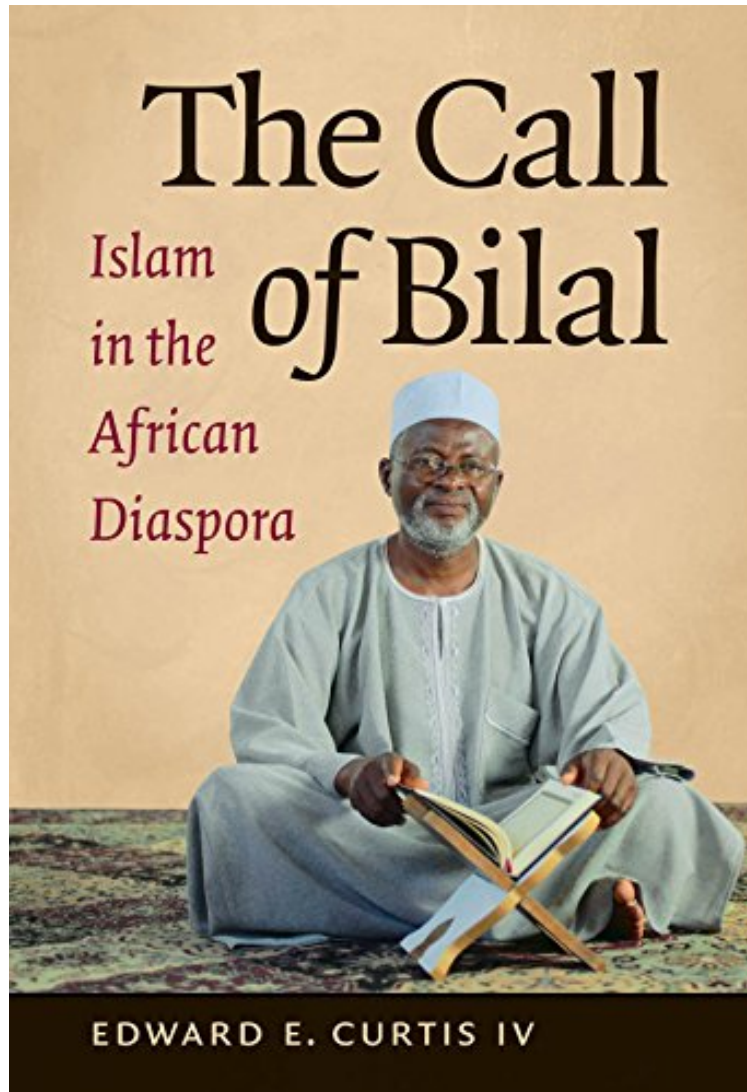


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The Call of Bilal: Islam in the African Diaspora (Islamic Civilization and Muslim Networks)

Edward E. Curtis IV

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How do people in the African diaspora practice Islam? While the term "Black Muslim" may conjure images of Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali, millions of African-descended Muslims around the globe have no connection to the American-based Nation of Islam. *The Call of Bilal* is a penetrating account of the rich diversity of Islamic religious practice among African Muslims worldwide. Covering North Africa and the Middle East, India and Pakistan, Europe, and the Americas, Edward E. Curtis IV reveals a fascinating range of religious activities--from the observance of the five pillars of Islam and the creation of transnational Sufi networks to the veneration of African saints and political struggles for racial justice. Weaving together ethnographic fieldwork and historical perspectives, Curtis shows how African Muslims interpret not only their religious identities but also their attachments to the African diaspora. For some, the dispersal of African people across time and space has been understood as a mere physical scattering or perhaps an economic opportunity. For others, it has been a metaphysical and spiritual exile of the soul from its sacred land and eternal home.

In a relatively short space, Edward E. Curtis IV skillfully and significantly complicates issues of religion, identity, and ethnicity. This is a book of multiple intersections: beliefs, customs, minority/majority relationships, presented across borders and oceans. . . . *The Call of Bilal* is . . . "thick description," to borrow Clifford Geertz's phrase, at its best: persist and you will be rewarded.--Shelby Shapiro, *American Studies*[Curtis] argues that any general discussion of Islam among people of African descent must resist automatic associations with any one practice or ideology. . . . "The Call of Bilal" adds to Islamic as well as African diaspora studies.--*Islamic Horizons*With this volume, Curtis. . . makes a major contribution to the literature on Islamic and diaspora studies. . . . He covers a wide range of historical and ethnographic studies of Islam in North Africa and the Middle East, India and Pakistan, and Europe and the Americas. . . . Highly recommended. --Lawrence H. Mamiya, *CHOICE*"A vivid portrait of the diverse Islamic practices of African-descended Muslims dispersed around the world. . . a work cast in dynamic and interpretative religious studies perspectives."--*Contemporary Islam*2015 Choice Outstanding Academic Title A vital intervention in the field, *The Call of Bilal* creatively and successfully engages Islamic studies as well as African diaspora studies. Features exactly the right balance between ethnographic material and analysis in a much needed conversation on the intersections of race and Islam, a crossroads of fields, arguments, and debates that has until now been insufficiently explored in its global dimensions.--Juliane Hammer, University of North Carolina at Chapel HillThis unique and valuable study of global Islam in the African diaspora is a compelling example of scholarly erudition, creative analysis, and original research wed to a synthesis of wide-ranging scholarship on the subject. It is refreshing to read a study of Islam that is concerned with its contemporary formations and that engages with important issues beyond those of religious violence.--Sylvester A. Johnson, Northwestern UniversityAbout the AuthorEdward E. Curtis IV is Millennium Chair of the Liberal Arts and Professor of Religious Studies at the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts in Indianapolis. He is the author of *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam, 1960-1975*, among other books.