

Monday 15th April

Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.

“It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!’ In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself! Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.’ Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’). When some of those standing near heard this, they said, ‘Listen, he’s calling Elijah.’

Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ‘Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,’ he said.

With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, ‘Surely this man was the Son of God!’” Mark 15:25-39

“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, ‘Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?’

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he said. ‘You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, “He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”’” Mark 16:1-7

The cross was not a mistake, or a defeat, but the redemptive act of Almighty God, planned before the world began (Gen. 3:15; Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28; Mt. 1:21). Through his death and resurrection, Christ defeated Satan and triumphed over the last enemy, death (I Cor. 15; Heb. 2:5-18). Jesus is risen! He has the victory.

- Pray that many Muslims would discover that Jesus is alive and has defeated death.
“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”
John 11:25

- Pray that the Good News would spread and that whole Muslim communities would come to know Him.
- Pray that those Muslims who accept Jesus would be courageous and would share widely amongst their families and networks.

Tuesday 16th April

For the next five days we will read Easter stories from Frontiers' workers in different regions of the Muslim world.

The scent of honour

We are in the days leading up to Easter and the celebration of Christ's resurrection.

I invite a group of Muslim friends into my salon - a Middle Eastern-styled living room. On the coffee table, I've arranged an assortment of intriguing objects. Each item tells part of the Easter story. Some objects come from Christian traditions; others are from the local culture. Each one has been carefully selected to communicate meaningfully to Muslim women.



A large bowl filled with sand signifies the desert, where God leads us to hear His voice and be renewed by Him.

A handful of stones remind us that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

There is a clear tea glass tinted deep purple and ringed with gold. It represents repentance.

A bottle of oil stands for baptism and the Holy Spirit.

A white candle represents the pure and sinless Christ who is the Light of the World.

In the weeks leading up to Easter, I add a new object to this visual recounting of the resurrection. My curious friends visit, eager to discover new items and the piece of the story each item reveals.

As my friends settle into my salon, their eyes dart over to the display, searching for a new object. They're polite and yet I see that they feel pained to be kept waiting to hear more of the Easter story.

I bring out a small bottle of expensive perfume purchased in the local market. I open it and the scent fills the room. We read the first half of Mark 14. The passage begins with religious leaders plotting Jesus' death and it ends with Judas agreeing to hand him over.

In the middle of all this evil, in the midst of men's failure to grasp who Jesus is, a woman shows up. In spite of criticism, she courageously pours out her perfume and her love, anointing Jesus with perfume valued at a year's salary.

And Jesus honours her.

My friends love the story. When it's time for them to leave, I give each woman a small vial of perfume to take home.

"Wear this scent so you don't forget how the woman poured out her love to Jesus," I say, "and how He honoured her."

That little vial of perfume is a reminder that they too can be part of the Easter story.

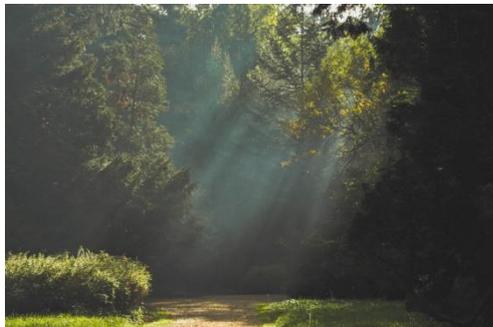
- Ask God to remind these women that Christ honours them enough to die for them.
- Pray that Muslims would have their minds and hearts opened to the truth of the resurrection.
- Ask the Lord to give Frontiers teams creative ways to share the gospel with local men and women this Easter.

Wednesday 17th April

No Longer Afraid: An Easter Message

As followers of Christ, we have every reason to celebrate Easter. Because of the cross and the resurrection, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35-39)!

We also rejoice because in many nations, Muslims are celebrating this as their very first Easter. To the praise of His name, more and more Muslims are discovering the infinite love and mercy of God the Father and declaring Jesus Christ as Saviour.



Richard, a Frontiers team leader in the Middle East, recently shared how his team is seeing Muslims choose to follow the Lord.

One of these is a new believer named Rahima, who used to live in so much fear, that she could hardly sleep at night. She was terrified of death and paralysed by thoughts of eternal rejection and torment in hell.

"Ever since I started reading the Bible," Rahima told one of Richard's teammates, "I'm no longer afraid of tomorrow. I don't cry myself to sleep anymore. With Jesus, everything has changed."

What a joy it is to see people like Rahima set free from the stronghold of fear!

And then there's Bassim, a young man who had never seen a Bible or known a follower of Jesus before meeting Richard. But his heart was hungry for the truth. He eagerly started studying the Word with Richard. On the days they didn't meet together, Bassim would read as much of the Bible as he could and then turn up next time at Richard's home full of questions.

Then one night, Bassim had a dream in which Jesus came to him and said, "Follow Me." He woke up ready to become a disciple and to follow the Lord's example of baptism in Matthew 3.

But it didn't end there. A few days after his baptism, Bassim had another dream. "Do not be afraid," the Lord instructed him. "I am making you to be a light and a witness to Muslim men and women throughout the region!"

The Lord is turning spiritually hungry people like Bassim into bold and faithful disciple-makers who help catalyse movements to Christ in Muslim communities.

This Easter, we at Frontiers are rejoicing over our new brothers and sisters from Muslim communities who have responded to the Good News and said yes to following Christ.

But hundreds of millions of Muslims have yet to hear the gospel.

- Pray with us for more workers for the harvest, so that those who live in fear will discover the sure hope of the Saviour.
- Help us all to glorify God by declaring the message of the resurrection with confidence and clarity to Muslims who live near us. He is risen!
- Let's pray for more Muslims to have dreams and visions this Easter, so they too can be a light and witness to Muslim men and women around them.

Thursday 18th April

Layla's First Easter: Reaching Muslims through Language Learning

"I've finally found Someone who can satisfy!" thought Layla.

Layla had been searching for spiritual fulfilment for years. First, she tried Islamic extremism. When that failed to fill her emptiness, she tried New Age mysticism.

But Layla still felt empty. Little did she know that she was about to meet someone who could point her to the true source of spiritual peace and hope.

Layla met Suzanne, a long-term Frontiers worker. As an expert in language learning, Suzanne served other field workers in her North African host country by teaching them effective ways to learn various unwritten dialects. She knew that one of the most important keys to language learning was having relationships with native speakers.

"Language isn't a thing that you get," Suzanne instructed. "It's a life that you live. You grow in the language by growing in your participation in the lives of those who speak the language."

Suzanne had trained scores of Muslim language helpers, investing hours into each one. Eventually, Suzanne would connect her language helpers to potential clients, most of whom happened to be fellow messengers of the gospel.

Suzanne's language helpers usually ended up in deep and meaningful relationships with followers of Jesus. The impact of these believers, humbly sharing their lives with their language helpers often had eternal spiritual impact, exposing Muslims to the transformative power of Jesus Christ.

When she first met Layla, Suzanne immediately recognised great language-nurturing potential in the intelligent and conscientious woman. Layla had just the sort of temperament and talent to help foreigners grow as effective communicators within the local culture.

Suzanne poured hours into training Layla, often incorporating stories of Jesus into their Sunday afternoon training sessions.

Layla loved hearing these stories. Sometimes, she and Suzanne would lose track of time discussing what it meant to obey Jesus. She'd leave these sessions with a distinct sense that she was encountering the very thing for which she had been searching for so long.

For the first time in her life, Layla was discovering the One who could fill her spiritual emptiness.

The week before Easter, Suzanne said to Layla, "We can't meet this Sunday; it's a special holiday for us."

"It's my holiday, too!" Layla said, surprising Suzanne as she professed her new faith in Christ Jesus!

- Hundreds of Muslim language helpers are involved in the lives of Frontiers workers who seek to grow as effective gospel messengers in the local language. Please pray for God to soften the hearts of Muslim language helpers to see Christ Jesus in the lives of these long-term workers.
- Pray that many will find, just as Layla found, the One who fills our spiritual emptiness.
- And praise God for His work of grace in Layla and so many other Muslims who have found the One who can satisfy.

Friday 19th April

The King has another move

When we lived in Iraq, Easter morning meant a lot to our family. Our children coloured Easter eggs and my wife Jan and I would hide them for an old-fashioned Easter egg hunt.



Our Muslim neighbours showed great respect by visiting us on Easter Day. That was always interesting. Guests would start arriving in the afternoon and we would set out sweets and hot tea for them. In fact, our guests would bless us, saying, "may your holiday be blessed" and "may your family be blessed." It still feels good to remember those blessings.

Easter was also a lonely time, far from family and familiar friends. We were greatly comforted by the new friends we made among fellow workers who lived nearby.

One year, a colonel in the US military invited us to Easter worship. A chaplain landed in a helicopter and greeted all of us before the service, which was conducted outdoors. It was thrill to sing "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" with members of the armed forces.

The chaplain shared a picture of Easter that I have never forgotten. I feel its power and goodness even now. He described to us a painting of a game of chess, hanging on the wall of an art gallery. The painting is called 'Checkmate' because it shows the end of a game. The king has been captured and the game is over.

One day a chess master visits the gallery and he sees the painting. He examines it, and then suddenly he shouts, "That's wrong! That's not true! It's not over! The king has another move!"

In the story of the resurrection, Jesus Christ had breathed his last. He had been buried. His enemies had won. Checkmate.

Then came the totally unexpected. It wasn't over. The king had another move!

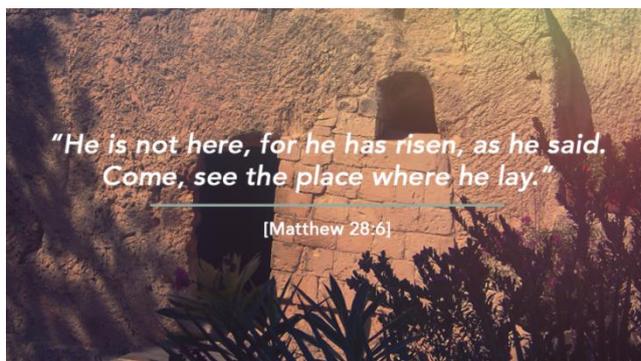
- Watch and pray in the days ahead, because the King has another move to make in the Muslim world.
- Sometimes our workers are lonely and discouraged. Pray for them today, that they might have Easter faith to remember God has been good and He will continue to help them.
- We have victories to celebrate. We have stories of Muslims coming to faith in Jesus, our resurrected Lord. Let's praise God for all He has done and all He is going to do!

Saturday 21st April

Happy Easter

It's special this Easter, because more Muslims are coming to faith than in any previous time. In numbers greater than ever before, believers from Muslim backgrounds are lifting their voices today, saying, "Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed."

In one Middle Eastern city, a hundred new fellowships of Muslim-background followers of Jesus are starting up. This is a new day for which Frontiers field workers have long awaited.



It's also special because there are record numbers of Frontiers workers on the field, inviting Muslims to believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

But it's too soon to celebrate. There are great expanses of the Muslim world where no Christians, no workers and no churches yet exist.

That should not be.

The promises of the Bible persuade us to keep going farther, to keep expanding the boundaries of God's Kingdom into every tribe, language, people and nation.

Consider the millions of Muslims living in Uttar Pradesh, India.

Uttar Pradesh is the same size as the state of Michigan in America. But Michigan has 10 million residents, while Uttar Pradesh has over 228 million. There is no Easter among the multitude of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh. Not yet.

Think of the number of unengaged Muslim peoples in Northeast Africa. There are 184 unengaged Muslim people groups in Chad, Sudan and South Sudan.

Consider the Muslims in Arab countries of the Middle East. There are of 50 cities in the region that have no messengers of the gospel.

We will not rest until all have heard the Good News, until there are fellowships of disciples of Christ Jesus planted among Muslims everywhere.

Thank you for partnering with us in prayer for this great life-saving effort to recruit, train and send new teams of gospel messengers to the unengaged peoples of the Muslim world. Because of you, the light of the gospel is shining in more Muslim homes than ever before. Together, we can complete the work Jesus has given to His people.

- Pray this Easter that we all might glorify God by completing the work He has given us to do in the time remaining.
- One day a great multitude of Muslims will turn to Christ. Why not now? Why not this Easter? Pray that it might be so.
- Let's expect great things from God, the One who gave His beloved Son to deliver a final blow to the curse of death. Together, we attempt great things for God, whose praise will be on the lips of Muslims everywhere.