

INTERVIEW WITH A LEADER OF AN ISLAMIC PESANTREN by Walter Williams
(Islamic boys and girls boarding school)

Yogyakarta

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Pak Movid age late 60s

The schedule each day is reading the Koran. That is the basic text for the pesantren. Not only the students attend, but also men and women visitors who wish to learn more about Islam. There are four sessions each day, in the early morning, late morning, afternoon, and early evening. We read in Arabic, then we translate the passages for the students, from Arabic to Indonesian.

We use the older more experienced students to teach the younger ones. There is no limit as to the age of the students; we have both males and females, from very young to the old people, and from all levels of society. Everybody can come. The younger students are still in public schools, and they come here after they complete their daily school classes in the morning. The teaching technique is the same as in public schools, but the subject is the Koran.

Every Sunday, in addition to the regular classes, the students also listen to speeches given by the leader. The leader teaches them how to give speeches also. Afterwards, the students take a walk together in the village, cleaning the village environment and doing other repairs that need to be done. On Fridays, in early morning, there is a special reading of the Koran, and again after evening prayers, they recite from the Koran.

We hope by doing this, we will make good Muslims. There are many people today who say they are Muslim, but they do not really do any activities or pay attention to their religion. Since I have this knowledge, it would be of no use if I did not try to spread it to other people. I would be like a tree that does not bear fruit.

Besides the academic classes studying the Koran, we also have practical skills classes like carpentry and sewing. The students can attend whichever skills classes they are interested in.

We have a two-story dormitory, with room for one hundred boys. Each room has two boys living in it. It is the same in the girls dormitory, but since we have more female boarding students there is an extra building for them. The students must pay Rp. 16,000 [US \$9.60] per month, for their room and board, plus their medical needs. We have to pay the utilities. Students who cannot afford to pay this amount, are assigned to do the cooking for the others. Students supply their own clothes.

To run the pesantren, private individuals will donate money. We get special donations from Arabia also. My wife sells gold jewelry and batik cloth, to help raise the money for operating expenses. Sometimes my well-to-do brothers contribute money as well, and whenever I ask them for help they will do so. The government has some funds to contribute if we want to apply for them, but we have enough money from among ourselves plus the tuition. If I need more money, I will ask other people.

ISLAM

Islam is a belief in the heart, as well as the person's declaration by their speech. There are five principles in

believing: (1) belief of God, (2) belief in angels, (3) belief in the holy book, (4) belief in the last judgement, and the hereafter, and (5) belief in God's will.

For someone to be a good Muslim, he or she should
There are five additional principles in Islam: 1. a statement of belief in God, and that Mohammed is his messenger, 2. pray 3. give one's property to the poor, 4. fast, 5. and making a pilgrimage to Mecca if possible.

Islam is distinct from other religions in its methods of prayer, its devotion to the Koran, and the concern for cleaning the body before doing prayers. Islam believes there is only one god, not many. There is no conflict with the ancient Javanese traditions, of many spirits. Islam will not wipe them out. We should not disturb other religions, but they should not disturb Islam either. We should obey the laws of Indonesia respecting freedom of religion. But in our own life we should follow the pure Arabic form of Islam, which is the real Islam.