COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL TO THE MUSLIMS IN FOUAD ELLIAS ACCAD: A REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Title

COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL TO THE MUSLIMS IN FOUAD ELLIAS ACCAD: A REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

[Keywords: Communication; Gospel; Qur'an; Muslims; Islam; Reformed; Mission; Culture; Evangelism; Contextualization; Accad]

1.2. Formulating the problem

1.2.1 Background.

Currently Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. The annual statistical table on global mission 2003 indicates the growth of Islam to be 2.11%. Next in line is Christianity (total all kinds) at 1.27 % (Barret & Johnson, 2003:25). The religions of Christianity and Islam represent the two largest distinct religions in Africa (Kraemer, 1947:269). Christians conducting any mission outreach in Africa will not only have to be able to effectively reach out to Muslims, but will also have to be able to compete with them on the mission field. Relations between the two religions are somewhat strained as a result of cultural stereotyping and a history of conflict between the two religions (Esposito, 1992:3; cf. Ruthven, 2003:17; Bowker, 1995:13). In some countries the penalty for officially converting to Christianity can be death (Accad, 1997:7, 50). In most cases the convert is shunned by his family and community, which terminates his opportunity to witness. The life of a convert from Islam is fraught with real danger. Muslims see conversion to Christianity as a political step (Accad, 1997:8).

A missionary religion itself, Islam proves very defensive regarding interference from outside. This is especially true of Christian evangelism. The reason for this defensiveness may be found in three sources:

- Historically: The relationship between Islam and Christianity has been overshadowed by the conflict between Muslim and Christian armies and missionaries in their struggle for power and souls (Esposito, 1992:3). The situation dates from as far back as the Crusades (McKay, *et al*, 1992:292) through to the colonial expansion of the "Christian West" (Mansfield, 2003) to the current "war against terrorism," following the September 11th destruction of the World Trade Centre (Ruthven, 2002:21).

- Socio-politically: Other than is the case with "Christian" society, Islamic society does not differentiate between "state and church" or "religion and government" (Accad, 1997:64). Islam is a state of life involving every aspect thereof (Lunde, 2003:102, 107). Turning from Islam means turning from God, country, culture, people, family and friends (Accad, 1997:8).

- Dogmatically: Much of what Muslims believe about Christianity is shrouded in misunderstanding (Accad, 1997:56). De Beer (1996:31) states the following erroneous beliefs that were held by Muhammad concerning Christianity:
    - Jesus is not the Son of God.
    - Jesus did not die on the cross.
    - The Trinity consists of the Father, the Virgin and the Child and is totally rejected.
    - Jesus did not rise from the dead.
    - No one can pay for another's sin.
    - Jesus will return to marry, to break the symbol of the cross and acknowledge Islam.
    - The prophecy of the coming of the Holy Spirit (*Paraclete*) is actually a prophecy of the coming of Muhammad.
    - The Christians tampered with their Scriptures and Islam abrogated those passages.
    - The concept of God as Father or us as His children is unknown in the Qur'an.
    - Man is not born in sin.

1.2.2 About Fouad Elias Accad

Fouad Elias Accad grew up in Lebanon in the Greek Orthodox Church. In his youth the Bible was chained to the church's pulpit and forbidden to all but the priests. In his teens he got a copy of the Bible and secretly read the truth about Jesus Christ. One day in his late teens he met followers of Christ who openly carried Bibles with them, searching in it for God's truth. In them he found friends who prayed to God and found answers to their deepest questions in the Bible.

He learned that there was life-changing Truth in Jesus Christ. He considered it necessary to "unchain" the Bible in his country. He served as Secretary of the Bible Society for the Middle East for 42 years (Glasser, *ed*, 1976:258). He later became pastor and he and his wife spent their lives reaching out to Muslims. As scholar he knew ancient Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Aramaic and Armenian. In his later years he was a respected *hakeem*[1], or "wise one," a fact that opened many unique doors to him. He passed away in 1994. In his ministry he used passages from the Qur'an to show that Jesus was more than a prophet and a miracle worker. His motive was to begin where the Muslims were (Accad, 1976:31). Petersen (1992:94) wrote, saying that Accad had a singular obsession and love: the one billion Muslims in the world.

1.2.3 Problem statement.

In his missionary approach to Muslims, Accad (1997:30) prefers friendship evangelism as a method through which Christians can effectively communicate the gospel. In this kind of approach, Christians should use the Qur'an as a point of contact in their relationship with Muslims. The purpose of using verses from the Qur'an in one's ministry to Muslims is to

- help Muslims to re-evaluate their false beliefs about Christ;
- take advantage of their immense respect for the Qur'an; and
- lead them to the point of being willing to read the Bible so that a more accurate profile of Jesus Christ may be presented to them (Accad, 1997:38).

[1] Transliterations of the Arabic words may vary from others sources. Where possible the transliteration used by Accad in his book "Building Bridges" is followed. The discrepancy in transliteration occurs because there are no hard rules and standards for transliterating Arabic (Caner & Caner, 2002:27).

In spite of erroneous beliefs held by Muslims, Accad (1997:10) maintains that the Qur'an itself is pro-Bible, pro-Christ and pro-Christianity. This contradicts the approach used by early missionaries who considered the Qur'an to be a devilish book. Their approach was more confrontational, without trying to understand the mindset of Muslims or their religious set of beliefs.

The main research problem is to ascertain whether Accad's method of communicating the gospel to Muslims by using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible, can be justified in terms of a Biblical theology of mission and is therefore acceptable within the Reformed tradition.

The individual sub-problems that will be researched include the following:

- How truthful is Accad's premise regarding the historical relationship between Christianity and Islam and his view that thier respective cultural heritages have led to strained relations and mistrust between Christianity and Islam?

- Accad's method of communicating the gospel to the Muslims. What are his basic premises and the principles underlying his method?

- How should we assess Accad's method of communicating the gospel to the Muslims from a Reformed perspective? Is his method of using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible Biblically acceptable within the framework of the Reformed tradition?

1.3. Aim and objectives

1.3.1 Aim

The research is aimed at investigating and evaluating Accad's method of communicating the Gospel to the Muslims through the use of the Qur'an, by identifying and evaluating the basic premises and seven principles underlying his method and testing them against the Bible as understood and interpreted from within the Reformed perspective.

1.3.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of this research include the following:

- To evaluate Accad's premise regarding the historical relationship between Christianity and Islam and their cultural heritages which preposedley lead to strained relations and mistrust between Christianity and Islam.

- To study and outline Accad's method of communicating the gospel to the Muslims, and to outline and analyse the basic premises and seven principles underlying his method.

- To analyse and evaluate, from a Biblical perspective, Accad's method of communicating the Gospel to the Muslims.

- To ascertain whether his methods and the basic premises and seven principles are Biblically acceptable from within the Reformed tradition.

1.4 Central theoretical argument

Accad's method of communicating the Gospel to the Muslims by using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible, within the context of friendship evangelism, is Biblically acceptable from within the Reformed tradition.

1.5 Research methodology

This missiological study is undertaken from within the Reformed tradition. In the Reformed tradition the aim is to shed the light of God's Word on the work of mission (Bavinck, 1960:xiv). In achieving the objectives of this study the following method will be used:

- To evaluate Accad's premise regarding the historical relationship between Christianity and Islam and the cultural heritages which preposedley leads to strained relations and mistrust - an historical overview will be given with reference to the relationship

between Christianity and Islam and their histroical and cultural heritages of Islam. Primary and secondary sources will be consulted, analysed and interpreted.

- To study and outline Accad's method of communicating the gospel to the Muslims, and to outline and analyse the basic premises and seven principles underlying his method Accad's book "Building Bridges" will be consulted, analysed and interpreted[2].

- To evaluate Accad's method of communicating the gospel to the Muslims from a Reformed perspective, Biblical principles from a Reformed perspective will be identified by the exegetical study of the relevant Scriptural passages and Reformed sources available. The grammatical historical method will be used (Kaiser & Silva, 1994:19). Against these principles, a critique of Accad's method will be presented. Specific passages that will be taken into account are: Jeremiah 23:9-40; Acts 15:1-35; Romans 1:18-2:16; Acts 17:16-33; Romans 14:1-23; and 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1.

[2] Refrences from the Bible are made from the New International Version and from the Qur'an from ARBERRY, A.J. 1998. The Koran: interpreted. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CHAPTER 2

ACCAD'S PREMISE REGARDING THE HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

2.1 Chapter overview

Accad's method is built on the premise that the effective communication of the Gospel to Muslims is hampered by a historically strained relationship and mistrust between Christianity and Islam as well as their cultural heritages and differences (Accad, 1997:34; 39).

The aim of this chapter is to outline and evaluate Accad's premise regarding the historical relationship between Christianity and Islam and their cultural heritages which leads to strained relations and mistrust[3].

Open Doors [4] (ANON, *s.a.*:3) describe Islam as a form of cultural imperialism in which a seventh century religion with accompanying culture was elevated to divine law and carried over from generation to generation into the 21st century. Kraemer (1947:270) describes Islam as a theological system that is at the same time a complete civilization in the medieval sense of a *Corpus Islamicum*. Because of its theocratic inspiration it is also an intensely political religion. Bailey and Matheny (1989:122) describe Islam as a societal structure and an integrative worldview and not merely a religion. Religion is the one factor that integrates almost every aspect of social life. No other religion in the world has been able to foster the same unity of theological attitude, cultural solidarity and theocratic-political sentiment, in its adherents as did Islam (Kraemer, 1947:270). The historical and cultural setting of the origin of Islam is therefore very important especially for two reasons:

- The understanding of the Qur'an, Muhammad and early Islam provide the paradigm for emulation by Muslims and Islamic movements in every age (Esposito, 1992:25).

[3] The historical overview in Accad's book "Building Bridges," is very limited in terms of a historical outline. In order to evaluate Accad's premise other primary and secondary sources are refered to.
[4] "Open Doors" is a missionary society specializing and helping the persecuted church in countries with religious restrictions. They also specialize in Islam (Louw, 1996:70).

- The understanding of the Qur'an, Muhammad and early Islam will provide the worldwide Christian community with a framework within which to better understand the wrong perceptions associated with the Islamic religion (Accad, 1997:39).

In this chapter attention will be given to:

- The growth and situation of the church in relationship to the Roman Empire and the Arabic Peninsula up to and during the time of Muhammad.
- The historical and cultural situation in Arabia, before and during the time of Muhammad.
- The background, life and achievements of Muhammad as the prophet of Islam, with attention to his relationship with Jews and Christians.
- The new community arising from Muhammad's endeavour, their scriptures, practices and doctrines.
- Different groups or factions that developed within the Islamic community.
- The contact between Christianity and Islam in three phases:
    - First phase: Islamic expansion – from Muhammad to the 1600's.
    - Second phase: Islamic decline – 1600 to 1950's.
    - Third phase: Islamic independence – 1950's to the present.

2.2 The growth and situation of the church up to and during the time of Muhammad

When considering the historical relationship between Christianity and Islam it is necessary to give a quick overview of the growth of the church and how this had an impact on the Arabian Peninsula.

After Augustus, who sought peace with his eastern neighbours, most Roman emperors were at constant war with the Parthians in the east. With the downfall of the Parthians in 226 A.D. the Romans continued this war with the Sassanids, a people from southern Iran. Rome's eastern frontier was eventually set by Emperor Diocletian (284-305) (McKay, *et al*;

1992:216). After the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180) the Empire was beset with civil strife that was brought to an end by Emperor Diocletian. In an effort to control some of the rebellious governors Diocletian divided the Roman Empire into a Western and Eastern half. This division would in time become permanent and play an important role in the Crusades. During the first three hundred years after Christ, the Roman emperors still believed that the Empire's only hope of survival lay in their alliance with the gods, these being the ancient protectors of Rome (Walker, 1992:123). Christianity was considered a threat to the state's success.

Born from the Hebrew/Jewish fold, Christianity quickly spread to the Greek communities and subsequently Christianity grew mainly among the Hellenic cities of the Roman Empire (Mohammed, 1999:25). During the second century Christianity started to spread in the Middle East. Because the Church in the eastern provinces of the Empire allied itself with the Greek culture, using the Greek language, it affected mainly the Greek upper class of the Hellenic cities. There always remained a gulf between the cities and peasants and tribesmen of the countryside. This gulf was mostly a linguistic one. In Syria for instance the city people spoke Aramaic and the nomads and semi-nomads on the fringes of Arabia spoke Arabic (Mansfield, 2003:10). This division between city and rural areas was not watertight. In Arabia the city people and Bedouin were tied together by bonds of economy, culture and more specifically kinship ties (Berkey, 2003:41). Information concerning the world at large did travel between the different communities in Arabia.

Among the Greek community all did not accept the Biblical message as presented to them. Some tried to make a synthesis of Oriental culture, Hellenism and Christianity. This gave rise to heretical doctrines surrounding the Incarnation and the Trinity. The most important of these heretical doctrines were Arianism[5], Nestorianism[6] and Monophysitism[7] (Mohammed, 1999:26).

[5]In 318, Arius a presbyter in Alexandria began to teach that Christ (the Logos) was created by God out of non-existence. As a creature he was subject to change and in principle capable of virtue and vice. As a creature there was then also a time when the Son/Logos did not exist (Walker, 1992:131).

[6]Nestorius the patriarch of Constantinople taught that Christ the Person was the locus of two entirely different natures: human and divine. Consequently he taught that Mary could not be considered the mother of God (*theotokos*), but only the mother of Christ (*Christotokos*) (Walker, 1992:166).

[7]Eutychus (c. 378-454) taught the opposite of Nestorius. He taught that Christ had two natures before the incarnation, but only one thereafter (*monophysis*). Consequently Christ had only one nature the divine. The Monophysite doctrine was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (Mohammed, 1999:27) and its adherents anathematized (Denny, 1994:54).

At the time of Diocletian and his successor, Constantine, Christianity had grown so strong that it could no longer be ignored or crushed (McKay, *et al*, 1992:220). After a dream, Constantine, before a decisive battle for control of the Western part of the Roman Empire, had the Chi-Rho monogram (initial letters of the name of Christ) painted on the shields of his soldiers. Constantine won and in 313 he recognised Christianity as a legitimate religion with the Edict of Milan. With this Constantine militarised Christianity; Christ Victorious was acceptable to Arab warriors in Syria, who would eventually fight with the Byzantine Empire against the Zoroastrian Persians, the pagan Arabs and the Muslims (Johns, 1992:164). During Constantine's rule the cause of Rome and the cause of Christ would become one (Walker, 1992:125). This would eventually have an effect on Christian outreach to their Muslim neighbours up to the present time.

When Constantine assumed control of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire he found a debate raging in the church which had split the Eastern provinces. These theological disputes would give rise to separate and distinct ecclesiastical networks and structures, churches, monasteries, and schools. In turn this fuelled sectarian competition especially between the Nestorians and Monophysites. Berkey (2003:26) considers it significant that the competition grew sharper in the early years of the seventh century, just before the Arab invasions, when churches and monasteries began to purge their ranks of nonconforming members.

These theological debates, for the time being surrounding the teachings of Arius, threatened state unity (McKay, *et al*, 1992:232). Constantine called a church council of bishops to meet at Nicaea in Asia Minor. Of the two or three hundred bishops attending all were from the Eastern provinces, except for six from the West (Walker, 1992:134). Constantine dominated the proceedings (Walker, 1992:134) and had soldiers present at the council to ensure that the bishops reached an agreement (Mohammed, 1999:26). Arius and those who refused to accept the formulation of the Nicene Creed were banished (McKay, *et al*, 1992:232). Of those groups that did not accept the formulation of the Creed the most notable were the Armenian and Coptic churches and the Nestorians. The division over the creed was not only on theological grounds as the Armenian and Coptic churches were the Syrian "national" churches (Wessels, 1978:14). The formulation gave rise to a variety of questions which would keep the debate raging for a long time.

In 380 A.D. Emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official state religion. Roman temples were stripped of their statues and the practice of the old Roman state religion was made a treasonable offence. Christians who dissented from orthodox doctrine were persecuted by the state (McKay, *et al*, 1992:231). Some of those persecuted by the Orthodox Church and State fled to the Arabian Peninsula (Wessels, 1978:19). With this the mission of state and church became more or less inseparable. Madany (1987:58) says that no Christian missionary can approach the Christian mission to Islam thinking that the past was unimportant or had very little to teach. From Church history he gleans two factors which played a role in the rise of Islam:

- The Church failed to acquaint the Arabs with the true contents of Scripture.
- The early Church failed to maintain the purity of the faith and to grasp the redemptive core of the Bible.

With all the good that may have come from Christianity becoming the official state religion, it is necessary to note that it became "state religion". The church was now the Roman church, embodying the religion of the Roman Empire. Because of this the Gospel became blurred: misunderstood and misrepresented. The effects of this may be seen in the different "sects" that arose from the difference of interpretation of church dogma. Sects that were mostly defined by national demography. Humanly speaking this situation annulled the Gospel as message of hope and salvation for all people. The Gospel had become subordinate to different churches and their agendas. The churches on their part represented different peoples or governments, with their policies. It is plausible to accept that the Gospel message the Arabs received was much distorted by the political and dogmatic situation of the time. In the Christian mission to Islam these things should be taken into consideration.

2.3 The historical and cultural situation in Arabia, before and during the time of Muhammad

According to Accad (1997:39) one of the misconceptions held by Christians, that hinders effective Christian–Muslim communication is the view that Arabia before and during the time

of Muhammad was a desert wasteland populated only by warlike Bedouin tribes who knew nothing of "the one true God." This conception holds that Muhammad brought knowledge of "the one true God" to the idol worshipping Bedouin filling the spiritual vacuum with his anti-Christian message about Allah.

In addressing these perceptions attention will be given to the social, political and religious situation in the Arabian Peninsula before and during the time of Muhammad.

2.3.1 The Arabian Peninsula: Socially

The Arabs are first mentioned in an Assyrian inscription of about 850 B.C. as a nomadic people from the north Arabian Desert who paid their tribute in the form of camels (Mansfield, 2003:6).

While some of the inhabitants of the desert settled around oases, the wide open spaces between oases were populated by nomadic tribes who lived from the produce of their camel, sheep and goat herds. Because of the uncertain rainfall they were forced to travel after grazing. Even though tribes moved in recognised areas, set boundaries were impractical. Wandering after grazing, tribes inevitably clashed. Hostilities normally took the form of raids on one another's herds and would continue until better grazing and rainfall caused rivals to drift apart (Glubb, 1970:24, 25).

In contrast to the fertile lands of Egypt, Syria and Iraq which were constantly occupied by one or the other powerful nation, and where Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and a residual paganism contested for followers and authority, the desert of Arabia suffered no such fate. The Arabian Peninsula produced a radically different social and political dynamic, especially in the areas dominated by Bedouin (Berkey, 2003:40). According to Glubb (1970:25) the Bedouin culture had four distinct aspects:

- *War in search of honour.* Tribal wars provided glamour to their monotonous existence. The aim of these wars was not to inflict great injury, but to acquire glory and honour by excelling the other in courage and endurance. Treachery was regarded as shameful and sometimes tribes would agree on a date and place for a battle to take place. Von

Grünebaum (1970:18) reflects that during the century before the rise of Islam the Arab tribes dissipated all their energies in trivial guerrilla fighting against each other. It is important to note that honour was highly prized among these tribes. This aspect of honour and respect would survive and be very important in the Muslim culture to the present day (Accad, 1997:12).

- *Poetry.* With much time at hand and a sonorous language the nomads excelled in the composition and recitation of poems, celebrating their own successes and heroes. During Muhammad's lifetime literature was highly respected. Even before Muhammad's time the best poems of famous Arabic poets would be displayed on the walls of the *Ka'ba* (Accad, 1997:38). After the rise of Islam it became customary to cover the *Ka'ba* with a cloth known as the *kiswah.* At first the *kiswah* was the same colour as the banner of the reigning caliph but in time was made black. The practice of displaying verses of poetry on the walls of the *Ka'ba* continues to this day, with the exception that verses from the Qur'an is embroidered in gold thread onto the *kiswah* (Amin, 1978:132).

- *Hospitality.* Crossing the desert was dangerous and travellers had to reckon on the goodwill of the scattered Bedouin communities. As in war the Bedouins tried to excel each other in their hospitality, so as to gain fame and glory in this way. The harsh environment of the desert led to a great deal of hostility among the Bedouin. To curb tempers social interaction became strictly controlled and meetings take place according to prescribed patterns. When Arabs meet there is prescribed greetings, inquiries and stereotypical answers. A quest is always offered food and drink before he leaves, and to decline the offer is `n insult to the host. Lavish hospitality shows the host's wealth and increases his prestige (Bailey & Matheny, 1989:121).

- *The blood-feud.* With no stable government there were no police, laws or judges to protect the weak. Within the tribe, the weak were looked after by the stronger members. During his early ministry, Muhammad would be looked after in this way by his wife and uncle. The ambitions and greed of the stronger members of society were curbed by the blood-feud. According to the blood-feud any member was entitled to kill the murderer of a family member. The feud could be compounded by the payment of heavy compensation, but only if the victim's family agreed. Contrary to the honourable rules

> governing warfare, the blood-feud carried no restrictions. The murderer, or one of his family members, could be killed in his sleep, by stealth or by trick. The aggressor lived in perpetual fear of his life. The blood-feud served as social "glue," placing realistic constraints on the anarchy of nomadic life and limits on the endemic violence, in the absence of centralised government (Berkey, 2003:40).

Bedouin tribesmen prided themselves on their endurance in war, generosity, hospitality, protection of the weak and the fact that they avenged every insult or injury with interest[8]. To be slow in reaping vengeance would expose a man to contempt and dishonour (Glubb, 1970:27). According to Gabrieli (Glubb, 1970:19) Bedouin society was entirely dependent on the principle of tribal solidarity. It is only within the tribe that the individual could find safety and glory. Membership to a tribe ensured a minimum of personal security (Von Grünebaum, 1970:15). The basic loyalty of the individual was therefore held for the tribe and family. To betray the tribe was considered a huge disgrace (Glubb, 1970:56). The power that bonded people together on clan and tribal level was known as *'asabīya*, a kind of powerful "group feeling" (Denny, 1994:46). A person's descent was determined by his tribe and not by where he lived (Von Grünebaum, 1970:14). This tribal solidarity was carried over into Islam. This would be part of the reason why Muslims who convert to Christianity are seen as apostate, turning their back on family and friends. Considering the honour of the family, the penalty for officially converting to Christianity, is death (Accad, 1997:7).

The oases dwellers consisted of farmers and merchants. The farmers raised date palms and other small crops. Merchants travelled from oases to oases into Syria, Egypt and Persia. Merchants were the "newspapers" of the day, bringing news of current events from afar. A good relationship existed between the Bedouins and the merchants who needed protection for their goods and lives. Merchants would import weapons, clothes, etc. for the tribes and buy their camels from the tribes. In return the tribes protected the caravans in their area. Upon entering a tribe's area a merchant would give an agreed upon gift or sum of money to the

[8] These aspects or attitudes of hospitality and compassion for your own and the destitute are also reflected in Mohammad's own life. After receiving his call from Allah, Mohammad feared that he was beset by demons and confided in his wife *Kadidja*. The *hadith* (see § 2.5.2) accounts that *Kadidja* comforted him by saying that Allah would never disgrace him because *"You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones."* (Caner & Caner, 2002:42). Muhammad also avenged himself on poets who spoke degradingly of him (Caner & Caner, 2002:50, 54).

tribal chief. This would ensure safety of passage for his caravan (Glubb, 1970:29). Before Islam three months a year were considered sacred and no fighting was allowed during this time. However, plundering of caravans played an important part in the politics of the Arabian people (Glubb, 1970:30).

The people were mainly animists by religion, worshipping a variety of spirits who were often based in a particular rock or shrine. They had no written codes of law, and crimes were restrained by the lasting fears of vengeance. Concerning communal acts of violence, no restraints existed. The frequent inter-tribal disputes could only be settled by reference to an arbiter (*hakam*), a wise authority on tribal customs (Mansfield, 2003:14).

2.3.2 The Arabian Peninsula: Politically

For the most part the Arabian Peninsula was devoid of indigenous traditions of permanent political institutions. Social identity rested on perceived patterns of kinship. Political authority rested on the same principle. Tribes could, through military accomplishment or through the control of cultic sites, acquire a certain "nobility" (Berkey, 2003:40). Thus temporary alliances and federations were formed between tribes and clans, rather than between individuals and institutions. Men who were highly respected were sometimes accorded a limited and temporary authority as *hakam*, a mediator selected through a process of consensus to provide limited guidance to and to negotiate differences between individual and tribal rivals (Berkey, 2003:40).

Politically the Arabian Peninsula was not completely cut off from world events. In the fight between the Roman and Sassanid Empires, the Romans made use of Arab tribes as "federates" and allies. This increased the cultural exchange and spread of Christianity among the Arabs (Berkey, 2003:44). These tribes acted as buffer kingdoms or vassal states between Byzantium and their Persian rivals. Byzantium also encouraged some of the Bedouin to settle on the frontiers, where they actively Christianised them in order to strengthen their political ties (Johns, 1992:164).

The Byzantine Empire tried to exert its influence on the Arabian Peninsula through Abyssinia (Ethiopia). Direct and constant contact was kept between Mecca and Abyssinia, via the sea and trade routes (Wessels, 1978:16). Shortly before the *Hijra*, some of Muhammad's followers would flee Mecca and find refuge in Abyssinia, where they were allowed to practise their religion without hindrance (Glubb, 1970:119). The influence of the Ethiopian Christians on the Arabs may be seen in the number of religious loanwords from Ethiopian origin found in the Qur'an (Wessels, 1978:16).

In effect Arabia was divided into spheres of influence. In the north the Sassanid Empire held sway through *Hira* on the border with Arabia. In the south Byzantium affected its influence via Ethiopia through *Najran*. Arabia's political life must be seen against the background of this struggle between the Sassanid en Byzantine Empires (Von Grünebaum, 1970:20).

The reality of this situation is best explained by means of an example.

Since the beginning of the fourth century Yemen came under the influence of Abyssinia (Ethiopia). With this Arabia came into contact with Monophysite Christianity spreading from Egypt via Abyssinia to Yemen. At the end of the fourth century the Arabs drove the Abyssinians out of Yemen. This did not result in an upsurge of the traditional religions. However, Judaism started to spread at an unprecedented pace (Von Grünebaum, 1970:21). Byzantium was prepared to make common cause with the Monophysites abroad, as this furthered their own political cause. Because the Byzantines did not tolerate the Jews, the Jews became acceptable allies to the Sassanid Empire.

At the beginning of the sixth century Byzantium supported Abyssinia in their policy of expansion. Their first successes forced the king of Yemen, *Dhu Nuwas*, to flee to the interior, where he accepted the Jewish faith (Von Grünebaum, 1970:21). He then led an attack on the Christians of *Najran*. *Najran* was the most important Christian settlement in the south of Arabia (Wessels, 1978:15). The attack was undertaken for the reported burning of the synagogue in *Najran*. His main concern may have been political. He tried to keep good relations with the Sassanid Empire, while the Monophysite Christians in *Najran* kept contact with the Byzantine Empire. Emperor Justinian intervened and asked the ruler of Abyssinia (a Monophysite Christian) to help the Christians in *Najran*. The Ethiopians defeated

Dhu Nuwas and occupied the region for half a century, until they were overthrown by the Sassanids (Berkey, 2003:47). In 525 with the death of *Dhu Nuwas*, his empire became a satrapy of Abyssinia (Von Grünebaum, 1970:22).

In time *Abraha* would build this satrapy up into an almost independent state under an Abyssinian ruling class. *Abraha* encouraged the spread of Christianity. In 550 he also tried to get control of Mecca, which at this time was under the influence of the Sassanid Empire. He failed and this largely strengthened the Meccans' "national" pride. Not much later the Yemenites rose against the Abyssinians and with the help of the Sassanid Empire they expelled them. Independence was followed by internal strife and in 597 the Sassanid Empire took over Yemen. They proceeded to convert the Yemen Christians to Nestorianism, a form of Christianity acceptable to the Sassanids because it was irreconcilably hostile to the Byzantine imperial church and Monophysitism, dominant in Ethiopia and Egypt (Von Grünebaum, 1970:22).

These events describe the effect of a state church divided by dogma and nationality. The church was no longer the bringer of "Good News" (Romans 10:15), but peons of state policy (see § 2.2). Mohammed (1999:28) is of the opinion that it is unlikely that the connection between religion, politics and culture would have escaped the attention of the Arabs, living as a buffer state between the two superpowers. With the birth of Islam it was only "natural" that they would copy the same connection and also use power in achieving their religious goals.

2.3.3 The Arabian Peninsula: religiously

Muslims describes the time before Islam as the *jahiliyya*: the "time of ignorance" (Berkey, 2003:39). The dominant religious traditions of pre-Islamic Arabia were polytheistic, but little is known about these (Berkey, 2003:42). The people were animists and worshipped a variety of spirits or gods, usually identified with a specific rock, well or place (Denny, 1994:52). Idolatry was prevalent and the *Ka'ba* (cube) in Mecca (which Muslims believe was built by

Abraham and Ishmael[9]) housed a number of deities and demigods which were worshiped by the Arabs (Ahmad, 1987:3). The black *Ka'ba* in Mecca was not the only one in Arabia. There was also *Ka'bas* in *Najran* and near *Tabāla* (in white stone) (Von Grünebaum, 1970:24).

In Mecca a pilgrimage was held annually to the *Ka'ba*. Lasting three days, large numbers of Arabs from all over Arabia would visit. A tax, the *rifada* was collected so that the guardians of the *Ka'ba* could provide the poor pilgrims with food and water during this time (Glubb, 1970:64). Some of the taboos governing a visit to the *Ka'ba* were that pilgrims had to walk around the *Ka'ba* seven times. They were not allowed to do so in "profane" clothes and had to get fresh clothes from the custodian of the house (Glubb, 1970:81). These practices have been taken up in Islam. Muslims who undertake the *hajj* (pilgrimage) circle the *Ka'ba* seven times and all that enter Mecca do so in a simple white robe (*ihram*) to demonstrate their purity and unity (Denny, 1994:130; cf. Caner & Caner, 2002:129).

Early Arabic sources as well as the Qur'an make reference to individuals known as ***hunafa*** (sing. ***hanif*** and their religion ***hanifiyya***). The word is an Arabisation of the Syrian word meaning "pagan." In Church language it was used for heretics (Von Grünebaum, 1970:25). These people professed a monotheistic faith, against the traditional polytheistic religion, that was neither Jewish nor Christian, but in a general way was connected with Abraham (Berkey, 2003:48). Arabians were not immune to outside influences and through their contact with Christian Byzantines and Abyssinians, and Zoroastrian Persians they had begun to acquire some monotheistic ideas by the time Muhammad started his mission (Mansfield, 2003:14). Tradition records that there were *hunafa* in Mecca, during Muhammad's time. They were dissatisfied with the pagan environment and made a habit of going on retreats into the caves of the surrounding mountains (Lunde, 2003:18).

The name Allah is a conjunction of the definite article *al* and an ancient Semitic word for deity: Arabic *ilah*; Babylonian *ilu*; Hebrew *el*, *elohim* (Schoeps, 1967:227). In Arabic it is used in the same way as the Hebrew form (*elohim*) (Van der Walt, A.J., 1985:7). Allah was

[9] Muslims also believe that the well inside the courtyard of the *Ka'ba* was a spring opened up by the Archangel Gabriel for Hagar and Ishmael (Glubb, 1970:28).

known in Arabia long before Muhammad. Allah was the high god of Mecca, especially of the *Quraysh* tribe, into which Muhammad was born. He was considered the creator and sustainer who would help when called on in need. With the start of history he left creation. Lower divinities existed to tend to daily life. In time of hardship or when young men were initiated into the secrets of the tribe Allah's name was called upon (Denny, 1994:52).

Allah had three daughters known as: *al-Lat, al-Uzza*, and *Manat* (Berkey, 2003:42). When, after encountering opposition from the people in Mecca, Muhammad received a revelation whereby Allah supposedly granted the people of Mecca permission to worship *al-Lat, al-Uzza*, and *Manat.* This was contrary to Muhammad's monotheistic message. Gabriel then revealed to Muhammad that Satan had placed the words in Muhammad's mouth, and Muhammad was allowed to change the verses. Muslim tradition (*hadith*) calls this controversial issue the "Satanic Verses" (ANON, 2004).

The *Ka'ba* was the holy sanctuary of the *Quraysh* and Allah was called the "master of the house." Every year people would undertake pilgrimages to Mecca and the *Ka'ba* (Schoeps, 1967:228). Initially Muhammad would use the name Allah with caution. Later, however, he used it as the only name for his God. He probably did so because of his contact with Syrian Christians. Their name for God is *allaha* which sounds like the Arabic. Muhammad took this name from the old-Arabic pantheon, cleansed it of its polytheistic content and gave it the content of creator and sustainer as well as final judge of mankind. Van der Walt (A.J., 1985:6) believes he did this because his main aim was to create a monotheistic religion.

Arabia was not devoid of knowledge of the God of the Bible. The Gospel reached the Arabian Peninsula from Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-40) across the Red Sea to Yemen. In later years Ethiopia would defend Yemen because they had the same religion (Accad, 1997:40). A member of Muhammad's family, *Waraqa ibn Nofal* was a professed monotheist and is alleged to have translated portions of the Gospels into Arabic (Glubb, 1970:68).

Arabia and the Jews

The Jews and Arabs had a long history together. Herod from Idumaea and appointed king of Judea in 40 BC by the Romans was an Arab by race. He was, however, a Jew in practice and saw himself as the protector of the Jews. But even though he had rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem, as a Helleniser and Roman protégé he was despised by the pious Jews (Mansfield, 2003:10). With the suppression of Jewish revolts in Palestine during the first and second centuries, Jews had sought refuge in Arabia (Berkey, 2003:46). Within the Roman Empire the Jews' situation changed after Christianity had become the state religion. The state continuously interfered with Jewish practices and tried to force them to adhere to Roman law (Berkey, 2003:17). Jewish religion was being defined as hostile to Christianity and the Roman state. Persia (Sassanid Empire), on the eastern border of the Roman Empire became a refuge for Jews fleeing the persecution (Berkey, 2003:27). With this Jews became more readily aligned with Sassanid interests than with Byzantium interests.

An important aspect of Jewish religious life before the rise of Islam was the strong current of messianism. Jews in the Near East looked forward to divine intervention and messianic salvation. In late antique Judaism, the Messiah was a political figure. It is significant to note that these Jews thoroughly combined their political and religious lives. The political and religious turmoil of the seventh century stoked the flames of messianism among the Jews of Palestine and Syria. Muhammad may have encountered Jews in Medina claiming a prophetic status or messianic role (Berkey, 2003:52). Some of the Jews in Medina believed that Muhammad was their long expected Messiah (Glubb, 1970:143; Accad, 1997:40). Berkey (2003:53) holds that the rise of Islam must be understood against the background of Jewish messianism as well as the religious turmoil characterising the Near East at the time.

Arabia and the Christians

Christianity had been present in the Middle East from the first century A.D. The first contact between Arabs and "Christians" is noted in Acts 2:11, at the time of Pentecost. Philip gave the Gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), from where the Gospel spread across the red sea to Yemen (Accad, 1997 40). Paul also spent three years in Arabia (Galatians 1:15-18). These efforts resulted in the presence of entire Christian tribes in Arabia. In time Arabs

would come into contact with Christianity in some form or the other. For the most part this contact would not be between the Arabs and the "orthodox" church of the West.

So it came that in the time before and during the life of Muhammad, the Arabs knew not one united Christian church. The schism over dogma resulted in rival networks of bishops, priests and churches in both Egypt and Syria. The difference between churches was not determined by theological issues alone, but by political, cultural and ethnic factors (Wessels, 1978:13; cf. Berkey, 2003:24). The Christianity of the rural Syria and Egypt was intermixed with legend, magic and ancient superstitions left over from paganism. Some of these legends found their way into the Qur'an: that Christ spoke in the cradle or made birds of clay that came to life (Glubb, 1970:295).

The main Christian influences on the Arabian Peninsula was Monophysite through Ethiopia via *Najran* and Nestorian through Persia via *Hira* (Wessels, 1978:16). The advance of the Nestorians into Mesopotamia would result in the establishment of a see in *Hira*. The first noted mentioning of a priest (Hosea) from *Hira* attending a synod is made in 410 AD (Von Grünebaum, 1970:23). In Syria Christianity would continue to grow, even into the Islamic period (Berkey, 2003:24).

The Christian Roman Emperors tried their best to get the Arabs into their own sphere of influence. In the middle of the fourth century Constantius sent a bishop (Theophilus Indus) to convert the Southern Arabians. His mission was not a great success but Berkey (2003:45) is of opinion that it demonstrates the complex intersection of religious, strategic and commercial interests in Arabia. During the fifth century Monophysitism and Nestorianism would facilitate the development of a distinctly Arab Christian culture. The Nestorians of central Mesopotamia and of *Hira* congregated into a community of "servants of God" an *ibād* wherein the tribal differentiations tended to disappear. Von Grünebaum (1970:23) considers this to be a forerunner of the *ummah*, where Arab speakers grouped around an ideology. The fifth and sixth centuries would be marked by violent revolts against imperial and patriarchal authority. With this a systematic persecution of the Monophysites began and whole communities of monks were expelled into the desert. These monks spread their beliefs among the Arabs, consolidating their own hostility towards the established church (Johns, 1992:165).

Muhammad's contact with the Church is mostly attributed to these "sects" who did not recognise the official or orthodox Roman dogma. Muhammad himself may have been more influenced by the Nestorians. Wessels (1978:18) indicates how Muhammad's early ministry is dominated by themes dominant in the Nestorian church at that time. Some of the non-Biblical stories in Qur'an also stem from Nestorian sources. Lastly, in his polemic against the Jews, Muhammad used arguments used by the Nestorians against the Jews in Syria.

Except for the Monophysite and Nestorian groups some of the other tribes were Christianised, but only partially or imperfectly so. Berkey (2003:45) shows that this may be reflected in the Qur'an, where it is suggested that some Arabs understood the Christian trinity to consist of God, Jesus and Mary. Christianisation must also be seen against the Arab habit of whole kin groups converting (Berkey, 2003:46). What was true for Christianity was true for Islam. Many Arab tribes converted *en bloc* after their leader visited Muhammad. These conversions were rather an act of political agreement than genuine religious change (Glubb, 1970:337).

Arabia and the Zoroastrians

Some of the tribes in the Arabian Peninsula were converts of the Zoroastrian religion (Berkey, 2003:30). The religion became known to them through the Sassanid military presence along the Persian Gulf and Southern Arabia (Berkey, 2003:47). The religion was founded in the sixth century B.C. by an Iranian prophet and reformer known as Zoroaster. He rejected the polytheism of his time and taught the people of *Ahura Mazdā* (The Wise Lord). According to Zoroaster *Ahura Mazdā's* twin sons entered an eternal rivalry at the beginning of creation. The one *Spenta Mainyu* (Bounteous Spirit) chose good (truth, justice and life) while the other *Angra Mainyu* (Destructive Spirit) chose evil (destruction, injustice and death). The world was caught up in these events and set for destruction, a destruction which only the followers of "good" will survive (ANON, 2003).

2.4 Muhammad: the Prophet of Islam

Mohammed was born in 570 A.D. as a member of the well established *Quraysh* tribe. His father died shortly before his birth and his mother died when he was about six years old.

His grandfather, guardian of the *Ka'ba* (Cooper, 1993:104), then took care of him until the formers death (Lunde, 2003:18). His uncle, *Abū Talib*, who belonged to a poorer branch of the family, then took responsibility for him (Guillaume, 1969:24). In later years it would cause Muhammad grief that his parents died as unbelievers, especially since God forbade him to intercede for them (Accad, 1997:27).

At the age of 25 he began to work as a camel driver for a rich widow, *Khadija*, whom he eventually married (Rahman, 1979:11). He had a very happy marriage with *Khadija* who supported him greatly in his religious endeavours. *Khadija*, fifteen years Muhammad's senior, died when he was fifty years old (Rahman, 1979:11). During his life with *Khadija* Muhammad never took other wives (Cooper, 1993:105). Nuadé (1974:8) proposes that Muhammad's later polygamy was an attempt to relive some of the marital bliss he experienced with *Khadija*. His **multiple marriages** also served to strengthen his alliances and had definite political value (Cragg, 1984:25).

Eventually Muhammad would have had 13 wives and consorts (Al Araby, 1995:18). Some of his marriages were political; in order to forge alliances, some to provide support for women who had lost their husbands and some were love matches. Two of Mohammad's wives, *Rayhana* and *Sufia* were Jewish, widows of Jewish tribal chiefs. Also noteworthy is that *Maryam* his eighth wife was a Christian slave-maiden from Egypt (Van Rooy, 1993:108). Culturally polygamy was customary in Arabia (Von Grünebaum, 1970:15). After *Khadija*, his favourite wife was *`A'isha, Abū Bakr's* daughter, who in the end tended to Muhammad on his deathbed (Lunde, 2001:21). His marriage to *`A'isha* is considered by some to be Mohammad's most questionable union. They were betrothed when she was six years old and Mohammad consummated their marriage when she was nine years old. This was unheard of even for Mohammad's day. She would become a very jealous wife and fiercely loyal supporter of Mohammad (Caner & Caner, 2002:59). After Muhammad's death she would play an important part in the politics of the Empire, as well as in the fixing of traditions (Gardet, 1959:14).

His many wives did not make for a tranquil household. In this regard it is interesting to note Muhammad's relationship with daughter-in-law *Zaynab*. Muhammad became emotionally

involved with her. During a visit to his son's house, she informed him that *Zayd* was not home. Muhammad immediately left, even though he had all the right to be there even when *Zaynab* was alone. Apparently *Zaynab*, who was very beautiful, and *Zayd* was not very happy together (Denny, 1994:79). When *Zaynab* told *Zayd* about Muhammad's strange behaviour, *Zayd* sensed the cause and offered to divorce *Zaynab*, so that Muhammad might have her as his own. This affair created a great commotion among Muhammad's followers. They considered his union to be incest as adopted children were considered blood relatives. A second objection concerned the pre-Islamic practice which held that when a man died his wives became the property of his son. Muhammad himself had prohibited this practice saying it was disgraceful for a man to marry his late father's wives. The people felt that Muhammad had for all practical purposes broken his own rule (Glubb, 1970:236). But Allah revealed to his prophet that he would allow Muhammad to marry *Zaynab* (Confederates 33:37[10]). Upon revealing Allah's command *`A'isha* is reported to have said: *"Truly thy Lord makes haste to do thy pleasure."* These verses have become very controversial (Denny, 1994:79). Furthermore, the Qur'an limits the number of wives a man may have to four. When Muhammad married *Zaynab* he exceeded this number. Again Allah specifically authorised Muhammad to do so (Confederates 33:50) (Glubb, 1970:237).

Concerning Muhammad's revelation, tradition seems to indicate that Muhammad may have suffered **epileptic fits** when he was young (De Beer, 1996:29). The case for epilepsy was first brought against Muhammad by a Byzantine writer (Guillaume, 1969:25). Rahman (1979:13) does not favour the view that Muhammad suffered from epilepsy. He considers the afflictions Muhammad suffered to be directly linked to the revelations Muhammad received. In support of his view he states that these afflictions started when Muhammad was 40 years old (i.e. the time of his calling as prophet); they only occurred when he received revelations and lastly he deems it unlikely that a sophisticated society like those in Mecca and Medina could not recognise epilepsy for what it was (Rahman, 1979:13). In the light of Muhammad's exceptional ability as ruler and statesman, Guillaume (1969:25) ascribes the case for epilepsy to anti-Muslim prejudice. He (1969:56) indicates that the feeling of violence and compulsion, and the outward appearance of "possession" was sometimes observed and recorded in the

[10] A chapter in the Qur'an is called a *sura*. Each chapter also carries a specific name. Some resources refer to this name as well, i.e. Sura 33:37 is referred to as Confederates 33:37. The name and first number indicate the same chapter in the Qur'an. This method of numbering will be followed in this work. *Sūra* means "degree or step" by which the faithful mount up (Ali, 1993:13).

Hebrew prophets. Caner and Caner (2002:85) advises that it is best to let the accounts on what happen to Mohammad speak for themselves without comment since identifying Mohammad with a neurological disease or demon possession does little to advance the Gospel witness.

Muhammad was very devoted in his religious life. He regularly retired for meditation, fasted and saw many visions (De Beer, 1996:29). In time Muhammad became convinced of the existence of one transcendent and true God. Even though the idea of monotheism existed in Arabia before Muhammad, it is possible that Muhammad discovered and developed the idea from his contact with Jewish and Christian communities (Van der Walt, 1989:111). Anderson (de Beer, 1996:29) indicates that it is almost impossible to measure how much of Muhammad's realisation was due to his contact with Jews and Christians. There was a large community of Christians and Jews living in and around Mecca. It is important to note that during this time Arabian Christianity was struggling to reach consensus on the dogma about Christ as God. Accordingly they were internally weak (De Beer, 1996:29).

As shown above Muhammad's contact with Christians was not with the Orthodox Roman Church but with "heretical sects" such as the Nestorians and Monophysites. It is extremely difficult to ascertain the influence of Judaism and Christianity on Muhammad. Muslim tradition, portrays him as a man dissatisfied with both Judaism and Christianity and utterly hostile to heathenism (Guillaume, 1969:27). Schoeps (1967:228) says it is important to note that the illiterate Muhammad's[11] primary contact with Christianity was not from literary

[11] Muslims adhere to the view that Muhammad was illiterate (Lunde, 2003:18). To Muslims this proves the heavenly origin of the Qur'an, as an illiterate Muhammad could not have composed this "literary wonder" on his own (Wessels, 1978: 18). Accad (1997:66) does not consider Muhammad to have been illiterate. Before Muhammad's grandfather died, the latter made *Abu Talib*, Muhammad's uncle, promise that he would treat the boy with as much care as he would his own sons. In traditional Arab culture a man's word carried incredible weight. *Ali*, one of *Abu Talib's* sons was considered to be one of the most learned, educated Arabs of his time. For Muhammad to be illiterate would imply that *Abu Talib* went back on his word. This was clearly not the case as *Abu Talib*, who never converted to Islam, defended Muhammad against the opposition his teachings brought about (Rahman, 1979:11). Accad (1997:66) shows that the Qur'an itself gives an answer to this question. In Heights 7:158 Muhammad is called an *ummi* prophet. *(Note: Pickthall and Ali both translate the name of the seventh sura as "Heights," Arberry translates it as "Battlements.")* Some Muslims have taken this to mean that Muhammad could not read. However, this word can also be translated as "who is not of those who read the Scriptures," or "Gentile." This would mean that Muhammad was not from "the People of the Book." Muslim commentators say that *ummiyoun* (plural of *ummi*) means people who do not have a divine book - that is people who are illiterate regarding the Scriptures, but not illiterate *per se* (Accad, 1997:66; cf. Van Selms, 1974:120). Attema (1962:17) states that the Qur'an does not give evidence to Muhammad's literacy or illiteracy. De Beer (1996:33) is of opinion that Muhammad only learned to write late in his life. Fossier (1981:261) holds the assumption that Muhammad was literate. Guillaume (1969:56) says the statement in the Qur'an that implies that

sources, but from people. Wessels (1978:18) agrees, considering it obvious that Muhammad had no direct contact with the Biblical text. Only two places in the Qur'an indicates a specific passage in the Bible, one from the Psalms and one from a parable in the Gospels. The rest of the "parallels" consists of allusions to Biblical figures. Accad (1997:9) indicates that Muhammad's main concern regarding the Qur'an, was that the Jews and Christians each had their own book in their own language, but the Arabs did not have any kind of book. The Qur'an was then a "Book" for the Arabs in Arabic (The Poets 26:192-199).

When he was forty years old Muhammad had a profound religious experience. Following the religious practice of his time he underwent a time of isolation and meditation in a cave in the *Hira* Mountain near Mecca. In a vision Gabriel ordered him to recite the revelation he was to receive (McKay, 1992:265; cf. Rippin, 2001:41). This revelation was considered a miracle because literature was a form that commanded great respect from the Arabs (see § 2.3.1) (Accad, 1997:38).

Shortly hereafter Muhammad began to preach that he was God's chosen prophet, called to preach about the true religion (Al Araby, 1995:11). He called on the people of Mecca to turn away from their idols and to become obedient to the one unseen God (McKay, *et al*, 1992:265). Conversion implied a conversion to a community dedicated to the worship of the one true God, the implementation of His will, and so to create a socially just society (Esposito, 1992:28). From Muhammad on and till today, Muslims have a real desire to please God (Accad, 1997:11). Service to God and participation in His society cannot be separated. It is very important to take this into consideration when contemplating Christian- Muslim relations and the communication of the Gospel to Muslims.

Apart from a few boys from the *Quraysh* and family members, most of the earliest converts were slaves or people from the poorer classes (Glubb, 1970:100). Muhammad asked of his converts not to associate other gods with God, nor steal, commit fornication, bury their female

Muhammad could not read or write till late in life may refer to the Jewish and Christian scriptures. An early tradition states that Muhammad wrote himself when a treaty was drawn up at *Hudaybiya*. Guillaume (1969:57) considers it unlikely that Muhammad would have been content to let associates read a letter, or in his early days a bill of lading. Guillaume considers it a poor compliment to call Muhammad "the illiterate prophet" as some of his followers do.

babies, slander their neighbours or disobey the Messenger of God in what was right. In return they were promised ultimate admission to Paradise (Glubb, 1970:143).

His message was not well received by the leaders of the great families in Mecca. They feared that this new message could hurt heir lucrative trade surrounding the pilgrimage to Mecca (Rahman, 1979:14; cf. Cragg, 1984:19, Guillaume, 1969:31). Trying to discredit Muhammad, the leading families accused him of being a forger, using a foreign message (Wessels, 1978:16). This is spoken of in the Qur'an (The Bee 16:103).

During his early ministry in Mecca Muhammad was supported by his wife *Khadija* who strongly believed in his calling (Naudé, 1974:8) and who is considered to be the first convert to Islam (Ahmad, 1987:67). Muhammad's uncle *Abū Talib*, who never converted to Islam, nevertheless defended his nephew against the opposition Muhammad's teaching brought about (Rahman, 1979:11; cf. Guillaume, 1969:34). In 620 A.D. *Khadija* and *Abū Talib* died. Plots were made to kill Muhammad and his followers (Davies, 2004). After an attempt on Muhammad's life, he and his followers fled to *Yathrib* in 622 A.D. (Lunde, 2003:20). In time this city became known as *Al Medina* or *Medinet al nebi* – "the city of the prophet" (Al Araby, 1995:112).

The people of Medina were beset by civil war, and unable to come to peaceful terms by themselves. They invited Muhammad to act as arbiter (Van der Walt, 1983:81). Since the people of Medina had invited Muhammad to live in their city, Medina posed a good sanctuary for the prophet and his followers (De Beer, 1996:30; cf. Rahman, 1979:18). Furthermore, Muhammad's great-grandfather's wife came from Medina, and Muhammad thus had family ties with the people in Medina (Guillaume, 1969:25). After arriving in Medina, the head of Muhammad's great grandmother's tribe died. The tribe asked Mohammed to become their leader. This greatly strengthened his position in Medina (Glubb, 1970:161). This flight of Muhammad's is still commemorated by Muslims today and is known as the *Hijrah* and also serves as starting point for Muslim chronology[12].

[12] The Muslim calendar begins in the year of the *Hijra, i.e.* 622 A.D. This implies that 2005 A.D. on the Western calendar is indicated as 1426 A.H. on the Muslim calendar. Muslims uses the abbreviation A.H. in counting years: "After *Hijra.*" The Muslim calendar months are based on the lunar cycle and therefore a year is

In Medina Muhammad would develop into an exceptional statesman, lawgiver and judge. Here he would organise his followers into a political society and universal brotherhood, known as the ***ummah*** (De Beer, 1996:30). Muhammad had to build up a self-contained community which would hold together even though the people had specific traditions and a long history of rivalries and feuds. This he achieved and for this, Guillaume (1969:20) considers Muhammad to be the greatest statesman of his time. Muhammad advocated the unity of God and thereby the unity and equality of mankind, denouncing the differences of race and colour (Ahmad, 1987:4). *Bilal*, an old Negro slave, was chosen as the first *muezzin*, or "caller to prayer" (Glubb, 1970:172).

A charter drawn up by Muhammad, about two years after he had arrived in Medina, clearly shows the precedence the brotherhood of Islam took over other ties and relationships. Thus faith replaced blood as the closest tie. Islamic life remains the same to this day (Caner & Caner, 2002:60). This brotherhood bound all Muslims together for offence and defence, and guaranteed them the protection of the community, except when someone was an obvious offender. God, together with his prophet was the final arbiter in all disputes (Guillaume, 1969:41). The brotherhood was a necessity as Muhammad's followers (the Emigrants), who had fled with him from Mecca, had left their own tribes. In Medina they were defenceless. According to the brotherhood the Emigrants were "adopted" by the Muslim tribes of Medina (the Helpers) (Glubb, 1970:161).

Within the *ummah* the Muslim community combined the organisational function of the tribe with those of a religious fraternity (Von Grünebaum, 1970:23). The *Shari'a* is the constitution of the Muslim community (Rahman, 1979:1). The system of Islamic Law would grow, and thanks to its all-embracing character, dominating the outward life of Muslims, it would result in the Islamic solidarity, in spite of cultural differences of the countries Islam spread to (Rahman, 1979:5).

Their commitment to the new community is shown in the way the Muslims would eventually attack their kinsmen in Mecca. Both the Emigrants and Helpers were reluctant to attack

only 353/4 days long. Consequently the month of fasting (*Ramadan*) moves in time when compared with the Western calendar. The same holds true for the Muslim New Year's Day (*Mihama*) (Caner & Caner, 2002:153).

Mecca. They were linked by marriage, commerce and ancient pilgrim rights. Blood relationship was a sacred tie recognised by all Arabs and as old as the people themselves. Muhammad overcame this in part by preaching that war was a sacred duty (*jihad*), and so induced his followers to attack Mecca (Guillaume, 1969:42). This holy war would become the main means of the expansion of Islam. From now on the highest loyalty would be to the *ummah* and not the clan. The *ummah* would forthwith show solidarity against crime and unbelievers (Cooper, 1993:107). It is during this time that legal material pertaining to the ordering of daily life started to be part of the Qur'an, creating what Mohammed (1999:11) calls a supra-tribal religious community. Within this community there was no distinction between sacred or profane, between religion and society, individual and community. Submitting to the will of God meant actualising His will in both individual and community life (Esposito, 1992:29). Kraemer (1947:223) comments on the fact that the theocracy, which developed with the birth of the ummah in Medina, was a thoroughly secularized theocracy. Kraemer indicates that the primary inspiration behind the theocracy was not the Will of God as only valid rule for life. The primary reason was the necessity and desire of Muhammad to achieve through the *ummah* a more powerful position.

After three years of preaching, reading and meditation Muhammad's ideas and work began to take shape. By mixing Jewish and/or Christian ideas with the aspirations of the desert his creed had a distinct persuasive force, lacking in the religions of the settled people. Even though his religion's dogma and practices showed some resemblance to other Eastern religions it suited the warlike tendencies of the nomad tribes very well (Fossier, 1981:261).

In Medina Muhammad started to raid the caravans coming from Mecca (Rippin, 2001:43). Muslims achieved great success against Mecca because of their stern discipline and contempt for death. During this time he would also neutralise the Jewish tribes within his territory, mostly banishing them (Guillaume, 1969:47; Rippin, 2001:42). Also, during his time in Medina Muhammad learned that the Jews did not accept his teaching. They made fun of his inaccurate renderings of stories from the Old Testament (Rahman, 1979:28). In answer to their mockery Muhammad began to teach that the Jews had corrupted the Scriptures. From this moment on prayers were said while facing Mecca and not Jerusalem as had been the custom until that time. Muhammad also declared that pilgrimage to Mecca was now an obligatory duty for Muslims (Rahman, 1979:19). During this time Saturday was abandoned

as the Sabbath and Friday became the special day of the week for Muslims (Glubb, 1970:170).

Seven years of hostility ended in 630 A.D. when Muhammad and his army entered Mecca victoriously. Muhammad immediately set about destroying the idols in the *Ka'ba,* and those in and around Mecca (Schoeps, 1967:232, cf. Rahman, 1979:24; Guillaume, 1969:51). Muhammad excelled as a political leader and used every possible method to unite the remaining Arab tribes under the banner of Islam: friendliness, conversion through the work of missionaries as well as a holy war against the unbelievers who had to be brought to submission to Allah by force (Schoeps, 1967:232).

After the death of the Sassanid king in 628 A.D. the Yemeni colony was left in great turmoil. The people of Yemen and other Arab tribes in the region began to seek closer bonds with Muhammad. While the pagans were prepared to except Islam, the Christians and Jews were not. Muhammad drew up a treaty with the Christians of *Najran*, whereby they would pay a special tax (*jizya*). In return they were allowed to keep their faith and were exempt from military service (Von Grünebaum, 1970:46). Muslim governments were tolerant of Jews and Christians and Zoroastrians (the People of the Book). These people were granted "protected" status, based on the guidelines of Muhammad's treaty with *Najran.* They could live in their own enclaves and by their own laws as far as internal matters were concerned (Denny, 1994:85). Only Muslims were recognised as full citizens, the protected peoples were classed as *dhimmi.* (Mohammed, 1999:32).

As ***dhimmi*** they were forbidden to build new houses or places of worship on new sites. They were, however, allowed to repair old ones. They were not allowed to publicise their religion in order to attract new converts. Eventually *dhimmi* were required to wear distinctive clothing, treat Muslims with respect and difference, and pay the **poll tax** (*jizya*) (Denny, 1994:85). Furthermore, they were not allowed to bear arms, ride horses or serve in the military (Denny, 1994:86). At times these rules were enforced strictly and at times not. A large number of Christians continued to live as Christians. As *dhimmi* they lost their equality and privileges. As poll tax payers they were considered second-class citizens (Neill, 1964:63). Christians living under Muslim rule were never forced to convert to Islam at the

point of the sword. On the contrary during the late seventh century some Muslim leaders discouraged conversion as it reduced the poll tax, upsetting the Empire's budget (Mohammed, 1999:33). Currently there are about 10 to 12 million Arab Christians (Accad, 1997:22).

Denny (1994:86) states that Christians and Jews living under Muslim rule, from the Middle Ages down to modern times, have for the most part been treated more tolerantly and respectfully than peoples of other religions under Christian rule. Muhammad and his immediate successors, whose lives were guided by the Qur'an, treated the Christians, as "people of the Book" with respect. This may indicate that Accad's (1997:10) premise concerning the Qur'an being pro-Christ, pro-Christian and pro-Bible is historically plausible.

Muhammad died at the age of 61 on June 8, 632 (Caner & Caner, 2002:61) having brought almost all the Arab tribes under the banner of Islam. A hundred years later the Islamic Empire was greater than the Roman Empire at its zenith (Esposito, 1992:31).

2.5 The Scriptures of Islam

Muslim teaching acknowledges 104 "Books of Allah," written by God and given to the prophets. Four of these are in the form of books (*kutub*) and 100 in the form of pages (*suhuf*) (De Beer, 1996:35). The four books are:

- *Tawrat*: the Law given to Moses (House of Imran 3:44).
- *Zabur*: the Psalms given to David (Woman 4:161).
- *Injeel*: the Gospel given to Jesus (*Isa*) (Table 5:50).
- *Qur'an*: given to Muhammad.

2.5.1 The Qur'an

Muslims consider the Qur'an to be the final and most perfect revelation. They also consider the Qur'an to be a miracle because they believe that no error, alteration or variation has

touched it since its inception (Rhodes, 2000)[13]. It is seen as eternal because it is part of Allah's word. The Qur'an is held in the highest esteem and reverence among Muslims as Holy Scripture. A Muslim dares not touch it without first washing and purifying himself (De Beer, 1996:35). They carry it with them to war, write sentences of it on their banners, suspend it from their necks as a charm, and always carry it above the waist and place it on the highest shelf or in some place of honour in their houses. It is said that the devil runs away from the house in which a portion of the Qur'an, *Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow 2) is read. Although translations of the Qur'an abounds Muslims consider only the Arabic version to be true and authoritative (Parshall, 1980:132). Muslims believe that the Qur'an comes directly from God and the original is on a "preserved tablet" in heaven (Denny, 1994:71). It is possible that this view of a "preserved tablet" was formed after the death of Muhammad when Muslim thinkers came into contact with theologians and philosophers in other countries (Glubb, 1970:94).

The Qur'an as revelation from Allah can be considered the heart of the Islamic system. Qur'an may be translated as "recital." In Arabic the Qur'an is also referred to as *Al-Kitab* (the book); *Al-furkan* (the distinction); and *Al-dikhr* (the warning) (Caner & Caner, 2002:83). To Islam the Qur'an is its sole foundation for its claim to be an independent, to be *the* universal, God-given and ultimate religion (Kraemer, 1947:217). The Qur'an is divided into 144 Suras, arranged from the longest to the shortest. The Qur'an contains the religious, social, civil, commercial, military and legal code of Islam (Al Araby, 1995:36).

Muslims believe that Allah appointed Muhammad *rasul* (apostle) to bring his word to them. Muhammad saw himself as a "warner" in a clear Arabic tongue (Table 5:68) (Accad, 1997:37). *Zayd ibn Thabit*, Muhammad's last secretary[14] started to collect the *suras* before the prophet died. Caliph *Uthman* would eventually have the Qur'an collected and put into an authorised edition (Denny, 1994:88). After receiving the Qur'an the Arabs were also known

[13] This is a good example of pre-scientific knowledge pertaining to one's worldview. Muslims consider the Qur'an errorless and unchanged since its inception irrespective of evidence to the contrary (see § 2.9.1. Caliph *Uthman* is credited with collecting and issuing the first authorised edition of the Qur'an, burning the wide range of variant readings).

[14] The *hadith* (see § 2.5.2) accounts that one of Mohammad's scribes – *Abdollah b. Abi Sarh* – renounced Islam because he believed that the revelations, if from God, could not be changed at a prompting from a mere scribe. The following example is sited. If Mohammad had said "And God is mighty and wise" and the scribe suggested "knowing and wise" Mohammad would answer that there was no objection (Caner & Caner, 2002:45).

as "people of the book" (Accad, 1997:36). Muslims would find anything said about religion hard to embrace if it is not related to what is said in the Qur'an (Accad, 1997:12).

2.5.2 The Hadith

A secondary source to the Islamic system is the *Hadith*, the traditions of the prophet - what he did and also what he did not do. The *hadith* is a record of Muhammad's words and deeds as handed down by his wives, family and companions. Muslims consider it to be inspired and with the Qur'an forms the most important part of Islamic Law (Al Araby, 1995:28). It is expected of every Muslim to learn as many as possible inscriptions from the *Hadith*.

2.5.3 Shari`a

From the Qur'an and *hadith* Islamic law (*Shari`a*) is deduced. This system of law encompasses every aspect of Muslim life and gives instruction for most every action (Van der Walt, A.J., 1985:12). *Shari`a* is a regulation and sanctioning of a medieval society on the basis of revelation (Kraemer, 1947:222). Literally translated it means "the way to the water hole." It indicates the right path to be taken (Denny, 1994:195). *Shari`a* is divided into three arenas: religious duty (*ibadat*), ethics (*m'Amalat*), and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). *Shari`a* helped Muslim communities (especially Sunni) to speak with one voice in various countries by detailing daily life in the finest detail (Caner & Caner, 2002:163).

2.6 The practices of Islam

The name "Islam" comes from the Arabic word *"aslama"* and can best be translated as: "to submit." A Muslim submits to the will of Allah, as revealed through the Qur'an, given to Muhammad. The word "Muslim" can be translated as "one who has surrendered." Muslims reject the term "Mohammedans" as they do not worship Muhammad as person (Van der Walt, A.J., 1985:4; cf. Denny, 1994:392). Every confessing Muslim is bound to take part in set religious duties (*ibadat*). These duties are known as the Pillars of Islam. These pillars are

non-negotiable. To criticise the five pillars is considered to be a heresy and blasphemy, in most cases punishable as treason (Caner & Caner, 2002:122).

2.6.1 The creed: Kalima

The creed is: *"There is no God but God and Mohammed is the prophet of God."* This creed must be recited correctly and confessed without hesitation. Most Muslims would consider the repetition of this creed as sufficient evidence of a person's conversion (De Beer, 1996:36). Part of the value of this creed for Islam is that it has prevented Muslims from deifying Muhammad (Schoeps, 1967:237).

2.6.2 Ritual prayer: Salat

Ritual prayer plays a very important part in the daily life of a devoted Muslim. Muslims pray five times a day: before sunrise (*Subh),* on the midday (*Zuhr*), late afternoon (*Asr*), after sunset (*Maghrib*) and two hours later an evening prayer (*Isha*). Most of the prayer time is taken up by a repetition of the first *sura* of the Qur'an. The repetition is a type of mantra invoking the power of Allah, and does not request anything. For the Muslim prayer is an act of obedience not petition (Caner & Caner, 2002:110).

Muslims are free to pray alone, with friends or at the Mosque. However, prayers must be said in Arabic with the observance of the prescribed genuflexions and prostrations. At the end of the ritual prayer the individual is free to make his own needs known to Allah (De Beer, 1996:36). Except for *salat* Muslims also adheres to *du'a*, which is a personal, spontaneous prayer not bound by any rules or rituals (Adeyemo, 1986:4).

The Friday gathering is a special occasion. At this gathering a sermon is given by the Imam. The *muezzin* calls the faithful to prayer from the *minaret.* Before taking part in the ritual prayer all those present cleanse themselves in the *wudu* or ablutions. Men and women always pray separately. The *Imam* leads the *salat* with his back to the congregation, so that everyone

can face the *qiblah* (the direction to Mecca) (De Beer, 1996:36). In the Mosque this direction is indicated by a niche (*mihrab*) in the appropriate wall (Denny, 1994:393).

De Beer (1996:37) notes that Muslims don't *say* prayers, but rather *do* prayers. In Islam prayer is an obligation, a protection, a merit and a communion.

2.6.3 The fast (saum) of Ramadan

In the ninth month of the Muslim calendar all Muslims[15] fast from sunrise to sunset. During day time they do not eat, drink, smoke or have marital relations (Denny, 1994:126). This rule is strictly adhered to. Before sunrise and after sunset they are free to eat. During Ramadan nights are a time of feasting where family and friends gather to eat, sing and entertain each other (Denny, 1994:127). At the end of *Ramadan* the fast is broken by a great feast: *id al fitr,* "Feast of the Fast Breaking" (Denny, 1994:130).

2.6.4 Alms: zakat

Himself an orphan Muhammad held special concern for people in need. The *zakat* is a compulsory gift, prescribed by law, which amounts to 2.5% of the individual's income. The *zakat* is distinguished from the *sadaqa*, which is a voluntary gift (De Beer, 1996:37).

2.6.5 The pilgrimage to Mecca: Hajj

Every Muslim, if able to, must attempt to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in his or her life (Guillaume, 1969:32). Before entering Mecca the pilgrim dons a ritual white garment (*ihram*), which shows his state of purity (Denny, 1994:130). Upon arriving in Mecca the pilgrim must run seven times around the *Ka'ba*, and if possible try and kiss the black

[15] Fasting is prohibited for pregnant or menstruating women or women who have just given birth. However they must make it up later (Denny, 1994:127).

stone in the corner of the *Ka'ba* (Schoeps, 1967:237). If a pilgrim dies on pilgrimage he is considered a martyr who receives immediate access into paradise (Denny, 1994:131).

2.6.6 The holy war: Jihād

Jihād is an Arabic word that means struggle (Al Araby, 1995:13) or "striving, exertion" (Denny, 1994:136). Because the Qur'an sanctions a holy war in order to expand Islam some have raised *jihād* to the rank of a sixth pillar of Islam (Al Araby, 1995:12,). An adult Muslim male is obliged to obey every lawful call to take up arms against Allah's enemies. Dying during *jihād* assures the martyr immediate access to paradise (De Beer, 1996:36). From early on Muslims have divided the world into two: *dar al Islam* (where Islam reigns) and *dar al Harb* (where Islam must expand through the sword) (De Beer, 1996:37).

Muslims distinguish between two types of *jihād* (Denny, 1994:136):

- "Greater" *jihād*: denotes the believer's personal (spiritual) struggle with his base instincts and lack of faith and devotion.
- "Lesser" *jihād*: denotes the struggle against the enemies of Islam and may include an armed struggle. Even though the Qur'an teaches that there can be no compulsion in religion (Cow 2:256), both the Qur'an and the *Hadith* promulgate an armed and violent struggle against unbelievers. Caner & Caner (2002:185) emphasises that *jihād* is combat on the fronts of politics, warfare and culture. Muhammad himself gave sanction to this practice through his revelations in the Qur'an and his example as reflected in the *hadith* (traditions). Because *jihād* is warfare aimed at righting a wrong, it has been propagated by one Muslim community against other Muslim communities (Denny, 1994:136).

2.7 The doctrines of Islam

Except for accepting and confessing the creed (see § 2.6.1) Muslims must also adhere to the following doctrines or articles of faith pertaining to God, the angels, the Holy Books, the prophets, future judgement and fatalism (Al Araby, 1995:12, cf. Caner & Caner, 2002:145).

2.7.1 The doctrine about God

The basis of belief regarding Allah is his unity and transcendences. The theme of Allah's unity is found right through the Qur'an. The Qur'an emphasises the absolute monotheistic nature of Allah as being both self-existent and necessary (Caner & Caner, 2002:109). Any compromise regarding the doctrine of Allah's unity is considered the greatest sin (Denny, 1994:65). Orthodox Islam (*Sunni*) denies the possibility that Allah can be influenced in any way by the deeds and attitudes of His creations. Allah created man with the ability to choose. Allah is the source of both good and evil, and always does as He pleases (The Night Journey 17:99).

Allah's nature and qualities are revealed in his *99 most beautiful names*. The list of names for Allah varies between different *`ulama* (the learned class of religious and legal scholars). The 99 is composed of eighty-one from the Qur'an and eighteen from the *Hadith* (Caner & Caner, 2002:110). These names are recited by the pious when praying with prayer beads (De Beer, 1996:35). Muslims believe in seven primary characteristics of Allah: He has absolute unity, and is all-seeing, all-hearing, all-speaking, all-knowing, all-willing and all-powerful (Rhodes, 2000). It is important to note that the idea of God as Father is foreign to Islam's concept of Allah (De Beer, 1996:35). Essentially the Allah of the Qur'an is unknowable (Parshall, 1980:75). Within the Islamic community Allah is never described in terms of intimacy, atonement and omni-benevolence. In Islam man is entirely absorbed in the greatness and majesty of Allah, and vanishes away. Fellowship does not exist between Allah and man (Kraemer, 1947:222). For Islam Allah is a god of scales, first and foremost a judge who may forgive if He wants to. Most important aspect of Islam's doctrine concerning Allah is that he hates the infidel. He has no love for the unbeliever. It is not the task of the Muslims to "evangelize" the world. All is to worship Allah, those who don't are to be defeated, silenced or expelled (Caner & Caner, 2002:118).

2.7.2 The doctrine about angels

Orthodox Islam recognises four archangels: *Jbril* (Gabriel), *Mikail* (Michael), *Israfil* and *Izrail*. *Iblis* (Satan) is a fallen angel whom Allah threw from heaven (Denny, 1994:108). Along with these major angels a indefinite number of ordinary angels exists. Angels are created from light and are absolutely obedient to the will of Allah (De Beer, 1996:35). Each human receives two recording angels who are tasked with writing up the individual's deeds – the one on his right records the good and the one on his left the sins. At the coming judgement these recorded deeds will be brought forward and judged (De Beer, 1996:35; cf. Rhodes, 2000). When a person dies the angels *Munkar* and *Nakir* make the corpses sit upright so that they may be examined in the faith (De Beer, 1996:35). In addition to the angels there are also supernatural beings created from fire called *jinn*. They are much lower than angels and are in most aspects human. They have limited life spans are either male or female and can be either good or evil. In general they are feared by humans because they are associated with the *"spooky and uncanny"* dimensions of life (Denny, 1994:108).

2.7.3 The doctrine about the Holy Books

See § 2.5: The Scriptures of Islam.

2.7.4 The doctrine about the prophets

Within the cadre of Orthodox Islam there is division concerning the number of prophets. Some say there have been 248 000 and others an indefinite amount (De Beer, 1996:35). The Qur'an names 25 prophets from Adam tot Muhammad, of who most are Biblical persons (Denny, 1994:108). Of these the greatest are: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jonah, John the Baptist, Jesus (*Isa*) and Muhammad (Rhodes, 2000). Muhammad is believed to be the seal (hallmark) of the prophets: what he said is sealed and nothing may be added to it. Muhammad's revelation completes all previous revelations. Muhammad has spoken the last word (Van der Walt, A.J., 1985:10).

2.7.5 The doctrine about the future judgement

Muslims believe in a Day of Judgement and resurrection (Rhodes, 2000). The time of the Day of Judgement is a secret but there will be 25 signs of its coming. On this day all of mankind will be resurrected and the records of each life will be opened and man judged according to his deeds (De Beer, 1996:36). Depending on the individual's performance he/she will end up either in heaven (a place of pleasure) or hell (a place of torment). This day is intended to either humiliate and shame or purify and reward (Caner & Caner, 2002:147). Judgement is effected statistically. Muslims believe a person must be 51 percent good. If one has lived a bad life and is near death there is no hope. Because of this the scales become more important the older one gets and the Muslim will work harder, live better and give more (Caner & Caner, 2002:149). It is important to note that Muslims have no assurance of salvation since their religion is based on a works system and complete surrender to Allah (Rhodes, 2000). No Muslim can claim assurance of where he is going to spend eternity, because Allah reserves the ultimate and absolute right to send individuals to wherever he pleases (Adeyemo, 1986:4). The purpose of Judgement day is to show Allah true in all ways: omniscience, omnipotence, mercy, wisdom, providence and justice (Caner & Caner, 2002:148). In this doctrine heaven and hell are described in sensual and graphic figures. It is believed that almost all will enter the fire temporarily, but no true Muslim would remain their forever (De Beer, 1996:36).

Islam has no concept of **original sin** (Caner & Caner, 2002:62). The question of sin is hardly touched in the Qur'an or in the standard theologies (Kraemer, 1947:218). Islam believes that man is composed of body and soul, and basically has a good nature. Man has only lost his way. If he were to continue following his mistaken ways his life is meaningless and his eternal destiny imperilled (Rhodes, 2000). Man is born sinless and has a capacity for unlimited moral and spiritual good through belief in Allah and faithful adherence to the inspired teachings of the prophets (Aziz-Us-Samad, *s.a.*:8). Man's duty in life is to obey Allah. Sin comes from doing what one should not do and not doing what one should do (Aziz-Us-Samad, *s.a.*:12). In repenting and submitting to Allah he *may* be forgiven. This forgiveness does not require any kind of atonement. Islam completely rejects the concept of atonement, believing that no man's (human or divine) suffering and death can pay for the sins of others (Aziz-Us-Samad, *s.a.*:14). Salvation is found in complete surrender to Allah.

Through a life of good works man is redeemed (Rhodes, 2000). The scales must balance plus one percent for good deeds. The result of this perception is that Muslims place great emphasis on external forms. The legalistic observance of the pillars of Islam prepares the Muslim for eternity in heaven (Parshall, 1980:57). Obedience in surrender to the God of Omnipotence is the core of Islam. Kraemer (1947:218) says that this fact accounts for the strangely eventless relation between God and man in Islam.

2.7.6 The doctrine about fatalism

Spencer (De Beer, 1996:36) indicates that Islam's belief that good and evil proceeds directly from the divine will, reveals a fatalism that is the logical conclusion of Islam's view on Predestination. *En sh'Allah* means "Allah wills it." Allah's sovereignty is adhered to by Muslims to the point of determinism. Allah knows everything, determines everything, decrees everything and orders everything (Caner & Caner, 2002:109). Kraemer (1947:217) says that Islam may be called a religion that has almost no questions and no answers. To a certain respect Islam's greatness is found in this question-less and answer-less condition – best exemplified by the name Islam: absolute surrender to God. Man has no significant role to play in his relationship with God. To the Muslim Allah is the one who does as He pleases, He leads man on the right path and He leads man astray (Cattle 6:39; Battlements 7:154, 177). To the Muslim sin is not something that necessarily grieves Allah. He created man to chose and sin is part of his creation. For this reason it is not necessary for someone to die in atonement of man's sin, because Allah will forgive someone his sin, if He wanted to (De Beer, 1996:56). The Qur'an hints that a believer may be confident in his eternal destiny, but there is no guarantee, not even for the most righteous (Caner & Caner, 2002:144). Whatever happens is predetermined; man can only do his best and hope for mercy in the end.

2.8 Sects of Islam

2.8.1 The Shi'is and Sunnis

(See § 2.9.1) Contrary to popular belief in the West, Islam is not an absolutely unified religion. Like Christianity, it is a *"fractured religion, which has many different expressions*

and theologies." (Wagner, 2003:343; cf. Accad, 1997:15; Kraemer, 1947:215). Soon after the death of Mohammed, in 632, Islam divided into two "mains streams." Those who believed *'Ali* to be Mohammed's appointed successor became known as the *Shi'is*. The majority, however, never accepted the claims made by the *Shi' at 'Ali* (the party of *'Ali*) and eventually evolved into the *Sunnis*, who considered themselves the mainstream of Islamic faith and practice (Denny, 1994:83). The *Shi'is* in turn had a major split in 765 and divided between the "Twelvers" and "Seveners" (Johnstone, 2002:281). The Twelvers formed a more moderate group, whereas the Seveners were more extreme in their theological and political views. This difference in expression and theology, in some instances gave rise to sects within Islam.

2.8.2 The Ahmadiyya movement

The Ahamadiya can be considered the youngest sect to splinter away from Islam (Guillaume, 1956:125). Currently it is one of the fastest growing movements within Islamic countries (Caner & Caner, 2002:169). Their founder *Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani* died in 1908. *Ahmad* was a village chief of the *Qadian* in Punjab, India (Cooper, 1993:188). Before his death, the group asked to be registered as a separate Muslim sect in India. After an International Muslim Conference held in Saudi Arabia the Pakistani government declared them a separate religion in 1974 (Bowker, 1995:115; Cooper, 1993:189). Most converts to this sect may be found in South-East Asia and Africa. After the death of *Ahmad Qadiani's* son *Kamal al-Din* and *Muhammad Ali* left the group and founded the Lahore party. The original *Ahmadis* became known as the *Qadianis*. This schism occurred because the *Qadianis* believed *Ahmad* to be a prophet, whereas the Lahore group only saw him as a reformer.

Guillaume (1956:126) summarises the distinctive doctrines of the *Ahmadiyya* as follows:

- No verse in the Qur'an is, or can be recalled. If one verse appears to be inconsistent with another, that is due to faulty exegesis.
- *Jihad* or "holy war" has lapsed, and coercion in religion is condemned.
- To say that Muhammad is the "Seal of the Prophets" does not mean that he is the last of them. A seal is a "hallmark" and Muhammad therefore embodies the perfection of prophethood. Consequently other prophets or apostles may follow Muhammad, as did the Hebrew prophets after Moses.

- Jesus is dead like the other prophets, and did not ascend bodily into heaven.
- Hell is not everlasting.
- Apostasy is not punishable by death.
- Any innovation in religious practice is culpable. The worship of saints is an invasion of the prerogative of God.
- *Ijma* or universal (catholic) consent is generally limited to the prophet's Companions.[16]
- Revelation will always remain a privilege of the true believer.
- Belief in *Mirza Ghulam Ahmad al Qadiani* as the Messiah-Mahdi is an article of faith. Faith is incomplete without it.
- Spirituality in religion is more important than legalism. An *Ahmadi* need not belong to any particular school of law.
- The mediaeval *`ulama*[17] need not be followed in the interpretation of the Qur'an or *hadith.*

Their view on Muhammad, Jesus and Ahmad is totally unacceptable to orthodox Muslims. Accordingly most Muslims believe them to be non-Muslim (Jomier, 1989:126; cf. Bowker, 1995:114). Even though Islam propagates no compulsion in religion the *Ahmadiyya* sect has suffered severe persecution in Muslim countries (Guillaum, 1956:127; Bowker, 1995:113). From the start religious syncretism formed the basis for this movement. *Ahmad* posed as a *guru*, claiming that he has come into the spirit and power of Jesus Christ. He was the promised Messiah. He also claimed to be in the spirit and power of Muhammad, and therefore the promised Ahmad (Praised One). He also was in the spirit and power of Krishna, and the promised future incarnation promised by all Hindus. His attempt to unite the main religions of India (Christianity, Islam and Hinduism) may be seen as a pacifist attempt to work against the British rule in India. A full-out holy war against the British would have been suicidal. In line with his pacifist method, one of the central claims of the *Ahmadiyya* movement is non-violence. To justify his Messianic claims he negates the death of Christ, contending that Christ became unconscious on the cross, and was revived by the cool surroundings in the grave. *Ahmad* was convinced of the spiritual death of Christianity, since the fruits of Christianity in the West were obviously corrupt. The *Ahmadiyya* was the first

[16] *Ijma* may be defined as the "consensus of the community." According to *hadith* Muhammad declared: "*My People will never agree together on an error.*" When the people agrees something must therefore be authoritative. Consensus did not depend on the agreement by all the people. Only the consensus of those Muslims who are learned, and whose opinions are respected and accepted are taken into consideration (Denny, 1994:198).

[17] *`Ulama* refer to the learned class of religious and legal scholars (Denny, 1994:396).

"Muslim" group to establish a mosque in Britain. They have embarked on an aggressive campaign to convert Europeans to the Muslim cause (Cooper, 1993:189).

2.8.3 The Bahā'īs

In 1844, after a series of revelatory visions, *Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shirazi* claimed to be the *Bab* (Gate), opening the way to the Imam of the Twelver Shi'ites. Later on he claimed to be the Imam himself. Called "*Babis*" by other Muslims, they were persecuted, and the *Bab* himself executed in 1850. After his death most of the *Babis* started to follow *Mirza Husayn Ali Nuri*, who called himself the *Baha'u'llah* (the Glory of God). He became a *Babi* in 1844. In 1852 he was imprisoned in the Black Pit of Teheran (Johnstone, 2002:307). Here he experienced his own revelatory visions. After the assassination of the Shah of Persia, he was released from prison and exiled. He went to Baghdad where he started the *Bahā'ī* religion.

Hereafter he was sent to several Turkish villages, eventually ending up in St John of Acre (Acco) in Palestine, in 1868. During 1871-1874 he wrote the basic book of his religion: *Kitab-i-Aqdas* (the Most Holy Book). The movement grew widely and adherents may be found in America, Europe, Africa (Uganda and East-Africa) and Indonesia (Jomier, 1989:100). Currently their worldwide membership exceeds 5 million adherents (Johnstone, 2002:307). Their basic tenets may be summarised as follows:

- They believe in the unity of the human race, the equality of men and women, world peace and the oneness of God.
- Prophets follow each other in cycles of a thousand years. Muhammad was followed by *Baha Allah* (1844), and after a thousand years another will come.
- Prayers are offered three times a day in any language. During prayer meetings they read from the holy books, which include the Qur'an and the Bible.
- They proclaim obedience to the local political authorities, but make provision for conscientious objection. It forbids membership to secret societies or political parties and condemns spiritualism.
- The religion commands the opening of temples which welcome believers of all religions. Each individual may pray as he or she prefers (Jomier, 1989:100).

Their view on Muhammad as not being the ultimate seal on the prophets is unacceptable to orthodox Muslims. Although, not as much as the *Ahmadiyya*, the *Bahā'ī* also suffered persecution in Muslim countries. This is especially true of Iran. As a minority they served in the Shah's administration. With the overthrow of the Shah by *Ayatollah Khomeini*, the *Bahā'ī* were severely persecuted as punishment (Bowker, 1995:116). As a religion the *Bahā'ī* do not consider themselves to be Muslims. They proclaim themselves to be a new religion (Bowker, 1995:115).

2.8.4 Sufism

During the ninth and tenth centuries Sufism arose as a popular religious movement in Arabia, Syria, Egypt and Iraq (McKay, *et al,* 1992:284). Some devout individuals became dissatisfied with the mere observance of the rules of the Qur'an. They rejected what they believed to be the increasing materialism[18] of Muslim life and wished to return to the simple life of Muhammad's time. They were called *Sufis* because of the coarse woollen (*suf*) garments they wore. Through asceticism and a deep love of God, they sought a direct or mystical union with God. They dedicated their lives to following the Qur'an, avoiding sin, fasting, prayer and a humble yearning toward God.

Eventually Sufism would grow into a mass movement, drawing adherents from all social classes. Though born from the Qur'an and *Sunna*, the Sufis also accepted ideas from Christian and Buddhist monasticism and Hindu devotionalism. In light hereof the *`Ulama* (religious scholars who interpret the Qur'an and Muslim law), declared the movement heretical, deviating unnecessarily from orthodoxy (McKay, *et al*, 1992:286). For most of the time during the developing centuries of Islam, the study and practise of the law was seen as far more respectable than the meaningless babblings of wild-eyed mystics (Cooper, 1993:185).

This changed when *al-Ghazali*, (died in 1111 A.D.) became disenchanted with the academic, legalistic studies and began to practise meditation and the internalisation of the law. With this Sufism became more respectable. Today Sufism is considered the interior requirements of

[18] During the early times in Medina the Muslim community was known for its poverty. This changed after the Muslims started their conquests and amassed large amounts of plunder. Some pious people remembered the early days and wished to return to that way of life (Jomier, 1989:91).

faith, whereas *Shari'a* consists of the exterior requirements (Bowker, 1995:180). The Sufi sees beyond the external application of rules, and seeks to internalise and experience, with the help of a particular teacher or Muhammad. This teacher or guide leads the believer into communion with God. In this Muhammad is the best example, as he pleased God. Sufis strive to do the same.

The Sufism is divided into numerous religious orders of dervishes or *faqirs* (Cooper, 1993:185). The difference between these groups may be seen in their names, and customs, such as dress, meditations and recitations. Differences apart they all adhere to the following basic tenets (Jomier, 1989:92; cf. Cooper; 193:186):

- The believer must submit himself completely to a *murshid* or "inspired guide."
- The complete union with God is the goal they wish to attain.
- Divine reality is perceived by three organs of human perception:
    - *qalb*: the heart which is the seat of emotions;
    - *ruh*: the spirit, through which knowledge is perceived;
    - *sira*: the secret, developed and revealed by the teacher, who passes it on to his disciple when he believes him to be ready.
- The love of God for believers is a central theme in the teachings of the mystics. It flows from the satisfaction and rebuke of Allah over certain human attitudes: He does not love the unbelievers, but loves those who fear Him. Despite opposition from the jurists the mystics base their belief on two texts attributed to Muhammad:
    - *"If you love God, follow me. God will love you and forgive you your sins."* (House of Imran 3:31);
    - *"Believers if any of you renounce the faith, Allah will replace them by others who love Him and are loved by Him."* (The Table 5:59).

A number of Sufi movements exist, particularly in Turkey, India and West Africa. Sufism has gradually moved away from Islamic culture founded on the *Hadith* and the *Shari'a*. It has been greatly influenced by the indigenous cultures cultivating Popular Islam (Cooper, 1993:188). The Sufi movement is rapidly growing in Middle Eastern and Eastern countries. The movement is also growing in America with the current trend towards Cabalic Judaism and Eastern mysticism (Caner & Caner, 2002:165).

2.8.5 The Wahhabis

From 1683 to 1718 the Ottomans engaged in a series of wars against Europe in which they lost a considerable amount of land. Internally things were not well in the Empire either. In the mid 18th century *Mohammad ibn 'Abd al- Wahhab* started an Islamic reform movement in Arabia (Lunde, 2002:76). When a young man, he travelled widely through central Arabia studying theology, philosophy, jurisprudence and Sufism. Settling down in *Dar'iya* he forged an allegiance with *Muhammad ibn Sa'ud* whereby he would give religious leadership and *Sa'ud* would give political leadership acting as the highest temporal power (Denny, 1994:325). *'Abd al- Wahhab* suppressed the Sufi orders and tried to eliminate all practices not specifically sanctioned in the Qur'an. As the rulers of central Arabia's (*Al Sa'ud*), power spread, so did the influence and prestige of the *Wahhabis* spread. In 1806 they forcefully took Mecca and Medina, and stripped the *Ka'ba* of all its ornaments (Mansfield, 2003:41). Although defeated by the Ottoman army it survived and played an instrumental role in the founding of modern Saudi Arabia (Lunde, 2002:104).

Wahhabi's reformation was a return to the Qur'an, the *Sunna* and the *Sunni* legal position of the first three centuries of Islam. His essential doctrine was that of *Tawhid* (the uniqueness of God) (Mansfield, 2003:40). He most ardently attacked anything remotely considered to be idolatry. Mosques, shrines and tombs dedicated to holy men were destroyed, and cemeteries were purged of anything more elaborate than a tomb marker (Denny, 1994:325). Believers were required to partake in congregational worship. Reciting the *shahada* was not considered sufficient for full membership in the *ummah* (Denny, 1994:326; cf. De Beer, 1996:36). The believers' character was also emphasised. Smoking, shaving the beard and abusive language was a punishable offence. Their influence spread to India and Central Asia.

Wahhabi reform was violent constituting a form a *jihad* against fellow Muslims (Denny, 1994:326). They organised themselves in agricultural communes and villages, called *ikhwāns* (brotherhoods) that were always ready for *jihad.*

Today *Wahhabism* constitutes an umbrella term indicating like-minded movements of reform in Islam. The aim of most of these is a reassertion of monotheism and the equality of men

combined with a reinterpretation of the positive legacy of Islamic tradition for the reconstruction of Muslim society (Rahman, 1979:199).

2.9 The expansion of Islam

2.9.1 First phase: From the death of Muhammad to 1600's

With Muhammad's death he was succeeded by the Caliphs. *Khalifa* (Caliph) may be translated as "successor or representative." The first four *Abu Bekr* (Mohammed's father in law), *Umar*, *Uthman* and *'Ali* was known as "The Rightly Guided Caliphs" because they heard the revelation from Muhammad himself (Lunde, 2003:48). Their reign is considered the golden age of the Caliphate (Schoeps, 1967:238).

At the time of Muhammad's death much of the territory around Medina and Mecca and in Yemen was under the banner of Islam. With Muhammad's death some of the tribes reconsidered their allegiance to Islam. This time is known as the time of "apostasy" (*ridda*). *Abu Bekr* met any withdrawal from the Medina centred Muslim rule with stern military measures (Denny, 1994:84). Using a mixture of force and diplomacy he brought the tribes of Arabia, who had renounced their allegiance to Muslim rule, back into the fold of Islam. Needing a common cause to unite them he sent them to fight against the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires. This was done in accordance with Muhammad's last wishes (Lunde, 2003:48). These wars were the beginning of the vast Muslim-Arab conquests. Their foreign conquest would bring them many riches and many Arab-Muslims would migrate to new countries as administrators, settlers or in the military (Denny, 1994:84).

Umar succeeded *Abu Bekr*. Considered to be one of the greatest military leaders in Islam, he was the first to carry the title: *amir al-mu'minin* (Commander of the Faithful) (Denny, 1994:88). During his reign the Byzantine army would be annihilated and all of Persia and Egypt would come under their control. The Christians and Jews in Jerusalem were allowed to worship in protected communities governed by their own laws (Lunde, 2003:49).

In 644 *Umar was* assassinated by a Persian Christian slave (Lunde, 2003:49). *Uthman* became Caliph (De Beer, 1996:32). He was chosen before *Umar*'s death by a committee (*shura*) appointed by *Umar* himself. *Uthman* was not as good a leader as *Abu Bekr* or *Umar* and prone to nepotism. However, he is credited with collecting and issuing the first authorised edition of the Qur'an. At the time a wide range of variant readings were available which led to tension among the Muslims (Denny, 1994:88). *Uthman* compiled a standard edition and had all the others burned (Al Araby, 1995:37). *Uthman* arranged the *Suras* in order of length rather than chronologically. During his reign Libya and Armenia were added to the Muslim Empire (Lunde, 2003:49). Eventually he was murdered in his own home by rebelling Arab troops from Egypt (Denny, 1995:88).

'Ali succeeded *Uthman.* Unfortunately he was suspected of having had a part in the murder of *Uthman* and the seeds were planted for the eventual schism in Islam (De Beer, 1996:32). *'Ali* would come up against *Mu'awiya* who opposed *'Ali's* appointment as Caliph. *Mu'awiya,* who started the *Umayyad* dynasty, won when *'Ali* was murdered in 661 (Denny, 1994:91). With *Mu'awiya's* appointment as Caliph Islam divided into two factions: the *Sunni* (orthodox Islam) followers of *Mu'awiya* and the *Shi'a*, followers of *'Ali.* Another splinter group was born during this time: The Kharijites (*khawarij*), meaning "those who withdrew". They formed a radical egalitarian sect that caused havoc in the Muslim Empire for years to come. *'Ali* was murdered by a Kharijite (Lunde, 2003:50). Today about 10 per cent of the Muslim population are *Shiite,* most of them in Iran and in the Indian subcontinent. In the Arabian Peninsula the majority of people have remained Sunni (Mansfield, 2003:15).

During the reign of the *Umayyad* dynasty Islam conquered much of North Africa and Spain. Their expansion into Europe was stopped when Charles Martel defeated them at Poitiers in 732 A.D. (De Beer, 1996:32). During their reign Arabic became the language of administration, a postal system was set up and the first Islamic coinage was issued (Lunde, 2003:51). The *Umayyads* moved the capital of the Islamic Empire from Medina to Damascus. The Caliphs would also start to employ Hellenised Christian Arabs at court and with this a subtle shift occurred in the relationship of the state and religion.

With their contact with Hellenised Christianity there was also a sudden eruption of conflicts of opinion on matters of theology and theological ethics in Islam (Rahman, 1979:3). When *Mu'awiya* died he was succeeded by his son *Yazid.* The *Shi'a* did not approve and backed *'Ali*'s son *Husayn* as Caliph. In the ensuing confrontation the *Umayyad* army invaded Arabia, sacked Medina and attacked Mecca, during which battle the *Ka'ba* caught fire (Lunde, 2003:51).

The *Umayyad* dynasty was succeeded by the *Abbasid* dynasty. *Abbas*, an uncle of Muhammad, became Caliph after a struggle with the *Umayyad* dynasty. The *Abbasid* dynasty is considered to be the golden age of Islam. It is the time of the Arabian Nights, *Al-addin* and his lamp and *Sinbad* the Sailor. The form of government changed from a *mulk*, temporal kingdom to a theocracy ruled by the Caliph as the "The Shadow of God upon Earth." *Abbasid* rulers did not rule like Arab tribal leaders, as their predecessors did, but as absolute monarchs (Lunde, 2003:54). Great progress was made in medicine, mathematics and science (Denny, 1994:97). They officially sponsored the translation of Greek philosophy, medicine and science into Arabic. They also tried to heal the gulf between state and religion brought on by the *Umayyad* dynasty (Rahman, 1979:4). During the *Abbasid* reign, non-Arab Muslims, especially Persians would start to play a dominant role in society.

The capital was moved from Damascus to Iraq where a new capital city was built: Baghdad (Persian name meaning "Gift of God") (Lunde, 2003:54).

The Muslims expanded east and west and at the beginning of the eleventh century large parts of Spain, North Africa and north India were under their control. Along with religious fervour, good military organisation helped the exceptional spread of Islam. A set salary, regular payment and the lure of battlefield loot attracted the rugged tribesmen to join in the battle for Islam. Newly converted peoples' loyalty would be secured by the assurance of army pay (McKay, 1992:272).

There was a steady loss of Christians, converting to Islam. Neill (1964:63) says that the most surprising factor of Islamic expansion was the small loss of life and the rapid collapse of Christian civilisation. As stated above Islam divides the world in two parts: *dār al Islam* (House of Islam) en *dār al Harb* (House of War). In the House of Islam Allah reigns, in the

other not. The ideal is that Allah must rule alone, as He does in heaven. Islam is therefore the only acceptable political system. A *de facto* state of war exists between the two houses. Every Muslim has the religious responsibility to fight in the war of conversion, *jihād*. This war will only end when all of humanity has been converted to Islam (McKay, *et al*, 1992:272). Islam did, however, not only expand through war, as was the case in India with the Mogul Empire. In Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and in East and West Africa Islam spread mostly through trade and peaceful penetration (Anderson, 1990:96).

The purpose of this chapter is not to give a thorough history of the development of Islam. What is interesting to note is that during the next centuries Islam will "change hands" three times. During the reign of the *Abbasid* Dynasty the Islamic Empire adopted Persian "cultural trappings" but still stayed true to its basic tenants. From there the Empire would be taken over by the Seljuk Turks (Lunde, 2003:62), after them the Mongols (Lunde, 2003:65) and eventually the Ottoman Turks would rule the Islamic Empire. Not withstanding the different cultural trappings the *ummah* succeeded in forging a more or less united Islamic Empire.

During this first phase Muslim relations with the "official" church were marred by the **Crusades**. De Beer (1996:32) calls the Crusades one of the saddest events in history. Parshall (1980:14) considers it an al time low in the relationship between Christianity and Islam. It not only harmed the relationship between Islam and the West but brought enmity. Esposito (1992:3) indicates the Muslim-Christian relations were overshadowed from the start by conflict as their armies and missionaries struggled for power and souls. This started with the Muslim defeat of the Byzantine Empire, the Crusades, and the expulsion of the Moors from Spain and the Inquisition, and eventually the Ottoman threat to Europe. For Muslims the Crusades lives as an example of militant Christianity (Esposito, 1992:40).

For a long time the Byzantine Empire had protected the Christian West from Islam. With the possible collapse of the Byzantine Empire, Emperor Alexius Commenus appealed to Pope Urban II for men to help fight the infidel invaders (Mansfield, 2003:20). In 1095 the Pope initiated the Crusades, calling on the believers to unite in a Holy War. With this he tried to gain recognition of papal authority, and to unite the Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) Churches (Esposito, 1992:41). Between 1096 and 1270 eight Crusades were approved by the

Pope (McKay, *et al*, 1992:365). Only the First Crusade was successful. In 1099 Jerusalem was captured and the Muslim and Jewish populations massacred (Mansfield, 2003:20). This stands in stark contrast to Saladin's conduct, who when he retook Jerusalem in 1187, spared the lives of all those who surrendered (Mansfield, 2003:21).

McKay (*et al*, 1992:367) and Johns (1992:166) agree that the Crusades as a military assault on the eastern Mediterranean had very little political effect on the Islamic Empire. Von Grünebaum (1970:199) is of opinion that the Crusades in spite of its overall failure benefited only the West. The Muslims sufficed with a few technological borrowings from the West. In the end the West benefited far more from the intellectual exchange stimulated by the Crusades. Concerning Christian-Muslim relations the perception created by the Crusades of the Christian West was of larger importance. Esposito (1992:39) calls the effect of the Crusades on Muslim-Christian relations shattering and long lasting. It remains to this day a living factor in Muslim-Christian relationship (Mohammed, 1999:35). Runciman (McKay, *et al*. 1992:367) calls the Crusades a tragic and destructive episode in the West's relationship with the East. He perceives the Crusade's idea of a Holy war as a long act of intolerance in the name of God. In the end the Crusades degenerated into intra Christian wars against the enemies of the papacy (McKay, *et al*, 1992:366; cf. Mohammed, 1999:35).

2.9.2 Second phase: Islamic decline – 1600 to 1950's

From its beginning to the 1600's Islam was a threat to Western Europe. The rise of Colonialism and Imperialism would change the situation, leading in a time of decline for Islam that would last till the 1950's (Esposito, 1992:48).

For the first three centuries of its existence the Ottoman Empire directed its interest to the conquest and control of Christian countries - the spread of the world of Islam to the West (Mansfield, 2003:35). Colonialism reversed the pattern of self-rule the Muslim world had known from the time of Muhammad (Esposito, 1992:48). By the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire would be known to the West as the "Sick man of Europe" (Mansfield, 2003:35). For Muslims the economic and religious conflict arising from Colonialism

conjured up Images of the Crusades (Esposito, 1992:51). Europe became an enemy threatening both the faith of Islam and the political life of the Muslim community. The problem was that missionaries entered regions that had already been penetrated by commerce or had already come under the control of Western colonial empires. As bearers of culture the missionaries inadvertently exerted a cultural influence. In this way missions voluntarily rendered an important service in the process by which the West mastered the world. It was consider necessary that the state and church work hand in hand to civilize the savage people of the world (Bavinck, 1960:101). To the Muslim mindset colonialism (*isti'mar*) and mission (*tabshir*) were identified as interwoven elements of Western corruption (Caner & Caner, 2002:77; cf. Kraemer, 1947:275). In this process the Biblical message has become interwoven with economics, politics and a Western approach to religion (Parshall, 1980:85).

The Muslim community's response was to withdraw. They started to see the Christians of Europe (up to now "People of the Book") in the same light as Muhammad did his opponents in Mecca before the *hijra*: they were infidels, enemies of Islam (Esposito, 1992:53).

The initial response of withdrawal caused Muslim countries to fall behind the West in terms of development. By the eighteenth century Muslim leaders began to grant concessions to European companies, in a bid to modernise their countries. These concessions were known as the Capitulations. They did not only give foreign government's economic rights in Muslim countries but rights over Orthodox Christians in Muslim countries (Mansfield, 2003:38). Christian missionaries entered Muslim countries trying to win souls for Christ, openly questioning the viability of Islam in the modern world (Esposito, 1992:49). This intensified strained relationships between Islam and Christianity. In spite of Western penetration of the Muslim material world, Muslims themselves held fast to their belief of the superiority of Islam, showing little or no interest in the ways of non-Muslim people (Mansfield, 2003:39).

American Protestant missionaries played an important role in the penetration of Western cultural influences. In 1866 they founded the Syrian Protestant College and later the American University of Beirut. This was followed by the French Catholic Université Saint Joseph in 1874 (Mansfield, 2003:118). Not withstanding Western secularist ideas finding their way into Muslim society, religious loyalties stayed the same. After World War One the

Islamic Ottoman Empire came to an end. Its territory was divided between Britain and France (Mansfield, 2003:166). The colonial authorities actively supported Christian missions and indigenous Christian communities were encouraged to assume a disproportionate role in the running of the colonies (Johns, 1992:194). During this time the Balfour declaration saw the light. In it Britain made provision for the formation of a National home for the Jewish people in Palestine. This planted the seeds of a conflict that has lasted till this day and destined to last for some time to come.

In the end the whole nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the political disintegration of the world of Islam. However, Islam as a religious and social force did not disintegrate, it stayed alive, eventually to facilitate the political reawakening in Muslim countries (Rahman, 1979:7).

2.9.3 Third phase: Islamic independence – 1950's to present

After the Second World War Muslim states began to gain their independence (Lunde, 2003:78). Independence did not come easy for the Arab states. Defining their identity in a modern age was difficult. Nationalism for Arabs, even non-Muslim Arabs, could never be entirely secular. This would mean they would have to cut themselves off from their heritage of Islamic civilisation, which was unthinkable (Mansfield, 2003:323).

After the 1950's traditional conservatism began to solidify into hard points of political resistance and open revolt. The failure of capitalism to deliver the promised economic and social benefits and the manifest decadence and corruption of the Christian West led to disillusionment about modernism (Johns, 1992:194). The fast changing modern world swept many Muslims along in a sea of alienation and marginalisation. These people found an anchor in religion. Islam offered a sense of identity, fraternity and cultural values (Esposito, 1992:16). Intellectual leaders called for a return to *shari'a.* The world was again divided into *Dār al-Islam* and *Dār al-Harb:* The House of Islam now consisting of the small group of radical Muslims and the House of War consisting of all non-Muslims and secular modernist regimes. This return to medieval Islam resulted in a new evaluation of the relationship

between Islam and Christianity. One of the outcomes was the rejection of the West (Johns, 1992:195). During the Iranian revolution of 1979 *Ayatollah Khomeini* declared the United States "the Great Satan" (Mansfield, 2003:329). Violence in the Middle East, the attack on the United States in September 2001 and the ongoing war against terrorism have placed Islam in the lime light of world events (Omar, 2003:158). The actions of Muslim radicals have resulted in media stereotyping of Muslims. The West started to suffer from Islamophobia (Ruthven, 2002:17).

Islam did not penetrate to "ground level" in all the territories it conquered. In Indonesia Islam had to a large extent remained a kind of cultural overlay on a social and cultural structure which stayed, for the most part pagan. After the 1950's this started to change with fresh input from the Middle East, creating groups of orthodox Muslims set on the Islamisation of their society (Rahman, 1979:8).

It is important to note that Christianity has not been supplanted by Islam in all Muslim countries. In some countries, like in North Africa, this has been the case. Christianity has almost entirely disappeared and Christians live as aliens in their "host" country. In countries such as Afghanistan there are practically no local or foreign Christians. Contrary to this important Christian minorities live in the south of India, Ethiopia and in the Middle East (Jomier, 1989:129). In the Middle East Christian communities live who have their roots in the first church, established by the apostle James in Jerusalem (Makari, 2000:34). In Lebanon Christians consist of almost half the population. In Asia Christian minorities are also found among Muslim societies (Jomier, 1989:129).

Today Muslims tend to equate Christianity and the West (Anderson, 1976:287). This should be taken into consideration when viewing Muslim-Christian relations. Considering the historic overview given above it is possible to see why missionaries to Muslim countries see only a handful of people coming to Christ after decades of work (Accad, 1997:10). Currently evangelical churches from the four major Protestant communities may be found in the Middle East: they are Lutheran, Reformed, Episcopal and Anabaptist (Badr, 2000:60). In 1934 the United Missionary Council was formed, it was renamed the Middle East Council of Churches in 1974 (Badr, 2000:62).

However, the Protestant legacy in the Middle East is beset by certain negative aspects. They tend to alienate their members culturally, socially and at times politically from the community at large. They also mixed Biblical preaching with Western political ideals, for example the interpretation of Zionist ideology in light of Old Testament statements concerning the Promised Land. This resulted in people blaming Christians for the establishment of the state of Israel. They also have a legacy of emigration. Christians from the Middle East, introduced to the Western Anglo Saxon world and its attractions, have been emigrating since the mid nineteenth century, a tendency which has become very difficult to stop (Badr, 2000:65).

A further negative aspect was that the missiological approach of the nineteenth century was polemic. The idea was to attack Islam until it "fell to the ground" (Schlorff, 1993:173). Things have changed and in the last 20 years of the twentieth century missionaries have been debating the pros and cons of contextualising the Gospel for Muslims (Schlorff, 1993:173.). Still the fact remains that very few Muslims have converted to Christianity (Anderson, 2000:285; cf. McCurry, 1976:267). Working in Pakistan, McCurry (1976:267) believes that one of the important reasons for this is that Western missionaries establish churches as replicas of Western models.

The quick rise of Islam was a shock to the Christian West. Western Christendom was for the most part defensive and belligerent (Esposito, 1992:38). Both Church and State in the West could not understand their new enemy, and demonised it, dismissing it as barbarian and infidel (Esposito, 1992:38). Through the centuries Western Christianity's commentary on Islam carries this negative spirit. "Christian superiority" has left its mark on the modern Church (Anderson, 1976:286). Currently the Islamic population of the world is 1 265 230 000 with a growth rate of 2.11 per cent (Barrett & Johnson, 2003:25). Islam is the second largest world religion, after Christianity. It averages about 20 percent of the world population, having grown 500 percent in the last 50 years (Rhodes, 2000).

2.10 Conclusion and comments

Considering the history of the Muslim-Christian relationship the important question may not be *"what"* Muhammad knew of Christianity, but rather *"how"* and from *"whom"* he came to know. Christianity's close relationship with the political powers since the third century A.D. to the present has a definite negative influence on the Christian's ability to effectively communicate the Gospel of Christ. Arabs for the most part did not come into direct contact with the "official" Church. Indirect contact consisted of seeing the Church as part of the Roman Empire's political machinery. Along with this the Church itself was beset by theological debates over dogmatic issues. This disunity and competition between different groups all confessing to serve Christ, did not serve the mission of the Church well. Kraemer (1947:216) considers it legitimate to understand Islam as a modified reflex of, and reaction upon Judaism and Christianity.

Muslim prejudice against "Western Christianity" needs to be taken into account when trying to communicate the Gospel to Muslim communities today. The same holds true of Western prejudice against Islam, born of fear and political intrigue.

It is clear that Islam cannot be separated from the community it arose from. The most important factor in this respect would be the *ummah* (the universal brotherhood of Islam, binding all Muslims into a family of faith). Muhammad effectively harnessed divided peoples' pride and solidarity for a new cause: that of Islam. The cultural mindset that held true before the time of Islam was carried over into the new brotherhood. Islam is not merely a religion but a cultural heritage, defining the identity of both the community and individual.

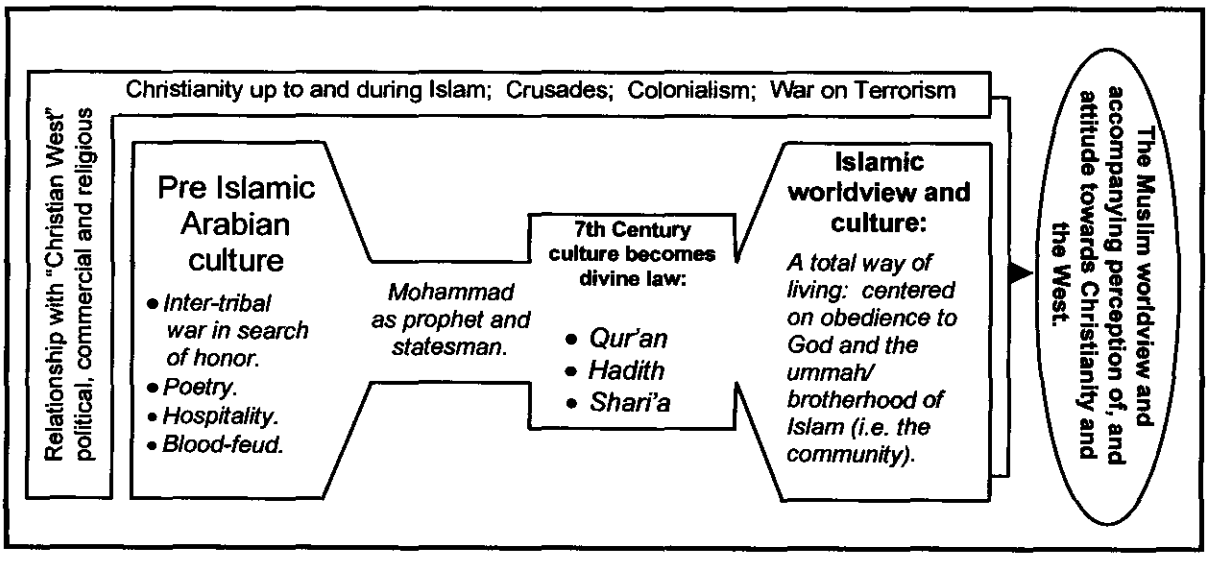
Within the modern world the logical consequence of distinction made between *Dār al-Islam* (House of Islam) and *Dār al-Harb* (House of War) is that Islam is not only a religious entity, but a political entity as well. This poses a unique obstacle when considering Muslim-Christian relations. Humanly speaking any discussion on religion will have political overtones – especially in countries in the Middle East, Indonesia and North Africa. This may not be the intention of the Christian missionary but the political consequences of a discussion on religion will certainly be foremost in the Muslim's mind.

As a total way of life, encompassing most every aspect of daily living, Islam has found inroads into numerous cultures over the centuries (Arab, Persian, Mongolian, Turkish and countries in Africa and the Far East). Islam is a conforming force, keeping people bound in the teachings and customs of Mohammad. Parshall (1980:64) comments on the surprisingly uniform worldview of Muslims in different countries in the midst of ethnic, linguistic, geographical and cultural diversity. Even though it is battling with modernism, it has survived as a seventh century way of life in accordance with the pillars set forth by Muhammad.

Historical factors and theological issues have made Muslims extremely resistant to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Parshall, 1980:15). Bavinck (1960:81) warns of the great error Christians commit when they fail to take a person's culture and history seriously. Christians, therefore, need to take serious the Muslim's culture and history in order to effectively communicate the Gospel to the Muslim community of the world.

Rev Madany (1987:57) who is a pioneer radio missionary to the Arabic broadcasting section of Back-to-God Hour, says that no missionary may approach the Christian mission to Islam as if the past were unimportant or that it had very little to teach modern missionaries. Ignoring this history would indeed be insensitive as Accad (1997:11) claims.

The history of Islam's relationship with Christianity and Islam's cultural development form an integral part of the Muslim worldview and perception of the Christian West. Schematically it may be depicted as follows.



From this historical overview it is feasible to justify Accad's premise regarding the strained relationship between Christianity and Islam. This history has become part of the Muslim worldview, resulting in a negative outlook toward the Christian West. As part of the Muslim worldview the Islamic cultural heritage and view on the history between Christianity and Islam, poses a definite stumbling block in the way of effectively communicating the Gospel.

The attitudes engendered by the history depicted above would probably hold true for most Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa. Especially for Muslims from those countries who suffered a time of colonization. To a lesser degree this attitude may hold true for Muslims in countries of the former USSR, India and the Far East. Although some of these communities also suffered on account of Western colonization, disgruntled attitudes toward Christians is in most cases the result of ethnic and mostly regional differences and history (Bosnia, Croatia, and Indonesia). Regional history and relations plays the defining role in the formation of their worldview giving rise to different attitudes and practises[19].

Accad's method of friendship evangelism must be seen as a necessity in the light of the historical relationship between Christianity and Islam. In a sense Christians need to work for and deserve an audience from the Muslim community. Friendship alone, however necessary, will not bring about life changing repentance in a Muslim's life. Although friendship evangelism may go a long way in correcting the negative perception Muslims hold of Christians, what is direly needed is a way to effectively address the Muslim worldview in order to correct a wrong view of God, Christ and man's place before God (see § 2.7: The doctrines of Islam). These aspects of the Muslim worldview are formed by Mohammad's teachings as taught in the Qur'an. This distorted picture can only be corrected by the Bible as God's only valid revelation. Born from a history of suspicion and false teaching, Muslims distrust Christians and the Bible. Accad's method of using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible, within the context of friendship evangelism may well pose a valid vehicle to effectively address the Muslim worldview, and in the process presenting the Gospel of salvation in Christ alone. Accad's premise regarding the strained relationship between Christianity and Islam is valid.

[19] Islam was peacefully introduced to China during the eighth century by Central Asian traders. There is an estimated 20 million Chinese Muslims. Although heavily persecuted during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) Muslims have started to open Mosques again. Shiite Muslims do not have Mosques but meet weekly in homes for prayer and the reading of the Qur'an. A different history gave rise to different practise (Hattaway, 2000:11). As a religious minority persecuted by a Communist regime these Muslims meet in homes, the same why the persecuted Christian gather in home-churches.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNICATION OF THE GOSPEL TO MUSLIMS ACCORDING TO ACCAD

3.1 Chapter overview

The purpose of this chapter is to give a summary of Accad's method as presented in his book "Building Bridges." Accad's method may be described as a culturally sensitive way to communicate the Gospel to Muslims by using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible, within the contexts of friendship evangelism.

3.2 A culturally sensitive way

Islam encompasses a total way of life. The strong distinction made between religion and government in "Christian nations" does not exist in Islamic nations. They are religious and political at the same time (Accad, 1997:64). Islam is a total culture, a complete way of living, of defining the identity of the community as well as that of the individual (see § 2.10). Muslims believe there is only one way to live: God's way! Consequently if someone came and said: "Islam is all wrong! Allah is not God! You have to accept Jesus, God's Son; He is the only way to God." A Muslim turns away at once. These statements contradict what a Muslim has been taught as God's holy truth (Accad, 1997:8).

When Muslims do convert[20] they are considered traitors to family, people, country and race. They are shunned by their families and in some cases lose their lives. Muslims, even if they are lukewarm believers or secret disbelievers, tend to get beside themselves with anger when if another Muslim becomes Christian or changes his religious allegiance (Kraemer, 1947:219). Family loyalty is a dominant theme in Muslim society. A family's place in society determines the individual's position (chances of success, attainments of wealth, education etc.). Few , if any, important decisions are made without consulting the family, and then the individual will usually submit to the family counsel (Bailey & Matheny, 1989:121). To a Muslim the greatest tragedy is bringing dishonour on the family's name. Shame causes

[20] Accad (1997:61) warns about the use of the word "conversion" when ministering to Muslims. To Muslims who have come to trust Christ and those who do not trust Christ, the word carries the meaning of betraying one's religion, people and friends.

internal upset and strife in the whole extended family (Parshall, 1980:70)[21]. Accad's problem with "traditional" methods of evangelism, is that the "converted" loses any opportunity to witness to his family and friends (cf. Goldsmith, 1982:135; Wilder, 1977:307).

Accad (1997:8) contends that this need not be the case, as Christ is considered one of the greatest prophets in the Qur'an (cf. Racey, 1996:305). Through Accad's method a Muslim may put his trust in Christ without being alienated from family and friends, and so be able to witness to them. These new believers do not become "Christians," a term which to Muslims carries a political connotation and has negative cultural implications (Accad, 1997:[22]35).They consider themselves to be truly Muslim ("Muslim" meaning surrendered to God), Muslims who have truly surrendered to God through the sacrifice of Messiah *Isa* (the Qur'anic word for Jesus) (cf. Parshall, 1980:26). Others simply call themselves "followers of *Isa*."

Comment: Accad's introduction identifies his problem with the Christian mission that does not reckon with the cultural and historical situation of the Muslims. Any such mission is doomed to failure because

- it fails to communicate the Gospel effectively – closing all avenues of communication by directly or indirectly (intentionally or not) contradicting what Muslims have been raised to believe as God's truth and way to salvation;

- in the event of successfully communicating the Gospel, it destroys the opportunities a new believer in Christ have to witness to his family and friends.

What is needed is a way of communicating the Gospel in such a manner that Muslims would first of all stop, listen and consider what is said. And in the second place a method that is effected in such a manner that would allow those who accept the Gospel truth, the opportunity to be effective witnesses in their own context without deprecating the Gospel. Parshall (1980:71) contends that the most common method employed by Christian missionaries, an individual oriented method that leads to alienation needs to be rejected.

[21] See in this regard Chapter 2: the prominence of virtues such as honor and loyalty to family in the Arab/Muslim society.
[22] The word "Christian" is a serious offence to Muslims. Experienced missionaries to Islam contend that even baptism is not as dangerous as the word "Christian" (Parshall, 1980:163).

The Bible teaches Christians to present the Gospel with gentleness and respect to people of different cultures and customs (1 Peter 3:16)[23]. When approaching a Muslim culture, honour and respect are of the utmost importance. Accad considers it insensitive, in fact negligent, to completely disregard the Qur'an when discussing spiritual things with a Muslim. The Qur'an is their primary spiritual book and it would be next to impossible to discuss spiritual matters without it. Even though the Bible is highly respected in Islamic religion and culture, Muslims will have great difficulty in accepting a missionary's message if he cannot show how the words relate to the Qur'an. No one can connect with a person from another culture unless he first establishes common ground with the other person's culture and traditions (Accad, 1997:12).

Comment: One of the unique problems and opportunities presented by Muslim evangelism is centred on the fact that the Muslims are a highly developed people. They are not a jungle tribe who worships the sun and moon, who have never seen the written word and who stands in complete astonishment of Western technology. Muslims too, beliefs in a transcendent God who revealed His will through a book. Muslims have views and believes on subjects such as Christianity, Jesus, the Old and New Testaments, man's place before God and the way to salvation. These are spiritual matters that pertain to man's worldview and the Muslim worldview is to a large extent formed by the Qur'an. Humanly speaking, ignoring the Qur'an would be detrimental to the Christian mission to Islam, as it leaves the Christian with no effective means of addressing the Muslim worldview.

To Accad the Qur'an serves as a cultural bridge helping the Christian to start where people are. An example of such a cultural bridge is found when Paul presents the Gospel in Athens (Acts 17). The religion of the people in Athens had very little in common with Christianity. Yet Paul starts where they are: an altar with the inscription "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD." Paul uses a responsible approach. While waiting in Athens for Silas and Timothy he saw the idolatry of the people there. So he went from the synagogue to the marketplace and reasoned with the people. He could easily have rebuked them for their foolish ways. This approach is not always effective. Accad (1997:21) contends that when missionaries put sinners down condemning them for their bad practices and erroneous beliefs, they become angry and turn

[23] The Old Afrikaans translation concurs with the NIV. Verse 15 states "met sagmoedigheid en vrees." In the New Afrikaans translation it is stated in verse 16: "met beskeidenheid en eerbied vir God". The words "for God' do not appear in the Nestle- Aland 27th edition of the Greek New Testament.

away, giving the missionary no further chance to influence them. Paul starts in a sympathetic and friendly manner using examples from Greek culture. He didn't begin with something foreign they couldn't understand. Accad emphasises the importance of how Paul starts: "*Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.*" Paul was not trying to flatter them. He was a serious man, who understood that they were searching, but that their hearts were as yet not satisfied. Paul was trying to find common ground with his audience. When Paul speaks to them he uses the same word, they used for God: *Theos* (the common Greek word for God). Paul described God in general terms that the Athenians were familiar with, using reference to their philosophers and poets as a bridge to introduce them to a few quotations from the Old Testament. In quoting the Greek poets Paul built a cultural bridge, reaching out to the people there, thus making a key cultural, and spiritual, connection with his audience (Accad, 1997:25).

Dionysius a member of the philosophical council a woman named Damaris and several others came to Christ in response to Paul's message. It is in this light that Accad (1997 23) proposes that Christians, using Paul's method, can skilfully introduce accurate verses from the Qur'an to share Gospel truth with Muslims. Through this method a Muslim's comfort zone will be reinforced, before he is exposed to the fuller truth from the Bible.

The difference between a responsive and unresponsive person is that one has been prepared to understand and the other not. To prepare a person to understand a totally new idea the missionary needs to explain his message in terms that the other understands (Accad, 1997:31). The Gospel must be explained in reference to a framework that Muslims has already been exposed to. Muslims must be consciously prepared to take the Gospel seriously. They have always been taught that Christianity is a heresy and will probably not listen, unless the Christians who have contact with them have become close and dear friends, friends whose character demands respect. Preparing the soil of people's hearts to accept the Gospel implies not only using a spiritual approach but also a concrete, direct one of kindness, generosity, sharing, and genuine friendliness. It is through Christians' consistent holy lifestyle that they can show others the way to life itself (Accad, 1997:33).

Comment: Accad uses the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible, within the context of friendship evangelism. His method may be seen as encompassing two equally important aspects: using the Qur'an as a way into Muslim minds and genuine friendship (born from God's love) as a

way into Muslim hearts. Both aspects are needed to effectively communicate to Muslims since it addresses two main stumbling blocks in Christian-Muslim relations: doctrine and experience. Muslims where taught to believe different than Christians, and experience has taught them not to trust Christians (especially Western Christians). These aspects are both needed to gain a fair hearing in the light of the Muslim worldview (see § 2.10).

3.3 The contextualization of the Gospel truth to Muslims

Too often Christians try to reach Muslims from the outside (Accad, 1997:13). They come across as all-knowing Westerners, insisting on displacing the cultural and religious customs of people in the Middle East with Western cultural and religious traditions. Unwittingly they imply "*You are Muslims. We are Western Christians. You have to come to us and follow our ways. If you do not adapt to our culture, our customs, you cannot become members of God's people.*" This is not expressed in an outright way, but this message so often happens to be carried across by the Christian's methods and lifestyle.

Comment: This is a natural response and pertains to man's worldview. As humans grow up the individual himself is the centre of his own world. Man is egocentric. In time and with difficulty he learns to break down the circle between himself and others: he learns to see things from another's point of view. The same principle holds true when encountering another culture. Man finds it difficult to look at the world through another's cultural eyes. Man is ethnocentric (Hiebert, 1999:378). When judging another culture from their ethnocentrism, a missionary's negative perception and attitude are quickly perceived by Muslims (Parshall, 1980:121).

Accad (1997:34) contends that Western Christians will have to attempt to strip their Christianity of the Western cultural forms and trappings with which they clothed it. The more radical and strange Christianity looks the more hesitant Muslims will be to consider the deeper message of Christianity (Parshall, 1980:59). Muslims should have the liberty to worship Christ in forms and trappings acceptable to their culture. The early church based its forms on the religious background from which it sprang (i.e. Jewish synagogue worship). Consequently it may be considered biblical for a church to relate closely to the religious and cultural context in which it is placed.

Muslims are sometimes outraged by the proud and unclean way Christians worship. Men and women sit together (to the Muslim mindset this leads to immorality). People fail to wash the exposed parts of their bodies beforehand, and are ritually unclean. They also sit upright with crossed legs while talking to Almighty God, thus showing their pride (Accad, 1997:13).

As a result of keeping this in mind, congregations in Muslim countries retain much of the Muslim (exterior) forms of worship. They meet on Friday, they have a facility for washing and believers remove their shoes and sit on the floor during sermons. They use the Muslim prayer posture and dress in typical Muslim clothing. They also use a wooden stand as Bible holder, as is being done for the Qur'an in the mosque. All this makes Muslims comfortable enough to attend services and to listen to the Word of God. They do not feel as if they are accepting a foreign religion, or as if they are forsaking their own culture or family and friends (Accad, 1997:35). Some may consider these ceremonial observances unnecessary and restrictive. Scripture teaches that those who have been set free by Christ are truly free (John 8.36; Colossians 2:16-17). However, Scripture also teaches believers who are strong in faith to accept those whose faith is weak without passing judgement on disputable matters (Romans 14:1-2; 14:15; 1 Corinthians 10:33; 2 Corinthians 6:3-4).

Christians from Western societies should not let their Western way of serving God stand in the way of Muslims accepting Christ as their Saviour. Consistent with the loving way in which Christians should serve Muslims they should be careful not to insult Muslims unnecessarily. The missionary should not only be aware of the other's cultural sensitivity and avoid violation of the Muslim's high regard for Islam or the Qur'an (Accad, 1997:36). By doing so relationships can suffer damage even though the missionary makes it clear that he loves God. Christians who display or emphasise reservations about Islam or the Qur'an, are automatically suspect and Muslims will certainly hesitate to engage in friendship.

Comment: Congruence of faith and practice are extremely important when communicating the Gospel to unbelievers. However, it is not enough to be merely friendly. The missionary needs to adapt to, those he seeks to communicate to. Petersen (1992:117) says that without this adaptation the most exemplary life will go unobserved by those whom the missionary wishes to communicate to. Without adaptation a prolonged exposure which is necessary for observance, will not be possible. In this Paul's attitude as expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 is extremely important. Paul says that it is his responsibility, as a witness, to adapt to

the un-evangelised. In practice being a Jew for the Jews meant that Paul respected the scruples and traditions of whoever he was with (Petersen, 1992:118; cf. Kerr, 1976:329).

Following Paul's example the important principle here is to be a Jew for the Jews and a Muslim for the Muslims. This does not mean that a missionary becomes a Muslim legally. This would amount to high syncretism (Parshall, 1998:405). Respecting the scruples and traditions of the Muslim community implies sensitivity for cultural differences. In this regard Goldsmith (1982:111) advises Christian girls to only go to Muslim countries if they are willing to adapt to a culture where women are by no means equal to men. Eating local food and following local custom or removing church pews for the sake of converted Muslims are good examples of contextualization (Racey, 1996:306). Own political views and personal interests must take a step back. Nehls (*s.a.*:33) says priorities in the missionary's personal and church life must be re-considered. Compassion for the one who needs Christ takes first place.

In order to effectively communicate the Gospel it is necessary to learn the basics of the Muslim's cultural background, their religion and their disposition to the Christian faith (Nehls, *s.a.*:35; cf. Goldsmith, 1982:112; Madany, 1987:64). Kraemer (1947:303) contends that this knowledge is extremely important for missionaries. It is not a case of being "not permissible" to reach out without this knowledge, but a case of impossibility. In this process of contextualization, cultural customs, as well as language and traditions are to be taken into account (Racey, 1996:305). This is the process by which the ground is prepared for the Gospel. It is important to remember that Muslims as a rule are not prepared or ready to listen to the Gospel. They are like Pharisees: quite confident because they follow the right religion and do the right things. (Nehls, *s.a.*:33). Islam has succeeded in creating in its adherents a feeling of absolute religious superiority (Kraemer, 1947:220).

Petersen (1992:120) emphasises that it is not enough to occasionally drop into another individual's world, preach to him, and then go away. Adeyemo (1986:10) says that the time has past for missionaries to live separately from the people they wish to minister to. The practise of "hit and run" (go in, tell the people about Jesus and retreat to their refuge) evangelism is also past. Missionaries must live with the people they minister to, and learn their language and cultural system. Muslims must receive ample opportunity to view the Christian's life, what they witness to, what they teach and how this affects their own life.

This is only achieved through a culturally sensitive approach. The missionary should therefore know the people and their customs to effectively communicate the gospel truth. Anderson (1976:299) says the mature Christian worker seeks to bring Christ to Islam. He therefore must learn to sit where they sit. Contextualization should, however, never be an excuse for doctrinal or spiritual compromise (Goldsmith, 1982:137). Contextualization implies an adaptation or identification to the new context, not an adaptation or change in the Gospel truth.

Using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible exposes Muslims to Bible knowledge. However, Brislen (1996:363) says that Bible knowledge alone is not enough. New believers need to experience true worship of God through Jesus and prayer with their heavenly Father. Other seekers need to see Christ worshipped in a culturally relevant manner (1 Corinthians 14:24-25). The manner in which God is worshipped and served must also be culturally relevant without detracting from the Gospel.

Within the process of the contextualization of the Gospel to Muslim several theological issues proves stumbling blocks for both Christians and Muslims. Christians have difficulty accepting the prophethood of Muhammad and the Qur'an and Muslims denies that Jesus is the Son of God and the Trinity. Accad places these stumbling blocks within a framework of understanding that he believes would be acceptable for Christians and Muslims.

3.3.1 Muhammad and the Qur'an

In the seventh century the Scriptures had not yet been translated into Arabic. Jews and Christians living in Arabia had Scriptures (Accad, 1997:36). During this period the Qur'an called the Arabs the "common people" because they had no scripture of their own (It was only after receiving the Qur'an that they were also called "the People of the Book").

Muslims believe God remedied this problem by appointing Muhammad as messenger to the Arab people (Congregation 62:2). Muhammad saw himself as a "warner" who was bringing the Qur'an in a clear Arabic tongue in order to fill this literary vacuum within the Arab religious culture and to help turn the Arabs from idolatry to the worship of the one true God (Table 568; The Sand Dunes 46:11-12; Poets 26:194-195). Unfortunately several wrong

perceptions about Muhammad, Islam and the Qur'an have pervaded the worldwide Christian community, and hindered gospel outreach among Muslims (Accad, 1997:39).

Such wrong perceptions include speculations that Arabia, prior to Muhammad, used to be a desert wasteland populated by warlike Bedouin tribes who knew nothing of "the one true God;" and that Muhammad, who was anti-Christian, filled this spiritual vacuum with his anti-Christian book the Qur'an. Historically the situation is much different (see § Chapter 2). The Arabian Peninsula was not only populated by Bedouin tribes completely isolated from the outside world. In Muhammad's time, there were of Jews and Christians living in Arabia. Muhammad respected these people and was often seen discussing their beliefs with them, in his hometown Mecca and along the caravan trade routes. Most of the Jews lived in Medina known for its date palms and goldsmiths (Accad, 1997:39).

Arabia was no wasteland cut off from the outside world, and most assuredly not a spiritual vacuum devoid of knowledge of God. Muhammad did not bring God to Arabia. People who believed in "The One God" had already been there for almost six centuries. Even though Muhammad's relations with Jews and Christians became troubled in later years, Accad (1997:41) believes that Muhammad was not anti-Christian. Christians may view Muhammad as a "warner" in a clear Arabic tongue, who came to tell his people of what he had learned from the Jews and Christians of the One God.

Comment: Kerr (1976:329) says that believing in God's revelation in Jesus Christ makes it impossible to accept Muhammad's prophethood in the same way as Muslims do. But, this does not imply that Mohammad should be rejected out of hand. Kerr (1976:329) recognises Muhammad's considerable achievement as a religious, social and political reformer committed to the vision of a society united in obedience to the will of the One God. Reformed missionaries may view Muhammad as prophet: not because he came with the direct words of God, but because he warned the Arab people in a clear Arabic voice (Accad, 1997:37). Rhodes (2000) advises that missionaries should not create unnecessary barriers by saying disdainful things about Mohammad or the Qur'an (cf. Parshall, 1980:136).

3.3.2 The Sonship of Christ

Another stumbling block in Muslims-Christians relations is the doctrine on the "Sonship" of Christ. Muslims believe this doctrine to be a reversion to paganism (Aziz-Us-Samad, *s.a.*:7).

When a Christian quote John 3:16, Muslims considers them to be worse than unbelievers for even considering that God married and had a child with a woman (Accad, 1997:9). But the Bible does not refer to Christ as God's Son in the physical sense. "Son" is often used in other contexts than the physical sense, in both the Bible and Qur'an (Accad, 1997:56). In the Bible Jesus gave His disciples James and John the nickname "sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). The early Christians named Joseph, Barnabas, which meant "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36). Likewise in the Qur'an a traveller who is in need of assistance and help is called "son of the road" (Cow 2:177, 215; Women 4:36; Spoils 8:41).

Instead of using John 3:16, Accad starts his explanation of who Christ is with John 1:1-2: "*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*" This wording is acceptable to a Muslim as the Qur'an also says that Jesus is the Word of God (Women 4:171). As God's Word was always with Him, and is part of His Being it is possible to explain that God's Word is included in His essence, no one can separate God from His Word. Accad (1997:9) considers this a valid explanation of Christ's deity, because it fits with the teaching of the Qur'an.

Comment: Considering that Muslims have been taught the direct opposite of what Christians try to convey, great caution should be taken when addressing the Sonship of Christ. Untimely and unprepared confrontation on this point may lead to a break in communication. This issue is a good example of where the two aspects of Accad's method are absolutely necessary: using the Qur'an as a way into Muslim minds and genuine friendship (born from God's love) as a way into Muslim hearts. Muslims must genuinely trust and respect the Christian who ministers to them. In this regard Cooper (1993:49) advises Christians to rather use phrases such as "Jesus the Messiah" than "Jesus the Son of God" as the latter is highly emotive and miscommunicates to Muslims. The issue of Christ's Sonship is closely linked to a related Christian doctrine, considered blasphemous by Muslims: the Trinity.

3.3.3 The Trinity

Accad (1997:56) states three false assumptions on which the condemnation of this doctrine has been based.

- A man (referring to Jesus Christ) who possesses a created body cannot be associated ontologically (in terms of personal being) with the Godhead (The Bee 16:51).

- According to Christian teaching, a woman, a virgin named Mary, had sex with God and bore a son, thus she came to be known as "the Mother of God," which is a concept found in heathen mythology (Table 5:119) (cf. Goldsmith, 1982:63).

- The concept of the Trinity was associated in some way with the blasphemous claims of some of the angels known as *jinn* who rebelled against God and pretended that they were equal to Him (Cattle 6:100; Cave 18:50).

Accad (1997:57) believes these false assumptions were made on an incomplete understanding of Christian doctrine and of the Qur'an itself. Passages from the Qur'an indicate that Muhammad was quite open to the Christian doctrine of the Virgin Birth, the Trinity and the Sonship of Jesus Christ (Spider 29:46; Cow 2:136, 285). In short when Muhammad confronted Christians about having three gods, he was not attacking the idea of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Godhead. He was attacking the idea of God having a wife and then having a son by her (Table 5:116: Jinn 72:3)[24]. Accad (1997:58) contends that Muhammad should have known about the right doctrine concerning the Trinity, otherwise he would not have been able to say that the Christian God is the true God (Spider 29:46).

To Muslims it is not logical that God could have had a son. Muslims think Christians believe God had sex with Mary (cf. Parshall, 1980:142). Although Muslims believe in the Virgin Birth (Prophets 21:91; Forbidding 66 12), they think some Christians don't really believe it (Accad, 1997:58). Until a Muslim comes to really know Christ, Christians should give a brief answer to any question about the Sonship of Christ. They may explain that when the Qur'an talks about the "son of the road" (Cow 2:177, 215) it does not mean the physical son of the road. This is a figure of speech. The same is true when the Qur'an mentions God sitting on

[24] A heretical sect of Christianity – the Choloridians – did teach that the Trinity consisted of the Father, the Mother (Mary) and the Son (Jesus). It is possible that Mohammad came into contact with them (Caner & Caner, 2002:89).

his throne (Ta Ha 20:5). These are figurative expressions God uses to help man understand. Later on in their relationship with Muslims, Christians could mention the story of Gabriel appearing to Mary to tell her of her virgin pregnancy. With this as starting point Christians could try and show Muslims to see the logic of Christ submitting and serving in the role of Son as a sacrificial act, and thus the logic of the title Son of God.

Comment: Parshall (1980:142) explains that Muslim and Christian thought processes differ when they hear the term Trinity. The language of the Qur'an has in view not a Trinity, but a triad, as is the case with the Hindu Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Being fiercely monotheistic Muslims become angered at any possibility of polytheism. Goldsmith (1982:63) contends that Muslims will never begin to appreciate the true claims of the Gospel as long as they labour under the misconception that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is materialistic and polytheistic. This is an extremely sensitive issue. Again it is important that the Muslims genuinely trust and respect the Christian who ministers to them. In any relationship between Christians and Muslims regarding spiritual matters both parties will know that the issue of the Trinity must be addressed. The time and circumstances is of great importance. Accad (1997:59) contends that some might consider this approach deceptive since it does not teach the whole truth. But he emphasises that teaching does not stop at this point. Muslims will come to grasp Christ's Sonship after they get to know Christ, since they will then have a fuller picture of the Scriptures and also the Holy Spirit's enlightenment. Christians must exercise sensitivity and respect at this point in the dialogue.

3.4 The *Qur'an* as a bridge to the Bible

Accad (1997:9) states that missionaries had for centuries, viewed the Qur'an as a devilish book, without ever studying it for themselves. He places the Qur'an within the framework of what Muhammad learned from the Jews and Christians in Arabia and the fact that Muhammad brought the Qur'an, in Arabic to the Arabs because the Jews (Old Testament) and the Christians (The Bible) had their own book in their own language (Poets 26:192-199). Because of the largely pro-Christian attitude in the Qur'an, Accad (1997:28) considers it legitimate for Christians to use pro-Christian quotes from Qur'an in their witness to Muslims.

With this method it is possible for Christians to explain who Christ actually is and why He occupies such a prominent place in the Qur'an, without alienating Muslims from their native

culture (Accad, 1997:10). Through the use of the Qur'an, which commands a Muslim's highest respect, it is possible to get a positive response from Muslims.

Accad gives examples of using the Qur'an in this way:

The Qur'an states: "*When the angels said. 'Mary, God gives thee good tidings of a Word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus son of Mary: high honoured shall he be in this world and the next, near stationed to God.*" (House of Imran 3:45).

Accad (1997:10) believes Muslims may seriously consider Christ, through the last part of this verse, because Muslims want someone to intercede for them, and Christ is in a good position to do so. Muslims actively seek intercession and most believe that Muhammad will intercede for them on the Last Day. The Qur'an forbids intercession for others, except with God's permission (Cow 2:255). Sunni Muslims believe no one can intercede for anyone else, dead or living especially not for that person's salvation (Accad, 1997:27).

Accad (1997:41) contends that Muhammad was profoundly impressed by the person of Jesus. In the Qur'an Jesus is called the "word of God," his birth and annunciation is described, He is described as a miracle worker who could raise the dead, was beloved by God, a messenger, a mercy and a sign from God.

In the Qur'an, Ornaments 43:63 states: "*When Jesus came with the clear signs he said: "I have come to you with wisdom and that I may make it clear to you some of that whereon you are at variance [disagree]; so fear you God* ***and obey me.***"

Accad considers the last part of this verse to be important, because it shows that Muslims are to obey Jesus. Muslims will more readily listen to Christians speak of Jesus when they quote passages from the Qur'an emphasising Christ's greatness and uniqueness (Accad, 1997:42). Muslims, who are witnessed to, using the Qur'an, will learn that the Qur'an teaches them to love Jesus Christ and to read study and follow what is written about Him in the Holy Bible (Accad, 1997:23).

The Qur'an says: "*People of the book [Qur'an], you will attain nothing until you observe [follow] the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord.*" (Table 5:68; Mary 19:19, 31; House of Imran 3:45; Cow 2:285; Women 4:136).

According to Accad (1997:38) the purpose of using verses from the Qur'an in the Christian mission to the Muslims is to

- help Muslims re-evaluate their false beliefs about Christ, by using their immense respect for the Qur'an; and

- move them to the point of being willing to read the Bible so that a more accurate profile of Jesus Christ may be presented to them.

Borrowing passages from the Qur'an to use it in a limited way to illustrate a point does not in any way imply approval of everything in the Qur'an. Precedence is given in the New Testament, where there are 133 references or quotations taken from Jewish and Greek non-Biblical literature (Accad, 1997:26). Christians should use the same wisdom as Bible writers, who used quotes from non-Biblical texts (Titus 1:12; Jude 14-15) to establish common ground. Likewise Christians should establish common ground with Muslim people who would otherwise probably never be open to listening to the Gospel message (Accad, 1997:29). This is done not only by a spiritual approach, but also by a concrete, direct approach of kindness, generosity, sharing and genuine friendliness. Through a consistent holy lifestyle Christians can show others the way to life itself (Accad, 1997:33).

Comment: The purpose of this method is to communicate the Gospel effectively to Muslims. Therefore it strives to bypass all the cultural and intellectual stumbling blocks: in order to help Muslims towards hearing the true Gospel concerning Christ. God wants people to know His truth.

Although Accad contends that the Qur'an has a pro-Christian attitude, it is necessary to keep in mind that Mohammad did become antagonistic towards the Christianity as a valid religion of revelation for the "nation" of Christians (Kraemer, 1947:354). This antagonism is seen in the rejection of some cardinal elements of Christianity (the Sonship of Christ, His death on the cross, the doctrines of the Trinity and Atonement.) as depicted in the Qur'an.

Kraemer (1947:354) warns that the Islam's rejection of Christianity is not merely a natural or intelligible reaction of a religion trying to assert itself. Being part of divine revelation in the Qur'an, the rejection of Christianity belongs to the Islam's religious creed.

Because of their worldview Muslims are automatically suspicious of Christians and the Bible. A bridge is needed to span this suspicion. Although almost all Muslims believe that the Bible has been abrogated by the Qur'an, the Qur'an itself does not support this view. The word *nasakha* (in the sense of "to abrogate") occurs only twice in the Qur'an (The Cow 2:100; The Pilgrimage 22:51), and in neither is it used in connection with reference to the Old or New Testament (Parshall, 1980:132). Using the Qur'an, the most holy book for Muslims, within the context of friendship evangelism may prove to be a valid bridge. There should not only be an intellectual connection (relating to the mind of the Muslim), but an emotional one as well (relating to the heart of the Muslim). If a Muslim does not trust and respect the Christian who discusses these spiritual matters with him, the Qur'an on its own would be more or less useless. Likewise friendship alone will not communicate the Gospel effectively. Rhodes (2000) also advises Christians to use the Qur'an when witnessing to Muslims, because the Qur'an calls Muslims to believe in and honour all the prophets of God. Christians should urge Muslims to consider the truth claims of Jesus Christ (cf. McCurry, 1976:280; Gilliland, 2000:232).

Not all agree on the use of texts from the Qur'an as connection points to the Bible. Schlorff (2000:320) rejects this method completely on the ground that form (of the word) and meaning (Muslim religious context) cannot be separated. Within the context of what Accad is trying to do, this would mean that using the Qur'an would strengthen the old perceptions (pertaining to worldview) rather than creating new perceptions (change in worldview). There is a definite risk that this may be the case. When Paul spoke to the scholars in Athens they understood what he said within there own frame of reference. When Paul used the Greek word for God (*Theos*) they did not understand this to indicate Jahveh. To them the word probably referred to Zeus. Form and meaning is hard to separate. Humanly speaking it is impossible. Evangelism, however, is not a human endeavour. It is God's work (Bavinck, 1960:57). Nicodemus also had difficulty in separating form and meaning (John 3:21). He could not understand what Jesus meant by "born again." In the end it is the Holy Spirit that leads man to understand. God is the One who makes the light of knowledge shine in the heart of man (2 Corinthians 4:6).

In responding to Schlorff's article Gilliland (2000:334) disagrees. He states as reason the Muslim community's high regard for the Qur'an (whether they understand the Arabic or not), historical precedence, and the fact that God through his Holy Spirit does indeed bring Muslims to Christ via this way. Because the Qur'an is so holy to the Muslim community (considering the historical and sociological factors) missionaries may and should use it in their ministry to Muslims. The main aim in the whole endeavour is getting Muslims to read the Bible so that they may be confronted and changed by God's Word and Spirit (Psalm 119:105).

Mogensen's research has shown that nearly 30 per cent of the Muslim Fulbe in West Africa has come to Christ through references of *Isa al Masih* (Messiah Jesus) in the Qur'an. After the first stages of conversion the Qur'an became less important to them (Gilliland, 2000:232). McCurry (1976:280) indicates that Muslims who have come to Christ through the Qur'an tend to replace the Qur'an with the Bible as reference book. He advocates the use of the Qur'an as a beginning point to introduce the subject of Jesus. Jeremy Hinds, working with Muslims in Africa, used the Qur'an fruitfully as a bridge to the Bible, trusting the Holy Spirit to confirm truths from the Qur'an that are consistent with the Bible (Gilliland, 2000:233).

Brislen (1996:363) says that missionaries should take care that new-creation Muslims (saved by Christ) are in dire need of solid, culturally relevant Bible teaching. Because they have been negatively influenced toward the Bible, this is a sensitive issue. Using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible and trusting the Spirit to convince people of the validity of the Bible may ease this process. Proclamation of the Word is God's chosen way to save people in Christ (Romans 10:14-15; 1 Corinthians 1 & 2; Hebrews 1, 2 & 3) (Madany, 1987:55). The Qur'an is not used to proclaim God's Word, but to serve as a bridge to the Bible, as a vehicle into the worldview of Muslims, in order to present the Word of God.

3.5 The Seven Principles of sharing the gospel[25]

With each principle Accad explains how missionaries should set about presenting the principle. The main idea of the principle is then explained in terms of verses taken from the

[25] Please note that in order to follow the argument proposed in each principle, much of the text had to be quoted. Where possible only one quote each, from the Bible and *Qur'an* are given.

Qur'an and the Bible (*Towrah* - The Law; *Zabur* - Psalms; *Injeel* - New Testament). The seven principles proposed by Accad, are:

- *Principle one: God has a purpose for our lives.*
- *Principle two: Sin separates us from God.*
- *Principle three: We can't save ourselves.*
- *Principle four: The cross is the bridge to life.*
- *Principle five: God's provision is a Person.*
- *Principle six: Making Him ours.*
- *Principle seven: What to expect when we accept God's gift.*

3.5.1 Principle one: God has a purpose for our lives

Accad (1997:78) emphasises that an attitude of genuine optimism is needed in presenting the concept in Principle 1, therein is real strength and hope (cf. Parshall, 1980:120). The Creator of the universe loves man and wants to enrich man by having a close relationship with man. God is love. He wanted somebody to love, someone who is able to return this love. Therefore he created man in His image, and gave him everything he needed.

The missionary should read the story of the Fall out loud from the Qur'an (Cow 2:30-39; Battlements 7:18-25) and allow his Muslim friend read the story from the Bible (Genesis 1:26-31; 3:1-24).

The Qur'an calls this man God created His "*khalifah,*" meaning representative. The Bible describes him as created "in God's image." The Missionary should discuss what these things mean as well as the different temptations used by Satan as stated in the Bible and Qur'an. The missionary should emphasise and discuss how man is always tempted, how he falls, and the results of that fall (Accad, 1997:79).

When discussing Genesis 3:15 the missionary should as yet not place emphasis on Christ, but emphasise that God promised to send mankind a deliverer from Satan's power and temptations. He should note that this deliverer was to be from the seed of the woman only, and that there is no mention of the man having anything to do with His conception. The

missionary should also note that in the Qur'an, at the end of the Fall story, the deliverer is called "God's guidance" (Cow 2:38): *"There shall come to you guidance from Me and whosoever follows My guidance, no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow."*

- ***Towrah (The Law):***
  Deuteronomy 7:9 *"Know therefore that the LORD your God is God: he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands."*
- ***Zabur (Psalms):***
  Psalm 5:12 *"For surely, O LORD you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favour as with a shield."*
- ***Injeel (New Testament):***
  Luke 1:50 *"His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation."*
- ***Qur'an:***
  Battlements 7:96 *"Had the people of the cities [Mecca] believed and been god-fearing, We [God] would have opened upon them blessings from heaven and earth."*

These passages show that God loves and cares about the people He has created. Through the prophets and apostles He has revealed His concern for man and His desire to give man inner peace, security, joy, purpose, strength and guidance. This all comes from a close relationship with Him. When an electric light bulb is put into contact (communion) with electrical power it immediately changes and becomes full of life and brightness. It becomes beautiful, attractive and beneficial to others. This is a picture of man's life before he comes to know God and after he comes to know Him, and enter into full communion with Him. The following are some references to this kind of intimate communion with God (Accad, 1997:81):

- ***Towrah:***
  Isaiah 60:20 *"The LORD will be your everlasting light."*
- ***Zabur:***
  Psalm 16:11 *"You have made known to me the path of life: you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."*

- ***Injeel:***

  1 Peter 2:9 *"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."*

- ***Qur'an:***

  Light 24:35 *"God is the Light of the heavens and the earth, the likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp (the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star) kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West whose oil well-nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light; (God guides to His Light whom He will)."*

God wants to attract whoever seeks Him to His light (Accad, 1997:81).

Comment: Adeyemo (1986:11) advises that Christians should use the similarities and areas of convergence between Christianity and Islam. Christians should never start their interaction with Muslims with subjects such as the Trinity or the atoning death of Christ. Muslims do not believe in these doctrines. Christian witness to Muslims should start with subjects such as God being the creator, revelation and the grace of God. When speaking of God's grace the Christian should move from common grace - God's care for his creation - to God's unique grace - his love for his creation. In this the principle succeeds. It starts with God as Creator and his love for his creation. Adeyemo (1986:11) moves from God as creator to the future hope man can have in Christ. This is the same line of reasoning followed by Accad, as Principle 5-7 deals with Jesus Christ as man's hope.

3.5.2 Principle two: Sin separates us from God

The greatest of all man's problems is that although God is his most primary need, he is faced with the seemingly impossible dilemma of Principle 2: Sin separates man from the pleasure of God's company and all the resulting benefits. Muslims have no concept of original sin. According to Islamic theaching man is not born sinful. Sin comes from ignorance and pride (see § 2.7.5). Principle 2 puts man in the position of admitting that there is such a thing as sin and that all mankind share in experiencing its devastating effects. Even if man wants to enjoy God's light, he has the problem of sin that blocks him from that goal. This is "bad news" and

is the starting point for the discussion of principle two. Many passages in both the Bible and the Qur'an deal with the sin dilemma (Accad, 1997:83):

- ***Towrah:***
  Isaiah 59:2 *"Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear."*
- ***Zabur:***
  Psalm 66:18 *"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."*
- ***Injeel:***
  1 John 1:10 *"If we claim we have not sinned, we make him [God] out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives."*
- ***Qur'an:***
  Cow 2:81 *"Whoso ever earns evil and is encompassed by his transgression - those are the inhabitants of the Fire, there they shall dwell forever."*

This verse from the Qur'an has the same meaning as "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). By sinning, man earns or gets paid his just "wages" of evil consequences. Cow 2:81 says a sinner is surrounded and overcome by his sin. So he goes to hell forever. Man was created to enjoy a continuous, close relationship with God. But he stubbornly abandoned Him to go his own, independent way. The Bible calls such rebellion or passive indifference toward God by several names, including sin, disobedience and breaking God's law.

It is vitally important at this stage for the missionary to help his Muslim friend recognise and acknowledge that there is such a thing as sin. Because sin separates man from God, it's not only bad news it's the worst possible news. As a result of that separation, man has feelings of fear, frustration, emptiness, guilt, lack of purpose, lack of peace, and unhappiness. If man actively pursues sin, it shows that he is addicted, that he is pursuing self-destructive behaviour. Man tends to be evasive about sin. He might prefer to think of his sins more as errors or mistakes. Many people do not believe that mankind is sinful at all, but view our species as basically good. The missionary should make pains to ensure that his Muslim friend understands, not going more quickly than his Muslim friend can understand. He has to assimilate all this (Accad, 1997:85).

- ***Towrah:***

  1 Kings 8:46 *"There is no one who does not sin."*

- ***Zabur:***

  Psalm 51:5 *"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."*

- ***Injeel:***

  Romans 3:10 *"There is no one righteous, not even one."*

- ***Qur'an:***

  Winds 51:59-60 *"The evildoers shall have their portion, like the portion of their fellows: so let them not hasten Me [God]! So woe to the unbelievers, for that day [from that day] of theirs that they are promised."*

  Spider 29:40 *"Each We [God] seized [caught] for his sin; and of them against some We loosed a squall of pebbles [pits inside of dates] and some were seized by the Cry [plaque] and some We made the earth to swallow, and some We drowned; God would never wrong them, but they wronged themselves."*

The point here is that God punishes sin. Each person is dealt with for his own sin. God does not wrong man when He punishes him, but man wrongs himself by sinning.

Accad (1997:87) contends that the following verses indicate a sense of sin in the Qur'an.

- ***Qur'an:***

  Rome 30:10 *"The end of those that did evil was evil."*

  Cow 2:30 *"When thy Lord said to the angels: 'I am setting in the earth a viceroy.'" They said: "What, wilt Thou set therein one who will do corruption there, and shed blood."*

Here God is telling the angels before the Eden creation that He is going to put man on earth to represent Him. "What?" the angels say. "But man will ruin the earth with his sin."

- ***Qur'an:***

  Cow 2:36 *"Then Satan caused them [Adam and Eve] to slip there from [Garden of Eden] and brought them out of that they were in."*

Battlements 7:22-23 *"Their Lord [Lord of Adam and Eve] called to them, 'Did not I prohibit you from this tree, and say to you, 'Verily, Satan is for you a manifest foe?' They said: 'Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if Thou dost not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall surely be among the lost.'"*

In these passages there is nothing about good deeds saving man from sin. They indicate that man is a sinner and that if God does not forgive and save him, he is lost. Although teachers of Muslim theology do not typically mention original sin, Accad (1997:88) believes these verses to imply original sin. In the light of some saying that the Christian church invented sin in order to have Christ as a Saviour, Accad contends that Muhammad serves as a witness against this interpretation. For example:

- ***Qur'an:***
  Ta Ha 20:121 *"Adam disobeyed his Lord, and so he erred."*
  Abraham 14:34 *"Surely man is sinful. Unthankful."*
  Confederates 33:72 *"Surely he [man] is sinful: very foolish."*

These three verses all reiterate Romans 3:23. The missionary should emphasise the last two, since they are so clear. He should emphasise the point that these verses are from the Qur'an, the Muslim's book of authority (Accad, 1997:88).

- ***Qur'an:***
  House of Imran 3:11 *"God seized them because of their sins; God is terrible in retribution."*
  Creator 35:101 *"Those who devise evil deeds - theirs shall be a terrible chastisement and their devising shall come to naught."*
  Bee 16:34 *"So the evil things that they wrought [made] smote them and they were encompassed by that they mocked at."*

These three passages show that man's sin boomerangs. The one who makes a trap for someone else falls into it. When man makes light of sin, that same sin will get him.

- ***Qur'an:***

  Crouching 45:7-8 *"Woe to every guilty impostor who hears the signs [miracles, or message] of God being recited to him, then perseveres in waxing proud [goes on sinning], as if he has not heard them."*

  Cow 2:276 *"God loves not any guilty ingrate."*

After discussing these passages with his friend and if he believes that his friend is willing to acknowledge that sin is a reality, then, the Christian could probably speak directly and personally to him about sin. To a Muslim communicating the dimension of sin that we would call defilement is very important. Muslims are constantly aware of the importance of being "clean." But as Jesus pointed out, although being clean on the outside is important, being clean on the inside is far more important (Matthew 23:25-28). Until a man sees that he is dirty on the inside, he has no real sense of sin, and thus no perceived need for being saved.

The missionary may ask his friend outright, "*Are you willing to admit that you have sinned?*" He should refrain from being as immediate in his wording as to say, "*Are you willing to admit that you are sinning?*" A missionary's own admission ("I know I have!") makes it less threatening for his friend to admit the same thing. Then if he admits his sinfulness, ask: "What do you think you can do to remove it?" This may leave him temporarily hanging, but it leads logically to the third principle, which gets to the heart of how bad the bad news of sin really is (Accad, 1997:90).

Comment: *"Abstract, disembodied and history-less sinners do not exist; only very concrete sinners exist, whose sinful life is determined and characterized by all sorts of cultural and historical factors..."* Bavinck (1960:81). Considering the Muslim concept regarding sin this principle is not only very important but extremely sensitive. In contrast to Islam's rejection of original sin the Bible teaches that man is born sinful (Romans 5:19) and that man is called to trust in Christ, alone for salvation (Acts 4:12) (see § 2.7.5.). Again the two aspects of Accad's method are in play. The Qur'an is used as a bridge, to present God's idea of sin, from the Bible. This speaks to the mind. Friendship evangelism born from compassion for others is reflected in presenting the question regarding sin (see previous paragraph). This speaks to the heart.

3.5.3 Principle three: We can't save ourselves

When it comes to what man can actually do about his sin problem he will find that human efforts is worthless. Man must ultimately look to God for His solution. Principle 3 states: *"Man is helpless to save himself from this dilemma of sin and death."* It is vitally important that the missionary clearly convey the message that man cannot save himself from his sin by his good works, just as he cannot get sweet water from a bitter spring. Muslims believe that good deeds or "a good life" can save them (see § 2.7.5.). Accad (1997:91) contends that this concept of salvation through good works is contradicted by many passages in both the Bible and the Qur'an:

- ***Towrah:***
  Proverbs 14:12 *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."*
- ***Zabur:***
  Psalm 12:55 *"Those who turn to crooked ways the LORD will banish with the evildoers."*
- ***Injeel:***
  Titus 3:4-5 *"God our Saviour saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."*
- ***Qur'an:***
  Cattle 6:70 *"Remind hereby, lest a soul should be given up to destruction for what it [soul] has earned [deserved] apart from God, it [the soul] has no protector and no intercessor: though it offer any equivalent, it shall not be taken from it [the soul]."*

Accad (1997:92) paraphrases: *"Beware lest you receive the destruction your sinful soul deserves because of what you have done. Outside of God, you have no hope of being saved, no protector and no one to intercede for you. Though your soul tries to offer something 'big', nothing is equivalent to what is necessary to save you. Nothing can save you but God."*

Man tries to remove his own sin by being good. He wants to outweigh his bad deeds with good deeds such as religious works, actions benefiting mankind, and political activity.

But man forgets that the only righteousness he can produce comes out of an unclean life, since he is a sinner. In short, self-produced righteousness is also unclean.

- ***Towrah:***
  Isaiah 64:6 *"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags."*

The missionary should emphasise that bad deeds always outweigh good deeds, because a sinner's good deeds are unacceptable. Because man is unable to please God, he must trust in God and in what God says regarding sin and salvation. It is a matter of a major step of humility and commitment before God. The Bible and the Qur'an makes the following clear about the solution to sin (Accad, 1997:93):

- ***Towrah:***
  Genesis 15:6 *"Abram [Abraham] believed the LORD, and he [God] credited it to him as righteousness."*
- ***Zabur:***
  Psalm 13:5 *"I trust in your unfailing [steadfast] love, my heart rejoices in your salvation."*
- ***Injeel:***
  Romans 14:23 *"Everything that does not come from faith is sin."*
- ***Qur'an:***
  Believers 23:109 *"Among My servants there were those who said 'Lord we believe in You. Forgive us and have mercy on us: You are the best of those that show mercy [the most merciful One]."*

In other words there are people who understand they must throw themselves on the mercy of God because their own deeds are not enough. This is why the Qur'an also points out (Accad, 1997:95):

- ***Qur'an:***
  Cattle 6:54 *"Your Lord has prescribed for Himself mercy. Whosoever of you does evil in ignorance and thereafter repents and makes amends, He is All-forgiving, All-compassionate."*

The missionary should emphasise that believing and asking God for mercy would bring forgiveness (Accad, 1997:95):

- ***Qur'an:***
  Muhammad 47:19 *"Ask forgiveness for thy [Muhammad's] sin, and for the believers, men and women. God knows your going to and fro, and your lodging."*

It is clear from this verse that no one can escape the need for forgiveness. Even Muhammad had the sin problem (Accad, 1997:95).

- ***Qur'an:***
  Cow 2:256-257 *"No compulsion is there in religion... Whoever disbelieves in idols and believes in God, has laid hold of the most firm handle, unbreaking, God is All-hearing, All-knowing. God is the Protector of the believers; He brings them forth from the shadows into the light."*

In other words, one cannot force people to accept a religion they do not like. They have to choose on their own to leave idols and believe in God, to lay hold of Him with a sense of commitment, the most firm handle. God Himself is man's protector, not his good deeds. God alone is man's Saviour. He takes people out of darkness (the shadows) into His wonderful light (Accad, 1997:95).

- ***Qur'an:***
  House of Imran 3:193 *"Our Lord, we have heard a caller [a person calling others to hear believe, and repent], calling us to belief, saying, 'Believe you in your Lord!' And we believe. Our Lord, forgive Thou us our sins and acquit us of our evil deeds and take us to Thee with the pious [righteous]."*

Man is called to believe and receive forgiveness for past and present sins. The missionary could ask a question that will focus in on the heart of this issue: "How many times have you tried unsuccessfully to change your sinful life, or to conquer a bad habit?" He should reassure his friend that countless other sinful people have succeeded through God's help. At this point the missionary may specifically ask his friend if he wants to be one of them. The answer to how this is accomplished leads logically to the next principle (Accad, 1997:96).

Comment: This principle also addresses a very delicate issue, deeply ingrained in the Muslim worldview: man's good works can save him (see § 2.7.5). Man's struggle with sin is a very intimate issue. Considering the Muslim view of sin, discussing this issue calls for genuine respect, trust and compassion for the other, by both Christian and Muslim. Again the two aspects of Accad's method (mind and heart) utilized.

3.5.4 Principle four: The cross is the bridge to life

God has provided a solution to man's dilemma. The emphasis here is on God. Man must turn to Him who can do the impossible. One of the reasons why God created the universe was that He wanted to commune with creatures who were like Himself, who bear His very image. God cared so much about man that even after the Fall, He worked out His own plan to save him since he couldn't save himself. He solved man's sin problem, but at great cost to Himself (Accad, 1997:97).

- ***Towrah:***
  Isaiah 19:20 *"When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors he will send them a saviour and defender, and he will rescue [deliver] them."*
- ***Zabur:***
  Psalm 49:7-8 *"No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him, the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough."*

It is impossible for man to do enough to ransom himself from the just punishment for his sins (Accad, 1997:98).

- ***Injeel:***
  Ephesians 2:8-9 *"It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast."*
- ***Qur'an:***
  Rangers 37:107 *"We [God] ransomed him [Abraham's son] with a mighty sacrifice."*

The term "mighty" in Arabic also means priceless without any limit (Accad, 1997:98). Since God is the only one able to provide for man's ransom, man must look to God in order to be saved.

It is vitally important to recognise the significance of the Cross. The underlying concept is one of paying a ransom for another person. A ransom is the necessary price to pay for the release of a captive. All of mankind is captive to sin. Realising this, the Cross will begin to be far more logical, necessary, and appealing as a concept. God should be trusted to provide man's ransom from his sin (Accad, 1997:99):

- ***Towrah:***
  Genesis 22:3 *"Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son."*
  Exodus 12:13 *"The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt."*

It is important to note that just as God designated that the blood of a pure lamb (without defect) would be a sign to protect the Jews in Egypt from being destroyed by a plague of death, so trusting in the pure blood of God's mighty sacrifice at the cross protects man from being destroyed in hell because of his sins (Accad, 1997:100).

- ***Towrah:***
  Leviticus 17:11 *"It is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."*

Pure blood is necessary for man's sins to be sufficiently paid for in God's sight, life for life.

- ***Towrah:***
  Isaiah 63:8 *"[God] said: 'Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me, and so he became their Saviour.'"*

The point here is that God Himself is the Saviour of His people (Accad, 1997:100).

- ***Zabur:***

  Psalm 34:22 *"The LORD redeems his servants: no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him."*

The missionary should emphasise that taking refuge in God will save man from condemnation (Accad, 1997:101). God alone can redeem and deliver man (Psalms 31:5; 56:13).

- ***Zabur:***

  Psalm 107:6-7 *"Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way."*

Many Muslims ask God to lead them in a straight path at least five times a day. Psalm 107:6-7 shows that the Bible agrees with this prayer and that indeed man has to look to God alone for his salvation and not trust in himself (Accad, 1997:101).

- ***Injeel:***

  Matthew 26:28 *"This is my blood [Jesus' blood] of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."*

In Matthew 26:28, Jesus explains that pure blood is necessary for forgiveness (Hebrews 9). Romans 3:23-25 emphasises that all mankind has fallen, sinners who need the redemption that is available in Jesus. The necessity of pure blood is mentioned again. This shows how amazing God's plan for man really is, for because of His mighty sacrifice of Himself through Christ, He cancels out man's past sins so that he need not do the impossible and pay for them himself. Jesus has already done so (1 Peter 1:18-19) (Accad, 1997:102).

- ***Qur'an:***

  Story 28:16 *"He [Moses] said, 'My Lord, I have wronged myself. Forgive me!' So God forgave him for He is the All-forgiving, the All-compassionate."*

Some people say that prophets (like Moses) do not sin. Accad (1997:102) contends that the previous verse shows that even a prophet needs to be rescued from sin.

- ***Qur'an:***

  Cow 2:38 *"There shall come to you [Adam and Eve] guidance from Me [God] and whosoever follows My guidance, no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow."*
  Women 4:110 *"Whosoever does evil or wrongs himself, and then prays God's forgiveness, he shall find God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate."*

Muslims believe that their good deeds must outweigh their bad deeds to win God's favour and to go to heaven. This verse says they must repent and ask for God's forgiveness of their bad deeds. God did this through the Cross (Accad, 1997:103).

Comment: This principle follows meaningfully after principle three. It does not jump directly to Jesus Christ but turns the attention from man (struggling with his sin) back to God. God is the only one who can provide for man's salvation. This proves sensitive to the Muslim perception concerning Christ. It focuses back on God, what He teaches about man's sin, what is necessary for salvation and how did He procure salvation for man.

3.5.5 Principle five: God's provision is a Person

Because the person most highly revered in the Muslim world is Muhammad, a missionary may find a unique kind of resistance when he speaks of truth being embodied in a person. But still the emphasis has to be on the solution not just being the Cross but a divine Person, Jesus Christ, who was anointed by the Holy Spirit and called the Word of God (Accad, 1997:110).

The question regarding exactly who Jesus Christ was and is, needs to be answered in a thorough way, but with respect, being constantly aware of what is commonly taught within Muslim culture. Both the Qur'an and the Bible say Christ is the Word of God, who is anointed and aided by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is legitimate to use these terms and to avoid certain other terms that will raise unnecessary discussions and strife due to misunderstandings. Sticking with terms that are not emotionally loaded, will help the missionary's hearers be more apt at listening to his perspective on Christ. Missionaries should point out that it is interesting and very logical, that God's provision is not a philosophical or a religious idea, not a list of rules to follow or a way of life. It is a person (Accad, 1997:110).

- ***Towrah:***

  Isaiah 61:1 *"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor... to proclaim freedom for the captives."*

Here the prophet Isaiah talks about the coming Christ, or Messiah (Accad, 1997:111).

- ***Zabur:***

  Psalm 107:20 *"He sent forth his word and healed them: he rescued them from the grave."*

God sent Christ, the Word, to the world to heal and deliver man from sin (Accad, 1997:111).

- ***Injeel:***

  John 1:1, 14 *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only ... full of grace and truth."*

God's Word was with Him for all eternity. He sent this Word as a flesh-and-blood person to save man from sin (Accad, 1997:112).

- ***Qur'an:***

  House of Imran 3:45 *"When the angels said, 'Mary, God gives thee good tidings of a Word from Him whose name is Messiah Jesus, son of Mary; high honoured shall he be in this world and the next, near stationed to God."*

Christ is the Word of God, He was highly honoured when He was in this world and now He is in the closest possible position with God (Hebrews 10:12 "*at the right hand of God*").

Now the missionary should tell the story of Gabriel coming to the Virgin Mary to tell her she would bear God's Word, Christ. No other prophet has ever been born of a Virgin. This speaks of the holiness of Christ, God's Word (Accad, 1997:112).

It was foretold by God in the *Towrah* (Genesis 3:15) immediately after Adam and Eve's disobedience. God said the seed of the woman, not the seed of the man, shall crush Satan's head. It is important for the missionary to explain that even when a word is uttered by God, it has not been severed from God. In this case the issue is the Word of God. There is something extremely unique about Christ. As a "word" He is an embodiment of what God wants to communicate to man. As an eternal Person, He is now right next to God never apart from God, and thus a part of God. The most difficult thing for a Muslim to believe is that Christ, who came in the flesh to our world, is the same God as the one God. The missionary need to show his Muslim friend convincing examples: such as Christ being the Word of God who is always with God. Others are Christ's miraculous birth; His ability to create, to heal diseases; and His ability to resurrect others and Himself from the grip of death (Accad, 1997:113).

- ***Towrah:***
  Micah 3:8 *"As for me [Messiah], I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin."*
- ***Zabur:***
  Psalm 139:7 *"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?"*
- ***Injeel:***
  Revelation 19:13 *"He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God."*
- ***Qur'an:***
  Cow 2:87 *"We [God] gave Jesus son of Mary the clear signs [miracles and God's words] and confirmed [sustained] him with the Holy Spirit."*

God gave Jesus His words and sustained Him always with His Holy Spirit (Accad, 1997:114)[26].

Jesus took the place of all the traditional sacrifices that are still being offered today on Mount Arafat in Saudi Arabia. Tradition says Muhammad told his daughter not to forget to put her hand on the head of a sacrificed animal, so that when it was killed she would be identified

[26] Accad (1997:115-123) then deals with the sensitive issues of Christ's Sonship and the crucifixion. He shows how these issues may be addressed from the *Qur'an* to verify the Biblical data.

with it. He understood well the need for a sacrifice for man's sins. The word Islam means submission to God's will, which should mean turning toward God and accepting His plan of salvation. The word godliness means fearing God and accepting what He is doing for man. If man accepts what God has done for him at the Cross, then God's righteousness is applied to man's account and thus becomes his own (Accad, 1997:123).

Comment: This principle centres on the most important and sensitive part in communicating the Gospel to Muslims. Jesus Christ's true identity. Although the Qur'an may be used to help proclaim the Gospel, Muslims must in the end come to acceptance of what Parshall (1980:144) calls the *"the stumbling block that has hindered conversion over the centuries,"* that is, the absolute truth that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. The missionary should be very patient and caring during this time. If Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died on the cross for man's sin and was resurrected, all other facts of live need to be arranged around this truth. This reality implies that a Muslim's religion and faith build on good works is in vain (Caner & Caner, 2002:210). This life altering truth encompasses a lot that needs to be assimilated.

3.5.6 Principle six: Making Him ours

Principle six deals with man's response to God's grace: Man must invite Christ, his substitute, to live in his heart and be the master of his life (Accad, 1997:124).

- ***Towrah:***
  Jeremiah 24:7 *"I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart."*
- ***Zabur:***
  Psalm 13:5 *"I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation."*
- ***Injeel:***
  Revelation 3:20 *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me."*
- ***Qur'an:***
  Thunder 13:27-29 *"He [God] guides to Him all who are penitent. Those who believe, their hearts being at rest in God's remembrance [that is, when you think of God, trust*

Him and surrender to Him], in God's remembrance are at rest the hearts of those who believe and do righteous deeds, theirs is blessedness and a fair resort [a good end]."

It is good news to know that God will guide the repentant. Repenting and believing will lead man's heart to be at rest. Man should obey God and receive by faith the Person, Christ, whom God has appointed as Saviour, Redeemer and Mediator, both in this world and in the world to come. The missionary may now ask his friend to say a simple prayer asking God to clean his heart and to help him live with that kind of repentance and faith forever. During this time he needs to thoroughly explain the meaning of the terms Saviour, Redeemer, and Mediator with his friend (Accad, 1997:125).

- ***Towrah:***

  1 Chronicles 22:19 *"Now devote [set] your heart and soul to seeking the LORD your God."*
- ***Zabur:***

  Psalm 119:145, 149 *"I call with all my heart; answer me, O LORD ... Hear my voice in accordance with your love preserve my life, O LORD, according to your laws."*
- ***Injeel:***

  Romans 10:10 *"It is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."*
- ***Qur'an:***

  Disputer 58:22 *"He [God] has written faith upon their hearts, and He has confirmed them with a Spirit from Himself."*

God is the only one who gives faith. If He does not, man will never have it. The Qur'an does not even mention good works in the previous verses. When a man receives Christ in faith, God puts the Holy Spirit in him. That is the meaning of *"He has confirmed them with a Spirit from Himself."* (Accad, 1997:127).

- ***Qur'an:***

  Mutual Fraud 64:11 *"Whosoever believes in God, He will guide his heart. And God has knowledge of everything."*

Accad (1997:128) comments: "God will guide whoever believes in Him."

- ***Qur'an:***

  Women 4:110 *"Whoever does evil, or wrongs himself, and then prays God's forgiveness, he shall find God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate."*

It is obvious in this verse that God will not cast anyone outside who comes to Him in repentance (Accad, 1997:128).

Comment: In a sense this is where the missionary's and Muslim's ways part. From now on the missionary will not be the new believer's primary teacher – Christ will be! Only God knows what happens in a man's heart (Luke 16:15; Galatians 2:6). The missionary who trusted the Holy Spirit to unveil the Muslim's mind (2 Corinthians 3:16) must now trust the Spirit to guide the new believer in the truth and way of Christ (John 16:8-13). This does not mean that the missionary's role has ended, but that it has changed. They are now brothers/sisters growing in all thing to Christ, their Head (Ephesians 4:15).

3.5.7 Principle seven: What to expect when we accept God's gift

When man accepts Christ, he receives forgiveness for his sins, a personal relationship with God, peace in his heart and a complete change in his life. This change in what man becomes, what he does and how he lives is reflected in the following passages (Accad, 1997:130):

- ***Towrah:***

  Ezekiel 36:26-27 *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."*

- ***Zabur:***

  Psalm 119:162-165 *"I rejoice in your promise like one who finds great spoil... Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws. Great peace has they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble."*

- ***Injeel:***

  John 1:12-13 *"Yet to all who received him [Christ, the "Word"], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, children born not of natural descent nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."*

- ***Qur'an:***

  Believers 40:2-3 *"God the All-mighty, the All-knowing, Forgiver of sins, Accepter of penitence, Terrible in retribution."*

God is almighty and He can give everything man needs. He forgives and accepts man, but if man does not come to Him, he is under God's judgment, and that is terrible. The missionary's needs to convince his Muslim friend that he is dependent on God's help to receive salvation and the full life He has for man now and forever. The missionary should make sure that his Muslim friend is convinced that the divine Person appointed by God to be man's Redeemer and Saviour is His mighty Word, anointed by His eternal Spirit (Accad, 1997:131).

The missionary can explain that when man believes in Christ and invites Him to enter his heart to rule over his life, he will receive the following:

- Forgiveness for all past sins, and also God's help to enable him to resist temptation and sin in future (Psalms 32:5 103:8-13, Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 43:25, 53:1-7; Ezekiel 36:25; Micah 7:18-20, Matthew 9:1-8; Romans 5:6-9, Ephesians 2:1-10).
- A fresh, personal relationship with God in which He favours him and delights to give him His divine treasures of blessing (Psalm 16:7-11; Jeremiah 31:34; Romans 8:12-17; Hebrews 10:12-18; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 3:1-24).
- Perfect peace of mind and assurance that his name has been written in heaven to receive eternal life with God (Psalm 4:8; Isaiah 26:3, 43:1-3; John 6:47-51, 10:22-30, 14:27; Romans 5:1-11; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 John 5:11-13; Revelation 3:1-5).
- A new love for God and a desire to live as He wants, a distaste for old sins in his life as well as the power to leave them behind (Ezekiel 36:26-31; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Colossians 3:1-14).

If the missionary's Muslim friend wants these incredible gifts in his life and believes that Christ, God's Word, is Gods provision for his salvation, then Accad (1997:132) considers it

appropriate for the missionary to help him with a prayer as a way to seal his relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

In Principle Seven, almost all verses used are from the Bible, because by now the Muslim probably understands enough so that it is not necessary to use many verses from the Qur'an, which has served its purpose as a bridge to the truth (Accad, 1997:133).

Comment: After the new believer has made a commitment to Christ the question may arise whether or not he should still read the Qur'an. This is a question the new believer should find an answer to himself. Preferably he should read both until "*the books themselves tells*" him which to read (Accad, 1997:45). This would be part of the risk taken by missionaries. New believers cannot be made dependent on the missionaries. If their relationship with Christ is to grow they need to find answers to important questions and problems by themselves. The fruit their lives bear would be proof to themselves and the missionaries of what Christ did in their lives.

3.6 Accad's guidelines for sharing the seven Muslim-Christian principles

Accad (1997:71) proposes the following guidelines when using the seven principles:

- *The Seven Principles in "Building Bridges" are not like a tract to be passed on to Muslims. It is a study guide for the missionary to be used and tailored as the need arises.*

- *The principles were not intended to be covered in one or two sittings.*

- *The missionary should build a relationship of trust and friendship by getting together just to have fun and socialise.*

  Comment: Nehls (*s.a.*: 33) emphasises that the way to the soul of a man is through his heart. This is only achieved by personal contact in which genuine confidence is built up. Goldsmith (1982:111) emphasises the importance of getting to know Muslims, and using every opportunity to talk and share with them (cf. Rhodes, 2000). The guiding principle here is that we do not relate to a religion, but to individuals (Cooper, 1993:37). Christians should remember that they are servants and not above their master Jesus Christ. In order to be a means through which Muslims can encounter the living God, Christians should know,

seek and love those they are reaching out to (Bavinck, 1960:82; cf. Parshall, 1980:89; Kraemer, 1947:140).

- *The Seven Principles are not designed to be used for witnessing to all types of people. Religious and political fanatics and closed-minded people will often simply want to argue. Missionaries should be careful and discerning. They should not be drawn into heated arguments, as servants of the Lord must not quarrel (2 Timothy 2:24).*

  Comment: Adeyemo (1986:10) advises never to argue as this only makes enemies. The Christian should engage in conversational dialogue with Muslims – each listening to the others (cf. Cooper, 1993:50).

- *Be familiar with the Seven Principles as a whole.*

- *A missionary should be sensitive to his friend's reaction as they go through the Seven Principles. If he sees his friend is not ready or open; he should bide his time and keep his friendship.*

  Comment: The principle here is love for the person (cf. Cooper, 1993:36; Adeyemo, 1986:11). Goldsmith (1982:112) says people quickly know if you merely desire to convert them without any deep concern for them as people. *"Christianity is not about religion; it is about a relationship with the Saviour."* (Caner & Caner, 2002:16). The Missionary's relationship with the unsaved should be guided by this principle. To really love our neighbour Christians should pray the Holy Spirit to give them love for their Muslim neighbours.

- *A missionary should get his friend to read the verses with him from the Bible, and read with him from the Qur'an. He should make sure that his friend understands what is being read.*

- *The missionary's main purpose is to expose his friend to the Word of God (Romans 10:17). He must see for himself what the Bible says, in which process the Holy Spirit will reveal the Bible's truth and authenticity.*

  Comment: Missionaries should not hesitate to quote from the Bible, and if a Muslim claims that the Bible was corrupted they should be ready to demonstrate why they trust the Bible's accuracy (Rhodes, 2000; cf. Cooper, 1993:51; Parshall, 1980:133).

- *If his friend has questions about the Bible verses, the missionary should look up the context.*

- *Only take up one principle at a time.*

- *If his friend disagrees with the point of the principle, the missionary should not go on to the next principle. Wait. Pray. Deepen the friendship. Discuss. The principles are sequential and build on one another.*
  Comment: Rhodes (2000) advocates patience, even if it implies explaining the same thing ten times.

- *If a verse in the Qur'an clearly makes the same point the missionary is focusing on in one of the principles, he should emphasize that fact.*

- *The missionary should give contextual background about Bible verses as much as possible and use other Bible passages that make the same point. This will help his friend to see how the point he is making fits in with the whole message of Scripture.*
  Comment: Madany (1987:54) says that no Christian may go to Muslims unprepared or half-prepared in his knowledge of the Scriptures (cf. Caner & Caner, 2002:134; cf. Kraemer, 1947:305). This implies an adequate acquaintance with the Bible, its background and most importantly, its rightful interpretation. As was the case with the Christians Muhammad met on his travels it appears that most Christians today are unable to explain their faith logically. On account of such experiences Muslims believes that Christians cannot defend the Bible, Jesus as the Son of God, or the Trinity (Caner & Caner, 2002:204). It is therefore vitally important that the missionary is prepared to give valid answer to questions surrounding his faith (1 Peter 3:15).

- *The Seven Principles do not stress that only the Bible is the Word of God and the Qur'an not. Why wave a red flag? At this point a Muslim sees the Qur'an as above the Bible. Let the Bible stand on its own merit. Eventually it will all become clear. If only the missionaries let things sink in gradually. "'Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with*

grain' declares the LORD, 'Is not my word like fire,' declares the LORD, 'and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces.'" (Jeremiah 23:28-29).

- *It is ideal to share the Seven Principles with only one person, alone, but it is acceptable in some situations to share the first few principles with two or three people at the same time.*

- *The missionary should be honest enough to acknowledge evil, even in his home country and also the grave problems in the church. In this way his friend can see that he teaches what the Bible says and not the ways of Christians in the nominal, wayward church.*
  Comment: Bavinck (1960:107) considers it an important requirement of a missionary to be critical of his own life and culture, which he always carries with him unawares. It is difficult to be critical of one's life and culture, since one is so engrossed in it. It is, however, very necessary for Western missionaries working among Muslims, as the perception exists among Muslims that the Christian Church ignores immorality and hypocrisy (Caner & Caner, 2002:206).

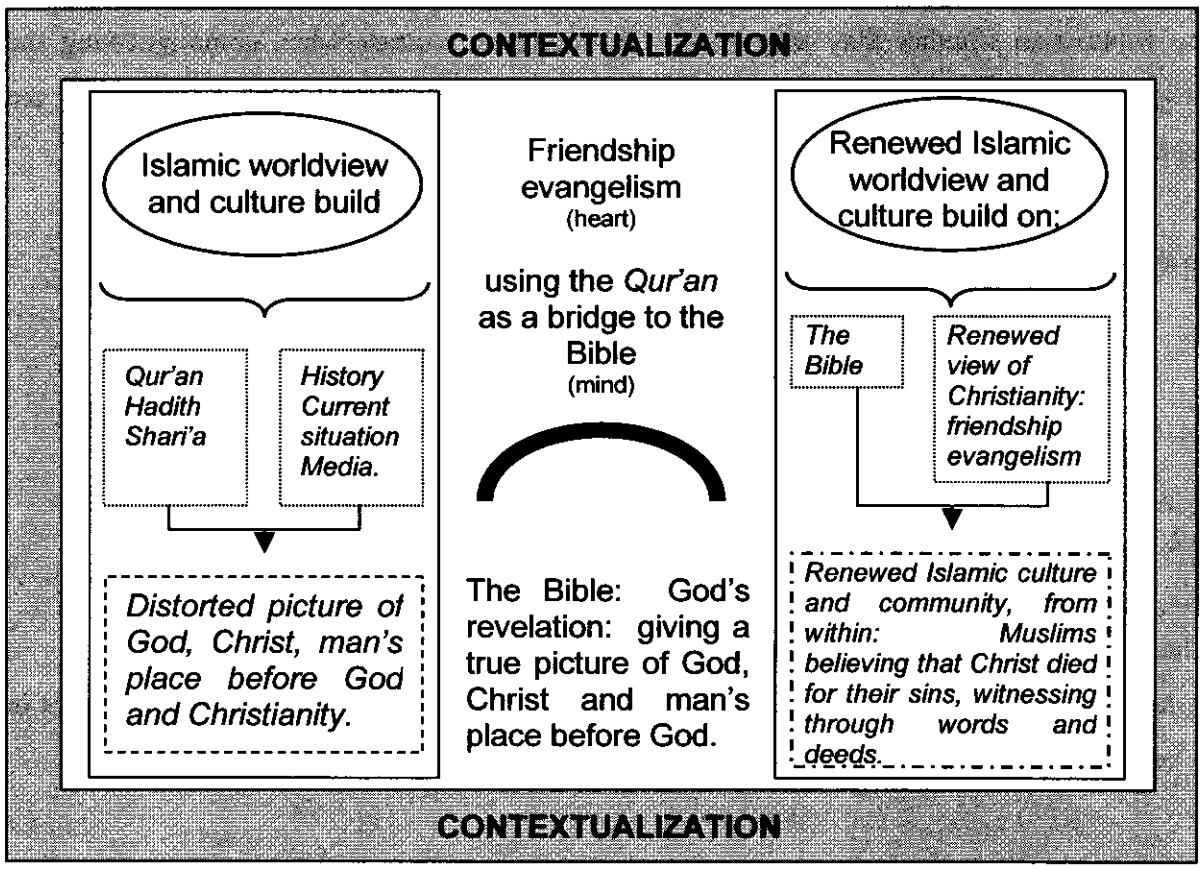
- *Keep Satan bound and ineffective (Matthew 12:29) through prayer and fasting.*
  Comment: Goldsmith (1982:116) concurs by pointing out that in this spiritual battle prayer has to play a significant part. It is the Holy Spirit that convinces man, arouses his conscience, opens his eyes and renews him (Bavinck, 1960:139). Missionaries should pray especially that Muslims will see the futility of trying to live a life good enough to earn God's favour (Rhodes, 2000).

Comment: These guidelines compare favourably with advice given by others. Within these guidelines both aspects of Accad's method, those speaking to the heart and mind of the Muslim are reflected. It is also clear that missionaries should know the people among whom they serve. Missionaries should trust in God as the One who saves man (1 Peter 2:9). The attitude presented by these guidelines is well summarised in the words of Caner and Caner (2002:80): *"It is the duty of the believer in Jesus Christ to persuade Muslims compassionately, wait for them patiently, and pray for them earnestly."*

3.7 Conclusion and comments

By using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible, within the context of friendship evangelism a missionary is given an opportunity to address the Muslim worldview. In this process the Qur'an is used as a bridge to the Bible in order to address the wrong perception of God, Christ and man (doctrinal issues relating to the intellect). Friendship evangelism is used as a vehicle to address the negative perception Muslims have of Christianity.

Graphically Accad's method may be depicted as follows:



Accad's method may be described as a culturally sensitive way of presenting the Gospel to Muslims. Accad's method poses as a valid vehicle to effectively address the Muslim worldview, and in the process presenting the Gospel of salvation in Christ alone. It takes into consideration intellectual, cultural and historical stumbling blocks, which may prevent a Muslim from listening to the Gospel being adequately presented and explained.

CHAPTER 4

A CRITIQUE OF ACCAD'S METHOD FROM THE REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

4.1 Chapter overview

In using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible Accad does not isolate the Qur'an from its cultural context. He uses it because to Muslims it is the most important holy book (Accad, 1997:12). Part of using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible is cultural adaptation (Accad, 1997:13). The question is then not only whether Christians may use the Qur'an as bridge to the Bible, also whether they may borrow from Muslim culture when communicating the gospel? Should Christians, who are free in Christ, bind themselves to certain customs for the sake of proclaiming the gospel?

In answering these questions attention will be given to

- relevant passages from Scripture;
- an overview of the Reformed perspective on mission/evangelism; and
- a critique of Accad's method based on the afore mentioned.

4.2 Exegesis of relevant Scriptural passages[27]

The following passages from Scripture are expounded:

- Jeremiah 23, to shed Scriptures light on the use and value of the Qur'an as an instrument in communicating the Gospel to Muslims.

- Acts 15, the first Christian synod. Some Jewish Christians wanted the Gentiles to keep the law as well as accept Christ. Paul represents non Jewish believers at the synod, and accepts the rules laid down – rules that take into consideration the true meaning of the Gospel. What was the function and meaning of these rules?

[27] Before the Reformed principles of evangelism are outlined as the basis of critique, exegesis of relevant Scriptural passages will be done in order to demonstrate that the use of contact points is possible. The selected passages shows Biblical precedence, to demonstrate that the use of the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible is possible, and missionaries should make use of this opportunity.

- Romans 1 and 2, as a prelude to the explanation of the Gospel, Paul describes man's unpardonable behaviour in the light of God's revelation, and God's righteous judgement. What light does the text shed on Paul's ministry in Athens? How should Islam be viewed in the light of this text?

- Acts 19, Paul the missionary in action. How does he communicate the Gospel? Is Romans 1/2 or Acts 15 reflected in these passages? What may Christians learn from Paul's method?

- 1 Corinthians and Romans 14, sheds light on Paul's application of the rules given in Acts 15. What may Christians learn from this in regard to Muslim-Christian relations?

4.2.1 Jeremiah 23:9-40

Accad (1997:75) uses Jeremiah 23:28-29 when explaining why the seven principles do not claim that only the Bible is the Word of God, and the Qur'an not. This text sheds Scripture's light on the use and value of the Qur'an as an instrument in communicating the Gospel to Muslims.

Writer and audience

The book Jeremiah was written by Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch (Jeremiah 36:1-3) round 605 B.C. and was addressed to the people of Judah and later their descendants returning from exile (Hill & Walton, 1991:327).

Cultural and Historical situation

The turbulent last years of the seventh century B.C. in the Ancient Near East constitutes the background against which Jeremiah's message should be understood (Huey, 2001). It was a time of crises and transition.

Josiah became king of Judah when he was eight. At the age of twenty he started purging Judah and Jerusalem of Pagan worship (2 Chronicles 34:3-7). Jeremiah was called shortly after this in 627 B.C. (Hill & Walton, 1991:328). In the same year Ashurbanipal, the last great ruler of the Assyrian Empire, also died. The following year an independent Babylonian state was founded, which eventually swallowed Judah and Jerusalem (as prophesised by

Jeremiah). Hill and Walton (1991:328) call the time of Jeremiah's call a time of hope and danger because of the spiritual reform taking place and the threatening new enemy Babylon.

Unfortunately Josiah died during battle and his reforms with him. Under Josiah's sons independent Judah would become a vassal state of Babylon. They would repeatedly try and throw of the yoke of Babylon. Eventually Nebuchadnezzar would destroy Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Judah as state was dismantled and the people deported into exile (Hill & Walton, 1991:328).

Like Josiah's sons most of the priests (Huey, 2001) and prophets (Hill & Walton, 1991:328) of the time lived wicked lives. The prophets did not proclaim God's Word. In Jeremiah 14:14 the Lord says: *"The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds."* When the deportations started some prophets proclaimed that that would be the full extent of God's punishment. They taught a popular theology for Judah prophesying a future of peace and prosperity (Jeremiah 6:13-15; 8:10-12) (Wiersbe, 1996). This was false, and Jeremiah continued proclaiming God's judgement until Jerusalem and the temple were eventually destroyed. The same happened to the Northern Kingdom. False prophets led the people away from God. The people listened, believed and were eventually destroyed (Dyer, 1983). Jeremiah's purpose as prophet was to bring the people back to their Lord, warning them of the consequences of continued disobedience (Hill & Walton, 1991:329).

The Passage

Jeremiah focuses on three areas in which the prophets were not obeying God. Verses 9-15 exposed their disgraceful conduct; 16-32 focused on their dishonest message and 33-40 on their disrespectful attitude (Wiersbe, 1996). These prophets' lives did not reflect the calling they claimed to have received from God and they gave the people false hope and ridiculed the message that God did give through his prophet Jeremiah. They not only brought the people false hope, but spoke from false authority, as God did not call them. Their messages were devised in their own hearts. Wiersbe (1996) sums up the situation by saying that the people listening to false messages from God, believed lies about God, and what they believed was reflected in their lives.

Within this context the Lord calls Jeremiah to faithfully speak God's word. The dreams spoken of in verses 28 to 29 indicate the messages thought up by the false prophets. Keil and Delitzsch (2002) emphasise that the purpose here is not to tell the people how to tell the difference between God's word and that of man. Jeremiah is telling them that God's word will eventually bring an end to the false prophets. Verse 29 serves as a stepping stone for the judgement over the false prophets (verse 30-32). The reference to God's word being like a hammer that breaks stone alludes to the fact that God's word will overcome all that is earthly (Keil & Delitzsch, 2002). *"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12). The attributes of God's word also indicate the way in which it burns and breaks the hard-hearted (Faussett, 1997). What is interesting in this passage is that no attack is made on dreams as such. "Dreams" were considered one of the traditional ways in which God spoke to prophets. What the passage does allude to, is that even if a message were received via a dream it did not mean that it would be true or that it had come from God. It may after all only have been the subconscious thoughts and desires of the dreamer (Davidson, 2001).

Application

In discussing the application of the Jeremiah the Christian's daily life Huey (2001) points to the role of the prophet in ancient Israel. Brueggemann (Huey, 2001) said that the role of the prophet was *"to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."* Jeremiah did this by preaching God's word to a people who had forgotten who God is. Through the faithful preaching of God's word the consciousness and perception of a dominant culture can be changed. Wrong beliefs about God can be set right.

Accad's use of this verse holds true. The Qur'an as a "word from God" reflects many of Muhammad's thoughts and desires (see § 4.4.1). The Qur'an, however, is not the Word of God, and also reflects lies about God[28]. Lies which where eventually reflected in Muslim lives. Through the Qur'an as most holy book to the Muslims, these lies have become part of

[28] What is interesting to note is the correlation between the wicked lives and lies of the prophets in Jeremiah 23. Their lives were completely set on furthering their own interests. The lies they proclaimed suited their own purposes and not that of Judah. They proclaimed what they wanted God to say. Jeremiah proclaimed what God said and this is what came to pass. Mohammad's purposes and interests are also reflected in the Qur'an (see § 4.4.1).

the Muslim worldview and culture. Proclaiming God's Word is the only way these lies may be assailed and replaced with true knowledge of God, Christ, and man's place before God. Missionaries need not fear to use the Qur'an, in the light of the many lies incorporated therein. Gods Word will be victorious (Jeremiah 23:29). In the end the message of the Qur'an will not hold against God's Word. God's servants need only proclaim the Word faithfully. Within the context of the Christian mission to Islam, faithfully also implies effectively. Missionaries need to do all in their power to see that the Muslim hears and understands the Word of God. Historic and cultural prejudices need to be taken into consideration. This passage does not give authorization for the use of the Qur'an (false) as a bridge to the Bible, but it does make clear that chaff will, in the end not stand up to Word of God (see § 3.4: new believers from Islam replaces the Qur'an with the Bible).

4.2.2 Acts 15:1-35

After the success of the Gentile mission the church had to decide whether or not the Gentiles had to keep the Pharisaic Law or not. Some Jewish Christians wanted the Gentiles to keep the law as well as accept Christ. Paul was one of the representatives for non Jewish believers at the synod. He accepted the rules given by the synod and the Holy Spirit – rules that took into consideration the true meaning of the Gospel. What was the function and meaning of these rules and what is their implication for the Christian mission to Islam?

Writer and audience

The "Acts of the Apostles" was written by Luke as a continuation of the Gospel of Luke, and is addressed to Theophilus (probably an important Roman official). It continues the story of Christ as the risen Lord, and the spread of the Gospel over the whole world (Du Plessis, 1996:150, 195).

Cultural and historical situation and the passage

From the time of Pentecost (Acts 2), the Church had grown, among the Jews and Gentiles. Legalistic Jewish teachers arrived in Antioch, teaching that gentile converts had to adhere to the Law of Moses in order to be saved. They came from the congregation in Jerusalem, but were not officially sent from there. Identified with the Pharisees (Acts 15:5) they were false teachers who wanted to rob Jewish and Gentile believers of their liberty in Christ (Wiersbe, 1996a).

In Jerusalem there were many who advocated the Law of Moses. Among the early converts were priests and Pharisees, trained in the law and the tradition. They did not always fully understand the relationship between the Law and grace, mixing the two. They were stitching up the rent veil (Luke 23:45) and blocking the new and living way opened up by Christ on the Cross (Hebrews 10:19-25). They were putting a heavy Jewish yoke on Gentile shoulders (Wiersbe, 1996a).

The implications of what these Judaizers taught were far reaching, especially for Paul and Barnabas's mission. If the Judaizers were correct Paul and Barnabas should not only have to proclaim the Gospel, but should also teach people to live as good Jews. But this would have been contrary to the heart of the Gospel. Paul and Barnabas started arguing with the Judaizers (Wiersbe, 1996a). The intention of all these people may not have been bad. More and more Gentiles were converting, bringing with them questionable morals and practices into the Church (Baker, 1996). Some of the Jewish believers may have thought that these new believers had to be disciplined. But some of them saw Christianity as a purified Judaism which meant believers had to believe in Christ and obey the Law (Nicol, 1997). Some believed that only the Jews were the chosen people. Gentiles who converted had to become Jewish, through proselyte initiation: circumcision and observance of the law (Polhill, 2001). One of the questions that needed to be answered was whether salvation was indeed meant for all mankind (Barclay, 2000).

The elders in Antioch decided to ask the counsel of the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem. As commission they sent Paul, Barnabas and some other believers (Acts 15:2). This meeting not only stands central in the book, but is central in the Church's growth. The whole church had to agree on the Gentile mission. As shown above some of the Jewish believers had reservations about the Gentile mission. With this meeting the reservations was worked out and the future of the Gentile mission set (Polhill, 2001).

The question that had to be decided was whether it was sufficient for the Gentiles to accept the Gospel through faith in Christ alone, or should they also be circumcised, with the accompanying keeping of the Law.

Peter stated that God had already shown that Gentiles are accepted into His family by faith in Christ. God made no distinction between Jew and Gentile. He continued by asking why the

believers would test God. The word used here indicates a negative intent. It is the same used of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:9 who tested the Holy Spirit (Toussaint, 1983). The Jews themselves were commanded by God not to test Him (Deuteronomy 6:16). Further more they could not lay a yoke on the shoulders of the Gentiles that they as Jews could not carry themselves.

After Paul and Barnabas had borne witness to what God had done among the Gentiles, James addressed the meeting. He referred to what Peter had said, showing that Paul and Barnabas were not the first to be sent to the Gentiles. What is more, Scriptures prophesied that the Gentiles would share in God's salvation when Christ returned to rebuild the fallen tent of David. James then quotes Amos 9:11-12. Amos said that God would restore the tent of David. The Jews would be the centre of a "remnant" of Gentiles bearing the name of God. The Gentiles do not become "Jews" but their identity stays the same (Baker, 2000).

James agreed with Peter that they should not make it difficult for the Gentiles. He therefore preposes that a letter be drawn up to the Gentiles in which an ethical code would be compiled that would not upset those Christians raised in the Old Testament (Toussaint, 1983). Barclay (2000) says it is important to remember that James was an exemplary Jew and observer of the Law. For him to speak in favour of the Gentiles, carried a lot of weight with the Christian Jews.

About the intent of the requirements commentators are in disagreement. Toussaint (1983) says it does not pertain to ritual law as some have tried to show but are intended as ethical guidelines for the Church in its Gentile surroundings.

The Gentiles were asked to abstain from:

- *Food polluted by idols.* This was food offered to idols (Acts 15:29). This was done because of the practice of Gentiles to use idol temples for banquets and celebrations. Paul also condemns these practices (1 Corinthians 10:14-22). In His letters to the congregations in Revelations (2:14, 20), Jesus admonishes those who partook in eating of these sacrifices.
- *Sexual immorality.* With the Gentile banquets went sexual immorality. Among Gentiles immorality was so common that it was an accepted practice. Even among

Christians it was a problem, and the New Testament letters address this issue on numerous occasions. Christians had to be pure in an impure world.

- *The meat of strangled animals and blood.* This did not refer to Leviticus 17:10-14, but went further back to Genesis 9. Here God established the Noahic covenant. Noah and his descendants were prohibited to eat meat with its lifeblood still in it.

These were moral or ethical "rules" which would have ensured a high moral standard among the Christians. These few requirements were also representative of the handful of laws Jewish tradition declared that God gave to Noah. According to a more lenient Jewish position any righteous Gentile who kept these basic laws would have a share in the world to come (Keener, 1993). James's proposition was thus a compromise that did not detract anything from Christ's sacrifice, but set moral standards acceptable to the Christians from Jewish descent. What is important to notice is that the unity of the Church is preserved, even though the church consists of different groups of people (Nicol, 1997).

Polhill (2001) disagrees concerning the moral intent of the decree. He says the main intention with these requirements was better fellowship between Jews keeping to ritual law and Gentiles who did not. He says that morality was not an issue as both Jewish and Gentile Christians lived by the moral laws in the Ten Commandments. Hughes and Laney (2001) agree in part by stating that these requirements were not all connected to salvation, but were set in part to increase community between Jews and Gentiles. It is also clear that Gentiles do not become part of God's family by first becoming Jews (the rite of circumcision). No mention is made of circumcision in the letter drawn up by the church. The letter was sent back to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, with two witnesses: Judas for the Hebrews and Silas for the Gentiles (Toussaint, 1983). The letter addressed to the churches clearly states that it is not a matter of the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem deciding, but that the Holy Spirit guided them in setting up these rules.

Application

Christ alone is sufficient. Through the grace of God man is saved in Christ. Peter also says that a burden the Jews themselves could not carry should not be laid upon the Gentiles. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

The weary and burdened are not those troubled by the weight of life or the burden of their sins, but those who are oppressed by the heavy Pharisaical conception of the law. These people do not know any rest or relief. They are, says Ridderbos (1962:254) haunted by *uncertainty and fear*. They are completely unable to bear the yoke of the Pharisaical law (Acts 15:10). Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light because it is He who teaches them. His commandments are still a heavy demand on man's self-love and self-assertion (Matthew 7:13-14). In Christ the yoke is easy and the burden light because Christ Himself shows the way. He is the Law-maker, but entirely dependent upon God, rejected by men and on His way to the cross. The point is that those who learn God's will from Christ and accept it are not only dependent on Christ's word as a command, but are called to fellowship with his person for its fulfillment. Christ is the one *"who gives those who live in his fellowship the rest, the assurance of salvation."* (Ridderbos, 1962:254) Jesus teaches those who live in fellowship with Him how to bear the burden in their new relationship to God, as children of their heavenly Father. He can do this, because He himself bears the burden as the One sent by the Father. In the end all the commandments point to Jesus. In fellowship with Him the salvation of the kingdom is received and the "yoke of the kingdom" becomes light (Ridderbos, 1962:255). The law is not without meaning, but should never detract from the work of Christ. Through Christ man is saved and in fellowship with Him believers are equipped to carry the yoke of the law (Matthew 5:17-20; 22:37-40). Jewish believers were free to follow Jewish custom as long as they understood the grace of God as revealed in Christ (Parshall, 1980:33).

In the Christian outreach to Muslim peoples the aim is to proclaim Christ, only in Him is salvation. Yet, the church in Jerusalem, sure of this truth, still sent, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a decree to the Gentile churches asking them to abstain from certain things. Two accents are important here: the moral and fellowship intent of the decree. The decree was not given to detract anything from Christ's work as savior. It was given for practical reasons. Many Gentiles were entering the church, bringing along unacceptable practices. They needed guidance. Guidance was also needed concerning unhampered fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians. At the time of this meeting in Jerusalem the epistles had not yet been written. This decree was the "first" epistle giving guidance to believers. Later Paul would write to the Corinthians and speaking of meat sacrificed to idols he advised the believers not to seek their own good, but the good of others so that they may be saved (1 Corinthians 10:24, 33).

Muslims saved by faith in Christ, who continue to worship in the "form" or "laws" they had under Islam, may do so, as long as this does not detract from the work of Christ or becomes an addition thereto. The moral and fellowship accents are applicable in this context as well. Muslims believe that men and women should sit apart during worship. Sitting together may lead to immorality. They wash themselves to be ritually clean, and prostrate themselves in prayer to show their humility before God (Accad, 1997:13). Keeping to these practices in order to facilitate fellowship and thus seeking the good of others so that they may be saved would seem acceptable.

There is, however, a definite requirement. Practices should in no way detract from the Gospel. Missionaries should ensure that new believers clearly understand the relationship between the law and grace. Not only should they understand it, but they should also be able to communicate the truth of "grace alone" to others. The practices in themselves, holds no salvation value. Only through faith in Christ is man saved. These practices have value within the Muslim community as they guard against moral decline and facilitate better communication with unbelieving family and friends.

The third principle of Accad's method is of great value concerning the above (see § 3.5.3). This principle makes it clear that there is nothing man can do for his own salvation; especially not keeping the law in order to let the good deeds outweigh the bad deeds.

4.2.3 Romans 1:18-2:16

This text is a prelude to Paul's explanation of the Gospel. Paul describes man's unpardonable behaviour in the light of God's revelation, and God's righteous judgement. What light does the text shed on Paul's ministry in Athens? How should Islam be viewed in the light of this text?

Writer and Audience

Paul wrote this letter, his last one as a free man (Pelser, 1998:45). Paul was about to return to Jerusalem, from his third mission (Romans 15:25).

Cultural and Historical situation

The letter is addressed to the believers in Rome (Romans 1:7; 15) (Pelser, 1998:45). It is possible tat Paul addresses it to "the saints" because there was more than one church in Rome (Witmer, 1983). Most of these believers were non- Jewish (Pelser, 1998:45). It does not appear that there were specific problems in Rome that Paul wanted to address, and he writes to announce himself and explain the content of the Gospel he preaches (Pelser, 1998:48).

Cultural and Historical situation

Rome as Capital of the Roman Empire was a very important city. It was a cosmopolitan city, with magnificent palaces, temples, theatres and sports arenas (Du Plessis, 1997).

The Passage

Before giving a thorough exposition of the Gospel, Paul first gives a description of man's fallen state and his need for salvation. Through his unrighteousness, man has suppressed the knowledge of God that was clear to be seen in God's creation (Wiersbe, 1996). This knowledge being seen in creation is called natural revelation and is accessible to all mankind (Witmer, 1983). Stoic philosophers argued that that the nature of God was evident in creation and Cicero asserted that no race of humanity was so uncivilized that they denied the existence of the gods. Cicero argued with others that the human mind pointed to what god is like. Jewish people in the Greco-Roman world would use these arguments to persuade Gentiles to turn to the true God (Keener, 1993). It is important to note that Paul is not arguing that man can be saved by the knowledge he got of God from creation (v. 19). Paul is arguing that man has suppressed this knowledge and has replaced it with his own foolishness (Jonker, 1998). Man did not start out without any knowledge of God and then attained it with time. No, man had knowledge of God, but turned away from it, suppressing it. But God did not turn on man. In general/ natural revelation the attributes of God shines through because God is always and everywhere busy with man. However, the general revelation can only be effectively discovered in the light of the special revelation – through the Word (Belgian Confession, Article 2) (Kraemer, 1947:125). The fact that God is always and everywhere busy with man has kept man from complete and utter destruction. Man's fall from God are evident in this world, but so are God's common grace, by which God restrains man from destroying all (Bavinck, 1960:173). The creation and the fact that God still maintains His creation is all part of the general revelation (Van Genderen & Velema, 1993:54).

God's wrath becomes visible in the fact that he gives man over to his own foolishness. God's wrath is directed against all the godlessness and wickedness of men, not against men as such (Witmer, 1983).

From man in general Paul turns his attention at the start of Romans 2 to those that condemns others on account of unrighteousness, and who lives unrighteous lives themselves. God is just, He may judge. Man may not. Scholars disagree on whether Paul is addressing Gentiles who do claim not to commit these crimes, or to Jewish readers (Wiersbe, 1996). Both Gentile and Jewish groups had their own moralists, who thought that God's judgement did not apply to them because of their higher planes of living. Paul states that *all* are condemned because everyone in the human race had turned their back on God. All stand condemned, especially moral pagans and Jews, because God's judgment is based on three divine standard: Truth (2:2-4), impartiality (2:5-11) and Jesus Christ (2:12-16) (Witmer, 1983). Those who had better access to truth will be judged far more strictly (Keener, 1993).

In Romans 2:4 Paul indicates that God still shows kindness, tolerance and patience, in order that man may repent. This is God's common grace at work. Through the gifts God gives, society is kept intact. God shows his kindness and patience so that all (everywhere and in every place) may hear the Gospel of God's love and grace (Van Genderen & Velema, 1993:277).

Paul then turns his attention to the law. Man will be judged by the law. Those who have the Law of Moses will be judged according to that Law. But, those who do not have the Law will also be judged. Gentiles, who know what is right and do what the law requires, will also be judged. Through their deeds they indicate that the law is written in their hearts. Their struggle with their consciences also bears witness to this fact. Paul is not propagating salvation through works. By stating that God will judge the deeds of man, Paul is indicating that no one, Jew or Gentile had what God requires – a life of perfect righteousness (Hughes, 2001b). In the end man's live will be judged by God in Jesus Christ. No matter how man lived, the question will be if he accepted God's grace in and through Jesus Christ.

Application

When Paul addresses the Athenians, this is his basic premise. Man, who considers his own foolishness wisdom, has suppressed the true knowledge of God. Now they serve Him in their own way. In the end this self-induced ignorance will not serve as an excuse. God will judge man in Jesus Christ.

What is interesting is that most of this passage (Romans 1:18-2:16) will be quite acceptable to Muslims. They also believe that man may know God through his works; that He is kind and merciful; and that He will judge man according to his works. Muslims, on the whole, live moral lives. They claim that their way of life (build on the Qur'an) is truly God's will for man. Seeing how Muslims sometimes live may force Westerners to reconsider the truth claims of Islam (cf. Armstrong, 2003:18). But this is no reason to believe that Qur'an is divine revelation. Through his common grace God allows man not to fall in total degradation. God gives man time so that he may hear the Gospel of love and grace in Christ. Christians should therefore make the best of this time by effectively communicating the Gospel to Muslims.

Muslims will, however, have a problem with the idea that man is naturally sinful. What is clear from this passage is that a high moral life is no ground for salvation. God's requirement is perfection and no man can attain this. Only those who accepted God's gift in Christ receive salvation. This passage sheds light on the value of Accad's method and principles. Accad's method is not only concerned with effectively communicating the Gospel, but in communicating it truthfully. Man *is* sinful by nature and there is nothing he can do to save himself. Only by accepting God's gift in Christ is there salvation.

4.2.4 Acts 17:16-33

In the chapter "The Qur'an as bridge to the Bible" Accad (1997:12) uses Acts 17 as an example of why and how missionaries should and may use the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible. Parshall (1980:37) considers this sermon an example of how Paul contextualised his message in order to be a more effective communicator.

Writer and Audience

See § 4.2.2.

Cultural and Historical situation

When Paul arrived in Athens, the city was considered a centre of culture and education in a period of decline. The glory of earlier had gone and the city was given over to "cultured paganists" that were nourished by idolatry, novelty and philosophy (Wiersbe, 1996a). Athens was known to be the city with the most idols (Nicol, 1997). A writer at Nero's court, Petronius, said that it was easier to find a god in Athens than a man (Fausset, 1997). In the cultural world which Paul entered here, it was no longer possible to speak of a Greek or Roman religion. The different religions had borrowed so much from each other and the influence of eastern religions was so great that it was near impossible to recognise the original religions (De Villliers, 1998). Athens was also devoted to philosophy. And according to Acts 17:21 people spent their time listening to new ideas. This openness of the people would give Paul an opportunity to present the Gospel (Toussaint, 1983).

After speaking to the people in the marketplace Paul was invited to address the Athenians on the Areopagus. In the beginning the council meeting on the Areopagus had supreme authority in political and religious matters. Later it would become a court for hearing criminal cases and by the time of Paul the council spent its time discussing religious and educational issues (De Villiers, 1998).

On this occasion Paul's primary opponents were the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. The Epicureans believed that man's purpose was pleasure and happiness. This pleasure was attained by avoiding excesses and the fear of death, by seeking tranquillity and freedom from pain, and by loving mankind. They also believed that if gods did exist they did not become involved in human affairs. The Stoics were pantheists who believed a great "Purpose" directed history. Man's purpose was to find his place in the scheme of things through tragedy and triumph (Toussaint, 1983).

The Passage

When Paul preached in a synagogue, he had the habit of starting with the Old Testament Scriptures and proving that Jesus was the Messiah (Toussaint, 1983). In addressing the Athenians he used a sermon that suited the cultural milieu of Athens. In the synagogue he spoke as a scribe, but in the marketplace as a philosopher (Nicol, 1997).

The main theme of Paul's sermon is God the Creator and the proper worship of this Creator God. Although, thoroughly rooted in the Old Testament his language has a philosophical ring to it. Paul was trying to build bridges to reach the Athenian intellectuals (Polhill, 2001). Paul's sermon can be divided into three parts:

Introduction (22-23)

Paul begins his sermon on a positive note, both conciliatory and commendatory, stating that he observed that they are very religious in every aspect (Nicol, 1997; Fausset, 1997). Such a positive introduction was a standard device in Greek rhetoric (Polhill, 2001). With this Paul tries to gain interest in his message (Van Genderen & Velema, 1993:57).

The unknown God (24-29)

Caught up in their religious pluralism the Athenians feared they might overlook an important god. So they dedicated an altar "to the unknown God." Toussaint (1983) says Paul's reference to this altar did not emphasise the altar, but rather the people's ignorance of the true God.

Paul also quotes Greek poets. He quotes Epimenides, a Cretan poet: "For in Him we live and move and have our being." (Toussaint, 1983) This quote also appears in Jewish anthologies of proof texts used to show pagans the truth about God (Keener, 1993)[29]. Paul does not use it in a pantheistic sense, but to explain that God is never far from man (De Villiers, 1998a).

He also quotes Aratus, from Cilicia: "We are his offspring." The quote is from a Hymn to Zeus. Paul tries to show them that a nation whose poets have such profound insights should not degrade themselves by worshipping idols and statues (De Villiers, 1998a). In using the quotes Paul does not intend to see absolute truth in these poems, but he uses them to reach his audience (Van Genderen & Velema, 1993:57).

The message from God (30-31)

Paul ends his sermon with the message from God: In the past the ignorance of people were overlooked by God. But now He is set to judge the world. As proof of this, God has raised Christ from the dead.

[29] This is not the only incident Paul uses a quote from Epimenides. In his letter to Titus (1:12), he uses a quote from Epimenides to describe the people of Crete.

Some of the hearers laughed at him in reference to the dead being raised. Even so a few wanted to hear him again and a few were converted. Petersen (1992:74) contrasts this sermon with that of Peter at Pentecost (Acts2:14-41) where three thousand became believers. Although Paul used a language and style to fit his audience, the results were still meagre. Peter was not more Spirit filled or necessarily a better speaker than Paul. The difference in result may be attributed to the different heritages. Those visiting Jerusalem at Pentecost were God fearing Jews from every nation, people with a Godly heritage (Acts 2:5). Paul's audience on the Mars Hill had a decidedly ungodly heritage. Where the people in Jerusalem were prepared for the Gospel, those in Athens were not.

Flemming (2002:201) shows the following cultural sensitive elements in Paul's sermon:

- He opens with the conventional form of address when making a speech. Making his audience feel at home.
- The sermon fits with the conventional pattern of Greco-Roman rhetoric:
  - An opening (*exordium*) designed to gain a hearing from the audience (17:22-23a).
  - A proposition (*propositio*) stating the desired goal of the discourse (17:23b).
  - The main proof (*probatio*) which argues the case (17:24-29).
  - A concluding exhortation (*peroratio*), an attempt to persuade the audience (17:30-31).
- He uses rhetorical techniques familiar to the educated Greeks.
- His speech is rich with irony. His recurring theme of human ignorance would not have gone unnoticed by the learned Greeks.
- His message draws upon the language and ideas of his Greek contemporaries.
- He quotes the pagan poets in support of his argument.

Application

Accad's (1997:18) application of this text holds true. Paul changed his approach to suit his audience. Seeing the idolatry of the people, he not only went to the synagogue but to the marketplace as well. He used quotes from Greek poets and Greek rhetorical techniques known. With making this cultural connection he did indeed make a spiritual connection. This common ground served as a bridge over which he could carry the gospel (Accad, 1997:24) It is true that not all accepted what he had said. But he did get an opportunity to speak, some laughed but some wanted to hear more, and eventually some believed.

Paul's premise regarding man's sinful state and God's judgement in Christ is reflected in his sermon. In the end man has no excuse for not accepting God's gift in Christ. What is important to note is that Paul made use of several "techniques" to communicate his message effectively. In spite of this, people did not repent in masses. This is important for the Christian mission to Islam. A technique does not guarantee certain success. Missionaries should do all in their power to communicate effectively, but always trust in God to make the seed grow.

4.2.5 Romans 14:1-23

Romans 14, sheds light on Paul's application of the rules given in Acts 15 and Christians may learn something from this in regard to Muslim-Christian relations.

Writer and audience

See § 4.2.3.

Cultural and Historical situation

Concerning the context of the readers it is important to note that Emperor Claudius had evicted the Jews from Rome. It is not known how many left and how many returned after the emperor's death in 54 A.D. Non-Jewish Christians would not have been affected by the decree. Because of this, it is probable to assume that relations were strained between Jewish and non-Jewish Christians in Rome. Along with this there were certain cultural issues that caused strained relationships.

The Jewish food laws forced the Jews to form their own moderately self-sufficient communities in the Greco-Roman world (Keener, 1993). In almost any Christian congregation there then would be people observing special laws (Barclay, 2000) Within the Jewish community festivals were such an important issue that Jewish groups sometimes broke fellowship with each other over it (Keener, 1993). Within the Christian community Jews still held the Sabbath as being consecrated to God. Other believers saw every day as the same, giving equal opportunity for worship and service (Mounce, 2001).

The Passage

Paul starts by admonishing those who are "strong in the faith," i.e. those who understand their spiritual liberty in Christ and are not enslaved by diets and holy days (Wiersbe, 1996a). The immature believers were those who believed they still had to hold to certain laws.

The ones who were strong in faith should accept those weak in faith. Paul gives four reasons why this should be the case:

- Both are accepted by God (1-3).
- God is master of all (4).
- Believers do what they do for the Lord (5-9).
- Christ is the only judge of man's life (10-12).

In describing the believers as servants Paul does not use the Greek word for "slave" (*doulos*) but for "domestic servant" (*oiketen*). With this he emphasises that it is the master of the house's privilege to judge his servants (Witmer, 1983).

The responsibility is on the individual here. Everyone will stand before God and be judged alone. The believer, whether strong or weak in faith, should commit his life to obeying his Master, Christ (Wierbe, 1996a). Neither strong nor weak has any reason to look down on or condemn the other in matters of custom (Jonker, 1998). Each acts to the glory of God.

Paul does not leave his report at the first admonishment. He continues with a second. Believers do not only stand in relationship with God as their Master, but with each other as brothers. Love should guide their actions. Through love believers have an effect on others (Wiersbe, 1996a). Paul then gives examples of how this love comes to effect:

- Through their deeds, believers should not place a stumbling block in the path of their brothers, for whom Christ died (13-15).
- Believers should have the right priorities. The kingdom of God is not about eating or drinking. Believers should serve Christ in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (16-18).
- Believers should help each other grow, and in doing so, the kingdom of God. Believers should apply themselves to that which builds up and edify the church.

Refraining from doing that which may bring their brothers to fall, builds the kingdom, and protects the work of God (19-21).

- Believers should live through faith and keep their convictions between themselves and God. Both strong and weak should live and act from faith, without condemning the other (22-23).

In Christian life there are some things that are unessential to Christian fellowship. Even if someone who is "weak" in faith is in error upon these things it is no reason to exclude him or her from the communion of the church or from those who are "strong" (Brown, 1997).

Paul is warning the believers not to give the good they have (*i.e.* the kingdom of God) a bad name by acting loveless (Jonker, 1998). In their lives others should see their renewed relationship and peace with God. Their priorities must be such that that which is more important comes first: the honour of God and the good (*heil*; salvation) of others (Jonker, 1998). The peace Paul is speaking about is that which should reign among the family of believers. The individual should not destroy what God is doing by insisting to get his own way (Mounce, 2001).

Application

In Acts 15 two emphases where evident in the rules given to the churches: a moral and fellowship intent. In Acts 15 the eating of meat sacrificed to idols is prohibited. Yet, it seems that this requirement has given rise to dispute among the Christians in Rome. Paul does not enforce the decree given in Acts 15 regarding the eating of meat sacrificed to idols. He places the requirement within the context of the Gospel. Man is not saved by works but by grace alone. Paul considers this a disputable matter and admonishes the reader to keep each other in mind and to keep conviction about disputable matters between oneself and God. In this way the fellowship is safeguarded. It is important to note that Paul makes an effort to place the issue within the context of the Gospel. Merely giving the Romans another decree would not have sufficed. They need to grow in their understanding of the Gospel. Concerning the Christian mission to Islam this is important. New believers may sometimes hold on to practices that are utterly useless in the light of the Gospel. As long as these things do not detract from the Gospel or harm the unity of the body of Christ it should be allowed. However, all should be done to ensure that new believers understand what they do in the light of the Gospel.

The key issue here is "disputable matters" that should not become a stumbling block in the way of people on their way to Christ, or of church growth. Conviction about disputable matters should be kept private. Thus seen, it asks of believers, who are already saved in Christ to be the lesser in "disputable matters" so that they do not put stumbling blocks in people's way, blocks based on personal preference or one's own culture and custom. Those who are free in Christ should not use their freedom as a licence to judge others.

4.2.6 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

1 Corinthians 10 sheds light on Paul's application of the rules given in Acts 15 and Christians may learn something from this in regard to Muslim-Christian relations.

Writer

Paul's authorship is clear from 1:1 and 16:21. He made at least three visits to the city, writing at least three letters to the believers there (Hughes & Laney, 2001a).

Audience

The city, Corinth, was amid crossroads between the north and south and east and west (Barclay, 2000). Merchants, religious preachers, philosophers, and armies passed through its gates (Groenewald, 1998). Religiously the city resembled Athens. There were many temples for different Gods. The temple for Aphrodite was said to have had 1000 religious prostitutes at one time. The word "*Korinthiazesthai*" (to live like a Corinthian) became part of the Greek language, indicating a life of drunken and immoral debauchery (Barclay, 2000).

Cultural and Historical situation

From Athens Paul went to Corinth where he met with Aquila and Priscilla (Guthrie, 1990:432). The city was cosmopolitan and housed a large number of Jews with their own synagogue (Lategan, 1998:59). Paul's work among the Jews was not very fruitful and he began to focus on the Gentiles (Acts 18:6). Leaving the synagogue he went to the house of a god fearing Gentile, Titus Justus. His work here was very fruitful and many Corinthians became Christians (Acts 18:7). Given the circumstances under which Paul left the synagogue in Corinth it is sure that relations between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians would be very strained. The requirements set in Acts 15 would have been applicable here as well.

Paul had some difficulty with the church in Corinth. Living in the cosmopolitan city, believers were in constant danger of contamination by their surroundings. Some still craved for the Greek philosophy and rhetoric, tying themselves in with Apollos and his eloquent speeches (Fausset, 1997a). Then there were the Judaizers, claiming to be from Jerusalem and attacking Paul's apostleship. Among these believers arouse a group trying to rationalise their immorality and keeping to the Epicurean motto "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die" (1 Corinthians 15:32).

The church in Corinth had many problems: the members were divided in groups (1 Corinthians 1:12); they still participated in immoral practices (2 Corinthians 5:1); they were involved in lawsuits against each other (1 Corinthians 6:1); they abused the Lord's Supper and fought over spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14) and some denied the resurrection (2 Corinthians 15:12).

The Passage

The Corinthians had a saying: "Everything is permissible!" When speaking about sin against their own bodies (sexual immorality) Paul quotes this saying adding: *"... but not everything is beneficial"* and *"...I will not be mastered by anything!"* (1 Corinthians 6:12). Speaking about sin against their neighbours Paul quotes the same adding *"...not everything is constructive!"* In Christ they are free to act but not everything they do builds up. This is not the example of Christ who sought not his own good but the good of others. Paul is telling them that freedom should be tempered by responsibility, because freedom without responsibility is anarchy and lawlessness (Wiersbe, 1996).

Meat left over from the idol sacrifices was taken to the meat market in the agora in Corinth. Not all the meat was sacrificed to idols, but some was. In the cities where the Jews did not have their own meat markets they would enquire about the source of the meat. But Jewish teachers considered unintentional "sins" in this regard to be of lesser value. Paul therefore says that they could eat without raising questions of conscience (Keener, 1993).

Concerning the eating of sacrificial meat (prohibited in the letter from Jerusalem, Acts 15) Paul continues with love as the guideline for the believer's action. Although they were free in Christ and could eat whatever they wanted, this freedom should not be a stumbling block in

the path of others. Everything belongs to God and the believers should thank God for what they receive. But Paul says that their freedom should be tempered.

If in visiting friends, they were told the meat they were eating was from a heathen temple, they should refrain from eating. Commentators agree that a weaker believer is indicated here (Groenewald, 1998, Wiersbe, 1996). The strong should abstain not because of their own conscience but on account of the one speaking. If nothing is said they may freely eat. This is done not to take anything away from the freedom in Christ, but for the benefit of the others. The believer's freedom in Christ should never be a stumbling block for Jews, Greeks or the Church.

Love is the guideline. The believers should try to please everyone in every way, seeking their good so that they may be saved. With this Paul is not saying that believers should become man pleasers, but that their lives should be centred on helping others (Wiersbe, 1996). A specific aim in their conduct should be the salvation of others. *"To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings."* (1 Corinthians 9:20-23).

In this Paul's life is an example, an example in which he is following Christ.

Application

The question may arise if Paul is not contradicting the decision made in Jerusalem (Acts 15). As is the case in Romans 14 Paul does not enforce the decree, but places it within the context of the Gospel. He goes one step further than Romans 14. In 1 Corinthians 10 the issue regarding the eating of meat is placed within the context of the Christians calling, in the light of the Gospel. In Christ believers are free from the law. However, their freedom should not be a licence to judge others. They should seek the good of others within the boundaries set forth by God in Christ. Seeking the good for others implies that which builds up and leads to salvation in Christ. Seeking the good of others implies service, just as Christ did (John 13:1-

17). Ericson (Parshall, 1980:35) maintains that Paul is giving an indication on how to deal with contextual behaviour. The issue here is that meaning determines the acceptability or non-acceptability of cultural forms. If the meaning of a cultural form is intrinsically contrary to the Biblical faith, no Christian may partake. If the practice is only viewed as wrong by some people then the Christian must abstain in their presence. Concerning the Christian mission to Islam, missionaries and new believers should take into account the meaning Muslims and other believers give to curtain practices. If these practices turn out to be a stumbling block for Muslims or new believers they should abstain from it. If the absence of a certain practice, carries a negative meaning, and adherence thereto does not detract from the Gospel, then missionaries and new believers should practice it. The aim is not to be set under the law again, but to seek the good of others so that they may be saved.

4.3 THE REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of this subheading is to give an overview of the Reformed principles of evangelism. This is done at the hand of Bosch's eight aspects of what Evangelism is.

4.3.1 Evangelism: proclamation through words and deeds

Evangelism theology literally abounds with different definitions of evangelism (Van der Walt, I.J., 1985:6). However, when considering a definition of evangelism one is forced to firstly consider the relationship between "evangelism" on the one hand and "mission" on the other hand. Traditionally a distinction was made between evangelism and missions. In this view mission was defined as bringing the gospel to far away places and evangelism comprised of bringing the gospel to places near at home (Kuiper, 1966:7). Less recent Reformed writers also thought of missions as bringing the gospel to those who have never been Christians and evangelism as bringing the gospel to those who no longer were Christians. Bosch (1987:98) indicates that most people use the words mission and evangelism as synonyms, although they don't always agree on what the term mission/evangelism means.

Bosch (1987:98) arranges the different views on the **meaning of the word** mission/ evangelism on a continuum ranging from the narrow evangelical position to the broad ecumenical one. People view evangelism in different ways, depending on their religious

heritage and background. In order to define mission/ evangelism, Bosch discusses eight aspects of mission/ evangelism.

4.3.2 The Aspects of Evangelism

4.3.2.1 Aspect one: Evangelism the heart of mission

Aspect

Evangelism is the core, heart or centre of mission; it consists of the proclamation of salvation in Christ to non-believers, in announcing forgiveness of sins, in calling people to repentance and faith in Christ, in inviting them to become living members of Christ's earthly community and to begin a life in the power of the Holy Spirit (Bosch, 1987:101).

Explication and comment

Bosch (1987:101) clearly states that this aspect does not limit evangelism to soul winning. Neither does it refer to an action concerned with only the inward or spiritual side of people. Evangelism must be seen in terms of calling people to faith in Christ, in all their relationships. Evangelism is not operative in only individual or spiritual categories. Evangelism is the heart of mission – it touches every aspect of the believer's life: private and corporate.

Believers are called to proclaim through their words and deeds what God has done for man in Christ. The individual's whole life, and therefore that of the church, is centred on this proclamation. All activity of the church in words and deeds, in preaching, in life, in forms of expression and in social service should spring from the church's apostolic calling – to proclaim what God did in Christ (Kraemer, 1947:302). However, Christianity and Jesus are not the same (Petersen, 1992:52). The problem exists that people may accept Christ without embracing the systems that have been built up around Him. Writing on his work in Pakistan, McCurry (1976:268) says that an increasing number of Muslim converts came forward seeking baptism, but were unwilling to be incorporated into the existing churches. Evangelism is not concerned with getting a quick answer in favour of Christ. The aim of evangelism is personal life change, leading to change in society, through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In such a way that the world may witness God's grace and love and glorify Him.

The Christian mission to Islam should not only be concerned with the proclamation of Christ, in the sense of getting a quick answer, but with the effective communication of the Gospel. Where this proclamation centres on the person and work of Jesus Christ, any mission to Islam need to take into account the intellectual and historical stumbling blocks Muslims have surrounding the person and work of Christ. Evangelism being the heart of mission encompasses an attitude that should make Western Christians sensitive to the world and surroundings of new converts from Islam. Everything possible should be taken into consideration and be done in order to allow the new believer to be an effective witness among his own family and friends (Mark 5:18-20). Evangelism is not only a process of proclamation, but of equipping believers to be effective witnesses of what God has done for them in and through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12).

4.3.2.2 Aspect two: Incorporation into a visible community of believers

Aspect

Evangelism seeks to bring people into a visible community of believers. Evangelism, however, should not only be seen in terms of church expansion. When expansion becomes prominent, evangelism may easily turn into a mechanism to boost an institution's stature or prestige. We should remember that authentic evangelism may in fact cause people NOT to join the church, because of the cost involved (Bosch, 1987:101).

Explication and comment

The only valid motive and purpose of mission is to witness to what God has done for man in Christ and to build up a community of those who have surrendered themselves to faith in and loving service of Jesus Christ (Kraemer, 1947:292).

The focus in evangelism is *not* the unprecedented expansion of the church (numbers) or of the success of a specific denomination. The focus in evangelism is the effective communication of the Gospel. Believers are called to proclaim God's love and grace in Christ. Those who accept God's gift in Christ become part of His body. This body is visible, executing its calling in front of the world. And even though the church does not belong to the world its members are sent to the world, to live in such a way that the world may glorify God and believe that He has sent Christ (1 Peter 2:9; Matthew 5:16; John 17:16-18).

This is not easy. Throughout church history believers have lived between two extremes concerning the world: isolation and compromise (Petersen, 1992:53). In trying to reach out, some Christians have absorbed the values of their business and social environments to such an extent, that they are indistinguishable from the rest of the world. On the other hand the tendency is to take a nucleus of Christians to some safe corner, in order to edify them. By doing so it becomes almost impossible for them to reach out to their peers. The edification of the saved must be carried out in the midst of the world. The visible community of believers should be in *this* world - they should still have meaningful relationships with non-believers, without repudiating the gospel (Matthew 5:14-16; Luke 5:29-13; 15:1).

Concerning the "numbers game," isolation and compromise may give way to two extremes in viewing the task of the church. On the one side churches may be to pragmatically inclined in their mission endeavour. If a method wins new members successfully, it is used. In extreme cases this leads to syncretism. This is unacceptable since those who join the church may do so having heard a perverted Gospel, which is no Gospel and leaves man without hope (Galatians 1:8). The calling of the church is not to win new members, but to proclaim Christ. God will call and add the saved to the church (Acts 2:47).

To the other side churches sometimes fall into the trap of ignoring the unique problems and challenges confronting the church. The answer to all problems is then seen in applying and carrying out old truths in the proven ways (Burger, 1999:103). Those who reject the message are seen as not being chosen.

From a Reformed perspective these tendencies are only countered in the realisation that evangelism is a work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:8; John 16:12-13). Christ builds his church (Matthew 16:18), He Himself being the firm foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11), through the believers (Ephesians 4:12). But in all this the Holy Spirit is the true architect (John 16:13) (Brislen, 1996:357).

Within the Muslim community the new believers would form a homogeneous church. This would imply that these "Muslim" churches would differ from the traditional "Christian" churches, in things such as liturgy, prayer posture, rituals such as washing before service, time of service (Friday) etc. Parshall (1980:161) says that the "flavour" of these churches would be distinctive and will naturally attract new believers from Islam, who would feel at home in

such a church. This, however, does not mean others from different backgrounds are disbarred from joining the church. The doors should be open for all who confess Christ as Lord. The point is that a visible community of believers within a Muslim context should not be culturally alien, but reflect the ways of the people, in so far as it does not detract from the Gospel.

Christianity can hardly be accused of playing a "numbers game" in their mission to Islam. For the most part mission successes have been meagre (Parshall, 1980:15; cf. Cooper, 1993:10). Concerning the second principle of evangelism it is important to note that believers should be incorporated into a *visible* community of believers. This community of believers should reflect the community from which the new believers were called and to which they must minister to, and proclaim the Gospel. In achieving this churches should be careful of both compromise and isolation. Methods that are used to proclaim the Gospel should stay true to the Gospel. Churches should proclaim Christ staying true to the Word of God (1 Corinthians 1:13). However churches should not, in their fear of syncretism, become completely removed from the world. Although they are still visible, when isolated, this isolation will not serve effective communication of the Gospel, especially within a Muslim community. In short the aim is to proclaim the true Gospel, giving rise to a visible community of believers that stay true to their calling of proclaiming Christ effectively in their words and deeds.

4.3.2.3 Aspect three: witnessing to what God has done, is doing and will do

Aspect

Evangelism involves witnessing to what God has done, is doing and will do. It therefore does not announce anything that man is bringing about but draws people's attention to what God has brought about and is still bringing about. Evangelism is not a call to put something into effect. It gives testimony that Christ has already conquered the powers of darkness (Colossians 1:13). Although the verbal witness is indispensable it is not that only. Evangelism consists of word and deed; proclamation and presence; explanation and example (Bosch, 1987:101).

Explication and comment

Evangelism is not primary man's work but God's. He is the one calling people to his new people, to Christ, to the true Israel (1 Peter 2:9) (Bavinck, 1960:57). In all of the churches' endeavours, God is still the one who saves (1 Corinthians 3:7). Evangelism is witness about God's work, *Missio Dei*, God's mission on earth (Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman, 1994:40). This work has a Trinitarian base: God the father sent his Son; the Father and the Son together sent the Holy Spirit and the Father, Son and Holy Spirit sent the church into the world. In order to speak of man's role, the role of his words and deeds in mission, it is important and necessary that the church will have this action of God firmly in their thinking (Newbigin, 1996:135). If *missio dei* is not the centre of the church's outreach they fall in the trap of propagating their own way of doing things - the Gospel tends to get lost in a specific community's cultural trappings.

Missio dei does not exclude *missio ecclesiae* (Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman, 1994:41). The church is sent into the world to proclaim God's works (John 20:21). Mission is the task of the church and not of a mission organisation. It is also the task of the whole church, not of a part thereof or as an optional programme (Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman, 1994:42). The whole church is contracted into God's mission. What holds true for the individual missionary when communicating holds true for the whole church. The church must adapt to the community they are serving, without losing sight of the fact that they are communicating a message from God. They may not adapt to such an extent that they nullify the message they are communicating. The church should still proclaim the Word of God (Madany, 2003:16).

Proclaiming God's salvation in Christ is also an act of proclaiming the coming of God's Kingdom (Mark 1:15). Within the church believers worship together, fellowship together, and share together for their own needs and that of others. This worshiping community is representative of the Kingdom of God (Brislen, 1996:357). Through the life of the church the Kingdom of God becomes visible in the world. The church is called through the whole process of evangelism to serve the Kingdom of God. Van der Walt (I.J., 1985:85) calls service to God's kingdom the highest aim of evangelism. It is a service in which the church strives to honour God's holy name and effectively build the Kingdom.

The aim in the church's missionary outreach is never to create an American Christianity, African Christianity or any other, but a Christianity growing out of the culture of the

Kingdom (Petersen, 1992:101). A culture where man lives a new life in submission to Christ the Lord, a life of love and service to God and his fellow man. This new life is not centred on man but on God and his glory. God is glorified by the new life of his children (Matthew 5:16). He also calls his children to proclaim the good news of how others may enter into a renewed relationship with God, and thus his Kingdom. And this is what God has done: He so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish and have eternal life (John 3:16).

Proclaiming what God has done needs to be done effectively. Missionaries draw attention to what God has done. Accad (1997:30) says the ground must be prepared to accept what God has done. Concerning this Kuiper (1966:129) says that Christians should never suppose that there is in natural man some spiritual good which renders his heart fertile soil for the seed of the Gospel. Man and his whole world are perverted by sin (Romans 1:28; 8:20-21). Man's natural reaction when confronted by the reality of this is to try and overcome this perversion with his own devices. Man is radically self-centred (Kraemer, 1947:101).

Still, God calls his children to give witness to what He has done. This is not always easy. Petersen (1992: 27) says that differences between Christians and non-Christians create an *"us and them"* mentality. This has the effect that evangelism becomes an unannounced assault on strangers, or little more than being nice to someone. Part of the problem is that Christians sometimes reason that they posses divine revelation. *"We have the revelation and not you!"* Realising that evangelism is God's work will lead Christians to point gratefully and humbly to Christ. Witnessing to the fact that it pleased God to reveal Himself fully in Christ and calling on listeners to repent, believe and adore (Kraemer, 1947:119). When confronted by cultural differences the most common response is to ignore the differences, reasoning that *"people are people and the gospel is the gospel"* (Petersen, 1996:29). With this reasoning no effort is made to understand the listener and his world. This is not conducive to a *"valid opportunity to be directly challenged by the gospel of explicit faith in Jesus Christ"* (Bosch, 1987:103).

One of the primary tasks of missionaries is to close the communication gap between themselves and their audience. In other words, it is the witness's task to do everything possible to ensure that the listener understands what is being witnessed about. Concerning mission work in Latin America, Petersen (1992:67) indicated that Western missionaries faced two tasks: understanding the listeners' patterns of thought and translating the gospel into

everyday language. The missionary's message needs to be *"translated out of North American Protestant terminology and communication forms and into patterns which will be understood by Latin American students"* (Petersen, 1992:62). The same holds true for missionaries ministering in the Middle East or other Muslim countries, especially considering the history of distrust between the Christian and Muslim communities.

Associations are very important in reaching out. The question here is: "How am I perceived by those I am seeking to win?" (Petersen, 1992:111). The issue is not how Christians view themselves but how they are perceived by others. This is very important because Christians can place a bowl over their lamp by what and how they do things (Matthew 5:15). If people perceive Christians as propagating a particular system or organisation their witness is almost always doomed to failure. The Bible points out, that it is the outsiders that largely determine the "internal" affairs of the church, not so much by active participation but through their reaction to what the church's practices communicate to them (Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman, 1994:45). The church does not live for itself, but for the world. The church exists to communicate God's grace and love through words and deeds. If the world does not "hear" what God has done, the church should take the necessary steps to ensure that they do. The church is an instrument in God's hand, He completes His work of reconciliation through men (2 Corinthians 5:20) (Bavinck, 1960:43).

Witnessing to what God has done, is doing and will do is not a proverbial shot in the dark. Evangelism is witness about God's work. God revealed Himself through his word (2 Peter 1:20-21) within the cultural context of the Hebrews and the Hellenic world so that man may understand (Hebrews 1:1). He went even further, and revealed Himself in Christ, reconciling the lost and condemned with Him, though faith in Christ (John 1:1). Because there is no way that man in his self-centred state of sin could understand and turn to God, he even gave his Spirit to dwell in man (John 16:8-14; Romans 8: 15-16). God took pains to ensure that man will understand what He did. Likewise, his children should make every acceptable effort to ensure that the people they witness to clearly hear what God has done, is doing and will do. Within a Muslim context this implies taking into account all relevant cultural and historical factors that may hinder a Muslim to hear the truth about himself, and what God did for him in Christ.

4.3.2.4 Aspect four: Evangelism is an invitation

Aspect

Evangelism is an invitation; it should never deteriorate into coaxing or threat. People must not be made to feel guilty in order for them to accept Christ, even more so - scared into the kingdom. This approach deprives the gospel of free grace and divine love (Bosch, 1987:101; cf. Caner & Caner, 2002:176).

Explication and comment

God gathers his Church through his Word and Spirit (Belgian Confession, Article 7). He is the one who saves (Titus 3:4-7). Christians should not try and bully people into the kingdom but give witness to what God has done, is doing and will do (Titus 3:8).

Petersen (1992:49) considers the common weakness in contemporary outreaches, to be the missionaries' focus on the Christian contract: how to transact a relationship with God. The focus is on telling people what to do. Most of the time, this implies the way "we" are doing it. Petersen (1992:49) says the focus should be on bringing someone to an understanding of Jesus Christ. As his understanding grows, the response (what the person needs to do) becomes self-evident. Christians should take the time to help a person grasp the implications of Christ's identity and work: to introduce him to the Person of Jesus Christ (Petersen, 1992:82).

The key here is sustained exposure to the Scripture (Petersen, 1992:62). Petersen says from experience that new Christians born from a longer period of gestation tend to have fewer spiritual problems (Mark 4:8). McCurry (1976:268) says that a decade of work by Bible correspondence schools in Pakistan has revealed that many have been convinced of the validity of the Gospel by the reading of the Scriptures. Scripture is the only way of helping people finding Christ and leading a godly life (Luke 24:27; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

In bringing someone to an understanding of Jesus Christ certain things are necessary. Man need to know three things to live in the joy of belonging to Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 1). How great his sins and misery are, how he can be saved from it and how he must thank God for His deliverance.

Within the Reformed tradition several methods have been developed to explain the basics of why man needs Christ in his life. Barnard (1979:119) describes the following necessary aspects:

- Grace: heaven is a gift and man cannot deserve it.
- Man: is a sinner and cannot save himself.
- God: is full of love and grace and does not want to punish man. But He is just and must punish sin.
- Jesus Christ: is truly man and truly God. He died for man's sins. He achieved eternal life for man. He gave eternal life as a gift.
- Faith: Faith is not temporary but is an eternal trust in Christ for salvation.

The above aspects are the same used by Buys (1991:43) in his evangelism course book "Ligdraers in die wêreld" [bearers of light in the world] a rendition of Kennedy's (1993) EE III discipleship course. Watson (1976:65) starts with God as Creator, as Redeemer, who justifies man, reconciling man with Himself in Christ. Man is called to repent, believe and receive what He has brought about in Christ.

The process of discussing these aspects cannot be rigidly set and should not be confined to one meeting but come naturally over several (Van der Walt, I.J., 1985:262). This is very important. Ignoring this advice will lead automatically to coaxing. The method is placed central in stead of witnessing to what God has done, is doing and will do. When God's work is central, evangelism becomes part of living with others. Scripture, the missionary's words and deeds, and what God is doing in the listener's life, all become part of the organic process of witnessing. When missionaries coax people or un-rigidly apply a method, they forget that there is a third party involved in any missionary endeavour: the Holy Spirit. Believers cannot save or keep others saved (Kraemer, 1947:130). The hard fact is that there are not bridges from human religious consciousness to the realty in Christ. There is no human contribution or disposition that can effect "the falling of the scales from the eyes." Only God's grace can achieve this (Kraemer, 1947:132). Believers are called to witness about what God has done, is doing and will do, it is the Holy Spirit that convinces man of guilt (John 16:8) and leads them in the right relationship with God (Romans 8:16).

This principle is reflected in Accad's method. The "Christian contract" is not central. The aim is not to bring Muslims to live as "Christians" (implying as "Western Christian"), but to bring the Muslim to a right understanding of God, Christ and man's place before God. In this process every effort is made to take into consideration the relevant cultural and historical stumbling blocks that may hinder a Muslim to hear and understand. Furthermore, definite recognition is given to the Holy Spirit as third but primary party in the process of communicating the Gospel. Missionaries are not only to pray for the guidance and work of the Holy Spirit, but also trust that the Bible can stand on its own merit (cf. Accad, 1997:75), because it is the Word of God (2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 4:12).

4.3.2.5 Aspect five: proclamation and affirmation

Aspect

Evangelism is possible only when the community that evangelises - the church- is a radiant manifestation of the Christian faith and has a winsome lifestyle (Bosch, 1987:101).

Explication and comment

Evangelism consists of two broad aspects: proclamation and affirmation (Petersen, 1992:71). Proclamation is the action by which the non-Christian receives a clear and understandable message regarding the Gospel. In other words proclamation is an effective declaration of the terms of man's reconciliation to God. The church is commanded to proclaim the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8). But proclamation is most effective among the "prepared." That is, people who have a Christian heritage, who know and understand something of the Christian message.

Affirmation is the process of incarnating and demonstrating the Christian message. This is effective among the "unprepared," i.e. those who do not have a Christian heritage or for whom Christianity does not constitute a credible basis for their lives (Petersen, 1992:71). In a sense Muslims are completely "unprepared." They come from a point of utter certainty of the rightness of their faith. They consider themselves the custodians of God's final and complete revelation. Most are convinced that they have nothing to gain from converting to an inferior religion, such as Christianity (Madany, 2003:18).

Proclamation and affirmation aspects pertain to the missionary dimension and intention of the church. The church is not only called to proclaim God's work of grace, but to realise his love in the service of its neighbours (Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman, 1994:44). Therefore everything the church does has a missionary dimension - it is in a sense aimed at the people outside. But more still everything the church does should have a missionary intention - it is aimed at reaching the people with God's message and love.

This is the emphasis of the New Testament epistles. Members of the church are repeatedly warned to walk as children of the light, in order to attract unbelievers and stir them to jealousy (Bavinck, 1960:46). The church's witness bears fruit when it lives as a "glorified" body (John 13:35). Concerning the Christian outreach to Muslims, Madany (2003:22) says that unless Christians lead lives that are concretely different from the lifestyles of secularised citizenry in the West, no Muslim will seriously consider what Christianity has to offer. Caner and Caner (2002:211) believe that Muslims apply valid criticism when pointing to the hypocrisy that infects churches. Many churches fail to heed the admonitions of the Bible, and many so-called Christians feel no sense of shame or fear for their sin patterns (Caner & Caner, 2002:211). To effectively reach the Muslims of this world Christians need to take God's call to new life very seriously (Ephesians 2:10). It is not only the New Testament that emphasises the importance of a true community of believers. In the Old Testament Israel had to live in such a way that the gentiles would be attracted into Zion by the life of God's people (Goldsmith, 1982:13).

In the light of the *ummah* (brotherhood of Islam) this is very important for the Christian mission to Islam. Kraemer (1947:297) considers Islam to be "group-solidarity incarnate," and that is the reason for its resistance to missionary outreach. He considers this group solidarity to be the real "holy" or "god" of Islam. This unbroken unity becomes the sacred treasure of the Muslim community as well as the Muslim individual (Kraemer, 1947:353). Muslims live in a close-knit community of love and care which gives them a definite identity. The new community in Christ should endeavour to love and care for each other, to be a unity as Christ prayed for his Church (John 17). The new community must incorporate the new believer in the same way, if not better, than the old community did (cf. Wilder, 1977:307). Anderson (1976:298) says the way to a Muslim's heart is the way of love and fellowship.

It is important to note that the Church as agent of mission is the local church (Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman, 1994:44). It is on this local level that the church maintains contact with the world. The main field of mission is therefore situated in the daily life of the local church. In this light Kerr (1976:328) says it is only by living seriously by the example of Christ's life that we can hope to commend what we believe to be eternally true about Christ to Muslims.

What is considered a radiant manifestation of faith and a winsome lifestyle in one community may not be in another. This is the basic problem when a Western Christian communicates the Gospel to Muslims. Not only do Muslims consider Christians to be heretics, they criticize the church of being slack in addressing the moral decline in the church and society.

This principle has two implications for the Christian mission to Islam. Firstly, how Christians live at "home" (whether in Western or Muslim society) has a definite impact on the Christian mission to Islam. The Christians at "home" need to take serious God's call to be holy (1 Peter 1:13-15). This means not only addressing moral decline in their private and church life, but actively speaking out against it in society.

Secondly, the principle compels missionaries to Islam, to take serious the Muslim community's idea of what a radiant manifestation of faith and a winsome lifestyle is. These things should be reflected in the lives of the missionaries, but especially in the lives of new believers, as individuals as well as in life of the new community (the body of Christ). This does not imply an unqualified acceptance of all things Muslim, only those that does not detract from the Gospel (see § 4.3.2.2).

4.3.2.6 Aspect six: evangelism is a risk

Aspect

To evangelise is to take a risk. There is no way of knowing how the gospel proclaimed will "come alive" in the listener's context. Not only may the listener's live be changed through evangelism, but also the life of the evangelist (Acts 10, Peter and Cornelius) (Bosch, 1987:101).

Explication and comment

Kraemer (1947:287) says that the aim of all missionary work must be the clear and persevering witness, in words and deeds, to Christian truth and life and the building up of living Christian communities. In this process the missionary should trustfully leaving to God what He would like to do with the work of His servants. The servants ministers, but it is God who makes the seed grow (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Speaking of reaching out to the secularised in Western society, Petersen (1992:48) says that Christians sometimes favour certain forms of expressing their faith because it is considered natural and right. These then become normative and essential, and Christians find it difficult to envision any Christian functioning without them. This restricts the Gospel. Petersen advises that Christians should be careful of their religious tradition, forms of worship, personal doctrinal emphasis and their own persuasion about Christian conduct. Western Christians may very well end up offering a Jesus who is identified with the things that are important to them, but a stumbling block to those they seek to win. *"They won't take him because of the wrappings!"* (Petersen, 1992:48).

Again the issue of compromise and isolation is relevant (see § 4.3.2.2). Fear of making a mistake in mission is healthy, but it should never cripple the Church, making it in effective in its outreach. Considering what has been said above, evangelism is a risk. The Gospel challenges the worldview of the listener but also that of the missionary. Both listener and missionary may change: not only in their attitude towards God and man, but also in terms of what they consider being radiant manifestations of faith or a winsome lifestyle.

However, the risk involved in mission is not a licence for irresponsible practices. The risk is tempered by the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, and by the context from which the missionary comes and within which the Gospel is proclaimed (Ephesians 5:16-17).

Within the mission to Islam, the church must be guided by the sociological situations of the Muslim community, and in this way devise acceptable structures for functioning within the specific society (Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman, 1994:45). The question of adaptation is very important. The responsibility rests with the missionary to adapt to those he seeks to win (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) (Petersen, 1992:117).

Adaptation is necessary to ensure prolonged exposure which makes observation (of the Gospel being affirmed) possible. Adaptation is part of the necessary and important process of contextualisation. Contextualisation does not imply that the context is the determining factor in evangelism. This holds true for the context of the missionary (Western society) and the listener (Muslim society). The Bible as God's Word still has the last say. Contextualisation is concerned with communicating by appropriate and understandable means that salvation is in Jesus alone (Gilliland, 2000:330). The important question here is how Christians may use aspects of a different culture to effectively convey the Biblical message about salvation in Christ, alone? Being confronted with the problem of the effective communication of the Gospel, there is a very real risk that things which are familiar to Western Christians, and with which they are comfortable, may change. This is not necessarily bad, merely uncomfortable.

Burger (2001:21) says that it is surprising to note what scope there is for local experience-related and surroundings-related presentation of the service in the churches, being so from the beginning of the Reformation. Things look different from congregation to congregation in the different countries. The Reformed principle here is that no historic institution, tradition, custom or confession be placed above critique. Everything that came into being in time is to be tested against the Word of God. That means that only the Word of God is normative. Everything else is open for discussion and rethinking as the situation demands (Burger, 2001:24).

Gilliland (2000:335) says that missionaries, when witnessing about the biblical Jesus, should as far as humanly possible do so in a way that is appropriate to the people of the target area. In reaching out to Muslims missionaries need to answer the following questions (cf. Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman, 1994:74):

- Who and where are these people?
- How are Muslim rituals observed in this place?
- What meaning do religious terms have for them?
- What is the history of the church (mission) in this place and among these people?
- How have Christians lived together with these Muslim people?

Accad's method poses definite risks. Muslims may misunderstand the use of the Qur'an by missionaries, seeing in this practice a validation of their view of the Qur'an as divine

revelation. They may misunderstand the contextualized "churches" in the Muslim context, viewing it as another unorthodox sect (see § 2.8). Although these things are used to help with the effective communication of the Gospel, there is a real risk that they to may become stumbling blocks. Stumbling blocks not only for Muslims, but also for Western Christians, whether they are familiar or unfamiliar with the mission to Islam (cf. Kraemer, 1947:316). The risk is real and necessitates an active and continued dependence on God's Word and Spirit.

4.3.2.7 Aspect seven: evangelism calls people to service

Aspect

Evangelism should not be centred on the joy, hope, trust, vision and life Christ gives. This degrades the gospel to a consumer product. The goal becomes the salvation and satisfaction of the new believer. This is not Biblical. Speaking in the context of mission the world does not exist for the church, but the church for the world. People are not simply called to Christ to receive life, but rather to give live (Bosch, 1987:102).

Explication and comment

In a sense this principle relates to the mentality of getting a quick answer regarding Christ (see § 4.3.2.1). Christ becomes the carrot on a stick, enticing people to join the church. Christ then becomes a consumer product, serving the human interest. Watson (1976:65) warns Christians not commercialise Christ putting Him almost on the same level as the soap powders of the day. *"What can He do for me?"* This is completely man-centred and not Biblical. Reformed evangelism is Biblical evangelism. Within the Reformed tradition the aim of knowledge of God is personal life change leading to the transformation of society (Burger, 2001:50). Speaking on Calvin's use of the Bible, Burger (2001:74) says Calvin did not only use the Bible to find rules and principles for life, but also studied the Bible because he believed that it was the only place where we could get to know the living God. Within the Reformed tradition this holds true. The Bible is the only authoritative source for knowing God and His will for man (Belgian Confession Article 7). In any evangelistic outreach the Bible is the starting point on the road to knowing Christ. But knowing Christ is not an end in itself, only a starting point for a whole new life. Evangelism is not as much a call to salvation, but to service. Believers are called to partake in Christ's mission on earth (John 20:21). As the body of Christ, the church exists not for itself but for the world.

It exists for God's purpose. God wants the world to see and find Him in the church (Burger, 2001:56). This purpose is achieved within the awareness of the following:

- Believers carry God's image (Genesis 1:28; 2 Corinthians 3:18). The church must live and act in such a way that people see God's love and grace.
- The church is to be a light among the nations (Zachariah 8:28). People from all nations should come to the church because they have heard God is there (1 Corinthians 14:25).
- The church should be as a city on a hill. Believers should live in such a way that the world can see their good works and glorify God (Matthew 5:14-16).
- And the church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:15-16). The church is the place where Christ lives, to which people may come in the expectation of finding Him.

The issue of compromise and isolation is at stake. Presenting Christ as a "consumer product" is an unacceptable compromise regarding human nature. Man is self-centred and perverted by sin. Presenting Christ as a "consumer product" makes Christ subservient to the need and will of man. Accepting Christ becomes the ultimate measure of insurance and therefore of self-assertion (Kraemer, 1947:124). In this process it is unlikely that man will ever come to adequate knowledge of his own sin and misery (Lord's Day 1). Man is saved trough God's grace and love and called to service (Ephesians 2:10). Believers must give themselves completely in sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1). When this accent of service is lost a church becomes isolated. When salvation is the aim of evangelism, the church becomes a "pocket" of saved people in the unbelieving world. With this the "us and them" mentality is strengthened (see § 4.3.2.3). The church forgets that it is called to partake in God's mission. The church is called to proclaim the Gospel through words and deeds so that the world may truly know God, Christ and man's place before God. Truly knowing God, what He did in Christ, and man's place, compels man to service (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

4.3.2.8 Aspect eight: following Christ in all aspects of life

Aspect

Evangelism does not simply offer personal bliss. People are called to be followers of Christ. People are enlisted for mission in every aspect of life. If the church's involvement becomes

secondary and optional, if the church invites people to take refuge in the name of Jesus without challenging the dominion of evil, it becomes a countersign of the kingdom. When compassionate action is in principle subordinate to the preaching of a message of personal salvation, the church is offering cheap grace and de-naturing the Gospel (Bosch, 1987:102).

Explication and comment

One of the driving forces behind the Reformed tradition is that it is focused on life (Burger, 2001:52). Christians are not taken out of the world but called to make a difference in it.

Within the context of the mission to Islam, this implies that all cultural goods in Muslim societies are not to be left as they are. Within Muslim society the new Word of God needs to work as leaven, bringing about renewal and freedom in Christ. This will, however, not be done from "outside" the Muslim community, but by Bible believing Muslims, redeemed by Christ, from within. The new life they have received in Christ should become evident in their society. The culture of the Kingdom of God should renew Muslim society (Matthew 13:33). The Gospel should work in on those aspects of Muslim culture which are contrary to the freedom that believers have in Christ. This is only achieved when their worldview (as the core of culture) changes, effecting an inside out change in culture. Therefore it is vitally important that missionaries don't over concentrate on habits and traditions, trying to change the way people live. The way people think and see God, Jesus and man's place before God (i.e. the world/reality) needs to be changed (Romans 12:1-3). This is only brought about by God's Spirit and Word. With the core of their culture (i.e. worldview) renewed Bible believing Muslims will be set to change their culture from the inside out. It is important to remember that significant culture change is always a matter of changes in worldview (Kraft, 1999:388). This may take a very long time. Again the aim is not to change Muslim culture into the Western culture. A Muslim may still continue practising certain cultural forms, but his purpose and perspective relating to these practices changes. The former life of merit-seeking is replaced by one of gratitude and love to Christ (Parshall, 1980:59).

This does not mean everything stays the same. Missionaries and new believers must endeavour for the renewal of their society in Christ. Madany (2003:23) calls on the Christian mission not to ignore the political, economic, cultural and religious factors in Muslim countries. From a political viewpoint (militant Islam) and an economic viewpoint (global investment in Muslim countries) it is clear that on the whole Islam suffers to cope with the

challenges of the modern world. This brings about a deterioration of the general situation in most Muslim homelands (Madany, 2003:23). Christian mission should also address the ground level needs of Muslim peoples.

The contextualization of the Gospel does not imply an unquestioned acceptance of all aspects in Muslim society. That which is contrary to the Word of God needs to be changed. However, missionaries should be careful not to enforce changes form "outside" the Muslim community. Change should come from within the community. Muslims who have come to know God in Christ should effect changes in the light of God's Word and Spirit.

4.3.3 A definition

Bosch (1987:103) defines evangelism as: *"that dimension and activity of the church's mission which seeks to offer every person, everywhere, a valid opportunity to be directly challenged by the gospel of explicit faith in Jesus Christ, with a view of embracing him as Saviour, becoming a living member of his community, and being enlisted in his service of reconciliation, peace, and justice on earth."*

4.4 A critique of Accad's method from the Reformed perspective

4.4.1 Is Allah God?

Accad (1997:22) contends that some Christians unthinkingly say: "Allah is not God!" To a Muslim this is the ultimate blasphemy. "Allah" is the primary word for God in Arabic, meaning "The God."[30] For more than 500 years before Muhammad the Christians called God by the name Allah. Today 10-12 million Arab Christians call God "Allah" in their Bibles, hymns, poems and writing. According to Accad, Allah is God.

Norman Anderson (Anderson, 1976:295) says that he has never met a Muslim convert who regards the God he previously sought to worship as a wholly false God; instead, they are

[30] The name Allah is a conjunction of the definite article *al* and an ancient Semitic word for deity: Arabic *ilah*; Babylonian *ilu*; Hebrew *el*, *elohim* (Schoeps, 1967:227). In Arabic it is used in the same way as the Hebrew form (*elohim*) (Van der Walt, 1985:7).

filled with wonder that they have been brought to know God as he really is, in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Caner and Caner (2002:102) disagree. According to them the God of Christianity, Judaism and Islam is not the same being (2002:104). They contend that people who draw a correlation between God and Allah based on semantics are influenced by philosophy, logic and etymology (2002:105). *"...to say that we all worship the same God because we use the same generic word is like saying that all references to the name "Mike" refer to the same person."* (Caner & Caner, 2002:207). Any question on the name of God must be centred in the nature of God (Caner & Caner, 2002:108). This is unequivocally so! Because of the difference in nature portrayed of God in the Bible and that of Allah in the Qur'an, Caner and Caner (2002:108) conclude that the God of the Bible and the God of the Qur'an is not the same being[31].

The question then arises whether the Jesus spoken of in the Bible and the Jesus spoken of in the Qur'an are different beings as well. According to the Qur'an Jesus was a mere man, born to a virgin, called to preach the truth. Christians on the other hand believe that Jesus was born to a virgin and *was* the truth (Caner & Caner, 2002:213). Between the Qur'an and the Bible there is a huge difference in the nature and task of Jesus. The Qur'an sees Jesus as a man just like Adam, a good Muslim who spent His life spreading the gospel of Islam. Because of his task his nature was limited (Caner & Caner, 2002:215). As a messenger of Allah he only needed to be a man.

The Bible reveals a totally different task and nature. Jesus came to seek and save (Luke 19:10) through his atoning sacrifice, resurrection and ascension. In the Bible Jesus is God (John 1:1; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:5). In order to fulfil his task as mediator and deliverer He needed to be true and righteous man and withal true God (Lord's Day 5). His divine and human nature is a necessity for his task as Saviour, to justly pay for the sins of man and to carry the burden of God's wrath (Lord's Day 6).

Is it justifiable to conclude, on account of the difference in task and nature of Jesus, that the Bible and Qur'an speak of different persons? This does not seem possible or logical.

[31] In the Bible God reveals Himself as holy, just and loving, who gave his Son, Jesus Christ, so that sinners may live, whereas the Qur'an portrays God as Absolutely One, deterministic, distant, a cold judge and hater of unbelievers (Caner & Caner, 2002:108-118).

Mohammad learned of Jesus from the Christians (who worshiped Christ) and the Jews (who abhorred Jesus of Nazareth). Is it then possible to have different descriptions of someone's nature? The answer to this question must be "Yes!"

For example: James has known "Mike" for the last fifteen years, working together as construction contractors. James has come to know "Mike" as a devoted husband and father who cares deeply for his family, is honest in business, and just to the people he employs. Peter met "Mike" on a celebration after the completion of a huge construction project. "Mike" drank one to many and subsequently made a bit of a fool of himself. Peter described "Mike" to his wife as a drunkard and braggard, probably useless at home and a pain at work. The testimony James and Peter (or Peter's wife) would give regarding "Mike's" nature would certainly differ. But this difference does not mean the name "Mike" refers to two persons. When considering someone's nature knowledge and specifically the source of that knowledge are of great importance.

From man's point of view any discussion on the nature of God must centre on the source of the knowledge regarding the nature of God.

Regarding the question of whether Allah is God, one must first ascertain whether the Qur'an is divine revelation or not? The answer to this question relates to man's worldview and is pre-scientific in nature. One either believes the Qur'an to be divinely revealed or not. Reformed Christians do not believe the Qur'an to be divinely inspired or revealed. Only the Bible is divinely revealed. In the Bible God reveals what man need to know regarding his salvation and God's nature (Belgian Confession Articles 2-7).

If the Qur'an is not divine revelation, what then is it? It is probable to assume that the Qur'an gives us a window into Mohammad's worldview. How did he see God? How did he see man's place in relation to God? As a part of Mohammad's worldview several factors played a role in the formation of his view of God and man's place before God (see Chapter 2). Mohammad's view of God was formed and tempered by the culture of his day, association with others (Jews and Christians) and, his own ambitions and successes.

- As a devoutly religious man, Mohammad was distressed by the idolatry of the Arabs.
- He had contact with both Jews and Christians. Both groups had "books" of their own and the Arabs none. In the Qur'an the Arabs received their own "book."

- Mohammad saw himself as a "warner" in a clear Arabic tongue. Called to lead the Arabs on the path to serve the One God who previously revealed Himself through other prophets (Adam, Moses, Jesus) giving man the Torah and the Gospel.
- The input Mohammad received from the Christians is questionable. Divided into sects because of theological differences and allied with different political interests, Christians were unable to give a clear Biblical witness regarding the Trinity.
- His own ambitions and successes also played a role. The formation of the *ummah* under theocratic rule in order to strengthen his position. A positive attitude towards both Jews and Christians in the first period of "revelation" changes when they become obstacles in his path to political success. Personal interest (marriage to *Zaynab*, marrying more than four wives) also played a role in forming his view of God.
- What may have started as a religious journey in the service of the One God, ended in using the One God as a political "tool" to unite warring tribes under the banner of one faith.

Mohammad's picture of God, based on questionable knowledge and tempered by his own ambitions and successes, is a much distorted picture. But, the point is that Mohammad did not think up the idea of Allah, he heard of God from the Jews and Christians. Kraemer (1947:215) consider Islam to be a branch from the prophetic stock of Judaism and Christianity. Mohammad's distorted picture of God gave rise to a distorted way of serving God, a false way, and in that sense idolatry (Van Rooy, 1993:109). His distorted picture does, however, not change the identity of God; God does not become an idol (Van Rooy, 1993:105). In the same way Paul viewed the religious practises of the Jews after they rejected Christ as the Son of God, and with that the Trinity (Van Rooy, 1993:106). In Romans 10:2 Paul testifies regarding the Israelites, that *"...they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge."* Because of their distorted picture of God, based on the wrong knowledge, their service may be seen as false and idolatrous. This, however, does not make the God the Jews serve, an idol.

In this way Reformed missionaries may view and accept Accad's claim that Allah is God.

Caner and Caner's reluctance to view Allah as God may be viewed against the backdrop of syncretism in American society (2002:102). It is vitally important to guard against

syncretism. Truth is not relative and absolute truth does exist (John 14:6). Religiously speaking all roads does not lead to Rome. For the Reformed missionary using Accad's method it is important to adhere to the following:

- Saying that Allah is God is not the same as saying that all "gods" worshiped by man is the same being (e.g. Krishna is not God). Mohammad's view of God is rooted in what he heard from the Jews and Christians.
- Just as is the case in Judaism, there is no salvation in Islam.
- Salvation is in Christ alone He is the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father accept through Him. In Him man comes to know God as Father (John 15:6-7).

Based on the Qur'an and life of Mohammad (*hadith*) the picture Muslims have of God is distorted and they have no hope of salvation. The problem in communicating the Gospel to Muslims is that they believe (pre-scientific) that the Bible is no longer a valid revelation of God, being corrupted by the Jews and Christians (Accad, 1997:142; cf. Caner & Caner, 2002:207). A bridge is therefore needed from where they are (antagonistic towards the Bible and Christians), to exposure to the Gospel truth revealed in the Bible. Using the Qur'an within the context of friendship evangelism may be seen as a logical bridge – giving Muslims a valid opportunity to be directly challenged by the Gospel of explicit faith in Jesus Christ.

Commenting on the difference of conviction among Christian, regarding the issue of Allah as God, Parshall (1980:141) promulgates love and sensitive understanding. Polarization and attacks should be avoided. *"If a Muslim convert perceives the God of Islam and Christianity as one, then who are we to deny such a possibility?"* What is essential is that the new believer comes to faith in, and acceptance of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments (Parshall, 1980:142).

4.4.2 The Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible

Paul used quotes from the Greek poets without giving Godly sanction to the portions used or the works they came from. He merely used it to build a bridge to his audience (Acts 17). It was not only Greek poetry that Paul used, but he also contextualised the Gospel further by debating his case in the marketplace, as the Greeks did, and using their forms of rhetoric. By doing this he presented the Gospel in the language and idiom of the Greek listeners. The

Greeks heard his message. Some laughed; some wanted to hear more and some were converted. Looking at the results of Paul's endeavour on Mars Hill we may conclude that the fruit was meagre. However the point is not to see thousands accepting Christ. To some the Gospel is a smell of death (2 Corinhians 2:14-15). What is important is that Paul did all that was in his power, taking into account cultural factors, to ensure that the Greeks had a valid and fair opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rhodes (2000) advises Christians to use the Qur'an when witnessing to Muslims. The Qur'an calls Muslims to believe in and honour all the prophets of God. Christians should urge Muslims to consider the truth claims of Jesus Christ. It is important to remember that the Qur'an is not divinely inspired. The "truth" given in the Qur'an is interwoven with lies and serves to strengthen a wrong perception of God, Christ and man's place before God. Muslims need to be exposed to the Bible, as God's Word, so that these wrong perceptions may be set right.

Within the Reformed tradition it is important to note that the Qur'an is not a divinely inspired preparation for Christ. The Qur'an may not replace the Old Testament (Kraemer, 1947:328). Glimpses of revelation found in the Qur'an may not be considered part of a preceding and preparatory stage for the full revelation in Christ (Kraemer, 1947:123). This idea stems from the doctrine of natural theology that suggests that man is on an evolutional path to greater understanding of God. The logical consequence of this idea is that if a people are left alone, long enough, they will eventually get to complete knowledge of God all by themselves. This is contradictory to what the Bible teaches (Romans 1). Man did not start out with insufficient knowledge of God, and then grew in knowledge as the time passed. Man had sufficient knowledge, but after the Fall he suppressed this knowledge, revelling instead in his own foolishness. There is no direct uninterrupted path from the darkness of paganism to the light of the Gospel (cf. Bavinck, 196:135-136).

The Cross, and its real meaning, stands antagonistic towards all human religious aspirations. Christ's sacrifice is an act of God, which He initiated to reconcile man with Himself. The real tendency of man's religion is to conquer God and realise his own divine nature (Kraemer, 1947:123). This is true even of Islam, who seems completely dedicated to serving God. There is a tension between what man is in essence, and what he is on the surface. Within the depth of his being a person may be in flight of God, while outwardly he appears to seek and

praise God in his religious life. The anxiety God produces in the depths of man's nature causes man to seek refuge and safety in his own culture, social position and religious convictions (Bavinck, 1960:123). What Muslims do and believe becomes a substitute for *real* submission to God.

Christ does not fulfil Islam, but unmasks it as self-love, self-service and rebellion against God. The Qur'an *is not* fulfilled in the New Testament. Instead of fulfilling Islam, Christ calls for the conversion and regeneration of Muslims (Kraemer, 1947:124, cf. Bavinck, 1960:136). Using the Qur'an as a substitute for the Old Testament, and therefore as a basis for contextualised theology is an unacceptable form of syncretism (cf. Parshall, 1980:32).

The word syncretism refers to the illegitimate mingling of religious elements (Kraemer, 1947:203). Syncretism occurs when critical and basic elements of the Gospel are lost in the process of contextualisation (Parshall, 1980:46). Throughout the history of mission, any contextualization that takes away the confrontational element (*ergernis-element*) of the Gospel has led to a degradation of the Gospel (De Klerk, 1979:70). At its heart evangelism is a confrontation between what man believes about himself, and what God has revealed about man's true state. The mark of the true church is that it is church of the Word. The church needs to stay true to what God has revealed, and not change the Gospel truth in order to make it acceptable to man. The basis of syncretism is the idea that all religions are ultimately one (Kraemer, 1947:200). Syncretism is grounded in the doctrine of natural theology, implying that man is on an evolutional journey to complete knowledge of God. The Christian revelation places itself over against the many efforts to apprehend the totality of existence (Kraemer, 1947:113). Man's understanding is and stays folly, and needs to be renewed by God's revelation in Christ.

Concerning the contextualization of the Gospel, syncretism may also appear in the illegitimate mixing of religious practices. For missionaries it is sometimes difficult to discern when practices have become syncretistic. This problem arises because, socio-culturally peoples lives change gradually after accepting Christ as Lord. The Gospel works as leaven, gradually changing the new believer's culture in the light of Scriptural truth (Matthew 13:33). Kraft (2003:376) identifies two paths that may lead to syncretism. Firstly, the "undirected selection" of elements from a culture, which leads people to make their own conclusions, and attach their own meaning, to religious practices. The second is over-direction or domination

with regard to what practices should be accepted. People, then accept the form but give an unbiblical meaning to it. The ideal church is one that is thoroughly Biblical and thoroughly appropriate to the sosiocultural setting. This implies local forms which are attached to Christian meanings. In this case the meanings come neither from the sending nor the receiving society, but from the Bible (Kraft, 2003:377). It is very important what forms are used and where they come from since they have to convey the proper Biblical meaning. Practices and forms should always be judged in the light of Scripture in order to ensure that they effectively convey the appropriate meaning.

Parshall (1980:52) warns that Christians should not overreact in their stance against syncretism to the point that they refuse to engage in experimentation in the area of contextualization. The value of Accad's method is that it uses the Qur'an not to forge a new theology, acceptable to Muslims, but to convey the Biblical truth about what God did in Christ for man. As such it is not syncretistic, but merely uses the Qur'an as an instrument to communicate the Gospel effectively. Missionaries should, however, be sensitive to potential misunderstanding by Muslims, when they use the Qur'an to convey the concepts in Accad's seven principles. Kuitse (1992:367) warns about the danger that Christian ideas or concepts may be projected into the Qur'an, especially when the Qur'an uses words like "Messiah," "Word of God," and "Spirit of God" in relation to Jesus. He contends that Muslims uses these concepts in a different context than the Biblical context. Missionaries should make sure that new believers understand the Biblical meaning of concepts within the Biblical context, relevant to the listener's context.

Concerning the use of the Qur'an as an instrument, missionaries should be careful not to place to much hope in using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible (cf. Kraemer, 1974:132). The Qur'an as point of contact is not the real agent of the missionary result of Muslims coming to Christ. The sole agent of real faith in Christ is the Holy Spirit. Using the Qur'an is merely a contextually related method, which captures the Muslim's attention, offering a quick entry into the Muslim worldview (Parshall, 1980:32).

It must be stated that approval of Accad's method is not pragmatic: "it works, therefore it is used." Scripture gives precedence for the use of extra Biblical literature in conveying Biblical truth (Acts 17; Titus 1:12).

Within the Reformed tradition the following should serve as guidelines for using the Qur'an:

- The Bible is and remains the only valid revelation of God's perfect will.
- The Bible is and remains the only guideline for Christian faith and conduct.

The Qur'an is never placed on the same level of authority as the Bible (Galatians 1:8). But, as the most holy book for Muslims it is a useful evangelistic tool in bringing Muslims to read the Bible. Only the Bible is God's Word able to make men wise through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:15). Because Muslims hold the view that the Bible was corrupted by the Christians[32], Madany (1987:54) contends that *no* missionary may work with Muslims if he entertains any doubts about the reliability or infallibility of the Bible (1 Timothy 4:16). It is noteworthy that in Principle Seven, almost all the references are from the Bible (Accad, 1997:133). As the Holy Spirit convinces someone of the truth of the Gospel that person will start to use the Bible more frequently (John 14:17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). The Reformed missionary's task is to faithfully proclaim God's Word (Jeremiah 23:28-29). In the light of this missionaries should use the Qur'an only when applying the Seven Principles. They should always use the Bible in reference to issues not covered in the Seven Principles. Muslims must see in practice the authority of the Bible as God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Within this context Accad's method of using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible is acceptable.

4.4.3 Contextualizatuion

A missionary must carefully take into account the specific situation and circumstances of the people with whom he is dealing with (Bavinck, 1960:80). In this endeavour missionaries should be careful of two extremes: In their effort to contextualise the Gospel, they may draw so close to the people they wish to reach, and may in the end sacrifice the purity of the Gospel. This is unacceptable. To the other side, it is possible, even with the best intentions, to preach the Gospel "pure and simple" while ignoring the cultural possessions of the people, leading to *no* application in their specific situation. This leaves the Gospel in a void and is equally unacceptable (Bavinck, 1960:80).

[32] Concerning this accusation Caner & Caner (2002:207) asks how it is possible to corrupt "the Book of God" or how Allah could allow it to happen? It would go against the nature of Allah as the Qur'an calls the Bible the "the book of God," "the Word of God," "a light and guidance to man," "a decision for all matters," "a guidance and mercy," and "the lucid Book."

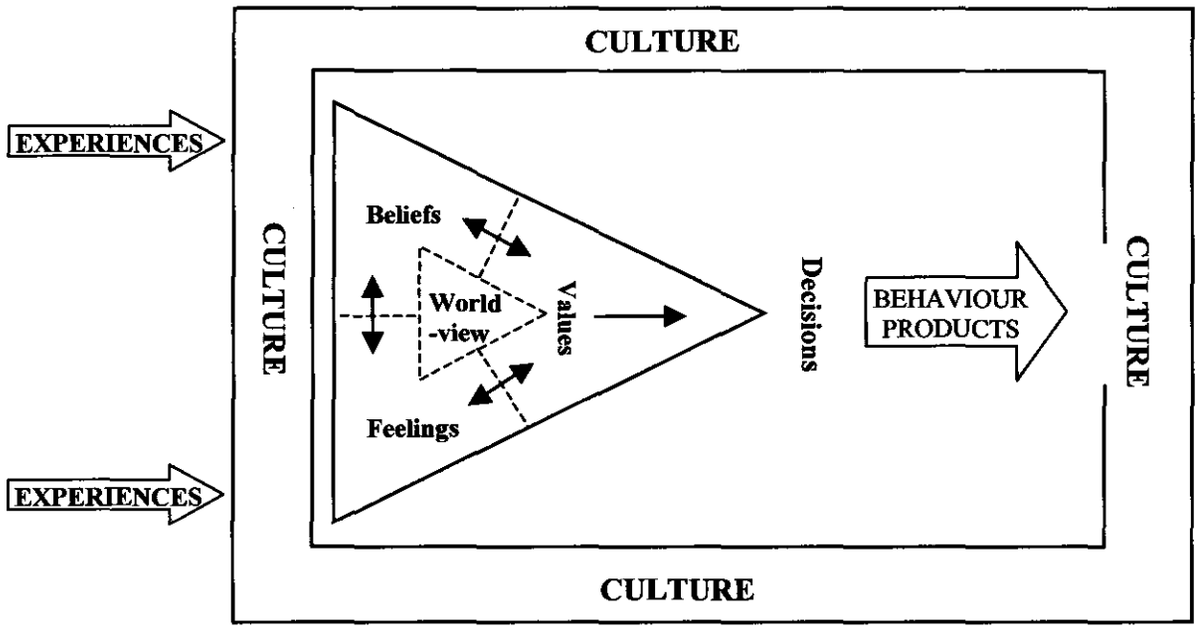
In order to bring about an abiding change in the life of a person, the Christian missionary should meet the other where he is, in his own house, in his own circle and not where the missionary is (Bavinck, 1960:87). This is easier said then done. The problem is that mission does not only deal with geographical distance but cultural distance. In evangelism cultural distance is always more important than geographical distance, because cultural distance, whether it consist of linguistic differences or structured prejudice barriers, obstructs effective communication no matter how close the missionary is geographically (Winter, 1974:18).

The Gospel is addressed to human beings, to their minds and hearts and consciences and calls for their response. The important thing to remember is that humans only exist as members of communities in which they share a common language, customs, ways of ordering social and economic life, and ways of understanding and coping with their world (Newbigin, 1996:141). The aim of contextualization is to bring the truth about Christ to its most vigorous and clear expression in indigenous ways (Kraemer, 1947:317). People must hear and understand the Gospel truth and the expression thereof, in forms that they understand. The basic problem related to contextualization, is the genuine translation of Christian truth into indigenous terms, so that its relevance to the Muslims' concrete situation, becomes evident. Genuine translation implies a thorough grasp of what Christian truth is as well as the material in which it must be expressed (Kraemer, 1947:323).

Concerning the communication of the Gospel to other people, it is possible that they may reject the Gospel because of the cultural forms within which it is presented (see § 3.3). Culture complicates the communication of the Gospel therein that it is difficult to ascertain which forms are merely cultural adaptations from the missionary's society and which are Biblical imperatives. When missionaries do not have clarity about this evangelism becomes an attack on cultural form that differs from the missionary's society. What needs to happen is that the Gospel is presented in culturally appropriate forms so that the people understand the Gospel and its claims on their private and communal life.

It is, therefore, necessary for the missionary to have an understanding of what culture is. Culture is the *"the more or less integrated system of beliefs feelings and values, and their associated symbols, patterns of behaviour and products shared by a group of people."* (Hiebert, 1999:374). Humans start learning the specific culture of their society from infancy and the process only ends with the death of the individual. The heart of culture is the shared

beliefs, feelings and values of a community of people. Through their common experience, people form a mental picture or map of their world (Hiebert, 1999:376). This mental picture of map is called a worldview. Metaphorically, the worldview may be described as a pair of tinted glasses through which an individual sees his world. All decisions a person makes is influenced by his/her worldview. From the invisible worldview flows the visible behaviour and products of culture.



When a missionary tries to contextualise the Gospel the visible forms of a culture is taken into consideration. These are the forms that a people understand and relate to. However, ignoring the worldview of a community is detrimental to the proclamation of the Gospel. If attention is only given to the visible behaviour and products, the danger exist that the people may accept these new or old forms without changing their base beliefs, feelings and values.

Humanly speaking, the effective communication of the Gospel is directly equivalent to the success of a missionary in addressing the worldview of his listeners. Within the context of the Christian mission to Islam, worldview is of great importance. Muslim prejudice towards Christians is part of the Muslim worldview that resulted from a history of mistrust and antagonism (see § 2.10). Furthermore, their religious beliefs concerning God, Christ and man's place before God, formed by the Qur'an, is part of their worldview. Relating to and addressing cultural behaviour and products has value in helping missionaries to relate to their Muslim community. However, it will have little or no effect in permanently changing the lives of Muslims. This would constitute an outside-in way of trying to effect change, and is

largely concerned with form. What is needed is an inside-out approach. The Muslim worldview must be changed. This is by-and-large, a spiritual endeavour. The Muslim view of God, Christ and man's place before God can only be changed by the Holy Spirit. God changes people's perceptions regarding Himself and man through the Gospel. In this process he uses missionaries who endeavour to give Muslims a valid opportunity to be directly challenged by the Gospel of explicit faith in Jesus Christ. This means, first of all, that the Muslim worldview needs to be changed by the Gospel: how they view God, Jesus and man. When this happens their renewed worldview will eventually influence each of the subsystems of culture, bringing change from the core to the surface (Kraft, 1999:388, cf. Bavinck, 1960:108).

In order to do this, missionaries need to take into account any cultural and historical stumbling blocks. Contextualisation also asks missionaries to find points of contact with their listeners.

Man, even in his fallen state is God's creature, in who's heart God "has laid eternity." (Kraemer, 1947:130). Man knows about God, and therefore seeks him, but at the same time tries to run away from God. Kraemer (1947:130) considers this man's deepest problem. It is therefore the first and primary point of contact between a missionary and his Muslim listener.

The second factor that leads to points of contact is seated in man's common humanity (his common capacity for religious and moral experience, effort, achievement and failure, common aspirations, needs and dreads). Because the Christian faith also has to deal with this common psychological apparatus, Kraemer (1947:131) sees in these things a point of contact between missionary and listener. They share some of the same fears, joys and heartaches.

To Kraemer (1947:140) the sensitivity, love and devotion of the missionary is the most basic point of contact between Christianity and the other religions. If this point of contact really exists, then many more are possible. For the missionary to be an effective point of contact, he should have an untiring and genuine interest in the Muslim's religion, their ideas, sentiments, and institutions – in the whole cultural life of the people among whom he works. If this is not so there can be no point of contact between the missionary and his listeners. This is one of the strong points of Accad's method. The Qur'an is not the primary and sole point of contact with Muslims. Using the Qur'an is set within the context of friendship evangelism.

The missionary is the basic point of contact. It is in this light that Accad's (1997:74) advice to missionaries using his method not to force the points made by the Seven Principles, may be seen. If a Muslim is not ready to understand or accept, the missionary should bide his time and deepen the friendship.

Smith (Verster, 2003:53) warns about the dangers regarding friendship evangelism. Friendship evangelism is very challenging as it takes a long time to develop and has limited results. It cannot be regarded as a short term relationship as is the case with most Western relationships. The outcome is sometimes compromised because people "accept" the gospel in order to the win the favour of the missionary. Smith opts for friendly evangelism which would, according to him, be more in line with Paul, who became a Jew to the Jews to win Jews. The distinction may seem small, but missionaries should take note of the mentioned dangers. In the Christian outreach to Islam, Muslims should never become "objects." Friendship evangelism should also never deteriorate into a situation where the friend is coaxed into accepting the Gospel.

Contextualization is a very sensitive issue. The fact that the church should be a light in the community it serves sets formidable obstacles given the historical relationship between Christianity and Islam. When the local church's mission field is considered to be the community around it, churches in Muslim communities need to communicate effectively with their habits as well. How far does one adapt in order to communicate the Gospel effectively?

John Travis (Parshall, 1998:407) has developed a scale to define six types of Christ-centred communities within the Muslim context.

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
Traditional church using outsider language.	Traditional church using insider language.	Contextualized Christ-centred communities using insider language and religious neutral insider cultural forms.	Contextualized Christ-centred communities using insider language and Biblical permissible cultural and Islamic forms.	Contextualized Christ-centred communities of "Messianic Muslims" who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour.	Small Christ-centred communities of secret / underground believers.

The new community born from Accad's method would be a C5 community (Travis, 1999:660). The fact that Muslim believers in Christ partake in Biblical permissible cultural

and Islamic forms, in order to win people for Christ is acceptable within the Reformed tradition (1 Corinthians 9:19-24). However, extreme care should be taken not to fall into syncretism. This implies that ideas and customs should continuously be tested against the Bible (Ephesians 5:15-17).

From a Reformed perspective it would be safer that the C4 outreach should only be allowed for Christ believers from a Muslim background (cf. Racey, 1996:308). Experience has shown, says Bavinck (1960:95), that in the process of contextualization the possibility exists that a missionary who casts off his own culture and identifies himself with his hearers will gradually sink spiritually and morally in his new environment and thereby lose the power to fulfil his calling. Parshall (1998:405) considers legal conversion or reconversion to Islam high syncretism, no matter what the situation. Jeremy Hinds, working under the Fulbe in West Africa, dressed as a Muslim and spoke the native language but never claimed to be a Muslim (Gilliland, 2000:333). To "convert" to Islam in order to become an "insider" would be extremely unethical and not in line with the work of the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13). It is possible that the people's whose customs are being imitated may view the missionaries' endeavour as deceit and react against it (Bavinck, 1960:95). Racey (1996:304) gives an example of Western missionaries working in Egypt who adopted Muslim cultural forms in order to remove stumbling blocks to the gospel. They called themselves "Muslims who followed Christ." Soon neighbours started to follow Christ. They taught the new believers to retain all Islamic forms but to change some of the memorised phrases. For a while all went well but then the authorities arrested the Westerners on the charges of *"exploiting religion to debase Islam and to foment sectarian religion."* After 45 days of incarceration they were released and expelled from Egypt. This clearly did not further the Kingdom of God. Extreme care should be taken in the process of contextualisation (cf. Anderson, 1976:288).

Contextualisation should be sensitive to the local culture and true to the Word of God (Racey, 1996:305). It is important to remember that contextualisation is only a means to an end (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). A Christ-centred witness is the aim (1 Corinthians 1:23). Missionaries should not see how close they can come to the host culture, but how close they can come to Christ. Christ must be honoured and glorified in everything Christians do (Racey, 1996:309). Cultural adaptation wishes to stay true to Christ and change Muslim culture from "within" (Anderson, 1976:292).

Ericson (Parshall, 1980:38) gives three basic criteria for proper and successful contextualization:

- *Truth.* A body of truth is assumed and forms the absolute standard by which everything must be evaluated.
- *Meaning.* Contextualization must affect the right meanings through the cultural forms and ideology. Missionaries should be aware that the meanings actions and objects of Western society will not automatically have the same meaning in other societies: actions and objects may be misunderstood. The relevant question must always be: "What does this *mean* to the people?"
- *Communication.* At the verbal-ideological level consistent attention must be given to effectiveness. The truth, impact and fruit of the Gospel must be demonstrated in culturally meaningful ways.

By using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible, within the context of friendship evangelism Accad's method adheres to these criteria. The Seven Principles adhere firmly to the Biblical truth regarding God, Christ and man's place before God. The Qur'an is used as a bridge to the Bible and as such is a way to address the worldview of the Muslim. This is very important for contextualisation. Attention is also given to the community of believers, who should live out their calling in culturally appropriate ways without degrading the Gospel. This is done by keeping forms of worship that is acceptable to Muslims and not in direct violation of the Gospel. Again it should be stated that contextualization does not primarily concern visible forms. Contextualisation in the deepest sense does not imply the mere assimilation of the cardinal facts concerning the revelation in Christ, as much as possible with the religious ideas and tastes of the Muslim community. Contextualisation implies a continued and concrete wrestling with the cardinal facts of the Gospel in order to express them in an appropriate and understandable way. The Christian truth should not only be presented, but the intrinsic inadequacies of man's religious efforts and answers to his religious and moral problems should come to light (Kraemer, 1947:308). This implies that contextualisation may differ between different Muslim communities. Accad (1997:15) warns that it should be kept in mind, that in each country of the Muslim world there are many groups and sects, each with different ways of thinking, worshipping and doing things. Missionaries should tailor their witness according to the requirements of each individual group or person. It is therefore very important to know this method very well, should a

missionary decide to use it. Before a missionary can express Christianity in Muslim forms he must first understand and live it himself (cf. Kraemer, 1947:299). Only then will he be able to contextualise the Gospel.

4.4.4 The Seven Principles

The Seven Principles developed and used by Accad are consistent with those used within the Reformed tradition (see § 4.3.2.4). Within the context of friendship evangelism where time is given for the individual to be exposed to the Biblical truth the principles are also acceptable. Seen from the point of view of the Gospel, the Seven Principles address the most serious flaws in Islamic theology (Madany, 1987:17):

- The denial of the event of the fall of man as described and explained in the Bible.
- The historicity of the crucifixion.
- The necessity of redemption.

Principle one

God has a purpose for our lives. God created all things good (Genesis 1:31). All things in heaven and earth were created by and for Christ (Colossians 1:16). We were created to live in communion with God and do his work (Ephesians 2:10). Man does not merely exist but has a specific function on earth (1 Peter 2:9-10; Belgian Confession Article 14). Knowing God's purpose for our lives helps us to understand how far we fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23).

Principle two

Sin separates us from God. It destroyed the relationship man had with God (Isaiah 59:2). Sin brings separation from God and death (Genesis 1:17; Romans 6:23). Not only is it important to realise that sin separates us from God, but also that everyone sins. Without Christ we all live in the darkness away from God. To live in the joy of belonging to Christ we need to know how great our sin is (Lord's Day 1).

Principle three

We cannot save ourselves. We are indeed helpless to save ourselves from the dilemma of sin and death. Our best deeds are like filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6). The righteousness

that God demands must be perfect. Man, who is born in sin, cannot measure up to God's divine law (Lord's Day 24).

Principle four

But God does not want man to die of his sins (Ezekiel 33:11). God in his mercy provided a solution to man's dilemma (Romans 8:3; Belgian Confession Article 17). Someone else needs to carry the punishment for man's sin. God provided that someone may stand in man's stead, because God's justice must be satisfied. But neither we nor any other creature can die for our sins. We are sinful and the creatures did not sin (Lord's Day 5). Therefore God redeemed us Himself, through his grace (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Principle five

As man must pay for the sins of man God's provision is a Person. But he could not be an ordinary man. He had to be one that would be able to carry the wrath of God (Lord's Day 6). He had to be both man and God. Jesus Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice so that man may be set free (1 Timothy 2:5-6). God gave his Word to die in our place (John 1).

Principle six

What man could not do, God did for him (Romans 8:3). But knowledge of this fact alone does not bring salvation. Man must accept Christ's sacrifice in faith (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26; Belgian Confession Articles 22-24). With our hearts we believe and are justified and with our mouths we confess and are saved (Romans 10:10).

Principle seven

Accepting God's gift of salvation in Christ changes our lives: what we are, what we do and how we live. As people brought into the light we must live as people of the light (Ephesians 6-9). We are renewed by Christ to be like Him, called to do good works (Ephesians 2:10; Lord's Day 32).

The Seven Principles (using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible) opens the door to explain the whole of God's redemptive plan, thus giving Muslims *"a valid opportunity to be directly challenged by the Gospel of explicit faith in Jesus Christ with a view of embracing Him as Saviour, becoming a living member of his community"* (Bosch, 1987:103).

4.5 Conclusion and comments

Using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible is acceptable as Biblical precedence exists. Paul's use of Greek poetry and rhetoric in his Mars Hill address is an excellent example hereof (Acts 17). Caution should be taken to ensure that the missionary never give the impression that the Qur'an is the Word of God. As precautionary measure the Qur'an should only be used when explaining the Seven Principles. Any other references concerning everyday or religious matters should be made from the Bible (Jeremiah 23:28-29).

The Seven Principles are acceptable as they adequately explain man's fall from grace, his incompetence to restore his relationship with God, and God's provision through grace in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:3).

It is clear that Accad's use of the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible should not be seen in isolation, but as part of a broader outreach to Muslims. The Gospel should be adequately contextualised for the individual in Muslim culture. This means the Gospel should be presented in the language and idiom known to the Muslim. In this Accad's method succeeds. The greatest value of Accad's method may be the use of the Qur'an and friendship evangelism to effectively address the worldview of Muslims. In this process the Qur'an is used as a bridge to the Bible in order to address the wrong perception of God, Christ and man. Friendship evangelism is used as a vehicle to address the negative perception Muslims have of Christianity. This constitutes an inside-out approach that is acceptable. It takes into consideration intellectual, cultural and historical stumbling blocks, which may prevent a Muslim from listening to the Gospel being adequately presented and explained. Contextualising also asks for a church in the idiom of the Muslim culture. From a Reformed perspective this is acceptable. A Jew for the Jews and a Muslim for the Muslims.

His method is for all purposes acceptable from a Reformed perspective. It leads people to the Bible without degrading the Biblical message.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION

The aim of this study was to ascertain whether Accad's method of using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible is answerable to a Biblical theology of missions and therefore acceptable within the Reformed tradition.

To achieve this aim the following objectives were set:

- To evaluation Accad's premise regarding the historical relationship between Christianity and Islam and the cultural heritage which leads to strained relations and mistrust between Christianity and Islam.
- To study and outline Accad's method of communicating the gospel to the Muslims, and to outline and analyse the basic premises and seven principles underlying his method.
- To analyse and evaluate, from a Biblical perspective, Accad's method of communicating the gospel to the Muslims.
- To ascertain whether his methods and the basic premises and seven principles are Biblically acceptable from within the Reformed tradition.

In Chapter Two a historical overview was given of the relationship between Christianity and Islam with special attention to the rise and development of Islam under the leadership of Muhammad.

From the historical overview of the history of the relationship between Christianity and Islam it is clear that there are definite factors that play a role in communicating the gospel to Muslims. Of these the most important are:

- The disunity in the Christian church (on dogmatical grounds) and its role in state policies from the third century AD to the present, resulting in a "battle" for souls and land between Christianity and Islam.
- The specific cultural heritage of the Arab peoples taken up in the *ummah* or Islamic brotherhood. A heritage which resulted in a close-knit family of believers who frown on apostasy. Historically Islam developed as a total way of life encompassing all religious and mundane aspects of the individual's life.

- The unique role Muhammad played as religious, social and political reformer, especially as "warner" for the Arab people in giving them a "book" in Arabic, from God.
- As a "book" from God the Qur'an, with Muhammad as prophet, became the centrepiece of Islamic community's worldview. Both evoke the utmost respect and reverence.

These factors became part of the Muslim worldview and gave rise to a strained relationship between Christianity and Islam. This strain manifests itself in Muslims' suspicion, distrust and sometimes outright hatred of Christianity. As part of the Muslim worldview the Islamic cultural heritage and view on the history between Christianity and Islam, poses a definite stumbling block in the way of effectively communicating the Gospel.
As a culture Islam became well defined, resisting influences from outside, especially Christian influences. A history of distrust stimulated misconceptions and gave rise to the formation of caricatures of each other. Both sides vilified the culture of the other leading to ineffective communication, especially concerning religion.

Accad's method of friendship evangelism must be seen as a necessity in the light of the historical relationship between Christianity and Islam. In a sense Christians need to work for and deserve an audience from the Muslim community. Friendship alone, however necessary, will not bring about life changing repentance in a Muslim's life. Although friendship evangelism may go a long way in correcting the negative perception Muslims hold of Christians, what is direly needed is a way to effectively address the Muslim worldview in order to correct a wrong view of God, Christ and man's place before God. These aspects of the Muslim worldview are formed by Mohammad's teachings as taught in the Qur'an. This distorted picture can only be corrected by the Bible, as God's only valid revelation. Born from a history of suspicion and false teaching, Muslims distrust Christians and the Bible. Accad's method of using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible, within the context of friendship evangelism poses a valid vehicle to effectively address the Muslim worldview, and in the process presenting the Gospel of salvation in Christ alone.

In Chapter Three an overview was given of Accad's method as set out in his book "Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam." Accad's method may be described as a culturally sensitive way of presenting the Gospel to Muslims. Accad's method poses as a valid vehicle to effectively address the Muslim worldview, and in the process presenting the Gospel of

salvation in Christ alone. It takes into consideration intellectual, cultural and historical stumbling blocks, which may prevent a Muslim from listening to the Gospel being adequately presented and explained.

In Chapter Four the Biblical and Reformed principles for mission/ evangelism is set out in order to critique Accad's method.
Using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible is acceptable, as Biblical precedence exists. Paul's use of Greek poetry and rethoric in his Mars Hill address is an excellent example hereof (Acts 17). Caution should be taken to ensure that the missionary never give the impression that the Qur'an is the Word of God. As precautionary measure the Qur'an should only be used when explaining the Seven Principles. Any other references concerning everyday or religious matters should be made from the Bible (Jeremiah 23:28-29).

The Seven Principles are acceptable as they adequately explain man's fall from grace, his incompetence to restore his relationship with God, and God's provision through grace in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:3). These are fundamental issues that are destorted in the teachings of Islam.

It is clear that Accad's use of the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible should not be seen in isolation, but as part of a broader outreach to Muslims. The Gospel should be appropriately and adequately contextualised for the individual in Muslim culture. This means the Gospel should be presented in the language and idiom known to the Muslim. In this Accad's method succeeds. His method is for all purposes valid. It leads people to the Bible without degrading the Biblical message.

Contextualising also asks for a church in the idiom of the Muslim culture. From a Reformed perspective this is also acceptable. A Jew for the Jews and a Muslim for the Muslims. The principle here is to *"become all things to all men so that by all possible means"* some might be saved (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). This humble attitude of service to others should not only characterise the individuals' life, but that of the whole church (John 13:14-15). Care should, therefore, be taken that Muslim "churches" do not end up living in separation from "Western" or other Christian churches within their society. The headship of Christ should be seen in their relationship with other churches where brotherly love is the sign of unity (John 17:21).

The same holds true for "Western" and Christian churches in their contact with Muslim Churches.

The greatest value of Accad's method may be the use of the Qur'an and friendship evangelism to effectively address the Muslim worldview. In this process the Qur'an is used as a bridge to the Bible in order to address the wrong perception of God, Christ and man. Friendship evangelism is used as a vehicle to address the negative perception Muslims have of Christianity. This constitutes an inside-out approach that is acceptable, moving from the invisible worldview to the visible cultural behaviour and products. Accad's method takes into consideration intellectual, cultural and historical stumbling blocks, which may prevent a Muslim from listening to the Gospel being adequately presented and explained.

From a Reformed perspective Accad's method is Biblically acceptable. Within our context in Africa where Islam and Christianity continue to rub shoulders in their competition for souls it will probably be used with great fruit.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to ascertain whether Accad's method of using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible is answerable to a Biblical theology of missions and therefore acceptable within the Reformed tradition.

In Chapter Two a historical overview was given of the relationship between Christianity and Islam with special attention to the rise and development of Islam, its scriptures, pratices and doctrines, under the leadership of Muhammad.
From the historical overview it is clear that Church disunity (on dogmatical grounds), and its role in state policies; the specific cultural heritage of the Arab peoples; the *ummah* (Islamic brotherhood); and the unique role of Muhammad and the Qur'an need to be taken into account when communicating the Gospel to Muslims.

In Chapter Three an overview was given of Accad's method as set out in his book "Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam." Accad's method may be described as a culturally sensitive way of presenting the Gospel to Muslims. It poses a valid vehicle to effectively address the Muslim worldview, in order to present the Gospel of salvation in Christ alone.

In Capter Four the Biblical and Reformed principles for mission/ evangelism was set out in order to critique Accad's method. Using the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible is acceptable, as Biblical precedence exists. Paul's use of Greek poetry and rhetoric in his Mars Hill address is an excellent example hereof (Acts 17). Caution should be taken to ensure that the missionary never gives the impression that the Qur'an is the Word of God. As precautionary measure the Qur'an should only be used when explaining the Seven Principles. Any other references concerning everyday or religious matters should be made from the Bible (Jer. 23:28-29).

It is clear that Accad's use of the Qur'an as a bridge to the Bible should not be seen in isolation, but as part of a broader outreach to Muslims. The Gospel should be adequately contextualised for the individual in Muslim culture. This means the Gospel should be presented in the language and idiom known to the Muslim. In this Accad's method succeeds.

Chapter five sets out the findings and contribution. Accad's method is for all purposes valid. It leads people to the Bible without degrading the Biblical message of salvation in Christ alone.

UITTREKSEL

Die doel van hierdie studie is om vas te stel of Accad se metode waarvolgens hy die Evangelie aan Moslems verkondig deur die Qur'an te gebruik as `n brug na die Bybel, Skriftuurlik en teologies verantwoordbaar is binne die Gereformeerde tradisie.

Hoofstuk twee omvat `n historiese oorsig van die verhouding tussen die Christendom en Islam. Besondere aandag is gegee aan die ontstaan en ontwikkeling van Islam onder die leierskap van Muhammad. Vanuit die historiese oorsig is dit duidelik dat sake soos die Christelike kerk se onenigheid oor dogma, die kerk se samewerking met die "Westerse staat," die kulturele erfenis van die Arabiere, die unieke geloofsgemeenskap van Islam (die *ummah*), Muhammad en die Qur'an in ag geneem moet word ten einde die Evangelie effektief aan Moslems te kommunikeer.

Hoofstuk drie omvat `n oorsig van Accad's se metode en Sewe Beginsels, soos uiteengesit in sy boek "Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam." Accad se metode kan beskryf word as `n kultuur sensitiewe metode om die Evangelie aan Moslems te verkondig. Dit is `n geldige metode om die Moslem wêreldbeeld aan te spreek, om sodoende die Evangelie van redding in Christus alleen, oor te dra.

Hoofstuk vier gee `n uiteensetting van die Bybelse en Gereformeerde beginsels vir sending en evangelisasie waaraan Accad se metode getoets word. Die gebruik van die Qur'an as brug na die Bybel is aanvaarbaar in die lig van Bybelse voorbeelde. Paulus se gebruik van Griekse gedigte in sy preek in Athene is `n goeie voorbeeld hiervan (Handelinge 17). Sorg moet egter gedra word om nie die indruk te skep dat die Qur'an die Woord van God is nie. As voorsorg moet die Qur'an slegs gebruik word wanneer die Sewe Beginsel verduidelik word. Verwysing na enige ander sake moet vanuit die Bybel hanteer word (Jeremia 23:28-29).

Accad se gebruik van die Qur'an as brug na die Bybel is deel van `n groter uitreik waarin die Evangelie gekontekstualiseer word binne die Moslem gemeenskap. Hiervolgens word die Evangelie aangebied in die taal en idioom van die Moslem. Accad se metode slaag daarin om die Evangelie te kommunikeer met in ag neming van die gehoor se kultuur en omstandighede.

Hoofstuk vyf gee die slotsom van die studie weer. Accad se metode is geldig. Dit lei mense na die Bybel sonder om kompromieë aan te gaan oor die Bybelse boodskap van verlossing in Christus alleen.

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