

# Practical-Tactical Approach

A Teachers' Textbook

By  
Gerhard Nehls  
and  
Walter Eric

Resource Material  
with Documentation of Original  
Sources

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By  
Gerhard Nehls and Walter Eric

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# Introduction

**Welcome!** This Textbook is part of a **set of five Teacher-Trainer Manuals** that are linked with a **Student Handbook** (REACH OUT). The set includes:

Vol. 1 <b>Islamicism</b> (green)	Islam – Basic Aspects
Vol. 2 <b>Apologetics</b> (blue)	Christian – Islamic Controversy
Vol. 3 <b>Pragmatics</b> (red)	Tactical – Practical Approach
Vol. 4 <b>Didactics</b>	Training of Trainers Materials
Vol. 5 <b>Presentation File</b>	Display Materials for Teachers

## **Please keep in mind:**

These notes depict primarily the view of original Islam as seen from its sources. Much of this is not known to the Muslim “man in the street”. So please use this information with wisdom and in a Christ-like spirit.

*Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature.*

*1Cor 14:20 (ASV)*

## **THIS IS A TEACHER’S TEXTBOOK – NOT A DO-IT-YOURSELF MANUAL!**

A textbook is not to be read as another book. Its content has to be well worked through to be fully understood.

It supplies the trainer with comprehensive, yet basic information. He has to scrutinize this information and select his specific teaching materials. This should be adjusted to the students, the situation in which they are likely to work and the type of Muslims they are likely to meet. Anyone who like to read about this in more detail should contact us for our various teaching books, videos and CDs.

Some repetitions have been unavoidable. These are done for emphasis, or because they relate to different subjects as well. But these notes are not designed to stand on its own. You will learn a lot from Muslims as you seek to share the Gospel in a meaningful way. It is so important to know how Islam views Christians and Christianity. We need to understand the Muslim’s world view, their perception of religion and some cultural aspects, for these factors determine decisively our communication. There are practical forms of how to present the Gospel, the good news, to this specific group of people.

These notes, however, do not supply quick answers, nor do they promise instant results. Love and patience are always needed, and more so in Muslim evangelism.

### **Which translations of Bible and Qur'an did we use?**

All quotations from the **Bible**, unless otherwise specified, are from the NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, 1984, by the International Bible Society.

All quotations from the **Qur'an**, unless otherwise marked, are from the translation by Abdullah Yussuf Ali, New Revised Edition, Amana Corporation, Brentwood, Maryland, U.S.A., 1989. This is one of the most acceptable translations to Muslims.

For practical reasons we have not included any Arabic texts in this edition.

Your instructors,

Gerhard Nehls and Walter Eric

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# 1 Understanding Evangelism

## 1.1 God's work of evangelism began in eternity

### 1.1.1 Man has an inborn conviction of God's existence

Augustine in his 'Confessions' (VII.xvii.23) calls the inborn consciousness or awareness of the existence of God the 'loving memory' of God, and underlines this by saying: "You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You."

The Psalmist reflects:



The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the works of His hands ... night after night they display knowledge.

*Psalm 19:1-2*

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon, the stars ... what is man that you are mindful of him ...?

*Psalm 8:5-6*

In the Epistle to the Romans, we are told:

What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them, for since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made ...

*Romans 1:19-20*

The existence and function of the universe and the utter complexity of life exclude the possibility that creation originated by mere chance without a guiding high intelligence behind it. Every gene in every living DNA molecule is bursting with information, and information essentially needs a source. In the book of Ecclesiastes we are instructed:

God ... has made everything beautiful in its time. He also has set eternity in the hearts of men.

*Ecclesiastes 3:11*

Professor Franz Delitzsch in his commentary on this verse rightly explains:

... no instinct in the natural world is an illusion, so also the impulse toward the eternal, which is natural to man, is no illusion. There is an instinct peculiar to his (i.e. man's) nature impelling him to pass beyond fragmentary knowledge and to comprehend eternity.

*Commentary on Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. Edinburgh, 1877. Page 261*

Man carries an 'image' of God in his mind, unless influenced by religious or philosophical instruction. People untouched by that, when exchanging their perceptions of God, are likely to have very similar notions, however undefined they may be.

### 1.1.2 Religion attempts to explain this inner awareness

In real life almost all people are living in some kind of religious environment. In this context religion 'explains' by its teaching that Krishna, Buddha, Yahweh or Allah is that God. The New Testament implies that:

Now, what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you ... *Acts 17:23*

Paul then proceeds to explain who God really is, and what He expects man to be. All religions try to fill the naturally undefined perception that man has of God. Teaching stands over against teaching. At this point the Truth question ought to come to the fore. The Truth question is more than just a matter of like or dislike, it concerns the establishment of what is true and what not. This process is painful and may even be traumatic. It needs openness and courage to new ideas and readiness and honesty to choose, even if the consequences might be rejection or persecution.

We may divide our perception of God into two parts:

- What we intuitively 'know' (*inward* knowledge) and
- What we have been taught (*outward* knowledge).

I would like to suggest that when a person earnestly prays, his/her perception of God is more determined by the sub-conscious, intuitive, built-in 'knowledge' rather than by teaching.

When a Muslim and a Christian pray - and I like to exclude here the ritual worship when doing 'salat' - they are not as far apart as when discussing the nature of Allah - God.

It is, therefore, wise not to begin the building of a spiritual relationship on a point of doctrine, but rather on our perception of God.

The Gospel is really only meaningful to a listener, when he or she has

*This means that we begin with what unites us and later turn to the points of difference.*

understood the true nature of God in His absolute holiness and righteousness, the standard of God expressed in His Law, the nature of man in his depravation and sinfulness and utter inability to save himself.

Then only the desperate need for salvation, atonement and reconciliation to God becomes apparent.

What we must not conclude, however, is that we are all believing in and serving the same God. The intuitive knowledge is by no means a comprehensive or even a saving knowledge! But God wants us to know Him in a personal way.

### 1.1.3 What evangelism is all about

Evangelism is an English word which is derived from the Greek work 'evangelizo' = to bring good news, which is also translated as 'preach'. We already understand that it is not only what we say which matters, but equally what the hearer understands.

The Good News, the 'Gospel' in a nutshell could be formulated somewhat like this: It is, of course, that God in His holiness and righteousness has made a plan to rescue us from the alienation and separation from Himself, which is a result of our sin. God is willing, even longing, to pardon, to save us, to be our salvation (Jesus = salvation!). He entered our world in Christ. Although totally incarnate in human appearance and nature (Phil 2:6-8), He did not sin and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice in our stead to suffer and die for our sins on the cross. If we accept His pardon personally by recognizing Him as our Saviour, we are redeemed. We are reconciled to God, and become by means of 'adoption' His children and by that heirs of eternal life with God. By His merit alone, without any of our own doing, we now are assured of eternal joy in God's presence, in heaven.

This is concisely expressed in Scripture:



Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation - if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the Gospel. This is the Gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed.

*Colossians 1:21-23*

Our salvation was affected by a once-for-all act. God's side of salvation is ever sure. True children of God will always endeavour and strive to please the Father and to turn away from further sin, although they are

not able to become sinless. They want to do everything in a spirit of gratitude. The Holy Spirit of God, who lives in them, guides them and assists them to follow God, to understand spiritual truth, and to find constant cleansing from any sin.

### 1.1.4 Evangelism is a 'holy calling'

All calling to evangelism and discipleship is holy, because the call for it comes from God. Our Lord Jesus Himself says:



All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.

*Matthew 28:18-20*

The Lord left no doubt about His will and purpose:



The Lord ... is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

*2 Peter 3:9*

God our Saviour ... wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

*1 Timothy 2:4*

We must take it that when God speaks of ALL, He means all!



How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

*Romans 10:14*

While we rejoice over so many nations and tribes that have heard and in a measure responded to the Gospel, too many have never really had a chance to hear and understand. One of those groups, in fact the largest, is the Muslims, now over 1 billion people! Admittedly, some of these have 'heard', but with Muslim ears. They have been very carefully programmed to misunderstand our message.

*Are we aware that almost half the population of Africa is made up of Muslims?*

If we were to try to reach all and every one of these, how many of the Christian workers would you have sent to the Muslims? You say half? Or even more than half? I would have done the same. But in fact by 1975 only about 250 of 16,000 missionaries working in Africa, went to the Muslim half of the population. Over the last twenty years the Islamic agenda (see Appendix 8.1) has taken a much stronger public profile and Christian missions among Muslims have been given greater priority, but still not in adequate proportions. According to Missions Frontiers ([www.missionfrontiers.org/newslinks/statewe.htm](http://www.missionfrontiers.org/newslinks/statewe.htm)) from 25<sup>th</sup> October 2006 the following numbers of missionaries are counted:

410,000 missionaries worldwide	from all Christian churches
140,000 of these	are Protestant missionaries
<i>These 140,000 missionaries are engaged in the following ways</i>	
74%	among nominal Christians
8%	among tribal people
6%	among Muslims
<i>The total for Muslims worldwide is given as 1.1 Billion, which would amount to</i>	
1 Protestant missionary	for each 130,952 Muslims

It should be obvious that expatriate missionaries can never meet this challenge!

*We maintain that in obedience to God's Great Commission, each follower of Christ, who lives in the proximity of Muslims, should prepare himself and go to his Muslim neighbour or colleague to share the Good News in a way that is meaningful and understandable to him!*

### 1.1.5 Why Muslim Evangelism?

Because

1. It is undoubtedly God's will
2. Our love for God is measured by our devotion to His will
3. The growth of the Muslim population makes it all the more urgent. While the world population at present doubles every 56 years, the Muslim population does so every 27 years. This is by biological growth. The world Muslim population increased from 150 Millions in 1900 to

850 Millions in 1993. Today an estimated 1.3 billion Muslims need to hear the gospel.

## 1.2 A History of Mission to Muslims

### 1.2.1 “Mission to Muslims” as the “Great Omission!”

Perhaps because Muslims are probably the people most resistant to the Gospel, Church history has comparatively few records of efforts by the Church to reach out to Muslims. The infamous ‘crusades’ resulted in mistrust, hatred and misery on both sides. In no way can such actions as the crusades be derived from the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ!

But God did call a number of individual servants who gave their lives in reaching Muslims. Some of the early pioneers were:

- John of Damascus (app. 675-750, in Syria)
- Francis of Assisi (1181-1226, in Spain, Morocco and Egypt)
- Raymond Lull (1235-1316, in North Africa)

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the mission to Muslims was pioneered among others by these men and women:

- Henry Martyn (1781-1812, in India, Iraq and Persia)
- Carl G. Pfander (1803-1865, in the Caucasus, India and Turkey)
- Alexander Duff (1806-1878, in India)
- Lilius Trotter (1853-1928, in Algeria)
- Ian Keith Falconer (1856-1887, in Arabia)
- W. St. Clair Tisdall (1859-1928, in Persia and India)
- Douglas M. Thornton (-1907, in Egypt)
- William Henry Temple Gairdner (1873-1928, in Egypt)
- Samuel M. Zwemer (1867-1952, in Arabia and Egypt)
- William M. Miller (1892-1993, in Iran)
- Charles Marsh (1902-1988, in Algeria and Chad)
- Christy Wilson (1922-1999, in Afghanistan)

In addition to these outstanding missionaries in the Muslim world other lesser known workers gave their life in service. But in general the number of missionaries working among Muslims has always been very small, compared with those who worked among other groups of people.

The underlying reasons are complex:

- **Lack of motivation** (the recruiting power of missionaries visiting their home countries was very limited so few ever consider the challenge of the Muslim world)

- **Lack of expected ‘success’.** Few are prepared to work and live without the prospect of results in a success-orientated society. This is a fatal mistake, because it implies a belief that the number of converts demonstrates the success of a missionary. No one can convert but Christ alone! A missionary has been successful (although this cannot be statistically established) when he has intelligently and, for a Muslim, perceivably and understandably shared the Gospel with him
- **Lack of funding.** Who likes to support a missionary who possibly works for years without ‘planting’ churches or even ‘making’ converts?

It is God’s will that...

- All should come to repentance (2Pe 3:9)
- No one should perish (2Pe 3:9)
- All men should be saved ( 1Ti 2:4)
- All should come to the knowledge of the truth ( 1Tim 2:4)

Therefore Christ commanded His disciples at ALL times to go to ALL people (Mt 28:18-20, Mk 16:15-18).

## 1.3 Principles of Muslim Evangelism

A careful study and application of the following scriptures (1Peter 3:15+1Thessalonians 2:7-8) will be the perfect foundation for any evangelism, teaching, admonition and service for God:

*In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.  
Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you  
for the reason of the hope that you have. But do this with  
gentleness and respect. We were gentle among you, like a  
mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much  
that we were willing to share with you not only the gospel, but  
our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.*

It is our conviction that Muslims can best be reached through these.

This is vastly different from preaching. A preacher will hardly be challenged on what he says. In person-to-person evangelism we are! That demands specific skills, which a Christian who wants to witness to Muslims must acquire.

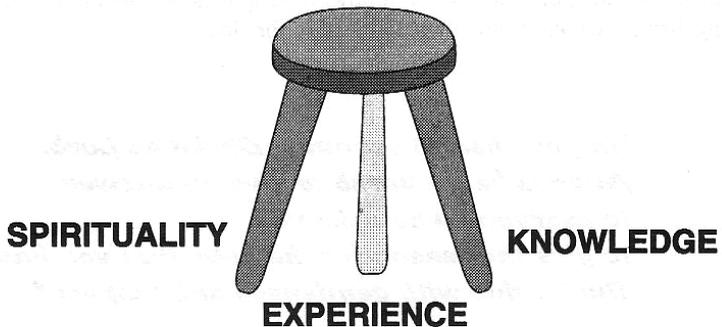
A witness should be well acquainted with

- The Bible and more particularly, the Gospel
- Communication that is truly understandable to ‘outsiders’
- The Muslim: the way he sees himself, the world around him and how he feels about his own faith as well as Christianity
- Cultural and religious issues which inhibit the understanding of the Gospel
- The spiritual battle we are engaging in when witnessing to Muslims.

### 1.3.1 The three ‘legs’ of evangelism

We may liken (Muslim) evangelism to a stool with three legs. These may be seen as representing

- Spirituality i.e. personal sanctity and prayer-relationship with God is the foundation;
- Knowledge of the Bible, its major doctrines and the ability to substantiate its truth, but also a fair knowledge of Islam, communication and related fields. This can be obtained by learning.
- Experience, which cannot be obtained from a book or in a classroom. It comes by doing - even if we make mistakes - as long as we learn from these.



I suggest that we hold to this order too: Spirituality - Knowledge - Experience.

### 1.3.2 Evangelism and prayer

You will have wondered why so much has been said about knowledge, understanding and methods in Muslim evangelism and so little about prayer. What has the priority?

Let me reflect on the statement made before.

There are three components in Muslim Evangelism:

- Prayer (or spirituality)
- Understanding (or knowledge)
- Experience

Neither is a substitute for the other!

When speaking about prayer, we deal with one of those words that may have very different meanings to various people. Every true Christian will constantly praise, worship and thank God, but also seek guidance, protection and assistance from Him. Obviously it is not our eloquence in praying nor the length (or elaboration) that is crucial.

It is God's prerogative to respond, in accordance with His wisdom and power. While faithfulness, sincerity and a right attitude towards God are important factors, we accept that the power of God to perform is coupled with His wisdom. He knows best, both time and measure of His actions, and we may safely trust Him in that. But someone may object: "If God can do and knows everything - why pray at all?"

The answer is because God has honoured us to be His co-workers. He draws us into His confidence. Evangelism is our action on God's behalf. We cannot do it without the assistance of God the Holy Spirit. Yet we are His partners. Being aware of this, prayer becomes our siding with God to achieve His will and purpose in and through us. So, our dependence on and devotion to God, makes prayer an absolutely indispensable part of evangelism.

### 1.3.3 Contentious issues

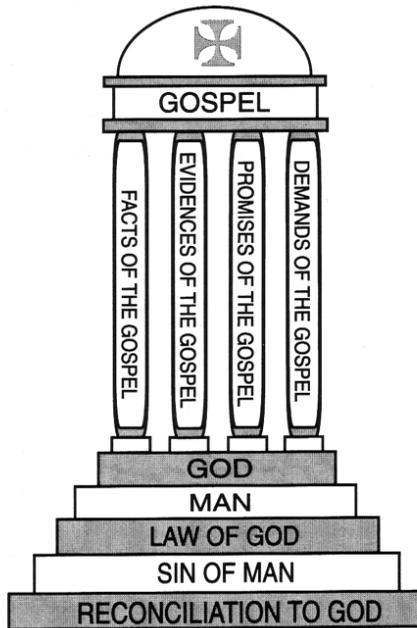
Aggressive methods will invariably cause more harm than good. This seems to be an obvious statement, yet in practice many Christians don't abide by it.

A Christian witnessing to Muslims should also be careful and wise when airing his/her political sentiments or convictions. To openly attack Islam or take sides against an Islamic leader like Idi Amin, when he was still in power, or Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, Yassir Arafat or Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda serves little purpose and is not our task.

Likewise, a 'crusader mentality' is not befitting a Christian approach, be it in public rallies or in 'Anti-Halaal-Campaigns' where Christians have been known to collect signatures against the almost exclusive sale of *halaal* (= ritually clean, allowed) meat in supermarkets. That is hardly our calling.

## 1.4 The four pillars of the Gospel

The illustration depicts the foundation of the Gospel and the four pillars on which it rests. The foundation signifies the need for a basic understanding of *God, man* as God views him, the dividing factor, which is *sin* as it is identified by the *Law of God*, and the way to find *reconciliation*.



The four pillars are to demonstrate the four aspects of the Good News, as we find them in the Bible. We examine these.

### 1.4.1 The Facts of the Gospel – WHAT the Gospel is

The Gospel is so full of content that it is practically not possible to present it in one evening or two without the recipient having some background knowledge. In our streamlined no-nonsense society in which few bother to study the 'small print', we have become used to uniform approaches that are supposed to secure (instant) results. These do not work with Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists or other people who are not acquainted with the Christian value system and terminology. All too

often we will find in the quick-fix methods an illusion of communication. An intelligent and binding decision cannot really be made without the recipient having basically understood the message. What then comprises the Good News? What are the facts of the Gospel? We already looked at this and, because of its importance, repeat it:

**God** is eternal, holy, almighty, all-knowing, all-present and righteous. He is the creator of all and has a claim on all His creation, and that includes our lives. He is not as an impersonal, remote super power, but a personal, loving God.

**Man** stands in stark contrast to God. As everything else he was created for a purpose. He was the object of God's love and meant to be closely related to Him. For that reason he has been created in God's likeness. Unlike all other creatures he was not governed by instinct, but rather enabled to choose and make decisions concerning loyalties and life style. But man chose to violate the intention and will of God. He did that consciously, willingly and constantly. The first sin led to the 'Fall of Man', and this resulted in a permanent persisting urge in man to **sin** causing the inner separation of man from God. C.S. Lewis in his book *The Problem of Pain* says: "We must look for ... sin on a deeper and more timeless level than that of social morality."

Thus the essence of sin is this act of self-will on the part of the creature. It meant an utter falseness to its true creaturely position. For the nature of sin is that it must be very heinous or secret, else its consequences would not be so terrible.

Sin is man's 'declaration of independence' from God, his assumption to be able to live without Him in time and eternity. The Bible identifies how sin appears. The lack of trust in God is sin (Ro 14:23). The transgression of the Law of God is sin (1Jn 4:3). In fact all unrighteousness is sin (1Jn 5:17), and it is inexcusable too (Ro 1:20; 2:1; Jn 15:22) (though not unforgivable!).



They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

*Ephesians 4:18-19*

What constitutes sin is defined by the **law**. While it is right to drive on the left side of the road in Britain, this is an offence in France, where the law demands that traffic should move on the right lane of a road. "I would not have known what sin was except through the Law" we read in Romans 7:7.

God gave the Law to counsel and guide man, but man, including all of us, broke the Law repeatedly. God's diagnosis is depressing:

The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thought of his heart was only evil all the time.

*Genesis 6:5*

This appears to be a rather harsh judgement, but that is how God sees man.

Depravity resulting from sin has made man insensitive to sense and understand God's position.

Sin is not just the trespassing of the one or other rule, or the omission to do a right thing, as Muslims view sin. It causes the total depravity of man in all his ways. This is constantly displayed in his preposterous assumption to be able to help himself out of this dilemma. Man's pride goes as far as to assume that he can earn merit before God.

This blindness regarding the holiness of God leads to sin, which to his own detriment hinders man from seeking, recognizing and accepting God's offer of **reconciliation**, because it seems unnecessary to him.

From the beginning God offered atonement and reconciliation to Himself through the blood of a sacrifice. All those who believed God offered their sacrifice for sin and made thus peace with God. Ultimately JESUS CHRIST is that only sacrifice of God who (potentially) takes away the sin of all humanity (Jn 1:29). But this offer of God must be accepted and received personally. There is no other way (Ac 4:12).

This offer is confirmed by the previously mentioned evidences embedded in the Word of God. Gratitude to Christ for this total liberation of the past and present, and His power which operates in reconciled man (Ro 8:29; 1Jn 3:2; 2Pe 1:4; 2Co 3:18), restores man to his original position and purpose.

In this new position man 'participates in the divine nature' (2Pe 1:4). He becomes part of God's plan to help rescue mankind out of the world of sin and blindness. God created man to be the object of His love. True, born again believers enjoy this love and the closeness to the triune personal God. They respond by offering their love and worship. This is the consummation of God's purpose. These are the facts of the Gospel.

## **1.4.2 The Evidence for the Gospel – WHY we can believe the Gospel**

Many people need objective evidence to show that they can rest assured and build their lives on the Biblical message. They want and need more than our personal subjective testimony may convey. Muslims, perhaps more than

others, need all the supporting evidence we can give to come to the conclusion that the Bible is the Word of God, which can be fully trusted.

The Apostles used this method extensively (Ac 2:25 ff.; 3:18-24; 1Co 15:3; Lu 1:1-4; Ac 1:3; 1Jn 1:1-3; 2Pe 1:16-21). (For a closer look at the eye-witness, historical and prophetic evidences, please turn to the *“Christian-Islamic Controversy”*, pages 34-44).

From the Scriptures referred to we conclude:

a. The Apostles quoted OT prophecies and challenged the people to consider the implication of their fulfilment to establish their ‘case’. In the Gospel according to Matthew alone we read at least 25 times phrases like: ‘... as the prophets foretold...’.

b. Peter in Jerusalem refers to the crucifixion and death of Christ just 7 weeks after the event, which is strongly denied by all Muslims. Neither then nor later did the Jews deny these facts. They were the ones to know and they were unfavourably disposed towards the Gospel. We can take it for granted “that nothing has escaped” their “notice, because it was not done in a corner” (Ac 26:26). How do we assume the Jews would have acted, if these statements were not true and common knowledge (Lu 24:18)?

c. Paul refers to the numerous (then still living!) eyewitnesses (1Co 15:3-6). We may well imply that he meant to encourage doubters in Corinth to verify his claim. In addition he repeatedly states that these facts were “according to the Scriptures”, i.e. in fulfilment of the OT prophecies.

d. Luke refers to his eyewitnesses and a careful investigation of “everything from the beginning” in an attempt “to write an orderly account”.

e. Jesus Christ showed Himself after His crucifixion and death to the eyewitnesses “and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive over a period of 40 days” (Ac 1:3). There was no need to prove His death. The Romans only permitted His body to be taken after His death had been confirmed (Jn.19:33-37).

f. John, the Apostle, begins his epistle by pledging himself as a reliable eyewitness of the life and death (Ac 1:7) of Christ.

g. Peter, just before his martyrdom (2Pe 1:13-15) testifies to the truth of Christ’s deity, which he confirms as an eyewitness, however, not without also referring to “the more sure word of prophecy”.

Recognizing the need to substantiate the facts of the Gospel, the Apostles used what God had given them to state their case honestly and

soberly, presenting the evidence with it. Why don't we? Muslims need to see how strong God's case really is!

### **1.4.3 The Conditions or Demands of the Gospel**

When sharing the Gospel one must not forget to mention that God lays claim on a person when he/she commits his/her life to Him. The acknowledgement of Christ as Saviour is tied to the need to accept him also as Lord with all the consequences that this implies.

The Lord confronted the people by telling them: "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower, will he not first sit down and consider the cost...?" (Lu 14:28)

People we witness to must know what God expects from them when they turn to Him: Repentance (= turning away from the old lives), and baptism (Ac 2:38; 3:19), faith (Ac 10:43; 13:38-39), the willingness to obey (Heb 5:9) and the determination to continue to the end (Heb 3:6; Rev 2:10; Mt 24:13). While the sinner ought to strive for salvation, the believer will strive for holiness without which no one shall see the Lord (Heb 12:14; 1Pe 1:13-19). Finally God wants us to be His witnesses (Mt 28:18-20). Again these words, strange to most people, need to be explained to our listeners.

The Gospel is Good News. But listeners must be made aware that it is bad News for those who reject the Good News. There is some reckoning and reasoning to be done (Isa 1:18).

### **1.4.4 The Promises of the Gospel**

This is a wonderful note on which to conclude our presentation of the Gospel. What an abundance of hope, joy and encouragement God has given to us!

Just consider: He assured us of His mercy (Ps 103:7), forgiveness (Ps 103:12; Isa 59:2; 43:25; 44:22; Jer 31:34 etc.), eternal life (Jn 10:22-28; Mt 25:34, 46b), a new life here on earth (2Cor 5:17), rest (Mt 11:28; Rev 14:13), His continued presence (Mt 28:20b). He wants to give us what all the world is striving for, but cannot find elsewhere: love and joy and peace (Jn 14:27; 15:9, 11; Gal 5:22). He also promises heaven to His followers (Jn 14:3) where His beloved shall reign with Him (Rev 5:10). To do our tasks on earth well, we are also given the needed gifts (1Co 12:8-10; Eph 4:11; Ro 12:6-8, Ac 2:38b).

No wonder, one of our Muslim friends once asked his “sheikh”: “What promises do we Muslims actually have?” – He was fully aware that there are far more promises in the Christian book than in their religion. Not surprisingly he never received an answer from his religious leader.

We have all the reason to ask ourselves in an honest and heart-searching manner:

- Could we think of anything better that the heart, mind and conscience of man could need or want to be totally satisfied in this world and the one to come?
- Is there any other religion or faith which can offer anywhere near to what the Gospel offers in content, assurance and evidence?

We can honestly confess that there is absolutely none. Already the first disciples asked Jesus the question, “Where shall we go? You have words of eternal life!” (Jn 6:68). So we can be assured that nobody has ever offered something better to mankind - and in addition established the truth of it with supporting evidences. Let us then go with confidence, love and knowledge to share this Good News with others! (Heb 13:12-13).

But even these facts, evidences and promises are not likely to create a dramatic response among Muslims. Francis Schaeffer expressed this so well:



The true scandal is that however faithfully and clearly one preaches the Gospel, at a certain point, the world, because it is in rebellion, will turn from it. Men turn away not because what is said makes no sense, but because they do not want to bow before the God who is there. This is the ‘scandal of the cross’.

*The Great Evangelical Disaster, p.64-65*

The cross stands for the inability of man to save himself. It is a severe attack on his pride and assumed integrity. But it is his only hope for time and eternity.

We are grateful to acknowledge that we are neither the sole nor the main actors in the task of evangelism. God Himself has prepared the human heart for the message of reconciliation. He will draw to Himself every true seeker (Jer 31:3; Jn 6:44 and 12:32).

## 1.5 The negative side of evangelism

We have looked at the positive side of evangelism, what is negative about it? That it calls all people away from counterfeit religion. Satan has managed to infiltrate mankind by offering all kinds of ‘ways to God’. But there is only ONE WAY, and that is our Lord Jesus. Even certain churches deny that by calling for a ‘dialogue’ with other religions, seeking agreement with other ‘truths’.

But according to the Bible anyone seeking salvation cannot really find it without Jesus, who is God’s only provision to obtain forgiveness and by that reconciliation to Him. This essentially leads to a turn-about (= repentance), a change (= conversion) of direction. It involves the admission and confession of our sin to God, the expression of our will to forsake all evil and to follow and obey God. As our “Yes!” at the wedding ceremony decidedly also means a “No!” to all other sexual or erotic partnerships, so our “Yes!” to Jesus excludes all other spiritual relationships. Faithfulness is one of the great themes of the Bible.

So also a Muslim must realize that to follow Jesus essentially means a break with Islam. As a rule a Muslim will realize this him/herself. If not, there will come a time to make it clear to him/her that one cannot believe in a Jesus who died for our sin, and one who did not.



### **We will remember:**

1. Evangelism is a holy calling and needs to be obeyed.
2. Muslims need to be evangelized because they do not know and understand the Gospel.
3. Evangelism and prayer are inseparable.
4. The sharing of the Gospel is best done within a personal relationship.
5. We begin a conversation with what we have in common. Differences can be dealt with later.
6. Evangelism is the sharing of the Gospel. The Gospel explains salvation. Salvation is an act of God. It is a free offer to all mankind.
7. The message of salvation is really only meaningful to a listener, when he or she has understood the true nature of God in His absolute holiness and righteousness, the standard of God expressed in His Law, the nature of man in his depravity and sinfulness and utter inability to save himself. Then only the

desperate need for salvation, atonement and reconciliation to God comes into focus.

8. The Gospel is expressed in four ways:
  - It is God's offer of His salvation to every one
  - It provides rational evidence of its truth
  - It contains information on God's promises
  - It outlines what God expects of man
9. When it comes to contentious issues, we can really say anything, provided it is done in the right spirit and at the right time.

## **Recommended Literature for Chapter 1:**

**Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God.** James Packer, Inter-Varsity Press, 1961.

**Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions.** John Piper, 1993.

**Christian Mission in the Modern World.** John Stott, 1975.

**Proclaim Christ Until He Comes. Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World. Lausanne II in Manila – International Congress on World Evangelization, 1989.** Douglas, J.D. (ed), 1990.

**The Master Plan of Evangelism.** Robert E. Coleman, 1963.

**The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism.** Robert E. Coleman, 1997.

**Christian Conversion in Context.** Hans Kasdorf, 1980.

**“Conflicting understandings of Christian conversion: A missiological challenge.”** Richard V. Peace, *IBMR* 28/1 (January 2004), 8-14.

## 2 Spiritual Warfare

The term ‘Spiritual Warfare’ has been formulated fairly recently. It is the name given to activities Christians are to undertake when attacking or protecting themselves from demonic and satanic forces.

*Spiritual Warfare suggests, first of all, that there is a war raging between God and Satan, between the kingdom of God and the domain of darkness involving every one under their respective rule.*

Perhaps, most of us have little or no experience of war. It is the most gruesome, devastating, destructive and extreme form of struggle with the aim and purpose to win the victory, to gain the total supremacy over the opponent. Sometimes such an open war is suppressed and becomes a ‘cold war’. This only affects the mode of warfare, not its reality, intensity or purpose, however.

### 2.1 Islam’s resistance to the Gospel

The Gospel is the solution to the dilemma of man. It is the Good News that in spite of our past sinful life, we may be reconciled to God. Jesus, our Saviour, claimed to be the Truth and the Light of the world.

In contradiction to that, as every other religion, Islam purports to bring the truth and light.

Scripture says:



No wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as servant of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.

*2 Corinthians 11:14*

It is consistent with the teaching of Christ that the ‘enemy’ sows weeds (= lit. darnel) among the wheat (Mt 13:24 ff.). The tragedy is not so much that the fields look untidy, but that the sown weeds are deadly poisonous and can hardly be distinguished from the wheat!

The system of Islam not only contradicts the ‘former scriptures’, i.e. the Bible, but devised a system that indoctrinates, deceives and captivates its followers so completely, that it is most difficult for them to come out of it.

Spiritual warfare does not direct itself against those who have been deceived, but against the deceiver, and that is the devil and his ‘angels’.

The effort to liberate people from unbelief or religious counterfeits that want to replace the Gospel is called Spiritual Warfare.

## 2.2 What the Bible says about ‘spiritual warfare’

In Scripture we read that ‘there was war in heaven...’ or of ‘the weapons of our warfare...’ (Rev 12:7; 2Co 19:4). We can observe the tremendous struggle between right and wrong, truth and deception in this world - and that this is constantly increasing with the growth of lies, evil and deception. Even the standards (and I do not think of relative, time-bound forms!) in the churches are constantly lowered by compromise and accommodation (a feature of a ‘pseudo-spirituality’).

To make our point we need to outline the issue a little better.

We know that we are the children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.



1 John 5:19

This is a stupendous, and to many an irritating, statement. But it is true, because God speaks.

### 2.2.1 An analysis

Let us, right at the outset of our examination of this concept, state that there are no such words as ‘spiritual warfare’ in Scripture. What then do we find in Scripture to alert us, or to challenge us, to ‘fight the good fight’ (1Ti 1:18; 6:12; 2 Ti 4:7) and to be ‘a good soldier of Christ Jesus’ (2Ti 2:3)?

It is well to note that the words ‘*agon*’ and ‘*agonizo*’ are used here in the Greek original, meaning to agonize, contest. Other words used are ‘*epagoniezomai*’ [*epi* = upon or about, intensive; *agon* = a contest], ‘*athleo*’ [engage in a contest], ‘*anthistemi*’ [struggle against], ‘*nikao*’ [overcome], ‘*parrhesiazomai*’ [to speak boldly or freely,] ‘*suzeteo*’ [to seek together jointly] and ‘*dialegomai*’, which is best translated as ‘to reason’.

We find relatively little about this topic in Scripture:

Paul... was speaking boldly [*parrhesiazomai*] talked and debated [*suzeteo*] with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him.



Acts 9:29



As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned [*dialegomai*] with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.  
*Acts 17:2*

So he reasoned [*dialegomai*] in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the market-place day by day with those who happened to be there.  
*Acts 17:17*

Every Sabbath he reasoned [*dialegomai*] in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

*Acts 18:4*

They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned [*dialegomai*] with the Jews.  
*Acts 18:19*

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively [*parrhesiazomai*] about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions [*dialegomai*] daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

*Acts 19:8-9*

...I will know that you stand firm [*agonizo*] in one spirit, contending [*athleo*] as one man for the faith of the Gospel...

*Philippians 1:27*

I ... urge you to contend [*epagoniezo*] for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

*Jude 3*

Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm [*anthistemi*] in the faith.

*1 Peter 5:9*

...I ask you...help these women who have contended [*athleo*] at my side in the cause of the Gospel...

*Philippians 4:3*

I urge you...to join me in my struggle [*agonizo*] by praying to God for me.

*Romans 15:30*

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling [*agonizo*] with all his energy which so powerfully works in me. I want you to know how much I am struggling [*agonizo*] for you....

*Colossians 1:29-2:1*

Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

They overcame [*nikao*] him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony....

*Revelation 12:11*

To help us in our struggle, to stand firm, to contend, to resist and overcome, we are given instructions:



...our struggle [*agonizo*] is not against flesh and blood, but against...the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms.

*Ephesians 6:12*

The most descriptive passage we all know:



Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel.

*Ephesians 6:10-19*

We are made acutely aware that as Christians we are - whether we realize this or not, whether we like it or not - involved in a 'struggle' against 'the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms'.

*Evangelism, particularly so among people of other religions and cultures, is always a spiritual battle. In evangelism we strive to liberate slaves, bound by Satan, and that will have repercussions.*

The Apostle Paul affords us some insight into his own experience:



I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message (content) and my preaching (form) were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

*2 Corinthians 2:3-5*

We also read:

...our Gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.

*1 Thessalonians 1:5*

## 2.2.2 Power in evangelism

Who of us does not feel the desire to be able to demonstrate God's power, the Spirit's power? Particularly in recent decades much thought, debate and prayer has been devoted to this question. Scores of books have been written and many a preacher is considered 'powerful' because of his performance. But much division has been caused in the Church because of this topic. Let us try at this crucial point to find a Biblical, spiritual answer.

- Not **we** hold the power, but God.



We have this treasure (God's light of the knowledge of the glory of God) in jars of clay (i.e. we are earthly beings) to show that this all surpassing power is from God and not from us.

*2 Corinthians 4:7*

- In **our** weaknesses God manifests HIS power.

To keep him from becoming conceited because of "the surpassing great revelations" he received, Paul was given "a thorn in his flesh", whatever that was. Gladly he then conceded:

... I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me...

*2 Corinthians 12:9*

- **God's power** is manifested and operates through the Gospel of the cross of Christ!

The Gospel ... is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

*Romans 1:16*

The message of the cross ... is the power of God!

*1 Corinthians 1:18*

Christ crucified ... the power of God and the wisdom of God.

*1 Corinthians 1:23*

The meaning of this expression must be found in the fact that the cross is called a 'stumbling block' for people, or 'foolishness' in their eyes, and also an 'offence' (Gal 5:11). The reason for that was that people insisted on finding forgiveness and salvation on the strength of their own efforts by keeping the Law. Paul retorted:

*The offence of the cross is the declared inability of man to save himself by 'good works' or any other means, and his absolute dependence on what God has already done!*



You, who are trying to be justified by the Law have been alienated from Christ. You have fallen away from grace!

*Galatians 5:4*

In the same fashion Christ is called a rock of offence (1Peter 2:8). What is so offensive, so 'foolish' and something to stumble over? The wider context suggests this clearly:

Man in his pride does not want to be dependent, a beggar before God. The Gospel alone, which is the message of the cross, contains the power of God that effects salvation as well as godly living and the qualification for service.



We pray that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience ...

*Colossians 1:10-11*

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.  
1:3

*2 Peter*

We believe this to mean His 'demonstration of the Spirit's power'.

## Fighting the good fight...

Having identified the key issue, let us now look at what God expressed regarding our involvement in this gigantic battle:



Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

*2 Corinthians 10:3-5*

Here the word 'war' (Greek '*strateuo*') is coming into focus. 'The weapons we fight with' should rather read as in the Authorized Version. 'the weapons of our warfare' (Greek '*strateia*'). The Greek word '*stratos*', meaning an encamped army, indicates armed conflict, here obviously a spiritual conflict.

Closely connected, it seems, is the following Scripture:

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

*1 Timothy 4:1*

What exactly do the above texts state?

- There are arguments and pretensions that set themselves up against the knowledge of God.
- People will abandon the (Biblical Christian) faith following deceiving spirits and things taught by demons through hypocritical liars without a conscience.
- We (ought to) demolish such arguments and pretension, by means of 'weapons', which have the divine power needed.
- This amounts to a war against 'the rulers, authorities and powers of this dark world and against spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places' (Eph 6:12).

Such warfare is not worldly, but the opposite, namely spiritual.

Let us answer the following questions:

- How does the world wage war (also among individuals or political groups)?

We know the answer: By force, deception, cunning, compromise, subversion, lies, character assassination, false propaganda, threats etc.

- What are the 'weapons' we are to 'fight' with?

The Bible says (Eph 6:14-18): Truth, righteousness, the proclamation of the Gospel, faith and salvation. In addition we do well to look at some other passages:



We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

*2 Corinthians 4:2*

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of **this** world rather than on Christ.

*Colossians 2:8*

## Power Encounter

'Power Encounter' has become somewhat of a trade name and suggests how we, as Christians, ought to defeat satanic forces by the power of God. We are told that signs and wonders play a special role in demonstrating God's power.

We recognize that Evangelism is indeed a power encounter with the world of darkness. Muslims, and more so those under the impact of Folk Islam, (see pp. 42-48) are kept from the light of the gospel through involvement with occult practices.

But a new dimension has been added to the struggle.

### 2.2.3 Deceiving and territorial spirits

In our effort to try to identify in which way our spiritual warfare ought to be, we are directed to a somewhat strange passage in Daniel. Daniel had mourned (!) for 3 weeks, rejecting choice food. This was followed by a vision at the bank of the river Tigris. Daniel saw what the bystanders could not see: "A man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude".

Calming the terrified Daniel, he spoke and said:



Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

So he said: 'Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come, but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No-one supports me against them except Michael, your prince).

*Daniel 10:12-13,20-21*

There are passages in Scripture, particularly those related to the unseen world, which do little more than let us sense dimensions we cannot possibly comprehend with our human mind or spirit.

We can learn from this passage that even the heavenly beings are intercepted and delayed by demonic or satanic forces. We can deduce from this and other texts that Satan rules over a host of fallen angels, demons; that these are well organized and are directed by a demonic hierarchy. The 'Prince of Persia' and the 'Prince of Greece' may well be chief demons with orders to control their respective territories.

What can we learn from that, and what can and should we do?

- The "man dressed in linen" was helped by Michael.
- Daniel was not asked or expected to help. Why?
- Michael was Daniel's 'prince'.
- Prayers are heard by God and answered, even when delayed for reasons we cannot fathom.
- The 'man dressed in linen' continues to fight the 'princes' of Persia and Greece.

**"We** fight not against flesh and blood, but struggle against rulers, authorities and powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms". We are to take our stand against the devil's schemes, to struggle, stand our ground and resist the devil, to pray and be alert. But we are not intended to defeat them. The whole context of this passage (Eph 6) suggests defence. The decisive battle is fought and won by Jesus Christ and His angels.

### **Power Encounter is also practiced in Islam**

Although not using that title, we find that 'Power Encounter' is well used in Islam as well. We should be aware that spiritual warfare is not a one-way-street. The reverse of it is called cursing.

Already in the Qur'an we read concerning Christians:



Allah's curse be on them! How they are deluded away from the truth!

**Surah 9:30**

This is almost grotesquely amplified in another statement:



O ye people of the Book [i.e. Jews and Christians G.N.!] Believe in what We have revealed [i.e. the Qur'an, G.N.], confirming what was (already) with you [i.e. the Bible, G.N.] before we change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition ... or curse them...!

**Surah 4:47**

When a delegation of Christians from Najran in the South of Arabia came to Muhammad, he challenged them to accept Islam, which they declined. Thereupon the following 'revelation' came to him:



The truth (comes) from Allah alone, so be not of those who doubt. If anyone disputes in this matter with thee [i.e. Muhammad G.N.], now after (full) knowledge has come to thee, say: 'Come! Let us gather together - our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves; then let us earnestly pray, and invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie!'

**Surah 3:60-61**

Since this time cursing has become a practice in Islam, up to this present day. (In regard to this, the author of these notes has been challenged to participate twice in such a kind of duel. Such curse will not succeed with a believer. As Christians we can, of course, not curse in return. We bless! – G.N.)

## Truth vs. power

The Bible proceeds from the premise of truth. The response to Truth is faith. We entrust ourselves to God by faith and then realize and experience that we are safe in His hands:



We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin. The One Who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one does not touch him.

**1 John 5:18**

Islam proceeds from the premise of power. In folk religion - and here many Muslims are also involved - the premise is equally power.

In Folk Islam the question is not so much, "Is it true?", but "Is it more powerful?" Those who ask the latter question are driven by fear. They feel

helplessly relinquished to spiritual forces, which they hope to control or manipulate through a shaman (witchdoctor) who may well be an Imam.

## 2.2.4 Our premise for evangelism

A crucial question is how to address people who view themselves as pawns in the game of powers they are unable to influence. Should we present them with the Truth and persuade them to exercise faith - or should we seek to 'display' the power of God to convince them by seeing?

We live by faith, not by sight! (2Cor 5:7), says the word of God.

Yet we read of instances, when 'many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the Apostles' (Ac 2:43; 5:12). This is confirmed by Acts 8:6:



When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.

### The counterfeit and the real

These days we hear of mind boggling claims of miracles and healing. Based on this enormous counterfeit practice, we ought to insist that claims of healing or miracles need to be substantiated. If someone is indeed healed, and we believe this still happens today, that healing can be verified.

If a person is declared to be healed - and he or she is not actually instantly and fully restored to health - which can be confirmed by medical doctors - the one who claimed the act of healing is dishonest. When God miraculously heals, it is instant and permanent and can be substantiated by medical tests. All else is make-belief! This does not exclude a gradual healing by prayer, but that should not be classified as a miracle.

While millions flock to meetings in which supposedly signs and wonders take place, the reality is that while uncritical and gullible Christians believe this to have happened, critical investigation all too often concludes that these are a hoax. The 'real thing' does not seem to happen in the form of a sensation!

Let us stay real. By all means, let us pray to God that He might use signs and wonders to convince the people we would like to reach! But let us first of all be honest and share the Truth in that spirit. Make-believe is difficult to sell.

### The Truth is that Satan and his prophets are liars

We are aware that our Lord called the devil a liar and the father of lies (Jn 8:44) and we learn that he was a liar from the beginning (1Jn 3:8). Spiritual lies are obviously made up to contradict spiritual truth. This is done in an

effort to diffuse God's truth, or at least to confound the seeker. Scripture names the liars - that is the human counterpart of the father of lies.



I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist - he denies the Father and the Son. No-one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

*1 John 2:21-23*



We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God which he had given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made Him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about His Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

*1 John 5:9-11*

At this point we have to stop and think a little. A statement as explosive as this is not well liked these days, even in Christian circles. Of course this message was inspired before Muhammad came, of whom we all thought while reading this text.

Should we really express thoughts of this nature regarding Muhammad towards Muslims? I suggest, no. We might well be convinced in our minds that Muhammad was a liar, even an Antichrist of some sort. But to present such an assumption to a Muslim, as true as it might be, is not speaking the truth in love. Statements like this will create unnecessary obstacles for a Muslim on his/her way to discover the beauty and glory of Christ.

## Spiritual blindness and bondage



The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.

*2 Corinthians 4:4* We know...that the whole world is under the control of the **evil** one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him, who is true.

*1 John 5:19-20*

...you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

*Ephesians 4:18*

Let us try to evaluate the above passages, which contain all that is stated explicitly on this topic in the New Testament:

- The ‘god of this world’, obviously Satan, has blinded the minds of unbelievers.
- This leads to a darkened mind and thus a darkened, confused understanding of spiritual content.
- The cause is the closing of their eyes and ears by inspiration of Satan, leading to the hardening of their hearts.
- If they would open their eyes and ears they would not need to live in the futility of their thinking, because they would no more be ignorant, they would be understanding and perceiving, their hearts would turn and they would be healed. An act of the will is asked for, a decision to be truthful!

It would be justified to call such a spiritual condition “bondage”.

How can people under bondage be liberated? In our given context we need to define what we mean by that.

Muslims are desperately fearful of eternal consequences, should they turn away from Islam. They also fear rejection by family and society should they become Christians, which may amount to psychological and mental trauma.

In addition, Muslims are extremely fearful of death or rather the judgment after death. Muslims do not know that Jesus Christ has by his death already destroyed Satan, the one...



...who holds the power of death - that is the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death...

*Hebrews 2:14-15*

We have to conclude, therefore, that Muslims live under bondage without existential knowledge of the way they can be liberated.

## 2.2.5 Not all Muslims are oppressed or possessed

We do not believe that evil spirits possesses all Muslims.

However, the teaching and system of Islam from its inception is clearly anti-Christian. By that token we can well believe that it was and is satanically inspired. That also explains the extreme resistance of Muslims to the Gospel.

Muslims are trapped in this system by an unprecedented indoctrination both in Islam and against the Christ of our Scriptures.

## Liberation from bondage

Whoever is bound is unable to free him/herself. Assistance from outside is indispensable. Therefore, whoever is bound or blinded by Satan can only be liberated by someone more powerful. The Lord Jesus (in Mt 12:29) likens Satan to a 'strong man' and asked a vital question:

How can any one enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.  
*Matthew 12:29*



## We will remember:

- To take away what is in his possession is not possible - unless the strong man is bound first.
- Are WE now expected to bind Satan in order to carry away his possessions, i.e. his captives? NO! Only the 'strong man', Jesus, can do that!
- We may now enter the strong man's house and can 'rob' it.

*These words invite us to ponder on the enormity and responsibility of their content. And Spiritual Warfare is the execution of the spiritual authority that has been delegated to us by our Lord Jesus.*

*Our Lord told us:*

*"I have given you authority ... to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you!" (Luke 10:19)*

These words invite us to ponder on the enormity and responsibility of their content. And they invite us in no uncertain terms to pray:

- ① **We pray** first of all for our willingness to obey Christ's command to GO!
- ② **By prayer** we actively resist anti-Christian spiritual forces or systems with the object of lifting the veil so that Muslims may become able to hear and understand the Gospel, affording them a genuine chance to choose.
- ③ **By prayer** we will endeavour to remove the bondage and blindness, which afflicts those Muslims we witness to.
- ④ **By prayer** we will endeavour to witness to Muslims in a way which is glorifying to God and understandable to them. We pray that God may prepare and use us by guiding our every step by His Word and His Spirit.

⑤ **We pray** for revival among Muslims and the collapse of the system of Islam. What God did to systems such as communism, He can do to Islam!

⑥ **We pray** for God's supernatural intervention by providing the individuals we attempt to reach with a sign of His Presence.

### **Our role model for action**

When we want to see the perfect model to follow, we look at Jesus Christ. Let us observe how He spoke with lost sinners:

- He never withheld the truth.
- He did not confound people with clichés, but spoke to each person individually on her or his own level of understanding and addressed the very point at which they were caught either in their sinfulness or their lack of loyalty.
- He did this in a manner that was kindly and not condemnatory. He sympathized with the sinners because He loved them. He became a 'merciful and faithful high priest' because he was 'made like his brothers in every way' (Heb 2:17). He was 'able to sympathize with our weaknesses' because He 'has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin' (Heb 4:15).



### **We affirm:**

1. Evangelism, particularly so among people of other religions and cultures, often involves a spiritual battle.
2. In Evangelism we strive to liberate people who are bound by Satan.
3. Muslim resistance to the Gospel has a spiritual root.
4. Spiritual blindness is a form of demonic oppression.
5. Evangelism may involve exorcism and we have been granted the spiritual authority to do so.
6. Exorcism is done by commanding in the name of Jesus.

**Recommended Literature for Chapter 2:**

**Biblical Christianity in African Perspective.** Wilbur O'Donovan, Paternoster Press: 1996, pp. 187-217.

**The Great Deception.** Abd al-Masih, Light of Life, 1995.

**That None Should Perish: How to Reach Entire Cities for Christ through Prayer Evangelism.** Ed. Silvos, 1994.

**Christ – Supreme over Satan: Spiritual Warfare, Folk Religion and the Occult.** Vivienne Stacey, 1986.

### 3 Understanding Communication

We will see that understanding culture and understanding communication are two sides of the same coin.

Until quite recently and even up till now various denominations viewed each other with suspicion, and much more so different religions. If we had to give a detailed account of why we are Christians and not Muslims, Presbyterian and not Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons or New Apostles, our reasoning is not likely to be convincing. We proceed from our subjective reality, which we (or anybody else, for that matter) perceive to be the Truth. If someone attacks our position we withdraw or argue our point, and even if we loose the argument – we will still stay what we are, perhaps a little more doubtful or fanatical. Many a Christian has heard or read forceful attacks by Muslims against the Bible and Christ. They were silenced because they had no answer. Yet, they will hardly consider becoming Muslims. And Muslims will react the same way.

*In order to win Muslims, we will have to be able to convince him/her that Jesus offers infinitely more, and that He can indeed be fully trusted.*

#### 3.1 The Mechanics of Communication



Communication means that an idea which I have in my mind passes through my lips and reaches the other person's mind. Adequate communication means that when it reaches the recipient's mind, it is substantially the same as when it left mine. I will have substantially made the point I wish to convey. The words that we use are only a tool for translating the ideas which we wish to communicate....

*The God Who is There, by Francis Schaeffer*

Besides body language we have no other tools than words to convey thoughts.

There are actions we can explain without words by means of a sign language, e.g.:  
 “I am hungry!”

“I have a headache!”

But how do we mime:

“We are saved by grace through faith?”

While it is relatively easy to communicate mundane issues by sign language, it is quite a different matter to convey abstract thought, but it is most difficult to transmit a spiritual message. Let us try to analyze this.

Words are relative to their users. When I say 'I am hungry', then this will mean something different for a subsistence farmer in a drought stricken area than to an affluent Western businessman looking into a full refrigerator half an hour before supper. When I say it is hot or cold I convey a different message in terms of expected degrees to an Eskimo or a man in Mombasa in East Africa.

The more specific a word becomes, the more likely it is to differ in content from that of a different culture.

### **3.1.1 Communication and the work of the Holy Spirit**

When we share the Gospel with an outsider, is it not the Holy Spirit who communicates the message to the spirit of the listener? Can anyone, for that matter, understand the Biblical message without the operation of the Holy Spirit? The answer to that is obvious. The Holy Spirit always effects spiritual understanding.

But what if my sharing of the Good News is unintelligible to my listener? Maybe I speak on an academic level that he cannot follow, or I use words he is not acquainted with. Maybe I use a terminology that makes no sense to him. Will the Holy Spirit not overrule this?

If it were meant that way, we would not have been charged to present the Gospel to 'all creation'. We would not have been charged to share the message understandably, as we will read just now.

Of course, God the Holy Spirit can intervene in a direct manner - and does so quite frequently - to open the mind of a person. But as a rule spiritual truth is first committed to the mind of the hearer. It is processed there. And that may be followed by a spiritual realization, which leads to a spiritual understanding of the message. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

We must conclude that the promised work of the Holy Spirit is not a substitute for our witness, and our witness will not be effective without the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the listener.

### 3.1.2 Communicating Christ to the Muslims

Let us investigate this. Donald N. Larson, a linguist at Bethel College, USA, observes:



When Christians and Muslims meet, it is not with clean slates but under conditions established in their respective groups and in terms of what each knows at that point in his life and how it is organized in his mind. They engage each other as outsiders. Well-defined boundaries keep them separate. They may be able to talk freely about the weather, but when it comes to the central issues of life, like their respective worldview and lifestyle, they tend to avoid each other. When they cannot, they tend to collide.

*In McCurry: The Gospel and Islam, pp. 72-73*

Every person, when confronted with something unknown to him, is dependent on a comparison with what is already known to him. Naturally, the characteristics of the known thing will be transferred to the unknown. Let us try to illustrate this.

When the first cars appeared, people looked under the bonnet to find the horses or oxen, which moved the car. Moving vehicles were always associated with drawing animals. Likewise when a Christian learns that Muslims believe in one god, it is natural to identify him as Yahweh, and to impute to him the characteristics and nature of Yahweh.

The question therefore is not: ‘Do we believe in one god’, but ‘how has this god revealed himself’? What is he like? What is the name which identifies him? The careful student will not only look at superficial similarities, but also at the fundamental differences like the nature of God and the consequences that flow from that. Larson continues:



The Christian must know something of what the Muslim knows in order to make effective use of his (i.e. the Muslim's) own knowledge and experience.

When Christian utterances enter Muslims ears, the meanings of those utterances are organized on the basis of what is already in the Muslim's mind. Likewise, when Muslim utterances enter Christian ears, the meanings are organized by the Christian on the basis of what is already in his mind.

To put it somewhat differently, as a Christian transmits what he knows, the Muslim takes it, compares it with what is already in his mind and processes it accordingly. In the same way, as the Muslim transmits what he knows, the Christian processes it on the basis of what is already in his mind. That is, the Muslim organizes what the Christian sends according to what he knows, and the Christian does the same thing. Each controls his own output. However, neither exercises much control over what the other does with what he transmits. Neither can withdraw what is

already in the other's minds. At best he can say things which may supplement or rearrange it.

Only when the Christian can understand and appreciate the Muslim's reality as he (i.e. the Muslim) does, can he talk about his own Christian reality in terms which the Muslim can understand and in ways that enable him to appreciate the Christian's point of view.



Therefore, if the Christian hopes to touch the Muslim at significant points in a significant manner, he must be prepared to talk, but he must also be prepared to listen.

The general problem boils down to the specific problem of belonging. Christians and Muslims belong to different "tribal" traditions. In their respective groups each comes to know different things, map them into language in different ways, meet others under different conditions and hold different beliefs.

*ibid.*, p.73

Paul Hiebert, a professor of Anthropology, adds that:

When Christianity enters a new culture, it must not only be translated into a new language, but also into the thought forms, symbols and customs of a new culture.

*ibid.*, p.60

Muslims, Christians, Hindus and others have integrated thought structures. Words, which may be the same as in other languages, have been coded by their respective religion, culture and sociological factors.

### 3.1.3 What is happening in spiritual communication?

When we think of ourselves we may divide our "self" into **body**, **heart** (soul) and **mind**. What do we want to express by that?

We assume that our **mind** is the centre of our **thinking** and our **heart** is the centre of our **feeling**:

- When we do arithmetic, we apply our **mind**.
- When we see someone hurt or mourning, we are moved in our **heart**.

What about our faith? Do we practice it with our **heart** or **mind**?

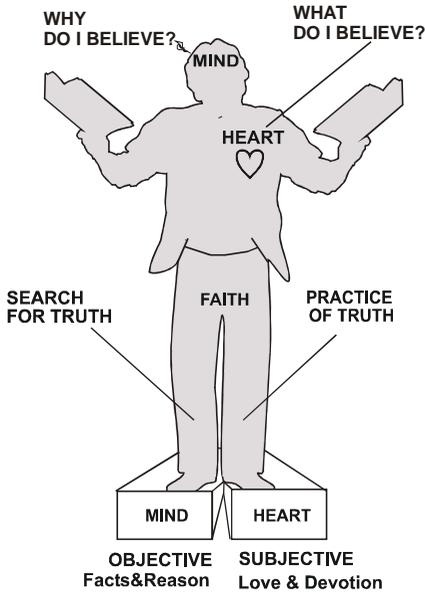
With both: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13)

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)

Our faith is built on two foundations: truth and love.

- To discern between truth and deception we need to apply our **mind**.
- To worship and adore our Lord, we apply our **heart**.

Let us illustrate this:



The Christian witness needs to be clear on **what** he believes. He knows the facts and promises of the Gospel; this is both to be understood in his **mind** and believed in his **heart**.

Our message will enter through our **senses** (ears and eyes), and is then scrutinized by the mind and heart or emotions. This should trigger off the question: 'Do I like it?'

It comes from the heart. Here our presentation of God in His glory, majesty, purity, righteousness, mercy and love is of great importance. Do we picture Him as threatening, watching our very step to punish us for any mistake? Or do we 'portray Jesus Christ

*The 'picture' of God that the Bible provides is absolutely and overwhelmingly more attractive than the way Allah is depicted in the Qur'an.*

clearly before their very eyes' (Gal 3:1) and demonstrate how God, although grieved over our sin, is the Good Shepherd who seeks and goes after the lost sheep until He finds it?

We must never forget that! The next question is likely to be different:

- Is it true? Can I trust it?

It comes from the mind. Here the evidence of the Gospel needs to dispel any doubts. If the mind is satisfied, it is time for the decisive question:

- Do I want it?

And that question is linked to another:

- Am I willing to pay the price?

Every Muslim knows what it means to leave his/her religion, and at this point come the inviting and yet hard words of Jesus:



Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

*Matthew 10:37-39*

But the price must never be considered without the knowledge of what the 'price' actually 'buys'! It is the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins and our reconciliation to God. It is the everlasting sunshine of His love over and around us! It is Life in His presence forever!

### The great 'but'

What we have just considered is a balanced and logical way to think, feel and decide. All too often we have to deal with another kind of logic. A fictitious incident may help illustrate the point:



A man is undergoing psychiatric treatment. He believes he is a mouse. After a lengthy therapy he becomes convinced that he is a human after all and is released.

A short while later he returns to the psychiatric hospital panting and with horror on his face: "Right on the road is a big cat!" he pants. The psychiatrist reminds him: "But you do know that you are a human being". "Yes, of course", the patient replies, "but does the cat know that?" **Anon**

Unfortunately, we often find little or no logic in religious thinking. It is, as a rule, a mixture of culture, tradition, misinformation, hear-say and fear. It is believed, because all Muslims believe it – and they can't all be wrong.

Must we despair? No! Number one: God is there! He recognizes an honest heart and the Holy Spirit will be at the listener's side.

But we also should be helpful by recognizing what the problem is and then direct the message accordingly. And we need to exercise one aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit: patience.

## 3.2 The acid test of good communication: Understanding

We are given a Biblical model:



...we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully...

*2 Corinthians 1:13-14*

Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he (i.e. Christ) explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself ... He said to them: "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. Then he opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures.

*Luke 24:27, 44-45*

These texts have two facets: understanding by means of explanation and by illumination through His Spirit. Both aspects are vital.

The 'normal' sharing the Gospel, the Good News, is basically confined to saying: 'You are a sinner and by that lost. Christ died for your sins. If you accept Him as your personal Saviour, your sins will be forgiven, and you will go to heaven'.

That, of course, is the Good News. But there is ever so much more to be said about God's love. We have to mention that He is holy! He wants us to be with Him, forever! But we cannot, because we are very unholy and holiness and sin do not mix! What is sin? What is God's expectation from us? How do we relate to God's Law? The Law is not just the Ten Commandments! It also introduces the possible atonement by sacrifice. What is a sacrifice really? How does all this apply to Christ? These and many more issues have to be made known.

*If one book of the Bible were enough, why did God give us 66?*

And when presenting the Gospel, which is the plan of God for mankind, why begin at the end? Do we normally read books from the end? (See Chapter 8 on Chronological Storytelling for more details on this principle.) We have to be careful to present the facts of the Gospel so that they make sense to the outsider, i.e. comprehensive enough.

It is good to remember what Christ said about the seed, which fell on good soil. It speaks of...



...the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

*Matthew 13:23*

The treasurer of Queen Candace of Ethiopia was reading a very significant prophecy concerning Christ's death. When Philip asked him, 'do you understand what you are reading?', he had to answer, 'how can I, unless someone explains it to me?'

This is confirmed by yet another passage:



All over the world this Gospel is producing fruit...just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard and understood God's grace in all its truth.

*Colossians 1:6*

Let us never forget:

*But it is not only the understanding that matters, but also the integrity of the witness: A Muslim will understand the Gospel in proportion to how we understand him and his religion.*

We do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

*2 Corinthians 4:2*

## 3.3 Objective vs. Subjective Communication

### 3.3.1 Our testimony – subjective communication

We call subjective experiences 'testimonies'.

What is real to us need not be a reality to others. Consider this simple illustration:



John is deeply in love with Rebecca. The way he feels, is very real to him. Rebecca's mother also loves her, but this is not the same reality. John's friends also 'love' her, but John's love is quite another experience. John's friends also were or are in love, with other girls. They surely have a very real experience of what falling in love is. But only John experiences what his being in love with Rebecca really is. It is his unique experience and reality.

*Nehls*

We should differentiate between objective facts and subjective spiritual experiences. Both are real to us, when they come our way. The more personal this experience is, the more precious, but also the more subjective, it is. We may be deeply grateful for our experiences with God, but it does not necessarily convey the same feeling to someone else; it may even be misunderstood and be compared with what someone else experienced on another level.

“God has answered a prayer of mine in a wonderful way!” I may consider that to be a testimony for Christ. But my Muslim friend may with full conviction respond by saying: “O, I have the very same experience all the time!” He compares my statement with his reality and that may be quite different. Or he may think that Christians always see something supernatural in everyday events, but these do happen to all kinds of people after all.

“God told me ...” is a dangerous statement to make. It will essentially be assessed as a subjective statement. Although it was probably meant to give weight to what follows, it will generally rather lead to the assumption that the user of this phrase wants to elevate him/herself in the eyes of the listener.

This way testimonies are perceived should not discourage us from testifying about God and His work in us. But these should be used in conjunction with and in support of the Biblical message.

A personal testimony, if well placed, can indeed stir the hearts of people and inspire faith, but it just is not the Word of God, and that is what we need to convey.

### 3.3.2 The Word of God – the way of objective communication

Objective communication is the transmission of the Biblical message. When an honest and objective person hears the facts of the Gospel and the evidence that verify the Word of God, he or she may need some time to come to terms with it both emotionally and rationally, but then will have to consent to it, for anyone may test the veracity of the Bible. That makes it objective. Whether one likes it or not - it is evidenced fact.



#### **We recall:**

1. The Word of God has a mental and a spiritual dimension.
2. Our task is to inform Muslims about who God is and what Jesus came to do. We have to inform them how God’s righteousness is expressed in His Law and what it means to sin against His will and

- purpose. But we must also inform them about God's grace and mercy that is expressed on the cross.
3. A Muslim will understand this message in proportion to how we understand him/her.
  4. Good communication means that the message of God we try to transmit, in the mind of the recipient becomes substantially identical to what the Scriptures teach.
  5. The purpose and aim of our communication is the mental and spiritual understanding of the Truth of God.
  6. Objective communication of the Truth happens when we share and explain the Word of God.
  7. Subjective communication of the Truth happens when we share our lives as well.

### **Recommended Literature for Chapter 3:**

**When You Cross Cultures: Vital Issues Facing Christian Missions.** Jim Chew, 1990.

**Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication.** David Hesselgrave, 1991.

**Contemporary Christian Communications: Its Theory and Practice.** James Engel, 1979.

**“The Road to Conversion: The Latest Research Insights.”** James Engel, *EMQ* 26/2 (April 1990), 184-93.

## 4 Understanding Muslims

### 4.1 Muslim characteristics

A most important statement must be made here. By now we may have come to a point where we begin to fear or resent the Muslims. We have to correct that:

*Muslims, like all other people, are a creation of God and are loved  
by Him!  
"They have a zeal for God - but it is unenlightened" (Rom 10:2).  
Our Lord Jesus died for every Muslim  
as much as He did for us!  
God loves the Muslims!*

We have to differentiate between the religion of Islam and the people who follow it for lack of better knowledge and understanding. Islam does not offer salvation or assurance of forgiveness, and those people who grew up or grow up under its teaching know no better!

They have little chance to believe, because they have not had sufficient opportunity to hear and understand an effective, convincing presentation of the Gospel. That is certainly not their fault. To some degree it is ours - if our evangelistic effort excludes the Muslims in our environment - or if our effort does not take into consideration the altogether different mind-set and understanding of a Muslim.

Besides the sects within Islam, we find a great variety of people:

- orthodox and liberal Muslims
- those who are only Qur'an orientated, and others who focus on the Hadiths or both
- blind fanatics and wonderfully considerate Muslims.
- Each one following one of the four law systems (Hanifa, ibn Malik, ash-Shaffi'i or Hanbal)
- the mystics who follow the teachings of their 'murshid', 'marabout' (West Africa) or 'pir' (India, inspired soul guide), those who venerate departed 'saints'; others who reject both
- Muslims who obey the 'letter' and others who try to spiritualize Islam

Muslims are not alike. There are...

- the educated and the simple
- rural and urban people
- people with different cultures, habits, characters, needs, desires, tastes, temperaments, social and ethnic backgrounds, etc. Many of these follow ‘folk Islam’, i.e. a form of Islam, which accommodates a considerable part of their former religion and tradition, including witchcraft.

As in every other social group, Muslims differ in character, education, temperament, cultural background, doctrinal position etc. Although rituals and forms may be quite uniform, the differences remain.

### **4.1.1 Muslims are confident that they are on the winning side**

Western ‘Christian’ politicians go far out of their way to accommodate the demands of Islam. They realize that enmity to Islam can backfire badly; they are scared of worldwide terrorism. While Christianity as a whole seems to crumble, Islam seems to take its place.

All this has boosted the self-confidence of most Muslims. After many years in oblivion, they are in the limelight. They are confident that the time has come for Islam to replace the decadent remnant of the Christian area.

### **4.1.2 Muslims are the product of the Islamic system**

Islam demands submission to Allah’s will – as expressed in the “*iman*” and “*deen*” and the “*sunnah*” (*see volume 1 for details*).

This presupposes the identification with the system and faith of Islam. That has led to the erection of a ‘wall’ around the Islamic community, particularly for those living in a non-Muslim context. This reminds us of the wall within the formerly divided city of Berlin. The wall was built by the communist regime. Officially it served as a line of defence against Western democratic influence. In reality, however, it was to prevent the mass exodus of people to the West. The psychological ‘wall’ around Muslims is to keep Islam and all that goes with it in, and everything else out. And those inside are not aware of the real purpose. Every Christian witness may be viewed as a ‘missionary’ and this causes their defences to go up.

We remember:

ISLAM = submission

MUSLIM = one who submits

Consequently, a Muslim views himself as a slave of Allah. Every Muslim must submit to the Sunnah and by that to Allah... It is '*ta-abudi*'; that means it has to be obeyed, not analyzed, considered or tested:



Allah's law is not to be penetrated by intelligence, it is *ta'abudi*, i.e. man has to accept it without criticism, with its apparent inconsistencies and its incomprehensible decrees, as wisdom into which it is impossible to inquire. One must not look in it for causes in our sense, nor for principles; it is based on the will of Allah, which is bound by no principles.

*Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, by H.A.R. Gibbs & J.H. Kramers, p. 525*

### 4.1.3 Muslims are 'under the law'

A Muslim essentially lives 'under law' in contrast to the Biblical 'under grace'. (Gal 3:10; 5:3-4; Ro 3:28; 8:3-4; 10:4).

Yet his position cannot be compared with the dispensation of the people under the 'Old Covenant', for there was a distinct law of cause and effect, which enabled every person to assess his position before God. It also clearly offered atonement with God.

*Law is rule by power. Grace is rule by love.*

Whether he admits it or not, a Muslim is under total submission to the Shariah and dominated by the two Islamic concepts of

- "*Halaal*" = Lawful or permitted
- "*Haraam*" = Unlawful or forbidden

This will govern his life in all its aspects. We have to understand that to a Muslim religion consists of performing prescribed tasks. There is a long list of religious duties that have to be observed every day. No Muslim can ever claim to have fulfilled these satisfactorily. Consequently, a sincere Muslim will always be aware of his/her shortcomings, which carry consequences! He/she can therefore never assume to rest in God and to be at peace with Him. He/she does not even know whether or not his/her sins are forgiven.

When a Muslim breaks the law, he is expected to compensate for this by some merit (almsgiving, extra prayer, extra fasting, the pilgrimage or some good deed).

For the rest, he relies on Allah's mercy, grace and forgiveness, which are often mentioned in the Qur'an, but for which no assurance is offered. Thus a Muslim can never be sure about his standing before Allah.

A Muslim who is somewhat acquainted with the Qur'an and the Hadith, fears death and judgement and with that the punishment of the grave (Textbook 1 *Islam – Basic Aspects*, Chapter 6).

He cannot be certain at all about the outcome of the Last Judgement and his eternal destiny.

He hopes (and even that is not Qur'anic!), however, that after having been punished for his sins in hell, he will be admitted to paradise. Perhaps this is a reflection of purgatory.

But a sin he fears above all others is 'shirk', the 'unpardonable sin' of adding a partner to Allah. He would do that when accepting Christ, which would be paramount to the acceptance of 'another god'.

Even so, his being a Muslim provides him with...

- A sense of belonging
- A set of convictions about Islam, the Qur'an and Muhammad
- A sense of Islam's superiority
- But also a fear of rejection and hell. And this accounts for his anti-Christian sentiments.

Submission and fear made Muslims resistant to the Gospel.

*A Muslim is probably more resistant to the Christian message than any other person. His mind is programmed to misunderstand the Christian message.*

But a loving approach weakens this resistance. To assume that people with that background and who are so different in their thinking can all be approached and reached by the same method as nominal Christians is simplistic and quite unrealistic.

Therefore, this course does not want to provide a step by step "Do-it-yourself" program, but rather suggests principles that can help Christians to select the best way of witnessing in every given situation and opportunity.

It must be emphasized also, that Muslim evangelism (as any other) cannot be learned in a classroom or simply from books. Knowledge can neither substitute for experience or Christian character.

## 4.2 The conflict between the 'Ultimates'

Our worldview and our value system govern our thinking and behaviour. We ought to consider this when meeting with Muslims. Their worldview and

value system have influenced their attitude towards the Christian message – as we are influenced to be suspicious towards views we deem to be false.

The Muslim we meet does not live in isolation. He is an integrated part of his family, clan, tribe and community. This determines his thinking and his decisions. It also heightens his fear and apprehension for change significantly. It will be well worth considering the ‘group behaviour factor’ from findings in social science when we witness to a Muslim.

### 4.2.1 The authority conflict

To a Christian the final authority on all matters is God and we refer here exclusively to Yahweh Elohim, the God of Israel, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What we know about Him besides His revelation in creation, we find in the Bible. Therefore Scripture is the final authority for every true Christian. Consequently, we believe that Christ is the only way, the only means by which fallen man can be reconciled to God.

To a Muslim the final authority is Allah, who revealed his will in the Qur’an through Muhammad, who is believed to have received the Qur’an and with it its interpretation and meaning by inspiration.

These respective authorities are not negotiable. They are absolute or ultimate, because “man is unable to go beyond them in his questioning mind”, to quote Prof. Klaus Nuernberger. According to him, an ultimate cannot be invented or created by man, but man is convicted and convinced of its claim to be absolute truth. In his study notes on Theological Ethics (UNISA), he states:



Ultimates constantly question each other and man has to make up his mind which of these claims to truth is valid and which is not. Once an ultimate is established, man no longer questions it. He accepts it as valid and binding.

We are all aware of the power which an ultimate, a conviction, has over a person. Countless thousands have valiantly and willingly died for whatever they considered to be the ultimate, be it religious, political or ethical. We wish it were true, however, that in all humans “ultimates constantly question each other” and that people would “make up their minds which of these claims to truth is valid and which is not”. The worldview and belief of people is formed almost exclusively on the basis of what is accepted within their respective group. It is accepted without any serious questioning.

The ultimate gives purpose, meaning and direction to an individual as well as a group. The closer knit this group is, the stronger is the influence of their ultimate on the individual. This is particularly true about Muslims.

## 4.2.2 The group factor

Prof. Nuernberger mentions the reciprocal effect:



Groups...grant a sense of acceptance and belonging. Every person needs the assurance that he has the right to be what he is, to do what he does, to strive for what he cherishes. The right of existence is granted him by the group to which he belongs. He is surrounded by people who have similar views, values and interests. (parents, peers, etc. G.N.) He becomes certain that it is 'normal' to be what he is and to do what he does.

They firmly believe that they are right and view reality quite objectively, while the other party is believed to be distorting the truth to serve its own ends. But then they also lose their capacity to recognize and rectify their own mistakes and to shoulder their own share of the responsibility. For this reason the individual identifies with the group. Touch the 'honour' or integrity of a group and you have attacked each one of its members personally!

Ultimates normally grant the right of existence only under certain conditions. Man has to fulfil certain prerequisites, live according to certain rules, subject himself to specified norms and criteria of acceptability.

The group, on the other hand, depends on the loyalty of its members for its continued existence. It grants recognition, status, acceptance and belonging only under certain conditions. You have to know and accept the rules of the game if you want to join a football club. Acceptance in any group is conditional. And that is the pointer to the fact that groups 'stand for' something bigger than themselves. They represent an ideal, a value, a conviction of some sort - thus an ultimate. In the name of the ultimate the group therefore punishes deviant behaviour with contempt, ridicule, harassment or rejection. The group may question or withdraw the right of existence it granted. But to be an outcast is tantamount to 'spiritual death'. All this is what we call 'Social control'.

Like everybody else, every Muslim has a deeply rooted need to belong to a group and to be accepted by it. He or she feels the need to be part of the '*Ummah*', the congregation of Islam, which not only grants this belonging to those who submit, but also watches over all its members. While (in most Muslim societies) there is a very considerable tolerance towards non-observance of Islamic duties, even sin, there is no tolerance toward a Muslim who becomes a Christian. The Qur'an says



“...if they turn renegades, seize them and slay them wherever you find them.”

*Surah 4:89*

### 4.2.3 The group dictates behaviour

Members think, behave and relate to each other in a given way. They are different from ‘those outside’. All groups establish boundaries, and the acceptance of these is conditional to the right to be part of the group. This boundary is to keep those inside in and those outside out.

Regarding ‘outsiders’, Nuernberger writes:



It is, however, not the outsiders themselves that present the problem for the group, but what they stand for. They have a different system of values, norms and beliefs. They represent another ultimate. The very existence of another ultimate presents a threat to the unquestionable validity of the ultimate of the group itself. But once its validity is challenged, its function as a justifying authority for the group and each of its members is questioned. That is why the in-group turns against the out-group. In the first place it isolates itself from the out-group. Communication with outsiders is restricted and controlled. Information from the outside is scrutinized and filtered. In the second place, the out-group and the ultimate it represents are consciously depreciated. Their system of values and norms is considered to be amoral. The members of the out-group are forced into a stereotype such as ‘the’ rich or ‘the’ oppressors. A deeper understanding of the other group and what it stands for is prevented because it is dangerous for group certainty and group loyalty.

### 4.2.4 Beware of deception!

We all have realized that...



Ideology is based on a selective and biased observation of reality; it uses reason to build up a system of arguments in its own favour; the real motivation behind an ideology is desire and self-interest and it therefore contains an element of dishonesty. But all this can be quite unconscious. In fact it must be suppressed into the subconscious if the person concerned is to believe in his own integrity.

*(ibid)*

Religion may well be or become an ideology. In such a case there is always a powerful personality in the lead.

Prof. Nuernberger well observed that...



... obsessive and compulsive power over people ... may catapult vast masses of people into hysterical action or resistance. Mobbing and rioting may be the result.

Since members have identified themselves with their group and its ideology, they experience any attack on the latter as an attack on themselves. They become defensive or, if threatened, aggressive.

It sweeps its own yard clean, as it were, and throws the rubbish over the fence into the yard of its neighbour. The group will see only those aspects of reality that support its views. This is called SELECTIVE PERCEPTION. It will interpret the world in the way that is most profitable to it. We call this BIAS. It will build up a system of clever arguments with partial truths and a twisted logic to prove its views to be correct.

Controlled by an ultimate, man will act in a certain way, argue in a certain way, strive for certain things. Challenge an ultimate and the person concerned gets uneasy, his face darkens, he may become emotional, aggressive or even fanatical. If a person is taken over by emotions it is usually a sure sign that an ultimate has been hit.

## 4.2.5 Christians are also influenced by group behaviour

All those acquainted with Islamic-Christian polemics are painfully aware of the truth of the above statements. We do have to admit, however, that Christians cannot be acquitted either. While we cannot escape emotional reactions when our ultimate, our triune God and His Word, are provocatively attacked - and in debates with Muslims this is often the case - we have to be self-controlled to avoid unbiblical retaliation, which is damaging to the cause of Christ. There is no need for it anyway... if we are convinced by rational evidence that we hold to the Truth.

None of us is likely to escape selective perceptions altogether, i.e. we all become one-sided in our intake of information. To do this out of fear is really admitting defeat, for when rational and factual argument is truly on our side, we need not fear - not for ourselves and much less for God!

## 4.2.6 Convictions may be stronger enemies of truth than lies

*Our only fear should be that of closing the eyes and ears of the people we would like to win for Christ!*

As we already noted, the feeling of belonging and acceptance is vital to man. Nuernberger puts it like this:



Once a man is sure that he is what he should be, and is doing what he is meant to do, that he is acceptable in the ultimate sense of the word, that he is true to his real being, that he found his authenticity, he is able and willing to sacrifice social, economical and political interest, possessions and privileges, family and friends, yes, even his own life.

We will have to honestly ask ourselves who or what is determining our values, rules or norms. While it is obvious that Scripture is our foundation, who interprets Scripture for us? Should we really succumb to standards, forms or even moral or ethical norms that are clearly determined or dictated by the group we belong to or its leadership?

Obviously the Islamic community is a group which fits these quotations. We do well to consider this and its implication for evangelism.

## 4.2.7 Meeting the challenge of untruth

All this points to conflict. Can we see the implications?

*Evangelism is essentially a challenge to the ultimate of a Muslim or even Islam. When we evangelize we offer an alternative to a Muslim's ultimate!*

If this is true, any form of evangelism that does not challenge a Muslim's ultimate is not evangelism at all. It may and should not be immediately evident, but will become apparent.

Perhaps not all can do this or are equipped to do so. But if we claim to have and follow the Truth, we should not be afraid to listen to the other side, to present the Christian position positively and also to testify why we believe and trust it. The Word of God supports this:



Know how to answer everyone!

*Colossians 4:4*

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone!

*1Peter 3:15*

Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should!

*Colossians 4:6*

If we do not take this to heart, i.e. if we believe without a sure basis, that is without a real knowledge of our faith, we are not likely to be evangelists but propagandists across the line to other faiths, and then we may well be viewed as fanatics, and not without cause.

*To win others for Christ means exposure to other concepts and views.*

## 4.2.8 The other side of the coin

While a person or group of persons might seem to be intricately and intangibly caught up in the system of Islam, we know of people who emerged from it, and these are by no means only those on the periphery or fringe. Prof. Nuernberger shows in his studies the motivating force behind this and we do well to study this carefully:



But the confirmation of our right of existence by the social group to which we belong, is not the last word. Once a man has a more profound ideal or conviction, he is willing to serve it even if this may lead to conflict with the group to which he belongs. The deeper his life is rooted in an ultimate, the less dependent he becomes on his social environment for recognition and acceptance.

To effect a change one has to be exposed to alternative ultimates. That is the only way. Man simply cannot do without a basis for his life and you cannot expect him to move before he is convinced that his foundations have given way and that he has now been presented with a more valid and stable alternative. That is the only way.

*(All emphases are ours)*

This confirms the thesis of a loving confrontation in which a conflict is not avoided, but in which the Gospel in all fullness is presented in a kind and loving, unemotional, factual and spiritual manner. But it also means that at

the right time in the right way, the insufficiency, indeed, the error, of Islam must be exposed. This obviously does not normally happen in a week or two.

### **4.3 A Muslim's 'Ultimates' – Handle with care**

#### **Allah, the Qur'an, Islam and Muhammad**

These 'ultimates' are what one may term the untouchables to a Muslim. A critique of Muslim leaders, certain practices or a political issue is likely to be discussed by and with Muslims without a problem. But touch the untouchables and expect a very strong reaction.

On the other hand, one can hardly avoid speaking at some time or other honestly about Islam and its contrast to the Biblical message. Muslims often have a very romantic understanding of Islam. They suppress anything negative in the character and behaviour of Muhammad and his teachings and promote only the positive, invariably fanciful and often fictional facets of Islam. This decidedly hinders them from truly considering the message of the Bible, and by that to realize the absolute superiority and trustworthiness of the Gospel.

However, in a spiritual conversation it is really impossible not to touch on these topics. How can one do this without undue offence? It is only possible with love for our Muslim friend, and love for the Truth.

Repeatedly one may be asked what we think of Allah, Islam or Muhammad.

How can one respond without unnecessary offence, using the given opportunity? Let us look at a model on how one can approach such a sensitive topic:

#### **What do you think of Islam?**

How are we to react when asked our opinion on any of the untouchables? Muslims obviously expect either a positive or uninformed answer and seek an opportunity to expound Islam by such a question. I have always found it best to turn the tables.

**“Y**ou want me to say what I think about Islam? That is not an easy question to answer. Both of us treasure our religion and organize our whole life around it. We put our hope in it for time and eternity. Yet, to you I am an outsider with different convictions.

In answering your question I am likely to contradict part of what you believe. Therefore I want you to know and be assured that there is no malice in what I

will say. Because I honour and treasure you as my brother in humanity, I also owe you my honest opinion. So, how or where can I start?

**W**hile I am touched by your devotion to Allah, your religion and your prophet, I have to ask myself, whether I would genuinely consider becoming a Muslim and why – or why not. In the light of this let me try to formulate what is in my mind.

You know that I am a Christian and naturally compare other options with what I have. If I were convinced that Islam is the right way - and that must be approved by God - I would surely not be a Christian, but a Muslim. So far nobody has convinced me.

The healing of our broken relationship with God is the only thing in life that really matters. It is our only hope to spend eternity in His presence. Therefore, false information about God and His proposed offer to receive pardon for our sin would mean no contact, no forgiveness, and no peace with Him. The consequence would be eternal separation from Him and that is hell. In the light of that, we have an obligation not just to be nice, but also honest to each other.

While the Biblical message and the message of Islam have a number of similarities, there are also existential differences. If one is true, the other cannot be.

**O**ne of the major disagreements between the Bible and the Qur'an is who Jesus really is and what he did. While the Qur'an says a lot of good about him, it states clearly that Jesus is 'no more than a prophet' and that he was neither crucified nor killed. By that token he did not reconcile us to God, the Father, as the Bible teaches. The truth about that is crucial. If the Qur'anic teaching is right, all Christians have added a partner to God, which is idolatry. In addition they believe that Jesus took their sins on himself and suffered the punishment for these as a sacrifice, when he died. This, according to the Qur'an, is equal to unbelief. So according to the Qur'an Christians would clearly believe and live in contradiction to God and His Word, and that leads to hell.

**I**f, on the other hand, the Biblical message is true, a Muslim, even if he tries ever so hard to live up to the standard of the Law of God and follow the Pillars of Islam and the Sunnah, will essentially fail. No one has ever reached the standard that God's holiness and righteousness demands, for nothing unclean will ever be able to enter His presence. We all accept that some people are decidedly better than others. But nobody is perfect enough to be accepted to live forever in God's heaven on his/her own right, by his/her own merit. We are all hopelessly lost unless God does something for us. And that He did, when He sent Jesus.

Which of the two mutually exclusive statements is true? That we have to know! So it is our first duty to establish the dependability of our respective sources. We can gratefully acknowledge that God provided us with the means to find out without a shadow of a doubt.

Many passages in the Bible tell us that we have to verify the truth of what a prophet speaks. One criterion is that a message that is from God must be verified by unpredictable prophecies. When these are fulfilled, we can be sure that it must come from God. We are warned not to accept any message that does not carry a seal of this divine proof. That seal is fulfilled prophecy (see Dt 18:21-22; Zec 4:9; Isa 41:21; 44:7,26; Am 3:7; Jer 28:9; Dt 13:1-4 etc.).

**S**ome 700 to 1000 years before Jesus was born, long before anyone could even imagine that something like that could happen, God told His prophets in considerable detail about the coming and life of Jesus. He predicted the time of his coming (Da 9:24-26) and that his mother would be a virgin (Isa 7:14). He foretold his place of birth (Mic 5:2), that he would be ‘God among us’ (Isa 7:14 and 9:6), and that he would prove his power by signs and wonders (Isa 35:4-5). And it tells us explicitly that his hands and feet would be pierced (Ps 22:15-18) and that he would suffer and die for our sins (Isa 53). But God also predicted that he would rise again from the dead (Ps 16:10). This and much, much more we can check out and find it to be part of the recorded life of Jesus. Could there be any reason why I – and you – should discard this truly divine sign, given to us in order to be able to distinguish between the Word of God, and the word of a man?

You have asked me about what I think of Islam. Maybe I deviated somewhat, but my answer is that in the light of what I already outlined, I prefer to be a Christian. As a Christian believer I have the assurance that what I believe carries God’s unmistakable seal. I have the assurance that my sin is forgiven that God loves me and grants me to be at peace with Him and that when I leave this world, I will go home to be with Him forever.

**B**ut what Jesus said is not only true for me. It is equally true for you. He stated: ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me!’ (Jn 14:6). You, as everybody else, will have to come to grips with that claim, honestly check its dependability as compared with the statements of Islam or any other religion for that matter, and exercise your God-given faculty to decide which way you will take. You may have to clear out a lot of misconceptions. You may have to find an answer to all the doubts that are still in your mind. It may take a little time to do it. But for God’s sake – do it! I will do my utmost to stand by you, to help you get the needed answers. But the decision to obey and follow God and what He revealed no one can make for you!”

Muslims are not used to such kind of reasoning. The given example provides:

- *An assessment of the differences* between Islam and the Bible
- The reason *why* as a Christian *we question* the veracity of Islam
- The reason why we can *fully trust* the Bible
- *The message* of the Gospel
- *A challenge* to consider and come to Jesus.

And it is presented in a kind manner with the least personal offence to the listener.

To continue we should further try to establish *who God really is*:

- ▶ He is a personal God.
- ▶ He cares.
- ▶ He gets involved in our world.
- ▶ He listens to us.
- ▶ We can approach Him as His children.
- ▶ He determines to do the best for us (Ro 8:28).
- ▶ While we decidedly revere Him, we are not frightened of Him.
- ▶ We fully confide in Him alone and need no other agencies.
- ▶ He is not preoccupied with Himself so that He has no time for us.
- ▶ He does not exercise revenge when we fail and approach Him for forgiveness of our sin.
- ▶ Unlike the description of God in the Qur'an, He is trustworthy, for He has committed Himself in His Word and will not retract even a letter from it.
- ▶ We know where we stand with Him, for if we confess our sins in true repentance, He will forgive us, for He promised in His Word to do so.
- ▶ Provided we approached God for forgiveness the way He told us, we can indeed rely that 'we have been saved!'
- ▶ We can gratefully acknowledge that we have been forgiven, that the former separation from God is now removed.
- ▶ When we die, we know where we will go.

*Evangalism is the sharing of the Gospel. The Gospel explains salvation. Salvation is an act of God. It is a free offer to all mankind.*

To a Muslim these are possibly presumptuous statements: Allah is not predictable. If he were so that would belittle his power. He is free to act as he

wills. Nothing commits or binds him. He can withdraw his word, and has evidently done so! (See *Islam - Basic Aspects*, pp.93ff).

## 4.4 Muslim thinking that baffles us

We find thousands of Muslims who commit the Qur'an to memory (in Arabic!), but comparatively few who pursue an independent and serious study of its content. What and how to believe is determined by teachers, who are the religious authorities, and not by personal study and its conclusion. Most Muslims can tell us stories from the Qur'an and the aHadith. All have the same kind of knowledge and understanding of Islam and most seem to be ignorant of the doctrines that are likely to provoke critical concerns (such as abrogation, predestination, the real history of early Islam, the collection and revision of the Qur'an etc.). This, however, does not mean that individual Muslims do not differ greatly on minor issues or use controversial arguments.

A missionary's experience may illustrate this point:



I learned that Muslims don't think the same way that we think. I began to question a fanatical Muslim. I said: 'Did God forgive Mohammed's sin?' The man replied loudly and emphatically, 'Yes!' Then I asked, 'Did Mohammed sin?' He answered with a loud voice, 'No!'. Three times I asked him those two questions, and three times he answered the same way. 'Yes, God forgave Mohammed's sin' and 'No, Mohammed never sinned!' To this young Muslim man it was logical that Mohammed never sinned, yet that God forgave Mohammed's sin.

It was difficult for me to understand this kind of logic until a Somali who had been in America for ten years came back to Aden, and helped me in perfecting my study of the Somali language. I mentioned this experience to him, and asked him how to understand it. It was easy for him to understand the logic, and he explained it to me. He said: 'Is it not favourable to say that Mohammed never sinned?' I said: 'Yes'. 'Well', then, he said, 'is it not favourable to say that God forgave Mohammed's sin?' I said, 'Yes'. 'Well, that is the way to explain it'. Apparently, whatever is "favourable" for Mohammed is logical to the mind of a Muslim, and believed!

*Personal Soul-Winning Experience Among Muslims, by H. W. Modrick*

A much more touching example was published in the Islamic periodical *Al Balaag* (Nov./Dec. 1988). Here a scholar and author of Islam, a Hafiz [someone who has memorized the whole of the Qur'an], reports his deeply distressing experience:



### In Defence of the Honour of Muhammad

Peace and blessing of Allah be on him.

One day in April 1978, I was studying Maudoodi's famous commentary on the Qur'an, Tafhimul Qur'an, vol.4. I had to look up something concerning the wives of the Prophet. Suddenly I read this about Maria the Copt (may Allah be pleased with her): "(The Prophet of God) took Maria Qabtia, who had been sent by the maqauqus (ruler) of Egypt, especially for himself. With Maria he had intercourse on the basis of his having her in his power. It is not proven about her that he freed her and married her" (Tafhimul Qur'an, vol.4, commentary on sura al-Ahzab, verse 50, note number 88, pages 113-114).

Such was the effect of this reading on my mind and soul that, without exaggeration, for three straight days, I could no longer believe even in the prophethood and messengership of Muhammad (may the peace and blessing of Allah be on him). Again and again I said to my friends: See and check. Has Maudoodi actually written that about Maria the Copt which I have understood? Or is there something which I have not understood? At my insistence, my friends again and again read the relevant passage and said to me: 'Surely this writing means what you have understood it to mean'.

I cannot explain fully what was the condition of my mind at that time. Strange doubts and fears of a nature that would put me outside the limits of Islam arose in my mind about the mission of the leader and seal of the prophets. I was so disturbed because the ugly act which Maudoodi was attributing to the messenger of God was so hideous that even a sinful person like myself could not have committed it or thought of committing it. How could a great messenger of God, walking on the path of Truth, have done such a thing? Whatever else such a person might be, he certainly would not be a messenger of God .

Some people may object to the weakness of my faith; however it is not a question of the weakness of my faith but of the credibility of my appropriate witnessing. We know from the Qur'an that it is correct to assume that faith can increase and also become weaker on the basis of reason and reliable evidence. My faith is based on the truthfulness and justice of the holy Qur'an and the highest moral and ethical example of the messenger of God referred to in the Qur'an as 'the pattern of excellence'. Hence imagine my mental condition when the greatest scholar and thinker of Islam in these times comes forward as a witness and testifies that whatever the enemies of Islam had been saying in their malice and hate about the messenger was partially, if not entirely true. The stories that the Prophet was a lustful person and used women as concubines (O Allah forgive us) and that

Muslims could take men as slaves, even without war, and take women from decent households and use them as concubines without benefit of marriage, was being given the seal of authenticity by a scholar of Islam.

Thus when we get this witness from the greatest scholar of Islam in our time, that 'in fact' the messenger of Islam had not even been forced by the conditions of war but had merely, according to un-Islamic culture then prevalent, taken Maria as a slave girl, and that too without marriage, and forced her entry into his household, then who would conscientiously believe in the messengership of such a person? Surely this was a deed which went against the very Qur'an which the messenger had been sent to teach and publicize. It is of course true that some other Muslim commentators and historians have also written that Maria was the slave girl of the Prophet. This took the meaning in my mind that originally she was a slave girl but the messenger of God must have married her. This did not leave a bad impression. But the words Maudoodi used, that it had not been proven that the Prophet ever married her, were shattering. Such misleading words I had not come across from a scholar of Islam.

*Hafiz Muhammad Sarwar Qureshi*

This revealing letter shows us:

- There are Muslims who are genuinely applying ethical norms to Muhammad and Islam.
- If Muslims knew more about genuine Islam, they might indeed consider the Christian faith as a possible alternative.
- But even if that is not a consideration, as in our case, the writer must recognize, that Islamic historians and commentators confirm the truth of Maudoodi's statement on Muhammad having concubines. And even if he rejects this fact on the ground that "what must not be, cannot be", he has to live with the knowledge that Muhammad falls short of his own standard.

While this may be an extreme case, it is quite logical for Muslims to interpret the Qur'an and the life of Mohammed in such a way.

This is characterized by the concept of "*ta-abudi*" (see p. 29). This contains the root word *abd* = slave. A Muslim is a slave to Allah, his revelation, laws and concepts, which have "to be accepted without criticism". Bound by this premise, Muslim theologians have always resisted any text-critical studies on the Qur'an and Hadith. These are to be believed and obeyed and not investigated!

It is quite paradox and inconsistent that Muslims happily employ the most ridiculous statements of liberal and modernistic 'Christian scholars' to question the Bible, while bluntly refusing to subject the Qur'an and Hadith to a truly scholarly evaluation (see TT2, '*Christian-Islamic Controversy*', page 21).

## 4.5 The Power Principle

Muslims from the very beginning were obsessed with what we may term the Islamic ‘power syndrome’. “*Allah-u-akbar*” i.e. “Allah is great!” is consistently on the lips of Muslims. Allah must rule everywhere. The Holy War has been and still is a form of aggression, although Muslims are inclined to reinterpret it. Islamic Arabia was founded on the force of Muhammad’s army. The power struggle after the death of Muhammad was expressed in ugly scenes. Hatred culminating in assassinations even within the leadership of the Muslims, and the expansion of Islam by military means bear witness to that fact. We remember that Islam divided the world into two territories: *Daru’l-Islam* and *Daru’l-Harb*, the Territory of Islam and the Territory of War.

All this is governed by the Islamic theological concept of the Islamic theocracy and has become part of a Muslim’s thinking. Allah is the supreme ruler and the entire world must submit to him. Wherever the *Shariah* is not yet established and practiced, is still war territory that still has to be subjected to Allah.

This principle is applied to all spheres of life, often resulting in an intricately devised, aggressive anti-Christian propaganda, to which particularly those Muslims are subjected who live in a context where they are exposed to Christian influence.

Every Christian witness to Muslims should know about this situation, for a spiritual conversation will be influenced or even determined by such a background.

A soft approach by Christians to avoid confrontation or to take a humble position in a debate will essentially create an impression of weakness. (*see 5.7 for more details*)

### **Muslims can be rather overbearing and compelling**

Muslims are very vocal to make known their demands regarding Muslims living in non-Muslim countries. They, on the other hand, are not prepared to grant similar rights to Christians living in an Islamic context. Their shouts of “*Allah-u-akbar!*” forcefully underscores that Allah must rule, not a fairness to grant others the same rights.

This may explain the militancy of much of Islam and their often arrogant, forceful and demanding attitude, even in countries in which Muslims constitute a small minority.

We should, however, also take note of the fact that Muslim groups which are doctrinally or politically of a different opinion, may well be abusive to each other. This was clearly visible in many historical events and the extended and brutal conflict between Iraq and Iran, in which chemical weapons were deployed, and in which Muslims fought Muslims, each side claiming to be fighting a *Jihad* or “holy” war.

The militancy of Islam is evident not only in the conflict with Christians, it extends to Muslims of other persuasions. Expecting uniformity within Islam, one is surprised by its fragmentation. This is illustrated by many a publication. The choice of language alone, as chosen in the following extracts from an Islamic pamphlet, shows the absence of mutual respect:



### **An open invitation to all Muslims**

For many decades now the self-appointed and undemocratic Muslim clergy (ulama) have styled themselves as the so-called “high priests of the faith”. However, this status is completely incompatible with the basic tenets of the Holy Qur’an. In fact, in Islam there is supposed to be no priesthood or clergy class at all.

But owing to a number of factors, several partly-educated Muslims have pushed themselves over the years into what they falsely consider to be the “learned elite”. This semi-literate group has then manipulated the religious life of all Muslims.

With no proper counter-force to check their theological impropriety or ethical excesses, the Islamic religious hierarchy (particularly the Muslim Judicial Council [MJC]), (which should stand for the MANIACS & JOKERS CLUB) has now become a law unto itself. So much so, that they have been unaccountable for any misdeeds or wrongdoings committed in their individual or institutional capacity.

By their appalling actions and absurd antics, the narrow-minded Muslim leaders have distorted, twisted and destroyed the original message of Islam for their own selfish gain.

***Pamphlet published by Muslims in Cape Town, South Africa***

May the knowledge of such expressions make us more gracious when we feel attacked or rejected. Now let us consider a vast section of the Islamic society, which represents a dominant as well as questionable force throughout the world of Islam.

## 4.6 Folk Islam – enslaving the Muslim masses

It seems to be one of the characteristics of Islam that it tolerates the practice of pagan religion, including sorcery and witchcraft, within its own ranks. (See TT1 *Islam – Basic Aspects*, pp. 48-51 for a basic introduction to Folk Islam) This is particularly true for India and Africa. Islam in Africa allows the people to be truly African! This is probably done in the hope that orthodox Islam will eventually replace the original religious practice by a conversion in stages. But Islam in Africa is firmly tied to spirit veneration and the occult, while Islam provides the more visible framework.

### 4.6.1 Orthodoxy and Folk Islam

The word ‘Folk Islam’ is used as opposed to ‘Orthodox Islam’. ‘Orthodox’ actually means believing and acting in the right way, of the kind that is closest to the source. Orthodox Islam by that token is the official Islam, close to the teachings of the Qur’an, but also to the Sunnah.

Folk Islam, on the other hand, is unofficial, though generally tolerated. Unlike official Islam, it does not provide a clearly defined doctrine.

Folk Islam is the practice of what is actually believed by the ‘normal’ Muslim in the given situations of daily life. It does not want to contradict or eliminate orthodox Islam. On the contrary, all Muslims rather universally accept the orthodox forms and tenets. Yet Folk Islam decidedly follows another agenda, another set of values and beliefs, and these differ fundamentally in form and content from the orthodox version. From its inception, official Islam seems to have turned a blind eye to this. It has been and is much more accommodating than, for instance, Biblical Christianity.

Life is rather complex, and often it does not move along expected ways. Every one faces crisis situations, fears, suspicions, sometimes superstitions, and unpredictable or unexplainable happenings. While religion endeavours to explain certain experiences, it is up to us to interpret the others. In an effort to explain an experience, we assume that we understand the intrinsic reason for it. This differs markedly from person to person - and from region to region. The traditional thought patterns of our environment are likely to influence, even determine our assessment, and subsequently the cure for the dilemma we seek. Let us look at an example.

### 4.6.2 People perceive things differently

When a Westerner catches flu, he is likely to consult a doctor or go to a pharmacy to get some medication which will kill the ‘bugs’ and restore his health. In Southern and Eastern societies, particularly among the lesser educated, the reason and the subsequent solution for a malady is sought elsewhere. People there view and interpret the world from a still prevalent animistic worldview. Everything is assumed to be governed by prevailing invisible powers. Some are stronger than others. Any malady is seen to be caused by a (negative) force and needs to be remedied by a stronger one. There are ‘wise’, also called ‘holy’ men and sometimes women, who deal with that. They are called ‘*fakih*’, ‘*mwalimu*’, ‘*marabout*’, ‘*pir*’, ‘*wali*’, or by some other name. They are acclaimed as having access to ‘higher’ powers. It is perceived that some of these powers are ‘good’, while others are bad. Such a ‘holy’ person is consulted to assess the cause of a given malady and its source, and then to employ a stronger remedy or power to break the force of the cause of the malady.

This is more often than not a ‘medicine’, which is prescribed by men or women who employ magical forces. It is rather revealing that magic or occult practices are very similar in cultures as far apart as North America (among ‘Red Indians’), Asia, Africa and even Europe. South America is no exception.

### 4.6.3 Islam compromised on animistic issues

Compromise on animistic issues is by no means a recent development. It was found in Islam right from its beginning. Even Muhammad is reported to have engaged in magic practices. A lot of Islamic rituals, particularly those done during the Hajj ceremony, were adopted from Arabic paganism. When Islam expanded, it did not, as in the case of the Christian practice, recognize and reject magic cults or influence as satanic, but rather tolerated the integration of the former with the new. Consequently, we find a large variety of occult practices within Islam just about everywhere! This has caused a decided shift of authority away from God towards all kinds of occult practitioners, and by that, according to Scripture, satanic powers.

Why do even ardent Muslims submit to this, although their whole perception of religion is focused on submission to Allah alone, who is “*tawhid*”, i.e. absolutely one and only? Because many (most?) of the occult practices have a deeply religious undertone and operate by seemingly acceptable means for protection, healing, or guidance.

‘Enlightened’ people in the ‘West’ need to appreciate that many of these practices are not just some kind of humbug. Real, very forceful and awe-inspiring powers are indeed involved and have to be dealt with.

### 4.6.4 Folk Islam reflects the African worldview

We have to realize that during the past 100 years or more many thought patterns have influenced the original African worldview. Christianity and Islam as well as Western secular thought have left strong imprints on the original worldview of the African peoples. Yet, the shaman in Africa still plays a very prominent role.

While Christianity rejected the animistic and spiritistic content of the African religion, though not always successfully, Folk Islam has absorbed much of the African worldview.

Dr. Yusufu Turaki has identified the African Worldview:



#### **African Theological Beliefs consist of**

- Belief in impersonal mystical, mysterious powers, unseen, hidden and magical;
- Belief in spirit beings;
- Belief in gods, divinities, deities (Rain, sun, other nature gods);
- Belief in the supreme being. Whether it is a human being or an impersonal being depends on the area.

Angels and the Holy Spirit are different to these spirits.

In Africa there is a strong belief in a hierarchy of beings.

Reality in Africa exists in the spirit realm. True reality is not in what is seen – but what is unseen.

Sickness is not the real thing. It is the power behind it that is the reality. The same applies to calamities. Spiritual powers cause them – the open question is: why?

#### **African Philosophy and Worldview**

The philosophical way to see things is...

- *in a spiritual view of the world* – this is seen as a spiritual reality.

Beyond a physical view is the spiritual reality.

This compels people to find a spiritual cure for calamity, sickness and death.

What is seen is not the real thing. Reality is spiritual.

- *in power consciousness* – for everything in the world is caused by powers.

There is a strong belief in personal or impersonal powers.

Edmond Smith calls this 'dynamism – vitality'. This is controlled by the Law of Power - be it mystical or real. It involves the need

to be in charge.

Africans will go anywhere or do anything in search for power.

If a President is in his position as a result of his need for power, so is a Bishop.

You must 'shop around' to find the greatest power...

- *a holistic or organic view of the world.* Everything, even the higher and lesser gods, are organic. They are governed by the law of harmony. Never step out – or ancestors will get angry and harmony will be destroyed.

The *Law of Harmony* is not a written code. It is transmitted in society – it is caught not taught.

The *Law of reconciliation* seeks to see, understand, respond, apply and to restore harmony. The Laws of harmony and reconciliation differ from area to area.

- *a communal view of the world.*

The world is seen through the *Law of Kinship*, i.e. blood relationship, tribe, ethnicity

The one who steps out of his boundary – to raid for cattle or women - is a hero.

Government and war zones are neutral territory, places to get as much out of it as one can and to bring home as much as possible.

People outside the tribe are not really people – they do not matter.

If you steal from other tribes and bring the booty home, you perform an honourable act.

That is why the Western world views Africans as corrupt people; but they are just true to their own ethnicity, tribe and kinship.

*Tribal Gods of Africa, Y. Turaki, 1997 and notes taken from personal conversation with Dr. Yusufu Turaki, 2002*

## 4.6.5 The practice and the practitioner of witchcraft

We will find that the Qur'an is a well-used object in Islamic witchcraft! For instance, a sick person will participate in a ritual in which a verse, selected from the Qur'an because of its assumed healing power, is written (e.g. with chalk or charcoal) onto some writing material. Then the written text is washed off with some water into a container. This solution is then used as medicine to be taken by the patient. Or, the paper with the verse on will be burnt, and the ashes will be used as remedy. Or, the verse will be worked into

an amulet, which will have to be worn for protection or healing. There is no end to the list of practices.

*Da'wah* means 'invocation' ('to call upon', 'to conjure up'), and this term was and is used for occult practices in the form of 'white magic', i.e. by calling on the name of God instead of Satan (Dictionary of Islam pp.72-78). It is very clear, however, that both 'black' and 'white magic' are satanic means to seduce and spiritually blind the ignorant. Today the word *da'wah* is used for doing Islamic missionary work.

To a Muslim, Allah is up in the highest heights. He is far removed, absolute and sovereign and can only be worshipped in a master-slave relationship. He is feared! Perhaps because of this perception, Muslims are seeking someone to relate to. Therefore, to many Muslims a 'holy man', even or particularly when he is already departed and consulted at the '*kramat*' (tomb), is in reality more of a confidant and consultant in personal affairs than Allah, who is addressed largely in prescribed words and forms. In popular Islam witchcraft is actually a practical expression of greater confidence in '*jinn*s' or spirits than in the personal involvement of Allah. This is ever so different from the Christian position. In the Bible we read: "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you!" (1Peter 5:7).

The occult practitioners are revered as 'holy men' or 'saints' because of the '*baraka*', the blessing, the power, they are able to dispense. Christians may well question the sanctity of such men. In Folk Islam, because of their position of power, they are considered a '*walis*' (particularly in India), which, interpreted, means a spiritual guide. The remarkable phenomenon is that a wali may exercise his power even beyond the grave! He is, as a rule, buried in a shrine, called '*kramat*' or '*karamat*', which becomes a place of pilgrimage for people seeking help for a great variety of requests, such as sickness, barrenness, marital affairs, to obtain a suitor's attention (love potion), influence of the evil eye, business advice, to mention just a few. The problem is the shift of faith and dependence from God to man, or rather to demons that pose as sympathetic assistants and do help - but at the expense of a person's spiritual condition. Spiritual hardening is invariably the ultimate price to pay, and that leads to eternal doom!

It is beyond question that many of these 'holy' men do have access to supernatural powers. Devout Muslims assume this to be divine influence, however. Measured by Biblical standards, it is clearly occult, and by that demonic power. The innocence, good intention, or sincerity of both the practitioner and the seeker for assistance does not protect them from resulting spiritual bondage.

### 4.6.6 Why people turn to witchcraft

Why do people turn to the occult for help? Don't we all at times feel helpless or fear certain situations? What can a rejected wife in a male dominated society do in order to get help?

Causes which make a Westerner go to a doctor, marriage counsellor, psychiatrist, or pastor, are the ones to let an Animist, Buddhist or Hindu, folk-Muslim, and sometimes nominal Christians seek advice and help from a magician. (Just open a secular magazine and look at the horoscopes offered and consider just how many people consult them Or look at the advertisements promoting fortune-tellers and 'faith healers'!). It is the natural thing to do, because everybody believes in the supernatural (often without the potential to distinguish between the truly divine and the occult). It has been done throughout history. Can it be wrong to seek help? The Bible gives an unequivocal YES for an answer! But who knows that? And who is not prepared to take chances when a problem becomes truly pressing, particularly when a person is led to believe that occult practices are a religious act?

*We must conclude that the occult world, including their human representatives, ministers to felt needs in order to harvest often innocent people for the kingdom of Satan.*

### 4.6.7 About spirits, angels and jinns

Islam, like the Bible, differentiates between angels that are considered to be of divine origin, and evil spirits. Jinns are similar beings. Supposedly originally created from fire, they are, as a species, considered to be value neutral. Some are good and some are bad. But who can distinguish between the two? Jinns are a breed somehow between angels and humans. They are invisible, though may adopt the form of humans or animals, and also reproduce and die. They may also have sexual encounters with humans (see Ge 6:1-2), which are said to be highly lustful, and this is, according to witness reports, frequently experienced. Just about every honest Muslim will have to admit his fear of jinns and their intervention in their lives. Therefore protection against jinns and evil spirits is needed, coveted and sought, curiously by occult means.

### 4.6.8 The ‘evil eye’

A cause for great fear is the ‘evil eye’. The evil eye may affect every part of life.



The fundamental concept of the evil eye is that precious persons or things are constantly vulnerable to hurt or destruction caused by other people’s envy. Such envy or jealousy is projected through the eye,

*“The Unseen Face of Islam”, by Bill Musk, MARC 1989*

The evil eye is feared in many cultures world-wide, and is not specific to the Islamic world. It did, in fact, exist before Islam began. In the Hadith of al-Bukhari (7:827) we read that Muhammad said, “evil eye is a fact”. It also says that he ordered “to do ruqya (if there was danger) of an evil eye”. *Ruqya* is ‘enchanting’, the use of spells, itself an occult practice! We also read that Umar related (7:784): “If any person suffered from an evil eye or some other disease, he would send a vessel (containing water) to Umm Salama. I looked into the container (that held the hair of the Prophet), and saw a few red hairs in it.” This implies that the water in which were some hairs of Muhammad, served as a medicine against the effects of an evil eye or diseases, again a magical practice. The effect of an evil eye is the opposite of ‘*baraka*’, blessing, namely a kind of curse, and may have an effect on man, beast or things. Hence the fear of it.

### 4.6.9 Who does not want to know the future?

Indeed, who does not want to know about what’s happening tomorrow or try to get some vital information?

Divination is another occult practice applied by many Muslims. Divination is used to identify culprits or ‘bad medicines’ and, of course, to discover what the future holds - and who would not like to know? It is used for determining the right marriage partner, the sex of an unborn child or to find out about a business proposition. It is equally used to select the right medicine for treatment by the use of a pendulum, etc. Divination is performed in a trance-like condition by a medium. It is assumed that the prior knowledge of events may avert negative or false decisions. Naturally this is in contradiction to the Islamic doctrine of predestination, but that does not seem to concern Muslims. This simply proves their proneness to the occult.

### 4.6.10 The spiritual void in Islam

When we witness to people about Christ, and in our case more particularly to Muslims, we have to bear in mind that their official religion does not satisfy the innate longing of every person for assurance of forgiveness. It also lacks the assurance of having been accepted by God, being loved and cared for by

Him, and being able to trust Him for eternal life in His presence when we depart from this world. Orthodox Islam does not offer this.

Consequently, even a pious Muslim is left with a void, for rules and regulations can never satisfy the deepest longings of any heart. This led to the forming of Sufi orders which heavily borrowed spiritual content from other religions and philosophies. Parallel to that revived heathen traditions raised untrustworthy expectations for protection from the forces of the unseen world. All this has led an immense number of Muslims into ever-increasing bondage.

#### **4.6.11 The conflict Folk Islam brings with it**

By implication all Muslims practicing Folk Islam opted to use sources that appear to be more powerful than their own, to make the best of a given situation. Of course, they do see results. Perhaps even spectacular ones! But in the final analysis they sell the only hope to access eternal bliss, for some questionable form of well-being in this life.

#### **4.6.12 Reaching Muslims where their felt needs are**

When Folk Islam is what a Muslim practices - and that is much more often the case than we may expect - the best way to reach him with the Gospel is to address him at the level of his own need and reality. Here the issue is not so much the Qur'an, the Hadith and the Sunnah over against the Bible. It is rather his 'felt need', in other words his fears and unfulfilled hopes and how he can cope with the powers at work in his life and the life of his family. That is existential to him/her. That is his reality. Religious discussion is theory. In it he can easily hide behind orthodox religion by presenting some poorly understood anti-Christian polemics as a smoke screen behind which he can hide.

#### **4.6.13 The liberating gospel**

The Gospel is the Good News for him that God is truly greater than the forces he fears! God is not far away. He is not remote and unconcerned for "Jinns and people" (Surah 11:119; 7:179; 32:13) after having predestined their temporal and eternal fate (see chapter on predestination in *Islam- Basic Aspects*, pages 105-111). God knows our fears and needs - and is willing to provide the remedy. Because He is all-knowing and everywhere and holds the power over everything, He alone can provide for us, not necessarily according to our wishes, but in our best interest, which He knows! And once we receive Him by faith and He lives in our hearts, we not only participate in His divine nature (2Peter 1:4), but can also expect assistance and guidance through prayer in His Name. We need not fear any shaman, or witch, or jinn, nor do we need any powers or remedies from them.

We should and can demonstrate to our Muslim friend how we cope with life, and fear, and want, and disappointment. But we should also not be shy to demonstrate God's power over the enemy by helping him to be liberated from the forces which bind and blind him.

*We have access to God Almighty  
- at all times!*

#### 4.6.14 Casting out oppressing or possessing spirits

While we pray for one another and ourselves, exorcism (casting out of a demon) is not done by prayer, but by command in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ! The oppressing or possessing spirit must subject itself to our trusting and authoritative command in Jesus' Name. It might well try to bluff us in some way or other to undermine our confidence in God, to make us give up. But it cannot resist the power of Jesus.

Exorcism is not to be done lightly; nor will we impress the enemy by pulling off a show of some sort. Human power will just not do. Exorcism should be done while clad "with the whole armour of God" (Eph 6:10 ff). It will be good to do this in the company of one or two other believers, and better still by preparation through prayer and fasting. By this we fulfil another part of the Great Commission (Mk 3:13-15; 16:15-18). It is perhaps 'normal' to be scared of attempting exorcism, particularly if we have never done it before. The study and citing of Luke 10:18-19, and also Acts 19:13-20 and other related Scripture will be most helpful. And so is the knowledge that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!" (Heb 13:8). (Read Ge 3:14, Mt 12:43-45; 16:19; 17:18-21; 18:18; 28:18-20; Mk 16:16-18; Lu 8:29-33; 10:17-20; 22:31; Jn 8:44; 12:31; 14:30; 17:15, Ac 16:18; Ro 8:31ff; 16:20; 2Co 2:15; Eph 2:1-6; 6:10ff; Col 2:15; 2Th 2:1-12; 1Ti 4:1-2; Heb 2:14-15; Jas. 2:19; 4:7; 1Pe 5:8; 1Jn 3:8; 4:1-5; Rev 12:7-12; 13:1-10; 20:10).



#### **We will remember:**

1. Muslims are people! They need to hear and understand the Gospel. They are not our enemies, but our responsibility!
2. Muslims are prisoners of the Islamic system. It gives them a feeling of belonging, but dictates their very thinking.

3. It is essential for a Christian witness to understand the Islamic mind-set, to understand a Muslim's world and to relate the Gospel to him in a way that he can understand and relate to.
4. Muslims represent a great variety of people with quite different backgrounds or perceptions.
5. Popular or folk-Islam has by far the largest influence on Muslims, and that means most Muslims are strongly influenced by occult forces.
6. Muslims have a different perception regarding faith and religion. They strive to merit heaven and are unaware of God's grace that is offered in Jesus.
7. Islam is a religion of power in contrast to the Christian faith, which is motivated by love. This power syndrome very often influences the personal disposition of a Muslim.
8. The caring Christian witness knows the real needs of a Muslim and will endeavour to provide the answer.

### **Recommended Literature of Chapter 4:**

**Beliefs and Practices of Muslims: The Religion of Our Neighbours.**

Steven Paas, 2006.

**Gods of Power: A Study of the Beliefs and Practices of Animists.** Philip

M. Steyne, 1996.

**Inside the Community: Understanding Muslims through Their Traditions.** Phil Parshall, 1994.

**Ishmael my Brother.** Anne Cooper, MARC: 1995, pp. 192-207.

**Ishmael Shall be Blessed!** Ahmad Aygei, 2002.

**Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God.** Rick Love, 2003.

**Passionate Believing: The Fundamentalist Face of Islam.** Bill A. Musk, 1992.

**Reaching Muslims for Christ.** William J. Saal, 1993.

**The Call of the Minaret.** Kenneth Cragg, 1985.

**The Cross and the Crescent: Understanding the Muslim Mind and Heart.** Phil Parshall, 1989.

**The History of Islam in Africa.** Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, 2000.

**The Occult in Islam.** Abd-al-Masih, Light of Life: (no date) pp. 49.

**The Unseen Face of Islam.** Bill Musk, MARC: 1989.

**Understanding Folk Religion.** Paul G. Hiebert and Tite Tienou, 1999.

# 5 Understanding Culture

## 5.1 A Definition of Culture

Someone said: “We don’t see things as they are, but as we are.”

What *we are* is determined by a number of factors, of which culture is a very prominent one. How can we define culture?



Culture is the integrated system of learned patterns of behaviour, ideas and products characteristic of a society, says Paul Hiebert, a well known mission-anthropologist.

Culture is the totality of man’s learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behaviour acquired through social learning.

*Robertson McQuilkin, former principal of Columbia Biblical Seminary*

For the purpose of evangelism - and that is what we are concerned with - the understanding of culture and its role is

- to help communicate the Good News, the Gospel, in the peculiar circumstances of a given culture and
- to implant it into this culture so that it can become part of and transform it.

Here theology, anthropology and communication fuse or merge. Let me define this a little better to avoid misunderstanding. The knowledge about God and of God has to be translated not only into another language, but into another way of thinking and human experience.

This demands that we have to seriously question most quick result-orientated evangelistic concepts and slogans.

Our aim is to present to a specific cross-cultural audience an understanding, a realization, a cognition which exactly reflects in their minds and world the truth of the eternal word of God.

## 5.2 How does culture function?

A working concept of culture may be graphically illustrated in the form of an onion.

*The outer layer represents the customs and artefacts, i.e. what meets the eye (dress, manners, speech etc).*

*The next layer constitutes the institutions, like government, marriage, justice systems.*

*The following layer represents the value system of a society, and the very centre accommodates the religion, ideology and world view of that society.*

*In principle the inner effects the outer.*



**CUSTOMS**

**INSTITUTIONS**

**VALUE  
SYSTEMS**

**RELIGION,  
WORLDVIEW**

RELIGION (ideology)  
forms and effects the  
VALUE SYSTEM

> the VALUE  
SYSTEM forms and  
effects the  
INSTITUTIONS

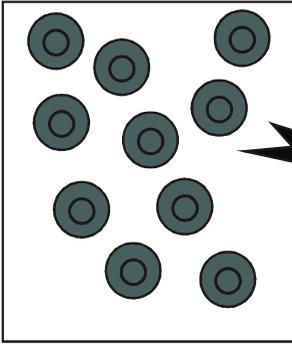
> INSTITUTIONS  
effect the  
BEHAVIOUR and  
THINKING of the  
people.

## 5.3 Cross-cultural Communication Problems

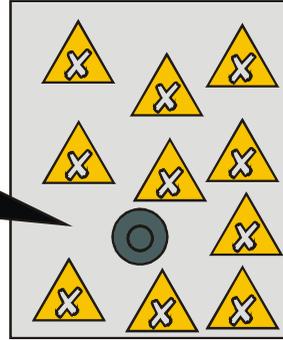
Two people assess a tree. One says: "Wonderful!" The other says: "Useless!" Why this difference? The first man is an artist. He considers the tree to be a beautiful motif for a painting. The other man is a forester. Such a tree, he judges, is useless for timber. We judge from different perspectives.

Or, if I ask an audience to think of ice - and then ask them to describe to me what they thought of. Someone may think of Antarctica, another of whisky 'on the rocks' with ice, some others may think of ice cream or ice-skating or a fridge. All these people had an exposure to the concept 'ice', though they thought of different experiences. Now try to describe 'ice' to a man in the tropics who has neither a fridge nor a TV!

The only real tool for the transmission of thought is language. Language has organically grown and developed within a given culturally integrated society over a long period in which intercultural contact was, unlike now, the exception. Consequently the words, grammar, phrases and idioms are embedded in a collective realm, which is determined by the experience within a given culture.

**HOME CULTURE**

**MY** LANGUAGE, TIME,  
BEHAVIOUR, THOUGHTS, VALUES

**TARGET CULTURE**

**HIS** LANGUAGE, TIME,  
BEHAVIOUR, THOUGHTS, VALUES

The concept of 'ice' is tangible. What about the transmission of abstract thought to people of another cultural and religious realm?

When we compile a "Gospel message" and translate it into Urdu, Malay or Arabic, but depend entirely on a dictionary, the content is likely to be completely unintelligible to the hearer. Technically, for instance, the word "wind" may mean the winding of the clock, or a wind which blows, or something a baby "brings up". The word uniform may mean unvarying or a type of dress etc.

The meaning of such words is given by their context and the experience of the people concerned. This pertains to language study. Matters become much more complex, when we try to convey spiritual content, in which words may carry a grossly different meaning or content: 'Conversion', 'salvation', 'repentance', 'grace', not to mention 'God' or 'accepting Christ', are words full of meaning to an Evangelical. A Catholic may get quite a different message from these words. How much more a Hindu, Muslim or Buddhist! Other concepts are more complex still: 'Son of God', 'Trinity' and 'Crucifixion', to name but a few!

This demands at least a general knowledge of the content of a person's religious convictions or life philosophy, but also of his understanding of the religious terminology used. How much more understanding should we have when witnessing cross-culturally!

*Understanding begins and grows by listening to people and learning from them.*

Some obvious questions arise at this point:

- Must we first become theologians, missiologists and anthropologists before we can attempt (Muslim) evangelism?
- Where does the work of the Holy Spirit come in? Has the Word of God lost its power?

These are indeed very justified questions. Let us briefly assess them:

We have to learn to differentiate between what only God can do – and what He expects us to do!

We cannot and should not try to convict of sin, or to convert. Even “to lead into all the truth” is ultimately not what we can do. It is God’s prerogative.

What we are expected to do, is to transmit, declare and inform about, is the Word of God and with that the Gospel. It is a ‘mystery’ to all outsiders. And we are commanded to do that as clearly, boldly, graciously, knowledgeably and wisely as its content deserves it:



The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

*2Corinthians 4:4*

God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints (i.e. believers).

*Colossians 1:26*

Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

*Colossians 4:4-6*

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

*Ephesians 6:19-20*

*We should never attempt to do what only God can do. On the other hand we should not expect God to do what He told us to do!*

## 5.4 World View and Message

The personal worldview of a person determines his understanding of our message.

We might not be aware of this, but ought to realize, that very often we read the Bible through the ‘glasses’ of our respective worldviews. And we interpret and apply Scripture as our context or even tradition dictates. People of another environment or culture may well perceive certain things differently. This, however, should never affect the fundamentals, i.e. the message, but rather the peripheral, forms and lifestyle.

Let me use an example from the ‘world’. Depending on our analysis of the cause of poverty, injustice and political oppression in this world, people seek to implement a cure. One group of people will blame unjust structures - and the definition of what is unjust and why varies widely - and economic as well as political exploitation by the West, for the misery in the world. Another one lists with concern the population explosion, political and economic corruption of governments, lack of motivation and productivity as causes.

In like manner, Biblical concepts have been subjected to varying interpretations at different times in various cultures. E.g. each society will naturally brand what it perceives as threatening or destructive to individuals or society. Some Christians have compiled long lists of what is viewed by them to be sin (e.g. cinema, trousers for women, use of cosmetics etc). Should they move to live in another society, they may well at first conclude that all the Christians there are either liberal or worldly or legalistic and exclusive, depending on the various backgrounds. This has to be born in mind particularly when doing cross-cultural evangelism (or teaching).

***While the wrapping, the form or method of communication must change, because it has to meet today's people and situations, the content, the message, must be preserved.***

As we will consider later on, it must be the aim of the communicator to create in the mind of the hearer a proper understanding of what the Bible really teaches and means, in spite of the fact that he/she is deeply influenced by another religion, perception or worldview.

### 5.4.1 When shame matters more than sin

Anthropologists differentiate between ‘Shame Cultures’ and ‘Guilt Cultures’. What does that mean?

Fundamentally one may assume that people living in a ‘Guilt Culture’ associate acts against generally accepted norms as a personal fault for which they are responsible to whatever authority they relate. Protestants appear to be strongest in this type of culture.

The great majority of people, however, live within a ‘Shame Culture’. To them it is not so much an offence to become guilty of sin, but that to be found out brings shame on them, their family, society or religion.

Muslims apparently are more preoccupied with maintaining ritual cleanliness than with what they may consider ‘small sins’. To be ritually unclean is abominable to them. Consequently, we often find that Muslims, because of their unbiblical view of God, law, man and sin, are quite unaware of their sin. Because of his/her preoccupation with ritual cleanliness and the compensation to rectify omissions, a Muslim does not really see the need for a Saviour. What he is subconsciously looking for is freedom from shame.

Theologically, and with regard to our personal relationship with God, this is a detrimental concept. We ought to repent for the sins we have committed, for they bring shame on God, and not so much feel ashamed to have been found out. When we consider the altogether different perception of sin in Islam and the Bible, we may have to blame this shame culture. I feel uneasy, however, in giving attributing this misunderstanding solely to cultural differences. Every person is individually responsible for his/her actions. And any culture must submit to Scripture, and not vice versa. Also Muslims should know that sin is the trespassing of law and the factor that divides God and man.

(We would like to refer to a thought-provoking article on that topic *The Gospel and Shame Cultures* by Bruce Thomas in Appendix 8.2)

## 5.4.2 Speaking the truth in love



Some suspect us of acting in worldly fashion. Though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly, but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ

*2Corinthians 10:3-5*

But this must be done in love and with concern for the lost. Let Francis Schaeffer formulate this for us:



Love is not an easy thing; it is not just an emotional urge, but an attempt to move over and sit in the other person's place and see how his problems look to him: love is a genuine concern for the individual. As Jesus Christ reminds us, we are to love him 'as ourselves'. This is the place to begin.

Without a right spiritual attitude, evangelism is a senseless and cruel undertaking. Evangelism may well cause the murder or total rejection of the potential convert and may divide a loving and caring family. Love, not sentimental love, but the love of Christ (not even for Christ), will dictate how we speak the truth in each given situation – (Ephesians 4:15).

Scripture gives us a beautiful pattern:



...we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us....

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God.

*1Thessalonians 2:7-12*

## 5.5 Contextualizing the Gospel

The meaningful transmission of the gospel message into different cultural settings compels the messenger to “contextualize” his message. This might imply to have men and women sit separately during services, or rather sit on a carpet than on chairs, certainly sing in their familiar language to indigenous tunes rather than only subscribe to the Western hymns that early missionaries may have brought. Much of this is a matter of common sense governed by the law of love for the people we will seek to reach.

### 5.5.1 Guidelines for contextualization

Here are some excellent guidelines for contextualisation that could assist in our reflections:



1. The task of evangelism demands that the timeless, supra-cultural truth of Scripture be communicated accurately to people of every culture. For the evangelistic message to be understood, it must be relevant to the cultural context of the receptor.
2. In cross-cultural settings, this requires the evangelist to distinguish between the heart of the Gospel and the expressions and presuppositions of his home culture.

This message needs to reflect an understanding of the worldview of the target audience, showing an appreciation for their culture.

3. The Word of God confronts all cultures, however, challenging sin and evil. In order to avoid the unbiblical pitfalls of syncretism and Christo-paganism, every facet of all cultures (including our own) must be brought under the judgment of Biblical revelation.
4. Cultural forms that make clear the meaning of the Gospel, without in any way detracting from its content, must be sought. We joyfully acknowledge our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to guide us in this task and to open the minds of our hearers to the glorious light of the Gospel.
5. We define contextualisation as meaningful and appropriate cross-cultural transmission of Biblical truth, which is faithful to its original intent and sensitive to culture.

***Source withheld for confidential reasons***

Several assumptions lie behind our idea of proper contextualisation:

- Biblical truth is absolute and defines the essence of the Gospel and the church. These truths cannot be compromised in any way.
- There are, however, various legitimate ways in which these same truths can be expressed and applied in different cultures. These expressions and applications must be consistent with principles of Biblical interpretation.
- As every culture contextualises the Gospel and church, missionaries come to new cultures already biased towards their own home culture. To transmit this would be theological imperialism. It leads to the confusion of the Gospel and the planting of a foreign church.
- A contextualized Gospel and church which are faithful to Scripture and sensitive to culture must be worked out for each culture being entered. This ensures that the issues which must be decided for someone to be 'converted' are the core (and not subsidiary) issues. It allows flexibility in forms of expression which are meaningful to the new church within its culture.
- A contextualized church should be better able to maintain unity, sustain its purity, and witness to its own community. Having experienced the process of contextualisation, it should be better equipped to transmit Biblical truth to other cultures. It may result in increased receptivity.

### 5.5.2 Over-realized contextualization

Cultural sensitivity and contextualisation are very much emphasized today. While in former generations an air of paternalism and cultural superiority could be sensed, the pendulum has now swung far towards the other side. As a result, some efforts to adapt the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a Muslim context simply have gone too far.

Contextualisation can best be understood as a spectrum. On the one end is an approach where the Gospel is presented in a culturally foreign way that is difficult to understand for the Muslims (= low contextualization). On the other end is an approach that assimilates Muslim forms and meanings to an extent that it can only be called syncretism, an unbiblical mixing of the Gospel with a deceptive religious system. The crucial question is: Where is the dividing line?



#### The Great Divide

*(Source: Evangelical Missions Quarterly 4/1998, p. 405)*

High syncretism in its most extreme form would be a complete identification with Islam to the point of actually converting to Islam. Low syncretism would be an approach where the Christian tries to become and behave like a Muslim so that Muslims perceive him as one of them, even though the Christian clearly follows Jesus in action and being. Suggestions to “present the Gospel in religious and cultural forms that Muslims feel at ease to identify with” carry the potential danger of denying the power of the Gospel. Using passages from the Qur’an not only as a starting point for a discussion but as a basis for explaining the Gospel “as contained in the Qur’an” not only give credit to the Qur’an as a divinely inspired book, but also reveal the fear that the Word of God has no appeal. All these approaches have already crossed the dividing line between a biblically relevant contextualisation and syncretism. They represent an over-realized contextualization.

The idea of contextualization was born when a new national and cultural awareness or consciousness emerged in the post-colonial era. Anything that smacked of foreign domination was suspect. The national awakening generally went hand in hand with an indigenous religious resurgence. Missionaries did not want to risk rejection due to cultural or religious misunderstandings, so they attempted to ‘indigenise’ or ‘in-culturate’ the

Gospel. After all, many of the church forms were decidedly western-cultural rather than biblical. Just look at church buildings and their spires, forms of church government, rituals like a communion service and many hymns which are characterized by given cultural, even historical or stylistic forms of the home-countries from which the missionaries imported them.

As a positive result of this increased sensitivity to the culture of the recipients the Gospel was being presented in a more relevant form. The religious practice of Muslims was taken serious (e.g. by developing a distinct Christian fasting practice), missionaries tried to avoid unnecessary violation of cultural norms (e.g. by dressing like Muslims or by following Muslim dietary regulations), the Gospel was being communicated in words and expressions which were familiar to Muslims. And outreach media were produced that would speak to the heart of a Muslim. All these efforts can be placed on the left side of the above spectrum, as being positive ways of contextualizing the Gospel. There is, however, a continuum in these efforts, from a low contextualization to a high contextualization, depending on how far one is prepared to go in putting the different aspects of outreach into the context of the hearers: the language and vocabulary used, the way how to dress, worship forms for the Christian meetings, individual religious practices, life style, use of cultural forms (music, artwork).

Every Christian who wants to share the Good News about Jesus Christ with his Muslim friends and neighbours needs to come to terms with the question of how best he or she can communicate this news so that the Muslim will understand it. Through careful study of the Bible and through constant interaction with others involved in the same ministry we need to define our approach, making sure we do not overstep the line to syncretism. It is not easy to define where this line is. But one needs to keep in mind that ritual forms, which are intrinsically Islamic, may not be able to convey the biblical message, though they may originally have been adapted from Jewish or Christian worship, like the Muslim prayer or fasting. Of course there is nothing wrong with fasting or prostration in prayer - if one is not creating the perception that these Islamic forms are more valuable than the more traditional Christian forms and. This does not necessarily mean that all Christian forms are biblical or relevant, however. But forms and rituals are often symbolic and carry with that meaning. This is no less true for Islamic practices.

All efforts to present the Gospel in a culturally appropriate way need to make sure that the content of the Gospel is clearly understood: Jesus Christ is the only way to God, he died for our sins and reconciles us with God. Only in him do we have a living personal relationship with God. If this is not understood by our friends, we have not clearly communicated the Gospel and need to evaluate our approach.

The other issue is the perception a highly contextualized approach gives to the Muslim community. Using Islamic religious rituals and terms like ‘Isa Mosque’ instead of ‘church’ are likely to create the impression among Muslims, that these people are really Muslims. When found out that in reality the participants of such meetings are following the Christian Gospel, such behaviour will inevitably be interpreted as deception.

We are reminded of Paul’s concern to present the truth of the Gospel plainly:



We have renounced secret, shameful ways. We do not use deception ... On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

*2Corinthians 4:2*

Paul’s appeal does not only address the sincerity of the motivation (“in the sight of God” of the communicator, but no less the way this is perceived by the recipients (as perceived by Muslims we seek to reach) of our message.

We may well wonder how Muslims view an exaggerated approach as shown earlier.

### 5.5.3 Islamic perceptions of an over-realized contextualisation

We seldom receive reactions from Muslims how our approaches are being received. Here is just one that was published under the heading “The Christian Islamization of Christianity” in the “Muslim Journal” (July 1987):



Contextualisation on the surface appears as a litany of deceit, of ‘convert at any cost’.

But the deeper process involves setting aside Christian practices to embrace the pillars of Islamic action. A quick look at (the author’s) recommendations reveals the deep structure of contextualisation.

Old missionaries, a la Zwemer, wrote endless vitriolic condemnations of Islam and Muslims. Newer missionaries take a more “compromising” stance. Without embarrassment (the author) can write, ‘without compromise, we can appreciate the good in Islam’. Their stance weakens from rejection to compromise. The next step is adoption.

(The author) feels compelled to say, about Muslims, that “they must be convinced that the rituals Christians follow to assist them in knowing God are indeed superior to their own highly formalized and ritualized system of religious expression”. That is the rhetoric, but look at the actual practices - relinquishing baptism, observing the Ramadan fast, donning *hijaab* and Islamic dress, and affirming the truthfulness of Islam. Perhaps

(the author) like many missionaries is discovering that the rituals that actually assist them in knowing God are from the Qur'an and the Sunnah rather than Christian tradition. Perhaps (the author) and the Christian missionaries will discover that Allah (SWT) is using their deceptive "contextualisation" as the occasion of their own Islamization. 'Allah (SWT) is the best of planners' (= lit. plotters, schemers) (Surah 3:47; 8:30).

Obviously missionaries experimenting with such daring forms of contextualisation did not intend to be perceived that way. Nor are such Islamic comments an absolute standard on which to measure our missionary approaches. Ultimately the Lord judges us (1Cor 4:4).

## 5.6 Life-style evangelism

Compared to mission work among other religious contexts the Christian witness in the Islamic world has had so little effect on Muslims, and have shown relatively small numbers of converts from Islam, which resulted in alternative methods of witness being sought out by many Christians. Most of these are based on a sincere wish to make Muslims realize the need for the Saviour and the value of the Gospel. Some concluded that the use of apologetics, reasoning, proclaiming or explaining spiritual content lead to controversial debates or polemics. Claiming that argumentation about spiritual issues is vain and therefore to be avoided, they opt for a demonstration approach: "Let us live among the Muslims and let our Christian love, charity and humility speak for itself!"

Certainly a Muslim is attracted by a loving and caring person just like others! But a silent, timid witness is not perceived by Muslim as a display of humility, but rather weakness. Weakness, in his sight, is despicable, though he may not say this outright. The strength of his own provocative witness to Islam he views as a duty towards Allah. Therefore the advice to avoid the use of apologetics altogether in favour of displaying a Christian lifestyle in humility and love to attract Muslims to Christ is simply based on the false assumption that Muslims think like Christians.

A Muslim will essentially suppose that the influence of Islam on the Christian is beginning to show fruit.

*Christian life-style without a clearly defined presentation of the Saviour Jesus Christ is no witness at all.*

There is decidedly no wisdom in starting a deliberate polemical argument! Yet one can very often not avoid a bold confession of what we believe without losing ground. As a Muslim testifies and stands up for his religion, he expects an honourable Christian to stand his ground. We ought to be careful, however, not to be drawn into endless debates on trivialities! All our argumentation is to be clearly based on love.

## 5.7 Confrontation and accommodation

While we all prefer to build bridges rather than walls, we have to make sure that no false signals are transmitted. We will see to it that no compromise is entered into, and that the content of the Bible is not blurred or obscured by the methods, symbols, words and concepts we use, for these are merely forms of expression.

We will avoid assimilating Islam. Assimilation is all too often not only a whitewashing of Islam, but also an obliteration of the distinction and difference that Islam as an anti-Christian religion displays. The next logical step would be syncretism.

### 5.7.1 Unavoidable confrontation

The more liberal a person or group is, the more the idea of 'dialogue' is promoted. Of course, there is nothing wrong in a dialogue with 'outsiders'. It is a Biblical practice and Paul and others practiced it. But when dialogue is translated into an exchange of thoughts and religious experiences, or 'ecumenical' prayers jointly performed by leading representatives of various religions, the signal given is that of acceptance of the divine origin of these. This will not only confound church members, but will in addition prove counterproductive to an effective evangelistic witness.

That means that we have to expose the origin, roots and deficiencies of Islam at some time or other. When and how this must be done, is a sensitive matter,

*We cannot avoid presenting the  
Christian message over against Islam.*

but to avoid it will mean that a Muslim will never be convinced in his heart, that he must turn away from Islam to become part of Christ. That is confirmed in Scripture:



They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God...

*1Thessalonians 1:9*

As I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.  
*Acts 17:23*

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

*1Corinthians 9:19-22*

Let me quote Francis Schaeffer on this point:



Truth carries with it confrontation. Truth demands confrontation; loving confrontation, but confrontation nevertheless. If our reflex action is always accommodation, regardless of the centrality of the truth involved, there is something wrong. Just as what we may call holiness without love is not God's kind of holiness, so also what we may call love without holiness, including when necessary confrontation, is not God's kind of love. God is holy, and God is love.

*The Great Evangelical Disaster*

We are aware that confrontation is not 'in'. Humanism has, unfortunately, left its definite imprint even on the minds of Bible-based Christians. Who can in this world, in which we are constantly exposed and bombarded with philosophical and religious thought, claim to be unaffected? While we have to be empathetic, understanding and lenient on the one side, we also have to realize that accommodation is unacceptable! Scripture is abundantly clear about this.

Even when the unrelenting wrath of Ahab and Jezebel sought to destroy him, Elijah confronted the four hundred and fifty Baal priests and the four hundred prophets of "Asherah" on Mount Carmel. Elijah did not go there to discuss or interact over a cup of tea to see how he could cooperate with them or how to come to a consensus about worship in Israel. It was a confrontation of truth against untruth!

### 5.7.2 What matters is the truth

Our conversation with Muslims should seek to establish, first of all, where and what the Truth is about God and man and their relationship.

The search for the truth is essentially an objective task where sober and rational information, thinking and deduction have to take place. This is not familiar to a Muslim. But that does not mean that one has to give up on this premise. On the contrary!

*A Muslim must be encouraged to use the God-given faculties to divide truth from error and to choose what can alone be established as divine revelation.*

Let us consider some basics:

1. In order to **choose** the Truth, I have to choose from whatever other 'truths' are available.
2. In order to **accept** the Truth, I have to compare and seek to substantiate what acceptable evidence speaks for the divine origin of the message. I have to learn to differentiate.
3. Before I **compare** competing 'Truths', I need to have sufficient information about these - and use it!

Let us illustrate the point:



What would you prefer, a banana or a 'pagro'? You don't know a 'pagro', so you will opt for a banana. But what if the 'pagro' is the most delicious fruit there is? If you take the trouble, you will find out that there is no such thing as a 'pagro'. So the choice is clear and you can accept the banana as the right choice.

*Nehls*

Let me mention just three men, whom I (G. Nehls) know personally, who made such choices:

**Abdallah** - When he heard the Gospel first, he was too busy with studies to attend to it. But then he read all he could to be informed. He was convinced of the reliability of the Gospel over against the teachings of Islam and he made a choice. He accepted the Truth.

**Abbas** - Heading an Islamic Information Centre in a certain country, he came across comprehensive Christian literature, written particularly for Muslims. He studied this (got information), then chose and accepted the Truth. For that he lost his job and was severely persecuted; he lives in another country now - but has honoured the Truth, because he recognized it.

**Goolam** - He turned Christian but for lack of knowledge reverted to Islam. When confronted with the Truth he argued: 'You have your truth, and I have

mine'. Then the issue was made clear: was Jesus crucified or not? The Qur'an says no, the Bible says yes. Given substantiated information, he processed this - in this case OT prophecies fulfilled in Christ - and made his choice. He too chose the Truth.

(For more examples see our interview with G. Nehls *A Tough Assignment*, available from LCA in video or DVD format.)

All this amounts to conflict - but the Truth shall set us free (Jn 8:32)!

The tendency to avoid conflict or controversy prevents the kind of communication which is necessary, for without a clear statement of the Truth, no true faith can emanate.

### 5.7.3 How to avoid misunderstandings

Love dictates two things: firstly, I must accept another person without prejudice, and secondly, I will learn so much about him, that I become able to speak to him in a way that he will be able to comprehend. Mere outward assimilation is not love! Besides, we have to ask: Does a Muslim really expect that?

An illustration will help again:



During a public debate between an American preacher and the Muslim antagonist Ahmed Deedat, seemingly hard pressed, the preacher resorted to a story to show the power of Christ over against that of Muhammad. He stated that he knew someone on a mission field who had visited a Muslim who had fallen ill. An Islamic leader had prayed for that sick man "in the name of Muhammad", but he did not get better. Then the Christian missionary prayed for that man "in the name of Jesus" and he was healed!

What was the effect of this statement? Not only did this reflect an uncalled for triumphalism, but on the video which was produced of that debate by the Islamic Propagation Center, a footnote was inserted, which rightly stated, that no Muslim will ever pray "in the name of Muhammad"! It was simply a projection of Christian practice into Islam. That made Deedat's day. He exposed his opponent to be a liar (or at least someone who repeated a lie, even if done unintentionally). *Nehls*

The problem here was that the Christian debater was ignorant and unprepared for such an encounter. He should have known so much about his opponent's religion to avoid such a blunder. These videos must have caused enormous damage over the years.

*Our message must always be verified by our integrity and fortified by our insight and knowledge.*

## 5.7.4 The use of the Qur'an in Muslim evangelism

We are all aware that Muslims accept and believe in the Qur'an and reject the Bible. This fact led to the suggestion that one should use the Qur'an to present Jesus from its pages. There are some very positive statements about Jesus in the Qur'an. But one should resist the temptation to 'prove' the crucifixion and death of Christ from it. It would be a very ambiguous attempt, and can be done only by 'clever' Christian hermeneutics. How legitimate is this?



The Christian Qur'anic hermeneutic assumes an essential agreement between the Qur'an and the Bible on many points. In so doing, it creates an authority conflict for Muslim inquirers and converts, and for the emerging Muslim convert churches.

"The fact is that commitment to Christ inevitably involves commitment to the authority of the Bible. When a Muslim inquirer is confronted with the claims of Christ, through the Scriptures, he is faced with a choice: he must either commit himself to the Bible and the Biblical view of Christ and forsake the Qur'an, or commit himself to the Qur'an and the Qur'anic view of Christ and reject the Scriptures".

*Samuel Schlorff: "The Hermeneutical Crisis in Muslim Evangelism"*

We may legitimately remind a Muslim that the book he believes in dictates faith in the 'former Scriptures' (i.e. the Bible) and that it has a lot of good to say about Jesus. But at the same time we express that it is very difficult for a Christian to accept the denial of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, the Qur'anic doctrine of God and the doctrine of abrogation (see "Islam, as it sees itself, as others see it, as it is",) or 'predestination'. We should indeed refrain from "preaching Christ from the Qur'an" as some do. The Qur'an constitutes no authority for a Christian! We must make this quite clear!

***The Use of the Qur'an is not an extended or true image of the  
Jesus of the Bible!***

## 5.7.5 Our use of Arabic terms

Depending on the type of people we reach out to, the use of Arabic may be absolutely essential. But even in non-Arabic speaking countries, Muslims have been and are being trained in the Arabic language, for religious terms and rituals are normally formulated in Arabic. It is therefore definitely an advantage to know these and their meaning, so that we may make use of this knowledge when defining the meaning of a word or concept.

But then there could also be the temptation of showing a Muslim how ‘clever’ we are, instead of showing them our care to understand their point of view even to the extent that we learned some of their vocabulary. This may well be appreciated. However, we ought to know what we do, else we either reap ridicule or create apprehension in the Muslim, as he might fear meeting a well-learned ‘Christian missionary’.

Let me illustrate:



We heard of a foreign missionary, who, in a conversation with some Muslims, kept referring to Jesus Christ as ‘Nabi Isa’ (the prophet or messenger Jesus). In his mind was, no doubt, the use of a familiar term in order to avoid ‘foreign’ terminology. At the end one Muslim clapped him on the shoulder approvingly, saying: “You are the first Christian, who admits that Jesus was no more than a prophet!” So the attempt to be accepted backfired.

*Nehls*

To avoid ‘proselytizing’ efforts by Christians, Muslims have begun to react and to inhibit the use of Arabic by non-Muslims. It is surely significant that Muslims in Malaysia have managed to see the “Control and Restriction of the Propagation of Non-Islamic Religions Bill 1989” passed. It prohibits non-Muslims from using expressions used by Muslims to describe anything pertaining to non-Muslim religions. Words like ‘Allah’ and ‘*rasul*’ fall under this category. Since 1981, the Malay-language Bible, known as the “*al-Kitab*”, has been banned because it used words like Allah (for God) and rasul (for prophet) (“SIM NOW” Sept.-Oct. 1989).

We see the need for a selective use of Arabic terms, being aware that using ‘Injil’ for Gospel and ‘Nabi Isa’, ‘Moosa’ or ‘Ibrahim’ is hardly more than effort to be familiar. One also should be fully aware that these do not necessarily convey a Biblical meaning. This applies particularly to ‘Nabi Isa’ and ‘Injil’.



## We will remember:

1. The way we experience the world is strongly influenced by our culture.
2. Every one sees the world in the light of his/her own cultural experience.
3. At the heart of culture is its ideology or religion.
4. Culture determines social learning and experience.
5. To be truly understood by people of another culture we have to take into account their own perception of things.

6. Understanding other people begins with observing and listening to them.
7. Learning about the mind-set of another person enables us to decode his/her way of thinking and feeling. This is to open the way for us to convey the Christian message in an undistorted manner so that a person from another cultural background may truly be able to grasp it.
8. Cross-cultural communication is meaningful and appropriate transmission of Biblical truth that is faithful to its original meaning and purpose in the setting of the recipient's culture.
9. While we are reluctant to seek unnecessary confrontation, we realize that the Gospel itself is a confrontation to all pseudo-truths.
10. Biblical truth may never be compromised to gain acceptance.
11. A member of another religion is unlikely to come to Christ unless he/she has realized the superiority of the Christian message over against his/her own.
12. It should be our aim to implant the Biblical message into the culture of our listeners without compromising its content.
13. The key to cross-cultural communication is love.

### **Recommended Literature for Chapter 5:**

**Biblical Christianity in African Perspective.** Wilbur O'Donovan, Baker Book House: 1985, pp.297-311.

**Ishmael my Brother.** Anne Cooper, MARC: 1993, pp.143-158.

**Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible.** Robertson McQuilkin, 1984.

**Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective.** Charles Kraft, 1979.

**Muslim Evangelism: Contemporary Approaches to Contextualization.** Phil Parshall, 2003.

**Transforming Culture – A Challenge for Christian Mission.** Sherwood Lingenfelter, 1998.

**Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues.** Paul G. Hiebert, 1994.

## 6 Reaching Out

Having received the foundational insight by a study of the many topics that relate to Muslim evangelism, we come to the actual purpose of all these lessons, to share the Gospel with our Muslim neighbours and colleagues in a way that is meaningful and understandable to them.

Our willingness to step over the line with the aim and purpose to make Christ known will have to be matched by our empathy and sensitivity toward our Muslim contacts. These are proof of our love for them. They must realize that we are trustworthy. This can really only happen within a relationship, and that grows best in an atmosphere of understanding and trust.

But even that is no blueprint for success!

Let us right at the outset come to terms with one needed precondition:

No knowledge or skill, no method, strategy, loving involvement or trick of any sort will suffice, for: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” (Jn 6:44)

We are told to make known the Good News. We have to be content with doing just that - plus a little more: we should be loving, faithful and patient in doing this.

This will include an effort to persuade - and even to argue or reason as Paul did (see *TT2*, page 2). We have to make ourselves understood. Christians must not hide behind a pseudo-spirituality, ‘leaving everything to the Lord’. But we also have to accept the freedom of choice of the other, who is very likely to reject the Good News of Jesus. So we find these three basics:

- We have to explain the Gospel in such a way that it is clearly understood by the listener;
- The Lord must ‘draw’ that person that is...
- Our listener must be willing to open his heart and soul to the truth of God.

While we should be prepared to do our best, we can neither convict of sin, convert or save. What we are expected to do, let us do with a deep sense of responsibility. But we want to act responsibly and that is why we will prepare ourselves in the best possible way.

Every salesman deserving this name is trained, and keeps on training himself, to best present his goods. Of course, it is below the dignity of the Gospel to use ‘sales techniques’ in presenting the Gospel, yet we should constantly be eager to learn, and be prepared to improve our skills.

This does not mean that we neglect to devotedly seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit! But we do our homework as men like Paul, John, Stephen and all the other saints did, as can be seen from Scripture.

It is the Holy Spirit who will teach us all things and will remind believers of everything the Lord Jesus had taught them (Jn 14:26). This presupposes that there is something to be remembered!

## 6.1 Preparation for outreach

In order to develop the best strategy we need to consider first of all:

1. What does the Word of God expect us to be and to do regarding the Muslim population within our reach?
2. How can we best accomplish what our Lord called us to do?

That alone is our criterion.

### 6.1.1 Different situations demand different approaches

It would be simplistic to assume that Muslims could all be reached in the same way everywhere. Basically there are two types of Muslim evangelism between which we must differentiate:

- A) Muslims in countries or areas which are overwhelmingly Islamic. They might even have an Islamic government and adopt a hostile attitude towards the Christian faith.
- B) Muslims in countries with Muslim minorities or where there is a near balance between Christians and Muslims. In this case both communities live in the same territory without Muslim dominated authorities, and where freedom of religion is granted. – This is true in most of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Our strategy model fits situation B.

### 6.1.2 Muslim evangelism and success

In our modern society everything is measured by success. Therefore it is a recurring question how successful Muslim evangelism really is. If there is little prospect for success, the interest for Muslims drops, perhaps with a sympathetic commendation for the few that stick it out.

#### What is success in evangelism?

A builder is a successful worker when he lays more than 800 bricks a day. A salesman is successful when he/she sells goods in excess of what a customer intended to buy. When is a witness for our Lord Jesus successful? The seemingly obvious answer is when he sees a lot of converts.

This is highly objectionable, for it presupposes that we can ‘make’ converts. But we are not God, who alone can save.

A witness for Jesus is successful when he/she faithfully and conscientiously communicates the Good News of God to a person until it is understood. A Muslim’s remark, “Oh, now I understand!” is a confirmation of a successful transmission of God’s Word. The recipient may not want to respond to God. To change that is beyond the capability of the witness, for that is on a spiritual level which man cannot influence. We may be able to persuade a person to “make a decision”, but that is not likely to effect a truly spiritual rebirth.

Our Lord commanded us to go and share the Gospel. He also told us to make disciples. But what is in between, the transformation, the New Birth, is God’s prerogative to perform.

Our ‘success’ is established by our faithfulness in doing God’s will to make Him known. Whether our listeners “hear or refuse to hear” (Eze 2:5), is their responsibility. It is our responsibility to share the Good News with them faithfully. (1Co 4:1)

### 6.1.3 Preparation and experience

Earlier it was said that knowledge, prayer and experience belong together and that none is a substitute for the other. It is obvious that one can get no experience without exposing oneself to Muslim evangelism.

Whether or not we are gifted to communicate the Gospel, no person can know until he has practiced it long enough to find out. No person is able to find out whether he or she is gifted to play the piano, unless lessons are taken and many hours of exercising and rehearsing have been done.

Skill comes with learning and experience. This does not exclude the possibility of making mistakes. Every witness will have to be content to learn from these mistakes so as not to repeat them.

What we learn from books or in a classroom can never be a substitute for experience, as important as this may be. On the other hand, experience without instruction will only in very exceptional cases lead to effective and understandable communication.

And we know from Scripture, that



...if I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

*1Corinthians 13:2*

This is followed by those most beautiful words:



Love is patient, love is kind ... it does not boast(!), it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails!

This may well be supplemented by chapter 8:1: “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up”. This surely does not mean that we should not seek knowledge, but that we seek humility as well.

### **6.1.4 The witness**

Without wishing in any way to discourage someone with a willing heart from considering Muslim evangelism, we will have to look at certain qualities a witness should have.

These qualities depend largely on the situation and intensity of involvement. On a personal level every Christian should be able to be a witness to his or her Muslim neighbour or colleague. But those who would like to participate in Muslim evangelism more extensively should train to develop abilities and to enhance their gifts. Even so most of the basic qualities should be natural to every Christian:

#### **Right attitudes**

We cannot stress enough the importance of right attitudes. Muslim evangelism that is induced or nourished by a fear of Islam or by a spirit of triumphalism is bound to produce negative results. Even an in-depth-knowledge of Islamic teaching and practice may be (and too often is!) used in an aggressive and destructive manner. A Christian witness will wholeheartedly seek to understand a Muslim and to share “the truth in love”.

#### **Prayer**

Prayer is a key issue in our struggle against the principalities that blind and bind (see Eph. 6:10-20). It is therefore necessary for the witness to seek before the Lord the right attitude, courage and wisdom for him/herself, and for the listener to have an open mind and be free of bondage.

#### **Freedom of fear when speaking with Muslims**

I might as well ask, “Are you afraid of snakes?” Our feelings might not be all that different. Is there a good reason to be afraid? We are afraid of something we feel inadequate to deal with, something unfamiliar. I have handled dozens of very poisonous snakes. Once we overcome our natural fears and know the dangers and limits that are involved, we are equipped to catch and pick up any snake. The same applies to personal evangelism. We may be inhibited

and have a natural fear of contact with strangers, but will be filled with joy when we have victory over our fears.

## Compassion

We all need compassion for those men and women who live without the Saviour, who have been deceived or live in a system which does not afford them any knowledge of the Bible and its teaching. They are lost though they may be religious, zealous and sincere.

## Empathy

Without the desire to understand the person we speak to, we will hardly be able to communicate properly, particularly in a cross-religious situation.

Even the Apostle Paul admitted:

I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.

*1Corinthians 2:3*



But then he made a resolve:



Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel that I may share in its blessings.

*2Corinthians 9:19-23*

## Courage

Courage is needed to go where others shrink back from going, to share the faith in love even in a hostile situation:

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe...

*Hebrews 10:39*

## Humility

Humility is the absolute absence of conceit or arrogance. We speak with a Muslim as being on the same level, not looking down on her or him.



Who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive?

*1Corinthians 4:7*

By the grace given to me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

*Romans 12:3*

...make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

*Philippians 2:2-3*

## Faithfulness



This is how men should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy (or faithful).

*1Corinthians 4:1*

‘Stickability’ is perhaps the quality most lacking in Muslim evangelism.

## Ability to debate, discuss and dialogue

...‘hot’ issues soberly without getting visibly upset. This demands knowledge of the subject and restraint, but also the ability to analyze and lovingly clarify the issues involved.



Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

*1Peter 1:13*

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

*1Peter 5:8*

## Ability to formulate and communicate

...difficult thought in simple and understandable ways



We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words”.

*1Corinthians 2:12-13*

Pray for us... that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ.... Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

*Colossians 4:3-6*

## 6.2 Practical considerations

A witness should be conscious of the fact that the Gospel is supra cultural. No one needs to change his or her culture in order to comprehend the Gospel, to accept and follow it. Naturally, the Gospel should be embedded in a given culture and expressed in adequate cultural forms. These should, however, not be a stumbling block to members of another culture. While absolutely no concessions may be made regarding the content of the Biblical faith, we have no mandate to force our traditional cultural forms on anyone else.

No doubt, most of us would agree with these common sense statements in principle, but do they truly affect our behaviour patterns when we meet people of other cultures? Take some time and “test yourself” whether your faith shows the effects that should come along with it “Faith effect test questions”:

- How do I dress? Does it honour and respect my focus culture?  
Observe how people respond to the way you dress and find out why.
- Food
- Greetings and personal introduction
- Entering a home, community, village
- Visiting friends or strangers; visitors and relatives
- Leading a conversation
- Use of vocabulary
- Abstract or illustrative sharing
- Follow-up and note-taking
- Integration in a new community / *ummah*

One will have to carefully observe and sensitively respond to every given situation, and decide what may or may not be done or said.

### 6.2.1 Be yourself!

Once we know and understand the principles, we can apply these within the given framework of our personality, circumstances and background. This course does not aim to make all participants operate alike, using the same

methods of approach or even an outline of what to say or which Scriptures to use. It is NOT a step-by-step do-it-yourself course! On the contrary, let us learn to practice Christian liberty.

God created and moulded each of us in a specific way. Let us be what God has intended us to be, and bring in all our gifts, enriched with information and knowledge, to carry out the great unfinished task to the glory of God and for the salvation of lost sinners.

It is not always easy to decide which methods and approaches will work well. It is always better to be your genuine self rather than to copy the ways and methods of someone else. But also other considerations will influence our approach, such as a given time frame, a specific situation or the character trait in the listener. These should influence every approach. A spiritual, wise and watchful witness will find the right way.

Some potential roadblocks should be considered, however.

### **6.2.2 Tact, understanding and consideration**

These are indispensable qualities we should show. When we enter a home, we are guests - and behave as such! If we use the Bible or lead a spiritual conversation and there is a knock at the door and family or friends come to visit, one should not embarrass the host, but rather put away the Bible to protect him, and to change the subject for the time being. Muslims are afraid of other Muslims and do appreciate such behaviour.

### **6.2.3 Leading a conversation**

It is often necessary to actively lead a conversation. Muslims have a way of jumping from subject to subject, when they feel they cannot deal with a topic, and rather defend themselves by attacking the Bible. When they come up with non-relevant questions without being prepared to listen to the answer, one will have to firmly lead the conversation, else one will just be involved in silly argumentation.

### **6.2.4 Controlled emotions**

Controlled emotions are often needed when Muslims attack our Scriptures or Jesus Christ. Particularly then, we have to keep feelings cool! There is no point in losing our temper! Nothing is achieved when an irrational argument gets out of control. Of course, some Islamic arguments are calculated to make us lose our composure. Let us be on the guard!

### **6.2.5 Illustrate your point**

This is very important indeed! Not all people can follow abstract thought easily. In certain cultures the very use of the language is symbolical or illustrative. Almost every transmission of abstract thought - and a spiritual presentation is just that - will be enhanced by using parables, metaphors or allegories. Our Lord Jesus made it almost a rule to use these. This should encourage us to use illustrations from the context of real life.

*(In the appendix of REACH OUT some selected examples are given.)*

### **6.2.6 Substantiate your point**

Our personal convictions and opinions are of very little use. When we make a statement, be it from the Bible, History or Islam, let us make sure that we are not vague about it, by providing the necessary frame of reference. This may not always be possible at once, but we can offer to provide this at a next arranged meeting. Always aim to prove your point, but also expect this from your Muslim friend who will hardly be able to prove much of what he stands for, particularly when we are reasonably well informed about Islam ourselves.

### **6.2.7 Politics and religion**

Zionism and Islam are enemies of each other. Actually it is more than Zionism that is resented by Muslims. It is anti-Judaism (one can hardly say anti-Semitism for Arabs themselves are Semites). Traditionally Christians have been - and should be - pro-Jewish. But they should also be pro-Muslim: considerate, loving and understanding. To take the side of Israel and the Jews, can be very offensive to Muslims. On the other hand it is difficult to take the side of the Arabs, when it comes to the Biblical occupation rights of Palestine by the Jews. As in politics, Christians should be understanding and kind-hearted to both sides - without calling wrong right or vice versa.

### **6.2.8 Male-female contacts**

Male-female contacts are obviously viewed from ones own cultural background. In Islamic communities hat means with much more suspicion, rigor and concern than in a Western society. Therefore, a witness must make quite sure that they do not unnecessarily offend their Muslim friends. What may be quite a normal chat to us may well be considered immodest, even offensive, in an Islamic context. Even shaking of hands, particularly after the ritual washing before the 'Salat' or 'Namaaz' prayer, may be considered defiling. One should indeed be careful not to expose a person of the other sex to criticism by being alone in a conversation with her or him.

## 6.2.9 Dress

Dress codes are an aspect of great importance in the Islamic world. Depending on their cultural heritage, women cover much more of their bodies than their Western counterparts do, with all-too-often rather unattractive clothes. This is viewed as a token of modesty, in an effort not to display any personal appeal or charm. To understand this we will have to consider the altogether different perception of modesty and morality in Islam. While originally (and even today in the territories of the Shiah sect of Islam), ‘*mut’ah*’, a temporary marriage for a few hours, days or even weeks, was or is acceptable and legal, it is still the practice that a couple in courtship will never be allowed to meet without a chaperon. The extensive covering of the body in some cultures, including the ‘*burka*’ (veil covering the face), is imposed on the women in order not to arouse men. Christians find it difficult to understand such forms, because we are called to practice modesty and morality from the heart. While Christians do not promote provocative apparel, their dress is decent within the context they live in.

A Christian woman seeking contact with Muslims will not unduly demonstrate her resentments about the taboos in Islam. In most cultures she will hardly be expected to conform to Islamic rules anyway. But then she also does not wish to give the impression that she is out to attract men. Good taste and sensitivity will make her find a middle path. A good norm would be the suggestion of the Apostle Paul, who wrote:



I want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety... with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

*1Timothy 2:9-10*

Women trying to conform by dressing the Islamic way, are known to have been accused of assimilation with the motive of deception. This happened to missionaries who dressed like the indigenous people. Again, considerate and tactful people will find the right way.

## 6.2.10 The right hand

The right hand is used for ‘clean’ activities such as eating, the left for ‘unclean’ ones, such as wiping the bottom. This somewhat stigmatizes the left hand - something to be aware of. In many Eastern cultures eating is done with the right hand only, while the left hand is kept under the table. While Eastern hospitality is often considerate enough towards Westerners to provide the ‘tools’ to eat, the witness would be well advised to use his right hand, if these are not available. It is advised in this context not to hand a gift of any sort (particularly a Bible) with the left hand.

### 6.2.11 Hospitality

We may at times not be aware how much hospitality is a sacred duty to most Orientals, including, of course, the Muslims. To refuse it may be offensive. One should, on the other hand, not insist on inviting Muslims for a meal, if they decline. They have their reason:

### 6.2.12 The Halaal law

In Islam just about everything is basically divided into two categories: '*halaal*', lawful and '*haraam*', unlawful.

Food laws are naturally included in this system. As in Judaism (the kosher law), the halaal food laws have been extended much beyond the original intent and purpose. Basically, a Muslim is only allowed to eat meat slaughtered in accordance with the Islamic ritual of cutting the throat of the animal and bleeding it to death. Exceptions are fish and locusts. The meat of predators is unlawful as well as that of pigs, canines, donkeys, mules and a host of others.

A Christian may buy food from a Muslim butchery when entertaining a Muslim friend, and yet the friend may still be suspicious and feel uncomfortable eating with Christians. The pots and pans may have been used for preparing pork. Worse, one hears stories of Christians having deceived Muslims by adding pork fat to food offered to them.

It has been brought to our knowledge that certain Christians demanded from a Muslim convert to eat pork before receiving her or him into a Christian fellowship. What a disgusting and unbiblical thing to do! And yet, one can understand it, when Muslims fake becoming Christians with the object of marrying Christian girls, only to return to Islam once they have succeeded. So let us not be too persuasive when inviting Muslims and sensing a reluctance or evasiveness on their side. Generally speaking, it is our experience that a Muslim feels much more at ease in his own environment.

### 6.2.13 Holy books

Religious books are generally highly esteemed by most Muslims. These include in particular the Law of Moses, the Psalms of David, the Gospel of Jesus and the Qur'an, or, shall we rather say, the Bible and the Qur'an.

Obviously Christians also have a deep reverence for the Bible, but in quite another way. While we may underline important passages in the Bible, and write on the margin our reference, or deposit our Bible on the bedside table or desk, this borders on desecration to a Muslim. He may rarely open the Qur'an to read it - yet he will always keep the Qur'an on the highest shelf, probably have it wrapped in a special cloth and will wash his hands before touching it. Folk Islam will provide portions of the Qur'an as amulets or

charms for protection. Can we see the difference? In Islam it is the Book as such which is revered. We value the content of our book, the message.

### **6.2.14 Titles**

Titles matter, yet they have to be used with care! Consider: can we honestly speak of the “Prophet Muhammad”? Or should we speak to a Muslim (or any non-Christian for that matter) of “the Lord Jesus”? To us Muhammad is a false prophet and to a Muslim Jesus is decidedly not Lord. Therefore let us be sensitive and truthful in our conversation, even in this respect. A suggestion: I never call Muhammad a prophet or messenger of Allah, neither do I speak about the Lord Jesus to Muslims. I rather call Him Jesus, the Messiah.

### **6.2.15 Inviting a Muslim to our church**

As a general rule this is unwise. A Muslim feels as uneasy as we feel when entering a mosque, synagogue or even a Hindu or Buddhist temple.

Once when I had a preaching appointment in a service, I had to tell a Muslim visitor in our home that I had to leave. Out of curiosity he asked me whether I would mind if he came along. Of course I did not! So he came. He insisted, however, on sitting next to the aisle in the back. Later he confided that he was terribly scared and was ready at any time to run out of the church! And he focused on the surroundings, rather than the message.

Besides, a Muslim is likely to misunderstand the message, unless it is specifically designed for Muslim ears.

### **6.2.16 A Muslim needs ‘stepping stones’**

Indeed, a Muslim needs ‘stepping stones’ before coming to church and to understand what is happening there.

But not all Muslims may need such help. Some may come from a Christian family or have Christian friends, or may have viewed church services on TV. That will lessen the possibility of being put off.

But as a rule a ‘house church’ consisting of some caring people, preferably from a Muslim background, can be a big help. Here the inquirer or young convert can explore the fundamentals of the Bible with some mature Christians. He can feel at ease, ask questions, observe and learn step by step by seeing and listening how we pray and sing, how we behave in a Christian community, etc. But such ‘house church’ should not present a traditional Gospel meeting! (*See appendix “Planting New Churches” for more details.*)

In general, we must try to get away from the idea that preachers are the (only) right people to evangelize Muslims.

### **6.2.17 The decision for Christ**

As always, the decision for Christ is the aim of evangelism. And that happens even among Muslims. It may happen progressively in the form of a process. The point is reached when a Muslim accepts the claim of Christ that He is indeed the Son of God who died for his sins personally. While the form may differ from the customary (must we really expect and aim for that?), the content of the faith ought to be fundamentally Biblical. Certainly there will still be open questions. As long as these are not of a fundamental nature, we should not make an issue of them, but pray that the Word of God will in time provide the answers. The Holy Spirit will guide!

### **6.2.18 After the decision**

After the decision the work is by no means completed. The young convert needs close Christian friends to stand by him, to assist and advise. How should he behave at home? How should he relate to his family now that he has found the Saviour? How should he respond to rejection and persecution? Must he now eat pork? What about the fast? The customary prayers? - Considerate and mature counsel should be given when questions and problems arise.

For an extended period the new convert should be accompanied in his new walk of life. He needs to be upheld in prayer and taught in Scripture. Again the 'house church' is a good tool. He might need assistance in finding a new world to live in, for his old world will have rejected him. Understanding, kindness and personal care will have to continue until such a person has become a devoted disciple himself or herself, able to witness to others. This may well mean that the convert needs to be accommodated with and cared for by a Christian family.

### **6.2.19 Secret believers**

We can hardly find support for this in the New Testament. And yet, there may be wisdom in counselling a young believer not to confess his new faith immediately and enthusiastically. In cases where an attempt on his life is real, and he is the first convert in a family or village setting, one might well consider the possibility of low key witnessing until such time as two or three other converts provide enough moral support to do so more openly. Of course, this can only be a temporary measure. We do not forget the words of Scripture:



Many even among the leaders believed in him (Jesus). But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

*John 12:42-43*

(See Appendix for article ‘*Discipling Muslim Background Believers*’?)

After having looked at all the practical considerations we still need to choose the gospel concept or specific gospel theme we want to share with each of our contacts.

## 6.3 Gospel concepts for Muslim enquirers

Good preparation for service is always commendable, but when it never results in touching the lives of a Muslim it becomes a sad caricature of our Christian calling. “What is the sense of a life touched by Christ but not touching the lives of others”, one wonders (Dr. E. Chandran).

But you may ask whether there are certain truths of the Bible that are more attractive to Muslims than others. That is a good and valid question, for Christ, our Master, did not preach the same basic standard message to everyone he encountered. A walk through John’s gospel will quickly convince us that the divine master teacher deliberately dwelled on topics that were brought up by his conversation partner (Nicodemus, woman at the well in Samaria) or connected to the circumstances and needs of the people he addressed (I am... bread, light, way, truth, good shepherd, resurrection and life).

Likewise there are many topics that are of special interest to our Muslim friends.

Consider the following and prepare your own study for each topic:

### 6.3.1 Islamic concepts – compare or contrast with Christian practices

- *Hajj* – Christians are pilgrims, but what is the nature of their pilgrimage? > Read Heb 11:9-10; 13-16; 1Pe 1:1
- *Qibla* – What “direction” do we face in prayer? > Jn 11:41-42; Heb 12:2
- *Shahada* – What is your confession? Do Christians have a creed? > Dt 6:4; Jn 17:3; 1Ti 2:4-5
- *Shariah* – What law do you follow? > Ro 6:14; Jn 13:34

- *Wudu* – Do you practice special “rituals” of cleansing? > Eph 5:25-27; Ps 51:10; 32:1-4
- *Zakat* – How much are Christians expected to give to the poor and needy? What is the importance of our attitude in giving? > 2Co 9:7+15
- *Zamzam* – What is the story behind that special well? > Ge 21:19; Jn 4:13-14

### 6.3.2 The Prophets and what we can learn from them

Remember that Muslims “believe” in all the prophets sent by God. But many know hardly more than their names! This provides us with an excellent opening to introduce these men and women from the Biblical records. Take time to study together the lives and lessons taught to us from

- *Adam and Christ* – Did you ever wish you could start your life all over again? > Ge 3; Ro 5:19-21; 1Co 15:22
- *Abraham, the Friend of God* > see special outline in the appendix of *REACH OUT*
- *Isaac and Ishmael* – Who was the true son of promise? > Ge 17:19; chapters 19 – 21; Heb 11:17-18; Gal 4:28-31
- *Jacob, the man who struggled with God* – Can we expect God to care for our life? > Ge 27-32; 32:22-32
- *Joseph, from slave to ruler* – How can we learn to forgive those who intend to harm us? > Ge 37-50; 50: 20-21
- *Moses, the man who walked with God* – Can we have a face-to-face relationship with God as our guide through life? > Ex 2-3; 14:19-20; 33:7-9, 2Co 3:7-18

### 6.3.3 Life events, feasts and life-style issues

These are natural entry points where we meet with Muslims for celebrations or talk about questions on life and death. (see Appendix *Questionnaire Models*) These could include

- *Birth, name giving, circumcision, wedding and funerals* – It is good to ask questions about or at these times of socializing and celebration, and you could reflect how to share ideas from the Bible that can be helpful for your Muslim friend. You may want to start them thinking by asking: If a Baby is born with a pure, clean and without sin, why bring a sacrifice at names giving festival? – Why do (some) Christians not circumcise their boys; how does it matter > Gal 6:15? – What is the secret of a happy, fulfilled marriage between a Christian husband and wife? – What will God say, when you stand before Him? Is there any way we can know that we will

not go to hell? Are you sure it is smart to wait until Day of Judgment to find out what your final destination will be?

- *Muslim and Christian feasts* – What is the significance of your big feasts Eid-ul-Adha (qorban – sacrifice) and Eid-ul-Fitr (end of Ramadaan celebrations)? Do you know why we celebrate Easter, Christmas, Ascension Day...? – There are many, many spiritual lessons that can be drawn from these feasts.
- *Life issues* such as family life, upbringing of our children, polygamous marriages, cleanliness, bad influences through charms, curses, evil eye etc could all be departure points into a reflection on Biblical principles and examples that govern our lives as Christians in the family of God.

### 6.3.4 Desires and longings that we share as human beings

Men and women all over the world are searching for...

Peace	Joy	Love	Forgiveness	Assurance	Truth
Power over sin, bad influences and evil forces					

These are inner needs that create a vacuum in the human soul that can only be filled by our creator himself. (*For many of these topics we have specially designed gospel outlines that can be received on request.*)

### 6.3.5 Stories with a special message

Everybody loves to listen to an interesting story, especially if he can identify himself with one or the other character in it. Life Challenge Africa offers a number of great stories in tract form that you could share with a Muslim audience.

- *The debt of Rashid Davids* > Accepting pardon rather than trying to pay ones own debt
- *A letter that came from a far country* > A bold journey to receive God's wonderful offer
- *The wisdom of a sheikh* > Finding deliverance from the flood of sins
- *The gold coin that did not ring true* > The danger of trusting into false security and wealth
- *Mustafa and the El-Hanouchi* > The power of hatred and the joy of a life of safety
- *Faithful unto death* > The true testimony of one condemned to death
- *Converging Destinies* > Reflections about Jerusalem, peace and the Messiah

### 6.3.6 Useful questions for deeper conversations on spiritual matters

- What do you think of the Messiah?
- We all need divine guidance to make it safely through the journey of life. How can we make sure that we arrive at the right destination, the one we all desire to reach?
- What are the benefits of the church as compared to the ‘ummah’ in Muslim society?
- What is true repentance? How can we be sure to be forgiven?
- How do you raise your children in an increasingly secular society?
- How do race and colour affect our religious practices?

Some of these topics present opportunities to “meet around the table” for a more extensive conversation in either family or organized settings. These will not only create opportunities for witness in word, but also for relating through our lives as well (1Th 2:8).

### **Recommended Literature for Chapter 6:**

**Touching the soul of Islam.** Bill Musk, 1988.

**Taking the Good News to the Muslims: An Educational Book for Students in Extension Studies.** Evangel Publishing House, 1987.

**Called from Islam to Christ: Why Muslims Become Christians.** Jean-Marie Gaudeul, 1999.

**From the Straight Path to the Narrow Way: Journeys of Faith.** David H. Greenlee, 2005.

**Islam and Christian Witness.** Martin Goldsmith, 1982.

**“The Search for the Golden Key.”** Mike Wakely, *EMQ* 40/1 (January 2004), 12-22.

**Christian Witness among Muslims.** Africa Christian Press, 1971.

**Chronological Bible Story Telling: The Gentle Way to the Heart.** Christel Eric, 1998.

*Specifically about Reaching Women:*

**Daughters of Islam – Building Bridges with Muslim Women.** Miriam Adeney, 2002.

**Partners or Prisoners? Christian Thinking about Women and Islam.** Ida Glaser and Napoleon John, 1998.

**Lifting the Veil: The World of Muslim Women.** Phil and Judy Parshall, 2002.

**Producing Mature Fruit.** Annette Hall, 1999.

**Women in Islam.** Christel Eric, (DVD, video), 2003.

## 7 Strategic Approaches

### 7.1 Designing a strategy

The word ‘strategy’ is related to the word ‘*strateuo*’, which means war, and is taken from the Greek word ‘*strategos*’, a military commander, and implies military leadership in battle. So when we speak of a strategy to reach out to lost people, we mean that we think over, plan and implement the best way to reach out to a specified group of people, in our case the Muslims within our context. It is obvious that there are many possibilities to form a strategy. It depends on a number of factors.

Does spiritual work want a strategy, or is this a carnal device? One can also ask, does one build a high-rise building without a plan? Or does a surgeon not train and diligently prepare to perform an operation? Does one build an airplane or conduct a great evangelistic campaign without a plan? Of course not!

But are we not to be led by the Holy Spirit, when we do evangelism? Of course, we do not dare to evangelize without asking God to guide us in our approach and witness. But even our Lord Jesus and the Apostles worked according to a strategy, which no doubt originated with God. Just before his ascension to heaven our Lord reminded them: “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses (1) in Jerusalem, and (2) in all Judea and Samaria, and (3) to the ends of the earth!” (Ac 1:8). Just before that he had told them: “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you!*” (Mt 28:18-20). We should stop and ponder on what obligation these Words convey to us.

They carry the divine strategy: Go to all nations and instruct them who God really is and what He has done for us. You will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth. Obey everything he has commanded us. We are given his authority and the promise that he will be with us always. We need not be timid. To overcome our human limitations the Holy Spirit will be in us and provide us with all we lack. So we, in turn, extend this strategy to meet our need in our situation. We are commanded to do something about the lost Muslims in our area.

#### 7.1.1 What if I am all by myself?

When I am the only person with such a vision, the question is whether I intend to just do my little share, or whether I will endeavour to share the vision with others in an effort to really make an impact. It is really the God-given task to the Church, and local churches need to wake up to this challenge and to respond to it. Mission is not an option. It is our obligation to God – and to the lost.

### 7.1.2 Operating together

When Christians join hands in an effort to fulfil the Great Commission within the local context, something really important is beginning to happen. Which logical steps should one follow? What strategy can be followed to reach the aim?

Nothing important works “somehow”. It takes some form of leadership, pooling of ideas, and advice from experienced men and women to begin with. Any mission or organization with a similar vision will be glad to provide guidance and training, even though they may not live and operate nearby.

### 7.1.3 Considerations for the outreach

Developing a strategy which equips Christians for Muslim evangelism is not an easy task, for there is no standard strategy to reach all peoples. We will now try to look at the criteria that need to be considered.

### 7.1.4 Identifying the focus group

Our strategy will have to take into account the given circumstances in which to operate. Therefore it is wise to make an assessment of our situation:

Research Question	Assessment
1. Do we live and operate in a predominantly Islamic environment, or are the Muslims a minority?	
2. Do we live and operate in an urban or a rural, tribal area?	
3. Are the Muslims around us educated or perhaps rather simple peasants with very basic formal education?	
4. Are they orthodox Muslims, or do they follow a form of Folk Islam?	
5. How 'at home' are they in their own religion?	
6. Are they antagonistic against the Christian faith and trained to resist it?	
7. What is the testimony of the Christians in the eyes of the people around them?	
8. Do the various churches cooperate in an Association of Evangelicals, or are they competing with each other?	

9. Is there already an effort to win Muslims?	
10. Are Muslims and non-Muslims mixing easily?	
11. Do Christian young people marry Muslims and become by that Muslims?	
12. What should be done and what must not be done to befriend the Muslim people in our area in order to acquaint them with the Gospel?	

The answers to these questions will help us to design the right strategy.

### **7.1.5 Breaking down prejudice: pre-evangelism**

An ever so important rule is to start with people where they are! In the case of Muslims, they are purposely misinformed and by that very suspicious toward the Bible and the Christian faith. To change this, we have to first clear the rubble in the way. The aim is to create a reasonable openness towards the Christian message in a community. Best, a broadly based effort should be made to lessen any existing antagonism and to clarify misinformation. This is called pre-evangelism. It aims to correct specific false impressions people may have about the Gospel.

The only really suitable vehicle for that is the media. The most comprehensive form to do it would be on TV, but that is excessively expensive. A long-term effort in the local press is second best. Readers' letters and articles will be helpful. But they must in no wise be aggressive! They should merely inform about aspects of the Christian faith that are generally misunderstood, not mentioning Islam or Muslims.

Another even more effective effort is an informative 'flyer' that is distributed to every home in a given area. The appearance of a newspaper (four pages is fine) is cost-effective and neutral. The headlines and topics must be relevant and appealing (and not only to Christians!) and not be aggressive. If this is done once a month or once every three months, it is likely to be noted. All this we call broad-casting.

## **7.2 Choosing an appropriate approach**

People and people groups differ. It is therefore important to develop a mission strategy to fit the given situation. There may well be instances that Muslims visit big evangelistic 'crusades'. But to conclude that this is good enough a tool to reach the Muslims is totally wrong.

In addition there is always a danger that lack of experience may mislead new workers to uncritically copy method that appears to be successful in other areas or countries. This could limit or even damage an evangelistic effort in our area. Let us take for example the evangelistic contact with members of the opposite sex. In contrast to a missionary in an Islamic country in Asia, who never witnessed directly to a Muslim lady, well-known author John Gilchrist clarifies that, “in South Africa, however, such restrictions hardly exist. Christian men may freely witness to Muslim women, whether single or married.”

### **7.2.1 Learning what helps a Muslim to get to know Christ**

Which contributing factors have helped Muslims to see the Light? Dr Jean-Marie Gaudeul researched the conversion stories of hundreds of Muslims and compiled his findings in *‘Called from Islam to Christ – Why Muslims become Christians’*. He notes five factors that motivated their conversion

- they were attracted by the personality of Jesus Christ
- It was the quest for inner certainty about God and the eternal
- they preferred the Christian community to the Muslim ‘ummah’
- is was a longing for forgiveness, the central message of the Gospel, but for which Islam provides no assurance
- it was a hunger for a personal relationship with God in prayer

### **7.2.2 Traditional and modern methods**

Our world changes with a breath-taking speed. The old order that made our societies function has dissolved. The ‘urban culture’ is replacing the rural one. Our traditional and approved value system has just about collapsed. TV and video have deeply changed the thinking and worldview of the masses of the people.

That demands that the methods we employ for evangelism and worship must be contemporary and appropriate. Traditional churches find this sometimes difficult to apply. In many countries Christians have developed their own style of worship and singing, but evangelism still carries traditional forms and methods. They still work! But surely, there must be more appropriate ways to convey the Message of God to the great majority of people that have been alienated from God.

Let us not misunderstand the issue. This must in no way effect the Biblical message! But this message must be appealing and understandable to the outsiders. In our case it must be attractive and accessible to Muslims. So we have to change the ‘wrapping’.

## 7.3 The choice of outreach models

There are some basic models to conduct an outreach to the Muslim community. The choice of the most suitable is determined by the degree of openness we can find among the Muslims, and by the availability of the Christians.

### 7.3.1 Personal or friendship evangelism

This is the most effective way to share our faith. We have to be aware, however, that the Qur'an strongly discourages a friendship between Muslims and Christians:



O ye who believe! take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust.

*Surah 5:51*

Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers; if any do that in nothing will there be help from Allah; except by way of precaution that ye may guard yourselves from them.

*Surah 3:28*

The Bible also discourages 'friendship with the world' (Ro 12:2, 2Co 6:17, Ja 4:4 and 1Jn 2:15), but it refers to the evil in this world rather than to people. When we befriend outsiders with the intention of introducing them to Christ, this cannot possibly be wrong.

### How do we practice friendship evangelism?

We do it by deepening casual personal contacts in the hope of lowering the defences on the other side. Since most people are not easily persuaded to listen and accept religious concepts unfamiliar to them, or what they consider perverted and false, a trust relationship is extremely helpful to open their minds to new ideas. The Gospel is such a new idea.

Trust-building takes time and personal investment. Also, it does not guarantee results.



With a certain Muslim friend we spent many an evening talking, sometimes until after midnight. He came to us for help when he had problems in his marriage, when his car had broken down, when he needed help after he was stabbed with a knife and when he had friction with his mother. And one day he quite desperately asked us: "Can you not just be my friends? Must

you be Christians also?" Well, we could not and eventually we drifted apart. But he fully knows and understands in his heart that Christ loves him and died for his sins. He knows that he cannot earn heaven, but that he depends on God's grace, which is found only in Jesus. He also knows that he is a hypocrite and deep down in his heart dishonest. He knows all he needs to find salvation. And maybe he will still make use of that knowledge one day. But we have given him all we could and that is what witness for our Lord is all about. *Nehls*

This is called 'felt-needs-evangelism'. It demonstrates Christian charity, care and love.

We may not have great gifts. We may not be evangelists. But we should be His witnesses, and we can all love people into the Kingdom of God. That is friendship evangelism. And that is what we can all do. It is the ideal counterpart to literature evangelism.

### 7.3.2 Literature and media evangelism

Unfortunately, we must accept the sad fact that the majority of Christians are very reluctant about a commitment to participate in home-to-home visitation evangelism. They may feel incompetent and by that insecure, when it comes to witnessing to people of another religion, of which they know little or nothing. This is understandable, but it is not necessary to stay ignorant. Also, not everyone is an extrovert or gifted to lead an informed conversation. But there is another option!

Many Christians already have some, contact, however superficial, with the

*Let Muslim evangelism become a people movement!*

one or other Muslim and are, by that token, a potential witness to them.

Irrespective of how introverted or unprepared for cross-cultural witness a Christian may be, he/she can select a booklet, a video or audio tape that are specifically designed for Muslims, and let these speak for them. These should be on the book table of every church.

Everyone can, in a friendly fashion, pass on something to read. Everyone can later ask the reader about his/her opinion and, if neutral or positive, give a more comprehensive piece of literature or video! If Muslims have queries -

*All this is possible when a Christian with a burden and love for Muslims begins to arrange a media service.*

there is a booklet which does provide the answer. One will just have to read the available literature in order to be informed.

This witness can hold the key to Muslim outreach – and every city and town should make use of it.

### Starting media evangelism

A media colporteur must first of all begin to train him/herself in the basics of Muslim evangelism. At the same time he/she can inquire which media in Muslim evangelism are available, order samples and select the most suitable. Ideally there should be...

- ▶ a contact-maker that is pre-evangelistic and creates curiosity and an interest for more
- ▶ a booklet that presents the Gospel in a way that Muslims with their very different disposition find easy to understand
- ▶ a booklet that deals with the common arguments Muslims present against the Christian message
- ▶ a Bible study course for Muslims
- ▶ At a later stage suitable material to disciple converts should be added

*(See appendix for a list of resource materials you can order from Life Challenge Africa.)*

The Muslim Media Outreach Facilitator, as we may call him/her, should seek some Christians with a definite interest in reaching Muslims as counsellors for assistance. Now it is time to introduce the project to the leadership of the various churches, offering a short introduction to the church members on a Sunday morning. Here the evangelistic concept is introduced and a brief introduction to the material is provided. Then an invitation is extended to the Christians to use the first booklet for the target person the individual Christian has in mind. A suitable logo is:

*'Introduce the Muslim you know to Jesus!  
You are his only chance to find the saviour!'*

### 7.3.3 Internet evangelism

The electronic medium is a relatively new communication tool. Yet the possibility for contact with Muslims knows no limit. Of course, one will have to have access to a computer and the Internet. And one will have to know how to make contacts.

We might consider designing our own web page with which to evangelize Muslims, but such web sites already exist. Try the following websites:

- [www.answering-islam.org](http://www.answering-islam.org)
- [www.the-good-way.com](http://www.the-good-way.com)
- [www.debate.org.uk](http://www.debate.org.uk)
- [www.injil.org](http://www.injil.org)
- [www.aboutisa.com](http://www.aboutisa.com)

These are just a few – look up more in the Appendix. What can we do? First of all we need to be equipped for such work. That is needed on all levels. Then there is a constant need for Christians to follow up contacts that have been established by the above websites. Then there are “chat-rooms” in which countless Muslims are seeking contact with other people. Many of these live in Islamic countries, and we might just open to them their golden opportunity. This offers tremendous opportunities that still need to be used.

### 7.3.4 Home-to-home outreach

This is the way to make sure that all Muslim families within a given area are contacted. How can this be implemented?

**F**irstly the initiator or team leader recruits Christian witnesses and arranges basic training in preparation for the outreach. If it is too comprehensive, it makes the participants insecure, for they may feel they cannot handle all the information. If it is too superficial, they are likely to be discouraged when they meet aggressive Muslims who confront them with questions they cannot answer. Ideally one begins with the basics, and deals with other issues as these come up.

*(Our 10-weeks course A CALL TO WITNESS is a good example for this approach.)*

In order to reach all the Muslim homes in a specific area, a survey is recommended. This way it is established which households are Islamic. The team leader records this for reference.

**W**hile the training is being done, the team leader produces simple street maps that indicate which homes are occupied by Muslims. Then the participants form teams of two or three for the actual visitation. Ideally each team consists of a female and a male witness, at least one of the two confident enough to begin a conversation.

Each of the teams is then allotted its mission field with a manageable number of households that are marked on the little hand drawn map. To complete this task may take a considerable time. Therefore each team should be dedicated to the task and pledge to complete it.

Experience has shown that it is easier to arrange a weekly outreach (evening) when the teams first meet for prayer, then attend to their area, and return for a short evaluation with helpful input by the team leader.

Such an outreach may well be done by a local church or be a combined effort of several congregations.

**N**ow you have knocked at the door! Just imagine there is a knock at your door and a couple of Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses come to involve you in a discussion. That is the way Muslims may feel when we knock at their door. We come somewhat as unwanted intruders. That can be quite stressful for the two witnesses, particularly if they are sensitive by nature.

The first few seconds actually decide how the witnesses will be received. It may well be by a welcome, but also by a polite but cool "no, thank you!"

If a team stands at the door with tie, jacket and a Bible under the arm, the response may be different than to a team in customary dress and with a cheerful introduction, like: "We are two thieves and would like to steal a few minutes of your time". That is an "icebreaker", a humorous way to relax a situation, which can easily dispel suspicion or prejudice. The host must not feel threatened or intimidated.

*We want to open not only the door of the home, but also of the hearts. Friendliness is decidedly better received than stern preaching.*

While we should not hide our identity and purpose, our first visit should fulfil one particular purpose, and that is to be welcome the next time.

**W**hat then could we say when the door opens? **A good beginning** is to invite the people to seek a personal contact with God. It should be obvious that this badly needed in a world of chaos, envy, hatred and strife. Muslims will hardly hesitate to tell you that they, being Muslims, are sincere believers and pray five times a day. "We are well aware of this and commend you for your sincerity, but actually we mean something else. Personal contact with God, as in a human relationship, needs exchange of thought. We would like to encourage you to make it a daily practice not only to talk to God, but also to listen to Him." That is generally a dimension Muslims do not know, so one can explain: "We mean that you listen to what He revealed to us in His Word. This is what every person should know intimately."

So far the word 'Bible' was not mentioned, but every Muslim will know what we speak about. They may respond by saying: "We have the Qur'an and read it." - "Well, that is wonderful! Do you read it every day and do you understand it?" This is a tricky question, for very few Muslims would do

that. They are likely to evade the question. Most Muslims may be able to read Arabic, but do not understand it, but the reading brings merit only when it is read in Arabic. We may ask questions about this and in contrast tell Muslims about the adventure of our daily devotions. And then we can say that we, as Christians, thrive on the promises of God and delight ourselves in what He means to us, and what He has done for us. We are now in the midst of a spiritual conversation!

We should also show the needed consideration by asking whether our visit is convenient, or whether we should come at a time more appropriate for this topic. **At the end** we should express our gratitude for the hospitality and time given to us. In brief, we should leave behind a perfect testimony on which to build when we return a week or two later. We do well not to come over as argumentative or as a nuisance to them.

“We are doing a **religious survey** of this area and would kindly ask you for a few minutes to fill in a questionnaire”, is another way of approach. If well designed, a questionnaire will lead to crucial questions, which in turn are likely to lead to a fruitful witness. We request permission to ask questions regarding the family. No names need to be given. After some general questions to dispel insecurity or fear, we may come to the ‘religious’ part. “What is your religion?” This is a question answered by all Muslims with enthusiasm. “Are you practicing your religion?” may be a follow-up question. Again one is likely to get an affirmative response. “Why do you follow and practice your religion?” is a dicey question. The answer could be one of conviction, or a simple statement that they were born into it.

**T**his is the point when one may politely and inquisitively put aside the questionnaire with a personal question: “Do you really mean to say that you leave your eternal destiny to the choice some ancestor of yours took, perhaps without knowledge or the ability to compare?” Again we are in a good spiritual conversation that we can guide and extend to the point when we can present the Gospel to the family. Again no haste is recommended, but rather the building up of trust and confidence and a personal relationship, which is so conducive to the sharing of the Good News of the Bible.

*(A sample of some questionnaires is found in the appendix under 8.3).*

### **How long should we maintain a contact?**

One should not be discouraged by the fact that, as a rule, it takes many months, even years, before prejudice slowly crumbles. At the same time the value and trustworthiness of Islam is questioned in the heart of the honestly listening Muslim, and his grasp of Jesus and His Gospel moves him/her to respond to the Saviour.

Obviously, one has no guarantee that the listeners will ever respond to our Lord. Yet, we have done what our commission dictates. We have faithfully

and intelligently shared the Good News of the Saviour. And that is all we are expected to do.

### 7.3.5 Witnessing to a passing contact

A more direct approach is decidedly advisable when one meets someone with little chance to ever meet him/her again. Here one could perhaps ask: “Do you know what is going to happen to you when you die?” or “When you die and stand before God, for what reason should He allow you into His paradise?”

Caring Christians will be able to think of many other ways to reach out.

### 7.3.6 Public debates

Public debates about the Bible and Islam have a long tradition. They have kicked up a lot of dust and are inclined to arouse the emotions. But they have at the same time helped to make the Biblical Christ known and they exposed Islamic claims to the truth as questionable.

C.G. Pfander, who debated in a highly scholarly manner with Muslim scholars in various countries in India and the Middle East in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, gave a classic example for such debates. His book, the *Mizan-ul Haqq* (‘The Balance of Truth’), and the Islamic response, the *Izar-ul Haqq* are still in circulation. Unfortunately, the influence of humanism has prompted even Christians to criticize Pfander’s presentation, although no honest reader will find a lack of genuine love and respect for his opponents. However, it is thoroughly honest, and the truth is a real stone of offence to Islam.

The late Ahmed Deedat, a Muslim of South Africa, revived public debates between Muslims and Christians in the 1960s to mid-1990s. He challenged well-known Christian preachers on the trustworthiness of the Bible and the life of Christ, particularly the crucifixion. His strength was in his rhetoric and the ability to pick opponents who were all too often unacquainted with the necessary apologetics. The resulting booklets and video presentations of such debates are still frequently used by Muslims to ridicule the Christian position.

This implies that debates have their place, but need very well equipped presenters. They need to be spiritual persons with love who know the Scriptures and Islam intimately.

While debates invariably create an emotional, and by that token often irrational atmosphere, they present an opportunity to make the Biblical message known. They also allow us to question the integrity of Islam. Honest seekers were and are given food for thought, and that is undoubtedly good.

We know that in Ghana and Kenya such “road-side debates” have muzzled attempts by Muslims to publicly attack the Bible and Christ, and that as a result Muslims have come to know Jesus as their Saviour.

One should think twice, however, before using public debates as a method in Muslim evangelism today. They may well backfire and create hostility rather than openness.

### 7.3.7 Conclusion

Whatever method of evangelization is applied, it must be discrete enough not to embarrass those Muslims that are contacted. They may be open to listen to the Gospel, but resent being exposed to other Muslims as being interested in the Christian faith.

It is very important that Muslims do not only learn about the Biblical message by reading about it, but that they can also see it in action, not so much in church activities, but by meeting real Christians and watching their life style. That obviously necessitates personal involvement and a life committed to Christ.

## 7.4 The spiritual conversation

### Building a basis for a spiritual conversation

Making contact with a person is best done when it comes naturally, and the opportunities for this are many, once we overcome our inhibitions to befriend Muslims. Unless it is a passing opportunity to speak, we are well advised not to start a conversation on a spiritual note. Rather show a personal interest.

Here are some ‘heart’ rules:

- Begin a relationship by showing interest and care. Promote trust rather than argument.
- Muslims like all other people have an inborn desire for unreserved acceptance, recognition and love.

Sharing the Good News of God is first and foremost our glorification of God. We do that by showing our devotion and fascination with Him and our total appreciation of what He has done for us. Doctrinal issues, as impotent as they are, must take a second place.

This is likely to lead to a more relaxed atmosphere and provides a better basis for a fruitful conversation later.

*Fear is the main factor  
preventing Muslims from believing in Jesus.*

In the back of our minds we should always be aware of the inhibition that hinders Muslims from accepting Christ:

- It cannot really be the mind, for all the evidence speaks for the truth of the Gospel.
- It cannot be the heart, for what we find in Jesus Christ is infinitely more desirable than what Islam has to offer.
- It is, in fact, fear. Fear is the single most inhibiting factor in the minds and hearts of Muslims that hinders an open-minded conversation on spiritual matters.

It is the fear of stepping outside a system that controls the hearts and minds of the people. Muslims are afraid of the immense pressure from their loved ones and society, should they decide to follow Christ. But they are also afraid of loosing whatever Islam promises.

Even an enthusiastic display of unreserved faith in Islam is ultimately based on that inner fear. People who fear are not prepared to listen with an open mind. They lack the readiness to accept truth, even if they find it more trustworthy and appealing than their own religion.

Honesty and true conviction are always marked by the readiness to listen, compare and decide on merit. Where that is missing, a believer turns into a fanatic, whatever persuasion he may hold.

That is why it is said of fanatics that they have an open mouth, but a closed mind.

### **Aim for a good start**

When speaking with Muslims (as with any other outsider, for that matter), let us avoid familiar stereotype clichés. Rather let us build a bridge (not a wall!) in order to find common ground and to **meet a person at the point of his or her need and interest**. This demands that we do not begin with preaching, but listening! Let us build up confidence rather than saying our ‘little verse’ or giving a tract under the false impression that this fulfils our responsibility towards such a person. But rather let us identify with a person that Christ has put in our way. Let us take him/her lovingly by the hand and endeavour to see his/her problem through his/her eyes and to lead him/her step by step to a real knowledge of the Saviour. Don’t come over as a ‘preacher’, but first of all as a friend! This may take time, but it is time well invested.

It should be our endeavour to lead a person from where he/she is to where they should be in God’s sight.

We are to convey spiritual content to people who may be blind to it. This demands empathy, understanding, tact, sensitivity and sensibility - and that is love. Muslim evangelism is first of all an act of love on behalf of our Lord.

## How to lead a spiritual conversation

It goes without saying that it is the aim and purpose of every true Christian to share Christ with other people. The big question is: What is the best way to do it? Is there a 'best way'? - Yes!

It should be one of our targets to keep the door open for further conversation.

*It is the way of kindness, tact, consideration, humility and, of course, love. We want to create a spiritual longing for God as he really is in the hearts of the people we meet.*

## Taking baby steps

It is natural and right that we wish to convey as much of the Gospel as possible. But there is wisdom in proportioning it. Too much at once may exceed the capacity of the listener and come over as threatening.

Like everybody else, a Muslim not only needs to hear, but also to 'digest' what he/she has heard. This takes time, particularly, when the 'stomach' is already full.

It is a good strategy to be content to convey one good point at a time and leave the message to be digested. Too much at a time is likely to confuse the listener or let him feel pressurised.

However: This does not at all exempt us from sharing the gospel comprehensively, seeking to bring across gospel concepts that are especially suitable for Muslims or to pursue a Chronological Story-Telling program (*see Appendix 8.5 and 8.6*).

## Asking questions

Have we ever wondered why we like people who show an interest in what we are and do? Let us think about that for a moment.

Asking questions displays our interest in the other. It is not threatening. On the contrary, it transmits a feeling of acceptance. It is part of human nature to incline toward those who take us seriously. And since we are made up of body, soul and spirit, we all have needs for these three components. But let us address these needs one at a time. It is advisable to begin the get-to-know-each-other with the peripheral and then proceed to the more personal level. A religious debate that does not touch the deeper emotion is not likely to leave an impression. On the other hand, an exchange regarding what God really means to me and why, can be very personal.

**Listening** is indeed a very important aspect of a conversation. To bombard the other with our 'message' or 'testimony' or even Bible verses, may leave the 'witness' with the feeling to have passed on the Gospel solidly, but is

likely to push the listener onto the defensive, or, worse, is an invitation to an unnecessary confrontation.

Asking questions is a good way to slowly discover the other person and to lead to a more personal level of communication. In turn we open ourselves to the other. That makes the other and us vulnerable, but also brings us closer together.

Christians with little experience or knowledge about Muslims may prefer to pass a piece of specialized literature to a Muslim requesting his/her opinion about it. This presupposes, of course, that the witness has read it before. It is also a good move to invite a Muslim to view a suitable Christian video together with us. The 'Jesus Film' (Note the new version *The Life of the Messiah* which has been specifically adapted for Muslim viewers!) really lends itself to that. But even that should really only follow a personal introduction.

### **What kind of questions does one ask?**

If a little 'bridge' has been built on a personal level, it is only natural to say...

- *"One hears so much about Islam these days, and this raises questions that need to be answered. Can you help me?"*
- *"I hear (or noticed) that you pray five times a day. Why do you do that?"*
- *"Why does everybody do it the same way?"*
- *"After saying the prayer 6200 times every year, will not a routine kill a genuine devotion when doing it? Is there not a danger of prayer becoming a mere habit?"*
- *"I hear (or noticed) that you bring sacrifices. Is that done in the same way and for the same purpose as God commanded to Abraham or Moses? What does the offering of a sacrifice achieve?"*
- *"Muslims consider Islam to be the religion of Abraham. In which way?"*
- *"Have you been on the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)? How does it feel to be there with hundreds of thousands of other Muslims? Does it not cost a lot of money? Why do you kiss the black stone in the Ka'ba? Jews and Christians would view this as an act of idol worship. Why did Muhammad, although he introduced a new religion to Arabia, keep many of the pagan rituals?"*

Obviously, the person asking these questions should know the Biblical (and Islamic) answers! They can all be found in these workbooks.

There are questions without end. Each one should be asked with a purpose in mind: the Muslim friend should begin to think! He should begin to compare!

While some Muslims may just tell us to leave them alone, others will respond. And that gives us the opportunity to develop God's plan of salvation from the

beginning. We may counter by saying: “Oh, we see this quite differently. The Bible teaches that ...” And now we can share God’s Word.

## 7.5 Setting our goal

We could see the need for Muslim evangelism and the many opportunities and ways to do it. There is an unrealized possibility for every believer in every city or town. When is the time for action? It is now!

After acknowledging the need for Muslim evangelism, we have to set the stage for our involvement. First of all preparation is needed to match the task. It needs to be done on two levels. There is, first of all, the spiritual preparation. That is our availability to God for His task and an intensification of our study of His Word. Then comes the mental preparation, and that consists of the specific learning necessary to equip us for the work.

While this is in progress, one should seek God’s counsel on which specific task or outreach model to choose. Once that starts coming into focus, it will be important to pray for and recruit fellow workers. Then information about and the choice of and ordering of literature or other media that is to be used, needs to progress.

All that needs time. But preparation is not an end in itself. Therefore, a time frame should be set from the beginning. Do we need a month? Or two or three? That is fine, for proper preparation is essential. But set a time goal to make your first contact with a Muslim. And expect to be a leader! Set the pace! Say: “*Here I am, send me!*” (Isa 6:8).

## 7.6 Searching our hearts

Muslims all too often isolate themselves and live within their own community. Many are indoctrinated and fierce in their criticism of Christianity. That successfully scared Christians away from targeting Muslims for evangelism.

Are Christians really too complacent, too fearful or too occupied with their own concerns to make an effort to get to know their Muslim neighbours? Are they so self-centred or church-centred that they are not mission-minded? Do they lack the concern to understand Muslims and their faith, convictions and fears? Do they really want to bring the Gospel to them in a way that they will not only hear it, but also understand the Biblical message? We must refuse to accept that! What then can we do?

The question really is, what am I going to do? We are looking at an immense task. None of us can tackle it alone. But each one of us can do his/her share.

If that is done wisely, many, many Muslims will have the chance to hear and understand the Gospel and commit their lives to our Lord Jesus.

Why do we not share the potential of the outlined evangelism strategy with other Christians in our town or city? Why don't we pool our resources and learn how to relate to our Muslim neighbour? In doing just that, the whole Muslim community can indeed be reached with the Good News of Jesus, the Saviour!

*The message of the Gospel is infinitely more attractive than the message of Islam. We cannot deny it to those lost Muslims we have the chance to meet.*

While every effort to present the Gospel to Muslims is welcome, a united action of many Christians and churches or groups is infinitely better.

- It should be the aim to coordinate and consolidate all committed Christian groups in a given area for a well-prepared outreach.
- Unless Muslim evangelism becomes a peoples' movement it is most likely to fail.

*Think: What one person can do in a hundred years a hundred people may be able to accomplish in one year.*

## 7.7 Epilogue

In the light of the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus, Muslim evangelism has never been an option for the Church. It is His command! The question is not so much whether we want to do it, but how. The New Testament gives helpful advice:



For our appeal does not spring from error or uncleanness, nor is it made with guile; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel, so we speak, not to please men, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never used either words of flattery, as you know, or a cloak for greed, as God is witness; nor did we seek glory from men, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gently among you, like a nurse taking care of her children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

*1Thessalonians 2:3-8*

And now let us join hands to complete the unfinished task!



In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord! Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have! But do this with gentleness and respect!

*1Peter 3:15*

And let us not say: “Maybe later.” – For “*Delay is the most subtle form of denial!*”



## We will remember:

1. Muslim Evangelism is not optional. We are commissioned to do it!
2. Muslim Evangelism is personal Evangelism. It is not done by inviting a Muslim to our church!
3. Muslim Evangelism is specialized Evangelism. It is not done by handing out any kind of tract.
4. Our approach and the literature we use must be designed to be intelligible to Muslims and try to meet their needs.
5. Muslim Evangelism is more difficult and less ‘successful’. It needs special dedication.
6. Muslim Evangelism is not uniform. It is addressing people, and these differ widely from area to area and situation to situation.
7. Muslims normally meet real Christians with suspicion and prejudice. This must shown to be unjustified.
8. Begin a relationship by showing interest and care. Promote trust rather than argument.
9. Muslims like all other people have an inborn desire for unreserved acceptance, recognition and love.
10. We share the Good News by showing our devotion and fascination with God and our total appreciation of who He is and what He has done for us.
11. Doctrinal issues, as important as they are, must take a second place.
12. Kindness, tact, consideration and humility are our way of expressing God’s love. We want to create a spiritual longing for God as he really is in the hearts of the people we meet.
13. An effective outreach to Muslims needs many participants. It really should involve all Christians.
14. There are various models of Evangelism one may choose to apply: Friendship and Caring Evangelism, door to door Evangelism, even

Internet Evangelism or public debates. But every outreach should major on well organized Media Evangelism.

15. Any outreach ought to begin with prayer and preparation and dedication.
16. The witness will be loving and caring, seeking to be understanding, tactful and considerate, humble, compassionate and faithful.
17. The witness will be sensitive to cultural considerations such as food and drink, dress, male-female taboos etc.
18. To be effective, an appropriate strategy will be drawn up, suited for the type of people to be addressed. That requires some basic knowledge about the people to be reached.
19. The use of selected and suitable media is of crucial importance.
20. To clarify spiritual truths the use of illustrations or stories is most helpful.
21. The witness will aim to be able to substantiate what he/she says. When we say, “the Bible says...”, he/she should be able to show where it does, even if this can only be done at a later visit.
22. Every outreach group should set an achievable target. Whoever has no clearly defined goal will be doomed to work insignificantly on an aimless undertaking.
23. And yet – one will have to take a step at a time, beginning NOW.
24. There is no time to waste! Remember: Delay is the most subtle form of denial!

## **Recommended Literature for Chapter 7:**

**Sharing God's Love with Muslims.** Bill Dennett, The Bible League: 1992.

**The Christian Witness to the Muslim.** John Gilchrist, Jesus to the Muslims: 1988.

**The Great Commission - You and the Muslims.** Gerhard Nehls, LCA: 1992.

**Welcome Home - Discipling Muslim Background Believers.** Horst Pietzsch, LCA: 2003.

**The Church is Bigger than You Think: Structures and Strategies for the Church in the 21st Century.** Patrick Johnstone, 1998.

**Planning Strategies for World Evangelization.** Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser (Edts.), 1980.

**Church Planting in the Arab-Muslim World.** Wendell P. Evans, 1982.

**Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: a Reader.** Ralph D. Winter & Steven C. Hawthorne (eds), 1981.

**"Missions and Web Outreach."** Tony Whittaker, *EMQ* 42/1 (January 2006), 106-112.

## 8 APPENDIX

### 8.1 The Challenge of Islam in Africa

#### 8.1.1 Introduction

##### **Muslims and the Christian message**

Islam has recently come into focus. It has a profile as never before in the Western world. Muslims gain more and more prominence in the media. They come over forcefully and with strong conviction. They present us with a challenge, which was unthinkable even 20 years ago. Many Christians are bewildered and are not sure how to respond. Can they really be reached with the Gospel?

Muslims just do not, as a rule, attend a Christian ‘Crusade’. The very word reminds them of the historical past when ‘warriors of the cross’ invaded their lands.

We can hardly expect a Muslim to accept an invitation to our church. But even if he/she does, our church service will be as strange and confusing to him/her, as a service in a mosque would be to us. What then is the answer?

Whenever keen Christians try to relate the Gospel to Muslims, they are likely to respond with arguments, which all too often throw the unaware witness off balance. An emotional debate results, and that serves little more than to save the face of the loser.

The consequent very limited personal contact between Christians and Muslims hinders a meaningful communication of the Gospel. There is a fear to witness to Muslims, which caused the very lamentable reality that the Great Commission of our Lord became the Great Omission. Muslims are largely overlooked when it comes to an evangelistic effort by a church. Indeed we hear that Christians say: “Muslims believe in the same God as we do. We follow different forms, but in essence it is much the same.” On such a basis the resulting contacts are confined to inter-faith dialogue with no intention to share the Good News.

To reach Muslims, we have to reconsider the old Biblical concepts of evangelism. Christ did not say, “Let them come to you!” but “Go! Proclaim! Teach them! Make disciples (pupils, learners)!”(Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15). Muslim evangelism is essentially a passing on of Biblical information from person to person.

These notes are meant to help change the unfortunate situation that still pervades. They want to assess the real hindrances but also correct the common mistakes and misunderstandings which have led to the assumption that Muslims are beyond reach.

## **Muslim evangelism is different**

We have already noted that Muslim Evangelism is quite distinct from the ‘normal’ preaching of the Gospel. It is true that a lot more effort and preparation is needed to reach the hearts of Muslims. This is caused by several factors.

Muslims live in quite a different context to ours. They have, as a rule, strong convictions about their faith, and in many subtle ways these contradict the Biblical message. Many religious words and concepts in Islam differ widely in meaning from the Biblical revelation and often complicate meaningful communication. To compound that, Muslims are not only religiously, but also socially and culturally embedded in a community that is providing them with a strong feeling of belonging. As comforting as this is, it also punishes any deviation from their faith. This is indeed an intimidating factor for anyone considering a change of faith.

## **Should Muslim evangelism not be left to missionaries?**

Since it is no secret that Muslim evangelism is a difficult task, it must surely be a job for missionaries and ministers?! Of course! But we should also understand that in Biblical terms every Christian is a missionary, saved and sent to share the Gospel. How many Muslims can one full-time missionary reach meaningfully with the Gospel in a year? A hundred? That would be an optimistic figure by any standard. Maybe 3000 in a lifetime? How many missionaries would it need to evangelize 2 Billion Muslims? 666.000 plus the administrators and those who see to the logistics. As it is, one has to accept the shocking reality that the present ratio is half a million Muslims to one missionary!

I dare to suggest that evangelistic and missionary work, i.e. the sharing of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, was never meant to be done by full-time workers only. Of course, the Scripture mentions evangelists (Eph 4:11; 2Ti 4:5 and Ac 21:8). But there is no mention of a gift of evangelism. It is a work, which is to be done by every believer. As in the days of the Book of Acts, every believer should be a witness of what they know and experience of Christ (Ac 1:8; Lu 24:46-48). The challenge “to go into all the world and to proclaim the Good News to all creation” is surely open-ended until our Lord returns. And for that purpose you and I have a calling to be His witnesses. It is, no doubt, significant that the word ‘witness’ in the Greek original reads *‘marturion’*, and that means martyr. To witness was a highly dangerous task in the early days of the Church, and still demands sacrificial involvement today, particularly when done to Muslim people. But we are called to be His witnesses!

So let the ministers and missionaries be the trainers to equip all Christians to “know how to answer every one” (1Pe 3:15).

That would, no doubt, set the scene for the evangelization of the world that we have been ordered to complete.

Since Muslims can really only be reached on a person to person basis, there is no way to fulfil the Great Commission of Christ, unless every Christian is willing to build a contact with a Muslim in his/her vicinity. That, of course, only applies to countries where Muslims and Christian live side by side. Islamic countries need professionals that are willing to share their lives with Muslims by moving there as ‘tent makers’.

### **The justification for Muslim evangelism**

Will Evangelism not lead to divisions within families, hardships and even the threat of the assassination of converts in extreme circumstances?

Yes! The answer to that is a question of values. We all believe in life after death – and we believe this with all our hearts. We also expect divine judgement of each and every person and a consequent eternal abode in either heaven or hell. Finding the right way to reach the right destination is therefore the most important aspect of life.

Both the Bible and Islamic teaching recognize this need, but differ fundamentally on how to find forgiveness, reconciliation to and peace with God. That is, they differ altogether on how a person can find the way to heaven.

The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is obtained only through Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for us. He alone died on the cross for the trespasses we committed against the order and will of God.

Islam, on the contrary, insists that heaven is obtained by merit, which is effected by personal effort. The death of Christ is denied as untrue, and by that His sacrifice for us is rejected.

Both these premises are mutually exclusive. Consequently, one position must be true and right and the other must essentially be wrong. Fortunately, evidence for the divine inspiration of our Scripture and for the crucifixion and death of our Lord Jesus is absolutely overwhelming. That convicts Islam to hold to a pseudo-truth. It also means that Islam, in spite of all the genuine sincerity of many of the Muslim people, deliberately or unwittingly withholds the saving knowledge of God and of Christ.

### **How then can Muslim evangelism be done?**

Muslim evangelism is a complex task. It is probably more difficult than the evangelism of most other unreached people groups. There are, of course, reasons for that. One of the contributing factors is the Muslims’ understandable fear of loosing the hope they have to enter paradise. They also fear being abandoned by family and friends and loosing their identity when becoming Christians. In addition we face considerable problems in the

effective communication of spiritual content because of differing thought and cultural patterns and concepts. That makes it imperative to deal with topics like understanding Muslims, culture, communication etc. before coming to what we want to learn in the first place.

Love, integrity and honesty are the foundation of Muslim evangelism, as for any other form of sharing God's Truth. Love will go the extra mile to discover the other person in his/her mindset and understand their world of thought and faith.

To balance this statement it must be said, however, that neither knowledge, nor skill or method is a prerequisite for (Muslim) evangelism. It is the work of God's Spirit in a person that affects spiritual understanding and enlightenment. Yet love, care, understanding and empathy are indispensable contributors.

*Evangelism is our witness to the  
evidenced and verified truth of God's salvation for man. It is  
comprehensible  
and understandable communication of information of and about  
God and His revealed Word to people who may have a  
very different worldview and by that  
a warped perception of God.*

### **Available training materials**

Two other parts of this set of Trainers' Books provide concise information about Islam in its historic and contemporary perspective, and Islam's arguments against the Biblical foundation. In addition to these Trainers' Textbooks, Student Manuals are available that deal with the same topics, but in a simpler and more concise manner.

'Battle for the Hearts', a professionally produced Video Seminar with 12x50 minute lessons on the same topics is available on CD ROM.

This volume attempts to briefly outline the present set-up of Islam, but concentrates on understanding Muslims within their social, cultural and religious environment in order to build a base for a spiritual conversation for an effective sharing the Gospel.

### **8.1.2 What is Islam?**

Islam sees itself not as just another religion next to Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism or Christianity. Islam claims to be the first and the only valid

religion in existence. It is more than a religion. It is a way of life. It integrates all aspects of life in itself, be it faith, prayer, social life, personal hygiene, matrimony, commerce, politics and everything else.

It is, in fact, a system that governs and controls the lives of close to 2 billion men and women around the globe.

Islamic publications describe it in these terms:



Islam in its clear and direct way of expressing truth has a tremendous amount of appeal for any seeker of knowledge. It is the solution for all the problems of life. It is a guide toward a better and complete life glorifying in all its phases God, the Almighty Creator and the Merciful Nourisher. Islam is the first and the final religion of mankind. Islam is the most rational religion. It gives a clear code of life. Islam is the shortest and broadest road that leads to God.

*'Islam at a Glance', Durban, RSA*

### **The spiritual challenge**

Since the end of the World War II the old 'world order' has been replaced. Morally, politically, socially and economically just about every aspect of life has changed dramatically. It began with the collapse of the colonial systems and the successful dissemination of a liberal humanistic worldview. This created a new perception of justice and ecology, and a new interpretation of socialism, democracy and freedom. We also experienced the shift from the East-West conflict to an impending North-South one.

Parallel to that, the migration of many millions of people to Western industrialized countries in search of a better future has created a new society with a great potential for conflict in many places on our globe. The victimization of people and systems that resisted a change in their value system, add to the problems we face. People that are unwilling to accept the 'liberalization' of ethics and morality are labelled 'fundamentalists'.

A new brand of nationalism has in many cases not kept its promises to facilitate the much needed and wanted economic uplift. An unprecedented pessimism accompanies the population explosion, urbanization, the AIDS threat, massive unemployment and rapidly increasing criminal and terrorist activities that lead to hopelessness in many areas of the world. Just about everybody believes they are an exploited victim of one or other group: of the rich, the state, terrorists, Jews, the Americans or the Muslims, the trade unions, the employers or whoever.

At the same time the industrial revolution with its ever-increasing appetite for energy - which is largely found in the oil fields of the formerly poor and marginalized Islamic countries of the Middle East - has created right there an unprecedented wealth. As we all know, wealth represents power. The human

potential of Islam also increased vastly when the former Soviet Union broke up and a number of the Republics in the South began to view themselves as Muslims in an Islamic state.

Material affluence with its inherent power is, by that token alone, no threat to others. Only when aligned with an ideology, does monetary power become a danger. This happened, for example, when Iran came under the influence and power of the 'Ayatollah' (= 'a sign of Allah') Khomeini. Because of his fundamentalist views he was forced to live in exile for a number of years, a time he used to effect a reversal of the Western influence in and on his country. When, after his return to Iran, his orthodox Islamic doctrines were forced onto the many secularized people living there, many Muslims worldwide viewed this as the turn of the tide, which was to lift Islam out of oblivion and to restore its former power and glory. But all those who disagreed with these views were forced to submit, even eliminated. On a more international scale, bin Laden has begun an all out effort to unite the Muslim world through a global Jihad against all who do not submit to the Law of Allah.

While there are other connotations, the word 'Islam' means 'submission'. What happened in Iran, later in Afghanistan and increasingly in other countries like Indonesia, Nigeria, Algeria etc, actually represents the authentic form of Islam. Many Westerners perceive the present Islamic revolution to be the work of a relatively small group of 'Islamists' or 'fundamentalists', as they are now called. That may be partly true, but it does reflect fundamental (original) Islam.

Islam has a new vision and, moving to the foreground, becomes very vocal and demands attention by flexing its muscles. A number of Islamic states were formed and show their non-confirmative spirit. Encouraged by this, Muslims raise their heads, being proud of their new image. While decidedly not all Muslims are happy with what to them appears to be a threatening trend, the pressure exercised on them allows for no deviation.

It is certainly not our intention to defend the present Western value system. But this at least allows relative freedom of expression and freedom of religion and worship. Islam has quite another agenda, largely misunderstood and underestimated by the rest of the world.

### 8.1.3 The way Islam understands itself



Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah.

*Surah 3:110*

O ye who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks; they will not fail to corrupt you. They only desire your ruin.

*Surah 3:118*

Muslims love to view themselves in this light. Despite this, Islam faces a major crisis that is partly expressed in its vocal appearance, fanaticism and radicalism. Islam fears ‘modernity’. This is the impact of what is called ‘secular humanism’, which already controls much of our society today. God is deposed and man and his needs and wants are for many the highest authority. The Bible has been attacked and criticized for more than a century or two. The result is that in the Western world, but also beginning in Africa and Asia, the authority of God is strongly contradicted and Christian values and ethics are ridiculed and put aside.

### **8.1.4 The goal of Islam is to bring all people to submit to Allah**

To understand the underlying trend of thought, we need to have a look at the Qur’an:

In Surah 8:39 we read (according to Pickthall’s translation):



And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere”.

The actual rendering should be “until all of religion comes to Allah.

The word ‘oppression’ should actually read ‘uprising’ or ‘revolt’, which turns the passive tense into an active one. We should further realize that this is not just a question of all the people submitting to God. It means that all have to submit to Islam and its laws.

Surah 61:9 confirms this:



It is He Who has sent His Apostle (i.e. Muhammad) with guidance and the Religion of Truth that he may proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest (it).

This is backed by a Hadith:



The Messenger of Allah said: 'I have been commanded to fight against people till they testify the fact that there is no god but Allah, and believe in me (that) I am the messenger (from the Lord) and in all that I have brought'.

*Sahih Muslim I, p. 17*

Consequently,

*Islam has divided the world into two parts: 'Dar-ul Islam' and 'Dar-ul Harb'; in English this means the 'Territory of Islam' and the 'Territory of war'.*

This may not necessarily constitute armed conflict, although in the history of early, original Islam that was the prime method for the propagation of Islam.

It is understood that countries that are not as yet under the Shariah, are still to be submitted to Islam.

As Christians we might be tempted to assume that conversion is essentially a spiritual experience. As Christians endeavour, pray and wish that the whole world should come under the rule of Christ, so Muslims endeavour to make the world Islamic. But that is not so, as we have already seen.

The Church cannot legitimately force its influence on the state, or rule the state. This would contradict the spirit of the Gospel. In Church History wars have been fought, but one must wonder, which of these could claim to have been supported by the New Testament, which is our authority.

Islam is based on a different premise. Only when the Shariah has become the established law of a country, is it an Islamic state. To affect this, the rule must be in Muslim hands. Islam does not differentiate between the secular and the spiritual. It follows an integrated system. Personal hygiene and politics, family life and prayer, hunting and business practices are all regulated by, and fall under, the Islamic law. While Christians and Jews may be tolerated in an Islamic state, they are certainly disadvantaged and not permitted to propagate their faith.

### **8.1.5 What is happening in the Islamic world?**

When we observe the current trend of Islam carefully, we can indeed notice how it consolidates itself and how concerted efforts are made to strengthen its position in many countries, and by no means only in those which were traditionally Islamic. Muslims double their population biologically twice as fast as non-Muslims do. This promotes migration and we can observe how in recent times much of the economy of Africa is dominated by Muslims. But

also in Europe, America, Australia and Asia their impact can be seen. Whoever controls the economy has by that token a strong influence on government, the media and education. The fact that Islam has also gained a socio-political profile should not be overlooked.

Muslims build very prestigious mosques, even in areas with a very small number of their own persuasion. In poorer countries schools are added, and free education is offered, in contrast to most Government schools. This is indeed attractive, and many parents cannot resist such temptation. In addition philanthropic help is offered to people in poor, drought-stricken areas. Employment is offered, but to Muslims only. This invariably raises the pragmatic question, “why not become a Muslim?”

The charity displayed, together with the sincerity of many Muslims, plus the social and material benefits of converting to Islam are convincing. And who can blame the people - unless they are committed Christians and have a good grounding in the Word of God, the Bible?

### 8.1.6 Islam in Africa

“Africa is to be the first Islamic continent” is now quite frequently heard. Is this wishful thinking, or do Muslims pursue this goal in earnest? Reality tells us that the move is on.

Let us have a hard look at the advance of Islam in Africa: Representatives of 24 African states at Abuja in Nigeria in November 1989 founded The IAC. In its opening communiqué we are informed about its aims and purposes. It expresses understandably the legitimate desires of Muslims, such as the unification of all Muslims throughout Africa, the removal of ‘artificial boundaries’, and the ‘re-instating’ of a strong and united ‘*Umma*’ (= congregation of all Muslims) with the purpose of fulfilling the commands of Allah.

We need to consider, however, the little syllable ‘*re-*’. It keeps on occurring in this document: ‘re’-instate the *Umma* in Africa, ‘re’-store the use of Arabic script in the vernacular, ‘re’-instate the application of the Shariah etc. This means that they are endeavoring to restore a situation that formerly existed. This implies that there was an *Umma* in Africa, within which the local languages were written in Arabic lettering, and that Africans were under the Shariah law. But that is not true, excepting in North Africa and perhaps very isolated cases when, for example, Kiswahili was written in Arabic script. Let us look at some of the statements:



‘The Conference notes the yearning of Muslims everywhere on the continent who have been deprived of their rights to be governed by the Shariah and urges them to intensify efforts in the struggle to reinstate the application of the Shariah’.

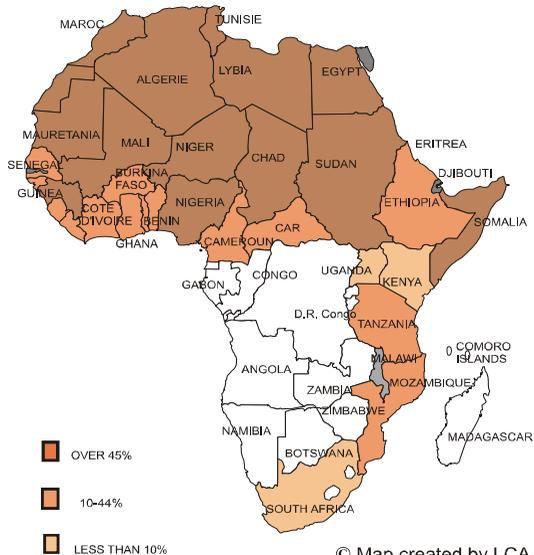
The question certainly arises as to how any country can be administered when two sets of laws are applied to different people? The Muslims in Britain are pushing for this, something that can only lead to either confrontation or disintegration.

Therefore, the ‘establishment and application of the Shariah to all Muslims’ can only mean disaster. It will inevitably lead to friction and oppression, as the example of Nigeria already displays. We find a worse dilemma in the Sudan, where the North is Islamic and the South pagan or Christian. Muslims have introduced the Shariah, but the non-Muslims refuse to accept this and are experiencing constant oppression.

Highly questionable also are the following objectives. The ISLAM IN AFRICA ORGANISATION (IAO) intends...

- ‘To ensure the appointment of only Muslims into strategic national and international posts of member nations’.
- ‘To eradicate in all its forms and ramifications all non-Muslim religions in member nations (such religions shall include Christianity, Ahmadiyya and other tribal modes of worship unacceptable to Muslims)’.
- ‘To ensure that only Muslims are elected (!) to all political posts of member nations’.
- ‘To ensure the ultimate replacement of all Western forms of legal and judicial systems with the Shariah in all member nations before the next Islam in Africa Conference’.

Among the disclosed names of the member nations we find Nigeria and Tanzania, which have



no Muslim majority. A number of other nations have not been mentioned. These are likely to have an even smaller Muslim presence.

It is indeed evident that these aims are being realized, and not only in Islamic states, but also in those with Muslim minorities: Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and even South Africa, where we find no proportional rep. of Muslims in Government; they are exceedingly overrepresented.

It may be relevant to mention a major financial contribution as was 'generously donated' by the 'government and people of Nigeria' for the "Islamic Dev. Fund" of US\$ 21 billion! (IAO communiqué).

The Roman Catholic publication "*Mission aktuell*", which is the German official magazine of 'MISSIO', the Roman Catholic mission, reported that in the same year (1989) 'the Nigerian head of state', General Ibrahim B. Babangida, had 'a credit bank balance at the Arab-African International Bank of US\$ 57.48 billion'. His chief of the army and two cabinet ministers had lesser amounts (US\$ 15.2; 17.8 and 24.9 billion).

Alongside this development we find an article in the Turkish newspaper "*Dünya*" (1980). It speaks about Islamisation and says: 'The whole territory is to be islamised before the year 2000 and in the Middle East in such a way that all living (people) who did not turn Muslims, (the Coptic Christians, the Christians in Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrian (i.e. Syrian-orthodox Christians), Armenians, Nubians and Israelis), must be totally annihilated'.

We have to realize some hard facts: The Christians in Turkey and Lebanon have almost been eliminated. Christians in Egypt are under constant scrutiny and are dictated to by the state. Christians and pagans in Southern Sudan are being exterminated. The press speaks of genocide. There is no freedom of religion in any of the North African countries, nor in several countries in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan or Malaysia or Indonesia.

In 1981 the so-called 'Mecca Declaration' was adopted by the '**Third Islamic summit conference of Kaaba**'.

Here are some extracts:



We have resolved to conduct Jihad ('holy war') with all the means at our disposal so as to free our territory from occupation.

We declare that the oppression suffered by Muslim minorities and communities in many countries is a flagrant offence against the rights and dignity of man. We appeal to all states in which there are Islamic minorities to allow them full liberty.

We are convinced of the need to propagate the precepts of Islam and its cultural influence in Muslim societies and throughout the world.

Which Islamic territories were occupied by non-Muslims at the time of this summit? We have to read these lines, as it were, with Muslim eyes. It was, first of all Israel, the ‘thorn in the flesh’ of Islam, but also Southern Sudan, part of Chad, Northern Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, parts of Tanzania, Kenya and many others. The Islamic understanding is that, unless the Shariah is in force and an Islamic government in place, this is ‘*dar-ul harb*’, territory which still needs to be conquered.

William Muir, one of the great and very fair orientalist scholars (1819-1905), made a statement which almost sounds like a prophetic utterance:



It is my conviction that the sword of Muhammad and the Qur'an are the most fatal enemies of civilization, liberty and truth which the world has yet known.

In this context we have to seriously ask the question: in which countries are Muslim minorities suffering oppression? What kind of oppression is meant? Muslim minorities feel oppressed as long as they are not governed by the Shariah - which would amount to ‘full liberty’ according to Islam.

The last paragraph confirms this in no uncertain terms. While Muslims vociferously demand freedom from oppression, they oppress Christian communities in their own countries. Indeed many human rights issues have been raised in this respect - without response.

Despite the alleged ‘oppression’ in the 1980’s, every two weeks one mosque was opened in Britain, a rate of expansion similar to that taking place in France and Germany. Similar advances are made in many other countries.

As far back as the early 1980’s, a document emerged from the Islamic Foundation in Leicester (UK) with clear statements of intent such as:



... the Islamic Movement (is) ‘an organized struggle to change the existing society into an Islamic society based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah and make Islam, which is a code for entire life, supreme and dominant, especially in the socio-political spheres’.

... (the) framework will have to be based on recognizing the fact that the ultimate objective of the Islamic movement shall not be realized unless the struggle is made by locals. For it is only they who have the power to change the society into an Islamic society.

*“Watchman Update”, Dec. 1991 by Dr. Clifford Denton*

The Ayatollah Khomeini is reported to have said:



'If we want to gain the final victory, we will have to know exactly what is to be done. Else we will meet the same fate as Hitler, who committed suicide ... In the early days of Islam the unbelievers were constantly hit over the head with the sword to make them Muslims. Many were killed. One should not shrink back from becoming a martyr ... Up to date we did not kill a single human being, but only attacking wild beasts have been purified, arrested and put away'.

As a result many thousands have been executed

That this is no joke can be concluded from some gruesome fact. In 2001 alone some 167.000 Christians were killed for their faith. That is 450 a day! And two thirds of them were martyred by Muslims. (Helmut Matthies, ideaSpektrum 9/2003)

Again we would urge the reader not to blame this on the Muslims he comes in contact with. This report was not compiled to blame any person, but to expose a religious system, which is imperialistic, oppressive and deeply anti-Christian.

### **8.1.7 Christians endeavours to get to terms with Islam**

The present setting of Islam in this world is indeed very threatening. It gains acceptance and profile, even in liberal 'Christian' circles.

There are several contributing factors. Muslims are aware that oil reserves do not last forever. Consequently, they have invested vast amounts of capital in the industries of the developed countries, which secures for them a considerable influence. Consequently, the press in these countries, fortified by the left-liberal premise from which they often operate, will generally be supportive towards Islam.

Quite in line with this is the liberal World Council of Churches (WCC). It seeks 'dialogue' with other religions in order to learn from each other and to accept one another. In practice this denounces and replaces the Christian witness of Jesus Christ, as the only hope for mankind.

The Vatican sides, at least partly, with this, as can be implied from the prayer for peace arranged by the Pope at Assisi, to which representatives of all kinds of religions had been invited. At the Second Vatican Council the following statements were formulated:



The plan of God's salvation includes those who acknowledge the Creator, and in the first place among them the Muslims. (L.G.16)

The Church has a high regard for the Muslims ... unfortunately many hostilities have arisen between Christians and Muslims. This sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that sincere efforts be made to achieve mutual understanding for the benefit of all. Let them together preserve and promote peace, freedom, social justice and moral values. (N.A.3)

Unfortunately, it is true that the Church has fought bitter and bloody wars against Muslims, which, as we already observed, cannot be supported from the New Testament, but has made hardly any move to present the Message of Grace to them.

## 8.1.8 A Christian response to the challenge of Islam

Islam is in many ways the antithesis to the Biblical faith. How are we to react? The antidote to a power mentality is love. How can one fight love?

We are not to fight Islam. We owe Christ's love to the Muslim people. We let them experience our attitude of love towards them in the spirit of Christ. And that love is patient and kind, it does not boast and is not proud. It is not rude or self-seeking (success orientation!) or easily angered. It also does not keep a record of wrongs. It protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres. And it rejoices in the truth. Therefore it does not fail and will not end.

Do we remember these words? They are all recorded in 1Co 13. This kind of love is our foundation for sharing the Truth. And it is this love, which will urge us to be wise in our contact with Muslims (Col 4:5) and to be prepared to meet with them on their own ground (1Pe 3:15). This attitude will motivate us to learn about Muslims and Islam and about

the controversies they may bring up and how to respond to them. This is the very purpose of this manual. So let us learn as much as we can to prepare ourselves for the launch of the rescue mission!

**In your hearts set aside Christ as Lord!**

**Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone  
who asks you for the reason of the hope that you have,  
But do it with gentleness and respect.**



**We will remember:**

1. The Islamic worldview is drastically different to the Christian.
2. Islam follows an imperialistic plan and by its own sources it justifies the use of force to bring territorial gain. Terrorism is one of the tools employed to achieve this.
3. Islam is pooling its efforts to bring the world under the rule of the Shariah. The Church must learn to see its responsibility to protect the world from a system that suppresses the Truth of God.
4. Islam, as a system, positioned itself as a threat and opponent to Judaism and Biblical Christianity.
5. Knowledge about Islam equips us to better understand Muslim thinking. This in turn helps us to share the Good News more effectively.

## **Recommended Literature to 8.1: The Challenge**

**Holy War in Islam.** Abd Al-Masih, Light of Life, 71 pages.

**Is an Islamic World Empire Imminent?** Abd Al-Masih, Light of Life, 91 pages.

**Ishmael, my Brother.** Anne Cooper, MARC, Evangelical Missionary Alliance, 317 pages.

**Islam under the Magnifying Glass.** Abd Al-Masih, Light of Life, 139 pages.

**Islam Unveiled.** Abdullah Al-Araby, The Pen versus the Sword, 1994, 44 pages.

**The Church in Africa takes note of the Islamic Agenda.** LCA 1996, 8 pages.

**The Great Commission, You and the Muslims.** Gerhard Nehls, LCA 1980, 135 pages.

**Who Cares?** Gerhard Nehls, LCA 1992 revised, 32 pages.

## 8.2 The Gospel of shame cultures

Have we failed to reach Muslims at their point of deepest insecurity?

### Observations

I have discovered that one of the most difficult aspects of evangelizing Muslims is getting them to appreciate their need for a Saviour. I have found the Islamic doctrine of God and man to be such that Muslims tend to be unaware of their sinfulness and inability to save themselves. As a result, convincing a Muslim to embrace Jesus as the blood sacrifice for his sins usually requires considerable time and pre-evangelistic effort.

... I have noticed a curious thing. While my Muslim friends and neighbours do not worry much about 'little sins' like lying and cheating, their daily lives and religious rituals seem to revolve around something which I would consider to be even less significant, namely their ceremonial purity. The intensity of this insecurity has caused me to consider that defilement might be a basic human problem as serious to some as sin is to others.

One day our helper told us that when she was a little girl she had a friend who used to feel her mother's hair in the morning to see if it was damp. Her friend did this so that she could tell if her mother, who was divorced, had been messing around. According to Islam, you are unclean after you have had sex and must take a complete bath, to include washing your hair, in order to be clean again.

When asked why her friend's mother would bother to take the bath if she was already committing adultery, our helper responded that no one would dare think of not taking the ritual bath after having had sex. Such a person would be a curse and the ground they walked on would be cursed. In other words, a prolonged state of ritual uncleanness following sexual intercourse was more unthinkable than adultery.

### Interpretation

Suddenly a lot of things made sense. It had always puzzled me why Muslims make such a big thing out of not eating pork, not getting licked by dogs, and keeping the fast, when sins like lying, cheating and stealing are treated so superficially. Few Christians seem to comprehend, for instance, the seriousness of eating pork. Dwell for a moment on the revulsion you feel when you think about the Stone Age tribe eating human flesh, and you will begin to understand something of the degree of disgust most Muslims have for the idea of eating pork. It is probably not a sin issue but an issue of ceremonial cleanness. Thus, because eating pork is the worst possible state of defilement, and more attention is given to ceremonial purity than moral purity, the pork eater (George Bush) is worse off than a murderer (Saddam Hussein).

In the light of this new perspective, I began to consider that perhaps the greatest need felt by these Muslim people is not for assurance of salvation from sin but for deliverance from the tyranny of being in a near constant state of defilement. Every element of their daily lives is ordered by this insecurity; the direction to face when falling asleep, the Arabic word uttered when beginning a task, speech, or greeting, and even the way to blow your nose or wipe your bottom. Defilement comes in various levels and for each level there is an appropriate matched cleansing. Burping and passing gas is one level of defilement. Touching your private parts is another. Touching semen, urine, faeces, or menstrual flow is getting pretty serious; serious enough that a woman's prayers will not be heard during her period. I wonder if there is a more relevant way to present the Gospel under these circumstances. Perhaps we could communicate more effectively with a Gospel message addressing man's defilement as well as, or as part of, his depravity.

## **An application**

A year ago, a friend asked me quite sincerely why we Christians insist that Jesus is God and that he was crucified. My answer moved him visibly. Instead of beginning by saying all have sinned and that the wages of sin is death, I waxed eloquent on what he knew better than me, that all flesh is defiled. He nodded knowingly as I affirmed that from the day we are born we continually carry inside us the very substance from which we need to be cleansed. He squirmed as I illustrated the futility of ceremonial rituals for such internal cleansing, and concluded that human flesh cannot cleanse itself. He was still as attentive when I climaxed by saying that just as a candle drives the darkness from a room by entering it, God drives defilement from human flesh by becoming it. In other words, the very thing that Muslims object to most in Christianity - shirk - the identification of God with his creation - is the solution to man's most basic problem as perceived by these Muslims.

If I'd thought of it at the time, I would have gone on to show how the nature of Jesus' miracles - healing blindness with his spit and leprosy with his touch - proves who he is. I didn't forget to answer the second part of his question by pointing out that Jesus touched and destroyed the most serious consequence of our defilement, death. Finally, I concluded by saying that our only hope lay in appropriating the once-and-for-all cleansing from defilement and victory over death that Jesus offers to those who believe in him, and by saying that baptism was the symbol of this appropriation.

## **Foundations**

It took months and considerable reflection for me to realize the possible implications of what I had stumbled into. Do general and specific revelation teach something about the defilement of man? Is man's defilement an

integral part of his sinfulness? Is shame related to defilement the way guilt is related to sin? Does Christ's death atone for man's defilement as well as his sin? Is the apparent lack of attention to this area related to Christianity's predominance in the West, which is more guilt and performance oriented as opposed to the East, which is more shame and being orientated? Have we missed some important concepts in our commentaries and in our English translations of the original languages? In cultures where defilement is a bigger issue than depravity, have our converts been disciplined into a healthy maturity, or are they still wrestling with unaddressed and misunderstood insecurities?

I believe the answer to the above questions may be yes. When Adam and Eve sinned, the first thing they felt was shame, not guilt. Before the fall, 'The man and his wife were both naked [*arowm* is the Hebrew word] and they felt no shame' (Ge 2:25). After the fall, 'The eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked [now the word is *eyrom*]; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves' (Ge 3:7). But with the coverings they were still naked. 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid' (Ge 3:10). Interestingly, and perhaps symbolically, it is God who suitably provides for Adam's nakedness. 'The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them' (Ge 3:21).

## More than death

The consequence of Adam's sin was death. 'But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die' (Ge 2:17). The concept of death includes spiritual separation from God, but I wonder if it includes something more. That the resultant awareness in chapter 3 is of nakedness and not separation, and that the word for naked takes different forms before and after the fall, may indicate a situation of defilement as well.

The progression in Genesis 3 is also interesting. Adam and Eve hid after they sinned because they were afraid and they were afraid because they felt naked. Interestingly, shame over nakedness, which precedes feelings of fear, alienation and separation, appears stronger than shame over the sin of disobedience.

No wonder the Old Testament is full of images showing man's defilement as integral to his depravity. As a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, Aaron and his sons were to wash their hands and feet whenever they entered the tent of meeting or approached the altar, otherwise they would die (Ex 30:17-21). Blemished or defective animals were not permitted to be used for sacrifices. Items used for worship had to be anointed or consecrated. Unclean animals could not be eaten, and even circumcision probably had some connection to ceremonial cleanness, as the illustration in Colossians 2:11-13

indicates by relating the foreskin with the sinful nature. Finally, Jesus himself, when he challenged the Pharisees in their use and understanding of cleansing and dietary laws, affirmed that man is unclean (Mk 7:10-13).

## **Makes depravity sensible**

The concept of original defilement makes total defilement more sensible. There is no one righteous, not even one (Ro 3:10) and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags (Isa 64:6), because we are defiled. Sin is not inherited but stems from our being. We are unclean and everything we touch or do, even with good intent, becomes contaminated. The Muslim who understands that the ground is cursed wherever he steps if he has not bathed after having had sex is showing an understanding of how bondage to unrighteousness stems from defilement. This defilement may form the basis for shame, insecurity, and a felt need for the Gospel in shame cultures.

## **A new paradigm**

Niels Mulder says, ‘Shame is the feeling of anxiety about one’s presentation, about being criticized or laughed at, for short, a feeling of embarrassment and fear for the eyes, ears and opinions of others’. Gailyn van Rheenen quotes Jacob A. Loewen saying, ‘While shame is “the response to disapproval of one’s own peers”, guilt is the “self-condemnation resulting from the violation of internalized convictions of right and wrong”. To all that has been written on guilt and shame I would like to add (G.N.) that guilt is a feeling and/or a condition occurring when one has broken or not kept a divine or human law, while shame is one’s state of being either before God or peers.

This definition creates for shame the same real and imagined distinctions that exist for guilt. Just as there is legal guilt whether it is felt or not, and there can be felt guilt whether there is an infraction or not, so there is a tangible condition of shame whether it is felt or not, and there is a felt condition of shame whether it has an objective basis or not.

Both Paul (Ro 9:33) and Peter quote Isaiah on the subject. ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame’ (1Pe 2:6). If shame is limited to a subjective feeling in the face of one’s peers without any objective condition, then how could this promise be true? What about all the saints and prophets who got ridiculed? If, on the other hand, shame in this verse refers to an objective condition, then the one who trusts in the cornerstone laid in Zion (Jesus) has the objective basis for feeling shame permanently removed, whether he gets ridiculed or not.

We talk about how sacrifice for forgiveness of sins is no longer necessary because Christ has provided the ultimate sacrifice, but what is our excuse for setting aside the Levitical dietary and cleansing laws? When Jesus declared

all foods 'clean' (Mk 7:18-23), he was not setting these laws aside but challenging added traditions by pointing out that the issue of cleanness was in man's basic condition and not in the food. Could it be that the purpose of these laws was to draw attention to man's defiled condition in the same way that the sacrifice drew attention to this sinful condition? Could it be that these laws are no longer adhered to because Jesus' work on the cross once and for all removed our defilement like it removed our sin? 'The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our conscience from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God'. (Heb 9:14)

## Implications

I have never heard a presentation of the Gospel, which addresses man's defilement and shame as well as his guilt and sin. I wonder what kind of Gospel we have been taking to the Muslim world when we neglect the issue of man's nakedness? Jesus not only bore our sins; he bore our shame. As the 'author and perfecter of our faith', he 'endured the cross, scorning its shame' (Heb12:2).

What did it mean for 'him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God' (2 Co 5:21)? Did he become depraved, or defiled? Could he have conquered our defilement by assuming it? Christ was not only 'pierced for our transgressions'; he 'took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows' (Isa 53:4,5). The atonement is not just the simple matter of someone taking our punishment, a concept, which Muslims find extremely distasteful. There seems to have been an assumption of our defiled state resulting in the destruction of our contamination, which was the foundation of our depravity. If this is so, there would be no need for an assumption of our depravity, so that some theological constructs involving imputed sin and imputed righteousness may have to be re-evaluated.

## Something missing

Has there been something missing in our understanding and preaching of the Gospel so that we fail to reach the Muslim at his point of deepest insecurity? Does the Muslim's preoccupation with endless cycles of ritualistic cleansing point to another human problem as basic as sin? Do we need an approach to evangelism, discipleship and contextualisation, which will meet people at this other point of need? Could such an approach revolutionize outreach and church planting in some of the most resistant parts of the world? Someday, I hope we have answers to these questions.

(From *EVANGELICAL MISSIONS QUARTERLY* by Bruce Thomas)

## 8.3 Questionnaire models for systematic outreach programmes

### ***Relationship Questionnaire***

Good evening, my name is..., this is my friend ...; we are concerned about the breakdown of relationships between people and even towards our Creator.

**A. Will you please help us by giving your thoughts to a few questions?**

***If the response is NO, go straight to C and / or D.***

1. For how long have you been living in this area? Do you like it here?
2. What would you see as the greatest need in your community?
3. What do you see as mankind's biggest problem today?
4. Why do you consider your faith to be the right one?
5. Are you afraid of death? ... the day of judgment? ... not being pardoned by God?
6. Do you know for certain that you will go to be with God when you die?
7. Suppose you were to die tonight and stand before God, and He would ask you: "Why should I allow you into my presence / heaven?" What would you say?

**B. This completes the questionnaire. Thank you for your interesting answers.**

May I have a few more minutes to share with you about my relationship with my creator?

**C. May we visit you at a more convenient time? (make appointment)**

***Do not forget to fill in name, street, literature code (=tract or booklet left behind).***

### ***Life Events Questionnaire***

#### **BIRTH**

1. What celebrations do you have when a child is born? (eg name giving)
2. Why are these rituals performed?

#### **CHILDHOOD**

3. Are there any special events/rituals in the life of a child in your religion? (**Circumcision – male, female?**)
4. Why is it done?

#### **MARRIAGE**

5. How do you perform a wedding in your community?
6. What role does the wife play in a Muslim family?

**DEATH**

7. How do you conduct a funeral?
8. What happens to the deceased after death?
9. How do you help one another to prepare for death?

**FEASTS**

10. What feasts do you celebrate in your faith?  
Is there any spiritual significance attached to them?

## 8.4 Illustrations for your Witness to Muslims

Why use Illustrations when we could just tell the truth?



Once upon a time the naked Truth was walking in the streets of her familiar home place. But wherever she went she was met with rejection. No-one invited her in to stay. Everyone turned away as soon as they saw her coming. She felt utterly discouraged and very sad when she came across Parable.

Parable was dressed in brightly shining, colourful clothes cheerfully moving from one home to the other. Noticing the downcast face of her friend she asked Truth: "Tell me, neighbour, what makes you so sad today?" Truth's response came in a bitter mood: "Oh sister, things are really bad. I have seen life in all its ups and downs, and now I am old, very old, yet no one seems to appreciate me. Worse still, no one wants to have anything to do with me. Everybody is avoiding me.

Parable listened carefully before she replied: "People do not run away from you because you are too old. I am just as old as you are. But the older I get the more people like me. Let me tell you my secret: Each one likes things a little bit "dressed up", attractively decorated. I will lend you some of my most precious and beautiful outfits. Put them on and you will realize that those who rejected you before will invite you into their homes and enjoy fellowship with you.

Truth accepted and followed the advice of her friend Parable and put on some of her clothes. From this time onwards Truth and Parable walked "hand in hand" and everyone loved to listen to them.

*(Source: Yiddish Folktales, Pantheon Books, New York)*

C.H. Spurgeon noted: "A sermon without an illustration is like a room without a window."

## A List of Illustrations (see REACH OUT, pp 90-99)

1. Shamuël, the Caucasian Prince (a historical event)
2. The Pearl-Diver (a true-to-life story)
3. The Big Swim (an imagined idea)
4. Paying for your tea (an illustration by action)
5. The Chair (an object lesson)
6. The Prisoner's Friend (a personal experience applied)
7. Good News or Bad News (using a given situation)
8. The Key to Freedom (a fiction story)
9. The Farmer and his Cat (a tale)
10. Halaal or Haraam? (a challenging question)
11. Two men who went for Prayer (a contextualised Bible parable)
12. The Son of a Lock (an expression explained)
13. The Greatest Fool who ever lived (a fairy tale)
14. The Angel Gabriel surely cannot lie (a logical conclusion)
15. The Poisoned Well (an allegory)
16. The House Owner who woke up at last (a parable)

### Parables from the Bible

Parable	Text	Application
The Ten Talents	<i>Luke 19:12-27</i>	A great reward awaits those who live for God
The Mustard Seed	<i>Matthew 13:31-32</i>	The truth in Jesus: first hardly noticeable, but one day honoured by all.
The Fig Tree	<i>Luke 13:6-9</i>	Limited time for repentance.
The Wheat and the Weeds	<i>Matthew 13:24-30</i>	Good and evil grow up together, but judgment will eventually set them apart.
Farmer sowing seed	<i>Matthew 13:3-9</i>	Watch out how you listen.
Unfruitful vineyard	<i>Isaiah 5:1-7</i>	Don't waste your life!
Jotham's fable	<i>Judges 9:7-20</i>	Wrong choices harm a whole nation.
The Labourers in the vineyard	<i>Matthew 21:33-42</i>	Judgment awaits those who reject God's messenger, and more so God's Son.
The Poor Man's lamb	<i>2 Samuel 12:1-9</i>	A convicted conscience

		seeks God's forgiveness.
A camel and the eye of a needle	<i>Matthew 19:24</i>	It is indeed hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God
The narrow gate	<i>Matthew 7:13-14</i>	Choose your destiny now.
The hidden treasure	<i>Matthew 13:44-46</i>	No sacrifice is too big when eternal life is at stake.
Lost Sheep, Coin, Son	<i>Luke 15</i>	There is joy in heaven over one sinner, who turns back to God.
The two sons	<i>Matthew 21:28-31</i>	Walk your talk and keep your promises.
Pharisee and Tax Collector	<i>Luke 18:9-14</i>	God looks at the heart.
Invitation to the Wedding banquet	<i>Matthew 22:2-14</i>	Rejecting the truth has sad consequences.
The ten Bridesmaids	<i>Matthew 25:1-13</i>	Prepare for Christ's coming.

## 8.5 Chronological Bible-Storytelling

*By Christel Eric*

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*Chronological Bible Storytelling is making God's Word available to Muslim women in exciting, life-changing ways. This article introduces this method, explaining how and why it is being used so effectively.*

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**M**edina missed the lesson. On my way home, I visited her small but neatly kept hut. Her husband was there, and I surmised that he was the reason she did not attend. I could see she was burdened.

She told me her sister had been sick for a long time, and people were saying she was cursed. Medina asked: "Can a curse make you so sick that you finally die?"

"Yes," I said. "There are curses with great effect, but not every one who is sick has been cursed."

"Why do we get sick all the time?" Medina asked. "Life would be so much easier without all this sickness."

"You are right," I replied. "When God created us, He made us perfect and healthy. But then man disobeyed God. Since that time we get sick—and eventually we die."

Medina interrupted me to tell the story from Genesis 1-3 to her husband. She told it just as she had heard it in the storytelling session some weeks earlier. Suddenly she stopped and asked, “Didn’t God promise to send a Savior to redeem us from the consequences and curse of sin? How can I be freed, forgiven and protected from any curse people might put on me?”

As I repeated the stories of Jesus, she was very attentive. Then her eyes changed from sparkling hope to doom. Outside, night was falling; I had to go. Medina accompanied me to the fence. “I know this is the truth,” she said thoughtfully. “I want to follow Jesus. I need Him to protect my children and me! But what about my husband? I’m scared.”

I knew she had reason to be frightened. My heart was heavy. How can a woman like Medina ever fully accept the gospel and follow Christ?

Early one Saturday morning, two Muslim girls from my Bible study group appeared at my doorstep. Before they even entered the house, one burst out with her question. “Is it true that the Quran and your Bible both tell us that Jesus is in heaven right now?”

Surprised, I nodded. She continued, “In our last session you told us that Jesus is busy preparing a place for us in heaven and is coming back to take us with Him to be with God. When I got home I remembered that Muhammad is still in his grave in Medina, which many Muslims visit every year!” She stopped, not knowing how to continue.

I tried to help her. “Does this bother you? Is that why you came here today?”

Looking past me in deep thought, she continued, “Yes, I asked myself shouldn’t we follow the One who is alive, sitting next to God, coming to judge the world, rather than follow a dead prophet, who still waits for his own judgment to come?”

As she continued, my heart nearly missed a beat. “Please help us. We want to follow the living One so that tonight, if we die, we will know we are going to heaven because we have been forgiven.”

**H**ow were these ladies able to understand and apply scriptural truths in ways that so profoundly impacted their worldview, their religious view, indeed their very lives? These ladies and thousands more throughout Africa are hearing Scripture through chronological Bible storytelling, also known as Chronological Bible Storying (CBS).

The Bible is God’s story to us and is best presented as a story rather than as a collection of teachings. It is a story with a beginning and an end, and should be told in sequence. Chronological Bible storying communicates biblical truths in this way. The Bible stories are narrated in the order they happened. CBS is not primarily for children—it is for adult men and women.

Because the story form is the vehicle by which oral cultures collect, retain, and pass on information, CBS has been especially effective among oral communicators. CBS enables them to learn and gather information in the easiest and most memorable ways. They can become wonderful Bible teachers as they tell the stories to others.

Because CBS starts at the very beginning of the Bible and takes the student step by step in historical progression through the whole story of God's interaction with man, it is especially effective in communicating the good news to Unreached People Groups. These are groups of people who have never heard the truth and do not understand who God is or what He has done.

The Old Testament stories lay a firm foundation revealing who God is, who man is, and how God desires to relate to man. The stories lead the listener from the wonder of creation, the tragedy of sin, and the fall of man through the history of God's people and the prophecies and pictures of the promised Messiah. They prepare the listeners to understand the New Testament stories that reveal the climax of God's redemptive plan. God used thousands of years to prepare mankind for the coming for Christ. We often try to lead someone to entrust their lives to Christ during one single conversation or Bible study. Then we wonder how they could reject the good news of God's love. CBS does not immediately challenge Muslim beliefs or involve them in debates or apologetics. Instead, it allows God's Word and God's Spirit to speak truth into their lives. It enables them to understand and respond to God.

As people hear the stories that make up The Story, they identify and become part of them. The stories enable them to understand what God has done, as well as touch their hearts and open their spirits to the work of God's Spirit. An effective evangelistic set of CBS stories is designed not only to communicate the basic story of God's redemptive activity, it also allows listeners to interact with Bible stories in ways that challenge and transform their worldviews and religious views.

In order to choose the stories that will best enable a particular people group to understand and be transformed by the gospel, the worker must study the worldview of that people group. The goal of this study is to identify the barriers that presently keep them from faith as well as the bridges that God has provided in their culture to help them hear and understand the gospel. After these barriers and bridges have been identified, the worker chooses stories that confront and remove the barriers and/or affirm and strengthen the bridges. These stories are added to the basic evangelistic set.

The chart below compares some Muslim religious beliefs with biblical truths. Understanding these differences can guide the choice of Bible stories.

<b>Religious View of Muslims</b>	<b>Christian Doctrines Essential for Salvation</b>
<p>God is too great to be approached or known by men. He does not act in history, except to set the dates of one's birth and death.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God is too great to be bound by His Word or by moral absolutes. He can abrogate and substitute His own word.</li> <li>2. Holiness is not a moral attribute of God; therefore, sin does not have serious consequences.</li> <li>3. Sin can be partially atoned for by works—observing the five pillars, additional fasting, memorizing the Quran, repeating the names of God.</li> <li>4. No Atonement by another person is necessary or possible. Each person will endure his own punishment on Judgment Day; there is no assurance of forgiveness.</li> <li>5. Jesus did not die on the cross. God removed Him beforehand and substituted someone else there.</li> <li>6. Jesus is just a prophet, not the Son of God. God cannot have a son.</li> </ol> <p>Muhammad is the last and greatest of the prophets. He is the seal of all prophets. He has universal status.</p> <p>The Quran abrogates and supersedes the Bible as the last and final testament.</p> <p>The Bible has been corrupted by men and the original text is lost.</p>	<p>God acts in history and communicates with man.</p> <p>God is all powerful, but still faithful to His Word.</p> <p>God is holy and hates sin. He punishes sin by death.</p> <p>Man is a sinner and is separated from God.</p> <p>God loves man and wants fellowship with him.</p> <p>Man is answerable to God.</p> <p>Man can do nothing to save himself.</p> <p>Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Messiah, who gave His life on the cross as a ransom for the sins of mankind.</p> <p>Man can approach God but can only have true fellowship with Him through the perfect Sacrifice.</p> <p>Fellowship requires faith and obedience to God.</p> <p>The Bible can be trusted—the main proof is in fulfillment of prophecies and the transformed lives of believers.</p>

The Islamic religion does not emphasize chronology except for the fact that Muhammad is the last prophet. Stories in the Quran are recorded in fragmented form in different surah (chapters) without reference to their setting in history. Islamic teaching jumps from one topic to another without encouraging the student to dig deeper or look for the truth in a logical way. The chronological approach of the Bible challenges the Muslim mindset. The Word recounts God's activity and character as demonstrated across thousands of years of history. It repeatedly illustrates through the lives of the men and women of the Bible how God wants to relate to mankind.

**CBS** is not just another rote learning process. During storying sessions, the storyteller asks questions carefully chosen to help listeners discover for themselves the truths in each story. CBS emphasizes the characteristics of God exhibited in each story. Then listeners can compare the biblical picture of God with the Islamic picture. Hearing and discussing these biblical truths over time enables listeners, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to examine and evaluate their beliefs and to change their views of God, themselves, and their world.

CBS not only answers the standard objections of Muslims, it takes the initiative to share the good news. It gives the worker a plan to follow that helps stay on target instead of being sidetracked by irrelevant questions. The questions help the listeners understand and apply biblical truths in their daily lives.

The story sessions provide a context for building and developing relationships between the storyteller and the listeners. Women like to identify with other women—with their happenings, sorrows, pains, and joys. This is one of the main reasons women are drawn to storytelling groups. As women listen to Bible stories and discuss them with their friends, their worldviews and religious views can be transformed. Each story touches some aspect of their worldview barriers or bridges while communicating a new biblical truth. When the confrontational aspects of the life of Jesus are introduced, their established relationship with the leader and with each other helps women continue to listen to the stories and to process the new truths. This extended learning time is a key factor in helping women grow in their understanding and commitment.

The CBS evangelism story track emphasizes two important biblical truths about salvation: First, sin can only be forgiven by offering the blood of an unblemished sacrificial lamb. Second, throughout the Old Testament God promised to send a special person who would save His people and establish His kingdom. These two truths are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is both the perfect Sacrifice and the promised Savior. CBS permits Muslim women to understand the necessity of Christ's incarnation, His divinity, and His atoning death.

Chronological Bible storytelling attracts listeners and keeps their attention. It can be effectively used with groups in conjunction with educational programs like sewing, agricultural or occupational training, community health, literacy, or English-as-a-Second Language classes. It also can be used with students or teachers in school settings. People participating in such projects or classes already have a common interest or purpose and regularly meet. Sharing stories with such a naturally occurring group enables them to hear the same stories at the same time, to talk about them, to ask questions, and to grow in

their understanding together. This community-integrated approach can encourage an entire group to make a decision for Christ together as well as to help prevent the ostracism or persecution of individuals as they become believers. CBS also can be used in sharing with one person, a family, or a small group of neighbours. Instead of just making small talk week after week, a worker can offer to tell stories at social gatherings.

## Personal involvement

**U**rbanization in Africa typically clusters people on the outskirts of big cities, forcing them to live in very congested, impoverished slum areas. In one such area, Christians started a literacy class. Soon, they were overwhelmed by the number of Muslim women attending and asked me for help. I had just learned about the CBS method and saw this as a great opportunity to try it out.

We chose not to include the storytelling program as part of the official literacy program, but to meet separately on Saturday afternoons at a neutral place (a school) for an extra Bible lesson. We did not want to give the local Muslim leaders grounds to accuse us of deceptively sharing the gospel under the pretence of teaching literacy.

At that time the only CBS material I was aware of was the manual *God and Man* by Dell and Rachel Schultze (Schultze 1991). I generally followed it, but made modifications I felt would meet the needs of the Muslim women involved in the program. For example, I rewrote the lessons from Genesis 2-4 and the story of the offering of Isaac. I also added the story of Hagar and Ishmael. I emphasized the prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament by making a picture chart. As we went through the New Testament stories, I used the chart to emphasize the exact fulfilment of the different Old Testament messianic prophecies. The Quran has no such fulfilled prophecies, and I found that this evidence of God's inspiration of the Word helped listeners trust the Bible.

In the beginning, approximately 25-30 ladies participated in the CBS sessions every Saturday. However, when the community leader responsible for bringing these ladies together died, the numbers dropped rapidly. After spending a whole year telling the stories, only one person accepted Christ. I was disappointed to say the least! When I asked the younger girls (who spoke English) why they did not respond positively to the stories, they said: "These stories are all so new for us. We had never heard them in this way. Please tell them again. We need more time!"

So the next round of story sessions began. This time I used J.O. Terry's story set *God and Woman* (Terry, 1998). At the end, I included some stories from the book of Acts to illustrate how people responded to the gospel, how persecution began, and the price some had to pay to follow Christ. Two

ladies made a commitment at the end of this set of classes, which lasted more than a year.

In the meantime the ladies requested that we start a sewing project. They reasoned that if they wanted to follow this teaching, they would have to earn money the “right way.” Many of the women were widows or divorcees who were involved in prostitution. Others were involved in drug trafficking. The opportunity to learn a skill was a natural incentive through which a growing number of unbelievers could be exposed to the gospel through CBS.

In the third year of CBS, I included the Daniel story, which made a real impression. I also showed Old Testament films from time to time so that the women could picture the lives of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and the other patriarchs. I ended the CBS classes by showing Campus Crusade’s Jesus film in the women’s own language. What bustling excitement filled my lounge that day as 25 Muslim women watched the crucifixion. Some were crying. Some were sneezing. Some were laughing.

Instead of inviting the ladies to publicly respond to the film, I asked them to write me a note. If they couldn’t write, I told them to ask a friend or neighbour to help them. A few days later, Medina came to me with her letter, determined to follow Christ whatever the cost. After her decision, she became very instrumental in encouraging others to believe. When I showed the JESUS film another time, the breakthrough came. Four ladies accepted Christ; slowly, others followed.

**I**t was a long process and a challenging one. Fear of husbands and families kept some women from committing themselves even after they knew and accepted the truth of the stories. During this time, two things helped me not to give up: For one, I was following a plan I knew had worked in other places; and secondly, I had local co-workers who faithfully helped and encouraged me and shared feedback from the participants among whom they lived.

Through this experience I learned many things.

- It is best for CBS classes to meet in neutral places like schools rather than in church buildings.
- The approval and support of a person of influence is very helpful—perhaps vital.
- It is best to keep the format as a class or storytelling time rather than structure the time like a church service. Many Muslim women are shy about singing Christian songs in the beginning. However, teenagers are more open, and you may be able to introduce culturally based praise music earlier in a group of young people.

- Each group has a different concentration span. Some like short stories, others like to listen to two stories at a time. The storyteller must be sensitive to the group.
- As is abundantly clear from my experience, one round of CBS stories might not be enough to enable solid decisions and changed lives.
- Don't lead a group alone—involve a co-worker from the beginning. She will not only provide encouragement and support, she will learn from you and eventually be ready to start her own group.
- It is helpful for national co-workers to visit members of the CBS group in between sessions. This enables you to know what they think about the stories and helps you adapt the sessions to meet their needs and correct any misunderstandings.

## Multiplication of this group

**W**hen she moved to another area, the first believer in our group started her own storytelling group with the help of one of my co-workers. I have never been there. They have done it all by themselves. These same two women founded a school with more than 100 students—85 percent of whom are Muslim. Three times a week they are telling a set of stories specifically adapted for children in the school. The parents of some of the students are participating in an afternoon adult literacy class. They use a collection of Bible stories titled *Sharing the Message* by LaNette Thompson (Thompson 2003). Other ladies have begun storying groups in their neighbourhoods for women who do not participate in the literacy or sewing projects. We provide these groups with tapes of the stories and picture books as well as encouragement and prayer support.

After we had three believers, we began an extra discipleship class for them using a storying set specifically developed for that purpose.

God has used our storying session as a model and encouragement for others. From time to time, different missionaries have observed the CBS sessions before starting a group of their own. One lady combined storying with a quilting class she held with educated Asian women. Others have included CBS lessons in a sports program for Somali refugee girls and women, and in women's sewing classes.

## Our challenges

Irregularity of attendance is the biggest problem we encounter in the neighbourhood storytelling sessions. Muslim women do not usually attend the mosque on a regular basis but are encouraged to pray at home. A storytelling program with many regular sessions is a challenge for a number of them. Weddings, funerals, sicknesses, and community celebrations also result in frequent interruptions. Another distraction for the women is the presence of children or too many outsiders. We find it best to have separate

classes for children when possible and also to limit the number and frequency of outside guests/observers.

People are much more eager to participate in the sessions and more consistent in their attendance when the storytelling sessions are held in conjunction with some kind of project. The incentive of secular learning or training in a valued skill helps sustain interest.

When Muslim women become believers, most do not see the need to attend church. Many prefer to meet with their teachers for individual Bible study or discipleship training. Teaching that believers need to meet together regularly to strengthen and encourage one another should be a priority in the discipleship-storying track.

Another challenge is deciding what to do at the end of a cycle of stories. The group could easily dissolve itself after some have become Christians and the rest decline to do so. In that case, it would be best for the believers to continue as a discipleship group. However, people are usually involved in projects for a few years, so, it may not be easy to just dissolve a group. In such cases the challenge is teaching a mixed group of believers and non-believers whose needs are different.

It is important to adapt your teaching style to the needs of the group. In urban settings, especially among teenagers and young adults, you may need to be innovative. We found it helpful to integrate drama, pictures, films, and object lessons to make the stories more interesting and memorable. The use of indigenous music, which captures the major message of each story, also has been effective in a variety of cultural settings.

Whatever methods and teaching resources you use, the most important thing is to enjoy sharing God's Word through stories. Become a good storyteller and demonstrate your trust, joy, hope, and faith in His stories. Let your own convictions be contagious.

### ***Love always finds a way!***

*For more information on this topic we recommend:*

**God and Man.** Dell G. Schultze and Rachel Sue. 1991. Bamako, Mali: [no publisher]

**God and Woman.** J.O. Terry, 1998. International Mission Board, SBC.

**Sharing the Message Through StoryTelling: A Bible Teaching Method for Everyone.** LaNette Thompson, 2003. Revised Edition. Bamako, Mali. International Mission Board.

## 8.6 Discipling Muslim Background Believers (Horst Pietzsch)

### 8.6.1 Being moved by ‘agape-love’ and compassion

Matthew 28:16-20 instructs Christians to make disciples and to teach them everything Jesus has taught. This is our formal instruction to care for those, whom the Lord Jesus Christ has called to follow him. The bond which connects us with MBBs is the LORD Jesus Christ himself.

One’s life is completely turned upside down when becoming a Christian. We were lost and now we are saved, were dead in sins and are now alive to God. There is also a change in our perception of people. The disciple follows Jesus wholeheartedly. He will love and accept people, whom Jesus has accepted, especially the broken-hearted, weak, ill and those lost in their sins. This does include the MBB.

When we disciple MBBs, we need to have compassion. 1John 3:17 clearly states, *“If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?”* The ministry to MBBs is an indicator of our love for Muslims; and without love we are nothing (1Co 13:2).

Love is the greatest motivator for getting involved in the lives of MBBs. Without unconditional love, we should not get involved in ministry to MBBs as our motivation is not right.

### 8.6.2 Sharing the vision: Sending the message

Vision is not just a matter of planning something one feels compelled to do. A true vision is inspirational. It’s a mental picture that drives you on, gives you strength and makes you want to see transformation in your church and area of ministry.

Caring and discipling MBBs is not just a matter of obeying Christ. It’s also about sending a message into the Muslim society, that the church loves and welcomes anyone who is obeying Christ’s call to follow him. Even though the church cannot and should not make false promises (Prosperity Gospel), it will walk the “narrow road” to glory “carrying the cross” together with anyone who obeys and serves Christ. On this “narrow road” we will totally depend on God and call on his name. He will answer their prayers and see them through the ups and downs of life. He will prove himself to be the faithful God. HE is the one whom everybody depends on.

## 8.6.3 Teaching to overcome obstacles

### Background

As Islam has different interpretations and as people also live their faith differently, one has to find out where a person comes from so that one can disciple them effectively (Orthodox Islam). Find out what practices the MBB has been involved in (Folk Islam).

Understanding their culture is the key to an effective ministry to MBBs (Cultural background).

### Doctrinal Challenges

There are a number of areas which the MBB initially needs to study. The MBB has to replace the Islamic world view and beliefs with Biblical truth. There are initial topics of Christian doctrine that need to be corrected:

**God:** God is the heavenly Father, who can be trusted, who loves us, but who is also holy. He is not a senile grandfather who ignores sin.

**Man** and his relationship to God – separation from God

**Christ and Salvation** – the perfect sacrifice

**Holy Spirit** - the powerful teacher in our lives

**Revelation and Scripture** – God is not just dictating His word but using the personality of the writer to reveal His will

**Society and the Church** – the church is in the world, not from the world. Therefore secular society and church have different values and roles

**Angels, Satan and the Occult** – God is not part of the occult world

**Eschatology** – The return of Christ is influencing the Christian life and the Church as a whole today

### Ethics

#### *Overcoming Islamic thinking*

**Manipulation:** Force is certainly part of the old life. But in following Christ's example, this has no place in the new life. Christ gives freedom of choice and a new believer has to learn to act the same way. Being open for correction is the key to change in this personality trait.

**Love for power:** When an MBB has been a leader in the Muslim society before his conversion, he needs to surrender his urge to rule and become truly humble and a servant for others. Abused women can also fall into this category, because of the hurt they have experienced.

**Being unmarried** for the sake of Christ can become a big problem for some individuals. If one is single against his own will, it cannot be the primary goal and purpose of life to get married. There is much more to life than

being married. God might call us to stay single for a special task He has for us. Teach MBBs how to cope with challenges of a single person.

### ***Rebuilding Marriage, Family and Society***

The values of marriage and family are very different. Intensive Bible-studies will help to correct the view on marriage, lifestyle, habits and relationships of the partners. Conversion is just the beginning, and the transformation of values will have to change during the process.

The values of society: A Christian wants foremost to do what Jesus expects of him/her. Christians are more concerned what Jesus expects from them and not so much what society thinks of them and how to keep face in front of others.

### **Personal Ethics**

**Transparency** is a foreign concept for an MBB. He is used to perform well in front of others, to try keep the honour and avoid mistakes and shame. The challenge for him is to be truthful, telling the whole truth even if it sheds a negative light on him. He needs to admit to have weaknesses which he needs to work on. Only if an open, clear, mutual relationship is established between counsellor and MBB, real growth is possible.

**Contentment** is not always easy, especially when an MBB sees others who are much better off. Other sisters and brothers in Christ may not know what the MBB goes through or may not always be able to help. Whether we have much or little does not change our position in Christ. There lies our riches and there we gather treasures.

## **8.6.4 Equipping for service**

### ***Practicing forgiveness***

An MBB might have learned the need to forgive but not to forget and since MBBs usually face persecution to the lesser or greater extent, it is easy to build up resentment towards God, for allowing such suffering. MBBs will have to learn to forgive those who persecuted them. This does not come easy. They may also have to forgive church members or others whom they feel have let them down or betrayed them. We are not ready to be Christ's servants if we have not been cleansed and forgiven. Bitterness will paralyze our life and service for Christ.

### ***Servanthood***

No job is too low or too high when we serve Jesus Christ, who is a humble LORD. There is no loss when we do humble jobs, since we follow Jesus' footsteps. Pride belongs to the past. Then one might have liked it to be

served. But Jesus' servants do not mind to work hard and sometimes without recognition or adequate payment.

### ***Transparency***

A good steward has to give account of his assets. He/she cannot be a good steward without being transparent.

## **8.6.5 Being set free by the truth**

### ***Scripture based***

Although every church claims to be scripture based, very few teach their members to search scripture and to consult scripture in order to find answers for their life. Let the scripture teach the MBB about new values, about truth and lies, rather than your own legalistic preaching.

### ***Discernment***

As life is full of challenges and temptations, the MBB needs to find good foundation and ways of growth, so that his faith can be strong and able to discern what is good and evil.

Watch teaching on spiritual warfare. It should not have an overemphasis on power struggle. Jesus practiced spiritual warfare by prayer and by preaching the Word – even in hostile areas.

### ***Exposing the shortcomings of religions***

The old roots of the old faith must be uncovered and taken out. Whatever superstition, magic and beliefs the MBB has practiced must be confessed and he must learn to “be complete in HIM.” (Colossians 2:6-15) Jesus is the only mediator – no other “helper” is needed. Especially verse 6-7: *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”*

Young believers can easily be pulled into different cults and churches with extreme teaching. The MBB needs to be equipped and enabled to detect when matters are not right. God is faithful and speaks through his Spirit. The Scripture is our basis and standard to rely on.

### ***Being set free (from the occult)***

Jesus says that it's the truth that sets free. Since the devil likes to operate with deception as his favourite tool, we need to know the truth. Only when we detect the lies are we able to choose the truth. Then Satan will lose his power, as we bring the sin and the manipulation of the devil into the light of Christ.

When we live a life with no hidden agendas or unconfessed sins, the devil has no power over us. Even if people curse us or we come under spiritual

attack, we can seek refuge with God in prayer. Because the one who lives in us is greater than the one who is in the world. Those who live a sanctified life will know that the attack comes from the outside.

Help the MBB to renounce the Islamic strongholds, to replace them with the healthy patterns of the Christian faith; i.e. instead of imitating Mohammed as a model, the MBB needs to commit himself to following Christ closely.

### **8.6.6 Love is the answer to Islamic challenge**

Islam does challenge the Christian faith. Jesus asked his disciples whether their righteousness was better than that of the Pharisees (Mt 5:20) – *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* Islam challenges Christians in the area of truth, but also in regard to a genuine commitment of caring. Other areas include:

#### ***Forgiveness***

*“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”* (Mt 6:12ff)

#### ***Goodness***

*“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”* (Ro 12:21)  
*“Never stop to do good, especially to those who are brothers in the faith.”*

#### ***Perseverance***

*“You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.”* (Heb 10:36) Christian life is not without struggle and problems. The Word of God encourages us at many places not to give up, because great is the reward we will receive.

### **8.6.7 Integrating into the Church**

#### ***Loneliness***

“Loneliness kills”, one MBB said. MBBs often feel being left alone out in the cold. Loneliness is caused by tunnel vision, misperceptions (conspiracy fears), and a lack of trust. The counsellor’s task is to walk alongside an MBB. It is helpful to introduce MBBs to one another, because they can share in similar experiences. Also introduce him to a wider circle of friends, where he finds an open door of welcome when he needs it.

### ***Assistance***

Since the MBB often has to deal with big life challenging issues, MBBs are clinging to any assistance that comes their way. One has to be very precise on the kind of assistance one does offer and for how long it will be given. Any help is better than none, but when a person is let down in time of need and desperation, the damage is even bigger. Ideally longterm-assistance should be administered through the church. The main objective is to secure an income and accommodation through re-training or employment.

### ***Assisting to grow spiritually***

This is not only accomplished through instructions at church meetings, but also when MBBs have fellowship and spend time with fellow Christians. As they eat, serve and have fellowship with mature Christians, MBBs can learn how the Christian faith is translated into the daily life of people (life skills, ethics, good traditions and practices). Let them watch their daily routine, and observe how you cope and solve problems in your setup.

### ***When integration is accomplished***

The task of the church towards MBBs is teaching, counselling, discipleship, and offering a place where they can worship, pray and practice their gifts. The MBB is not a show piece for sharing a sensational testimony either. Let them only share from the front once they are established in their faith and have proven themselves as genuine followers of Christ. Young believers often become proud, if they are asked to share their testimony publicly.

Another social aspect of the church is that it offers a place where they find friends and a group of people who accept them and stand by them. The church can also be instrumental that an MBB can find a spouse. MBBs should not be referred to as “Muslims” or “ex-Muslims” by the church members. We don’t introduce people as a prostitute or a drug addict either! MBBs are disciples of Jesus Christ and therefore they should be treated with dignity and respect, even when they make mistakes! Who of us is without sin and fault?

**In Closing:** Discipling and caring for MBBs is a challenging, yet rewarding task. MBBs are HIS people. Since the Lord loves and accepts them, so should we. Paul encourages us to follow his example in 1Thessalonians 2:8: *“We loved you so much, that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”*

## 8.7 Planting New Churches

*Please note: These ideas and instructions will be most useful in settings where there is no established church group yet. We do not encourage planting “our own” convert congregations in places where already lively and well functioning churches exist.*

*As a rule House-churches or New Believers Fellowships in informal settings will be more suitable for Muslim Background Believers. (Walter Eric)*

### Church Planting Phases

Phase	Objectives	Steps to take	Comments
<b>1. “Get ready!”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To get the vision</li> <li>To decide on target group</li> <li>To develop a strategy</li> <li>To form a team</li> <li>To gain support from churches and friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research on target group (language, history, culture)</li> <li>Prepare a vision statement</li> <li>Develop a strategy paper</li> <li>Get church support (prayer and finances)</li> <li>Recruit a team</li> </ul>	
<b>2. “Prepare to Sow!”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn the language</li> <li>To adjust to the culture</li> <li>To learn how to survive as individuals and families</li> <li>To enjoy life in the area</li> <li>To develop a good team-life</li> <li>To develop relationships with target people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move into the area of target group</li> <li>Learn language</li> <li>Adapt to culture</li> <li>Develop many relationships with target persons</li> <li>Enable your family members to develop relationships with target persons</li> <li>Bring spiritual elements into relationship</li> </ul>	This stage has begun when most team members are on-site and engaged in language-learning.
<b>3. “Sow the Seed!”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To share the Gospel in the language of target people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find various ways to share the Gospel</li> <li>Memorize parts of the Bible (e.g. parables or</li> </ul>	This stage has begun when most of the team are

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a sympathy for the gospel in your friends</li> <li>• To find "gate people:" people who can bring others to Christ</li> <li>• To lead people to Christ</li> </ul>	<p>miracles) in the target language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a strategy for reaching receptive people and their closest relationships (family or friends) as a group</li> <li>• Prayerfully evaluate your friends to find a person of peace</li> <li>• Model Christ's life before this person</li> <li>• Lead someone to follow Christ</li> <li>• Begin evangelistic Bible studies</li> <li>• Encourage contact persons to share with others</li> </ul>	<p>spending most of their ministry time on evangelism, as opposed to language learning.</p>
<b>4. "Disciple the New Believers!"</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have regular discipleship training with MBB's</li> <li>• To model Christ's lifestyle before these people and their social network</li> <li>• New believers to grow into mature Christians</li> <li>• To encourage new believers to be faithful in persecution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge one or more believers to be disciplined by you</li> <li>• Include family or friends of believers in the discipling</li> <li>• Train believers in the many aspects of the Christian life: the foundations of their faith, baptism, dealing with sin, making decisions, marriage and family life, suffering, spiritual gifts, witnessing etc.</li> <li>• Begin to identify spiritual gifts in new believers</li> </ul>	<p>This is an on-going process, working toward the maturing of MBB's in character and service for Christ.</p>
<b>5. "Begin the Church!"</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three or more MBB's to begin meeting regularly for the purposes of fellowship in Christ, teaching, prayer, etc. At least two should be from the target</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and friends begin to explore good news together</li> <li>• Three or more believers agree to follow Christ as community</li> <li>• Spiritual gifts are discovered and</li> </ul>	<p>During this phase the church-planter exerts significant influence in the community.</p>

	group.	<p>practiced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sense of belonging together develops, responsibility and accountability grows</li> <li>• The community is meeting together regularly for worship, instruction and prayer</li> <li>• Develop patterns for forgiving, exhorting, solving conflicts</li> </ul>	
<b>6. “Train Leaders!”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders to emerge in growing church: Older believers disciple and baptize new believers, women train new women</li> <li>• Believers to take responsibility for Bible instruction</li> <li>• Initial leaders to emerge, to function as shepherds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train new leaders in peace-making skills (forgiving, exhorting, disciplining)</li> <li>• Teach leadership concepts</li> <li>• Encourage new leaders to take over responsibility in church</li> <li>• Ordain elders</li> <li>• The new house-church sees need for reproduction</li> <li>• Members begin to look for new persons of peace to start new communities</li> </ul>	<p>Now the churchplanting team will concentrate on leadership development. The church-planters begin to phase out; new leaders emerge and take over responsibilities. Church-planters withdraw from meetings, concentrate on new meetings.</p>
<b>7. “Motivate the Church to Plant other Churches!”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A group of mature men and women to lead the church</li> <li>• To emphasize on reproduction and evangelism</li> <li>• To have a vision for the Great Commission</li> <li>• National church to fulfill Great Commission on its own</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intense teaching on reproducing communities</li> <li>• Encouraging the foundation of new meetings</li> <li>• A network of relationships between different new churches of the target group develops</li> </ul>	<p>The church-planters do not stay in this first congregation they have planted, but are working with the national believers to plant more churches.</p>

Adapted excerpt of unpublished manuscript by Ben Naja

## 8.8 Mobilising and Training Others (TOT)

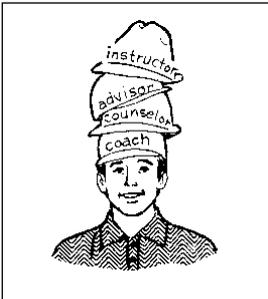
*The task of presenting the Gospel to all Muslims around us is far too big to be accomplished by a few “specialists”. The material in this chapter has been taught to hundreds of trainers across Africa for many years. We encourage you to make these outlines your own and to teach others with a potential to train others – 2 Timothy 2:2. (Walter Eric)*

### How to become a better teacher

Welcome on board! You are joining us to teach and train other followers of Christ how to share their faith with “outsiders”, people of another faith. Thank you for willingness. We are so grateful for your commitment. Let us work together to be excellent teachers, enthusing and enabling our students to apply what they have learned.

The word “didactics” could be explained as “the art of teaching effectively.” Just as much as a good leader can be measured on the kind of people following him, so a good teacher will be recognised in the way his students apply what they have learned. In other words: Teach interestingly without aiming for popularity; rather make sure your students will touch the lives of Muslims.

### Teacher or trainer – What’s the difference?



How do people learn? It is generally recognized that most of the skills we have acquired in life do not come from formal teaching in a classroom or institution, but by observing and imitating an example. This fact is a constant reminder and challenge to the teacher to not only pass on information, but also be a trainer or coach instructing his followers by way of example.

There is a world of difference between passing on information and helping people to understand matters, to reflect and act upon new ideas. It is not good enough for the learner to memorize figures and facts, no, he needs to understand their significance and draw important principles from these facts. The famous “Aha” experience, or just a big smile, will give the teacher a signal that the students have really grasped the idea.

Here is an example of what we are talking about. Imagine you are teaching on the subject “The Life of Muhammad” beginning with the life dates of the prophet of Islam. You have the choice to either just list the year dates and events (570 – birth; 595 – Marriage to Khadija; etc) or you can highlight the significance of each one of these events:

570 – Do you realize that Muhammad was born long after Christ? That is why the Qur'an reflects so much on biblical teaching and hits at some of the main doctrines of the Christian faith in a way you would never find it in traditional African sources or Eastern religions.

595 – Remember that Muhammad grew up as an orphan boy. He had been missing a mother's love and a father's guidance for most of his childhood. Have you wondered about him marrying a woman 15 years older than himself? What could be the reason for this and why did he have such a good marriage with Khadija, but never seemed to be satisfied in his later marriages?

610 – When Muhammad was no longer a fiery youth, but a mature middle aged, respected member of the Meccan community he had his first mysterious revelation. What could we make out of this?

622 – This year marks the watershed in Muhammad's life and the beginning of the Islamic era. You will also want to refer to the Islamic calendar that runs along AH rather than AD. And isn't it interesting that Islam starts with this flight rather than with the birth of its prophet? There is a reason for this. Do you know it?

632 – Do you realize that Muhammad had just ten years to establish the Islamic community and subjugate all of Arabia to the new religious order? How do you compare the later years of his life with the earlier period as a messenger?

Can you appreciate the difference between these different teaching methods? As a good teacher you want to give exact, correct information, but go far beyond it in creating understanding and insight as you link facts and reflect on related aspects.

### **Teaching styles – Variety makes life more interesting**

Now that we have considered this basic principle let us look at some different teaching styles or approaches in presenting our lessons.

Let us learn from the Lord Jesus as a Master Teacher using the example of the boy Jesus before he began his three years of ministry. Luke 2: 45-46 shows us five ways of interaction between Jesus and the Jewish teachers of the law:

*Sitting* - he chose the right environment and company

*Listening* - he learned by taking in

*Asking questions* - helped to reflect and deepen the 'input'

*Understanding* - gained insight and comprehension

*Answering* - NOW is the time to answer and ask others

We note that even Jesus went through a learning process experiencing growth in all areas of his human being; intellectual – in wisdom; physical – in stature; spiritual – in favour with God; social – and in favour with man.

## **Christ the master teacher – Let us learn from his example**

Let's learn these lessons:

1. Move your students from the known to the unknown (Mt 13:52).
2. Teach by way of contrasts and comparisons (Mt 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43).
3. Stimulate your students by asking good questions (Mt 22:41-46).
4. Clarify issues by answering questions (Mt 22:15-22).
5. Make good use of fitting stories, parables and illustrations (Mt 13:7, 24-27).
6. Carefully select key-statements, poems or proverbs that will stick in people's mind for a long time (Mt 5:1-8; 6:9-15; 22:37-39).
7. Give plenty of encouragement, but also careful warnings (Mt 23 – seven woes).
8. Occasionally demonstrate your message with personal demonstration (John 13 – but make sure people understand and interpret your actions correctly – verse 12).
9. Use repetition and summaries (Mt 5 – 7).

You may want to add other principles of teaching here. We are not so much concerned about a comprehensive list, but rather want to urge you to constantly reflect on better, more interesting ways of communication in place of a dull, repetitive style. If we ourselves feel bored while teaching, our audience will probably not benefit from us either.

### **For reflection:**

Have you ever thought about the differences between a teacher and a trainer? How should this affect your personal life as well as your teaching methods? Are you just reading from the Trainers Textbook or have you prepared your personal notes? Have you carefully pre-packed your lessons with questions, illustrations and summaries to suit both you and your audience?

### **ORGANISING A SEMINAR: Some basic principles**

We never learn as much as by trying ourselves. Yet there are skills and principles which we should be able to adopt from the experience of others, rather than making the same mistakes. And certainly we should aim never to make a mistake more than once. Let us assist each other towards excellence. Keep in mind.

**Never call it an “Islam Seminar”** - We are not called to increase people's knowledge about another religion, but to facilitate outreach to Muslims. Names and titles do matter because they create (wrong) expectations. Don't give the impression that you are an Islam specialist. Or worse still, to call

yourself an “Islamist” which might land you into real trouble! Rather invite to a “Seminar for Understanding Your Muslim Neighbour”, “Bearing Witness among Muslims” or just a “Muslim Evangelism Seminar.”

**Be an ambassador** - Our ultimate goal is to see Muslims introduced to the person of Jesus Christ. We need to be convinced and involved ourselves if we want to convince others. Always remember that it is far more important to inform accurately than to entertain people. Never attempt lecturing on issues that you do not know well. You don’t need to know everything because nobody does. We never stop being learners.

**Strike the right balance between spiritual challenge and factual information** - Build up your students both in understanding and in commitment to God. For instance when you speak about the traditions in Islam, challenge the students about their personal relationship with God against a mere traditional observance of rules while giving insights into Hadith and Sunnah.

**Make things practical** - Don’t just lecture. Include personal experiences with Muslims or examples from committed witnesses you know or from missionaries you have read about. We need to model an example which others want to follow. – But make sure your story is verified (true).

**Carefully go through the lesson outlines** - Select and study their contents and adjust it to make things most relevant to your seminar participants.

## **PREPARING FOR A SEMINAR**

### ***1. Who are the people you expect to attend?***

- Are they ordinary church members, full-time evangelists, pastors, Bible college students or young people? Is it likely to be a mixed group?
- What is the main age group? Are they only men or mostly women? How many do the organizers expect? (Be reasonable and give a realistic estimate.)
- Do most of them have daily contact with Muslims? Do they already have a good knowledge of Islam? Can you take them a step further?

### ***2. How much time will be available?***

- Are you only allowed 10 minutes during a service? – Make the most of it!
- Or did you get one hour Bible study time? – That is much better, but not enough for a seminar!

It’s quite different, if you got a full day, a weekend or even one week. You will want to adjust your seminar to serve the purpose and select your topics

accordingly. In other situations you might be given a regular time over an extended period. Then you don't need to cram everything into a short span of time, but could involve your students with home assignments and activities in Muslim evangelism from one week to the next. (The 10 Week Course A Call to Witness is an ideal tool for this kind of setting!)

### ***3. What is the best way to invite people?***

- Should we send out an official invitation letter? (see sample in Part 4)
- Could we make an announcement in church? Or are there other meetings when one could hand out some leaflets? (Islam – The Strongest Challenge and The Church in Africa takes note of the Islamic Agenda) Is it reasonable to expect people to return a registration form? (You will have to start early mailing these out!) Or could some local coordinator be found to organize things?
- And don't forget: the best advertisement is a satisfied customer! One who personally invites others: "Don't miss this seminar. It has helped me tremendously. You should really go there."
- Possibly Muslims hear about the seminar and want to attend also? If so, try to explain to them that this is for Christians only; rather invite them for a separate discussion time. They might be from the local 'dawah'-mission group all eager to sell Islam to you. – Don't feel offended; it may be a good opportunity to reach some of them.

### ***4. What are your expectations? What is your goal? Is it achievable?***

Should every participant receive a copy of the student handbook REACH OUT? How much will we charge participants for materials, inclusive tea and lunch? Can we afford a full service, or do we need to charge more? What is a reasonable time to start the sessions? Consider the distance people will have to travel, their work situation, other functions in the church. Could we include some time for outreach during or after the seminar? Or should we plan to organize a systematic visitation program afterwards?

### ***5. What are the facilities to be like?***

- Will there be electricity at the place? Do you need video / TV equipment?
- You will definitely need a blackboard (and chalk!!) or might have to bring along a flip-stand plus some big sheets of paper. Alternatively a white-board is a good thing also. Or they might even be able to organize an overhead projector. What a wonderful tool, if you have prepared some transparencies!

Now that you have researched all these things **decide on your format:** contents and length, teaching method. A simple way to get most of this information is by requesting your contact to fill in “*Organizing a Seminar with Life Challenge Africa*”.

## CONDUCTING A SEMINAR

You have finally reached the great day to start your seminar. Keep in mind these aspects:

1. Your most valuable resources are the **people** who attend. You can never repeat a seminar the way you did it last time, but will always seek to adapt contents, academic level and teaching style to the people god has given you to impart your vision.

2. Another equally important resource is **time**. > Col 4:5

Approach every session as a unique opportunity. Don't waste any time! Give your all. Prepare as well as you can. > Eph 5:16

It has been said that “wasting time is worse than wasting money.” This is true in the sense that we might be able to recover and pay back money, but never ‘stolen’ time.

### ***Time robbers and distracting things are:***

- Facilities were not prepared in time.
- Your venue is not organized: chairs, table, black-board, etc.
- Too much ... singing, stories, announcements or apologies are being offered.
- Generalizations, clichés and repetitions have “killed” much of the good things you taught.
- Bad habits may distract people – mobile phones can become very annoying!
- You did not arrange your materials ahead of time.

Instead take some positive steps to ensure good participation by preparing a program (will always raise expectations).

Helpful measure: appointing a time keeper to start and finish in good time.

3. Urge people to **take notes**.

If you use posters or overhead transparencies, don't give much text, but rather use pictures, symbols or simple drawings. Remember: One picture says more than a thousand words!

4. Ask some **good questions**.

A good question can be far more powerful than dozens of statements. They are especially useful as starters (give your audience time to reflect) or finishers in conclusion of a session (see Jonah 4:10). Makes you think, doesn't it?

5. Make good use of tracts, pamphlets, books, tapes and other **materials**. Don't just mention it: hold it up, summarize the content, share what this book meant to you. In other words: convince your listeners why this book would be an excellent asset in their ministry. – Test question: when you promote a book who needs to see it, you or your audience? > well, then raise it high and sell it with enthusiasm!
6. Close with a distinct statement, illustration and, as appropriate, **with prayer**.

Avoid routine sentences, but rather “prepare your landing” ahead of time, unless you are sure you've got a special gift for spontaneous, fitting remarks!

An important decision to take is whether you hand out your notes before (usually a bad idea, unless it's a worksheet for group studies) or after your talk. These materials will still “speak” long after you have left! Consider whether you will want your students to do some homework. Are you willing to go through them for correction?

## EVALUATING AFTER YOUR SEMINAR

1. What could the participants take along: Books? Notes? Handouts? A new attitude towards Muslims? A strong desire to witness? Greater assurance of their own faith?
2. What could *You* take along: their names and addresses? New lessons learned? Encouragement to continue with your ministry?
3. How can you stay in touch: visits? Personal letters/email? Ministry newsletter? Correspondence courses? Advanced level training modules?
4. And don't forget your testimony (reputation) as a servant of Christ which includes
  - Cleaning up the room
  - Paying your bills
  - Returning things you might have borrowed
  - And writing a report (for yourself) and LCA

Now you are ready for the next seminar.

<b>CHECKLIST FOR THE TRAINER</b> (Prepare and Take Along)			
<b>No</b>	<b>Description of Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>✓</b>
1.	Set of Trainers Textbooks	1	
2.	Copies of REACH OUT	(for each student)	
3.	Your Bible	1	
4.	Posters / Display File	1 Set	
5.	Handouts	(for each student)	
6.	Free Tracts for Distribution	Plenty	
7.	Learn & Share Special	Plenty	
8.	Samples of all LCA Publications	1 Set minimum	
9.	Your personal Lecture Notes	1	
10.	Chalk, marker, paper, pens		
11.	Literature for Sale		
12.	Receipt Book		
13.	Prayer Bulletins		
14.	Map to LCA Resource Center	Plenty	
15.	Your contact address	Plenty	
16.			

## A Brief Description of 12 Seminar Sessions

### Islamic issues

1. What is Islam? - Nature and Essence
2. Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam
3. The Books of Islam - Qur'an and Hadith
4. Basic Beliefs and Practices
5. The Teaching of Islam

### Apologetic issues

6. Muslim Objections against the Bible
7. Muslim Objections against the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus
8. Muslim Objections against the Trinity
9. Muslim Objections against the Crucifixion and Atonement

### Practical issues

10. Gospel Concepts
11. Guiding Muslim Background Believers
12. Strategy and Planning

(NB: *LCA offers a SYLLABUS with detailed lesson descriptions for 10, 30 and 60 sessions.*)

## Seminar Sessions

### Catch the broad picture

The following 12 session outlines are all structured according to our Textbooks. This refers to the TEACHERS TEXTBOOKS 1-3:

Title of Book	Colour	Volume	Category
Islam – Basic Aspects	Green	Volume 1	Islamic
Christian-Islamic Controversy	Blue	Volume 2	Apologetics
Practical-Tactical Approach	Red	Volume 3	Pragmatics

**Purpose:**

This will help you to get a clear picture of the goal you want to accomplish during the session. At times it may be wise to share this with your students.

**Format:**

This gives you a suggestion as to the most likely teaching mode to help your students learn better. But you may well decide to take another format.

**Main Ideas:**

This should provide you with a good overview of the major points you should address during the session. You might want to take these down on a card and check yourself how much of it you were able to cover during the session.

**Review Questions:**

This is meant to give you some ideas how to ascertain feedback from your students. It will depend on your time whether you go through these questions at the end of the session or leave them with the student to work out in their own time. But make sure to revise these with your students making sure they are understood.

**Significance:**

This could assist you to highlight the most important aspects of the session and to put it into perspective to other subjects during the course

**Danger Spots:**

This alerts you to the potential danger areas where you might be sidetracked or could confuse your students in one way or another. You will want to think these points through BEFORE your session and avoid possible mistakes.

**Additional Materials:**

This relates to additional material that will help you, the teacher, to get additional information for your topic.

Most of these materials are usually available at your LCA office. *Don't hesitate to write us on special resources. We might be able to assist you with one or the other in a scanned version.*

- PF, page 1 refers to page 1 in the Presentation File.

Special Resource: “*Battle For The Hearts*” (BFTH) training course – available in video and DVD (English or French) format.

## **Session 1: What is Islam? – Its nature and essence**

**Textbook:** Green, Islamics, Chapter 1 and TT3, Appendix 8.1

**Purpose:** To give an overview and broad understanding of what Islam is before going into a detailed presentation.

**Format:** Lecture style

**Main Ideas:** Impact of Islam (see Session 1) makes many a Christian wonder: What is this religion called Islam?

Why is the Muslim presence increasing in our country day by day? What do these people actually believe? Have they got the truth? Do they pray to the same God as we Christians do? What do they know about my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? How can I tell them? Explain the meaning of the words Islam, Muslim and Salaam. What do Muslims say about their religion? Islam is...

How should we evaluate Islam from a bible-based Christian perspective? And what should be our conclusion from all this?

### **Review Questions:**

1. Are Christians and Muslims worshipping the same God? Give reasons for your answer.
2. How could you find out whether there is a spiritual void in the life of your Muslim friend?
3. If a Muslim challenges you to accept Islam what reasons would you give him why you prefer to remain a Christian?

**Significance:** We want the student to see clearly that Islam is not like another denomination of the Christian faith, but fundamentally anti-Christian.

### **Danger Spots:**

Watch out that you don't repeat too much from the last session.

Don't go into too many details - leave this for later - but just draw the main lines of the picture.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 1: Islam/Christianity: The differences; Understanding your Muslim Neighbour (Part 4); Books: Islam, by Prof. Al-Faruqi; Do's and Do Not's in Islam; Islam in the Bible; The Gospel of Barnabas

## Session 2: Muhammad - The Prophet of Islam

**Textbook:** Green, Islamics, Chapter 2

**Purpose:** To provide basic information on the life of Muhammad coupled with a fair evaluation compare/contrast with the life of Jesus Christ.

**Format:** lecture, plus evaluation (by way of discussion? Or homework assignment?)

**Main Ideas:** First you want to show Muhammad's background: his immediate world, family tree, Arabia and the power blocks of the time Present the main dates/events of his life.

Now have a closer look at some aspects of his life his attitude towards his enemies, his wives and concubines, his use of personal advantages Finally consider the crucial question: Can we accept Muhammad as a true prophet of God? Make sure this comes across clearly.

### **Review Questions:**

1. What different people groups did Muhammad encounter in Medinah?
2. What is the significance of the Hijrah for Islam?
3. Why do Muslims claim universal significance for Islam today?
4. Why can Christians not accept Muhammad as their prophet?

**Significance:** No doubt Muhammad has influenced the course of history in a phenomenal way. As Christians we don't need to belittle his achievements as the most famous son of Mecca who won the respect and loyalty of rich and poor. He proved himself as a master diplomat among the hostile tribes in Arabia, and a warrior and statesman par excellence during his years in Medina. However since Muhammad claimed to be a prophet of God in the line of the Jewish prophets before him, the standard to measure him must be higher than for a mere politician or general such as Nelson Mandela or Napoleon.

**Danger Spots:** You need to strike a fair balance and be above personal feelings in presenting the life of Muhammad. Remember that he was a faithful husband for 25 years and his wife became his first believer, when you turn to his excessive sexual life in his later years. Don't portray him as a blood-thirsty tyrant when you know that he also granted a generous amnesty in many a situation. Always warn your students against using this information against their Muslim contacts in a hurtful or triumphalistic manner.

Make sure you know your facts well, but don't spent more time on this topic than you can afford from the scope of your seminar.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 2

PF page 10 - Map of Arabia at the time of Muhammad

Books: Towards Understanding Islam, by Maududi

### Session 3: The Books of Islam - Qur'an and Hadith

**Textbook:** Green, Islamics, Chapter 4

**Purpose:** Give a basic introduction to the Qur'an and evaluate its sources. Show the influence of the Hadith on the lives of Muslims today. Format: lecture and demonstration (have your students read some Surahs for themselves)

#### Main Ideas:

Instead of giving a technical lecture rather take a Qur'an into your hand, comparing and contrasting it with the Bible in regard to Form - Nature - Content/Main Themes - Manner of Revelation - Collection - Sources - Islamic Claims to its Divinity - Interpretation (Law of Abrogation).

Similarly explain the importance, contents, collection and reliability of the Hadith contrasting with the NT message about external laws and regulations.

#### Review Questions:

1. To what extent is Islam a "Book Religion"?
2. What should Christians do with the Qur'an? - What contradictions are found in the Qur'an?
3. What importance does the Qur'an have in the lives of Muslims you know? And how does it satisfy their spiritual, ethical or even intellectual needs?
4. How does the distinction made between "halaal" and "haraam" food influence Muslim: Christian relations?
5. Which Hadith collection or books/booklets with selected Hadith are prominent in your area?
6. How could you best help a Muslim who is strongly governed by the Islamic traditions?

**Significance:** Muslims have to follow both the Qur'an and the Hadith, but many have never read the Qur'an for themselves so they rather depend on stories they have learned in their Madressa schools.

#### Danger Spots:

Resist the temptation to make a mockery out of those Muslims who fervently follow every detail of their traditions

Avoid going into too much detail

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 3: The Qur'an

PF pages 15 - 19 : The Qur'an contradicts the Bible; Parts of the Qur'an were substituted; The Sources of the Qur'an; The Complication of the Qur'an; The Hadith

## Session 4: Basic Beliefs and Practices

**Textbook:** Green, Islamics, Chapter 6, (integrate Chapter 5)

**Purpose:** To explain the pillars of the Islamic faith show how Muslims perform their religious duties and give a broad picture of their belief system.

**Format:** Participatory teaching style

Demonstrate prayer positions

Show Islamic items such as prayer rosary

### Main Ideas:

It may actually be easier to begin with the practices and ask the students to list them for you.

Then proceed to explain each one of the five pillars in more detail and draw some comparisons to Christian practices of their faith.

Take sufficient time to consider the concept of God in Islam and the Christian faith. People want to know whether they are the same and they will expect an answer from you.

Spend less time on Allah's angels, books, prophets, but more on the issue of predestination. Here again people are looking for answers and need to have a clear perception of the Muslim and Christian concepts.

**Review Questions:** (see REACH OUT "Questions for further study and reflection")

1. How can Matthew 6: 1-18 help us in our reflection on the pillars of Islam?
2. What is the crucial difference between the Islamic and the Christian teaching on predestination?
3. What is the motivating force for the Christian to do what is right?

**Significance:** Show the deeper significance of confessing your faith, prayer, fasting, helping the poor and being a pilgrim in this world than a mere ritualistic observance, to clarify that Allah can never be called or considered to be the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### Danger Spots:

Watch out not to give the impression as if Allah were a demon which Christians would need to fear.

Don't fall into the trap of presenting Islam at its worst and Christianity at its best. There are many Christians who relate to God in a very superficial way. Rather use this session as a challenge to our own spiritual life.

On the other hand don't give Islam credit which it does not deserve by projecting a deep spirituality into each of their practices when this is generally absent in the lives of Muslims.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 5

PF pages 21-33

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<sup>1</sup> You might well use two hours for this topic or add a workshop to discuss some of the issues in more details.

## Session 5: The Teaching of Islam

**Textbook:** Green, Islamics, Chapter 6 and 7

**Purpose:** To show “the dark side of Islam” that there is no assurance of salvation, but rather constant fear of punishment in the grave.

**Format:** lecture, highlight quotes in textbook

**Main Ideas:** Muslims are very much aware of the Day of Judgment, which is vividly described in the Qur’an. Quote extensively from their books what punishment they are to expect after death, their expectation of the return of Jesus to defeat Al-Dajjal (the Antichrist) and all his other actions to vindicate Islam.

Present texts on paradise/heaven and hell from Qur’an and Hadith and the three options for possible “salvation” in Islam.

The section on the Law of Islam (Shariah) is rather complex and technical. In most situations you might not want to burden your students with many details of it.

### Review Questions:

1. Why do Muslims often state that they are not afraid of death, but are afraid of the Day of Judgement?
2. In what way is the biblical description of heaven different from the quranic description of paradise?
3. Consider the role of the Law in Islam and the Christian faith. (optional)
4. What is the difference in the Christian teaching about God, angels, prophets, books etc?

**Significance:** Muslims have often rationalised hell to be like a moral hospital (like purgatory in the Catholic church) which will not last forever. On the other hand the fear of punishment after death is so vividly described in certain Islamic books that it must terrify the simple reader. Quote from their source books and show the hope which we as Christians have. It is also important to mark the difference between the Islamic paradise and the biblical view of heaven.

### Danger Spots:

Note that there are many different and widely contradicting beliefs about life after death, so watch out not to make sweeping statements (generalizations) but present the teaching of Qur’an and Hadith clearly.

Don’t try to quote from memory giving exact documentation or even reading from Islamic books directly will add much greater weight to your presentation.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 5: final section

Books: The Spectacle of Death; What Happens after Death

Part 4: Paradise and Heaven Compared

## Session 6: Muslim Objections against the Bible

**Textbook:** Blue, Apologetics, Chapter 1 and 2

**Purpose:** To be familiar of the Islamic attacks against the Bible in order to be equipped for an informed response.

**Format:**

Lecture and participatory teaching style

Short role play how NOT to do it

**Main Ideas:** What do Muslims believe about our Bible? What does the Qur'an teach about the Bible? Investigate the major arguments of Muslims against the Bible including allegations of omitted verses and books (Gospel of Barnabas), contradictions and obscenities. Discuss the main reasons for the claim that Muhammad was foretold in the Bible. Show how your belief in the authenticity of the Bible affects your life style. Consider a general introduction to Apologetics

**Review Questions:**

1. What is implied when Christians (and Jews) are called "The People of the Book" in the Qur'an?
2. Why do you believe (and how would you explain) that the Bible is inspired by God?
3. How would you answer a Muslim who challenges you to read "The Gospel of Barnabas" instead of the NT gospel reports?
4. Muslims seek to prove to you that Muhammad has been foretold in the Bible. How can you best take a stand against this claim?

**Significance:** Christians should not allow themselves to be cornered and ridiculed by Muslim missionaries on our home ground, the Bible. We need to know our Book well and be able to not only defend its truth, but to attract and motivate our Muslim challengers to consider its message for themselves. A bold, yet knowledgeable, loving stand for the truth is required.

**Danger Spots:** Make sure to first point out the importance of a loving, humble attitude in any debate with a Muslim. A Christian should never allow himself to be incited into losing his temper or he has lost all credibility. On the other hand "a silent witness" will invariably be interpreted as weakness and cowardice.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 6

Let the Bible speak for itself, and other booklets

PF pages 34-36: Is the Bible Corrupted?; Comparison: Bible in Qur'an and Muslim Teaching; The Gospel of Barnabas

## Session 7: Objections against the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus

**Textbook:** Blue, Apologetics Chapter 4

### **Purpose:**

To show why Christians believe that Jesus is God and how this affects their life

**Format:** Lecture, or use a role-play (see sample)

**Main Ideas:** Present the Quranic texts and show that there is no way to reconcile these with the Biblical statements.

Then show how positively Jesus is acknowledged even in the Qur'an.

However, many Muslims are either not aware of these or just explain them away not recognizing their significance.

Highlight some of the Bible texts on Jesus' divinity and take special time to explain the "problem texts" which seem to imply that he was a mere human.

Point out the tension between the two natures of Jesus: true man and true God.

Clarify what the title "Son of God" does not imply (Muslims speak of a physical begetting act), but show the spiritual relationship between Jesus and His Father.

### **Review Questions:**

1. Why is the Sonship of Christ not negotiable for a Christian?
2. How would you show the importance of Jesus' being fully human?
3. What evidence would you show to your Muslim friend who believes that Jesus was no more than a prophet so that he could understand why Christians believe Him to be the Son of God?

**Significance:** As this teaching touches the very heart of our belief make sure that Christians have understood it thoroughly. You might not have the time for this during a seminar, but you could encourage the pastor or other workers to take it up soon.

### **Danger Spots:**

Watch out against overemphasizing one aspect at the expense of the other. Various sects have fallen into this trap and distorted the Biblical message.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 7: Disputing Christ's divinity  
The Time Line of Jesus

The Prophetic Stars and Two Branches

PF pages 38 - 42

Biblical Christianity in African Perspective by Wilbur O'Donovan

## SESSION 8: OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE TRINITY

**Textbook:** Blue, Apologetics, Chapter 4

**Purpose:** To help understand the Islamic distortion of a belief in three gods and confirm the Biblical teaching of a triune God.

**Format:** Lecture; Brief discussion times on what we believe about the trinity

**Main Ideas:** Islamic arguments are that this doctrine is contrary to reason, and that Christians are adding partners to God.

That the term ‘trinity’ is not even found in the Bible.

And that this is an invention of Paul who went astray from the strict Unitarian belief of Jesus and his twelve disciples. In response to these we need to explain what we do not believe (that the trinity is not a heavenly family of God-father, God-mother and God-son) and why we believe in the divine triune nature of God. This needs to be shown from scriptural references rather than using all kinds of illustrations.

### Review Questions:

1. How would you describe the roles of God-Father, God-Son and God-The Holy Spirit?
2. In what way does the triune God relate within the godhead?
3. Which images, comparisons would you see most helpful in explaining the godhead?

**Significance:** Christians need to gain confidence and do not need to be perplexed on the issue of the nature of God. Instead they should see this as a fantastic opportunity to revel in the God who is personal and relates to His creatures, because he relates within the godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Indeed this personal relationship with our creator is a major attraction to any Muslim who never knows how Allah will react now or at the Day of Judgment.

### Danger Spots:

Don’t “prove” God’s nature from personal experience or from illustrations/comparisons with other subjects (sun, water, three parts of human nature). Unless God had revealed Himself in His word as a triune being, we simply could not have known.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 7: Disputing the Trinity

Books and Booklets

PF page 37: The Trinity

## Session 9: Objections against the Crucifixion and Atonement

**Textbook:** Blue, Apologetics, Chapter 4

**Purpose:** To show the reality of the cross and the necessity of the death of Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind.

**Format:** Lecture; Let people read / listen to Surah 4:157-158 and share their ideas about it

**Main Ideas:** The Qur'an gives an outright denial of the crucifixion (Sura 4:157-158). For the Muslim this is enough to reject all other evidence. He holds that "Nabi Isa" was a good prophet and therefore should not end in the curse of the crucifixion (Galations 3:13). His conclusion: Christians believe in a fiction, a "cruci-fiction".

Some suggest that someone else was nailed to the cross, but nobody knows for sure who this "someone" was. Barabbas, Judas Iscariot, Simon from Cyrene are suggested. The Ahmaddija sect even claims that Jesus was nailed to the cross, but only "swooned" there then revived in the coolness of the rock grave and eventually fled to Kashmir where he died at the ripe age of 120 after having married and led a fulfilled life.

The atoning death of Jesus is also rejected on the grounds that "everybody has to pay for his own sins, no one can take up another person's sin." They would say that this is making things far too easy granting a free license to sin "as you like."

### Review Questions:

1. Why can a Christian not accept the Qur'anic denial of the crucifixion of Jesus above the Biblical report?
2. How can you explain the "three days and three nights" time frame in the grave?
3. Does the doctrine of atonement give a free license to sin?
4. Explain the difference between "sin" and "sins".
5. How can a holy and just God be at the same time full of mercy, love and compassion?
6. What actually was the mission of Jesus?

**Significance:** Paul explains in 1Corinthians 15 that without the resurrection our faith would be in vain. This is quite true, even so Muslims at times use this argument to "prove" why Christians of necessity must have such a strong belief in the crucifixion.

### Danger Spots:

Don't fall into the trap to solely defend the crucifixion. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ is the all-important corner stone which should not be forgotten.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 7: The crucifixion and death of Christ

Islamic booklets: "Crucifixion or Cruci-fiction" by A. Deedat, "Jesus Christ was not crucified" by A. Hassan.

Make sure to use some of the stories, parables and illustrations, such as "Shamuel" or "The Prisoner's Friend" > atonement topic.

PF pages 43 – 44: Isaiah 53; More Questions that demand an answer.

## Session 10: Gospel Concepts

**Textbook:** Orange, Pragmatics, see pages 71-73

**Purpose:** To present the gospel in ideas and concepts which will make it easier for a Muslim to follow, as it builds on a common ground between Islam and the Christian faith. This does not mean that he will easily accept the conclusions leading to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, but it will allow for an entrance to explain the gospel to him and gain his interest.

**Format:** lecture or workshop; (see A Call to Witness, Homework, for a good example)

**Main Ideas:** Each gospel concept should stand for itself, even so we might draw connecting lines from one to another.

You may start at any particular area of interest (see Abraham Gospel Concept for a natural introduction), arouse his curiosity with a particular question (What was the message of Nabi Isa?), take up an issue you touched in your questionnaire (lead from Relationship Questionnaire, Are you afraid of death?, Destination Unknown booklet). Come prepared, yet avoid preaching at your “victim” (see Learn & Share # 11, Wrong Strategy, on how NOT to do it).

### Review Questions:

1. These obviously depend on the gospel message which you have chosen to unfold for your Muslim friend.
2. Make sure not only to ask questions of understanding, but to determine whether he/she has also grasped the spiritually significant points which you sought to bring across.
3. What could you do, if you were not in a position to complete a full gospel presentation?

**Significance:** Sharing the Gospel with our Muslim friend will become one of our greatest delights. Get a good grasp of various gospel concepts, so as to be prepared whenever the opportunity presents itself.

**Danger Spots:** Remember that people are at different stages of their spiritual journey to Jesus.

Don't press for a quick decision. In many cases these gospel stories will be preparatory steps leading to a decision at a later stage. It needs patience and perseverance from your side to unfold the Gospel one step at a time and explain it in more detail.

Watch out against a theological treatise, rather tell the gospel story with enthusiasm and wit. We don't encourage a “programmed gospel presentation”, rather listen first before you start sharing.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 11: Speaking the truth

Great Gospel Concepts, by A. Maurer

Christianity and Islam Series by J. Gilchrist (republished in 2009); various tracts: Storyteller, Cleanliness, Messiah, Finger of God, Adam Concept; The Lamb of God; various evangelistic booklets.

## Session 11: Guiding Muslim Background Believers

**Textbook:** Orange, Pragmatics, Appendix 8.6

**Purpose:** To empathize with the existential struggle every Muslim background believer (MBB) faces as he leaves the Islamic community to follow Christ.

To see ways of assisting him personally and eventually introducing him to find a new home in a church or fellowship.

To find realistic criteria to test the genuineness of a convert.

**Format:** Lecture with discussion, possibly role-play or testimony from an MBB

**Main Ideas:** We need to be fully aware of the enormous barriers - religious, social, economical, psychological and spiritual - encountered by a Muslim seeker after Christ. But the power of God needs to be seen in perspective to these hindrances.

A discipling program including an introductory Bible study / reading model will be considered.

If time allows for an extra lesson/workshop various models of convert care (Total extraction: mission compound, Bible college, Muslim convert center, Subversion: Jesus mosques, secret believers, short-term extraction, family adoption) should be discussed and compared.

### Review Questions:

1. What are the needs of a Muslim convert?
2. How could you assist to meet these needs?
3. What problems are to be expected and how could you face and solve them?
4. How could your church become involved in meeting the needs of the convert and solving the related problems?

**Significance:** There are far more questions than answers in this area of convert care. This should, however, not lead us to despair or ignore our responsibility, but rather to put your full reliance on the Lord and His work in the life of the Muslim background believer. After all, the MBB is owned by God not us and He has promised to work out His perfect plans and bring the work to full completion (Phi 1:6).

### Danger Spots:

We should be very careful not to offer financial or material assistance too quickly. Encourage the MBB to trust God yet at the same time assure him in word and deed that you are standing at his side. Shows your willingness to make him a part of his new family, the church.

We will also want to bring across to him that as a follower of Jesus Christ, the foundation of a Christian life is in who we are rather than what we do.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 10: Why Muslims turn to Christ

Why is it so difficult for a Muslim to become a Christian?, by Abd-al-Masih; Handouts: Follow-up of Muslim Converts and Barriers You Encounter; See also Learn & Share # 18: Testimony column in Learn and Share; Video or interview with MBB

PF pages 53 – 55: Is a Muslim Converted in Stages?; Follow-up of Muslim Converts; The Local Church and its Mission to the Muslims.

## Session 12: Strategy and Planning

**Textbook:** Orange, Pragmatics, Part 3, pages 74 - 87

**Purpose:** To gain a clear understanding of the different settings Muslims are found in.

To choose the right strategy and make specific plans how to reach the Muslims which God has put at my doorstep, or laid on my heart.

**Format:** Lecture; Action session with planning sheets

**Main Ideas:** Differentiate between areas where Muslim communities form the overwhelming majority, where they are roughly the same size as Christians or where they are a minority. Consider different methods of outreach to them.

Come to the conviction that God wants us to plan specifically and set definite goals and objectives which you (together with others) want to see accomplished.

### Review Questions:

1. Consider some of the questions under the heading “Set a definite goal”.
2. What steps could you take in preparing and conducting a concerted outreach to Muslims in your area?
3. How would you prepare for a seminar to be conducted in your church / fellowship / Christian organization?

**Significance:** This is the all-important closing session that will decide whether the teaching will stay in the “head-department” or will lead into God-inspired action. As people may also feel worn-out at the end of a series of talks it will be important to get their attention and take them to a point of making specific commitments.

### Danger Spots:

Make sure this session does not come across as the end of the seminar, but rather as the beginning of a ministry among Muslims.

Remind participants that LCA is committed to be “A Helper in Muslim Evangelism” and that there is a wealth of resources designed to assist them in their witness to our Muslim friends. Prayer is one very important, integral part of this.

**Additional Materials:** BFTH – Episode 12: Reaching Out

Planning worksheet; Prayer books and bulletins; TOT invitation; Commitment sheet for support of LCA ministry

## 8.9 Resources and Websites

### Websites suitable to recommend to Muslim friends

<a href="http://www.answering-islam.org">www.answering-islam.org</a>	(the most extensive website, contains apologetics, chat, testimonies, articles; many links to other websites)
<a href="http://www.soon.org.uk">www.soon.org.uk</a>	(easy English web magazine)
<a href="http://www.the-good-way.com">www.the-good-way.com</a>	(good site for Muslims to understand the Christian faith, offers Bible courses)
<a href="http://www.the-good-news.org">www.the-good-news.org</a>	(evangelistic, not only for Muslims, in different languages, correspondence courses, answers to ultimate questions)
<a href="http://www.arabicbible.com">www.arabicbible.com</a>	(Bible commentary, testimonies, apologetics, English and Arabic)
<a href="http://www.call-of-hope.com">www.call-of-hope.com</a>	(various articles and books, Bible studies, evangelistic)
<a href="http://www.injil.org">www.injil.org</a>	(tells Muslims about Jesus, English)

### Websites for the study of Islam (critical towards Islam)

<a href="http://www.debate.org.uk">www.debate.org.uk</a>	(Hyde Park Chr. Fel., Christian-Muslim debate in Britain, many good topics)
<a href="http://www.apostatesofislam.com">www.apostatesofislam.com</a>	(site of former Muslims, not particular Christians, criticising Islam)
<a href="http://www.fatherzakaria.net">www.fatherzakaria.net</a>	(website of Zakaria Butros, Coptic Priest in US, speaks openly about problems in Islam, crimes, etc. in English)
<a href="http://www.light-of-life.com">www.light-of-life.com</a>	(investigates Islam from a Christian viewpoint, contains critical articles and books about Islam, English and Arabic)
<a href="http://www.truthnet.org/islam/source">www.truthnet.org/islam/source</a>	(critical, has some good sources on Islam, e.g. "Sources of Islam" by W. St. Clair Tisdall)
<a href="http://www.thequran.com">www.thequran.com</a>	(critical, information on Islam from a Christian perspective)
<a href="http://www.copts.com/english/">www.copts.com/english/</a>	(US Copts Association, news about Copts in Egypt & beyond, infos about problems in Christian-Muslim relationships)
<a href="http://www.islam-on-line.org">www.islam-on-line.org</a>	(documentation of persecution of Christians by Muslims)

[www.islamreview.com](http://www.islamreview.com)

(critical site about Islam from a Christian perspective)

### **Islamic websites**

[www.islamonline.com](http://www.islamonline.com)

(world news from Muslim perspective)

[www.al-islam.com/eng/](http://www.al-islam.com/eng/)

(official site from Ministry of Islamic Affairs in Saudi Arabia, information about Islam and many related topics, one of the most extensive Islamic sites)

[www.islamworld.net](http://www.islamworld.net)

(many articles on various subjects, e.g. about Qur'an and Hadith, articles particularly for Non-Muslims)

[www.islamicity.com](http://www.islamicity.com)

(various articles on different subjects, online Qur'an in different languages)

[www.islamic-awareness.org](http://www.islamic-awareness.org)

(professional apologetical site, serious articles against Chr. arguments, "Muslim response to anti-Islam polemics")

### **Other websites**

[www.lifechallenge.de](http://www.lifechallenge.de)

(official homepage of Life Challenge Africa)

[www.jesusfilm.org](http://www.jesusfilm.org)

(infos about the Jesus-film)

[www.domini.org/lam/home](http://www.domini.org/lam/home)

(support group for Christian women dating or married to Muslims, good and loving approach)

[www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org)

(many information and articles about world missions)

[www.ibs.org](http://www.ibs.org)

(International Bible Society, online Bibles in many languages)

[www.gospelcom.net](http://www.gospelcom.net)

(links to many mission organizations)

[www.thegrace.com](http://www.thegrace.com)

"Arabic Christian Bible Internet Magazine," some English articles)

[www.alkalema.net](http://www.alkalema.net)

(Bible text, testimonies, apologetics, in different languages, many links)

## Publications of LCA

(Letters in brackets refer to the language in which the publication is available. See code below.)

### **Training Materials**

*A call to witness* (10 weeks course in Muslim evangelism). Manfred Jung & Walter Eric. (E)

*Christian-Islamic controversy* (Trainer's Textbook II). Gerhard Nehls and Walter Eric. (E, F, A, K)

*Christians Answer Muslims*. Gerhard Nehls. (E, H)

*Christians Ask Muslims*. Gerhard Nehls. (E, H)

*Chronological Bible storytelling – the gentle way to the heart*. Christel Eric. (E)

*Facing the Muslim challenge*. John Gilchrist. (E, F, K)

*Great gospel concepts for your Muslim friends*. Andreas Maurer. (E)

*Islam - Basic aspects* (Trainer's Textbook I). Gerhard Nehls and Walter Eric. (E, F, A)

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