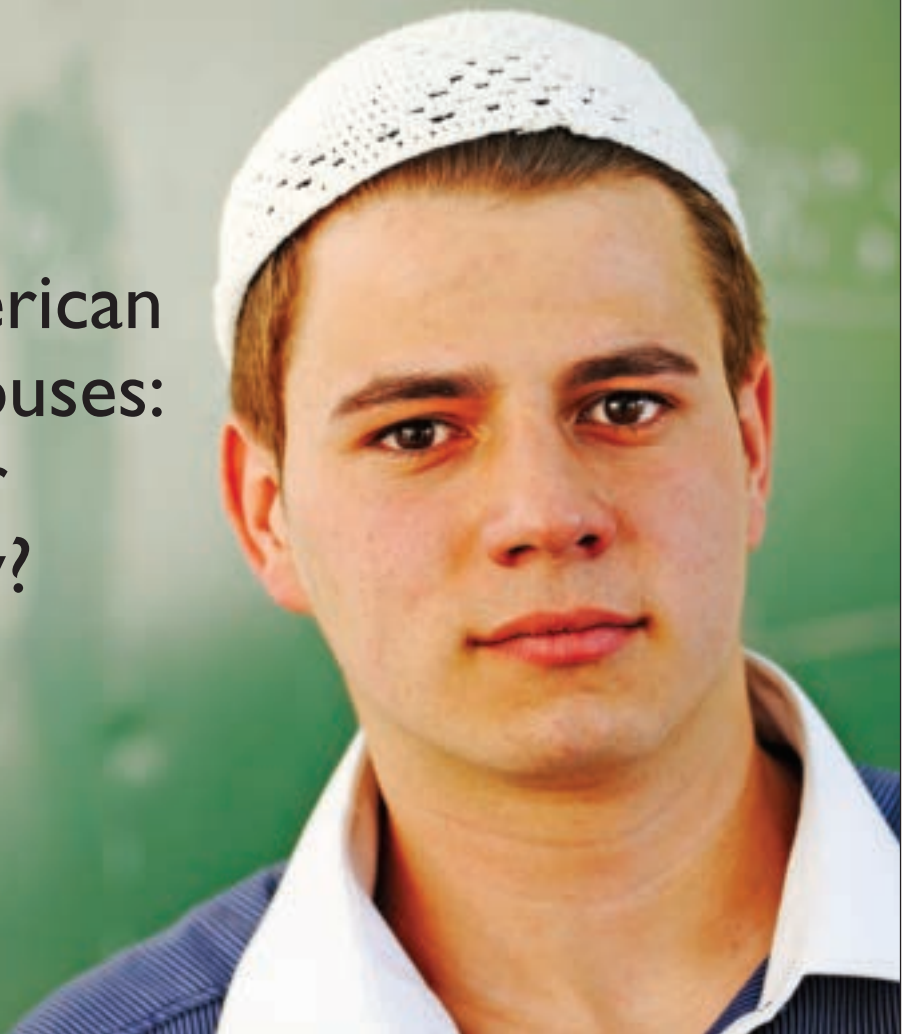


Muslims on American University Campuses: A Threat or Opportunity?

By Lee Jenkins



Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16 NIV)

Only ask — and I will give you the nations as your inheritance — the ends of the earth as your possession. (Psalm 2:8 NLT)

So often I have observed it: about 100 Muslim students, men and women, dressed in Islamic clothing, bowing to Allah at their Friday prayers. Where is this happening? In the outdoor amphitheater, right behind the Student Center, the busiest place on a major American university campus. What else have I noticed? American non-Muslim students, standing nearby, watching. What are they thinking as they see the

Muslim students do their prayers? No doubt, many different attitudes are forming.

This scenario is not at all uncommon on American campuses. Many universities have hundreds of Muslim students from different Islamic nations. Muslim students strongly exercise their rights to openly practice their faith on American campuses. Do we, as Christ's followers, view this fact passively or negatively, or, are we asking our Savior Jesus to give them to us to increase His Kingdom?

As true followers of the one true God of the Holy Bible, it is essential for every Christian to adhere to the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God. He is Lord over all the peoples of the Earth and Jesus Christ is the ultimate “mover and

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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 Hausfeld
International Director
Global Initiative:
Reaching Muslim Peoples



MISSION IS NOT WHERE BUT WHOM! This has become my “mantra” since I became director of Global Initiative: *Reaching Muslim Peoples*. My family and I spent nearly 16 years living among and doing ministry with Muslim peoples in Central and South Asia. During those years we made periodic ministry trips back to the United States. As I met Muslims in America, something became increasingly clear: that Muslims are Muslims — no matter where they are — and that many of the evangelism practices used overseas could be employed right here in the U.S. However, in America there was and is a very powerful and divinely given opportunistic difference. It is called FREEDOM!


In contexts of Western freedom a person may feel free to share the Good News. For sure, he would not be asked to leave the country for such an “infraction.” The fact is that freedom of religion is a staple of the U.S. Constitution. That means you and I have the right to share about Jesus Christ with any person who wants to hear. No “persona non grata” threats will follow. This basis of freedom brings me to our lead article written by one of the finest laborers among Muslims I know. He and his family have served among Muslims in Central and South Asia for close to 20 years. They now are engaged in reaching Muslim peoples on a strategic university campus in the U.S. Again — MISSION IS NOT WHERE BUT WHOM!

In his book *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration and Mission*, J.D. Payne writes:

Many students desire to study at colleges and universities in the United States. With all of its shortcomings, the quality of this education is still coveted throughout the world. In the 2010-2011 academic year, the United States hosted 723,277 international students, with 214,490 new international students enrolling for the first time. From 2009-2010 to 2010-2011 the number of students from Saudi Arabia increased by 43.6% (22,704) and Iran by 18.9% (5,626). Other vitally important Muslim nations sending large numbers of students to American universities are: Turkey (12,184); Nigeria (7,148); Indonesia (6,942); Malaysia (6,735); and Pakistan (5,045).

The Apostle Paul in Acts 17: 26-27 said in a university setting in Athens:

From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him — though he is not far from any one of us.

Now is God's “decided” time to reach Muslim peoples from around the world on our university campuses. MISSION IS NOT WHERE BUT WHOM! 



In most Muslim nations one dares not say the word “missionary”, let alone be identified as one. Foreign Muslim governments are very astute; and make it a practice to know all expatriates who reside in or visit their countries — and they should, it is their sovereign right. Sharing the gospel is not an accepted value in Islamic nations and in some countries it is simply forbidden. The result is that if a foreign visitor or resident chooses to overtly share the gospel, he may be asked to leave. The official diplomatic term for the expelled individual is “persona non grata,” which translated from Latin means “an unwelcome person.”

Muslim World News



Bible Society raid questioned

Malaysia

The ruling that the use of the word “Allah” for God is banned for non-Muslims in Malaysia hit global headlines in October 2013. In 2014, the latest development in the continuing row has triggered more furious debate in Malaysia. On Jan. 2, in the richest and most populous state of Selangor, near the capital Kuala Lumpur, over 20 officers, four from the top Islamic authority, the Islamic Religious Department (JAIS), together with the police, raided the Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM). Despite the lack of a search warrant, more than 330 copies of Bibles in Malay and Iban languages were confiscated.

The BSM President Rev. Lee Min Choon and its office manager Sinclair Wong were immediately taken to the local police station and released on bail two hours later. They were expected to see JAIS officers at a later date to discuss the matter.

Reuters reports that it was the first time Islamic authorities have entered premises belonging to a Christian organisation to carry out a raid.

In its official statement, BSM said that it was “deeply shocked that JAIS, whose legal powers are limited to policing Muslims, are now exercising powers over non-Muslims. BSM is of the view that this action contravenes a host of legal provisions, including that of the Federal Constitution. This is a sad day heralding the erosion of minority rights. BSM also calls upon the Christian community to remain calm and to display their best Christian character and virtues of love and forgiveness in this situation.”

Malaysia Today reports that in the aftermath, the minister for Islamic Affairs in Selangor's state government (which is ruled by the opposition to the main national ruling coalition party, UMNO) said JAIS officers involved in the raid were summoned to provide an explanation of their actions.

The minister, Sallehin Mukhyi, said JAIS's actions

were carried out without consultation with the state executive council. “This is not a small issue. It affects the rights of people of other faiths, so we have to be careful in these matters,” he said. — *World Watch Monitor*

Bomb scare reignites fears

Mali

Christians in a city in northern Mali, already forced to hold services in a school classroom because their church was looted and not ready to host meetings, had a bomb scare on Jan. 12. Military personnel patrolling the area in Gao on a Sunday morning discovered explosives near the school. French army personnel were able to safely defuse the devices and authorities are now investigating, but the incident left church members shocked.

The pastor of the church, whose identity is being withheld to protect his security, told *World Watch Monitor* there is “insecurity in all aspects of life” at the moment, but that his congregation was refusing to panic.

“I cannot say for sure that the bomb was intended to hurt us Christians,” he said. “I only know that the location of the bomb was right next to our place of worship and also a route frequently used by the military.”

It is just over a year now since French troops ousted the Tuareg-led Islamist group, which had taken over northern Mali and declared independence, aiming to impose Islamic law on cities such as Gao.

On Jan. 11 last year, French troops moved to regain control of the region after the Islamist militants had attempted to progress further south.

For nearly a year, the armed Islamist groups had ruled the region, banning the practice of other religions and desecrating and looting churches and other places of worship. Thousands, including many Christians, fled the occupation and found refuge in the south of the country or in neighbouring countries such as Niger and Burkina Faso. —

World Watch Monitor

Muslims on American University Campuses

Continued

shaker” of all nations. Our eternal God is a God who works in time. In recent years, it has become very difficult for Christian missionaries to get long-term visas for living in restricted access Muslim nations. Amazingly, at the same time, thousands of Muslim students from these very countries are coming to our American campuses to study. God has orchestrated a purposeful opportunity at our universities — the chance for Christian believers to meet and befriend Muslim students. God is sovereign over their lives and in His love He desires that they engage in friendships with Christ's true followers. Could that be YOU? Are you open for such a friendship with a Muslim? Our loving God wants to use Christian students on our campuses to reach Muslims for Christ.

Sadly, it seems at present that the majority of Christian university students are either disinterested in Muslim fellow students or they feel threatened by their aggressive presence on their campuses. Therefore it is vital that we clarify to Christian students that the presence of Muslims on American university campuses is by God's sovereign purpose. Their chances to have a clear Gospel witness are greatly increased when they leave their Muslim homeland and come to study or live in America.

Let me urge you to view Muslim people who live near and study on our university campuses as an opportunity for Christian witness, not as a threat. Christ's love in you will overcome any negative feelings or fears you may have. The clarion call of the Holy Spirit is that we reach out to them — and not lose the opportunity. Matthew 22:1-14 tells of the Parable of the Wedding Banquet. In it, the King prepared a wedding banquet for His son. He sent His servants out to those who had been invited ... and urged them to come! Our Lord wants us to go out — in our case, to Muslims on our campuses — and in a wise, loving and respectful way invite them to know the Biblical JESUS as Lord and Savior.

Spirit-filled university students have the power that will enable them to purposefully reach out in friendship to a Muslim. Muslim-perpetrated terrorist attacks may be legitimate reasons why some American university students sometimes feel resentful or threatened by fellow Muslim students. To be fair-minded, hateful acts have also been carried out by those who claim Christian beliefs. We must not allow what has been done in the past to hinder us from doing God's will today. I believe the



following is what Christ wants to make clear to His true followers on American university campuses: *For such a time as this have I sovereignly purposed you to be My witnesses on your campus; a time when I have orchestrated the lives of thousands of Muslims to be on your campuses and in your cities. Muslims who may never have a true Christian friend or ever hear and see the Gospel of Christ unless you act on this great opportunity to reach them.*

Some years ago, I began to share a phrase among university students that said simply this: *Befriend a Muslim.* I began a small group study and called it the “BAM Study Group.” In it we spent an hour or more together once a week. Half the time was used in learning what Muslims believe and practice, and ways to effectively share Christ with them. The last half was spent in fervent prayer for Muslims on our campus to be saved; especially praying

Campuses: A Threat or Opportunity?

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for those we knew by name. This was a true faith building use of our time. It changed mindsets from feeling fearful or threatened to being inspired in faith and love to reach out to Muslims with the powerful message of Christ. Perhaps there are some reading this who could start a “BAM” group on your campus or in your church.

The opportunities I have had over the last five years in my area have been awesome. By God's strength, I have tried to make the most of them. I have met Muslims from many Islamic nations and have done a lot of sowing of the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16-17) ... and a lot of praying! On my campus I have never once felt threatened while attempting to share Christ and His love and truth. For sure, I have been strongly opposed by Muslims; ignored, rejected, and probably even spoken evil of — all of which my Lord Jesus suffered Himself. As true followers of Him, we must be prepared for and willing to face

the same. In Matthew 10:24-25 we learn that the servant is not above his Master.

In his book *Response Evangelism*, author Randy Hurst offers much wisdom and practical advice. Here are two examples: “We must be diligent and faithful to share the Gospel with people, even if they do not 'appear' to be responsive.” And “Most people who come to Christ through personal evangelism are not reached by strangers but by someone they've gotten to know.” Both these observations are especially applicable when witnessing to Muslims. I suggest you to get a copy of this little book and read it and pray to do what he teaches from Colossians 4:2-6.

Have any Muslims on your campus or in your city gotten to know you because you took the initiative and befriended them? Paul the Apostle wrote in 1 Thessalonians 2:8 “We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God, but our lives as well, because *you had become so dear to us.*” How is that to happen for us in our relationships with Muslims? The answer is by spending quality time together. If we ask our loving God for these types of relationships, He will lead us to Muslims who are searching for true friends. Maybe you could ask a Muslim friend to take you with him/her to their Friday prayers on your campus or at a local mosque. You could both learn about them and pray for them. I do this regularly and it has opened many doors.

The highest purpose of God for every individual is that each one might know Him, the One True God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. In that knowledge is the gift of eternal life (John 17:3). Our dear Muslim friends, from the Biblical perspective, are in a tragic dilemma: trying to earn something that cannot be earned — salvation from sin and escape from Hell. Our sovereign Lord is grieved that they are in this deceived state. As followers of Jesus, we should be, too. The God we know acts on behalf of those who love Him and who search for Him (2 Chronicles 16:9). Even now He is acting in order that multitudes of Muslims in America might receive His gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

Our attitude will largely determine our response to the opportunities God has arranged to reach Muslims on our


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university campuses. An excellent example is found in the classic Christian epic *Ben Hur*. At the end of the film, Ben Hur stands near the man Masala, who opposed him, his beliefs, his family and his country. Masala, near death, says to Ben Hur, "Look at me, enemy vanquished." The awesome response of the man of God was, "I see no enemy." How will we view those Muslims among us who may oppose us, our belief in the Holy Bible, and our precious Lord Jesus? Do we see them as a threat, as the enemy ... or as a glorious opportunity, arranged by God? In 2 Corinthians 2:12 the Apostle Paul teaches that God

gives tremendous opportunities and opens doors for proclaiming Christ's message. Let us, as Christ's servants, act upon the opportunities and enter the open doors.

Christ is able to save any Muslim. PRAY that Jesus will use you to lead Muslims to the light — and see what He does. Many of the Islamic faith on our American campuses are searching for spiritual fulfillment and assurance of eternal life — something they do not have as a Muslim. Believe that you can be the person to help them find both in Christ. Nothing is too difficult for God. (Luke 1:37) 

Prayer Profile: Muslim Students on U.S. Campuses



Pray for:

1. More than 75,000 Muslim students studying at American universities and colleges.
2. Campus ministries as they reach out to Muslim students with the gospel.
3. The distribution of Scriptures to Muslim students.
4. Local churches as they reach out to visiting Muslim students from across the world.
5. Christian students who are developing friendships with Muslims.



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



Friday, March 7, 2014. Please pray

...that God would continue to strengthen the underground Church in Iran.

...for Muslims living in the West. Pray that through their conversions and testimonies, the gospel of Jesus Christ will be spread into the Islamic world.

...for God to protect and sustain the persecuted Church in Bangladesh.

Friday, March 14, 2014. Please pray

...for Muslims attending mosques today. Pray that the Lord would reveal His love to them in miraculous ways.

...for expatriate Christian workers in the UAE to gain opportunities to witness about Jesus. A large percentage of the UAE's population is made up of foreign workers.

...for Christian missionaries across the Muslim world. Pray for their protection and encouragement.

Friday, March 21, 2014. Please pray

...for the Muslims of Kazakhstan to have opportunity to learn about Jesus.

...for Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) across the Islamic world seeking discipleship and fellowship.

...for Christian pastors across the Muslim world. Pray that through divine intervention, windows of opportunity would open allowing indigenous pastors to openly preach about the love of Jesus Christ.

Friday, March 28, 2014. Please pray

...for more than 75,000 Muslim students studying at U.S. universities and colleges.

...for Muslims in Syria. The country remains on edge as the Assad regime maintains power.

...for Muslim women in Somalia. They are often subject to *sharia* law and have little opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ.



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Friday, April 4, 2014. Please pray

...for government leaders across the Muslim world. Pray that through divine intervention, windows of opportunity would open, allowing millions of Muslims to truly have the chance to learn about Jesus Christ.

...for God to work a miracle in the lives of Chinese Muslims.

...for Muslims in North Africa. Pray that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would sweep across this stretch of countries.

Friday, April 11, 2014. Please pray

...for the Muslims of Zanzibar. Muslims make up 97 percent of the population, and tension is consistently high between the Islamic community and the Christian minority.

...for indigenous Christian pastors in Central Asia. Many toil under intense danger.

...for God's protection over underground churches in Afghanistan.

Friday, April 18, 2014. Please pray

...for God to protect and sustain the persecuted Church in South Sudan.

...for Muslim children to have the opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ. More than a quarter of the world's 2 billion children live in Muslim countries. Children make up over 40 percent of the global Muslim population.

...for India's 200 million Muslims to freely hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Friday, April 25, 2014. Please pray

...for Christian witness to the Muslims of Ghana. Many cities in north Ghana are up to 95 percent Muslim.

...for the approximate 2,000 Christians of Gaza, living as a pressured minority with 1.7 million Muslims.

...for Christian believers in Morocco to be filled with the vision to share Jesus Christ with 33 million Muslims.

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