

Author, Former Missionary Pens Book to fight Prejudice, Fear of Muslims

Peace Activist Steve Slocum uses new book, "Why Do They Hate Us? Making Peace with the Muslim World", to tackle Islamophobia, shed light on peaceful Muslim mainstream.

San Diego, CA (June 28, 2019) – Five years as a Christian missionary in Asian Kazakhstan was a game changer for Steve Slocum, altering forever his view of Muslims and his understanding of Islam. Today, with anti-Muslim sentiment at an all time high, Slocum is on a mission to dispel rumors and myths about Muslims and shed light on Islam's peaceful mainstream in his debut book, *Why Do They Hate Us? Making Peace with the Muslim World*, and through his work with SalaamUSA, the nonprofit he founded in 2018.

In an era of rampant Islamophobia, Slocum's book is essential reading."

– Todd H. Green, author of *The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West*

With the release of his debut book, Slocum takes a stand against Islamophobia and encourages his readers to see through the rising anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. and beyond. By taking the spotlight off the extremists, Slocum instead exposes the heart of the everyday Muslim through Christian outreach and clears up common misconceptions about jihad, Sharia law and the role of women in Islam.

"In his comprehensive, helpful debut, Slocum encourages Christians to establish friendly relationships with Muslims ." – Publishers Weekly

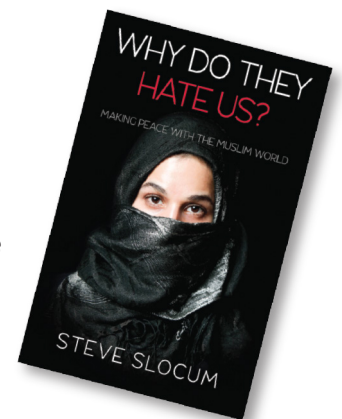
When Slocum returned from his missionary work in 1997, he resumed his engineering career, but became uncomfortable with the growing animosity towards Muslims. *"When 9/11 happened, just like everyone else, I was traumatized,"* said Slocum. *"Having experienced the generosity and hospitality of the Muslim Kazak culture, I couldn't fathom Muslim radicals flying packed airliners into skyscrapers filled with people."*

After 9/11, the world became more fearful of Muslims, and the current political climate has only exacerbated the issue, culminating in the rise of horrific hate crimes like the New Zealand Mosque shooting. *"I believe many Americans have never healed from the trauma of 9/11. Others have misconceptions about Islam fed by media coverage of extremists,"* Slocum added.

Most Americans don't even know a Muslim, and 55% say they know "little or nothing" about Islam, according to SalaamUSA. *"In this void, Americans' opinions about Islam are shaped by the media, political rhetoric, and religious bias,"* said Slocum. *"Islamophobia is a present and rising force in the West."* says D. Donovan, Senior Reviewer at Midwest Book Review. *"(Slocum) takes a stand against this prejudice by advocating a different approach to not just tolerating Muslims, but getting to know them on a personal level. In this case, familiarity does not breed contempt. It leads to understanding."*

This personal interaction across cultures and faiths is the crux of Slocum's work with SalaamUSA. From awareness events to mosque visits to the face-to-face friendship dinners and discussion groups, Salaam's programs help fight fear with friendship.

"Since people fear what they don't know, we create curriculum and hold workshops that help people better understand the peaceful mainstream – rather than the extremism that dominates the headlines, Slocum said.



"There could have been no better timing for the appearance of "Why Do They Hate Us?" than in these modern times," added Donovan.

The book which releases on July 16 (Top Reads Publishing) has garnered rave early rave reviews from the trade and scholars alike, many calling it 'essential reading' and a thoughtful first hand examination of Islam's peaceful mainstream. A few of the reviews include:

"This book is an important antidote to the rising anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. and beyond. It will appeal to those who are seeking the truth about the Islamic faith and those who are hoping to live their spirit by reading the work of a committed bridge builder."

- Dr. Craig Considine, Department of Sociology, Rice University

"Well-researched, cogently argued, and drawing on the work of scholars as well personal insights, Slocum's work avoids clichés and deeply examines the complex relationship between Islam and the West. In the end, Slocum unmask a clash of ignorance and reveals a shared humanity to which we can all relate."

- Muhammed Hassanali, Booklist Starred Review

"Steve Slocum skillfully encourages us to rediscover the beautiful truth about our Muslim sisters and brothers. This book is for the peacemakers, the haters, and everyone in between who long to see more clearly and who dare to believe that God inhabits uncommon friendships and, through them, is remaking the world."

- Jer Swigart, Co-Founder, The Global Immersion Project, Co-Author, Mending the Divides: Creative Love in a Conflicted World

"There could have been no better timing for the appearance of "Why Do They Hate Us?" than in these modern times," - Midwest Book Reviews

Slocum launches a national book tour with local book events at Warwicks in La Jolla on June 30 followed by Barnes & Noble stores throughout Southern California before heading up the coast as far as Seattle, WA and Vancouver, BC to spread his message of interfaith peace and tolerance.

About Steve Slocum:

Steve Slocum, author and peace activist, founded SalaamUSA.org with the goal of creating friendship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Motivated by his experience as a missionary in Kazakhstan, Slocum wrote *Why Do They Hate Us? Making Peace with the Muslim World* to counter rampant Islamophobic political rhetoric and give a voice to Islam's peaceful mainstream. Through SalaamUSA and his new book, Slocum hopes to fight the fear, prejudice, and violence surrounding Islamophobia. He is an ambassador for the Parliament of World Religions and a presenter at the 2018 Parliament in Toronto. He is a frequent keynote speaker and media expert based in San Diego.

About SalaamUSA.org:

SalaamUSA.org is a non-profit organization that focuses on creating mutual understanding between Muslims, Christians, Jews and the non-religious. Salaam uses events, community outreach and media to raise awareness of Islam from an unbiased, non-religious, nonpartisan perspective.



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Reviews

STEVE SLOCUM

Peace Activist, Author of *Why Do They Hate Us? Making Peace with the Muslim World*

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WHAT THEY'RE SAYING...

- "Well-researched, cogently argued, and drawing on the work of scholars as well personal insights, Slocum's work avoids clichés and deeply examines the complex relationship between Islam and the West. In the end, Slocum unmasks a clash of ignorance and reveals a shared humanity to which we can all relate."

– **Muhammed Hassanali,**
Booklist Starred Review

- "In his comprehensive, helpful debut, Slocum, an aircraft designer and former missionary, encourages Christians to establish friendly relationships with Muslims... Effectively countering pernicious, misinformed narratives, this is an essential contribution to interfaith studies."

– **Publishers Weekly**

- "An exploration of Islamic beliefs and history that aims to challenge American Islamophobia... A clear, concise, and thoughtful introduction to Islam."

– **Kirkus Starred Reviews**

- "Steve Slocum's *Why Do They Hate Us?* offers readers a highly accessible introduction to Islam as a lived religion along with a helpful blueprint for how to build and maintain peace between Muslims and majority populations in the West. In an era of rampant Islamophobia, Slocum's book is essential reading."

– **Todd H. Green, author of *The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West***

- "*Why Do They Hate Us?* takes a stand against prejudice by advocating a different approach to not just tolerating Muslims, but getting to know them on a personal level... It stands out from the crowd in offering a powerful blend of historical, political, and personal perspectives on a very complex issue..."

– **Midwest Book Review**

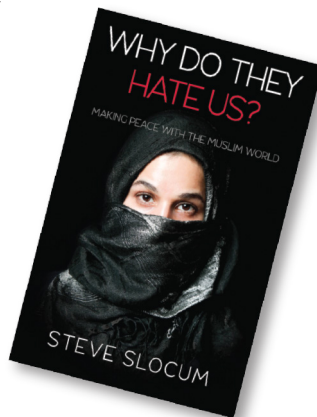
- "Steve Slocum skillfully encourages us to reclaim our sight and rediscover the beautiful truth about our Muslim sisters and brothers: just like us, they

are beloved image bearers of the Divine. This book is for the peacemakers, the haters, and everyone in between who long to see more clearly and who dare to believe that God inhabits uncommon friendships and, through them, is remaking the world."

– **Jer Swigart, Co-Founder, The Global Immersion Project, Co-Author, *Mending the Divides: Creative Love in a Conflicted World***

- "Steve, I wasn't able to just glance through your book. I had to read it slowly. I found it to be captivating, full of important information, relevant to every American."

– **Safi Kaskas,**
Muslim Peacemaker, Activist, Author,
The Qur'an - A Contemporary Understanding



- "*Why Do They Hate Us?* provides needed information about the Muslim world to help non-Muslims see through misleading propaganda. It provides real inspiration based on Steve Slocum's experiences as a Christian living in a Muslim country and traveling widely in the Muslim world. Most important, it is an invitation to join Steve as a peacemaker, learning to love our 1.5 billion Muslim neighbors as we love ourselves. That's an important mission, and a lot depends on our being part of it."

– **Brian D. McLaren,**
Author, Speaker, Activist

- "Steve Slocum's book is a labor of love for humanity. Part historical, contemporary, and reflective in light of his personal transformation, Slocum brings the reader on a beautiful ride towards understanding, compassion, knowledge, and the kind of genuine religious pluralism that our worlds desperately need in the 21st century. This accessible written book is an important antidote to the rising anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. and beyond. It will appeal to those who are seeking the truth about the Islamic faith and those who are hoping to liven their spirit by reading the work of a committed bridge builder."

– **Dr. Craig Considine,**
Department of Sociology, Rice University

The Top 10 Things I Thought I Knew About Islam, But Was Wrong

STEVE SLOCUM

Peace Activist, Author of *Why Do They Hate Us? Making Peace with the Muslim World*

1 Mohammed was primarily a warrior.

In fact, Mohammed was a champion for social justice and egalitarianism. You can read about the life of Mohammed in chapter 1 of *Why Do They Hate Us? (WDTHU)*

2 Islam oppresses women.

In fact, in the time of Mohammed, women were oppressed by virtually all civilizations and cultures. Mohammed introduced the revolutionary idea that women were equal to men long before other civilizations.

3 Muslims consider Jews and Christians to be infidels.

"Mohammed considered Islam to be a clarification of both Judaism and Christianity for the Arab peoples..." More than twenty Old Testament prophets are validated by the Quran, including Jesus of Nazareth. The story told in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke is virtually retold in the Quran." (Pg. 114 WDTHU)

4 Muslims are commanded by the Quran to slaughter all infidels.

In fact, the Quran forbids wars of aggression and allows only self-defense. "Fight in God's path against those who fight you, but do not be aggressors, for God does not love the aggressors." (Quran 2:190) "What set the Muslims apart from the Hebrews, the Christians, and the Quraysh was the strict prohibition against initiating a conflict and the requirement to cease fighting the moment the enemy surrendered." (Pg. 50 WDTHU)

5 Islam opposes freedom of religion and spread using the "convert or die" philosophy.

In fact, Mohammed taught that "there is no compulsion in religion." All are free to choose for themselves (Quran 2:194).

6 Islam is primarily a warlike religion.

In fact, the Quranic teachings about war were exclusively in the context of self-defense of the Muslim community, who were under attack from the Quraysh tribal leaders of Mecca. There is nothing in the teaching of Islam even remotely close to a concept of killing all those who are not followers of Islam. (Pg. 46-56 WDTHU)

7 Sharia law is about violent forms of punishment for various infractions such as in Saudi Arabia, Iran, by ISIS and the Taliban.

"I was shocked to learn that physical punishment is mentioned just five times in the entire Quran." (Pg. 45 WDTHU)

8 Mohammed was a conquering commander and a leader of the Islamic Empire.

In fact, Mohammed had passed away before Islam's period of Imperial expansion, and this expansion had nothing to do with the religion of Islam but with the culture of empire. (Pg. 65 WDTHU)

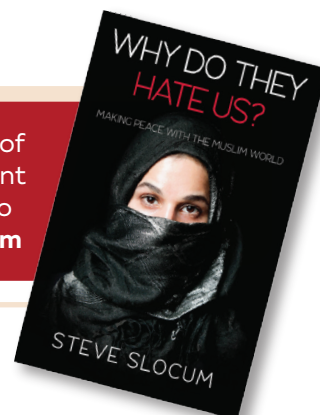
9 Al Qaeda originated as a group of militant Islamic fundamentalists intent on slaughtering infidels.

In fact, the CIA created terror in the name of Islam as a means to resist the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. "The United States all but created Al Qaeda: limitless cash and weapons, no accountability or oversight, training in explosives and detonation,...even US-provided schoolbooks to make sure the next generation grew up as jihadists, according to the *Washington Post*." (Pg. 161 WDTHU)

10 Suicide and terror attacks committed by Muslims are motivated by religious fervor.

In fact, these attacks by Muslims nearly always have political motivation and nothing to do with religion. "The central fact is that overwhelmingly suicide terrorist attacks are not driven by religion as much as they are by a clear strategic objective: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from the territory that the terrorists view as their homeland." (Pg. 173 "Dying to Win: The Logic of Suicide Terrorism," by Robert Pape)

For a sample chapter of my new book and event updates, please go to www.steveslocum.com



Author Bio

STEVE SLOCUM

Peace Activist, Author of *Why Do They Hate Us? Making Peace with the Muslim World*

Short: (50)

Steve Slocum, author and peace activist, founded SalaamUSA.org with the goal of creating friendship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Motivated by his experience as a missionary in Kazakhstan, Slocum wrote *Why Do They Hate Us? Making Peace with the Muslim World* to counter rampant Islamophobic political rhetoric and give a voice to Islam's peaceful mainstream.

Medium: (121)

Steve Slocum, author and peace activist wants people to understand their Muslim neighbors. The founder of SalaamUSA.org, Slocum recently released his debut book, *Why Do They Hate Us? Making Peace with the Muslim World* to counter rampant Islamophobic political rhetoric and give a voice to Islam's peaceful mainstream. In 2018, he founded SalaamUSA.org, a nonpartisan, nonreligious organization, whose mission and meaning is 'peace', to create mutual understanding between Muslims, Christians, Jews and the non-religious. Through SalaamUSA and his new book, Slocum hopes to fight the fear, prejudice, and violence surrounding Islamophobia. He is an ambassador for the Parliament of World Religions and a presenter at the 2018 Parliament in Toronto. He is a frequent keynote speaker and media expert.

Long: (159)

Steve Slocum, author and peace activist, founded SalaamUSA.org with the goal of creating friendship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Motivated by his experience as a missionary in Kazakhstan, Slocum wrote *Why Do They Hate Us? Making Peace with the Muslim World*. When Slocum took his family of five to Kazakhstan as missionaries their time spent immersed in this culture and the iconic Muslim hospitality left a lasting impression. Once back in the states, Slocum resumed his engineering career, but grew uneasy with the growing level of animosity towards Muslims. In 2018, he founded SalaamUSA.org, a nonprofit organization, whose mission and meaning is 'peace', to create mutual understanding between Muslims, Christians, Jews and the non-religious. Slocum has set out to build bridges of peace through his nonprofit and his new book. He is an ambassador for the Parliament of World Religions and a presenter at the 2018 Parliament in Toronto. He is a frequent keynote speaker and media expert.



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WHY DO THEY HATE US?

MAKING PEACE WITH THE MUSLIM WORLD

STEVE SLOCUM

"A thoughtful, firsthand examination of Islam's peaceful mainstream."

With Americans still in shock after watching packed airliners slam into the twin towers, George W. Bush asked America, "Why do they hate us?"

After 9/11, the world became more fearful, and acts of terrorism were prominent in the news cycles. In *Why Do They Hate Us?*, author Steve Slocum takes the spotlight off the extremists and instead exposes the heart of the everyday Muslim through Christian outreach.

Why Do They Hate Us? brings the story of Mohammed to life and unveils the storied history of Islam with refreshing detail. Slocum clears up common misconceptions about jihad, Sharia law and the role of women in Islam. He then connects the dots for readers of all faiths between cause and effect for the rise in Islamophobia. Finally, Slocum suggests practical ways to overcome societal fears by face-to-face interaction with our Muslim neighbors.

Why Do They Hate Us? is sprinkled with stories from the lives of everyday Muslims and anecdotes from Slocum's time in Kazakhstan, allowing the reader to catch a glimpse of a different side of Muslims than portrayed in the media.



"In an era of rampant Islamophobia, Slocum's book is essential reading."

TODD H. GREEN, AUTHOR OF *THE FEAR OF ISLAM*

RELIGION / ISLAM / ECUMENISM
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www.whyydotheyhateus.org

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Slocum took the adventure of a lifetime when he disappeared with his family of five in the Central Asian steppe as Christian missionaries to Kazakhstan. During their five years there, they were often on the receiving end of the iconic Muslim hospitality. It left a lasting impression. Once back in the states, Slocum resumed his engineering career, but grew uneasy with the growing levels of animosity towards practitioners of Islam.

In 2018, he founded **Salaam**, a non-religious, non-partisan nonprofit organization. Salaam's mission is creating mutual understanding between Muslims, Christians, Jews and the non-religious. Salaam's first workshop took place at All Souls' Episcopal Church in San Diego. Afterward, the rector, Rev. Joseph Dirbas, said, **"In a world full of division, ignorance and hate, Salaam builds the bridge of peace with education and fellowship as we share our stories and work for the common good."**

Slocum is a frequent media guest and keynote speaker. *Why Do They Hate Us?* is his first book.



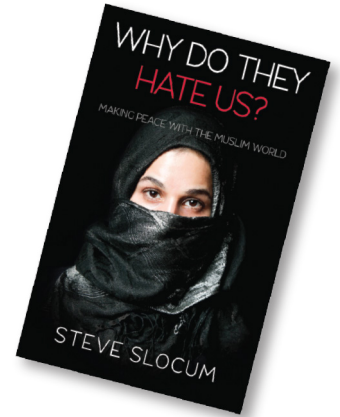
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Fact Sheet

Islamophobia: Fear Used For Political Gain Has Deadly Consequences

- Up to 75% of Americans don't know a Muslim
- 55% Americans know "little or nothing" about Islam
 - Americans' opinions about Islam are shaped by the media, political rhetoric, and religious bias
- Islamophobia is real—and deadly -- and being used for political gain
 - Well-funded anti-Muslim centers pump out false information for political purposes - with callous disregard for the innocent casualties
- From 2008-2013, \$206M has funded 33 Islamophobic misinformation centers* including:
 - ACT! For America (actforamerica.org)
 - Center for Security Policy (centerforsecuritypolicy.org)
 - Middle East Forum (meforum.org)
 - Jihad watch (JihadWatch.org)
- In 2016, anti-Muslim assaults reported to the FBI spiked to 37% -- more than in the year of the 9/11 (2001) attacks
- In the two years leading up to the 2016 presidential election, Donald Trump made approximately 30 public statements making false claims about Muslims or threatening discrimination
- As President, Trump has penned three versions of an executive order banning citizens from six Muslim majority nations from traveling to the United States.
- From 2016 to 2018, the government cut admissions for Muslim refugees by 91%
- Middle East countries account for fewer than 15% of the world's population of Muslims
- 50 dead in Christchurch Mosque Massacre March 15, 2019
- 6 dead in Quebec City Mosque Shooting January 29, 2017
- SalaamUSA.org creates friendship and mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims.
 - Non-religious, non-partisan, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit corporation
 - Bringing people together to overcome fear
 - Proven process is designed to guide non-Muslims from fear to friendship
 1. Awareness events with Muslim speakers
 2. Mosque visits
 3. Friendship dinners
 4. Interactive discussion groups
 5. Diplomacy-hosting visiting dignitaries
 6. Travel to Muslim lands
- American Muslims have seen the greatest growth of bias-motivated violence in two of the past three years.



Media Advisory

Christians and Muslims Come Together During Lent

Salaam and St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral bring together Muslim leaders to share their stories and create understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims

WHO: Salaam, a non-religious, non-partisan organization that focuses on creating friendships and a mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. Salaam USA has partnered with St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, a place of sanctuary and safety that celebrates diversity, and leaders in the Muslim community.

"Salaam's Lenten Interfaith Dialogue Series gives non-Muslims an opportunity to interact with Muslims from across the spectrum – conservative to progressive – in order to gain a firsthand understanding of the Muslim – American community." -Steve Slocum, Founder & President, Salaam USA

WHAT: During the contemplative season of Lent, Salaam and St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral will present a six-week interfaith discussion series featuring key leaders from the Muslim community. Attendees will have the opportunity to interact with the full spectrum of Muslims, progressive to conservative, enjoy a complimentary community dinner and a lively roundtable discussion. Registration for any or all of the weekly events is open to the public and available at SalaamUSA.org or <http://bit.ly/InterfaithSeries>.

WHEN: Every Wednesday March 13– April 17 at 6 p.m.– 8:00 p.m.

- March 13: A Homophobic Mother's Journey – Siddika Jessa –Leader, CEO of WiderLens, runs development programs to inspire individuals towards positive and authentic Action by sharing her journey to acceptance of her son's same sex marriage.
- A Queer Muslim's Story – Kilian Colin , an American Muslim Queer activist, is working days and nights to bring awareness to the Muslim Queer community issues and to help more Muslim Queers to come out without fears of persecution.
- March 20: Israel and Palestine: Getting Through to the Real Issues – Steve Slocum , author of *Why Do They Hate Us?* and founder of Salaam, focuses on creating mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims.
- March 27: Islam's Roots in Social Justice and Today's Progressive Muslims – Ani Zonneveld , founder of Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV), advocates for egalitarian expressions of Islam, for women's rights, LGBTQI rights, freedom of expression, and freedom of and from religion or belief by challenging human rights abuses in the name of Islam.



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