PEOPLE OF THE BOOK: PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S ENCOUNTERS WITH CHRISTIANS

by

Craig Considine
The Christians that lived around the Arabian Peninsula during Muhammad's lifetime are shrouded in mystery. Some of the stories of the Prophet's interactions with them are based on legends and myths, while others are more authentic and plausible. But who exactly were these Christians? Why did Muhammad interact with them as he reportedly did? And what lessons can today's Christians and Muslims learn from these encounters? Scholar Craig Considine, one of the most powerful global voices speaking in admiration of the prophet of Islam, provides answers to these questions. Through a careful study of works by historians and theologians, he highlights an idea central to Muhammad's vision: an inclusive Ummah, or Muslim nation, rooted in citizenship rights, interfaith dialogue, and freedom of conscience, religion and speech. In this unprecedented sociological analysis of one of history's most influential human beings, Considine offers groundbreaking insight that could redefine Christian and Muslim relations.
people to people international, People of the PeopleReady, People of people magazine, People of People Playground, People of people synonym, People of People People, people en espanol

What people say about this book

N. Mutlu, “Interesting and informative. I like how he put everything in a perfectly connected. You can see how the life of Prophet Muhammed effected the whole world! Definitely recommend!”

Mohammad Fakhr, “The cover is nice, and has good print.. Its cover is nice and the book print is very good.”

Roger DeBlanck, “Another Illuminating and Exploratory Work from Dr. Considine. Acclaimed professor and global speaker Craig Considine follows up his enlightening work The Humanity of Muhammad: A Christian View with even more valuable historical insights in People of the Book: Prophet Muhammad's Encounters with Christians. His research offers a clarifying view of Muhammad's remarkable life in order to provide us with an abundance of meaningful interactions between Christians and Muslims. Learning from these encounters can guide us in developing religious pluralism and stronger interfaith dialogue. Considine offers a fascinating overview of Muhammad's youth and how his experiences shaped his receptiveness towards Christians and others from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds. Considine explains that during Muhammad's travels on trading caravans, he interacted with Christians, such as the monk Bahira. Muhammad's knowledge of monotheism impressed Bahira into declaring that the young Muhammad had the mindset of a prophet. In examining Muhammad's formative years, I like how Considine praises him as a “cross-cultural navigator” with the intuition of “someone who possesses insight into—and an understanding of—the functions and values of various cultures across places and times.” Considine gives us further insight about young Muhammad's acceptance of Christians and others. He points out how Muhammad's clan, the Hashim, served as caretakers of al-Ka'bah. This responsibility enabled Muhammad to interact with diverse visitors to Mecca who came to worship at al-Ka'bah. Considine sees these experiences as instrumental in helping Muhammad become “a hospitable and tolerant man who looked after pilgrims and strangers in his midst.” Indeed, Muhammad's diverse interactions made him willing to reach out and learn from others. After the Angel Gabriel spoke to Muhammad, Considine reminds us of the vital influence Muhammad's beloved wife Khadijah had in convincing him that he possessed the fortitude to deliver God's message to humankind. To confirm her husband's forthcoming prophethood, Khadijah called upon her cousin Waraqa Ibn Nawfal, a Christian, who assured Muhammad that his experience with Gabriel was a sign that God had selected him as the honorable man needed to be God's messenger. Considine narrates this story of the Christian Ibn
Nawfal as an illuminating historical occurrence in understanding how Muhammad's relationships with Christians shaped his prophethood. Once Muhammad began sharing God's message of charity and generosity as a way to counteract inequalities and injustices, he and the first Muslims faced grave opposition from the rich and powerful Meccan tribes. Suffering persecution, the Muslims' first migration, the hijra, had them fleeing Mecca and seeking asylum from Ibn Abjar, the Christian king of Abyssinia. Considine describes how Ibn Abjar “recognized the legitimacy of Islam” because the Muslims shared a similar reverence for Jesus and Mary. Muhammad and the Muslims respected the Christian king because he did not dismiss Islam, even though the Muslims explained how they honored Jesus as guided by God's spirit, but he was still the human son of Mary, not the divine son of God. Considine's compelling examination of this event with the Abyssinian king gives us insight about the crucial role Christians played in the early days of Islam and how these experiences enhanced Muhammad's receptiveness towards Christians. Considine offers a gripping account of Muhammad's Night Journey to Jerusalem. He describes each of the seven stages of heaven that Muhammad visits, where he meets Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and many other prophets. These encounters, Considine points out, strengthened Muhammad's embrace of the Judeo-Christian prophets as brothers. Considine offers a profound observation of how Muhammad's Night Journey can help us recognize the benefits of learning from other faiths: “While Muhammad may be more important for Muslims, Jesus for Christians, and Moses for Jews, all three traditions link themselves back to Abraham, the common monotheistic patriarch. Abraham unites the Ahl al-Kitab [People of the Book].”In discussing the second hijra of the Muslims to Yathrib (renamed Medina), Considine examines how Muhammad utilized his extraordinary leadership skills as a just and honorable statesman to interact with the diverse tribes. Considine details how Muhammad settled conflicts and established the Constitution of Medina, whereby he promoted an egalitarian society that granted Christians, Jews, and others equal rights and protection under the law. Considine further makes clear how conversion to Islam was unnecessary because Muhammad recognized the freedom of Christians and Jews to worship God in their own traditions. Considine enables us to see how Muhammad's achievement of creating an equal and just community rejected ancestry and bloodlines in favor of embracing the first civic nation. Maintaining and protecting such a democratic state, however, in an era of rampant turmoil challenged Muhammad to develop specific standards of self-defense and peacemaking. Considine covers the many conflicts that arose, and he cites widely from the Qur'an about the context of self-defense verses. Muhammad saw fighting as a last resort, and he forbid initiating aggression. As soon as hostilities ceased, he sought peace negotiations. Considine shows how Muhammad always strove towards peacemaking, rather than merely keeping the peace. In particular, he recounts the extraordinary covenant Muhammad drafted with the Christians of Najran in order to ensure peaceful coexistence and provide them with protection after centuries of persecution. Considine steers us towards understanding how throughout Muhammad's life, each of his encounters with Christians increased his open-mindedness towards
accepting all people. His encounters also helped develop his grand vision for the Ummah as a diverse community based on human and civil rights. Considine captures perfectly the humanity of the Qur'an when he says that its message “not only embraces diversity but also challenges readers to find ways to cooperate with other human beings who might not physically look like them, or even believe like them.” Muhammad, of course, shared this ethical and universal message of God with humankind, and he made sure his piety and good actions exemplified his acceptance of people from all races and faiths. In the last chapter of his book, Considine reminds us of the touching anecdote about Muhammad preserving a fresco of Jesus and Mary after he removed all other icons from al-Ka'bah. This inspiring historical account demonstrates Muhammad's reverence for Christians and why they are, indeed, recognized in the Qur'an as Ahl al-Kitab or “People of the Book.” Considine's thoughtful and illuminating research reveals the Prophet Muhammad's lifelong open-mindedness towards engaging with Christians. Similar to Considine, I grew up in the Christian tradition and I embrace the teachings of Jesus, but I also value the knowledge I've gained from studying the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet Muhammad. I've always sought a path to keep my mind open to learning, and Considine's exploratory work People of the Book provides us with eye-opening accounts of Muhammad's interactions with Christians. These historical encounters can serve as contemporary guides for us of how accepting people of all backgrounds and beliefs leads us nearer to a world of inclusiveness and civic peace among all nations.”

Karim Shabazz - author of “Jesus and Muhammad 2 Rays of The Same Light”, “Compelling, Poignant, Highly Informative, Thought Provoking!!”. This book from Dr. Craig Considine is an invaluable milestone in the field of comparative religious studies and interfaith! Highly informative, easy-to-read, and yet superbly written, the author gracefully shares with the public critical insights into many of the encounters of Muhammad the prophet (peace be upon him) with Christians! These insights and surprising historical references in the book can help promote better relations amongst people of faith, especially Christians and Muslims. This book is a must read! There are many lessons that can be learned from the encounters of Muhammad the prophet (peace be upon him) and Christians of his time. Despite our individual religious autonomies, the lessons explored in this book can help foster a spirit of love, friendship, and mutual cooperation amongst Christians, Muslims, and Jews. I highly recommend this book!!Let There Be Light!!”

Anon, “People of the Book. I definitely think it's a must read. I like the way Dr Craig writes and it is easily accessible for the lay person. Even if you're not particularly religious this book certainly makes one think. Go read it! Thank you : )”


The book by Craig Considine has a rating of 5 out of 4.6. 18 people have provided
feedback.
Book Information

Language: English
File size: 7032 KB
Text-to-Speech: Enabled
Screen Reader: Supported
Enhanced typesetting: Enabled
X-Ray: Not Enabled
Word Wise: Enabled
Print length: 213 pages
Lending: Enabled

DMCA