How To Dialogue with Muslims

Many books are available to the interested reader concerning interfaith dialogue with Muslim people. In these, the history of Islam is clear, correctly describing the religion with its various branches. Even strategies for conversion are discussed in detail. However, a real difference presents itself to the Oneness believer, because the authors of these books are Trinitarian theologians. Therefore, their strategies lack essential Apostolic elements. This booklet is designed to help the oneness believer establish meaningful dialogue with Muslims. It is not our intention to inflame emotions or proselytize. Only God can truly change a life or belief. Our purpose is to inform Apostolic believers, thus enabling them in the art of meaningful dialogue. God can do the rest!

(Since Biblical Scriptures are irrelevant to the Muslim we don't need to use chapter and verse. The principles of Scripture are relevant.)

Major Principles

The apostolic belief in the Oneness of God, Baptism in the Name of Jesus, the Infilling of the Holy Spirit with godly living, separate us from most mainline Christian denominations. However some of these principle doctrines unite us with Muslims. Using these primary beliefs, we can relate to the Muslim's mentality.

Muslims strongly believe in One God. They see Him as the great, eternal Spirit. He is incorporeal. He could never be a man. For this reason, they totally reject the idea of a "son of god." In their minds, this belief is extremely insulting because in implies a physical, sexual relationship between Mary, the mother of Jesus, and God. Of course this is impossible and blasphemous! On these points we can agree.

Muslims believe in the power of God's Holy Spirit (part and Parcel of Himself). To impregnate Mary's womb and give birth to a son, who was the Word of God incarnate.
In Islam, Jesus was prophet to all and Messiah to the Jewish people. He will return at the end of time, marry, father children and ultimately judge the world.

The Word of God

When speaking to a Muslim, it is extremely important to remember one thing: *Never say, "Jesus is God."* They will close their ears and walk away. You will not find another opportunity to speak with them about this subject. Therefore, be wise and wait on the Lord. Gently lead them from what they know to what they do not know.

Beginning with the Spirit of God, we agree with God's form… He is Spirit. We establish agreement through our strong belief in One God. From this foundation, we move to His interaction with human beings. How does God speak to mankind? We agree – He spoke through his prophets and through His divine Word. (To us this is the Holy Bible: to them it is the Holy Quran) This discussion will lead us to Jesus the Word of God.

In Islam, Jesus' name was Isa (eessah) this Isa is considered the second greatest prophet, Mohammed being the first. Muslims believe Isa performed great miracles. For this reason, they are very open to prayer for the sick. It is even acceptable to pray in the Name of Jesus. Often times in Muslim countries, more Muslims are healed by the name of Jesus than nominal Christians. They have great faith in Isa. His is greatly revered in the Muslim World.

(Christian Arabs use the word Yasua (Yasúa) for Jesus. This is a translation from Aramaic of the true name of Jesus and does set Him apart in Arabic, as the Salvation of God)

The Son of God

There are two words in Arabic translated into the English word "son". 'walid' and 'ibin'. (Remember, the Holy Quran was written in Arabic, and all true Muslims must learn to read in the Arabic language.)

Walid refers to a begotten son. A true physical son as the result of a physical sexual relationship. Ibin may refer to a physical son but often is used in a more versatile way. Someone may be their 'son of the road' or a traveler. He may be a son of a country meaning he is a citizen. By using the word 'ibin Allah' we have bypassed the blasphemous rhetoric that Jesus was the walid of God. Jesus was God's son, by a miraculous conception in the womb of Mary, We explain to them how Joseph served the position as the father of Jesus, but technically was not His father. No one else fulfills the definition of father. Therefore, by elimination, and because of His miraculous conception and birth, we declare Jesus was the Son of God. Once the blasphemy and misunderstandings and removed, our Jesus is more acceptable. We have established Jesus as the Word of God made flesh. The next step takes us to God in Christ Jesus.

Focal Point

We agree with Muslims that God is a Spirit. He is all-powerful, Omnipotent, He is all-powerful.. God is omniscient, He is all knowing. He is Omnipresent, God is everywhere. However, when God chooses to speak to man, He does not speak from everywhere, but uses one focal point-the Word of God. Once this point is established, we must gently lead them to the incarnation, Jesus was the mouthpiece or focal point God used to spread to the world. They believe He was a prophet, However, no other prophet is called the "Word of God" in Islam.

This example has effectively impacted Muslim thinking:

God is like electricity…we cannot see its essence, yet it surrounds us. Men collect its power, transforming invisible waves of electricity into light. Looking at a light bulb we see only glass and wires. Yet, this tiny object manifests great power and light when filled with electricity. Jesus, the Son of God, the fleshly body is like the light bulb. God's power was manifest in him. He became the light of the world. We cannot see the electricity and we do not know where the powerhouse is , yet we do see the results.

Jesus revealed the light of God to the World. He was a man, yet within him dwelt the full power of God's Spirit. This should lead to recognition of Jesus as the focus of God's nature, revealed to the world.

(again, be careful not to force Christ's divinity upon them at this point. Lat the "Word of God" and logic do its work.)

A Muslim already sees Jesus as the Word of God. When he is led to see Jesus as God's light for the world, he will begin to understand the Savior, the Lamb of God. God will reveal himself to a Hungry heart as the Messiah.

The Lamb of God

In the Muslim world, a lamb is slain at least once a year. It is cooked and the excess food given to the poor. Sometimes, the blood of the lamb is poured on the ground in front of the entrance to their home. (this parallels the Passover in Egypt.)

The Muslim does not kill this lamb to atone for his sins, He does it in remembrance of Abraham and the sacrifice he made upon the altar, (Ishmael not Isaac). Do not contend with them over the name of the son for this defeats all strategy. I Instead, concentrate on the need for a sacrifice and the importance of the blood of the Lamb. At this point we share Jesus as our sacrifice and His blood as atonement for our sins.

If a member of a Muslim family returns from afar or recovers from sickness or tragedy, a lamb is slain to thank God. Share with your Muslim friends the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, slain for our sins. Elaborate on Abraham's test, as it foreshadowed the crucifixion of Jesus. It is important to keep these explanations personal, my sin, my redemption, etc. Our word will be received better if they are directed at ourselves, not at our friends.

Salvation & a Savior

Muslims contend for their salvation through obedience to the five pillars of Islam. They pray five times a day, they fast 30 days a year during the holy month of Ramadan. They give alms to the poor. They memorize the Koran and try to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during their lifetime. But the cornerstone of these pillars is the Shahadeh or their testimony of faith. They say this every time they pray:…" There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet."

When comparing religion with Muslims salvation is a core issue. We ask, "Are you saved? Do you have a Savior or do you save yourself?" The answer will amaze you! They bluntly say, "We save ourselves!" Our response to this statement is of utmost importance. It is suggested we respond in this way:

"I could never save myself. I am a sinner, so far from God. He is so holy. How could I ever be good enough to live with Him? I need a mediator: I need a Messiah. I need a Savior."

Nothing is accomplished in the Arab world without a "wasta" or mediator. Unless you know someone who can help you, your efforts will be in vain. The mediator is truly the most important person in Arabic culture. Jesus was our wasta. Christ was the mediator between man and God. He became redeemer and savior for all. Remember, Muslims believe God is far from them. They can never have a personal relationship with God. Telling them about the mediator between God and man is very relevant. Muslims believe Jesus (Isa) was the Messiah to the Jewish people. We contend He is Savior and Messiah for all mankind.
(Muslims do not believe Jesus died on the cross. In Islam, bad things cannot happen to holy prophets. According to Islamic teaching, the face of Jesus was transfixed upon Judas. Consequently, Judas was mistaken for Christ and crucified for his betrayal of the Messiah.

Judgment

A child growing up in the Muslim world constantly hears about the judgment of God. Whenever he or she is naughty, they may be told, "Allah will put you in the fire. The word "Allah" becomes synonymous with terror and judgment. Muslims are literally afraid to doubt their religion. Even to question their validity might mean the loss of their eternal souls. Allah is a god of balances. He weighs good and bad deeds. Only on the Day of Judgment will a Muslim know whether the scales of his life balance. Will the good deeds cancel out the bad ones? Depending upon the result, Allah may allow him to enter Paradise or throw him into the fires of hell. There is no assurance of salvation. Actually, Allah is purported to have a somewhat fickle nature. Even if the scales balance, he may choose to remember a bad deed, canceling all of the good and sentencing the dead soul to eternal punishment. There is no absolute salvation in Islam, because there is no savior mediator. There is a judge, but no advocate for the sinner.

Why would young men highjack airplanes and fly them into the Twin Towers? These same young men were known to have experimented with al sorts of sins. They knew their bad deeds could never be recompensed; only by giving their lives in a holy war could they hope to enter Paradise. Imagine! They literally gave their own lives in hope of finding salvation. How easily the masterminds of terrorism played upon their hopeless condition! As Apostolic believers we are blessed with Christ, the hope of glory. Almighty God endowed us with His love and mercy. We have glimpsed His glory through his

incarnation in Jesus Christ. And we are promised that " nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord/" We know Christ in whom we have believed. He is not a far distant god. We have not been brainwashed to fear the wrath of some terrible deity. Praise God! We are persuaded Jesus is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against the great Day of Judgment.

Holy Living

Time and time again, Muslims are amazed at our tenets of holy living. Some have even wept, telling us they never met a holy Christian. To a Muslim this means: no smoking or drinking alcohol, no sex outside of marriage, or concubinage, praying daily and studying the holy book, caring for the poor, abstaining from the appearance of evil. Mohammed spoke of Christians who had no need of conversion. He stated they were one-god believers who lived holy lives. They are called "The people of the book" in Islamic teachings.

People of the Book

Many centuries ago, in Jerusalem, a covenant was written between Christians, Jews and Muslims. The Muslims controlled the city. They wrote this treaty as a means of peaceful coexistence. It is called the Covenant of Omar.

According to Islam, there are three holy books: the Torah, the Bible, and the Koran. Mohammed commanded all Muslims to study these books. He even stated the need to study the Torah first, then the Bible and finally the Koran. Yet Islamic scholars today contend the first two have been corrupted and should not be studied.

(A good argument follows: If Mohammed were truly a prophet and knew the future, why would he insist Muslims read books which were corrupted or lost? Wouldn't he know this was going to happen? The answer to these questions ends in a quandary. If they say Mohammed's orders were true and should be followed, they MUST read the Bible. However, if they say there is not a true Bible available, they deny Mohammed's ability to foretell the future. For this reason, many Muslim countries encourage their people to read the Bible. It may be illegal to convert a Muslim to Christianity, but it is not illegal to offer him a Bible. The Holy Bible may be found on bookshelves in Muslims houses next to the Koran.)

Generally, Muslims are thrilled to met oneness believers. They are astonished to find true Christians still in existence. In free countries, most of them are anxious to visit our services and see the people spoken of by Mohammed, their prophet.

(What a great opportunity! Say to your Muslim friend, Come and see the people about whom Mohammed spoke. We won't try to convert you or argue with you. Just come and see!")

Wonderful things happen when Muslims visit our services. Many times they hear someone speaking in other tongues, perfectly emulating their dialect.. Sometimes the message is directed towards them personally. All the logic and reasoning in the world will never convert a Muslim. However, one touch of the miraculous Holy Spirit can leave them forever changed.

(Muslims are superstitious people. They are aware of the spirit world and respond to the presence of God. If they do not convert, they will still reverence what they felt in our services. They believe it is Allah's will for them to protect holy people. God can use a Muslim to protect an Apostolic from future harm.)

According to the Covenant of Omar, Muslims are bound to protect the people of the book. During the horrible inquisitions of the Holy Roman Empire, oneness believers fled to Muslim lands. There, they

were sheltered and protected from torture and even death,. They were allowed to practice their faith and live their lives in relative freedom without conversion to Islam. This fact must be remembered! God used Islam to save the oneness Apostolic message from extinction. Surely He will exert all His power to reveal Himself.

Eternal Life

Muslims believe in a literal Paradise. This place is like the Garden of Eden. However, in this heavenly domain, every Muslim man will be allotted seventy beautiful, longhaired, blond virgins. No matter how many times they experience sexual bliss, the next day the women are again virgins. This is Muslim Paradise. Some envision rivers bubbling with potent alcoholic beverages and trees laden with strange mind-altering fruit. These sinful pleasures, forbidden on earth, are readily available in Islamic Paradise. We counter this belief using the very nature of God. His is a Spirit, not a man and we must ask these pertinent questions:

Would a spiritual God reward His believers with carnal and sinful pleasures?
Isn't God Holy? Why would he fill His Paradise with unholy, sensual sins?
Will men be flesh and blood in Paradise or will they be spiritual creatures?
Do spiritual beings engage in sexual activity?
Do alcohol and mind altering drugs affect a spiritual body?
And what about the Muslim Women? Will they have seventy male virgins waiting for them?

Many Muslim women find the Christian idea of Paradise much more appealing than their own "fardous." The carnal pleasures awaiting the Muslim men are not available to Muslim women. Imagine a good, Muslim wife believing her husband will perform sexual acts with seventy blond prostitutes in Paradise!

In Muslim law, women are considered inferior to men in every way. Even Islamic eternity is prejudiced against them. (Many Islamic teachers declare the majority of residents in hell are women!) Most of these women have learned to simply submit themselves to whatever "fate" brings. They fear their husbands will divorce them or worse, kill them. Yet, they secretly resent this "male dominant religion." When they believe in Jesus, He sets their spirits free. Like tender plants they spring up in the desert. Still, their lives are never easy. These sweet roses must live with the thorns attached to their lives; but whom the Son has made free is free indeed!

It is not advisable for Muslim women to tell their husbands when they convert to Christianity. In Islam, baptism is considered the point of conversion. If a woman is baptized, she should do it secretly, unless her husband has already converted to Christianity. Secrecy may save her life. Or, it may keep her with her children. In the Muslim world, the children belong to the men, not the women. If a woman converts and is divorced, she loses all hope of raising her children. If she stays in the marriage, she has a chance to influence those children towards Christ. Jesus never condemned secret believers. Nicodemus was one. Joseph of Arimathaea was another. When we teach these women their spirits and souls belong to the Creator, they understand; a husband may rule over the natural life but he has no authority over the eternal soul. The soul belongs to Almighty God!

Church Attendance

Converted Muslims may never be able to attend public services in their own countries. Some move to neighboring Muslim countries where they have no family. Still, they could be killed for their faith in Christ Jesus. The best escape for a converted Muslim is a Christian country. However, visas are not easily obtained, especially if the applicant has a Muslim name.

We, as Apostolics, must find a way to help them without endangering their lives. Often times they meet in secret with other Muslim believers, studying materials and growing in Gods grace. Let us never judge their walk with Christ. It is easy to say, "If they love the Lord, they should take a stand for Him." The question comes back to us, "are we willing to die for their salvation?" Remember, God is

the judge of the hearts of men and women. Do what you can to help them without judging their predicament and trust the Holy Spirit for everything else.

Islam is an Arabic Religion

Ishmael was the firstborn son of Abraham. Around the age of fourteen, he and his mother were cast out of Abraham's Bedouin village. Although an angel visited them and provided water for their journey, they were still "rejected." It is no wonder the descendants of Ishmael invented their own religion to counter the religion of Isaac. Keeping their strong belief in one God and holy living, they mixed this new faith with elements of paganism, Judaism and even, Christianity.

Rejected children suffer from hostility and anger. They are difficult and dysfunctional. They trust no one; yet, they long for someone to love them and give them credibility. This perfectly describes the Arab mind. Their eastern minds resent the West; but paradoxically, they long for the acceptance by the West. Jealousy and hopelessness drive their anger. They truly want to be a part of the future world; yet, Islam is a religion of the past and holds them back. The Arab world struggles to survive on a diet of frustration, rejection and paranoia. How do you reach a rejected child? You love them and overlook their "problematic personality." The next time you encounter a difficult Muslim, remember Ishmael and reach out to the rejected child of Abraham with the love of Christ Jesus.

The Koran was first written in Arabic. Islam was originally the religion of Arabs. Down through the centuries, conversion by the sword brought many nationalities into Islam. Still today, ever Muslim must earn to read and recite the Koran in Arabic. They may not understand the meaning of the words, but the Arabic language is the language of heaven. So, they memorize the Quran in Arabic. During Ramadan, the holy month of fasting and repentance, the day's fast is broken with traditional Arabic foods. This religion is definitely defined by the Arab culture. It is advisable for anyone who is interested in reaching out to Muslims, to study the Arabic culture and history, as well as the evolution of Islam. Real revival will come to the Muslim world- only after strongholds in the Arabic world are bound. Focused, powerful prayer works. Please pray for the Islamic world and Muslims everywhere.

The word, "Muslim," in Arabic, refers to "one who is submitted to God." Islam is called the religion of submission. May these dear people observe our Apostolic submission to Christ and desire what they see and feel! Born again Christianity is truly the religion of submission. As such, we are all Muslims before God!

What the Quran says about Jesus

It is important in sharing with others to not look for differences but build a bridge of understanding and communication through finding similarities and things that you can agree on. Here are some things the Quran states about Jesus that we can agree with.

I The Virgin Birth of Jesus

The Quran:

Surah 19 Maryam 17,

"We sent unto her our spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man."

Surah 19 Maryam 20, 21 "She said; How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?"

Surah 21 Anbiyaa 91 "And (remember) her who guarded her chastity we breathed into her of our spirit and we made her and her son a sign for all people"

The Bible:
Is 7: 14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.
Mt 1: 20* But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Luke 1: 35* And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

II The Purpose of Jesus' life:

The Quran:
Surah 3 AL-1-Imran:45 "O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him; His name will be Christ Jesus."

This agrees with the Bible:
Mt 1: 21* And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

III Titles of Jesus

The Quran:

The Messiah	Surah 3: Al-I-Imran 45
The Word of God	Surah 3: Al-I-Imran 45
The son of Mary	Surah 2 Bakara 87
The Word of Allah	
A sign for all people	Surah 21 Anbiyaa 91
A perfect man, and faultless son	Surah 19 Maryam 17, 19

The Bible:

The Messiah the meaning of the word "Christ"	
The Word of God	John 1:1,14
The son of Mary	Mark 6:3
Emmanuel	Matt. 1:23
The Spirit of the LORD	2 Cor. 3:17
A sign	Isa 7:14 with Luke 2:34
That which is perfect	1 Cor 13:10; Heb 7:28
Without fault	Luke 23:4; Heb 7:26
Wonderful Councelor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace	Isa 9:6

IV. That Jesus worked Miracles

The Quran:
"We gave Jesus the son of Mary clear signs and strengthened Him with the Holy Spirit"
Surah 2, Bakara 87
Surah 5 Maryah

The Bible:
John 20:30* "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:"
31 "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

V. The Resurrection and ascension of Jesus

The Quran:
Surah 19: Ayat 33
"So peace is on me the day I was born, the day I will die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life again
Suraah 3: Al-I- Amran 55
"When Allah Said: O Jesus, I will cause you to die and exalt you in my presence and clear you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the day of resurrection."

The Bible says:
Acts 2:32* This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.
33* Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

VI. Believe and Obey Him

The Quran:
Surah 43: Sukhruf 61-63
" And (Jesus) shall be a sign for the coming of the hour (of Judgment), therefore have no doubt about he Hour, but follow ye me, this is the straight way."
"When Jesus came with clear signs, he said: 'Now have I come to your with wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some of the points on which ye dispute; therefore fear God and Obey me."

The Bible:
36* Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.
37* ¶ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren**, what shall we do?**
38* Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
39* For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.