



Idealized Islam: Interview With Rev. Elijah Abraham

In the nine years since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Americans have been subjected to a great deal of “spin” from the political elites and the media regarding the history and teachings of the Islamic religion, and the rise of jihadist terrorist organizations around the globe. America’s history of religious freedom and the religious dimensions of the current conflicts in which American troops are engaged leave many citizens feeling confused: How should they perceive Islam? How may they best understand the faith of Muslims living in the United States?



Rev. Elijah Abraham offers a much-needed perspective on the nature of Islam. He was born and raised as a Muslim in Iraq, but converted to Christianity when he found that Islam did not answer his most pressing religious questions.

Rev. Abraham earned a degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and was ordained in 2002. In 2006, Rev. Abraham started Living Oasis Ministries, an organization devoted to teaching American churches about Islam and the best means for reaching out to Muslims with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the past year, he has also helped to establish [Veterans Against Jihadism](#), endeavoring to inform our nations veterans about Islam and the origins of the current conflict in the Middle East.

Rev. Abraham was recently interviewed by Rev. James Heiser for *The New American* and shared his perspective on Islam and the current threat posed by the ideology of the Islamic jihad.

The New American: *What was it like growing up in Iraq as a Muslim?*

Rev. Elijah Abraham: Born in a Muslim family, you really have no choice but to be a Muslim. If a child is born to Muslim parents, according to Islamic law, he is immediately a Muslim. And that locks that human being be it a boy or girl into Islam. Whether he grows up knowing what Islam is all about that’s really secondary. Of course, it would make the parents happy if that child grows up and knows everything about Islam, becomes an Imam, or whatever he does to advance Islam. But he will learn about Islam from his parents, from society, from school, from the mosque if his father takes him to the mosque, from the culture. Islam is a way of life. Its not like here in America. Christianity, or whatever faith that you have here in America, is a personal thing. That’s why they don’t have separation between Islam and State.

So I grew up under that environment. I was a member of a large family, and my father was self-employed, and he did pretty well. He didn’t work for the government. My parents were devout and prayed five times a day and observed all the religious holidays, and they tried to teach us kids to do that, but they really didn’t enforce it because my parents were uneducated. If they were educated and read the Koran themselves, probably they would have enforced all the Islamic laws on the family. We were more nominal Muslims, as kids. My dad and my mom were devout because they wanted to please



Allah.

TNA: *Growing up in a nominally Islamic home, what was your view as a child of Christianity?*

Rev. Abraham: Its a license to sin, and that was the view not just for me, but really for every Muslim around the world. You ask any Muslim. Usually when I witness to Muslims, they ask me, What religion are you? I say, What do you mean? Well, what do you believe? I'm a follower of Jesus Christ. Oh, so you're Christian! I don't say yes right away; I say, What do you know about being a Christian? I want to know his worldview: Whats Christianity to you? And they'll tell me. Their view of Christianity is Hollywood, Clinton, *Baywatch*, drugs, alcohol, and pornography. Its a license to sin.

When I hear that, its a great opportunity to share the Gospel with them and say, You know, I don't know where you get that from, but let me show you Christianity, really true Christianity. I ask them, Can you read? Read this. And I let them read the Sermon on the Mount. And they ask me a very powerful, legitimate, indicting question: If this is really true for Christians to live like this, how come Ive not seen a Christian live like this? I turn it around, so it is a witnessing opportunity. I say, God knows we still have this flesh. We still fall short. Were saved by grace through Christ Jesus. And when we sin, we come to Him directly and say, Lord, forgive me. I messed up and Im sorry. And He is faithful and righteous to forgive my sins 1 John 1:9. Its a promise.

I grew up with hatred: hatred toward Christianity. I had a lot of Christian neighbors and friends and I loved them, but the Christians I could not separate from Christianity because my community and Islam told me I could not separate America from Christianity ... England from Christianity ... colonialism from Christianity. So that was the hatred toward the West imperialism, capitalism, etc. and hatred toward the Jews, and Israel, and Zionism. Nobody told me why I needed to hate. The culture of hate is just a way of life, and not just hatred toward Christians and Jews, but also toward other factions within Islam. There is no peace. There is this constant struggle, on a personal, community, or national level. That's why its a really great opportunity to share the Gospel with Muslims, because as human beings we always want to have peace of mind. We always want to be at rest and ease. That's the void that only God can fill. So its a great opportunity when I witness to Muslims and give them that option. Yes, they will give me typical Muslim objections to the Gospel, but Im prepared to answer those questions.

TNA: *Was it the hatred and the lack of peace that led you to start having doubts about Islam?*

Rev. Abraham: No, it was really something else. It was a personal journey seeking answers from God. And I could not find those answers from the Islamic god. I have an analytical mind. I majored in engineering, so I looked at it as a mathematical equation: Because I'm begging God to help me and Hes not answering my prayers, either God does not exist, or the way Im talking to Him is not the right way. Well, He exists because creation tells me He exists, and I exist, so therefore He exists. So Romans 1 is really real. So the problem is not with God; the problem is the way Im talking to Him. The only way I had known was Islam, and Id been begging Him. By that time I was a very devout Muslim, praying five times a day, doing everything that Allah asks me to do. Hes not answering me, so maybe Islam is not the way.

So I checked out other religions. I had the boldness to do this because I was outside the Muslim world. I was in the United States. I was free. The Constitution gave me the freedom to check it out, and I loved it. And that's why I'm pretty hostile to those who want to undermine our constitutional freedom our religious liberty and freedom of speech. I don't care if its Obama, or Islam, or the liberal media, or whoever it is; if you want to take my liberty, you've got a fight on your hands. Every American should



Written by [James Heiser](#) on November 1, 2010

have that attitude.

TNA: *How did you become a Christian?*

Rev. Abraham: I went through the law of deduction. I said I'm going to try other religions: Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, eastern religions. If I can't find Him, then it's between You and me, God. That's how I saw it. And one day I looked outside my apartment, and there's a cross and a steeple: a church. I knew nothing about denominations. To me, a cross represents Christianity so I went to check it out. During the service, the pastor preached out of a text in John, and God really answered my typical Muslim objections.

Muslim objections are really few. If every Christian knows how to answer them, I don't think there's really any problem witnessing to Muslims. Of course, that's the apologetic side defending Christianity. First, we've got to love them. We need to pray for them. We've got to love them and reach out to them in a genuine way. The apologetics are just something in your armament for when they give you that objection.

TNA: *There is quite a bit of debate over the size of the Muslim community in the United States. How many do you believe there are at this point?*

Rev. Abraham: It depends on whom you talk to. If you talk to the Muslim community, they say there are about nine to ten million. I would say anywhere between four to six million. But we really don't have any way to measure the population because there are many things to consider. You've got migrants, refugees, and then second and third generations descended from them, and then the converts from black, white, and Hispanic communities. Then you have the women who marry Muslims and then later on convert.

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