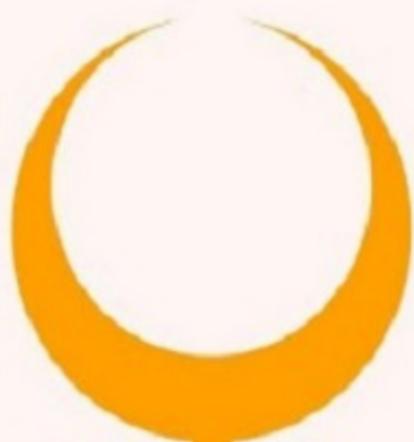


How
to Tell
Others
About



Islam

Yahiya Emerick

www.islamic-invitation.com

How to Tell Others About Islam



By Yahiya Emerick

The logo for Noorart, featuring a stylized sunburst or fan shape above the word "Noorart" in a bold, serif font.

Noorart

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*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate Source of All Mercy.*

Contents

Preface.....	I
Introduction.....	II

Part I Preliminaries

1. The Importance of Da'wah.....	2
2. Necessary Ingredients for Da'wah.....	4
3. Preparations.....	11
4. Available Mediums.....	14

Part II Da'wah in Action

5. Da'wah in the Home.....	26
6. Da'wah to Muslims.....	30
7. Da'wah to Jews.....	36
8. Da'wah to Christians.....	46
9. Da'wah on Campus.....	86
10. Da'wah in Popular Culture.....	90
11. Da'wah at Work.....	96

Part III Other Beneficiaries of Da'wah

12. Hispanic-Americans.....	102
13. Asian-Americans.....	108

14. Native-Americans.....	115
15. The African-American.....	124
16. The Caucasian.....	132
17. Teenagers.....	144
18. The Elderly.....	152
19. The Poor.....	156
20. The Handicapped.....	158
21. Da'wah in Prison.....	160
22. Da'wah in the Military.....	164

Part IV Practical Assistance

23. Advice on Da'wah in North America.....	167
24. The New Muslim.....	177
25. A Syllabus of Study for the New Muslim...	179

Appendices

A. Recommended Reading for a Solid Foundation	184
B. Knowledge of the West and Related Topics.	189
C. Excellent Da'wah Literature.....	197
D. Audio-Visual Listing.....	201
E. Where to Find Islamic Literature.....	203
F. Qur'anic/ Biblical Names.....	205

Sample Da'wah Handouts

Who was Jesus?.....	208
Islam for Americans.....	213

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May Allah have mercy on them all!

Preface

The Muslim community in North America has reached a critical stage in its growth. Hence, there is an urgent need for Muslims, both native and immigrant, to learn how to properly communicate their faith to the society around them. Such an activity is known as *da'wah* and is also an important aspect of living the Islamic way of life. If Muslims are to retain their identity and make a positive contribution on this continent, then they must continue to make their presence and their beliefs felt.

In our research and experience, we have found that many of the techniques currently employed by concerned Muslims to inform the public about Islam are ineffectual at best, and counter-productive at worst. It is mainly for this reason that we have undertaken to produce an instructional volume to meet the changing needs of the da'wah effort in North America. New insights and methods have been introduced into this book as well as previously undiscussed topics.

Though not intended to be a technical work on da'wah, it nonetheless is an important commentary from a different perspective. It may or may not prove useful to Muslims. But no purpose is served in keeping potentially helpful information secret. If we have overlooked any issues or if suggestions are in order, please write to us with your comments so that we may correct any future editions.

Lastly, we seek the grace and benevolence of Almighty Allah and pray for strength in carrying out His Will. When we stumble and make mistakes, as we will invariably do, we shall seek refuge in His Mercy and Forgiveness; for to Allah we belong, and to Him we return.

Yahiya Emerick

Introduction

*"La ilaha illa Allah,
Muhammadar rasul Allah"*

*"There is no god but Allah,
And Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."*

This simple statement is the most powerful declaration ever devised. For beyond the words themselves lies a powerful concept and a compelling ideology. Whole societies, cultures and empires have been elevated with its application, or ruined by its rejection. And yet, away from grandiose movements and campaigns, the lone spiritual wanderer can attain to the highest levels of wisdom and insight, in the contemplation of its mysteries. This declaration of faith, the Shahada, captures the essence of what Islam is all about: peaceful surrender to the will of the Divine.

But Islam is not a new religion that began in the seventh century with a great Prophet. Islam is, rather, the latest installment of a Message brought by all the previous Prophets. The specific circumstances of the age and culture determined the structure of those teachings, but the basic directive was always the same: surrender to the Universal Will and do what is morally right.

If, over the course of time, a people came to forget, ignore or change the teachings bequeathed by their Messenger, Allah, in His Mercy, would renew His Message by sending fresh guidance. In this way, every age had access to Divine precepts. Allah says,

"Certainly, We have raised among every nation a Messenger who declared, 'Serve Allah and shun false objects of worship.' Thus were some guided by Allah, while ruin was justified on others. Travel over the earth and see what befell those who rejected their Messengers."

(Qur'an 16:36) ¹

This process of revelation and correction went on unabated through human history. ² Some of the Messengers brought major revelations and scriptures, while most were teachers of wisdom and morality to their community or tribe. But at long last, after many thousands of years, humanity finally reached a point in its development when one final Messenger would be sufficient: when a last Prophet from Allah could deliver a way of life applicable to all. This last Prophet was Muhammad, may he be blessed.

Allah says concerning His last Messenger,

"O followers of earlier revelation! Our Messenger has come to you bringing clarity after a break (in the chain) of Messengers. This, lest you might claim, 'We never received any announcer of good news nor any Warner.' Now you have received an announcer of good news and a Warner. And Allah has power over everything."

(Qur'an 5:21)

Muhammad, may he be blessed, lived in the full blaze of history's lamp. His life, deeds and teachings are well known and authenticated. He neither claimed to be a demigod nor did he put himself among the ranks of the angels. Instead, he insisted he was only a man among men chosen by the Creator for His service. Allah specifically instructed him on this point:

1. Also see Qur'an 30:47.

2. According to one saying of the Blessed Prophet, there were many thousands of these messengers sent to humanity. Twenty-five are mentioned by name in the Qur'an. See Qur'an 4:164 and Appendix F.

"We sent Messengers before you, (Muhammad) and appointed for them spouses and children. It was never the place of a Messenger to bring a sign save when Allah allowed. For every age there is a scripture."

(Qur'an 13:38)

From these verses it is evident that Islam was taught from the beginning of history, though it may have gone under different names and guises. It is also clear that Islam is not merely a set of rules and rituals, but a way of life (deen). The final, perfect form of this way is enshrined in God's last Revelation. The rise and fall of previous nations is a testament to this truth.

"How many peoples have We destroyed which gave themselves to wrongdoing? They fell from their roofs! And how many wells lie idle and neglected, and castles high and strong also? Don't they travel through the land so that their hearts may learn the wisdom (in all this) and that their ears may learn to hear? Truly it's not their eyes that are blind, but the hearts within their chests!"

(Qur'an 22:45-46)

The scripture revealed to Muhammad, may he be blessed, the Holy Qur'an, contains directions for every important aspect of life. It also includes instruction in wisdom, ethics, philosophy, economics, politics as well as science. Furthermore, the recorded deeds and sayings of the Blessed Prophet provide us with additional, detailed information about the specifics of living life properly and peacefully. The requirements of our faith, however, are wider than our merely practicing it ourselves. Allah says in this regard:

"There should be a number of you who actively call people to righteousness; who encourage goodness and forbid evil. These are the ones who shall prosper."

(Qur'an 3:104)

Thus, we see that promoting good in society and forbidding wrong are also requirements of the faith. Allah makes it clear in other verses that only by following His Laws can true justice and order be established. We must therefore give the call to those around us that they might desire to lead lives of goodness and faith. With this understanding in mind, how do we go about our task? ³

Allah, the Exalted, gives us direction saying:

"Call people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and inspiring speech. Reason with them in a superior and respectful manner. Certainly, your Lord knows best who strays from His path and who is guided."

(Qur'an 16:125)

The purpose of this manual is to equip the eager Muslim with the necessary information for calling others to Islam (an activity henceforth to be called Da'wah,) in North America. ⁴ No Muslim is required to leave his or her job and family and shout on street corners. All of us are capable of making our own small contributions in the cause of Islam. A small percentage of the work of one hundred is more effective than one hundred percent from one. So do not feel that Islamic da'wah is a daunting task best left to the "professionals."

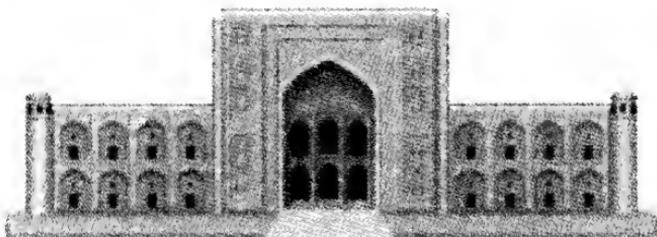
3. For example, see the Qur'an, 14:52 where Allah states, *"This (Qur'an) is a Message to humanity, and a Warning for them, so let them know that He is One God. May people of understanding take heed."* Verse 5:67 reads, *"O Messenger, proclaim what is sent to you from your Lord, for if you do not, then you would not have delivered His Message..."*

4. The term, "Da'wah" means to call or to invite. A "Da'i" is one who calls others to the faith or beliefs that they themselves adhere to. Every ideology, lifestyle, religion and even trend can exert a kind of da'wah-like influence. Our job is to call to Islam while avoiding being called away into falsehood. The job of a Da'i is not exactly comparable with the activities of a missionary, for each individual believer is charged with doing his or her own small part on a continuing basis, whereas Christian missionaries are usually paid individuals who go specifically to preach their message.

There are no priests in Islam, only a society of men and women united by the bonds of a potent ideology.

An important saying of the Prophet is that, if there are at least three Muslims in an area away from the Muslim community, then they must make one of them their leader. Many Islamic groups in North America seek to assist Muslims in this task by helping them to organize locally, while at the same time making them a part of the national and international Islamic movement. Branches and units of many of these activist organizations exist in nearly every major city of the U.S. and Canada.

Upon completion of this manual, you may begin to become more interested in the Islamic movement and in inviting others to the path. You can look into getting involved with ISNA, MYNA, ICNA, MAS, CAIR or a local masjid, or you may promote an organization of your own creation. Any of these avenues may provide you with a channel to carry out this essential requirement of the faith. Whether or not you become involved with an Islamic group, however, we hope that this manual influences you in the right direction and provides a solid foundation for all those involved in da'wah everywhere.



Part I
Preliminaries

1

The Importance of Da'wah

The community that fails to promote its values ceases to exist. That much is universally recognized, and Muslims are no different. But we are not interested in da'wah just because we have a sentimental attachment to Muslim culture. Our main concern is obedience to the commands of Allah and to follow the example of His Messenger. What is the evidence that da'wah is really essential to our faith? We find that Allah has said:

"This is a reminder for all humanity, for those who desire the straight road."

(Qur'an 81:27-28)

Our lives are filled with choices from the mundane to the profound. Every day we find little challenges and opportunities for personal growth and disappointment. We are given time in life to choose to surrender to our Maker. Can you imagine it? It is even a choice for us to deny our Creator! Indeed, many people have sought to forget, so to speak, their dependence on Allah. They bury themselves in work or pleasure and would have others do the same so they need not feel guilty about that missing element in their life, namely faith and responsibility. But it is the plan of Allah that His creatures should have ample opportunity to remember themselves and their true nature. Those who know and understand have to wake up those who are asleep. That is what da'wah is about.



Allah also said:

"And We have made you a moderate community that you may be a witness to humanity even as the Messenger is a witness to you..."

(Qur'an 2:143)

Now let us turn to the next level of authority to see what the Blessed Prophet told us about da'wah:

"Convey this Message, even if only one sentence (ayah)."

"Learn the required precepts of Islam and the Qur'an, then teach them to others, for I will not live forever."

(Bukhari)

Every Muslim, man or woman, is bound by the injunctions of Islam and must therefore make da'wah an important part of their lives. If you say you are committed to your job or your family you will do things unquestioningly and without hesitation. Why? Because you have a vested interest in the enterprise. Is serving the Preserver of the Universe any less important?

For many people it seems like a task of gargantuan proportions, but it really is not. It is rather a duty of responsibility, not of hardship. Be happy about sharing your faith with others. It's important to you and you know it will benefit the spiritual void plaguing this land. Now let us proceed and take a look at our fitness to do da'wah. Are we properly qualified, and what are those qualifications?



2

Necessary Ingredients for Da'wah

"Whose word is better than one who calls people to Allah, works righteousness and declares, 'I bow in peaceful surrender (to Allah)'?"⁵

(Qur'an 41:33)

Islam is a faith whereby every Muslim is a "priest" unto himself. Thus, because Islam makes no arrangements for a religious hierarchy, every Muslim is responsible for working out his or her own salvation through the grace of Allah. Therefore, of course, only those who are sincere in following the right road can help others to discover it. For example, how would it be if a person called himself a Muslim but then drank alcohol, used foul language, had an unkempt appearance or seemed to be far too concerned with wealth to be a shining example of goodness and upright conduct? Not only would he or she look bad, but others would judge Islam by his or her actions.

Granted, the average Muslim conforms generally to many of the more obvious Islamic trappings. Perhaps he or she will marry a Muslim spouse, carry certain cultural items like beads, say 'Salam' and eat tabouleh or biryani *religiously*, but we must remember that Islam is a total way of life, and not a cultural expression or nationality. Our place of birth has no more to do with whether we are a sincere believer than our height or weight.

5. Peaceful Surrender to Allah, i.e. *Islam*. The root verb from which the name of our faith is derived signifies the concepts of peace and surrender. Islam can be defined, then, as the peace that you get when you surrender your will to Allah.

The Word of Allah could not be more succinct:

"O you who (claim) to believe! Why don't you practice what you preach?"

(Qur'an 61:2)

Besides following Islamic guidelines, every Muslim must cultivate within him and herself the virtues of patience, consideration, respect, courtesy and tolerance. But these qualities cannot be learned from a book. They come, rather, as a natural consequence of full adherence to the Islamic way of life. Someone who lacks such characteristics may deliver the most brilliant presentations, but if all the listener notices is arrogance and callousness, his speech will have little effect.

But does this mean that a Muslim must be perfect in his belief and practice before he can tell others about his faith? Of course not. No Muslim can be perfect. For life is a process of continual improvement. As you learn about Islam you hone your beliefs and your actions, which leads you to tell others of the faith which leads you again to learn more. It is an ever-growing circle of study, practice and improvement!

Anas relates that, "We asked the Prophet, 'O Messenger of Allah, shouldn't we refrain from calling others to goodness if we don't practice all good things ourselves, and shouldn't we refrain from forbidding wrong things until we ourselves have abstained from all the bad?' 'No,' he replied, 'You should call others to goodness even if you don't do all the good, and you should forbid bad things even if you don't abstain from all of them yourselves.'"

(Al Tabarani)

The first step in da'wah is to give da'wah to the self. This means that a Muslim must imbibe the spirit of Islam in his or her heart and mind. It certainly would not be enough to say, "Read this or

that," however, for learning to surrender yourself to your natural inclination (*fitra*) is a task that requires the strength of the entire individual; not just a book and a few hours reading time.

A Self Program for Da'wah

1. Approach the Islamic way of life with a desire: a person has to want to be spiritually and emotionally at peace in order to succeed. ⁶ Allah has declared:

"But any who repent, have faith and do what is right, they shall have the hope of salvation."

(Qur'an 28:67)

Repentance (*taubah*) is recognizing that Allah has created us with the ability to choose, and that sometimes we select what we know to be wrong. We become remorseful and truly seek the forgiveness of our Lord. ⁷ Faith (*eman*) means that one believes in Allah, the Author of Destiny and Creative Will behind all that exists. One elevates one's mind above infatuations and false allegiances to anything material and refocuses thoughts upon our short existence and the greater significance of the permanent afterlife. ⁸ Finally, doing what is right connects each one of us to the mutually beneficial web of which all plants, animals and humans are a part. Allah created the

6. The Islamic term for improving the soul is known as *tazkia* (literally, purifying and elevating or uplifting). *Tazkia* is related to the third pillar of Islam, *Zakat*, in that by giving up a part of the world for the sake of Allah, one is uplifting oneself to a new level of being.

7. Once the Blessed Prophet was asked, "*What is faith?*" And he replied, "*When doing good makes you feel pleasure and doing wrong makes you feel terrible, then you are a believer.*" Then someone asked, "*What is a sin?*" To which he responded, "*When something bothers your conscience, give it up.*" (Ahmed.)

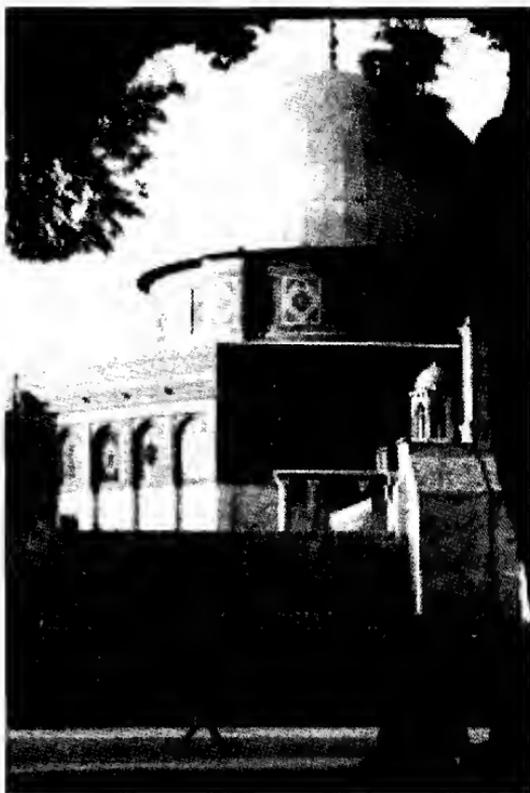
8. "*Be in the world as though you were a stranger or drifter.*" (Bukhari.)

earth to be an ordered, self-sustaining unit. Humans were placed upon her to be her stewards. Righteous action is the basis of good stewardship.

2. Next, realize that Allah has granted humans the ability to learn and the intellect to understand. With the guidance of Allah, then, one may make progress in advancing in faith. Guidance (Hidaya) is granted by Allah upon those who seek it. The recipients of guidance become Surrendered (Muslim) and they in turn blossom into believers (mu'min). Islam is the state of being which brings us into a harmonious balance with the universal way.

3. Prepare for learning by finding suitable materials. If there is a translation that is difficult to decipher, find an easier one. If you have questions, find understanding and knowledgeable people who can assist. If there is a shortage of information, look for it "*even if you have to go to China.*"

If we don't find absolute contentment in our first effort, does this mean that we are a *failure*, or that it is impossible to live or feel Islam in our soul? Of course not! Remember that our level of faith is tied to the roller-coaster of life. Sometimes we will be strong, other times, not so strong. Learn to trust in Allah and in the Destiny placed for each one of us. Surah Al Rahman is a good place to start for insight. ⁹



The famous Masjid Al Aqsa in Jerusalem: One of many excellent places to contemplate life!

4. Attend the masjid often. Become involved with Islamically oriented activities whenever you can. Avoid the danger of participating for worldly benefits, for it is only the intention that Allah considers, not the actions. People are influenced by their environments and whom they associate with. If we surround our lives with good people and good things, then we may learn and improve by default. ¹⁰

5. Avoid negative habits such as smoking, listening to popular music or watching television. These deaden the senses and desensitize the mind.

6. Practice physical fitness regularly. There are martial arts, aerobics, team sports- any type of consistent, dynamic activity will keep the Muslim community in a state of physical preparedness. The Blessed Prophet emphasized, for example, that Muslims learn swimming, archery (or sharp-shooting) and horseback riding.

7. Maintain a healthy diet. Consume fruit, vegetables and unbleached grains in preference over meat and fat-concentrated products. The Prophet Muhammad, may he be blessed, subsisted principally on a vegetarian diet (bread, dates, etc...) and rarely ate meat.

8. Make frequent excursions alone to think and reflect. Walk in the forest or desert, sit by the side of lakes or streams, or even retreat to an unoccupied area of a house in the early light of day or

9. Prophet Muhammad, may he be blessed, once said, "*Hearts can corrode just like metal.*" Someone asked him, "*Is there any way to prevent it?*" And he replied, "*By constantly remembering that you will die one day and by reading the Qur'an.*" (Baihaqi.)

10. "*And keep your soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance. And don't let your eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this life, nor obey any whose heart we have allowed to neglect Our remembrance. One who follows his own desires has gone outside all bounds.*" Qur'an 18:27.

late in the evening. Allah does not call our attention to meditating upon the meaning of life in natural settings for nothing! It is perhaps the only way we can clear our minds and really begin to notice the real world around us which is so often blurred by our daily hassles and challenges.

9. Practice a generous variety of Islamic ibadat (worship methods). Increase prayers, form study circles, make dhikr, go on Hajj, retreat to the masjid in Ramadan, give secret charity whenever you can, etc... In fact, by reading the collections of hadith, one may find innumerable suggestions for enhancing his or her life.

This is a basic program for expanding the Islamic spirit. If you have never thought of giving da'wah to yourself before, realize that Islam is total in its application. It is not limited to dusty tomes or hushed lecture halls. Islam is the wind in the trees, children at play, friends shaking hands and the exploration of space. Islam is in everything you do and in everything that happens around you. Experience the wholeness of Islam and let its healing balance remove the stress and strain of this material world. Then, and only then, may you look beyond yourself.



Indeed, Islamic knowledge is not an end in itself. It is the beginning of a spiritual journey that can lead us to a higher state of human consciousness. For example, let us examine some things the Blessed Prophet said:

"By Allah, this world compared to the next is like dipping your fingertip into the sea. Consider what you bring out."

"The successful person is one who has accepted Islam, been provided with enough to live on and has been made content by Allah for what He has given him."

(Muslim)



"The most enviable of my friends in my understanding is the believer with few possessions who finds his pleasure in prayer, who performs well in the service of his Lord and obeys Him in secret, who is anonymous among people and is not pointed out by them, and whose supply is just enough which contents him." He then snapped his fingers and said, "His death will come quickly, few will mourn him and he will leave only a little."

(Ahmed, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

That's quite a lot right there! But now you can see that we must embody this spirit of faith (eman) to be a truly effective da'wah worker and a good Muslim as well. Only when a Muslim has truly surrendered to the will of Allah can he direct others to the same path....

3

Preparations

Once a Muslim is assured of his or her qualifications and readiness to engage in da'wah, the next step involves deciding how to do it and with what resources. There are three levels of da'wah work which can be examined:

Personal Da'wah Efforts

These include any da'wah activity you carry out with friends, family and acquaintances.¹¹ Scant resources are needed here other than yourself, a few good books on Islam, and possibly a local masjid in which to gain inspiration and any additional help one may need. Possibilities for action are:

- A. Living Islam as your way of life, thus showing others a positive image of your faith.
- B. Donating books to libraries.
- C. Responding to anti-Islamic propoganda on radio talk shows or in the newspapers.
- D. Tacking fliers up or taking out small advertisements.
- E. Subscribing to Muslim periodicals for information and thereby helping to strengthen the new Muslim media.
- F. Supporting Islamic causes financially, morally and/or physically to the best of your ability.

11. Notice the use of the word "with" and not "towards." We cannot cause anyone, not even ourselves, to be "saved." We must all work together mutually for the good pleasure of Allah.

Organized Da'wah Activities

These are medium-sized projects that usually require less than a few hundred dollars but are very effective. A relatively large supply of da'wah materials will be needed, as well as some appointed persons to organize and direct the activities. Halls, hotel conference rooms and masjids are in plentiful supply for holding lectures and every college campus or center of town provides an excellent forum for Islam. Common undertakings are:

- A. Lectures, debates, trialogues and dialogues.
- B. Fundraising activities.
- C. Establishing local prayer services.
- D. Book tables and literature mailing services.
- E. Renting billboards or advertising in papers.
- F. Community social work, i.e. soup kitchens, neighborhood clean-up crews, elderly assistance.
- G. Youth activities such as summer camps, quiz competitions, speech competitions, etc...

Major Da'wah Projects

Here is where expenses start to climb. These activities can only be carried out by the large organizations such as ICNA, ISNA, MAS, MSA, masjid councils, etc... and require much planning and participation. Some examples are:

- A. Conventions.
- B. Conferences.
- C. Political activism.
- D. Funding masjids, schools and aid projects.
- E. Providing a wide forum for Muslims to meet, plan and reinforce their Islamic prerogatives.
- F. Coordination of a nation-wide da'wah movement.
- G. Publishing useful Islamic books and periodicals.
- H. Producing radio or television programs.

A word about financial commitment; we must remember that da'wah does not require cash. It is not a program of throwing money into projects and having new Muslims come in as dividends. The Message of Islam is carried by the heart of every faithful believer, and not by an almighty dollar or dinar. There is no substitute for good, committed Muslim brothers and sisters. Indeed, millions have entered Islam solely through observing the excellent conduct and character of the Muslims they met. So insist on quality of Iman over the size or scope of the undertaking.

To help you in your planning no matter what the level, here is a useful checklist of questions to ask yourself:

1. WHO AM I TRYING TO REACH?
2. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO REACH THEM?
3. HOW MUCH TIME, ENERGY AND MONEY WILL IT TAKE?
4. WHEN SHOULD I START PLANNING?
5. WHAT DO I NEED TO GET?
6. WHO WILL ASSIST ME/US?
7. WHERE/ WHEN WILL THE ACTIVITY TAKE PLACE?
8. HAVE I COVERED EVERYTHING?
9. DO I HAVE ANY BACK-UP PLANS?
10. WILL THERE BE ANY FOLLOW-UP FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO LEARN MORE?

4

Available Mediums

Any form of communication can be employed in presenting Islam, from sign language and Braille to pamphlets and television. Below are outlined some of the various vehicles from which to choose in da'wah work:

Speech

The power of effective speaking is at the heart of da'wah. For the orator, as no book man has ever written, can instantly influence or change the behavior and thinking of others. Indeed, the Blessed Messenger of Allah didn't pass out pamphlets or beam satellite relays—he preached fiery sermons and called to people with his vibrant energy and charisma. He was a master speaker. People were moved to respond with great emotion and fervor. He comforted and eased those whom Allah wished to be guided and he enraged and angered the corrupt and the wicked. He didn't mince words or need a script. His words came from the natural talent and inspiration Allah bestowed upon him. And look at his results! Within one hundred years Muslims liberated most of the known world from ignorance. This is why there is such a critical need for trained, experienced, eloquent and fluent speakers in the Muslim Ummah, both here and abroad.

But how does one acquire that devastating mastery over words that would enable him to storm the hearts and minds of others? ¹² After being pure in conduct and content of heart, the following two ingredients might be useful to note:

12. Be conscious of your body language. The French writer, Michel de Montaigne (d. 1592) once observed, "*How often do the involuntary movements of our features reveal what we are secretly thinking and betray us to those about us!*" *Essays*.

1. *Fluency in the tongue of the people (if it is not your native language.) Spanish, French and English are the most widely used languages in North America.*

2. *Confidence. If you need improvement in your abilities as a speaker, attend a public speaking seminar. Dale Carnegie or Anthony Robbins seminars are widely available.*

An Essential Da'wah Strategy

An effective way of reaching a person is when we talk 'with' them, and not 'at' them. Have you ever come into contact with someone who kept pushing something at you or who didn't seem to care about what you had to say or how you felt? What sort of reaction did you have? You probably steeled yourself to anything they said and ignored their arguments. This is the way some Muslims carry out da'wah, so it is important for a Da'i to be aware of this pitfall.

One perceptive early Muslim, Hasan al Basri, said,

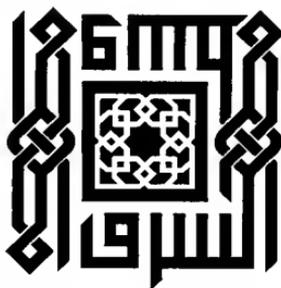
"...And I shouldn't find you approaching a group of people who are busy with something else and then preaching to them. Instead, remain silent and when they ask you to speak, start unraveling your message, for then they will be ready for it."

The Blessed Prophet was noted for a very respectful, humble style of conversation. He reasoned with people, not at them. He showed concern for their families, business and well-being, and he was always reserved, never unduly harsh or uncouth. For further example, we read that Allah instructed His servant, the Blessed Musa, to go to Pharaoh and,

"...speak a gentle word to him that he might heed or fear."

(Qur'an 20:44)

We need to emulate this type of approach. ¹³ In addition, a good rule to follow is to speak 20% of the time and listen the other 80%. Ask questions and evaluate responses. There is no greater pleasure for a person than to talk about him or herself and his or her concerns. It makes them open up and to become receptive to you as a person, as well as a Muslim.



View the sample dialogue below and pay particular attention to how our faith can be shared in a subtle, yet relevant way.

Ahmed was returning to his desk after lunch when he noticed one of his co-workers, Bob Smith, staring blankly at his pencil sharpener. The tension and worry were clearly visible in his face and he had not been very courteous to people for several days. Ahmed, heeding the advice of the Prophet Muhammad, may he be blessed, felt concern for the man and wandered over to his desk.

"How' ya doing today Bob?"

"Uh," he cocked his head awkwardly, "Oh, Uh, okay, I guess."

"You don't sound too happy."

13. Other relevant verses include: 2:256, 3:63, 7:199, 16:125, and 30:60.

"The Prophet Muhammad, God's last Messenger on earth."

"That's some kind of title. What did he say?"

"Well, once he explained to some of his companions what life is really all about. He said, 'The true success is one who surrenders his will to God, is provided with enough to live on and is made content by God for what He's given him.'"

"That sounds about right," intoned Bob cheerfully. "What else did he say about success?"

You can see where the conversation will be going now. Let's analyze what we've done: We asked personal, reflective questions and made the person receptive to us. We've learned certain things about this person by his answers, such as, he is really proud of his life so far but seems to be struggling to remain thankful for what he has. We've sparked his curiosity about Islam by strategically looking for an opening in his world-view where Islam could be introduced. And above all, we didn't start right off with "religious talk." That is something that must be eased or flowed into. Remember that. ¹⁴

To reiterate, many people are desperate for someone to listen to them. By asking respectful questions about them instead of lecturing you will both gain a new friend and learn how to approach them with the Message of Truth and Peace.



14. Avoid the use of Arabic terms during initial contacts. Most people are completely unfamiliar with the structure, sounds and terminology of the language.



The Rules of Organized Programs

With the growth in popularity of dialogues, trialogues, lectures and debates, careful consideration must be given to these seven rules:

A. Know your speaker. Part of the responsibility for what your speaker may say is upon you. Don't select known malcontents or unreasonable people. The ability to speak in an inspiring fashion is also a plus. If a speaker bores your community to death at Jumuah, why would you want him or her to bore those we want to share our message with? Also rate your prospective speakers according to the type of audience. Don't bring an impassioned activist to a meeting of intellectuals and vice versa. The Blessed Prophet said,

"Speak to people according to their level of intelligence."

B. Avoid debates unless that is the thrust of your program- and then avoid them still. Debates are like spiritual boxing matches- they get people excited, but all come away bruised.

"Do not insult those whom they call upon besides Allah lest they, out of spite, insult Allah in their ignorance."

(Qur'an 6:108)

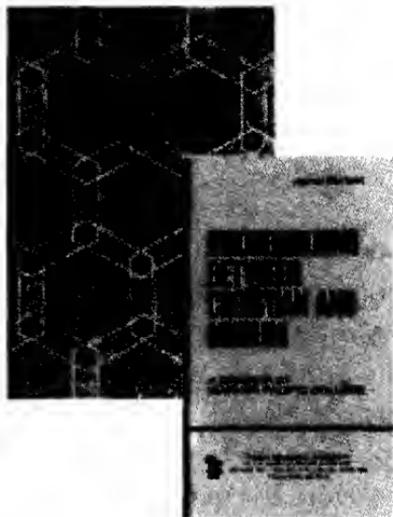
C. Limit the entire event to under two hours. After this length of time, most people become restless. I know some of us are used to all day lecture programs but the general public is not!

D. Have a clearly defined topic and format. When confusion occurs, disaster is soon to follow.

E. Have a refreshment table (and an intermission if your program is over two hours). Refreshments make an audience feel more at ease and an intermission of five minutes or so helps relieve people of possible distractions. Tip: do better than cheap chips and no name soda pop.

F. Avoid heated political discussions! Politics can be introduced as a topic of interest, but do not be drawn into the tangles of rhetoric. Politics is not religion.

G. Display free literature before and after your program. Remember, most people believe nothing unless they see it in writing., and any portable speech you distribute may find its way through many hands that otherwise might not have ever heard of Islam. The appendices at the conclusion of this book offer sources from which quality literature may be obtained.



Literature

The definition of literature is clear. But what should be remembered is what literature is not. Literature is no substitute for personal human contact. Time and time again, Muslims will pass out reams of literature, only to later complain that their da'wah work is ineffective. Next, we must be perfectly frank about one important observation: much of the da'wah literature in circulation today is plagued with spelling errors, unimaginative writing, haughtiness and/or improper use of grammar. How can we expect people to answer the call of Islam when they cannot even read about it clearly?

That is not to say that every pamphlet and booklet should be tossed out. What it means is that we must be much more careful in what we choose to distribute. Try this acid, time-proven test: before handing out any type of literature, read it yourself first. Did it hold your attention? Was it interesting? Did you detect any errors or any phrases that could have been expressed better? Remember, non-Muslims will be unconsciously looking for anything to justify ignoring this Message. Don't let them ignore it because of poor English.

The Golden Rules for Distributing Literature.

1. Read everything yourself first.
 2. Never settle for material that is merely acceptable unless you have no choice.
 3. Never appear over-eager to hand things out. It makes people nervous.
 4. Never load down a person with too much to read.
 5. Don't corner someone with a lecture about Islam whenever they take a pamphlet and don't be drawn into political arguments or polemics that have nothing to do with our faith.
 6. Keep a tidy appearance. The messenger is noticed just as much as the message.
 7. Keep a record of what is taken and what is left. A good inventory list creates efficiency and helpful statistics.
 8. Provide some mechanism for follow-up whether it is an address or website stamped in the literature or a flyer with useful addresses or phone numbers.
-

At the back of this manual is a list of da'wah materials we believe to be very effective. Of course, there are many new da'wah materials coming out every year and you may wonder about them. Just follow the test outlined above to help in your determination. If you find little suitable for your specific needs, by all means, write something yourself! Then have a few brothers and sisters look at it with a critical eye.

A possible strategy to distribute literature by might be to mail flyers to people or to place ads in newspapers providing an address where people can write for more information. Letters can be sent to politicians. Billboards could be rented, business cards with da'wah phone numbers could be distributed, etc...

A special note about books. We have seen book tables in public places where the Muslims have tried selling books to passers-by. We feel this is an unwise practice. Many people may not feel comfortable buying books at a table in the hall of a building- the Bazaar or Souk atmosphere is not prevalent in North America. Anything you put on a book table should be free if your sole object is da'wah. If you are giving books to friends to read, don't give them a bulky book at first, they may never read it. Give them something small with an interesting theme. When loaning a copy of the Qur'an, it is wise to give that same copy to the borrower as a gift if they later accept Islam. ¹⁵

Mass Media

The average American spends many hours staring at the television. He also usually listens to the radio at some point in his day. If these are the mediums of choice for this culture, then we are obliged to also direct our message through them. Below are outlined some of the most effective projects we have been acquainted with:

A. VIDEO. Islamically oriented videos and television shows are generally well-planned and reasonably entertaining.

15. The most popular translation of the Qur'an for da'wah work is that of Abdullah Yusuf Ali. However, some Muslims are uneasy about handing out a book containing the Arabic text to non-Muslims. An edition of Ali's work without the Arabic, but retaining the commentary, is now available from various publishers. T.B. Irving's work, *The Noble Qur'an*, is also notable as is Abdulhaqq and Aisha Bewley's translation. As more accurate and competantly done translations become available switch as necessary.

Documentaries, lectures and even feature films are available. If your area has not yet been blessed by a weekly Islamic presentation of some type, organize a committee to arrange one. Space can be rented on cable TV networks and on local stations, though usually only on the public access or UHF frequency.

B. CASSETTES. Abridged books, Qur'anic translations, stories and Islamic songs and raps have been available for years. The peculiar strength of such materials is in their auditory appeal. For many it is much more convenient, and enjoyable to listen to something rather than read about it. ¹⁶ Don't feel ashamed to hand a cassette to a friend. They're often more comfortable with these than with more involved materials.

C. RADIO. Muslim produced radio programs are rare. A multitude of local cultural productions exist, but they hardly ever mention Islamic ideology beyond announcing important religious dates.

If Islamically-oriented programming could be accomplished in areas of high Muslim concentration, then a great service will have been rendered to the Ummah and to da'wah. Imagine broadcasting the Qur'an with translation on the airwaves, or news from the Muslim perspective, or Muslim talk shows and variety programs. (WAHY FM?) Broadcast time can be purchased on some stations which specialize in mixed programming.



16. The growth of the "Audio-Book" industry has been explosive in recent years, though there is still a lack of professionally presented audio-books on Islamic themes to date. Concerned Muslims have launched a Cable TV project while various other efforts are being undertaken in California and on the East Coast.

Part II
Da'wah in Action

5

Da'wah in the Home

"O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is humans and the stones (of false idols)."

(Qur'an 66:6)

Islam teaches that tremendous responsibility rests with the parents to guide and nurture the family unit. Da'wah in the home consists of creating an Islamic environment conducive to faith, justice, love and learning. Some important features of an Islamically oriented home include:

1. The authority of the father and the respect of the mother must be maintained. The husband must consult with the wife and the wife must provide support for her husband. ¹⁷

2. *Salat*, or prayer, at its proper times, must be established in the home as well as fasting in Ramadan and the use of the Sunnah in day-to-day relations. Ethnic cultural practices should be distinguished from the teachings of Islam. This doesn't mean that there is no place for cultural expression in the home. What this means is that useless conflict can be avoided if the parents understand that there are some

17. The Muslim home is not a monarchy for males. When we look into the lifestyle in the Prophet's home, we see that women were treated as partners and not servants. In Medina, women moved about freely, participated in business, accompanied men to the battlefield and sometimes fought as well, and were not governed by ignorant tribal customs anymore. For a more in-depth study of how the Islamic family is formed, see, for example, "*The Family Structure in Islam*," by Hammudah 'Abd al Ati. American Trust Publications, 1977, or any other reputable book on the subject.

facets of life unique to their children's environment that will be different from what they, themselves, experienced when they were young. This can revolve around simple things such as food choices or hobbies or to larger issues such as spouse selection methods, educational opportunities, career plans, etc...

If the parents come from another culture than what their children experience in their everyday lives, then it behooves the parents to ask themselves what they would like preserved in their coming generations. Styles of dress or specific cultural practices will likely die out by the third generation, but Islam can survive in each household's family tree- if the parents settled on that being the priority they wanted to emphasize in the home.

3. Family study and discussion time must be budgeted into the weekly schedule. Each family member should be encouraged to lead in discussions and any disagreements of opinion must politely be referred to the Book of Allah and His Messenger. Proof for any position must be found in order to build a sense of certainty in the children. Islam is a rational faith and can provide rational answers.

4. The family, as a unit, should attend Friday jum'ah whenever possible. Every family member must be regularly exposed to the masjid.¹⁸ If there are no youth groups, then push to have one created. Don't let your children see the Masjid as a strange place that is only visited on 'Eid. Remember also the famous hadith of the blessed

18. If an Islamic School is in the area, it would be well advised to enroll your child there. If you have no children your support is still crucial given that an Islamic school will produce Muslims while a public school will produce assimilation. School lists can be found at <http://www.islamicity.com/education/iEducation.shtml> or www.soundvision.com. Interesting research may be found in the Book: "*Muslim Families in North America*." Edited by Earle Waugh. (1991, The University of Alberta Press) and the more telling book by Yvonne Haddad, "*Islamic Values in the United States*" (1987, Oxford University Press). Home schooling advice can be obtained from: Muslim Home School Network and Resource: www.muslimhomeschool.com, www.studyislam.com or www.arabesque.com

Prophet when he said, "*Do not prevent the female servants of Allah from going to the masjid.*" Some traditional Muslim cultures forbid women from the Masjid, but this is clearly not a part of original Islam. If women and girls do not go to the Masjid, how will they ever learn to identify with Islam?

Consider what well-known author Jeffrey Lang wrote recently on the issue: "*At first I used to attend mosque for the five daily prayers and I loved going there, but once I got married and had girls, they were not welcome at the mosque.*" He also wrote, "*I would like to see mosques being more family friendly — presently they are like a men's club.*" Lang has three daughters and commented dryly, "*Without me, my girls would lose their only link with Islam and I don't want that to happen.*"

5. Islamic values must be ever present in the choice of furnishings, books and other materials that are brought into the home. Don't buy your child *Grimm's Fairy Tales* or *The Three Little Pigs*, for example, when there are better books available from both Muslim and non-Muslim sources. This author has literally been amazed when visiting Muslim homes to see children playing with Barbie Dolls, reading Dr. Suess' *Green Eggs and Ham*, playing endless hours of mind-numbing video games, listening to pop stars or other Top 40 music or even worse!

What do you want your child to be? Muslim or not! Remember that even though music and singing are conditionally allowed in Islam, the type of music choices available to our children today is often immensely unIslamic in tone, message and allure. The types of attitude-forming music, toys, magazines, movies, TV shows and other things you allow in your home can undermine whatever positive values you are trying to stress.

19. Of the thousands of Muslim immigrants to the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, precious few of their descendants are still practicing Islam. This is the greatest argument against those who say that assimilation is desirable and harmless. It is the end of the Islamic identity and faith in this continent!

6. Each family member should study those areas of Islam that relate directly to the family and relations between the sexes in great detail. Muslim children, in addition, must be sent to private Muslim schools or taught at home using home schooling. The educational system in this country will do everything in its power to take spiritual values away from our children. Even many sincere Christians have understood this and contributed to a rise in home schooling, for example, that has surpassed two million children in such settings according to the latest governmental statistics in 2004. ¹⁹

7. Monitor your child's exposure to the secular, pleasure-driven society around them. Everything from cartoons, teen fiction, Rap, MTV, Movies, etc... is trying to influence your child away from his or her true self. This may sound alarmist, but if you have ever read or investigated the tools of modern American youth culture, you can see clearly the subtle values that are foisted upon young people. ²⁰ Things such as dating, disobedience to parents, drinking, fighting, lying, permissiveness and a lack of respect for tradition and hard work are being offered to your child as an alternative to what you offer. Remember that!

8. Expose your family to the wider world of Muslims. You must go to the Islamic conventions if for no other purpose than to let your children see a multitude of other Muslims, just like them, so they can appreciate we are a large community, not a perpetual minority always under fire and hiding in the corners. Travel to Muslim countries, make Hajj and visit masjids in cities you vacation in. Send your children to youth camps, bring them to the masjids for youth programs and subscribe to as many different Muslim publications as you can afford. If only you are exposed to the ummah, and not the rest of your family, can you blame them if they come to identify with the non-Muslim society as their primary affiliation?

20. The MSA has compiled a guide for parents to help them navigate their families through the rough waters of North America. It is entitled, "*Parents Manual A Guide for Muslim Parents Living in North America.*" American Trust Publications, 1992. "*The Child in Islam*" by Norma Tarazi is also a great work for shepherding an Islamically-oriented family.

6

Da'wah to Muslims

The blessed Prophet said, "Seek out your brothers for these three things: If they are sick, visit them; If they are busy, help them, and if they have forgotten, remind them."

(Mishkat)

Muslim thinkers through the ages have said that the world is divided into two camps: the abode of Peace (Islam) and the abode of Conflict (non-Muslim world). This boundary cannot always be easily discerned. Within each camp itself there are vast differences of strengths and convictions. There are People of the Book who can be entrusted with a mountain of gold, as well as others who wouldn't return a dime. Likewise, there are Muslims who are excellent in character and others in need of serious reform. Practicing Muslims should be encouraged with inspiring da'wah and any wayward Muslims should be called back to the straight path. This is da'wah to Muslims.

The Blessed Prophet Muhammad declared that "*Muslims are one community.*" Part of the duty of an inclusive group is to look after the welfare of its members, in both their physical and metaphysical needs. North America presents a paradox for us. Though our numerical, statistical population seems to be constantly on the rise, so many Muslims seem to needlessly pass out of the Ummah under the influence of a meaningless materialistic society. Allah declares that the only successful people are:

"...those who believe, work righteousness and who teach each other truth and perseverance."

(Qur'an 103:3)

Now it becomes necessary to describe the different categories that Muslims can be grouped into.²¹ The first is of the good Muslims who believe and practice all the requirements of the faith. They are, in most cases, the ones who will be calling others to Allah. Da'wah to them is reinforcement of Islamic brotherhood and values. These are "Practicing Muslims."

The second type of Muslim covers those who are sincere in their belief but sometimes weak in their practice or level of commitment. They must be helped to develop a greater level of conviction. These are known simply as "Trying Muslims."

A third category is that of people who call themselves Muslims but who view Islam more as something of a cultural identity. They are married in the masjid, observe Ramadan, wear traditional outfits and take comfort in a misty sense of certainty, even if they rarely attempt to define their faith. These are by far the most numerous kind of Muslim. Their allegiance to the concept of Islam is strong, but their endurance tends to be weak. These are "Cultural Muslims."

And the last category is that of people who neither practice Islam nor who know much about it. They almost always come from Muslim families, have Muslim names, and would not identify themselves as non-Muslims. It is this sort of person who is likely to believe ardently in socialism, secularism, western-style democracy or some other "ism" and is filled with revolutionary zeal for a materialistic goal. A worldly cause becomes their true religion, whether the cause is the general good as they see it or merely themselves. This describes those who are usually in power in Muslim countries.

21. A recent book entitled, "*The Muslims of America*" by Yvonne Y. Haddad describes the current state of the Muslim community in North America. (Oxford University Press, New York, 1991.) Other good materials for research into the spiritual state of our community can be had from organizations such as CAIR, MAS and ISNA.

Given that most Muslims today are in need of da'wah to one extent or another, what sort of approach should be adopted? We require a model to guide us, and the example of Medina is an excellent place to start. ²² The early Muslims, may they be blessed, attended to one another. A gentle but firm peer pressure was applied in the community to maintain desired norms and behavior. Even the hypocrites were forced to comply or risk being alienated from the community. We need to reactivate this force in our social life. Gently encourage your brothers and sisters with good admonition but do not mindlessly condemn. ²³

The Crucial Subjects Which Must be Presented to Muslims

1. The revolutionary nature of Tawheed. Islam is the final perfection in humanity's knowledge of Allah. What it means for Muslims, and the superiority of Islam over all other philosophies and ideologies.

2. The Intangible (Al Ghayb). How belief in the Intangible, or unseen world, increases our trust in Allah by affirming that there are things beyond our comprehension, yet a part of our ultimate destiny.

3. How Allah has revealed codified guidance to humanity. The applicability of Qur'anic injunctions to any situation. True Hidayah (Guidance) is found only in the Qur'an. The Qur'an was sent to give glad tidings, warnings and lessons for us to learn from.

22. Surat ul Hujurat (49) provides a synopsis of how inter-Muslim relations should be conducted. Useful reference books include: *Manners and Morals in Islam*, Marwan Al Kaysi. *Islamic Manners*, S.M. Madni Abbasi. Tahdhib and Sirah, B. Aisha Lemu.

23. Some verses for study in connection with this topic are: 2:185; 3:103, 159; 5:6; 12:108; 29:46; 20:44; 30:60; 2:256; 7:199; 8:53; 9:71; 13:11; 21:92; 22:77; 39:53; 41:34; 49:10; 59:9.

4. The Messenger of Allah. How he provides the example of excellence. Inspiration and strength can be found in his life, character and teaching. Tribal customs and ethnic practices that go against the spirit and practice of Islam must be abandoned.

5. The Day of Judgment, accountability and its impact in our daily lives. We must answer for our conduct in this life, therefore, everything we do matters. No injustice will be forgotten and no reward will be lost.

6. Belief in Qadr and the certainty it provides. All things happen for a purpose and that purpose is known only to Allah. We are not programmed and have some choices in our lives because Allah has willed us to have free will in our actions. We are not at the mercy of events, rather, we can choose how we react to them.

7. Life in the hereafter. This life side-tracks us from the real goal. Material success is not an accurate measure of a person's worth. Why should you spend your life only focused on making money when you could lose the greatest investment opportunity of all!

8. Islamic ibadat (practices) are an essential part of a Muslim's life. They are a daily training regimen to strengthen the soul, comfort the mind and bring us closer to our Creator.²⁴ Anyone who abandons this training and teaching tool also abandons their chance for spiritual contentment and peace. However, it must be stressed that these practices are not an end in themselves. The blessed Prophet was quoted as saying that we are rewarded according to the extent of our understanding of what we are doing. (Quoted from the book, *A Treasury of Islamic Virtues* by Wahedduddin Khan.)

24. Syed Abul A'la Maududi's book, *Let Us Be Muslims*, published by the Islamic Foundation, is the textbook for da'wah to Muslims. It allows the reader to examine their own state of faith as well as understanding the weaknesses that may plague us all. Works by Abdul Qadir al Jilani also seek to probe our own inner spiritual state.

9. Racists, bigots and Islamophobics are arrayed against all of us and they make no distinction between practicing and non-practicing Muslims. Their only goal is to divide Muslims and keep them weak so they will be unable to withstand conversion, pacification or elimination. ²⁵

It is not unreasonable to assume that there are people whose only aim is to bring Islam and Muslims down for their own advancement. People and nations usually always work against others that they perceive as different. This is the sunnah of mankind and Allah addresses this in many places in the Qur'an. Although many secular Muslims have been lulled into complacency by wealth, opportunity and a comfortable lifestyle, the simple fact remains that nations rise and fall, peoples achieve greatness and then sink to moral depravity and what we take for granted today may not be what we have tomorrow.

It would not take too much propaganda or prodding by any Western government to turn the civilized, cultured and gentlemanly masses of the West into genocidal mobs. European Jews found themselves in the 20th century the victims of an entire program of elimination promulgated by educated, Christian gentlemen. The same held true for Bosnians and Kosovars in the 1990s, whose principle antagonists were also educated, Christian gentlemen. Strangely enough, in the United States and Europe the same process of demonization leading to oppression can be seen in its embryonic phases, accelerated by the irrational backlash against Islam and Muslims following the unexpected and heavily symbolic attacks of September 11th.

25. *"Neither the Jews nor the Christians will be satisfied with you until you follow their ways. Declare to them, 'Certainly, the Guidance of Allah is the only true Guidance.' For if you follow their desires after knowledge has come to you, you shall have neither a protector from Allah nor any helper."* Qur'an 2:120.

What must be continually emphasized to our Muslim brothers and sisters who have gone dormant and no longer actively live an Islamic lifestyle is that merely hiding in the masses of non-Muslims will not save them from prejudice (or worse). The enemies of Islam make no distinction between practicing and non-practicing Muslims and thus, for their own preservation (in this world and the next) all Muslims need to become active advocates for the rights of Muslims in society, politics and in the workplace. One of the side effects of the anti-Muslim bigotry that arose since 2001 has been a growing consciousness among dormant Muslims that we must do this very thing.

Another angle of perception that must be emphasized is that there are indeed competing visions of Islam in the world: a traditional viewpoint that has grown and evolved from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (p), and a recent, very radical, austere and irrational extremist ideology that takes basic Islamic forms and gives them new and frightening interpretations. Muslims need a renewal of their traditional knowledge and must be trained in how to detect all errant or violent misinterpretations of Islam that distort and give a bad reputation to our faith.



7

Da'wah to Jews

In our time, Jews and Muslims seem to be holding opposite sides on many issues. Indeed, politics and sometimes chauvinism work to keep Muslims and Jews from coming together with any sort of civility. The true Muslim, however, knows that all people are individuals. There are good and bad amongst all nations and part of our responsibility is to reach out with the message of Islam even to those who might be now considered as adversaries.²⁶

What, then, does one need to know about Jews in order to call them to Islam? A knowledge of Jewish history and beliefs is essential, as well as a basic understanding of American Jewish thought today. But a preliminary point that must be highlighted is that Jews in North America are virtually indistinguishable from Christians in appearance. Centuries of inter-marriage have left the bulk of today's Western Jews anything but *Jewish*. The label has taken on the wider definition of a culture or a "feeling" of Jewishness. So your co-worker, local editor or State Governor may be Jewish, but if he doesn't have a Jewish sounding name, you may never know it. Many Jews have tried to hide their identity for fear of being discriminated against.

26. The Blessed Prophet continued to call the Jews to Islam, even though some of them fought the Muslim community or practiced treachery. Many readers will be familiar with the story of the Jew who came to the Blessed Prophet demanding some money he lent him. Umar, who witnessed the Jew's uncouth behavior wanted to punish him for his insolence, but the Blessed Prophet stopped Umar and said, "*We are in need of different treatment from you. You should have told me to be quicker at paying my debts, and you should have told him to be easier in asking for payment.*" The blessed Propet then payed the Jew his full due along with a little extra on account of Umar scaring him. The Jew, Zayd bin Saana, later accepted Islam. The full story is recorded in Al Tabarani and ibn Majah.

Jewish History

Jews trace the development of their faith to the Blessed Prophet Ibrahim,²⁷ as do Muslims.²⁸ The history of the Jews can be briefly summarized as follows: Ibrahim, may he be blessed, found guidance from Allah and left his people in Mesopotamia (Iraq) about 1800 B.C. He wandered for several years and finally settled in Canaan (Palestine) to found a nation based upon the teachings of God. There he bore two sons, Isma'il and Ishaq. Isma'il was sent to the wilderness of Arabia with his mother Hajara, however, when Ibrahim's first wife, Sarah, became jealous, clearing the way for her son, Ishaq, to inherit the mantle of leadership after the death of the Patriarch.²⁹ Ishaq bore Yaqub who in turn bore twelve sons, each of whom became the leader of a large clan.

Decades later, a famine struck Palestine forcing the people, now called Israelites, to move to Egypt for sustenance.³⁰ After some years of residency, however, the Egyptians forced them into bondage. Several generations passed in misery and despair until Allah raised His great Prophet Musa, may he be blessed, to lead them to freedom. The drama in which Musa defeated the schemes of Pharaoh is widely

27. Due to the extremely large numbers of names connected with Prophets that will be mentioned in upcoming pages, honorific references to blessings or peace have been omitted. The reader, upon seeing a Prophet mentioned, should wish him peace silently.

28. Jewish writings refer to a man named Abram who left Iraq to found a monotheistic community. He later changed his name to Abraham. The Qur'an goes into great detail about how and why he came to believe in one God. Consult any Qur'anic index for a plethora of ayat on the subject.

29. Many Jews and Christians try to assert that the mother of Isma'il, Hajara (Hagar) was not a legitimate wife of Ibrahim, may he be blessed. This view is refuted by the witness of the Jewish writings themselves when Hajara is referred to as "wife" in Genesis 16:3.

30. Surah Yusuf (12) in the Qur'an explains the mechanism whereby the Jews migrated to Egypt.

celebrated among Jews, even to this day. But as they were returning to Palestine, however, the people became obstinate and began to defy Musa and the Laws of God which were revealed to him.³¹ Therefore, Allah set forth strict religious duties and forbade their entrance to Palestine for forty years. When the term of this sentence was lifted, the Jews were permitted to enter Palestine with the talented Joshua in the lead.

A line of stewards, or chiefs, known as "Judges" succeeded Joshua and were later themselves followed by a succession of Kings. The first three Kings were Talut, Dawud, and Sulaiman, may they be blessed.³² The kingdom was later divided into two parts, Israel and Judea, due to civil war and a succession crisis. In the sixth century B.C. the Babylonians invaded the land and exiled the Jews to Babylon.³³ The righteous king, Cyrus the Great (Dhul Quarnain?) eventually allowed them to return. But in 70 A.D. an invading Roman army expelled the Jews, yet again, as punishment for their not submitting to Rome.

In the following centuries, Jews of the Diaspora (the scattering) wandered through many lands in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Those who lived in Europe, however, were persecuted and dreamt of a separate Jewish homeland.³⁴ Meanwhile, Jews in Islamic lands were given considerable freedoms (despite a few rare periods of persecution) and excelled in philosophy, politics and the arts.³⁵

31. See references in Surat ul Baqarah for further details.

32. In English their names are Saul, David and Solomon.

33. It is after this event that the Synagogue, or local meeting, became the principle form of religious expression in Judaism.

34. Jews were despised by European Christians as "Christ-Killers." They were forced to live in miserable ghettos and were mistrusted as misers and cheats. History recounts many injustices done against them by the Christians, culminating in the "Holocaust," when German Christians, operating under the fascist philosophy called "Nazism," attempted to liquidate their presence in Europe. Many Jews sought refuge in Muslim lands even unto Ottoman times and received it.

By the 19th century, the aspirations of the European Jews coalesced into the Zionist movement, the political program supporting an all Jewish state.³⁶

In 1897 the first World Zionist Congress was organized in Europe after which chapters spread all over the world. In 1917, in order to quell Jewish demands and to reward Jews for certain services to the Crown, the British issued the infamous Balfour Declaration, in which they outlined a plan to divide their newly acquired Palestine Mandate (won from the defeated Ottoman Empire) into Jewish and Arab sections.³⁷

Then, in 1947, after the full extent of the Nazi persecution of the Jews became known, the Western-controlled United Nations formally recognized a new state named Israel, which militant Jews had been preparing in Palestine. This decision was reached despite the objections of the Muslim and Christian Arabs who did not want to be pushed off their ancestral lands to make way for outsiders. As expected, Jewish immigrants poured in from the United States and

35. For example, one of the greatest Jewish philosophers, Moses Maimonides, lived first in Spain and then in Egypt and was court physician to Salahudin. He wrote the Jewish classic "Mishneh Torah" in 1180 C.E.

36. The racial exclusiveness implied by Zionism has led many to charge that it is a racist ideology. *"Of all the sombre ironies of history none throws a more sinister light on human nature than the fact that the new-style nationalist Jews, on the morrow of the most appalling...persecutions that their race had endured, should at once proceed to demonstrate, at the expense of the Palestinian Arabs...the crime of which they themselves had been the victims..to persecute, in their turn, a people weaker than they were."* Arnold Toynbee. "A Study of History." page 177, Oxford U. Press, New York 1957.

37. The American and European Jews were so filled with romantic notions of "A Return to Zion" that they failed to notice the hundreds of thousands of Arab Christians and Muslims who called Palestine home. They displayed the same "settler" mentality that the Spanish Conquistadors and the American Pioneers did when they killed or drove off the native Indian populations without mercy or justice. See "A Study of History" pp 177-180. (Toynbee).

Europe and forced many Arabs to flee for safety. The hastily organized Arab defenses were ineffectual in halting the wholesale theft of Muslim lands.



The Star of David is considered to be the symbol of the Jewish people. Modern-day scholars doubt that it was ever known to or used by David himself.

Since that time, the North American Jewish community has focused most of its attention and resources upon Israel. Few discussions can be heard in which Israel is not mentioned. Therefore, Muslims who seek to give da'wah to Jews must familiarize themselves further with the full details of the formation of, and loyalty to, Israel.

Sometimes Muslims are asked to speak in front of Jewish audiences, in synagogues or community centers. These are very trying experiences because of the great tension that hangs in the air. The most important first step in giving da'wah to a person who identifies himself as Jewish, or to anyone else, is to be a confident, consistent and reserved Muslim. ³⁸ In conversations with Jews, the following points are very important to take note of:

1. Politics should be avoided as much as possible. Instead of getting stuck in ethnic or nationalistic arguments, stress positive solutions and thereby highlight the principles of Islam. ³⁹ For example, when the focus is on the Middle East, mention the Islamic system where minorities are protected and allowed to organize themselves in their own ways, and where freedom of identity is encouraged.

38. Many Jews, like Maryam Jameelah, Muhammad Asad and Abdullah ibn Salam have accepted Islam in part due to the beautiful nature of the Muslims they came into contact with.

39. *"And do not argue with the People of the Book except in a superior manner, unless it is with the wrong-doers among them. But declare, 'We believe in the Revelation which has come to us and in the one that came to you; our God and your God are One, and to Him we surrender.'" Qur'an 29:46.*

2. Don't assume you are speaking to a Jew who feels bound by the laws of the Jewish scriptures. Studies have shown that most Jews do not practice Judaism beyond celebrating holidays. You will have to "*reason with them in a superior manner.*"⁴⁰

3. Do not belittle, in any way, the experiences of the Jews throughout history. This seems to be the one, central factor coloring their collective psychology.⁴¹ Muslims, though often persecuted around the world, have not experienced the horrific suffering that Jews have undergone for more than three thousand years.

4. Use verses from the Qur'an concerning the Jews in proper context. Learn before hand what these mean.⁴² Emphasize that the Qur'an does not treat hatred of Jews and that any verses that are critical of Jews merely reflect similar verses in their own scriptures in which their ancient prophets often took their ancestors to task for failing to live a godly lifestyle.

5. Never be too quick to speak of a Jewish monopoly in the media or banking. We suspect there is something there, but they are extremely sensitive about this issue. When we have to mention our perceptions, let it be after our rapport is well established.

40. A concept popular among many Jews today is called, "Perfecting the world" (Tikun Olam). This means that the emphasis of a Jew's life should be on this world and its issues, with less importance attached to the concepts of personal moral accountability or an afterlife.

41. To illustrate the irrational hatred Christians have directed against Jews, consider this directive from the penitential of Theodore (668-690), one of the most widely distributed books in Europe during the middle ages: "If (a man) fasts (on Sunday), he shall be abhorred as a Jew by all the Catholic churches." (Page 284). "*Readings in Medieval History.*" Patrick Geary. Broadview Press, 1991. No wonder the Jews have sought to dominate and control Christian societies and cultures. It's merely self-preservation on their part!

42. Relevant verses include, but are not limited to: 2:40-103, 106-141, 246-253, 258-260; 3:21-25, 95-99.

6. Stress the common ties to Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and the concept of monotheism. Avoid belittling the Old Testament as far as Jewish tribal history goes. Also make reference to the protection and support the various Muslim nations have given to the Jews throughout history, especially in Spain, Egypt and Iraq.

7. Point to the concept of Prophethood in history, showing how God's Revelation to man has moved through many Prophets from many lands culminating in the Last Prophet of God, Muhammad, may he be blessed. ⁴³ Open up for them the possibilities of the Jewish people as part of a worldwide community under the banner of *La ilaha illa Allah* and highlight the lives and experiences of Jewish Muslims.

Key Beliefs of Judaism

The full range of Jewish belief and teachings varies from sect to sect and place to place, but there are certain principles that characterize the basic beliefs of Judaism. These include:

1. Belief in One God. "The God of Israel."

43. See Qur'an 2:213 for elucidation.

44. The contents of the "Old Testament," or Jewish scripture, were standardized in about 100 C.E.

45. See Qur'an 4:150-152. A Jewish Muslim organization named *Jews for Allah* seeks to bring the message of Islam to Jews. <http://www.jews-for-allah.org/>

46. "*O Children of Israel! Remember My favor which I granted you; keep your pledge to Me, and I will Mine to you, and be heedful of Me. Believe in what I have revealed which confirms the (writings) with you now, and do not be the first to deny it, nor part with it for a small gain, and be mindful of Me.*" Qur'an 2:40-41.

47. There have been many claims to this title of Messiah in the Jewish community, just as many Muslims have claimed the title "Mahdi" through the ages. Some Jews hold that a New York Rabbi by the name of Lubavitch was this Messiah. Other contenders include Rabbi Schneerson and Rabbi Hilal, although both are no longer in the land of the living.

2. It is required to follow the laws as outlined in the Torah.
3. A belief in prophecy and revelation. ⁴⁴
4. The superiority of Moses over all other Prophets. ⁴⁵
5. The Revelation of the Law to Moses at Mount Sinai and the establishment of a special covenant, or agreement with Allah. ⁴⁶
6. A belief in the future coming of a Messiah or great leader. ⁴⁷ The Jews reject Jesus as their Messiah. ⁴⁸
7. A belief that God chose them as His own people above all others. Many Jews publicly de-emphasize this exclusivity realizing that it can be interpreted negatively.
8. A belief in the Old Testament (Tanakh) as the only true scripture. Jews will readily admit to its being altered, however. This is explained away with the excuse that God's Message is a *changing, growing* institution. The idea of the Bible being the literal word of God is not as important to Jews as it is to Christians. The first five books are known traditionally as the *Torah*.
9. The Talmud, which is something like tafseer and fiqh joined together, is the record of Jewish scholarship and insight into the Torah through the early centuries of the diaspora. ⁴⁹

48. A small number of converted Jews do accept Jesus. They have labeled their movement, "Jews for Jesus." Their funding comes primarily from fundamentalist Protestant churches who have made it their duty to bring Christ to the Jewish community. The irony is that these same Christians, while saying the Jews are lost and need to be saved, pour billions of dollars into Israel where Christianity is a suppressed religion.

49. The second main source for Judaic Theology is the Talmud, a compilation of stories, commentaries and questions. One Jewish scholar explained the relationship between Jewish doubts about religion and the Talmud by saying that their thought is "*the perfect intellectualization of life, that is, the subjection of life to rational study ... what is talmudic in thinking is perpetual skepticism.*" As quoted in *Exploring Religion* by Roger Schmidt. Wadsworth Inc., Belmont, 1980. p. 284.

Major Divisions Among Jews

Orthodox- This is a rigid traditionalist sect which believes in following the tenets of medieval Judaism to the letter. They can often be distinguished by their beards, vintage black European suits, shawls, robes and clannish nature. They most often live in tight-knit communities with a leader who exercises near-total authority. Some orthodox followers wear secular dress, though yarmulkas are often present. The women cover their hair, as a religious obligation, though usually with berets or even wigs, and wear long skirts.

Conservative- This tendency is mid-way between orthodoxy and liberalism. It accepts the importance of the Law and respects Rabbinic authority,⁵⁰ but is less strict in its application. Rituals are important but can be modified.

Reformist- This sect is distinguished by its belief in liberalism and its willingness to embrace new ideas. The importance of ritual is downplayed and it does not adhere strictly to the exclusive nature of Judaism, i.e. they do not emphasize the "Return to Israel" or the reinstatement of old Jewish Law. This form of Judaism is popular among secularized Jews.

Mystical- Two separate movements emphasizing sufi- like devotion arose in Europe among the Jews. The first arose in Muslim Spain in the 13th century and is known as Kabbalah. It teaches that union with God can occur through meditation and contemplation. The second, called Hasidim, originated in Eastern Europe in the 18th century. It holds that enthusiastic prayer brings communion with God. Both tendencies are alive and well in varying forms among Jews today.

50. "Rabbinic Authority": the power of the local Rabbis to direct the community's religious affairs. "*They take their priests and rabbis as lords beside Allah...*" Qur'an 9:31.

Zionist- This nationalistic philosophy enjoys wide support, though mostly from secular and orthodox Jews. It stresses that Jews are distinct and cannot exist in safety amongst other peoples. This movement is similar to Fascism and has given rise to terrible injustices against the native Arab populations of Palestine.

Jewish Festivals

PASSOVER (Pesach). Commemorates the flight of the Israelites from Egypt and the wicked Pharaoh. Jews believe an angel was sent to kill the first-born children of the Egyptians but avoided Jewish homes. The celebration occurs in the spring and lasts eight days. See Qur'an 2:50, 10:90-92 and 79:15-26.

NEW YEAR (Rosh Hashanah). The symbolic new beginning of the Jewish calendar. Prayer and reflection are encouraged.

DAY OF ATONEMENT (Yom Kippur). The tenth day of the Jewish New Year. Jews observe a 24 hour fast from food and water as a sign of penitence to God. It is considered the most holy day.

PURIM. A commemoration of the Jews' deliverance from the plots of a Persian official.

DEDICATION (Hannukah). A winter festival marking the purifying of the second Jewish temple in Jerusalem after the occupying Greeks had ransacked it in 165 BC. Menorahs are lit.

TABERNACLES (Succoth). An autumn harvest celebration. Tents are erected and prayers are recited making reference to the Jews wandering in the desert during the time of the Prophet Musa, may he be blessed. See Qur'an 2:57-61.

PENTECOST (Shavuot). Seven weeks after Passover, a festival is held to celebrate the corn harvest and the revelation of the Law to Prophet Musa (a) at Sinai. See Qur'an 2:51-53.

8

Da'wah to Christians

Statistics say that the United States is roughly 80% Christian. The figure for Canada is similar and for Mexico and Central America much higher. But no Muslim should view these figures and conclude that there is one monolithic Christianity. In fact, the complete disunity among Christians is so great as to be bewildering. Indeed, Allah has allowed the Christians to wander in their confusion after they altered the Message of His great Prophet, Jesus ('Isa or 'Esa), may he be blessed. ⁵¹ Therefore, it is the duty of Muslims to call all of the wayward followers of this earlier Messenger back to his original teachings.

The Development of Christianity

Allah entrusted the Children of Israel with His Divine Message, yet they failed to live up to the precepts bestowed upon them. As the centuries passed the Jews gradually layered their revelations with speculations, additions and deletions until all that remained was a legal-minded, formalistic religion based upon ritual. Such a development impeded the spread of Allah's message to all humanity. Accordingly, Allah sent the Jews one more Messenger, the Prophet Jesus, ('Isa,) may he be blessed. His mission was to revive in them the true spirit of faith.

51. See Surat ul Bayyinah (98), ayah 4, where Allah indicates that the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) fell into schisms and sects even after Clear Evidence was given to them. Also see Qur'an 19:37. It is currently estimated that there are nearly 40,000 different Christian sects in the world today. The majority of the world's Christians are grouped under the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox umbrellas.

Jesus was born of a special miracle to be a sign from Allah to humanity.⁵² When he came of age he traveled throughout ancient Palestine calling people back to true surrender to Allah (Islam).⁵³ He drew some supporters and disciples among the Jews and never wavered from teaching pure monotheism. He is reported to have said:

"VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT SENT ME, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SHALL NOT COME INTO JUDGMENT, BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE."

The Bible- John 5:24

But his insistence upon trust in Allah, genuine faith and an endearing love of the next life angered many in the establishment and they began to conspire against him. After plotting together in secret for over a year they eventually had him arrested. By making false accusations and bringing contrived testimony, they successfully goaded their Roman overlords into sentencing him to death. But Allah answered the prayer of His Messenger and saved him, though the Jews thought they had killed him.⁵⁴

After Jesus was taken from the world by Allah (to await his later reappearance,) his disciples dispersed and continued to preach sincerity in faith. But as new converts began to enter the still very Jewish sect, they brought with them many influences and ideas alien to the concept of monotheism.⁵⁵

52. For the true account of the life of Jesus, may he be blessed, see the Holy Qur'an: His birth- 3:42, 3:45-51. His Mission- 19:28-32; 5:46-47. His escape from certain death- 4:157-159. Comments on his personality and nature- 2:87; 3:59; 4:171; 5:17, 75.

53. The Qur'an calls his message "the Injeel." "Evangel" in Greek.

54. Some early Muslim commentators have held that the man who betrayed Jesus to his enemies, Judas, was mistaken for Jesus and crucified in his place. This was the view held by some early Christian sects. There is no evidence in Islam, however, to support this theory beyond doubt.

These Greeks and Romans were used to worshipping images of humans, and they were well versed in the ways of philosophy and complex theology. They began to mix their old beliefs with the new and synthesized a hybrid faith, much to the horror of some of the original teachers. ⁵⁶

Paul, followed this path. He was a Jew who went from persecuting Christians to helping them. He claimed to see a vision of Jesus while traveling on the road to Damascus and thereafter became a believer. He attempted to merge the two traditions (Western polytheism and Judaic Monotheism), into one unified religion with Jesus as its focal point. ⁵⁷ He was opposed by the traditional companions of the blessed Jesus, like Barnabas, but others joined him. He displayed remarkable zeal in promoting his new belief, wrote many letters and traveled extensively. ⁵⁸ Paul, however, began to annoy the prevailing Roman authorities, and was arrested and thrown into prison. Eventually, traditional accounts say, he was executed.

55. Nearly all modern-day practices of Christianity have their roots in paganism. Christmas, which falls on the day of the winter solstice, was the day of celebration for the devotees of Mithra, the sun-god of Rome. Easter is simply the English spelling of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar (Astarte in the Phoenecian language). Everything from holly wreaths to painted eggs can be traced to pagan, pre-Christian sources. Several denominations in the United States and Canada have attempted to expose the falsity of such practices to the general public with little success. This can be attributed to the fact that who is to say which Christianity is right? Christians can choose to believe whatever they want it seems. For more details see the pamphlets produced, ironically enough, by The Worldwide Church of God entitled, "*The Plain Truth About Easter*" and "*The Resurrection was Not on Sunday.*" (Worldwide Church of God, Pasadena, California, 91123)

56. The book of Acts in the Bible recounts the disagreements which occurred in the early Christian community concerning the importance of the Law of Musa, may he be blessed, and its relationship to the Message of the blessed Jesus. See Acts 15:19-21 where the leaders were debating how much of the Law the non-Jewish converts should follow, while Paul in Romans 10:4 sought to abolish the Law altogether in favor of a vague and misty sense of fatalistic-like faith.

In time, the new religion gained ground throughout the Empire, but the Roman government, fearful of movements which competed for its absolute authority, sought to check its advance and began a program of repression.⁵⁹

Christian doctrine by the second century was still an unsettled issue, so the religion was marvelously adaptable in the new environment. A church structure began to emerge consisting of regular meetings, a leadership hierarchy and symbols of the faith. A secret network spread to the four corners of the Empire and by the fourth century the Romans finally acknowledged the new sect as legitimate.⁶⁰

Due to the unsettled doctrinal disputes which began to flare up, however, a council was organized by the Roman Emperor Constantine in the year 325 at Nicaea. Complex issues such as the nature of Jesus, original sin, atonement and the form the new scripture should take dominated the proceedings.⁶¹

57. He began to espouse the idea that Jesus was the son of Allah, that his death ended the need to follow the Laws of Musa and that his blood was a sacrifice to Allah as payment for the sins of mankind. He also advanced the trinity theory.

58. Most of the New Testament is made up of his writings or of those of his supporters. Later Christians labeled these letters "inspired" and hold them to be revelation from God.

59. They were named 'Christians' by idolaters in Antioch who knew of no other way to describe them (Acts 11:26). (The name is derived from the Greek "Christos" which is equivalent to the Semitic "Messiah" which means "annointed." or rubbed with oil.)

60. The Emperor Constantine proclaimed freedom of worship in 313 C.E. Eleven years later he accepted the new faith, at least in public, and made it the official religion of Rome. His own practice was far from sincere as he dedicated temples to idols even after his conversion to Christianity.

61. *"In fact, every year brings fresh evidence to light- and raises fresh questions and uncertainties- that will compel us to reappraise our present ideas of what really 'belongs' in the Bible and of how this selection process was (or should have been) made."* Manfred Barthel, *What the Bible Really Says*, p. 16.

The purpose of these talks was to unify Christianity once and for all. But several serious factors worked against the participants at the council. These were directly related to the evolution of Christianity itself after the first generation.

The Christian world was divided, almost from the beginning, between a Latin-speaking West and a Greek-speaking East.⁶² Some sects, particularly those in the Middle East and North Africa, held that Jesus was a Prophet and not god

in the flesh. While the Latins and Greeks blended the teachings of Jesus with their own pagan traditions which called for man-gods. This led to a synthesis or compromise where Jesus himself was elevated to godhood.⁶³ And by sheer force of majority, the man-god (Trinitarian) theorists, led by the enigmatic Athanasius, voted their position into official sanction.⁶⁴ This, however, did not settle the issue of Christian unity. Lingering political and cultural differences continued to divide the eastern and western halves of Christianity.



Early Christians were divided as to the nature of Jesus. Was he a man? A God? A God-man?

Only through political manouevering and real persecution of dissenting views did the third choice come to prominence.

62. The Latin West looked to a "Pope" for its guidance, while the Greek-leaning East was under the sway of a Patriarch based in the city of Constantinople (Istanbul).

63. Arius, a North African Christian leader, publicly opposed the position taken by the Roman-oriented council by pointing out that Jesus always affirmed the Divine Unity. As quoted in *Jesus A Prophet of Islam*. M. Ata ur Rahim, pg. 13.

64. In a letter to a friend Arius complained, "*We are persecuted because we say that Jesus had a beginning, while God has no beginning.*" *Jesus A Prophet of Islam*, Ata Ur Rahim, p. 93.

In the sixth century the Monophysite Churches (Unitarian) broke from their eastern cousins. Later, in the eleventh century, the Western Church and the Eastern Church broke off all formal relations with each other resulting in what is known as the "Great Schism." The Western Church has since come to be known as the "Catholic" or "Western Catholic" Church, while the Eastern Church is now called the "Eastern Orthodox" Church. ⁶⁵ It is the Western Church which is more likely to concern Muslims in North America.

In the fifth century wild Germanic tribes from northern Europe conquered the Western Roman empire but then subsequently adopted the values and religion of those they vanquished. After adding their own idol-worshipping practices to the mixing bowl of Christianity, the new rulers gave the Catholic Church permission to convert all within their borders to the faith. ⁶⁶

Over succeeding centuries, the Church amassed much political and secular power. The Bible was the province of priests who interpreted it to the people. Confession, the telling of sins to a priest for forgiveness, gave the Catholic leaders tremendous control over the social affairs of the community, and a network of informers and official henchmen helped ensure the dominance of the institution. ⁶⁷ This led to great corruption and dubious behavior. ⁶⁸

65. The Eastern and Monophysite Churches both receded from prominence as many of their followers later accepted Islam. See *The Preaching of Islam*, Arnold Toynbee.

66. Charlemagne (d. 814) decreed that any who would not accept Christianity should be put to the sword. (Page 302). "*Readings in Medieval History*." Patrick Geary. Broadview Press, 1991.

67. Confessions were an important tool in the Inquisition. In 1184, Pope Lucius III launched the rudimentary procedures for finding alleged heretics. This system was improved upon by his successors so much so that by the thirteenth century, the mere threat of the Inquisition sent fear into the hearts of the people. "*In medieval law, confession was considered the most certain proof of guilt... Confession was supposed to be voluntary, but...the inquisitors were allowed to use torture...*" *Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, Brian Tierny.

The Church institution became a self-perpetuating business. The bishops, popes, priests, monks and other functionaries collected huge revenues from tenant-farmers, donations, penance fees, grants, taxes and in the selling of indulgences: certificates of God's forgiveness which could be purchased from traveling salesmen. These papers purported to shorten a person's confinement in purgatory (limbo) after death. ⁶⁹

Political meddling by the popes angered princes and magistrates from France to the Germanic states. The boiling point was soon to be breached. Many writers in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries called for reform and a return to basic religious piety. Bridget of Sweden (1302-1372), William of Ockham (1285-1349) ⁷⁰ and Marsilius of Padua (1275-1342) were among the vocal critics calling for change.

After a few more generations of muted grumbling, a general rebellion arose in the sixteenth century against the moral decay of Christianity. Martin Luther and John Calvin were the two major figures in this movement. They held that the Bible should be available to all, that the power of the Catholic Church should be broken and that each person must go to the intermediary Christ themselves to be saved. This is known as the Protestant Reformation which resulted in the birth of many new sects of Christianity.

68. Monasticism for example, which began in the fourth century, was often associated with stagnant values, and sometimes corruption. Writers such as Francois Rabelais, Michel de Montaigne, Desiderius Erasmus and innumerable others earned the wrath of the Church through their negative reports on the functioning of monasteries. See Qur'an 57:27.

69. The Catholic church declared that purgatory, the place between heaven and hell where some sinners go to await entrance into paradise, is now no longer there. (Vatican II conference).

70. William of Okham all but conceded that three-in-one means three and not one. See *Hunted Heretic*, Roland Bainton, p. 28.

The internal religious rebellion was highly successful. Luther, who had the support of many German princes seeking freedom from papal control, launched his own sect in the north complete with doctrines, liturgy, services and a new scripture. Calvin, on the other hand, was influential in Switzerland, France and parts of Scotland. ⁷¹

Other lesser known figures also had an impact in Eastern and Central Europe. ⁷² The Reformation was a bloody affair and atrocities were committed by all sides with impunity. What finally emerged was a compromise agreement between Catholics, Protestants and secular authorities which held that, "to whom belongs the land, to him the religion." In other words, the ruler of each territory would decide the religion of his people. The religious mosaic of Europe and North America today is a legacy of this complete and final break-down in a faith that only saw unity in the lifetime of its Messenger.



71. Perhaps the most important figure who wrote in the sixteenth century, from the Muslim standpoint, was Michael Servetus alias Villanueve. He was born in 1511 in a Spain which still retained much Islamic flavor and ideology. Though something of a Christian, he could not accept the Church's teachings on the Trinity and on the godhood of Christ. His two most important works were: *On the Errors of Trinity* and *Dialogues on the Trinity*. In these he masterfully dismantles the sacred myths that the Church invented for itself. He writes: "If you are to convince your understanding ... (you) ...ought to believe that God could have brought forth from His own Substance not only Christ's flesh, but a stone ... and saved us by it." *Dialogues on the Trinity*, p. 210. His intellectual abilities cost him his life as he was burned at a Catholic stake...with Protestant complicity!

72. E.g. Francis David who rejected trinitarianism and gained many followers in Poland and Transylvania. See: *Hunted Heretic*, p. 127.

The Formation of the Bible

In 325 A.D. a council was organized in the city of Nicaea by the Roman Emperor Constantine to determine which beliefs Christianity should hold. Another purpose was to establish a body of written works to use as inspirational writings and/or scripture. As has been already noted, the Trinitarian thinkers were in the majority and their views came to be accepted as the verdict of the council. It stands as no surprise, then, that they played a considerable part in choosing the contents of their holy book. ⁷³

At that time in history, each major church center from Rome to Alexandria, and from Carthage to Corinth, had its own canon or body of writings from which it taught. Biographies of the Prophet Jesus, may he be blessed, were in abundance, with hundreds of them being used. These they called "Gospels," after the Message of Jesus, but in many cases, they only contained a smattering of the authentic, inspired words of the Revelation.

The four "Gospels" that were chosen at that council, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were not original, eye-witness accounts, but were written by unknown authors who drew from other sources. The writers of the first three are thought by Biblical scholars to have copied from the same source document that they have come to label the "Q" manuscript. The Gospel of John is a "Gnostic" or philosophical work full of Greek mysticism and terminology.

The final version which came to be accepted in 367 B.C. contained over 70 books. It was the standard scripture to be used throughout the Western Church (Catholic) and was meant to replace

73. Jewish religious writings as contained in the "Old Testament" were held by Jesus and his immediate disciples as worthy of study. There was no "New Testament" or "Bible" until after the fourth century.

all other rival collections. In 382 B.C. an edict was issued banning all other Gospels and any other church-employed writings not approved by the Pope. The Gospel of Barnabas was among the books banned.

74

Some years later, under the efforts of Martin Luther, John Calvin and others, new Bibles were produced. They are known as the Protestant Bible and came into being at the time of the Reformation, when many Christians rebelled against the authority of the Roman Church. In 1522 Luther translated the Bible from Roman Latin into German. Others began translating the Bible into their own native languages as well. A few Protestant theologians, however, rejected some of the books in the traditional canon and labeled them as *Apocrypha* (doubtful) and removed them from their version, leaving 66 books, thus creating another major division among Christians. Now there would be two different Bibles with competing contents.

Today, there are countless versions of the Bible used by Protestants and Catholics. Some claim to be based on the most up-to-date scholarship and therefore even now exclude passages that others may still retain. Some may be based upon Latin manuscripts, others on ancient Greek fragments that differ from one version to the next. The differences between the Revised Standard Version, the King James Version, the New King James Version, etc... are so many and so varied that no one need doubt that the words of the Prophets have been thoroughly corrupted and lost. ⁷⁵

74. The Gospel of Thomas, discovered as late as 1945 in Egypt, has caused much excitement in Christian circles. It also presents a portrait of Jesus which is closer to what Islam says about him. See *The Five Gospels*, published by the Jesus Seminar. 1993.

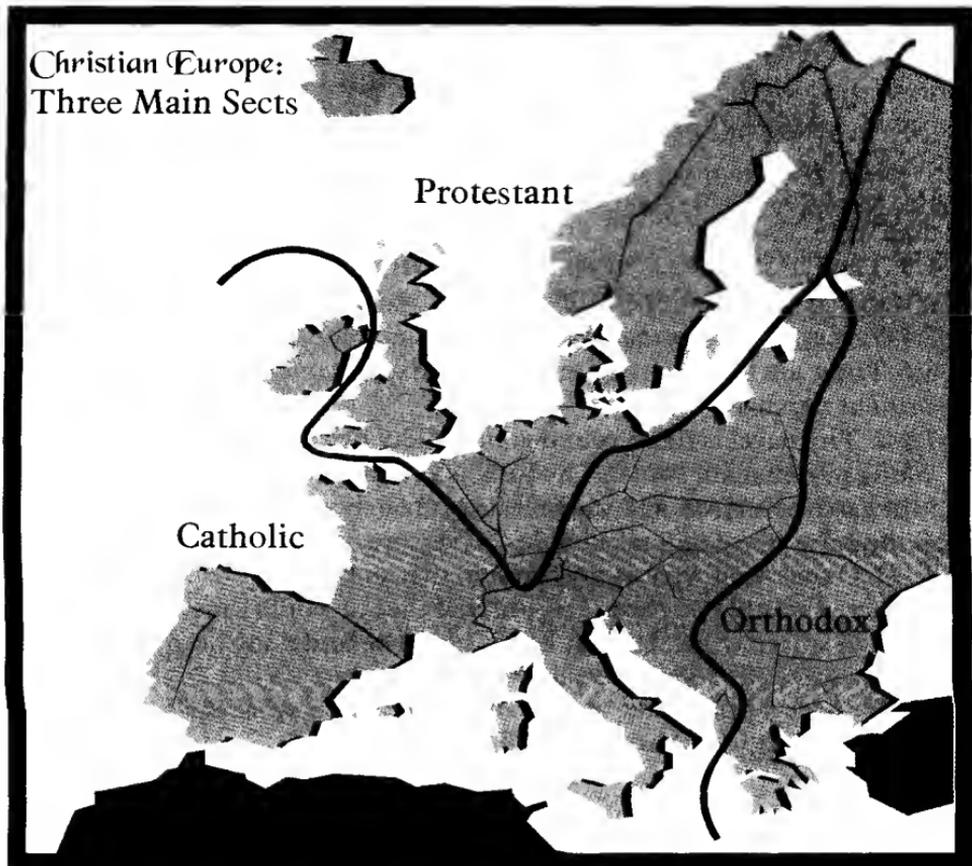
75. Many fundamentalist Christians uphold that the King James Version 1611 is the only true and inspired Bible, all other versions being works of the Devil. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible (RSV) states in its preface: "*Yet the King James Version has grave defects ...that (are) ... so many and so serious as to call for revision...*" RSV Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York, 1959.

The Bible, whether Catholic or Protestant, has two major divisions. There is the Old Testament, consisting mainly of Jewish tribal history, and the New Testament, which is in the main the Christian scriptures. The Old Testament spans roughly 1000 years in its compilation and arrangement, while the books in the New Testament were formulated in less than 100 years. Hebrew and Aramaic were the principle languages used in the former, Greek was used almost exclusively in the latter.

Although tradition states that the Prophet Musa wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, internal and external evidence proves otherwise.⁷⁶ Although the Qur'an agrees that he received the Law (Taurah), it does not say that Allah revealed anything else to him. When we examine these five books purported to be the works of Moses, we find also that they contain enormous amounts of genealogical data, tribal history, small stories peculiar regulations, vague references whose meaning is lost and many other things.

So while some of the original words of Musa may be quoted here and there in maybe a couple of places, it is obvious that Musa was not the author of most of the first five books of the Bible. It would have taken truck loads of stone tablets, leather and/or papyrus for the Blessed Prophet Musa to write all of that stuff himself! What remains of the Law is buried somewhere, and we're not sure where, within the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

76. For example, Deuteronomy 34:5-6 contains the account of the death of Musa, may he be blessed. How could he have written his own obituary and sealed his books? If that were not enough, all five books are written in the third person. Someone else is narrating the events. Finally, given the writing materials that were available in Musa's time, it is highly unlikely the ancient Bani Isra'il carted wagon loads of papyrus, clay tablets or leather sheets from place to place. Manfred Barthel's book, *What the Bible Really Says* contains a fascinating discussion on the multiple authors of the book of Genesis, for example (page 33-36). Modern scholars even point to the influence of a woman in these books as well. Her identity is labelled as the mysterious "J" contribution.



The Book of Psalms probably still contains some of the authentic writings of Dawud, may he be blessed, known as the Zabur, but nearly half of the works are thought (by Christian scholars) to have been written and contributed by others. Christians seem to have little difficulty in accepting the Psalms, which were written by anonymous Rabbis and politicians, as God-breathed revelation.

The remainder of the Old Testament consists of various books attributed to various authors, from the book of Ezekiel (Dhul Kifl?) to the Proverbs of Sulaiman and his proteges. These are historical writings directly related to Jewish history and represent an enigma for modern Christians to unravel. Many theologians look for signs and "prophecies" in these writings.

Selections from The Song of Songs (or Solomon),
A book in the Old Testament that is
Held as God's Word by Jews and Christians

1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.

4:9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

5:4-6 (Note: This passage is far too pornographic to repeat here.)

6:6 There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.

7:2-8 Thy navel is like a round goblet...Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins...Thy neck is as a tower of ivory...thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes...I...will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold...(of) thy breasts...

8:1-3 O that thou were as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother...I would kiss thee...I would lead thee...I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine...His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

8:8 We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts, what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

The New Testament begins with the four "Gospels," named after supposed authors, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, whom much of Christendom no longer recognizes as being genuine. These books are not original documents written by original disciples, but are, rather, second and third hand accounts loosely based on earlier writings. Copied passages contradict each other among the four and many verses are outright plagiarized from one to the other. Their specific contents vary from Bible version to Bible version.

The next block of writings is made up of Paul's letters to various church communities in the Mediterranean basin expounding on theology and Christian belief as he formulated it. Galatians, Romans, Corinthians and Ephesians are representative of his letters. Paul has been called the "Second Founder" of Christianity and his letters of advice and doctrine are accepted as Divine Writ.

Then there are miscellaneous works such as James, Jude or the three letters of John. These booklets cover a wide range of topics concerning charity, mysticism, local organization and miscellaneous doctrines. Finally, the New Testament ends with the Book of Revelations, in which a man named John recounts a fantastic vision of the future. This section is a favorite reference for Christian fundamentalists because of its mythology, fantasy, allegory and mystery. In it, John sees dreams (as prophetic scenes) of the Last Day: earthquakes (6:12,) monster insects with golden crowns and human faces (9:7-8) and even red dragons (12:3).

It is in this book that Christians gain most of their theories about the end of the world. As Revelations was written by a Hellenized-Jew for Roman and Greek Christians, it comes as no surprise that the book is filled with allegory, fantastic creatures and symbolism. The focus is on the people of the Mediterranean region as rest of humanity plays only a marginal role in any future events, other than acting as mindless invaders.

Common Christian Symbols and Their Meaning



The Cross symbolizes the death of their man-god, Jesus and his assumption of all of humanity's sins. The Romans actually used crosses in the shape of a capital "T" so their defining symbol is incorrect. The palm branch symbolizes Jesus' triumphant entry into a city. Eager followers laid palm branches out for him to walk on. Modern Christians will sometimes make processions whilst carrying palm branches.



The cup symbolizes two things: God's mercy and the sacred wine that some Christians believe will become Jesus' blood upon drinking during holy services.



The dove is a peace symbol made famous by a speech of Jesus.



Symbolizing a miracle in which Jesus fed a multitude with only a small basket of fish, this symbol was adopted by early Christians during the period of Roman persecution. It was kind of a code word for Christianity.

A Brief Survey of the Books of the Old Testament

(Protestant Version) ⁷⁷

Genesis: Opening book; describes beginning of the world; Adam and his descendants; the Tower of Babel; Nuh and the flood; Prophet Ibrahim; Lut and the cities of the plain; Prophet Yusuf (Joseph).

Exodus: Musa and the rescue of the Children of Israel from Egypt; Wandering in the Sinai desert; Prophet Musa receives Taurah; religious worship and regulations.

Leviticus: The Jews develop a formal legal system. Many new practices related to religious observances are instituted.

Numbers: Disobedience of the Jews; wandering in the desert.

Deuteronomy: Farewell speeches of Musa; historical data; warnings of punishment for disobeying God.

Joshua: Joshua leads the Children of Israel; wars and battles.

77. The Bible that was in use almost exclusively in the Christian world from the fourth century until the sixteenth century had a total of 73 books in it. Although the so-called *Catholic Bible* still retains these as holy writ, the Protestant world threw them out as being doubtful in nature. These books are: Tobit, Judith, Maccabees I, Maccabees II, Wisdom, Sirach, and Baruch. Of course, many other early Christian writings, that could have been chosen to be in the official canon in the fourth century, are still in circulation today such as the Gospel of Barnabas, the Gospel of Thomas, etc...

The interesting thing is, Christians will tell you frequently that men working under the inspiration of God formed the Bible. But Christians saw fit to delete these books in the sixteenth century after having followed them for over a thousand years. And what's more, today Christian scholars who have access to even more ancient manuscripts than their predecessors are busy throwing verses out of today's Bibles left and right. Just compare any RSV or NIV with a KJV or a NKJV to see how they include or delete completely different things. If Christians believe they are working under God's influence, then they may be guilty of duplicity in God's view, for why would their holy book be forever flawed and in need of correction?

Judges: Jews disobey Allah; leaders arise called "Judges."

Ruth: Human interest story of two poor widows.

I Samuel: Samuel becomes the spiritual leader of the Jews; he appoints Talut as Israel's first king when the Jews demand one; Talut said to have opposed Dawud.

II Samuel: Dawud leads the nation; Dawud accused of adultery and murder, failure of foreign policy.

I Kings: Sulaiman succeeds Dawud; civil war at his death; evil kings that follow; Prophet Al Yasa' (Elijah?) confronts a king named Ahab.

II Kings: The histories of the rulers of two separate Jewish kingdoms. An account of how the northern kings were rebellious against Allah; invasion by Babylonians; deportation of the Jews.

I Chronicles: Genealogy; parallel account of II Samuel about the life of Dawud, with contradictions viv-a-vis the related book.

II Chronicles: Parallel account of the books of Kings; just rulers of Judah emphasized; more inconsistencies.

Ezra: Jewish captivity in Babylon; Jews allowed to leave; Prophet Ezra ('Uzair?) leads first immigrants back to Palestine.

Nehemiah: Nehemiah builds a wall around Jerusalem; joins Prophet Ezra in calling the Jews to worship God.

Esther: Jews in Persia foil an evil plot with the help of a royal concubine. (Note: stories such as these are Jewish tribal history/anecdotes.)

Job: The suffering and eventual triumph of Prophet Ayyoub (Job) who tested to see if his faith would remain true even in adversity.

Psalms: Prayers and hymns; miscellaneous authors.

Proverbs: Wisdom sayings of Sulaiman and temple priests.

Ecclesiastes: The consequences of leaving the straight path.
Admonitions.

Song of Songs: (Also called the Song of Solomon) Love poems between a lover and his mate. Graphic and pornographic in nature. Christians used to attribute this book to Prophet Suleiman, but today it is thought that a temple poet or priest wrote these words.

Isaiah: Commentary on Jewish history; prophecies of a future leader who will renew religion.

Jeremiah: Exhortations against the wickedness of the Jews.

Lamentations: Five poems by Jeremiah dedicated to the fall of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel: Parables for the Jews in Babylon; Teachings of Prophet Dhul Kifl (Ezekiel).

Daniel: Jewish Prime Minister in Babylon; King Nebuchadnezzar and his fight against the youthful Daniel.

Hosea: Hosea married an adulterer; accusations against the Jews. Jewish rebellion against God's laws.

Joel: Plagues in Israel; Punishment of the Jews for their disobedience.

Amos: Amos spoke against Jewish love of the material world.

Obadiah: Warnings to a nation adjacent to Israel called Edom.

Jonah: Prophet Yunus, who was not Jewish, went to Nineveh; preached to non-Jews; they accepted his da'wah.

Micah: The prophet Micah castigates the corruption in all levels of Jewish society; promises forgiveness for those who repent and reform.

Nahum: A man named Nahum predicts Nineveh will fall in ruin after the time of Prophet Yunus.

Habakkuk: A long poem in the form of an extended dialogue with God. Many sections follow a question and answer format.

Zephaniah: Predictions of the fall of Judah. Some remnants of Israel will bless world.

Haggai: Rebuilding the temple after escaping Babylon; Jews build own homes in preference to the temple; warned to put Allah first.

Zechariah: Further exhortation to build the temple; They learn it will facilitate the mission of a future leader.

Malachi: Warnings to the Jews who began to forget Allah again. Indictments against their corrupt practices and attitudes.



A Brief Survey of the Books of the New Testament

(Protestant Version)

Matthew: Tries to bridge Jewish traditions with the new Messenger, Prophet Jesus. Portrays him as a king and Messiah; power and authority emphasized.

Mark: Straight-forward biographical outline of the life of Jesus.

Luke: Emphasizes human nature of Jesus; anecdotal data. Similar events to Matthew and Mark although some contradictions arise.

John: Mystical approach to the life of Jesus. Seven signs used to validate godhood; vast difference in style from the previous three parallel accounts.

Acts: Reportedly written by a physician named Luke (who was a friend of Paul's); An account of the early believers after Jesus left the earth; Peter, Barnabas and others actively spread their version of Jesus' message; Paul turns from Jewish oppressor of Christians to an ardent Christian convert; Paul's teachings; doctrinal disputes among the early church; separations and dissension; Paul's activities.

The Major Writings of Paul

(Letters he wrote to different churches)

Romans: Paul's theology and doctrines; written for the pagan Romans and new converts.

I Corinthians: Church at Corinth not in line with Paul's teachings; miscellaneous matters dealt with (marriage, factions, law, etc...) Paul discourages people from marrying save for avoiding sin. (7:1-8)

II Corinthians: Paul in opposition to rival leaders and theologians.

Galatians: Law and moral codes de-emphasized.

Ephesians: Written while in captivity; exhortations and certainty of his feelings.

Philippians: Letter of congratulations and miscellaneous exhortations to a church in Phillipi.

Colossians: Opposition to certain new cults and innovations in opposition to Paul's message.

I Thessalonians: History of a local church; Paul's advice to it. Paul sends a helper named Timothy to report on their activities.

II Thessalonians: Sequel to the previous letter; the second coming of Jesus.

I Timothy: Letter of encouragement to his young protege named Timothy.

II Timothy: Sequel to the previous letter in which Paul tells Timothy to take over the work he began.

Titus: Advice to a missionary named Titus. Paul also attacks the Jewish Christians as unbelievers and calls all people from the Isle of Crete "liars." (1:10-14.)

Philemon: Exhortation to be kind to a runaway slave named Onesimus.

Miscellaneous Writings of Paul and Others

Hebrews: Warning Christians to avoid returning to Judaism; reinterprets Jewish customs as proof of the validity of Jesus. A non-Jewish king from ancient times by the name of Melchizedek is called a man with no mother, father, genealogy, beginning or end of days. (7:1-4)

James: Living a righteous life; obeying God's injunctions.

I Peter: Comfort for persecuted believers.

II Peter: Warnings about false teachers and theologians.

I John: Mystical and emotional aspects of belief.

II John: Advising churches on repelling teachers of different doctrines.

III John: A thank-you note from someone named John to a friend named Gaius.

Jude: Outlines the features and description of heresy and disobedience; warns against listening to the ways of wicked neighbors.

Revelations: Recorded dream of a man named John: prophecies; cosmic battle between good and evil; fantastic mythological symbols; Jesus' second coming; the fight against the forces of darkness resulting in a new heaven and earth. Difficult riddles and mysteries to unravel.

Selections from the Book of I Corinthians with Analysis

7:1-2 “Now concerning the things thereof you wrote unto me. It is good for a man to not touch a woman. Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”

***Marriage is suffered only to avoid fornication!

5:11 “But now I have written unto you not to keep company...(with) an idolater...(and) with such a one not to eat.”

***Non-Muslims complain that the Qur'an says something similar (see Qur'an 3:28 and 18:28) but their Bible says the same here and in a few other places!

The Term "Old Testament" was coined by Christians to emphasize that the special covenant that the Jews had with God had been superceded by the new covenant offered by Jesus to the whole world as formulated in the "New Testament," or uniquely Christian portion of the Bible. Understandably, Jews do not accept these terms and hold Christian writings as false.

Standard Christian Doctrines

Every ethnic and even national group has its own version of Christianity, but three main theological branches remain dominant. These are the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Churches. The Catholic and Orthodox Churches stress elaborate rituals and the importance of the church institution in a person's relationship with God.⁷⁸ The Protestant churches emphasize personal conversion experiences characterized by an emotional certainty of salvation.⁷⁹

1. **Monotheism**. Christians claim to believe in one God.
2. **Trinity**. Christians hold that this one God is made up of three distinct parts or personalities. The stern and punishing part of God is known as "The Father," the benevolent and merciful part is known as "The Son" (Jesus,) and the mysterious, spiritual part is known as "The Holy Ghost or Spirit." They hold this arrangement to be a unified relationship. Christians believe that the Father eternally begets the Son and that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

78. The main weekly service is known as "Mass." The church also administers the Seven Sacraments of baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders and marriage.

79. Catholic doctrines are heavily influenced by: Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Francis of Assisi and Saint Bonaventura. Protestant teachings reflect the thinking of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Duns Scotus, Meister Eckhart and William of Ockham.

The three persons in the godhead are unified in purpose and act in consort with each other.⁸⁰ The Nicene Creed, formulated by the early church, provides a synopsis of the basic philosophy.

The Nicene Creed of the Early Church

"We believe in One God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and Son. With the Father and Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."

80. Michael Servetus wrote in his *On the Errors of Trinity*, "Furthermore, and worse than all this, how much this tradition of the Trinity has, alas! been a laughing stock to Mohammedans, only God knows. The Jews also shrink from giving adherence to this fancy of ours, and laugh at our foolishness about the Trinity; and on account of its blasphemies they do not believe that this is the Messiah who was promised in their law. And not only Mohammedans and Hebrews, but the very beasts of the field, would make fun of us did they grasp our fantastical notion, for all the works of the Lord bless the one God. Hear also what Mohammad says ... For he says in His Al Coran that Christ was the greatest of the prophets, the spirit of God, the power of God, the breath of God, the very soul of God, the Word born of a perpetual virgin by God's breathing upon her; and that it is because of the wickedness of the Jews toward him that they are in their present wretchedness and misfortune. He says, moreover, that the Apostles and Evangelists and the first Christians were the best of men, and wrote what is true, and did not hold the Trinity, or three Persons in the Divine Being, but men in later times added this." p. 66-67.

3. Original Sin. Christian doctrine teaches that because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate of the tree of knowledge, all of their descendants bear the stigma of sin and are condemned to doom. In addition, women, as representatives of Eve, are looked upon as corrupters of men and must endure the pain of child birth as a punishment. (Genesis 3: 16)

4. Atonement and Redemption. These teachings assert that the death of the man-god Jesus on a Roman cross paid the price of original sin. People supposedly can earn salvation by believing that the second part of God (the Son) died for them (to pay their share of Adam's original sin) and that he returned to life again after three days. The third part of God, the Holy Ghost, mysteriously brings knowledge of faith into people's hearts.

5. Salvation. Protestant Christians believe that eternal life comes from believing in Jesus' death only. Catholics stress that the church institution can save or damn a person. Both groups state that all other religions, faiths and philosophies (including each other's) are the inventions of man's own mind or of Shaitan.

6. Second Coming. Christians expect the world to flounder in the near future. Before the worst of it, however, all true believers in Christ will disappear from the earth and enter into the spiritual realm. Christians label this event the Rapture. A time known as the Tribulation marked by wars and oppression will then take place leading up to the appearance of the Anti-Christ (Dajjal). ⁸¹

81. Consult Christian literature about the book of Revelations and the numerous predictions interpreted by Biblical scholars. One popular book is entitled, "America in Prophecy." E. G. White. Inspiration Books East, 1988.

A popular science fiction series written by Christians emphasizes the reality of the time of tribulation. It is called the *Left Behind* series and chronicles the harrowing life of some late converts to Christianity who have to somehow survive in a world ruled by the Anti-Christ. It, and other recent works and publications have fueled modern Americans' belief that the end times are imminent.

When the Dajjal tries to invade Israel with his armies (Gog and Magog) Jesus will return with hosts of angels and defeat him in a great battle called Armageddon.⁸² A thousand years of peace will follow, with Jesus acting as a king. He will later allow more mischief to occur but will ultimately destroy the earth and raise everyone for his judgment.

The Cosmic Battle According to the Book of Revelations

12:1 A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.

2. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.

3. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.

4. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.

5. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.

6. The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

7. And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

8. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

82. Many xenophobic Christian scholars hold Gog and Magog to represent the Russians and Chinese. A common theme in their literature is that non-whites are coming to destroy America. Such teachings are spread by fundamentalist Protestant denominations, in most cases.

Given that Christian doctrine represents a meandering labyrinth of contradiction and speculation, no Muslim can ever presume to know how to use the tenets of Christianity as the basis for his arguments, for no two Christians of even the same sect believe in exactly the same things.

For example, there are Episcopalians who believe homosexuality is a sin, and others who believe it is a beautiful expression of God-created love! On another topic, some Catholics believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, should be elevated as a fourth part of the godhead, while other Catholics reject this notion. How can we hope to develop a systematic approach to giving da'wah to the Christian community! Thankfully, there is a simple program outlined for us by Allah in His last and perfect Revelation.

"Invite people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and inspiring speech, and reason with them in a superior and respectful manner. Certainly, your Lord knows best who strays from His path and those who are guided."

(Qur'an 16:125)

A crucial point which must be stressed is not to make the Bible and its inaccuracies the focus of your talk, writing or conversation. We know that the Bible is not *revelation*, but rather a collection of biographies, tribal histories, sermons, and other such documents all mixed in with a smattering of whatever remains of the true words of the Prophets. But Christians do not realize the full implications of this because they have been programmed to focus on Jesus and to dismiss the faults of the Bible and the oddity of their doctrines.

Furthermore, if the Bible is the only book they have been exposed to, then they will be reluctant to examine it critically or give it up out of hand. So draw arguments from it, but do not be drawn into discussing it exclusively, which is what Christian strategy attempts to achieve. They can tie you up in irrelevant verses for years!

Instead, our starting point in reaching them has to be Tauhid, Risalah and Akhirah presented with wisdom. ⁸³ Use Islamic ideology freely and spend less time talking about Christianity and its basis. We want to tell them about Islam, not so much about the poor foundation of their beliefs. ⁸⁴ If Allah wills, they must come to the realization themselves! You cannot hope to change their minds. It has to come from within.

Misconceptions and Mistakes Muslims Make When Talking to Christians.

1. Muslims refer to the Bible as previous revelation. This is a false premise. The term Bible means a book, and is the title for a compilation made by a council of men in the fourth century. ⁸⁵ This means that the Bible is a collection of the works of various authors, it was not revealed as The Bible. Never say Bible when you mean Revelation.

2. Muslims refer to the New Testament as the Injeel, or the Gospel of Jesus, may he be blessed. This is a serious mistake. The Injeel that Allah revealed to Jesus was an oral Message only. ⁸⁶ Jesus did not write it down nor did any of his followers. It consisted of sermons and was meant to show the mercy of Allah's teachings to the Jews who had become mired in legalistic sophistry.

83. Arabic terms should be translated whenever possible in initial da'wah contacts. Non-Muslims do not know or feel comfortable with Arabic-based terminology, what with all its unfamiliar sounds and constructs. Think about it, save for a handful of Greek and Hebrew terms like Halleluja, Noel, Messiah and Christ, the lingo of their religion is exclusively couched in their local languages. That's why Christian missionaries to Muslim lands translate everything into the local language, even using 'Allah' when they are referring to their conception of God. They do this so people can understand the concepts better and keep track of the new information. Buddhism and Hinduism have long suffered problems in their growth due to their use of too much foreign sounding terminology. There is no reason we need to suffer the same needless obstacle.

84. See Qur'an 5:82-85 and 57:27.

The first four books of the New Testament, which are called Gospels, are nothing more than the attempts by some later Christians to write biographies of his life and work. At the council in 325 A.D. where they were deciding which books to consider sacred, they had hundreds of such Gospels to choose from.

The New Testament also contains writings from other early Christians: historical accounts (Acts), theological speculations (Romans) and even thank-you notes (III John). So never refer to the New Testament as the Injeel. At best it contains a small amount of factual information concerning the life and speech of the blessed Jesus. It is poorly researched hadith and sirah about Jesus!

3. Muslims refer to the Old Testament as the Law of Musa, may he be blessed (the Taurah). In reality, only the first five books of it are attributed to Moses. But even then there is serious disagreement among Christians and Jews as to whether his personal writings still survive in the five books as we now have them. The present form of the Psalms of Dawud (Zabur) are thought to contain the works of many other writers.

4. Muslims add the Christian title, Christ, sometimes when referring to 'Esa (Jesus). This is misleading because Christians have been programmed to think a certain way when they hear the term, "Christ."⁸⁷ Use the term that Allah used in His last Revelation: either, Jesus, the Son of Mary, or Jesus, the Messiah.

85. The Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E., where an officially sanctioned collection was voted into approval. Although today Catholic and Protestant versions differ in their contents.

86. This is consistent with the Arabic term Kitab, (Book), for the Qur'an was being called a "Kitab" long before it was written. The word "Kitab" then, can be used as a term denoting an organized body of teachings. See Qur'an 2:2.

87. "Christ" is derived from the Greek word "*Christos*" which is a translation of the Hebrew word "*Messiah*," which simply means "Anointed One" or "to rub oil on." This term has been applied to other people and even to things in the Bible. See Ahmed Deedat's fascinating discussion in his book, "*Christ in Islam*."

5. You may use the Gospels of *Barnabas* or *Thomas*, but be advised that most lay Christians have been conditioned to ignore them and other ancient historical documents with the shady and mystical Greek word, *Apocrypha*.⁸⁸ In I Corinthians 9:6, however, Paul vouches for Barnabas.

6. Christians would have little trouble in accepting nearly all of what Islam teaches. Often the barrier is in the expression of concepts. If a Muslim told a Christian that doing good deeds was an essential part of the faith, the Christian would likely start quoting Paul, "You are not saved by works..." But if the Muslim quoted Paul back, "Faith without works is dead," the Christian would immediately agree. Christians are programmed and must be approached in the terms and concepts they understand.

7. Lastly, sometimes Muslims will try to interpret passages of the Bible in their presentations. It is extremely dangerous to do this when Christians themselves cannot come to agreement about what this or that verse really means. We must quote the Qur'an first and primarily.⁸⁹

88. "Certain writings received by some Christians as...authentic...but rejected by others." Source: *Webster's New Concise Dictionary*, 1984.

89. For an example of problems in Biblical interpretation, the Nelson Illustrated Bible Dictionary (pg. 1107) has this to say about "Works" (deeds): "*Christians are taught to display good works (Matt. 5:16; Rev. 3:8). On the other hand, works are viewed negatively when they are either bad in themselves...or works of the law...they do not bring salvation (Rom. 4:2, 6; Gal. 2:16)...(Abraham (was) not justified by works)...(But) works were the evidence of Abraham's faith (James 2:14-26).*" From this passage it is difficult to tell if the doing of good is encouraged or merely tolerated as a necessary "evil."

To further confuse you, I Corinthians, verses 7:18-19 says both to keep the commands and also to flout them. Perhaps we can better understand Paul's lack of clarity when we read in the same book, 9:20-22 where he says that whoever he was with, be they Jews who followed the law, non-Jews with no law or anyone else, he would go along with their customs and practices as if he were one of them in order to *save* them. Perhaps Paul's inflated view of himself can best be summed up in I Corinthians 13:1-4 where he says he can move mountains, understand all mysteries, speak the language of the angels, etc...

Sample Arguments to Put to Christians

1. In the sequence contained in Genesis 1:1-31, Light (3-5) is created before light producing objects (14-18), life on land (11-12) is created before life in the sea (20-22), birds (20-22) are created at the same time as sea creatures and before land dwelling animals (24-25), and God "rested" on the last day (2:2).

This chronological order goes completely against even the most simple scientific evidence.⁹⁰ Moreover, the idea of the Omnipresent and All-Powerful God "resting" is ludicrous. See Qur'an 2:255 for elucidation.⁹¹

2. The account of the fall of Adam contained in Genesis; some points to ponder: 3:22-25 shows God being fearful of man for succumbing to evil after he acquired "knowledge." Then God is supposedly afraid that man will eat of the tree of life and live forever. Is God powerless? Why is having "knowledge" the basis for being evil?

3. Genesis 4:1-26 contains the story of Adam's first offspring, Cain and Abel. After Cain kills Abel (8), he is banished by God to wander the earth (12,16). Verses 17-22 recount Cain finding a wife, having sons and building a city. All while Adam, Eve and a few children were supposed to be the only humans on earth! According to this story, there were other humans on earth besides Adam's family.

90. I once read a book entitled, "*God, the Atom and the Universe*," by James Reid (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1968) in which he discusses science from the Biblical point of view. He glossed over these scientific errors completely and instead concentrated on explaining natural laws, theories of light, etc... He accepted matter of factly that the Bible's sense of science was skewed! Talk about not wanting to see the truth staring you in the face!

91. See Maurice Bucaille's fascinating study, "*The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*," pages 22-35.

4. Paul states in I Corinthians 7:19 that the Law of God must be followed, "Keeping God's commands is what counts." Further in Romans 2:13 he says, "...those who obey the law...will be declared righteous." He is seconded by James who says that deeds and faith are inseparable (2:14 and 3:13). But Paul in Romans 7:6 declares he is now "released" from the law. Furthermore he states that Jesus "is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (he died for their sins)" (Romans 10:4). In other words, if a person disregards the laws and believes in Jesus, they can still get to heaven. Indeed, one of the bedrocks of Christian thought is that Biblical laws, especially the Old Testament ones, no longer need to be followed in general. Christians have retained a few general moral precepts that they liked such as a few of the ten commandments, etc..., but they do not follow the lion's share of the traditional Biblical laws.

In Galatians 2:16 and 3:13-14 Paul declares that, "*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law,*" while back in Romans 7:7 he stated that the law is good. There appears to be inconsistencies in his view of religious injunctions. Should people do what God has commanded or not? Can the Law of God ever be defined as a "curse?" Also, Deuteronomy 8:1, Proverbs 6:23, Matthew 5:17 and Exodus 19:5 all state that God's commands must be kept. See Qur'an 3:34.

5. Ask the Christian to explain these selected verses: Jeremiah 10: 2-5 forbids the use of decorated trees (even equating them with idols). I Corinthians 11:3-13 commands women to wear veils when they pray; condemning them to baldness if they do otherwise.

6. John 16:13 clearly refers to a human being and not to God or a part of God when it announces a future guide for humanity.

92. Beware of slick excuses. I once mentioned to a Christian that Jesus spoke Aramaic and therefore, even the Greek writings could never be taken as his literal words, even if they survived. He responded that Jesus knew Greek, (which is doubtful) and then he extrapolated that Jesus could speak every language because he was God. Astaghfirullah! Always demand proof for their claims even as we are able to easily provide proof for ours.

7. Paul clearly forbids divorce or remarrying in I Corinthians 7:10-11, yet Christians now whole-heartedly practice both. If Paul said that following the commandments was irrelevant, why is he making so many commandments and laws? Read Paul's letters and you will find dozens of doctrines and laws that are entirely irrational, impractical and/or discarded by Christians today.

8. Why would Jesus command people to "...take up their cross and follow me..." (Mark 8:34) when his supposed crucifixion was still an event far in the future. The cross had no symbolic meaning as of yet. ⁹²

These are just a few of the innumerable arguments which may be put to Christians for explanation. Careful study will reveal many more. Remember, it is no sin in Islam to examine the Bible if the intention is to glean arguments to show non-Muslims where they have erred. Some of the most famous Muslims who have made a close study of this flawed scripture in recent times include such luminaries of interfaith dialogue as Jamal Badawi, Ahmad Deedat, Yusuf Buckus and Hamza Abdul Malik. The one thing that must be kept in mind is that some Christians will try to offer Divine Mystery as a defense against your logical concerns. Be prepared to argue on this highly philosophical level.

One essential part of giving da'wah to Christians, which is sometimes overlooked, is to read portions of the Holy Qur'an to them. ⁹³ The story of Jesus, found in Surah Maryam, for example, is well received among Christians. ⁹⁴ Other sections such as Surah 35 (Al Furqan) or the story of the Blessed Prophet Yusuf or even verses dealing with the nature of this world are also effective.

93. Suggested passages are many, but here are just a few: 3:33-64; 7:1-20; 40:61-65; and 67:15-27.

94. Some verses from the Qur'an that are applicable to the study of Christians: 2:87, 138-140, 256; 3:35-59, 64; 4:156-159, 171; 5:15, 19, 46-47, 75-78, 85-88, 113-121; 6:85; 9:16-38; 19:23-33; 21:91; 22:68-69; 23:50; 28:53; 29:46-47; 41:6, 14; 43:59-61, 63-64; 46:12; 57:27

Examples of Contradictions in the Old and New Testament ⁹⁵

Old Testament Contradictions

1. II Samuel 24:1 and I Chronicles 21:1 confuse Allah and Shaitan in assigning responsibility for the census carried out by the Blessed Dawud.

2. II Chronicles 36:9 tells us that Jehoiachin was "eight" years old when he began to reign, while II Kings 24:8 says he was "eighteen."

3. II Samuel 10:18 states that Dawud destroyed 700 chariots and 40,000 horsemen, while I Chronicles covers the same event saying it was 7000 chariots and 40,000 foot soldiers.

4. I Kings 7:26 tells us that the palace contained two thousand baths, while II Chronicles 4:5 says it was three thousand.

Frequently Christians will defend these contradictions by stating that these inconsistencies are due to copyists' errors and historical circumstances. But in the case of numbers, for example, the ancient Jews did not know of the symbol for the number zero. They wrote out their numbers in long hand. So how can simple human error explain two completely different figures? These are only a few examples of similar factual contradictions in the Old Testament. Theological and scientific contradictions are ALSO numerous. ⁹⁶

95. "And woe to those who write the book with their own hands and then say, 'Here, this is from Allah.' They traffic with it for a mean profit. So woe to them for what their hands write and woe to them for what they gain from it." Surat ul Baqara (2), ayah 79.

96. Maurice Bucaille's book, "*The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*" details many of the scientific contradictions in the Bible as well as showing how the Qur'an's statements are in keeping with the latest discoveries in science. This book is one of the must reads for da'wah workers, as well as good reading for one's own information and elevation of faith.

New Testament Contradictions

1. The genealogies of Jesus contained in Luke 3:23-38 and Matthew 1:1-17 contradict each other. Not only by names, but ALSO by the number of generations between them.⁹⁷
2. John the Baptist (Yahiya) is said to have recognized Jesus as the Messiah in John 1:29,34. But Matthew 11:2-3 says otherwise. Also, Matthew 5:1-2 and Luke 6:17-20 disagree on whether or not John (Yahiya) was in prison.
3. Mark 6:8-9 and Matthew 10:9-10 are contradictory in the matter of traveling gear.
4. Contradictions can be found between the following pairs: Matthew 20:30 and Luke 17:35-38; Matthew 8:28 and Mark 5:2.
5. Matthew 1:18 states that the "Holy Ghost" gave Mary a child, while Luke 1:26-27 states that it was the angel Gabriel sent to her. Christian theology makes a clear distinction between the two beings, so which one was it?⁹⁸

Again, there are numerous contradictions to be found in this section of the Bible as well. Consult any book detailing the flimsy authenticity of the Bible and you will notice them by the page full! But contradictions should never be used as the focus of a da'wah conversation. Attacks upon a person's beliefs and foundations usually

97. Christians try to explain this away by saying one genealogy is that of Joseph and the other is of Mary. This explanation is simplistic and does not stand up to even the most casual scrutiny. Besides, if Joseph has no biological connection to Jesus anyway, what purpose does his family tree serve?

98. Whereas Muslims use the term *Ruh ul Quddus* (Spirit of Holiness) to refer to the Angel Jibreel, Christians have confused him with a part of God in their Trinity theory. Thus, when one gospel account states it was Gabriel who visited her, and another declares it to be the Holy Spirit, for the Christian this would be something of a theological dilemma.

cause them to activate their inner defenses. They must be guided skillfully to the conclusion so that they may come to know through their own thought processes and rationality that the Bible is indeed not a true scripture in the sense of the immutable Word of God.

Points of Commonality in Da'wah to Christians

There are many verses of the Bible that conform to the true Message and practice of the ancient Prophets. When a Muslim seeks to explain the how and why of his 'Ibadah (service to Allah), he can draw upon these to illustrate points of common reference for Muslims, Christians as well as Jews.

1. The previous Prophets also prostrated before Allah as a sign of their humility: Psalm 95:6 "*O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker.*" Joshua 5:14 "*And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship...*" I Kings 18:42 "*And Elijah...cast himself down...and put his face between his knees.*" Acts 7:33 "*And He (God) said (to Moses),...put off thy shoes...for...(this)...is holy ground.*" Matthew 26:39 "*...he (Jesus) fell with his face to the ground and prayed...*" ⁹⁹

2. Women are commanded in the Bible to cover their hair even as Muslim women do: I Corinthians 11:5-7 "*But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonour her head... For if the woman be not covered (veiled), let her (hair) also be shorn... Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?"*

3. Shrines and pilgrimages are features of Old Testament religion: Genesis 31:45-49 "*And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones, and they took stones, and made an heap... but Jacob called it Galeed...and Mizpeh.*" I Samuel 10 "*The whole nation of Israel assembled in*

99. Also Nehemiah 8:6, where the people as a whole prostrate in reverence.

The Bible forbids the Use of Christmas Trees!

(The modern practice of this symbolism
has its roots in European idolatry!)



Hear what the Lord says to you, O House of Israel. This is what the Lord says:

"Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the sky, though the nations are terrified of them. For the customs of the peoples are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel. They adorn it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter. Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried."

(Jeremiah 10:1-5)

Mizpeh..." Psalm 84:6 makes reference to the valley of Mecca (Baca) and the well of Zamzam: *"Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well, the rain also filleth the pools."*

4. Both Christians and Muslims are critical of Jewish rebellion against God: Matthew 23:15-39 *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces...You who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you..."* See Jeremiah 7:9-11 also.

5. The traditional roots of the name of God are the same for Jews, Christians as well as Muslims. The Jewish language name, "Elohim" (pl. of Eloh) occurs over 3,350 times in the Old Testament. It has identical roots with the Islamic name, "Allah." ¹⁰⁰

100. Interestingly enough, the term "Jehovah" was mistakenly created by non-Jewish Christians out of two separate words. The ancient Jews wrote one of the names of God as Y-H-W-H and were afraid to articulate it with their mouths. -

Examples of the Original Teachings of Jesus Which May Have Survived

1. "And Jesus answered him, The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is One Lord." Mark 12:29.

2. "...Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:9-10.

3. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be." Matthew 6:19-21. ¹⁰¹

Possible Prophecies that Point to the Advent of the Prophet Muhammad.

Although the Jewish and Christian writings contain only parts of the authentic Message of the Prophets, may they be blessed, it is not impossible to use their own writings against them in proving our point. ¹⁰² One is that earlier Prophets directed man to look for one last, global Prophet. When we examine the Old Testament for example, we find that the Blessed Musa was reported to have said,

So from the third century onwards they wrote the vowels of the word A-O-I ("Adonai") or "Lord" beneath the text of Y-H-W-H to remind the recitors not to pronounce the name. The Christians of Europe combined both words to form the non-existent term: *Jehovah*. See Manfred Barthel, *What the Bible Really Says*, page 28.

101. The Blessed Prophet Muhammad said, "Those who love this life do damage to their next, while those who love the next life do damage to their present."

102. Although the Apostle Paul may have been a fraud or an opportunist, he provided a test of his own to check on whether someone should be accepted by Christians or not. See I John 4:1-3 where he says a real Prophet will testify to accepting Jesus as being sent from Allah. Although we do not accept the Bible as scripture, we can use their own words against them, as Allah instructs us to.

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me (Moses) from among your own brothers; him shall you heed; just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let us not hear again the voice of the Lord our God, nor see this great fire anymore, lest we die.' And the Lord said unto me, 'They have rightly said all that they have spoken. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put My words into his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not give heed to My words which the prophet speaks in My name, I Myself will call him to account. But a prophet who presumes to speak in My name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.' You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him."

Deuteronomy 18:15-22

To begin with, a Prophet like Musa is called for. Christians like to assert that this passage can only refer to Jesus, yet the test is given that the prophet to come must be like Musa. When we examine facts we find that Muhammad is closer to being like Musa than Jesus. Refer to the chart below for a cursory comparison. It is easy to see that in nearly every category, Jesus and Musa (Moses) are virtual opposites, while Muhammad is the only figure in history who comes even close to being like Musa.

Factor:	Musa	Muhammad	Jesus
Birth	Normal	Normal	Unusual
Married?	Yes	Yes	No
Children?	Yes	Yes	No
Revealed Laws?	Yes	Yes	No
Prophesied?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Governed?	Yes	Yes	No
Healed others?	No	No	Yes
Accepted by his people?	Yes	Yes	Few did
Written revelation?	Yes	Yes	No
Died natural death?	Yes	Yes	No
Predicted future events?	Yes	Yes	Yes

The last part of the passage in Deuteronomy also lays down the further test of the true prophecy spoken in the name of the Lord as involving things that come true. Muhammad made several predictions that came to pass. A revelation came to the beleaguered Muslims in Mecca that said that the badly beaten Romans would be victorious against the Persians in just 3-9 years. It came to pass against all odds. Other predictions also came true. Other Biblical sections which may be consulted on this theme of Muhammad being predicted in the Bible include: Jeremiah 28:9, 31:36; Isaiah 21:13-17 and chapters 42 and 60; John 1:20-21 etc.

Is the Bible Really God-Breathed Scripture? You Decide.

1. The elder, to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.
2. Dear friend. I pray that you enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.
3. It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth.
4. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
5. Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you.
6. They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

III John 1-6

This "Thank you" letter from the New Testament is considered the literal and Divine Word of God by Christians. There are many more passages like this.

Christian Festivals

GOOD FRIDAY. A prelude to the Easter observance of Jesus' alleged resurrection. This is commemorated as the day in which Prophet Jesus was supposedly crucified and died. He descended into Hell for the weekend to pay for the sins of all mankind.

LENT. A period of mild dietary restrictions observed by Catholic and Orthodox Christians prior to Easter. (This is not a type of complete fasting but rather the voluntary giving up of a certain item from one's daily diet.)

EASTER. The day chosen to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus. The term Easter is ancient in origin and can be traced back to the Babylonian cult of the goddess *Ishtar* and later to the Teutonic goddess "Eastre." During the formative period of Christianity compromises had to be made between paganism and the new faith. The oft-accompanied symbols such as the rabbit (the Easter Bunny) and painted eggs can also be traced to idolatrous roots.

CHRISTMAS. Celebrates the birth of Jesus. It occurs on the 25th of December, the day used in ancient times to celebrate the winter solstice. The pagan Romans held this day to be the special day of their god of light, Mithra. When Christianity gained ascendancy in the Roman world, this major idolatrous festival was subsumed to celebrate the birth of their savior. Eastern Orthodox Christians celebrate this holiday in January. In the United States this holiday is often accompanied by rituals such as gift-giving, decorating trees, singing songs about Jesus called Carols and commemorating Jesus' humble birth with Nativity scenes.



9

Da'wah on Campus

Universities in North America are thought of as places where old beliefs are exchanged for new and where intellectual fervor reaches its highest point. Should the message of Islam be excluded from such a place? Many are the students who have found Islam anew or refreshed their existing faith while attending the university.

Da'wah on campus is really quite a natural affair, for students are already used to seeing speakers in front of halls and people handing out literature. They are also expecting to have their ideas challenged and modified. Educators, researchers and administrators are constantly involved in debate, research and community contact. Da'wah activities, quite frankly, are more suited to the campus than to many other places.

The da'wah effort can be initiated by Muslim students and faculty already on site, by Muslim professionals and even by everyday Muslims. If there is a dynamic masjid nearby then half the task of building bridges has been accomplished. Here is how da'wah on campus has its beginnings:

1. Conduct regular activities on campus. Booktables, flyer distribution, lectures, debates (these are acceptable in the college atmosphere) and cultural events. ¹⁰³ A Muslim Anti-Defamation committee can also be launched to combat anti-Muslim propaganda and present true Islamic teachings which will bring publicity.

103. Many Colleges have branches of the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) conducting regular activities. Visit them at <http://www.msa-national.org/> or through snail mail at: MSA of the US and Canada P.O. Box 18612 Washington, DC 20036 Tel: 703-820-7900 Fax: 703-820-7888 Email: office@msa-national.org

The showing of movies is often an effective method of introducing Islam to the widest number of students. Oftentimes one attracts only the most serious-minded to lectures and other academic functions. But the image of a movie conjures up in people's minds the prospect of entertainment. Suggested flicks include:

1. The Book of Signs
2. A Visit to a Mosque
3. Inside Islam
4. Born in the USA
6. Inside Mecca
7. Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet
8. The Message
9. Pathways to Islam
10. Malcolm X
11. The Bridge: How Islam Saved Western Medicine

2. Have an excellent supply of da'wah materials and start making contacts with persons in the university who can smooth the way for your programs to function unhindered. ¹⁰⁴ This is especially useful for getting permission to hold such events as an “*Islam Awareness Week*.”

3. Establish free weekly lessons (or discussion groups) on Islam. Advertise them on campus as a chance to learn and chat. Have the program on a weeknight about an hour or so before Maghrib time. Serve tea and small cultural sweets and give a half-hour talk or better yet, a round-table type discussion, on some aspect of Islam.

Don't just keep to the basics of Islam, and avoid most Arabic terminology. These meetings are good for discussing honestly issues of the day related to terrorism, politics, true Islam and misconceptions about Islam. Leave twenty minutes for questions and then briefly explain that you have to make salat. State the reason for doing so and what features it contains. Then invite the non-Muslims to view the salat performed.

104. Many college students spend large amounts of time on the internet. Good da'wah could be establishing an on-line Islam resource page for students along with a discussion web and a calendar of monthly or weekly events.

4. Become active in political and social causes on campus. It maintains high visibility. Many campuses have Student Unions where student organizations can be headquartered and operated. These facilities are nearly always open to any group and there is the possibility of the University supporting student organized programs.¹⁰⁵ Other universities have student newspapers which may be open to budding Muslim journalists.

5. Whenever a student seems to be interested in Islam, move cautiously and with wisdom. Don't christen somebody Abdullah the moment they seem to accept an Islamic concept.

6. Maintain a da'wah office or telephone hotline near the campus and have it staffed by good Muslims for most of the day, in rotation. If that is difficult use existing national resources.¹⁰⁶

There are many Muslim students studying at colleges and universities across North America. Care must be taken to protect them from being pulled into the extremely permissive culture which pervades the college atmosphere. Far too many Muslim students from this or other countries weaken or lose their faith altogether. Drinking, drugs, pop-culture, sexual licentiousness and crass-materialism face him or her every day. The following steps may be considered for giving "reinforcing" da'wah to Muslim students:

1. Contact should be made with every Muslim student on campus. Regular Jum'ah services and weekend programs (Muslim parties and gatherings, tarbiyyah sessions, etc.) should be organized.

105. For example, UCLA has one of the most dynamic student run magazines in Al Talib. Visit them at: <http://www.al-talib.com/> or through Al Talib at 118 Kerckhoff Hall 308 Westwood Plaza Los Angeles, CA 90024 • altalib@media.ucla.edu Phone: (310) 206-7877 Fax: (310) 206-3165

106. ICNA-NJ maintains a "Da'wah Hotline" service in which people can call for information on Islam. 1-877-WhyIslam. ICNA also assists Muslim student groups with their local efforts through the Campus Dawah Support program. Contact ICNA for further details. www.icna.com

2. Muslim families in the area should "adopt" one or more Muslim students and include them in their family activities to give them a sense of stability and inclusion in the Ummah.

3. Muslim students should be encouraged to engage in da'wah and to protect their rights on campus. The Muslim community, whether large or small, near or far, must give its full support.

This brief outline represents a da'wah effort that can be handled by less than three or four people. If there is a local Muslim student's organization on campus, then some collaborating efforts may be worked out. The goal of all Muslims is the same, so never be afraid to work with others.

Sample Two Week Activity Schedule

Thursday:	Mass meeting; food and refreshments.
Saturday:	Bowling trip for sisters.
Tuesday:	Movie night for brothers: "Malcolm X."
Friday:	Soup kitchen volunteering.
Saturday:	Interfaith Discussion Circle
Wednesday:	Maghrib prayer and dinner get-together.
Saturday:	Movie night for sisters. "Living Islam."
Thursday:	Sisters discussion group.
Friday:	Guest presentation at the student union.



10

Da'wah in Popular Society

Popular Society is a term used to describe the general secular culture prevalent in North America today. It is a phenomenon formed and shaped primarily by adults known as "Baby Boomers,"¹⁰⁷ but now subsumed by a new and essentially hedonistic youth culture. As for the "Boomers," (those Americans born after WW II until the mid 1960s) after leading the country through social activism, disillusionment and finally, crass materialism, they have found themselves approaching late middle-age and are consequently finding themselves turning towards more spiritual matters. This influential segment of society has been confronted by its own mortality and many have set off searching for something meaningful in which to believe. This is a golden opportunity for Islamic outreach, for the aging of America has been accompanied by a steady return to enduring values among this most important generation.¹⁰⁸

Indeed, as the Baby Boomers have aged and become wiser, conservative values have come to dominate their thinking. They make up roughly one-third of all adults in the U.S. and Canada, so when their whims or aspirations change, society changes. Business has known this for years and has consistently profited from the fulfillment

107. After the end of the Second World War, hundreds of thousands of returning soldiers contributed to a rapid increase in the number of children being born for roughly two decades. This massive influx of births led to the creation of a vastly expanded economy and social order.

108. They altered the course of American culture. Their wholesale involvement in the Civil Rights, counter-culture and Vietnam opposition movements earned them the distinction of being the most liberal and activist generation. But while they accomplished many goals, they have made the mistake of forgetting religion.

of their needs. One example is the nostalgia craze that has swept over them as they begin to reach back for memories of their youth. Old music, fashion styles and ideas fill the media and television. New age crystals, hula-hoops and fancy cars illustrate how diverse and materialistic their focus often is. ¹⁰⁹

It is sometimes difficult to give them da'wah because, by and large, they have been completely cut-off from religious sentiment for most of their lives and their inner nature has been thoroughly smothered. When crisis strikes them, they do not usually turn to God, they seek a counselor. When misfortune befalls them, they call a psychic. When their self-destructive lifestyles begin to catch up with them, they take a pill.

The approach one would take to reach Christians does not always work with them, for many of these people are Christians only by default and follow secular American traditions as a matter of upbringing. Like many Muslims in the world today, these people confuse culture and religion and believe that spirituality is a personal choice that shouldn't get in the way of what they desire in life. ¹¹⁰

So how can they be approached? What impresses them is action, service and consistency. The best da'wah would be to make a visible impact on the well-being of the society. Muslim operated charities, neighborhood crime patrols, environmental activism and public involvement is what catches their eye. Once they are focused on something, they begin to investigate it in more depth.

109. Youth culture is dealt with in the section entitled, "Teenagers."

110. Popular secular holidays are Valentines Day and Halloween. Both are based on pagan traditions and are associated with wild drinking and debauchery. Halloween began 2,000 years ago as a Druidic ceremony honoring the souls of the dead, while Valentines Day goes back to the pagan Roman Feast of Lupercalia where lovemaking and woman-chasing was celebrated on Feb. 14. The Catholic church merely changed the focus to worshipping saints in 496 A.D.

The Boomer generation is, by no means homogenous. There are vast differences and trends among them and each sub-segment must be approached accordingly. Here are a few notes on some of the major categories.

Suburbanites

This term is usually applied to those adults (usually whites) whose incomes enable them to live a reasonably comfortable lifestyle. They tend to live in suburbs or segregated areas of cities, away from the poor and minorities. They often own their own homes and value stability above all else and can sometimes be nationalistic. They also generally have high expectations from their local schools and civic organizations. Da'wah must be more than quick pamphlet from a person wearing exotic looking clothes. Masjid open houses, presentations in libraries, sponsoring a community clean-up day in the local park, etc... these are the kinds of activities that allow them to see Muslims as a part of their community fabric as well.

Bohemians, Intellectuals and Artists

There is something of a counter-culture movement in America that benefits and feeds off of the stability of the middle classes. A comfortable lifestyle and access to good education has enabled some individuals to pursue very personal and creative goals as a veritable lifestyle for its own sake. American cities are full of people whose very defining identity is linked to their interests in art, social activism and leading a very gritty (by choice) daily existence.

Such people tend to flock together in “trendy” or “artsy” neighborhoods, they frequent coffee shops in search of stimulating conversation, they know all the latest *risque* writers and social activists of the past, they adore *alternative music* and they fancy themselves as misunderstood geniuses. The age range for this group goes anywhere from the mid-twenties up to the fifties and encompasses people of many races, though mostly caucasian.

Any da'wah efforts must take into consideration the pacifistic nature of these people. They look to the justice and rightness of a cause or ideology and tend to ask very probing questions related to personal freedom and expression. Given that much of the Muslim world is quite socially backward, be prepared to have to answer a lot of questions related to women's rights, war, the authority of the state over people's choices, abortion, pre-marital relations, homosexuality and even animal rights.

Some points to know are: 1) Be well-versed in the shortcomings of life for people in Western societies. Know crime statistics, be aware of negative social values and be prepared to point out that life is just as unfair to people here, though in a more subtle way. 2) Be able to explain how the Muslim world got into its current condition. From stagnation due to lack of faith and chaos caused by the Mongols, on through the only partially Islamized Ottomans, moving to colonialism and finally the secular ideologies that govern most artificially created Muslim countries today. 3) Know what original Islam says about issues of concern to this group and be prepared to provide sources and examples and to debate social issues in general. 4) Be able to give a holistic view of what Islam means for personal growth and fulfillment. They tend to be interested in the esoteric and mystical so a dash of sufiism may help.

Rednecks, Cowboys, Good 'Ol Boys and Southerners

The American south and to some extent the southwest is home to a particular culture all of its own. So-called *Southern Culture* is so pervasive and so often identified with traditional American values that its influence extends even into some regions of the lower Midwest. The characteristics of this subculture are: rugged individualism, self-reliance, adherence to traditional social practices, a belief in providence and fate, nationalism, Christian conservatism, community loyalty and a belief in an individual's moral character and honor as being paramount.

The image of the stalwart American cowboy or *southern rebel* is one that is also strongly identified with and this streak of southern (and western) individualism is partly given as an explanation for the cause of the American Civil War (1861-1865). That conflict wasn't really about slavery, as many scholars now understand, but more about individualism (States' Rights) verses imposed values from above (federalism). The south was defeated due to the very cause they advocated: they had so much individualism going on that southerners were unable to make the sacrifices necessary to really integrate together. The culture there has evolved little since then.

This group tends to be a little less well-off compared to the more liberal suburbanites and also less educated. Their preferred music style is called country music, the major themes of which center around the misunderstood man, broken hearts, drinking, carousing and bars and the value of family, community and country. They tend to work in jobs related to manual labor such as farm work, factory work or other manufacturing. They are the proverbial everyday American. Howard Dean, who was a presidential candidate in the 2004 race described who these people were succinctly when he boasted, "*I want to be the president of the guys who hang confederate flags on the back of their pickup trucks.*"

In no way shape or form will superficial da'wah efforts work to bring them to understand Islam. They are mistrustful of outsiders and foreign seeming ways. Indeed, it is from this group that Muslim Americans have suffered some of the worst hate-crimes for they tend to be reactionary and fearful of whomever they deem to be *different*. African Americans have long suffered many a struggle for their human rights mostly from White Americans of this subculture. A large portion of the U.S. Military, for your information, is populated by southerners who are quick to bravado and physical confrontation as a matter of personal duty. Giving a pamphlet and a quick lecture in broken English just will not do.

They value honor, tradition and community, therefore, da'wah requires that we show them our sense of honor through daily deeds and also that we are a staunch supporter and component of their community values which are very similar to our own. Most importantly, this may require some amount of integration and even mild assimilation on our part. Investing in a business, hiring locals, getting on the PTA, putting your kids on the local baseball team, volunteering as a poll worker during elections, and being able to present a balanced and sympathetic view of international events is what must be implemented.

The *presentation* of Islam must change (not the substance). For example, the Turks developed a style of Masjid architecture that blended elements of the Arab world and Europe to create a style that was at once unique and also appealing to both European and Arab sensibilities. When we build our Masjids in America, especially in small town USA, should we choose a style of architecture that is transplanted from an exotic land, or do we adapt our architecture to local tastes (which, by the way, our own children will identify with more)? This is a deep question to ponder.

Be aware that Christianity runs deeper in the South than in any other portion of the nation, (that's why it is called the Bible-Belt) and that any potential converts run a serious risk of being ostracized or worse. A support network will be required for them. A dynamic Masjid or network of Masjids will have to develop an underground railroad for converts which can provide them the road to physical freedom if necessary, or at the least, give them a network for finding a job, getting an education or even finding a spouse.

It is, of course, not impossible to bring Islam to this subgroup, but it will require a considerable investment in personal capital and community involvement. Are we up to the challenge? So many Muslims already live around people of this subculture that we have no choice but to try.

11

Da'wah at Work

Giving the Message of Islam to a person's co-workers is essential. Many are the Muslims who fail to recognize the benefits involved in sharing their beliefs in the work place. Some fear, and not without justification, that discussing religion in the work place would jeopardize their jobs or advancement. Unless one owns his or her own business, then da'wah may have to remain discreet. But it must not be abandoned. Remember da'wah assumes many forms, not solely preaching.¹¹¹

Da'wah for Muslim Business Owners

If you have the freedom of self-employment, da'wah becomes less difficult. Whether your employees are Muslim or not, make it a point to let everyone have a break at prayer time. Display Muslim magazines and literature in a magazine rack somewhere and place work-ethic oriented hadith on the walls. Insist that smoking and drinking be prohibited from the premises and be generous towards all your employees. This is all part of da'wah.¹¹²

111. The Blessed Prophet once remarked that "Every act of kindness is a Sadaqa (blessed charity)." Bukhari, Muslim. Other useful principles derived from Islam include: 1) Draw up written contracts for all transactions. 2) Give debtors time to pay and do not be overbearing. 3) Give a portion of earnings in charity to increase one's good deeds and be faithful in the payment of zakah. 4) Do not attempt to hide profits from one's partners. 5) Treat non-Muslim workers kindly and do not make them work more than they are able. 6) Refer to one's underlings with respect and honor all contracts whether enacted with Muslims or non-Muslims. A careful study of the hadith literature will reveal many more useful guides for ethical business behavior.

112. CAIR has published several guides for businesses with Muslim employees. In addition, they have fought several high-profile discrimination cases involving employers who failed to accommodate the legal rights of their workers.

Da'wah for Muslim Workers

If you work for others, then da'wah for you would consist of the following: exemplifying Islamic manners (akhlaq), being an efficient worker, leaving an Islamically oriented conversation piece on your desk or work station to invite questions from the curious, being cordial and friendly to others, assisting them above and beyond the call of duty, and being prepared to discuss your beliefs and traditions at any time. ¹¹³



Nine Islamic Business Ethics

1. Halal Enterprises: A Muslim may only participate in a venture or occupation that would pass the Haram (forbidden) test. Any business involving: intoxicants, interest accrual (riba), dishonesty, swine products, futures speculation (futures market), injustice or environmental turmoil is strictly off-limits. ¹¹⁴

2. Ready Compensation: Timely payment of employees or contractors must be made. Wages cannot be held for more than a reasonable time. The Blessed Prophet recommended that workers should receive their due "before their sweat dries."

3. Fair Dealing: A Muslim cannot seek to two-time or swindle partners, employees, contractees or others in the pursuit of his or her profits. Unfair burdens result in injustice.

113. See Qur'an: 3:14; 3:186; 4:58; 9:69, 20; 23:8; 24:37; 47:38; 57:20; and 83:1-6.

114. See the book, "Modelling Interest-Free Economy," by Muhammad Anwar. III, Herndon, VA. Also, the Prophet said, "90% of the rizq (bounty) of Allah is in trade."

4. Generosity: Kindness, graciousness and a general sense of good-heartedness must prevail in business or work relations. The Blessed Prophet said, "*May Allah bless the generous one when he buys, borrows or lends.*"

5. Continuous Improvement: Muslim workers and entrepreneurs must seek to reach new levels of excellence. The Blessed Prophet said, "*Allah loves those who, when they do a thing, do their best.*"



6. Open Dealing: In any transaction of goods, services or information, the seller must provide complete details of any and all defects or potential defects to the buyer. One day while in the market, the Blessed Prophet caught a grain merchant who tried to hide the poor quality of his product and admonished him.

7. Personal Responsibility: When money or position is entrusted to the Muslim worker or business owner, he or she must not seek either to enrich himself at the expense of his employer or stockholders while at the same time doing poorly in their service. Debts which lead to a bankruptcy must be answered equitably.

8. Efficient Use: Waste and mismanagement are strictly forbidden. Recycling, full exploitation of materials at hand and a strict process of accountability and auditing are a must. Waste is strictly forbidden in Islam.

9. Consistency: A Muslim must observe the rules of Islamic commerce in all situations and places whether the work or transaction involves non-Muslims, capitalistic or communistic systems or otherwise. A good business sense and trust in Allah will work to keep Muslims from being led into various difficult circumstances.

Good Literary Resources for Islamic Business Ethics

Linking Ethics and Economics

Dr. Al-'Alwani. (www.astrolabe.com)

Business Ethics in Islam

Mushtaq Ahmad (www.halalco.com)

Economic Concepts in Islam

Kausar Niazi. (www.halalco.com)

Economic Security in Islam

Yusuf al Qaradawi. (www.halalco.com)

Economic Teachings of Prophet Muhammad ^(p)

Muhammad Akram Khan. (www.halalco.com)

Islamic Business Ethics

Rafiq Issa Beekum (www.halalco.com)

Islamic Law of Business Organization (Partnerships)

Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee. (www.halalco.com)

Partnership & Profit-Sharing in Islamic Law

M. Nejatullah Siddiqi. (www.halalco.com)

The Issue of Interest (Including Commercial)

Muhammad Muhammad Shafi. (www.halalco.com)

What is Permissible Now?

Steven Abdul Kader. (www.halalco.com)

The Virtues of Trade & Business

Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya. (www.halalco.com)

The Return of the Gold Dinar

Umar Ibrahim Vadillo. (www.halalco.com)

Part III
Other Beneficiaries
of Da'wah

12

Hispanic Americans

It may surprise some to know that Muslims can be found in every Hispanic area of North and South America. There are thousands upon thousands of Muslims in Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Panama, Guyana, Mexico, etc... They are the descendants of African slaves, Arab immigrants, Indian contract laborers as well as converts. Remarkably, they have managed to maintain some semblance of Islam in their lives and this amidst an overwhelming Catholic majority.

Within the confines of the United States and Canada, however, the number of Hispanic Muslims is negligible. Again, the vast majority of Latinos identify themselves as Catholics, followed by various sects of Protestantism. Hispanics currently make up over ten percent of the population and this number continues to rise steadily with their high natural birth rate and an influx of immigrants from poverty-stricken Latin America. Of the 23 million Hispanics in the United States, fully two-thirds trace their heritage to Mexico, twelve percent to Puerto Rico, five percent to Cuba and the rest to other countries.

115

Hispanic communities face the same sorts of issues that plague other cultures in North America. Their family oriented social structure is under constant assault from materialism, their descendants lose touch with the customs and ways of the homeland, the youth show much less enthusiasm for religious activities and they are sometimes

115. An important point to note is that Hispanics are not a homogeneous racial community. They, like the Arabs, are delineated by a shared culture and language. Some are descended from full-blooded Indians like the Mayans or Yaquis, others are known as *Mestizos* and have a mixture of Indian, European or African heritage and yet others have less native and more European ancestry.

discriminated against on the basis of their race, religion or status (especially if they are recent immigrants). In addition, Protestant denominations have been all but waging war on the Hispanic Catholic community in the United States through aggressive proselytizing.

The Hispanic community, also called the Latino community, presents a special challenge for da'wah. Muslims have all but failed to reach out to them and Hispanic Muslims are often left to network for themselves. Part of the blame can fall upon the already overloaded backlog of issues the Muslim community must address, and the other part can be attributed to the simple unawareness of Muslims. To be frank, how many non-Hispanic Muslims speak Spanish or have ever seriously thought of learning it? How many Muslims are even cognizant of the size and importance of Latinos in the U.S. and Canada?

Efforts have been made, however, in recent years, to rectify this situation. Major Islamic organizations have begun publishing literature in Spanish, international links with Central and South American Muslim groups have been established and Muslims have come into greater contact with their Latino brethren.

Though much work remains to create an effective da'wah movement that is geared towards them, preliminary efforts are encouraging. In order to begin da'wah in the Hispanic community, these steps need to be followed:

1. Establish contact with Hispanic Muslims and offer your complete support to them in their own da'wah activities. (Hispanic Muslims reside in almost every city in the U.S. and some in Canada.) They know best how to speak to people with similar backgrounds. Follow their lead and provide background support and resources. ¹¹⁶

116. There are many Latino da'wah organizations now that are actively engaged in promoting Islam among their peers. Some operate on the internet while others are grass roots efforts involved in preaching, social activism and even in the establishment of Masjids throughout Spanish speaking Mexico, Central American and South America.

Sample Word Translation

Arabic	English	Spanish
Masjid	Mosque	La Mezquita
Allah	Allah (God)	Ala' (Dios)
Makkah	Mecca	La Meca
Salat	Prayer	La Oracion
Muslim	Muslim	El Musalman
Muhammad	Muhammad	Mojamad
Al Qur'an	The Qur'an	El Cor'an

2. Make an effort to collect quality Islamic literature in Spanish. Collaborate on literature projects with your Hispanic brothers and sisters.

3. Try to learn at least a little Spanish. The more you know the further you can go towards reaching Spanish speakers. It is a rich language with a surprising number of words derived from Arabic (over 6,000!)

4. Make a positive contribution to the Latino community on a continuing basis. Open up businesses in Latino sections of town which employ local people, make generous donations to Latino organizations which are struggling towards goals similar to those of the Muslim community, and sincerely make yourself available to the Hispanic community for service, aid and encouragement.

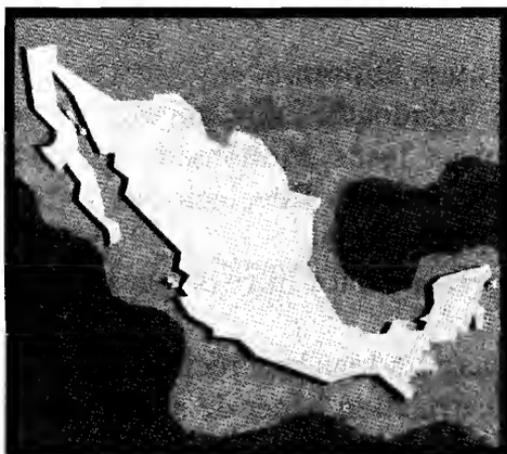
5. Stress the close ties between Latino culture and Muslim culture, with examples of related language, family values and even a shared history. ¹¹⁷

117. See T. B. Irving's book, "*Falcon of Spain*." There are also quite a few other good books on the subject of Spanish Islam that can provide a historical link for context. Even Christopher Columbus' ships were full of closet Muslims!

6. Support Spanish language magazines and other publications which seek to bring Islam to the Spanish speaker. Subscribe to them whenever possible and put copies in your local Masjid monthly. (You would be surprised how many of your own children might be able to read them.) ¹¹⁸

There are several translations of the Holy Qur'an in the Spanish language. Most are done by Christian scholars and priests. The most widely available is that of Julio Cortes, although many native speakers dislike the style Cortes used. In addition, in the preface to one of his editions he writes that his purpose is to show that Islam is a mistaken religion and that Christianity is superior. We can hardly expect a sincere translation there! The translation of Rafael Castekanas, *El Sagrado Coran*, is more appealing. Abdelghani Melara Navio also translated an edition that is also widely praised among Spanish readers.

Most Spanish speakers in the United States are Mexican, Followed by Puerto Ricans and Cubans. Each Latin culture is unique and often has its own dialect, customs and ways.



118. Hispanics and Spaniards have been given a prejudicial view of history ever since the fall of Muslim Spain. For example, there are quite a few towns in North America and Spain with names like *Matamoros*, which translates into Spanish as "*Muslim Killers*."

Reglas Que Cumplir en el Islamismo (The Five Pillars of Islam)

- * Afirmar que no hay otro dios sino Al-lah y Mohamed es Su siervo y mensajero.**
- * Hacer regularmente las oraciones diarias.**
- * Pagar el impuesto religioso llamado azaque (Zakat).**
- * Ayunar en el mes de Ramadan.**
- * Hacer peregrinacion a La Meca, por lo menos una vez en la vida, si se puede costear el viaje.**

Articulos Fundamentales de la Fe Islamica (Fundamental Articles of the Islamic Faith)

Cada musulman debe creer en:

- 1. Un Dios Unico, Supremo.**
- 2. Todos los Enviados de Dios, angeles y Profetas como Abraham, Moises, Jesus, Mohamed y otros.**
- 3. Todas las Escrituras y Revelaciones de Dios.**
- 4. El Dia del Juicio Final.**
- 5. Que cada persona nace libre de pecado, como una pagina en blanco.**
- 6. Que todas las personas han recibido posibilidades espirituales que pueden hacer de ellas buenos musulmanes, si gozan acceso Al Islam.**
- 7. Que el Cor'an es la palabra de Dios revelada a Mohamed por medio del arcangel Gabriel, y se debe hacer una distincion entre la Palabra de Dios y las tradiciones de Mohamed.**

Addresses and Websites of Islamic Organizations Which Operate in Spanish

1. Hispanic Muslims.
<http://www.hispanicmuslims.com>
2. Comunidad Islamica en España.
Calle Cetti Meriem 10, 3º Dcha.
Phone: 18010-GRANADA.
<http://www.cislamica.org/> info@cislamica.org
3. Latino American Dawah Organization.
<http://www.latinodawah.org/>
4. Los Angeles Latino Muslim Association.
<http://www2.islamicity.com/LatinoMuslims/>
5. Piedad.
<http://hispanicmuslims.com/piedad/> (Women's organization)
6. Muslim Center de Mexico.
<http://islam.com.mx/index.php>
7. Organizacion Islamica para America Latina.
<http://www.islamerica.org.ar/>
8. Bism Rabbik Foundation.
1844 N. Nob Hill Rd. #628. Plantation, Florida 33322-6548.
Phone: (954) 749-0777 Fax: (954) 749-9927
<http://www.bismrabbik.org/>



13

The Asian American

Asian Americans are one of the fastest-growing and most diverse population groups in North America today. Currently, they number over 12 million people and are spread throughout the U.S. and Canada. Nearly eighty percent trace their roots to China, the Philippines, Japan, India, and Korea. The rest are Pacific Islanders, Polynesians, Indo-Pak and others. ¹¹⁹

Although a few of them are Muslim, the vast majority are either Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Taoist or secular. But as is often the case with immigrant communities, the importance of traditional religion and customs decreases in the family over time, so much so that by the third generation, their habits and cultural attitudes are virtually indistinguishable from those of the majority of the nation's citizens. Da'wah to them presents a challenge for there are few qualified Muslim specialists in Asian da'wah in the North American arena.

There have been marked improvements, however, in the materials and other resources available for Islamic outreach to Asians. New translations of the Qur'an in Chinese, Korean, Japanese and even Vietnamese, have made teaching Islam a little easier. Unfortunately, when compared with the size and scope of Evangelical Christian mission work, we are still light years behind in our techniques and resources. (Most Korean immigrants, for example, are *already* converted to Christianity *before* they ever set foot in the West.) Gradually, as more Muslims become acquainted with their East Asian neighbors, and as English gradually takes its place alongside the

119. The largest concentrations of Asian immigrants and their descendants can be found on the Western coast of North America, in New York and in Hawaii. Other important communities reside in most major urban areas.

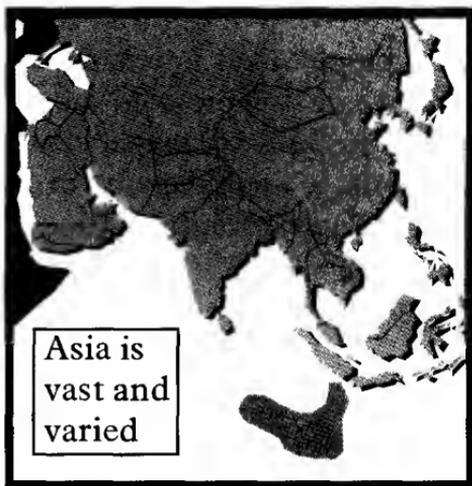
traditional languages of their immigrant ancestors, a new and potentially vast number of contacts for da'wah will open up. Islam offers real solutions and we should not be shy about offering it.

To begin a program of da'wah, each particular type of Asian community must be considered separately and viewed as a distinct entity apart from

other Asians. Due to history and the far flung nature of Asia, many of these people have little in common with each other. Some Asians, such as the Chinese and Japanese or the Japanese and Koreans have a deep mistrust of the other and they order their societies under vastly differing principles. The one size fits all da'wah scheme will not work.

It is possible that a strong Muslim community structure will appeal to newly-arrived immigrants in need of assistance, as well as to those already established who may feel American popular culture is swallowing their values and traditions. In addition, Islam's emphasis on sobriety may be used as an inroad to making Asians aware of the benefits of Islam, as alcoholism is as much a problem in Asian communities as elsewhere.

Asian societies are noted for their strong family traditions and communal decision-making processes. They are also known for their strong distrust of "outsiders." Families from Japan, China, Korea, Laos and Vietnam, in particular, combine an almost fanatically loyal family structure with an equally strong insular outlook which leads them to isolate themselves from the wider North American community. It is of little surprise to make the observation that even by the second and third generation, many Asian families are still speaking fluently the language of their immigrant fore-fathers.



In order to begin da'wah, it would be useful to make contacts with national and international Asian Muslim groups to form an effective da'wah program suited for the Asian psyche and mind.¹²⁰ Following this basic preparation, and the collection of suitable da'wah materials, it would be wise to study the history and culture of each Asian group separately. The range of national experiences makes generalizations about them difficult. Then and only then can a workable program be envisioned. This is essential for beginning da'wah to Asians.

121

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Some Islamic Internet Resources for Asia

China Net. <http://www.islamcn.net> A Chinese language website devoted to Islam. Entire Qur'an in Chinese is on-line there. English resources as well. Also see the Islamic Union of Hong Kong at <http://home.netvigator.com/~iuhk/>

Japan Islamic Trust. <http://www.alles.or.jp/~jit/Services.htm>
Resources for Islam and Japanese culture and tradition.

Islam in Korea. Several websites of resources and organizations. <http://salam.muslimsonline.com/~kwangju/> or try <http://welcome.to/islamkorea> or try here <http://www.quran.or.kr.com>

120. Other internet resources include: Report on Islam and China: <http://www.ou.edu/mideast/country/china.htm>, Islamic Union of Hong Kong: <http://home.netvigator.com/~iuhk/>, United Muslim Association of Hong Kong: <http://www.geocities.com/umahweb/home.html>, and finally, a link for islam in vietnam: <http://forums.gawaher.com/index.php?showtopic=1597&>

121. Contact, for example, the Cham Refugee Community 5945 39th Ave S Seattle WA 98118 Phone: (206) 721-7864. Free Dawah literature in Japanese is available from a variety of sources. Here is a link to a great webpage listing masjids and Islamic organizations in Japan: <http://www.ic.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~tuics/Japan/>

Facts to Know About Asian Culture

1. Most Asian cultures do not carry the tradition of shaking hands in initial contacts. Bowing may be preferred accompanied with hand gestures. Although Muslims bow to no one but Allah, a slight nod of the head in respect and a smile are often good ways not to compromise your faith and also not to insult your da'wah contact.
2. Many Asian societies are extremely suspicious of outsiders. A person who seeks to give da'wah must learn the language and cultural nuances of the target group, even then, if the da'wah worker is from a different ethnic group they may encounter a great deal of skepticism. Christian evangelicals, for example, have known this for years and employ native converts almost exclusively in many locales.
3. Ancestor worship, the practice of praying or making offerings to one's ancestors is widespread, especially in Buddhist cultures.
4. The traditional color of mourning is white, not black for most oriental Asians.
5. Festivals and celebrations are the focal point of community life. New Years celebrations, particularly for the Japanese, Koreans and Chinese are especially important. Hindus celebrate Diwali with great public festiveness in many Western cities.
6. Most oriental immigrants to the United States readily adopt one form of Christianity or another to practice alongside their own cultural traditions. This is in keeping with the oriental tradition of amalgamating what is perceived to be useful. In this case, they perceive Christianity to be a door opener for economic success and social acceptance. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims tend to resist religious assimilation, though they usually adopt social assimilation to one degree or another.

Hinduism

Origins: Aryan invaders from Central Asia arrived in the Indian subcontinent over two thousand years ago. They combined their beliefs with those of the indigenous population forming a mixture we label today as Hinduism. The ideal society envisioned by this faith is one in which four castes define the social structure. Brahmins (priests) are at the top while Dalits (untouchables) are at the bottom. Warriors and artisans/freeholders are in the middle. Countless sub castes serve to stratify society in a hereditary caste system. Hinduism gradually spread to most of southeast Asia and remains a cultural force in places as far flung as Indonesia and elsewhere.

Sacred writings: The Vedas, the Law Codes, the Puranas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. (Written in an ancient language called *Sanskrit*.) These are mostly epics, poems and dialogues.



Main Teachings: *Reincarnation*, or the soul being reborn into another living creature.

Brahma- one controlling principle sort of like a deity with many lesser gods and magical deities in charge of various duties. People can be perfected through meditation and asceticism. Gods come to earth periodically by incarnation. There are also varying regional beliefs throughout India, the primary home of Hinduism.

Sects: There are countless sects in Hinduism. Three main groups center around the worship of these exclusive deities. Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti. Other deities include: Rama, Hanuman (monkey god), Ganesh (elephant god), Lakhshmi (money god), etc...

Rituals: Idol-worship is required. Shrines of gods and relics are objects of pilgrimage. Philosophy is encouraged and renouncing the world is praiseworthy. Many Hindus believe it is a meritorious act to bathe in the Ganges river. Cremation of the dead is the final act in the Hindu lifestyle. Cows and cow urine are sacred.

Taoism

Taoism began as an amalgamation of philosophical reasoning in the fourth century BC. The mythological founder is Lao Tzu, who, as legend tells it, wrote down his profound insights for others just before departing China. The two main works of inspiration are the *Tao Te Ching* and the anthology called the *Chuang Tzu*. The astrological work, the *I-Ching* is also used widely. Taoism teaches that a mystical Way, or Tao, is the goal of life. One must seek to become “one” with the great flow of life and withdraw from active involvement in the world. The faith is so loose that it is generally practiced alongside Buddhism or Shintoism. The martial art known as *Tai Chi Chuan* is closely linked to this philosophy as it promotes self-control and calmness.



Confucianism

Confucianism began with the efforts of Confucius (K'ung fu tzu) who was born in 551 BCE in Northern China. He preached that life should be ordered and organized logically with everyone in society knowing their proper place. Confucian thought has dominated Chinese culture to the present day. The six Classics and the Four Collections, of which the *Analects* are the most important, provide the basis for this system of life. Good manners, virtue, piety, gentlemanly conduct, a heavenly providence, the Way (tao) and the principal of reciprocal relationships are the main teachings of this philosophy. Confucianism is not so much a religion as a set of cultural values which has widely influenced the social practices of such nations as Korea and China.

Buddhism

Origin: An Indian prince by the name of Siddharta Guatama left his life of luxury about 2,500 years ago to find the meaning of life and suffering within it. After wandering as a beggar he sat down under a tree to meditate and then found himself "enlightened." He then began to travel throughout northern India preaching self-restraint, the deadening of one's own desires, charity and self-realization.

Sacred Writings: The Tripitaka (three separate collections,) and the Dhammapada. These are similar in form to ahadith, many of Buddha's supposed sayings, however, are spurious and/or legendary.

Main Teachings: All life is pain and suffering. Pain and suffering are caused by lust and desire. The way to remove pain is to give up desire. The goal of life, then, is to achieve Nirvana (nothingness). Karma, or the law of cause and effect, travels with us throughout our life. There are three main ways to achieve enlightenment which are to follow the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Precepts. Although Buddha didn't actually command anyone to worship him, most Buddhists venerate him as a diety.

Sects: Theravada, practiced in south-east Asia; Mahayana, practiced in China, Vietnam, Tibet, Japan, etc... Zen is the version of Buddhism that the Japanese adopted. Each sect has its own curriculum of texts and distinct set of specific teachings. It is characterized by contemplation and scholarship. Zen "riddles" or logic puzzles are employed to sharpen awareness.

Rituals: Monks perform standard, daily rituals which involve study, chanting, bowing to statues of the Buddha, physical exercises to master the body, and contemplation about how to destroy a person's desires. Common people are exhorted to follow this way of life as well. Monks sometimes go out into the world as beggars to serve humanity. Ancestor worship (praying for good fortune and protection to one's ancestors) is commonly practiced alongside Buddhism.

14

Native Americans

No nation has been more oppressed than that of the American Indians. From their first contact with European civilization hundreds of years ago until the present day, Indians in Canada, the United States and Latin America continue to struggle for their legitimate rights. They were not all hostile savages or raiding bandits, as depicted by the popular media, but rather, they belonged to a highly developed civilization organized into tribes, nations and confederations.

The ancestors of the American Indians came across the Bering Straits which connected Asia with North America tens of thousands of years ago. These people, who were of Mongolian stock, gradually divided into many groups. Some remained in Alaska, and the rest fanned out across the Northern and Southern continents. The different groups are classified according to "language families," for each group developed its own distinct language and view of the world. When the Europeans arrived, there were thousands of different dialects and languages spoken in this country.

Despite the diversity in languages, however, the indigenous peoples were not isolated from each other. For in fact, as exhaustive research has documented, a continent-wide network of trade and communication flourished, bringing the natives into contact with tribes thousands of miles away. The trend was continually reinforced as large and small tribes formed associations, nations and confederations to promote civilization, protection and trade.

It is in this arena that the European states began to compete for land and power. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Indians were courted for their support by one side or

another as valuable counter-weights and allies. Alternately the French, the British and later, the American Colonists, sought their help. But they were just pawns in a deadly conflict and were eventually discarded as unimportant when the Europeans and the American Colonists gained complete control over much of America. Thereafter, they were vigorously exploited, driven from their lands, betrayed and cheated. Though they fought back with fervor and determination, they had little chance against the profound savagery of a materialistic culture.

In 1830, the U.S. Government passed the Indian Removal Act which banished Native Americans from all lands West of the Mississippi River. Eventually, the government confiscated more Indian lands until it finally corralled them on to poor, desolate reservations which were little more than unfenced concentration camps. Many battles were fought between the Indians and the U.S. cavalry during the nineteenth century. The last skirmish occurring on December 29, 1890, when a band of Sioux refugees was ruthlessly massacred by government soldiers at Wounded Knee.

"They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one; they promised to take our land, and they took it."

The Bureau of Indian Affairs office was created by the U.S. government which served to make the Indians utterly dependent upon handouts from the government. Later, some charitable organizations were formed, principally by Christian women, to help educate and care for the Indians, but nothing could redeem the injustice they suffered at the hands of other Christians. A Lakota Indian chief, Red Cloud, is reported to have said, "They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one; they promised to take our land, and they took it."



American Indian Beliefs

"To every people We have appointed rites and ceremonies to follow: Let them not argue with you concerning this. But invite them to your Lord. For certainly, you are on the straight path."

(Qur'an 22:67)

The philosophy that Native Americans live by calls for them to revere the earth as the mother of all life. The heavens and the natural world are all symbols of the continual birth and rebirth of man and nature as exemplified by the changing of the seasons, the predator and the prey and the unceasing cycle of night and day. They had no concept of ownership of land nor of countries. Their land was where the great bison roamed or where the winter pastures lay.

Although animism, a belief in spirits, plays an important role in Native American religion, ¹²² almost all tribes have at least an idea of an over-riding, supreme being. ¹²³ We know this concept in English as "Great Spirit," although the Indians had their own terms such as "Manitou" among the Algonquian peoples or "Orenda" among the Iroquois. The Ojibwa of Eastern Canada, in an ancient saying, describe the Creator thus:

122. For example, the Hopi belief in friendly spirits that bring rain called Kachinas.

123. See Qur'an 16:77-80.

"Out of nothing He made rock, water, fire and wind. Into each one He breathed the breath of life. On each He bestowed with his breath a different essence and nature... (and He) then made the Great Laws of nature for the well-being and harmony of all things and all creatures... All things lived and worked by these laws."

124

Harmony was an art and a way of life in their belief systems. But this harmony was destroyed by the Europeans and their descendants. Many natives were forced to convert to Christianity to receive mercy from the Christians, others were forced to watch their children being converted in missionary schools, but most reservation-based tribes still retain some of their traditional beliefs. Although they have adopted a semblance of American culture, most have resisted complete assimilation.

There has been a gathering movement over the last two decades to fully resurrect the old ways. (The American Indian Movement, for example.) This is partly in response to the spiritual hunger Native Americans are feeling. They have found European derived culture to be unsatisfying and dehumanizing and are reaching back to the ways of their forebears. This trend is reinforced given that the bulk of their peoples are still virtually forced to reside on impoverished reservations with little opportunity. Most reservations are located in the West and mid-West of the United States, in such areas as South Dakota and Arizona. They are interspersed throughout Canada, though the Canadian government does not consider them to be reservations.

Currently, there are almost two million Native Americans in the United States alone. There are not many da'wah efforts being directed to them and this is a great injustice. Islam can provide the solution to many of their dilemmas without destroying their culture. This is the peculiar strength of Islam: culture and identity are not torn away upon acceptance, for Islam is the way of life suited to all races, climes and conditions.

124. Excerpted from Islamic Horizons - March 1985.



Da'wah Pointers to Native Americans

A. There are many different tribes of Indians, each with their own set of beliefs and practices. (562 federally recognized tribes so far!) There is, however, a basic pattern which most native philosophies follow centered on reverence for the earth, a dislike of waste and rashness and an emphasis on family and communal ties.

B. Some, but not all Native Americans, take offense at the term "Indian" and prefer to be called "Native American" or "First Peoples." This is to emphasize that they have a claim to North America that predates that of all others.

C. About half of all Native Americans still live on what are called *Reservations*. These are reminiscent of the *Bantustans* created by South African Whites in the mid and late twentieth century to keep Black Africans bottled up and separate. After breaking nearly every treaty they ever signed with the indigenous people of this land, the American government finally herded the few surviving Native Americans onto desolate wastelands designated to be their *homeland*. To this day, many reservations are wracked by despair, high unemployment, alcoholism and frustration. Gambling casinos and other devices of debauchery can be found in far too many Reservations due to a loophole in the Reservation laws. Many Native Americans see in these casinos a way out of poverty. What they fail to realize is that they lose their identity and values as well and become perveyors of the very things that destroyed their ancestors. Corruption scandals and greed have literally torn tribes apart. Most reservations are in the vast American deserts and dry plains.

D. Most Native Americans have been nominally converted to one Christian sect or another. The conversions of their forefathers, mostly done in the late 1800s to early 1900s, were generally forced, though in more subtle ways. Christian charities would grant assistance to converts and shun those who held stubbornly to their native ways. The U.S. government, which during that era was quite interested in promoting Christianity, actually instituted policies in which thousands of Native American children were forcibly removed from their parents and raised as Christians in special boarding schools. They were forced to wear Western style clothing, adopt Christian names and were forbidden to speak their parents' languages.

Many of these children suffered abuse, both physical and sexual from their boarding school teachers and masters and these wounds, and the forced separation from their previous generation's knowledge, have contributed to the general breakdown in family life that has afflicted many remnant tribal groups to this day. Violence, for example, is now epidemic on many reservations. The U.S. Department of Justice, in a report dated June 1999, entitled, "*American Indians and Crime*" said this:

"..findings reveal a disturbing picture of American Indian involvement in crime as both victims and offenders. The rate of violent victimization estimated from responses by American Indians is well above that of other U.S. racial or ethnic subgroups and is more than twice as high as the national average. This disparity in the rates of violence affecting American Indians occurs across age groups, housing locations, income groups, and sexes."

E. Respect must be paid to Native ways and practices which many remnant tribal groups have long tried to resurrect, especially since the rise in awareness among Native Americans of their past and uniqueness, most principally in the late 1970s and beyond. These include: Totem poles, sweat lodges, hunting and farming rituals, pow-

wows, use of the drug peyote in ceremonies and nature legends. Beliefs and practices are Islamized gradually, not overnight.

F. A good part of Native philosophy is consistent with the Islamic way of life. A study of Native history and lore to determine possible Prophets and Messengers is highly recommended. There remains today a large record of Indian legends and beliefs, thanks in large part to the diligent efforts of anthropologists and cultural historians.¹²⁵

G. Information can be obtained about Native Americans by consulting the National Congress of American Indians or the following organizations, websites and publications:

American Indian Movement

<http://www.dickshovel.com/www.html>

Native American Organizations Directory

<http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/organizations.html>

Assembly of First Nations (Canadian Tribes)

<http://www.afn.ca/>

National Congress of American Indians

<http://www.ncai.org/>

Indian Country Today (Premiere Newspaper)

<http://www.indiancountry.com/>

125. A well-published book details the locations, general histories and current situations of nearly every American Indian tribe in the United States. It is replete with addresses, a calender of annual events, tourist information and useful notes. (1991) Indian America, Eagle/Walking Turtle. John Muir Publications, P.O. Box 613 Santa Fe, NM, 87504. (\$17.95)

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Head Office
1951 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20245
Phone: 202-208-3710
<http://www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html>

National Park Service Tribal Preservation
<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tribal/>

Do not fall into the trap of simply sending Islamic literature and doing nothing further. Committed Muslims must be ready to visit the reservations and urban cultural centers, to live among the Native Americans and to make an investment in their well-being and improvement.



O Great Spirit, Grant that I
might not criticize my
neighbor until I have walked
a mile in his moccasins.

--Native American Proverb

Some Examples of Native American Tribes and Where they are Found.

Tribe	State
Seminole	Florida
Apache	Arizona
Chippewa	Michigan
Cheyenne	Montana
Navajo/Hopi	New Mexico
Mohawk	New York/Quebec
Shawnee	Oklahoma
Cherokee	Oklahoma
Sioux	North/South Dakota

15

The African American

The African American community has been the most active of any group in accepting and propagating Islam. For many, making this choice is a way of breaking the chains of Western society upon them. The Muslim African experience on this continent, however, is not limited to the last few decades. It is a centuries old tradition of struggle and loss that is slowly finding its way back to Islam.

There is some evidence that West African Muslims actually forayed into the New World centuries before Columbus. These early African Muslim explorers, mostly from the Mandinke tribe, appeared to have landed in the region of the Caribbean some time between the 12th and 14th centuries. They did not establish a link, however, between their homeland and these new lands, and thus were lost in assimilation with the local cultures. That Africans had made some small influence upon at least some of the natives is attested to by Columbus, his brother, and even Vasco de Balboa, later European explorers whose own thoughts on the evidence they saw lead them to record their thoughts in their journals and official reports. For example, one of Balboa's secretaries wrote:

“It is believed that such blacks came long ago from Africa (to the caribbean)... and that, having shipwrecked, established residence in those mountains.” (Quoted in A.H. Quick's book, *Deeper Roots*)

Moving ahead to the sixteenth century, when the Europeans first began to export enslaved Africans from their homeland, countless Muslims were brought to the Americas in bondage. Cut-off from the Ummah, their people, their families and their environment, these Muslim slaves gradually began to lose their knowledge of Islam. They

did not give up without a fight, however, and rose in rebellion many times, most notably in Brazil. It became so hard to tame the Muslims that a ban was placed on the importation of Muslim slaves into the Americas in 1550 by the Spanish crown. Without the new infusion of Muslims from Africa, the resistance of these first American Muslims withered away under the iron fist of the slave masters. This process has been well documented, especially in the United States in the 1700s and early 1800s with many surviving accounts by Muslim slaves, and references from their masters as to their *property's* peculiar ways. By the era of the Civil War, however, Islam was thoroughly erased from the Africans in North America. Jane I. Smith, writing in *Islam in America*, states:

“Unfortunately for those who would have wished to practice their Muslim faith during the harsh circumstances of slavery in America, their Christian overlords rarely permitted it. Just as Muslims who remained in Spain after 1492 had been forced to convert to Christianity, so American slaves were required to become Christian also.”

But some scanty knowledge of Islam remained scattered here and there, though it became mixed with Christian dogma and Black Nationalism. Timothy Drew, a poor black born in North Carolina in 1886, became the first African American to call for a return to Islam. He did not have full access to Islamic teachings, so his movement began as a nationalist plea complete with his own self-made book which he labeled as *the Qur'an*. He founded an organization in New Jersey called the Moorish-American Science Temple in 1913 and continued his call for black people to consider themselves as different, as "Moors" or "Asiatics." His movement (and temples) spread to many cities.

Shortly after he died in 1929, a new movement was initiated in Detroit by an immigrant from the Middle East named Wallace D. Fard. He taught a mixture of Islamic ideology and Black Nationalism and called the blacks back to their *real* heritage. The movement was

Muslim African



African in America



African-American



Black Muslim



Muslim American

called, "*The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America.*" While the teachings contained some Islamic trappings, there was virtually no Islamic 'ibadat nor sources (Qur'an, Sunnah, etc.) utilized.

The sectarian nature of this movement became clear when Wallace Fard began proclaiming that one Elijah (Poole) Muhammad was the "new" Messenger of God who would bring blacks back to their true nature. Fard disappeared in 1934, but not before appointing Elijah Muhammad as the chief minister of the *Nation of Islam*. It would focus exclusively on bringing its message to African Americans. Accordingly, the teachings began to focus on racial prejudice and held that the white man was responsible for all the black's suffering. Only by lifting themselves up and attaining economic and social success, it was argued, would the black man achieve fairness and justice.

Many good things came out of this early effort by the black community to return to Islam, *even if it wasn't really Islam they were learning*. Masjids, temples and schools were built and a new sense of

pride and self-confidence was instilled in the members of the young sect. The poor as well as the affluent flocked to this new movement and it grew in strength.

But as the movement matured in the coming decades, and some of its members became exposed to true Islamic teachings, a rift began to grow in the organization. Malcolm X, among others in the 1960s, came to understand that true equality among people can come only from pure Islam.¹²⁶ Later, these individuals helped to lead the neo-Muslim movement into mainstream Islam, though regrettably Malcolm X became a martyr under an assassin's bullet.

When the leadership of the organization fell to Elijah Muhammad's son, Warith Deen Muhammad, in 1975, the movement turned fully in the direction of reform. By about 1985, the Muslim African-American community became fully integrated with the Muslim Ummah.¹²⁷ Warith Deen Muhammad decentralized the organization, repudiated any incorrect teachings the group espoused before and established contact with the rest of the Muslim ummah. (Some splinter sects who wanted to retain the racist teachings of the original movement remain in existence.)¹²⁸ In 2000, the leader of one of those recalcitrant groups, Louis Farakkhan, pledged his allegiance to Warith Deen Muhammad, thus ending the major schism in African American Islam. In 2003, Imam W.D. Muhammad resigned from his post as head of the national community.

126. "At Makkah I saw the spirit of unity and true brotherhood displayed by tens of thousands of people from all over the world, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. My religious pilgrimage (Hajj) to Makkah has given me a new insight into the true brotherhood of Islam, which encompasses all the races of mankind." -- Malcolm X (Al Hajj Malik Shabazz,) from an article written in Egypt, August 1964.

127. The Chicago based "Muslim Journal" has become an important source for news and information concerning Islam in America. It is the principle publication of the Islamic Movement in Black America.

128. Imam Warith Deen Muhammad summarized this movement to pure Islam in his pamphlet entitled, "*Religion is Sincerity.*"

Today, there are roughly one million Muslims in an African American community of almost 30 million. For a large percentage of these people, the economic reality is discouraging. There are blacks at all income levels, but a majority still live in economically depressed areas, primarily in the eastern and southern halves of the U.S. and Canada. Crime, drugs and broken families are a fact of life for many communities who are often denied equal access to government services that could help alleviate their condition. What is encouraging, however, is that those who accept Islam tend to lift themselves out of the quagmire and become excellent examples for others to follow.

Muslims, whether of African-American heritage themselves or from other ethnic groups, who feel the call to reach out to this community, must be prepared to give their all in this effort. African-Americans, who come from a long line of ancestors who have been abused, discriminated against, lied to and forced to live as second class citizens, are oftentimes skeptical by nature. The Muslim must be prepared to work among them sincerely and permanently and not just preach fine sounding words and then disappear. Some points below outline suggestions which will, insha'llah, assist in the formulation of plans for this area of da'wah work.

1. For the African-American, strong words from the heart, backed up by solid deeds, are more effective than handing out piles of pamphlets or philosophizing about how Islam would ennoble them, and active involvement in the community is the best way to demonstrate the message. ¹²⁹ They must see Islam at work in you before they would want to give it a try. Hypocrisy is not tolerated in the eyes of African Americans whose very rallying cry has come to be "*being real*."

129. Muhammad Ali, Jamil El-Amin, Mahmoud Abdul Rauf, Hakim Olajuwon and many other famous African and African-American personalities have all emphasized that sincerity was a major factor in their being attracted to Islam.

130. See "*Methodology of Da'wah*" by Shamim Siddiqi, pages 155-159.

2. Social improvement campaigns catch the eyes of African-Americans. Anti-drug rallies and efforts, procurement of Federal funding for youth projects, homeless shelters, community clean-up squads and opening or investing in businesses that benefit the African-American community are essential. ¹³⁰

3. Sponsoring Masjids, youth clubs or schools is a good way to bring the presence of Islam into their communities. These become the focal points of activity in the neighborhood and can provide much needed social structures for the youth. Given that there are so many African American Muslims already, it would be advised to seek their involvement in all projects.

4. Family outreach and social services can be established by even a few brothers and sisters by utilizing existing space in Masjids and schools. It does not require large amounts of money to have good brothers and sisters counsel families, help the timid and feed the children. Soliciting donations (better yet funding foundations) for this purpose is a winning strategy.

Cultural Issues Among African Americans

There are stereotypes prevalent in any people's view of another. The same hold true for African Americans. White America has held several negative beliefs about African Americans that can be traced back to the earliest days of colonial America. Racism in its worst and ugliest form has been the result. After the Civil War and emancipation, African Americans were still denied basic human dignities that had to be fought for in another arena, that was in the social and legal realm. The culmination was the Civil Rights Act of 1964, spearheaded by Dr. Martin Luther King.

From beginnings primarily in the American South, African Americans gradually spread throughout the continent. This migration was fueled by the search for jobs, primarily manufacturing. The entire movement of African Americans throughout the 20th century can be

characterized by this reality. As a by product, however, many traditionally-minded African American families suddenly found themselves disconnected and out of touch with each other.

Add to this the spectre of racism that African Americans encountered wherever they went and one can see some of the factors that have hampered this important component of American society from coming into its own economic and social well-being. Vices that have always plagued white America such as alcoholism and spousal abuse hit the African American community hard. The decline in America's manufacturing base and the subsequent loss of jobs in the 1970s through the 1990s greatly accelerated this blight which is often referred to as urban decay.

Today, many forces have coalesced together that have given a negative reputation to some aspects of African American culture, particularly where it concerns the youth. The major features of African American youth culture are:

1. **Rap music:** A style of music incorporating rhyme, bold lyrics, often times accompanied by vulgarity, rivalry, self-promotion, images of sex, drug use, violence and excitement and disturbing messages of degradation towards females and a dislike for education. Some Muslim African American rappers have attempted to co-opt this music for more noble purposes as the success has been marked.

2. **Sports:** This physical outlet has become a critical component in youth culture today. All the self-destructive vices of the ego, which should be mitigated by the love of the game, have been propelled to new heights with sports, particularly basketball, providing opportunities for glory, fame, dominance, wealth and the acquisition of female admirers. A Muslim sports league with an emphasis on glory being for Allah, and also good sportsmanship for its own sake, would be a key strategy for reaching the youth.

3. **Gangs:** While it is a stereotype that is prevalent, most African American youth have no connection to any gang. Those that do often cite the close bonds of a surrogate family that they receive that motivates their loyalty. These gangs operate like primitive tribes with their own recognition symbols, art forms (graffiti) and initiation rituals (usually violent). They also often engage in crime. Although they represent only a minority of African American youth, nevertheless their influence is widespread with many youth attempting to emulate these “*homies*” or *homeboys*. (This term means brothers.) Gangs, unfortunately, often consider it praiseworthy to *conquer* as many females as possible. This, of course, exacerbates the cycle of poverty and unwed motherhood, causing it to grow from generation to generation. A strong Masjid with good youth programs and also good youth directors could begin to provide the youth with alternative *families*.

As far as adult culture is concerned, African Americans are as diverse a group as any other. Most African American adults are within the orbit of the middle class, whether just below or just above. Many are quite well-to-do. Most African Americans in the Northeast, extreme west and southeast tend to live in urban areas. In the deep south (Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, etc...) they live both in rural and urban areas. Most profess loyalty to Christianity, though the undercurrent of white racism always seems to lead many of them to question its relevance, even if discreetly. This is one of the factors that has fueled the tremendous conversion rate to Islam.

The African-American community in North America is awakening to its glorious past and is reaching back into its rich traditions for stability and identity.¹³¹ What better gift to present to them than the religion of so many of their African ancestors- Islam.

131. For example, many blacks have taken to celebrating "Kwanzaa" in place of Christmas. Kwanzaa is a mixture of several traditional African agricultural festivals created by a professor named "Maulana" Karenga in the 1960's to foster black pride. It stresses seven principles evoked over the course of a week ranging from Unity (Umoja) to Faith (Imani).

16

The Caucasian

Researchers have estimated that there are nearly 100,000 Caucasian Muslims in the U.S. and Canada. The overwhelming majority of them are women.¹³² This represents a small fraction of the over 260 million Caucasians on this continent. There are several reasons for the lack of greater success in bringing Islam to them. The top two are as follows: Muslims have never developed an indigenously acceptable expression of Islamic culture in North America (as they have in all other parts of the world). This serves to perpetuate the stereotype that Islam is somehow *foreign* and *different*.

The second reason has to do with the propaganda wars. On all fronts from the meaning and truth about terrorism to the very nature of Islamic teachings themselves, Muslims have consistently failed or at best only achieved mediocre results in the vast war of words and ideas that rages continually throughout the airwaves and pulpits of the land. There are many complicated reasons for this but one of the easiest to explore is the invisibility of Muslims on the political, social and cultural scene- *an absence by unwitting choice*.

Immigrant Muslims have generally been aloof in their love/hate relationship with Western ways, at once taking the best of what the West has to offer while shunning responsibility for its ills and claiming loyalties to countries or cultures *back home*. Thus, while

132. Studies conducted by various organizations suggest that the majority of women accept Islam first before finding husbands. Consult the recently published book entitled, "*Islamic Da'wah in the West*." Larry Poston. Oxford University Press, New York, 1992. Or see the fascinating compilation entitled, "*Daughters of Another Path*" by Carol Anway. Debra Dirks also published recently, "*Islam Our Choice*," which chronicles American women's entry to the faith.

reaping the benefits of education, business and personal development, few immigrant Muslims have taken the time to become a part of their local communities. Vague and misty feelings about returning to one's *homeland* on some future day alternate with a bizarre sense of superiority some Muslims feel, even if they don't practice Islam very well themselves. The idea being that Americans are a loose and immoral people who are surely on the verge of cultural collapse. Better not to mix with them lest we become *corrupted* as well. The result has been that we don't bring Islam to our neighbors, let alone try to be friendly and congenial. *Hardly* the Prophetic example.



African-American Muslims have been cocooned in their own community affairs and struggles and have had few moments to consider how to convert white Americans to Islam, and the few reverted Caucasian Muslims we find here and there have often been subsumed by either a specific cultural milieu or a narrow-minded sect. (Sort of like *becoming* Syrians, Pakistanis, Indians or Turks, Wahhabis, Sufis, Salafis, etc..). This serves to neutralize their potential impact on other white Americans as they come to serve only the interests of their new sectional-minded fellows who often put culture over Islam anyway.

In addition, white converts often have to endure a measure of depressing isolation from being shunned both by their non-Muslim blood relations and the immigrant Muslims who alternatively idolize them and then ignore them on a certain fundamental level. So in other words, in the absence of an identifiable Caucasian segment of the Ummah that successfully demonstrates how Islam and Caucasian culture can blend, white Americans become suspicious and ask, "Who are these people who want to take away my cultural heritage?" The complete neglect of the American majority has been the blind side in the Islamic movement and now, since 9/11, we find ourselves paying

the price both as frequent targets of discrimination and as permanently excluded outsiders in all realms social, political, economic and cultural.

We must not despair, however, for as anecdotal evidence has suggested, conversion to Islam by caucasians has remained steady, even after 9/11. The simple fact remains that no matter what a person has to offer, there will always be a certain number of people who will see value in it. Islam is inherently valuable in itself, so simply by getting the information out there, even if hostile propaganda was the source, we are providing life boats to a drowning population that needs the message we have to offer. Franklin Graham's ridiculous and immature pronouncement that "*Islam is a wicked and evil religion*" actually peaked many people's curiosity about it.

It is suspected that many Muslims are intimidated by the idea of bringing their faith to a people some may consider above the need of any religion (they have high technology and atom bombs after all!) But, in fact, the white community is in the greatest need of finding Islam, or at least benefiting from interacting with noble-minded Muslims. This may be their only hope of realizing what they, themselves, have mostly lost in the modern era: their dignity and moral character.

American Caucasian-centered culture is in decline. Non-Muslim academics and thinkers from Samuel Huntington to Pat Buchanan have noted this and raised alarm bells for years, but to no avail. America, after having been propelled by the scientific revolution, rationalism and secular materialism for so long, has run out of steam. Basically, there is no longer any real ideal for society to progress towards anymore. The praiseworthy Protestant Work Ethic has been replaced by naked greed and self-aggrandizement. The great works of American literature of the 19th and 20th centuries, whose grand themes sparked noble responses in their readers, have been replaced by the so-called modern novelists whose imagery is dominated by sex, vulgarity, mental illness, murder and bizarre rantings. American music and cultural expression has likewise suffered a most un-Christian

turn for the worst with singers and painters vying with each other in pornography, lewdness and vulgarity. The American imagination has been warped into an American love affair with hedonism and quick pleasure, and modern Christian leaders have all but given up trying to stem the tide.

Wither Christianity?

Traditional Christianity is dying in America. The church experience of Christians from as little as fifty years ago, with its dignified services, noble messages and calls for conservative social and personal values, has given way to a modern kind of Christianity whose emphasis is on *the show*. With names such as *Charismatics*, *Evangelicals*, *Full Gospel* or *Pentecostals*, these modern Christian movements de-emphasize personal self-control, good deeds and modesty and offer as a replacement an ecstatic “*personal relationship*” with Jesus, whose main expressions are best summed up as singing, dancing, supernatural tricks like *healing* and *casting out of demons* and emotional outbursts during very energized performances. *Crusades for Christ* are now common throughout America with entire stadiums being filled with countless swaying believers, singing, shouting, wiggling wildly on the floor or crying masses who are swayed this way and that by a central pop-star like preacher in a carefully choreographed performance.

Why has traditional Christianity melted away to be replaced by frantic showmanship and demagoguery? The most common explanation is that modern times demand a more modern form of religion, and that Americans no longer feel satisfaction with traditional forms of worship and have fallen away from active belief. This, of course, is a superficial answer, for a truly legitimate religion offers spiritual solace for all times and generations, and doesn't need to rely on gimmickry, appeals to emotion or the kinds of undignified chicanery that we see today. Americans have drifted away from traditional Christianity because it was unsatisfying for the masses to begin with. In previous ages, social control kept people in line, more than church

teachings, which are inherently contradictory and often without depth. (Think of how rich just the *hadith* literature is, let alone the Qur'an. Christians don't have this depth of source material.) In addition, Christianity makes few daily demands on its adherents. There is no personal plan of reform and spiritual maintenance, for example, like we have in Islam with the five pillars.

When social control started to loosen following World War II, the influence of Christianity slowly became weaker as it had no prop to support it anymore. Without the societal pressure to attend church, individuals were free to explore other aspects of their lives and, unfortunately, Shaytan took that opportunity to increase the desire for vices among people.

To take one factor, the growth of youth-oriented popular music from the 1950s on, we see that with every decade its themes became steadily more individualistic, hedonistic and vain. Listen to the music children patronize today and you see the end result. The last stand of Christianity, then, has been to co-opt and mimic the myriad forms of popular culture today, for this is what people are now used to. What they don't realize, however, is that they have merely enabled people to see Christianity as just another excuse to let their self-control go. View a televised Christian service from Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Jimmy Swaggart or any number of such charismatics and you will see how their techniques are not much different from a well choreographed variety show, music concert or fast-paced play. This is the fastest growing sect of Christianity in the world. In a 1996 book entitled *The Hallelujah Revolution*, author Ian Cotton wrote:

“Conservatively there are now 400 million Christian charismatics worldwide. And where in 1906 less than 1 % of the world Christian communion was charismatic, today at least 25 % is. By the year 2000 this figure will climb to an estimated 30 % ... It demonstrates that this movement stretches from South America to Europe, from Canada to mainland China. In Henan province of China, for instance, a million converts were reported in 1994.”

Despite these new forms of faith, however, Americans remain as spiritually unsatisfied as ever, (Americans love to consult psychics, astrologers, tarot card readers, even therapists) and even though they've made every conceivable form of Christianity you can imagine, teaching every odd-ball thing possible, still, because ultimately their faith is based on a faulty foundation, they remain ultimately unfulfilled. Their inner-nature (*fitra*) is telling them that, yes, there is meaning to life, that we are accountable for our actions, and that our lives matter, but after crystals, astrology, communion, born-again emotionalism, primal scream therapy, new-age gobeldy-gook and all the feel-good teachings well-meaning people make up, they are, in essence, the most unhappy people on earth. ¹³³ More than one white North American writer/popular figure has remarked that an empty life is a poor prize at the end of the struggle for total *freedom*.

Secular materialism, with its habit of desire-driven fads, deprives life of any meaning, other than what the culture gives to it at any particular moment. The explosion of fickle fashion, frightening cults, an alcohol-inspired pub culture, and relentlessly frenzied self-help literature is symptomatic of the entire lack of stability many people feel. In some respects, the section on Da'wah to Popular Society is applicable here. There is a growing sense of aimlessness and rootlessness pervading white culture that Islam can heal. When reading the stories of white converts, these themes constantly come to the fore. ¹³⁴



133. One of the most popular philosophies for ordering one's life in academia is called *Existentialism*. It is an anguished philosophy whose premise is that there is no after life and no such thing as moral values. The unspoken motto is "*Do whatever you please for tomorrow you die.*" It is a very depressing philosophy but it helps people to excuse their bad behavior and aimless lifestyle.

134. Islam is the only way of life that can provide stability and a sense of contentment to a person's life. The feature of guidance and certainty inherent in the Message must be brought to the fore.

***To Reach a Caucasian with the Message of Islam,
the Following Points Should be Considered:***

1. Most Caucasians are fairly educated. The logic of the message should be conveyed and not just the surface meaning. For example: when explaining salat, also include a discussion of the importance of worship in mind and body simultaneously, how five daily prayers can help cleanse a person's thoughts, how congregational salat contributes to discipline and why all Muslims using the same language in salat is so advantageous. The reason and logic inherent in all aspects of Islam must be brought out.

We also need to prepare ourselves for a withering assault on our beliefs, our practices, the legitimacy of the Prophet and the Qur'an, our doctrines, etc... Since 9/11 there has been a literal explosion of books and websites devoted to *proving* our religion is false and based on lies. Caucasian preachers are trying to insulate their flocks as our message continues to cut through the white noise of false propaganda and innuendo. Usually most arguments are easy to counter as they involve a very juvenile misreading of the meaning or intent of verses or hadiths or a general ignorance of history. A second tier involves the authorship of the Qur'an. By citing such figures as Bahira or Waraqa, our detractors try to create the impression that Muhammad (p) was attending Bible study classes for most of his life and decided to make up his own religion one day. Of course, the sheer volume of the Qur'an and hadith, coupled with the entire story of Muhammad's (p) life and mission decries such a simplistic approach.

A third angle of attack seeks to create the impression that Muhammad (p) was not a pious man. Even though we know the contrary to be true, they will bring up all sorts of issue from polygamy and the wars with the Meccans to Aisha's age at marriage. Some sample answers to some of these charges are:

A. **Polygamy:** It is not forbidden in the Bible (only for deacons), Muhammad spent the lion's share of his time away from his

wives, he married mostly older women and widows who had no support. He only had one wife from the age of 25 to about 52. If he was licentious, the time to have a lot of wives would have been when he was young, well-off and without much responsibility. The Qur'an says one wife is best and most proper and only permits up to four for specific circumstances. It is useful for situations in which women outnumber men. The modern practice of unlimited girlfriends in Christian societies certainly is worse. A Muslim man who has more than one wife has to treat each equally or he will be raised with one half of his body paralyzed on Judgement Day, etc...

B. Warfare: Muhammad (p) never initiated any wars. There were not "66 wars" in his time. From the start, the Meccans, the people of his hometown, declared war *on him*. First they persecuted him for 13 years and then tried to murder him. After he escaped to Medina they attacked him three major times. (At Badr, where he was trying to capture a caravan loaded with goods stolen from Muslim emigres, at Uhud, where they marched all the way to Medina, and at Medina itself in a month long siege.) Any other fights with other peoples also were in self-defense. Both the Byzantines and Persians were harassing and threatening allies of the Muslim state. In victory, Muhammad never forced anyone to convert, ever, and prisoners were almost always freed (this show of magnanimity often caused people to convert out of wonder and appreciation of his virtues). Etc... The oft-repeated, and quoted out of context ayahs from the Qur'an that command us to kill all unbelievers, only refer to a wartime situation and apply only to enemy soldiers. Merely reading the verses before and after them will clear up the misconceptions that Islam is warlike. (The verses before say if we are attacked then we can defend ourselves. The verses afterward tell us peace is better and if the other side wants peace we must make peace with them. See 4:74-76, 88-91, 9:1-6.

C. A'ishah's Age: Muhammad (p) has been accused, in a very vicious manner, of being a *pedophile*, simply on account of the fact that one of his wives was of a very young age. The literature says that A'ishah was six years old when she was engaged to the Prophet.

The marriage was finalized and consummated when she was nine. Other sources say she was nine at engagement and twelve upon consummation. Regardless, here are the facts: 1) a pedophile preys upon the young, they don't marry them. 2) a pedophile doesn't stop with just one, but has an illness that propels them to make new conquests. 3) A'ishah was either nine or twelve when the marriage was consummated. In many societies girls reach puberty by eight or nine years old (even in some parts of the United States.) 4) A'ishah was *already* engaged to a man much older than she when the Prophet approached her father, Abu Bakr, and told him about a dream he had in which an angel said she was supposed to marry him.

Abu Bakr asked the previous suitor for his permission to break the engagement and he gave it. 5) Neither Abu Bakr, nor any other person objected to the marriage. 6) After the engagement, A'ishah continued to live with her parents for three to five more years and only went to live with the Prophet *after* she reached puberty. That is why there was a delay of several years. If Muhammad (p) was indeed a *pedophile*, he would not have waited years for his betrothed to come and live with him. The argument can devolve further from there but most people understand by this point and drop their objection to Muhammad's character on this point.

There are many other issues we also now face but there is a growing body of literature on the internet in which Muslims answer point by point the false allegations and malicious attacks against our religion, our scripture, our history and our Prophet.

2. Never assume that the average Caucasian is a part of a "Western conspiracy against Islam." This is the type of simplistic thinking that drives extremists in other parts of the world to *declare war on all* (fill in the blank). Most whites, who are generally illiterate when it comes to Islam and even world affairs, do not care about what happens in other parts of the world. Most of them barely know anything about our faith at all beyond a name. When some hostility is displayed towards Islam or Muslims, it is usually the result of the

immensely powerful propaganda machine which controls the focus of most Americans. But this same propaganda device has led to the development of an extremely short attention span which allows Muslims to make their approach once again after the latest round of misinformation has abated.

3. Most Caucasians know very little about authentic Christian doctrine, beyond an emphasis on Jesus, his dying for our sins and a few popular tales from the Old Testament. This may sound surprising but Christmas is more about Santa and not about saints and Easter is more about eggs and not about resurrection. In addition, most Christians have absolutely no idea that the Bible was put together by vote, that early Christians slugged it out over doctrines, that Paul never really met Jesus, that the trinity means that Jesus *is* God *and* the Son of God at the same time, etc... So one should not always seek to debate religion with them as a primary tactic. They won't have a base of knowledge about their own religious and theological history to reference what you are saying.

Instead, they are very knowledgeable about the social and political ills affecting their local community. This is where you are most likely to reach them. Issues that spark a lot of interest include: feminism, the environment, cultural affairs, the generation gap, etc...

4. American Caucasians are curious and straightforward. They will not hesitate to speak their mind. Canadians, however, are noted to be very reserved and shy. They are patient and often must be coaxed out of their shells. But they are very willing to quietly discuss things.

Native-born converts and newly arrived Muslim-European immigrants ¹³⁵ may play an effective role in da'wah to the native

135. Bosniak American Islamic Center, Louisville, KY; Croatian Islamic Centre 75 Birmingham St. Etobicoke, ON M8V 2C3 Phone: 416-255-8338; Albanian American Muslim Society, 157 W. Girard Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19123; etc.

Caucasian population, but keep in mind that the converts must have a role that is more elevated than merely being a *poster boy* for Islam. As for the European Muslim immigrants, they may have concerns of their own or are in need of da'wah themselves. Check your local area for converted Muslims and either Albanian, Bosnian, Turkish, Bulgarian or other immigrant Muslim centers or masjids. Then sit down and craft and design a strategy in which all can benefit and participate.

5. Caucasians require Islamic literature that is written in a clear, fresh and lucid style. Boring or grammatically incorrect English will not be tolerated. They also need a variety of choices in their Islamic education: cassettes, videos, magazines, computer programs, interesting meetings, retreats, conventions- all these things are an essential part in assimilating them into the Muslim mainstream. ¹³⁶

6. It must be stressed to the Caucasian that becoming Muslim does not entail becoming a Senegali, Arab or Malay, and that every group of people is entitled to keep its identity in the greater sphere of Islamic culture. ¹³⁷ In addition, the potential convert will have some hard questions for you about sectarianism. It is my recommendation that you emphasize *Original Islam*, the Prophet's Islam, in other words, was very tolerant of a wide variety of ideas. (Remember the differences between Abu Bakr's and Umar's approaches, so much so that the Prophet even commented upon it. Remember that Abu Dharr was a reclusive ascetic while Ibn Mas'ud was a scholarly activist and teacher.) Thus, our personal understanding of Islam may vary from person to person.

136. Great web resources for converts include: Converts to Islam: <http://www.convertstoislam.org>, Sisters in Islam: <http://www.sistersinislam.net>, and a great site maintained by a dedicated sister at www.jannah.org,

137. The North American Muslim Pow Wow, sponsored by Dar Al Islam in Abiquiu, New Mexico, had become the "Mecca" for Caucasian Muslims in North America during the early and mid 1990s. No other gathering to date attracted so many converts *where they were in the majority*. See <http://www.daralislam.org/>

If we seek to bring someone to Islam, as opposed to a certain sect, we must be truthful and tell them that the sects that have arisen were due to many factors and that it is best not to have a sectarian frame of mind. There are, of course, many ayahs and ahadith that condemn sectarianism that can be offered. Then, you, the da'wah worker, have to wrestle with the issue yourself. Do you try to get the potential convert to join your sect, or do you let yourself be satisfied with their entry into a state of submission to Allah and let their education as a Muslim take them in the direction that they will? It is hoped you choose the latter, as we have lost enough Caucasian converts through disillusionment with sectarianism and assimilation into narrow sects where they cease to care about concerns beyond inter-sect rivalries.

Original Islam is the best sect, for it was the first. The Masjid is our best organization, for it is the well-spring from which our community grows, and the simple struggle to learn Islam and live it is the most noble cause we can ask of converts- and ourselves. Beyond this there is room for a Caucasian-friendly expression of Islam to finally take root. Then, as in the African American Muslim experience, you can have exponential, internally-driven growth.



17

Teenagers

Young people are often the last people we think about for da'wah. But their energy and enthusiasm is vital to the cause of Islam. It must be pointed out that the first male to accept Islam in the Blessed Prophet's time was 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. He was still below his teens! And when put to the test, he refused to recant his faith in Allah and in his Messenger, but held firm and resolute. There are many examples in Muslim history of youth leading the way or contributing to the effort whether it be from the time of the Sahaba to the various true Mujahideen of today.

The first teenagers which must be reached, however, are our own Muslim youth. ¹³⁸ Living in North American society has robbed most of them of the chance to develop strong faith and identity. For many, there is nominal, culturally-based *Islam-lite* in the home, and outside, is the "real" world. A generation is being lost before our eyes while their parents and communities devote more time to work and socializing than to their children's Islamic education. The beginning of da'wah here is placing them in a Muslim environment as much as possible: in the home, in masjids, in Islamic private schools and in central Muslim communities. Getting them involved in a cause, no matter how mundane, is the key. It is said that the grandchildren of an immigrant will not remember their ancestor's culture. Don't let it be true of their faith also.

138. Of great concern to Muslim parents is the malicious misinformation and stereotyping of Islam and Muslims in some school textbooks. A group of active brothers and sisters have launched a drive to force textbook publishers to be more responsible in the material they present. Contact the Council on Islamic Education for further information. CIE P.O. Box 20186, Fountain Valley, CA 92728-0186 Phone: (714) 839-2929 <http://www.cie.org>

The next group of youth are the non-Muslims. There has never been a time in history when youth have had to face so many hazards and obstacles in their lives in a peacetime situation. Today, North American youth are faced with drugs, alcohol, broken families, AIDS, dating, abuse, hopelessness and despair.¹³⁹ The statistics show that a large number of these youth contemplate or attempt suicide at one point or another. A barrage of hedonistic music, violent movies, video games and strange fads have combined to make immorality and rebellion seem a natural mode of life. Clearly they are on the path of self-destruction.

Da'wah to them will rarely consist of passing out pamphlets or lectures. They do not read nor do they like to listen. They must be shown love, purpose, direction and respect. Those organizations which employ these techniques are credited with much success in turning some of these young lives around.¹⁴⁰

Some examples: the YMCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Big Brother/Big Sister, Boys Clubs, etc...¹⁴¹ Concerned Muslims who wish to emulate such programs will have to study these techniques and then duplicate them if they seek to attract young people to Islam. Special emphasis must be laid upon organization and what appeals to youth sensibilities.¹⁴²

139. Western youth culture is driven by images of power, wealth, sex and violence. From the earliest age children are exposed to violent cartoons leading to violent music and hedonistic advertising, games and movies. A serious lack of parental willingness to get involved has led to a moral decay in youth quite unprecedented in human history.

140. Several organizations have attempted to publish youth-oriented magazines, but none have remained in circulation for very long. Generally the publishers have tried to do too much by packing items of interest for all grade levels into one publication. Alternatively, the content itself was often out of sync with real youth concerns today.

141. Nearly all major Islamic organizations have established youth groups. Some of these include: Young Muslims: <http://www.icna.com/YoungMuslims/>, Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA): <http://www.myna.org/about.html>, and the Muslim American Society's youth division: <http://www.masnet.org/youth.asp>

At home, practice regular salat with your children, encourage them to have Muslim friends, take them to weekend Islamic schools, read Qur'an with them with meaning, be selective about TV, games and music, form a parents' network to build the Islamic community in your area, and of course, make du'a that you can raise a healthy, believing child. Insha'llah.

Understanding the Assimilation of Muslim Children

How can the United States best be described: A melting pot or a salad bowl? Should Muslims discard their past ethnic identities to become indistinguishable from other North Americans, or should they retain some features of their old culture which can then be added to the American experience? Where does Islam fit into the equation? These are the issues faced by immigrant Muslims everyday, whether they are conscious of it or not. Converts also have to decide how much foreign culture to add to their American identity to create a balanced Islamic outlook and practice that is true to faith, accomodating to immigrants and reflective of their own upbringing.

Assimilation is usually the situation our youth face. It means to become literally *absorbed* into the dominant culture. Assimilation does not mean, however, automatic *acceptance* by the dominant culture, nor does it guarantee instant access to the best that America has to offer. Factors that influence assimilation include the age of the newcomer, the motives that brought him or her to America and the amount of contact with people outside the citizen's ethnic group. Also important are the conditions for acceptance that American society places upon the newcomer.

Where do immigrant Muslims fit in this cycle? (They make up, after all, the majority of the Muslim population here.) Sadly,

142. An inspiring and informative book entitled, "*Living With Teenagers*" by Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood (Ta-Ha Publishers-London) provides many insights into coping with Muslim teens in the 90's. Other similar themed books are widely available in the Muslim book market. Some video lectures are also relevant.

there are two dominant patterns in operation. Either the immigrants try to totally assimilate: they change their names, remove their hijabs, shalwars and thobes, hide Islam from their children and take no further interest in following Allah's ways thinking that those concepts ended once they left the old country. The other group builds masjids, yes, but often for their ethnic group to have a place to meet, have parties and functions. A place where only "their" people are invited. They also marry their sons and daughters almost exclusively to others of the same cultural group. Even going so far as to "import" spouses from overseas rather than have their child marry a Muslim from another ethnic or national category. Horrors!

The extent of their Islam is quite superficial, however, and their children and grandchildren assimilate almost as quickly as the ones who assimilated right off the plane! Either way, most children of immigrant Muslims are doomed to become non-Muslims, all the while the parents believe they are raising good kids, even good Muslim kids. But as any teacher in any Islamic school or Sunday school will tell you, it just ain't so!

For example, suppose a young Arab boy comes to this country with his parents and his widowed grandmother. The boy will probably learn the new language and customs much faster than his parents or grandmother. For one thing, he has many more opportunities for learning --in the classroom, on the playground, around the neighborhood, etc...

His parents, who came here to have better jobs or to open businesses, also learn quickly. They know that a good working knowledge of English will help them move ahead faster. Perhaps they both spend large amounts of their time either in college or in their professions or both.

His grandmother, on the other hand, may have far fewer opportunities for meeting new people. Her English may be poor or even nonexistent. She may not be comfortable speaking with anyone

except those who know Arabic. She is here only because she didn't want to be left behind when her family decided to immigrate. She has less motivation to learn English and American ways.

Taking these factors into account, try to see the influences which will play upon the Arab child. He goes to school with people who speak a different language than his grandmother and parents. He also watches television, listens to the radio, plays video games and sees people in the streets who have a lifestyle all their own. Given that his parents are always working or studying, he naturally begins to imitate the dominant culture.

When he is at home, he sees that his grandmother is not very educated, cannot relate to what he is experiencing and seems to be cut off from the world which has become his reality. While he may like her and listen to her, for the most part, he does not want to *be like her*. She is a quaint old biddy who makes nice food (although his real love is pizza and burgers!)

As he grows older, he begins to demand presents for Christmas like the other children get. His parents are worn down and too tired and busy to argue so they accede to his desires. He doesn't see his parents praying and he never really is taught anything about Islam because his parents just stopped actively practicing, if they ever did to begin with. (Day-to-day concerns seem to get in the way, anyway. You know how it is.) He knows that there is a special month called Ramadan because his dad and grandmother make bigger dinners and eat a little later, but it's no big deal. All he remembers is that his grandmother told him on one of the last nights you can wish for anything and it will come true. (The grandmother was never really educated in true Islam back home. Women weren't considered in need of it. All she knows is *folk-tale* Islam.)

When he is a teenager, his values, attitudes and morals are whatever he learned in school or from his American friends. He doesn't consider himself a "Muslim" (although he may call himself an "Arab-

American" in later years). His name is American, he wears American clothes, he dances, listens to rock or rap, has girlfriends and perhaps experimented with beer or something worse. (Surprisingly enough, his parents will claim they never knew!) He's generally a good kid. He doesn't strike one as odd if you saw him in a crowd. He is, for all intensive purposes, an assimilated American.

Meanwhile, his parents have grown older and can now relax in their prosperity. They have money, job-security, nice cars, friends and comfort. Grandmother is in a nursing home (they visit her once a month. The nurses are *so* nice.) Their struggle is over. They made it. But then, over time, they begin to feel strange in their leisure. They become restless. They can't just sit still. They're used to moving around. They crave some new action to give themselves a sense of purpose. One day they "rediscover" their Muslim roots or ethnic (old country) identity. (Take your pick.) Maybe politics or world events reminds them that they once cared about someplace else.

They begin to crave those pleasant memories from their youth; the peaceful masjid, the adhan in the morning, the Qur'an, the idea of hajj and prayer. They start to seek out other Arabs or Muslims (although they may be as assimilated as they are!) They might even look for a masjid in the area. The father goes to Juma'h a few times and has his faith invigorated and reawakened. The mother reestablishes contact with some relatives in other parts of the country. The next Ramadan, the parents try to fast and even pray a few times, though not pushing their son to join them in everything.

Meanwhile, the son notices a change in his parents. They use some funny Arabic phrases that he hasn't heard since before grandma was put in the nursing home. He even sees his father doing some kind of bowing and chanting. He passes it off as all kids do and concentrates on his own life of fun and girls.

One day, his dad begins to tell him about the masjid he's been attending. He says there are other kids that go there and that he

would enjoy it if his own son would accompany him. "It's our religion, after all," he tells him. The son nods his head saying, "I know, yeah, sure." But he really doesn't want to go. He tries it a couple of times. He meets the other boys at the mosque. Hey, they *are* sort of like him! They go outside while their fathers are praying and talk about girls, basketball or the latest video game releases. The son goes home with no more than the impression that the masjid is a place to hang out. He'd rather do it at the mall or over at his friend's house.

To make a long story short, this boy never had a chance. His parents were motivated to immigrate for money, not because they wanted to live as Muslims in another country. Other relatives that came, the grandmother as in our example, will quickly be associated with backwardness. Consequently, there will be little Islam in the home and the child will imbibe the values he learns in school. In America, these values almost ALWAYS¹⁴³ include: dating, drinking/drug use, disrespect for parents, personal freedom at all costs, music, dancing, violent video games, having fun being of primary importance, and morals and values are simply a matter of personal choice.

The subject of this story could easily be any immigrant boy from any Muslim country. This author has personal experience with Muslim youth all over the country and can testify to the fact that most Muslim children are, for all practical purposes, living like non-Muslims. Even the children of masjid-attending parents are usually on their way out of Islam. This is a horrible tragedy and spells the future doom of our Ummah in North America unless drastic, and painful steps are taken by every family to raise their children as Muslims and to practice and teach Islam in the home with wisdom, consistency and forethought. If you can just imagine losing your child to hell-fire forever while you possibly enter jannah, you can definately motivate yourself.

143. How many times have Muslim teachers seen wayward teenagers brought to them by parents who ask them to *save* their children! "*He drinks and curses his own parents!*" "*She has a boyfriend!*" Some parents admit their children to Islamic schools seeking a quick-fix to a serious behavioral condition.

All Muslim children are at risk, whether they are the children of Indians, Pakistanis, Arabs, Turks, Malaysians, Africans or even native-born converted Muslims. This author has seen assimilated, non-practicing (or caring) children from among them all. Some of the most assimilated have been the children of masjid-attending parents who are oblivious to what their children are picking up out there.

When the parents of our Arab boy wake-up and realize their son will not practice Islam after he is on his own, no matter how much they beat him or plead with him, it's too late. They ran after the luxuries of the world and cut-off Islam in their family tree at the same time. Imagine the shame of facing Allah on Judgment Day with that on your hands! For a Muslim parent, there is only one solution: do not mix unIslamic cultural traditions with Islam, teach your children that Islam is a universal faith that can be practiced by anyone, anywhere, and inform them that we must surrender our wills to Allah, and show them how with your own example. Either do it, or lose them, forever. ¹⁴⁴

Activities for Youth

1. Camping trips, summer schools and day camps.
2. Youth-led study circles and halaqas.
3. Sports activities such as basketball, ping pong, swimming and other tournaments.
4. Discussion groups, newsletters and peer mentoring.
5. Quiz competitions.
6. Nasheed (Islamic songs), Qirah competitions or chorus type dhikr activities.
7. Islamic art exhibitions and poetry reading contests.
8. Hiking, horseback riding, skating, swimming and biking.
9. Youth Seminars, groups and conferences.
10. Martial Arts groups.
11. Halal Youth Movie Night parties/Pizza parties.
12. Creative writing contests. (See <http://www.jannah.org/thecave/>)

144. See Qur'an 46:17-18 for an understanding of the danger.

18

The Elderly

Islam is very clear in calling for respect to the aged.¹⁴⁵ Traditional Muslims, in addition, do not shun their elderly family members or demean them physically or verbally. Unfortunately, the precepts of modern Western materialism/secularism do not share the same admiration and love for them.¹⁴⁶ It is a sad reality of life in North America that millions of elderly people are all but abandoned by their children to fend for themselves. They are placed in nursing homes, because the family "can't" care for them anymore, (read: don't want to sacrifice the time) or they are left alone in their homes which are often allowed to deteriorate around them.¹⁴⁷ How many an inmate of a retirement or nursing home has lamented their loneliness in their greatest hour of need!

145. For a Muslim, aging is not some type of curse, but a natural progression of our lives as we head towards the ultimate reality in the next life. As Allah describes it in the Qur'an: *"O Humanity, if you doubt that you will be raised up (after death) then consider that We created you from dirt, then from sperm, then from a clinging (zygot) then into a partially formed lump of flesh in order that We may show Our ability to you. Then We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs until their term is finished, then We bring you out as babies that you might reach your age of full strength. Some of you are then called to die (in your youth) while others are sent to a feeble old age so that you know nothing after having known much."* Qur'an 22:5.

146. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) was formed partly in response to the poor status the elderly hold in North America. The organization publishes a monthly magazine called "Modern Maturity" and lobbies the government for elderly rights.

147. The Blessed Prophet said, *"May his nose be rubbed in dust,"* then he repeated it twice, *"who found one or both of his parents approaching old age, but failed to enter Paradise (by not serving them.)"* Muslim.

If you are a Muslim immigrant reading this chapter, it would be difficult to convey to you the utter horror that awaits the average elderly person in this country when they begin to decline in their faculties and abilities. Whereas you may have fond memories of a close-knit family in which everyone from baby to the oldest surviving member had a treasured place in the wider circle of kinship, the emphasis in America is on the nuclear family. Basically, this means that the needs of the middle aged parents and their young children are the most important while the needs of the grandparents are of lesser importance. If the grandparent becomes a *burden* to care for, they jettison him or her into a stranger's care.

It wasn't always this way in North America. Traditional American and Christian values did emphasize a great respect for the aged. Indeed, one's old parents would often live with them until their death, being cared for by the younger family members. With the breakdown in the American family structure that accompanied industrialization, especially in the late 1800s the focus of the family shifted more towards the young. Traditional bonds were weakened, young people migrated away from the farms of their parents and developed an urban lifestyle that was characterized by a faster pace of life and more opportunities for work, entertainment and also stress.



By the 1960s onward the concept of a retirement village or home began to take embryonic shape. The rising pop culture, with its emphasis on fun and invincible individualism, also could not tolerate reminders of human mortality (the aged) being in close proximity. By the 1970s and beyond an entire industry grew up of what were essentially hotels with a few nurses on hand. Families could dump their elderly members there to be entertained and given constant care and then get on with their lives.



Two unforeseen situations developed. The first was in the rise of depression among the elderly. Obviously, at least to us, if you rip a person who is already in a weakened and vulnerable state away from their personal support network (their loving family) and put them in antiseptic

rooms to wait out their days in the company of low wage workers who don't have any emotional or familial connection to them, they are going to sink into severe depression and melancholy. Think of a scared infant being abandoned in a dirty, uncaring orphanage with rough workers, though in reverse. Indeed, there has been an alarming rise in suicides by elderly people in the United States, especially.

The second problem that arose was in neglect and abuse. Government and private investigations have found shocking examples of abuse of the elderly by low-wage workers who see their charges as little more than cattle. Numerous undercover cameras have caught such miscreants in the act of beating, slapping, pushing and doing otherwise horrible crimes against the defenseless infirm and aged. Couple this with a general rise in unsanitary and unsafe conditions in many nursing homes and one can see how heinous the practice of discarding elderly parents is.

Da'wah to senior citizens entails taking the time to respect, care for, and assist them. Concerned Muslims may organize themselves into small groups who can visit the elderly and offer their assistance in repair work to homes, taking them shopping or simply taking the time to listen to them. Whatever help the person needs, the Muslims can make it a point to provide it. ¹⁴⁸

148. A program called "*Meals on Wheels*" operates in many cities which brings prepared food to each elderly person's house in a neighborhood. What an excellent example.

When the Muslim is questioned as to why they are getting involved, they can reply with ayat from the Qur'an and hadith which encourage respecting and assisting the aged. ¹⁴⁹ Community presentations can be arranged for the elderly to attend, which highlight different Muslim cultures, food, etc. and the merciful teachings of Islam. This is an area of da'wah that Muslims must pursue.



149. *"Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, do not say to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! bestow on them Your mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"* Qur'an 17:23-24.

19

The Poor

"Thereafter, do not oppress the orphan, nor drive away the poor."

(Qur'an 93:9-10) ¹⁵⁰

"He who works hard on behalf of old women or the poor is like a mujahid in the cause of Allah."

(Bukhari & Muslim)

Da'wah to the poor entails a sincere belief in the mercy and love of Allah. Prophet 'Isa (Jesus), may he be blessed, is reported to have said in the Christian hadith books, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." ¹⁵¹ Indeed, there is a trial in poverty and many of us are touched by it at some point in our lives. Working with the poor entails a supreme effort in caring for our fellow men and fearing Allah. Muslims have made some efforts in this area, but have yet to do more. ¹⁵²

Some examples of da'wah to the poor are economic, others are spiritual. Economic examples include soup kitchens, homeless shelters, free medical help, donation of clothing or food, training for

150. Also see Qur'an 30:38.

151. Matthew 5:5.

152. The Blessed Prophet said, "*May I tell you who the dwellers of Paradise are? It is everyone who is considered weak and is despised, and who, if he vows an oath upon Allah, fulfills it. Now shall I tell you who are the ones destined for Hell? It is everyone who is ignorant, impertinent, proud and arrogant.*" (Bukhari and Muslim.)

the job market, finding housing for them and finally, looking after them so they do not succumb to poverty again.¹⁵³

It is possible for charities to receive U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) donated food for distribution. Over 8,000 charitable institutions obtain this food and bring it to the needy. Cereals and grain products are what is usually available but sometimes dairy and vegetable products are offered. Write the USDA for more information.

USDA Food and Nutrition Service
3101 Park Center Drive Room 926
Alexandria, VA 22302

(<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>)

Spiritual da'wah is half-accomplished with your economic help, for they can see that your selflessness springs from an inner faith and conviction. They are impressed. The rest comes from calling them to Islam, pure and simple.

Many of the homeless are women with children who have been abused or abandoned by their mates. A shelter must be established for them. It does not have to be a multi-million dollar operation. Any Muslim community can purchase a home or two and open it up as a half-way house for these people until alternate arrangements can be made to put them back on their feet. A thorough reading of the Qur'an and hadith concerning the poor, the orphans and the weak will convince concerned Muslims to take up this challenge, insha'llah.

153. Contact your local or national Muslim organization to see what programs, if any, they offer for the relief of the poor.

The Handicapped



"Allah does not consider your looks nor your money, but He considers your heart and your actions."

(Riyadh us Saliheen)

There are hundreds of thousands of individuals in North America who are handicapped. The type of handicap can be a physical disability or a mental impairment. Whatever the case, they are not a silent minority. The impaired-rights movement has become a powerful and vocal force which has yielded great benefits and results. Discrimination against the disabled is illegal and society has found a new respect for them. Muslims are endowed with their share of challenged people, so da'wah to non-Muslim handicapped people would not be an insurmountable task. ¹⁵⁴

Service to the handicapped is highly valued: doing their shopping, providing transportation services, etc... Providing them with respect and compassion, not pity, is even more important. Show them that the Akhirah is the goal and that in the sight of God there is no difference among people, except on the basis of piety. There are

154. Read what Allah says to us in Surah Abasa. (80). The Blessed Prophet is rebuked for preferring to speak to a healthy, influential man over a poor, elderly blind man. Allah tells him, "*By no means (should you neglect someone because of their perceived status) because this Message is a reminder (for all).*" Qur'an 80:11.

Muslims who are inclined towards different types of da'wah efforts. A few compassionate individuals must come forward to answer this need.

Some Useful Resources are as Follows:

1. The Qur'an has been set down in Braille, the written language of the blind which is *read* with the fingers running along upraised text. It is also available on cassette tape in translation. ¹⁵⁵

2. Sign language, a way of speaking with hand gestures, is taught in most locales. This unique system, which can be mastered in a short time, is becoming a more common feature of everyday life in America. ¹⁵⁶

3. Organizations for the handicapped can be found in almost every city. Examples include:

* World Institute on Disabilities.

<http://www.wid.org/>

* The Independent Living Center movement.

http://dmoz.org/Society/Disabled/Independent_Living/

or <http://www.civilrc.bc.ca/>

* Paraquad

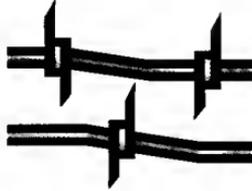
<http://www.paraquad.org/mainmenu.html>

They can be contacted to learn more about how to assist this often overlooked community.

155. The Messenger of Allah once said, "*Allah, the Exalted, declares, 'When I afflict one of My servants by taking away his two most useful and precious possessions (the sight of his eyes), and he proves persevering in the face of the affliction, I grant to him Paradise in their place.'*" (Bukhari.)

156. "He said, 'My Lord! give me a sign!' 'Your sign,' was the answer, 'shall be that you will not speak to any for three days except by hand-motions. Then celebrate the praises of your Lord over and over and glorify Him in the eve and in the morn'." Qur'an 3:41.

Da'wah in Prison



The last few decades have seen an explosion in the number of people behind bars.¹⁵⁷ A deteriorating economy and a dysfunctional social network have contributed to this alarming trend. But there is hope. Although today's prisons are designed to hold people, not reform them, some still manage to find a new focus for life and good living. It is estimated that tens of thousands of people have found Islam while incarcerated, and have completely transformed their lives.

But da'wah in prison is not easy. Some have said that more crime and injustice happens behind prison walls than ever happen on the street. The life inside is a violent and despairing experience. Those who engage in da'wah from the outside must be individuals of very strong character. Those Muslims who begin da'wah while incarcerated must have an extraordinary amount of Sabr (perseverance).¹⁵⁸

157. At any given time nearly one million people are in the U.S. prison system. This is the highest incarceration rate in the world. 87% of all inmates are male and the majority of those are African American or Hispanic. According to estimates compiled by the National Association of Muslim Chaplains, nearly 20% of the people in prison eventually accept Islam. *Allahu Akbar*.

158. Muslims have established several independent da'wah initiatives in prisons. Interested brothers and sisters can contact ICNA, ISNA, MAS, The National Community or any number of local masjid or service organizations. There is also a good chance your local prison may already have a Muslim chaplain on staff.

Expert: Islam gaining ground in French prisons

ASSOCIATED PRESS, Apr. 12, 2004

French prisoners are often overwhelmingly Muslim, with many inmates converting to Islam while behind bars, an expert told a French newspaper Monday. Muslims often account for over half the population of many French prisons, while penitentiaries close to rough suburbs could have up to 80 percent Muslim inmates, Fährad Khosrokhavar, a French author and academic, was quoted as saying in *Le Figaro* newspaper Monday.

“For disenfranchised youths from poor backgrounds, the pull of Islam is strong in prison offering inmates companionship and often protection from the dangers of daily life behind bars,” said Khosrokhavar, a professor and director at the School of Higher Studies in Social Sciences.

“The demand is strong for converting (to Islam) in prisons,” he added. Khosrokhavar, who recently published a book called “Islam in Prisons,” based on a two-year study of three French prisons.

To begin da'wah in the prison system, it is necessary to contact the prison Chaplain's office and/or the Warden. You will be seeking permission to enter as a Muslim Minister.¹⁵⁹ You may obtain the names and locations of Muslim inmates and a schedule of visiting hours. Prepare yourself mentally for da'wah and enter the prison with a keen interest in the lives of those inside.¹⁶⁰

Always carry with you introductory literature on Islam as well as periodicals and tapes. Be aware, however, that permission must be attained for anything you bring in and anything you wish to give the inmates- from dhikr beads to books. Avoid asking personal questions of the inmates. Neither should you inquire as to what brought them to prison. We are interested in their future. Their past is for Allah to

159. ISNA often holds conferences about the issue of Islam in prisons. In addition, the National Association of Muslim Chaplains certifies Muslim chaplains for service.

160. The Prophet Yusuf, may he be blessed, is our prime example of approaching inmates for da'wah. See Surat ul Yusuf (12).

The **National Islamic Prison Foundation** claims to convert an average of 135,000 prisoners a year and federal prison statistics estimate that 10 to 20 percent of prisoners in America are Muslims. Sulayman Nyang, a professor of African Studies at Howard University, estimated that one of 10 African-American Muslims today came to the faith through a prison conversion.

In prison, Islam becomes “*a way of life that transforms what they think about, what they read, how they view the crimes they committed,*” Robert Dannin, author of “*Black Pilgrimage to Islam*” told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, in a story published July 7, 2002.

Source: http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheus/06c_convert.htm

consider. If it happens that an organized group of Muslims can be established inside, then it is absolutely crucial that these points be followed:

1. Frequent training programs must be conducted with the brothers or sisters so they can perfect their knowledge of the Straight Path and learn to “*teach each other truth and perseverance.*” A regular teacher must be appointed who can be depended upon to fulfill his obligations.

2. Abundant Islamic supplies must be made available to them. Pamphlets, books, prayer rugs, kufi's etc... These things will help them to establish their Islamic identity.

3. Muslim-oriented magazine subscriptions must be given to them. This will help them keep in touch with the Muslim world and develop an interest in the Ummah. Books covering advanced Islamic topics should also be provided for those who wish to reach new levels of Islamic learning. ¹⁶¹ Remember, Malcolm X, Maududi, Abul Kalam Azad, Syed Qutb and many other prominent Muslim leaders were in Prison at one time or another.

4. Disputes between the Muslims and the prison authorities must be addressed by the wider Muslim community. Issues such as Islamic education, fasting in Ramadan, halal food, attending juma'h' prayer and even hajj are the sort of things which Muslims must struggle for.

5. If an inmate happens to be released, then he (or she) must be taken into the community fully. He must be assisted in finding a place to stay if needed, locating a job if needed, and a function in the life of the community. Do not hold any prejudice for Allah forgives all that went before accepting Islam, and so should you.



161. A fascinating article on Islam and prisons can be found at <http://www.islam-online.net/english/Views/2001/08/article20.shtml>

Da'wah in the Military



"Let those fight in the cause of Allah who have sold the life of this world for the hereafter. To the one who fights in the cause of Allah, whether he is slain or victorious, soon shall We give him a great reward."

(Qur'an 4:74)

At the present time, there are an estimated six to ten thousand Muslims in the United States and Canadian armed forces.¹⁶² Da'wah efforts are lacking because many Muslim civilians cannot conceive of their fellow brothers and sisters choosing the military as a career, nor can they fathom giving the Message of Truth and Peace to a soldier. But this lack of realization on the part of Muslims must not be allowed to continue.

In the history of Islam we find many examples of da'wah being directed towards soldiers, officers and leaders. From the days of the Blessed Prophet, when every able-bodied man was also a soldier by custom, to the last of the Ottoman troops who displayed Muslim constraint on the battlefields with the British, Muslim men-at-arms and their foes have been constantly exposed to the call of faith.

162. According to a report in *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Feb./Mar. 1994, the U.S. Defense department listed 2,500 Muslims in its ranks. Now the figure, as of 2004, may be as high as 10,000. An amazing 5,000 American soldiers are reported to have accepted Islam during the first Gulf War alone! *Allahu Akbar*.

To begin da'wah, whether as a civilian or as a soldier, one must be cognizant of the fact that the military is a world unto itself which closely parallels the outside world. There are rules of conduct governing every sphere of life from eating to addressing superiors, and the lifestyle is strictly regimented, by force if necessary. Da'wah under such circumstances is precarious and must be carried out keeping in view the rules of military etiquette.

Currently, the U.S. Armed Forces Chaplains Board controls all matters relating to religion in the military. Canada has a similar board. They officially appoint religious workers to act as spiritual guides to the soldiers. These "Chaplains" as they are called must often minister to people of many different faiths and sects. To be considered a Muslim Chaplain, one must be endorsed by an organization recognized by the Chaplains Board. The Washington D.C. based American Muslim Council was one of the few Muslim groups which had been accepted. ¹⁶³

Many issues such as regular Salat, hajj, halal food, fasting in Ramadan, hijab and conscientious objection during unjust aggression are faced by Muslim soldiers every day. Countless potential Muslims are undoubtedly held back from the faith due to the immense hardship that is often associated with Islam in the military. The wider Muslim community must open its strength and vision to assist those who wish to enter, or retain, Islam in the North American military establishments.



163. An organization of Muslims in the U.S. armed forces has been established. For more information contact the American Muslim Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Council at <http://www.amafandvac.org/>

Part IV
Practical Assistance

Advice on Da'wah in North America

Offering a charging lion an apple probably will not save your life. Likewise, da'wah as it is done in Karachi will not work in Kansas. Every people, every culture, is a lesson in diversity. The only way to reach person X, Y, or Z is through methods he or she can understand. For our purposes, every Muslim must be aware of the following when seeking to tell others about Islam in North America:

Use Wisdom

Allah says that da'wah must be done "with wisdom." But what does that mean? Quite simply, wisdom is wisdom. Know when to talk and when to be silent. Know what to say at the most opportune time. Don't waste your energy in a non-productive way nor apply more energy than is required. This is of critical importance to da'wah. English has coined the term, "Common Sense," to refer to the reasoning abilities of the common man. In Islam, we have something superior: "Islamic Sense." Use it and don't leave it at the door.

Learn Before You Leap

North America is a mosaic of world beliefs. Every religion, superstition and ideology can be found right in your own neighborhood. Never assume that someone believes or thinks a certain way. Use the technique mentioned in Chapter Two of asking questions. Questions such as: *"I'm curious, what are you really thankful for in your life right now?"* *"Is there anything you would change in your life if you could?"* *"What's the most important belief in your life right now?"* What if someone asked you these questions? You would probably be delighted to answer them, to share your experiences with someone willing to listen. What does the other person gain? Knowledge about

you, your outlook and your needs. That's powerful information which will help you understand how to reach them.

Remember, don't assume beliefs and never tell someone what *you think* they are supposed to believe. For example, if a woman tells you she is a Christian, don't start off tearing apart the tenets of Christianity as you understand them, or worse, don't claim that Christianity is demeaning to women and oppresses them. Even if you brought every negative verse about women in the Bible, she probably will not know what you're talking about. As many Christians as there are in the world, there are that many different Christianities. Only Islam, of all the world's beliefs, is more organized, clear-cut and understandable. It is often hard for us Muslims to conceive that others would operate on a different wavelength but this is a fact of life.

Relevance

When speaking of Islam, never dwell too much on past Islamic glories or past Prophets in ancient days. Most people cannot relate to events that happened hundreds or thousands of years ago. Instead, the talk should be on Islamic ideology: *Tauhid* and *Akhirah*, personal responsibility, and Islamic solutions to modern problems such as teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse and crime.¹⁶⁴ Feel free to explore the vast and alternative worlds of Islamic Environmentalism, Islamic Economic theory, the Liberation of Women through Islam and Islamic Social Activism. People in problem-ridden North America will be more inclined to listen if you speak to the concerns they have. By the way, this also holds true for Muslim audiences as well. Our khatibs and activists need to offer more relevant fare in their public discourses to enable our community members to become inspired and hopeful.

164. The Council on American-Islamic Relations has as its stated goal the promotion of better understanding of Islam among Americans. **Council on American-Islamic Relations.** 453 New Jersey Avenue, S.E. Washington, DC 20003 Tel: 202-488-8787 Fax: 202-488-0833 Email: cair@cair-net.org <http://www.cair-net.org>

Gender-Consciousness

Watch what you say about the role of women in Islam. First of all, if you believe that women belong locked away, never to be seen, if you believe women are inferior or only made to serve man, then you, yourself, need to go back and read what Allah and His Messenger said about them.¹⁶⁵ Islam was a force for women's liberation until Muslims themselves adopted the stifling cultural practices of the Bedouins, Byzantines, Persians and others. Emphasize that Islam views men and women as equal partners in faith as well as in life. Women are not to be in competition with men nor are they to be the slaves of men.¹⁶⁶ Point out the differences between Western Feminism and Islamic Feminism and avoid being drawn into arguments about the merits of polygamy.¹⁶⁷ Polygamy is not exactly a hot topic among Muslims so it should not be one among non-Muslims. In any case, a simple comparison between the modern Western familial cycle and Islam will yield a vast amount of clues as to why Western women are as oppressed as they are.¹⁶⁸

165. It is the Bible which calls for women to be housewives alone. See Titus 2:4-5 and many others. Also the Bible insults women in very opinionated terms. See I Timothy 5:11-15 or I Timothy 2:11-15 for example. The Bible even forbids women to have fancy hairstyles or wear jewelry! Read on: "*I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes.*" I Timothy 2:9.

166. If you are unsure of issues related to women, you may consult such books as *Gender Equity in Islam* by Jamal Badawi or *Women in Islam* by Aisha Lemu, etc...

167. The Bible does not forbid a man to have more than one wife. In fact, the Bible only states that a church leader (a bishop or deacon) is confined to one wife. I Timothy 3:1-2, 12. Otherwise, the Old Testament allows an ordinary man to have four wives and a king to have eighteen! See the booklet, *Polygamy in Islamic Law* by Jamal Badawi, ATP, no date, p. 2.

168. Muslim Women's organizations play a vital role in dispelling myths about Islam and women. They also are an important link in integrating sisters into the community. Here are some useful links: <http://www.maryams.net/org.shtml>, <http://www.arches.uga.edu/~godlas/Islamwomen.html>, <http://www.jannah.org/sisters/> <http://www.mw1usa.org/welcome.html>, <http://home.earthlink.net/~hanan/mwhelpnet.htm>

Think of the real cycle of life for modern, young women in the West. From a very young age they are exposed to images of hypersexuality: Barbie Dolls and cartoons featuring females similarly *idealized*. They are constantly given reinforcement of the need to have a boyfriend and many begin having pretend boyfriends while in early elementary school. The music and videos they listen to and watch contain endless stories of *love* and even carnal lust. Clothing styles from as young as two or three emphasize tightness of pants and shorts and as they grow into early elementary age they are introduced to revealing tops, make-up (a dishonest form of camouflage to attract a sexual partner) and nail and hair styling.

Finally, by junior high, many girls already have boyfriends and sexual activity is on the rise in this age group as a whole. (An alarming percentage of young girls have also suffered incest by this age.) All around them they see women competing with each other in beauty and fashion, all to attract as many male eyes as possible. The teen dramas they watch on television blatantly deal with boyfriends, gossip, the anguish of being ugly or dowdy and many witness their own parents (many of whom are divorced) indulging in an endless parade of bar-hopping and partner swapping.

Young virule males, of course, are extremely happy, for in decades past, they would have had to woo their potential mates, impress their fathers and be on their best behavior during a long courtship period marked by good manners, gentlemanly conduct and abstinence. Marriage would have followed (or not) with all its attendant responsibility. Feminists in the Sixties and Seventies decried this male dominated patriarchy, exposing how women could be mistreated or kept from fulfilling their ultimate potential.

With the so-called women's liberation movement, males in the West can now have illicit relations with any woman almost at will, as the sexual liberation movement encouraged women to be as promiscuous as some men were before. Women now compete with each other, and use the promise of free and easy intimate relations, as

the opening bait in their search for *a true life partner* (which most women still aspire to). Males, realizing they no longer need to marry a woman, or act according to complicated social strictures, in order to obtain the fulfillment of their base desires, have, accordingly, acted as one would expect unrestricted males to act. Now males can abuse women, use them, debase them and discard them at will without having to care for them, marry them or give a concrete commitment. The song and dance of the moment is all it takes to get what they want from women who are now themselves confused as to the real meaning of *love*. For non-compliant females there is the odious spectre of sexual harassment, rape, incest and other forms of abuse which are now very real possibilities for a growing number of women in the West.

When the messy problem of unwed motherhood came up, feminists championed abortion as a quick fix. Their message to women was: *you are now promiscuous, the man will not marry or support you now, raising a child alone will interfere with your pursuit of personal fulfillment, so kill the child and nix the problem in the bud*. Although abortion seriously clashes with traditional Christian values, and some Christian organizations have gone to great lengths to oppose it (even terrorism), still they have been unable to stop its growth and instalment as a major feature in the life cycle of the average American woman. (Abortion statistics show that an increasing number of women have the distinction of having had utilized this procedure.)

Women, of course, are the primary beneficiaries of a social system that seeks to shackle a man's freedom and force him to commit to a wife and carry the responsibilities of a husband and father. Ironically, it was women, acting through naive, though well-meaning goals, who destroyed this system and now women find themselves degraded as never before, considered as pleasure objects for men, abandoned (even when children are an issue), forced to undergo a series of shallow relationships in the search for the *ideal husband* who rarely is ever found, plagued by depression and stress, hammered by alcohol and drug abuse, suffering through an explosion of STDs

and even taught, in some cultural expressions such as rap music, to call themselves whores, female dogs and even worse *from their own tongues*. (To top it off they still earn less than men in similar jobs!)

This is the general condition that is growing by leaps and bounds and threatens to subsume all women. Now you can understand why so many Muslim women are vociferously refusing this kind of *liberation* for their own societies. On the flip side, many Muslim cultures come up wanting on the issue of women's rights. For us, we must accept responsibility for the failures of Muslim peoples in this regard. The best thing to do is not to be shy about this. Many Muslim men do discriminate against women, abuse them and keep them in ignorance, even as many Western men do. (Hispanic *machismo* culture is also notorious for oppressing women.) What we must emphasize is that this is not a problem connected with any religion, rather it is the misapplication or even absence of religion that has allowed some men, all over the world, to be so backward.

I recommend putting the argument in this light, for Islam, taken by itself and devoid of every nation's traditional culture, is very progressive from the standpoint of wanting to safeguard women's rights, honor, safety and status. The Qur'an, unlike the Bible, takes the automatic posture that men and women are equal beings before God. The only differentiation is given in Surah an Nisa where men are said to be physically stronger than women and thus have the responsibility to look after them and protect them. This is easily a defensible concept for even *liberated* Western women who still expect their men to defend them in times of trouble (even if they don't want to admit it). The Qur'an does not say men are superior, smarter, more holy or nicer than women. The Bible, by contrast, contains many sexist statements. The popular culture itself is rife with the exploitation of women, so much so that feminists are in a quandry: how can they oppose this degradation of women while at the same time defending their supposed right to be prostitutes, promiscuous, abortion-minded and even topless *modern* women. (There are feminist activists campaigning for all of those!)

You must become well-versed in Islamic Feminism, or Qur'anic-based women's liberation. This will allow you to both navigate the pitfalls of non-Muslim women's conditions and also the negative condition of some Muslim women who suffer under cultural restrictions that have no root in Original Islam. You may also have to reassess certain stereotypes or unIslamic attitudes you may hold towards the status of women as well. This will serve to make you a better da'i in the process.

The Nature of Western Society

Western society is primarily materialistic in its focus. Sovereignty lies with the whim of the majority and not with the timeless laws and precepts of Allah. Every generation is shocked by what the one after it does.¹⁶⁹ Religion plays no public role apart from providing national holidays and most people are educated in secular public schools whose standards are usually declining. The concept of God or of an irresistible destiny and meaning to life is largely unknown. The pursuit and attainment of wealth is held to be the measure of success in Western society.

In many ways this situation is similar to the period of ignorance prevalent before the establishment of Islam in Arabia. This being the case, the Message we must advance should be the same today as it was so long ago. People should be called to obey their Creator, recognize their accountability in this and the next life and accept the last installment of Divine faith to this world as exemplified by Allah's last Prophet, Muhammad, may peace be with him. In short, the Message must be that of Tauhid, Akhirah, Risalah, as well as encouraging good in society and forbidding evil.

169. Al-Zubayr ibn 'Adi narrated, "We went to Anas ibn Malik and complained about the wrong we were suffering at the hands of al-Hajjaj. He told us, "Be patient, I heard the Prophet say, 'No time will come but that the time following it will be worse until you meet your Lord.'" (Bukhari, as quoted in Ibn Kathir's al-Bidayah wal Nihayah.)

Word Power

The words you choose are sometimes more important than the idea you express. If someone said, "He was hungry," it would give you a different mental image than if he said, "He was ravenous." Likewise, Muslims must be very careful about expressing Islamic terminology correctly. Remember, many of the words we currently use were coined by Orientalists and others to slander or misrepresent Islam. Look over this list of terms below to avoid and their substitutes. Learn them. ¹⁷⁰

<u>Islamic Term</u>	<u>Words to Avoid</u>	<u>Correct Intent</u>
Jihad	Holy War	Struggle, Striving
Mujahid	Holy Warrior	Striver, Struggler
Rasul	Apostle	Messenger
Da'wah	Propagation	Outreach, Inviting
Khilafah	Theocracy	Constitutional Stewardship
Khalifah	Vicegerent	Steward, Caretaker
Ruku'	Genuflect	Bow at the waist
'Abd	Slave	Servant
Mu'min	Devotee	Believer
Qur'an	Koran	Qur'an
Qadr	Fatalism	Measurement
Ibadah	Worship	Service (to Allah)
Dar ul Harb	Land of War	Land of conflict or turmoil
Mujaddid	Fundamentalist	Revivalist, Renewer
Tawaf	Circumambulation	Encircle, go around.

170. Also consult, *"Islam and Muslims, An American Stylebook"* or *"How to React to Incidents Involving Muslims"* both published by the American Muslim Council. Ismail al Faruqi also wrote a book many years ago entitled, *"Towards Islamic English"* in which he attempted to formalize the translation of many key words and concepts.

Avoid Generalizations

Remember that our mission in da'wah is to educate, not to dominate. Don't speak of "the Jews," "America," "the West" or "the Media" in strictly confrontational terms. Not all Jews are against Islam, America is a land where millions of Muslims live and prosper, at least financially, the West is just a region and the media is merely a tool which anyone, including Muslims, can influence. We can speak against the ideology of materialism or the actions of governments and individuals, but generalizations are dangerous and not always valid. Think of how wrong the people are who say all Muslims are "terrorists" or "violent" etc...

Problems in Da'wah

"They said, `Do you approach us to worship the One God and give up the ways of our ancestors? Then bring us what you threaten us with, if you are truthful!"

(Qur'an 7:70)

Anyone who calls people to faith and goodness will encounter opposition. This should not ever be a cause for despair for our duty is only to inform. We would love to have our friend or neighbor see Islam as it really is and accept it joyfully, but there are some people who *will not believe*, as we read in the opening lines of surah 2. Read what Allah is telling us:

"You won't be able to guide all those you love, but Allah guides whom He wills and He knows best who receive guidance."

(Qur'an 28:56)

171. Also see Qur'an 30:52-53.

"If only there had been among the generations before you, people endowed with sense; forbidding man from mischief in the land. (They) were but few whom We saved. The wicked pursued the enjoyment of fine things and persisted in wrong."

(Qur'an 11:116) ¹⁷¹

One final note: most Americans are not looking to find out who they are, but are looking for a direction in life. The "Melting Pot" has made people secure in their sense of place, but it has also deprived them of a reason for being. ¹⁷² Show them that Islam will give them the purpose and peace they've been seeking.



172. Many Americans are first introduced to Islam through mystical Sufi doctrines. The popular counter-culture movement amalgamates Sufi, Buddhist, Animist and Humanist teachings into one "feel-good" theology. The search for meaning often drives people to create their own beliefs when they cannot find a truth that convinces them.

24

The New Muslim

Every so often, *alhumdulillah*, one comes across a person who is receptive to the call of Islam. ¹⁷³ But when they accept the Divine way of life, a whole new level of responsibility comes to the Ummah. The new Muslim may encounter hardship in every area of his life: he may lose his job or have to leave it because it involves haram, his family may disown or abuse him or nagging feelings of isolation may plague him. Whatever the situation, the Muslim community is obligated to assist. ¹⁷⁴

It is a tragedy when a person accepts Islam only to drift away later because Muslims failed to fulfill their duty. To insure that the new Muslim makes a complete transition to his or her new life, the following points must be considered:

173. The process for entering into the fold of Islam consists of five parts: 1) A person becomes acquainted with the message of Islam through some means. 2) If they have developed the desire to consider Islam as a way of life they begin to study the tenets of faith and/or they observe Islam at work among practicing Muslims. 3) They accept the teachings of Islam and desire to surrender their wills to Allah (*Aslama*). 4) In the presence of at least two witnesses and at the hands of a brother or sister the person recites the *Shahadah* (the testimony of faith) "*Ashahadu an la ilaha ill Allah, wa ashahadu anna Muhammadar rasulullah.*" The English translation may be read after. 5) Then the brothers or sisters embrace their new relative in faith and proceed to make them welcome in the community. The new "revert" should take a shower before the next due Salah (to enter into a state of taharah) and be told that all his or her previous sins have been forgiven. Advice should be imparted as to how to avoid the many pitfalls which this society will try to heap upon them. Finally, one or more members of the community should be appointed as a mentor to guide the new "revert."

174. Anthologies of conversion experiences are extremely useful in helping the new Muslim down his or her difficult road. By reading about the experiences of others who accepted the faith and dealt with the reactions of their family they can find assurance and comfort in solidarity with those who went before them.

1. Accept them as full members of the Ummah. Assign one member of the community to act as their mentor/teacher so that they will always have an avenue of assistance, information and love. Let them be invited to family dinners often and gradually give them responsibility in the community.

2. Involve the New Muslim in Islamic causes but keep their duties or responsibilities at a minimum in the beginning. Let them grow into more activity. Organizations such as ISNA, ICNA, MSA, MAS, etc... can be an important part of this process.

3. Do not "showcase" new brothers and sisters. By this we mean that they should not be held up as a special example. Although Muslims dearly love new members of the faith, it is up to each individual to decide whether they are comfortable with such a role.

4. And lastly, be ever concerned with the welfare and needs of the new Muslim. They are your brothers or sisters in Islam and the Blessed Prophet taught that we should want for them first what we would want for ourselves. *Ameen, let it be so.*



A SYLLABUS OF STUDY FOR THE NEW MUSLIM

1st Stage (0-6 months in Islam)

1. *The Holy Qur'an*. Translated by T.B. Irving, Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Asad, Muhammad Malik or Abdulhaq and Ayesha Bewley.
2. *What Islam is All About*. Yahiya Emerick.
3. *Towards Understanding Islam*. Abul A'la Maududi.
4. *Guidance from the Messenger*. Mazhar Kazi.
5. *Muhammad's Prophethood, An Analytical View*. Jamal Bedawi.
6. *The Rap is Live: Revolution by the Book*. Jamil Al-Amin.
7. *Islam Beliefs and Teaching*. Ghulam Sarwar.
8. *Muhammad*. Yahiya Emerick
9. *Is the Bible the Word of God?* Ahmed Deedat.
10. *A Guide to Prayers in Islam*. M.A.K. Saqib.
11. *The Status of Women in Islam*. Jamal Bedawi.
12. *The Teachings of Islam*. Wahiduddin Khan.
13. *Islam as It Is*. Wahiduddin Khan.
14. *The Bible, The Qur'an and Science*. Maurice Bucaille.
15. *The Spirit of Islam*. Muhammad Asad.
16. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Koran*. Shaykh Muhammad Sarwar.
17. *The Muslim Woman's Handbook*. Huda Khattab. (For Sisters)
18. *Struggling to Surrender*. Jeffrey Lang.
19. *The Lawful and The Prohibited in Islam*. Yusuf Al Qaradawi.
20. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam*. Yahiya Emerick.
21. *Summarized Sahih al Bukhari*. Translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan.

2nd Stage
(6-12 months in Islam)

1. *Methodology of Dawah*. Shamim Siddiqi.
2. *The Road to Mecca*. Muhammad Asad.
3. *Woman in Islam*. Aisha Lemu & Fatima Heeren.
4. *Islam and Western Society*. Maryam Jameelah.
5. *Understanding Islam and Muslims*. Ahmad H. Sakr.
6. *Jesus: A Prophet of Islam*. Ata ur Rahim.
7. *Riyadh us Saleheen*. Translated A. R. Shad.
8. *Christian-Muslim Dialogue*. H. M. Baagil.
9. *Islamic Manners*. S.M. Madni Abbasi.
10. *Even Angels Ask*. Jeffrey Lang.
11. *Islam, Our Choice*. Debra Dirks. Amana Publications.
12. *Let Us be Muslims*. Abul A'la Maududi.
13. *Everyday Fiqh*. M. Yusuf Islahi.
14. *Muslim's Character*. Muhammad Al Ghazali.
15. *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*. Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad Al Ghazali. Translated by T.J. Winter.
16. *Religion and Science*. Wahiduddin Khan.
17. *Women, Between Islam and Western Society*. Wahiduddin Khan.
18. *Bent Rib*. Huda Khattab.
19. *Believing As Ourselves*. J. Lynn Jones.
20. *Islam and the Destiny of Man*. Charles Le Gai Eaton.
21. *Rethinking the Veil*. Catherine Bullock.

3rd Stage
(12+ months in Islam)

1. *The Muslim Handbook*. Mubarak Ali.
2. *The Life of Muhammad*. M. H. Haykal.
3. *This Law of Ours and Other Essays*. Muhammad Asad.
4. *Authentic Supplications of the Prophet*. Waleed Essa.
5. *The Sublime Qur'an and Orientalism*. Muhammad Khalifa.

6. *A Treasury of Islamic Virtues*. Wahiduddin Khan.
7. *Life, Death and the Afterlife*. Ahmad H. Sakr.
8. *Jewels of Remembrance*. Rumi (trans. Kabir Helminski.)
9. *'Ulum ul Qur'an*. Ahmed Von Denffer.
10. *Dawah and its Objectives*. Shamim Siddiqi.
11. *Remembrance and Prayer*. Mohammad Al Ghazali.
12. *Family Roots*. Mildred M. El-Amin.
13. *The Fundamentals of Islam*. Abul A'la Maududi.
14. *Tablighi Nisab*. Maulana Zakariyya Kandhalvi.
15. *Family Life in Islam*. Khurshid Ahmad.
16. *Companions of the Prophet*. (2 vols.) Abdul Wahid Hamid.
17. *The Muslim Marriage Guide*. Ruqaiyyah W. Maqsood.
18. *A Call For Help from within the American Muslim Community*. Jeffrey Lang.
19. *The Conference of the Birds*. Fariduddin Attar. Penguin edition.
20. *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Chain of the Two Desires*. Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad Al Ghazali.



Appendices

Appendix A

Recommended Reading for a Solid Foundation

Basic Islamic Knowledge

1. Ali, Abdullah Y. *The Holy Qur'an*. Amana Corp., Beltsville, 1983.
2. Asad, Muhammad. *The Holy Qur'an*. Dar al Andalus.
3. Irving, T. B. *The Noble Qur'an*. Amana Book Corp., Battleboro, 1992.
4. Azad, Abul Kalam. *Tarjuman Al-Qur'an*. Kitab Bhavan, New Delhi, 1990.
5. Madni, S.M. trans. *Riyadh us Saleheen*. International Islamic Publishers, Karachi, 1983.
6. Siddiqi, Abdul Hamid. *Mishkat ul Masabih*. Kitab Bhavan, New Delhi, 1989.
7. Glasse, Cyril. *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*. Harper and Row, New York, 1989.
8. Khan, Wahiduddin. *God Arises*. The Islamic Center, New Delhi, India, 1987.
9. Bashir, Zakaria. *The Makkan Crucible*. The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1991.
10. Bashir, Zakaria. *Sunshine at Madinah*. The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1990.
11. Badawi, Jamal. *Polygamy in Islamic Law*. Muslim Students Association, Plainfield, 1972.
12. Asad, Muhammad. *This Law of Ours and Other Essays*. Dar Al-Andalus, Gibraltar, 1987.
13. Kherie, Altaf Ahmed. *Islam, A Comprehensive Guidebook*. Idara Sirat- I- Mustaqeem, Karachi, 1981.
14. Haykal, M. H. *The Life Of Muhammad*. North American Trust Publications, Plainfield, 1976.

15. Maududi, Abul A'la. *Islamic Way of Life*. Islamic Publications Ltd., Lahore, 1991.
16. Yunus, Muhammad. *Manual of Tazkia*. Islamic Circle of North America, New York, 1987.
17. Faruqi, Lois and Isma'il. *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*. MacMillan Publishing Company, New York.
18. Maududi, Abul A'la. *The Process of Islamic Revolution*. Islamic Publications Ltd., Lahore.
19. Lemu, Aisha & Heeren, Fatima. *Woman in Islam*. The Islamic Foundation, Leicester.
20. Al Hasan, Masud. *The History of Islam*. Islamic Publications Ltd., Lahore.
21. Al Qaradawi, Yusuf. *The Lawful and The Prohibited in Islam*. IIFSO, Kuwait, 1984.
22. Al Turabi, Hassan. *Women in Islam and Muslim Society*. Milestone Publishers, London, 1990.
23. Haeri, S. F. *Living Islam*. Element Books, Dorset, 1989.
24. Islahi, M. Yusuf. *Etiquettes of Life in Islam*. Islamic Publications Ltd., Lahore.
25. Al Amin, Jamil. *Revolution by the Book*. Writers Inc. International, Beltsville, 1993.
26. International Islamic Publishers. *Why a Modest Dress?* Karachi, 1991.
27. Emerick, Yahiya. *In the Path of the Holy Prophet*. Amirah Publishing, New York, 1994.
28. Khan, Wahiduddin. *Woman in Islamic Shari'ah*. The Islamic Centre, New Delhi, 1995.
29. Hewitt, Ibrahim. *What Does Islam Say About Racism, Drugs et al?* The Muslim Educational Trust, London, 1993.
30. Emerick, Yahiya. *Muhammad*. Alpha Books, New York, 2002.
31. Emerick, Yahiya. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam*. Alpha Books, New York, 2001.
32. Sarwar, Shaykh Muhammad. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Koran*. Alpha Books, New York, 2003.

Calling to the Faith

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2. Al Faruqi, Isma'il. *Islamic Da'wah: Its Natures and Demands*. American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, 1986.
3. Siddiqi, Shamim. *Methodology of Da'wah*. The Forum for Islamic Work, Brooklyn, 1989.
4. Khurshid, Muhammad. *Da'wah in Islam*. Islamic Education Council, Houston.
5. Khan, Ahmed. *The Message to Muhammad*. Muhammad Azam Khan Publishers, Lahore, 1977.
6. Carnegie, Dale. *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1964.
7. Altalib, Hisham. *Training Guide for Islamic Workers*. International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, 1991.
8. Al Hussein, Khalid and Sakr, Ahmad. *Introducing Islam to Non-Muslims*. Foundation for Islamic Knowledge, Lombard, 1990.
9. Jameelah, Maryam. *Invitation to Islam*. M. Y. Khan, Lahore.
10. Maududi, Abul A'la. *Witnesses Unto Mankind*. The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1985.
11. Maududi, Abul A'la. *The Evidence of Truth*. Islamic Publications Ltd., Lahore, 1978.
12. Islahi, Amin Ahsan. *Call to Islam and How the Holy Prophets Preached*. Islamic Book Publishers, Safat, Kuwait, 1982.
13. Siddiqi, Shamim. *Dawah and its Objective*. Forum for Islamic Work, New York, 1994.
14. Von Denffer, Ahmad. *Key-Issues for Islamic Dawah*. Hindustan Publications, Delhi, 1983.
15. Poston, Larry. *Islamic Da'wah in the West*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1992.
16. Dirks, Debora L. *Islam Our Choice: Portraits of Modern American Muslim Women*. Amana Publications, Beltsville, 2003.

Comparative Religion

1. Smith, Huston. *The Religions of Man*. Harper & Row, New York, 1986.
2. Bucaille, Maurice. *The Bible, the Qur'an, and Science*. Seghers, Paris, 1987.
3. Barlevi, Mahmoud. *Islam and World Religions*. Islamic Publications Ltd. 1992.
4. Yussef, M. A. *The Dead Sea Scrolls, The Gospel of Barnabas and the New Testament*. American Trust Publications, Plainfield.
5. Deedat, Ahmad. *Islamic Selections*. The Islamic Propagation Centre. Durban.
6. Deedat, Ahmad. *What Was the Sign of Jonah?* The Islamic Propagation Centre, Durban.
7. Yusuf, S. M. *Studies in Islamic History and Culture*. Islamic Book Service, Lahore, 1982.
8. Al Faruqi, Isma'il. *Triologue of the Abrahamic Faiths*. International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, 1986.
9. Deedat, Ahmad. *The Choice*. Vols. I & II. The Islamic Propagation Center. Durban.
10. Nu'man, Imam Muhammad Armiya. *Comparative Religions*. New Mind Productions, Jersey City, 1995.
11. Pagels, Elaine. *Beyond Belief*. Random House, New York, 2003.

Valuable Periodicals

The Message International. 166-26 89th Ave., Jamaica, NY., 11432. www.messageonline.org

The Minaret. 434 S. Vermont, Los Angeles, CA., 90020. www.minaretonline.com

Islamic Horizons. P.O. Box 1197, Bridgeview, IL., 60455. <http://www.isna.net/Horizons/> 1-317-839-8157 ext. 811

The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences. PO Box 669, Herndon, VA 20172. <http://www.amss.net/ajiss/> Telephone: (703) 471-1133

The Muslim Journal. 929 W. 171st Street, Hazel Crest, IL 60429-1901. <http://www.muslimjournal.com/>

The Voice of Islam. ALAM. PO Box 57285, Washington DC, 20037. (Spanish/English).

Bismillah. Islamic Community of Sevilla, P.O. Box 4139 Sevilla, Spain, 41080.

Da'wah Highlights. Da'wah Academy. PO Box 1485 Islamabad, Pakistan.

Al Jumuah Magazine. P.O. Box 5387 Madison, WI 53705-5387. Telephone: (608) 277 1855 Fax: (608) 277 0323. <http://www.al-jumuah.com>

The Muslim Magazine. 607 A W. Dana St Mountain View, CA 94041-9817 (1-888-ASUNNAH) <http://www.muslimmag.org/>

Mirror International. Mirror International News & Views, Inc. 310 McGuinness Blvd. Greenpoint, NY 11222. Phone: 718.609.1872 Phone #2: 718.609.1873 Fax: 718.383.7755 www.readmirror.com

Muslim American Magazine. 3602 Forest Drive • Alexandria, VA 22303 Phone: (703) 998-6525 • Fax: (703) 998-6526 <http://www.americanmuslim.org/>

Q News. PO Box 744 Station 'A' Toronto, Ontario Canada M5W 1G2 www.q-news.com

The American Muslim. <http://www.theamericanmuslim.org/>

Appendix B

Knowledge of the West, Christianity and Related Topics

Christianity

1. Haines, B. L. & Cooley, F. L. *Christians and Muslims Together, An Exploration by Presbyterians*. The Geneva Press, Philadelphia, 1987.
2. Mufassir, Sulaiman. *Jesus in the Qur'an*. American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, 1972.
3. Miller, Gary. *A Concise Reply to Christianity*. Ordinary Press, 1983.
4. Barthel, Manfred. *What the Bible Really Says*. Bell Publishing Company, New York, 1984.
5. Deedat, Ahmed. *Is the Bible the Word of God?* Islamic Propagation Centre International, Durban, 1987.
6. Al Rahim, M. Ata. *Jesus: A Prophet of Islam*. Presidency of Islamic Research, Ifta & Propagation, Riyadh, 1984.
7. Baagil, H. M. *Christian-Muslim Dialogue*. Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, Al Dahieh, 1984.
8. Jameelah, Maryam. *Islam vs Ahl Al Kitab Past and Present*. M. Y. Khan, Lahore.
9. Lonsdale & Ragg. *The Gospel of Barnabas*.
10. Thomas Nelson Publishers. *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. New York, 1986.
11. Mehrally, Akbar. *Understanding the Bible Through Qur'anic Messages*. 1991.
12. Knights of Columbus. *This is the Catholic Church*. New Haven, 1955.
13. Al Faruqi, Isma'il. *Christian Ethics*. American Trust Publications, Plainfield, 1985.

14. Cairncross, John. *After Polygamy Was Made a Sin: The Social Histroy of Christian Polygamy*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1974.
15. Durrani, M. H. *The Qur'anic Facts About Jesus*. International Islamic Publishers, Karachi, 1983
16. Ozment, Steven. *The Age of Reform*. Yale University, 1980.
17. Calvin, John. *Instruction in Faith*. Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, 1992.
18. Dillenberger, John. *Martin Luther*. Doubleday, New York, 1961.
19. Bainton, Roland H. *Hunted Heretic*. The Beacon Press, Boston, 1960.
20. Wilbur, Earl M. (trans.) *The Two Treatises of Servetus on the Trinity*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1932.
21. Kandhlavi M. H. *Muhammad. Christ and Christianity*. Maktaba Yaqeen, Karachi.
22. Dawud, AbdulAhad. *Muhammad in the Bible*. Pustaka Antara, Kuala Lumpur, 1979.
23. Bloom, Harold. *The American Religion*. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1993.
24. Rubenstein, Richard. *When Jesus Became God: The Struggle to Define Christianity during the Last Days of Rome*. Harvest Books, 2000.
25. Abdullah, Misha'al. *What Did Jesus Really Say?* 1ANA, 2002
26. Halsell, Grace. *Forcing God's Hand*. Amana Publications.

Native Americans

1. Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. Washington Square Press, New York, 1981.
2. Tedlock, Barbara. *Teachings from the American Earth*. Liveright Publishing, New York, 1975.
3. Grant, Bruce. *Concise Encyclopedia of the American Indian*. Crown Publishers, New York, 1989.
4. Marquis, Arnold. *A Guide to America's Indians*. U. of Oklahoma, 1974.

5. Robinson, Margaret. *A Woman of Her Tribe*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990.
6. Hardin, Terri. *Legends and Lore of the American Indians*. Barnes and Noble Books, New York, 1993.
7. Walking Turtle, Eagle. *Indian America*. John Muir Publications, Santa Fe, 1991.
8. Imran, Maulana Muhammad. *The Native American Religions*.

Hispanic-Americans

1. Irving, T. B. *Falcon of Spain*. American Trust Publications.
2. Chejne, Anwar G. *Muslim Spain*.
3. Reig, Mercedes. *The Muslim Spain*. Secretaria General de Turismo, Spain.
4. Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America*. Monthly Review Press, 1973.
5. Skidmore, Thomas E. & Smith, Peter H. *Modern Latin America*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1989.
6. Brown, Marguerite. *Magnificent Muslims*.
7. Temimi, Abdejelil. *Las Practicas Musulmanas de Los Moriscos Andaluces*. Publications du Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches and IIT, Zaghuan, 1989.

African-Americans

1. Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Random House, New York.
2. Haley, Alex. *Roots*. Grove Press Inc., New York.
3. Haley, Alex. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Ballantine, New York, 1991.
4. Hauser, Thomas. *Muhammad Ali, His Life and Times*. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1991.
5. Blum, John Morton. *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience*. Harcourt Brace Javonovich, New York, 1971.
6. Siddiqi, Ali. *Malcolm X: Martyr of Islam in America*. ASRCU, Baltimore, 1992.

10. Katz, William Loren. *Breaking the Chains: African American Slave Resistance*. Atheneum, 1990.
7. Deen, Warith Muhammad. *Al-Islam: Unity and Leadership*. The Sense Maker, Chicago, 1992.
8. The Institute of Islamic Information and Education. *Islam and Farrakhanism Compared*. Chicago.
9. El-Amin, Mustapha. *The Religion of Islam and the Nation of Islam*. W. Deen Muhammad Publications, Calumet City.
10. Rashid, Hakim Muhammad. *In Search of The Path, Socialization, Education and the African-American Muslim*. Imania Publications, Capital Heights, MD, 1990.
11. Griffin, John Howard. *Black Like Me*. Signet, New York, 1976.
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13. Grier, William. *Black Rage*. Bantam Books, New York, 1969.
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15. Diouf, Sylviane. *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*. New York University Press, New York, 1998.
16. Muhammad, Amir Nashid Ali. *Muslims in America: Seven Centuries of History (1312-2000) Collections and Stories of American Muslims*. Amana Publications, 2002.

African-Muslims

1. Abdul Rauf, Muhammad. *Bilal ibn Rabah*. Lebanon, no date.
2. Jameelah, Maryam. *Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio*. M. Y. Khan & Sons, Lahore, 1978.
3. Al Akkad, Abbas Muhammad. *Bilal, the First Muadhin of the Prophet of Islam*.
4. Bennet, Lerone. *The Shaping of Black America*. Johnson Publishing Co., Chicago, 1975.
5. Alford, Terry. *Prince Among Slaves*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1977.

6. Van Sertima, Ivan. *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America*. McKay, David Co., 1989.
7. Austin, Allen. *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles*. Routledge, 1997.

Euro-Americans

1. Johnson, Steve. *Da'wah to Americans*. Islamic Society of North America, Plainfield, 1984.
2. Jameelah, Maryam. *Islam and Western Society*. M. Y. Khan, Lahore, 1978.
3. Jameelah, Maryam. *Islam Vs the West*. M. Y. Khan, Lahore, 1977.
4. Lippman, Walter. *Drift and Mastery*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.
5. De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*. (Edited and abridged by Richard D. Heffner.) Mentor, New York, 1984.
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7. Jameelah, Maryam. *Islam and Modern Man*. M.Y. Khan, Lahore.
8. Jameelah, Maryam. *Correspondence Between S. A. Maududi and Maryam Jameelah*. M.Y. Khan, Lahore.
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10. Lerner, Max. *America as a Civilization*. Henry Holt & Company, New York, 1987.
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12. Cash, W. J. *The Mind of the South*. Vintage, New York, 1991.
13. Anway, Carol. *Daughters of Another Path*. Yawmna Publications, 1995.
14. Loewen, James. *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. Touchstone Books, 1996.

Judaism

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2. Bendinar, Elmer. *The Rise and Fall of Paradise*. 1989.
3. Johnson, Paul. *A History of the Jews*. Harper & Row, New York, 1987.
4. Irving, T. B. *The Falcon of Spain*. ATP. 1985.
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6. O'Brien, Lee. *American Jewish Organizations and Israel*. 1990.
7. Sachar, Howard M. *A History of the Jews in America*. Peter Knopf, New York, 1992.
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2. Brown, Tricia. Lee Ann: *The Story of a Vietnamese American Girl*. Putnam, 1991.
3. Broomhall, Marshall. *Islam in China*. Paragon Book Reprint Corp., New York, 1966
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5. Yee, Paul. *Tales from Gold Mountain: Stories of the Chinese in the New World*. MacMillan Publishing Co., 1990.
6. Elegant, Robert. *Pacific Destiny: Inside Asia Today*. Avon Books, New York, 1990.
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General Reading

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2. Waugh, Earle H. *The Muslim Community in North America*. The University of Alberta Press, Edmonton, 1983.
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4. Ebrahim, Abul Fadl M. *Abortion, Birth Control and Surrogate Parenting, an Islamic Perspective*. American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, 1989.
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10. Siddiqi, K. *The Struggle of Muslim Women*. American Society for Religious and Cultural Understanding, Maryland, 1992.
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21. Ahmed, Akbar. *Islam Under Siege: Living Dangerously in a Post-Honor World*. Amana Publications, 2003.
22. Bowman, Betty. *The Sun is Rising in the West*. Amana Publications, Beltsville, 1999.
23. Wolfe, Michael. *Taking Back Islam: American Muslims Reclaim their Faith*. Rodale Press, 2002.
24. El Fadl, Khalid Abou. *Speaking in God's Name*. One World Publications, 2001.
25. Khalidi, Tarif. *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature*. Harvard University Press, 2003.
26. Ehrman, Bart. *Lost Christianities: The Battle for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew*. Oxford University Press, 2003.
27. Ehrman, Bart. *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*. Oxford University Press, 1997.
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Appendix C

Excellent Da'wah Literature

Pamphlets

1. Badawi, Jamal. *Bridge-Building Between Christian and Muslim*. Islamic Information Foundation, Halifax.
2. ICNA. *Islam, 7 Major Characteristics*. New York.
3. The Institute of Islamic Information and Education. *What They Say About Islam*. Chicago.
4. The Institute of Islamic Information and Education. *What They Say About Muhammad*. Chicago.
5. Muslim Students' Association. *Islam At a Glance*. Plainfield.
6. ICNA. *You Must Know This Man*. New York.
7. Islamic Teaching Center. *How Did it Happen?* Plainfield.
8. The Institute of Islamic Information and Education. *Islam As Other*. Chicago.
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14. Khan, Wahiduddin. *The Teachings of Islam*. Islamic Center, New Delhi. (One of the best booklets we've seen.)
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Appendix D

Audio-Visual Listing

Audio

1. *The Long Search, The Desert Chief*. (Assorted stories on tape.) Sound Vision.
2. *Islam in Focus*. Vols. 1-11. Jamal Bedawi. Islamic Information Foundation.
3. *Witness unto Mankind*. Sayyid Maududi. Sound Vision.
4. *Series on Aqeedah*. Abdullah Hakim. Islamic Society of North America.
5. *Islam. The Path to Women's Liberation*. Amina Assilmi.
6. *Islam in Focus*. H. Abdal 'Ati. Audio Visual Center.
7. *We All Come From Two*. The Da'wah Ensemble.
8. *Forty Hadith Qudsi*. Audio Visual Center.
9. *Seerah of the Prophet*. Audio Visual Center.
10. *Echoes of Light*. Amirah Publishing.
11. *Life of Muhammad*. Yusuf Islam.
12. *From Darkness to Light*. Yusuf Islam.
13. *Glorious Qur'an: The Liberator*. Yusuf Islam.
14. *Adhan and How to Make Wudu and Salat*.
15. *Slavery Material and Spiritual*. Thomas Cleary. Alhambra Productions.
16. *How To Invite People to Islam*. Yahiya Emerick.

In addition, artists such as Zain Bhika, Raihan, Dawood Wharnsby Ali and Mustaqiim Sahir, etc... provide pleasant listening selections that can be a form of da'wah as well. For Qur'anic listening selections Abdel Basit in Tajweed mode with a good English translation is the best.

Visual

1. *Hajj: The Journey of a Lifetime*.
2. *The Book of Signs*. Sound Vision.
3. *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*.
4. *Reach out with Islam*. Yusuf Islam.
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10. *The Guests of God*. Meridian, Islamic Information Service.
11. *Islam in America*. The Christian Science Publishing Society.
12. *The Message*. (Motion picture.)
13. *Americans Becoming Muslim*. Sound Vision.
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16. *Malcolm X*. CBS Productions.
17. *Pathways to Islam*. Astrolabe Pictures.
18. *Crucifixion or Crucifiction*. Ahmed Deedat.
19. *Salat: How to Perform Daily Prayers*. IIS.
20. *Is the Bible God's Word?* Ahmad Deedat. The Islamic Propagation Centre.
21. *Islam: A Closer Look*.
22. *Welcome to My Mosque*.
23. *Born in the USA*.
24. *Inside Mecca*. National Geographic.
25. *Frontline: Islam: The Misunderstood Millions*. ABC.



Appendix E

Where to Find Islamic Literature

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Appendix F

Qur'anic Names and Biblical Equivalents

Qur'anic Name:

Biblical Name:

Adam	Adam
Idris	Enoch?
Nuh	Noah
Hud	N/A
Salih	N/A
Ibrahim	Abraham
Isma'il	Ishmael
Is-haq	Isaac
Lut	Lot
Ya'qub	Jacob
Yusuf	Joseph
Shu'aib	N/A
Ayyub	Job
Musa	Moses
Harun	Aaron
Dhul Kifl	Ezekiel?
Dawud	David
Sulaiman	Solomon
Ilyas	Elias?
Al Yasa'	Elisha?
Yunus	Jonah
Zakariyya	Zecharias
Yahiya	John the Baptist
'Esa	Jesus
Muhammad	Highly Praised

Maryam	Mary
Jibreel	Gabriel
Bani Isra'il	Israelites
Yahudi	Jews
Dhul Quarnain	Cyrus the Great?
Uzair	Ezra
Nasara	Nazarenes (Christians)
Firoun	Pharoah (generic)
Rum	Romans

(Places/Things)

Mecca/Baca	Baca
Taurah	Torah
Zabur	Psalms
Injeel	Gospel (Good News)
Arabia	Paran
Ash-Shamm	Syria
Aden	Eden?
Suhuf	Scrolls
Jannah	Paradise
Jahannum	Hell
Madyan	Midian
Misr	Egypt



Sample Da'wah Handouts

WHO WAS JESUS?

Yahiya Emerick

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, Source of all Mercy.*

There are many questions which come to mind when the name Jesus is mentioned. Some people say he was a prophet, others call him a god, while yet others say he was a very wise man. But whatever your idea is, one thing remains clear: he was not your ordinary man. So if there is something special about him, why all the confusion? Just who was Jesus anyway?

His Origins

Jesus lived about 2000 years ago in ancient Palestine during the height of the Roman Empire. It is said that he was not conceived in the usual way, but was implanted supernaturally in the womb of a virgin whose name was Mary. God simply commanded "Be" and he existed. In this sense, he was a "word" of God and a special sign for humanity. In fact, he was the last in a long line of religious guides sent to the Jewish people.

Mary, the Blessed

Mary was a righteous woman. She was dedicated to God's service and lived a life marked by health and goodness which others pointed to in admiration. She was raised by the wise Zakariya who instilled in her a beautiful sense of faith in God. When she had become a young woman she sought to purify herself further before her Lord. She withdrew from her people to a sanctuary in the East. There she could meditate in seclusion and peace.

Whereupon one day an angel of the Lord visited her disguised in the likeness of a man. Afraid of so strange a sight, Mary prayed for protection, but he reassured her and declared he was a messenger from the Lord to announce the glad-tidings of a faultless son. Mary incredulously asked how this were possible seeing that no man ever touched her. But the angel replied, "Your Lord says, 'It is easy for Me...'"

But when she felt the little child within her, she fled her sanctuary out of fear of what her family would do or say when they heard the news. Mary, however, was not to face hardship. When in her despair she cried out to God for oblivion, a voice soothed her and she found shade and a cool spring. Under the fronds of a date-palm, in the warmth of late summer, she made her dwelling and there bore the child unlike any other in human history.

Shortly thereafter, Mary returned to her community carrying he who was to be called Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary. When her people saw her with the babe they could not accept her at her word. They refused to believe her when she told of an angel who came to her and declared that she was chosen above all other women to carry this burden. They accused her of infidelity and implied that she ruined the family name. Mary, being overwhelmed, simply motioned towards the child meekly.

The Miracles

Now the child was the product of a miracle and consequently, miraculous things began to happen. In defense of his mother and of the truth, the infant Jesus spoke saying, "I am a servant of God. He has given me Scripture and has made me a Prophet. He has blessed me wherever I may be and has made prayer and charity my duty as long as I live..." This extraordinary occurrence put her critics to rest.

Throughout his youth, Jesus remained dutiful to his mother and developed quickly in intelligence, wisdom and piety. He dumbfounded the learned and was greatly admired by those around

him who appreciated his talents. He claimed to be a sign from God and His Messenger to the Israelites.

They had strayed from the spirit of truth and placed their trust in legalism, thereby burying their hearts beneath dusty scrolls and rituals. Finally, when he came of age, Jesus began to travel and preach throughout the land of Palestine about a return to the truth of the old revelations and a rejection of all that man had added. In his task he was supported by the spirit of truth, the angel Gabriel.

The Gospel, His Message

He taught that love and mercy overcome hate and anger and that only a true and sincere faith in the Creator and obedience to His will can bring one salvation in this life as well as in the next. To reinforce his message which was called "Injeel" (Good News) God granted him the performance of miracles. He healed the sick, enheartened the distressed and revived those thought dead. All these things he did with the permission of God, never taking credit for them himself.

He led a simple and pious life. Soon he attracted an inner-circle of devoted followers who listened to his teachings with fervor and humility. These disciples, whom we remember as Peter, Barnabas, John and others, helped him carry the message of Divine Love to the people. They helped him in his mission.

A Test of Wills

But no righteous man of God is without trial and tribulation. As the message of Jesus began to gain wider acceptance, a small clique of hypocrites and jealous men began to plot against him. They were the priests and leaders of the Jews whose position and wealth depended upon their place as the sole interpreters of religion to the people. They pursued him and his followers and eventually captured him.

Though they abused him, he never renounced his faith in the one God. So in their anger they plotted to crucify him on a Roman cross. But Jesus slipped from their grasp at the last moment, and all the while they thought they had succeeded. They were sure they killed him but God answered Jesus' prayer and saved him from their schemes. Confusion overtook the mob and they killed the man who betrayed Jesus instead. Then God removed Jesus from this world into the other dimension, to a place with him, not to return until a later time.

With their teacher gone, the devoted followers of Jesus tried to maintain the purity and simplicity of his teachings. But they were soon besieged and overtaken by a flood of Roman and Greek influences which eventually so buried and distorted the message of Jesus that only a little of its truth now remains. Strange doctrines of Jesus being a man-god, of God dying, of saint worship and of God being made up of different parts came into vogue and were accepted by many of those who took the name "Christians" centuries after Jesus.

Conclusion

The only records that have come down to us concerning Jesus are some sketchy biographical materials, poorly researched and compiled, which can in no way be representative of the full and accurate Message of Jesus, the Son of Mary. His daily sermons over many years, his commandments, laws and opinions on a wide variety of matters just never survived intact. Later followers were able to preserve only a little. The time of the final and incorruptible Message was not yet at hand. It would be left to the last Prophet of God, Muhammad, to clarify the truth from man's additions and deletions.

Jesus taught the same eternal message that was taught by all the Messengers of God. From the first human being, Adam, on through Noah, Abraham, Moses and ending with the mission of God's last guidepost to humanity, Muhammad, whose coming was foretold by Jesus himself.

Every nation and every people, from the Mayans to the Greeks, have received a prophet or a Messenger from God. Though the specific form of religious ritual may have varied from place to place, the core message was only one and the same. Jesus was the last of a series of Messengers sent specifically to the Israelites with this very same message. Though his people chose, for the most part, not to accept him, preferring to wait for a future messiah, his mission and example stand as a testament to the best in religious practice and devotion.

Each of the many Messengers to humanity spoke a different language and followed varied customs, but the core message taught by each was one and the same: surrender your imperfect and fickle will to the perfect will of the power or force that is greater than yourself thereby finding the peace and freedom that only the Creator of humanity can provide, and then do what is right and good to your fellow creatures. This way of living is called Islam (which literally means to surrender your will to God in order to find peace).

If you would like to learn more about Jesus, Muhammad or the teachings of the Prophets, call or write to us at the address below for free information.

Source: The Holy Qur'an



Islam for Americans

Yahiya Emerick

*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate Source of All Mercy.*

What is Islam?

The name "Islam" simply means "Self-Surrender to the Will of God." It is the way of life that all Prophets and religious teachers throughout history have taught, from those known in the Western world such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus, to those sent to other parts of the earth like Salih, Shu'ayb and Luqman. The last and final guide was Muhammad, may he be blessed, who lived in sixth century Arabia. A "Muslim" (i.e. a self-surrendered one) is a follower of this faith. Nearly one of every five persons alive today is a Muslim.

What does Islam teach?

Islam calls humanity to the service of the One, Omnipotent Creator, Who is known as "Allah" (lit. The Deity) in the Arabic language. It further instructs people on how they may live together in peace and harmony regardless of race, class or beliefs. The unity of purpose brought by all previous religious guides is highlighted as are traditional morality, the equality of the sexes before God and the virtues of patience and humbleness.

Where do these teachings come from?

Muslims have two major sources from which they derive their religious teachings. The first is a book known as "the Qur'an," which Muslims believe to be the direct revelation of God to His last Prophet, the blessed Muhammad. The second source is the collected sayings and pronouncements of the Prophet which are complementary to the Revelation. These are known as "the Hadith."

What about Muhammad? Who was he?

Muhammad, may he be blessed, was born in Arabia in the year 570. His father's name was 'Abdullah and his mother's was Ameenah. 'Abdullah died before his son was born and his mother died when he was still a small child. He was first placed under the care of his grandfather and then later under that of his uncle, who raised his nephew as his own.

As a boy, Muhammad, may he be blessed, disliked the prevailing custom of idol worship practiced by his people. How many a night he must have paused to watch the stars and endless plains, while tending his uncle's flocks, and wondered at the real Creator of it all. He shunned the mischief of his fellow young men and soon developed a reputation for honesty, generosity and compassion.

When he was a young man he took employment in the merchant trade and soon distinguished himself for his excellent managerial skills, which resulted in an offer of marriage from his widowed employer, the noble lady Khadijah. He was 25 and she was 40 when they married and theirs was a relationship based upon love, friendship and trust.

Though time and circumstances had changed as he grew older and wiser, Muhammad still remained restless for the truth and began to retreat once more to the solitude which could only be found outside the city of Mecca. He often went to a mountain grotto where he would sometimes spend days at a time thinking and contemplating

about God, reality and the Divine way of life. Then, on one glorious day, the hopes and prayers of Muhammad were answered when the Almighty revealed words of inspiration to him through His herald, the angel Gabriel.

"Read!" the angel commanded him, "Read in the name of your Lord who created man from a clinging zygote. Read, for your Lord is most generous. He taught people through writing what they didn't know before..."

Thus, Muhammad, with all his truthfulness, patience, piety and spirit, was commissioned as the last and final Prophet of God to humanity. Though many trials, tests and triumphs lay ahead of him, he ever called people to the service of the One God, to shun myths and idols and to do unto others only what is good and right. He always lived a frugal life, and even after all of Arabia was liberated from the darkness of ignorance, he still slept on a reed mat and mended his own clothes.

He taught a new standard to people and brought civilization to an area of the world where it had long since passed by. His lips moved with the Revelation of God and his life put its precepts into practice. Though persecuted by the idol worshipers for thirteen years in Mecca and followed faithfully by the believing citizens of Medina for ten years more, he remained unto his death a devoted father, husband, leader and Prophet. He was given the title of "*Mercy to the Worlds*" by God Himself in the Qur'an and anyone who has studied the details and adventures of his life must necessarily declare the same. This man, Muhammad, is truly the hero of his age as well as an inspiration to ours.

Do Muslims worship Muhammad as Christians do Christ?

No. Muhammad, may he be blessed, was only a man from among men who received the special favor of God. No true Prophet of God taught that any man must be worshipped, as if any human

body could contain the infinite. God instructs us in the Qur'an about him thus: "Muhammad is no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers who passed away before him..." (3:144.)

How does Islam compare with Christianity and Judaism?

Islam, or, the Way of Self-Surrender to God, was taught by all Prophets whether their race was Jewish, Chinese, African, Greek or Aztec. Accordingly, Moses, who is regarded as the pivotal figure in Judaism, and Jesus, who is the central personality of Christianity, both taught Islam to their peoples. The teachings of these great Messengers of God did not go unchanged, however, over the centuries, and one can find that many practices, beliefs and customs practiced by the adherents of those faiths today differ from the original purity of their founder's Message. Muhammad, may he be blessed, simply brought the last installment of Self-Surrender (Islam) to the world in order to correct earlier corruptions in humanity's knowledge of the truth.

If the roots of Judaism and Christianity are basically the same as Islam, why does Islam seem so exotic and strange?

The problem is two-fold. On the one hand, there are people in the world who claim to be Muslim, but who do not follow the ethical or religious teachings of the faith. Unfortunately the media has a universal fascination with negative news and a reluctance to highlight the positive. On the other hand, much of what we read and learn about Islam in the West is written, interpreted and presented by those who either know very little about Islam and the Muslim world, or who are even hostile towards them and distort information about Islam for their own purposes.

An even more important area of misunderstanding lies in the basic assumptions about religion that the Western world and the Islamic world make. Because of the West's negative experience with religion, an alternate ideology known as secular-humanism came to be established to allow science, rationalism and free-thought to flourish.

Islamic civilization, in contrast, never impeded science nor the development of human thought so a break between secular values and religious ones never occurred. This is why Islam is often mislabeled "Theocratic." Education and improvements in global awareness, however, are slowly wearing down barriers to understanding, but it will require some effort from all of us to finally reach a point of tolerance and mutual good-will.

Does Islam teach violent concepts or condone terrorism?

Islam's name means 'peace'. The whole idea behind Islam is to find peace with one's self, society, environment and Lord. Islam does not condone terrorism and the Prophet Muhammad never engaged in any form of terrorism. On the contrary, he never initiated any hostilities with any community around him. In the first thirteen years of Islam, Muhammad and his converts were a persecuted minority in Mecca. Muhammad never allowed anyone to attack or even defend themselves when the local idolaters harassed and even tortured them.

When the Muslim community fled for a safer city, the only military action Muhammad ever condoned was in self-defense. There were three battles fought against the Meccan idolaters who wouldn't leave the Muslims alone in their new city, followed by a handful of other battles with other tribal groups that also wanted to annihilate the Muslims. In any case, Muhammad never allowed his soldiers to harm women, children, the aged, non-combatants, animals or even trees and buildings wherever possible. When he finally occupied Mecca (which surrendered without a fight) he forgave all his old persecutors and let them go free.

While there are some small groups in the world using the name of Islam for their terrorist activities, it must be remembered that the traditional teachings of Islam do not condone their actions. Every religion can have its reputation tarnished by the actions of a few violent people. Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, even Communism have

all been misused to justify horrible atrocities. Even as level-headed people recognize that Jesus or Buddha or Moses can't be blamed for what a few zealous followers do, so too, Islam and Muhammad can't be blamed for the new phenomenon of international terrorism which has its roots in real political crises in the world.

Where are Muslims found?

Muslims live in every country and region on earth from Norway to Malaysia and Morocco to Mexico. Muslims form a large percentage of the population in Russia, China, India and Eastern Europe. Some important Islamic lands include Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt and Nigeria. Arab Muslims form a small minority of the world-wide Muslim population. There are nearly eight million Muslims in North America alone. That is more than the population of some states such as Alaska, Nevada and Rhode Island.

How does one become a Muslim?

There are no elaborate rituals or ceremonies to perform to enter Islam (Self-Surrender to God) for Islam is the faith of reason, and therefore it takes an exercise of reason to become a Muslim. Simply by declaring and believing in one's heart the following phrase: *"There is no object of devotion save God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God,"* one thereby is a believer. As a consequence of making this statement sincerely, everything an individual did that was wrong or unethical in his life up to that point is forgiven by God, no matter what it was. From that moment onwards, the slate is cleared and you begin life again as a new person-- A Muslim.

