

The Matter of Islam and Christianity (Pamphlet 2) * Geoffrey Bingham

The Rev. Geoffrey Bingham, an Anglican clergyman, a teacher of interstate and international experience, lived and worked as a missionary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Pakistan from 1957 to 1966. He was the Founder–Principal of the Pakistan Bible Training Institute at Hyderabad, Sind. Later, he was Principal of the Bible College of South Australia, and Executive Director of New Creation Teaching Ministry.

Introduction to Our Second Subject

In our first pamphlet¹ we gave a background to the rise of Islam, with a history of Muhammad's life and his founding of the faith of Islam. We then traced the basis on which Muslims practice their faith, their five pillars of practicing, the Islamic dates and dynasties. Finally we discussed briefly our approach, as Christians to Muslims and the faith of Islam. In this pamphlet we will seek to look at the two faiths, those of Christianity and Islam, and the situation we face in a world where a billion folk are Muslims. This is not simply in order to comprehend what a Muslim believes and how he believes he should act, but it is also to search out what we believe and practice so that we may act in a world in which these two faiths are operating.

The missionary Samuel Zwemer, wrote back in 1946:

A vertebrate and virile creed counteracts the centrifugal tendencies of nationality, race, climate and environment. The Arab is blood-brother to the Negro convert in Africa. The souls of Indian Muslims and Chinese Ahungs throb with indignation when they read of real or fancied wrongs committed against the Riffs of Morocco or the Arabs of Palestine. The question of Zionism is front-page news in the Muslim Press of India as well as in Egypt; it arouses the Muslims of Sa'udi Arabia, but also those of South Africa and Morocco. This unity and solidarity of the Muslim world through its religious creed, the pilgrimage to Mecca, the power of the press and the continued existence and power of the Sufi dervish orders cannot be denied.²

Since 1946 there has been a strong, if a somewhat unrecognized, resurgence of Islam. Pakistan and Bangladesh have come into being, being separate in their own right from Hindu control; Middle East countries have taken on a new life with the income from oil; Muslim nations have been released from the oversight of Western powers so that Egypt is again a powerful nation in its own right. The Arab League has been formed in the face of Israel achieving nationhood and proving itself as a formidable foe. Indonesia has come into being as the largest Muslim nation in the world, and in the last decade or two has become sensitively alert as to its Islamic identity. Islamic nations such as Iran and Iraq have fought one another, and Iraq has sought to establish itself as one of most significant nations of the Middle East, failing to do this in seeking to capture Kuwait. Also, the Israel–Palestinian conflict has been a running sore. Muslims, seeing themselves as those who should rule and not be ruled, have fostered dissension in many countries and what the West calls terrorism has been built into a formidable force in the affairs of nations. It has started running sores within many a nation, with the intensity that fundamentalism portrays.

Even so, the principle of Zwemer's quote has not altered: many Muslims have a view of themselves as the force which must ultimately achieve world conquest for the honour of God and the sake of all mankind as they see it, and so they are a powerful bloc to be considered. Lately have come the operations of Islamic terrorists in the USA on September 11th 2001, with the consequent claim that they—the offenders—were not terrorists but Muslim freedom fighters, liberating the world from the tyranny of the United States and the growing powers of

¹ Article available from www.newcreation.org.au.

² S. M. Zwemer, *A Factual Survey of the Muslim World* (Loizeaux Brothers, New York, 1946), p. 5.

multinational organisations. As we will see, it may well be that most Muslims are not in favour of trying to conquer the world by force. They have what are excellent arguments in their eyes for converting the world by missionary action, for much of such work is presently operating in the world. Such Muslims would find terrorism highly objectionable, unacceptable, a hindrance and wholly unnecessary.

In the light of these matters, and in the need to understand movements of these days — especially as they pertain to Christians who wish to know the mind of God in history — what do we need to learn, and how are we to act as Christians in these times which seem to be so apocalyptic? As Christians we highly desire to have effective communication, to correct wrong thinking about the Bible and Christianity. If this is the case then surely we need to know the way in which Muslims look at the world and its present history and anticipate its future operations. We also need to know that a vast majority of Muslims are content just to live in their own lands, or, if in other lands, then to be at peace as localised communities. Surely, too, we need to know no less what God is about in regard to both Muslims and Christians—leaving aside for the time the extended issues regarding the whole of the world. God is about bringing men and women of all races, classes and creeds to know Him as the good Creator, the Redeemer of mankind, and the Transformer—ultimately—of the entire creation so that it is filled with His glory. It is said that through the sword which comes out of Christ’s mouth he will ‘smite the nations’, for his ruling word, as also his saving word alone will change the nations. What we call his apocalyptic acts will change whole world situations and move them to times when the gospel will be heard.

The Mind of Islam As It Can be Known

Muhammad’s View of Christianity

This is undertaking a demanding task, i.e. to enquire into the historic development of Islam in its many facets and aspects. The reader of this pamphlet should determine to read widely to comprehend the events and developments of history which have changed much in some Islamic thinking from the time of Muhammad. For his part Muhammad was the founder, prophet and organiser of Islam. That called for an extraordinary person, and through him a book was given for the faithful, as in Israel and as in the Christian faith. By his teaching Muhammad laid down central religious and social laws for Islam, and he worked to bring about that state in which his religious ideas found expression and development. Whoever envisaged that millions would daily mouth the words he gave for worship of God and the service of God, and would be knit together as a close brotherhood? It is no wonder that Muhammad took umbrage when the Jews and Christians did not receive him as God’s prophet and obey him as their leader. For his part he never did discover the quality of the books of Jews and Christians, nor understand the depths and qualities of those writings, let alone understand that God had revealed Himself to humanity in the incarnation of His Son. In his book *Islam*,³ Alfred Guillaume shows by means of the Apostle’s Creed the differences in Christian thinking and that of the Koran. The words in italics show what Muhammad did not believe:

I believe in God
the Father
Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ

³ Alfred Guillaume, *Islam*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1966, p. 194.

*His only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate. Was crucified
Dead
and buried, He descended into hell; The third day
He rose again from the dead,
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From thence He shall come
to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost;
The Holy Catholic Church;
The Communion of Saints;
The Forgiveness of sins;
The Resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting.*

Even to say Muhammad believed in the Holy Spirit is not sufficient for he thought the angel Gabriel was the Holy Spirit. The forgiveness of sins was a matter of God's mercy and did not require the atonement of the Cross. Islam would not call itself 'the communion of saints'. The following passage is from Norman Anderson's essay 'Islam' in *The World's Religions*:⁴

Of the tenets of Christianity Muhammad seems to have had a very superficial, and in part wholly erroneous, knowledge. In his early life he was as favourably disposed to Christians as to Jews: and even in his later life they seem to have come under less severe strictures than the latter. 'Isa', the Qur'anic name for Jesus, was the Messiah, was born of a virgin and is called God's 'word' and 'a spirit from God'.⁵ He was a great miracle-worker and one of the greatest of the prophets. But the Qur'an depicts him as expressly disclaiming deity and seems to deny that he ever died on the cross: instead, it says that 'it was made to appear so' (or 'he was counterfeited to them') and that God caught him up to himself. This has always been interpreted by orthodox Muslims as meaning that someone else was crucified, by mistake, in his place . . . there can be little doubt that he believed the Christian Trinity to consist of the Father, the Virgin and their Child. (Cf. the Ash'arite statement: 'God is One God, Single, One, Eternal . . . He has taken to himself no wife nor child', and several verses in the Qur'an.) It is not surprising, then, that he not only denounced the doctrine strongly but also repudiated the whole idea of the Sonship of Christ, understanding it as he did in terms of physical generation. Instead, the Qur'an depicts Christ as a prophet whose followers had deified both him and his mother against his will. Similarly, in his denial of the crucifixion, Muhammad may have been influenced by Gnostic views, by his hatred of the superstitious veneration, largely divorced from true theology or living experience, accorded to the symbol of the cross in seventh-century Arabia, or by his repugnance to believe that God would allow any prophet to come to such an end. He even believed that Christ had foretold the coming of another prophet, Ahmad (a variant of Muhammad); and Muslims frequently maintain that Christians have changed this reference into the predictions of the Paraclete in the later part of St John's Gospel. The Traditions add that Christ is to come again, to marry and have children, to break the symbol of the cross, and to acknowledge Islam. In Muslim eschatology the second coming of Christ and the advent of the Mahdi (the 'Guided One') are inextricably mingled. There is much truth in J. T. Addison's summary: 'If Muhammad's knowledge of a decadent form of Christianity had been thorough, or if the Church which he knew so imperfectly had been stronger and sounder, the relations between the two religions might have been very different. As it was, however, what passed for Christianity in his confused mind was a distorted copy of fragments of a notably defective original' . . . Other verses, such as 3:48 and 19:34, seem to suggest that he did die. Sura 5:116 with 4:169 and 5:77-79; also Sura 19:35; 19:91; 112:3. Some think that Sura 61:6 rests on a confusion between 'Paraklytos' and 'Periklytos,' a possible Greek equivalent for 'Ahmad', an eschatological figure who will restore Islam in its purity and power.

⁴ *The World's Religions*, (ed) J. N. D. Anderson, IVP, London, 1991, pp. 100-2.

⁵ *The Koran*, Sura 4:169, etc.

What, then, did Muhammad believe regarding Islam and himself? It seems clear enough that he knew what he did not believe, i.e. many things Jews and Christians believed from their books. This is shown above in Alfred Guillaume's 'Apostle's Creed', insofar as Christians are concerned. Edmund Perry gives us a clue as to the difference between Muhammad's use of revelation⁶ and the Christian Revelation:

While God was the exclusive source of the revelation to Muhammad, God himself is not the *content* of the revelation. Revelation in Islamic theology does not mean God disclosing *himself*. It is revelation *from* God, not revelation *of* God. God is remote. He is inscrutable and utterly inaccessible to human knowledge . . . Even though we are his creatures whose every breath is dependent upon him, *it is not in interpersonal relationship with him that we receive guidance from him* (emphasis mine).⁷

Perry has said in the same book (p. 173) that our task is 'retrieval of the emasculated Jesus from the Koran'. That 'emasculated Jesus' is Muhammad's Jesus. In his own eyes Muhammad is the seal of all the prophets, the last one, thus superseding all prophets who had gone before him, which means he is greater than Jesus. He saw himself as the restorer of the religion of Abraham which the Jews and Christians had falsified, for to him Abraham was the great *hanif*, i.e. the one who possessed the truth, and so Islam was really the continuity of Abraham and his faith. Muhammad saw his own message is greater than Christ's, who, thus, cannot be 'the way, the truth, and the life', since Muhammad has superseded him. Islam has developed the idea that to be a Muslim is to be natural and normal as a human being. All children are born Muslims and it is only that Jews, Christians and pagans subvert those who are born natural by their wrong teaching and practice. The idea of Muslims bringing all human beings back—or forward—to that which is natural, is in the Muslim's mind the proper thing to do, no matter what methods are used to accomplish it.⁸

The Muslim, Yesterday and Today: How Shall We Understand Him?

Islam has a proud history. It was almost inevitable that it would capture the world. Both Christianity and Islam see themselves as the universal faith. Islam does not have both 'state' and 'church' as two entities because to him they are the one. Islam may use any force to bring its message to all humanity, wars included. It is proper for Islam to rule and not be ruled, though it has criteria for living under the rule of others. The church is a force in the world, living in the Kingdom of God and proclaiming it to the world so that human beings may repent and enter the Kingdom. The Kingdom is not after the fashion of the world's kingdoms. It is not political, and it may not use force to bring people to God, through Christ.

If we go back to Pamphlet 1 and look at the 'Islamic Dates and Dynasties' we will see how rapidly Islam spread through country after country and ruled them, and subjugated Jews and Christians, often by ruthless methods, no matter if the Koran may have appeared to disapprove of such treatments. Islam was sure it was on its way to world rule, and its ascendancy was not only to be military, but it was also to be in culture, the arts, the sciences

⁶ The question of inspiration and revelation are well set out by thoughtful Islamic theologians. One pragmatic idea set forth is that the Koran is, in Arabic, a most beautiful book, and that this is therefore awesome proof that it is of God. It is said that the Koran is never fully itself when translated, which is probably true. On this criterion great literary works, including superb poetry, could be said to be inspired by God, but this kind of inspiration does not necessarily constitute revelation which is the unveiling of God's truth.

⁷ E. Perry, *The Gospel in Dispute: The Relation of the Christian Faith to other Missionary Religions*, Doubleday, New York, 1958, pp. 155, 157.

⁸ For a study of this and further material on Muhammad's estimate of himself and his ideas see Harry Boer's *A Brief History of Islam* (Daystar Press, Ibadan) pp. 30–3.

and philosophy. The development of ‘Sufism’—i.e. Islamic mysticism—led the way to a personal, intimate devotion to God which could have been—and sometimes was—persecuted as indulgence in the sin of *shirk*, i.e. ‘the association with any thing or being with God’, e.g. to say that God has a Son is *shirk*, and to think of any human or other creature having fellowship with God is also *shirk*. There was a spiritual hunger for God, and even though the Sufis were often persecuted their influence spread far and wide. It is said by some Christian writers that Sufi mysticism became a bad influence on Christians because the mystic seeks to become one with God directly, and not by means of a mediator, such as is Christ. Over the centuries, then, Islam built up a proud history on many parts, i.e. in culture, the arts, crafts, the sciences, theology and philosophy. It developed greatly from its early Arabian beginnings. So far as deep penetration into Europe, it was stopped in AD 732 by the Frankish General Charles Martel at Tours in France. It went on, however, to other victories—witness the vast Ottoman Empire. Islam’s capture of part of Constantinople (renamed Istanbul), Spain and Southern France with its intention to take all Western Europe was halted by the Frankish Army, from which time there began the decline of Muslim power, and the rise of the European nations.

Islam lived in ignominy under powerful colonisation, especially with the breaking up of the once powerful Ottoman Empire. In ignorance of Islam’s proud history, many of the West treated Muslims with contempt. The development of a strong Europe and a strong North America, as also the powerful missionary movement of the 19th and 20th centuries in which nations in the African and South American continents have been Christianised, has set a further problem for Islam who once imagined that God had energised and enabled them to have the dominion they had achieved so that it seemed they were to rule the whole world.

It is only against the background of Islamic conquests and development in high culture that we can understand the humiliation of Islam as the West halted its conquests, and eventually brought it under Western (infidel) rulership. From this state of international failure the shame and subversion of the Islamic peoples has recently given way to a new sense of the future that might yet be theirs, yet *jihad* (holy war) in the eyes of most Islamic peoples is **not** one of physical war and military weapons or of a combined Arab League plotting to subdue non-Islamic nations. If there is to be *jihad* by Islam then it is by quieter means. The migration of Muslims to European and other ‘Western’ countries may be thought to be, by some, a conspiracy, but on the whole Muslims have the desire to live peacefully. Some ‘asylum seekers’ are seeking refuge from fundamentalists who seek to take all Islam—and for that matter the whole world—back to the days of Muhammad’s era. That cannot be achieved. *Jihad*, if it is to be, must be by peaceful and not by military methods. Without doubt there is in our age warring by Muslims, those we call ‘terrorists’ and who call themselves ‘freedom fighters’. We must recognise the elements which make for the terrorist mind. There is anger against injustice and the humiliation many Muslims experienced under non-Islamic rulers. Ideology breeds the greatest threat of all by those who would impose it on the world, whatever that ideology may be. An ideology is seen as bringing together all humanity in a world which will be perfect, which will be Utopia completed. Unfortunately the methods by which it is hoped to achieve that goal are always in contradiction of the desired Utopia.

How, Then, Should We Approach the Muslim Today?

First of all we should recognise that whilst there are many groups or sects in Islam, yet all Muslims pride themselves that they are Muslims and not unbelievers or, as they say, infidels. The word ‘infidel’ was, curiously enough, formerly used by Christians regarding Muslims, but is now used by Muslims about Christians and others who do not believe the Muslim faith. It is used then of an unbeliever regarding Islam. When it comes to what seems to be an attack on

Islam then all Muslims stand together. However, that has not prevented Muslims attacking one another, though this is forbidden in the Koran.⁹ Some of the enmity between sects runs very deep, as it also does, sadly enough, in Christianity.

We should also recognise that a large part of Islam does not endorse the old way of force in order to conquer the world. If it seeks world domination then it is by other methods. Many Muslims are evangelists and by various means seek to capture the minds of non-Muslims. This would seem to be justified if we remember that they believe all babies born into the world are virtual Muslims because they are 'natural'. The Muslim does not believe that the first couple sinned in Eden and thereby there was a fall in humanity so that all are sinners. They do not believe a person has to be saved, except it be by becoming a Muslim through sincerely reciting the creed (*Kalima*) at least once in his lifetime, 'There is no God but God and Muhammad is his prophet'. It is taken for granted that all Muslims will follow the example of Muhammad in living their lives, and this way is to be found in the Koran and the Traditions (*Hadith*).

We should also be keeping in mind that the Muslim thinks he knows the beliefs of Judaism and Christianity. This is not the case, as we saw on page 2. Because of this he has already concluded that Jews and Christians have changed their book—the Bible—which is untrue. It has been said that Muslims have never heard the full truth of the whole Bible. Many Muslims who have studied the Christian Scriptures have confessed they never knew this was what Christians believed. Some have converted to the Christian faith. Indeed this is the major way in which Muslims have become Christians. Fear of terrible consequences if they converted to Christianity has kept many Muslims from taking the step of faith in Christ.

Whilst it is true that ignorance keeps many from becoming Christian, there is, nevertheless, a responsibility on all human beings to seek God, believe in Him and come to the faith which brings everlasting life. The same things prevented the Jews of Christ's day in coming to God the Father through him—the Son. Muhammad is understood as the authentic prophet and apostle of God and, moreover, the last apostle and prophet, when it is Christ who is said to be this in the New Testament. Muslims say Muhammad outdated Christ and thus superseded him. It is not enough that we should think of Muslims as 'victims' of their upbringing. Each human being is responsible for his or her personal choices.

It is said by some that if we just out-live and out-love the Muslim he will come to Christ. This is not necessarily the case. The Muslim believes in doing works of merit for these will help to bring salvation to the doer, so that is how he will interpret our works, no matter how fine they may be. The more 'sacrificial' they are the more he will think we will gain merit and more merit. It will always require the revelation of God's love through Christ, for love cannot be shown by theology alone. Christians need to be filled with the Spirit of love so that love flows as a river from the one witnessing to Christ. Christians must meet non-Christians as fellow human beings created by God, and must not see them primarily as Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc.

It is also said—and perhaps rightly so—that the Muslim can never be defeated in an argument or debate. If the Muslim and the Christian are each wishing to win the debate then nothing is gained whoever may win that debate. Presenting the facts, however, is another matter. The Christian must work at: (i) presenting the facts as they are the reality of the gospel; and (ii) clearing wrong ideas from the mind of the Muslim. This will never be easy, but it is essential. Of course in all this presentation the Christian must never speak down to his hearer. He must never ridicule or be contemptuous of the faith of the Muslim with whom he discusses the matter. In presenting the truth the presenter must not rely on his abilities to communicate. Without genuine love he can never present God who *is* love. It certainly takes genuine love to

⁹ History reveals that Islam has known much infighting, not only by those striving for power, but by one nation against another. Civil war has also been the experience of some nations and intertribal ferocity has often dragged on for generations.

persist with a Muslim and self-stimulated, emotional love is no substitute for deliberate, continual study of the problems which face the listening Muslim when he is presented with the gospel. The Christian teacher must always believe that God is working towards and upon the hearer, and he/she—the evangelist—is one of the means God chooses to use.

What also must be kept in mind is that Christ is over all history, ruling in all its acts. In history, whilst on the one hand many Christians have been forced into converting to Islam, yet on the other hand there have also been times and situations in which Muslims have come to Christ in large numbers. One modern occasion was in Indonesia when, during the 1960s, thousands converted to Christ. In Muslim countries missionaries have witnessed through spiritually hard and dry times, but this witness, though seemingly unfruitful, has not been ineffective. This witness stands, and we do not know the effects it has produced in Muslims who have watched it. Because Islam is a movement which in one sense has come from the reality of Judaism and Christianity, it is therefore partly a reaction to the Biblical faith, but it cannot get away from these roots. It is axiomatic that human beings cannot be satisfied apart from the truth.

Again, we should never forget that in Islam, church and state are one. Whilst this has been an advantage in forcing the Islamic faith on many, Christ has made it clear that this kind of pressure does not achieve the reign of a religion over all the world. Jesus said to Peter who cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword'. Later, in Revelation 13:9–10 (cf. 14:12–14) the same message was given: 'If any one has an ear, let him hear: If any one is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if any one slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.' What we are saying in this paragraph is that any kind of political, material, psychological or intellectual force will never win genuine converts to Christ and his Father, and cannot capture the world. Love—God's love alone—will ultimately bring in the elect of God from every nation and people. No human or evil force can ever be triumphant in the ultimate. Many people think that love is too soft and unrealistic to accomplish real change in the world. We will think in this manner when we do not understand the enormous power of love. It is the word of the Cross—the word of love—which will smite the nations.

Conclusion: Summing up the Matter

I hope a reader of this limited treatment of the birth, nature and aims of Islam will realise I speak out of a subject so wide and deep in its content that study and exposition of it requires unremitting attention, i.e. further personal research by the reader himself. The shifting sands of Islam are not easy to negotiate if we are shallow thinkers and ignorant of the deep realities. If this faith is becoming resurgent, as it always seems to do when it goes back to its beginnings and its Arabic composition, then we will need to be alert to all things Islamic. If love is the prime mover of our hearts then we will not begrudge the time and attention required to be given to Islam in general, and to Muslim persons in particular. We will need to know we are called to such a ministry so that we can devote the time and energy required to fulfil it. Even so, every Christian ought to be as familiar as possible with the whole matter of Islam and Christianity. Terrorism is not essentially an element of Islam. The sword never, of itself, brings peace or victory to the world. On the way, however, we can trace the effects of Islam upon Christianity and many of them are not good. We probably feel that Christianity has not been affected by Islam but Jacques Ellul shows us otherwise. In his book *The Subversion of Christianity* he has a chapter titled 'The Influence of Islam', i.e. Islam's influence on Christianity:

. . . it is readily perceived that Christianity and Islam had certain obvious points in common or points of meeting. Both were monotheistic and both were based on a book. We should also note the importance that Islam accords to the poor. Certainly Christians reject Allah because of the denial that Jesus Christ is God's Son, and they do not allow that the Koran is divinely inspired. On the other hand, Muslims reject the Trinity in the name of the unity, and they make the whole Bible a mere preface or introduction to the Koran. At root, Muslims do with the whole Bible what Christians do with the Hebrew Bible. But on this common foundation there are necessarily encounters and debates and discussions, and hence a certain openness. Even where there is rejection and objection, there can be no evading the question that is put.

It seems that the Muslim intellectuals and theologians were much stronger than their Christian counterparts. It seems that Islam had an influence, but not Christianity. Our interest here is not in the philosophical problem or in theological formulations, which were necessarily restricted to a small intellectual circle, but in the way in which Islamic influences change practices, rites, beliefs, attitudes toward life, all that belongs to the domain of moral or social belief or conduct, all that constitutes Christendom . . . I believe that in every respect the spirit of Islam is contrary to that of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. It is so in the basic fact that the God of Islam cannot be incarnate.¹⁰

Ellul claims that Islam invented the *jihad* or holy war and it was this which the Christians imitated in the Christian Crusades. He points out that soldiers who died in the Crusades were said to go straight to heaven. This myth is quite strong in regard to wars fought by Western powers. It has become a Christian myth that those who fight have their 'lesser Calvaries' and somehow are assured of their salvation by fighting in a righteous war. Ellul has much to say about Islamic mysticism affecting Christian practice of devotion to God; of Islam's doctrine of fatalism affecting the Christian doctrine of predestination; of Islam's religious piety affecting the Christian practice of the same; of Islam's view of woman affecting the Christian view of woman; of the slave-trade traffic being practiced strongly by Muslims—as it is still, today, practiced around the Gulf of Oman—and being taken up by Christians who would have abominated the practice as a legitimate *Christian* venture. Finally, Ellul believes the colonisation of countries did not exist prior to Islam. Certainly subjugation of nations by other powerful nations seems always to have existed, but colonisation as Islam practised it was a new principle in seeking to destroy all religion but their own, in forcing people to think as they think by their commercial and religious penetration.

We are saying, then, that in history there are three faiths which have universal allegiance to God in mind—that is the faith of Judaism, Islam and the faith of Christianity. Undoubtedly Judaism holds the belief that one day all nations will come to Israel and to acknowledge God—Yahweh—as King over all the earth, and they will seek to worship God in Jerusalem, on the holy mountain of Zion. Christianity likewise believes the Day of the Lord will fulfil all this and, even more, that Christ will rule over the nations in the 'age to come', and will bring them into the Holy City. His people will reign as kings and priests forever. Islam believes in the judgment which will bring all true Muslims to Paradise and separate the infidels from them, bringing them into fiery Hell. In the present the Christian has to know what is the truth regarding all these things and has to discern the everlasting covenant of God, and who are the true people of God. He has to face Islam in its disbelief in Christ as the Son of God, the Last Adam, and the only final Apostle of God. He has to believe that Christ now reigns over all principalities and powers, and that having put down all enemies of God and His covenant people, he will give the Kingdom of God to the Father that God may be all in all.

This must be our understanding and must lead us as the church, i.e. as the people who love and serve God, to press on to convince Muslims of the need for the Cross and the new birth, in order to recognise and surrender to Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

¹⁰ Jacques Ellul, *The Subversion of Christianity*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1988, trs. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, pp. 97f.