

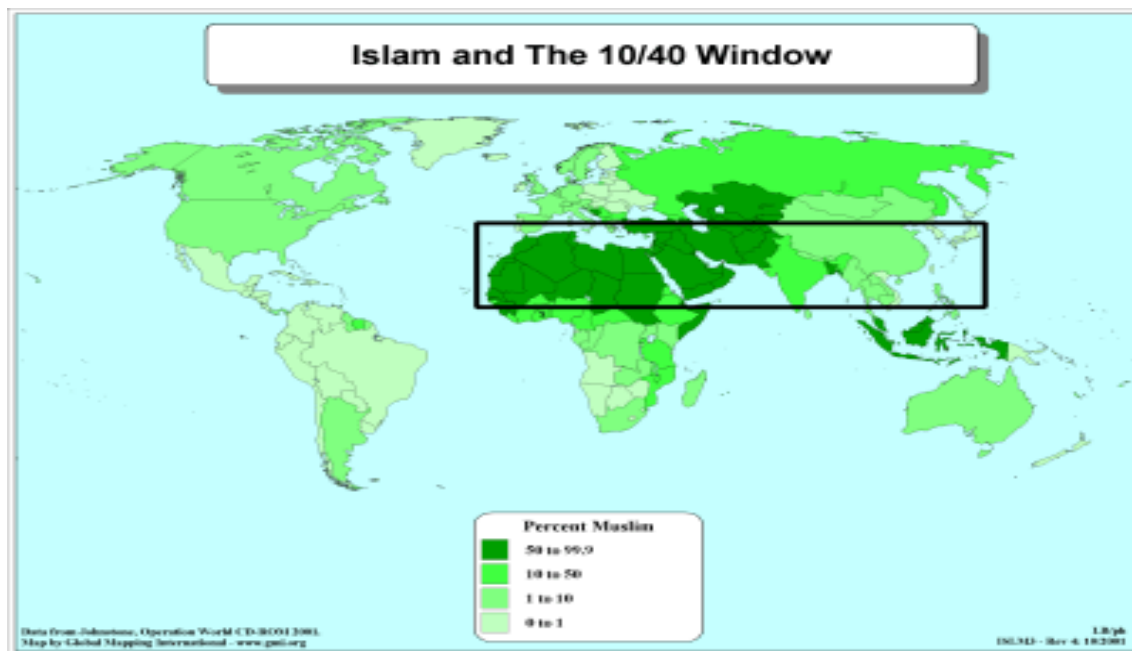
Chapter 7: Reaching the Muslims



One of these lost relatives we should reach out to is the Muslims. Although there are more new Christians added to the world population than any other religion on earth everyday and that *Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world is pure myth at best and at worst a deliberate deception of solid statistical facts*, Islam is still one of the greatest threats to the world evangelization today, especially in the Third World including Africa. Therefore, in this section we wish to have more in-depth study of Islam and discuss about some effective ways to reach the people of this particular religion.

THE MUSLIM WORLD

The Muslim world stands out prominently as the hardest mission field of all. With its incredible oil riches, the Arab world has become more openly militant in its Islamic faith. No Muslim ever forgets that the parallel growth of Christianity and Islam has meant centuries of mutual bloody hostilities. There is no separation between Muslim and the state. When either is threatened, both rise up in combined malevolent power. There are, however, small pockets of Christians throughout the Muslim world.



© Global Mapping International. 1991

BASICS OF ISLAM

Basic doctrines

- GOD

'Allah is greater.' (e.g. He is greater than all our ideas about him.) Allah simply means 'God is great.' He is the creator and sustainer of the universe. The almighty guides or leads astray whom he pleases. He is free to condemn or condone at will. Good and evil come from Him.

- MAN

The proper relationship of man to Allah is that of a slave to his master. Man was created weak. The tendency to sin in man was an act of Allah. There is no such thing as innate sin in mankind. Every man is born sinless, with a clean sheet before God. Muslim means 'submission.'

- SIN

Sins consist of two kinds, greater and lesser. Each sin is only one act in a series of acts or sins. No concept of salvation in Muslim.

- JESUS CHRIST

He was a prophet sent by God to the people of Israel. He was one of the greatest prophets, since he was born of virgin and worked miracles. Allah rescued him from death by crucifixion, and raised him to himself. He will return to earth again before the Day of Judgment.

- SALVATION

Allah has made man's burden light. Allah will weigh our good deeds and our bad deeds in the balance on the Day of Judgment. Man can never have assurance whether Allah will accept or reject him. 'If Allah wills', man's good works can help him to be accepted. Muslim does not acknowledge sin so he does not see the need of Savior. Islam goes by rules and regulations, not love. Therefore, Islam emphasizes prayer (chanting), fasting and a visit to Mecca during Ramadan period. Their doctrine believes that Allah's blessings are outward and physical, not inward. It prohibits alcohol and eating of pork meat, chooses polygamy (marrying many wives), and approves slavery and slave trade.

Quran

- This is the Muslim's holy book. It is a collection of Mohammed's words.
- Quran believes Adam, Noah, Elijah and Jesus were prophets, but Mohammed was the greatest prophet of all.
- Quran has supreme authority in faith and politics, therefore, it is not allowed to be questioned.

Mohammed

- He was born in Mecca (Saudi Arabia) in 570 AD. Mohammed was an orphan.
- He was married at the age of 25 to a very rich 40 year old lady.
- When Mohammed's first wife died at the age of 49, all the wealth was left to him. And he married the second wife after 2 months. Eventually, he had 14 concubines.
- When Mohammed became 40, he claimed that he received a special revelation from the angel Gabriel.
- He changed the name of the place he went (Yathrip) to be Medina, and Medina became the base of propagation of his religion.
- In 630 A.D. he conquered Mecca. A particular black box in Mecca was called the 'Kaaba' inside which were full of idols.
- Mohammed died at the age of 63. History of Islam is full of blood, wars and betrayals.
- Mohammed had a secretary and his name was Zaid. Abubeker, Mohammed's father-in-law edited the book of Quran.
- Mohammed's successors were given a title, Caliph. And the first caliph was his own father-in-law, Abubeker.
- The 4th Caliph was called Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law, who was married to Fatima, Mohammed's daughter. It was during Ali's reign that arguments broke out about succession issue and as a result different sects were formed within Islam.

Arguments and formation of sects

- Shiites

Some believed that Caliph must be a descendant of Mohammed (blood succession). This argument formed a sect of Shiites.

- Sunnites

Others believed that Caliph can be anyone who follows teachings of Mohammed. This argument formed a sect of Sunnites.

SPREAD OF ISLAM IN AFRICA AND THE THIRD WORLD

Islam spreads in different communities and countries by establishing institutions like:

- Mosques

- Schools
- Hospitals and health centers
- Bookshops and libraries (cultural centers)
- Missions

Stages of spread of Islamic movement in Africa

1. First wave (Big Bang) - Mohammed's birth in 570 AD
2. Second burst (Boiling pot)

1. Egypt
2. Northern
3. Western
4. Central
5. Eastern
6. Horn of Africa
7. Swahili



[Islamic Influences in Africa]

- When Christian could not unite, Muslims had an easy access to enter among people.
 - Christ is mentioned 97 times in Quran. He is merely one of 25 prophets. Meanwhile, Mohammed is mentioned 25 times, and Mary is only woman mentioned in Quran.
3. Third (historical) crusade - left a bitter taste in the minds of Muslim
 4. Fourth colonial era
 - More growth (left an image of 'Christianity = Colonialism')
 - Opposed the western forces (opposed colonial power)
 - 50 years of colonial era resulted in greater growth of Islam than the past 1,000 years.
 5. Fifth golden age (since 1970 AD) - Oil price skyrocketed

What makes Islam so attractive in Africa and the Third World

Islamic propaganda is quite successful in *many* ways.

1. They help those in need.
2. No racism, no tribalism (Especially on the trips to Mecca the poor can unite with the rich.)
3. Non-white people dominate

4. Sinful and natural religion (no change of life necessary and flexible with morality issues)
5. No expectation to change of culture
6. Muslim missionaries integrating into society
7. Not abstract but practical (just live like Mohammed - simple formula)

REACHING OUT TO THE MUSLIMS

How to reach the Muslims

1. Motivate yourself and others for the Muslim outreach.
2. Avoid Christians' self-complacency. We cannot ignore to reach out to the Muslims for whom our Lord died also.
3. Learn who the Muslims are through researches and seminars.

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight (perception, sense, intelligence or judgment)." (Philippians 1:9)

4. Network with other experienced Muslim outreach organizations.
5. Most of all, pray! Prayer penetrates power of darkness in the Muslim world (e.g. anti-Ramadan prayer, etc. See Appendix 4)
6. Establish friendships. Get to know the Muslim's culture and learn to even appreciate some of its strengths.
7. Avoid unnecessary stumbling blocks.
 - Quran and Muhammad
 - Dress
 - Expressions
 - Politics
8. Find the 'Eye Opener.'

"... I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26:17-18)

9. Build on firm foundation. Use the Old Testament as a witness tool. You can use the Scripture only if you know your Bible. So read and study your Bible on a regular basis!

10. Start from where people are.

"Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus." (Acts 8:35)

11. Ask good questions (e.g. thought-provoking questions).

- Be a learner.
- Get people to think.

12. Be patient and keep sowing the seeds.

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9)

*What is our attitude towards the lost Muslims? Respect? Love? Unity and harmony? Suspicion and Mistrust? Fear? Indifference? Is the Muslim my enemy? Do I see in him the creation of God, loved by Him, but misled? Or is he my brother, devoted to his religion and sincere who only needs to understand Jesus and His work better? Or should we rather work together to build a better world in mutual trust and love and understanding? *Our attitudes determine our relationship and ultimately the outcome of our effort to truly share the gospel with a Muslim.* Remember that 'you do not love a Muslim, if you do not tell the truth'!*

Biblical truths you need to share with a Muslim

(Adapted from: How to lead Muslims to Christ, by G.K. Harris, China Inland Mission)

- Before the fall, man's relationship to God was one of unbroken fellowship.
- Man fell from a spiritual state of righteousness with God and innocence to one of broken fellowship, guilt and condemnation.
- After the fall, Adam's sinful nature, the result of the fall, was transmitted to all mankind, there being one exception, Jesus, Son of Mary.
- Moral instability and tendency to sin in man was the direct result of the fall.
- Sin, the root, and sins, the outcroppings, are kept distinct in the Bible.
- God is absolutely holy and righteous, therefore all sin or sins in His sight merit condemnation.
- Good works cannot do any of the following: merit favor with God, dispose Him to forgive wrong doing, cover sins, remove guilt, blot out the past, or guarantee the future.
- God requires of man love and holiness in the very highest degree, 100%!

- No man has merits to heap up for himself or for others, for only one man, Jesus Christ has ever rendered to God complete, justifying obedience.
- Heaven is a state of eternal and unbroken fellowship with God.

Comparison between the Bible and Quran

In recent years many debates have taken on topics such as "Is the Bible the word of God?" or "The Bible and the Quran, which one is the word of God?" Various publications are flooding the Muslim community like "Islam in the Bible" or "Let the Bible speak" or even "Jesus, a prophet of Islam." Others are promoting dialogue implying that all religions are equal and that all religions are equal and that we dare not judge on the beliefs of another person.

You might also have some questions about the Quran on your mind like these: "Is the Quran just like our Old Testament?", "Is it dangerous for a Christian to read in the Quran?", "Should we take a Quran with us when we visit Muslims?", "What verses of the Quran are useful for a Christian witness to memorize?" Or you may have questions about the Bible: "Are there really contradictions in the Bible, or even obscenities and absurdities as my Muslim friends maintain?", "Why are Muslims quoting so much out of our book and at the same time attacking it?", "Are Muslims afraid to read the Bible?", "Why do Muslims not accept the Bible rather than the Quran seeing that our book is actually much older?"

In this section, we would like to discover the differences and similarities between the Quran and the Bible. Let us keep in mind first of all that more sensitivity and understanding are required as we try to share the message of the Bible with our Muslims friends. To this end, it has been proven over the years that approaching the Muslims with the Quran knowledge instead of the Bible is somewhat far more effective in Muslim evangelism.

So let us examine Quran and its details by comparing it with the Bible at below. *Please notice the areas that are marked with yellow.*

Book	Quran	Bible
Form	114 Chapters (Sura)	2 Sections - Old Testament and New Testament, 66 books
Length	80% of New Testament	$\frac{3}{4}$ Old Testament and $\frac{1}{4}$ New Testament
Nature	To be recited in Arabic	
Claim	Has divine origin and contains no contradictions.	
Availability	Only few have a Quran.	Most believers have one or more.
Used by believers for	Personal merit and magic	
Mode of inspiration	Sent down from the heavenly tablets (nazil)	
Transmitter	The angel Jibreel	
Authors	One man - Muhammad over a period of 23 years	

Chronology	Roughly according to length	
Theology	Allah is power (Allah-u-Akbar). Man is his slave.	
First words	Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.	In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Last words	I seek refuge from ... the jinn and men.	The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.
Dependence on other books	Strongly depends on Jewish, Christian and pagan sources	
Essential message	Man is Allah's slave.	Man is God's object of love.

© Walter Eric / Life Challenge Africa. 6/96

Let us then compare the life of Muhammad and Jesus each respectively from Quran and Bible.

	Muhammad	Jesus
Name	Praised one = 'Ahmad'	The Lord saves = 'Jesus' (Mt. 1:21)
Prophesied	By Jesus (M.s claim S. 61:6!)	In the Old Testament (e.g. Is. 53)
Calling	As a warner and apostle (S. 2:119, 3:144, 4:163)	As a servant and son (Phil. 2)
Birth	By Aminah and Abdallah	By the virgin Mary and no earthly father (Luke 1:35)
Status	Married to several women (S. 33:37, 50)	Never married
Purpose of life	Founding a religion and power (even using force and revenge)	Glorifying God by word and action of love, and doing God's will (Jn. 4:34)
Character	In the beginning gentle. Later hatred against enemies and became more like a dictator	Compassion even for his enemies (Lk. 23:34)
Sin	Prayed earnestly and frequently for forgiveness of his sins (S. 47:19, 4:105f, 40:55)	Without any sin. Never prayed for forgiveness of his sins, but forgave sins of others (Heb. 4:15, Eph. 1:7, Mt. 9:2)
Teaching	For his own advantages (Mishkat I p.159, 173)	With authority (not like teachers) (Mt. 7:29, 28:8)
Message	Worship one god (Allah) and believe his messenger (Muhammad) <i>Shahada</i>	Believe in me (Jesus) and you will be saved (Jn. 3:16, 11:25, 14:1)
Miracles	None at all (S. 17:90-93) (Quran is claimed to be his miracle by Muslims.)	Many miracles - healing of blind, lame, feeding, authority over nature, rising from the dead (Mt. 11:2-6)
Death	Poisoned (?) in Medina at age 62	Crucified in Jerusalem for the sins of the world at age 33 (Jn. 1:29)

After death	Still in the grave, waiting for judgment day not knowing his destiny (S. 46:9)	Risen from the dead, gone to heaven to his father and will come back to judge (Jn. 3:13, 20:17, 2 Tim. 4:1)
--------------------	--	---

© Stephen H. / Life Challenge Africa. 5/98

This time, let us compare at below what Quran itself says about Muhammad and Jesus. As you can see below, it is noticeable that even in the book of Quran Jesus and his life is much valued and therefore it might be used as one of those 'eye openers' as we witness to our Muslim friends and as the Holy Spirit does his work of convicting people.

	Muhammad	Jesus
Birth	Normal	Virgin May, no father (S. 19:20)
Title	Rasul = just a messenger (S. 3:144), Al amin = trustworthy, a human being (S. 18:111)	Nabi = prophet, the Messiah (S. 4:171), Kalam = word of God, spirit of God (S. 4:171)
Character	He had to ask for forgiveness (S. 47:19)	Holy and faultless (S. 19:19)
Miracles	He did not perform any miracle (S. 29:50)	He created life, healed the sick, raised the dead (S. 5:113)
Purpose of life	He was sent as a mercy for the peoples (S. 21:107)	He came with clear signs (S. 43:63)
Significance	He was the seal of the prophets (S. 33:40)	He is a sign to all mankind (S. 21:91)
Authority	"Consult the People of book." (S. 10:95)	Supported by the Holy Spirit (S. 2:253)
Death	Buried, grave in Medina	He was raised to heaven (S. 4:158)
After death	He was not sure about his destiny (S. 46:9)	He was near to God (S. 3:45), he will come for judgment (S. 43:61)

© Stephen H. / Life Challenge Africa. 5/98

Barriers of Muslim evangelism

Even if a Muslim reaches a point whereby he/she wants to accept Jesus as the Lord and Savior, he/she has to overcome enormous barriers to become a Christian and live as one. Very few Christians are actually aware of and can imagine those barriers. Careful reflection on the following issues will greatly improve the effectiveness of our Christian witness.

1. Religious barrier

- Muslims are often very proud of their strong religious heritage. They feel far superior to atheists, animists and any other religion. However, this religious background is fundamentally opposed to the gospel and needs to be challenged and eventually transformed and replaced by the gospel

content. *Admittedly, Islam has taken much from the Bible, yet it vehemently denies the very fact of the gospel.*

- Muslims are instilled from childhood with a falsified concept:
 - a. Who God is
 - b. Who man is
 - c. How man relates to God
- In addition to this, we are aware of a strong indoctrination through anti-Christian propaganda:
 - a. That the Bible has been changed and corrupted
 - b. That Jesus did not die and reconcile man with God
 - c. That the Messiah is not the Son of God

2. Social barrier

Islam provides its adherents with a close-knit society. A Muslim does not worship and practice his faith as an individual and usually lives in an extended family. Religious practices such as praying, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca and many of their feasts are all performed in a communal way. These shared experiences and actions strengthen the identity and self-worth of a Muslim. They also provide a certain norm and even uniformity among them and give them a sense of belonging. Consequently, it becomes extremely difficult for any Muslim to think differently or even act independently from the Islamic community, *the ummah*. Add to this the fear of being completely cut off from your family and friends along with an intense feeling of guilt and betrayal in contemplating to leave the religion one is born into and you will start to perceive how much this barrier will prevent any Muslim from becoming a Christian. *Islam is not just a religion but also a way of life, which does not allow its adherent freedom of choice.*

3. Economical barrier

For a Muslim to leave Islam and become a Christian will often mean:

- To lose your means of livelihood and work.
- To lose support from your family (food, clothing, housing, school fees, help for the children, care during sickness, etc.).
- To lose a spouse, children and parents.

The economical sacrifices for a convert from Islam are enormous.

4. Psychological barrier

As one gets into closer contact with Muslims, the reality of interpersonal relationships among them are rather marked by:

- Fear
- Mistrust and suspicion of gossip or even an impending curse through one's envier
- An exaggerated urge to 'save face'
- A strong sense of isolation and loneliness

Interpersonal relationships among Muslims often lack true love and trust. *In discipling Muslim converts, you will have to battle with these psychological problems of mistrust, suspicion, fear, seeking to 'save face.'*

5. Barrier of spiritual bondage

The Islamic community as a whole is bound by Satan and kept under a 'blanket' (2 Corinthians 4:3-4), which effectively keeps Muslims from questioning their beliefs and seeing the light of the truth. There is a tangible spiritual battle wherever this spirit of Islam is at work. For instance, it is a known statistics that there is an increased rate of crimes, prostitution and even obscure accidents all over the world during the months of Ramadan. *Islam is more than just a religion, it is a spirit.*

Possibilities in Muslim evangelism

- Do *not* be discouraged. The possibilities are as bright as the promises of God! The Holy Spirit indeed is strong and able to save Muslims despite all the above barriers. *Never give up* in the face of these obstacles because:
 - a. We know the power of the gospel. It is not the word of men and will not return void.
 - b. We know the power of the Holy Spirit to convince, convict and convert.
- Trust that, once a Muslim comes to Christ, the Holy Spirit will be the principal teacher, helper and comforter of the new convert.
- We can help the believers we know who came from Muslim background in the following ways.
 - a. Faithfully pray for them.
 - b. Try to feed them with enough materials which the Holy Spirit can use to work in their lives, especially if you cannot stay in close contact with the new believer. Make as many helpful materials as possible available to them (e.g. books, tapes, songs, Christian calendars, scripture verses, etc.).

- c. Share some testimonies from other converts which could encourage them in their struggles.
- d. Most importantly, *give the new convert the assurance of belonging to a new family. God's way of discipline is through His children. Wherever possible, focus on a person-to-person discipleship model.*

Someone referred to the symbol of Islam, the crescent, which is the light that shines around the moon. It is all the truth a Muslim can see. But Jesus is the Son of God and in him we see all of God's light! When you reach out a Muslim friend, you are starting with the crescent and moving toward the sun. So do not lose hope nor give up.