

Islam and Christianity: A Comparative Missiological Analysis

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The opinions expressed in this [thesis/dissertation] do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African Theological Seminary.

DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

RANDY THOMAS HARRIS
MARCH 2006

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Randy Thomas Harris
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SUMMARY

The continual rise and influence of Islam around the world is cause for Christians of every nation to better equip themselves for the glorious task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace to their Muslim neighbors. This mini-thesis seeks to strengthen believers in their understanding of and witness to the Muslims with whom they will be increasingly interacting on a daily basis regardless of where they find themselves in the world.

A host of comparisons between Christianity and Islam are offered to identify how radically the essential content of each religion contrasts. These stark differences in the central figure, origins, expansion, texts, Divine Being, humanity, salvation and practice give rise to radically different motives and methods for expansion.

An analysis of how Islam is currently operating and growing globally is then presented to ground the aforementioned historical and theological investigation into the present realities of a sampling of nations.

After identifying the heart of Islamic doctrine, practice and modern methodology for global dominance, the terms of engagement for communicating the gospel to Muslims become more clear and urgent. The intent of this thesis is then to inspire and equip Christ-centered, faith-filled, and Spirit-filled Christians of every nation to boldly, competently, and lovingly share the gospel with Muslims.

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1 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

1.1 Intent and Purpose of Writing

This thesis will seek to analyze how the contrasting theological perspectives of Christianity and Islam prove to build foundations for radically different missiological motives, methods, and mission. The emerging picture of Islamic missiology will serve to aid Christians in their understanding and interaction with Muslims for the sake of the gospel.

1.2 Methodology

I do not want to simply report on ‘what Muslims believe’ or ‘what Islamic doctrine is’ but rather, I want to immediately enter into a dialogue of strategic comparison between Islam and Christian origins, expansion, and theology, which will demonstrate themselves to manifest radically different missiological ideologies. It is the very nature of theology that generates all religious expression and motivation. One’s view of the Divine ultimately directs the way(s) they relate to that Divinity, to others, and to themselves. This being the case, it is paramount that a strong emphasis be committed to revealing the Islamic worldview and theology.

The pervasive problem of the average Christian’s naivety and misconceptions concerning Islam is to be addressed by tackling the more poignant problem of replacing these misconceptions with a concise analysis of Islamic theology and mission. In light of this I hope to present a theological comparison through simple, contrasting images that will help Christians understand Muslims and to equip them to engage in wise, informed, and loving dialogue with Muslims (Also see Appendix B and Appendix C). I have been

assisted in the development of these theological contrasts by others who have examined Islam extensively through the lens of their Christian worldview and many years of exposure to Muslims, whose expertise I have found particularly helpful in assembling my ideas (i.e. Braswell 1996; Caner & Caner 2002; Geisler, Norman and Saleeb, Abdul. 2002).

Secondly, I hope to engage in a contemporary analysis of how Islam is currently operating in the world as a direct result of their historical and theological foundations. My intent is to equip the modern Christian with a helpful theological, historical, and methodological summary of comparisons between Islam and Christianity as a basis to understand the current missiology practiced in Islam.

1.3 Preliminary Perspectives and Comments

Islam was birthed with a missionary character and mandate. From Mecca to Indonesia and everywhere in between in the last fourteen hundred years, it has spread its beliefs, practices, worldview, cultural values, material wealth, and spiritual aspirations. Its “sixth pillar” of faith, *jihad*, has consistently been an instrument of religious efforts, struggles, and violent wars on behalf of Allah and His prophet.

Wherever Islam has infiltrated, Muslims have imported their sacred texts and traditions, built their mosques for prayer and worship, and considered it their mission to cause others to come to submission to their god. Truly, the very word *Islam* means “submission”, to which over 1.2 billion people around the world, on all continents, and in most countries, with 17 million in Europe, and over 5 million in North America submit (Braswell 1996:3434).

Globally, Islam manifests a great diversity of expressions from the more cultic-folk adherents throughout the southern hemisphere, to its fundamental and 'radical' expressions in its heart of the Middle East, to its more academic and modernized face in Western Europe and North America. But regardless of the variant manifestations and divergent practices, all streams of Islam ultimately find their identity and mission in their sacred texts, beloved prophet, and religious history. Since it is these sources that will ultimately guide and define Islam of the future as it continues to spread around the world, we must take them as seriously as do serious Muslim.

We must understand what lies within Islamic texts and the life and example of their prophet in order to understand the nature and growth of Islam. On this theological-historical foundation, we will then be able to best understand and contrast the state and objectives of Islam in the world today for its true motivations and mandates.

The often-heard naïve statements that "Islam is much like Christianity" and "the Quran is much like the Bible" will be decisively eradicated with a penetrating comparison that demonstrates the complete moral, doctrinal, missional, and spiritually antithetical nature of the two fundamentally conflicting faiths. The greater portion of this thesis is a comparative analysis of the historical foundations and textual theology behind both religions. It will leave much to be said as to how accurately the contemporary version of each religion reflects their sacred texts and esteemed Lords.

1.4 Definition of Terms

Allah

This thesis will use the term 'Allah' when discussing the Divine Being of Islam, and the name 'God' when referring to the Judeo-Christian God of the Bible. This distinction holds greater value than the sake of practical clarity, and the distinction of divine naming will demonstrate tremendous theological and practical implications.

Hadiths

These are reports on the sayings and the traditions of what the Prophet Muhammad saw or what he witnessed and approved. These volumes of books are understood to be the real explanations, interpretations, and living example of the Prophet for all teaching of the Quran.

Hijab

A hijab is typically a facial veil, which is either a (a) niqab: full facial covering or (b) a khimar: partial facial covering, i.e., it covers the face, but leaves the eyes exposed.

Imam

An Imam is an Islamic religious leader, who leads a congregational prayer. Any religious leader who also leads his community in the political affairs may be called an Imam, an Amir, or a Caliph. However, an Imam is not infallible. He is responsible for his mistakes to all the members of the community and he is responsible to Allah.

Jizyah

Jizyah is a tax paid by non-Muslims living in a Muslim State.

Ka'bah

The ka'bah is a cubed shaped structure based in the city of Mecca to which all Muslims turn to in their five daily prayers.

Kafir

A kafir is a person who refuses to submit himself to Allah (God) and / or disbelieves in Allah.

Surahs

The Quran is divided into smaller sections called surahs in a similar manner as the Bible is divided into chapters.

Ummah

An ummah is a community or a people. It is used in reference to the community of Islamic Believers or Muslims.

Zakat

One of the five pillars of Islam is Zakat, which means to grow (in goodness) or 'increase', 'purifying' or 'making pure'. So the act of giving zakat means purifying one's wealth to gain Allah's blessing to make it grow in goodness. The exact amount paid on wealth and profits basically depends upon the religious-political setting of the believer.

1.5 Quotations

Quranic quotations will be taken from The Holy Quran with MH Shakir as the translator, unless otherwise indicated. Hadith quotations will be taken from Sahih Al-Bukhari's *Hadith: 9 vols.* translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Al Nabawiya. Biblical quotations will all be taken from the New International Version.

1.6 Hypothesis

A clear and concise analysis of basic Islamic theology and practice will inspire Christians to competently share the Gospel with Muslims.

2 CENTRAL FIGURES

The character of a religion must be seen through the life and teaching of its founder. Both Jesus and Muhammad demand respect and submission, telling their followers to look at their lives as the model and their message as the mission for pleasing God (surah 33:21; John 13:14). With over a billion people following the lives and teachings of each of these men, it is critical to understand their lives, character and teaching.

2.1 *Prophet of the Sword*

Prince of Peace

A brief survey of the life and activities of Islam's central figure and great Prophet reveal a dark and sinister legacy of great accomplishment. As Muhammad established the first Islamic state community between A.D. 622 and A.D. 632, He fulfilled the leadership roles of prophet, ruler, warrior, bandit, military chief, and judge.

In Muhammad's quest for political and religious supremacy, he participated in no less than thirty-eight caravan raids to finance and empower his growing community of followers (Ye'or 2002:36-37). Increasingly, throughout Mohammad's rule, he taught and inspired killing. These killings were not confined to the context of war or even to the banditry raids of caravans. In several documented instances, Muhammad ordered the assassination of others because they were an irritation to him, to his reputation, or to seek vengeance (Caner and Caner 2002:50-52).

Beyond his personal example, the Quran records Muhammad's teaching on killing. "And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you...And kill

them wherever you find them...And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah..." (surah 2:190-193).

Fighting is enjoined on you, and is an object of dislike to you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you, and Allah knows, while you do not know (surah 2:216).

In the Hadith collection of Al-Bukhari (the most authoritative book in Sunni Islam, second only to the Quran), Muhammad is quoted as saying: "Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords" (Al-Bukhari 4:55). And: "It is not fitting for a prophet that he should have prisoners of war (and free them with ransom) until he has made a great slaughter (among his enemies) in the land..." (Al-Bukhari 4:161).

Islam's 'prophet of the sword' is a dark canvas upon which Christianity's 'Prince of Peace' shines very bright. Prophesying hundreds of years before His birth, Isaiah foretold that: "...He will be called...Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end" (9:6-7). Jesus was to be the divine peace-bringer. In His own words, Jesus describes Himself: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). Jesus teaches others to follow His peaceful example: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9), while condemning the sword as a way to advance God's purpose: "...those who live by the sword will die by the sword" (Matthew 26:52).

2.2 *Muhammad Took the Lives of others to Build His own Kingdom*

Jesus Gave His own Life to Establish His Father's kingdom

Killing dissenters and enemies was typical protocol for Muhammad in his pursuit of Islamic domination. Al-Bukhari (4:181-2) reveals a short narrative: "An infidel spy came to the Prophet... and started talking and then went away. The Prophet said, "Chase and kill him" So, I killed him. The Prophet then gave him the belongings of the killed spy." As a strategic decision to secure a home base, advancing his cause and removing potential antagonists, he once gave the genocidal order to behead an entire tribe of 600-900 Jewish men in Medina, selling their wives and children into slavery (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:324).

Indeed, in brilliant contrast, instead of taking others' lives to accomplish His mission of establishing Christianity, the only life Jesus was willing to surrender, was His own. "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "Jesus Christ shed His own blood on the cross so that people could come to God. Muhammad shed other people's blood so that his constituents could have political power throughout Arabia" (Caner and Caner 2002:49).

2.3 *Muhammad Dishonored Women, Demoralizing and Desiring them for himself*

Jesus Honored Women, Elevating their Dignity and Desiring their Spiritual Growth

A basic attribute demonstrating a person's integrity and character is the measure to which they comply with the teachings and commands they impose on others. Muhammad failed to live according to a basic law he set out for his followers of only taking a maximum of four wives. Indeed, he married fifteen

wives, including his adopted son's wife he divorced because the prophet desired her beauty, along with a six year old girl with whom he claimed to only consummate marriage with at age nine (Richardson 2003:76).

Muhammad quickly provided 'revelation' from Allah justifying taking fifteen wives as an exception to other men, and to marry the divorced wife of his adopted son along with the nine-year old child (see surah 33:37-50). This common concept in Islam of a later law canceling out an earlier law is called 'abrogation.' Revelation that develops over time, from one person in response to changing circumstances (i.e. taking additional wives) to serve the needs and desires of the messenger is self-indicting to the rational observer.

Jesus' relationship to women stands in stark contrast to Muhammad's. Rather than being approached to satisfy His sexual desire, and subjugating them morally, domestically and religiously, Jesus persisted in elevating women, honoring, forgiving, loving and valuing them (e.g. John 4:1-16; 8:1-11) (for more on the value of women see chapter 7.4 HUMANITY).

2.4 Muhammad Sanctioned his own Will, with Allah's Approval

Jesus Surrendered His Will, doing only His Father's Will

Muhammad's agenda was persistently self-serving, maneuvering himself as the primary beneficiary of his endeavors. Richardson (2003:66) quotes philosopher David Hume's (1999) view that

Muhammad bestows praise upon such instances of treachery, inhumanity, cruelty, revenge and bigotry as are utterly incompatible with civilized society...No steady rule of right seems to be attended to, and every action is blamed or praised so far as it is beneficial or hurtful to the true believers.

Through such policies, Muhammad became a materially wealthy, polygamous, authoritarian leader whose life choices exposed his motives as spurious.

Alternatively, Jesus openly confesses that His will is not His own, but that He is doing His Father's business in all His words, teaching, and action. He is not the beneficiary of any of His endeavors, but rather fulfills God's will and benefits mankind with redemption. "...I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me (John 8:28). "...So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say" (John 12:5). "...the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me (John 14:31). Jesus died in obscure poverty, giving His life for the message and mission for which God sent Him.

2.5 *Muhammad, a Sinful Man in need of Forgiveness*

Jesus, a Sinless Man who Provides Forgiveness to others

In many instances even the Quran reveals Muhammad as a mere man in need of seeking forgiveness for himself (see surahs 40:55; 47:19 & 48:2). Surprisingly, Muhammad was also not sure that he would be accepted into Allah's paradise (surah 11:107). He certainly would not want to challenge his enemies with the question Jesus dared to pose: "Which of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8:46).

Curiously, not even one phrase in the Quran links Jesus with any kind of sin and Muhammad ascribes two amazing titles to Jesus as "the Word from God" (surah 3:390), and a "Spirit from Him" (surah 4:171). But Jesus does not require the Quran's commendation. The Biblical witness to His sinlessness is unparalleled: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize

with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus’ sinlessness not only serves as the qualifier of His redemptive mission, but also as the holy basis for Christians to imitate.

2.6 Imitate Muhammad’s Life in your own Strength

Imitate Christ’s Life with His Spirit’s Enablement

It is a regrettable and confounding irony that Muslim scholars proclaim Muhammad as someone to be exemplified in every way. “[Muhammad’s] life constitutes the highest ideal, the perfect example, and the concrete instance of his Lord’s command” (Haykal 1976:294). Though there is a great diversity across Muslim groups as to the attitude towards Muhammad that ranges from him being regarded as merely a great, moral human to him being a semi-divine and almost eternal being (see Geisler and Saleeb 2002). He has become the focus of devotion and religious adulation by millions.

Unlike orthodox Islam, the emerging popular Islam attributes supernatural qualities to Muhammad. Orthodox Muslims hold him to be the last of the prophets with special charisma and gifts, but rejects the tendencies of popular Islam to treat him as divine, as a savior, or as a saint (Braswell 1996:3291).

Regardless, the majority of pious Muslims try to do their best to imitate Muhammad’s example in many details of their daily living. The *imitatio Muhammadi* (imitation of Muhammad) has for example, provided Muslims from Morocco to Indonesia with uniformity of action, and for centuries Muslim children have been raised to perform strict Muhammad-imitation (Geisler and Saleeb 2002). With only the brief aforementioned picture of Muhammad’s life,

this Islamic pursuit to model his life is alarming with foreseeably grave consequences for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Jesus called people to follow Him in His life of loving-sacrifice for others. “Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”” (Matthew 16:24). The Christian is called to walk and suffer as Jesus did (1 John 2:6), and to embrace the same attitude of humility and selflessness (Philippians 2:5). Recognizing the believers’ inability to model His holiness, God provides His Spirit to ‘form Christ’ in the lives of His children (Romans 8:1-27), writing His law upon their hearts by the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

Curiously, Islamic understanding places Jesus as a prophet who performed many miracles to prove the divine origin of his message (surah 5:113). The Quran contains examples where a prophet is confirmed by his ability to perform miracles (e.g. 7:106-108), yet astoundingly Muhammad failed to produce any miracles to confirm his own prophethood.

3 HISTORICAL ORIGINS

3.1 Birthed in the Blood of Antagonism by Killing Enemies

Birthed in the Blood of Atonement by Innocent Sacrifice

Muhammad believed in, encouraged, and participated in forms of 'holy wars' (which often took the form of banditry, raiding commercial Meccan caravans) (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:179), as can also be seen in over one hundred Quranic verses.

Revealingly, the Muslims' victory at the battle of Badr (624) was taken as a sign of divine approval of both Muhammad and his message (Richardson 2003:45). Interestingly though, exactly one year later he suffered a humiliating defeat, which was not considered a sign of divine disapproval. Regardless, Islam's origins and validation of their prophet and his message were affirmed through the perceived victorious shedding of blood in banditry and military conquest.

Christianity was also birthed in blood. Indeed, the shedding of blood is the only means by which sin can be atoned for before a holy God (Romans 3:23). God instituted substitutionary sacrifice whereby another innocent and pure animal (typically a lamb) was offered to provide the necessary atonement for sins (Hebrews 2:17). This is not the blood of enemies being spilt to gain power for oneself, but rather, the blood of an innocent to make atonement, thereby restoring the severed relationship between man and His Creator. God's covenant with Abraham and testing with Isaac are primary early examples of His redemptive grace that culminates with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (see Genesis 15; 22; Hebrews 9:11-14).

3.2 Established Man-made Structural Temple of Worship

Established God-indwelled Human Temples of the Holy Spirit

In his pursuit to establish Islam, Muhammad fixed a geographical location where worshippers could focus their devotion and make pilgrimage.

For Muslims worldwide, the city of Mecca is the central place of pilgrimage to the birthplace of their Prophet Muhammad and to the ka'bah, which he transformed into the symbol of his monotheistic faith. Pious Muslims face the direction of Mecca five times daily in their prayers (Braswell 1996:3282).

Jesus came not to establish a man-made temple of worship, to which the faithful would need to travel to commune with God. Rather, He came to reconcile man to God Himself, such that a believer's whole life and body would be a place of God's abiding presence where there could be unceasing communion (1 Corinthians 6:18-20; John 4:21-24). God seeks to inhabit the lives of His children, which is made possible through Christ's death and resurrection. "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). Jesus taught that the true worshipers God seeks, are those who worship Him in "spirit and truth" taking the emphasis off a fixed geographical place of worship and rather calling believers to make their whole lives a continual offering of praise and worship to an ever-present and indwelling God (John 4:21-24).

The Christian worships God in an abiding, loving, and unbroken fellowship, as he lives every moment before and within the awesome presence of an imminent and holy Father. In contrast, the Muslim worships an unknowable and incomprehensibly distant Allah within the strict routine of set quantities, set times, and even set direction, as he faces Mecca in his daily religious life. Mecca is the center of Islamic religious life. In Christianity, the center of religious life is Christ Himself, as He serves as Lord to the individual

and Head to the body of collective believers (Colossians 1:15-20; John 13:13-15; Ephesians 5:23-32).

4 EARLY EXPANSION

4.1 *Methods of Coercion*

Methods of Charisma

Fight those who do not believe in Allah...nor follow the religion of truth, out of those (i.e. "even if they are those") who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection (surah 9:29).

According to this surah and others (e.g. 60:1), the Muslim must combat, oppress, and even hate those who oppose the expansion of Allah's cause. This missiological strategy of coercion took forms of oppression through taxation for those who would not convert, or even slavery and death. "It is significant that (Muhammad) seldom gained conversions except through coercion..." (Caner and Caner 2002:54). Much unlike the early spread of Christianity, Muhammad initially attracted very few followers. "It was only after Muhammad began to use the sword in defense of Islam that it grew more rapidly" (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:208).

In a radically opposing manner, Jesus drew people to Himself through charisma, particularly as it was manifested through loving compassion towards the physical and spiritual needs of others. This was to become the main methodology of Christian evangelism. "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back" (Luke 6:35). "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34). The Christian mandate is make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), which is fundamentally seeking the transformation of people into the likeness of the Lord they follow. It is not a forced or coerced submission of the

will, but a willing and genuine conversion of the heart to the charisma and likeness of Christ.

4.2 Sought Expansion by Conquest

Sought Expansion by Conversion

Islam is defined as a community of people living in ‘submission’ to its laws, its traditions and its prophet. It was during the Umayyad period of the 8th century, after Muhammad’s death that brought “a period of conquest and expansion, of empire building, of great wealth, and of family feuding, and a period when worldliness entered official Islam” (Braswell 1996:3299). During this time, Muslims expanded from Arabia eastward to the edges of China and westward through the Middle East and North Africa into Spain (see 1996:3299).

The crescent moon became the symbol on mosques and on flags. The mission of Islam had been set, dividing the world into two domains: that which was to exist under Allah, the Quran, and Muhammad; and that which was in ignorance and disobedience, needing to be brought under submission to Islam. Islam’s method of proliferation on national and global scale is best described as *conquest*.

Throughout its first three centuries, Christianity spread despite persecution ranging from political pressure to imprisonment, torture and death at the hands of the Roman Empire (Davidson 2005:7-9). Yet Christianity’s message of grace through faith in Christ continued to draw believers, not because of its pursuit to conquer, but based on Christ’s model and motivation to love one’s enemies, seek and save the lost, and to endure suffering for the sake of the gospel of eternal life (see John 20:21; Luke 19:10; Matthew 5:44; 28:19-20).

For the Christian, conversion to genuine faith in Christ meant certain persecution from non-Christians, potentially costing them their security, their families, and their lives. For the Muslim, *not converting* to Islam meant facing persecution at the hands of Muslims, costing them their freedom, security and even their lives.

In modern Pakistan Christians are often being falsely accused of blasphemy against Islam under their current “blasphemy law” and face beatings, imprisonment and even death if they refuse to convert to Islam. This persecution is carried out by local authorities and neighboring civilians.

Pervez Masih, a 33-year-old Pakistani Christian teacher was released on 8 April, 2006 after spending five years in jail, being found innocent but still facing threats from the people. He cannot even build a house and must be continually on the move because of the intimidation. During his trial, Masih testifies how:

a high official of the local administration invited me to embrace Islam and in return, they would withdraw the charges against me. I refused and my defense was not even considered. In prison, I saw at least 10 Christians forced to convert. ...God helped me to remain strong in my faith (Felix <http://www.persecution.org/suffering/index.php>, Accessed: 2007-02-17).

In modern Iraq, Christians are being forced out of their homes and communities as they face constant threats of persecution in a land of unremitting socio-religious violence. The UN estimates that approximately 3.7 million Iraqis (1 in 8) have been forced out of their homes by the violence since 2003. Though Christians make up only 3-4% of the population of Iraq, they account for nearly 25% of the refugee population. The number of Christians currently living in Iraq has fallen from 1.4 million in the 1980s to less than 500,000.

The high number of Christian refugees is not accidental; it is part of the plan of Muslim insurgent groups to clear Iraq of its Christian heritage...Christian refugees will commonly tell of being given a timeframe - two days, a week - to leave their homes or face death at the hands of insurgent groups

(Iraqi Christians Fleeing Violence Face Uncertain Future.

<http://www.persecution.org/suffering/index.php>, Accessed: 2007-02-17.).

4.3 Growth by Employing Persecution

Growth by Enduring Persecution

Incentives for many conversions to early Islam were rife. Muslim soldiers killed in battle were immediately transported to a paradise of perpetual virgins and sensual desires at their disposal, and those who did not submit to Islam were threatened with death, slavery, or taxation. There was no need to appeal to the supernatural to account for this early growth of Islam (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:209).

In the 16th century, Martin Luther penned this revealing description:

Muhammad is a destroyer of our Lord Christ and His kingdom...Father, Son, Holy Ghost, baptism, the sacrament, gospel, faith, and all Christian doctrine are gone, and instead of Christ only Muhammad and his doctrine of works and especially of the sword is left (Jacobs and Schultz 1967:170).

Jesus forbade His disciples to spread His message through force (Matthew 26:52), yet Christianity flourished in its first few centuries, not only without a sword of its own, but despite the persecuting sword of the Romans and other antagonists. The Christian is not only called to peace, but to willingly endure persecution. "So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do what is good" (1 Peter 4:19). Jesus promised persecution for the faithful, as Paul later testified in his life:

...persecutions, sufferings—the kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:11-12).

The Apostle Paul, the great missionary to the Gentiles, delineates his missiology in the face of persecution with these words:

To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly... (1 Corinthians 4:11-13).

Christianity's early expansion is antithetical to Islam's early expansion. Christianity spread without the sword, in spite of tumultuous opposition, which some believed helped strengthen its advance across the continent (Latourette 1975:81).

4.4 *Revenge Protocol, Fighting Enemies*

Grace Protocol, Forgiving Enemies

And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits. And kill them wherever you find them...and fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah... (surah 2:190-193).

Islamic sympathizers insist that Islam is a peaceful religion and only fights when it is under attack. But even this protocol to fight only antagonists is blurred in the Quran by numerous texts that identify the 'enemy' as those who simply do not submit to Islam.

...I am with you, therefore make firm those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them. [8.13] This is because they acted adversely to Allah and His Apostle; and whoever acts adversely to Allah and His Apostle-- then surely Allah is severe in requiting (evil) (surah 8:12-13).

Surah 5:36-38 provides a more graphic description of how enemies are to be gruesomely dismembered. Quranic Islam seeks to instill 'terror' into the hearts of its enemies and unbelievers, even as it 'slays,' 'smites,' and 'fights' them.

Jesus rather taught and exemplified that persecution was to be bravely and faithfully endured by believers, recognizing that God is Judge of all things and He will make things right in the end. He taught: "Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic" (Luke 6:28-29).

Here Jesus is teaching another radical anti-Islamic principle of forgiving and blessing enemies, which He ultimately portrayed in the passion of the cross when He spoke of His torturers and executioners with the words: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do..." (Luke 23:34). God, who entered into His creation as a man, taught mankind what it was to love. He then gave His own life as a demonstration of His love, redemptively welcoming mankind to share in His love. This portrait of grace reveals the heart of Christianity, and exposes the spiritual bankruptcy of Islam.

4.5 Hate *Enemies*

Love *Enemies*

Both Islam and Christianity make a severe distinction between the faithful and the unbelievers, and an equally severe distinction in how each are to be treated. Christians see unbelievers as spiritually and morally 'lost' and in profound need of forgiveness, and redemption from the curse and penalty of

sin, and ultimately in need of reconciliation to a relationship with God through faith in Christ.

Muslims see unbelievers as 'infidels' who are not worthy of love until they submit to Islam. Muslims are to assume the position of Allah and His prophet of only loving those who first love him (surah 2:190, 195; 3:32). Incredulously, the Quran identifies unbelievers as 'enemies' of Allah and Muslims. "...surely the unbelievers are your open enemies." (surah 4:101). The prescription here is one of hatred towards 'enemies,' which contains the concept of hatred towards unbelievers in general. This stance is often ascribed to 'radical Islam,' but is truly far more orthodox and textually accurate than the modern media dares to portray.

In sheer opposing fashion, God has first loved those who did not love Him. "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were yet still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). It is this disposition of undeserved and unqualified love for enemies that Christ modeled, and calls His followers to live by: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven..." (Matthew 5:43-45). While Muhammad was killing his enemies at worst, and suppressing and tolerating them at best, Jesus loved His enemies, giving His life for them, and calling His followers to do likewise.

4.6 *Heretical Christian Crusades*

Doctrinal Islamic Jihads

Islamic scholars often attempt to compare the medieval Christian crusades against modern Islamic jihad, with later Muslim writers depicting the

crusades as a 'Christian jihad' against Muslim lands and peoples. There are current veins of Islamic thought that Christian crusades are still being waged against Muslims. Colonel Gadhafi of Libya has proposed that the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798 was the ninth crusade, and the establishment of the state of Israel was the tenth crusade with the aid of Christian America (Runciman 1951:21). Muslims through the centuries have used the crusades as illustrations of the worst that has been ascribed to Christian history. Even today, in their schools, from the sermons in their mosques, and from their various writings, Muslims remember the crusades as a Christian blight upon Islam.

The term 'Christian jihad' is itself an unorthodox paradox that does not fit inside the framework of Biblical Christianity. Braswell explains that rather than biblical or spiritual reasons, the crusades occurred for various, economic-political reasons, such as:

the commercial rivalries between Genoa and Venice, rivalries between the emerging nations of Europe, and the Pope's desire to reunite Christendom under his leadership, and mounting resentment toward the Muslims over their control of the Holy Land (1996:3519).

Nothing within Jesus' life or teaching can in any way be construed to justify or command the murderous Crusades. Truly, they were horrifically antithetical to the whole of Jesus' life, message and mission. The Christian crusades are a moral blight in history, and should not be assigned a place in 'Christian history' as they were non-Christian endeavors of men who were not loyal to the God, message or teaching of Christianity, which they proclaimed to serve.

However, historical and modern Islamic militancy and warfare is exemplified by their prophet and taught and endorsed by their sacred texts.

Muhammad taught to “fight in the way of Allah” (2:244) and to “...slay the idolaters wherever you find them” (9:5), that “So when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, then smite the necks until when you have overcome them...” (47:4). And in general, Muslims are instructed to “Fight those who do not believe in Allah nor in the Latter Day...” (9:29). When the Muslim takes up arms and hostility against non-Muslims, they are living more true to their texts than conservative Muslims who choose peaceful relations.

The ‘Christian crusades’ were non-orthodox, non-biblical, and heretically immoral endeavors by misled or counterfeit believers, while Islamic jihad is an orthodox, Quranic-inspired and modern protocol for global Islam.

5 REVELATION

5.1 *Word that became Book*

Word that became Flesh

Islam's holy book was received through an angelic messenger by Muhammad who then dictated the words to his followers who recorded them as a word-for-word copy of Allah's final revelation (Caner and Caner 2002:83). It is the uncreated speech of Allah that has existed in the mind of Allah from eternity (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:102). It is seen as the final, complete and exact revelation of Allah and the "Mother of books" (surah 43:3), with which no book can compare (surah 10:37-38). These recitations over time were to become the sacred scriptures of the Quran, which consists of 114 chapters and is about 1/3 the volume of the Bible.

Muhammad initially questioned his experiences with the angel. He considered himself to be an illiterate poet and at times under the influence of an evil spirit. As fear and despair came over him, he experienced doubts and contemplated suicide. Only after Khadija (his first wife) convinced him that it was an angel and not a devil did he persist (Braswell 1996:3285).

Christ is the final revelation of Truth to mankind as the Quran is the final revelation of Allah to humanity. Christ reveals the very person of God who is to be accepted, loved and followed. The Quran reveals only the commands of Allah to which man needs to submit. "The Word of God in Islam is the Quran; in Christianity it is Christ..." Geisler and Saleeb (2002) quoting Hossein Seyyed (1975:43), a Muslim scholar highly conversant with Western scholarship.

In Christianity: "...in the beginning was the Word...the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh" (John 1:1-14).

Whereas in Islam, in the beginning was the word, and the word became a book. Islamic 'word' is to be accepted and submitted to without question or consideration of any other books or revelation. For Christians, the Living Word of God is to be loved and known personally as Jesus Christ and as recorded and revealed in the biblical text. Obeying Christ does not yoke believers to a burdensome and insatiable law, but rather His commands seek to establish and build relationship with Himself and others by faith and walking in His love by His Spirit (1 John 3:23; 5:1-5; 2 John 1:5). A Christian's obedience is inspired and empowered through their relationship with the Holy Spirit who leads them to live according to God's Word with the ultimate purpose of forming them into the likeness of the One they obey (John 16:13-14; Philippians 3:10).

5.2 Ruled by Law

Ruled by Spirit

Sunni Islam (the major orthodox sect of Islam) embraces six canonical collections of Hadiths. They are seen as essentially complementary, presenting the Quran in a practical form (Geisler & Saleeb 2002). "...As Muslims, our knowledge of Islam would be incomplete and shaky if we did not study and follow the Hadith. Similarly an outsider cannot understand Islam if he ignores the Hadith" (Kateregga and Shenk 1981:31). Braswell notes how:

...reading the Hadiths elicit feelings of perplexity while pondering Muhammad's marital and sex life, and feelings of horror when jihad is described in gruesome form. But the result will be a dramatic new understanding of why Muslims think and act as they do (1996:3354).

The genius of Islam is finally law and not theology. The believers' task is not so much exploratory, still less fellowship, but rather obedience to the strict law of the Quran and the Hadith. In the words of a Western Muslim scholar,

Nasr Seyyed, “not only do the teachings of the Quran direct the life of a Muslim, but what is more the soul of a Muslim is like a mosaic made up of the formulae of the Quran in which he breathes and lives” (1975:61). Since faithful Muslims seek to embody and exemplify (indeed “breath and live”) the teaching of the Quran, it not only compels the non-Muslim world to scrutinize their text, but also identifies the text as the primary source of Islamic methodology and mission.

A Muslim who memorizes the Quran is called a Hafiz. A tradition praises the Muslim who accomplishes it.

Narrated Aisha: The Prophet said, 'Such a person as recites the Quran and masters it by heart, will be with the noble righteous scribes (in Heaven). And such a person as exerts himself to learn the Quran by heart, and recites it with great difficulty, will have a double reward' (Al-Bukhari 6:431-32; 60.332.459).

Richardson aptly warns that,

Islam insists that Muslims must accept the Quran in its entirety, so accepting its good verses leads one inexorably to accept also its evil verses – the ones that advocate violence, slavery, sex with slaves and even prostitution (2003:86).

Understandably failed attempts to fulfill Islamic law leaves many Muslims in a state of frustrated insecurity, as Allah demands that His followers faithfully obey His moral law, assuming they have the power to do so. Christian theology recognizes that because of man’s sinful condition, he is unable to fulfill God’s moral law, which then requires a redeemer who can fulfill the law on mankind’s behalf (Romans 3:21-26). Christians are set free from futile attempts to meet the humanly unachievable demands of God’s law on their own, and are justified by faith through Christ who perfectly fulfilled God’s law on their behalf. Jesus then empowers believers to live by the law of the Spirit (Romans 5:1-11). This law of the Spirit is now God’s moral nature written on the hearts of the

regenerate who choose to live according to His life-giving, holiness-producing power in relationship.

...the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:1-4).

5.3 *The Miracle of the Quran*

The Miracle of the Son

Indeed the 'miracle' of the Quran (its perfection, transmission, inspiration) is one of the most fundamental tenants of belief for the majority of Muslims. This absolute confidence in the Quran has remained unshaken among Muslims, serving as the foundation of Islam and the most essential evidence for the prophethood of Muhammad. There are masses of evidence that challenge the authenticity of the Muslims' claims about their sacred book, which are worth exploring for the interested reader. But by our purposes here, it will serve better to evaluate the theoretical viability that such claims infer.

Firstly, there is no logical connection between literary eloquence and divine authorship! This is an irrational basis of authority, though Muslims present it as objective evidence. Secondly, accurate transmission is a logical fallacy to prove divine authorship as well. Even if the copy of the Quran we have today is exactly as it was when Muhammad dictated it, it would say nothing about the truthfulness or divine origins of the text! Thirdly, self-consistency or the absence of internal-contradictions (even assuming there are none) also says nothing about divine authority. Just because a book has no contradictions certainly does not mean it is from God. With this in mind, it is

revealing that though the Quran teaches that “no change there can be in the Words of God” (10:64), we read in 2:106 that, “...revelations...We abrogate or cause to be forgotten.” This is of course problematic and the casual thinker would expect that divine revelation would need no improvement and would have been correct the first time.

For the Muslim, the Quran is the sourcebook for whatever is true about Christianity as a religion, as a people, and as a way of life. It sets the record straight about who Christians are, what they may or may not believe correctly, and about their relationship with God.

Whatever is in the Bible, and however Christian history has developed over six hundred years up to the time of Islam are true only as they do not contradict that data in the Quran (Braswell 1996:3513). And Muslims see the Quran not as contradicting the Old and New Testaments, but rather as fulfilling them (surah 21:7).

On a comparative level, these discussions reveal the radically different nature of the texts being considered and their respective authority. Islam presents the ‘miracle’ of the historical, technical and literary qualities of the book itself, while Christianity presents the ‘miracle’ of the personal and divine qualities of the living Word, Jesus Christ, raised from the dead as revealed through the written scriptures. “He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God” (Revelation 19:13).

These ancient divine scriptures, of which many pre-date Islamic texts by millennia, contain thousands of years of specific, prophetic, covenantal promises fulfilled in the very Person, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the New Testament (e.g. Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:14-21; Acts 2:25-33; Joel 2:28-32; Psalms 104:4; Hebrews 2:6-10). Jesus Christ came not

only as the fulfillment of messianic expectation, but also as the source of life Himself. “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26). While speaking to those who knew the ancient Biblical texts and promises of the Old Testament, Jesus taught that: “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life” (John 5:39-40). The Word of God itself is ‘living and active’ as it continually stands and speaks as the written Word of Jesus Christ who was and is the Living One (Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 1:18).

6 GOD

6.1 *Unknowable Transcendent Being*

Knowable Intimate God

Allah has many designations in the Quran and the Hadiths. Most commonly, Allah is attributed ninety-nine names that range from *al-Latif*, the Gracious (42:19) to *al-Muntaqim*, the Avenger (30:47), to *al-Wadud*, the Loving (11:90) and *al-Mutakabbir*, the Proud (59:23). These names for Allah are derived from how He has 'willed to act' more than being fundamental statements of His nature, which cannot be known. Allah's actions are not seen to necessarily reflect Allah's character.

Quintessential to Islamic understanding of Allah is *tawhid*, the doctrine of the Oneness of God. Due to Islam's high view of Allah's Unity, its message is a call to testify to that Unity, making the greatest of sins (and unforgivable) to assign partners to God, *shirk* (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:20), which is how Muslims perceive the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

For the Muslim, Allah's seemingly contradictory qualities are not problematic, because Allah's sovereign will ultimately transcend reason and revelation and requires no defense. Islam attempts to present Allah as having no knowable essence or nature, but rather, that He is just Absolute Will who chooses as He will in every given circumstance. He is not composed of, or limited by any unchanging character traits. It is through this lens that the dark fatalism of Islam emerges, where Allah arbitrarily sends people to eternal destiny. "So Allah leads astray those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases and He is Exalted in power, full of wisdom" (surah 14:4). *En sh'Allah* means "Allah wills it" and so it is with these words that one of the foundational

doctrines of Islam manifests itself on the lips of millions of Muslims... the absolute sovereign and deterministic activity of Allah (Caner and Caner 2002:109).

This view leads to a form of fatalistic agnosticism, as the heart of Islam is not to *know* Allah, but to *obey* him. It is not to *meditate* on His Person or His Presence, but to *submit* to His will. It is this unknowableness of Allah's complete transcendence that leads Islam to a form of agnosticism. Indeed, it is impossible to know Allah. Al-Ghazali, the most prominent theologian in the history of Islam went as far to say:

The end result of the knowledge of the arifin (those who know) is their inability to know Him, and their knowledge is, in truth, that they do not know Him and that it is absolutely impossible for them to know Him (Shehadi 1964:37).

Muslims are called to worship, adore and love that whom they do not and cannot know. It can be seen how due to the very nature of worship and love, that this makes the Muslims worship a paradox of massive self-deception at best, and a farce of meaningless mechanical activity at worst. One cannot worship what one cannot and does not know. This makes prayer an activity of obedience, a type of repetitive mantra invoking Allah's power, but does not request anything, as everything will only transpire according to Allah's unalterable pre-determined will. This situation is especially accentuated in the modern appeal of the mystical practices of Sufi Islam (Partridge and Melton 2004:126).

The Christian scriptures delineate God as also being sovereign. Yet His immutable sovereignty is not only grounded in His nature, but also continuously demonstrated in all of His personal interaction with humanity.

Look to the LORD and His strength; seek His face always. Remember the wonders He has done, His miracles, and the judgments He pronounced...He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth. He remembers His covenant forever, the word He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant He made with Abraham, the oath He swore to Isaac...an everlasting covenant (1 Chronicles 16:11-17).

Allah's sovereignty is that of a distant, impersonal power who 'wills' everything, thus reducing humanity to mechanical, determined slaves who do His bidding. Alternatively, the God of the Bible is sovereignly accomplishing His ordained plan through the freewill He has granted to humanity, particularly (though not exclusively) through those who would seek Him and serve Him as children to a Heavenly Father. The Bible reveals this astounding tension between an all-powerful, sovereign God and human moral freedom, which He has not only granted, but seeks to relationally utilize to accomplish His sovereign will. "Lord, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us" (Isaiah 26:12). The New Testament continues to display this reality: "...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Philippians 2:12-13).

The Christian rests deeply secure in the reality that their heavenly Father will accomplish all that He desires as they lovingly serve and submit to Him, and are yet never coerced by His sovereignty. "I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:4-6).

Christians worship the one true God who is simultaneously transcendent and imminently present. God seeks to know believers personally and welcomes them to walk in relationship with Him. "I will give them a heart to

know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart (Jeremiah 24:7). "No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest (Hebrews 8:11). "... I will bring him near and he will come close to me, for who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?' declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 30:21).

6.2 Allah Reveals His Will to be Obeyed

God Reveals Himself to be Known

The faithful Muslim lives to serve the will of Allah. Allah has not revealed Himself per se, but only His divine, immutable and sovereign will. The success and piety of the Muslim's life is measured by his faithfulness to Allah's will in hope of earning His favor.

God invites people to come and know Him. To obey His will is to walk in relationship with Him. Truly, to know God's will is to know Him. "Those who obey His commands live in Him, and He in them. And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us (1 John 3:24). John 14:17 states that: "...you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you." The Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesians believers to know God better: "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better" (Ephesians. 1:17).

6.3 *Impersonal Judge*

Loving Father

It is as true in Islam as in any faith, that one's concept of their deity defines the whole religious identity and activity of the faithful. Two Christians who are former Muslims testify that: "The Allah we worshiped as Muslims was a remote judge. When Christians speak of the intimacy and grace of God, it confuses a Muslim who has no concept of the God-man in their religion except by negation" (Caner and Caner 2002:107). Truly, Allah is "nearer than your jugular vein" (surah 50:16), revealing Himself as the one who will be sure to judge mankind, but also as one who keeps Himself at an unknowable distance to those whom He judges.

Allah is Al-Hakem, the Judge (surah 40:48), and Al-Hasib, the Accounter, who is the Reckoner (4:6-7); that is, the One who will take account of all people's deeds, and who will reward or punish them accordingly. He is also Al-Jami, the Gatherer of men for the final day of judgment (3:9). He is also Al-Mudhill, the Humiliator (3:26), and Al-Muqsit, the Judge who sets the scales (21:47-48).

In divine contrast to the Quranic picture of Allah, the Bible reveals God as the "LORD your God who carried you, as a father carries his son..." (Deuteronomy 1:31). God is a holy, righteous, and loving Father who will discipline and judge mankind for their deeds, but not apart from His graciousness and profound compassion to see sinners turn back to Him and live!

Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!" (Ezekiel 18:30-32).

God has ultimately provided a way for the repentant to receive a new heart and a new spirit through His Son. He has poured out His wrath against sin upon Jesus Christ, whose redemption He offers to all who will receive Him as a free gift of forgiveness (1 Thessalonians 5:9). "Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!" (Romans 5:9). Through Christ's redeeming sacrifice for sin, God in all of His holiness and hatred towards sin, demonstrates Himself as being "gracious and righteous," ...full of compassion (Psalms 116:5).

6.4 Allah's Inability to Love

God is Love

"God loves you!" is the bold, unmatched claim of Christianity (Romans 5:8, John 3:16). Whereas the Bible teaches that God loves all, hates sin, and is angry with sinners because of how it separates Him from His beloved (Proverbs 6:16-19; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 1:18; Acts 28:27), Islamic scripture affirms that Allah hates sinners and loves only those that love Him and do good (surah 2:190, 195; 3:32). The list of those Allah does not love includes: "transgressors" (2:190), "ungrateful sinners" (2:276), "those who do wrong" (3:57), and "the arrogant" (4:36).

Though the Quran names Allah as *Al-Wadud*, the Loving One (surah 11:90), it also attest that Allah's love is only for those who are 'doers of good' (2:195), or those who 'turn much to Him' (2:222), or those who 'purify

themselves' (2:222), 'guard against evil' (3:76), who are 'patient' (3:146), 'who trust' (3:159), who 'judge equitably' (5:42), 'who are careful of their duty' (9:4), and who are 'doers of justice' (60:8).

This model of 'love' is of course not love at all, but rather reciprocity. Love by nature is given not on merit, or even in response to being loved, but is rather undeservedly giving of oneself to another. Christianity is the radical alternative, whereby God first loved sinners (Romans 5:8) as the model and source of how people could then love in return. "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Further, love is truly only love when one gives himself to the beloved. Astoundingly, only in Christianity does the Deity give Himself – not sending a representative or simply giving things to humanity (e.g. life, health, etc.), but giving *Himself*. One would expect that if the divine being and creator of everything (i.e. God or Allah) were to love they would do so perfectly. This is truly so only of the God of Christianity, who loved so much that He gave...His one and only son (John 3:16).

7 HUMANITY

7.1 *Slaves to Serve Allah's Will*

Sons and Daughters Communicating with their Father

The Quranic language describing man's relationship to Allah is in terms of master (*rabb*) and slave (*abd*). The word "Islam" means 'submission' which is what Allah requires of all people in order to make them 'Muslims, meaning 'those who are in submission.' The mode of communication between the Divinity and His follower discloses much about the character of their relationship. For the Muslim, prayer is not primarily an exchange of love and relationship as it is in Christianity, but rather Muslim prayer is offered out of fear of judgment and in strict obedience in order to: (1) reassure faith (surah 2:3-4), (2) remove evil (surah 11:114), and (3) receive rewards (surah 20:14-15).

So it is then, in similar manner to how the designation "Allah" cannot be interchanged for "God" due to their radically divergent meanings, that the word "prayer" does not describe the same act in both faiths because they refer to entirely different expressions. One is the impersonal, mechanical obedience of slaves to secure rewards, avoid judgment and do Allah's will, while the other is personal communication of a son or daughter with their heavenly Father.

7.2 *Slave-Race Community*

Spiritual Family

Islam provides a roadmap for life on a daily, monthly, and yearly calendar, leaving little room in private or public life for speculation and uncertainty. Even as the individual must seek to strip himself of his will, and submissively serve the will of Allah, so also the community together forms a

collective agent of corporate submission to Islamic controls. Sources of Islamic authority include the Quran, Hadith, Sunnah, Sharia schools of law, and mosques and Quranic schools. These institutions govern and administer Muslims and their communities. The cohesion of community is very important to Islamic identity. "Although Muslims may do religious duty individually, the main thrust of Islam is to reflect a religious lifestyle in community and in the brotherhood of Islam" (Braswell 1996:3503). Therefore, the Muslim lifestyle affects the family, the vocation, the economic and political life, and the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The key aspect to Islamic fellowship is the giving of alms (or 'zakat'), which cleanses the Muslim of greed and selfishness, while distributing goods amongst the community (Caner and Caner 2002:125). This material sense represents the bonds between members of the community.

Christianity employs the imagery of 'body' to describe the community of believers (1 Corinthians 12). This is not a body held together by financial equality and distribution, but rather held together by loving relationships, with God's Holy Spirit serving as the intimate ligaments joining each body part, and with Christ Himself as the governing Head (Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 2:19). From the ancient opening pages of the Bible, God has sought the formation of an eternal spiritual family to which He would serve as Father and as Head (Genesis 22:17-18; Ephesians 3:14-15).

7.3 *Compassion for Needy*

Compulsion for Salvation

Tradition records the following statement of Muhammad on almsgiving: "The Prophet said, 'Charity is a necessity for every Muslim'" (Braswell

1996:3336). The motivation of submission to Allah has yet to produce a utopian Islamic community. It is questionable as to whether the compulsion to give to the needs of others can form the bonds of relational cohesion that Muhammad envisioned as compared to a community that is held together by the motivation of Divinely exemplified and empowered compassion.

Giving in the Christian community is modeled by Christ's love for the needy who then calls His followers to love others likewise (Luke 10:27-37). Compassion is the great foundation of the Christian's life and of God's Kingdom (John 13:34-35). The motivation to give to the needs of others does not flow strictly from obedience to a command, but primarily from the love that a grateful heart of a redeemed child has received, and desires to pass on to others. "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us..." (Ephesians 4:32-5:1). The follower of Christ who has freely received the incalculably valuable and free gift of salvation is duly called and aptly motivated to freely give the same love, being one in spirit and purpose! (Matthew 10:8; 18:23-25; Philippians 2:2).

7.4 *Divinely Endorsed Misogyny*

Eternal Gender Equality

Islam declares that women are intellectually and morally inferior to men. It requires the witness of two women to equal that of one man (surah 4:11). The Quran sanctions polygamy of up to four wives, but women cannot marry more than one husband, affirming that men are a "degree above them, and Allah is Mighty, Wise" (surah 2:228). Men can divorce their wives, but women cannot divorce their husbands (surah 2:228). The Quran sanctions men to

deny sexual relations and even beat their wives if they deem necessary (surah 4:34). Further, Muslim women must completely cover their bodies in public, stand behind their husbands, and kneel behind them in prayer, and in some respects are considered to simply be instruments of their husband's sexual desires (surah 2:223).

Women are also deemed inferior spiritually, as Caner and Caner quote two Hadiths stating: "Muhammad said, 'I was shown Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers are women.' Bad omen is in the women...after me I have not left any affliction more harmful to men than women'" (2002:134). Modern scholarship, particularly in the West reinterprets such Islamic texts to grant women equality in most spheres of life politically, economically, educationally, etc., boasting that the modern Islamic woman has more rights than those typically granted to modern western women (see Braswell 1996:3418-3420). This kind of reversal-interpretation is unconvincing in light of even a surface reading of the implicated texts, and the biography of Muhammad and his contemporaries. Such inverted interpretations are also unconvincing in light of how the vast majority of women are valued in Islamic countries around the globe. Many contemporary books document a sampling of the horrors done to women in Islamic contexts (e.g. Goodwin's *Price of Honor* and Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter*). Richardson cites a typically horrific example:

A woman is raped on a bus in Egypt and Fundamentalists began saying it was the girl's fault. She was wearing a skirt...not a hijab. The media also began to blame her...Even women said it was her fault...she was working, not staying at home (2003:43).

Alternatively, Jesus persisted in elevating the value and role of women throughout His ministry far beyond the cultural and religious norms of the day, emphatically honoring women to equality (e.g. John 4). The New Testament

writers further teach equality of men and women before God (e.g. Galatians 3:28) and include naming women in the very lineage of the Messiah, God's son (Matthew 1:1-17). Christian women are assured the same standing before God eternally and granted the same high honor and sacrificial love that He bestows on His church in this life and the next (Ephesians 5:22-33).

7.5 *Subdue Humanity*

Transform Humanity

Allah's interests are in subduing humanity to His sovereign will. As seen previously, Allah enlists His faithful to "...fight those who believe not in Allah...Nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth...until they pay the Jizya (tax) with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued" (surah 9:29).

The Islamic concept of salvation does not include regeneration or any transformation of man during his earthly life, but rather it is a future state of experience (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:124). Rather, Allah's vision as expressed through His prophet is one of subjection, control, and domination of humanity to serve His will.

Alternatively, God has a vision to create a people for Himself, who are increasingly formed into His holy likeness. "... (Christ) gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2.14). God's mission is one of reconciliation: "...through (Christ) to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:20). God's ultimate reconciling purpose is the founding of a New Humanity who are transformed into the likeness of their Lord: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being

transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3.18).

8 SALVATION

8.1 *Man's Pure Nature*

Man's Sinful Nature

Man, according to surah 30:30 is born in a natural state of purity. It is only external forces after his birth, which negatively affect his life and moral condition. Humans then, are not inherently 'sinful,' but rather born 'good.' Evil and good are determined by the Quran's stipulations and when Allah specifically declares them so according to His will (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:46). The Quran does not teach extensively about sin per se besides *shirk*, which is the association of other deities with Allah, which is unpardonable. According to Kateregga (1981:17-18) the majority view in Islam, is that the Quran teaches, "all people are born as true Muslims, innocent, pure, and free". A well-known tradition from the prophet forms the belief that "Every infant is born according to the *Fitra* ('on Allah's plan'), then his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magician" (Abdul-Haqq 1980:158).

Due to operating from a radically different set of presuppositions about the nature of humanity and the method of entering into Allah's favor and paradise, there are no strong concepts of 'sinning' against the righteous requirement of a holy God and the need for salvation from any condition of sinfulness. Geisler and Saleeb (2002:45) quoting Muslim author, Faruqi (1984:9) wrote,

...because (humans) are not 'fallen,' they have no need of a savior. But because they are not 'saved' either, they need to do good works – and do them – ethically – which alone will earn them the desired 'salvation.' Indeed, "salvation" is an improper term, since to need 'salvation,' one must be in a predicament beyond the hope of ever escaping from it. But men and women are not in that predicament.

Christianity rather recognizes that man has been born into a state of enmity and separation from God. Humanity is powerless to save themselves from this inescapably horrible predicament of sinfulness and alienation from God (Romans 3:23; 5:6; Ephesians 3:4-10). This radically different presupposition serves to construct opposing theological foundations upon which the opposing worlds of Islam and Christianity are built.

8.2 Works to Earn Allah's Favor

Faith to Receive God's Redemption

Traditionally, the Quran is understood to teach that faith (iman) consists of the following five or six categories: Allah and His attributes, the prophets and their virtues, the angels, the sacred books, the day of resurrection, and Qadar; that Allah is in absolute control of the world. If one believes in these he is called Mu'min (i.e. believer), and one who does not believe in any of them is called kafir (i.e. unbeliever). In addition to believing these doctrines, a Muslim is also required to do good works to obtain salvation. Sometimes referred to as the 'five pillars' they are: reciting the Shahada (confession), prayer, fasting, almsgiving (zakat), and pilgrimage to Mecca. Some Muslims also include jihad (holy war) as a sixth pillar, making holy war essential to salvation (Geilser & Saleeb 2002:126).

In a real sense then, Islam teaches that paradise can be earned if the believer faithfully performs all of these good works and makes up for his shortcomings by performing other duties. Muslims live in fear of the 'scales' in which their acts will be balanced. "Then as for him whose good deeds are preponderant, these are the successful. And as for him whose good deeds are

light, these are they who shall have lost their souls, abiding in hell (surah 23:102-103).

Based on this text, the Muslim believes that each person's life must balance more towards the good than bad to qualify for paradise, where each person is literally accountable for each act, hoping to please Allah more than they offend Him. The Quran speaks of those who give their lives to 'earn the pleasure of Allah' (2:207).

In Islam then, sin is not 'paid' for, or 'atoned' for on any legal basis to render the guilty justified before Allah's law, but rather it is balanced against good behavior, and left to the unpredictable will of Allah. "Islam...has no redeemer, no mediator and no forgiveness guarantor...every human defendant in Allah's court must face the ultimate judge without the help of an advocate..." (Richardson 2003:230). This exposes a radically different ideology of justice at work behind Islam, to which the Christian redemptive-analogous approach, which identifies humanity's need for redemption from sin, cannot be easily applied.

8.3 *Duty for Payback*

Devotion to Relationship

Islam is based upon a sense of duty and desire for 'payback' for deeds done. The spiritual bankruptcy of this system is glaring. The Muslim works to earn his place in paradise, whereby he virtually places Allah in his 'debt' (though Muslims would not see it this way, it is the only logical framework for a works-salvation), thus hoping to compel Allah to grant him favor, though He of course need not feel compelled since He is sovereign. This is part of the tragic and circular hopelessness of Islam.

In Christianity, it is clear that people cannot come to God by ‘fixing themselves,’ somehow employing the same broken capacity that needs to be cleansed to become cleansed. But rather it is on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ that believers can stand before God with confidence (Hebrews 10:18-18). The Christian’s ‘duty’ then is to stay in close relationship with their Savior who has redeemed them. Devotion to Him personally is the key; not to meriting salvation, but to keeping oneself ‘in Christ,’ a place where strength for victorious Christian living and fruitfulness can only be realized as the free gift that is received by faith (see John 15; Ephesians 2).

8.4 *Condemnation for the Prodigal*

Grace for the Prodigal

“Say: Obey Allah and the Apostle; but if they turn back, then surely Allah does not love the unbelievers” (surah 3:32).

The Muslim can be totally sure that Allah will never restore a believer who has rejected the teaching and faith of Islam. This is why so many Muslims quickly disown children who have converted to another religion...Why love them when almighty Allah will never love them? (Caner and Caner 2002:33).

This harsh reality stands antithetical to the familial heart of the Christian doctrine of grace, as illustrated by Jesus in the parable of the ‘prodigal son,’ to which there is no parallel in Islamic texts or thought (Luke 15:11-31).

There is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1), and God’s cry to the backslider is: “Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity” (Joel 2:13). Christians are no longer bound by an unforgiving, unachievable law, but rather by grace and truth that have come through Jesus Christ (John 1:15).

8.5 Heavenly Feast of Self Satisfaction

Heavenly Wedding Banquet of Communion with God

Islamic hope is Quranically envisioned as an eternity of sensual pleasures, which includes sex with perpetual virgins or houris (surah 37:48), drinking from an ocean of wine with no intoxicating after-effects (37:45-47), dressed in the finest of clothes, and waited on by menservants (52:24; 56:17; 74:19). Scholarly Islamic interpretation of these 'Gardens of Felicity (surah 37:43) range from a common literal interpretation to a purely symbolic understanding denoting unknowable pleasures (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:122-123).

Regardless of how literally or metaphorically these descriptions are interpreted, the picture is still fundamentally a self-satisfying paradise void of communion with Allah. This stands in striking contrast to the Biblical concept of Heaven, whose very center is the Person and Presence of God with whom every son and daughter will enjoy eternal consummate relationship. God Himself is the main event of Christian paradise (Revelation 21-22).

The concept of 'hope' that Muslims aspire to, is a 'hope' in one's own good works earning a future place in paradise. This is fundamentally different from the Christian concept of hope that rests in the certainty of what has been accomplished by Christ on their behalf to secure their eternal state through His atoning work. The Christian hope is already a reality complete in Christ (Colossians 1:13-14). The Islamic 'hope' is based entirely upon one's performance (acts of submission) and Allah's sovereign and unpredictable will. Christian 'hope' is an eternity of relationship with the Creator, reigning with Christ in glory, made secure by God Himself through Christ and guaranteed by the seal of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:11-14; 2 Corinthians 1:21).

8.6 Eternally Insecure

Eternally Secure

Islam provides no assurance of salvation or eternal security, as it is religious self-justification and Allah's mercy that Muslims cling to as their eternal hope. "There is no security for the believer of Islam. One is left wanting and waiting for the will of Allah to be accomplished. Good works can only give one hope for heaven, but never the guarantee of such..." (Caner and Caner 2002:31).

The one exception to the eternally insecure and assurance-less plight of Muslims is to offer one's life to fight in Jihad (Holy War). This provides the devoted Jihadi direct access to paradise, as the Quran declares:

...(those) who fled and were turned out of their homes and persecuted in My way and who fought and were slain, I will most certainly cover their evil deeds, and I will most certainly make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow...a reward from Allah, and with Allah is yet better reward (surah 3:195).

...And if you are slain in the way of Allah or you die, certainly forgiveness from Allah and mercy is better than what they amass. And if indeed you die or you are slain, certainly to Allah shall you be gathered together. (surah 3:157-158; see also 4:57; 95-96; 22:58-59).

For the Muslim who fears that the scales are hopelessly weighed against him, the best option he has for eternal security is to ensure that he dies in the cause of Allah. Here, death in jihad becomes not only an option, but also the *only way*. Many Muslims who live in peaceful, non-oppressive societies will redefine this 'jihad' as an internal struggle to better oneself and promote Islam through the infrastructure of society. Understandably it is much more difficult to be killed in this genre of 'jihad' to secure one's eternal destiny.

Yet for any Muslim who has a measure of hope that their life's deeds will balance in their favor, there are still no guarantees of securing paradise forever,

for after being admitted into paradise, there are no certainties of being allowed to stay (see surah 11:107).

The Christian hope is made secure through the finished work of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ who is *Himself* the guarantee of promised salvation (Hebrews 7:22). He has given believers His indwelling Holy Spirit as a seal guaranteeing His promise (Ephesians 1:13).

8.7 *Forgiveness Secured by Forgiving Enemies*

Forgiveness Secured by Dying While Killing Enemies

“Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven” (Luke 6.37). “...if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins (Matthew 6.15). The Christian need not believe that he will be forgiven on any other basis than his willingness to forgive others. This is not a limitation of God’s grace or of the finished work of redemption, but rather a genuine fruit that will be present in one who has been forgiven. Jesus illustrated this in the parable He told in Matthew 18:23-35 of a servant who failed to forgive his fellow servant a relatively small debt compared to the insurmountable debt that the King had just forgiven him.

Islam offers quite a different picture. Allah’s forgiveness is not secured by forgiving enemies, but rather by seemingly being slain in attempts to kill them. “And if you are slain in the way of Allah or you die, certainly forgiveness from Allah and mercy is better than what they amass. (surah 3:157). Though this theme of violence-secured forgiveness is often redefined in the Western faces of Islam, it will arise again in the later discussion of modern jihad.

9 POPULAR PRACTICE

9.1 *Understanding the Sects*

The majority of Muslims are from the orthodox sect called 'Sunnis' who support the 'mainstream' line of caliphs, and embrace the *sunnah* (custom) of Muhammad as they are interpreted and practiced by the *umma* (Islamic community). They have systematized Islamic life and ethics, establishing the community leaders as the final resource for law. It is the Sunni community that has detailed law in virtually every area of life and works to keep Islam speaking with one voice (see Caner and Caner 2002:162-163).

Early dissenters to this lineage became known as the Shia' (faction) of Ali, who believe that the leader must be a descendent of Muhammad. They negate the caliphs and enlist their own leaders, *imams*. They insist on the sharia as a governmental absolute, and believe that a theocracy is the best form of national leadership.

Islam is divided politically and religiously. The Shi'ite regime of Iran has waged war against the Sunni regime of Iraq. During the Persian Gulf War, the Islamic nations of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, and others sided with western nations in war against Iraq... (Braswell 1996:3011).

The final major sect of Islam is Sufism, which embraces a mystical, ascetic lifestyle appealing to countries where Buddhism and Hinduism are strong (Caner and Caner 2002:165). Paradoxically, Sufism does not have a cohesive and systematic theology, often contradicting much of orthodox Islamic doctrine. But Sufism is on the rise with its appeal to the spiritual desires in mankind. "There have always been Sufis who have departed from strict obedience to Islam's exoteric code of law but maintain loose Muslim allegiance through birth and culture" (Partridge 2004:137). Such adherents emphasize the

value of their own mystical experience of a personal (and textually unfounded) Allah, which prevail over the dictates of Islamic law (ibid).

There are other smaller sects within Islam, which are worth mentioning. The Wahhabi are typically and historically the most radical militant Muslims in the world, teaching that kismet (fate) determines the purpose of jihad, which surfaces as warfare on all kafirs (infidels) who do not worship Allah (Caner and Caner 2002:167). Wahhabis are found in mostly in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern regions.

The last major divide in Islam is not so much a sect but the manifestation of Islam as it intermingles with other indigenous and often animistic cultures. Such 'Folk Islam' may include power encounters with a spirit world, especially in health, healing, and life decisions. It may incorporate many diverse fetishes, amulets, rituals, and tribal characteristics. As a form of Sufism, it is considered the mystical arm of Islam, stressing the love of Allah, the closeness of Allah, and feelings about Allah. Folk Islam appears to address the heartfelt and spiritual needs of a people (Braswell 1996:3543). It desires a God who is near and not far away. Christianity is challenged to understand the differences between Quranic and Folk Islam and realize how Folk Islam addresses some of the deep issues and needs of humanity, which are fully met in Christianity.

9.2 Celebrate Human Accomplishments

Celebrate God's Interventions

Due to their radical divergent natures, Islamic holidays are antithetical of Christian holidays, with the former celebrating human accomplishments while Christianity celebrates the interventions of God over human affairs.

The most famous date in Islam is the *Hegira* or Flight to Medina (July 16,

622). On this date, Muhammad fled from Mecca to Medina. It is the beginning of the Islamic calendar, (1 A.H.), and follows the lunar calendar. The parallel date in Christianity is Christ's birth, which marks the beginning of the Christian calendar, (1 A.D.) and follows the solar calendar. Islam marks the year their prophet flees from his enemies as their date of origin, while Christians mark the entrance of their Messiah-King to save them from their sin. (see Braswell 1996:3347)

Eid-ul-Adha celebrates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Ishmael and the *10th of Muharram* is a day of sorrow commemorating the assassination of Husein, the son of Ali and grandson of Prophet Muhammad. Muslims venerate Husein for his great sacrifice, and shedding of his blood as having some sacrificial value. He represents the idea of martyrdom and suffering. In contrast, *Good Friday* celebrates Jesus' willingness to sacrifice Himself for the salvation of mankind.

12th of Rabi' I. Mawlid al-Nabi is the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet," often becoming the occasion for excessive veneration of their warrior-prophet. *Christmas* is the celebrated birth date of Jesus, mankind's Redeemer.

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrates the end of the Muslim's personal sacrifice of the Ramadan fast. *Holy Communion* celebrates the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood for mankind.

Note that Islam has no parallel celebration for Easter Sunday, due to its unique quality of the resurrection of the Redeemer. Muhammad's body still rests secure in his tomb in Saudi Arabia.

10 CONSIDERING UNBELIEVERS

10.1 *Enslaving Unbelievers*

Embracing Unbelievers

They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be (all) alike; therefore take not from among them friends until they fly (their homes) in Allah's way; but if they turn back, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them, and take not from among them a friend or a helper (surah 4:89).

So when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, then smite the necks until when you have overcome them, then make (them) prisoners, and afterwards either set them free as a favor or let them ransom (themselves) until the war terminates (surah 47:4).

Depending on how literally and how faithfully Islamic authorities apply the Quran concerning unbelievers in current Islamic societies, Christian missionaries and Jews face a grave danger. According to surah 5:33, the punishment for those who 'spread mischief throughout the land' is: execution, crucifixion, cutting off of hands and feet, or exile. The example of Muhammad defines verbal insurrection as fulfilling this criteria, whereby making such slandering criminals guilty of treason (Caner and Caner 2002:55).

Yet initially, the Islamic state suppressed Christians and Jews with heavy taxes, whereas pagans and idolaters were given the choice of accepting Islam as their religion, or the sword. In some instances, Christians could become the community of the protected. The protected status of Christians and Jews had at times historically been a part of the Sharia (law) where Islam has been the dominant political power, but this 'protected status' was often only for those who embraced Islamic rule (Braswell 1996:3516).

The Quran also promises humiliating punishment for those who do not accept Muhammad's prophethood (surah 4:150-152), and Christians are further

condemned to the 'abode of Fire' due to their belief that "God is Christ the son of Mary" (surah 5:75). And most commonly, Christians are charged by the Quran as committing the only unpardonable sin of *shirk*, denying the unity of God with the doctrine of the Trinity (though be it a misunderstanding of the Christian doctrine). "Surely those who disbelieve from among the followers of the Book and the polytheists shall be in the fire of hell, abiding therein; they are the worst of men." (surah 98:6).

The Islamic charges against Christians are most commonly directed at the (1) Biblical text (having been forged and changed), (2) doctrine (belief in the Christ's incarnation, the Trinity of the Godhead, and original sin), and (3) religious practices (use of sacraments, images and church laws) (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:61).

These harsh Quranic scriptures are supplemented by a more practical social decree that states: "O you who believe! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them" (surah 5:51).

Understanding these verses will shed light on many Christian's frustrations in trying to build friendships with Muslims. When Muslims are friendly to non-Muslims as many certainly seek to be, it is by their own choice, not the directive of the Quran. Indeed, such friendliness contravenes the aforementioned texts.

In light of all this, there is nothing in Islam that contains anything comparable to Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan where a despised person is esteemed for their compassion towards an unbeliever. Christians are called to love and embrace non-Christians. "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back" (Luke 6:35). This is the radical heart of biblical Christianity, which is a scriptural mandate that has

certainly not always been faithfully upheld by believers, and only perfectly modeled by its Founder.

11 MISSIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

11.1 *Conquest by Violent Control*

Transformation by Sacrificial Love

“...Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them and heal the hearts of a believing people” (surah 9:14). An Iraqi jihadi foot-soldier spoke out in Time Magazine (Ghosh 2005:28) that “the jihadis are more religious people...You ask them anything-and they can instantly quote a relevant section from the Quran...” And even as this young, soon-to-be assassin-suicide bomber testified, he fluidly worked Quranic allusions into his dialogue, such as the promise of forgiveness and paradise for those who die in Allah’s cause (ibid).

Kelsey (1993:57) writes that Islam teaches that the world is divided into two spheres. There is the territory (or “house”) of obedience (dar al-Islam) and there is the territory (or “house”) of war (dar al-harb). The territory of war is characteristic of the non-Islamic world, leading to religious moral error and chaos. The way of obedience is to follow the admonitions of Allah in the Quran. “Islam has the mandate to control and subdue, and if possible to convert the unbelieving world. Unbelievers, therefore, must submit to certain political and religious realities under the dominance and tutelage of Islam” (Kelsey 1993:57).

Islam is truly seeking its version of peace in the world, which is defined as a world under the protection of submission to Islam. Kelsey points out that the program of action, namely jihad, is to help bring about the territory of Islam (Kelsey 1993:33). Western media and spokespersons have often typified such Islamic motivation and confrontation as ‘radical’ or ‘over-zealous fundamentalists.’ Typically, the term ‘radical’ is assigned to those Muslims who

view violence and warfare literally in the name of Islam, implying that they have exceeded the parameters of the orthodox faith. But truthfully, those who partake in violence are fundamentally following their sacred texts and model of their sacred prophet. It can be seen how it is rather the peaceful and conservative Muslims who are 'radical.'

When Iran began a war against its Muslim neighbor, Iraq; hundreds of thousands of Iranians lost their lives upon Ayatollah Khomeini's call to become martyrs to the cause of Allah and gain the reward of heaven (Braswell 1996:3531). Yet Khomeini was not calling his people to an unorthodox or heretical militancy, for "Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in ranks as if they were a firm and compact wall ." (surah 61:4).

Many Muslim scholars are writing to set the record straight with regards to how they believe the West has distorted Islam's idea of war. Hammudah Abdalati writes, "the Quran makes it clear that, whether we want it or not, war is a necessity of existence, a fact of life, so long as there exist in the world injustice, oppression, capricious ambitions, and arbitrary claims" (quoted by Braswell 1996:3411). Thus, Islam recognizes war as a lawful and justifiable action for self-defense and the restoration of justice, freedom, and peace.

War, is often presented as the last resort for Muslims. As one Muslim scholar, Abdalati writes,

Islam is the religion of peace...There is no such thing as religious war to force Islam on non-Muslims, because if Islam does not emerge from deep convictions, from within, it is not acceptable to Allah...if there is any religion or constitution to guarantee peaceful freedom of religion and forbid compulsion in religion, it is Islam, and Islam alone (Braswell 1996:3411).

Abdalati carefully redefines all of Muhammad's violent endeavors as necessary, temporal and grossly misunderstood, but it is rather unconvincing in

the face of a clear reading of the authoritative texts and how those texts have continued to fuel widespread violence in the name of this most 'peaceful' religion. His presentation of Islam as a 'religion of peace' is an illogical and unfounded precursor of his reinterpretation of the Islamic text and history. Of the many Quranic scriptures that refer to violent struggle, polygamy, and slavery as normative for Muslims, there is not one textual disclaimer that would limit these to any particular time or circumstance, but rather, seemingly until Islam overcomes all other religions (see surah 61:9).

Two former Muslims who were abandoned by their Muslim father as teenagers for turning to Christianity explain that:

...talking heads on television continually pass along the politically correct notion that jihad means "internal struggle for piety" and not military engagement...Yet the Quran's promises (of) Paradise to those who die in battle for Islam more certainly than it promises salvation to anyone else...War is not a sidebar of history for Islam; it is the *main vehicle for religious expansion*. It is the Muslim duty to bring world peace via the sword (Caner and Caner 2002:36, 78).

It is not the task of the Muslim to 'evangelize' the unbeliever. Rather, "Allah is to be worshiped, period. Any who will not do so must be defeated, silenced, or expelled. The theme is conquest, not conversion, of the unbelieving world" (Caner and Caner 2002:118).

The God of Christianity is not concerned with conquest of this world's people and temporal kingdoms, but rather to transform the individuals, Father an eternal royal family, and establish His eternal Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy (Romans 14:17).

11.2 *Bring Unbelievers to Disgrace*

Free Unbelievers from their Disgrace

While the Quran calls the Muslim to 'bring your enemies to disgrace (surah 9:14), Christ calls His followers to present unbelievers with the only way to be freed from their disgrace. In Islam, the unbelieving person is disgraced for their failure to believe and submit themselves as they are to Islam.

In Christianity, the unbeliever is in a state of disgrace because of the condition of their unregenerate, unholy heart before an all-holy God that must be transformed through Christ's atonement in order to be acceptable to God. Islam teaches the removal of your own shame by submitting to Allah, while Christianity says you cannot escape your own shameful condition, but come to Jesus Christ, your Representative and Substitute, and He will remove your shame and make you new (2 Corinthians 5:14-21).

11.3 *Believe Allah and Fight Others*

Love God and Love Others

Fighting is enjoined on you, and is an object of dislike to you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you, and Allah knows, while you do not know (surah 2:216).

So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush, then if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, leave their way free to them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful (surah 9:5).

Despite the plethora of Muslim scholars who industriously seek to reinterpret the Quranic concept of violent 'jihad' for the modern world (typically redefining the concept into a 'war of words and ideology' and a 'struggle for equality', etc.), "the Hadiths (sic) also interpret jihad as a "fight, struggle, or

battle” (Caner and Caner 2002:186). Al-Bukhari’s first Hadith volume notes, “Allah’s Apostle was asked, ‘What is the best deed?’ He replied, ‘To believe in Allah and His Apostle.’ The questioner then asked, ‘What is the next (in goodness)?’ He replied, ‘To participate in Jihad in Allah’s cause” (surah 2:25).

This Hadith parable has a profound parallel from the life of Jesus.

One of the teachers of the law...asked (Jesus), ‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’ ‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these’ (Mark 12:28-31).

Jesus here instructs a Jewish seeker that it is not the right method or right law that can get him into heaven, but rather the right relationship, being one of love for God and others.

The Muslim who is trying to earn favor with Allah through his good works, must move from strict belief, which manifests as submission, towards participating in some form of Jihad to advance Allah’s cause. Islam then is a *two-fold conquest*: the conquest of oneself enslaved to Allah’s demands, and the conquest of others, seeking to coerce unbelievers into the same oppression.

Alternatively, the Christian’s life is not made victorious through the conquest of oneself and the conquest of others, but rather to surrender one’s will and give one’s self to love God and to love others. The very center of Christianity is characterized by a life of love (Ephesians 5:1-2, Mark 12:30-31), seeking to continue Jesus’ example and ministry to reach a world dying in selfishness. “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5.8). “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full” (John. 10:10).

11.4 World Domination by Islam

Eternal Kingdom of Theocratic Peace

As has been noted, the 'sword' in Islam is commonly interpreted as a struggle of ideologies and values, which has often manifested as militaristic endeavors of worldly control to compel unbelievers to submit to Islam or to free Muslims from non-Islamic leadership. It is difficult to interpret any of the Quranic uses of the concept of 'sword' as any other than literal bloodshed on behalf of advancing and protecting Islam.

The Islamic quest for world domination is not a new phenomenon or response to current global conditions. Rather it is a historically demonstrated ideology embedded deep within the very heart of Islam flowing from their sacred texts. Over 50 years ago, the Muslim scholar Muhammad Ali exuberantly claimed:

...to the effect that the great forces of opposition should be brought to naught, that the enemies of Islam should be put to shame and perish...that Islam should spread to the farthest corners of the earth and that it should ultimately be triumphant over all religions of the world (Muhammad Ali 1950:249).

The mechanism of Allah's world domination is the militant-political arm of His Muslim slaves. Allah seeks to establish His global reign through the efforts of His followers. Hence, the faithful Muslim will seek to be victorious politically and look to receive an "inheritance of power" as one of Allah's blessings (surah 24:55).

Inheriting and maintaining authority is an important theme in the Muslim's relationship to Allah...Allah (is) expected to give prosperity...to those who will enforce His law. No wonder victorious Muslim warriors were so quick to coerce a conquered people to embrace Islam... (Caner and Caner 2002:35).

Politics, religion and prosperity are inextricably linked, and Allah expects that His faithful will use the prosperity and influence He provides to expand His

kingdom politically and spiritually. Such faithfulness is linked to the Muslim's salvation and eternal security, although no sure guarantee of either.

If you go forth struggling hard in My path and seeking My pleasure, would you manifest love to them (Allah's enemies)? And I know what you conceal and what you manifest; and whoever of you does this, he indeed has gone astray from the straight path (surah 60:1b).

The 'sword' in Christianity represents the persecution faithful believers are promised to encounter, as well as the ostracizing and division they will have to endure for their faith (Matthew 10:34-36; Luke 21:22-24). The sword also represents the eschatological judgment and victory that God will enact in the end times over all evil (Revelation 19:13-16).

The mechanism of God's Kingdom is not reliance upon His human sons and daughters to establish His kingdom through worldly means, but is rather, the faith-filled realization that it has already been secured and inaugurated through the life, death and resurrection of their King Jesus. Jesus' bodily resurrection marks the beginning of the reign of the King, the certainty of His Kingdom, and the resurrection of all His own to reign with Him (John 11:24-26; Ephesians 1:20-22; Hebrews 1:3,13; 2:9). Christians are to live as Kingdom-minded and Kingdom-hearted people who recognize the present and future realities of the Kingdom, of which they are stewards and citizens (see Mark 1:15; Matthew 12:28).

There is no topic that Jesus spoke more of than the Kingdom of God, fulfilling thousands of years of prophetic expectation and hope. The Kingdom of God has already begun and will be consummated in Christ's return. Jesus saw Himself as the Messiah-King who would establish God's Kingdom (Matthew 12:42; Mark 12:35-37). This was the good news that Jesus' message and mission announced and demonstrated – the Kingdom of God had come! (Mark

1:14-15; 16-20; 21-27). Signs of the Kingdom followed this announcement, fulfilling centuries old prophecies (Luke 7:20-21).

The Kingdom Jesus spoke of was a radical invasion of God's reign, ultimately eradicating sin, judging saints and sinners, establishing God's government, and transforming presence within the created order. Indeed the incarnation-invasion of God into humanity in human flesh came as a flagship trumpeting the Kingdom's arrival while bearing the King Himself. In all this, the paramount defining quality of God's Kingdom is the Personal presence of the King.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever (Isaiah 9:6-7).

12 DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC MISSIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY TO PRESENT

Since World War II Islam has undergone revival and resurgence. A number of Muslim-dominated nations gained independence from their colonial administrators, including **Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Algeria**, and **Indonesia**. Peoples of these newfound republics wrestled with their new forms of government and socio-religious life (Braswell 1996:3529).

...Islamic revival is reflected in increased emphasis upon religious observance (mosque attendance, Ramadan fast, outlawing of alcohol and gambling), religious programming in the media, the proliferation of religious literature, the rebirth of the Muslim Brotherhood, the rise of new Islamic associations, the success of Muslim student associations in university elections, and the vibrant dawah (missionary) movements which seek not simply to convert non-Muslims but to 'Islamize' the Muslim population (Esposito 1983:10-11).

Even as Islamic leaders seek to defend Islam to the West as being a democratic 'self-sufficient ideology' that protects and defends human rights and religious freedom, there is still not a single true democracy among the fifty-five Muslim nations of the world. "For all their rhetoric about tolerance, not one Muslim-controlled government offers comprehensive religious freedom" (Caner and Caner 2002:176).

12.1 Islam Exemplified in Modern Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Sudan, and Indonesia

The Kingdom of **Saudi Arabia** is the heartland of Islam. As the birthplace of Muhammad and Islam, it also contains the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina. Muslims face Mecca for daily prayer and millions make the annual pilgrimage to this land. **Saudi Arabia** has the Quran for its constitution and the

Sharia as the base for its legal system. It is an absolute monarchy, which has been ruled by the Saudi family for decades. The large royal family closely controls its administration, commerce, and diplomacy. The Kingdom is a leader in working for worldwide Islamic unity. It is the home of the Muslim World League and the Organization of Islamic Conference headquarters. The League controls vast sums of money to propagate Islam around the world. Much aid is given to countries sympathetic to the Kingdom. The world's largest printing presses are located in the country and each year produce some 28 million Qurans used to extend Islam globally (Braswell 1996:3437).

Saudi Arabia denies religious freedom among the natives. Workers from other countries may under certain conditions maintain their own religious activities, but expatriate Christians live under tight surveillance. They can build no churches. Other religions are strictly forbidden. No Christian may enter the city of Mecca. **Saudi Arabia** funds the building of mosques, the sending of Muslim missionaries, the establishment of Islamic study centers on university campuses, and the distribution of Islamic literature in other countries (see Braswell 1996:3439).

In **Nigeria**, Arab Islam has heavily influenced the majority of resident Muslims. They have sought a special place for the Sharia (Islamic law) in the affairs of government. Their desire to rule by means of Islamic jurisprudence has concerned the Christian Nigerians. In the civil wars of 1966, many of the Igbo people, who are a largely Christianized Nigerian language group were killed. Thus, Muslims became known for their killing of Christians in this nation (see Braswell 1996:3457).

The **Sudan** shares a more modern and more violent record in the name of Islam. **Sudan** was split as a nation in 1994 from nine into twenty-six states.

Little had changed, with the refugee problem intensified, corruption rampant, revolutionary forces still in the south, and food shortages magnified. The **United States**, after some years of aid, cut off aid and classified **Sudan** as a terrorist state exporting violent Islamic fundamentalism. (Braswell 1996:3535)

A primary issue has continued to be the Islamization of the Sudanese and whether it would be moderately Islamic or fundamentally Islamic. Besides natural disasters and political turmoil, there has been much warfare and persecution of both Christians and moderate Muslims. Since 1985 in particular, there have been attempts to eliminate a viable Christian presence in parts of the country through bombings, the destruction of churches and Christian villages, massacres with mass crucifixions in some areas, and the killing of Christian leaders (Johnstone, 1993:511).

In **Malaysia**, the Muslim population has been politically and socially divided through an extremist minority pressing for radical Islamic reforms and the formation of an Islamic state.

This has brought stress to the whole country, an acceleration of Muslim missionary activities among non-Muslims, and also discriminatory legislation and actions against non-Muslims...All non-Muslims, and Christians in particular, are suffering a creeping erosion of religious freedom. Intimidation, discrimination and bureaucratic obstructionism are widespread (Johnstone, 1993:366).

12.2 Islam's Current Track Record of Violence

Of this sample of nations, Sudan serves as a horrendous example of violence in recent years where the highest population of Christians in any Islamic country has lived. When Muslims came to power in 1983, they immediately declared jihad on the millions of Christian infidels that resulted in

1.5 – 3 million genocidal murders, which are more deaths than all the victims in Rwanda, Bosnia, Somalia and Kosovo combined (Caner and Caner 2002:176).

The continued level of present-day violence is only one of the horrific manifestations of fundamental Islam, where forced conversion is government policy and open-persecution against Christians is the norm (refer to www.persecution.org for hosts of ensuing relevant articles updated regularly).

Other notable (countries) include: Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan... (where) Christians who openly worship may be killed, imprisoned, forced to convert to Islam; and Christian centers of worship are destroyed. It is not a small fringe group of Taliban radicals who are carrying out these actions. Rather, more than a dozen governments encompassing hundreds of millions of Muslims justify these acts by...the Quran and the prophet Muhammad (Caner and Caner 2002:177).

Reflecting on recent acts of terrorism attributed to radical Islamic groups (e.g. World Trade Center 9/11), the Arabic-speaking, former-Muslim now Christian authors (Caner and Caner) of “Unveiling Islam” (2002: 184-185) state that:

Islam does in fact have an essential and indispensable tenet of militaristic conquest. The terrorists [of 9/11]...understood the Quran quite well and followed the teachings of jihad to the letter. In both the Quran and the Hadith, the infidel must be converted or conquered...

“The minority groups in Islam who resort to violence are not an aberration to Islam but in fact can legitimately claim to be working within the parameters of Islamic jihad” (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:319). A young Iraqi frighteningly explains his motives in that he fights first for Islam, second to become a ‘martyr’ and win acceptance into heaven, and only third for his country.

“Yes, I am a terrorist...The Quran says it is the duty of Muslims to bring terror to the enemy, so being a terrorist makes me a good Muslim.” This young al-Qaeda insurgent continues to quote lines from Al-Anfal surah: “Against them

make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into the enemy of Allah and your enemy” (Ghosh 2005:29).

This is an example of how religious motivation, inspired by the Islamic texts often reigns over political motivations. He continued, “the only person who matters is Allah – and the only question He will ask me is ‘How many infidels did you kill?’” (Ghosh 2005:29).

In response to reports such as these, many Muslims feel the greatest threat is what they call the ‘misuse’ of the Quran to defame Islam, ‘distorting’ the doctrine of jihad as being a ‘holy war’ instead of ‘internal struggle to better oneself and the community’ (Caner and Caner 2002:204). The modern Muslim often finds himself defending the Quran from this ‘distortion of truth’ to avoid the violent label that Islam is manifesting around the world based on the outworking of its sacred texts. They will propose that the mission of all Islamic tradition is to present peaceful values associated with their notion of pure monotheism and moral standards in society with the intent to create a political state that reflects these values.

Muhammad’s militaristic escapades and personal example are problematic in light of this quasi-utopian peaceful vision. Typically, the astute Muslim will defend Muhammad’s early military activity as justifiable because they believe he was under persecution (though history records an aforementioned different story). The problem with defenses of this sort is that nowhere in the Quran are any of its violent commands restricted to a time or place, unlike the divine commands given to Israel in the Old Testament who were claiming a temporary geographical Kingdom foreshadowing God’s eternal spiritual Kingdom of peace fulfilled and inaugurated in Christ.

Another common objection is that war in Islam is only for self-defense, as Jamal Badawi (a popular Muslim apologist) asserts, “Actual armed jihad is permissible under two conditions alone: one is for self-defense and the other is for fighting against oppression” (cited by Eck 2001:238). This apologetic has consistently fallen apart in its susceptibility to subjective and very broad definitions of ‘self-defense’ and ‘oppression.’ Many Muslims believe that if a nation’s rulers do not acknowledge the active rule of Islam, than those rulers are ‘oppressors’ and thus a legitimate target for militaristic jihad (see Kelsay 1993:35). Some Muslims also argue that America is a ‘cultural aggressor’ by exporting its Hollywood values, and thus any fight against Americans is done in ‘self-defense’ (Geisler and Saleeb 2002:323). Islamic traditionalists or fundamentalists view many cultural changes as forms of colonialism and imperialism and a threat to Islamic values, institutions, and life (Braswell 1996:3530).

It is not difficult to see how any Muslim group can justify violence, while not violating the true teachings of the Islamic texts, as Osama bin Laden did in quoting some of the same Quranic and Hadith passages documented above, in his recent militaristic exploits.

12.3 Dynamics of Islam’s Recent Revival

Braswell (1996:3435-3436) suggests the following reasons why Islam has recently been able to extend itself as far as it has.

- (1) Islam teaches and encourages large families. Birth into a Muslim family means one is a Muslim both hereditarily and culturally, thus adding to Islamic population.
- (2) Islam began as a religion closely associated with urban life, trade and

travel. Muslim merchants, educators, diplomats, students and religious leaders have actively engaged in the construction of mosques and Islamic infrastructure within the countries and cities where they have migrated, studied, and settled.

(3) Islam is a missionary religion engaged in jihad, holy efforts for Allah, by both individuals and the Muslim community.

(4) Islam, though a complex religion, presents itself with clarity and simplicity in its six basic beliefs and its five pillars or practices, which makes it appealing to those searching and asking for religious answers and directions.

(5) Islam is amenable to certain religious and cultural traditions of others and is able to incorporate them into itself. Polygamy and saint veneration are two examples.

In addition to Braswell's observations, hosts of other witnesses attest to how the experiential appeal of Sufism is also gaining momentum in the West and around the world.

(Sufism) continues to attract Western seekers of an experiential truth...being especially attracted to new developments such as the New Age, with its focus on holistic living, alternative healing and ecological themes...being interested in the eclecticism of universal Sufism (Caner and Caner 2002:202).

The doctrinal-softening effect of Sufism is a particular catalyst in the third world where many common Muslims do not know the orthodox tenets of their belief and the claims of the Quran. An eclectic Folk Islam has allowed for the accommodation of native animistic religions.

With these dynamics at work in an increasingly global community, Richardson (2003) emphatically warns that Islam is currently mating political

cunning, incredible wealth, with religious zeal to infiltrate and dominate the global scene.

He cites the following three Islamic missiological strategies:

First, the exploitation of massive immigration – legal and illegal – of Muslims into Westernized Nations in pursuit of positions of influence, education and power. Only after one million Muslims had immigrated into Great Britain, did they boldly announce the establishment of an Islamic parliament, which is already passing laws that Muslims in Great Britain are required to obey.

Richardson ominously predicts that in little time, a duly-elected Muslim will become prime minister of a parliamentary Western democracy under whose oil-wealth assisted government will elevate the mission of Islam through schools, banks and politics, ultimately seeing Muslim leadership over every area of power in the country, including the armed forces (2003:165-166,169).

Recognized as the most articulate advocate for a theocratic Islamic world, Dr.Kalim Siddiqui has written many books and articles whose recurrent themes include the coming Islamic global dominion, the greatness of the Ayatollah Khomeini, the need for an armed struggle...and the indivisible unity of religion and politics...[stating that] “with a population of [over a billion] and infinite sources of wealth, you can defeat all the powers” (Richardson 2003:163).

A second missiological strategy is the persistence of a multibillion-dollar international mosque-construction and Quran-translation program, employing oil-wealth to build mosques in hundreds of non-Muslim cities and distributing the Quran in dozens of languages (Buchanan 2000:171). As Christian churches of Europe empty out, mosques are filling up. There are 2000 mosques in

Germany and 5 million Muslims in France, plus an additional estimated half million illegal immigrants entering Europe (Buchanan 2000:172).

A third missiological strategy is the academic influence and faculty penetration into Western education institutions. The Fox News Channel, on June 27, 2002 reported that foreign Muslims are pouring 13 billion dollars annually into American colleges and universities. Externally funded, staffed, and managed Islamic departments on Western campuses are becoming increasingly prevalent.

In his book, *Militant Islam Reaches America*, Dr. Pipes identifies three primary strategies Islamists are employing to achieve their dream of an Islamicized America: “immigration, reproduction, and conversion” (2002:112). These dynamics of Islamic proliferation are rather stealthy in their character and are typically assimilating into many cultures without stirring much attention. Yet an even more covert strategy of Islamic propagation is under way in the minds of the next generation of devotees.

12.4 Islam’s Educational Missiology

For as much as Islam has been re-inventing itself to be capable of assimilated into other cultures, it is ultimately “determined to assimilate Europeans into Islam. Muslims in Europe are now demanding that Islam be taught in public schools as superior to every other religion” (Richardson 2003:184).

More than ten years ago, *The Boston Globe* (1993) reported,

With its \$5 million grant from Saudi Arabia, Harvard University will move into the vanguard of a national boom in Islamic studies spurred by the growing power of religious movements in the Arab world, and generous gifts from the Saudis and other Arabs. Harvard will use the grant to establish a center for Islamic legal studies. Meanwhile,

University of Arkansas officials say they are closing a deal with the Saudis for \$23.5 million to fund a Middle Eastern studies program at the Fayetteville campus, which will include the study of Islam (Dembner 1993)

Richardson reports that at least 40 million Muslim youth in the Muslim world's religious schools, called madrasas, are avidly memorizing the entire Quran and the Hadiths (2003:69).

Professor Mochtar Buchori, a member of Indonesian Parliament, reported on July 1, 2002 (via www.Laksamana.net) that there are 37,362 Muslim madrasas in Indonesia alone and 92% of these have NO INPUT from the Indonesian government. Some 4.6 million students are enrolled in such privately run madrasas, which reject all but Islamic courses. He concludes that the potential for a majority of such schools to train terrorists is high (Richardson 2003:71). These staggering numbers are only outdone by the overwhelming global effects of a generation of millions of young men who have been nurtured and solely indoctrinated with orthodox Islamic ideology and values.

Jeffrey Goldberg reports in Readers Digest on the Haqqania madrasa in north-west Pakistan,

...the school enrolls 2800+ male students, ranging from 8-35 years old, and drawn mostly from the dire poor. Tuition, room and board are free...funded by wealthy Pakistanis and devout, politically minded Muslims in Persian Gulf countries. The youngest boys spend 4-8 hours a day memorizing the Quran in the original Arabic. [Older students] are enrolled in an 8-year course...focusing on interpreting the Quran and the Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and Islamic history. There are no courses here in world history, English, math, computers or science...it is in fact a jihad factory...[in one class] I asked, "who wants to see bin Laden armed with nuclear weapons?" Every hand in the room shot up... "What would you do if...the CIA ...captured bin Laden and was taking him to America? A student stood up: "We would sacrifice our lives for Osama. We would kill Americans (2002:70-75).

Goldberg goes on to write that over 1 million youth fill 10 000 madrasas in Pakistan alone, and that these boys are poor, impressionable and kept

entirely ignorant of the world and that this massive future army are 'perfect jihad machines.'

In Saudi Arabia, Islamic textbooks were published in 2000 that contain explicit anti-Semitic and jihadist content. FRONTLINE is an American public affairs documentary broadcaster responsible for exposing the textbooks. The investigators discovered that these textbooks are part of the official curriculum for Saudi students and are a fundamental part of their education.

Approximately 35% of school studies are devoted to compulsory Saudi religious education (*Saudi Time Bomb?*,

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/etc/textbooks.html>,

Accessed: 2006-09-01). For a sample of the teaching curriculum from this

Saudi textbook see appendix A.

13 ISLAM AND CHRISTIAN MISSION

13.1 The Cultural-Religious Melting Pot of Islamic Ideology

Muslims typically view Christian mission through the lens of their own religion-state ideology. For example, the colonization of Africa was deplored for what was deemed a western 'Christianizing' of Islamic territory (Caner and Caner 2002:77-78, 211). Since Muslims do not have a worldview that separates religious devotion from cultural values or from political interests, they will continue to interpret the activity of the West as being the advancement of Christian 'Western' corruption. To the Muslim, the whole of Western culture is the representation and expression of Christianity and vice versa.

Islamic fundamentalism, thus deplores the West, particularly the United States. The United States became the "enemy of God" and "the Great Satan" through the narrow Quranic-charged lens of fundamentalists. Western values were equated with corruption, materialism, and immorality. Muslims often take a similar 'assimilation' view of the whole of western culture and media, seeing it as the product of a powerfully coercive and corrupted Christian force.

Bernard Lewis has observed that Muslims have accused the West, particularly the United States, of sexism, racism, and imperialism institutionalized in patriarchy and slavery, in tyranny and exploitation. However, Lewis theorizes that what is truly evil and unacceptable to Muslims is the dominance of infidels over the true believers (i.e. Muslims under the domination of infidels). This domination is blasphemous and unnatural. Thus, the true faith of Islam must be protected from insult and abuse. In addition to this, Lewis observes that the struggle of Islamic fundamentalism is also against secularism, an evil neo-pagan force, and modernism, the process of holistic change. The

United States is almost paradoxically held as the prototype of secularism and modernism, as well as the expression of the Judeo-Christian heritage (1990:92).

13.2 In Pursuit of the Islamic State

Islam has been a missionary religion for fourteen hundred years...it has attempted to penetrate Christian places and peoples, particularly in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and North America. The twentieth century has been a time of advance for Islam in Europe and the United States. At the same time Christianity has not seen much advance into predominantly Islamic lands (Braswell 1996:3536).

In discussing the purpose and vision of the Muslim state, Braswell quotes a modern Muslim scholar as stating: “(the Quran) alone should prevail in the world. It is the duty of every Muslim and of every Muslim government not only to follow the Divine Law but also to organize foreign missions to help others know about Islam” (1996:3393).

“Fight in the cause of Allah with their *wealth and lives*” (surah 4:95).

Central to Islamic missiology is the socio-political emphasis on possessing the land (Hadith 4.52.79). In this passage the conquest of land (initially Mecca) is seen as part of the victory of Islam. This missiological agenda combines the imposing elements of utilizing wealth and power to see Islam claim more ‘land’ geographically, politically, socially and culturally. “The parallel between military victory and the will of Allah is key in understanding that Islam at its core desires both physical and metaphysical victory...” (Caner and Caner 2002:190).

Alternatively, if the Islamic state is politically or economically subjugated by a non-Muslim power, and becomes *dar al-harb* (the community or nation of war or unbelievers), then the state has two choices. There may be jihad (struggle or war) to gain independent status, or there may be Hegira (migration) to another

territory (Braswell 1996:3394). The toleration that Islam demands when it is a minority (as currently typical of western nations) is not reciprocated when it becomes a majority and takes control. Understandably from their doctrine, Muslims do not desire Christian Missionaries in their countries, yet they are determined to spread Islam around the world, expecting the right to enjoy freedom of religion in the West they deny within their nations.

Ye'or Bat (2002:48) concisely summarizes the Islamic approach to a global jihad as: the pre-eminence of Islam over all other religions (surah 9:33); Islam is the true religion of Allah (3:17) and it should reign over all mankind (34:27); the umma (Muslim community) forms the party of Allah and is perfect (3:106), having been chosen above all peoples on earth it alone is qualified to rule, and thus elected by Allah to guide the world (35:37). The purpose of jihad, until this goal will be achieved, is an obligation (8:40).

13.3 Islam and the Gospel

In closed Islamic societies (like Pakistan), any sort of criticism of Islam can be punishable by death (Caner and Caner 2002:201). And further, the Muslim who converts to Judaism or Christianity falls under the condemnation of Al-Bukhari 9:45: "Mohammad said: Whoever changes his Islamic religion, kill him'." Practically this is not an ancient practice of the dark ages to be likened to the heretical Christian Crusades, but a tragic reality in many nations today. An Afghanistan man has been recently made an example of this type of orthodox Islamic response to conversion in the past months of this writing. Being caught possessing a Bible, he was put on trial for converting to Christianity 16 years ago while working for an international Christian group helping Afghan refugees

in Pakistan. The decision to free him angered Afghans, who believe he should be executed under the country's Islamic laws.

Around 1,000 protesters marched through the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif yesterday (March 27, 2006), chanting "Death to Christians" and "Death to America" after court officials announced at the weekend that they were dismissing the case. (*Afghanistan Frees Christian Convert*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,1741329,00.html>, Accessed: 2006-03-28).

The cultural trend in the West that permits open criticism of Christianity yet timidly avoids any comparative criticism of Islam is persistent and alarming. Pipes elucidates: "...a biographer of Jesus has freedom to engage in outrageous blasphemies while his counterpart working on Mohammad feels constrained to accept the pious Muslim version...I present this silencing as...a potential first step toward the imposition of Islamic law [in America]" (2002:17-18). Geilser and Saleeb quote a translator of the second most authoritative Hadith (Abduhl Amid Siddiqi *The Sahih of Muslim*) that any person who abuses or insults the prophet Muhammad must be killed (2002:3). A recent example of this dynamic has gained international attention where a Danish newspaper published comic and derogatory cartoons of Muhammad:

Muslims are furious because depicting Muhammad is forbidden in Islam. The outrage also poses new dangers to Christians in the Middle East and elsewhere...Lebanese security forces were unable to stop the riots that led to the burning of the Danish embassy and attacks on Christian churches and neighborhoods. Nearly 30,000 Muslims invaded Christian areas of Beirut. They ransacked buildings and even tore down a cross at one church (Mitchell 2006).

14 CLOSING COMMENTS

14.1 *Closing Observations*

In his radio broadcast “Just Thinking” which aired in the United States on February 2, 2006, Ravi Zacharias, a Christian apologist and teacher who has studied and dialogued with Muslims for decades presents four philosophically incoherent aspects within Islam that face those who would challenge it.

(1) Muslims espouse Mohammed as the final ‘Prophet to the world’ who performed no miracles because the Quran itself is a miracle. The problem is that the Quran is in Arabic, which means all humanity are required to embrace Mohammed based on a miracle they themselves cannot perceive. How are people to foster genuine faith or even enter into a discussion concerning an imperceptible ‘miracle’?

(2) Muslims readily abolish the authority of the Bible, as not being an accurate reflection of Jesus Christ, but they do not have a measure, point of reference, or original by which to demonstrate its fallacy. So Muslims wish to discredit the Bible *carte blanche*, without any corresponding evidence or rationale by which to do so, leaving the Christian with no opposing text with which to compare or dialogue.

(3) Islam states that the original divine revelation has been lost (i.e. the Biblical text is a corrupted version of that original revelation), but 600 years later the final revelation was transmitted. So it is a case of “B” overruling “A” – absolutes being overruled by future ‘absolutes.’ This presents the problem of course of “C” overruling “B”, much like Joseph Smith did with Mormon revelation, where he claimed that all past revelations had become corrupt, so his revelation overrules them. This is philosophically unarguable, because it

gives no point of reference, and removes the possibility of discussing absolutes all together.

(4) A final philosophical conflict Zacharias identifies is that Islamic scholars reserve the right to impugn and debunk truths about Jesus Christ, but do not give the right to others to challenge or scrutinize the individuals they hold as sacred (*The Uniqueness Of Christ in World Religions* 2006).

Neither Muslims nor non-Muslims are permitted to question Islam, its Prophet, its texts, or its spiritual leaders. Alternatively, Jesus welcomed and engaged questions from His antagonists and the Bible invites scrutiny and testing (see Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 5:11; James 1:25). God is not insecure. He welcomes people to come with their understanding and to see if what He says is true (1 John 5:20; Acts 26). The Prophet says: “submit” while Jesus says, “choose.”

Since the rejection of Jesus Christ’s lordship is a fundamental tenet of orthodox Islam, a Muslim who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord must reject Islam, which explicitly denies Christ as God. “As they (Christians) say the Beneficent has taken to Himself a son. Certainly you make an abominable assumption...It is not worthy of Allah that He should take to Himself a son (surah 19:88-92). This radical change in lordship contains a myriad of theological, cultural, and relational challenges for any sincere Muslim, as they potentially face persecution, rejection and even execution from their Muslim family and community.

Some of the most divisive points of doctrinal departure include:

(1) Salvation is granted by grace through faith, not by works. Muslims can feel insecure in being unable to earn favor with the Divine. Islam, with its strict moral code and explicit religious instructions provides people with a sense

of control over their lives and a paradoxical false sense of security. If working hard enough can please Allah, then one's own hard work becomes the religion and hope that can be controlled.

This apparent religious appeal of Islam can lend to its staying power in westernized cultures, and Christians must see how the Gospel addresses this works-confident salvation. Yet the ultimate and inevitable failure to fulfill Islamic law leaves many Muslims in a state of frustrated insecurity, as Allah demands that His followers faithfully obey His moral law, assuming they have the power to do so. Christian theology recognizes that, man is unable to fulfill God's moral law (or even Allah's), which then requires a Redeemer who can fulfill the law on mankind's behalf (Romans 3:21-26).

(2) The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. Accepting that God, who is supposed to be utterly removed from humanity, would enter humanity as a man. This also implicates their difficulties with the Trinity, which appears as a detested form of polytheism.

(3) Man's original, innate sinful nature. Accepting the innate sinfulness of man and understanding the need for atonement and a Redeemer is a leap in both logic and religious understanding for many Muslims.

(4) God's Fatherhood and the Sonship of Jesus Christ, are personal and relational identities that are absolutely foreign to the Muslims' understanding of the Divine Being.

(5) Jesus Christ as the substitutionary and sacrificial Lamb of God, whose death atones for sin, and whose resurrection to life secures a new birth into life for all those who would respond to His invitation.

14.2 Recommendations

Evangelizing Islam is the challenge and privilege of every Christian, whose mandate is to make disciples of all Muslims, baptizing them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to teach them to obey all of Christ's teaching (Matthew 28:19-20). In the face of apparently overwhelming opposition, we may be tempted to ask: "Who is equal to such a task?" (2 Corinthians 2:16). Yet we can rejoice, despite that to some, our lives and our message will be the smell of death, to those who are being saved, we will be the very fragrance of the knowledge of Christ, as God leads us in triumphal procession (2 Corinthians 14-16).

When sharing your faith with a Muslim it is not helpful to speak of the Christian God as Allah and vice versa, due to the radical divergent character of the two divinities. The Christian God cannot be assumed into the Muslim concept of Allah, but rather the Muslim concept of "Allah" must be dismantled and replaced with a Biblical picture of God. And yet, even with a Muslim's misconceptions about God, they still have a foundation of faith in a singular, sovereign, omnipotent Divine Being to whom they are ultimately accountable. This can serve as a starting point and common ground for evangelism. In this sense, the average Muslim is much closer to understanding and responding to the Christian message than a staunch material humanist / existentialist who denies the divine and the spiritual altogether.

Since the Muslim's religion is inseparable from most aspects of life and culture, it is important to understand some basic assumptions that are normative for the typical Muslim (see Appendix B). It will further be helpful for Christians to behave in a manner that is sensitive to aspects of Islamic culture in hopes of building loving relationships with Muslims (see Appendix C).

When speaking with Muslims, it is further helpful to use natural, non-Christianized language that does not presume previous knowledge. We must remember that the power of the gospel is found in its message of grace through the atoning work of the cross, which fulfills every human need. Our message is:

- (1) Forgiveness from all sin, which is only possible because God has paid the price through His Son. Allah can only 'overlook' sin and say you are 'forgiven' without having any 'way' or mechanism of dealing with sin. Allah actually only chooses to forget, or chooses to not hold sin against the transgressor, but there is a price to be paid for sin by someone!
- (2) Freedom in Christ, which means liberty from the fear of judgment, fear of death, bondage to legalism, and to a works-merited salvation.
- (3) Fatherhood of God is the personal relationship dimension to communicate, remembering that Islam has no concept of an intimate, loving Father God who is a Person in close relationship with His children.

14.3 Hypothesis Revisited

Our method, model, and message, culminate in a mission of unconditional love that we have received and now freely give to demonstrate Christ to Muslims. God defines this true character of divine love as the sacrificial giving of oneself for the beloved. In this sense, Allah has never loved any of His followers. God puts His love in our hearts, compelling us not by force or by an external law, but by His divine love He transforms us from within through a living relationship with His Spirit by grace. It is this same love that inspires Christians who understand Muslim's spiritual bondage and theological

plight to introduce them to the love and hope found only in the Person of Jesus Christ. During this week of writing, I had the privilege of leading a Muslim to faith in Jesus Christ, and it was ultimately the hope and forgiveness that Christ lovingly offers that he never knew before, and which he came to see how desperately he needed, which ultimately won his life to Christ.

A clear and concise analysis of basic Islamic theology and practice will inspire Christians to competently share the Gospel with Muslims. I believe that the theological analysis that this thesis has conducted will provide the sensitive Christian with not only an acute awareness of the need to evangelize Muslims, but also inspire them to compassion and action with a new understanding of how the brilliant light of the gospel contrasts with the dark realities of Islam.

It is my prayer that this thesis will motivate and educate believers into a new realm of competence and confidence as they minister to Muslims under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

14.4 Conclusions

The challenge of reaching Islam with the freedom, forgiveness and Fatherhood offered only in the Gospel will not occur in any physical, political, cultural or social arena or battlefield. But as Paul reminds us, our warfare is not against flesh and blood but is fundamentally spiritual, as we struggle against rulers, authorities, principalities and spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12). There are demonically inspired forces that are sustaining and perpetuating Islam around the world, holding millions captive to its hollow and deceptive philosophies and religion. As Christians we must fight with radically different weapons to those Islam embraces.

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

Peter the Venerable serves as an historic Christian servant who fearlessly engaged Islam. He collected Latin works translated into Arabic, and under his influence the Quran was translated into Latin... Peter (worked) on the basis that Islam was a Christian heresy and Christians needed to know Islam in order to respond to it. "I attack you not as some do, by arms, but by words; not with force, but with reason, not with hatred, but in love.... I love; loving, I write you; writing, I invite you to salvation" (Kritzeck 1962:395). Muslim fields around the world are ripe for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, lovingly demonstrated in the lives, and faithfully spoken from the hearts of His children.

Appendix A

Excerpt from a Saudi School Textbook :

Cover of the textbook: "The Victory of Muslims over the Jews"

This first extract, "The Victory of Muslims Over Jews," is the last two pages from the prophet Muhammad 's sayings in the Hadiths

Hadith narrated by Abi Hurira:

"The last hour won't come before the Muslims would fight the Jews and the Muslims will kill them so Jews would hide behind rocks and trees. Then the rocks and tree would call: oh Muslim, oh servant of God! There is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. Only "Gharkad" tree, it is of Jews' trees."

Teachings of the Hadith (as found in the school textbook):

- 1) ...fate (is) decided by Allah that the Muslims and Jews will fight till the end of the world.
- 2) The Hadith predicts for the Muslims God's victory over the Jews.
- 3) The victory (is) for the Muslims because they are right, and who ever is right is always victorious, even though most people are against him.
- 4) God grants victory to the Muslims if they have a true will, if they unite, hold on to God's Sharia, if they go by God's ruling, (and) if they are patient.
- 5) The material strength won't be enough to warrant victory, it is necessary to invoke God (and) seek His support.
- 6) Who ever is with God, God is with him; no matter what hardships and ordeals one would undergo. What counts is the final result.
- 7) Jews and Christians are the enemies of believers (and) they will never approve of the Muslims, beware of them.

Questions for discussion (as found under the above Hadith text in the textbook):

- 1) What was the prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in this Hadith?
- 2) What is the name of the tree that will tell about the Jews?
- 3) At the end, who will be victorious?
- 4) What should the Muslims arm themselves with against the Jews?

Questions about duties

- 1) Will the Jews and the Christians ever approve of the Muslims and why
- 2) Give four factors that would grant victory of Muslims over their enemies?

[This second extract from the school textbook, which includes explanations of the Quran, also deals with Muslims and Jews and presents an interpretation of part of a sura, which says "murder" is a form of punishment for those who acted in opposition to Allah (pbuh).]

Order Of Revelation 101, Verses: 24

"59.3": And had it not been that Allah had decreed for them the exile, He would certainly have punished them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have chastisement of the fire.

"59.4": That is because they acted in opposition to Allah and His Apostle, and whoever acts in opposition to Allah, then surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil).

"59.5": Whatever palm-tree you cut down or leave standing upon its roots, It is by Allah's command, and that He may abase the transgressors.

Benefits and Rules (Teachings)

1. God decreed for Ibn Nadhir tribe to leave their bastions and homes and left them for the Muslims. If they were not granted exile, they would have been tortured by God with murder and imprisonment, that was out of His mercy, beneficence and clairvoyance, and for the believers since He granted them (Muslims) their (Ibn Nadhir's) lands, homes, monies without having pained for it. God Says: "And had it not been that Allah had decreed for them the exile, He would certainly have punished them in this world."

2. The opposition of God and His Apostle and the opposition of His Sharia- is a reason for retribution of Allah. That is what happened to the Jews of Ibn-Nadhir. God Says: "That is because they acted in opposition to Allah and His Apostle, and whoever acts in opposition to Allah, then surely Allah is severe in retribution."

3. When the Muslims besieged Ibn-Nadhirs, they had farms, palm trees outside of the bastions. So the Muslims had burned some of their palm trees and cut others. Some Muslims had condemned it thinking that all this will end up for the Muslims. But God had sent this verse to express His support for the cutting and the devastation because it does humiliate and weaken the Jews.

4. It's allowed to demolish, burn or destroy the bastions of the Kufar (infidels)- and all what constitutes their shield from Muslims if that was for the sake of victory for the Muslims and the defeat for the Kufar (infidels).

Word	Definition / Explanation:
"Exile"	Getting out of the city with family and children once and for all
punished them in this world	(by) / with murder and imprisonment
they acted in opposition to Allah and His Apostle	They parted to another side than the one of Allah and His Apostle Opposed and made enemies with (Allah)
He may abase the transgressors	(i.e. He will) humiliate them, weaken and devastate them by cutting, because off their craze for money since it (belongs to) the Muslims'

(Saudi Time Bomb?,

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/etc/textbooks.html>,

Accessed: 2006-09-01).

Appendix B

Traditional Cultural Assumptions

The following is a general summary of typical Muslim thinking and behavior:

- (1) Islam is the one true religion. It is inconceivable that anyone would want to be anything but a Muslim.
- (2) When non-Muslims learn about Islam and realize that it is the one true way, they will convert.
- (3) The Quran and associated laws and customs found in the sharia, the Sunnah, and the Hadith are the final arbiter in any dispute, argument, and legal question.
- (4) Male members of the family have the right and the obligation to maintain the family honor.
- (5) All good things, including education, jobs, marriage, housing, and recreation, come through the family. The individual is an intricate part of the family.
- (6) The preferred marriage partner for any male is the daughter of his paternal uncle.
- (7) A woman fulfills part of her duties as a wife by bearing male offspring.
- (8) The woman's place is in the home.
- (9) It is a son's duty to take care of his parents in their aging years.
- (10) The future is in Allah's hands. It would be presumptuous for one to predict the future or even to assume there will be a future.

Adapted from Braswell (1996:3387) and Caner & Caner (2002:224-227)

Appendix C

Being Culturally Sensitive to Muslims

Cultural-Religious sensitivity will assist the sincere person to not offend a Muslim and open the possibility for friendship and sharing the gospel.

- (1) One should be careful in a greeting not to inquire about another's wife but rather only about the family.
- (2) One should not offer food or drink with the left hand. It is for cleansing oneself.
- (3) To tell a guest 'no' is impolite. One will do one's best to oblige a guest
- (4) One must offer a guest food and/or drink.
- (5) If someone admires something one owns, then one should offer it.
- (6) Never greet a Muslim by shaking his left hand.
- (7) Never call a Muslim 'brother' as it implicates complicated cultural issues and theological agreement, but rather 'my friend'
- (8) In their homes, take your cues from your hosts, following their eating practices.
- (9) Be very gracious and thankful
- (10) When hosting Muslims, no alcohol or pork or lard-based cooking or shellfish. Assure your guests of the effort you have made in how and what you have prepared
- (11) Thank "the Lord" for the food and avoid praying to 'Jesus.' There is the right moment to present the Lordship of Jesus, but it is not during prayer for the meal
- (12) Do not enter into casual conversation with a woman in the absence of her husband as it is an insult to him

Adapted from Braswell (1996:3387) and Caner & Caner (2002:224-227)

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