



Study Guide

Notes for the Leader

Throughout the sessions in this study guide, *italicized text* is intended for the leader or facilitator.

Have on hand for each session

- several Bibles and at least one translation of the Qur'an
- two flip charts, easels, and markers
- enough copies of *Voices United* for all participants
- name tags
- extra pens
- sticky notes to flag pages under discussion
- enough copies of this document for all participants

Participant Preparation

If possible, invite participants to read the first chapter of *That We May Know Each Other* in advance of Session 4. As each of the four sessions in this study guide is based sequentially on the seven chapters in the study document, participants should be encouraged to read as much of the next session's chapter as possible.

Each session will take about an hour and a half. While the sessions are comfortably designed for this amount of time, it is possible to get through the material in one-hour sessions if required. Session 1 provides options so there is time to work through the responses to the 10 points of the proposed statement on pages 1–2.

Note: There is a response form at the end of this study guide. The responses will relate to the proposed statement found on pages 1–2. Both group and individual responses are welcome. Responses will be especially helpful to guiding the That We May Know Each Other Steering Committee in confirming, altering, or refining the particulars of the proposed statement. Leaders might reflect ahead of time on the best way for their group to complete the response form. This guide calls for it to be completed during Session 4.

Please return the response form on completion of your study.

Final date is May 1, 2005, to

The Committee on Inter-Church and Inter-Faith Relations
Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit
The United Church of Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4

Session 1

Why This Document Is Needed

Opening

Invite someone to read aloud Luke 10:25–37.

Prayer

Great Living God, never fully known, we gather here to seek ways of knowing and understanding our neighbours. Help us in this work so that we may grow in our appreciation for their ways of being. Help us that we may not be fearful but that we may learn, in this hurting world, to love our neighbour as Christ would have us do. Amen.

Invite participants to introduce themselves and offer, if possible, a story, incident, or experience that relates to an engagement with Muslims. (If the number of participants is too large, break into groups.)

Exploring

Divide into two groups, and referring to the assigned paragraphs, discuss the following questions:

Group 1: Why This Document Is Needed (pages 3–4, up to box)

- What would you say are the three key reasons for producing this study document, based on your understanding of the five paragraphs on pages 3–4?
- Do you believe, as the Qur’an predicts, that Muslims and Christians will become “nearest in affection”? Is it possible and preferable for Muslims to be nearest in affection to Christians? How possible is it, given the current situation of tensions mentioned on pages 3–4, first and fifth paragraphs?

Group 2: The Goal of Understanding (first three paragraphs of The Goal of Understanding, pages 4–6, excluding the boxes)

- Two key affirmations from The United Church of Canada are presented in the first two paragraphs. The first one is fairly recent; the second has been with us for almost half the life of this denomination. Which of these affirmations are you familiar with?
- Do you question any parts of either of these affirmations?
- Discuss the implications and opportunities arising from these affirmations.
- Do you think God is “creatively and redemptively” at work in Islam? If so, how?

Return to plenary. Record the group responses on a flip chart, and discuss.

Connecting

*Discuss or read the last paragraph of *The Goal of Understanding* (page 7) and introduce this “Describing the Relationship of Christians to Other Faiths” exercise. Have participants individually read the four approaches from exclusivist to transformationist (page 6). Then have them consider:*

- In which approach would you put yourself?
- Where would most of your congregation be?
- In your congregation, how many exclusivists, how many transformationists, and so on would there be? Play with this idea.

Return to plenary. Record on the flip chart only what people want to share, and discuss.

Return to the original two groups to discuss the following:

Group 1: Do We Worship the Same God? (page 5)

- Why does the document say the question “Do we worship the same God?” is more of a problem for Christians than for Muslims?
- Is this question problematic for your group?

Group 2: Differences in Understanding (pages 7–8)

- What differences in understanding are named in this section?
- What is our conviction and hope, according to this section?

Group 3: The Report of the Commission on World Mission (pages 30–32, excluding box on page 31)

- According to pages 30–31, how did the commission break new ground?
- What do these pages say was the most important recommendation from the commission report?
- Describe the two ideas of revelation these pages mention from the commission report.

Return to plenary and report on the discussion, using the flip chart to record responses.

Take-home assignment: See “Qur’an or Bible?” on the next page.

Closing Prayer

Read or sing together from Voices United, #268: “Bring Many Names.”

Invite the group to go through the following texts indicating whether they think each comes from the Bible or the Qur'an. Emphasize that this is not an intellectual test but rather a whimsical sampling from both traditions. Encourage the use of both sides of the brain and having fun. Participants can check their responses against the answers in Session 2.

Qur'an or Bible?

The quotations below are taken from either the Qur'an or the Bible. A variety of translations have been used to make them interesting. The Almighty is referred to as God in all cases for the purpose of this exercise.

	Qur'an	Bible
1. We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The disciples said "O Jesus son of Mary can you send down a table set with food for us from heaven?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. When Moses came back to his people, angry and grieved, he said "Evil it is that ye have done in my place and in my absence."... He put down the tablets [and] seized his brother....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We took from the prophets their covenant: As from thee: from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus the son of Mary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. If there is a young woman already engaged to be married, and a man meets her in the town and lies with her, you shall bring both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took some bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar...and sent her away.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. And Jesus shall be a sign for the coming of the judgment: therefore have no doubt about the hour but follow...this is the straight way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do not kill Joseph, if you must do something, throw him in the bottom of a well. He will be picked up by caravan traders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. For it is indeed just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Moses! In this land are people of exceeding strength: never shall we enter it until they leave it: if they leave then shall we enter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Curses were pronounced on those among the Children of Israel who rejected Faith by the tongue of David and of Jesus...because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 13. Children of Israel! Call to mind the special favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you among all others. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. ...took the children of Israel across the sea: Pharaoh and his hosts followed them in insolence and spite.... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan...." | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. "...for the measure you give will be the measure you get back." | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. But if our injustice serves to confirm the justice of God, what should we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us?... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. You shall surely find that the nearest in affection to those who believe are the ones who say we are Christians. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with God's will. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Session 2

The Bible, the Qur'an, and Revelation and Understanding Our Differences

Connecting

Invite participants to check their responses to the “Qur'an or Bible” questions from Session 1 against the answers at the end of this session. Allow time to discuss this exercise as a group.

Prayer

God of word and action, you reveal yourself again and again through time. In so many ways we feel your rich presence. Grant us the wisdom to discern your ways as witnesses and disciples in Christ. Amen.

Exploring

Divide participants into four groups to discuss the following:

Group 1: A Christian Understanding of Revelation and Holy Scripture and The Qur'an's Claims for Itself (page 24 and box on page 26)

- What characterizes the basic difference between the claims of revelation with respect to the Bible and the Qur'an?
- Some Christians refer to the Bible as “the Word of God.” What does page 24 say about this?

Group 2: The Question of Critical Study of the Qur'an (pages 26–28)

- What does the study document say about literary dependence in the Qur'an and the Bible?
- Name some of the challenges that present themselves to Christians seeking to understand the Qur'an as a word of God.

Group 3: Can Christians Affirm Muhammed as a Prophet? (page 32)

- How does page 32 describe the prophets in Islamic thought?
- How does page 32 describe the prophets in Christian thought?
- What is meant by the term “seal of the prophets”?
- Could your group affirm Muhammad as a prophet? In what sense?

Closing Prayer

Welcoming God,

We thank you for your love revealed in Jesus Christ, a love that goes far beyond the boundaries of human understanding. Help us become aware beyond the boundaries of our human understanding. Help us become aware of the judgments and boundaries that we create, inadvertently excluding others and blocking our vision of you. Open us to hear anew the message of your affirming love for all people. Amen.

Answers to "Qur'an or Bible?"

1. We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob.... Surah 2.136
2. The disciples said "O Jesus son of Mary can you send down a table set with food for us from heaven?" Surah 5.112
3. When Moses came back to his people, angry and grieved, he said "Evil it is that ye have done in my place and in my absence."... He put down the tablets [and] seized his brother.... Surah 7.150
4. We took from the prophets their covenant: As from thee: from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus the son of Mary. Surah 33.7
5. If there is a young woman already engaged to be married, and a man meets her in the town and lies with her, you shall bring both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death.... Deut. 22:23
6. So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took some bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar...and sent her away. Gen. 21:14
7. And Jesus shall be a sign for the coming of the judgment: therefore have no doubt about the hour but follow...this is the straight way. Surah 43.61
8. Do not kill Joseph, if you must do something, throw him in the bottom of a well. He will be picked up by caravan traders. Surah 12.10
9. For it is indeed just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you.... 2 Thess. 1:6
10. Moses! In this land are people of exceeding strength: never shall we enter it until they leave it: if they leave then shall we enter. Surah 5.22
11. Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent. Mt. 11:20

12. Curses were pronounced on those among the Children of Israel who rejected Faith by the tongue of David and of Jesus...because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses. Surah 5.78
13. Children of Israel! Call to mind the special favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you among all others. Surah 2.122
14. ...took the children of Israel across the sea: Pharaoh and his hosts followed them in insolence and spite.... Surah 10.90
15. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan...." Gen. 9:24
16. "...for the measure you give will be the measure you get back." Lk. 6:38
17. But if our injustice serves to confirm the justice of God, what should we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us?... Rom. 3:5
18. You shall surely find that the nearest in affection to those who believe are the ones who say we are Christians. Surah 5:82
19. It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Heb. 2:10
20. I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with God's will. Surah 3.49, as well as the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas 2 or 3, depending on translation

Session 3

The Islamic Way of Life and Common Challenges and Paths toward Change—Building a Just Society

Connecting

The following prayer is the *salat*. It is prayed five times a day by Muslims at appointed times of the day.

Say: “Let us stand and face the east.”

Leader: (Call to prayer, or *azan*) God is great (x4). I witness that there is no deity except God (x2). I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God (x2). Come to prayer (x2). Come to the good life (x2). God is Great (x2). There is no deity except God.

All: In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds
The Merciful, the Compassionate,
Master of the Day of Judgment.
You we worship; you we ask for help.
Guide us in the straight path,
The path of those whom you have blessed
Not the path of those who have incurred your wrath,
Nor of those who have gone astray.

Exploring

Divide into two groups and discuss the following:

Group 1: Hijra (pages 17–18, first four paragraphs, excluding the Jihad box)

- Explore the differences and similarities between the *hijra* to Medina and the exodus from Egypt.
- What reason is given for Muslim countries having a “different attitude toward political power” from Christian countries?
- How does the document describe the Christian propensity for separating church and state?

Group 2: Jihad (page 17 box)

- What is the first thing that pops into your head when you hear the word *jihad*?

- Does your impression of the lesser *jihad* differ from its description on page 17? If so, how?
- How do you think the description on page 17 would differ with most Canadians' perceptions of what *jihad* is about?
- With respect to the greater *jihad*, what terms would Christians use to describe or name this "warfare within our self against evil or temptation"?

Return to plenary and report responses on the flip chart.

Break into pairs. Assign half the pairs separate sections to report on.

First set of pairs: Discuss the five pillars (page 19)

- Do you or your family have a set of pillars that ground your faith?

Second set of pairs: Discuss the call to prayer (page 20)

- Do you or your family have a prayer routine?

Return to plenary and share the learnings. Share your practices.

Connecting

Assign a reader for each line of the surah in modern translation (source unknown) on page 47:

1. We have revealed to you the book with truth, confirming the Scriptures which came before it....
2. For each of you We have ordained a Law and a Way.
3. Had God pleased, He could have made all of you a single community.
4. However it is His will to test you by the revelation given you, so compete in goodness.
5. To God you will all return and He will resolve your disputes.

Read the first paragraph on page 53 about this surah.

Study

Divide participants into seven groups to cover the topics below (if you have a small number of participants, groups can take more than one topic). Ask the groups to find and bring back, from their reading, any learnings, challenges, or encouragement.

- Muslim Ethics (pages 42–43 and page 46, middle of page, to page 47)
- Muslim Views on War and Non-Violence (pages 47–48)
- The Role of Women in Muslim Societies (page 48)

- Marriage (pages 48–49)
- Equality for Women (pages 49–50)
- Issues around Sexuality (page 51)
- Polygamy (page 52)

*Return to plenary and collect learnings, challenges, and encouragements on the flip chart.
Open a discussion on the emerging issues from the above exercise.*

Closing

A Christian Prayer

Lord,
 Make me an instrument of your peace.
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
 Where there is injury, pardon.
 Where there is doubt, faith.
 Where there is despair, hope.
 Where there is darkness, light.
 Where there is sadness, joy.
 O Divine Master,
 Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled,
 as to console;
 Not so much to be understood, as to understand;
 Not so much to be loved, as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive.
 It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
 It is in dying that we awaken to eternal life.

Prayer of St. Francis

A Muslim Prayer

Oh God,
 You are peace.
 From You comes Peace,
 To You Returns Peace.
 Revive us with a salutation of Peace,
 and lead us to your abode of Peace.
*A saying from the Prophet
 Muhammad used in daily prayer
 by Muslims*

Session 4

Paths of Reconciliation

Your group may want to use part of this session to respond to the proposed statement on pages 1–2 of this document. The response form on pages 106–7 includes a set of questions about your group’s perceptions of the process and the content of the individual points that are part of the proposed statement. The General Council would like to hear from you as a group. If your group is planning to respond at the end of this session, open with the prayer and use the litany of the statements (see *Opening and Connecting* in box below) later. To make time for the response, consider skipping the *Exploring* part of this session.

Opening and Connecting

Turn to pages v–vi and read the preamble. Then have individual participants read each point of the proposed statement on pages 1–2 as a litany.

Prayer

God, for your great gift of diversity, we thank you. Help us to treasure this gift and help us to use it for your divine purpose. Amen.

Exploring

Divide participants into two groups to discuss the following questions:

Group 1: Imperative quote and United Church’s approach to ecumenism and reconciliation (page 54, starting at “It is the search” through “a respect between our two communities”)

- Were you aware of this approach to ecumenism and reconciliation?
- Using Schreiter’s steps in the ministry of reconciliation (page 55, “Schreiter describes...”), what concrete outcomes can we, as individuals or together, imagine happening?

Group 2: Reconciliation (page 55, from “Personal reconciliation,” down to box)

- The fifth line after the box on page 59 states, “The foundational marker that we have chosen to lift up is the affirmation of the 1966 Commission on World Mission that God is creatively and redemptively at work in the religious life of humanity,” and in this context the religious lives of Muslims. Are you surprised that this statement has been with us for almost half the life of our denomination?

- Does this statement make it easier to achieve concrete ends for reconciliation? Why or why not?
- What concrete outcomes can we, as individuals or together, imagine happening?

Have each group briefly check in in plenary.

Connecting

On separate flip charts, record commonalities and differences between the Muslim and Christian traditions. Take some time to reflect on these.

- How great are the differences?
- Can we move on our commonalities?

Closing Prayer

Invite the group to stand in a circle facing inward. Ask everyone to be prepared to turn 180 degrees to look outward from the group when you ask them.

For the questions we have raised, for the stories we have shared, for the learnings we take away we thank you. Let us turn outward to the world (*turn*). For the work of faith communities throughout the world striving toward your shalom, we offer thanks and honour to you, O God, as we travel in our distinct way, sure in your love for us. Amen.

Name of congregation/mission unit/chaplaincy _____

Presbytery/District _____ Conference _____

Location: rural/village town small city urban centre

If not a congregation/mission unit/chaplaincy, please indicate

presbytery/district group Conference group theological school

Is this the response of the Session or equivalent? yes no

Is this the response of another group? yes no

If yes, please specify _____

Approximate number in study group _____

Ages of participants (check all that apply): under 30 30–55 over 55

Is this the response of an individual? yes no

In dealing with the topic of United Church–Muslim relations, this study document and the process were on the whole very helpful helpful not helpful

Additional comments:

Please return on completion of your study. Final date is **May 1, 2005**, to

The Committee on Inter-Church and Inter-Faith Relations
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3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300
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Glossary



To learn more about these terms, a good reference is Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), available in many public libraries.

99 names of God Muslims commonly speak of these, which include the name “Allah.” These names are the attributes of God (for example, The Compassionate, Most Merciful, The Sovereign, and so on).

abrogation *See* naskh.

Ahmadiyya A group founded in North India in the late 19th century by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. There is controversy as to how the founder understood his role.

Al Fatihah “The Opening,” the first surah of the Qur’an. This surah is recited every day at daily prayers.

al Ghazali The greatest religious reformer of the Muslim theological tradition, who affirmed that religious awareness must be based on personal, intuitive awareness of the goodness and mercy of God. Unless this is personal knowledge, the allegedly religious person is just obeying abstract rules without comprehending why.

Allah The Arabic name for God. Christians and Muslims worship the same God, the God of Abraham (father of Isaac and Ishmael), Sarah and Isaac (the lineage that leads to Jerusalem and Jesus, and therefore Christianity), Hagar and Ishmael (the lineage that leads to Mecca and Muhammad, and therefore Islam).

Allahu Akbar “God is greater,” the words that begin the Muslim call to prayer.

Asbab al-Nuzul The study of the contexts of the events of the Prophet’s life so the meaning of particular revelations can be understood in their context.

Ashura A Shi’a Muslim holiday observed on the 10th day of the first month of the Islamic calendar, mourning the martyrdom of the Prophet’s grandson Hussein.

ayatullah A senior expert in Shi’a Islamic law.

azan The call to prayer, which goes out five times a day in mosques all over the world. The *muezzin* calls the *azan* out from the *minaret*.

caliph The title given to Muhammad's successors. The first four caliphs, in order, were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali.

charism A divine gift, or gift from God, such as the gift of prophecy.

da'wa Mission.

dhikr Sufi rituals in remembrance of God, sometimes performed on Muhammad's birthday.

dua Personal prayers Muslims can offer in addition to *salat*, or ritual prayers.

Eid ul Adha The second major holiday of Islam, which marks the end of *hajj* and commemorates Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son Ishmael.

Eid ul Fitr Festival of Fast-Breaking, which ends the month of Ramadan.

Eid ul Ghadir For Shi'a Muslims, a major holiday that celebrates the announcements of Ali's succession to the Prophet.

fiqh Principles of Islamic jurisprudence: 1. the Qur'an; 2. the *hadith*, stories about the actions and decisions of the Prophet; 3. analogy; and 4. consensus.

five pillars of Islam 1. To bear witness that there is no god but God, and that Muhammad is the prophet of God; 2. to perform ritual worship (*salat*) five times daily at appointed times; 3. to fast from break of dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan; 4. to give alms (*zakat*) regularly; 5. to go on pilgrimage (*hajj*) once in a lifetime, health and wealth permitting.

fundamentalist A term widely used for anyone in any religious tradition who sees him- or herself as ready to do battle for what are perceived as threats of alteration to doctrine in relation to changing social context.

hadith The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

hajj Pilgrimage, which Muslims whose health and wealth permits must perform at least once in a lifetime.

hanif People contemporary with Muhammad who were seeking religious insight.

hijab A head covering.

hijra The emigration of Muhammad and a small number of his followers from Mecca to Medina in C.E. 622. This event is comparable to the significance of the exodus from Egypt of Moses and his followers. The *hijra* marks the first year of the Islamic calendar.

Hussein The grandson of Muhammad. Hussein's death is the central event in Shi'a history.

Imam Generally, the leader of prayers. For Shi'a Muslims, this term takes on a deeper meaning, referring to Ali (Muhammad's son-in-law and the fourth caliph) and a select group of his immediate descendants.

Islam "Serving God." The main creed of followers of Islam (Muslims) is "The only God is God and Muhammad is his Prophet."

Isma'ili A branch of Shi'a Islam that traces its origin to the death of the sixth Imam, Ja'far, within the Shi'a succession.

jihad Often incorrectly translated as "holy war," this term really means "striving in the cause of God." The greater *jihad* is a personal striving to overcome evil and temptation; the lesser *jihad* is the striving to defend Islam or a Muslim community. The latter defence is to be done through speaking or writing; physical conflict is only a last resort.

Ka'ba A shrine built around an ancient meteorite. The city of Mecca grew around the Ka'ba, which was dedicated to the worship of God in C.E. 630.

Logos In Christianity, the Word of God. Logos can be thought of as being always present everywhere and potentially expressed anywhere. According to John 1:1–5 and other scripture, it is through the Logos, or eternal Word, that all things come to be and finally will be perfected. Christians know the Word as incarnate in Jesus Christ.

Mahdi A messianic figure.

masjid "A place for bowing down," and the word Muslims use for mosque.

Mawlid un Nabi The birthday of Muhammad, a major Muslim holiday.

Mecca The most holy city of Islam, located in Saudi Arabia.

Medina The second most holy city of Islam, after Mecca. Medina is located in Saudi Arabia.

minaret The traditional tower, topped with an onion-shaped dome, on mosques. It is from the minaret that the muezzin calls Muslims to prayer five times a day.

monotheism The belief that there is only one God.

muezzin The official who sends out the *azan*, or call to prayer.

Muhammad The main prophet of Islam, who began to receive revelations from God at about the age of 40 and continued to do so for 23 years. Muhammad was born around C.E. 570 and died in C.E. 632.

Muslim A follower of Islam.

Muslim lunar calendar Consists of 354 days, or 12 months of 29 or 30 days. Each month begins with the new moon.

names of God *See* 99 names of God.

naskh “Abrogation,” a technical term in Islam used to refer to the notion that one revelation abrogates, or replaces, another. The discipline of studying abrogation has become very complex because there is no consensus among Muslims about which revelations abrogated which other revelations. This has been the subject of theological debate for centuries.

polytheism The belief that there are numerous gods.

the Prophet In Islam, refers to Muhammad and is used interchangeably with “Muhammad.”

Qur’an The holy book of Islam. The word Qur’an means “recitation,” a recitation of words spoken by God. Muslims believe the only true version of the Qur’an is in Arabic and all translations are secondary paraphrases.

Rabia An early Sufi who wrote poetry that has influenced almost all later Muslim mystical poetry.

Ramadan The major holiday of Islam, which occurs in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. During this month, Muslims are required to fast from dawn to dusk to gain spiritual awareness and strengthen their souls. Ramadan ends with Eid ul Fitr, the Festival of Fast-Breaking.

Report of the Commission on World Mission A report adopted by the 22nd General Council of The United Church of Canada in 1966. This report urged the church to define its mission as including a dialogue with other faiths. The most important recommendation was that the church “recognize that God is creatively and redemptively at work in the religious life of all mankind [sic]” (page 435).

Rumi A famous Sufi poet now being widely read through the world by Muslims and non-Muslims.

rusul Major prophets, or messengers, who bring new major revelations to Islam. Among them are Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. For Muslims, Muhammad is the “seal of the prophets,” the one final messenger who completes and corrects humanity’s hearing of God’s revelation.

salat Ritual worship, performed five times daily by Muslims at appointed times.

Shari’ah The religious law taken from the four sources of law in Sunni Islam.

Shi’a The second-largest community of Muslims. Shi’a grew out of the disputes about the succession to Muhammad following his death. The Shi’a have maintained that the succession should have gone to the Prophet’s son-in-law Ali and his descendants. Today, Iran is the country with the largest number of Shi’a Muslims.

shirk The associating of anything else with God.

Sufi One who follows a mystical form of Islam.

Sunna The practice, or example, of Muhammad, which is the source of guidance for all Muslim individuals and societies.

Sunni The majority community of Muslims.

surah A chapter within the Qur'an. Each surah is divided into verses.

tafsir Commentary on the Qur'an. Knowledge of *tafsir* is central to the training of Muslim religious leaders.

ulema Islamic scholar-jurists.

umma Community. The Qur'an teaches that Muslims constitute an *umma* based not on tribal blood connections but on faith.

wali In Sufism, holy or devout people, friends of God.

wudu The ritual washing performed by Muslims before prayer.

zakat Alms, which Muslims are required to give regularly.

zhikr Ritual practices concentrating on seeking awareness of God.

Bibliography



Dialogue

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