

WHOEVER SERIES



A MUSLIM PRAYS AT MECCA ABOVE A HUGE CROWD CIRCLING THE KAA'BA

“WHOEVER” IS A MUSLIM

Michael K. Wilson

This booklet is written to give Christians a basic sense of the world in which our Muslim friends live. It takes a bird's eye view of Islam's attraction, history, beliefs and practices. It looks at what it means to be a Muslim in multicultural Australia. It promotes positive measures for Christians to adopt in relating to their Muslim friends.

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Facing the Challenge

Competing for Allegiance

Migration has been by far the primary determinant of religious affiliation in Australia. Though there has been a significant and continuing drop-off, Christianity is the largest religion in Australia, with migration patterns having placed Buddhism second and Islam third.

Islam presents a major alternative for those who seek an alternative spirituality or way of life. The reasons are wide and varied. In Australia the conversion of sporting stars Anthony Mundine and Sonny Bill Williams has enhanced the appeal of Islam for some. The great goal-kicking Canterbury fullback, Hazem El-Masri was highly respected and was seen as a fine role model for Islam. Some women become Muslims through marriage, but others find wholesomeness in a morality that they see as standing against the treatment of women as sex objects. Islam’s stand against alcohol and drugs strikes a chord with some. Others, reacting against the superficiality that characterises so much of Western civilisation, feel that Islam offers them a life of substance. They hear Islam speaking with a definite voice and marking out clearly how a good person should live. A growing public sense that Christianity is irrelevant and even morally compromised, adds to the relative appeal of Islam.

“WHOEVER” YOU ARE...

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”
(John 3:16).

Whoever you are:

- God loves you
- Jesus died for you
- Believe in Jesus
- Receive life

Historical Forces

As a world religion Islam dates back to Muhammad who was born about AD 570. From the age of 40 onwards, Muhammad claimed that Allah had sent the angel Gabriel to dictate revelations to him. Muslims insist that it is the collection of these revelations that now comprise the Islamic holy book, the Qur'an.

Notably, Muhammad's father's name was Abd-Allah, "Servant of Allah." Indeed, prior to Muhammad's birth, Al-Ilah ("the God") was being worshipped, along with more than 360 other gods, at an established pilgrimage site in Mecca, the Kaa'ba ("cube").

Around AD 613 Muhammad began to declare that there was only one God and that he himself was God's final prophet. Fierce opposition from the inhabitants of Mecca forced him to flee with many of his converts to Medina. This is the famous *hijra* ("departure from one's country"), which marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. Muhammad became a warlord who eventually succeeded in conquering his home town of Mecca. Mecca became the central Muslim sanctuary. Muhammad then undertook to subjugate all of Arabia to Islam.

Muhammad died on June 8, 632 in Medina. He had not communicated what should be done after his death. As a result Islam broke into warring sects, most notably the Sunnis and Shi'ites, who in many countries continue to kill each other to this day. The rest, as they say, is history. For a millennium, Islam's impressive expansion was largely due, though not exclusively, to military conquest.

But then Islam suffered many major setbacks. In the 16th century the Portuguese were involved in pushing back Islam, through its conquest of Goa and assistance in liberating Christian Ethiopia. 1683 is a major date, marking the defeat of the Ottomans in Vienna, followed by the liberation of Hungary and Transylvania. The 18th century ended with Napoleon's conquest of Egypt. In the 19th century

Islamic History

AD/CE

570	Birth of Muhammad
596	Muhammad marries Khadija
610	Muhammad's first vision in cave near Mecca
613	Muhammad preaches one God and one prophet
622	Muhammad flees to Medina (Yathrib) with followers (<i>hijra</i>)
630	Muhammad conquers Mecca
632	Muhammad's death
c.650	Caliph Uthman authorises an official version of the Qur'an
656	Uthman murdered; Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, becomes fourth caliph
661	Ali murdered. Start of Umayyad Dynasty
680	Killing of Muhammad's grandson, Husayn, in battle
732	Muslim empire reaches fullest extent
750	Start of Abbasid Dynasty
800s	Collections of Hadith (traditions of Muhammad)
1099	Christian Crusaders take Jerusalem
1281	Beginning of Ottoman Empire
1453	Mehmet Fatih conquers Constantinople
1683	Defeat of Ottomans at Battle of Vienna
1798	Napoleon's expedition to Egypt
1948	Establishment of State of Israel
1979	Beginning of Iranian revolution
2001	Fall of the Twin Towers
2014	ISIS invades Northern Iraq

Moghul rule in India was ended by British rule and the continuing Russo-Turkish wars saw many defeats inflicted on the Ottomans, enabling eastern European nations to become independent. World War I resulted in the final defeat and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Rubbing salt into the wound was what happened in 1948, the establishment of the modern state of Israel in land many Muslims considered to be theirs.

A significant body of Muslims are committed to reversing these setbacks and bringing about a world dominated by Islam. Islamic revivalism is especially associated with such groups as the Wahhabi sect (producing Osama bin Laden), the Deobandi movement of India and Pakistan, Jamaat e-Islami, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Taliban, Al Qaeda, Tablighi Jamaat, Hizb Ut-Tahrir, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and ISIS (Daesh). Revivalist Muslims diagnose that Islam's decline must be due to a failure to observe Islam properly. The cure is to force greater compliance with the demands of *sharia* – Islamic law. One clear indication that this revivalist agenda has an immense impact on Muslims all around the globe is the increasing frequency with which Muslim women wear headscarves and burqas.

Submission to Allah's Will

Who will turn away from the creed of Abraham but one dull of soul? We made him the chosen one here in the world, and one of the best in the world to come, (for) when his Lord said to him: "Obey," he replied: "I submit to the Lord of all the worlds." And Abraham left this legacy to his sons, and to Jacob, and said: "O my sons, God has chosen this as the faith for you. Do not die but as those who have submitted (to God)" (Qur'an 2:130-132; Ahmed Ali translation).

The vast majority of Muslims are peaceable and not 'revivalist.' But the actions of Muslim revivalists have all-too-often served to create an unfortunate stereotype of Muslims that is contrary to this. Many revivalists have been willing to resort to violence to achieve their ends. The 1979 Iranian Revolution was followed not by a glorious resurrection of Islam, but by corruption and savagery. The Taliban imposed unspeakable cruelties on the people of Afghanistan. ISIS has gained infamy through its videoed beheadings. Revivalist fervour has pitched Muslim against Muslim. The great majority of the world's refugees are Muslims. Today, even as Islam gathers strength in many Western settings, there is a growing disenchantment with Islam in its own homelands. Significant numbers are embracing the Christian faith.

Still, Islam is the second largest religion on earth, with over 1.6 billion adherents. It continues to grow. It continues to attract and claim the allegiance of many.

Islamic Beliefs and Practice

The way of life (*sunnah*) required of Muslims is based on the teachings and practices of Muhammad and interpretations of the Qur'an. The edifice of Islam stands on five pillars, the fundamental aspects of visible Muslim conduct: confession of faith (*kalimah shahadat*), prayer (*salat*), charity (*zakat*), fasting (*saum*) and pilgrimage (*haj*).



THE CONFESSION OF FAITH SEWN INTO THE FLAG OF SAUDI ARABIA

The *Confession of Faith* is this: "I witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

Prayer involves five ritual ceremonies at different times of the day: the crack of dawn, midday, the midpoint between midday and sunset, sunset and one hour after sunset.

Charity requires Muslims to devote 2.5% of capital assets (e.g. gold, silver, cash, stocks, merchandise for business, livestock) continuously owned over one lunar year that exceed a minimum monetary value. This money is given for (1) the poor and needy and those who serve them; (2) ransoming captives; (3) paying the debts of debtors who can't pay; (4) the advancement of Islam; (5) the traveler.

Fasting occurs during the ninth month of the lunar year (*Ramadan*). Technically, the fast each day commences from when it is possible to discriminate between a white and a black thread. It lasts until sunset. During this period it is forbidden to eat or drink. Indeed, strict Muslims will not even swallow their saliva. Also off limits are games of chance, sexual relations and even touching a person of the opposite sex. The purpose of the Fast is to commemorate the coming of the Qur'an. Children, pregnant women (if in danger), menstruating women, travelers in deserts, Muslims engaged in holy war and very weak aged persons are exempt.

Unless impossible, every Muslim is expected to make the *Pilgrimage* to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. Many Islamic scholars rule that Muslims can send a substitute instead. The central ceremony involves circling the *Kaa'ba* ("cube") seven times in an anti-clockwise direction. Muslims will try to kiss, touch or otherwise greet the famous Black Stone set in the eastern corner of the *Kaa'ba*. The *Kaa'ba* is the holiest of all Muslim shrines, believed to be the remnant of the original house of worship constructed by Abraham and Ishmael.

Piety does not lie in turning your face to East or West: Piety lies in believing in God, the Last Day and the angels, the Scriptures and the prophets, and disbursing your wealth out of love for God among your kin and the orphans, the wayfarers and mendicants, freeing the slaves, observing your devotional obligations, and in paying the zakat and fulfilling a pledge you have given, and being patient in hardship, adversity, and times of peril. These are the men who affirm the truth, and they are those who follow the straight path (Qur'an 2:177; Ahmed Ali translation).

Some Muslims add a sixth pillar - *Jihad* ("struggle"). There are those who insist that this primarily concerns a person's private struggle to be a good Muslim. However, this is hard to defend from Quranic usage, which consistently uses this language in a militaristic way, hence the common and valid understanding of *jihad* as "holy war." There are many major Muslim leaders who especially promote this understanding of *jihad*. Islam is essentially political and all political systems must resort to violence at some level (e.g. police force and armed services). It follows from this that some level of violence is integral to Islam.

Allah is ONE God

O people of the Book, do not be fanatical in your faith, and say nothing but the truth about God. The Messiah who is Jesus, son of Mary, was only an apostle of God, and a command of His which He sent to Mary, as a mercy from Him. So believe in God and His apostles, and do not call Him 'Trinity'. Abstain from this for your own good; for God is only one God, and far from His glory is it to beget a son. All that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him; and sufficient is God for all help (Qur'an 4:171; Ahmed Ali translation).

Muslims also confess six articles of faith (*iman*; not to be confused with *imam*, the name given to the leader of a mosque). Muslims believe in: (1) one supreme solitary God; (2) angels; (3) the sacred books of God; (4) the prophets of God; (5) the last day; and (6) the divine decrees.

One God (tawhid): Muslims have a strictly mathematical concept of God's oneness. It is the ultimate blasphemy (*shir'k*) to violate this doctrine. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity, understood in the Qur'an as God, Mary and Jesus, is abhorrent to the Muslim mind. To call Jesus as "Son of God" often implies to Muslims the repulsive notion of Jesus being the product of sexual relations between God and Mary.

The absolute oneness of Allah explains much of Islam's stress on visible conformity. It is integral to the all-important confession of faith. Muslims, always facing Mecca, together perform the same ritual prayers to this One



MUSLIM MEN PERFORMING RITUAL PRAYERS AS THEY FACE MECCA

God. The month of fasting celebrates Allah's revealed book. The *haj* involves immense visible conformity for millions of Muslims each year as they focus on this One God. Conformity is often seen in the everyday dress of many Muslim men and women. Arabic, as the revered language of the Qur'an, is used by Muslims in their prayers, though over 90% of them don't speak Arabic. Revivalists

sometimes say that the neglect of Arabic has contributed to Islam's historical decline. The universal commitment of Muslims to eating *halal* food (see below) is yet another indication of the strength of visible conformity.

Visible communal conformity is so integral to the very essence of Islam that it also becomes mandatory, where possible, to have laws and authorities that will ensure such observance. Islam is based on ritual and all-encompassing laws that, when applied, control every aspect of human life – economic, political, legal, relational, educational, sexual, recreational, and so on.

Angels: So utterly transcendent is Allah that he did not communicate directly even with Muhammad, but rather through the angel Gabriel. Muslims believe one angel records a Muslim's good deeds and another his bad deeds. On the Day of Judgment a Muslim's fate is determined by the weighing of these deeds on the scales. The *jinn* are beings that are greater than humans but lesser than angels. Muslims believe that Satan, as one of the *jinn*, is not an angel.

Sacred books: the Qur'an encourages Muslims to venerate the holy books of Jews and Christians, the Taurat, Zabur and Injil. The Taurat corresponds to the Torah (books associated with Moses), the Zabur to the Psalms and the Injil to the Gospels. Muslims are taught that Christians have corrupted these books. Yet the Qur'an itself appeared many centuries after the composition of these books. The onus is on Muslims to produce verifiable manuscripts of the Taurat, Zabur and Injil that demonstrate such alleged variance.

There are 114 chapters (*surahs*) making up the Quran. Later verses of the Qur'an abrogate earlier ones. Significantly, the later (Medina) verses are much more aggressive than earlier (Meccan) verses.

Various chapters and verses are reputed to be powerful for such problems as headaches, fevers, swellings, aches, blindness, insanity, toothache, and the protection of property.

Muslims venerate the *Hadith* (volumes of written traditions concerning what Muhammad said, did and approved). In practice it is not always clear that the Qur'an takes precedence over the *Hadith*, as typically claimed. Such fundamental expressions of Islam as the five times of prayer, the identification of 99 names of Allah, and the wearing of the *hijab* (the veil covering the head and chest of Muslim women) are derived from the *Hadith*. Significantly, the Shi'ites do not recognize the same collections of *hadiths* venerated by Sunnis.

Prophets:

Aside from Muhammad, the Qur'an refers to many other prophets including Adam, David, Abraham, Ishmael, Idris (Enoch?), Aaron, Moses, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Solomon, John the Baptist and, most significantly, Isa, that is, Jesus. The Qur'an shows confusion about when many of these figures appeared in history.

Muslims insist that Muhammad is only a prophet, a man. Yet many Muslims are enraged when people speak against him. Jesus, who is God the Son, said, "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man [that is, "anyone who speaks a word against *me*"] will be forgiven" (Mt 12:32). The uproar in the Muslim world occasioned by the Danish cartoons illustrates the contrast.

In Islam Jesus is venerated as a prophet. Muslims usually deny that Jesus died on the cross. To them it is unthinkable that a prophet should suffer such humiliation. To Muslims Jesus is not the son of God, but merely the Son of Mary. But Muslims do believe that Jesus ascended into heaven and that he will return before the Day of Judgment to lead Christians to Islam.

Last Day: On the Day of Judgment all unbelievers will be sent to hell. Those whom Allah adjudges to be faithful Muslims will enter a garden paradise. It is significant that even in paradise Muslims have no intimate personal relationship with Allah, who remains utterly transcendent.

Divine Decrees: Muslims believe that everything comes from Allah and is subject to his Will, whether it be good or bad, pleasure or pain. When Allah created each thing he predetermined when it would come into being and when it would cease to exist. He also predetermined the qualities and nature of each thing. There is a strong tendency for this doctrine to encourage fatalism.



THE BEAUTIFUL INTERIOR OF AUBURN GALLIPOLI MOSQUE SYDNEY. THE RECESS (MIHRAB) MARKS THE DIRECTION (QIBLAH) OF MECCA. THE STEPS LEAD UP TO THE PULPIT (MINBAR) FROM WHICH THE IMAM (LEADER OF PRAYER) DELIVERS SERMONS. THE GOLDEN ARABIC SCRIPT IS THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

Muslims in Multicultural Australia

There is significant diversity among Australian Muslims. But Professor Abdullah Saeed, author of *Islam in Australia*, recognizes: (1) that there is broad agreement among Australia's Muslims concerning core values, beliefs, ideas and institutions; (2) that Sunnis and Shi'ites are much more unified in Australia than in their home countries; (3) a significant 30-40% of Australia's Muslims are "committed" Muslims.

Many Muslims adapt well to Australian society and culture. Yet, the strength of traditional mainstream Islam prevents significant numbers from appropriately integrating into Australian society. Sometimes Muslims have even succeeded in changing Australian society itself, so as to accommodate

Islamic *sharia* law requirements. The Muslim demand for *halal* food has led to the slaughter of animals in Australian abattoirs conforming to *sharia* law. Separate prayer rooms for Muslims in such places as airports and some educational institutions are another case in point.

There are unfortunate and unacceptable expressions of prejudice and discrimination against Muslims. This is not helped when some Australian Muslims promote an Islamic way of life that involves radical cultural difference and values that clash with mainstream Australian and Christian values. Such instances have led some Christian leaders to voice warnings about the threats they believe that Islam poses for the future wellbeing of Australia.

The Biblical Challenge

At a time when many Christians are prone to withdraw from forming friendships with Muslims and to see Islam as a threat, it is important to keep in mind the words of Ephesians 6:12: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Christians must not see Muslims as their enemy. Helping Muslims to grasp the wonder of God’s grace will not be achieved by mouthing off against Muslims or filling the hearts of Christians with alarm, so as to cause them to isolate themselves all the more from Muslims.

Be Gracious!

“But make sure in your hearts that Christ is Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

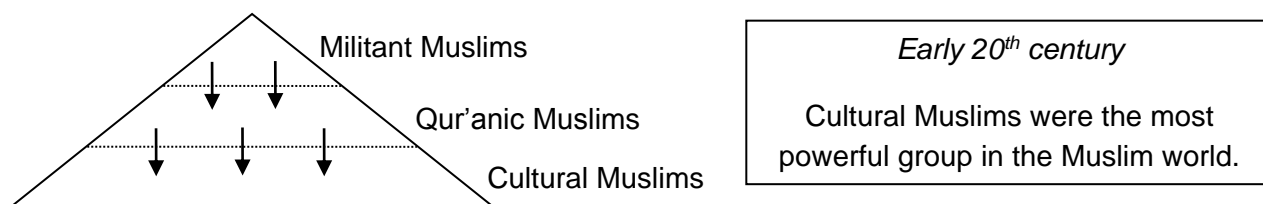
Accepting the Challenge

Living the Life

Nabeel Jabbour helpfully discriminates between three types of Muslims:

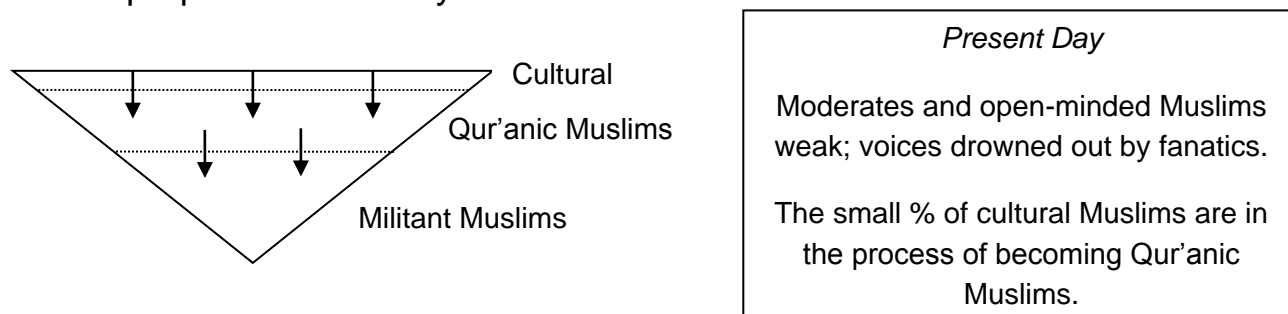
Cultural Muslims	They adhere to social norms rather than to theology. In short, they are born into Islam.
Qur’anic Muslims	They embrace the faith, and they adhere to the explicit teaching of the Qur’an. They follow Islam closely and seek, on a daily basis, to apply the teachings of the Qur’an to their lives. Some of these Qur’anic Muslims are fundamentalists.
Militant Muslims	They actively engage in defending the faith by means of armed conflict and/or other strategic efforts aimed at the destruction or subjugation of non-Muslims who are understood to constitute a threat to the Islamic population in particular, or to Islamic civilization in general. This group includes the fanatics and some of the fundamentalists.

Jabbour suggests that at the beginning of the 20th century the Muslim world looked like this:



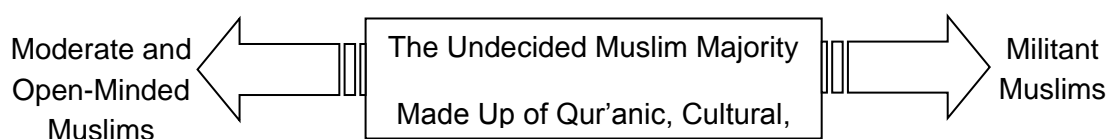
At that time, Jabbour observes, cultural Muslims had a great impact on their countries as they promoted modernity and secular education. Militant Muslims played a minor role. Indeed, as the downward arrows indicate, many were settling for being Quranic Muslims, while many Quranic Muslims were adopting a more culture-informed than Qur'an-shaped Islam.

Jabbour proposes that today the situation looks more like this:



Notice how the triangle has been flipped. Now, the downward arrows indicate a movement in the opposite direction. Cultural Muslims no longer have the dominance they had at the beginning of the 20th century. Militants have been able to exploit the sometimes legitimate grievances of Muslim populations and recruit support and volunteers to join their ranks.

As we relate personally with Muslims we need to be aware, as Jabbour puts it, that “(t)he huge war that is waging today in our world is for the souls and minds of Muslims”, so that: “Either we draw the Muslims we know to open-mindedness and to Christ, or we push them away to fanaticism.”



This illustrates that in communicating the gospel to Muslims what particularly matters is the disposition and attitude of the cross-cultural worker. An extensive survey was carried out by Fuller Theological Seminary's School of Intercultural Studies. This indicated that the most telling perceived factor in causing Muslims to choose to become Christians is seeing Christians living out their faith.

Some Comparisons and Contrasts

Do Muslims worship the same God as Christians? Nobody denies there are some fundamental differences, not least being the Muslim's rejection of the Trinity. However, there are Christians who find parallels between Islam and Judaism and contend that Muslims do in fact worship the same God and that Muslims, like Jews, merely need to see this same God revealed in Christ. Other Christians adopt a very different position, insisting that the differences are far too deep-seated to permit such an accommodation.

Quite apart from the matter of the nature of divine unity, it is hard to deny that Islamic and Christian understandings of God are radically different.

God is Present Everywhere

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you (Psalm 139:7-12).

The Bible emphasizes the immense gap between our ways and God's ways and his thoughts and our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). Although God's self-revelation has enabled us to have a real knowledge of God, God is so unspeakably great that we will spend the rest of eternity only beginning to know him better.

Along with this, the Bible lays great stress on God as one who involves himself in the world. The supreme manifestation of this is when God the Word "became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). But even in the Old Testament God speaks to Moses from within the burning bush, accompanies his people in the pillar of cloud and fire, and at times appears in

human form as “the angel of the LORD.” Indeed, the God of the Bible is so much a part of all he has created that in Psalm 139 David recognizes it is impossible ever to escape God’s presence.

By contrast, in the Qur’an there is no depiction of Allah manifesting himself in and through earthly phenomena. He does not even reveal the Qur’an directly to Muhammad, but via an angel. Similarly, in sharp contrast with the Bible, Allah creates Adam in the Gardens of Paradise and banishes him to earth after he succumbs to Satan’s temptation. After death faithful Muslims are admitted into these same Gardens which are other-worldly. Again, this is at odds with the biblical view of paradise, with its vision of a new heavens and a new earth.



GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO MOSES IN AND THROUGH THE PHENOMENON OF THE BURNING BUSH
(EXODUS 3)

The Bible teaches that all people are created in God’s image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). Among many other things, this includes the reality that God created people so that they could know him and have such an intimate, loving relationship with him as to become more and more like him. But the Qur’an’s presentation of the absolute transcendence of Allah means that people can never be his much-loved children but are simply his slaves who must submit to his implacable will. That’s why this religion is called *Islam*, meaning “submission”, and why its adherents are called *Muslims*, that is, “those who submit” to Allah’s will.

What to Say?

Some gifted evangelists, with a profound knowledge of Islam and often fluent in Arabic, have credibility when, with recognized intellectual integrity, they criticize Islam. Most of us should avoid such an approach. How often have our critics seriously misunderstood true Christianity? Often we are just as opposed to the distorted version of Christianity they attack. The moment we step into the critic's shoes we run the danger of making the very same mistakes.

There is one basic principle we should observe whenever we are talking with any non-Christian, not just with Muslims. Keep Christ central. Keep talking about him.

Although we will avoid confrontation it is helpful to have in mind some of the vulnerabilities of the worldview held by many Muslims. Indeed, Islam has an Achilles Heel. For it claims that Allah is perfectly holy. However, Muslims also emphasise that Allah is merciful and pin their eternal hopes on Allah showing them mercy. Can you see the inescapable contradiction here?

Logically, if Allah remains perfectly holy then it is impossible for him to show mercy towards sinners. For to allow Muslims to enter Paradise would involve turning a blind eye to sin. Muslims are caught on the horns of a dilemma because Islam lacks a doctrine of atonement. It has nothing that corresponds to the Christian doctrine of propitiation; the truth that the cross reconciles the justice and mercy of God. Inevitably, many Muslims lack any assurance that they will survive the Day of Judgment and be admitted into paradise. Help your Muslim friend to see just how holy and just God really is and why the price paid by Jesus on the cross is the **only** solution to the human predicament.

The Islamic view of God as a solitary monad who is so transcendent that he has no intimate relationships with any other being in the entire universe stands in sharp contrast to the rich doctrine of the Trinity. Whereas Islamic unity tends to breed legalistic conformity, the doctrine of the Trinity, when grasped, leads to variety and freedom.

Be genuinely warm, loving, gentle, polite and gracious. Make a big thing of hospitality. Invite your Muslim friends or neighbours to come to your home for a meal, remembering, of course, that you will need to make sure the food is *halal*. Be ready to accept invitations to have meals or enjoy hospitality in their homes.

Recommended Reading

Colin Chapman, *Cross and Crescent. Responding to the Challenge of Islam* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003)

Bill Dennett, *Sharing the Good News with Muslims* (Australia: SPCK)

Bill Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam. Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims* (MARC: Essex, 1989)

Tony Payne, *Islam in our Backyard. A Novel Argument* (Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2002)

Nabeel T. Jabbour, *The Crescent Through the Eyes of the Cross. Insights from an Arab Christian* (Navpress, 2008)

Questions

1. Is there a set of practices foundational to the Christian faith that parallel the pillars of Islam? For example, do sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper) play a similar role in the lives of Christians to that played by the pillars of Islam in the lives of Muslims?
2. How does the Bible's view of God compare and contrast with the Islamic view of God?
3. What difference is there between the way Muslims relate to Allah and the way Christians relate to God?

For more titles in the “Whoever” and “Contending with Culture” series of booklets see the listings at: www.facetofaceintercultural.com.au



In an Australia that is becoming ever more multicultural, “whoever” will often be someone coming from a quite different culture. This presents particular challenges for churches intent on reaching “whoever.” We think here of all churches, not merely dominant culture churches that may be predominantly Anglo-Celtic in composition. As your church faces these challenges may you know God’s guidance and enabling as you set yourself to be the channel of God’s love to “whoever.”

Need Advice?

Contact Mike Wilson, facetofaceintercultural@gmail.com

More resources: www.facetofaceintercultural.com.au

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