

Why Not All Muslims Want to Kill You

A former Muslim explains the stereotypes surrounding Islam—and how to reach its followers.

It was in the early 1970s that a figure arose suddenly on the Middle East stage who loomed large as a hero throughout the Muslim world. His name was Yasser Arafat. His cause and that of his organization, the Palestine Liberation Organization, or PLO, inspired scores of Muslim youth to engage in armed guerilla warfare against Israel and in support of Palestinian self-rule. Among them was an impressionable young man named Mohammad.

Mohammad had been born into a Hashemite Arab family. This heritage was no small thing—they were direct descendants of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam and the religion's founder. They were a respected clan, made up of generals, ranking government officials, political figures and highly educated professionals. Mohammad's father was an army general decorated for bravery. As a young man in Pakistan where the family lived, Mohammad also served as an army officer; and having dreams of jihad and martyrdom, he had seen combat.

Yet Mohammad had also grown greatly disillusioned with life. He was looking for a cause to live and die for.

Zealous for the PLO's purpose, he decided to become what he called a "freedom fighter," or to others, a terrorist. He began to collect weapons and grenades, readying himself for radical resistance, until an army-officer friend tipped him off that military intelligence was on to him and he should tone it down.

Then one day in December 1975, a young Englishman, the son of one of the wealthiest and most well-known Christians in

England, happened to be passing through Pakistan. He stopped for a day or so in the city of Lahore where Mohammad lived. The Englishman decided to spend his time there handing out tracts to people in the streets. Before he went out, he knelt and pleaded with God to give him "just one soul for Jesus from this Muslim land!"

Mohammad was in town that day and spotted the very tall white man handing out tracts. He walked up to him and looked into his eyes, later describing what he saw: "When I looked into his eyes I saw a joy and a peace there that I had never had in my life. He had something that I had never had but badly wanted."

The Englishman shared Jesus Christ with the young Muslim, who responded by receiving Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Three days later Mohammad received the call of God to preach the gospel. Forsaking everything, he obeyed God. He was soon arrested for preaching Christ to Muslims and was imprisoned for almost a year.

Upon his release he was told that if he did not recant his faith in Jesus and go back to Islam he would be killed. He decided to escape from Pakistan. After a long journey through several countries he ended up in Belgium where he worked with Operation Mobilization, an international missions and evangelism organization.

The ministry injected into Mohammad's spirit a zeal and passion to take the gospel to the lost. From Belgium, he went to Sweden, where he was granted political asylum. He was also baptized with the Holy Spirit and continued his ministry of reaching the lost.

Today, more than three decades later, this former Muslim has preached Jesus in 70 nations. He holds crusades every year in which he sees more than 1 million people come to Christ. More than 1,000 churches have been planted as a result of his

ministry. He has seen the dead raised, the lame walk and the blind see. He glorifies Jesus for all the mighty works of God that he has been privileged to witness.

When Jesus Gets Hold of a Muslim

I who am writing this am that young ex-Muslim Mohammad. My life testifies to what our Lord Jesus can do when he gets hold of a Muslim!

Today I am known as Christopher, the name I chose legally for myself in 1981. The same year, somebody brought a young Arab-Muslim man to my door. He wanted to hear about Jesus Christ. I shared Christ with him for several days, and he gave his life to Jesus. We baptized him in water, and I disciplined him for several months. I then went on to Bible school in the U.S. and sent this man to live with some friends in England.

God is using him mightily in a Muslim country today. What is happening there reminds us of the book of Acts. The dead are coming back to life, the lame are walking, the blind are receiving their sight and multitudes are coming to Jesus. He has tens of thousands of born-again, Spirit-filled ex-Muslims in his churches. He is at the center of the biggest modern-day move of God in the Arab world.

Again, this is what our Lord Jesus can do when he gets hold of a Muslim!

All this has happened because a young Englishman pleaded with God for "just one soul for Jesus!" I thank God this man chose to love Muslims instead of hate them. He chose to bring Jesus to me instead of calling for my death and looking at me as an enemy.

But do you know what really got me? It was the true and genuine love and acceptance for me that I saw in the eyes of those first Christians I met. That broke me! *To the love of Jesus, Islam has no answer!*

The Bible says such things as: "Love your enemies," "Bless them who curse you," "Overcome evil with good." Again—to the love of Jesus, Islam has no answer!

Behind the Islam Veil

✖ The religion of Islam has been around for 1,400 years.

Today Muslims make up more than 20 percent of the world's population, or one in every five people. As Christians charged with taking the gospel to the whole world, we need to know what Muslims believe.

They are monotheistic, meaning they believe in one god—whom they call Allah. Incidentally, the word *Allah* pre-dates Islam. It doesn't belong exclusively to Muslims. Arab Christians have always used it as the generic word for deity (as one would say *God* in English).

When Muhammad came, he took the word and made it the name of the god he worshipped. So for Muslims, *Allah* is not only the generic word for "God" in Arabic, it is also the name of their god, as Yahweh is the name of our God. Arab Christians use *Allah* in prayer, but when they do so they are not praying to the Muslim god but using the generic Arabic word for God.

Muslims also believe that Jesus ('Isa in Arabic) was the greatest of all the prophets after Muhammad. They believe He was born of a virgin, ascended to heaven, is with God and is coming back. They also believe He is Al-Maseeha (*Messiah*), or "Anointed One," and that He healed the sick. They believe that in His name miracles are still available to humanity today. This is why I see many sick, diseased and infirm Muslims come to my meetings in Muslim countries!

On the other hand, what Muslims *do not* believe is that Jesus is the Son of God. They also do not believe He died on the cross. These two denials—His sonship and death on the cross—are clearly stated in their scriptures, the Quran. They, however, honor and deeply respect Jesus Christ and the Old

Testament prophets.

Having read all this, some might be tempted to think Islam is tantalizingly similar to Christianity and that Muslims and Christians worship the same God. The truth is, the Quran's clear and categorical rejection of the divinity and crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ reveals Islam's truly demonic origins. It shows also how distant in truth it really is from Christianity.

While it is true Muslims and Christians share the same values and convictions in many things, the fact remains that the divinity of Jesus, His atoning death on the cross and the power of His resurrection are the bedrock of Christianity. Islam totally denies these very foundations of our faith.

Are All Muslims Terrorists?

Most articles and books written by Christians about Islam and Muslims in recent times have focused on Islamic terrorism. They have left people believing most Muslims are terrorists and vicious killers. This has planted fear, distrust and even outright hatred of Muslims in the hearts of many Americans.

On several occasions I have had Christians come up to me with tears in their eyes and confess they actually hated Muslims and Arabs. Also, almost nothing has been written to remind us that Muslims are loved by God, that Jesus died for them and that they too must be reached with gospel.

Added to this is the fact that the version of Christianity many practice in America is heavily loaded with nationalism and politics. This caused Muslims, after the tragedy of 9/11, to become enemies of America and therefore, by default, also enemies of God.

While it is true there are extremely violent Islamic fundamentalists who threaten the world, it must be remembered that they make up only a small portion of the 1.3 billion

Muslims worldwide. Most Muslims in our midst are ordinary people working to feed their families and raise their children. They do not hate America. They came here with the same dream that other immigrants did—to make better lives for themselves.

Living here, they are concerned about the same things that concern us. They care about the declining moral state of our society and the affect it can have on our children. They want to protect their families just as we do. They live among us and are our neighbors.

We have to think this way about them: *Could it be that God has brought them here from closed Muslim nations so they may receive Jesus and then go out to their own people with the gospel?* We must reach them with the gospel of Jesus!

We must also remember that Muslims are not our enemies; rather the spirit behind Islam is. The war against this spirit cannot be fought and won in the flesh. It can only be won on our knees and with our efforts to reach these precious people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How You Can Reach Muslims

We Christians should have no enemies because our DNA is one of faith and love, not fear and hatred. We must not forget we have received commandments to bless those who curse us, to overcome evil with good and to preach the gospel to the lost.

It is these things, not a spirit of fear, that should be in the forefront of our hearts and minds when we look at the Muslims living in our midst. If we are willing to lay down our lives to reach a certain group of people with the love of Jesus, it becomes impossible for us to hate them!

I have three keys to reaching Muslims with the gospel:

1. The Love of God. Muslims are generally warm and friendly

people who respond well to love and kindness. Their culture is one of hospitality, generosity and fellowship. In the Middle East, everything is based on relationship and covenants. Instead of looking at Muslims with fear and suspicion, befriend them, invite them to your home for a meal (no pork!), and show them warmth and kindness. You'll be amazed to see how they respond.

2. Personal Testimonies. Muslims also respond well to people's personal testimonies of what Jesus has done in their lives; testimonies of lives transformed, of healings, of direct answers to prayer and of God's provision. They find this most fascinating and gripping because such things are totally foreign to Muslims. Their god is silent and hasn't spoken for 1,400 years!

3. Signs, Wonders and Miracles. Muslims greatly respect and respond to the supernatural work of God—signs, wonders and miracles. This is a major key. Muslims actually acknowledge there is healing in Jesus but not in Muhammad. I have never met a Muslim who has ever turned down an invitation to receive prayer in the name of Jesus when it comes to disease or demonic oppression.

Many Muslims today have seen their faith in Islam shaken, and they need Jesus Christ. As it was in my case, they can see Him only when we let His life, light and love shine through us. Jesus Christ changed my life, bringing me out of the darkness of Islam into His light.

I look at the vast numbers of Muslims still in slavery to Islam. Jesus died for them so they may be saved. What a great and wonderful harvest of souls we have before us, ready to be reaped for the kingdom of God!

Christopher Alam is the founder of Dynamis World Ministries, which he started as a missions organization in order to preach behind the Iron Curtain before the fall of communism in

Eastern Europe. The ministry has spread to Asia, Africa and Latin America, and Alam has preached the gospel in 70 countries. His autobiography, *Out of Islam*, tells his journey of faith.