



Islam at the Crossroads

by Steve Krstulovich

Muslims face unique challenges as they are being increasingly immersed in the trends of the twenty-first century through the social media and internet platforms flooding the world today. Islam is an inherently prescriptive faith, based on medieval sources, that affects every aspect of a Muslim's daily life and practices. Islam stands at a crossroads where three main views are commonly held to define its place in the world today: Traditionalism, Islamism, and Modernism.

Three Main Views of Islam Today

The majority of Muslims prefer to hold to traditional Islamic practices that have slowly been developed over many centuries in their historic and geographic contexts, and simply enjoy whatever benefits modern life can bring to them. However, these Muslims stand between two other competing views among the remaining Muslim community.

On one hand are the Islamists, who embrace their own literal interpretation of the Quran and Hadith. This view is held by Salafists and radicals who call for Islam to become the only religion in the entire world. They may use terrorism and even Muslim-on-Muslim violence against those who do not agree. Other tactics include:

- Political Islam, which uses legal means to influence current political structures
- Academic Islam, which relies on rational discourse in Western universities
- Theological Islam, which tries to convert others through public dialogue and debate
- Popular Islam, which is emotive and persuasive in speaking to Muslim hearts.

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Until All Have Heard

How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? – Romans 10:14

Mark Brink

International Director
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The men of Issachar “had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chron. 12:32). In the same manner, the Apostle Paul admonishes us, as believers, to “walk in wisdom towards outsiders, making the best use of the time” (Col. 4:5). He also charges Titus to “hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9). In ministry to Muslims, we must also discern the changing times. We must be prepared to answer traditional Islamic arguments against Christian beliefs, but we must also offer answers to the secular arguments of Muslims. The times are changing, and we must be prepared to respond appropriately to these new challenges.

In this edition of the *Intercede*, you will read about how ministry to Muslim people has been changing over the last decades. The rise of secular Islam creates a new challenge for our missionary workers. The internet and social media is not only revolutionizing Western culture, but also impacting Islamic contexts. Muslims are coming into contact with

other ideologies and questioning their own belief systems. Voices are rising within Islamic cultures challenging Islamic traditions. This rise in secularism may sound promising as an open door to the gospel, but workers need training to respond to these new dynamics and arguments.

In the last two decades, a growing number of Muslims have left Islam and are vocal in their disillusionment with the religion of Islam. Ibn Warraq, a pop culture icon, is one such author who has written numerous books that challenge the origins of Islam and the legitimacy of the prophet of Islam, as well as question the veracity of the Quran. Various organizations in the West offer support to individuals who have renounced their Islamic faith and lobby against Islam. All this has nudged Christian workers around the world to be prepared to answer the objections that secular Muslims have to the gospel of Christ. We must be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have in Christ Jesus (1 Pet. 3:15). We pray that this edition of the *Intercede* will inform and prepare you to effectively engage with secular Muslims.



Muslim World News

Teacher Lambastes Muslims for Eschewing Pride

EDMONTON – In a particularly stark illustration of what appears to be a growing rift between Muslim communities and the Canadian public school system, an Edmonton teacher was allegedly caught on tape lambasting Muslim students for eschewing in-school Pride celebrations.

“You are out to lunch if you think it’s acceptable to not show up because ... there’s Pride activities going on at school,” says the unnamed Londonderry School teacher in the two-minute recording, which appears to be directed against a student named Mansur.

A statement to the National Post, Edmonton Public Schools confirmed the authenticity of the recording, and said it is “taking steps to address the situation.”

Education ministers in both B.C. and Ontario sent out official Pride Month notices reminding staff that such celebrations are mandatory, and that any failure to properly observe Pride could constitute a violation of the Canadian Human Rights Code. – *National Post*

Ohio Sees First Egyptian-Muslim Female Police Chief

CLEVELAND – WEWS reports that Sarah Shendy was sworn in with the Case Western Reserve University Police Department.

“This department has phenomenal culture, and it really values diversity, leadership and the advancement of women of law enforcement,” Shendy told WEWS. “Being in uniform is absolutely the best job on the planet and also the most fulfilling. We get the chance, the opportunity and the privilege to be part of people’s story.”

Before her newly sworn position, Shendy was part of the force with Copley Township police. In addition to her tenure with Copley Township, she was appointed by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine as the inaugural director of the state’s Office of Law Enforcement and Recruitment. Emphasizing campus safety, she highlighted it as a key focus in her communication with students.

Shendy said her parents were a big part of her success and said she will continue to share her message of diversity, determination, and self-belief with the younger generations on campus. – *WEWS*

Police in India Bust Video Game Conversion Racket

MUMBAI – The Ghaziabad police, as they busted an online conversion racket, also uncovered an uncanny *modus operandi*, which has been gaining ground in recent times—using online games to lure unsuspecting victims. The police arrested a man for running this syndicate in collusion with a Mumbai-based man.

According to Ghaziabad police, the accused men allegedly used an online gaming app to target children and teenagers to entice them to convert to Islam. A cleric at a mosque in Sanjay Nagar area in Ghaziabad was arrested with police adding that a hunt had been launched to nab the second accused, who hails from Thane in Maharashtra.

According to the cops, the *modus operandi* was to target teenagers via the online game, which required users to recite verses from the Quran in order to win. According to the DCP, the teenage gamers were also shown videos of radical Muslim preachers Zakir Naik and Tariq Jameel.

Slowly, they will steer the conversation to subjects like violence and glory, and the need to be pious, in the context of a certain religion. This is usually accompanied by a sob story about how a close friend or a family member of the miscreant was killed or kidnapped by the police, the armed forces, or other religious fanatics. Then, the conversation will be steered toward the Israel-Palestine conflict, and supposed atrocities by the armed forces and the police. – *First Post*

Minneapolis Approves Call to Prayer Over City Loudspeakers

MINNEAPOLIS – In April 2023, the Minneapolis City Council unanimously approved a change to the city’s sound ordinance, effectively eliminating time constraints that previously prevented the pre-dawn and evening prayer calls from being broadcast.

For the citizens of Minneapolis and for many Muslims across the United States, this represents a historic moment. Jaylani Hussein, executive director of the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, described this as a victory for religious freedom and for the U.S. Constitution. The resolution demonstrates that Muslims are not only “welcome here, but they’re also here – that they are part of the fabric of the diversity of this city and our state,” he said in a statement. – *Religion Unplugged*

Modernists, on the other hand, want to make Islam more compatible with the modern world and allow for greater participation in the global community. Several major approaches have been employed to try to implement this view, with varying consequences. The following discussion outlines three of the primary perspectives regarding Modernism.

Primary Perspectives regarding Modernism

Secularization

The secularist approach seeks to remove religion from the public sphere while continuing to allow its practice. In Turkiye, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk attempted to de-Islamize society in the name of reformation and modernization by outlawing traditional Islamic attire and replacing the Arabic alphabet, among other things. This eventually resulted in the backlash seen today where the current leader is now attempting to make Turkiye a leader in the Islamic world.

The same is true of Iran, whose modernizing regime under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi ended in a 1979 coup under Ayatollah Khomeini during the Iranian Revolution and resulted in the creation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the end, such aggressive approaches to implement change actually helped Islamic fundamentalists tighten their grip on society. Although secularization may have worked for a time, it ultimately failed to protect minorities, and “secular Islam” has since been widely regarded as an oxymoron.

Liberalism

Following the two World Wars, vibrant liberal Muslims included authors, artists, professors, and political activists. Pakistan was founded in 1947 on the vision of becoming an Islamic country where every citizen could freely follow any religion, with no distinction being made on the basis of faith. Today, the country has reverted into a strictly Islamic nation, abandoning its founding goals altogether. Bangladesh, formerly known as East Pakistan, has become a center for Islamist activity.

Tunisia became a liberal Muslim-majority republic shortly after winning independence from France in 1956. Abuses of basic human and political rights led to the 2011 Tunisian Revolution, which protested corruption, poor living conditions, and lack of freedoms. In spite of this, Tunisia is considered the only fully functioning democracy in the Arab world today.

Today, one hears the voices of liberal Muslims primarily when they encounter trouble. The silence is often deafening when one would expect them to speak up for non-Muslim victims of religious or racial injustice. Liberals have become identified with non-practicing Muslims.

Moderates

Moderates’ belief in Islamic sources is tempered by a focus on viewing the Quran and Hadith in historical context. They realize that they are full of ambiguity, which allows for theological misunderstanding and calls for reinterpretation of Islam and changes to its core doctrines. Moderates are often young practicing Muslims who embrace symbols of Muslim identity with an open mind. They are aware of the limits of the Muslim community’s hesitance toward reforms



and, coming from conservative backgrounds, they are trusted as one of its own.

Moderates do not see a conflict between their religion and modernity. However, they prefer civil law over *Sharia* religious law, which they feel needs adjustment to better suit modern times. The views of these young Muslims are often not reflected in the greater Muslim community and their influence may be limited to chat rooms and social media sites. A deep generational gap exists among the 18-25 year age group. They view their elders as the cause of their own misery by failing to produce insightful and credible leadership.

Crossroads

Addressing the Times

Young Muslims around the world are deserting Islam. In fact, a Pew Research Center survey found that almost one-quarter of Americans raised as Muslims no longer identify with the faith. Levels of atheism and agnosticism in Muslim countries are comparable to those in non-Muslim nations. Due to the fear created by apostasy laws, the exact figures are likely even higher than reflected in the survey.



Disbelief often begins with personal doubts about the inconsistencies and contradictions found in Islam and its holy texts. Some have struggled for years before deciding to abandon Islam and even learned Arabic to examine the Islamic sources themselves. The decision to leave was difficult and the loss of identity leaves many in a social and moral limbo. Some even report suffering intense emotional and psychological trauma after leaving Islam.

Being part of a global community, bound by common faith and rituals, is appealing to many people. Rituals, like the *Hajj* and Ramadan, create a unique sense of Muslim

identity. Although other religions have rituals that bring followers together, the Muslim sense of identity is unique in its intensity.

Any suggestion to take a fresh look at the Quran and *Sharia* is often seen as interfering with divine law, even though many of the Islamic sources were written centuries after the founding of Islam and are incapable of rigorous authentication. Due to complacency and defensiveness over perceived Islamophobia, progress in addressing these issues is very slow. The Islamic traditions and practices lie at the heart of Muslim identity and the fear of losing them contributes to the fear of modernization.

Moderate Muslims believe that if Islamic theologians originally made a mistake in creating a violent narrative of Islam, one need not continue to follow them blindly. They recognize that many of the Islamic practices and punishments seen as excessive today are not prescribed in the Quran. However, there is a deep attachment to notions of Islamic superiority and a golden age to which Muslims wish to return. This is based on stories in Islamic sources that lack historical confirmation. Many of these stories and ideas are of very late origin and lack the credibility needed to correctly evaluate the present condition of Islam in the modern world. Notions that call for Islamic scholars to make everything in the Islamic sources unambiguously clear to preclude misinterpretation are obviously unrealistic and reflect the shallowness of the thinking behind such proposals.

Creating a version of Islam that would line up with values of peace, love, and mutual understanding, by rejecting violent passages in the Quran and Hadith, would mean rejecting absolutely foundational ways of interpreting these sources. In the eyes of many Muslims, an Islam that does not seek to dominate will no longer be Islam at all. In light of this, it is of utmost importance that Islam be critiqued and questioned.

Conclusion

The real answers to the dilemma facing the Muslim world are found only in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, “the Prince of Peace.” Technological and economic progress can degenerate into an ethically impoverished society of hedonistic individuals. The greatest need today is for the supernatural peace and love that only the Holy Spirit can bring. The historical foundations of faith that Moderates seek are incomparably sounder for Christianity than they are for Islam. In closing, let us remember the following admonition from the Apostle Peter: “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

Prayer Profile - Muslim Unreached People Group

The *Toukaleur Fulani in Senegal - Population: 723,000 - 99.5% Muslim

The Toukaleur Fulani are located in the Futa Toro region of northeastern Senegal, West Africa.

The Futa Toro region is the richest agricultural district in Senegal because of its two yearly growing seasons. The Toukaleur Fulani consist of two main groups: the semi-nomadic and the nomadic peoples. They primarily farm, fish, and raise livestock.

The Toukaleur Fulani are expected to follow a code of behavior known as *Pulaaku*, which extols virtues such as kindness, bravery, patience, tolerance, honest, dignity, and generosity. To be reserved is part of being dignified; thus, they are shy and modest in public.

The Toukaleur Fulani are almost entirely Muslim people, and this has greatly affected their traditions and customs. Many of them send their children to village schools to learn to pray and recite parts of the Quran. While some may go on to become priests and leaders of the Islamic faith, most have only a general knowledge of Islam and the Arabic language. Polygamy is generally practiced up to the Muslim limit of four wives.

Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord to raise up prayer teams who will begin breaking up the soil through intercession.
- Ask the Lord to give the few Toukaleur Fulani believers boldness to share Christ with their own people.
- Ask the Lord to burden the hearts of the Senegalese church to reach the Toukaleur Fulani people.
- Ask the Lord to speak to the Toukaleur Fulani people through dreams and visions.

**For further information on the Toukaleur Fulani people, see www.joshuaproject.net*





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*Jumaa Prayer is now on
Facebook. Please join today:
[Facebook.com/JumaaPrayer](https://www.facebook.com/JumaaPrayer)*

Friday, September 1, 2023. Please pray for

...a successful harvest of crops in Lebanon. The Evangelical Agricultural Team plan to bless struggling churches with this food, especially those helping to feed displaced Muslim children.

...a house group in Turkiye. The leader says: "At a recent meeting, 45 people unexpectedly showed up, many of them Muslims. After the message and worship time, the power of God came down in a special way. At midnight, 14 Muslims gave their hearts to Jesus."

...protection and sustenance for Nigerian Christians. 5,000 Christians were killed in 2022 and over 1,000 were killed in the first three months of 2023.

Friday, September 8, 2023. Please pray for

...Holy Spirit anointing on Global Initiative team members who are teaching at a missionary training school in Romania, September 11-22.

...the ministry of Houmayoun, an Iranian evangelist. After leaving Islam, he was imprisoned for blasphemy. Without a Bible, he and other Christians wrote down verses they knew in a notebook. This "prison Bible" sustained Humayoun for the three years he spent in prison.

...the safety of believers in Iraq as they evangelize and minister in Baghdad and Basra. Of Iraq's population of 45 million, 96% are Muslim. 1.4% of the population is Christian.

Friday, September 15, 2023. Please pray for

...the country of Mauritania. Of its population of 4.8 million, 99.5% are Muslim. Only a handful of Christians exist, but through low-profile mission work and key national believers, there is renewed hope for more fruit.

...home cell groups in Indonesia. An elder says, "Pray that our converts will not be fearful of dead prophets and Islamic curses. They are told that if they reject Islam, they will be cursed."

...Muhammad, a Christian journalist in the Middle East. He says, "After my conversion, the authorities began following me. Christian journalists and writers are the most targeted people by the Islamic regime. Right now I am in hiding. Please pray for me."

Friday, September 22, 2023. Please pray for

...a house group in Kyrgyzstan. The leader reports, "Muslims keep coming to Christ through signs and wonders. Our biggest job is to disciple them until they are mature in their new faith."

...success for Living Water Ministries in the Middle East. They are "ahead of schedule" to print and distribute 100,000 Bibles in Arabic and 100,000 in Farsi by the end of 2023.

...the Holy Spirit to move on the hearts of the growing number of Saudis who report as atheists. A poll found that 5% of Saudis (more than a million people) self-identify as atheists.

Friday, September 29, 2023. Please pray for

...protection for home cell groups in Somalia. The Islamic terrorist group al-Shabaab states: "Our mission is to remove any trace of Christianity in Somalia and establish sharia law."

...ongoing success for the ministry of Ronald Musasizi in Uganda. He states, "We are boldly preaching the gospel in mostly Muslim villages. Many have given their lives to Christ, including Muslims, witch doctors, and street vendors."

...churches in northern Burkina Faso. Al-Qaeda-linked Islamic terrorists have crossed the border from Mali and wreaked havoc and caused bloodshed in villages of northern Burkina Faso.



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Friday, October 6, 2023. Please pray for

...*Uyghur pastor Alimujang Yimiti*. Born into a Muslim family, he became a follower of Jesus in 1995. In 2008, he was charged with proselytizing and sentenced to prison in Xinjiang. After 15 years, Pastor Yimiti was freed in March of this year, but authorities continue to harass him.

...*a powerful Holy Spirit manifestation of dreams, visions, and supernatural episodes* for the world's 1.9 billion Muslims as they celebrate the birthday of Muhammad on October 9.

...*the health needs of Australian missionary Dr. Ken Elliott*. After founding a clinic in Djibo, Burkina Faso, in 1972, Elliott was kidnapped in 2016 by al-Qaeda terrorists from Mali. After 7 years as a hostage in Mali, the 88-year old doctor was freed on May 23 of this year.

Friday, October 13, 2023. Please pray for

...*Pastor Zuma in Zanzibar, which is 99% Muslim*. Brother Zuma says: "My passion is to preach the gospel to Muslims in my village. Many of them have come to Jesus. Extremists destroyed our church building, but they cannot destroy my heart or the hearts of the flock."

...*the release of 500 imprisoned Christians (many are converts from Islam) in Eritrea*. Due to the rising number of Muslim conversions, authorities are clamping down on "proselyting activities."

...*safety for house groups in the Malaysian state of Selangor*. Authorities there have issued a *fatwa* banning Muslims from entering churches. As a result, home cell groups are springing up and spiritually hungry Muslims are attending.

Friday, October 20, 2023. Please pray for

...*Christians in Afghanistan*. The Taliban now offer money for Afghans to "turn in" Christians. Since Afghans are already financially desperate, this heightens the security risk for Christians.

...*Bible distribution ministries in North Africa*. A worker says, "The words of the Bible are a nightmare for Islamic authorities. They fear that when Muslims read the Scripture they will follow Jesus. Pray for us as we distribute Bibles; it's a dangerous task here."

...*Evangelist Musa Syeed in Iraq*. He says, "As a former Muslim, I am a partaker of Jesus' saving grace. I praise Him for the many Muslims who are coming to the Lord in my country."

Friday, October 27, 2023. Please pray for

...*an Arab refugee couple in a Middle Eastern country*. Given the option to return to their country, this couple said, "If we all leave, who will serve all these displaced Muslims? We feel responsible to serve them and tell them about Jesus. We will stay."

...*Sohrab, an Iranian house church leader*. He says: "Despite intimidation, our workers are in touch with Muslim inquirers. Whether it's in the city or the mountains, we are not afraid."

...*the influence of Dr. Noor, a recent Indonesian convert from Islam*. She says, "I suffered with pain in my back. A Christian patient of mine prayed for me in the name of Jesus. I am completely pain free. I am now a follower of Jesus and read my Bible every day."

**All personal names used herein are pseudonyms.*