Sura 3:185, the Qur'an states: *Every soul shall have a taste of death: And only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense.*

There is a popular view in our Western society today that everyone who dies automatically goes to heaven. The Muslim view of these important matters, based on the teaching of the Qur'an, is much closer to biblical teaching than these popular Western ideas.

For the Muslim, the Day of Judgment after death is real and sure. In the teaching of Islam, there is a *Book of Deeds* kept for each person. Two recording angels are assigned to each person and they record every word and deed—whether great or small. Sura 80:10-12 says, *And surely there are keepers over you, honorable recorders...they know what you do.*

Another Qur'anic reference says, *And the Book shall be placed, then thou wilt see the guilty fearing from what is in it; and they will say: Oh! Woe to us! What a book is this! It omits not a small one nor a great one but numbers them all.*

According to Islamic teaching, life after death is far beyond anything we could compare with this life. Sura 17:21...*But verily the Hereafter is more in rank and gradation and more in excellence.* From this reference, it is clearly understood that life after death is not to be compared with anything we have experienced in this life.

The Islamic word for Paradise is *al-Jannah*. It conveys the thought of *a walled garden*. It will be a quiet and peaceful place of shade and refreshment. There will be fruit trees and cool flowing fountains. It is also described as a place of milk and honey.

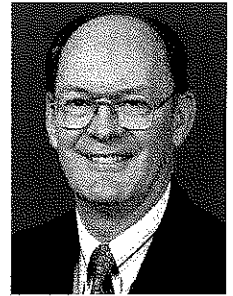
The passages in the Qur'an that refer to Paradise are too numerous to mention, but there are some themes referred to repeatedly. The following reference

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Speaking on Behalf of Muslims

*How, then, can they call on people who 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



I have just departed from one of the most Muslim countries in the world—a nation officially closed to missionary work...a nation whose government issues no missionary visas. There are no Christian bookstores for purchasing Bibles and other gospel literature, and converting to Christianity is against the law. One can only describe this nation as an extremely difficult place for gospel work.

I spent six days there, traveling from city to city with a group of college students. These young people had come for just one reason: *to witness to the power of Jesus Christ to change the lives of Muslims.*

Incredibly, we found people very open to our friendship and experienced a powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit as we interceded for them in prayer!

The college students were received with warmth and hospitality over and over again. They were invited into Muslim homes for tea and conversation, and during those times were able to share the truth of the gospel in beautiful and creative ways.

I met new converts from Islam—wonderful and intelligent young people who have found new spiritual life through faith in Jesus Christ. Their lives seem to overflow with joy. I was thrilled as I listened to their Holy Spirit-inspired worship and praise in song in a language that has been used only by Muslims for hundreds of years.

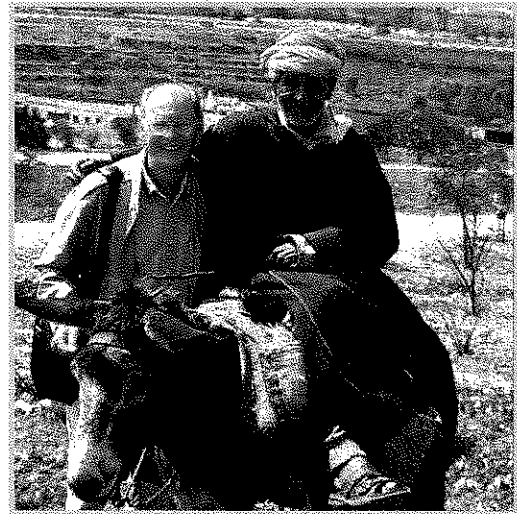
I met some wonderful Christian workers from other Western countries. Some were retired, giving time that could be spent in leisure and the enjoyment of grandchildren to the work of the Kingdom—making faithful and significant contributions so that the Church can be planted in a Muslim society.

One fine Christian couple had been married for only six months. These young people were well qualified academically and could easily be placed in good jobs anywhere in the world. Yet they have chosen to live in a city of 60,000 where there is no church. They carry on their work in agriculture in a village that has only one secret believer. They are making a

significant difference in the livelihood of many poor Muslim farmers—all for the love of Jesus Christ.

I met a single lady who has spent several years in this country sharing the message of Jesus. When she first went to the area, she realized that she could have long-term involvement in the nation only if she obtained some special training. Thus she returned to her home country and earned a graduate degree. That degree opens the door for her to fulfill the call of God on her life.

My recent visit has reconfirmed that all of God's heroes did not live in years gone by. There are still pioneers of the faith, taking the message of Christ into some very difficult situations at a genuine personal sacrifice and at some risk to themselves and their families. I have come away from these experiences challenged



in my own heart to do more for the Lord's kingdom.

One fact was clear in the hearts of all of the college students traveling with me: Muslims *are* reachable! Those students have a clearer vision and deeper concern for reaching Muslims with the gospel, they see the need and some are now open to investing their lives and influence to share Christ in countries that appear to be "closed."

Friend, no country is "closed" to the work of the Holy Spirit! No country is "closed" to men and women who are willing to give their lives to reach people who need a Savior! With God, all things are possible!





Indonesia

More than 30 Islam-inspired political parties have been formed in Indonesia in preparation for the first parliamentary elections of the post-Suharto era on June 7. In a country where 86 percent of the population is Muslim, Christians remain a vulnerable minority. Christians have an unexpected ally in interim President B.J. Habibie, who declared in January, "We in this nation believe in one God, but there are many roads leading towards Rome." But a Protestant pastor in East Timor said, "We are frightened we may live in another Pakistan or Saudi Arabia by the end of the year." Violence has engulfed parts of the country. In Ambon, 55 people were killed in riots.

—Compass

Sudan

Muslim students tore up and burned Bibles at a Christian book fair in Khartoum. Seven Christian students were injured in the incidents. Muslim students had issued threats during preparations for the fair. When the fair opened, about 60 Muslims attacked the 15 Christians with sticks and stones.

All Bibles were either torn apart or burned, and even the tent was set ablaze. The total damage amounted to about US \$1,000. The incident was hardly reported in the Sudanese media. An eye witness reacted angrily: "If a Christian would have done the same with a single page of the Koran it would have caused a

fury in the country, but now that piles of Bibles are burned, it is not even mentioned on radio or television."

—IDB

Nigeria

February ended in Nigeria with the very momentous voting in of Olusegun Obasanjo as Nigeria's first democratically-elected president in over 15 years. For the past nine months God has been doing remarkable things in Nigeria in answer to the mounting prayers of God's people. Who could have even DREAMED a year ago that today Nigeria would have a BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIAN as president-elect? A year ago Nigeria was under the heavy thumb of a godless nominal Muslim dictator and there was an acute air of national despondency. Today, things have totally changed. Praise God for this national victory, and also uphold President-elect Obasanjo in prayer.

—PrayerNet

Kosovo

Last month saw two separate fasts called by different Christian churches on behalf of the war-torn province of Kosovo (Kosova to the Albanians). The province, which has a 90 percent Albanian majority, is a part of Serbia, the larger of the two remaining republics within Yugoslavia. Most of the Albanian population is seeking independence. Fighting has flared up in the past year between Serbian forces and guerrillas of the Kosova Liberation Army, which is waging a war for independence on behalf of the Albanian majority. However, as the two recent fasts have shown, the majorities of both groups do not support armed conflict. The conflict has already exacted a huge toll on the Kosovan population. In 1998, nearly 2,000 Albanians were known to have been killed, with a further 100 in January of this year. Some 1,500 are missing. Half a million

people have been forced to flee their homes. Some 450 villages have been destroyed.

—Compass

Maldives

Cinemas in the tiny island nation of the Maldives will not be showing the recent animation film "The Prince of Egypt" after the film was banned by the authorities.

Censors banned the film for animating Moses, who is a prophet in Muslim eyes. Islam frowns on any depiction of prophets, and this is why the "Jesus" film is also banned in the island state. The Maldivian censors even went as far as to say that "The Prince of Egypt" was "pure biblical propaganda."

—IDB

Uzbekistan

Two Uzbek Pentecostals from the Full Gospel Church face long prison terms if convicted of charges leveled against them last month of using and distributing drugs. Currently in prison in Nukus, Pastor Rashid Turibayev and another church member were arrested after a search allegedly found packets containing illegal drugs. The planting of drugs by state security agents is used commonly by the authoritarian Uzbek regime against dissidents. Except for one unconfirmed case last year, this is the first reported use against Christians. Turibayev was previously sentenced in October 1997 to two years of forced labor on charges of holding unsanctioned meetings. Although released from prison and allowed to live at home, he was required to hand over 20 percent of his salary to local authorities as punishment and was not allowed to leave town. Uzbekistan enacted harsh controls on all religious groups last May. Members of several other unregistered churches have been detained and fined for holding religious gatherings in homes in the past month.

—Compass



HEAVEN AND HELL...THROUGH MUSLIM EYES

continued from page 1

is somewhat typical:

*God hath promised to Believers,
Men and women, Gardens
Under which rivers flow,
To dwell therein,
And beautiful mansions
In the Gardens of everlasting bliss.
But the greatest bliss
Is the good pleasure of God:
That is the supreme felicity.*

Qur'an 9:72

So for the faithful Muslim, there is the expectation of "great happiness." A place where they will find their heart's desire.

The Qur'an also has some significant passages about the sensual delights of Paradise which influ-

ence Muslim thinking. One of the shorter passages is Sura 55:54-56: *On couches with linings of brocade shall they recline, and the fruit of the two gardens shall be within their easy reach...therein shall be the damsels with retiring glances, whom neither man nor jinn hath touched before.*

Some Muslim teachers would not interpret this passage, and others like it, literally. They would rather apply these ideas to spiritual bliss. But when we turn our attention from the Qur'an to the traditions canonized in the Hadith, the imagery becomes even more graphic.

In one Hadith, Allah's Apostle said, *"In Paradise there is a pavilion made of a single hollow pearl sixty miles wide, in each corner of which there are wives who will not see those in the other corners, and the believers will visit and enjoy them...and nothing will prevent the people staying in the Garden of Eden from seeing their Lord except the curtain of majesty over His face."*

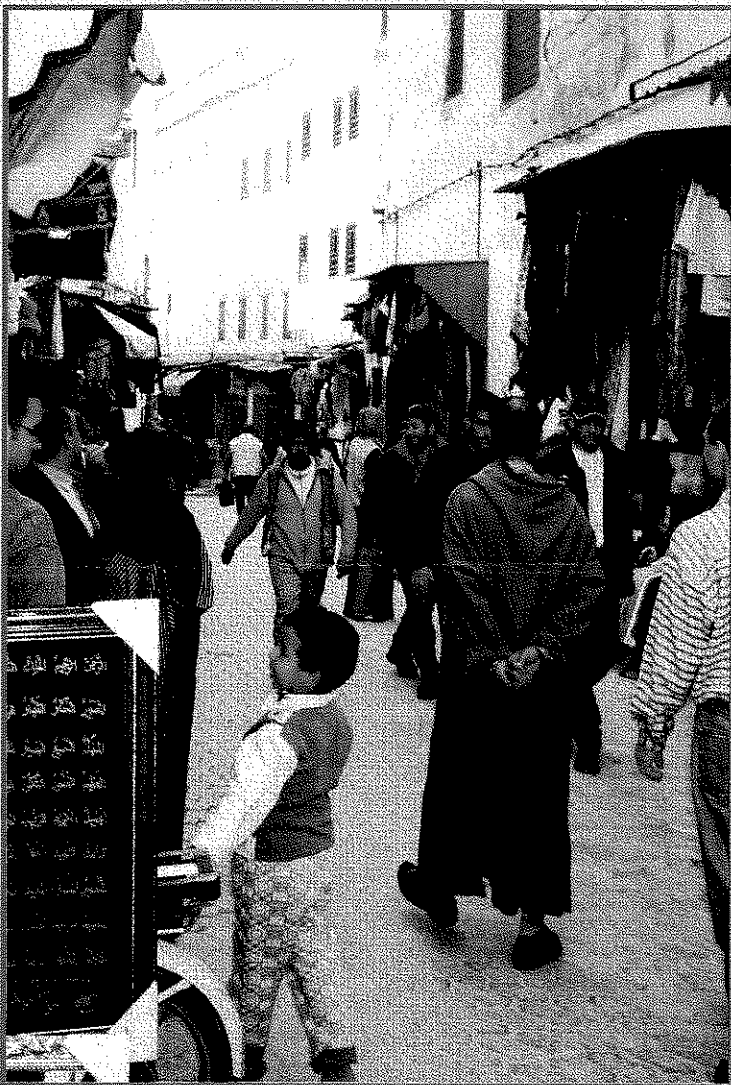
Very little is stated about the rewards that faithful women will receive in Paradise. It all seems to point to a male-dominated experience in life after death.

Another tradition indicates that those who die in the world, young or old, will be made 30 years of age when they enter Paradise.

Another very interesting tradition was narrated by Abu Huraira in which the Prophet said, *"Paradise and the Fire (Hell) argued, and the Fire said, 'I have been given the privilege of receiving the arrogant and the tyrants.' Paradise said, 'What is the matter with me? Why do only the weak and humble among the people enter me?' On that, Allah said to Paradise, 'You are my mercy which I bestow on whoever I wish of my servants.'"*

As we turn our attention from Paradise to the Fire (Hell), let me quote one more tradition as a bridge of transition. Narrated by Abu Huraira, the Prophet said, *"None will enter Paradise but will be shown the place he would have occupied in the Fire (Hell) if he had rejected faith, so that he may be more thankful; and none will enter the Fire (Hell) but will be shown the place he would have occupied in Paradise if he had faith, so that may be a cause of sorrow for him."*

For the Muslim the Fire (Hell) is a reality that should be feared by every person. The Qur'an speaks



often of the sad estate of those who reject the message from God. In Sura 4:56 it is written,

*Those who reject
Our signs, We shall soon
Cast into the Fire:
As often as their skins
Are roasted through
We shall change them
For fresh skins,
That they may taste
The Penalty: for God
Is exalted in Power, Wise.*

Among Muslim scholars there is some difference of opinion regarding who will be consigned to hell and for how long. Some believe that on Judgment Day all will be required to pass over hell on a narrow bridge. Some even say the bridge is as narrow as the edge of a sword. This "bridge" is not spoken of clearly in the Qur'an, but there are statements that are so interrupted. In Sura 19:71 we read, *Not one of you but will pass over it: this is with thy Lord, a decree which must be accomplished.*

Some believe this "passing over" refers to the Bridge. Others feel that this passage indicates that all Muslims will spend some time in hell, however, in a special section that is not so harsh. This somewhat modified approach to an Islamic "purgatory" is designed to purify one of earthly sins and failures.

To answer the question concerning the duration of hell, we will look at Sura 41:28:

*Such is the requital
Of the enemies of God,—
The Fire: therein will be
For them the Eternal Home:
A (fit) requital, for
That they were wont
To reject our Signs.*

This is actually one of the clearest Qur'anic statements regarding the eternal nature of punishment for earthly sins.

Then, if we turn from the Qur'an to the Hadith, there are other ideas that influence the thinking of Muslims regarding eternal suffering. It was narrated by Usama, that the Prophet said, *"I stood at the gate of the Fire and found that the majority of the people entering were women."* Could this explain some of the images of Paradise that are male-oriented?

There is another tradition that would indicate that one's eternal condition will be greatly influenced by the earthly deeds done near the time of one's death. A


Hadith was narrated by Sahl, in which the Prophet said, *"Fire, and verily (the rewards of) the deeds are decided by the last actions (deeds)."*

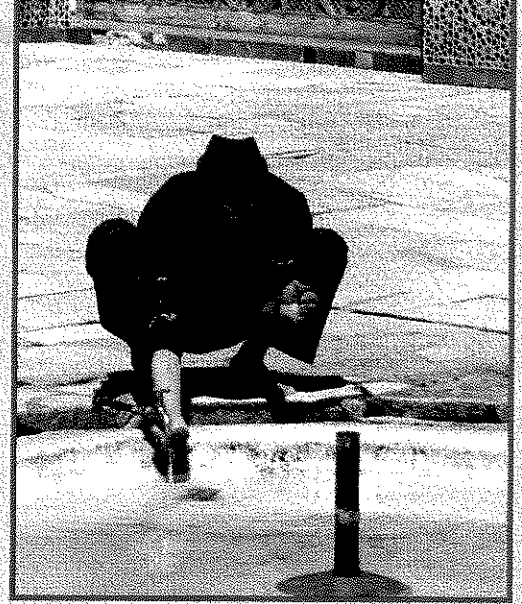
How one ends life's journey is extremely important. This is a sobering thought when we ponder the moral shipwreck of some religious people in their final years.

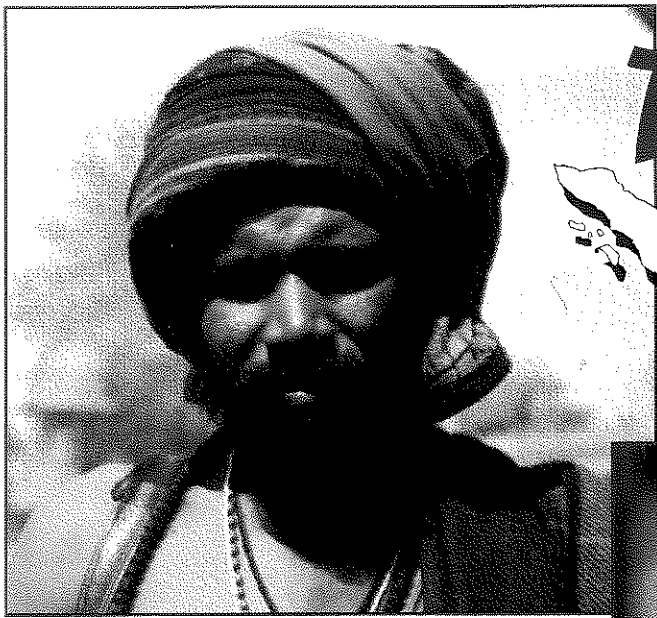
The thought of annihilation is ruled out by our Muslim scholar as he comments on the Qur'anic passage in Sura 14:16-17:

*In front of such a one
Is Hell, and he is given,
For drink, boiling fetid water.
In gulps will he sip it,
But never will he be near
Swallowing it down his throat:
Death will come to him
From every quarter, yet
Will he not die: and
In front of him will be
A chastisement unrelenting.*

In interacting with Muslims for many years, I have found that many, and perhaps most, believe that their eternal state is to be arbitrarily decided by God on Judgment Day. This concept is so deeply ingrained in Muslim thought patterns, most Muslims consider it unthinkable to have confidence or assurance about being accepted by God.

The issue of heaven and hell is one that continues to be debated between Muslims and Christians. Yet the fact remains, *No man cometh unto the father except by me.* Pray with us that Muslims will come to understand this truth of Jesus Christ. 





The Madurese Forgotten?



The unreached people group known as the Madurese live in East Java, Indonesia, and on Madura Island. This hot-headed, needy people has rejected the few serious attempts to bring them the good news. Each of these attempts has been an object of Satan's strong opposition, according to the report in *Operation World*.

Of the 12 million Madurese, there are fewer than 500 known Christians. But God has not forgotten the Madurese; He has a master plan to bring them into the Kingdom. Perhaps Husein* and his wife Fatima* are key instruments in this plan.

Husein, a young Madurese man, had been invited by his friend Benny to attend the International Assembly that was being held in a local hotel. He enjoyed the services and felt free to come regularly because of this locale. However, he was hesitant to give his heart to Christ. Still, he kept coming to the services.

In October 1998, Husein's wife Fatima became ill with tuberculosis. By the end of November, her condition had become critical. With no hope and no money for medicine, Husein went to see his friend Benny. He desperately needed encouragement and someone to lean on in this time of hopelessness.

As Benny and Husein were talking at about 8:30 p.m., Sunjaya, the young pastor of another church in the city, joined them. They immediately went to

prayer for Husein's wife.

At precisely that same time, Fatima, alone in her house, heard a knock at her door. Struggling, she answered, "Come in." But there was no response.

A second time, she heard the knock.

Confused by the lack of response previously, she called out, "Who is it?"

This time a voice answered, "I've come to heal you."

Mustering all of her strength, Fatima went to open the door. As she did so, a gentle breeze blew through the door and she was totally healed.

When Husein returned home and found out what had happened, he was overwhelmed with awe. He accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior!

Could it be that God is raising up Husein to be an evangelist to bring healing to his Madurese people?

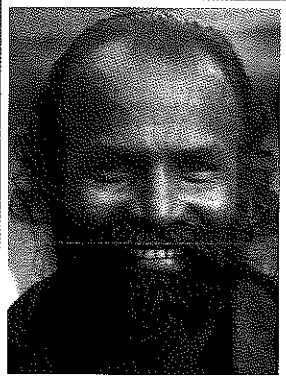
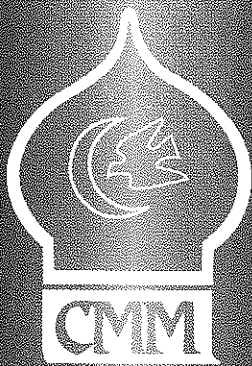
We do not know precisely how God is planning to bring the gospel to the Madurese, but we do know that it is His will to not only bring physical health and healing to Madurese Fatimas but to also bring these needy people spiritual healing.

Let us join in prayer that God's master plan will soon result in many Madurese coming to know Christ as Savior and Lord.



Jumaa Prayer Fellowship

Praying for Muslims
Around the World!



Friday, July 2, 1999. Please pray

...for God to touch the hearts of Malay leaders: the King of Malaysia Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuan'ku Jaafar; Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir; and others in government.

...for the protection of the government of Turkey from all who seek to destabilize it. Several attacks planned by a militant Islamic group in Germany have been thwarted.

...for Serap, a young Kurdish girl who was abducted last December by a Kurdish terrorist group in Germany. Ask God to perform a miracle on her behalf and also to help her parents.

Friday, July 9, 1999. Please pray

...for a Somali woman—who is a believer living in Darwin, Australia. Pray that she will be encouraged in her family situation.

...for the Saharawi, an Arab-Berber people numbering about 200,000 who live in Western Sahara, Algeria, Mauritania, and the Canary Islands. Pray that God will raise up Spanish speaking missionaries to bring them the gospel.

...for the students who will be studying Islamics in the Ukraine the next three weeks. The CMM team member who is teaching this course desires for this training to make an impact.

Friday, July 16, 1999. Please pray

...for the candidate missionaries who will be attending the Islamics courses sponsored jointly by the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary and CMM. Pray that they will apply themselves diligently to these studies for the next two weeks.

...for a former Muslim prisoner who recently helped baptize 20 of his fellow inmates. Pray that his ministry will continue to be effective.

...for all the Christian domestic workers who have been deported back to the Philippines from Saudi Arabia. Pray that they will be encouraged and find new places to minister.

Friday, July 23, 1999. Please pray

...for Kurdish families who have sought refuge in the United Kingdom. Many cannot cope with loneliness, unemployment and new freedom. Broken homes are common outcomes.

...for President Habibie and his cabinet in Indonesia that they will make right decisions in dealing with the economic and social conditions in the country, that justice will prevail.

...that Christians will no longer be satisfied with comfortable evangelism. Pray that more Christians will actively pursue the most difficult unreached people groups in the world.

Friday, July 30, 1999. Please pray

...for all expatriate Christians in Saudi Arabia, especially for those who were arrested and their families. Pray for God's guidance concerning future witness in this country.

...for a camping program which is seeking to minister to the youth of Bosnia and Croatia. Pray for those who have made commitments to Christ during this summer program.

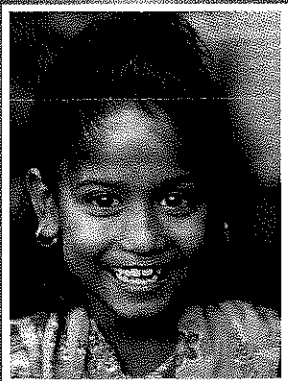
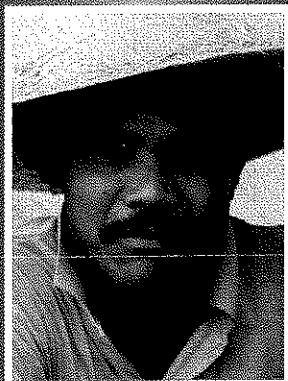
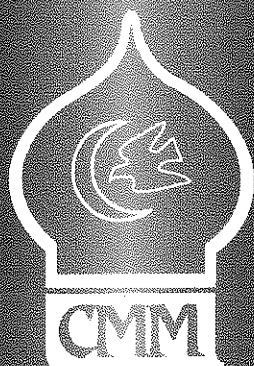
...for the African national missionaries who will be participating next week in a missions training seminar in Malawi. Pray God will give wisdom to the CMM team member who will be teaching.

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!



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

Friday, August 6, 1999. Please pray

...for all who are seeking to use the Internet for witness to Muslims. Pray for wisdom in making effective presentations and in standing against opposing forces who want to deny Christians the right to be heard.

...for a strong church among 10 million Muslim Saudi Arabs. Pray that many will be exposed to Christian literature, radio broadcasts and the Jesus film.

...for the work of the Institute of Bible Translation (located in Stockholm, Sweden). They have translations in progress in Kazak, Karakalpak, Uygur, Dungan and Baluchi. Pray that God will bless this ministry and help them in the preparation of these needy translations.

Friday, August 13, 1999. Please pray

...that Christian English teachers will be called of God to live with and love the Malays. Malaysia is actively recruiting English teachers.

...for the presentation of Veggie-Tales in Arabic, Farsi and Turkish. Middle East Video (MEV) believes that children of the Middle East will enjoy biblical truths portrayed through these tales too.

...for the many Christian refugees in Khartoum North, Sudan. The government has again destroyed many of their makeshift homes along with their fragile existence. Pray for God's intervention and public protest by world Christians.

...that a strong church may be built among the Muslim-animistic Wadaabe Fula people of Niger and Mali.

Friday, August 20, 1999. Please pray

...for the Isawa of Nigeria whose founder was executed as a heretic by orthodox Muslims. Numbering about 1 million, they are closer aligned to Christianity than to Islam. Pray the Lord will call workers with a burden to bring these people into the full light of the gospel.

...for King Hassan and those in authority in Morocco. King Hassan has begun liberalizing the country politically and economically. Pray that he will also make the country more open to Christian worship.

...for refugees who have been fleeing into Albania and Macedonia from the violence in Kosovo. Pray for God's intervention in this desperate situation.

Friday, August 27, 1999. Please pray

...for the many illiterate people of Burkina Faso who now have the opportunity to hear the Word of God through recorded messages in their own languages.

...for continued outreach to Muslims by Christians in Australia. Many Scripture portions were given to Muslim visitors at the Centre of Friendship in Sydney last year.

...for Muslims in Jordan who have come to faith in Christ, whether openly or in secret. Pray they may grow in their faith.

...for protection for Algerian believers in the climate of violence that pervades their country. Pray God will give them boldness to share their faith with anyone who needs hope.