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.

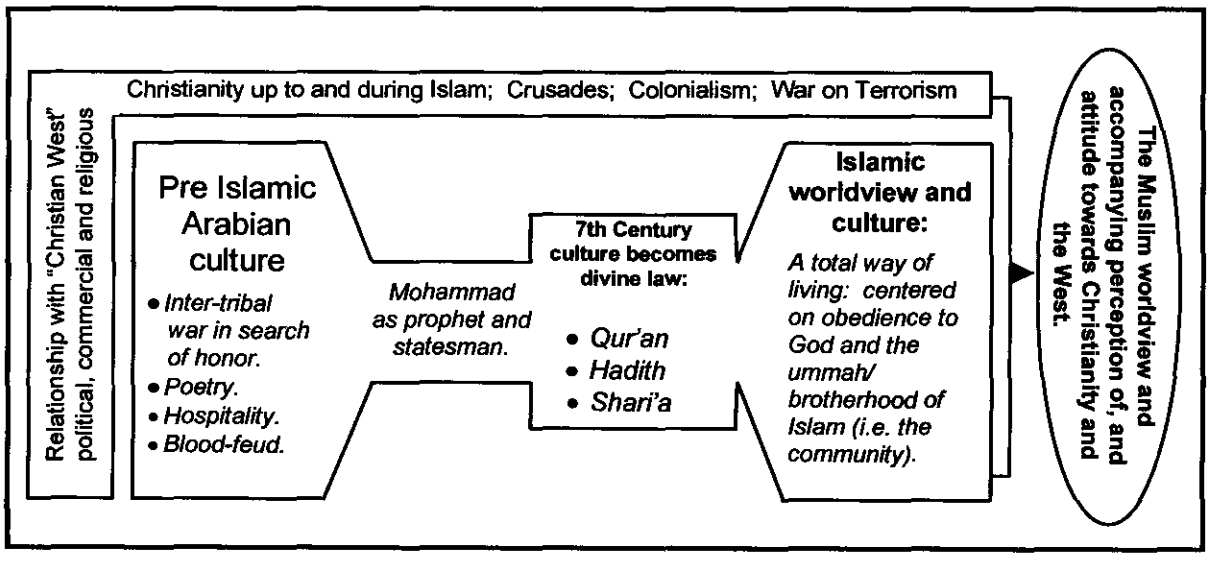
Within the modern world the logical consequence of distinction made between *Dār al-Islam* (House of Islam) and *Dār al-Harb* (House of War) is that Islam is not only a religious entity, but a political entity as well. This poses a unique obstacle when considering Muslim-Christian relations. Humanly 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."*

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).