

General Topics :: Is Islam truly a religion of peace? -turner

Is Islam truly a religion of peace? -turner - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/3/22 13:56

Is Islam truly a religion of peace?

by Kevin Turner

Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God?
 Are the Bible and the Koran basically similar?
 Is Islam a religion that promotes peace? Are all Muslims terrorists?
 Would Allah commend Bin Laden for his good work and faithful service?

These are many of the questions that I am continually asked as I travel, speaking in churches and to various groups. Since the 'War on Terror' began, Christians, as well as non-believers, have been seeking answers on these and other critical questions, desperate to come up with understanding to learn why terrorists have singled out the West to wage Jihad and Holy War. (Incidentally Islam is also at war with Hindus in India and Buddhists in Thailand and any other religion or group that they see in need of eradication or forced conversion.)

Our President continues to assure the American people that Islam is a peaceful religion, and in fact, "one of the great religions of the world," he says. Terrorists have hijacked peaceful Islam, the pundits say. And the attacks that Christians and Westerners endure? That's the work of very misguided zealots. Indeed many Evangelical Christians say we have the same roots as Muslims— aren't we all part of the monotheistic (one-God) faith? Bin Laden and his cohorts do not really practice what Islam teaches, right? Muslims believe in Jesus similar to the way Christians do. The Koran and the Bible are basically the same.... On and on they go— making statements that are at times simply posed as rhetorical questions, lacking regard or understanding of some important facts.

While I understand that most people simply do not have the time to conduct extensive studies on Islam, or other religions for that matter, many are now interested in understanding Islam, looking for the truth of what this religion really believes and teaches.

I must confess that my own studies were initiated from necessity rather than desire, by virtue of the work I have been doing in regions from Bosnia to Sudan. Over the past fifteen years my learning has been out of a need to understand as I found myself working in cultures and places I simply did not comprehend.

I have many friends who are Muslims from different countries around the world, and I have been blessed by their kindness and friendship. In fact, I have actually had my life saved by the actions of Muslims. I do not hate nor dislike Muslims, and in no way do I seek to encourage bitterness nor anger towards these people.

In short, Muslims are the first victims of Islam and its insidious bondage. In fact, many innocent Muslims have been killed by radical fundamentalists for not taking a hard line stance on such benign things as wearing lipstick, accidentally exposing their skin, or taking political postures that would be seen as pro-western, i.e. voting or promoting democracy instead of authoritarian rule.

To understand Islam you must understand the Koran, Islam's holiest book that was dictated by Mohammed, its prophet, who was spoken to through meeting with an angel named Gabriel, who in turn was speaking for Allah, the god of Islam. Since Mohammed was illiterate, he simply orally communicated to his followers what would later become the Koran. Mohammed died in the arms of one of his wives, roughly around 632 AD, whom he was engaged to when she was six years old, and married at the age of nine. The earliest fragments of the Koran date to roughly 725 AD, a century after Mohammed's death, and the complete Koran was not written until some two or more centuries after he was dead.

Once you do try to read the Koran, you will find as I did, that it is poorly written, lacks any flow, and contradicts itself continually. To truly understand the Koran, you must also read the Sunnah and Hadith, the first being written about the life of Mohammed over a century after his death, and the second written over two hundred years after he was dead, containing the narration of pieces of his life and what his teachings were. The Sunnah is the basis for Islamic Jurisprudence (Sharia— meaning the path), and is authoritative for rulings in Islamic states. Having laid some foundations, allow me to exami

ne some of the questions that inspired this article.

Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God?

I feel that the best thing I can do for most of these questions is to simply let the writings of Islam, such as the Koran, Sunnah, and Hadith speak for themselves. I am also supposing that the reader has general knowledge of the Holy Bible and its basic doctrines. I will not attempt in this article to explain the Biblical doctrines, but rather show what Islam teaches. The New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus was virgin born and that He is part of the Triune God. Now read from Surah 5: 72-75.

72. They do blaspheme who say: "Allah is Christ the son of Mary." But said Christ: "O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." Whoever joins other gods with Allah, Allah will forbid him the garden, and the Fire will be his abode. There will for the wrongdoers be no one to help.

73. They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One Allah. If they desist not from the word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them.

74. Why turn they not to Allah, and seek His forgiveness? For Allah is Oftforgiving, Most Merciful.

75. Christ the son of Mary was no more than an apostle; many were the apostles that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food. See how Allah doth make His signs clear to them; yet see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth!

Again we can read in the Hadith that they say Jesus was not God but just man and will judge Christians who believe differently. -Hadith 4:657

Allah's apostle said, "By Him in whose hands my soul is, surely the son of Mary will soon descend amongst you and will judge mankind justly (as a Just Ruler); he will break the cross and kill the pigs and there will be no Jizya (i.e. taxation taken from non Muslims). Money will be in abundance so that nobody will accept it, and a single prostration to Allah (in prayer) will be better than the whole world and whatever is in it." Abu Huraira added "If you wish, you can recite (this verse of the Holy Book): 'And there is none of the people of the Scriptures (Jews and Christians) but must believe in him (i.e. Jesus was just a human being) before his death. And on the Day of Judgment He will be a witness against the Christians.'" "

Are the Koran and the Bible similar?

In Surah five, Islam clearly teaches that it is the final revelation given by Allah to man and takes precedence over the Bible. And in fact Islam teaches that the Bible is corrupted and was changed by man. Islam sees the Koran as offering corrections of the Bible. Many of the Surahs teach that Allah sent corrections of the Bible to Mohammed and are hence "corrected" the Koran. Please note the discrepancies from the Bible narrative:

Surah 28:9 Pharaoh's wife adopted Moses. Exodus 2:10 tells us that it was Pharaoh's daughter that adopted Moses.

In Surah 5:116 the trinity includes Mary, but Orthodox Christianity teaches that God is one substance and three persons.

Surah 28:38 and 40:25 teach that a servant of Pharaoh built the tower of Babel, but Genesis 11 tells us clearly who constructed the tower and this was long before there were Pharaohs.

Surah 2:249 states that it was Saul who led Gideon's army even though Saul was not yet even born.

Surah 4:157 says that Jesus was not crucified, and anyone with an entry level understanding of the Bible knows that the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus are the central theme of the Bible.

Surah 22: 34-37 teaches that blood is unimportant to Allah, but Leviticus 7 tells us that shedding of blood is essential for the remission of sin, and Hebrews 9:22-28 echoes the work of Christ.

Finally, Surah 3:85 and 5:72 tell us according to the Koran that Christians will be in Hell!

Is Islam a religion of peace?

Of course not all Muslims are killers nor will all wantonly go against the law. The question is not so much, "What do all Muslims do?" Rather, I wish to delve into the reality of what Islam really teaches.

By the end of its first century, Islam dominated by the sword from the border of Western China to the south of France, and all of North Africa to Morocco. The Citadel in Cairo, Egypt has a museum dedicated to the battles that Mohammed and his successors fought to force Islam upon the inhabitants.

Islamic teachings say that the world is divided into two distinct groups, the first being the 'Dar al Salam' or the 'World in Submission' and the 'Dar al Harb' or the 'World at War' meaning anyone who is not in submission to the will of Allah. In 691 AD the Dome of the Rock Mosque was built upon the Jewish Temple Mount, and in 715 AD the Great Mosque of Damascus was built over the Cathedral of St. John to demonstrate the superiority of Islam over Christianity. The battle of Tours in 732 was literally the key battle in France that stopped the full European spread of Islam. Charles "The Hammer" Martel crushed the advancing Muslim armies and sent them back to Morocco pushing them back past the Straights of Gibraltar.

Many now say it was the Crusades of the Christians that have caused the present day turmoil between Islam and Christians, or the West. The sixth leader or Caliphate of Islam was named Al-Hakim and he ruled from Cairo. North Africa, previously a Christian stronghold, had been completely taken over by Islam and huge advances were made in Europe. Hakim declared himself God incarnate and brutalized Christians and destroyed their holy sites until 1021 AD, and in 1064 AD seven thousand Christians were attacked and slaughtered while on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

After years of Islamic expansion by the edge of the sword, where Muslims were taking over Churches and destroying religious sites, the Crusades took the battle back to the Holy Land. This endeavor forced Islam back into the Middle East and out of Europe. Yes, history tells us that the so-called Christians were responsible for many attacks against Jews and did many things that certainly are not the marks of a believer. However, in the large scheme of things they were responsible for checking Islam once again, even though most of the Crusader battles were losses. By 1453 AD, Muslims had taken over the seat of the Eastern church in Constantinople and converted St. Sophia Church into a huge Mosque that still exists to this day. With the end of World War One came the end of the Islamic empire via the Ottoman empire who sided with the Germans. Since the end of WWI, Islam has been staggering and has blushed for its loss of world dominance. Those like Bin Laden and other terrorists are longing once again for the rise of the Islamic empire.

What about Bin Laden?

Is he really interpreting the Koran correctly? Would Allah say to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant?" Listen to the Koran and the writers of the Sunnah and Hadith.

Bukhari: Allah's Apostle said, "I have been victorious with terror!"

Koran: "I shall terrorize the infidels. So wound their bodies and incapacitate them!"

Tabari: The battle cry was: "Kill! Kill! Kill!"

Koran: "Wipe the infidels out to the last."

Koran: "Fight and kill disbelievers wherever you find them. Take them captive, harass them and ambush them using every stratagem of war."

Koran: "Fight them till all opposition ends and the only religion is Islam."

Ishaq: "We are pledging ourselves to wage war against all mankind."

There are the words of the Koran and its leaders who are responsible for the writings surrounding the Koran and Islam.

What we see, even on a surface-level inspection, is that Islam is a religion of terror and hatred. This is because the god of Mohammed is a god who is totally different than the God of the Holy Bible who is love, and who gives the sacrifice instead of demanding sacrifice. While Muslims may be offended by reading what I have said, I can only ask them to reason with me as I have quoted the Koran continually to show the points.

My prayer is that Christians will use this material to learn not to hate Muslims but to see the real culprit is Satan, the father of lies who has propagated this and other false religions to twist the hearts of humanity to veil the true Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The first victim of Islam is the Muslim, and we must have broken hearts filled with love and truth to confront the enemy of our souls (and theirs) to see them snatched from the power of darkness and brought into the Kingdom of our King.

Re: Is Islam truly a religion of peace? -turner - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/22 14:26

i live in an area with many Muslims, and when i talk to them, i always tell them about their sin, if God is a holy God how can he forgive you? they don't know, they always hope for the best, and hope God will show them mercy and by obeying him they will get into heaven. Then i tell them if God forgives them he is no longer Holy and righteous, he is no better than a corrupt judge, then give them the gospel....

they have a problem figure out how Jesus can be God's son if he could be wiped and crucified by the Jews, they have very limited understanding, and the little they have is often wrong. But as to all men show them how lost they are, utterly lost in their sin, without any hope at all, then we can give them the good news.

Re: Is Islam truly a religion of peace? -turner - posted by joyinjesus8 (), on: 2007/3/22 16:24

That was a very interesting read Brother Greg. Thank you.

Not all Muslims are terrorists, but unfortunately there is the underlying purpose for Muslim to 'take over the whole world' by any means. In your studies Brother, can you please tell me if the Muslim women go to heaven - or do they believe it's just the men who do. There are women suicide bombers - is there a 'reward' for them?

Good read for Greg - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/3/22 18:44

(<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/2001/04/imilit.htm>) Original Here Don McCurry is considered by many in the missions community to be one of the foremost experts on reaching Muslims with the Gospel, I had the wonderful opportunity to hear him speak just a few months ago (in fact I owe him \$15). -Ian

**Islam and Christian Militarism
How Christianity has fueled Muslim violence**

Don McCurry

Excerpted from the new book by Don McCurry, "Healing the Broken Family of Abraham: New Life for Muslims"

For the first three centuries of its history, the Church kept itself separate from secular power. That changed with Constantine, the Roman Emperor who, after his victories in the civil wars that wracked the empire, embraced Christianity and then declared it the official religion of the empire. Around A.D. 312 Constantine, as a Christian Emperor, went forth to conquer using the symbol of the cross on the shields of his warriors. From that time forward, Christianity has been compromised with various levels of entanglement with empire and plagued by those who have failed to distinguish the secular realm from the spiritual, who have used force to defend their faith, or promote it, as a banner under which to wage its unholy wars.

It is not my intention to get into a long discussion on the question of the separation of church and state. But I do embrace the idea, and believe that those who have sought to advance the gospel of Christ by military means, for example, the Spanish Conquistadors, have done tremendous harm to the cause and the name of Christ. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the fourteen centuries of Christianity's interaction with Islam.

Muhammad (A.D. 570-632) was aware throughout his lifetime of the long struggle between the Persians and the Christians. The latter was called the Eastern Roman Empire or Byzantine by their foes. In the year that Muhammad made his fateful emigration from Mecca to Medina (A.D. 622), the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius launched a seven-year "holy war" against the Persians. Instead of serving as a check and balance to the Byzantines' militaristic excesses, the Church joined with it, thus weakening the effectiveness of the spirit and teaching with which Christ wanted to establish His kingdom.

How tragic that Muhammad, watching a Christian empire in action, drew the conclusion that one's faith should be wed to the sword. In the most vivid way, Muhammad saw in the example of the Byzantines a model for wedding the sword to the faith. It only took his inventive mind to appropriate the ancient Bedouin tribal tradition of razzia, that is, raiding one another's caravans, and rename it jihad, that is, striving in the way of God.¹

The period of the Crusades (A.D. 1095-1291), those Christian military expeditions commissioned by the Church to wrest

the "Holy Land" out of the hands of the Muslims, were not an exception to wars fought in the name of and with the blessing of the Church. Rather, they were in keeping with unbroken tradition of Christian militarism introduced by Constantine in the early fourth century.

Muslims gradually came to learn that Christians were dangerous. If ever that was in question, the colonial period (roughly A.D. 1450-1970) laid that doubt to rest forever. Spain and Portugal led the way in the sixteenth century with their warrior-missionary adventures. The next century saw Dutch, French and English enter the field in a mad race to build empires. Before it was over, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Russia had jumped into the game. Of them, only France is still at it, occupying the island of Mayotte and French Guyana. The six Central Asian Muslim republics, which formerly belonged to the recently dissolved Soviet Union (Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan), have only recently become free (December 1991). To this could be added the ill-fated Russian invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1988).

To be fair, by the latter end of the colonial period, many of these Western powers no longer went forth in the name of God and their countries, for in several of them the idea of separation of church and state had taken hold. But missionaries, often of the same nationality as that of the occupying colonial power, followed quickly in their wake. Even though these were technically not religio-military incursions, they were perceived as such by the Muslims. Since Muslims make no distinction between religion and state, they tend to see others the same way. That is, they assume there is an implicit link between our governments and our missionaries.

When one marks on a world map the extent of the colonial powers' occupation of the Muslim world, it comes to about ninety percent. In appendix C, the reader will see just how recent the relinquishment is of these occupied Muslim lands and how fresh the wounds are which Western powers inflicted on Muslims. If only we could go into the Muslim world clean! But it is not to be, especially if we happen to have been born a Westerner. It is easier for missionaries who go forth from countries that were never colonial powers. Even so, Islam contains an inherent animus toward Christianity that must be overcome.

Islam and American Militarism

American readers may need to remind themselves that their country, too, has stained its hands with Muslim blood, beginning in 1898 when America defeated Spain and took over the Philippines. Spain had been trying for centuries to rule the Muslim peoples of Mindanao and the islands of the Sulu Archipelago. They had been at war intermittently with these Muslims for almost four hundred years. America stepped in where Spain left off, and fought the Muslims of the Philippines.

In more recent times, America has exhibited a strange ambivalence in its relations to Muslim countries. She invaded Lebanon in 1956. She bombarded it from the sea in 1986. America is the chief supporter of the modern state of Israel since 1948, and yet she stepped in and forced France, Britain and Israel to back off from their attempted seizure of the Suez Canal in 1956. In the Iran-Iraq War (1979 to 1988), the United States assumed the responsibility of defending Kuwaiti ships, and later all ships under attack by Iran, thus tilting toward Iraq. Yet later (1991), the United States went to war with Iraq to expel Iraqis from Kuwait. The United States' quarrel with Libya is well known. We could say more of our armament deals with several Muslim countries, beginning with Saudi Arabia, and others such as Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan and the Afghan resistance movement.

But the most painful thorn in the side of Islam is what the West and its friends did to bring into being the modern state of Israel. America was the first country to recognize the state of Israel following the United Nations Resolution of 1948. Ever since then, in the eyes of Muslims not only in the Middle East, but around the world, Americans have been perceived as the power behind Israel, and hence the real enemy of Islam. Muslims ever since the Jewish victory in the War of 1967 feel they have been deprived of one of their most treasured possessions: Jerusalem. Muslims consider Jerusalem their third holiest city, after Mecca and Medina. The Dome of the Rock and al-Aksa Mosque, both in Jerusalem, are sought out by pilgrims from all over the Muslim world. In addition, Palestinians were driven out of their land by the Jews in 1948, forced to leave their farms, orchards, businesses, and homes. Palestinian refugee camps can still be found today in Lebanon and Jordan.

When the pain of losing these sacred places, which Muslims had controlled for almost thirteen hundred years, is compounded with the pain of what the Jews have done to the Palestinians, it becomes the most inflammatory issue between Islam and the West—and in line with the way they perceive Westerners. We are considered guilty because of our blind support of Israel. It's as though all of our vaunted espousal of democracy, the rights of individuals, and our well-publicized stance on "human rights" has washed away in the flood of our unquestioning support for political Israel, right or wrong.

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One modern day writer, Barbara Tuchman, has tackled this inexplicable blind spot in our uneven treatment of Jews and Palestinians in her book, *Bible and Sword* (1956). Tuchman, who only traces the history of this issue up to the time of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, maintains that the attachment of the British to the Bible as well as the British drive for empire culminate in their policy to rehabilitate the Jews in their ancient homeland after an absence of two millennia.² Adroitly, she develops through British history the early fascination with the Bible, and hence, the "Holy Land," their involvement in the Crusades, their fascination with the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the Jews, the historic role they saw themselves playing in bringing that about. She also, demonstrating a great feeling for the British instinct for empire, shows how this converged with the religious-cultural preoccupation with the question of the Holy Land from their Christian perspective, and led to the amazing movement to provide the Jews with a homeland again.

In the end, when the British lost interest with the waning of their empire, it was the Americans, like the British, fascinated with biblical history and prophecy, who took up the cause of a homeland for the Jews. The birth of Israel in 1948 could not have happened without the United States. Jewish-Americans responded as volunteers and spilled Muslim blood in vouchsafing the land to the Jews.

The explosion of outrage in the Muslim world was instantaneous. The Muslims have never forgotten. Every ruler of Saudi Arabia from the late King Faisal to the present has proclaimed jihad (holy war) against Israel. That it is not being prosecuted militarily at the present in no way means it has been forgotten. The Muslims, in spite of various peace efforts, are waiting for the most propitious time to commence jihad militarily.

In addition to the pro-Israel foreign policy posture of the United States government, a segment of the American church, based on its own understanding of biblical prophecy, has given unqualified monetary support to Israel. Because of this, Christians are perceived as being religiously, politically, and militarily anti-Muslim. In plain words, we are perceived as the ultimate enemy.

Undoubtedly, Islam presents a formidable challenge to Christian missions. All cross-cultural missions involve replacing or radically altering a people's worldview with one based on the Bible. The clash between that of Islam and a biblical worldview, on the surface so similar, is so sharp that every effort must be made to avoid any other complicating clashes on lesser issues such as nationality, patriotism, political opinions or military adventurism. That is, unless of course, Muslims commit aggressions that force the rest of the world to become involved.

All of these comments, based on recent events, tend to reinforce the impression in Muslim eyes that America is either an extremely suspect friend or a potentially dangerous enemy, or both. The fact that the majority of Protestant missionaries abroad are from the United States (so far) sends mixed signals to our Muslim friends. Their question is, "Are you in league with the political leadership of your country?" Muslims who have never had a personal missionary friend think our answer would be "Yes." They assume Christians are like them. They have seen very few, if any, models of Christians whose supreme loyalty is to a supranational and even a supernatural kingdom of God.

In the several pages we have just been through, we see what happens when Christians disregard our Lord's teaching about the abuse of power. If His kingdom is not to be characterized by soldiers, political boundaries, military adventurism, conquest and forcible subjugation of others, what is it about?

The kingdom of God is about love. It is about serving. It is about humility. It is about truly caring for others. It is about striving to restrain others from their headlong plunge into destruction and instead bringing them into the everlasting kingdom of God's dear Son. The central person of this kingdom is, of course, Jesus Christ, the King who emptied Himself and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and who, in the end, died for us. His teaching is about the renunciation of power, the denying of one's self, giving one's self in service to others.

Muslims, who in my opinion have erred massively in confusing spiritual power with worldly power—power of the sword, fear, and intimidating tactics—are hypersensitive in detecting the same in others. Perhaps no other religion heightens the stark difference between the world's way and the way of God as does Islam. Therefore, the burden is on the Christian to separate himself from the ways of the world, as seen in the history of military states, crusades, colonialism and modern power politics, and to enter the harvest fields equipped only with spiritual weapons and power. The Christian worker who intends to work with Muslims must have come to a deep understanding of the nature of Christ's kingdom, lest he or she become confused and begin to fall back on the use of worldly power, pride, and prejudice.

And the work will not be easy. Jesus, who came as a lamb, sends us as sheep among wolves.

1. W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1974), 108.
2. Barbara W. Tuchman, Bible and Sword, (New York, Funk & Wagnalls, 1956) ix, x.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/3/22 18:50

Greg, thanks for the informative article. Along the lines of trying to understand Muslims here is a small section of an article from AWBE regarding the Islamic mission field. I found this report encouraging.

When watching world news we ought to ask "what is God doing?". He often uses the raging of the nations to praise Him. For example, as a result of instituted Islamic law in Iran, many Muslims have left the country and the Muslim faith, and some are part of a growing number of Iranian Christian churches all across Europe. One Iranian convert described Islam in his country before the Ayatollahs came as a nicely wrapped package up on a shelf. "But then the Imams made us open it and eat it," he said, "and it stunk, and it was bitter."

Because of Immigration and the fact that Europeans aren't having large families, Islam is the fastest growing religion throughout Europe. But what you won't hear on the news is that in France, for example, the fastest growing religious group by conversion is former Muslims becoming Christians. Even though the effects from the spread of Islam are felt all over the world, researchers inform us that more Muslims have come to saving faith in Christ during the past thirty years than in the previous 1,300 years combined."

from the article "God loves Muslims. Do you?"

Bill Commons

Strategic Initiative and Research

ABWE

MC

Re: - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/3/22 19:27

The (<http://www.ijfm.org/index.htm>) International Journal of Frontier Missions has had over 6 volumes dedicated entirely to mission outreach to Islam. This is definitely worth checking out.

<http://www.ijfm.org/archives.htm>