

Sharing Christ with Muslims
August, 2015
PEFA Workshop, Kenya
Dr. Stan Fleming

Introduction

- A. J. D. Gear, a pastor and former missionary to Muslims, wrote an article entitled “A Gospel for the Muslim”. In it he says, “Muslims worldwide who come to faith in Christ consistently identify one of three factors leading to their conversion (or a combination of these three).”
1. A copy of the Bible is placed in their hands.
 2. They see the love in a Christian community.
 3. They are visited with a supernatural dream or vision.
- B. Meeting with Pastor Hamad. His dream of Jesus
- C. There are also accounts of Muslims who prayed to Jesus for healing and after they receive a healing, they give their lives to Christ.¹

Difficulties with Witnessing

- A. General statement: I do not claim to be an expert at how to witness to Muslims or to anyone for that matter. I think that evangelism can be difficult. It is often awkward for both the Christian and the one to whom the Christian is witnessing. Some people have the gift of evangelism and for them it seems to be easier to begin a conversation with a non-Christian.
- B. My experience: Even though I do not consider myself an evangelist, the Lord has put me in some very interesting situations:
1. Praying down salvation on Muslims in Jakarta.
 2. I have also had the opportunity to see many respond to an invitation to follow the Lord that I have given. Even here in Pakistan, I have preached at gatherings in which many have responded. This was probably not as much my ability to preach as it was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit making the hearts of the listeners ready to respond.
- C. That being said, the Bible tells us a couple of important things about evangelism:
1. **Proverbs 11:30** “The fruit of righteousness is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.”

¹ J. D. Gear, *A Gospel for the Muslim* (2014) <http://gcdiscipleship.com/a-gospel-for-the-muslim/> <accessed 4/8/15>.

2. **2nd Timothy 4:5** “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”
3. Illustration: Many of my moments of witnessing have been small settings with one or two people. And as an apologist, I have witnessed to those who are caught up in cults (sects) and other world religions.

The Role of the Pastor

- A. To equip the body of Christ – Ephesians 4:11-12
- B. Training your people on how to share Christ with Muslims if they are asked by a Muslim to explain something.
 1. Cultural boundaries: Of course, Christians have to be cautious. So you, being Pakistani pastors, know when it is okay to witness and when it is not. You should train your people about that.
 2. Teach them how to answer questions that Muslims may have.
 3. Teach them about what the Koran says about Jesus so that it can be used as a bridge into the Bible.
 4. Teach them to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit because every person is unique and every situation is unique.
 5. Individual styles of witnessing:
 - i. Confrontational approach: Peter was bold, direct, and to the point.
 - ii. Intellectual approach: Paul was well educated. He could be confrontational, but he could also reason from Scripture, explaining and proving Jesus Christ.
 - iii. Testimonial approach: The blind man in John 9 didn’t know a great deal about theology but he could say, “One thing I know: I once was blind and now I see.”
 - iv. Invitational approach: The Samaritan woman left her water jug at the well and invited her friends to come and hear a man “who taught me everything I ever did.”
 - v. Interpersonal approach: Matthew put on a banquet (Luke 5:29) for his tax-collecting friends in an effort to expose them to Jesus. (Friendship evangelism)
 - vi. Service approach: Dorcas witnessed by serving others in Jesus’ name, making clothes for the needy and poor (Acts 9).¹⁷

¹⁷ Mark Mittelberg, “Discover Your Evangelism Style,” *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 95 (September / October 1996).

6. Illustration: Evangelism Explosion course.

Jesus in the Koran

A. Teaching your people about Jesus in the Koran to use as a bridge to the Bible.

B. Jesus in the Koran

1. Jesus (Isa) was born to a virgin

i. Sura 19:20-22 “She (Mary) said, ‘How shall I have a son, when man has never touched me? and I am not unchaste.’ He said: ‘So it shall be. Thy Lord hath said: ‘Easy is this with me;’ and we will make him a sign to mankind, and a mercy from us. For it is a thing decreed.’ And she conceived him.”

2. Jesus had a special mission

ii. Sura 2:81 “To Jesus, Son of Mary, gave we clear proofs of his mission, and strengthened him by the Holy Spirit.”

3. Jesus is the Messiah

iii. Sura 3:40 “His name shall be, Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, illustrious in this world, and in the next, and one of those who have near access to God.”

iv. Al Masih Isa

4. Jesus has divine power

i. Sura 43:57 “And when the Son of Mary was set forth as an instance of divine power, Lo! Thy people cried out for joy there at.”

C. Displays of divine power

1. Sura 3:43 “Out of clay will I (Isa) make for you, as it were, the figure of a bird: and I will breathe into it, and it shall become, by God’s leave, a bird. And I will heal the blind, and the leper, and by God’s leave I will quicken the dead.”

2. Sura 19:30-31 “And she made a sign to them, pointing toward the babe. They said, ‘How shall we speak with him who is in the cradle, an infant?’ It (Isa) said, ‘Verily, I am the servant of God; He hath given me the Book, and He hath made me a prophet.’”

D. Five miracles

1. Heal the blind.
2. Heal the lepers.
3. Raise the dead.
4. Create a bird from clay and breathe life into it.
5. Speak from the cradle as a babe.

E. Bridges from the Koran to the Bible

1. The bridge of healing and miracles

- i. **Sura 3:43** - “. . . *I will heal the blind, and the leper; and by God’s leave will I quicken the dead.*”
- ii. **Matthew 10:8** – [Jesus told his disciples to] “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”

2. The bridge of Jesus the Way

- i. **Sura 43:36** “For the Satans will turn men aside from the Way, who yet shall deem themselves as rightly guided.”
- ii. **John 14:6** “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to Father except through Me.’”
- iii. Testimony of a former Muslim
 - a. “Romans 3 describes the problem of my people: ‘The way of peace they do not know.’ My people are suffering because they are infected by the sin of the world. As I understood this I thought: If all Muslims knew the way of Jesus, they would live in peace with God, with other nations and with themselves.” -- Mark Gabriel

3. The bridge of Jesus the sign

- i. Sura 23:51 “And we appointed the Son of Mary, and his mother for a sign”
- ii. Luke 2:12 “And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”
- iii. John 2:18-19 “So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things? Jesus answered and

said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

4. The bridge of Jesus the Word

- i. Sura 4:169 "The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God, and his Word which he conveyed into Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from himself."
- ii. John 1:1 ". . . And the Word was God."
- iii. John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

5. The bridge of the gospel and compassion

- i. Sura 57:27 "We caused Jesus the son of Mary to follow them; and we gave him the Evangel (gospel), and we put into the hearts of those who followed him kindness and compassion."
- ii. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 explains the gospel of Christ.
- iii. Colossians 3:12 "Put on tender mercies, kindness . . ."

F. Jesus was given for mercy

1. Jesus given as a mercy to mankind (Sura 19:20-22).
2. She said: "How shall I have a son, when man hath never touched me? And I am not unchaste." He said: "So shall it be. Thy Lord hath said: 'Easy is this with me;' and we will make him a sign to mankind, and a mercy from us. For it is a thing decreed." And she conceived him.

G. Testimony of Love

1. Shahrokh Afshar became a pastor at a Christian church for Iranians in Los Angeles. However, when he first came to the States, he argued his position with Christians. It was the love he saw in their lives that melted him. A Christian friend invited him to Thanksgiving dinner, and the simple prayer of a father saying grace touched him. From simple social gatherings and warm acceptance, this brother gave his life to Christ.

H. Testimony of the Word

1. In Iraq, a young man named Monthir was searching for Jesus in the Koran and read Sura 10:94 "And if thou art in doubt as to what we have sent down to thee, inquire at those who have read the Scriptures before thee." So he got a Bible and discovered John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and

life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Monthir gave his life to Jesus

I. Muslims claim / Christian response

J. Conversion of Simba

1. Simba Mohammadovich, a twenty-three-year-old male, was raised a Sunni Muslim but turned to Sufi Islam (animism) as he grew older due to visions he was having. In 1992, he encountered a Christian named Martha and asked her for a Turkish New Testament. She did not have one but invited him to visit a Messianic Muslim Christian fellowship, so that he could learn more about her faith. He refused on several occasions but finally attended . . .
2. As a Muslim, Simba thought he knew all about prayer. Five times a day, he normally prayed for himself, his family, and perhaps a close friend. These Christians were different. They were praying for many things and people, including him. Their sincere love oozed into his heart and he could not get the meeting out of his mind. Eventually, he accepted Jesus as his Messiah.

A GOSPEL FOR MUSLIMS

J.D. Gear: Three words describe the current Western approach to the gospel: *formula, forgiveness, and death*. We present the gospel as a *formula*, a series of propositions about God, which addresses our need for *forgiveness* from guilt, and which summarizes the means of attaining that forgiveness, the *death* of Jesus.

While such a presentation accurately reflects aspects of the gospel, a more effective strategy among Muslims might focus on three “new words:” ***story, cleansing, and victory***.

Instead of presenting the truth of the gospel propositionally as a formula, we ought simply to let the ***story*** of Scripture unfold. Muslims rarely come to faith in Christ through apologetic arguments and dogmatic proof-texting, but they often come to faith in Christ by studying the major stories of the Bible and encountering the gospel there.

Instead of presenting the work of Christ in terms of forgiveness, we can emphasize the ***cleansing*** power of the gospel. Muslims understand the need for purification; they undergo a process of ritual cleansing, called *wudu*, every time they pray. Such a cleansing is only external, but Christ offers *wudu* for the soul.

Instead of presenting the death of Christ merely as a point of weakness, we should point to the ***victory*** inherent in Christ’s work on the cross. Every time Muslims pray, they say that God is the “most powerful” and the “most merciful.” Is not the cross the greatest demonstration of those two attributes? What greater demonstration of power is there than a God who overcame sin and death? God’s greatness is actually shown in His humility. As Gregory of Nazianzus said, “The strength of a flame is shown by its ability to *burn downward*.” And what greater demonstration

of mercy is there than in Christ's death and resurrection? The God of the universe conquered sin and death in order to redeem us for Himself, through no merit of our own.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Deity of Christ

Trinity

Holy Spirit

The Bible

STORY OF THE MISSIONARY WHO WEPT