TEACHING CHRISTIANS ABOUT ISLAM:

A STUDY IN METHODOLOGY

by

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A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of Theology

of the University of Birmingham

for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Centre for the Study of Islam
and Muslim-Christian Relations
Selly Oak Colleges

September 1993

SYNOPSIS

Some of the major issues involved in teaching Christians about Islam are discussed on the basis of the author's experience of teaching in three different contexts: in work with Christian students in the Middle East, in an Anglican Theological College in Bristol, and in the Department of Mission at Selly Oak, Birmingham. Several other teaching programmes are described and evaluated. A rationale is then presented for the content and method of two educational programmes which have been developed to work out the author's approach in detail: a book entitled Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam (to be published in 1994), and a training course with the same title (to be offered for use in British churches by the British and Foreign Bible Society from 1994), which uses some of the material from the book.

Approx 48,500 words

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4. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CONTENT AND METHOD: An Evaluation of Other Programmes

1. INTRODUCTION

Why should Christians want or need to learn about Islam? The most obvious basic reasons can perhaps be summed up in the following words: curiosity, co-existence, mutual enrichment and mission.

The first reason has to do with that basic curiosity which makes people want to know about other human beings. So whether they find themselves living alongside Muslims, or are simply becoming aware of the existence of Islam in the modern world, many Christians want to know about this great world religion which is 'so near and yet so far', so close in many respects to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and yet in others so different and even alien.

The second has to do with co-existence, and arises out of the complex history of relationships between the two faiths over fourteen centuries and the need for peaceful co-existence at the present time. In many countries today Muslims and Christians live together peacefully and with mutual respect and understanding. But one only has to mention countries like Yugoslavia/Bosnia, Sudan, and Nigeria to be reminded of situations where there are deep divisions between the different communities. Meeting Muslims face to face and learning about Islam will not by itself provide instant solutions; but it may at least help Christians to appreciate the complexity of the many different factors - historical, religious, racial, social, economic and political - which contribute to the tensions, and may perhaps enable the two communities to live together more peacefully.

The third reason can be summed up as the need for mutual enrichment. This goes beyond the need for peaceful co-existence, since according to this view, Christians should welcome the opportunity of learning from Islam and from Muslims, and renounce the arrogance that claims that Christianity contains 'the whole truth'. Whether or not Muslims are open to learn from Christians and from Christianity in the same way, Christians often bear witness to the fact that in the process of dialogue with Muslims their own faith is deepened and enriched.

The fourth reason is related to the fact that we are dealing with two religious traditions which are 'missionary' by their very nature. Both religions have historically believed that the revelation they have received is final and absolute, and is therefore in some sense for all humankind. da'wa is an invitation to non-Muslims to accept the religion of Islam, and is not significantly different in principle from the Christian concept of 'mission'. Many Christians understand the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18 - 20 to mean that they have an obligation to 'make disciples of all nations'. They therefore want to understand Islam better as part of their Christian mission. It is also very likely that they will find themselves from time to time at the receiving end of Islamic da'wa.

Realism will of course alert us to the great gulf between the 'want' and the 'need'. Many Christians can put forward a host of reasons to explain why they do not want to learn about Islam: they have no friends, neighbours or colleagues who are Muslims, and do not have the time or the interest to learn about something that is so far outside their own experience; since the Christian Gospel is 'God's last Word' to humankind, they have nothing to learn from a religion that developed 600 years after Christ; or they are not strong enough in their own faith to get involved with another faith which they think, in one way or another, must be 'inspired by the Devil'. In these situations the challenge to the Christian teacher is to decide whether such people need to learn something about Islam, even if they do not want to.

Assuming, however, that Christians have some desire to learn about Islam and need help in the process, what is involved in the task of teaching and education? This dissertation attempts to describe and present a rationale for one particular approach developed by one particular person in several different contexts over the past 30 years. This approach has been worked out in detail in a book which is to be published in 1994 by the Inter-Varsity Press under the title Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam, and a Study Course with the title Cross and Crescent, which is to be made available in 1994 by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The manuscript of both the book and the Workbook that goes with the course are submitted with the dissertation.

The rationale for these two teaching tools is developed in the dissertation in the following stages:

Chapter 2, FROM ALLAHABAD TO BIRMINGHAM: Autobiography and Context explains the different contexts in which I have been living, and the slow and sometimes painful introduction I have had to questions concerning other faiths. It also indicates ways in which my approach to teaching has developed over the years. Personal and autobiographical details are included, firstly, to explain the importance that context has played in the development of my approach, and secondly, to establish my identity as a Christian who has grown up within an evangelical Christian tradition (1). In addressing this particular constituency, therefore, on the subject of Islam, I speak not as an 'outsider', but as one who knows and appreciates this tradition 'from within'.

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1. The words 'Evangelical' and 'Evangelicalism' are defined in A New Dictionary of Christian Theology, edd. Alan Richardson and John Bowden, SCM, London, 1983, as follows: 'Derived from euangelion (evangel, gospel, good news), the term came into use at the Reformation to identify Protestants, especially as they held to the belief in justification by grace through faith and the supreme authority of scripture (often considered the material and formal principles of Reformation teaching). Subsequently, the meaning tended to narrow, with evangelicalism referring to those who espoused and experienced justification and scriptural authority in an intensified way: personal conversion and a rigorous moral life, on the one hand, and concentrated attention on the Bible as a guide to conviction and behaviour on the other, with a special zeal for the dissemination of Christian faith so conceived (evangelism). Anabaptism, Puritanism, Wesleyanism, Continental pietism, converts of the American Great Awakenings, and all their heirs represent variations on these themes. Today evangelical continues as an adjective in the names of some Protestant denominations and is also used in theology to identify Reformation doctrine (viz. Karl Barth's Evangelical Theology), but it is more generally associated with the aforementioned subsidiary meaning of interioriorization and intensification as in "born-again Christianity"...'

Chapter 3, ADDRESSING ISSUES RELATED TO ISLAM AND OTHER FAITHS: Four Presentations in Different Contexts includes the revised and edited text of papers presented to different audiences. These papers, taken together, represent a theological and practical justification for the approach to teaching Christians about Islam that has been adopted in the various contexts described. Parts of these papers are included in the form in which they were originally given, in order to illustrate ways in which I have presented the rationale for my approach to particular audiences.

The audience in all of these cases consisted largely of Christians who would call themselves 'evangelical'. Justification for this narrowing of the audience can perhaps be found in the fact that there is a whole set of distinctive attitudes to other faiths in general and Islam in particular which are shared by evangelical Christians, and which are significantly different in certain respects from those of Christians who might describe themselves as 'catholic', 'liberal' or 'radical'. If one recognises the wide variety of Christian attitudes to other faiths summed up by the popular positions known as 'Exclusivism', 'Inclusivism' and 'Pluralism', it would be hard, if not impossible to adopt an approach to teaching Christians about Islam which would be equally acceptable to people at every point on the spectrum (1). And the evangelical 'wing' of many denominations represents a sizeable and growing proportion.

Chapter 4, STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CONTENT AND METHOD: An Evaluation of Other Programmes, presents a critique of three books/study courses/programmes which are similar to my own. It describes the kind of continuing dialogue in which I have been engaged with Christians of my own and other traditions, and therefore seeks to explain how I have learned from these other approaches and how I differ from them.

Chapter 5 offers a RATIONALE FOR THE BOOK: 'CROSS AND CRESCENT: Responding to the Challenge of Islam'. This describes the concept of the book, and explains the structure of the book and the content of each chapter.

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1. A popular outline and evaluation of the three position is found in Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue, Board of Mission and Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England by CIO Publishing, June 1984.

Chapter 6 is a RATIONALE FOR THE BIBLE SOCIETY COURSE: 'Cross and Crescent', which is to be mounted in churches as a course of 5 x 1½ hour sessions by the British and Foreign Bible Society from the beginning of 1994. The chapter explains the pedagogical principles on which the course in based, and gives an outline of the Workbook which will be given to all participants, together with suggestions as to how leaders can take the group through the material.

Chapter 7, CONCLUSION, summarizes some of the major issues involved in teaching Christians about Islam, and the distinctives of the approach that has been developed.

On the basis of this summary, it may be helpful at this stage to comment on the title of the dissertation, 'Teaching Christians about Islam: A Study in Methodology', and thereby to justify what inevitably involves a kind of 'shorthand'. It will be evident, for example, that the dissertation does not simply deal with teaching Christians about 'Islam' as a world religion, a system of belief and a way of life, but about Muslim-Christian relations in a much more general sense. Moreover, it is not interested simply in teaching 'about' these subjects in a detached and neutral way, but in commending a distinctive style of thinking and relating.

It will therefore become clear that 'teaching' involves far more than formal teaching through lectures in the classroom, since it requires a continuing process of training, development or 'formation' (understood in the sense of the Spanish formación). In speaking of 'Christians', the dissertation focuses on those who describe themselves, or are described by others, as 'evangelical'. In spite of this narrowing of focus, however, many of the principles that are relevant in this constituency can no doubt be applied in others as well.

Finally, the dissertation is 'A Study in Methodology'. The major concern throughout is: how precisely can one and should one attempt to go about the task of teaching/training/formation with these particular Christians? How are they to be initiated into, or taken further in, their appreciation of the faith and practice of Islam and of all that is involved in Muslim-Christian relations and in Christian mission to Islam today?

Explanatory Notes

1. Format

Since the ms of the book (which is likely to be between 200 and 300 pages) is at present being edited by the Inter-Varsity Press and is likely to undergo further revision before publication, it is being submitted in its present form with the thesis, bound separately with spiral binding. Similarly, since the Bible Society Course is still in the process of being edited, it is submitted in its present draft form, with the thesis.

2. Spelling

In the dissertation the transliteration of Arabic words used is essentially that of the Encyclopedia of Islam, with two standard English language alternations: q (instead of k) for ق and j (instead of dj) for ج .

In the book and the course, however, a simplified spelling of Arabic words has been adopted, in view of the fact that the material is not intended for specialist readers.

3. Abbreviations

The abbreviation BK is used for the Book, Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam.

The abbreviation BSC is used for the Bible Society Course, Cross and Crescent.

The abbreviations OT and NT are used for Old Testament and New Testament respectively.

4. Qur'an References

References used are those of the standard Egyptian system of verse numbers. The main English translation used is that of Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, Mentor, New American Library, New York and Scarborough, Ontario, (no date).

2. FROM ALLAHABAD TO BIRMINGHAM: Autiobiography and Context

2.1 India, Scotland and Egypt, 1938 - 1973

The story probably needs to begin in a city with a very Islamic name - Allahabad - the place of my birth. My father's work with the Indian Police took us to many different parts of the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh as it is now), and I have many vivid memories of those first seven years up to 1945. I would like to think that my early experiences in India may have contributed to my desire at a later stage to work overseas, if not to my interest in other faiths.

The small village in Scotland, by the name of Dollar, to which we returned, was solidly white, without a black or an Asian face anywhere in sight, and it was not until I went to University at St Andrews that I made my first Jewish and Muslim friends.

During this time I was asked to give a talk at a Christian camp on the subject of Other Faiths. I can remember the difficulty I had in the preparation of the talk, since the only books I could find were general introductions to other religions, and there was no one with any first-hand experience with whom I could discuss these difficult questions. I suspect that the theological content of the talk consisted of a very traditional interpretation of John 14:6. Needless to say, my interpretation of this popular 'Exclusivist' text has since then been revised (1).

It was during two years of ordination training at Ridley Hall in Cambridge that I first heard a lecture given by Kenneth Cragg and began to come under his spell. From the first words of his lecture, I was aware of the authority with which he spoke, and was deeply impressed not only with his

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1. See 3.2.3.(5) (page 100) for a brief discussion of John 14:6. A fuller discussion is given in the author's The Christian Message in a Multi-Faith Society, Latimer Studies 41 - 42, Oxford, 1992, pp 60 - 61.

insight into Islam, but also by his understanding of the Christian mission to Islam.

My three years as a curate in Leith, the port area of Edinburgh, from 1964 to 1967, brought me a little nearer to people of other faiths. As I cycled round the streets in the dockland areas of Leith, I became aware of the streets in which Asian families were living, and of one in particular which was known by the teenagers in the Church Youth Club as 'The Khyber Pass'.

These same young people were responsible for forcing me further into the study of other faiths. Most of them had little involvement with the Church itself, but were happy to come to informal discussions over tea in my flat on a Sunday afternoon, when they enjoyed raising every question and objection to the Christian faith that they could think of. After some months I began a series on other faiths, in which I tried to present Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism as objectively as possible, knowing that the group would easily sense if I was presenting them in a negative light simply to 'knock' them and to show up the superiority of Christianity.

As a part-time Assistant Chaplain to Overseas Students in the University, I had the opportunity to visit and get to know many overseas students. Although I was not familiar in those days with the theory of 'Muslim-Christian Dialogue', I certainly found myself engaged in it at some depth with one particular Muslim post-graduate student from Pakistan. After many months of conversation, I lent him a copy of John Stott's Basic Christiantity, and can remember being very puzzled to find that the chapter on the Ten Commandments had the effect of confirming and deepening his appreciation of law in Islam, rather than creating a desire to know more about the Christian faith.

My year of training with the Church Missionary Society from 1967 to 1968 introduced me to the study of Christian mission, and by then I had read several of the volumes on other faiths in the Christian Presence series, edited by Max Warren (1) . I can also remember an impressive series of

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1. eg. Kenneth Cragg, Sandals at the Mosque, SCM, London, 1959; George Appleton, On the Eightfold Path, SCM, London, 1961.

lectures on Islam given by David Brown, a former CMS missionary in Sudan, and his plea that Christians develop respect for the world of Islam, recognising its incredible achievements over fourteen centuries.

Having arrived in Egypt a year after the Six Day War of 1967, it was not as easy as one might have expected for a Christian expatriate to enter into the world of Islam. One could visit mosques as a tourist. But in the days of Gamal Abdul Nasser, we were constantly being told to be careful with whom we spoke in public. Soon, therefore, I found myself living virtually in a Christian ghetto.

None of the missionaries I knew had any special interest in Islam, except one who had considerable contact with Muslims and engaged in dialogue at a fairly academic level, but had lost the sympathy of the Christians he was trying to help because his theological position was so much more 'liberal' than theirs. For this reason, most of the Christians with whom he tried to work were not open to developing a more sympathetic approach to Islam.

Part of my work in Cairo was to teach Greek and Hebrew at the Seminary of the Coptic Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church. I doubt if the little I taught of these languages made a significant contribution to their understanding of the Bible. But my experience with those students, both inside and outside the classroom, enabled me to understand the mentality of a Christian minority living in a Muslim country.

I can still remember the time when one student came up to me and asked, almost under his breath, 'Is it true that Muhammad met a Christian monk in the desert? What did he learn from him?' Unfortunately in those days there was no teaching of Islam in the seminary, and my own knowledge of Islam was not sufficient to enable me to help him a great deal (1).

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1. The account of the meeting between Muhammad and Bahira in Ibn Ishaq's Life of Muhammad is included as one of the texts in the chapter on Muhammad in BK 2.4.

This situation changed in 1970, half way through my time in Egypt, when Kenneth Cragg came to work in Cairo as Assistant Bishop. His lectures at the Anglican Cathedral encouraged me to read The Call of the Minaret (1). It took me some time to understand what lay behind his approach, and I could not always agree with his conclusions. But I have to record with gratitude that the approach I have developed since then probably owes more to him than to any other single person (2).

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1. Kenneth Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, Oxford University Press, 1956; second edition, revised and enlarged, Collins, 1986. See further Annexe 1, pages 183ff

2. The main places in BK where this influence is evident are: the emphasis on undersanding Islam at its best; the need to listen to 'The Call of the Minaret' and 'sit with' Muslims as they pray; the possibility of dialogue that goes beyond traditional polemics and apologetics; the desire for 'retrieval', in which Christians 'yearn to undo the alientation and to make amends for the past by as full a restitution as they can achieve of the Christ to whom Islam is a stranger' (Call of the Minaret, 1986 ed, p 220). The major emphases of Cragg's work are discussed and evaluated in a doctoral thesis entitled 'The Call to Retrieval. Kenneth Cragg's Christian Vocation to Islam' by Christopher Lamb, submitted to the University of Birmingham in 1987. See further Annexe 1, pages 183 ff.

2.2 Birmingham and Beirut, 1973 - 1983

2.2.1 Birmingham, 1973 - 1975

My time as a tutor at Crowther Hall, Selly Oak, from 1973 - 1975 is significant in this survey for two reasons. The first is the contact that I had with Dr David Kerr and Dr Sigvard von Sicard, lecturers in Islamic Studies, and with the Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations which was founded in 1975.

The second was that it was during this period that I first explored the possibility of research in the area of Islamic Studies. In my application to the Department of Theology, I described my research interests at the time as follows:

> 'The approach which has most influenced my study of Christian apologetics and underlies my series of books, Christianity on Trial, is that of Francis Schaeffer. I am interested in exploring how this kind of 'Presuppositional Apologetics' could be related to the field of Muslim-Christian Dialogue.' (1)

It became clear that there was more groundwork in Islamics that I would need to cover before tackling a project of this kind. As I look back at the topic I proposed in 1974, however, it is evident that Apologetics still occupied a major place in my thinking about Muslim-Christian dialogue (2).

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1. The first two, and most well known, of Francis Schaeffer's book at that time were Escape from Reason, Inter-Varsity Press, London, 1966, and The God Who is There, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1988. See further Annex 2, pages 192 ff

2. Questions relating directly to Apologetics are covered in BK in 3.1 - 3.6. Chapter 3.6, Learning from the Controversies of the Past points out the limitations of Apologetics, while 3.7. Exploring Dialogue, attempts to leave discussion of Apologetics altogether and explore the possibilities of Dialogue. See further Annexe 2, pages 192 ff.

2.2.2 Beirut, 1975 - 1983

My work with Christian students in Beirut began in October 1975, just six months after the start of the Lebanese Civil War. Our Student Centre was at first located in the area of Museitbeh, near the Lebanese University, and later in Ras Beirut, not far from the American Univerisity of Beirut (AUB), Beirut University College (BUC), Hegazian College and the Near East School of Theology. As Regional Secretary with a student organisation, I was also involved in similar work with Christian students in other countries in the Middle East, North Africa, the Gulf, Iran and Pakistan.

In this context it was possible to begin to appreciate the difficulties that Christian students in Lebanon and other countries of the Middle East faced in coming to terms with Islam and relating to their Muslim neighbours and friends. It was during this time, therefore, that I began to prepare study material that might help them to develop a more open approach to Islam. This material is described in more detail in the following chapter (2.2.3).

It was not always easy, however, to get Christian students to think about Islam. I can remember the resistance that I felt from the Chairman of the student group, a graduate of the American University of Beirut who worked as a research economist with the United Nations. In one of our conversations he said to me, 'You seem to be spending a lot of time thinking about Islam these days!' From the tone of his voice it was obvious that what he really meant was, 'I thought you came here to work with Christians. Why are you being diverted into thinking so much about Islam and Muslims?' This conversation made me realise how important it would be to work as closely as possible with Christians in the preparation of the study material. It was clear that it would have to be at a reasonably popular level, and address students where they were in their thinking.

2.2.3 '"YOU GO AND DO THE SAME": Studies in Relating to Muslims'

The first draft of the study material with this title, written in Beirut for Christian students (referred to in 2.2.2), consisted of 10 studies which were completed early in 1979. The titles of the chapters were as follows:

PART 1

(1) Relating to our Muslim Neighbours

(2) Understanding Ourselves and our Muslim Neighbours

(3) The Muslim at Prayer

(4) Basic Muslim Beliefs and Practices

(5) Muhammad

(6) The Qur'an

PART 2

(7) Muslims and Islam

(8) Discussion with Muslims

(9) Muslims and Conversion

(10) Explaining the Gospel

In preparing this material, there were four main audiences that I had in mind:

a. Christian nationals living in the Muslim world. Here I was thinking of the students with whom I was working in the Middle East, Pakistan, Iran, the Gulf and in North Africa.

b. Missionaries working in the Muslim world. Long-term workers needed orientation before beginning their work and continuing training during their work. Short-term workers similarly needed some kind of orientation. In those days the only courses of this kind that I was aware of were Reaching Muslims Today and Studies on Islam (1).

c. Christians working in secular employment in the Muslim world. I was aware that a large number of Christian expatriates, both from the West and from the East, were working all over the Middle East and North Africa. The nature of their work made it impossible for them to devote time to extensive study and training.

d. Christians in the West. It seemed as if the Churches in the West were gradually waking up to the presence of Islam in their midst. A major 'Festival of Islam' was held in London in 1976, and Christians were debating whether redundant churches in inner cities should be sold to be turned into mosques (2).

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1. Reaching Muslims Today: A Short Handbook, compiled by the North Africa Mission, 1976; Studies on Islam: A Simple Outline of the Islamic Faith, compiled by Jack Budd, Red Sea Mission Team, 1975

2. One of the Case Studies from the UK in BK 1.5 focuses on this question, which is still a live issue in some situations in Britain.

The following were the basic principles which determined the content and method of the studies:

1) The emphasis should be on relating to Muslims as people, as individuals, as communities, rather than simply learning about 'Ideal Islam'.

2) Christians need to be helped at a personal and emotional level, and not just at an intellectual level; they need to be able to deal with deep-seated fears and prejudices and not just presented with information about Islam.

3) The Holy Spirit can deal with Christians at this level as they study the Scriptures. Christians can be helped to understand Islam through the Bible.

4) The ideal context for such study is a group of two or more Christians.

5) The first great need is to get people started, not to teach them everything that can be known about Islam.

6) The studies should help students to begin to learn certain basic skills, especially (a) the art of listening and asking questions, (b) handling controversy, and (c) using the Bible to help an enquirer.

7) The studies should encourage the group to do further study.

8) The studies should lead to action.

9) The students should be introduced to the current discussion about approaches to Islam.

10) The studies should help to enrich and deepen The Christian's understanding of his/her own faith.

2.2.4 Field testing of the material

The first draft of the 10 Studies, 'You Go and Do the Same': Studies in Relating to Muslims, was field-tested in several different situations between 1978 and 1981, including a Youth Fellowship in a church in Alexandria, a Study Group for Expatriates at All Saints Cathedral in Cairo, the Adult Sunday School of the International Community Church in Amman, and student groups working among Muslims in Sweden and France.

The written evaluation from a group of college students in San Diego, USA, is worth quoting almost in full, because it raises several important issues and highlights some of the special needs of groups of this kind:

'Beginning March 16, 1981, we met each Tuesday night for 10 weeks. AR and DD taught the class of 8 students. All were in their 20s or early 30s, knew little about Islam, but knew Muslims in San Diego. The students were all committed Christians and did not appear to have any strong prejudices towards Muslims. The chapters were distributed a week in advance to be studied, rather than all at once, in order to encourage regular attendance.

'In the first session we all introduced ourselves and told why we were taking the class. We discussed our feelings towards Muslims in general, the building of mosques in the US, American Muslims, and whether gas prices and militant Iranians affected our attitudes. Each week we closed the session with a student-led presentation of a Muslim people group or country.

'The second week we discussed the lesson, with particular emphasis on philosophy of ministry, winning the right to be heard, developing real friendships, and different types of Muslims. We also discussed the characteristics which Muslims generally respect - allegiance to families, modesty, hospitality, awareness of their society and country, etc. In view of the fact that the students were highly motivated, a second week of preliminary introduction was probably not necessary. The main points of chapters 1 and 2 could have been condensed into one lesson. The students were eager to know how to share with Muslims and wanted to start learning specifics right away.

'AR and I felt it was important to present chapter 4 on Muslim Beliefs the third week, rather than chapter 3. We didn't understand why the chapter on Prayer came first.

'The next four weeks were largely devoted to role-playing, with minimal discussion of the chapters, which the students felt they could read and study on their own. Material for role-playing was largely taken from Tide of the Supernatural by Kundun Massey. The role-playing developed unexpectedly and spontaneously in reponse to student need. The students were being asked by their Muslim friends questions such as "Why did Jesus have to die?" "Why should I believe the Bible when it has been

corrupted?" and "How can I believe in three gods?" etc. They found themselves stuttering and unsure how to answer, or else getting off on tangents. This happened as well in our first attempts at role-playing, in which one student played the part of a Christian, and another student played the role of a questioning Muslim. The other students listened and afterward critiqued. I'm aware that role-playing is not always satisfactory with all groups, but it worked extremely well in our class, when the participants were willing to volunteer and try over and over until they gained confidence in what to say.

'I think the building of confidence in knowing how to sensitively and effectively answer questions was the most valuable result of those four weeks. At the end of that time the students knew how to answer five common Muslim objections to the gospel. This is what they really wanted to learn when they began the class. They found the material in the 10 Studies to be helpful, but they wanted more of a "how-to" approach. "What do I say when Ahmed asks me why Jesus is referred to as God's Son?" They didn't want just a pat answer, but a solid response which they could put in their own words.

'In their written evaluations, the students cited the role-playing as the most helpful part of the class. They said the 10 Studies were helpful as background material, but not as helpful as expected in actual conversation with Muslims. Actual converations between a Christian and a Muslim should be included to make these studies as practical as possible.

It is worth commenting on several points made in this evaluation, and noting how some of them were taken into consideration in the revision of the studies at the time and in the development of BK and BSC since then:

(1) The group began with their context and the relationships they already had with Muslim friends. This underlines the importance of beginning with relationships in BK 1. and BSC 1. Relating to our Muslims Neighbours.

(2) They faced the question of attitudes squarely in their first session. BK 1.3 and BSC 1.8. are entitled Examining Our Attitudes.

(3) Cultural issues were discussed in the second session. These issues are raised very near the beginning of the book (BK 1.2) and the course (BSC 1.2), because of the conviction that cultural issues present more initial problems for many than theological issues.

(4) The group could not understand why the chapter on Prayer (No. 3) came before the Chapter on Muslim Beliefs and Practices (No 4). The order remains the same in BK (2.1 and 2.2) and BSC (2.1 and 2.2). But the reason

for looking at Prayer before Beliefs and Practices is explained more fully, using a quotation from the Introduction of Constance Padwick's classic, Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer Manuals in Common Use (1).

(5) What the students 'really wanted' was to learn how to answer questions put to them by Muslims. They wanted more than 'pat' answers, and needed 'a solid response'. BK 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 consists of brief answers which can be given to questions of this kind. Fuller discussion of the issues comes later in 3.5. BK and BSC therefore recognise the need for both immediate answers to the awkward questions, and further teaching explaining the issues in greater depth.

(6) The value of role-playing is strongly emphasised. Role-playing is encouraged in BSC Session 3.

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1. S.P.C.K., London, 1969, pages 11 and 13.

2.2.5 'The Message of the Tawrat, the Zabur and the Injil'

A number of Muslim students used to come to the Student Centre in Beirut to join in our social activities and to take part in study groups. Since some of them were serious enquirers, I soon felt the need for some appropriate way of introducing them to the Bible. It was in this context that I developed the series of Bible Selections The Message of the Tawrat, the Zabur and the Injil, which was published in English, French and Arabic in 1981 by the Bible Society of Lebanon.

The rationale for these Selections was given in Chapter 10 of 'You Go and Do the Same': Studies in Relating to Muslims. Ten short four-page leaflets were put together in a small folder. Each leaflet contained a series of passages from the Bible, all of them introduced with a brief explanation of the context from which the passage is taken and the relevance of the passage to the subject. The inside page of the folder contained a brief description for Muslim readers of the contents of the Bible.

In the earlier studies an attempt is made to build bridges and to start with common ground, leaving the more controversial subjects, like the deity of Christ and the crucifixion, until later in the series. The following are the titles of the 10 Selections of Bible passages:

(1) God is One and has created man to serve and love him

(2) God gives man his laws

(3) God warns man of the consequences of failure to keep his laws

(4) God is merciful and loving and wants to forgive

(5) God revealed to his prophets that he would come among men

(6) God sent Jesus the Messiah as his Word through a miraculous birth and gave him miraculous powers

(7) God gave Jesus the Messiah the Message of the Injil (the Gospel)

(8) God demonstrated his love for sinful men through the death of Jesus the Messiah

(9) God raised Jesus from death

(10) God gave his Spirit to the disciples who recognized Jesus as God's Messiah and God's Word

Since I believe there is a place for introductions to the text of the Bible that are prepared with Muslim readers in mind, and since these Selections are still being produced in different languages by the Bible Societies, the chapter explaining the rationale for The Message of the Tawrat, the Zabur and the Injil from the book 'You Go and Do the Same': Studies in Relating to Muslims is included in BK 5.3 in substantially the same form, and more briefly in BSC 5.2.

2.3 Bristol, 1983 - 1990

The second main context in which my approach to teaching Christians about Islam has developed was at Trinity College, Bristol, where I spent seven years as a lecturer in 'Mission in Religion'.

2.3.1 Trinity College, Bristol

The College described itself as 'a co-educational college recognized by the Church of England to train men and women for its pastoral ministry' (1). In the 1980s it had around 130 students, of whom around 65% were studying for the Anglican ministry. A sizeable minority consisted of students from other denominations and other parts of the world.

The overall aim of the college was summed up in 1983 as follows:

> 'The aim of the College is to train individuals for ministry in the Christian church, equipping them to:
>
> (i) engage in critical reflection upon the Christian theological tradition,
> (ii) seek the implications of that reflection for creative and constructive application to the living situation of the contemporary world.
>
> 'In furtherance of the aim, therefore, the Dip HE/BA (Hons) course has been designed to provide opportunities for rigorous academic study on Christian theology and its contemporary relevance.' (2)

The College was probably the first to recognise the need to introduce the Study of Mission into the curriculum. Following the Lausanne Congress of 1974, Dr James Packer and the Rev Peter Williams started exploring ways of introducing the subject.

Dr Myrtle Langley, who had previously worked in East Africa and joined the staff in 1973, taught the following as optional course in the second year until she left in 1982: The Study of Mission, Theology of Mission, History of the Modern Missionary Movement, Ethno- and Political Theologies, and Missionary Method and Strategy.

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1. Submission to CNAA, January '88, p 1.
2. Submission to CNAA, vol 2, January '83, p 1.

2.3.2 'Mission and Religion' in the 1983 CNAA Submission

There were three significant developments which had been agreed on by the Faculty between the time of Dr Langley's departure in 1982 and my appointment in 1983, and which were incorporated into the CNAA Mission and Religion Submission (1):

(1) The Study of Mission and the Study of Religion were recognised as two distinct disciplines which ought to be included in any curriculum of theological study, and were brought together as one subject, named 'Mission and Religion'.

(2) The new subject of Mission and Religion was made compulsory within the core curriculum for all students in the first year.

(3) Because Mission and Religion were being offered in all three years, a significant element of progression could be introduced. The first year course attempted to lay a foundation which could be built on in the second year, and the third year course had to be at a level comparable to that of other third year options, tackling one particular subject in some depth rather than providing a broad survey.

The Aims of the whole Mission and Religion course were defined as follows:

> '(1) To introduce students to the study of two distinct disciplines - the Study of Religion and the Study of Mission.
>
> '(2) To enable students to appreciate and understand the phenomenon and history of religion, and to enter sympathetically into the faith of others.
>
> '(3) To examine critically the concept and practice of mission in a world of religious pluralism.
>
> '(4) To enable students to see the relevance of these two disciplines to other branches of theological study and to different kinds of ministry.'(2)

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1. Resubmitted Mission and Religion Programme, March 1984.

2. Resubmitted Mission and Religion Programme, March, 1984, page 1.

The Rationale was presented as follows:

'(1) The programme begins with the Study of Religion, a discipline with its own academic tradition which seeks to study religion in general in its own terms. It combines an historical approach to individual religious traditions with a cross-cultural analysis of religious phenomena. It seeks to enable students to study any religion as objectively as possible, and at the same time to understand and appreciate it in its own terms.

'(2) Since we live in a world of many religions, some of which have their own understanding of mission, the Study of Mission must involve a study of the interaction between faiths, together with a critical examination of the whole concept of mission. Attitudes to other faiths and ideas of the total task of the church in the world must therefore be studied in the context of religious pluralism.

'(3) In the previous programme the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion were taught in the second year as two separate subjects, both optional. This was found to be an unhelpful division, since it meant, for example, that many students had no exposure to the Study of Religion, while others could opt for the Study of Mission and ignore the Study of Religion. The two subjects are now, therefore, combined within one programme. In this way the presuppositions of both disciplines can be clearly acknowledged and constantly challenged by the other.

'(4) Mission and Religion is now moreover offered as a compulsory subject in Phase I because of its relevance to Christian ministry of any kind anywhere in the world today. Every student needs to face squarely the issues raised by religious pluralism, and many will be in contact with ethnic communities in Britain. Students from overseas need to be introduced to the academic study of religions which previously they have encountered only at a popular level.

'(5) The Study of Mission and Religion frequently raises issues which are relevant to other areas of theological study. Thus, for example, the Study of Mission adds a further dimension to the study of Church History. The Study of myth and ritual in other religions raises important questions about doctrine and worship in Christianity. The theological challenge of Islam concerning the Incarnation, the Trinity and the Atonement is a reminder that we can no longer study these subjects from within the circle of western, Christian assumptions. Since the study of Folk Religion or Implicit Religion draws on sociological perspectives, it is likely to affect approaches to many issues in Pastoral Theology. The attempt will therefoe be made to help students to see how the Study of Mission and Religion impinges on other disciplines taught in the course.

'(6) Phase I concentrates on methodology, introducing students to the assumptions and methods of the two disciplines. It also offers an introduction to three different religious traditions: Islam, the Eastern Religions, and African Traditional Religion. The subject is offered as an option in Phases II and III, thus providing an opportunity to work out these approaches in greater depth in certain specific areas.' (1)

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1. Resubmitted Mission and Religion Programme, March 1984, pp 1 - 2.

2.3.3 Student Evaluations

The Objectives and Content of the Unit on Islam in Phase I were explained as follows:

> 'To introduce the Study of Religion through the study of one major non-Christian religion, Islam. We attempt to see what it means to enter sympathetically into another religion, and to understand it in its own terms.' (1)

Since CNAA required rigorous evaluation of all courses, students were encouraged to complete a detailed evaluation form after each unit had been taught. A copy of the form used appears as Appendix 1.

The following are extracts from student evaluations of the first year unit on Islam. The wording of many of these comments is revealing, and the repetition of certain responses underlines several impressions made on the students, which will be discussed later.

> 'This emphasis on the practical is essential; but perhaps a little more theology would be good.'
>
> 'I felt at times the tolerance of Muslims and love for them as people became compromise of Christian beliefs.'
>
> 'Slightly more emphasis on the effect of the studies on our faith. Some people were clearly affected.'
>
> 'Because I have not had direct contact with Muslims, I found it difficult to "feel" deeply and enter sympathetically into the faith of Muslims. I pray that my concern will be deepened.'
>
> 'The unit has been challenging in that it has raised questions in my mind as to how far we need to go in relating to someone of another faith in order to share the gospel with them. I now realise it is not just a simple case of telling them.'
>
> 'This unit presented a clear, sympathetic introduction to Islam. It also showed me how little conscious thought I had given to the system of beliefs someone might have before I tried to communicate the gospel.'
>
> 'I cannot say I "enjoyed" this unit, but it has made me much more aware of people as individuals ... This unit disturbed me in a way that I have not fully understood yet.'
>
> In response to the question 'What were the strongest aspects?': 'To see a Muslim as a neighbour rather than an enemy.'

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1. 1984 CNAA Submission, p 9.

'Islam is now a real religion and not just another person's view of life and God.'

'The practical approach to Islam, seeking to understand Muslims - rather than Islamic religion in an academic vacuum.'

'One of the strongest aspects of the course was the emphasis on the need to understand the Muslim, to "sit where he sits". My attitude before the course was of solid, defensive judgementalism against Muslims (an attitude aggravated by events in Iran). Another strong aspect was the attempt to understand the Qur'an and its doctrines, particularly in relation to Christian faith. Unless we can do this we will never build a bridge to the Muslim. Finally, the combination of these two aspects, ie understanding the individual Muslim, his world-view etc, was a healthy reminder for me to treat people as individuals, not as "someone from such and such a group".'

'Key area of "how we empathise without compromise" not covered in enough depth.'

'It raised fundamental questions about the Christian faith, by exposing personal beliefs to the scrutiny of another religious system.'

'There seemed a little too much on Islam without reference (if only in passing) to why Christianity is better.'

'The attempt to enter sympathetically - and not just study it from outside - it gave a greater understanding of what it is to be a Muslim.'

'More prayer for spiritual discernment, which is perhaps the main stumbling block for many - how far one can identify.'

'A subject which needs a higher ratio or seminar/discussion to lecture - it's attitudes and deep-seated feelings which have to be confronted.'

'Your enthusiasm had me worried at first.'

'Understanding Islam from within has been an extremely stimulating "adventure".'

'You shared your experience well with us, so much so that at one point I was anxious that we would leave the lecture hall converted to Islam.'

'Your desire to get us involved in the chants and the suggestion of trying the postures was, for me, frightening ... Too much emphasis was put on Islam in the lecture without balancing it with a counter opinion of a Christian nature. This left me feeling rather unsure as to which way the lectures were going to finally end up. I therefore suggest that you try to incorporate a more reassuring approach so that peopole like myself do not end up feeling threatened.'

'Certaintly I have had my ideas about approaching other religions radically changed, and have learned a lot about Islam as well.'

'I sensed that some may have felt that they were being pressurised and indoctrinated after the first two or three lectures.'

'I have been fascinated by the sympathetic approach to Islam.'

'I think, despite the evangelical flack, the sympathetic look at Islam should be retained. I feel that as a future minister I now know how to begin to contact Muslims, whereas without the unit I would probably have ignored them. It's a shame we have stopped at the point where we have only just begun to look at points of useful contact and dialogue.'

'The content (ie Islam) got boring - but mostly because I have never met a Muslim.'

'Tackling the major issues of Christianity vs other faiths, the standing of other faiths and the problem of other faiths should be dealt with first. I am still unsure of the ways to view other faiths, and this makes it difficult to put the study of one faith on a sound footing.'

'Learning to think beyond my own "structures of belief" into someone else's structure, thus being able to see both from a new perspective ... Now I am beginning to see links across into other subjects, ie. Christian Doctrine, and Pastoral Theology, and feel richer devotionaly and practically as a result.'

'Why are some other people so hot under the collar about this approach?! It is refreshing because it makes such obvious practical and spiritual sense. I didn't expect before starting it that I would find study of other religions very stimulating.'

'Not sure whether it's helpful to look at Islam so early because it is seen as a threat to many. Looking at Animism etc and at the beginnings of religion "at a distance" may help an unbiased and truly sympathetic entrance to Islam later on.'

Evaluations of this kind were considered regularly at Departmental meetings, which included student representatives. These were some of the ways in which I responded to particular comments at the time and tried to modify the unit in subsequent years:

(1) I responded to the feeling of being threatened by introducing an introductory unit, An Introduction to the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion, before the unit on Islam. This was intended to reassure students that we were attempting to study Islam within a Christian framework which included an understanding of mission. I also found I had to assure students that I was not wanting to push them further than they were willing to go.

(2) I had to explain that the emphasis in the unit on Islam was on understanding and entering sympathetically into Islam, not on evangelising Muslims. It was therefore deliberate that the unit focussed on the Beliefs and Practices of Islam, and said nothing on how Christians could share their faith with Muslims. Although the emphasis on understanding Islam

from within seemed to be understood by many, several expressed the need for more Christian teaching, which could not be given in this context.

(3) Questions concerning Christian attitudes to other faiths were deliberately kept until later in the course, when it was made clear that there is a wide variety of Christian responses to other faiths. I felt then, and still feel, that the desire to have traditional concepts of mission reaffirmed before embarking on the study of another faith needs, in this context at least, to be resisted. Students need to be forced to face the reality of other faiths in order to understand and feel the complexity of the issues of pluralism. They probably need to do this before they try to come to terms with the many different attitudes that Christians adopt to other faiths.

The following are significant conclusions I was able to draw from the evaluations:

(1) Many students appreciated the need for empathy, and could see how it was important not only in approaching people of other faiths, but in other areas of Christian ministry as well.

(2) Several students recognised the challenge of the study of Islam not just as an intellectual and theological level, but at a very personal and emotional level: 'It's attitudes and deep-seated feelings which have to be confronted'.

(3) Students who had had no previous contact with Muslims found the unit difficult.

(4) While some students felt threated by the approach to Islam, others were fascinated and stimulated.

These evaluations from students became the basis for changes made in the revised curriculum submitted in 1988 (See 2.3.4).

2.3.4. Revisions in the 1988 CNAA Submission

Changes in the Mission and Religion curriculum submitted to CNAA in January 1988 were explained as follows:

'Evaluations by students during the first four years have shown that these developments (ie developments explained in the '84 Submission) have been understood and appreciated. Some students find the subject threatening, because of the way it challenges basic convictions about the uniqueness of the Christian faith. Most, if not all, however, sooner or later recognize the truth of Max Warren's dictum that the impact of agnostic science may turn out to have been "as child's play compared to the challenge to Christian theology of the faith of other men". They also have little difficulty in making connections with other disciplines. For example, the emphathy required in entering another religion is very similar to the empathy required in every aspect of Pastoral Theology. The study of Eastern Religions introduces them to basic philosohpical concepts like Pantheism and Monism. And the study of African Traditional Religion provides analytical tools for understanding Canaanite Religion in the Old Testament as well as Folk Religion in Britain today.

In developing our programme we have tried to learn from other attempts in Britain and other countries to introduce the other-faiths dimension into theological education. Theology on Full Alert (Kenneth Cracknell and Christopher Lamb, British Council of Churches, London, 1984; revised and enlarged second edition, 1986) and Ministerial Formation in a Multi-Faith Milieu - Implications for Inter-Faith Dialogue for Theological Education (edited by Sam Amirtham and S. Wesley Ariarajah, WCC, Geneva, 1985) explain the need for this development and give examples of many different ways of introducing this new dimension. Having opted for the introduction of Mission and Religion as a subject it its own right, we recognise the possible danger of compartmentalization which is inherent in this approach. We therefore see that the next step for us is to explore ways of introducing the other-faiths dimension into other disciplines. Thus, for example, the Church Historian needs to find some explanation for the collapse of the Christian East and the rapid spread of Islam. And familiar questions about suffering and evil take on a new dimension in the context of dialogue with Judaism if we ask: where was God during the Holocaust?' (1)

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1. The rationale for this emphasis on an inter-disciplinary approach is explained further in 2.3.5. It is also relevant to the discussion of the Report of the Islam in Europe Committee, The Presence of Muslims in Europe and the Theological Training of Pastoral Workers, which is discussed in 4.3.

The Outline of the Course was explained as follows:

'Phase One begins with an Introduction to the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion, explaining in outline the scope and methodology of the two disciplines. The Study of Religion is then taken before the Study of Mission, because it is felt to be more important to expose students to the study of other faiths than to confirm the assumptions they may already have about the meaning of mission. Unit 2 therefore looks at Islam and seeks to explain what is involved in entering another faith. Unit 3 concentrates on the Eastern Religions, underlining the importance of understanding the historical and cultural context of any religion. Unit 4 deals with African Traditional Religion and provides an introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion. It is only at this stage that we proceed to the Study of Mission, with Unit 5 exploring the Theology of Mission and Unit 6 looking at Pluralism and Christian Attitudes to Other faiths.

'The six units offered in Phase Two cover a wide range of subjects which come under the heading of either the Study of Mission (Units 2,3 & 4) or the Study of Religion (Units 1, 5 & 6). Thus Unit 1 offers the opportunity to study Islam and either Judaism, Hinduism or African Traditional Religion in greater detail than was possible in Phase One. Unit 5 explores some of the key issues involved in the teaching of Religion in schools, while Unit 6 looks at the responses of Christianity, Judaism and Islam to the existence of the state of Israel.

'The Study of Mission is taken up in Unit 2 which focuses on some of the main areas of Missiological Debate today. Unit 3 concentrates on the History of Christian Mission, particularly the Protestant Missionary Movement of the last 200 years. Unit 4 combines a study of the Church Growth Movement with a study of the debate about Secularization and the decline of religion in the western world. At this level, therefore, the student is encouraged to select one or more units and work out in particular areas some of the basic methodologies explained in Phase One.

'In Phase Three the focus narrows to one particular religion - Islam. The choice of this religion is determined largely by the special interest of the lecturer, but can also be justified by the contemporary resurgence of Islam and the fact that of all the world religions it probably poses the greatest intellectual challenge to Christianity. The study of Muslim-Christian Dialogue requires a historical study of relations between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and Europe over 14 centuries, an understanding of the wide range of Christian attitudes to Islam, and sensitivity in handling the difficult areas of controversy between the two religions' (1).

An outline of the course was presented in diagrammatic form (see following page).

The full text of the Submission appears as Appendix 2.

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1. January 1988 CNAA Submission, pages 82 - 84.

MISSION and RELIGION

PHASE III

MUSLIM – CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE		
① Qur'an and Sunnah	② St. John of Damascus and the Middle Ages	③ 19th and 20th Centuries
8 CCH	4 CCH	15 CCH

PHASE II

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
THE STUDY OF RELIGION	HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSION	AREAS OF CONTEMPORARY MISSIOLOGICAL DEBATE	CHURCH GROWTH and DECLINE	RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY (PSU)	THE PROBLEM OF THE MIDDLE EAST
CC 16 CCH	CPW 16 CCH	CC 16 CCH	CC 15 CCH	EC 15 CCH	CC 15 CCH

PHASE I

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF MISSION and THE STUDY OF RELIGION	ENTERING ANOTHER FAITH (ISLAM)	HISTORICAL and CULTURAL CONTEXT OF RELIGION (HINDUISM and BUDDHISM)	PHENOMENOLOGY OF RELIGION (AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION)	THEOLOGY OF MISSION	PLURALISM and CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TO OTHER FAITHS
6 CCH	7 CCH	7 CCH	7	6 CCH	7 CCH

2.3.5 'Introducing the Other-Faiths Dimension into Theological Education' and 'Meeting the Challenge of Islam in Theological Education'

Reference has already been made in the rationale for the 1988 Submission tothe need for an inter-disciplinary approach to the teaching of Islam in theological education (page 28). I first attempted to argue this case with my colleagues at Trinity College in two papers with the above titles which I presented at a staff seminar in September 1986. The aim of the papers was to suggest that issues relating to other faiths cannot and should not be tackled only through the Study of Mission or the Study of Religion.

The paper began by referring to the document Theology on full Alert, which was an attempt to explore ways in which an awareness of other faiths can be introduced into existing curricula (1). That document, first written by Kenneth Cracknell and Christopher Lamb in 1984, outlined two basic approaches and gave many examples of how different institutions had tried to follow one or other of them:

(1) to introduce the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion in the curriculum in some form as additional subjects;

(2) to encourage every discipline of theology to take on board this extra dimension.

The 1983 CNAA Submission from Trinity College took the first approach. Theology on Full Alert, however, favoured the second approach for two main reasons:

(a) it is often very difficult to introduce new subjects into a curriculum which is already overloaded;

(b) it is all too easy for the study of theology to become compartmentalized, with the result that the study of other faiths merely becomes a completely separate discipline with very little connection with other disciplines.

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1. Kenneth Cracknell and Christopher Lamb, Theology on Full Alert, BCC, London, 1984; revised and enlarged edition, 1986.

My response to Kenneth Cracknell and Christopher Lamb at the ACATE Conference in 1984 (for which Theology on full Alert was originally written) was to suggest that it is unrealistic to imagine that students and/or teachers can easily add this new other faiths dimension to existing subjects, unless there is some opportunity for them to be introduced to the study of other faiths in some other context.

The case I presented to my colleagues at Trinity College, however, was that having taken the step of introducing the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion into our curriculum, the next challenge to us was to explore how the other faiths dimension could be introduced into certain other subjects, if not into every other subject in the curriculum.

The first of the two papers dealt with other religions in general, and started with Max Warren's claim that 'the impact of agnostic science' would turn out in the long run to have been 'as child's play compared to the challenge to Christian theology of the faith of other men' (1).

The second of the two papers concentrated on Islam, and began with the following quotation from William Montgomery Watt:

> 'It is hardly too much to say that the intellectual challenge to Christianity from Islam at the present time is greater than any challenge Christians have had to meet for fifteen centuries, not excluding that from natural science' (2).

The paper argued that if there is any truth in Montgomery Watt's claim, the whole church needs to be alerted to the nature of the challenge. If we consider the challenge in the context of Theological Education, it soon becomes clear that the Islamicists and the teachers of Religion cannot on their own do all that is required to make students aware of the issues. If we have had to tackle western agnosticism in the context of Church History, Philosophy, Doctrine and Biblical Studies, what would happen if we were to start trying to answer Islamic questions in these different disciplines?

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1. Max Warren, in an address at Scarborough, Ontario, 18 October, 1958; quoted by Wilfred Cantwell Smith in Christianity and Other Religions, edd John Hick and Brian Hebblethwaite, Collins, London, 1980, page 91.
2. W. Montgomery Watt, Times Literary Supplement, Insert on Islam, 30 April, 1976, p 513.

The remainder of the paper attempted to spell out some of the ways in which the study of Islam can, and perhaps should, impinge on the different disciplines of theological study. It did so by suggesting a series of questions which could be addressed to ten different disciplines of theological study, and which could be used as subjects for interdisciplinary essays for second and third year students.

The first draft of these questions was prepared during a visit to Jeddah in 1986. Seeing the world from that vantage point had enabled me to think of the task of theological education in a new light! These essay titles were listed as follows:

1. ISLAM AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

(1) How much does Islam have in common with the Judaism of the OT?

(2) Why do Muslims believe it was Ishmael, not Isaac, whom Abraham tried to offer as a sacrifice?
Can we be sure that Ishmael was the ancestor of the Arabs?
How did Islam come to associate Abraham with the Ka'ba in Mecca?
Is there any kind of evidence outside the Qur'an to support this association?
Can Islam be seen in any way as the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham concerning Ishmael in Genesis 15?

(3) Is there any way of accounting for Muhammad's selective and often sketchy knowledge of OT characters and history.?

(4) How did the OT prophets carry out their campaign against idolatry?
Is there anything in common between their preaching and their action and that of Muhammad in his campagn against Arabian polytheism?

(5) Some Christians try to find evidence for the Trinity in the OT: eg. the plural of majesty in Genesis 1 ('let us make man ...'); 'Holy, holy, Holy ...' (Isaiah 6); the theophany to Abraham; Melchizedek; the angel of the Lord etc). Even if such an exercise is helpful for the Christian who already believes in the Trinity, does it have any value in speaking to the Muslim and convincing him about the Trinity?
Are there other ways of using the OT to explain the Trinity to the Muslim?

(6) Is there anything in common between ideas of sacrifice in the OT and ideas of sacrifice in Islam (eg 'Id al Adha)?

(7) How much is there in common between the idea of God in Islam and the idea of God in the OT?

(8) Describe and evaluate the contribution made by well-known OT scholars to the study of Islam: eg Julius Wellhausen, George Adam Smith, and Duncan Black McDonald.

(9) What is the role of Abraham in Islam?

(10) Compare and contrast the story of Joseph as recorded in Genesis and the Qur'an (Surah 12).

2. ISLAM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

(1) Is it possible to trace in the gospels any of the stages by which the disciples, all strictly orthodox Jews, holding firmly to the unity of God, came to believe that Jesus was 'more than a prophet'?

(2) How much does the book of Acts speak about the Christology of the early Church? Can this help us in explaining Christian beliefs to Muslims today?

(3) How much does Islam have in common with the Judaism of the NT? Does the shari'a in Islam play anything like the same role as the torah in Judaism?

(4) Is it possible to put on one side centuries of Christian discussion about the Trinity in the context of Greek, Roman and European civilizations, and go back to the NT to work out a way of expressing our belief in the divinity of Jesus and the Trinity that is easier for the Muslim to understand and causes less unnecessary offence?
If traditional Christian formulations are influenced so much by Western vocabulary and thought forms, it is (a) possible, and (b) desirable to get back to the more Semitic vocabulary and thought forms of the NT writers?

(5) Is it possible to believe in Jesus as God and man without using the title 'Son of God'?
If Jesus refused to call himself 'Messiah' because of the misunderstandings inherent in the word for a 1st Century Jew (eg the military/political Messiah, and the Messiah descending on the clouds), are we justified in putting the title 'Son of God' on one side because of its associations for the Muslim (God physically begetting Jesus as his Son) and using other titles (like 'Word') when speaking to the Muslim?

(6) Which of the NT words associated with atonement is more helpful and which is less helpful in speaking with the Muslim?

3. ISLAM AND DOCTRINE

(1) How much did Islam owe to Judaism, and to Christianity?

(2) What solution did Islam offer to the Christological controversies of the early centuries?

(3) What evidence is there that Muhammad and his followers were influenced by heretical Christian teaching (eg about the person of Christ)?

(4) How do we defend the doctrine of the Trinity against Muslim attacks? How would you try to explain the doctrine to a Muslim?

(5) How do we defend the doctrine of the Incarnation against the challenge of Islam? How would you try to explain your understanding of the Incarnation?

(6) Most Christians assume the need for atonement, and spend their time discussing different theories of atonement (ie questions concerning the how of atonement). How do we answer the Muslim who sees no need for any atonement, and for whom the idea of sacrifice for sins is meaningless, blasphemous and unnecessary?

(7) Compare and contrast Muslim and Christian understandings of revelation and inspiration. Compare and contrast the role of Scripture in Christianity and Islam.

(8) Compare and contrast Muslim and Christian eschatologies.

(9) What is the role of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in Islam? Is there anything in common with her role in Christianity?

(10) How have the great theologians of the past (eg Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin, Luther etc) sought to face up to the challenge of Islam?

(11) Do the great theologians of the 20th Century (eg Barth, Brunner, Tillich, Rahner, Bultmann, Moltmann etc) have anything to say about other religons in general and Islam in particular?

4. ISLAM AND CHURCH HISTORY

(1) What was the state of Christianity in Arabia at the time of Muhammad?

(2) How much did Muhammad owe to the example of Byzantium in his understanding of the relationship between 'Church' (and its Islamic equivalent) and 'state'? What examples have there been of Christians following the same approach and trying to set up a 'Christian state'?

(3) What was the state of Christianity in the Middle East and North Africa during the spread of Islam in the centuries after Muhammad?

(4) How are we to account for the collapse of Christianity before the spread of Islam in North Africa and in Byzantium?

(5) How did Christianity and Islam interact during the centuries of Islamic civilization in Spain?

(6) How much did Europe owe to Islam in the Middle Ages (eg translation of Greek and Latin texts, art, philosophy, science, mathematics, medicine, etc)?

(7) What can we learn from the experience of the Eastern Churches which have lived alongside Islam since it began?

(8) What was the motivation of the Crusaders, and how did they think about Islam?
What impact did the Crusades make on the Muslim world?
What has been the legacy of the Crusades in Muslim-Christian relations since then?

(9) What kind of record does the Church have in the way it has treated minorities and heretics? How does its record compare with the record of Islam in its treatment of minorities, eg Jews and Christians?

(10) To what extent did the missionary movement from Europe and North America in the 19th and 20th Centuries go hand and hand with European colonialism? How do we answer Muslim accusations about the motives and methods of Christian missions in the Third World?

5. ISLAM AND PHILOSOPHY

(1) What were the influences which led to the development of philosophy within Islam? In what ways has Islamic philosophy influenced and been influenced by Christian theology and philosophy?

(2) What solutions has Islam offered to some of the traditional problems of philosopohy: eg. predestination and freewill; the problem of evil; miracles; 'the one and the many'; reason and faith?

(3) In what ways did Islam contribute to the development of Western philosophy?

(4) What philosophical problems are involved in the Islamic understanding of the oneness of God?

(5) How do Muslims respond to the challenge of modern science and technology: eg. evolution; the scientific method; atheism associated with modern science; issues associated with ecology; the spread of technology etc.

(6) What is the contemporary Muslim apologetic against modern materialism, scepticism, and Marxism?

(7) Should Communism and agnosticism be seen as common enemies to Christianity and Islam? Can Christians and Muslims work together and present a common front in these areas?

(8) How have Christians and Muslims used polemics, in the past, and how do they continue to do so today?
What do you see as the role of apologetics in our discussion with Muslims?
What is the difference between apologetics and dialogue? What should be the distinctive marks of dialogue between Christians and Muslims?

6. ISLAM AND ETHICS

(1) What is the basis of Muslim ethics? How is the Muslim taught to determine ethical values?

(2) What common ground is there between Christian ethics and Muslim ethics?

(3) What is the ideal of the Muslim state? Do Christians today have any similar concept of 'the Christian state'? What are some examples of Christians in the past who have thought in similar terms (Christendom, the Papacy etc)?

(4) What is unique about Muslim political theory? Is there such a thing, and can there be such a thing, as 'Christian poltical theory'?

(5) To what extent should we in our country seek to accomodate Muslim demands regarding the ritual slaughter of animals?

How do we stand in relation to the confrontation between Muslims and the Animal rights lobby?

(6) What are the differences between Muslim and Christian attitudes to women and to marriage and the family?

(7) Both Islam and Christianity see man as God's vice-gerent on earth, responsible for taking care of the earth's resources. Is it possible for Christians and Muslims to have a common mind on questions of ecology today?

(8) What are the ethical problems associated with the concept and practice of mission in Christianity and of da‘ wa in Islam?

(7) ISLAM AND PASTORAL STUDIES

(1) What is distinctive and unique about Islamic thinking about the family and the Muslim community?

(2) How does the Muslim understand the relationship between religion and culture?

(3) How does the Muslim's thinking about the Muslim community differ from the way the Christian thinks about (a) the Church, and (b) the society to which he belongs?

(4) How does the Muslim cope with the challenge of secular society in the West - eg. the media and education?

(5) Should we encourage Muslims to retain as much of their culture as possible, or to integrate into British society? Should we hope for assimilation?

(6) To what extent should we sympathise with the Muslim desire for Muslim education for their children?

(7) What are the special problems of Muslim young people in growing up in our society today?

(8) Should we be involved in helping Muslims as individuals, families and communities to obtain their full rights in our society? If so, how? If not, why not?

(9) Should we relate to Muslims as individuals, or as members of a family and community?

(10) An Anglican vicar is Chaplain to the Lord Mayor in the City. How should he respond when the Mayor asks for a Muslim chaplain to be appointed? What happens if he is invited to take part in an act of worship?

(11) Should we encourage local government and national government to be sympathetic to Muslim requests/demands - eg for halal meat for prisons and schools etc? How far should we go?

(12) A Muslim girl is not allowed by her religion to marry a Christian man; but a Muslim man may marry a Christian girl without forcing her to become a

Muslim. What should be our response when a Christian girl (however committed or uncommitted she is) wants to marry a Muslim?

(13) What is involved in baptism for a convert from Islam? How does the convert understand it and how does his family/community understand it? How should we respond to a request for baptism for a Muslim convert?

(14) What would you say, and how would you pray, if invited to attend or take part in a Muslim funeral?

8. ISLAM AND SPIRITUALITY

(1) What can we learn from the discipline of Muslim prayer? Is it something we ought to copy? Or is it something we should reject as legalism?
What other kinds of prayer are there in Islam apart from the ritual prayers five times a day?

(2) What is the attraction of Sufism for Muslims? Did orthodox Muslim theology make Muslims feel that God is abstract, inmpersonal and unknowable? To what extent was/is Sufism a reaction to such a tradition? How much is there in common between Sufism and the mystical tradition within Christianity?

(3) Does the Muslim know that his sins are forgiven? Does he know what will happen to him on the Day of Judgement? How does this affect his spirituality?

(4) What is the fear of God in Islam? Is it different from the fear of God in Christianity?

(5) Is there anything comparable to 'conversion' and 'new birth' for the Muslim?

(6) Is there anything comparable to the process of 'sanctification' for the Muslim?

(7) What does pilgrimage to Mecca mean for the Muslim? What does he get from it? What does it do for his faith, and his standing in society? Is there/should there be anything comparable to pilgrimage in Christianity?

(8) What is the role of the Prophet Muhammad in the spirituality of many Muslims? How do they seek to model their character and life-style on the Prophet? How do we account for the veneration of the Prophet found in many Muslim countries? Is Muhammad ever seen as more than a Prophet and model?

(9) Many have commented on the wide gulf between the orthodox Islam of the Qur'an and the theologians and the popular Islam as practised in many different countries all over the world. How do we account for this difference? Is there anything comparable in Christianity?

9. ISLAM AND THE STUDY OF MISSION

(1) How are we to account historically for the spread of Islam? Why was Islam so successful in its mission? Can Church Growth Principles be

applied to explain the spread of Islam at particular times and in particular places?

(2) How are we to formulate a 'theology of religions'? Why does God in his sovereignty allow the existence of Islam (or any other religion)?

(3) How does Islam cope with religious pluralism?

(4) If Islam has its own understanding of mission (da῾ wa), what is the theological basis for its mission, and how do Muslims understand the mission of Islam in the world today?

(5) Should there be anything special about the Christian's understanding of the Churches' mission to Islam? Should we think of our mission to Islam as different from our mission to, for example, Hindusim or African Traditional Religion?

(6) What can we learn from the history of Christian mission in the Muslim world?

(7) Evaluate the way the Homogenous Unit Principle (HUP) is used to argue for the formation of Muslim convert churches.

(8) Why is the contemporary debate about Gospel and Culture significant in our thinking about Muslim evangelism?

(9) What is the value of polemics, apologetics, proclamation and dialogue in our relations with Muslims today?

10. ISLAM AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION

(1) What does the word 'religion' mean to the Muslim?

(2) Is there any difference between the understanding of 'religion' as developed in the western world in the Study of Religion and the understanding of religion in Islam?

(3) How do Ninian Smart's Six 'Dimensions of Religion' help us to understand the religion of Islam?

(4) Is it (a) possible and (b) desirable for the Christian to try to enter with sympathy/empathy into the world of Islam?

(5) How valuable is a phenomenological approach to the study of Islam?

(6) If Christians like Kenneth Cragg have done so much to try to understand Islam from within and interpret it to the Christian world, do any Muslims show any similar desire to understand Christianity from within?

The importance of an inter-disciplinary approach to the teaching of Islam is underlined again in the discussion of the Report of the Islam in Europe Committee, The Presence of Muslims in Europe and the Theological Training of Pastoral Workers (See 4.3).

2.4 BIRMINGMAH, 1990 -

Since taking over the post of Principal at Crowther Hall in Selly Oak, Birmingham, in September '90, I have been teaching in the Department of Mission of the Selly Oak Colleges, and continuing with my research in the Centre for the Study of Islam.

This chapter includes a description and evaluation of a course I have been teaching in the Department of Mission, and of a post-graduate seminar on the subject of my dissertation which I led in the Centre for the Study of Islam.

2.4.1. 'Christian Responses to Islam'

It had been felt for some time that while the Department has always offered courses on different aspects of Mission, and has encouraged its students to attend courses offered on the open time-table by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations, little has been offered in the Department of Mission that is specifically related to Islam. The Dean of Mission, Andrew Kirk, therefore asked me in the summer of '92 to offer a course in the Department on Christian Responses to Islam.

The following is the outline of the course which I have taught, with some modifications, during the autumn term in '92 and the spring term of '93.

Aim

Christianity and Islam have not enjoyed the best of relationships over the past 1400 years. The aim of the course is to explore the complex relationships between Christians and Muslims in the past, and the variety of ways in which Christians have responded, and still respond, to Islam.

Objectives

To give a brief outline of the encounters between Christianity and Islam since the 7th century.

To explain the complicated dynamic at work in these relationships in different contexts and at different times between the two religions which are both by nature missionary religions.

To present and explain the many different ways in which Christians respond to Islam.

To explain the difference between polemics (attempts to attack and discredit Islam), apologetics (the attempts to give a reasoned defence of Christian beliefs) and dialogue (the attempt to enter into genuinely open-ended discussion).

To reflect on case studies of particular situations in the world (eg Nigeria, Malaysia, the UK, the Middle East) where there are particular problems between Christians and Muslims.

To explore the most effective ways in which Christians can bear witness to their faith in Christ.

To introduce participants to the study of texts.

Participants

It will be assumed that participants are attending (or have already attended) the course Introduction to Islam, or already have a basic understanding of the faith and practice of Islam. The course is an optional course, of introductory or intermediate level, and does not require any previous theological study.

Further detials about the content of the course are given in Appendix 3.

My own evaluation of the course would focus on three particular issues:

(1) It has been difficult to teach a class of students with such a wide variety of backgrounds. Approximately a third have been British students preparing to work overseas; another third have been from the continent, and the remainder from Africa or the Far East. Although all the classes have been run as seminars with a great deal of discussion, some of the quieter students and those whose English has been more limited have been very slow to contribute. This has meant that it has been difficult to engage with all the different contexts represented in the class - from Indonesia to Pakistan and Tanzania.

(2) The course outline states: 'It will be assumed that participants are attending (or have already attended) the course Introduction to Islam, or already have a basic understanding of the faith and practice of Islam.' In practice, however, it appears that not all participants have been taking the introductory course. This has meant that time is wasted in class going over basic introductory material. The course can be taught by a different lecturer from the Centre for the Study of Islam each term, and there probably needs to be close coordination between the Department and the Centre.

(3) I recognise the need to introduce other speakers whose theological approach is different from my own. While my starting point does not seem far from that of the majority of participants who have attended the classes, and while I am concerned to explain the wide diversity of approaches to Islam among Christians, the course would be more balanced if a variety of other speakers were invited to take part.

This experience has confirmed three basic convictions about teaching Christian about Islam in this kind of context:

(1) Mission students need a thorough grasp of the foundations of Islam. Wherever possible, this teaching should be given partly or wholly by Muslims, as is the present policy of the Department of Mission.

(2) Students in this context need adequate time for theological reflection on what they have learned about Islam. Whatever their background, they need the time and freedom to think through the basic theological questions in an unhurried way.

(3) There needs to be sufficient time in the classsroom for discussion about the wide variety of situations from which participants come and to which they will be going.

It is hoped that if BK could be used as a text for such a course, and if participants were able to read it in their own time, more time in the classroom could be devoted to discussion.

2.4.2 Presentation at the Graduate Seminar

I was asked to give a presentation at the Graduate Seminar of the Centre for the Study of Islam on 10 March, 1993. The presentation consisted in an explanation of the thinking behind the book Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam. After the presentation several members of the group made comments, some favourable, but mostly unfavourable.

The following are the main critical comments from participants in the discussion that followed, together with a summary of how I tried to answer them at the time or would want to respond on further reflection. These answers represent an attempt to defend the rationale of BK at certain points:

(1) 'Surely you can understand Muslims without understanding Islam. I don't believe it is necessary to understand Islam in order to be able to understand Muslims.' This was the comment of an older Christian laymen, who was uneasy about the general approach of the book, and in particular, about the emphasis on the need for Christians to attempt to understand Islam.

I do not think a Muslim could understand me as an individual if he/she did not understand at least something of Christianity. If my Christian faith is an important part of me, I doubt if a Muslim could understand me at any depth if he/she could not appreciate the way my faith affects the whole of my life. In the same way, I suspect that my Muslim friends would say that I have not begun to understand them, if I have little or no understanding of Islam. I may appreciate something of their individual personalities, their culture, their work and their social context. I will not, however, be able to understand them in any depth if I cannot appreciate the ways in which their faith impinges on every aspect of their lives.

BK emphasises the importance of understanding Islam by devoting the whole of Part 2 to an objective, yet sympathetic, description of Islam. I remain convinced that any attempt to understand Muslims requires some understanding of Islam as an all-embracing world-view and way of life.

2) 'As a Muslim, I don't feel any need to study Christianity. I have known many Christians; but I feel I know them through the Qur'ān.' This Muslim participant felt that he had no need to explore the beliefs and practices of Christians today, since the Qur'ān teaches him all that he needs to know about Christians and Christianity.

If this is how a Muslim today feels about Christians and Christianity, it will be important for Christians to start where the Muslim is. This might mean, for example, entering into further discussion about the relations between Muhammad and the Christians of his day as reflected in the Qur'an and the Sunna. Christians reading the Qur'ān today feel that they are able, as it were, to overhear the kind of discussions that took place between the Prophet and Christians in his own day. At many points, however, Christians will want to point out that beliefs attributed to Christians in the Qur'an represent misunderstandings of orthodox Christian beliefs, and in some cases beliefs that are regarded by most Christians as heretical.

This is the interpretation of the Islamic sources which is given by Jean-Marie Gaudeul in the chapter on the Origins of Islam in Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History (1). The chapter has the subtitle 'A Failure in Dialogue?', which is explained in this way:

> 'Islam owes its existence as a separate religion to the fact that its message and its founder were rejected by the first pagans of Mecca, then by the Jews and finally by the Christians. One would say: Islam exists because dialogue failed' (2).

Many Christians would therefore want to say, 'We are very happy to start the discussion with the Qur'ān. But we wonder if you have really understand us and our faith if you feel that all that you need to know about us and our faith is found in the Qur'ān.'

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1. Jean-Marie Gaudeul, Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History, Pontifical Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Rome, 1984.

2. Jean-Marie Gaudeul, op. cit. page 13.

(3) 'Why should Christians think of Islam as a "challenge"? Islam is not "challenging" anyone. The greatest need today is for Muslims and Christians to learn to live together and see how the two faiths complement each other. We should be working for mutual understanding and co-existence, for better relationships and the betterment of human beings. We should be asking "what can we do together, and how can we live together?" rather than discussing theological questions. I never think of Christianity as a challenge to Islam. Iqbal in his Reconstruction of Islam never saw Christianity as a challenge. Muslims should want Christians to become good Christians, rather than convert to Islam.'

This position seems to represent the more 'liberal' face of Islam, a more 'open' approach which can claim a very honourable pedigree over the last hundred years, and no doubt expresses the feelings of a considerable proportion of Muslims at the present time. It is difficult, however, to see that it is more than one position among many put forward by Muslims. While one can see it as a genuine response to pluralism in the modern world, it is harder to find evidence for such an approach in the first twelve centuries of Islam. If the concept of da'wa means anything at all, it is an invitation to embrace Islam. The message of the Prophet to the Negus of Abyssinia and the rulers of the surrounding nations, according to tradition, was 'I call you to Allah ... And I invite you and your people to Allah, Might y, Sublime'(1). Although Christians and Jews, as 'People of the Book', were not compelled to accept Islam, it can hardly be said that they were simply being invited to 'co-existence with Islam'.

The word 'challenge' is used in the subtitle of the book since this is how many Christians perceive the religion of Islam. The introduction to the book explains the reasons for this perception, but also points out some of the dangers in thinking of Islam in these terms. In spite of these difficulties, the word has been kept in the title, and I would continue to use it in spite of all its limitations, simply because of the need to adress Christian readers where they are, rather than where I would like them to be.

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1. These words were quoted on the cover of the Muslim periodical Impact International, vol 21:5 & 6, 31 Dec 1991 - 9 January 1992.

(4) 'The book clearly comes out of "a particular stable", out of one particular tradition within the Church, which is not representative of the majority of Christians. Moreover, the approach is antiquated, because it simply rehearses the same controversies that Christians and Muslims have been engaged in for centuries.' This was the comment of an Anglican clergyman who has many years of experience overseas and with Muslim communities in England.

All of us come out of 'a particular stable', and the one that I come from is evident from the whole of the thesis. It probably needs to be said, however, that it would be very hard, if not impossible, to write a book on Christian responses to Islam which represents adequately the whole variety of Christian responses to Islam. BK is not adressed to scholars, but to 'people in the pew', and in particular to one kind of 'people in the pew' who represent a sizeable proportion of the churches in the UK and elsewhere.

Many Christians would be satisfied with an approach which aims simply at enabling Christians to understand Islam and to enter sympathetically into the mind of Muslims. They would want to avoid all the theological controversies in which Christians and Muslims have been engaged for centuries. They might want to tackle social and political issues, but have little or no desire to bear witness to what they believe about Jesus. I fully accept that many Christians have no desire to go further than this in their relations with Muslims.

My own understanding of the Christian obligations towards the House of Islam, however, would go beyond this. I cannot find a better expression of this obligation than in the words of Kenneth Cragg:

> 'If Christ is what Christ is, he must be uttered. If Islam is what Islam is, that "must" is irresistible. Wherever there is misconception, witness must penetrate; wherever there is the obscuring of the beauty of the Cross, it must be unveiled; wherever persons have missed God in Christ, he must be brought to them again... in such a situation as Islam presents, the Church has no option but to present Christ.' (1)

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1. Kenneth Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, Collins, London, 1986, pp 304 0 305

It is this sense of obligation to bear witness to our understanding of Jesus which provides the rationale for BK 5 and BSC 5. Sharing our Faith.

The criticism that the approach is antiquated may be based on the fact that considerable space in the book is devoted to all the main areas over which Christians and Muslims have disagreed in the past. I am dissatisfied with the approach of some Christians who seem preoccupied with traditional apologetic approaches (1). But my own experience tells me that these issues still need to be addressed, even if indirectly, because they continue to be raised by Muslims, and because they provide important clues to fundamental differences between the two faiths.

(5) 'What is lacking in this approach is respect for Islam that is based on the deepest humility. There is no suggestion that my dialogue with Muslims can change me and allow me to re-interpret my own understanding of my faith. Since all faith, Muslim or Christian, is a gift, there needs to be a profound interaction between Muslims and Christians. We are called to learn, and should be engaged in open theological sharing.'

This dimension of respect has been implicit in the evolution of the rationale behind the teaching material and the book from the beginnng. My own thinking has changed through contact with Muslims over the years, and I am sure that I have come some considerable way since I first began to meet Muslims and engage with their faith. I therefore constantly find myself in discussion, and sometimes in disagreement, with Christians from similar backgrounds to my own who do not seem willing to questions their assumptions or to move in their thinking. I am more than willing to 're-interpret my own understanding of my faith', and one of the chapters of BK is entitled 'Rethinking and Restating the Gospel' (5.4).

I would also want to argue, however, that it is my respect for Islam that makes me take so seriously the various different ways in which it responds to the Christian faith. If, therefore, in the process of patient and respectful dialogue with Muslims, I have understood Islam's fundamental

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1. See the discussion of In the Family of Abraham in 4.2.

objections to the concepts of Incarnation and Atonement, I am faced with a number of options. I can ignore the differences, or try to pretend that they are not as serious as they appear or as they have been portrayed in the past. Or I can simply engage in very traditional apologetics and/or polemics with a view to convincing Muslims of the truth of the Christian faith. A third option, however, is to try to explore new ways of entering into dialogue which will lead to a more meaningful meeting of minds. I have tried to explore this third option in BK 4.6, a chapter that comes after several chapters dealing with the controversial questions. Moreover, each of the three studies in the series Starting from the Qur'ān begins with a serious study of a Qur'anic theme.

I am certainly committed to the concept of 'open theological sharing'. There must inevitably, however, be some limits to the openness on both sides. Muslims, for example, are not likely to have a great deal of respect for Christians who are so open-minded and flexible in their approach that they are unable to give a clear account of what they believe and why. The contributions of some of the Muslim participants in the seminar indicated clearly the limits to their openness. Others, however, were clearly open to sharing at a deeper level. If a a Muslim post-graduate student one day writes a dissertation on the subject Teaching Muslims about Christianity: A Study in Methodology, this will be further evidence of the commitment to this kind of openness and sharing.

(6) 'Christian minorities in Muslim countries are in a better position and have more freedoms than Muslim minorities in Christian countries. In Egypt, for example, Christians are allowed to follow their own family law, while Muslims in Britain are not allowed to apply Islamic law in relation to family issues.'

In responding to this kind of comment, one has to underline the fact that a great deal always depends on the context in which Christians and Muslims are meeting together and engaging in dialogue. No two situations are the same, and while we can make certain generalisations, we need to be careful about making comparisons, for example, between Egypt and Britain.

My own experience of living in Egypt made me aware of the pressures under which the Christian community feels it is living, and of the subtle (and

not so subtle forms) of discrimination which they face. The position of a Christian minority of between 10% and 15% which dates back to pre-Islamic times is bound to be different from the position of a Muslim minority of around 2% in Britain today. Each situation calls for patient dialogue in which Muslims and Christians are helped to understand and to appreciate the hopes, aspirations and fears of the other community.

It is for this reason that Part 1 of BK and Session 1 of BSC emphasise the importance of Christians meeting Muslims face to face in the actual situations in which they find themselves. When genuine relationships have been established, it may be possible for Christians and Muslims to reflect together on the relations between the two faith communities in that particular situation in the way suggested in the chapter Exploring Dialogue (BK 3.7). There needs to be a willingness on the part of Christians and Muslims to drop their natural defensiveness and look at each situation on its own merits.

3. ADDRESSING ISSUES RELATED TO ISLAM AND OTHER FAITHS: FOUR PRESENTATIONS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

We have already noted (Chapter 1, Introduction, page 3) that there is a whole set of distinctive attitudes towards other faiths in general and towards Islam in particular that are common among evangelical Christians. Any attempt to teach them about Islam will therefore have to be aware of these attitudes and reckon with all the special opportunities and problems that they present in the task of education and training.

Those who have a strong commitment to mission and evangelism, for example, may feel that they have an obligation to share their faith with others, and may be more interested to learn about Islam than those who treat their faith as a purely private affair. They may be very open to learn if the aims of the training seem to fit in with their sense of mission, and if they have confidence in those who are teaching them.

For many, however, negative views about Islam and all other faiths can create barriers and make Christians reluctant to learn about Islam. The assumptions that 'if Christianity is true, Islam and other faiths are false', or that 'Islam is inspired by the Devil' can produce an arrogant and judgemental mentality that is not so open to learn.

The four sections of this chapter consist of revised and edited versions of presentations given in different contexts. The first two were given to audiences concerned with theological education or theological research, while the second two were presented to groups concerned with mission. Three of the four (ie.3.1. 3.3 amd 3.4) are related specifically to Islam, and one (ie. 3.2) deals with issues associated with the teaching of other faiths in general.

All are relevant to the subject of the dissertation in that they represent examples of ways by which I have tried to explain and justify my approach to the teaching of Islam as it has evolved over the years. The original style of the lecture is retained at many points simply in order to illustrate how I have attempted to argue the case with particular audiences.

In each section there is a description of the audience, and an explanation of the aims and rationale of the presentation. Reference is made in footnotes to ways in which these issues, as a result of further reflection, have been dealt with in BK and BSC.

3.1 'Going Soft on Islam? Reflections on Some Evangelical Responses to Islam

A paper with the above title was given at the London Bible College in February, 1988, as the annual Laing Lecture (1). The audience consisted of the staff and students of the college and visitors.

I had two basic aims in the lecture:

(1) To describe the variety of approaches to Islam which come from evangelical sources. These approaches were summed up as

- A traditional evangelical response: 'No compromise with Islam'
- 'A new threshold': 'We need a new theology of religions'
- 'The Call of the Minaret': 'Let's appreciate Islam at its best'
- Folk Islam and power encounter: 'Let's recognize Islam as it is'
- Gospel and culture: 'Let's reduce every unnecessary hindrance'

I argued that there can be no single approach to Islam that is likely to be equally acceptable to all evangelical Christians. These five approaches are described in 3.1.2.

(2) To pin-point basic issues in the discussion of Christian responses to Islam. The five suggested were:

- Is the God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity?
- Is Islam inspired by the Devil?
- Is there any revelation or salvation in Islam?
- What is true Islam?
- How should we respond to the spread of Islam in the West?

My aim in this discussion was to encourage Christians to question simplistic convictions about mission and the uniqueness of Christ in relation to other faiths. In addressing questions related to the spread of Islam in the West, I wanted to illustrate the importance of addressing political and social issues as well as purely theological issues. These five issues are covered in 3.1.3.

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1. Published in Vox Evangelica, Vol xix, 1989, pp 7 - 31

The whole lecture, therefore, as the title suggests, was intended to challenge the assumption that the only legitimate and appropriate approach to Islam among evangelical Christians should be a 'hard-line' approach, which takes a very negative view of Islam. I tried to suggest that there may be as many weaknesses and limitations in the 'hard-line' responses to Islam as there are in those that are regarded by evangelicals as being too 'liberal' or too 'soft'.

3.1.1 Introduction and Conclusion

The Introduction and Conclusion deliberately referred to my time as a student at London Bible College and to subsequent developments in my thinking, in order to say something about my credentials to this audience. It seemed to be important to make these points in ways that evangelical Christians would understand.

Introduction

> Among the many visiting speakers who preached in the mid-week service during my days at the old London Bible College in Marylebone Road was a missionary who at that time was working in North Africa. I don't remember his name, but I do remember his message, because it made a profound impact on me.
>
> His text was John 8 and he spoke about the challenge of Muslim evangelism. The main thrust of his message was that we cannot begin to have an effective ministry with Muslims until and unless we appreciate what we are dealing with in Islam. Just as Jesus was prepared to say to the Jewish leaders 'You are of your father the Devil' (John 8:44), so we today must recognize that Islam is a religion inspired by the Devil, and therefore must think of our ministry among Muslims in terms of a confrontation with him.
>
> I never forgot that address, and it continued to challenge me during my years in Egypt. I had gone out with great hopes of being able to reach Muslims, but soon found myself caught in a Christian ghetto under the

eyes of the Secret Police, and therefore found it hard to make contact with Muslims. During the two years that followed on the Staff of Crowther Hall at the Selly Oak Colleges, I was able to go deeper into the study of Islam. But it wasn't until I was engaged in student work based in Beirut that I had greater freedom to talk to Muslims, and was able to face up to the challenge of Islam more seriously.

What I want to do is to share with you something of my own pilgrimage as an evangelical Christian trying to come to terms with this great world religion...'

Conclusion

If we return finally to the question in our title 'Going soft on Islam?' you may be left wondering: who does the cap fit? You will no doubt have noticed that I have expressed as much fear about 'hardline' approaches as about those which are thought to be 'soft'. So if you are inclined to think that the cap fits people like me, I hope at least that you are persuaded that the issues we are dealing with are far too serious and far too complex for us to allow ourselves to be polarized into two or more camps.

If you find yourself in strong disagreement with some of personal views I have expressed, I hope you can still own me without too much difficulty as a graduate of London Bible College! Thanks to that missionary preacher, I am still living in John 8 and Ephesians 6. But I would suggest that the issues I have tried to discuss have a lot to do with 'the breastplate of righteousness', the shoes which represent 'the readiness to announce the Good News of peace', 'the shield of faith', the 'helmet of salvation', the 'sword of the Spirit', and finally with the prayer that we and the whole church of Christ will 'fearlessly make known' to the House of Islam 'the mystery of the gospel' (Eph 6:10-26).

3.1.2 Appreciating the diversity of evangelical responses

The following examples are not intended to cover the whole range of evangelical opinion; nor do they represent completely distinct schools of thought. Several of them can be seen simply as different emphases. Because of the danger of presenting caricatures of different positions and putting them neatly into fixed categories, these approaches are summed with titles that are an uncontroversial as possible, and with the minimum of comment.

(1) A Traditional Evangelical Response: 'No compromise with Islam'

The use of the indefinite article "A" is deliberate, in order to make the point that we cannot insist that there has been only one Evangelical position. The quotation to illustrate this position comes from a section entitled 'Variety Among Christians' in the Introductory Guide of the Carey College Study Course:

> 'In this time of great opportunity and great expectations there are emerging a number of different stances, even among evangelical Christians, in regard to Christian/Muslim relations.
>
> 'Some enter dialogue to find common ground between Christianity and Islam, others would call this compromise. Some deny that Satan has a role in Islam, others would see a fierce spiritual battle. You will inevitably have to face up to questions such as 'Is the Allah of Islam the same as the God of Christianity?' 'Is Islam a possible way to God?' You may be tempted to think that Islam makes people 'good' even in comparison with many Christians and be led to ask why God should allow these good people to go to Hell.
>
> 'Carey College believes that there is only one way to God the Father and that is through His one and only Son Jesus Christ. This way is made absolutely clear in the Bible and all people regardless of race or country of origin need to accept the Good News and be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. Without the Lord Jesus they are lost.
>
> 'We must face up to the tensions and deep questions that will come to our minds in this study course. We recommend that you bring them into the light in your study groups and hence defeat, through prayer, the powers of darkness that would seek to lead you to compromise and disunity." (1)

Although the writers of the course acknowledge the diversity of views among evangelicals, it is reasonably clear on which side of the fence they themselves want to come down. But part of the value of this summary for our purpose is that it alerts us to three of the key issues which we shall take up later (in 3.1.3): the question of the identity of the God of Islam, the role of Satan in Islam, and the question of the salvation of those who have rejected or never heard the gospel.

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1. Carey College, Introductory Guide to Carey College Study Topics, Carey College, Whitefield House, London, 1987, page 10.

(2) 'A New Threshold': 'We need a new theology of religions'

The title here comes from the booklet A New Threshold: Guidelines for the Churches in their relations with Muslim communities (1). The author was David Brown, a distinguished Islamicist, former CMS missionary, and Bishop of Guildford from 1973 until his death in 1982. He worked closely with an Advisory Group set up by the British Council of Churches and the Conference of British Missionary Societies, which included such well-known names as Professor Sir Norman Anderson and the late Rev Canon Dick Wooton. According to the Preface, however, the document was David Brown's work and appeared 'on his authority'. The following section has the title A new threshold: the modern Antioch:

> 'The disciples of Jesus of Nazareth have crossed many high thresholds of new understanding since they were first called Christians in Gentile Antioch. Each new threshold crossed has resulted in a clearer awareness of the significance of Jesus Christ, and an enrichment of theology as well as producing tensions and misunderstandings...
>
> 'One of the new thresholds which the Church in Britain is called to cross is that which leads to an understanding of other faiths in relation to the purposes of God. In earlier times, most Christians had no occasion to cross this threshold because societies were largely homogeneous, and one major religion was usually dominant in any particular region. For most Christians these conditions still operate. But in today's pluralist world, adherents of different religions share together in common enterprises and as fellow-citizens of the nations and cities in which they live...
>
> 'Understanding other faiths in relation to the purposes of God involves a willingness to believe that many of those who practise other faiths have a living relationship with God and know the power of his grace in their lives. It implies also a willingness to accept that they worship God as he has been made known to them, in spirit and in truth; and to recognize that they enjoy in their own religious pilgrimages experiences which are similar to what Christians call trust and hope, devotion and sincerity, repentance from sin and turning to God. It means also to affirm that the God whom they worship is he whom Christians know as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, even though their understanding of his relationship with the created universe differs from that of Christians. To affirm such statements as these, gladly and with sincerity, is for many Christians to step across a very high threshold indeed. Many do it uncertainly because they fear to devalue their commitment to the lordship of Christ.

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1. David Brown, A New Threshold: Guidelines for the Churches in their Relations with Muslim Communities, British Council of Churches, London, 1976.

'Crossing this threshold, however, need not be a destructive process; instead, it can be a purifying and enriching experience..." (1).

Whether or not we are prepared to go the whole way with David Brown, these words remind us that, as Christians living in Britain, we need to take into account the new situation created by the spread of Islam in the West, and be fully aware of all the political, sociological and theological implications of the pluralist society to which we belong.

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1. op.cit., pages 22 - 23.

(3) 'The Call of the Minaret': 'Let's appreciate Islam at its best'

Since Kenneth Cragg's roots are so firmly within the evangelical tradition, I personally have no hesitation in describing his approach as genuinely evangelical.

The passage I have chosen to give the flavour of his approach comes from his first book The Call of the Minaret, published in 1956, and revised in 1986. The main message of the book is that we need to be willing to listen to the call to prayer and the confession of faith that come from the minaret before we begin our own proclamation, and that we have an obligation to try to appreciate and enter into Islam at its very best.

After a description of contemporary Islam (Part I. Islam at the New Century), he devotes several chapters to an attempt to explain Islam from within, and in its own terms (Part II. Minaret and Muslim). The third part of the book, entitled Minaret and Christian, invites the Christian to hear the call of the minaret as a call to Meeting, to Understanding, to Participation, to Retrieval, to Interpretation and finally to Hope and Faith. The idea of retrieval is explained as follows:

> 'Among the factors contributing to the rise of Islam was the Christian failure of the Church. It was a failure in love, in purity, and in fervour, a failure of the spirit. Truth, as often before and after, was involved to its hurt in the spiritual fault of its trustees. Islam developed in an environment of imperfect Christianity and later by its own inner force gathered such strength to become, and remain, essentially at odds with the pure faith beyond the imperfection.
>
> 'This is the inward tragedy, from the Christian angle, of the rise of Islam, the genesis and dissemination of a new belief that claimed to displace what it had never effectively known. The state of being a stranger to the Christ of Christians has been intensified by further failures of love and loyalty on the part of institutional Christianity in the long and often bitter external relations of the two faiths through the centuries.
>
> 'It is for these reasons that the call of the minaret must always seem to Christians a call to retrieval. They yearn to undo the alienation and to make amends for the past by as full a restitution as they can achieve of the Christ to whom Islam is a stranger. The objective is not, as the Crusaders believed, the repossession of what Christendom has lost, but

> the restoration to Muslims of the Christ whom they have missed. All that the minaret both says and fails to say is included in this call to retrieval as the listening Christian hears it' (1).

Cragg is not content, however, simply to listen to Muslims or to engage in dialogue for the purpose of understanding them. In many of his books he presents a sharp challenge to Islam in three main areas: its understanding of revelation and inspiration; its philosopohy of power based on the example of the Prophet and the conviction that Islam must rule; and its over-optimistic response to evil. Even if his writing is not always easy to understand, there is no escaping Cragg's missionary vision and his desire to bear witness to 'the Christ to whom Islam is a stranger'.

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1. Kenneth Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, Collins, London, 1976, pages 219 - 220.

(4) Folk Islam and Power Encounter; 'Let's recognize Islam as it is'

Whereas Cragg and others have pleaded that we appreciate Islam at its very best, many missionaries believe that there is a real danger in concentrating on 'Ideal Islam', 'High Islam' or 'Islam as it ought to be'. Their experience of missionary work tells them that the description of Islam in text books does not always correspond with Islam on the ground.

Samuel Zwemer was one of the first writers in this century to draw attention to the importance of Folk Islam in three of his books: Islam and Animism (1917), The Influence of Animism on Islam: An Account of Popular Superstitions (1920), and Studies in Popular Islam (1939). He explains the importance of this emphasis in the following words:

> 'The student of Islam will never understand the common people unless he knows the reasons for their curious beliefs and practices ... all of which still blind and oppress mind and heart with constant fear of the unseen... Witchcraft, sorcery, spells, and charms are the background of the native Muslim psychology to an extent that is realised only by those who have penetrated most deeply into the life of the people' (1).

At the Colorado Springs Conference in 1978 the thrust of a paper by Bill Musk entitled Popular Islam: the Hunger of the Heart was summed up as follows:

> 'Christ, in his dealings with ordinary people around him, tended to free them from the 'ideal' religion of the professionals. Why educate the ordinary Muslims in their own faith so that Christ can meet them there tomorrow when he can meet them more fundamentally at the point of their felt-needs today?' (2)

At the same conference Arthur Glasser contributed a paper entitled Power Encounter in Conversion from Islam (3). This same theme was taken up by Paul Hiebert in a paper contributed to a conference in 1987 on Power Encounter and the Challenge of Folk Islam (4). One of the reasons why his

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1. Samuel Zwemer, Studies in Popular Islam, quoted by Bill Musk in The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium, ed Don McCurry, MARC, Monrovia, 1979, page 209.
2. Bill Musk, op cit, page 214.
3. Arthur F. Glasser, in The Gospel and Islam, ed Don McCurry, pages 129ff.
4. Paul Hiebert, Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road, ed J. Dudley Woodberry, MARC, Monrovia, 1979, pages 45 ff. See further Annexe 4, pages 199 ff.

contribution to this debate is so significant is that he writes not only as a missionary with field experience in India, but also as a trained anthropologist. His experience overseas and his involvement in the debate about the Signs and Wonders Movement at Fuller Theological Seminary at Pasadena, California, lead him to warn that 'we must guard lest our answer (to Folk Islam) be a distorted version of Christianity'. He points out the following dangers associated with certain unthinking Christian responses to Folk Islam:

'1. The danger of confusing phenomenology and ontology.
2. The danger of self-centred-narcissism.
3. The danger of a new Christian magic based on a false theology of power.
4. The danger of instituting a new secularism by perpetuating a dualistic world view.
5. The danger of making signs and wonders normative and ends in themselves.
6. The danger of generating a false sense of guilt and failure among those who are not healed or delivered.
7. The danger of exalting a human leader.
8. The danger of selling out to pragmatism.'

For those who wonder how this awareness of Folk Islam and Power Encounter works out in practice in an Islamic context, Vivienne Stacey provides and extremely helpful and balanced treatment in her booklet Christ Supreme over Satan: Spiritual Warfare, Folk Religion and the Occult (1). She does not make the reductionist mistake of saying that everything in our approach to Muslims must be thought of in terms of a power encounter, but explains in detail how she and others have dealt with manifestations of evil in particular situations.

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1. Vivienne Stacey, Christ Supreme over Satan: Spiritual Warfare, Folk Religion and the Occult, Masihi Isha'at Khana, 36 Ferozepur Road, Lahore - 16, Pakistan.

(5) Gospel and Culture: 'Let's reduce every unnecessary hindrance'

This emphasis is one that has come to be associated with the Church Growth Movement, and in particular with the School of World Mission at Fuller Seminary. The person who has worked it out in greatest detail in relation to the Muslim world is Phil Parshall, who worked for over 20 years in the Indian sub-continent, and is now based in Manila.

In his most recent book Beyond the Mosque: Christians Within Muslim Community he sets out his agenda as follows:

> 'Introductory books on Islam continue to flow forth from Christian presses. I find this to be a bit distressing. It seems to me that we should leave the rudiments of Islam and press on to examine the weightier matters of Muslim life: theology, ethics, sociology, and ethnic distinctives. Our efforts should be directed towards exploring the potential to bridge differences between Islam and Christianity...' (1)

He sums up his main message in these terms:

> 'My major thesis is that extraction evangelism is an erroneous methodology and should immediately cease. We must see the light and salt of Christianity expressed through converts' lives within their own sociological milieu of relatives, friends, and acquaintances' (2).

When he asks 'Is there ever a converging set of circumstances that will allow converts to remain members in good standing within Islamic community?' his answer is a very positive YES!

> 'Sociology and theology are inseparable components of Islam. Therefore, it is a serious mistake to approach the religion of 850 Muslims from only a theological perspective. On the other hand, some Christian authors, in my view, have gone too far in proclaiming the obstacles encountered in Muslim evangelism to be primarily sociological. They seem to contend that, given an ideal set of societal circumstances, Muslims will convert to Christ in large numbers. This simply is not true. The offense of the cross and the divinity of Christ remain as major stumbling blocks to the Muslim. We should, however, be committed to reducing every unnecessary hindrance, both sociological and theological, to the Muslim becoming a follower of Christ. My postulate is that we can do a much better job of evangelism among the Sons of Ishmael than we have in the past." (3)

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1. Phil Parshall, Beyond the Mosque: Christians within Muslim Community, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1985, page 13.
2. Phil Parshall, op cit, page 21.
3. Phil Parshall, op cit, pages 177 - 178.

Whether or not we are prepared to go the whole way with all the details of how Parshall has practised Contextualization in his own situations, his writing and his work have forced many to face the question of what a contextualized gospel and a contextualized convert church in any Muslim environment would look like.

If these, then, are some of the main responses to Islam among evangelical Christians, what are the areas of disagreement? The following section suggests some of the basic issues over which evangelical Christians give different answers.

3.1.3 Pin-pointing the basic issues

(1) Is the God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity?

My own approach to answering this question is as follows:

a. The question itself is a kind of trick question, because it forces us to answer with a simple 'Yes' or 'No'. What we need to do, therefore, is to break the question down into several smaller questions:

eg. 1) Is the Christian's idea of God the same as the Muslim's idea of God? Most Christians, if not all, would have to answer 'No!'

2) Is there anything in common between the Christian's idea of God and Muslim's idea of God? Most would not hesitate to answer 'Yes'.

3) Is there enough in common between the Christian's idea of God and the Muslim's idea of God for us to be able to use the same word? This, I would suggest, is the crucial question. Some Christians, like Arne Rudvin of Karachi, believe that there is not enough in common, while others, like Kenneth Cragg, believe that there is enough in common. In the words of Michael Nazir-Ali, 'For Cragg the similarity outweighs the disparity, whereas for Rudvin the disparity clearly outweighs the similarity' (1).

b. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that there is a country somewhere in the world where the sun is never clearly visible. People are aware of the sun, because they can see the shape of the sun behind the clouds, and they know that the sun is the source of heat. But they have never seen the sun in a cloudless sky. Contrast this with someone who lives in the Mediterranean. He sees the sun very clearly, and feels the heat of the sun on his skin. Is it the same sun for both these people? Of course it is the same sun, although their mental image of the sun and their experience of the sun are very different.

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1. Michael Nazir-Ali, Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter, Regnum, Oxford, 1987, page 20.

If we accept the analogy, we can assume that Muslims and Christians are talking about the same God, even though their ideas of that God and their experience of him may differ considerably. If we cannot accept the analogy, we have to think in terms of two completely different planets, like the sun and the moon, and assume that Christians and Muslims are talking about two totally different beings.

c. When Paul is speaking to a Greek audience at the Areopagus in Acts 17 he does not hesitate to use the word theos both for the 'Unknown God' and for the God who raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 17:23-24, 30-31). He believes that there is enough in common between their concept of God and his concept of God for him to use the same word (1).

d. The vast majority of the converts and enquirers whom I have known or heard about assume that there is some real continuity between their knowledge and experience of God before and after their conversion. The experience of people like Bilquis Sheikh in I Dared to call Him Father (2) points to continuity rather than discontinuity.

When converts take a totally negative view and want to repudiate everything in Islam, I suspect that there may be two possible reasons: either it is because the only way they can feel secure in their new faith and in a new community is to cut themselves off from everything in their past, or it is because the Christians who taught them and discipled them have taken a very negative attitude towards Islam.

I am well aware that many English translations of the Qur'an keep the Arabic Allah for God. This is largely, as I understand it, because Muslims are concerned about the possible confusion between God (with a capital G) and god (with a small g). I am also aware that Islamic governments in

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1. See Myrtle Langley, Paul in Athens: Pseudophilosophy of Proclamation? A Missiological Study of Acts 17:16 - 34, Bulletin of the Evangelical Fellowship of Missionary Studies, No 10, 1980, pages 59 - 74.
2. Bilquis Sheikh, I Dared to Call Him Father, Kingsway, Eastbourne, 1978.

Malaysia and elsewhere have not allowed Christians to use Allah in recent translations of the Bible. I believe it can be argued against this view, however, that such practice is not true to the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet. Nothing in the Qur'an suggests that Muhammad ever believed that Jews and Christians, the People of the Book, were worshiping a different God. For example,

> 'Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah ...' (Surah 3:64)

> 'And argue not with the People of the Scripture unless it be in (a way) that is better, save with such of them as do wrong; and say: We believe in that which hath been revealed unto us and revealed unto you; our God and your God is One, and unto Him we surrender.' (Surah 29:46).

When Christians today follow the practice of using Allah for the God of Islam they want to make the theological point that the God of Islam is totally different from the God of Christianity. As one whose introduction to Islam has been through the language of Arabic, I have great difficulty in understanding this practice. If Arabic-speaking Christians never think of using a different word for God, I can see no linguistic reason for us to use such a contrived way of speaking about God in Islam. And for the reasons I have outlined I cannot find any adequate theological reason for trying to distinguish between the word Allah and 'God' in Christianity (1).

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1. This question about the God of Islam and the God of Christianity is discussed in BK 4.1, and BSC 4.1, Theological Questions, and in BK 4.4, Thinking Biblically about Islam.

(2) Is Islam inspired by the Devil?

If I have to give a short and immediate answer to this questions, it would consist of two words: 'YES, BUT ...' In case I am laying myself open to misunderstanding, let me say right from the start that I do believe without hesitation that 'the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers ...' (2 Cor 4:4). I do believe that 'our struggle is ... against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms' (Eph 6:12). I do also believe that 'Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light' (2 Cor 11:14). I am convinced that all these verses are thoroughly relevant to our thinking about other faiths and ideologies.

I want to suggest, however, that there is a real danger in coming too easily and too quickly to the conclusion that Islam is a religion inspired by the Devil. I have six reasons for being hesitant about using these categories too freely in our teaching about Islam.

a. Why single out Islam for special mention? What about the godless Humanism of the West today? What about some of the demonic forces at work in parts of the Christian world, like Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia? When some Christians speak as if Islam is 'Enemy No 1' in the world today, I wonder if they are not getting things out of proportion.

b. An overemphasis on the role of Satan in Islam can easily prevent Christians from facing up to the terrible record of the Christian Church in its relations with Muhammad and his followers. Attributing everything in Islam to demonic forces allows us, so to speak, to 'pass the buck', and fail to recognize the responsibility of the Christian Church in all that has happened. The very existence of Islam can be see as a judgement on the Christian Church, and the record of the Church over 14 centuries in its relations with Islam should leave us with a sense of shame.

As Christians we need to see Church History as our history, and recognize Christians of the past as our people, as brothers and sisters in Christ, however much we may differ from them in points of doctrine. In talking with Muslims we will of course want to disassociate ourselves from the Crusades, just as many Muslims have diassociated themselves from leaders

like Qadhdhafy or the Ayatollah Khomeini. But resorting too quickly to the explanation that Islam is inspired by the Devil may mean that we are letting ourselves off the hook too lightly, and that we never recognize the responsibility of the Christian Church for all that has happened in the past.

c. If we teach that all other religions are inspired by the Devil, some Christians jump to the conclusion that people of other faiths must therefore by definition be possessed by evil spirits. I have more than once encountered this way of thinking in theological students, and I find it most in those who have been deeply influenced by the Charismatic Movement and the Signs and Wonders movement. It is obvious that there are occult practices in some forms of Folk Islam, and I have no difficulty whatever in believing in demon possession. But I do not believe it is either true or helpful to suggest that every Muslim must be treated as a case of demonic possession.

d. We are probably influenced more than we realize by stereotypes of Islam which we have inherited from the past. It was not for purely biblical and theological reasons that our forefathers in the Eastern Churches and in Europe thought of Islam in these terms. There were many other cultural, political and psychological factors which are at work not so far below the surface. This is how Jean-Marie Gaudeul makes the point, writing about the Middle ages:

> 'Europe elaborated instinctively an image of everything it repudiated and projected this image on Islam, the symbol of all that was "un-Christian" ...This was not deliberate, but instinctive: Europe had felt inferior to the Islamic civilization, it had received much from it: philosophy, the sciences, technology; unable as yet to express its own Culture in positive terms, Europe rejected in Islam whatever seemed to threaten its Christian identity' (1).

Norman Daniels, in his book Islam and the West: the Making of an Image shows that many of the popular images and stereotypes of Muslims and Islam in the minds of Europeans and westerners today can be traced back to the writings of Christians in the Middle East and Europe in the Middle Ages(2).

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1. Jean-Marie Gaudeul, Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History, Pontifical Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Rome 1984, page 130.
2. Norman Daniels, Islam and the West: The Making of an Image, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1980.

e. When I find Christians interpreting the contemporary revival of Islam, especially in the Middle East, simply in terms of the work of Satan, my reaction is to plead that this can lead to a terrible oversimplification of complex issues. This resurgence is to some extent a response to centuries of European colonialism, and we cannot understand what has been happening in countries like Iran if we do not even attempt to appreciate the many cultural, political and economic factors that have been involved. I believe we need to be aware that simple explanations expressed in purely spiritual terms can easily have the effect of preventing us from getting to grips with the complexities of history and politics (1).

f. Some Christians use the language of the demonic to explain things that are culturally strange and foreign to them. I remember some Christian friends saying to me before I first went to Cairo, that when they spent some days there they felt an atmosphere of evil in the city. I often used to think and worry about what they had said, because I came to love Cairo with all its crowds and dust and smells and broken pavements. Was it that I was spiritually blind to what was there in the atmosphere, or was it that my friends used the demonic to explain those aspects of a culture with which they could not cope?

Perhaps the answer lies somewhere in between. But my basic fear about explaining Islam in terms of the Satanic is that it can become an easy way out. It absolves us from the need to face up to those areas where judgement may need to begin with the household of God (1 Peter 4:17), and saves us from the hard work of coming to terms with all those pastoral, psychological, political and cultural factors which come into the equation.

Is Islam inspired by the Devil? I hope it is clear from what I have said that my BUTs do not turn my original YES into a NO! They are intended not to make it 'die the death of a thousand qualifications', but rather to qualify the simple YES and to encourage us to get beyond our favourite neat, simplistic answers.

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1. Some of the questions facing the Muslim world today are outlined in BK 2.11, Islam in the Modern World.

(3) Is there any revelation or salvation in Islam?

Once again we need to be cautious about the question itself, because it is framed in such a way as to invite a simple YES or NO for an answer. We therefore need to take revelation and salvation separately, and break the larger questions down into a number of smaller questions:

a. Revelation

1) Are we speaking about general revelation or special revelation?

Most evangelical Christians would reject the view that Muhammad received special revelation, in the sense that he received new revelations from God which had not been revealed before through the prophets, Jesus or the Apostles. No doubt they would also be suspicious of the view that Muhammad's teaching was genuine revelation of a monotheism which was specially relevant and appropriate for the Arabs. Most would probably want to say that if he did receive any special revelation, it did not come to him direct from God, but through what he learned from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

If, however, we are simply speaking about general revelation, we could say that any revelation Muhammad received was no different from the general revelation that is available to all people. Or we might want to argue that if Muhammad was a sincere seeker after God, any revelation he received was no different in principle from that given to a man like Cornelius before his conversion. This would mean that if God had real personal dealings with Muhammad (as I believe most strongly that he did), they were no different in kind from his dealings with all people who are seeking after God (Acts 17:27). Or again, using Charles Kraft's memorable phrase, we may want to think of Muhammad as being 'chronologically AD, but informationally BC'(1). In this case we might want to think that his experiences could have had something in common with people in the OT like Gideon, or possibly even Elijah, even though he was in no sense part of God's salvation history which was worked out through the descendants of Abraham (2).

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1. Charles Kraft, Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective, Orbis, Maryknoll, 1981, page 252.
2. See further BK 4.4 Thinking Biblically about Islam.

2) How did the religion of Islam compare with the religion of Arabia?

We could argue that Islam was a distinct improvement on the pre-Islamic polytheism and idolatry of Arabia. We may therefore want to acknowledge that if the pre-Islamic religion of Arabia had much in common with Canaanite religion, Islam had (and still has) much in common with the monothesim of the OT. On the other hand, we may want to argue that it is irrelevant to ask how close or how far Islam was from the religion of the OT. The final product was a denial of Christianity, and this is all that matters.

3) How are we to understand the development in the experience of Muhammad?

Many Christians are prepared to acknowledge that earlier in his life Muhammad was a sincere seeker after God. He had come to believe in the One Creator God, but did not have the opportunity to read the Bible or find out the truth about Jesus. And because of choices that he made at certain stages in his ministry, he wandered away from the truth that he knew, and was further away from the truth at the end of his life than he was at the beginning. Other Christians answer this question, however, by saying that what matters is 'the finished product', namely his life and teaching as a whole, and that studying the development of his experience is therefore irrelevant.

4) How are we to understand Muhammad's rejection of Christianity?

Here again there are at least two possible answers we can give. We can say that what Muhammad rejected was at best a misunderstanding of the Gospel, and at worst a travesty of the Gospel. We simply do not know how Muhammad would have responded if he had had an opportunity to hear the true Gospel. But because the Christianity he rejected was so imperfect, we cannot immediatley put Muslims into the same category as Arians or Jehovah's Witnesses. The other answer would be that since Muhammad denied the deity of Christ and the cross, Islam must be seen as a heresy just like any other heresy, ancient or modern. It is irrelevant to ask 'what would have happened if he had known the true Gospel?'

5) How are we to understand the psychological processes of the so-called 'revelations' which came to Muhammad?

Some would say that the descriptions of Muhammad's practices and experiences in the Qur'an and the Hadith suggest that they had strong similarities with those of ascetics, monks and mystics etc. But since there is not enough clear evidence, we need to look at the content of the revelations rather than the psychological processes involved. On the other hand, many Christian would not hesitate to say that Muhammad must have had dealings with the occult, and that any 'revelations' he received must have come from evil spirits (1).

b. Salvation

In this context we cannot avoid asking the difficult question: what about those who have not heard the gospel? Dick Dowsett's answer in God, that's not fair is very clear-cut and straightforward: the Bible teaches that only those who consciously respond to the gospel can be saved, and that the realization of this truth must be a basic motive for mission (2). Norman Anderson, however, expresses some reservations about this view, and is prepared to believe that God is able to read the hearts of all people and recognize whether or not a person expresses any kind of trust and repentance towards God (3). When he takes this view he is not saying that there is an alternative way of salvation within Islam, but rather that it is perfectly possibly that Muslims, not as Muslims, but as sinners who show genuine repentance and faith towards God, may experience salvation through Christ, even if they have not heard or understood the Gospel. This is very different from Rahner's Anonymous Christianity, which has been summed up by Lesslie Newbigin as 'conferring an aegrotat degree in absentia upon a non-matriculant who does not even believe in tertiary education' (4).

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1. Questions about revelation are discussed in BK 4.1 and BSC 4.1, Theological Questions.
2. Dick Dowsett, God that's not fair!, Send the Light, Sevekoaks, 1982.
3. Norman Anderson, Christianity and World Religions: the Challenge of Pluralism, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1984, pages 162 - 175.
4. Leslie Newbigin, quoted by Peter Cotterell in The Eleventh Commandment: Church and Mission Today, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1981, page 15.

Whenever a Muslim asks me whether I believe Muhammad was a prophet, I simply reply, 'If I did believe that he was a prophet, I would be a Muslim', and he has no difficulty in seeing the point. I do believe that John 14:6 is relevant to people of other faiths; but I do not believe that Jesus is saying here that non-Christians have no knowledge of God at all; he seems rather to be saying that no one can come to know God as Father, except through Jesus the Son (1).

When we come to the Scriptures with our questions about who is going to be saved, we need to be prepared to find different kinds of answers. I believe that Acts 4:12 is as uncompromising as it sounds: 'Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved'. But when someone asked Jesus, 'Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?' he gave an answer that the disciples probably did not expect. He said in effect, 'Make sure that you yourselves enter through the narrow door! For some of the people who are most confident of their place in heaven will be turned away, and people from north, south, east and west will be welcomed into the kingdom. There are going to be some surprises in heaven! (Luke 13:22-30. 2) (3).

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1. This text is discussed further in BK 4.4 Thinking Biblically about Islam.
2. See Lesslie Newbigin, The Open Secret, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978, pages 196 - 197.
3. The question concerning salvation is deliberately avoided in both BK and BSC. Firstly, because it is so complex and demands sensitive handling in any context. Secondly, because discussion of such a difficult theological issues could very easily divert Christians from focusing on the subject in hand - the faith of Islam.

(4) What is true Islam?

One way of breaking the 9th Commandment ('You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour', Ex 20:16) is to compare the worst in Islam with the best in Christianity. But there are other more subtle variations of this same sin, like accepting any and every action of Muslims as expressions of Islam, and judging the history of Islam in previous centuries by the moral standards of the 20th century. If, therefore, we want to make sure that we do not give false testimony against our Muslim neighbour, we need to be willing to ask this difficult question, and explore what is 'the real thing'.

In case we find that this discussion leads us into a maze, I suggest the following as basic guidelines to help us to find our way through:

a. We must allow Muslims themselves to tell us what they believe is true Islam.

b. When we are not in a position to find out from Muslims themselves, we must use the criteria that Orthodox Muslims would use to distinguish between genuine Islam and distortions or perversions of Islam: ie. does it conform to the teaching of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet?

c. We must apply the Golden Rule and remember how we deal with the difficult question of what is real Christianity. If we feel compelled to disassociate ourselves from the Crusades, or from particular actions and attitudes of Roman Catholics, of the Moral Majority or of Protestant Loyalist preachers in Northern Ireland, we must allow Muslims to do the same. This is nothing more nor less than the Golden Rule: 'Always treat others as you would like them to treat you' (Matt 7:12 NEB).

There are at least four areas in which this may be a crucial question.

1) 'Folk Islam'

How much of 'Folk Islam' is true Islam? Do we see the true spirit of Islam in the Wahhabi protest against superstitions, the veneration of saints, and Sufi practices etc? Or would we have to say that Muhammad's incorporation

into Islam of pre-Islamic rituals associated with pilgrimage to the Ka'aba suggests that this kind of folk religion is an inevitable and integral part of Islam even at its best and purest? I do not pretend to know the answer to this question. But it does need to be asked, because it is totally unfair of us to assume that everything that goes under the name of 'Folk Islam' is true Islam. People in glass houses should not throw stones! How do we like it when Muslims look at Folk Christianity and assume that it is true Christianity?

2) Parshall's Contextualization

Parshall's approach is relevant in this context because he seems to fail to ask the question: what is true Islam? When in Beyond the Mosque: Christians Within Muslim Community he explores the possibility of converts remaining within the Muslim umma, he never stops to ask the question: what does Islam think of Muslims who renounce their faith and become Christians? He refers briefly and indirectly to the Law of Apostasy, but never discusses it in detail. This is partly deliberate, since his own experience has led him to be reasonably optimistic (1).

The problem, however, probably goes deeper than this. His refusal to tackle the Law of Apostasy means that he never faces up to the fact that if the shari'a is upheld and applied consistently in the case of Muslims converting to Christianity, it is never going to be possible for Muslim converts to be accepted as disciples of 'Isa (Jesus) within the umma. There are good reasons for encouraging converts to remain within their own family and culture as much and as long as they possibly can, and no one should be arguing for a return to the old extractionism. But I cannot see how we can encourage them to think that they belong to the Islamic umma and to the Body of Christ, both sociologically and theologically, at the same time. In so far as a Muslim community allows converts to remain totally within their own culture and community without any real dislocation, the Muslim community is not being genuinely Muslim. We can be thankful that this does

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1. Phil Parshall, Beyond the Mosque: Christians Within Muslim Community, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1985.

sometimes happen. But when it does, it may be proving the point of the saying 'the further from Mecca, the less pure the Islam'. And refusing to acknowledge what is true Islam in this area may mean that we do not help converts adequately to 'go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore' (Hebrews 13:13) (1).

3) Islam and Israel

Bat Yeor's book The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam documents with frightening detail how Jews and Christians were often treated as dhimmis, protected minorities in the Islamic Empire (2). Reviewers of the book have argued that she has oversimplified and overstated her case, if not actually distorted it (3). Some moderate Muslims today claim that Islam has got beyond the dhimma system, and that it need not be an essential part of Islamic faith and practice in dealing with minorities (4). But if Ismail Faruqi can be regarded as an authoritative spokesman of mainstream Orthodox Islamic thought, the Islamic solution to the problem of the Middle East is based fairly and squarely on the dhimma system and is breathtakingly simple: all the present nation states from Morocco to Pakistan should be turned into one Islamic State. The Zionist State of Israel must also be dismantled. Jews who have illegally seized lands from Arabs must return them or pay compensation; but any Jews who wish to remain are welcome to settle wherever they will, within the Islamic umma as dhimmis (5).

Because I believe that Faruqi probably expresses consistently the spirit of Orthodox Islam, I find myself caught in a very real dilemma over the Palestinian question at the present time. While I have the utmost sympathy for the Palestinians because of all the injustices that they have suffered, I cannot accept the theological basis of Muslim opposition to the state of

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1. See further BK 4.5 and BSC 4.3, Counting the Cost of Conversion.
2. Bat Ye'or, The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam, Associated University Presses, London and Toronto, 1985.
3. Jorgen Nielsen, Review in Newsletter of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations, No 15, May 1986, pages 26 - 32.
4. Quotation by Gabriel Habib in Christian-Muslim Issues in the Middle East in Christian-Muslim Encounter in the Middle East, Middle East Council of Churches, Geneva, No. 4/5, July/August 1985, page 31.
5. Ismail R al-Faruqi, Islam and Zionism in Voices of Resurgent Islam ed John L.Esposito, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, pages 261 - 267.

Israel. This may be an example of where Islam may be showing itself in its true colours to the modern world.

4) Cragg's Ideal Islam

I can remember attending a supper party in Cairo several years ago in the home of a leading member of the Episcopal Church, when she said to Kenneth Cragg: 'We Christians in the Muslim world admire your understanding of Islam, and we know that even Muslims recognize you as an authority. But we also feel that you make life difficult for us, because you present such an ideal kind of Islam. In fact we feel that you can present Islam in a far more convincing and attractive way than Muslims themselves can ever do!'

What is it that drives Cragg in this direction? Christopher Lamb finds the key to Cragg's approach in the twin concepts of Hospitality and Embassy:

> 'Hospitality involves not only the personal inviting of Muslims into one's home and as one's friend, but also the openness to Muslim society and understanding... Hospitality ... is best understood as a hospitality to the mind and heart of Islam itself. Cragg believes that by opening ourselves to the message of the Qur'an and the understanding of Muslims recorded in the voluminous literature of Islam Christians with a proper perception can truly find "Islamic reasons for being Christian".
>
> 'Likewise, embassy means not only speaking the word of Christ in Muslims lands but also the determination to be fully 'resident' in those lands and at home where they are ... The Christian missionary aims 'to help Islam to a more critical awareness of itself'. In other words, Muslims must be persuaded and urged to ask the kind of questions which will turn out to have Christian answers' (1).

If Cragg begins, therefore, with a desire to listen to the call of the minaret and appreciate Islam at its very best, he is not content just to listen. And in pointing Muslims to 'the Christ whom they have missed', he believes that Christians have a mission not only to individual Muslims, but also to Islam as a whole. So if it seems at times that he is 'reading Christian meanings into Islamic concepts' (2), it is because he judges everything in Islam by the measure of Christ and aims at nothing less than 'recruitment to Christ' (3).

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1. Christopher Lamb, The Missionary Theology of Kenneth Cragg, unpublished paper of the Islam Panel, CMS, 1987.
2. Alber Hourani, Muslims and Christians in Europe and the Middle East, Macmillan, London, 1980, page 76.
3. Christopher Lamb, op cit.

(5) How should we respond to the spread of Islam in the West?

Evangelical Christians believe in the sovereignty of God at work in history, and recognize both the obligation and the opportunity to share the Gospel with the Muslims. But while - or even perhaps before - we do that, we need to face up to a whole cluster of challenges which have as much to do with psychology, culture and politics as with theology and mission. For what we are dealing with here is not just the question of how we think of Islam and how we evangelize Muslims, but the gut reaction of white, British Christians to a growing community of Asians and Arabs settled in our midst.

What we need to do here, therefore, is to articulate as clearly and honestly as posible the instinctive reactions that many of us have, and which we sometimes put into words, and then suggest how they can be seen in the light of the Gospel.

a. 'The Muslims are aiming to convert Europe, and they see Britain as a key to the conversion of Europe and the West'.

This may be true of some Muslims. But let us recognize that for every Muslim in Britain who has a strong missionary vision, there are dozens of Muslims who are only interested in the survival of the present Muslim community in Britain. They are so concerned to hold on to their young people and protect them from the influence of our godless society that they have little interest in spreading the faith of Islam. There are many groups which are actively spreading the message of Islam; and the church needs to be aware that they are not interested in the kind of open-ended dialogue which many Christian leaders are calling for. But although a number of individuals have converted to Islam, I personally do not forsee vast numbers of white British people becoming Muslims, largely because Islam still appears so culturally foreign in this country.

b. 'They are using their oil wealth to finance the spread of Islam'.

Once again this is no doubt true. But how much did the modern missionary movement owe to the wealth created by the Industrial Revolution in Europe?

And are the Muslims doing anything in principle that Christians have not done?

A recent newspaper article refers to the Archbishop of Kenya expressing concern about petro-dollars being used to win Christians to Islam. It also reports the reply given by Professor Ali Hillal Dessouki of Cairo University in a public lecture in Nairobi:

> '... that Muslims today were behaving similarly to the first Christian missionaries who came to evangelise Africa.
> 'Like Muslims today ...the early missionaries used all available human and material resources, including money, to conduct their evangelistic work ... Muslims had as much right as Christians to continue to evangelise Africans ...' (1)

c. 'They have no right to ask for the implementation of Islamic law in Britain.'

But is there any reason, either legal or theological, why they should not ask for halāl meat for Muslims in schools and in prisons? When Christians suggest that Muslims want the whole legal system in this country to be abolished and for us to adopt sharī'a law, I fear that they are playing on people's fears about 'the thin end of the wedge' and 'the domino theory'. Muslims in this country at the present time are in a very strange and an almost un-Islamic situation, because they live as dhimmis in a post-Christian, secular, pluralist democratic state.

The Qur'an never envisaged Muslims living in that kind of situation, and the nearest parallel in the time of the Prophet to which Muslims can point would be the Emigration of Muhammad's followers to seek refuge under the Christian Emperor in Abyssinia in 615 - 616 AD. While Judaism has had to develop a theology of Diaspora, Muslims are still in the process of developing a theology to explain the situation in which they find themselves in the West. We are not in Malaysia or Singapore, and the total Islamization which is held up by many Christians as the end of the slippery slope could never take place in this country unless the vast majority of the country converted to Islam.

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1. Church of England Newspaper, 8 January, 1988.

d. 'They should not be allowed to press for Islamic schools'.

But they already have several independent Islamic schools, and provided they can maintain the standards set by the Department of Education and Science, they have every legal right to have as many independent schools as they can support. The crucial question is whether the government should allow them to have Islamic schools within the state system on the same basis as Jewish, Catholic, Methodist and Anglican schools. We may not want Britain to become divided into many different ghetto communities; but we need to have very convincing reasons if we decide that one section of the community does not have the same rights as those which are enjoyed by other sections of the community.

e. 'They should adapt to our culture - "when in Rome ..."'

But is this how the British have behaved when they have gone overseas? If we seldom adopt this principle when we live and settle overseas, do we have any right to expect that Muslims should do the same in our country?

f. 'The government should resist the spread of Islam'.

I have heard of one Christian leader expressing the wish in private that the government would turn all mosques in this country into public conveniences. This sentiment is probably based on the story recorded in 2 Kings 10:25 - 27, in which Jehu orders his guards to kill the ministers of Baal, destroy the sacred stone and tear down the temple of Baal. The account ends with the final comment: 'and people have used it for a latrine to this day'.

There are at least two assumptions here which I would want to challenge: (1) that our government is in the same position as the kings of Judah in the OT period; and (2) that Christian attitudes to Islam should be the same as the attitudes to Canaanite religion called for in parts of the OT. If some Muslims are behaving in such a way as to threaten law and order in our society, there is every reason for our government to be concerned. But there is no other reason for which we could possibly expect our government to resist the spread of Islam. Since we live after the Incarnation, and after Pentecost, and after Paul's address at the Areopagus, some

expressions of this view seem to me to represent a sad regression to a way of thinking that is less than Christian.

g. 'Islam has no right to be here!'

Even if it is not expressed in these terms, I cannot help feeling that this is the feeling which lies near the heart of many of our responses. What right have they got to bring their foreign religion into 'Christian Britain'?

Perhaps instead we should be saying: 'Now at last we ought to know what it has been like for them to be at the receiving end of our missionary work for 200 years! Are they doing anything in principle in our country which we haven't done in theirs?'

While therefore we must not be naive about what is happening, we need to be aware of the opposite danger, which is to appeal to people's fears of a great, sinister conspiracy. If we give in to this approach, I suggest that we may be reacting to the situation in an Islamic rather than a Christian way.

It is very important that those who are involved in discussion of these issues with Muslim leaders should have had some experience of living in Muslim countries, and know what it is like for Christian minorities there. At certain times it may be right for us to say to Muslim leaders, 'Are you willing to grant to Christian minorities in your countries these same rights which you are demanding for yourselves here in Britain?' But if we do so, we must be certain of our facts and aware of all the implications. And if we are looking in the OT for guidance in our context about our basic attitudes, the best place to find it is not in the commands to 'tear down the altars of Baal' (eg Deut 12:1-3), but in the command to 'love the stranger' (Lev 19:33-34; Ex 22:21; 23:9. 1) (2).

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1. See further Christopher Lamb and Roger Hooker, Love the Stranger, SPCK, London, 1986.
2. Several of the issues raised in this section are discussed in BK 1.3 and 4.6 and BSC 1.8.

3.2 **'Two missing disciplines in evangelical responses to Pluralism?**
Tyndale Fellowship Conference, London, 1991.

The Laing Lecture in 1988 (3.1) was an attempt to reflect on the response of evangelical Christians to Islam. A presentation with the above title was given to a group of evangelical theologians in 1991 with the aim of raising broader questions about the way the study of Christian mission and the study of other faiths can and should be integrated into the study of Christian theology.

The context of the presentation was the annual conference of the Tyndale Fellowship in July 1991, which was devoted entirely to the subject of Pluralism. Each of the individual study groups which normally meet at least once a year - Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Systematic Theology, Ethics etc - were asked to address the question of Pluralism from the standpoint of their own discipline.

I was asked to prepare a paper on the subject of Mission/Evangelism. The Introduction to the paper (3.2.1) explains some of the special sensitivities and difficulties in approaching the subject in this particular context.

On the basis of my experience of teaching Mission at Trinity College, I tried to argue that two newer disciplines, the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion, needed to be welcomed into the sphere of academic theology. In doing so I tried to address some of the special problems that evangelical Christians have in recognising these two disciplines, and giving them a place alongside the traditional disciplines with which they are familiar.
The paper is relevant to the subject of teaching Christians about Islam because it touches on basic questions about how we 'do' theology today. The questions addressed by theologians should be those that arise out of the mission of the church in the world today, and not simply the questions raised by other theologians. The task of teaching Christians in the area of other faiths cannot be left to the Islamicists and other specialists. If people in the pew need to learn something about Islam, Christian theologians and the scholars need to do so even more, whatever their special disciplines.

3.2.1. Introduction

A joint conference for all the Tyndale Fellowship Study Groups calls for a slightly different way of 'doing theology'. Here we have specialists in several different disciplines having their annual meeting with members of the same 'Union', and at the same time putting their minds to one particular issue that faces the church in the world today.

But where does a mere missiologist fit into such a gathering? At the preparatory Consultation at Stapleford House, Nottingham, in March 1990, when I was told that my contribution was to be 'in the area of Mission/Evangelism', I found it very difficult to grasp what I was being asked to do. In response to my initial questions, two specific issues were mentioned:

> '1. The way in which the church in Britain should maintain a faithful Christian witness in a multi-religious society.
>
> 2. How the British church should maintain confidence in overseas missionary work.'

Although I had several ideas on both these subjects, I still found it difficult to see how I could address them in this particular multi-disciplinary context. Further probing elicited the following guidelines:

> 'Although the area of mission/evangelism stands out in contrast to the other areas we are investigating in the sense that it is dealing with application rather than the theory of theology, we are still concerned that it should address above all the underlying theological issues. The contribution that your area can make in a way that is not possible for any of the others, is to ensure that there is a consistency between the problems people are actually facing on the ground and the theological questions that are raised. We are also keen at this stage to ask questions rather than produce detailed answers ... You are much more likely than I am to know what the real theological issues are in mission and evangelism.'

My response was to offer two separate papers to the Consultation. The first was the address I gave at Lausanne II in Manila in July '89 on The Challenge of Other Religions, in which I had opened up four fundamental questions questions that I believed evangelicals in particular ought to be asking:

(1) What is our theology of other religions?

(2) What about people who have never heard the gospel?

(3) To dialogue or not to dialogue?

(4) How should we pray about our witness? (1)

The second was an article relating to British education, an area in which questions about pluralism are brought sharply into focus for us in Britain today. In this article, entitled Pluralism and British Schools: Asking the Right Questions, I tried to separate the following different kinds of question:

1. Statistical: How do we interpret the statistics?
2. Historical: How do we interpret our own history?
3. Political: How does our constitution at present deal with pluralism?
4. Philosophical: What is our understanding of truth, and how can questions of truth be raised in school?
5. Biblical and theological: What do we believe about other faiths and the uniqueness of Christ?
6. Ethical: How do we apply the Golden Rule?
7. Missiological: How can we see our work in schools as part of our Christian mission?
8. Pedagogical: What approach is best in terms of teaching method? (2)

The Consultation left me with some feelings of unease which I found it hard to analyse at the time. It was partly a question of time, in that we had covered so much ground in 24 hours. But as I have reflected on the Consultation since then, and as I have tried to work out why I have found it so hard to prepare for this conference, I have come to the conclusion that my unease has something to do with method in theology, with the way we study or 'do' our theology.

I suspect that the problem lies in the way we understand the relationship, firstly, between theology and mission (3.2.2), and secondly between theology and religion (3.2.3). My contribution, therefore, is to suggest that here are two disciplines, the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion, which have not yet been taken sufficiently seriously by theologians, and especially evangelical theologians, in their response to religious pluralism.

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1. The Challenge of Other Religions, in Proclaiming Christ Until He Comes: Lausanne II in Manila, International Congress on World Evangelization, 1989, J.D.Douglas, ed, World Wide Publications, Minneapolis, 1990, pages 179 - 183.
2. Pluralism and British Schools: Asking the Right Questions, in Spectrum, vol 22, No 1. Spring, 1990, pages 25 - 34.

3.2.2. Theology and Mission

(1) Different views of the relationship beytween theology and mission

Some evangelicals will no doubt reply, 'But surely we evangelicals are more interested in mission and evangelism than anyone else! How can we be accused of failing to relate theology to mission and mission to theology?' My starting point would therefore be the sentence already quoted from my briefing for the Stapleford Consultation:

> 'Although the area of mission/evangelism stands out in contrast to the other areas we are investigating in the sense that it is dealing with the application rather than the theory of theology, we are still concerned that it should address above all the underlying theological issues'.

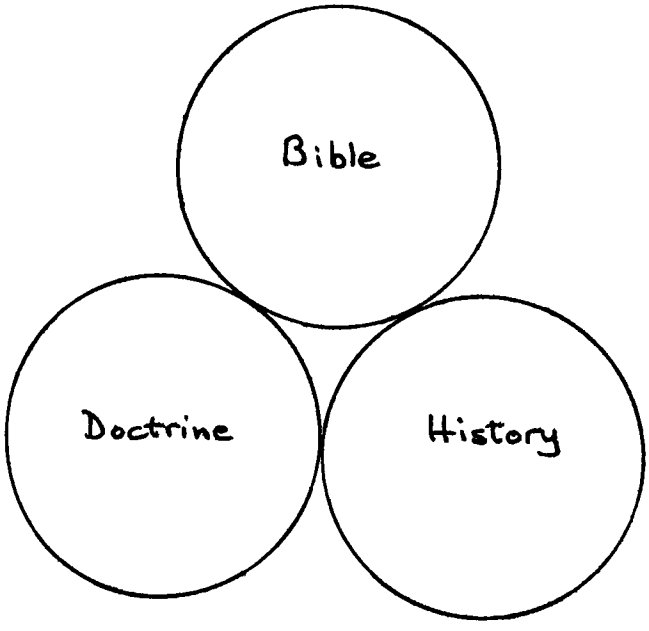
The assumption here is that theology has to do with theory, while mission and evangelism have to do with practice. We begin by studying theology, and then work out how to apply it, proclaim it and live in out in the world. The theologians call the tune by asking the right questions, raising the important issues and working out a correct theology, while the missionaries, out of their experience in mission and evangelism, come up with responses to the agenda set by the theologians, and put the received theology into practice.

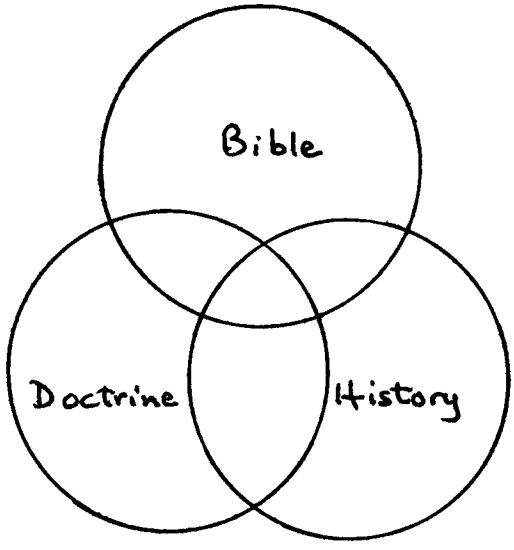
An alternative way of understanding the relationship between theology and mission would be to recognisese that mission should play an important part in setting the agenda for theology. According to this way of thinking, most of the important theological issues that we need to wrestle with are those that arise out of the mission of the church in and to the world today. The situations in which we find ourselves force us to ask the theologians questions which are both theoretical and practical. This is not to go to the opposite extreme and say, 'The world or the context must set the agenda', but rather to say that the main issues that theology needs to address at the present time are those which arise out of the interaction between the gospel and the people to whom it is addressed.

(2) The legacy of the western theological tradition

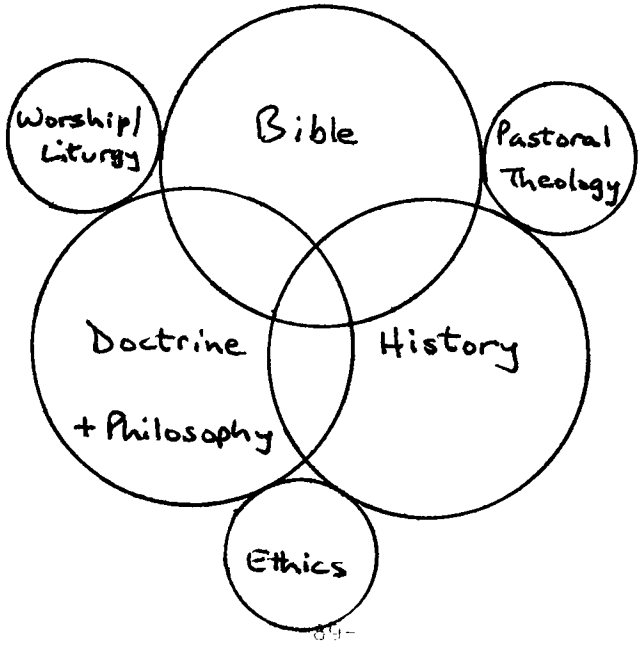
One way to argue this case is to reflect on the way that western Protestant theology has developed, and to recognise some of its limitations. The

study of theology has traditionally been divided into three main areas: Bible, Doctrine and History. This pattern can be illustrated by the following diagram, in which the three disciplines are seen either as quite distinct subjects or as overlapping and therefore interdependent:





Philosophy came to be included at different stages within the area of Doctrine, and Practical or Pastoral Theology was added as a new discipline. Philosophy thus becomes a small circle within Doctrine, while Pastoral/Practical Theology becomes another small circle separate from all the others. More recently Worship or Liturgy, and Ethics have been added; but we are still not fully agreed over how they relate to the 'Big Three'.



(3) Limitations in the traditional approach

The late David Bosch put his finger on a basic weakness when he wrote: 'The present division of theological subjects was canonized in a period when the church in Europe was completely introverted' (1). Some of the limitations of this approach can be summarised as follows:

a. There is little integration, and each discipline tends to be independent, with its own terms of reference, its own methodology, and its own specialist teachers. The point can be illustrated by asking in which subject area and in which of the Tyndale Study Groups one might be encouraged to address the challenges raised by Lesslie Newbigin in books like Foolishness to the Greeks and The Gospel in a Pluralist Society (2).

b. It is seen as a course in purely academic theology, with theology as a datum, something given, something preserved from the past that we have to study and learn. Bible, Doctrine and History are seen rather like the Basic Sciences, Anatomy and Physiology in the two years of pre-clinical medicine, and the first post as an assistant minister or curate is seen as the equivalent of the three years of clinical medicine and the first house job rolled into one.

c. It is largely reflection on the tradition of Christendom. One consequence of this has been that missionaries have not on the whole been able to contribute very much to academic theology, because the missionary movement has always been considered, in the words of Andrew Walls, as 'a peripheral movement ... an extension of the church at the margins'. Since the main task of theology has been to study the Christian tradition developed in the west, 'the missionary movement was bypassed as an embarrassment' (3). One wonders if it is significant that the Evangelical Fellowship for Mission Studies has had so little contact with the Tyndale Fellowship and its Study Groups.

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1. David Bosch, Theological Education in Mission Perspective, in Missiology, An International Review, January, 1982. See also his later discussion of these issues in Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, Orbis, New York, 1991, pages 489 - 498.
2. Lesslie Newbigin, Foolishness to the Greeks, SPCK, London, 1986; and The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, SPCK, London, 1989.
3. Andrew Walls, unpublished address at the conference of the British Association for Mission Studies, Selly Oak, Birmingham, September, 1989.

d. It is pastoral rather than missionary. 'The real business of theological education,' writes Kenneth Cracknell, 'was to train "pastors"; the main concerns were with "preaching, the sacraments and discipline"... It still seems this emphasis in the British tradition has obscured the realization that Britain, like the whole of Europe, is pays de mission with far more sheep outside the fold than the few who actively take part in the flock of Christ' (1).

(4) The call for a closer integration of theology and mission

The following are examples of how different groups and individuals have called for a new relationship between theology and mission during the last 150 years (2):

a. At the time when Alexander Duff was at the height of his influence in India, he wrote a letter from Calcutta (dated January 20 1844), in which he made a suggestion to the first convenor of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Free Church of Scotland:

> '... allow me to hint that *a new professorship* in the Free Church College, of MISSIONS AND EDUCATION, would tend mightily to impart life, energy, wisdom and consistency, to all her missionary and educational schemes, domestic and foreign ...' (3).

When in 1867 the General Assembly established 'A Professorship of Evangelistic Theology' and invited Duff to occupy the chair, his vision was that the study of mission would be inter-disciplinary, and 'not detract from other studies', but become central to all theological study (4).

b. The Conference on Missions at Liverpool in 1860 passed a resolution to the effect that

> '... the subject of Christian missions, in all their bearings, their history, difficulties, successes, and obligations, should be brought

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1. Kenneth Cracknell, Response to David Bosch, in Missiology, An Internatioanl Review, 1983.
2. Further examples are given in the author's paper delivered at the inaugural conference of the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies in Edinburgh, in July, 1990, entitled Mission and Theological Education: 'An admirable idea ... but exceedingly difficult to work out'?
3. Quoted in Olav Buttorm Mykelbust, The Study of Missions in Theological Education, vol 1, Egede Institute, Oslo, 1955, page 169.
4. Quoted in Mykelbust, op cit, page 190.

systematically before theological students, as part of their college course: that they may thus be trained in the practical conviction that missionary work is the regular work of the Church of Christ; acquire information respecting its position; and themselves go forth to share its toils.' (1).

c. In 1861 Dr Karl Graul, Director of the Leipzig Mission, moved to Erlangen in the hope that he could obtain permission from the university to lecture on the subject of mission. In 1864, as part of the process of acquiring this right, he gave an address with the title On the Position and Significance of Christian Mission in the totality of University Sciences. In what has been called 'the first knock on the theological faculties' door', he pleaded for the scientific study of missions to be included in the curriculum (2):

'This discipline must gradually come to the point where she holds her head up high; she has the right to ask for a place in the house of the most royal of all sciences, namely, theology (3).

d. Gustav Warneck became the first professor of Mission in Germany at the University of Halle in 1897. In his inaugural address, entitled Mission's Right to Citizenship in the Organism of Theological Science, he argued that mission constitutes an essential concern of the Church and therefore of theology, and that the Study of Mission covers such a vast area that it requires scientific treatment as a separate subject (4).

e. The Report of the Commission on Mission and Ministry at the Lambeth Conference in 1988 included the following paragraph:

'The pressing needs of today's world demand that there be a massive shift to a "mission" orientation throughout the Communion. The bishop would then become more than ever a leader in mission, and the structure of dioceses, local churches, theological training, etc, would be so reshaped that they would become instruments that generate missionary movement as well as pastoral care' (5).

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1. Quoted in Mykelbust, op cit, page 190.
2. J. Verkuyl, Contemporary Missiology: an Introduction, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978, page 12.
3. Quoted in Mykelbust, op cit, pages 98 - 103.
4. Quoted in Mykelbust, op cit, pages 285 - 297.
5. The Truth Shall Make You Free: the Lambeth Conference 1988, Anglican Consultative Council, London, 1988, page 32.

(5) Mission (or the Study of Mission) as an autonomous discipline and a dimension in every existing discipline.

The model that I find most convincing is one that recognises both the need for independence and the need for integration with other discplines. David Bosch puts the case most eloquently:

> 'Missiology should provoke theology as a whole to discover anew that mission is not simply a more or less neglected department of the church's life which only enters the picture when a specialist from outside appears on the scene or when a collection is taken. Missiology is not simply yet another subject but a dimension of theology as a whole, an indispensable dimension which must preserve the church from parochialism and provincialism. It constitutes a 'test of faith' for church and theology.
>
> 'This implies that missiology has in the first place a critical function and operates as leaven in theology - sometimes as a gadfly. It causes unrest, a rustling among the dry bones, articulating mission as the conscience of the church, for it always questions, uncovers, digs down, prods and irritates. It scrutinizes the church and proclaims it guilty. No group of people can ever hug God's mission to themselves or boast of having accomplished it. It is dynamite, and unless we handle it in the proper manner, it will explode in our faces.' (1).

Notice the profusion of metaphors: leaven, gadfly, and dynamite! Perhaps I can add some more. This new discipline may be seen by some as an irritant, because if it is to be studied in theological institutions, it can only be studied at the expense of existing subjects. It also asks awkward questions which we may never have thought of asking, and which we have not been trained to answer. Some may feel threatened by what appears as an attempt at subversion. If so, it is good that we have been warned, since some of us are talking about what Andrew Walls calls 'sustained acts of theological subversion on a massive scale' (2).

One final metaphor: perhaps this discipline may come to be seen as a catalyst, providing a point of focus and integration in all the other disciplines of theology, because it asks and tries to answer basic questions about what we are here for and what we are doing in the world.

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1. David Bosch, op cit.
2. Andrew Walls, op cit.

This discussion of the relationship between theology and mission leads me to conclude that the aim of those who are deeply involved in the study (and practice) of mission must be to continue to be involved closely with others in the process of working out a response to pluralism - and to the many other issues which face the church. They must not be in the position of those who simply have to teach and apply the theology which the biblical scholars, dogmaticians and historians, have handed on. They must be involved at <u>every</u> stage: in formulating the theological questions, and in checking new ideas in the light of the present mission of the church.

3.2.3. Theology and Religion

If theologians are to take other faiths seriously, a second discipline that needs to be recognised as having a place of its own alongside other disciplines is the Study of Religion. The following account of the first meeting between Karl Barth and D.T.Niles of Sri Lanka highlights the basic issue here:

> 'In the course of the conversation Barth said, "Other religions are just unbelief". Niles asked "How many Hindus, Dr Barth, have you met?" Barth answered, "None". Niles said, "How then do you know that Hinduism is unbelief?" Barth replied, "A priori". Niles concluded, "I simply shook my head and smiled"' (1).

How important is it for us to know anything about other faiths? In working out an evangelical response to pluralism, how much do we need to know about the many different faiths and world-views which make up our pluralist society? Do we base our theology of other religions on particular biblical texts and/or deduce it from our total theological system? Or do our biblical interpretation and our theology need to be informed by our understanding of other faiths and our personal knowledge of those whose world views are different from ours?

It seems to me to be almost self-evident that we cannot hope to have a genuinely Christian response to religious pluralism if we know little or nothing about the faiths, world-views and ideologies that make up our pluralist world. Theology needs to recognise the Study of Religion as a discipline in its own right and allow it to make its own special contribution in our response to pluralism.

It needs to be recognised, however, that the word 'religion' has very negative connotations for many Christians, and especially for evangelicals who constantly say, 'Christianity isn't a religion, it's a relationship with Christ.' They are intensely suspicious of the very word 'religion', and resist any attempt to put Christianity into the same category as other world religions.

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1. Quoted by Kenneth Cracknell in Towards A New Relationship: Christians and People of Other Faith, Epworth, London, 1986, page 122.

Theologians have had their own special difficulties in coming to terms with this discipline. Describing this difficult relationship over the last hundred years or so, Eric J.Sharpe writes:

> 'The theological faculties were, with very few exceptions, at first suspicious of what seemed to them to be illegitimate trespassing on their preserves. Some in fact still are. Most tended to look upon comparative religionists much as the landed gentry once looked upon poachers - as resourceful villains who knew the terrain extraordinarily well, but were totally lacking in respect for property. They were not able to prevent the development of the new discipline, although they did succeed in considerably retarding it in some areas' (1).

The term 'the Study of Religion' is used here deliberately, rather than 'Comparative Religion', 'Comparative Religions', 'the Science of Religion (Religionswissenschaft)', 'the History of Religion (Religionsgeschichte)', 'the Phenomenology of Religion', or 'Religious Studies'. This is partly because it may be free from the philosophical assumptions associated with some of these terms. The term may also be helpful because it draws attention to the fact that this discipline is not simply concerned with the study of religions (plural), but with religion (singular), ie. with religion as a phonomenon, 'religion as such'. It is therefore interested in religion in its widest sense, including Folk Religion, Popular Religion or Implicit Religion, as well as the rejection of religion that is so common today, just as much as in the great world religions.

The following six propositions attempt to sum up the nature of this discipline. Each one is illustrated from the writing of some of the people whose writings have helped me not only to understand what the discipline is about and to see its relevance to theology, but also to work out a rationale for teaching Christians about Islam..

(1) The Study of Religion has to do with understanding people

In 1901 Nathan Söderblöm was appointed to a chair in the university of Uppsala to teach comparative religion under the heading of Christian Apologetics. In his inaugural lecture he asked:

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1. Eric Sharpe, The Comparative Theology of Religion in Historiacl Perspective, in Man's Religious Quest, Whitefield Foy, ed, Open University Press, Croom Helm, London, 1982, pages 10 - 11.

'How can any education deserving of the name avoid knowing about religion? How are we to describe and understand the history of mankind without insight into that mighty, incommensurable factor in human aspiration and the destiny of peoples which we call religion? How are we to attain to any real understanidng of the deepest secrets of human life in all ages and of the great present-day conflicts and questions in the world without coming up against religion?' (1)

Robert Michaelsen makes the same point in relation to the study of liberal arts in the American context:

'Religion is a fact. It is a fact which the community of learning cannot responsibly ignore. To be sure, one can debate whether religion is phenomenon or epiphenomenon; whether religious behaviour is normal or aberrant; whether religion is *sui generis* or merely the function of something else more fundamental. These are important debates which are of significance to the study of religion and will inevitably be raised in connection with such a study. But to deny the fact of religion by ignoring it is to engage in a kind of irresponsibility which does not befit the proud heritage of the community of learning. The question, then, is not *whether* to study religion, but *how* to study it' (2).

(2) The Study of Religion is a behavioural science.

This is how Eric Sharpe describes the importance and value of this science:

'The study of religion in the sense in which it is discussed in these pages is, therefore, a behavioural science (or art, or craft). It is first of all the study of human beings feeling, thinking and behaving in a certain way or ways, both as individuals and as groups. These feelings, thought and habits can, of course, be studied with a view to their acceptability, to their reasonableness or unreasonableness, and to their conformity to other habits of human thought and behaviour. They may be - though they need not necessarily be - compared with one another in such a way as to show up similarities, differences and distinctive features generally. In every case, though, the student has to remember that every belief, every doctrine, every ritual, every myth is or has been part of the mental equipment of living and breathing human beings. In a word, the student is studying people, and not quaint abstractions. Because the study of religion is the study of people (not all of whom are dead), and because the student is part of what which he is studying, the subject at the very least possesses human interest, and if pursued with a measure of dedication, is capable of providing valuable (even though often ignored) insights into human motivation and human conduct in its totality. Speaking of the dialogue which emerges in the study of religion between western and other religions and cultures, Mircea Eliade writes that "the history of religions and religious ethnology are of a much more urgent usefulness in the politics of today than are economics or sociology". This is so precisely because the study leads beyond the superficialities of social machinery into the vast and complex hinterland of human motivation' (2).

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1. Quoted in Sharpe, op cit, page 12.
2. Quoted in Sharpe, op cit, page 15.

(3) Although the Study of Religion tends to put questions of truth on one side, it can still be a valuable discipline, provided we recognise its limitations.

Ninian Smart in his introduction to The Religious Experience of Mankind, a text-book which has been widely used in Open University Courses, explains what is involved in understanding another religion 'from within'. He believes that this process should precede judgements about religious truth:

> 'The history of religion must be more than the chronicling of events: it must be an attempt to enter into the meanings of those events. So it is not enough for us to survey the course which the religious history of mankind has taken: we must also penetrate into the hearts and minds of those who have been involved in that history ...
>
> 'It gives rise to some profoundly important questions about the truth of religion. But just as it would be unwise to make claims about the nature and scope of science without understanding something of the present state of the sciences, together with their methodology and history, so it would not be helpful to speculate about religious truth without a proper knowledge of the facts and feelings of religion. The aim, then, of this book is to try to convey these facts in relation to the experiences which religions attempt to express. The intention is to describe, rather than to pass judgement, on the phenomena of religion. The intention is not to speak on behalf of one faith or to argue for the truth of one or all religions or of none. Our first need is to understand. The result, I hope, will be that the reader will be in a better position to judge wisely about religous truth' (1).

It will no doubt be pointed out that scholars like Smart seem to have moved away from the Christian assumptions with which they began. Some will have difficulty with the concept of 'holding belief in abeyance' that is called for. But if we do not reject psychology or sociology because of the presuppositions or conclusions of some psychologists or sociologists, there is no reason why we should be suspicious of this discipline simply because of the assumptions or conclusions of some who have practised it.

The relevance of this to the debate about Religious Education in schools should also be noted. While teachers of RE have been schooled in Smart's approach and in the Phenomenology of Religion for the last twenty years, most ministers and Christian workers have little or no idea from their

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1. Ninian Smart, The Religious Experience of Mankind, Collins, London, 1982, pages 11 - 12.

theological studies of what it is all about. It is hardly surprising, therefore, if they find it difficult to understand each other.

(4) There needs to be some context in the theological curriculum in which students can be introduced to the study of culture.

It is increasingly being recognised that interpreting the Bible is not just a question of understanding the grammatical meaning of the words or their historical context (Sitz im Leben). The culture is as important as the grammar and the history in understanding any biblical text. But where in the traditional disciplines of theological study is there an opportunity to open up questions about the nature of culture?

A lecture on culture in the context of the Study of Religion might introduce definitions of culture such as these:

> 'Culture is a way of life; culture is the total plan for living; it is functionally organized into a system; it is acquired through learning; it is the way of life of a social group, not of an individual as such' (1).
>
> 'Culture is an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning) of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, etc etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, union, clubs, etc,), which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, security, and continuity' (2).
>
> 'When we speak of culture in its broadest sense, we are speaking about the sum total of ways of living which shape (and are also shaped by) the continuing life of a group of human beings from generation to generation. We are speaking about language which enables them to grasp, conceptualize, and communicate the reality of their world; about law, custom, and forms of social organization, including marriage, family, and nation; we are talking also about art, science, technology, and agriculture. These things shape the life of each member of the society. They are also shaped, modified, and developed from generation to generation by the members of the society. From the point of view of the individual member they are given as part of the tradition into which he is born and socialized. But they are not changeless absolutes" (3).

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1. L.J.Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures, William Carey, Pasadena, 1970.
2. Gospel and Culture: The Willowbank Report, Bermuda, 1978, Lausanne Occasional Paper, No 2. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Wheaton, 1979.
3. Lesslie Newbigin, The Open Secret, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978, page 159.

An awareness of cultural issues is essential in the discussion of pluralism, since we are not simply concerned with religions or world-views as systems of intellectual belief, but with the total culture of people and communities (1).

(5) Exegesis needs to be informed by a knowledge of other faiths

How, for example, is the familiar text 'I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me' (John 14:6) to be interpreted? I always used to think it meant that a person who does not believe in Jesus has no knowledge of God. But having met some people of other faiths who seem to have a very real relationship with a personal God (even if it is not what is called a 'saving relationship'), I have been forced to look again at the text. I now believe that my earlier interpretation went beyond what Jesus is actually saying.

Jesus is speaking about coming to the Father, and claiming that he himself is the Son. Thus when he says 'I am the way', he means 'I am the way to the Father', because he goes on to explain, 'no one comes to the Father but by me'. If this is a legitimate interpretation of the text, the words of Jesus do not necessarily mean that people of other faiths have no knowledge of God and no relationship with him. What Jesus claims here is that no person in any religious tradition can know God as Father and enjoy that kind of intimate relationship with him, unless he/she comes to know the Father through Jesus the Son.

I find that this interpretation of the text makes sense of my experience with people of other faiths. When think of some people of other faiths whom I have met, I cannot help thinking of the words of Jesus 'You are not far from the kingdom of God' (Mark 12:34). The devout Muslims I know would never want or dare to call God 'Father'; but the quality of their lives hardly suggests that they have no knowledge of God and no relationship with him (2).

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1. Because of the importance of cultural issues, they are raised at an early stage in both the book (BK 1.2) and in the course (BSC 1.5).
2. The interpretation of John 14:6 is discussed in BK 1.3.

While our interpretation of the text should not be determined by our personal experience, it seems that it is not only legitimate, it is actually vital, that interpretation of texts like this should be informed by knowledge and experience of people of other faiths.

These five propositions taken together seem to me to present a compelling case for giving the Study of Religion a significant place in any programme of theological education and training. They also explain why so much importance is attached to understanding Islam in both BK and BSC. Part 2, Understanding Islam, is deliberately written with the intention of describing Islam with objectivity and empathy, and negative comments and criticisms from a specifically Christian viewpoint are avoided as far as possible. It is hoped that this part of the book at least could be used as a basic text in classes in theological colleges and missionary training colleges.

3.3. 'The Study of Islam for Missionaries'

Having discussed the place for the study of other faiths in theological education (3.2.3), we now turn to consider the place for the study of Islam in the training of those whose work is connected in some more explicit way with mission among Muslims.

At a meeting of representatives of missionary societies which met in London in September, 1986, I was asked to do a presentation on 'The Study of Islam for Missionariaries', opening up the question of how they should be introduced to, and encouraged to go further in, the study of Islam.

3.3.1 The need explained

The presentation included the following brief paper, entitled 'WOT - ME? A STUDENT OF ISLAM?', which, it was hoped, might be circulated to missionaries to encourage them to think about the need for continuing study.

'WOT - ME? A STUDENT OF ISLAM?'

An introductory course on Islam at a Bible or Missionary Training College generally includes subjects like: the Beliefs and Practices of Islam, the Life of Muhammad, the Qur'an, the Sects of Islam, Popular Islam, Muslim Evangelism etc.

When missionaries begin their work overseas, much of their time is taken up with the business of living, with learning the language, getting used to a new culture, and doing a particular job. Some may feel they already know all they need to know about Islam, while others may wonder how adequately their study of Islam at college has equipped them to understand and communicate with the Muslims around them. As a result, even when they are well established in their work, further study of Islam is probably very low on their list of priorities.

But what if they recognize that the study of Islam in one form or another may be just as important for missionaries on the job as for candidates in training? Obviously the interests and needs of different missionaries will vary considerably, and they will not all need to be put through the same hoops. Some may be more interested in the Popular Islam which they meet all around them than the Ideal Islam they may have read about at college. So for one person it might mean studying 'superstitions', or collecting proverbs or prayers; for another, a detailed study of a Surah of the Qur'an, or the life and teaching of a great Muslim thinker like al-Ghazali. For someone else it might mean watching religious programmes on TV or reading a Muslim periodical regularly.

The following is an attempt to construct a framework for the study of Islam for missionaries. The suggestion is simply that all missionaries need, in their own way, to becomed serious students of Islam. This means in practice that they need

(a) to be introduced, however briefly, to all of the following 10 areas during their initial period of training; and
(b) to learn how to continue and develop their study and reflection in at least some of these areas throughout their ministry:

1. MUHAMMAD, THE QUR'AN and HADITH

2. CLASSICAL ISLAM

3. ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

4. POPULAR ISLAM

5. ISLAM TODAY

6. CHRISTIN MISSION TO ISLAM

7. APOLOGETICS AND DIALOGUE

8. STRATEGIES

9. COMMUNICATION - THEORY AND SKILLS

10. CHRISTIAN REFLECTION ON ISLAM

3.3.2. Responses to a questionnaire

As a result of the presentation, a questionnaire was compiled by a member of the group and circulated to the personnel of several missionary societies. The full text of the questionnaire appears as Appendix 4. An analysis of the 30 returns was presented in December, '88.

The report summarised data in the following tables:

Types of work

Period of service given for current work

Summary of establishments and course of training

Amount of time spent on training specifically aimed at work among Muslims

Books that were read as part of the preparation

Perceived adequacy of training

The compiler of the report included the following comments:

> 'It is a personal opinion that these returns are from a few of those people who were sent with sufficient preparation so that they would not be embarrassed to fill in the form. In other words it is my opinion that they represented some of the better prepared missionaries... I have a feeling that the analysis will confirm some suspicions in the minds of mission leaders that preparations are normally far from adequate...
>
> 'These statistics can form the basis for considerable discussion as to the adequacy of training for work among Muslims. There seems to be some very clear evidence that Islamic Studies have just been a part of a major course or a short course (full time). Considerable reading is done but rather unstructured. Practical work is in very short supply and theoretical work, though reckoned to be important and potentially interesting, is perceived to be grossly inadequate...'

The following are some of the most revealing comments included in the replies. They are quoted here because of the way they reflect on the adequacy or inadequacy of the training the missionaries had received:

'Before anyone is accepted for full-time, long-term work with Muslims, I

think it is strongly advisable that their mission should require them to work for 3 months to 1 year with Muslims in their home country, to be sure this is the ministry God is calling them to before they are involved with raising support, living in another culture and learning a new language. It would also be a way of re-inforcing all the theoretical study before the extra challenges of leaving home culture etc.'

'We endeavoured to continue deeper study of Islam in a small group. Two members were very shaken in their own faith as a result. We feel that one should be fully aware of the dangers of these studies and not to embark on them without a steady Christian faith.'

'For our particular calling and field too much "Islamic" Academics is NOT useful. Those who have had it here, have long since gone - to lecture in home countries, not sticking at the job amongst non-academic people for various reasons.'

'Not having a mind for history, I find all study of Islam uninspiring and very difficult to absorb. Most books are very dry and written very formally. There is a need for something written in a more "popular" (though not trivial) style. I find biographies most readable and they often give a personal view of Islam "from the inside".'

'We need refresher courses and constant update on what is happening in the Islamic World.'

'With the majority of Muslims I have talked to I have faced the same problem which no preparation has helped me with sufficiently - and I'm not sure if it could. My Muslim friends are convinced (indoctrinated) in the truth and relevance of Islam for themselves but quite happy that I am a Christian (to the extent that they will help me practise reading the Bible in Arabic, listen to my faltering Arabic Sunday Schools stories, even explain Islamic beliefs in Arabic onto a casette tape for discussion in language school). Despite all this they cannot conceive the relevance of the Gospel for themselves. "We all have our religion" they say, and the cultural background of Arab girls has not prepared them for independent thinking; they cannot conceive that they could believe differently from their families. This is a fundamental barrier. I realise that this is the spiritual battle we face and increasingly believe in the need to pray for God to move supernaturally ...'

The longest comment contained many perceptive points about basic training and continuing training, arising out of many years of experience:

'Much of my "training" (I'm not sure I like the word) has been informal, in that the vast majority of my knowledge has been gained by reading books and magazines. The courses I've taken have usually been of value only in so far as they have stimulated me to further study. Perhaps therefore I am not qualified to talk about the courses as such.

'It was difficult to assess the "value" of certain books read; especially those read a long time ago. Most of us get more excited about things we've discovered more recently. It would have been much easier to list six books I've read this year. But knowledge builds slowly and the foundations lie buried in the forgotten past. Certainly some of the later material would not have made sense without reading the earlier books.

'I was not sure what was meant by practical training. It if means "How to evangelise Muslims", then I'm sceptical about its value. There is no such thing as "how to". It seems to me that the modern world - or western world - is far too result (euphemistically called goal) orientated. I think a lot of emphasis on methods and strategies falls down on this score. We need to discover the face behind the mask, the person behind the Muslim. Training programmes that expose would-be missionaries to real Muslims, those who take their faith seriously, would help. Mosque visits and the like would also be helpful. But you can't learn a culture, a history, a way of thinking in a few short hours. It does take a lifetime.

'I feel the biggest step forward for me was in 1984 - 85 when I undertook an in-depth study of modern movements in Islam. Suddenly I began to understand what I was reading, and various things fell into place. (Remember that very few books are neutral. Most authors have a hidden agenda, a pet theory they wish to sell. This is even more so when you come to some of the "Christian" introductions to Islam. One of the key issues in modern Islam is how far Orientalists and Christian Missionaries have distorted Islam.)

'From there I have come to realize that I need to have a firmer grasp of my own culture and history. As I discover more I realize there are gaps in my own understanding of Christianity. I've always been interested in history, but I would now approach a course in church and secular history with a much greater sense of urgency. I need to understand where I've come from if I'm to understand why it is that Muslims don't share my outlook. Perhaps now I'm just beginning to ask the right questions.'

3.3.3. Some conclusions

There are several significant points which emerge from these replies:

(1) Teaching in the classroom needs to be supplemented by some kind of pratical training which must involve meeting with Muslims, preferably in their own context.

(2) Christian workers need guidance and help in the study of Islam, even when they have taken introductory courses. It cannot be assumed that they can find all the resources and guidance they need on their own.

(3) Training needs to help a person to relate to any kind of person, and not only the more educated and academic.

(4) The biggest barrier felt by many Christian workers is the lack of openness to explore new ideas.

(5) Method in any kind of study and training is all important. It is vital to help people to learn how to ask the right questions.

(6) The initial study of Islam needs to be comprehensive, systematic and relevant.

3.4 'Training for Work among Muslims'

The next significant stage in the development of a rationale for teaching Christians about Islam came with the invitation to present a paper on the subject of 'Training for Work among Muslims' at a conference in Holland in March 1991, which brought together a number of Christians from all over Europe.

The paper represented a summary of my thinking to date of what is involved in training Christians who feel that they are called in one way or another to engage in Christian mission among Muslims, and drew on the results of the questionnaire described in 3.3.

The main aims of the paper were:

(1) To encourage Christians working in these areas to recognise several very positive developments in recent years.

(2) To persuade them to be more self-critical and to evaluate their training work more rigorously.

(3) To analyse the basic ingredients that need to be included in any programme of training.

(4) To encourage greater co-operation and sharing of resources among those responsible for teaching and training.

3.4.1 Introduction

'I was profoundly conscious that they (the missionaries) did not understand the Muslims because they were not properly trained for the work - were in fact, as far as Islam was concerned, horribly ignorant .. the result for me was that I made up my mind if ever I could do anything to train missionaries to Muslims to know Islam, I would put my back into it.' (1)

These words were written by the American scholar, D.B.Macdonald, about the western missionaries he met during a visit to Cairo in 1907. Is it conceivable that someone visiting Europe today might come to the same conclusion (a) about the few Christians who are working among Muslims, and (b) about the churches in general: 'not properly trained for the work'?

The four main section of this paper are intended to suggest basic questions that need to be asked about training for work among Muslims. The answers suggested in each case are not intended to be exhaustive.

3.4.2. What progress have we made in recent years?

(1) Many individuals and churches in Europe have begun to face up to the challenge of Islam and to develop a vision for Muslim evangelism, especially in response to the new Islamic presence and the increased Islamic self-awareness.

(2) A number of training courses have been developed (a) to equip those who are intending to work among Muslims, and (b) to make churches more aware of the Muslim world.

(3) A wide variety of books have been published about Islam and Muslim evangelism.

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1. Quoted by M.T.Shelley in The Life and Thought of W.H.T.Gairdner, 1873 - 1928. A Critical Evaluation of a Scholar-Missionary to Islam, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1988, pp 111 – 112.

(4) Training centres and resource centres have been established.

(5) Many colleges (theological colleges/seminaries, missionary training colleges and Bible colleges) have explored new ways of preparing Christians for work among Muslims.

(6) Increasing cross-fertilisation between Christian workers, scholars etc all over the world has made us aware of new and creative thinking - eg about 'Folk Islam', Contextualization, Muslim convert churches, Bible translation for Muslims etc.

3.4.3. What weaknesses are there in the training programmes?

What are the particular areas where, in spite of all the programmes, the training is still inadequate?

(1) There is often too much emphasis on 'Ideal Islam'

Many missionaries have said that the lectures they were given in college hardly equipped them to understand the real Muslims they met in the villages of Pakistan or the cities of North Africa. The situation has changed in recent years through the books of Phil Parshall and Bill Musk, which have brought about a greater awareness of Folk Islam. There is still some way to go, however, in finding the right balance between 'Ideal Islam' and 'Folk Islam', between Islam at its best and Islam as it is in practice (1). And we need much more guidance on how to respond to the political and social challenges of Islam in different situations (2).

(2) There is often too much theory and not enough practice

The survey on preparation for work among Muslims (discussed in 3.3) called for more attention to be given to practical training. Asked about the adequacy of the practical training they had received, 3% of the missionaries who responded rated it as 'good', 31% as 'adequate', and 66% as 'poor'.

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1. The relationship between 'Ideal Islam' and 'Folk Islam is discussed in BK 2.9.
2. BK 4.6 discusses The Political Challenge of Islam, and BK3.3 and BSC 3.3 open up several Social and Political Issues.

(3) There is a lack of an effective contemporary apologetic

Although Maurice Boucaille's book The Qur'an, the Bible and Science was first published in 1976, a substantial reply in French was not published until 1989, and in English until 1993 (1). Ahmad Deedat has been travelling all over the world for several decades, and videos of his lectures and debates are sold, for example, in the villages of Egypt. I can think of two 'Davids' who have stepped forward to challenge this 'Goliath' in public debate. But how effective have they been? And are public debates of this kind the most appropriate way to respond to 'the Deedat phenomenon'? Our slowness in this area must say something significant about the adequacy of training and the degree of cooperation among Christians.

(4) Too much emphasis is often placed on apologetics

Pfander's Balance of Truth is an example of 19th century Christian apologetics in a Muslim context. But when this book, first written in 1829, is reprinted in the 1980s, is it offered as a model for the present time and sold to Muslims? Temple Gairdner's criticism of much of the apologetic material of his day was that it was 'a curiously arid, machine-made literature. It was as though the compilers ... had been caught into the argumentative machinery of the schoolmen, and had expended all their vital strength in meeting Muslim arguments with juster arguments' (2). While apologetics are important, sharing the gospel with Muslims involves much more than answering objections about the Trinity, the deity Christ, the Crucifixion and the Corruption of the Bible (3).

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1. Maurice Boucaille, le Coran, la Bible et la Science, editions Seghers, Paris, 1976; William Campbell, Le Coran et la Bible au Lumiere de l'Histoire and la Science, Farel, Marne-la-Vallee, 1989; William Campbell, The Qur'an and the Bible in the Light of History and Science, Middle East Resources, 1993.
2. See the discussion of Gairdner's approach to apologetics in 4.2.3.
3. This point is made in BK by confining the main discussion of the controversial issues to Part 3. Entering into discussion and dialogue, and keeping this separate from Part 5. Sharing our faith.

(5) More effort is put into evangelism than discipling new believers

Recent statistics suggest that an alarmingly high proportion of Muslims who have professed faith in Christ have gone back in one way or another. If there is a similar pattern in many countries, this points to the need to hold evangelism and discipleship closer together, and not think that the hardest part is completed when a Muslim makes his/her initial response.

(6) The focus can sometimes be too narrow

It is not enough simply to teach Christians how to answer Muslim objections, how to share their faith and how to persuade Muslims to read some Scripture. In Europe today we have to be prepared to tackle wider and more difficult questions about racism, minority rights etc. Rushdie's Satanic Verses is as much about western racism as it is about Islam, and if our training does not make Christian aware of these bigger issues, its focus is probably too narrow (1).

3.4.4. What is involved in training for work among Muslims?

In addition to the 'spiritual' elements which need to be part of all training for ministry and evangelism, training at any level for work among Muslims should generally include all of the following:

(1) Giving information

It is obvious that Christians need to know something about the life of Muhammad, the content of the Qur'an, the development of Islam, the Five Pillars, Islamic Law, Sufism, Folk Islam, Islam in the modern world, etc. Since people in the churches are generally very ignorant about these subjects, there is a certain amount of basic knowledge that needs to be communicated. Care needs to be taken, however, not to present too much information. It is not necessary to know everything about Islam before one crosses the street to talk to a Muslim!

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1. Zaki Badawi has written concerning racism in Britain: 'This ingrained racism is our lifeline - it brings many of our people back to Islam. That's where they start to identify more closely with Islam - some even go to the extent of becoming fundamentalists'. In New Horizon, April/May 1988 page 25.

(2) Dealing with motivation and non-intellectual factors

These factors include prejudices (cultural, religious and political) against Muslims and Islam which have become deeply ingrained in the mind of Europeans over many centuries. Events in our time tend to reinforce the old stereotypes and increase the fear of 'Christendom' being overrun. These prejudices and fears need to be brought to the surface, talked and prayed through - ideally in a group context - and dealt with in the light of the Word of God and through the power of the Spirit (1).

(3) Meeting Muslims

There can be no substitute for meeting Muslims face to face! No amount of study in the classroom and no amount of reading will make people human and natural in their relationships or teach those basic skills of cross-cultural communication that need to be learned (2).

(4) Developing cultural sensitivity

When people say 'It's the smell of their cooking and the way they decorate their homes that I find hard', it is clear that these things have more to do with culture than with religion. In other areas, like attitudes to women, there is a mixture of culture and religion. But no amount of knowledge about Islam will help people if they are unable to relax and feel at ease in the company of Muslims. Under this heading it should also be noted that since there are significant differences between the social, linguistic, national and ethnic groups in the Muslim world, there needs to be specific training for Christian ministry among Arab, African, Turkish, Indian, Indonesian Muslims etc.

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1. See BK 1.3 and BSC 1.6 Examining our attitudes, and BK1.6 and BSC 1.9, Bible Study.
2. This emphasis is evident in the chapter Meeting face to face in BK 1.1 and BSC 1.1.

(5) Teaching particular skills

What are people being trained for? In some situations the answer may be: 'We want them to know how to develop natural relationships with Muslims, to visit them at home, or to work with them in the community'. In other situations the answer may be: 'We want them to be able to answer Muslim objections, or tell a story or a parable to a Muslim'. More attention needs to be given to what people should be able to do, instead of assuming that people can work out by themselves how to apply what they learn (1).

(6) Dealing with wider issues

In order to obey the Great Commission, Christians have to go back to the Great Commandment, and ask what it means for them in Europe to love their Muslim neighbours as themselves. This may involve questions about halal meat in schools and prisons, the wearing of the veil, separate schools for Muslims, selling redundant church buildings to Muslims, etc. Whatever the context of the training, it is important to be aware of the sensitive social and political issues in any area, and not try to avoid them. Accurate and up to date information about the way Christian minorities are being treated by Muslim governments is also needed. If Christians can demonstrate that they are trying to live up to the Golden Rule and treat others as they would like them to be treated, there may be opportunities to ask if Muslims want to live by the same rule.

(7) Stimulating theological reflection

I have constantly found in teaching that these are some of the major questions which sooner or later come to the surface in any introductory course: a. Is the God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity? b. Is there any genuine revelation in Islam? c. How are we to understand

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1. Particular skills touched on in BK and BSC include: listening, answering questions and objections, and introducing enquirers to appropriate parts of the Bible.
2. The Case Studies in BK1.5, Facing Immediate Issues, illustrate the variety of situations faced by Christians in different countries.

the demonic in Islam? d. Is Islam a religion of 'law' and 'works'? Is there any grace in Islam? We need to help Christians to know how to work through these difficult questions, resisting the temptation to find simplistic answers (1).

5. What needs to be done to improve the training?

The following are steps that may need to be taken:

(1) Distinguish different levels of training

Five different levels need to be distinguished:

a. members of a local church, who have no direct contact with Muslims
b. members of a local church in an area where there are Muslims
c. all pastors/priests Christian workers and leaders, whether or not they are in direct contact with Muslims
d. Christians working with Muslims either in Europe or elsewhere
e. the trainers who will be training others.

Each of these levels will no doubt require its own aims, content and teaching methods.

(2) Encourage churches to make specific plans for training

While some training needs to be orientated towards particular denominations, at local and national level, there is ample scope for interdenominational programmes. Specific plans need to be made and implemented. The churches also need to be encouraged to make use of the resources of the para-church organisations.

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1. The first two of these questions are discussed in BK 4.1 and BSC 4.1, Theological Questions, and the third in BK 4.1.

(2) Encourage churches to make specific plans for training

While some training needs to be orientated towards particular denominations, at local and national level, there is ample scope for interdenominational programmes. Specific plans need to be made and implemented. The churches also need to be encouraged to make use of the resources of the para-church organisations.

(3) Encourage some to go deeper into the study of Islam

D.B.Macdonald determined to do all he could to 'train missionaries to Muslims to know Islam'. When Temple Gairdner went to study under Macdonald during a sabbatical in the USA, he was hoping to learn 'knock-down arguments' that he could use against Muslims. Macdonald's emphasis, however, was to encourage Gairdner to take time to understand Islam. Explaining his approach he wrote, 'You see it is method that you must get, tools to do your own working out hereafter' (1). Young people who have done their 'basic training' while distributing tracts on the streets of London or Paris should be encouraged to take time to go deeper into the study of Islam.

(4) Ensure that training is an on-going process

Is it an exaggeration to say that there is something unique about Islam which demands that people living and working among Muslims need to be studying it in one way or another throughout their life and ministry? If this is true, regular periods of study/reflection need to be built into the programme of most Christians. There probably also needs to be far more interaction between the teachers/scholars and people living and working at the grass roots (2).

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1. Quoted in M.T.Shelley, op cit, p 126. See further Annexe 3, pages 197 f.
2. See the comments of missionaries in response to questionnaire on training discussed in 3.3.

(5) Encourage more consultation and cooperation

In the area of training it is specially important for Christians to work together. Greater cooperation would mean that resources available in one place can be used and adapted elsewhere. More consultations would mean more careful evaluation of what is being done, to learn from one another, and to learn from other Christians who have different approaches. What if a representative group had met together 15 years ago and asked: How are we going to respond to Ahmad Deedat?

It is hard to overestimate the importance of training. For this reason it is imperative that Christians should take these issues seriously, and that those involved in teaching and training should work through them with the same determination as D.B. Macdonald did, and be prepared to 'put their backs into it'.

4. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CONTENT AND METHOD: An Evaluation of Other Programmes

Chapter Four of the dissertation is devoted to an evaluation of other books, courses or programmes that have been developed in the last 15 years. The first two are from British evangelical sources, while the third is from an ecumenical European committee. Each of them will be described, and strengths and weaknesses will be suggested, with a view to indicating similarites and differences between their approach and the approach adopted in BK and BSC. The contribution of this interaction to the rationale of BK and BSC will also be explained, either in the text or in footnotes.

4.1 Ishmael My Brother: A Biblical Study Course on Islam
MARC Europe, STL Books and Evengelical Missionary Alliance, 1985

This programme was developed under the auspices of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance, and was known in early publicity as COMMIT, 'Course on Muslim Ministry, Individual Training'. It was designed for distance learning, and divided into 15 units, each of which was expected to involve between 3 and 4 hours of private study.

The editor, Anne Cooper, was a former missionary who had returned to the UK, and was committed to distance learning methods to the extent that she enrolled as a student in her retirement and took several courses in different subjects in the Open University. The main contributors were Ron George, Sarah James, Roger Malstead, Torbjorn Brorson, Ronald Waine and Bill Musk, all of whom have worked with Muslims in different countries for considerable periods.

Since its publication, approximately 15,000 copies have been sold, and translations have been made into several languages. A revision has been undertaken by Anne Cooper, and is likely to be published in the autumn of 1993. It has been distributed very successfully all over the world by MARC Europe, and for many years has been regarded as the most accessible and most readable introduction of its kind coming from evangelical sources. In

many respects its publication marked a breakthrough in attempts to teach evangelical Christians about Islam.

4.1.1 Outline

Introduction

Course Study guide

Part 1	Chapter 1	The Christian and Other Faiths
	Chapter 2	Making Muslim Friends
Part 2	Chapter 3/4	Muslim Beliefs and Practices
	Chapter 5	The Qur'an
	Chapter 6	Christians and Muslims Debating Together
Bridging	Chapter 7	Muhammad, Prophet of Islam
Part 3	Chapter 8	History and Political Development of Islam
	Chapter 9	History and Significance of Sects within Islam
	Chapter 10	Islamic Law
	Chapter 11	Christian-Muslim Relationships
Bridging	Chapter 12	Islam Today
Part 4	Chapter 13	Folk Islam
	Chapter 14	The Gospel and Culture
	Chapter 15	Case Studies of Cultural Significance

Conclusion

4.1.2 Strengths

(1) Educational method. Building on the models of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) and the Open University, the course is deliberately developed to be used for distance learning, and describes itself as a 'home study course'. The writers were asked to pitch the material roughly at the equivalent of 'O Level' standard.

Each unit begins with a clear statement of Learning Objectives. The objective in Chapter 10 on Islamic Law, for example, are stated as follows:

'When you have completed this chapter you should:

1. Understand the framework of Islamic law.
2. Be able to explain the sources of the law and its development from these sourses.
3. Know something of the application of Islamic law and the difficulties encountered in this.
4. See how relevant Islamic law is to the Muslim world today.'

Each chapter includes sections entitled 'Activity', which require the student to do some reading, to write down reflections of his/her own on a particular issues, or to do a particular piece of research by talking to someone. For example,

'Please read John 4:4 - 26. It will be helpful to jot down the points you think might help you in meeting those belonging to other faiths ...'

'Try to find a Muslim friend who has been on hajj and ask him to tell you about it.'

'Describe any one of the sects in existence today. Look out for any mention of it in the news. Use the knowledge gained in this chapter to explain the background of the news item to a friend...'

An educational pack is available, containing audio casettes, leader's notes, and discussion material which can either be used for individual study or for a group.

(2) The emphasis on relationships. From the very beginning of the course there is a strong emphasis on the importance of personal relationships. Thus the Introduction states:

> '... Islam and Christianity have common roots. The aim of this course book is to bridge some of the rifts which have increased over time and to prepare Christians to be able to explain their understanding of the covenant promise (to Abraham)...' (page 1).
>
> 'This course in no way minimises the deep doctrinal differences between Christianity and Islam. It does, however, try to dispel some of the barriers and prejudices which negate the fostering of personal relationships and exclude a real understanding of each other's faith' (page 2).

(3) Taking seriously the study of Islam. The book attempts to give an accurate and fair description of the beliefs and practices of Islam. Three chapters in the middle of the course are particularly significant. Chapter 8, History and Political Development of Islam gives an 'overview of the way Islam has developed historically and politically'. Chapter 9 on History and Significance of Sects Within Islam explains the main sects, ending with a section on Modern Movements. Chapter 10, Islamic Law explains why 'Islamic law is of central importance to Islam, and the heart of Islamic law is family law'. The author of these chapters, Ron George, took a degree in Islamic Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London after returning from work overseas.

(4) Use of Muslim sources. There is strong encouragement not only to read books written by Christians about Islam, but also books written by Muslims. Two books in particular are used as basic texts: Abul A'la Mawdudi, Towards Understanding Islam (Islamic Foundation, 1981), and Ghulam Sarwar, Islam: Beliefs and Teachings (Muslim Educational Trust, 1984).

(5) Cultural issues. Discussion of cultural issues is introduced early in the course in sections on 'Guidelines for Initial Contact with Muslims' (page 24) and Muslim Family Life (pages 28 - 30). Chapter 14, The Gospel and Culture and chapter 15, Case Studies of Cultural Significance show the importance that is attached to cultural issues.

(6) Folk Islam. The themes of Samuel Zwemer's The Influence of Animism on Islam: An Account of Popoular Superstitions, published in 1920 have been taken up by more recent writers like Phil Parshall (in Bridges to Islam: A

Christian Perspective, Baker, 1983) and Bill Musk (in The Unseen Face of Islam, MARC, 1989), who have understood the importance of developments in anthropology. Chapter 14, for example, attempts to give 'a brief introduction to cultural anthropology as it relates to evangelism among Muslims'.

4.1.3 Weaknesses

My comments in this area are inevitably conditioned by the fact that I had originally agreed to act as 'General Editor' for the course, and for just over a year was working with Anne Cooper on the editing of the material. Having seen several of the chapters which had been revised in the light of my initial comments, I felt some continuing unease about several aspects of the course, and decided that I should withdraw from the project.

In writing to explain the reasons for withdrawing, I commented on the fact that the material was still incomplete, and that a very considerable amount of editorial work would still need to be done. The following is what I wrote on basic questions which concerned me in the material. Although several of these points were taken up in the final revision of the book, they are quoted here in the form in which I wrote them (in December 1984) because they reflect the difficulties that a group of evangelical writers were having at that time in putting together a course of this kind.

'Basic Questions. I have to say honestly that I still feel the material has some serious weaknesses:

'(a) I'm not entirely happy about the division of the material into three parts: Theological, Historical and Practical. Eg. I cannot see how some of the basic description of Muslim beliefs can practices can be described as part of "a theological discussion of Islam" (1).

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1. The structure of BK and BSC is totally different from that of Ishmael My Brother. Each of the five parts focuses on a basic ingredient in Christian response to Islam: meeting, understanding, discussing, reflecting and sharing. Each of these sections, therefore, includes elements which could be described as 'theological', 'historical' and 'practical'.

'The editing that has been done has not removed the impression that the different units have been put together without a great deal of thought. I can't see a very clear rationale in the structure of the course.

'(b) I believe there there are some rather serious gaps:

- Because there's no section on Apologetics, there's nothing at all on subjects like Corruption of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, the Death of Christ (1).

- Apart from Unit 1 and the material on the Samaritans, there is very little Bible study (2). Big issues like the origin of Muhammad's inspiration are touched on but not dealt with (3).

- The historical section seems to me to be very thin on the 20th Century. I would have thought that if we are trying to help Christians to understand Islam as it is today, there ought to be some reference to subjects like, for example, Islamic Banking, and the Muslim Brotherhood (4).

'(c) The unevenness of the material. Some parts seem to me to be very sketchy (eg parts of the life of Muhammad - the important battles etc) while other sections I fear are just a bit too detailed (eg on Islamic Law) (5).

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1. These are dealt with in BK 3.2 and 3.5 and BSC 3.2 and 3.5.
2. BK 1.6 and BSC 1.9 are devoted to Bible Study. BK 4.4 is entitled Thinking Biblically about Islam. BK 5.3 and BSC 5.2 explain how parts of the Bible can be used in Christian witness, and BK 5.5. includes Biblical reflection which follows on from a study of Qur'anic themes.
3. BK 4.1 and BSC 4.1 include a discussion on the question Is there any genuine revelation in Islam?
4. BK 2.10 gives an overview of The Spread and Development of Islam, while BK 2.11 explores Islam in the World Today.
5. The amount of material required in any course of this kind presents severe difficulties. I have tried to make BK and BSC accessible both to complete beginners who need to know the basic ABC of Islam, and to those who already have such a foundation knowledge and want to go further. Thus some of the basic information about Islam is given in note form, and short texts are included to encourage the reader to go further, not relying all the time on the convenient summaries and introductions.

(d) I find the "find a Muslim friend" theme difficult. It may be that it's simply a question of wording. But I can't help feeling that it goes deeper than this:

- To me it conveys the idea that we are using the Muslim as a kind of informant, rather than being interested in our Muslim neighbour as a person.

- Even if the student is able to find such a Muslim friend, he/she may not be articulate enough to be able to answer the kind of questions which are put to him/her. What if the Muslim friend is a Pakistani lady in Bradford who dosn't speak very good English?

- Working on the same principle of checking things out with a Muslim, would we be willing to have the study material read over and checked by a Muslim? Thus, for example, what would a really well-educated Muslim think about the picture of life after death given on p 18? the impression given in that this is what all Muslims believe.' (1)

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1. The emphasis in BK1 and BSC 1 is on Relating to our Muslim Neighbours, and therefore attempts to get away from the possible artificiality which could be deteced in the 'find a Muslim friend' theme. Similarly BK5.1 speaks of 'Natural Openings in Everyday Life'.

4.2 In the Family of Abraham: Christians and Muslims Reasoning Together People International, 1989

This book of 146 pages is designed as a text-book of Apologetics. It was compiled by Anne Cooper, the editor of Ishmael My Brother, and the Foreword was written by Ron George, the Series Editor.

It is intended 'for those who want to consider the subject of Christian-Muslim apologetics in some depth', and is based on the book Crusaders of the Twentieth Century, by W.A.Rice (1861 - 1948), a CMS missionary who worked in the Indian subcontinent, Iran and Iraq.

The title is based on the idea that both Muslims and Christians look back to Abraham 'as their human founding father': 'It is in the sense of being "in the family of Abraham" that this book approaches the task of "Christians and Muslims reasoning together"' (page 5).

The book is designed, like Ishmael My Brother, for distance learning, and assumes that most readers will follow the course on their own and/or in groups with others doing the course. It also assumes that readers already have a basic knowledge of Islam and are in touch with Muslims.

The aim of the book is summed up in the Foreword in this way:

> 'There is little doubt that the history of Muslim-Christian relationships has been fraught with conflict, suspicion and misunderstanding, whether deliberate or otherwise...
>
> 'This study manual is an attempt to help Christians to understand the issues involved and to be better equipped to build meaningful relationships which are based not on mutual ignorance but rather on informed understanding. Western study of Islam and translations of the Qur'an were pioneered by missionaries who sought an improved understanding of their Muslim friends. The present work follows the path of these early pioneers in attempting to convey to a wider audience those issues which are of the utmost importance in facilitating such mutual understanding.
>
> 'It is in the hope of enhancing better communication that this volume has been researched and presented, often quoting directly from Muslim sources ...' (page 3).

4.2.1 Outline of the Contents

Introduction

BLOCK 1 THE WORD OF GOD

Unit 1 Muslim beliefs concerning the authenticity of the Bible

Unit 2 The allegation that the present Bible is an inferior substitute

Unit 3 Alleged predictions about the coming of Muhammad

Unit 4 The Qur'an

BLOCK 2 GOD HIMSELF

Unit 5 Christian and Muslim conceptions of God

Unit 6 The mystery of the Trinity

Unit 7/8 Jesus in the Bible and in the Qur'an

BLOCK 3 RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

Unit 9 Muhammad, Prophet of Islam

Unit 10 Mankind and his relationship to God

Conclusion

4.2.2 Strengths

(1) Distance learning. The techniques used successfully in Ishmael My Brother are used here again. Many of the Qur'anic passages to be studied are printed out in full (in A. Yusuf Ali's translation). There are several

'Activity' sections in every unit, each of which requires considerable study and reflection. There is a booklist at the end of each unit.

(2) Thoroughness in its treatment of traditional controversies. The arguments that have been used by Muslims and the answers of Christian apologists are rehearsed in considerable detail.

(3) The best of traditional apologetics. The main source book that has been used, W.A. Rice's Crusaders of the 20th Century (1910), was itself an excellent summary of Christian apologetics as they had developed during the 19th Century, especially in 'the Mohammedan Controversy' in the subcontinent. Other major sources referred to from this earlier period are Pfander's Balance of Truth, William Muir's Sweet Firstfruits, St.Clair Tisdall's The Sources of the Qur'an, Hughes' Dictionary of Islam, and Samuel Zwemer's The Moslem Doctrine of God.

4.2.3 Weaknesses

(1) Dated sources.

Frequent reference is made to recent works, such as Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk's Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and A Christian in Dialogue, Eerdmans, 1980. There are references to more recent books, like Josh McDowell and John Gilchrist, The Islam Debate, Campus Crusade, 1983; A.A. Abdul Haqq, Sharing Your Faith With A Muslim, Bethany Fellowship, 1980; James S. Moon's abridged version of J.Sweetman's Islam and Christian Theology, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations; Kenneth Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, OUP, 1956 and Collins, 1986; Geoffrey Parrinder, Jesus in the Qur'an, Sheldon, 1965; Tor Andrae, Muhammad, The Man and His Faith, Harper, 1960; Martin Lings, Muhammad, Allen & Unwin, 1983; Chawkat Georges Moucarry, Islam and Christianity at the Crossroads, Lion, 1988; Abul A'la Mawdudi, Towards Understanding Islam, Islamic Foundation, 1980.

Most of the major Christian sources, however, are from the 19th Century or early 20th Century. The Balance of Truth, for example, was written in 1829, early in Pfander's ministry in Persia. Hughes' Dictionary of Islam

was first published in 1855, and Zwemer's The Moslem Doctrine of God was published in 1905.

(2) Apologetic approach. While the book brings together much that is valuable in the 19th century apologetic tradition, there does not seem to be any attempt to stand back and look more critically at the assumptions of this very rationalistic approach in the way that James Sweetman/James S. Moon and Jean-Marie Gaudeul, for example, have done (1). It seems to assume that the arguments of Muslims have not changed, and that all that Christians need to do is to rehearse all the counter arguments developed by previous apologists.

Since my own first literary efforts were in the field of apologetics, I recognise that much can still be learned from these books of traditional apologetic (2). It was, however, my exposure to the writings of Temple Gairdner and Kenneth Cragg which helped me to recognise certain limitations in the basic method of these apologists.

The following extract from Constance Padwick's Temple Gairdner of Cairo, explains how Gairdner's approach developed in a situation in which he was regularly debating in public with sheikhs of Al-Azhar, and what was distinctive in his approach:

> 'He was now becoming familiar with certain Moslem objections which he must always meet when he would fain present one of the truths he lived by, and he wearied of the endless defensive controversy:
>
> 'For one and a half hours we went at it, very unprofitably as one would think ... at such times the preaching of the Gospel seems impossible. When one is set upon with questions and objections, silence and evasion are impossible, and answering is useless and unprofitable - so one is in a dilemma.

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1. Sweetman's Islam and Christian Theology, abridged by James S, Moon, CSIR, pages 92 - 94; and Jean-Marie Gaudeul, Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History, vol 1, PISAI, 1984, Chapter 6. Old Quarrels and New Perspectives, pages 245 - 300.

2. Colin Chapman, Christianity on Trial, vols 1 - 3, Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1972 - 1974.

'It seemed to him that much of this defensive work might be done by literature. If there were but little books dealing singly with the main difficulties, they might be handed to Moslem friends who reached the inevitable objection-point, and they might be distributed over the countryside and do their preparatory work in opening minds. Still more might there be books of narrative quite free from argument, yet understanding and anticipating and meeting the Moslem's difficulties as he hears the Christian story. But when Gairdner looked for such books he found that the literature by which the Christian Church had set forth her living truth to Moslems was a curiously arid, machine-made literature. It was as though the compilers, holy men though they were, had been caught into the argumentative machinery of the schoolmen, and had expended all their vital strength in meeting Moslem arguments with juster arguments. The objector himself might be left on the field prostrate but cursing. The books were starved of personality and of appeal to aught save logic and justice. Moreover he saw, and it was one of his most fruitful perceptions, that the converts made by this literature were often born in its image - with the spirit of disputation rather than of worship and of love, and apt to hammer rather than to woo and win.

'Gairdner believed (for was he not nightly battered with anti-Christian arguments?) that there must needs be an apologetic literature, unafraid of controversial points. Silence, he felt, was tantamount to denial of the truth he knew and lived. But the literature must be humanized and written for fellow-men, not only for the defeat of arguliers. Moreover, to Gairdner, stories, history, drama, music, poetry, pictures, all that could bear the impress of the Spirit of Christ, was a reasonable part of the Christian apologetic to the whole man...

'No one could think of Gairdner as a controversialist for choice. He was far too richly human. "We need the song note in our message to the Moslems," he said at the beginning of the Beit Arabi Pasha days; "not the dry cracked note of disputation, but the song note of joyous witness, tender invitation," and much of his writing aswered to these words ...' (1)

Kenneth Cragg's awareness of the limitations of traditional apologetics are expressed most succinctly in the Foreword he wrote to Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue (1981). In four pages he manages not only to commend the book, but to say in the gentlest possible manner, 'This approach is fine as far as it goes, and is a vast improvement on the debates of the last century. But don't we now need to get beyond these "position-statements" and venture into a deeper kind of dialogue?' The key paragraphs where he presents this vision are the following:

'But, given the pattern the authors have followed, two impressions emerge. The first is how far we have come away from polemic and barren controversy. To use a phrase of Peter in his New Testament letter, "this

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1. Temple Gairdner of Cairo, Constance Padwick, SPCK, 1929, pages 147 - 149, and 158.

is thankworthy". It is important that it should deepen and widen among us. For there are still sad areas of what might be called "fanatical consciousness", which remain quite impervious to love and honesty. Rejectionism has a way of growing by psychic factors, feeding upon itself and stiffening its obduracy. We can never be sanguine that we have overcome it: we must always be dedicated to doing so.

'The other impression is that consciousness within religious establishments of faith and practice, though free from the fanatical, can still remain unresponsive to meaning from outside. This, in a way, is the frustration of dialogue. As in the present study, we each state our case. We indicate differences. We disentangle misunderstandings. We re-affirm positions. We maintain politeness. We even repent. But what then? For the most part we still stay within our positions, sometimes still failing to take what the other means. Response sometimes reveals that we are not responding. There are numerous examples here. To query God's "resting on the seventh day" on the ground that He is almighty and needs no rest; to note that it may have been Jibril in "the burning bush" in comment on the theme of God in history; to disown anthropomorphism in discussion of analogy - all these indicate a non-penetration of meaning. The situation is mutual.

'It seems to suggest that we should try, now, to move away from position-statements, with courteous rejoinders, and try, with the continuing courtesy, to develop areas of experience which, while involving what is at issue in the familiar divergencies of view, focus it vitally in terms we both experience and terms which, hopefully, neither of us sponsor as sole proprietors. This may allow us to <u>escape</u> from the formalism of dogma and positional thinking and <u>into</u> genuine enterprise of mind and spirit. Perhaps I can put the point by saying that we will then get our bearings by our compass of faith rather than stay believers by a tether of authority...

'I suppose it would be right to say that the central controversy between Islam and Christianity has to do with the distancing, or otherwise, between the divine and the human. It is this which pervades all the themes of revelation, prophetic vocation, the ways of divine mercy, the categories of law and love, the degree of <u>Kenosis</u> in creation itself on God's part, and the question of Jesus and the Cross. It is urgent for us to live together in the depth of these issues, neither foreclosing them by anathemas, not obscuring them by neglect. Rather we should let them press the more fully upon us by virtue of our openness to common action in the day to day scene and by our readiness to think second, even third, thoughts about the responses we first instinctively make ...' (1)

My own approach to traditional Mulim-Christian apologetics and to the relationship between apologetics and dialogue has been deeply influenced by both Gairdner and Cragg, and is worked out in BK and BSC in Part 3. <u>Entering into Discussion and Dialogue</u>. The rationale for this treatment is as follows:

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1. Forward to Badru D.Kateregga and David W. Shenk, <u>Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and A Christian in Dialogue</u>, Eerdmans, 1981, pages xv - xvi.

a. Christians need to be introduced to the main controversial issues with an explanation of the thinking behind the Muslim questions and objections. They then need initially to be given brief answers which they can master and then express in their own words. This is done in BK 3.1 - 3 and BSC 3.1 - 3.

b. They need to be given basic guidelines for handling discussions of this kind. These are outlined in BK 3.4 and BSC 3.4.

c. They need to get beyond the brief answers as much as they can, in order to understand the issues in greater depth. Thus BK 3.5 and BSC 3.5 are entitled A Deeper Look at the main Theologican Objections.

d. A survey of Muslim-Christian dialogue over fourteen centuries (BK 3.6), using material, for example, from Jean-Marie Gaudeul's Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History introduces students to different approaches that have been developed by Christians and Muslims in the past and suggests important lessons that can be learned from this history.

e. The final stage is to point to a totally different model of discussion/dialogue by outlining an agenda of questions and issues that can be discussed between Muslims and Christians (BK 3.7). After sections entitled 'Who are we?', 'What about the past?', 'What are we up against?' and 'How can we agree to talk together?', there is a section entitled 'Can we find new ways of bearing witness to our faith?' There is a diagram with two overlapping circles, with the following propositions printed in the area of overlap: God creates; God is one; God rules; God reveals; God loves; God judges; God forgives. The explanation that follows is developed out of Cragg's idea that 'The question is not whether but how'. Thus the issues between Muslims and Christians is not, for example, whether God forgives, but how he forgives; not whether God reveals, but what he reveals and how.

4.3 The Presence of Muslims in Europe and the Theological Training of Pastoral Workers

Final report of the 'Islam in Europe' Committee of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), Birmingham, 9 - 14 September '91

4.3.1 Outline

This brief report of 54 pages begins by describing the changing social context in Europe, in which 'Muslims now live in Europe on a permanent footing, a fact of which the Churches are only now beginning to take into account', making Islam 'numerically the second religion after Christianity' (page 1). In these situations across Europe Christians have been involved until now in 'social, charitable and political activities' and have 'defended the rights of the underprivileged' (page 3).

It goes on to explain that 'The encounter between Christians and Muslims has extended into the pastoral sphere ...' As a result, 'Social interaction between Christians and Muslims nowadays extends also to theological research. Christians of Europe are faced with the fact that society has become multi-religious. Themselves confessing the One God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, Christians live side by side with other believers who follow a different religious tradition. Muslims thus ask Christians questions concerning revelation, prophethood, faith in God as Trinity, Christology, etc. All branches of theology are involved and should be able to provide an answer (page 3).

One of the first subjects which the 'Islam in Europe' Committee considered when it was formed in 1988 was 'the theological training of future priests, pastors, teachers of religion, and pastoral co-workers, so that their training should be adapted to this new situation' (page 4). The approach of the Committee is described as follows:

> 'The "Islam in Europe" Committee was faced with two possible ways of proceeding: either to develop a study programme for an introductory course on Islam, or to prepare a study programme underlining Islam's impact on every branch of Christian theology. At the Committee's first meeting, at Oegstgeest in the Netherlands in 1988, the members opted for the latter formula, since it allows the questions raised by Muslim

doctine to be more clearly set out and gives teachers of theology the possibility of replying to these questions' (page 4).

The main part of the paper (pages 6 - 30) consists of Reports from six different discipline groups: Exegesis, Dogmatic Theology, Pastoral Work, History of the Church, Ethics, Mission and Dialogue. Each one sets out the special agenda it needs to address, including basic questions about theological method and detailed questions arising out of the questions put to Christianity by Islam.

The Report ends with suggestions 'with the view of better incorporating reflection upon Islam within the training course' (pages 31 - 33), including comments on 'Perspectives and Methods', 'Specific Suggestions' and the Role of the CEC 'Islam in Europe' Committee.

4.3.2 Strengths

I find myself in sympathy with the basic thrust of the report. It states very clearly an ideal towards which everyone in theological education should be aiming. Some of the detailed questions outlined by the discipline groups are similar to the questions in my papers Introducing the Other Faiths Dimension into Theological Education and Facing the Challenge of Islam in Theological Education (2.3.5), and Two Missing Disciplines in Evangelical Responses to Pluralism? (3.2).

4.3.3 Weaknesses

My questions and reservations about the Report revolve round the following three issues:

(1) The concentration on an inter-disciplinary approach. The Committee decided in 1988 not to develop a study programme for an introductory course on Islam, choosing instead to find ways of encouraging specialists in all disciplines of theology to respond to the questions posed by Islam. While I agree that this must be our ideal and that it represents a long-term goal, I believe that more attention needs to be given to ways in which students are to be given a basic introduction to Islam.

On the basis of my own experience in an Anglican theological college in England, I would argue that, unless there is a solid foundation of basic knowledge about Islam, an inter-disciplinary approach is hardly realistic, for the following three reasons:

a. Most students studying theology do not have a sufficient basic knowledge of Islam. This is also true of most teachers of theology. There can be real dangers if students and teachers of theology attempt to address questions concerning Islam if they do not have some minimal grounding in Islam.

b. Christians need to be introduced to the study of Islam as a religion in its own right, and not simply in order to study the impact of Islam on every branch of Christian theology. The term 'Comparative Religion' has been out of fashion for some years, at least in the British context, partly because comparative approaches can often distort both religions, with the result that one is never comparing like with like. We are familiar, for example, with the danger of comparing the Bible with the Qur'an, since the role of the Qur'an in Islam is different from the role of the Bible in Christianity. The emphasis in the Study of Religion is now much more on studying the phenomenon of religion in general and individual religions in their own right. The attempt is made to undersand a religion 'from within', to understand it 'in its own terms'.

The Report states well the kind of comparisons between the two faiths which need at some stage to be made: 'Comparisons need to be made between both the convergences and the divergences of the two religious traditions in their anthropologies; their views on human will and responsibility; the relationship between law and moraltiy; the human endeavour to discern God's will; the epistemological and hermeneutical challenges of our scriptural traditions; and the application of all these to the circumstances of the world we live in together today' (page 24). It seems to assume that both teachers and students have sufficient knowledge and understanding of Islam to be able to make the comparisons. My experience in theological education in Britain suggests that this cannot often be taken for granted. My own attempt to argue for the inclusion of the Study of Religion as a discipline in its own right in the theological curriculum is given in 3.2, Two Missing

c. Statements of an ideal need to be supported by more detailed guidance as to how the ideal is to be achieved. I suspect that teachers have little difficulty in recognising the need for an inter-disciplinary approach. Their immediate problem, however, is that they do not have enough knowledge or experience to enable them to work it out in any detail. I hope that the CEC Islam in Europe Committee will be able to produce models of how this demanding work can actually be done.

d. The 'new approach to Mission and Dialogue' which is commended seems to play down the place of 'evangelism' or 'evangelisation'. The report from the group discussing 'Mission and Dialogue' argues convincingly that 'The question of mission and dialogue becomes highly topical in a Europe whose social and political structures are being radically affected by ethic (sic; ?ethical or ethnic?), cultural and religious pluralism' (page 27). It goes on to say that 'mission end evangelisation projects for Christians in Europe experience the discovery of the meaning and value of co-existence with other cultures and other religious communities' (page 27).

It then argues that 'This fundamental rethinking of missiology, which is neither one-way nor the preserve of the Churches overseas, leads to a theology of intercultural and inter-religious relationships which allows us to go beyond any presuppositions, whether confessional and cultural or social and cultural. It is a theology with a view to dialogue and resulting from dialogue, in which Islam is perceived in its political, cultural, and spiritual dimensions' (page 28).

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1. It is also worked out in more detail in in a paper presented to the inaugural conference of the British and Irish Association of Mission Studies, at Edinburgh, July '90, entitled Mission and Theological Education: 'An admirable idea ... but exceedingly difficult to work out'?

It attempts to discuss the relationship between Mission and Dialogue:

> 'To clarify what is at stake in this new approach, care will be taken to rely upon a clear definition of dialogue, which is neither polemic nor apologetics any more than it is a simply comparative study between different systems of thought... It is also important to specify the relationships between dialogue and the mission of evangelisation in such a way as to avoid the double suspicion of betrayal: to misrepresent dialogue in reducing it to a missionary tactic, and betray the missionary effort in renouncing witness and conversion (page 28)

It recognises that Islam and Christianity are both 'missionary' religions:

> 'Study of the specific enounter between Christians and Muslims has to recognize the missionary character of both traditions with the search for a modus vivendi which respects the integrity of each ...' (page 28)

In the following paragraph, however, which contains a full statement of 'The Aims of Training', there is no mention of what Christians of all denominations would traditionally have thought of as 'evangelism' or 'evangelisation'. The emphasis is on openness, the readiness to adopt new points of view, abandoning superiority and prejudice, risk, unlearning and relearning, transforming one's relationships to the neighbour and opening up one's own view of the world. There is no suggestion that people need to be trained to bear witness to their understanding of the Christian faith. All the emphasis is all on ways in which Christians need to be changed, and nothing is said about the possibility that Christians might have something to share with Muslims (1).

This is surprising in view of the fact that all the group reports recognise that Christians need to have answers to the questions put by Islam. Is the ommission, therefore, purely accidental? Or does it reflects the profound re-thinking about other faiths that has been going on in the Roman Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council? Expressions like 'a theology with a view to dialogue and resulting from dialogue' (page 28) sound as if they could have been written by Michael Barnes (who was present at the

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1. Both BK and BSC point out areas where Christians are likely to have to do a considerable amount of re-thinking. The Introduction to BK, for example, questions the language of 'challenge' and 'threat'. The chapter on Examining Our Attitudes in BK 1.3 and BSC 1.8 points out several areas where traditional Christian attitudes may need to be challenged. The importance, however, that I attach to the element of witness and testimony in Christian responses to Islam is shown in Part 5 of BK and BSC Sharing our Faith.

conference), since they express the views elaborated in his book Religions in Conversation: Christian Identity and Religious Pluralism (1).

In spite of these questions, one hopes that the report will be widely read, and that the success of theological educators in carrying out the recommendations will be carefully monitored by the Islam in Europe Committee. It is theologians of all kinds, and not just the Islamicists, who need to be addressing these issues.

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1. SPCK, London, 1989.

5. RATIONALE FOR THE BOOK 'CROSS AND CRESCENT: Responding to the Challenge of Islam

This chapter includes:

- The Outline of the book (5.1). Each of the five parts represents a distinct stage in the overall approach, and the significance of these five stages is further explained in the Conclusion to the thesis (7. pp 169ff).

- The Introduction to the book (5.2), which explains the main title Cross and Crescent as well as the subtitle, Responding to the Challange of Islam. While the dangers and limitations in the language of 'challenge' are pointed out, it is argued that the subtitle is justified on the grounds that many Christians at the present time do in fact perceive Islam as a challenge, if not as a threat (1).

- The opening page of each of the five parts of the book, including several quotations designed to give the 'feel' of the chapters, and a brief summary of the contents. This is followed by a more detailed summary of the contents of each chapter, which was included in an earlier draft of BK but later ommitted to shorten the ms.

- The Conclusion (5.4) takes up the theme of the Cross, suggesting that if it is the symbol of the Christian faith par excellence, it needs to influence every aspect of the way Christians relate to Muslims and respond to the challenge of Islam.

It will thus be seen that BK attempts to bring together all the main aspects of my approach to the teaching of Islam as it has developed over the past thirty years and as described in this dissertation. The book is offered as a pedagogical tool, to be used by Christians who want to go further in their thinking about Islam and their relations with Muslims.

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1. The main theme of the Muslim periodical Impact International (vol 23.7 and 8, 9 April - 13 May, 1993) was Islam: Friend or Foe? It included the following articles: Fundamentalism is Out There!, Roots of the New Crusade, Who is afraid of Islam?, Islam: Friend or Foe?. Under the heading A Lone Christian Voice it printed a one and a half page review of the recent book by John L. Esposito, The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?, OUP, New York, 1993.

5.1 Book Outline

INTRODUCTION

Part 1. RELATING TO OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBOURS

1. Meeting face to face
2. Appreciating their culture
3. Examining our attitudes
4. Visiting a mosque
5. Facing immediate issues
6. Bible Study

Part 2. **UNDERSTANDING ISLAM**

1. The Muslim at prayer
2. Basic Muslim beliefs and practices
3. The Qur'an
4. Muhammad
5. Tradition
6. Law and theology
7. Sub-Groups in Islam
8. Sufism
9. 'Folk Islam' or 'Popular Islam'
10. The spread and development of Islam
11. Islam in the modern world
12. Women in Islam

Part 3. **ENTERING INTO DISCUSSION AND DIALOGUE**

1. Questions and objections concerning Christian practice
2. Questions and objections concerning Christian beliefs
3. Social and political issues
4. Guidelines and aims in discussion with Muslims
5. A deeper look at the main theological objections
6. Learning from the controversies of the past
7. Exploring dialogue

Part 4. **FACING FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES**

1. Theological questions
2. The Islamic View of Jesus
3. Crucial differences
4. Thinking biblically about Islam
5. Counting the cost of conversion
6. Facing the political challenge of Islam

Part 5. **SHARING OUR FAITH**

1. Natural openings in everyday life
2. Responses to 'Folk Islam'
3. Using the Bible
   - The Prodigal Son
   - The Gospel of Luke
   - The Message of the Tawrat
4. Rethinking and restating the Gospel, starting from the Qur'an
   - God and his prophets
   - God and his Word
   - God and his mercy
5. Strategies for the church: what can we do together?

CONCLUSION: Walking the way of the cross

5.2 Introduction

'Cross' and 'Crescent'

It's not hard to understand why the cross has been a major symbol - if not the major symbol - of Christianity since the beginning.

But what of the crescent? The moon is important for Muslims because they follow a lunar calendar, and have their own names for the twelve months of the year. So, for example, the first sighting of the new moon at the beginning of the ninth month of the Islamic calendar signals the start of fast of Ramadan. Since a new moon is increasing in strength, the crescent symbolises something that is growing.

The symbol of the crescent, however, has a strange history. The people of Byzantium (Constantinople) used to have a myth that the city had been founded by Keroessa, the daughter of the moon goddess, Io-Hera. They therefore used the crescent as a symbol for the city. It continued to be the symbol of Byzantium when it became the capital of the eastern half of the Holy Roman Empire. For centuries, therefore, it was the major symbol of a Christian empire. In other cultures it has been the symbol of 'the Great Mother', the lunar 'Queen of Heaven'.

It was then taken over by the Muslims some time after they conquered the city in 1453 AD, and for several centuries it was regarded as a Turkish symbol. Since the beginning of the 19th century, however, the crescent, usually combined with a star, has come to be regarded as the emblem par excellence of the faith and community of Islam all over the world.

Just as Christians often put a cross on the spire or dome of a church, so Muslims put a crescent on top of the minaret or the dome of a mosque. By putting *'cross'* and *'crescent'* together in the title, therefore, we are bringing together the symbols of two major world religions - religions which have had an uneasy relationship with each other for more than 1400 years.

Why speak of Islam as a challange?

'Challenge' is a popular word which we use in sport, politics and many other areas of life. It conveys the feeling that we're being invited to a contest or a duel. We cannot remain neutral and are forced to react in one way or another, since ignoring or refusing the challenge amounts to surrender, and making an inadequate response means certain defeat.

Christians who live in predominantly Islamic societies, like the Copts in Egypt, tend to have all the fears of a minority community, and feel themselves to be at best tolerated and at worst persecuted. Since in many cases they have lived in this kind of situation for centuries, they have worked out ways of adapting, which often involve having as little close contact with Muslims as possible. Their concern is not so much with the growth of the Church, as with its survival, and the religion of Islam is perceived as a threat to their very existence.

Christian expatriates working in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia come face to face with Islam in every area of their life and work. They cannot fail to see how Islam is practised all around them and how it is presented for their benefit on television. They are only too aware that the authorities want them to gain greater sympathy for Islam, even if they don't actually become Muslims.

Christians in the western world who are gradually becoming aware of the growing Muslim communities in their inner cities and the increasing number of mosques, can easily feel threatened by what they see as an alien religion. They cannot avoid asking fundamental questions about the uniqueness of the Christian faith, and wondering if Islam is set to win the world.

Many of these Christians would feel that the word 'challenge' is entirely appropriate, while some would feel that it is too weak, and prefer the word 'threat'. Most of them find it hard to agree with other Christians who adopt a 'live and let live' attitude to other faiths, or who think simply in terms of 'mutual sharing' between Muslims and Christians. They believe that Islam has its own clear agenda, and that in one way or another it continues to throw down the gauntlet to the Christian world.

How is the challenge perceived?

If we are thinking simply in terms of numbers, the feeling is that "Islam is growing and spreading". We know that Islam has been a missionary religion ever since the time when the Prophet Muhammad brought the tribes of Arabia into the House of Islam. We have heard of the glories of the Islamic Civilization. Islam is very obviously here to stay, and it seems incredible to us today that as recently as 1916 Samuel Zwemer, an American missionary in the Middle East, could write a popular book entitled *The Disintegration of Islam.* Muslims claim that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, with about one billion adherents, and that it is now poised for the conversion of Europe and North America. Here, then, in what is said to be a pluralist world, we have a missionary religion which would like to convert the world; and while the Christian Church seems to be contracting in the West, Islam seems to be expanding.

If we are thinking in terms of culture, the typical reaction of Christians is that "Muslims are different - their culture is alien to us". When the average westerner thinks of Muslims, he thinks of Arabs, Pakistanis or Bangladeshis rather than of white Anglo-Saxon Muslims. When Muslims keep their wives in purdah, want their children to go to Muslim schools, and insist on halāl meat, they seem to be foreigners trying to maintain their own kind of culture and society in 'our' country. The smells of their cooking and the way they dress make us feel that we're dealing with a totally different culture. They don't seem to follow the saying "When in Rome, do as the Romans do".

When we come to think of politics and economics, the feeling seems to be that "Islam wants to conquer the world". Since Muhammad regarded himself as both prophet and statesman, his followers have always believed that "Islam must rule". The assumption was that the territory occupied by Islam (dar al-islām) would eventually overcome and absorb the territories as yet outside the control of Islam (dar al-harb). Within a hundred years of his death, the Islamic Empire had spread as far as Spain in the west and China in the east. If Charles Martel hadn't stopped their advance at the Battle

of Tours in 732 AD, they might have conquered the whole of Europe. In 1453 the Muslim armies captured Constantinople, and in 1683 they were battering on the gates of Vienna.

Coming nearer to our own time, we think of Idi Amin attempting to turn Uganda into an Islamic country, or of Ayatollah Khomeini wanting to export the Islamic Revolution to other Islamic countries from Iran. We can never forget the way the Arab world used its oil as a political weapon in 1973, and we're aware of many countries in which Muslims are working to establish an Islamic state. And don't some of them even say that they want Britain to be an Islamic state? When we're told "The Arabs are buying up the whole of London", and hear rumours that "Arab hotel owners are throwing the Gideon Bibles into the dustbin", it is understandable that all the alarm bells start ringing in our minds, and we begin to imagine the worst: "the Muslims are coming ...!" If we are no longer afraid of "reds under the beds", we begin to think that the Muslim world has taken over from the Communist world as the major threat to the western world.

If we're thinking of the intellectual and theological challenge of Islam, we can sum it up in the words "Here is a religion that offers itself as an alternative to Christianity and Humanism". Islam seems to be saying to the Christian world, "You've got it all wrong about Jesus! Your Trinity of three persons in one God is impossible to understand, let alone explain. Islam is a simple creed without any dogmas, and this belief in one Creator God includes all that had previously been revealed to Judaism and Christianity. It leads to a unified world-view which embraces every aspect of life, and can draw people of all races together without discrimination."

When these four perceptions are put together, the word 'challenge' can seem more than justified. But before we get carried away by feelings of this kind, it may be wise to look more critically at this kind of language, asking what it may be doing to us.

Is 'challenge' the right word?

We need to acknowledge, in the first place, that the word is so grossly overworked these days, that we are in danger of being numbed into a state of apathy and indifference because of all the things that confront us. We cannot possibly face all these 'challenges' at the same time; so why bother with any of them?

Secondly, many Muslims would say that Islam is not wanting to challenge anyone - least of all the Christian world. They would quote the verse from the Qur'an which says, "There is no complusion in religion" (Surah 2:256), and point out that the word used by Muslims to describe their missionary activities is da'wa, a word which simply means 'calling' or 'invitation'. While they recognize that there are Muslim missionaries working all over the world, they would say that the vast majority of ordinary Muslims simply want to keep their own community together, and are not trying to convert anyone. We may or may not agree with such a generous interpretation of the intentions of Islam; but we do need to be willing to hear the many different voices of the Muslim community.

Thirdly, the language of 'challenge' can easily become provocative and sensational. So, for example, we have titles like 'Clash of the Titans' to describe the encounter between Christianity and Islam in Africa. This language tends to harden the them/us division; it also implies that it is

always the Muslims who are challenging us, the Christians. We as Christians are therefore made to feel like the young defenceless David, faced by the Goliath of Islam.

Then, finally, as a result of this process, we begin to feel that if this is how Islam is challenging the Christian world, we have got to respond in the same terms. We therefore use statistics to prove that Muslims don't outnumber Christians; we present Christianity as a superior culture; we think that we must use political weapons to resist the spread of Islam; and we argue back, trying to prove that Christianity is more reasonable than Islam.

Should we therefore hesitate to speak about 'The Challenge of Islam", or abandon this kind of language altogether? Each of us will have to answer this question for ourselves. But one reason for using the word 'challenge' in the subtitle and starting at this point is that this is how many Christians in Europe and North America perceive Islam.

This book will show that Islam puts very real questions to us as Christians which we have to answer. But as we do so, we ought to realise that there may be more then one way of answering these questions and responding to this faith and to the people who live by it!

What's involved in a Christian response to Islam?

This book is divided into five parts, each of which covers a vital element in a genuinely Christian reponse to Islam:

Part 1, KNOWING OUR MUSLIMS NEIGHBOURS, focusses on the way we relate to Muslims. We begin at this point because relating to people is more important than acquiring information or mastering new ideas. This means appreciating Islamic culture and reflecting on some of the difficulties that we experience in our relationships with Muslims. It also involves recognising the wide variety of situations all over the world in which Christians live alongside Muslims.

Part 2, UNDERSTANDING ISLAM covers basic Islamic beliefs, the practice of Islam, the Life of Muhammad and the Qur'an. The study of Islam cannot stop at this point in time, however, and we need to take note of developments in Islam since the beginning up to the present day. In all this we are not simply trying to absorb facts and information. Our aim is to try to understand Islam as far as possible 'from within'. We want to put ourselves into the shoes of Muslims, and learn to sit where they sit.

Part 3, ENTERING INTO DISCUSSION AND DIALOGUE deals with some of the main issues that tend to come up in discussions between Muslims and Christians. Some of these are very practical (eg "Why do you eat pork?), while others are more theological (eg "Why do you believe in the Trinity?"). Another group of questions is related to political and social issues (eg "Why do Christians tend to support the state of Israel?"). We need to work out how to respond to these questions and objections, and think of what we should be aiming at in our discussions with Muslims.

Part 4, FACING FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES begins by considering some of the difficult theological questions which come to the surface sooner or later when Christians start engaging with Muslims and Islam (eg. Is the God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity?), and looks at some of the most

fundamental differences between the Christian faith and Islam. One chapter explores the question of prayer for the Muslim world, and another discusses what is involved in thinking biblically about Islam. Two further sensitive issues are the cost of conversion and the political challenge of Islam.

Session 5, SHARING OUR FAITH attempts to get beyond the stage of argument and concentrate on testimony. How can we bear witness to Jesus as the most complete revelation of the One True God? We look at the power of personal testimony, and at different examples of how the Scriptures can be used with Muslims. In the final chapter three themes are studied first in the Qur'an and the in the Bible.

In the Conclusion we reflect on what it may mean for us in our own situation to be walking the way of the cross in our relationships with Muslims.

5.3 Opening Page and Summary of Chapters, Parts 1 - 5

OPENING PAGE PART 1 RELATING TO OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBOURS

'If we are to make any progress in dialogue with Muslims we must first of all get inside the world of Islam and make ourselves welcome as guests and friends... There is also a need for some of us to get inside the Muslim world and meet Muslims on their own territory where they are most at home, and perhaps, most truly themselves.'

(Roger Hooker)

'I cannot say I am reaping a harvest; I am not even planting seeds. Perhaps all I am doing is removing the stones.'

(Robert Bruce, 19th Century missionary in Persia)

The emphasis in Part I is on the relationships of Christians with Muslims. Before asking what Muslims believe or how they practise their faith, we think about how we relate to them as people and as neighbours in the different situations in which we find ourselves anywhere in the world.

1. MEETING FACE TO FACE

There is no substitute for meeting Muslims 'eyeball to eyeball'. No amount of reading about Islam will help us if we are not able or willing to develop relationships that are real and natural. Our study of Islam needs to begin with people rather than with history, doctrine or ideas.

2. APPRECIATING THEIR CULTURE

It is often the culture of Muslim communities that presents initial difficulties for Christians, simply because it seems so foreign - especially in the West. It may therefore be more important for us at this stage to appreciate something of Muslim culture than to understand Muslim beliefs.

3. EXAMINING OUR ATTITUDES

We need to be honest with ourselves and examine some of the attitudes and prejudices in our minds which may make it difficult for us to understand Islam or to approach Muslims.

4. VISITING A MOSQUE

This can be a very natural way of making contact with Muslims, and in many countries Christians may not have to travel too far to find a mosque. A visit to a mosque would be particularly important for a group working through any material in the book.

5. FACING IMMEDIATE ISSUES

A series of Case Studies illustrates some of the very practical issues that Christians have to face in their relations with Muslims in different situations all over the world today.

6. BIBLE STUDY

What can we learn from the Bible to help us in working through our attitudes to relating to Muslims? Many of the issues discussed in Part 1 are raised again here in the context of Bible study.

'Great Spirit, grant that I may never criticize a man until I have walked a mile in his mocassins.'

(An American Indian prayer)

'One tries to get inside the mind and heart of Islam, to get the feel of it, to be at home within it.'

(Roger Hooker)

'You have got to know and yet never try to teach a Muslim his own religion.'

(Jens Christensen)

'The intention is to describe, rather than to pass judgement, on the phenomena of religion ... Our first need is to understand...'

(Ninian Smart)

'I was profoundly conscious that they (the missionaries) did not understand the Muslims because they were not properly trained for the work - were in fact, as far as Islam was concerned, horribly ignorant ... The result for me was that I made up my mind if ever I could do anything to train missionaries to Muslims to know Islam, I would put my back into it.'

(D.B. Macdonald, writing about a visit to Cairo in 1907)

Our aim in part 2 is to try to understand Islam as much as possible <u>from the point of view of Muslims</u>. We want to describe the faith and practice of Islam in a way that Muslims will recognise as accurate and fair, so that we can put ourselves, as it were, into the shoes of Muslims and understand their world-view.

We are <u>not</u> at this stage trying to compare Islam with Christianity, except where there is some similarity or difference that can help us to appreciate better some aspect of Islamic belief and practice. We are <u>not</u> trying to show that Christianity is superior to Islam, and we are not yet at the stage of answering Muslim objections to Christianity. We are simply trying to understand Islam as a world faith in its own right, resisting the temptation as far as possible to interpret it in Christian categories or to see it through Christian spectacles.

Much of the material is presented in note form, with quotations from different writers, Muslim, Christian or secular, to illustrate important points. Brief texts are included in several sections to encourage students to go on to study original sources. The later chapters are longer and deal with more complex issues.

1. MUSLIMS AT PRAYER

Understanding the prescribed prayers can give us some insight into the minds and hearts of devout, practising Muslims.

2. BASIC MUSLIM BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

This is an outline of the basic creed of Islam and the 'Five Pillars', the five essential elements in the practice of Islam, using a recent summary writen by a Muslim.

3. THE QUR'AN

This chapter comes before the one on Muhammad because it is the Qur'an that is the supreme revelation of God, rather than the life of the Prophet. How did it come into being? And what is the best way for Christians to start reading the Qur'an?

4. MUHAMMAD

After an outline of the life of the Prophet, we consider further basic questions. What kind of world did he live in? What contact did he have with Christians and Christianity? What was the significance of the Hijra, the Migration from Mecca to Medina?

5. TRADITION (Hadith and Sunna)

Traditions about the life of Muhammad are important because they provided the basis for later developments in Islamic law and theology, and contribute to the Muslim's understanding of the Qur'an. Reported sayings about how Muhammad lived, and what he said and did on different occasions also provide Muslims with an example of how they should live today.

6. LAW AND THEOLOGY

It is important for Christians to understand that in Islam law is generally far more important than theology. While Christians have expended much time and energy trying to understand and defend doctrines like the Incarnation, the Trinity and the Atonement, Muslims have put their energies into defining law (sharī'a) as the basis for the life of the Muslim community.

7. SUB-GROUPS IN ISLAM

This chapter provides a brief overview of the main groups within the House of Islam in the past and present.

8. SUFISM

The mystical tradition within Islam has at times had an uneasy relationship with orthodox Islam. What is its origin? What is distinctive about mysticism in Islam?

9. 'FOLK ISLAM' or 'POPULAR ISLAM'

The beliefs and practices of ordinary Muslims often differ from the teachings of Orthodox Islam. At times they are influenced by Sufism, while at other times they are closer to superstition and magic, and the different practices of traditional religion found in societies all over the world.

10. THE SPREAD AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM

Some understanding of the history of Islam is vital for our understanding of Islam today. Who, for example, were the leaders of the Islamic community after the death of the Prophet? How did Islam spread? What are the most important things <u>for Muslims</u> in their own history over the last 1400 years?

11. ISLAM IN THE MODERN WORLD

In this chapter we consider how Islam has tried to come to terms with some of the challenges of the 20th century - political, economic, social and intellectual.

12. WOMEN IN ISLAM

Here is a kind of 'test case' for the approach that has been developed in Part 2. An introduction to this sensitive issue will have to refer to the Qur'an, the life of the Prophet, Tradition and Law, and note the variety of approaches represented among Muslims today.

'Before I gained an entree into the House of Islam I used to ask myself the question: "How should we Christians approach Muslims?" Having got inside I immediately found that this was the wrong question. The real issue was rather, how should I react to their approach to me? ... The areas of conscious difference with Christians seem to act like a magnet which draws their mind in any conversation...'

(Roger Hooker)

'It is hardly too much to say that the intellectual challenge to Christianity from Islam at the present time is greater than any challenge Christians have had to meet for fifteen centuries, not excluding that from natural sciences'

(W. Montgomery Watt)

'O that I could converse and reason, and plead, with power from on high. How powerless are the best directed arguments, till the Holy Spirit renders them effectual.'

(Henry Martyn)

'For far too long evangelical missions have been limping along without an effective apologetic to Islam. Since the demise of the nineteenth-century polemical method, known as "The Mohammedan Controversy", no significant Christian apologetical work for Muslims has been written.'

(Sam Schlorff)

Having tried in Part 2 to gain a deeper understanding of Islam as a total way of life, we turn now to consider the main controversial issues that tend to arise in conversation between Muslims and Christians. In some cases these are issues over which Muslims and Christians have been talking and arguing for centuries.

1. QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN PRACTICE

Why, for example, do Christians eat pork and drink alcohol? Often it is practical questions of this kind that are uppermost in the minds of Muslims when they think about the Christian way of life.

2. QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Here we focus on some of the main objections raised by Muslims - concerning the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Crucifixion, and the 'Corruption' of the Bible. At this stage we are simply trying to work out simple, immediate answers to these questions and objections.

3. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES

Some of the questions raised by Muslims concern the state of society in the west and sensitive political issues, like Christian attitudes to Zionism. However difficult they are, issues of this kind cannot easily be avoided in discussion with Muslims.

4. GUIDELINES AND AIMS IN DISCUSSION WITH MUSLIMS

A list of DOs and DONTs is given as a guide to those who may be wondering how to handle discussion, and sometimes heated argument, with Muslims.

5. A DEEPER LOOK AT THE MAIN MUSLIM OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

If we want to get beyond the immediate answers (3.2), and work through some of the issues in greater detail, we need to understand what lies behind the objections and think through the deeper issues that they raise.

6. LEARNING FROM THE CONTROVERSIES OF THE PAST

Here we ask what lessons we can learn from 1400 years of discussion, argument and polemics between Christians and Muslims.

7. EXPLORING DIALOGUE

This final section suggests an agenda for discussion that may take us away from traditional differences and offer a different model of dialogue.

'... the problem in mission to Islam is theological.'

(Arne Rudvin)

'There are several ways of establishing contact or communication between man and God. The best would have been incarnation; but Islam has rejected it. It would be too degrading for a transcendent God to become man, to eat, drink, be tortured by His own creatures, and even be put to death. However close a man may approach God in his journeying towards Him, even in his highest ascension, man remains man and very much remote from God.'

(Muhammad Hamdillah)

'... the call of the minaret must always seem to the Christian a call to retrieval. He yearns to undo the alienation and to make amends for the past by as full a restitution as he can achieve of the Christ to Whom Islam is a stranger. The objective is not, as the Crusaders believed, the repossession of what Christendom has lost, but the restoration to Muslims of the Christ Whom they have missed ...'

(Kenneth Cragg)

'Islam is a one-way door, you can enter through it but you cannot leave.'

(Abul A'la Maududi)

In part 4 we consider some of the harder issues that come to the surface in the meeting between the two faiths. In chapter 1 we consider three of the thorny theological questions which are raised for Christians by the existence of Islam. Chapter 2 explores the perceptions of Jesus in Islam. This leads on in Chapter 3 to an attempt to pin-point the crucial areas of difference in the two faiths.

Chapter 4 discusses different biblical models which may help Christians in their thinking about Islam. Chapter 5 deals with some of the implications of conversion to the Christian faith, while Chapter 6 explores possible Christian responses to the political challenges presented by Islam in the modern world.

1. THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

(1) *Is the God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity?*

Is Allah the same as 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'? Are we talking about two different beings or the same being who is understood in different ways?

(2) *Is there revelation in Islam?*

Should we as Christian be prepared to believe that Muhammad was in any sense a prophet? Is there genuine revelation from God in the Qur'an?

(3) *Is Islam inspired by the Devil?*

How do we account for the resistance of Muslims to the Christian faith? Should we say that Islam is in any sense a religion inspired by the Devil?

2. THE ISLAMIC VIEW OF JESUS

Muslims say that they recognise Jesus as a prophet, and wonder why Christians cannot recognise Muhammad as a prophet. But what is the picture of Jesus that emerges from the Qur'an and from centuries of Muslim tradition?

3. CRUCIAL DIFFERENCES

Here we try to analyse the differences between Christianity and Islam in several areas of belief, like revelation and inspiration, forgiveness and salvation. After trying to summarize orthodox Muslims beliefs under each heading, we attempt to express what we believe in a way that Muslims would understand.

4. THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT ISLAM

It may be easy to put a label on the teaching of a post-Christian sect like the Jehovah's Witnesses, and think of it as heresy. But do Muslims come into exactly the same category as the false teachers described in the Epistles of John who denied the deity of Christ? Can we find in the NT and/or the OT models that can guide us in our thinking about the status of Islam?

5. COUNTING THE COST OF CONVERSION

Engaging in discussion with Muslims and sharing our faith with them is not something to enter into too lightly. It is good for us to remove misunderstandings and appreciate one another's faith better. But what if Muslims feel attracted to the person of Christ and want to become his disciples in any sense? What is involved in conversion to the Christian faith?

6. FACING THE POLITICAL CHALLENGE OF ISLAM

If it is hard to answer the many practical and theological questions put to us by Muslims, it can be even harder to respond to the challenge that comes on the political level: eg in the demand for special rights for Muslim minorities, the desire to create Islamic states. How should Christians respond to challenges in the area of public life?

'We need the song note in our message to the Muslims ... not the dry cracked not of disputation, but the song of joyous witness, tender invitation.'

(Temple Gairdner)

'We believe not in words, but in the Word made flesh, a Word which only the Spirit of God can interpret to us. To argue is to turn it into mere words.'

(Roger Hooker)

'If Christ is what Christ is, he must be uttered. If Islam is what Islam is, that "must" is irrestistible. Wherever there is misconception, witness must penetrate; wherever there is the obscuring of the beauty of the Cross, it must be unveiled; wherever persons have missed God in Christ, he must be brought to them again ... In such a situation as Islam presents, the Church has no option but to present Christ.'

(Kenneth Cragg)

'Do not deceive yourself; proclamation is NOT child's play. It is not a thing every gossiping layman can do. Serving the Word as a preacher is the most exacting charisma in the Church, and besides faith and humility, patient, wearisome and continual effort and struggle are needed on the part of those whose gift it is to serve the Church in this way.'

(Jens Christensen)

In Part 5 we consider different ways of sharing our faith with Muslims. Assuming that we have understood and begun to practise what is involved in the four stages described in parts 1 to 4, we now ask: what does it mean to bear witness to Jesus? If we want to share with Muslims our understanding and experience of God as he is revealed to us in Jesus, how do we do it? Is there anything special about the way we share our faith with Muslims?

The following chapters offer several different models, none of which should be seen as a blue-print for Christian witness. It can hardly be emphasised too strongly that the most effective Christian witness usually arises naturally out of any situation, and is backed up by actions and by a life-style that are genuinely Christian. There are no simple techniques that are bound to make our witness easy or effective. All we can do here is try to learn from the experience of others, noting what they have found to be appropriate ways of sharing the Christian faith in different situations, and trying to understand what is involved in making the Gospel intelligible and relevant to Muslims.

1. NATURAL OPENINGS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Here we look at a typical conversation that could take place between a Muslim and a Christian at the time of a Muslim feast.

2. RESPONSES TO 'FOLK ISLAM'

How should Christians respond to the variety of practices (described in 2.9) which are not part of traditional, orthodox Islam?

3. USING THE BIBLE

Although some Muslims have no interest in reading the Bible, others are curious and interested to read it for themselves. But what parts of the Bible are particularly appropriate for Muslims to read, and why? This chapter suggests how to use a parable, a series of Bible selections, and a gospel.

3.1 The parable of the Prodigal Son

3.2 'The Message of the Tawrat, the Zabur and the Injil'

3.3 The Gospel according to St. Luke

4. RETHINKING AND RESTATING THE GOSPEL - STARTING FROM THE QUR'AN

Instead of starting with the Bible, the three studies in this chapter start with themes in the Qur'an and then go to explore the same themes in the Bible, relating its teaching to the ideas and questions that have emerged from the study of the Qur'an.

4.1 God and his prophets

4.2 God and his Word

4.3 God and his mercy

5. STRATEGIES FOR THE CHURCH: WHAT CAN WE DO TOGETHER?

This chapter raises questions about how Christians can think <u>together</u> about their relations with the Muslim community in their midst. Ideally these questions need to be discussed in the context of a <u>group</u>.

5.4 Conclusion

> 'The missionary among Muslims (to whom the Cross of Christ is a stumbling block and the atonement foolishness) is driven daily to deeper meditation on this mystery of redemption and to a stronger conviction that here is the very heart of our message and our mission.'
>
> (Samuel Zwemer)

> '... wherever there is the obscuring of the beauty of the Cross, it must be unveiled ...'
>
> (Kenneth Cragg)

Throughout our study we have been exploring what would be a genuinely Christian way of responding to the challenge of Islam. Perhaps the most vital clue to this response can be found in the symbol at the heart of the Christian faith. What then will it mean to walk the way of the cross in all our thinking about Islam and our relating to Muslims?

Walking the way of the cross in our relationships with Muslims will mean following the example of the one who was willing to cross barriers of race, class, sex and religion, in order to meet people where they were in their joy, their pain and their need. For some of us this may mean surrendering any power and privilege that are part of our history and culture, and 'taking the form of a servant' (Phil 2:7). The cross will constantly call us to leave the safety of our own circle and reach out to that other community or that other individual in love and hope.

Walking the way of the cross in understanding Islam will mean trying to 'get inside the mind and heart of Islam'. Our desire will not be to judge or condemn, but to 'sit where they sit', and to show that words like 'identification' and 'empathy' can be more than easy slogans. Sooner or later, however, we will have to understand why, from the Muslim point of view, the cross is a symbol of weakness, shame and defeat. In their way of thinking it is both a 'stumbling block' and 'foolishness', and can never be the final clue to the working of an all-powerful God.

Walking the way of the cross in discussion and dialogue will mean patient and attentive listening, which understands the words and appreciates the total world-view and the feelings that they express. The more keenly we feel the sins and shortcomings of the Christian Church of the past and present, the more we will feel compelled to say 'We have sinned with our fathers' (Psalm 106:6). The example of Jesus will teach us how to respond to scorn, anger and ridicule, but also to recognise the searching of a Nicodemus or the faith of a Syro-Phoenician woman. We shall continually be praying that stumbling blocks will be removed, so that through our words and deeds, and through the free working of the Holy Spirit, Muslims can begin to see why it was necessary the Christ should suffer (Luke 24:26).

Walking the way of the cross in facing fundamental issues will mean testing everything in Islam not by the standard of our own history and our culture, but by the measure of the crucified and risen Christ. Whether we are talking about revelation or salvation, law or the state, our goal will be to try as far as possible to seek 'the mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2:16; cf Phil 2:5ff). Sometimes we may need to hear the rebuke that says 'Away with you, Satan ... you think as men think, not as God thinks' (Mark 8:33 NEB). Much of the time we may be dealing with misconceptions and misunderstandings. But where there is rejection of the real injil, the real gospel, we will driven, in the words of Zwemer, 'to a deeper meditation on this mystery of redemption'.

Walking the way of the cross in our witness will mean testifying as best as we can how it is 'in the face of Christ' that we see 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God' (2 Cor 4:6). However weak our efforts to bear witness to 'Christ crucified' as the very heart of our message, we shall find that for 'those whom God has called' - of whatever community and whatever faith - Christ on the cross will be recognised as the supreme revelation of 'the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor 1:23 - 24).

'... here is the very heart of our message and our mission'.

'... wherever there is the obscuring of the beauty of the Cross, it must be unveiled ...'

6. RATIONALE FOR THE BIBLE SOCIETY COURSE

This chapter explains:

- The background and context in which the course has been developed (6.1).

- The principles on which it has been constructed (6.2).

- The outline of the course (6.3).

- The outline of each session for leaders, giving suggestions about allocation of time and teaching methods that can be used (6.4).

6.1 Background

It was in 1989 that I was first approached by the Rev Dr Roy Pointer of the Bible Society, who asked if I would be willing to prepare a course on relating to Muslims which could be mounted in local churches. Since Dr Pointer left the Bible Society I have been negotiating with the Rev Dr Martin Robinson and others in the department for Church Training Courses.

6.2 Basic Principles

The following are the basic principles which have determined the content and the method of this course:

(1) The model that is followed is one that has been used for some years by the Bible Society in its Church Growth Courses. The course is offered in a local church, and it is hoped that with publicity organised locally and more widely by the Bible Society, people from the surrounding area will be encouraged to take part. A fee of £15 is charged (£8 for the unwaged) to cover the costs, on the principle that people are likely to take something more seriously if they have pay for it.

(2) The course is aimed at Christians who are interested in knowing more about Islam and Muslims, and those who are interested in Muslim evangelism. Ministers and other church leaders, for example, may be wondering how they should think about Islam and what kind of strategies they should adopt for relating to Muslims in their area. The material has been written with a UK audience in mind; but it is hoped that Bible Societies in other countries, especially on the continent, may be interested in taking the material and adapting it for their own situations.

(3) The main aims of the course are:

- to provide basic information about Islam and Muslims;

- to help Christians towards greater understanding of Islam and greater empathy with Muslims;

- to help Christians to begin to get to grips with some of the difficult theological and biblical questions concerning other religions and general and Islam in particular;

- to enable Christians to understand the particular problems that Muslims have in understanding Christianity;

- to encourage Christians to think about the need for strategies in their relationships with Muslims in their own area and country;

- to encourage Christians to be less fearful and more open in talking with Muslims, to listen to them, to share their faith with them, and in particular to have confidence in using the Bible.

(4) The book Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam, is intended to be used as the teacher's handbook, and will be available to participants for sale.

(5) The Workbook, which is given to all participants, contains some of the material from the book. On several pages there are sections to be filled in during the course. The cover containes the following note:

'This Workbook contains more material than can be covered in the five sessions of this course. The leader will select what is most appropriate in any situation, and participants are encouraged to work through any other sections on their own after the course.

(6) The course needs to have sufficient flexibility so that it can be used in different situations. The teacher should know the needs of the people at a particular seminar and therefore know how to choose material that is likely to be relevant to them. The outlines for leaders (6.4) explain the aim of each session and suggest the amount of time that could be allocated to any subject that is chosen.

(7) The course needs to rely on a variety of teaching methods: straight teaching from the front with the OHP, group work, audio-visual material etc. Material in the Handbook not covered during the seminar can be studied by individuals at home.

(8) There will one main teacher for each course and one or more assisting with different parts of the course. A team of teachers will be trained who can teach the course in different parts of the country.

6.3 Outline

SESSION 1: RELATING TO OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBOURS

1. MEETING FACE TO FACE
2. WORKING OUT AN AGENDA
3. FACTS AND FIGURES
4. SECTS, GROUPS AND MOVEMENTS
5. PROFILE OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN YOUR AREA
6. CULTURAL ISSUES
7. VISITING A MOSQUE
8. EXAMINING OUR ATTITUDES
9. BIBLE STUDY

SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING ISLAM

1. MUSLIMS AT PRAYER
2. BASIC MUSLIM BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
3. 'FOLK ISLAM' OR 'POPULAR ISLAM'
4. THE QUR'AN
5. MUHAMMAD
6. 14 CENTURIES OF MUSLIM HISTORY AND MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS
7. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BE A MUSLIM IN BRITAIN TODAY?

SESSION 3: ENTERING INTO DISCUSSION AND DIALOGUE

1. QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN PRACTICE
2. QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN BELIEFS
3. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES
4. GUIDELINES AND AIMS IN DISCUSSION WITH MUSLIMS
5. A DEEPER LOOK AT THE MAIN OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIAN BELIEFS
6. ROLE PLAY

SESSION 4: FACING FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

1. THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS
2. CRUCIAL DIFFERENCES
3. COUNTING THE COST OF CONVERSION
4. THE POLITICAL CHALLENGE OF ISLAM

SESSION 5: SHARING OUR FAITH

1. NATURAL OPENINGS IN EVERYDAY LIFE
2. USING THE BIBLE
3. STRATEGIES FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH
4. EPILOGUE

6.4 Outline for leaders

SESSION 1: RELATING TO OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBOURS

Aim: To find out the particular needs and questions of the participants, and to give basic information about the numbers and distribution of Muslims in the country and in the world. Cultural questions are opened up, and there is an opportunity to discuss attitudes to Islam and Muslims, and relationships in each particular context.

1. MEETING FACE TO FACE

fill in answers to questions in Workbook
buzz groups
brief reporting in plenary — 10 mins

2. WORKING OUT AN AGENDA

fill in answers in Workbook
brief reporting in plenary — 10 mins

3. FACTS AND FIGURES

Distribution of Muslims in world (OHP and Workbook)
" " Europe (OHP and Workbook)
" " UK (OHP and Workbook)
Countries of origin and languages of Muslim communities in UK

10 mins

4. SECTS, GROUPS AND MOVEMENTS — 10 mins

5. PROFILE OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN YOUR AREA — 10 mins

6. CULTURAL ISSUES

1) How can we begin to appreciate Muslim culture?

2) Some basic DOs and DON'Ts — 20 mins

7. VISITING A MOSQUE — 10 mins

8. EXAMINING OUR ATTITUDES

Fill in answers to questions in Workbook
Buzz groups and brief reporting
Bible Study in groups — 20 mins

9. BIBLE STUDY — 20 mins

SESSION 2 UNDERSTANDING ISLAM

Aim: To give a brief overview of the Beliefs and Practices of Islam. This includes an introduction to the Qur'an and an outline of the life of Muhammad. A summary of 1400 years of Muslim-Christian relations leads into an exercise in understanding what it feels like to belong to the Muslim community in Britain today.

1. MUSLIMS AT PRAYER

   1) The Call to Prayer (tape)

   2) Ablutions and Compulsory Prayers

   3) The Fatihah 15 mins

2. BASIC MUSLIM BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

   1) Basic beliefs

   2) Basic practices 15 mins

3. 'FOLK ISLAM' OR 'POPULAR ISLAM' 15 mins

4. THE QUR'AN

   1) What does it mean to Muslims?

   2) Further questions

   3) Reading the Qur'an 15 mins

5. MUHAMMAD

   1) What does Muhammad mean to Muslims?

   2) Arabia before and during the life of Muhammad

   3) The life of Muhammad 15 mins

6. 14 CENTURIES OF MUSLIM HISTORY AND MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS 10 mins

7. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BE A MUSLIM IN BRITAIN TODAY?

   Group discussion 15 mins

SESSION 3 ENTERING INTO DISCUSSION AND DIALOGUE

Aim: To explore beiefly the main issues that tend to come up in discussions between Muslims and Christians, with the aim of trying to understand the background to these questions and working out effective ways of responding.

1. QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN PRACTICE

1) to 5)

15 mins

2. QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

1) to 5)

15 mins

3. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES

1) to 4)

Case study: Selling a redundant church or

Muslim schools

20 mins

4. GUIDELINES AND AIMS IN DISCUSSION WITH MUSLIMS

Comment briefly on 1) to 10)

Exploring Dialogue: Explain the basic idea of the 'agenda'

10 mins

5. A DEEPER LOOK AT THE MAIN OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Choose one of 1) 'The Bible has been corrupted'
2) 'Jesus was not the Son of God'
3) 'Jesus was not crucified'

15 mins

6. ROLE PLAY

15 mins

SESSION 4 FACING FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

Aim: To appreciate the common ground as well as the fundamental differences between the two faiths, and to understand some of the theological issues that are raised for Christians by Islam. The implications of conversion and the political challenge of Islam are two further issues that raise problems for Christians.

1. THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

either 1) Is the God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity?

or 2) Is there any revelation in the Qur'an?

20 mins

2. CRUCIAL DIFFERENCES

1) to 6)

20 mins

3. COUNTING THE COST OF CONVERSION

1) Conversion as seen by Islam

2) Issues involved in conversion

20 mins

4. THE POLITICAL CHALLENGE OF ISLAM

1) Islamic theology and practice in the past and present

2) Christian responses

20 mins

SESSION 5 SHARING OUR FAITH

Aim: To explore a variety of ways in which Christians can share their own faith with Muslims. Particular attention is given to ways in which portions of the Bible can be used effectively. The group is given an opportunity to discuss how they can follow up the seminar and make plans for the future.

1. NATURAL OPENINGS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Tape of conversation

Buzz groups: What is Elizabeth to say to Fatima? 20 mins

2. USING THE BIBLE

Explain: 1) the Prodigal Son

2) The Gospel according to St Luke

3) the Message of the Tawrat 30 mins

3. STRATEGIES FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Group or plenary discussion 30 mins

4. EPILOGUE

Meditation: Walking the way of the cross

Prayer 10 mins

7. CONCLUSION

Major issues involved in teaching Christians about Islam

This dissertation has given an account of attempts to teach groups of Christians about Islam in three different situations: university students in the Middle East, theological students at an Anglican college in Bristol, and an international group of mission students in Birmingham. When the context and special needs of each of these groups were recognised, a course was devised to teach what seemed most essential about Islam and Christian-Muslims relations. As a result of this process, two related teaching programmes have been developed and are about to be launched.

Throughout this period of development and testing, questions about how to teach Christians about Islam have raised questions of content: what precisely is one to teach? Is it, for example, 'Ideal Islam' or 'Folk Islam' or a mixture of both? And how much do Christians need to know? How well does one need to know the Qur'an, the details of the life of the Prophet, or the varieties in the different schools of Law?

Many of these questions about method and content can only be answered in the light of the fundamental question about reasons and aims first raised in the Introduction (pages 1ff): why do Christians want to know, or need to know, about Islam? If we are simply concerned with mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence, anything that enables Christians to get beyond the stereotypes and develop a deep sense of respect for Islam and for Muslims will be valuable. If there is a determination for Christians and Muslims to draw closer together in facing contemporary issues, there needs to be an appreciation of those large areas of common ground in these two 'revealed religions'.

If, however, in addition to these motives, there is a desire for witness to the House of Islam, Christians will want to understand Islam well enough to be able to give an account of their faith in terms that Muslims will understand, even if they remain unconvinced.

Issues about methodology, content and motivation, therefore, are seen to be inextricably related to each other. It is impossible to address the question of how? without addressing the questions of what? and why?

Distinctives of the approach

It will be evident that a particular approach has develped through a continuing process of interaction with other approaches to teaching Christians about Islam - some of them coming from evangelical sources, some from 'liberal', 'catholic' or 'ecumenical' sources. The main distinctives of the approach developed in the book and the course can now finally be noted in relation to the five parts of the book and the course. Each of these represents an important emphasis which makes the approach different in certain respects from that of other similar courses.

(1) The significance of context and the importance of face to face meeting

The political and social context in which Muslims and Christians meet is bound to have a profound effect on the nature of any dialogue. The way they engage with each other in Cairo will be different from the way they engage in Beirut or Birmingham. Any programme of training must therefore be flexible enough to cope with these differences, and be capable of adaptation to widely differing contexts. Cultural questions are relevant under this heading, and there are good reasons for at least opening them up at this early stage. An awareness of the political, social and cultural factors in different situations, if handled with sensitivity, should bring to the surface those 'attitudes and deep-seated feelings' which, as one student recognised, 'have to be confronted'.

(2) The need for serious and sympathetic study of Islam

Any serious study of Islam for Christians will have to go well beyond the Five Pillars and the life of the Prophet. It cannot be satisfied with what Christians have written about Islam, and will want to read what Muslims write about their own faith. It will also want to get to grips with some of the primary sources, and not be content with the introductions and the broad surveys. The student will need to enter into the world of Islam with sympathy or empathy. Without ceasing to be a Christian, he/she will be wanting, in Roger Hooker's words, to 'get inside the mind and heart of Islam, to get the feel of it, to be at home wihin it'.

(3) The quest for dialogue that goes beyond apologetics

However tired we may feel of the issues that Christians and Muslims have been debating for centuries, we can hardly ignore them. If, therefore, we cannot by-pass the fundamental issues, we should at least be able to learn something from the controversies of the past. 'There must needs be an apologetic literature', as Constance Padwick wrote in describing Temple Gairdner's distinctive approach to the controversial questions, 'unafraid of controversial points. Silence, he felt, was tantamount to denial of the truth ...' Any apologetic that emerges must therefore be 'humanized and written for fellow-men'. Kenneth Cragg, however, has gone one step further than Gairdner in this respect, and his example encourages us to 'move away from position-statements ... to escape from the formalism of dogma and positional thinking and into genuine enterprise of mind and spirit'.

4) The need to grasp the difficult questions

The patient practice of dialogue should enable us to discover areas of common ground that we perhaps never imagined to exist. But it will no doubt also remind us painfully of those areas where there is a parting of the ways, where Muslims and Christians give fundamentally different answers to the same basic question. Questions about the political dimension of Islam and implications of conversion (either to or from Islam), however difficult and sensitive they may be, need to be faced. And because of their understanding of the importance and authority of Scripture, in approaching these difficult questions evangelical Christians will want, and need, to be assured that Christian thinking about Islam is firmly based in Scripture.

5) The obligation and the privilege of Christian witness

If we have abandoned polemics, worked through apologetics, and begun to explore dialogue, we may discover that there is still a real place for witness in the context of dialogue. Christians who appreciate Cragg's concept of 'retrieval' will be concerned about how to bear witness to 'the Christ to Whom Islam is a stranger'. They will, however, see that 'Christian mission is not a calculus of success, but an obligation in love ... As long as Christ is Christ, and the Church knows both itself and him, there will be a mission to Islam'.

The title of the book and the course brings together the symbols of the two faiths: Cross and Crescent. The aim in bringing them together, however, has not been confrontation or conflict, but a genuine meeting of hearts and minds. Whether or not it is appropriate to speak in terms of 'the challenge of Islam', it need not be too hard for Christians to hear and understand what the House of Islam has been trying to say to the followers of Jesus for 1400 years. It is often harder for Christians to know how to respond in a way that is genuinely consistent with the spirit of the one who was willing to go to the cross.

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TEACHING CHRISTIANS ABOUT ISLAM: A STUDY IN METHODOLGY

M.Phil Thesis, 1993: Colin G. Chapman

ANNEXES

The following amendments are submitted in response to the Report from the External Examiner, Dr Kenneth Cracknell, dated 26 April '94.

Annexe 1. Revised footnotes 1 and 2 on page 10, explaining the influence of the approach of Kenneth Cragg in the development of the material. (pages 183 ff)

Annexe 2. Revised footnotes 1 and 2 on page 11, explaining further Francis Schaeffer's concept of 'Presuppositional Apologetics'. (pages 192 ff)

Annexe 3. Further elaboration of the significance of Temple Gairdner's period of study under Duncan Black Macdonald, referred to on page 116. (pages 197 ff)

Annexe 4. Annotated bibliography on Folk Islam, with reference to the discussion on page 63 and the handling of the subject in BK Part 2.9 and BSC 2. (pages 199 ff)

Annexe 1. Revised footnotes 1 and 2 on page 10, explaining the influence of the approach of Kenneth Cragg in the development of the material.

The influence of Cragg will be evident at many points in the development of the material. There has never, however, been any attempt at conscious imitation. In many cases I had read parts of Cragg's work many years before, and when I came to write the study material and the book was not always aware of the ways in which I might be following Cragg.

The following are the main points at which influences may be clearest:

(1) The emphasis in BK and BSC Part 1 on Relating to Our Muslim Neighbours is consistent with what Christopher Lamb describes as 'one consistent theme which marks virtually all his (Cragg's) work': 'the need for contact, for communication, for relationship, between human beings estranged from each other, and between humankind and God' (PhD. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1987, page 37.

(2) Part 2 of BK and BSC is entitled Understanding Islam, and works out in some detail what is involved, especially for those unfamiliar with the subject, in attempting to gain a sympathetic understanding of Islam. Chapter 7 of The Call of the Minaret is entitled The Call to Understanding, and explains the need to 'penetrate into the inner meaning of personal Islam' as follows:

> '(Christian thought about Islam) begins simply with the will to understanding, divested of susceptibilities that would compromise its purpose and alerted to its own duty of inward integrity. Forgoing the impulse either to excuse or to upbraid, we must seek an openness of soul and sensitivity to all that is deepest in our fellows' (pages 173-174).

(3) The first chapter of Part 2 of BK and BSC deals with The Muslim at Prayer. The assumption here is that one of the best ways of understanding Islam and getting inside the minds and hearts of Muslims is to listen with them to the Call to Prayer and to listen to them as they pray. The quotation at the beginning of this chapter comes from Constance Padwick's Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer Manuals in Common Use, and is based on the principle of lex credendi, lex orandi, which is fundamental both to The Call of the Minaret and to Cragg's later work, Alive to God: Muslim and Christian Prayer (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

(4) BK Part 2.11, Islam in the Modern World, draws on material found in Counsels in Contemporary Islam (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965) and in the chapter on Islam in the New Century in the 1986 revised edition of The Call of the Minaret (London: Collins). The chapter attempts to explain issues facing Muslims in the world today, without attempting to score debating points or to present Christian responses to the same issues. The underlying question is 'What is it to be a Muslim in the world today?' (Call of the Minaret, page 173).

(5) In BK Part 3.5, A Deeper Look at the Main Theological Objections, my approach to the question of the Crucifixion of Jesus is influenced by Cragg's insistence that we get beyond simple statements like 'The Qur'an denies the Crucifixion'. He points out that the Qur'an does not deny that the Jews wanted to kill Jesus or that Jesus was willing to die; all it denies is that God could have willed the death of Jesus or allowed it to happen (See Call of the Minaret, pages 265-268).

(6) BK Part 3.7, Exploring Dialogue, attempts to develop some aspects of Cragg's approach to dialogue in a somewhat simplified form. The emphasis on beginning with our humanity and with issues in the world today is consistent with the approach developed in The Privilege of Man: A Theme in Judaism, Islam and Christianity, London, Athlone Press, 1968.

The understanding of dialogue in the section Can we find new ways of bearing witness to our faith? is based on Cragg's dictum 'The question is not whether, but how'. His desire to get beyond the sterility of much MUslim-Christian controversy of the past is summed up in his Foreward to Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue (Kateregga and Shenk, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981, quoted on pages 129 - 130. The idea here is that if Christians and Muslims can begin with the recognition that they agree on these seven propositions ('God creates'; 'God is one"; 'God rules'; 'God reveals'; 'God loves'; 'God judges'; 'God forgives') we may then be able to go on to discuss differences in our interpretation of these basic convictions. So, for example, the question between us is not whether God forgives, but how he forgives; on what basis does God forgive us?

(7) My answer to the question 'Is the God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity' is very much the same as Cragg's, although not expressed in the same terms. Christopher Lamb sums up Cragg' approach as follows:

> 'He does not need to keep asking the question whether the God of Islam is the same God as the God of the Bible, since although the two definitions differ in important respects, there is clearly enough overlap to be confident that the respective terms refer to the same being. The predicates may differ but their subject is the same, which means that we can (and must, if we are loyal) differ about the nature of God, and how he should properly be described, while at the same time we know that it is the one God we are talking about. If we were not we should have nothing to say to each other' (Lamb, page 81).

(8) In the chapter on Crucial Differences (BK 4.3), I have developed ideas which I first heard explored by Cragg in a lecture given at All Saints Cathedral, Cairo, in 1972. Speaking about the Qur'an's approach to the Crucifixion, he suggested a parallel between the Qur'an's denial of the crucifixion and the immediate response of Peter to Jesus's prediction of his suffering and death. Cragg encouraged a mainly Christian audience to appreciate the logic behind the Muslim response to the question of the death of Jesus, suggesting that the difficulties Peter had in accepting the possibility of the Messiah's suffering and death are similar to the difficulties in the minds of Muslims. He went on to quote the New English Bible's translation of the response of Jesus to Peter's outburst ('Away with you, Satan; you think as men think, not as God thinks', Mark 8:33), arguing that there is a very understandable and reasonable logic behind the traditional Muslim denial of the crucifixion.

In the conclusion of this chapter in which I attempt to outline some of the most significant differences in Muslim and Christian approaches to six different issues (Revelation, Inspiration, the Unity of God, Human Nature, Forgiveness and Salvation, and Politics and the State), I have suggested a way of using Cragg's analysis of the question of the crucifixion and applying it to six crucial areas of difference in the following way:

> 'Is there any common denominator in our discussion of these six issues? Where there has been a parting of the ways between Christians and Muslims, perhaps it is because we are faced ultimately with a choice between two ways of thinking which cannot be reconciled. From the Christian point of view, Islam is utterly rational and reasonable in each of these areas - but reasonable only by the standards of human reason.

'If Jesus had to rebuke Peter for his very "Islamic" thinking over the question of his suffering and death with the words "You think as men think, not as God thinks" (Mark 8:33), could it be that the words might be applied also to the thinking of Islam at these other points as well? From the point of view of the revelation of God in Christ, Islam seems to be thinking 'as men think' in each of the six areas considered in this chapter ...'

(9) In the chapter Facing the Political Challenge of Islam (BK 4.6), I have quoted from Cragg's comment on significance of the Hijra to explain the 'progression from preaching to ruling':

'In the last analysis, Islam sees the militancy of Muhammad as the legitmate and appropriate progression from preaching to ruling' (Islam and the Muslim, Milton Keynes: Open University, 1978, page 17).

(10) On the page of quotations at the beginning of Part 4, Facing Fundamental Issues, I have used sentences from The Call of the Minaret which explain the concept of 'retrieval': '... the call of the minaret must always seem to the Christian as a call to retrieval ...'. Similarly in the page at the beginning of Part 5, Sharing Our Faith, I have used the passage where he says 'If Christ is what Christ is, he must be uttered ...'

(11) The three studies in BK 5.4, God and His Prophets, God and His Word, and God and His Mercy attempt to work out some aspects of Cragg's methodology. A study of these themes in the Qur'an seeks to state as faithfully as possible how Muslims approach questions relating to divine revelation and mercy. In turning to the Christian scriptures, we attempt to recognize where there is genuine common ground with Islam, and only then to see significant differences. The study of the life of Jeremiah in God and His Prophets attempts to develop suggestions made by Cragg about the significance of this prophet in various talks and in other places in his writing (eg Jesus and the Muslim, London: Allen & Unwin, 1985, pages 130, 155ff).

There are two areas, however, in which I have some difficulty in following Cragg. The first is over the question of the prophethood of Muhammad. One of the key passages where he deals with Christian responses to the question of Muhammad's prophethood is in the following paragraphs in Muhammad and the Christian: A Question of Response:

'Christian response to the main theme of his prophethood has surely to be a positive acknowledgement of its significance, as reviewed in chapter 7. But that lively sense of its relevance is left taking strenuous issue with the guiding principles of action by which the message was reinforced. Such strong, if critical, Christian affinity with the Qur'an via the Prophet is long overdue. But its sincerity in no way relieves us of the necessity to maintain our steady witness, for Islam's own sake, to religious dimensions which must always elude the power-equation.

'The thrust of these chapter, then, is that the Christian conscience must develop a faithful appreciation of the Qur'an and thereby participate with Muslims in Muhammad within that community of truth as to God and man, creation and nature, law and mercy, which they afford. But such community in truth will never cease to stand in need of those measures of grace and love, of sin and redemption, which are distinctive to the Gospel and which must remain incompatible with the original assumptions of Islamic Jihad.

'There will doubtless be immediate rejection of this positive, critical position by many Christians and by many Muslims too. There will be those among the latter who will say that the prophethood and the principles of Muhammad can in no way be open to discriminating judgement of this kind. They are inseparably joined and sealed by divine sanction. Among the former many will find truth community with the Qur'an quite excluded by their dogmatic lights and inadmissable by their instictive loyalties. To all these, either way, their consciences and decisions of mind and will.

'But the decision these consciences dispute is not to be denied a conscience of its own, rooted in the sense of things, both Quranic and Christian, which have been explored in the previous chapters. It is a conscience firm in the conviction that its acknowledgement of Muhammad rests on authentically Christian/Biblical grounds and that its instinct to make central the power-question is what the New Testament vitally requires of it. It may thus claim to be loyal to Christ no less by what it welcomes than by what it disavows. And each for the other's sake. What remains irreducibly at issue, for the Christian, about Muhammad in no way detracts from what waits authentically for confession and assent. The crux of either is what he did with prophetic experience at the watershed of crisis.' (pages 140 - 141).

If I understand Cragg correctly, he seems to be saying three things:

(i) 'Christians cannot deny that Muhammad was in some sense a prophet sent by God, firstly because they should recognise the fact that Muslims see him as such, and secondly because there is so much in the Qur'an to which Christians can and should respond positively.'

(ii) 'While recognising Muhammad as being a prophet in some sense, Christians cannot avoid 'deciding by the gospel', i.e. making judgements about the life and teaching of Muhammad in the light of the life and teaching of Jesus.

(iii) Even if Christians are prepared to acknowledge that Muhammad is in some sense a prophet sent by God, they will want to argue that prophethood is not enough by itself, since it cannot deal with the full reality of the human condition. A prophet can only be a 'warner', and cannot 'save' or offer 'salvation' in its fullest sense.

My own experience of tackling the sensitive question of the prophethood of Muhammad in teaching Christians (and especially evangelical Christians) is that they often find it hard to accept the open-endedness of the first part of Cragg's answer. While they are glad to recognize all the areas of common ground, they find it hard to recognize Muhammad as a genuine prophet in any sense, because of the significant points at which Islam seems to deny basic Christian convictions about Jesus. When I myself am asked by Muslims why I do not recognise Muhammad as a prophet, I often say, 'If I did, I would be a Muslim'. I sometimes also say that I can accept the first part of the shahada, but not the second. I find that such answers are clear and respectful, and leave the Muslim to draw the appropriate conclusion without closing the conversation.

For these reasons the section dealing with the question 'Is there any revelation in Islam?' in BK 4.2.2 begins as follows:

> 'Once again we need to be cautious about the question itself, because it is framed in such a way as to invite a simple YES or NO for an answer. We therefore need to break the question down into a number of smaller questions, which ought at the very least to alert us to the danger of simplistic answers ...'

The section ends:

> 'Working through questions like these should force us to recognise all that there is in Islam which is thoroughly consistent with Christian beliefs. We all probably still want to make a distinction between "truths" (plural) and "the truth" (singular), and will remain geuinely puzzled about the mixture of truth and error which Christians find in Islam. But at least we will have been alerted to the danger of simplistic answers which either repel Muslims (because they convey such a negative view of Islam) or alternatively leave them confused (because they blur the distinctives of the two faiths).

The section on the same subject in BSC 4.2 ends with a brief statement of four possible answers given by Christians, which is intended to lead into further discussion without any suggestion that there is only one possible answer that Christians can give.

The second area in which there may be a difference of approach is over Cragg's concept of 'Islamic reasons for being Christian'. The suggestion here is that some basic Muslim convictions (eg about the majesty and sovereignty of God, or about prophethood) can with some imagination be shown to point to Christian conclusions, and not necesssarily only to Islamic conclusions.

I have no difficulty with the general argument that creation implies both responsibility: God the Creator takes full responsibility for his creation and inevitably therefore becomes vulnerable to the ways in which his creatures respond to him. For Christians this sense of divine responsibility and vulnerability leads ultimately to the cross of Christ.

I have until now, however, had some reservations about some aspects of this approach. The first reason is that the argument is probably too subtle to communicate to all but a very few Christians. The second reason is that I sense that Cragg is a little too optimistic at this point. I fully accept his call to 'patience and hope'. But I have not found many Muslims able to see how their basic convictions could point in a radically different direction from the one they have accepted.

My own approach has been to say in effect to Muslims, 'I understand what you believe and I appreciate your profound objections to Christian beliefs like the crucifixion. I do appreciate the Muslim desire to safeguard the unity and transcendence of God which leads you to believe that God could not have allowed the Prophet Jesus to suffer and die on the cross. But do you Muslims appreciate our conviction that there is a deeper logic which demands that 'the Christ must suffer ...'?

I suspect that the difference between Cragg and myself at this point is that while Cragg seems to want to persuade Muslims that their Islamic assumptions can and perhaps should lead to Christian conclusions, I think I am less optimistic about the possibility of persuading them on these grounds. Some Islamic assumptions, I believe, probably need to be seriously modified, if not abandoned, if a Muslim is to accept Christian teaching about the death of Jesus. The task of the Christian in dialogue is therefore to remove misunderstandings, to understand Muslim beliefs and then to highlight contrasts at the crucial points. 'Don't you see', in

other words, 'that there is another way of looking at the same question which may meet your deepest concerns - but not necessarily in the way that you have expected until now?'

Annexe 2. Revised **Footnotes 1 and 2, page 11, explaining further Francis Schaeffer's concept of 'Presuppositional Apologetics'.**

'Presuppositional Apologetics', as understood by Francis Schaeffer, emphasises the need for Christians not only to understand the presuppositions of non-Christian world-views and philosophies, but also to be able to enter into discussion with non-Christians within the circle of those presuppositions, without immediately presenting a Christian world-view as an alternative.

In a chapter entitled Finding the Point of Tension in The God Who is There: Speaking Historic Christianity into the Twentieth Century (London: Hodder, 1968), Schaeffer outlines his general approach in discussion with non-Christians. He begins by pointing out that every human being has a set of presuppositions about the nature of the world and the meaning of life, but that no-one is ever totally consistent in working out these presuppositions to their logical conclusion. There is always bound to be a 'point of tension' between the way people actually live day by day in the real world and the way they would live if they were entirely consistent to what they believe. He continues:

> 'The first consideration in our apologetics for modern man, whether factory-hand of research student, is to find the place where this tension exists ...
>
> 'In this way it does not seem to me that presuppositional apologetics should be seen as ending conversation with the man about us. On the other hand, to try to work below the line of despair without a clear and defined concept of presuppositional apologetics is simply to destroy the possibility of helping twentieth-century people. There is no use talking today until the presuppositions are taken into account, and especially the crucial presuppositions concerning the nature of truth and the method of attaining truth.
>
> 'When we have discovered, as well as we can, a person's point of tension, the next step is to push him towards the logical conclusion of his presuppositions ... We try to move him in the natural direction in which his presuppositions would take him. We are then pushing him towards the place where he ought to be, had he not stopped short.
>
> '... The whole purpose of our speaking to twentieth-century people in this way is not to make them admit that we are right in some personally superior way, nor to push their noses in the dirt, but to make them see their need so that they will listen to the Gospel. As soon as the man before us is ready to listen to the Gospel we do not push him any further, because it is horrible to be propelled in the direction of

meaninglessness against the testimony of the external world and the testimony of oneself' (pages 126 - 127).

My own writing in the area of Christian Apologetics was influenced by this general approach. Thus in Christianity on Trial (3 volumes, Lion Publishing, 1972-1974), volume 1 deals entirely with the question of truth under the title 'How can I know if Christianity is true?'. Volume 2 deals with questions about God, Man and the Universe; and questions about Jesus Christ are not dealt with until volume 3.

The emphasis on presuppositions was made even clearer when the material was re-written and published as one volume, with the title The Case for Christianity (Tring: Lion Publishing, 1981). Section 1 is entitled Starting Where We Are - Basic Human Questions, and this is followed by Christian Answers to Human Questions (Section 2). Understanding the Christian World-View then leads on to Testing the Christian World-View (Section 4). Section 5, Understanding and Testing the Alternatives is the longest in the book and looks at the Major Religions, Ten Key Thinkers and Ten '-isms'. The whole section is introduced with the following three quotations, which point to the same basic idea of following presuppositions to their logical conclusion:

'It was the manifestly poisonous nature of the fruits that forced me to consider the philosophical tree on which they had grown.'
'An obviously untrue philosophy leads in practice to disastrous results.'
'... we realise the necessity of seeking an alternative philosophy that shall be true and therefore fruitful of good' (Aldous Huxley).

'What I have to record is a changed view of the nature of man, which in due course led to a changed view of the nature of the world' (C.E.M. Joad).

'Atheism is a cruel, long-term business: I believe I have gone through it to the end' (Jean-Paul Sartre).

One of the illustrations of the method given in the introduction was from Temple Gairdner's The Muslim Idea of God:

'When men get into a cul-de-sac and think their position hopeless, it means they have taken a wrong turn, and that they must go back to beyond the point where they took that turn, and start upon another path.'
(Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1909)

This approach is worked out in greater detail by Gairdner in his Mishkat il Anwar, The Niche of Lights: Translation and Introduction (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1924). He explains how, while al-Ghazali's understanding

of the qualitative difference between God and man (the doctrine of mukhalifa) leads him in the direction of complete agnosticism, he takes refuge in 'the most extreme Gnosticism':

> 'In Ghazali the most extreme Agnosticism and the most extreme Gnosticism meet ... What saved God for him from his obliterating agnosticism was the experience of the mystic leap, his own personal mi'raj ... the man who had thought his way out of both atheism and pantheism ... would have been left at the end of the quest, by his thinking alone, with an Unknown and Unknowable Absolute (page 29).'

Gairdner thus concludes that the Mishkat

> 'seems to be one long attempt to modify or even negate this its own bankrupt conclusion. Indeed it goes unusual lengths in asserting a certain ineffable likeness between Allah and man' (page 29).

I still find considerable value in Schaeffer's approach to Presuppositional Apologetics because of its emphasis on the need to uncover the basic assumptions of any religion, world-view or philosophy and on the importance of epistemology. I have three main reservations, however, about the application of Schaeffer's Presuppositional Apologetics in the area of Islam:

(1) The emphasis on the need for consistency may not be very compelling for Muslims who have little sympathy with the Western intellectual tradition. Convinced, thinking Muslims are probably more concerned with ensuring that their beliefs and life-style are thoroughly consistent with the Qur'an and the sunna than with philosophical consistency or with pursuing presuppositions to their logical conclusion. Their fundamental assumption is that Islam is the final revelation of the God the Creator to humankind, and that its teachings must therefore by definition be relevant to life as it has to be lived in the real world at any time and in any place. I suspect that only those who have grown more sceptical about their Islamic faith are prepared to look more critically at the philosophical presuppositions of Islam and to see how they work out in practice.

(2) The tactic of forcing a people into a corner and trying to convince them that a particular belief is untenable often proves to be self-defeating. Temple Gairdner, it seems, had to learn this lesson the hard way. He was fully aware of the barrenness of much traditioanl apologetic

which can leave the objector 'prostrate but cursing', and pleaded for a new kind of apologetic writing which 'must be humanized and written for fellow-men, not only for the defeat of argufiers' (see quotations on pages 128-129). In spite of this, however, he wrote an article entitled Mohammed Without Camouflage: Homo Arabicus (Muslim World, 9 Jan, 1919) which proved to be so provocative to Muslims that the censor would not allow Gairdner's second article on the subject to be published in Arabic (Shelley, page 266).

Shelley suggests that in writing this article Gairdner was going against the principles regarding controversy with Muslims which he himself had outlined several years before in Orient and Occident:

> 'Avoid controversy on issues that must inevitably lead to personalities, or that acutely wound the sensibilities of the opponent, for we may be certain that however strong, in fact crushing, our arguments, they can never win the opponent, who may be silenced, discomfited, enraged, routed, anything you please, but not converted. Of course, if our object is to discomfit, enrage, or silence, well and good: but if we want to convert, we must abstain from barren victories, however satisfying they be to the flesh.'

(3) Cragg suggests an alternative approach to people in the Muslim world who understand fully the kind of philosophical despair which was a major concern for Francis Schaeffer. One of the chapters in The Pen an the Faith: Eight Modern Muslim Writers and the Qur'an (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985) deals with Najib Mahfouz, quoting a description of how his questioning of religion and ethics led him 'to fall victim to a grim, spiritual crisis which was so oppressive that I almost rejected human experience in toto'. In another context Mahfouz wrote: 'I've lived through an age without precedent in which ethics and values have collapsed. I have often felt that I'm living in a huge house sceduled for demolition, not in a society at all' (page 148).

The chapter ends with a summary of several novels and short stories in which Mahfouz 'ponders the quest for salvation'. One of these, says Cragg, called A Word in the Night, 'brings Najib Mahfouz closest to an ultimate answer to the human dilemma of doubt, alienation and significance'. A government official suddenly realizes on his retirement that his selfish life and ruthless ambition have brought him to 'pointlessness and dismay'. Then suddenly he begins to reflect on the opening Surah of the Qur'an and

the phrase 'In the Name of God ...', and then on 'the peace and beauty and guilenessness of nature'. When he returns home his wife recognizes that some deep transformation has taken place in him because she sees him 'smiling ... an altogether new smile ... the smile of a pure heart'. Cragg comments:

> 'It is fitting to leave Najib Mahfouz and his radical despair, his characters and their harassed, restless, bewildered report on humanity, with this picture of redemption through a spirit opened on to nature, to love, and to "the Name of God"' (page 163).

Annexe 3. Further elaboration of the significance of Temple Gairdner's period of study under Duncan Black Macdonald, referred to on page 116.

The statement on page 116 that when Temple Gairdner went to study under Duncan Black Macdonald at Hartford he was hoping to learn 'knock-down arguments' which he could use against Muslims is based on the recollections of Macdonald as recorded in two different places. The first is a letter which Maconald wrote to Constance Padwick, dated 11 October 1928:

> 'On one point he (Gairdner) and I had to come to an understanding and I think that we did so thoroughly. His first feeling was that my approach to the study of Islam was not sufficiently controversial. This feeling reached after a time quite frank expression. "I came here thinking that I would get from you knock-down arguments" - this phrase I am certain of - "to use with Muslims and you are teaching me only to understand them." So we had it out together, he and I, but in the end he came completely round to my method of approach' (quoted in Shelley, page 131).

The second is Macdonald's Autobiographical Notes, published by the Hartford Seminary Foundation in June 1946:

> 'When Temple Gairdner came to me to study Islam he cam seeking knock-down arguments against Muslims. I never gave him such but he went away understanding the genius of Islam and able to enter into the minds of Muslims. He had passed from controversy to persuasion.' (Shelley, page 136)

It appears, however, that Gairdner did not agree entirely with Macdonald's recollection of these meetings or with his interpretation of the significance of the sabbatical year. In a letter to Macdonald dated 18 May, 1914, he wrote:

> 'By the way, though, I don't recognise myself - that scene you reproduce, at tea one day in your house! I must have been jesting, for (i) it would have been too absurd to come to you for "to get equipped with smashing arguments" etc: - I knew your line very well indeed before I came; (ii) it was not my own point of view either. I must have expressed myself ill; - or ironically perchance'. (Shelley, pages 131-132)

In his discussion of these different perceptions of their meetings during the study year, Mike Shelly comments:

> 'Had Macdonald misunderstood something said in jest? Perhaps. We are unable to recover the scene. But given Gairdner's attitude towards Islam prior to his study leave ... Macdonald may be excused for misconstruing intended humour or an ill-expressed statement. We can well imagine that

> he was looking for arguments with which to pierce Islam's armor, in order to show Muslims the impropriety of some of their arguments and to demonstrate the intelligibility, even superiority, of Christian doctrines. Although he disliked controversy, he did engage in it, even while trying to do so in a friendly spirit. Macdonald's remarks to Padwick, and those he made in articles and chapters on mission, show that he held for the efficacy of a non-controversial presentation of the Gospel to Muslims. Indeed, he advised missionaries to avoid controversy as much as possible, even that conducted in a friendly manner.' (page 132)

We should perhaps conclude that while Gairdner had no doubt moved considerably in this thinking about his apologetic task in relation to Islam before he went to Hartford, there was still a considerable difference of approach which became evident to Macdonald during their early meetings. If Gairdner had not been fully convinced of the appropriateness of Macdonald's approach, he would never have gone to study with him in the first place. But it probably took some time for Gairdner to disengage himself from the controversies and debates in which he had been involved in Cairo and to focus on the task of understanding Islam 'from within'. Gairdner certainly testified to the profound effect of his time of study with Macdonald because it was he who described the whole experience as 'my grand transformation drama' (Shelly, page 151).

Annexe 4. Annotated bibliography on Folk Islam, with reference to the discussion on page 63 and the handling of the subject in BK 2.9 and BSC 2.

Three of the writers quoted in the chapter on 'Folk Islam' or 'Popular Islam' in BK 2.9, Bill Musk, Paul Hiebert and Vivienne Stacey, write from a Christian standpoint. Their work therefore needs to be seen against the background of other academic studies of the phenomena described under this general heading. The following are examples of such studies, listed in order of publication. Some are written by Muslims, while others are written by Islamicists or anthropologists.

It will be evident that while all these writers recognise the existence of phenomena of this kind, they differ in the way they understand the relationship between them and what is called 'Ideal Islam', 'Orthodox Islam', 'Qur'anic Islam' or 'Normative Islam'. Some recognise the tension, if not the conflict, between the two, while other minimise the differences and see a close relationship between them. Attention is drawn to this methodological problem in writing about 'Folk Islam' in the introduction to the chapter in BK 2.9

(1) On the Veneration of the Dead in Paganism and Islam, in Muslim Studies, by Ignaz Goldziher, edited by S.M. Stern, Allen and Unwin, 1967, pp 229-239. Although first published in German in 1890 and translated into English in 1967, this study is regarded by M. Geibels as 'probably still one of the best on this subject' (Muslim Festivals and Ceremonies in Pakistakn, Rawalpindi, Christian Study Centre, 1982, page 22).

Goldziher describes the building of graves and the visiting of graves before and after the coming of Islam, and concludes: 'Some of these pagan customs survived in Islam, and ... could not be eradicated' (pages 209-210). Later he comments:

> 'We see here how pagan customs continued to live quietly and unconsciously within the framework of Islam and have clad themselves in the form of Muslim religiousness and piety'. (page 210)

He records sayings of the Prophet denouncing pagan mourning rites and other customs, but concludes:

> 'Despite all the opposition of the pious, supported by the temporal authorities, many survivals of the pagan form of mourning and veneration of the dead continued to exist, though bereft of some barbaric features.'

The study ends with the following observations:

> 'It was in Syria that the custom (lamentation for the dead) survived most completely, and least influenced by Islam and we owe to the man most knowlegeable about this part of the East, a detailed description of wailing in Syria which shows how powerless were the warnings of tradition and later theology in the face of the primeval institutions of Semitic society. In funeral customs primeval habits were retained elsewhere, too, up to quite recent days. To characterize the tenacity of ancient institutions the following saying has been attributed to Muhammed: "There are four things among the customs of paganism which my community cannot give up: boasting of good deeds, finding fault with one another's descent, the belief that fertility depends on the stars, and lamentations for the dead"; all matters against which Muhammed and later exponents of his teaching fought vehemently without being able to abolish the pagan customs and beliefs connected with them' (pages 237-238).

(2) Growing Up in an Egyptian Village, by Hamed Ammar, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954.

This is an anthropological study of the village of Silwa in the Province of Aswan in Egypt. While there is little in the book which is explicity about popular Islam, the book provides a detailed study of the life of a Muslim village in Egypt, including observations like the following:

> 'The fear of sacred objects is also inculcated during the period of childhood. The child is made to believe in their blessings as well as their dangers. He is taken to a saint's tomb or wears a Koranic charm when he is ill. At the same time he is warned against urinating near a saint's tomb or running about in the cemetry for fear of incurring the saint's wrath (p 134).'

> 'Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worm by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment (p 78).'

(3) Ibn Taimiya's Struggle against Popular Religion, by Muhammad Ummar Mouton, Paris: Memon, 1976.

Memon argues that ibn Taimiya did not reject all kinds of Sufism. He was deeply influenced by the earlier Sufis, but reacted strongly to the developments of Sufism associated with teachers like ibn al-'Arabi. He argued strongly against the two Sufi concepts of fana' ('annihilation' of the individual ego) and wahdat al-wujud ('Transcendent Unity of Being'), and to some of the more extra-ordinary and spectacular practices like eating glass, walking on fire, and playing with snakes. Ibn Taimiya's work is particularly important as evidence of the tensions between Orthodox Islam and Sufism during the 13th Century.

(4) 'Baraka as Basic Concept of Muslim Popular Belief' by Ahmad von Denffer, Islamic Studies, vol 15, 1976, No. 3.

This article attempts to explain the concept of baraka as 'a wide ranging category covering Muslim popular beliefs, with evidence from the traditional Muslim dogmatics based on the Qur'an'. Such a study, he argues, explains 'the unity of Islam as a system embracing both theory (in its ideal-type) and practice of belief', and points to the conclusion that 'the concept of baraka is not just limited to popular belief but has its place in Islam proper'.

After reviewing the interpretation of baraka in writers like Wellhausen, Westermarck and Chelhod, von Denffer gives examples to illustrate 'the close connection between baraka and other elements of popular religion'. This is followed by a summary of baraka in the Qur'an, and a discussion of baraka and the integration of society and baraka as a religious phenomenon.

In his conclusion he explains that the Qur'an speaks of the ka'aba in Mecca, 'the House of Allah' as being 'full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings', so that everyone who enters it 'attains security' (Sura 3:96-97). On this basis, 'the House of Allah and all that is connected with it, holds and transfers baraka.'

Von Denffer has no difficulty, therefore, in concluding that it is difficult, if not impossible, to drive a wedge between 'Folk Islam' and 'Ideal Islam' or 'Orthodox Islam':

'In Mecca baraka intertwines popular belief and Islam in such a way that it can hardly be separated. Baraka is obtained by visiting the Ka'ba. This holds valid for popular belief and Islam alike. Thus baraka is the basis of Muslim popular belief.'

(5) Muslim Festivals and Ceremonies in Pakistan, M. Geibels, Rawalpindi, Christian Study Centre, 1982.

The first part of the monograph describes Muslim Festivals throughout the twelve months of the year, Festivals of Saints and National Festivals. The second part describes Muslim Ceremonies, including Ceremonies related to Birth, Marriage, Death and Burial.

(6) 'Popular Islam' South of the Sahara, edited by J.D.Y. Peel and C.C. Stewart, Manchester University Press, 1985.

The Introductory essay outlines the methodological problem involved in speaking of 'Popular Islam':

'The term "popular Islam" at once suggests denial or fragmentation within the Great Tradition or 'orthodoxy' in Islam as well as a degree of hostility on the part of those Islamicists and Muslims whose understanding of the oneness of God extends to the indivisibility of His Community. Social scientists may be expected to embrace the notion with more enthusiams, being accustomed to observing Islam "from below", but legitimate disquiet follows after plumbing the analytical shallows implicit in simple attributions of "popular-ness" to matters of causation, motivation or ideology. Yet, with that said, few students of Islam in Africa cannot cite examples of belief or practice that represent "popular Islam", and most would agree that this frequently bears some relation to the dramatic expansion of Islam during this century in Africa....

'A common effort in all the essays has been to avoid the time-honoured orientalist's dilemma of conflict between idealist postulates and actual practice in the communities under study. Perhaps the chief heuristic value in the notion of "popular Islam" lies in the distance it demands that students of Islam maintain from the perspective of the Muslim scholars, the *'ulama*, whose vision generally defines the parameters for discussions of Islam in society. Beyond this implicit agreement by our contributors, only one essay tackles a definition of "popular Islam". Brenner and Last place the notion in opposition to the practices and beliefs of the *'ulama*, implying the incorporation of doctrinally aberrant views and activities of the Arabic illiterate. The simplicity and efficacy of the popular Islam concept is then questioned and found

wanting. Other contributors have worked from rather less rigorous formulations of popular Islam' (page 363).

(7) Muslim Shrines in India, edited by Christian W. Troll, Oxford University Press, 1989.

The first seven chapters describe a variety of dargahs in different parts of India, together with the ceremonies associated with them. The next section consists of interpretative essays, including an analysis of pir-muridi relationships in Sufi doscourse. Part 3 has two theological essays, in the first of which, Shah Waliullah and the Dargah (pages 189-197), J.M.S. Baljon describes the development of Shah Waliullah's attitude to dargahs as follows:

'To sum up, in Shah Waliullah's views of the dargah a certain evolutionary process occurred. Born in an environment where various traces of popular religion are noticeable, he at first accepted visits to shrines as something quite common, not liable to any objection. At a maturer age he becomes gradually more critical of this usage. And finally, he condemns it in sharp words: "What people have devised in the matter of shrines, taking them as grounds where melas are held, belongs to the worst heresies.

'The changing attitudes in respect of the institution of the dargah are caused by, first, the independent outlook with which the Delhi scholar approached the issues of religious life and thought; and, second, the influence of the writings of Ibn Taymiyya (d.1328), the famous opponent of saint-worship' (page 195).

The second article in this section is a study of A Nineteenth Century Indian 'Wahhabi' Tract Against the Cult of Muslim Saints: *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*, by Marc Gaborieau (pages 198-239). This tract condemned the cult of Muslim saints on the following grounds:

a. Since supernatural powers belong to Allah alone, saints have no power to perform miracles, and they have no powers of intercession; saint-worshipers are therefore guilty of shirk.

b. According to shari'a law, it is haram to build tombs or turn them into shrines, to pray to the saints, or to have music at festivals etc.

c. The practice of worshipping saints is very similar to the worship of gods and goddesses in Hinduism. Since Allah has forbidden Muslims to resemble polytheists, the worship of saints is prohibited.

Gaborieau concludes that the tract is to be seen as 'an adaptation of the book of Ibn Taymiyya to the Indian context' (page 229).

Another significant essay in the fourth part of the volume is entitled Saints and Dargahs in the Indian Subcontinent: A Review, by A.R.Saiyed. The first paragraphs sums up the tension that has been felt for centuries between 'Orthodoxy' abd Sufism:

> 'Since mediaeval times Islam has experienced a tension between 'orthodoxy' and Sufism, and over the centuries Muslims everywhere have remained divided over the question of whether the veneration of Sufis (referred to as saints in Africa and in the Indian subcontinent) can legitimatley be considered a part of Islam. To orthodox Muslims such veneration has been a source of great embarrassment and even shame, and nothing would be dearer to their hearts than the purging of the cult of saints from Islam. But this opposition notwithstanding, *pir-muridi* has peersisted all over the Islamic world.'

The rest of the essay consists of a review of six different articles dealing with aspects of Sufi cults and dargahs in India, Nepal and Pakistan, all of which emphasize the sociological dimension of the various phenomena.

(8) Popular Islam in Tunisia: A Regional Cults Analysis, by Kees Schilder, Leiden: African Studies Centre, research Reports 1991/44, 1990.

This is a dissertation for a Master's degree in Cultural Anthropology at the Free University of Amsterdam. It consists of a detailed study of the Maraboutic cult in the village of Balta in northwestern Tunisia, and of Rahmaniya Sufi cult in the same area.

In a section entitled Popular and Formal Islam, an attempt is made to describe the features of each. There then follows an attempt to explain the relationship between the two:

> 'The interrelationship of formal Islam and popular Islam is the most interesting aspect of the dichotomy. The boundaries are not static. Considerable overlaps do exist, which may change over time. The tension between the two manifests itself differently in subsequent epochs, and may be "resolved" differently in the course of time. Thus, popular Islam and formal Islam are not distinct religious realities, which can be exclusively defined in the logical sense of A is not B. Popular Islam s a "part-religion"; it is related to formal Islam by definition, and has never existed autonomously.' (page 45)

(9) Perfecting Women. Maulana Asraf 'Ali Thanawi's *Bihishti Zewar*: A Partial Translation with Commentary, Barbara Metcalf, University of California Press, 1990.

The Preface explains the significance of this book as follows:

> 'The Bihishti Zewar, written in northern India in the early 1990s, has been one of this century's most influential books. A guide for respectable women, it sets out the core of a reformist version of Islam that has become increasingly prominent across Muslim societies in the past hundred years. As a text for the world's largest population of Muslims, that of the old British Indian Empire, it has influenced countless individuals.
>
> 'Among Indian reformist works, the Bihishti Zewar is especially important because it explicated reformist teachings for women. It presents in principle and in detail the normative rules for ritual and social life common to Hanafi Muslims then and now, and it attempts to shape a specific temperament of moderation, piety, and control. By elaborating these teachings in a particular context, it offers rich descriptions of the everyday life of the relatively privileged classes in turn-of-the-century north India, providing information on ways of thought and personal formation, as well as on family life, social relations, household management, and encounters with new institutions and inventions. Throughout, nothing is more striking than the extent to which the work treats women and men as essentially the same, in contrast to European works directed toward women at this time' (page vii).

It describes practices which are generally thought of as being part of 'Folk Islam', such as the wearing of amulets (ta'wiz), and the use of certain Qur'anic verses which are appropriate for particular ailments, both of which remain part of what might be called 'high Islamic tradition'.

The book was originally in Urdu, but has been translated into many of the languages of the Indian subcontinent. The fact that the book is still given as a dowry to Muslim women in Britain within the Deobandi tradition indicates its continuing significance for Muslims who have links with the subcontinent.

APPENDIX 1. Evaluation form used at Trinity College

STUDENT EVALUATION FORM *Name* .....
(Helpful though not mandatory)

PHASE .... UNIT .... SUBJECT .....

COURSE TUTOR .....

Note to Students When completing your Assessment of this unit, please also include full and frank verbal comments as these are especially useful in the Department's evaluation and improvement of the Course.

1. *LEARNING AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT*

Question i) How far do you think these aims and objectives have been achieved?

_____

_____

ii) Would you suggest any changes in them?

_____

_____

2.

CONTENT	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Excellent

(Consider - were the aims achieved? The amount of material; the length of the unit; whether the unit improved your theological understanding or sharpened your critical faculties).

Question What were the a) Strongest aspects?_____

_____

b) Weakest aspects?_____

_____

*Comments or Recommendations?*_____

_____

_____

3.

RELEVANCE	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Excellent

(Consider - did it achieve its stated vocational aims? Was it relevant to your vocational aims)?.

Question What were the a) Strongest aspects?_____

_____

b) Weakest aspects?_____

_____

Comments or Recommendations? _____

_____

_____

4.

TEACHING METHODS

Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Excellent

(Consider - the lecturing style and use of seminar time; teaching aids, handouts and other learning methods - the ways your reflective and intellectual capacities have been broadened by these methods).

Question What were the a) Strongest aspects? _____

_____

b) Weakest aspects? _____

_____

Comments or Recommendations? _____

_____

_____

5.

COHERENCE

Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Excellent

COHERENCE OF THE COURSE (Consider - cross references with other disciplines; have questions raised elsewhere been answered here or have other subjects clarified issues in this unit? Does this unit appear to cohere with other units in this discipline?).

Comments or Recommendations? _____

_____

_____

6. *OTHER COURSE COMPONENTS*

Please comment on: i) Private studies (Consider - essay titles; marking and evaluation; the stimulus to read more widely).

_____

_____

ii) Spirituality (Consider - the effect of the unit on your devotional life - did it help you to integrate theological and vocational ideas?).

_____

_____

7. *SUGGESTIONS*

Please comment: i) Would you like to suggest any changes which could be made to improve this unit?

_____

_____

ii) Any other comments or recommendations?

_____

_____

_____

PHASE ONE (100) SYLLABUSES (MISSION & RELIGION)

7.7. MISSION & RELIGION

7.7.1. Aims

1. To introduce students to the study of two distinct disciplines: the Study of Religion and the Study of Mission.

2. To enable students to appreciate and understand the phenomenon and history of religion, and to enter sympathetically into the faith of others.

3. To examine critically the concept and practice of mission in a world of religious pluralism.

4. To enable students to see the relevance of these two disciplines to other branches of theological study and to different kinds of ministry.

7.7.2. Rationale

The Study of Religion is now recognized as a discipline with its own academic tradition, which seeks to study religion in general in its own terms. It combines an historical approach to individual religious traditions with a cross-cultural analysis of religious phenomena. It seeks to enable students to study any religion as objectively as possible, and at the same time to understand and appreciate it as far as possible 'from within', and in its own terms.

The Study of Mission, a comparatively new discipline with a different pedigree and different assumptions, seeks to undertake a critical examination of the theory and practice of mission. In a world of religious pluralism, it is increasingly being recognized as an important branch of theological study, since it asks such basic questions about the role and purpose of the church in the world.

The '1983' Course made three significant innovations in its approach to these disciplines:

1. The Study of Mission and the Study of Religion were recognized as two distinct disciplines which ought to be included in any curriculum of theological study, and were brought together as one subject named 'Mission & Religion'.

2. The new subject of Mission & Religion was made compulsory within the core curriculum of Phase I, because of the conviction that all students needed to face squarely issues raised by religious

pluralism. It was assumed that many students would be in contact with ethnic communities in Britain and dealing with questions concerning Religious Education in schools; and students coming from overseas needed to be introduced to the academic study of religions which they had encountered only at a popular level.

3. The subject was offered as an option in Phases II and III, thus introducing the element of **progression** and making it possible to build on the introductory material of Phase I and take the subject right on to Honours level.

Evaluations by students during the first four years have shown that these developments have been understood and appreciated. Some students find the subject threatening, because of the way it challenges basic convictions about the uniqueness of the Christian faith. Most, if not all however, sooner or later recognize the truth of Max Warren's dictum that the impact of agnostic science may turn out to have been 'as child's play compared to the challenge to Christian theology of the faith of other men'. They also have little difficulty in making connections with other disciplines. For example, the empathy required in entering another religion is very similar to the empathy required in every aspect of Pastoral Theology. The study of Eastern Religions introduces them to basic philosophical concepts like Pantheism and Monism. And the study of African Traditional Religion provides analytical tools for understanding Canaanite Religion in the Old Testament as well as Folk Religion in Britain today.

In developing our programme we have tried to learn from other attempts in Britain and other countries to introduce the other-faiths dimension into theological education. **Theology on Full Alert** (Kenneth Cracknell and Christopher Lamb, Bristol Council of Churches, London, 1984; revised and enlarged second edition, 1986) and **Ministerial Formation in a Multi-Faith Milieu - Implications of Inter-Faith Dialogue for Theological Education** (edited by Sam Amirtham and S. Wesley Ariarajah, WCC, Geneva, 1985) explain the need for this development and give examples of many different ways of introducing this new dimension. Having opted for the introduction of Mission & Religion as a subject in its own right, we recognize the possible danger of compartmentalization which is inherent in this approach. We therefore see that the next step for us is to explore ways of introducing the other-faith dimension into other disciplines. Thus, for example, the Church Historian needs to find some explanation for the collapse of the Christian East and the rapid spread of Islam. And

familiar questions about suffering and evil take on a new dimension in the context of dialogue with Judaism if we ask: where was God during the Holocaust?

Outline of Course

Phase One begins with an Introduction to the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion, explaining in outline the scope and methodology of the two disciplines. The Study of Religion is then taken **before** the Study of Mission, because it is felt to be more important to expose students to the study of other faiths than to confirm the assumptions they may already have about the meaning of mission. Unit 2 therefore looks at Islam and seeks to explain what is involved in entering another faith. Unit 3 concentrates on the Eastern Religions, underlining the importance of understanding the historical and cultural context of any religion. Unit 4 deals with African Traditional Religion and provides an introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion. It is only at this stage that we proceed to the Study of Mission, with Unit 5 exploring the Theology of Mission and Unit 6 looking at Pluralism and Christian Attitudes to Other Faiths.

The six units offered in Phase Two cover a wide range of subjects which come under the heading of either the Study of Mission (Units 2, 3 & 4) or the Study of Religion (Units 1, 5 & 6). Thus Unit 1 offers the opportunity to study Islam and either Judaism, Hinduism or African Traditional Religion in greater detail than was possible in Phase One. Unit 5 explores some of the issues involved in the teaching of Religion in schools, while Unit 6 looks at the responses of Christianity, Judaism and Islam to the existence of the state of Israel.

The Study of Mission is taken up in Unit 2 which focuses on some of the main areas of Missiological Debate today. Unit 3 concentrates on the History of Christian Mission, particularly the Protestant Missionary Movement of the last 200 years. Unit 4 combines a study of the Church Growth Movement with a study of the debate about Secularization and the decline of religion in the western world. At this level, therefore, the student is encouraged to select one or more units and work out in particular areas some of the basic methodologies explained in Phase One.

In Phase Three the focus narrows to one particular religion - Islam. The choice of this religion is determined largely by the special interest of the lecturer, but can also be justified by the contemporary resurgence of Islam and the fact that of all the world religions it probably poses the greatest intellectual

challenge to Christianity. The study of Muslim-Christian Dialogue requires a historical study of relations between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and Europe over 14 centuries, an understanding of the wide range of Christian attitudes to Islam, and sensitivity in handling the difficult areas of controversy between the two religions.

Teaching Methods

In addition to all the general reasons for reviewing teaching methods, it has been found in practice that the nature of this subject underlines the need not only to impart!0information!0, but also to spend time dealing with basic !0attitudes!0. For this reason every effort is made to use a wide variety of teaching methods.

Thus, for example, handouts are generally as full as possible, in order to allow the maximum time for questions, discussion and group work during lectures. An attempt is being made to increase the amount of study material which can be used for resource based learning. Students are encouraged to see a film about the life of Muhammad, and a visit to the main mosque in Bristol is seen as an integral part of the course. Student evaluations have suggested that the variety in the content and teaching methods help students to absorb new information and work through basic attitude changes at their own pace.

Changes

1. The Unit on Islamic Society in Britain in '1983' was taught for two years only, since it coincided in the third year with a popular unit of Pastoral Theology on Ministry to the Sick, and the small number of students who opted for it made it difficult to mount as an educational programme. It is now proposed to include the subject as one aspect of the new unit on the Changing Face of the City.

2. Phase Two has been completely restructured. All the units in '1983' (except Islamic Society in Britain) are still offered, and can therefore be selected **either** within the core, in combination with units of core Pastoral Theology 200 **or** for Special Mission & Religion, **or** as Half Options. It is therefore possible for students to take as much or as little of Phase Two Mission & Religion as they wish. Some students who are likely to be engaged in pastoral ministry in this country may prefer to choose all the required units from Pastoral Theology (200). Others, however, who are thinking in terms of different kinds of work overseas, will be able to opt

for every one of the units offered. And all students who take Special Mission & Religion as one of their Phase Two options will be able to choose **any** two out of the six units. Students will be encouraged to make their selection of units in consultation with the lecturer, to ensure that there is a balance between those dealing with the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion.

7.7.3. **Syllabus: Mission & Religion 100**

7.7.3.1. Tutor: Revd. Colin Chapman

7.7.3.2. INTRODUCTION

A new unit has been included at the beginning of the phase as an introduction to the whole subject and to explain how the two disciplines are brought together. After this introductory unit the first three units concentrate on the Study of Religion, while the last two deal with the Study of Mission. Throughout the phase there is an emphasis on the methodology of the two disciplines.

Unit 2 explains what is involved in trying to appreciate another religion 'from within', and Islam is chosen as the paradigm. Unit 3 traces the development of the Eastern Religions, especially Hinduism and Buddhism, and underlines the need to study the historical and cultural context of any religion. Unit 4 is an introduction to African Traditional Religion and leads into a study of the Phenomenology of Religion.

Unit 5 explores the biblical and theological basis for the Christian concept of mission, and Unit 6 examines issues raised by religious pluralism and the variety of Christian attitudes to other faiths. The subjects covered by Unit 4 in '1983' (Dialogue and Cross-Cultural Communication) are now covered in two separate units: (Unit 5. The Theology of Mission; and Unit 6. Pluralism and Christian Attitudes to Other Faiths.) The debate about Dialogue is still covered in Unit 6, and issues relating to culture and cross-cultural communication are dealt with throughout the course.

7.7.3.3. **Structure of Phase** Total CCH 36

The following units will be taught in Phase One

1. An Introduction to the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion 100 (4 CCH)

2. Entering Another Faith 100 (7 CCH)

3. The Historical and Cultural Context of Religion 100 (7 CCH)

4. The Phenomenology of Religion 100 (7 CCH)

5. The Theology of Mission 100 (5 CCH)

6. Pluralism and Christian Attitudes to Other Faiths 100 (6 CCH)

Method of Assessment: Two short essays on any of the units.

7.7.3.4. **Units and Bibliographies**

1.An Introduction to the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion 100

Objectives and Content

The aim is to outline the scope and methodology of the Study of Mission and the Study of Religion, and to indicate their relevance to Christian ministry.

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2.Entering Another Faith 100

Objectives and Content

The aim is to introduce the study of one major non-Christian religion, Islam, and thereby attempt to see what it means to enter sympathetically into any other religion and understand it in its own terms. In addition to studying the beliefs and practices of Islam, and its historical origins, attention is given to prejudices which affect our attitudes to peopole of other faiths.

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3. The Historical and Cultural Context of Religion 100

Objectives and Content

The aim is to trace the historical development of Eastern Religions, especially Hinduism and Buddhism, and thus to show the importance of a proper understanding of the historical and cultural factors which shape every

religions tradition.

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4. The Phenomenology of Religion 100

Objectives and Content

To introduce the student to the concept that the Study of Religion involves not only the study of **religions**, but also the study of **religion** as such . An introduction to the world-view and some of the phenomena of African Traditional Religion leads into a study of the Phenomenology of Religion. The student is also introduced to the study of Implicit Religion (Folk Religion).

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5. The Theology of Mission 100

Objectives and Content

The aim is to examine critically the biblical and theological basis for the Christian concept of mission. After a study of passages in the Old Testament and New Testament relating to mission, attention is given to questions about the definition of 'mission' and its relationship to evangelism and service etc.

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6. Pluralism and Christian Attitudes to Other Faiths 100

Objectives and Content

The aim is to explore some of the issues involved in the existence and interaction of many different faiths in the world (some of which have their own concept of mission), and to study the wide variety of Christian attitudes to other faiths.

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8.9. MISSION & RELIGION 200

8.9.1. Tutor: Revd. C. Chapman

8.9.2. **INTRODUCTION**

Three units in this phase (1, 5 & 6) come under the general heading of the Study of Religion. In Unit 1, ten lectures are devoted to Islam and six to either Judaism, Hinduism or African Traditional Religion. One important feature of the work in this phase is that students are introduced to the study of set texts (in most cases those used in the Open University courses on the Study of Religion). This is a required unit for those considering taking Mission & Religion in Phase Three. Unit 5 explores issues involved in the teaching of Religion in a pluralist society, and through visits to schools students are encouraged to reflect on appropriate ways of teaching Christianity and Other Faiths in British schools. Unit 6 examines how the different responses of Jews, Christians and Muslims to the existence of the Jewish state of Israel reveal something about the nature of the three religions.

The remaining three units (2, 3 & 4) continue the Study of Mission. Unit 2 is a historical study of the Missionary Movement of the last 200 years. Unit 3 explores major areas of recent missiological debate, like the relationship between 'Gospel' and 'Culture'. Unit 4 is a critical study of the principles of the Church Growth Movement, and explores how far the concept of secularization explains patterns of growth and decline in religion in the western world.

The restructuring of Phase Two allows greater flexibility in choosing the two units required for Special Mission & Religion, and will mean that most classes will be smaller than at present. It also means that students who, because of their vocational aims, have less interest in the units offered in Pastoral Theology (200) can take as many as they wish of the six units offered in Mission & Religion (200).

The following guidelines will be offered to indicate how students should make their selection from the six units:

1. Pastoral Theology 200 and Mission & Religion 200 together form a core curriculum subject in Phase Two. All students must therefore select three units out of Pastoral Theology 200 and Mission & Religion 200 (e.g. two from Pastoral Theology 200 and one from Mission & Religion 200; or three from Pastoral Theology 200 and none from Mission & Religion 200; or three from

Mission & Religion 200 and none from Pastoral Theology 200.

2. If only one unit is selected from Mission & Religion 200, it must be either Units 1, 2 or 3.

3. Students wishing to take Mission & Religion 300 (Muslim-Christian Dialogue) must take Unit 1 of Mission & Religion 200 (The Study of Religion).

4. For Special Mission & Religion students must select **any two** out of the six units which they have not already selected for Mission & Religion 200.

5. Any remaining units (i.e. those not already selected for Mission & Religion 200 or for Special Mission & Religion) can be chosen as Half Options. This makes it possible for those who want to concentrate on Mission & Religion to take **all six** of the units offered in Mission & Religion Two 200.

8.9.3. **Structure of Phase** Total CCH 93

The following units will be offered:

1. **The Study of Religion 200** (16 CCH).

2. **The History of Christian Mission 200** (16 CCH).

3. **Areas of Contemporary Missiological Debate 200**(16 CCH).

4. **Church Growth and Decline 200**(15 CCH).

5. **Religious Education in a Pluralist Society 200**(15 CCH).

6. **The Problem of the Middle East and its Implications for Judaism, Christianity and Islam 200**(15 CCH).

Method of Assessment!: Continuous Assessment ~~Final Examination~~.

8.9.4. **Units and Bibliographies**

1. **The Study of Religion 200**

Objectives and Content

The aim is to study two non-Christian religions in greater depth, using the approaches studied in Phase One. Special attention is given to the study of set texts.

All students study Islam (10 hours) and choose between Judaism, Hinduism, and African Traditional Religion (for the remaining 6 hours).

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2. The History of Christian Mission 200

Objectives and Content

The aim is to examine its origins, its interaction with forces in the churches and in current society, and its methods of evangelism and church growth.

The course will cover the following topics: origins and policies of the Movement; background and motives of the early missionaries; missionary expansion; independent, dependent and national churches; missionaries and imperialism; the strength and influence of non western Christianity; the emergence of the church in the twentieth century.

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3. Areas of Contemporary Missiological Debate 200

Objectives and Content

The aim is to examine areas of contemporary debate in missiology, e.g.,Culture and Contextualization, Third World Theologies, Mission and Ecumenism, Evangelism and Social Concern, the Theology of Development, and Structures for Mission.

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4. Church Growth and Decline 200

Objectives and Content

The aim is to study the social, cultural and intellectual factors relating to church growth and decline, and to evaluate critically the principles and practice of the Church Growth Movement. The subject is studied both in relation to the Western world and Third World situations.

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5. Religious Education in a Pluralist Society 200

Objectives and Content

The aim is to explore approaches to religious education in multicultural situations. Subjects covered include: the Development of the Teaching of Religious Education in Schools since the Education Act of 1944, the Agreed Syllabus, World Faiths in Religious Education, School Assemblies, the Separate Schools Debate, and Church Schools.

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6.The Problem of the Middle East and Its Implications for Judaism, Christianity and Islam. 200

Objectives and Content

The aim is to study the historical, religious and political factors which have led to Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel, and to consider the main isues raised for Judaism, Christianity and Islam by the establishment of the Jewish State and its subsequent history.
Particular attention is given to theological issues.

Bibliography

C. Chapman, Whose Promised Land? Tring, Lion, 1983.
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D. Hirst, The Gun and the Olive Branch: Roots of Violence in the Middle East, London, Faber, 1977 (Future 1978).
E. Mendelsohn, A Compassionate Peace, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1982.
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9.8. MISSION & RELIGION 300

9.8.1. Tutor: Rev. C. Chapman

9.8.2. **Introduction**

Phase III seeks to examine different approaches to dialogue between Christianity and Islam. Since Christians and Muslims have been living side by side and facing each other in an uneasy confrontation both in the Middle East and Europe for 1400 years, any attempt to study dialogue between the two faiths must take into account theological developments within the two religions, and the complex interaction between them over the centuries.

Unit 1 concentrates on the dialogue between Muhammad and Christians of his time as reflected in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Unit 2 focuses on St. John of Damascus and his dialogue with Islam during the 8th Century, and traces the influence of his approach on the development of Muslim-Christian Dialogue in the Middle Ages. Unit 3 looks at the 19th and 20th centuries, studying several examples of Christian and Muslim attempts at dialogue. Throughout the phase there is special emphasis on the study of set texts, with full attention to the historical and cultural cultext in which they were written. Students are encouraged to relate the subject to their biblical and theological studies, and to work out the approaches which they believe to be most appropriate for Muslim-Christian dialogue in different situations in the world today. Meetings are arranged with members of the Muslim community in Bristol, the Islamic Society in the University or the Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations at Selly Oak, Birmingham.

9.8.3. **Structure of the Phase** Total CCH 30 CCH

1. Muslim-Christian Dialogue in the Qur'an and the Sunnah 300 (8 CCH).

2. Muslim-Christian Dialogue in St. John of Damascus and the Middle Ages 300 (6 CCH).

3. Muslim-Christian Dialogue in the 19th and 20th Centuries. 300 (16 CCH).

Method of Assessment!: Final Examination.

9.8.4. **Units and Bibliographies.**

1. **Muslim Christian Dialogue in the Qur'an and the Sunnah 300**

Objectives and Content

The aim is to study evidence of the dialogue between Muhammad and the Christians of his day as described in the Qur'an and the earliest lives of the Prophet.

Set texts:

(1) Selected passage of The Qur'an.

(2) Selected passages from **The Life of the Prophet, A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah**, by A. Guillaume, Oxford, OUP, 1970.

Basic Bibliography

J. M. Gaudeu l, Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History, Vol.1 A Survey, Chapter 1, The Origin of Islam, pages 1-14, Rome, Pontifical Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, 1984.

G. Parrinder, Jesus in the Qur'an, London, Sheldon, 1976 (1965).

A. Von Denffer, Christians in the Qur'an and Sunnah, Leicester, Islamic Foundation, 1985.

2. Muslim-Christian Dialogue in St John of Damascus and the Middle Ages 300

Objectives and Content

The aim is to study the first important example of a Christian attempt at dialogue with Muslims and a theological evaluation of Islam in St. John of Damascus (675 - 573 AD), and to study examples of dialogue during the Middle Ages.

Set texts:

(1) St. John of Damascus, De Haeresibus, The Muslim Heresy, Muslim World, 1934.

(2) The Correspondence of Al-Kindi and Al-Hashemi (9th-10th centuries).

Basic Bibliography

T.W. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith, N.York, Scribners,

1913.
H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., Encyclopedia of Islam, Articles on Ahl al Kitab, Crusades, Dhimma, Dhizya.
J.M. Gaudeuil, Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History, Vol.1. A. Survey, Chapters, 2-5, Vol.2, Texts, Pages 1-128.

A. Hourani, Europe and the Middle East, London, Macmillan, 1980.
B. Lewis, The Arabs in History, London, Hutchinsons, 1975.
T. Ling, A History of Religion, East and West London, Macmillan, 1982.
W. Muir, The Apology of Al-Kindy, London, SPCK, 1911.
D.J. Sahas, John of Damascus on Islam: The Heresy of the Ishmaelites, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1972.

3. Muslim-Christian Dialogue in the 19th and 20th Centuries 300

Objectives and Content

The aim is to study examples in the modern period of writings by Christians and Muslims, some polemical, some apologetic, and some engaging in genuine dialogue, and to explore the most appropriate forms of Muslim-Christian dialogue in different situations in the world today.

Set texts:

(1) K. Ahmad ed, Christian Mission and Islamic Da'wah: Proceedings of the Chambesy Consultation, Internattional Review of missions, Vol.LXV No.260, Oxctober 1976. Also published by the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1977.
(2) A.K. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, London, Collins, 1985 (1956).
(3) _____, Muhammad and the Christian, London, DLT, 1984.
(4) K. Hussein, City of Wrong (Qaryatu Zalimah), translated with an introduction by A.K. Cragg, Amsterdam, Djambatan, 1959.
(5) B.D. Kateregga & D.W. Shenk, Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue, Exeter, Paternoster, 1981.
(6) N. Mahfouz, Children of Gebelawi (Awlad Haritna), translated by Philip Stewart, London, Heineman, 1981.
C.G. Pfander, The Balance of Truth (Mizanul Haqq), London, Religous Tract Society, 1900.

Basic Bibliography

K. Cracknell tr., Christians and Muslims Talking Together, London, British Council of Churches, 1984.
J.M. Gaudeuil, Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History, Vol.1, A. Survey, Chapters 6-7, Vol.11, Texts, Pages 129-148.
L. Vander Werff, Christian Mission to Muslims: the Record Pasadena, William Carey, 1977.
WCC, Christians Meeting Muslims: WCC Papers on 10 Years of Dialogue, Geneva, WCC, 1977.

9.8.4. **Resource Bibliographies**

Unit 1.

R. Bell, The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment, Oxford, OUP, 1926.
H.A.R. Gibb & J. H. Kramers, The Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, Articles under Isa, Nasara.
J. Spencer Trimingham, Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times, London, Longman, 1979.
M.W. Watt, Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman, Oxford, OUP, 1961.
_____, Muhammad at Mecca, Muhammad at Medina, Oxford, Clarendon, 1977.

9.8.4.

A.J. Arberry, ed., Religion in the Middle East, Part 2, Ch.5, Christianity in the Middle East: A Survey down to 1800, by W.H.C. Frend, Cambridge, CUP, 1976.
A.S. Atiya, A History of Eastern Christianity, London, Metheun, 1980.
N. Daniels, Islam and the West: the Making of an Image, Edinburgh, EUP, 1960.
W.H.C. Frend, The Rise of the Monophysite Movement, Cambridge, CUP, 1972.
J.S. Moon, Sweetman's Islam and Christian Theology, Birmingham, Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations, 1984,
J. Riley-Smith, The Cross and the Crusades, London, BBC/Athlone, 1986.
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J.W. Sweetman, Islam and Christian Theology, London, Lutterworth, 1947-1967.
A.S. Tritton, The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects, London, Frank Cass, 1930.
S. Vryonis, The Decline of Mediaeval Hellenism in Asia Minor, University of California Press, 1971.
M.W. Watt, The Influence of Islam in Medieval Europe, Edinburgh, EUP, 1972.
B. Yeor, The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam,

London, Associated University Presses, 1985.

9.8.4. Unit 3.

C.C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt, London, OUP, 1933.
M. Nazir Ali, Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter, Exeter, Paternoster, 1987.
A.J. Arberry, ed. Religion in the Middle East, Cambrige, OUP. 1976. B. Betts, Christians in the Arab East: A Political Study, London, SPCK, 1979.
A.K. Cragg, The Pen and the Faith: Eight Modern Muslim Writers and the Qur'an, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1985.
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D. Pipes, In the Path of God, 1984.
D. Rahbar, The God of Justice: A Study of the Ethical Doctrine of the Qur'an, Leiden, Brill, 1960.
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S.J. Samartha & J.B. Taylor, eds., Muslim-Christian Dialogue: Papers from Broumana, 1972, Geneva, WCC, 1973.
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APPENDIX 3. CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO ISLAM

Outline of course taught at Selly Oak

PROGRAMME

Topics to be covered include:

Session -

1 *Relations between Muhammad and the Christians of his day.*
Texts: Selected verses of the Qur'an.

2 *A survey of Muslim-Christian relations over 1400 years.*
Texts: Extracts from Ibn Ishaq's Life of the Apostle of God, and Selected Treaties between Muhammad and Christian communities.

3 *Theological questions raised for Christians, e.g. - Is 'Allah' in Islam the same as 'God' in Christianity?*
- What kind of 'revelation' is there in the Qur'an and in Islam?

4 *Polemics and Apologetics*

5 *Dialogue*
Text: The Call of the Minaret (Kenneth Cragg)

6 *Responses to Folk Islam*
Text: The Unseen Face of Islam (Bill Musk)

7 *Case Studies from different situations, e.g. Britain, France, Nigeria, Malaysia*

8 *The place of personal testimony and the use of Christian Scripture in witness*

Bibliography

Kenneth Cragg	*The Call of the Minaret, Collins, 1986*
B D Katteregga & D W Shenk	*Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue, Erdmans, 1980*
James P Dretke	*A Christian Approach to Muslims: Reflections from West Africa, William W M Carey, 1979*
Michael Nazir-Ali	*Islam: A Christian Perspective, Paternoster, 1983*
Michael Nazir-Ali	*Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter, Regnum, 1987*
Jean-Marie Gaudeul	*Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History, Pontifical Institute for Arab & Islamic Studies, Rome 1984*
Colin Chapman	*'You go and do the Same': Studies in Relating to Muslims, CMS - BMMF, 1983*
Bill Musk	*The Unseen Face of Islam Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims MARC, 1989*

Questionnaire Concerning Preparation for Missionary Work among Muslims

A Present Work

Nature of Work

Describe your present work as fully as possible. (You need not mention locations etc. if this is to be kept confidential. The nature of the work is most important.

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Period of Service

How long have you been doing this work?

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B Training

General Training

Did you receive any formal training in preparation for this work? (State place of training, length of course, title of course, full or part time).

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Training on Islamics/Christian response to Islam

If you received formal training, what proportion of your general training was devoted to the study of Islam? (give as much detail as possible). What was the nature of this training?

a) Theoretical

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b) Practical

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If you made some private studies of Islam, give details here. (Nature of study, hours spent studying etc.)

a) Theoretical

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b) Practical

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C Adequacy of Preparation

General

In general terms was your training sufficient for your present work? Tick one box.

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good
Theoretical Training			
Practical Training			

If possible, describe areas of strength and weakness in your overall preparation, both theoretical and practical.

Strength

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Weakness

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Topics Covered

For each of these topics of study describe

a) How important the study of this topic is/was for your present work.
b) How adequate your preparation was.
c) Was your preparation interesting?
d) What areas of service benefitted/should have benefitted from your study of the topic? (For example, Making conversation with a Muslim friend, Preparing Bible study, Lecturing, in helping your understanding of Muslim culture, in understanding the ways Muslims respond to Christianity etc.)
e) Was the major part of your training for this topic formal or informal?

Muhammad

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Qur'an

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Hadith

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Classical Islam

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

.....

.....

e) .....

Islamic Civilisation

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Islamic Culture

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Popular Islam

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Islam Today

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Christian Mission to Islam

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Apologestics and Dialogue

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Communication-theory

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Communication-skills

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Strategies

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Christian Reflection on Islam

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Other Topics of training (Please specify)

Topic 1

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Topic 2

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Topic 3

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Books

What books (if any) have been most useful in your training. Give Author, title, approx year read and the reason for its usefulness. Give your best 6 if possible.

Book 1

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Book 2

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Book 3

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Book 4

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

Book 5

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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Book 6

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

d) .....

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e) .....

D Improvements

Describe how your training could have been improved (if that is possible).

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E General Comments

Please make any additional points here about your preparartion and continuing studies on Islam that are not already covered.

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