

**WHAT
DO
MUSLIMS
BELIEVE?**

A series of 4 programs

featuring

Dr. Ergun Caner and Dr. Emir Caner

Hosted by

Dr. John Ankerberg

**prepared by
Ankerberg Theological Research Institute
P.O. Box 8977
Chattanooga, TN 37414**

Copyright 2003

WHAT DO MUSLIMS BELIEVE?

Copyright 2003 – Ankerberg Theological Research Institute

Introduction

Dr. John Ankerberg: What evidence could cause devout Muslims today to leave Islam and embrace Christianity? Today on The John Ankerberg Show, two former Muslims tell why they turned away from Allah and placed their faith in Jesus Christ as God, knowing that their decision would cost them the love and acceptance of their family?

Dr. Emir Caner: And so I told my father, necessarily, Allah and Jehovah are not the same gods. I worship Jesus Christ now. And he told us to make a decision between our religion and him, or better said, between our Heavenly Father and our earthly father. So I got up and I left. He disowned us.

Ankerberg: These two brothers went on to get their Ph.D.'s, and now, Dr. Ergun Caner, is Associate Professor of Theology and Church History at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, and Dr. Emir Caner is Assistant Professor of Church History at Southeastern Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. In countries outside of America, if a Muslim leaves Islam and embraces Christianity, what consequences does he or she face?

Emir: In many of the countries, what happens is, on a Friday day, the Jumaa prayer, they will take you to the city square, they will bury you up to your waist in your burial cloth....The indictment is read that you have converted to Christianity, and then everyone picks up the stones and you are stoned to death in the city square—for the sole indictment of being a believer in Jesus Christ.

Ankerberg: Everyone in the world should understand what the religion of Islam teaches 1.6 billion Muslims of what they must do to have any hope of going to Heaven; of how they are to treat Christians, Jews, and other unbelievers in Islamic countries; how women are to be treated; the role of Islamic leaders in government, and when jihad, or holy war, is justifiable.

Dr. Ergun Caner: If the numbers hold up right—and 16 percent of the Muslims worldwide believe that the bombing of the World Trade Towers was morally justifiable—if those numbers continue out, we're talking about somewhere in the vicinity of 100 million Muslims who believe that jihadic acts are morally justified. And so you see that there is this divergence of opinion about jihad, but what we hear here in America, we have never heard anywhere else in the world. We've never heard certainly in our background that you would say jihad was only an internal struggle.

Ankerberg: Today, we invite you to join us to hear two former Muslims talk about Islamic belief and practice on this edition of The John Ankerberg Show.

Program 1

Ankerberg: Welcome! I'm glad that you've joined us today. We have two former Muslims who are our guests. They became Christians, their family disowned them. They went on in their education to get their Ph.D.'s. They are now teaching in Christian seminaries. They have two best-selling books out. And our topic is: "Is Jihad for today? Is jihad really armed struggle?"

After 9-11 and the terrorist bombing of the Trade Towers and also of the Pentagon, people wanted to know, "Why are these folks quoting the Qur'an against us? Why do they hate Americans? What's going on? What's the relationship of Al Qaeda to what Muhammad said and the teachings in the Qur'an and the Hadith (the Tradition)?"

And fellows, let's talk about this thing of jihad. There are a lot of arguments that jihad is not armed struggle, it's not for all Muslims.

Emir, start us off. What are all the arguments that they are saying today, that this is not armed struggle, this is just internal spiritual struggle?

Emir: Well, the first thing they say is, "Well, listen, Islam means peace." And if you look at the word Islam, it does not mean peace. It means submission to Allah. It's a totally different scenario, then.

But after September 11th, they had to create this chasm between what they wanted to consider extremists and who **they** were as Western Muslims. And so they allegorized the Qur'an. They said the Qur'an only spoke of an internal struggle. Now, the Sufis are very good at doing this. Or they said, "This is an historical argument, that is, Muhammad himself was a military leader but never called anyone else to military leadership.

Finally, they would say, "Well, yes. But only in self-defense; only if we are attacked do we have jihad." And so they try to compare it between any of the self-defense arguments within Christendom or secular ideas.

Ankerberg: Ergun, you believe now that that, even though that's what people are trying to promote, that that is not the case. And we're actually going to look at the Qur'an, we're going to look at the Hadith, and show that you can't misinterpret that any other way than saying this is physical warfare.

Ergun: And this is something that we're only dealing with here in America or in the West, because around the world, this is without question. Around the world, the Muslims would listen to these arguments and just scoff—and they do scoff and they mock.

Is Jihad for Today?

Because, they say, "This is ridiculous! This is an embarrassment to Islam that you would possibly think this."

If the numbers hold up right—and 16 percent of the Muslims worldwide believe that the bombing of the World Trade Towers was morally justifiable—if those numbers continue out, we're talking about somewhere in the vicinity of 100 million Muslims who believe that jihadic acts are morally justified. And so you see that there is this divergence of opinion about jihad, but what we hear here in America, we have never heard anywhere else in the world. We've never heard certainly in our background that you would say jihad was only an internal struggle.

The Qur'an is explicit, but the Hadith is even more explicit that there is such a thing as: "jihad al askar," that there is such a thing a "high jihad." There is such a thing as acts of holiness, but there is also such a thing as acts of warfare in the name of Allah.

Ankerberg: Yeah, and I think we need to make clear to the people, we're not trying to promote this. We're just trying to say what the historical situation is so we will be able to know how to deal with it. Also, it's an opportunity for Muslims to re-think things. And we want to show the folks the quandary of Muslims in the West who are dealing with these very issues that we're going to talk about. But let's get down to the Qur'an and the Hadith. Let's slow it down for the people. Why are certain verses, why do they trap you into one way of looking at jihad?

Ergun: Well, one of the arguments that we have against us, the Christian community, is, they'll say, "Yes. But in your Old Testament you had 'kill all the Amalekites. Destroy them and every living creature.'" And we say, "Yes. This is true. This is exactly what the Old Testament taught. But in that Scripture as you read it, that is descriptive. Prescriptive means that it applies for today, and there's nothing in Scripture that says, "Go ye and do likewise." The problem that they have in Islam is, everything is prescriptive. They do not have simply descriptive texts. That which was done in days gone by is still to be done now. This is why, in their culture, they live the same way they did as when Muhammad was alive in the seventh century. And so you do not have a distinction of hermeneutics here where they can say, "Ah, but this was past. We don't do this anymore. That's a description. We are not called to do this anymore." Around the world, the

Muslims know if jihad was then, jihad is now.

Ankerberg: Let's start with the contemporary illustration that actually quotes the Qur'an and work from that angle. Okay? In 1998, you had a Fatwa that was signed by five Islamic leaders, Usama bin Laden being one of them. Could you just read us some excerpts of this letter?

Ergun: It's the famous Fatwa signed February 23, 1998, by Fazlul Rahman, Usama bin Muhammad bin Laden, others signed it. I will read just their conclusion. After listing what they believed to be perceived dangers of the Crusader Zionist alliance, they say this: "On that basis"—talking about what we have done against them—"in compliance with Allah's order, we issue the following Fatwa to all Muslims the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty (*Fard Ayn* in Arabic) for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible in order to liberate the Al-Aqsa mosque and the holy mosque from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty Allah, 'And fight the pagans altogether as they fight you altogether....'" And so, not only here but throughout the entire Fatwa, which is many pages, they quote the Qur'an, they quote the Hadith and they believe that by so doing, they have proven beyond the shadow of a doubt, that this is an act not of geopolitical consequence, not of conquest, but of Islamic **duty**. [See Appendix.]

Ankerberg: All right, let's take some verses from the Qur'an and give us the context and start us off here.

Emir: Surah 9:5: "Slay the enemies wherever you find them." People say that means self-defense. That's after some period and only in reaction to someone fighting them. Well, that's not the case because Muhammad's on the aggression. But then he does define it in religious terms. Verse 29: "Those who do not believe in Allah or the last day." And so your enemy is the infidel, the *kafir*, the one who does not believe in Allah.

And then you hear in surah 4:101, what is it? That they are "open enemies to you" and, after that in verse 102 it says that "we'll provide for them a humiliating punishment." And so on and on the verses go about the Qur'an. Chapter 8, verses 13-17 deals with it in a very specific manner of jihad and what you should carry out and how you should carry it out. And so Christians can look these verses up

and see it for themselves. They can see surah 5 where you recognize in battle or otherwise: "Do not take Jews or Christians as your friends nor your protectors."

And you just start listing and listing and listing, and the only way they can defend it is they say, "Yes. But that's only in self-defense."

Ankerberg: Why aren't those verses description and why are they prescriptive?

Emir: Because they are the words of Allah to Muslims. Not to a specific people group—like the Old Testament is specified for Israel. There is no such thing as a church replacing Israel as some Christian theologians would have it. And it's specified to specific territory with Israel: The land of Canaan. There is no specific territory. There is no specific people. The world is your territory. The aggression, the self-defense is to have Dar al-Islam, a House of Islam where you conquer. And you see it from Abu Bakr and Uthman and Umar and Ali and all the other caliphs, most certainly and traditionally, they recognized it as an aggressive act that they had to do. And it is still to them was a relief of oppression that they were with them.

Ankerberg: When you argue with Muslims in the West that want to oppose it, what verses do you show them?

Ergun: Not only there, I go to surah 9 and I will begin walking with them where they...the first verse they will throw out is surah 2:256, "There is no compulsion in Islam." I say, "That's a great verse. Let's go back 60 verses, surah 2:190, "Seize them and slay them where you find them."

You have this constant battle between, "Okay. There's no compulsion" and yet, "we must conquer." Either you are called to jihad or you are not. Either you are called to fight battle or you are not. There is no give and take. However, Hadith [volume 4, book 52], "Jihad"—the entire chapter is called, "Jihad: Fighting for Allah's Cause." And through it are the protocols by which Muslims operate when they are engaged in such battle.

Emir: And when Usama bin Laden declared the Fatwa, he was declaring it from Hadith, that Book 52 of Volume 4, verse 42 where it says, if you are called forth by your leader, "go forth immediately." (4.52.42)

So these are the tenets, the commandments of Allah to the people of Islam, even to this day and

until the end of time.

Ankerberg: All right, we're going to take a break and when we come back, we're going to talk about: What do Muslims think about Christians? What do Muslims think about Jews? And third, did the hijackers that took the planes and flew them into the World Trade Center towers, did they expect paradise according to the Qur'an? Okay? We're going to talk about all that when we get right back. Stick with us.

Ankerberg: All right, we're back, and if you've just joined us, we're talking with two former Muslims who left Islam, became Christians, their family disowned them. They went on in their education to get their doctorates, and they're professors in Christian seminaries. Can you believe that! And they're here as our guests and we're talking about, What does Islam, what does the Qur'an and Hadith, say about Christians and Jews and others that are non-Muslims?

Emir: Well, one of the verses in the Qur'an which is very salient is surah 5:51: "Take not the Jews or Christians for your friends or protectors. They are but friends and protectors to each other. Any amongst you that turns to them for friendship is of them." And then it says, "Allah does not guide a people who is unjust."

And so it starts out, this is the eternal battle between Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac is the promised son from Genesis 12 and Genesis 15. Ishmael has a curse placed on him. So Muslims place their own lineage from Ishmael and the Jews to Isaac and they say, "See, we had the right to the land in Israel, and the Jews took it from us. And now they took it and since 1948, with the Balfour Declaration with the Brits, and then overtaking after World War II." And the Jews are despised! They are the ones who have perverted the gospel, perverted the land, corrupted what it was to be a believer, where Ishmael was a Muslim—and Ishmael was never a Muslim. Many Christians buy into the very fact that Ishmael somehow that his descendants were the cursed Arabs, the Muslims that came to be. And they're given really a false perception of who Ishmael was because if you look in Genesis 16, God also promises to bless Ishmael. The first Muslim was not until Khadija and Abu Bakr converted to Islam.

Ankerberg: Behind this admonition to not be friends with Christians and Jews, Ergun, is it the fact that the Christians and the Jews have a different religion, a

different belief; therefore, you can't associate with them? This goes back to keeping Islam and the things that Muhammad promulgated "pure." Is that really the bottom basement line here?

Ergun: Absolutely! And there are certain sects within Islam where they will not even shake the hand. You are encouraged...there is a group in Washington, DC that exposes businesses to this type of Islam where, you know, "Don't extend the hand to shake their hand because they will not take your hand." They will not greet you because of this teaching and because of the belief system that you will become somehow made less than pure by contact. However, it is important, yes, that this type of teaching, this type of influence and influx of Judaism and Christianity is very, very important for our discussions.

In our debates, where we will speak with the media and such, they will eventually get to the question—we call it the "trigger question," which is, "Are you saying that a good Muslim goes to hell?" And inevitably, my brother and I will say one of two things. We will first say, "I'm saying a good Baptist goes to hell. It's not your denomination. It's what you do with Jesus Christ." But secondly and perhaps more importantly for this discussion, I'm saying a Muslim thinks you and I are going to hell. See, the only thing in our culture that is no longer absolute are those who believe in absolutes. And our culture has now made everyone into one big huge "group-hug." Islam teaches that there are six levels to hell-fire...or seven levels to hell-fire, the lowest is for the hypocrites. Level 6 and level 5 are for the Jews and the Christians who do not accept Allah. And so, whether you want to believe it or not, whether you want to like it or not, Muslims believe in absolutes and so do Christians.

Ankerberg: Okay, how can Christians who are listening, they say, "Hey. I've got Muslim neighbors and I really love them. I want to reach out to them. Are you saying that they'll never become my friend?"

Ergun: I'm saying that there is a belief system in Islam that if you become friends with the Jews and the Christians, you are somehow hurting your chances for paradise with Allah.

Ankerberg: Yeah, let me just follow up. Here's something about the infidels.

Surah 4:89: "Seize them, slay them wherever that you find them and in any case, take no

friends nor helpers from their ranks.”

Surah 4:101: “For the unbelievers are open enemies to you.”

Surah 4:102: “For the unbelievers Allah has prepared a humiliating punishment.”

Again, behind this is keeping the faith “pure” and if you associate with others, you are going to defile the faith?

Emir: At the least! Well, they say “that’s warfare!” Well, does that mean a Muslim in the military cannot befriend a Jew or a Christian in the military? Do you not trust it? The inherent contradiction is the fact that there cannot be any separation between mosque and state and there is no such thing as a “good infidel army.” There are only those armies that Allah blesses and those are the blessings that come from him—Muslim armies. And so those verses go outside of the military.

Ankerberg: Let’s go one step further. Muhammad in Hadith 9.57 talked about what should happen to any Muslim who would convert to Christianity or Judaism. Okay? Which is what you guys did. What’s the Hadith?

Ergun: It’s Hadith 9.57, Muhammad speaking: “If anyone changes his Islamic religion, kill him.” It’s the same chapter where it says, “No one can be killed for killing an *akafir*”—“No one can be killed for killing an infidel.” Right after the bombing, we put up what? \$25 million, for somebody to turn over bin Laden. No one would ever turn over bin Laden to the infidel who will try him as a capital offense for killing the infidels.

Emir: And it comes from the Qur’an, surah 3:85, “if you have another religion outside of Islam, it will never be accepted of you.” So what the Qur’an puts in principle, the Hadith places out in practicality.

Ankerberg: You guys, with your eyes open, you switched sides.

Ergun: Yes.

Ankerberg: You faced this one. Did you think about this?

Ergun: When you’re young you are immortal, you think that the world’s going to fall at your feet.

Emir: And our father was kind. I mean, our sisters are peaceful. Our whole family is peaceful. This is not an argument that all Muslims are violent. This is

an argument that Islam is inherently violent, that the religion purports an aggressive faith that is in its way political, military. This is not to say that 1.3 or 1.6 billion Muslims are this violent. In our own family, I don’t think there was as much worry because our father was more merciful than Muhammad would even allow.

Ankerberg: Let’s talk about the Muslims in the West here who are caught between a rock and a hard place. Okay? Explain this.

Ergun: Well, I mean, on the one hand, they like America. They came here the same way we came here, which was for the prosperity that you have. On the other hand, they are good Muslims, and they are being told by the Muslims in the Middle East, they’re being told by the Muslims of other cultures, “You have been obliged, you are obligated to holy war. You must fight. You know? The Qur’an is very explicit on this. You have been obliged to holy war. If you do not go on holy war, you are in endangering yourself of hell-fire.”

And so, they are in a public relations nightmare, but they’re also in a spiritual nightmare. The public relations nightmare is: Affirm jihad and face the wrath of America, you know, the American media; deny jihad and face the wrath of the Muslim community.

The same thing with their spiritual issue. If you do not fight, you can be a good American but you’ll be a bad Muslim. You do fight, you may be a good Muslim but you will not be a good American.

Ankerberg: Let’s go right down that path. Were the suicide pilots and hijackers expecting forgiveness of sins and a certain degree of honor in paradise **because** they did the horrific deeds, according to the Qur’an?

Emir: Hadith 1.35 promises that when you die as a martyr, you’ll go, not to heaven, but to the highest, the hundredth level of heaven. They weren’t expecting some portion of reward; they were expecting the highest reward of sitting on couches and perpetual virgins passing by them, serving them sexually. And so, they are picturing that the more devout you are to jihad, the higher your reward is in heaven. There is no question that they thought when they rammed those planes into the World Trade Center that the next thing they would see is this paradise that was very sensual, very physical, and when it exploded, sadly, they saw something else.

Ankerberg: What does the Qur'an say about Muslims who are slothful Muslims and do not endeavor in jihad, that do not take that line?

Ergun: The Qur'an is very explicit that if you do not fight in jihad, surah 4:95, "not equal are those believers who sit at home and those who strive and fight hard in the cause of Allah with their wealth and with their lives." A slothful Muslim is considered a poor Muslim.

Ankerberg: Is it true that no person who has enlisted in holy war can be found guilty of murder?

Ergun: Yeah, Hadith 9.50. This was our issue, because you cannot be killed for killing an infidel, an *akafir*.

Ankerberg: So, there would be no leader in the Islamic world that would turn over one of the terrorists to us because actually, he had done a good thing in Islam and you shouldn't do that over on our side of the fence.

Ergun: Exactly.

Emir: And probably the preeminent example is if we remove ourselves from the World Trade Center into the hot spot of the world today, it's Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. It's Israel. And you'll never hear Muslims get on Fox News or CNN or anything else and say, "What's going on with the suicide terrorist bombers, homicide bombers, is wrong." It's justifiable to more than 80 percent of the Muslims there in Israel, and they want to fight for what was "Palestine," they say. The problem, there is no Palestine. It's my contention that the Palestinians should have as much territory as they have ever had: zero!

Ankerberg: I've got to ask you guys, I mean, when you were growing up, it seems to me that the hatred toward the Jews in Israel is off the charts! I mean, it's not tied to logic in certain ways. I mean, did you guys feel this when you were growing up?

Ergun: We were taught that the Jews drink the blood of Palestinian children. We were taught that the Jews are the money mongers, the horrible, mean, conniving, mean-spirited people. And here's the hard part for us. This is difficult for us to say but it's a fact of our lives, and that is, many who come from our background, many who have been saved out of Islam, still have this vestigial distaste for Israel. Now, we have come to the point, my brother and I,

have come to the point where we see Israel as the children of God. The Church hasn't replaced them. We are grafted, but you know, they are still the children of God – "to the Jew first." But we see among our people a real dislike for them, and thus they develop theological systems based on a replacement or a confining of the Jew.

Ankerberg: Keep going.

Emir: This is not to say that Jews are saved, but that they are chosen by God.

Ankerberg: Right.

Emir: In fact, not only that, but we are remind ourselves, if God could throw away His promise to the Jews, He can in likewise manner throw away his promises to us. It is an unconditional covenant to the Israeli people. Not to justify every minutia and detail of what they're doing in Israel, but to recognize biblically and as a nation, with Britain, with the Balfour Declaration, and others, that we promise to stand by these people. We cannot leave them hanging. It is their right to be there. They were there first. They were kicked out so many times. They have a right to their homeland.

Ankerberg: We've only got a couple of minutes. Two questions. Number one is, the fact of, was the illustration about the elderly, those that are sick that cannot participate in jihad, what is that verse? Because it shows those people that are elderly and are sick, they could have internal spiritual struggle. But they cannot participate in jihad in that section of the Qur'an? What is that?

Ergun: It's [Hadith] Volume 4 and book 52, the one I cited about jihad itself. There is a list of people who are excluded. One are those who are looking after their parents, those who are the infirm and the elderly. And so they are excluded. A woman is not allowed to fight jihad, according to Islam. Her pilgrimage, her Hajj, becomes her jihad.

You know, if only one percent of the Muslims worldwide believe in jihad, if only one percent do, and the rest of the 99 percent are peaceful, we're still dealing with an army of 16 million warriors.

Ankerberg: Give me a word of hope as we go out of this program. Compare Christ with what Muhammad was saying.

Emir: Well, what we need to recognize is that

actually suffering and violence has done us good in this world, but only in one time—at a cross sitting there on Golgotha, a man shed His blood, not just for Christians, not just for part of the world, but for the entire world. And in so doing, all the blood that was necessary and sufficient was shed on that one day. And so when Jesus Christ claimed victory at the Resurrection, He claimed victory not only for Americans, or not even for Americans, but for the entire world, including 1.3 billion Muslims, all of whom Jesus died for. And this is why we're doing this, to share the Gospel of unconditional love to them.

Ankerberg: All right, next week we're going to talk about *The Five Pillars of Islam*. What these guys did, believed, what Muslims around the world believe, what the foundation stones are for Islamic belief. It's fascinating. I hope that you'll join us.

Program 2

What Do Muslims Believe About Allah?

Ankerberg: Welcome! We've got an exciting program for you today. We have two former Muslims who are our guests. These fellows became Christians. Their family disowned them. They went on in their education to get their doctorates. They're now professors in Christian seminaries. They've written two best-selling books, and just loaded with information. What we want to talk about is, What is Islamic belief about Allah? What is the difference between the God of Islam and the God of the Bible?

And guys, in starting this, I am fascinated with the story of John Walker, the kid that grew up in California, seemed like an all-American kid. He ends up fighting with the Taliban against our Forces. Now, the President, George Bush, said this guy was misled. What misled him? What was going on? What was the lure of Islam for a kid growing up in California?

Emir: Well, he had liberal parents, if you will, or pluralistic parents, at the least, where they said, "You pick. It's a Wal-Mart of religions. They're all equal. You're just picking a God that is all really the unknown God or God as we put Him in a universal scheme." And so he reads the autobiography of Malcolm X and he becomes a Muslim because he's looking for meaning, and he's looking for structure, none of which he got from his parents who didn't give him anything in terms of an eternal meaning to his life. And he heads on over to the Madrassah of

Pakistan, fights for the Afghans. Ends up being caught. And everybody goes, "I can't believe there's an American Taliban."

Well, each and every one of us is looking for meaning in our life. Islam has many people come to it, 34,000 here in America in and of itself, because it is natural. We want to **work** our way to God. We think somehow, some way we can earn it, and there is no more works-based religion in the world than Islam and its Five Pillars.

Ankerberg: What do you mean? Explain that one.

Ergun: The Five Pillars?

Ankerberg: Yes.

Ergun: Islam is based on the desire for the straight path, the straight way, the straight life, and so to get more good deeds than bad deeds in your life, you must follow the paths of righteousness. The paths of righteousness are defined by the six foundations or the five pillars.

Ankerberg: We're going to cover those in-depth next week, but just what are they right now?

Ergun: *abinedab, salat, zakat, sawn, and hajj.* *Abinedab* is the Sha'hada, the confession. *Salat, zakat, sawn*, that's prayer, fasting and almsgiving. And Hajj is the pilgrimage you are to make once in your lifetime to Mecca.

Ankerberg: Okay. And the fact is, why is that attractive? Just because it gives you order and stability?

Emir: And it gives you a way in which you can somehow work your way to heaven. It really doesn't give you hope. You can't say it gives you hope. It just gives you purpose. You still live in angst, surah 17, with those dreadful scales that are there. But somehow it gives you a box, parameters, and what John Walker was looking for was that box. "Someone tell me where authority lies, this epistemology, what do you know? How do you know what you know? Where really is it?" And he finds it in the personal story of Malcolm X.

Ankerberg: Yeah. Let's pick up on that and during 9-11, all kinds of people gathered in Yankee Stadium. Christians, Jews, Muslims. And they were all praying, okay? And the commentators would say: Well, they're all speaking to the same God who just happens to have different divine nicknames.

Ergun: Sure. And that's actually what they said on television. It was September 23.

Ankerberg: My question to you is, Is the God of the Bible the same as the God in Islam?

Ergun: If you would have said to us when we were Muslims that Allah and Jehovah are the same God, we would have been offended. As Christians, we find it blasphemous. No one who has read the Qur'an, no one who has read the Bible would ever say that it's the same God. As a matter of fact, this is, interestingly enough, this is one of those things about which we can agree or with which we can agree with most Muslims. We have never, we have never met a Muslim *ulema* who would say that the Jehovah described in the Bible is the same God as the Allah of the Qur'an. The message seems to come from our culture instead. The message comes from our syncretist, post-modern "group hug" kind of culture that wants us all to be talking about the same God. But nothing can be further from the truth.

Ankerberg: Yeah, when you were in Islam, the fact is, Islam completely rejected Christian belief and the Christian God.

Ergun: Yes. There's the idea that we've heard this taught even among missiologists that Islam was an attempt to fulfill Christianity. Absolutely not! Islam was a complete and total rejection, a repudiation, a revision of Christianity. It wasn't any fulfillment—like it was some sort of a messianic "fixing" of Christianity. They believed that the Jews had the truth and it was corrupted. The Christians had the truth and it was corrupted. The only truth is Muhammad and Allah, and this is the final revelation, this is the truth, this is the corrected text.

Ankerberg: Now, you've also, since becoming Christians, come to realize that there are some Christians that are saying you could use Allah, the word for God in Arabic, and you could still be talking about the God of the Bible. You guys vehemently disagree with that one. Why?

Emir: Missiologists want to use and say, "Well, it's a linguistic argument. Allah just means deity." Really a large, significant problem involved there. For example, in the Old Testament, when you set up the gods of Baal—Baal was a generalized term for "gods" in which you can pluralistically pick – which is so familiar to us today. Baal in the Canaanite Semitic

language meant "lord." Can you just imagine Isaiah saying, "I want to speak to you about Baal." There is no way he would have translated that that way. And then they say, "But Acts 17 in the New Testament, here they have the 'unknown god' and this is our missiological strategy." But it doesn't parallel. If they are going to use Acts 17 as a missiological strategy, they couldn't compare the Jehovah Jesus Christ of the Bible with, the way they do with Acts 17. They would have to compare Allah with Zeus. Zeus has characteristics. Allah has characteristics.

Ankerberg: Let's slow that down. Some Christians say in Acts 17—this is what's going on: Paul is actually showing the Athenian philosophers they were ignorantly worshiping the true God of Christianity. Second, he was using their false gods to preach the true God to them; and third, thus on the mission field we can speak of Allah as God because Muslims do not know His nature. It's just okay to use the word.

Ergun: He didn't point to one of their idols and say, "Look, let me tell you his real name." What he did was, he took the one that they hadn't named, but they had tried to make him into their image, they shaped him by their hands, gave him a name, put him in a temple, you know, "to the unknown god." But Paul said, "No, no. Let me show the One that you don't know." This is the issue, the missiologists will say this is a linguistic issue. This is an etymological issue. We say, "This is not etymological. It's theological. There's only one name under heaven by which man can be saved, and that's the name of Jesus Christ" [cf. Acts 4:12]. It's the name, the authority, the *exousias* of Jesus Christ that empowers us unto salvation—and that's the issue. This is the central fundamental thing.

We are not religious. The desire to sort of amalgamate religious peoples into one big "seeking a divine inner spark" or something, what we call the "Oprah-ization" of culture, we vehemently stand against. This is not our culture.

Ankerberg: Take also this fact that in our culture we are saying, "You know, it doesn't really matter which God you believe in, they're all kind of good. As long as you believe in one, that's fine. And they're all equally good in terms of what they do for you. That's not true either, especially in Islam. Why?"

Ergun: Well, because you have 99 names of Allah in the Qur'an. There are the names of terror and the names of glory. Not one—and I cannot emphasize this

enough—**not one** was intimate, personal. There is no such thing as a Muslim having a personal relationship with Allah.

Ankerberg: Yeah. I think we've got to say that again. I mean, when I read that in your book, that just struck me. Say that again.

Ergun: Not one name of the 99.

Emir: That is, love in Islam is a condition. Allah loves those who do righteous deeds. "Allah loves not the transgressors. Allah...fill in the blank." In Islam it's a condition. In Christianity, love is a characteristic of God. It's not just merely an action. It is not primarily an action. It is first, His character; then it's brought about—and we have to remember, surah 19:88. They say that this Trinity, this picture is "most blasphemous! Most monstrous!" And we have to remember as Christians, if Muslims reject part of the Trinity, they reject all of the Trinity. The Father sent the Son; the Father and Son thereby sent the Spirit, and if you reject Jesus Christ who was crucified and resurrected, you reject the Father who sent Him, and the Spirit who follows Him, and thereby you cannot in any way be worshiping the same God.

Ankerberg: Yeah. Let me see if this hits your own personal experience. What I hear you saying is that, you know, Christians have this intimate relationship with the Lord where the Lord actually comes and lives inside of us. And we talk with Him and we experience Him, and He leads us moment by moment. In Islam, you didn't expect to have that. You were told not to expect to have that. What did you have?

Ergun: You had Allah who is creator and who is judge. He is transcendent, to use theological terms, but he is not immanent. And you fear, not revere, you **fear** Allah. And then we were saved and we found out we were temples of the Holy Spirit. That we could "come boldly before the throne of God to obtain mercy in the time of need" [Hebrews 4:16]. We found out that we were indwelt, that He cared about our deepest need. That He loved us intimately, that He was Abba, Father. This was beyond anything we had ever imagined because we had always seen Allah as judge. But we found the true and living Jehovah God who is loving Father.

Ankerberg: We're going to take a break and when we come back, I want to talk about the other

differences that you have discovered between the God of the Bible and Allah. Stick with us. We'll be right back.

Ankerberg: We're back. We're talking with two former Muslims who have become Christians. Their family disowned them. They went on in their education to get their Ph.D.'s, and they're professors in Christian seminaries.

We're talking about, *What Do Muslims Believe about Allah?* And what did they find in Christianity, how was the God of the Bible different from Allah? And guys, in listening and kind of playing back that first segment, you're probably going to have a lot of critics who are going to say, "Listen, you have no right to speak about that." And they'll probably give you three reasons why: "Hey, you're not an expert on Islam! You've not read the Qur'an enough. Or you're just straight lying to us." What would you say to those things?

Ergun: Well, first off, my brother could probably handle the issue of that you don't read the Qur'an in Arabic. We hear this often in our debate formats but "reading it enough" is silly because you have to understand, everything is works-based. We read the Qur'an daily. You would take it from the highest shelf in your home, you read your Qur'an, close it, kiss it, place it to your forehead and put it on the highest shelf in your home as well. You revered it because it is supposed to be the written word of Allah. Because it was written the way it was written, it points to one of the differences between Jehovah God of the Bible and Allah of the Qur'an. When we talk about the translation of the Qur'an, you have Allah speaking to Jibrael (the angel Gabriel). Jibrael gives it to Muhammad. Allah is transcendent. He has nothing to do with man as far as in intimacy. And so even in the transmission of the Qur'an, he speaks to an angel, the angel speaks to man. It was one of the clear, defining moments in my life was to realize that I could have a personal relationship with God.

Ankerberg: All right, you have read the Qur'an every day. You guys have more of the Qur'an memorized than most people that I know. What about the fact that you're not an expert on Islam? Is anybody an expert on Islam?

Emir: Well, the expertise they say comes...you must study the Qur'an in Arabic. Now, if that's the case,

then 75 percent of Muslims are not Muslims—they cannot be because they do not speak Arabic. And if they don't speak Arabic, then they're not a true Muslim. That's what we hear. "Oh! You're a Turk! You grew up in a country that does not speak Arabic as its first language. You cannot know what you're talking about." If that's the case, then 60 million Turks, neither do they know what they are talking about. And so it really is an illegitimate argument. It's actually a medieval argument, this very fact that only the clergy somehow could understand really demonstrates why so many people followed blindly the clerics in their countries and listen to what they say and the clerics run because the people truly only repeat the Qur'an, they never understand the Qur'an or they're **unwilling** to understand it. And it gives Allah a very frail characteristic as if he is not able to transmit the text in any other language besides Arabic.

Ankerberg: Yeah, if that would be the case, 90 percent of the people that are listening to you right now could never make it either because they don't know Arabic.

Ergun: Of course. Of course. But you asked a great question that was sort of tangential to that and that is, Does anybody speak for Islam? Nobody speaks for Islam! No one! It's not a monolithic religion. You understand what...the fall of the caliphate, at the end of World War I, you had the Ottoman Empire which was on the wrong side. Once again, Turkey is always on the wrong side. We were on the wrong side and we fall. The caliphate falls. From that moment until now, there has not been one singular voice, even in the Sunni world, much less Sunni versus Shi'ite. The distinctions between the major sects—Sufis' rejection of jihad, the Shi'ite use of the muttah, the temporary marriage, the belief in the twelfth imam, such as Ayatollah Khomeini's belief. Then the Sunnis over here. Even within the Sunni you have *Wahhabi*, you have mainline Sunni. Wahhabi who believe in an absolute literal jihad and the rejection of all other types of denominational beliefs, schism beliefs of Islam. You have this huge conglomeration of warfare and so, I guess, to no one's satisfaction anyone will ever be an expert in this. Not any more than anyone is an expert in Christianity.

Ankerberg: Wahhabis come underneath the Shi'ites?

Ergun: Come under the Sunnis.

Ankerberg: Sunnis.

Ergun: Come under the Sunnis.

Ankerberg: How many Sunnis versus Shi'ites in the world?

Emir: Eighty percent to 15 percent or even a little bit more than that.

Ankerberg: Eighty percent are Sunni?

Emir: Yes. The vast majority are Sunnis, as you can see, even with Usama bin Laden—Sunni. Saddam Hussein—Sunni. In Iran and much of Iraq, the Shi'ites. The Ayatollahs, so to speak. Those who were used to having terrorism actually today are the lesser of the terrorists because of the Wahhabi subsect in the Sunni which was started in the eighteenth century with Wahhab, the prophet.

Ankerberg: All right, quickly roll through the different groups simply because people do make—let's argue the other way—they're saying that Islam **does** speak as a whole. But that's not true either. Talk about the different groups. You don't have to name all of them, but just give me a few of them.

Ergun: How about the major ones. Obviously, the Sunni, the Shi'ite, the Sufi, which we really haven't discussed that much, the Wahhabi, the Alawite out of Syria; you have the Druze, another classic group; and then, of course, the Nation of Islam which is a purely American group.

Ankerberg: And some of those violently disagree with each other.

Ergun: Oh, absolutely. They constantly declare one another a cult.

Ankerberg: Give me a couple of examples.

Ergun: The Sunni believe that the Shi'ites misread eschatological passages. The Shi'ites look for a twelfth imam. The idea of the twelfth imam is someone who has never died in the Shi'ite faith and they wait for him to join with Jesus—Isa, who returns, and they will fight *al Dajjal*, they will fight the Antichrist.

Ankerberg: And that's particular to them.

Ergun: Yes. So they have Jesus as one of the two revelation witnesses in that way.

Emir: And there's a key, though, because so many times a Muslim will come up to a Christian and say, "I cannot become a Christian. Look at all your denominations." And the Christian will say, "You're right. Unlike Islam, where it's unified, we have to give you that point." Absolutely not! If the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have proved anything, it's that the fractions within Islam, even though they're sub-sects instead of major denominations many times, are as fierce as they are in Christianity. And the commonalities between Christians are very clear: if you do not believe there is only one way to heaven and His name is Jesus Christ, if you do not believe in the Trinity, if you do not believe the fundamentals of the faith, you cannot legitimately call yourself a Christian by way of New Testament standards.

Ankerberg: Great. Give me Sufis, Druze, Sikhs....

Ergun: Yeah, these are some of my favorites. Sufis are the mystics. And the reason I say they're my favorites is, in all of this discussion, post-9-11-01, we will have on occasion a phone caller who will say, "I am a Muslim and I completely abhor violence. I have turned my back on violence. I do not believe in violence." And we will always ask, "Okay, fine. Where is Mohammed Atta now, according to the Qur'an and according to the Hadith?" Of course, the answer they will give is, if they say he's in hell-fire, then they weren't good Muslims which history doesn't really stand behind them. If they say he's in heaven, well then, politics stands against them. But when we get the phone caller who says, "Oh, they're in hell-fire. Allah did not call us to jihad," I will often say, "You're a Sufi, aren't you?"

"Yes. I'm a Sufi." Not all Sufis have disavowed jihad but a vast majority have. They are mystics. They believe in their mind coming into union with Allah, the whirling dervish, the use of sometimes mind-altering substances to help them come to union with Allah.

The Druze are the secret Muslims, the secret sect, and for generation upon generation, passed on by whispers.

Alawites used to be the ruling party of Syria and they are coming into prominence again in certain areas.

You have these sub-sects of Islam. Among the Shi'ites, the Shi'ites alone are splintered into almost 40 different groups.

Ankerberg: Okay. So I think your point of the fact is, they do not speak as a whole, they don't even believe the same thing is a great point to make. Let's

come back to this thing of, let's continue to talk about Allah because we only have a few minutes left in this program. What were the differences that you found between Allah and the God of the Bible personally?

Emir: The one word in which no Muslim understands correctly until they come to salvation is grace. Undeserving merit. The very fact that God loves you in spite of your sin, instead of an encouragement to your righteousness. That all of our righteousness, [Isaiah] says, "is like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). The idea that original sin, Islam has no such idea. There is no original sin. You are born with two angels: one on the right side which is good; one on the other side which is bad. And then all of sudden, you somehow get this works-based salvation so imbedded in your mind that Allah can only be judge. But if grace is the primary tenet to which to be saved, then God, Jesus Christ, is love, and that is the understanding, that I have to come as I am. I must come in my filth and then Jesus Christ not just covers me with His blood, that He removes all the sin, all the guilt, and wipes it as far as East is from the West (Psalm 103:12) and I'm as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18). I never, never could understand grace until I came to the cross.

Ankerberg: What did you expect? What were you believing in, then?

Emir: Another religion. I expected when I went to the church to see another faith that was based on works. When we see Christianity, you have to remember, chapter 5, verse 116, when they talk about the Trinity, they say it is God the Father, Jesus Christ and Mary. Many Muslims picture Christians as Catholic. And you walk in and see their rituals, you see Mary as the center of the Catholic Church holding baby Jesus sometimes. And that's what we pictured. It was only the ritualism of the Catholic Church. The Evangelical movement, as large as it is with so many millions, is still foreign to many Muslims.

Ankerberg: So you had a wrong view of what Christians even hold and meantime, as a Muslim yourself, you were holding to a works system that had no guarantee of heaven.

Ergun: We assumed you didn't either.

Ankerberg: Yeah. Talk about how that felt.

Ergun: The idea that...

Ankerberg: No guarantee.

Ergun: Yeah. At the close of each evening that if I was to die, I wouldn't know. That is an astonishing...you know, the difference between fear and angst—angst is unfocused. You would have this trembling and dread that if I was to die, I'm out of luck. I don't think my accounting was done well. I don't think I was good enough today, nice enough today, sweet enough today, well thought today. You cannot possibly find words to describe the ultimate works-centered religion.

Emir: That's why we say we didn't switch religions. If we did it, it's our own power. If God did it, it's by His power. If it's humanistic, if our anthropology, our doctrine on what we are based is us, you know, I look inside myself and I see depravity. When I look outside of myself, I see Jesus Christ and I see perfection, and in that perfection thereby I see that there is only one way to Heaven and His name is Jesus Christ.

Ankerberg: Ergun, talk to the Muslim that's listening. Maybe secretly he's listening right now. What do you advise him to do? If this might sound too good to be true, what would you advise him to do next so that he would come into a relationship with Christ?

Ergun: I would, please, please, please focus them on one central fact. We were raised believing that Isa was a prophet. Raised believing that Isa spoke of Muhammad who was to come. But if Jesus actually claimed to be God, then He was saying He was more than just a prophet. He was saying more than He was just one pointing us to the way. He Himself is the way. That Jesus Christ died on the cross, resurrected, ascended into heaven, and presented His blood for me, for you, for the full forgiveness of sin—not just the outweighing of bad, but the forgiving, cleansing, purging of all evil, through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and Savior and God.

Ankerberg: All right, I think that's terrific. That's a terrific word. Next week we're going to turn our attention to the works system. I found it absolutely fascinating, your chapter on the Five Pillars of Islam, what you guys were expecting to do to earn heaven. And what you actually went through day after day after day. And folks, I hope that you'll join us next week as we look at the five fundamentals, the five pillars of Islam and let these fellows explain. Join us then.

Program 3

What are the Five Pillars of Islam?

Ankerberg: Welcome to our program. We've got an exciting program for you today, people I want you to hear, and I'm just so glad they're here. They're former Muslims who came to know Christ, their family disowned them. They went on in their education to get their doctorates. They are professors in Christian seminaries today. They've written two best-selling books, and we're talking about, "Is Islam a Peaceful Religion?" And we've covered a lot of topics so far, but we're to the topic of: What do Muslims believe, guys, in terms of the "Five Pillars" of Islam? I found this absolutely fascinating of what you had to do in order to please Allah and to have a hope—not a guarantee—but a hope of getting to heaven someday. I was absolutely amazed.

Let's start with number one: **the Creed**. What is it and how does it operate?

Emir: The Creed is Sha'hada, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah." That's why Islam is a religion from the cradle to the grave, that you whisper it to your son when he is born. You whisper it every day to yourself. It is your motto for your entire life.

Ankerberg: Did your dad do that to you? Do you remember him talking about that?

Ergun: Of course.

Emir: Being devout as a good Muslim, he would. Yes.

Ankerberg: So every Muslim did that—when the baby was born, you whispered right into his ear, first thing, the Creed.

Emir: Because it's a key. No one is born *carte blanche*, as John Locke would say. No one is born a blank slate. No one is born a Christian, or a Buddhist, anything else. Everyone is born a Muslim. And when someone perverts them over to another religion, then there is where the problem lies. I had a Muslim come up to me and he asked the question, not regarding the Creed but regarding Islam in general and Christianity in combination. He said, "Well, you Christians think you can get away with anything."

I said, "Well, what do you mean?"

He said, “Well, you have someone on death row, he accepts Jesus Christ as Savior, does he go to heaven?”

I said, “Absolutely.”

He said, “See. You got away with something.”

I said, “No. Every other religion, which is based on works, gets away with sin. Not Christianity. If you’re 50.1 percent good, what about that 49.9 that’s bad? What happens to that?”

“Well, Allah, in his mercy, removes it.”

But there’s no punishment. Whereas, in Christianity, either the lost person who sits at the Great White Throne Judgment and stands before God and says, “I have no excuse,” he must pay for his sin on his own behalf. He must go to hell because of his rejection of Jesus Christ, not because of any bad work. Because he rejected Jesus. But, for the person who is saved, every sin—past, present and future—is paid for on the cross. No one, no one in Christianity gets away with any sin, by thought or by deed.

Ankerberg: Yeah. I think that Muslims, even the ones that we’ve had in debate, do not understand that at all. They really see, like it “magically” disappears but they cannot see that that then talks about the holiness of God. It corrupts God. God can’t just say, “Well, boys will be boys. I’ll let those guys get off.” That would be like having a judge say, “Well, you broke all these laws, but for some reason, I’ll just say you can go free.” Okay? That wouldn’t be upholding the law. And if your character is the law, if your holiness is what happens in the universe, God can’t do that. And the message of the Bible is that God can’t do that, but He made a way by punishing Jesus for what we’ve done and we can take advantage of that if we place our faith in Him.

Ergun: That’s exactly why Islam rejects the crucifixion. You’ve hit it. That’s the whole reason. And what’s interesting is that, we find this ironic, that as former Muslims, we see that Islam believes more about Jesus than liberals do. Islam believes in a virgin birth. Islam believes in miracles—have no problem with Jesus working miracles. Islam believes in a historical Jesus, whereas, liberals have a search going on all over the place and vote with marbles. In Islam you have a belief in a historical, virgin-born prophet. But, that is not far enough. If Jesus Christ on the cross actually died for man’s sin, that substantially, fundamentally changes the message of what my brother just explained. Islam teaches that you are pardoned of your sin, but that’s not what happens with sin in Christianity. Sin is not pardoned. We are not simply cleansed. It’s not a commuted

sentence. It’s not time off for time served. On the cross, Jesus paid the penalty, the capital offense for sin. He paid the debt. If I could suffer for my sins, that would be double jeopardy. What took place on the cross was nothing short of cosmic judgment. And that’s why in Islam there’s a rejection of the cross, because the idea of the penalty being paid for sin goes against everything we have in Islam on the scales.

Ankerberg: Yes. Let me come back to this: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” That’s the Creed. Now, that is said into the ear of every little boy, every little girl. You hear that every day.

Ergun: Yes.

Ankerberg: And I found it interesting that you said that simple statement is actually comprehensive in its scope. Tell me what you meant.

Ergun: Well, it is the summation, do you not agree, Emir? It’s a summation of all the confessions.

Emir: And it is within that realm, that very brief sentence, everything which was given to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel through Allah is then agreed upon: that Muhammad is the final revelation, the final prophet, the Rasul. He is the very way to understand that “straight path.” And so what he says is not his own words, instead, they are the very words of Allah dictated to mankind. And so there you have the overlying umbrella, the parameters, so that the Qur’an is right, perfect. Surah 15:9: It will be guarded from corruption, while the scriptures, the Old Testament and New Testament, are only right when they agree with the Qur’an or, as we would put it, when they agree with Muhammad.

Ankerberg: So, when you accept that one little statement, it brings the whole religious system of Islam with it. You now accept the Qur’an as authoritative, Muhammad in the Hadith, and so on, this becomes your authority, which encompasses your entire belief system.

Emir: And so he says, with the other five pillars, that you must pray five times daily, and so you do so. That you pray at dawn, that you pray at midday, and then millions across the world, when you hear *Allah hu Akbar. Allah hu akbar.* God is great. God is great. Come to prayer. Come to prayer – thousands stream into the mosques, every Friday, every day, to do these prayers and to tithe 2-1/2 percent of their

income. To finally do the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. To do the five pillars of Islam that they believe is necessary, including the fasting, that lunar calendar year where for a full month, from sunrise to sunset, there are no physical activities.

Ankerberg: If a Jew or a Christian—let’s say he’s 25 years old and he’s not been a Muslim, how does he become a Muslim?

Ergun: By the confession.

Emir: By the Sha’hada.

Ankerberg: So he says that and he’s in and he’s started....

Ergun: You have to say that in the presence of other Muslims. You have to make it known to your imam that you are one who is wanting to become a believer. Actually they would say...they don’t believe in conversion, they believe in reversion. You have reverted back, because again, as my brother cited, you are born a Muslim. Everyone on the planet, everyone in the world is born a Muslim in their belief in the ubiquity of Allah. And so they would say you reverted, you’ve come back. You’re 25 years old. There are a number of things you must do. You must adhere to a certain mosque and you must make the confession. You must pay the zakats. You have things to catch up on.

Ankerberg: Okay. Well, let’s take number two: the fact is, now let’s say that you’re in. You’ve said the Creed in front of witnesses, and you start the system, and you’re hoping to gain entrance into heaven. What’s number two? Prayer.

Emir: Prayer.

Ankerberg: Yeah.

Emir: The life line. This really is what they say—this is...they’re entire life surrounds prayer. Five times daily from the sunrise to sunset, they pray. And that this is not God speaking to them, but them speaking to God—and that’s absolutely key. When you speak to a Muslim and you say, “Did you speak to God this morning?” they say, “Absolutely.” But on a different realm, “Did God speak to you personally?” is a wholly different question. That is, that God cares for me enough that He’ll never leave me nor forsake me (Deuteronomy 31:6). That He speaks to me. That that still, small voice inside of me is not my

conscience but is the Holy Spirit of God speaking to me personally and directly.

Ankerberg: So you’ve said in your book, it’s “an external practice, not a personal conversation.” Explain that a little bit more.

Ergun: Absolutely. You are repeating the first surah of the Qur’an. Of the 114 chapters, surah 1, the very first one, is a type of confession before Allah. You face Mecca, you face East, you’re on the prayer rug. You basically stop, drop and roll. You stop five times a day and you repeat that surah over and over and over based on devotion, with a right mind, but you must be explicit in your confession of the First Surah of the Qur’an.

Ankerberg: All right, what if you don’t say your prayers five times a day?

Ergun: There are some times they are forgiven; for instance, those who are on flights where the time is not calculable. Those who at war—they’re allowed to miss or they’re allowed to say a shorter one or take an ablution.

Before you begin the prayer time you must absolve, you must wash, ceremonial washing, cleansing of the nostrils, cleaning out of the mouth, and washing the feet. But there are times when this is forgiven.

Emir: But, if you don’t do it on a regular basis, there is little, if any, hope of heaven, outside of being killed as a martyr. If you are a bad Muslim for most of your life and you’re 60 years old and you know the scales are outweighed, what hope do you have, for you didn’t live a life of a Muslim and thereby you can’t even have a chance at 50.1 percent. But we know as Christians that couldn’t happen anyway.

James says that if you’ve had one sin in your life, you’re guilty of them all [James 2:10]. One sin is enough to leave a barrier between us and God. To the Muslim who is 60 years old who knows he hasn’t been a faithful Muslim....

Ankerberg: So you’re saying, as you get older, it starts stacking up against you. And let’s say that you realize you’re at the 30 percent level and you’ve got no way of ever getting to 51 percent, okay? So what’s your hope?

Emir: The only thing they can do that they say may give it is Hajj. Why do two million people congregate in Mecca every year? Many of them die going through the small walkways. You have

between two dozen and two hundred killed a year! Just performing the Hajj—which is a very strenuous activity of going to Muhammad’s last sermon, circling the Ka’aba seven times, going up and down the hill, and doing all of these things. And they hope that maybe this Hajj, maybe this strenuous activity can remove the blemishes of the past. How in the world can you ever know what the percentage is in the first place, much less recognize that you can be good enough for God?

Ankerberg: We also have to throw in here that the person that truly is sincere about wanting to get to heaven and this weighs heavily on their mind, as it did you guys, if you came to that predicament that you were nowhere close the 51 percent, am I right in saying that the only sure thing is becoming a martyr?

Ergun: Yes. jihad. Well, that explains a lot about those....

Ankerberg: Explain that, because people might not have heard that in some of the other programs, so exactly what are we talking about?

Ergun: The only eternal security that a Muslim has, the only absolute, without question, assurance that a Muslim has that he is going to paradise is if he dies as a martyr in an act of declared Fatwa, signed Fatwa, a legal opinion.

Ankerberg: What is a Fatwa?

Ergun: Fatwa is a declaration of war. It’s a legal opinion. So a declaration of war, jihad. If you die as a martyr in jihad, it is clear in the Qur’an, it is clear in the Hadith that you are protected and that you will be “saved” to use the term evangelicals would understand. But in their case it’s that your blood has purchased your paradise.

Ankerberg: Recently we’ve seen women committing suicide bombings. Okay? I found that really interesting in what you said. What are some of the promises connected to women who do that?

Ergun: Well, what’s interesting is it’s...we were never raised believing that women could fight jihad. The Hadith is very clear: women do not fight jihad. But the Wahhabi have a doctrine of the female suicide bomber. The Wahhabi teach it this way. If a man dies, he dies for himself. If a woman dies, she...because, you know, think about it. If a man is given the hundredth degree of paradise, and he’s got vestal virgins, perpetual virgins waiting for him, this

is his heaven. But if you tell a woman that you die and you’re going to the hundredth degree of paradise and there are 70 virgin men waiting for you, that’s not heaven to her. That’s annoying to her because she will spend eternity, you know, “Leave me alone.” What does the woman get? The woman is given the opportunity to pick those who will go with her to paradise. And so what she does is, she, because of her nurturing, picks the ones that she thinks wouldn’t make it without her. Maybe family members, maybe loved ones. A man dies for himself. A woman dies for her friends.

Ankerberg: What a motivation.

Ergun: But Jesus dies for the world. And to me, it’s a great picture of the Atonement. If someone is willing to believe in the Wahhabi doctrine of the female suicide bomber, I think they could be willing to believe in Jesus Christ on Calvary, what you could actually explain to them as, Cosmic jihad.

Ankerberg: All right, we’re through the first two: the Creed and Prayer. We’ve got to get to the next three and it’s just absolutely fascinating. So we’re going to talk about Almsgiving and what that actually means in Islam when we come right back. Stick with us.

Ankerberg: All right we’re back, and if you’ve just joined us, we’re talking with former Muslims who have become Christians. They were ostracized by their family. They’ve gone on in their education to become professors at Christian seminaries. They’ve written two best-selling books. Guys, we’re talking about the Five Pillars of Islam. We’ve talked about the Creed. We’ve talked about the Prayer. Talk about Almsgiving. What is it?

Emir: Almsgiving is the requirement that to go to heaven you must give one-fortieth of your income to the poor and needy, or 2-1/2 percent. And if you do so, then it’s part of those requirements to get to heaven. But not only that, it is the promise of community. Muslims see the Almsgiving as they’re one body. Each state or the entire Dar al-Islam, the entire house of Islam is one state that they give to each other to insure their survival and their prosperity, so that those who are wealthy give to those who are not; and they share with the poor and needy, so to lift up not just an individual, but more importantly, lift up the community of Islam. To

make sure that it is financially and spiritually, to them, tenable and prosperous and victorious for the next millennium, if you wish.

Ankerberg: But the key thing is, if you are a Muslim and you did not give your 2.5, or whatever it was, the thing is, could you get to heaven?

Emir: No. I mean, the whole point that, if you don't give that *fiqh*, then you are ensured that you will be in hell-fire.

Ankerberg: All right, let's go to the next one, and that is, Ramadan.

Ergun: Yeah, well, sawn, fasting, during Ramadan. Fasting is the denial of that which is essential, and so, just like in American Christianity, we talk about fasting, but in Islam they actually act on it. During the month of Ramadan, you fast from sunrise to sunset, and you eat before, you eat the *suhoor* afterwards, the evening feast. But that you do not eat and in most places, you do not even drink anything from sunrise to sunset. And this is an unbelievably Lentian time, you know, the idea that we are denying ourselves. But it is also celebration time in that you celebrate the break of the fast with a feast.

Ankerberg: Compare Ramadan with Christmas.

Ergun: It's the antithesis to it.

Ankerberg: Why?

Ergun: Because it is work-centered. Whereas Christmas is the celebration of the Incarnation, God for us, God with us; Ramadan is the celebration of me sacrificing for my God.

Ankerberg: Christians could have Muslims over for Christmas, but Muslims wouldn't come because of the theological differences.

Emir: No.

Ankerberg: Sometimes, Christians mistakenly have gone to the end of Ramadan. Okay? But that's ridiculous, too. Why?

Ergun: Number one, because Muslims are the equivalent of closed communion. Okay? One, because you do not celebrate with the *akafir* in such a holy time. But number two, because it is a celebration of our works garnering our salvation, and

for them, this is the celebration of their fasting which earns them eternity, which is part of the good scales, part of the good celebration.

Ankerberg: They also open with prayer to Allah.

Ergun: To Allah, exactly. And they open and close with prayer to Allah, which is not the God of the Bible, in any stretch of the imagination.

Ankerberg: Okay. What if you don't do the fasting?

Ergun: Well, you're in danger to...fasting is prescribed for you. It's the same word that is used for jihad, called *Fard ayn*.

Ankerberg: Is there a surah or are there Hadith that say that specifically, that you won't be in heaven?

Ergun: The fasting. Yes, of course.

Ankerberg: Okay. How about the fifth pillar, the Hajj.

Emir: The Hajj is the epiphany of the experience. I mean, what you do daily with the prayers and with the tithes and so forth is one thing; the Hajj is the finale, it's the final scene. It's you going, unless somehow you cannot go physically and then you hire a substitute to go for you, you must go to Mecca. Only Muslims are allowed into the city of Mecca. You must put on that white robe, that simple robe. You must circle that Ka'aba seven times, reciting surah 1, reciting that which Allah dictated to you. You must go to the last place Muhammad preached. You must go and go up a hill and down a hill as the story of Abraham and his wife Hagar goes looking for water for her son Ishmael. You must do these things which are strenuous. It's an activity. It takes hours on hours to do this. This is not something where Christians picture it on the television where they're just praying in front of the Ka'aba, that 30 foot by 50 foot stone which is representative of that strict monotheism. That is just the beginning, and that is just the end. What happens in the middle is so much more complicated and strenuous than that, that you really would have to take a video camera and see that. But of course, no one is allowed into Mecca unless you have a signed document from your imam that you are a good Muslim.

Ankerberg: All right, you do all those things. You've got to do all those things, right?

Ergun: Yes.

Ankerberg: And if you don't do those things, you're not going to make heaven.

Ergun: That's right.

Ankerberg: All right. Even if you do all those things, do you have the guarantee you will make heaven?

Emir: Absolutely not. Surah 14:4, "Allah leads astray whomever he pleases." The undercurrent of fatalism is everywhere in Islam. In fact, the number one word we heard in Islam is always, Insha Allah: "If God wills." The representative of a good Muslim is someone who falls down the stairs and gets up and says, "Thank God it's over." He is the cause of everything ultimately in the universe. Now, Muslims disagree with it. They disagree whether free will plays a part or not, but fatalism, in its final premise, means that Allah causes what goes on in this world.

Ergun: You have the Islamic equivalent to hyper-Calvinism, because the *kismet*—we've heard this before, this reprobation: "Allah will lead astray the infidel." "Allah chooses the one who is to be in righteousness, who will be in heaven." Allah chooses those who go to heaven and Allah chooses those who go to hell. Again, Surah 14:4. And so we've heard this, this American Christian issue is not new to us. We've heard of this before: it's called fatalism, predeterminism.

Ankerberg: Compare that with what you found in Christianity.

Emir: Well, that is that Jesus Christ died not only for our sin, but He is a propitiation for the entire world. He's "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" [2 Peter 3:9]. That He is the Savior of the world (1 Tim. 2:4). That He is "our God and Savior" but not ours alone, but on anyone who will believe in Him, "for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" [Romans 10:13]. It is God already given us His grace to such a point that we, as dead people (Ephesians chapter 2), can see Him for who He is and choose. Because God will never force anyone, coerce anyone to love Him. In fact, it would not be love if He coerced us. Instead, we choose to love Him, not because of who we are or what we've done, but because of that one word in Greek, that three words in English, "It is finished."

Ergun: I couldn't improve upon that. If I could explain what grace meant to me, living by works my entire life, living by my scales, terrified of my scales, terrified of my thoughts, terrified of my inclinations and my desires, terrified that Allah could read my mind. And then to turn around and see that the God of the Bible, Jehovah God of the Bible, was not just the One who provided salvation, He became my salvation.

Ankerberg: Guys, I just marvel at the fact of what Muslims try to do to please Allah, and to realize that you were doing all of that and still, you didn't have any assurance that you were going to make it. For the Muslim that may be watching, maybe even secretly watching right now, speak to that person. We only have about 35 seconds left.

Ergun: I would simply say this. Don't look at Christians. Muslims will look at Christians and say, "Yeah, but they're such hypocrites. We work so hard and you tell us we are wrong? You've got the truth but you don't live by it?" Don't look at Christians, look at Christ. Salvation is not found in the Baptists or the Episcopalians or in my church or in your church. Salvation is found only in the name of Jesus Christ. He was not a hypocrite. He was Savior, Messiah, God.

Ankerberg: Yeah. To the question, "How good do you have to be to get into heaven?" according to Christianity, you've got to be as perfect as God [cf. Matthew 5:20]. We can't be that perfect. The Bible says "This righteousness **from God** comes through Jesus Christ to **all** who believe" [Romans 3:22]. And that is the marvel, that is the joy of Christianity—the righteousness of Christ becomes ours, and He also pays for our sins. There's an imputation, there's a crediting to our account. It's nothing that we do, it's what Christ has done. And that's the most marvelous message, once a person understands that.

Next week, we're going to go further. We're going to talk about: What is salvation in Islam? And I hope that you'll join us. It's absolutely fascinating information.

Program 4

What Is Salvation in Islam?

Ankerberg: Welcome. My guests today are two former Muslims who came to faith in Jesus Christ. Their family disowned them. They went on in their education to get their doctorates. They're now professors at Christian seminaries. They've written two best-selling books. And we're talking about, What do Muslims believe? What did they believe when they were in Islam?

And we're talking about the fascinating thing today of: What is salvation in Islam? And Emir, start us off. What is it that you believed? What was the goal? What did you have to do to get there in Islam?

Emir: Well, the Five Pillars that you had to do from the Creed, to the Prayer, to the Almsgiving, to the Fasting, and finally, the Hajj is what a Muslim hopes will get him good enough—50.1 percent. Yet they have the scales, surah 23:101, and that they always have this fear in surah 17 fastened around their necks. But we watched it very personally, that is, we watched our father, who was dying of prostate cancer. He was so kind enough, through the convincing of our stepmother, to see us again. And we're so grateful to God that we got to be reconciled to our father. After 17 years apart for my brother and a decade for myself, we're grateful. But I'll tell you, when I walked into that house, how much it broke my heart to see that he had no peace, no joy, no hope. Why? If it's based on works, you can't know until you're dead. But if it's based on grace, you can know right now. And what I remember of that day—he died on my birthday, 1999. What I remember of that day so clearly is there was absolutely no contentment and no peace. He never cracked a smile. He gave us the Qur'an just four days before he died and handed [them] to us, hopefully that we would revert back to Islam somehow. But he himself never found any eternal joy.

Ankerberg: Ergun, take us back, because maybe some folks didn't hear the program in which you talked about it, and that is, there was a time when you investigated Jesus and all of a sudden, you realized He was more than a prophet. And that the real reason that Jesus was tried was for blasphemy because He actually claimed to be God. That's what the evidence showed. And that got you thinking and eventually, you realized that Jesus not only claimed to be God, but He was God. You placed your faith in Him, but you had to go back and tell your father. What was

that like? What happened when you told him? So let's go to the beginning of the story and then come to the end.

Ergun: Sure. We had come to America. My father, being an architect, I was going to follow in my father's footsteps. I was going to become a worker in the mosque just like our father was, and he built mosques in America and overseas. So, for me to become a Christian was more than just a change in my life, it was betrayal to him. Your children, you know, following along in your footsteps is very big in our culture. And so my father disowned me. For him it was the best option he had. And for me, it was as bad as it humanly can be.

Ankerberg: Were words said?

Ergun: Yes. Yes. I was denying Allah. I was denying faith in Allah, faith in Islam, faith in the Qur'an. I believed Jesus Christ was Lord, Savior, and God. I was no longer a Muslim, I was a believer in Jesus Christ, a Christian. I was the oldest of three, so I had not only betrayed my father, betrayed my mother, but betrayed my brothers who were supposed to follow after me. I learned what Psalm 68 said, that He is "a Father to the fatherless and a hope for the widow" [Psalms 68:5]. A year later, both of my brothers accepted Christ, and I want in stark contrast to the way we saw our father pass was the way we saw our grandmother pass. Our grandmother did not accept Jesus until the late 1990's, until she herself was in her 90's. But when she died, she went with peace and hope even though she did not accept Jesus until she was almost a hundred years old. The distinction is not the chronology, not the amount of time you are saved, but in what or in whom do you put your faith and confidence.

Emir: The key: no one goes to heaven by good works and no one goes to hell by bad works. People go to heaven for accepting Jesus Christ as Savior; people go to hell for rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior.

Ankerberg: I'm just still stunned with what you were telling me and how to process that in your own mind. Your father disowned you at that spot. Also, in reading your book, I realized that you guys, with your eyes wide open, knew what you were doing. The Qur'an and the Hadith have some words to say about those who openly reject the faith. What does it say?

Ergun: Hadith 9:57 says that if anyone...Muhammad

speaking. Muhammad says, “If anyone changes his Islamic religion, kill him.” And now while here in America there are those that will allegorize this and say this is simply just hyperbolic speech, around the world this happens every day. All you have to do is visit some persecution Websites to know, some persecution ministries to know that in the past decade more Christians have died for the cause of Christ, not dying to earn their salvation but dying because of their salvation, dying because of their faith. More Christians have died in the past decade than at any period of time, **including** what we consider the days of high persecution in the Early Church.

Ankerberg: Not only is there words about the person that leaves you can kill them. If you are in Iran, Iraq, the Sudan, I mean, that could actually take place. But the fact is, from your father’s point of view, there was a reason he cut you off. What does the Qur’an and Hadith say about that?

Emir: Surah 3:85, if a Muslim accepts another religion, it’ll never be accepted of him. And so it is the very fact that when he saw us, he didn’t know what to do. He was in America. He’s in a secular country. He loved us; we loved him. He was our hero.

Ergun: Yes.

Emir: This wasn’t a matter of something he wanted to do, but something he was commanded to do. And so he, using scripture in the way he used it, mercifully said, “I can’t see you anymore.” What was he afraid of? He was afraid that we would pervert our two sisters. He was afraid that it would be a bad testimony to him as a Muslim. And you can see that it even broke his heart. This is not to say our father was a bad father. Indeed, our father was a wonderful father. I have a nearly six-month-old at home, and the more I raise him, the more I recognize he was a good father. But he followed a fallible prophet. He followed a false prophet. He followed one who said, “This is what you should do” and my father was devout, and did it.

Ankerberg: Talk about the angst, the 51 percent. Because some folks might not have understood what you were saying there. Islam actually teaches that at the end of your life, you have got to reach 51 percent good of all the works that you do in your life. They have to add up to 51 percent. Right?

Ergun: Surah 23 of the Qur’an. Surah 23:101-102

says, “He who finds the scales heavy will find salvation. He who finds the scales light”—meaning the good side of the scales light—“shall burn in eternal hell-fire.” We live and die by these scales, that at the moment of consciousness, everything you do, everything you say, everything you think, everything, every motivation, every desire, every deed, everything that can possibly go through the transoms of your mind either goes on the good scales or the bad scales. That you have a *jinn*, an *anjil*, you have an angel standing on one shoulder, and angel sitting on the other. They write down everything. A spirit being writing down everything that you do. At the end of your life, they must be tipped in favor, must be tipped in favor of the good.

Ankerberg: How did you keep score?

Ergun: You can’t.

Emir: You can’t! You can’t. You hope you could, but you can’t. The numbers are so unfathomable that you can’t. Not only that, but then, the picture of hell comes into the equation, surah 14 and surah 25 where it speaks of it as boiling and roasting and torture, and even in Christianity, where we recognize hell is real, the fire is real, but it is torment. It is not torture. The ultimate picture of hell in Christian theology is a lost person who stands before the Great White Throne Judgment and sees Jesus face to face and He says, “Depart from me. I never knew you.” And hell is the eternal privation of God’s face. The fire is not the epicenter. But in Muslim theology, the boiling and the roasting, over and over again. Because your body then gets roasted and comes back and it more resembles Greek mythology than it represents anything else.

Ankerberg: Okay, you get a new skin so you can have it burned again.

Emir: That’s right.

Ergun: This is what we were raised with. And as a young child, your father would even say, “Watch what you’re doing. Hell awaits. Watch what you’re doing. Your scales!” At the end of the day, as we would say our evening prayers, after we were doing wadu, “What kind of day did you have? What did you do?” It just added up.

Ankerberg: Unbelievable. We want to talk about the Good News of what you found in Jesus Christ and compare the two. All right? We want to do a

careful comparison, and we're going to do that. It's fascinating information and I hope that you'll stick with us.

Ankerberg: All right, we're back. We're talking with two former Muslims that came to know Christ, their family disowned them. They went on in their education to get their doctorates and they're teaching in Christian seminaries. They've written two best-selling books. But we're talking about Islam's beliefs about salvation—what you had to do. And somewhere along the line, with all this angst, with all of the troubling thoughts, no assurance, no guarantee of heaven, you started investigating Jesus Christ. Tell us the Good News.

Ergun: Well, I would probably want Emir to begin by showing how we get to the Gospel and how we bring somebody...is that okay with you?

Emir: Yes. There's a wonderful verse in the Qur'an that I hope every Christian can even memorize, in surah 10:94. It's really the question, "How do we know, Muhammad, what you say is true?" And of course, it is, to the Muslim mind, the answer from Allah, and here's what he says, "If you are in doubt as to what we [speaking of God] have revealed unto you, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee. The truth has indeed come to you from your Lord." And the question must be asked, "Can Allah recommend perversion?" In his transcendence, in his separatedness from us, absolutely not! He recommends to the Christians and the Jews in the Arabian Peninsula, in the seventh century, to read the Book—the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament; the Gospels of the New Testament, and he says, "It's truth from your Lord." And all of a sudden you have a commonality between you and a Muslim that many Muslims forget. They're called to read the Bible.

Ankerberg: Let me slow that down. What you're saying is...that's the Qur'an, right?

Emir: Yes.

Ankerberg: In the Qur'an, Allah tells the Muslims, okay, you've got a question, go and ask the people of the Book, which are the Christians. All right? Is that what you're saying?

Emir: Yes. And so you have two camps in Islamic

theology. Did the Christians pervert, corrupt, the New Testament and the Jews the Old Testament? Or is it just merely a misinterpretation? And they recognize they have to agree with corruption because you cannot go to John 8:58 and come to any other conclusion, besides the fact that Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I Am" is a direct, explicit statement that He is God. That when Peter says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" and Jesus says, "Upon this confession I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it" [Matthew 16:16-18], you cannot come to any interpretation besides those which are simple and hermeneutically literal. But they're in a quandary when you share the Gospel.

Ankerberg: Yeah, and if Allah said that in the seventh century, that means that the Bible in the seventh century had to be **the** revelation that was accepted...

Emir: Which it's the same.

Ankerberg: ...and we've got records that goes back before that and it's the same as we're reading in our Christian churches.

Ergun: That's right.

Emir: That's exactly right. And of course, you can defend the Scripture, not by any type of archaeological evidence, but the Scripture defends its own. The Scripture defends Scripture. And so when we recognize Christians are called to believe that the Bible is infallible, it will lead no one astray, it is inerrant—there are no errors in it, and it is inspired—it's from God. If they do not believe it, then they're in heresy. But as they believe, so they can also defend it. We have thousands of copies of the Scripture. Indeed, when you mark down any mistakes and you take away any of the spellings, it is such a minute portion of any mistake that we could find between the copies, not within the Bible but the copies between themselves, that it has no doctrinal difference and indeed, no difference at all in terms of its minutia.

Ankerberg: Could it possible, then, for a Muslim that is listening to us, would it be possible for him, then, to use that verse as a reliable reason why they ought to be listening and considering what we're saying—because we are Christians?

Emir: Absolutely. He should. He should because

Allah gave the Torah and the Injil and though they may be corrupt, he says here, “It is truth from your Lord.” It is a recommendation that the Muslim must consider seriously in order just to consider his own faith; that is, he thinks he is the perfection of a corrupt Christianity, when really he is a repudiation.

Ankerberg: When you’ve said this to Muslims, how have they reacted?

Emir: They either are ignorant of their faith, that is, they haven’t read the Qur’an because they say if you don’t read it in Arabic, then you’re not reading the “original” autograph. And so many of them are just ignorant of it. Others repudiate it and say, “Well, I’ll have to go back to my imam but it cannot be right.” Yet, there are open ones. When Christians get an open Muslim that says, “I want to listen. I want to speak. I want to have open dialogue,” and that, the Holy Spirit pricking his heart must be taken with such an incredible understanding that God is speaking to that man or that woman, and that we can thereby speak the grace of God to them.

Ankerberg: More good news. What more good news can we know?

Ergun: I would hasten to add, to our Christian friends who are listening and they’re trying to win their other Christian....

Ankerberg: What are the dos and don’ts?

Ergun: There are a number of things that you need to know, to be absolutely sure of, because especially in our Christian culture we all have training—E.E. [Evangelism Explosion], C.W.T. [Continued Witness Training], whatever. You’ve been through all this kind of evangelism training and in our Westernized mind, knock on the door, ask the two questions. But they have to remember that to turn from Islam and to turn to Jesus Christ is more than just changing a set of beliefs; and more than just changing a hypothesis or changing your theological abstracts. It is literally a rejection that goes to your family, your home, friends, your job, your loved ones, and sometimes even your life.

Ankerberg: If necessary, for believing in Christ.

Ergun: For the sole “crime” of believing in Jesus Christ. So when you come to a Muslim and you begin to share the Gospel and you sense they’re open, I would tell them, “Please, please, please! Patience.”

I know that eternity is waiting, but I also know that this is not just a small decision for our people. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church, and sadly, we have sprouted much in the past decade. There have been more deaths because believers in other countries have come to Jesus Christ out of Islam and a revival among our people. We’ve been preaching about this for 17 years, trying to reach our people, and nobody paid attention. Four planes go into two towers, the Pentagon and a field—and people listen. I mean, between us, we have five masters and two doctorates. We’d give them up like this! [snap of fingers] I’d go and paint houses if it meant that my father could be saved. If it meant that my father would have listened. Our brother accepted Jesus. Our mother accepted Jesus. Our grandmother accepted Jesus. We have sisters who have not, and we have a father who did not.

Ankerberg: Do you see any other openings in the Islamic community in America right now?

Ergun: In America, yes. There was a survey done of mosques last year, and they asked, “How many Muslims live in America?” and they came up with a number a little over a million. But the Council for American-Islamic Relations said, “No! There’s eight million.” Well, they had surveyed the mosques. Here’s the issue. There probably are eight million Muslims living in America, but only about a million of them are faithful to the mosque. That means we have “cultural Islam.” We have Muslims who are committed to Islam as a part of their heritage, as part of their background, perhaps even their dietary laws. But they do not go to the mosque. They do not attend, they’re not devout, they’re not faithful—and thus, there is an opportunity for us as believers in Christ.

There has never been a chance like this in a millennia now to share the Gospel! There’s never been a chance like this in history, in my estimation. We have not had this opportunity. If we miss this, we have made one of the gravest errors, because one out of five people that you and I run into, according to statistics, come from our kinsmen according to the flesh.

Ankerberg: Dos and don’ts. What would you advise Christians to do and not to do?

Ergun: I would say very quickly, number one, make sure that you do not offend them in trying to build opportunities.

Ankerberg: How could you offend them. How can you offend?

Ergun: Serve them shrimp. Halal and haram, the rules by which we will eat, dietary restrictions: no shellfish, no catfish—because it has skin. You must eat fish with scales. No pork. No lard-based products. No liquor. But I would also say, you know: men speak to men; women speak to women. In our culture, sometimes you cross those lines and you are offensive. I would be very clear, very loving and very gracious. You will find them to be some of the most hospitable people in the world. Some of them are very hospitable because they believe it to be an act that is a good act. Be patient. Don't force the door open to try to witness to them, but know that when you do get the opportunity, be able to hammer what we believe to be the two major messages of the cross, which is: the finished work of Atonement; that Jesus Christ is God; mercy and grace.

Ankerberg: Emir?

Emir: There are two other things that **have** to be stated. Number one, I spoke to a woman who is from Afghanistan, and she just couldn't become a Christian because she didn't want to lose her family. To that key, Matthew 10:34, Jesus prophesied, "I didn't come to bring peace but a sword." What was the sword? Not jihad, but that "daughter will be separated from mother, and son will be separated from father," and that when they make a commitment to Christ, you don't say, "Well, you can make a half commitment. You can haphazardly become a Christian. You tell them, "It's all or nothing!" And more Muslims will be won to Christ by a **bold** witness. And **no** Muslim will be won to Christ by a weak witness.

The second is not speaking to the Muslim in general; the second is speaking to the Christian. We have had such a conflagration of Christianity that we want to be a "21st century Church." We want to reach out to certain age groups, we want to reach certain races or certain economic groups—whatever it may be. And God calls us to be a first century Church—not casual, not convenient—costly! And that means that out of our churches—rural, city, whatever it may be—that believers in Jesus Christ will be called out to pay the price—to sacrifice their lives, to give the privilege of sharing Jesus Christ to a people they never met, to go to a place they never went and share Jesus. That is to become a **first century** Church. We have to go back to Matthew 28. We have to be "Great Commission" Christians, and that means we

have to get out of our convenience, out of our comfort, and know more blood will be shed, but, indeed, Americans are called to even risk their own lives.

Ankerberg: I was thinking, boy! How in the world could you reach any Muslim when they're not supposed to befriend a Christian? They're supposed to hate that which Christians love. And they have to do it in terms of having any hope of heaven, and yet, you guys were in that boat and you crossed the line and God brought you to Himself and you paid a great price. And again, this is Truth. If you want to know the true God and you really want to have His salvation, there is no other way. And sometimes it is costly.

For the dear Muslim that is watching right now, that says, "I want to cross the line. I'm willing to pay the price"—Ergun, we've got about a minute left—would you lead them in a prayer that they could pray to Jesus Christ and how they could take His gift of salvation and start a personal relationship with Him? Would you pray that prayer for them?

Ergun: I would be honored. I'm going to ask that you simply do this. You pray along silently as we pray out loud and I want you to please listen to the words we're about to say. "Dear God, I know that I'm a sinner, born a sinner—by lifestyle, by deed, by thought, a sinner. I know that if I had to live by the scales, that there would be no chance for me to make it to paradise. That daily, hourly, even minute by minute, my life is far more outweighed with bad than good. But Father, I also know that not one sin, not one, not one, is allowed in. And so it's not a matter of me being good enough, or smart enough, or nice enough, or kind enough, but by the shed blood of Jesus Christ—that Jesus, in fact, was crucified. He died, was buried, resurrected and ascended. Jesus shed His blood so that I never would have to. Father, I accept you in my heart. I repent of sin, turn my life over to you. Jesus Christ, you are more than just a prophet. You are prophet, priest, and King. Thank you for saving me. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen."

Ankerberg: Thank you. If you prayed that prayer, we'd love to hear from you.

We're going to have you back, guys, and I also want to say "thank you" to you for coming, and I just admire your courage. And I just thank God for you that you had the courage to stand up and to speak this. A lot of this is "politically incorrect," but we think that God is going to use this information. So

thank you for being with us.