

**LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**UNDERSTANDING ISLAM, ITS HISTORY IN GHANA, AND AN  
EFFECTIVE EVANGELISTIC STRATEGY TO OVERCOME  
ISLAMIC INFLUENCE IN GHANA**

**A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED TO  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **UNDERSTANDING ISLAM, ITS HISTORY IN GHANA, AND AN EFFECTIVE EVANGELISTIC STRATEGY TO OVERCOME ISLAMIC INFLUENCE IN GHANA**

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While church growth is waning in many places of the world, Islamic influence is spreading and getting stronger in most parts of the world. In light of this crisis, it is the purpose of this project to guide Christians and churches a better understanding of Muslims, of their faith, and of an effective method of evangelizing them with special care and love.

This thesis attempts to discuss the origin of Islam, the life of Muhammad, and how Islam was spread throughout the world as a religion. Insight on how to reach Muslims with the Gospel will be gained through the study of the practices of Islam and a comparison of its doctrines with the Biblical doctrine. Understanding historical Islamic influence and power in

Ghana and the suggested practical methods of approaching Muslims in Ghana will help to win Muslims elsewhere. As a result of this project, although the fruits may not be seen in a short period of time, it is hoped that lost souls *will* come to Christ and liberate from the power of Islam.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

National Geographic reported that, in the world today, Muslims number 1.3 billion and over 40 countries are Muslim dominated where the Muslims have over 4 million in their total population.<sup>1</sup> It is one fifth of the world population-nearly one in every five persons on earth. Indeed, Islam is now reputed to be the fastest growing religion in the world<sup>2</sup> and Christian evangelism may not be keeping up with Islamic expansion. The Muslim world - the uttermost part of the world (Acts 1:8) - should be one of Christianity's final focuses of world evangelism today.

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<sup>1</sup> "In Focus - Inside Islam: Faith and Politics: A Volatile Mix," *National Geographic*, January 2002, 85.

<sup>2</sup> Mission Handbook is reporting that Islam is one of the fastest growing major religious groups, largely as a result of population grows in Asia and Africa. John A. Siewert, and Edna G. Valdez, eds., *Mission Handbook 1998-2000 : U.S. and Canadian Christian ministries overseas* (Monrovia: MARC Published, 17th ed.), 42.

While this author and others do missionary work in Ghana, Muslim evangelism is a significant force which is rapidly spreading throughout Ghana. The growth of Islam is faster than Christianity in Ghana as well as other places in the world.<sup>3</sup> Spencer Trimingham says, Ghana (Voltaic people) is a resistant belt to Muslims coming down toward the South in Africa.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, this resistant belt is collapsing nowadays in Ghana. One evidence of the collapse is the increasing number of Mosques in Accra, the capital city, where the absolute majority is Christian. As Christians, we should not merely resist their influence, but rather reach them with the Gospel.

After the 9/11 terrorist attack, many more people are considering the Arabic and Muslim world, and the impact it has been having on the world. For one thing, Christians can no longer ignore the worldwide challenge of Islam.

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<sup>3</sup> It is not only a missionary's feeling in Ghana but also Dr. David B. Barrett collected statistics of religious adherents in Ghana as Muslim growth rate 3.10 but Christian growth 3.06 which means that now Muslim is one fourth of the size of Christianity, but in the year of 2050, 50 years later Muslim will be almost half the size of Christianity in Ghana. See David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2nd Edition, 2001), 307-311, Also, Melton, J. Gordon, & Baumann, Martin, eds., *Religions of the World Vol. 2* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CILO, Inc., 2002)

<sup>4</sup> J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 19.

Before the Towers fell, Islam did not threaten the whole world. Dr. Norman L.

Geisler clearly points out the threat of Islam:

To put it mildly, the interest in the threat of Islam to Christianity was minimal before 9/11. That is understandable, since we had just survived the communist threat, the Humanist threat, and were still undergoing the New Age threat. American Christians were simply not ready for another threat.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that a sect or religious group of Islam is opposed to our beliefs and attacks us by terror does not mean that we should hate them and wish to see evil befall them. The spirit of our Lord Christ is full of love to reach them for the Gospel. Loving when we are hated is what makes Christians different. Love could be the best way to approach them for Christ, in spite of the many violent acts of terrorism. “Like many other battles in history, we believe that the pen is sharper than the sword. The real war will be won with words, not weapons. The success of Christianity over Islam as a world religion rises or falls on the battlefield of ideas.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Norman L. Geiler, & Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

They are a group of people who really need the gospel. The Muslims are proud that their religion has absolute unity of the brotherhood across national boundaries. People sometimes associate Islam exclusively with the Middle East and mistakenly use the words Muslim and Arab interchangeably. However, all Arabs are not Muslims. Some Arab countries have a substantial Christian population, and there are many Muslims who are not Arabs. For example, Iranians, Pakistanis, and Afghans, most of whom are Muslim, are not Arab. Islam has a large number of adherents in other parts of Asia, notably Indonesia, and in Africa.<sup>7</sup> Despite, the outward appearance of unity in the worldwide Islamic community, there are many differences between countries in language, background, custom, religious practices, and the understanding of their religion's doctrine.<sup>8</sup> These differences leave an opportunity through which we can carry the Gospel to Muslims in Ghana. This study will explain the origin and history of Islam in Ghana, and establish a more effective method to

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<sup>7</sup> Assuming Jesus Christ's prognosis as recorded in Matthew 28:19 (i.e., that his disciples in turn will "make disciples of all nations") infers these would be a personal approach to the unbeliever.

<sup>8</sup> Charles R. Marsh, *Share Your Faith with a Muslim* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 3.

evangelize Muslims in Ghana in order to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20).

## **A. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS**

If Jesus Christ looked at the world, especially the 10/40 window which stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the islands of the Pacific Ocean where 1.3 billion Muslims live, what would He think? Would He feel that there is nothing wrong because there are many Christians in the North America, Russia, Africa, and even Korea? It is not an insignificant matter that over 40 Muslim countries are controlled by Satan. It looks like Christ's churches are almost defeated by Islam in this 10/40 window, the center of the earth.

The Muslim evangelistic campaign on the world is extremely effective. They have a more powerful strategy than Christian missions do today. For instance, Islamic missions are rapidly building schools and mosques and helping human welfare services at the villages in Ghana to spread Islamic influence. Arab missionaries pour generous amounts of money into Northern

Ghana Region. The city of Tamale in Northern Ghana Region is the Islamic center of the North. Barker says,

Tamale in particular is becoming an important Muslim centre. Saudi Arabia and the gulf states are channeling oil wealth into promoting Islam in Africa, and in recent years a series of new Muslim institutions has appeared on the scene. In Tamale alone there are over a dozen Muslim missionaries at the present time.<sup>9</sup>

They are using any means they can think of to spread Islam. But contrarily, there are only a few Christian missionaries that are working to spread the gospel in Muslim societies. We need to remember that Jesus' request "the harvest truly (is) plenteous, but the labourers (are) few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:37, KJV). Even though Jesus Christ commands us to go to all nations and to the uttermost parts of the world, only 2% of the whole missionary force of Christianity is involved in Muslim work.<sup>10</sup> This small percentage means that we

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Barker, *Peoples, Languages, and Religion in Northern Ghana* (Accra, Ghana: Ghana Evangelism Committee in association with Asempa Publishers, 1986), 60.

<sup>10</sup> Jack Bird who is vice president of Red Sea Missions wrote a preface to Korean Christian reader in his book to give a challenge. In it, he said that only less than 2% of missionaries do their ministry in Muslim places. Indeed, this is really small group of missionaries who cannot cover all Islam area for evangelism. Bird, Jack, *Studies on Islam*, trans. Middle East Team (Seoul, Korea: Jerusalem Publish, 1992), 7.

are not working effectively in the Muslim world. The church seems to be giving the Muslim world a cold shoulder. Soon our Judge, Jesus Christ, will come and evaluate the Churches.

To reach Muslims with the Gospel and to target Islam for evangelism are not easy matters. Islamic influences, such as their practices, their prayers, their way of thought, and their evangelizations are continually spreading to the southern part of Ghana where the majority are Christian, and these symptoms are also present in many other countries as well. There is a proverb that ‘knowing your adversary, and then knowing yourself brings great victory.’ Understanding Islam, therefore, is very important before making the Muslim evangelistic strategies. The ways of spreading of the Christianity to the Muslims should be different than the ways of evangelizing to other religion.

The so-called polarization what is fallacious and an orchestrated lie by the Evil One is that “just keep the Muslim World in tight isolation from being reached by the gospel of Jesus Christ.” What is even more disturbing is the fact that many Christians have fallen victim to this lie and have become partakers in deepening the gulf between the Christian and the Muslim worlds. In this

dissertation, an attempt will be made to expose the origin of Islam and its history in Ghana which will provide us with the correct perspective and incentive to reach out to Muslims who are also dearly loved of God and who must be shown the only way to pass through the gate into the sheepfold. We will discover a better way to reach Muslims in Ghana and will establish a strategy.

## **B. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**‘Idul Fitr** (EE-du el-FEE-tra) : Festival at the end of Ramadan.

**Abd, ‘Abd**: Arabic for Slave. Very common in names. e.g., Muhammad's father is ‘Abdullah’ meaning ‘slave of *Allah*.’ Muslims believe the highest status of man with respect to God is to be his obedient slave.

**Adhan**: making announcement

**A. H.** : After *Hijrah* (the expulsion of Muhammad to Medina in A. D. 622), starting point in Muslim calendar

**Alima** : scholar or expert in Islam

**Allahu Akbar** : means ‘God is the greatest’ used in Islamic prayers

**Assalamu alaikum** : Muslim greeting ‘Peace be upon you’

**Ayah (p1. ayat)** : **1.** miracle or sign from God **2.** Each verse of the Qur’an

**Ayatollah** : highest ranking religious leaders in Shia branch of Islam

**Azzan** : calling to prayer



**Barakallah** : means ‘May the blessing of *Allah* be upon you’

**Bismillahir rahmanir** : phrase from the Qur’an which means ‘In the name of *Allah*, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.’

**Caliph or Khalifah** : refers both to Muhammad’s successors and to leaders of Islam in general

**Da’wah** : mission of spreading Islam, evangelization

**Dar al-Islam** : Abode of Islam-territory under Islamic rule

**Dar ar-harb** : Abode of war-territory outside Islamic control

**Dhimini** : non-Muslims living under Islamic control or law

**Din** : way of religion, way of life

**Du'a** : a prayer

**Faqih** : an expert or scholar in Islamic law or jurisprudence

**Fard** : anything that is obligatory, like praying five times per day

**Fatihah** : opening chapter of the Qur’an, recited in prayers

**Fiqh** : understanding and comprehension of Islamic law

**Hadith** : oral traditions about the prophet Muhammad

**Hajj** : the pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the five pillars of Islam

**Haraam** : that which is illegal or not allowed in Islam

**Hijrah** : refer to Muhammad’s trip to Medina in AD. 622 and is the first year of Islamic calendar (A.H.)

**Iblis** : Qur’anic word for Satan

**Ibn** : ~ son

**'Id** : the feast of Ramadan terminates. **'id al Fitr** – last three days of rejoicing of the finishing Ramadan. **'id al Kabia** or **'id al Adha** – this is another Ramadan feast. They do this feast on seventy days later after Ramadan finished

**Ihram** : a white garment, at hajj when Muslims do pilgrimage to Mecca, they wear it

**Imam** : **1.** refers to spiritual or community leader in Islam **2.** The person who leads prayer **3.** In Shia Islam it refers to one of the early special leaders after Muhammad's death

**Iman** : trust, faith in *Allah*

**In sha' allah** : means 'If *Allah* wills' or 'If *Allah* permits'

**Injil** : the revelations given to the prophet Jesus (who is called Isa in Islam)

**Isa** : Jesus

**Islam** : the correct name for the religion of Muhammad, is the infinitive of the Arabic verb 'to submit' (i.e. to the will of God, as Muslims understand it); while '**Muslim**,' the correct term for one who follows that religion, is the present participle of the same verb

**Istighfar** : to ask for divine forgiveness

**Jahannarn** : hell

**Jahiliyyaiyyh** : the state of ignorance and disobedience in Arabia before the Prophet arrived to give truth

**Jannah** : paradise, heaven

**Jihad** : **1.** to strive, to endeavor **2.** To engage in just war to defend

Islam

**Jinn** : invisible spirit beings created by *Allah*, who can do good and bad just like humans

**Jizyah** : the tax paid by non-Muslims in an Islamic country

**Ka’bah or Ka’ba** : shrine or house of worship in the great mosque of Mecca, that Muslims believe was built by Abraham

**Kafir** : an unbeliever, someone who rejects *Allah* and his way

**Kalam** : Islamic logic and philosophy; can also mean speech

**Khutbah** : sermon or speech, used of sermon at Friday prayers

**La ilaha illallah** : means “There is no God but *Allah*”-first part of confession of faith necessary to be a Muslim

**Mahdi** : a term in various divisions of Shia Islam for either the seventh or twelfth ruler who went into a state of hiding and is expected back at the end of time

**Masjid** : house of worship (mosque in English)

**Minaret** (min-are-RET) : Tower on a mosque.

**Miraj** : when Muhammad was taken to heaven by the angel Gabriel

**Mosque** (MOSK) : Place where Muslims pray.

**Muezzin** (moo-ez-ZEN) : Person who calls Muslims to pray.

**Mujahid** : a fighter for Islam (both literally and figuratively)

**P.B.U.H.** : abbreviation for Peace Be Upon Him, said after reference is made to Muhammad

**Qiblah** : direction Muslims face when they pray to Mecca

**Qur’an** (kor-ON) : The Islamic holy book.

**Quraysh** : Muhammad’s tribe, the most powerful in Arabia

**Ramadan** : month in Muslim calendar when revelations were first given to Muhammad and month when Muslims fast

**Rasul** : messenger or prophet

**S. A. W.** : abbreviation of “Salla Allahu ‘Alaihi Wa Sallam” which means “May the Blessing of *Allah* be upon Him” and is to be said or written when reference is made to Muhammad

**Salah** : pillar of special communion or prayer five times per day

**Sawm** : pillar of total fasting during Ramadan

**Shahadah** (sha-HAH-da) : Muslim confession of faith. First pillar of confession: “There is no God but *Allah*, and Muhammad is His prophet.”

**Shari’a** (shar-ee-AH) : Islamic law.

**Shi’ites** : the major Islamic sect that believes, in contrast to Sunnis, that Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, was the true successor to Muhammad in the leadership of the Islamic community

**Shirk** : the most serious offense of idol worship, teaching that God has partners, or putting something ahead of *Allah*

**Sunnah** : written Islamic tradition of the life and deeds or way of Muhammad's conduct, considered authoritative by Sunni Muslims

**Sunnis** : the main body of Islam that comprised about 80 percent of all Muslims who, in contrast to the Shi’ites, believe that the true line of succession from Muhammad is found in the four Caliphs: Abu Bark, Umar(Omar), Uthman, and Ali

**Surah** (or Sura, p1. suwar) : refers to the chapter divisions of the Qur’an

**Taqwa** : the reverence or fear of *Allah* which leads to obedience

**Tawaf** : ritual of going around the Kabah seven times during pilgrimage to Mecca

**Tawrat** : Jewish Torah or Law of Moses

**Ulama** : the principles that Muslim scholars arrived at by consensus, considered authoritative by Sunnis; those learned in religious matters (scholars)

**Ummah** : the community of believers in *Allah*. The collective dimension belonging to Muslims, in the trust of the Qur'an, the obedience of Muhammad and the fulfillment of law and liturgy

**Uzzah** : major goddess worshipped in pre-Islamic Arabia

**Wudu** : washing or purification that is to take place before prayers

**Zakal** (or Zakah) : the pillar of giving a percent of wealth for the needy

**Zabur** : Original Psalms of David

### C. THE STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

The Christians will have an idea of how to understanding and approach a Muslim for evangelism through this project. It will give a practical method to use in evangelizing Muslim friends. The writer himself does not know Arabic so he cannot get any Arabic resources, but only translated materials in English.

This dissertation could be used worldwide for Muslim evangelism, but it may not be effective in every different situation outside of Ghana. This dissertation has a limitation that cannot cover the whole origin of Muslim

emigration everywhere in the world. It will only cover Muslim emigrant history in Ghana.

The Qur'an and the Bible comparisons cannot be covered verse by verse. Passages were selected for the writer's purpose to bring out the idea that there are differences between the Bible and the Qur'an. It will be considered by the biblical ideas, biblical perspective, or biblical worldview. The Bible comparisons give a common ground of thought between Christians and Muslims. Its purpose is to make and to use these commonalities to lead Muslims to Christ for missionaries and Christians who willing to go to the Muslims.

#### **D. THE STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE**

Chapter two will consider Muhammad Islam's origin. Chapter three will discuss Islam's doctrines, beliefs, and practices. Chapter four will treat its history in Ghana, for effective understanding of the condition of the Ghanaian Muslims. Chapter five will discuss the comparisons of the teachings of the Qur'an with the Bible. These comparisons will help us to develop a strategy for evangelism. Finally, Chapter six will examine how to approach Muslims with

the Gospel. Making a practical witness to Muslims and planning how to deal with the trials that they will face after their conversion to Christianity will be discussed in this last chapter.

A number of research sources are used in the preparation of this dissertation such as books, dissertations, periodicals, seminars, interviews, internet sites, videos, tapes, and the writer's missionary experiences in Ghana. In addition, the writer's four years of living experiences of Middle East - Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait were also one of the helpful resources.

## **E. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND THE REVIEW OF THE SELECTED LITERATURES**

### **The Books about Islam and its Origin**

Cragg, Kenneth, *The House of Islam, 2nd ed.*, (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1975) This book contents about Muhammad, Qur'an, Its law and sects, and Ummah.

Farah, Caeser E., *Islam: Beliefs and Observances* (New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1968) It shows the beliefs and practices of Islam.

Geisler, Norman L., & Saleeb, Abdul, *Answering Islam: the Crescent in Light of the Cross 2nd. ed.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002) This book point

out Christian's Response to basic Muslim Belief, Positive Defense in the Christian Perspective with Islam's history.

Hisham, 'Abd al-Malik ibn, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955) This book originally written in Arabic by Muhammad Ibn Ishaq was translated in English by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hisham. It contained the biography of Prophet Muhammad. This is a classical literature about Muhammad. This biographical writing about Muhammad was nearly perfect to know him. This is a must for study of Islam.

Parshall, Phil, *Understanding Muslim teaching and traditions: A Guide for Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002) In this book we can get the Hadith's teachings on salvation, prayer, Jihad and violence, women, and Jesus which is the essence of the body of Muslim practice and literatures.

Riddell, Peter G., & Cotterell, Peter, *Islam in the Context: Past, Present, and Future* (Grand Rapid: Baker Academic, 2003) This book is a recent publication and gives accurate account of Islam.

Watt, W. Montgomery, *Foreword by His Excellency Shaikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, Islam and Christianity today: A Contribution to Dialogue* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983) Montgomery looks at the meeting of two religions, how they see and have seen each other in dealing with the problems of the world today. He is convinced that, in defending Christianity from anti-scientism, one must also defend Islam. He emphasized those beliefs which Christianity and Islam have in common, and shows how they may be justified intellectually.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1964) From the beginning of Islam to 20th century, the author writes the historical background of Islam and its theological and philosophical aspects.



## **The Books about Islam History of Ghana**

Ajayi, J. F. A., & Crowder, Michael, eds., *History of West Africa v.1* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972) This book records much about Hausaland and its history to spread Islam to Ghana.

Brett, Michael, ed. *Northern Africa: Islam and Modernization* (London: Frank Cass, 1973) This book discusses the spread of Islam in Egypt and North Africa, the development of Islam in Housaland, and some aspects of Islam in the Southern Sudan and independence in its area.

Clarke, Peter B., *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1982) In this book, we can see early Islamic contacts (A.D. 700s) in West Africa and its impact and development up to 20th century. Especially it tells about Hausaland and Volta Basin with important ideas of how to spread Islam to West Africa and Ghana.

Hiskett, Mervyn, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* ( New York: Longman Inc., 1984) Mervyn wrote effective book to search Islam tribes throughout in Ghana, West Africa.

Levtzion, Nehemia, *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1973) He traced Islam's journey to ancient Ghana.

\_\_\_\_\_. 'Patterns of Islamization in West Africa,' in *Aspects of West african Islam*, ed. by Daniel F. MaCall & Norman R. Bennett (Boston: African Studies Center; Boston University, 1971) This book tells about the history of Islam in West Africa.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968) This book teaches Islam's Ghana history.

Schildkrout, Enid, *People of the Zongo: The Transformation of Ethnic Identities in Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) It shows how to Mossi people came to Ghana and growing of the Zongo community in Kumasi, Ghana

Trimingham, J. Spencer, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) This book discusses the expansion of Islam in north Africa, Islamic stagnation and pagan reaction during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the recrudescence of Islam in the nineteenth century

\_\_\_\_\_. *Islam in West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) This book is primarily a phenomenological study of the religious life of West African Muslims. His special aim is to assess what the impact of Islam has been, the way it influences African society, and, conversely, the way the African community molds the Islam it receives.

### **The Books for Evangelism to Islam**

Accad, Fouad Elias, *Building bridges: Christianity and Islam* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1997) The author brings practical insight to approach to Muslims.

Barker, Peter, *Peoples, Languages, and Religion in Northern Ghana: a Preliminary Report* (Osu, Ghana: Ghana Evangelism Committee, 1986) This book explains Islam in Northern Ghana, Peoples, and Religious Statistics.

Chapman, Colin, *You Go and Do the Same: Studys in Relating to Muslim* (: Published by Church Missionary Society & BMMF International, 1983) This book is designed primarily for group study. This book teaches a knack of Islam to understand and reach them.

Marsh, Charles R., *Share Your Faith with a Muslim* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975) He wrote his long Muslim ministry in Islam country. It is a good practically.

Matheny, Tim, *Reaching the Arabs: A Felt need Approach* (Pasadena: William Carry Library, 1981) This book has a thorough explanation of Muslim culture, social structure and restriction to evangelism. We can approach them effectively with a relevant message to the transitional Arab. It is a very useful book for my evangelism method chapter.

Sheikh, Bilquis, with Richard H. Schneider, *I Dared to Call Him Father* (Waco: Chosen Books publishing, 1978) A Pakistani woman converts to Christianity. She writes the reason how she converts to Christianity because of the love of Christ than *Allah*.

Zwemer, Samuel A., *The Law of Apostasy in Islam: Answering the Question Why There Are So Moslem Converts, and Giving Examples of Their Moral Courage and Martyrdom* (London: Marshall Brothers, Ltd., 1924) The author brings the question at first in his book: 'why so few Moslem converts?' He answers this question. It is good to understand why Muslim evangelism is not easy. He tells many cases about that.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE ORIGIN OF ISLAM**

In order to know something of the context of Islam, one needs to understand how the message of Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was related to the main events of his life. This chapter is an attempt to understand the general viewpoints of Islam's history. It will deal, in turn, with the origin of Islam and how Islam spread after Muhammad's death.

#### **A. BEFORE MUHAMMAD'S BIRTH IN ARABIA**

More than five hundred years after the birth of Jesus Christ, Muhammad was born in Mecca, probably in April 20, 570 A.D.<sup>1</sup> He has had a great impact

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<sup>1</sup> Choi Eyung-Kil., *160 Million Islam's History and Culture* (Seoul, Korea: Songsan Publish, 1996), 22.

on world affairs from that time to the present time. Dr. Riddell and Dr. Cotterell say that he brought in ‘a dynamic movement’:

By the time of his death at the age of sixty-two he had brought into existence ‘a dynamic movement’ that would carry Islam through the centuries and across the continent, birthing empires, transforming the sciences, and challenging economic, cultural, and political systems.<sup>2</sup>

There were the two great empires, to the west, Byzantium (Constantinople, the modern Istanbul) which was the Christian empire, and the Zoroastrian Sassanian in Persia to the east. These empires did not pay attention to the Arabs. The Arabs were not yet a nation. They were only a gathering of clans. The main thing that they united them was their language, Arabic. They fought among each other to keep their clan and their power. They were Bedouin nomads moving from one oasis to another and one pasture to another. Mecca was a center of trade and a fascinating city in the Arabian Peninsula. People gathered together to move into that city because of its Zamzam well.<sup>3</sup> This urbanization brought some problems into the clan society.

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Riddell and Peter Cotterell, *Islam in Context* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Miriam Adeney, *Daughters of Islam: Building Bridges with Muslim Women* (Doners

Out in the desert the rules were clear: look after your own clan. An attack on one is an attack on all. The need of one is the need of all. Fighting is unavoidable and noble. Death in fighting for the clan is an honorable death. If you are fortunate enough to live into old age, the clan will care for you, provide for you. Orphans, too, will be cared for. Every member of the clan of a few hundred people knew everyone else. In the city all this was changed. Now there were the anonymous poor, with no one to care for them. There were fortunes to be made and lost, and with the fortunes went power. Beggars roamed the streets, orphans looked for help, the aged needed care. As always, the rich got richer but were never rich enough.<sup>4</sup>

They did not have a common religion that could bind them into a nation.

They were animists who worshiped the sun, moon, stars, trees, wells, springs and large stones. Probably, those worship ideas came from the Zoroastrians in Persia.

These animistic individual activities did not bind them as a cohesive power.

But when they gathered together for worship of those idols, it created a kind of unity for them. The focal point for that unity was Mecca, in which stood the

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Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 15. Its spellings are many Zamzam, Zemzem, and Zamzum. For origin of the well Zamzam, see Tor Andrae, *Mohammed: the Man and His Faith*, trns. Theophil Menzel (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1960), 34. Further reading of the Zamzam well's story, see Francis E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: Suny Press, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Riddell, *Islam in Context*, 15.

Ka'ba, a cube shaped storehouse for over three hundred idols. The Quraysh tribe, the same tribe of Muhammad,<sup>5</sup> kept and presided over the Ka'ba;

A cubical stone building in the court of the mosque at Mecca that is called the 'House of God,' toward which Muslims turn in prayer. This building contains the black stone supposedly given by Adam to Gabriel [other tradition said, to Abraham] and used by Abraham who allegedly built the Ka'ba with his son Ishmael. This black stone has been kissed by Muhammad and Muslims since his time.<sup>6</sup>

The Ka'ba was a place to make a pilgrimage by the Arabian pagan once per year as a focal point of worship. The large Black Stone, which was in the Ka'ba, was originally white according to Islamic tradition. However, at the time it was simply part of the stone worship by the Arab. It was the foundation stone for the first House of Worship by Islam later. This stone is a very important matter to modern Islamic worship even today. Peter Riddell says,

Here, unexpectedly, is one of the important and perhaps surprising links of modern Islam to those early days, for the Ka'ba in Mecca in the twenty-first century contains that same Black Stone. It is certainly

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<sup>5</sup> Jack Beird, *Study on Islam*, trans. Middle East Team (Seoul, Korea: Jerusalem Publishing, 1992), 14.

<sup>6</sup> Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books House Co., 2002), 339.

surprising that in such a strong monotheistic religion as Islam a stone should play such a center role.<sup>7</sup>

## **B. MUHAMMAD<sup>8</sup>: A BRIEF LOOK AT HIS LIFE STORY**

Amidst these backgrounds, Muhammad was born in Mecca<sup>9</sup> into the family of Hashim in Quraysh tribe. It was an influential family. Muhammad's grandfather was guardian of the Ka'ba. His uncle was clan chief of the Hashimites, one of the ten or so clans that made up the Quraysh, the dominant tribe of Mecca. His father, Abdullah, died before his birth, and his mother, Amina d. Wahb, died when he was six years old. At the age of eight, Muhammad lost his grandfather, 'Abdu'l-Muttalib, who was caring for and influencing him since his birth. There is the story of how his grandfather loved and influenced Muhammad even before his mother died. Ibn Ishaq, the earliest biographer of Muhammad, wrote,

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<sup>7</sup> Raddell, *Islam in Context*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad's full name is Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim. See *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* vol. 22, 1.

<sup>9</sup> According to Sura 61:6, Jesus foretold Muhammad's coming, when He mentioned an apostle that shall come after Him whose name shall be Ahmad which has the same significance as Muhammad – 'the illustrious.' It is usually assumed that some Arabic Christian, who knew Greek, played upon the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John 14: 16, where He promises his disciples to send them another comforter. Instead of parakletoj (parakletos) he reads periklitoj (periklitos), which signifies Ahmad in Arabic. We will discuss it later in chapter five.



When his foster-mother brought him to Mecca he escaped from her among the crowd while she was taking him to his people. She sought him and could not find him, so she went to ‘Abdu’l-Muttalib and said: ‘I brought Muhammad tonight and when I was in the upper part of Mecca he escaped me and I don’t know where he is.’ So ‘Abdu’l-Muttalib went to the Ka‘ba praying to God to restore him. They assert that . . . found him and brought him to ‘Abdu’l-Muttalib saying, ‘we have found this son of yours in the upper part of Mecca.’ ‘Abdu’l-Muttalib took him and put him on his shoulder as he went round the Ka‘ba confiding him to God’s protection and praying for him; then he sent him to his mother Amina.<sup>10</sup>

After his grandfather, ‘Abdu’l-Muttalib died, he was then put under the care of his uncle, Abu Talib.<sup>11</sup> Muhammad traveled with his uncle’s trading caravan into Syria when he was around the age of twelve. On these journeys, he probably heard some of the stories of Old and New Testament and encountered the more powerful and developed world of the Christian Byzantine Empire. He might have had a chance to receive the Lord Jesus Christ through the Gospel by someone but it was not enough to be a Christian. Through these journeys, he may have contrasted what he saw in Syria, a people united in the worship of one

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<sup>10</sup> Ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad: a Translation of Ishaq’s SIRAT RASUL ALLAH*, trans. Abd al-Malik ibn Hishim, with Instruction and Notes by Alfred Guillaume (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 72-73.

<sup>11</sup> Geisler, *Answering Islam: the Crescent in Light of the Cross*, 70.

God, with the lot of the fragmented Arabic peoples of his homeland, worshipping a multitude of idols. From his caravan trade traveling, he could have learned Jewish or Christian religious practices and terminology, which he later applied in Islam, such as fasting and regular prayers. Other evidences of this influence are in the Qur'an. In Surah of Yunus (chapter of Jonah)<sup>12</sup> verse 94 indicates that he had much knowledge of Christianity and Judaism.<sup>13</sup>

If thou art (still) in doubt regarding what we have bestowed on thee ask thou of these who read the **Scriptures** that preceded thee. In truth it comes to thee from thy Lord. Be thou, in no-wise, among the doubters.<sup>14</sup>

These **Scriptures** are *Tawrat* - Jewish Torah (five books of Moses), *Zabur* -Original Psalms of David, and *Injil* - the New Testament Gospels.<sup>15</sup>

Khadija,<sup>16</sup> a widow who was an entrepreneur, hired Muhammad to take charge of one of her caravans to Syria. A relationship developed and he married

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<sup>12</sup> The traditional number of this 'Surah of Yunus' is chapter 10. See *The Koran*, 4th rev. ed. trans. N. J. Dawood (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1956), 6.

<sup>13</sup> Baird, *Study on Islam*, 18.

<sup>14</sup> Hashim Amir-Ali, *The Message of the Qur'an: Presented in Perspective* (Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Company Ltd., 1974), 248-249.

<sup>15</sup> Baird, *Study on Islam*, 18. Also, see chapter three for more details.

<sup>16</sup> Khadija Bint Khuwailid, daughter of Khuwaylid, Muhammad's first wife. She was a wealthy widow and the employer of Muhammad. After a successful business trip of Muhammad

her in A. D. 595, at age twenty-five, even though she was fifteen years older than he was. He remained faithful to her until her death without taking any other wives. After his first wife Khadija died, he married twelve other women.

However, she had a great influence over him by supporting him financially, encouraging him when he was doubting himself, and giving him a new and more influential position in Meccan society through their marriage. She also gave him leisure time, which he used to go out into the desert, musing and pondering about what he had seen in Syria, and what this might mean for the Arab people.

When he was forty (A. D. 610), in the cave Hira, he claimed to have received the first of the revelations from *Allah*. Ibn Ishaq said that the related story in the following way:

When it was the night on which God honoured him with his mission and showed mercy on His servants thereby, Gabriel brought him the command of God. ‘He came to me,’ said the apostle of God, ‘while I was asleep, with a coverlet of brocade whereon was some writing, and said, “Read!” I said, “What shall I read?” He pressed me with it again so that I thought it was death; then he let me go and said “Read!” I said,

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to Syria, she sent her maid Nafisa to propose to him to be married. Muhammad accepted; she was forty and he was twenty-five. She was the mother of Fatima who was the wife of Ali, the 4th Caliph. The marriage gave Muhammad prestige among the Quraysh, and also time to pursue spiritual contemplation. See <http://answering-islam.org.uk/Index/M/muhammad.html>, Accessed January 20, 2004

“What shall I read?” He pressed me with it the third time so that I thought it was death and said “Read!” I said, “What then shall I read?” - and this I said only to deliver myself from him, lest he should do the same to me again. He said: “Read in the name of thy Lord who created, Who created man of blood coagulated. Read! Thy Lord is the most beneficent, Who taught by the pen, Taught that which they knew not unto men [Sura 96:1-5]. ”

So I read it, and he departed from me. And I awoke from my sleep, and it was as though these words were written on my heart . . . I could not even look at them. . . . Gabriel in the form of a man with feet astride the horizon, saying, ‘O Muhammad! Thou art the apostle of God and I am Gabriel.’<sup>17</sup>

Muhammad himself was, at first, confused by his experiences. He wondered if *jinn*, an evil spirit that inhabited the desert, possessed him. Apparently, Khadija was the one who reassured him, and encouraged him, and thus with new confidence Muhammad began to preach his message to the people. Ibn Ishaq relays the following account:

And I came to Khadija and sat by her thigh and drew close to her. She said, “O Abu‘l Qasim [Muhammad], where has thou been?” . . . I said to her, “Woe is me poet or possessed.” She said, “I take refuge in God from that . . . God would not treat you thus. . . . This cannot be, my dear. Perhaps you did see something.” “Yes, I did,” I said. Then I told her of what I had seen; and she said, “Rejoice, O son of my uncle, and be of good heart. Verily, by Him in whose hand is Khadija’s soul, I have hope

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<sup>17</sup> Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 106.

that of thou wilt be the prophet of this people.” Then she rose and gathered her garments about her and set forth to her cousin Waraqa B. Naufal . . . who had become a Christian and read the scriptures and learned from those that follow the Torah and the Gospel. And when she related to him what the apostle of God told her he had seen and heard, Waraqa cried, “Holy! Holy! Verily by Him in whose hand is Waraqa’s soul, if thou hast spoken to me the truth . . . and lo, he is the prophet of this people.”<sup>18</sup>

That was the moment of the birth of the new religion, Islam. When the Christian Church could not perform its role, Islam was born and swallowed up the one fifth of the world population.

After the advent of the first revelation came a long interval of silence that, according to some accounts, lasted about three years. Once again Muhammad sank into the depths of despair, feeling forsaken by God, *Allah*, and even entertaining thoughts of suicide. When he began to preach his message, first he preached among his friends and relatives secretly, and later publicly in the city. He called this new faith ‘Islam (submission)’ and claimed that he was merely a warner to his people.<sup>19</sup> Among his first converts were his wife Khadija,

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 106-7.

<sup>19</sup> Geisler, *Answering Islam*, 73.

his cousin Ali, his adopted son Zaid, and his lifelong faithful companion Abu Bakr.

The central doctrine of *tawhid*, the oneness of *Allah* obviously implied an attack on the religion of the day. Moreover, as a warner, Muhammad's proclamation admonishing his listeners about the reality of hell awaiting those who ignored his call to believe in the one God, *Allah*, brought persecutions and tensions from the Meccan aristocrats. To escape the persecution, on September 24, A. D. 622 Muhammad and his followers finally emigrated to Yathrib, to the north of Mecca, Madina (Medina). This emigration is called *hijra* and that now marks year one in the Muslim calendar.<sup>20</sup>

Muhammad became a bellicose and a pillager. He attacked Meccan caravans. At the battle of Badr, Muhammad's band of only 300 soldiers defeated 950 Meccan fighting men and obtained much plunder. Muhammad, himself, symbolized himself the victory at Badr as a definite sign of Allah's vindication of his prophethood and his prestige greatly increased.<sup>21</sup> At the other

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<sup>20</sup> Raddell, *Islam in Context*, 23-26.

<sup>21</sup> Geisler, *Answering Islam*, 78-79.

battle of Uhud, however, Muhammad's army was defeated by the Meccan leader, Abu Sufyan and his soldiers. Nevertheless, Muhammad continued his efforts to strengthen his position. He led and authorized attacks on the neighboring tribes, such as the Jewish tribe at Medina and confiscated all their properties. In the spring of A. D. 627, Abu Sufyan's army of Mecca lay siege to Medina in order to crush Muhammad's growing power. Although the Meccan troops were stronger, they had to withdraw. The reason for their withdrawal was that they had broken coalition with various cooperative tribes by Muhammad's secret negotiation with them, bad rainy weather, and trenches which Muslims dug accepting the advice of the Prophet's Persian disciples. Muhammad got a silent victory. After the victory of the siege, Muhammad attacked the last Jewish tribe of the Medina. This time Muhammad showed his cruelty. Unlike the previous Jewish tribes which had been simply expelled from the city, this time all the men of the tribe were put to death and the women and children were sold into slavery.<sup>22</sup> This time he felt that he had to sweep them away in order to prevent future

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 81.

doctrinal conflicts that might be started by the Jews because of his non-truthful Islamic doctrines.

The Prophet led many more campaigns, and that brought greater financial benefits to his Muslim community. Because of these benefits, more people were steadily coming into the fold of Islam. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica presumes the reason; “the religious attraction of Islam was apparently supplemented by material motives.”<sup>23</sup> After a while, Meccan strength declined because their leaders defected and joined Muhammad’s ranks. Now, Muhammad was not a rebellious fugitive anymore but he was an opponent of equal rank to the Meccan leader. Finally, in January 630, Muhammad with a ten thousand men army invaded his beloved city of Mecca with no resistance. The general of the Meccan army surrendered to him and he gained the victory without a battle. When he entered Mecca as a triumphant leader, he expelled three hundred sixty idols in Ka’ba with no opposition from the Meccans, and gave great pardon to all the Meccan leaders including Abu Sufyan. Geisler says this:

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<sup>23</sup> *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 22, 4.



. . . generous gifts and rewards for their surrender. Thus he not only conquered his long-time enemies but also won their respect and admiration. As Andrae claims, “it is rarely that a victor has exploited his victory with greater self-restraint and forbearance than did Mohammed.”<sup>24</sup>

After Mecca surrendered to Muhammad, other tribes in the Arabian Peninsula also confessed their allegiance to the prophet Muhammad after being defeated. There was another reason why Islam became stronger in political power and religious unity. Geisler says again;

As a general rule, the heathen tribes were obligated to denounce paganism and profess Islam, whereas Christians and Jews could practice their own faith but had to pay tributes and taxes. It is certainly one of Muhammad’s greatest accomplishments that he was able to incorporate all the many Arab tribes into one unified and powerful nation under the banner of Islam.<sup>25</sup>

The nation of Islam became bigger because the heathen tribes preferred to join under Muhammad’s Islamic umbrellas rather than remaining in the Byzantine power. Additionally, the heathen tribes who were conquered by the

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<sup>24</sup> Geisler, *Answering Islam*, 81.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 82

Muslims did not need to pay heathen tribes' taxes if they came under the Islamic religion.

After Muhammad established the foundation of the strong Islamic nation, he died peacefully when he was 62 years old, in June 632 AD. He died in his favorite wife A'isha's bosom.<sup>26</sup> She was one of his other wives, a daughter of Abu Bakr, who married him at age nine. He died suddenly in Medina, three months after he delivered his farewell address to tens of thousand followers about his personal Islamic pilgrimage. Before he died, he did not appoint his successor who could lead the new religion that he left behind. Riddell says at his first chapter finishing:

With amazing rapidity the fragmented and insignificant Arab tribes, the no-people, had been turned into a single powerful nation, united under a single religion, worshiping the one God. And it was done in the lifetime of just one man.<sup>27</sup>

After Muhammad died, "Muslims now had two urgent matters to handle: Muhammad's burial and the succession . . . Islam now reached the first of several

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<sup>26</sup> Ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad*, 682.

<sup>27</sup> Raddell, *Islam in Context*, 31.

crossroads it had to negotiate through its history.”<sup>28</sup> Muhammad did not appoint his successor, and after a while, without a successor, the Islam divided into two sects, ‘Sunni’ and ‘Shi‘ite Islam.’

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 32.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **THE BELIEF AND PRACTICES OF ISLAM**

This chapter will consider major points of practice and belief of orthodox Islam. These are the Practice of Islam, the basic essentials of the practice of Islam; and the Articles of Faith, the basic “Creed” of Islam. This is to set forth as objectively as possible the basic doctrines of orthodox Islam, steering away from different opinions of rival sects and emphasizing what most Muslims believe. Through this study, Christians will be guided to a better knowledge and understanding of Islam, and its doctrines for spreading the gospel in Ghana and elsewhere.

## A. THE PRACTICE OF ISLAM (*din*)

The basic practices of Islam are summed up in the “Five Pillars.” These practices can tie all Muslims in the world into one strong boundary and keep them in one faith. They are, the two sentences of incantation, five times of prayer a day, alms for poor, fasting in the month of *Ramadan*, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Very occasionally the *Jihad* - holy war is added as another making six beliefs. Especially the Shi‘ite Muslims observe the *Jihad* as a sixth pillar of Islam. Here we will consider the five pillars of faith and then we will examine the sixth belief, *Jihad*.

### 1. The ‘*Shahadah*’

The one prerequisite for becoming a Muslim is simple and direct. That is the ‘*Shahadah*’-confession of Islam- public testimony: ‘*la ilaha ila al-Lah, wa Muhammadan rasul<sup>1</sup> al-Lah*’, which means in English ‘there is no God but *Allah*, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.’ Farah says that, “By uttering the

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<sup>1</sup> *rasul*, ‘apostle,’ one of the offices for Muhammad in Arabic, the other one is *nabi*, ‘prophet.’

first part of the *shahadah* one becomes a *muslim*, submitter to God; but when he pronounces the second part, he becomes a *Muslim*, an adherent to the religion of Islam.”<sup>2</sup> The average Muslim repeats this no less than twenty times daily, at their daily prayer five times, the first words recited over a newborn baby and the last words on the lips of the dying, as the muezzin, by the cantor, in a minaret, etc. Even missionaries are asked to speak this being a good friend with them, but missionaries should not repeat it in front of Muslims, because then they would rejoice that missionary became a Muslim. This sentence can be memorized in a few seconds, but its repetition makes people become Muslim, like magic incantation. It gives Muslims an uncompromising belief in *Allah*.

To be a practicing Muslim, the adherent is obligated to acknowledge and apply the two basic fundamentals: Beliefs and Acts. Both are absolutely necessary for the establishment of one’s faith as a Muslim. In partaking of Islam the believer acknowledges his dependence on God, his creator, sustainer and guide, and his solidarity with fellow believers.<sup>3</sup>

When the non-Muslim people recite the ‘*Shahadah*’ several times, they

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<sup>2</sup> Caesar E. Farah, *Islam: Beliefs and Observances* (New York: Barron’s Educational Series, Inc., 1968), 103-4.

<sup>3</sup> Farah, *Islam*, 104.

are brainwashed by the repetition into the Muslim faith. A man can become a Muslim without needing to understand all the teachings and doctrines of his new faith. Through reciting the '*Shahadah*,' they instantly become a Muslim. By contrast, when people convert to Christianity, the missionary will watch them and evaluate whether they are truly converted or not, even though they confess their faith with the mouth. Then, they will be asked to be baptized. However, we should consider what Muslims are saying when they say 'unless you confess that there is no other god, but *Allah*, and bear witness that Muhammad is his only prophet, you can not be saved'. So, when they recite this '*Shahadah*,' they believe that they are saved. This idea comes from Romans 10:9-10. But they neglect 'believing' the objective. This Christian believing or confession does not happen without the work of Holy Spirit. We can say in conclusion that they just spring out a biased view of faith through their recital.

## **2. The *Salah* (or *Salaht*)**

Additionally, when the Muslim repeats ritual prayer, they become a stronger Muslim. That is the *Salah*. The *Salah* is the ceremonial ritual praying

five times daily. Muhammad placed greater importance on prayer than on any other religious obligation. “The act of prayer is not left to the whim of the believer to perform; it constitutes rather a well-defined ritual, faithfully executed according to a prescribed pattern.”<sup>4</sup> When the prayer times come, *Imams* or *Muezzin* shout ‘*Azzan*’ - the calling to prayer in the early morning. They pray anywhere. Even if they are traveling there are place to pray. They pray towards Mecca. They call it ‘*Qiblah*.’ This idea of facing to Mecca probably comes from Daniel in the Old Testament. In the beginning, Muhammad taught his followers to set their faces to Jerusalem when they prayed, but later he changed it to Mecca. The time of prayer is fixed as follows:

*subh* (at dawn): when the sky is filled with light but before actual sunrise

*zuhr* (midday): immediately after midday

‘*asr* (mid-afternoon): sometime between three and five o’clock in the afternoon

*maghrib* (sunset): after sunset but before the onslaught of darkness

‘*isha* (the fall of darkness): any hour of darkness.

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<sup>4</sup> Farah, *Islam*, 135.



At Friday noon, Muslims are customarily asked to pray at a mosque.

Before they pray, they do *Wudu*, ceremonial washing with pure water, first face, hands and forearms up to the elbows, then feet.

. . . precise details governing the washing of the hands, head, and beard, rinsing of the mouth, nostrils, and ears, and the use of dust or sand when water is not procurable are prescribed and obligatory . . . all subject to religious law and not matters of personal preference . . . these matters are common in many Muslim countries today.<sup>5</sup>

The posture of prayer in a mosque is impressive. The standing, kneeling, and bowing poses of prayer bring a symbolization of the ideal of submission and surrendering to *Allah*.

*Allah* is the all-omnipotent One for Muslims. He provides another basic theological emphasis on prayer. Man's response to God's power and authority is simply to bow low before him in submission and humility. So they recite the '*Allahu Akbar*' several times in their prayer which means 'God is the greatest.'

Here is their prayer;

*God is the greatest, God is the greatest,  
God is the greatest,*

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<sup>5</sup> Alfred Guillaume, *Islam* (London: Cassel & Company Ltd., 1963), 88.

*I witness that There is no God but Allah;  
 I witness that There is no God but Allah;  
 I witness that Muhammad is His Apostle;  
 I witness that Muhammad is His Apostle;  
 Come to the prayer! Come to the prayer!  
 Come to the betterment! Come to the betterment!  
 God is the greatest, God is the greatest,  
 There is no God but Allah.<sup>6</sup>*

It is a very simple prayer.

The integration of form and content is seen in this interplay between posture and theology. Personal salvation is very important to Muslims as it is to Christians. Their belief in the eternal existence of the soul is also similar to the Christians. So, the salvation process for the Muslims is one of the key themes in all Islamic Scripture, as well as in other religious instruction. Muslims' accumulation of merit is also a very integral part of motivation for the regularized performance of salat.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Richard C. Martin, *Islam : a Cultural Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1892), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Phil Parshall, *Understanding Muslim: Teaching and Traditions; a Guide for Christians* (Michigan: Baker Books, 1994), 63.

Huraira's *Hadith* highlights the role of prayer in obtaining forgiveness of sins. This is a *Hadith* quotation by Pashall<sup>8</sup>:

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "The reward of the prayer offered by a person in congregation is twenty-five times greater than that of the prayer offered in one's house or in the market (alone). And this because if he performs ablution and does it perfectly and then proceeds to the mosque with the sole intention of praying, then for every step he takes towards the mosque, he is upgraded one degree in reward and sin is taken off (crossed out) from his accounts (of deeds)." (1:352; 10.30.620)<sup>9</sup>

There is discordance between beliefs and practice. Muslim women cannot enter a mosque in practice. When they pray, if a dog passes in front of their prayer, the prayer is canceled. Likewise, if a woman passes in front, the prayer is also canceled. That is why they do not pray in a mosque with women. They provide a separate place for women. So, how can women obtain forgiveness of sins? However, through the *salah*, the Muslims can come together in the same ritual of humility and submission to the *Allah*. It makes them into one brotherhood which means that they are born in one God, *Allah*.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Here is explaining of numbering of *Hadith*: (1:352; 10.30.620) – '1' is the volume; '352' is the page number; the book is '10'; the chapter is '30'; and the number of the tradition is '620'. It is explained in Parshall, *Understanding Muslim*, 14.

### 3. The *Zakah*

This is the third pillar, ‘almsgiving.’ “The *Zakah* literally means giving back to *Allah* a portion of His bounty as a means of avoiding the sufferings of the next life, and as an ‘expiation’ or ‘purification’ of what the Muslim retains for himself of material possessions.”<sup>10</sup> Usually it is given to the mosque for distribution. It is incumbent on all Muslims to give 2.5 percent of their income to poor. Parshall wrote this subject:

In the context of such widespread poverty one can at least understand why almsgiving is more an ideal than a reality. What often happens is that an extended family makes every effort to provide adequately for the needs of its own sociological unit. Beyond that, few venture to go.<sup>11</sup>

### 4. The *Sawm* (or *Saum*)

The *Sawm* is fasting and the prerequisite of faith. It is decreed by the Qur’an:

O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you. As it prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint. (Fasting) for a fixed number of days: . . . Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the

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<sup>10</sup> Farah, *Islam*, 141.

<sup>11</sup> Parshall, *Understanding Muslim*, 96.

Qur'an, . . . so every one of you . . . should spend it in fasting, but any one is in ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic year. It is the holy month when Muhammad received his first revelation. During the feast, the Muslims may not eat any food, drink, nor smoke or have sexual intercourse. Some sincere Muslims do not even swallow their saliva but spit it out from their mouth. Fasting is begun in the morning before sunrise when a white thread may be distinguished from a black one and finished after sunset. After sunset, the fasting is immediately broken. They may eat and drink lightly before sunrise. Ramadan is a season of celebration with families or friends in the evening to enjoy what has been prohibited in the daytime. When the last day of fasting is over and Ramadan is finished, they have a great feast (*'Idul Fitr*) for celebration. Under the hot sunshine, fasting is not an easy matter. The Christian missionaries should be careful, and respect them for fasting, and avoid eating in front of them during the Ramadan fasting time.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Sura 2:183-5.

<sup>13</sup> When I was in the Saudi Arabia, in 1982-4 an Imam beat my company fellow because he smoked in Ramadan daytime at a street. They hate and dislike some one eating and even

## 5. The *Hajj*

The pilgrimage to Mecca called *Hajj* is the fifth pillar of Islam. During the twelfth month of the Muslim year, men are expected to make pilgrimage to Mecca. Every Muslim is expected to make the pilgrimage at least once in his lifetime unless illness or poverty prevents it. While on the pilgrimage they wear ‘*Ihram*’, white garments. Women can accompany the men. Armour describes about the *Hajj* in this way:

Upon entering Mecca pilgrims dress in simple white robes [*ihram*] symbolic of their desired purity before God and their equality before each other. The pilgrimage lasts several days and includes walking around the Ka’aba seven times, and then making two traditional journeys. One journey, called the ‘lesser pilgrimage,’ is a short and hasty trip to the well Zamzam, a reenactment of Hagar’s frantic search for water after Abraham had sent her and her son Ishmael away. The ‘greater pilgrimage’ is a two-day trek into the desert in remembrance of Abraham’s attempt to offer his son as a sacrifice to God, parallel in part to Genesis 22. The hajj concludes with a three-day period of celebration and festivity and a final visit to the Ka’aba.<sup>14</sup>

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smoking in Ramadan. See Charles R. Marsh, *Share Your Faith with a Muslim* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 22.

<sup>14</sup> Rollin Stely Armour, *Islam, Christianity and the West: A troubled History* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 24-5.

When they reached Ka'ba, they do '*Tawaf*', the ritual of going around the Ka'ba seven times during the pilgrimage to Mecca. They kiss the Black Stone that has become the focus of worship by the Muslims. This is an act of idolatry.

Phill Parshall agrees:

The non-Muslim world has asked Islamic theologians hard questions concerning the hajj. In a religion so adamantly opposed to any form of idolatry, how can it permit any earthly place to assume gigantic spiritual proportions? A cubical building (Kaaba) housing a holy Black Stone has become the focus of all worshipping Muslims worldwide. Circumambulation of the Kaaba and kissing the stone appear to the dispassionate observer to be idolatrous acts. To make a pilgrimage of thousands of miles to enter into such a prescribed ceremony can be understood only through the mind and heart of the nonquestioning believer. I find it impossible to comprehend millions of Muslims each year bowing before a stone and kissing it in a spirit of spiritual ecstasy.<sup>15</sup>

Actually, the stone is worn out now, showing that so many Muslims have come and kissed it. Ka'ab is a very important image for Islamic religious activities.

If someone finishes his pilgrimage, he gets an honorary title as '*al-Hajji*' at the front of his name.

The Five Pillars of Muslims, the customary practice of faith for Muslims,

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<sup>15</sup> Parshall, *Understanding Muslim*, 84.

are totally different from the Christian's practical prayer in faith. Riddell narrated it in this way: "The observance of the Five Pillars of Muslim is what makes Muslims from non-Muslims, rather than a pattern of belief, and the most vital of these observances is the first."<sup>16</sup>

## **B. THE ARTICLES OF FAITH (*iman*)**

### **1. They believe in God, *Allah***

Muslims are monotheists and believe in a self-subsistent unity of God, *Allah*. This is expressed in the title *Al Wahid*, the One.<sup>17</sup> Muslims also believe in omnipotence, omniscience, justice, and mercy of their God, *Allah*. They believe He is the eternal being, Creator, the Lord of universe, Self-subsisting, and Self-sustenance. *Allah* is the source of all things and knows everything.

Muhammad teaches a God, *Allah* above us, and yet with us. Jesus Christ teaches God above us, God with us, and God in us. The Muslims idea of God, *Allah*, is negative. Islam reduced God to the category of the will. It is a false

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<sup>16</sup> Raddell, *Islam in Context*, 47.

<sup>17</sup> H. U. Weitbrecht Stanton, *The Teaching of the Qur'an, with an Account of its Growth and a subject Index* (New York: Biblo & Tannen Booksellers & Publishers, Inc., 1969), 34.



conception of God. They believe that God is only One without a partner or son. They deny the Trinity of God. They describe their God's attributes in ninety-nine names.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. They believe in angels

Muslims believe in three species of spiritual beings that are angels, *jinn*, and devils. This belief is not theological but is practical and touches every day life of Muslims. They believe that there is neither hierarchy nor archangel,<sup>19</sup> but the angel 'Gabriel' who is a messenger to carry the revelation from *Allah* to Muhammad. Angels are very numerous and endowed with life, speech, and reason.

*Jinn* or *Genii* are spirits that are either good or evil. The evil *Jinn* are followers of the Satan, *Iblis*. They have a fear of *Jinn* to encompass the world or to ruin houses. In Sura 47 and 72, *Jinn* listened to Muhammad's preaching and were converted to Islam. So they do not need to fear the *Jinn* but they are still afraid of *Jinn*.

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<sup>18</sup> Geisler, *Answering Islam*, 22-25.

<sup>19</sup> Riddell, *Islam in Context*, 48.

The *Iblis*, Devil was expelled from Eden for refusal to prostrate himself before Adam when God commanded it. “It is We Who created you and gave you shape; Then We bade the angels bow down to Adam, and they bowed down; not so Iblis; he refused to be of those who bow down (Sura 7: 11).” *Iblis* was made from fire and clay. When God commanded him to leave Eden, he asked God for respite until the Day of Judgment to assault the way of the people and God allowed him to do that.<sup>20</sup>

### **3. They believe in the prophets**

They believe that Muhammad was the last prophet and Adam was the first, and Muhammad was the ‘Seal of the prophet.’<sup>21</sup> There are no more prophets to receive revelation from God, *Allah*. Muhammad was the final messenger of God. Because Jesus came to the earth earlier than Muhammad, Jesus was only one of the prophets. To describe the recipients of the revelation of God, they used two terms; *Rasul* (apostles), and *Nabi* (prophet) which are synonymous and used as exchangeable words. Twenty-eight prophets are

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<sup>20</sup> See Sura 7:11 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Stanton, *The Teaching of the Qur'an*, 43.

mentioned in Qur'an including Adam, Abraham, Ishmael, Moses, David, Elijah, Elisha, Zachariah, John the Baptist, and Jesus.

Muhammad is a prophet, teacher, mentor, vanguardist or pioneer, and model. Every Muslim does his best to follow Muhammad's traditions in his daily life.

An interesting example of Muslim piety in following the prophetic tradition is found in Sayyis Ahmad Khan, the nineteenth-century Indian reformer, who emphatically believed that it was better not eat mangoes since the prophet had never touched this favorite fruit of India. Also it is said that the great mystic Bayezid Bistami did not eat watermelons for sixty years because he could not establish how Muhammad would have cut melons!<sup>22</sup>

They believe that the ideal life is to follow the example of Muhammad, and this should display in man's outer lifestyle.

#### **4. They believe in the books**

They believe that God sent down one hundred and four holy books.

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<sup>22</sup> Geisler, *Answering Islam*, 82. He quoted from Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is his Messenger: the Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 44.

Adam received ten books, Seth fifty, Enoch thirty, and Abraham ten. All of these books were lost and only four books remain: the Torah of Moses, Psalms of David, Gospel of Jesus, and Qur'an of Muhammad. Muslims believe that Qur'an is the final revelation from *Allah* and eternal. This book is a little smaller than the New Testament in bulk. The defects of its teaching are many. They believe that only the Qur'an is inerrant and the other three books are tainted by 'the People of the Books.' So, the Qur'an is the foundation of their belief. We will discuss this matter in chapter three.

### **5. They believe in the Day of Judgment and Paradise**

They believe when the Judgment Day comes the dead will revive with their bodies and will stand before the Judge, *Allah*. 'A mysterious Beast of the Earth will appear, and rebuke mankind for their unbelief.'<sup>23</sup> At this Judgment Day, no soul can save another from judgment. They will be judged by their own acts.

Paradise 'is the garden of refuge, of delight, of eternity, and the Garden or

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 52.

Pleasure.’<sup>24</sup> Like the story in the Book of Revelation, there are cool streams from the King. This will be a great place for Muslims. Stanton describes the Islamic Paradise like this:

They repose on luxurious couches, are clad in the richest raiment, enjoy exquisite food, drink of fountains in which are mingled camphor and other costly essences, and quaff celestial wine at will. They enjoy the society of ever virgin *houris*, dark-eyed damsels with swelling breasts and shy, retiring glances; and pure wives are provided for them. These visions of delight are a reward for the godly who will abide in Paradise while heaven and earth shall last. They praise *Allah* and behold the fiery torments of the damned with whom they converse, and to whom they refuse water. The inmates of Paradise are the prayerful and charitable, who have refrained from unlawful lust, righteous believers who were persecuted, fighters in the way of *Allah*.<sup>25</sup>

They believe that hell is a contrast concept of Paradise. In hell, there is fire and no peace. The unbeliever and the one who neglected prayer and alms, the one who worshipped the servants and creature of *Allah*, and the one who opposed Muhammad shall be in hell according to Qur’anic doctrine.

## **6. They believe in the decrees of Predestination of Good and Evil**

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

This belief is explicit though not logical, and it is the keystone in the arch of Muslim faith. This faith is that God wills both good and evil; there is no escaping from the caprice of His decree. In this kind of fatalism Islam, an archangel, a murderer, a devil, the action of men, belief and unbelief, and whatever, all things, execute the will and purpose of *Allah*. It looks like an ultra-Calvinistic conception.<sup>26</sup>

### C. THE *JIHAD* (THE HOLY WAR)

For a long time, even Muslim theologians debated whether or not *Jihad* was among the prescribed “pillars of the faith.” That was one of the requirements to be fulfilled if one were to complete his ‘submission’ before God, *Allah*. Anyway, however people define it, we will not include it as one of the “pillars of the faith.”

The *Jihad* appears in the Qur’an. Sura 9:5 says;

but when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait

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<sup>26</sup> Samuel M. Zwemer, *Islam: a Challenge to Faith* (New York: Laymen’s Missionary Movement, 1907), 95.

for them in every stratagem (of war); But if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity (*Zakah* or tax), then open the way for them: For God is oft-forgiving, most merciful.

The *Jihad* revelation came to Muhammad that he should make war on the idolaters or pagans of Arabia and force them to submit and become Muslims, and this he did. The followers of Muhammad used the sword to extend their empire throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, and in recent times to other places.<sup>27</sup>

Muslims themselves define the *Jihad* as “The word ‘*Jihad*’ means ‘struggle or striving’ in the Way of God. Every effort made by a Muslim to do good acts comes under *Jihad*.”<sup>28</sup> This statement is quoted from an internet site which is made by Muslims to show that they think *Jihad* is a good means to do good acts. This is for the Muslims’ side only. Yes, *Jihad* is good for them but not for the others. The non-Muslims’ concept of *Jihad* is a fear of being attacked. Recently in Iraq, American soldiers were killed by radical Muslims

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<sup>27</sup> William Miller, *A Christian’s Response to Islam* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1986), 62-63.

<sup>28</sup> Anonymous, *Discover Islam: Questions on Islam and Answers*, Available from <http://www.islamonline.net/english/discover/discover10.shtml>, Accessed February 18, 2004

who carried a bomb for suicidal explosions. A internet site which is made by Christians defines *Jihad* as “striving, struggling, endeavoring. It is commonly translated as *Holy War*.”<sup>29</sup> That site continues to explain:

fight till they (i.e. the infidels) confess Islam, greater vs. lesser jihad (striving against inward desires vs. fighting in battles) is a distinction based on a weak hadith, non-believing parents persuading believer to polytheism, martyrs go to paradise, . . . It is therefore not difficult to understand why some extremist Muslims (eg. the Hamas) were willing to die for their terrorist acts all around the world. They believed that as long as they are fighting Allah’s cause, they die for it, they are assured a place in Paradise. However, believing that it is for God’s cause does not automatically mean that it really is God’s cause.<sup>30</sup>

To find the root of *Jihad*, we should go back to the time of Muhammad and his successor Abu Bakr, first Caliph for only two years, after Prophet’s death from AD 632-634. While Muhammad himself engaged in war, his successor Abu Bakr led wars. Here is the historical story about *Jihad*. Abu Bakr was generous to Christian communities in Arabia during his Caliph reign as long as Christians submitted to the political authority of Islam. However, Christian, non-Christian, or pagan, all non-Muslims were required to pay the tax imposed,

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<sup>29</sup> Anonymous, s. v. Jihad, *Answering Islam*, Available from <http://answering-islam.org.uk/Index/index.html>, Accessed February 18, 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



otherwise the Muslims fought those who refused to pay the tax. In the account of *Hadith on Jihad*, one finds:

Narrated by *Abu Huraira*:

When Allah's Apostle died and Abu Bakr became the caliph some Arabs renegade (reverted to disbelief) (Abu Bakr decided to declare war against them), 'Umar, said to Abu Bakr, "How can you fight with these people although Allah's Apostle said, 'I have been ordered (by *Allah*) to fight the people till they say: "None has the right to be worshipped but *Allah*," and whoever said it then he will save his life and property from me except on trespassing the law (rights and conditions for which he will be punished justly), and his accounts will be with *Allah*.'" Abu Bakr said, "By *Allah*! I will fight those who differentiate between the prayer and the Zakat as Zakat is the compulsory right to be taken from the property (according to Allah's orders). By *Allah*! If they refuse to pay me even a she-kid which they used to pay at the time of Allah's Apostle. I would fight with them for withholding it." Then 'Umar said, "By *Allah*, it was nothing, but *Allah* opened Abu Bakr's chest towards the decision (to fight) and I came to know that his decision was right."<sup>31</sup>

This is clear, that Muhammad taught that Islam must spread to the whole world.

They obtained their best Islamic desire, the propagation of Islam, through *Jihad*.

This *Jihad* made Muslims rich in the past by gaining booty and extending their

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<sup>31</sup> Muslim Student Association, *Introduction to Translation of Sahih Bukhari, Book 23*, translated by M. Muhsin Khan, (*Hadith: Volume 2, Book 23, Number 483*), s. v. Abu Bakr, Available from <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/bukhari/023.sbt.html>, Accessed February 18, 2004.

territory under Islamic rule.<sup>32</sup> Watt concludes his account on *Jihad* :

Conversion of the heathen was not a prominent aim, and in fact most of the opponents were People of the Book, who became protected minorities. In later times, when much of the fighting was done by professional armies, devout Muslims are found saying that actual fighting is only the lesser Jihad, and that the greatest Jihad is against the evil in oneself.<sup>33</sup>

Specifically, they used it as a tool for the expansion of Islam to the North Africa.

North Africa History: The most obvious fact is that the spread of Islam, in contrast with the spread of Christianity, has been less often the product of direct effort or conscious propaganda than the inevitable by-product of other activities. Among these other enterprises has been military conquest. Especially in the Sudan the conquerors of modern times have been Moslems, and some of their campaigns have been definitely of the type of Jihards, or holy wars. The outstanding example of such expansion by force is the rise of the Fulani Empire a century and more ago. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, among the Fulah (or Fulbe) tribe of the western Sudan, there arose a powerful warrior-missionary, the Sheikh Othman Danfodio. He conquered Hausa land which is now Ghana.<sup>34</sup>

Muslims do not fear to die by suicide bombing attacks because they

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<sup>32</sup> William Montgomery Watt, *Islam: a Short History* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999), 86.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> James Thayer Addison, *The Christian Approach To The Moslem: A History Study* (New York: AMS Press, 1966) p. 25

believe that if a faithful man fights and dies for *Allah*, then he who dies by *Jihad* goes directly to Paradise.

Here is another principle of the '*Jihad* spirit' that can give a person conviction to kill someone. Gulshan Esther<sup>35</sup> was a Pakistani. She was disabled and was healed by the power of Jesus Christ who appeared to her in a vision. Then, she completely left Islam to Christianity and gave her Christian testimony to the people. Her brothers tried to persuade her to return to Islam. When they realized that she would not come back, they tried to kill their own sister because they followed this *Jihad* spirit. These kinds of stories are many among the converted ones from Islam to Christianity and they often were killed by family or by close relatives. How can we deliver the Gospel to them and convert them from such a religion to the knowledge of salvation in Christ Jesus?

#### **D. THE APPEARANCE OF THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS IN THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN**

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<sup>35</sup> Gulshan Esther, *The Torn Veil: as Told to Thelma Sangster*, trans. by Myunghee Hong (Seoul, Korea: Tyrannus Press, 2001). Read her book entirely to understand that persecution can put converted person in possibilities of killing from Islam to Christianity in Muslim countries.

Passages of the Bible and the Qur'an show the sharp contrast between the Gospel message of grace and the Islamic emphasis on good work. According to the Bible, Salvation comes by faith and by the grace of God, not by works (Eph. 2:8-9) and Romans 3:21-23; 28 agree saying, ' . . . justified freely by his grace . . . by faith apart from observing the law.'

Contrast these references with Qur'an accounts,

(On the day of judgment) they whose balances shall be heavy with good works, shall be happy; but they whose balances shall be light, are those who shall lose their souls, and shall remain in hell for ever (Sura 23:102-103).

The weighting of men's actions on that day shall be just; and they whose balances laden with their good work shall be heavy, are those who shall be happy, but they whose balances shall be light, are those who have lost their souls (Sura 7:8-9).

Islam's salvation is clearly based upon their works by the teaching of the Qur'an. They need continually to pray five times a day, give alms, fast, make pilgrimages, and make holy war. Especially, when they die by the *Jihad*, they immediately go to the heaven.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM TO KUMASI, GHANA

This chapter will consider how Islam came to Ghana from its birthplace, Mecca to the Zongo<sup>1</sup> of Kumasi, and how it continues to spread even today. In reality, Islam is one of the most explosive growing religions in Africa. Islam's expansion began more than a thousand years ago.

Kumasi is the second largest city and capital for the Asante tribe which is one of the largest ethnic groups in Ghana. The word 'zongo' means the camping place of a caravan, or the lodging place of travelers in a Hausa<sup>2</sup> term. The British used this word 'zongo' to refer to the section of town where Muslim

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<sup>1</sup> Schildkrout explains that "with a capital z, Zongo refers to a specific geographical neighborhood; with a lower case z, zongo refers to the stranger community which inhabits a neighborhood named Zongo, as well as other neighborhood." See Enid Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 280.

<sup>2</sup> The term Hausa was itself referred to 'all up-country traders.' The Hausaland located northern Nigeria today.

traders lived. 'Housa settlement,' 'Mohammedan settlement,' or 'strangers quarter' was used with this word 'zongo' interchangeably.<sup>3</sup>

It should already be clear that the term zongo as used in Kumasi has different meanings which vary according to the context in which it is used and the identity of the speaker. In the beginning of the century the term was used to describe a neighborhood and, by extension, it was applied to the inhabitants of that area (and later of other areas) who were regarded as members of the zongo community. From the Asante and European points of view, the zongo community included all northerners who were recent migrants, and who therefore were strangers vis-a-vis the Asante. It did not include northerners who were incorporated into the Asante Nkramo community or former slaves of northern origin, all of whom were, for some purposes at least, regarded as Asante. Nor did it include southern Ghanaian migrants.<sup>4</sup>

## **A. ISLAM'S JOURNEY FROM MECCA TO NORTHERN GHANA**

After the death of Muhammad in A.D. 632, the Christian Empire of Byzantium had been struggling over the controversy between the patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria concerning the interpretation of Christology. While the emperors disputed imposing a compromise formula, the Muslim

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<sup>3</sup> R. C. Abraham, *Dictionary of the Hausa Language* (London: University of London Press, 1962), 967, quoted in Enid Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo: The Transformation of Ethnic Identities in Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 67.

<sup>4</sup> Enid Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo : The Transformation of Ethnic Identities in Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 85.

Caliphs took advantage by completing the conquest of Egypt where there was rich and fertile land in A.D. 642.<sup>5</sup> It took only ten years for the Muslims to conquer Egypt after Muhammad's death. Prior to this conquest, Egypt was under the control of the Byzantine Empire which was the Eastern half of the Old Roman Empire, and the Western half of the Old Roman Empire had been conquered by the barbarian. The Byzantines, however, only controlled cities; the villages, the countryside, and the mountainsides belonged to the Berber natives. The third Muslim Caliph, 'Uthman b. 'Affan, authorized the conquest of northern Africa for expansion of Islam from Egypt to Carthago(Tunis) which is present day Tunisia and it was also a part of the Byzantine Empire, on the coast in A.D. 647. In A.D. 663-664, the faithful Muslim conqueror of North Africa, 'Uqba b. Nafi al-Fihri came to Qayrawan near Tunis (Carthage), a fortress city, and garrisoned his Arab tribesman to fight both Byzantines and Berbers. After he died, Hassan b. al-Nu'man<sup>6</sup> took his place, fought with the Berbers and

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<sup>5</sup> *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 2002), vol. 24 Macropaedia 15th Ed. s. v. "North Africa," 959.

<sup>6</sup> Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1984), 3-4.

captured Carthage from the hand of the Byzantines in A.D. 698.<sup>7</sup> After that moment of the time, Berbers began to convert to Islam. Over the following three or four hundred years, Qayrawan became an important center for the study of Islam. A group of influential ‘*ulama*,’ or Muslim scholars of Qayrawan who were bitterly opposed to Shi‘ism, following the Maliki legal system and orthodox Sunni Islam, projected their influence from Qayrawan through future Muslim trader-missionaries who then took the message of Islam to cities and towns all across the savannah lands of West Africa.<sup>8</sup>

### **1. Islam in Western Sudan and role of Mali**

There were non-Negro peoples such as Arabs, Berber, and Tuareg in central North Africa. They made their way into Western Sudan from the north and north-east to settle. They gave religious influence to the Western Sudan. Tuareg was ranked among the non-Negro peoples. At that time, Tuareg were nicknamed as Sanhaja, *al-mulathamun*, ‘the Veiled Ones’, for their wearing of a mouth veil all the time. They gave Islamic culture slightly to Saharan Berbers in

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<sup>7</sup> The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 24. s. v. “North Africa,” 960.

<sup>8</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 6.



the area of present day Morocco. In A.D. 1045, one of the chiefs of the Sanhaja Berber tribes who was discontent with the Islamic syncretism of his people, set out on a pilgrimage to the important holy place of Islam, Mecca. On the way back home, he stopped at Qayrawan, now a Islamic scholastic city, devoted to the study and teaching of Malikism<sup>9</sup>-the school of Islamic law, taught by the Imam Malik of Medina. He sought a teacher willing to go back with him to teach his people, the Sanhaja Berber, the true Islam. The teacher, ‘Abd Allah b. Yasin, who trained in Qayrawan, followed him. He not only taught them Islam but was also an able and inspiring military leader for *jihad* against their traditional enemies, like the Zanata Berbers. He took control of the northern terminal of the Saharan caravan routes, such as a Sijilmasa trade terminal, and a Awadaghust trade terminal which was a counterpart in West Sahelian Africa. He controlled from the Zanata Berbers to northwest the ancient Kingdom of Ghana.<sup>10</sup> By

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<sup>9</sup> Malikism is developed from the one of early Sunni Islam schools. “Majority or ‘Sunni’ Islam developed four schools of interpretation whose functions were to decide upon the proper application of the Qur’an and Sunna to virtually all aspects of the life of the community. Each of the four schools takes its name from a famous early jurist to whom later followers trace many of the school’s distinctive opinions.” Quote from Richard C. Martin, *Islam* (Englwood: Prentice- Hall, Inc., 1982), 11. Malikism followed by Imam Malik ibn Anas who died AD 795. To know other Sunni schools and Islam’s divisions, see pages 10-14.

<sup>10</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 7.

about A.D. 1076, the Zanata Berbers had been replaced in Awdaghust by the militant Sanhaja Almoravids who were followers of Yasin.<sup>11</sup> The Sanhaja Berbers purified and spread Islam as far as the ancient kingdom of Ghana, located in present day Mali, in the 11th century.<sup>12</sup> This began a pattern that was repeated many times. Muslim traders came introducing Islam to regions of West Africa. Islam would then be mixed with local culture, and later, chiefs and rulers of those regions would make Islamic pilgrimages either to Mecca, or other Islamic centers, bringing back with them renowned teachers of Islam to purify the faith.

The ancient kingdom of Ghana was the first known political state of the western Sudan.<sup>13</sup> It was central to the trade of gold and salt between North Africa and the Sahel of West Africa, and thus became rich. The first mention of the ancient kingdom of Ghana was in the eighth century by Arabic astronomer al-Fazari.<sup>14</sup> He knew that the ancient kingdom of Ghana was a source of gold and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>14</sup> K. B. C. Onwubiko, *History of West Africa: School Certificate AD 1000~1800*, 2d ed.,

visited by Muslim traders. However, the real origins of the state of the ancient kingdom of Ghana can now ever be known very well. By A.D. 750, the Soninke was ruling the ancient kingdom of Ghana,<sup>15</sup> and the Mande kingdom<sup>16</sup> was under their control. The people of the ancient kingdom of Ghana are thought to be of Mande origin and have little association with modern Ghana, except that the related Mande tribe of the 'Dyula,' or 'Wangara,' as they are known in modern Ghana, introduced Islam to the area of present day Ghana.

Following the Arab conquest of North Africa, the Berbers gradually accepted Islam. The Berbers carried Islam across the Sahara to hand it over to the Soninke in the Sahil, the "shore" of the desert. The Soninke brought Islam to the Malinke, their neighbors to the south, and Malinke-speaking traders -- the Dyula -- spread Islam as far as the fringes of the forest. This way of transmitting peoples, in relay, within wider cultural contacts between neighboring peoples, helps to explain the peaceful process of Islamization. Indeed, the Islamization of Africa became more successful because of the Africanization of Islam. Islam proved its vitality because of its rational basis, simplicity, and adaptability on the one hand, and its tradition of scholarship on the other. These two

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(Onitsha, Nigeria: Africana-Fep Publishers Limited, 1985), 12.

<sup>15</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> The Mande (or Mandingo- Mande speaking peoples) kingdom was between the Senegal and on the upper Niger usually known as Mali or Mallel. See J. D. Fage, *A History of West Africa: An Introductory Survey, the Fourth Edition of 'an Introduction to the History of West Africa'* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), 1, 21.

aspects account for two trends in West African Islam -- compromise and militancy.<sup>17</sup>

Late in the 11th century, the Sanhaja Berbers reached the ancient kingdom of Ghana. Their relationship with the Ghana Empire was generally peaceful. The 11th century Arabic traveler and writer, al-Bakri, wrote about the ancient kingdom of Ghana at the time of its glory. It is written by Mervyn Hiskett.

Ghana in about 460/1067 is vividly described by the 5/11-century Arabic writer, al-Bakri. By this time it was an empire in the sense that it exercised political and military control over a wide expanse of territory from the edge of the Sahara, south into the Niger region, and west to the river Senegal. It also controlled the trade in the salt and gold between the Maghrib and the western Sudan. Al-Bakri tells of a city, built largely of stone and wood, not mud, divided into two quarters, a Muslim quarter and a quarter inhabited by the still polytheist Soninke. While culturally and religiously distinct, the Muslims were none the less deeply involved in the life of the state and they served it as government officials, scribes and in other roles where their literacy was useful to Ghanaian rulers. A number of them even became ministers of state in the Ghana government and served alongside their non-Muslim colleagues.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Nehemia Levtzion, "Patterns of Islamization in West Africa," in *Aspects of West African Islam*, ed. by Daniel F. MaCall & Bennett, Norman R., (Boston: African Studies Center; Boston University, 1971), 31-32.

<sup>18</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 22.

This pattern and the spread of the influence of Islam, was repeated in most every West African Sudanic empire that was to follow the ancient kingdom of Ghana's decline, even as far as Kumasi in modern day Ghana. Levtzion quotes al-Bakri also:

In Ghana of the mid-eleventh century Muslims lived in a separate town or quarter -- like the zongos of modern Ghana -- under the auspices of a pagan king. This king "was praised for his love of justice and generosity towards the Muslims . . . He had a mosque near his court where Muslims prayed when they called upon him. His interpreters, the official in charge of his treasury and the majority of his ministers were Muslims."<sup>19</sup> In Gao such contact with Muslims brought about the Islamization of the king.<sup>20</sup>

Early in the 13th century the Susu, a group of the Soninke who had not been converted to Islam, though the Muslims retained their influence, took over most of the territory of the ancient kingdom of Ghana.

The result was that the Muslims - Arabs, Berbers and Soninke - fled from the area and set up a new city at Walata. They took their trade with them

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<sup>19</sup> Al-Barkī, *Al-Masalik wa'l-mamalik: kitab al-mughrib fi dhikr bilad Ifrigiyya wa'l-maghrib* (Paris, 1911), p. 183, translated as *Description de l'Afrique septentrional* (Paris, 1913), pp 342-343, quoted in Nehemia Levtzion, "Patterns of Islamization in West Africa," in *Aspects of West African Islam*, ed. by Daniel F. MaCall & Bennett, Norman R., (Boston: African Studies Center; Boston University, 1971), 32.

<sup>20</sup> Levtzion, "Patterns of Islamization," in *Aspects of West African Islam*, 32.

and Walata now began to replace Ghana as the hub of commerce in the Sahel, largely under Muslim Berber control.<sup>21</sup>

The Susu victory over the ancient kingdom of Ghana was short lived.

Sunjata Kaita, from the Mandingo kingdom of Mail, formerly part of the ancient kingdom of Ghana, conquered the Susu chief and founded the Mali Empire. The Mali Empire expanded under a number of its kings. Mansa Musa who reigned Mali Empire from A.D. 1312 to 1337 was the greatest king. He did a great deal to promote the development of Islam in Mali,<sup>22</sup> especially through his pilgrimage to Mecca. When he went to Mecca from 1324 to 1325 A.D., he brought one hundred camel-loads of gold, five hundred slaves each carrying a four pound gold staff, thousands of his subjects including slaves to carry his personal things, his senior wife with her five hundred slaves and maids, and soldiers to protect the entire caravan.<sup>23</sup> His journey greatly influenced the economy in Egypt.

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<sup>21</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1982), 43.

<sup>23</sup> Adu Boahen, J. F. Ade Ajayi, & Michael Tidy, *Topics in West African History*, 2nd edition (England: Longman Group Limited, 1986), 29-30.

Important in opening Egyptian eyes to the opportunities that direct trade with the western Sudan offered was the Pilgrimage of the king of Mali, Mansa Musa, in 724/1324. Mansa Musa traveled from Mali via Walata, Tuwat and probably along the coast of Tripoli, to Cairo, on his way to Mecca. He was accompanied, so it is recorded, by a caravan of 60,000 followers and 80 camels carrying gold. In addition, there were 500 slaves also laden with the precious metal and his arrival in Cairo created great excitement. It is said that the sudden huge influx of gold disrupted the Egyptian economy.<sup>24</sup>

Really he presided over what he has been called the “Golden Age”<sup>25</sup> of Mali. His fame was so great that his portrait was on an early European map of West Africa, the Catalan map of A. D. 1375<sup>26</sup>, and the Mali empire appeared on the early map, the ‘Mappa Mundi’ or ‘Map of the World’ drawn by Angelino Dulcert in 1339, two years after he died.<sup>27</sup> He sat in majesty, apparently presiding over the whole Sahara.

During the Mansa Musa’s reign, trade was extremely important between Egypt and the western Saharan caravan town of Walata which was a key point on the road to Egypt. They even imported slaves which developed as a part of a

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 31. Also see Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 29.

<sup>26</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Adu Boahen, *Topics in West African History*, 30.

more general trading pattern. This trade brought not only great wealth to Mali people,<sup>28</sup> but also through those trades and wealth of Mali greatly contributed to the spread of Islam into the areas like Kumasi in present day Ghana. The Mande traders who delivered Islam throughout the West Africa, the Dyula or Wangara, were related to the people of the Mali Empire. Even though the Mali Empire was decaying during the 15th century after Mansa Musa, and finally declined early in the 17th century, they still gave an important heritage of Islam to West Africa.<sup>29</sup> First, the rise of the Mali Empire not only served to associate Islam with Sudanic kingship but also drew Sudan more closely into the world of international politics, diplomacy and trade. Second, Sudanis adopted Islam largely for better trading relations with Saharans. Third, Sudanic rulers sought the foreign Muslim experts as teachers or advisors. Lastly, Islamic law was evolving in his kingdom, as was literacy in Arabic, brought by his pilgrimage.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 14.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.



During the 13th century, Mali annexed Songhay on the eastern arm of the Niger. At that time, the Songhay's two princes were taken as hostages by Mali. Ten years later, A.D. 1275, one prince escaped and set himself up as a king of Songhay and founded the dynasty of the Sonnis. In the Sonnis dynasty line, one of the famous kings, Sonni Ali, delivered Songhay from Mali in A.D. 1465. He was nominally Muslim, and took the city of Timbuktu in A.D. 1468 and conquered Jenne in A.D. 1473. Upon the death of Sonni Ali ('magician-king,' because he was much given to traditional African magic) civil war broke out and Muhammed Ture, or Askia Muhammad, the pilgrim-king<sup>31</sup> who was a true Muslim, became the ruler and took the title of "Askia." His reign marked the highest point of political and cultural development so far attained in the western Sudan. The Songhay Empire was led by him more strictly for Islam than by Sonni Ali.<sup>32</sup> He made his pilgrimage to Mecca A.D. 1495.<sup>33</sup> His reign was

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<sup>31</sup> J. O. Hunwick, "Songhay, Bornu, and Hausaland in the Sixteenth Century," in *History of West Africa*, vol. one, eds. L. F. A. Ajayi and Crowder, Michael (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 228.

<sup>32</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 33-34.

<sup>33</sup> T. A. Osaе and S. N. Nwabara, *A Short History of West Africa: A.D. 1000-1800* (London: University of London Press Ltd., 1970), 49.

important for a number of reasons. First, he was invested as Caliph (*Khalifa*) by the last Abbasid Caliph, al-Mutawakkil in the Sudan and received similar recognition from the Sharif of Mecca. He used Islam as an instrument to build and establish the Songhay Empire more firmly. Second, he led what he chose to call a *jihad* against the polytheists of Mossi, whose beliefs were largely influenced by their seasonal migration, although he failed to subdue these bitter enemies completely.<sup>34</sup> This is noteworthy, because though a warlike *jihad* failed against the Mossi in the early 16th century, a peaceful *jihad* persuaded multitudes of them to convert to Islam<sup>35</sup> some 400 years later as they migrated into Ghana. Today, the Mossi make up one of the larger groups of ‘strangers’ in the zongos of Kumasi in modern Ghana. Nearly all Kumasi Mossis are Muslims. Third, he brought two Muslim scholars from Egypt, Abd al-Karim al-Maghili, who was “intellectually fiery and physically violent” and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti who was “a blander and less aggressive person” to help him to govern his

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<sup>34</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 35.

<sup>35</sup> Elliott P. Skinner, “Islam in Mossi Society” in *Islam in Tropical Africa, 1464-1591* 2nd ed., edited by I. M. Lewis (Bloomington: International African Institute in Association with Indiana University Press, 1980), 177. To know more about this “peaceful *jihad*,” refer pp. 177-186.

empire in the way of Islam.<sup>36</sup> Al-Suyuti's approach was later to become the norm for middle belt West African Islam, though Askia(or Askiya) Muhammed himself did not personally adopt it. Even today, Egyptians like Suyuti live in Ghana as missionaries. And lastly, he allowed an inner circle of Muslim 'ulama' to help him govern.

## **2. First Europeans and continued spreading Islam to Kumasi**

In 1591 A.D., the Moroccans Jawdhar invaded Songhay, and they made Songhay their province.<sup>37</sup> This was a sign of the declining power of the great kingdom of the Sahel-Sahara area of West Africa. Europeans began reaching the southern coast of West Africa, because trade patterns were shifting to the south. Newer kingdoms to the south grew in importance and began to take the place of trading cities associated with trans-Saharan trade; however, the tradition of Sunni-Maliki Islam remained. Literacy in Arabic and a generally peaceful spread of Islam continued to proceed by the hands of the Dyula-Wangara traders,

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 39.

who had been originally associated with the Mali Empire.<sup>38</sup> These amazing people, through their trade, reached Kano in Hausaland (Northern Nigeria today) as early as A. D. 1385. It mattered little to them which empire held power in the Sudan, so long as they could trade. They settled throughout the middle belt of West Africa, including modern Ghana, and often learned local languages. Thus, we find Dyula people in the north of modern Ghana as early as the 15th century.

Islam's expansion to North Africa caused Islam to come from Mecca to Kumasi, which is the center of the Asante region of Ghana. Islam's entrance into the northern part of modern Ghana began in the 14th century, when the Sudanic kingdoms began to grow in political and economical power because of the traders. The role of Islamic influence also passed on to the Dyula-Wangara, and they, in turn, passed Islam further into the south of Ghana, West Africa. To understand the infiltration of Islam into Ghana, we should see the background of the 14th century Western Sudan, which was dominated by Empire of Mali. The rulers of Mali were impressed by Islam through the pilgrimages to Mecca. By the end of that century, even though Mali was in a state of political decline, its

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 45.

principal trading classes, Dyula-Wangara, still showed great vitality, and had established merchant colonies in regions far beyond the limits of Mali political authority.<sup>39</sup>

The Dyula-Wangara people were diligent and founded a colony at Begho (or Bighu) for the purposes of trading, and this also became a center for Islam. Begho was only a day's journey from north of the rain forest in the Asante Region of Ghana, exactly west of Gonja which was north of the Black Volta River and was dominated by the Mossi Kingdom of Dagomba. Begho was located in what is now the west part of the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana today and near the border of the present day Ivory Coast. It was an important center associated with the gold trade for about 300 years. During its period of influence, Begho became known as a warehouse for gold. The gold would be taken south, and from there to the Portuguese traders who were at Elmina on the south coast of Ghana, or west to the Gambia, or north to the Jenne, Mali and on across the Sahara to European markets. This gold trading was dependent upon

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<sup>39</sup> Ivor Wilks, "Islam in Ghana History: An Outline," *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 2, No. 3 (1962), 20.

the politics and economics at any given time. The gold fields belonged to the Asante, who needed and sought slaves to work their fields.

The Wangara and the Portuguese competed for this slave market by supplying slaves to the Asante in exchange for gold. Ironically then, the Portuguese actually imported 10,000 to 12,000 slaves into their port at Elmina in the early 16th century from other parts of West Africa.<sup>40</sup> Joao De Barros who was governor of Elmina in 1524 and 1525, mentioned that the supply of slaves to the Elmina continued throughout the reign of Portugal's King Dom Manuel. The slave trade was prohibited for a little while by his successor, King Dan Joao III of Portugal (1521-57), lest the slaves become converts to Islam at their relocated places in the interior. Also, he found another big gold mine which brought in more money than what he would have obtained from slave trade. Though there were temporary reversals in favor of the Wangara in the 16th century, Europeans from the coast eventually came to dominate the gold trade, taking it away from the Sudanic empires to the north. Soon, slaves became

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<sup>40</sup> Ivor Wilks, Neheinia Levtzion, and Bruce M. Haight, *Chronicles from Gonja: A Tradition of West African Muslim Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1986), 10.

more important than gold since they were needed in the Americas, and were exported from, rather than imported to, Elmina, and on to the New World.

### **3. The penetration of Islam into Gonja, Ghana**

During this time, in the middle of the 1500s, Muslim traders from Begho played a major part in bringing Islam to the Gonja, the northern states of Ghana. According to one of the traditions, a group of Bambara warriors from the middle region of Niger conquered the people in the Gonja region and established the state of Gonja. At that time there were already Muslims who had arrived from Begho, Hausaland and Borno.<sup>41</sup>

Around A.D. 1585, Faqih Ismaila visited the Gonja from Begho. He was received with honour by the Gonja chief, Naba'a (or Lamba-the first Gonja King). Faqih Ismaila died on the way back to his town and the Gonja chief also died shortly thereafter. Faqih's son, Muhammed al-abyad set out to meet the Gonja chief, his father's friend. But he did not see him alive, instead he found the chief's son, Manwura, who was at the time at war with an enemy.

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<sup>41</sup> Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 94.

The king was waging war . . . on that day, a Friday. The sun's heat became intense, and he was in the sun. The *faqih* saw a big tree near the enemy and said to the king, “Why don't we go in the shade of this tree?” “How can we sit in its shade,” asked the king, “for it is nearer to the enemy whom we cannot defeat?” The *faqih* replied, “If Allah wills, we shall defeat the unbelievers and sit in the shade.” The *faqih* went forward followed by the king until [they came] under the tree. The *faqih* had a staff in his hand which he planted in the ground leaning towards the enemy. The enemy was defeated by the power of Allah, and the king conquered the town.<sup>42</sup>

When the king of Gonja saw this, it made him wonder. “This religion,” he realized, “is better than our religion.” He became devoted to Islam. They were converted to Islam, he and his brothers, Wamu and Dimu, together with Jafa and Mafa.<sup>43</sup>

Wilks agrees:

The *Faqih* Muhammad al-abyad assisted the king of Gonja, Manwura, and caused the enemy to flee “by the power of Allah”, and, “when the king of Gonja saw what the *Faqih* had done, he was surprised, and knew that the religion of Islam surpasses all others. So he was pleased to join Islam.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Patrick J. Ryan, “Gradualist Militant in West Africa: A study of Islam in Ghana,” in *Faith, Power, and Violence: Muslims and Christians in a Plural society, Past and Present*, eds. John J. Donohue, S. J. and Christian W. Troll, S.J. (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1998), 150-151.

<sup>43</sup> *Kitab Ghanja*, as translated by Nehemia Levtzion in Ivor Wilks, Nehemia Levtzion and Bruce M. Haight, *Chronicles from Gonja: A Tradition of West African Muslim Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1986), 92-93.

<sup>44</sup> Wilks, “Islam in Ghana History: An Outline,” 22.



This account is disputed by J. A. Braimah, who died in 1987, was Yagbumwura (paramount chief) of Gonja with the title of Timu I, and was Minister of Communications in the pre-independence government of the Gold Coast under Kwame Nkrumah (first president in Ghana). He wrote a different story. He wrote that Faqih's son, Muhammed al-Abyad acted valiantly in that battle, and when the enemy saw his intrepidity, they ran away.<sup>45</sup> However, we can consider that in these ancient times rulers needed some mystical magic for providing a sufficient basis for authority and administration. Mervyn Hiskett comments on this: "There is no reason why this story, or something like it, should not be substantially true."<sup>46</sup> Islam was capable of supplying these mystical elements<sup>47</sup> and this was a stepping-stone for Islam to grow powerfully in these days.

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<sup>45</sup> J. A. Braimah, "A History of the Gonja State", *History and Traditions of the Gonja: African Occasional Papers No. 6*, P. L. Shinnie, General Editor (Alberta, Canada: University of Calgary Press, 1997), 19-20.

<sup>46</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 120.

<sup>47</sup> O. J. Hunwick, "Religion and State in Songhay Empire," in *Islam in Tropical Africa, 1464-1591* 2nd ed., edited by I. M. Lewis (Bloomington: International African Institute in Association with Indiana University Press, 1980), 129.

However, as a consequence of this great victory, the Dyula Muslim teacher Faqih, and Dyulas were welcome as advisors to Gonja chiefs. They also became significant persons in Gonja because they were literate (in Arabic). One of these Muslims more important functions was to maintain accurate lists of chiefs and their personal Imams. This was extremely important in order to prevent disputes over succession. Muslim scholars also chronicled Gonja history in general. Al-Hajj Muhammed b. Mustafa, for instance, chronicled events in Gonja from A.D. 1710 to 1752, and this history was added to by Imam Umar Kunandi b. Umar. Though in 1751-1752, the Asante Empire which was exercising an influence in Kumasi, conquered western, central and eastern of Gonja provinces, this faithful recording of history continued.<sup>48</sup>

The decline of important Mande centers such as Begho in the early 18th century had important results for Islam in the region. While the Asante were rising in power and influence, European activity on the coast drew much of the gold-trade south to the coast, and there were internal disputes in Begho

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<sup>48</sup> Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers Limited, 1982), 94-95.

itself.<sup>49</sup> Today, Begho does not exist at all. However, it left quite a legacy: “its importance as an early center of Islam is still reflected in the number of clerical families in both northern Ghana and the northern Ivory Coast that regard it [Beghos] as their place of origin.”<sup>50</sup>

The Dyula-Wanara traders also established centers from which Islamization occurred among the states of Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Wala.<sup>51</sup> The Mossi, mentioned above, the Mamprusi, and the Dagomba in Northern Ghana are related to each other. It will be remembered that the Mossi successfully held the Songhay Empire at bay in the 16th century when Askiya Mohammed tried to incorporate them into his empire. Thus, they resisted Islam. Geographically, the Mossi was located in Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) which is the most northern part of Mamprusi and Dagomba. Just south of Mossi in Northern Ghana are the Mamprusi, south of which are found the Dagomba. Sandwiched between Dagonba and the Asante of the forested area of modern

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>50</sup> Wilks, “Islam in Ghana History: An Outline,” 21.

<sup>51</sup> Ali M. Kettani, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1986), 178.

Ghana is the Gonja. Of the four northern states mentioned, Gonja received Islam most warmly, and the Gonja city of Salaga in the 18th and 19th centuries was instrumental as a staging post for Islam's penetration into Asante.

The Dagomba, to the north of Gonja, accepted Islam more slowly. Islam probably entered there in the 17th century. Islam did not exercise any real influence there until 1700. There were Mandi-speaking Muslims who were traders from the upper Niger region and later joined by Hausa Muslim traders. However, it was not until the time of the "reign of Na Zangina (c. 1700-1714) that a strong and influential Islamic community began to emerge in Dagomba."<sup>52</sup> Muslims encountered resistance among the Mamprusi to the north of Dagomba, who like the Mossi, also associated Islam with conquest.

The Dyula-Wangara were not aggressive evangelists. "Their main concerns were . . . with trade, the provision of a sound Islamic education for their own people and anyone else who wanted it, and organizing the pilgrimage to Mecca."<sup>53</sup> The Dyula Muslim missionaries, unlike the Hausas that were to come

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<sup>52</sup> Clark, *West Africa and Islam*, 95.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

later, were not particularly bothered by the need to adapt and mix Islam with local animistic beliefs.

As was the case in Gonja and to a lesser extent perhaps in Mamprussi and Dagomba, the Muslims in Wa forged close ties with the chiefs and took on the language and many of the customs of the local people. They also allowed Islam to be adapted to a very considerable degree to the local culture.<sup>54</sup>

#### **4. The influence of the Hausa Islam to Ghana**

The Hausa Muslims brought Islam to northern Ghana, too. They were different and less tolerant Muslims. The Hausa lived from northern Nigeria through Salaga. Ironically, the Hausa themselves were brought under the influence of Islam through Dyula-Wangara traders who crossed all the way east, through modern Ghana, to Hausaland in the fourteenth century. The influence of the Hausa as keen traders, shrewd business people and extremely skilled artisans was tremendous. In the 18th century, these Hausas began traveling to the west for trade in Ghana. Hausa speaking traders settled the town of Salaga in Gonja around 1775.<sup>55</sup> It was a better and more convenient place for trading

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>55</sup> Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* 129.

for them. Salaga's importance grew as Saharan trade died. "It first rose to prominence as a result of the kola-nut trade."<sup>56</sup> Kola-nut, a rather bitter, tangy tasting fruit that is chewed, is a stimulant like coffee. Today it is used in beverages such as Coca Cola. Though kola-nuts are found in Nigeria and other West African countries, Ghana's kola-nut "cola nitada" is considered superior to the species found in other West African countries, and this kola-nut found its way as far north as markets in Tunisia. The trade route used by the Hausas by-passed the bend of the Niger River, going directly across West Africa from Hausaland in Northern Nigeria to Salaga in Gonja, Northern Ghana. Levtzion says, "As most traders in the Sahil and the savannah were Muslims, trader and Muslim became almost synonymous."<sup>57</sup> When the Ashanti annexed Gonja, and Salaga along with it, they contributed to Salaga's greatness through the uninhibited trade that passed through it. The trade was carried out by the Hausa. Wilks comments on this, and quotes Dupuis, the British consul to Kumasi in 1820:

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>57</sup> Nehemia Levtzion, "Patterns of Islamization in West Africa," 33.

Where the Ashanti was unable to venture “unless under the escort and protection of the Moslem,” the Muslim could travel with every facility: “On the journey from Coomassy [Kumasi] to Haoussa [Hausa], he seldom disbursed a mitskal of gold or cowrees (the value of ten shillings) but, on the contrary, is frequently a gainer by the generosity of princes, and his daily wants are moreover liberally supplied at their expense, and oftentimes with unbounded hospitality.”<sup>58</sup>

Another important kola trading route was that which passed through the Volta region. This was closely linked to the gold trading route. The Asantes successfully took over the kola trade and organized it from Kumasi. In 18th century they founded the Salaga village in Gonja, probably Hausa-speaking traders settled there because it was more convenient for their purposes than the old center. Salaga became the center of trades, a major kola market that linked to east, west, north, and south and getting bigger as mentioned by Hiskett, “by c. 1202/ 1788, the small Islamic sultanate of Djougou, north-east Salaga, had emerged.”<sup>59</sup> As a result, Hausa-speaking traders and Borno traders took over the monopoly of the gold and kola trade which was enjoyed by the

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<sup>58</sup> Ivor Wilks, “The Position of Muslims in Metropolitan,” *Islam in Tropical Africa*, ed., I. M. Lewis (Bloomington & London: International African Institute in association with Indiana University Press, 1980), 153.

<sup>59</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 130.

Dyulas. Hiskett continuing says, “the fact that Salaga soon became almost entirely a town of Hausa-speakers makes it clear how strong Hausa presence there become.”<sup>60</sup> Hausa influence has continued to dominate, and today in Kuniasi Zongos, Hausa is the dominant language. Thus, in the 18th and 19th centuries the 400 years of Dyula-Wangara influence from centers like Begho gave way to Hausa influence from Salaga.<sup>61</sup> Hausa traders later came in contact with the Asante and spread Islam further south. The Ashanti Kingdom, the center of which was 150 miles southwest of Salaga, had an effect on Muslim penetration of southern Ghana. European powers were at play in Asante, and which would therefore eventually have an effect on the progress of Islam as well.

## **B. COLONIAL RULES AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOLD COAST**

As the first Europeans in 1471, the Portuguese reached Elmina on the south coast of Ghana, for the monopoly of the gold trade, leased land from local

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 131



leaders and built the Castle of St. George (the Fort of Sao Jorge de Mina) there in January 1482 by Dom Joao II.<sup>62</sup> Wilks proposed:

The commercial situation at Elmina in the late century clearly presupposed the existence in its hinterland first, of a well developed extractive industry in gold, and secondly, of a well-organized distributive trade. Only thus could such large quantities of gold have become so rapidly available on the coast with the opening of the new maritime markets after 1471.<sup>63</sup>

Most of the traders with whom the Portuguese did business were Akans, but there were also some Dyula-Wangara traders who were associated with Begho to the north. Originally, the Akan were one state among many, incorporated into the Asante Kingdom. Later, the term Akan came to refer to all Twi speaking peoples.

The Dutch, Danish, and the British soon were to compete with the Portuguese in commercial operations. Between 1637 and 1642, the Dutch took the Castle of St. George from the Portuguese, forcing the Portuguese to leave the

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<sup>62</sup> Wilks, *Chronicles from Gonja*, 3.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

Gold Coast. The British who were at Cape Coast Castle only ten miles away from the Castle of St. George captured it from the Dutch in 1664.<sup>64</sup>

Gold was of primary interest to Europeans and was the original reason for their coming to West Africa. As has been stated, the Portuguese were involved with the import of slaves from Benin to the Gold Coast until the mid-16th century. The Asante needed slaves to till their land, and actually demanded slaves along with other wares that the Portuguese brought in return for gold.<sup>65</sup>

By the 17th century however, there was a turnaround. Slaves were needed in the Americas to work on the plantations, and soon slaves became more valuable than gold. The pattern of Afro-European trade on the Gold Coast was almost completely reversed in some sections. Instead of bringing in captives and exporting gold, they were selling African captives and receiving gold in return.

Many tribes hunted down people of other tribes in order to sell them as slaves. The Asante were involved in the slave trade. The slave trade was then

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<sup>64</sup> J. D. Fage, *An Introduction to the History of West Africa* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 70.

<sup>65</sup> Wilks, *Chronicles from Gonja*, 9-11.

important through the 17th and 18th centuries, after which it was prohibited by the Dutch, Danes and British.<sup>66</sup>

The Asante was the last and the most powerful state of the Akan speaking peoples under the Asantehene or great king Osei Tutu(1697-1731) and his fetish priest Anokye in the early 18th century.<sup>67</sup> The incorporation of Akan tribes who were closely related to the Asante in Southern Ghana continued under the successor Asantehene Opoku Ware 1731-1742.<sup>68</sup> By this time, the Asante kingdom included Akan, Akim, Sefwi, Tekyiman, and Fante states which were considered part of the Greater Asante.<sup>69</sup> These differed from the tributaries such as Gonja and Dagomba to the north, which were non-Akan states and only loosely controlled.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Britannica*, s. v. "Ghana."

<sup>67</sup> Fage, *An Introduction to the History of West Africa*, 96.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> J. K. Fynn, "The Structure of Greater Ashanti: Another View," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* XV, No. 1 (1974), 2.

In the early 18th century, several traders struggled for control of the market. The Portuguese had been in control of the gold trade market in the 1500s. In 1642, they lost their market to the Dutch people. The Asante united with Dutch, whereas the British allied themselves to the Fante on the coast. Even though Fante were less successful in their cooperation with the British, they also tried to keep good relations with the Asante. The Fante tried to acquire control of the trade passing through to Asante and the interior, and thus encouraged the Akan states bordering it to pull away from the Asante hegemony.<sup>71</sup> Thus, relations between the British, Asante, Dutch and Fante were often in conflict. This was compounded by misunderstandings as well as the deliberate manipulation of various situations. The Asantehene, Osei Bonsu, in 1800, complained that all he wanted was trade, and that the Fante were ruining his trade with Europeans on the coast.<sup>72</sup> “Thus, as far as Osei Bonsu was

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<sup>71</sup> Fage, *An Introduction to the History of West Africa*, 96.

<sup>72</sup> Fynn, “The Structure of Greater Ashanti,” 15.

concerned what he resented it was the forms of control which the Fante exercised over the trade routes.”<sup>73</sup>

The conflict which occurred in 1807 in the reign of Osei Bonsu may be summed up briefly thus. Firstly the Asante were desirous of securing free access to trade with the Europeans on the coast, Secondly, the Fante were equally desirous of maintaining their lucrative position as middlemen in the trade between the Asante and the Europeans. Thirdly, the British for their part were anxious to prevent Fanteland from falling under the political control of the Asante.<sup>74</sup>

Because of this desire, the Asante invaded the Fante in 1807 on the coast and for the next decade were sovereign over all the territory toward the coast.<sup>75</sup> Also at this time, the Anglican Church members were forbidden to engage in slave trade, but not prohibited in the possession of slaves. During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in England, an evangelical small group and Quakers began an anti-slavery campaign.<sup>76</sup> Because of these influences, the British forbade trading of slaves.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>74</sup> Osae, *A Short History of West Africa*, 134.

<sup>75</sup> Carl Christian Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante: Based on Traditions and Historical Facts Comprising a Period of More Than Three Centuries from About 1500 to 1860*, 2d ed. (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1966), 162.

<sup>76</sup> J. D. Fage, *A History of West Africa: An Introductory Survey* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 113.

The Dutch and Danish followed. With Asante hegemony reaching the coast, it was imperative that Britain establish a relationship with the Asante. Thus, under Asantehene Osei Bonsu, “we enter on a period in which political relations may be said to commence between Great Britain and Asante.”<sup>77</sup> The British were interested in a limited Protectorate of Fanteland.

In its attempts to maintain order between itself and Asante, the British sent a diplomatic mission to Kumasi, in the person of J. Dupuis, who was appointed British Consul for Ashanti in 1818, though he only spent two months in Kumasi. At the time, there had been a disagreement between the Asantehene, Osei Bonsu, and the British, over the insulting of Asante people resident among the Fanti on the coast, who were under protection of the British.<sup>78</sup>

While the British, Dutch, Asante and Fante were struggling over issues of trade and sovereignty in the early 19th century, the Muslims were quietly developing their influence in Kumasi.

Muslims began arriving in Kumasi, capital of Asante in modern Ghana, in the 18th century. These Muslims came from further north, from Gonja, Mamprussi, Dagomba and from centres in the upper and middle Niger region and even from North Africa. Some of these states became

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<sup>77</sup> Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, 135.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

tributaries of Asante as a result of Asante expansion northwards during the reign of Opoku Ware (1717-1750), and the Muslims who traveled south from these states and settled in Kumasi came to represent their own commercial and political interests and those of their States.<sup>79</sup>

As they had done before in Ancient Ghana, Muslims were establishing themselves in Kumasi, a pagan city. The reason that Muslims had a significant influence on the Asante is that Asantehene Osei Kwame's (1777-1801) became a Muslim even though he was only a nominal Muslim. Through his conversion, he caused himself to be deposed from Asantehene.<sup>80</sup> The following Asantehene was Osei Bonsu who we mentioned above already. He began as an enemy to Islam and executed a number of Muslims.

After the Asante invasion of Fante in 1807, T. E. Bowdich came to Kumasi in 1817 representing the mission of the Africa Company, a British chartered company which was originally formed in 1662. Also, Consul Dupuis from Britain was sent as a representative to Kumasi in 1820. Dupuis spoke Arabic fluently, which helped him to develop his relationship with Kumasi

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<sup>79</sup> Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 106.

<sup>80</sup> Nehemia Levtzion, "Islam in Ashanti," chap. in *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 186.

Muslims.<sup>81</sup> Both Bowdich and Dupuis developed good relationships with the Muslims in Kumasi. Much of what is known about the Muslims at that time comes from the diaries that were kept by these men.<sup>82</sup> By this time, the hostile attitude toward the Muslims of Osei Bonsu, which endured 15 years, changed into good relations between Muslims and the Asantehene. They again had a cordial attitude toward each other, as seen by the ability of Muslims to be involved in government, religion, and trade.<sup>83</sup>

Just as Muslims spread their influence in Mansa Musa's kingdom of Mali, and Askia Muhammed's Songhay Empire, the Muslims began to have influence in Kumasi (1750s on). They exercised Muslim influence in much the same way that they had in ancient Ghana.

The Kumasi Muslims lived in the center of the town, their quarter lying along the avenue leading from the main market to the king's palace. . . . The head of the community was the elderly Muhammad al Ghamba . . . more commonly known as Baba, who had first settled in Kumasi in 1807.

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<sup>81</sup> Wilks, "*Position of Muslims*," 164.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>83</sup> Levtzion, "*Islam in Ashanti*," 187.



A man of piety and learning, his obligations to the Kumasi faithful required the exercise of both qualities.<sup>84</sup>

Shaikh Baba, who had come under the influence of Islam through a Muslim ‘*murabit*’ (which in Arabic means frontier warrior), was a possessor of a large library and was well informed concerning Islam and Sudanic history. He founded a school in which he taught the Quran, and as a Imam he led his people in prayer.<sup>85</sup>

Shaikh Baha and the Muslims also were involved in government just as they had been in the ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhay kingdoms. Moreover, much of Asante's trade was carried out by Muslims.

The Gyaasewahene, head of the Ashanti bureaucracy employed a Muslim secretary. . . to keep records of political events, and court proceedings were reported in Arabic. . . Diplomatic relations between Ashanti and northern Muslim states were probably largely conducted by the Muslims.<sup>86</sup>

The Asantehene, eager for success against the many enemies of the Asante State, offered both pagan sacrifices and sought the influence of the Muslims as well.

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<sup>84</sup> Wilks, “*Position of Muslims*,” 144-145.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

Bowdich, the Africa Company representative resident in Kumasi wrote in his journal,

(2 November, 1817) The king [Asantehene] has been busy for the last twelve days making fetish, etc. for the success of the war; the Moors going every morning to the palace for prayer and sacrifice.

(8 November 1817) The king has been making human sacrifices for the success of the war at Bantama, Assafoo, and Aduma, in the evenings and the Moors make their offerings of sheep in the palace according to the Moslem ritual.<sup>87</sup>

The half century or so of years between the beginnings of British relations with the Asante (about 1820) and the British invasion of Asante in 1874 was marked by constant problems. After the Asante invasion of Fante, trade was greatly inhibited and came to a complete halt when the British Governor at the coast and the Asantehene failed to agree on a treaty concerning Asante's sovereignty over Fante, and the desire of the Asante to send its own ambassadors to England.

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<sup>87</sup> T. Edward Bowdich, *Mission From Cape Coast Castle To Ashantee*, 3d ed. W. E. F. Ward (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1966), 393-394.

In 1822, Sir Charles MacCarthy arrived at Cape Coast and made preparations for an invasion of Asante.<sup>88</sup> Unfortunately, MacCarthy had a very inadequate understanding of the situation, and though he had the chance to resolve the problems with the Asante, he chose rather to go to war, trying to gain control of various Asante tributaries. He badly miscalculated, and the Asante won.

In the years just prior to the British invasion of Asante of 1874, the Asante Union had suffered under the incompetency of the two brothers who ruled (as Asantehene) at that time, Kofi KariKari and Mensa Bonsu, and the crisis of succession that lasted five years. In addition, Kofi Karikari badly mismanaged the Kingdom's finances by lavish spending and gift giving.<sup>89</sup> Relations between the British and Asante climaxed when, “in 1874, after enduring seven full-scale Ashanti invasions of the coast in less than seventy years, the British Government launched Wolseley's punitive expedition.”<sup>90</sup> This took barely one month.

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<sup>88</sup> Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, 170-173.

<sup>89</sup> Agnes Akosua Aidoo, “The Asante succession Crisis 1883 - 1888,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* XIII, No. 2 (1972), 163-164.

<sup>90</sup> W. E. F. Ward, “Britain and Ashanti, 1874 - 1896,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* XV, No. 2 (1972), 131.

The treaty made no provision for establishing a temporary British garrison, or for stationing a permanent British representative at Kumasi. If Ashanti defaulted on the treaty, Britain would have no redress short of another punitive expedition. . . . Twenty-two years later, another British force occupied Kumasi. . . . But this time they took with them the Asantehene and his principal chiefs as prisoners; and a British Resident was appointed, not to represent the British Government's views to an independent king, but to administer Ashanti, as a conquered territory.<sup>91</sup>

Under these conditions, the Hausa penetration continued into the Asante empire. As long as the power of Asante lasted, the Asante did not allow the dispersing Hausas to reside in the empire capital city of Kumasi. Later, with the defeat of Asante from the hand of the British in 1896, Hausa traders slowly infiltrated to the south to Kumasi with their proud, bookish and uncompromising version of Islam.<sup>92</sup> The Hausa Muslims and other Muslims who were in Asante found themselves in a good position later when the British assumed power in Kumasi.

### **C. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ZONGOS IN KUMASI**

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 131.

After the British arrived in Kumasi, Asante Muslims incorporated with the Asantehene to stop the British invading Kumasi. In the wars with the British in 1874 and 1900, Muslims were loyal to the Asantihene. British recruited northern Muslim soldiers that were Hausa, Mossi, Yoruba, Zabaarama, and Grusi to fight against the Asante. After the British conquered Kumasi, Asante power was broken. Thus, the British contributed to the settlement and development of the Kumasi zongo (stranger's community) with the promise of free trading.<sup>93</sup> Because the British were attempting to retain the powers of traditional authorities in zongo, they kept Muslims in power and encouraged them to be strong leaders. So, to be the stronger leaders they depended upon the patronage of British officials for legitimating their authority and not upon traditional criteria. This general policy continued until the mid 1920s while the Asantehene was in exile.

The first area in Kumasi to be called a zongo was located just north of town, and was made up of Muslim traders and others who had followed the British forces into Kumasi. This zongo was burned by the Asante during the

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<sup>93</sup> Enid Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 68-71.

1900 uprising, and was rebuilt with British support. Later, the British set town limits surrounding the fort in town that they had built.

A large swamp was reclaimed in an area that is now the center of the city, and the Central Market was started. In 1901 the town limits were set at one mile's radius from the British fort . . . the British confiscated land, . . . ground rents for plots which were leased at one pound to twenty-four pounds per annum, . . . In 1905 the government moved the Muslims from Mmoromu [the first zongo which had been burnt and rebuilt] into the town, to the area now known as Old Zongo, . . . thereby benefiting from the collection of rents.<sup>94</sup>

From that time on, Kumasi was no longer an Asante ethnic town. The more wealthy 'strangers' (who were Muslims) were able to buy land and became permanent residents in Kumasi. Thus, Kumasi was only partly an Asante town or city, with the stranger (Muslims) population nearly equal to the size of the Asante population.<sup>95</sup>

With the stability of British reign came increased trade between Asante and the north. The city of Salaga, once the great Muslim center of study and commerce, began to decline in importance as new trade routes to the north

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

opened up which formerly had not been allowed under the Asante. Poor northerners soon found Kumasi and the Asante Region to be a good place to find work, and a growing population of strangers began in earnest. The Mossi in Upper Volta, under French control, were eager for the better way of life they were to find in Ghana. Though they had resisted Islam in Upper Volta, now called Burkina Faso, they found the largely Muslim “strangers’ community” to be like a family. The Yarse Mossis, who were related to the Dyula, were already Muslims.

The Hausa, Yoruba, and to a lesser extent, the Mossi who came to Kumasi in the early 1900s (and who were all non-Ghanaians) became significant owners of property and thus were able to become well established. This was not true of migrant laborers from the uncentralized states of Northern Ghana, who could not attain the economic security that the resident Muslim traders enjoyed.

By 1920, these had become a second tier in the zongo population. Unlike the earlier migrants, these were not primarily traders. Many came from traditionally uncentralized societies of the Northern Territories and Upper

Volta, and they were often not Muslims. When they came to town, many were destitute, unskilled, and unemployed.<sup>96</sup>

Affecting all immigrants and migrants were the changing winds of colonial politics. From 1900-1924, the British allowed the different 'stranger' tribes authority to hear petty court cases according to traditional customs. This encouraged the individual tribes' retaining of their ethnicity in the zongos. "As a result, until 1932, when the policy of indirect rule began to alter the relationship between the British and the Asante, the headman [chiefs of the various 'stranger tribes'] were in a relatively strong position."<sup>97</sup>

The first zongo leader recognized by the British was a Hausa, and therefore, a non-Ghanaian. Subsequent zongo leaders ('Sarkin Zongo' means Zongo Chief) were also Hausas. In 1924, the British allowed the deported Asantehene, Prempeh I, to return from exile, and in 1926 he was recognized as the Asante chief for Kumasi (Kumasihene). The then Sarkin Zongo, Malam

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 196.



Salaw, whom the British regarded as very capable, also gained “a formal position in the Kumasi administration . . . as the ‘non native’ African member.”<sup>98</sup>

While the policy of giving both the Asante and the zongo people a measure of autonomy seemed reasonable, the other tribes of the zongo, particularly the Yoruba, who like the Hausa are from Nigeria, and the Mossi from Burkina, were less than pleased with the arrangement. Friction between these tribes became so great, that after riots protesting Mallam Salaw’s leadership in 1932, the office of Sarkin Zongo was abolished for a time, and heads of the various tribes became accountable to the Kumasihene.

Thus, new chiefs were recognized for the various tribes living in the zongo by the Kumasihene, who in 1935 were to regain the title of Asantehene again, but still under British sovereignty. Relative peace continued until political parties were formed in the late 1940s and 1950s. It is interesting that when zongo people desired to be included in the Kumasi Divisional Council, which was part of the Native Administration (through which the British ruled indirectly), the headmen of the various tribes brought their request to the city

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 198-199.

authorities with the Hausa headman, al-Hajj Abmadu Baba, assuming a kind of leadership. By 1954, he was considered the Sarkin Zongo, an office that would again be dismantled in 1961.<sup>99</sup>

Today, there are five major zongos in Kumasi, as well as several other smaller zongos. The position of the Sarkin Zongo resembles the situation as it was in 1954. The Kumasi Sarkin zongo, who is a Hausa, is so recognized over all Kumasi zongos. In addition, each individual zongo has its own Sarkin zongo, who often is not a Hausa. For example, the Sarkin Zongo in Yate Yate zongo is a Mossi. Says Schildkrout, “Despite the reluctance of non-Hausa to grant a Hausa leader authority over them, the Hausa headman was and still is accorded some ritual recognition in the stranger community.”<sup>100</sup>

The Hausa Sarkin zongo represents the zongos as a whole as spokesman. “Most groups, including all the Muslim ones . . . are willing to call the Hausa headman Sarkin zongo but they deny that this implies that he has authority over

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<sup>99</sup> Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo*, 206-208.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

all the immigrants in the zongo.”<sup>101</sup> The Hausa elders seek, informally, the advice of elders of the other tribes, before selecting a new zongo chief.

According to the 1960 Ghana census summarized by Schildkrout, about one-third of the population of Kumasi consisted of northern Ghanaians or non-Ghanaians.<sup>102</sup> Today, Kumasi's population is said to be approaching 1,000,000, and it appears that zongo people still constitute at least this same percentage among the total population.

In many ways, people of different ethnic groups that came to Kumasi in order to trade or to seek a better life become a new people group, zongo people, regardless of the tribe from which they came.

From its inception the zongo has been ethnically heterogeneous. Immigrants from any different areas have come to Kumasi and, because of a common identification as strangers, common occupations, and common linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, they have settled in particular areas of the town.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 265.

Thus, while all tribes in the zongo, particularly the Mossi and the Hausa, do maintain state ethnic ties, the ties of kinship, social status, and societal roles tend to be replaced by a new zongo culture. Each zongo has a sarkin zongo or zongo chief, and each ethnic group within each zongo also has a sarkin chief. These men do not wield a great deal of power.

The headman [chief] sees his job . . . as one of helping people in trouble. He says proverbially that the chief is like a garbage heap, he must accept whatever 'good or bad thing' they throw at him.<sup>104</sup>

Because of the diversity of people groups classified as 'zongo people,' relationship bonds tend to be weak.

As Nadel (1942: 17) has written, "There is not one community; but a complex hierarchy of communities. The consciousness of a uniform culture defines the widest, loosest unit in the hierarchy of communities-potential rather than 'actual' common life."<sup>105</sup>

Yet interestingly, zongo people develop another kind of family network that can take on an even greater importance to them in their new situation.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 94.

Immigrants are able to move from one zongo to another with ease, marriages are often made between strangers of different zongos, trading relations are easily established; and politics is barely comprehensible without taking account of such links. . . . These alternative bases of identification are valuable, for they offer multiple sources of support, and sometimes, protection to strangers.<sup>106</sup>

An interesting phenomenon among the Mossi people regards the use of the word *doaghda*, which translates 'kinship,' at the family level. Since many Mossi immigrants have no family with them in the zongo, they will adopt a family, and use the term *doaghda* in describing them. A first generation Mossi immigrant will adopt such 'family members' among other Mossi who are not actually related to him. A second generation Mossi will even choose *doaghda* from another tribe. Thus, Mossi people seek a functional substitute for family members in order to have a kind of strong and close relationship with somebody.

Many migrants who come to live in the Kumasi zongos are not Muslims. When they reach Kumasi, it is no longer respectable to be 'pagan.' Molla, agreeing with this, says,

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 97.

Both Muslims and Christians, in fact, instill in the animist a feeling of shame. His way of life, his clothing, his food, his ritual sacrifices, his way of burying his dead, are looked upon a shade scornfully.<sup>107</sup>

The migrant then, is pressured socially to choose between Christianity and Islam.

Since Islam predominates in the zongos, many migrants find it expedient to

become Muslims. “Clearly then, incorporation into the zongo political

community for immigrants of all generations, is brought about through the

adoption of Islam.”<sup>108</sup> “Although only a minority of northern Ghanaians are

Muslims, the northern community in the south is largely Muslim in ethos, . . . It

has been led by Hausa immigrants from northern Nigeria.”<sup>109</sup> This requires

great change on the part of any non-Muslim newcomer to the zongo.

Whenever a Mossi . . . establishes himself definitively in a foreign community whether to trade, or to study the precepts of Islam, he is obliged to abandon his habits, . . . he also loses his personal status. If he wishes to embrace Islam he changes his surname, his first name.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Claude F. Molla, “Some Aspects of Islam South of the Sahara,” *International Review of Missions* 56, no. 224 (October 1967), 462.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>109</sup> Margaret Peil, “Host Reactions Aliens in Ghana,” edited William A. Shack and Elliot P. Skinner, *Strangers in African Societies* (Los Angeles University of California Press, 1979), 126.

<sup>110</sup> Dim A. A. Delobsom, *L’Empire du Moqho Naba* (Paris. Doxnat-Montchrestian, 1932), 187, quoted in Enid Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press,

Not only is it incumbent upon a newcomer to the zongo to become a Muslim, but to become an important member of the zongo, he must emulate the Hausa tribe. “It is essential to note the high value placed upon being Hausa among most Muslim groups. Although both wealth and Islamic orthodoxy can be achieved, they have come to be associated with the status of being Hausa.”<sup>111</sup> One way the Hausa have gained the upper hand in zongo communities is through language.

The use of Hausa as a ‘lingua franca’ by the northern community gives the Hausa a status not available to other foreigners. The Hausa built up their prestige by obtaining leadership roles over other strangers housed in the zongos, and becoming their representatives to the local and colonial governments.<sup>112</sup>

The importance of the Hausa language and culture dates back to 1860, with the growth of the Hausa speaking diaspora of traders. Since Hausa merchants were Muslims, and Hausa traders in non-Muslim areas were

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1978), 45.

<sup>111</sup> Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo*, 83.

<sup>112</sup> Peil, “*Host Reactions: Aliens in Ghana*,” 126.

considered 'Muslim society,' Hausa culture and languages have come to be equated with Islamic culture.<sup>113</sup>

This cultural hegemony of the Hausa and the unity it appears to bring about in the Kumasi zongos is kept in check by the various cleavages that continue to exist in Kumasi zongos, as well as in Accra zongos. If one goes too far in emulating the Hausa, he is regarded as a traitor to his own people.<sup>114</sup> The primary cleavage in the Muslim community pits Muslims who are aliens from Ghana, such as the Hausa, Yoruba, and Mossi, against Ghana's indigenous Muslims, whatever tribe they may be from. A Fanti Muslim or a Dagomba Muslim, indigenous to Ghana, at times resents the prominence of the Hausa Muslims, yet they will express solidarity with them when it is socially or politically expedient. Deborah Pellow in her study of Muslim segmentation in Accra, says, "in certain situations, an individual may express his belongingness

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<sup>113</sup> Louis Brenner and Murray Last, "The Role of Language in West African Islam," *Africa* 55 No. 4 (1985), 437.

<sup>114</sup> Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo*, 275.



as a Hausa, in others as a stranger, or as a Muslim.”<sup>115</sup> This is equally true in Kumasi.

Thus, Islam in Kumasi has achieved respectability among the many tribes in Ghana plurality of tribes, which in a loose sense are united, but in which certain natural cleavages continue to exist. Islam in Kumasi is winning new converts among the northern pagans. They continue to migrate south in search of work. Perhaps more Muslims are also winning southern Ghanaians to Islam. These Islam's works have to resist recently, being under the western Christian influence and being further removed culturally from Islam.

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<sup>115</sup> Deborah Pellow, “Muslim Segmentation Cohesion and Divisiveness in Accra,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 23, No 3 (1985), 419.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **A COMPARISON OF SOME TEACHINGS IN THE QUR'AN AND THE BIBLE**

Islam has many matters that bring conflict with Christianity in their Qur'anic doctrines. This chapter will compare the Qur'an with the Bible. It will bring an understanding of the truths and fallacies of Islam, and will give an idea of controversies within the teachings of the Qur'an.

A central part of Muslim's faith is belief in the four holy books of *Allah*. They believe that these four books originated directly from God. They are written on eternal tablets in heaven. Muslims are required to accept and believe in them completely. In addition to these four, there are others. The other books considered holy by the Muslims are the following: The *Suhuf* (Scrolls) – These are ten Holy Scriptures revealed to the prophet *Ibrihim* (Abraham), but

unfortunately they are now extinct and not traceable in existing world literature. The first available book is the *Taurat* (Torah), the Pentateuch. This was a Holy Book revealed to the Prophet *Musa* (Moses). The second book is the *Zabur* (Psalms). This Holy Book was revealed to the Prophet *Daud* (David). The third book is the *Injil* (Gospel). This was a Holy Book revealed to the Prophet *Isa* (Jesus). Lastly, the fourth book is the *Qur'an* (Koran). This is the Holy Book, the final message to mankind which was revealed to the prophet Muhammad, through the most prominent angel *Jibril* (Gabriel), from an archetype preserved in the seventh heaven.<sup>1</sup>

### **A. THE GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE QUR'AN**

In order to appreciate what the Qur'an means to the Muslim, Christians have to have knowledge of the Qur'an. This is Cragg's description of the Qur'an:

The sense of possessing a Scripture – a Scripture which finalizes all others – is the very making of Muslim. It follows that there is nothing

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<sup>1</sup> Badru D. Keterega, and David W. Shenk, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* (Ontario, Canada: Herald Press, 1997), 53-54.

more important than the sense the Scripture possesses. The word ‘Qur’an’ means literally ‘reading’ as ‘recital.’ It is a Book to be heard in chant and transcribed in calligraphy.<sup>2</sup>

All Muslims treat the Qur’an respectfully, because they believe the Book is to be miraculous and extremely holy. Unless they clean their bodies, they will not even touch the Qur’an. They also never place the Book on any surface, which is lower than their waistline.

A Muslim professor Keteregga, who teaches Islamic studies at Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya, writes the following the Qur’an:

The Qur’an is just the final revelation, very Word of God *Allah* which confirms earlier Scriptures, clears up all uncertainties, and perfects the truth. The Qur’an itself testifies that there have been earlier revelations before it. The Qur’an is a unique Book of Divine guidance and it was a revelation to the Prophet Muhammad through the prominent angel *Jibril* (Gabriel) from an archetype preserved in the seventh heaven.<sup>3</sup>

This is what Qur’an itself says:

He hath revealed into thee (Muhammad) the Scripture with truth, confirming that which was revealed before it, even as He revealed the Torah and the Gospel aforetime, for a guidance to mankind. (Sura 3:3-4a)  
Nay, but it is a glorious Qur’an on a guarded tablet. (Sura 85:21-22)

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<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Cragg, *The Pen and the Faith: Eight Modern Muslim Writers and the Qur’an* (London: George Allen & Unwin Publishers Ltd., 1985), 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

Muslims believe the revelation of the Qur'an was itself a miracle, since Muhammad himself was not able to read and write. The Qur'an says following:

Those who follow the messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel. (Sura 7:157) And thou (O Muhammad was not a reader of any scripture before it, nor didst thou write it with thy right hand, for them might those have doubted, who follow falsehood (Sura 29:48).

Since the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, the Arabic of the Qur'an is an essential part of the message because Muslims declare that Arabic is a heavenly language (Sura 12:2). They believe that if the Qur'an is translated into other languages, it loses the quality of the Qur'an. However, some translations are being allowed and some have the approval of Muslim leaders, although they are regarded as a kind of paraphrase. They give them titles such as "The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an." Muslims have a lack of knowledge of the Qur'an, its doctrines, and its chronological or historical development. They worship and surrender when they hear the Qur'an as a message.

The first division was the Mecca period (AD 611-615). At this time, Muhammad was a just ‘Warner.’<sup>4</sup> Sura 98:6 said, “Those who reject (truth) among the people of the book and among the polytheists will be in hell-fire, to dwell therein (for aye) they are the worst of creatures.” In this period, the Suras were written in shorter verses and the earlier Suras contained the conception of the ‘Oneness of *Allah*’ and ‘Muslims’, and are recorded in the last part of the Qur’an.

The second division was from the time before he moved to Median (AD 616-622). In this second division he mentioned his counterforce. At that time, he wanted to gain the people to his side, but it was not done that way. Therefore, the contents of the Suras engaged in a controversy, and became a dogma. In this period Suras were getting longer in length, and included the stories of the Bible.

Lastly, the third division was from the time in the Medina (AD 623-632) until he died. At this time, he became a leader of his new community in Medina. This third division contained the strongest statement of doctrines and practices.

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<sup>4</sup> See also Sura 87:9

Also, he changed his attitude toward Jews and Christians from friendship to antagonism.

However, the first problem is the Qur'an itself. Nobody can confirm that the Qur'an came from the same God as the Christian's God. In the Qur'an, there are lots of conflicts with the Bible. They will be considered later in this chapter, even though not all of those matters can be examined in this writing.

First of all, one must know that the Muslims use two main sources for religious practices, the holy Qur'an and *Hadith* which are the collections of the recorded words, actions, and sanctions of the prophet Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad's *sunnah* (acts) and *hadith* (sayings) are collectively known as the *Hadith*. The *sunnah* (acts) and the *hadith* (sayings) show the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad. *Sunnah* means the practices and the way of life of Muhammad, and *hadith* means the reports of what Muhammad taught or said. The collections of writings, called the *Hadith*, include both *sunnah* and *hadith*.<sup>5</sup> The *Hadith* has contributed to Islam by correcting the religious practices because the Qur'an cannot teach them one word. Therefore, if they cannot solve the

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<sup>5</sup> Badru, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, 59.

religious practical problems or something is not described in detail in the Qur'an, they try to find them from the Prophet's words and acts. Their trying to find specific answers from *Hasith* is understandable if Muhammad was a real messenger of God. But he was not clearly identified as God's messenger, and it is the same of belief as evolution theory.

## **B. CORRUPTION OF THE BIBLE**

Muslims believe in the Qur'an's beauty and nature, and the circumstances in which it was promulgated. Some claim that the Qur'an is the only 'Revealed' book whose text stands pure and uncorrupted today. Sometimes Christians have difficulties communicating with Muslims, because Muslims censure the Bible as having been corrupted. They claim that the Jews have changed the Old Testament to suit their purposes and Christians have altered the New Testament.<sup>6</sup>

We sent Jesus, Son of Mary, confirming the Torah before Him; and We gave to him the Gospel, wherein is guidance and light, and confirming

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<sup>6</sup> James P. Dretke, *A Christian Approach to Muslims: Reflection from West Africa* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1979), 178.



the Torah before it, as a guidance and an admonition unto the God fearing . . . and we have sent down to thee the book with the truth, confirming the book that was before it, and assuring it (Sura 5: 49. See 5:47 and 51).

This Sura challenges Muslims to study the Bible, but some interpret these verses in different ways. This shows that many Muslims have a limited understanding the Qur'an and their faith. This is the reason that, generally, Muslims do not read the Qur'an nor do they have much knowledge of the Qur'an. For example, most Ghanaian Muslims are illiterate and the Qur'an is not translated into their tribal languages. Even if they had translated Qur'an, most Ghanaian Muslims would not read it.

As Muslims declare that the Qur'an is the entire Word of God, it is God who speaks every verse of it to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel, but the Bible was written by the inspired men of God. The New Testament is not the book that God gave to Jesus, it is written by Matthew and John and Paul, etc.

Abd al-Masih studied historically as following;

About two centuries after Muhammad died, many scholars of law and Qur'an interpreters studied differences between the Qur'an the Bible. They confirmed that there are no similarities between two Books in their forms and substances through any sentence. They had uneasy feelings

about it and they started to refute what the differences between the two books. They wilily concluded that the Bible is fabricated. Because of it the Qur'an became a measure of the Bible. As an Islamic understanding, two Books delivered from heaven through verbally inspired. The differences which can not be bridged between two books testified that the Torah and Gospel were fabricated. As a consequence of it, we understand that Islam is captured by Evil who is the spirit hostile to the Bible to bind a large number of Muslims.<sup>7</sup>

We can explain to Muslims that God Himself preserves the Word of God.

“Then said the Lord unto me, thou hast well seen, for I will hasten my word to perform it (Jer. 1:12).” Jeremiah confirmed the validity and sacrosanctity of God's word. If Muslims consider four statements about God's Word, ‘perfect, sure, right, and pure’, they will believe there is no corruption in the Bible.

In the matter of how to answer the common objection that the text of the Bible has been corrupted, Chapman suggested four ways:<sup>8</sup> First, there are only four verses in the Qur'an, which speak about “corruption” (*tahrif*), and they do not imply that the text of the Bible has been corrupted (4:46, 5:13, 5:41, 2:75).

The basic accusation in these verses seems to be that certain Jews deliberately

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<sup>7</sup> Abu al-Masih, trns. in Korean by Dong-Joo Lee, *Dialogue with Muslim* (Seoul, Korea: Christian Literature Crusade Press, 2001), 146.

<sup>8</sup> Colin Chapman, *You Go and Do the Same: Studies in relation to Muslims* (London: Church Missionary Society and BMMF International, 1983), 52-54.

mispronounced words spoken by Muhammad, probably playing on the resemblance between certain Arabic and Hebrew words. Second, the accusation about the corruption of the text of the Bible was developed later by Muslim apologists. Muslim writers from the time of Muhammad to the 11th century consistently understood the Quranic verses about “corruption” to mean that Jews and Christians had misinterpreted their Scriptures. Al-Ghazali<sup>9</sup> wrote a treatise on the Trinity, he quoted many passages from the Bible, without ever questioning the trustworthiness of the text. The accusation that Jews and Christians had tampered with the text of their Scriptures first appeared in the Writings of Muslim apologists in the 12th century. It was probably developed to explain the many discrepancies between the Bible and the Qur’an. Third, If Muslims claim that the gospel of Barnabas is the original *injl* which was revealed to Jesus, it is not difficult to show from internal evidence (e.g., the serious errors in history and geography, and points at which it contradicts the Qur’an), that it was written in the 17th century. The author of the gospel of Barnabas was probably a Spaniard

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<sup>9</sup> Al-Ghazali was a great Islamic theologian, philosopher, and an apologetics. He was deeply influenced by the Sufis. See *ibid.* 37.

of Jewish background who had recently converted to Islam. The manuscript was discovered in Amsterdam in 1709.<sup>10</sup> Fourth, two following statements can be addressed to a Muslim who asks when the Bible has been corrupted: One, if he says they were corrupted *before the time of Muhammad*, we can ask him to explain why the Qur'an says that the message revealed to Muhammad was simply a confirmation of previous Scriptures.

He hath revealed unto thee (Muhammad) the Scripture with truth, confirming that which was (revealed) before it, even as He revealed the Torah and the Gospel (Sura 3:3).

Say ye (Muslims): "We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another them: And we bow to God" (Sura 2:136).

O ye who believe! Believe in God and His Apostle, and the scripture which He hath sent to His Apostle and the scripture which He sent to those before (him) (Sura 4:136).

Two, if he says they were corrupted *after the time of Muhammad*, we can point out that the manuscripts on which our present Bible is based were written centuries before the time of Muhammad. For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls which included Old Testament, were found in 1947, and were written before AD

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<sup>10</sup> Chapman, *You Go and Do the Same*, 53.

68, agree exactly same with the Bible today. The Codex Alexandrinus, which was one of the oldest Greek New Testaments, dates from the AD 5th century, also agrees with today's New Testament.<sup>11</sup>

God's Word is final and complete. We are still growing in our understanding of it. His word is all we need to know for our salvation and a full and perfect relationship with Him. We are able to learn to apply the meaning of that relationship to our relationship with others. We discover how to share our love to Muslim neighbors with the Gospel in the word of God.

### **C. TRINITY**

Muslims stand firmly on their belief that 'there is no other God, but *Allah.*'

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Say: "He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, Who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one (Sura 112).

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 54.

If someone recognizes that the Creator is the same God as the Son of God or as the Holy Spirit, then that person will be an enemy of *Allah* and all His angels, because they believe in the negation of trinity.

Muslims believe that God is one in the sense of being a unity without parts, and that God cannot be three persons in one essence. By this belief, Muslims deny the Trinity, one of the important attributes of God. They insist that in Christianity Trinity means that Christians believe in three gods. They accuse Christians of worshiping three gods.

They do not need to prove that the Holy Spirit is also another person of God and Jesus has His own humanity and deity. Rather they interpret the Bible distortedly and Muhammad described Jesus as below:

No one can say that there are three gods (Sura 4:17), God does not have a mother and she cannot bear the son (Sura 5:116). No one can accept a man as the Lord (Sura 3:64; 9:31) and *Allah* is not Christ (Sura 5:17).

The deity of Christ is negated fifty times<sup>12</sup> and His position as the Son of God was denied seventeen times in the Qur'an.<sup>13</sup> *Isa* is a son of Mary the virgin, but he is not the Son of God, even though virgin birth is written in the Qur'an:

Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God" (Sura 3:45).

She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son When no man hath touched me?" He said: "Even so: God createth What He willeth: When He hath decreed A Plan, He but saith To it, 'Be' and it is!" (Sura 3:47).

Even though Muslims believe that Christ was born by the Virgin Mary through the power of *Allah*, they deny the deity of Christ Jesus. They believe that even though the Qur'an mentioned that the Spirit breathed on her to bear a son:

And remember her who Guarded her chastity: We breathed in to her Of our spirit, and We made her and her son a sign for all peoples (Sura 21:91) .

And Mary the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded Her chastity; and We breathed into her body of our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of his Revelations, And one of the Devout (servant) (Sura 66:12).

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<sup>12</sup> Al-Masih, *Dialogue with Muslim*, 21.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

*Allah* is the one God, because he did not bear anyone and he was not born by anyone. They insist that God cannot have a son and Christ is not the son of *Allah*. If so, that would be blasphemy. To them, the meaning of ‘the Son of God’ is that God had a son between Mary through sexual relationship.

The Qur’an declares Jesus as a slave of *Allah* (Sura 3:172; 19:30), as His apostle (Sura 2:87; 3:49, 53; 4:157, 171; 5:75; 6:61), and as His prophet (Sura 19:30). Muslims have found it a difficult and impossible matter to accept the deity of Jesus Christ as the Bible reveals. The reason is that the Qur’an does not specifically declare the deity of Christ. Rather, the Qur’an condemns the association of partners, or likening other beings or things to God, which is regarded as the greatest sin of Islam.

Most Muslims think that the Holy Spirit is the created Spirit by *Allah*, even though the Qur’an mentioned it as ‘Our Spirit’ (Sura 19:17; 21:91; 66:12) or as ‘My Spirit’ (Sura 38:72; 29:15). Islamic traditions come to an agreement finally that Allah’s Spirit is *Jibril* (Gabriel), which appeared to Zechariah, to Mary, to Jesus, and to Muhammad. A Muslim theologian tried to prove that:

The Holy Spirit may be meant the holy angel such as *Jibril* or it may



mean the revelation, guidance, and support which God sends down by mediation of the angel or without it. The two notions may mutually be connected, or the angel sends down the relation, and with the revelation descends the angel. God supports His messengers with angels and with guidance, as God stated concerning His prophet Muhammad.<sup>14</sup>

The Spirit of Islam always works under Allah's commandments (Sura 97:4; 17:85; 42:52). He is a slave of *Allah* and performs His commandments faithfully (Sura 26:193). He is the unknown Spirit to Muslims, but he is respected by all Muslims.<sup>15</sup>

The misunderstanding among Muslim theologians is founded on the trinity. They do not understand God is one in trinity. Sometimes they give a biased interpretation about the Holy Spirit in the Qur'an. The doctrine of the trinity is not a Christians' invented idea; it is God's attribute.

For a conversation with a Muslim explaining the trinity, it will be best to use the Qur'an, *Taurat* (Torah), the *Zabur* (Psalms), and the *Injil* (Gospel), which they recognize as their scriptures. Using the Qur'an is the first and best way to reach Muslims, because they deny the Bible. The Holy Spirit can work and

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas F. Michel, *A Muslim theologian's Response to Christianity* (New York: Caravan Books, 1984), 261. See also Sura 9:26, 40; 33:9; 8:12; 58:22; 16:2; 40:15; 42:52

<sup>15</sup> Masih, *Dialigue with Muslim*, 21-22.

move their heart to understand and believe in the Trinity through the Qur'an and later they will be assured through the Bible.

The Trinity is found in the Qur'an as 'we' passages like the Bible uses 'we.' Sura 66:12 mentions, "We breathed into (her body) of our spirit." Compare, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (Gen. 1:26)." Muslims explain that this use of 'we' is the majestic plural. Muhammad imitated this form when he was told to write *Allah* as 'we' form, after he had a conversation with a Christian, Wadi Nashiran, who came from North Yemen as a missionary.<sup>16</sup> Through this passage, Allah did not breathe into Mary the spirit of *Jbril*, nor *Jbril* (Gabriel) himself. Through Sura 66:12 and 21:91, it is clear that God did not impregnate Mary biologically. The Spirit of *Allah* was involved in the conception of Jesus. Therefore, one of the essences of the Trinity - the Holy Spirit, is mentioned in the Qur'an clearly.

In the Old Testament and the New Testament, the concept of Trinity is mentioned. In Genesis 18:1-3, Abraham was visited by three men, but he received them as 'my Lord' as a singular. The KJV of the English Bible

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 25.

translated יהוה־יהושׁע (Jehovah) as ‘the LORD’ in Psalm 2:2, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed.” Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ (anointed Messiah) is already mentioned in the Old Testament. “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou [art] my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Ps. 2:7). This prophecy was written one thousand years before Jesus was born. It means that He was begotten by God before time began. He was with God and He is God Himself from eternity and forever (Jn. 1:14). In Psalm 110:1, “The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool,” the same word יהוה־יהושׁע (Jehovah) used as ‘the LORD’, and God recognizes that ‘my Lord’ is our Lord Jesus Christ in the same verse.

To Muslims, they are not cared for by God the Father neither do they have a personal relationship with the Father. They do not seek God for their salvation by the Son of God, our Lord. They do not have any hope for redemption from their sins by Jesus Christ. They do not need the guidance and the teaching of the Holy Spirit to know God. They do not care to bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit to have an abundant life.

### **D. JESUS, NOT THE SON OF GOD**

While we are realizing that the Qur'an is the holy book to the Muslims as the Bible is to the Christian, it will be hard to make a direct comparison between the role of Jesus in Christianity and the role of Muhammad in Islam.

Muslims and Christians have been alienated partly by the fact that both have misunderstood each other's faith by trying to fit it into their own pattern. The most usual error is to suppose (on both sides) that the roles of Jesus Christ in Christianity and of Muhammad in Islam are comparable. We suggest that much more insight is gained if one realizes that the role of St Paul is closely comparable. Both are apostles. St Paul preached a message, as Muhammad did; only his message, and the message of Christianity, is the person of Christ. If one is drawing parallels in terms of the structure of the two religions, what corresponds in the Christian scheme to the Qur'an is not the Bible but the person of Christ – it is Christ who is for Christians the revelation of (from) God.<sup>17</sup>

Muslims claim that Jesus is also a prophet. When they speak the name of Jesus, they say 'peace be upon him' first, as they use the phrase of 'peace be upon him' before they speak Muhammad. It shows the same level of respect to Jesus as to Muhammad. They also believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. However, this is tragic because Muslims reject the real meaning of

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<sup>17</sup> Wilfred Cantwell-Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (New York: Mentor Books, New American Library, 1957), 25-26.

Jesus' redemptive death. They do not believe in His Sonship and cleansing power of His blood. They do not accept Jesus as their Savior.

Christ's birth in Virgin Mary was mentioned in the Qur'an in Sura 3:45.

“Behold! The angels said: “O Mary! *Allah* giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: His name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to *Allah*.”

This is not a revelation of God, because it happened about 600 years before Muhammad was born. Christ's birth in Virgin Mary was revealed to Isaiah about seven hundred years before it was fulfilled. Muhammad heard this story somewhere from someone and spoke it to his followers as a revelation from God.

#### **E. IS MUHAMMAD THE COMFORTER IN JOHN 14:16?**

There is an argument on the great controversy surrounding the comforter. Is he the Holy Spirit or Muhammad? Muslim theologians use verses in both the Qur'an and the Bible for this argument. According to the Qur'an, “Jesus said, ‘O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of *Allah* (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving glad tidings of an apostle to come after

me, whose name shall be Ahmad' ” (Sura 61:6). Muslims claim that ‘Ahmad’ in the Qur’an is prophesied by Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John, when Jesus was preparing His departure from His disciples, He promised that He would send the ‘Comforter’ who comes after Him (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, KJV).

Islam theologians alleged it in this way: in Sura 61:6, “Ahmad” is actually the same name as Muhammad and both names mean “The Praised One.” The Muslim theologians contend that **‘paravklhtoj’** (paracletos-Comforter) is a corrupted word of an original word of **‘perivklhtoj’** (pericletos-The Praised One). They argue that ‘Ahmad’ was written in the Bible originally, but Christians corrupted the word, and ‘Ahmad’ (**‘perivklhtoj’**-pericletos) which means Muhammad was actually promised by Jesus Christ.

However, there is no record in the Scripture that ‘Ahmad’ is mentioned in anywhere by Jesus Christ. This is a disturbing matter to Muslims, but at the same time, this also will give a change to explain to them the comforter in whom Christians believe. The word **‘paravklhtoj’** (paracletos) means ‘Helper’, ‘Advocator’, or ‘Counselor’, therefore the word conveys the meaning of ‘Comforter.’ It never can be a misspelled of the word ‘Ahmad.’ In John, the

word **‘paravklhtoj’** means ‘may He abide with you for ever.’ ‘He’ in John 14:16 refers ‘the Spirit of the truth’ in verse 17. The ‘Counselor’ equals He, and He equals the ‘Sprit of the truth.’ Therefore, only ‘the Holy Spirit of Truth’ can abide in us forever and ever. This brings us to another argument with Christians that ‘Ahmad’ (Muhammad) really abides within Muslims forever, because Muslims do not claim that Muhammad is an immortal being, he is just a prophet. Also, ‘Ahmad’ could never be a ‘spirit’ according to the Qur’an, “say: Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a man, - an apostle” (Sura 17:93).

#### **F. A SHORT EVALUATION ON MUHAMMAD**

Islam claims that Muhammad is a prophet of God as the Qur’an declared. It was already argued that Muhammad could not be the ‘promised’ one in John 14:16. Muslims bring similar claims from Old Testament which appear in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. God promised Moses, “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.” Muslims believe this prophecy is fulfilled in their Prophet Muhammad. The Qur’an claims this in

Sura 7:157, when it refers to “the unlettered Prophet (Muhammad), whom they find mentioned in their own (scriptures), in the Law and the Gospels.”<sup>18</sup>

This promise cannot refer to Muhammad. According to Geisler’s opinion: First, the ‘brethren’ refers to Israelites not Arabs. Second, even if Muhammad came from Ishmael who was a descendent of Abraham, God clearly emphasized that “My covenant I will establish with Isaac (Gen 17:21).”

Therefore, the Promised One should be a seed of Isaac not a seed of Ishmael.

Third, the Qur’an itself confirmed that the prophetic line came through Isaac, not Ishmael: “And we bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and we established the prophethood and the Scripture among his seed (Sura 29:27).”<sup>19</sup>

The question is what is Muhammad’s role in his prophethood and did God call him as His Prophet? When he received the revelation, he thought that he was being deceived by a *jinn* or evil spirit, because he had believed that he was demon possessed before. This time he even felt that the spirit choked him until he believed he should die. When he was so afraid of that, his wife Khadija

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<sup>18</sup> Geisler, *Answering Islam*, 153.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



and her cousin Waraqah encouraged him to believe that it was the revelation of God. That was the moment a new history started.

His moral account should be considered also. He was practicing polygamy living with twelve wives. He even married a seven year old girl, A'isha who was his favorite wife. Geisler brings two questions about this matter: Is polygamy moral? Was Muhammad consistent with his own law?<sup>20</sup>

Here is Geisler's argument on polygamy:

First, monogamy should be recognized by *precedent*, since God gave the first man only one wife (Eve). Second, it is implied by *proportion*, since the amount of males and females God brings into the world are about equal. Finally, monogamy is implied by *parity*. If men can marry several wives, why can't a wife have several husbands? It seems only fair.<sup>21</sup>

The Qur'an commands equal treatment of their wives, but nobody can do it, and the wives may feel jealous and the wives (or women) may recognize that their status is lower than men's.

Generally, Muhammad's morality was imperfect. He commanded Jihad

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

to smite pagan's necks and he destroyed all of the Jews in Medina even as he sold women, boys and girls as slaves. He also attacked commercial caravans in Mecca.

Now, all evidences collected together make the conclusion that Muhammad cannot be a pure, holy, sinless, or final prophet as Islam and the Qur'an claim. He was just a new social and national political leader of the Arab Peninsula in his lifetime.

## CHAPTER SIX

### BIBLICAL APPROACH TO WINNING MUSLIMS

“You, Christians look like do not believe what you have the Gospel messages. If you believe it truly, you should come here very urgently, quickly, or early.”<sup>1</sup> One Muslim believer sarcastically told Charles Marsh, who was a missionary to Algeria and Chad in Africa, why Christians could not evangelize Muslims with the Gospel well. This chapter will present a method on how to approach to Muslims with the Gospel.

Christian missions and Islam *Da’wah* (missions) both endorse and demand converts, and both religions claim that they possess the truth. The pages of history, from the time of Muhammad until the present time, confirm this

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Marsh, *Love Will Find a Way*, edited by Roger Steer and Sheila Groves, trans. to Korean by Cho eun-he (Seoul, Korea: Joy Mission Press, 1995), 126.

missionary nature<sup>2</sup> of the two faiths. There are three methods for evangelizing Muslims practically. The first method is “the direct approach method.” It is the conversational apologetics method. It can be a good method in developing personal friendships and in presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to individuals or to small groups. The second method is “saturation evangelism.” This approach is used by Dr. Jerry Falwell. This method can be used with every available source to win the lost souls to Christ. The proclamation is made in various forms and can be used in ways such as medical ministries, education, orphanages, homes for destitute people, mass evangelism, and others. The third method, which may be partly connected to the second method, is “the indirect approach method.” This could be literature and mass media ministries. The difference between the second and the third methods is the second method of evangelism approaches them directly, but the third one does not. The soul winners do not see souls directly in the third method. The missionaries and evangelists have used all of these methods.

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Shahid, *The Cross or the Crescent: Understanding Islam* (Alpharetta: North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2001), 45.

To win the Muslims to Christ the Christians have dynamically ignored and mistreated the culture of Islam. ‘Which method is the best?’ Whether or not the chosen method from those methods which already mentioned has fallen into disrepute for reaching Muslims in cultural background. Furthermore, evangelism should be continued to reach Muslims to become Christians with patience. Every new believer in Islam countries has to escape from their family, friends and cultural environments just to remain alive from their strong Muslim communities. Among the world religions, only Islam resists strongly the Muslims to convert Christians. Because of these cultural and religions reasons, missionaries can witness to people individually or in small groups. Therefore, the missionary who works in Islamic environments gets only a handful of souls.

Though Islam demands a profession of faith and surrender to Allah, Islam countries have a tolerance for gradual or partial conversion in most of the West African countries. Levtzion explains,

Chiefs found themselves in a difficult position between an influential Muslims minority, living close to the center, monopolizing the trade, and having extensive outside relations, and the majority of the pagan subjects. The way out of this dilemma was for them to maintain a middle position between Islam and paganism; to be neither real Muslims

nor complete pagans. That a negative definition is necessary indicates that it is difficult to locate the exact position of the chiefs between the two poles of Islam and paganism. From the middle position some dynasties or individual rulers sometimes advanced toward a more complete acceptance of Islam and sometimes fell back to regain closer relations with traditions.<sup>3</sup>

Even as a religious dynamic or strong Islam may be an open door in some situations, and a closed door in others. These partially convertible country or people group of Muslims should be considered winnable. Indeed in Ghana several mission organizations, like Ghana Baptist Bible Fellowship, or a lot of individuals, have targeted such group of people for outreach evangelization. On the other hand, what should consider, even though they do not practice Islamic religious activities as Muslims, some are closed to the gospel.

There is no doubt that Islam has been one of the great external forces that influenced cultural and social changes in West Africa. Islamic ethnocentrism also precludes the idea of religious pluralism, though some Muslims tolerate it. As a matter of fact, religious pluralism makes a mockery of all religions and no man of faith can entertain such a proposition. If Islam considered the possibility of

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<sup>3</sup> Nehemia Levtzion, "Patterns of Islamization in West Africa," in *Aspects of West african Islam*, ed. by Daniel F. MaCall & Norman R. Bennett (Boston: African Studies Center; Boston University, 1971), 34.

peaceful coexistence with other religions and mutual recognition of rights along with rejection of religious pluralism, that would be best. However, this will never happen. That is only an ideal thought.

Muslims do not welcome individualism in their society because they are strong social units with the background of Islam. The chief's authority contributes, in the presence of his elders, to the complete tribal setting cohesively. The chief is truly the guide and the judge of the people of his tribe. His political and religious choices are determinative and commit the whole of his family, his clan, his tribe and all those who come under his authority. Therefore, if one of these significant members of Islam is won to Christ, these patriarchic structures must not be violated. In a similar way, the chief in African communities also carries their entire group in important decisions. This kind of patriarchal structure is difficult for the Christians to understand and it is one of the barriers to Muslim evangelism. Therefore, it is easy to understand why Muslim leaders view Christian evangelists with great suspicion. The chiefs worry that the Christians might break down the order and authority of their Islamic society. Here is what Levtzion observed in West Africa:

I therefore emphasize the role of chiefs as early recipients of Islamic influence, and consequently the importance of centralized chiefdoms in the process of Islamization. Indeed, a survey of the spread of Islam in West Africa clearly shows that Islam did not spread among stateless peoples, even where geographical conditions were the same.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, not all of the Muslim chiefs and leaders will respond in the same way to the Gospel and, subsequently, convert the rest of their people. Christianity also seeks to penetrate such people groups in a way that does not violate and undermine patriarchal society. If individual missionaries can cultivate really good friendships with Islamic religious leaders, heads of families, chiefs, and respected men in the community, they may have great opportunities.<sup>5</sup> Patience is needed for the missionaries to win even only one Muslim leader to Christ. It is a long and loving process. However, if this foundation of friendship has first been established and the missionary, having given due respect to the hierarchies of authority, has become somewhat of an insider to the culture, his converts may also be able to remain as insiders. Once such a foundation of friendship is

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Fouad Elias Accad, *Building bridges: Christianity and Islam* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1997), 30-33.



established it will not present trouble, and it will give an opportunity to the Muslim convert who has been kicked out to reunite with his family or community. It may also be necessary to proclaim Christ over a period of time to as many members of a given community as possible, before giving an invitation to receive Christ. Then, a multi-individual decision for or against Christ can be made by the community. For Islam to be evangelized, it would not be the direct approach, but the chosen method which is the best way. The moving of families and communities as a whole, or nearly whole, units has to happen for them to come to Christ. Again, this sort of multi-individual, group conversion took place in Java, Indonesia.<sup>6</sup>

Here are some additional ways to approach them. These are generally accepted everywhere. The 'Friendship Dialogue' approach to Muslims is a good method for Muslims to stay in Muslim groups. Through gentle and humble attitudes, Muslims allow Christian messengers to draw closer (Titus 3:2-3). Muslims familiar with Ahmed Deedat's writings aim to upset, irritate, and enrage the Christian worker. If the Christian messenger becomes angry, the Muslim

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<sup>6</sup> Bentley-Metuh, *Java Saga* (London: OMF Books, 1975), 142-143.

side has won, since the Christian's behavior has contradicted his message.

Marsh had the same experience. When he was in Moissala, Chad, he sat with fanatic Muslim leaders. They determined to disturb his witnessing. When he opened the Arab New Testament, they impeded and said, "This book does not start with 'in Allah-(*B'ism Allah*),' we cannot listen to your words. Only we, Muslims know truth." They continually argued the superiority of the Qur'an. He told them why he came and what they did not know. He asked, "Do you know your sins are forgiven?" "Nobody knows that!" They replied with a loud voice. When he talked about God's forgiveness, the Islam leaders sprang up greatly upset. He smiled, stroking his beard. He had won. The Muslim leaders lost.<sup>7</sup> Some may have questioned whether such dialogue is biblical or even profitable. Colossians 4:6 says, "Let your speech [be] always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

As mentioned earlier, to do not neglect that 'long term friendship' is also important with African Muslims. Good friendships bring the Christian witness respect for Christ.

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<sup>7</sup> Marsh, *Love will find way*, 39-41.

Terminology is also important. Messengers of Christ should also avoid the words like ‘church,’ and ‘crusade.’ These kinds of words only conjure up thoughts of irreverence to Muslims. Worship is a better word to use when speaking of a church service, since worship is fundamental to Muslim experience. While some missiologists are opposed to use ‘Allah’ for God’s name, the choice of a name for God has already been made. God is called ‘Allah’ in the Hausa Bible in Ghana. It was used by Jews and Christians in early Arabia. Using ‘Muslim friendly’ terminology is not compromising Christianity. It will create a more peaceful atmosphere for discussion without hostile feelings.

Once after establishing friendships, the Christian missionary can continue to meet with Muslims to discuss religion. A typical African custom is to use a spokesperson for dialogue with others especially when talking to the chief in a village. A group involves about ten men led by a spokesperson that is familiar with Islamic arguments against Christianity. During these kinds of discussions, it is not necessarily to win. Just embarrassing the spokesperson will bring future discussions. Rather, during each appointment, ask to share the scripture without interruption. This will give a chance to talk about Jesus, and what God

has done in a positive way. Afterward, let them share about Islam or ask questions during the question time, and never show anger or irritation in any way. If there is no good answer for a question, then say that an answer will be brought to next time.

This writer does not know Arabic well. It really is a disadvantage when dealing with Muslims. To do ministries with Muslims, learning Arabic is important role for evangelism. In Northern Ghana, they speak the Housa language which is similar to Arabic. This individual's speaking ability brings familiarity with the Housa Islamic Community in Ghana and other areas where they speak that language. Marsh points out:

It is probable that the only way to really reach the hearts of such men is to speak their native idiom well. The best way to approach them is as you would speak to agnostics of your own background. It will soon be seen how their profession belies the real state of their hearts and minds . . . . . There is no doubt that a good knowledge of the vernacular and of Arabic, at least enough Arabic to know the religious terms importance to Muslims, even when Arabic is not their mother tongue, is of primary importance in reaching Muslims abroad.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Marsh, *Share Your Faith with a Muslim*, 5-6.

Wycliffe Bible Translators in Ghana uses the literacy program in their ministries. They translated the New Testament in the local language. The translated scripture can be used as a literacy textbook.<sup>9</sup> Openness to the Gospel and the centralized states of Northern Ghana is a relatively recent phenomenon. Having gained little from Islam, they want to know what Christianity has to offer them. Literacy is a major need at this time, though it was considered nearly useless just a few years ago. Barker wrote,

Because the Dagomba do not want to lose educated boys from work on the farm, and because they have these patterns of education for adult roles, they take less interest than some other peoples in western type education. The sharp deterioration in the quality of education in recent years has still further reduced the interest of Dagombas in school education of the western type. If they want education at all, the Qur'anic school in the village is seen as a valid and less dangerous alternative.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, literacy is probably the greatest opening that missionaries have for introducing change among Muslim villages. On the spiritual level, literacy,

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<sup>9</sup> Wycliffe Bible Translators work in Ghana as named Ghana Institute Linguistics Bible Translator.

<sup>10</sup> Barker, *Peoples, Languages, and Religion in Northern Ghana*, 135.

when introduced by Christian missionaries, enables men and women to read the Bible. Literacy also opens village people to new and better ideas.

Charles R. Marsh's, 'Suggestions of the general principles to present the Gospel to Muslims,' gives great insights to Muslim evangelism:<sup>11</sup> First, never condemn Islam and Muhammad because, it will bring antagonizing anger. Second, never treat them as a pagan, an agnostic, or an idolater. They are a believer in the one true God and his law. Third, never forget that they fear God and use this point to approach them. Fourth, know that they understand sin and they continually repeat their forgiveness formula in their prayer. This will be a point to preach the Gospel. Fifth, do not think they are Muslims but treat them as sinners or human beings, like ourselves. Avoid any arguments with them. Sixth, remember that the messengers' own characters judge the messages of missionaries. The messenger must have the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which shows the good character to the messenger. Seventh, use biblical truth that they already know. It will lead them to accept the whole truth of the Word of God easily. Eighth, keep in mind that they respond to 'LOVE'. Finally, he

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<sup>11</sup> Marsh, *Share Your Faith with a Muslim*, 8-13.

suggests that every effort must be made by the power of the Holy Spirit because only the Holy Spirit can bring great results.

What is the practical consideration to approaching Muslims? Here are some suggestions;

1. Allah is the supreme God for the Muslims. When we talk to Muslims about God, we should approach them carefully. Marsh expressed the Muslim's thought about Allah:

He is absolutely unique, and inconceivable by man. "Whatever your mind may think of, God is not that." This idea utterly excludes the thought of the holy Trinity. The greatest sin that man can commit is to worship anything else but Allah or to associate any other being on the same level with Him.<sup>12</sup>

They believe that Allah is gracious and merciful. However, they cannot think that Allah is our Father, because Allah cannot be our physical father. They describe Allah in ninety-nine different names. The one hundredth name of Allah is unknown to men. It should be known to Muslims that this one hundredth name of God is Jesus Christ. Let us see again Marsh's insight to

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 30.

explain God to the Muslims through the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32):

The father still loved his son even though he was in the far country and doing wrong. When the son returned, three possibilities lay open to the father: (1) He could have given up the son entirely. This attitude would have been unworthy of loving God. (2) He could have beaten him severely when he returned and refused to have received him. How unlike God! (3) He could have continued to love him, to patiently wait and suffer. In such a situation, who is it that suffers most: the father or son? This suffering opened the way for the son to come back (I Peter 3:18).<sup>13</sup>

2. When they ask the missionary to repeat the *Shahada* by persuasion, the missionary should refuse gently and give convictions as a believer of Christ.

Instead of repeating the *Shahada*, it is better to give his testimony of life changes by Christ. As it is a missionary experience, personal testimony makes a great impact to the Muslims. In the testimony, these three things should be included to give greater effect; the life conditions before knowing Jesus Christ, how he accepted Jesus as personal Savior, and after knowing Jesus Christ, how He changed the life.

3. The devout Muslims pray five times a day. Their prayer has sincerity

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 32.



and piety. This is a point of contact with the Gospel. When they pray, they pray as an obligation to *Allah*. It is not a deep conversation with God. Before they pray, they wash some part of the body ceremonially. The Gospel deliverer can say to the Muslims that they can wash their body devotionally, but they cannot wash their mind that brings most evil thoughts. Hebrews 10:22 says, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

Marsh approaches for this:

“I notice that when you washed the various member of your body you neglect to wash your heart. Now if you wash the members of your body and leave the heart unclean, surely that is not enough. The motivation and controlling force of your body must be cleansed.” He [Muslim] will reply, “It is quite impossible for a man to wash his heart.” “Yes, I quite agree, but what is impossible to man to wash is possible to God. The Word of God tells us that ‘the blood of Jesus His son cleanses us from all sin (I John 1:7).’ ”<sup>14</sup>

That is a wonderful idea to point out from the Muslim’s ceremonial washing for the Gospel. In addition, from their ‘prayer attitude,’ the idea of the Gospel preaching can be brought out.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 19.

The Muslim must bow down during his prayer, for he assumes the attitude of a slave before his master. This indicates a fear of God's wrath and punishment. It is in direct contrast to the reverence and holy boldness with which the Christian approaches his heavenly Father. It is possible to bow outwardly but to refuse God the obedience and submission of heart and life.<sup>15</sup>

4. At the Ramadan Fasting period, there is also a chance to share the Gospel. If you cultivate friendships with Muslims, it might be that they will ask you whether you fast or why not, and additionally, whether Christ fasted or not. You can answer them that even though He was not a Muslim, He did fast forty days and nights, but He did not fast in the Ramadan period, and that Satan tempted him during the time and He was found to be the perfect man. You can ask also the real meaning of fasting. That question could be like "do you fast from food or from sin?" The Muslims must know the true meaning of fasting, that man needs to not only learn self-control over the desire of eating but also self-control over man's carnal appetites.

5. When they have the feast of '*Id*,'<sup>16</sup> they will slay a ram, preferably with

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> After they finish the Ramadan fasting, they have a great feast to rejoice of the termination of fasting. They call this feast as '*Id*.' See the glossary at the introduction of this dissertation.

very large horns. In this slaying a ram, they have a conception of redemption. Here is a message to Muslims that Jesus is the ram to forgive the sins of the world. John the Baptist said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29).” Jesus is the only ram to forgive, Hebrews 10:4 says, “For [it is] not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

6. When we preach the Gospel to Muslims, we must use the Bible, even though they believe that Jews and Christians changed the Bible. We should show our attitude that we are giving the Bible supreme authority, and show that we strongly believe the Bible. If we use or quote the Qur’an, they will ask you to believe the whole Qur’an not the part of it that you quote now.

7. The Muslims will challenge Christians continually that Jesus did not die on the cross, and Jews did not nail Him, but they only assume it according to their Qur’an.

That they said (in boast), “We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary; The Apostle of God”; but they kill him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they kill him not (Sura 4:157).

Their challenge is to make no value of Christ's atonement death. They respect Jesus but they deny the divinity of Christ. We must show the necessity of His death for sinners with His triumphal resurrection. We should tell boldly because this is historical truth. If we do not testify this Gospel boldly to them, we cannot expect to win them.

There are some easy conniving things to do. These suggestions are not very important things but have a value to consider reaching out to Muslims because these are involved mostly Muslim's culture.

1. One of the evangelists for Muslims in Northern Ghana, pastor Asari said to the author in 1996 while interviewing him, "man-to-man evangelism is necessary to the Muslims with love. Love will melt their hearts to come to Christ." That is best way to evangelize Muslims. Sometimes a missionary talks to a Muslim in the presence of others. Usually he will try to defend his Muslim faith immediately, because he is aware that others are watching. It is an unwise thing to do. He should take it to a person-to-person level.

2. If the missionary is a man, he must wear long pants, or if the missionary is a woman, she must wear a long skirt when going to Muslims.

Modesty is needed by missionaries in the Muslim society.

3. While the Muslims sit on the mats, and do not sit on the chair, the missionary should remove his shoes and sit on the mat like them. It will show you are on the same level with them with your polite manners, and you will show your desire to share words. It is also better to sit than standing while you are talking. Usually in their culture teachers sit to speak.

4. If you are asked a question that you do not know how to answer, do not hesitate to say that you do not know. Give a promise that you will think over that matter and will give the answer in the future.

5. Emphasizing prayer is not enough. Pray before, while, and after your talk to Muslims, and depend upon the Holy Spirit to guide you.

6. Never forget the importance of the Bible. Quote from the Bible directly in their language. Our message may be forgotten quickly but the God's Word will speak continually. Free distributions of the Scripture portions are not

wise, but sell them for a small amount. Then they would not throw them away easily but put value on them because they bought what they wanted.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CONCLUSION**

We considered many areas of Islam and reaching Muslims. This study may not be the best but will give some practical ideas. To bring the Muslims to Christ is not a simple matter. The one who is involved in Muslim ministry should study continually and carefully. In the past, many of God's people have written evangelical books about Islam, some others continue to write now, and in the future, there will be better books for Muslim evangelism. Those books have many references with useful information for Muslim ministry such as the book of Charles R. Marsh's "Share your faith with Muslim." We need to study as many of those books as possible for good results. We have to go to the Muslims much more practically.

We should remember Christ's commandment, the Great Commission,

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19).” There is much evidence that Muhammad had a chance to hear the Gospel. However, no Christian told him the correct Gospel. If a Christian told him the sound Gospel, so he could receive Jesus as his Savior at that time, then there would be no Islam in the world today. Therefore, we need to preach the Gospel “be instant in season, out of season (II Timothy 4:2).” Through our diligent sharing of the Gospel, who knows whether we could lead another Muhammad to Christ?

Even though there is only a handful of souls in their ministries in Muslim societies, do not be discouraged. More Christians must go to the Muslims with love. More workers, more gains. They need the Gospel. They must join in one fold. “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd (John 10:16).”

Peace of God be upon Muslims!



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