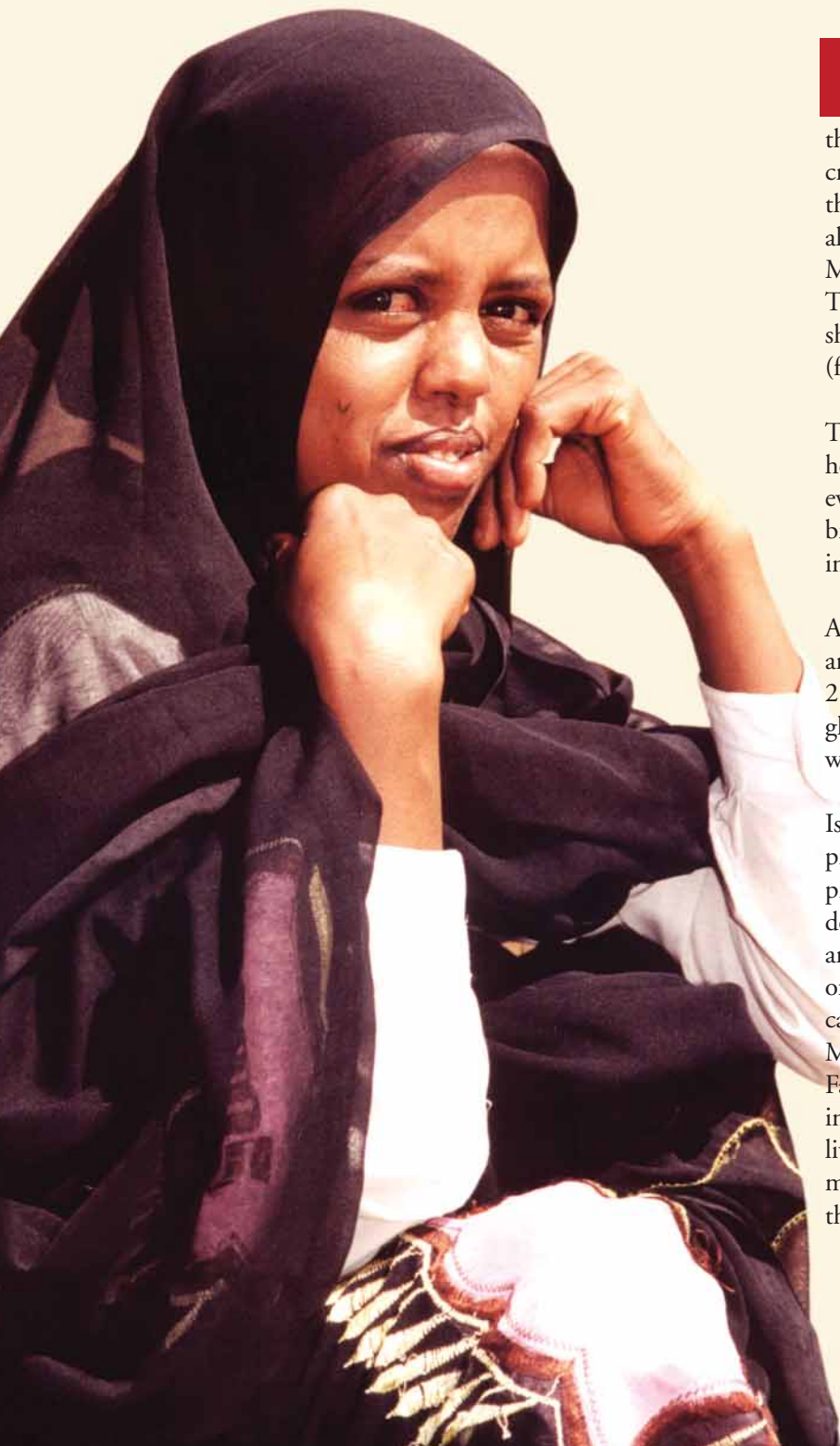


## The Muslim Woman... *Who is She?*



Imagine a summer day on the resort beaches of Larnaca, Cyprus—a tiny island in the Mediterranean Sea near the coast of Lebanon and Israel. The sun's strong rays are creating temperatures of nearly one-hundred degrees and the humidity hovers around eighty percent. An occasional breeze is a refreshing welcome. It is a beautiful day for Muslim honeymooners visiting from the Arabian Gulf. They sit side-by-side looking at the sea—the groom in shorts and a tank top; his bride in a new black *chador* (floor-length robe), full-face veil and long dark stockings.

To most Americans and perhaps others from the Western hemisphere, real life scenes like the one mentioned above evoke strong feelings of disbelief and sympathy for the bride and feelings of outrage toward the groom for his insensitive endorsement of her attire while on a beach.

A Muslim woman...who is she? What religious, family and societal challenges does she face living in this modern 21st century? This article will attempt to give you a glimpse into the lives of the nearly 600 million Muslim women of our world today.

Islamic scholars, both men and women, extol their prophet Muhammad as one who delivered women from pre-Islamic bondage and gave them unprecedented freedoms. Quoting verses from their holy book, the Qu'ran, and collected sayings called the Hadith, they claim Islam offers equality between sexes in worship, civil rights, education, inheritance, marriage and all other affairs of life. Muhammad's wives, Khadija and A'isha, and daughter Fatima, are regarded as role models of saintly women. Yet in reality, it is overtly obvious that most Muslim women live under a system of tradition, rites and rituals that favor men above women. Two Arab proverbs lend credence to this idea:

"A woman's heaven is under the feet of her husband."

"A man loves first his son, then his camel and then his wife."



# 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**



## A Church Born Out of a Dream

*Note:* This story is adapted from *Women of Vision 2000*. Because it is so powerful, I will use this space to share it in its entirety.

In her late teens, Fidan was already a wife and mother when in her dreams a man appeared to her, calling, “Come to me.” The second night the vision returned, and this time she asked, “Who are you?” The man responded, “I am *Isa* (Jesus).”

On the third night when *Isa* reappeared, she promised to follow him. When she told her father of her vision, he grew angry. He was a witchdoctor and had promised to pass his powers on to her. He tried to deliver her of the “evil spirit,” but couldn’t.

With her rejection of Islam, her father beat her and sent her husband and child away. She delivered her second child, but was not allowed to see her before she, too, was given to her husband. He eventually married three other women and kept her children from her. For five years Fidan listened to the voice within her, knowing this Spirit was her friend. But she knew nothing else about Him.

When Fidan entered a hospital for appendix removal, a nun secretly gave her a Bible. She began reading in the Islamic way, washing her hands before handling the sacred book. She discovered who her friend was. He had died on the cross for her. Fidan realized what a miracle her conversion was. There were no missionaries in her country, but she says now, “God had a plan—He came by Himself.”

Though she did not see her children for 10 years, God gave her a deep sense of peace and assurance that He would care for them. Today, not only are her children believers, but her parents are too. Fidan has remarried a Christian man.

Fidan longs for the day when her country is filled with the Spirit of God. Some estimate there may be 100 believers in her country. She believes that most have come to faith through dreams and miracles. This young woman has started one of the few house churches in her North African country. Her small fellowship is now sending members out to villages to tell people of the love of Christ.

Fidan echoes Paul, “God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7).





# Muslim World News



## CMM/OGC

*Our Greatest Challenge* campaign is hosting our second event at Times Square in New York City on October 20 and 21. Friday the participants will be going to Ground Zero to share a time of prayer at that historic location. Pray with us that out of the tragedy of 9/11, we will make positive history on 10/21 as we pray together for God's direction in expanding our outreach to the Muslim world.

## Malaysia

Seven years after she converted to Christianity, a Malaysian woman is still waiting for a High Court ruling on her right to remove the word "Islam" from her identity card. In 1998, Azlina Jailani, as she was then known, applied to the National Registration Department (NRD) to have the name on her identity card changed to Lina Joy to reflect her conversion to Christianity. NRD officials agreed to alter the name, but refused to switch her religious status. In the latest hearing on the case, senior federal counsel Umi Kalthum Abdul Majid said that Joy abused the legal system by requesting the change from the NRD instead of an Islamic *sharia* court. Joy has repeatedly argued that, as a Christian, she is not subject to *sharia* law. Her case highlights the urgent need for Malaysia to set clearer ground rules for religious conversions.—*Compass*

## Bangladesh

Sources have confirmed the murder by beheading on March 8 of Dulal Sarkar, a lay pastor and evangelist in Bangladesh. Sarkar worked with the Bangladesh Free Baptist Church in Jalalpur village as an evangelist and church planter. On the night of March 8, he was killed by Muslim extremists. His wife, Aruna, immediately filed a case against the killers, and three suspects were arrested. However, militants are now threatening Aruna and her children. The beheading is the second in the space of a year. Dr. Abdul Gani, a respected Christian leader, was decapitated by a gang of assailants in September 2004.—*Compass*

## Indonesia

The family of Pentecostal pastor Jokran Ratu, kidnapped on the remote Indonesian island of Buru, still does not know whether he is dead or alive. Ratu was abducted on the night of December 3, 2004. "We always ask the police whether they have made progress or found Mr. Jokran's body," said the Rev. Henry Lolaen, a pastor from neighboring Ambon island. Meanwhile, police are preparing for the April 25 anniversary of a Malukan separatist group. Last year, an illegal flag-raising ceremony led to violent clashes between Muslims and Christians in Ambon, with at least 20 casualties and scores of buildings burned to the ground.—*Compass*

## Jordan

An Amman court of Islamic law has ruled in favor of Christian widow Siham Qandah, revoking the legal guardianship of her children's Muslim uncle, Abdullah al-Muhtadi, and ordering him to repay misspent funds. Ah-Muhtadi proved unable to provide the court with documented evidence of his claimed expenditure to buy the children a refrigerator. Accordingly, Judge Mahmud Zghl removed him from his court-designated guardianship and ordered him to pay back this amount to his wards' trust fund. The seven-year custody battle may continue, as former guardian has the right to appeal the judgment within 30 days. "I still can't believe it!" Qandah said laughing and crying. "I'm so happy, I am just speechless."—*Compass*

## Pakistan

Gunmen attacked Christian worshippers as they emerged from Easter service in a church, killing one man and injuring seven others. Irshad Masih, in his early 20s, died from a bullet that struck his head during the half hour attack. Police guards were reportedly absent from their post when attackers opened fire at Victory Church International in Khamba village near Lahore. Police later said they had arrested two of four suspects, and attributed the attack to a land dispute. Locals discounted that explanation of events.—*Compass*



# The Muslim Women Who is She

continued from page 1

Shamima Shaikh, a Muslim woman from South Africa, writes, “It is ironical that [Islamic traditionalists] claim that Islam liberated women 1400 years ago...while also teaching that women are ‘inferior’ and ‘unequal’ to men. Women are described as weak, inferior and inherently evil (it is the nature of women to promote *fithan* (mischievous); we have deficient intellectual capabilities and are spiritually lacking. Furthermore, these evaluations have been used to claim that women are unsuitable for performing certain tasks or for functioning in some ways in society. Thus women are barred from mosques and excluded from other Muslim institutions.” (Author’s note: Not all Muslim women are barred from mosques; many allow women to pray in areas separate from men).

While allowing women to pray in mosques, it is believed that Muslim women cannot lead mixed-gender prayer in mosques. This tradition has recently been challenged by Dr. Amina Wadud, professor of Islamic studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and author of the book “Qur’an and Women: Re-reading the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective.” On Friday, March 18, 2005, Dr. Wadud delivered the *Jumaa* (Friday) sermon and led prayer to a mixed-gender crowd at the Synod House in Upper Manhattan, New York City.

From a very early age girls learn and experience the prejudice of male superiority. It comes in many forms: the double fee earned by a mid-wife when she delivers a boy rather than a girl, taking orders from and serving the needs of a male sibling several years younger than herself, and other educational and social restrictions. It is an oft spoken and reinforced decree that the most honorable future for a young lady is to be married, please her husband, birth and raise children. This is not to say that all Muslim women are prohibited from gaining an education, working outside of the home or obtaining an influential public career. There are many examples of women from some Muslim countries who have successfully combined the status of wife, mother and professional. Yet it is most likely that the majority of Muslim women will never endeavor to escape the traditional role set for them.

Also, pressure is put on all females to uphold the ‘family

honor’ and remain morally pure. Young girls are taught from an early age to avoid looking directly at men, to dress modestly so that they don’t draw the attention of men, and to abstain from any inappropriate interaction (factual or perceived) with those of the opposite sex. To do otherwise could lead to severe punishments such as beatings, forced detention at home or in jail, and even the extreme—death by male family members seeking to cleanse the honor of the family’s name. Islamic scripture holds the same high standard for Muslim men but is often overlooked and excused due to the understanding that men have special needs that must be met.

If one were to intently study the lives of Muslim women and have the opportunity to befriend a wide spectrum of them,





it would quickly become obvious that *fear* is a constant and binding companion for most of them. Fear of what? Fear of not being attractive and being left behind in marriage, fear of not being able to bear children, fear of birthing only daughters and no sons, fear of divorce, fear of her husband taking a second wife, fear of not successfully fulfilling the needs of her family, fear of beatings, fear of evil spirits (curses, the evil eye, superstitions), fear of whether or not her God, Allah, will grant her acceptance and entrance into eternal paradise (heaven).

While it is hoped that future social and relational aspects of a Muslim woman's life will improve, it is the last fear mentioned that should grab the hearts of those who know Jesus Christ as personal Savior, Lord and friend. A deep cry of

intercession for Muslim women to know and experience Christ's redeeming love, acceptance, forgiveness and security for eternity should arise in the spirit of each believer.

Jesus, when He asked the Samaritan woman at the well for a drink, spoke a promise to her that holds true for all Muslim women, *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water...the water that I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life"* (John 4:10,13).

It is Christ's heart that "none should perish." He sits on the throne of heaven and cries out for Muslim women to come to Him. And coming to Him, they are! Withstanding many dangerous and difficult circumstances, Muslim women from all corners of the globe are answering the call to follow Jesus Christ! While some believe and serve Him in secret, others are boldly exposing their new faith to their families and communities. Their testimonies show the personal, creative and divine work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Many Muslim women tell of dreams and visions in which Jesus appears to them. Others come to faith through the personal witness and years of examining the life of a foreign or national believer living among them. Others speak of listening to a radio broadcast, watching a Christian satellite program or film, experiencing or witnessing a miraculous healing, or focusing on the name and life of Isa (Jesus) as spoken of in the Qu'ran.

It is the author's personal hope that you who read this article with align your hearts with Christ's heartbeat for Muslim women and join Him in an active cry of prayerful intercession. It is also hoped that you would not stop there, but you would take further action: praying daily or weekly for Muslim women, befriending a Muslim woman within your own community in order to speak words of 'living water' and 'life' into her life, or perhaps giving yourself to full-time ministry to Muslims scattered throughout the world.

A Muslim woman...who is she? One who needs to hear and have opportunity to encounter Christ in an intimate and personal way. Will you be one who will help her discover the greatest Truth of all time?

**A deep cry of intercession  
for Muslim women to  
know and experience  
Christ's redeeming love,  
acceptance, forgiveness  
and security for eternity  
should arise in the spirit  
of each believer.**







# AZERBAIJAN

**Population:** 8 million

**Religions:** Muslim 84%, Non-religious 13%, Christian 5%

**Official Language:** Azerbaijani (with 20 dialects)

**Peoples:** Azerbaijani 80.7%, Russian 5.5%, Armenian 5.5%, Lezgian 2.3%, Talysh 1.9%

The Republic of Azerbaijan, located to the west of the Caspian Sea, varies in geography from semi-desert regions to the rugged Caucasus mountains.

Even though officially there is religious freedom, today, rising nationalism linked with Islamic revival is making many Azerbaijanis less receptive to the gospel.

The Christian population is almost entirely Russian and Armenian; many of whom have now fled the country. Among the unreached ethnic minorities, only the Georgians and Udi of the many Caucasus people are Christian; all other groups remain Muslim.

Information from Operation World, 2001 edition and Bethany World Prayer Center's "The Unreached Peoples Prayer Profiles."

## PRAY THAT...

...the Lord will call people who are willing to go to Azerbaijan and share Christ with the Lezgian.

...God will reveal himself to these precious people through dreams and visions.

...the small number of Lezgian Christians may be strengthened, encouraged, protected and that they will reach out to their neighbors with the gospel message.

## Unreached People Group... **LEZGIAN**

**Location:** Caucasus Mountains

**Population:** 190,000

**Religion:** Muslim (Shafiites) 99.9%

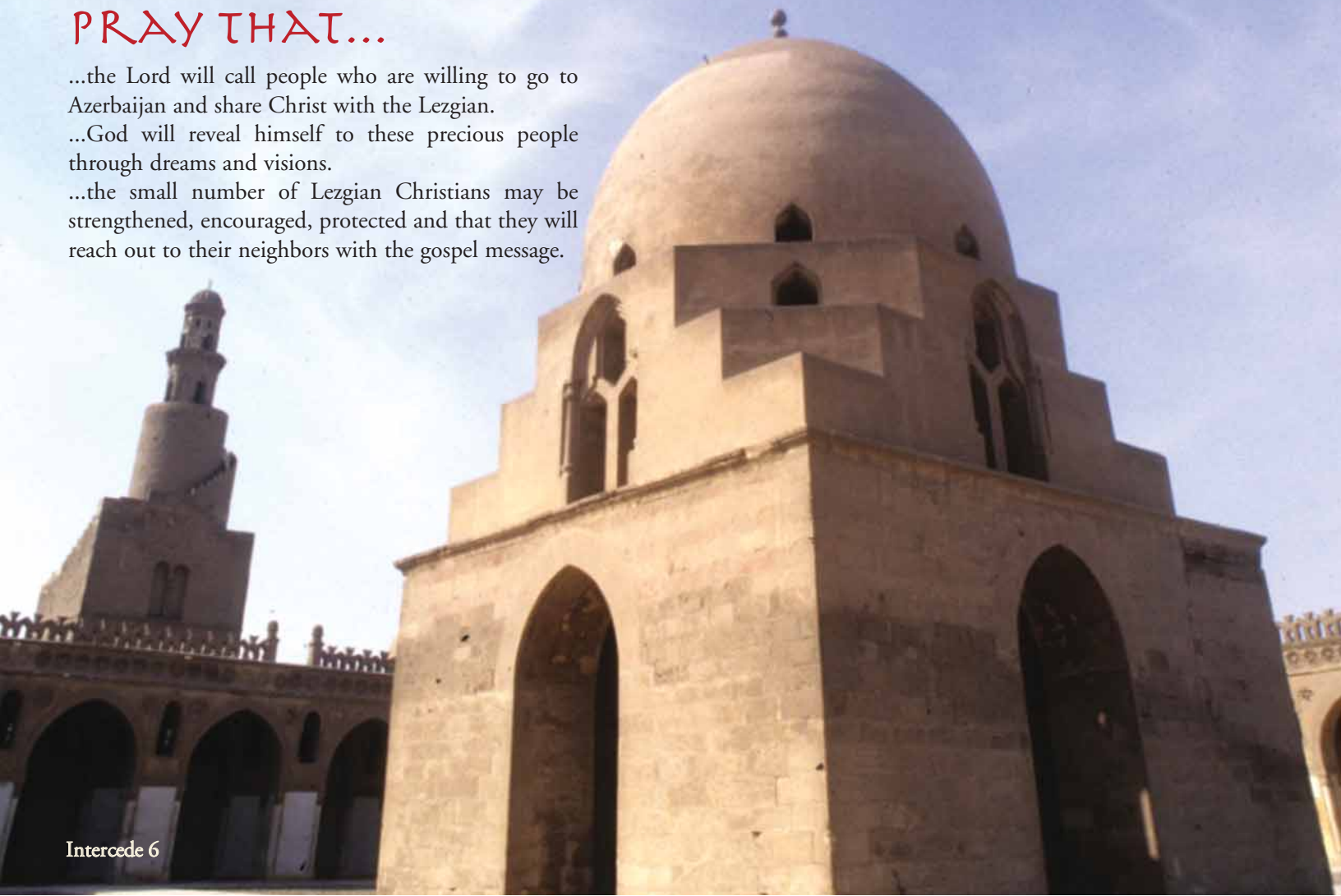
**Language:** Lezgin

The Lezgian are one of the five major ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan. Most of them live in the rugged Caucasus mountain regions where there are many canyons and gorges.

The Lezgian formerly lived in free societies comprised of large extended family units known as *tukhum*. The *tukhum* is losing its importance due to modernization and migration.

Most Lezgian marry within their own clans. The custom of paying *kalim* (bride price) is still followed by some, but is now more of a symbolic payment than a requirement.

There are only 18 known Lezgian believers and they do not have the Bible in their language, but many are bilingual, speaking both Lezgin and Azerbaijani.





# **JUMAA PRAYER**

## **FELLOWSHIP**

### ***PRAYING FOR MUSLIMS AROUND THE WORLD!***

Friday, July 1, 2005. Please pray

...for believers in Turkey. After distribution of New Testaments last Christmas, they are now being subjected to persecution and harassment. Pray they will use wisdom as they share the gospel during this time of heightened awareness and opportunity.

...for the continued relief efforts among the tsunami victims in the Indian Ocean Rim.

...for the candidate missionaries who will be taking a special course in Islamics next week. Pray that they will be challenged to give themselves to ministry among Muslims in the countries where they will serve.

Friday, July 8, 2005. Please pray

...for the many who will be going on short-term missions trips to Muslim countries this summer.

...for Jordanian widow Siham Qandah in her fight to retain custody of her two teenage children.

...for the CMM team member who will be teaching a class in Islamics at the West Africa Advanced School of Theology for the next two weeks. Pray that the students will be challenged concerning the Muslim population throughout West Africa.

Friday, July 15, 2005. Please pray

...that the Church in Europe will be emboldened to stand strong in the face of the Islamization of Europe. The patterns of migration and demographics show that Europe has the potential to become a Muslim-majority region.

...for relief efforts to those who survived the earthquake near Zarand, Iran, on February 22. Pray that Iranians will be challenged to the claims of Christ through this tragedy.

...that teens in the Middle East will be influenced by the new television programming being prepared for them by SAT-7.

Friday, July 22, 2005. Please pray

...that President Islam Karimov will recognize the Christian churches in Uzbekistan and allow them to register legally.

...that the minority Christian population in Syria will realize the rich Christian heritage that is theirs.

...for those who are ministering to drug users in Pakistan. Pray that the love of the Lord will shine through their lives.

Friday, July 29, 2005. Please pray

...for the negotiation proceeding between India and Pakistan concerning Kashmir. Pray for protection against Islamic terrorism and heavy-handed Indian Army punitive measures.

...for "Kathy" a Muslim in Burkina Faso who has made a decision to follow Jesus. Pray that she will grow in her faith.

...for a Muslim imam and a Christian pastor who together are promoting reconciliation in Nigeria. Pray for God's protection and blessing on their joint effort to promote peace.

***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, August 5, 2005. Please pray

...that the Church in the Middle East will grow this year, not shrink. Christians are migrating at an alarming rate from Middle East countries because of fear and persecution.

...that the Sudanese peace agreement that was signed in January will bring stability to the region and that the southerners will set up a structure for their regional government to establish unity.

...for strength and courage for persecuted Christians in Yemen. Several converts from Islam have been beaten, interrogated and imprisoned in recent months.

...for the many callers with requests for prayer as a result of the distribution of New Testaments in Turkey.

Friday, August 12, 2005. Please pray

...for the many female viewers of SAT-7 programs. Pray that they may be encouraged in their everyday lives.

...for the estimated one million Iranian refugees in Turkey. Pray that God will bless the Turkish people for their concern and outpouring of love for these distressed people.

...for a Christian couple that is endeavoring to establish a Turkish Christian fellowship in Texas. Pray for healing for the wife.

Friday, August 19, 2005. Please pray

...for a team that is sharing the gospel with Turks in Nurnberg, Germany. Pray that those who attend the bi-weekly Bible study will commit their lives to Christ.

...for the millions of Arabs tuning in to Christian programs every day. Pray that God will minister to each through the different types of programs.

...that the economy of Turkey will stabilize and continue to grow and jobs will become available for the many unemployed.

...for the refugees from Darfur, Sudan, who fled to Chad. Some Muslim refugees have become believers because of the love shown by Chadian Christians. Pray that these new Christians will grow in faith.

Friday, August 26, 2005. Please pray

...that God will challenge the hearts of the Evangel University students who are enrolled in an Introduction to Islam class for the next two weeks. The fields are ripe unto harvest, but the laborers are few.

...that nationals in Afghanistan who are sharing the gospel in spite of persecution will remain faithful and obedient in the midst of the harassment. Pray that many Muslims will be brought to faith through diligent witness.

...for a Christian couple who has recently begun a ministry to Muslims and internationals in central Indiana. Pray for wisdom as they seek creative ways to reach out to Turkish-speakers.