

**ET 306**

**The Muslim World**



**Teacher Handbook  
Diploma and certificate level  
Nazarene Theological Institute  
Church of the Nazarene  
Africa Region**

## **ET 306: The Muslim World**

**Author of the Course:** Daniel A K L GOMIS. B.A., M.DIV.

### **Course Description:**

Examining the theology of Islam, this course places emphasis upon the nature of Islam in Africa and ways that the Christian Church can reach out to the Muslim community.

### **Narration:**

Islam is an evangelistic religion, meaning they use official and unofficial systems for converting people to their beliefs and their practices. The Sahel and sub-Saharan parts of Africa constitute one of the world areas where Islam has been most active. It is essential that pastors and lay ministers in the Church of the Nazarene know the ideals and practices of Islam in Africa not only for informing their church members but also for becoming the living testimony of good neighbors that will open their doors to those they seek to evangelize.

### **Program Outcomes:**

The following program outcomes assigned to this course are identifiable competencies required of the student in this course.

CN 5 Realization of the biblical, theological, and practical implications of holiness doctrine when taught from a Wesleyan perspective

CN 6 Knowledge of the events, personalities, and important themes in the history of the Christian Church, understood as the history of the Church in Africa

CN 9 Acknowledge the differences between evangelical doctrines and the teachings of cults and sects, in particular African cults and sects

CN 11 Use the principles of evangelism, church growth, planting new churches and the missionary task of the Church in the world

CP 3 Ability to defend the doctrines and positions of the Church of the Nazarene

CP 6 Ability to apply the principles of church growth, church planting, and evangelism in the local church

CR 3 Ability to worship God by using personal and public means of grace

CR 5 Ability to express humility and interdependence in all of one's personal relationships

CR 8 Ability to stay faithful to the Church of the Nazarene and maintain a spirit of collaboration

CX 1 Ability to understand African history in the context of world history

CX 2 Ability to understand the context within which he or she lives with objectivity

CX 3 Ability to understand the principles of cross-cultural ministry

CX 4 Ability to understand the differences between the worldviews of the Western world, that of Africa, and that of the Bible

CX 5 Ability to interpret on a scientific and biblical bases the Christian position on magic, spiritism, medicine and traditional healing.

**Course Outcomes:**

For achieving the competencies listed above, this course organizes several learning activities and requirements around the following intended learning outcomes for this course.

At the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand the challenges posed by Islam in their contexts. (CN 6, CN 9; CX 1);
2. Compare and contrast accurately the beliefs of Islam with Christian doctrine (CN 5, CN 9; CP 3);
3. Formulate a coherent strategy for evangelizing Muslims in their places of ministry (CP 6; CX 2, CX 3, CX 5);
4. Show grace and compassion to Muslims that live in their context of ministry by being a living witness of Christian character (CP 6; CR 5);
5. Contextualize effectively the message of the Gospel to be able to speak with respect to the concerns and perspectives of Muslims while at the same time makes connections between Islamic worldview and the Christian faith (CN 9; CP 3; CR 8; CX 4);
6. Plan a worship service that reaches out in a positive way to Muslims (CR 3; CX 3).

The following sessions and exercises of this course offer the following percentages of the four Cs:

Content	30%
Competency	15%
Character	20%
Context	35%

*Course requirements and Evaluation*

Faithful attendance to class sessions.....20%

All absences must be made known (as much as can be) in advance to the teacher.

Small tests and quizzes.....20%

Group work .....20%

At the end of each lesson there are several questions. The class will be divided into small groups and assigned a question to discuss. The group spokesperson will give an account of the groups conclusions (No longer than 10 minutes). After the report, it is hoped that the other groups ask questions in order to better probe the various subjects. It is important that each

member of the group participate in order to avoid one person doing everything.

Final Exam .....40%

*Diploma level:* During 120 minutes, the students will compose essay responses that reflect the course content. This exam is open-book; this means that the students are permitted to search in their handbook in order to find information that will be helpful.

*Certificate level:* The exam will be given orally.

Date of the final exam: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Course Resources:**

Any textbooks suggested by the professor or the teaching center

Azumah, John. *My Neighbour's Faith. Islam Explained for Christians*. Nairobi, Kenya: Hippo Books, 2008.

Kateregga, Badru D., & Shenk, David W. *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*. Scottsdale, PA (USA): Herald Press, 1997

Horst B. Pietzsch. *Welcome Home. Caring for Converts from Islam*. Nairobi, Kenya: Life Challenge Africa, 2004.

All quotations from the Bible are taken from the Revised Standard Version, as contained in BibleWorks, CD-ROM version 4.0.035p (Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks, 1998).

All quotations from the Qur'an are taken from the translation by M.Pickthall, as contained in the Alim CD-ROM (Baltimore, MD:ISL Software corporation, 1986-2000).

### **Other suggested readings**

Cragg, Kenneth. *The Call of the Minaret* (rev.ed., Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000).

Azumah, John Alembillah. *The Legacy of Arab-Islam in Africa: A Quest for Inter-Religious Dialogue*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001.

- , *Let Your Light Shine! Christian Witness in a Muslim Context*. Sydney: Horizons Publications, 2006.

Sanneh, Lamin. *Piety and Power: Muslims and Christians in West Africa*. New York: Orbis, 1996.

- , *The Crown and the Turban: Muslims and West African Pluralism*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997.

### **Course Requirements**

1. Regular attendance to all course sessions and preparation of all assignments prior to their deadlines is required. A student that is absent that misses eight hours of class sessions will have a reduced final mark by 25%. If the student misses two full days of class, they will not be able to pass the course.

2. Completion of all the activities and lecture notes found in the student handbook based on the course textbook (Course outcomes 2, 3)
3. Class participation and discussions (Course outcomes 1, 5)
4. Take the two oral revisions and quizzes (Course outcomes 1, 4)
5. Prepare an order of worship and critique it from the point of view of a Muslim. (Course outcomes 3, 6)
6. Role-play an encounter between a Muslim and a Nazarene pastor (Course outcomes 2, 4, 5)
7. Final Exam (Course outcomes 1, 2, 5)

Course Evaluation:

Class participation and attendance	20%
Quizzes	20%
Group work:	40%
Final Exam:	20%

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **Introduction**

##### **Session 1: The Sources and the founder of Islam**

- A. The Political Context**
- B. The Religious context**
- C. Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam**
- D. Muhammad's prophethood**
- E. Muhammad's four successors: The Rightly Guided Caliphs**

##### **Session 2: The Muslim Beliefs**

- A. Articles of Faith of Islam**
- B. Belief in Angels (Malaika) and other supernatural beings**
- C. Belief in the Prophets**
- D. Belief in Scriptures**
- E. Belief in the Last Days (Akhira)**
- F. Beliefs in Divine Decree (Predestination)**

##### **Session 3: The Duties or Five Pillars of Islam**

- A. Shahadah**
- B. Salat/Namaz (Prière)**
- C. Zakat**
- D. Sawm**
- E. Hajj**
- F. Muslim Hollidays**
- G. Islamic Law (Shar'iah)**

##### **Session 4: Main Movements and divisions within Islam**

- 1. Main Divisions in Islam**
  - A. Shi'ites or Shi'a**
  - B. Sunnis**
- 2. Main Movements in Islam**

- A. Sufism**
- B. The Wahhabiya Movement**
- C. The Ahmadiyya Movement**

#### **Session 5: Jesus in Islam**

- A. Jesus Birth**
- B. Jesus' as Son of God**
- C. Jesus as God**
- D. Jesus' Mission and Miracles**
- E. Jesus' titles in the Qur'an**

#### **Session 6: Challenges of Islam**

- A. The Four Major Obstacles**
- B. Folk Islam: Dealing with bondage**

#### **Session 7: Reaching Muslims for Christ**

- A. Attitudes towards Muslims**
- B. Methods for sharing the Gospel**

#### **Appendix 1: Personal Evangelism of a Muslim**

#### **Appendix 2: Revised list of Biblical stories for reaching Muslim women**

#### **Appendix 3: Guidelines for small group activities**

## **Introduction**

"A beautiful church with a bell-tower dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, property of the Catholic mission is perched on a hill surrounded today on every side by an urban mass. Nowadays, a huge mosque with a tapered minaret- gift of a rich oil monarchy from the Persian Gulf- faces the Roman Catholic Church. Down the road, on every side are deployed a horizontal meshing of countless places of worship undistinguishable from the houses around them: "The Redeemed Christian Church of God", "Ministry of Spiritual Warfare," "Mission of the Full Gospel" etc. Linger on this environment, a little white flag signals the presence of a traditional temple. One can also notice construction sites of places of worship showing the vitality of the religious sector. In two decades, that scenery has become the reality of a lot of major cities in Sub-Saharan Africa."<sup>1</sup>

Africa is cosmopolitan and there is a melting pot of religions cohabitating in most places, and fighting in some others. However, for most of African Christians, the Muslim is more than a neighbor; he is a father, a mother, a

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<sup>1</sup> *Pluralisation religieuse, entre éclatement et concurrence* par Maud Lasseur et Cédric Mayrargu.

brother, an uncle or aunt, he or she is a close family member. Hence the need to have a right and clear understanding of the Muslim faith in order to live as Christ among them by showing love, respect, and truthfulness.

Another reason for studying Islam is its place as the second major faith in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Pew Research Center notes:

*Sub-Saharan Africa has about 241 million Muslims, which is about 15% of the world Muslim population. Nigeria has the largest Muslim population in Sub-Saharan Africa, with about 78 million Muslims (about 50% of Nigeria's total population). Almost one-in-three Muslims (about 32%) in Sub-Saharan Africa live in Nigeria. Western Africa is the only area in Sub-Saharan Africa with a Muslim majority. In contrast, the southern part of Africa has the smallest Muslim population.*

*Sub-Saharan Africa is also home to a number of other countries that have very large Muslim majorities. Countries with the highest percentages of Muslim populations are: Mauritania (99%), Niger (99%), Somalia (99%), Mayotte (98%), Comoros (98%), Djibouti (97%), Senegal (96%), Gambia (95%), Mali (93%), Guinea (84%) and Sierra Leone (71%). The combined Muslim population of all these countries is about 67 million, or about 4% of the global Muslim population.<sup>2</sup>*

Four major sources will be used for this course:

- *My Neighbour's Faith. Islam Explained for Christian* by the Ghanaian scholar in Islam: John Azumah who gives a simple and clear presentation of the Islamic faith.
- *A Muslim and A Christian in Dialogue* by Badru D.Kateregga and David W.Shenk which gives an excellent comparative presentation of both Christian and Islamic faiths.
- *Islamic Challenge and Hope. Why Muslims don't want your Christianity and what you can do about it*, a course on Islam given by Nazarene Pastor Joe Knight who gives a Wesleyan perspective to the study of Islam.

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<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center. *Mapping the Global Muslim Population. A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population*. 2009.(p.19 -20).

# **Session One: The Sources and the founder of Islam**<sup>3</sup>

## **A. The political Context**

Islam emerged in the seventh century AD in the region now known as Arabia. At that time, the area was inhabited by nomadic Bedouin, by other semi-nomadic groups, and by people who were permanently settled in small towns like **Ta'if** or in cities like **Mecca** and **Medina**. Mecca, which was located on flourishing trade routes that ran from north to south and from east to west, was an important commercial center as well as a center of pilgrimage.

There were various ethnic groups living in Arabia united by individual alliances but there was no unity in the area as a whole. The region was affected by the power struggle between the two great world powers of the time, the Byzantine and Persian empires. For example in 614, the Persians captured Jerusalem from the Byzantine Empire, but the Byzantines recaptured it in 628. Struggles like this exhausted both empires, and Islam emerged in the power vacuum that followed in the 630s.

## **B. The Religious Context**

The empires were riven with conflict, and so was the Christian church, which was deeply divided over doctrinal issues. Ever since the great councils of Nicaea (325) and Chalcedon (451), the churches of the East had been arguing about the doctrine of the Trinity and the person of Christ. The Byzantine Empire fiercely supported the stance of the Council of Chalcedon (insisted that Christ was both fully human and fully divine) against other groups like the Nestorians (insisted that Jesus divine and human nature were separate) in Mesopotamia, the Coptic Monophysites (emphasized Christ divine nature and he was not fully human) in Egypt and the Jacobites Monophysites in Syria persecuted as heretics.

In the Persian empire, Zoroastrianism was the state religion and traditional religions dominated the Arabian Peninsula where each ethnic group had its own god and goddess represented by stones.

Mecca was a religious center. The local god of Mecca, Hubal, was highly venerated in the ancient temple known as the **Ka'bah** which was surrounded by images of deities representing different ethnic groups. According to Islamic tradition, there were 360 such images, including statues of Jesus and Mary. Many groups made annual pilgrimage to this site. Three goddesses were also worshiped in Mecca: *al-Manat* (the goddess of fate), *al-Lat* (the goddess of fertility) and *al-Uzza* (the goddess of power). These three goddesses were regarded as the "daughters of Allah."

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<sup>3</sup> John Azumah, *My Neighbour's Faith: Islam Explained for Christians*, 15-20.



Some Arab groups were moving towards henotheism, that is, the belief that one god or goddess is greater (*akbar*) than all the other deities. There were also a few individuals known as *hanif*, who were monotheists. It is clear that the supreme deity was already called **Allah, meaning "the God,"** for important contracts were sealed by taking an oath in this name and the name is mentioned in pre-Islamic poetry.

The whole of the pre-Islamic era in Arabia is referred to in Islamic terminology as the **Jahiliyya** (Period of Ignorance). The emergence of Islam is seen as the dawn of enlightenment. Nevertheless, many religious rituals and social norms and systems dating from this period were adopted, in some cases adapted, and given new meaning in Islam. These include virtually all the rituals of the pilgrimage performed by Muslims today, as well as laws on marriage, retaliation, circumcision, slavery, and the observance of a holy month in which fighting is forbidden.

The religious rites of the Sabians which included daily prayer at seven fixed times, with worshipers bowing and prostrating themselves, and the observation of a thirty day fast from dawn to dusk and a **fitr** (breaking the fast at the end of the month) are influences on Islamic rites.

Judaism represented by strong and well-organized Jewish communities existed around the big oases of North Arabia such as Khaybar and Yathrib (present-day Medina). There were also individual Jews living in and around Mecca. The Talmud and Jewish Apocrypha largely defined the beliefs of those Jews.

Christianity was also present, for several nomadic ethnic groups in the Hijaz (the region around Mecca) had embraced this faith. Yemen in the south had been Christian since the fourth century, and there was a strong Christian community in Najran. The presence of Christian monks in the desert is also well attested in both pre-Islamic and Islamic poetry and traditions. In Mecca itself, most of the Christians were non-Arab foreigners from neighboring countries. They kept themselves aloof from the Arabs and continued to worship in their own languages. The result was that in the seventh-century Arabia, Christianity was basically a foreign religion. It was also a divided religion, torn by doctrinal divisions and confusion as outlined above. Christianity was viewed as a hostile religion and was associated with a foreign and oppressive political power that fiercely repressed any beliefs that differed from the orthodox religion of the state.

### **C. Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam**

The account of Muhammad's life that will be given here is the one presented in traditional Muslim sources. Muhammad was born in the commercial city of Mecca, Arabia in 570. His mother was Amina bint Wahab and his father was

Abdallah, the son of the many sons of Abdul-Muttalib, head of the noble family of Banu Hashim, a branch of the **Quraish** tribe.

Muhammad's father Abdallah died a few months before his birth. At age six he lost his mother. Then his grandfather Abul-Muttalib took care of him, but he died only two years later. So at the age of eight, Muhammad was orphaned. He was soon taken over by his uncle **Abu Talib**, son of Abdul-Muttalib who took care of him.

As Abu Talib was a man with insufficient means, he looked for a job for his nephew, Muhammad. A rich widow, **Khadija bint Khuwaylid** employed Muhammad to take care of her trading business. When he was twenty-five and she was forty, she apparently fell in love with him and they were married. The couple enjoyed twenty-five years of happy marriage until Khadija's death. They had seven children, but the three sons died in infancy and only four daughters survived. In the end, Muhammad was survived by only one daughter, **Fatima**, who lived only six months longer than the Prophet of Islam.

Before getting married, Muhammad starting frequenting a cave in Mount Hira, a few miles outside of Mecca, for meditation. After his marriage with Khadija, he had more leisure, which enabled him to devote time to his spiritual quest.

#### **D. Muhammad as Prophet**

As earlier stated, Muhammad used to visit the cave of **Hira** frequently for spiritual mediation. It was during one night in the month of Ramadan that he heard a mighty voice commanding him to recite in the name of Allah Who created (Qur'an 96:1-5). The night of revelation is remembered in Muslim history as the Night of Power (**Lailatu-l-Qadr**). This was about the year 610, and the prophet Muhammad was forty years old. The first revelation had descended on Muhammad through the angel Jibril (Gabriel). In this way Muhammad was appointed by Allah to be His last Prophet (Qur'an 33:40). When he saw the angel and heard the message, Muhammad was overcome with fear, hurried home and related to his beloved Khadija all that had happened. She comforted him, assuring him that what he had received was true revelation from Allah. She was the first person in Mecca to accept Islam. The first revelation was followed shortly by a second one, which came to Muhammad when he was shivering and had been covered by a mantle at home. The command was, "O thou enveloped in thy cloak, Arise and warn! Thy Lord magnify" (Qur'an 74.1-3).

Muhammad began his mission quietly. He preached the oneness of God. He stressed that Allah is all-powerful. He is the Creator of the universe and the Master of the day of judgment. On the day of judgment, the faithful and righteous will be rewarded with paradise, while unbelievers and the idolaters will end up in hell- an abode of great torture and suffering. In the first three years, Muhammad had only converted a few inhabitants of Mecca. Important

names among them were Khadija, his wife; Ali, his young cousin; Abu Bakr, Uthman, and Talh- all his friends.

Soon Muhammad was commanded by Allah to preach in public and he started his preaching of the worship of one God to the polytheistic society of Mecca in 613. His preaching annoyed many citizens of Mecca. They realized that his preaching would curb their power and economic interests as guardians of the Kabbah. They started to oppose Muhammad and persecute the growing number of believers. As a result of the continuing severe persecution, the Prophet of Islam advised eleven families to migrate to the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia, then under the rule of King Negus. King Negus would not hand over to the Muslims, the pagan Quraish who believed in one God, and all His prophets, including Jesus. Muhammad continued to meet opposition but was shielded by his clan ties, which included an influential uncle and a wealthy wife. These two: Abu Talib and Khadija passed away in 619, leaving him in a vulnerable position in Mecca. Some merchants from Medina invited him to migrate to their town (then called Yathreb) and be under their oath of protection. The move from Mecca to Medina in 622 is known in Islam as the ***hijra*** which many scholars now translate as "emigration." However, the detailed description of how Muhammad had to leave Mecca under cover of night, hide in the cave of Thawr and use his young cousin, Ali, as decoy in order to escape death at the ends of his pursuers, suggests that the word "emigration" is an euphemism.

The *hijra* is very significant in Islam, for it is the year of Muhammad's escape, rather than of his birth, call or death, which marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. This year also marks a division between two phases of his ministry. During the twelve-year period in Medina (622-632), Muhammad's mission was a preparatory one in which he preached, warned and used peaceful persuasion. But the fulfillment of his mission came during the ten-year period in Medina (622-632), when he established a theocracy in which his religious beliefs were integrated in a political, judicial and military framework.

In Medina, Muhammad and his followers resorted to the traditional Arab nomadic practice of raiding other groups. Muhammad himself participated in twenty-seven battles and raids. The raids provoked a series of battles with the people of Mecca. Muhammad and his followers won the first major battle, the ***battle of Badr*** in 624, but the next year they were defeated at the ***battle of Uhud***. When a third battle loomed in 627, they successfully protected Medina by digging a trench around it, with the result that this battle is known as the ***battle of Trench***.

In 630, Muhammad marched on Mecca with ten thousand men and captured the city. He executed a few of his leading opponents and granted a general amnesty to the rest. Two years later, he ordered all idol worshippers in Mecca to surrender their idols and convert to Islam within the next four months, or face attack. This emphasis on surrendering reminds us that the term "Islam"

is derived from the root word *slm*, which means "surrender." Islam demands complete and total surrender or submission to God's will- there is no scope for personal choice.

Later that same year (632), Muhammad died in the bosom of his beloved wife, *Ayisha*, leaving the task of consolidating his work to four of his close associates and successors, who are known as the *Rightly Guided Caliphs*.

<b>Muhammad's Life at a Glance</b>	
<b>AD 570</b>	Birth in Mecca
<b>595</b>	Marriage to Khadijah, a travel merchant
<b>610</b>	Claims to receive divine revelations through mystical experience
<b>613</b>	Begins to preach monotheistic message and endures persecution
<b>619</b>	After the death of Khadijah, he marries Sawdah, first of many other wives
<b>620</b>	Angel Gabriel takes him to Jerusalem and he ascends to seventh heaven on a ladder
<b>622</b>	Escape to Medina to avoid persecution in Mecca
<b>624</b>	Defeats Meccan enemies at the battle of Badr
<b>630</b>	Conquers his enemies at Mecca and removes idols from city
<b>632</b>	Dies on June 8 after a period of ill health <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> These dates come from James A. Beverly, *Understanding Islam*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001.

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## E. Muhammad's Four Successors: The Rightly Guided Caliphs

The death of Muhammad caught the young Muslim community unprepared and threw it into confusion. Dissension arose between different groups claiming the right of succession. Three main contending parties emerged:

- **The Hashemites (*Banu Hashim*)** were led by **Ali**, Muhammad's cousin and son-in law who was married to the Prophet of Islam's only surviving child, **Fatima**. They were the immediate family of Muhammad and regarded themselves as his rightful successors by virtue of their blood relationship. They were later joined and dominated by non-Arab converts to Islam (*mawali*), mainly Persians who had suffered various types of discrimination at the hands of the their Arab co-religionists.
- **The Emigrants (*Muhajirun*)** were led by **Abu Bakr** and **Umar** along with their respective daughters, **Aisha** and **Hafsa**, who were wives of Muhammad. They were joined by the Helpers (*Ansar*), who were early converts to Islam in Medina. They based their claim on their loyalty to Muhammad.
- The **Quraysh**, under the leadership of **Uthman** and **Abu Sufyan** were the Meccan patricians. They were the eleven-hour converts who wanted to take advantage of Muhammad's death to re-establish their dominance under the cloak of Islam. They stressed the importance of Mecca and their role as its custodian.

The individuals from these parties who rose to power as Muhammad's successors are known as caliphs or *Khulafa* (sing. *khalifa*). This Arabic word means 'vicegerent' or 'viceroy'. As a title, it is a short form of *Khalifatu Rasulillah* (Successor to the Messenger of God, that is, to Muhammad). The first four caliphs, who occupy a special place in Islam, are referenced to as *Al-Khulufa-ur-Rashidun* (the Rightly Guided Caliphs) because they are deemed to have faithfully followed the example of Muhammad in the leading the Muslim community of which they were the religious, political, military and judicial heads.

### Abu Bakr (632-634)

The first of the Rightly guided Khalifs was Abu Bakr who is said to have been a merchant who used his wealth to support the cause of Islam. He gave his daughter Aisha to Muhammad in marriage, and she became his favorite wife. After the death of Muhammad, Umar lobbied for Abu Bakr to be chosen as the first caliph, arguing that Muhammad himself nominated Abu Bakr to lead

prayers when he was ill. Abu Bakr is known as the 'saviour of Islam' and *al-Siddique* (the Righteous One) because he subdued all the rebellions that came out of the Muslims ranks. Abu Bakr expanded the Islamic domain outside Arabia and ordered the writing of the Qur'an to preserve it. Muhammad had not left a written copy of the Qur'an; rather, his words had been committed to memory by some of his follower known as *huffaz* (rememberers). Many of them died in the battles of Abu Bakr's reign, so he ordered the writing of the Qur'an for its preservation.

### **Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-644)**

Umar can be called the Paul of Islam. He initially persecuted Muslim converts, but after his conversion he used his wealth to support the cause of Islam. He also gave his daughter Hafsa in marriage to Muhammad. Under Umar, Islam expanded rapidly by way of conquest. He captured Damascus with little resistance in 635, he defeated the Byzantines at Yarmuk in 636 and took over all of Syria and Palestine. In the same year, 636, Umar captured Mesopotamia from the Persians. Between 640 and 642, his general Amr ibn al had conquered Egypt and the rest of North Africa. Thus Umar is referred to as 'the second founder of Islam'.

Umar also set in place the various administrative and judicial structures of the empire. He divided the empire into provinces, appointed governors, and set up departments to control the treasury, army and public revenues. He is also credited with the expulsion of Christian and Jews from the Arabian Peninsula. Umar died in 644 after being attacked by a Christian slave (although some sources say that the slave was Zoroastrian).

### **Uthman (644-656)**

Before his death, Umar appointed five or six men who were to select the next caliph from among them. One of these men, Abdul Rahman, withdrew his name from consideration. The others then authorized him to appoint the next caliph. The choice appeared to be between Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, and Uthman, the leader of the Quraysh faction. Abdul Rahman chose Uthman to become the third caliph.

Uthman was a wealthy man who used his immense wealth to support the cause of Islam. He had been married to two of Muhammad's daughters, Ruqayya and Khulthum, and as a result was known as the Possessor of the Two Lights. Upon becoming caliph, he appointed some of his close relatives as governors of provinces. A weak ruler, Uthman lacked the courage to apply the letter of the law when it affected relatives and prominent personalities. Uthman's most notable contribution to Islam was his ordering Zaïd ibn Thabit, Muhammad's personal secretary, to undertake the second compilation of the Qur'an. When this was done, all the other versions were destroyed. Thus the authorized version of Uthman, which most Muslims today believe to be the authentic and original Qur'an as given to Muhammad, was the only one left.

In 656, disgruntled Egyptian Muslims allegedly murdered Uthman, apparently for what they saw as his nepotism.

### **Ali ibn Abu Talib (656-661)**

Ali was Muhammad's cousin and adopted son. He married the Prophet's daughter Fatima, who gave birth to two boys, Hassan and Husayn. Ali has been one of the first converts to Islam and has taken part in almost all the battles fought by Muhammad. He was convinced that he was Muhammad's rightful successor. Thus for six months, he had refused to recognize the appointment of Abu Bakr as the first caliph. But now, after having been denied the caliphate three times, he was finally invited to become caliph after the murder of Uthman in June 656.

A rebellion led by Ayisha, the widow of Muhammad, and others of his companions resulted in the first serious Muslim civil war. At the **battle of the Camel**, Ali's forces defeated those of Ayisha, who went into battle on a camel. At the **battle of Siffin**, Ali's forces clashed with those of Muawiya, son of Abu Sufyan (the other leader of the Quraysh faction) and a cousin of Uthman. Muawiya was reproaching Ali for not punishing the murderers of Uthman. Both parties agreed to resort to arbitration to resolve their differences. However, some of Ali's supporters (later referred to as *Kharijites* or separatists) rejected arbitration and accused Ali of seeking a human solution rather than abiding by the divine injunctions spelt out in the Qur'an.

The arbitration went in favor of Muawiya. Ali was outraged and returned to his supporters, who demanded he repent for accepting arbitration in the first place. This he refused to do. Instead, he attacked his own supporters and massacred thousands of them, further damaging his credibility.

The battle with Muawiya was suspended and another council was convened. This time the council decided to depose both Ali and Muawiya. But both parties refused to accept this decision. Ali and Muawiya stuck to their positions until a Khajirite murdered Ali in 661 in revenge for the massacre of his compatriots. This left Muawiya as the de facto caliph. Ali's second son, Husayn, later took on the fight for the caliphate, but was unsuccessful and was executed in Karbala in present-day Iraq. These events brought about a permanent split between the supporters of Ali known as the *Shi'ites* or the party of Ali, and the main Muslim body, the *Sunnis*.

<b>KEY EVENTS IN MUSLIM HISTORY</b>	
<b>634</b>	Death of Abu Bakr, the first caliph (successor to Muhammad)
<b>637</b>	Capture of Jerusalem by Muslim leaders
<b>661</b>	Assassination of Ali, the 4 <sup>th</sup> caliph to Muhammad

<b>690</b>	Construction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem
<b>732</b>	Muslims defeated at Battle of Tours
<b>1099</b>	Crusaders capture Jerusalem
<b>1111</b>	Death of al-Ghazali, second to the Prophet as spiritual leader
<b>1197</b>	Saladin recaptures Jerusalem
<b>1258</b>	Mongols sack Baghdad
<b>1300</b>	Rise of Ottoman Empire
<b>1315</b>	Death of Raymond Lull, Christian missionary to Islam
<b>1453</b>	Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople—renamed Istanbul
<b>1517</b>	Salim I conquers Egypt
<b>1520</b>	Rise of Sulayman the Magnificent, the Ottoman emperor
<b>1563</b>	Akbar gains power in India
<b>1803</b>	Wahhabi movement gains control in Saudi Arabia
<b>1910</b>	Oil prospects in Persia
<b>1924</b>	Secularization of Turkey
<b>1928</b>	Muslim Brotherhood founded
<b>1932</b>	Political independence of Iraq
<b>1947</b>	Creation of Pakistan
<b>1948</b>	Founding of the State of Israel
<b>1962</b>	Algeria gains independence
<b>1964</b>	Formation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization
<b>1967</b>	Six Day War between Israel and Egypt
<b>1973</b>	October War between Israel and Arabs
<b>1977</b>	Anwar Sadat makes peace with Israel
<b>1979</b>	Islamic revolution in Iran
<b>1982</b>	Assassination of Anwar Sadat
<b>1987</b>	Intifada begins in Palestine
<b>1991</b>	Gulf War to liberate Kuwait
<b>2001</b>	September 11 – Attack on America



## **Session Two: The Muslim Beliefs**

In Islam there is a clear distinction between what constitutes "faith" or "belief" (*iman*) and "works" or "duties" (*ibadat*). Whereas Christianity teaches that salvation is by grace through faith, Islamic teaching implies that salvation is achieved by faith through works. To be a Muslim, one must believe in God, angels, Scriptures, prophets, the last day (and predestination). One must also observe the following duties or works: witness, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, pilgrimage (and jihad).

The two following charts<sup>5</sup> give an outline of the basic beliefs in Islam. In the first chart, the goal of the exercise is to help the students approach the Muslim's basic beliefs as a bridge. As the Apostle Paul mentioned in Acts 17:24-28 in his explanation of God's general revelation to the pagan Greeks:

*The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. "For in him we live and move and have our being." As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring."*

Any Muslim will agree with Paul's argumentation and this is a good starting for approaching their beliefs. As John Azumah stated it:

...Paul's basic motivation in this context was purely missionary and evangelistic. He was using the Unknown God of the Athenians as a stepping-stone to present them with God the creator of the universe and the Father of Jesus Christ. In the same way, Allah or the Muslim God is a crucial stepping-stone for sharing the Christian witness to God with Muslims.<sup>6</sup>

### **Group work 1:**

Read the Apostles' Creed and circle the phrases or terms that you think Muslims will accept as true. The teacher will do this exercise with the students

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<sup>5</sup> Joe Knight, in the course: "Islamic Challenge and Hope"

<sup>6</sup> John Azumah, *My neighbour's faith*, 144.

in order to help them know their general knowledge of Islam’s beliefs. These beliefs should be viewed as stepping-stones for sharing the Good News to Muslims rather than having a confrontational approach.

<b>Do Muslims &amp; Christians Share Common Beliefs?</b>	
<b>CHRISTIANITY</b> <b>The Apostles’ Creed</b>	<b>ISLAM</b> <b>The Muslim’s <i>Shahadah</i></b>
<p><b>I believe in God the Father Almighty</b> Maker of heaven and earth;</p> <p><b>And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:</b> Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended to the dead; the third day He rose again from the dead;</p> <p>He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;</p> <p>from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.</p> <p><b>I believe in the Holy Spirit,</b> the Church universal, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.</p> <p>Amen.</p>	<p>“There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His prophet.”</p>
<p><i>Read the Apostles’ Creed and draw a circle around the phrases or words that you think Muslims would accept.</i></p>	

The second chart is an outline of the Articles of Faith of Islam and goes along the explanation of the content of those beliefs.

<b>ARTICLES OF FAITH</b>	
<b>ALLAH (God)</b>	Strict monotheists.
<b>ANGELS</b>	Divine messengers, including Gabriel and Satan
<b>SCRIPTURES</b>	<p>The Qur'an ("recitation")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Believed revealed by God through Gabriel to Muhammad</li> <li>◆ Eternal, preserved perfectly through history</li> <li>◆ Divided into 114 chapters ("suras")</li> <li>◆ Also accept divine inspiration of the traditions about Muhammad, the <i>Hadiths</i></li> </ul>
<b>PROPHETS</b>	Include Adam, Noah, Moses, David and Jesus Muhammad: "seal of the prophets" (the <i>last</i> divine word)
<b>AFTERLIFE</b>	Future resurrection of the dead, Divine Judgment, eternal destiny in paradise or hell
<b>DIVINE DECREE PREDESTINATION</b>	Most Muslims accept the complete and total sovereignty of God. "Free-will" is a foreign concept.

## **A. Articles of Faith of Islam**

### **Belief in God (Allah): There is No God but Allah**

"Islam means total submission to the commands and the will of Allah, the only true God. The first and greatest teaching of Islam is proclaimed by the ***Shahada*** (confession): *La illa 'illa 'llah Muhammadun rasal Allah*". This

means: There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the apostle of Allah. It is this very confession which, once uttered sincerely and followed completely, makes one a real Muslim. It is this Shahada which leads a Muslim throughout his life.

Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion. The key **surah** (chapter) in the Qur'an testifies to Islam's monotheism.

Say: He is Allah, the One!  
Allah, the eternally Besought of all!  
He begetteth not nor was begotten.  
And there is none comparable unto Him. (Qur'an 112)

A Muslim must believe in One God (Allah). Belief is the very basis of the **al-Din** (religion) of Islam.<sup>7</sup> Belief in God (*Allah*) is the first and central belief in Islam. He is depicted as a sovereign, king, ruler and master who is utterly other than his creation. His transcendent status is encapsulated in the familiar Muslim expression, *Allahu akbar* (God is great).

Idolatry, the worship of more than one God, is strongly condemned since Islam stresses the oneness or unity (**tawhid**) of God. He is one and has no partners and no children. Associating anything else with God is an unforgivable sin, referred to as *shirk*. Explaining this key Islamic teaching, Badru Kateregga, a Ugandan Muslim, states:

Because God is one, no one else can share even an atom of His divine power and authority. God alone possesses the attributes of Divinity. Because God is one and one only, to associate any being with God is a sinful act and an infidel act.

Islam makes it clear that God has no son, no father, no brother, no wife, no sister and no daughters...In his unity, God is not like any other person or thing that can come to anyone's mind. His qualities and nature are conspicuously unique. He has no associates.<sup>8</sup>

The emphasis on the oneness of God means that he is never conceived of as a father. Fatherhood would imply that he has children, which to Muslim mind implies that he cohabited with a woman in order to produce a child. The Qur'an asks 'How can He (Allah) have a child, when there is for Him no consort?' (6:101). In the eyes of Muslims, Christians are committing *shirk* by referring to Jesus as the Son of God and believing in the Trinity (which, according to the Qur'an, consists of God, Mary and Jesus – 5.116).

### **Do Muslims and Christians worship the same God?**

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<sup>7</sup> Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity : A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* (Nairobi : Uzima Press, 1980), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Kateregga and Shenk, 46.

The current debate on the use of the name *Allah* for Christians from a Muslim or Arabic background implies the most frequently asked question: "Do Muslims and Christians worship the same God?" John Azumah observes:

It is first of all important to understand that if Christians and Muslims agree that there is only one God, the creator of the universe and of humanity, and both claim they are worshipping this God, then clearly they are both worshipping the same God. Secondly, given the Qur'anic claim that Muhammad's prophetic mission is in line with the missions of such biblical figures as Abraham, Moses and Jesus, it is difficult to say that the God of Islam is not the same as the God of Christianity. Thirdly linguistically, *Allah* is simply the Arabic name for the High God or Supreme Being. In other words, the term 'Allah' is to Arabic speakers as "God" is to English speakers, *Onyame* to Twi speakers in Ghana, *Oludumare* to the Yoruba in Nigeria, and *Ukulunkulu* to Zulus in South Africa<sup>9</sup>.

The argument here is not about the nature of God's relationship to humanity. Islam is a purely monotheistic faith while Christianity is a Trinitarian Monotheism. Azumah continues:

The doctrine of the Trinity seeks to underline the point that God is not only a God of communion, a God of dialogue and a God of relationship, but also a God *in* communion, *in* dialogue and *in* relationship. Christians and Muslims agree that God is the creator, master and sovereign lord over the whole of creation. The issue at stake, however, is how the Creator relates to his creation...Both Muslims and Christians believe in revelation, that is, that God takes the initiative to reach out to humanity. Both agree that without revelation there could be no relationship between human beings and God. But that is as far as the agreement goes! Disagreement arises as soon we look at the nature of revelation. According to Islam, God reveals his will and the record of this revelation is "in perfection in the Qur'an." Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that God reveals not only his will but also himself in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The question that then arises is, to what extent does the will of God contained in the Qur'an match the life and ministry of Jesus as contained in the Gospels?<sup>10</sup>

Lamin Sanneh wonderfully summed up the major difference in revelation between Christianity and Islam as follows: "For Christianity, the Word of God is Jesus, the Word 'made flesh who dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.' For Islam, the word became a holy book and dwelt among us, full of commandments and directives."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Azumah, 139.

<sup>10</sup> Azumah, 142.

<sup>11</sup> Dr Lamin Sanneh in *Reflections on the comparative history of translation in Islam and Christianity*. Andrew Walls lectures, 2007.

The nature of relationship the Muslim has with Allah is that of a slave submitted to the will<sup>12</sup> of his master or a subject to his master while the Christian has a Father and son relationship with God.

The Muslim God will not, cannot and need not to do the things the Christian God does. 'Allah is not begotten and does not beget' is the central teaching of the Qur'an: 'Jesus is the Son of God' is the central teaching of Christianity. So can Allah be the Father of Jesus Christ? If the Muslim answer is *no*, is it fair and right for Christians to insist that Jesus is the Son of the Muslim God? And if Allah is not the Father of Jesus, can it be said that Muslims and Christians worship the same God?

## **B. Belief in Angels (Malaika) and Other Supernatural Beings**

### **Angels**

Angels are believed to be created from light and are endowed with life, speech, and reason. They neither eat nor drink and have no gender differences, and hence do not procreate. They dwell in heaven and their chief task is praising God, carrying out his orders and interceding for mankind (42:3). Angels mentioned in the Qur'an include *Jibril* (Gabriel), the angel of revelation (2:91; 66:4); *Mikail* (Michael), the angel in charge of rain and sustenance (2:92); *Israfil*, not mentioned in the Qur'an but believed to be the angel who will sound the trumpet at the last day; and *Izrail*, the huge and ugly angel of death (32:11 and 6:93). *Mankar*, "the unknown" and *Nakir*, "the repudiating," are two angels who are believed to visit the dead in the grave to interrogate them about their belief in God and Muhammad. *Malick* is said to be the presiding angel of hell (43:77), while *Ridwan* is the angel in charge of heaven.

Two angels are also said to sit on the shoulders of every person, recording their deeds (43:80; 82:10-13). There are also guardian angels who protect believers from danger (6:61; 86:4).

### **Jinns**

Jinns are dealt with in Sura 72 of the Qur'an. They are said to have been created of smokeless fire (15:27) and to be peaceable by nature. They eat and drink and procreate among their own kind, though sometimes in conjunction with human beings. Good ones are very beautiful or handsome, while evil ones are ugly. Jinns can appear to people in the form of snakes, dogs, cats or human beings, and can appear and disappear at will. Some jinns are Muslim and good, while other are non-Muslim and evil. Jinns are overwhelmingly present in the worldview of Muslims practicing folk Islam (mixture of Islam and traditional religions).

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<sup>12</sup> John Azumah, *My neighbour's faith* :143.

## Devil

The devil is referred to in Islam as *shaytan* or *Iblis*. He is believed to have been one of the angels of God. He disobeyed God by refusing to bow down or prostrate himself before Adam, the first created human. God then cast him down to earth from the precincts of heaven. *Iblis* is therefore roaming the face of the earth, trying to deceive human beings. He sometimes hides behind the walls of heaven to listen to what is going on there. When he is spotted by the angels, they pelt him with stones, and so his other name is the "pelted one."

## C. Belief in Prophets

Two terms are used for prophets in Islam: *nabi* (prophet) and *rasul* (apostle/messenger). Muslims believe that every group has at one time or another been sent a prophet of their own kind (16:36). The total number of prophets is believed to be 124,000. The Qur'an mentions only twenty-eight by name, including Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Some of the prophets have special titles:

Adam	<i>Safi u-llah</i>	The Chosen of God
Noah	<i>Nabi u-llah</i>	The Prophet of God
Abraham	<i>Khalil u-llah</i>	The Friend of God
Ishmael	<i>Dhabih u-llah</i>	The Sacrifice of God
Moses	<i>Kalim u-llah</i>	The Converser with God
Jesus	<i>Kalimat u-llah</i>	The Word/Spirit of God
	<i>Ruh u-llah</i>	
Muhammad	<i>Rasul u-llah</i>	The Apostle of God

Even Muslims are warned not to make distinctions between the prophets of God. However, Muhammad occupies the highest place as the 'Seal of the Prophets' (*Khatam Nabiyyin* 33.40).

Christian students will observe that those referred to as patriarchs in the Judaeo-Christian traditions, such as Abraham, are regarded in Islam as prophets, while most of the major and minor Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah and Hosea are not accorded any significant place.

## D. Belief in Scriptures

Islam can be understood through two main sources: 1) The Qur'an and 2) the collections of the recorded words, actions and sanctions of Muhammad. These acts (*sunnah*) and sayings (*hadith*) of Muhammad are collectively known as *Hadith*.

### The Qur'an:

Belief in divinely inspired books, or Scriptures, is the next fundamental belief in Islam. Muslims believe that God has given holy books to different prophets in the past (2:130; 4:135; 5:47, 70, 72, etc). The main such books are the *Tawrat* (Torah) given to Moses, the *Zabur* (Psalms) given to David, and the

*Injil (Gospel)* given to Jesus. All these books are portions of the "mother of books" (*umm ul-kitab*), which resides in heaven. The Qur'an, however, is the final chapter of the heavenly book and contains the perfect revelation from God.

*Al-Qur'an* means **recitation** (meant to be heard and spoken). The Qur'an is four-fifths (80%) of the length of the New Testament.

The revelation of the Qur'an is a literal and exact copy of God's reality upon the earth (viewed as the only incarnation of God by Muslims). Note the difference with Christianity—Who do Christians say is the only incarnation of God?

The recitation of God's word was received by Muhammad while in a trance-like state and recorded later by followers. A final copy was created within 20 years after his death. Arabic was only written in consonants (much like Hebrew), so there are various schools of tradition that interpret the Qur'an. In fact, conservative Muslim scholars believe the Qur'an cannot be translated from Arabic, it must be memorized, even if a follower does not understand the words.

The Qur'an is to be read in **ARABIC**.

*"We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic, That ye may be able to understand." (Sura 43:3)*

*"Qur'an in Arabic for people who understand" (Sura 41:3)*

*"Had We sent this as a Qur'an (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said: 'Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (A Book) not in Arabic and (a Messenger) an Arab?'" (Sura 41:44)*

Therefore, all translations of the Qur'an are merely attempts at interpreting the holy book. The only authentic version is in Arabic.

### **Organization of the Qur'an**

There are 114 Suras (chapter) or degrees, literally "steps by which we mount."

Each chapter begins with the phrase "In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful."

The Suras are ordered in sequence from longest to shortest.

There are 86 Meccan Suras usually shorter and of high literary style. There are 28 Medinan Suras usually longer and considered God-revealed discourses for particular occasions.



Each Sura contains individual Ayas (or verses) or signs from God. Each verse is considered a sign from God; each verse stands alone as revelation. There is no way to "proof-text," since each aya is God's direct word no matter what the context might be.

### **Other Important Facts about the Qur'an**

According to Islam, the Qur'an completes the Old and New Testament revelation, which are only portions of truth and fallible. The Qur'an is perfect.

Part of the miracle was that God revealed His perfect word to an illiterate person ("unlettered prophet," Sura 7:157)

The Qur'an is thought to be "mubeen" or "clear," though large parts of it are incomprehensible, though understood as infallible Word of God by Muslims.

The Qur'an is a vocal book to be recited. Qur'an has sometimes banal language, with exciting sounds.

**Group work 2:** How would you introduce a Muslim friend to the Bible? Where should they begin? What should they expect to find?

**The hadiths:** The sunnah (acts) and hadith (sayings) show the way of life of Muhammad. The collection of writings known as the Hadith includes both sunnah and hadith. A report of verbal tradition transmitted by word of mouth about what Muhammad said is called a hadith and the written collections are called the Hadith. The Hadith is not a Holy Book (revelation) as the Qur'an and the previous scriptures. However, to the Muslims the importance of Hadith ranks only second to the Qur'an. It helps to explain and clarify the Qur'an and present it in a more practical form.

Unlike Christianity which came after Judaism but accepted and reinterpreted Jewish Scriptures to suit its own self-understanding, Islam completely rejects previous Scriptures, and in particular the Jewish and Christian Bible. Muslims argue (albeit without any empirical evidence) that these Scriptures have been tampered with, falsified and corrupted by Jews and Christians. Many even insist that the *Gospel of Barnabas* is the original true gospel or injil written by the Apostle Barnabas. This belief is not shaken by the irrefutable proof that this gospel is a work of fiction that was produced in late sixteenth – or early seventeenth- century Spain, or by the fact that it contradicts the Qur'an by referring to Muhammad, rather than Jesus, as the Messiah. It is also odd that this gospel refers to Jesus as 'Christ' (a title that is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew 'messiah'), but reports him denying that he is the Messiah.<sup>13</sup> Despite the clear lack of credibility of the so-called *Gospel of Barnabas*,

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<sup>13</sup> Jan Slom, "The *Gospel of Barnabas* in recent research," in *Islamochristiana*, vol.23 (1997) : 81-109.

Muslims have translated it into many languages and distributed it around the Islamic world.

This attitude to the Christian Scriptures makes Christian-Muslim dialogue rather unfruitful, for many Muslims reject the Bible and accuse Christians of corrupting it.

### **E. Belief in the Last Day (Akhira)**

Every Muslim is expected to believe in the Last Day and the Day of Judgment, which is graphically described in Suras 75:1ff; 81:1-19; 82; 83 and 84. This day is variously referred to as *Yaumu l-Quiyamat* (the Day of Resurrection), *Yaumu-l-Hisab* (the Day of Reckoning), *Yaumu d-Din* (the Day of Judgment) and *As-Sa'a* (the Hour). No one except God knows when it will be (41:47). It will be preceded by signs that will include the appearance of the *Mahdi*, the Rightly Guided One, followed by the second coming of Jesus.

Judgment will then take place by the weighing of deeds, for in Islam salvation has to be earned, whereas in Christianity it is God's gracious gift...If one's bad deeds outweigh one's good deeds, one will be condemned to hell (*jahanna*). The Qur'an speaks of a purgatorial hell for Muslims, where after a little suffering they are admitted into heaven (19:72), a blazing fire for Christians (98:5), an intense fire for Jews (104:4), and a huge hot fire for idolaters (2:113).

If one's good deeds outweigh the one's bad deeds, one will be admitted to paradise (*janna*). Each palace contains seventy houses, and in every house there are seventy rooms containing seventy beds, as well as tables and dishes. Milk and wine will flow and the inhabitants will be served by beautiful virgins. The place will be cool and shady and filled with a sweet aroma. All who live there will be preserved at the youthful age of thirty-six, will remain beardless and will suffer no fatigue (4:60; 35:32). They will each be given many wives: 4000 virgins and 8000 previously married women. Above all, they will see God face to face, which is the highest of all rewards.

### **F. Belief in divine decree (predestination)**

Though predestination is not always included among the official beliefs of Islam, it is present and very strong in Muslim society. Predestination means that God decrees all things, good and evil, and that nothing happens without his sanction. God has decreed everything in the lives of individuals, including their eternal destination, whether heaven or hell. In his sovereignty, God guides and misguides whomsoever he wills. These decrees are written and preserved on a tablet in heaven and are unchangeable. *Insh Allah*, or God willing, the favorite expression of Muslims, testifies to their belief in the irresistible will and decrees of God. The Islamic doctrine of predestination affects the responsibility of humans in case of death due to negligence and it also gives a fatalistic approach to life.

## Comparing the Beliefs of Christians and Muslims

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Christians</b>	<b>Muslims</b>
<b>God</b>	One God in three Persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit The Trinity	Allah, there is no God but God
<b>Creation</b>	Genesis 1-2 God created the universe, and placed Adam in the Garden of Eden which was part of God's created world, and created a companion in Eve	Adam and Eve were created, tempted, and sinned while in Paradise. Paradise was and is not located upon the earth (Qur'an 2:36).
<b>The Fall and Origin of Sin</b>	Genesis 1-3 Humans are created in God's image. By sin came into the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve.  All people are born with a fallen nature, and are, therefore, inclined to evil, and that continually. All unrepentant people are hopelessly and eternally lost.	Humans are not created in God's image, but entrusted with qualities of knowledge and will power. Humans have dignity and privilege, particularly believers in Allah. Adam's and Eve's sin and rebellion did not tragically distort humankind's relationship with God. Adam repented and was forgiven. People are not born into sin. Adam became the first Messenger on earth, and Messengers or Prophets of God cannot be tarnished like that. "Sin is not original. Sin is through choice, and avoidable through good choices." Humans are fundamentally good and dignified creatures, but not fallen.
<b>Word of God</b>	Old and New Testament Scriptures are fully inspired by God and contain all truth necessary to faith in Christ and for Christian living.	Respectful of the Torah (Taurat), Psalms (Zabur), Gospels (Injil) attributed to the true prophets: Moses (Musa), David (Daud), Jesus (Isa) Deny human personality could be partner with divine revelation or that Jesus could be the Good News (Injil)
<b>Prophets</b>	Old Testament, John the Baptist made the way for Jesus the Christ	Adam, Noah, Moses, David, and Jesus-Muhammad is considered the "seal of the prophets" (the divine word came through Muhammad)
<b>Jesus</b>	God did not beget a Son as a human father produces a son. Jesus is	Jesus was a Messenger born of a virgin mother. Jesus is not Son of God (Qur'an 5:75, 112).

	<p>eternal and co-existent with God.</p> <p>Jesus is the Son of the Triune God; through His life, death on the cross, and resurrection from the death, atonement is available for the entire human race</p>	<p>Muslims deny the Incarnation: God would never lower Himself to humanity's level. Muhammad finalized God's message. They view the biblical testimony of Muhammad as more important (Deut. 18:18)</p> <p>Jesus is not really killed, though details are unclear in Qur'an (4:157-158). Allah would not allow a righteous prophet to suffer and die in such a brutal way. Jesus is a messenger of salvation a light for humankind; is given the Injil (good news); confirms the Torah (Qur'an 3:49-50); is only a servant, not a son (Qur'an 19:93)</p>
<b>Salvation</b>	<p>Salvation is granted by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Whoever repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is justified and regenerated and saved from the dominion of sin.</p>	<p>People do not need redemption. There is no need for Christ's sacrificial death. One Muslim teaching says Jesus did not die, but was removed from the tomb, and continued teaching (compare to Jonah—three days in fish, then preached in Ninevah). People are fundamentally good, and God loves and forgives those who obey His will.</p>
<b>Church</b>	<p>A sacred fellowship of believers with responsibilities to serve God and one another in love as a witness to full salvation through faith in Jesus Christ</p>	<p>Umma, like the universal Church, is not a building. It is a community of believers that submit to God's will. There are no ordained leaders, but is guided by God's word (Qur'an), the example of Muhammad (Sunnah), and the Shari'a (divine law). Though the Christian church has many denominations, the goal of the Umma is a single universal Islamic culture which surpasses ethnic, national, linguistic, and racial boundaries. There are many sects within Islam too.</p>
<b>Sovereignty</b>	<p>God is Sovereign of the universe; one He is God, creative and administrative, holy in nature, attributes, and purpose.</p>	<p>God has complete and total sovereignty. There is no possibility for the existence of free will.</p>
<b>Last Things</b>	<p>Jesus Christ will return, the dead will be raised, and the Lord Jesus Christ will judge all</p>	<p>There will be one universal community (Umma) living by Shari'a (divine law) and worshipping Allah. A final Judgment Day will separate true believers from the</p>

	people to either the reward of eternal life or the punishment of eternal damnation	unbelievers. (similar to the post-millennial view of Christian eschatology)
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*Source:*

Badru D. Kateregga & David W. Shenk. *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1997.

## **Session Three: The Duties or Five Pillars of Islam**

The most important Muslim practices are the Five Pillars of Islam. The Five Pillars of Islam are the five obligations (or duties) that every Muslim must satisfy in order to live a good and responsible life according to Islam.

The Five Pillars consist of:

***Shahadah***: sincerely reciting the Muslim profession of faith

***Salat***: performing ritual prayers in the proper way five times each day

***Zakat***: paying an alms (or charity) tax to benefit the poor and the needy

***Sawm***: fasting during the month of Ramadan

***Hajj***: pilgrimage to Mecca

### **Why are they important?**

Carrying out these obligations provides the framework of a Muslim's life, and weaves their everyday activities and their beliefs into a single cloth of religious devotion.

No matter how sincerely a person may believe, Islam regards it as pointless to live life without putting that faith into action and practice.

### **A. Shahadah (Confession of Faith)**

"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger."

This is the basic statement of the Islamic faith: anyone who cannot recite this wholeheartedly is not a Muslim.

When a Muslim recites this, he or she proclaims:

That Allah is the only God, and that Muhammad is his prophet

That they personally accept this as true

That they will obey all the commitments of Islam in their life

Reciting this statement three times in front of witnesses is all that anyone needs to do to become a Muslim. A Muslim is expected to recite this statement out loud, with total sincerity, fully understanding what it means.

The Arabic can be transliterated into the Roman alphabet like this:

*Ashhadu Alla Ilaha Illa Allah Wa Ashhadu Anna Muhammad Rasulu Allah* Transliteration of the shahadah from the Arabic which means 'I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' It is known as the *Kalima*, and can be described as the Muslim Creed.

The first part of the Shahadah asserts the Oneness of God (tawhid) by denying the existence or worthiness of all other gods or deities and by affirming the existence or worthiness of the one and only God, Allah. The second part asserts the unique authority of Muhammad within Islam and underscores his status as the last prophet.

## **B. Salat / Namaz (Prayer)**

Salat is the obligatory Muslim prayers, performed five times each day by everyone over the age of twelve and of sound mind. Initially Muhammad and his early followers prayed twice a day, in the morning and evening (11:114). Later on in Medina, they began to pray three times each day (2:238). This change was possibly influenced by the Jews, who prayed three times a day. Eventually Muslims adopted five daily times of prayer, each announced by a *muezzin* who issues the *adhan* or 'call to prayer'. The faithful are summoned to pray at:

<i>Salat-az-Subh</i>	Dawn	5.00 a.m (before sunrise).
<i>Salat-az Zurh</i>	Midday	12.00 noon (after the sun passes its highest)
<i>Salat-al-'asr</i>	Afternoon	4.00 p.m (the late part of the afternoon)
<i>Salat-al-Maghrib</i>	Evening	6.00 p.m (just after sunset)
<i>Salat-al-'isha</i>	Dusk/Night	8.00 pm (between sunset and midnight)

Prayer sets the rhythm of the day. This prayer timetable gives Muslims the pattern of their day. In Islamic countries, the public call to prayer from the mosques sets the rhythm of the day for the entire population, including non-Muslims.

Before praying, Muslims must ritually cleanse themselves. *Wudu* or *Wusu* is the normal ablution. It involves washing certain parts of the body including the mouth, nostrils, ears, private parts, arms and feet. *Ghusul*, a more thorough washing involves a complete bath and is performed after such things as sexual intercourse or after touching a corpse. If there is no water to wash in, fine sand (*tayammum*) can be used for cleansing.

The *qibla* is the name for the orientation that Muslims must adopt when praying. At one time, Muslims faced Jerusalem, but later it was ruled that they must face Mecca and the *Ka'bah*. There is no truth in the allegation that Muslims pray towards the sun and therefore worship the sun god.

Prayer can be performed individually, but it is preferable to pray in a group led by a prayer leader (*imam*). The prayers involve adopting prescribed postures and reciting key Qur'anic verses in Arabic.

Besides these formal prayers (*salat*), there are other non-liturgical prayers such as *du'a* (a prayer of supplication or invocation), *istighf'r* (a prayer of pardon or forgiveness); and *tash* (a prayer of praise or glorification). These prayers, which are mainly invocations, do not have to be said in Arabic but can be offered in any language.

### **C. Zakat**

Zakat is the compulsory giving of a set proportion of one's wealth to charity (2:43, 271-271). It is regarded as a type of worship and of self-purification. The word zakat means "to purify." Zakat does not refer to charitable gifts given out of kindness or generosity, but to the systematic giving of 2.5% of one's wealth each year to benefit the poor. In addition to zakat, Muslims can also pay *sadaqa*, a free-will offering given to help the poor. An example of *sadaqa* is *fitrah*, which is given at the end of the Ramadan (2:276).

### **D. Sawm**

Sawm is fasting. It's the fourth of the Five Pillars of Islam. Initially, Muhammad observed Jewish traditional fasts, including the Day of Atonement, and the fasts lasted a full twenty-four hours. It was later changed to a time of fasting from dawn to sunset for thirty days during the month of Ramadan. This month was chosen because legend has it that *Laylat al Qadr*, the Night of Power when the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad, was ten days before the end of Ramada. The month is so holy that it is believed that during it the gates of heaven stand open, while those of hell are shut and the devils are chained.

The duty to fast is mentioned in Sura 2:183-87, which prescribed total abstinence from food, drink and conjugal relations during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. The end of the Ramadan is marked by two days of celebration (known as *Eid ul-fitr*) and Muslims gather together in the open to say special prayers. Dressing up and visiting family and friends for celebratory meals also mark the celebration of *Eid ul-fitr*.

### **E. Hajj (Pilgrimage)**

Sura 3:96ff specifies that every adult Muslim who is free and physically, mentally and materially able must undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca at least one in his or her lifetime.

The Hajjis or pilgrims wear simple white clothes called *Ihram*. During the Hajj, the Pilgrims perform acts of worship and they renew their sense of purpose in the world.

Mecca is a place that is holy to all Muslims. It is so holy that no non-Muslim is allowed to enter.

For Muslims, the Hajj is the fifth and final pillar of Islam. It occurs in the month of Dhul Hijjah which is the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

## **Umra**

The Hajj is a real pilgrimage - a journey, with rites and rituals to be done along the way.

You begin at a place just outside Mecca called the Miqat, or entry station to the Hajj.

There you bathe, put on the Ihram (the special white clothes), make the intention for Umra and begin reciting the Talbiya Du'a (prayer).

*Here I am at Your service, O Allah, here I am at your service! You have no partner. Here I am at your service. All praise and blessings belong to you. All dominion is yours and You have no partner.* Talbiya Du'a

Then you go to the Masjid al Haram and walk around the Ka'ba seven times repeating du'as and prayers. This is called the Tawaf. Afterwards you should sip some Zam Zam water.

Zam Zam water is water from the Zam Zam well, the sacred well which opened in the desert to save Hajira and Is'mail from dying of thirst.

Next you go to the walkway between the hills of Safa and Marwa and walk back and forth between them seven times.

This completes the Umra portion of the Hajj rituals and some of the Ihram restrictions are relaxed.

## **F. Muslim holidays**

There are only two Muslim festivals sets down in Islamic law. There are several other special days that Muslims celebrate, although some Muslims disapprove of adding extra festivals.

Al-Hijra : Al-Hijra is the Muslim new year. It marks the Hijra, Muhammad's journey in 622 CE to Medina.

Ashura : Ashura marks two historical events: the day Nuh (Noah) left the Ark and Musa's (Moses') escape from the Egyptians. Shi'a Muslims also commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein, Muhammad's grandson.

Eid ul Adha : The festival of sacrifice remembers the prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son when God ordered him to.

Eid ul Fitr :This festival comes at the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Muslims thank Allah for the strength he gave them to help them practice self-control.

Lailat al Miraj : The festival celebrates Muhammad's journey from Mecca to Jerusalem in a single night on a winged creature called Buraq. From



Jerusalem he is believed to have ascended into heaven, where he met the earlier prophets, and eventually God.

Lailat al Qadr : The Night of Power, marks the night in which the Qur'an was first revealed to the Muhammad by Allah.

Lailat-ul-Bara'h:The Night of Forgiveness is the time when Muslims ask God to forgive their past sins.

Milad un Nabi : Milad un Nabi marks the birthday of the Muhammad.

Ramadan :Ramadan is a holy month in which Muslims practice fasting (sawm).

**Group work 3 :** 1) If a Muslim friend tells you that Christians don't pray because they are never seen doing it and they don't fast because it is not compulsory in the Bible, what would you answer ?

2) If a Muslim friend invites you to his/her house for the celebration of Eid ul Fitr and tells you to share their meal and spend the day with them, what would you do? How would you find opportunities to know more about their faith and share yours?

### **G. Islamic law (Shari'ah)**

The Arabic word *shari'ah* means "path," "road," or "way." The word occurs only once in the Qur'an, where God tells Muhammad, 'And now have We set thee (O Muhammad) on a clear road of (Our) commandment; so follow it and follow not the whims of those who know not' (45 :18). As this quotation suggests, God is the source of all law and Muhammad is the lawgiver. *Shari'ah* Muhammad is thus the law or religion of Muhammad. It is the path or way Muhammad trod, and consists of the rules and regulations governing the lives of Muslims. Theoretically, these rules are derived from the Qur'an and from the Sunna (the record of prophetic example or custom) using *ijma* (consensus) and *qiyas* (analogical reasoning).

The Shari'ah is divine law as opposed to human law. It provides the pattern of conduct for Muslims in all matters ranging from how to cut one's nails to how to perform prayers and how to run a state.

In Islamic law, all acts are graded into five main categories: mandatory (e.g. prayer), praiseworthy by not obligatory (e.g. extra prayers), indifferent or neutral (e.g. travel by foot or on horseback), deplorable but permitted (e.g. gluttony), and prohibited or *haram* (e.g. eating pork).

As regards Muslims' personal lives, the Shari'ah prescribes that Muslim men must grow a beard and wear a turban in emulation of Muhammad. Muslim women must wear a veil, like Muhammad's wives. Adult Muslims must pray five times a day, fast and pay *zakat*.

As regards society, the Shari'ah legitimizes and regulates slavery. It dictates how non-Muslims are to live under Muslim rule and prescribes the punishments for different crimes and sins. The punishment referred to as *hadd* are those prescribed by the Qur'an and hadith. They include amputation of a thief's hand, eighty lashes for drinking alcohol and a hundred for fornication, stoning to death for adultery, beheading for apostasy, and execution for the murder of a Muslim.

The Qur'an legitimizes and seeks to regulate jihad (war). The Shari'ah therefore spells out who is eligible to declare a jihad (the imam), who qualifies as a target of jihad (non-Muslims), who is qualified to take part in Jihad (free male adult Muslims), how jihad is to be conducted, how the booty is to be shared, and the reward of martyrdom (paradise). Another meaning of Jihad is the fight against one own fleshly desire. This interpretation of jihad is very common among the sufi orders.

## **Session Four: Main Movements and divisions within Islam**

Within less than three decades of Muhammad's death, the early Muslim community split into two main factions as a result of civil wars during Ali's reign. It is important to note that the divisions in Islam, in contrast to those in Christianity, are rooted in politics rather than dogma. The questions around which the divisions first crystallized were primarily concerned with leadership of the community after the death of the Prophet of Islam. Dogma was always formulated in retrospect to support particular political claims.

### **I. Main divisions in Islam**

<b>Sunni</b>	<b>Shi'a (Shi'ites)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largest division (80% Muslims worldwide)</li> <li>• Believes Muhammad named no successor</li> <li>• Follow Qur'an, Islamic tradition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insist that Muhammad named his cousin and son-in law, Ali, as his successor.</li> <li>• Led by legal specialists and scholars known as "Ayatollahs"</li> </ul>

#### **A. Shi'ites or Shi'a**

The Shi'ites were originally known as *shi'at-Ali* (the party of Ali). They regard Ali as the only legitimate successor to Muhammad and see the first three caliphs as usurpers. They believe that Ali, Muhammad's son-in law, inherited from Fatima part of the divine light believed to be deposited in Muhammad. Thus in their confession of faith, Shi'ites testify there is no god but Allah and

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and Ali is the friend of Allah.' Shi'ites regard Ali and particularly his son Husayn as martyrs. Husayn's murder is commemorated on the Day of Ashura (the tenth day of the month of Muharram). On this day, mourners march through the streets in a funeral procession, while beating themselves with all sorts of objects. Karbala (the place where Husayn was murdered) rivals Mecca as a place of pilgrimage.

Where Sunni Muslims have five pillars of faith (confession, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage) the Shi'ites have six. Their sixth article of faith is that leadership of the Muslim community is vested in an Imam (leader) who must be a direct descendant of Muhammad and Ali, the first imam.

Shi'ites have their own collection of hadith and their own school of law known as *Al-Ja'fariyya*. Great value is placed on the intercession of saints known as the "friends of God."

Shi'ites are mostly found in Iran, Lebanon, Iraq and Pakistan.

## **B. Sunnis**

The name Sunni derives from the word *Sunna*, which we previously encountered in the discussion of hadith (tradition). The Sunna is the record of the example of the Prophet of Islam, and the Sunnis regard themselves as the true followers of his example. Between 80 and 90 percent of all Muslims are Sunnis.

Sunnis accept all four caliphs (including Ali) as legitimate successors to Muhammad. But they regard the caliphs as political, military and juridical leaders of the community, and not as spiritual leaders as in Shi'a Islam.

Sunnis became preoccupied with the political and legal aspects of Islam. *Fiqh*, the study of Shari'ah law, rather than theology became the hallmark of their scholarship. Four different schools emerged:

- The *Maliki school*, founded in Medina by Malik ibn Anas (died 795), is dominant in North and West-Africa;
- The *Hanafi school*, founded in Baghdad by Abu Hanifa (died 767), is now predominant in West Asia (excluding Arabia), Lower Egypt and Pakistan;
- The *Shafi'I school*, founded in Cairo by Imam al-Shafi'I (died 820), is adhered to in Indonesia and East Africa;
- The *Hanbali school*, founded in Baghdad by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (died 855), is the strictest and most fundamentalist of all the Islamic law schools and is the official law code of Saudi Arabia.

By the end of the ninth century, Islamic law had taken a definitive shape with the closing of the gate of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning). *Taqlid*

(unquestioning obedience) became the norm, and there has been little development since then.

## II. Main Movements in Islam

<b><i>The Sufi Movement (Sufism)</i></b>	<b><i>The Wahhabiyya Movement</i></b>	<b><i>The Ahmadiyya Movement</i></b>
Direct communion with God through mystical experience	Urge a return to the Qur'an and Sunna, and strive for the strict application of the Shariah as it was in the Seventh Century during the time of Muhammad.	Prophecy and revelation continue- God has not stopped speaking  Ghulam Ahmad the founder claims to be a prophet superior to Christ and the Mahdi  Principal mission: Brining an end to Christianity

### A. Sufism

Sufism is Islamic mysticism. It is not so much a sect within Islam as a mode of religious experience that began as a yearning for a deeper spiritual spring in Islam and personal fellowship with God. In this respect it was a reaction against Sunni Islamic formalism and legalism.

The word *sufi* was given because the early Muslim mystics wore garments made of *suf* (wool), in imitation of Christian monks. Christian monks are praised in the Qur'an for their devotion and humility (5:85), they thus provided the initial stimulus and inspiration to early Sufis, who adopted an ascetic lifestyle in the belief that worldly materialism and power are impediments to attaining a fulfilling spirituality.

Sufis draw their teaching mainly from the Qur'an and in particular from verses like "God is nearer to you than your jugular vein" (50:16) and "wherever ye turn, there is Allah's face" (2:115). In Sufi teaching, Jesus is a model wayfaring ascetic. In Sufi tradition, while Muhammad was called the Seal of Prophecy, Jesus is the Seal of Holiness.

The main characteristics of Sufi theology as opposed to Islamic theology are:

- Sufism teaches God's nearness to believers, as opposed to mainstream Islamic theology that teaches his absolute transcendence.
- Sufism teaches a personal relationship with God as opposed to mechanical observance of the five pillars of Islam. The ultimate aim of this personal relationship is *faana* (self-extinction in God) and complete union with the Divine.
- Sufism teaches the love of God towards believers and their reciprocal love for God, rather than emphasizing fear of God or punishment in hell. Sura 5:57 serves as a source of inspiration and justification for the emphasis on love.
- Sufis emphasize *tariqa*, the spiritual path of contemplation, rather than the way of the Shari'ah. They see themselves as travellers in this world, on a journey whose final destination is *faana*.

In contrast to traditional Islam, Sufism teaches the need for a mediator in the form of a spiritual master and guide known as a *shaykh*. A famous saying has it that "a believer who does not have a human shaykh has Satan for his shaykh." The disciple must place himself entirely in the master's hands and become "like a corpse in the hands of the body washer." The master blesses his disciples, intercedes for them, prays for them, and prepares amulets and charms to bring them good luck and protection. Some groups believe that the master prays on behalf of his disciples, absolving them from the need to perform the five daily prayers themselves.

Sufis believe that their shaykhs can perform signs and miracles (*karama*), including sometimes creating things *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). Pilgrimages are undertaken to saints' shrines and tombs to offer sacrifices, ask for blessings and make pledges;

Sufi organize spiritual meetings (*majalis*) once a week, normally on Friday evenings. The meeting involve *dhikr* (uninterrupter repetition of the names of God), singing and special dances.

Well-known organized Sufi orders in Africa include the *Qadiriyya*, *Tijaniyya*, the *Mouride Order* in Senegal and the Gambia, and the *Salihyya* and *Shadhiliyya* in East Africa. In some African countries, like the Sudan and Senegal, Sufi orders have acquired great political and financial clout, transforming themselves into political parties.

## **B. The Wahhabiya Movement**

Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792) who founded the Wahhabiyya movement came from Northern Arabia. He studied in Medina and travelled widely in Iraq and Iran. During this time he studied Islamic law, theology and mysticism and became attracted to the teachings of the fourteenth century revivalist Ibn Taymiyaa (died 1328). Taymiyya insisted on obedience to the letter of the Qur'an and Hadith and attacked the veneration of saints and pilgrimages to shrines and tombs.

Upon his return to Arabia, he was expelled from his hometown because of his preaching. Abdul Wahhab was offered refuge by a local ruler Muhammad bin

Saud (died 1765). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Saud family controlled most of what is now known as Saudi Arabia. When their group of Wahhabi missionary-warriors who called themselves *Ikhwan* or Brotherhood captured Saudi Arabia, they desecrated all tombs, including those of the Prophet of Islam, and they advocated the destruction of the sacred Ka'bah. The Wahhabi were also vehemently opposed to Sufism. They urged a return to the Qur'an and Sunna, and strove for the strict application of the Shariah as it was in the Seventh Century during the time of Muhammad.

Military training became part of Wahhabism as the faithful were trained in warfare as *mujahiddun*. Wahhabism, which is the official creed of Saudi Arabia, has since inspired and directly influenced other revivalist movements such as al-Qaida.

Their aggressive approach in their propagation efforts created tensions and open confrontations between reformers (as they call themselves) and mainstream traditional Muslims as is currently the case in Nigeria, Sudan, and Northern Mali.

### **C. The Ahmadiyya Movement**

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who was born in a Qadian, in the Indian province of Punjab in about 1835. Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be the *Mujaddid*, the Renewer of Islam believed to be sent by God at the start of every century of the Muslim calendar. He identified himself as the fourteenth Mujaddid. As the Promised Messiah, he saw his principal mission as the "breaking of the cross," that is, bringing an end to Christianity.

Ghulam died in 1908 leaving a body of written works. Six years later, a rift among the leadership split the Ahmadiyya movement into two factions: *Lahoris* and *Qadianis*. They are declared as heretics by orthodox Muslims and banned from performing the *hajj* in Mecca.

Both Qadianis and Lahoris relish anti-Christian polemic. The Ahmadi theory of the fainting or swooning of Jesus on the cross has been adopted by Ahmed Deedat (Muslim cleric and polemist) in much of his anti-Christian writing, which is widely distributed in many African countries.

**Group work 4:** Do you think the divisions and movements in Islam are similar to the denominations in Christianity? Explain your answer.

## **Session Five: Jesus in Islam**

### **A. Jesus 'Birth**

Jesus and his mother Mary are held in high esteem in Islamic sources. Sixty-four of the 93 verses in the Qur'an that speak about Jesus are found in the nativity narratives in Suras 3 and 19. *Maryam*, or Mary the mother of Jesus, is greatly honoured in Islam. She is the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an (34 times) and whole chapter (19) is named after her. She is identified as a chaste woman whom God chose, made pure, and preferred to all the women of creation (3:42).

Before her birth, her mother pledged her unborn child to God. She was greatly distressed when she gave birth to a girl, and asked that she and her daughter be protected from Satan. Mary was under the guardianship of Zachariah in the temple, where she was miraculously fed.

The Qur'an contains two accounts of the annunciation of Jesus' coming birth (3:33-49; 19:16-34). In Sura 3, God is said to have sent an angel to Mary, while in Sura 19, it was a spirit that was sent to give her good news. The angels appeared to Mary and addressed her in the following words:

O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto Allah). He will speak unto mankind in his cradle and in his manhood, and he is the righteous (3:45-46).

When Mary queried how this was going to be since no man had known her, the angel assured her that God could do anything. When the time came, she gave birth under a palm tree and took the child home to her people. She was accused of having brought shame and dishonor to her family. In response, Mary simply pointed to the infant Jesus lying in his cradle, who then spoke the following words:

Lo! I am the slave of Allah. He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet, And hath made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and hath enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving so long as I

remain alive, And (hath made me) dutiful toward her who bore me, and hath not made me arrogant, unblest. Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the die I shall be raised alive! (19:30-33).

## **B. Jesus as Son of God**

Although the Qur'an accepts the virgin birth, the incarnation is strongly and repeatedly rejected. His miraculous birth is not considered to prove that he was either the Son of God or God. The Qur'an strongly condemns the very idea and insists that Jesus is no more than a human being and a prophet:

The Messiah, son of Mary, was no other than a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) had passed away before him. And his mother was a saintly woman. And they both used to eat (earthly) food! (5:75).

Muslim theologians insist that Jesus was a creature made by God, the creator who has no associate. Muslims also argue that the creation of Adam from dust was even more marvelous than that of Jesus. He had no father and no mother, did not have to go through the normal developmental stages of life, and was honored by God who asked angels to prostrate themselves before him. If unusual birth makes one the Son of God or God, then Muslims argue, Adam qualifies even more than Jesus!

Mainline Islamic teaching about Jesus is summed up in the following quotations from the Qur'an:

O people of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three." Cease! (it is) better for you! Allah is only One God. Far is it removed from His transcendent majesty that he should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient as Defender (4:171).

They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo! Whoso ascribeth partners to Allah, from him Allah hath forbidden Paradise. His abode is the Fire. For evildoers there will be no helpers. (5:72).

The Qur'an denial that Jesus is the Son of God is based on the idea that his conception would have required God to physically take Mary as his wife. The term used for "child" in all except one of the verses denying that God has offspring is *walad*, a word which denotes physical conception. The Qur'an thus asks: "How can He have a child, when there is for Him no consort?" (6:101). In other words, for Allah to have a child, he must take a spouse, and it not in his nature to do such a thing.



The Islamic position seems to be influenced by the pre-Islamic Arab belief that God had daughters in the form of female deities whose intercession was sought. The Qur'anic denials of God having children which were first directed to the pre-Islamic Arabs were then extended to the Christian teaching about Jesus being the Son of God, without a good understanding of what Christians mean by that title. Unfortunately, this position remains the orthodox Muslim teaching regardless of Christian protestations to the contrary.

### **C. Jesus as God**

The Islamic denial of the deity of Jesus is rooted in core Qur'anic teaching and Islamic beliefs about the Oneness of God (*tawhid*), his transcendence, and the nature of revelation.

The core message of the Qur'an is that Allah is *wahid*, the sole divinity. The assertion "Lo! Thy Lord is surely One" (37:4) is at the very core of Muhammad's preaching concerning God, and is constantly repeated throughout the Qur'an (e.g. 'It is inspired in me that your God is One God – 41:6; see also 2:163).

Sura 112 of the Qur'an is the sura of unity (*tawhid*) par excellence: it stresses that God Alone is the Master, not begetting and not begotten, without equal. It asserts the unity of the divine nature, whose intrinsic mystery cannot be fathomed (see also 23:91). God the creator is unique and totally other; to associate anything or anyone with him constitutes *shirk*, the greatest and unpardonable sin. Consequently the Christian teaching that God took a human form and came to dwell with human beings is both alien and repugnant to Islam. In Islam, God is absolute and transcendent – the very possibility of Emmanuel (God with us) is unthinkable.

### **D. Jesus' Mission and Miracles**

According to the Qur'an, Jesus was no more than a prophet. His mission was primarily to the children of Israel, whereas Muhammad's mission was universal. According to the Qur'an, Jesus himself prophesied the coming of a prophet named *Ahmad* or the "praised one" (61:6).

Jesus and Mary are the only two people whom the Qur'an describes as sinless (3:36, 46). Islam rejects the concept of original sin, but nevertheless there is a tradition which states that every son of Adam when born is touched (or probably squeezed) by Satan (and infected with sin). It is at this contact that the child utters his first cry. The only exceptions were Mary and Jesus, both of whom were granted the extraordinary privilege of being preserved from any contact with the devil at the instant of their birth. They are unique, for the Qur'an reports other prophets falling into temptation, sinning and asking for

forgiveness – Adam (7:22-23), Abraham (26:82); Moses (28:16); Jonah (37:142) and Muhammad (3:31; 47:19).

The Qur'an acknowledges that Jesus was the only one of all the prophets given the power to heal the sick and raise the dead, and says that he performed all these miracles by the permission of God (5:110). But it denies that these unique signs of healing and even giving of life indicate that Jesus is something more than a prophet.

In talking about the Qur'anic view of Jesus and his mission, the Christian theologian Hans Küng rightly observes that "the portrait of Jesus in the Qur'an is all too one-sided, too monotone, and for most part lacking in content."<sup>14</sup>

In summarizing the whole Islamic Christology, Craggs notes:

Islam has a great tenderness for Jesus, yet a sharp dissociation from his Christian dimensions. Jesus is the theme at once of acknowledgment and disavowal. Islam finds his nativity miraculous but his Incarnation impossible. His teaching entails suffering, but the one is not perfected in the other. He is highly exalted, but by rescue rather than victory. He is vindicated, but not by the resurrection. His servanthood is understood to disclaim the sonship which is its secret...Islam has for him a recognition moving within a non-recognition, a rejectionism on behalf of a deep reverent esteem.<sup>15</sup>

### E. Jesus' titles in the Qur'an<sup>16</sup>

Arabic	English	Reference
<b>Al-Masih</b>	The Messiah	3:40,45; 4:156-172; 5:72-79; 9:30-31
<b>Abd</b>	Servant	4:170-172; 19:30-31; 43:57-61
<b>Nabi</b>	Prophet	19:30-31
<b>Rasul</b>	Messenger	2:81, 87, 253-254; 3:43-53;156- 171;5:75,79,111, 61:6
<b>Kalima</b>	Word	3:34, 39; 4:169-171

<sup>14</sup> Hans Küng, 'Christianity and world religions : The dialogue with Islam as one model', in *The Muslim World*, (Vol.77, No 2 (April 1987) : 89.

<sup>15</sup> Cragg, K., *Jesus and the Muslim : An exploration* (Oxford : Oneworld Publications, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> Workbook V © Life Challenge Africa 1999.

<b>Ruh</b>	Spirit	2:81,87,253-254;4:169-171
<b>Aya</b>	Sign	19:21; 21:91; 23:50, 52
<b>Mathal</b>	Parable, example	43:157,59; 3:52, 59
<b>Shahid</b>	Witness	4:157;159;5:117
<b>Rahama</b>	Mercy	19:21; 3:40, 45
<b>Min al-Muqarrabin</b>	One brought near	3:40,45
<b>Min al-Salihin</b>	One of the upright	3:40, 46
<b>Mubarak</b>	Blessed	19:31-32

List compiled from *Jesus in the Qur'an* by Geoffrey Parrinder

## **Session Six: Challenges of Islam**

### **A. The Four Major Obstacles**

There are four major obstacles for Muslims in accepting Christian beliefs:

#### **Obstacle 1: Accusation of blasphemy, that "Christians believe in three gods"**

This is an accusation of polytheism and a misunderstanding of the Trinity. Sura 5:73 "They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God."

Sura 5:17 "In blasphemy indeed are those that say that Allah is Christ, the son of Mary."

#### **Muslims claim that God needs no partners**

Sura 6:163: "He hath no partners [or associates]"

Sura 6:21-24 "We [Allah] shall say to those who ascribed partners (to Us): 'Where are the partners whom ye (invented and) talked about?' There will then be (left) no subterfuge for them but to say: 'By Allah our Lord, we were not those who joined gods with Allah.' Behold! How they lie against their own souls! But the (lie) which they invented will leave them in the lurch.

#### **Muslims claim that the unforgivable sin is to associate someone with God**

Sura 4:48: "Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed."

For Muslims, the Trinity is nothing short of blasphemy and a direct contradiction of the Shahadah, their declaration of faith.

For Christians, the Trinity is the epitome of their faith in God who is one (Deut 6:1) in three (Father in the Son in the Spirit). The Father sent the Son incarnate to redeems humans from their sins who now teaches and empowers humans to live for God in the Spirit.

### **The Biblical Response to Obstacle 1**

Clarify all misunderstandings. Christians believe in only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 12:30-32; 1 Timothy 2:5)

One God, "We" (same in the Old Testament as in the Qur'an)

Isaiah 6

Deuteronomy 6:4: "One" can be a reference to a complex unity rather than a simple unity.

### **The one God became a man**

The prophecy is found in Isaiah 9:6: born to a virgin and to be called, "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6) The son will be given to Galilee (Isaiah 9:1), the son will be called Emmanuel "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

1 Timothy 3:16: "He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory."

See also John 1:1-2, 14, 18; Revelation 22:3

### **Obstacle 2: Accusation of a false expiatory sacrifice: "Jesus was not crucified"**

### **The basis for Islamic rejection of the crucifixion is clearly stated in the Qur'an.**

Sura 4:157: "That they said (in boast), 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah'—**but they killed him not, nor crucified him**, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not—"

**Why would Islam reject the crucifixion?**

- God would not allow a true prophet to suffer death in such an unworthy or shameful fashion.
- They allow (pretend) to have credible historical proof that the crucifixion was an illusion by divine intervention and not a real event.

**Christian teaching about the crucifixion:**

Christ was killed upon the Cross, died, and was buried. On the third day, God the Father raised Jesus from the dead with his wounds intact. Christ walked, talked, and ate with His disciples. Later, Christ in the flesh ascended into heaven. This belief is crucial for supporting the doctrine of the blood sacrifice necessary for the expiation of sins, which is rejected by Islam.

Several sects in the early centuries of Christianity rejected the crucifixion of Christ, including the Basilides, who believed falsely that someone else took Jesus’ place on the Cross. The Docetists believed falsely that Jesus was not resurrected in a true physical form but only as a spiritual apparition. They also believe falsely that the crucifixion was not real.

**Common Islamic sources for refuting the Crucifixion**

Source and date	Doctrine
<p>Cerinthians Followers of Gnostic teacher Cerinthus (A.D. 90-100)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creator is not the supreme God</li> <li>• The supreme God sent a divine Christ to join the man Jesus who was not born of a virgin.</li> <li>• They taught the crucifixion and resurrection but said that the divine Christ parted from the human Jesus.</li> </ul> <p><b>Refuted by the apostle John</b></p>
<p>Basilidians Followers of Gnostic teacher Basilides (Alexandria, Egypt, A.D. 125-150)</p>	<p>The resurrection of the material body is not possible because matter is evil. The crucifixion did not take place, but Simon the Cyrene was crucified in the place of Jesus.</p> <p>The supreme God is called "Abraxas." There are 365 different heavenly places each directed by a different God.</p> <p>Abraxas sent his son Christ who was joined to the man Jesus, teaching knowledge (gnosis) that had once been lost</p>

	<b>Refuted by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Clement</b>
<p>Carpocratians Followers of Gnostic teacher Carpocrates (Alexandria, Egypt, 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.)</p>	<p>The Creator is not the supreme God. Deny the virgin birth of Jesus the Christ Jesus was given a special knowledge during a previous existence. Anyone can attain this knowledge for themselves.</p>
<p>Gospel of Barnabas Fraudulent medieval text (A.D. 1400-1450)</p>	<p>"...the wonderful God acted wonderfully, insomuch that Judas was so changed in speech and in face to be like Jesus that we believed him to be Jesus...The soldiers took Judas and bound him, not without derision. For he truthfully denied that he was Jesus...So they led him to Mount Calvary... and there they crucified him naked...." (trans. Ragg L &amp; L, no date, pages, 216-217)</p> <p>This book contains major historical, geographical, and linguistic errors. It was probably written by an unhappy Christian in medieval Europe that was converted to Islam and wanted to try to support their new religious beliefs.</p>

Toby Jepson, *Muslims and the Crucifixion*  
([www.debate.org.uk/topics/apolog/crucifix](http://www.debate.org.uk/topics/apolog/crucifix))

**Obstacle 3: Accusation of using the wrong source for the eternal Word of God: "Your Bible has been falsified and obsolete."**

**Islam believes that the Bible has been superseded by the Qur'an.**

*"As the Gospel replaces the Torah of Moses, so the Qur'an replaces the Gospel."*

The Islamic belief is supported by references to the Torah being written a long time after Moses lived, apparent contradictions in the Gospel accounts,

and the attempt to show how Paul might have corrupted the original religious teachings of Jesus.

### **A Christian Response: Do not be intimidated.**

Accusations are easy to make but difficult to prove in the face of demonstrated truth.

*The Old Testament has not been superseded by the New Testament but the New Testament fulfills the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17-18)*

### **The Bible is the Eternal Word of God (Matthew 24:35)**

Examples:

**Passover** (Exodus 12) fulfilled in 1 Corinthians 5:7

**Circumcision** (Genesis 17:9-14; Deut. 30:6; Jeremiah 31:31-34) is fulfilled in Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:3

### **Christians ask Muslims:**

1. Why should anyone change the Bible? Severe punishment awaits them (Rev. 22:18-19).

2. When was the Bible changed? We have Biblical manuscripts from the time before Muhammad.

3. Who changed the Bible?

4. Where is your "original Bible manuscript"? Then we could compare the different versions.

5. How can one man change the Bible? Others would have objected to it.

6. How can the Word of God be changed? Even the Qur'an denies that (S. 6:34; 10:64).

***"Say: We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us (i.e. the Qur'an), and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes (of Israel), and that given to Moses and Jesus ... We make no difference between one and another of them ...". (S. 2:136)***

### **B. Folk Islam: Dealing with bondage<sup>17</sup>**

#### *Introduction*

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<sup>17</sup> Most of the information in this chapter is taken from Horst B. Pietzsch, *Welcome Home: Caring for Converts from a Muslim Background* (Nairobi, Kenya: Life Challenge Africa, 2004).

Muslims claim to live "the perfect way of life" and to have a faith that's being "perfected for them." The occult however is a harsh reality within this religion, which may easily be overlooked. Those who leave Islam have to leave all that "baggage" behind in order to experience the fullness of life.

## **Folk Islam**

Since Islam has an occult component, Muslim Background Believers (MBB) can only win this battle with the proper spiritual weapons. They may be tempted to react with human strength and wisdom, but that may compromise them. The main battle-ground is the mind. Paul affirms:

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

*- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5*

Folk Islam is full of superstition and magic. It is a mixture of animistic spiritism clothed in Islamic garb. The concern is for power not really for truth. Muslims usually do not admit this, but MBBs are a good source of valuable insight into the unseen face of Islam. Different areas will exhibit different forms and practices of these beliefs in the "unseen."

## **The reasons for using magic**

There are certain issues for which Muslims consult witchdoctors or mediums in the Muslim community. The local leader of the mosque is often the person with these supernatural powers. MBBs have to confess these occult practices and also find the biblical answers and alternatives.

### **1. Illness**

When Muslims become ill, they might visit the specialists who have healing power. When a woman cannot bear children, she might go to the grace of a "saint" (krammat) to pray, and make promises in order to conceive a child. It is believed that the "saint" has healing power because of his "baraka" (blessing).

### **2. Love**

When Muslims want to marry a particular person of their choice, they might use magic to win the other's affection. Sometimes a hair, perfume or something else from the other person will then be used in the spell. When the wife of a Muslim finds out that her husband is involved with another woman (possibly intending to marry her, too), she might have someone put a curse on the "competitor" in order to keep her husband.



### **3. Prosperity**

Magic and superstition are used to become wealthy. A Qur'anic verse written on a parchment and sealed in a little bag may serve as an amulet. These are carried in the purse or as a charm under the clothing with the expectation of being superior in business.

### **4. Insight**

People seek guidance in difficult circumstances. They often visit diviners who search in cowries and give them instructions for sacrifices or offerings to make in order to succeed.

**5. Forcing someone to accept Islam** In marriages between a Christian and a Muslim it may happen that the Muslim tries "everything" (magic) to win the Christian spouse over to Islam. When the Christian truly accepts Jesus as Lord it would be reported that "it did not work."

### **6. Curse on unbelievers**

When Muslim relatives want to bring MBBs back to Islam, they might "pray" for them or even put curses on them. MBBs need intercession when this happens. It's helpful if MBBs have confessed any sin and renounced Islam including the inherited sins of the forefathers. Then they are able to bind the curses according to Matthew 16:19.

### **7. Occult manifestations in houses**

Muslims experience demonic activities in their houses probably much more than we might expect. The manifestations are manifold, such as the disappearance of valuable objects, objects breaking, spirits being seen, beds being moved, noises are heard in the house (poltergeist), etc. These things put fear into children and adults.

### **8. Various other manifestations**

A deceased woman "visited" her Muslim sister as a spirit at night, as "Allah makes things possible for those who are close to him." Other Muslim women have been sexually abused by spirits. MBBs have felt throttled and choked, they have known something heavy to sit on their chest, totally immobilizing them and rendering them unable to call on Jesus.

## **Uprooting the Islamic Mindset**

When a Muslim turns to Christ the "strong man" in his life has to be bound (Mark 3:27), otherwise the Christian faith will not grow deep enough and the MBB might even be drawn back into Islam. The old must be cleared out first. We need to labor with the MBBs so that they come to the point where they want to separate completely from Islam. We have a testimony of an MBB, who had a serious spiritual crisis after some 5 - 8 years of serving Christ. The reason was not a lack of knowledge about his new faith in Christ, but some Islamic myths which had never been dealt with.

## **What brings an end to occult bondage?**

When we evaluate the spiritual situation of MBBs, we must take their spiritual, physical, and medical history into account. Problems are never only physical or spiritual. They are linked. So we must get the whole picture, such as unconfessed sin, having been involved in occult practices, false religions, and sins of the forefathers which form part of our family and personal history.

The early church included a renunciation of Satan in its public declaration of faith. For some reason, this has disappeared from most evangelical churches. A very important truth has been neglected. We must choose the truth and renounce the counterfeit. In other words, it's not enough to declare one's new faith in Christ. The MBBs also have to say what they do not believe and subsequently distance themselves from the counterfeit and idolatry. There is no middle ground with truth.

Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me. He who does not gather with me, scatters" (Luke 11:23). There are not many paths to the Father; there is only one way (John 14:6). Repentance is a change of mind. This is not a mere mental acknowledgment. The idea is that MBBs should go through the process so they can testify about how they were, and now show that they think, believe and walk in a new way.

## **Strongholds can be overcome**

The good news is that strongholds can be destroyed. Negative thinking and behavior patterns are learned, and they can be unlearned through discipline and Bible study. Some strongholds are the result of demonic influences or spiritual conflicts. If people believe Satan's lies, those lies will control their lives. They need to tear down all the lies established in their mind against the knowledge of God. They can choose what to believe.

People under spiritual attack need to be assured that they are not crazy, but that there is a battle going on for their minds. This insight brings incredible relief to people. The center of all spiritual bondage is the mind. That's where the battle must be fought and won in order to experience the freedom Christ purchased on the cross.

"For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5).

## **General Outline**

This is how strongholds can be overcome. It is the truth that sets us free. Therefore sin has to be confessed and brought into the light. Then Satan will have to let go and have no more hold over people. Satan's deception has to be exposed, then it loses its power. No special gifting is necessary for these steps. This authority is given to all children of God.

After becoming a Christian by giving one's life to Jesus, the following points help to overcome the power of sin and Satan in the lives of new MBBs.

**1. Confessing**

The sins of false religion, occult practices, pride, unwillingness to forgive, lies, habitual sin and rebellion need to be confessed by name to Jesus.

**2. Sins of ancestors**

Reject Satan's right over the MBB's life.

**3. Islam and its strongholds have to be renounced with an understanding of their inadequacy and deception.**

**4. Maintain freedom**

Once MBBs have been set free, they have to know how to deal with curses and how to live in a hostile demonic environment.

### **Being pro-active, using God's armor**

The greatest protection from Satan and his evil power is the "armor of God". Receiving God's protection is not passive. God wants us to actively use our spiritual defense. Note in the following verses how often we are directed to take an active role.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm"  
*Ephesians 6:10-18*

Since their position in Christ is secure, MBBs may ask: "Why do I have to get actively involved? Can't I just rest in God and let him protect me?" Any soldier in battle will have to use his armor, not only put it on. Just wearing it does not do the job. God is in command and He will do every- thing necessary to secure the victory. In fact, He has done so already. Choose to be strong in the Lord today and take an active stand in the strength of His might. We are vulnerable to Satan's deception if we fail to clothe ourselves daily with the spiritual armor.

### **Conclusion**

When MBBs are in bondage they will not see themselves as God's children who are loved unconditionally, but as failures, and will talk negatively. This deception can be overcome when we minister God's truth to MBBs, reminding them of their identity in Christ. We need to be Scriptural in our approach if we want people to find freedom in Christ. This is no field for "specialists only" but for all who know their authority through Scripture.

## **Session Seven: Reaching Muslims for Christ**

### **A. Attitudes towards Muslim: Do's and don'ts in sharing with Muslims**

#### **DO:**

1. Wisely and prayerfully choose a friendship circle in a Muslim community.

The older you are, the better you will be in multi-cultural ministry (especially women).

2. Dress modestly and with dignity.
3. Be hospitable and accept hospitality.
4. Respect a community's piety and culture.
5. Honor family and elders.
6. Take pride in holy living.
7. Take a few gifts with you as friendship tokens.

#### **DON'T:**

1. Insult. "When in doubt, bite your tongue!"
2. Work with the opposite sex!
3. Take on a group.
4. Embarrass someone who is responsive.
5. Use the "M" word.
6. Show people the soles of your feet; touch people and receive gifts with left hand.
7. Write in sacred texts.

## **B. Methods for sharing the Gospel**

- Personal Evangelism (One on One should be the main method).
- Use of Qur'an
- Chronological Bible Study
- Jesus Film
- House Church
- Church Multiplication Movement

Important other methodologies:

- Radio
- Literature
- Other Mass Media

## **C. One Method for reaching Muslims: Oral Presentations of the Gospel**

A common method for reaching Muslims is through the oral presentation of the Bible, also referred to as chronological Bible storytelling. One of the proponents of this method has been working among female Muslims in the Middle and Western Europe for over 25 years. More on her story and this method can be found in Fran Love and Jeleta Eckheart, eds., *Longing to Call Them Sisters: Ministry to Muslim Women*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2000, 146-173. Although this book deals with reaching Muslim women, the same principles will also apply to reaching Muslim men.

### **Why teach with oral methods?**

- 1) Today over half of the world's population only communicates orally.
- 2) The majority of Muslim women communicate orally.

Most people who only communicate orally learn best by experience, by association, and not by rational arguments. Information is organized by events and by interaction with other people. They must hear something several times to memorize the information.

### **Why present the Biblical story through oral methods?**

**Romans 10:14** "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

It is one thing to preach with sincerity, it is another thing **to be seriously heard** by others. This method helps people to listen to the message.

The oral method puts **the emphasis on the listener** and what they hear rather than on the preacher/talker and what they say.

**Uneducated people can learn this method**, and many times they often already use it in their daily lives. They can learn Biblical stories and teach them to others.

This method **avoids unnecessary debates and arguments** over theological points and **focuses on the Biblical story which allows God to work completely** in the hearts and lives of the listeners.

This method is used by the apostles Peter and Stephen in the Book of Acts. They **presents the Old Testament chronology to support their claim about the Gospel message**. Jesus used the same method while walking with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. He gave them the words of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms before revealing to them that Christ is the Messiah. This process allows God to reveal himself before dealing with the difficult but necessary message of Christ's death and resurrection.

This method **breaks down barriers and helps someone understand the context of the Gospel message**, especially in a context where the Biblical story is not well-known.

### **What is the oral method for presenting the Bible?**

There are two parts:

- 1) **Tell** the Biblical story (in chronological order)
- 2) **Dialogue** about the story by responding to questions without giving commentary.

The listeners are left to **get the meaning of the story and apply it** to their lives.

If a group is well-educated, the story can be read together accompanied by in-depth teaching during the following dialogue session.

The majority of the time **it is best to give the story without commentary** and allow the listeners to think about the story before adding commentary.

### **How does one use the oral method?**

Tell the stories in the context of the listeners' culture, otherwise the stories will be considered fables.

Determine which stories communicate well within the listeners' worldview

For **Muslim women**, some of these stories need to include those . . .

that **demonstrate God's love**. The image of father is not a popular image for God among Muslim women, since the father is to be feared because of his severe punishment and secrets should be kept from him.

that **describe the sacrifice of blood for sins**. Since Muslims reject the death of Jesus on the cross, there was no need for him to die. It needs to be explained why Jesus needed to die on the Cross to save us from our sins.

that **God is close at hand** and not far away.

that **describe how our sins are known by God and need to be confessed and forgiven**. God is not a spectator, but intimately involved in our lives.

### **How does one select the biblical stories to tell?**

Some guidelines:

- Study the listeners' worldview and identify the barrier and bridges to communicating the Gospel.
- Make a list of essential Christian doctrines that need to be understood.
- Choose a theme that can be supported by various biblical stories, such as characteristics of God, the sinful nature, the separation of sinful humanity from God, the acceptable sacrifice for sin, and the promise of salvation).
- Organize these Biblical stories in order to communicate them well.

### **How does one use these methods for evangelization?**

Invite a Muslim to study the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), which is considered a sacred book for Muslims, Jews, and Christians, in order to learn about God the stories He has given us.

"We are going to study this story to see what God says about himself." There is no need to argue or defend the veracity of the stories.

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## **Appendix 1: Personal (One-on-One) Evangelism of a Muslim**

**Theme:** From Christianity to Islam to Christ Jesus

Use this questionnaire to interview two Christians (that you know and who are the same gender as you) who have converted to Islam. Many Christians are converting to Islam because of peer's influence, lack of knowledge of their faith, marriage with Muslims, and economic reasons. This step-by-step questionnaire is a way to understand the background and reasons for conversion of these people in order to find bridges and help them rediscover Christ as Lord and Savior.

**Note:**

1. Pray: Make sure you take time to pray for these two people, asking God to prepare their hearts and to give you wisdom and love as you go through this process.
2. Tell the truth: Explain to these people that you will be writing down (or record) their answers for your own research.
3. Be patient. Listen to the person and make sure you let him/her fully express her thoughts.
4. Continue the relationship: This exercise gives you the possibility to continue the conversation and develop the relationship with the person of the same gender.

**Questionnaire:**

- 1) How long have you been a Muslim and how did you become a Muslim?

This is to listen to their spiritual journey and see the motivation behind their conversion. As Wesleyans, we are convinced that God is already at work in people's lives through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and prayer. It helps understand their current spiritual status.

- 2) What did you think about Christianity when you were Christian? What do you think about Christianity today?

In most cases, these people are friends and family members and will not be offended by the question, as there is already a natural relationship.

- 3) Which aspects (beliefs, values) of Christianity did you like? Are you still applying or valuing them in your new faith?

This question helps understand the things this person values and approaches him/her not according to his/her beliefs but his/her needs and personality. It gives their understanding of God and how their worldview has been affected or influenced by Islam.

- 4) What do you think about Jesus (Isa in the Qur'an)?

This is to avoid discussing about the differences between Islam and



Christianity or comparing Christ to Muhammad. It is a way to let that person talk about Christ and his/her experience of Christ. It can be a crucial step where that person confesses that Jesus is still/her heart or that he/she still prays Jesus.

- At this stage, one can start explaining the ministry of Christ and go along the Roman road:  
Romans 3:23: "There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."  
Romans 3:10: "There is no one righteous, not even one."  
Romans 6:23a: "For the wages of sin is death...It will be important to stress on the meaning of sin and explain it in the perspective of guilt, shame and fear."
- At this stage one can start sharing the idea of God's grace and love.  
Romans 6:23b "But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."  
Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- This is the moment to explain the mission of Christ and His unique sacrifice and that He did not come to make followers of a religion with rules and duties but disciples. We can then quote: "Romans 5:11"...we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

It is also time to answer the questions he/she may have and let him/her read the Bible verses. This is a moment for sharing the presenter's own personal testimony.

Romans 10: 13: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Romans 10:9 "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Romans 10:17 'Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.'

- In most cases, we are told to ask that person if he/she wants to accept Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, but for someone still in Islam it doesn't mean much. One can ask that person if he/she wants to know and learn more about Christ and suggest a Bible study or the showing of the Jesus Film. One can continue to develop that friendship and let God touch her/his heart through acts of service and love.

This is a step-by-step process; one needs to keep in mind that our contact can open his/her heart to God at any stage. Evangelism among Muslims is a long and arduous process where one needs to be open and sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit, bearing in mind that God is able and He loves everyone.

**Appendix 2: Revised List of Biblical Stories for Reaching Muslim Women.** Created in Paris in 1999 by A.H. and her colleagues

1	Introduction: Tell about the characteristics of God	
2	The history of creation: All was good and perfect	
3	The angels and fall of Satan. Explain the presence of Satan and evil spirits in the world	Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:11-19
4	The sin of Adam and Eve plus the consequences. God is all-knowing.	
5	Cain and Abel. God is all-knowing	
6	Noah and the Flood. God does not tolerate sin, and God also has the power to save.	
7	The tower of Babel. There are consequences for disobeying God.	
8	The call of Abram/Abraham and his walk of faith with God. Abraham was an example of faith though he was not without sin	
9	The birth of Ishmael. The banishment and God's promise to Ishmael. God keeps his promises. This story may be risky due to the differences in the Bible and the Qur'an	
10	The sacrifice of Isaac. God provides the necessary sacrifice	
11	Summary of the life of Isaac and Jacob. Birth of Jacob's children. God takes care of us, even when we falter.	
12	The life of Joseph. His birth and experience with Potiphar's wife. God was always with Joseph. Even if each person has a sinful nature, the act of sin is a choice.	
13	The experiences of Joseph in prison, the famine and reconciliation with his brothers. God desires that we forgive one another	
14	Summary of 400 years, including the birth of Moses to his call upon Mt. Sinai. God has not forgotten His people.	
15	God delivers the people from slavery in Egypt. The story of the Passover. God defines the acceptable sacrifice.	
16	God guides His people in the desert and gives the Ten Commandments. God provides.	

17	The law, the people's rebellion against God, and a summary of the 40 years in the wilderness	
18	The entry into the Promised Land, especially Jericho. The emphasis is on the history of Rahab, her faith and decision to follow God	
19	Ruth, the emphasis on her decision to follow God. This story, along with Rahab, shows women they can make their own decision to follow God.	
20	Hannah and the birth of Samuel. Hannah and her faith in the Almighty God. God needs help from no one in order to fulfill his purpose.	
21	Saul and the sorcerer (seers) of Endor. It is important to explain why Saul has lost all communication with God. This story directly addresses popular forms of Islam.	
22	David and Bathsheba. Tell much of David's life to show how he knew the law and still disobeyed. Sin has its consequences even when individuals repent.	
23	Elijah and Elisha. Put an emphasis on Naaman and the fact that salvation includes obedience to what God says, and not upon what individuals want to do.	
24	The birth of Jesus, including prophecies about his birth.	
25	The baptism and temptation of Jesus	
26	Jesus is more powerful than evil spirits: The demoniac of Garadenes	
27	Jesus is more powerful than nature: calming the storm, feeding the 5000	
28	Jesus is more powerful than sickness and death: The healing of the woman who was sick for 12 years, and the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus	
29	Jesus has the power to forgive sins. The adulterous women in the house of Simon and the healing of the man with four friends	
30	Jesus and the women at the well	
31	Palm Sunday (entry to Jerusalem) to the Last Supper	
32	Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection	
33	Jesus' ascension. Review of the meaning of several stories that have already been told	
34	The story of Lazarus and the rich man. The day of Judgment	
35	Meet with every listener individually and ask them to make a decision	

### **Appendix 3: Guidelines for Small Group Activities**

Educational research demonstrates that shared-learning activities, such as small group projects and discussion groups, raise the student's ability to gain and retain knowledge for practice outside the teaching environment. Students are able to develop critical thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis as they work in small group. Assigning small group projects help students to:

- 1) Learn how to work together in a team environment through positive interdependence.
- 2) Understand group processes, including process management, conflict management, synergism, collaboration, resource utilization, individual accountability, shared knowledge, cooperation, planning and problem solving.
- 3) Effectively and efficiently develop oral and written presentation skills.
- 4) Be better prepared for social interaction at work.
- 5) Explore and integrate a broader range of ideas and expertise.
- 6) Respond to different learning styles.
- 7) Supplement the knowledge of the facilitator/teacher.
- 8) Develop a sensitivity to and awareness of cultural and gender diversity

When engaged in small group activities, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. When considering the formation of groups, take into account that it is desirable to balance the small groups by gender, age, geographical origin, local language, and experience. Try to bring as much diversity as possible to the group.
2. Select a spokesperson(s)/Leader(s) for the group to keep the team on task and for reporting back to the rest of the class about the small group's findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The spokesperson(s) should also serve as the recorder(s) for the group.
3. Select a timekeeper for the group. Most small group activities should not exceed twenty minutes. The timekeeper's task is to keep the group moving forward and on task to complete the assignment within the allotted time frame.
4. During the course, students are encouraged to try to participate in as many

small group roles as possible—spokesperson, recorder, and timekeeper.

5. Solicit the facilitator/teacher's assistance at any time the small group is unable to stay on task.

## Quiz #1 (Session 1 and 2)

Respond "true" or "false" to the following questions.

1. The local god of Mecca, Hubaln was highly venerated in the ancient temple known as the ***Ka'bah***. **(TRUE)**
2. Muhammad was raised by his grand father Abdallah who took care of him. **(FALSE)**
3. The whole of the pre-Islamic era in Arabia is referred to in Islamic terminology ad the ***Jahiliyya*** (Period of Ignorance). **(TRUE)**
4. The night of revelation is remembered in Muslim history as the Night of Power (***Lailatu-l-Qadr***). **(TRUE)**
5. *Ali*, Muhammad's cousin and son-in law who was married to the Prophet of Islam's only surviving child, *Fatima* was his first successor. **(FALSE)**
6. A Muslim must believe in One God (Allah). Belief is the very basis of the ***al-Din*** (religion) of Islam. **(TRUE)**
7. The Qur'an mentions only twenty-eight prophets by name, including Noah, Job, Moses and Jesus. **(FALSE)**
8. The Qur'an is four-fifths (80%) of the length of the New Testament. **(TRUE)**
9. Some jinns are Muslim and good, while other are non-Muslim and evil. **(TRUE)**
10. Eid ul Fitr is the Night of Power, marks the night in which the Qur'an was first revealed to the Muhammad by Allah. **(FALSE)**

## Quiz #2 (Session 3 to 5)

Respond "true" or "false" to the following questions.

1. The *qibla* is the name for the orientation that Muslims must adopt when praying. (TRUE)
2. The Sunnis insist that Muhammad named his cousin and son-in law, Ali, as his successor. (FALSE)
3. **Zakat** is the performing ritual prayers in the proper way five times each day. (FALSE)
4. In Islam, eating pork is regarded as deplorable but permitted. (FALSE)
5. Muhammad Ibn Adbul Wahhab (1703-1792) who founded the Wahhabiyya movement came from India. (FALSE)
6. In Islam, prayer can be performed individually, but it is preferable to pray in a group led by a prayer leader (*imam*). (TRUE)
7. Sufis emphasize *tariqa*, the spiritual path of contemplation, rather than the way of the Shari'ah. (TRUE)
8. According to the Qur'an, Jesus himself prophesied the coming of a prophet named *Ahmad* or the 'praised one'. (TRUE)
9. The Shi'ites have five pillars of faith (FALSE).
10. The Shari'ah provides the pattern of conduct for Muslims in all matters ranging from how to cut one's nails to how to perform prayers and how to run a state (TRUE).

## Final Exam:

ET 306 – The Muslim World

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Final Exam Grade: \_\_\_/20

### Instructions

- 1) Time allowed: 120 minutes
- 2) Following are three questions based on the content of this course. You will choose only 2 questions and then write all that is necessary to answer them well, but write a minimum of one full page for each question. In all, you will have written at least 2 full pages during the two hours.
- . 3) Manage your time well. Don't spend longer than an hour for each question.
- . 4) The use of your course notes is allowed. Use them.

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Don't forget – answer only two questions, NOT three! Begin your essay by noting the number of the question to which you are responding.

Question # 1: Mention the main religions and beliefs, which existed before the advent of Islam. According to you, how did these religions and beliefs influence the making of the religion of Islam?

Question # 2: Do Muslims and Christians worship the same God? What would you answer to a Muslim who tells you that you both worship the same God and each one of you can keep his/her religion and respect each other?

Question # 3: You have been mentoring a Muslim Background Believer who comes one day to tell you his/her dream. In the dream, he/she saw a man clothed in white who told him/her to return to Islam or he/she would die. He/she told you that since that time he/she is having nightmares and is seriously considering visiting his Muslim father for help. What will you say using the Bible and do as practical ways to help him/her?



