

## Encountering Islam

### A. A Brief History

1. The Christian Church in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. (monotheistic but with a lot of idolatry, veneration of relics, statues).
2. The Arabs
  - a. Many claim descent from Abraham through Ishmael.
  - b. Polytheistic prior to Muhammad.
3. Time Line of Muhammad and Islam
  - a. Birth of Muhammad, 570 AD.
  - b. Revelation or recitation of the Qur'an from the angel Gabriel, 610 AD.
  - c. Death of Muhammad, 632.
  - d. Writing down of the Qur'an, 644.
  - e. Division into Sunni and Shiite sects, late 7<sup>th</sup> century.
  - f. Conquering of Mecca, nations in the Middle East, and into Spain, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Italy, and Palestine, 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - g. Christian crusades to Palestine to stop Islamic expansion, recover Christian lands and holy places, and protect the Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land from persecution by the Muslims, 1095-1291.
  - i. United Nations vote to divide Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state, 1948.
  - j. Repeated attempts—and failures—by the Muslims to conquer Israel and get control of all of Palestine (see Isa. 10:5,24; 14:25; 31;8).

### B. Some Terminology

1. IsLAM=submission.
2. Muslim (preferred spelling)=one who submits.
3. Mohammedan=same as Muslim; not used by Muslims and not to be used by non-Muslims when referring to Muslims.
4. Qur'an (Koran)=recitation; contains 114 chapters or "surahs."
5. Hadith=quotations by Muhammad in addition to the Qur'an.
6. Shiite belief=the community of Muslims is led by a semi-divine leader, the imam, who acts as the mediator between man and Allah.
7. Sunni belief=the individual believer stands directly face to face with God, with no need for an intercessor.
8. Sharia=Islamic law based on the Qur'an and teachings of Muhammad.
9. Jihad=a striving to serve the purposes of Allah upon earth; includes inner spiritual struggle as well as outer struggle against enemies of Allah; this outer struggle is sometimes called holy war.

### C. Basic Teachings of Islam

1. Worship of Allah (monotheism, one god, no idols). (Note that “Allah” is NOT Islam’s name for the God of the Bible.)
2. Belief in angels and evil spirits (djinn).
3. The Qur’an is the revealed word of Allah.
4. Honor to three great prophets: Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad—the last being the greatest.
5. Resurrection and day of judgment (see surah 37:41-49 for virgins in heaven).
6. Destiny or fate (“The will of Allah”; story of Omima).
7. Five pillars of Muslim practice:
  - a. Repetition of the words: “I witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”
  - b. Ritual prayers.
  - c. Paying of ritual alms.
  - d. Observance of the fast of Ramadan.
  - e. Pilgrimage to the Kaaba in Mecca.
8. Ishmael, not Isaac, was offered as a sacrifice by Abraham on Mount Moriah.
9. Teachings concerning Jesus Christ:
  - a. Born of the virgin Mary (surah 3:47).
  - b. Not the Son of God (4:171).
  - b. Great prophet and teacher (43:62-64).
  - c. Did not die on cross (4:157).
  - d. Raised to heaven without dying (4:158).
10. Acceptance of the Law (Pentateuch) and the Gospels, but only as corrected by the Qur’an
11. Salvation gained by good works, prayers, worshiping at the mosque, being killed while engaging in jihad against the enemies of Islam, martyrdom; good deeds weighed against bad deeds to determine eternal future (51% good is passing grade!).
12. Five perceptions Muslim have concerning Christians (Caner and Caner, pp. 203-211):
  - a. The true Christian gospel has been changed.
  - b. Christians are divided and weak.
  - c. Christians have maligned true Islam by misuse of the Qur’an.
  - d. Christians are blind and unreasonable.
  - e. The Christian faith overlooks immorality.
13. If a Muslim converts to another religion, kill him (hadith 9:57).
14. There is no distinction between “church” and state in Islam.

### D. Suggestions for Trying to Lead Your Muslim Friends to Christ

1. Love them and show appreciation for their zeal
2. Plan to spend lots and lots of time (invite them to home, dinner, tea) developing friendships with them. (However, learn about Muslim customs first; for example, repeat an invitation three times, don’t shake hands with left hand; don’t serve pork or shellfish.)
3. Don’t be negative! Be careful not to disparage Muhammad, the Qur’an, or the Islamic religion.

4. Be positive!
  - a. Live an exemplary life, living out Christ in your daily life (not just going to church Sunday morning), demonstrating that Christianity impacts every facet of your life, just as Islam is a whole way of life with devout Muslims.
  - b. Study the Scriptures earnestly and diligently and be prepared to show your friends passages of the Bible that teach Christ the eternal One and the Creator, the atoning death of Christ, the sin of men in plotting to kill Jesus, the love of Christ in choosing to die, the love of Christ in forgiving His murderers, the resurrection of Christ, the need—our sins—for Christ’s death, the way of salvation—not of works but the free gift of God as a result of Christ’s suffering, shed blood, death, and resurrection.
5. When your Muslim friend says that the Bible disagrees with the Qur’an, gently hold your ground and patiently and kindly show your friend what the Bible says (see Heb. 4:12). “To win an argument and lose a Muslim’s friendship is to gain nothing at all” (Hesselgrave).
6. If your friend makes the claim (common with Muslims) that the Bible has been corrupted, gently ask them to ask their spiritual leaders to provide evidence for this claim, and be prepared to explain the thousands of manuscripts in existence dating from the first century B.C. (Old Testament) and 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. (New Testament), with no substantial differences among them.
7. Be prepared to discuss what it really means for Jesus to be God’s Son, that He was *eternally* God’s Son, and that it does NOT mean that God had sex with Mary, leading to the conception and birth of Jesus.
8. Be prepared to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the Bible (Matt. 5:17,18; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20,21; 3:15).
9. Read the Qur’an; for a topical index to the Qur’an see Caner and Caner, Appendix A.
10. Explain that the “West” is not Christian any more, but is becoming more and more atheistic; Bible-believing Christians do not approve of the gross immorality portrayed by the news and entertainment media of the Western nations.
11. Look out for ways to help your Muslim friends and neighbors in their time of need; note that many Muslims tend not to share with one another nor help each other in time of need (pleading “the will of Allah”).
12. Women: Do NOT marry a Muslim man, even though he may behave more morally upright than many or most American men (see Caner and Caner). Note that Muslim men are permitted by the Qur’an to marry up to four wives; the man who wants you to marry him may have other wives overseas.
13. Pray, pray, and pray some more for your Muslim friends. Ask them if they have any prayer requests that you can pass along to the Lord Jesus. (Many Muslims regard Jesus as “the healing prophet.”)
14. Pray for the salvation of Muslims everywhere, around the world, including the radical Muslim terrorists; many stories are being told today of Muslims having dreams and visions pertaining to Christ and/or to the Bible and ultimately being saved; there is at least one story of a Muslim terrorist/assassin who became saved (see Ripken); remember how God mightily saved Saul of Tarsus.
15. Be prepared to deal with the shame factor (RL and NQ).

## E. For Further Reading

1. P.D. Bramsen: *One God, One Message*
2. Ergun M. Caner and Emir F. Caner: *Unveiling Islam*
3. Paul L. Canner: *Answers to Questions by Muslims About the Bible*
4. P.L. and M.K. Canner: "Who Are the Arabs and What Is Islam?" *Words of Truth*, 1991
5. J.W. Dawood (translator): *The Koran*
6. Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb: *Answering Islam*
7. David Hesselgrave: "A Legacy of Enmity," *Moody Monthly*, 1987.
8. G.H. Jansen: *Militant Islam*
9. Thomas W. Lippman: *Understanding Islam*
10. C.R. Marsh: *Share Your Faith with a Muslim*
11. Jerry Mattix: *Dear Muslim Friend*
12. Andrew Miller: *Church History*
13. Anthony Nutting: *The Arabs*
14. Phil Parshall: *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*
15. Nabeel Qureshi: *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*
16. Nik Ripken: *The Insanity of God*
17. Matthew White: *The Great Big Book of Horrible Things: History's 100 Worst Atrocities*