



Photo by Pete Bowman

Jay Smith regularly debates with Muslims at Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park.

Confronting Radical Islam

Story by Debra Smith

The hundreds in attendance at CC Missions Conference 2010 in Murrieta, CA, sat riveted. Many frantically took notes as Jay Smith quoted statistics, Bible passages, and Qur'an references with breathtaking speed. "Radical Muslims," declared Jay, "are the people I like to work with the most—mainly because they're just like me."

Jay explained that Islam and Christianity both include radicals, moderates, and liberals. Radical Muslims—the ones who tend to commit the violence—are also, he contended, the ones who take the Qur'an seriously. Radical Christians such as Jay likewise take the Bible seriously—and therefore serve others in love. Radical Muslims model their lives on Muhammad; radical Christians on Jesus Christ. The outworkings are different though the tenets the same: Radical Muslims and radical Christians both look to their Scriptures as authoritative and to their central hero as their exemplar.

Citing surveys, Jay said radicalism is growing markedly among Muslims worldwide. This escalation is demonstrated by a surge of terrorist activity, including 2001 shoe bomber Richard Reid, Heathrow Airport's 2006 liquid bombers, and the subway bombers of July 2005. "There are 149 young men in Belmarsh Prison in London who have been caught making bombs, transporting bombs, or trying to explode bombs. Every one of them is Muslim. All except four are British citizens." Jay said radical leader Omar Bakri Muhammad introduces Jay to audiences with the words, "This is my favorite Christian, but this is the first man I will kill when Islam comes to Britain." Jay noted that while the U.S. has seen less radicalism than the U.K., 9/11 displayed the threat. "We've got a real dilemma. How are we going to deal with this growing radicalization?"

Some hope the government's police, soldiers, and politicians will restrain the danger. "But no government is equipped to confront radical Islam," Jay continued. "Radical Islam is an ideology that you cannot destroy with bombs, bullets, and cruise missiles. When has there ever been an ideology that has been destroyed with physical means like that?"

Others look to the media and its power to expose. But reporters "saw what happened to Salman Rushdie," said Jay. Rushdie received death threats after offending many Muslims with his 1998 novel *The Satanic Verses*. Citing others who were killed for criticizing Islam, Jay concluded the media will never speak out: "They've seen what has happened to others who have dared confront Islam. They don't live very long."

A third group, academics such as university professors, may hold tools that challenge radical Islam. "What the academics are finding is proving to be exciting," Jay said, referring to new discoveries that undermine Islamic claims about the Qur'an. But because many university Islamic departments are controlled by Muslims, "Don't wait for the academics to take on this battle," Jay added. "They'll continue to research, but they will not go public with what they know."

Only Christians are genuinely able to confront radical Islam, concluded Jay: "We're the only ones who understand Scripture, because we start from Scripture." Christians must not be so timid that they fail to expose falsehood, he said, citing Jesus' example of confronting the Pharisees in Matthew 23. Paul also vigorously disputed error, using his knowledge of Scripture and of other philosophies to challenge Jews and pagans in Acts 17-19. He was willing to be shunned, stoned, and whipped for doing so—and today, proclaimed Jay, "We need men like Paul."

To equip believers to challenge Muslims with the Gospel effectively, Jay used his second session to contrast Islam and Christianity. The following summary reveals differences that can point Muslims toward Christ.

The Qur'an and Its Sources

The Qur'an is composed of 114 *suras*, or chapters. Each sura contains verses called *ayas*. In references, Q. stands for Qur'an.

The Qur'an is filled with ancient Jewish stories. In one of Jay's four examples, found in Q. 27:15-44, King Solomon's hoopoe bird tells him of a beautiful queen in the land of Sheba. Solomon summons her, and upon arrival, she mistakes the shiny glass floor of Solomon's palace for water. Lifting her skirts to cross without getting wet, she exposes her calves—a humiliation for any ancient woman, especially one of queenly status.

Researchers have found a similar story in a Jewish document called the *Targum Sheni*, which Jay and other scholars believe the Qur'anic story was borrowed from.¹ Such discoveries undermine the Qur'an's claim to be from heaven (Q. 85:22). Asserting that

much of the Qur'an can be traced to earlier sources, Jay termed it "a fraudulent collection of stories borrowed from other texts."

The Bible and Its Manuscripts

Islam teaches that God originally revealed the Bible or portions of it, but Jews and Christians corrupted it later—adding, for example, the doctrine of Jesus' divinity. Jay counters with the question: When, and where? More than 24,000 early New Testament manuscripts, in 11 different languages, exist today. All teach the same Christian doctrines, including Jesus' divinity. How could the early manuscripts, scattered throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa, all have been changed—and all in the same way? The only manuscript differences are often footnoted in English Bibles and pertain to details, such as whether Jesus sent out 70 or 72 disciples in Luke 10:1—not to doctrines, such as whether He is God's Son. ☞

"There are 149 young men in Belmarsh Prison in London who have been caught making bombs, transporting bombs, or trying to explode bombs. Every one of them is Muslim. All except four are British citizens."

Jay Smith

Other Muslim Doctrines and Christian Responses from Jay Smith

	Islam	Christianity
<i>Kingdom</i>	Radical Islam seeks to establish a worldwide Islamic political state ² governed by Shari'ah Law. According to Shari'ah, women must cover ³ (Q. 33:59), robbers' hands should be cut off (Q. 5:38), and adulterers should be whipped with 100 lashes (Q. 24:2).	Christ's kingdom is not an earthly political state (Luke 17:20-21) and is not defended by physical force (John 18:36). Jesus' people are empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), not the sword, and are motivated to obey Him by love (John 14:15; Romans 13:8-10), not fear of corporal punishments.
<i>Women</i>	Qur'an sura four is called "The Women." It specifies that a man may have up to four wives (Q. 4:3), and if measures such as verbal admonition fail, the husband of a disobedient wife should beat her (Q. 4:34). Another sura adds that a woman's legal testimony is worth half a man's (Q. 2:282).	Against cultural norms, Jesus allowed Mary to learn from Him (Luke 10:39) and appeared first to women after resurrecting (Matthew 28:1-10). Galatians 3:28 teaches that male and female are equal in Christ, and Ephesians 5:25 instructs a husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church and died for her.
<i>God</i>	Islam teaches that God cannot enter time and space by descending to earth; doing so would diminish His greatness. But in Q. 20:9-36, God did come near and talk with Moses. Jay challenges Muslims by asking why God couldn't likewise come to earth in the form of Jesus?	Both Muslims and Arab Christians call God <i>Allah</i> , the Arabic word for God. But the God of the Bible can descend to earth. He entered time and space repeatedly, such as when He talked with Adam and Eve in Eden (Genesis 3:8-13), appeared to Abraham at Mamre (Genesis 18:1), and incarnated in Jesus (next box).
<i>Jesus</i>	The Qur'an honors Jesus as a great prophet (Q. 3:45-49) but insists He is not God's Son (Q. 4:171; 5:116), suggesting that such would require a physical relationship (6:101). However, Jay points out, the Qur'an recognizes that Jesus did things Muhammad could not, such as heal people (Q. 5:110). So, Jay asks, who is greater?	The Bible presents Jesus as God eternal, not a product of a physical relationship. Philippians 2:5-7 reveals He was already God before taking on humanity, and Luke 1:35 says He was conceived by the Holy Spirit's overshadowing. John 1:1 declares He existed in the beginning. Matthew 1:23 states He fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 that a virgin would bear <i>Immanuel</i> —"God with us."
<i>Peace & Violence</i>	Early verses of the Qur'an commend peace and later parts command violence. A doctrine called <i>abrogation</i> teaches that when contradictory, later <i>ayas</i> replace earlier ones (Q. 2:106; 16:101). A frequently cited <i>aya</i> favoring religious tolerance, Q. 2:256, is followed chronologically by many violent <i>ayas</i> , including Q. 4:89, 8:39, and 47:4. Tolerance is thereby abrogated and the violent verses authoritative.	The New Testament and Jesus' example promote peace, exclusively—not violence. Jesus said peacemakers are blessed (Matthew 5:9) and told His followers to offer the other cheek when slapped (Luke 6:29). While being arrested, He ordered Peter to put away his sword (John 18:11), healed a member of the party arresting Him (Luke 22:51), and said that "all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:52b).

¹ Such scholars include Dr. Abraham Geiger, W. St. Clair Tisdall, Dr. Charles C. Torrey, and Dr. Norm Geisler.

² World dominance in the name of Islam is a stated goal of, among others, Omar Bakri Muhammad, Abu Hamza al-Masri, and Osama bin Laden.

³ "Covering" is interpreted differently by various Muslims. It generally involves covering the hair, completely concealing the shape of the body, and covering all skin except the hands, and sometimes, the face and feet.

"This is my favorite Christian, but this is the first man I will kill when Islam comes to Britain."

Radical Muslim leader Omar Bakri Muhammad, describing Jay Smith