

# Muhammad, Jesus, and the Spirit of Islam

*Gracious Father, God of Abraham, it is only You who can open our eyes and soften our hearts. We pray today that you will fill us with a spirit of love towards our neighbors and that everyone who believes in you will receive a full revelation of Your loving character. In Jesus name, Amen.*

## Group Question:

*How many of you know a Muslim personally?*

*When you hear the word Islam or Muslim, what comes to mind?*

## Common Definitions:

**Allah:** Deity, (see Elohim)

**Islam:** "submission or surrender" (to God). Named, not for its founder, but for its attitude or way of life. Islamic Society of North America defines it as:...**an Arabic word which means peace, purity, acceptance, and commitment**. A Muslim is one who freely and willingly accepts the supreme power of God and strives to organize his life in total accord with the teachings of God. He also works for building social institutions which reflect the guidance of God.

**Muslim:** "One who submits to God", 1 out of every five people around the world is Muslim

**Salaam:** "Peace", (shalom)

**As-Salaam Alaikum:** A Muslim greeting. "The peace that comes to one who submits to God be yours".

**Islamist:** One for whom Islam is not just a religion, but a political ideology. Islamist's seek to establish pure Islamic societies governed according to the harshest interpretation of Islam. Islamism has apocalyptic echoes of another millennial ideology, Fascism (the thousand year Reich). Islamism is totalitarian, Utopian, violent—and like Fascism, it is expansionist.

**Muhammad** (8:17-9:59) Born in the year 570 AD/CE in Mecca, Arabia. At the age of 40, he had the experience that God spoke to him and appointed him His prophet. He preached a faith in one God (monotheism), rather than the common faith of many gods (polytheism). His teachings are written down in the Qur'an. He died in the year 632 AD/CE.

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## The Pillars of Islam (9:59-24:20)

1. Confession of faith (9:59-12:06): "There is no deity except God and Muhammad is the messenger (or apostle) of God"
2. Prayer (12:07-12:58): 5 times a day
3. Alms-giving (12:58-13:38)
4. Ramadan (13:39-15:21)
5. Pilgrimage (*Hajj*), (15:22-17:21)
6. Jihad (17:21-24:20) "Struggle". The greater jihad is the jihad of the self. The lesser jihad is the jihad of the community.

## History: (24:26-29:24)

- For about 1,000 years Muslims possessed the heights of the world's civilizations and power.
- In less than four centuries Islam fell from being a superpower to being fragmented and underdeveloped.
- Today a powerful mix of pride and defeat still shapes the identity of Muslims.
- Muslims often interpret events such as the crusades, Western colonialism, the establishment of Israel and current events as evidence of a Jewish-Christian alliance against Islam.

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## Hopes for Islamic Revival: (29:24-32:30)

Three Common elements of Muslim hopes for revival are:

1. taking the Qur'an as a guide for life;
2. following the model of the life of Muhammad and the first Muslim community;
3. and ordering the government and society according to revealed law (*Sharia*).

End Session One

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What became of Ariens's Co situation?

## **Badal et al. v. Ariens Company**

CAIR (The Council on American-Islamic Relations') is representing nineteen American Muslims whose right to reasonable accommodation of their daily prayers was terminated by Ariens Company, an agricultural equipment manufacturer, who seems to have followed Cargill in company procedure. Prior to accepting their jobs, these individuals had verified that they would be granted breaks to accommodate their daily prayers. This lined up with existing company policy that allowed all employees short breaks.

After initially providing accommodation, Ariens held a meeting exclusively with their American Muslim employees and revoked permission. The company allowed short breaks but not for religious purposes. Ariens also threatened two plaintiffs with "punishment" if they did not sign a resignation notice form stating that they would resign due to a "conflict with company policy and my faith."

Ariens management forced their employees to choose between:

1. Violating their core religious beliefs by not performing their obligatory prayers in order to maintain their employment,
2. Continuing to adhere to their religious beliefs and performing their obligatory prayers, thereby placing them on track for eventual termination; or
3. Resigning their employment in order to continue to adhere to their religious beliefs.

In this lawsuit, CAIR argues:

- Ariens violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It acted in conscious disregard of or reckless indifference to their American Muslim employees and their fundamental right to be free from religious discrimination and/or retaliation.
- Ariens acted with malice due to pique at the American Muslim workers' opposition and protestation at the revocation of their religious accommodation request.
- The individuals so affected have suffered emotional distress, anxiety, humiliation, inconvenience, lost wages and benefits, and other consequential damages.
- **Status:** As of the publication of this report, the complaint is pending with the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

**June 8, 2018:** Plaintiffs, nineteen American Black Muslims of Somali national origin, brought ... suit against Defendant Ariens Company, alleging race, national origin, and religious discrimination, retaliation, and a hostile work environment ... ""

Ariens ... concluded that the accommodation it had previously allowed was unduly burdensome.

(If) Ariens' decision to rescind the accommodation was justified for business reasons, then its efforts to implement its new policy in the face of the Plaintiffs' resistance would, at least for the most part, be deemed reasonable and nondiscriminatory. If, on the other hand, there was no business justification for rescinding the accommodation, then Ariens' decision to do so and management's actions in prohibiting prayer breaks and taking steps to enforce its new policy, given the importance of prayer in the Muslim religion, may amount to the kind of harassment and intimidation hostile work environment claims are intended to redress. For these reasons, Ariens' motion to dismiss Count III in its entirety will be denied.

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(32:30-)

## Pillars of Islam:

1. Confession of Faith
2. Prayer 5 times a day
3. Alms-giving
4. Ramadan
5. Pilgrimage (Hajj)
6. (sometimes) Jihad

## Core Beliefs of Islam:

1. God (Allah) is One
2. Angels
3. Books of God (Torah, Psalms, Gospel, Qu'ran)
4. Prophets
5. A Day of Judgement (the Last Day)
6. Predestination (all things rest in the will of God)

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## Key Differences in our Concepts of God: (32:36-56:38)

- 1) In Christianity we see God through the lens of the life of Jesus.
- 2) In Christianity God feels the pain of human sin and Jesus reveals God's self.
- 3) In Islam God is not thought of as one who suffers.
- 4) In Islam God's gift to humanity is the revelation of God's will (God does not reveal God's self).

## Books of God:

1. The Qur'an refers to Jews and Christians as people of the book.
2. There is no charge in the Qur'an that the texts of the earlier books have been changed.

## Muhammad:

1. Muhammad is called the seal of the prophets.
2. Muhammad is not worshiped, he was only a man but he is a model of the Godly life.

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## Jesus in The Qur'an is:

Born of the Virgin Mary

Spirit from God

Performed Miracles

Word of God

Prophet

Messiah

## Jesus in The Qur'an is not:

Son of God

Died on the Cross

- Very often what the Qur'an rejects is not orthodox Christian teaching, but rather some distortion.
- The Qur'an claims that God does not have a son. It could be that what the Qur'an is rejecting is a very physical kind of sonship, implying sexual procreation, birth, etc.
- Most Muslims believe that Christians worship three gods.
- It fits Qur'anic logic that God would not allow his beloved messenger to undergo crucifixion, but would rather rescue him.

## Summary:

- The pillars of Islam are good spiritual discipline.
- The core beliefs are very close to a simple expression of Christian faith, with one key difference: the role of Jesus.

*What bridges could we build with Muslims?*

*How can we express our faith?*

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*Selected Resources For Learning About Islam*

## Selected Resources For Learning About Islam

(these materials should be available through your local bookstore or the internet)

### Books

#### • Introductions to Islam

1. Muslim Friends: An Introduction to Islam, by Roland E. Miller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995.) *This easy-reading introduction to Islam is marked by its depth of scholarship and the author's style oriented toward giving the non-Muslim a sense of what it "feels like" to be Muslim. The Rev. Dr. Miller is a retired Lutheran missionary and professor who served in India, Canada and the USA.*
2. The Call of the Minaret, 2nd edition, by Kenneth Cragg (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985.) *This is a classic work from a renowned Christian scholar of Islam, eloquently written to give the Christian reader an introduction to Islam and to help provide a foundation for understanding and healing relationships between Christians and Muslims.*
3. Islam: An Introduction for Christians, by Paul Varo Martinson, ed., trans. Stephanie Ormsby Cox. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1994.) From Dudley Woodberry: *"An empathetic overview of Islam, including North American, and Muslim Christian encounters."*

#### • Muhammad

1. The Life of Muhammad, by [Ibn] Ishaq, ed. Ibn Hisham, trans. Alfred Guillaume. (London: Oxford University Press, 1955.) *This is the earliest biography of Muhammad.*
2. Muhammad; prophet and statesman, by W. Montgomery Watt (London: Oxford University Press, 1961.)

#### • Revival (Peaceful and Violent)

1. The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality, 3rd edition, by John L. Esposito (London: Oxford University Press, 1999.) *This is an invaluable summary of 20th century Islamic revival that illustrates the diversity of Muslims and confronts grave errors that our analysts make by assuming a hostile and monolithic Islam. He details leading Muslim figures and movements around the globe while underlining the vitality of Islam as a global force and the tendency away from violence and toward parliamentary practice. Dr. Esposito is a Professor of Religion/International Affairs and Director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University.*
2. Passionate Believing: The "Fundamentalist" Face of Islam, by Bill A. Musk (Tunbridge Wells, Kent, UK: MARC Europe/Monarch Publications 1992.) *A helpful history and "big picture" of revival and implications for Christian presence.*
3. Islam: the fear and the hope, by Habib Boularès (London/Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1990.)

#### • Christian Witness

1. Christian Witness Among Muslims: A Guide to Understanding the Muslim Religion Through the Eyes of Jesus, (Living Sacrifice Book Company, 1994.) *This very short book provides helpful insights on 11 Christian beliefs, questions Muslims ask about them, and practical suggestions to help you*



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*discuss these with a Muslim friend. Also included is a helpful section titled "Christian attitudes toward Muslims." Written over many years by anonymous contributors in various parts of Africa and the Middle East, this book is a labor of love.*

2. Building Bridges, by Fouad Elias Accad (Nav Press 1997.)

3. Sharing Your Faith With a Muslim, by Abdiyah Akbar Abdul-Haqq (Bethany House Publishers, 1980.) *This book is written with the assumption that "an effective evangelistic approach to the adherents of Islam must be based upon a study of Christ as he is found in both Scripture and the Koran." authored by a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Christian whose father converted from Islam.*

4. The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims, by Bill Musk (Crowborough, E. Sussex, UK: Monarch Publications, 1989.) From Dudley Woodberry: *An excellent resource to help the Christian appreciate "folk" or non-orthodox Islam and the effects it has on common Muslims around the globe.*

5. Planting Churches in Muslim Cities: A Team Approach , Greg Livingston (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1993.) From Dudley Woodberry: *The challenge, prerequisites, and task of planting churches in Muslim cities by the founding director of Frontiers, the largest agency of church-planting teams among Muslims.*

6. New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization, by Phil Parshall (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House.) From Dudley Woodberry: *Still a foundational study on the biblical basis, theory, and application of contextualization among Muslims.*

7. Reaching Muslims for Christ, William J. Saal (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993.)

From Dudley Woodberry: *An overview of the major factors in witness to Muslims: understanding Muslims, Christian answers to their questions, strategies, and resources.*

## **.Dialogue**

1. Islam From Within: Anthology of a Religion., Kenneth Cragg and Marston Speight (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1980.) From Dudley Woodberry: *Translation of Muslim sources from the Quran, worship, law, theology, art, mysticism, and contemporary writings.*

2. Jesus and the Muslim: An Exploration, by Kenneth Cragg (London: George Allen and Unwin. 1985.) From Dudley Woodberry: *The Islamic portrayal of Jesus in the Quran and Tradition and what unites and divides Christian and Muslim Christologies.*

## **Materials on CD**

1. The World of Islam: Resources for Understanding (Global Mapping International, 2000) *This CD-ROM contains the full text of forty-five books and articles, the new Survey of Islam, seven basic educational Courses on Islam, Maps & Photographs, and an annotated Bibliography. presented in a compact, portable, and inexpensive library, and extends the life of some out-of-print materials. available for \$39.99 through [www.ywam.org/books/](http://www.ywam.org/books/)*

## **Videos**

1. Living Islam, a BBC-TV production in association with Ambrose Video Publishing (New York, NY :

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Ambrose Video Publishing, c1993.) *In 6 half-hour sessions you get a dynamic look at Islam through Muslim eyes.* 2. Islamic conversations (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, c1994.) *Six ½ hour programs, each featuring an interview with a Muslim leader on a specific topic. Topics include: Islam and pluralism; Islam and Christianity; Islam and war; Islamic state; Authority and change; Women and Islam.*

## Websites

### • Muslim sites

1. <http://www.makkah.com/other.htm> This page provides links to Muslim Student Association home-pages around North America and England as well as links to Qur'an translations in various languages and Hadith collections.
2. <http://soundvision.com/> "The Vision of Sound Vision: The attitudes and behavior of men and women today are shaped and molded by the media whose ideals and images, by and large, are non-Islamic. Sound Vision aims to produce content with Islamic ideals and images for all current and future media."
3. [www.islam.org](http://www.islam.org) From Dudley Woodberry: Islamicity: Very impressive site visually and in wide variety of content locally and through links. Online videos... Overview of Islam... Qur'an, Hadith, Salat sound recordings. Information links to Muslim nations' Web sites. Cyber Bookstore. Islamic art section, with text and lots of photos, including Islamic mosques and shrines.
4. [www.kazi.com](http://www.kazi.com) From Dudley Woodberry: Kazi Publications: Large selection of books, software, etc. on Islam. Claim to be the largest Muslim bookstore online.

### • Christian-Muslim relations

1. <http://www.cmcu.net/> This is the home page of The Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University.
2. [www.gmi.org](http://www.gmi.org) Global Mapping International: List of links to sites on Islam, updated regularly at [www.gmi.org/islam.htm](http://www.gmi.org/islam.htm). Many mission research resources and links.
3. [www.spotlights.org](http://www.spotlights.org) Dedicated to in depth responses to Muslim theological questions.

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## 10 Practical Ideas for You & Your Congregation

"Ten Ways You Can Promote Positive Relationships Between Christians and Muslims"

### IDEA

#### 1. Increase Education

- Host and attend forums/classes on Islam.
- Read materials on Islam (see bibliography for some suggestions).
- Meet and talk with Muslims. At work, school, the park, perhaps even in your family, etc. don't avoid someone who appears to be Muslim. As you make an effort to be a friend you will learn more about and likely respect the faith of your Muslim friend.
- Let a Christian convert who loves Muslims share their story with a small group, luncheon, etc.
- For youth use the "ELCA Youth Ministry Help Sheet" on Islam from the ELCA Division for Congregational Ministries 1-800-638-3522.

#### 2. Eliminate words like "crusade" from all aspects ministry.

#### 3. Experience Interfaith Activities: e.g.: Interfaith groups organized for dialogue, Interfaith community service or advocacy, Interfaith concerts, Visit a mosque.

#### 4. Avoid false witness

- Remember that the words or actions of any Muslim individual, group or nation most likely do not represent ALL Muslims.
- Always strive for the best possible construction when speaking about Muhammad, The Qur'an, and Muslims.
- Distinguish between Islam and terrorism flying the banner of Islam.

#### 5. Treat Muslims with kindness and hospitality, e. g.:

- Welcome immigrants and refugees into your neighborhood, youth group, etc.
- Create/support ESL classes or other basic services which will meet practical needs for some Muslims neighbors.
- Smile. If you are a woman, offer to help a veiled woman if you see them walking in the rain, need

### PURPOSE

- Mis-information and Ignorance breed fear.
- Correct information can break down stereotypes and help to breed understanding.
- Muslims often see Christians as a violent threat and such language confirms their fears and suspicions.
- Create and model non-threatening contacts That encourage personal relationships between Muslims and Christians.
- Encourage continued good will, dialogue and friendships by avoiding needless offense and unfair judgments.
- Create positive experiences with Christ's followers. We have a responsibility to reflect Christ whose actions gained him a reputation for benefiting to the "least of these."

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a door opened for them, look lost, etc. If you are a man you can greet Muslim men, open a door, help a stranger in need. But respect a Muslim woman's space by not initiating a handshake, patting her on the back, or seeking eye contact.

6. Joint social ministry efforts.

7. Incorporate positive attitudes toward Muslims and positive responses to injustice or suffering in sermons as well as any public speech. Always imagine that your Muslim friends are there listening.

8. Do not passively or actively participate in labeling Islam as our enemy or an evil religion.

9. Publicly interact with Muslims.

10. Support and create media models for Christian-Muslim friendships and partnerships.

- Create unity in concern for the well being of society and for promoting good moral values.

- Consistently call Christians to a higher standard of love and compassion rather than wallowing in fear, prejudice, or retaliation.

- Such labels only create false division and mistrust between Christians and Muslims.

- Model cooperation.

- Public opinion is shaped more by TV, radio, And film than anything else and generally the media show negative images of Islam.

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## Suggested Introductory Reading

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*toward giving the non-Muslim a sense of what it "feels like" to be Muslim. The Rev. Dr. Miller (a retired Lutheran missionary and professor who served in India, Canada and the USA) treats such wide ranging topics*

*as basic beliefs and practices, developments and divisions throughout the history of Islam, Islamic thought and*

*theology, as well as some hopes and fears of many Muslims.*

2. ***The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality***, 3rd edition, by John L. Esposito (Oxford University Press, 1999).

*This is an invaluable summary of 20th century Islamic revival that illustrates the diversity of Muslims and*

*confronts grave errors that our analysts make by assuming a hostile and monolithic Islam. He details leading*

*Muslim figures and movements around the globe while underlining the vitality of Islam as a global force and*

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*This very short book provides helpful insights on 11 Christian beliefs, questions Muslims ask about them, and*

*practical suggestions to help you explain these to your Muslim friend. Also included is a helpful section titled*

*"Christian attitudes toward Muslims." Written over many years by anonymous contributors in various parts of*

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<http://archive.elca.org/globalmission/resource/glimpsepractical.html> (3 of 3) [1/2/2009 9:57:09 AM]