A young boy and an elderly man are sitting on the ground in a forest, reading books. The boy is on the left, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt, dark blue pants, and a white cap. He is sitting on a small wooden stool. The man is on the right, wearing a brown long-sleeved shirt and patterned shorts. He is sitting on the ground, leaning forward. They are both looking down at their books. The background is a dense forest with many trees and branches. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

1992-2022: Celebrating 30 years of 30 Days of Prayer

30 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD

• APRIL 2 TO MAY 1, 2022 •

Welcome to the 2022 edition of *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* – our 30th anniversary edition!

30 years ago...

It was April 1992 when a group of Christians from a global mission organisation gathered by the Red Sea in the Middle East. Ramadan had just ended and so were their meetings. Praying together, they felt a strong and unexpected awareness of the presence of God, calling them to devote greater efforts towards the Muslim world. Those involved in the meeting describe the revelation as a clear and forceful message which directed them to embrace the Muslim world in all its diversity, seeing Muslims as God does - as His beloved creation. They committed to obey this word, beginning with a time of 30 days of focused prayer and fasting for the Muslim world.

Those involved in the meeting describe the revelation as a clear and forceful message which directed them to see Muslims as God does, as His beloved creation.

Those 30 days were followed by another 30 days the following year. A guide to help others pray with them was created (using ground-breaking communications technology like AmiPro 3.0 and Microsoft Word 2.0!). Christians working in Muslim communities were asked to share needs

and stories to inspire prayer. A team was formed to coordinate distribution to an increasing number of regions and to manage translations.

Each year, participation grew. Other organisations, churches and ministries got involved in contributing, translating, and distributing the prayer guide, as more and more Christians were inspired to pray for Muslims. And now, 30 years later, up to a million people use the prayer guide each year all over the world, in over 40 languages, responding to that word from God to a group of Christians to love Muslims more.

Thank you for 30 years of faithful prayer – from Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Today there are almost
60 000 Muslims in NZ.**

Thirty years ago, there were less than 5,000 Muslims in NZ. In the 1980's the NZ Government significantly changed its immigration policy allowing skilled workers from all over the world to apply to work here. Around the same time, the number of refugees/asylum seekers from Muslim nations began to increase creating many opportunities to come alongside these new arrivals who would be difficult or impossible to reach with the gospel in their own nations. Friendship evangelism led to the establishment of a few small ethnic fellowships worshipping the Saviour in their own language.

Today there are almost 60 000 Muslims in NZ. There are significant communities from the Middle East (Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran), South Asia (Pakistan, India and Bangladesh) and Southeast Asia

(Indonesia). There is also a large Indo-Fijian Muslim community and an equally substantial Somali minority. Muslims have established their own social infrastructure, shops, medical and legal support systems and over 70 worship centres. Some missions organisations now have workers reaching out to Muslim communities. New groups like Friends of Friends Fellowship have been established and are helping to meet the social, practical, relational, and eternal needs of Muslim friends.

Technology has advanced, with Bibles and other Christian resources in many languages able to be read online on many devices. COVID has changed the way we interact. Zoom meetings are a poor substitute for personal interaction—but still we keep connecting. The challenges of sharing the Gospel with Muslim peoples in

NZ are huge but we have a loving Heavenly Father who desires that none should perish but all should have an opportunity to hear the Good News and come to repentance and faith in Jesus. The opportunities are there—it is up to each of us to play our part in His plan of salvation.

How can we pray?

Pray for Friends of Friends Fellowships to have more opportunities to meet the eternal needs of Muslim friends.
(Romans 1:16)

Pray for friendships to deepen and Gospel conversations to increase despite COVID restrictions.
(Colossians 4:6)

Pray that new believers will have the courage to share the love of Jesus with family and friends.
(Psalm 73:26)

The Fruit of Faithful Prayer

In 2015, the *30 Days of Prayer* guide focused on the work of a researcher and writer named David Garrison who had been studying movements to Christ among Muslims - confirmed situations where at least 1000 people from the same Muslim community became followers of Jesus. Garrison had discovered that such movements were very rare in the first twelve and half centuries since Islam was founded. In fact, Islam had grown to a global population of more than 1.6 billion adherents by that time.

...in the first 14 years of the 21st century more movements erupted across the Muslim world - more, in fact, than had been seen in the previous 12 centuries combined!"

But something changed at the end of the 20th century. Movements to Christ began to be recorded in Algeria, Soviet Central Asia, Bangladesh, Iran... And in the first 14 years of the 21st century more movements erupted across the Muslim world - more, in fact, than had been seen in the previous 12 centuries combined! (Read more about these movements in the book, *A Wind in The House of Islam* by David Garrison).

In 1992, God spoke to a group of people He trusted, inspiring them to begin to pray for the Muslim world at the very time He was working by His Spirit to bring thousands of Muslims to faith in Him. If you are using this prayer guide, you know that God works together with us through prayer, and you can see the fruit of 30 years of faithful intercession.

Educating and Inspiring

Over these 30 years, in addition to praying for Muslims to be blessed, and to have the opportunity to hear of the message of Jesus and come to faith in Him, *30 Days* has pursued the aim of educating the Church about Muslim people.

Through years when Muslims were presented in the media largely as terrorists and enemies, *30 Days* has remained committed to its calling to see Muslims as beloved of God, the friends, and neighbours, of those who contribute to this guide.

We are always thrilled to receive feedback from readers who have had a revelation of God's love for Muslims as they pray for the diverse cultures and communities represented in these pages.

Looking Forward

The prayer guide has evolved with communications technology and design developments from those early years! In addition to the prayer guide, participants pray along with social media updates and phone apps, participating in 40 languages! Every year, the *30 Days* team is amazed at how God has kept the event going, providing people who share the vision, from so many different Christian organisations and traditions, to contribute their time and talent to create this resource.

Thank you for being part of this 30-year journey with us! Your participation, prayers, and pursuit of a word spoken 30 years ago have changed the world forever.



The *30 Days* Editorial Team

We would be delighted to hear how *30 Days* has impacted you!

Tell us about it at:
info@pray30days.org

Donate to *30 Days International* to help keep the prayer guide going!
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Praying for the Forgotten

In 30 years of producing prayer guides each Ramadan season, we have mobilised prayer for hundreds of Muslim communities. We have prayed for people groups of all sizes, national populations, migrant groups, sub-cultures and sects. In this, our 30th year of production, we aim to focus on those communities which we have not prayed for enough.

Unreached, Unengaged...

There are 1.8 billion Muslims in the world and a good majority of them remain unreached by the Gospel. Included in this edition are articles highlighting some of the most populous Muslim groups which have no known Christians among them (making them unreached), and among whom there are no known efforts being made to make disciples of Christ among them (making them unengaged).

Unknown...

We asked our contributors to send us prayer needs for groups that are often overlooked because they are too remote, or too challenging. Some

are very small populations; others are large but overwhelming in their need. Some of these forgotten groups have characteristics that make them especially difficult to engage with. Some of them have no known Christian witness. All of them need your prayers

No longer...!

But we also wanted to celebrate a little in this edition and so we have also included some articles that reflect on groups we have prayed for in the past, to show you the impact of our prayers and to share what God is doing among those communities we have prayed for in years gone by. We hope you will be inspired by

these stories to pray for those Muslims who have yet to encounter the message of Jesus.

Reflecting on 3 decades

And finally, we have included a few articles by Dr. Steve Cochrane, one of the founding creators of *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* who is still involved with the guide. He shares his thoughts on how ministry to Muslims has evolved in each decade, what significant changes occurred and considers what the future might hold as we continue to pray for Muslims.

30 Years of Prayer: 1990's

In 1992 the *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* began. It was a decade when prayer mobilisation was expanding alongside the mobilisation of loving Christian witnesses from all over the world to Muslims. One of the most exciting things about mission in the 1990's was seeing growing numbers of Christian witnesses being sent from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

A French movie titled, *Of Gods and Men*, released in 2010, told the story of a group of Christian monks in 1990's Algeria, caught between a violent Muslim extremist group and Muslim villagers they were called to love and serve. A profound scene happens when the Islamist leader comes to the monastery to ask for medical supplies for wounded comrades. The priest denies the request due to needs of the villagers, but quotes from the Qur'an

and prays for and with him. While this extremist leader was alive, he ensured that the monastery and monks were protected.

As many Christians in the 1990's prayed during *30 Days for Muslims* to have dreams and visions of Isa al-Masih (Jesus), stories of answers to those prayers were heard all over the world. J. Christy Wilson, who helped start the International Assistance Mission (IAM), had a regular practice of praying with a Muslim before he would leave them, in their homes or after conversation. He would say, "Would you join me in prayer before we part?" Wilson believed that praying with Muslim friends was one of the greatest ways to let the presence of God work, far greater than words about beliefs alone.

30 Days

of focused prayer



for the
Muslim World

How can we pray?

Pray for more Christians to join in prayer with *30 Days* – encourage others to pray with you this year!
(James 5:16)

Pray for Christian workers who have sent the requests and stories in this guide, to see the fruit of their work and your prayers.
(Ephesians 6:18)

Pray for Muslims to experience God's presence in new ways this Ramadan.
(John 14:13)

Marsh Arabs of Iraq

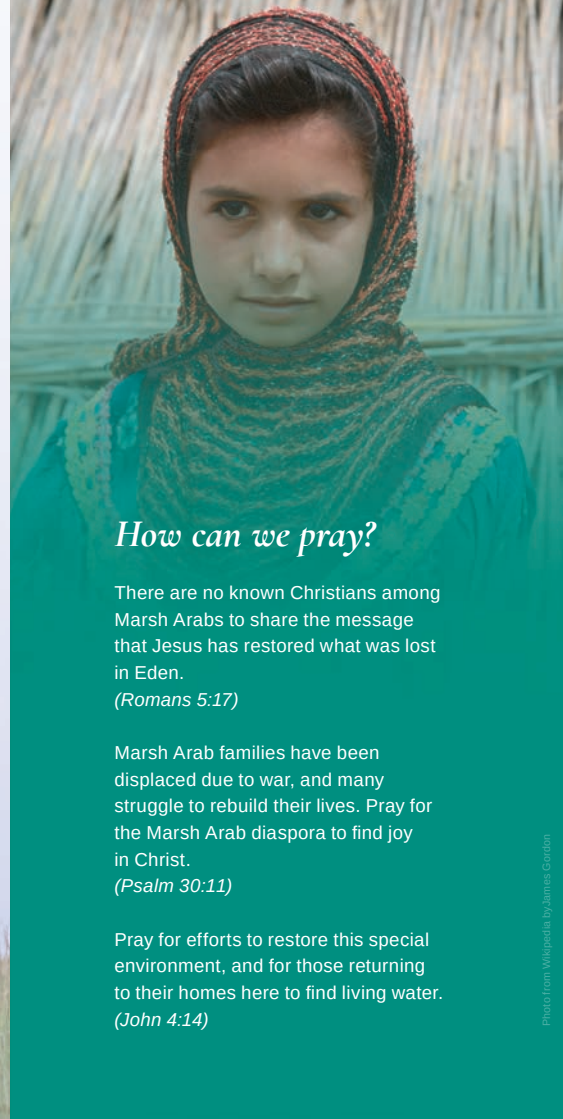
Manoeuvring his boat with a pole through the canals in the marshes, Abdul makes his way to a secluded hut made of reeds on the water, where his family will eat the fish he caught earlier. Abdul is a Marsh Arab, living in the desert wetlands of southern Iraq where the Tigris River joins the Euphrates. His culture depends on the water for survival.

There are two branches in the Islamic faith: Sunni and Shia. The vast majority of global Muslims are Sunni, but in Iraq, Shia's are the majority. This division has long been a source of conflict. In the 1980s and 1990s, water was diverted from the wetlands by Sunni Muslim authorities intending to destroy the livelihood of the Marsh Arabs, who are Shia. Recent efforts have restored

about half of the marshes and in 2016 this rare ecosystem with its unique wildlife was named a World Heritage site.

The Marsh Arabs are a people in transition. They had a population of 500 000 in the 1970s, but many fled when the marshes were drained. An estimated 48 000 live there today, fishing, raising water buffalo, and rebuilding the traditional meeting structures made of reed columns known as mudhifs. Some have moved to cities, in Iraq and abroad, and have lost the skills required to live in the marshes. And some Marsh Arabs are returning and hoping to create an ecotourism destination in this land that tradition says was once the Garden of Eden.

Photo from Pexels by Abdelmajid Khatem



How can we pray?

There are no known Christians among Marsh Arabs to share the message that Jesus has restored what was lost in Eden.

(Romans 5:17)

Marsh Arab families have been displaced due to war, and many struggle to rebuild their lives. Pray for the Marsh Arab diaspora to find joy in Christ.

(Psalm 30:11)

Pray for efforts to restore this special environment, and for those returning to their homes here to find living water.

(John 4:14)

Ismailis

Ismailis are a sect within Shia Islam who follow a living imam (spiritual leader) who is descended from Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. They believe these hereditary imams offer moral and spiritual guidance to their community.

In the 7th century, there was disagreement among Shias about the correct successor. Ismailis formed to follow the leadership of the hereditary line that is currently led by His Highness the Aga Khan IV.

There are 15 million Ismailis, mainly living in Central and South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, North America, and Australia. They highly value education, believing that the search for knowledge benefits self and society. Ismailis also

aim to live peaceably alongside others, and work to build a better life for the communities they live in as a whole.

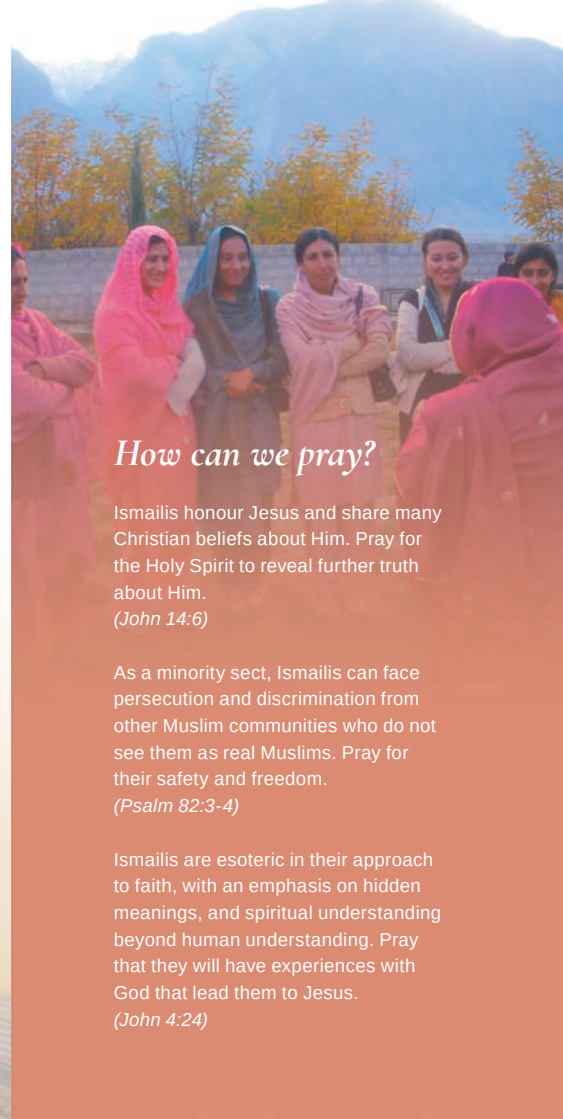
They are often visibly engaged in efforts to help others, with others. For example, last year the Ismaili community in Edmonton hosted a pancake breakfast and Covid-19 vaccination clinic on Canada Day, where they partnered with the city, local indigenous leaders, and a Christian shelter for the homeless. Very few Christian workers focus on Ismailis. It is easy to talk about faith with them, as they are interested in learning and may readily engage with Scripture, agreeing with another perspective, but not accepting it for themselves.

How can we pray?

Ismailis honour Jesus and share many Christian beliefs about Him. Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal further truth about Him.
(John 14:6)

As a minority sect, Ismailis can face persecution and discrimination from other Muslim communities who do not see them as real Muslims. Pray for their safety and freedom.
(Psalm 82:3-4)

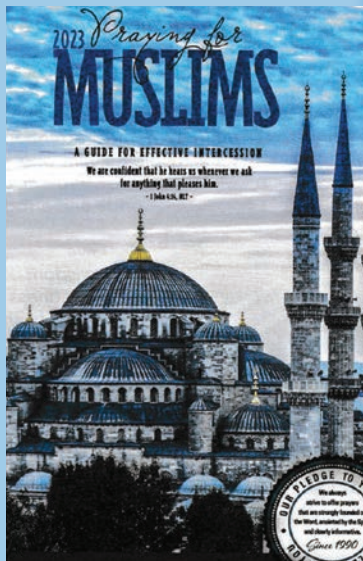
Ismailis are esoteric in their approach to faith, with an emphasis on hidden meanings, and spiritual understanding beyond human understanding. Pray that they will have experiences with God that lead them to Jesus.
(John 4:24)



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"(Honor is) carried and contained in women and is there to be guarded by men"



Qanta Ahmed

"The honor of a family is vested in a woman's body. The honor of a family is vested in what she does and



what she says. His honor is connected to what she does and says. It's a misplaced sense of honor." Raheel Raza

For those seeking to reach out to Muslim women, this DVD is a gem. It provides insights and understanding about Muslim women, their role in their families and how "honor" controls their lives and dictates their behaviour.

Nine courageous, articulate women (from Muslim, Sikh and Christian backgrounds) share their personal experiences and encourage women everywhere to work together for reform. Freedom of movement, the right to education, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation are some of the topics explored via in-depth interviews and round-table discussions with archival footage. Contains 8-min, 30-min and 60-min videoclips + bonus material.

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Unreached and Unengaged: Shias of Saudi Arabia

The distinction between Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims is felt keenly in the nation of Saudi Arabia. These two Islamic sects share many of the same beliefs and practices, but they also have significant differences which cause conflict. The Sunnis are “Ahl al-Sunnah” or “People of the Tradition.” They believe it is essential to practice Islam in the same way that the Prophet Muhammad did, as recorded in the Sunnah.

The Shia, however, believe that they can also be guided by the teaching and example of the descendants Muhammad had through his son-in-law and cousin, Ali. The “Shiat Ali” or “Party of Ali” argued that Ali should take the role of leader (imam) of the Muslim community after the death of Muhammad. In practice, the Shia are more reliant on their religious leaders (ayatollahs) for guidance, while Sunnis rely on the Sunnah.

Saudi Arabia’s royal family follow a fundamentalist form of Islam which does not consider Shias to be true Muslims. About 2 715 000 Shias live in Saudi Arabia, mostly in the Eastern Province. They are discriminated against at work, are limited in their access to political participation and have an uneasy relationship with the ruling powers. As a result, they tend to be poorer, and experience harassment and violence for their religious practices.

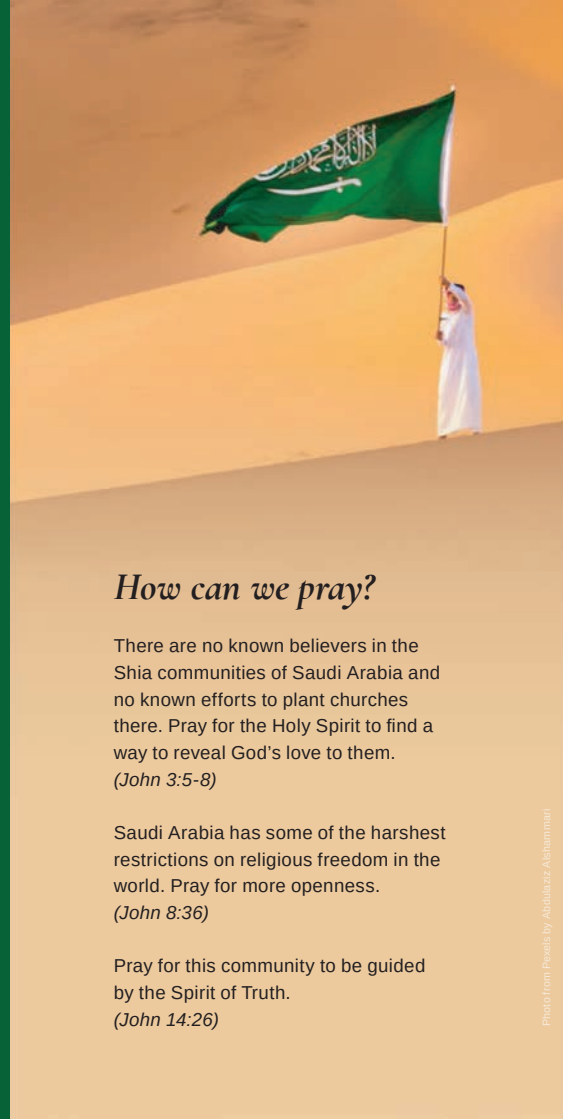
This causes the community to be disenfranchised, with some forming activist groups to demand equality with their fellow citizens. This results in further oppression as such activists are suspected of conspiring with the Shia communities in neighbouring Iraq for political purposes.

How can we pray?

There are no known believers in the Shia communities of Saudi Arabia and no known efforts to plant churches there. Pray for the Holy Spirit to find a way to reveal God’s love to them.
(John 3:5-8)

Saudi Arabia has some of the harshest restrictions on religious freedom in the world. Pray for more openness.
(John 8:36)

Pray for this community to be guided by the Spirit of Truth.
(John 14:26)



The Khoja Ithna Asharies of East Africa

The Shia branch of Islam that we have been praying for has other sects. One of these is the Ithna Asharis. Ithna Ashari means “twelver” a term that refers to the belief that twelve male descendants from the family of Muhammad are divinely appointed religious and political leaders. Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al Mahdi is the twelfth, the final imam, a messianic figure, who is expected to return one day with Isa (Jesus) to bring peace and justice to the world.

The Khoja Ithna Asharis community numbers about 125 000 people worldwide. They originate from the Kutch district in Gujarat, India, but have spread to form communities in most continents west of South Asia.

Most of the Khoja in East Africa arrived in

the 19th and 20th centuries. Originally, they were Ismailis, but a dispute in the Ismaili community in 1866 over the first rightful Aga Khan caused some Ismailis to leave that sect, either wilfully or forcefully. A prosperous Indian trader and leader in the Khoja Ismaili community in Zanzibar named Dew Jamal was one of those who converted to the Ithna Asheri faith and later built that community's first mosque in East Africa.

Today, Mombasa is the seat of the Supreme Council of the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asharis of Africa, representing about 17 000 people. They have been energetic evangelists, working to spread their faith through the Caribbean and into Latin America.



How can we pray?

Pray for the Khoja to encounter Jesus and understand Him through His own words in Scripture.
(John 1:1-14)

Pray for movements to faith in Jesus among the Khoja community, for thousands of them to be baptised and disciples.
(Matthew 28:19)

Pray for the many believers in East Africa to be enthusiastic witnesses, sharing their faith in Christ with the Khoja in a meaningful way.
(1 Peter 3:15)

When We Prayed: Saudi Arabia

In 1994, the *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* was in its second year and on Day 22 of that year, we prayed for Saudi Arabia. The guide said, "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the least evangelized countries of the world. It has few known believers, no indigenous churches, and Christian workers are not permitted to enter the country."

Much of this remains true. The Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia, who we prayed for earlier, remain unengaged and with no known believers. Among the majority Sunni population, however, there are recent reports of many being discipled and gathered into house churches! One local worker exclaimed, "The only Saudis I know here are Christians!" In just a few years, there have been so many new Saudi believers that all their time is taken up with discipleship.

And those disciples are sharing the gospel themselves. One Saudi woman became a believer in August 2020 and by Easter of 2021 she had led more than 30 of her family and friends to Christ. Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) can be found in every city, broadcasting their faith, and teaching the Bible through social media.

Some members of the Saudi royal family are trying to help their nation becoming a more open, tolerant society and this has been a great blessing. We do not know exactly how many Saudi believers there are in the nation, but we know there are many hundreds more today than there were in 1994, and we can pray that the movement will continue to grow.



How can we pray?

Pray for those members of the Saudi royal family who want to make Saudi Arabia freer, for wisdom, and the opportunity to institute change.
(1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Pray for MBBs in Saudi Arabia, to be wise in their witness, safe from persecution and bold in sharing their faith.
(Matthew 10:16)

Pray for expatriate Christians in Saudi Arabia to be helpful in discipling and encouraging local believers.
(2 Timothy 2:2)

The Wakhan Corridor, Afghanistan

A rugged, narrow strip of land seeps out from the northern border of Afghanistan, reaching to China to divide Tajikistan and Pakistan. It has been a trade route for centuries, but an 1893 agreement between the British Empire and Afghanistan created it as a border; but it is a border that crosses through the different people groups who live there.

The Wakhi people in Northeastern Afghanistan are from a sect of Shia Ismaili called Nizaris. They are not seen as real Muslims by other Afghans and are often discriminated against, sometimes even persecuted. Notably, the Taliban are very hostile towards them. The Wakhi number about 50 000, with about 17 000 of them living in the Wakhan corridor and the others in neighbouring regions of Tajikistan, China, and Pakistan. Also living here are about 1500 descendants of Kirghiz nomad

herders who were in Afghanistan when the border was created. They are strict Sunni Muslims.

The remote location of the Wakhan prevents the establishment of a good infrastructure. There is inadequate access to medical care, clean water, electricity, telephone connections or internet. Educational opportunities are very limited. The situation of the Kirghiz is even worse. Their daily life is marked by desolation.

Over the last two decades, a group of believers have had the opportunity to travel to the Wakhan corridor to share the Good News, although there is no existing church. After the retreat of western military in 2021, the Taliban quickly took over the Wakhan District – with unforeseeable and possibly disastrous consequences for the people who call it home.



How can we pray?

For peace and protection for the people in the Wakhan Corridor.
(Isaiah 54:10)

For the spiritual seeds spread in the past to grow in the hearts of the people
(Matthew 13:1-23)

For followers of Christ to be able to live among the Wakhi and Kirghiz in the Wakhan again, to share His love and salvation.
(Isaiah 52:7)



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Addiction in Afghanistan

Most people will never hear about a man like Qasim. He is from a remote part of Afghanistan; a member of an overlooked tribe, from an unreached people group; and he is a drug addict.

As a young man, Qasim travelled across the border to work in a neighbouring Islamic country. There, he was given drugs to make him more productive and able to work longer hours. He became addicted and before long, the drugs made him less productive, not more. Replaced by another worker who would likely follow the same pattern of exploitation, Qasim returned home. His addiction brought great shame on his family, who would have nothing to do with him. He ended up living under a bridge where the sewer waters emptied out, along with around 2,500 other addicted men, for much of the 24 years of his addiction.

This is the state of many people in Afghanistan and the surrounding nations, where drug addicts are rejected by families and shamed by their communities. Qasim, however, was found by workers from a treatment centre who have given him help and hope. He has been free from addiction for over 4 years and now works as a guard at one of the treatment centers.

Drug addiction is a growing problem in Afghanistan, which is the world's largest producer of opium. The problem is growing among women and children also, who live in poverty, conflict, and hopelessness.

Photo from Unsplash by Joel Heard

How can we pray?

Pray for more workers to serve and bring hope to addicts in Afghanistan who have very little chance of ever hearing the Good News.
(Romans 5:5)

For healing from the deep bonds of shame that keep many of these people, who are beloved of God, bound in the chains of addiction.
(Psalm 34:18)

For safety for those who are helping and serving such a needy population in dangerous circumstances across this region.
(Psalm 91:1-2)

30 Years of Prayer: the 2000's

30 Days of Prayer continued to grow in the decade of the 2000's, against a backdrop of deepening poison in inter-faith relations. A cycle of violence and corresponding responses from those attacked created growing bitterness and desires for endless revenge from groups in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America. Yet as Christians prayed globally for Muslims, both near to them and far away, hearts were softened, and changed, and love more greatly expressed even in very small ways.

On November 14, 1940, Nazi bombers attacked London and other English cities including Coventry. Over an eleven-hour raid, St. Michael's Cathedral in Coventry was virtually destroyed. At least 600 people were killed in the area with as many as another 400 dying in ensuing fires.

The next morning as the vicar, Dick Howard, walked through the ruins, there were no

words. All he could do was scratch in chalk on a remaining wall behind the altar the words Father Forgive. Howard did not add 'the Nazis' but left these two words to include all of us in our own sin and need.

Coventry Cathedral was not re-built fully until 1962, but the old ruins stand next to the new building. The words Father Forgive are now permanently engraved above the altar. But these are not just words. A ministry of reconciliation is based there that has touched the world in its impact, including in Iraq.

The 2000's began with the 9/11 attacks and other conflicts followed. But those events stirred significant growth in participation with *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* as Christians sought ways to pursue reconciliation and a witness to the Gospel, as Jesus taught us.

30 Days of Prayer

Calling the Body of Christ
to Pray for the Muslim World

November 6 - December 5, 2002



How can we pray?

Pray for Christians engaged in peace-making and reconciliation ministry with Muslims.

(Luke 6:17-36)

Pray for Muslims who are working to reconcile and restore peace in their communities, with Christians and others.

(Isaiah 1:18)

Pray for a greater revelation of the work of Christ to reconcile the world.
(2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

The Mehri Tribe

The sun sets on the desert horizon and darkness falls. In the southwest corner of Oman, close to the border of Yemen, a few old men gather to drink coffee and share the news of the day. They do so in a language that may die with them.

The Mehri tribe's historic homeland falls within the area between the modern borders of Yemen, Oman and Saudi Arabia. A Semitic language, Mehri is unwritten, and is unique to this tribe. Mehri is considered "definitely endangered" by UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages and is not understood by Arabic speakers which is contributing to its growing disuse. Limited efforts to preserve the Mehri language have been undertaken, but it remains at risk.

There are an estimated 100,000 Mehri speakers split between the three Gulf

States, however, estimates vary widely due to a lack of concrete knowledge and the remote nature of the tribe's homeland.

Up until the mid-1980's the Mehri tribe roamed freely across the borders of Oman, Yemen and Saudi Arabia without restriction as traditional Bedouin camel herders. Since then, the three national governments have encouraged the Bedouin tribes to settle into established villages, and this has resulted in the separation of the Mehri tribe into these three separate countries. This further isolates them and has caused their language to fall into further disuse.

Photo from Pexels by Ruslan Azadov

How can we pray?

This tribe is an unreached and unengaged Muslim community. There is no written form of Mehri and no oral translation of the Bible into Mehri exists. Pray for Christians who are fluent in Arabic to be able to reach Arabic speaking members of this remote tribe with the Gospel, and for an oral translation of the scriptures to be made in Mehri.
(1 Corinthians 14:10-11)

Pray that Arabic speaking Mehri's will find Jesus through existing online Christian resources or miraculous means.
(Revelation 3:20)

Pray that this people group would not be overlooked by the governments whose authority they live under and will be able to preserve their identity.
(Revelation 5:9)

Unreached and Unengaged: Northern Yemeni of Yemen

It is hard to think of a more desperate people than the Northern Yemeni people of Yemen. A population of over 13 million, speaking Sanaani Arabic, they are Shia Muslims and one of the largest populations in the world with no known Christian witness. Christianity arrived in Yemen in the 4th century, but Islam quickly dominated. If you look up a list of unengaged Muslim people groups (people groups with no known efforts to make disciples among them) different groups from Yemen appear repeatedly, with the Northern Yemeni being the largest.

Conflict has been ongoing in this region since the Arab Spring in 2011 but Yemen was already one of the poorest nations in the Middle East before that. A decade of brutal war has devastated the economy and

poverty here is a way of life. Malnutrition is widespread.

Millions rely on foreign aid to survive but Covid-19 has caused a drop in aid budgets by foreign governments focused on their own economies. The ongoing conflict continually disrupts the supply of essential food and fuel that does arrive. Most food must be imported but the people of north Yemen cannot afford to buy it, or the medical care they need to treat the illnesses caused by malnutrition. It is a vicious cycle. Unless the conflict ends, there appears to be no hope for any improvement. It has been called the world's worst humanitarian crisis.



How can we pray?

Pray for Northern Yemeni women. Their culture is restrictive for women, with arranged marriages and strict gender segregation, giving women even fewer opportunities. Women marry young and bear children who are likely to suffer from malnutrition and illness with little access to healthcare.

(Numbers 6:24-26)

Pray for peace in Yemen. For the conflict to end and the nation to be restored.

(Matthew 5:9)

Pray for God to make a way for His gospel to be shared in North Yemen.

(Isaiah 65:1)



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The Akhdam in Yemen

Aisha collects garbage and lives in a city slum in Yemen. She struggles to survive, as the living conditions for the marginalized Akhdam have steadily worsened since the beginning of the war in Yemen, years ago. Like many of the poorest people here, she spends her day at the garbage dump, trying to find some water, food or even some other things to use or sell. Aisha nearly died when she caught Covid last year - in the cramped slums nobody can afford to be treated in a hospital. But her hope is strong, hope for things to get better for her, and for her people.

Official estimates say there are 500 000 Akhdam in Yemen, but other sources say it is closer to 3 000 000. Their origins are uncertain, but they are of African descent and have always faced social inequality. They are discriminated against in many

ways and have few opportunities. The Akhdam live, isolated, in the slums of the big cities in Yemen and speak a mixture of Amharic, Somali and Arabic. Their living conditions reflect their inability to earn more than they need to survive. There is no sanitation or electricity. Almost none of the children attend school and the infant death rate is shocking. Many of them suffer from genetic or preventable diseases.

Many Yemeni Arabs consider the Akhdam to be bad Muslims because of how they live, without considering how unjustly they are treated.



How can we pray?

For groups that advocate for the Akhdam to have more opportunities and equal treatment in Yemen. Pray for more healthcare, infrastructure, and education to be made accessible to them.

(Proverbs 14:31)

Pray for the Akhdam to find hope and a future, in the plans that God has for them.

(Jeremiah 29:11)

Pray for completion of Bible translation in this people group's mother tongue and for Christian workers to share the love of Christ with them.

(John 3:16)

When We Prayed for Central Asia

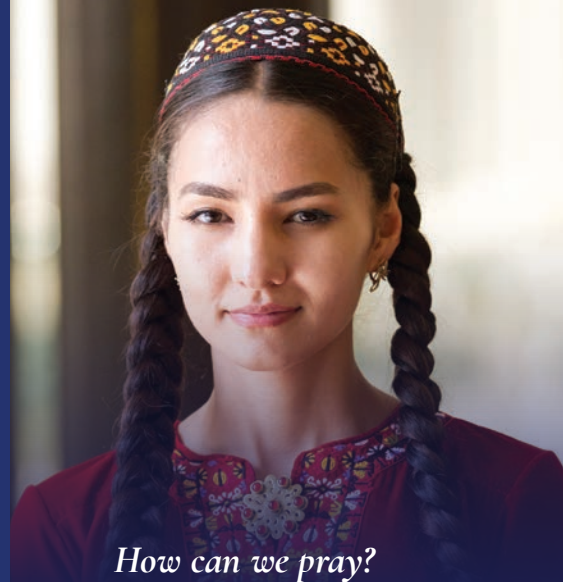
When *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* was just beginning, Central Asia was unreached by the Gospel, hidden behind firm restrictions on religious and other freedoms. We have included prayer for this region in almost every guide published.

Islam has dominated in Central Asia since it arrived in the 8th century by Arab conquest. The Russian Empire restricted religious practices from the mid-1800s, in efforts to establish a secular state. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the relaxation of these restrictions and to a revival of Islam which was supported by Muslim nations such as Saudi Arabia who sent Qur'ans and funded mosques.

In 1994, *30 Days* prayed for what was known then as the "Commonwealth of Independent States" - new nations who were engaging with the rest of the world for

the first time. We prayed for Christians to go to the region to help in practical ways, establishing healthcare, education, and businesses, and for resources to share the message of Jesus.

All these things happened. In the last 3 decades, more Muslims have come to follow Christ in this region than ever before – tens of thousands in some nations. Thriving Christian communities, led by Muslim background believers (MBBs) have survived ongoing persecution from both Muslim and secular opposition. Central Asian Christian leaders are taking part in global missionary events, contributing to the development of gospel resources for their own nations and creating their own worship songs and traditions.



How can we pray?

Pray for growing fellowships in Central Asia to be disciplined wisely and to have the resources they need.
(*Philippians 1:9-11*)

Pray for governments to protect religious freedom and allow Christians to worship safely and be able to contribute to the development of their nations.
(*Colossians 1:9-12*)

Pray for the Muslim majority to meet Christians from their communities and come to faith.
(*1 Peter 3:15*)

The North Caucasus

Every morning the sun rises over the majestic mountains of the North Caucasus and shines on nearly 7 million people who live between the Black and Caspian Seas. They are among the most unreached peoples of the world. Over 45 languages are spoken there, making it home to one of the most complex linguistic systems in the world. There are very few Bible translations in their languages.

The people in this region are, first of all, loyal to their clan. They harbour a deep mistrust of outsiders and strangers. However, if this basic reluctance is overcome, a kunakh relationship develops: a strong, mutual bond of friendship, loyalty and protection.

Yura became a believer in a country in Central Asia after his ancestors were exiled there in 1944. He returned to his Caucasian homeland to tell people about Jesus. He

has now lived there for over 30 years as the only known believer among his people. For many years Yura has been praying for open doors and for the formation of kunakh relationships.

One remote region especially dear to him is inhabited by the “eagle people.” To get there, he has to apply for a permit 90 days in advance. Then he must drive up into the mountains for hours and pass through several checkpoints. Only when he reaches his destination does he know whether he will be granted access by the authorities. Other regions are a little easier to reach, but even they require kunakh relationships to access.

The terrain, the languages and the culture all work together to make the North Caucasus one of the last places on this continent to receive the Gospel.



How can we pray?

Pray for open doors for believers to reach these closed people
(*Revelation 3:8*)

Pray blessings on the people of the North Caucasus, for peace and the knowledge of God.
(*2 Peter 1:2*)

Pray that all these people will hear God's word in their own language
(*Acts 2:4-6*).

Anatolian Alevis of Turkey

Hasan grew up in a poor Alevi village in eastern Turkey, speaking Zaza as his native language. At primary school he learned Turkish, and eventually became a teacher. Now retired, Hasan worried to see his grown sons struggling with alcoholism, in the same way his brother had. He feared his family was cursed.

Searching for help, Hasan began watching Christian satellite TV and realised that Jesus might be the answer for his family. He read a Bible and became convinced of it. Hasan prayed to receive Christ, and then wrote to the TV station who sent someone to visit and pray with him for the rest of his family. There are roughly 20 million Anatolian Alevis, made up of three ethnolinguistic groups (Turkish, Kurdish, and Zaza). They originated in Central Asia among the Turkman and are the largest religious minority group in Turkey.

Alevis follow a mystic interpretation of Islam and are regarded as a sect. They do not fast during Ramadan but during the Ten Days of Muharram, when Shi'a Muslims commemorate Imam Hussein's martyrdom. They do not prostrate themselves during prayer or meet in mosques but in smaller places of worship, called cemevis. They do not give alms like traditional Islam requires, but regard loving God and man as more important than Islamic law. Their theology and beliefs are not written down, they are passed through generations through poems and songs.

Alevis face prejudice and harassment, politically and socially in Turkey. They cannot be educated in their native Kurdish or Zaza, only in Turkish. In spite of this, Alevis value education, especially for their girls and women, and through hard work many go on to college.



How can we pray?

For committed Christian workers, especially teachers, musicians, and business people to go to Alevi areas. (Romans 15:20)

For the hearts of Anatolian Alevis to receive gospel seeds. (Matthew 13:1-9)

For blessings on the small number of Alevi believers and more Christian resources in their languages. (2 Peter 1:3)



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Fethullah Gülen Movement

In 2016, Turkey was shaken by an attempted military coup, organised by followers of Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen. Gülen has denied instigating the violence, but he certainly is the charismatic leader and inspiration for a highly influential movement throughout Turkey and beyond. Members of the movement refer to themselves as Hizmet, which means 'service'.

The Gülen movement hold to orthodox Sunni teaching, with strong Sufi overtones. Their particular concern is for a modern interpretation of Islam, so they place a strong emphasis on science, education, and dialogue with other religions. Their influence spread through student hostels, schools, and universities. Many Hizmet students rose to key positions in the military, judiciary, media, and business. Estimates suggested that at one time up to 4 million people identified with

the movement. The attempted coup led to a harsh campaign of persecution and imprisonment by the Islamist government, aimed first at Hizmet sympathisers, and then at all opposition voices. Around 70,000 have been imprisoned, and more than 150,000 civil servants have been dismissed. Many others have had to flee to the West. Very few have become Christ followers.

Ayshe attended a Hizmet school and joined in their prayer times at university. All this changed when she read the verses commanding violence in the Qur'an which provoked a spiritual crisis. To resolve her crisis, she started keeping nightly prayer vigils, and during this time she was given a New Testament. She opened it at random and read Matthew 5:44, where Jesus taught, "Love your enemy." This revelation led her to become a follower of the true Prince of Peace.



How can we pray?

Pray for the Hizmet prisoners, that the Lord would reveal himself to them.
(Isaiah 61:1)

Pray for those in exile, that their interest in dialogue with other religions would become true searching.
(Matthew 7:7)

Pray that Hizmet followers would realise their piety can only be fulfilled in Jesus.
(James 2:14-26)

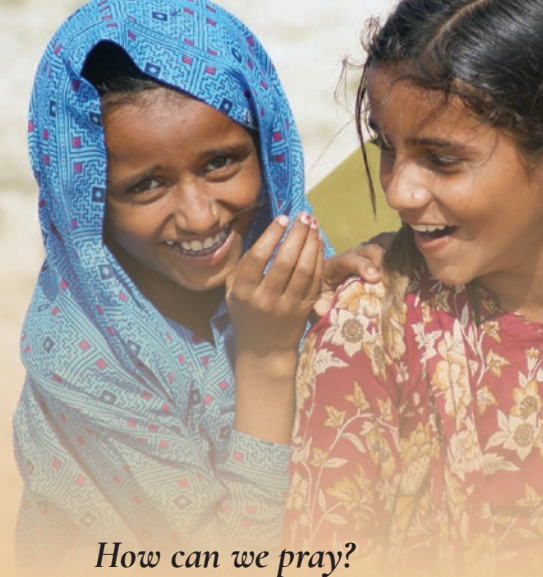
Unreached and Unengaged: Baloch of Eastern Pakistan

Anwar sighed as he finished the last of the khaddi kabab - a traditional Baloch dish in which a whole sheep is stuffed with rice, and cooked in an underground fire pit. The sun is setting over the mountains and Anwar prepares for evening prayers, hoping that will bring some peace to his troubled thoughts. He worries over the news of a military attack in a nearby village. His wife is pregnant, and he worries about her delivery. If the child lives, he wonders what opportunities they will have with no schools, and no end to the conflict that only seems to make life harder.

The Baloch people are mainly found in the mountains and deserts of southern Pakistan. Traditionally, they were nomadic, but most have semi-settled into mud or

stone huts on the hills, growing wheat and raising camels, cattle, sheep, and goats, which they move in winter to forage. They are among the poorest and the least educated people in Pakistan.

It is a difficult life in a region that has seen little development. The last two decades have seen escalating violence between Baloch nationalist groups who want to establish an independent Balochistan, and the Pakistani authorities. Most of the Baloch want more control of the natural resources (like coal, gas, oil, and gold) in their homeland, not necessarily to leave Pakistan. But the Pakistani government has been harsh in its attempts to suppress insurgent groups, so the conflict is ongoing with outbursts of violence and little hope of resolution.



How can we pray?

The Baloch have no known believers and no known efforts to make disciples among them. Pray that God will make a way to fulfil His Great Commission in this region.

(Matthew 28:19)

Pray for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and efforts to improve living conditions here.

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

Pray for blessings on the Baloch, that they would experience the love and compassion of God.

(Isaiah 54:10)

The Shabak in Iraq

Hassan has invited his friends for sugar biscuits and sweet tea. But the mood is tense. “The Arabs have driven us out, the Kurds have abandoned us. Who are we supposed to trust anymore?” he asks.

Hassan is a political activist and a member of the Shabak, an ethnic group in Iraq. About 300 000 Shabak live in an area called the Nineveh Plain in the north of the country – where the prophet Jonah called for repentance about 2700 years ago. Today, the region is the scene of ongoing conflict; last year the Islamic State (IS) raged in the area. Jihadists killed members of all minorities: Christians, Yazidis, Turkmen—and Shabak.

Most Shabak people follow Shia Islam, with elements of Sufism – a mystical expression of Islam, with their own

spiritual guides, known as pirs. From the IS's point of view as orthodox Sunni Muslims, that makes the Shabak infidels. Arabs and Kurds, the two dominant ethnic groups in Iraq, also often look disdainfully on the Shabak, who earn their living as simple farmers or truck drivers.

For a long time, the Shabak, were largely unknown outside of Iraq. The fact that they were persecuted by IS suddenly put them in the headlines. But this has done little to change their difficult situation: unemployment is high, especially among young people. Many of them struggle with their identity as members of a small minority.



How can we pray?

Pray that the few Christians in the Nineveh Plains will be light and salt for the Shabak.
(Matthew 5:13-16)

Pray for Bible material in their language, Shabaki, which is related to Kurdish.
(Isaiah 55:11)

Pray that soon many Shabak will be able to say with Jonah, “Out of my distress I cried to the Lord, and he answered me.”
(Jonah 2:2)

30 Years of Prayer: the 2010's

As *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* continued to grow in the 2010's, Christ's message of love and reconciliation towards Muslims also gained strength. One man who personified that love was Justin Normand, a 53-year-old man from Dallas.

In 2016, amid rising hate crime incidents targeting Muslims, Mr. Normand went to the mosque nearest his home and held up a sign. It read: 'You Belong. Stay Strong. Be Blessed. We are One America.' It was a counter-cultural message for a changing nation where some people feared Muslims and wanted them gone.

When asked why he did it, Mr. Normand replied that he wanted to, "...share the peace with my neighbours. My marginalised, fearful, decent, targeted, Muslim neighbours." He said, "This was about binding up the wounded. About showing compassion and empathy for the

hurting and fearful among us. This was about my religion, not theirs."

During the 2010's more partnerships strengthened to share the Gospel of peace with Muslims, including Vision 5:9 – a network with a desire to see people from all nations involved as witnesses. This partnership also encouraged more gatherings of Muslim background believers from many nations who were now following Jesus - also the result of increased global prayer.

Other ministries of reconciliation formed in the 2010's seeking to build bridges of love and kindness between faiths. More ministries focused on practicing the Gospel of peace and were nourished in part through millions participating in the global prayer initiative of *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World*.



How can we pray?

Pray that Christians will be living examples of Christ to their Muslim neighbours.
(John 13:14-15)

Pray for partnerships and ministries that work to "publish peace and salvation" to Muslims.
(Isaiah 52:7)

Pray for Muslims to be shown compassion, and empathy, and be welcomed by Christians in places where they are persecuted.
(Luke 4:18)



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Kanuri Manga of Niger

Just under 700 000 Kanuri Manga people live in the east of Niger and far north-east of Nigeria. They are a sub-group of the larger Kanuri tribe and before colonialism they were a powerful empire. Most of them are farmers, growing mostly grain crops in a harsh environment as well as raising sheep, goats and the horses which are a symbol of prestige among them. The Kanuri Manga are Sunni Muslims, with no known Christians among them.

The Kanuri are fond of using proverbs, developed to teach life lessons with a simple phrase such as:

"At the bottom of patience there is heaven."

"One does not love another, if one does not accept anything from him."

"He who does not know the road holds back even the one that does."

Today the Kanuri Manga face great physical and spiritual needs. Their climate causes famine to return like a season every year.

Local terrorist group, Boko Haram, has recruited some of their people, and killed others, causing many to flee to refugee camps, calling to mind the Kanuri proverb, *"When you see a rat fleeing into a fire, where it was fleeing from was hotter than the fire."*



How can we pray?

Pray for blessings on the Kanuri Manga, that God's kingdom will reach them in all its fullness and bless them in spirit, soul, and body. Pray for good rains, and an end to famine and poverty.
(Matthew 5:44-45)

Pray that God will bring peace and prosperity, an end to violence, and that there will be reconciliation among the people of this region. Pray that all refugees will be able to live in safety and be able to return and build up their communities again.
(Proverbs 30:5)

Pray for more Christians in this area to be bold in sharing their faith and for more efforts to share the Gospel among them.
(Proverbs 1:7)

Northern Mozambique

The beautiful tropical country lying on the coast between Tanzania and South Africa is Mozambique. After centuries under Portuguese colonial rule, Mozambique achieved independence in 1975 but fell into a long civil war, which finally ended in the early 1990s.

The northern half of Mozambique is courted by foreign Islamic groups. Islam arrived in the area in the 12th century through Arab traders and has influenced the population of the northern coastal strip ever since, as can be seen in the use of Arabic phrases in various local languages. But it is mixed with traditional religion too. In many cases, the leader of a mosque and the local witchdoctor are one and the same person.

Most of the locals in northern Mozambique live in fishing villages, where they have

fished and hunted for generations. Diseases of poverty - malaria, cholera, and malnutrition - are the main reasons for a high death rate, especially among children. But since 2017, the northern province of Cabo Delgado has also been terrorised by armed groups of Islamist extremists. Several thousand have been killed and a million others have been displaced by violence caused by the group known as Al Shabab ("the youth") because of their strategy of forcefully enlisting young people and children.

Half of the population of Mozambique are Christian, and many believers are choosing to stay in the troubled north to serve their communities, despite the danger.



How can we pray?

Pray for traumatized children and refugee families from Cabo Delgado who have witnessed horrors from attacks by Al Shabab.
(*Psalm 23:1-6*)

Pray for extremists, who have political and religious motives, to be subdued, to repent and work to restore their nation.
(*2 Peter 3:9*)

Pray for Christians in Northern Mozambique, including new believers, to be protected, and to be a light in the darkness.
(*John 1:4-5*)

Blue Nile Refugees

Fatima rushed inside her small mud hut and hurriedly packed a few belongings. Rumours of conflict nearby had the whole refugee camp in a panic, and she was ready to grab her children and flee. Her family is no stranger to conflict.

Fatima was a young teenager when she and her family first fled from their homeland in the Blue Nile state of Sudan over a decade ago. Back then she didn't understand the impact of war, and her family's flight was a big adventure. Now, as a mother of small children, she knows better.

Fatima is from a small sub-tribe of the Burun, one of the many tribes and sub-tribes who make up over 130 000 refugees now living in a remote corner of South Sudan, itself a war-ravaged country. They

rely on limited rations, received from the UN, and daily life is a struggle, especially since the Covid pandemic has reduced foreign aid. Fatima regularly walks three hours into the bush to cut firewood, and she struggles to keep her children healthy.

The Blue Nile state has been inaccessible to outsiders for many years, so little research has been done about the different tribes who call this region home. Although the refugees' current location is still difficult to access, they are now living in a country where they are free to hear the Good News.



How can we pray?

Pray for God to bring healing to refugees scarred by years of conflict. May they see the power and love of Jesus in their everyday struggles and find real hope for both the present and the future.
(*Psalms 103:2-4*)

Pray for peace in the Blue Nile region of Sudan so that the refugees can return to their homeland.
(*Isaiah 35:10*)

Pray for God's kingdom to grow among each of these tribes, and for fellowships of believers to be established which can continue to grow in their homeland.
(*1 Peter 2:9*)

Unreached and Unengaged: Jaaliin of Sudan

Descended from one of the earliest known human civilisations, and tracing their lineage to the prophet Muhammad, the Jaaliin people of Sudan were originally Nubians who became Arabised and now form the largest Sudanese Arab population.

There are four million Jaaliin (also known as Gaaliin, or other spellings) and they traditionally lived and farmed along the hot and dry banks of the Nile River basin in Northern Sudan. Many have moved to cities, but they keep close ties with their homeland and fellow tribesmen, mostly marrying within the tribe and living in communities with other Jaaliin.

Identity is an important issue to many Jaaliin. They emphasise their descendancy from Muhammad, a distinction which is more important than being ethnically Arab. But being Arab is also important, as

the Jaaliin assimilated the Arab language, culture, and their Sunni form of Islam. Outside of Sudan, however, Jaaliins may be considered “African” for their placement on that continent. Different families may feel different connections to these, and other identities, if they have emigrated. Whatever ways they identify, the Jaaliin are a strategic group for spreading the gospel in Sudan, due to their influence and size.

The Jaaliin are one of the largest populations on lists of unreached and unengaged people groups. There are no known believers and no known efforts to make disciples among them. There are some resources available in their language which could be used to communicate the Gospel to them, but they are in an area that is stricken with poverty and unrest which makes it very challenging to establish any kind of ministry.



How can we pray?

Pray for Christian groups in this area who want to engage the Jaaliin to have opportunities and the resources needed to make disciples.
(Acts 1:8)

Pray for Jaaliin who are in positions of influence to be peacemakers.
(James 3:17-18)

Pray for the Jaaliin to discover their identity in Christ.
(Ephesians 4:20-24)



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When We Prayed for India

The very first edition of the *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* was produced in India in 1993. Since that time, the Christian population in India has officially remained static at around 2.5% but non-government-led research indicates significant growth. Certainly, most of the Christian work in India is conducted by the Indian Church, foreign efforts being increasingly subdued by a hostile government.

Some researchers report that the Christian population in India is closer to 4% - a small minority, still, but in a nation with the second largest population in the world, that places India among the top 25 countries with the most Christians.

Islam is the second largest religion practiced in India, accounting for 15% of the population. That equals about 200 million Muslims, making India the nation with the

second largest Muslim population in the world (the first is Indonesia).

Indian Christians have faced incredible challenges and significant loss in the last year as Covid-19 raged through their communities. One pastor in northeast India described how his team responded during the pandemic by finding new ways to serve struggling Bengali Muslim communities around them.

When their usual work was disrupted by lockdowns, they responded by sourcing food, accommodation and assistance for thousands who fled to their home villages. As a result of their commitment to serve, they saw new fellowships emerge among some of the most challenging Muslim people groups in Bengal, new believers were baptised, and more openness has been reported among previously unreached communities than ever before.



How can we pray?

Pray for peace in India...ongoing conflict particularly between Hindus and Muslims stifles other progress and development.
(Romans 15:13)

Pray for Muslims in India—there are still many unreached groups—to have opportunities to hear the Gospel, and that they will be open to the Message of Christ.
(2 Peter 3:9)

Pray for Christians in India to contribute well and wisely to blessing India and modelling Christ to the nation.
(Philippians 4:8-9)

Mirpuri-Pahari people in Britain

The people from Mirpur District in Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AK) have a sea-faring tradition, and this became their first link with the British Empire. In the 1960's, the large Mangla Dam was built in Mirpur, flooding farmland, and displacing over 100 000 Mirpuris. Many of them used their compensation to come to Britain, where there was a labour shortage.

Most of the immigrants planned to stay for a few years, but extensive chain migration has resulted in 70% of the British Pakistani population being from a Mirpuri-Pahari background. This has made Mirpuri-Pahari the second most spoken language in Britain.

Mirpuri-Pahari is a low status, unwritten language but has been remarkably preserved through generations in Britain – better than it has been preserved in its

place of origin. Mirpuris are Sunni Muslims but practice a form of folk Islam that contains the fear of evil spirits (djinn), use of talismans and 'magic men', known as pirs.

Only about 30 Mirpuris are known to have come to Christ in Britain over the past 50 years out of a population of an estimated 900 000. Most of them remain hidden, fearing community rejection. There are only a handful of believers in Azad Kashmir, so it is inconceivable to Mirpuris that one of their own might become a Christian.

Mirpuri's tight-knit communities, self-sufficiency, and long-standing resistance to the good news, means they have been neglected by British churches. They are hidden in plain sight and so other groups who are more responsive receive more attention.



How can we pray?

Pray for efforts to develop audio, visual and social media resources to share the gospel in Mirpuri-Pahari in Britain and in Azad Kashmir.
(Hebrews 4:12)

Pray for British churches to be aware of and bless the many Mirpuris around them.
(1 John 4:7-12)

Pray that Mirpuri-Pahari in Britain will be blessed with peace and find salvation in Christ.
(John 14:27)

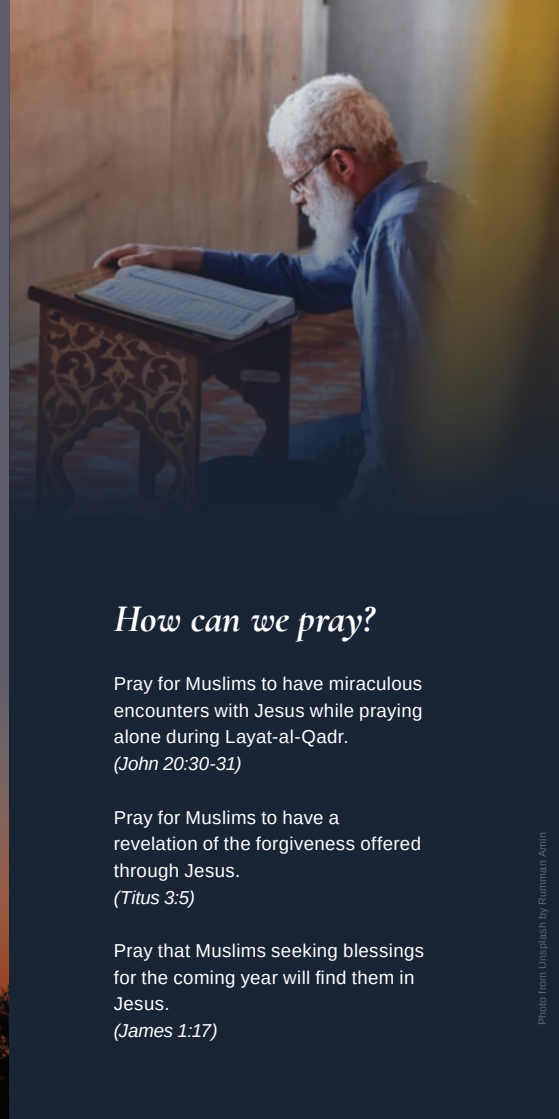
The Night of Power

Laylat-al-Qadr, translated as the Night of Decree or Night of Power, is one of the most sacred nights in the Islamic calendar. It takes place in the last ten days of Ramadan and marks the night in which the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It is also believed to be the night in which Allah shows great mercy to his creation and the night in which one's fate for the coming year is decreed.

Devout Muslims spend the night praying for forgiveness of sins, reciting the Qur'an, and saying special prayers. It is believed that prayers and worship conducted on this night are multiplied in value. Many Muslims choose to spend the last ten days of Ramadan in seclusion (i'tikaf), in order to focus on worship and prayer, and to

avoid involvement in worldly affairs. It is a time to reflect, worship, study the Qur'an and seek closeness to God, establishing practices that Muslims hope will continue, and seeking blessings for the coming year.

The i'tikaf often happens in mosques, although last year, due to Covid-19 restrictions, many secluded in their homes. There is also an outward focus at this time, as good deeds performed on Laylat-al-Qadr are considered equivalent to a thousand months of good deeds, so many make generous donations to Islamic charities and other good causes during this time.



How can we pray?

Pray for Muslims to have miraculous encounters with Jesus while praying alone during Layat-al-Qadr.
(John 20:30-31)

Pray for Muslims to have a revelation of the forgiveness offered through Jesus.
(Titus 3:5)

Pray that Muslims seeking blessings for the coming year will find them in Jesus.
(James 1:17)

The Panthay in Myanmar

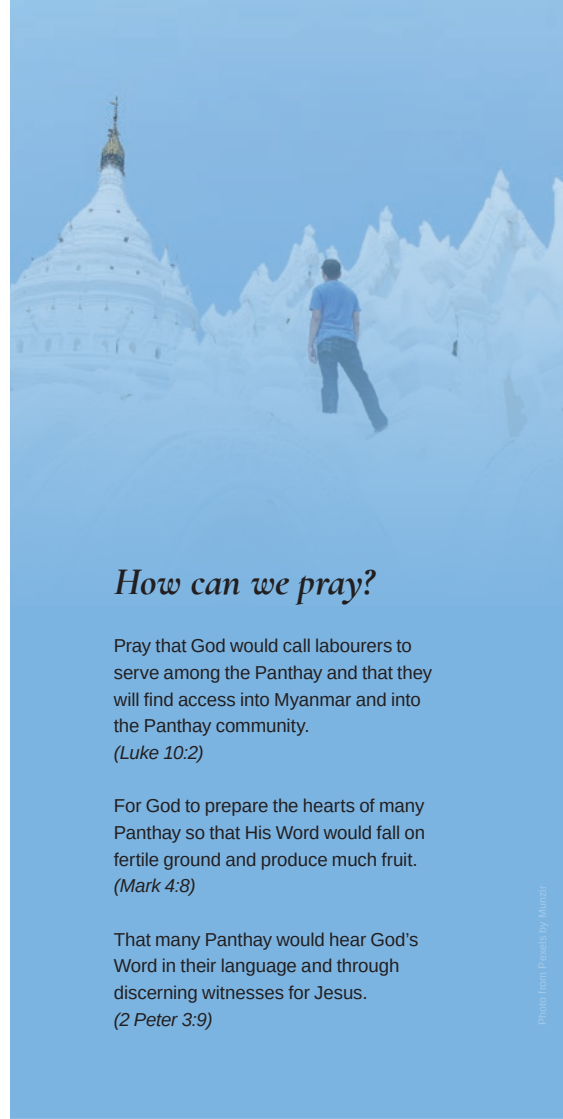
In the old Burmese royal capital of Mandalay alongside the palace, golden pagodas and Buddhist monasteries, there is an unexpected sight worth seeing: a Chinese-style mosque. It was built in 1868, by Muslim Hui people from the neighbouring Chinese province of Yunnan. The Hui, who are called Panthay in Burmese, came to what is now Myanmar to trade. They settled down permanently and were given permission to construct the mosque. Later years would see thousands more Panthay fleeing from violent conflict in Yunnan across the Burmese border.

Today, an estimated 30 000 – 50 000 Panthay live in northern Myanmar. Ma Pyu is one of them. A young and educated woman, who practices a moderate form of Islam, she is still unmarried. Following tradition, her parents are searching for

a suitable husband for Ma Pyu. However, within the small Panthay community they cannot find someone of her age, education, and social standing.

Asked whether he would look for a Muslim groom from another ethnic background such as Burmese or Indian, Ma Pyu's father replied, "Never! I would rather take a Chinese Buddhist!" The Panthay are deeply rooted in their Chinese culture and language. Compared to the Rohingya or other Muslim people groups in this area, the Panthay are less discriminated against by the Burmese majority.

So far, there are no known efforts to introduce the Panthay to the Gospel. A military coup in February 2021 and Covid-19 restrictions further hinder access into Myanmar.



How can we pray?

Pray that God would call labourers to serve among the Panthay and that they will find access into Myanmar and into the Panthay community.
(Luke 10:2)

For God to prepare the hearts of many Panthay so that His Word would fall on fertile ground and produce much fruit.
(Mark 4:8)

That many Panthay would hear God's Word in their language and through discerning witnesses for Jesus.
(2 Peter 3:9)

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The Suluk – Muslim Sea-Nomads of the Sulu Sea

Sandokan, the “Tiger of Malaysia”, was a legendary pirate in the novels of Emilio Salgari. He was a prince who had lost his kingdom and was fighting as a pirate against foreign invaders. The story takes place in North Borneo and is inspired by the Suluk and other indigenous people groups who were colonised by the British in the 19th century.

The Suluk, Islamic converts, are sea-nomads in the Sulu Sea, a region as large as Great Britain, between North Borneo and the South Philippines. During the colonisation by European powers, the proud and united Sultanate of the Suluk disintegrated. Noble descendants of the Sultan are, just like Sandokan, still fighting for the liberation of their kingdom from foreign influences. The leader of the Suluk, Tun Mustapha (1918 –

1995), led the British crown colony, North Borneo, to independence, forming the state of Sabah 1963. As chief minister, and a radical Muslim, Mustapha Islamized the country and banned Christian missionaries.

Through prayer and Bible distribution, however, some Suluks have come to faith in Christ. Today, some of them are actively sharing the good news among the Suluk. Despite this, the Suluk today are still an unreached group. Less than 2% are Christians, with no believers in some areas. The Suluk radically defend their Muslim faith, supported by the Islamic extremist organisation, Abu Sayyaf. Hundreds of local Christians and tourists have been abducted and murdered in the past few years by this group.



How can we pray?

Pray that the Suluk discover the Kingdom of God during their fight for an independent state and that they get to know the prince of peace Jesus Christ.

(Matthew 6:33)

Pray for the extremist groups to lose influence in this area and make it possible for Christians and others to live in peace.

(Psalm 37:1-5)

Pray for the few Suluk Christians to be safe and effective in their witness, and to be a blessing to their community.

(Luke 6:35)

Unreached and Unengaged: Rahanweyn in Somalia

When Somali immigrants in the USA meet, one of the first things they want to know is, “what tribe are you from?” Clan and tribal associations in Somalia are important, and complex, with marriages – often polygamous – creating new associations and loyalties.

The Rahanweyn (also known as the Digil-Mirifle for their two main groups) are an important and influential clan in Somalia. They are composed of many sub-clans, and have a distinct language, Maay. In Somalia, they are known as a minority clan, but the term ‘minority’ refers here to any clan that does not belong to one of four “noble” clan families – clans that are considered to have descended from a common Somali ancestor.

Nevertheless, the Rahanweyn have fought against colonial invasion, formed a political

party which was among the first to call for federalism in Somalia and advocate on behalf of their people’s interests, and in the early 1990s, they established a militant group (the Rahanweyn Resistance Army) to defend their autonomy.

The Rahanweyn are also devotedly Sunni Muslim. Somalia embraced Islam from around the 15th century, but family and clan identities are still more important than the claims of Islam. Sufi mystical orders and practices used to be common among the Rahanweyn, but fundamentalism has been steadily growing in recent decades, with fundamentalist groups bringing financial aid to impoverished communities, but also recruiting for terrorist groups like Al-Shabab.



How can we pray?

With a population just under 2 million, the Rahanweyn are one of the largest unreached, unengaged Muslim people groups in the world. The diaspora population may be key to reaching this community, with immigrant populations in other nations who have access to the Gospel and maintain connections to their homeland.

(2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

Pray for peace and prosperity in Somalia – survival is the only concern of people who are surrounded by famine and war.
(Psalm 106:4-5)

Pray for God to move miraculously to see the Rahanweyn reached with His love.
(Mark 16:20)

Praying for Muslim Background Believers (MBBs)

Abu grew up as a Muslim in North Africa. When he decided to follow Jesus, he was disowned by his family. All his acquaintances considered him a “traitor” and he lost his social status.

Abu longs for community and belonging. But even in the existing churches, the Christians treat him with suspicion because he used to be a Muslim. The church leader is afraid of the public authorities. He does not want to baptise Abu and accept him as an official member of the church. Although Abu would like to go into Christian ministry, he is denied theological training or involvement in church leadership.

Abu is one of many Muslims who have found Jesus in the last thirty years. In many Islamic countries, however, converts have a difficult time growing in their new faith

and becoming integrated into the family and fellowship of believers, sometimes due to fear, sometimes because there are no existing fellowships nearby. Some MBBs have formed their own fellowships and networks, encouraged by Christians from farther away, or rely on online connections and resources.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus involves being a part of a community of believers, loving one another and encouraging one another to live as Jesus taught. This looks different in every culture, but in areas where the dominant religion is hostile towards Christians, it can be very challenging. Where churches are just beginning to emerge, the process of organising discipleship and selecting leaders can be difficult, just as it was in the early days of the Church.



How can we pray?

Pray for mission workers who are discipling new MBBs to have real wisdom and humility as they teach everything Christ has commanded. *(Matthew 28:19-20)*

Pray for MBBs who are learning how to form churches, fellowships and Christian communities in places and cultures where they have never existed before. *(Romans 15:20-21)*

Pray as Jesus did, for the Church to be one, unified in love, a living witness of the Father. *(John 17:20-25)*

Looking forward...

How Can We Pray?

Looking back on what God has done over 30 years, and considering the current state of the world, gives us some ideas about what might happen in the next decade for global Christian witness among Muslims.

With these, and other, potential developments there will be a need for increased trust and hope in a future of promise.

On the night of March 11, 1812, in Serampore, India, a devastating fire ripped through a warehouse. In a few hours, fourteen language translations of the New Testament were destroyed with no backups, twelve hundred reams of paper and other invaluable manuscripts were also lost. Fortunately, the printing press was saved and within days legendary missionaries, William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward were back at work translating.

They would go on to publish thirty-eight language translations of the New Testament. Their work was also an inspiration for Henry Martyn in Patna and his first translation into

Urdu of the New Testament for Muslims. For Carey and friends, a horrible fire did not stop them. Nor did countless other losses including loved ones, misunderstandings, crippling of the work by British authorities, sickness, and much more. In fact, at a particularly low point of Carey's life in Serampore, perhaps after this fire, he was said to declare 'The future is as bright as the promises of God'.

No matter what the 2020's hold, trusting in a future as bright as the promises of God will be needed as we pursue in prayer for Muslims around the world.

Dr. Steve Cochrane has been involved in Muslim/Christian relations for over 35 years in South Asia as a missionary, historian, researcher, and friend. Read more at his blog: www.stevecochrane823.com

Here are some things to pray about:

The global increase of Muslim background believers following Jesus and taking more leadership in global Christianity.

The increased persecution of these believers and other witnesses to the Christian faith.

Continued movements for reconciliation among Muslims and Christians.

Increased mobilisation from all nations by Christians called to share their faith locally and globally with Muslims.

Increased global instability due to conflict and environmental changes.



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