

## **Studying Islam and Engaging Muslims: Some Things to Know and Where to Learn It**

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Published under "Contemporary Practice" at [www.globalmissiology.org](http://www.globalmissiology.org), October 2007

Since 9/11, the subject of Islam has been thrust into the spotlight before a bewildered Western world. Just a few years prior to that tragic event I had struggled to get my friends at church to understand why I would want to pack up with my pregnant wife and our 10 month old son and move to a country that describes itself as an Islamic nation. Few people that I knew here in what is called the Bible-belt had any real understanding of what Islam teaches, and even less desire to learn. Nevertheless, we moved into that context for just over a year, interacting with people whose beliefs I had only previously read about in books. I quickly learned that Islam is no neatly defined theological system that can be adequately summarized with Five Pillars. As I worked and ministered among the people I came to understand that not even the categories of Sunni and Shia could tell me what was going through their minds. I remember trying to write home and share with folks here in America what life was like in that culturally distant land. It was a struggle because at that time few Americans even cared to know. It took a while, but at some mysterious point in our journey we moved beyond just studying a people to loving individuals. And it was at that point that our ministry among them became modestly fruitful. Due to a family health issue we were forced to move back to the USA before our term there was completed. But it was not before we saw several men confess their need for Jesus giving a bold profession of faith in the presence of their community.

Upon our return "home" we felt the effects of reverse culture shock. We had become accustomed to living in that "other world" because it freed us from the trappings that sometimes trivialize the Gospel here in the West. We tried to explain this awkwardness with the same family and friends that we had written to while living overseas, getting a little more response because of the novelty of our firsthand stories. And then it happened. September 11, 2001. Suddenly it seemed as if everyone in the US was talking about Islam. Everyone wanted to hear about it. They wanted to understand. I remember how the church I was serving at requested that I speak on the subject on a Sunday evening a few weeks after that fateful day. A typical evening service filled about a third of the seats in the sanctuary, but on the night that I spoke on Islam we had a packed house. People streamed in from the rural Bible-belt community. And six years later people across the USA are still asking some of the same questions. But are they looking in the right places to find the answers?

Fortunately many today are considering thoughtful engagement of Muslims as individuals. If you have questions about understanding Islam or engaging Muslims, then the following collection of resources should be a help to you.

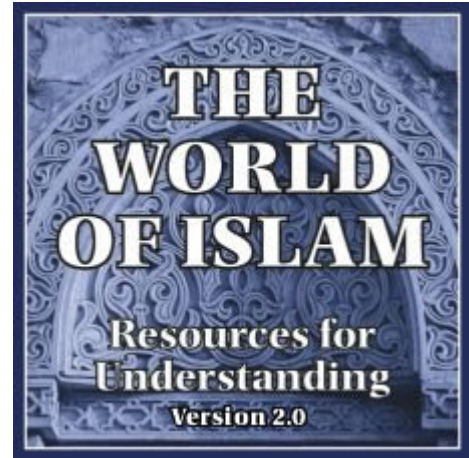
## **A CD Library:**

### **The World of Islam: Resources for Understanding**

Available for purchase at:

<http://www.gmi.org/products/islamcd.htm>

“*The World of Islam CD-ROM* contains some of the best in educational resources about Islam and Christian witness to Islam. Designed in partnership with [Fuller Seminary](#) and the [Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization](#), this high-quality research and training resource is for Christians seriously interested in learning about Islam or those ministering in the Muslim context. It benefits field workers, professors, students, local churches, and concerned Christians.”



## **Conferences and Seminars:**

### **Summer Institute on Islam by Arab World Ministries**

[www.awm.gospelcom.net](http://www.awm.gospelcom.net)

The Summer Institute on Islam in Philadelphia (SIIP) is a training program of Arab World Ministries in partnership with the Eastern Mennonite Mission Board and Westminster Theological Seminary. The course is based upon understanding what the Muslim believes at the theological level and comparing that to Christianity. This enables us to better understand their views and beliefs and subsequently to speak our point of view into their frame of reference. Experience has shown that this is a most effective model for training people to witness to Muslims, laying an excellent foundation for effective witness and ministry.



### **Encountering the World of Islam**

[www.encounteringislam.org](http://www.encounteringislam.org)

*Encountering the World of Islam* is a twelve-lesson course which combines typical learning assignments with experiential activities and on-line interactions for an integrated multi-disciplinary learning environment. Each course lesson is taught by a different Muslim or Christian expert. This course is engaging and life-changing as a result of the rich combination of methods of instruction. The course textbook itself has more than 80 authors providing a broad range of perspectives on Islam. (see below)



## Horizons International Summer Institute of Muslim Studies

[www.horizonsinternational.org](http://www.horizonsinternational.org)

Institute training is composed of three elements:

**Academic:** Morning lectures provide a wide spectrum of subjects including history, theology, and apologetics.

**Practical:** Afternoon workshops explore different evangelism approaches. Case studies by missionaries feature Muslims in areas such as Turkey, Morocco, Kosova, Yemen, Iran, The U.S., and more.

**Spiritual:** Evenings are dedicated to worship, sharing and a spiritual challenge emphasizing the roles of faith, prayer, boldness, and the Holy Spirit.

**WANT TO REACH MUSLIMS FOR CHRIST?  
WE CAN HELP YOU.**

HISTIME is a complete training course that will prepare you to reach Muslims for Christ, whether you want to minister to Muslims in the U.S. or abroad.



### Comprehensive Training:

#### **The Zwemer Center for Muslim Studies at Columbia International University**

[www.zwemercenter.com](http://www.zwemercenter.com)

The strategic kingdom impact of the Zwemer Center ministries is that it is teaching Great Commission Christians how to make disciples among Muslims. Workers are becoming better prepared to reach the world's 1.3 billion Muslims for Christ--now one-fifth of the entire population on earth. Zwemer is contributing to Columbia International University's mission to provide the very best training possible for these special ambassadors. Within the last decade, graduates of this program have committed to long-term service in at least thirty Muslim contexts. Zwemer is the place where Christian scholars, field missionaries, and missionaries-in-training can access the most comprehensive information on Islam and Muslim-Christian relations available. Call us for more information at 803-807.5327.



#### **Fuller Theological Seminary Islamic Studies Concentration**

<http://www.fuller.edu/sis/conc/islam.asp>

The Islamic Studies concentration equips cross-cultural workers and national leaders to serve effectively among Muslim peoples. Courses offered address both traditional approaches to Islamic thought and the areas that pose special challenges to Christian witness today such as folk Islam, the fundamentalist resurgence, and the contextualization of the gospel for particular Muslim people groups.



## **Organizations Specializing in Outreach to Muslims:**

### **Frontiers**

[www.frontiers.org](http://www.frontiers.org)



FRONTIERS' passion is to glorify God by planting the Gospel of Love among unreached Muslim peoples. Founded in 1982 by Dr. Greg Livingstone, FRONTIERS now has members serving to love, respect and bring peace with Muslims in over 40 countries. This organization was born out of Dr. Livingstone's conviction that God had not forgotten one-fifth of the world's population. Under God's blessing, teams with clear goals and strong mutual commitments can plant the Gospel in the Muslim world. They believe that communities of Jesus-followers living the Apostle Paul's model is the key to serving Muslims today. Their singular focus enables us to pour resources, experience, and growing expertise into this one objective.

### **Pioneers**

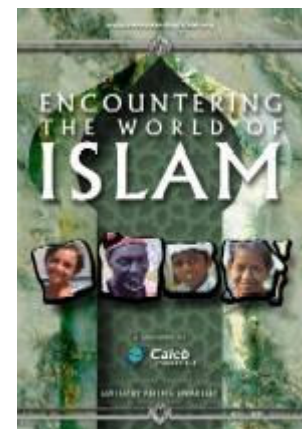
[www.pioneers.org](http://www.pioneers.org)

Pioneers mobilizes teams to glorify God among unreached peoples by initiating church planting movements in partnership with local churches. For many years, PIONEERS has been one of the fastest growing mission organizations in North America. Based in Orlando, PIONEERS currently partners with more than 2,000 churches to send more than 1,500 missionaries to the neediest areas of the world. PIONEERS has a clear statement of faith, a focused mission, and a consistently applied set of core values. It is a leader in the application of a "team" philosophy of maximizing the potential of indigenous national missionaries. PIONEERS has a reputation for excellence, for the high quality of its missionaries, and for stewardship of resources.



### **Books:**

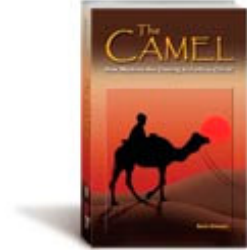
*Encountering the World of Islam* guides you on a journey into the lives of Muslims around the world, and in your neighborhood. Through this comprehensive collection, you will learn about Muhammad and the history of Islam. Gain insight into today's conflicts and dispel western fears and myths. Discover the frustrations and desires of Muslims and learn how to pray for and befriend them. *Encountering the World of Islam* provides a positive, balanced, and biblical perspective on God's heart for Muslims and equips you to reach out to them in Christ's love. Available for purchase at: [www.encounteringislam.org](http://www.encounteringislam.org)



## **The Camel: How Muslims are Coming to Faith in Christ**

[www.thecamelmeth.com](http://www.thecamelmeth.com)

A popular Muslim proverb teaches that God has one hundred names, and 99 of these have been revealed to men. One the camel knows the one hundredth name. Today, Muslims are learning the camel's secret and discovering in Jesus Christ the Name above all names.



## **Two Online Bookstores Focusing on resources for understanding and engaging Muslims:**

**William Carey Library Bookstore:** <http://missionbooks.org/wcl/customer/home.php?cat=9>

**Frontiers:** <http://www.frontiers.org/resources/bookstore/index.htm>

## **Helpful Web Resources:**

There are several excellent sites listing links pertinent to those who wish to understand and engage Muslims with the gospel:

[http://www.answering-islam.org/L\\_c-on-i.html](http://www.answering-islam.org/L_c-on-i.html)

<http://www.gmi.org/islam.htm>

<http://www.evangelicalresources.org/islam.shtml>

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

I pray that the resources that I have referenced herein would serve to educate, equip and encourage you in understanding and engaging Muslims with the good news of the Gospel. May the LORD Jesus Christ guide you in this endeavor for His glory.