

Email

Dear Friend,

This week is International Women's Day, an event that is celebrated throughout much of the world. It calls for the equality of women in societies where they are often not given that right, as in many countries in which our teams work. This whole week is dedicated to women; women in the Muslim world, a story of a pioneering English woman who went as a missionary to China and a modern day woman missionary to the Muslim world.

Looking ahead, in preparation for Ramadan, which this year falls between 10th March and 8th April we're offering a free copy of the annual 30 Day Prayer Guide (UK only) for everyone.

Every year, for 30 days, the majority of the world's 1.9 billion Muslims fast from food and water during daylight hours. During those 30 days hundreds of thousands of Christians around the world take time to pray for them. Would you join us for 30 days in praying for the Muslim world?

If you'd like us to post you a free copy, email your postal address to info@frontiers.org.uk or call us on 0303 333 5051 (Mon-Fri, 9.00-5.00).

If you'd like to order more copies for your church, prices (including postage) are below:

2-10 copies £2.00 per copy

11+ copies £1.60 per copy

Additional postage and packaging costs may apply outside the UK.

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

For His glory in the nations,

Charlotte and Richard

Prayer Mobilisation Team

Monday 4th March

Muslim women

"She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong." Proverbs 31:15-17



There are approximately 800 million Muslim women in the world today. Their social roles, freedoms and opportunities vary greatly from one Muslim context to another. More Muslim women than ever before are entering the work force and university (there are proportionately more women enrolled in university in Saudi Arabia than in Mexico or China). But while some earn good salaries, others work with little or no pay. Muslim women still endure abuse in some countries.

They even risk being killed by a male relative if they do anything to bring shame upon the family. Women and girls, even if they are older, are usually expected to submit to men and boys. They are given more domestic responsibilities at an earlier age.

Singleness, especially for women, carries much shame. Marrying and having children is required in Islam. Arranged marriages usually depend on the consent of those involved, but it is still common in some Muslim cultures for people, especially young girls and women, to be married against their will. When a woman

marries, she often leaves her home and joins her husband's household under the authority of her mother-in-law. This can sometimes be a very traumatic and abusive experience.

If a Muslim man can treat them all equally, the Quran allows a man to marry up to four wives, including women of certain other faiths (Quran 4:3). Since having more than one wife is expensive, only a minority of Muslims practise this. Sometimes women are considered equal in the Quran (9:72, 16:97, 33:35). But in 2:228, men have authority over women, and in 2:282 the testimony of a woman is worth half that of a man.

In many Muslim cultures, women are required to wear various coverings when in the presence of men they are not related to, ranging from a loose headscarf to a complete covering of their face and body. While women might not always be very visible in the Muslim world, they can be influential. They teach their children about Islam by keeping the customs and passing down the traditions.

To learn more about women and marriage you might like to watch a Prayercast video here: <https://prayercast.com/marriage.html>

- Pray that any Muslim women who live in fear, will come to know that God is the only one to be feared. The believer's fear is reverence of God and leads to freedom and life.
- Pray for Jesus' unconditional love to be the foundation of Muslim women's identity and value.
- Pray for husbands and wives to follow Jesus together and for Muslim men to know how precious their wives are.

For more information see <https://www.frontiers.org.uk/latest/pray-now.php>

Tuesday 5th March

The words of women



I stood at the front of the little church and smoothed my patterned dress. This was the first time I had ever led a seminar, and I was doing it in the local language. Pushing down my nerves, I smiled and began to teach.

Seventeen women and two men—the pastors of the village’s churches—listened as I taught them how to share their testimonies with Muslim neighbours.

Then I invited the women to practice. I smiled as they spoke of the joy they’d experienced in following Jesus and receiving His forgiveness, but my heart broke as many said they had lost friends and even family members after leaving Islam.

An unfamiliar man slipped into the room and sat on a bench at the back. One of the pastors turned to look, then nudged his colleague and raised his eyebrows.

Curious, I went to the pastors and quietly asked, “Who is that man?”

“The village leader.”

Respect in this culture means handing the microphone to anyone with social standing, so I knew I was obligated to invite him to speak.

“He owns the bar across the street,” one of the pastors whispered. “The first time

believers met here, he told me my congregation would soon prefer hanging out at his bar.”

I frowned at this insult. Even in this Muslim society, rampant alcoholism destroys many families, so Jesus followers are trying to help those who are addicted and are taking a stand against drinking.

After all the attendees had shared their stories, I pasted on a smile and asked the village leader if he’d like to speak.

“Of course.” Straightening his colourful shirt, he strode to the front of the room.

“What you said moved me,” he began. “I’ve always respected Jesus. I like what He said. But I never saw any reason to follow Him.” He paused, looking over the group. “But now that I have heard your stories, I understand forgiveness, and I want to follow Jesus.”

I stared at him, stunned. God had used the testimonies of these 17 Muslim-background believers almost immediately, and I’m praying that the village leader’s decision will lead many more to the forgiveness found only in Christ.

Pray:

- Ask God to continue to move in this village leader’s heart so that he will use his influence for good.
- Praise God for the courage of the women who shared their stories of redemption.
- Pray that many Muslim men and women will discover Jesus through the ministries of these local churches.

For more information see

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

Wednesday 6th March



Resilient women in the Bible

Over the next four days we will be reading about resilient women and the great impact they have had on people's lives. God values women and, despite cultural expectations, we see that God worked through them to change history. If we think of Mary, the mother of Jesus, Ruth, Hagar, Esther and Hannah, each had a difficult path to walk. They lived in a context similar to that of some Muslim women today. They had few rights and were expected to rely on men to provide for them. Men could have more than one wife and masters could sleep with their servants. Women without men to protect them such as Ruth and Hagar, could be deemed unrespectable and were often molested.

Despite their circumstances, each of these women showed remarkable strength and courage. Esther saved the Jewish people, even though it may have cost her life to speak out to the King. The other four women raised sons who influenced history; Hannah cried out to God for a child. The Lord gave her Samuel, who went on to become a great prophet. Ruth gave birth to Obed, the grandfather of King David, while Mary (most likely having endured much scorn for being pregnant out of wedlock) gave birth to Jesus.

Hagar gave birth to Ishmael after Sarah his wife who couldn't have children asked her

husband Abraham to sleep with her servant so they could have this child. When Sarah later had a son, she grew jealous of Hagar and Ishmael and told Abraham to send them way. Muslims remember this on the third day of the Hajj. Pilgrims run or walk through tunnels between the two small hills of Safa and Marwa near the mosque in Mecca. According to Islamic tradition, Abraham was ordered by God to leave his wife Hagar and his son Ishmael alone in the desert of ancient Mecca. In search of water, Hagar ran seven times between the two hills of Safa and Marwa.

Hagar became a homeless displaced person bringing up a son alone. Many Muslim women fleeing conflict and disaster face the same situation today.

- Pray for all Muslim women to be treated with love, dignity and respect.
- Pray for deliverance, comfort and healing for abused, neglected and oppressed Muslim women.
- May you be greatly encouraged in all you do to reach Muslim women where you live and work.

Source of some content: Resilience in Life and Faith, chapter 12 by Tony Horsfall and Debbie Hawker

For more information see

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

Thursday 7th March

Princess Sarvath El Hassan of Jordan - a modern day resilient woman.

Jordan is situated in the Middle East and has a population of approximately 10.2 million people, of which 92% are Muslim. The nation has been ruled by a constitutional monarchy since 1952. Princess Sarvath served as Crown Princess of Jordan for over 40 years. She has had a huge impact on the lives of many people.

"I DIDN'T WANT TO BE WHAT I CALL A 'RIBBON-CUTTING PRINCESS.' I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE."



When she came to Jordan, she wanted to use her role to make a difference. At that time there was nothing for mentally-challenged children in her country. Starting from scratch and with like-minded friends, she started fundraising to train people in the skills that were needed. They started a school in an apartment with 20 children and 3 staff. They went on to serve 170 students. Nearly 2,500 poor Jordanian families with mentally-challenged children are living witnesses to how her efforts (and the efforts of those who joined with her) have changed their lives forever.

In 1995, Princess Sarvath received the 'Woman of Peace Award', granted by the Rome-based 'Together for Peace' Foundation, in recognition of her deep commitment to the promotion of education, special education and social welfare.

Princess Sarvath El Hassan has gone on to sponsor and support numerous other humanitarian and educational projects in

Jordan and welcomed volunteers from around the world. They too have had their lives changed forever through serving. It has also impacted those around the projects, as volunteering is not very strong in the Arab world. Local people have seen the value of doing something for others.

- We thank God for caring woman leaders. Pray that God will raise up strong women who will make a difference, as they show the love of God to those they serve in their Muslim community.
- Pray that just as Princess Sarvath El Hassan cared about the poor in her country, that many women serving in Muslim countries around the world will show the love of God through caring for the poor and needy.

Sources: Material adapted from <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/discern/sept-oct-2014/heart-of-service/> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princess_Sarvath_al-Hassan

For more information see <https://www.frontiers.org.uk/latest/pray-now.php>

Friday 8th March

Gladys Aylward - a pioneering woman of mission

"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies." Prov 31:10



Born in 1902 in the East End of London, Gladys was working as a parlour maid when she attended a revival meeting at which the preacher spoke of dedicating one's life to the service of God. She became convinced that she was called to preach the gospel in China. Then she heard of a 73-year-old missionary there, Mrs. Jeannie Lawson, who was looking for a younger woman to carry on her work. Without a mission agency to support or guide her, and with just over two pounds in her pocket, she set off to China determined to serve God.

The two women lived in the inland city of Yangchen, in the mountainous province of Shansi, a little south of Peking (Beijing). They realised that the best way of reaching people was to set up an inn as an overnight stop for mule caravans that carried coal, raw cotton, pots, and iron goods on six-week or three-month journeys. In the evenings they told stories about Jesus to their guests. Some became believers and retold the stories to others at stops along the caravan trade.

During her second year in Yangchen, Gladys was summoned by the Mandarin to help end a riot in the local prison. She proved a good

listener and organiser and was able to sort out work and food for the inmates. The people began to call Gladys Aylward "Ai-weh-deh," which means "Virtuous One." It was her name from then on. She was a regular and welcome visitor at the palace of the Mandarin, who found her religion 'ridiculous', but her conversation stimulating. In 1936, she officially became a Chinese citizen. She lived frugally and dressed like the people around her and this was a major factor in making her preaching effective.

Then in the spring of 1938, Japanese planes bombed the city of Yangchen, killing many and causing the survivors to flee into the mountains. As the war continued Gladys often found herself behind Japanese lines. Eventually she had to flee bringing with her over 100 children. They walked for twelve days until they came to a river with no means of crossing. The children said, "God can do anything. Ask Him to get us across." They all knelt and prayed. A Chinese officer heard their singing and then of their plight and was able to get a boat. Ai-weh-deh was able to safely deliver her children to an orphanage in Sian.

As her health gradually improved, she started a Christian church in Sian, and worked elsewhere, including a settlement for lepers in Szechuan, near the borders of Tibet. Her health was permanently impaired by injuries received during the war, and in 1947 she returned to England for a badly needed operation. She remained in England, preaching there.

When she died in 1970, she was a Chinese citizen and had been the means of help and hope to thousands of Chinese children and women.

You can read more about her life in a book called 'The Little Woman' by Alan Burgess. It is an inspiring record of human bravery and God's sustaining power against all the odds.

Gladys Aylward's story has also been immortalised through the film, 'The Inn of the Sixth Happiness' (1958).

- Many have probably never heard of Gladys Aylward. Let's take a moment to thank God for the passionate faith of pioneering women like her, who have inspired other women to follow in her footsteps.
- Let's pray for a special outpouring of God's grace and favour on all women, both single and married, who number hundreds among foreign workers in the field. They dedicate hours every day to engage with the women in their host countries to bring them stories about Jesus.
- Gladys' life and teaching led many to accept Jesus as their saviour. Pray for our workers on the field to have such influence and for the seeds they sow to bear a harvest of 30, 60 and 100 fold.

Source:

<http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/73.html>

For more information see

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

Saturday 9th March

Jesus Only at the Bench Press

The following story is from a Frontiers worker:



“From the moment I met Majda, I adored her. She was one of the first clients to sign up for private training sessions after I qualified as a personal trainer.

One day between exercises on the bench press, I asked her to tell me a story from either her childhood or her travels. She lit up and began to tell me about being in America with her sister who was having surgery at a state-of-the-art hospital. They stayed for several months so her sister could recover. While there, they met a nurse who invited them to church. Majda started going to church with the nurse, and she really liked it. She described it as “a Jesus-only church.”

As Majda shared, I was really impacted. Here we were having an amazing conversation. I felt as though I was outside looking in on this surreal moment and singing for joy over God’s work in Majda’s life.

As she resumed her exercises, Majda told me how this bold nurse had shared the gospel with her and her sister. Majda’s sister wasn’t interested in hearing the good news and began to defend Islam. But the message of Jesus was exactly what Majda had been seeking for many years. Earlier in her life, she stopped believing that Islam was the true path. She still tried to be very religious and do all the right things. But she felt empty and

lost. Majda searched online for spiritual direction, but nothing spoke to her heart.

Hearing the gospel from the nurse in the hospital that day, Majda received the good news and has never stopped believing it. Before she left America, the nurse gave her a Bible in English.

“I’ve read some of it,” Majda said to me. “But it is difficult to read in English, and I don’t understand much of it.”

“I am a Jesus-only believer like the nurse,” I said. I told Majda that I had an Arabic Bible and would be happy to give it to her. Majda was ecstatic. She couldn’t believe there was a Bible in Arabic and that I would let her keep it. Then Majda said, “I know Jesus died for my sins and that He is the Son of God.”

This is amazing to hear from a woman who lives in a place where people have little to no chance of hearing the gospel. I praise God for stirring Majda’s heart when she felt empty and lost and for bringing her to faith in Jesus. After years without fellowship in her Muslim country, Majda is so happy to know me, her sister in Christ. Majda and I are now reading the Word together three times a week before she works out. I am so humbled and blessed to be a part of God’s work in Majda’s life.”

- Praise God for drawing Majda to the truth of the gospel and pray that her love for Christ will deepen as she studies the Word.
- Pray for more Muslim women to have the chance to hear the good news of eternal life that speaks to their hearts.
- Ask God to use Frontiers workers as beacons for the gospel in their communities, schools, and workplaces.

Source: <https://frontiersusa.org/blog/jesus-only-at-the-bench-press/>