

INTERCEDE

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That is why stories are effective means of communication in the Muslim world and are very popular among the common people.



The Qur'an and the Bible

To better understand what Muslims think and feel about the Qur'an and the Bible, we need to first understand how Muslims communicate.

Christians believe that the supreme purpose of the Bible is to enable God to communicate with man. In most Muslim cultures, communication is primarily oral, not written. That is why stories are effective means of communication in the Muslim world and are very popular among the common people.

Some of the best-known stories are those about one Mulla Nasreddin or Nasreddin Khoja. These stories are understood by Muslims on three levels: *the humorous incident itself, the moral of the story, and a deep Sufi meaning which is thought to bring enlightenment.*

One such story is called "Nasreddin Khoja and the Overcrowded Bed."

After Nasreddin's first wife died, he remarried a woman who had been previously married as well.

One night as they lay in bed, she began to talk about the virtues of her first husband. Then Khoja began to talk about how wonderful his first wife had been. This new wife could talk faster than he could, and she was winning the discussion. So finally Khoja kicked his wife out of the bed and she fell on the floor. The next day the wife took Khoja to court. She

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by Dr. Paul Parks

*International
Representative
Center for Ministry
to Muslims*



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



A few days ago, a colleague and I conducted a Muslim Training and Awareness Seminar in El Salvador. It was our first experience in Central America. The church in which we ministered was birthed out of great revival that began several decades ago.

Many faithful North American missionaries have worked alongside Salvadorian pastors and evangelists to establish a strong, growing and vibrant church. The tremendous influence this church has in its community is a tribute to the wise leadership of visionary men who unselfishly built the work on a lasting and solid foundation.

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As we approach the turn of the century, the Church in El Salvador is poised to become a great missionary influence in the world. The national church organization has a well-established missions department under strong and competent local leadership. They have already sent a number of missionaries to several countries.

Some excellent work has also been done in other Central American nations, some in very difficult pioneer situations. I was personally challenged by the commitment of many of the workers I met.


As we taught in the seminar concerning the spiritual needs of Muslims and the unique opportunities to minister to them, there was keen interest. The delegates were particularly open to the practical suggestion we made in regard to relating to the cultural considerations of Muslims.

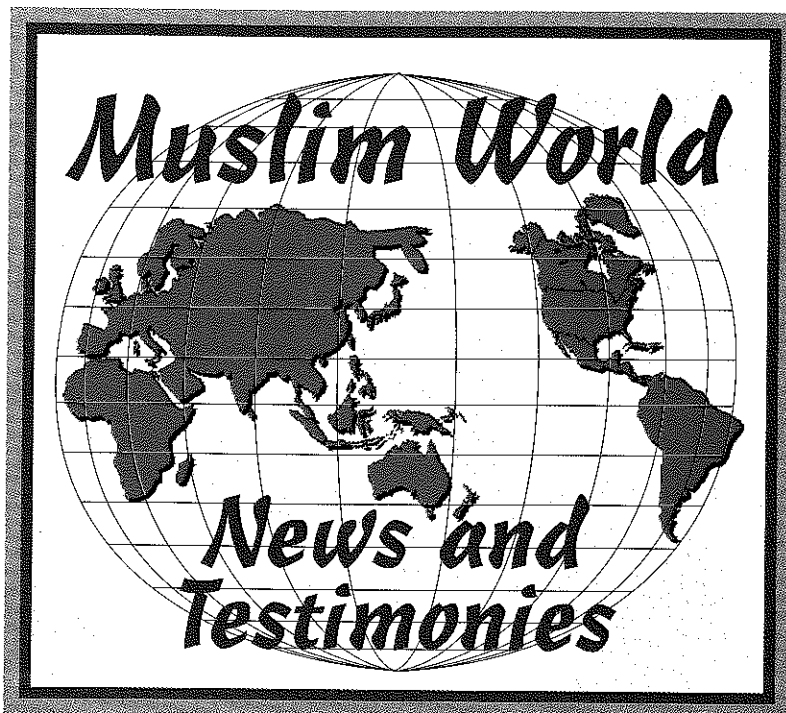
There is a memorable picture etched in my memory that I will never forget. One night after an evening session, fifteen young men and women sat around a large table and asked question after question about missionary service. They were young and energetic. Their questions were penetrating and on target. One could not fail to be inspired by their great potential.

Toward the end of the discussion I asked, "How many of you believe God is calling you to be missionaries?" Every one of them raised their hand to signify the call of God in their lives. I then asked if any of them felt especially directed to Muslim people. Five of them said, "Yes!"

This underlines something I consider to be of primary importance. God is raising up a host of workers from developing countries for the end-time harvest. They are going to contribute something special and unique to the missionary outreach of the Church. I do not believe they will replace or displace the North American missionary force, but I do believe that culturally and economically they may identify with Muslim people better than North Americans can.

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I am challenged by these developments in my personal life and ministry. I want to follow the example of this new generation of missionaries in their zeal and faith. I want to emulate their simplicity of lifestyle. I sincerely believe there is a wonderful opportunity for a fruitful partnership as the older and younger churches of the Kingdom work together to complete the unfinished task of missionary harvest. 



Saudi Arabia

After two and one-half years in Riyadh's Al Malaz Prison, Filipino Christian prisoner Rene Camahort has been told by a high-ranking prison official that he is to be released within the next two months. Jailed in August 1995 on what he termed "fabricated forgery charges," Camahort came to faith in Christ while in prison.

Prison authorities have reportedly tried to curb his active Christian witness ever since. Yet one source reported that six of his fellow inmates have come to faith in Christ since Camahort arrived. "Rene has very strong faith," one of his friends in Riyadh told *Compass*. "He always stands for his faith, no matter what will be the cost."

—*Compass Direct*

Egypt

Bowing to persistent criticism at home and abroad, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak made a technical amendment in January to an old Ottoman law which has restricted the building and repair of churches in Egypt for the past 140 years. The new decree simply delegated presidential authority to issue permits for church renovation to the country's 26 provincial governors. It was described by most Coptic Christians as a "cosmetic change" in the long-hated Hamayouni law of 1856. Significantly, the decree made no mention of the permits needed to build new churches. That permission still needs to be given by the president himself. Permits for building new churches and church repairs remain hard to get, while mosques continue to receive special legal privileges.

—*Compass Direct*

Israel

Fifty fundamentalist Muslims occupied the House of Simon the Tanner, a Christian pilgrimage site, in the old city of Jaffa, near Tel Aviv. They want to convert the house into a mosque. All attempts to evict the occupants from the house have so far been fruitless.

Members of the Jaffa Islamic Society forced the door around noon on February 14. The house reportedly accommodated the apostle Peter. The society has strong ties to the fundamentalist Hamas movement.

Since its occupation, the house is guarded by between five and seventy people depending on the time of day. During the day, they are reinforced by fellow Muslims from Gaza and the West Bank.

—*Islam Development Brief*

Kyrgyzstan

From February 9-March 4, CMM's associate director, Dale Fagerland, taught two classes at the Silk Road Bible College in Bishkek. An ethnic college of 62 Central Asian students learned about Islam and Cross-Cultural Communications during the bloc sessions Fagerland presented.

"God visited our early morning class in a marvelous way the first week of this bloc session, which spilled over into the chapel service. When I challenged the students to let go of the past, to be open and honest, to bear one another's burdens, and to build a bridge of trust strong enough to support the truth, they spontaneously began to open their hearts," Fagerland said.

"One after another, they exposed deep, lingering hurts and festering wounds. Heart-wrenching stories emerged, and Jesus brought healing. He lifted heavy burdens of excess baggage as students' confessions were followed by fervent intercessory prayer on their behalf by loving brothers and sisters who laid hands on them."

Fagerland related that the entire experience at the school was a powerful reminder that the seemingly insurmountable obstacles to reaching Muslims and the daunting barriers to effective cross-cultural communications can be overcome with God's help.

"While teaching Islamics to numerous Muslim converts and teaching cross-cultural communications in a multi-cultural setting, God crowned our efforts with His cleansing, healing, refreshing and liberating presence," Fagerland concluded.

—*CMM News*



The Qur'an and the Bible

Continued from page 1

complained to the judge that her husband had kicked her out of bed.

The judge asked Khoja if that was true.

"No, I did not," responded Khoja. "It was this way. We were in bed and one of her friends came and got in bed with us. Then one of my friends did the same. With so many people in the bed, it became very crowded, and she simply fell out."

This is more than just a funny story. It has a very real moral—a moral which is not lost on the average Muslim: *It is not easy to be married to two people, even if one is dead!*

It is important that Christians understand that such stories are not just *understood* by Muslims, but they are *felt* by them as well. These stories help them to remember both the practical and spiritual wisdom being taught.

We also need to look at how Muslims view the subject of thinking and feeling.

In the West we have been trained to believe that using one's cognitive abilities is the best way to arrive at the truth. We have looked down on the importance of emotions and feelings.

Yet for the average Muslim, when it comes to religious knowledge feelings are probably more important than his cognitive abilities. A Muslim wants to *experience* his faith by gathering

with other believers, by hearing the Qur'an chanted, and by looking back in time at the great history and traditions of his faith.

To begin seeing the importance of the Qur'an for Muslims, the Christian needs to understand its central role in Islam. Many Christians have made the

mistake of thinking that Muslims use the Qur'an as Christians use the Bible, and that Jesus and Muhammed, therefore, have corresponding roles. This is not a correct assumption.

While Christians see Jesus Christ as God's eternal Word, most Muslims see the Qur'an as the only eternal revelation of God. Their feelings for the Qur'an are similar to those of a Christian toward his Lord.

When we look at what Muslims think concerning the Qur'an, we need to understand several facts.

First, Muslims believe that the Qur'an was sent down to Muhammed through the angel Gabriel (*Jibrā'il*). Every word of it is the Word of Allah.

The Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic language over a span of 23 years. It is divided into 144 *Surahs* (chapters) with 6,236 verses. It is unmatched in its

recording and preservation, and has remained unchanged for 1,400 years.

Dealing with man and life's ultimate goals, the Qur'an has three themes: the oneness of God, prophet-

hood, and life after death. Muslims believe that a successful life

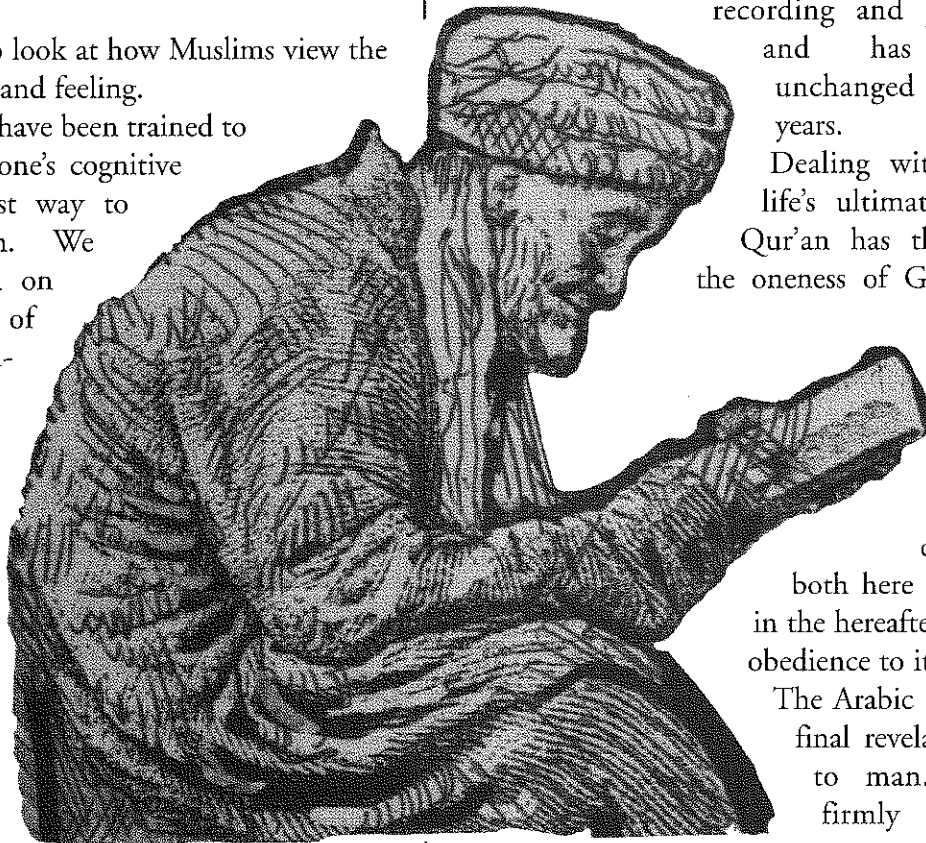
both here on earth and in the hereafter depends on obedience to its teaching.

The Arabic Qur'an is the final revelation of God to man. Muslims firmly believe this presupposition. To do

otherwise would be blasphemy and would incite God's wrath. They feel that submission to God means there is no questioning of religious authorities.

What, then, do Muslims think about the Bible?

Often Muslims are not aware of what their own Holy Book, the Qur'an, teaches about this Christian



Holy Book. Yet the Qur'an gives positive credence to the Scriptures.

- a) *Surah* 2:87, 3:3, and 4:136 show that the Bible came from God.
- b) *Surah* 3:3, 5:44, and 6:91 indicate that the Bible has direction, guidance, and light for man.
- c) *Surah* 2:121, 3:84, and 42:15 declare that the Bible is to be believed and it threatens those who do not believe it.

The Muslims' biggest complaint is that the Bible has been corrupted by both the Christians and the Jews. Because they strongly believe this idea, Muslims feel its words cannot be trusted.

However, the Qur'an instructs Muslims to read the Bible and obey its commands. In fact, the Qur'an states that its purpose is not to *replace* the Bible but to *confirm* it. This is noted in at least seven passages of the Qur'an: *Surah* 2:41, 89, 91, 101; 6:92; 46:12; and 5:48.

Many Muslims would like to read the Bible of Jesus and Christians, but it is a "closed" book for them. Either it is unavailable where they live, or it is written in a dialect they cannot really understand.

It can be said that Muslims "feel" the Qur'an.

The word Qur'an means "recite." Reciting the Qur'an is their way of communing with God.

When the Qur'an is read aloud, its language provokes strong feelings in those who are listening. The rhyme and rhythm of its poetry awakens and quickens a person's emotions. Muslims believe that these emotions that a person feels as he hears the words of the Qur'an is proof of its divine inspiration.

What do Muslims "feel" about the Bible?

They feel *NOTHING*. It is a closed book!

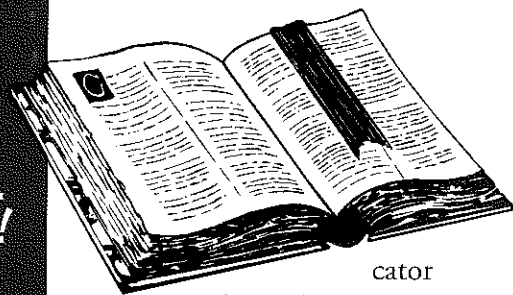
As believers, we can change that situation by the approach we use in sharing the Scriptures.

If we try to defend the Bible or put down the Qur'an when speaking to Muslims, we will fail. If, however, we invite our Muslim friend to have his emotions moved by the Bible, marvelous things can happen.

How can this be done? By telling him stories found in the Bible—especially the Parables of Jesus. These parables can speak vividly when the communi-

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cator relates them using expressions understood by his Muslim friend.

One such story is the "Parable of the Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-32). This parable contains a clear presenta-

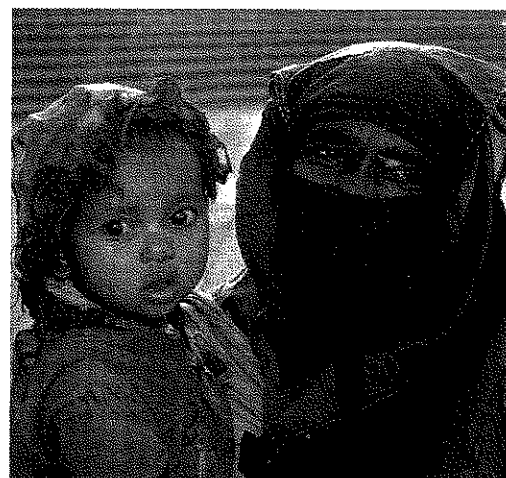
tion of the gospel in story form—speaking not only

to those who are like the rebellious younger son, but also to those who are like the self-righteous older son. Told with very little change, this story can help the Muslim understand and *feel* five fundamental truths about God. The Muslim can learn that:

- a) God loves all men, not just the ones who love Him,
- b) God's forgiveness can be known,
- c) it costs God to show His mercy to man,
- d) we can know forgiveness now, before the Judgment Day and
- e) God demonstrates His love by actions, not just words.

We want to introduce the power of the Bible to our Muslim friends in a way that it will move their emotions not just their minds. This will require that we not argue theology, but rather tell them the story of God's love, just as Jesus did.

When we tell them the stories of the Bible, we are giving them God's Word—a Word which can and will reveal to them the great love of God.



This article is condensed from a chapter in 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.

Why Has No One Told Us?



Anonymous for security reasons

The country in which we serve is currently ruled by *sharia* (Islamic law). By definition *sharia* (pronounced *sha-re-ah*) is “the clear path to be followed,” or “the road to the watering place.” In reality *sharia* leads to bondage and oppression.

Some penalties of *sharia* are prescribed by the Qu’ran, such as cutting off a limb for stealing and death by stoning for adultery. Other penalties are derived from the life and the traditions of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. One of these is the penalty for murder.

The penalty for murder is based on a principle called *qisas*, which means retaliation. It is similar to the Old Testament Jewish concept of “an eye for an eye, a life for a life.” If someone murders someone in a Muslim country, the prescribed penalty is death by execution.

There is an interesting loophole for the doomed murderer. It is called *diyah* and basically means “blood money.” The family of the victim has the right to demand the death of the criminal, but if he pays the prescribed blood price to them the execution will be waived. In this country the blood price is a hundred camels or their equivalent.

Recently I was sitting with a Muslim friend. Our conversation had turned to the redemption principle—how we all are sinful, powerless to save ourselves, and desperately in need of a Savior.

“You mean no one is good, not even one?” he asked.

“That is right,” I replied.

“Then it is hopeless,” he answered.

I asked my friend if he was familiar with the concept of blood money, which of course he was. I explained that Jesus paid our blood money. I told him that we were all condemned to death with no escape when He stepped in and saved our lives by giving His. Because Christ paid our debt of sin, we can all have eternal fellowship with God, if we will repent and believe.

A deep, awesome silence descended on us. My friend sat quietly, yet it was evident the Spirit was speaking to him.

After a long pause, he looked piercingly into my eyes and said: “If this is true, Christians have a tremendous responsibility. WHY HAS NO ONE TOLD US?”

His question echoed within my heart and I had no answer to give him. This question, or some form of it, has often been asked by those on whom the light first dawns. “Why have you not told us sooner? How can you clutch the bread of life to yourself when others are starving?”

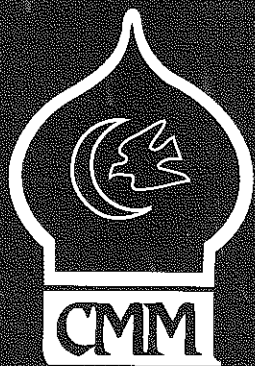
Deeply challenged myself, I want to pass on the question to you, “WHY HAS NO ONE TOLD THEM?” Muslims, Chinese, teenagers, relatives, and friends—their key is in our hands. Will we throw it away while they languish in a prison of their sin? Will our fear, our disobedience, our love of comfort translate into condemned souls?

Will we one day stand on the brink of heaven and watch our friends, our neighbors, or our co-workers be led away to hell? Will we hang our heads when they turn with one final backward glance and ask with their eyes, “WHY DIDN’T YOU TELL ME?”

Lord Jesus, your blood has been shed to free my friends. Will their blood now be upon me? Will they suffer eternally because I did not tell them. O precious Jesus, fill my heart and open my mouth, amputate my fear and conquer my pride, that I might tell them and that they might hear and believe so that we might all rejoice together.



Jumaa Prayer Fellowship...



Praying for Muslims Around the World!

Friday, July 3, 1998. Please pray

...for relatives with close family members who have chosen to marry Muslims or convert to Islam. An Internet support group has been established to help such family members receive encouragement and support in coping with the difficulties involved.

...for Christians in the six republics of Soviet Central Asia which have a strong Muslim influence. There is increasing harassment and intimidation directed against minority religious groups. Foreigners are being banned from sharing the gospel and national Christians are facing this same opposition.

...for a pastor and his wife who are ministering to a growing Uygur fellowship near the Kazakstan border.

Friday, July 10, 1998. Please pray

...for outreach to Muslims in the United Kingdom. It is estimated that by the year 2000, Britain will have a Muslim population of 1.4 million.

...for two new families living in the capital of Turkey who have come to the Lord. Pray that they will stand firm in their faith, and that a house fellowship will be established in that area.

...for wisdom for Western powers that they will know when to speak out against human rights abuses being perpetuated by Muslim governments. Sometimes penalizing a government only results in more anti-Christian oppression and restriction.

Friday, July 17, 1998. Please pray

...for candidate missionaries who will be taking the Islamic courses offered by CMM in cooperation with the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary during the next two weeks. Pray they will be renewed in body and spirit and gain insights concerning living and working among Muslims.

...that the Lord will raise up Christians from many places and cultures to reach the Cham people of Vietnam and Cambodia with the gospel. They have been resistant to the gospel being shared by neighboring Christian communities.

...for workers to be raised up to go to the unreached Sharawan of Western Morocco.

Friday, July 24, 1998. Please pray

...for many Christians in Pakistan who face grave difficulties because of their faith. Some are reluctant to declare their faith openly. Pray especially for wisdom for a pastor in a major city who is caring for many new believers.

...for Christian workers in Indonesia during this time of economic and political instability. Pray that many Muslims will be drawn to Christ during this crisis time.

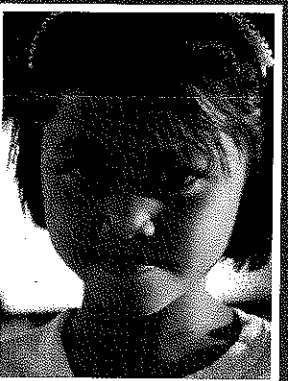
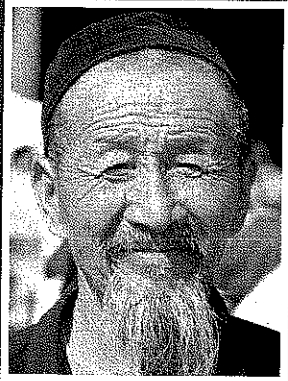
...that the Lord will help our Palestinian brothers and sisters to remain steadfast in their faith despite the adverse circumstances in which they find themselves.

Friday, July 31, 1998. Please pray

...for the leaders of Chechenya who have created the new Islamic republic named Ichkeria. Pray for justice and freedom to be granted to their people.

...for the CMM team that is heading for Cameroon tomorrow. They will be conducting Muslim Awareness Seminars in Cameroon and Togo for the next two weeks. Pray that they will find many prepared hearts ready to accept the challenge to work among Muslims.

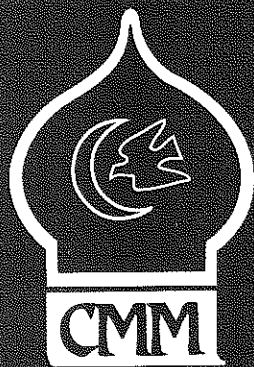
...for the situation in Tanzania in which both the Muslims and Christians feel they are disadvantaged. Pray that harmonious relations may be established between the two faiths.



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 7, 1998. Please pray

...for an end to the random terror which is a daily experience of many people in Afghanistan. Pray that wise rulers will emerge, able to provide stability and plan for the redevelopment of the nation.

...for the nearly 300,000 children in Kazakstan who received a Bible at school. Pray that the Word will be studied in the schools, and that many will experience the joy of salvation.

...for all the Christians working in Saudi Arabia who are not able to challenge the injustices they suffer because of their faith. Pray that they will remain faithful in their witness in spite of abuse and ill treatment by the *metowah* (religious police).

Friday, August 14, 1998. Please pray

...that Church leaders in Ghana will teach Christians to be strong in faith and active in witness. Islam is making inroads in parts of the country.

...that God will continue to make the satellite TV ministry of SAT-7 productive in the lives of the recipients in the Middle East. Pray for all those involved in the preparation and planning of the programs.

...for many Dagestanis to turn their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ and not be misled by the activities of the many Muslim missionaries. Dagestan is being Islamized at a rapid pace because of the influence of neighboring Chechnya.

Friday, August 21, 1998. Please pray

...for Rashid Turibayev who is serving a 2-year sentence of forced labor because of his involvement in Christian activities in Uzbekistan.

...for Christians in Algeria. According to reports, the Lord has kept the believers safe throughout the country. Some foreign clergy have died, but most of the killing by the Armed Islamic Group has been directed against other Muslims. Pray that in the present climate of fear and insecurity the Christians will be faithful in their witness of true peace found only in Christ.

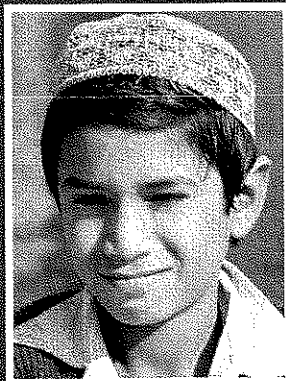
...for Egyptian Christians in Upper Egypt who are being pressured for payment of *jizya* tax by Islamic terrorists. This is payment demanded for protection of Christians without which they are often killed. Pray that God will intervene and turn the hearts of these killers from their evil ways.

Friday, August 28, 1998. Please pray

...for the growing Muslim population here in the States which is also becoming more politically active. They are sponsoring Eid celebrations at the White House each year. During the holidays, they have succeeded in adding the Crescent and the Star to the White House lawn as well as many other public buildings along with the National Christmas tree, the Menorah, and the Nativity.

...for Faisal Abdallah, a Sudanese believer from a Muslim background. He has been in prison since May 1997 without a trial or visitors. Pray for the Lord's provision for him and for his witness to others.

...for a national believer who is part of a team translating the Bible into a Kurdish dialect. His entire family is under strong spiritual attack.



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—(1 Timothy 2:1, NIV)