

RESUMEN

CONTEXTULIZACIÓN DE LAS PRINCIPALES CREENCIAS MUSULMANES CON EL FIN DE
ALCANZARLOS CON EL EVANGELIO

por

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Problema

Es un hecho que el Evangelio se debe predicar a todas las naciones, tribus, lenguas y pueblos. Esto es el mandato divino. Esto quiere decir no podemos dejar a nadie fuera. El evangelio es para todos sin excepción. Un grupo que representa un gran problema para la misión es el Islam. El Islam como todas las otras religiones del oriente es muy difícil de

evangelizar. No comparten el mismo libro sagrado que nosotros. Lo que para nosotros es fundamental, ellos simplemente lo rechazan. El mensaje se les debe predicar pero cómo?

Método

El método que hemos usado es la de la revisión bibliográfica. Hemos revisado muchos libros sobre el Qur'an, sobre sus creencias. Hemos podido revisar de igual manera libros de personas que ya han tenido una mejor relación con ellos y que han compartido sus experiencias con nosotros. Resultados Hemos encontrado por nuestra sorpresa mucho parecido de nuestra Biblia en el Qur'an. Hemos podido ver que ellos tienen muchas prácticas que para nosotros son muy importantes. Tienen una Buena Idea de Jesús aunque no es totalmente la correcta más eso puede ayudar para iniciar una Buena relación con ellos.

Conclusiones

Más que conclusiones, hemos preparado una pequeña guía de preguntas introductorias que pueden ayudar a la hora de empezar una relación Christiana-Musulmana

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Tesis
presentada en cumplimiento parcial
de los requisitos para el grado de
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DEDICATORIA

Yo dedico esta investigación a Dios, a mis padres, a mi hermana y a todos mis amigos por sus palabras motivadoras.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Evangelism is something that matters to every person, group or religion. We are all called to serve our fellow citizen on this earth. When we care for someone we always try to give him the best that we have. The most important thing in our life for sure is Jesus Christ. No matter the language, the culture, the country or the color we need to come up with strategies so that everybody hears the word.

Antecedents

Peace is what we need the most in our generation today. In the words of Mother Theresa, “peace is not something you wish for, it’s something you make, something you do, something you are, something you give away”.¹ Also talking about religion and peace, the prominent Swiss theologian Hans Küng made the following solemn observation:

“No world peace without peace among religions; no peace among religions without dialogue between the religions; and no dialogue between the religions without accurate knowledge of one another”.²

¹ John Azumah, *My neighbour’s faith: Islam explained for Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008),

² *Ibid*, 2.

Since September 11 2001, Islam is perhaps the most difficult religion to deal with. Maybe due to the stereotypes placed on them. They are a really challenging group. “The capital of present day Turkey, Istanbul, used to be Constantinople, the city of Constantine, the first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity in the fourth century”.¹ “What is today known as the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria used to be the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, and his tomb is still there”.² “ For Muslim, Islam is a complete way of life and there can be no separation between private and public, spiritual and temporal, religion and politics, or church and state”.³ “Muhammad saw himself as in line with past prophets of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. In the early stages of his mission, he portrayed the Quran as the Arabic version of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. In the later stages, however, Islam was portrayed not just as a continuation but as the culmination of the Judaeo-Christian tradition”.⁴

When we look at those challenges and so many others, we need to come to the conclusion that something has to be done. There are many good methods of Muslim evangelism in use right now. But in our study we will be proposing the contextualization of their beliefs. What they can happen to accept from us or us from them.

¹ Ibid, 10.

² Ibid, 11.

³ Ibid, 12.

⁴ Ibid

The investigation question

The investigation question is the following: Contextualization of the main Muslim's beliefs as a medium to reach them with the Gospel.

We all are desperate about finishing the work that Jesus commissioned us to do. If we are about to reach our Muslim's brother we should seek to demonstrate Christ's love in our attitudes, words, and compassionate. To do that, we need to go in the core of the problem. How does Muslim see us? What do they expect from us? We need to know their theology, their customs and manners, those false assumptions that they are cherishing. When we are well aware of those important facts then we can work with them. We cannot say everything at once and so we must choose what to reveal to them.

Goal of the study

Evangelism is not just a matter of one person but of us all. An encounter with a Muslim for the first time without knowledge about them can be a bittersweet experience at the end of the day. You would felt like the message did not go through. The mission was not being accomplished properly. As Phil Parshall said:

“It is my conviction the Christian church must look with a critical eye at the whole subject of Muslim evangelism. There is a piercing urgency to our deliberations. The great commission provided for no exceptions the imperative. The imperative of proclamation is affirmed by the reality that thousands of Muslims die daily with no saving knowledge of Jesus Christ”.¹

¹ Phill Parshall, *Muslim evangelism : contemporary approaches to contextualization* (Waynesboro, GA: Gabriel Publishing, 2003), 21.

It is necessary to come to the conclusion that there is salvation for the Muslim also. We want to make sure everybody come to the same conclusion. When we are out canvassing, it's easy to meet a Muslim. The first word you say it's what matter the most. It can be a first stone to a long friendship or completely the opposite. Provide basic information to every single canvasser is surely the main goal of this research. Second, is to provide the church with a useful method to establish a primary communication with our Muslim brother.

Justification

As Seventh Day Adventist, we are all bound under the great commission founded in Matthew 28:18-20. Our mission is to spread the word to all nations. I'm sure that the region known as the Middle East is part of all nations. Jesus once said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me¹. How can someone be saved if it does not give the proper or the exact place to Jesus in his life? How can we draw this person to Christ? How can we bring down many of those walls between us? How to introduce ourselves effectively so that later on we can make a great impact out of a well developed relationship? What do they really believe in? How can the knowledge of their beliefs help to begin establishing a common base and a solid ground to built a strong relationship upon? An answer to every single question written above might be the beginning of this great expansive evangelistic wave toward the Muslim.

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Importance

One of the main labors of a Christian is testification. This is the way one can express in his own word the work of Jesus's grace in his particular life. It is not always easy to do so with the Muslim. *Time* magazine devoted its April 16, 1979, cover story to this emerging and dynamic movement:

“Islam is the world's youngest universal faith, and second largest, with 750 million (today 1.2 billion) adherents, to about 985 million (today 1.8 billion) for Christianity. Across the eastern hemisphere but primarily in that strategic crescent that straddles the crossroads of three continents, Muslims are rediscovering their spiritual roots and reasserting the political power of the Islamic way of life. Repelled by the bitter fruits of modernization and fired by zealous pride in its ancient heritage, the Umma (world community) of Islam is stirring with revival... the west can no longer afford to ignore or dismiss the living power of the prophet's message”.¹

There is a serious matter here. People need to hear the truth. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”.² Will we hand out the truth to them? Or will we keep quiet and let them be destroyed or destroy themselves?

¹ Phill Parshall, *Muslim evangelism : contemporary approaches to contextualization* (Waynesboro, Ga: Gabriel Publishing, 2003), 17.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Limitations

The limitations that we have been facing so far can be placed under two labels: (1) there are always transparencies when it's come to tell others what we as Christian are doing to reach the Muslim because people often found themselves with resistance from the head leaders of those countries where Islam prevails. (2) the best materials about Islamic theology are in Arabic language (3) It cannot be nothing else than the lack of time.

Delimitation

We will more likely revise as many bibliographies as we can principally the Quran to compare the main beliefs of Islam to their parallel in the Christendom.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islam is without doubt one of the biggest religion worldwide. Almost the whole middle east is dominated by that religion. For us to understand such a great expansion of Islam we need to look at some facets of it. The creed of Islam is: “*La ilaha illa’llahu: Muhammad Rasulu’llah*” there is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God. This may seem short but there a valley of thought behind this simple phrase. For now we will discuss the second part of the creed looking at the life of the Prophet, his call and his works.

The prophet

At a time when Mecca was a refuge of eclectic religious belief for Arabians tribes fleeing the dominant religions: Christianity and zoroastrianism (followers of the ancient Iranian poet Zoroaster).¹ Muhammad was born in Mecca in AD 570. His father, Abdullah, died before he was born and his mother, Amina passed away when he was only six. An uncle, Abu Talib, took care of him.²

¹ Bryan McAnally, *The indispensable Guide to Practically Everything: World Religious and What People Believe* (New York: Guideposts, 2008), 67.

His childhood and youth

The childhood and youth of the Messenger of Allah passed in purity and loftiness that reflected qualifications for the brightest future. He was a shepherd for a period. Then, he engaged in commerce. He became famed for honesty and fairness in trade, and he became respected and esteemed. The Messenger of Allah was the best of his nation in terms of virtuousness, the most honorable in terms of ancestry, and the most upright in terms of morals. He was the one who most respected the rights of neighbors, most gentle and loyal, foremost in trustworthiness and credibility, and he stayed away from bad acts and harm towards people. It was never seen that he condemned and reproached someone or quarreled with someone. Because God Almighty collected every high merit and characteristic in him, his tribe used to call him “Muhammad Al Amin” which means Muhammad the Trustworthy. Trustworthiness had become his name since, when he was 25 in Mecca; he used to be just called “Al Amin” (the Trustworthy).¹ At the age of 25 he married Khadija, a wealthy widow who was forty years old. He had worked as her caravan agent in trade with Syria. She saw in him his honesty. She provided him economic security and psychological support. They had two sons who died in infancy and four daughters. His increased economic security allowed him more time for leisure and visits to a popular cave at Mount Hira, three miles from Mecca. There he

² John Azumah, *MY NEIGHBOUR'S FAITH: Islam explained for Christians* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2008), 18.

¹ Murat Kaya, *The final divine religion ISLAM* (Istanbul: Erkam publications, 2009), 101.

would spend one month each year.¹ His prophethood started during one of those trips to Mount Hira.

His prophethood

Many books report what could have been the departure point of Muhammad prophethood. They are alike. In the year 610, at the age forty, Muhammad received a vision during the month of Ramadan while at the cave. The angel Gabriel appeared to him and spoke the Arabic word *Iqra*, meaning, “read” or “proclaim” or “recite.” Muhammad responded that he could not read. Nevertheless, he recited the words of the angel: “Proclaim/ In the name/ Of thy Lord and Cherisher, / Who created/ Created man, out of/ A clot/ Of congealed blood:/ Proclaim! And thy Lord/ Is Most Bountiful/ He Who taught/ (The use of) the pen/ taught mind that/ which he knew not.”² After this encounter, he feared a lot he went back home asking his wife to cover him. He experienced doubts and contemplated suicide. He spoke to his wife about the conversation with the angel. Facing the situation of her husband, she went to her Christian cousin Waraqa.

A tradition describes the counsel of Waraqa:

¹ George W. Braswell Jr, *Islam: its prophet, peoples, politics and power* (USA: Boardman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 12.

² Qur’an 96:1-5

Narrated Aisha: Khadija the accompanied Muhammad to her cousin waraqa who, during the Pre-Islamic Period became a Christian and used to write with Hebrew letters. He would write form the gospel in Hebrew as muhc as Allah wishe him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqa asked, "O my Nephew! What have you seen?" Allah's Apostle described whatever he had seen. Warraqa said, "This is the same on who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live to the time whin your people would turn you out." Allah's Apostle asked, "will they drive me out?" waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, " Anyone who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqa died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while.¹

A reassured Muhammad came out of that encounter. "From 610 until 622, Muhammad lived in Mecca and continued to receive communications from Gabriel. For three years he was silent. Then, he launched his prophetic Mission. Most Meccans rejected Muhammad's message when he attacked the idols housed in the ka'aba. They considered his preachments an economic threat to the commercial traders who visited the ka'aba and cultural threat to their way of life."² Though he had many detractors at the begenning, he also gained some people for the cause. His first converts were few: his wife Khadija, his adopted slave son Zayd, his cousin Ali, the son of Abu Talib, and his companion Abu Bakr.

¹ Braswell, 13

² Ibid., 14.

Despite of his surrender, he could keep up with his ministry because he was shield by his clan ties, which included an influential uncle and a wealthy wife. These two, however passed away in 619, leaving him in a vulnerable position in Mecca.¹

What followed after their death marked a very turning point in Muslim way of evangelism. At a town not far away form Mecca, he was invited by some merchants from Medina to take refuge as he's being hotly pursued by his Meccan enemies.

The move from Mecca to Medina is known in Islam as the *hijira*, which many scholars now translate as "emigration". It is very significant in Islam, for it is the year that Muhammad's escape rather than his birth, call or death, which marks the beginning of Muslim calendar. This year also marks a division between two phases of his ministry.

During the twelve-year period in Mecca (610-622), Muhammad's mission was preparatory one in which he preached, warned and used peaceful persuasion. But the fulfillment of his mission came during the ten-year period in Medina (622-632), when he established a theocracy in which his religious beliefs were integrated in a political, judicial and military framework. From then on, the situation was the one described by popular saying that "in Islam there is no separation between religion and politic." With this set of mind, force was used to conquer nations a later Islam was imposed.

Muhammad himself participated in twenty-seven battles and raids. He and his followers won the first major battle, the battle of Badr in 624. They were defeated in some battle also. By the year of 630, he marched on Mecca with ten thousand men and captured the

¹ Azumah, 19.

city. He executed a few of his leading opponents and granted a general amnesty to the rest. Two years after that, he ordered all idol worshippers in Mecca to surrender their idols and convert to Islam within the next four months, or face attack. At the end of the same year Muhammad died in the bosom of his beloved wife Ayisha, leaving the task of consolidating his work to four of his closest associates and successors, who are known as the Rightly Guided Caliphs.¹

It has always been a difficult task to choose a successor even worse if there is no pattern to follow. The death of the prophet Muhammad created a big hole in the emergence of Islam.

Four Caliphs and the beginning of Islam expansion

At the death of the prophet, Muslims had to go on. The process for choosing a new head leader of the religion was not easy. The first four successors of Muhammad were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. Then the title passed to the Umayyads and then to the Abbasids.

Abu Bakr (632-634)

Abu Bakr, Muhammad's father-in-law, had been one of the first converts to Islam, an intimate friend and counselor of Muhammad. He was named the first Caliph that means the deputy of the Messenger of Allah from 632-634 by consensus of the community. He dealt with rebellious tribes by sending his armies to the east, west, and north of Mecca. He defended the law (*shari'a*) of Islam and organized holy war (*jihad*). Before he died he appointed Umar as his

¹ Ibid., 20.

successor.¹ Perhaps the most precious legacy of Abu Bakr is his ordinance for the Qur'an to be written and preserved. Later we will talk about the Qur'an.

Umar ibn al-Khatab (634-644)

Umar ibn al-Khatab was the second Caliph. He ministered from 634 to 644. He can be called the Paul of Islam. He initially persecuted Muslim converts, but after his conversion he used his wealth support the cause of Islam. As Abu did with his daughter Aisha, si did her with his daughter Hafsa. He gave her in marriage to Muhammad. Under his caliph's period, Islam expanded rapidly by way of conquests. He captured Damascus with little resistance in 635. There he divided the churches equally between Christians and Muslims, and arranged for one half of the Cathedral of St. Joohn the Baptist to be used as a mosque, while the other half remained a church. This arrangement continued for about eighty years until the whole building was converted into the mosque that is now known as the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. Then e defeated the Byzantines at Yarmuk in 636 and took over all Syria and Palestine.² He also expanded Islam into Iraq by 638. Muslim armies had taken Jerusalem and its environs and Egypt by 640 and parts of Persia by 642. Certain lands became state properties. Jews and Christians were placed under protection of the Islamic state and were required to pay taxes. Persian slave murdered him. Some says it was a Christian and others a zoroastrian. Before his

¹ Braswell, 23.

² Azumah, 25.

death he had appointed a council of six elders to name his successor. The council chose Uthman, a wealthy Meccan and son-in-law of the Prophet, over Ali.

Uthman (644-656)

During the caliphate of Uthman, Islamic armies pushed across North Africa as far as Tunisia by 647, and Persia became a province of the caliphate by 651. Under his rule the Qur'an was codified. Thus the authorised version of Uthman, which most Muslims today believe to be the authentic and original Qur'an as given to Muhammad, was the only left. In 656, disgruntled Egyptian Muslims murdered him, apparently for what they saw as his nepotism.¹

Ali ibn Abu Talib (656-661)

Ali was Muhammad's cousin and adopted son. He married the Prophet's daughter Fatima. He was one of the first to be converted to Islam. He thought that he should have been the one succeeding Muhammad. He had to wait that long to see his dreams come true. He became caliph after the murder of Uthman in June 656. He promptly removed the governors appointed by Uthman. However, the governor of Egypt and Muawiya, the governor of Syria, refused to leave office or pay homage to him. Muawiya, who was son of Abu Sufyan (the other leader of the Quraysh faction) and cousin of Uthman, accused Ali of being reluctant to punish Uthman's murderers. They engaged into battle. They tried to fix things out without war. Ali's followers were reluctant to the solution of arbitration appealing that was a human solution. The

¹ Ibid., 26.

arbitration went in favour of Muawiya. Ali was outraged and returned to his supporters, who demanded he repent for accepting arbitration in the first place. This he refused to do. Instead, he attacked his own supporters and massacred thousands of them, further damaging his credibility. The battle with Muawiya was suspended and another council was convened. This time the council decided to depose both Ali and Muawiya stuck to their positions until a Kharijite (those who turned against him) murdered Ali in 661 in revenge for the massacre of his compatriots.

Muawiya then became the *facto* caliph. Ali's second son, Husayn, later took on the fight for the caliphate, but was unsuccessful and was executed in Karbala in present-day Iraq. These events brought about a permanent split between the supporters of Ali, known as the *shi'ites* or the party of Ali, and the main Muslim body, the *Sunnis*.¹

Main divisions and movements within Islam

As in many world religions, internal divisions and disagreements on points of faith have resulted in schisms of the expressed belief. In Islam, these disagreements are most predominantly observed in the differences between the two main branches of Islam, *sunnis* and *shi'ites*.

¹ Azumah, 27.

Sunnis

The Sunni represent orthodoxy in Islam. They teach that the successor to the Prophet Muhammad should be a male from the Quraysh tribe to which he belonged. By a process of consensus the community should select the leader. He should be caliph with responsibility to administer the affairs of the community according to the Qur'an and prophetic tradition. However, no one can assume the place of Muhammad in his nature and quality as a prophet, for he was the final prophet.

The *sunni* claim, as do the Shi'ite, that the two groups together believe and practice similarly. In most respects each views the other as a brother and sister Muslim. However history and tradition have brought to the surface the differences have brought conflict and sometimes war. Though they may worship and pray together, theoretically and sometimes actually, they have separate communities with separate mosques, rituals, and leaders.

Shi'ite

The Shi'ite meaning "partisan to Ali" believe that Muhammad designated Ali to be his successor. They hold to traditions that have Muhammad saying, "He whose master I am also has Ali for master." Or, "Ali is to me what Aaron was to Moses." A tradition indicates that "The Divine spirit which dwells in every prophet and passes from Muhammad to Ali and from Ali to his descendants in the Imamate. Thus the Shi'ite differ from the Sunni concerning the Imamate, concerning the elevation of the family of the Prophet Muhammad to leadership, concerning the spiritual qualities of its leaders, and concerning certain practices and rituals. The Imamate

is so important to the Shi'ite that they add to the confession a phrase that declares Ali the commander of true believers and the "friend of God."

They also embrace the doctrine of light, which teaches that a divine light is passed down from prophet to prophet. This divine illumination gives the imam the status of sinlessness and infallibility. Shi'ites often depict their prophets/imams with divine halos surrounding their heads. Even among them, there are some divisions.

Besides those two main groups there are other minority groups such as the Wahhabi Islam, the Sufis and so on. Now shall we have a look about their holy book?

The Qura'n

Every religion has a book to rely on. A book that can guide their members and help them improve their lives on a daily basis. Most of the religions nowadays use the Holy Bible. But the Muslim community uses what we call the Qura'n. "The word qur'an is an infinitive noun from the root *qara'a* meaning, primarily, he collected together things, and also, he read or recited."¹ It is a sacred book for the Muslims. It is the last book of guidance from Allah, sent down to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. It was revealed over a period of 23 years in the Arabic language. The Muslims believe that:

¹ Maulana Muhammad' Ali, *Introduction to the study of the Holy Qur'an* (USA: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 2011), 20.

“the Qur’an deals with man and his ultimate goal in life. Its teachings cover all aspects of this life and the life after death. It contains principles, doctrines and directions for every sphere of human activity. ... the success of human beings on his earth and in the life hereafter depends on obedience to the Qur’anic teachings.”¹

The Qur’an has to be recited in Arabic and cannot be translated into another language. Even though translations may be undertaken, the translated Qur’an will not be accorded the same spiritual and devotional status as the Arabic version. This version is highly venerated by Muslims, almost as if it possesses magical properties. Women are generally discouraged from handling it and men handle it only after undergoing ritual cleansing. No object is ever placed on top of it.²

Muslims believe that the Qur’an was revealed gradually to Muhammad between 610 and 632 form a heavenly document known as the Mother of books or *umm ul-kitab*. It might be difficult for Christians to understand this. Once that we get the idea that they have about revelation, it will be easier.

Revelation

In Islam, revelation is embodied in the Qur’an, which came as a direct message from God to man through the prophet Muhammad. The key here is that God’s words came to man,

¹ Azumah, 45.

² Ibid.

the prophet being only the channel for communication. His title is 'the Messenger of God', which well describes him as one who takes the message and relays it to the recipients.¹

The mechanism of communication is simple: the Qur'an is considered to have been written in Heaven from eternity. Books have been given to many prophets in different languages and cultures from Adam onwards, but all have, it is said, been lost or distorted. The final revelation of the eternal Qur'an in the Arabic language was given to Muhammad, to be preserved in all its purity for the remainder of human history²

The Qur'an admits that this word was revealed in different ways. At times, Muhammad himself is presented as the author of the words (81:15-21; 84:16-19; 92:14-21); more commonly the words he utters are said to have been recited to him by angel Gabriel (2:97); and at other times God seems to bypass Gabriel and speak directly to Muhammad (2:252; 3:108; 45:6).³

The story of the beginning of the revelation is best told in the words of the Hadith, Sahih al-Bukhari 1, 3:

¹ Ida Glaser, «Towards a mutual understanding of Christian and Islamic concepts of revelation», *Themelios*, No. 3, 1982 7 (1982): 16–17.

² Glaser: 17.

³ Azumah, 46.

The first revelation that was granted to the Messenger of God (peace and blessings of God upon him) was the true vision of sleep, so that he never saw a vision but the truth of it shone forth like the bright gleam of dawn. Then solitude became dear to him and he used to seclude himself in the cave of Hira, where he would devote himself to Divine worship for several nights before coming back to his family. He would take provisions for this purpose, then he would return to Khadijah and get some more provisions for a similar (period), until the Truth came to him while he was in the cave of Hira. The Angel came to him and said, 'Read'. He said, 'I am not one of those who can read.' And he continued 'Then he (the Angel) took hold of me and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more, after which he let me go and said, 'Read'. When I replied, 'I am not one of those who can read', he took hold of me and pressed me a second time so hard that I could not bear it any more, then he let me go again and said, 'Read'. I said, 'I am not one of those who can read'. The Prophet continued: 'Then he took hold of me and pressed me a third time, then he let me go and said, "Read in the name of thy Lord who creates—creates man from a clot. Read, and thy Lord is most Generous" ' (Surah 96:1–3). The Messenger of God (peace and blessings of God upon him) returned with this (message), his heart trembling, and he went to Khadijah, daughter of Khuwailid and said, 'Wrap me up, wrap me up'. So they wrapped him up until the awe had left him.¹

Unlike Christians who believe in the inspiration of the Bible, the Muslim believe in dictation word by word of the Qur'an. (see Table below)

| The Qur'an | The Bible |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Copy of the eternal book Surah 43:2–4. [Dawood: We have revealed the Koran in the Arabic tongue that you may understand its meaning. It is a transcript of the eternal book in Our keeping, sublime, and full of wisdom.] Surah 4:82. Will they not then ponder on the Qur'an? If it had been from other than Allah they would have found therein much incongruity [Dawood: many contradictions]. Surah 85:21–22. [Dawood: God surrounds them all. Surely this is a glorious Koran,</p> | <p>2. Inspired by God 2 Timothy 3:16–17. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 1 Corinthians 2:13. 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. 2 Peter 1:16. We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the</p> |

¹ Ida Glaser, «Towards a mutual understanding of Christian and Islamic concepts of revelation», *Themelios*, No. 3, 1982 7 (1982): 17.

| | |
|--|--|
| inscribed on an imperishable tablet.] Surah 10:37. [Dawood: This Koran could not have been devised by any but God. It confirms what was revealed before it and fully explains the Scriptures. It is beyond doubt from the Lord of the Universe.] | power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹ |
|--|--|

How is it preserved?

Since nothing was written but memorized, a problem arised. Many of those who originally memorized Muhammad’s words died in battle. Abu Bakr is said to have instructed Zaid ibn Thabit, Muhammad’s personal secretary, to undertake the first compilation of the Qur’an. This compilation was given to Hafsah, one of Muhammad’s widows, for safe keeping. But during the time of Uthman, the third Caliph, reports emerged of variant readings or versions of the book in some of the urban centres of the Islamic empire. Hence Uthman appointed zaid to head a committee that would collect all available copies, decide what was genuine and come out with a standardized copy. Thereafter all variant copies were collected and destroyed.

Andrew Rippin a lieading Islamic scholar, thus observes

The ultimate enshrinement of the text of the Qur’an as we now know it, understood to be literally the word of God, miraculous inimitable, linked to an illiterate prophet, and thereby having its authority within the community, was the result of two to three centuries of vigorous debate.²

Explaining this declaration Azumah said:

¹ Richter, 138.

² Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: their beliefs and Practices*, (London: Routledge, 2001), 32.

In other words the content of the Qur'an, as we have it today, underwent lots of discussion and editing for a period of between two and three centuries. Despite this, orthodox Muslims regard every letter, word, content, form and meaning of the Qur'an as Divinely revealed.¹

Structure

The holy Qur'an is not like the Bible divided by books, chapter and verses. The Holy Qur'an is divided into 114 chapters, each of which is called a sura (2:23). The word sura means literally eminence or high degree, and also any step of a structure, and in the Book itself it is applied to a chapter of the Qur'an, either because of its eminence or because each chapter is, as it were, a distinct degree or step in the whole Book, which is thus compared to a structure.² The chapters of the Holy Qur'an are of varying length, the largest comprising fully one-twelfth of the entire Book and the smallest containing only three verses. Each chapter is, however, complete in itself and is therefore, called a book, and the whole of the Qur'an is said to contain many books: "Pure pages wherein are rightly-directing books" (98:2,3). The longer chapters are divided into ruku's or sections, each section generally dealing with one subject, the different sections being interrelated. Again, each section contains a number of ayas or verses. The word aya means, originally, an apparent sign or mark and, in this sense, it comes to mean a miracle but it also signifies a communication from God, and is applied as such to a verse of the Holy Qur'an as well as to a revelation or a law.³

¹ Azumah, 48.

² Maulana, 21.

³ Ibid.

As in every religion the Holy book contains the beliefs of the religion. In our next chapter we will look at some of the Muslim's beliefs and compare them to ours in Christianity whenever it is possible.

CHAPTER 3

ISLAMIC THEOLOGY VERSUS CHRISTENDOM THEOLOGY

There would have been no religion without doctrine. What really characterize a religion are his beliefs. Those beliefs together form the core of the religion. We will be analyzing in the following lines the Islamic theology.

God

There are many things that are so difficult for us to understand. They are just out of range. They surpass our mind. Every time we are thinking about them, it's seems like our mind will blow away. Among those things is the idea we have about God. There are many religion aout there. Most of the time, we differ on the person of Christ, his nature and his works. We all seem to agree about God in our Christian world. Who is God to the Muslim? How does he relate with his creation?

Oneness of God

All the basic principles of Islam are fully dealt with in the Holy Qur'an, and so is the doctrine of faith in God, of which the corner stone is belief in the Unity of God. Belief in one God (*Allah*) is the first and central belief in Islam. He is depicted as a sovereign, king, ruler and

master who is utterly other than his creation. His transcendent status is encapsulated in the familiar Muslim expression, *allahu akbar* (God is great).

Idolatry the worship of more than one God, is strongly condemned for Islam stresses the oneness or unity (*tawhid*) of God. He is one and has no partners and no children.

Associating anything else with God is an unforgivable sin, referred to as *shirk*.¹ Explaining this key Islamic teaching, Badru Kateregga, a Ugandan Muslim, States:

Because God is one, no one else can share even an atom of His divine power and authority. God is alone possesses the attributes of Divinity. Because God is one and one only, to associate any being with God is a sinful and an infidel act. Islam makes it clear that God has no son, no father, no brother, no wife, no sister and no daughters... in His unity God is not like any other person or thing that can come to anyone's mind. His qualities and nature are conspicuously unique. He has no associates.²

The Unity of God, according to the Qur'an, implies that God is One in His person, One in His attributes and One in His works. His Oneness in His person means that there is neither plurality of gods nor plurality of persons in the Godhead; His Oneness in attributes implies that no other being possesses one or more of the Divine attributes in perfection; His Oneness in works implies that none can do that which God has done, or which God may do. The doctrine of Unity is beautifully summed up in one of the shortest and earliest chapters of the Holy

¹ Azumah, 28.

² Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1980), 2.

Qur'an: "say: He, Allah, is one; Allah is He on Whom all depend; He begets not, nor is he begotten; and none is like him."¹

How is God like?

We relate to God for what He is. We talk to a friend because we trust him. We know his character, what he's like. Our relationship with God depends on how much we know him.

How is Allah described in the Qur'an?

The opening of the Qur'an, in Surah 1 describes Allah as "Beneficent," "Merciful," "Lord of the Worlds," "Owner of the Day of Judgement," the one who shows "the straight path," and one who shows favor or anger.²

Allah is absolute, independent, unique and sovereign: "He is The First and The Last. He is unique and nothing resembles Him in any respect. He is One and The One. He is self-sustained, does not need anything but everything needs Him.... He is the Willer of existing things and the things that will exist, and nothing happens apart from his will. He is the Knower of all that can be known. His knowledge encompasses the whole universe that he has created and he alone sustains. God is completely sovereign over all his creation."³ Muslims traditionally

¹ Muhammad Maulana Ali, *The religion of Islam : a comprehensive discussion of the sources, principles and practices of Islam* (Columbus, Ohio: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'At Islam Lahore, 1990), 144.

² Rick Richter, *Comparing the Qur'an and the Bible: What They Really Say About Jesus, Jihad, and More* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 41.

³ Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 21.

“insist on learning and remembering the following thirteen attributes specifically: ‘Existence, Eternity, Perpetuity, Dissimilarity, Self-Sustenance, Unity, Mighty, Will, Knowledge, Life, Hearing, Sight and Speech. ”¹ Note the many “names” that describe “Allah” in Surah 8: “Mighty,” “Wise,” of “Infinite bounty,” “best of plotters,” “Seer,” “Befriender,” “transcendent Helper,” “Hearer,” “Knower,” “severe in punishment,” “Forgiving,” and “Merciful.”²

But among those primarily attributes, there are four that need our attention for their occurrences in the Qur’an. The first one is *Rabb* which, for want of a proper word, is translated as Lord. The word in Arabic, however, carries a far grander idea than its English rendering. Its significance, according to *Raghib*, is the *fostering a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion*. Hence *Rabb* is the Lord Who not only gives to the whole creation its means of sustenance, but has also preordained for each kind a sphere of capacity and, within that sphere, provided the means by which it continues gradually to attain its goal of perfection.³ The importance of this attribute among all the others is clear from the fact that it is the first attribute mentioned in the Holy Qur’an in its present arrangement, occurring in the first verse of the opening chapter after the name *Allah*; it is the attribute mentioned in the first revelation granted to the Holy Prophet, occurring twice in the first five verses of the 96th chapter; it is the attribute which, after Allah, is mentioned most

¹ Ibid., 22.

² Richter, 42.

³ Muhammad Maulana Ali, *Introduction to the Study of The Holy Qur’an* (Columbus, Ohio: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’At Islam Lahore, 1992), 89.

frequently, occurring 965 times in the Holy Qur'an; and, lastly, it is the name by which God is most often addressed in prayers.¹ Another peculiarity regarding this attribute may be noted here. It is never used absolutely but always as my *Rabb* or our *Rabb* or your *Rabb*, or thy *Rabb* or *Rabb* of the world. The reason is plain. The Nourisher or Sustainer can be spoken of only in relation to something which He nourishes or sustains. He is spoken of repeatedly as the *Rabb* (or Sustainer) of believers as well as of unbelievers, of the Muslims as well as of their opponents, which is a clear evidence of the broadness of the conception of God in Islam.²

Next to *Rabb* in importance are the closely-related names *Rahman* and *Rahim*, translated as *Beneficent* and *Merciful* respectively. They occur 400 times in the Qur'an, while the same attribute in verb form — *showing of mercy* — occurs about 170 times, bringing the total to about 570. No other attribute, with the exception of *Rabb*, is as frequently repeated. These two attributes not only occupy the highest place after *Rabb* with regard to the frequency of their occurrence, but their importance is also indicated by bringing them in immediately after the attribute *Rabb* in the opening chapter, and further by heading with them every chapter of the Holy Qur'an in the well-known formula *Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*. Both these words are active participle nouns of different forms from the same root *rahma*, which signifies tenderness requiring the exercise of beneficence, and thus comprises the idea of love and mercy. *Rahman* is of the type of *fa'lan* and indicates the greatest preponderance of the quality of mercy, and *Rahim* is of the type of *fa'il* and expresses a constant repetition and

¹ Ibid., 90.

² Ibid.

manifestation of that quality. The two words are applicable to two different states of the exercise of mercy in God; the first to that state when man has not done anything to deserve it and God exercises His unbounded mercy in bestowing His gifts on him, and the second to that condition when man does something to deserve His mercy, and His mercy is, therefore, repeatedly exercised for him. Thus it is *Rahman* Who creates for man all those things which make his life possible on this earth, and it is *Rahim* Who gives him the fruits of his labour; or, again, it is *Rahman* Who, by His revelation, shows man the right way to develop his faculties, and it is *Rahim* Who rewards the faithful for the good they do.¹

The next name in point of importance is *Ghafur* (Forgiving) so far as the frequency of its occurrence in the Holy Qur'an is concerned, for, along with the other cognate forms *Ghafir* and *Ghaffar*, and along with its verb forms indicating the exercise of the attribute of *ghafir*, it occurs 233 times in the Holy Qur'an. Now Forgiving is again a defective rendering for the original *Ghafur*, for the Arabic word carries a double significance. The root word *ghafir* means the granting of protection, and *Ghafur*, therefore, means the Grantor of protection against sin or against the punishment of sin.²

All the other attributes of the Divine Being that are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an are, as it were, offshoots of any one of the four essential attributes mentioned in the opening chapter.

¹ Ibid., 91.

² Ibid., 94.

He is *al-Wahid* or *Ahad* (the One), *al-Hayy* (the Ever-Living), *al-Qayyum* (the Self-Subsisting), *al-Ghani* (the Self-Sufficient), *al-Awwal* (the First), *al-Akhir* (the Last), *al-Quddus* (the Holy), *al-Samad* (on Whom all depend and He depends not on any), *al-Haqq* (the True).

As relating to the act of creation, He is *al-Khaliq* (the Creator), *al-Bari'* (the Maker or the Creator of soul), *al-Musawwir* (the Fashioner of shapes), *al-Badi* (Wonderful Originator).

In relation to His love and mercy, He is *al-Ra'uf* (the Affectionate), *al-Wadud* (Loving-Kind), *al-Latif* (the Benignant), *al-Tawwab* (the Oft-Returning to mercy), *al-Halim* (the Forbearing), *al-Afuww* (the Pardoner), *al-Shakur* (the Multiplier of rewards), *al-Salam* (the Author of peace), *al-Mu'min* (the Granter of security), *al-Muhaimin* (the Guardian over all), *al-Jabbar* (the Restorer of every loss), *al-Barr* (the Benign), *Rafi 'al-darajat* (the Exalter of ranks), *al-Wasi'* (the Ample-Giving), *al-Wahhab* (the great Giver), *al-Razzaq* (the Bestower of sustenance).

In relation to His glory, power, and greatness, He is *al-'Azim* (the Great), *al-'Aziz* (the Mighty), *al-Qadir* or *Qadir* or *Muqtadir* (the Powerful), *al-'Aliyy* or *Muta'al* (the High), *al-Qawiyy* (the Strong), *al-Qahhar* (the Supreme), *al-Mutakabbir* (the Possessor of every greatness), *al-Kabir* (the Great), *al-Karim* (the Honoured), *al-Hamid* (the Praiseworthy), *al-Majid* (the Glorious), *al-Matin* (the Strong), *al-Zahir* (the Ascendant over all), *dhul-Jalal wal Ikram* (the Lord of glory and honour).

In relation to His knowledge, He is *al-'Alim* (the Knowing), *al-Hakim* (the Wise), *al-Sami* (the Hearing), *al-Khabir* (the Aware), *al-Basir* (the Seeing), *al-Shahid* (the Witness), *al-Raqib* (the Watcher), *al-Batin* (the Knower of hidden things).

In relation to His control of things, He is *al-Wakil* (having all things in His charge), *al-Waliyy* (the Guardian), *al-Hafiz* (the Keeper), *al-Malik* (the King), *al-Malik* (the Master), *al-Fattah* (the greatest Judge), *al-Hasib* or *Hasib* (One who takes account), *al-Muntaqim* or *dhu-Intiqam* (the Inflictor of retribution), *al-Muqit* (the Controller of all things).¹

God's love

How does the Qur'an describe Allah's love?

Allah's love for people is conditional: "If ye love Allah, follow me [Muhammad]; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins" (Surah 3:31). By our love we gain Allah's love. Allah is merciful and loving toward those who "ask pardon of your Lord and then turn unto Him (repentant)" (Surah 11:90); first they must "ask pardon" and "turn unto Him."

In the Qur'an, Allah's love is for those who are good (see Surah 2:195; 2:222; 3:134; 5:13; 9:4; 9:108; 49:9; 60:8). Surah 85:14 speaks of Allah's love—"He is the Forgiving, the Loving"—in the context of "those who believe and do good works" (Surah 85:11). (In contrast, the Lord God loves the "ungodly," "sinners," and "enemies" of God [Rom. 5:6–10]; see "b. The Bible: The Lord God," below.) However, "Allah loveth not the disbelievers" (Surah 3:32); "Allah loveth not wrongdoers" (Surah 3:57).

Allah's love is conditional on obedience:

"Allah loveth those who ward off (evil)" (Surah 3:76).

¹ Ibid., 97.

“Allah loveth the steadfast” (Surah 3:146).

“Allah loveth those who put their trust (in Him)” (Surah 3:159).

“Allah loveth the equitable” (Surah 5:42).

Thus, Allah’s love is conditional upon a person being worthy of that love.¹

This following table (*table 1*)² describe at his best the differences how the Bible and the Qur’an define God.

Table 1.

| The Qur’an | The Bible |
|--|---|
| <p>1a. Allah Surah 1. The opening</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. 2. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds: 3. The Beneficent, the Merciful: 4. Owner of the Day of Judgement. 5. Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help. 6. Show us the straight path: 7. The path of those whom Thou hast favoured; Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray. <p>Surah 7:180. Allah’s are the fairest names. Invoke Him by them. And leave the company of those who blaspheme His names. They will be requited what they do.</p> <p>Surah 112. The Sincerity <i>Revealed at Mecca</i> In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the</p> | <p>1b. Lord God Exodus 34:6–7. And he [the LORD] passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”</p> <p>Psalms 145:8–9. The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.</p> <p>Psalms 86:15. But you, O LORD, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.</p> <p>Psalms 139:1. O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.</p> <p>Jeremiah 23:24. “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?”</p> |

¹ Rick Richter, *Comparing the Qur’an and the Bible: What They Really Say about Jesus, Jihad, and More* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 42.

² Richter, 40–41.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Merciful.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Say: He is Allah, the One! 2. Allah, the eternally Besought of all! 3. He begetteth not nor was begotten. 4. And there is none comparable unto Him. <p>Surah 8. “Allah is Mighty, Wise” (10); “Allah is of Infinite bounty” (29); “Allah is the best of plotters” (30); “Allah is Seer of what they do” (39); “Allah is your Befriender—a transcendent Patron, a transcendent Helper” (40); “Allah is able to do all things” (41); “Allah in truth is Hearer, Knower” (42); “Allah is severe in punishment” (48); “Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” (70).</p> | <p>declares the LORD. “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD.</p> <p>Leviticus 19:2. [The Lord’s words:] “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.’”</p> <p>Deuteronomy 32:4. He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.</p> <p>Matthew 6:9. [Jesus’s words:] “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name ...’”</p> <p>Romans 11:33. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!</p> <p>1 Corinthians 8:6. There is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.</p> <p>1 John 4:8. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.</p> |
|--|--|

How does the Bible describe God?

The Lord is “compassionate and gracious,” “slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,” as he tells Moses in Exodus 34:6–7. “Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished” if they do not repent. This description of God as compassionate and gracious is often repeated in the Old Testament, for example in Psalms 145:8–9 and 86:15.¹

The Lord is all knowing. He searches and knows us (**Ps. 139:1**). The Lord is all-present, filling heaven and earth (**Jer. 23:24**).

¹ Ibid., 42–43.

The Lord is holy (“I, the LORD your God, am holy” [Lev. 19:2]). He is perfect and just (Deut. 32:4). The Bible takes very seriously the justice and holiness of God and the need to meet and “satisfy” the justice of God through sacrifice. (In distinction, in the Qur’an the possibility of ransom for sin is denied and the need for sacrifice and atonement is absent.)

God is Father: “Our Father in heaven ...” (Matt. 6:9).

God’s wisdom is celebrated in the Bible: “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” (Rom. 11:33).

God is One, according to Deuteronomy 6:4, the Shema (Hebrew “hear”) prayer: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” God’s oneness is likewise expressed in 1 Corinthians 8:6: “There is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.”¹

More names of the Lord God appear throughout the Bible. Here are some examples: “LORD God” (Gen. 2:4; cf. Gen. 1:1; Isa. 42:5); “God of gods and Lord of lords” (Deut. 10:17); “God Most High” (Gen. 14:19, 22; cf. Num. 24:16; Luke 1:35); “Creator of heaven and earth” (Gen. 14:19, 22; cf. Isa. 54:5); “shield” (Gen. 15:1; Ps. 3:3; 18:2); “strength” (Ps. 18:1);

“refuge” (Isa. 25:4); “very great reward” (Gen. 15:1); “the God who sees me” (Gen. 16:13); “God Almighty” (Gen. 17:1; cf. Num. 24:16); “LORD Almighty” (Isa. 1:24; 6:3; 54:5); “Eternal God” (Gen. 21:33); “*Elohe Israel*” (the God of Israel; Gen. 33:20); “*El Bethel*” (God of Bethel; Gen. 35:7); “I AM WHO I AM” (Exod. 3:14); “banner” (Exod. 17:15); “peace” (Judg. 6:24);

¹ Ibid., 43.

“rock” (Ps. 18:2; cf. Isa. 26:4); “King of glory” (Ps. 24:8); “Mighty One of Israel” (Isa. 1:24; cf. Isa. 9:6; 33:21; Luke 1:49); “Everlasting Father” (Isa. 9:6); “Holy One of Israel” (Isa. 43:3; 49:7; 54:5); “Savior” (Isa. 43:3; Luke 1:47); “Redeemer” (Isa. 49:7; 54:5); “God of all the earth” (Isa. 54:5); “Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:13).

A number of titles are also applied to the second person of the Trinity: “Branch” (Zech. 3:8); “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6); “Wonderful Counselor” (Isa. 9:6); “Jesus” (Matt. 1:21); “Immanuel” (God with us; Matt. 1:23); “Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32); “Son of God” (Luke 1:35); “Word” (John 1:1; cf. 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13); “Savior of the world” (John 4:42); “author of salvation” (Heb. 2:10); “bread of life” (John 6:35); “light of the world” (John 8:12); “good shepherd” (John 10:11); “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25; cf. 1 John 1:2); “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6); “true vine” (John 15:1); “radiance of God’s glory” (Heb. 1:3); “the living Stone” (1 Pet. 2:4); “the First and the Last” (Rev. 1:17); “Living One” (Rev. 1:18); “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16); “the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star” (Rev. 22:16).¹

How does the bible describe the love of God?

By the love of God is sometimes meant his goodness, of which all sensitive creatures are the objects and of whose benefits they are the recipients. Sometimes it means his special regard for the children of men, not only as rational creatures, but also as the offspring of Him who is the Father of the spirits of all men. Sometimes it means that peculiar, mysterious,

¹ Ibid., 43–44.

sovereign, immeasurable love which passes knowledge, of which his own people, the Church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven, are the objects. Of this love it is taught, (1.) That it is infinitely great. (2.) That it is discriminating, fixed on some and not upon others of the children of men. It is compared to the love of a husband for his wife; which from its nature is exclusive. (3.) That it is perfectly gratuitous and sovereign, *i.e.*, not founded upon the special attractiveness of its objects, but like parental affection, on the mere fact that they are his children. (4.) That it is immutable. (5.) That it secures all saving blessings, and even all good; so that even evictions are among its fruits intended for the greater good of the sufferer. Now to this love, not to general goodness, not to mere philanthropy, but to this peculiar and infinite love, the gift of Christ is uniformly referred. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10.) Hereby perceive we the love of God (or, hereby we know what love is), because He (Christ) laid down his life for us. (1 John 3:16.) God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8.) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13.) Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:35–39.) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32.) The whole argument of the Apostle in Romans 5:1–11, and especially throughout the eighth chapter, is founded upon this infinite and immutable love of God to his people. From this he argues their absolute security for time and eternity. Because He thus loved them He gave his Son for them; and, having done this, He would certainly give them everything necessary for their salvation. No enemy should ever prevail against them; nothing could ever separate them from his love. This

whole argument is utterly irreconcilable with the hypothesis that Christ died equally for all men. His death is referred to the peculiar love of God to his people, and was the pledge of all other saving gifts. This peculiar love of God is not founded upon the fact that its objects are believers, for He loved them as enemies, as ungodly, and gave his Son to secure their being brought to faith, repentance, and complete restoration to the divine image. It cannot, therefore, be explained away into mere general benevolence or philanthropy. It is a love which secured the communication of Himself to its objects, and rendered their salvation certain; and consequently could not be bestowed upon all men, indiscriminately. This representation is so predominant in the Scriptures, namely, that the peculiar love of God to his people, to his Church, to the elect, is the source of the gift of Christ, of the mission of the Holy Spirit, and of all other saving blessings, that it cannot be ignored in any view of the plan and purpose of salvation. With this representation every other statement of the Scriptures must be consistent; and therefore the theory which denies this great and precious truth, and, which assumes that the love which secured the gift of God's eternal Son, was mere benevolence which had all men for its object, many of whom are allowed to perish, must be unscriptural.¹

¹ Charles Hodge, *Systematic theology*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 549–551.

The triune of God

At the beginning of this chapter we look at the oneness of God. Does the trinity reject the oneness of God? Let's see what the Qur'an and the Bible has to say about it. (see the table 2) ¹ below).

The trinity is also denounced as a form of *shirk*: so believe in Allah and his messengers and say not, Three. Desist it is better for you; Allah is only one God. The belief that they have about Jesus prevents them from accepting the doctrine of trinity.

Table 2.

¹ Richter, 44–45.

| The Qur'an | The Bible |
|--|--|
| 2a. Contra the triune God | 2b. The deity of Jesus |
| <p>Surah 4:171. <i>O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which he conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three"—Cease! (it is) better for you!—Allah is only One God. Far is it removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son.</i> His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient as Defender. [The words italicized here appear inscribed inside the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.]</p> <p>Surah 3:64a. Say: O people of the Scripture! [note: "Jews and Christians"] Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for Lords beside Allah.</p> | <p>Matthew 28:19. [Jesus's words:] "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."</p> <p>2 Corinthians 13:14. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.</p> <p>John 5:23. [Jesus's words:] "... that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him."</p> <p>John 20:28. Thomas said to him [Jesus], "My Lord and my God!"</p> <p>Colossians 2:9. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.</p> <p>1 Peter 4:11.... so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.</p> |

Islam on sonship of God

This doctrine by far is perhaps the most hated by the Muslims. They simply don't get it. The doctrine is denounced repeatedly, even in the earliest revelations. Why? The reason for this is that the doctrine of sonship is due to the supposition that God cannot forgive sins unless He receives some satisfaction therefor, and this satisfaction is supposed to have been afforded by the crucifixion of the Son of God, who alone is said to be sinless. The Doctrine of sonship is thus practically a denial of the quality of forgiveness in God and this amounts to attributing a

defect to him. It is for this reason also that a most forcible denunciation of the doctrine of sonship is followed by the words: "IT is not worthy of the beneficent God (*Rahman*) that should take himself a son" (19:92). The word *Rahman* signifies originally the Lord of immeasurable mercy who requires no satisfaction or compensation for a display of the quality of mercy which is inherent in Him, and the attribute of being *Rahman* negates the doctrine of sonship.¹

The differences between us really reside in our idea of the triune God. Notice that we do not teach there are more than one God. The oneness of God is still present in our theology as Christian but scripture reveals the unity of God (Deut 6:4; Eph 4:6; 1 Tim 2:5). It also asserts or implies the deity of three Persons: Father (John 6:27), Son (Heb 1:8), and Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3–4). Also the Bible pictures the Trinity in action at the birth (Luke 1:35) and baptism (Matt 3:16) of Jesus. The Trinity is associated together in benedictions, doxologies, and baptismal formulas (Matt 28:19–20; 2 Cor 13:14).

We can say that God is one in His nature and three in His Persons. More specifically we can confess that there is only one God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance yet distinct in function. The members of the Trinity are equal, yet they may functionally subordinate at times. Without the Trinity we have no final and perfect revelation of God. God is perfectly infinite, and only God can reveal God perfectly and adequately. Thus Christ perfectly reveals an infinite God to finite and imperfect humanity while the Spirit makes known to us the fullness of Christ.

¹ Maulana, 147.

The teaching regarding the Trinity is incomprehensible. It is truth for the heart. The fact that it cannot be satisfactorily explained, instead of refuting such a truth, rather underscores it. No one could have imagined this doctrine; such a truth had to be revealed. As the church fathers affirmed, the Trinity is divinely revealed, not humanly constructed. It would be absurd if it were a human invention. It is not self-evident or logically consistent, but it is a mystery that God has revealed.¹

God's will

“Nothing will happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us: He is our protector”:
and on Allah let the Believers put their trust”² (Surah 9:51). For the Muslim people God is the One that guides us. He kind of prevents us from doing what is bad. Whatever he wills happens, and whatever Allah does not will does not happen. “Whatever good, (O man!) happens to thee, is from Allah; but whatever evil happens to thee, is from thy (own) soul.”³(Surah 4:79). The Qur'an's strong emphasis on the final judgment continually impresses upon Muslims that they are responsible and accountable to Allah.⁴

¹ David S. Dockery, Trent C. Butler, et al., *Holman Bible Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1992), 813.

² Abdullah Yusuf Ali, «The meaning of the Holy Qur'an», 2004.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Richter, 48.

What does the Qur'an state concerning predestination?

As for us Christian there are many interpretation of the Qur'an on that particular matter. Al-Asha'ari (d. 330/942), on the basis of certain texts from the Qur'an, developed the doctrine of "acquisition." He held that "all acts are created and produced by God but attach themselves to the will of man who thus acquires them.... The principle that seems to be at work here is that all power is referred to God while responsibility must remain with man.... Thus, al-Ash'ari confirmed the absolute Power and Grace of God as orthodoxy had maintained it. All acts take place by the Will and 'Good Pleasure' of God, whether good or evil!"

Al-Maturidi (d. 333/945), like al-Ash'ari, "holds that all acts are willed by God, but unlike him, maintains that evil acts do not occur 'with the good pleasure of God.' More important, Maturidism, while emphasizing the Omnipotence of God, allows the efficacy of the human will and, in some of its later developments, the absolutely free human production of acts."

The systematic theology of Islam after al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) "was that of an uncompromising determinism and a flat rejection of human freedom.... We are not the authors of our acts but God is, on the ground that we are never fully aware of the details and consequences of our actions. This systematic theology was taught in the educational institutions of Islam through the Middle Ages.

In *The Religion of Islam*, Maulana Muhammad Ali (1899–1951) states, "God is recognized by the Qur'an as the first and ultimate cause of all things; but this does not mean

that He is the Creator of the deeds of man.” Man “is a free agent and responsible for what he does”¹

Even among their scholars the idea over this subject is not all set.

What does the Bible say about Predestination?

As for the Muslim’s scholars, we as Christians we have many point of view on predestination. Generally we four point of views. Let’s look at them.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) “clearly asserts man’s total inability to exercise his will favorably before God, and stresses on the other hand that God is absolutely sovereign, indeed irresistible, in His gracious activity”²

Martin Luther (1483–1546) approached the mystery of predestination from the perspective of Christ. To those troubled by the mystery and the question whether or not they were elect, Luther writes, “God has given us His Son, Jesus Christ; daily we should think of Him and mirror ourselves in Him. There we shall discover the predestination of God and shall find it most beautiful. For apart from Christ all is danger, death, and devil; but in Him all is pure peace and joy.... Therefore avoid and flee such thoughts as temptations that come from the serpent in Paradise. Instead, look at Christ. May God have you in His keeping”³

¹ Ibid., 49.

² Walter W. Oetting, “Augustine of Hippo” in *Lutheran Cyclopedia, A Concise In-Home Reference for the Christian Family*, ed. Erwin L Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 62.

³ Martin Luther, quoted in *What Luther Says*, ed. Ewald M. Plass (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 1:454.

John Calvin (1509–64): “For Calvin God is the Beginning, the Means, the End of everything. This principle prompts Calvin to systematize every phase of theology around the “greater glory of God” concept. This overemphasis on the sovereignty of God becomes most patent in Calvin’s doctrine of double election. God is Absolute, subject to no law. In His absolute sovereignty He has predetermined that the salvation of some is to be to the glory of His grace; the reprobation of others likewise to the glory of His name.”¹

Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609) held: “God from all eternity predestined to eternal life those of whom He foresaw that they would remain steadfast in faith to their end.” “Christ died for all mankind, not only for the elect.” “Man cooperates in his conversion by free will.”²

We as Adventist according to our study of the Bible we are more attaching to Arminius. If we surround ourselves to God’s will, God in his everlasting love for us will save us.

Now that we have seen some key point on the doctrine of God, not let’s see what the Muslim really think about Jesus.

Jesus

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”³ Most of us when we read for this verse only one thing come to our minds. We need to accept Jesus in other to be saved. We need to believe in

¹ F. E. Mayer, *The Religious Bodies of America* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 202

² F.E.Mayer, Arminianism: in *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, ed. Erwin L Lueker, 49.

³ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Hch 4.12.

Christ so that we may be saved as John 3:16 say. As we already see they do not accept Christ as part of the trinity in fact they reject at all the idea of a triune God. Now let's see what the Qur'an say about Jesus.

The name Jesus appears some 35 times in the Qur'an.¹ Jesus is considered among the prophets of God by the Muslims as Moses, Abraham, Ishmael and so on.

The person of Christ

Christ as we considered it above is not the Son of God. Nevertheless as Richter remarks it He is hold in high regard in the Qur'an. He is called the "slave of Allah" (Surah 19:30), the "messenger" (Surah 19:19), the "mercy" (Surah 19:21), a "word [Rodwell: the Word]" (Surah 3:45), and "only a messenger" (Surah 4:171). He is among the prophets (Surah 19:30). While Jesus is called Messiah, he is denied and rejected as the Son of God. In the Qur'an the name Jesus or Isa occurs twenty-five times, while Jesus as "son of Mary" appears twenty-three times. The use of all names and titles for Jesus adds up to thirty-five times.² From our Christian point of view almost all of us agree that Christ is a divine being. Form his conception, his mission, and his death; there is no place to doubt. (see table 3)

Table 3.

¹ Maulana, 163.

² Richter, 56.

| The Qur'an | The Bible |
|--|--|
| 1a. No son of God | 2a. Jesus the Son of God |
| <p>Surah 6:101. The Originator of the heavens and the earth! How can He have a child, when there is for Him no consort, when He created all things and is Aware of all things?</p> | <p>Matthew 3:17. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matthew 16:15–16. "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Mark 14:61–62. The high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."</p> |
| 1b. Jesus and Mary are not gods | 2b. Mary is a humble servant of God |
| <p>Surah 5:116a. And when Allah saith: O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah? he saith: Be glorified! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right.</p> | <p>Luke 1:38a. "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. Luke 1:46–48a. And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."</p> |
| 1c. Jesus was created like Adam | 2c. The Son was with God from the beginning |
| <p>Surah 3:59. Lo! the likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, then He said unto him: Be! and he is.</p> | <p>John 1:1–4, 14. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.</p> |

What does the Qur'an say about the conception of Christ?

It is good to notice that most of the time the Qur'an speak about Jesus is about his birth. Sixty-four of the 93 verses that speak about Jesus are found in the nativity narratives in Suras 3 and 19. Reading along the Qur'an and the Bible on the Birth of Jesus, there are many resemblances.

God foreordained the Birth of Jesus (*Isa*); Q 3:47 (Matthew 1:23). God commanded Jesus' birth; Q 3:47 (Luke 1:31, 35). Jesus' birth was a miracle to mankind; Q 21:91 (Luke 2:8–20; Matthew 2:1–12). The Day of Jesus' birth was blessed; Q 19:33 (Luke 2:10–14). Jesus is the son of of Mary (*Maryam*); Q 3:36; Q 3:45 (Luke 2:7; Matthew 13:55). Jesus confirms his own legitimacy; Q 19:29 (Matthew 1:18–25). No man had touched Mary when she became pregnant with Jesus; Q 19:20; Q 21:91 (Matthew 1:18). Despite those resemblances the conclusion that Muslim came to acknowledge is that Jesus is Created. "The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: "Be." And he was."(Surah 3:59)¹ The Qur'an does not teach that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, the Word become flesh (John 1:14).

The work of Christ

Jesus came to the earth with a mission. He grew up like a normal child. In his quality of prophet, he did various miracles for the benefices of his followers. But his work is better

¹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, «The meaning of the Holy Qur'an», 2004.

understood at cross. It is by his crucifixion that we can claim for salvation today. Nevertheless Muslim and Christian, we do not see the crucifixion at the same angle. As the distinguished Islamic scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr has said, the nonc rucifixion of Jesus is

“the one irreducible fact separating Christianity and Islam, a fact which is in reality placed there providentially to prevent a mingling of the two religions.”¹

The crucifixion and the Qur’an

It is not easy to accept such a difficult topic. Our idea of God’s love is crucial when it comes to study this subject.

Qur’an blames the Jews for the death of Jesus.

They uttered against Mary a grave false charge (and) that they said “We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah”—But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not. (Sura 4:157)²

The “grave charge” directed against Mary is obviously the accusation that she had been unchaste and that her pregnancy was the result. The remainder of the verse is both intriguing and perplexing: intriguing because the actual meaning of the passage is not clear; and perplexing because there appears to be one certainty at least about Jesus, that he was “crucified under Pontius Pilate.”³

¹ Timothy George, *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 97.

² Peter G. Riddell y Peter Cotterell, *Islam in Context: Past, Present, and Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 78.

³ Riddell y Cotterell, 78.

Muhammad knew that the prophets of God were subject to death and penalty but he simply could not handle the idea of a crucified Jesus. Therefore the idea that someone else took the place of Jesus at the cross. Tradition said that when God wanted to take Jesus to heaven, he had him heading a meeting. They discussed about who was going to take the death of Jesus at the cross. It is reported that one of them Judas who look alike him was the one who died in his place.

What does the Bible say about Crucifixion?

The crucifixion of Jesus is all over the Bible. It is affirmed frequently repeatedly in the Bible.

Jesus himself foretells that he will “be killed” (Matt. 16:21–23; see also Matt. 17:22; Mark 8:31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 18:31), indeed “mocked and flogged and crucified” (Matt. 20:19). Peter rejects and strongly opposes the notion that Jesus would be killed and asserts emphatically, “This shall never happen to you!” Jesus rebukes Peter and states that his objection comes from Satan himself: “Get behind me, Satan!” A denial of Jesus’s crucifixion and death came not from “the things of God, but the things of men” (Matt. 16:21–23). The strong witness of the Bible is that soldiers “led him away to crucify him” (Matt. 27:31).¹

¹ Richter, 68.

Secular Corroborating Testimony to the Crucifixion.

Along with the eyewitness accounts in the Bible, the record of history confirms the literal crucifixion of Jesus, as a number of modern apologists point out.

Lee Strobel cites Josephus, the Jewish historian, in the *Testimonium Flavianum*, in words he considers to be genuine: “About this time there lived Jesus.... When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing among us, had condemned him [Jesus] to be crucified ...”¹

Paul L. Maier affirms that the fact of the crucifixion of Jesus is substantiated by the recent discovery of an Arabic manuscript of Josephus’s *Antiquities*: “*Pilate* condemned him to be crucified.... His disciples ... reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion.”²

Strobel appeals to Tacitus, the Roman historian of the first century, who writes: “Christus, from whom the name [Christian] had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hand of one of our Procurators, Pontius Pilate....”³

Crucifixion was “the extreme penalty” of the time. Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb give evidence: “According to Julius Africanus (c. A.D. 221), the first-century historian, Thallus (c. A.D. 52),’ when discussing the darkness which fell upon the land *during the crucifixion of*

¹ Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 103, citing Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.63–64.

² Paul L. Maier, *In the Fulness of Time* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1991), 200.

³ Strobel, *Case for Christ*, 107, citing Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.

Christ,' spoke of it as an eclipse.¹ The second-century Greek writer, Lucian, speaks of Christ as '*the man who was crucified in Palestine* because he introduced a new cult into the world.'²

The crucifixion of Jesus is central to the Christian belief in his atoning sacrifice as the Lamb of God offered for the sins of the world, as we shall see. The Qur'an holds, however, that human beings are born without sin and that one is able to pass the test of life and the final judgment on the basis of one's belief in Allah and one's good works, "As for those who believe and do good works, We shall make them enter Gardens underneath which rivers flow to dwell therein for ever" (Surah 4:57). Hence in Islam there is no need for sacrifice.³

The last days

We born, we live and we die. What's next? This is a question that we often ask us. The best answer for it is found in the religions. When speak about last days, there are a couple things that come to our mind: resurrection, judgment and heaven Let's see what Islam has to say about it.

Resurrection

A faith in life after death is the last of the basic principles of Islam. The Word generally used in the Holy Qur'an to indicate this life is *al-akhirah*. Death, according to the Holy Qur'an, is

¹ F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Chicago: InterVarsity, 1968), 113.

² Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 236, citing Julius Africanus, *Chronography* 18.1 and Lucian, *On the Death of Peregrine* 11 (italics original).

³ Richter, 70.

not the end of man's life; it only opens the door to another, a higher, form of life: "we have ordained death among you and We are not to be overcome, that We may change your state and make you grow into what you know not" (56:60-61). Since the Muslim believe in process of perfection, they think we will get to a higher state of life. But it all depend on the faith people have in Allah. The Qur'an said and we quote:

"And there are some people who say, We believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they are not believers" (2:8)

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord" (2:62)

As in many other Christian religions they believe that we are saved by deeds. We as Adventist we believe that the deeds are important. They are an answer to the love of God. We believe that our resurrection to life depend only on the grace of God.

Judgment

We all born as creation of God. We come to be children of his when we accept him with all our heart. Judgment is a process when this choice of ours will be acknowledged.

The Qur'an frequently and repeatedly reminds the reader of the coming resurrection and day of judgment. One cannot read the Qur'an without being confronted with the final resurrection and the judgment every few pages.

According to Surah 39:68, "the Trumpet is blown" on that day, and all "in the heavens and the earth swoon away" except those whom Allah wills to remain. The trumpet is blown a second time. "The book is set up," and a just judgment is rendered by "the Prophets and the

witnesses” (Surah 39:69), who include Jesus. “Each soul is paid in full for what it did” (Surah 39:70). Those “who disbelieve are driven unto hell” (Surah 39:71).

“On that day,” as Surah 3:106 states, “faces will be whitened and (some) faces will be blackened,” clearly indicating sentence to Paradise or hell.

Allah will weigh each person’s deeds and reward them accordingly. Surah 23:102 shows that those whose “scales are heavy” with good deeds will succeed in going to Paradise. Those “whose scales are light” (Surah 23:103), lacking in good deeds, will lose their souls in hell. Allah will give greater weight to good deeds over bad deeds, double or tenfold (Surah 4:40; Surah 6:160). Thus, the full requirements of justice will be compromised and reduced to meet human effort.¹

The majority of Muslims believe that Jesus will appear before the final judgment. He will battle the antichrist, personally profess Islam, kill all pigs, break all crosses (since he was not crucified), and establish a reign of righteousness. People will convert to Islam, and Islamic law will be established among the nations. Jews will recognize that Jesus is a prophet, and Christians will realize that he is not the Son of God. Completing his mission, Jesus will then die and be buried next to Muhammad in Medina, where a vacant place is reserved for him. The death of Jesus will be the signal for the general resurrection.² The majority of Shi’ite Muslims identify the person of righteousness who brings in the resurrection not as Jesus but as Muhadi (divinely guided one). “According to Shi’ite tradition, *Muhadi* was the twelfth Imam (successor

¹ Richter, 131.

² Ergun Mehmet Caner and Fetthi Emir Caner, *Unveiling Islam* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 221.

and descendant of Muhammad) who miraculously disappeared and will one day reappear to establish righteousness on the earth.”¹

This following table gives us a great panorama of the two point of view.

| The Qur’an | Don’t |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Recompense and punishment</p> <p>Surah 39:68. And the Trumpet is blown, and all who are in the heavens and the earth swoon away, save him whom Allah willeth. Then it is blown a second time, and behold them standing waiting!</p> <p>69. And the earth shineth with the light of her Lord, and the book is set up, and the Prophets and the witnesses are brought, and it is judged between them with truth, and they are not wronged.</p> <p>70. And each soul is paid in full for what it did. And He is best Aware of what they do.</p> <p>71a. And those who disbelieve are driven unto hell in troops till, when they reach it and the gates thereof are opened, ...</p> <p>Surah 3:106. On that day when (some) faces will be whitened and (some) faces will be blackened; and as for those whose faces have been blackened, it will be said unto them: Disbelieved ye after your (profession of) belief? Then taste the punishment for that ye disbelieved.</p> <p>Surah 23:102. Then those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful.</p> <p>103. And those whose scales are light are those who lose their souls, in hell abiding.</p> <p>Surah 84:7. Then whoso is given his account in his right hand</p> <p>8. He truly will receive an easy reckoning</p> <p>9. And will return unto his folk in joy.</p> <p>10. But whoso is given his account behind</p> | <p>2a. Judgment of words, actions, fruits</p> <p>Matthew 25:31–32. [Jesus’s words:] “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.</p> <p>Daniel 7:10b. The court was seated, and the books were opened.</p> <p>Matthew 12:35–37. [Jesus’s words:] “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”</p> <p>Matthew 7:17. [Jesus’s words:] “Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.”</p> <p>2b. Faith in Jesus gives escape from condemnation</p> <p>John 3:36. [Jesus’s words:] “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”</p> <p>John 5:24. [Jesus’s words:] “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from</p> |

¹ Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 116.

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| his back, 11. He surely will invoke destruction 12. And be thrown to scorching fire. | death to life.” |
|--|-----------------|

Both the Qur’an and the Bible teach a final judgment day when every person will have to give an account of his or her life. The Qur’an repeatedly sets forth the final judgment as a reminder, warning, and motivator in life. Since the scales’ tipping in one’s favor depends on one’s effort, one’s final destiny is always uncertain. The Muslim may always wonder, “Have I done enough to tip the scales of judgment in my favor?”²

Heaven

Then those whose balance of good deeds is heavy will attain salvation, but those whose balance is light will have lost their souls and abide in Hell forever. (Q 23:102-103) the garden of paradise is a heavenly mansion of peace and bliss with flowing rivers, beautiful gardens, and cool drink from shining stream. Quranic descriptions of heavenly bliss are life-affirming, emphasizing the beauty of creation and enjoyment of its pleasures within the limits set by God:

Those who have faith and do righteous deeds—they are the best of creatures. Their reward is with Allah: Gardens of Eternity, beneath which rivers flow; they will dwell therein for ever; Allah well pleased with them, and they with Him: all this for such as fear their Lord and Cherisher. (Q 98:7-8)

¹ Richter, 130–131.

² Ibid, 133.

Later traditions elaborated on the joys of paradise and the role of *houris*, or beautiful companions. The Qur'an makes no reference to a sexual role for the houris, but some western critics have rendered *houris* as meaning "virgins" and seized upon one popular belief that has been used to motivate some Muslim suicide bombers. However, many Quranic commentators and most Muslims understand houris as virgins only in the sense of pure or purified souls.¹

| The Qur'an | The Bible |
|--|--|
| <p>1a. The gardens of Paradise Surah 55:46. But for him who feareth the standing before his Lord there are two gardens.</p> <p>48. Of spreading branches. 50. Wherein are two fountains flowing. 52. Wherein is every kind of fruit in pairs. 54. Reclining upon couches lined with silk brocade, the fruit of both gardens near to hand. 56. Therein are those of modest gaze, whom neither man nor jinni will have touched before them. 62. And beside them are two other gardens.</p> <p>Surah 78:32. Gardens enclosed and vineyards, 33. And maidens for companions [Dawood: high-bosomed maidens for companions], 34. And a full cup. Surah 52:20. Reclining on ranged couches. And We wed them unto fair ones with wide, lovely eyes.</p> | <p>2a. The beatific vision of paradise Luke 23:43. Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." 1 John 3:2b. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Revelation 22:1–5. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.</p> |
| <p>1b. Paradise for believers who do good Surah 7:42. But (as for) those who believe</p> | <p>2b. Paradise, a gift of grace through faith Revelation. 7:14–15. These are they who</p> |

¹ Esposito, *What everyone needs to know about Islam*, 28.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>and do good works—We tax not any soul beyond its scope—Such are rightful owners of the Garden. They abide therein.</p> <p>Surah 48:29b. Allah hath promised, unto such of them as believe and do good works, forgiveness and immense reward.</p> | <p>have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple.</p> <p>Ephesians 2:8–10. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.¹</p> |
|--|---|

Paradise in the Qur’an is filled with many pleasures that delight the senses. Paradise is a beautiful garden, like an oasis in the desert, with flowing streams and every kind of fruit.

Paradise is promised to men and women who “believe and do good works.” Allah promises the men who come to Paradise that they will wed beautiful virgins. For men, then, the emphasis is on the sensual pleasure of sexual relations with virgins.² While for us as Christian we believe that moment will be a delight because we will be with Jesus

Now that we have ran over some key teaching, in our next chapter we’ll try to provide a way start a good conversation with the Muslim base on their beliefs.

¹ Richter, 133–134.

² Ibid, 136.

CHAPTER 4

Spreading the word of God, always has been a challenge for any religion. When it comes for somebody to accept a religion, a group of doctrines, always it has to be voluntary and by faith. Even between us, so called Christian, sometimes we have so many divergences that we do not come always to a solution. Speaking about the western religion it's even more difficult. How do we approach them? We as Adventist we always deplored this practice of being too hasty when it comes to doctrine someone. It is never good to say to anybody you are so wrong. This will close the door for sure. There has to be a common base. Looking at the challenges that the Islamic world represents for us, in our view the best way to do it is via contextualization.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

Contextualization as Phill Marshall remarks it:

“is a word that has come into popular usage among evangelicals. The word itself directs our attention to context. This includes the total matrix of society the social patterns of a people, their economic policies, politics, and a host of other integrative areas.”¹

In our western world church and state are divided. The Islamic world does not understand a separation between Church and state. For this matter the religion is also part of

¹ Phill Marshall, *Muslim evangelism contemporary approaches to contextualization* (Waynesboro, Georgia: Gabriel Publishing, 2003), 35.

the Society itself. Thus, we can conclude that the religion is part of the integrative area. In our case this religion is Islam. In other word Contextualization is about presenting the truth not forgetting the cultural barrier.

Most of the time we are so concern about baptizing a person that we barely take time to listen to him. We just skip the method of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus use to listen. Luke gives us a vivid description of Jesus in the temple at the age of twelve, where his parents found him ‘sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers’ (Lk. 2:46f. RSV). This kind of sharing was possible only because Jesus was *sitting among them* and *listening* in order to know how they thought and felt. He had begun to learn the art of *asking questions*, not to trip up and embarrass, but to draw others out into a real meeting of minds. He had the *understanding* which enabled him to grasp the real issues and discern the things that really matter. When he offered *answers*, it was in response to questions that were understood and expressed.¹ It is only by listening that we will come to an agreement. What happens when a married couple has disagreement? First of all, they need to stop yelling at each other. Second, they need to listen to each other. Third, they need to agree on the point in common and look for a solution whenever they disagree on something. But if the wife or the husband thinks nothing is worth listening to, the dispute will never stop. Speaking about our relationship with other religion we all agree that it is not peace of cake. We disagree on many things. What if we pause and look were we at least agree. The Bible say in the book of Amos chapter 3 verse 3: “Can two walk

¹ Colin J Chapman, “Thinking Biblically About Islam,” *Themelios*, No. 3, April 1978 3 (1978): 66.

together, unless they are agreed?" we believe that if someone need to come to the knowledge of our God, we need to walk together with them. How are we going to walk with them if we do not agree? How can we agree? Only by listening to each other. How can we listen to our Muslim neighbor? By knowing what they believe in at least their key beliefs. The best way to get to know their beliefs is through the Qur'an. There have been some issues about the use of the Qur'an in Evangelism.

The use of the Qur'an

Opinion are divided with regard to the status of the Qur'an. Some feel It is a compromise to refer to the Qur'an in seeking to relate to Muslims. Others find the use of the Qur'an not only legitimate but praise the value of its content. As Ganoune Diop stated in his articles

"The Qur'an for the Muslim is a guidance to facilitate the return to God. It is considered the criterion to measure and know truth. It is truth. It is the good news form a merciful and compassionate God whose dispositions are favorable towards believers. It is a book of warning for the avoidance of the punishment of fire that awaits the unbelievers and idolaters who hide the truth. It is designed as an exhortation and comfort for those who face trials. It is a book of wisdom that teaches how to walk on earth and relate meaningfully to others. It is a book that celebrates God's power."¹

For the majority of Muslims, the Qur'an is the matrix or frame o reference that presides over aspect of their lives. Islamic sciences developed form the central role of the Qur'an. As the life of genuine follower of Christ is inconceivable without the life and teachings of Jesus Christ,

¹ Ganoune Diop, "Relating to the Qur'an". In *Faith development in context*, ed. Bruce L Bauer, (Michigan: Andrews University press, 2005), 155.

likewise the Qur'an itself is the worldview of Muslims, despite regional and cultural peculiarities. Diop continues saying:

“To have 1.3 billion people shaped by the Qur'an in every aspect of their lives and still debate over the necessity to understand and use the Qur'an as an initial bridge may deprive mission to Muslims of its incarnational drive and relevancy. Conversion to Islam then and now is closely connected to the content of the Qur'anic message. It is therefore fitting to grasp the content of the Qur'an in order to understand the questions it is purposed to answer. The Qur'an has much in common with the biblical faith. The sense of human solidarity in the face of hardship is moving. The encouragement to patience, hoping in God to provide a way out, is remarkable. The call to share with the poor, to defend the defenseless, orphans, and widows in seventh century Arabia, the invitation to humility, the beliefs in justice and in retribution are relevant. The summons to fear God, to live in righteousness, and to ward off evil are values that cannot be underestimated. More importantly, the repeated calls to center one's life on God by praying, praising, and glorifying him is appealing.”¹

Definitely, there are a lot of thing that we do not agree on but it is possible today to take up such venues in order to share the compelling power of the prophetic message about Jesus Christ.

Now that we have built a base we will discuss about contextualization's system.

John Travis, a missionary of many years experience in an Asian Muslim country, has sought to categorize various levels of contextualization as practiced in recent times:

Levels of Contextualization

C1 – Traditional church using outsider language (“ outsider” pertains to the local non-Muslim population). ... Thousands of C1 churches are in Muslim lands today. Many reflect

¹ Ibid, 170-171.

Western culture. A wide cultural chasm often exists between the church and the surrounding Muslim community. ... C1 believers call themselves Christians.

C2 - Traditional church using insider language (“insidr” pertains to the local Muslim population). Essentially, the same as C1 except for language.

C3 – Contextualized Christ-centered communities using insider language and religiously neutral insider cultural forms. Religiously neutral forms may include folk music, ethnic dress, artwork, ect.

C4 – Contextualized Christ-centered communities using insider language and biblically permissible cultural and Islamic forms. Similar to C3, however biblically permissible Islamic forms and practices are also utilized (i.e., praying with raised hands; keeping the Fast; avoiding pork, alcohol, and dogs as pets; using Islamic terms, garb, etc.). ... C4 believers identify themselves as “followers of Isa the Messiah” (or something similar).

C5 – Christ-centered communities of “Messianic Muslims” who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. C5 believers are viewed as Muslims by the Muslim community and refer to themselves as Muslims who follow Isa the Messiah.

C6 – Small Christ-centered communities of secret, underground believers. ... C6 believers worship Christ secretly.¹

As we can see those levels are interesting, but we need to pay attention to this quotes from Ellen G White where Seventh Day Adventist are admonished to:

“agree with the people on every point...[where they can] can consistently do so”¹

¹ Marshall, 62.

there are some cautions to be taken because close by there is the danger of Syncretism.

What is syncretism?

Syncretism occurs when Christian leaders accommodate, either consciously or unconsciously, the prevailing plausibility structures, beliefs and practices through cultural accommodation so that they reflect those of the dominant culture. Or state in other terms, syncretism is the blending of Christian beliefs and practices with those of the dominant culture so that Christianity loses its distinctiveness and speaks with a voice reflective of its culture.²

How to avoid syncretism?

The motive can be great but if we do not act properly, it is not going to be helpful anyway. As a safeguard against syncretism Bertil Wiklander propose six guidelines.

Maintain Close Connection With the Scriptures

To safeguard against syncretism we must take the Bible as a whole, and use proper hermeneutical keys and models.

¹ Ellen G. White, *the review and Herald*, 13 June 1912, par.4.

² Gailyn Van Rheenen, "Syncretism and Contextualization: The Church on a Journey Defining itself". In *contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, ed. Gailyn Van Rheenen, (California: William Carey Library, 2006), 7.

Pray for and Trust in God's Leading

Contextualizers must rely on the Holy Spirit who has promised to guide into all truth.

Check Motives and Attitudes

Are we truly trying to give the gospel as clearly as possible, or are we just making excuses for laxity? Do we have the mind of a servant, or are we just pushing our own agenda and culture? Are we prejudiced?

Dialogue with the Church As a Hermeneutical community

The Adventist Church should set up proper forums for regularly handling issues dealing with contextualization in mission.

Realize That Over Time Truth Surfaces

Haste sometimes produces wrong decisions. Allow God to work and prove to us what his will is.

Maintain concern for the weak

Paul says in 1 Cor 9 that he became all things to the weak. The weak in this context refers to those who are bothered by changes taking place in the church. Committed contextualizers always consider the feelings of their brothers and sisters and try to relate to them while also relating to those who need to hear the gospel. Never forget that we are a

World church that both needs to advance the gospel to all peoples while at the same time maintaining unity. If your approach to contextualization offends, which good contextualization tends to do, ensure that it is for the right reasons, not the wrong ones.¹

Legitimate Contextualization

We just talk about some ways to avoid syncretism while trying to do good by spreading the word. In the following lines we'll discuss about legitimate contextualization. Hesselgrave and Rommen offers a useful starting point. In support of the thesis that contextualization is a necessity, they proceed from the following three presuppositions:

“First, it is imperative that the Great Commission be fulfilled and the world be evangelized. Second, however world evangelization is defined, at the very least it entails an understandable hearing of the Gospel. Third, if the gospel is to be understood, contextualization must be true to the complete authority and unadulterated message of the Bible on the one hand, and it must be related to the cultural, linguistic, and religious background of the respondents on the other” (1989:xi)

They then present what they describe as authentic and relevant contextualization. This concept would include four inter-related criteria for legitimate forms of contextualized mission, namely:

¹ Bertil Wiklander, “The Boundaries of Contextualization in Mission: How Flexible and Absolute Are They? What Principles Should Guide the Church?”. In *Adventist Responses to Cross-Cultural Mission, 2 vols.*, ed. Bruce L. Bauer, (Michigan: Andrews University press, 2006), 124-125.

Context

Contextualization includes correctly understanding and relating to people in their historical and cultural context. This may be termed the *anthropological perspective* and it focuses on the culture.

Authenticity

Contextualization should have to do with God's revelation first of all, with faithfulness to the authority and content of the will of God as revealed in his creation, in man's conscience, and especially, in his son and his Word inspired by the Holy Spirit. This may be referred to as the *theological perspective*, placing the focus of interest on fundamental Christian beliefs.

Effectiveness

Authenticity does not assure us that the message will be meaningful and persuasive to the intended receivers, contextualization must also include effective communication, i.e., our mission is completed only when the receivers have had a fair chance of *hearing and understanding* the message, on *their* terms, not ours. This might be called the *communication perspective*, focusing on the process of communication.

Relevancy

As pointed out by Ellen White in my quotation from *Gospel workers*, our mission is contextualized only when the message is presented in such a way that it meets the needs or

wants of the recipients, i.e., their needs of *salvation* in a very broad sense. This means that we are looking at their needs of traditional standards. This may conveniently be referred to as the *hermeneutical perspective*, since it involves retrieving the supra-cultural validity of the Gospel truth and making it cross-culturally communicable, meaningful and acceptable.¹

Having laid all the basis, we are ready to start a conversation with a Muslim by knowing the parallel between us and what we may accept primarily from them.

Conversation Starter Guide

Based on the principles that we have learned so far and the basic knowledge of their main beliefs. We will try to provide a conversation starter guide with a Muslim.

How?

This guide will be a list of some suggestive question that for sure will receive a positive answer from any Muslim.

For Who?

This guide basically is for a person who isn't a outlander missionary. It is for a person who have a burning desire to share his faith with Muslim in a foreign land. It can be a coworker, a neighbor or a random friend.

¹ Ibid.,94-96

Lets get started. The most important when you first meet a person is the greetings. You need to put joy, strength and passion. We need to see this person as a potential citizen for heaven. We hear often people saying that salvation is not for the Muslims. It is just like the primitive church close the door to the gentiles at the beginning saying that salvation was not for them. It is good to learn custom from other cultures. People always receive it with humor when they see a foreigner all over sudden start speaking their language. It is a good way to get along quick. It may takes time but we need to build a relationship with them first. It is even good to fast with them sometime, as we do not abrogate fasting. Maybe they repeat only verses from the Qur'an in their prayer but their passion for prayer, their dedication must teach us great lessons. Getting along in those basic activities is key to further discussion. As we discuss it, it's all about accepting their way of living when it is according with our beliefs.

Questions

On God

We may disagree on the idea of how God express his love but they accept that God is love. And he has a purpose for us. Therefore the first question will be.

What is the purpose of God for us? What was the purpose of God creating as his represent? What does that mean to you that God is light? If God is light, Who represent the darkness? How do you understand the conflict between good and bad? Is God merciful?

Expect that you will agree on most of the answer. Next what you can do is read from the Qur'an passages like:

They said: "Glory to Thee, of knowledge We have none, save what Thou Hast taught us: In truth it is Thou Who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom."

He said: "O Adam! Tell them their natures." When he had told them, Allah said: "Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal?"

And behold, We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam" and they bowed down. Not so Iblis: he refused and was haughty: He was of those who reject Faith.

We said: "O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression."

Then did Satan make them slip from the (garden), and get them out of the state (of felicity) in which they had been. We said: "Get ye down, all (ye people), with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood—for a time."

Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of inspiration, and his Lord Turned towards him; for He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

We said: "Get ye down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

"But those who reject Faith and belie Our Signs, they shall be companions of the Fire; they shall abide therein." (Q 2:32-39)

If the people of the towns had but believed and feared Allah, We should indeed have opened out to them (All kinds of) blessings from heaven and earth; but they rejected (the truth), and We brought them to book for their misdeeds. Q 7:96)

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star: Lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light: Allah doth set forth Parables for men: and Allah doth know all things.(Q 24:35)

As you can see many of those lecture from the Qur'an have their counterpart in the Bible. As we already say. Muslims believes in the other books prior to the Qur'an, when the time come it will be good to show those verse from the Bible to them also. This will develop in them a kind of trust in the Bible. Hopefully the Holy Spirit might lead them one day to the reading of it.

On sin

What is sin? How does it affect us? How does it affect our relationship with God/ Allah?

What is the role of Sin in the judgment day? How sin make our good deed a shame? What is the medicine to sin?

There are some good passages from the Qur'an also that are really helpful for this part.

Nay, those who seek gain in evil, and are girt round by their sins—they are companions of the Fire: Therein shall they abide (For ever). (Q 2:81)
In the long run evil in the extreme will be the End of those who do evil; for that they rejected the Signs of Allah, and held them up to ridicule. (Q 30:10)
“I will create a vicegerent on earth.” They said: “Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?—whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?” He said: “I know what ye know not.” (Q 2:30)

As Accad mentioned in his book, if we discuss the passages with our friend and believe that he has been willing to acknowledge that sin is a reality, a reality that affects all of us then we can probably speak directly and personally to him about the in reality. To a Muslim, communication the dimension of sin that we could call defilement is very important. Muslims are constantly aware of the importance of being clean. But as Jesus pointed out, although being clean on the outside is important, Being clean on the inside is far more important.¹

On Salvation

What is salvation? How can we be saved?

There are texts in the Qur'an that invite us to ask for forgiveness.

¹ Jonas Elias Accad, *Building Bridges Christianity and Islam* (USA: Navpress, 1997), 89.

“A part of My servants there was, who used to pray ‘our Lord! We believe; then do Thou forgive us, and have mercy upon us: For Thou art the Best of those who show mercy!” (Q 23:109)

Know, therefore, that there is no god but Allah, and ask forgiveness for thy fault, and for the men and women who believe: for Allah knows how ye move about and how ye dwell in your homes. (Q 47:19)

Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things. Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the evil ones: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness. They will be companions of the fire, to dwell therein (For ever). (Q 2:256-257)

“Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (Us) to Faith, ‘Believe ye in the Lord,’ and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous. (Q 3:193)

Making a commentary on those verses Accad said that we cannot force people to accept a religion they do not like. They have to choose on their own to leave idols and believe in God, to lay hold of Him with a sense of commitment. God himself is your protector, not your good deeds. God alone is your savior. He takes people out of darkness into wonderful light.¹ Believe and receive forgiveness for past and present sins.

On Jesus

Who was Jesus? How was he born? What does the Qur’an say about him? Who is call the righteous? Who is call the word of God? What do you know about the miracles performed by Jesus? What is his role in the judgment?

¹ Ibid., 95-96.

It is always a good start what we have in common. Then you can slowly proceed to the fact that Christ was a prophet, then the kind of prophet he was. There are many things that are not clear in the Qur'an but we know for sure that they believe in the prophet before Muhammad. They believe in their books like the Towrah, the Zabur, the Injeel. Good for us that Surah 10:94 says:

If thou wert in doubt as to what We have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee: the Truth hath indeed come to thee from thy Lord: so be in no wise of those in doubt.

They can go to these other books for more explanation. If we gain their trust over those books, for instance the Bible we can also use it as a way to teach them about Christ later on.

The Qur'an spoke about Jesus as the word from God in Surah 3:45. It says:

Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to Allah;

We need to show our Muslim friends convincing examples, such as Christ being the Word of God who is always with God. Others are Christ's miraculous birth; His ability to create, and to heal diseases; and his ability to resurrect others and Himself from the grip of death. No sincere, clear thinking Muslim can deny what the Qur'an affirms about Christ's divine characteristics.

We need to try our best to guide them to a knowledge of Christ. As Whitehouse notices in his article the divinity of Christ is not a subject to force on the Muslim. It is not to become a point of controversy or a stumbling block. It is our job to pile up the evidence for his divinity without directly referring to it, and then the Holy Spirit will bring that evidence to bear on the

mind of the seeker in due time and lead them to that “aha” experience. “ He must be...He is my God”¹

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Now it's the time. Christ is at the door. The word need to be heard by every body no matter the religion or creed, races, color ect... the mandate of our Lord was to go around the world to preach this good news. The angels would have been glad to do the work. God want to elevate us to the image of his character. For that to happen we need to immerse ourselves in the word of God. We need to know everything about it. Once we know, we need to put into practice every single teaching. When we do so, we will be ready to go out and do the work. There is a need of revival an reforms among us. We shall receive the Holy Spirit after that. When the Lord is with us even the most simple strategy like the one presented in this paper will be of a great blessing. The strategy we have come up with it's simple. As we have studied above, there are a lot of staff we have in common. But there are somes also we will just need

¹Jerald Whitehouse, “ Communicating Adventist Beliefs in The Muslim Context”. In *Adventist Response to Cross-Cultural Mission*, 2 vols., ed. Bruce L. Bauer, (Michigan: Andrews University Press, 2007), 47.

to live them at the beginning. It's like the Bible says: let your light shine before the others. And later on surely they will try to live the way you live.

Recomendations

There are theological words even for us the people of the book are difficult for us to understand. Word such as atonement, redemption ect... at the beginning will have negative reception from the Muslim therefore it is better to use vocabulary that we have in common

We can sit down for a year planning strategy to reach the Muslim world, but the best way to share with them the word of God is by living it. Never think that we are superior to them. Always be kind to them in other words live a Christ like attitude.

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