

Hot Topics –What Do Christians Need To Understand About Islam!

In our day, post 9/11, the problem becomes one of separating Islam and terrorism. Certainly all Moslems are not extremist and certainly not terrorist. But whether you stop to realize it or not America is in a cultural war. We are fighting for our way of life.

*Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today (there are over 1.2 billion Moslems in the world). There are 11,000 converts to Islam each year in the United States (Newsweek, Oct. 30, 1995) and 90% of them are among the Black population. *"The number of mosques has increased significantly in the U.S. in the last decade. There was a 74% increase in the number of Islamic houses of worship rose from 1,206 in the year 2000 to 2,106 in 2010."**

[USA Today. February 29, 2012]

*But the gravest problem as I see it is dealing with people in our country that do not see any fundamental difference between Christianity and Islam. Just this past week I again read someone making the statement, **"After all Christians, Jews and Moslems, all worship the same God."** This is the same line that Oprah is helping to spread. **The***

problem is that is not true, and every Christian needs to understand it.

If you asked the average American today what the difference was between the major world religions, they would probably mumble something about all religions being pretty much the same. People assume that all religions have nearly the same moral teachings and ideals. They might have different names for God, but it is the same God. These religions, many people believe, may travel different roads, but they all lead to God. As long as you believe in something, as long as you believe in God, it really doesn't matter what form your belief takes.

The truth is that these religions are all very different and even contradict each other at crucial points. What this means is that we are left with two options: either none of them are true, or one of them is true and the others are not. Ravi Zacharias said it well when he said, "[Anyone who claims that all religions are the same betrays not only an ignorance of all religions but also a caricatured view of even the best-known ones. Every religion at its core is exclusive.](#)" [Ravi Zacharias, [Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message](#), p. 7]

Bill Hybels, after interviewing people from the different religions said: "[You need to know that the law of non-contradiction says that positions that are different from one another cannot be equally true.](#)"

You've got to figure out what you believe and where you're going to drive that stake in the ground and say, 'On the evidence, on the search that I've done, this is what I believe. This is what I'll stake my life and my eternity on.'" This is not just a preference of philosophies. It is not just an intellectual quest. Your life and eternity are at stake. You need to make a careful decision.

Let's begin with some **general information**. The word **Islam** refers to the religion, while word **Muslim** refers to the people. Islam founded by a man named Mohammed in 610 A.D. The Arab world at that time was polytheist and worshipped many gods, Mohammed taught the belief in one god called **Allah**. Their sacred book it is the **Quaran** or **Koran** (the westernized spelling).

While the overwhelming majority of Arabs are Moslem, most Moslems are not Arab. Although Islam had its origins in the Middle East, the four largest populations of Muslims are Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

There are two major sects within Islam, Shi'ties and Sunni. The two sects came about because they disagree about the legitimate successors of Mohammed. About 85% of all Muslims are Sunni and only about 10% of the Muslim world is Shi'ite. The Shi'ite who resided primarily in Iran and Iraq are the most militant.

All Muslim are not terrorist – I suspect that the average Muslim is like the average Christian. They know enough to call themselves Muslims but are mostly concerned with a good job, and comfortable life. But that being said, it does not mean that Islam is at its core a peaceful religion. Islam is a religion of works and war is an **intrical** part of their plan for world domination. Salmon Rusdie, a Muslim sentenced to death by Muslim clerics over his 1988 book, **“The Satanic Verses”** said this about media’s comments after the 9/11 attacks that true Islam is peaceful and harmless, *“The trouble with this disclaimer is that it is not true. If this is not about Islam, then why the world-wide demonstrations in support of Osama Bin Laden and Al Queda.”* [*Israel My Glory.*] (March/April 200r p. 7)

Chuck Colson has commented, *“The truth is that Bin Laden and his followers did not hijack Islam they simply took it seriously.”* Those who attacked the World Trade Center and engaged in other acts of terrorism were acting full accord with the tenets of Islam and the teaching of the Koran.

Islam like Judaism traces its lineage to the patriarch Abraham. The Arabs, however, trace their lineage to the firstborn son of Abraham by Hagar, Ishmael. The Jews trace their lineage to Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah who had been promised by God. The war in the Middle East today can be traced

back to this Biblical story of who really is the rightful son of Abraham. The truth about the Middle East is that the Palestinians and surrounding Muslim nations will never make a genuine and lasting peace with Israel. They don't want peace – they never wanted peace – they want Israel, all of it.

First, Five Pillars of Islam.

- ***Creed. – “There Is No God But Allah And Muhammad Is His Prophet.”***

*Muhammad was born into a tribe who was keeper of a pagan shrine housing the sacred black meteorite (**Kaabah**) at Mecca. Muslims are taught that it was Abraham who received the Kaabah stone from the angel Gabriel and who established the shrine at Mecca.*

Muhammad received a series of revelation from Allah that culminated in the Qur'an, the Islamic bible. They submit unquestioningly to the teachings of the Koran, the Islamic Bible. The Koran contains divine messages said to be given by the angel Gabriel to Mohammed, a self-proclaimed prophet who lived in the seventh century.

An interesting note about Mohammed is that he was completely illiterate. He could neither read nor write. He dictated what Gabriel told him and his followers wrote it down. Also, Mohammed was given special permission by Allah to have 13 wives.

- **Prayers.**

Daily prayers are required five times a day (three for Shi'te), [at daybreak, noon, afternoon, sunset, and early evening] kneeling facing Mecca and placing their forehead on the ground. This is an important way to earn merit with Allah. And if it is done in a mosque it is worth 25 times merit as much as prayers done in the home, marketplace or work.

- **Alms**

The Koran teaches that to give 2.5 % of their overall of their overall estate or 10% of their income to the poor each year. They discharge this duty by gifts to mosque, schools and hospitals.

- **Fasting.**

Once each year during Ramadan all heathy adult Muslims are required to abstain from food and drink during the daylight hours during this month. They do this as annual reminder that the Koran was given to Muhammed.

- **Pilgrimage.**

Every Muslim who is physically and economically able is expected to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least one in his or her lifetime.

Secondly, Five Points of Tension.

- **Trinity** – Rejects the concept of the Trinity.
- **Deity of Jesus** – although Islam recognizes Jesus as a Prophet it reject the deity of Jesus.

- **Atonement.**

Muslims believe there is no atonement because they believe that Jesus did not die on the cross.

- **Means of Salvation**

*Muslims have no guarantee of being saved. They believe that all their works will be accounted for and that on Judgement Day, if your bad works outweigh your good works, you are going to go to hell. But if your good works outweigh your bad works you will **probably** go to heaven. (No guarantee) The only guaranteed way to heaven for a Muslim is to be killed carrying out “**jihad**” or holy war (literally – exerting force for god). [Surah 3:157]*

- **Nature of God**

True Christianity worships the eternally self-existent God who spoke the world into being. Islam worship a god named Allah who is not eternal and who created nothing.

*Muslims believe that Allah is their god. The word Allah is derived from **al-ilah** which had become the general name for whatever god was considered the highest of all their gods at the time. During the days of Muhammad, each Arab tribe used the word Allah to refer to its own particular high god.*

Before Islam began, the moon god was the central focus of prayer and worship at Kabah. Interestingly the moon god was worshiped by praying toward Mecca several times a day, making

an annual pilgrimage to the Kabah which was the temple of the Moon god, walking around the Kabah seven times, touching a black stone set in the wall of the Kabah and gathering on Fridays for prayer and giving of alms to the poor. These were all part of the pagan rites practiced by the Arabs long before Muhammad was born and they still serve as “the five pillars” of Islam practiced today.

Third, Five Pivotal Truths.

1. Moslems Are Sincere And Devout But That Is Not Enough.

Muslims generally are among the most serious and devout people on the earth. Many of them have completely memorized the Koran. They pray at least five times a day. They fast for one month every year (during Ramadan, from sunrise to sunset). But salvation to them is something which must be earned. It is not graciously given by Allah.

Islam does have a high standard of morality called the “straight path,” which must be strictly maintained. Women are regarded as possible temptations which would lead men away from the path, so women must be modest to the point of being veiled and wearing clothing that completely covers them.

The word Islam, meaning submission, says much about the attitude of the followers of Islam.

2. It Is A Good Thing To Believe In God, But It Is Not Enough.

This is a problem even in this country there are some who think that because they believe in the existence of God, they are alright. Over the years I have met a lot of people who assume because they simply believed in a god that it was enough. The Bible speaks directly to this supposition when it says in James 2:19, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe——and tremble!” Acknowledging the existent of a god is not the same as trust in “the” God for salvation.

3. We Are Not Trying To Appease An Angry God; We Are Learning How To Fall In Love With Our Creator, Redeemer And Friend.

There is not a single mention of the love of Allah for the world or the people in it. There are many, many laws and strict warnings of the penalty of not keeping the laws. The concept of having a relationship with Allah is not found anywhere in the Koran. But Christians understand that Christianity is not about moral laws or religious practices — it is about a relationship with a living Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is this relationship with Christ that is the center of our faith.

The early church ministered in an age of religious pluralism but preached a message of salvation through faith in Christ alone.

4. It Is A Good Thing To Believe In Jesus But It What You Believe About Jesus That Is Important.

The greatest tension between Christian and Muslims is the difference between Muhammad and Jesus Christ. To Muslims, Jesus was a prophet but not the Son of God. While Christians understand that Jesus was not a way to God he is the only way to Heaven. Jesus said in John 14:6-7 about himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (7) "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

This principle is repeated in Acts 4:12 which States, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Jesus is the only Savior of mankind.

5. True Christianity Is Spread By Love And Choice – Islam Is Spread By Sword And Force.

It is true that some Muslims, like Christians, are willing to die for their faith. Some unfortunately,

are also willing to kill for it. In fact the only sure way of earning salvation as a Muslim is to die as a martyr for the faith. They believe that just as Mohammed was whisked immediately to heaven and given several maidens, so will it be done for those who die for the cause of Islam. Those who attacked the World Trade Center and engaged in other acts of terrorism were acting in full accord with the tenets of Islam and the teachings of the Koran.

The West, the United States in particular, is seen as corrupting the entire world and worthy of death. The U. S. policy of befriending Israel is particularly seen as harmful to the Muslim people and their cause. The principle of **Jihad**, or “holy war” is taught in the Koran as a viable tool for the cause of Islam. Jesus taught that we are to love the sinner. Mohammed taught that the infidel must be killed if he refuses to convert.

On of the saddest thing about the Moslem belief system is like many others they believe that they will either make it to heaven or not based on either their good works outweighing their bad deeds or maybe that God will simply decide to let them in. According to their beliefs there is no way to know whether or not they are going to paradise or not. It is only at death that you find out if you made it, may I submit that it is a heck of a time to find out you were

wrong? But for a Muslim there is no way of knowing until the final judgment.

I am so glad that I can know the writer of 1 John 5, says in verse eleven, “*And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. (12) He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (13) These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **that you may know that you have eternal life**, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”*

Conclusion

So how does one reach out to Muslims with the Gospel? If you want to win a Moslem to the Lord, or any other non-believer this is what you do. I wish this was profound but it simplicity itself.

- 1. Express and interest in and develop a relationship.*

They need to know that you care about them, before anything else transpires. Some of you have read the book by Thom Rainer entitled “Unexpected Journeys.” It is the story of 13 different individual’s journeys to faith in Jesus Christ. They came from almost every conceivable background; one was a witch, a Satanist, a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Jehovah’s Witness etc., and they had one thing in common - someone took an interest in them and someone

invited them to church. The amazing thing was that many of them went the first time they were invited.

- 2. Invite them and keep inviting them to join you in worship.*
- 3. Live out your faith in front of them. You cannot expect them to be interested in anything you do not live out in front of them.*

A 2010 report put out by the International Mission Board, entitled, “Reaching Muslims: Trade fear for Love” stated, “Christians must transcend their own prejudices if they are committed to fulfilling the Great Commission in reaching Muslims. The real problem, translates into a “lack of love” for Muslims that causes believers to respond with fear and hatred rather than loving them as God does.

Muslims are responsive to the gospel.... The issue, he says, is that most Muslims have never heard it or seen a committed Christian live it out. It is particularly frustrating that American believers’ heightened fear of Islam can halt them from sharing the message of truth with Muslims at a time of unprecedented Gospel advance in the Muslim world, The question becomes, “If you had an opportunity to see a Muslim in your community come to Christ, would you want it to happen?” “Or is your hatred for Muslims so great you don’t see them as someone in need of the Gospel?” To us [Americans], Muslims are kind of like the Samaritans were to the Jews — we

want to [avoid] their territory. But Jesus sought the Samaritans out.” [Don Graham. “Reaching Muslims: Trade fear for Love.”

Imb – connecting . Report of the International Mission Board. Southern Baptist Convention. 9/8/2010.]

Although the globally the rate of missionaries working among Muslims is only one missionary for every one million Muslims. ...More Muslims have come to faith in Christ since 1970 than in the entire previous history of outreach to the Muslim world.

[www.christiananswers.net/islam “What is Islam?”]

- 4. Don’t give up on them. Keep developing a relationship and keep inviting them to be a part of your faith.*

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- ***Creed.*** – “There is No god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.”
- ***Prayers.*** - required five times a day kneeling facing Mecca
- ***Alms*** - 10% of their income
- ***Fasting.*** - during Ramadan
- ***Pilgrimage.*** – to Mecca expected at least one in their lifetime.

Secondly, Five Points of Tension.

- ***Trinity***
- ***Deity of Jesus***
- ***Atonement***
- ***Means of Salvation***
- ***Nature of God***

Third, Five Pivotal Truths.

- Moslems are sincere and devout but that is not enough.
- It is a good thing to believe in God, but it is not enough. (James 2:19)
- We are not trying to appease an angry God; we are learning how to fall in love with our Creator, Redeemer and Friend.
- It is a good thing to believe in Jesus but it what you believe about Jesus that is important. (John 14:6-7, Acts 4:12)
- True Christianity is spread by love and choice – Islam is spread by sword and force.

Winning a Moslem to the Lord, or any other non-believer this is what you do.

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- Invite them and keep inviting them to join you in worship.
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