

Email

Dear Friend,

This month we are praying for the Muslim communities of the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa. The region is vast, stretching from Dakar on the Atlantic coast in Senegal in the West to Somalia in the East, along with Comoros in the Indian Ocean. The Sahel marks the geographical transition between the Sahara Desert in the north of Africa to the more humid savannahs that lead into the tropical regions of central Africa. In a similar way, the Sahel also marks the transition zone between the predominantly Islamic north of Africa and the predominantly Christian south.

You can now also access our materials through the Pray Now App which, when installed on your smart phone is an easy way to stay up to date with the daily prayer feed and join with others to pray for our Muslim cousins around the world. Download the app now from your preferred app store searching for Pray Now or use this link (<https://geni.us/praynowapp>) in your phone's web browser.

May God bless you as you pray and intercede this week.

For His glory in the nations,

Charlotte and Richard

Prayer Mobilisation Team

Monday 29th July



Sub Saharan nomads

I did not go to the semi-nomadic Arabs of the Sahara because I loved them. I was not drawn to their culture. I certainly didn't like their food. There wasn't much of anything that I found beautiful in their land. The idea of transplanting myself into an impoverished city on the edge of the desert held little appeal for me.

So, why did I go? What kept me there for almost six years? I went because God is worthy of the passionate worship of all peoples and nations. "Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you (Psalm 67:3)!"

God's heart for the nations is compelling. With an infinite capacity for mercy and love, His heart beats for those tribes and peoples who have yet to worship Him in all His goodness and glory.

Pastor John Piper said it best in *Let the Nations Be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions*: "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the Church. Worship is. Missions exist because worship does not. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. However, worship abides forever."

The task of the Christian mission is to point lost people to God so that all would know Him and enjoy Him in worship. When God first called me to the nations, I had my ideas about where and to whom I would go. The region of the world that I had my eyes set on had plenty of thriving churches. This was a people group already reached by the Gospel; they no longer needed cross-cultural workers to come to them.

God turned my attention to the Muslim world, where there is only one worker for every 100,000 Muslims. There are 1,108 Muslim people groups that still have no one reaching them with the Gospel. While 94% of mission work focuses on already reached peoples, most Muslims will never have a chance to meet a follower of Jesus. These are troubling statistics. If we take the Great Commission seriously, we should consider those who have the least chance to hear about Jesus.

As I examined the facts, the problem stared me in the face: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few (Luke 10:2)." God had my attention. "Will you go to the harvest, to the Muslim world?" He asked me. Eventually, it was an easy decision. What mattered is that God desires the Arabs of the Sahara to flood into His kingdom. In my years living with and working alongside these desert dwellers, God's heart rubbed off on me. He increased my capacity to love my friends and neighbours and, in the process, I discovered that Muslim peoples have a vast wealth to offer the church, the bride of Christ.

Prayer

- Pray for more workers to go to the Sahel and Sub Saharan Africa
- Pray for workers to find ways to reach Sub Saharan nomadic peoples with the gospel of Jesus.

Tuesday 30th July



Nyaush: Women's Style in the Sahel

I live in the Sahel, a semiarid region stretching across Africa just south of the Sahara desert. My daily uniform here is called a lafai, a thin sheet of starched fabric fifteen feet long and five feet wide.

A lafai isn't the easiest thing to wear. First I tie it on my shoulders with two knots. I swoop the rest of the fabric around to my back, floating it over my head and pulling an edge down to cover my hair. Then I swing it across my front and flick the end over my shoulder. Wrapped in this billowing fabric, I feel like a human-sized ball of cotton candy with hands and feet.

Lafais come in all sorts of colors and patterns, from cheap Chinese-imported prints to intricate tie-dyed tapestries. Many local women pass the time by making their own lafais, needling designs into folded bolts of white fabric. Sometimes they use geometric shapes unique to their home villages. Or they try a motif that has just hit the sandy runways of the Sahel. Once dyed and stretched open, the material displays beautiful tie-dyed patterns.

Wearing a freshly starched lafai may not feel flattering. But a "nyaush" or two makes it worth it. Nyaush is what local women say to compliment each other. Think of it as a condensed version of the praise you might

hear a lady in the grocery line say: "That dress looks so good on you."

Getting nyaushed is great. So I wear my blazing orange lafai—the new one with intricate spirals. The pattern is called zenga zenga, a name drawn from words in a government official's recent speech. (Who says fashion isn't political?)

Smart shoes, a matching purse, and blingy earrings accessorize my zenga zenga lafai, which is a little too stiff thanks to the launderer's heavy handedness with the starch. To keep sudden gusts from lifting the material like a kite, I clamp the lafai to the top of my head with a pair of cheap sunglasses. I stay on-trend by putting them on upside down.

I stop on the street to buy freshly deep-fried sweet dough called beignets. As I adjust my upside-down sunglasses, a woman passing by looks me up and down, smiles, and declares, "Nyaush!"

I smile back and decide that dressing like a cotton candy orb on fire is worth a few good nyaushes. High nyaush ratings are great. They're proof that I'm getting it right—that I'm figuring out how to present myself to local women and that they approve of my fashion sense. And while I'm not here for the fashion, it opens doors into Muslim women's lives, leading to opportunities to share Jesus.

Prayer

- Please pray for my friends and neighbours, that they will approve of the Good News—just as they approve of my nyaushy style.
- Pray they receive the message of Christ as good—and accept Him as King and Saviour.

Wednesday 31st July



Dream of Jesus

For months, my teammates and I had been praying for God to lead us to people hungry to read His Word and learn about Jesus. The first breakthrough came when we met an elderly midwife who was open to the Gospel. She invited us to share the Good News in her village several miles from our city.

Traveling the short distance across arid scrubland, we arrived in her community and found that she had gathered a group of people to study God's Word. We took the group through the first in a series of lessons that incorporate stories of Jesus and teachings from the Bible. At the end of the lesson, several people said they wanted to learn more. A man named Ousman was one of those. We started visiting the village every week to study the Bible with Ousman and some of his neighbours. One day, Ousman walked an hour from his village to visit me and he shared about a dream he'd had the night before.

"You and I were sitting in my house," he said. "Then a man dressed in bright white clothing said to us, 'Come, follow me.'" Ousman told me how the man led us to a beautiful place with a stream and lots of fruit trees. In his dream, we sat and ate delicious fruit with the man and talked for a long time.

Then the man in white said to Ousman, "I have a house prepared for you." After Ousman finished describing the dream, I said,

"Jesus said He would do exactly that." I pulled out my phone to play John 14 recorded in Ousman's local dialect. Together we listened to the passage. Then we listened to Mark 1:16–18, in which Jesus called Simon and Andrew to leave their nets and follow Him.

"What the man in your dream said to you is the same as what Jesus said in the Bible," I told Ousman.

I then described how Jesus had called me to follow Him too. I shared that as a new disciple, I learned that the best way to follow Jesus was to listen to His words daily and try to put them into practice that same day.

"If you like, we can listen to His words together and help each other follow Him. I'm ready to do that with you."

Then Ousman said the most amazing thing: "Yes, I am ready too!" Since then, Ousman's hunger for the Word has continued to grow. We meet at least twice a week to listen to a passage, discuss it together, and talk about how to follow Jesus. Already we've completed an entire series of Bible stories, and we've listened to the story of Christ's death and resurrection.

Ousman hasn't declared Jesus as Lord yet. But he is eager to learn and wants to help as many people as possible hear the message of Christ. Recently Ousman suggested that he and his wife come to my house each week so I can help them learn to lead Bible studies and introduce others to Jesus in the Word. It's a fantastic strategy. Many movements of faith in Christ have started exactly this way—through local men and women who are coached to help others engage with the Word.

Prayer

- Praise God for giving dreams to Muslims, and thank Him for sending

Frontiers teams like this one to bring them the message of the Good News.

- Ask God to draw many Muslims into His Kingdom as believers share the Gospel and point others to the Word.

For more information see

<https://www.frontiers.org.uk/latest/pray-now.php>

Thursday 1st August

Dreams and visions of Jesus



In the Muslim world, there are a staggering number of people who have first met Jesus through a dream or vision.

God has used dreams to reach some Muslim Yawo, who have found hope and peace from these powerful encounters.

For the Yawo of Mozambique, as for most Muslims, Laylat al-Qadr (the Night of Power), is a time when people believe that sins are forgiven, prayers hold more power and there is an abundance of God's blessing. This night occurs near the end of Ramadan and signifies when Allah is believed to have sent the Quran to humanity through the prophet Mohammad. During this time, many Yawo Muslim believers seek Allah with a great fervour and have a greater openness to receive God's truth.

There have been many accounts of dreams and visions of Jesus during this time as people seek God's mercy, grace and guidance. God does not limit himself to this time only, and throughout God's Word we see accounts of God meeting people in visions and dreams.

Prayer

- Please pray for Yawo Muslim believers that they would encounter Jesus in a

dream or vision and experience his hope, love and peace.

- Please pray for open hearts to receive God's true Word, Jesus.
- Pray for those who will witness their friends and family encountering Jesus through dreams and visions. May they have ears to hear and hearts willing to receive the love and hope of Christ.

For more information see

<https://www.frontiers.org.uk/latest/pray-now.php>

Friday 2nd Augus

A daughter of the house

In recent months, my language helper, a young woman named Mekka, has wholeheartedly invited me into her family's everyday life. It started when my housemate got a new job, and Mekka's mom began inviting me to lunch because she felt sorry for me having to eat alone every day.

After lunch and afternoon tea, Mekka and I would shift to another room for our language lesson. Our lessons began spilling over into the early evenings, and Mekka would ask me to stay and help her prepare dinner so I could keep practicing new vocabulary. Then her family would insist that I stick around for dinner and evening tea.

Sometimes Mekka and I would go out to the garden after nightfall to continue our lessons. Mekka's mother and sisters would often join us once they finished their chores.

As if I wasn't spending enough time with the family already, one of Mekka's younger sisters started joining me for morning walks in the park. (The local language is much more difficult at 5:00 a.m.)

After our walk, she would invite me in for breakfast. The first few times, only she and I ate together because everyone else was still sleeping. But eventually her mom and sisters started waking up early to join us as well.

At first, I wasn't sure how often to accept their offers. I felt like that neighbourhood kid who's always in the house—the one you can't bring yourself to send home. But now, whenever I miss a meal with them, Mekka's mom sends me a plate of food and asks me why I didn't come over. Most times, I jokingly place the blame on Mekka for not inviting me,



to which her mom reminds me that I am a “daughter of the house” and don't need an invitation.

They consider me so much a part of the family that they invited me to their nephew's engagement party and introduced me as one of the sisters. They even had me join them in some of their family photos!

The depth of relationship and language I've cultivated in my time with the family has been such a wonderful gift. But the greatest blessing is the opportunity I have to share about Jesus.

One evening while snacking on sunflower seeds and fruit, one of Mekka's sisters mentioned how different our cultures are.

“Yet you are so different from your own culture,” she said to me. “You have high morals, you are respectful, and you listen to God. Our whole family really respects you and the way you live.”

Then the youngest sister asked, “Why are you so different from others in your culture?”

“Because when I believed in Jesus' sacrifice for the forgiveness of my sins and turned to His ways, my heart was changed,” I explained. “God gave me a desire to listen to Him and obey Him. He is with me, and His presence gives me joy and peace.”

That conversation reminded me how important it is for believers to serve in places where the Gospel has not yet been shared.

Most Muslims in the least-reached places haven't had a chance to meet a follower of Jesus and witness the life of a believer. They

have no model for what it means to live by the Word of God through the power of His Spirit. They have yet to discover Christ moving in and through His people.

God has called me and others to the field to begin to change that.

Prayer points:

- Please pray for hospitable families like Mekka's to open their hearts to the Gospel as much as they welcome new friends into their homes.
- Pray for more men and women to hear God's call to go and live among those who have the least access to the Gospel.
- Ask the Lord to give Frontiers field workers open doors into Muslim homes to share the message of Jesus Christ.

For more information see

<https://www.frontiers.org.uk/latest/pray-now.php>

Saturday 3rd August

Baptism in a wadi

Bisharra popped an SD card into her phone and turned up the volume. She loved to listen to scripture passages recorded by her friends, Kristi and Anna. The words of Acts echoed through her small mudbrick home as she built a fire and prepared millet and okra sauce for her grandchildren.

In some ways, Bisharra felt like one of the disciples from the early church. She shared about Jesus daily, even making weekend trips to other villages to share what was recorded on her SD cards.

Bisharra paused, spoon in hand, and frowned as the audio described a group of new Christians becoming baptized. Kristi and Anna frequently spoke about baptism, urging Bisharra, her sisters, and her cousins to take the step of showing public commitment to following Jesus. But Bisharra didn't see the purpose of baptism.

A few days later, Bisharra walked to her cousin's house for their weekly study with Anna and Kristi. She and two of her cousins had been meeting in one of the women's homes each week for over two years. Sometimes their adult daughters joined them.

"What can you do to obey what you listened to this week?" Anna asked the group after they listened to and discussed the text.

The women looked at one another. Bisharra spoke up hesitantly, "Be baptized." The other women murmured and nodded in agreement, eyes on the ground, showing the same uncertainty Bisharra felt.

Anna pulled her phone from the pocket of her dress. "Would you like to see pictures of my son's baptism?"



When she saw the image, Bisharra gasped. A tarp filled with water lined a rectangular hole dug into the hard, sandy ground, and the 14-year-old boy lay in it, pinching his nose as his father dipped him under the water.

"It looks like a grave," Bisharra cried. "It is like the Savior dying and coming back to life again."

"We must be baptized, too," Bisharra's older cousin decided. "We want to be like Jesus and His disciples."

At the beginning of the rainy season, both Kristi and Anna went on trips with their families. Before leaving, Anna assured the ladies they would be back soon. The rains picked up slowly. Bisharra and her cousins continued to wait for their opportunity to be baptized. Finally, it rained enough to fill the *wadis* and ponds. Bisharra stood at the door of her little house, grinning as the glorious rain poured down on the thirsty earth. "It's time!"

Together, Bisharra and one of her cousins waded into the muddy water. Bisharra closed her eyes as her cousin dunked her and brought her up. She laughed and lifted her hands to heaven, praising God for what He had done in her life and for filling her with His Spirit.

One by one, each of her cousins and two of her nieces stepped into the water to be

baptized by one another, huge smiles flashing across each face as their colourful body wraps dripped with brown water.

When Anna and Kristi returned four days later, Bisharra could hardly wait to tell them the good news. The friends grinned as she described the baptism.

“How did you feel after you were baptized?” Anna asked.

Bisharra smiled back. “I felt very happy and completely at peace.”

Bisharra knew she and her cousins had made the right decision. She wanted to follow Jesus with her whole heart, living in the hope of His resurrection. Though illiterate and disregarded as an irrelevant woman by many in her community, she continues to be a bold ambassador for Christ.

Prayer

- Praise God for Bisharra and her family’s commitment to follow and obey Jesus.
- Pray that Bisharra’s ministry to surrounding Muslim communities will encourage many to follow Jesus.
- Ask the Lord to continue to bless the work among Muslim village families in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Original article:

<https://frontiersusa.org/blog/baptized-wadi/>

For more information see

<https://www.frontiers.org.uk/latest/pray-now.php>