

A Christian Response to Islam

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To begin with, I'd like to ask you some questions. If you would like to answer yes, please do so with conviction and volume, so it will be a testimony before the visible and invisible world.

Do you believe in Jesus?

Is He precious to you?

Do you love Him?

Is He the Son of God?

Did He perform miracles while on earth?

Did He come as the Prince of peace?

Is He the King of kings?

Is His kingdom one of righteousness and peace?

Did He die, so that we could have forgiveness of our sins?

Did He die for the whole world?

Did He give us a commission to share this good news with the whole world?

Yes, we have a great God and a great commission.

Today we've come together to talk about an appropriate Christian response to Islam. To do this, we must first take a look at Islam.

As we all know, there have been a number of major attacks since the year 2000:

September 11, 2001 - World Trade Center and the Pentagon /

October 2002 - Bali /

March 2004 Madrid train attack /

July 2005 - London attack

Some people ask: "When will this end? Why all this violence and murder? What did we do to deserve this? What can we do to stop it?"

Others say: “Don’t worry. It will be all right. They’ll settle down. We all worship the same God, so we should be able to get along like brothers and sisters.”

With the influx of Islam, we need to understand the Islamic religion and the Muslim mindset. Unless we know how people think and unless we understand the meaning of the words as they use them, it is very difficult to communicate.

To answer these questions and others I’d first like to start with Muhammad and **the origins of Islam.**

Muhammad was born in 570 AD in the Quraysh tribe of Arabia. The tribe lived in Mecca, and the people of this tribe were the keepers of the holy Arab shrine, the Ka’aba. They were idol worshippers.

Muhammad’s original name was Abdul Cassim. He later accepted the name Muhammad, as it means “the praised one”. His father’s name was Abdullah.

Muhammad was an orphan by the age of 6. From his 12th year he accompanied his uncle on many caravan trips to Jerusalem and Syria. His uncle was a Christian, and Muhammad became very involved with Christians and Jews.

From AD 610 when he was 40 years old, Muhammad isolated himself from the rest of his people and went into the Hijra Mountains for meditation. According to tradition it was here in the mountains where the angel Gabriel (Jibril in Arabic) is said to have visited him and revealed to him portions of the Quran. From then on he was known as a prophet.

Muhammad was illiterate, but his friends wrote down the words that he recited. They didn’t have books in those days, so they wrote on whatever was at hand. In the end all the sayings were collected and sorted into chapters, or “suras” as they are called in Arabic. Then they were put into sequence - not a chronological sequence, but they

were sorted according to length. The longest first and the shortest last. There is no standard verse numbering system.

As I mentioned earlier, Muhammad had met both Christians and Jews, and he knew something about their faith. He was convinced that the polytheistic religions of Arabia were not the right way, but rather that monotheism was right. He had come to the conclusion that there was only one God. There were over 360 gods in the Kaaba shrine in Mecca, and Muhammad chose the most sacred stone to be the one true god. It is a black stone, and it is said to be a meteorite.

Because Muhammad had decided on monotheism, he was disturbed by the Christian concept of the Trinity, which he didn't understand. He felt that Christians worshipped 3 gods. According to his perception the Trinity consisted of God the father, Mary the mother and Jesus the son. So he thought, Christians must believe that God the father had had sex with Mary and produced Jesus. That was repulsive to him. Actually, it is to us too. Because it was so repugnant to him, he made a point of trying to correct Christians. He told them in no uncertain terms that it was blasphemous to think that God had a partner and that God had had sex. Furthermore, if God had had a Son, he couldn't have become a human being with all our human needs, because that would be degrading to God. Therefore, that too must be a falsehood that should be combatted. According to Muhammad both ideas were blasphemy, and they were so insulting to God that they must be punishable by death.

Muslims believe that their religion is superior to Christianity. Islam came later, and so they feel it superseded Christianity. Muslims believe that the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospels are sacred books, but that Christians and Jews have corrupted them. Since Muhammad had problems with the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures, this was a convenient explanation. But this makes it very difficult for Christians to speak with Muslims. We cannot back up what we say about our faith with quotes from Holy Scripture, since Muslims believe it has been corrupted.

When Muslims go on their pilgrimage, the hajj, one part of the ritual is to go inside the Ka'aba shrine and kiss the sacred black rock. So Allah is represented by a rock. Some people might wonder: But don't Christians and Jews also worship a Rock? What about the song "Praise the Name of Jesus?" We sing: "He's my Rock, He's my Deliverer, in Him will I trust." There are many Psalm verses referring to God as a Rock.

Psalm 31:2&3: Be thou a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me! Yea, thou art my rock and my fortress; for thy name's sake lead me and guide me.

Or:

2 Samuel 22:2&3: The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge.

How is that different from the Muslim rock?

That's a good question. Yes, we do call God a Rock. But we don't refer to a specific rock or stone. To answer this question, we need to understand Hebraic thought. When David called God his rock, he wasn't thinking of a physical rock. As a Hebrew man, he was saying that God has the characteristics of a rock. A rock is firm and stable. It doesn't change; it doesn't move. If the rock is in the form of a cave, it is also shelter from the heat and from the rain and cold, it is a fortress.

The Bible consists of 66 books. *Some of the books are historical, some prophetic, some consist of letters, one consists of Psalms, another of Proverbs, and the last one is the description of a vision.* In most of the Bible you can see a storyline or timeline to use modern terminology. In other words, the statements are in context, and therefore they are usually fairly easy to understand.

The Quran does not have a storyline, and the meaning of many passages is obscure. Therefore, it is necessary to consult other works like the Hadith, which is a collection of short historical accounts, and the Sunnah, which tells about the practices and customs of Muhammad, and the sira or biography of Muhammad. The Jews have

their Talmud and their Mishna, and Christians have an abundance of commentaries. However, the Bible can be read and understood without them.

There are many **contradictions** in the Quran. Why? How are they explained? It is not easy for an outsider to understand this, and since the chapters of the Quran are not arranged chronologically, it is very difficult to know what the chronological sequence is. However, the Islamic scholars have made in-depth studies and have come to the conclusion that when verses contradict each other, the verse that is from a later time abrogates or cancels the verse from an earlier time.

The main subject in question is the peaceful verses and the aggressive verses. The scholars' explanation is as follows:

While Muhammad was in Mecca, he and his followers were in the minority. They did not have the strength of numbers or the strength of force. Thus it behoved them to get along peacefully with their neighbours, who were Christians, Jews or Pagans. Muhammad gave his followers instructions to be peaceful and conciliatory.

Muhammad's time in Mecca came to an end when he tried to assert himself and his beliefs. The natives of Mecca felt that their gods and their beliefs were being insulted. His influential uncle and his wealthy wife had died by that time, and so he no longer had any protection in Mecca. Therefore, Muhammad fled to Medina with some of his followers.

That was the year 622 AD, and it is the beginning of the Muslim calendar. Muhammad stayed in Medina for 10 years. During that time he set up a theocracy and directed it politically, militarily and judicially. Muhammad and his followers resorted to the traditional Arab nomadic practices of plunder for survival. In all Muhammad personally took part in 27 battles and raids. There were several orders of assassinations of individual opponents and a massacre of 600-900 Jewish men in Medina.

In Medina he received revelations or inspirations saying that Muslims should use force against the infidels. This is the source of the aggressive verses.

By 632 AD he had become so strong that he returned to Mecca with 10,000 men, conquered the city and destroyed the idols that were in the Ka'aba. Now the Meccans were subjugated to Islam.

The Islamic scholars tell us that the later verses, the aggressive ones from the Medina period abrogate or cancel the earlier peaceful passages, which were written in Mecca.

There are at least 114 verses in the Quran that speak of peace, love and forgiveness, especially in the sura entitled "The Heifer" (sura 2:62,109). However, they were all cancelled by the verse of the sword: sura 9:5.

"Fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every strategy (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."

The problem is that the abrogated verses are still in the Quran; they were never removed. So the peaceful verses, although they are no longer valid, can be quoted at will, whenever it seems advantageous to make Islam look like a peaceful religion and to give the impression that Christians, Jews and Muslims can live side by side in peace.

Trying to gain favour with the West, they say that Islam means "peace" and that Islam is a peaceful religion. In actual fact, Islam means "submission", submission to Allah and his will. In the bus ads for Islam in the United States, they themselves say that Islam means "submission".

With the exception of short periods in history Islam has been a violent religion. From the time Muhammad went to Medina, it was a religion

of violence, After Muhammad's death it spread within 120 years from Arabia to India in the east and to Spain in the west. A huge empire - conquered by the sword. As each new area was conquered, the people were given 3 choices:

- 1) they could become Muslims and join in the Jihad
- 2) they could accept subjugation and become 2nd class citizens and pay a tax to the Muslims for the furtherance of their Jihad (*this option was only open to Christians and Jews*)
- 3) if they rejected the first two options, they were killed

The second option is called "Dhimmitude". The Christians and Jews in many Muslim countries are called "Dhimmis". They do not have all the rights of the Muslim citizens.

Quotes from the Quran:

Let's take a look at some of the peaceful verses:

2:62 Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in GOD, and (2) believes in the Last Day, and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

2:256 Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands out clear from error.

2:47 O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I blessed you more than any other people.

And now some of the aggressive verses: There are many. These are just a few samples.

Refusing to believe

48:13-14 And if any believe not in Allah and His Apostle, We have prepared, for those who reject Allah, a Blazing Fire!

Opposing Allah or his apostle

9:63 Know they not that for those who oppose Allah and His Apostle, is the Fire of Hell? - Wherein they shall dwell. That is the supreme disgrace.

Resisting Islam

5:33 Resisting Islam is "...punished by death, crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet."

Rejecting Jihad

8:16 If any do turn his back to them on such a day... he draws on himself the wrath of Allah, and his abode is Hell, an evil refuge indeed.

8:59 Prepare against the infidels (Christians and Jews) whatever arms and weaponry you can muster so that you may terrorize them.

8:12 I will instill terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers: smite their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them.

8:39 So fight them (non-Muslims) until there is no more disbelief (in the whole world) and all submit to the religion of Allah alone.

Changing religion

(Hadith: Al Bukhari vol. 9:57) Muhammad said: "Whoever changes his religion, kill him."

Fate of the Christians

5:73-75 "Those who declare that Jesus is the Son of God are 'unbelievers' who will be forbidden entrance into Paradise, and shall be cast into the fire of hell" for "the Messiah, the son of Mary, was no more than an apostle."

So you can see that if the aggressive verses are preached in the mosques and taught at the schools, Muslims are told that we Christians are idolaters and infidels and that they should act accordingly.

Concerning the Jews:

Says the Hadith: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said: The Last Day would not come unless the Muslims will fight against the Jews and the Muslims would kill them until the Jews would hide themselves behind a stone or a tree, and a stone or a tree would say: Muslim, or the servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.

(This verse is in the charter of Hamas. It is taken very seriously, since this is what Muhammad said.)

Let us now take a closer look at the beliefs of Christianity and Islam. Both claim that their God is the only true God.

In 1982 Mother Basilea wrote a very helpful little book: "Allah or the God of the Bible - What Is the Truth?" Both claim to be the one true God, yet they are very different.

The God of the Bible is omniscient. He knows the past, present and future. He gives prophecies and they are fulfilled. There are no prophecies in the Quran.

In Isaiah 41:21ff: God challenges the gods of the day and any that might come afterwards:

Set forth your case, says the Lord; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob. Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen. *Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come. Tell us what*

is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods... Behold, you are nothing, and your work is nought; an abomination is he who chooses you.

Here God is asking all those who pose as God whether they have given prophecies as He has - prophecies that have been fulfilled in the history of mankind. God proves that He alone is God with the words: *“I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.” Isaiah 48:3 NIV*

“Remember what happened long ago; acknowledge that I alone am God and that there is no one else like me. From the beginning I predicted the outcome; long ago I foretold what would happen. I said that my plans would never fail, that I would do everything I intended to do.” Isaiah 46:9f.

From Mother Basilea: God is, in other words, the God of history. Allah, as Muhammad describes him, is not the God of history. He does not utter prophecies. He does not disclose divine plans and then carry them out. But the God of Holy Scripture has divine counsels, which come true and go down in history - as we can see when we look at Abraham, at His chosen people Israel, at the Body of Christ, at all nations and the world....

For instance, God spoke to His chosen people through Moses, warning them that if they did not obey Him and His commandments, He would have to lead them along paths of chastening and they would be dispersed and persecuted throughout the world (Leviticus 26:14-16,33). And this became a reality. But so too His promise of blessing to His people: “I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.” (Ezekiel 11:17). With our own eyes we have seen this coming true in the present age.

Isaiah prophesied that a king named Cyrus would send the Israelites back to their home land long before Cyrus was on the world stage.

Also, Isaiah prophesied that one of names of the child born of a virgin would be “Mighty God” - very unusual for a Jewish parent to call his son a god - but Isaiah was predicting Jesus’ divinity. (Isaiah 9:6)

Another point that Mother Basilea makes in this discussion is the attitude towards Israel. The God of the Bible refers to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The God of the Bible contends for Israel. On the other hand, in the Quran Allah calls for the Jews to be persecuted and killed. Therefore, the God of the Bible cannot be the same as the god of the Quran.

It is also important for us to understand that Islamic theology is totally incompatible with the Christian faith.

1. We do not worship the same God. As we have seen, Allah is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Our God is a God of love. There are 99 attributes for Allah in Islam, but “love” is not among them, nor is “Father”.

2. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He came in the flesh. Muslims reject that and say that Jesus was only a prophet. In Arabic His name is Isa. Muslims believe that Muhammad is the final prophet, the “seal” of the prophets and the messenger of Allah.

Their creed is: “There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.” One becomes a Muslim simply by saying this creed. It is the first thing that is whispered into a newborn baby’s ear, and it is the last thing that is whispered into the ear of a dying person.

3. We believe in the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For Muslims: to say that Jesus is the Son of God is blasphemy, punishable by death.

4. Both the Bible and the Quran state that Jesus did miracles and even raised the dead to life. Muhammad, on the other hand, did no miracles.

5. Jesus came as the Prince of Peace to teach us about the Kingdom of God. Muhammad came as a warrior to spread Islam.

6. We believe that Jesus died on the cross at Calvary, offering Himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. As Christians we have the assurance of forgiveness when we repent, because Jesus paid our ransom price at Calvary. Muslims believe that Jesus did not die on the cross. Hence they have no concept of salvation, no assurance of forgiveness and no assurance of eternal life in heaven. Muslims are only guaranteed entrance to paradise if they do Jihad and kill infidels (Jews, Christians and other non-Muslims), or if they die as a martyr in a Jihad.

7. We believe Jesus is coming again to judge the world in righteousness and to establish His kingdom. Muslims also believe that Jesus will come again. They believe that when he comes again, he will make all men Muslims, and if Christians and Jews refuse to become Muslims, Jesus will kill them. Then Jesus will marry and die and be buried in a grave next to Muhammad's.

8. Both Christians and Muslims believe in the resurrection of the dead and the last day (Day of Judgment), life after death, heaven and hell, although the Muslim versions are a bit different from the Christian ones. In Islam Allah has predestined everyone's fate. Nevertheless, they must still endeavour to do good works and please Allah to earn a place in paradise.

9. Christianity is a religion of love, peace and joy, whereas Islam is a religion of submission.

The name "Allah" was used in pre-Islamic times. Muhammad's father was called Abdullah, which means "slave of Allah".

While we are still discussing the belief system, let us take a look at the 5 pillars of Islam:

There are **5 Pillars of Islam** - these are duties that need to be performed.

1. Recital of the creed. It is repeated in every act of worship and must be said every day - also, if possible, to a non-Muslim.

2. Prayer

Ritual prayers 5 times a day with the face on the ground, facing Mecca. The men pray in the mosque and the women at home. Friday is a special day of communal prayer (*for men only*).

3. Alms

2.5% of their total income

4. Fasting

During the month of Ramadan all adults fast from dawn until sunset for 28 days. They must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and all forms of physical enjoyment.

5. Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)

Once in a lifetime for every Muslim who can afford it. All Muslims desire to make this pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during their lifetime. Muslims are prepared to make huge sacrifices in order to make this pilgrimage.

Some say that Jihad is the 6th pillar, since it is “required” in the Quran, but it is not an official part of the 5 pillars of faith.

Jihad means “holy war”. A leading Muslim cleric in Victoria was asked what the meaning is, and he answered: to make all people submit to Islam, whether by peaceful or by violent means.

Any means of Jihad (persuasion, coercion, deception and violence) are acceptable.

As mentioned earlier, Jihad is the only guarantee for Muslims to get into heaven. That is, they will go straight to heaven if they die in a

jihad or holy war, fighting against infidels, among which are Christians and Jews.

According to the Quran, to fight against or try to stop a jihad is to become an enemy of Allah and to burn in hell for eternity (sura 8:16, for instance). This explains why the military and the police in Indonesia did not come to the rescue of the Christians when they were asked to.

It is interesting to see what things Muslims do believe about Jesus. When speaking with Muslims, it is important not to disparage their god or their prophet, for that is not only rude, but it will close their minds immediately. However, it is good to keep in mind the points that they do believe about Jesus, because these can be used as a starting point for a conversation about faith.

Muslims believe

- the virgin birth of Jesus
- the sinlessness of Jesus
- the miracles performed by Jesus to the extent that He raised Lazarus from the dead
- that Jesus is the Messiah
- that He is the Word of God
- that He is the Spirit of God
- that He ascended to heaven
- that Jesus will come back again and that His return will signal the dawning of judgment day.

It is interesting to note that they believe that Jesus is in heaven. Whereas, they say they do not know if Muhammad is in heaven. In the Hadiths Muhammad said that he could not save his relatives nor himself. Muhammad said that he asked Allah for forgiveness more than 70 times a day; yet he acknowledged that Jesus is sinless.

We also need to understand the Muslim world view. Islam is not only a religion, but it is a socio-political system. Its religion is diametrically opposed to Christianity, and its socio-political system is diametrically opposed to Western democracy. For us Christianity is our religion, and government is a separate area. For Muslims religion, government, society and culture are all inter-related; they are virtually the same. So when Muslims come to Australia and see that we have drugs, alcohol, gambling, pornography, pregnant teenagers, adultery, abortion, etc., they find this repulsive, **and** they feel that all this is part of Christianity. Therefore, they look down on us. As Christians we need to humble ourselves under the sins of our country and try to do what we can to make our society more god-like.

Muslims believe in having a theocracy under Allah. This is why so many of them do not seem to be interested in democracy at all. They would rather have a theocracy with Sharia.

We hear a lot about Sharia today. The word Sharia means Islamic law. What is it? And why is it so important to Muslims?

According to the Muslim way of thinking, only Allah is entitled to make laws. If man makes any laws, he is usurping the position and authority of Allah. Also, since only the laws of Allah are valid, Muslims do not need to obey any other laws. **Think of the implications of that.**

For us Christians it is different, the Bible exhorts us to obey the governments we are living under. Fortunately, most of the laws in Western countries are based on the Ten Commandments, even though nowadays most countries have laws that contravene the commandments of the Bible. If there is any conflict, then Christians are commanded to obey God rather than man.

However, for Muslims man-made laws are by definition invalid and do not apply to them.

Sharia deals with many aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business, contracts, family, sexuality, hygiene and social issues. I did not study the whole of *Sharia* before putting this talk together. So I will only mention a few points.

Are there significant differences between *Sharia* and our laws? Yes.

For a start: According to *Sharia* no Muslim is allowed to leave Islam. Leaving Islam is punishable by death. In other words, people are allowed to convert **to** Islam, but no one is allowed to **leave** Islam. In many Muslim countries the religion of a person is printed on his identity card. The government will not change Islam to any other religion on an ID.

Blasphemy is also punishable by death. In Islam some examples of blasphemy are: Saying that Jesus is the Son of God or that God has a Son / or saying that one believes in the Triune God, which they interpret as believing in 3 gods.

Critics of Muhammad are also to be killed.

A woman's testimony in court is only worth half of a man's testimony.

If a girl is raped, it is **her fault** and her family is shamed. To set that right the family must kill the girl. This is called "honour killing". It is also used in other instances. For instance, if the girl marries a man of her own choosing or divorces an abusive husband.

Men are permitted to beat their wives.

Men are permitted to have multiple wives, but only 4 at a time.

Muhammad's example is extremely important for Muslims. Islamic scholars say that the Quran can only be properly understood in the light of Muhammad's life. Muhammad is said to be the perfect example.

Muhammad had multiple wives and he also had a child bride. Muhammad set a precedent by marrying a child of 6 and consummating the marriage when she was 9. Today 2 million female children have been married to older men because of this example. Some of these girls have died, because their bodies are not yet ready for child-bearing.

According to Islam the world is divided into two houses or areas. One is Dar al-Salaam, the House of Peace, which is also the House of Islam. The other is Dar al-Harb, which is the House of Infidels, also known as the House of War. The House of War does not mean that the infidels living in it are waging war with each other. Rather, Muslims feel that it is their duty to wage war on the house of war or the house of infidels, so that all would be subjugated to Islam. Then they would be in the house of peace and there would be peace in the world.

From this we see that their definition of peace is quite different from ours. This is a problem also in international negotiations. So we see that we can only really communicate with each other and understand each other if we know the meanings of the words we are using.

By the way, the meaning of truce is also different. In Islam it means a temporary cessation of hostilities to leave time for re-grouping and re-arming.

Incidentally, in Islam there is a **concept called taqiyya** which means “deception”. Although the Quran commends truth (sura 33:24) and condemns lies (sura 40:28), it also permits and even encourages Muslims to lie and use deception.

“Taqiyya in the defence of Islam allows Muslims to make contradictory statements depending upon whom they are addressing. Much of what is said by Muslims about Islam to non-Muslims is likely to be untrue..... There are even special translations of the Quran in English which are designed to appeal to Westerners and to dispel all their anxieties about Islam. These translations soften the more aggressive verses by

wandering further from the original text and its traditional Islamic interpretation. (For example, Allah is the best of deceivers is changed to planners.)

“Some Muslims have embarked on a deliberate process they are calling ‘Islamisation of knowledge’... One of the erroneous take-home messages is that Islam should take the credit for all that is best in European civilisation, having been the original source from which Europeans derived their learning and skills.

Just a few examples:

- Napoleon Bonaparte converted to Islam.
- Muslim explorers reached America before Christopher Columbus did.
- Islam arrived in Australia in the ninth century.

(By the way, this is very important for Muslims. If they can prove that they were there first, they have a right to the land according to their way of thinking. In America they even re-wrote school textbooks and offered them to the Department of Education in some areas. - not from Barnabas Fund))

- Muslims led the field in science and medicine during the Middle Ages.... [Actually] the first Arabic medical book was written by a Christian priest and translated into Arabic by a Jewish doctor in 683 AD. Furthermore, the scholars’ work was basically no more than to translate into Arabic the work of earlier Greek scholars with little in the way of new additions. This applied to medicine, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, zoology, chemistry, geography and technology... What medieval Islam did in effect was to absorb the learning of other cultures, to re-name everything in Arabic and then to claim it all for Islam.” *(From Barnabas Fund write-up May/June 2007)*

There are other examples as well, but as the last one I’d like to mention an example of their re-writing of history which should be obvious to all

Christians and Jews. Muslims have claimed that the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (where now the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque are located) was never a Jewish holy site. But from our Bible we know that Solomon built the Temple there, that Jews worshipped there for centuries, that it was destroyed by the Babylonians and rebuilt by King Herod. Jesus and His disciples went to the Temple. Jesus taught in the Temple precincts. Jesus predicted that the Temple would be destroyed, and indeed it was destroyed by Roman forces in AD 70. There are many references to the Temple in our Scriptures. Yet, the Muslims claim it was never a Jewish holy site!

Islam is a religion that places a great deal of importance on honour and power. This is an important point.

When a Danish newspaper published cartoons of Muhammad some years ago, Muslims were greatly distressed, and they rioted all over the world. They made it very clear that their prophet had been insulted and they were not going to take that lying down. On the other hand, when Jesus is ridiculed today, Christians are silent. Muslims draw the conclusion that our God is not worth anything to us and that our religion is not worth anything. I am not saying that we should become violent and have demonstrations. But it would help if we would raise our voices in some way - for instance, in letters to the editors of newspapers, in talk-back shows, or on TV.

The Islamic goal is **world domination**. As Stuart Robinson wrote in his book, "Mosques and Miracles" "In the next fifty years we will capture the Western world for Islam. We have the men to do it, we have the money to do it, and above all we are already doing it.' So said a Muslim religious leader at the opening of yet another Islamic centre - this time in Stockholm, Sweden." Muslim leaders have been making similar statements for years. By their own admission Muslims have world rule as their goal.

How is that different from Christianity? Christians were given the Great Commission by Jesus to go into all the world with the Gospel and make disciples.

Now we have a problem. Only one group can rule the whole world, and if two groups have the same goal and are serious about attaining it, they cannot co-exist in peace.

Islam was spread mainly by the sword - that is a fact of history. Muslims, however, turn around and say that Christianity does not have a clean-slate history. What about the Crusades? Yes, we as Christians have a lot to repent for. One of them is the Crusades. Many today do not understand the real reason for the Crusades, but I won't go into that today. The main point, however, is that Christians have repented for the Crusades. They have journeyed from Europe to the Middle East in repentance, asking Jews and Muslims along the way for forgiveness. The difference is: Violence in the form of Jihad is a tenet of Islam, but it is not a tenet of Christianity.

Again, Islam prides itself on being a religion of power. Muslims regard the Christian emphasis on the virtues of humility, meekness, turning the other cheek and forgiveness as a sign of weakness and as proof that they are superior.

A religion of power appeals to many who feel helpless, marginalized by society, or suffering injustice. This is one reason for the high rate of conversion to Islam among the inmates of jails. The prisoners are looking for a means to get revenge, and they feel that Islam will provide the answer. Thousands of Afro-Americans are converted this way in the United States.

There are at least 35 terrorist training camps in America.

Muslims bring the same message to the Aborigines in Australia. By 2002 they had succeeded in converting over 1000 Aborigines to Islam.

Elders in North Queensland shared with my Sisters that two of their young people who had become Muslims had already been assigned to commit terrorist acts. That year SBS did a documentary on Islam among the Aborigines. I was very saddened to hear one of them say: "If Christians won't treat us as human beings, the Muslims will." What does that have to say to us Christians? Another Aboriginal Muslim declared that because the land belongs to them, they can turn Australia into an Islamic land.

The American missionaries, Martin and Gracia Burnham, were held hostage in the jungles of southern Philippines for a year by Abu Sayyaf, a branch of Jemaah Islamiyah. They faced death and danger daily. Some of the other hostages were beheaded. However, Martin had the courage to speak with the terrorists about the Gospel. He also asked them what they were trying to accomplish. The terrorists openly admitted that they were not only interested in gaining independence for the southernmost provinces of the Philippines, but that they intended to take over the entire country as well as other countries in Southeast Asia.

Several years ago two Norwegian journalists were taken hostage in the Gaza Strip. To save their lives, they converted to Islam. What about us? If we are taken hostage, would our faith in Jesus be so strong that we would rather die than deny Him? That is a question that we need to face today.

When we look around the world, there are many armed conflicts. Most - not all of them - but most of them have been started by Muslims. The international media has been silent about many of them. The news of the atrocities in Ambon, Indonesia, where 5,000 - 10,000 Christians were killed in a Jihad barely received a mention in the Australian news, although Indonesia is our neighbour. Millions of Christians were murdered in southern Sudan by the Muslims, some of them even crucified. Schools and hospitals were bombed. This went on for over 20 years, and the international community was silent.

Boko Haram in Nigeria kidnapped over 200 schoolgirls. Their families are in agony as they are fearful for their fates.

ISIS has invaded Iraq and holds territory in Syria too. They have cells in many other countries and have openly stated that their goal is world domination. They execute non-Muslims who do not convert to Islam, and they also execute Muslims who will not recognize their authority.

Violence is prescribed in the Quran. Every good Muslim must take part in a Jihad. Just as in other wars, the goal of Jihad is to kill so many that the other side will give up and surrender.

But there is a second purpose to Jihad, and that is to strike fear into the hearts of the unbelievers. In other words, if you experience or hear of such attacks like 9/11 in America, 7/7 in London, Bali or Madrid, you will be very careful not to do anything that would upset the Muslims for fear of experiencing another act of terror. Islam wants to be recognized as the stronger power. The cry of the Muslim is Allahu akbar - Allah is greater.

Armed conflict is not the only method that Islam uses. Persuasion and coercion are very common. Sabah and Sarawak in East Malaysia were Christian states. But fanatical Muslims came in and bribed and coerced them into conversion. About 10,000 converted to Islam.

Another method is the birth rate. Muslim population is growing at a far greater pace, since their families are encouraged to have more children while western families prefer to have fewer and fewer children, or none at all. If this continues, the Muslim population will overtake us in the West in a few decades.

Another method is "education". The Australian Prayer Network circulated an article from the United States. An imam in Washington D.C. has declared that they intend to take over the United States by the year 2050 and turn it into the Islamic State of North America. Then he

revealed their strategy in a 6-point plan. The first point in his strategy was to build a mosque, and the third point was to establish an Islamic school to raise children with a strong Islamic identity

Meanwhile the founder of the leading Islamic lobby group, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), has reportedly told a group of Muslims in California that they are in America not to assimilate but to help assert Islam's rule over the country. The CAIR spokesman said that he hopes to see an Islamic government over the U.S. some day, brought about not by violence but through "education".

During his term of office President Bush authorized an investigation into the Islamic schools nationwide. Why? They have found that Muslim men, born and raised in America, have gone off to Iraq to fight with the terrorists against the American forces. What motivated them? Where did they get this motivation?

Walid Shoebat, a former Palestinian terrorist, became a Christian and is now working against terrorism. He explained: "Most Americans think that terrorism starts by some group coming to recruit you. The recruitment already happens at the mosque. It already happens at the school. They're already part of the whole system of education. You don't need to recruit. The people are willing souls ready to die for martyrdom...ready to die for the cause of Allah."

Yes, Islam is on the march. Jesus needs us more than ever.

Jesus is at work among the Muslims. The ex-terrorist, whom I mentioned earlier, said: "Thousands are turning to Jesus every day - even in Mecca, the centre of Islam. Christians should pray that Muslims all over the world will find Jesus. The Islamic extremists are very active, and we need to know that. However, the Great Commission, which Jesus gave us, is still valid. Let us pray more than ever that Muslims will find Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

Tom Doyle has written a very encouraging book with some amazing testimonies about what God is doing in the Middle East. He writes: Jesus is reaching out to the people of the Middle East in a powerful way, and the people are responding in record numbers. Millions have given their lives to Jesus Christ in the last ten years. **Millions!** ... The new generation of believers who serve Christ is willing to give their lives to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to hear of Jesus' offer of grace and forgiveness. They are willing to risk everything to make sure new believers have a Bible and can grow in their new life in Christ. They put themselves in harm's way daily as they start new churches in places that have had no Christian presence for centuries. Pray for them. One of the chapters is a story of how two young men find Jesus and now serve Him in a very dangerous land and have received many death threats. The two of them are ministering to 6000 new believers! **Two men ministering to 6000 new believers!**

From the New Life newspaper in 2008:

In Afghanistan there were only 17 known Christians in 2001. Today, there are well over 10,000 Afghan followers of Christ, and the number is growing steadily.

In Uzbekistan there were no known Muslim converts to Christ in 1990, but now there are more than 30,000.

In Egypt more than 1 million Egyptians have trusted Christ over the past decade or so. The Egyptian Bible Society used to sell about 3000 copies of the Jesus film a year in the early 1990s. But in 2005 they sold 600,000 copies plus 750,000 copies of the Bible on tape in Arabic and about half a million copies of the Arabic New Testament.

More than 5 million Sudanese have become followers of Jesus since the early 1990s. Seminary classes are held in mountain caves. Thousands of small group Bible studies are being held in secret throughout the country.

How is all this happening? One of the most dramatic developments is that many Muslims throughout the Middle East and in other countries are seeing dreams and visions of Jesus. They come into the churches, saying they have already converted, but need a Bible to know how to follow Jesus. There is a wonderful DVD called “More Than Dreams” with testimonies by Muslims in 7 different countries.

In the meantime there are many more that have found Jesus and there are remarkable testimonies.

* * *

I have spoken about the history of Islam and shared some portions of the Quran to help us better understand Islam. I have also shared a little about the wonderful things the Lord is doing among Muslims.

What does this all mean for us? I would like to sum up this talk in 7 points.

1. We need to know the Muslim mind-set. We need to know what they think and why. We need to understand their agenda for world domination and their methods to obtain this goal. We need to be alert - and take the next steps, if need be.

2. We need to remember that Jesus died for all lost souls. That includes the nominal Christians in our churches and it includes members of other religions and atheists. They are all precious in God’s sight and we should not look down on them - but we should pray for them - and, share with them if the occasion arises. Learn the right way to reach out to your Muslim neighbour with Jesus’ love. This requires wisdom and training. We also need to read much in the Word of God. Learn it inside out. We need to know the Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. As Christians we need to remember how important our witness is - not only the words we say, but the lives we live. For some people we might be the only Bible they will get to read.

4. There is a battle going on. Not only on earth, but also in the heavenlies. It is a battle between the Holy Triune God and the powers behind Islam. Since we belong to Jesus, we are involved in this battle, whether we like it or not. We need to spend more time on our knees. When we listen to the news, we need to ask for the Holy Spirit's interpretation.

5. For our prayers we need to be informed. We need to know what they are saying and what they mean. We need to ask God what His prayer strategy is.

6. Jesus needs us today as never before. Let's not let Him down. Let us be His faithful followers and His instruments in the world today.

7. We need to know Jesus intimately. Our love for Him needs to be strong. It needs to be on fire and it needs to fill our hearts. If we are told to deny our faith or else, will we love Jesus so much that we will be ready to lay down our lives for Him?

Sister Gideona

Recommended Books and DVDs on Islam

M. Basilea Schlink: Allah or the God of the Bible - What Is the Truth?

- ONLY FOR CHRISTIANS -

Samuel Green: Engaging with Islam (set of DVDs and workbook)

See also his website: answering-islam.org

David Pawson: The Challenge of Islam to Christians (set of DVDs)

Mark Gabriel (ex-Muslim, who has a doctorate in Islamic studies and a doctorate in Christian studies):

1. Jesus and Muhammad
2. Islam and Terrorism
3. Islam and the Jews
4. Culture Clash
5. Journey into the Mind of an Islamic Terrorist

Stuart Robinson: Mosques and Miracles

Mark Durie: The Third Choice - Islam, Dhimmitude and Freedom

DVD: The Third Jihad available on the Internet from

www.thethirdjihad.com

Daniel Shayesteh, a former member of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard:

1. Christ Above All Gods
2. The Difference Is the Son
3. Islam - the House I left Behind
4. Daniel's testimony on DVD - See also his website: Exodus from Darkness.

Daniel Scot from Pakistan - website: Ibrahim Ministries International.

1. Windows into the Quran
2. Share the Gospel with Jesus

Belteshazzar and Abednego: The Mosque and Its Role in Society

John Azumah

1. Light on Islam
2. Let Your Light Shine

Keith Piper: Answers

Tom Doyle: 1. Breakthrough - The Return of Hope to the Middle East;
2. Dreams and Visions – Is Jesus Awakening the Muslim World?

DVD: More Than Dreams

Brother Andrew: Secret Believers

Sally Neighbour: In the Shadow of Swords

Bat Ye'or: Eurabia

For availability check the Internet. Koorong orders in requested books.
The Book Depository and Fishpond have very good prices and make no charge for postage.

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