

May 2015



Dear praying friend,

In my travels, I sometimes have to spend the night in unsafe places – some even with barbwire on the windows. And yes, I confess that fear has gripped my heart. But the redemptive stories, and the exuberant joy of the women I met during the day, by far offset my concern with safety. Maybe you too are fearful to go to dangerous and hostile places. Believe me, I understand. Nonetheless, I am inviting you today to come with me to a place that is neither safe nor friendly – Somalia, one of the darkest places in the world.

Somalia is in great need of HOPE. Somalia needs Jesus in the midst of its great chaos. Thousands are dying of starvation, clans clash in unending hate, and brutal warlords paralyze the rule of law. Christians are severely persecuted, even killed. In the midst of it all, our prayers impregnated with faith and hope in God have the power to pierce Somalia's thickest darkness. No religious, political, social, or spiritual darkness stands a chance of surviving in the presence of Jesus Christ – the Light of the World!

People say that Somalia's chaos is "beyond repair." Isn't it so, though, that in God's eyes every one of us would be beyond repair had Jesus Christ not come to seek and to save us? He is still seeking to save the suffering Somali women. Let's stand in the gap with prayers for them, assured that "when we pray, God works!" His light will prevail in millions of precious Somali women's hearts.

When I visited our courageous Somali team members, they told me of the great joys but also the death threats they sometimes receive in response to sharing Christ in the *Women of Hope* programs. "Aren't you afraid?" I asked. "Not really," they said. "We will die when God says so." Looking at their childlike faith and their broad smiles, listening to their prayers and happy songs, Isaiah 9:2 came to mind: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." They are walking in God's light and faith! And Jesus is shining through these dear sisters.

So, beloved, come! Let's pray for them – for endurance, faith, and salvation to overspread the land of Somalia.

Believing with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marli Spieker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marli Spieker  
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**Testimony from the Somali *Women of Hope* production team:**

“As we all know that nearly 100 percent of the Somali nation is Muslim. Since we are also Somalis, and we know Jesus Christ, we are very happy to serve our fellow Somalis so that they can know the truth. Sometimes they ask us questions like: ‘Why are you Christians, you Somali lady? Are you asking for money?’ But we respond that it is not for money, but it is because Jesus died to save us. Thank you for praying for us and with us. God bless you!”

**Testimonies from Somali *Women of Hope* listeners (some of whom threaten our production team):**

“You ladies who speak on the radio every Saturday, still I’m waiting for your right answer. I know your reward (hell). I would like to get in writing that you are expressing your repentance. We know where you are, maybe in a Christian country. You ladies, you must repent; I say you have to repent.”

“Greetings to you. I’m a Muslim person. My religion is Muslim; I know God, or Allah, and his prophet Mohammed. Please fear your God, and come back to Islam. It is good for you when you die – and even in your lifetime. If you don’t, God will punish you.”

“Even though I live in great suffering, I am listening to your program. Each Saturday I receive God’s grace through the *Women of Hope* program. It is so helpful and encourages me to trust God in all of my life situations. I am in a terrible situation, but I have great hope to return to [Africa] and serve God. Please pray for me.”

“Greetings to the *Rajada Dumarka (Women of Hope)* staff. You are working very hard, and it is a very good program. Maybe there are some people who are not happy about this program, but I am very happy, so I want to tell you that you should not give up. Love God and God bless you.”

“I am greeting you, the *Rajada Dumarka* ladies. I am happy to hear the Somali women who have no fear to preach the word of God – thank you, God! Sisters, even if I do not know your names, I encourage you not to fear to preach to Somali ladies, those who are in the dark. God bless you.”

“I am greeting you. I like your radio program. So I would like to get an idea from you how one can become a Christian. Please answer my question.”

“*Rajada Dumarka* women, I’m greeting you. I live in Somalia. I am a listener of your program. The program is very interesting. Where are you, because I want to learn the Bible? Please pray for me.”

**Facebook ministry:** We have more than 100 Facebook friends. Some of these are good, while others insult us – but we pray for them. In 2013 and the first two months of 2014, we have heard from more than 122 Facebook friends who are curious to know more about the God we serve. Through a Facebook conversation, one friend eventually accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord. Praise the Lord!

Here are some of their comments:

- “How did you become a Christian? Were your families Christians? Can you tell me why you became a Christian?”
- “OK, are you one of the Christians who learned the Somali language? Tell me, which part of Somali are you from, and which region do you come from? I am from Somaliland.”
- “When Jesus was on the cross, he said, ‘My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?’ If Jesus was God, why did he call God?” [The team had an extended conversation with this listener about Jesus being God, and God being one and not three. The questioner has not become a Christian to the knowledge of the team.]
- Facebook User 3 wrote: “Thank you, God! It is my first time to see Somali Christians, but before, I had heard some information. At least now I can see the truth, because today I chatted with a woman who said that since I believe in Jesus, I am now a Christian, and I am proud to be that.”