

# Secret Believers Prayer Focus



## Part 1



Praying for Secret Believers, Iraq,  
Egypt, , Understanding Islam

Considered Infidels!

Threatened by family!

Isolated from culture!

Forced to believe in secret!

***YOUR PRAYERS can bring  
relief and change for these  
believers.***



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# January

## Please Pray

We have a few suggestions to help you in your own personal life to remember to pray for this special part of the body of Christ.

- Every time you see a news story from Gaza, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran or any other Muslim country or area, remember there is a Church there, and this news probably affects the Church. Use that news story as a reminder to stop and pray for the Church in that country.
- Pray that Muslims will have an opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ, will receive a portion of Scripture in their language, and will meet someone who can show them the love of Christ.
- Pray for the political situation in the Muslim world. Pray for peace so that the Church may flourish and spread freely.

## Secret Believers

Secret Believers are generally defined as brothers and sisters in Christ who live in the Muslim world and who cannot identify themselves as a Christian.

To become a Christian in the free world is a personal choice. Westerners are free to make this choice. However for people in Islamic countries it is hard – and in fact unsafe – for many to become Christians. Believing in Jesus Christ, owning a Bible, studying it and joining other Christians in church services, can be dangerous for their personal liberty and lives.

- The risk of doing so often brings death threats that mean the believer lives in constant fear for their life.
- Family, friends and society reject them for becoming a Christian and therefore they become very isolated.
- There can be a loss of livelihood which effects the whole family.
- The option to remain secret in their belief in Jesus therefore excludes them from Christian fellowship or the opportunity to learn and grow in their new Christian faith.



# Praying with Purpose

Brother Andrew says: Wherever I go throughout the Muslim world, there is one thing Christians always request when I ask them how we can help: "Please pray for us," they say.

Those of us who live in freedom need to understand the struggles of Christians living under Islam, and with that have compassion to remember to pray. Many Muslims are becoming followers of Christ and they face unique challenges - especially when they have to keep their identities secret.

While most Islamic countries around the world claim to tolerate freedom for believers of all religions to practice their faith, the reality for many Christian groups and individuals is very different.

Islam identifies Christianity with Western Culture rather than understanding it as a deep belief of faith based on a personal relationship with God.

Thousands of Muslim Background Believers suffer persecution daily.

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, having over 1.4 billion followers. Nevertheless, local Christians in Islamic dominated countries also share that the interest in Christianity is increasing. Muslims become Christians despite facing great danger to their lives.

# Please Pray

- That Secret Believers are encouraged and strengthened to pursue their Christian faith in spite all the difficulties they face.
- That Muslim dominated countries will freely allow citizens to change their beliefs without penalty.
- That Secret Believers will have the right to openly identify themselves as Christian.
- That Secret Believers will be warmly integrated into local Christian communities, without suspicion.
- That the free Western Church will grasp the importance of praying for their brothers and sisters who are Secret Believers.

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# February



## Please Pray

With our Iraqi Christian brothers and sisters we cry out for a solution.

- Pray for the Church in Iraq to be sustained through this time of many believers leaving.
- Pray for the safety of all Iraqi believers.
- Pray for Muslim Background Believers to find the encouragement and support they need.
- Pray for unity among all Iraqi believers.
- Pray for the terrorists to know the real God.

## Iraq

The Church In Iraq has a long history. In recent years there were probably about 475,000 Christians in the country, but since the war many of them are scattered around Iraq.

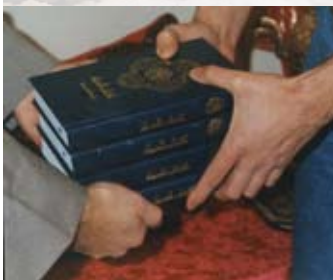
There is a fear for the future of the Iraqi Church, because so many Iraqi Christians are leaving. Many Christians are becoming refugees in their own country, and therefore the Church has a very low profile and is very low in activities.

It can be dangerous to organise secret meetings and seminars. Even holding a church service can put people at risk.

### Sources of Oppression and Persecution

Many Christians fear the future for themselves, for Iraq and for the Iraqi Church.

- Many Islamic-fundamental and criminal groups fight a non-officially declared war towards the Christians and are trying to do away with the Christian heritage of the country.
- Church buildings and monasteries have been destroyed. Christians have been kidnapped and killed.
- Young Christian girls and women have been raped or killed. The government is unable to protect its citizens and especially its minority groups like Christians. There is total anarchy, and the Christian minority is suffering.



Key Facts: Iraq  
Leader: Prime Minister Maliki  
Population: 29 million (1.5% Christian)  
Majority Religion: Islam  
Type of Government: Parliamentary democracy

## People

### **Almost 2000 families have fled from violence in Mosul**

Armed Islamic terrorists are walking the streets and asking pedestrians for their identification card. The religion of the owner is written on every ID card, either Muslim or Christian. When 'Christian' is read by the terrorists, the owner of the card can sometimes be murdered on the spot, hence many families have fled to the plains of Nineveh.

However families that left the city often live in miserable circumstances. Many left Mosul overnight with only the necessities of life and arrived in villages that can barely host them. Relief is offered by the villagers, the Iraqi government and several organisations. But since most cannot find any work in the generally small villages, the families lack income and find themselves in the difficult situation of being fully dependent on help from others.

This then has forced some families to return to Mosul, in cooperation with local organisations. Open Doors is working to practically support these families. There remains a great need to pray for their protection.

As the Church is under such attack this leaves Secret Believers very few places to go to find fellowship or protection and support for themselves.

## Please Pray

- Please pray for safety for the leaders of the Church and for all the active church members.
- Pray for a very fragile situation and for the many Christians living in grim circumstances.
- Pray for the many children in this country.
- Pray that the cloud of violence and war will be lifted from this country.
- Pray for the many families who have lost loved ones, their homes and possessions, to find strength and comfort in Jesus.

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# March



## Please Pray

- Pray for the believers facing this discrimination that they may stand strong in their faith even through persecution.

- Pray for not only those discriminated against, but their families who are directly affected as well. Pray for unity among the Church in Egypt.

- Pray that Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) would find the support and encouragement they need.

- Pray for churches to find ways to continue to worship and fellowship despite the regulations against them.

## Egypt

There are many Muslim people in Egypt who see the Islamic faith only as a cultural and traditional religion bringing a binding unity of their nation.

However the Church in Egypt has been in existence since the 1st century AD. Orthodox Christianity is an integral part of Egyptian history. Evangelical work began 150 years ago and has been active in church planting, education and providing health services.

The estimated number of Christians in Egypt is between 8-10 million, with 1 million said to be evangelical Christians. The Church is under constant pressure with a minimal margin of rights and freedom. There is a real challenge for the Church in integrating MBBs.

### Sources of Oppression and Persecution

- Fundamental Islamists cause discrimination on the grassroots level even though they are not in power. Strict government regulations exist against many church activities.
- Rejection of MBBs socially and culturally.
- The Orthodox Church, in general, is against Evangelicals.
- Discrimination of Christians in the workplace, etc.



Key Facts: Egypt  
Leader: President Mubarak  
Population: 75.5 million (13% Christian)  
Majority Religion: Islam  
Type of Government: Republic

## People

Faithful, conservative Muslims eagerly study the Koran and other writings. They hesitate sometimes in their studies about the portrayal of Isa (Jesus), who is greatly honoured by Allah. In search for answers they can come to believe the Bible, which they once considered to be false.

The sheik Bahaa el-Din Ahmed (59) from Egypt became a Christian this way. As leader of a mosque he had been a member of a radical group for 20 years.

On account of his disrespect for Islam he was then imprisoned for two years. After his release he said: "In these hard times Jesus was always with me."

Please pray for Ahmed, who is threatened further. Many other Muslim spiritual leaders, who became Christians, need support, protection and often a new identity.

### Integration in the church

When Sara and her husband became Christians, they lived in upper Egypt. They were tormented by their families. It was difficult to find a church. The leaders of the ethnic churches – not only in Egypt – can be afraid to accommodate former Muslims. "In every church are masked police spies, which are monitoring the churches to spy out former Muslims," she reports. Sara moved with her family to the capital of Cairo, where they could hide in a large church where nobody knew them.

## Please Pray

- Please pray that the ethnic churches will have the courage to accommodate former Muslims, so they will not be excluded from the community of believers.
- Please pray also for former Muslims, who are supporting other converts in their new faith.
- Pray that the conversion of influential Islamic scholars arouses curiosity about Christianity.

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## Understanding Islam

Islam began with Muhammad who was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in 570 AD. At age 40 he began having a series of visions which occurred over the next 22 years until his death in 632 AD.

In 622 Muhammad assumed political power over and above his claim to prophet-hood. His followers were called 'Muslims', which means someone who has 'submitted' to Muhammad and his version of God.

In the ten years between 622 and his death in 632, Muhammad bequeathed to his followers a body of administrative, political, and religious teaching and duties, that was posthumously collected into a book called the Quran. The word "Quran" means recitation.

Some Islamic beliefs (adapted from A Muslim World Overview by Don McCurry)

- 1 There is One God. (No Trinity). He does not beget (therefore, God could not have a Son.) Jesus is only a prophet, and Muhammad is the last and greatest of the prophets.
- 2 God is absolutely sovereign, responsible for all that happens (thus making Him the author of evil).
- 3 The Day of Judgment. God will judge the world on the "Day of Doom." Everyone's good deeds will be weighed in a balance scale against his bad deeds.

The god of Islam is not personal and cannot be known - is responsible for good and evil, loves only conditionally - those who love him, does not promise salvation (except through martyrdom), nor is he under obligation to be truthful or fair to human beings. 'Revelation' by Mark Durie



Throughout this brochure, names of believers have been changed to protect their identities.



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