

# Guidelines & Cautions



## Inside Session 3:

- **Introductory Notes**
- **Guidelines for Sharing Christ with your Muslim Friend** (starting on page 3)
- **Cautions when Sharing Christ with your Muslim Friend** (starting on page 9)
- **Resources**

## Welcome to this introductory teaching segment, "Sharing with Muslims"

### Before you begin, please consider these points:

- This teaching segment is intended to follow sessions 1 and 2. If you have not yet worked your way through sessions 1 and 2, we highly recommend you do so before proceeding.
- These Guidelines and Cautions for Sharing Christ with your Muslim Friend are compiled from our Jum'ah Friday Prayer Network articles. This series of articles took excerpts from David Goldmann's excellent book *Islam and the Bible: Why Two Faiths Collide*, to which our commentary has been added. You can purchase the full book on our website's resources page.
- These materials are free for your personal use. Our quotation of copyrighted sources does not in any way imply freedom for you to reproduce and distribute these materials without the copyright holder's permission.
- Why do we provide these Guidelines and Cautions? The majority of our readers are not from Muslim backgrounds nor have they grown up around Muslims. The experience of living and working with Muslims is new to most. Thus, most of our readers are dealing with a new cross cultural experience. As such, it is easy to unconsciously assume other people understand us as we typically do in our own culture. But when dealing with someone from another culture, those assumptions lead to many misunderstandings. We trust these guidelines and cautions will help our readers better understand and communicate Biblical truths to their Muslim friends, as well as help our readers understand the comments and questions posed to them in these conversations.
- We very much enjoy hearing how you have benefited from and utilized these materials. Please share your experience with us via email: [info@cmocanada.org](mailto:info@cmocanada.org).

May the Lord bless you as you learn, grow with God's heart for and reach out to Muslims in the love and truth of Isa al-Masih, Jesus the Messiah.

Sincerely,

[cmocanada.org](http://cmocanada.org)

## Guidelines for Confronting Your Muslim Friend With The Claims of Christ: Guidelines 1 & 2

We've been working up to this section for some time, looking first at stereotypes we as Christians commonly hold against Muslims and those that Muslims hold against Christians. This is necessary in order to clear the air between us, moving beyond generalities and misunderstandings into true knowledge of one another.

I'm reminded of the summer I spent in the West Bank with Palestinian Muslim university students. We were all in the same ages and stages of life – university studies, early 20's, single, idealistic and not very realistic about the wide world around us. Meeting this group of guys, being introduced and engaging in introductory conversation, I was surprised by the questions and assertions I was assailed with. Reagan was President at the time and, being a North American, was verbally attacked as the personification of everything American – including everything they didn't like about American political agendas, whether they were true or skewed by what the Imams had been preaching in the local mosques. *It took the first three whole days to get past all that stuff in their heads!* Yet, once past all the stereotypes and into actual personal relationship, I don't ever recall them bringing any of those political things up again all summer.

Could we have gotten into the personal realm without going through the thick veneer of assumptions and stereotypes? I seriously doubt it.

Be ready to wade through that stuff with grace, humility as you seek to understand your Muslim friend's point of view, and – when necessary – asking them forgiveness for Western arrogance and ignorance. No, you and I don't set the government's political agendas nor enact them. Yet we are to our Muslim friends the personal representative of the West. So, be humble and ask their forgiveness. *A soft answer turns away wrath*, said Solomon, and your softness in response to their pain and offense will soften their walls and open the doors to their hearts.

Goldmann shares 17 points in his Guidelines.<sup>1</sup> We will cover a few at a time as space allows. I believe these will strengthen your witness greatly:

Even though a Muslims' theology differs from that of a Christian in many areas, beginning with his or her view of God as remote and impersonal and Jesus as being a mere prophet, a Christian can effectively proclaim the Gospel to a Muslim friend. We cannot overlook God's sovereign plan and the Holy Spirit's enabling power in using you and me to communicate. Here are seventeen guidelines for presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ:

1. *Be constantly in prayer.* "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer is essential to winning Muslims to Christ. They are in the grip of Islamic teaching, which necessitates spiritual warfare.

God works as we pray. Jesus says in John 6:44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." God, by the Holy Spirit, does the urging toward Jesus. He must also give faith and courage to trust only in the work of Jesus Christ for their salvation.

Pray that God will give you good opportunities to present the gospel of Jesus Christ clearly, that it will be clear to the listener, that Muslims will recognize their sin and need of a savior and have the courage to trust Him for their salvation. God has even used dreams to bring many Muslims to faith in Jesus Christ. You may pray that God reveals truth about Himself to Muslims even as they sleep.

2. *Be a genuine friend.* Relationships are very important. How one relates is sometimes more important than what one says! The key is one's attitude. Spending time together in various contexts will help establish warm relationships. Consider establishing a close relationship with one or two Muslims. Muslims value and will cherish friendships.



**Your friendship with your Muslim friend is the key that opens the door to their heart. When they see you embody the character of Christ, they will ask you to enter the courtyard of their inner self where you can sit and discuss matters of the heart and Biblical truth. You are their bridge into the Kingdom of God!**

Genuine friendships take time and effort, of course. Invite your friend to your home, go on an outing, eat meals together, and help him or her with their problems. Immigrants don't always understand our cultural patterns. One presents oneself, not just the Gospel, to a Muslim friend.<sup>1</sup>

References: 1. *Islam and the Bible*, David Goldmann. Moody Publishers, Chicago © 2004, p.73 & 128

## Guidelines for Confronting Your Muslim Friend With The Claims of Christ: Guidelines 3, 4 & 5

Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, shares this powerful thought with us:

*"...God...reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

~ 2 Corinthians 5:19-21

We are Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us! When we grasp the implications of this verse, then we grasp how necessary it is to go to another people as ambassadors and represent our Sender! And we also grasp that God is making his appeal to our Muslim friends through our daily witness and friendship.

So, it is for these reasons I am compelled to share these guidelines with you, to strengthen your witness as Christ's ambassador to your Muslim friend! Here are Goldmann's next guidelines:

3. *Ask thought provoking questions.* Asking questions about your friend's faith and attitudes will help you know where the person is coming from in their religious beliefs. They may be a Muslim in name only, being secularist at heart. Or they may be Muslim at heart but strongly opposed to violent acts that are sometimes carried out by Muslim fundamentalists

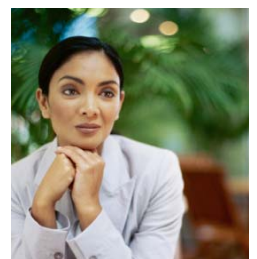
Some good questions are "Do you have assurance that you will go to paradise?" or "What does the Qur'an say about forgiveness?" or "How do you find strength and victory against Satan?" Questions like these prove that you have an interest in spiritual things and in them. By exploring the Bible together, sharing what you believe about these questions, you let your Muslim friend discover the truths and answers.

4. *Listen attentively.* Courtesy and respect for the other person requires that you listen carefully. One should have a learning attitude. Respond in such a way that the person realizes that you understand what they are saying. Making eye contact is considered good manners in Arab culture. However, when one speaks to someone of the opposite gender, one minimizes eye contact.

Respect for your friend's point of view is important, even if you don't agree with it. If we want our Muslim friends to listen to our testimony, the first step is to listen to theirs.

5. *Share your personal testimony.* As you patiently listen to your friend's viewpoint, you can ask for permission to share with them what the Lord means to you personally. Don't press ahead when your friend has lost interest. The Lord will give future opportunities.

Instead of trying to prove that God can be One and yet exist in three persons, we can share what each person of the Trinity means in our salvation, e.g., the Father, who planned to bring us into a vital relationship with Himself; the Son, who provided forgiveness for sin by dying on the cross; and the Holy Spirit, who gives us victory over the devil and helps us surrender our life to God so He can act through us.



Your personal testimony will show that your faith is relational rather than a system of religious doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

God bless you today as you pray for, ask thought-provoking questions of, listen attentively to and share your personal testimony with your Muslim friend! You are Christ's ambassador to them!

References: 1. *Islam and the Bible*, David Goldmann. Moody Publishers, Chicago © 2004, p.131-132

## Guidelines for Confronting Your Muslim Friend With The Claims of Christ: Guidelines 6, 7 & 8

As we continue looking at these Guidelines, last week we began with God's word wherein Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, shared that *"we are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."*

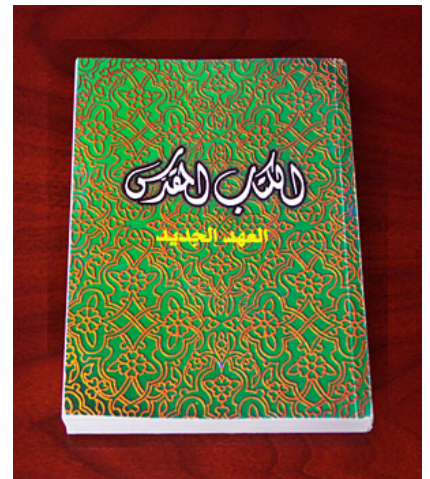
This powerful biblical truth really comes into direct application with the following Guidelines:

6. **Use the Word of God.** Even though Muslims believe the Bible has been corrupted, they still respect the sacred books, i.e., the Law of Moses, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Qur'an. Let the Word of God speak for itself. Matthew and Luke are the best gospels to use. Read from and quote the Bible aloud. It has tremendous power to convict the hearer. The Holy Spirit will use the written word to *"convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment"* (John 16:8).

Read accounts of Jesus' healing and teaching. The parables give insights into truths of God. And as you have opportunity to study together, correct any misunderstanding your Muslim friend may have of your faith.

7. **Give a portion of Scripture.** If possible, give your Muslim friends a portion of Scripture, the New Testament, in their own language. Give a modern language version. Some may prefer to have a bilingual version, with English and their native language in parallel columns.
8. **Proclaim Jesus Christ.** A common mistake Christians make when they present the gospel of Jesus Christ is to declare that "Jesus is God" during the beginning of the discussion. Jesus is God, yet saying so right away may create obstacles to further witness among those who have been taught "There is one God and He is Allah," and believe Christians believe in many gods. It is better to begin with a Muslim's understanding of Allah from Qur'anic teaching, which acknowledges God's creation (Genesis 1), Adam's sin (Genesis 3), Abraham's offering up his son (Genesis 22:1-14) – remember, Muslim Scriptures teach that Abraham offered up *Ishmael* – and Moses' deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 12:31-42). It should be noted that the Qur'an's account of events often varies from biblical teaching.

In many of its accounts, however, the Qur'an agrees with Scripture regarding Jesus' supernatural miracles, and this can be used as a point of common ground. The Qur'an states that Jesus healed the blind and lepers and raised the dead (Sura 5:110). One can show where in the Bible Jesus raised the dead, healed the lepers, and cast out demons (Luke 7:11-16; 17:11-19; 8:26-37). Then one can show Scriptures that describe how Jesus Himself rose from the dead, is with God in heaven, and will come again (John 20:1-8; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).



**Give your friend a Bible in their national language – the language of their home, heart and dreams. Your friend may NEVER have opened or read a Bible ever! Help them learn how to navigate it, too. Explain the many books held within, and where best for them to start reading. You are giving them the One Book that can change their life!**

Muslims generally believe Jesus is alive in heaven with God. One could ask where Muhammad is (his bones are in Medina) and make the comparison with Jesus, who is alive in heaven. Significantly, Jesus spoke of Himself as “the way and the truth and the life,” “the good Shepherd,” and “the bread of life” (John 14:6; 10:11; 6:35). We can mention those titles in Scripture, as well as His calling Himself our Judge and the Son of Man. In so doing, we may show that Christians are not trying to deify a man but that in Jesus Christ God became man.<sup>11</sup>

Each of these Guidelines demonstrates the importance of the Word of God in our witness with our Muslim friends. These will perhaps bring up a topic you may have either not yet discussed, or have discussed before but need to review again: The authenticity of the Bible. We have covered this topic in past *Jumuah* issues. If you missed that one, or didn't retain your copy to refer to – just ask! We'll be happy to send it to you.

As you demonstrate your knowledge of and reverence for our own Holy Scriptures, this too has a positive effect upon your Muslim friend. They will see your honest devotion to God and sincerity of faith. These characteristics are attractive to Muslims and ones which, unfortunately, are ones they don't often find in non-Muslims. Your character will stand out to them, putting contrast between you as a true believer and follower of *Isa al-Masih* vs. the rest of Western culture. This contrast will help them to dispel one of the myths they hold that keep them from faith in Isa: That Western culture is the same and “Christian” culture!

God bless you today as you pray for, use and share the Word of God with your Muslim friend! You are Christ's ambassador to them!

References: I. 2 Corinthians 5:19-21  
II. *Islam and the Bible*, David Goldmann. Moody Publishers, Chicago © 2004, p.132-134

## Guidelines for Confronting Your Muslim Friend With The Claims of Christ: Guidelines 9, 10 & 11

Have you ever heard the phrase, “The medium is the message”? Now famous Canadian educator, philosopher and scholar Marshall McLuhan expressed this in a book published in 1964. What does he mean by it? “McLuhan's theory was that a medium (the means by which something is communicated, e.g. TV, newspaper, radio, face-to-face speech) affects the society in which it plays a role, not by the content delivered over the medium, but by the characteristics of the medium itself.”<sup>1</sup>

While he was focusing on what is now regarded as “media theory,” I think he hit upon a Biblical truth and applied it to secular media. (His mother was a Baptist schoolteacher and, in adult life, McLuhan became a devout Believer after reading the works of G. K. Chesterton).

What Biblical truth is this? That we are Christ's ambassadors – the very personal representatives of Jesus – for the purpose of God's making his appeal through us to the world (see 2 Corinthians 5:19-21)!

We embody this Biblical truth in our relationship with our Muslim friends, so that through us Jesus is making his appeal to them. Just as Jesus came personally to represent God the Father to us, so He sends us to personally represent Him to our Muslim friends. Thus the importance of these guidelines and my fervent hope they help you represent Christ even better!

9. **Give God time to work.** Be willing to allow God much time to draw Muslims to Himself through you and His Word. Muslims are often quite open to discussing spiritual matters. Some Christians think that an interest in spiritual matters means that a Muslim is responding positively to the Truth. This may not be the case! It takes time for Muslims to agree that Jesus is more than a prophet. After they make that huge shift in understanding, it may take even more time for them to believe that He died on the cross, taking the penalty for our sins.



Ever seen this guy's picture before?  
Probably not. Could he help you in your  
witness to the world and to your Muslim  
friends? Probably yes!

The last crucial step is having the courage as well as the faith to trust Jesus as Savior and Lord. Islam focuses on what we must do to gain Allah's favor and mercy. The free gift of salvation by God's grace is foreign to their thinking. Be aware that when a Muslim does believe, opposition will come from family, friends, and Satan.

10. **Be an example.** A consistent lifestyle of love will earn you the right to share the Truth. Building trust is critical for what you say to be accepted. In northern Africa, some Muslims would tell my family, "We have the truth, but you live as we should."

Our patterns of life can be powerful witness. The joy of the Lord should be evident in us. Muslims lack assurance of salvation. There is obligation to worship, but little joy. Though Muslims generally believe that good Muslims will make it to paradise, they can't be sure. Even Muhammad didn't know what Allah would do with him. The Prophet said, "By Allah, though I am the Apostle of Allah, yet I do not know what Allah will do with me" (Hadith 5:266). We should be able to show others what Christianity is all about by demonstrating Jesus' presence, power, and joy in our lives.

11. **Respect Muslims' customs and sensitivities.** Muslims infer honor (or dishonor) based on how they are greeted. It is essential to be polite and greet Muslims respectfully before speaking of other matters. Using the appropriate name or title for the person you're addressing is important.

In many other countries, especially where Islam is predominant, there is some distance between man and woman. Men should be friendly and warm with men but cool toward women. In most Islamic countries, one man will not ask another man how his wife is, for the second man might wonder why the first is interested in his wife! One asks about the family, and the wife is included.

Whenever possible, be aware of appropriate behavior inside and outside the home. For instance, in many countries, Muslims take off their shoes at the door. Why should the dirt from the street be brought into one's house? Allow a Muslim to remove his or her shoes in your home, and offer to remove your shoes when visiting the home of your Muslim friend.

Modesty should be observed in public. A woman should be properly clothed. Men should not show their legs. Exposing one's body in the presence of men for swimming is often not allowed for women.

Remember, we all make some cultural mistakes. A warm, loving relationship can cover all these mistakes.<sup>11</sup>

Yes, God has used the medium of his written Word. Yet from the beginning He has used personal relationship with people to lead and affect His will. Even the written Word is an expression of his personal living Word, Jesus Christ (see John 1). God's method of sending people in relationship with Him to appeal to others is still his primary method. Other forms of media such as TV, radio, print and the electronic, while useful, will never replace people. You and I are the ones needed, chosen, gifted and anointed to go and live out our relationship with God before the World and our Muslim friends. You, my friend, are vital and cannot be replaced!

God bless you today as you be the medium of communication between God and your Muslim friend!

References: I. Wikipedia.com: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall\\_McLuhan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall_McLuhan)  
II. *Islam and the Bible*, David Goldmann. Moody Publishers, Chicago © 2004, p.134-136

## Guidelines for Confronting Your Muslim Friend With The Claims of Christ: Guidelines 12, 13 & 14

Continuing with our series on "Guidelines for Confronting your Muslim Friend with the Claims of Christ,":

12. **Be informed.** Many North Americans are ignorant of world geography. Morocco is not in Asia. Pakistan is not in Africa. As we get to know Muslims, we can learn a few basic facts about their country in the library. *Operation World* (Zondervan) gives excellent facts about other countries and their peoples.

It's good to know some basic facts about Muslims and their faith. Read part of the Qur'an. Visit a mosque; its best to go in pairs. With a basic understanding of a Muslim friend's religious system and his or her country of origin, you can have more meaningful discussions. You can ask such questions as: "What's the biggest difference between our countries?" "Tell me about your educational system." "How does a family take care of its seniors?" "What's the biggest surprise that you had in our country?" etc.

13. **Go slowly.** Be content to communicate one small aspect of the Gospel. Don't feel that you have to present "the whole Gospel" all at once. We must not think that one technique is bound to produce certain results every time.
14. **Show hospitality.** Remember the injunctions of the New Testament, "Practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13); "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2), etc. When inviting students or immigrants into your home, be sensitive to cultural patterns. At times in our home, we have had men and women eat in separate rooms. Immigrants may feel uncomfortable eating with a fork and knife; they may prefer to eat out of a large, common dish!

Muslims should not be served pork or alcohol. Some Muslims will only eat meat that is *halal* - that was killed in the Islamic way in the name of Allah. Explain what kind of meat is being served and whether it is halal. If you are not comfortable purchasing halal meat, you could choose to exclude meat completely from the meal. Muslims pray with their eyes open. Therefore, when we have Muslim guests, I usually give thanks with my eyes open. Also, it's good to explain what you are doing before you do it. One could read a short portion of the Bible after the meal. You might show the *Jesus* film on a subsequent visit.

Consider the little details that can make your first-time guest comfortable (yours might be the first Western home they've ever been in!). An invited guest may not understand spoken directions for getting to your house. Provide your guest with a note that includes directions and your telephone number.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, let me comment on these last two. **Go slowly!** Compared to most of the world's people, we live fast paced lives. As such, we often share, consider, accept or discard and make decisions on new information very quickly. Other cultures are not like this and in fact we will benefit by slowing down and considering things and relishing our relationships more deeply. Our Muslim friends are typically very far from the knowledge of the Gospel. Therefore they are not going "jump" from where they are all the way to accepting the Gospel of Jesus the first time we share it! Give them time and give God time to work.

And second, **show hospitality!** The practice of hospitality has taken a beating in our fast paced society. Most prefer to "go out" rather than go through all the world of having someone over. But think of the impact! Our Muslim friends are from hospitality oriented cultures. As such, our lack of hospitality is often an affront to them and they come away feeling cold and distant from us. To reach your Muslim friend, exercise this Biblical admonition, be considerate of their cultural (social and dietary) needs, relax and enjoy the relationship with them. This will naturally lead to opportunities to share Biblical truth in conversational nuggets as they are ready.

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldmann, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. Pp. 136-138

## Guidelines for Confronting Your Muslim Friend With The Claims of Christ: Guidelines 15, 16 & 17

Here we conclude our series of installments on "Guidelines for Confronting Your Muslim Friend with the Claims of Christ." It occurs to me that perhaps you've wondered...what do these guidelines for confronting Muslims have to do with our Friday reminders to pray for them?

Prayer is always to be coupled with action. We see this numerous times directly in the New Testament alone:

- Acts 6:4 – the Apostles were to give themselves to prayer *and* the ministry of the Word.

- Acts 10:32 – God paid attention to Cornelius’ prayer *and* giving to the poor
- Mark 9:29 & Acts 14:23 – Prayer is coupled with fasting as being a kind of “dynamic duo”
- 1 Timothy 4:5 – All God’s good creation is to be consecrated by prayer and the Word of God

Thus, even as we pray for Muslims to come to the Lord, we ought pray also for Muslims to engage with Believers who can and will share the Good News of Jesus with them *and* we who know Muslims ought to be those very people, too! So my desire and aim is to inspire and equip you to prayer and action on behalf of Muslims.

15. **Help with practical needs.** Meeting felt needs of newly arrived Muslims can be a vital witness. I’ve helped men learn English, obtain a driver’s license, apply for a job, and have given counsel on the job market. My wife has helped women find jobs. Also, she has taken women with their children to the doctors and to schools for education helps.

16. **Point out the differences between true Christianity and North American cultural patterns.** All Westerners are not Christians, contrary to popular Muslim belief. Point out that committed Christians living here disagree with nude dancing, gambling, drunkenness and other evils.

17. **Persevere.** Continue your friendship even if your friend may not seem to be interested in Christianity. It often takes a long time for a Muslim to come to Christ. Real friendship should not be dependent on that person becoming a Christian. However, if there is no response to the Gospel after repeated attempts, you may ask God to lead to you to someone who is hungry for spiritual truth. The first friendship should continue, but you may be able to make better use of your time and effort with another Muslim. Note: *Muslims and Christians at the Table*, by Bruce A. McDowell and Ahees Zaka, has an excellent section on methods for reaching Muslims (pages 173-186) .<sup>1</sup>



*illustration:* Imagine moving to a foreign country...you don't know anyone, don't speak the language well, you don't know the customs nor how things work. Wouldn't you need help? Wouldn't you appreciate help? Your practical help to a Muslim immigrant demonstrates the Gospel of Jesus more powerfully than words, and opens the door to their heart for Jesus' Words.

Last week I concluded Goldmann’s points with a comment about our fast paced Western society, and it bears repeating and application to this final guideline – persevere. We live in such an “instant gratification,” fast and instant everything society that we are often conditioned to *not* be patient, not wait nor persevere through things. The nature of friendships has suffered in our society, too. It has long been noted by others that Western travelers are quick to start relationships, but often miserable at keeping them up. We start and discard them like playing cards, but fail to recognize that we’re picking up and discarding people. Our Muslim friends are not like this! Persevere with your friendships with Muslims in spite of apparent “progress” toward them becoming a Believer. This, too, is part of our Christian witness! Just as Christ did and doesn’t give up on us, don’t give up on them!

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldmann, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. Pp. 136-138

## Cautions when Presenting the Gospel: Cautions 1, 2 & 3

Having covered the 17 Guidelines for sharing the claims of Christ with your Muslim friends now we start looking at Goldmann’s 10 cautions to be aware of when presenting the Gospel to your Muslim friend:

1. **Reason, don’t argue.** One cannot change a Muslim’s heart (or anyone else’s) with logic. Arguing may win points in a debate, but it can lose a hearing. There are some points on which one can argue forever, yet not achieve very much except closing a mind against you.

One suggestion in discussing various issues with Muslims: One lobs the ball back – as in a tennis match – rather than driving it back. Still, you can show passion or emotion in what you believe. Muslims may interpret a lack of emotion as lack of conviction.

2. **Don't attack Muslim's beliefs.** One shouldn't speak negatively about a Muslim's religion, his holy book – the Qur'an, or the prophet Muhammad. Even nominal Muslims are emotionally tied to their religious systems, which are often observed by family members. If a Muslim asks a Christian what he thinks about Muhammad, it's best to say, "I respect Muhammad as your prophet, who led the Arab people from paganism to belief in Allah. But as a Christian, I've found peace, contentment and eternal life in Jesus Christ."
3. **Avoid some terms such as the Son of God and Trinity.** Because the Muslim will confuse "the Son of God" and "the Trinity" as belief in three Gods, Christians should avoid these terms during early visits with Muslims. There are other terms that show Jesus' deity and unique mission. For instance, Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son of Man, the Bread of Life, the Good Shepherd, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Also, He is referred to as the Word.

Be aware that such terms as *faith*, *grace* and *salvation* may mean one thing to us and another to a Muslim. Explain what these mean to you and show Scriptures that support these teachings.<sup>1</sup>

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldmann, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. Pp. 136-138

## Cautions when Presenting the Gospel: Caution 4 Consider Carefully Before Bringing Your Muslim Friend to Church

What is the most common way North American believers "witness" to their friends?

From my experience with believers, I'd have to say it's inviting their friends to come to church with them.

We love church. We love the worship. We love the preaching, the fellowship with believers and the atmosphere of joy and unity. So we naturally believe others should love this environment, too.

Have you ever taken one of your North American friends to church with you, your heart full of anticipation at how they'd enjoy it with you ... but then they didn't? Maybe they didn't react negatively, but maybe they didn't react with great enthusiasm either. Not what you'd expected or hoped for.

It might be hard to understand, yet we have to put ourselves in their shoes – to understand their background, their church *in*experience, and how they view "church," spirituality and religion in general. Perhaps their background in each of these areas hadn't prepared them for what to expect, how to interpret what was going on, and – lacking these things plus the sense of belonging we have – their reaction may have been sorely lagging behind what you anticipated.

Now just imagine taking someone from an entirely non-Christian social and religious background into your church. Do you think they will respond better than your North American friend? Almost definitely not. Only a Muslim in whom the Holy Spirit has already been *long* at work, moving them out of their Islamic mindset and being already well familiarized with Western church culture would come into a church with an open heart and mind. In fact, many of our customs in church would be interpreted offensively in their eyes.

This intro will help you better understand Goldmann's next caution in how you share Christ with your Muslim friend:\*

4. **Use caution before inviting a Muslim to a church.** If you bring a male Muslim to church, don't seat him next to a female; men and women worship separately at the mosque. There is no singing in the mosque and no pictures on the walls. Muslims take off their shoes when they enter a mosque, and they must perform ablutions before praying.

In churches, many Christians hug each other – even men and women! Some women wear clothing with short skirts and low necklines, men and women sit together, and some Christians put their Bible on the floor! All this may so offend your Muslim friends that they won't be able to hear the truth in church.

Explain why we pray with our eyes closed. Before going to church together, explain the service first. Some sermons are better than others for Muslims. Ask your pastor which Sunday would be the best time to bring your Muslim friend to church.<sup>1</sup>

After experiencing a church service for the first time your Muslim friend – even if you’ve “prepared” them prior to it – may come away with and start asking many questions, such as:

- Why do you wear your shoes in a place of worship... isn't that disrespectful to God?
- Why do you sit on pews rather than on the floor? Why do you not kneel and bow before God, showing your humility and submission to him?
- Why do you sing and clap and use musical instruments in worship ... aren't these secular things that are displeasing and disrespectful to God?
- Why do you not wash yourself before entering into the place of prayer... do you not want to show yourself clean before entering into worship of the Almighty?
- Why do your women not clothe themselves modestly in church and in society? Instead they look like the women of the world who do not honor God and flaunt their bodies in shameful ways.
- How can you hold the revelations of God to your prophets in so low esteem (your Bible) as to put it on the floor where everyone has walked with their dirty shoes? Why do you not respect God's revelation by putting it in the place of honor?

These and other questions you may be faced with after taking your friend to church. I trust this will help you be prepared, as well as to prepare your friend.

I would also challenge you to notice how very biblical many of their practices are! Perhaps we are the ones who should consider more carefully how we approach God and show Him our devotion and respect. I'm not denying the freedom we have in Christ, but rather asking that we not use our freedoms to offend those who do not understand. This, too, is biblical!

So, as you walk down the road of growing relationship and witness with your Muslim friend, may you both be better prepared for what you will experience together. And through it all, may Christ be glorified in you and in them!

\* You can find past issues of *Jumuah* with all the previous Cautions on our ministry webpage: [www.cmocanada.org](http://www.cmocanada.org)

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldmann, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. Pp. 140-141

## Cautions when Presenting the Gospel: Caution 5

### Avoid Getting To the Main Point of Your Message Too Quickly

How were you taught to “witness” – either through formal instruction or informally by watching others?

Was it through a “Steps to Peace with God,” “Romans Road,” “Four Spiritual Laws,” “Evangelism Explosion” or other similar program? Most of these have an emphasis on being able to share the Good News of a new life and faith in Jesus Christ in the most succinct, time-efficient manner.

Have you ever stopped to ask why we teach ourselves and others to share the Gospel in the shortest time frame possible?

It's because one of our highest values in Western society is on the use of our time. We value time so highly we'll pay money to save time. We buy all sorts of gadgets that we believe will save time (though they usually don't). We pay others to do time consuming, tedious, mundane tasks for us – mowing our lawn, cleaning our house, laundering our clothes, etc. It's gone to such an extreme that some even contract personal shopping services to do their Christmas shopping for them. Or, have you heard about the lady who called 911 from a fast food drive through line because they weren't moving fast enough with her order!! It's hilarious! (Search for it on the web— I don't have a copy of it.)

Just consider how upset people get when the check-out line is too long in the store, or someone in line in front of them seems to be moving too slowly. Wow! Do people ever get steamed quick! I know I've even been guilty of this, too.

All of these examples demonstrate how much we value our time. It is a primary characteristic of our culture. But it's not the character of the vast majority of Muslims. If your Muslim friend didn't grow up in North America, then they probably don't have this inordinate value on doing everything as fast as possible.



**Yet, consider the other side of this cultural coin:** If your time is so precious, then it is also one of the most precious gifts and investments we can make in someone else!

This intro will help you better understand Goldman's next caution in how you share Christ with your Muslim friend:\*

5. **Avoid getting to the main point of your message too quickly.** As previously encouraged to "proclaim Jesus Christ," we must [as a counterbalance] be wary of saying something like "Jesus is God" at the beginning of the discussion. This may throw up obstacles to further discussion. A Muslim would think that we are associated others with Allah, which is an unpardonable sin.<sup>1</sup>

When you share Christ with your Muslim friend, you're doing more than just sharing some facts. While you are sharing truths about Jesus, you are sharing across cultural boundaries. These boundaries are not visible like lines on a map that show us where one country ends and other begins. The cultural boundaries are the differences in how you see, interpret and respond to your world versus how your Muslim friend sees, interprets and responds to the world.

Their cultural experience and training has taught them to view Jesus, Christians, the Cross, Churches, etc. in a totally different way than we have. It is because of the cultural difference between your and my thoughts about Jesus from their thoughts about Jesus that prevent us from sharing too quickly.

The closer you are culturally to someone, the faster you can communicate because there isn't a huge cultural distance to cover. And vice versa, the farther you are culturally from someone, the longer it takes for our thoughts and concepts to travel back and forth. It's like those thoughts have to go through a language translation process, then checkpoints at the border, followed by immigration control and customs inspections before they are allowed in. The process can be fraught with misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and misdirection.



So, knowing we come from a fast paced culture that is used to communicating at ninety miles an hour, realize that when you sit down to communicate Christ with your Muslim friend you've exited the superhighway, regional road, main thoroughfares and have entered a "go slow" area. Get out of your cultural high speed vehicle, pull in to your friend's driveway, sit down and be prepared to enjoy slowly sipping Turkish coffee or delicious Afghan tea over unhurried conversation. This pace will allow you to go further than stepping on your conversational gas pedal.

The slow journey will prepare their hearts to hear and receive the main points of our message!

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldman, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. p.141 – excluding my contextual comments in the brackets.

## Cautions when Presenting the Gospel: Caution 6

### Don't Spend Time in Cul-de-sacs or Box Canyons

Goldman's caution number 6 is **Don't spend time discussing minor points like the treatment of women or the importance of democracy.**\* Under this heading he simply shares, "The main difference between Islam and Christianity is not the treatment of women or its citizens; it's the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Focus on Jesus, who gives eternal life."<sup>1</sup>

It's definitely not that the treatment of women, the importance of democracy or a host of other issues are not important. These are important issues. Yet they are not the crucial issue.

The crucial issue in our sharing with our Muslim friends is "Who is Jesus?" All the time we spend running down the philosophical cul-de-sacs or box canyon of other issues is time away from the crucial issue.

So, am I saying you cannot talk about anything but Jesus?



No. If you're going to have a genuine friendship with your Muslim neighbor, co-worker or fellow student, then you will inevitably talk about all kinds of topics. Just realize that all the discussions on other topics might be of some peripheral benefit for your friend in understanding Christ-like values, world view, motives, etc., but they won't directly help them understand the key decisive issue that is imperative for them to wrestle with: Is Jesus who He said He is, or is He who someone else – be it Muhammad or another – said He is?

This caution is calling for us to keep the “bigger picture” view in mind while conversing.

Have you ever been sharing with a friend – even another believer in Jesus – and gotten off onto one of these topics? Maybe you were even impassioned in trying to explain your position on that topic to the point of raising your blood pressure and your voice to match? Has such a “discussion” ever put a chill – maybe even ended – your friendship? This is the dynamic Goldmann is cautioning us about.

As said in past issues of *Jumuah*, you might win a “discussion” with your Muslim friend, but lose their friendship. In the big picture our validation and victory on the issue is not as important as the person, our friend, sitting across from us. I'm not saying to concede the issue to a point of error; rather I'm saying watch your own motivations and how you handle such situations. Their eternity hangs in the balance.

May the Holy Spirit give you great wisdom and discretion in your conversations with your Muslim friends! May He embolden your prayer for and witness to your Muslim friend as well.

God's blessings be upon you as you pray and proclaim the grace and truth of Jesus.

\* You can find past issues with all the previous Cautions on our ministry webpage: [www.cmocanada.org](http://www.cmocanada.org)

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldmann, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. p.141.

## Cautions when Presenting the Gospel: Caution 7 Is Your Bible “Squeaky Clean”?

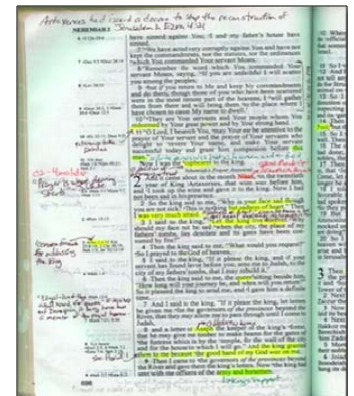
As a child in church I have a vivid memory of seeing for the first time someone use a highlighter in their Bible. My little eyeballs must have been as big as saucers. I also recall notes in the margins of my parent's Bibles. My Dad's was my favorite to look at, because I admired his artistically quirky handwriting. And I recall when as a teen I started to highlight and underline passages in my own Bible. It wasn't until university – where we were taught to question virtually everything including the “sanctity” of books – that I began to write in my own Bible. Yet, as a “missions” major with a minor in Islamic studies, I was also exposed to a different cultural perspective: The sanctity of the Holy Writ.

Most cultures and religions would not hold any holy writ in so low esteem as to write their personal notes and thoughts into them. Why? Their perspective is that, if these are the words of God, why would I desecrate it with my personal scribbling? It's holy, just as we call it the *Holy Bible*. Do I practice graffiti on church, temple or mosque walls? No? Then why would I practice graffiti on the inside – including the inside of the Scriptures?

From my exposure to other faiths and cultures I have restored my Bible to its previously highly held position: I don't write in it. Oh, I still write in other books, but not in my Bible. I mean, really...does highlighting a passage make me remember it better? And if I want to take notes I have plenty of other things to write them on – not on my Bible.

It was and is for the thought of opening my Bible to a passage with a non-Believer - especially from another cultural background - that I hold off from doing this.

Goldmann's caution number 7 is **Don't share Scripture from a Bible that has personal notes in it.**\* He shares a great additional point, too: “If you have your Muslim friend look with you as you read from a Bible, be sure it has clean margins. A Muslim who sees personal notes may think that you have added to the Scriptures.”



Does your Bible look like this... well “loved”?! If so, **don't** show it to your Muslim friend... they won't understand why you've written in God's Holy Writ and may think you're trying to add to His Word.

That Muslims already contend we have corrupted our Bibles is an argument that doesn't need more fodder from seeing and misunderstanding the notes in our Bibles.

Is it okay for you to highlight and write in your Bible? I don't and won't condemn you for doing so. But I do ask you to consider something else... to consider someone else's point of view. What would your Muslim or other non-Western friend think?

So, if you've got a much loved, well worn and marked Bible, what should you do? Keep it! But also get yourself a nice clean copy, too. Use that one when sharing with your Muslim friend. The Gospel has enough "stumbling blocks" already in it that challenge our limited human thinking: We don't need to add any more unnecessary stumbling blocks!

God's blessings be upon you as you pray and share your "clean" Bible with your Muslim friends!

\* You can find past issues with all the previous Cautions on our ministry webpage: [www.cmocanada.org](http://www.cmocanada.org)

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldmann, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. p.141.

## Cautions when Presenting the Gospel: Caution 8

### Mono-gender Ministry

By now I think you will have already realized that Muslim culture is very different from Western culture. Goldmann's caution number 8 reminds us of this again:

8. ***Men should not visit women in their home when they are alone.*** \* Remember that in Islamic culture, men and women do not mingle and they sit separately for meetings and most gatherings. Therefore, a woman should not be with a man by herself and vice versa.

In a way I'm surprised that he would say a man should visit a woman at all! Unlike our liberal Western society that puts no restrictions on the relationships between men and women, Islamic culture is almost the opposite extreme. The custom in most Muslim countries is that men and women don't look each other in the eye nor even shake hands when introduced!

I made this mistake on a trip last year in Asia. It's such an automatic thing for us Westerners to thrust forth our hand when meeting someone new. Fortunately it was okay as the woman, who worked in the airport, was used to foreigners and was not an "orthodox" Muslim. My host simply reminded me of this after we were not longer with her. Whew!

Have you ever attended an old fashioned church event where men and women sit segregated? Some in Newfoundland still do!

Why? To minimize distractions, I suppose.

But all this is not foreign to Christian faith, either. The New Testament indication that the believers sat segregated in their worship services. This custom carried over from Judaism where it is also commonly practiced. And there are many Christian churches in the Middle East that continue this custom as well.

So, just because our overall Western culture has moved far from its Biblical moorings, don't think that Muslims' segregation of the sexes is some strange thing. They're simply still practicing what they inherited from us, which we have since abandoned.

And this issue has greater import than we might give it. If a man were to visit a Muslim woman while she was alone in her home, she would likely be accused of adultery and divorced, or maybe worse.

This situation does have a positive side to it: It demonstrates the absolute necessity of both men and women sharing with your Muslim friends. And it shows the value of married couples acting together to reach Muslim couples.

And besides, Believing couples can certainly also be united in praying for their Muslim friends...and Jesus says praying in unity has great power: *"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."* [Matt. 18:19-20]

God's blessings be upon you as you "mono-gender" visit with your Muslim friends and pray in agreement for them!

\* You can find past issues with all the previous Cautions on our ministry webpage: [www.cmocanada.org](http://www.cmocanada.org)

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldmann, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. p.142.

## Cautions when Presenting the Gospel: Caution 9 Be Careful In the Use of Your Time

Time is probably Westerner's most precious resource. Therefore when we invest our time in helping a newcomer to our nation we're paying them the highest of compliments.

We must be careful in the giving of our time though. Have you ever given what you thought was a compliment, only for it to be misunderstood and received badly on the other end? And, have you ever had someone who in trying to be nice smothered you? While they were trying to be helpful, they really interfered with you accomplishing your goal. While experiencing that did you get the feeling that they thought you were incapable of doing it yourself? Neither a good feeling nor a relationship building exercise at all. Goldmann's next caution warns us of these kinds of mistakes:

**Be careful in your use of time.** \* Immigrants need help in many areas as they adjust to living in the West. They may be able to do something themselves or with the help of another family member. Keep in mind your goal is to help immigrants to function by themselves rather than in a codependent relationship.

If your friend is a newcomer here, they may need help understanding many things that need to get done and why we do things the way we do. But friends don't just "barge in" upon each other. We offer our help. Give them dignity and respect by offering and waiting for their acceptance and/or request for help. It might not come right away. They don't want to look stupid or ignorant and they suffer plenty of that without our extra help!

I grin as I write this, thinking of times when people meet someone learning English and, unwittingly, start speaking loudly. They're not deaf! Likewise we simply need to be natural and not make our own host of ignorant – uninformed and ill considered – assumptions.

How does all this relate to the Gospel? Very directly: It's a practical application of all the "one another" statements of the New Testament (a fascinating word study I encourage you to do!). Be kind. Be hospitable. Be helpful. Give. Bless. These are essential attributes of Christ-likeness we all need in greater doses. I'm convicted of my shortcomings just writing this! And it is this kind of witness without words that breaks down superstitions and myths they've believed about Christians and opens the eyes of their heart to the Good News of Jesus.

God's blessings be upon you as you pray for and help your Muslim immigrant friend!

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldmann, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. p.142.



Give help when needed without overwhelming, doing it all for them or creating a dependence upon yourself. Help them learn, gain experience and self-confidence to move naturally in their new host culture.

## Cautions when Presenting the Gospel: Caution 10 Look Out for Relational Landmines

We shared about some of this two weeks ago in the section on mono-gender ministry, but there are additional worthwhile cautions here. Goldmann warns us to "look out for relational landmines" by highlighting these three points:

A man should be slow in offering to shake a woman's hand. Let her take the initiative. Because the left hand is used for personal hygiene, it should not be used in greeting. A Christian man may call a Muslim "my friend" but not "my brother." Brotherhood assumes theological agreement.<sup>1</sup>

I shared how I've make the "cultural blooper" of immediately thrusting out my hand to shake a Muslim woman's hand upon being introduced to her. In reply a friend shared: *I had a similar experience a few weeks ago at a nearby college. I had been invited to participate in a panel with an atheist, a Catholic priest, a Bahai, and a Muslim (who happened to be a woman.) It turns out she was the best friend of my cousin (who married a Muslim and converted...) She was quite bubbly and enthusiastic about this realization and said she would immediately tell my cousin she had met me! I tried to shake her hand and she pulled back and*

said, "You should know better than that!" I told her I didn't and had her explain it to me. Fortunately she was very gracious and we laughed. I said, "What should I do when I meet my cousin? Should I salute her?!" As in these two experiences, Muslims are often quite gracious with our ignorance. Let us always purpose to be as or even more gracious toward them.

The "left hand" thing is always of some interest. If you haven't figured it out, they don't have many trees in the Middle East to make toilet paper from, so historically they've had to use other means. When you eat with your hands, as many cultures do, it makes the left hand versus the right hand thing very important! Given this, you can understand why using the left hand for serving most anything is an insult.

And I think the "my friend" versus "my brother" is quite self evident.

Are these the only relational landmines? Certainly not! If you've ever traveled outside North America, or have spent time in a cultural community here, you'll have already experienced plenty of these. There are linguistic ones, such as mispronunciations that change the entire meaning of words in unexpected and often embarrassing ways. I recall taking Russian in University, and in that language where you place the stress in pronouncing a word can change its meaning completely. Instead of saying "I am writing on the paper," if stressed wrongly the sentence becomes "I am [relieving myself] on the wall"! And there are the nonverbal, social landmines like shaking hands, and much much more. Even in relationships between two men or between two women these can happen. Our cultures train us to behave or not behave in certain ways so well that we just don't even think about our actions. But when we unconsciously enact these behaviors cross culturally in our friendships with Muslims, yikes!

How all these things fulfill Colossians 4:5-6, "*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*" God's blessings be upon you as you pray for and help your Muslim immigrant friend!

\* You can find past issues with all the previous Cautions on our ministry webpage: [www.cmocanada.org](http://www.cmocanada.org)

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldman, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. p.142.

## Cautions when Presenting the Gospel, concluding comments

### Secure Communication Needed

Goldman concludes this section with the following:

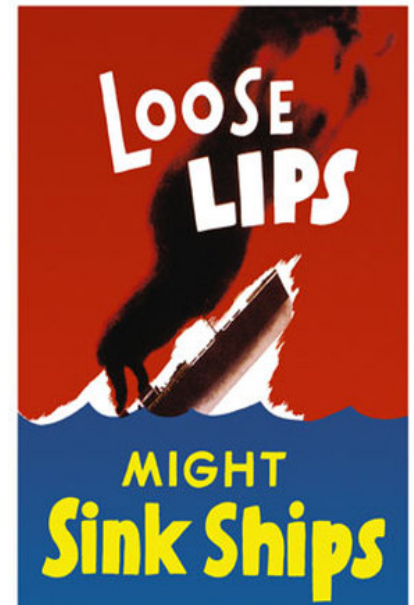
In addition to these ten cautions, be careful in presenting information in public on Christian activities. The governments of some countries have informants who spy on others' religious activities, so be careful about giving out information on such Christian activities as church gatherings, conferences, retreats, or outreaches, especially in Muslim countries. If names of missionaries are printed in church bulletins, don't indicate the country where they serve.<sup>1</sup>

A friend who serves in a R.A.N. (Restricted Access Nation) was sharing with me last year how a church in South Africa listed a couple who were ministering in their country on their website. The church even thought they were doing everything right: Not listing their last names, listing them as working in a different region of the world, etc. Yet still they were listed on the church's "mission" web page and, with all the other stuff the government agents had collected, it was enough to tip the scale against them.

Their ship was sunk. And not only were the couple evicted from the country but also their entire team – the crew of the entire ship was sunk!

Can you imagine praying and working for years to get into a R.A.N. in order to fulfill God's call and passion in your heart to share His love with a people, only to be evicted because another believer - albeit well meaning yet still naïve and damaging - exposed your presence there?!

Westerners live immersed in a context of hyper-freedom. We think all information ought to be freely available without restriction. Yet the rest of the world isn't that way and it's horribly ethnocentric of us to expect they should value what we value and behave as we behave.



As Western churches we want to promote everything we're doing in order to attract seekers into coming. To accomplish this we use all means possible these days. We've moved beyond newspaper and radio ads to email alerts, web page listings, broadcasting announcements via social networking sites, etc. We want everyone to know what we're doing, who we're supporting, where we're sending them, etc. etc.

Yet, as we begin shifting our focus to reach those who are most unreached in the world today by sending Christian workers into R.A.N. situations (the majority of people who yet need to hear the Gospel are in R.A.N.s!), we CANNOT broadcast their presence to the public.

Are you willing to accept these restrictions upon your lips (and fingers as you communicate **electronically!**) for the sake of those who most need to hear the Gospel and those who are serving among them?

Do you know and/or support someone working in a R.A.N? If so, *please ask them* for the secure communication guidelines they need you to follow. These guidelines can be different from country to country, so it's best for you to get their list from them.

Join me in praying today for those serving in R.A.N. situations, for those living in R.A.Nations who need to hear the Gospel, and for the Lord to raise up new workers willing to be His witnesses among Muslims in Restricted Access Nations. Thank you for praying!!

References: <sup>1</sup> Goldmann, *Islam and the Bible*; Moody Publishers, Chicago. p.142.

**Resources:** We are encouraged that there is a growing body of resources available on sharing your faith with your Muslim friend. Not all resources, however, have the same attitude or approach. Many, unfortunately, are quite combative and negative toward Islam, Muslims and the potential for them to come into the Kingdom of God. To help you, we do recommend you explore the following resources.

*These agencies may also provide additional resources. Please consult their resource pages for details.*

1. [Frontiers](#)
2. [AWM](#)
3. [Pioneers](#)
4. [IMB](#)
5. [ACMC](#)
6. [Center for Ministry to Muslims](#)
7. [Joshua Project](#)
8. [Perspectives](#)

*In addition to our Resources page (<http://www.cmocanada.org/resources>), the following are sites you can use for reference and some also offer additional resources. Please note: Some of these sites, such as #3 and #5, are not "Christian" but "Muslim" sites*

1. [Answering Islam.org](#)
2. [Encountering Islam](#)
3. [Qur'an](#)
4. [Bible Online](#)
5. [Hadiths Online](#)
6. [William Carey Library](#)
7. [30-Days Muslim Prayer Focus](#)
8. [Caleb Project Store](#)