

A Painful Divide Facing an Impossible Task By Benjamin Hegeman

*“Jesus looked at them and said,
“With man it is impossible, but not with God.
For all things are possible with God.”*

Since AD 630, the Church historic faces two impossible ‘mission tasks’ that only God can achieve: first, bring Muslims into the kingdom of God –probably kicking and screaming, and second, bring unity amongst those ministering to Muslims –with yet more kicking and screaming. It is very evident to those called to Muslim ministry in our generation that there is not only a present divide in how to minister to them but an uncertainty of how we got here. As **Søren Kierkegaard** might well say, “missions is lived forward, but understood backwards.”¹ Before God will hopefully bridge this divide, we need to know how we came to be divided in our assessment and responses to Islam, and why and when our convictions went in such radically different directions.

There is no need to question our common ‘Evangelical’ faith. I believe we could all sign –if need be– the statement of faith of the WEA (World Evangelical Alliance)². Our divide lies beyond our shared *“faith that was once for all delivered to the saints”*. There is something else that bifurcates missionaries to Muslims in the post-WW II decades; something more than just strong personalities, more than tense church-mission rivalries, and more than our entrenched ethnicities. It manifests itself in the mercurial debate of contextualisation, a methodology launched independently after the Vatican II Council from 1963-65, and the Evangelical Lausanne Conference in 1974.³ This seemingly neutral method has gained the momentum of a hurricane and has unleashed the stormiest exchanges since the Liberal-Fundamentalist divide. Who predicted this in 1974? Whatever that ‘something more’ is, constitutes the goal of this paper, in asking this question: ‘What have post-WW II missiologists inadvertently interwoven with their shared convictions that they are now so divided in their approach to Islam?’

The Apostle Paul gave the divided Corinthian community a self-audit question: *“for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognised.”*⁴ One of three things can be inferred from this: one side will be vindicated, or both, or neither. This paper will explore the latter possibility: namely, that all missiological approaches to Islam bring something imperceptibly ‘more’ than just the Gospel of Christ’s kingdom to Muslims. This ‘something more’ lies not in our new Spirit-led nature in Christ, nor in our biblical ‘mind of Christ’ but rather in each Christian’s former ideological or ‘religious’ worldviews; be it imperial, legalistic, economic, nominal, tribal, mystic, civic, philosophic, ethnic, traditional, esoteric, or carnal. We invariably communicate more than the Gospel to our Muslim friends and to each other. Long before we attempt any new contextualisation with Muslims, we should ask: might we have -imperceptibly and inadvertently- contextualised our own ideological heritage into our missiology?

It is incumbent on each missionary movement to seek to discern what ‘human religion or ideology’ might be embedded with their Gospel message. This is genuine New Testament homework. Paul had to help the Galatians to discern and to purge Judaizing legalism, the Colossians to purge early Gnosticism, the Romans Antinomianism, and the Corinthians local syncretism; even as John sought to purge early traces of Docetism.⁵ Each disciple of Christ unwittingly retains, contextualises, and/or harnesses their native unbiblical ideologies in the service of Christ. In the poetic words of William Wordsworth, “The world is too much with us”. This paper will assume this will be found with all approaches to Muslims and it wishes to argue that whatever is “too much with us” is both subtle and divisive.

Christian attitudes to Muslims can be understood as ten different approaches, ten unique convictions, ten distinct responses to Muslims and Islam, or again as ten missiological limitations with Muslims.⁶ Many of these convictions have been launched singularly or combined into composite ministry styles, although it is impossible to merge all ten responses. Indeed, some are profoundly antithetical. A sharp opposition, for example, exists between, say, 'dialoguers' and 'polemicists', or between 'insiders' and 'heresy exposers'. Nor are fracture lines among missionary approaches of recent vintage; they have shadowed church history and more recently the ecumenical-fundamentalist debate. They also predate our present postmodern contextualisation debate by many decades. However, by 1990, the 'contextual divide' among Evangelicals was not only unavoidably real but also unlike anything missionaries had ever known. These two polarised communities are presently known as the 'Insider Movements' and the 'Historical Positions'. (The plurality of both terms is intentional, as it will become clear.)

In historical order of appearance, we will review these ten most influential Christian responses vis-à-vis Muhammad's Islam and his followers.

1. The conviction to respond with felt need to Muhammad's Muslims and message (615)
2. The conviction to use diplomatic questioning of Muhammad's message (630)
3. The conviction to use dhimmi silence before Muslims (635)
4. The conviction to use eschatological warning and polemics with Muslims (644)
5. The conviction to compare Islamic heresy to Christian truths (740)
6. The conviction to persuade Muslims that Christ is superior (720)
7. The conviction to launch irenic dialogue with Muslims (1218)
8. The conviction to use contextualised bridge-building among Muslims (1460)
9. The conviction to only share Jesus and one's testimony (1930)
10. The conviction to preserve insider movements (1938)

This list is not exhaustive. The most forceful conviction, the militant Crusading *Reconquista* response is not listed. That it successfully coerced, shamed, or lured untold numbers of converted Muslim Moors (*Moriscos*) back into Iberian Catholicism cannot be negated but its un-Christlike theocratic aspirations are beyond theological defence. Did not Jesus say: "*My kingdom is not of this world?*" Again, we will not list the imperial colonial approach which was incrementally retired following WW II. That no one is imitating these highly tainted models disqualifies them from our survey. We now turn to consider the ten historic/contemporary responses, all of which continue to this present day.

The above list is ordered chronologically to avoid the common habit of ranking items from the author's least favourite to the most endorsed. Each response will be evaluated from four perspectives: First, when and why was this response first used? Second, how does this response seek to imitate Christ? Third, how widely has this response been practiced by Christians? Fourth, what have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of this conviction? The last question is the critical one of this paper. It asks us to discern which mimicking ideology or 'religious' worldview might be attaching itself with barnacle tenacity to any given response.⁷ For that reason, the last question will be set apart in an outlined box, so that any reader who is familiar with each response can skim through and only focus on this perspective. To this we now turn.

1. The conviction of responding with felt need to Muhammad's Muslims and message (615)

When and why was this response first used?

Relying exclusively on source criticism of **Abdul Qasim Muhammad's** 'Meccan Surahs', **Denis Gotan**, in his 1985 work, *Mahomet, le Coran et les origines de l'islam*, speculates that Muhammad drew much of his Jewish-Christian-apocryphal narratives from peripheral night-time meetings with two Persian Christian slaves living in Mecca. At best, Gotan and all other attempts to trace Muhammad's initial contacts with Christians not only predate his first trances in 610 but they rely upon embellished biographies written many centuries after his death.⁸ Historical speculation makes for historical fiction, not sound historiography.

The preferred source for Christian historians to study Muhammad's encounter with Christians remains the 9th-century biographer **Ibn Hisham** (citing **Ibn Ishaq** d. 768). The Hisham/Ishaq text gives readers an isolated account⁹ estimated to have happened around AD 615 when 83 of Muhammad's most persecuted followers fled from Mecca to Abyssinia under the leadership of 'Ali's brother, **Ja'far b. Abu Talib**. Muhammad always considered Christians as gracious.¹⁰ The Abyssinian ruler of Aksum (called **Negus**, i.e. 'king') received them. He too was reputed for being just and friendly.¹¹ Negus gave the Arab monotheists asylum. When two Meccan emissaries came to have the refugees repatriated, Negus called them to a meeting. During the interrogation, the Muslims contextualised their answers to his 'Christian' ear. He was receptive. Upon hearing parts of Surah Maryam (19) concerning Isa and Miriam, Negus interpolated his Abyssinian orthodoxy into their theology, declared them credible believers and guaranteed them protection.¹² This first felt need response also anticipates a latter practice now associated with Ecumenicals and 'bridge builders', namely, to seek spiritual communion with Muslims. According to Ibn Ishaq, Negus' compassionate felt-need conviction and shared spirituality even morphed into a secret decision to become a Muslim, something which he allegedly communicated covertly to Muhammad via the returning Muslims.

The felt need approach completely disappeared from Christian approaches for the next 750 years, and that due entirely to the Muslim invasion and occupation of Christians lands in which all Christians were forced into the humiliating pact of dhimmitude, and one which robs Christians of displaying merciful compassion and free charity. This ghetto-like and demeaning social treatment best explains the atrophy of Christian compassion.

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

Of all the ten responses, none is easier to demonstrate from the person and teaching of Jesus: "*But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you*" and again "*He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him*". Paul repeats this: "*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another.*"¹³ A felt-need response is being merciful even as our Lord was merciful.

How widely has this response been practiced by Christians?

This response only revived among isolated Christians unhindered by dhimmitude and often in the zones of the *Reconquista*. Following the singular 'loving' ministry of the Majorcan Franciscan **Raymond Lull** (1232-1316)¹⁴ to Tunisian Muslims, the only shining example of this felt-need approach to Muslims came from **St Vincent Ferrer** (1350-1419)¹⁵, the charismatic Spanish Dominican

preacher and miracle worker, a man reputed to speak in tongues. Even more convincing was his personal holiness and love for Muslims and thousands were converted under his ministry. His genius, however, birthed no movement and it would be four centuries later when the Jesuits revived parts of this approach before the Mughal monarchy in a sensitive study of the local language, the local culture and the local genres of communication.¹⁶ This unique Jesuit ‘incarnational’ genius was not to triumph and their only surviving ‘Catholic Christianity’ was limited to isolated rural communities in Goa, India and Macau.

In keeping with the Evangelical methods of the Semaphore Trio, **Henry Martyn** (1781-1812) joined in promoting the felt-need approach of the then-emerging ‘modern mission movement’ in ‘British India’.¹⁷ His unique burden was for Muslims. He began by analysing the Urdu and Persian languages while sponsoring Christian elementary education. His sacrificial labours and writings bore great admiration but little fruit, even though it heralded the significant Anglo-missionary educational thrust of **John Wilson** (1804-1875), the Scottish Presbyterian **Alexander Duff** (1806-1878), and **George LeFroy** (1854-1919).¹⁸ For them, reaching the children of Muslims through education constituted the most promising response to the felt needs in the Islamic world.

This greatest American felt-need champion was **Samuel Zwemer** (1867-1952), a man deemed the ‘apostle to the Muslims’ by Yale church historian, Kenneth Scott Latourette, and whose *“evangelization of Moslems [was] to be of practical help to all who toil for this end; and to awaken sympathy, love and prayer on behalf of the Moslem world until its bonds are burst, its wounds are healed, its sorrows removed and its desires satisfied in Jesus Christ.”*¹⁹ Zwemer too was greatly admired but saw precious little fruit, echoing the results of his predecessors who used this approach.

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of the felt-need conviction?

For over two centuries, the greater Muslim world has witnessed the felt-need approach worldwide. The overwhelming response to all forms of Christian charities, clinics, schools, development projects, friendship evangelism, literacy ministries and counselling services has been passive benign tolerance. This response was commanded by Muhammad: *“O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.”*²⁰

At best, this approach reaches those most marginalised in the Islamic communities –be they children, handicapped or disenfranchised- and this continues to be the case worldwide. That this form of ministry can also unwittingly degenerate into ‘rice Christianity’ is well documented.²¹ (The singular exception to this observation is the massive conversion of Javanese Muslims to Christianity, following the anti-communist persecution by **General Suharto** in 1965-66, during which time Javanese Christians sheltered untold number of Muslim refugees.²²)

Felt-need responses are entirely dependent on safety from Muslim persecution. This is only possible in zones under the auspices of Western powers: i.e., the Reconquista powers, mercantile powers, colonial powers, and today, globalised powers. For this very reason, the message coming from our political patronage speaks louder than our Gospel message. Writes **Seyyed Nasr**: *“Each side in addition to its religious message possessed its own military might and distinct culture.”* Devout Muslims may well have seen foreign Christians as ‘People of the Book’ and charitable volunteers but their individual identities and ministries were dwarfed by the political patronage of the infidel ‘Western’ hegemony hanging over them. As Nasr argues: *“This phase was in time followed by educational and medical crusades which had as its consequence the destruction of the unity and homogeneity of Islamic civilization.”*²³ By inference, Christians ministering under any form of ‘safe

conduct' –even contemporary globalised treaties- are still viewed as co-agents of that sponsoring worldview. To 'convert' to Christianity equated with endorsing a worldview antithetical to their communal unity and identity. This liability is as true under the patronage of globalisation as it ever was under imperial colonialism. Little has changed.

Two further factors weaken this conviction. First, since the 1974 Lausanne Congress, Evangelical missions began to successfully move away from the narrow polity to 'persuade through any means' towards the wider, holistic, felt-need missions where Evangelicals seek social transformations whereby God acts in human history through human agency. The new horizon became: 'the Church in response to human need'.²⁴ That this led to an incremental decline in Gospel proclamation was an unintended consequence. In the 40 years since Lausanne, Felt Need ministries have morphed overwhelmingly into non-verbal lifestyle testimonies.

Second, Felt Need advocates have borrowed unconsciously from both Enlightenment and modern scholars. According to Comparative Religious Studies experts, all religions are fundamentally the same in "expressing and/or invoking sacral sentiments".²⁵ Christianity is but the largest of the global human religions. Consequently, Christianity is viewed as a competing faith, seeking to meet the felt needs of the soul better than, say, Islam. The Felt Need response is no longer, therefore, a singular Scriptural commandment to obey, but a missionary methodology employed to prove that Christ's love for mankind is superior to other faiths. It becomes a means to an end.

In conclusion, the prevailing Felt Need response, so cherished by most in the Historical Positions carries 'too much of the world' with it, suggesting that those who critique it most are not without discernment and wisdom.

2. The conviction of diplomatically questioning Muhammad's message (630)

When and why was this response first used?

According to Islamic sources, when the Yemenite Nestorian delegation of 60-Arab princes, bishops and theologians came from Wadi Nadjran (or Nadjran) to Muhammad in Medina (between 630-31) they came to ask questions.²⁶ Their purpose was to ascertain if Islam was comparable to Christianity. The delegation questioned Muhammad for three days in the Medinan mosque, listening to Muhammad's message, in which he made the greatest possible honorific concessions possible to Isa Ibn Miriam al Masih. What seemingly worked with the Negus did not work with the Nadjran bishops. The deliberation succeeded to clarify that Islam and Christianity were completely irreconcilable faiths and that both parties had failed to unite their contesting expressions even though both claimed to be the true Abrahamic faith. Muhammad was deeply insulted by this failure and his riposte and *muballah*-curse duel are recorded in Surah 3.64-71.

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

Diplomatic questions, as the Nadjran delegation did, engage the most strategic genre used by God. More than 3200 questions are asked in the Bible and most of them by God. Why would our all-knowing God ask questions if not to awaken our conscience and mind? This was the *modus operandus* of the Lord Jesus. Our Lord is a God who delights in questions.

The use of diplomacy is based on Paul's injunction to Timothy: *"The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will"*; and Peter's instruction: *"In your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame."*²⁷

How widely has this conviction been practiced by Christians?

Upon his deathbed, Muhammad told his followers to annul the non-aggression treaty with the Yemenite Christians and to attack them. His death wish led to the extinction of Christianity in the Arabic world for the next 1300 years. It also led to the realisation that asking Muslims about their faith without safe protection is risking the same *muballah* response –a duel in which Christians can never participate, since Jesus said: *"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them."* In the ensuing thirteen centuries of clashes of civilisations, there is little evidence that the Nadjran Diplomatic Visitation model was ever repeated. In the post-colonial globalised era, however, the use of respectful questions has returned.

This return, from a Christian perspective, is in direct consequence of the perpetual and baffling Islamic resistance to all previous Christian approaches. If indeed the Qur'anic worldview renders the Muslim psyche closed to the Gospel, veiled from the Gospel truth, hostile to kingdom claims, and if almost any encounter will be sterile: be it irenic dialogue, debate, felt-need ministry or even contextual bridge building, then what else must be done? The second variable favouring its return was that worldwide, 'the playing field is far more level' between Muslims and Christians than ever before. Once Christian-Muslim conversations are removed from either dhimmitude or colonisation, a new conversation is possible. In Westernised schools and civic public squares all over the globe, Christians are encountering Muslims as social peers. This is especially true in the emerging global youth culture of digimodernism.²⁸

This new 'peer' environment suggests a two-pronged approach, either in addition to or in replacement of other approaches. It suggests that Christians engage diplomatic peer exchanges and in strong intercessions for Christ to appear to them in dreams and visions (call it 'heavenly questions'), and that Christians everywhere use diplomatic questions to sow the Muslim mind with divine questions concerning Islamic claims ('Christian questions').

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of the questioning conviction?

The conviction to use diplomatic question is not without its 'Western' ideological shadow. The West is a civilisation of daring questions. Western questions may sound innocuous enough since Westerners ask them all the time in all directions. Muslims in all quarters are asked: "Tell me what Islam means to you," and "How do you feel about your religion?"²⁹ Unceasing 'out-of-the-box' questions are asked everywhere in socio-research on all subjects, and especially with religions.

To ask questions of Muslims or even to poll and then to collect their responses is also a widespread Western approach to religions. This venue reaps a plethora of definitions, studies, historic inquiries and more. When Napoleon invaded Egypt, he had scores of researchers and scientists in his wake and through their inquiry they awoke the ancient treasures to the most open and inquiring minds of

the age. The Middle East has never looked the same to the world and the credit for the monumental Islamic research is due to a small European army of archaeologists, philologists, Arabists, Orientalists, Islamologues, Semitic scholars, librarians, social scientists, and source critics who painstakingly unearth the hidden secrets of the Arab and Middle Eastern civilisation, soil, history, language and beliefs. Enlightenment-inspired research is irrefutably linked to a spirit of questioning knowledge-expansionism. Before a European power ever wished to 'engage' a Muslim land, did it not first send in researchers? Missionaries must discern this ideological shadow.

The most recent zealous effort was launched by **John Esposito's** 2008 book, *Who Speaks For Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*. Islam, correctly understood, eludes quick definitions by 'how do you feel', or by Socratic questions, or by polls. Islam is a religion obsessed with a pursuit of an elusive unity around a theocratic definition. It is allergic to probing -and often-disturbing- questions by outsiders.³⁰ Inquisitive questions, especially 'why' questions, are terribly Western, unpredictable, intrusive, and therefore perilous. Christians seeking to use this approach must first ask:

1. How will questions asked by Christians be perceived by respected authorities in Islam?
2. When Christians interview Muslims, will their questions promote honest reflection or might the questions suggest intrusion in the Muslim leader's eyes? How will the Christians know?
3. How do Christians extract inside knowledge without triggering unwelcome reactions?
4. What if the very act of asking questions is heretical to the Muslim?
5. Will we receive an honourable answer, a *Taqiyyah* answer, or a truthful answer?
6. If the Christian process of evaluative research on Islam is highly objectionable to Muslims, or to Westerners who advocate the voice of Muslims, ought Christians to retrench from this endeavour?
7. What if the diplomatic questions feign an unintended sincere interest in Islam?

In conclusion, the resurgent conviction to ask Muslims diplomatic questions, cherished by many in the Historical Positions, also carries 'too much of the world' with it. While Jesus was a master in this domain, so are ever-probing secular socio-scientific scholars. We must shed the illusion that this response is innocent, neutral or without Western baggage.

3. The conviction of dhimmi silence before Muslims (635)

When and why was this response first used?

From the fall of the Bosra in Syria (July 634), then Damascus (635), followed by the defeat of Byzantine army (636) at the Battle of Yarmuk, and finally the fall of Jerusalem (638), the die was cast: Islam was an unstoppable force in the war theatre of Oriental Christendom. According to *Kitab al tarikh wa al-Maghazi* (Book of War Campaigns)³¹, the **Caliph Umar** (634-644), the second and the most aggressive of the caliphs, pressed Muhammad's religion hard against Christianity. His policies included the humiliation of other religions, cultures and peoples. As the surviving (717 AD) Nestorian Dhimmi text outlines in 28-points: Christians were 'protected' by a mandatory pact that theologically demeaned them into a ghetto lifestyle. Only Muslims could obtain government, civil, military or significant posts. After 685, **Caliph Abd-al-Malik** mandated that Arabic be the only official language of the empire. Silence –and quiet conversions to Islam- became the overwhelming default of the Christian communions.

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

There is a time for silence. Silence is sometimes being “*as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves as you sojourn as lambs among wolves.*” Was not Jesus mostly silent before the Sanhedrin and Pilate? Does not Jesus instruct us to not cast our pearls before swine? Was not Job considered wise for as long as he was silent before his friends? Did not Job answer Elihu with silence? Did not God instruct the Israelites on the seashore to keep silent before the armies of Pharaoh? Does not God often communicate in silence? Does not Amos say: “*he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time.*” (5.13) Silence is Biblical if times are evil. For Orthodox Christians living in dhimmitude, that is forever and a day.

How widely has this conviction been practiced by Christians?

Even Latin pilgrims travelling in Muslim zones followed the lead of the Anglo-Saxon missionary, **Willibald** (700-787), refrained from all preaching while on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 720 AD. Nor does the lament from the Norman English chronicler, **Oderic Vitalis** (1075–1142), seem foreign when he writes (in 1107) that all monks in Muslim regions of Europe refrained from preaching there for fear of their lives.³² Even the first great Western European to research Islam, **Raymond of Pennafort**³³ (1180-1275) endorsed ‘silence’ by encouraging monks to engage in charitable works rather than open evangelism, in the hope that the Muslims would see their good works and be moved to consider the truth of Christianity. Catholics were not alone; silence became the overwhelming position of the Greek Orthodox monks and priests under Ottoman rule when Constantinople fell in 1453. And that silence has continued for the subsequent six centuries.³⁴

The greatest ‘apostle of silence’ of this conviction is French Catholic priest, **Charles de Foucauld** (1858-1916) who, from 1901 until his untimely murder, chose a celibate anchorite life in the northern Sahara desert, bordering Algeria and Morocco.³⁵ His chief aim was to celebrate the Eucharistic mass silently throughout an entire day and thereby offer the region a living silent spiritual presence of Jesus in their midst. De Foucauld esteemed Muhammad’s Allah as the true God of the Bible and he respected Islamic piety. He refrained from converting Muslims. His fluency in the Tamadjeg language gave him tribal status and his scholarly research gave him respect from the French colonial military. He lived in utter seclusion, had no converts, and yet became extremely influential with subsequent Catholic missionaries. In particular, he helped shape the French mystic theologian and Oriental scholar **Louis Massignon** (1883-1962), who, in turn, so profoundly influenced the Vatican II response to Islam that the concluding statement concerning Islam totally abrogated all previous convictions and Catholic approaches.

“The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,(5) who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honour Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.”³⁶

De Foucauld could not have said it better. This is the highest endorsement of Islamic piety. It led to a global retirement by Roman Catholics of evangelism and proclaiming the Christian faith to Muslims. This conviction is the leading reason why the reigning universal Catholic response to Muslims is silence. Islamic missiology in the Catholic fold has been reduced to studying mission history, inter-faith dialogues and diplomatic negotiations for the protection of the persecuted Catholic minorities in Muslim lands. There is no more conversion-oriented proclamation, especially since Pope **Paul**

John II wrote in his 1997 Catechism: "841: *The Church's relationship with the Muslims. "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."*

For Protestants who are correctly informed about Islam, silence is sometimes adopted as the most prudent approach in the most unreceptive Islam nations, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and those communities under Wahhabi or Hezbollah teaching. Certain Mennonite mission agencies have adopted 'silent presence' as a means to testify of God's love without using words. They join this conviction with the felt-need expression of charitable development, education, disaster relief, and refugee responses. They seek to preach the Bible only by loving deeds and a spiritual presence. Private prayers and prayer walks are also promoted as providing a spiritual presence in such cities or nations. Many tent-making Christians, believing embassy workers, Christians serving in transient NGO assignments, and others serving in Muslim-dominated nations, may opt for the response of silence as their best hope of avoiding expulsion. There is a time for silence.

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of the dhimmi silence conviction?

The silence of subjugated dhimmi Christians is mandated by the Pact of Umar:

*"We Christians (9) ...shall not manifest our religion publicly, (10) nor convert anyone to it. (11) We shall not prevent any of our kin from entering Islam if they wish it. (12) We shall show respect toward the Muslims..."*³⁷

It stands to reason that this conviction, response, and approach is the most expected, wanted, and imposed when Muslims are ruling over Christians.³⁸

The first liability is human angst. Even if 'prudence' is cited as the genius of this Christian conviction, it is hard to separate it from fear of persecution. Fear of one's rivals and enemies can never be endorsed as the permanent posture of Christianity. If anything, fear' is the chief enemy for Christians facing Muslims, not Muhammad's doctrines. To 'fear' is to disobey 366 Biblical junctions to 'fear not'.

Secondly, enduring silence cultivates an unbiblical complex of inferiority, something the Gospel seeks to expel, not enshrine. Writes Paul:

*"For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."*³⁹

Thirdly, silent Christianity morphs into a survival form of religious ghetto community, a mind-set which the Gospel instructs obedient believers to resist. This was the treatment Christ prescribed for the traumatised disciples hiding silently in the upper room after his resurrection.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." and again, *"Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."*⁴⁰

Fourthly, silence enshrines a reluctance to testify, to preach, and to proclaim – at least to the Muslims. There is no verse mandating silence to any people; all must hear.

"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe

in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"⁴¹

And again: "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus,... preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ... As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry. ... I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

In conclusion, no Evangelical historic position endorses complete silence; therefore the human liabilities of this approach cannot be laid at the feet of Evangelical missionaries. Silence is the larger default conviction of both the Catholic and Orthodox communities.⁴²

4. The conviction of eschatological and polemic warnings to Muslims (644)

When and why was this response first used?

Within ten years of Muhammad's death, the first hint of an eschatological response to Islam came from the pen of the Burgundian author **Fredegar (642)** who notes that through the use of astrology [!], the Frankish king **Dagobert (603-639)** had discovered that 'a circumcised race would lay waste to his empire'. Fredegar assumed this race was the recent 'Saracens'.⁴³

Shortly thereafter, a more alarming text came as an apocalyptic book under the pseudonym of **Father Methodius of Olympus**⁴⁴ claiming the Arab invasion was ushering in the end of the world. In actual fact, the alleged *Revelation of Pseudo-Methodius* came from the pen of a Syrian Christian in northern Mesopotamia. Historian Andrew Palmer estimates it was written between 644 and 691 AD.⁴⁵ Using the clandestine apocalyptic genre, it addresses the dilemma of why Islam had swept the Christian lands, why no Muslims were converting to Christianity, and why Muslims were so impervious to Christian doctrines. Islam was assigned a place with the reign of the antichrist, the coming of Gog and Magog, and by consequence, the end of the world. The only hope in the text is that a Byzantine emperor will arise and destroy the antichrist Arabs. The Syriac work would have been lost to history had it not been translated into Greek and then into Latin by a Frankish monk called Peter. From there it enjoyed a wide circulation in Medieval Catholic Europe.⁴⁶

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

The New Testament support for exposing the secret satanic schemes through false religions is strong. Jesus publically referred to the Pharisees' deity as the devil in John 8.⁴⁷ Paul publically denounced Elymas in Acts 13 as a son of the devil and Paul frequently warned Christians of the schemes of the devil. By that Paul meant 'religious attacks' not gross carnality.⁴⁸ Satan is at his strongest when attacking through other 'religions', 'strange doctrines' or heresies. John the apostle makes the strongest case for this approach:

"Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. 22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son."

“and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.”

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.”⁴⁹

Nor is rescuing people from Satan’s beguilement unrelated to evangelism. Paul writes to Timothy:

“The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”⁵⁰

How widely has this conviction been practiced by Christians?

As Daniel Saheh explains in his work, all Orthodox or Oriental Christians who publically engaged in this conviction were executed by Muslim authorities.⁵¹ Understandably, thirteen centuries of silence followed.

Beginning in 858 in Andalusian Spain, forty-eight **Cordovan martyrs** were inspired by their eschatological faith and believed that the public exposure of Islam would guarantee their martyrdom and also hasten the return of Christ. Fleeing monks, and especially **Paulus Alvarus**, spread the martyrs’ message throughout a traumatised Medieval Europe. Again in 925, the worsening plight of European Catholics under Saracen rule compelled **Pelagius** (925) and **Vulfura** (931) to hasten the cataclysmic end by their own martyrdom in Andalusia.⁵²

Not until the re-conquest of Sicily in 1091 did the eschatological antichrist thesis gain wide approval and galvanise in **Pope Urban II**’s call for the First Crusade in the Clermont Address (1095), where the supreme aim was to liberate the holy land before the return of Christ and to “wage war on God’s behalf against pagans and mad Saracens”.⁵³ This and not political-economics, writes Crusade historian **Thomas Madden**, was the overwhelming motive of the original crusades: defeating the antichrist in order to hasten the return of Christ.⁵⁴ By 1108, the French Benedict monk, **Guibert of Nogent** (1055–1124) supported Pope Urban II’s call and wrote that Christians were “needed in Jerusalem so that the Antichrist may there find adversaries”.⁵⁵

Even **Bernard of Clairvaux** (1090-1153) was reluctantly conscripted by the Pontiff into the role of preaching eschatology to recruit for the crusades. A far more eloquent call to war came from the Calabrian theologian, Abbot **Joachim of Fiore** (1135-1202) who used the Bible’s *Book of Revelation* to explain the power of the Saracens and identify them in the end time battles. Even the irenic approach of **Francis of Assisi** (1181-1226) with Muslims did not dissuade the most zealous Franciscans from using eschatological sermons to denounce Muhammad and merit their martyrdom.⁵⁶

This response found a close echo in **Martin Luther** (1483-1546) who clearly identified Muhammad as the antichrist in his commentary on 1 John 2.12, a view with which **John Calvin** and all the Calvinistic Reformers would come to agree. Contrary to the Catholic Crusaders, the Reformers did not advocate the ‘true church’ to wield any other sword other than the Word of God. However, the Protestant princes were strongly mandated to protect the ‘true church’ from the onslaught of the devil which was no less than the Ottoman Turks and a militant papacy.

⁵⁷Not until the resurgence of theocratic Islam in Iraq (1979) and the increasing Sunni Wahhabi-inspired attacks against the West did missiologists seriously revisit the thesis of the Antichrist. **George Otis Jr.** led the way with *The Last of the Giants* (1991) and since then, the Response of Eschatology Warning and Polemics has returned with a vengeance among more conservative Christian writers, especially **Robert Spencer, Joel Rosenberg, Reza Safa, Mark Gabriel, Gregory Davis, Grant Jeffery** and **R.C. Sproul**.

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of this eschatological conviction?

No conviction has engendered a more hostile response from Muslims than when Christians have the boldness to claim that Islam is Satan's greatest end-time tool. That the Qur'an implicates Christians as being deceived by Satan is something that ought to invite mutual laughter more than mutual vengeance. But the argument is more than theological; it is a clash of worldviews.

The first liability is that this conviction is more political than theological. It invariably emerges when Islamic invasions or re-conquests are imminent. From the successful defeat of the Ottoman Turks at the gates of Vienna (1683) until the First Gulf War (1991) this conviction went into complete sequestration. It completely disappeared. The alleged 'War on Terror' and successful attacks on Israel have reawakened it with a vengeance. Indeed, the combined Middle Eastern conflict of Israel and Islamic Palestinians, together with the West's warfare against theocratic Islamists, has made this conviction one of the more accepted among deeply concerned, beleaguered and persecuted churches and missionaries.

Second, its ideological baggage is repeatedly targeted by rival political voices in the West who castigate this response as a crusading, polemic and Islamophobic victimisation and demonization of Muslims.⁵⁸ Its unquestioned common cause with political Zionism and 'Israel can do no wrong' engenders a devastating critique among secular, liberal-left intelligentsia. This approach is far too aligned with conservative secular authors, such as **Geert Wilders, Bat Ye'or, Melanie Philips, Ibn Warraq, Oriana Fallaci, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Mark Steyn, Daniel Pipes**, and even left-wing writers such as **Bruce Bawer** and **Hege Storhaug**.

Third, the use of apocalyptic speculation bears very little fruit in reaching Muslims for Christ. There is no evidence that fear-mongering is ever a conversion factor among the growing number of global Muslim-Background Believers. Very few are born again into God's kingdom by fear sermons, and still fewer by a frontal attack on their native faith. If used at all, this response is best kept as an in-house private training track and left out of the global public square.

In conclusion, I would hazard to suggest that many global Evangelicals quietly fear that Islam looms as the primary agent of Satan in the soon-anticipated Middle Eastern end-time scenario, and this fear is possibly shared among both sides in our present divide. Either way, it carries far 'too much of the world' with it, especially among those most "creative" in their approaches to eschatology: Anglo and American Evangelicals.

5. The conviction of comparing Islamic heresy to Christian truths (740)

When and why was this response first used?

John of Damascus (675-749) is both the last Greek Church Father and the first researcher on Islam. He is frequently cited in contemporary circles for his wisdom in handling the volatile subject of Islam while living in dhimmitude and living a Daniel-like life of serving in the courts of five Umayyad caliphs (**al-Walid I, Sulayman, Umar II**⁵⁹, **Yazid II & Hisham**), either as official translator, as *protosymbulus* (chief agent for the Christian dhimmis) or as palace consultant. He retired at age 65 in 740 to the Greek Orthodox monastery of Mar Saba, east of Jerusalem, in order to complete his theological manuscripts, among which was a detailed catalogue "Concerning Heresy" (*peri aipseon*), in which entry 101 is the 'Ishmaelite heresy' of Islam. John Damascene, as he is also known, did not treat Islam as another religion but downgraded it to an Old Testament heretical deviation.⁶⁰

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

On the eve of Israel's penetration into pagan Canaan, Moses instructed the monotheistic concerning any new religious encounters:

*"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other Elohim (or 'another God'), which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord-Yahweh your Elohim is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord-Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul. Then **you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently**. And behold, if it be true and certain that such an abomination has been done among you, you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword..."⁶¹*

Exposing heresy and idolatry remained the burden of all the prophets and sacred historians. The old covenant cannot be imaged apart from the passionate defence and prophetic resistance to polytheism, idolatry, and all heretical deviations among the Israelite community. John Damascene's conviction, is therefore, profoundly rooted in the Old Testament.

The New Testament promotes the same protective charge to defend the flock. Concerning the legalistic heresy of Judaism, Jesus taught: "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" and Mark adds, "and the leaven of Herod".⁶² The apostles, in turn, taught church leaders to discern, expose and even denounce heretical doctrines: Judaising legalism, early strains of Gnosticism, Graeco-Roman antinomianism, and syncretism.

"Fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert."⁶³

How such heretics are to be engaged is less developed. Heretics are rarely addressed directly⁶⁴; rather, believers are warned. The warnings come through in-house writing or through in-house sermons. This method is always exercised with diplomatic caution:

"Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will."⁶⁵

John of Damascus, therefore, was on very strong New Testament ground in the way he wrote about the danger of Islam.

How widely has this response been practiced by Christians?

John Damascene's Greek texts on Islam spread quickly in Byzantine circles after 787.⁶⁶ In 1150 when **Pope Eugenius III** (1145-1153) raised up the Second Crusade, he ordered John's writings on Islam to be translated into Latin by ambassador **Burgundio of Pisa** (1110-1193). This translation was later used first by the Latin polemicist **Peter Lombard** (1110-1160), second by the Byzantine author **Nicetas Acominatus** (1214), and third by the Italian Dominican **Thomas Aquinas** (1225-1274). That John was the only Oriental Christian researching in this vein suggests how much dhimmitude and ignorance prevailed amongst Mediterranean Christians during the first six Islamic centuries.⁶⁷ Yet this conviction prevails to this day in Orthodox Christianity, and for this reason it ranks among the contemporary convictions.

Until the Enlightenment experiment began, any historical reappraisal of Islam⁶⁸ and other 'religious beliefs', were invariably classified by Christians as 'false doctrine', 'heresy' and 'false religions'. The Reformers echoed the earlier writers who argued that Muhammad's Islam was merely a false innovation that he invented⁶⁹ leading to the pejorative description of Muslims and Islam, not by their self-designations as 'believers' (*mu'minun*) or 'Muslims' (*muslimun*), but as Saracens or *saracenus*, Ishmaelites, Hagarians, or Mahometry, Muhamadism or Mahometism.

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of this conviction to call Islam heretical?

Islamic theologians have invariably repaid the heresy-charging Christians in coin. Writes the ultra-orthodox jurist **Ibn Taymiyya** (1263-1328): "*The false religion of Christians is nothing but an innovation which they invented after the time of Christ and by which they changed the religion of Christ.*"⁷⁰ To shame Muslims with charges of heresy or innovation is beyond their code of respect. In a pre-dhimmi world, Muhammad ordered either silence ("*argue not with the People of the Scripture unless it be in (a way) that is better*": S29.46) or avoidance of certain Christians as evil-doers (S5.51). Once dhimmitude prevailed, so did the Christian silence of this approach.

The chief liability of this conviction is that John Damascene appealed to his readers with Greek philosophical reasoning. This alone made his work highly suspect to any Sunni Muslim steeped in the prevailing anti-logos, anti-rationalism (and anti-Mu'tazilite) theology of the Ash'arites. Secondly, his association with Byzantine Orthodox imperialism made him an Eastern Roman Christian 'Rumi' (i.e. 'a Roman') in their eyes. Since Islam does not even recognise the authority of Christian councils, creeds and the Bible, it seems entirely specious – if not baffling – to treat Islam as an in-house Christian heretical crisis when it claims to supersede it.⁷¹

Secondly, to cry 'heresy' assumes the accused are anxious to disprove all heretical accusation from the Christian Scriptures itself: an impossible precondition for Muslims. This conviction relies heavily upon premises to which only Christians can agree, namely: Christian Scripture is true; the Qur'an is on trial. Orthodox Christianity is true; Islam is suspect. This approach, therefore, could only be expected to have any credibility within Christian circles, if even there.

Third, the tone with which this conviction is communicated is invariably tainted with scorn. This is evident in John Damascene's text and in all the subsequent writings that embrace this conviction.

There are no known conversions based on this approach. This speaks loudly.

Finally, that this approach is used only in writing (often under a *nom de plume*) conveys clearly its likely hostile reception in public. For this reason, this approach has very limited value: at best, limited to private in-house gatherings.

This Greek-reasoning and creedal-centred response to Muhammad's teachings assumes that Muhammad's doctrines were either lifted from Christian heretical teachings or that Muhammad was a Semitic 'Old Testament' heretic who invented it. If anything, when Muhammad met the Nadjran delegation, he was adamant that Christianity was flawed and 'led astray', not Islam.⁷² This response, therefore carries too much of the Graeco-philosophic world with it.

6. The conviction of persuading Muslims that Christ is superior (720)

When and why was this response first used?

The first author to employ this approach was the Byzantine emperor **Leo III** (685-740) who not only succeeded in resisting the Umayyad armies in the Second Arab Siege of Constantinople (717) but then followed up by composing a theological reply to the very devout Umayyad **Caliph 'Umar II** (717-720) who had invited him to Islam on the basis of its self-evident superiority.⁷³ 'Not so', wrote Leo III; 'it is Christianity that is superior.'

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

Our Lord Jesus, Peter and Paul were formidable debaters with whom the Herodians, Pharisees and Sadducees often went toe-to-toe in the most public arenas possible. These included synagogues, the Sanhedrin, the temple courts and large gatherings –especially Paul in Athens and in other public contexts. Christians who reject public polemics do not do so based on lack of Scriptural evidence but rather because of their cultural allergic reaction to the strong emotional exchange that may occur. Public apologetics is as dramatic as it is risk-taking. Jesus and the apostles never sought out debates but riposted their rivals and accusers brilliantly and with divine unction. Those who debate have exceptional Scriptural ground, providing they debate in a Christ-like manner –which is very hard to do. Public debates were also used for the defensive purpose of countering slanderous accusations within the churches. As Paul explains:

*"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete."*⁷⁴

How widely has this conviction to persuade Christ's superiority been practiced by Christians?

This article cannot do justice to the remarkable debaters with Muslims over the centuries: the Orthodox missionary to the Slavic world, **Cyril-Constantine** (826-869), the Nestorian doctor and philosopher **Hunayd bin Isaq** (d. 875), the Nestorian apologist **Yahya bin Adi** (893-974), the Sicilian monk **Elias the Younger** (823-903), Byzantine emperors **Romanus Lecapenus** (ruled 919-944) and **Manuel II Paleologos** (ruled 1391-1425), the converted Andalusian scholar **Pedro Alfonsi** (1062-1110), the French abbot and translator of the Qur'an, **Peter the Venerable** (1094-1156), the French Dominican **Andrew of Longjumeau** (d. 1270) and the Flemish Franciscan friar **William of Rubrock**

(1220-1293) and their debates before the Mughal Khans, **Thomas Aquinas**, **Raymund Lull**, and the Hungarian Lutheran **Baron Hans Ungnad von Sonegg** (1493-1564). All of them were passionate to debate in pen or in public.

Evangelicals inherited this mantle, and this conviction was also promoted by Anglican translator Henry Martyn, the Luther based Basel Mission, and the German pietist, **Karl Gottlieb Pfander** (1803-1865). With the brilliant exception of Dutch missiologist **Hendrik Kraemer**⁷⁵ who promoted a dialectical model between Islam and Christianity, this response was retired in the early 20th century because not only had it failed to yield fruit but also because it was associated with the much-critiqued 'Muhammadan Controversy'. It was revived in 1985 at the request of Muslim debaters seeking Christian apologists.

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of the conviction to persuade Christ's superiority?

With the advent of televised broadcasting and recording live public debates, Muslims orators have confidently demanded televised debates with celebrated Christian speakers. The most broadcasted Islamic debates are those undertaken by the Indian-born **Ahmed Deedat** (1918-2005), **Nadir Ahmed**, and **Shabir Ally**. Their Christian debating partners include apologists **David Wood**, **Jay Smith**, **Sam Shamoun**, **Richard Carrier**, **Josh McDowell**, **Anis Shorrosh**, **Father Zakaria Boutros**, **John Gilchrist**, and **Robert Douglas**. Routinely, both debaters claim victory in that both presenters invariably succeed in pleasing their followers, and both judge the debate by their own unique standards. Based upon Muslim invitations, it therefore merits to be considered a unique form of contextualisation.

The first liability is that both postmodern Westerners and Muslim thinkers react to the 'religious rational argumentation' in very different ways. Postmodern Westerners are fatigued with religious wars, religious polemics, apologetics and doctrinal debates. Any attempts to 'prove Christ superior' through debates are invariably rejected as intolerant vestiges of theocratic Christendom or the failed grand narrative of 'triumphant modernity'.⁷⁶ Only in politics is vibrant debate still condoned. Muslim debaters, for their part, are unmoved by Christian arguments because they remain convinced of the innate and inexplicable superiority of the Qur'an while remaining faithful to the intellectual tutelage of al-Ghazali's anti-rationalism theology⁷⁷ - a contradiction which accounts for the complete absence of Muslims and Christians switching sides based on the compelling 'logic' of their rival. 'Reason' is not the reason they debate.

Second, there is limited value in missionaries using debates or polemics, even as damage control against inflammatory slanderous critique and even if undertaken by Christian expert debaters who model courage and tact.⁷⁸ This approach often fails to gain the desired impact that the Lord Jesus, Peter and Paul had when they engaged in public debates. The exception is certain Middle Eastern Christians (especially Believers from a Muslim Background) debating in the free West. They consider this one of the most powerful and fruitful means of leading global Muslims to Christ.⁷⁹ This observation suggests that this approach strongly communicates western imperialism (or white Western superiority complex) when used by Westerners.

Third, most Muslims embrace the ethos of a regional variation of the Qur'anic worldview (*Koranische Weltanschauung*) while not grasping its essential core theology. This has led certain modern researchers to suggest that the *ulema*, their students and all devout Muslims follow an 'essentialist' form of Islam, while the majority mind-sets (cultural, mystic, tribal, folk, cultural, liberal and secular) belong to distinct Muslim societies. These are spoken of in the plural, by certain scholars, as "islams". (That those who attack Islam's 'essentialism' are perceived as being as

‘western’ by certain Muslim scholars, is a liability of which they seem to be unaware.). If this hypothesis (i.e. most Muslims do know the essentials) is valid, then it follows that such Muslims are not sufficiently schooled in Islamic core theology to be deeply impacted by the debates.

Fourth, open academic inquiry into the origins of the Qur’an, the apocryphal sources behind Muhammad’s message, and source criticism of the Hadiths is considered forbidden for both Muslims and investigative Westerners.⁸⁰ Christians who seek to persuade Muslims often resort to this genre of research, which is anathema in devout Muslim circles. Western source criticism of the Qur’an is antithetical to Muslims’ theology of revelation, and therefore sceptical secular academic inquiry is censured in Islam. Christians use source criticism at their own risk and preferably only in western nations.

7. The conviction of irenic dialogue with Muslims (1218)

When and why was this response first used?

The almost legendary irenic intervention of **Francis of Assisi** with **Sultan Malik** has eclipsed the lesser-known three-day questioning ‘dialogue’ of the Yemenite delegation with Muhammad in Medina (see p. 3). The dialogue failed when both parties discerned that Islam and Christianity were irreconcilable. Muhammad was insulted but he granted them a non-aggression treaty, allowing them time to go home and consult their community. They never returned. Upon his deathbed, Muhammad told his followers to annul the non-aggression treaty with the Yemenite Christians and attack them. His death wish led to the extinction of Christianity in the Arabic world for the next 1300 years. This, if you will, was both the first and last use of diplomatic questioning and inter-faith dialogue in Arabia.

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

The command to all Christians to be preeminent peacemakers and to live at peace with everyone is patently clear from Scripture:

‘Blessed are the peacemakers’. ‘Strive for peace with everyone’. ‘If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all’. ‘Let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.’⁸¹

Christians are to strive to become, among other virtues, the most irenic communities on earth. Irenic dialogue has two streams. If by ‘irenic dialogue’ we mean proclaiming a gospel of peace in a peaceful way to people of other religions and answering their questions in gracious ways, then the Book of Acts is our *magna carta*. Peter did so to Pharisaic Jews on the day of Pentecost, as Stephen did before the Sanhedrin council. Paul and Barnabas repeated this in every synagogue they visited on their first, second and third missionary journeys. They also did this in public to the polytheistic ‘Greek’ community of Lystra, and again to the “very religious” idol-worshipping Athenians.

If, however’ by ‘irenic dialogue’ we mean mutual inter-faith exchanges then we are left with only one possible example: Jesus sharing with the Samaritan woman and community. The Samaritan faith was a monotheistic syncretism of a truncated Judaism and Semitic shrine worship. The woman wished to dialogue but Jesus did not. He informed her they were not on equal grounds to do so: *“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know.”* Dialogue requires a mutual perception of equality. Jesus did not grant that to her. He proclaimed to her, instead, the Gospel in a new way: *“The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.”* He did not dialogue but

converted her; not to Judaism but to a new relationship with the Father. Outside of this brief exchange, there is no recorded example of Jesus, or the apostles, 'inquiring' or studying the religion of the Jews or 'Greeks'. Inter-religious dialogue, as we understand the term, never happened in the Old or New Testament.

The Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 is suggested as a model for irenic dialogue. This singular example, however, is a dialogue among Christians. Nor was it about mutually endorsing differences but about maintaining essential apostolic unity. If, however, the post-Vatican II Council's argument is followed (by considering Muslims and Jews 'genuine believers' in their own right), then the possibility of an Acts 15 dialogical type of encounter is plausible. Those who are open to this reformulation of what constitutes 'saving faith' are often attracted to similar convictions concerning Jews and Muslims as held inside the Insider Movements.

The two dialogical models (irenic proclamation & irenic inter-faith exchanges) best display the peaceful fruit of the Spirit, the peaceful wisdom that is from above and the 'gentle of heart' character that Jesus showed to those who were teachable.

How widely has this conviction been practiced by Christians?

The celebrated dialogue of Francis and Malik in 1217 had a distant antecedent in 781 Baghdad Debate between the Nestorian Patriarch, **Timothy I** (780-824) and the tolerant Baghdad **Caliph Muhammad al-Mahdi** (ruled 775-785).⁸² That this inter-faith dialogical debate happened once during the short-lived 'golden era' of the Abbasid Caliphate suggests how briefly this window was open.

What is noteworthy about Francis' dialogue is a lack of seeking a common theological ground with the Sultan, and his lack of concession that they worship the same God. Francis had a deep love for Muslims, a great desire for a passionate exchange, and a willingness to die for Christ. However there is no trace of academic curiosity about Islam or a desire to cultivate a spiritual communion with Muslims.⁸³ Francis' model comes in direct response to the Latin Church's indefensible hatred of Muslims. Francis needed a model that would replace the hostility towards the Saracens with love: a pure Gospel love. As long as hatred toward Muslims prevails among Christians, so will this response.

The Levant-born Dominican, **William of Tripoli** (1220-1291) expanded the inter-faith dialogical response by developing comparative religious research as well as exploring the libraries of Syria in search of historical information on Islam. After him the chapter of inter-faith irenic dialogue closed until it was revived by Louis Massignon (see p. 8) who lived, studied, dialogued with and experienced the 'Ishmaelite' spirituality of Islam first-hand. Islam, for Massignon, was a "*natural religion – a primitive law [faith], the simple worship that God has prescribed for all time- that Adam, Noah, Abraham and the prophets have always practiced in the same way.*" Massignon believed that the 'natural religion' stems from a religious instinct present in the heart of each person. Islam, in particular, writes O'Mahony, was for Massignon an ancient patriarchal religion, owning a spirituality predating the biblical promise made by God to Abraham.⁸⁴

Following the Edinburgh International Missionary Conference (1910), new irenic literature also emerged among Protestants. In 1915, and following his mastery of al-Ghazali's mystic works on Allah, Anglican **William Temple Gairdner** (1883-1924) began using the Qur'an as a *preparatio evangelica* model in dialogue.⁸⁵ He turned away from debates to the spiritual search within Islam and irenic exchanges with Muslims. Gairdner was followed by **Constance Padwick** (1886-1928) in promoting Islamic scholarship through a spiritual exploration (*communicatio in spiritualibus*) focusing on Islamic prayer life rather than sociological research. Padwick was followed by Anglican

Kenneth Cragg (1913-2012) who sought dialogue with Islam's inner spiritual life, even comparing it with the NT inner spiritual theology. His goal was to promote a mutual respect based on inner spiritual reflections. Cragg promoted the use of conciliatory language with Muslims, away from dialectical debates, and towards a generous respectful treatment of the Qur'an –allowing that the Holy Spirit could also speak through the Qur'an. So doing, the irenic inter-faith dialogical model re-appeared in Protestant circles through the scholarship of three prominent Anglican missionaries to Muslims.⁸⁶

In the current inter-faith model, irenic dialogue draws heavily from the dominant academic consensus, which postulates that orthopraxis and liturgical commonalities in 'Abrahamic monotheisms' signify a *communicatio in spiritualibus*. Seen from this perspective, the religious behaviour, rites, organisations and doctrines of each religion are defined, classified and compared as favourably as possible. The foundational conviction of this model is that all Abrahamic religions worship the same God and share the same spirituality, as defended by most Western politicians, secular intelligentsia and media luminaries.

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of the inter-faith dialogical responses?

Since 1972, Muslim scholars have welcomed 'dialogue', first with Catholics, then with ecumenical Protestants and more recently with Evangelicals. The prevailing Evangelical voices who promote the irenic inter-faith dialogical track are Anglican scholar **Colin Chapman** and Mennonite missiologist, **David Shenk**. In 2007, **Joseph Cumming** and **Mirslav Volf** composed an Evangelical response to the Jordanian Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute text called *A Common Word Between Us and You*. *A Common Word* was addressed to the Pope and Christian leaders throughout the world, and signed by 138 Muslim leaders. This text invited Christians to agree together with Muslims on mutual principles of love for God and one's neighbour, emphasising justice and freedom of religion. Its tone was essentially a *dawa*-invitation to join Islam in doing so. The Yale response was a diplomatic irenic dialogical answer displaying classical *dhimmi* respect by avoiding any Trinitarian references. The goal of this response, as defended in subsequent interviews, was to seek an opening for promoting private concerns on the behalf of minority Christians. Since the controversial September 12, 2006 Regensburg address, Pope Benedict XVI and the Vatican retired from inter-faith dialogue as persecution of Christians in Muslim communities actually increased in spite of significant dialogues. The 'dialogical model', however, continues to be used in inter-faith social issue seminars and irenic exchanges between local imams, rabbis and priests concerning common themes.

Insofar as inter-faith dialogue has no direct Scriptural antecedent, this model must draw deeply from 'common truths' that are found in the field of comparative religious research. A religion that dialogues is but one voice among many. Such a religion is ranked as a large family of denominations among global religions. It dialogues as one of many international political voices. It speaks for one branch of a vast institutional network. It identifies itself as one of many 'belief systems'. Therefore a true dialogical faith mandates itself to behave as an 'equal' in the multi-faith settings. It assumes that the vast commonality of rites, liturgies, organisation, and behaviour legitimises the claim that all religions respond to the same spiritual longings.

A second serious limitation is that it draws deeply from the Western guilt syndrome. Gracious, diplomatic, tolerant and benign portraits of Islam are invariably accompanied by an apologising, self-critiquing depiction of Christianity. It equates the type of public apology issued by contrite politicians with Christian humility and repentance. The list of apologies includes every past and present ill in Muslim nations. The first major Muslim-Christian dialogical gathering in 1976 in Switzerland led to a

Christian self-declared suspension of all missions in all Muslim nations to cleanse the Christian-Muslim relations.⁸⁷ It wishes to communicate a 'reborn' affection for Muslims, and a new context for Muslims to reappraise *Isa ibn Miriam* in a favourable light. Apologetic statements, at best, produce more dialogue conferences and more inter-faith journal entries. Imbedded in the apology is the guilt that 'White Western Christianity' has ruined so much the world, and that it must zealously seek to repair the damage. Those making the apologies apparently do not see that this attitude is as ethnocentric as the one for which they are apologising. We must rather ask: Has Western Christianity been so very powerful as to have truly ruined the Muslim world? Are contrite Christians now going to lead global teams in fixing the Muslim world by dialoguing and social activism? How is that not as imperialistic as anything before?

Finally, the inter-faith dialogical response assumes all "Abrahamic" monotheisms to be authentic faiths.⁸⁸ This assumption follows from theological inclusivism, practiced by those loyal to religious pluralism, and committed to seeing special revelation and 'truth' in all religions. This liberal ecumenical conviction is contrary to the statement of faith of the World Evangelical Alliance.

8. The conviction of contextualised bridge-building among Muslims (1460)

When and why was this response first used?

The contemporary response to build theological bridges between Christianity and Islam is not unique. The Nestorian Oriental scholar from Baghdad, **Yahya bin Adi** (893-974) graciously combined rational arguments and quotes from the Qur'an in his isolated attempt at Christian-Muslim exchanges.⁸⁹ In turn, the Italian Dominican, **Raymond Martini** (1220-1285), frequently used the Qur'an and other primary sources in his writings -even if he was more focused on exalting Christianity than on bridging comprehension between the two faiths. **Ricoldo da Montecroce** (1243-1320) followed Martini and even sought to cultivate a genuine intrinsic comprehension of Islam by studying Arabic, Islamic theology and philosophy at the Mustansiriyya University in Baghdad. His writings detailed the social conditions and mores of the Islamic communities in Palestine, Syria and Iraq. He followed Martini, however, in using his 'bridges' to extol Christianity rather than make Christianity winsome to their Qur'anic worldview.

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

The Biblical defence for contextual bridge building, writes Rick Love, lies in the belief that "God has 'contextualised' his transcultural truth in the languages and cultures of humankind"⁹⁰, meaning Scripture is 'receptor-oriented' in its very DNA. Did God not contextualise his truths to his covenant peoples in Semitic poetry, in ancient legal codes, in parables, and through Greco-Roman epistles? Are not the words 'Elohim' and Theos' contextual forms into which God poured his divine content?

Seen from this perspective, Paul is seen as to have done this continually:

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all

people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings."

Seen as such, all that Jesus did and all that the apostles did was 'contextual bridge building' and Paul's statement, 'I am all things', is the *magna carta* for new efforts to pour new kingdom wine into God-prepared cultural forms and contextual wineskins.

How widely has this response been practiced by Christians?

It was not until the 1872-1873 Decennial Missionary Conference in Allahabad, that the Anglican clergyman, **Thomas Valley French** (1825-1891) presented the possibility of using Sufi writings to bridge with the Christian concepts of sin, repentance and fellowship with God.⁹¹ This was followed by the Evangelical Oriental expert, **Sir William Muir's** 1878 work: *The Coran: Its Composition and Teaching, and the Testimony it Bears to the Holy Scriptures*. Anglican Bishop **Samuel Adjai Crowther** (1807-1891), in turn, recorded in 1891 using the Qur'anic understanding of *Isa ibn Miriam* and the Christian *kitab* to approach Yoruba Muslims in a diplomatic manner. What none of these earlier 'bridge' models assumed was the plausibility of the Holy Spirit speaking through the Qur'an.⁹²

The most recent pioneer for new 'bridge building' was the British Baptist scholar **Lewis Bevan Jones** (1880-1960). "He made practical action a plank of his missionary program; 'substantial bridges of understanding, sympathy and friendship,' he maintained, could be built 'out of little acts of simple, ungrudging kindness.'"⁹³ From this he built further 'faith' bridges with Muslims, so that there would be no radical displacement of Islam with Christianity but continuity between the two monotheisms. He clearly combined a felt-need conviction with bridge building.

As Evangelical missionaries continued to explore this approach in the second half of the 20th century, the chief focus was on building bridges from the Qur'an to the Bible, from the Islamic *Isa* to the Scriptural Jesus, from the distant *tawhid* theism of Allah to the redemptive triune love of the Father, from Muslim communities to Jesus communities, and from narrow defence of Christianity to the comparative exploration between the two faiths. It was in this missiological milieu that 'bridge building' forms of contextualisation were reborn.

The fruit of this renewed reflection was a profound awakening toward a genuine 'indigenous' approach, a contextual approach, an incarnational missiology, and an immersion commitment on the part of Western missionaries. Respect for context, culture and religion reached a new height. Missiology developed simultaneously with the innovative dynamic equivalent translation research of **Eugene Nida** (1914-2011)⁹⁴. The era of critiquing the West's Grand Narrative gave way to the empowering of local narratives. That this was happening in conjunction with Western modernity's slide into post-modernity was not evident until it had happened.

A new generation of contextually-sensitive missiologists flourished after the Lausanne Consultation in 1974 and included **Ralph Winter, Don McCurry, Phil Parshall, and Dudley Woodberry**⁹⁵. This renewed mandate, in turn, led to new research in Muslim languages, Muslim customs, Muslim people and Muslim 'folk' religion. The zeal was specifically focused on the discovery of the 'key' to a possible and much coveted 'people movement' toward the kingdom of God. Writes **David Kerr**:

*The cultural contextualisation approach reached its official approval at the Lausanne Conference in 1974 and 'The Gospel and Islam' 1978 conference in North America. What dominates is not an analysis of Islamic theology but a preoccupation with cultural and social analysis.*⁹⁶

A new generation of missiological works quickly appeared. In 1976, **Fuad 'Accad** wrote an article in *Missiology*, entitled: "The Qur'an: A Bridge to Faith." This was followed in 1979 by **Merle Inniger** who wrote of the Evangelical search for the key to remove obstacles so that a 'harvest' could come. Kenneth Cragg wrote "Islamic Theology: Limits and Bridges." ⁹⁷

In 1980, Phil Parshall launched among Protestants the controversial 'contextualisation debate' with his work *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*, in which he promoted contextualisation along the line of the recently successful contextual approaches of reaching Jews for Jesus. In the same year, the mission organisation World Vision produced the film *Unlocking the Doors*, proposing a sociological 'key' that would lead to a breakthrough in each Muslim people group. The July 1980 issue of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* featured **Samuel Schlorff's** article, "The Hermeneutical Crisis in Muslim Evangelization" and the October issue featured Gerald Otis, promoting power encounter as the needed breakthrough with Muslims.

What emerged from these exploratory years was the emergence of 'cultural insiders', Christians who chose to fully identify with the wider Islamic 'cultural' community without contextualising into the Islamic orthopraxy or rituals of Islam. Phil Parshall and Don McCurry strongly pioneered the former while avoiding the latter. Those who later practiced the latter would become known as 'religious insiders.' (See below).

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of the 'bridge building' conviction?

The earliest 'bridge builders', Yahya bin Adi, Martini, da Montecroce, French, Muir and Crowther saw precious little fruit for their creative and strenuous contextual efforts. There is a stark reality that profoundly thwarts any God-down-to-man contextualisation; namely, Qur'anic negation. Since Islam is the world's largest post-Christian religion, Muslims respond to Christianity based on what they believe they already know –and strenuously deny. As such, contextualisation may fascinate if not honour Muslims whenever 'bridge-building Christians' elevate their Islamic culture higher than any precious Christian approach. But no amount of contextualisation can remove deeply flawed Islamic premises about God, Jesus, the Bible, salvation, and all the core teachings of Scripture. The preconceived defaults of devout Muslim minds preclude them from hearing God's Good News in their own unique context. Devout Muslims negate contextualisation. "A veil lies over their hearts." The words of Paul could well be rewritten as follows:

*And how are they to believe in him of whom they have [falsely] heard?
And how are they to hear without someone preaching [another than the Qur'anic Isa]?⁹⁸*

Secondly, contextualisation workers often make several generous –not necessarily Scripturally inferred- assumptions about Islam. First, that Islam should be treated as an adjacent 'global Abrahamic religion'; second, that its communities exist in a generic cultural milieu; third, that Muslims are unaware of ('have never heard') the Christian message, and fourth, that Muslims are unsuspectingly longing to hear a contextualised Gospel communicated to them, something which Islamic theologians (and Jewish ones too) would energetically reject. The possibility that this particular Semitic monotheism might actually be anti-contextual seems never to be contemplated; rather, its eventual success is assumed.

A third limitation, as Samuel Schlorff argues, is that the current 'bridge building' perspective is shaped by 19th century theory of religion, namely that the latest form of Christianity is also the highest fulfilment in the family of religions, and that Christians must create bridges (i.e. stairs down) to other faiths; but which, in practice, leads to a 'syncretism' of embracing both.⁹⁹ Notice again the modern referencing to Christianity as one among the many religions.

Fourthly, Schlorff argues that sensitive bridging approaches to Islam grew from the regret that both westernisation and Christendom were perceived as being historically destructive ideologies which sought to radically displace 'native' religions, 'native' cultures, local customs, mores and indigenous 'tribal' contexts with their invasive worldview. Post-colonial self-critique and shame of the 'displacement imperial model' brought missiologists to question all previous approaches as insensitive, intolerant, imperialistic and destructive.

Fifthly, as 'bridge building' missiologists began to draw heavily upon new truths learned in social-scientific research, the weight of importance between special revelation (Bible-missional truths) and general revelation (all other missiological 'truths') experienced an imperceptible shift. Questions of polygamy, baptism, conversion, rituals, and identity were no longer uniquely prescribed by the Bible, but by a 'Spirit-led harmony' of Scriptural truths and contextual truths. The rise in cultural orthodoxy invariably rivalled, and at times seemed to eclipse Scriptural authority. When cultural injunctions become as orthodox (or more) than Scriptural injunctions, then missiology has joined anthropology and sociology in preserving and enshrining the hosts' cultural identity. It no longer engages in a radical transformation of it. If and when culture becomes a greater centre of gravity than divine revelation, then ethnic/tribal Christianity or new forms of patriotic syncretism are likely outcomes.

Missionaries holding to Historical Positions engage in cultural bridge-building and contextualisation (up to C4) as much as present-day Insiders ; but where they will strongly differ is in whether or not to engage in 'religious' contextualisation (C5). Yet the Achilles Heel of all so-called C-4 bridge-building efforts owes far more to social-scientific analysis than to clear antecedents in the Bible. Even the above quoted (1 Cor. 9) Pauline passage is a limited foundation for 'contextualisation' because, as David Bosch argues in *Transforming Mission* (1990), Paul's chief intent was to explain the degree of self-sacrifice he makes in preaching the Gospel, not in how successful his methods were as a religious chameleon in each sacred community.

9. The conviction of only sharing Jesus-only and your testimony (1930)

When and why was this response first used?

During the Inter-War years (1919-1939) all responses to the Muslim world had retrenched and the doldrums blanketed all global mission efforts. The final chapter of Western Christian patronage, Euro-American cultural superiority-complex, and the humiliating colonial regimes were not yet discharged. The controversial Christian-Islamic persuasion debates were silenced, charges of heresy were left unsaid, Islamic antichrist warnings were forsaken, inter-faith dialoguing had not yet reawakened, skilful diplomatic questions were largely unused, dreams and visions of Jesus Christ to Muslims had not yet emerged, and dhimmitude silence seemed to reign everywhere. Even felt-need approaches seemed crippled by the Western patronising curse.

Into this vacuum the last voice standing was the intrepid 'Jesus-Only' testimony. This view was championed by American Presbyterian missionary **J. Christy Wilson Jr.** (1891-1973) in Afghanistan. Sam Schlorff follows **J.H. Bavinck** in calling this the 'direct approach': make a direct presentation of Jesus to the Muslims and retrench from all other approaches. If speaking about Islam in any possible form was fruitless, could missionaries not just speak of what they felt personally? Do not Christians

have powerful testimonies of personally encountering their Saviour Christ Jesus? Could they not speak of spiritual and radical changes in their personal life and of their assurance of eternal life?

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

Paul clearly said this was his strategy in Corinth:

“And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” (2 Cor. 2)

And again Paul writes to Titus –as elsewhere:

“Remind themto speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.” And again: “avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.” (Titus 3)

Did not Jesus teach his disciples to avoid the religious, legalistic teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees? Jesus said:

“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16)

How widely has this conviction been practiced by Christians?

This conviction seems best illustrated today by American Frontier missionary **Carl Medearis** who wrote *Speaking of Jesus: The Art of Not-Evangelism* (2011) and *Muslims, Christians, and Jesus: Gaining Understanding and Building Relationships* (2008). Unlike Christy Wilson, Muslim conversion to Christianity is not Medearis’ goal. Indeed, he avoids discussions about Christians, Christianity, Christendom, Churches, Crusades, missions, the Trinity, and conversion. Medearis also circumnavigates any conflict between Islam and Christianity. He affirms to Muslims that they worship the same God, that Muhammad is not anti-Christian in any sense, that Islam is not inherently violent, that one can remain both Muslim and a follower of Jesus, that American-style Bible studies are not necessary, that the Qur’an is a very good book to read, and that Muhammad is a noble ‘prophet’ of sorts. (See Insider Movements).

In a wider sense, contemporary Christian visitors to the Islamic world, especially those who have never studied Islam and yet find themselves on a brief “mission’ overseas, will default to this very-American style of ‘sharing your personal testimony’. They can honestly avoid everything of which they are ignorant and rely on their only strength: their testimony.

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of this ‘share only Jesus’ conviction?

As Carl Medearis will testify, the best of all possible scenarios to share ‘Jesus’ is to avoid all previous and historical responses and exchanges between Christians and Muslims. This is the very stage which the Vatican sought in their 1965 *Nostra Aetate*:

“Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.”¹⁰⁰

This conviction assumes that Muslim theologians are as eager to whitewash the painful past as Christians are. They are not. The plea to “forget the past” is only heard from Christian quarters. This is evidence enough that the feelings are not mutual.¹⁰¹ The assumption that an ancient monotheistic religion (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) can “forget the past” presupposes that the religion is endowed with the same profound desire for repentance followed by a rebirth of sorts –as found in Christianity. That no ‘repentant’ voices are heard from Muslim theologians suggests that Christians are wishfully interpolating Christian doctrine into Islam. Where are the ‘forgive us our past’ echoes from the Muslim world? They are nowhere to be heard. That these assumptions are only entertained by Christian theologians following WW II, says more about the missiological state of the Western world –and the Christian identification with it- than the desire of Muslims to forget the past.

Secondly, we must notice that since the failure of colonial ideologies -- and the correlated rise of the Western guilt complex -- Muslim intellectuals actually desire to openly, and publically debate such a hand-wringing apologetic Christianity. For them, the historic debate is not over but just beginning. Since the 1960s, who speaks more of the West’s ‘crusading’ ethos than the Muslim world?¹⁰² That is not called ‘memory-loss’. For devout Muslims worldwide, this is the hour for the offensive with hard questions about the recent and distant past –especially the political questions. This is the moment in history to definitively prove Islam’s supremacy. As Jay Smith argues repeatedly, how can Christians avoiding the hardest questions asked by Muslims be anything less than a sign of its imminent demise? Which Christian debaters who will only ‘testify of Jesus’ not find themselves humiliated by their opponents’ questions?

Thirdly, this testimonial approach is only attempted by certain American pietistic Evangelicals. There is no historical precedent in any Oriental, Orthodox, Catholic, or historic Liberal church of its missionaries sharing their private, personal life-changing testimony as the ‘key’ to the Muslim hearts. This conviction, therefore, says more about the reigning ethos in American Evangelical churches than about a profound grasp of what Muslims need.

Fourthly, the ‘speak only of Jesus’ conviction comes extremely close to classical dhimmi responses. Which biblical virtue is being proclaimed by the steady avoidance of speaking about Islam and fourteen centuries of history in any way but in a positive way –as does Medearis? Does denial of our collective unity in Christ, our shared heritage, our global communion, and our historical pilgrimage bring forth a purer devotion to Christ? Is Jesus as ashamed of the ‘church historic’ as many Anglo-American Christians are today? That this shame is rooted in the Western guilt complex suggests it is not born out of a missiological breakthrough but out of a theological fatigue in the West.

Finally, how is this not the latest trend in the Americanisation of ministries to Muslims? Only personal-faith American Evangelicals could imagine that ‘sharing only Jesus’ could be an adequate response to the historical global challenge of Islam. How does the message ‘It’s only about you and Jesus’ prepare new disciples for a radical transformation of the mind, of their community, and of their nation?

10. The conviction of preserving insider movements (1938)

When and why was this response first used?

Philip Jenkins, in his work, *The Lost History of Christianity*, outlines how dual religious identity was not infrequent, especially following Muslim conquest of formerly Christian regions. He correctly identifies them as Crypto-Christians and finds evidence of them spanning several centuries.¹⁰³ Write Jenkins:

As early as the 1330s, the patriarch of Constantinople unofficially sanctioned "double faith," promising that the church would work for the salvation of Anatolian believers who dared not assert their faith openly for fear of punishment, provided that they tried to observe Christian laws. After the fall of Crete in the seventeenth century, the patriarch of Jerusalem similarly permitted surface conversion to Islam on grounds of "inescapable need."

This is the first evidence of 'unintended' Insider Movements (IM) in church history, and as Jenkins details it, it has existed for centuries.¹⁰⁴ This covert response resurfaced as a proposed 'intentional' missiological strategy just before WW II in Beirut. Sam Schlorff observes that the Near Eastern Christian Council meeting in Beirut in 1938 proposed that 'followers of Jesus' stay inside Islam; that converts not call themselves Christians; and that alternate forms of baptism be sought. This approach did not bear any fruit but the vision reemerged after the Lausanne Consultation of 1974, particularly under the missiological leadership of **Charles Kraft** (b. 1932-) and John Wilders (1924-2011).¹⁰⁵

How does this response seek to imitate the ethos of Christ?

The Biblical foundation for the Insider's missiology is found in peripheral Scriptural texts which hint at God's unique treatment of individuals in non-covenant religions and the surprising ways way he seems to permit them to remain in their original religious community.

- The peripheral desert mandate assigned to Ishmael (*I will bless him*) suggests a future divine fulfilment outside the Jewish faith. (Genesis 17:20)
- The singular visit of the magi suggests that (these possible) Persian influenced Ishmaelite-Arabs were recipients of divine revelation in both star-gazing and in dreams. (Matt. 2:11)
- The remarkable Melchizedek appearance suggests a union of *El* (Melchizedek's Canaanite deity) and *Yahweh* (Abraham's deity) with them both worshiping the same God. (Gen. 14:18-24)
- Balaam communicates with *Yahweh* even though he is not of the covenant community. God speaks to 'prophets' outside of the twelve tribes of Israel. (Numbers 22)
- God spoke directly to the Semitic monotheist Eliphaz in Job 42, rebuking him and instructing him to seek reconciliation through Job.
- Namaan received Elisha's permission to practice a brief obligatory homage to an idol (2 Kings 5:18) suggesting God can be worshipped outside the covenant community.
- God heard and responded to the prayers of non-Jewish pagan sailors (Jonah 1).
- Nicodemus practiced a dual faith as a secret disciple of Jesus. (John 3) Could not Muslim followers of Jesus be seen in the same light today?
- The Samaritan woman continued to worship among the Samaritans, not in Jerusalem. (John 4) And again, when the Samaritans came to faith, they stayed in their Samaritan community. (Acts 8:14-17) Could not Muslim followers of Jesus be seen in the same light today?
- God instructed Christians at the Jerusalem Council to not burden non-Jewish Greek believers with Judaism. This is true of other monotheisms as well. (Acts 15)

- Paul cited two Greek religious texts and assumed the Athenians were worshipping the same God of whose purposes they were ignorant. If Paul spoke today, surely he would use the Qur'an the way he used Greek sacred texts. (Acts 17)
- Paul encouraged Greek Christians to remain in the place where God called them, which was a social-religious community of Corinth (1 Cor. 7:17-20). Could not Muslim followers of Jesus do the same today?

This unique anthology of verses strongly suggests to Insiders that God's kingdom (i.e., all true believers) is greater than the church ('Christians' in established churches). As they see it, the former can still belong to other religions, such as Judaism, Samaritanism, or Islam. The debate and divide among Evangelicals is hinged on the legitimacy for a kingdom of god that is both/and: both 'Christians' and 'followers of Jesus' in peripheral contexts.

How widely has this response been practiced by Christians?

Intentional Insider Movements are very recent in mission history and are limited to Evangelicals. There is no IM promoted by Roman Catholics, Liberal Ecumenicals, or Orthodox missionaries. Some of the foremost Evangelical IM advocates are Rick Brown, Stuart Caldwell, Paul-Gordon Chandler, Kevin Higgins, Rebecca Lewis, Joshua Massey, John Travis and Dudley Woodberry. Those mission organisations which have been the most receptive to IM experiences are, among others, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Frontiers, Navigators, and Fuller Seminary.

Insiders testify how they are witnessing some of the most amazing responses to Jesus ever known and that in some of the most resistant corners of the Islamic world. As they see it, how could this be so wrong when so many are coming to Jesus in this new way in very hostile areas? IMers join inter-faith dialoguers in promoting the most sensitive, most respectful treatment of Islam, of the Qur'an, of Muhammad, and of Muslims identities. IM advocates allow that each movement can determine the degree to which it wishes to commune with 'Christians' from the historic heritage. As they see it, continuity with the original community is of more value than joining 'foreign' branches of Christianity. Indeed, they denounce any form of assistance in moving away from the original Islamic community as a form of "extraction".

While the axiom, 'all truth is God's truth' is not unique to IMers, it is very instrumental, if not a critical *a priori* assumption in their missiology. As they see it, all 'general revelation' belongs to God and must be discerned and attributed to him. This was most recently illustrated in the CT interview of "Abu Jaz" by "Gene Daniels". While Abu Jaz would consider himself a cultural insider, his approach is similar to that of religious insider advocates who also begin with 'general revelation' in Islam. Paul, he argues, "started with general revelation but ended up with Jesus."¹⁰⁶

IMers are among the best-informed researchers on the diverse identities within the Muslim world, which some call 'islams'. They believe they avoid the pitfalls of 'essentialist' researchers on Islam (i.e., Islam is defined by its essentials) and which they believe is the cardinal defect in all other research done by proponents of the Historical Positions.

What have been Muslim responses and the liabilities of the Insiders' conviction?

Jenkins notes that the art of Crypto-Christian dissimulation was not lost on Muslim observers in previous centuries. Muslims have always been skilled at this in their own right; religious dissimulation (*Taqiyyah*) is permitted. While benign tolerance for Jesus-praying Muslims is evident in many Islamic communities, there is no internal Islamic conviction that would prevent a vigilant

community or a zealous imam from denouncing ‘Muslim Followers of Jesus’ as heretics and attacking them with a persecuting zeal. Inquisition is always justified by zealots to bring hypocrites back to the pure faith.¹⁰⁷

That ‘Insiders’ are critiqued as severely by devout Muslim leaders as by fellow Christians is a double-edged sword for these proponents. To devout Muslim leaders, ‘insiders’ lead their faithful into the worst of sins (*shirk*) in praying to the Lord Jesus as the Son of God. Such theological innovations (*bidah*) are seen as sheep stealing, deception, and pseudo-Islam.¹⁰⁸ To those in the Historical Positions, Insiders are erring and/or heretical colleagues.¹⁰⁹ These are painful charges.

The first limitation with which IM missiology must wrestle is that it relies on a synthesis between a Christianised-reading of the Qur’an and a human-religion-friendly reading of the Bible.¹¹⁰ It presumes a sort of ‘cousin kinship/friendship’ between the Bible and the Qur’an. It is believed that the Holy Spirit speaks through general revelation in the Qur’an and that the Father has created all human religions as redemptive depositories of certain divine truths. God’s special revelation (in the Bible) is coupled with God’s general revelation (in the Qur’an) to form a newly evolved religious entity within Islam: ‘Muslim Followers of Jesus’ or as others call it, ‘Chrislam’. While proponents see this as a new movement of the Spirit¹¹¹, the burden of proof is on IMers to explain why all such similar previous attempts at synthesis in church history (and which are always hailed as divine movements by its proponents) were eventually denounced as syncretism by orthodox believers.

Second, it is hoped that IMers will pause when they realise that their definition of religion is entirely secular. They speak of Islam as ‘a particular system of faith and worship’ without any reference to its truthfulness, its spiritual state, or its verdict under God’s Word. **Kevin Higgins** writes: “*we may speak of religion as a sub-system (religion) of a sub-system (ideology) of culture.*” This is not a biblical but a secular social-scientific definition and it assumes that God views ‘religion’ as modernists or postmodernists do. IMers need to wrestle with this. What if this definition is in sharp conflict with a prior theology of religion? Missiologist J.H. Bavinck argues that the real starting point for religion lies in Romans 1. Namely, all ‘men’ suppresses the truth in unrighteousness, exchanging God’s glory for the glory of symbolic images, exchanging truth for falsehood, and exchanging natural relations for unnatural relations. This is the origin of all human-created religions. For IM advocates, religion is the spiritual identity of a larger cultural identity: it is largely generic with certain questionable content. For detractors, all religions – and Islam in particular – are “*ungodliness and unrighteousness*” systemic worldviews in revolt against God’s revelation, God’s glory, God’s truth, and God’s mandate for human relations. Romans 1 and IMer definitions of religion are mutually exclusive.

Following from the above, IM advocates see human religions as having (God-prepared) truth-receptor structures and concepts into which they can pour new biblical meaning, the way linguists use dynamic equivalency when they translate the Bible into a Muslim language. This assumes God wishes to convert/transform religions as well as people. Where is the Scriptural basis for ‘converting’ legalistic Judaism into Christo-Judaism, converting Greco-mythology into Christo-Greek mythology, converting the Samaritan religion into a Christo-Samaritan religion? Where does the conviction come from that religions function like languages, if not from contemporary social-scientific analysis?

Next, IMers seem inspired by what can best be described as an ‘Anglo-American academic love for social-scientific solutions’ (in short, the A3-S3 syndrome). IM’s most immediate roots trace back to post-Lausanne Consultations where pragmatic missiological experiments were openly encouraged. This invitation received its best reception from American and Anglophone Islamic practitioner scholars, beginning with early ‘bridge-builders’ Phil Parshall, Charles Kraft, John Wilders, **Gerald Anderson**, and Dudley Woodberry, among others. That all these names are American scholars,

frequently working out of California, should interest us. We also notice that their innovative 'inside' approaches were entirely predicated upon extensive research in ethnography, anthropology, sociology, linguistic-anthropology, and recent studies in the theology of religions. This begs the question: how is the IM genius not the 'first-born son' of an A3-S3 missiology?

As well, among these same scholars grew an inter-disciplinary interest in the anti-essentialism studies promoted by Comparative Religious research. The mantra of this approach is 'Islam is not monolithic'.¹¹² This new field of anti-essentialism ('accidentalism' or 'peripheralism') has inspired much social scientific research but it too is not without its own 'worldly' shadow. As S. Sayyid argues, "anti-essentialism is simply another means of promoting and endorsing western hegemony."¹¹³ That it is also categorically rejected by most devout Islamic scholars attests to its foreign status.

A critical constellation by which IM missiology steers is the common conviction that "all truth is God's truth"¹¹⁴. This aphorism implies that a religion, such as Islam, must be evaluated for how much 'truth' quotient it might contain, not for how much darkness they adamantly defend or for how many half-truths they enshrine. This analysis immediately fails the religious 'light' test of John 3:

"And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

The axiom 'all truth is God's truth' immediately falters when the full 'light' of the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to anyone outside of the kingdom of God. All 'men' in Paul's Romans 1.18 view, universally reject 'the way, the truth, and the life of Christ' or as he says again: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside". Far from coming to the truth, people recoil from it. This axiom, therefore fails to attract anyone to Christ. What it does suggest, however, is that this maxim allows Evangelicals to explore a pragmatic working relationship with all disciplines of modernity and postmodernity, rather than a counter-cultural prophetic proclamation from Scripture.¹¹⁵

If IM approaches do work, and their advocates are humbled by 'amazing numbers receiving God's grace' through their approach,¹¹⁶ this ushers in a new problem. If a 'divine movement' seems to 'work', we must then ask the harder question: how deeply is this approach leaning on contemporary pragmatism and utilitarianism? As Mike Wakely summarised in *The Search for the Golden Key* (EMQ Jan. 2004); while "the list is endless", missiological keys that work with Muslims have "dangers and benefits" associated with their pursuit. The pragmatic mantra 'if it works, do it!' must never be equated with the endorsement of the Holy Spirit. Twenty centuries of Christianity have amply demonstrated that religious nominalism, religious legalism, religious mysticism and religious patriotism 'work' better than 'the narrow way and the narrow door' of the Gospel. As contemporary sub-Saharan Christianity amply demonstrates, religious syncretism works far better than the "pure and undefiled religion" of James, which will not have anything to do with the 'world' -- read, human ideologies and syncretism.¹¹⁷

Do IM advocates realise that, together with inter-faith dialoguers, they too are completely in harmony with academic theories concerning the 'theology of religion' and 'comparative religious research'? As noted in the festschrift review of Dudley Woodberry *Toward Respectful Understanding & Witness among Muslims* (2012):

"[Sufi scholar] Abdolkarim Soroush's 'distinctions' on Islam as a 'religion' sounded strikingly similar to arguments advocated by current leading Insider Movement (IM) thinkers, among whom Woodberry is a significant voice. Soroush distinguishes between 1)

religion and our understanding of religion; 2) between essential and accidental aspects of religion; 3) between minimalist and maximalist interpretation of Islam; 4) between religious belief and religious faith; 5) between religion as an ideology/identity and religion as truth. Are Soroush ... and other IM advocates all drawing from similar sources, or from each other?"

These 'distinctions of religion' reign in academia and IMers speak their language. They express themselves in post-modern constructs and some even call themselves 'Evangelical post-modernists'.

Crypto-Christianity has all but failed historically. The few tiny traces left in places like Japan suggest that it is the least reproducible model of Christianity. They only survive in the most distant mountains, marshes or island villages. This conviction lacks the ability to self-propagate successfully into a second or third generations. IMs promise to follow the tragic trail of Crypto-Christianity, even if its name, mission, and strategy are innovative and courageous.

Conclusion

Islam is formidable. This text has briefly surveyed ten convictions, ten responses, ten approaches and ten limitations vis-à-vis Islam. Which religion is capable of generating ten distinctly different Christian approaches to her if not Islam? Why does the seeming impossibility of Islam cause Christians to add 'more' than the Gospel in any given approach? Over the span of history, why is it that for every Muslim who became a Christian, nine Christians have become Muslims? The historic church does not know a more painful Gordian Knot.

Muslim rejections of Christianity are also formidable. The ten-fold Christian approaches to Islam are as historic as they are recent. We are still doing what we have always been doing. All ten approaches can be defended as "this is what Christ and his apostles would do"; yet each one falls painfully short—even in combination. Why are Christians always seeking new approaches if not because all former means seemed so painfully inadequate? Which missionary, which missiologist, which denomination has not at some point altered their position on how to reach Muslims?

Our missionary limitations are formidable. This is the core of the article: there but for the grace of God, we will all fail once again. Indeed, with "man it is impossible". No conviction is above serious limitations. Not even a combined 'dream team' of convictions has offered us the elusive 'key' to kingdom success. Yet, in spite of us and through us more Muslims are turning to Christ than ever before. Even more amazing, there is no 'silver bullet' to which we can give credit. This makes our inadequacies baffling; God is doing something supernatural among Muslims that is both independent of us and yet indirectly related to most efforts. Not a single approach triumphs as 'God's choice' and yet God is blessing many—albeit not necessarily all—contemporary approaches.

In conclusion, this article does not imagine there to be a knockout punch against any conviction nor a triumphant 'winner takes all' response, but rather a charitable need to tolerate the clay feet of every approach. Each response is like a minority party in a minority government; unless they find some way to align themselves, they will never form a governing platform.

It is hard to repent from that which you cannot discern. Each response needs to observe its worldly shadow. Because all ten approaches are somehow ideologically handicapped, they need to lean on mutual charitable tolerance and critique. All ten responses are found among Evangelicals to a certain degree; therefore it is incumbent of all Evangelicals to hold their nose with their left hand while giving the right hand of fellowship with their right, even as we must do over onerous debates

concerning denominations, eschatology, soteriology, pneumatology and cosmology. It is neither ideal nor pleasant but an inseparable schism and a haemorrhaging divide is worse. Bridge we must because we are weaker if we fail; but if we do bridge, then *"all things are possible with God."*

¹ Note: throughout this text, each first mention of an authors is in bold and accompanied by dates. See Kierkegaard: *Papers and Journals*, Translated by Alastair Hannay, 1996 P. 63 and 161: *"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."*

² *We believein the Holy Scriptures as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct...*

One God , eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...

Our Lord Jesus Christ , God manifest in the flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His vicarious and atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work, and His Personal return in power and glory...

The Salvation of lost and sinful man through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith apart from works, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit...

The Holy Spirit , by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a holy life, to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ...

The Unity of the Spirit of all true believers, the Church, the Body of Christ...

The Resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

³ The preferred Roman Catholic term is *incarnational* ministries, while the Protestant term was initially 'indigenisation' a term popularised by Henry Venn (1796-1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) and which, in turn, was replaced by contextualisation following its first missiological usage by the WCC in 1972.

⁴ 1 Cor. 11.19 ESV

⁵ Paul will call such ideologies or 'religious irritants' *"any different doctrine, deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, and every wind of doctrine, human cunning, craftiness; philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world"* (I Tim. 1.3, 4.1 & 6.3; Eph. 4:14, Col. 2.8) which contrasts with *"good doctrine, sound words, the teaching that accords with godliness, the doctrine of God,* etc. (I Tim. 4.6; 6.1 & 3; II Tim. 4.3; Titus 1.9; 2.1 & 10).

⁶ The terms 'convictions', 'responses' and 'approaches' will be used interchangeably throughout.

⁷ I am in debt to the insights of alternate 'list' of approaches, as suggested by David Kerr and Sam Schlorff.

⁸ The alleged claims that Waraqah ibn Nawfal was a Nestorian monk or that Khadijah was a Christian are popularly circulated by such authors as Al-Jibouri, Yasin T. *Khadija Daughter of Khuwaylid*, (1994) but any such 'Christian' content relies on hagiolatrous material written centuries after the events by Al-Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar* (d. 1698), Al-Sayyuti's *Tarikh al Khulafa* (d 1505), Abul-Faraj *al-Isfahani's Aghani* (d. 967), Abu Ja'far r al-Tabari *Tarikh al-rusul wal muluk* (d. 923). Whatever concrete information cannot be established by the Qur'an is therefore purely speculative.

⁹ As copied and only preserved in Ibn Hisham's biography, which was written before his death in 834, 200 years after Muhammad's death. As there are scant primary sources to either verify or falsify Ibn Hisham's account, much of the 'Muhammad Narrative' is either alleged or assumed to be true because it functions as historical truth in the Muslims' minds.

¹⁰ S. 5:82-86: *"nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, "We are Christians": because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant.*

¹¹ Ibn Ishaq. *The Life of Muhammad: sirat rasul Allah*, (transl. Guillaume, A.) 1955, Oxford University Press, p. 146.

¹² Wim Raven, *Texts On The Negus Of Abyssinia*, Journal of Semitic Studies, XXXIII (2), 1988 , p. 201. The Negus' extremely high view of Mary caused him to interpolate his Mariology into Islam and grant it refugee status. With his Monophysite religious sentiments satisfied, he missed an enormous opportunity to learn Muhammad's intended meaning of his new faith.

¹³ Luke 6, 27, Acts 10.38 & Romans 12.14ff.

14 For more on the 'apostle of love' see David A. Kerr. 'Christian Mission and Islamic Studies: Beyond
 Antithesis.' *IBMR*, Jan 2002, Dulles, Avery. *A History of Apologetics*. Corpus of New York: 1971, pp. 96-
 98; and Samuel Zwemer. *Raymund Lull. First Missionary to the Moslems*. 1902.

15 See also Robert Spencer. *The Catholic 'loving answer', 'From Crescent to Cross'*. Nov-Dec 2005, pp. 30-
 33; André Pradel. *St. Vincent Ferrer, His Life, Spiritual Teaching, and Practical Devotion*, Tr. by T.a.
 Dixon. 2012.

16 To the Mughal court between 1579-83, in 1593, and then a team led by Jerome Xavier from 1594-
 1614. Goddard, Hugh. *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*. Chicago: 2000, p. 117. All three
 missions failed.

17 See Padwick, Constance E. *Henry Martyn: the pioneer translator who opened the Scriptures to the
 Muslim and Hindu World*. 1922

18 See Vander Werff, Lyle L. *Christian Mission to Muslims: Anglican and Reformed Approaches to India
 and the Near East: 1800-1938*. (Pasadena, (USA): William Carey Library, 1977), p. 53.

19 Samuel Zwemer. *The Moslem World*. (volume 1, January, 1911) as cited by Warren
 Larsen in *The Zwemer Journal*: editorial. Vol. 1, No. 1, 2007

20 Surah 5:51.

21 William Jackson. 'The Problem Of Dependency In Bangladesh And How Cross-Cultural Workers Can
 Avoid Perpetuating It'. 2012. *WMAUSA*. P. 3.

22 Avery T. Willis Jr. *An Indonesian Revival: Why Two Million Came to Christ*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey
 Library. 1977.

23 Seyyed Hossein Nasr. 'Islamic-Christian Dialogue -Problems And Obstacles To Be Pondered And
 Overcome'. *The Muslim World*. Vol. 88, No. 3-4 July-October, 1998, p. 231.

24 C. René Padilla. *Holist Mission Issue Group Report*. Lausanne Occasional Paper, (patayya, Thailand,
 2004) notes on p. 17: "Rodger C. Bassham has pointed out, the Lausanne Congress "produced some
 marked changes in evangelical mission theology....through broadening the focus of the Congress from
 evangelism to mission" (1979:231).

25 Citing Ninian Smart in Irving Hexham. *Concise Dictionary of Religion*. IVP, 1993, p. 187.

26 Their bishop was probably Abu Harithah ibn 'Alqamah.. See P.S: Ibn Hisham, *Abd al-Malik, al-Sirat al
 Nabaviyyah*, Egypt 1955, Section I, p., 575.

27 2 Timothy 2.24-26 ESV.

28 According to Alan Kirby, digimodernism is "the cultural effects of new technologies. It's the impact of
 computerization on texts and the arts. It's a whole new cultural paradigm, the successor to
 postmodernism. *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure
 Our Culture*. (2009).

29 See for example, CNN, 'Muslims around the world: Your thoughts on what Islam means today', August
 14, 2010. <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/08/12/muslims.on.islam/index.html>

30 There was a brief period when it was tolerated. During the first century of Abbasid Caliphate (750-
 850) it flourished in elite academic circles but then went into decline until it was shut down
 irreversibly by Islam's greatest theologian al-Ghazali (1058-1111). The period was called *ijtihad* or
 openness and both academic sciences and philosophy (esp. the Mu'tazilites) thrived under its brief
 patronage of some 70-years (chiefly from 750-820).

31 Written by Abu `Abdullah Muhammad Ibn `Omar Ibn Waqid al-Aslami (c. 748 - 822 AD).

32 Benjamin Kedar. *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches towards the Muslims*. 1984, pp. 5

33 Kedar. *Op. cit.*, p. 78.

34 Kedar. *Op. cit.*, pp. 5, 11 & 78.

35 Drawn from Charles de Foucauld. *Reconnaissance au Maroc: 1883-1884*. ed. Rene Bazin.
L'Osservatore Romano. No. 47, 23 November, 2005, p. 5.

36 Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: **Nostra Aetate**. Proclaimed By
 His Holiness Pope Paul VI On October 28, 1965, item 3, p. 2.

37 *Op cit.*

38 For further studies on dhimmitude, see the writings of Bat Ye'or: *The Decline of Eastern Christianity:
 From Jihad to Dhimmitude* (1996), *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide* (2001), *Eurabia:
 The Euro-Arab Axis* (2005).

39 1 Cor. 1:26-29 ESV

40 Acts 1:8 & Mark 16:15 ESV

41 Romans 10:14-17 ESV

42 2 Tim. 4:1-8 ESV
43 *Fredergarii et aliorum Chronica* as cited in Kedar p. 28.
44 Who had died in 311 AD.
45 Palmer, Andrew; Sebastian Brock; and Robert Hoyland. *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian
Chronicles: including two seventh-century Syriac apocalyptic texts.* (Liverpool: Liverpool University
46 Press 1993, p. 225.
See also Benjamin Kedar 1984:29-30; Alexander, Paul J. "The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman
Emperor and Its Messianic Origin". *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 41. (1978),
pp. 1–15; Tolan, John V. *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (NY, Columbia
University Press, 2002); Hoyland, Robert G. *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of
47 Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam.* Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997.
"We have one Father---even God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me,
for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not
understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the
devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has
nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own
character, for he is a liar and the father of lies". (John 8.41b-44)
48 Eph. 4.27, 6.11 and 1 Tim 3.6-7.
49 1 John 2.18, 22, 4.3 & 2 John 1.7
50 2 Tim. 2:22-26 ESV
51 Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), p 54, 68. See Theophanes,
Chronographia ann. 734: 'the Passion of St. Peter of Capitolia'.
52 See Gaudeul, J.M., *Encounters & Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History.* I & II. Pontificio Instituto di
Studi Arab e d'Islamistica. Roma 2000. p. 61; and B. Kedar , *op cit.* Pp.16-17
53 Kedar, Benjamin. *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches towards the Muslims.* 1984, p. 59
54 Carole Hillenbrand & Thomas Madden. 'Why the Crusades Still Matter' *National Catholic Reporter*,
Feb 2006, pp. 12-14.
55 Kedar *op cit.* p.:57
56 Five were martyred in Selville in 1220, seven in Tuscan in 1227, and four in Jerusalem in 1391: Kedar
op cit. p. 126.
57 Take these popular titles, for example: Joel Rosenberg's four eschatological novels: *The Last Jihad*
(2002), *The Last Days* (2003), *The Ezekiel Option* (2005) and *The Copper Scroll* (2006) and his non-
fiction *Epicentre* (2006); Reza Safa. *Inside Islam: Exposing and Reaching the World of Islam* (1996);
Mark A. Gabriel. *Islam and Terrorism: What the Quran Really Teaches About Christianity, Violence and
the Goals of the Islamic Jihad* (2002); R.C. Sproul. *The Dark Side of Islam.* (2003); Robert Spencer. *The
Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* (2005); Gregory M. Davis. *Religion of Peace?:
Islam's War Against the World*; Christopher Catherwood. *Christians, Muslims and Islamic Rage.*
(2003); Grant R. Jeffery. *War on Terror: Unfolding Bible Prophecy.* (2002); Randal Price. *Unholy War:
America, Israel and Radical Islam.* (2001).
58 See Karen Armstrong. 'Islamophobia: We need to accept the 'other'. [The Globe and Mail](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/islamophobia-we-need-to-accept-the-other/article534337/) May 26,
2012. [http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/islamophobia-we-need-to-accept-the-
other/article534337/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/islamophobia-we-need-to-accept-the-other/article534337/) ; John L. Esposito. 'Islamophobia: A Threat to American Values?' [Huff Post
Politics.](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-l-esposito/islamophobia-a-threat-to_b_676765.html) August 10, 2010. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-l-esposito/islamophobia-a-threat-
to_b_676765.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-l-esposito/islamophobia-a-threat-to_b_676765.html) ; Amir Saeed. 'Islamophobia and Capitalism.' Thinking Thru' Islamophobia
Symposium Papers. Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies Organised by S.Sayyid Abdoolkarim Wakil
May 2008. www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk .
59 Umar II was the most devout Islamic caliph of all the Umayyad caliphs.
60 My sources for John of Damascene are: David A. Kerr. 'Christian Mission and Islamic Studies: Beyond
Antithesis.' *IBMR*, Jan 2002, pp. 8-13. Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus: The "Heresy of the
Ishmaelites"*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972; and Richard J. H. Gottheil, Apocalypse of Bahira: "A Christian
Bahira Legend," *ZA* 13 (1898): pp. 189-242.
61 Deuteronomy 13.1-3; 14-15 ESV. Transliteration of Elohim and Yahweh, as well as use of bold, is mine.
62 Matthew 16.6 & Mark 8.15.
63 Acts 20.29-31.
64 Exceptions would be: Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8) and Bar Jesus.
65 2 Tim. 2.23-26 ESV.

66 Thirty years after his name was cleared of heretical charges.

67 See David A. Kerr. 'Christian Mission and Islamic Studies: Beyond Antithesis.' *IBMR*, Jan 2002, pp. 8-13. Sahas, Daniel J. *John of Damascus: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972. This approach had a brief rare appearance during the early Abbasid Caliphate when Nestorian Christians were given a public voice under the tolerant caliph al-Mamun (813-834). The Nestorian theologian Eustathius Al-Kindi used this openness to write against Islam and engage in philosophical polemics in the form of a long letter to the caliph's cousin, Abdullah ibn Isma'il al-Hashimi, who had earlier invited Eustathius to embrace Islam. This work, as well Abdullah's reply, was published in 830, some ninety years after John of Damascus' work. Writes Guillaume: "*Al-Kindi's Christian apology is significant, because it was written over eleven hundred years ago by an Arab who was nurtured in the ancient indigenous Arabian culture and manners. Thus, Al-Kindi's critique of Muhammad's religion arose from the very heart of ancient Arabian sentiments. It was argued on the basis of ancient Middle Eastern values, and not Western European ideals. Both disputants chose to remain unknown for personal safety reasons. So, the names they chose to use were 'pen names.'*" (A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*. Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 639.)

68 See Henri de Boulainvilliers: *La Vie de Mahomet*, (1728), Hermann Samuel Reimarus: *Abhandlungen von den vornehmsten Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion* (1754), Johann Jacob Reiske (1715-1774) and Silvestre de Sacy (1758-1838).

69 Adam Francisco. *Martin Luther and Islam: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Polemics and Apologetics*. p. 225.

70 Quoted by Adam Francisco, *op cit*, p. 226, from Thomas Michel. *A Muslim's Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's Al-Jawab Al-Sahih* (Delmar: Caravan books, 1984), p. 143.

71 Compare Surah Tawbah, 9.33: "It is Allah Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and a true religion that will prevail over all other religions, though the polytheists may be averse." (cf. also S3.85).

72 Muhammad saw Christians as 'turning back from the truth. Surah 3.65-66: "Ye People of the Book! Why dispute you about Abraham, when the Law and the Gospel were not revealed till after him? Have ye no understanding? Ah! You are those who fell to disputing in matters of which you had some knowledge! But why dispute ye in matters of which you have no knowledge? It is Allah who knows, and you who know not! ... 69: "It is the wish of a section of the People of the Book to lead you astray. But they shall lead astray (not you), but themselves, and they do not perceive!"

73 Umar II was the caliph who mandated his theologians to begin the editing of the authentic Hadiths.

74 2 Cor. 10.5-6 ESV.

75 Hendrik Kraemer. *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. 1947.

76 Admittedly, even this paper leans upon the formulation of academic knowledge through classifications, definitions, primary and secondary source research, first-order reasoning, and academic protocols –all of which are strongly associated with Western trans-Atlantic cultures.

77 The two most influential works of al-Ghazali ((1058-1111) were *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* and *Deliverance from Error*, both of which destroyed any reliance on human reason to ascertain God's nature, creation or the human mind. The most insightful treatment of the consequences of the Asharite versus Mu'tazilite controversy on modern Islamism is by Robert Reilly. *The Closing of the Muslim Mind*. (2011)

78 Compare Jay Smith, "Courage in Our Convictions: A Case for Debate in Islamic Outreach" July, 1998 issue of EMQ: www.gospelcom.net/bgc/emis/1998/courage.htm.

79 The singular success of Coptic Father Zakary Boutros is probably the most notorious example.

80 Robert Reilly illustrates this very precisely in the 1995 Egyptian apostasy trial of Dr. Nasr Hamid abu Zayd who "provoked an uproar for suggesting that the Qur'an was a partially human product because language is a human convention." *op. cit.* pp. 194-195

81 Matt. 5.9, Heb. 12.14, Rom. 12.18, 14.19.

82 My sources for Bishop Timothy I include Gaudeul, J.M., *Encounters & Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History*. I & II. Pontificio Instituto di Studi Arab e d'Islamistica. Roma 2000; Philip Jenkins. *The Lost History of Christianity* (2008); and Alphonse Mingana, "Timothy's Apology for Christianity" *The Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library* (Manchester), Vol. 12, No. 1 (Jan. 1928), pp. v-vii, 1-15

83 My preferred sources for Francis of Assisi are Benjamin Kedar. *Op cit*. Hugh Goddard, *op. cit.* and Christine Mallouhi. *Waging Peace on Islam*. (2000).

84 O'Mahony, Anthony. 'Reflections on the Encounter Between Christianity and Islam'. *The Merton Journal, Advent*. 2002: vol. 9. No. 2, p. 9.

85 Gairdner, William H. T. 1915. "Moslem tradition and the Gospel Record: The Hadith and the Injil." *Moslem World* 5 (October 1915) pp. 349-379.

86 I am following the extensive analysis of Sam Schlorff on Kenneth Cragg as found in chapter 6 'A New Hermeneutic in Qur'anic Interpretation', in *Missiological Models in Ministry to Muslims*. (2006), pp. 72-79.

87 John Azumah. *Christian Mission and Islamic Dawa: Proceedings of the Chambesy Dialogue*. The Islamic Foundation, Leicester: 1982. *Missionalia* 34:1 (April 2006:5)

88 Egyptian-born Magdi Cristiano Allam, 61, a prominent journalist and outspoken critic of Islam, publicly entered the Catholic Church on March 22, 2008 during an Easter Vigil service, receiving baptism directly from Benedict. On March 25, 2013, he left the Catholic church to protest its soft stance toward Islam after Pope Francis I pledged to "intensify dialogue among the various religions," particularly Islam. Allam has called Islam an "intrinsically violent ideology" and said his main reason for leaving the church was its perceived "religious relativism, in particular the legitimization of Islam as a true religion." http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/25/magdi-allam-muslim-convert-leaves-catholic-church_n_2950937.html?utm_hp_ref=mostpopular,catholic-church

89 Kedar. *op cit.* p. 18-19.

90 Rick Love. *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God*. 2000:10

91 Vander Werff 1977p. 48

92 American missiologist Phil Parshall frequently refers to the Javanese evangelist to his Muslim people, Sadrach Surapranata (1835-1928) and his attempts at radical contextualisation, which, upon his death, led to a church which was some 7,500 strong: all MBBs (Muslim Background Believers). See Dsam Schlorff, *op cit.*, pp. 15-16. See C. Bennet <http://clintonbennett1020.webs.com/>.

93 See Eugene Nida. *Customs, Culture and Christianity*. (Tyndale Press, 1963)

94 See Eugene Nida. *Customs, Culture and Christianity*. (Tyndale Press, 1963)

95 This was taken up by further disciples of these convictions: Rick Love, Kenneth Bailey, Roland Muller, Anne Cooper, Keith Swartley, Timothy George, Hamid Algar, Greg Livingstone and David Brown, among others.

96 David Kerr. *IBMR*. #26.1, p. 12

97 Kenneth Cragg's work "Islamic Theology: Limits and Bridges." In *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, pp. 196-207. Edited by Don M. McCurry. Monrovia, CA: MARC.

98 Romans 10.14 ESV

99 Samuel Schlorff. *Missiological Models in Ministry to Muslims*. 2006, p. 16.

100 *Op cit.* p. 2.

101 Jesuit priest, Avery Dulles (1918-2008) writes that "in the winter of 1453 - 54, just after the fall of Constantinople, the medieval philosopher Nicholas I of Cusa (1401-1464), in seeking to rouse himself from depression, composed a dialogue on peace, or 'Concorde' in the faith. This work is a reverie, not an apologetic. It outlines in a work called 'Sifting the Koran' the essentials of a world religion that could conceivably be adopted by all major groups - including pagans, Muslims, Jews, Tartars, and Hindus as well as Christians - if each would make all the concessions comparable with his conscientious commitments. The religious pact ultimately arrives at a somewhat diluted version for Catholic Christianity. Nicholas' work reflects weariness with religious strife and a longing for "universal harmony." That this conviction parallels religion-weary, war-weary postmodern western writers should not be lost upon us.

102 Inspired largely by the writings of Sayyid Qutb.

103 Philip Jenkins. *The Lost History of Christianity* (2008) pp. 177-178: "Crypto-Christians survived under Muslim rule. After the great conversions of the fourteenth century, mainstream Egyptian Muslims never knew quite what to make of the new Coptic converts, whom they called not Muslims but *masalima*— "pseudo-Muslims" or even "Muslim-ish"—and they treated them with suspicion."

104 Where Insider Movements differ from crypto-Christians is that they seek to multiply their numbers rather than remain incognito. As well, they have a highly developed missiology, rather than a survival-mode of operation. Nor again do they seek to flee their present context for 'safer Christian grounds', as many crypto-Christians would probably have done. That being said, the overlap of behaviour, community conduct, orthopraxy and duality is highly similar.

105 Sam Schlorff. *Missiological Models in Ministry to Muslims*. p. 79.

106 Gene Daniels. 'Worshipping Jesus in the Mosque'. *CT*, 2013, Vol. 57, No. 1, p. 22

107 The historical origins of religious inquisitions began with Muslims, first among each other (the anti-
Mu'tazilite persecutions of the Abbasid Empire) and latter in Andalusian Umayyad caliphate –a policy
108 tragically adopted by the Spanish Catholic authorities, and leading to the Spanish Inquisitions.
See extensive IM note 23 of Chuck Lawless and Adam W. Greenway, *The Great Commission
Resurgence: Fulfilling God's Mandate in Our Time*, 2010, p. 192.
109 See Joshua Lingel, Jeffery J. Morton, & Bill Nikides, *Chrislam: How Missionaries are Promoting an
Islamized Gospel*, 2011.
110 As do inter-faith dialoguers and certain bridge-builders.
111 See 'John Travis' reply to Gary Corwin's: 'A Humble Appeal To C5/Inside Movement Muslim Ministry
Advocates to Consider 10 Questions'. *IJFM*, 2007.
http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/24_1_PDFs/Corwin.pdf . Writes Rebecca Lewis in the same article:
"As in the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts, God is moving this way and we are trying to
112 catch up by analyzing the phenomenon."
Among others: John O. Voll. Islam and Democracy: Is Modernization a Barrier? *Religion Compass* 1/1
(2007), p. 5. : BA Roberson , *Islam and Europe: an enigma or a myth?* Middle East Journal, 1994, Vol.
48, No. 2, pp. 288-308; Laith Kubba, The awakening of civil society. *Journal of Democracy* 11.3 (2000)
84-90; Theresa R. Milallos, 'Muslim veil as politics: political autonomy, women and Syariah Islam in
Aceh', *Contemporary Islam, Volume 1 (3)* Springer Journals –2007.
113 S. Sayyid, 'Bad Faith: anti-essentialism, universalism and Islamism', *Hybridity and its Discontents:
Political, Science and Culture*, ed. Avtar Brah & Annie Coombes, 2000, p. 257)
114 See both the article and comments of Georges Houssney 'What is wrong with the Insider Movement?'
Biblical Missiology. January 7, 2010. [https://biblicalmissiology.org/2010/01/07/what-is-wrong-with-
the-insider-movement/](https://biblicalmissiology.org/2010/01/07/what-is-wrong-with-the-insider-movement/) American Evangelical missiologist Frank E. Gaebelin (1899-1983) argued
that 'all truth is God's truth' is "...the most important principle in Christian thought, or for that matter
in any kind of thought at all. That principle is the continuity of all truth under God. Or to put it in other
words, it is the principle that all truth –whether in religion or philosophy or science or art or industry
or politics – is God's truth." (Gaebelin, *Truth and Culture*, p. 19, cited in Albert Beck's work: *All Truth
is God's Truth: The Life and Ideas of Frank E. Gaebelin*. 2008, p. 131.)
115 C.L. Deinhardt: "The prevalence of this maxim [all truth is God's truth] among Christian writers could
make one think it is a quotation from Scripture, with very likely a long history of theological treatises
about it and biblical exegesis supporting its use in justifying 'truth' being drawn from science, nature,
psychology, etc. But I have yet to find the text in the Bible." (Deinhardt, C.L., 'General revelation as an
important theological consideration for Christian counseling and therapy', *Didaskalia*, Fall [Autumn]
1995. p. 250.), cited by Robert T. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New Versus the Old*, Kregel
Academics, 2002, p. 136.
116 'Brother Yusuf' writes: "I agree that insider movements are not justified by numbers, although the
numbers are a cause for rejoicing. What justifies the insider movements is the evidence of God's
grace." Gary Corwin. *Op. cit.* Gary Corwin, p. 13.
117 And Sub-Saharan African leaders claim their 'new' churches' are, in fact, a work of the Holy Spirit.