A Biblical Point of View on Sharia Law

Kerby Anderson provides an overview of the dangers inherent in Islam's sharia law, which threatens to invade U.S. cities.

Sharia law is once again in the news. Back in 2010, Sharia (shah-REE-uh) law was in the news because Oklahoma approved a law that would amend the state constitution to prevent the consideration of Sharia law in state courts. However, a federal judge declared the law was unconstitutional.

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This time the focus is on the state of Texas because of a desire by Muslim leaders in Collin County to build a 40-acre EPIC City project. The East Plano Islamic Center and the developers have received lots of attention and at least five investigations from state officials. The project would include a new mosque, more than 1,000 single and multi-family homes, a Muslim faith-based school, senior housing, an outreach center, commercial developments, sports facilities, and a

community college.

Governor Greg Abbott posted on X that “The proposed EPIC compound in Collin Co. has serious legal issues. A dozen state agencies are investigating it, the Attorney General will look into it, and legislators are considering laws to restrict it, as well as laws to prevent foreign adversaries from buying land in Texas.”

On one side are the developers and a Texas representative (Salman Bhojani, who is the first Muslim elected official in Texas history) who say this is a violation of religious freedom and evidence of anti-Muslim hysteria. On the other side are Collin County residents, including a retired police lieutenant (Douglas Deaton, who testified that an Islamic enclave is already operational and has been for almost 12 years).

It is worth taking a moment to understand what Sharia law is. This is important no matter what happens in this Texas community or in others with increasing Muslim communities. American law isn’t going to be challenged by Sharia law, but we can discuss what has been happening in the Middle East and some European countries as a cautionary tale.

What is Sharia Law?

A foundational practice of Islam is the implementation of sharia into the legal structure. Sharia is a system of divine law, belief, or practice that is based upon Muslim legal interpretation. It applies to economics, politics, and society.

Sometimes the world has been able to see how extreme the interpretation of sharia can be. Muslims have been put to death when they have been accused of adultery or homosexuality. They have been put to death for leaving the religion of Islam. And these are not isolated examples.

Christians are persecuted in Muslim countries. Each year, the organization Open Doors publishes its World Watch List that identifies where Christians are persecuted. Over the last few years, nine of the top ten countries that practice extreme persecution of Christians are Muslim countries.

Treating Jews and Christians differently under sharia law is justified in the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an talks about "people of the book." Sura 9:29 says, "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Prophet, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."

Muhammad made a distinction between infidels, who were pagans and polytheists, and the "people of the book," who had received revelations from the prophets (Moses, Jesus). The latter group is protected in one sense because they have received these revelations. But they are also guilty because (according to Islam) they have distorted these teachings and rejected the teaching of Muhammad. Although this status was originally given only to the "people of the book," it was later extended to other religions (Sikhs, Zoroastrians, etc.).

Because of their guilt, Islamic teaching stipulates that Jews and Christians may live in a Muslim country, but not as equals to other Muslims. Usually this means that they may not participate in the government. They may practice their religion, but with many restrictions. For example, they were not allowed to have any external manifestations of worship (procession with the cross, ringing bells).

These restrictions are another part of the verse that requires the *dhimmis* [historical non-Muslim subjects living in an Islamic state] must "feel themselves subdued." In the past this has meant: (1) that they could not prevent a fellow Christian from converting to Islam, (2) that they could not

erect a cross on their church building, and (3) that they must dress in a certain way that would identify them as Jews or Christians.

Finally, they must pay the *jizya*, which is the poll tax required from every dhimmi. In earlier times, this was a major source of income for the Muslim government from dhimmi who paid both the personal tax and the land tax.

The Qur'an teaches (Sura 2:256) that "there is no compulsion in religion." But is that really so? It depends upon your definition of compulsion. A closer look at Islamic law demonstrates a veiled threat that many believe is tantamount to compulsion. For example, Muhammad instructed his followers to invite non-Muslims to accept Islam before waging war against them. If they refused, warfare or second-class status would follow. They would be inferiors in the Muslim social order and pay the jizya as required in Sura 9:29. If they pay it, they may live, but if they refuse to pay it, warfare will ensue.

Sharia Law and Apostates

It is difficult for a Muslim to leave the faith of Islam. A Muslim is considered part of a larger community of Muslim believers.

When a Muslim decides to leave the faith, there are repercussions in the family and community.

The family is embarrassed and will even lose respect within the Muslim community. The mosque feels it has failed in its duty and lost a member to ignorance and idolatry.

The Qur'an teaches that an apostate Muslim faces the wrath of Allah (Sura 47:25-28). Sharia law in many countries treats apostasy as the unforgivable sin and therefore punishable by death.

Many Muslim countries have laws against apostasy. Islam teaches that once you are a Muslim, you are always a Muslim. Leaving the Muslim faith can have harsh consequences, including death.

Sharia Law and Women

There is great confusion about the status of women within Islam. While it is true that many Muslims do respect and honor women, it is not true that those ideas can be found in the Qur'an. Here are just a few passages that illustrate the way women are to be treated.

According to the Qur'an, women are considered inferior to men: "Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other" (Sura 4:34).

The Qur'an restricts a woman's testimony in court. Her testimony is worth half as much as that of a man (Sura 2:282).

The Qur'an teaches that a son's inheritance should be twice that of a daughter's: "Allah thus directs you as regards your children's inheritance; to the male, a portion equal to that of two females" (Sura 4:11).

Islam sanctions polygamy (with up to four wives) as well as sex- with slave women: "If we fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if we fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one, or a captive that your hand possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice" (Sura 4:3).

Wives are subject to their husbands. If wives are disloyal or disobedient, the Qur'an sets forth their punishment. The husband is first to admonish them, then not sleep with them, and third to beat them lightly. Essentially, wives are subject to the control of their husbands (Sura 2:223; 4:34). The veiling and seclusion of women has been part of the Muslim

culture since the beginnings of Islam. In the Qur'an, Muhammad commands his wives and daughters to draw veils around them. This has been applied to all Muslim women. The veil would allow them to be recognized but not molested (Sura 33:59).

The Qur'an teaches that women must "lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what must ordinarily appear thereof: that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers" (Sura 24:31).

In some Muslim countries, women cannot drive, nor can they leave their home without being accompanied by a male family member. Human rights groups report that women in Saudi Arabia who
are not accompanied by a man who is either their husband or a close relative, can be arrested for prostitution or other moral offenses.

Sharia Law and the Constitution

Sharia law is very different in many respects from the laws established through the U.S. Constitution and the laws established through English common law. To prevent sharia law from being implemented in America, a number of state legislatures have bans on sharia law. Voters in other states have approved a ban that has been struck down by a federal appeals court.

Although opponents argue that these sharia law bans are unnecessary, various studies have found
significant cases of sharia law being allowed in U.S. courts. One report with the title, "Shariah Law and the American State Courts" found significant cases of sharia law in U.S. courts just from their small sample of appellate published cases. When they looked at state courts, they found additional cases in the trial courts and more in the appellate courts. A few

judges are making decisions deferring to sharia law even when those decisions conflict with the U.S. Constitution and the various state constitutions.

How should we respond to the increased use of sharia law in America? One simple way to explain your concern to legislators, family, friends, and neighbors is to remember the numbers 1-8-14. These three numbers stand for the three amendments to the U.S. Constitution that contradict the use of sharia law.

The First Amendment says that there should be no establishment of religion. Sharia law is based on one religion's interpretation of rights. The First Amendment prohibits the establishment of any national religion (including Islam).

The Eighth Amendment prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." Most Americans would consider the penalties handed down under sharia law to be cruel and unusual.

The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees each citizen equal protection under the Constitution. Sharia law does not treat men and women equally, nor does it treat Muslims and non-Muslims equally. This also violates the Constitution.

It is easy to see why we don't need sharia law in America.

Additional Resources

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical Point of View on Islam*, Point of View Ministries, 2020.

Kerby Anderson, *Understanding Islam and Terrorism*, Cambridge, OH: Christian House Publishers, 2017.

Joel Rosenberg, *Inside the Revolution*, Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009.

Robert Spencer, *Islam Unveiled*, Washington: San Francisco,

Encounter, 2002.

Open Doors, World Watch List 2025, www.opendoors.org/en-us/persecution/countries/

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A Biblical Point of View on Islam

Kerby Anderson provides a basic understanding of Islam with suggestions for how Christ-followers can share their faith with Muslims.

The second largest religion in the world, and one of the fastest growing religions, is the religion of Islam. Although we hear so much about it in the news, many Christians don't know much about Islam and don't know how to share the gospel with a Muslim. Whole books have been written on these subjects, but here is a short summary with recommended books so you can learn more.

Islam is a monotheistic religion based upon the holy book, the Qur'an, which its followers believe was sent by God through the angel Gabriel to the prophet Muhammad. Additional teachings are also recorded in the *Hadith*.

The Five Pillars of Islam

Although the beliefs of Muslims vary, all believe in what are

called the “Five Pillars of Islam.” These provide a summary of the practices of this religion.

1. *Shahadah*: The first pillar is recitation of the creed: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.” This statement is the foundation for all other beliefs in Islam. It is what makes someone a Muslim. Those who convert to Islam are to recite the creed. It is generally believed that you must recite this creed in the presence of two witnesses in order to formally convert to Islam.

2. *Salat*: The second pillar is the daily practice of prayer. Muslim prayer may be done individually or in community, but the prayers are required five times each day (dawn and sunrise, noon and mid-afternoon, mid-afternoon to sunset, sunset to twilight, and from twilight to dawn).

In Muslim and Western countries where there is a mosque, a prayer leader climbs to the top of the minaret in the mosque and calls the believers to prayer. He chants in Arabic, “God is great. There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Come to prayer. Come to prayer. Come to success in this life and the hereafter.”

3. *Zakat*: The third pillar is almsgiving, which is mandated giving to the poor and needy within society. The Qur’an requires that each Muslim give 2.5 percent of their income to the poor or to the spread of Islam. The collected funds are used for building and supporting mosques, for printing the Qur’an, and for the advancement of Islam.

4. *Sawm*: The fourth pillar of Islam is the fast during the ninth lunar month of the Muslim calendar. This is significant in the Muslim calendar for two reasons.

First, this is the time when Muhammad is said to have received the first of his revelations from God. Second, it is also the time when he and his followers made their historic trek from Mecca to Medina.

During this month, Muslims in good health are required to abstain from all food, drink, smoking, and sexual intercourse during daylight hours. This month-long fast promotes the Muslim's self-discipline, dependence on Allah, and compassion for the needy.

5.*Hajj*: The fifth pillar is a pilgrimage to Mecca that occurs during the last month of the Muslim year. Every able-bodied Muslim is to make a pilgrimage to Mecca once during his life. Pilgrims travel to Mecca, which is the holiest city in Islam and the birthplace of Muhammad. Only Muslims may enter Mecca. The focal point of Mecca is the Ka'bah which is an ancient stone building (thirty feet wide and forty feet long). A black stone (believed to be a meteorite) is set in the corner. The Ka'bah existed before the time of Muhammad. He taught that their worship had been corrupted and removed the idols from the Ka'bah and instituted Muslim worship of Allah in its place.

Major Divisions of Islam

Islam is not a monolithic system. Though all Muslims draw their inspiration from Muhammad and the teachings in the Qur'an, there are many identifiable groups and movements within Islam.

The most significant division is between Sunni and Shi'a Islam. The Sunnis comprise about eighty to ninety percent of all Muslims. They draw their name from the fact that they look both to the Qur'an and to the "Sunna" in establishing proper Muslim conduct. The Sunna is the recorded behavior or example of Muhammad and of the early Muslim community. There are many subdivisions among the Sunnis, but they all identify themselves as Sunni.

Sunnis currently control the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. They adhere to the five pillars of Islam and take a strong stand on the successor to Muhammad. This leader will be the

caliph who will govern Islam and provide theological direction to all Muslims, including the interpretation of sharia law. These caliphs have ruled continuously until the Ottoman Empire fell.

The other major group of Muslims is the Shi'ites. They compose about ten percent of all Muslims. They reside mainly in southern Iraq and in Iran. The word Shi'ite means "partisan," and refers to the fact that Shi'ites are "partisans of Ali." Ali was the son-in-law and cousin of Muhammad and one of the early caliphs. The Shi'ites believe that the leader of Islam should be a descendant of Ali, whom they believe possesses a special divine anointing for this task.

A third group of Muslims are the Sufis. They seek a mystical experience of God, rather than a merely intellectual knowledge of Him. Sufi Muslims are the mystics in Islam. They believe that the soul can rise to Allah during prayer and other spiritual exercises. Although they also read the Qur'an, they read it in a different way than other Muslims. They believe that it is an allegory of our soul's union with Allah.

Muslim Beliefs

When you are witnessing to a Muslim, it is important to remember that their beliefs about God, Jesus, and the Bible are very different from a Christian's view. They may have many misconceptions, and you may have certain misconceptions about what they believe. It is therefore important to ask questions about what they believe and help them understand what the Bible actually teaches. Here are a few basic theological beliefs.

It has often been fashionable to hear people say that, "Christians and Muslims worship the same God." It is understandable that people might say that. Both Islam and Christianity are monotheistic, even though a foundational difference is the Christian belief in the Trinity.

The most foundational doctrine in Islam is monotheism. This doctrine is encapsulated in the creed: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.” Because of this strong emphasis on monotheism, Muslims reject the idea that God could be more than one person or that God could have a partner. The Qur’an teaches that Allah is one God and the same God for all people. Anyone who does not believe this is guilty of the sin of *shirk*. According to Islam, God cannot have a partner and cannot be joined together in the Godhead with other persons. Muslims therefore reject the Christian idea of the Trinity.

Muslims and Christians also differ in their understanding of the nature and character of God. Islam teaches that Allah is distant, transcendent, and unknowable. He is separate from His creation. He is exalted and far removed from mankind. While we may know His will, we cannot know Him personally. By contrast, Christianity teaches the fatherhood of God. Jesus taught in the Lord’s Prayer that we may address God as “our Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). Christians can have a personal relationship with God through Christ.

Muslims also have a different view of Jesus. The Qur’an refers to Jesus as “the Messiah” or “the Christ.” But Muslims reject the idea that God could have a Son. By contrast, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. God is heard from heaven declaring, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 17:5). Also, believers are called children of God: “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God” (1 John 3:1).

Witnessing to Muslims

Muslims usually believe that the Bible has errors in it. You should be prepared to answer such objections. But you can even begin with what is taught about Jesus in the Qur’an. They accept that He is the Messiah and the Christ. And they honor him as one of the greatest prophets. In Sura 3:42-55, the

Qur’an also teaches that:

(1) Mary was chosen by God,
(2) Jesus was born of a virgin,
(3) Jesus is the Messiah,
(4) Jesus has power over death, and
(5) Jesus knows the way to heaven.

The Qur’an also teaches that a proper Muslim must read the Old and New Testaments, known as the Before Books (Sura 4:136). And it teaches that those who observe the teaching of the Torah and the Gospels may go to heaven (Sura 5:6566). Many Muslims feel this gives them permission to read the Bible. You can give them a Bible and suggest they read the gospel of John.

When you witness to Muslims, be sure you talk about the love of God. Most Muslims believe that Allah is distant and unknowable. Christianity offers them the possibility of knowing God personally. This is attractive to Muslims.

A seminary conducted a survey of six hundred former Muslims who had become Christians. One of the most significant factors involved in the conversions of these former Muslims was the emphasis on the love of God and the intimacy that believers can have with God as their heavenly Father. This was an important factor in drawing these former Muslims to Christ, so make sure you talk about the love of God.

Another factor was eternal security. A Muslim never really knows whether he or she will be saved due to their good works on earth. The Bible teaches that we can know that we have eternal life (1 John 5:13). We are saved by grace through faith, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). The bad news is that the works Muslims do will not enable them to enter into heaven. The good news is that God gave his Son so that they would not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Additional Resources

Kerby Anderson. *Understanding Islam and Terrorism: A Biblical Point of View*. Christian Publishing House, 2017.

Ergun Caner and Emir Caner, *Unveiling Islam*. Kregel, 2002.

Norman Geisler. *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*. Baker, 2002.

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The Qur'an From a Christian Perspective

Steve Cable provides a biblical understanding of Islam's holy book, drawing on James White's book What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur'an {1}. *Christians interacting with Muslims will benefit from a basic understanding of the development and the teaching of the Qur'an.*

Introduction and Background

Beginning with the basics, we need to understand how the Qur'an came into our possession and how it is viewed by most Muslims. The founder of Islam, Muhammad, was born in Mecca around AD 570 and began to receive instruction leading to the religion of Islam at the age of 40 in AD 610. "The classical belief is that while [the Qur'an's] entirety was "sent down" in one night, the Night of Power, but Muhammad himself received it piecemeal over twenty-two years."{2} Muhammad did not receive a written version as Joseph Smith claimed to have received for the Book of Mormon. Rather he memorized what was told him by the Angel Gabriel and passed it on to certain followers.

The popular Muslim belief is summarized in a recent guide to Islam as follows: "The Qur'an is the literal word of God, which He revealed to His Prophet Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel. It was memorized by Muhammad, who then dictated it to his Companions. They, in turn, memorized it, wrote it down, and reviewed it with the Prophet Muhammad. . . . Not one letter of the Qur'an has been changed over the centuries."{3}

"From the position of Sunni Islamic orthodoxy, the Qur'an is as eternal as Allah himself. It is the very Word of God, without even the slightest imperfection. The finger of man has no place in it, as the book held reverently in the hand today is an exact copy of a tablet in heaven upon which the Qur'an has been written from eternity past."{4}

How this view holds up to a critical review of the history of Muhammad and the early days of Islam following his death will be addressed later in this document. For now it is important to understand that to a devout Muslim, the Qur'an in its original Arabic is above analysis and above question, for it is a matter of faith that it has been perfectly transmitted and maintained. Note the Qur'an exists only in Arabic. Even though most Muslims depend upon a translation for their access to the teachings of the Qur'an, Muslims still would say the Qur'an itself is not translatable and the public prayers must

also be done in Arabic.

It is interesting to realize that the Qur'an in multiple places states that Allah "sent down the Torah and the Gospel" as works that serve as guidance to mankind. One cannot help but wonder, why God would send down the Torah and the Gospels when the Qur'an existed from eternity past and according to Muslim thought supersedes and corrects misconceptions men developed from reading these earlier texts. Why didn't God protect the Gospels in the same way as the Qur'an?

In what follows, we will look at where teachings of the Qur'an are counter to the truth of the Bible and to the historical facts. We will also consider how the current Qur'an came into existence, asking why the creator of the world would pass down his truth in such an uncontrolled fashion.

The Qur'an and Biblical Beliefs

Most Muslims, if they know anything about Christianity, will point to three primary problems with our faith:

1. the Trinity,
2. the resurrection of Jesus, and
3. the corruption of the Scriptures.

Is there anything taught in the Qur'an that causes them to reject the Christian concept of trinity?

In his book, James White describes the key Islamic belief in this way, "Ask any sincere follower what defines Islam, and they will answer quickly *tawhid*, the oneness of Allah, as expressed in Islam's great confession, "I profess that there is only one God worthy of worship and Muhammad is His messenger." . . . Without *tawhid*, you have no Islam."{5}

Interestingly, the word *tawhid* in that form does not appear in the Qur'an just as the word trinity does not appear in the

Bible. They are words to describe a concept clearly taught in those two books. The difference between these two words is a major difference between these religions. The Islamic concept of tawhid is that Allah **has only** and **can only** exist in one form, the creator of the universe. The Christian understanding is that the one God is expressed in three ways or persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All the persons of God were involved in the creation of this universe and reflect the full nature of God. The Bible is very clear that the Trinity is one God as shown for example in 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6:

> "There is no God but one . . . for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him."

In Islam, the most feared of all sins is called *shirk*, associating anyone, or anything with Allah. A person who dies in this state of idolatry cannot be forgiven. In Islamic thought, Allah is free to forgive any other sin if he so desires, but he will not forgive anyone who dies in idolatry.

This teaching causes the Trinity to become an unforgivable sin for Christians. "Many Muslims believe that the doctrine of the Trinity and, in particular, the worship of Jesus is an (unforgivable) act of *shirk*. This has led many of them to conclude that Christians, as a group, are bound for hell."{6}

The Qur'an attempts to address the Trinity but does it show knowledge of the concept so that the criticisms offered are accurate and meaningful? "The reason for the question is self-evident: If the Qur'an is the very words of Allah without admixture of man's insights or thoughts, then it would follow inevitably that its representations will be perfectly accurate and its arguments compelling."{7}

What does the Qur'an say about the Trinity? First, it holds up monotheism as the correction for the false Christian claim of

the “three.” By holding to this concept of the “three,” Christians are actually polytheists, denying that God is one. The author of the Qur’an does not understand that Christians are saying there is one God who manifests in three distinct forms or persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. But the misunderstanding goes much further than this. The Qur’an is very clear that the “three” are the Father, the Son, and Mary. As stated in Surah 5:116,

> And when Allah said: “O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say to mankind: ‘Take me and my mother for two gods other than Allah?’” He said: “Transcendent are you! It was not mine to say that of which I had no right. . .”

And this view is reiterated in the Islamic commentaries, the *hadith*. “Nothing in the Qur’anic text actually addresses the essence of Christian faith, even though it is painfully clear the author thought he was doing so.”{8}

White believes this distinction helps us respond to the oft-asked question, “Is Allah the same god as Yahweh?” Although Muslims make reference to the one God of Abraham, they deny the witness of the incarnation and the resurrection. Thus denying the entirety of the Christian faith. “If worship is an act of truth, then Muslims and Christians are not worshiping the same object. We do not worship the same God.”{9}

So, we see the Qur’an misrepresents the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and relegates Allah to a lower status than omnipotent God by declaring that Allah is not capable of appearing in multiple forms.

The Qur’an, Jesus and Salvation

As we consider what Muslims are taught in the Qur’an, we next look at the second stumbling block in their view of Christianity: the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

The Qur'an has quite a bit to say about Jesus as a prophet of God, specifically stating He was not God and was not crucified. The name of Jesus appears 25 times in the Qur'an, almost always as *Isa ibn Mariam*, i.e. Jesus the son of Mary. Jesus is presented as the result of a miraculous virgin birth. In the Qur'an, Surah 3:47, it is written, "She said, My Lord! How can I have a child, when no man has touched me? He replied, "such is the will of Allah. He creates what He will. When He decrees a thing He only says: 'Be!' and it is."{10}

The question of how Jesus came to be is an important topic for comparison. First, we see the Qur'an says that Allah created Jesus by declaring His existence and having Him born of a virgin. Second, we understand that the author of the Qur'an believed Christians teach that Jesus came into being as the child of a physical, sexual union between God and Mary. Third, Christianity actually teaches that Jesus was the preexistent creator of the universe (John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16-17), always and fully God, who became fully man being born of a virgin. Note that the primary difference between the Qur'an's view of Jesus' birth and a biblical view of Jesus' birth is not the role of Mary, but rather the Qur'an says that Jesus was created at His human conception and the Bible clearly states that Jesus is eternal and was not created but rather took on a new form at his birth:

> Although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:6-8)

The words attributed to Jesus in the Qur'an, beginning with words spoken from the crib, are not found in any source from the 1st through 5th centuries. "But the Muslim understanding is that no such historical foundation is needed for lengthy

portions of narrative for its words to be true. This is the Qur'an. It has been preserved. For the large majority, that ends the discussion, even when the same believers will then embrace historical criticism to question the value of His words in the Gospels."{11}

When it comes to the cross, the Qur'an stands firmly and inalterably against the mass of historical evidence and the almost universal view of the populace of itsday. This Qur'anic view is not sprinkled throughout the teaching, but rather appears in only one verse, namely Surah 4:157–

> "They slew him not, nor crucified him, but it appeared so to them; and those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge of it except the pursuit of a conjecture; [but] certainly they slew him not. But Allah raised him up to Himself."

This verse stands alone in the Qur'an and surprisingly without commentary in the hadith literature as well. This verse, written six hundred years after the events, in a place far removed from Jerusalem, takes a position counter to the gospel texts from the first century and counter to six centuries of Christian teaching. In more recent times, various Muslim apologists have surmised various tales to build upon this one verse. For example, some Muslims believe that someone else died on the cross and Jesus fled to India to continue his ministry there.{12} Regardless of what unsubstantiated fairy tales one conjures up to support its claim, this verse is based on no historical knowledge of the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus.

"This suggests the author did not have even the slightest knowledge of the centrality of God's redeeming act in Christ on the cross. . . The Qur'an places itself, and all who would believe in it, in direct opposition not only to the Gospels but also everything history itself says on the subject. The question must be asked: Who, truly, is following mere

conjecture here? Those who were eyewitnesses on the Hill of the Skull outside Jerusalem? Or the author of the Qur'an, more than half a millennium later?"{13}

Without the cross, salvation in the Qur'an comes through an unknowable mixture of predestination, good works, and the capricious will of Allah. "In Islam, forgiveness is an impersonal act of arbitrary divine power. In Christianity, forgiveness is a personal act of purposeful and powerful yet completely just divine grace."{14}

One cannot attribute these differences between the Qur'an and the New Testament to a minor corruption of the biblical text as they reflect the core themes of these books.

Corrupting the Gospels

As discussed above, most Muslims have been taught there are three primary problems with our faith: the Trinity, the resurrection of Jesus, and the corruption of the scripture. We have dealt with the Trinity and the resurrection of Jesus. Now let us turn to the corruption of scripture.

Most Muslims will affirm to you that the Christian scriptures cannot be relied upon because they have been changed and corrupted over the years and do not reflect the true message of Jesus. But is this affirmation what is taught by the Qur'an, and does it have any basis other than hearsay?

The Qur'an is very clear that the messages sent to the prophets of the Bible are to be believed. For example, Surah 3:84 says, "We believe in Allah . . . and that which was sent down to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes; and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have surrendered." Or as stated in a hadith, "Therefore, faithful Muslims believe in every Prophet whom Allah has sent and in every Book He revealed, and never

disbelieve in any of them."{15}

Very clearly, the Qur'an states that what was given to the Old Testament prophets and to Jesus was the truth of God. It is not just the prophets themselves who were from the Lord, for the Qur'an states that Allah "sent down the Torah and the Gospel" as works that serve as "guidance to mankind." If this is the case, why do Muslims not interpret the Qur'an in light of the truth from the Gospels, assuming that Allah's truth never changes?

In contrast, it is a virtual pillar of Islamic orthodoxy to hold that the Bible has undergone significant revisions so much as to make them totally unreliable and thus, useless to a modern day Muslim. As James White puts it, "Muslims around the world are taught that the Jews and the Christians altered their Scriptures, though there is no agreement as to when this took place. If anything unites Islamic apologists, it is the persistent assertion of Qur'anic perfection in contrast to the corrupted nature of the Bible, particularly the New Testament."{16}

This position certainly makes sense from a human perspective. For if one takes the position presented by the Qur'an that we are to believe every word of the Bible, then the huge differences between the theology of the New Testament and the theology of the Qur'an leave one little choice: either reject the Qur'an as not from God, or assume that all of the differences are the result of some massive corruption of the message of the Bible. The normal assumption taught to Muslims today is this corruption happened early on, perhaps even with the apostle Paul.

However, the preponderance of verses in the Qur'an which address this issue point to the corruption as being a distortion of the meaning (not the words) of the text. One example is found in Surah 3:78, "And there is a party of them who distort the Book with their tongues, that you may think

that what they say is from the Book, when it is not from the Book." As White observes, "We must conclude that the now predominant claim of the biblical texts themselves, having undergone major alteration and corruption, is a later polemical and theological perspective not required by the Qur'anic text itself. It comes not from the positive teachings of Muhammad but through the unalterable fact of the Qur'anic author's unfamiliarity with the actual biblical text."{17}

As noted by a Christian, Al-Kindi, writing to a Muslim around AD 820, "The situation is plain enough; you witness to the truth of our text—then again you contradict the witness you bear and allege that we have corrupted it; this is the height of folly."{18}

In Surah 5:47, we are urged as Christians to judge by what Allah has revealed in the Gospels. If this admonition has any meaning at all, it must assume that Christians had access to a valid gospel in the 7th century during the life of Muhammad.

What Christians had as the Gospels in the 7th century is what we have as the Gospels today. In fact, "each canonical gospel we read today we can document to have existed in that very form three centuries before Muhammad's ministry. A Christian judging Muhammad's claims by the New Testament and finding that he was ignorant of the teachings of the apostles, ignorant of the cross, the resurrection . . . and meaning of the gospel itself, is simply doing what the Qur'an commands us to do in this text."{19}

Thus, while modern Muslims claim the Bible is corrupt and unreliable, the Qur'an appears to teach that the scriptures available to Jews and Christians during Muhammad's day were correct and should be followed; as long as one did not reinterpret the meaning into something that was not really said. However, doing so would lead one to the conclusion that the Qur'an was written by someone who was not knowledgeable concerning Jewish and Christian scripture.

The Perfection of the Qur'an

As noted earlier, one of the primary objections Muslims voice toward Christianity is their belief that our Scriptures have been changed and corrupted while the Qur'an in Arabic is exactly the words given to Muhammad fourteen hundred years ago. Does this belief stand up to impartial scrutiny?

The modern Muslim view of the Qur'an does not allow for the critical examination of sources and variations as has been done for the New Testament. Many bible scholars such as Dallas Theological Seminary professor, Daniel Wallace{20}, point out that the large number of ancient manuscripts from different locations and times give us a richness of sources allowing us to identify the original text of the Christian New Testament with a high degree of confidence. Muslims on the other hand are relying on a specific follower, Uthman the third Caliph, who was purported to have assimilated the correct version and to have ordered the destruction of all other versions.

If the Qur'an is a perfect representation of the message from Allah, what accounts for the differences in multiple accounts of the same story recorded in the Qur'an? For example, four different Surahs contain the story of Lot in Sodom. Each recounting of the story is different from the others even when quoting what Lot said to the Sodomites. Thus we have Muslims pointing to differences in accounts among the Gospels but ignoring accounts of the same events throughout the Qur'an which differ in detail, order, and content.

When we find this type of variation in the Gospels, we recognize that each gospel was written by a different author with a different perspective inspired by the Holy Spirit. But if the Qur'an was preexistent in heaven and given to one man by one angel, one would not expect these types of variants. But as James White notes, "We could provide numerous examples of parallel passages all illustrating with clarity that the serious Muslim exegete must face the reality that the Qur'anic

text requires exegesis and harmonization."{21}

In addition to these troubling passages recounting different versions of the same events, we also find legendary stories about the life of Jesus which do not appear in any of the known accounts from the first century. White points out, "The Qur'an fails to make any differentiation between what is clearly legendary in character and what is based on the Hebrew or the Christian Scriptures. Stories that developed centuries after the events they pretend to describe are coupled directly with historically based accounts that carry serious weight and truth content. . . . This kind of fantastic legendary material is hardly the kind of source that can be trusted, and yet the Qur'an's author shows not the slightest understanding of its nature and combines them with historical materials."{22}

In addition to the inconsistencies in retelling stories and the incorporation of legends generated centuries after the actual events, we also should consider whether the current Qur'an is the perfectly accurate version of the earliest version supposedly shared verbally by Muhammad with certain followers. The common Islamic claims are strong and clear:

"The Qur'an is the literal word of God, which He revealed to His Prophet Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel. It was memorized by Muhammad, who then dictated it to his Companions. They, in turn memorized it, wrote it down, and reviewed it with the Prophet Muhammad . . . Not one letter of the Qur'an has been changed over the centuries."{23}

"It is a miracle of the Qur'an that no change has occurred in a single word, a single [letter of the] alphabet, a single punctuation mark, or a single diacritical mark in the text of the Qur'an during the last fourteen centuries."{24}

Interestingly, the hadiths give us early insight into one view of how the written Qur'an was collected and who was involved. At the time Muhammad died, there was no written version of the

Qur'an. It was carried about in the minds of a set of men called the Qurra, each of whom had memorized at least a portion of the Qur'an. However, a number of these Qurra were being killed in battles, raising the prospect that a significant portion of the Qur'an might be lost. According to one hadith, Zaid bin Thabit undertook the task of collecting a written version.

"To many outside the Muslim faith, the Qur'an's organization looks tremendously haphazard and even Islamic literature notes how one surah can contain materials Muhammad gave at very different times in his life. Many Muslims assume Muhammad was behind this organization, but there is little reason to believe it. Zaid and his committee are far more likely to have been responsible."{25}

Eighteen years later the third Caliph, Uthman, charged Zaid and others with rewriting the manuscripts in perfect copies. In the process of doing this, Zaid reportedly found at least two more passages that he had missed in his earlier compilation. Once this was accomplished, "Uthman sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt."{26}

Not every scholar agrees that this story from a hadith is accurate and many suggest a much later date after AD 705 for the compilation of the Qur'an we find today. Whether it was Uthman or some later compilation effort, since the eighth century, we have had a fairly stable text for the Qur'an with few variants. "Muslims see this as a great advantage, even an example of divine inspiration and preservation. In reality, just the opposite is the case. When a text has a major interruption in transmission, one's certainty of being able to obtain the original text becomes limited to the materials that escape the revisionist pen. For the Muslim, Uthman had to get it right, because if he was wrong, there is little hope of ever undoing his work."{27}

Al-Kindi, the Christian apologist writing around AD 820, had much to say on the formation of the Qur'an. He records that multiple versions were collated during the time of Uthman stating, "One man, then, read one version of the Qur'an, his neighbor another, and differed. One man said to his neighbor: "My text is better than yours," while his neighbor defended his own. So additions and losses came about and falsification of the text."{28} According to Al-Kindi, this situation caused Uthman to take his action while his rivals, such as Ali (Muhammad's cousin and the 4th Caliph), created and kept their own manuscripts. Al-Kindi listed alterations and changes made to the earlier documents in creating Uthman's version. One of the reasons Al-Kindi had access to this type of information was the open warfare between the Sunnis and the Shiites, led to charges and countercharges of corruption.

Al-Kindi concludes his discussion stating, "You know what happened between Ali, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, how they hated each other and quarreled and corrupted the text; how each one tried to oppose his neighbor and to refute what he (had) said. Pray, how are we to know which is the true text, and how shall we distinguish it from the false?"{29}

As White states, "It is self-evident that no matter how stable or even primitive the Uhtmanic tradition is, it is not the only stream that can claim direct connection to Muhammad and the primitive period of Qur'anic compilation. The greatest concern for any follower of Muhammad should be what he said (or what he received from the Angel Gabriel), not what an uninspired Caliph later thought he should have said."{30}

The study of manuscripts shows beyond all possible question that the Qur'an was neither written down in perfection in the days of Muhammad, nor was it never altered or changed in its transmission.

White concludes his study with this thought, "When we obey the command of Surah 5:4 and test Muhammad's claims in the light

of the gospel, of history, and of consistency and truthfulness, we find him, and the Qur'an to fail these tests. The Qur'an is not a further revelation of the God who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. The author of the Qur'an did not understand the gospel, did not understand the Christian faith, and as such cannot stand in the line of Moses to Jesus to Muhammad that he claimed."{31}

Notes

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8. White, p. 98.
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12. Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, www.alislam.org/library/books/jesus-in-india/ch2.html.
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16. White, p. 171.
17. White, p. 180.
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19. White, p. 186.
20. Dr. Daniel Wallace, Executive Director of CSNTM & Senior Professor of NT Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary,

speaking at Prairie Creek Baptist Church on August 30, 2015.
21. White, p. 229.
22. White, p. 237-8.
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24. Kazi, Mazhar, *130 Evident Miracles in the Qur'an*, Richmond Hill, ON, Canada, Cresecnt, 1997, p. 42-43.
25. White, p.258.
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27. White, p. 262.
28. This portion of Al-Kindi's apology is found in Newman, *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries*, 455-459.
29. Ibid.
30. White, p. 271.
31. White, p. 286.

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The Lives of Muhammad and Jesus

Dr. Pat Zukeran explores the radical differences between Muhammad and Jesus, and the implications of following their examples and teachings.

Muhammad and Jesus are the founders of the two largest religions in the world and two of the most influential people in the history of the world. Both men serve not only as founders but also the ideal models whose lives are to be emulated by all their followers. What kind of lives did they live? What example did they leave behind, and how is their example impacting our world today?

This work will examine the lives of both men. In my research I have relied on what is considered by Muslims to be some of the most authoritative historical sources on the life of Muhammad. The first source is the Qur'an, the inspired text of Islam. Second is the Hadith, a record of the many sayings and the life events of Muhammad. The most recognized collection is by Ismail Sahih Bukhari, written in 870. Third is the first and most authoritative biography of Muhammad, written by Ibn Ishaq nearly 150 years after Muhammad's death.

In examining the life of Jesus, I relied primarily on the New Testament. The four Gospels are biographies of His life. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written prior to AD 70, and John was written in AD 95. The letters of the New Testament written by His disciples also serve as a historical source. Most were written prior to AD 70 while some, like 1 Corinthians, were written as early as AD 55.

Muslims believe that Muhammad is the perfect example to follow in all aspects of life. The Qur'an states that in Muhammad, "Ye have indeed in the Apostle of God a beautiful pattern and excellent model of conduct" (Surah 33:21). It also states that Muhammad demonstrates "an excellent standard of character" (Surah 68:4).

The Qur'an also emphasizes that obedience to Muhammad's teachings is equivalent to obeying Allah, as evidenced when Surah 4:80 states that "he who obeys the Apostle, obeys Allah." Moreover, Surah 4:115 also reflects how highly Muslims revere Muhammad as it explains the fate of one who disobeys: "If anyone contends with the Apostle even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men of faith, we shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell—what an evil refuge."

Muslims are called to imitate Muhammad in all aspects of their lives, even in their daily activities. Islamic scholar John

Esposito writes, “Muslims look to Muhammad’s example for guidance in all aspects of life: how to treat friends as well as enemies, what to eat and drink, how to make love and war. . . . His impact on Muslim life cannot be overestimated, since he served as both religious and political head of Medina: prophet of God, ruler, military commander, chief judge, lawgiver. . . . Traditions of the Prophet provide guidance for personal hygiene, dress, eating, marriage, treatment of wives, diplomacy, and warfare.”{1}

Christians are not called to copy Christ in all aspects of their lives as Muslims do Muhammad. Rather, Christians are called to reflect the character, mindset, and attitude of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians. 2:5, 1 Peter 2:21). Christ focused on the inner transformation of the heart and mind of the individual which would result in righteous living (Matthew 5:8, 6:21, 15:8, 18).

When making decisions in their lives, Muslims will ask, “What would Muhammad do?” while Christians ask, “What would Jesus do?” Since these two men serve as models of perfect conduct for their followers to imitate, it is important to learn what kind of lives they lived. This work will present a brief overview and highlight key events in the lives of each person as we explore that which can be learned from their examples.

The Call of Muhammad and Jesus

Muhammad and Jesus lived remarkable yet radically different lives. Muhammad was born in AD 570. His family was part of the Quraysh tribe, which oversaw the Mecca temple where the deities of Arabia were worshipped. His father died when he was very young, and his mother died when he was six. He was raised by his grandfather and later by his uncle. At the age of twenty-five, he married Khadija, his employer, who was fifteen years his elder.

At the age of forty, Muhammad received his first visitation

from the angel Gabriel. According to Ibn Ishaq, the giving and receiving of the revelation was quite violent in nature. Gabriel came to Muhammad and ordered him to read his message. Being illiterate, Muhammad asked Gabriel, "What shall I read?" It is then Gabriel pressed Muhammad so hard that Muhammad thought he was going to die. This was repeated three times until Muhammad read the following message from Gabriel: "Read in the name of thy Lord who created, who created man of blood coagulated. Read! Thy Lord is the most beneficent, who taught by the pen, taught that which they knew not unto men." After this the angel Gabriel departed.{2}

Muhammad was terrified by this incident. Bukhari records that Muhammad returned home trembling and sought to hide under a blanket. His first thought was that he had come under demonic influence.{3} In fact, he was so troubled that he became suicidal. Ishaq records that since Muhammad did not want anyone in his tribe to discover that he was possessed, he resolved to go to the top of a mountain and commit suicide.{4} However, his wife and her cousin Waraqa, an Ebionite Christian, encouraged him that he was not possessed but rather a prophet of God.{5} Through their encouragement, he came to believe that he had received a divine message from Allah.

Prior to his encounter with Gabriel and throughout his life, Muhammad struggled with demonic possession. Ishaq records an incident during Muhammad's childhood when his foster parents, al-Harith and Halima, were raising him. One day while behind the tents, two men clothed in white threw Muhammad to the ground, opened up his belly, and searched through it. His foster father felt the boy might have suffered a stroke. Halima, his foster mother who had nursed Muhammad, believed a demon had possessed him.{6}

Another account of Muhammad's struggle with demon possession occurred a few years after his prophetic calling when Muhammad believed he received a revelation allowing Muslims to worship the three gods of the Quraysh. However, he later admitted that

Satan possessed him when he uttered those verses.{7} Allah eventually forgave Muhammad but gave him a stern warning recorded in Surah 17:73-75. Also another time after his prophetic calling Muhammad fell under the spell of a Jewish magician named Labid for one year.{8}

In contrast, biblical prophets and apostles clearly understood their visions were from God rather than Satan or demons. Although some were frightened by their vision of God or the angels before them, they were not violently handled. Instead they were given an assuring introductions such as "Do not be afraid" (Luke 1:13, 28-30, 2:10, Isa. 6:6-7, Revelation 1:17). Jesus' birth was miraculous, and He understood His mission from His childhood (Luke 2:41-52). Throughout His life, Jesus clearly distinguished between God's message and Satan's. During His temptation in the desert, He did not struggle with possession but instead defeated Satan's attacks using the word of God. Throughout His ministry, Jesus demonstrated authority over the demonic realm, and the demons were terrified of Him (Matthew 8:16, Luke 8:26-39). Through His death and resurrection, Jesus defeated Satan and the demonic hosts. Paul states that Jesus "disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Him" (Colossians 2:15).

The contrast is readily apparent. One man struggled from demonic presence in his life; the other conquered the devil.

The Warrior and the Rabbi

At the beginning of their mission, both Muhammad and Jesus began preaching in their home territory, and both were persecuted for their message. However, the two responded very differently to their opposition. Muhammad resorted to the use of force while Jesus pursued the path of peace.

Muhammad began preaching in Mecca. During his thirteen years preaching in Mecca he preached a message of tolerance towards

other religions as he sought to win the favor of the people. It is at this time that several passages teaching tolerance of the Jews and Christians were recorded (Surah 2:62, 5:69, and 22:17). However, as the persecution grew, he fled to Medina in 622. This event is one of the most important events in Islam known as the *Hijira*. In Medina he gained a following and became the leader of the city. It is in Medina as his power grew that his message transformed to one of intolerance of unbelievers. Moreover, he began to encourage the use of military force. Earlier Suras of tolerance were abrogated by the new revelations exhorting Muslims to Jihad against unbelievers.

To sustain his growing army and impress the Quraysh in Mecca of his growing power, he raided commercial caravans on their way to Mecca. He received revelations endorsing his raids to attack unbelievers and seize their valuables (Surah 8:38-45 & 60-65, 22:39-40, 2:244, 4:95-97). Bukhari records that on his first raid at Al-Abwa, Muhammad was asked if it was permissible to attack at night since doing so would endanger the lives of the women and children traveling with the caravans. Muhammad replied, “They (women and children) are from them (the opposition).” In other words, he permitted the killing or capture of women and children during the raids.{9} The booty collected from the raids was distributed among his men.

These raids incited the Meccans to war against Muhammad. Four major battles were fought between Muhammad and the Quraysh armies of Mecca. In 624 the two armies met at Badr where Muhammad defeated the armies of Mecca. This victory instilled confidence in Muhammad of his calling. He believed Allah fought for him to bring about victory (Surah 3:123-125, 8:9, 12-13).

A year later the Meccan army returned and engaged Muhammad’s army at Uhud, a mountain near Mecca. This time Muhammad was defeated, and his army retreated to Medina. Muhammad was

bloodied in the battle and he vowed revenge on his enemies.{10}

In the spring of 627, the Jews of Medina plotted with the army of Mecca against Muhammad. Hearing of this plot, Muhammad dug a trench around the city of Medina. The Meccan army laid siege to the city but were unable to capture the city and returned to Mecca. After the retreat of the Meccan army, Muhammad sought to deal with the Jews of Medina who had plotted against him. Ibn Ishaq records that Muhammad "went out to the market of Medina and dug trenches in it. Then he sent for them and struck off their heads in those trenches as they were brought to him in batches." Ishaq records that the estimates of those killed were six to seven hundred; others estimate the numbers to be as high as eight to nine hundred.{11}

After the Seige of Medina, a peace treaty was signed between the two armies. However, the treaty was soon violated, and in 630 Muhammad gathered an army of ten thousand and marched on the city of Mecca. Seeing their hopeless situation, the Meccans surrendered to Muhammad. Muhammad ordered his men to enter the city and fight only those who resisted. He also had a list of those who were to be killed even if they sought refuge in the Ka'bah Temple. Most on the list were those considered apostates.{12} Muhammad rode his camel to the Ka'bah and cleared the temple of all its idols and burned them. Along with these major conflicts were other raids and battles as Muhammad spread his religion. Ibn Ishaq records that in all Muhammad participated in twenty-seven battles, personally fighting in nine of them.{13}

Islam spread throughout the Middle East through the sword. Muhammad sent messengers throughout Arabia and neighboring countries, ordering them to convert to Islam or suffer the consequences. Those who did not submit to his rule were attacked and forced to pay a tax called a Jizya to Muhammad. In Surah 9, Muhammad gave instructions to his men on dealing with unbelievers:

> Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued (Surah 9:29).

In this passage, unbelievers are given three options: to convert to Islam, to pay the tax, or to prepare for battle. Today, fundamentalist Muslims who seek to follow the example of Muhammad and follow the literal teachings of the Qur'an view *jihad* (holy war) as a military conflict for the cause of Islam. These believe that jihad will be waged worldwide against all unbelievers until the world comes under the rule of the House of Islam.

In contrast to Muhammad, Jesus preached, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). In His famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus praised those who make peace by teaching, "Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). During His earthly ministry, Christ never engaged in military conflict. Instead, He spread His message through preaching, teaching and accomplishing miracles. His mission culminated in His death on the cross for the sins of mankind and His resurrection from the dead.

Christ's disciples followed the example of Christ. Christianity was spread through the preaching of gospel message. Christ's disciples did not die on the battlefield as mighty warriors but were instead martyred for proclaiming the name of Christ. Today, Christianity is spread through the preaching, teaching, and humanitarian aid in the name of Christ. One leader was a man of the sword; one was a man of peace.

Facing Their Critics

Both Muhammad and Jesus faced sharp criticism for their message and lifestyle. However, the two men dealt very differently with their critics. There were times Muhammad forgave his critics, but there were also many times he exacted revenge on those who criticized him. Jesus, on the other hand, responded in love to those who were critical of Him.

Ibn Ishaq records several of Muhammad's dealings with those who criticized him. On one occasion, a Jewish Poet named Ka'b bin Al-Ashraf composed a poem that was critical of Muslim women. Muhammad asked, "Who will rid me of Ibnu'l-Ashraf?" A young man named Muhammad Maslama volunteered to kill the poet. Maslama's plan, which Muhammad endorsed, was to deceive the poet and lure him into a trap. After luring Ka'b into meeting, Maslama and his companions stabbed him to death and presented his dead body to Muhammad who then praised the men.{14} After the assassination of Ka'b, Muhammad ordered his men to "kill any Jew that falls into your Power."{15} The first victim of that decree was Ibn Sunayna, a Jewish merchant.

Another poet killed by Muhammad was a man named Abu Afak, who was nearly one hundred years old. He had written poems mocking Muhammad. Muhammad asked, "Who will deal with this rascal for me?" A young man named Salim bin Umayr volunteered and killed the old man while he was sleeping.{16} A female poet named Asma bint Marwan was infuriated by the murder of Afak and wrote verses condemning Muhammad's men. Hearing of her criticism, Muhammad asked, "Who will rid me of Marwan's daughter?" Umar bin Adiy al-Khatami volunteered and killed her and her unborn child that night. Umar was worried that he had committed a sin, but Muhammad reassured him saying, "Two goats won't butt their heads about her."{17} On another occasion Ishaq records that Muhammad killed two girls who wrote satirical songs about him.{18}

Muslims today take seriously any criticism against Muhammad.

Many respond peacefully to the criticism but many responses are much harsher. A death *fatwa* (religious ruling) was declared against Salman Rushdie, author of the fictional novel *The Satanic Verses*. Moreover, in early 2006, riots, many of which were violent, broke out worldwide over Danish cartoons depicting Muhammad. Many who reacted violently believed they responded in a manner exemplifying Muhammad's example.

In contrast to Muhammad, Christ never exacted revenge on those who criticized Him. Christ taught, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:43-48)

This does not mean Christ passively ignored those who opposed His teachings. Christ often sharply rebuked those who spoke out against Him (Matthew 12:22-32), or He pointed out their error (Matthew 7:37-50, 9:10-12, 12:9-14), or He allowed his character to speak for itself (Luke 19:1-10). When Jesus was beaten and mocked, He was silent and in the end prayed for the forgiveness of His enemies. Like Muhammad, Christ had the power to take revenge. Before He was taken away by the mob to stand an illegal trial He told Peter that He could call "twelve legions of angels" to destroy His enemies at hand. However, Christ chose to forgive and even love those who hated Him.

One leader chose the sword of vengeance while the other taught us to overcome evil with good.

Treatment of Women

Muhammad's view of women is reflected in his personal relationships and his teachings revealed in the Qur'an and Hadith. Muhammad remained loyal to his first wife Kadhija and did not take any other wives until after her death. They had been married for 25 years. Islamic historians record that

Muhammad married eleven to thirteen wives. The Qur'an allows a man to marry up to four wives (Surah 4:3); however, Muhammad received a special revelation from Allah that he may have more (Surah 33:50). Muhammad's marriages have been a source of criticism of his moral character. However, Muslim historians state that Muhammad's marriages were not immoral but instead followed the normal practices of the culture. Many of his marriages were to solidify political alliances and to provide and protect the widows of his men who had fallen in battle.{19} Here is a brief overview of the circumstances regarding the marriages to some of his more prominent wives.

After the death of Kadhija, Muhammad chose a young girl named Aisha, who was Muhammad's favorite wife. He married her when she was seven and consummated the marriage when she was nine.{20} At the time, Muhammad was in his fifties. Aisha was the daughter of Abu Bakr, one of Muhammad's first and loyal followers who eventually became the first Caliph (spiritual leader) after the death of Muhammad. In his final moments, Muhammad died in the arms of Aisha.

One of his most controversial marriages was to Zaynab bint Jahsh, the wife of his adopted son Zayd bin Haritha. Zayd was unhappy in the marriage and knowing of Muhammad's interest in his wife, sought to divorce her. Initially Muhammad discouraged Zayd (Surah 33:37). However, the marriage worsened, and they divorced. Soon after Muhammad married Zaynab. Arabs considered this marriage equal to incest and criticized Muhammad. However, he received a revelation justifying his action (Surah 33:37).

Ibn Ishaq records the story of another wife Safiya. Safiya was the wife of Kinana al-Rabi, the leader of Jews living at the Khaybar oasis. Muhammad attacked this settlement. Ishaq records, "We met the workers of Khaybar coming out in the morning with their spades and baskets."{21} Muhammad and his men killed 93 men during the raid. Muhammad then sought to obtain the riches in the city. Muhammad ordered his men to

torture Kinana so that he would reveal the location of hidden treasure. Ishaq writes that Muhammad ordered his men to "'Torture him until you extract what he has,' so he kindled a fire with flint and steel on his chest until he was nearly dead. Then the apostle delivered him to Muhammad b. Maslama and he struck off his head, in revenge for his brother Mahmud."{22} After Kinana's death Muhammad took his wife Safiya and married her.{23}

Muhammad's relationships with his wives were often a source of sorrow and struggle for him. On one occasion, Muhammad threatened to divorce his wives because one of them disclosed a secret to one of his consorts. This caused some of his wives to join together against him. Muhammad then received a revelation rebuking them, saying Allah and Gabriel would back him up. Allah would allow him to divorce them and Allah would provide "consorts better than you."{24} On another occasion, Muhammad's wives continued to irritate him by asking for money. In exasperation, he gave them the choice of divorcing him and seeking worldly pleasure or remaining with him.{25}

Muhammad's teachings regarding women give us insight into his attitude that he did not view women as equals to men. First, it appears that Muhammad viewed women as less intelligent than men. In Surah 2:282, Muhammad taught that the testimony of a woman is worth half that of a man. Moreover, the Hadith also echoes Muhammad's belief in the "deficiency" or inferiority of women's intelligence. Bukhari gives this account:

> Once Allah's Apostle went out to Musalla (to offer prayer) of Id-al-Adha or Al-Fitr prayer. Then he passed by a woman and said, "O woman! Give alms, as I have seen that the majority of dwellers of Hell-fire were you (women). . . . I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you. A cautious sensible man could be led astray by some of you." The women asked, "O Allah's Apostle! What is deficient in our intelligence and religion?" He said, "Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness

> of one man?" They replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her intelligence."{26}

Also, the *Hadith* further reinforces this teaching the inadequacy of a woman's intellect as follows:

> The Prophet said, "Isn't the witness of a woman equal to half of that of a man?" The women said, "Yes." He said, "This is because of the deficiency of a woman's mind."{27}

These passages teach that women are considered to have a "deficiency" of the mind, which leads us to conclude that they are inferior to men. Second, Muhammad appears to teach that women have less value than men. This is evidenced in passages such as Surah 4:11 which states that a son's inheritance is to be twice that of a daughter's. Also, men are allowed up to four wives, and sex with slave girls is also allowed (Surah 4:3). Third, Muhammad's teachings lead one to conclude that women are less spiritual than men. One reason is that women are not able to pray during their menstrual cycles: "'Isn't it true that a woman can neither pray nor fast during her menses?' The women replied in the affirmative. He said, 'This is the deficiency in her religion.'"{28} Moreover, women are spiritually deficient to men because, although prayers are an important part of Islam, a man's prayers will be canceled if a woman walks in front of a man while he is praying. Aisha wrote the following:

> The things which annul the prayers were mentioned before me. They said, "Prayer is annulled by a dog, a donkey and a woman (if they pass in front of the praying people)." I said, "You have made us (i.e. women) dogs." I saw the Prophet praying while I used to lie in my bed between him and the Qibla [Ed. note: the direction that should be faced for prayer]. Whenever I was in need of something, I would slip away for I disliked to face him."{29}

Finally, Muhammad's teachings reveal that wives were to live

in subjection to their husbands or face physical and spiritual discipline. Muhammad taught, “Your wives are as a tilth [Ed. note: a measure of the quality of soil] for you; so approach your tilth when or how you will” (Surah 2:223). Chapter four of the Qur’an taught men to “beat [their wives] (lightly)” if their wives were guilty of “disloyalty,” “ill conduct,” or “refusing to share their beds” (Surah 4:34). There may also be spiritual consequences for a woman’s lack of subservience as the Hadith states that “If a husband calls his wife to his bed (i.e. to have sexual relation), and she refuses and causes him to sleep in anger, the angels will curse her till morning.”{30}

Moreover, the spiritual consequences of wives who were not subservient to their husbands is seen in a passage which records when Muhammad looked into the bowels of hell and stated that the majority in hell were women who, although they believed in God, were there because they were ungrateful to their husbands.{31}

Thus, based on these passages, not only is a woman’s physical well-being dependent on her husband, but her eternal destiny is also connected to her subjection to her husband.

From these passages we can conclude that Muhammad did not view women as equals to men. They had a “deficiency” of the mind; thus, their testimony was only worth half that of a man’s. They were less valuable; thus, sons received a double portion of inheritance than daughters, and men could have multiple wives or sexual partners. They were less spiritual because of their inability to pray during menses and the fact that they would cancel out the prayers of a man simply by walking in front of him. Finally, the physical and spiritual well-being of a woman was not within her own power, but instead was dependent upon her submission to her husband.

In contrast, Jesus never married; however, He valued women, and several were a very important part of his ministry.

Several traveled with Jesus and ministered to Him and His disciples (Luke 8:1-3). Jesus often praised women for their example of love and faith in the Lord (Mark 5:21-34, Luke 7:36-50, 21:1-4). In Luke 7:36-50, Jesus praised a sinful woman as being a person of greater faith than the men who were present! Jesus spent time with and taught women (Luke 10:38-42). The women were at the cross, and in His dying moments Jesus made sure His mother was taken care of (John 19:25-27). The women were also the first ones entrusted with the message of His resurrection. Jesus' treatment of women showed that He viewed women as important and equal in value to men.

Jesus' disciples reflected the attitude of Christ in their teachings. Peter exhorted husbands to honor their wives and treat them as co-heirs of eternal life (1 Peter 3:7). Paul stated in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Paul also exhorted husbands to "love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25.)

Muhammad and Jesus were considerably different in the way they treated and valued women. Muhammad's relationship with his wives and consorts and his teachings reflect his attitude toward women. Today, in nations where Islamic law is enforced, women struggle for equal rights. In contrast, Jesus valued women, and the teachings of the New Testament have been the foundation for improving the status of women throughout the world.

Muhammad, Jews, and Christians

Jews believe that God presented special revelation to them through the prophets and the Old Testament. When writing the book of Deuteronomy, Moses prophesied that God would raise up another prophet similar to himself who would speak God's words and bring deliverance to the nation. Deuteronomy 18: 15 and 18

state, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— . . . I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.”

Christians believe that this prophet of whom Moses and the other prophets wrote is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the predicted Messiah who fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. Muslims believe that the prophet Moses spoke of was Muhammad and that there are New Testament prophecies such as John 14:16 that predict the coming of Muhammad. Islam claims that God’s revelation began with the Jews, was built upon by the Christians, and culminates with Islam. Since Muslims believe there is a connection between the three, it is important to explore the relationship of Muhammad to the Jews and the Christians.

Early in his preaching, Muhammad appealed to the Jews and Christians, hoping to win their acceptance. He believed that he was a prophet in the lines of the Old and New Testament prophets and apostles. Various Surahs were written during this period, teaching tolerance of Christians and Jews (Surah 2:62, 5:69, 22:17). In harmony with Jewish teachings, Muhammad taught that pork was forbidden, and he taught followers to pray facing Jerusalem.{32} Muhammad even challenged the Jews and Christians to look in their writings for confirmation of his teachings (Surah 10:92).

However, the Jews and Christians rejected his message, and he became hostile towards them. He received revelation denouncing the Christians and Jews for rejecting his message (Surah 5:12-16). In Surah 3:110 he calls the Jews and Christians (“People of the Book”) “perverted transgressors.” Coming to the realization the Jews would not acknowledge his prophetic call, Muhammad ordered Muslims to turn from Jerusalem and face Mecca when praying (Surah 2:143-150). Muhammad chastised Jews and Christians for distorting previous revelation and called

them to return to the true teachings of scripture (Surah 5:14-16).

After winning control over Mecca and Arabia, Muhammad received a revelation to fight against the Jews and Christians until they accepted paying taxes and living as second-class citizens (Surah 9:29). Muhammad taught that Jews and Christians rejected his message due to their perversion and rebellion to the truth. Therefore, Muhammad announced that the Jews and Christians were accursed (Surah 5:12-16).

According to Bukhari, Muhammad's final moments were spent in the arms of his youngest wife Aisha. His final words were, "May Allah curse the Jews and Christians, for they built the places of worship at the graves of the prophets."{33} Islamic eschatology teaches that Jesus will return, break crosses, slaughter the Christians and the Jews, and establish Islam as the true religion.{34}

Muhammad's example influences the attitude that Muslims display towards Jews and Christians. Throughout Islamic history, Muslims have had conflict with the Jews and Christians. Non-Muslims in Islamic countries continue to face discrimination and, in many cases, persecution.

What was the relationship of Christ to the Jews? The apostle John writes of Jesus that "He came to His own, and his own people did not receive him" (John 1:11). Jesus came to save His people but was rejected by them. However, He never stopped reaching out to them in love and, in the end, cried over the city of Jerusalem, knowing the judgment that was coming upon them (Matthew 23:37). Paul reflects the heart of Christ saying, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:3). Jesus and His disciples gave their lives for the lost, including the Jewish nation that rejected their message.

Christians continue to follow the example of Christ and preach the Gospel message to the Jews and non-Christians throughout the world. There have been times when Christians were guilty of the misuse of force; however, Christians can refer to the teachings of the New Testament and the example of Christ and the disciples to show clearly such use of force to spread Christianity is contrary to Christ's example and teaching. Muhammad cursed the Jews and Christians while Christ gave His life to save both Jews and non-Jews who were lost.

Conclusion

This article focused on the lives of Muhammad and Jesus. Both serve as the founders and exemplary models of their religion. We have seen that they lived radically different lives. Their examples influenced their early followers and continue to influence followers today.

Both men lived remarkable yet radically different lives. Muhammad's call reflects the struggle he had with the demonic forces while Christ conquered Satan, sin, and death. Muhammad was a warrior and chose the way of the sword while Christ was a rabbi who gave His life to rescue mankind from sin and death. Muhammad exacted revenge on his critics while Christ reached out to the lost, even those who rejected Him. Muhammad's treatment and teaching on women stand in stark contrast to Christ. It is apparent that the lives and teachings of both men were significantly different.

It is important that we understand the lives they lived and realize the implications of their teachings and examples for our present situation. I encourage every person to examine the lives of both men and consider the implications of following their examples. Following the path of Muhammad leads one down the road of the sword. Following in the footsteps of Christ will lead one to righteousness and eternal life.

For it is Christ who claimed to be the divine Son of God, and

He is the only one who confirmed His claims through His sinless, miraculous life, death, and resurrection from the dead. Even the Qur'an affirms the miraculous birth, sinless life, and miracles of Christ. Even the Qur'an teaches that He did not die but was raised to heaven. So even in the Qur'an, Jesus performs greater works than Muhammad. I encourage all Muslims to study the life of Jesus in the Bible. Muhammad even encouraged Muslims to study the Bible (Surah 10:94, 2:136, 4:163, 5:56, 5:68, 35:31). I believe once you study the life of Christ you will inevitably realize this was indeed was more than a prophet, He was the Son of God, the author of eternal life.{35} (For more, please read my article "Jesus in the Qur'an").

Notes

1. John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, (New York: Oxford Press, 1988), 13-14.
2. Ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. A. Guillaume (Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 1955), 106.
3. Hadith, ed. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 1, bk. 1, no. 3. This translation can be found online at the Univ. of Southern California's Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement at http://tinyurl.com/p2ujny.
4. Ishaq, 106.
5. Ibid., 107.
6 . Ibid., 71-72.
7. Ibid., 165-66; Qur'an 22:52, 53:19-23.
8. Ibid., 240. Guillaume's footnote states Muhammad was under the spell for one year.
9. Bukhari, vol. 4, bk. 52, no. 256.
10. Ishaq, 382.
11. Ibid., 464.
12. Ibid., 550.
13. Ibid., 659-60.
14. Ibid., 367-68.
15. Ibid., 369.

16. Ibid., 675.
17. Ibid., 675-76.
18. Ibid., 551.
19. Esposito, 19-20.
20. Bukhari, vol. 5, bk. 58, no. 234, and vol. 7, bk. 62, no. 65.
21. Ishaq, 511.
22. Ibid., 515.
23. Ibid., 511.
24. Surah 66:1-5 and Bukhari, vol. 6, bk. 60, Verse 274.
25. Surah 33:28-29 and Bukhari, vol. 6, bk. 60, Verse 309.
26. Bukhari, Vol. 1, Bk. 6, No. 301, narrated by Abu Said Al-Khudri.
27. Bukhari, Vol. 3, Bk. 48, No. 826, narrated by Abu Said Al-Khudri.
28. Bukhari, Vol. 1, Bk. 6, No. 30, narrated by Abu Said Al-Khudri.
29. Bukhari, Vol. 1, Bk. 9, no. 490, narrated by 'Aisha.
30. Bukhari, Vol. 4, Bk. 54, No.460.
31. See note 26.
32. Bukhari, vol. 6, bk. 60, no. 13.
33. Bukhari, vol. 1, bk. 8, no. 427.
34. F. E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 390.
35. For more please read my article, "Jesus in the Qur'an," Probe, 2008, probe.org/jesus-in-the-quran/.

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Islam and Terrorism

Kerby Anderson provides various perspectives on the link between Islam and terrorism, including how Americans and

Christians can think about its encroachment on our culture.

Clash of Civilizations

In this article we will be looking at Islam and terrorism. Before we look at the rise of Muslim terrorism in our world, we need to understand the worldview conflict between Islam and western values. The Muslim religion is a seventh-century religion. Think about that statement for a moment. Most people would not consider Christianity a first century religion. While it began in the first century, it has taken the timeless message of the Bible and communicated it in contemporary ways.

In many ways, Islam is still stuck in the century in which it developed. One of the great questions is whether it will adapt to the modern world. The rise of Muslim terrorism and the desire to implement sharia law illustrate this clash of civilizations.

In the summer of 1993, Samuel Huntington published an article entitled "The Clash of Civilizations?" in the journal *Foreign Affairs*.{1} Three years later Samuel Huntington published a book using a similar title: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. It became a bestseller, once again stirring controversy. It seems worthy to revisit his comments and predictions because they have turned out to be remarkably accurate.

His thesis was fairly simple. World history will be marked by conflicts between three principal groups: western universalism, Muslim militancy, and Chinese assertion.

Huntington says that in the post-Cold War world, "Global politics has become multipolar and multicivilizational."{2} During most of human history, major civilizations were separated from one another and contact was intermittent or nonexistent. Then for over 400 years, the nation states of the

West (Britain, France, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Germany, and the United States) constituted a multipolar international system that interacted, competed, and fought wars with each other. During that same period of time, these nations also expanded, conquered, and colonized nearly every other civilization.

During the Cold War, global politics became bipolar, and the world was divided into three parts. Western democracies led by the United States engaged in ideological, political, economic, and even military competition with communist countries led by the Soviet Union. Much of this conflict occurred in the Third World outside these two camps and was composed mostly of nonaligned nations.

Huntington argued that in the post-Cold War world, the principal actors are still the nation states, but they are influenced by more than just power and wealth. Other factors like cultural preferences, commonalities, and differences are also influential. The most important groupings are not the three blocs of the Cold War, but rather the major world civilizations. Most significant in discussion in this article is the conflict between the Western world and Muslim militancy.

Other Perspectives on Radical Islam

In the previous section, we talked about the thesis by Samuel Huntington that this is a clash of civilizations.

Bernard Lewis sees this conflict as a phase that Islam is currently experiencing in which many Muslim leaders are attempting to resist the influences of the modern world (and in particular the Western world) on their communities and countries. This is what he had to say about Islam and the modern world:

> Islam has brought comfort and peace of mind to countless

> millions of men and women. It has given dignity and meaning to drab and impoverished lives. It has taught people of different races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side in reasonable tolerance. It inspired a great civilization in which others besides Muslims lived creative and useful lives and which, by its achievement, enriched the whole world. But Islam, like other religions, has also known periods when it inspired in some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence. It is our misfortune that part, though by no means all or even most, of the Muslim world is now going through such a period, and that much, though again not all, of that hatred is directed against us.{3}

This does not mean that all Muslims want to engage in jihad warfare against America and the West. But it does mean that there is a growing clash of civilizations.

William Tucker believes that the actual conflict results from what he calls the Muslim intelligensia. He says "that we are not facing a clash of civilizations so much as a conflict with an educated segment of a civilization that produces some very weird, sexually disoriented men. Poverty has nothing to do with it. It is stunning to meet the al Qaeda roster—one highly accomplished scholar after another with advanced degrees in chemistry, biology, medicine, engineering, a large percentage of them educated in the United States."{4}

His analysis is contrary to the many statements that have been made in the past that poverty breeds terrorism. While it is certainly true that many recruits for jihad come from impoverished situations, it is also true that the leadership comes from those who are well-educated and highly accomplished.

Tucker therefore concludes that we are effectively at war with a Muslim intelligentsia. These are essentially "the same people who brought us the horrors of the French Revolution and

20th century Communism. With their obsession for moral purity and their rational hatred that goes beyond all irrationality, these warrior-intellectuals are wreaking the same havoc in the Middle East as they did in Jacobin France and Mao Tse-tung's China."{5}

Threat from Radical Islam

It is hard to estimate the extent of the threat of radical Islam, but there are some commentators who have tried to provide a reasonable estimate. Dennis Prager provides an overview of the extent of the threat:

> Anyone else sees the contemporary reality—the genocidal Islamic regime in Sudan; the widespread Muslim theological and emotional support for the killing of a Muslim who converts to another religion; the absence of freedom in Muslim-majority countries; the widespread support for Palestinians who randomly murder Israelis; the primitive state in which women are kept in many Muslim countries; the celebration of death; the honor killings of daughters, and so much else that is terrible in significant parts of the Muslim world—knows that civilized humanity has a newevil to fight.{6}

He argues that just as previous generations had to fight the Nazis and the communists, so this generation has to confront militant Islam. But he also notes something is dramatically different about the present Muslim threat. He says:

> Far fewer people believed in Nazism or in communism than believe in Islam generally or in authoritarian Islam specifically. There are one billion Muslims in the world. If just 10 percent believe in the Islam of Hamas, the Taliban, the Sudanese regime, Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, bin Laden, Islamic Jihad, the Finley Park Mosque in London or Hizbollah—and it is inconceivable that only one of 10

> Muslims supports any of these groups' ideologies—that means a true believing enemy of at least 100 million people.{7}

This very large number of people who wish to destroy civilization poses a threat that is unprecedented. Never has civilization had to confront such large numbers of those would wish to destroy civilization.

So, what is the threat in the United States? Let's take one number and one percentage for an estimate. There are about 4 million Muslim-Americans in the U.S., and we are often told that nearly all are law-abiding citizens. So let's assume that percentage is even as high as 99 percent. That still leaves one percent who believe in jihad and could pose a threat to America. Multiply one percent by 4 million and you get a number of 40,000 individuals that Homeland Security needs to try to monitor. Even if you use a percentage of one-tenth of one percent, you still get about 4,000 potential terrorists in America.

That is why it is important to understand the potential threat we face from radical Islam.

Islamic Tipping Point

When the Muslim population increases in a country, there are certain social changes that have been documented. Peter Hammond deals with this in his book, *Slavery, Terrorism, & Islam*. Most people have never read the book, but many have seen an email on one of the most quoted parts of the book.{8}

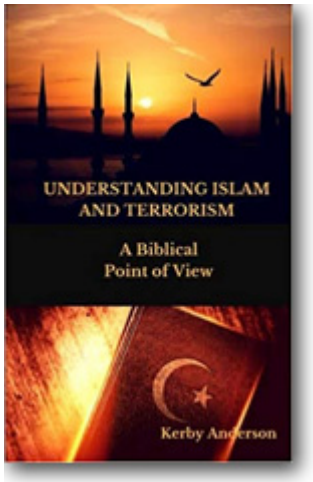
He argued that when the Muslim population is under five percent, the primary activity is proselytizing, usually from ethnic minorities and the disaffected. By the time the Muslim population reaches five percent or more, it begins to exert its influence and start pushing for Sharia law.

Peter Hammond sees a significant change when a Muslim population reaches ten percent (found in many European countries). At that point, he says you begin to see increased levels of violence and lawlessness. You also begin to hear statements of identity and the filing of various grievances.

At twenty to thirty percent, there are examples of hair-trigger rioting and jihad militias. In some countries, you even have church bombings. By forty percent to fifty percent, nations like Bosnia and Lebanon experience widespread massacres and ongoing militia warfare. When at least half the population is Muslim, you begin to see the country persecute infidels and apostates and Sharia law is implemented over all of its citizens.

After eighty percent, you see countries like Iran, Syria, and Nigeria engage in persecution and intimidation as a daily part of life. Sometimes state-run genocide develops in an attempt to purge the country of all infidels. The final goal is "Dar-es-Salaam" (the Islamic House of Peace).

Peter Hammond would probably be the first to say that these are generalizations and there are certainly exceptions to the rule. But the general trends have been validated through history. When the Muslim population is small, it leaders focus on winning converts and working to gain sympathy for Sharia law. But then their numbers increase, the radical Muslims leaders takeover and the Islamic domination begins.



In this article we have been looking at the challenge of Islam when it comes to jihad and terrorist activity. I document all of this in my new book, *Understanding Islam and Terrorism*. The book not only deals with the threat of terrorism but also takes time to explain the theology behind Islam with helpful suggestions on how to witness to your Muslim friends. You can find more information about

my book on the Probe Ministries website.

Sharia Law and Radical Islam

A foundational practice of Islam is the implementation of Sharia into the legal structure. Sharia is a system of divine law, belief, or practice that is based upon Muslim legal interpretation. It applies to economics, politics, and society.

Sometimes the world has been able to see how extreme the interpretation of Sharia can be. Muslims have been put to death when they have been accused of adultery or homosexuality. They have been put to death for leaving the religion of Islam. And these are not isolated examples.

Sharia law is very different in many respects from the laws established through the U.S. Constitution and the laws established through English Common law. In an attempt to prevent Sharia law from being implemented in America, a number of state legislatures have such bans on Sharia law. Voters in other states have approved a ban that has been struck down by a federal appeals court.

Although opponents argue that these Sharia law bans are unnecessary, various studies have found significant cases of Sharia law being allowed in U.S. courts. One report with the title, "Sharia Law and the American State Courts"{9} found 50 significant cases of Sharia law in U.S. courts just from their small sample of appellate published cases. When they looked at state courts, they found an additional 15 cases in the trial courts and 12 more in the appellate courts. Judges are making decisions deferring to Sharia law even when those decisions conflict with the U.S. Constitution and the various state constitutions.

How should we respond to the increased use of Sharia law in America? One simple way to explain your concern to

legislators, family, friends, and neighbors is to remember the numbers 1-8-14. These three numbers stand for the three amendments to the U.S. Constitution that prevent the use of Sharia law.

The First Amendment says that there should be no establishment of religion. Sharia law is based on one religion's interpretation of rights. The First Amendment prohibits the establishment of any national religion (including Islam).

The Eighth Amendment prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." Most Americans would consider the penalties handed down under Sharia law to be cruel and unusual.

The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees each citizen equal protection under the Constitution. Sharia law does not treat men and women equally, nor does it treat Muslims and non-Muslims equally. This also violates the Constitution.

These are just a few ways to argue against Sharia law. As Christians, we need discernment to understand the religion of Islam, and boldness to address the topic of radical Islam with biblical convictions.

Notes

1. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, 22-49.
2. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 21.
3. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/199009/muslim-rage. Accessed 7/8/2018.
4. William Tucker, "Overprivileged Children," *American Spectator*, 12 Sept. 2006, spectator.org/46473_overprivileged-children/. Accessed 7/8/2018.
5. Ibid.

Dennis Prager, "The Islamic Threat is Greater than German and Soviets Threats Were," 28 May 2006, www.dennisprager.com/the-islamic-threat-is-greater-than-german-and-soviet-threats-were/. Accessed 7/8/2018.
6. Ibid.
7. Peter Hammond, *Slavery, Terrorism, & Islam: The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat* (San Jose, CA: Frontline, 1982), 151.
8. Shariah Law and the American State Courts, Center for Security Policy, 5 January 2015. www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2015/01/05/shariah-in-american-courts-the-expanding-incursion-of-islamic-law-in-the-u-s-legal-system/. Accessed 7/8/2018.

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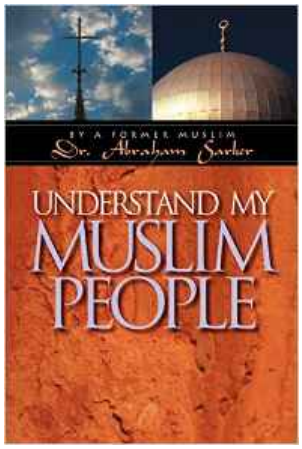
Basic Religious Practices of Worldwide Muslims

More Cultural Research from Steve Cable

Between October 2011 and November 2012, Pew Research Center conducted a major survey of Muslims involving more than 30,000 face-to-face interviews in 26 countries across North Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Since Probe has been evaluating similar surveys about the beliefs and practices of Christians and other faiths in America, we wanted to analyze the data in this large survey to see how the beliefs and practices of Muslims in the eastern hemisphere relate to Christians in America. We also wanted to see how Muslim beliefs and practices varied across different regions. To do this, we divided the data into five geographic regions: North Africa, Middle East, Europe, the 'Stans (e.g. Kazakhstan,

Uzbekistan), and South Asia.



To evaluate the religious practices of Muslims, a reasonable place to start would be the Five Pillars of Islam. "Muslims hope that by completing these duties of Islam, Allah will favor them and grant them entrance into heaven."{1} In other words, performing these duties are necessary but not sufficient to gain the reward of eternal life in heaven. These five pillars are:

1. Declaring "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet."
2. Praying five times each day in Arabic quoting from the Qur'an
3. Fasting during daylight hours of the month of Ramadan
4. Giving 2.5% of their income for the poor and for the cause of Islam
5. Completing the hajj, a ritual pilgrimage to Mecca

Because the hajj is a once in a lifetime event and according to the survey data is most likely to occur after the age of 60 (if at all), only the first four pillars are considered in our analysis. The results divided into age groups and regions of the world are as follows:

% Practicing Four of the Pillars of Islam					
Age	North Africa	Middle East	Eastern Europe	The 'Stans	South Asia
18 – 29	49%	41%	10%	11%	49%
30 plus	58%	57%	16%	17%	60%

As shown, the geographical groups vary significantly. The composite of all those surveyed is 40% of the respondents claim to practice these four pillars. While not miniscule, this does indicate that the vast majority of those who claim

to be Muslim are not seriously attempting to gain favor with Allah by adhering to these four key pillars of the faith.

One startling thing we note from this table is that the Eastern European (e.g. Russia, Bosnia, Turkey) Muslims and those from the 'Stans do not practice the four pillars to the same degree as other areas surveyed. In those areas, less than 1 in 7 practice the four pillars, while in the other areas it is more than half of the people. In general, Eastern European Muslims and those in the 'Stans do not practice the four pillars, much less the five pillars, of Islam. Given this, one may argue that the Islam practiced in these parts of the world is not Islam at all, but rather another religion with a historical name, Islam, which may at some point in the past been the dominant religion.

The second fact that stands out in the table is the difference in practice versus age. From our earlier blog post on religious beliefs, the results showed very little difference between those ages 18 – 29 and the rest of the respondents, but this is not the case for religious practice. In Eastern Europe and the 'Stans those over the age of 30 are more than 50% more likely to practice the four pillars than are those aged 18 to 29. In the other areas of North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, the older adults are 18% to 37% more likely to practice the key pillars of Islam. In fact, if we compare those ages 18 to 29 with those 60 and older these ratios grow to more than 150% and 31% to 50% respectively.

It appears that the younger adults are not as committed to carrying out these practices as their elders. We can only speculate on whether this difference will diminish as they get older. This difference may in fact shrink over time because, as noted earlier, there is virtually no difference in the percent of young adults and the percent of older adults who profess a Muslim worldview.

The results found for this aspect of religious practice are

generally consistent with those reported for religious beliefs (i.e., a Muslim worldview). We find the majority of those who claim to be Muslim to NOT hold a Muslim worldview and do not practice the five pillars of Islam. In our next post, we will compare Muslim religious practice with Christian religious practice in the United States.

Note

1. Dr. Abraham Sarkar, *Understand My Muslim People*, page 169, Barclay Press, 2004.

Acknowledgement: The World's Muslims Data Set, 2012, Pew Research Center – Religion & Public Life. The Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The data were downloaded from the Association of Religion Data Archives, www.TheARDA.com, and were collected by James Bell, Director of International Survey Research, Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life.

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Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam and Terrorism

Although the war on terror has become a household subject since September 11, 2001, we still hear many politically correct phrases. Do Muslims and Christians worship the same God? Is Islam a religion of peace? What is the true meaning of *jihad*? Kerby Anderson offers an honest, biblically-based discussion of Islam and terrorism.

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• Conversation with a Muslim [Don Closson]

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Why Radical Muslims Hate You

– Responding to Islamic Attitudes

Rusty Wright looks at the historical roots of Muslim hatred of American and the West. He points out that there are cultural, political, religious and psychological factors combining to create the current attitudes among Muslim people. Understanding the roots behind the feelings of some Muslims toward the West may help us in reaching out to our Muslim co-workers and neighbors.

Historical Roots of Hatred

Do you remember how you felt on September 11, 2001? You likely saw images of jets crashing into buildings, people jumping from skyscrapers, the towers collapsing. What feelings did you experience? Confusion? Anger? Depression? TV showed some Palestinians celebrating. One Hamas publication wrote, "Allah has answered our prayers."{1} In London, one Muslim group circulated stickers praising the "magnificent 19," the hijackers.{2}

Chances are, you are a target of this hatred. If you are a Westerner, an American, a non-Muslim, or a Muslim of a different stripe than they, then some radical Muslims hate you. Why? The answer is complex and involves history, culture, politics, religion, and psychology.

Of course, many – some would say most – Muslims are peace loving and deplore terrorism. Islam is quite diverse.{3} Extremist Muslims do not represent all Muslims any more than white supremacists represent all Christians. Not all "radical" Muslims are violent or hateful. But understanding extremist Muslim hatred is essential to interpreting our post-9/11 world. This article examines that hatred and offers a biblical response.

In his October 2001 video, Osama bin Ladin mentioned the "humiliation and disgrace" tormenting Islam for "more than eighty years." Princeton Near Eastern scholar Bernard Lewis notes that the reference likely puzzled many Westerners. Many Muslims – for whom Islamic history carries divine significance – understood. Bin Ladin referred to the 1918 defeat of the once- mighty Ottoman Empire and to British and French partitioning of Ottoman territory. Secular Turks soon also abolished the caliphate, or succession of rulers of all Sunni Islam. Desecration of this symbol of Muslim unity has pained many Muslims ever since.{4}

For centuries, the Islamic world had displayed military, economic and scientific superiority. But European development eventually overtook Islam.{5} Today, United States ties with Israel and involvement in Saudi Arabia have kindled ire.

Bin Ladin calls on Muslims to "obey God's command to kill the Americans and plunder their possessions . . . to kill Americans and their allies, both civil and military . . . ."{6} He and his sympathizers want to eliminate Western influence and restore their version of Islam to the world.{7}

Socio-cultural Roots of Hatred

History is behind some of the radical Muslim hatred of the West. But so are cultural differences. Would you believe that dancing in an American church helped fuel Muslim anger today?

In 1948, Sayyid Qutb visited the United States for Egypt's Ministry of Education. His stay left him shocked with what he perceived as moral degeneracy and sexual promiscuity.

He wrote that even American religion was tainted by materialism and consumerism. Churches marketed their services to the public like merchants and entertainers. Success, big numbers, "fun," and having "a good time" seemed crucial to American churches.{8}

He especially deplored clergy-sanctioned dances at church recreation halls. When the ministers lowered the lights, the dances became hot. Here is Qutb's "PG" description: "The dance is inflamed by the notes of the gramophone . . . the dance-hall becomes a whirl of heels and thighs, arms enfold hips, lips and breasts meet, and the air is full of lust." He cited the famous Kinsey Reports as evidence of American sexual debauchery.{9} Qutb, who was dark skinned, also experienced racism in America.{10}

Back in Egypt, Qutb joined the Muslim Brothers organization.{11} Imprisonment and torture made his writings more militant. Qutb became what Georgetown University religion and international affairs professor John Esposito calls "the architect of radical Islam."{12}

Some Muslim Brotherhood groups, offshoots, and alumni are mainstream and nonviolent. Others have a violent legacy. A militant offshoot,{13} Islamic Jihad, assassinated Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. Esposito notes that a radicalized former Muslim Brother, Abdullah Azzam, significantly influenced Usama bin Ladin.{14} Former CIA Middle East case officer Robert Baer observes that a Kuwaiti Muslim Brother, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, became a bin Ladin terror chief.{15}

Secularization, consumerism, materialism, the status of women, sexual mores … all concern radical Muslims.{16} Bernard Lewis notes that Sayyid Qutb's denunciation of American moral flaws became incorporated into radical Islamic ideology. For instance, he says Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, in calling the U.S. the "Great Satan," was being consistent with the Koranic depiction of Satan not as an "imperialist" or "exploiter" but as a seducer, "the insidious tempter who whispers in the hearts of men."{17}

Historical, social and cultural factors have influenced radical Muslim hatred of the West. Consider now how global politics stirs the mix.

Political Roots of Hatred

Bernard Lewis – who is not without his critics{18} – notes an essential difference between Christianity and Islam regarding government and religion. Jesus of Nazareth, the founder of the Christian faith, said, "Give to Caesar what belongs to him. But everything that belongs to God must be given to God."{19} For much of history, this has been understood as recognizing the existence of two distinct authorities, one spiritual and the other political.{20}

But much of Islam has known no such distinction. Muhammad was both a religious and political leader, the Prophet and the head of state. Under his successors, the caliphs, Islam grew into a huge empire and world religion. Islamic shari'a, or Holy Law, deals with power, authority and political philosophy. Specific applications differ among Islamic nations. In an extreme example of this spiritual/political blend, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini once said, "Islam is politics or it is nothing."{21}

With this mindset, the Western world and the United States as superpower become to many Muslims the infidel invaders, imperialist bullies who desecrate Islamic states by force. European colonialism, Western imperialism and U. S. policies are frequent Muslim complaints.{22} Many Muslims deplore the U. S. invasion of Iraq. Of course, U. S. concessions to Israel often are seen as collaboration with an enemy of Islam.

One perceived offense to radical Islam that is sometimes overlooked by Westerners is Western complicity with corrupt rulers of Islamic states. These situations are complex. Oft-mentioned offenses include the 1982 government massacre at the Syrian city of Hama to put down a Muslim Brothers uprising. An estimated ten to twenty-five thousand died, attracting little Western attention. In 1992, with Western approval, the Algerian military cancelled democratic elections to prevent the Islamic Salvation Front from winning them and established

a brutal regime.{23}

Especially galling to radicals is Western complicity with rulers of Saudi Arabia – Islam's Holy Land – whom they see as warped by greed, graft and moral corruption. One Saudi diplomat noted after 9/11, "What shocks me most is why they hit America and not us."{24}

But they did hit America, and radical views of politics played an important role.

Religious Roots of Hatred

Still other reasons some radical Muslims hate you involve religion.

Wahhabism, a movement much in the news, was founded by an eighteenth century theologian, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al- Wahhab. Wahhab wanted to purify Islam and return it to its authentic ways. He condemned and burned books contradicting his views. Wahhab's followers became fiercely exclusive. Their principal focus was not outsiders but insiders, Muslims whom they felt had practiced a "less-pure" form of Islam. They could be vicious, desecrating holy places and slaughtering Muslims who differed.{25}

Wahhabism's ongoing Saudi links would propel it into international influence. When Saudi forces conquered Arabia in 1925, they controlled Islam's two most holy cities, Mecca and Medina. When Saudi Arabia became oil-rich, the stage was set. Wahhabism became the "official, state-enforced doctrine of one of the most influential governments in all Islam,"{26} which hosts annual pilgrimages to Mecca involving millions of Muslims from around the world. Saudi oil wealth funded Wahhabi propagation of their views at home and abroad.{27} Wahhabism affected both Usama bin Ladin and the Taliban.{28}

Wahhabism's pervasive influence troubles Princeton's Lewis. Imagine, he says, that the Ku Klux Klan or a similar group

took control of Texas and its oil and could widely propagate its version of "Christianity" through heavily endowed schools and colleges.{29} Georgetown's Esposito distinguishes puritanical, politically conservative Wahhabism from radical, militant Wahhabism.{30}

Former CIA agent Robert Baer notes that Wahhabi soldiers fought the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s, with U.S. support. There, Wahhabis linked with radical followers of Sayyid Qutb, an alliance Baer likens to "mixing nitroglycerin in a blender."{31} A new, more militant strain of Wahhabism developed in addition to mainstream Wahabbism, with a new emphasis on taking the fight to outsiders: the infidels and the West.{32}

After al-Qaeda attacked three housing complexes in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May 2003, the Saudi government began to crack down on terrorists and violent rhetoric in the mosques. Initial results were mixed. U. S. Ambassador Robert Jordan reported, "We have noticed lately in influential mosques the imam has condemned terrorism and preached in favor of tolerance, then closed the sermon with 'O God, please destroy the Jews, the infidels and all who support them.'"{33}

Psychological Roots of Hatred

In addition to the foregoing, there are psychological factors at work in radical Muslim hatred.

Lewis writes, "Almost the entire Muslim world is affected by poverty. . . ."{34} Georgetown's John Esposito sees "weak economies, illiteracy, and high unemployment"{35} in many Muslim nations. *Relative deprivation* can be psychologically debilitating. If you are poor, some theories argue, and you see others more prosperous, you may feel inferior, trapped or depressed.

Reports from the United Nations and the World Bank note that

Arab nations fall far behind the West in "job creation, education, technology, and productivity."{36} (There are, of course, exceptions.) When global media bring pictures of lavish Western life, frustration burns and some extremists lash out. One Egyptian playwright described these extremists as "pathologically jealous." He said, "They feel like dwarfs, which is why they search for towers and all those who tower mightily."{37}

Feelings of rejection play a part. Many Western societies have been slow to accept Muslims. The father of shoe bomber Richard Reid said of his son, "He was born here in Britain, like I was. It was distressing to be told things like 'Go home, nigger.'"{38}

New York Times foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman speaks of a "*poverty of dignity*" affecting even privileged Muslims. Belief in Islam's superiority contrasted with economic and military disparity in the context of a repressive regime can engender feelings of humiliation, prompting vengeance against the perceived cause.{39}

What is an appropriate biblical response to radical Muslim hatred? A complete answer would take volumes. May I suggest four ideas?

First, *love your enemies*. Jesus of Nazareth taught, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."{40} It is not emotionally easy for me to love Usama bin Ladin or to pray for him. I have to ask God for strength for that.

Second, *support national defense*. Paul, one of Jesus' early followers, wrote that governments are to "bear the sword" to subjugate evil.{41} The implications are complex and debatable, but the principle of defending against attack is biblical.

Third, if you are not a Muslim, *learn about Islam*.{42} One writer remarked of some of Israeli King David's supporters

that they "understood the times."{43} Paul sought to understand cultural and religious views of his day.{44}

And fourth, *befriend some Muslims*, perhaps from your neighborhood or workplace. In humility, learn about their families, their hopes and dreams. If appropriate, discuss your respective faiths. You may be surprised at the similarities. And your kindness may generate warmth toward the spirit that drives your kind behavior and speech.{45}

This article is adapted with permission from Rusty Wright, "Why Radical Muslims Hate You," The Plain Truth, *September/October 2004, 6-9. © Rusty Wright 2004.*

Notes

1. *Al-Riswāla*, issue of September 13, 2001; in Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 156-7.

2. Helen Gibson, "Islam's Other Hot Spots: Britain: No Pause in the Recruiting," *TIME.com*, posted September 7, 2003 at http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101030915/wpakistan.html; from *TIME* magazine issue cover date September 15, 2003.

3. John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xiii, xx, 225-226, 239.

4. Lewis 2003, op. cit., xv-xviii. Bin Laden is not alone in his concern. For example, the founding leader of Ansar al-Islam, a fundamentalist militia in northern Iraq with suspected Al-Qaeda ties, sees his work as part of a lengthy Islamic struggle to restore the caliphate. See Neil MacFarquhar, "Islamic Militants Said to Infiltrate Iraq to Battle the U.S. Occupiers," *New York Times* (AOL edition), August 13, 2003.

5. Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and*

Modernity in the Middle East (New York: Perennial/HarperCollins Publishers, 2002), 6-7 ff., especially 18-63.

6. Lewis 2003, op. cit., xxvii.

7. Lewis 2002, op. cit., 164-5.

8. Lewis 2003, op. cit., 76-79.

9. Sayyid Qutb, *Al-Islwām wa-mushkilwāt al-hadwāra* (n.p., 1967), 80ff; in Lewis 2003, op. cit., 78-79.

10. John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 57.

11. Lewis 2003, op. cit., 79, 76.

12. Esposito 1999, op. cit. 135, and personal interview, November 19, 2003.

13. Esposito 1999, op. cit., 272, also calls it a "splinter group."

14. Esposito, personal interview, November 19, 2003; Esposito 2003, op. cit., 7, 19.

15. Robert Baer, *Sleeping with the Devil: How Washington Sold Our Soul for Saudi Crude* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2003), 91-128, 195 ff.

16. See Lewis 2002, op. cit., 64-81 for historical perspective on socio-cultural differences between Islam and the West. See Esposito 1999, op. cit., for additional perspective that differs from Lewis' on certain key points. See Thomas A. Friedman, *Longitudes and Attitudes: The World in the Age of Terrorism* (New York: Anchor Books/Random House, 2002/2003), 334, 357, ff., for a contemporary journalist's perspective.

17. Lewis 2003, op. cit., 81. The final quotation in the paragraph to which this note refers, "the insidious tempter…",

is from Qur'an CXIV, 4, 5.

18. For example, Esposito 1999, op. cit., 219 ff.

19. Matthew 22:21 NLT.

20. Lewis 2002, op. cit., 97.

21. Lewis 2003, op. cit., 5-8; see also Lewis 2002 op. cit., 96-116, and Esposito 2003, op. cit., 67-68.

22. Esposito 1999, op. cit., 45-73, 222.

23. Lewis 2003, op. cit., 103-112.

24. Baer, op. cit., 166.

25. Lewis 2003, op. cit., 120-124 ff.

26. Ibid., 128.

27. Ibid., 123-128.

28. Esposito 2003, op. cit., 5, 7, 16, 48, 108-109.

29. Ibid., 129.

30. Esposito 2003, op. cit., 49, 111, 115.

31. Baer, op. cit., 89-90. Baer here refers to Wahhabis in Afghanistan mixing with Muslim Brothers. Esposito, personal interview, November 19, 2003, feels it is more precise to say that the Wahhabis there mixed with radical followers of Sayyid Qutb.

32. David Van Biema, "Wahhabism: Toxic Faith?", *TIME.com*, posted September 7, 2003, at http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101030915/wwahhabism.html; from *TIME* magazine issue cover date September 15, 2003.

33. Lisa Beyer with Scott MacLeod, "Inside the Kingdom," *TIME.com*, posted September 7, 2003, at

http://www.time.com/time/magazine/printout/0,8816,483269,00.html; from *TIME* magazine issue cover date September 15, 2003.

34. Lewis 2003, op. cit., 113.

35. Esposito 1999, op. cit., 241.

36. Lewis 2003, op. cit., 114.

37. Friedman, op. cit., 216. Friedman takes the quote from an unidentified issue of *TIME*. 38. Ibid., 354-355. Friedman cites *TIME* of February 25, 2002.

39. Ibid., 242-243; 355 ff. The argument is not that all Muslims live in abject poverty. Many Muslim nations are oil-rich. But oil wealth does not always filter throughout society. Beyond finances, feelings of relative lack of power, influence and respect on the world stage contribute to the poverty of dignity, Friedman holds.

40. Matthew 5:44 NASB.

41. Romans 13:1-4 NASB.

42. For an example of a Christian reflecting on the essentials of Islam, see Rick Rood's, "What is Islam?, http://www.probe.org/probe-answers-e-mail/cults-and-world-religions/what-is-islam.html" and "Probe Answers Our E-mail: Why Do You Lie about Islam?" http://www.probe.org/probe-answers-e-mail/cults-and-world-religions/why-do-you-lie-about-islam.html".

43. 1 Chronicles 12:32 NASB.

44. Acts 17:16-34.

45. Colossians 4:5-6.

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Islam Day in Hawaii – Misinterpreting Tolerance

May 20, 2009

On May 6, 2009, the Hawaii State Senate overwhelmingly passed a bill by a 22-3 vote to recognize September 24th, 2009 as Islam Day. The reason for this bill was to recognize "the rich religious, scientific, cultural and artistic contributions that Islam and the Islamic world have made. It does not call for any spending or organized celebration of Islam Day."{1}

Democrat Senator Will Espero presented his reason for this bill stating, "We are a state of tolerance. We understand that people have different beliefs. We may not all agree on every single item and issue out there, but to say and highlight the negativity of the Islamic people is an insult to the majority of believers who are good law-abiding citizens of the world."{2}

Two Republican senators opposed the bill, stating their reasons. Republican Senator Fred Hemmings said, "I recall radical Islamists around the world cheering the horrors of 9/11. That is the day all civilized people of all religions should remember."{3} Republican Senator Sam Slom stated, "I don't think there's any country in the history of the world that has been more tolerant than the United States of America, and because of that tolerance, we've looked the other way a lot of times, and many thousands of our citizens have been killed by terrorists."{4}

How should we approach this issue as believers in Christ? I believe there are two points we should be very concerned about. First, I agree with Sen. Will Espero that the majority

of Muslims are peaceful, law-abiding citizens. However, I do not believe Islam is a religion of tolerance and peace. The teachings of Islam's sacred works and its history reveal this to be the
case.

Throughout the Qur'an Muslims are commanded to spread Islam through the use of force. When Muhammad first began preaching his message, he did teach tolerance of Jews and Christians as he attempted to win converts from these religions. Sura 2:256 teaches that there is to be "no compulsion in religion." However, as he grew in power and the Jews and Christians rejected his message, these commands were later abrogated by later commands to fight against unbelievers in holy war.

Sura 9:5 teaches, "But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them, for Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful."

Sura 9:29 states, "Fight against those who believe not in Allah, nor in the last day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His messenger and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah (tax) with willing submission and feel themselves subdued."

The Qur'an teaches holy war against unbelievers. Muhammad also represents the perfect model for Muslims to copy. Muslims are called to imitate him in all aspects of life. Islamic scholar John Esposito writes,

> "Muslims look to Muhammad's example for guidance in all aspects of life: how to treat friends as well as enemies, what to eat and drink, how to make love and war . . . . His

> impact on Muslim life cannot be overestimated, since he served as both religious and political head of Medina: prophet of God, ruler, military commander, chief judge, lawgiver . . . . Traditions of the Prophet provide guidance for personal hygiene, dress, eating, marriage, treatment of wives, diplomacy, and warfare."{5}

What kind of leader and model was Muhammad? He was a warrior. The history of Islam records his raids on caravans, battles, and the merciless killing of those who disagreed with him. The first biography of Muhammad states he fought twenty-seven battles in which thousands were killed.{6} His successors followed in his footsteps, spreading Islam through jihad attacking the countries of Africa, Asia, and Europe. Many of these countries posed no threat to Muslims nor were they aggressive towards Islam. For example, Egypt was not aggressive towards Islam, yet they were attacked and the Muslims killed over four million Egyptians. The nations of Europe posed no threat yet Islam invaded Europe and nearly conquered Europe until Charles Martel repulsed them in 732 A.D.

Most Muslims are peaceful but the religion of Islam is not a religion of tolerance and peace. In reading some of the authoritative sources of Islam, the Qur'an, the Hadith (sayings and actions of Muhammad), and the earliest biography of Muhammad, one will soon realize this to be the case. Therefore, it is dangerous to tolerate a religion that promotes intolerance and the use of force on unbelievers. Observe the history of Islam when they became the majority and instilled Sharia Law in a country. Once Sharia Law is instituted, they do not tolerate other faiths. In passing this bill, the leaders of Hawaii send the unbalanced message that we will honor this religion and its values, yet ignore the dangers it poses. I believe the leaders of Hawaii do not know what this religion teaches, and its history. It is dangerous then to honor a religion that poses such a threat to our

nation and civilization.

Second, there is a misunderstanding of tolerance. Senators state tolerance as a reason to honor Islam. However, true tolerance has moral guidelines and limits. A tolerant society should not tolerate pedophiles or the abuse of women or racial discrimination. Tolerance does not mean all religions and values are equal and true, and therefore should be allowed to permeate a culture. However, this appears to be the definition the leaders of Hawaii are going by. True tolerance has its limits; it does not tolerate all beliefs. Should we tolerate racism and groups like the KKK that promote this belief? Would we in the name of tolerance have a KKK day? What about Nazism? What about the Taliban?

If we are to tolerate all beliefs as equally valid and true and worthy of recognition, we will end up allowing groups like these to permeate our culture. Philosopher Karl Popper states, "If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them."{7} Unlimited tolerance with no moral guidelines will eventually lead to the downfall of our civilization as we allow false ideologies to destroy the moral foundations of our nation.

I ask the leaders of Hawaii to study the religion of Islam and its history from its beginning to what is occurring now in Europe. I believe Islam represents one of the great threats to western civilization and if we do not stand against its ideas, we may soon succumb to its tyranny.

For more information please see