



Connecting with Muslims: A Guide to Communicating Effectively
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Fouad Masri offers insights into Muslim culture and helps Christians understand and relate to their Muslim friends. Masri addresses seven common questions that Muslims ask about Jesus and the Christian faith, providing sensitive answers that winsomely guide Muslims to Jesus without arguing or awkward debating.

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“Where I grew up, a civil war gripped the country.”

I was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon, which is a small country in the Middle East about the size of Connecticut. While the country is beautiful, the lengthy civil war was completely ugly. It created in me a hatred for foreigners and fellow countrymen. In my mind, I placed them in either a religious or political box. To me, individuals were no longer just individuals—they were defined as either friends or foes.

During the war, I routinely witnessed Israeli jets flying over Beirut on reconnaissance missions. The planes roaring overhead would break the sound barrier and bomb both the capital city and the mountainous areas. These ringing sounds in my ears only reminded me of the Arab-Israeli war and of family members on my mom’s side who fought in the Golan Heights. Seeing and hearing the Israeli jets and bombs fostered in me a deep-seated hatred of the Jewish people.

Not only was I nursing my loathing of the Israelis, but I was also harboring acute disgust of the Palestinians because a friend from high school was killed by them. Waleed, my close friend and soccer teammate, was taking a walk on a Saturday morning at 9 o’clock, smoking a cigarette. Shelling from the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) militia killed him. I hated the Palestinians for killing my friend.

I grew up with this abhorrence during the Lebanese War, hating Jewish people and hating Palestinians. I believed both people groups ought to go away. I knew my hatred didn’t reflect the heart of Jesus, but I just wanted the war to be finished.

Amazingly, it was the war that prompted me to start studying different religions and prompted me to look more closely at the teachings of Jesus. The Christian faith had come to my family when my grandfather was saved in Toledo, Ohio, in 1914. He returned to Lebanon and brought the gospel back to his family. As I, years later after my grandfather was saved, revisited the teachings of Christ, I discovered that weapons don’t kill people; people kill people. Even a cursory review of history shows that humans have filled their hearts with hate. Humans have filled their hearts with anger and sin. It is the hardness of humans’ hearts that results in humans killing one another. The atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb, the neutron bomb: we are ever more creative in how we utterly destroy human life. Still, the root problem remains: sin.

As I continued to study the teachings of Jesus, I was especially struck by the story of how Christ washed the feet of his disciples. I was really shocked that Jesus would even wash the feet of Judas Iscariot, fully knowing Judas would betray him. It was a humbling moment for me as I read, and I knew that Jesus was the Messiah. I knew that Jesus was the Savior. I knew that Jesus’ teachings were correct, but at the time, for me, it was all head knowledge. I wrestled with how I could submit my will and my life to Jesus, especially in the middle of my country’s chaos. A terrible tragedy spurred me to action.

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BOOK EXCERPT

“This book shows how Christians and Muslims can connect with one another in real relationships of respect and trust. Masri is an Arab Christian and a skilled communicator who can explain the cultural differences and bridge the gap between different worlds. He explains where Muslims are coming from in ways that Christians can understand, and he explains Christianity in ways that make sense to Muslims.”

—From the foreword by Josh McDowell, author and speaker

A family friend was eating dinner with his wife and four children. His youngest child was two years old and had spilled his milk at dinner. This friend picked up his son to take him to the bathroom to wash up, and a mortar shell blasted through the balcony door and exploded in the middle of the table. Our friend made his way back to the kitchen and found his wife and three other children in pieces. With a plastic bag and a heavy heart, he picked up the remnants of his family and buried them.

That was my trigger to move my head knowledge of the unique love of Jesus to my heart. I was finally ready to fully commit my life to Christ. I went to my room, closed the door behind me and knelt by my bed. I prayed to the Lord, “Lord Jesus, when you came to earth, you healed the sick. You raised the dead. You washed the feet of your disciples. The more hate there is in Lebanon, the more I want to be a soldier of love. The more war there is in Lebanon, the more I want to be a soldier of peace. Forgive me for my sin. Forgive me for hating Palestinians and Israelis. Change my heart and make me a new person. I want to follow you as my Savior and Lord.”

It was a life-changing moment for me. I started to pray for the Jewish people. I started to pray for the Palestinians. When you are a follower of Jesus, when you are committed to the teachings of Christ, when you have received Jesus as your Savior, you don’t see people by their religion, race or background. You don’t see people by their level of education. You see them as God’s creation. You see they need a Savior. Like you and I need a Savior, they also need a Savior. . . .

Ignoring the command of Jesus to “go and make disciples of all nations” is not an option. Who will welcome the Muslim family who just moved into the area? Who will befriend the Muslim neighbor down the street? Who will reach out to the Muslims sitting at the coffee shop? As the hands and feet of Jesus, we must welcome them. We must take care of them, regardless if they become Christians or not.

We need not fear Muslims or reaching out to Muslims because Jesus’ mandate to us is fully funded. When you are sent out by Jesus, you are not going in your own name. You are going in the name above all names. Under his authority, in his power, you must take initiative—you must go.

—From chapter one, “Our Role in the Great Commission”

