

Islam: An Introduction

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I Introduction

1.1 “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”

George Santayana (1863-1952)
(US [Spanish-born] philosopher, poet, literary and cultural critic
The Life of Reason, Vol 1, Ch 12, 1905)

The events of recent years have shown us that there is a whole world of people out there that we knew about, but have not understood. Today, in that world, there are well over one billion Muslims. They claim that Islam is the fastest growing religion. Somehow we thought that world did not affect our daily lives and so our ignorance was unimportant. We failed to consider where Muslims and Islam would fit into a Christian understanding of the world and life. It has been a very costly error.

I.2 True or False?

1. The majority of Muslims are Arabs.
2. Most Muslims live in the Middle East.
3. The world's largest concentration of Muslims is in South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh).
4. The country with the largest Muslim population is Indonesia.
5. Africa has at least 100 million black Muslims.
6. The Arab country with most Muslims is Saudi Arabia.

(For the answers see page 12)

Part A Muhammad and the History of Islam

A.1 Birth and Early Life of Muhammad

The earliest accounts of Muhammad's life were written at least 150 years after his death and are all Muslim in origin. The following is the traditional Muslim account, but there is no non-Muslim confirmation of this history. The events, and even some of the locations, are shrouded in uncertainty (see, Jones 2020, Section H.1 and refs).

Muhammad was born in the wealthy merchant town of Mecca in AD 570 (some say 571). Mecca was a very important trading centre for western Arabia and stood on the main caravan routes linking India to the West, and Africa to Persia. His tribe (*Quraysh*) were custodians of a famous shrine, the *Ka'aba*, a cube-shaped building housing a black stone said to have come from heaven, *i.e.* the stone may be a meteorite.

Orphaned at an early age, he came under the care of his uncle (*Abū Tālib*), the head of the prestigious *Hāshem* clan. In about 595 he was employed by Khadija, a wealthy widow to manage her camel caravan trade. He so impressed her that she offered marriage. She was then about 40 and he only 25, but it was a happy marriage producing 6 children (only a daughter, Fatima, survived). After Khadija's death (in 619) he married a further twelve wives. (For Islam this sanctioned polygamy.)

A.2 Muhammad in Mecca

By his marriage he became important and could devote himself to religious meditation. When about 40 (c 610) he became very concerned about the irreligion of his countrymen. In a cave on Mt Hira (c. 3 miles from Mecca) he claimed to receive revelations from God, via the arch-angel Gabriel. Jewish and Christian communities had settled in Arabia and Muhammad drew (presumably orally) on Jewish and Christian teaching. The knowledge he gained of Jewish and Christian thought was superficial and mixed orthodoxy and heresy. At first he probably saw his mission to convey this teaching to the Arabs. At this time the Muslims were told to face Jerusalem in prayer (*Qibla*). Archaeological evidence indicates that the *Qibla* in the earliest mosques faced neither Jerusalem nor Mecca, but Petra in Jordan. (see refs in Jones 2020, Section H.1)

Muhammad preached the goodness, power and unity of Allah (God), the condemnation of idolatry, protection of the family, love for children and peace to all people. Polytheism and child murder were dominant practices and he could only preach against them because he was under his Uncle's protection. For some 10 years he sought to win the hearts and minds of the Meccans, but without success. In 615 Muhammad sent some of his followers to the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) where they were well received and returned to share with Muhammad their admiration for the emperor and his faith. When his uncle died in about 619, Muhammad lost the protection of the clan. In 622 he took his followers 250 miles north to Medina. (It was then called Yathrib; Medina means 'city', *i.e.* the prophet's own city.)

A.3 Muhammad in Medina

In Medina a radical change took place. He attacked the Meccan camel caravans, divided booty to his men and became popular with the local Arab tribes. Muhammad was becoming a politician, legislator and judge. War on religious grounds was now sanctioned and *jihad* ('holy war') became not only acceptable, but a religious duty for Muslims when Islam is under threat. At first Jews and Christians had been sympathetic, but this soon ended. Around 624 he broke with the Jews, asserting instead the specifically Arabian character of Islam. From now on Muslims were commanded to face the Kaaba at Mecca in prayer. Muhammad went on to expel two Jewish communities from Medina and in 627 he beheaded all (hundreds) of the men in another. In 630 he turned against Christians, too, when Christian tribes near Syria opposed him during a raid.

Islam may have begun as a traditional religion, but at Medina it became – and has largely remained – a medieval, Middle-Eastern, Arab socio-political system that has been sanctioned by Allah. Built into the Qur'an was an irreconcilable tension between Meccan and Medinan suras, suras of peace, and suras of politics and war.

The emigration to Medina in AD 622 marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. Known as the year of the *Hejira* (or *Hijrah* 'the severance of kinship ties'), it is abbreviated as *AH*. It is a lunar calendar, so the Muslim year has only 354 days. The Muslim months move through all the seasons every 32½ years, the Muslim year beginning 11 days earlier in each successive year. For example, in 1985 the Muslim year AH 1406 began on September 16th; in 2004 AH 1425 began on February 21st. Ramadan (the ninth month, the month of fasting) began on November 28th in 2000, but on April 24th in 2020

A.4 Islam after Muhammad

Within 8 years Arabia was under Muhammad's control. He died in AD 632. By 656 the boundaries of Islam had reached Afghanistan in the East, Libya in the West and the Caucasus mountains in the North. The Muslim advance was not halted in the West until AD 732 near Poitiers in France by Charles Martel (688-741, Frankish statesman and military commander). Further south, Christianity was almost wiped out in North Africa; only the Copts in Egypt survived. In the East, Islam continued to advance into Europe (sweeping up the Balkans). This continued until 1683 when they were defeated outside Vienna.

A.5 The Rise of Europe and the Decline of Islam

The expansion of Islam cut off the great trade routes for Europe to the East and turned the Mediterranean into a Muslim sea. Jewish and Christian peoples joined the new Arab culture and helped the Muslims develop a new society under Arab patronage. Europe went through a time of decay and stagnation, but, fuelled by contact with Islam through Spain and North Africa, recovered into the periods we know as the Renaissance and Enlightenment. There were strong developments in philosophy,

mathematics, astronomy and other sciences. By the late 14th century, Venice had become the centre of the developing world, Antwerp in the 1550s, Amsterdam in the 1600s, London from the late 18th century and New York from the 1920s. After the 17th century Islam steadily lost territory and by the 19th century the era of Western imperialism was well underway. France, England, Russia, Holland, Spain, Portugal and even Germany carved up the Islamic world. Even so it was not until 1918 that Islam lost all control in Europe.

The most significant dividing line in Europe remains that defined by the extent of long-term Muslim conquest. The peoples to the north and west of this line are Protestant or Catholic. They share the common experiences of European Christian and post-Christian history. They are generally economically better off and tend to have stable democratic political systems. The peoples to the east and south of this line are Orthodox or Muslim. They have been only slightly influenced by the shaping events in the rest of Europe. They are generally less advanced economically, and seem less likely to develop stable democratic systems. Conflict, sometimes bloody, has gone on along that fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations for 1,300 years.

A.6 Islam in the Modern World

Islam is now unable to exert any global legal or spiritual authority. There is no world-leading Islamic country or culture, and Islam does not have the means to resolve major political struggles and injustices, even within its own Muslim world. It has also become subject to the Western processes of modernisation & globalisation and has been unable to stop the infiltration of Western cultural values.

There is also the demographic challenge. Many Muslim countries face a demographic explosion and are unable to meet the needs of their young people. In contrast European countries face a demographic implosion and need young immigrants to grow their working populations. Unsurprisingly many young Muslims have come to live in Europe, with many of their family members eventually following.

A.7 Muslims expected the Blessing of Allah to be upon them. Perplexed by the conquest of Muslim lands by the European powers in the 19th and 20th centuries, they had few options. Some Muslim leaders such as Attaturk in Turkey, The Shah of Iran and Ibn Saud of Arabia have sought to combine elements from Islam with others from the secular West, but their attempts have only added to the sense of unrest within Islam, unravelling the good they have tried to accomplish. At heart the problem remains the fact that Islam developed historically, not as a traditional religion, but as a medieval, Middle Eastern Arab socio-political system. That system, stamped with the time and place of its origin, is proclaimed as the perfect system for all times and all peoples. No allowance is made for the possibility that it might be at fault. No criticising or questioning of Islam, the Qur'an, or Muhammad is allowed. The Qur'an cannot even be translated into any other languages (*i.e.*, as an authoritative text). Few European books have been translated into Muslim languages and those that have are commonly bad translations. The result is that until quite recently the ordinary Muslim was trapped in a world of romanticism. But now that isolation has come to an end. Globalisation is bringing enormous changes to Islamic peoples. In the modern world, the Islamic

system simply does not work. Given the resistance to change by Muslim totalitarian regimes and the global information onslaught (especially via the internet and satellite TV), Muslim youth can no longer be confined to the self-sufficient world of Islam.

A.8 With no framework for understanding such change and development, there have been only three main Muslim responses, **conservative**, **islamicist** and **escapist**:

- (1) **Conservative** The first response is to blame themselves and become more fundamentalist. Since about 1800 there has been a growing radicalisation of Islam as renewal movements have sprung up to purify it, including the Wahhabi, Sunnusiya, Muslim Brotherhood, Jamaat-e-Islami, Hamas, Hizbullah and Islamic Jihad. Osama bin Laden, for example, was a Wahhabi. The oppressiveness of the Taliban is one outcome. After several decades of independence, modern Islamic states have had enough time to prove that they can deliver, but have failed to do so. This failure and the continuing success of the modern West have further fuelled the development of Islamic fundamentalism.

Conservative Islam faces the question of what 'renewal' means. Does it mean return to Islam as it developed in, say, the first 300 years?. The Qur'an presents different pictures in its Meccan and Medinan suras, so which part of the Qur'an should Muslims follow?

- (2) **Islamicist** (= 'Fundamentalist', but that term is primarily applied to Christians). The second response is to blame others for the failure of the system to meet the needs of Muslim people in the modern world. Globalisation is then interpreted as an enemy to be destroyed, or at least kept out. The traditional response of the weak – terrorism – is one inevitable outcome. September 11th 2001 should not have been a surprise. Unlike Christianity, Islam has no moral code based on the revealed character of God. For many Muslims the end justifies the means. Hence young men who grew up dressed in classical Arab clothes and with long beards, chose to shave and dress like Americans and get drunk on the nights before their martyrdom. These first two responses usually go together. Together they equate to an attempt to return to Islam as it was at the beginning – as a political as well as a social and cultural entity.
- (3) **Escapist** The third response is to deny themselves and leave Islam intellectually, emotionally and sometimes physically. New waves of immigrants to the West are nearly always Muslim, and primarily escapist. The irony is that once they are settled in the West, their children are prey to the islamicist preachers and may be recruited to the terrorist cause and to violent *Jihad* (holy war).

A.9 The Crusades

Christian violence against Islam has a long and terrible history during the Crusades as does Christian anti-Semitism and Christian aggression against other Christians during the Wars of Religion. This is historical fact and undeniable. Equally undeniable are the Muslim crusades, some long before the Christian crusades of the Middle Ages and

some long after them during the time of the Ottoman empire. But the question is not whether Christians or Muslims have engaged in war, inquisitions and atrocities. Nor is it who has been worse in this respect. As Roy Clouser has pointed out (*pers comm*, 07 April 2003), the central issue is not what has happened, but what is taught as normative by the scriptures of each tradition and by the example set by the founder. Humans are marred by sin and may fail to live up to their convictions or to their traditions. But so long as the traditions contain the resources for judging and correcting those failures, the tradition itself is not at fault. The law is not at fault because some people steal and murder! The issue for Muslims is not just the parts of the *Qur'an* that advocate force against unbelievers for no other reason than their unbelief. The issue is the *example* of Muhammad that won't go away, no matter how the *Qur'an* is interpreted.

“The Prophet rode into Mecca to conquer; Jesus rode into Jerusalem to die. The crux lies there.”

(Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, 1990, p 2)

After each outpouring of violence, the Christian church has had to ask itself: Is this what Christ wanted us to do? In time agreement was reached, and, except for small fringe groups, Christianity has repudiated war, coercion and hate as ways to further the gospel. Faced with the New Testament record, and the example of Jesus, it could hardly do otherwise.

Mainstream Islam has not yet repudiated its past, nor has it declared itself on human rights. Why do Muslim countries have such appalling records on human rights? Of the 41 countries whose population is at least 70% Muslim, only two protect political and civil rights as defined by the UN *Declaration of Human Rights*. Why do so many Muslim countries deny rights to Christians and Jews that they want – and have – for Muslims living in Western countries? Do Western Muslims support terrorism? Do they desire the adoption of Shari'ah law, which would require the death penalty for Muslims who convert from Islam?

The clash between Islam and the West may not prove to be a major factor in the future. Instead it could be clashes within Islam as Muslims seek to define their faith for the 21st century. We may hope that September 11th 2001 has forced Muslims to question the system of which they are a part. For many Muslims in the West this is a time of confusion and disillusionment. Religiously they want to affirm Islam, but culturally they resist living anywhere else except the modern 'Christian' West. Many of them know full well that religion and culture are actually inseparable. As Muslims begin to question their heritage, we may have a unique opportunity to reach them with the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

A10 Muslim Sects

Today there are well over one billion Muslims in the world, but Islam has never been a monolithic religion. Beyond the five pillars and the six articles of faith, there is no single belief system that is followed by all Muslims. The interpretation of some 85% of the *Qur'an* is disputed. Consequently there are over 70 different Muslim sects. However

these sects fall into three fundamental groups, the third generally being part of either of the first two.

Soon after Muhammad's death Islam split into **Sunni** and **Shi'ite (Shi'a)** groups.

The **Sunni** make up approximately 85% of all Muslims and follow Abu Bakr, one of Muhammad's earliest followers, as his true successor. They are the 'Traditionists' and found throughout the Muslim world. Caliphs (worldwide leaders) are chosen by consensus and oversee the *ummah* under the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Among Sunnis there is no universally recognised caliph today.

Shi'a make up about 15% of Muslims and are found mainly in Iran, Iraq and Syria. They believe the caliph should be descended from Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, as his true successor. The caliph should be the guardian of the prophet's message and ministry and also be the *imam* (spiritual leader) with authority to interpret the Qur'an and guide the *ummah*. This can be compared with the Catholic belief in apostolic succession from St Peter down through the centuries of popes.

The third group are the **Sufis**, a mystical group seeking deeper religious experience, and a personal relationship with Allah. Sufis may belong to either the Sunni or Shi'ite groups. Over the centuries they have been alternately persecuted and revered. Much Islamic poetry and music, and the ecstatic whirling of the dervishes, comes from the Sufi tradition.

Despite the many races, ethnic groups and sects, for the Muslim there is only one Islamic mother community (the *ummah*).

NB: In discussing Islam we are discussing the orthodox faith. The 'ordinary', 'folk', or 'cultural' Islam of most Muslims is much more superstitious and may even be idolatrous. We have the same problem, of course, with folk Christianity. On 'ordinary' Islam see Bill Musk's *The Unseen Face of Islam* (2003). He shows how ordinary Muslims are impacted by animist beliefs. This syncretism of Islam with paganism is important to notice as it helps us to understand why strict Muslims are very unhappy with Sufi mystics.

Part B Islamic Teaching (*Iman*, the six articles of faith)

B.1 God [*Allah*]

God is One (no partner, no equal), all-powerful (omnipotent), all-knowing (omniscient). The greatest of all sins is *shirk*, associating any one or thing with God. All orthodox Christians are guilty.

B.2 Angels

Much as in Bible. Also *Jinn*, shadowy spirit beings, some good, but many evil and greatly feared. Many Muslims live in superstitious fear of *Jinn*.

B.3 Sacred Books

Originally said to number 104, but only 4 remain: Torah (given to Moses), Psalms (given to David), Gospel (*Injil*, given to Jesus) and Qur'an (given to Muhammad). *NB*: The majority of Muslims have never read, or even heard the Qur'an read aloud in their own language. They know only the interpretations given by their imams in the Friday sermon at the mosque or, as children, in the Madrassa (Islamic religious school) classes. An even larger majority have never been exposed to the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

B.4 Messengers of Allah (Apostles & Prophets)

Many thousands, but only 25 are named in the Qur'an (of these 18 occur in the Old Testament and three in the New Testament). There are six major prophets: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Isa [Jesus] and Muhammad ('the seal of the prophets'). They all bring the same message (see Jones 2020). Jesus is referred to in the Qur'an as 'Son of Miriam' (Mary), or as 'Jesus son of Miriam', or as 'the Messiah, son of Miriam'. Controversy attends what happened to him, but any atoning death is strenuously denied. He was not killed, but was taken up to Paradise by God. He will return to earth as a Muslim, marry, have children and then die and be buried near Muhammad.

B.5 Judgment and Future Life

Heaven is described in physical and sensual terms. Hell is 'The Fire', a place of horrific torture. The greatest sign of the coming of Judgment Day is the second coming of Christ. Judgment is on the basis of the acceptance of Islam and the weighing of (good and bad) deeds. All people will spend eternity in paradise or in hell.

B.6 God's Sovereign Decrees

Central to Islam ('submission [to God]') is submission to the Will of God. The Muslim ('one who submits') is the only true believer. God has supreme and sovereign power over all things. Some (with Qur'anic verses in support) even take this to mean that man cannot be held responsible for his actions. (e.g. Sura 14.4, 'Allah leads astray whomsoever he will and guides aright whomsoever he will').

Part C The Qur'an ('Reading' or 'Recitation')

C.1 The Qur'an (often spelt *Koran* in English) is the Holy Book of all Muslims. In Arabic it is also called *Al-Furqan* ("The Standard") and *Al-Mushaf Al-Shreef* ("The Glorious Book"). It is similar in length to the New Testament and contains 114 chapters (*sura*). Each verse is called *ayat*, "sign" or "miracle". Muhammad never performed a miracle, but - in reply to those who therefore challenged his claim to be a prophet - he claimed that the Qur'an itself was the miracle. The suras are not arranged in any

logical or chronological order, but roughly in order of length, the longest first. The Qur’an is regarded as wholly divine; Muhammad was merely the recipient.

C.2 The Qur’an claims to be God’s final revelation to man. Muslims claim that both the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament had become corrupted by the time of Muhammad and that the Qur’an retells the story of the ancient world in the proper context – that of Islam, or submission to Allah.

| The Qur’an Affirms | The Qur’an Denies |
|--|--|
| Creation | Trinity |
| Fall | Deity of Christ (a created being) |
| Resurrection and Judgment | Sonship of Christ |
| Virgin Birth of Christ | Crucifixion (death) of Christ |
| Miracles of Christ | Atonement |
| Second Coming of Christ (but see above) | Abraham’s son of promise was Isaac |
| Devil/Satan and demons | The son Abraham went to sacrifice was Isaac |
| Angels | (The Qur’an claims that the son of promise was Ishmael, ancestor of the Arabs) |
| Heaven | |
| Hell | |
| Freedom of Religion | Freedom of Religion |
| Those who resist Islam are to be attacked, killed, or kept in subjection | Those who resist Islam are to be attacked, killed, or kept in subjection |
| (These last two illustrate the inherent contradictions in the Qur’an, especially between Meccan and Medinan suras) | |

The Qur’an is often very succinct leaving readers hungry for more details – which the Bible provides.

Part D Islamic Practice (*Din*, The Five Pillars of Islam)

These are obligatory duties (*fard*) based on explicit injunctions in the *Qur’an* or *Hadith*.

D.1 Confession (*tashahhud*) – the Oneness of God (*tawhid*)

Most briefly as the *kalima* or *shahhada* (‘witness’). ‘There is no deity but Allah [*la ilahu illa ‘illahu*] and Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah’. Shortest and possibly most

frequently repeated creed in the world. Publicly pronounced 5 times each day in the call to prayer. It is used both as a battle cry and a lullaby. Said truthfully it is sufficient to make one a Muslim.

D.2 Ritual Prayer (*salat*)

Performed five times daily in Arabic following prescribed washings and accompanied by bowings and prostrations. Signifies praise and submission. Times are dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and two hours after dark. Always done facing towards the *Ka'aba* in Mecca. The well-known words, *Allahu akbar* ('God is great') are frequently repeated.

D.3 Fasting (*saum*)

Especially the month of Ramadan (ninth month). In 2004 Ramadan begins on October 15th.

NB Lunar calendar so Ramadan moves through the year. Total abstinence from food and drink, smoking and sexual intercourse, between sunrise and sunset. But then feast!

D.4 Religious Tax (mandatory charity or almsgiving, *zakat*)

To poor, homeless, slaves, debtors, those fighting for Islam, and to travellers. Hence travellers can be given very generous hospitality. It is generally 2.5% of one's personal assets given at the end of each year.

D.5 Pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*)

The highest point of Muslim devotion, so millions now perform it each year. Should be done a least once in a lifetime (then the muslim is respected as a *hadji*). Muslims believe that the *Ka'aba* in Mecca was founded by Adam and his son Seth, was visited by Abraham and Hagar (the father and mother of Ishmael) and that Abraham and Ishmael rebuilt it.

[D.6 Holy War – *Jihad* 'struggle on behalf of Allah'– A religious duty when Islam is under threat. To many muslims (esp. Sufis) jihad means the ongoing struggle to bring their own hearts and lives into conformity to God's will. But it can also mean holy war.]

Part E Authority

In the absence of any clear guidance in the Qur'an, the Arab empire had to develop its own. In the course of time, Islamic doctrine, law (*Shar'ah*), and thinking in general came to be based upon four sources, or fundamental principles (*usūl*):

E.1 Qur'an

Uncreated, eternal, confirms preceding scriptures. About 2/3rds the length of the NT and consists of 114 chapters (*sura*). It is in Arabic and is scripture only as such. It is no part of Muslim devotion to translate it. In many ways the Qur'an has a status in Islam that only Jesus Christ has in Biblical Christianity.

Christians would say that part of the validation of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the miracles performed in His name, the miraculous life of the communities of faith and, supremely, the resurrection. Those who proclaim the Creator's message might expect validation that shows His sovereignty over His creation. In contrast Muslims would claim that the Qur'an itself is the miracle, that it is self-validating and needs no other miracle.

E.2 Traditions (*Sunnah* 'A well-trodden path' or *Hadith* 'Report')

Collections of deeds or sayings attributed to Muhammad. *Sunni* and *Shi'a* Muslims have their different collections of Hadith. The believers depend on these for many of the details of their daily religious practice.

E.3 Majority Opinion (*Ijmā* 'consensus', of the religious leaders [imams/mullahs] on the meaning of the *Qur'an* or *Hadith*)

Accepted interpretations of the *Qur'an* and the actual content of the *Sunnah* all finally depend on *ijmā*.

E.4 Analogy (*Qiyās*)

Where the *Qur'an* and Traditions are silent recourse is made to a strict analogous reasoning. Originally this was the principle of *ijtihad* ('to exert effort'), meaning individual opinion, but *ijtihad* was replaced by *qiyās* in the 2nd century AH.

Part F The Goal of Islam

F.1 Establishment universally of the Laws of Islam (*Shari'ah*). Four orthodox schools (with differing interpretations of the *Shari'ah*) are recognised.

F.2 At present the world is divided into two sections: *dar al-islam* ('house of submission or peace') where Islam rules, and *dar al-harb* ('house of war') which is yet to become Islamic. The goal is that every state should be ruled by a Muslim and the state governed by Islamic law. Islam is a missionary faith. The concept of mission is *dawah* ('invitation [to Islam]') in Arabic. It is used of Muslims being renewed in their *islam* (submission), as well as of non-Muslims (*harbis*) being called to embrace Islam. From this perspective, the two houses are always at war, and the property of the infidel

legally belongs to the *umma*. *Jihad* seeks to reclaim all property and bring it into the *dar al-islam*. This is seen as the only way to bring harmony and peace among peoples.

Part G Issues facing Islam:

Religious freedom and persecution

Status and role of Women in Islam

Shari'a Law

Part H Our Response

Treat Muslims as people created in the Image of God.

Accept the challenges Muslims bring to us as Christians, particularly in terms of their community life and corporate values (actually poorer than in the New Testament teaching, but, sadly, often better than in much Christian practice).

We must be fair and impartial regarding issues of peace and injustice (both our Western Christian history and theirs is a mixture of both positive and negative practice).

Seek to bring the Gospel in Muslim cultural context (to the extent every aspect of Muslim culture is compatible with Biblical teaching and values)

Be aware that it is a spiritual battle, demanding prayer and fasting (*cf Mark 9:29*)

Follow a Christian approach to Islam (see Jones 2020)

Choose a neutral meeting place (but long-term friendship, respect and trust overcomes taboos regarding places such as Christian churches and centres).

Be consistent in the use of Scripture. Do not be wrongly selective, or quoting out of context.

Answers to 'True or False?' (Section I.2, page 2)

1. **FALSE** About 80% of Muslims are not Arabs and most cannot speak Arabic.
 2. **FALSE** Most Muslims do not live in the Middle East.
 3. **TRUE** The world's largest concentration of Muslims is in South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh), c 240 million (2017 estimate).
 4. **TRUE** The country with the largest Muslim population is Indonesia (207 million (2010 census) – more than in the entire Middle East).
 5. **TRUE** Nigeria alone has about 97 million black African Muslims (2017 estimate).
 6. **FALSE** The Arab country with most Muslims is Egypt (c 85 million in 2017).
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This paper is available online at <http://www.allofliferedeemed.co.uk/jones.htm>

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About the Author

Arthur Jones holds a doctorate in biology (1972) for a thesis exploring alternatives to materialistic evolution [aka Darwinism] in the field of origins. Until he retired in 2018, he was (from 1976) a Chartered Biologist (CBiol), a member of the *Royal Society of Biology* (MRSB). Between 1972 and 2002 he was mostly a secondary school and college science teacher in England, or in South Asia (India and Nepal). From 1995-97, he was a part-time lecturer in science and religion in the Faculty of Continuing Education, *Birkbeck College, University of London* and from 1996-97 in the Department for Continuing Education, *University of Bristol*. From 2000 to 2013 he wrote and taught worldview-based courses for Christian professionals accredited by three more UK universities (*University of Wales, Lampeter, University of Wales, Bangor, and York St Johns*), at both graduate and postgraduate levels. From 1990-1998 he was a Research Consultant for Curriculum Development to the *Christian Schools' Trust* and authored *Science in Faith: A Christian Perspective on Teaching Science* (CST, December 1998). He also authored *No Home & Alone: A School Programme on Homelessness* (Global Concern, 1999), and *Is Creationism a Science Stopper?*, a chapter in John Ashton (ed), *In Six Days: Why 50 Scientists Choose to Believe in Creation* (New Holland, 1999). His last paid employment was as Tutor with *Responsibility for Co-ordination and Development of the Foundation Degree in Evangelism, Mission Based Training, Church Army, Sheffield*. He is a Covenanted Evangelist with *Church Army*. In Education he was a member of the *Movement for Christian Democracy's Education Policy Group* from 1991 to 1997. After several changes of sponsoring organizations, this group became the *Education Commission* of the *UK Evangelical Alliance*, of which Arthur was a founding member in 2013. From 2004-2011 he was a Trustee (and Company Director) of the *Association of Christian Teachers* (ACT, <http://www.christian-teachers.org.uk/>), and was the Chair from 2007-2011. Currently he is a member of the Scientific Panel of *Truth in Science* (TiS, <https://www.truthinscience.org.uk/>) and a trustee of the *Manchester Centre for the Study of Christianity and Islam* (MCSCI, <http://www.mcsci.org.uk/>) based at the *Manchester Nazarene Theological College* (NTC, <https://nazarene.ac.uk/>).

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