

[Note by James Bruggeman. The following article is by a well-known prison minister. We first published his story in our private monthly thank you letter to donors in May 2004, so we know the incident had to have happened some time before that.]

Allah or Jesus?

by Rick Mathes

Last month I attended my annual training session that's required for maintaining my state prison security clearance. During the training session there was a presentation by three speakers representing the Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim faiths, which explained each of their belief systems. I was particularly interested in what the Islamic Imam had to say.

The Imam gave a great presentation of the basics of Islam, complete with a video. After the presentations, time was provided for questions and answers. When it was my turn, I directed my question to the Imam and asked: "Please, correct me if I'm wrong, but I understand that most Imams and clerics of Islam have declared a holy jihad [holy war] against the infidels of the world. And, that by killing an infidel, which is a command to all Muslims, they are assured of a place in heaven. If that's the case, can you give me the definition of an infidel?" There was no disagreement with my statements and, without hesitation, he replied, "Non believers!" I responded, "So, let me make sure I have this straight. All followers of Allah have been commanded to kill everyone who is not of your faith so they can go to heaven, is that correct?"

The expression on his face changed from one of authority and command to that of a little boy who had just gotten caught with his hand in the cookie jar. He sheepishly replied, "Yes!", I then stated, "Well, sir, I have a real problem trying to imagine Pope John Paul commanding all Catholics to kill those of your faith or Dr. Stanley ordering Protestants to do the same in order to go to heaven!" The Imam was speechless. I continued, "I also have a problem with being your friend when you and your brother clerics are telling your followers to kill me. Let me ask you one more question. Would you rather have your Allah who tells you to kill me in order to go to heaven, or my Jesus who tells me to love you because I am going to heaven and He wants you to be there, too?" You could have heard a pin drop as the Imam hung his head in shame.

Chuck Colson once told me something that has sustained me these 20 years of prison ministry. He said to me, "Rick, remember that the truth will prevail." And it will!"