

BEGINNING TO SHARE LIFE

(Training in Ministry to Neighbours)

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	6
Session 1: Getting Started	10
Session 2: A Look Back to the Past and Forward to the Future	16
Session 3: The Priority of Prayer	41
Session 4: Understanding My Neighbour	53
Session 5: Avoiding the Transfer of Culture	98
Session 6: Beginning to Build Relationships	107
Session 7: Storytelling	120
Session 8: The Value of Working Together	152
Session 9: Answering Tough Questions	168
Session 10: Beginning Where They Are	195
Session 11: Learning Patience	214
Session 12: Discipling a Neighbour Believer – Beginning Steps	232

A List of the Handouts that accompany each session

Session 1: Getting Started

- The Introduction
- The Quiz
- God's Heart for the Nations

Session 2: A Look Back to the Past and Forward to the Future

- Fear in Ministry
- The Problem of Fear
- A Brief Overview of Ministry to Neighbours
- Neighbours Today
- The Theological Basis of AI Qaeda
- Church Planting Movements
- Ten Characteristics of a CPM in Bangladesh

Session 3: The Priority of Prayer

- Prayer : Priority One
- ABC of Prayer for Neighbours
- The Art of Praying with Authority

Session 4: Understanding My Neighbours

- Finding Common Ground
- A Comparison of Worldviews
- Aspects of a Biblical Worldview
- The Viable Cross-cultural Worker

Session 5: Avoiding the Transfer of Culture

- Identity: My Own and My Neighbour's
- Building a Useful Conversation leading to a Lasting Relationship
- A Religious Terminology Quiz
- Religious Terms

Session 6: Beginning to Build Relationships

- Bible Study on Relating to the Lost
- Who Am I?

Session 7: Storytelling

- Storytelling and Witness
- Conversation Openers
- How would Jesus talk to a Neighbour?
- Presenting the Gospel
- The Chronological Bible Story Teaching Model
- Seven Crucial Stories to Develop
- Seven Great Mysteries of God

Session 8: The Value of Working Together

- The Two-by-Two Principle
- Why we Believe in Team
- The Importance of Working Together
- Principles of Developing Networks

Session 9: Answering Tough Questions

- Jesus Under Attack
- Our Neighbours' Objections to Our Faith
- Approaches to Answering Questions
- Answers to the "Son of God" Issue
- Answers to the Issue of Three Gods/Trinity
- Answers to the Charge that we have Corrupted the Scriptures
- Answers relating to the Gospel of Barnabas

Session 10: Beginning Where They Are

- Building Bridges
- How to Read the Quran with a Christian Interpretation
- Guidelines for reading the Quran – what the Quran says about itself
- Using the Quran as a Bridge
- Jesus in the Quran and other Sources
- A Reference List of Jesus in the Quran
- God's Love in the Quran and the Bible

Session 11: Learning Patience

- The Kingdom of God
- The Concept of the Spectrum
- Not 'Closed Sets' but 'Centred Sets'
- Why Neighbours are coming to Faith
- The Afterlife in the Quran and the Hadith
- Types of Encounters with Neighbours
- P.R.E.P. ing in Ministry

Session 12: Discipling a Neighbour Believer – Beginning Steps

- Bible Study on 'How to Disciple Your Neighbour'
- Hindrances to Discipleship
- The Birthing Process – how to be a Good Midwife
- Issues that need to be covered in Initial Discipleship
- A Curriculum for Life-Changing Discipleship
- Developing Biblical Functional Substitutes for Cultural Practices
- The Concept of Reproduction
- Moving Towards a Believing, Reproducing Community

A Word to Group Instructors

This is a basic introductory course designed for Global Action and Global Service personnel working among Neighbours. The material has been drawn from different sources.

It is designed as twelve sessions. Each session has a Bible Study and a Homework Assignment. If the team members have a fairly busy schedule of language learning each session could take two weeks. If their schedule is fairly light then you could try to cover one session per week.

Each session is expected to cover 3-4 hours – i.e. an afternoon or an evening each week. As the group gets used to interacting, the sessions will probably get longer. Each session has quite a bit of background reading that should be done **before** the session.

Some of the quizzes have Arabic words. I have given you the key. So, if you are in a non-Arabic language, you might have to translate the terms, using the key, before the session.

Before Session One

Hand out to each member:

The Introduction

Session 1: Getting Started

The Quiz

God's Heart for the Nations

Don't hand out:

The Quiz (the key)!

Introduction

1. Before you begin this course

As we begin to consider how we may reach out effectively to our Neighbour friends, we can very easily feel overwhelmed. Where do we begin? Most of us know so few Neighbours who have become followers of Jesus that we find ourselves lacking in faith that **any** Neighbour can and will become a follower of Jesus through our ministry.

Many of us struggle with fear and anxiety. We don't know how to go about sharing our faith and we fear we will say the wrong thing and get arrested or worse! Some of us struggle to have a loving attitude towards our Neighbour friends when we see and feel things around us that aren't fair – things that are cruel and unjust or even just weird. This is especially so if some of these things have made life more difficult for us.

While we will be addressing the issue of fear, it is of vital importance that the “eyes of our heart” are correctly focussed at the beginning. Our focus comes from the fact that we no longer belong to ourselves. We have been bought with a price and now we belong to Jesus. His command to us is to make “disciples of all nations” and this includes our Neighbours. Reaching out to our Neighbours is part of the obedience that is expected of us. It is our duty!

Yet if our witness is simply one of obligation, it is unlikely to be very effective. Paul said he was motivated (‘compelled’) by the “love of Christ”. Certainly he had a motivation from being ‘called’ and so there was an obligation based on a sense of duty. But ultimately his motivation came from a deep sense of God's loving intervention in his life. Paul wrote,

“God demonstrates His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8)

Paul's experience of God's sacrificial love for him so overwhelmed him that he felt constrained to share that love with others who were lost as he had been.

2. Key Areas to have settled before you begin

➤ Authority

As followers of Jesus, the first ‘key area’ to consider is whether we have settled the issue of **authority**. Who is the master of my life? It may appear odd to ask this in this context, but it is a critical issue. Here is a simple test: Are you willing to say ‘yes’ to the Lord Jesus regardless of what He might ask you to do? Have you settled it in your heart that you will obey the Word of God regardless of what you find the circumstances to be? If you can say, ‘Yes’ and if this ‘Yes’ is being worked out in your attitudes in daily living, then you can start this course on ‘Beginning to Share your Life’.

If there is any area of uncertainty, I suggest you open your Bible and do a word study on: obey, obedience, disciple and any other words you think may relate to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You might also want to take time to talk and pray through this issue with your team leader.

➤ A Daily Walk with God

Another ‘key area’ is our daily walk with God. It is crucial to make sure that you have this in place **before** you ‘Begin to Share Life’. It is easy to believe in Jesus and hold firm convictions in our minds, but it is quite another matter to relate to Jesus in a natural, personal way. Are you making progress in having a growing relationship with God?

Most Neighbours are not looking for a new belief system. They are reasonably content with their own. They think it is quite meritorious to despise **our** belief system. Most have too much of their identity and culture invested in their own system to arrive at the conclusion that our beliefs are “better” or “more true” than their own and that they should make a trade! It is **an experience with God** that usually brings a Neighbour to faith in Jesus. If they can't see the “overflow” of your experience with God, you will have little to offer your Neighbour friends. Your conversation could easily end up in sterile cerebral arguments.

If you are not growing in your relationship with God, you need to keep in mind the principle, “First Things First”. When Jesus was asked which was the most important commandment, He replied, ***“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is like it: Love***

your neighbour as yourself". (Mt. 22:37-40) Make your highest priority your loving relationship with your Heavenly Father! Then, as a natural outcome of this, God will pour into your heart His love for Neighbours making it possible for you to love them too.

In this life your relationship with God will never be perfect. But never let your shortcomings be an excuse for not pressing on and being determined to improve and develop this relationship. Don't be deceived into making "the ministry" the love of your life instead of having a love relationship with your Father.

➤ **Unresolved Sin Situations**

There is a third 'key area' to address before starting this course. Do you have a past or current 'sin situation' that you have simply decided to live with? This may be a **broken relationship** from the past that you have failed to resolve. Are there people from whom you need to ask forgiveness? Is there any anger in your heart because of how others have hurt you? Broken relationships will drain away your spiritual energy.

Perhaps your 'sin situation' is an area of **hidden sin** in your life – something (some habit) no one knows about: immoral thoughts; an explosive temper; a tendency to be lazy; always seeking attention. Perhaps it is something in your past that you have tried to bury with time, but you have never found forgiveness from God or from those involved.

The Evil One will not stand idly by while we seek to take the Light into the darkness. He will fight you 'tooth and nail'. He will search for any handle in your life. 'Sin situations' we have failed to deal with as God wants us to, will suit his purposes very well!

Beyond the opportunity for the enemy to exploit these situations, is the reality that the power of the Gospel is seen most clearly in a transformed, transparent life! It is very easy and natural to keep others at a safe distance – especially in a cross-cultural situation. But if we demonstrate that we have nothing to hide and that the "windows" of our lives are wide open to view, then God is revealed in a powerful way and He begins to draw those around us to Himself.

The world is not looking for perfect people, but they are drawn to people who are at peace with God, who are experiencing the freedom of the forgiveness of sin and the removal of shame. They are drawn to those who know what it is to be loved by God and blessed by Him.

As you read these words, does some person or situation come to mind? If so, don't waste time making excuses about what you can't do! Humble yourself. Seek forgiveness. Confess your sin to God. If it would be helpful, share your 'sin situation' with a team member and ask him/her to help you. Allow God to transform this area of sin and shame into something that will reveal His grace and transforming power. Whatever you do, don't ignore what God's Spirit is calling to your attention!

Preparing a manual for friends to reach out to Neighbours is a frustrating task! Why? **Because ministry is not about methods it is about the Master!** Ministry flows out of the Master's work in our lives and you can't write a manual about that!

Is there knowledge to be gained? Yes! Are there skills to develop? Yes! But these are useless – perhaps even harmful – if the foundations aren't in place! Ask yourself a very personal question, **"Is Jesus truly my Lord?"** There must be no 'ifs' and 'buts'! Are you growing day by day in a loving relationship with your Heavenly Father? Are you dealing with sin in your life as soon as the Holy Spirit makes you aware of it? Are you welcoming the spotlight of God's Spirit and inspection by those in the team into every area of your life? This self-examination is crucial not only at the beginning of this course, but throughout your ministry to Neighbours.

➤ **Faith**

The final 'key area' is faith. ***"Without faith it is impossible to please God."*** (Heb. 11:6) ***"We have not because we ask not."*** (James 4:2) We must choose to trust God for fruit – fruit that will last. We must run the race with perseverance – faithful to the finish. (2 Tim. 4:6-8) Our task is to work in the 'field' skilfully (with the best agricultural tools and knowledge). We must do our part.

Yet, when all is said and done, what a sense of freedom, what a wonderful sense of peace and rest we experience, if we daily present all that we have and are to our Master as a living sacrifice. He is Lord. He is working out His great purposes and so we can leave the matter of the effect of our contribution to Him. We may be ignored (or worse treated like Jeremiah) or we may fully evangelise whole countries like Paul.

Whether our contribution is little fruit or abundant fruit we too will one day hear the words, ***“Well done my good and faithful servant.”*** (Mt. 25:21)

3. Using this Training Manual

The purpose of ‘Beginning to Share Life’ is, as a starting point, to help those who want to reach out to our Neighbours but don’t know where to begin. Most of the issues raised in this Twelve Session Course are just presented as an introduction to the topic with the expectation that it will be dealt with at greater depth later on in your training programme.

One of the major weaknesses of a training programme in this type of ministry is that the focus quickly turns to acquiring more facts (knowledge). Facts are important, but they are not of major importance. Are we learning **to know** or are we learning **to do**? So each session has:

A head section: where knowledge can be gained

A heart section: where knowledge is applied to the heart in order to develop deeper convictions and challenge and change our attitudes

A hands section: where knowledge and attitudes are put to use to develop skills that **will** help you accomplish the task

Each session is not to be seen as a formal lesson or a lecture, but rather as integrated suggestions addressing important subjects in our witness to Neighbours.

This training programme is designed to cover 12 weeks – one session per week. However, some topics may well be expanded to cover several weeks. The needs of the group should dictate the speed at which the group goes through the course.

Suggestions to ensure the success of the group in ‘Beginning to Share Life’

- i) Be certain that the group shares common expectations of these sessions together.

Possible expectations include:

- **That the group is committed to becoming personally effective in Neighbour ministry.**
 - **That participation in the group is contingent on having Neighbour friends. Probably the members of the group have just started language learning and don’t yet have enough language to build friendships. So it is assumed that each member has at least one English-speaking Neighbour friend. The momentum of group learning is greatly impacted by the progress of each group member. Those with no Neighbour friends will negatively impact the overall effectiveness of the group.**
 - **That participation in the group takes high priority in the time schedule of the group members. The higher the expectation of commitment, the greater the likelihood for success.**
 - **That all members of the group start together and it is agreed that others won’t join in the middle of the course.**
 - **That participation in the group implies supporting each other as much as possible in beginning to share with Neighbour friends.**
- ii) The facilitator doesn’t need to be a ‘Neighbour religion expert’, but it is important that he/she is practicing what he/she is teaching! In most cases it will probably be a ‘let’s learn together’ approach. **If it is simply fact giving, the group will die!**
- iii) Friendship/Relationship is foundational for ministry. Each member of the group must make an intentional effort within the group to spend time together during the twelve sessions sharing, praying and socialising. This will stimulate learning in ‘head, heart and hands’ together. This will help the group to thrive.
- iv) The overall vision must not be compromised. The purpose of “Beginning to Share Life” is **not** to learn about the belief system of Neighbours. It is **not** to learn about sharing your faith with Neighbours. The purpose is to discover how God wants to use each person individually and together, collectively towards the vision of Neighbours finding Jesus and contributing towards a growing, multiplying Neighbour believing community that can transform whole communities and cultures. This is a vision

worthy enough of your life's investment! Yet in most places it is slow in coming. Never trade God's vision for something so much less – something cheap and tawdry – just because it is more manageable.

- v) God's perspective must be maintained. It is so easy for our ministry to become self-centred. We must remind ourselves constantly that God's work is so very much bigger than what we can see. We need to value what others are doing and seek to fit into the bigger picture if we don't want to miss out on God's blessings and fail to contribute all that we could.

May God bless you as you respond to Jesus and are compelled by His love in sharing the Good News of life and peace and being loved by God with our Neighbour friends.

Zech. 4:6 ***“Not by might nor by power (or strategy or methodology) but by My Spirit.....”***

John 15:5 ***“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he is the one who bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”***

2 Cor. 5:14-15 ***“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that One has died for all, therefore all have died. And He died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who, for their sake, died and was raised.”***

Session 1

Getting Started

Objectives:

1. To assess where the members of the group are in the areas of Head, Heart and Hands
2. To help the group begin to trust each other and learn from each other
3. To deepen the conviction that we must have an effective ministry to Neighbours **from a Biblical basis**.

Assessment of Head, Heart and Hands

Head (Knowledge)

Find out how much each group member **knows** about Neighbours:

- ❖ Ask each member to spend 10-15 minutes answering the questions from The Quiz on a separate piece of paper before they come to the session.
- ❖ Begin by leading them through the answers with the opportunity for a brief discussion. The purpose of this part is to encourage an interactive atmosphere within the group. Make sure that everyone is encouraged to share – especially those who are shy or are not native speakers of English. Assure those who know almost nothing that they are in the right group. They will learn as they go along.

Heart (Attitudes)

Find out from the group their perceptions of and feelings for Neighbours. Taking each question one at a time, ask each member to tell the whole group what their attitudes are. Take time to discuss the negative attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices any are struggling with. Help the group to process these heart attitudes by asking what the Bible says about these issues.

The Questions:

- a) When you think of Neighbours, what words and pictures come to mind?
- b) Describe your interaction/relationships with Neighbours – past and present.
- c) What do you hope to gain from these group studies together?

Discuss the importance of clear and shared expectations among the members of the group. Use a flipchart/white board to help members generate several expectations. Be sure that, as a facilitator, you are happy with the minimum of shared expectations for the twelve group sessions.

- ❖ Discover a solid Biblical basis for ministry to Neighbours

Before the session distribute **God's Heart for the Nations** to each member of the group. Get each person to look up and write down **before** the session each of the verses. Assign one verse/passage to each person to share with the group – i.e. **the key concept** from that passage.

After each member has shared, give an opportunity to the members to share general observations with the group. Hopefully God's heart for **all** peoples will be revealed.

End with several minutes of prayer as a group.

Hands (Skills)

Find out about the experience of each group member in reaching out to Neighbours.

Taking each question one by one, have each group member share with just one other member and then discuss as a group:

- d) What has been your experience of witnessing to Neighbours?

- e) Share a recent experience through which you were able to share in word or deed with a Neighbour.
- f) Have you been able to speak about Jesus to Neighbours in the past?

NOTE: Building friendships and sharing aspects of spiritual truth (*"Yes, there is only **one** God"*) is good and a vital part of the process. The intention of the question is to find out if the members of the group have the ability to share the heart of the Gospel – Jesus – with their Neighbours. Don't let this be depressing. It is simply something that we need to learn together.

Spend some time praying for one another and for Neighbour friends.

Homework – Living it out

Head: Pick one area of your Neighbour's culture from the Quiz and learn as much as you can about it between now and the next session.

Heart: Study and pray through the verses of **God's Heart for the Nations**. Memorize the one that speaks most strongly to you. Ask God to speak to you about how He is going to use you in ministry to Neighbours. Read the paper on **Fear in Ministry**.

Hands: Discover the favourite topic of conversation for one or more of your Neighbours. See what you can learn about this topic from your friends.

Handouts for Session 2: A look back to the past and a look forward to the future

- Fear in Ministry
- The Problem of Fear
- A Brief Overview of Ministry to Neighbours
- Neighbours Today
- The Theological Basis of Al Qaeda
- Church Planting Movements
- Ten Characteristics of a CPM in Bangladesh

Quiz for Session 1

Take a maximum of 10-15 minutes to do this self-test to assess how well you know and understand your Neighbours.

1. What are the 5 key events and terms in the cycle of life (sometimes called rites of passage) for a Neighbour male child?
2. What does *Saboua tasmiya* mean?
Describe the event itself
Relate its significance in the local society
Should a believer participate in it? Why? or Why not?
3. When a Neighbour lady does *nefsa* what does she do and why?
4. What do Neighbour parents do with their small children when the sunset (*Maghrib*) Call to Prayer is heard?
What are the names of the other four prayer times?
5. What is Dusk called?
6. What is an '*afrit*'?
What is its significance in Neighbour culture?
7. What is a '*bakhour*'?
What is its significance for Neighbours?
8. How many *suras* are there in the Quran?
 - a) Less than 20
 - b) Between 20-100
 - c) More than 100
9. How did the Quran come into existence – the orthodox view?
10. List four key objections often given by Neighbours to Christ faith/witness.

Quiz for Session 1 (Key)

The words are in transliterated Arabic. You will need to translate into other languages as necessary.

1. The five events in the cycle of life or rites of passage for a neighbour male child are:

Birth	<i>wilada</i>
Circumcision	<i>khitan</i>
Adulthood	<i>sin-al-roshd</i>
Marriage	<i>zwaj</i>
Death	<i>mawt</i>

2. What does *Saboua tasmiya* mean? To shave off the baby's first hair. It is often called '*tasmiya*' (naming ceremony).

Describe the event: It is usually 7 days after the birth (in some places 40 days). During the preceding days the baby doesn't have its hair cut and in some places its feet are not allowed to touch the ground. The family gives a party for relatives and neighbours during this ceremony. Money amounting to the weight of the shaven hair is then given to the poor.

What is the significance: It is celebrating the baby's entrance into the world. In some places it is at this party that the baby is officially named and so is given an identity and a place in the family. Where orthodox beliefs are strictly observed this will take place on the **7th day** after the birth often with a sacrifice called *aqiqa*.

Can a believer participate in this feast?

Why not? Participation in this event doesn't compromise our allegiance to God nor does it break God's law. It will certainly help build rapport with Neighbour friends. A western equivalent would be something like a 'baby shower'. Take along a gift such as an item of clothing for the baby.

3. When a Neighbour lady does *nefsa* what does she do and why?

This refers to the 40 days after a woman gives birth and when it is believed she is especially vulnerable to evil spirits. During this period there are many taboos that are observed such as not eating certain foods, not leaving the house and a variety of other practices. Failure to observe all the taboos incurs spiritual punishments that may include sterility, sickness, wounds that don't heal, eye diseases etc. In some places the ceremony at the end of the 40-day period consists of pouring 40 jars of water over the mother as a final ritual cleansing! Fear is the central theme in many of these practices.

4. What do Neighbour parents do with small children when the sunset (*Maghrib*) Call to Prayer is heard?

This varies from place to place. In many places parents teach their children that they must stop playing and come inside to prepare for evening prayer. Evening Prayer is often the only time a whole family prays together. They are also concerned about coming into contact with bad jinn and evil spirits that are known to be about especially at dusk with malicious intent – especially towards small children.

Times of Prayer:	Sunrise/Dawn	<i>Salatu – el – Fajr</i>
	Midday/Noon	<i>Salatu – z – Zuhr</i>
	Mid-afternoon	<i>Salatu – el – 'Asr</i>
	Sunset	<i>Salatu – el – Maghrib</i>
	Evening prayer	<i>Salatu – el – 'Isha</i>

5. What is Dusk?

It is the evening time between sunset and night time darkness. The nearer you are to the equator the shorter this time will be. It usually differs from winter to summer.

6. What is an 'afrit' (a particular *jinn*)?

It is a *jinn* or evil spirit that is orange/pink in colour and is supposedly present when the sky turns yellow/orange/pink/red at sunset and after.

What is its significance in Neighbour culture? If you have contact with this *jinn*, sickness or some misfortune will befall you. To reverse the effect of the *jinn* you need a 'spiritist' to come and help you. They will have local names:

Ajuza (old woman) in Morocco

Matiyalun (a curer) – also in Morocco

A *talla* in Morocco is able to identify the attack by *jinn* through various divinatory practices.

7. What is a 'bakhour' and what is its significance for Neighbours?

It is a type of incense generating a lot of smoke when burned. It is burned in the house in the belief it will chase bad *jinn* away and protect the household from spells being cast against them – even those they are not aware of. It is especially burned in the evening. Incidentally it also keeps mosquitoes away!

8. How many chapters (*suras*) are there in the Quran? There are 114 *suras*.

9. How did the Quran come into existence?

The orthodox view: The Angel Gabriel first revealed it to Muhammad while he was alone in a cave. It was revealed in parts both in Mecca and later in Medina. Because he was illiterate he later related the words to others who were able to write down the revelations.

10. List four key objections often given by Neighbours to Christ faith/witness.

The Concept of the Trinity

That Jesus is not the Son of God

That Jesus did not die on the Cross

Since our defence of the three points above is based totally on the reliability of the Bible, the key major objection is:

That the Bible has been corrupted and is no longer reliable

(Don't be too worried if you, as a leader, only get 3 or 4 out of 10! The examples in the questions relate to Muslim customs which vary enormously across the Muslim World. The purpose of the quiz is to help people move beyond "theological aspects of Islam" to how the culture of a people affects their behaviour.)

Session 1

God's Heart for the Nations

Look up the following references and mark those you find of the greatest significance. Reflect on these and memorize at least one of them.

Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14

Numbers 14:21

Psalms 86:9; 96:3

Isaiah 2:2,18; 34:1; 49:6; 56:7

Jeremiah 3:17

Daniel 7:13,14

Joel 2:28

Jonah 3 and 4

Micah 5:4

Habakkuk 2:14

Zephaniah 2:11

Haggai 2:6,7

Zechariah 14:9

Malachi 1:11

Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20

Mark 11:17

Luke 24:45-47

John 10:16

Acts 10:35

Romans 1:5; 15:8-9,18-21; 16:26

Galatians 3:6-8,13,14

2 Timothy 4:17

Revelation 5:9; 7:9-10; 14:6-7

God's Concern for the Nations

➤ God created the "nations": Genesis 10

Nation/People relates to "origins", "identity" – a sense of belonging

A people group: people having the same language, customs and sense of history

Avoid political concepts of statehood. It is not about who I pay my taxes to.

➤ God's purpose for the nations

- To bring **blessing**: Gen. 12:3 and Gen. 18:18
- To bring **salvation**: Ps. 67:1-5 and Ps. 98:2
- To bring **judgement** – also in the sense of evaluation: Ps. 96:13
- To bring **justice**: Is. 51:4-5
- To bring **hope**: Mt. 12:18-21
- To bring **peace**: Zech. 9:10
- To bring **healing**: Rev. 22:2

What would each of these words mean for "your people group"?

What would it look like if God did what he purposed for "your people group"?

See Rev. 5:9 and Rev. 7:9.

Session 2

A Look Back to the Past and Forward to the Future

Objectives:

1. Head:

To help the group understand the traditional hindrances to this type of ministry

To learn what a Church Planting Movement is and how this relates to Neighbour ministry

2. Heart:

To know that God's grace and power can help me overcome fear in ministry to Neighbours

3. Hands:

To gain experience in sharing a spiritual truth with a friend

Time Together

1. Begin with welcome and prayer.

2. Debrief the group members as to their 'homework'.

Ask members to share about the areas of culture they have studied.

Ask one or two members to share the verse/verses they have memorized.

Ask if anyone discovered a favourite topic of conversation for a Neighbour friend.

Note: Be sure you spend plenty of time on 'debriefing' the homework assignment each session. If there is no accountability, group members are less likely to do the homework faithfully. The value of your time together will depend on what happens when you are not together!

3. Review highlights from the papers Fear in Ministry and The Problem of Fear:

Brainstorm as a group about the possible reasons for fear in ministry to Neighbours.

Give members time to share any specific fears they have had.

Give the opportunity for members to share passages of Scripture in the study Fear in Ministry that God might have used to speak to them that week.

Highlight God's love as motivation and His grace as the means to overcome all fear.

4. Share A Very Brief History of Ministry to Neighbours

Highlight traditional hindrances (see A Very Brief Overview of Ministry to Neighbours)

Highlight reasons for encouragement (see Neighbours Today)

Fill in the local history of ministry to Neighbours.

5. Discuss the nature of a Church Planting Movement (CPM)

Questions:

What is a CPM?

What are some of the obstacles to a CPM?

What are the 'key factors' in all CPMs?

What are some of the very common factors in a CPM?

Discuss:

Did anything you read surprise you?

Of the ideas you read about, which seemed to you to be of greatest importance?

How does what you have read/discussed relate to your ministry to Neighbours?

Write: On a white board/flipchart write a vision statement reflecting a CPM vision for reaching your local Neighbours

How does this compare with the present vision of the longtermers? Can they improve their current vision?

Note: Use words like – “growing, multiplying, expressions of a local indigenous believing community that can penetrate and permeate every segment of the local population.....and beyond”. Avoid jargon words like ‘church’.

How will this vision statement affect:

- **The way we pray for Neighbours?**
- **The way you make choices in ministry?**
- **The way you relate to individual Neighbours?**

6. Spend some time in prayer for one another, for the ministry and for your Neighbour friends.

Homework

Head: Study the CPM handout. Memorize the definitions then share with someone else – not someone in your study group but a friend you trust – some of the key factors and obstacles to a CPM. Share how it might relate to Neighbour ministry. Share what God is doing in your heart in relation to Neighbours.

Heart: Look through the Bible Study on Fear. Review both the key verses and the discussion points. Memorize the verses that speak most powerfully to you. Make them part of your prayer life this week.

Hands: Initiate a conversation with a Neighbour this week about the fears you struggle with – e.g. getting lost in the Suq and being unable to ask directions home etc. If appropriate, share the verse you memorized and how it encouraged you. You can be as specific as you like.

Handouts for Session 3: The Priority of Prayer

- Prayer : Priority One
- ABC of Prayer for Neighbours
- The Art of Praying with Authority

Session 2

Fear in Ministry : A Bible Study

Fear is one of the greatest hindrances in ministry to our Neighbours. We don't need to be put in jail to be imprisoned! Fear imprisons us far more effectively. Fear not only imprisons us, it tortures us in prison! (1 Jn. 4:18) This Bible study looks at the fears you may have in relation to your ministry – where they come from and how they may affect you. It also helps us to see these fears from God's perspective and discover how He wants us to deal with them. Before you start read the article: **The Problem of Fear**.

1. Who feared what in the following passages? What was the result of their fears?

	The Passage	Who feared?	What did they fear?	What was the result of their fear?
1.	Gen. 3:6-10			
2.	Deut. 1:26-32			
3.	1 Sam. 15:7-26			
4.	Jer. 38:17-39:7			
5.	John 9:20-23			
6.	2 Tim. 1:6-12			
7.	Heb. 2:14-15			

a) Which of the above examples do you most identify with and why?

b) What fears prevent us from reaching out to our Neighbours?

2. Fear is a biological reaction to something going on in the mind. When fear controls us 'fight or flight' hormones kick into action. Then a paralysis of our obedience to God sets in. What is going on in our mind is exposed. We discover an area of insecurity and need where God has not yet breathed in His power and His hope. Reflect on the following people who experienced fear. From the context discover what they feared, what God said to them and what was the result.

What was feared?		What did God say?	
1.	Gen. 15:1 Abraham		
2.	Gen. 21:17 Hagar		
3.	Gen. 46:3-4 Jacob		
4.	2 Chron. 20:15-17 Jehoshaphat		

What was feared?		What did God say?	What happened?
5.	Jer. 1:8 Jeremiah		
6.	Hag. 2:4-9 Zerubbabel		
7.	Mt. 14:27 The disciples		
8.	Acts 18:9-11 Paul		
9.	Rev. 1:17 John		

3. The only healthy kind of fear is the fear of the Lord. John Bunyan said, *"Fear God and you will then have nothing else to fear."*

What do the following passages say about fearing only God?

	The Passage	Comments
1.	Job 23:13-16	
2.	Ps. 76:4-7	
3.	Is. 8:11-13	
4.	Is. 51:12-13	
5.	Mt. 10:26-31	

4. What are the blessings that come to us as a result of the fear of God?

	The Passage	The Blessing
1.	2 Chron. 19:7	
2.	Ex. 20:20	
3.	Job 1:1	
4.	Ps. 34:9	

	The Passage	The Blessing
5.	Ps. 112:1-8	
6.	Prov. 9:10	
7.	Prov. 10:27	
8.	Prov. 14:26	
9.	Prov. 15:16	
10.	Prov. 16:6	
11.	Is. 33:5-6	
12.	2 Cor. 5:10-11	
13.	2 Cor. 7:1	
14.	Eph. 5:21	

5. What can we do with the fears that we have?

	The Passage	Our Response
1.	Ps. 34:4-7	

	The Passage	Our Response
2.	Jn. 3:19-21	
3.	Acts 4:23-31	
4.	1 Cor. 2:1-5	
5.	2 Cor. 12:9-10	
6.	Eph. 6:19-20	
7.	Heb. 13:5-6	

6. As you reflect on your answers to the above five questions, what is God saying to you about your fears regarding ministry to your Neighbours?

Session 2

The Problem of Fear (1 Jn. 4:18)

Introduction

All of us battle against fear. It is one of Satan's main weapons. In Acts 4:29-30 we read the prayer of the church for boldness in view of Peter and John's problems with the authorities. This is a key prayer for the Majority World. The word 'boldness' (*parresia*) means confidence. The opposite of confidence and boldness is fear. What delivers us from fear is love.

How can we discern if fear is creeping in? Often there is a realisation that we **know** what the will of God is and we are very reluctant to do it.

- ❖ There may be a slow build up of resistance to God's will for fear of the consequences.
- ❖ There may be an eagerness, desire and longing to do God's will coupled with a tremendous dread that you will never be able to do it.
- ❖ The whole atmosphere in the Majority World can often generate in our hearts a spirit of fear and timidity. Control by the Evil One is achieved through fear and intimidation.

1 John 4:18 may be God's answer to this problem. It suggests three things:

1. **The Problem:** Fear is a Torture
2. **The Remedy:** "There is no fear in love."
3. **The Certainty:** "Perfect love ejects fear."

1. The Problem: Fear is a Torture

The Greek word means a torment, punishment or a sense of restraint. It is punishment that is either retributive or disciplinary. So it is not fear of something. The fear itself is a torture. In life in the Majority World, fear is often the dominating emotion in our hearts and minds.

We all know something about fear. We know the tyranny of fear and the imprisonment and restrictions that come from being bound by fear. What constitutes the essence of fear? What is the basis of fear? What underlies fear?

Fear is the sentinel of life – the self-protective instinct that gives warning of danger. However, this instinct is in a 'fallen' state and so fear may be an indication that all is not well in our relationship with God.

Three Basic Factors

An insufficiency in myself of which I am aware

An imagination that is actively anticipating trouble

An intention of which I am afraid

a) I am afraid because of an insufficiency in myself of which I am aware.

- The pathway of the will of God is going to be difficult:
 - It will be lonely
 - Language learning and cultural acquisition are hard
 - The demands of incarnational ministry seem impossibly high
- You look at your own heart and your experience and find utter insufficiency – your inability to do God's will – true of Moses and most others since!

- You feel not only miserable but tortured by fear – fear of failure. This feeling is similar to being in a sinking boat and knowing that you can't swim! You are tortured by your insufficiency or inability. This is very common among workers in the Neighbour World.

b) I am afraid because my imagination is actively anticipating trouble.

- We picture situations that may never happen.
- We endure in our imaginations a torture that we may never encounter. This is a bit like having an injection or going to the dentist. The pain we endure before the event is often far greater than the actual pain of the event.
- Our imaginations are active and our thoughts are busy magnifying problems. Soon fear begins to torture us. Once the event is over we sigh with relief and say, 'That wasn't nearly as bad as I had thought it would be!'
- We anticipate problems with police, authorities, security and all ...ists.

c) I am afraid because of the intentions of others that I do not trust.

- We find ourselves in the control of others and we are not sure of their intentions towards us. This may be similar to when you were at school and you were told to go and see the headmaster. You were not sure of his intentions towards you! The fact of this uncertainty made the time of waiting miserable as you anticipated the worst.
- Remember the emotions when a special friendship with someone of the opposite sex came into your life. Perhaps this was love? There was the problem of SP. You know your own intentions but you are very uncertain of the intentions of the other person. Is this just a casual friendship or is it the fulfillment of all your dreams? The uncertainty is pure torture.

So there is a complexity in the tyranny of fear. Whatever is causing the fear, it hinders us from going farther in our relationship with God. It makes us extremely hesitant to do His will.

2. The Remedy: No Fear in Love

We read not only that fear is a tyranny and a torture. We also read: *"There is no fear in love!"* The Greek is very emphatic – 'Fear – there is none in love!' Why is there no fear in love?

a) With respect to our inabilities/insufficiencies there is the lavishness of the gift of God's love.

When you are being tortured in this way, ask yourself, *'Do I really think God is going to leave me to handle this situation alone?' 'Do I think God will fail to supply what I need?'* Imagine a girl from a very poor background marrying a very rich man who truly loves her. Would he expect her to continue to live on the edge of poverty and to dress in rags?

"God so loved ...that He gave". He still loves us and He still gives. The one hallmark of true love is love's desire to give. That is the difference between lust and love. Lust takes and love gives. God gives to us lavishly. It is the assurance that He will always give abundantly that deals with the fear that is based on the insufficiency of which my soul is so aware. My insufficiency is met by God's lavish giving! Read 1 John 3:19-20.

b) With respect to our imaginings there is the limit of love's thinking.

God gives lavishly and there is no limit to His loving thoughts. Love is able to dream. Love has its hopes. Love has the ability to expand the imagination for this is how joys are multiplied.

But there are some directions in which love is unable to go. The limits are set by the character of the one loved and the character of our love. We say of someone, *"I wouldn't dream of thinking such a thing about her!"* Both the character of that person and the character of my love and my regard for her set a limit beyond which my imagination cannot pass. So the character of God sets a limit beyond which our thinking about God should not go.

Think about the character of God! He is wise. He is all-powerful and He is committed to me! Let us not treat lightly God's love and His commitment to us.

c) The loveliness of love's planning

Why is it that we so often identify the will of God as something that is threatening and filled with unpleasant things? Some people go so far as to believe that anything that will bring them joy and happiness probably isn't the will of God for them. They think that God's will is always hard, harsh and designed to make them unhappy!

Picture a pregnant mother. Her hands and her thoughts are busy day and night planning the prettiest nursery with the loveliest cot and the daintiest baby clothes. Everything that love can plan is planned in detail and with great care. This is the loveliness of love's planning. Or picture a bride dreaming of the lovely home she will create for her beloved husband and then going round to all her fiancé's friends to ask what food he **does not** like so that when the honeymoon is over and they have their first day in their new home she can give him the **worst** meal of his life! She would never do such a thing! Yet we sometimes act as if we believe God is hard at work in just such a way!

All the planning of love is for the happiness of the loved one. Why do we fear God's intentions?

"We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God has ordained before that we should walk in them." (Eph 2:10)

If only we could catch a glimpse of the heart and mind of God! We would find the love of God planning with infinite care, exactness of detail, thoughtfulness and consideration everything designed for my happiness and God's glory. There is no fear in love. Love is the remedy for the tyranny of fear.

3. The Certainty: Perfect Love casts out Fear

Perfect love says to fear, "Out" and, so to speak, flings it out of the door. In Greek the word 'cast' is the word '*ballei*' from which we get ballistic. This means ejection with exceptional force.

There is also a suggestion here of the growth of love. The word 'perfect' indicates completeness. The implication is that it is possible to have incomplete love and so to have a degree of fear. But there is a certainty that characterises perfect love. Love that is developed and mature will throw out fear. What are the characteristics of complete love?

- **The reality on which this love rests.**

"We love Him because He first loved us." (1 Jn. 4:19) The reality on which our love for Jesus rests is the absolute certainty of His love for us. Where do we have the guarantee, the assurance on which our reality can rest?

"He who didn't spare His only Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32)

The measure of the reality of the love of God is in the Cross. It is on that reality that my love rests.

A Story

A little girl of about 3 or 4 years old used to shrink away from being touched by her mother because her mother's hands were deeply scarred with burn marks. It hurt the mother to see her little daughter shrink away from her touch. When she thought her child was old enough, she took her in her arms and told her how she got the ugly scars on her hands. When her daughter was a baby her cot had caught fire. The mother had put her hands into the flames to rescue her child. As a result her hands were scarred. After that the little girl was never again afraid of those hands. She loved them as they were a proof to her of her mother's love.

If ever you are tempted to doubt God's love for you, look at the Cross. It is the reality on which our love rests.

- **The intimacy in which love grows**

Love is a growing thing. As with human love, so with our love for God there is an incompleteness and a growing to completeness. Between humans and between us and God there are depths of love and different degrees of love. What governs the depth of our love for God?

"If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." (1 Jn. 1:7)

What is essential for a growing love through a deepening fellowship? It is that we are 'in the light'. Human love can die. Often this is because there is a gap – a distance – that has developed spiritually, emotionally, intellectually or even physically between people. It isn't easy to maintain and nurture love when there is a distance! Where there is distance there is no fellowship.

- **The authority by which love rules**

"Perfect love casts out fear." There can be no questioning the authority of that love! Love exercises absolute dictatorship with regard to fear!

As a father of small boys I sometimes pretended to be angry and that I wanted to fight. I clenched my fists and looked ferocious. What did they do? First they laughed and then they ran into my arms for a hug. Love casts out fear!

What is the picture you have of God – a frowning face? A clenched fist? A wrathful God? Such a picture isn't the God we have come to know in Jesus.

Here is a lovely definition of holiness:

"If you want to live the Christian life as we are meant to live it, get into the presence of God and then do whatever you like!"

Summary

We should be living in the love of the Father. Get there. Grow there and you will find that this verse will become true in your experience. The tyranny of fear will go. The remedy will be applied and the certainty will come.

There is no fear in love. If you are afraid and tense fearing that you will snap, let it all go in the knowledge of the love of God that is eternal and unchanging.

Session 2

A Brief Overview of Ministry to Neighbours

'Missions to Neighbours' has not been on the agenda for very long! Why not?

- Neighbours often live in restricted access countries. Agencies send workers to places where they are free to proclaim.
- Agencies thought the best strategy was to revive the traditional churches in the Middle East, South Asia etc. so that they could proclaim the Gospel to their Neighbours. This largely failed since agencies didn't appreciate the fact that centuries of embitterment towards Neighbours couldn't be easily overcome by teaching and encouragement. This method gave rise to evangelical Christian churches for the Christian minority. Some of these are now beginning to have an effective ministry among Neighbours.
- Colonial powers usually prevented agencies working among Neighbours.

Why has the work among Neighbours – little as it is – been so unfruitful?

- Traditionally, evangelical churches have tended to extract Neighbours who have come to faith in Jesus (BMBs – Believers from a Muslim Background) out of their culture and so have prevented them from witnessing to their own people.
- We, the agency workers, have insisted that BMBs reject their culture and dishonour their family by not participating in family events etc. As a result, Neighbours have felt shamed and despised by workers who have rejected their culture and traditions. Shame causes a huge backlash. Why follow a foreign polytheistic God who rejects their culture and their traditions?
- Until recently the Bible was not translated and distributed among Neighbours because:

It was illegal to do so

There were no outlets

Few workers were making translation and distribution a priority

The vast majority of Neighbours are aural preference learners

- Much of the witness over the centuries has focussed on high theological debate – the nature of the Trinity etc. If the genuineness of Muhammad's prophethood has been questioned, Neighbours have lost any ability to stay objective. Very little witness has been directed towards reaching people's spiritual, emotional, social and physical needs.
- Efforts to persuade Neighbours to change religion in the 18th and 19th centuries were often motivated by a political and 'civilising' motive rather than a concern for their eternal life – the negative impact of colonialism. Many perceive this as still continuing today – a sort of cultural imperialism by "the West".
- Very few Neighbours have had a good friend who knows the Lord, speaks their heart language and cares for their souls.
- It is rare to find examples of ex-pat workers becoming integrated into the Neighbours' community or having Neighbours who enjoy their company and with whom there is mutual trust as friends.
- The Quran warns Neighbours **not** to become close friends with Christians or Jews lest they go astray from the True Path.
- Most workers trying to reach Neighbours have **not** known the language of the Neighbours well enough to teach the Bible.
- Evangelical churches in countries where Neighbours are a majority do not usually function in the Neighbours' language (i.e. Pakistan) or they are culturally inappropriate and sometimes even seem 'shockingly irreverent' to a seeker.
- Not many workers among Neighbours have been gifted evangelists.
- Well-educated workers from rich countries have not often been able to live among the majority poor, more open, 'Folk' Neighbours.
- There has been an emphasis on quick evangelism, short term outreach or even just prayer teams. Not many workers have spent a decade or more in face-to-face disciple making.

Session 2

Neighbours Today

God is at work among our Neighbours worldwide. Let us consider 10 important events in the last 14 or 15 years.

1. A Focus on Neighbours

Due to 9/11 and more recent events, the Majority religion is on the world's mind and in the media focus. People have a growing fear of the Majority religion. This religion tries to propagate itself as a religion of peace and goodwill, yet it is being increasingly seen in the spotlight as something else. Majority leaders encouraging violence no longer hide in the wings. They are at centre stage. Neighbours are asking themselves what is the true nature of their religion.

2. A Cloud of Shame

A cloud of shame hangs over many of our Neighbours – see **The Theological Basis of Al Qaeda**. Today the majority religion and terrorism are synonymous. A sense of shame has fallen on the majority of Neighbours who are peace loving. At the same time they feel humiliated by the cultural and economic imperialism of the West with its superior technology. Many say, *“If Osama is the figurehead of our faith, then something is wrong with us – but what?”* Cracks are appearing in the foundations on which many have built their lives.

3. No Closed Countries

Most Majority countries allow access to cross-cultural workers. There are only one or two exceptions to this. In the last twenty years Central Asia, the Caucasus, China, Iran and many other countries and islands have allowed (or even welcomed) access.

4. Reformation

The Majority religion is going through its own **inner** struggles. The former King Fahd of Saudi Arabia made an important move. He commissioned the Quran to be translated from Arabic into every language. This means that lay people are able to read and understand the Quran in their own languages. With this new level of understanding it is often the case that the lies and additions of the Imams over the centuries are being exposed. The foundation of the Ulema is being damaged and the Hadith are being questioned.

For example, a national newspaper in Bangladesh (May 1999) reported that in a district in Bangladesh thousands of Neighbours, under the leadership of their Imam, threw their Qurans and Hadith into the river. About 5000 of these Neighbours replaced their Qurans with Bibles.

5. Major Growth

More Neighbours have come to faith in Jesus in the last three decades than at any other time in history. Someone has put forward the figure of six million per year since 9/11.

6. Abundant Tools

Cross-cultural and local workers are recognising that God has provided abundant and effective tools for Neighbour evangelism. There are now Neighbour-friendly Bibles and books for the literate. Great emphasis is being put on producing appropriate materials for aural-preference learners – radio, satellite TV, audio and video cassettes. Then there is the Internet. The whole of the New Testament can be downloaded from the worldwide web in several different Neighbour languages. Neighbours who have come to faith are learning to use the Quran as their number one tool in evangelism.

Twenty years ago very few of these tools were available.

7. An increase in the number of cross-cultural workers

In the mid-sixties only about 1% of the workers in cross-cultural mission were involved with Neighbours. By the early 80s this number had risen to 2%. In 2014, it is estimated that there are 30,000 – 35,000 workers (about 10%!) working among Neighbours world-wide.

8. The “Back to Jerusalem” Movement

One of the astonishing things God has done in the last 25 years is to stimulate the growth of the church in China. Some estimate that there are over 100 million Chinese Christians – the world’s largest church! And God has placed Neighbours on the heart of this church. The church in China recognises that the church was birthed in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and from there it spread eastwards to all of Asia. They see that now is the time to re-evangelise Asia and take the Gospel “Back to Jerusalem”. This involves reaching the nearly one billion Neighbours. The B2J movement plans to establish a CPM (church planting movement) among every Neighbour group in Asia! One leader of this movement said recently, *“The reason God has allowed us to face severe persecution in our country is only for practice. He is making us ready for”* (our ‘Neighbours’ World’)

9. Dreams and other demonstrations of God’s power

Recent surveys of hundreds of Neighbours who have placed their faith in Jesus revealed that a high percentage became believers as a result of a revelation of Jesus Christ in a dream. The most common theme of these dreams is seeing Jesus as a shining light dressed in white robes – very similar to what John saw in Revelation chapter one.

Others have been healed, delivered from demonisation or have experienced in one way or another the supernatural power of God.

10. Church Planting Movements

In one North African country over 750,000 Neighbours have come to faith and churches are multiplying rapidly. In another South Asian country it is estimated that about 200 Neighbours a day (!) are coming to faith in Jesus and being baptised.

Family members or close friends who have already believed in Jesus have won the vast majority of these Neighbours to faith.

Session 2

The Theological Basis of Al Qaeda

In the war against terrorism Al Qaeda and associated groups **should** be able to be swept away by military might, vigilant police forces and all sorts of undercover operations. This seems to be the view of many in the West. They are going to be disillusioned! The reason is that Al Qaeda and similar organisations are deeply rooted in theological/ideological ideas. Unless these theological/ideological issues are addressed and challenged, the West will never win a war on terrorism!

Our political leaders speak of UN resolutions, weapons inspectors, multi-lateralism and a host of other things. But none of these things speak to the profoundly important issues underlying Islamic terrorism. Our religious leaders, at least as we hear them in the media, are liberal thinkers and seem to have no concept of the war of ideas that is being fought.

The Intellectual Founder of Al-Qaeda

Although Osama bin Laden was a Saudi, the son of one of the directors of a major construction company in Saudi Arabia, the Laden clan comes from the border region between Northern Yemen and the Abha region of Saudi Arabia. The Laden clan also has ideological roots in the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Egyptian Islamic Group. These are two radical Islamist groups. They both have their roots in the 1960s Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt.

At the heart of the theology/ideology of these groups stands Sayyid Qutb – the intellectual hero of the Islamists. Sayyid Qutb is to Islamists what Karl Marx is to communists. The heart of Qutb's writings is a commentary on the Quran called, **In the Shade of the Quran**.¹ It is 15 large volumes in English. It is from this work that the theological basis of Al Qaeda is taken.

Sayyid Qutb's Background

He was born in Cairo in 1906 and initially taught through a traditional 'madrasa'. By the age of ten he had memorized the Quran. Later he switched to a modern secular education.

In the 20s and 30s he was a socialist and wrote novels, poems and short stories and even a book on literary criticism. In the late 40s he studied in the USA at the Colorado State College of Education from where he received his MA. Even before going to the USA he wrote a book entitled, **Social Justice and Islam** in which he outlined some basic tenets of Islamic radicalism – Muslim fundamentalism.

In 1952 Gamal Abdul Nasser and a group of nationalist army officers overthrew King Farouk and Egypt became a republic. Nasser strongly advocated pan-Arabism based on socialist, secularist nationalism. Briefly Nasser and Sayyid Qutb tried to co-operate in the dream of rescuing the Arab World from the legacies of the imperial colonial powers and crushing the brand new Zionist state. Both of them wanted to be up-to-date on economic and scientific issues. Both wanted to restore the old Arab Empire under one ruler.

But Sayyid Qutb wanted his new empire to be based on Quranic principles. He pictured a resurrected Caliphate as a theocracy strictly enforcing the Sharia. When Nasser came to power he began to put pressure on the Muslim Brotherhood – especially after one of them attempted to assassinate one of his leaders. Some leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood went into exile. Sayyid's brother, Muhammad Qutb, was one of these. He went to Saudi Arabia and became a distinguished Saudi professor of Islamic Studies. Osama bin Laden was one of Muhammad Qutb's students.

In 1954 Nasser put Sayyid Qutb in prison. He briefly released him only to imprison him again for ten years. He released him again for a few months and then finally hanged him in 1966.

During these years in prison, **In the Shade of the Quran** was written. Prison conditions were very bad and torture was routine. He was locked in a large cell with 40 other men. A loudspeaker broadcast Nasser's speeches for 20 hours a day! Qutb managed to smuggle out what he had written – the ideological and theological basis of Islamic revolution. In his multi-volume book he builds an enormous theological criticism of modern life and of other worldviews.

Qutb's Analysis of the World's Problems

Qutb understood that the world and human beings were in a mess. The human race had lost touch with its intrinsic nature. Man's inspiration, intelligence and morality were all degenerating. Relations between the sexes were deteriorating *"to a level lower than the animals"*. Man was miserable, anxious, hopeless and cynical. He was slowly sinking into idiocy, insanity and crime. In their unhappiness, people were turning to a mindless hedonism, to drugs, alcohol and to existential despair.

Thoughtful people in Europe and North America were asking deep questions after the horrors of the Second World War and the advent of nuclear war. Many pointed to the Age of Enlightenment as the fatal error in Western civilisation – an arrogant and deluded faith in the power of human reason. This error was at the root of the philosophical position of modernity. In the 50s/60s this produced the tyranny of technology over life.

The modernity of enlightenment was a recovery of the worldview of the humanistic renaissance – from Thomas Aquinas onwards. This, in turn, was rooted in the philosophy of the early Greeks such as Aristotle and Plato. This worldview was challenged by a Biblical worldview both by the early church and by the reformation – see Francis Schaeffer's book **Escape From Reason**² that was written at this same time.

Qutb didn't think the root of the problem was Greek philosophy. He thought it was the way that **Semitic thinking** had altered. He recognised that nearly 60% of the world's population is influenced by Semitic thinking – Muslims, Jews and Christians. As a Muslim, Qutb saw the teachings of Judaism (as originally given) as divinely revealed by God to Moses and the other prophets. Judaism instructed man to worship the One God and to reject all other gods (centres of authority). Judaism also instructed man how to live in this world in a way that conformed to the will of God. This was accomplished by obeying a system of divinely mandated laws – **the Mosaic Law**.

In Qutb's view, the problem with Judaism was that, over time, it had withered into *"a system of rigid and lifeless ritual"* disconnected from God. So God sent another prophet – Jesus. In Qutb's view, Jesus brought much needed reform to revealed religion. Jesus brought a new spirituality to the legalism of Judaism. But something terrible happened to Jesus' teaching after his lifetime. Perhaps in trying to communicate to the Greek-speaking world, the followers of Jesus took, in Qutb's view, *"a deplorable course"* and this caused the message of Jesus to be diluted and perverted.

Writing from his miserable prison in Cairo, Sayyid Qutb thought that Jesus' disciples, in their persecutions and deaths, were never able to provide an adequate and systematic exposition of Jesus' message. According to him, the Gospels are garbled and are not divinely inspired. The sad result was clear separation and animosity between Jews and Christians. So Judaism was not reformed and Christians rejected much they should have accepted! Christians emphasised Jesus' message of spirituality and love, but rejected Judaism's legal system. Instead they made the fatal mistake of introducing Platonism into Christianity and so separating the life of spiritual existence from physical life in the world.

In Qutb's analysis he called this, *"the hideous schizophrenia"* of the Christian worldview. The old Mosaic code was holistic. It was a unified worldview – essentially a theocracy. There were laws for an entire way of life that was theocratic – diet, dress, marriage, sex and everything else. This was all linked into the worship of the unique Creator-God at the centre. The *"hideous schizophrenia"* of Christianity in separating the secular from the spiritual is clearly wrong.

Christianity went wrong particularly in the 4th century when the Roman Empire became "Christian". Roman paganism was introduced into Christianity (idols, morals, laws etc.). Qutb sees a strong reaction to this 'paganisation' of Christianity in the monastic asceticism of the 5th century. But monasticism only perpetuated *"the hideous schizophrenia"* – the spiritual-secular divide. The church councils of the 4th and 5th centuries put into cement the *"absolutely incomprehensible, inconceivable and incredible"* teachings about the Trinity, the Deity of Jesus Christ etc. All these teachings were irrational and misguided principles resulting from the mixture of paganism with the clear teachings of Jesus.

So in the 7th century God gave a new revelation to His prophet Muhammad to establish the true, undistorted way that man, God and nature should relate to each other. Muhammad brought man back to true religion and to a holistic worldview. He re-introduced a strict legal code that integrated man with the physical world in a better way than the Mosaic code on which it is broadly based. Muhammad re-enforced the concept of man as God's vice-regent on earth appointed to take charge of this physical world. In Qutb's analysis, this integrated worldview gave rise to the "scientific method" in the Arab World in the 8th – 11th centuries. (For a far more accurate analysis of the origins of modern science see **Re-building the Matrix**³ by Dr. Denis Alexander.)

Sadly, in Qutb's analysis, Islam **also** began to depart from its true beginnings after 300 years. When under attack from the Crusaders, Mongols and others, the theocratic, holistic ideals began to crumble and they were unable to capitalise on their discovery of the scientific method. The scientific method was exported to Europe and re-enforced "*the hideous schizophrenia*", with the result that God and the spiritual world was completely divorced from the physical world – the church **against** science. Everything that Islam knew to be one, the church divided into two. This break eventually became final and in the Western World the result was a small ineffective Christianity versus an atheistic, secular humanism. In Qutb's view, the latter was winning and Christianity was doomed. But there is something worse than this! The scientific and technical achievements of the West have allowed it to dominate the world and inflict its "*hideous schizophrenia*" on all people everywhere. The result is misery everywhere – anxiety, a sense of moral drift, purposelessness and craving for false pleasures.

So the crisis of the West is being forced on the Muslim World. It is producing Muslim "moderates" who have accepted the same "*hideous schizophrenia*". Qutb sees this as a great 'shame' (humiliation) and disastrous for Islam. Qutb's agony was to live in a Muslim World increasingly being dominated by liberal, secular ideas. It was a Muslim World being split by pragmatic dualism, just as happened to Christianity in the 3rd century.

So Qutb's analysis is soulful and heartfelt. It is a theological analysis of western culture over the centuries. It has its parallels in Francis Schaeffer's analysis of the same history from an evangelical point of view at about the same time.

(See **Escape from Reason; The God who is There; He is There and He is not Silent** and **How Should We Then Live?** ⁴)

There are many points of agreement in Qutb's analysis and Schaeffer's analysis as well as some major differences! Qutb sees the fault of the West as its acceptance of a plurality of sources of authority. To him, this is paganism – an immense backwards step into a life without reference to the One Creator-God. Such a life, according to Qutb, can never be satisfactory or fulfilling.

Qutb writes bitterly about the West (mainly European imperialism and sometimes America) not because it was hypocritical in having double standards in its liberal policies, but **because of** these liberal policies. Liberal policies are the "*hideous schizophrenia*" of the separation of the church from the state – the secular from the sacred. So the great problem with the West is not its political agenda, its individualism, its Hollywood morality, its exploitation of the world's resources etc. **What is wrong with the West is its theology!** Qutb says that the conflict between western liberalism and the World of Islam, "*Remains, in essence, one of ideology* (this is the word in the English translation – in Arabic the word used is 'theology'), *although over the years it has appeared in various guises and has grown more sophisticated and, at times, more insidious*".

Because the liberal West doesn't understand theology, it uses pejorative words like "fundamentalism", "fanatics", "backward people" etc. But Qutb says, "*The confrontation is not over control of territory or economic resources. It is not for military domination. If we believed that, we would play into our enemies' hands and would have no-one but ourselves to blame for the consequences.*"

So the real issue is theology. Qutb is absolutely clear. The West, consciously or unconsciously, is mounting a huge campaign to weaken Islam by forcing onto it "*the hideous schizophrenia*". He was furious that the West was succeeding. He used Turkey as an example. In 1924 the remnants of the Caliphate in Turkey were finally removed and Atatürk introduced a secular state with a complete separation of religion from the state. Atatürk spoke strongly against the concept of an Islamic state. To Qutb this was an attempt by a Muslim (!) to destroy the very heart and soul of Islam. He spoke of secular Muslim rulers launching a great offensive all over the Muslim World. He said:

"It is an attempt to exterminate this religion even as a basic creed and to replace it with secular conceptions that have their own implications, values, institutions and organisations".

Atatürk wasn't the only one. There was Jinnah in Pakistan, Nasser in Egypt, the Shah in Iran etc.

Qutb's Solution

Step One was to open the eyes of Muslims to see what is going on. They need to recognise the danger and understand that the major assault is coming from inside the World of Islam by people who call themselves Muslims! These poor Muslims have had their ideas polluted by the "*hideous schizophrenia*". They are "false" Muslims who have aided and abetted the West.

Step Two is the creation of a vanguard (a term he borrowed from Lenin). This is a group of people whose eyes have been opened and who are fired with the spirit of true Islam. The goal of the vanguard is to bring revival

to Islam. It is to attack “false” Muslims and “hypocrites”. It is to found a new state based on the Quran and Sharia. It is to resurrect the Caliphate and unite the Muslim World into one state.

Step Three is to take Islam from this renewed Muslim World to the rest of the world – just as Muhammad and the early Caliphs did. Qutb wrote, *“We are certain that this religion of Islam is so intrinsically genuine, so colossal and so deeply rooted that all such efforts will succeed”*. This vanguard must take responsibility for Jihad – the struggle for Islam.

To Qutb, the imposition of Sharia is the true liberation – liberation from man-made (and therefore arbitrary) laws. He said, *“The resurrection of the Caliphate will enable every person to be free of the servitude of others and to live in the service of God”*. For Qutb, Sharia was utopia – perfection – the natural order of a world created by God. It was freedom, justice and dignity. It was a vision greater than communism – the *“total liberation of man from the enslavement by others”*.

It is a sad fact that Sharia requires a total dictatorship in order to enforce the vision. Since Sharia is very intricate and complicated, it really needs a dictatorship **of theocrats** who can seek to interpret Sharia to the ordinary masses. *(There are 4 “schools” of interpretation of the Sharia and within these there is diversity of interpretation.)* The 20th century generated a number of despotic, totalitarian, revolutionary projects – the Nazis, the Fascists, the Communists and to these should be added Sayyid Qutb and his followers.

Islamists are often well educated and wealthy in spite of attempts by the western press to make them look weird. They have a powerful philosophy that explains their own unhappiness, that gives them an explanation of thousands of years of theological error and corruption and that also gives them a blueprint for the principles of a perfect God-given society. They believe they are preserving Islam from extinction. They believe they are doing the world immense good as well as doing the will of God.

Our Response

We must ask ourselves, ‘Are we speaking to the deep philosophical/ideological/theological ideas that are presented by Sayyid Qutb?’ As the West we have nothing to say! Much of Qutb’s criticism is justified and we would agree with him. As Biblical, evangelical believers it is clear that we need to be much more holistic in our thinking, in our actions and in our interaction with Muslims. We need to focus on understanding our own Biblical worldview and working out a way of explaining it to Muslims. We need to help Muslims understand the Fall, the function of the Mosaic code, the purpose of the Mosaic sacrifices and the job description of the Messiah. Sayyid Qutb’s misinterpretation of the Old Testament is profound and this is the root of all his analysis.

The sort of apologetics of “anti-Deedat” – picking over the minutiae of differences – is not going to be sufficient. We need an apologetic of broad, deep, theological counter ideas. Perhaps we need to re-read Francis Schaeffer again and then to re-interpret his philosophical framework into the Islamic terminology of Sayyid Qutb – contextualise Schaeffer!!

The advocacy of post-modern liberalism won’t stem the tide! The West misunderstands an ideological” war and relegates this thinking to the 16th century. For this reason alone it will never win the “War on Terror”.

¹ **In the Shadow of the Quran** – Islamic Foundation ISBN 0 86037 303 7

² **Escape from Reason**, Francis Schaeffer – Intervarsity Press ISBN 0 85110 340 5

³ **Rebuilding the Matrix**, Denis Alexander – Lion Publishing ISBN 0 7459 1244 3

⁴ Schaeffer books: **Escape from Reason** (as above); **He is There and He is not Silent** ISBN 0 340 19358 1;

The God Who is There ISBN 340 04466 7; **How Should we then Live?** ISBN 0 8007 0819 9

Session 2

Section 5

Church Planting Movements (CPMs)

Definition:

A CPM is a **rapid** and **exponential** increase of **indigenous churches planting churches** within a given people group or population segment.”
David Garrison

To put it more colloquially: it is when God opens the heavens and pours out His Spirit upon a lost group of people resulting in a massive explosion of churches.

There are 4 key phases in Garrison’s definition: (*He has written a book on ‘Church Planting Movements’.*)

➤ **Rapid**

The formation of new house churches is very fast. The Coca Cola company grew **rapidly**. It was founded in 1940 and within 50 years you could buy a coke nearly everywhere on earth! There are Coca Cola manufacturing plants in most countries of the world. That is **rapid** growth! A CPM is not restricted by buildings or paid, seminary-trained leadership and so it can grow rapidly.

➤ **Exponential**

This is a mathematical term. It describes what happens if one church starts two new churches in a year and then in the following year each of those churches starts two new churches and so on for ten years. In ten years, if this progression continues, there will be over 18,300 churches! This is more than addition or even simple multiplication! Exponential growth is explosive!

➤ **Indigenous**

Churches are planted in a particular culture by the people within that culture. These are the people that will be sensitive to that culture – i.e. they are already contextualised. These indigenous churches don’t look like traditional or western churches.

➤ **Churches planting churches**

New churches are not planted by professional evangelists or ex-pat cross-cultural workers. They are planted by lay people in the local church.

Why do we need to see CPMs?

Both historically and until now, this is the only way to fully evangelise a people! Sometimes this is called ‘saturation evangelism’. In a country like India it would take 10,000 expatriate workers with each of these workers leading 2000 non-believers to faith in Christ **each** year just to keep up with population growth! This is nearly twice as many workers as the time when there was a maximum of ex-pat workers in India in the 1950s. Our only hope is a CPM in each of the many people groups in India!

Ten Key Factors present in all known CPMs

1. Prayer

Prayer is the first pillar of all church planting strategies. It is essential that it play a vital part in the **personal life** of a church planter as well as in the life of a church planting team. It is an interesting fact that the new believers in a church plant realise right away that the source of power and effectiveness in church planters is answered prayer and not money, training, nationality etc. The new believers in a church planting movement **see** that prayer is the essential secret in what is happening.

2. Abundant Gospel sowing

Widespread sowing of the Gospel precedes all CPMs. Recently this has been largely done by mass media evangelism – satellite TV, radio, mass literature distribution etc. But it is noticeable that it is always those who model personal evangelism as a way of life who start CPMs. This model is then reproduced. It is also noticeable that evangelism continues unintimidated by governments or pressure from the surrounding culture.

3. Strong intentionality in church planting

New churches are not planted incidentally after evangelism. Churches are planted when there is a deliberate strategy to plant them and the strategy and plans are carried through. CPMs come into being when there is a strategy to plant churches that can reproduce themselves using their own resources.

4. Scriptural authority

CPMs happen when the Bible is in the language of the people – both orally (for aural preference learners) and in written form. In all CPMs the authority of the Bible is unquestioned. The movement looks exclusively to the Bible for models in church and life-style. All teaching is Bible-based.

5. Local leadership

From the earliest days after conversion, the church planters coach/mentor new believers in doing evangelism rather than doing it exclusively by themselves. The church planters model what it is to lead participative Bible studies with seekers and new believers. The church planters do not lead the church. Rather, they model servant leadership and very early on they encourage local leadership development.

6. Lay leadership

Lay leaders are strongly encouraged in church plants. It is very detrimental to pay full-time local leaders with foreign money. The leaders must be like the people they lead. They should have the same level of education and a similar outlook. This facilitates effective communication to the people they lead.

7. Cell or house churches

In a CPM churches can reproduce themselves because they are built around small structures – cells or house churches. House churches are small units of between 10-30 members. They are semi-autonomous and are linked together into a network. From time to time the house churches/cells meet together for a ‘celebration’ or other special event. The leader of the house church is accountable not only to the other leaders of the church but also to the wider network of church leaders.

8. Churches reproduce other churches

Believers are taught that church planting is normal for all churches and that each church can reproduce itself without external aids.

9. There is rapid reproduction

There is a sense of **urgency** in the church. Everyone believes in the importance of friends and relatives coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Churches expect to reproduce themselves rapidly.

10. Each cell or house church is healthy

Five core functions of a healthy house church were in evidence:

- **Fervent worship**
- **Effective outreach**
- **Education and discipleship of believers at all levels**
- **Widespread ministry with the believers using their spiritual gifts**
- **Warm fellowship**

Ten Very Common Factors in CPMs

David Garrison also found 10 very common factors that were present in **nearly all** CPMs, but not quite all.

1. Worship in the heart language of the people

The church planters are fluent enough in the heart language of the people that they can enter fully into worship – i.e. they model heartfelt worship to the new believers. (*Note that most church planters are not expatriates but indigenous believers.*) The prayers, songs, messages (jokes and all) are in the heart language of the people and at a level that is within the reach of all members of the community.

2. Evangelism has strong communal implications

Evangelism makes use of strong family and kinship connections. New believers are urged and equipped to share the Gospel through corridors of trust (the web of their family, relationships, close friends etc.) Small churches or cells may consist of family/kinship units. Evangelism is built round meeting the felt-needs of the community.

3. Rapid incorporation of believers into the church

Baptism is not delayed by lengthy discipleship requirements or by non-Biblical requirements (such as eating pork or drinking wine!). New believers are expected to become witnesses immediately. They need training in storytelling and careful instruction in vocabulary to do this. New believers are often directed to new churches or new cells rather than added to old ones.

4. Passion and Fearlessness

Both the church planters and the local believers are characterised by passion and a sense of urgency that attests to the importance of salvation and the necessity of repentance and turning towards God. Both church planters and new believers demonstrate boldness in the face of opposition.

5. Becoming a follower of Jesus is costly

It is a curious fact that churches grow more rapidly where becoming a believer is not popular or socially advantageous and where turning to Jesus and leading a new life in Him often leads to persecution.

6. There is a leadership crisis and/or a spiritual vacuum in society

This vacuum may occur due to war, natural disaster or a displacement of people. What people feel is the loss (or potential loss) of long-held symbols of stability and security. Leadership is missing or inadequate. They feel that they are, “sheep without a shepherd”!

7. On-the-job training for church leadership

Church leaders are being trained in action rather than in the abstract in seminaries. Theological education by extension (TEE), short term training modules and continuing on-going leadership training needs to be in place.

8. Leadership authority is decentralised

Every cell or house church has authority to be pro-active in evangelism, in ministry and in new church planting. There is no leadership hierarchy and there are no levels of bureaucracy. Leadership is networked.

9. Expatriates/Outsiders keep a low profile

The expatriate church planters keep a very low profile and mentor from behind the scenes. “Foreignness” is minimised by a degree of contextualisation. Ingenuity and experimentation are warmly encouraged.

10. The church planters are seen to suffer

Expatriate church planters must be prepared to suffer. If they are seen by the local believers to suffer, this will accelerate church growth! Expatriate workers need to be on their guard to watch, fight and pray.

Major Obstacles to the Development of a CPM

David Garrison’s research highlighted nine major obstacles that obstruct, slow down and hinder the start and growth of a CPM.

1. Extra-Biblical requirements for being a church

In other words, to be accepted as a church, a group of believers must have: land, a church building (that looks like a western church building), seminary-educated leaders with degrees, full-time paid clergy etc. Conditions have been added to the Biblical requirements. None of the above is mentioned in the New Testament. The more conditions we add to those found in the Bible, the slower will be the growth of the CPM. It is vital that we remember this obstacle!

2. The loss of a valued cultural identity

If a person has to abandon some much loved and appreciated cultural identity and adopt an alien culture to become accepted as a believer, this will dramatically slow down the growth of the CPM. This is at the heart of the contextualisation debate.

3. Negative examples of Christianity

This includes “western” values propagated by Hollywood and seen on satellite TV. It also includes culturally alien, worldly, traditional churches that have little passion for sharing their faith. Both of these can cause serious misunderstandings and put the brakes on the growth of a CPM.

4. Non-reproducible church models

If the church planters introduce expensive and non-reproducible methods, solutions or materials into the church planting – e.g. expensive buildings, worship instruments that are not made locally (organs, large pianos etc.), expensive Sunday School materials, dependence on retreats, camps etc. far from home, then this will inevitably slow down church planting.

5. Subsidies that create dependency

This is the use of money to create dependency on outside people who then have a degree of 'control' over the church. The subsidy may include the purchase of buildings, vehicles, materials etc. or the paying of salaries to local church leaders by expatriate agencies. All this will inhibit the start of a CPM.

6. Extra-Biblical requirements for leadership

If we add to the Biblical requirements for leadership and leadership development (1 Tim. 3:1-9; Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-9), then we will slow down church planting movements. This would include seminary training, ordination etc.

7. Adherence to and promotion of dualistic thought and practice along with a linear presentation of truth

Dualistic thinking (that dichotomises, separates into different parts – reductionism) based on the Greek philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, promotes the spiritual-secular division. This has profoundly affected western Christianity, but it isn't Biblical.

There are two forms of reductionism. **Methodological reductionism** is the process of taking a system apart and analysing the properties of the components in isolation. This is a valuable scientific method. But it sometimes leads to **ontological reductionism** which says that the whole only has meaning in terms of the component parts – i.e. "man is a complex biochemical machine".

The actions of western church planters are often very dualistic. We must be much more holistic in our thinking and in our living. Linear thinking leads to a line-by-line logical presentation of propositional truth (in our sermons and teaching). This is very unhelpful – especially since most people are aural preference learners! They prefer stories and proverbs. We need to teach as Jesus taught.

8. Producing "Frog" churches rather than "Lizard" churches

A "frog-church" sees itself as having arrived. They have gone through the trauma of metamorphosis and are in their final stage. They sit contentedly on the equivalent of their water lily and sun themselves. They croak with others and they sit and wait. If a morsel of food (a fly) happens to fly near them, they can capture it with a flick of their tongue. The picture is of a satisfied and passive church expecting the lost to come to them.

A "lizard church" is more like the active little geckos you find in Asia. They are very active! They chase the flies! They adapt to their environment by changing colour when necessary. They can suffer loss (their tails) and pain, but they still keep moving! (Their tails grow again!) In terms of 'the lost', they "chase" them!

9. Prescriptive Strategies

Teams that arrive in our Neighbours' World with a pocket full of answers and formulae are going to be disillusioned! It will take them several years to learn that prescriptive strategies don't work. We need a constant, humble dependence on God to reveal His way step-by-step in this process of seeing churches planted and rapidly reproducing themselves.

Session 2

Ten Characteristics of a CPM in Bangladesh

1. The Point of Conversion

Usually a seeker doesn't receive the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Lord the first time the Gospel is presented. The average time is usually three months with constant exposure to the Gospel – often through a family member or someone with whom there is a high level of trust. In other words, they need to **see** and **hear** the Gospel.

2. How it is spreading?

The Gospel is running down corridors of trust – usually down family lines. The exception to this is where there is some outside community involvement. This **sometimes** causes a jumping beyond family lines.

3. Methods of Evangelism

Those sharing the Gospel always have a secular identity – farmers, shopkeepers, tradesmen etc. They call themselves “Isa-ic Neighbours” – i.e. Neighbours who follow Jesus. The method of evangelism is almost entirely using the Quran as a bridge to the Gospel. The typical new believer continues to read the Quran for about two weeks **after** he has come to faith. He then realises that the Bible is all he needs. After this the new believer uses the Bible exclusively. The method by which Neighbours move towards faith in Jesus (the use of the Quran and being told stories) is the same method **they** use to evangelise others once they become believers.

4. Baptism

Baptism follows immediately after a declaration of exclusive faith in Jesus. The one exception to this is that some individuals wait until a sizeable group of believers has been formed – sometimes a whole family – and are ready for baptism. Most baptisms are conducted in secure locations and performed at night. Almost all are baptised by **local** leaders, not by expatriate evangelists and church planters.

5. The Church Planters

A house is often too small for a church, so they move some of the believers to a new location and start another house fellowship. The church planters are almost all from a local Neighbour background.

6. Terminology

Majority religious terminology is used:

“*Jamat*” for a church

“*Imam*” for a Christian leader

Using Christian terminology does not ‘sit’ well with Neighbours. They have been taught from childhood to reject anything ‘Christian’ and that Christians are sinful and walk in darkness. Using Neighbour-friendly terminology separates the BMBs from the western cultural forms that carry such negative connotations for the Majority.

7. Most BMBs were not fringe Neighbours

According to a study done in 2002, over 66% of those coming to faith were active, practising Neighbours. The movement is **not** made up of ‘fringe’ or non-practicing Neighbours. The vast majority of those coming to faith intentionally chose to make a clean break with their past practices of Neighbour religion. Also, only 8% of those who claimed they followed Jesus “reconverted” back to the Majority faith due to persecution. Most of these remained “secret believers”.

8. Places of Worship and Gatherings

“Isa Jamats” usually worship on a Friday. Prayer, offerings, a message and singing make up most of the time. Some songs are being written by BMBs with indigenous music forms. Some use ‘Christian’ music but change the words to majority terminology. Food is often served after the meeting.

Out of 6000+ churches that have been planted, there are only two reports of a mosque being taken over by believers. The remaining churches meet in their villages under a tree or on the veranda of a house.

9. Leadership Training

In the Bangladesh CPM 63% of the leaders have received and continue to receive leadership training. The CPM assessment team found no major doctrinal errors, though teaching on tithing and the Lord's Supper was weak. The content of the training divided the time between chronological Bible story telling and using the Quran as an evangelistic tool.

10. Persecution

Persecution occurs in every instance where a Neighbour becomes a follower of Jesus. It varies in severity. Often intense persecution – in terms of verbal abuse, occasional beatings and complete rejection from the community – lasts six months to a year. Only 3 martyrs have been reported. In each case there was a very clear motive of killing the believer to stop him being effective in witness. The low number of martyrs and the relatively mild persecution is attributed to using the Quran as a bridge and to family-based evangelism.

Session 3

The Priority of Prayer

Objectives:

Head: To grow in understanding the strategic value and responsibility of prayer

Heart: I must be completely dependent on God for fruit in ministry

Hands: To begin developing a prayer strategy and the discipline to maintain it

Time Together

1. Welcome and Prayer

2. Debrief members as to their Session 2 homework assignments:

- Ask about their experiences in sharing the CPM vision with a friend.
- Ask about key verses they memorised for overcoming fear and if they were helped by the paper **The Problem of Fear**.
- Ask if they shared any of their fears with a Neighbour.

3. Review highlights from the Bible study 'Prayer : Priority One'.

Work through the study. Stop often for discussion. Stop for prayer as you work your way through.

4. Discuss what you might do as a group to grow in the area of prayer.

Some possibilities would be:

- Get the group into prayer triplets
- Set aside designated times of prayer
- Build up prayer resources – news from other teams etc.

5. Review: The ABCs of Prayer for Neighbours and The Art of Praying with Authority.

Discuss any questions raised.

6. Spend time in prayer for one another, for the ministry and for your Neighbour friends.

It is sometimes helpful to place people you are praying for in 'stages'. This makes it easier to see the progress in prayer. Here is a suggestion:

Stage	Comment
0	No openness or haven't yet talked about spiritual things
1	Seed planted (<i>mention with what</i>)
2	Seed beginning to sprout
3	Moving into "seeker" category
4	Conviction of the truth but no commitment and no repentance
5	Process of putting allegiance in Jesus has begun
6	A new believer being prepared for baptism
7	A beginning disciple
8	A growing disciple

Example:

Person	Stage	Prayer Request	Progress
Sami	1	To be willing to start Bible study in Genesis	Beginning to read Scripture
Najib Ali	3	That he will see he is a sinner	Completed Genesis study and beginning to read Luke

Homework

Head: Read again through 'The ABCs of Prayer for Neighbours'. Take note of any areas for prayer that you have not previously used. Read again through 'The Art of Praying with Authority'.

Heart: Skim through the Book of Acts in search of what you can learn about prayer. Make a list of the principles gleaned. Pray through them asking God to speak to your heart.

Hands: Spend some time with a longterm team member and discuss the area of prayer. See what you can learn from him/her. Ask for suggested reading and resources. Ask them how they discipline themselves in intercessory prayer. What tools do they use?

Handouts for Session 4: Understanding My Neighbours

- Finding Common Ground
- A Comparison of Worldviews
- Aspects of a Biblical Worldview
- The Viable Cross-cultural Worker

Session Three

Prayer : Priority One

Where is the worker who would deny that prayer is foundational? God uses prayer to challenge our hearts and our thoughts. Prayer helps to change us to reflect Him more. Prayer is an expression and reflection of our dependence on Him. (Jn. 15:5-7) Without Him we can do nothing.

Prayer is also a catalyst for the work of God. A catalyst is a substance that, when added to a chemical reaction, speeds up the reaction without itself being consumed or changed. With prayer what was slow begins to change rapidly!

Lastly, prayer and faith produce something out of nothing! James tells us that we do not have something because we haven't asked for it!

In Session Two we saw that while God rejoices in the lost being found, His purpose is that men and women should not only come to salvation, but should be part of a believing community that leads to more believing communities – a CPM. Prayer was seen to be one of the major factors in all CPMs.

It has been said that we need not only **more** prayer (quantitative) but also **better** prayer (qualitative). So what kind of prayer do we need? The following three components are vital.

1. Practicing the Presence of God

Prayer should be a natural expression of our daily, continuous walk in God's presence. (1 Thess. 5:17) Our day and all that we do should flow out of prayer and be guided by prayer. When things go well, we praise God by giving Him all the credit. When things do not go so well, we praise God thanking Him for the opportunity to grow in His grace. We can thank Him for growing in discernment and wisdom as we learn why things haven't gone so well.

Discussion for Group Session

Think of someone God has put on your life's path who exemplifies practicing the presence of God. What can you all learn from their example? What changes do you need to initiate in your own life to grow in this area?

2. Spiritual Warfare

The Devil, our enemy, is on the prowl looking for those he can devour. (1 Pet. 5:8) He isn't going to stand by while you seek to destroy his kingdom of darkness by letting in the light and robbing him of his slaves! What should be our response to this reality? We must be **proactive** and **reactive** – attack and defense.

Discussion for Group Session

Divide the group into pairs or triplets and ask each group to answer the following three questions. Give both a reactive (defensive) and a proactive (attacking) response.

- At which points in your life do you usually struggle?
- What has this struggle revealed to you about your own life and the needs you might have?
- What might you need to do to address this area more effectively?

Possible Suggestions

Proactive

- Maintain a daily, conscious walk with God completely surrendered to Him. (Jn. 15:5)
- Take back any ground previously surrendered to the enemy. (Eph. 4:26)
- Take up your spiritual armour. (Eph. 6:10-17)
- Any other?

Reactive

- Assume authority based on your position in Christ. (Eph. 1 and 2)
- Pray with confidence/boldness in the name of Jesus. (1 Jn. 5:14-15)
- Wage the battle to bring every thought captive to Christ. (2 Cor. 10:3-6 and Phil. 4:7-8)
- Any Other?

Spend some time in your small groups praying for each other and concerning the things you have discussed.

Like a predator in the forest or grasslands, the Devil feeds on those who are stragglers. He attacks those who have somehow isolated themselves from the encouragement and support of others! One of the purposes of team is to prevent such isolation. In your small group discuss the following:

- Do you have a brother or sister with whom you feel comfortable sharing your concerns and struggles?
- Do you set aside time on a regular basis for sharing and prayer for one another?
- If not, what might be hindering you from doing so?

Attacking Strongholds

While we might have to deal with the battle on a personal level first, we don't usually have the luxury of an enemy attack on just one front! We usually have to fight on multiple fronts against "a full court press". Jesus suggests that if, ***"We do not bind up the strong man"*** (Mt. 12:28ff) we will not only wage continual battles, but these battles will increase in intensity. Paul tells us that we have been given effective spiritual weapons in order to win this war. (2 Cor. 10:5)

Group Discussion

What are some of the strongholds that hold our Neighbours in their grip and resist the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? These may be things such as: pride – false religion – isolation – lying – division – fear – lust – anger and many more. You can add to the list. Has anyone studied the spiritual history of your people? If so, what conclusions were drawn about the spiritual strongholds to be broken down?

There is great value in having **experienced spiritual intercessors** visiting your area (prayer teams). Because of their calling and gifting they can often discern "strongholds" that local workers don't see. Local workers are often deceived by the subtlety of Satan's disguises.

How should we pray against the strongholds of the enemy?

➤ **Remember the end of the story!**

God **will** triumph over all His enemies! (1 Jn. 4:4) Satan and all his demons will be cast into the lake of fire. Their certain defeat will be absolute! Don't let the enemy deceive you into conceding to him what does not belong to him and what he will one day be forced to return to its rightful owner – the Lord Jesus Christ! ***"All the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of God and of His Christ"*** (Rev. 11:15)

➤ **Recognise your position in Christ.**

You are ***"Seated with Christ in heavenly places far above all rule and authority, power and dominion."*** (Eph. 1:20)

In Him you have the right to come against anything that sets itself up against the knowledge of Him. (2 Cor. 10:5)

➤ **Pray in Faith**

Time and time again Jesus identified **faith** as the crucial trigger for God's interventions in even the worst situations. To make His point as clear as it could be, Jesus said that we could move mountains if we had faith.

However, in implementing this, there is a danger that **our faith** becomes the focus of our faith instead of the Faith-giver. There is no excusing the reality that we have not because we don't ask! (James 4:2) or because we are asking but not expecting an answer. (Mark 11:24)

Group Discussion

- How are you 'standing in the gap' on behalf of your Neighbours?
- What strongholds have you identified in the lives of your friends and in the whole people group (nation)?
- What else have you learned in this area of spiritual warfare praying that might be a help to others in your group?
- What adjustments might you need to make in terms of your personal time and your group time to see greater Kingdom expansion?

3. Intercession for ourselves

Here are a few items you can be praying for yourselves and for others in your team/group.

- Give me a deeper passion to know and love You. (Jn. 15:5)
- Help me to reflect more clearly the **character** and purposes of Jesus. (Mt. 20:28)
- Help me learn more of what it means to walk in step with Your Spirit. (Gal. 5:25)
- Help me to walk in loving humility with the other members of my team. (Eph. 4:2)
- Help me to step out of my comfort zone or, better still, expand my comfort zone through acts of faithful obedience. (Acts 10)
- Help me to develop a greater appreciation of other cultures – both those of my team members and the culture we live in. Help me to be really effective in cross-cultural communication. (1 Cor. 9:23)
- Break my heart over the condition of the lost – especially of my Neighbours. (Mt. 9:36)
- Give me Neighbour friends and help me to be able to share with them in grace and truth. (Jn. 1:14)
- Help me to be a great encouragement to local brothers and sisters I meet. (Heb. 10:24)
- Cover me in the shadow of Your presence and protection. (Ps. 36:7 and Eph. 6)

Group Discussion

1. What other suggestions for regular prayer do you think would be relevant in your situation?
2. Of the suggestions above, which are most crucial for you right now and why?

4. Intercession for Neighbour Friends

We will touch this area of prayer again in Session 6 where we will look at developing an evangelistic life-style. Here are a few initial suggestions and principles.

- **Developing a Focus**

As you pray for Neighbour friends, ask God to help you discern who to spend more time with. Try to figure out a way to prioritize into a list those you pray for and those you are actively seeking to reach. But don't chisel this list in stone! Be flexible and allow God to move people up and down on your list.

- **Having a strategic focus**

Ask God to show you how to pray strategically for your Neighbour friends. What are the key things for which you sense the Holy Spirit is asking you to persevere in prayer?

- **Being Spirit-led**

While you want to pray strategically and with perseverance, be sure to wait on God, looking to Him to give you direction in prayer. Expect the Holy Spirit to take you beyond the present frontiers of your understanding.

- **Being Faith-filled**

Never allow your praying to become ritualistic. This can easily happen if you use a personal prayer book. Actively trust God in relation to your prayers and expect Him to answer. Shape your life on the answers you believe God will give.

- **Being Responsive**

Seek to serve your Neighbour friends by praying for them. Most Neighbours will respond positively to your care and concern evident to them when you offer to pray with them or for them. Find out their needs and take the initiative in prayer.

1 Jn. 5:11-15 tells us that if we pray according to God's will, He hears us and will grant us our requests. Think of 4-6 key requests to be prayed for Neighbour friends. Write them down below together with the verse reference. This will help you pray with greater confidence according to the promise in 1 John above.

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What further questions do you have in this area of prayer?

What are your key points of application from this study?

Session 3

The ABC of Prayer for Neighbours : An Acrostic Prayer

Awaken: Awaken the church around the world to pray in faith and love for the Neighbours' World. There are still so many unreached people groups with no believers. Since 9/11 walls of prejudice, fear and ignorance have been built higher than before!

Blindness: A spiritual battle rages for the hearts and souls of our Neighbour community. Ask God to open the eyes of Neighbour men, women and children who have been blinded by Satan. (2 Cor. 4:4)

Courage: Believers, whether expatriate or local, who witness to Neighbours, risk being reported for breaking laws that prohibit all forms of proselytism among Neighbours. Neighbours who choose to follow Jesus risk losing family, friends, job, freedom and personal safety. Ask God to replace fear with courage and enable believers to reach out to Neighbours and Neighbours to follow Christ wholeheartedly.

Dreams: Most Neighbours who have become believers have experienced a dream (or several) that was instrumental in their choosing to follow Jesus. Pray that God would continue to use dreams to bring many more Neighbours to faith in Him.

Evangelism: Pray that believers would discover how to develop an evangelistic lifestyle that leads to a positive and effective witness for Jesus among Neighbours.

Fellowship: What would you be like if you knew of no other believers from your background? Pray that your Neighbour background brothers and sisters who are very lonely and isolated will find encouragement from other believers.

God's Word: For many Neighbours access to a copy of God's Word in their own language is not at all easy. Pray for governments to ease restrictions on the publication and distribution of God's Word – not only in written form but also in aural form.

Holy Spirit: Ps. 127:1 *"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders build in vain."* Pray that every move to reach Neighbours would be initiated and empowered by God's Spirit.

Intercession: Since we believe that God answers prayer, we need **more** praying and **better** praying! Ask God to raise up more intercessors who know how to stand in the gap effectively on behalf of Neighbour peoples. (Ex. 17:8-13)

Jesus: From their knowledge of the Quran, Neighbours perceive Jesus to be a powerful prophet who healed many people and raised the dead. Pray that God would create a hunger in the hearts of Neighbours to know more about this Jesus.

Kids: Neighbour children are being indoctrinated day after day with false and deceptive teachings about the Bible and other Christian beliefs. Pray that God would put a hedge (a protective barrier) around the hearts and minds of these children and prepare them to hear and understand the truth one day. (Jn. 14:6)

Love: Neighbours have a deep understanding of the power and sovereignty of God. But they know little of His loving desire to relate to them in a personal way. To many it is irreverent to hear God addressed as 'Father'. Pray that Neighbours would come to understand more of Our Father's love through the believers that they meet.

Mobilisation: Pray that believers around the world would assume responsibility for reaching all the Neighbours in the world through sustained prayer, sacrificial giving and sending their people out to where Neighbours are living – both where they are in a majority and where they are a minority.

Nourishment: Neighbour background believers don't have the resources and support to maintain their spiritual growth that are available to believers from large churches. Pray that they would discover how to find nourishment from the Word and how to be filled and empowered daily by the Holy Spirit. (1 Pet. 2:2)

Obedience: Pray that new Neighbour background believers would develop life-styles of obedience, rooted in the Word of God and responsive to the Holy Spirit regardless of the cost.

Peace: Pray that God's peace would fill the hearts and minds of all our Neighbour background brothers and sisters despite the pressure of their circumstances and that they would learn to be content in God alone.

Questioning: God is shaking up the world of Neighbours. They find themselves asking questions about how their children are being educated – economic, political and religious questions. Pray that they will also question issues of faith and practice as never before.

Rulers: Pray that the political and religious rulers of your Neighbour nation would rule with integrity and justice and that their leadership would help spread the Gospel among the Neighbour community.

Suffering: Paul reminds Timothy to expect suffering. (2 Tim. 1:8) Yet many believers today are not prepared when it happens. Pray that Neighbour background brothers and sisters wouldn't seek to avoid suffering at all cost, but instead would discover the joy and the fellowship of sharing in the sufferings of Jesus. (Phil. 3:10)

Trust: To prevent Neighbours leaving their religion, informants are often recruited to infiltrate groups of believers and report on gatherings etc. Issues of trust are important, but fear often hinders the work of God. Pray that believers would know how to be *"as wise as serpents yet as innocent as doves"*. (Mt. 10:16)

University Students: These are the future leaders of nations. Pray that every opportunity will be taken to reach Neighbour students with the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Victory: Neighbours are often ensnared by *"spiritual forces of darkness in the heavenly places"*. (Eph. 6:12) Pray that they would experience release and victory. Pray that Neighbour background believers would discover that *"greater is He that is in them than he that is in the world."* (1 Jn. 4:4)

Worship: In their own religion Neighbours experience a sense of the unity of community in worship. After they come to Christ they often fail to experience this. Pray that believers will discover both personal and corporate patterns of worship that satisfy their souls. Pray especially that God will raise up musicians and song writers to produce worship songs in the indigenous music and languages of Neighbour people groups.

Examples: Pray that the believers would set an example, *"in speech, life, love, faith and purity"* (1 Tim. 4:12) so that Neighbours living around them would smell the sweet aroma of Christ. (2 Cor. 2:15)

Young People: Youth around the world are open to change. Pray that we will be able to recruit more expatriate young people who are believers to reach out to this section of society. Pray for sports ministries and music ministries reaching out to young people.

Zeal: Pray that God's people would be filled with a zeal to share His love with Neighbours no matter what!

Session 3

The Art of Praying with Authority

“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been coming violently and the violent take it by force.” (Mt. 11:12)

Introduction

We live in a world full of violence. We experience wide scale terrorism, suicide bombs and ethnic cleansing etc. We withdraw in horror from the murder, torture, rape and deprivation of freedom that comes from this violence. It is therefore a shock to hear that the Lord Jesus calls for violent people! War is the most universal and unrestrained form of violence and spiritual warfare – like all warfare – is never gentle!

The Lord Jesus spoke of His Kingdom in terms of **an invasion** that would drive Satan from the territory that he has illegally occupied. For example, in Mt. 12:28 we read, ***“But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.”***

The Greek word for cast out is ‘*balleo*’. This word implies ejection with considerable force. We must not be naïve. Satan will never easily relinquish his grip on territory. He must be forced to do so and that involves violence. An intruder will not leave unless he is convinced that you intend to throw him out and even then he may stay and fight it out!

What does it mean to ‘take the Kingdom’?

It means to depose Satan. It means to take from him the control that he has in the hearts and lives of men and women in a community. This control he has wrongfully taken. Our task is to establish there the rule of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is growing but it will not come fully until the Lord Jesus returns. Then it will come in all its fullness.

Paul saw that any sacrifice was acceptable if it furthered the advancement of the Kingdom. See Acts 21:13, ***“I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus”***. Yet with us there is often so little earnestness! We long for jolly and joyful lives. We are relaxed and laid back. Are we following Jesus?

The disciples watched Jesus cleanse the temple. (Jn. 2:13-22) They were awestruck at the way He cleared away the money changers. Then they remembered it was written of Jesus, ***“Zeal for your house will consume Me”***. (Jn. 2:17) The great sin of most believers is passivity. This probably weakens the Kingdom more than anything else. We are in a training programme for men and women of holy, Spirit-filled violence who will go on in and dispossess Satan. We must bind up ***“the principalities and powers and forces of wickedness”*** and take the Kingdom. The Bible talks of men and women who ***“through faith conquered kingdoms...stopped the mouths of lions ... became mighty in war putting armies to flight....”***. (Heb. 11:34)

God is still looking for such men and women.

Two Characteristics of people who are “Taking the Kingdom”

1. The Violence of Self-Discipline

There is an **inner war** we have to win. Violent men are always intolerant of everything they see as thwarting their purpose. ***“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul.”*** (1 Pet. 2:11) The ‘passions of the flesh’ are those sinful desires or character weaknesses that war against our souls. The answer is the application of the Cross (a violent form of death) to the flesh. Gal. 5:24 says, ***“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”***.

There are two aspects to this self-discipline:

- An all-out war against sin in our lives
- A war to ensure that our spiritual will dominates our physical desires

Our bodies love ease! There is a constant desire by the body for us to surrender to our physical appetites. We have to learn to assert the ascendancy of our spirit over our body. Why is it that fasting is so often linked with prayer? Why fast? Scripture gives four reasons:

- ❖ It breaks demonic bondages (Mt. 17:19-21)
- ❖ It is a sign of repentance (Neh. 9:1)
- ❖ It helps us to get an understanding of God's will (Dan. 9:3)
- ❖ It helps to clear the mind in a time of crisis (2 Chron. 20:3)

In essence, it strengthens the inner man by liberating us from the demands of the body and sensitizing us to the realm of the Spirit. The body has a loud and persistent voice – *"Feed me – wash me – put me to sleep – pander to me"*. It commands and we leap to obey! The still small voice of the Spirit can so easily be drowned out!

There is often a need for fasts from things other than food – e.g. from TV and other media. Such a fast will decrease your dependence on **external** stimulation.

We read in 1 Cor. 6:12, ***"All things are lawful...but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful but I will not be enslaved by anything."***

Make sure that your spirit is free and is not being enslaved by anything. Echo Augustine's prayer:

**"Toward God a heart of flame
Toward man a heart of love
Toward myself a heart of steel."**

Paul put it this way, ***"I discipline my body and keep it under control lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified"***. (1 Cor. 9:27)

2. The Violence of Intercessory Prayer

Col. 2:1 ***"For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you...."***

Col. 4:12 ***"Epaphras... always struggling on your behalf in his prayers."***

Eph. 6:12 ***"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."***

The term 'struggle' is a wrestling term. It implies continuous, violent spiritual expenditure of energy.

Jesus taught us about this!

Mt. 12:28-29 ***"How can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob the house!"***

Lk. 11:21-22 ***"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armour in which the man trusted and divides his spoils."***

Notice the order: **First bind and then spoil**. We must **first** bind the strong man, remove his armour and **then** we can take his possessions. If we try and plunder the house while he is free and fully armed, we shall be in trouble and we will leave empty-handed. It is clear that "the strong man" is the devil and the whole demonic hierarchy. Satan is the prince of this world, powerfully in control of the minds and hearts and wills of people. He is armed with all sorts of weapons.

Intercession is not only earnest petition but it is "binding the strong man". Clearly this is the key to successful evangelism. Clearly this sort of intercession is a very violent business.

How do we "bind the strong man"?

It is best to follow the example of the Lord Jesus. This will show us that it is not repeating some kind of mechanical formula. It depends on you as a person.

"The prayer of a righteous man has great power as it is working." (James 5:16)

The Lord Jesus had three great encounters with the devil:

1) In the desert (Mt. 4:1-11)

Satan attacked Jesus along the only three avenues where people can be reached:

- appetite (v. 3)
- avarice (v. 6)
- ambition (v. 8)

We can see two reasons for Jesus' triumph in 'binding the strong man'.

➤ **Definite resistance with the Sword of the Spirit (The Word of God)**

Use the Word of God in prayer. Claim the promises. Remember Moses told Joshua to lead the army into battle against the enemies of God while he went up the hill to pray. (Ex. 17) I don't think Joshua was very impressed by this! But this is not all that Moses did! He said, ***"I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."*** The staff was a symbol of God's authority. It had exercised immense power!

Our authority is the Word of God. Use specific Bible promises for specific situations as the Lord Jesus did. Here are some examples:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| • Victory over fear | 2 Tim. 1:7 |
| • Victory over a sense of inadequacy | 2 Cor. 9:8 |
| • Victory over a weariness of spirit | Gal. 6:9 |
| • Victory over worry | Phil. 4:6-7 |

➤ **No unyielded areas in His life**

"The prince of this world comes and has no hold on Me." (Jn. 14:30) Satan has no hold on Jesus! Why? He was filled with the Holy Spirit! You will be powerless to bind Satan if there are unyielded areas in your life that can give Satan an opportunity to manipulate you and, in fact, to bind you!

2) In the garden (Mt. 26:36-46)

Here the conflict with Satan was intense and agonising. Jesus sweat drops of blood so intense was the pain and the struggle. How did Jesus win? How did He "bind the strong man"?

The answer: By merging His will with the will of the Father

In Mt. 26:39 we have the first recorded prayer of Jesus. Notice the distinction between ***"My will.....and your (the Father's) will"***.

Mt. 26:42 is the second prayer of Jesus. Now it is only ***"Your will"***.

Finally in Jn. 18:11 we have that great statement of acceptance, ***"The cup that My Father has given me, shall I not drink it?"*** and the exultant cry on the Cross, ***"It is finished!"*** These indicate not a grudging acceptance of the will of God, but joyful acceptance.

The lesson is clear: unquestioning acceptance of the will of God with joy.

The place of authority, the place of victory with the ability to ***"bind the strong man"*** is conditioned on this acceptance of the will of God in our lives.

3) On the Cross

The Cross was the decisive event of victory over Satan. In the ultimate sense we see the Lord Jesus in close combat with the "strong man" – the devil. He didn't rest until He had overcome Satan and He won't rest until Satan's house is utterly despoiled! If we are going to bind demonic forces, we must be utterly convinced of Christ's victory over Satan on the Cross.

In Col. 2:15 we read, ***"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross."***

Heb. 2:14 says, ***“Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy Him who holds the power of death – that is the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”***

Jesus, by His death, broke the power of the devil over us. Any dominion the devil now exercises over us is **either** because we do not understand Christ’s triumph and so we do not make it ours **or** because we tolerate sin in our lives. As we embrace the victory of Jesus, His victory becomes our victory! His authority becomes our authority! What Jesus began we continue! ***“They (i.e. us) overcame him (the devil) by the blood of the Lamb.”*** (Rev. 12:11)

It is the Cross and our identification with the Cross that invests us with the authority to plunder.

The Father can and does act unilaterally, but since Pentecost, He has chosen to act through His children. John Wesley put it this way, *“Without God man cannot. Without man God does not.”*

So aggressive praying is always based on the Cross. We can prevail because of Christ’s triumph on the Cross. Perhaps the example of J.O. Fraser (OMF) is helpful:

Fraser worked for five years with great devotion and self-sacrifice among the Lisu of South West China. He got very discouraged. He arrived at a point of inner desperation in his spirit. He found that much of what he had been taught about prayer did not work! At this point he was sent an article about “the prayer of faith”. In it he read that deliverance from the power of evil comes through **definite resistance on the grounds of the Cross**. Spiritual breakthroughs would happen when a person fought (wrestled) based on the claim of the victory of Christ on the Cross.

Fraser began to pray for 100 Lisu families. Praying became an “authoritative notice to quit”. It was based on Satan’s loss of victory on the Cross. He found that Satan didn’t mind carnal, rambling prayers. But when he prayed with definite faith for specific objectives based on Christ’s victory, unimaginable results began to be seen! He began to “rob Satan”! **Thousands** of Lisu families turned to the Lord.

Making the Potential Actual

How are we going to make Jesus’ example real for us? It is not enough to grasp this intellectually! We need to exercise the spiritual authority that has been given to us. Are our prayers effectively ***“binding the strong man”*** or is he laughing at our puny attempts to spoil his house? Are we needlessly impotent?

In Mt. 17:19-20 the disciples were powerless to cast out the demon. Why? Lack of prayer and fasting!

We need violent, holy men and women who are involved in aggressive prayer – binding Satan – breaking the spiritual powers that bind people, communities and countries.

Summary

- **Be ruthless with sin in your life.** Don’t toy with it. It opens up your life for Satan to manipulate you.
- **Yield yourself completely to Jesus.** Merge your will with His will.
- **Take a definite stand and a position of authority** based on Christ’s victory on the Cross. Claim the effect of that victory on your situation.
- **Use the Word of God.** Claim specific promises for specific situations.
- **Pray through to complete victory** – note the example of Moses in Exodus 17.

Session 4

Understanding My Neighbour

Objectives:

Head: To begin to develop a greater understanding of our Neighbours' Worldview

Heart: I must become a lifelong learner if I am to be effective in this ministry.

Hands: To learn how to become a participant-observer in my Neighbour's world and to grow in interpersonal skills – especially where I am weak

Time Together

1. Welcome and prayer

2. Debrief the group members as to how the homework assignments went:

- Ask the group if they picked up on any more principles related to prayer as they skimmed through Acts.
- Ask how they did asking longtermers about their intercessory prayer experience. What did they learn? Have they applied any of their observations?

3. Review highlights from the Bible Study Finding Common Ground

- Give group members opportunity to share passages from the study through which God has spoken to them that week.
- Discuss how Paul might share the Gospel with a Neighbour if he were in our place.
- Discuss what changes they think they might have to make in the style and content of their witnessing and in the structuring of their time as they reach out to Neighbours.

4. The Gospel, Cultures and Worldviews (Read together as a group)

One of the greatest expressions of God's creativity is the diversity of cultures He has created in this world. In Genesis 10 God creates and names seventy (the Biblical number of completion) nations (peoples). Naming them implies giving them separate identities. Linguistic diversity was a response to man's sin at the Tower of Babel. God still delights in these cultures He has made. His glory is still evident in them and will be revealed through all these cultures. John saw this in his revelation of eternity:

"After this I looked and behold a great number that no-one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to Our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!' " (Rev. 7:9-10)

God clearly delights in the voices and expressions of every tribe and language! Traditionally cross-cultural workers have not simply brought the Good News of salvation in Jesus. They have also brought a great deal of cultural baggage! Instead of sharing the life and the Spirit that transforms from the inside out, all too often the fruit of our cross-cultural witness has been merely an external change in individuals, with little evidence of any inward spiritual transformation.

4.1 A Definition of Culture

There are various definitions:

- Culture is, *"The more-or-less integrated system of ideas, feelings and values and their associated patterns of behaviour and products, shared by a group of people who organise and regulate what they think, feel and do."* (Paul Hiebert)

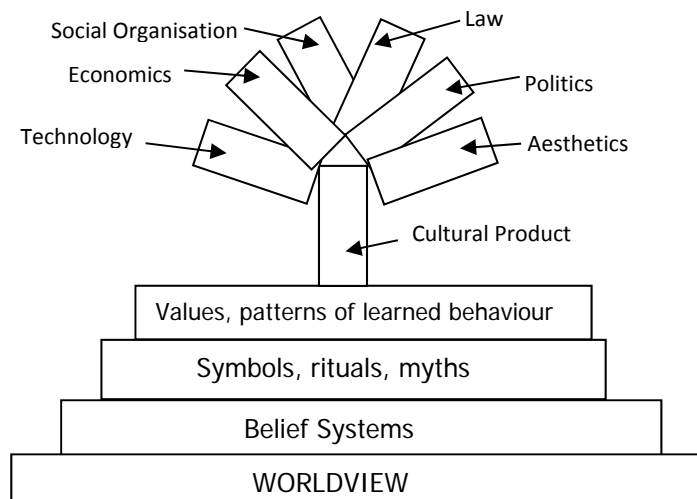
- Culture is, *“The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from another.”* (G. Hofstede)
- Culture is the total of human behaviour patterns, expression and technology communicated from generation to generation.
- Culture is the way of life of a given society, passed down from one generation to the next through learning and experience.
- Culture is, *“Man’s medium; there is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture. This means personality, how people express themselves (including shows of emotion), the way they think, how they move. How problems are solved, how cities are planned and laid out, how transportation systems function and are organised as well as how economic and government systems are put together and function. But it is often the most obvious and taken-for-granted aspect of a people and therefore the least studied.”* (E.T. Hall)

The Gospel has the power to transform a culture. But culture is also the medium through which the Gospel is expressed. If the Gospel does not address the ideas, values and feelings of a culture down to its deepest level, then spiritual transformation is impossible.

What we often observe is “the leaves and branches” of a culture (the economics, laws, politics etc.) – i.e. the behaviour of the people. But the roots of the culture go down very deep. There are four discernible levels of depth:

- **The values** and the learned patterns of behaviour. Are they an honour-shame culture or a truth-guilt culture?
- The values are based on **symbols, rituals and myths** that are taught to children very early in life.
- The symbols and rituals are based on a **formal belief system** that may not be fully understood by each person within that culture.
- This belief system is based in the **Worldview**.

A “Worldview” is the largely implied system a group of people uses to think, feel and decide. The Worldview is the basic foundation on which a culture is built. It is on this foundation that the culture decides categories and the ways of creating categories, its system of logic and the fundamental assumptions about the nature of truth, beauty and morality.



We need to:

- Study the Worldview of our Neighbours
- Help them, once they are believers, to see how the Biblical Worldview is different from their own. This will help them to keep what can be used from their culture and change what needs to be changed.

Much evangelism has been directed to “pulling the leaves off the tree” – i.e. attempts to change the observable area of “the tree” (culture). So, ‘If you change your behaviour, diet, clothing, politics etc. then you are a believer’. This never gives any depth to the believer and syncretism soon follows or even extractionism. Ultimately you have to put an axe to the roots – i.e. transform the worldview of your Neighbour.

An Example from India

The Indian concept of God (Belief Systems)

Brahman	Devudu	God of the Bible
Cosmic force – the ground of being	The greatest being	The greatest being
Power itself	Powerful	Powerful
No feelings	Conditional love	Unconditional love
Eternal, infinite	3.15 trillion years	Eternal, infinite
Amoral	Good and evil	Righteous
There is no sin	Suffers for own sin	Suffers for our sin

It is clear that behind these concepts of God lie different worldviews.

From one culture to another people see things differently because of their basic assumptions about reality. What is true and real varies. These basic assumptions are not consciously chosen but are naturally formed through acculturation from an early age.

A worldview is much like a filter that serves a culture in many ways. A worldview provides us with a logical framework to relate and create. It provides us with emotional security. It helps us to make sense of life in a crisis. A worldview affirms and reinforces values and behaviours of society. It is the glue that holds everything together. At the same time it monitors the changes that are ever present. It is little wonder that anything that is perceived as inconsistent or in opposition to the worldview of a culture is seen as a threat and is often opposed almost irrationally.

How does this discussion of culture and worldview relate to ministry to Neighbours?

Firstly, we need to recognise that cross-cultural ministry demands great sensitivity **and humility** on the part of workers. We must recognise our own worldview bias through which the eternal truth of the Gospel has been filtered. (I am a typical westerner brought up in a culture of modernity.) We need to recognise for what they are, the things that are simply our own cultural baggage – i.e. Sunday worship, looking respectable going to church etc. We must be careful not to integrate our cultural baggage into the Gospel package we have come to share. It is **far easier** to satisfy ourselves with an outward change in new believers – leading to a religious culture that mirrors our own! – than to recognise the emerging fruit of the Spirit in cultural forms and behaviours that remain strange and different to us.

Secondly, We need to advocate strongly that the Gospel should not only confront and challenge all cultures, but also that the Gospel should be able to move freely through a culture and transform it. The Gospel does this by penetrating the values, beliefs and feelings of a people. There must be no boundaries to its impact!

Yet to the extent that a culture and a worldview are **unnecessarily confronted**, that culture’s hackles are raised, walls are built and the mobility of the Gospel is hindered. As the Gospel is truly absorbed into a culture at its deepest levels, then, over time, that culture begins to champion the Biblical Worldview rather than be its enemy. That culture will then facilitate the Gospel’s expansion. Note that **cultures** cannot become ‘Christian’. Only **people** can be followers of Jesus.

This issue of **unnecessary confrontation** will continue to grow in relevance and in complexity as you learn more and more of the language and enter into the culture more and more. At this point you should realise:

- You are going to have to put a lot of effort into understanding God’s Word.
- You need to understand yourself and how you have been influenced by your own culture.

- You are going to spend a great deal of time over the next two years learning the culture and the worldview of your Neighbours.
- As they come to faith you are going to help them to see how a Biblical Worldview is different from their old worldview. This will help them figure out how to keep what can be used and change what needs to be changed.

We must recognise our desperate need for greater understanding. What is the essence of God's truth that we want to share? Which kind of wrapping is most appropriate to present it – ours or theirs? It is easy to state what is appropriate! Wrap it up in ***“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”***. (Gal. 5:22) It is easy to make the list and far harder to live it out and define how these qualities are to be expressed in someone else's cultural context.

The goal is to **transform** the worldviews of our Neighbours in the light of the Bible. This is an on-going process, not only in the lives of individuals, but in the lives of churches as bodies of believers.

For Group Discussion

- Discuss possible barriers to becoming an intentional learner of your Neighbour's culture and how these barriers can be overcome.
- Brainstorm specific action plans that could be incorporated into the lifestyles of group members and would help them become lifelong learners of culture and worldviews.

4.2 Biblical Examples of Worldview Transformation

Acts Chapters 8-15 – the early Jewish church and the Gentiles

➤ God converted the Gentiles

- Samaritans – 8:4-25
- The Sudanese Eunuch – 8:26-40
- Cornelius – 10
- Unknown Greeks – 11:19-21

➤ God converted the Jewish believers (much harder)

- Philip – 8
- Peter – 10
- Barnabas – 11:23-26 and 13:1-12
- James – 15 and the Jerusalem Council

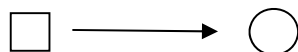
➤ The Example of Peter – 10:9-33

- A shift **from** God is a Jewish God **to** God is the God of all people
- A shift **from** Christianity is how we do it in my culture **to** Christianity can be 'done' in different ways in different cultures
- He came as an outsider to the Romans but shifted to being an insider-outsider.

4.3 The Gospel in human contexts

The context (social, cultural and historical) should determine the way we preach the Gospel. Often you have different stages:

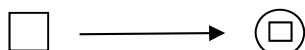
Stage 1



A foreign Gospel coming from a square culture and going into a round culture.

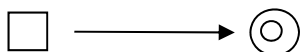
Possible Stage 2 (a)

The new culture is evil; formal Bible translation; displacement of the new culture by the old; a foreign God is imported; the old culture goes underground.



Possible Stage 2 (b)

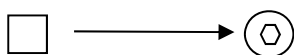
The new culture is good; dynamic equivalence Bible translations; radical contextualisation; aim at an insider movement.



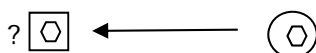
The result is that the Gospel is lost.

Possible Stage 2 (c) – the one we are aiming at:

The new culture is good and evil; there are cultural bridges and cultural barriers; the seed of the Gospel is planted in local soil; critical contextualisation.



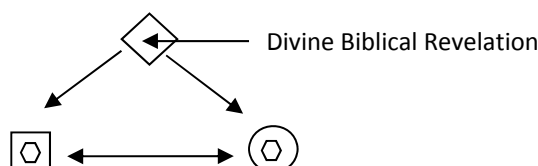
Stage 3



This is a critical look at the Gospel and the church in your own culture. In fact we can see that even our own sub-Christian culture is not really very Biblical.

Stage 4 – To see Scripture as Revelation

We need to understand that theologies are often determined by context.



Biblical transformation occurs when we understand the Biblical Principles. As we will see in Session 9 with the ‘Son of God’ vs ‘Son of Man’ issue, our thinking is often determined by theology that has developed in a context rather than by Biblical revelation. Biblical revelation needs to permeate both square and round cultures. Their theologies might then vary.

For Example: Our western focus is on truth. In the culture of our Neighbours the central question of religion is not so much truth as righteousness. What does righteousness look like in your Neighbour’s culture?

4.4 Transforming Worldviews

How can we go about dealing with Worldview issues?

- Do research and ministry together
 - What is the danger in doing ministry without research?
 - What is the danger in doing research as an end in itself?
 - Minister as you study!
- We must study the Worldview of:
 - Our Neighbours
 - Our own culture
 - Scripture
- In ministry we must begin where people are and lead them to Jesus.
- We are to ‘bear witness’. We are not God’s lawyers!

Some Questions to Ponder

- ✧ How can we contextualise the Gospel without losing its message and power? Can the Gospel survive our contextualisation? Can the Gospel survive non-contextualisation?
- ✧ What are our models of “culture”, “people groups”, “people movements” and what are the social theories that inform them?

- ✧ How do we integrate a theology of power and of suffering?
- ✧ How do we respond to globalisation and the local reactions to globalisation?
- ✧ How are evangelism, discipleship, church planting, the Kingdom of God and the King related?

5. The Comparison of a Biblical Worldview with a Generic Neighbour Worldview

You should have read the paper **Aspects of a Biblical Worldview** before you came to the discussion. As a group discuss the similarities and differences. Were there any surprises?

6. Take inventory of your interpersonal skills

One of the possible barriers that may cause difficulty in relating to our Neighbours is the unwillingness of our Neighbours to relate to us! They have stereotypical views of who we are and so they don't want to make friends with us. In Proverbs God lays down principles of how we should relate to others. Make sure you are applying these in your lives. This is the only way to become people of influence in the community.

Write down the principle from each verse as a member of the group reads out the verse.

	The Proverb	The Principle
1.	Prov. 11:2	
2.	12:15	
3.	18:13	
4.	11:16	
5.	12:16	
6.	13:10	
7.	15:30	
8.	22:11	
9.	15:1	

10.	17:14	

- Of the principles listed, which are the most relevant for effectively reaching Neighbours?
- Which do you, as an individual, need to give most attention to?

7. Prayer: Spend time in prayer for each other, the ministry and Neighbour friends.

Homework

Head:

- Pick up some material – e.g. a local English newspaper – or a book about about the local culture and take note of anything you learn or any questions you might ask a Neighbour friend. A Neighbour TV programme would also be fine. Ask your Neighbour to explain to you what is going on.
- Read **The Viable Cross-Cultural Worker**. Record key concepts and any relevant points of application to your life and ministry.
- You have two columns in the **Comparison of Worldviews**. Try and devise a **third column** for your own culture (English, German, Korean, South African, Brazilian etc.) Once you have done this, ask which culture is closer to a Biblical Worldview? What can you learn from this exercise?

Heart: Pray through your own commitment to becoming a learner of Neighbour culture.

Be sure to bring before the Lord Jesus any resentment or attitude struggles.

Hands: Look for an opportunity to talk to Neighbours about cultural and historical issues that might be of interest to them. When you discover a point of interest, explore the issue as thoroughly as you can. May this be a new point of interest in your own life! Soon after, make a few notes to remember the highlights. Share some of these with the group in the next session. Many have found it helpful to keep a record of visits to neighbour friends. This will help you to pray more effectively for your friends and to be more systematic in your preparation. A sample page from a journal is given below. Every visit write down what happened and your impressions after you get home. It is amazing how easy it is to forget simple information! *What was her aunt's name?*

A Sample Journal Page

Person visited:		
Date:	Location:	Length of visit:
Address:		Phone No.
Others Present:		
Expectations for visit:		
Goals for visit:		
What happened at the visit?		
Evaluation of the visit (based on goals):		
Things to do / items for prayer before next visit:		
Thoughts about next visit:		

Handouts for Session Five: Avoiding the Transfer of Culture

- Identity: My Own and My Neighbour's
- Building a Useful Conversation leading to a Lasting Relationship
- A Religious Terminology Quiz
- Religious Terms

Session 4

Finding Common Ground : A Bible Study

(Taken from Tim Down's book Finding Common Ground, Moody Press 1999)

1. Read Acts 17:16-34 : Paul in Athens

- Why was Paul in Athens in the first place? (v. 16)
- What can you imagine Paul doing as he waits?
- What does this say about Paul as a person?
- What is triggered in Paul's heart? (v. 16)

Is our spirit stirred when we see the plight of myriads of Neighbours heading to eternal lostness? Be honest!

What is keeping your spirit from being stirred for lost Neighbours? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you two or three reasons and write them down.

1.

2.

3.

- What is Paul's response to his heart being stirred? (v. 17)
- Who were his focus group?
- Who interrupted his ministry? (v. 18)
- Who were they in relation to his target audience?
- How well was Paul communicating? Why?
- Why do you think Paul went with them? (v. 19-20)
- How does Paul build rapport and establish common ground with his audience?
 - * v. 19-21
 - * v. 22

- List the principles for building rapport and establishing common ground that you can derive based on your observations of Paul.
- How might these principles relate to our ministry to Neighbours?
- What can we learn from Paul's character (based on what he did in Athens) that will help us to be people who 'narrow the gap' in finding common ground in order to share spiritual truth?
- In establishing rapport and finding the common ground, what were some of the mistakes he could have made that would have led to compromising the truth?
- What are the key points of Paul's Gospel presentation that he would probably present no matter to whom he was speaking? (v. 24-31)
- Which of Paul's points do you think might have been shaped by the audience to whom he was speaking – idolatrous Athenians? (vs. a Jewish audience)
- What relevance do these observations of Paul's adapted message have for us as we seek to share the same basic message with Neighbours?
- Paul's address is a good example of how to communicate the Gospel. He began by building a case for the One True God using examples they understood. Then he established common ground by emphasizing what they agreed on about God (17:30,31). Finally he moved his message to the person of Jesus focussing on the resurrection. (17:30,31)

When you witness use Paul's approach:

- ❖ Use examples and quote their authority
- ❖ Establish common ground
- ❖ Move people towards an understanding of Jesus

Re-write Paul's address so it would be suitable for Neighbours! What would be your main points?

- One of the observations or principles you listed earlier referred to how Paul borrowed from the Greek poets. What can we borrow from our Neighbours' poets, scholars and books and use without compromise? How would this relate to the Quranic references to Jesus?
- So far we have focussed on **what Paul said** as opposed to **how he presented himself** as a person. Paul appeared to the philosophers as "*a preacher of strange deities*" (v.18). How do you come across to our Neighbours? How would you like to be seen?
- As you think of the Neighbours God has put in your life, what changes might you need to make in terms of your message, character and lifestyle to help you establish better rapport and find more common ground to be able to communicate the Gospel more effectively?
- What is the **one thing** you believe God might want you to do in response to this study?
- Is there any question or issue that needs further study and discussion relating to building rapport and finding common ground as a stepping stone to effective witness?

Session 4

A Comparison of Worldviews

There are results of sin and the rebellion of “The Fall” in all cultures. In most cultures these results can be divided into three types with the following major emphases:

- ♦ Guilt – breaking the law
- ♦ Fear – breaking a trust
- ♦ Shame – breaking a relationship

In fact the result of sin is guilt **and** shame **and** fear **and** the wrath of God! But different cultures tend to focus on one or other of these results although the other two may also be present.

1. Guilt-based Cultures

These are mainly found in western protestant cultures. As post-modernism becomes more influential, there is a shift to shame and fear in western cultures.

2. Fear-based Cultures

These are common in animistic cultures. They come into our Neighbours’ cultures through Folk Islam. The emphasis is on taboos and living at peace with spiritual beings and spiritual forces. Sacrifices to placate these spiritual powers are usually involved.

3. Shame-based Cultures

This is true of semetic cultures and of most of our Neighbours’ cultures. Here are some differences between shame and guilt cultures:

Trait	Shame Cultures	Guilt Cultures
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Failure before one’s ideal or exposure before an inner or external audience• Loss of face before significant persons• Embarrassment before social demands• Total emotion: fearing rejection as a person, exclusion from the community or the withdrawal of love• Humiliating exposure, dishonour, self-negation; the impulse is to hide, to cover, to deny	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Condemnation before an inner parent or judge• Loss of integrity before one’s own conscience• Pain under moral demands• Specific emotion: fearing judgement of behaviour, correction of acts or withdrawal of trust• Humbling disclosure, discomfort. Regretted acts; the impulse is to justify, rationalize, excuse
Origin	Identification with an idealised parent	Submission to an idealised parent
Precipitating Event	Unexpected, possibly trivial, event	Actual or contemplated transgression

Character	Failure of being; falling short of goals – of whole self	Violation of values and norms
Primary Feeling	Inadequate, deficient, worthless, exposed, disgraced, disgusting	Bad, wicked, evil, remorseful
Primary Response	Physiological: eyes down, strong emotions, behavioural paralysis	Cognitive: being responsible, weak emotion, focus on the act
Involvement of self	Total self image involved, <i>'How could I have done that?'</i>	Only moral self image involved, <i>'How could I have done that?'</i>
Primary Focus	Focus on self	Focus on act
Central Focus	Not belonging	Punishment
Social Reaction	Ridicule and exclusion	Demand penalty
Mechanism	Feels anxiety when violation is pre-meditated or enacted	Feels guilty when violation is pre-meditated or enacted
Initial Defense	Denial, withdrawal, arrogance, rage, exhibitionism, perfectionism	Rationalisation, intellectualisation, paranoid thinking, obsessive/compulsive thinking, seeking excessive punishment
Positive Features	Sense of humanity, builds strong relationships, works towards reconciliation	Initiative, moral and ethical behaviour, reparation when proven wrong
Social reaction to those caught	Ridicule and exclusion	Demand that the law is upheld and the penalty exacted
Evangelism	<p style="text-align: center;">?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(see section 4 below)</p>	<p>Emphasis on the Book of Romans: guilt, penalty, law, justification, righteousness, use of forensic language</p> <p>e.g. The Four Spiritual Laws</p>
The Interpretation of the Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An instrument of shame • God's ultimate identification with us in our sinful shame • Expresses God's love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An instrument of penalty • God's substitute for our sinful guilt • Expresses God's justice
Restitution	Identification and communication; reintegration and reconciliation banish shame	Propitiation through penalty; justification and reparation banish guilt
Treatment	<p>Affective: help a person to expose his hidden defects in a safe relationship</p> <p>Behavioural: overcoming effect; the binding of shame</p>	<p>Cognitive: allocates responsibility</p> <p>Behavioural: Turns confession into plans of action</p> <p>Affective: Discerns between the emotions of true and false guilt</p>

4. Presenting the Gospel to Shame-based Cultures

This is an introduction to a very major subject! More time will be spent on this in future sessions.

a) From being unclean to being clean

There are helpful stories such as the story of Naaman. (2 Kings 5:1-19) The concept of defilement makes sense to shame-based cultures. The issue is then: *'How do I become pure and clean?'*

See Mal. 3:1-3 and Psalm 51: 2, 7, 10.

"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."

"Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

"Create in me a clean heart, O God."

b) From being naked (a very great shame) to being clothed with beautiful clothes.

There are pictures in Scripture of garments of salvation and righteousness. There is a great story in Mt. 22:2-14 – The Great Wedding Feast. It is about the man with no wedding clothes.

c) From being expelled to being visited by God

The shame of expulsion – the Garden of Eden and what happened to Cain etc.

The honour of being visited by God:

- ✧ Abraham
- ✧ Emmanuel – Jesus
- ✧ Pillar of fire/cloud in Exodus
- ✧ The Holy Spirit
- ✧ Tabernacle/temple (2 Chron. 6:13-42; 7:1-3)

d) From weakness to strength

We are weak and therefore shamed. We can be strengthened by the Holy Spirit. (Phil. 4:13)

It is important to show that Jesus demonstrated great strength on the Cross and even greater strength in the Resurrection! Run through 10 major accomplishments of Jesus on the Cross and in His Resurrection:

- He completed a perfect sacrifice. (Heb. 9:11-14)
- He inaugurated a new covenant. (Heb. 9:15-17)
- He disarmed the principalities and powers. (Col. 2:15 and Jn. 12:31)
- He plundered hell and released captives. (1 Peter 3:19)
- He set us free from the dominion of self. (Rom. 6:6-14 and Col. 2:11-13)
- He set us free from the fear of death and judgement. (Heb. 2:14-15)
- He brought reconciliation and unity in all creation. (Eph. 2:11-19)
- He won the right to take the title deeds of all creation. (Rev. 5:1-14)
- He entered into His high priestly ministry as our intercessor. (Heb. 7:25)
- He took the keys of death and Hades. (Rev. 1)

e) From sickness to health

There are many great stories that illustrate this – physical, emotional, social and spiritual healing. Look at the examples in Mk. 5:24-35 and Jn. 4:1-41

➤ A life from which health had gone

- A crippling disease bringing very great shame
- A crushing despair

➤ A life in which hope was born

- Learning about Jesus
- Longing for Jesus

➤ **A life for which help was found**

- What Jesus gives must be received personally
- What Jesus gives must be revealed publically

Homework on A Comparison of Worldviews

1. Ask around among your neighbours and other workers to discover what brings shame to the local people. Note especially the strong group-conscience as against the individualism of the average westerner. Another good source of what constitutes a sense of shame is 'sayings and proverbs' i.e.

"Make sure that you don't get caught!"

"Where people don't know you, you can do what you like."

"Innovation is the root of all evil."

"Be the same as everyone else."

"The nail that sticks up above the rest gets hammered down!"

2. Ask around among your neighbours and other workers to discover how to build up honour in your family.
3. How does a person with much honour **behave** in society?
4. Concerning honour and shame, how do women differ from men in your local culture. What brings shame to women? What can women do to bring honour to their family? How do honourable women behave?

Session 4

Aspects of a Biblical Worldview

Compared with Viewpoints from Various Worldviews held by Neighbours Today

Prepared with input and feedback from a wide variety of books and people.

The following chart, although incomplete, strives to present significant aspects of a Biblical Worldview and compares them with corresponding points of view from worldviews currently held by many Neighbours.

By “Biblical worldview” we don’t mean western worldview or western evangelical worldview or even a modern Christian worldview, but rather an ancient New Testament worldview such as that seen in the New Testament. A few traditional Christian conventions are included, as they will inevitably enter the picture. It is also inevitable that modern evangelical understandings of the Bible will have influenced the analysis. Anyone from a Christian background wanting to discuss Biblical Christianity with a Neighbour should first distinguish between his/her residual western worldview and the Bible and then differentiate between Biblical and majority faith worldviews. It is important to be aware of the differences between highly literate cultures and cultures that retain a strongly oral character, such as many in the world of our Neighbours.

Since listeners anywhere tend to filter what they hear through the grid of their own worldview, a communicator needs to first understand his/her listener’s worldview and then prepare the message in a way that can penetrate it. For example, if the listener’s worldview includes the assumption that a person can avoid sin if he wants, that sins are not consequential unless they outnumber one’s religious works and that sins can be atoned for by additional good works, then the listener will not understand the need for sacrifice, grace, regeneration, the Holy Spirit, etc. Instead, any religious activity he sees or hears about will be interpreted as works to gain God’s favour. The purpose of this worldview comparison is to highlight elements of the Biblical worldview that a Neighbour is likely to misunderstand or be inclined to reject, as well points on which there is general agreement. The latter may be referred to as “bridges”, and are symbolised as “=”. Similarities are marked with an “~”. More obvious differences are marked with “x” or “X”. Points of conflict that hinder the Biblical message being understood correctly or even considered, are called “barriers”; they are symbolised as “|” or “||” or even “|||”. Some differences, although initially confusing, may nevertheless come to be appreciated by a Neighbour; these are marked with a “>”.

Since the goal is to understand the worldview of the listener, the Neighbour worldview mentioned here is not just based on the Quran and Hadith, but on the belief and practice of our Neighbours as it is currently taught or observed – especially within the Sunni tradition. The comparison, therefore, is between the 2,000 year-old worldview reflected in the New Testament message and current worldviews reflected in traditional Neighbour cultures. The worldviews of ‘folk’ Neighbours, Sufis, Shi’ites, and secular Neighbours differ in some regards from this and these differences are noted in the text. For example, ‘folk’ Neighbours tend to be much more concerned with averting demons and evil and gaining supernatural favours and they view the majority faith rituals as a means to these ends. Some secular Neighbours only practice the majority faith minimally, yet share that faith’s view of what a religious person should be and do. Sufis seek religious experience and the intervention of saints. Shi’ites glorify martyrdom yet tend to be more tolerant than Sunnis in some regards. Bedouin and many others hold to traditional values of family honour that predate the majority faith and lead to honour killings and the like.

Please note that the right column is not an integrated, holistic treatment of a Majority Faith worldview, but only elements of a Neighbour worldview that correspond to aspects of the Biblical message. A properly integrated Majority Faith worldview would be organised by different categories, such as monism (*tawhiid*), guidance (*huda*), prophethood (*risaala*), and the hereafter (*aakhira*). In addition, more could be said about family, education, health, social life and the general outlook on life. **It is not intended or recommended to make comparisons such as this for a Neighbour audience.** The intention is for Christians to gain a better understanding of Neighbours and the difficulties they have in understanding the Biblical message, so they can dialogue more effectively. Significant aspects of the Biblical worldview that seem most likely to be misunderstood have been italicised. These require greater care in expression.

The last column cites portions and passages from the Bible that exemplify each aspect of the Biblical worldview. The reader is encouraged to contribute suggestions for improvements to this chart, both in regard to the worldviews and the passages cited.

Aspects of a Biblical Worldview		Views from some Majority Faith Worldviews	Bible Portions that Present this Point
God		God	
God is eternal, immutable, and self-sufficient.	=		Ps. 90:2; 102:12; Num. 23:19; 2 Pet. 3:8
God is omnipotent, all powerful	=		
God is omniscient; He knows all things	=		Is. 40:13-14
God is omnipresent	=		
God transcends this world.	=		1 Kings 8:27; Is. 66:1
<i>God is also immanent in this world.</i>		God is utterly transcendent but sees all.	Ps. 139:7-10; Is. 66:1; Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 7:48-49; Acts 17:27-28
<i>God is holy and blameless; He never violates His own principles.</i>	X	Whatever God does is all right. He is not limited by any principles.	Ezra 9:15; Neh. 9:8; Job 34:10; Ps. 119:37; Dan. 9:14; Hab. 1:13; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Jn. 1:5; Rev. 16:5
God is consistent with His own principles and in a sense predictable. He will not do what is wrong or approve of wrong-doing.	>	God is not bound to principle. He does not limit Himself to any predictable behaviour or standard of justice, yet He is just in whatever He does.	see above
Because God is holy; he loathes sin. <i>Sin distances people from God.</i>	x	God is unaffected by sin.	Ezra 9:15; Job 34:10; Ps. 5:4-6; 11:5; 45:7; 66:18; Is. 64:6-7; Hab. 1:13
God is reliable; He will fulfil His promises and prophecies.	x>	God is not bound by promises or covenants.	Deut. 7:9; Num. 23:19; Ps. 89:33; Is. 42:9, 49:7; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 6:17-18, 10:23
God is faithful to His covenants.	x	God made a covenant with the Children of Israel, but they were unfaithful to it.	see above
<i>God is one, without equal, but reveals Himself to us as three persons: the Creator (The Father), His Word (The Son), and His Spirit (The Holy Spirit). (So inherent within God, besides power and creativity, is fellowship, harmony, love, and communication, yet with one will.)</i>		God is absolutely one and indivisible, without equal, without associates, without “persons”. As for Christians, it is claimed that they worship three gods: the God, Jesus, and Mary.	1 Kings 8:60 (no other God); Deut. 6:4-5; Eph. 4:6; 1 Chron. 17:20; Neh. 9:6; 1 Tim. 1:17, 2:5; Mk. 12:29-32; Jn. 1:18; James 2:19; Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:4; Gal. 3:20
<i>Christ is the divine, eternal Word of God</i> expressed in fully human form, revealing to mankind what the invisible God is like. He was born of the Virgin Mary after Mary received the Spirit of God. He is also called “The Son of God.”		Christ is “a word” from God and a “spirit” from God, born of the Virgin Mary after she received the Spirit of God, but Christ is neither pre-existent nor divine. It is the Quran that is the eternal, uncreated Word of God. God has begotten no sons.	God as Saviour: Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; Is. 43:11, 45:22-23; (Phil. 2:9-11 said of Jesus) Jesus as Saviour: Mt. 1:21; Jn. 4:42 Jn. 10:30; Mt. 28:19
<i>The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God Himself, with which He gives life to mankind, communicates with His people, cleanses their hearts, inspires them with His love, and enjoys their company.</i>	X	By His Spirit God creates life and sends messages of warning. The “Holy Spirit”, however, is generally thought to refer to a special angel (Gabriel).	Mt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4

God and Creation	
God created all things in six days.	Gen. 1:31
God made the 7 th day holy, a day of rest and remembrance, for on that day He ceased from His work. By the time of the New Testament, Jews observed it as a day of both rest and religious observances. Most Christians make Sunday a special day of religious observances. The true Sabbath rest is entered, however, by relying on the work (grace) of Christ.	x On the 7 th day God sat on His throne, but He did not need to rest, as it is claimed that Christians believe. There is no special day of rest for people, although Muslims should cease work for the Friday prayers. Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Acts 20:7; Heb. 4:4-10
God created all things through His Word, Who is Christ	(no such concept) Jn. 1:3,10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2
<i>God created the earth entirely good, without evil.</i>	God created the earth as it is now. He created mankind as good, although weak and in need of guidance. (See sura 4:28 that we are programmed for failure.) Individuals may become evil through unbelief and sins. Gen. 1:31; 1 Tim. 4:4
God created Adam from dust of the earth and breathed life into him from His breath (=spirit) and he became a living soul.	= God created Adam from a lump of clay and breathed life into him from His spirit. Gen. 2:7
<i>Death and suffering entered the earth because of man's sin. God can utilise sinners and suffering for His good purposes, but He does not generally cause people to sin.</i>	God created the earth to have death and suffering. Gen. 3:14-19; Rom. 5:12, 6:23; James 1:13-15
The Angels, Satan, Evil Spirits	
God created angels as spirit beings with supernatural powers.	= Ps. 33:6; Neh. 9:6
The angels serve God as messengers to intervene on earth and to praise Him.	= Heb. 1:7,14; Is. 6
(No such idea)	x God created angels from light.
(No concept of Jinn at all)	X The Jinn stem from a pre-Adamic race that God created from smokeless flame or from the fire of desert wind.
Satan was a glorious angel; he and his angels opposed God and were rejected by God.	~ Satan became proud and disobeyed God. He and his soldiers were rejected by God. However Satan is classed among both angels and jinn and was made of fire. 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6
	x Specifically, Satan refused to bow to Adam.

Satan is the enemy of man and of his right relationship with God.	=	Jn. 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Jn. 3:8; Eph. 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:8
Satan enticed Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit.	=	Gen. 3:1-4
Demons are of uncertain origin, but some—if not all—are fallen angels.	x	The demons (<i>shayaatiin</i>) are of uncertain origin but are thought to be rebellious jinn. Mt. 12:24-29
Satan and his angels entice people to distrust God, to abandon His guidance and to follow them instead.	~	Specifically, Satan and demons entice people to disbelieve in God and to neglect His laws. 1 Chron. 21:1; 1 Pet. 5:8; Mk. 4:15; Acts 5:3
Satan accuses sinners and he or his demons can inflict the punishment God has ordained for their sin, even death; thus he manipulates people by the fear of death.	X	Official: Satan and demons have no power to benefit, harm or kill; only God can do that. Heb. 2:14-15; Rev. 12:10
	~	Popular: Demons cause evil to people.
<i>Those who are in Christ can effectively resist Satan</i> through the name of Christ and their position in Him, through the power of the Holy Spirit that is within them and through the Word of God. Those outside the Kingdom are subject to Satan's tyranny and have little effective means to resist demonic evil. Some are even deceived to worship demons.	>	Official: God causes demons to accompany and mislead those who disbelieve, but others are also tempted. A common Muslim prayer requests to take refuge in Allah from Satan. Lk. 9:1, 10:17; Eph. 6:11-18; 1 Pet. 5:9; James 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:4; Rev. 12:11 Those outside the Kingdom even worship demons—Rev. 9:20 Popular: Demons are a danger for everyone. By various rites and talismans one can hope to ward off their evil influences or at least appease them.
Mankind		Mankind
<i>God made man in His own spiritual image</i> (capable of fellowship with God, moral choice, language, love, creativity, discovery, etc.)		Official: God gave man spiritual qualities, but God is entirely unlike man; not only is He non-physical, He is not a person and not a spirit. Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1, 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9 Sufi: God made man in His spiritual image. High Sufi: Man is not really distinct from God; it just appears so until the veil is lifted from his vision.
God put man in authority on the earth and told him to obey Him.	=	Gen. 1:28; 2:15-17
Adam and Eve disobeyed in the Garden by eating forbidden fruit.	=	Gen. 3:6
The garden was on earth.	x	The garden was in Paradise. Gen. 2:8-14

Mankind fell from the previous spiritual condition, and since then, <i>man is born with a sinful nature</i> .		Adam repented and was forgiven. There was no spiritual fall, only a physical fall from the heavenly Paradise to earth. Man continues to be born with a good nature, free from sin, although he is weak and forgetful of God's laws.	Mk. 10:18; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:3
<i>All people sin. Sin disqualifies a person from Paradise.</i>		The class of sins include faults and transgressions (<i>ithm</i>). All people (except Jesus) commit faults (<i>dhunuub</i>). However, not all people commit transgressions (<i>ithm</i>), and it is only this (<i>ithm</i>) that disqualifies a person from Paradise and then only if God chooses not to forgive it. God has kept prophets and saints from transgression.	1 Kings 8:46; Prov. 20:9; Rom. 3:10-23; Gal. 3:22a; 1 Jn. 1:8-10; Rev. 21:27
<i>The main reason people sin is because their fallen human nature (called "the flesh") inclines toward sin.</i>		<p>The main reason people sin is because they are weak and forgetful of God's laws.</p> <p>Official: Ultimately, every good or evil action is the result of God's predestination. Those whom He guides fulfil His requirements.</p> <p>Popular: When wronged, people generally blame the wrongdoer rather than God.</p> <p>High Sufi: People sin because they don't focus their minds on God as the Absolute and Only Reality and instead attribute value to physical things.</p>	Rom. 8:5-8, 13; Gal. 6:8; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13a
God and Mankind			
God is merciful, gracious and provident toward mankind.	~	Similar terms are used, but the definition of these terms is not the same as the Bible definition.	Ps. 57:10, 145:9; Lk. 6:35-36
God desires people to do what is right and not sin.	~	God calls all people to follow His laws, but He misleads some people.	Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9
God loves all people, including those who do not love Him.	>	God loves His followers and slaves but hates His enemies.	Mt. 5:44-45; Jn. 3:16
<i>God's love includes a genuine concern for people's well-being, including a concern to rescue them from sinfulness and folly.</i>	>	God's love is a reward to those who please Him. The nearest equivalent in the Quran is that God is "friendly".	Ezek. 33:11; Jn. 3:16; 2 Pet. 3:9
<i>God delights in righteousness and grieves over sin and evil.</i>	>	Official: God is not moved or influenced by what man does or feels, but He responds to it as He wills.	Is. 62:4-5, 65:17-19; Zeph. 3:17; Eph. 4:30

<i>God desires personal fellowship with people. His greatest desire for them is that they should love Him and trust His love for them forever.</i>	 ~	Official: God does not have personal fellowship with man. High Sufi: God desires that people love Him and realize that they have no separate reality apart from Him.	Ps. 37:5-6, 40:4, 62:8, 125:1; Mt. 22:37; Jn. 14:1, 15:4,14-15; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:3
<i>God establishes covenants with people as a way of defining a relationship with them.</i>	X	God reveals law and makes promises and calls for commitment from mankind, but covenants do not figure. There is only one defined relationship, that of submission to the one, unchanging Law of God.	Heb. 6:13-19, 8:8-12
<i>Because of man's sin, fellowship with God was broken and remains hindered.</i>		Official: Fellowship is impossible because of God's transcendent nature and in any case it would not be hindered by sin.	Gen. 3:23-24
God is a covenant-making God. These agreements rest on His promises, on His nature and give people an opportunity to obey Him. <i>In the New Covenant, God gives people the power to obey.</i>		High Sufi: Lack of union with God is caused by failure to recognize Him as the only absolute reality in all things.	
<i>God is knowable and has a relationship through His Spirit, who indwells those who belong to Jesus Christ. They can draw closer to God by relying on Him, by studying/meditating on His Word, by worshipping Him, by spending time with Him in prayer, by being attentive to the indwelling Holy Spirit and by accepting His chastening.</i>	>	Official: There is no possibility for man to experience God because of His absolute transcendence. Popular: One can feel closer to God by reciting His eternal Word, the Quran, in God's own language (Classical Arabic). Sufi: God can be experienced by chanting His name (<i>dhikr</i>) until ecstasy (<i>wajd</i>) is reached. High Sufi: Ultimately, the advanced Sufi can come to realize that he is not separate from God (<i>ridwaan</i>).	Husband/wife: Is. 54:5-7; Hos. 2:19; Eph. 5:22-23; Rev. 19:7-8 Num. 6:25; Ezek. 11:20; Mt. 6, 7:7-12; Rom. 8:9, 14-17; 2 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 3:26-4:7; Heb. 2:11, 4:16, 8:10-11,12: 5-11; 1 Jn. 5:20
God's Rule		God's Rule	
God's power is absolute, but <i>His rule is self-limited. He allows man some freedom of choice</i> and works to influence those choices and to teach mankind to choose well. Example: God allowed Adam to name the animals.	>	God's power and rule are absolute. He decrees every deed, whether good or bad. Man has no freedom of choice. Example: God taught Adam the names of the animals.	Gen. 2:19-20; James 1:13; 1 Jn. 1:5
God sets the dates of one's birth and death, etc.	=		Ps. 139:15-16

Before creation, God planned the course of history, including the means of salvation. He remains in active control of human events and history, ensuring that His promises are fulfilled, His Kingdom established and His people saved and sanctified.		God decreed everything before creation. There is an end to history and the goal of a universal <i>umma</i> , but little sequencing of events to achieve that goal—little purpose.	Gen. 50:19-20; 1 Kings 21:27-28; 2 Kings 20:1-5, 22:18-20; Ps. 33:11, 104:24; Is. 46:9-10; Acts 2:23, 4:27-28; Eph. 1:4, 10-14, 2:10, 3:10-11; Phil. 2:13
In accord with His will, God may change the course of events in response to prayer, repentance, etc.	>	Official: Fate cannot be changed. Everything is already written. People have no power of choice. Popular: When opportunity allows, Muslims do in fact exercise choice, but they resign to fate when things are difficult.	
<i>People are slaves to sinfulness and in subjection to the Kingdom of Darkness until they are set free by Christ and enter the Kingdom of God. They then relate to God as sons, with an obligation to obey Him as Father.</i>		All people are slaves to God, but Muslims are those who acknowledge this servitude and submit to it.	Is. 9:6; Rom. 6:15-23; 8:14-17; 2 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 4:4-7; Col. 1:12-14; Heb. 12:7-11
God, to achieve His purposes through or for his saints and prophets, may allow them to suffer, but not more than they can endure with His strengthening and comfort and He will reward them later in this life or the next.		God prospers those who believe and obey, but He also allows people to suffer as fated. Popular: God allows people to suffer more than they can endure.	1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 12:7-11; James 1:2-3; 1 Pet. 1:6-7, 4:12-13
Mankind's Predicament			
Man has misconceptions about God.	=	Man has misconceptions about God.	Acts 17:22-23, 30
Man has misconceptions about God's requirements.	~	Man is forgetful of God's laws.	1 Sam. 15:13-23; Is. 1:10-17; 1 Tim. 4:1-5
<i>Evil exists among mankind because of man's sinfulness and its consequences. Satan can cause evil directly to lawbreakers deserving punishment, which is everyone on earth. God can also use evil circumstances to discipline and train His people.</i>		Evil exists because God created it and wills it. God allows Satan to mislead those people whom God wants to destroy, but Satan has no power to harm, nor has anyone else.	Rom. 1:18-31
A sin is failure to love God fully and keep all of His commandments.	x	A sin is breaking one of God's laws.	Mt. 22:35-40; 1 Jn. 5:3

<i>Man is by nature a hopeless sinner, unable to comply with all of God's requirements.</i>		Official: Man is forgetful but good; he only needs instruction in order to comply with all of God's requirements. High Sufi: Man is confused by what seems to be real but isn't, and fails to realize that within him is the Perfect Man, which is a projection or image of the Divine Being, from which he is not really distinct.	Is. 64:6; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13a
<i>Because of man's sin, he is unsuitable for Paradise and is condemned to hell.</i>		Only great sinners and those who refuse to submit to Islam are condemned permanently to hell; most Muslims will pass through hell and then go to Paradise. Nevertheless, God has already consigned to hell whomever He wanted, and there is nothing anyone can do to change it.	Mt. 5:20-22, 27-30; Rom. 1:28-32, 2:1-5; 2 Thess. 2:12; Rev. 21:27, 22:15
Man needs fellowship with God, but because of his sin, he is separated from fellowship with God.	X	Official: Man cannot have fellowship with God, because it is not possible.	Ps. 66:18; Is. 59:2, 64:6,7
	x	High Sufi: Man cannot have fellowship or union with God, because that implies they are separate realities; however, he can recognize his unity with God.	
<i>Man needs deliverance from the tyranny of his sinful nature, but he is unable to free himself.</i>		Man needs right guidance, but God sometimes allows Satan and others to mislead him.	Jn. 6:44; Rom. 7:7-12
<i>Man wants life, but because of his sin, he is spiritually dead and doomed to die physically.</i>	X	Physical death is not the result of sin. There is no concept of spiritual death.	Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13a
<i>Man can do nothing of himself to make himself righteous and acceptable to God.</i>		By right guidance and observing God's laws man can please God.	Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:4-9; Titus 3:5
<i>The mortal judgement on man's sin can only be borne by the death of a perfect substitute, since a sinful substitute would need to die for his/her own sinfulness, but no man is without sin.</i>		No one can be a substitute to bear the judgement for the sins of someone else, but ablutions may wash away sin and fasting and alms may atone for them.	Heb. 9:11-15, 10:11-14
<i>Because of man's sin, the natural world suffers from death and corruption.</i>	x	Man's sin did not affect the natural world.	Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:20-22
<i>Because of man's sin, he is under the sway of the accuser, Satan, who lords it over the world.</i>		Man suffers from the temptations and doubts whispered by Satan. His activity is not the result of sin.	2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Jn. 5:19

Jesus Christ	x	The Messiah 'Isa son of Mary
The coming of the Christ was foretold by the prophets, as recorded in the Old Testament.	~	The coming of Jesus was foretold by the prophets. Is. 7:14, 9:6-7; Micah 5:2
There were shadows or forerunners of Christ in the Old Testament.		Serpent lifted up: Num. 21:4-9 with Jn. 3:14-16 Rock at Masseh: Ex. 17:6 with 1 Cor. 10:4 OT sacrifices: Lev. 17:10 with Heb. 10:4 Isaiah: Is. 61:1-3 with Lk. 4:18-21 Joseph: Godly Joseph, beloved by his father (Gen. 37:3 with Mk. 1:11), was sent to his brothers (Gen 37:13 with Jn. 1:11), but was then sold for twenty pieces of silver (Gen. 37:28 with Mt. 26:15). After suffering persecution and temptation (Gen. 37:18-36, 39:7-20 with Mt. 4:1-11), righteous Joseph was exalted as lord over his brothers (Gen. 37:5-11, 41:37-45, 42:6 with Phil. 2:9-10).
Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary and did many miracles.	=	Lk. 1:26-38, 2:4-7; Acts 2:22
Jesus Christ was a prophet.	=	Deut. 18:15 with Acts 3:22; Mt. 21:11, 46; Lk. 7:16, 13:33
Jesus Christ was without sin.	=	Jn. 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15, 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5
Jesus Christ embodies the eternal, creative Word of God. He is God's supreme message and self-revelation to man.	~	Jesus was a word sent from God (a phrase with uncertain meaning) Jn. 1:1-4, 14:9-11; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3
Jesus is called <i>Christ (the Messiah)</i> because He is the anointed King in God's Kingdom on earth.	X	The title "Messiah" is a name without Messianic meaning. Ps. 2:2, 8-9; Acts 2:36; Rev. 11:15
Other <i>Messianic titles</i> from the Bible include " <i>The Son of Man</i> ", " <i>The King of the Jews</i> ", " <i>The Son of David</i> ", " <i>The Saviour</i> ", and " <i>Lord</i> ".	X	(unknown) Son of Man: Mt. 16:28; 26:63 King of Jews: Lk. 23:2-3; Jn. 18:33-37 Son of David: Lk. 20:41-44 with Acts 2:25-36 Saviour: 2 Pet. 1:11; Lord: 2 Pet. 1:11
" <i>The Son of God</i> " is another <i>Messianic title</i> in the Bible, affirming His special kingly relationship with God.		The Christians claim that God slept with a woman and had an illegitimate offspring. Mt. 16:16; Mk. 1:1-3; Rom. 1:3-4

<i>Jesus Christ is God and reveals what God is like.</i>		Jesus was only a prophet; he was not like God, and he was not divine in any way.	Is. 42:8 with Jn. 1:14-18; Jn. 8:28-29, 58-59, 10:30-31, 14:9; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:1-3
<i>Jesus Christ died on the Cross as the only perfect sacrifice for sin. This sacrifice benefits all who accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. He is our advocate before the Father.</i>		Jesus did not die; someone else died in his place. There is no sacrifice that can atone for sin. No one can help man at the judgement.	Lk. 23:46-47; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:18-19, 2:24, 3:18. Advocate: Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25, 9:24; 1 Jn. 2:1
God's love for mankind and Christ's love for the Father is demonstrated in the sacrifice of Christ.		It would have been shameful for God to have allowed his prophet Jesus to be killed.	Jn. 3:16, 14:31; 15:10; Eph. 2:4-7; 1 Jn. 4:9-10
<i>God was honoured when Jesus obeyed Him even to the Cross.</i>	>	Although martyrdom is valued, God would never allow His prophets to be badly mistreated.	Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:19-20
<i>Jesus Christ rose from the dead.</i>		Jesus did not die or rise from the dead.	Mt. 28:5-7; Lk. 24:46-48; 1 Cor. 15:1-8
The resurrection of Jesus demonstrated that He is the Messiah, the righteous Son of God, who has conquered sin and death and will come again to rule and judge all mankind.		Jesus ascended without death and resurrection. He will come again to rule and make everyone Muslims and then He will die.	Acts 2:32-36, 17:31; Rom. 1:4
Jesus Christ ascended to heaven.	~	Jesus ascended into heaven in his normal body without dying and rising.	Acts 1:9
<i>Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on the earth; He rules and expands His Kingdom from heaven.</i>	>	Jesus does not rule. Only God has power; only He can harm or benefit.	Mt. 28:18; Jn. 3:35; Eph. 1:19-22; Phil. 2:9-10
<i>Petitions to God are most effective when made on the basis of one's standing in Christ (in the name of Christ). They may be addressed to Christ.</i>	>	Official: One cannot make petitions to Christ or to God in Christ's name. This would be 'shirk' – the worst of sins.	Jn. 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:23-24; 2 Cor. 12:7-9
	~	Popular: One can address petitions to Jesus (or other prophets and saints)	
Jesus will return to earth from heaven at the end of this age.	~	Jesus will return near the end of history.	Jn. 14:3, 18; Acts 1:11; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; Heb. 9:28
Jesus will judge the living and the dead.		When Jesus returns, he will break crosses and force everyone to become Muslims.	Mt. 25:31-33; Jn. 5:22, 27-29; 2 Tim. 4:1
<i>Jesus will establish His universal Kingdom over heaven and earth.</i>		Jesus will proclaim and demonstrate that Islam is the true religion and will become part of the universal <i>Umma</i> .	Rev. 11:15
Jesus will rule forever.	x	Jesus will die and be buried.	Lk. 1:33; Rev. 11:15

The Holy Spirit		
<i>The Holy Spirit is God and has all the attributes of God.</i>		The Holy Spirit is usually identified with the angel Gabriel, but it some cases it may mean the Spirit of God. Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:16 with 2 Pet. 1:21
God gives life to mankind through His Spirit.	=	Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4
The Spirit of God convicts people of sin and leads them to Christ.	x	(no such idea) Jn. 16:8-11
<i>The Spirit of God indwells believers in Christ and enlightens and guides them and makes them more like Christ.</i>	X	God guides us by giving us law. There is no spiritual indwelling, no sanctification. Jn. 16:12; Col. 1:9-12
The Spirit of God empowers believers to overcome the sinful nature and to live in a manner pleasing to God.	x	(no such idea) 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Gal. 5:16-18, 22-25
The indwelling Spirit of God allows fellowship with God and allows the church to be a "community of God."	x	(no such idea) 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 2:19-22
Prophets		
A prophet is someone whom God calls to speak His message to people.	~	A prophet is someone whom God calls to warn people to repent and observe His laws. Is. 61:1-3; Heb. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:10-12
An apostle (<i>rasuul</i>) of Christ is someone sent by God to spread the Gospel and establish the church.	X	An apostle of Christ (<i>hawaari</i>) is one of his close companions. Acts 9:15; 2 Cor. 13:10
(Jesus and certain prophets were apostles sent by God. Heb. 3:1; Lk. 11:49)	x	An apostle (<i>rasuul</i>) is a someone to whom God has sent down laws for a "people of the book" to follow. God sent down to each of the main apostles a book of law and gave them political authority over a people.
<i>A prophet is inspired by the Spirit of God, but he uses his own language and manner of speech to deliver the message.</i>		God sends down to the apostle the exact words to speak to the people. The prophet could be in a fit and understand nothing. 2 Pet. 1:19-21
Christ foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit.	x	Christ foretold the coming of Muhammad. Jn. 15:26, 16:5-15
There have been false prophets, whom God has not sent and there will be false prophets and antichrists.	~	There have been false prophets, and there will be false prophets, especially <i>Al-Masih ad-dajjal</i> – the false Christ, 1 Jn. 2:18, 4:1-3
<i>A true prophet not only directs people to obey the Creator, he is also attested by miracles</i> such as foretelling events which come to pass and praying for people to be healed.	>	Most major prophets were attested by miracles, but the last prophet was attested only by the quality of the verses he uttered in the Quran – the greatest miracle. Moses: Deut. 18:15-22 Deut. 13:1-5

<i>Aaron, Job, Isaac, Lot, and Ezra are not generally considered to be prophets, and certainly not Adam and Alexander the Great.</i>	X	These are generally counted among the prophets, along with others called Hud, Salih, Shuaib, Dhu-Kifil.	
Petitions should be made directly to God, without requests to dead prophets, apostles or saints for their intercession.	=	Official: same	Lk. 11:2; Jn. 17:1
	X	Popular: Appeal is made to dead saints to intercede or even to intervene. <i>Baraka</i> is sought from their tombs and relics.	
Knowledge of God		Knowledge of God	
God reveals His character to people through creation, prophets, His Spirit and most of all through His Son.	X	God does not reveal Himself, only His commandments. He is unlike anything man can see or imagine.	Ps. 103:7; Jn. 1:18; Rom. 1:19,20; Heb. 1:1-2
God can be partially comprehended from creation and revelation.	>	God is utterly unknowable – at least in respect to his attributes. But everyone is born with some sense of God and His law, as well as faith and submission; that is, they are born Muslims.	Ps. 19:1-4, 103:7; Rom. 1:19-20
The Scriptures were written by prophets and by apostles of Christ who were inspired by God. They received a message or insight from God and expressed it in their own language and style, as is evident from their different styles.		The Scriptures were written by God and sent down to the five apostles: Ibrahim, Musa, Daoud, Isa and Muhammad. The prophets received the words of God in His language and style and merely recited them.	2 Pet. 1:19-21
Knowledge is transmitted by transferring information and fostering understanding. <i>Regeneration by the Holy Spirit in response to faith in Christ is a pre-requisite to understanding spiritual matters.</i>	X	Knowledge is transmitted by transferring information.	Jn. 3:3-8; 1 Cor. 2:12-14
Most religious knowledge concerns the character and ways of God as revealed in the record of His activities in history, His instruction and especially in His self-revelation in Christ.	x	Most religious knowledge consists of God's laws and the revealed record of God's activities in history through His prophets.	
<i>The Scriptures show a progression in revelation and in the history of salvation, culminating in the work of Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom. There is a succession of covenants as well, but there is not a cancellation of some passages by others.</i>	X	The prophets all brought the same message: the unity of God, His laws, the call to follow His laws, the Day of Judgement, the promise of rewards for the pious and the punishment of unbelievers. Nevertheless, some revelations and verses cancel others.	Progressive Revelation: Heb. 1:1-2, 6:17, 8:6, 9:15, 10:1 No cancellation: Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19

The Scriptures consist of books written by over thirty men of God who were inspired by the Spirit of God. They expressed God's message accurately in their own language and style. Traditionally the Bible is divided into the Old and New Testaments. The Old consists of the Law of Moses, the books of the Prophets, and the 'writings' including the Psalms.	X	The Scriptures consist mainly of the <i>Tawrat</i> (Torah), <i>Zabour</i> (Psalms), <i>Injil</i> (Gospel or NT) and the <i>Quran</i> , which were dictated by God through an angel. However, the Christians have corrupted the Injil.	
The Gospel is the good news of the establishment of God's gracious Kingdom through Christ Jesus—the Eternal King. It was announced by Christ, as recorded in the four "Gospels".	x	The <i>Injil</i> is a book that God sent down to Jesus. Some say it was taken to heaven with him.	Is. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6; Lk. 17:20-21, 22:29-30; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 12:28; 2 Pet. 1:11
Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the Old Covenant on behalf of His people and God made a new covenant with His followers by the perfect sacrifice of Jesus for their sins. They are therefore no longer under the Law of the Old Covenant. But the Old Testament is still a valuable and beneficial revelation.	>	The Quran expresses God's law the best and it has cancelled previous scriptures.	Mt. 5:17; Rom. 7:7-12; Heb. 9:11-10:18
<i>The Christian Scriptures are reliable for faith and practice.</i>		The Christian Gospels have been altered and enlarged, mostly in regard to the prophecy of the "Ahmed" to come in Jn. 14:16. Therefore they should be avoided. In practice, the whole Bible is avoided.	2 Tim. 3:15-17
God's perfect, eternal Word is Christ – the Living Word Whom He sent to exemplify His will and character etc.		Christ is a word from God, but God's perfect, eternal Word is the Quran, which He sent down to inform man of God's law.	Jn. 1:1-18
Those who sincerely seek the truth of God will eventually come to see and believe it. They will see that Christ spoke the truth and is who He said He is.	x	Muslims who question or doubt Islam and look for the truth objectively are viewed with alarm and suspicion.	Deut. 4:29; Ps. 119:2; Prov. 2:1-5; Jer. 29:13; Jn. 5:39-40, 7:16-17, 8:43; 2 Cor. 3:13-16
The Epistles are reliable and authoritative for believers.		The genuine traditions (<i>Hadith</i>) are reliable and authoritative for believers.	
The Bible has a rich message; people continue to discover new aspects of its meaning and message.	x	The correct interpretation of the Quran has been handed down from medieval scholars; individual exegesis is prohibited.	Ps. 119 (Hard to find verses for this!)

<i>The Bible is beneficial only to the extent that it is understood and believed.</i>	X	The Quran is most beneficial if it is chanted with correct pronunciation, regardless of whether it is understood, although understanding is also good. Popular: Written verses from the Quran have power to cure disease, exorcise demons or ward off evil. They may be displayed, worn, burned or consumed.	Jn. 5:39-40
Salvation from Mankind's Predicaments		Salvation from Mankind's Predicaments	
God shows His goodness and grace to mankind by providing the things man needs for life and salvation and especially by giving instructions to guide him into blessings now and Paradise hereafter.	=		
<i>Man can be saved from his predicament by God's grace through faith in Christ alone. Acceptance by God is an unearned gift.</i>		Official: If God wills, one can be saved from his predicament by believing in God's unity and following His guidance. High Sufi: By revelation and concentration he can come into the state of the Perfect Man.	Rom. 1:16-17, 3:24, 6:23; Eph. 2:1-9; Titus 3:4-7
God provides man with revelation about Himself and His will for man through the Bible's record of His activities, judgements, and messages. <i>God reveals Himself through His incarnation in Jesus Christ</i> and through the indwelling Holy Spirit.		God provides man with revelation about His unity and laws for man through the Quran and the sayings and example of the Prophet, but God does not reveal Himself. He remains beyond conception or characterization, although the 99 names suggest something about Him.	Ps. 103:7; Jn. 1:18; Rom. 1:19-20; Heb. 1:1-2 Holy Spirit: Is. 61:1-3; Eph. 1:17,18; Heb. 10:15; 1 Jn. 2:27
<i>Jesus Christ taught and exemplified the perfect life as God desires it and this is further explained in the Epistles.</i>	>	Muhammad taught and exemplified the ideal life as God desires it.	Jn. 5:19, 30, 4:34, 15:10; Heb. 2:10,18, 5:8, 12:1-3
<i>Faith in Christ involves personal trust and commitment to Him, as well as repentance from what displeases Him. True faith gives rise to works of love.</i>	x	Faith involves assenting to the revealed doctrines, especially God's unity. Saving faith should involve belief from the heart and result in submission to God's revealed laws.	Lk. 24:47; Rom. 3:26, 4:1-5; Gal. 2:16, 5:6; Eph. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; James 2:14-26
Repentance involves recognition and regret of personal sinfulness and a resolution to lead a life pleasing to God.	x	Repentance involves recognition of and regret for individual sins and a resolution to abstain from them and obey God's law.	Lk. 3:8; Acts 26:20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-10
<i>By faith in Christ, man can be regenerated and receive a new nature. Without regeneration and the grace of God, man cannot do what God requires. The Law is weak because man's flesh (nature) is weak and sinful.</i>	>	There is no regeneration. Knowledge of God's law is sufficient to make a person submissive and compliant with the Law.	Jn. 3:3-8; Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 2:20

<i>By faith in Christ, man can receive the indwelling Spirit of God, to guide him and to give him power (grace) to resist sin.</i>	>	Power to resist sin comes only from conducting ritual prayers regularly and from fearing hell fire. God guides through fate rather than through His Spirit.	Rom. 8:1-17; Gal. 5:16-18, 22-25
When people repent of sin and personally accept Jesus as Christ, their Lord and King, <i>God accepts them into His Kingdom and treats them as His sons.</i> They are saved by God's kindness and power through personal faith in Jesus Christ.		Man becomes more acceptable to God by resisting temptation and by submitting to God's laws as His slave. He can never be like a son to God.	Jn. 3:3-5 with Titus 3:4-7; Rom. 8:1-17; Eph. 2:4-8; 1 Jn. 3:1
<i>By accepting Christ as the perfect, atoning sacrifice for his/her sins, a person can be freed from condemnation to hell and have assurance of forgiveness and Paradise.</i>	>	There is no sacrifice for sin and no saviour. God may forgive whomever He wants to forgive. There is no assurance.	Jn. 3:18; 5:24; Eph. 1:3-12; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:3-5
When someone has submitted to Christ as Lord and been freed from condemnation, he is freed from the power of the accusation and oppression of Satan, although he can still be tempted.	x	Official: Satan has permission to lead astray all who are not true servants of God, but he does not rule, oppress, or kill.	Rom. 8:1, 31-34; Eph. 2:1-2; 1 Jn. 4:4
	>	Popular: Satan causes harm and intimidates.	
On the Day of Judgement, Satan and his hosts will be cast into the fire of hell.	=	On the Day of Judgement, Satan and his hosts will be cast into the fire of hell.	Rev. 20:10
<i>In the age to come, the earth will be renewed and freed from corruption, death, and evil.</i>	X	The earth will not be regenerated or re-populated.	Rom. 8:20-22; Rev. 21:1
By accepting Christ and receiving the Spirit of God, man can have partial fellowship with God now and full fellowship after death.	x	Fellowship with God is not possible either now or after death.	Jn. 1:12,13; Rom. 8:14-17; 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 Jn. 1:2-3; 3:1-2
<i>Good deeds please God and benefit man, but they do not gain for one grace, forgiveness or eternal life.</i> They do not cancel sins.		If God wills, one's good deeds will outweigh his bad deeds and bring him material blessings now and Paradise in the end.	Mt. 5:16; Rom. 12:1,2; Eph. 2: 8-10; Titus 2:7-10, 14; 3:4-8,14
Illness, misfortune, and failure		Illness, misfortune, and failure	
Prosperity or its lack, illness and health, misfortunes and disasters may all have natural or supernatural causes, but God takes special care of those who love and obey Him.	X	Prosperity is a sign of the blessing of God. Illness, poverty, misfortune and failure generally have spiritual causes.	1 Sam. 2:7-9; Prov. 30:8,9; Lk. 12:22-34; James 1:9-11

God frequently blesses His own people with spiritual prosperity without giving them material benefits. Spiritual blessings are more important than material blessings because they are eternally enduring.	x	Material prosperity is always due to God's blessing.	Ps. 49:16-20; Job 1:21; Mk. 10:17-27; Lk. 12:13-21; 1 Tim. 6:6-11, 17-19; James 2:5; Rev. 2:9
God keeps the followers of Christ from being overwhelmed by illness and disaster, but instead of protecting them from all problems, He supports them in dealing with problems. God does directly intervene in the lives of His people to help them in many ways, often in response to their prayers. He actively works in their lives so that their life experiences progressively improve their character and their relationship with Him. Christ heals many who request healing from Him in faith. His power defeats the power of Satan.	>	There are many malevolent supernatural beings and forces operating in the world that are a constant threat to man. Allah is more powerful than any of these beings and forces, which in any case He created, but He has left it to lesser beings to provide help against them. Humans are therefore obliged to consult with those specialists who can deal with these beings. Popular: The causes of illness, misfortune, and failure can be determined by ritual specialists to whom God has given special insight into these matters. These specialists then advise their clients of the measures they need to take to regain health and success.	1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:3-5; 7:6; James 1:2-4; 2 Pet. 2:9 Mt. 8:16, 9:20-22; Mk. 10:52; Acts 26:17-18; Eph. 6:10-11; Col. 1:13
Envy (the evil eye) is a sin, but it does not magically cause harm to the object of the envy. In general, though, Satan can make envy and other sins an occasion to cause harm.	x	The evil eye is dangerous. Popular: The evil eye is a major source of evil; its harm can be intentional or not. Some people harm almost anything they look at.	Ex. 20:17; Prov. 14:30; Rom. 13:13; James 3:14-16
The Kingdom of God and the Church	x	Dar al Islam and The Umma	
God is establishing a Kingdom on earth in which His will will be done.	X	God is establishing Islam on earth and causing all people to submit to His laws.	Mt. 6:9-10
<i>The Kingdom of God</i> is God's establishment of the Messianic Kingdom on earth among those who accept Jesus as their Messianic King. Until the consummation of this Kingdom at the return of Christ, God tolerates a limited amount of sin and rebellion.	X	(No such concept. The Kingdom (<i>malakuut</i>) of God is His absolute sovereignty, but more commonly the term is used for the unseen world of jinn and magic.)	
The Messiah, the promised King, administers the Kingdom of God. He will rule forever, bringing willing conformity to God's will. All supernatural power and authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him.	x	The <i>Umma</i> should be administered by a succession of Caliphs. The <i>Umma</i> observes and enforces the Law, but cannot change it.	Mt. 28:18

Nevertheless, <i>Christ's Kingdom is not a political body in this present world</i> . Until He returns, Christ rules from the unseen world, influencing events on earth.	X	The <i>Umma</i> is the rightful government of this world.	Acts 7:56; 1 Pet. 3:22
This Kingdom started small but is growing in the earth. In general, only a minority of people will enter in. When Christ returns, He will form a new government over all the earth and remove those who have rejected His rule.	>	The <i>Umma</i> should bring everyone into submission to Islam and establish an Islamic government, so that Islam can be practiced in purity. 'People of the Book' may be tolerated as second-class subjects.	Mt. 7:13-14, 21, 13:31-32, 25:31-46; Rev. 11:15-18
<i>Jesus is the Messiah King who administers this Kingdom.</i>		Jesus was a prophet, not a ruler.	Eph. 1:20-23
Christ rules in the hearts and lives of His people.	X	The <i>Umma</i> observes and enforces the <i>sharia</i> law.	
One enters the Kingdom by accepting Christ as His King and being thereby born again and forgiven etc.		A non-Muslim enters the <i>Umma</i> by testifying of God's unity and Muhammad's apostleship and by submitting to <i>Sharia</i> . Children of a Muslim father are born into Islam.	Jn. 1:12-13, 3:3-8; Col. 1:13-14
Those whom God brings out of the dominion of sin and into His Kingdom are called the "Church", as well as other terms. Their real citizenship is not in this world, but in heaven.	x	Those who submit to Allah and His prophet, as prescribed in Islam, enter the <i>Umma</i> .	Mt. 16:16-19; Phil. 3:20; Col. 1:13-14
Although <i>the benefits of the Kingdom of God</i> will not be fully realized until Christ returns, the benefits are partially available in this age to those who are in Christ. These include the fruit of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, fellowship with God, peace that passes understanding, and assurance of salvation.	>	There is no foretaste of a supernatural life in this present earthly existence. In fact, the life in Paradise is a luxurious, painless version of life in this present world.	Benefits: Rev. 21 and 22 Fruit: Gal. 5:22-24 Gifts: 1 Cor. 12:4-7 Peace: Phil. 4:7 Fellowship: 1 Jn. 1:3 Assurance: Eph. 1:13 and 1 Pet. 1:3-5
<i>The struggle of the Kingdom of God is not against people and governments but against the supernatural kingdom of darkness</i> (Eph. 6:12).	X	The struggle of the <i>Umma</i> (<i>Dar al Islam</i>) is against all people and governments who resist Islam (<i>Dar al Harb</i>).	Eph. 6:12
Local assemblies of those in the Kingdom of Christ are also called churches. God helps them serve one another in different ways through the power of His Spirit.	x	Churches and mosques are buildings used for religious rites.	1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-16
<i>The core social unit in the Kingdom of God is the local body of believers</i> (church, congregation, fellowship, assembly etc.).	x	The core social unit in the <i>Umma</i> is the extended family.	Acts 2:42-47
Those in the Kingdom (in Christ) are all brothers and sisters.	x	Muslims are considered brothers, but family relationships remain the most important.	Mt. 10:35-37, 12:48-50
Only a minority of people enter the Kingdom.	x	Whole countries can be in the <i>Umma</i> .	Mt. 7:13-14

Some from every tribe, tongue, nation and people will enter the Kingdom. Those chosen may retain, in this life at least, most of their cultural and linguistic diversity. <i>No particular culture or language is favoured above others.</i>	X	The whole world should be brought into submission to Islam and eventually to a common Islamic culture and a common language – Classical Arabic – but this will not be completed until Christ returns and kills all who refuse to submit to Islam.	Rev. 5:9-10, 7:9
The Role and Status of Women		The Role and Status of Women	
A woman may own property.	=		
<i>Men and women are created equal in value and ability, although there are small distinctions in their responsibility towards God and one another.</i>	X	On the one hand, men and women are said to be equal except in responsibility towards God, but on the other, women are said to be deficient in intelligence, piety, gratitude and reliability. Compensation for a woman's life is half that of a man's.	Named in genealogies: Mt. 1:3-16 Equal: Gen. 1:27, 2:18-23; Joel 2:28-29; Gal. 3:28 Distinctions: 1 Cor. 14:34-35, 11:7-9; 1 Tim. 2:11-12; Eph. 5:22-25
The testimony of men and women is equally valid.	x	The testimony of one man equals that of two women.	Acts 18:26
Jesus appealed to men and women equally; both are welcome. There is no indication that men are more acceptable.	>	Those in hell-fire are mostly women; those in Paradise are mostly men.	Acts 16:14, 17:4,,12,,34; 2 Tim. 1:5
<i>A woman gains salvation in the same way as a man.</i>		A woman gains salvation by pleasing and obeying her husband.	Acts 15:13-14, 16:31
A husband's duty is to love his wife and be willing to die for her.	x	A husband's duty is to provide food and clothing for his wife, after he has fed and clothed himself and to beat her if she rebels.	Eph. 5:25-33
<i>One husband and one wife should become like one flesh.</i> Polygamy is discouraged. Sex outside of marriage is forbidden to both the man and the wife.	x	A man may marry four wives and have slave concubines. A woman may not marry more than one husband at a time.	Gen. 2:24; Prov. 5:15-21; Mk. 10:2-12; 1 Cor. 6:13-20; Titus 1:6
God hates divorce and strictly limits it. Believers should stay united.	x	A man may divorce his wife at will and may threaten her with divorce. A woman may not generally divorce her husband.	Mal. 2:16; Mk. 10:2-12; 1 Cor. 7:10-16, 7:39
There is no discrimination between men and women in heaven.	x	In Paradise, a man may have many concubines (<i>hur</i>) and the sexual strength of a hundred men, whereas nothing is promised for the few women who reach Paradise.	
A person's own lust is the cause of temptation and sexual sin. Men and women are equally to blame.	x	Immodesty on the part of women is the cause of temptation and sexual sin.	James 1:14-15

A woman is not restricted in regard to leaving the house or travelling, but she should dress modestly and not entice men.	x	A woman should ideally remain at home. If she goes out, she must be covered and accompanied by close relatives or other women. She should never be seen uncovered by a man who is not a close relative.	1 Tim. 2:9
Men and women may socialize together in mixed company. They should view each other as brothers and sisters, not as sexual objects. In Christ there is neither male nor female.	x	Men and women live in different social worlds. Although they marry, homes are divided into separate men's and women's sections. Role distinctions are strictly defined. Men work outside and deal with public affairs and finances while women serve in the home and manage the family.	Gal. 3:28; 1 Tim. 5:2
Paradise		Paradise	
<i>Followers of Christ enter Paradise after their death.</i>	x	Those predestined by God will enter Paradise after the resurrection and the judgement.	Lk. 23:43; Jn. 17:24, 14:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:6-8
Those entering Paradise have been regenerated and progressively transformed on earth and they are fully sanctified and glorified in Paradise.	x	Those in Paradise are similar to how they were on earth; there is no moral transformation of their nature.	1 Cor. 15:35-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; Phil. 3:20-21; Rev. 21:27
Paradise is a beautiful, harmonious place where there is no suffering. <i>The greatest pleasure of Paradise is close fellowship with God.</i>	X	Official: Paradise is a beautiful place; its chief pleasures are food and sex. <i>High Sufism: The chief pleasure is the removal of the illusory veil of being separate (distinct) from God.</i>	Rev. 21:3-4
The End of this Age		The End of this Age	
Before the resurrection there will be many signs.	=		
The antichrist will appear with false signs and wonders.	~	<i>Ad-Dajjal</i> will appear with false signs.	Mt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13
The Beast will brand unbelievers with a sign on their faces.	=		Rev. 13:16
Gog and Magog will appear.	=		Rev. 20:8
There will be signs in the heavens: smoke, the sun darkened.	~	There will be eclipses.	Rev. 6:2; 8:13
Jesus will return to earth.	=	Jesus will return to earth.	Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 1:7
<i>Jesus will come to gather His people and to judge the earth. Those who belong to Christ will be raptured to meet Him as He returns.</i>		Jesus will come to restore people to Islam and then die.	1 Thess. 4:16-17; Mt. 25:31-46

There will be a resurrection of those who died belonging to Christ. They will join the throng that was raptured to meet Jesus and receive their rewards. Some people understand the Book of Revelation to teach that this throng will inhabit the earth for 1000 years, under the rule of Christ, before the resurrection of the rest of mankind.	X	There will be a general resurrection.	Mt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20
The dead, who did not belong to Christ, will be resurrected and eventually be judged according to their deeds; they will be condemned because they have rebelled against God. They will have no salvation because their names are not in the Book of Life. (By rejecting the King they forfeited the Kingdom.)	X	All people will be judged on the Day of Judgment. God will double the good works of his servants, then good works will be weighed against bad works. Ultimately, God may forgive or condemn anyone, but he will not forgive those who associate another with Him.	Deeds: Ps. 62:12; Mt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10 Book of Life: Rev. 13:8, 20:11-15
Those whom God finally rejects will “perish” in the lake of fire (hell).	~	Those whom God rejects will be tortured in the hell fire; they will be neither dead nor alive.	Is. 66:24; Mk. 9:47-48; Rev. 20:14-15
Those who are in hell are spirits of the dead, whereas the saved are resurrected beings with glorious, immortal bodies.	X	All people are resurrected with the same kind of bodies. Those who are in hell are half dead or else they suffer frequent death and resuscitation.	(verses yet to be added)
Satan and the other fallen angels will be cast into hell.	=		Rev. 20:10
The earth will be destroyed.	=		Rev. 21:1
There will be a new earth and heavens, in which God dwells with His people and they enjoy loving fellowship with Him.	>	Those whom God guides will be assigned to one of several different places in Paradise, still separated from God.	Rev. 21:1-5, 22:1-5
<i>The saved do not go to hell; there is no exit from hell.</i>	>	(Almost) all believers go to hell for punishment before going to Paradise. It is thought that one day of sin in this life is punished with a thousand years of punishment in hell.	(verses yet to be added)
Worship		Worship	
The main purpose of worship is to thank and praise God for what He has done and to acknowledge His surpassing worth.	x	The purpose of ritual worship is to acknowledge submission to God’s will. Popular: Ritual worship helps to ward off evil, as does use of the rosary, etc.	Ps. 29:1-2; Rev. 4:1, 11

Mankind was created to praise and love God, but the manner of worship is not rigidly prescribed. <i>The greatest obligation is to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength, and after that to love others as oneself.</i>	~	Worship is obligatory and specific acts of devotion are prescribed in the 'five pillars': witness, ritual washings and prayer, fasting during Ramadan, alms, pilgrimage.	Ps. 22:22-31; Mt. 22:37-40; Jn. 4:24
Worship involves prayer, song, studying God's message in the Bible, celebrating the last supper and fasting. All that one says, thinks and does should bring honour to God. Worship encompasses the whole of life.	~	Worship encompasses the whole of life. It includes prayer, chanting the Quran and observing the law. Singing (as opposed to chanting) is generally inappropriate.	(verses yet to be added)
Worship draws the believer closer to God and helps purify his life.	~	Ritual worship reminds the believer of his obligation to God and paves the way for his entrance into Paradise.	Rom. 12:1-2
Worship is only acceptable if it is done sincerely, from the spirit.	x	Worship is only acceptable if the rituals are performed correctly, with sincere intent.	Jn. 4:24
Ethics (a small selection of contrasts)		Ethics	
The basis of ethics is love for God and gratitude for what He has done. Ethical behaviour is an expression of love for God and man, in response to the experience of God's grace. It is motivated by a changed nature, the result of one's spirit being born again through the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in those who are in Christ. The Holy Spirit is a continual source of motivation.		The basis of ethics is fear of God and the desire to please Him and gain His approval. Ethical behaviour is a fulfilment of duty and obedience to God's laws. It is motivated by learned rules of behaviour and by fear of the Last Day. Popular: Major components of motivation include the fear of public dishonour and the fear of the consequences of uncleanness.	Mt. 22:37-40; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-25
The ideal person whom believers should seek to emulate, is Jesus Christ.	x	The ideal person that believers should seek to emulate is the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).	Heb. 12:1-2; 1 Jn. 2:6
God wants His people to love Him as children, to love others, and to be holy as He is holy. They show their love for God by making Him their highest priority and by obeying His commandments.	X	God wants his people to submit to Him as slaves. They show their submission by observing His laws.	1 Pet. 1:15-16; 1 Jn. 4:11, 5:2-3
The divine law is a schoolmaster that should increase awareness of sinfulness and lead one to Christ.	X	The divine law prescribes how one should behave.	Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:24
Humility is required for true love for God and others. Humility is more important than promoting and preserving one's honour among men.	X	Popular: Preserving one's honour is a more important duty than humility. High Sufi: Absolute humility and selflessness are required to perceive fully the truth of the Absolute Reality of God.	Phil. 2:3-8; Col. 3:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:24-25; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 5:5-7

A believer is free to eat or drink anything in moderation, even pork or wine, but he should limit his freedom to avoid hurting others.	X	A Muslim must never eat pork or drink anything alcoholic.	Rom. 14:14-23; 1 Cor. 8:8-13
Fasting is encouraged but not required.	x	Fasting is required during Ramadan.	Mt. 6:16-18; Lk. 5:33-35
Believers should talk often to God and also be attentive for His guidance. This is what they mean by “prayer”. They should also make their petitions known with thanksgiving and intercede for those in authority and for those in need.	x	Muslims should observe the five scheduled times of ritual worship, which they call “prayer” (<i>salaah</i>). Afterwards they can make petitions to God (<i>du`aa</i>).	Rom. 15:30; 2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 6: 18-20; Phil. 4:6
Believers should gather often for worship and fellowship, but personal prayer and fasting are better done in private.	x	Muslim men should pray in a mosque, if possible, but women should pray at home. On Friday men should pray the noon prayer in the mosque; women may pray at the same time if there is a special place for them.	Mt. 6:5-18; Acts 16:13; Heb. 10:25
The Old Testament prescribed one day of rest each week and although this is not required under the New Covenant, it remains a common and valued practice.	x	There is no required day of rest. Popular: Friday has become a day of rest in many places—also Thursday, Saturday or Sunday.	Ex. 20:8-11; Acts 20:7; Rom. 14:5; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10
Acceptable types of clothing are not strictly defined and cultural diversity is approved, but believers should dress modestly.	x	Muslims should dress very modestly. In conservative communities certain kinds of clothing are often prescribed as “Islamic”.	1 Cor. 10:31-33; 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:3-4
Believers are free to pray at any time. They should not make a show of their prayers or repeat their words needlessly.	x	Muslims must wash and remove shoes before praying. A Muslim’s ritual prayers (<i>Salaah</i>) will not be acceptable if he/she is unclean in any way. A petitionary prayer (<i>du’aa</i>) may be made at any time.	Mt. 6:5-7
Believers are not required to make pilgrimages.	x	Every Muslim who is able should make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once.	
Believers should consider all of their property to belong to God. Giving to those in need is a reflection of the believer's gratitude to God for His gift of Jesus Christ. Many follow the Old Testament example of giving at least ten percent for ministry.	~	Muslims should pay the alms-tax (<i>zakaat</i>); they should also be generous to guests, to those in need and to the cause of Islam.	Ps. 24:1; Mt. 10:8; Acts. 2:42-45; 2 Cor. 9:6-7, 10-15
Believers are free to relieve themselves in any practical position. OT: Waste should be covered and contamination avoided.	x	Muslims should relieve themselves in prescribed ways, taking care not to contaminate their clothing or skin.	Deut. 23:12-14

Murder is forbidden.	X	Official: Muslims should not murder anyone except the enemies of God, whom they are obliged to kill. This includes the enemies of Islam and apostates from Islam. Popular: A father may kill anyone in the family who brings shame to the family, especially women who are indiscreet.	(verses yet to be added)
Politics		Politics	
Believers should obey all those in authority as much as possible.	x	Muslims should obey authentic Muslim leaders.	Acts 4:18-19; Rom. 13:1-7
The Kingdom of God is not of this world. A theocracy is not possible until Christ returns.	x	Muslims should establish a Muslim state. Ideally they should establish a worldwide utopian theocracy ruled by a Caliph.	Jn. 18:36; 1 Tim. 6:13-16
Believers can live anywhere.	x	Muslims are encouraged to live in a Muslim state.	
Mission		Mission (Da'wa)	
All followers of Christ have a duty to proclaim the Gospel.	~	All Muslims have a duty to defend and propagate Islam.	Mt. 28:18-20
The purpose of mission is to make the Gospel known to every person. Some will believe and enter the Kingdom of God. Mission involves proclaiming the Gospel, baptising believers, training disciples etc.	x	The purpose of <i>da'wa</i> is to extend <i>Dar al Islam</i> and enlarge the <i>Umma</i> . It involves bringing people into submission to God, and should eventually include everyone.	Mt. 28:18-20
Genuine conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be forced or enticed by worldly means.	X	Conversion is a result of re-education. It can be fostered by threat, pressure or reward.	Jn. 3:5-8; Acts 8:20-21
Defilement and Purification		Defilement and Purification	
Under the Old Covenant (OT), one could be defiled (made ceremonially unclean) to various degrees by eating or touching ceremonially unclean things. If one was defiled, his worship and prayers were not acceptable to God. Many animals (such as pigs and dogs) were unclean to eat—as was blood and any animal improperly slaughtered. Anything contaminated by leprosy, seminal emissions or blood from childbirth and menstruation was unclean to touch.	=	Official: Mostly the same as the OT. In addition an unclean person cannot read or touch the Quran. Popular: Being unclean brings the curse of God, which leads to punishment.	Lev. 11:15-17, 22
OT: A human corpse was unclean to touch, as were infidels.	x	(Shi'a agree; Sunni don't.)	Lev. 22:4

OT: Excrement is unclean and must be buried.	x	Defecation and urination render one unclean until ritual washing (ablution, 'wudu').	Deut. 23:12-14
Wine is clean, although drunkenness is prohibited. (In the OT priests were prohibited from wine and intoxicants while serving in the tabernacle – Lev. 10:8)	X	Wine and all spirits are unclean.	Ps. 104:15; Prov. 20:1, 23:29-35
OT: Sinfulness – especially idolatry – rendered a land unclean.	X	The unclean person defiles the ground he walks on; his personal angels record this and curse him for it.	Widespread divorce and remarriage: Jer. 3:1 Idolatry: Jer. 2:7-8, 3:2, 9, 16:18 Detestable things in general: Lev. 18:25-28 Sin – breaking the covenant: Is. 24:5; Jer. 44:22; Hos. 4:1-3; Rom. 8:20-22 Body of an executed murderer: Lev. 21:22-23 Murder: Num. 35:33-34
OT: Purification usually involved washing or bathing.	~	Purification of minor defilement (<i>hadath</i>), such as touching the skin of a person of the opposite sex or relieving oneself, involves ablutions with clean water and formulaic prayers. Purification of major defilement (sexual emission, blood) requires a complete washing. "Purity is half the faith." (Hadith)	Lev. 11-15; 17; 22
	x	In the absence of water, sand may be used.	
Christ said that <i>what really defiles people is the sinfulness of their hearts</i> , not what they eat. Mk. 7:18-23	>	(These concepts are unknown, but they could answer a felt need for inner cleansing.)	Verses included under "Aspects"
<i>God has made people and foods clean for believers in Christ.</i> Acts 10:15; Rom. 14:20; Titus 1:15; Mk. 7:23	>		Verses included under "Aspects"

<p>In the New Covenant, the power and holiness of Christ is stronger than uncleanness. When He touched lepers, He was not defiled; rather, they were cleansed. Mk. 1:40-44. The guilt of sin is cleansed once for all time by baptism with faith in Christ (Acts 22:16). <i>The hearts of believers are purified by the Holy Spirit through faith in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ</i> (Acts 15:9; 1 Cor. 6:11; Tit. 3:5) and regularly cleansed by confession of sin (1 Jn. 1:9) and by the word of Christ (Eph. 5:26; Jn. 15:3). This is possible because of the sacrificial blood/death of Christ which cleanses our hearts. Heb. 9:13; Rev. 7:14; Col. 2:16-23</p>	<p>> (Islam has no cleansing from sinfulness. It cannot clean the heart and mind.)</p>	<p>Verses included under "Aspects"</p>
<p>Values commonly held</p>	<p>Values commonly held</p>	
<p>Believers should seek unity within diversity.</p>	<p>x The Muslim community should promote uniformity.</p>	<p>1 Cor. 12:12-27</p>
<p>There is a place for simplicity and a place for complexity.</p>	<p>x Simplicity and uniformity are preferred.</p>	
<p>Impartiality towards all is commanded, but there is a greater obligation to love those within the household of faith. (In practice, partiality has been a problem from the beginning.)</p>	<p>x There is official inequality between sexes, languages, religious communities and – unofficially – between races, clans and classes.</p>	<p>Acts 10: 34-35; Gal. 6:10; James 2:1</p>
<p>Nevertheless, the Bible foretells the growth of the Kingdom until it exists in every nation, tribe and tongue and this is what is seen in history. Many believe that God is moving the Church toward greater holiness and understanding. Nevertheless, the Kingdom of Christ has always faced opposition in this world. Among its constant opponents have been institutional religion and human tradition.</p>	<p>X The first Islamic society was the best and it has been downhill since then. The early practices, teachings and interpretations are the best. Hence tradition is sacred and innovation is profane.</p>	<p>Rev. 5:9-10 Mt. 15:6-9</p>
<p>Creativity is valued as an attribute of God's image in man.</p>	<p>x Creativity violates tradition and uniformity.</p>	
<p><i>Individuals may make their own decisions</i> with due respect for the counsel of fellow believers and the effect on others.</p>	<p> Decisions should be made by leaders in the family or clan.</p>	<p>Prov. 15:22, 16:3, 20:18</p>
<p><i>Individuals should grow in conformity to Christ</i>, especially with regard to holiness, love, obedience and understanding.</p>	<p>X Individuals should conform to Islamic society and family and should follow the example of their prophet.</p>	<p>Eph. 4:11-16</p>
<p>Adversities (trials) are an opportunity for spiritual growth.</p>	<p>x Adversity is to be avoided or else accepted as fate.</p>	<p>James 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7</p>
<p>Peace is valued as an inner condition produced by the Holy Spirit in those reconciled to God through Christ.</p>	<p>x Peace is valued as the absence of adversity.</p>	<p>Rom. 5:1, 8:6; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 2:14</p>

Loyalty is owed to fellow believers in the family of God.	x	Loyalty is owed to one's extended family.	
Personal honour is based on individual character. A person of honour is characterized by wisdom, dependence on God, loving and serving Him.	x	Personal honour is based on the honour of one's family and clan.	<p>Wisdom: Prov. 4:7-8, 8:18</p> <p>Dependence on God: Ps. 91:15</p> <p>Service to God: Jn. 12:26</p> <p>Honouring God: 1 Sam. 2:30</p>
One should bring honour to Christ by honest means even if one appears foolish to others or displeases one's family.	x	One should, by almost any means, promote and protect the honour of one's family and of Islam.	1 Thess. 4:11 (NKJV study Bible says "aspire" in this verse means to garner honour through outward show). Lk. 10:17-20
One should seek guidance from God through the Bible, prayer and the Holy Spirit.	x	One should seek guidance by learning the Sharia and following it.	<p>Prayer: James 1:5</p> <p>God the Holy Spirit: Ps. 32:8, 48:14; Jn. 16:13</p> <p>Bible: 2 Tim. 3:15-17</p>
<i>Believers should feel ashamed if they dishonour or displease God. However, if they are following Christ, then they must expect reproach and persecution from worldly people.</i>		The Muslim generally feels ashamed when others reproach him or his family or a member of his family. Avoidance of shame is perhaps the strongest factor affecting social behaviour. The family should keep its womenfolk from shaming them by committing a sexual indiscretion. Shame can be alleviated by strictly punishing the offending woman.	Phil. 1:27-30, 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 4:12-16; 1 Jn. 2:28
One should practice hospitality even to strangers.	~	The practice of hospitality and generosity bring honour to the family; its lack brings dishonour.	Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2
One should work and not be idle. Work with the hands is honourable.	X	A man should not work if it is not necessary. Manual labour is not honourable.	2 Thess. 3:6-12

Session 4

The Viable Cross-Cultural Worker

(Much of this material is taken from Donald N. Larson, Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics at Bethel College, St. Paul, MN USA)

There is often a wide gap between a cross-cultural worker's **conception** of his or her role and how it is viewed in reality by those of his or her adopted community. Our purpose is to examine this gap and propose ways of closing it.

Typical Encounter Models

When local community members first meet new cross-cultural workers (CCWs) they see them as outsiders. The locals usually place a CCW in one of three boxes (interpretive backdrops or metaphors of identity)

- The school
- The market place
- The court

The CCW may not intend to be in a box and may not understand he has been put in a box.

If he is in **the school box**, then he is seen as a teacher and they see themselves as students. Any useful interaction between themselves and the CCW is to **learn information**.

If he has been placed in **the market place box**, then the locals see the CCW as a seller and themselves as buyers. Any meaningful interaction between them is in the area of buying and selling.

If he has been placed in **the court box** then the locals see him as the prosecuting lawyer and themselves as the accused!

In school the teacher says, *"I am going to teach you something."*

In the market place the businessman says, *"I will sell you something."*

In the court the lawyer says, *"I have measured you against this (usually foreign) standard."*

Now this is the scenery by which the locals will decide whether they want to relate to the CCW. If the CCW is in the school box, then the locals ask themselves whether they need to know what the teacher has to teach. If he is in the market place box they ask whether they want to buy what he is selling. If he is in the court box, then they ask themselves whether they need to take their accuser's accusations seriously!

This raises some serious issues. Can an **outsider** ever teach or sell or accuse successfully? Can an **outsider** ever be needed? Can a CCW ever communicate the Gospel effectively if he is assumed to have the role of teacher, seller or accuser?

Most **insiders** expect the outsider to learn the insider's point of view **before** he can teach effectively about the outside. They expect him to survive like an insider depending on the local market before he can sell his imported goods. Insiders expect outsiders to measure themselves by the insider laws before they start accusing insiders on the basis of outsider standards.

The sequence seems to be very important

Student before teacher

Buyer before seller

Accused before accuser

A CCW outsider must follow this order before he can have these roles to the insiders. Outsiders who live in their boxes on the edge of the community will always be looked on negatively by the insider community. The very term “outsider” has negative connotations! So the CCW must do everything he can to become an “insider” – at least to some extent. Otherwise he will always experience negative reactions to his presence and be an irrelevance to the community. If none of the insiders are willing to learn from an outside teacher, buy from an outside seller or accept the accusations of an outside accuser, then the outsider can’t achieve anything.

To close the gap, CCWs need to adopt viable roles that will help them build relationships with the insiders. Until CCWs can take on such roles, the gap will remain.

Closing the Gap

Closing the gap between the CCW and the local community usually means redesigning old roles and designing new roles. Firstly the CCWs must **learn** to be the foreigners they are for the first time in their lives. They must find new ways to make friends and build trust. They must recognise their ‘foreignness’. Typically this means the CCWs will have to measure their identity and effectiveness by the standards of their hosts and not by their own standards. Inevitably the CCW comes to realise that he or she must first be acceptable by **local** standards (in dress, behaviour etc.) and, to be acceptable, local community members must find CCWs **approachable and teachable!**

Two Redesigned Roles

The two redesigned roles that the CCW can develop to establish viability, acceptability and trust in the eyes of his host community are:

- A learner – in the context of a school
- A trader – in the context of a market place

The role of an accuser in court has to go! There should be no sense in which the host community feel you are accusing them!

A CCW should take on the role of a learner. He will probably have to keep this role for the rest of his life if he is going to be effective. **After several months the CCW adds the role of a trader** while still continuing as a learner. From his position as an outsider the learner begins to find a way by which he can become acceptable to his host’s society. Once he has a large degree of acceptance, he can add the role of a trader. As a trader he can begin **to contribute** to the community.

A Newly Designed Role – A Story Teller

After a year or two a third role should be added to the other two (learner and trader) – that of a story teller. Story tellers are welcomed in any society! Most of our Neighbour cultures love hearing new stories as well as hearing old stories repeated.

With these three roles the gap should be closed. Once the gap is closed then other roles can be added. Let us look at these three roles in greater detail.

A Learner

As a learner the CCW will spend most of his time learning language – the primary symbol of identification in the host community. The CCW should make a good start. Once the community understands he is making a serious effort to learn their language, they know they are worth something to him because he is trying to communicate on their terms. A combination of the LAMP method and formal classes is best for most CCWs. As the CCW learns a little every day he can share his new knowledge with neighbours and friends. The community will quickly warm to his attempts to say something new every day. Gradually the CCW will reach a point where he begins to understand and is understood a little.

At the same time the CCW makes strenuous efforts to understand and acquire the host culture in all its diversity. The CCW needs to be seen making efforts to be less of an outsider – in clothing, behaviour, style of hospitality etc.

After a few months the CCW should have made dozens of new acquaintances and even a few friends. By now he can make simple statements as well as ask and answer simple questions. He can find his way around. He can learn the meaning of new words on the spot and, most importantly, he can experience some measure of “at homeness” in his adopted community.

Even in several years he will not be able to learn the ‘whole language’. But as a learner he can initiate conversations and learn about both the culture and the language from the people he meets.

A Trader

When people in the community know the CCW, he can add to his learner role the role of a **trader**.

It is here that the role of a ‘tentmaker’ may help to legitimize his presence, since it gives him a recognisable purpose for being there. The CCW’s motives are seen to make sense.

The CCW begins to trade his experience and insights with the people in his adopted community. His aim is to present himself as a part of humankind, in some ways similar to the host community, and not as a visiting alien from outer space! He **prepares** as much as he can for this role of trader.

Examples of preparation include:

- Photos of his own extended family and his town and country
- Elements of his background
- Ability to cook, fix cars, play football (and especially coach it) – any useful practical skill
- His professional background

The CCW learns vocabulary/phrases that will be useful in “trading” these experiences. The goal is to exchange elements of the CCWs background and experience with others in the community so that they begin to see that this person has something useful to contribute to their community.

During the “trader” months the CCW concentrates on fitting in and establishing relationships. He continues to spend time with his language teacher learning to talk about photos, cake making or “the offside trap” in football. He always builds on the vocabulary learned in the first few months. In the afternoon/evening he works on vocabulary and then casually visits his friends in the community using his photos, cookies, carpentry or plumbing skills or sports skills as a sort of ‘show and tell’ demonstration. He tells his new friends as much as he can about his family and his home country – how the people live there – how they earn money – what they do for fun – how they hurt and struggle for survival and satisfaction.

The aim of this ‘trader’ phase is to establish that the CCW is not only a **learner** but someone who is interested in other people and wants to trade one bit of information for another – i.e. not only taking something out of the community, but willing to put something in. Language proficiency is still developing. The CCW is meeting people. Depending on the size and complexity of the community, he may well have established himself as a well known figure in the community by this time!

The Story Teller

By the second year the CCW begins to add a third role – that of a story teller. Still spending time with a language teacher, the CCW begins to learn how to tell a simple story to the people he meets and how to respond to their enquiries as best he can. He might learn a joke or two or even a local story. But probably most of his stories will come from the Old Testament prophets – the foretelling of the coming of Jesus – the formation of a new People of God – the movement of the Kingdom into all the world and finally the CCW’s own encounter with Jesus and his walk as a follower.

Part of the day is spent developing these stories and practicing them. In the afternoon/evening the CCW goes into the community, as he has been doing for a few months, but now new people meet him as a story teller. He is still a learner. He is still a trader. But now he has added the role of story teller. He tells as much as he can of the story he has prepared to as many people as possible.

At the end of this third phase, the CCW will probably have many acquaintances and a few good friends who enjoy his stories and are provoked to thoughtfulness by them. Essentially the CCW will have left positive impressions as a learner, a trader and a story teller. He is then ready for further roles to be added.

A Check on Viability

Let us look again at these roles from the viewpoint of viability. Any role the CCW takes must be viable from four perspectives:

- The sending constituency
- The others on the team
- The sending agency
- The CCW himself – i.e. the role must allow him to be himself – to be his own person

If all four of these don't recognise your role and its importance then you won't survive very long! The agency, the sending constituency and the team need to encourage, support and motivate you as much as possible in these roles.

Finally, your role must be viable from point of view of the local community. If you don't find an acceptable role in the community you will be judged by that community as a freak, a misfit, a spy or something else equally useless or dangerous. It is important that the community should 'approve' of the role of the CCW. Local residents must feel good about his/her presence in their community. Each CCW needs to reinforce and complement the whole on-going progress of the Kingdom in the community.

So what do local people think of you as a learner, a trader or a story teller? From the standpoint of the locals, it is nearly always true that an outsider who is ready and willing to learn and adapt nearly always has a continuous welcome into the community. In any community the average person has a natural curiosity about people from other places as long as this knowledge is not seen as threatening. This curiosity can be sensitively used to 'trade'. The community feels it is gaining knowledge and skill and appreciates the fact that outsiders feel they can learn from them.

Finally, in most cultures story telling and the reporting of incidents is very common and is often a much appreciated skill. Of course there are rules that must be respected. Local people will probably listen to the stories and even help the CCW tell them to others.

Most CCWs find these roles viable. Effective CCWs enjoy learning and know how to go about it. They really appreciate the possibilities inherent in a trader role. They love to listen to stories and enjoy telling them.

But surprisingly these roles may be questioned by others. The home supporting constituency sees the CCW as a sermon-maker, theology teacher or religious lecturer – not as a story teller! The agency may want to rush people into a role quite different from these three roles (a bookkeeper, manager, teacher etc.) and so may not give the CCW the time or encouragement to get into any of these three roles.

So teams should exploit the role of a learner as quickly and as much as possible. Failure to do so will always result in the worker being an 'alien'. A good start in the first role leads to an easy transition to roles two and three.

In addition to all this, the dependency and vulnerability of a learner conveys to the local community – at least in some way – **the message** that we are trying to bring: God's identification with us and the message of reconciliation that are explicit in the Gospel.

The viability of the trader role is just the beginning of the role of a 'tentmaker'. But sadly, few people think **holistically** and many see exchanging ideas and skills – whether it is baking cookies or teaching the art of penalty talking in football, as too "secular" for a CCW. Yet from the point of view of **the community** such a secular role is natural and acceptable to them. It is common ground. Presenting oneself in the role of a 'religious specialist' will generate all sorts of barriers, problems and difficulties. The trader role requires holistic thinking if the CCW is to feel comfortable in his role. Holistic thinking makes the transition into story telling much easier. Mixing Biblical stories with "secular" stories is also made much easier.

Our Biblical mandate challenges the CCW to identify with those to whom he brings the words of life. Apparent weakness, vulnerability and flexibility have always been an inherent part of the power of the Gospel.

Session 5

Avoiding the Transfer of Culture

Objectives:

Head: * To grow in your understanding of your role as a messenger

* To grow in your understanding of the Biblical principle of “remaining in the community”

Heart: Our goal is not to bring our new culture but to bring Jesus.

Hands: To gain greater confidence and be comfortable in telling “their” story

1. Welcome and Prayer

2. Debrief the group members as to their homework assignments:

- Give opportunity to share some of the reading material and what members have learned.
- Ask the group whether there were issues they had to deal with before the Lord concerning being willing to be a learner.
- Give opportunities to share about conversations they have had with Neighbours relating to Neighbour culture – in particular about honour and shame. How do women differ from men?

3. Discuss the article The Viable Cross-Cultural Worker

- What key concepts were identified?
- How do these concepts relate to ministry to Neighbours?
- How will this article make a difference in your personal ministry and relationships?

4. Discuss the “Identity” Bible Study

- Work your way through the study question by question.
- Have different members of the group summarize key concepts along the way.
- Discuss how these Biblical concepts challenge the current thinking and practices of individual group members.
- Get a sense of what might be key issues for on-going discussion.

5. Sharing your “Story” *(It is best to avoid all jargon terms like ‘testimony’.)*

- Discuss how we can organise our “story” with the following simple outline:
 - ❖ What was your life like before you began to follow Jesus?
 - ❖ How did you put your trust in Jesus and begin to follow Him?
As you describe how you put your trust in Jesus be sure to highlight the important parts of the Gospel message so that they could do the same.
 - ❖ Describe how Jesus has made a difference in your life.
- Break into pairs and give each partner a chance to share his/her “story”.
- Discuss how the Biblical principle of “remaining in the community” might impact how you tell your “story”.
- Have pairs share their “stories” a second time. This time contextualise it as if you were sharing it with a Neighbour.

6. Read through **Building a Useful Conversation**

How do you expect this to make a difference in the way you relate to your Neighbours?

8. Spend some time in prayer for one another, the ministry and Neighbour friends.

Homework

Head: Try and learn a little more this week about the faith and practices of a Neighbour friend.

Heart: Continue conversations begun with Neighbours, but now with an eye towards getting on to spiritual issues. Think of themes related to the Gospel (forgiveness, dealing with shame, sin, having God's favour etc.) and try to discover more about what your friends think and believe. **Just listen and learn!** Ask God to use these conversations to sink more deeply into your heart the conviction of Neighbours' need for Jesus.

Hands: * Write your "story" down on paper as if you were sharing it with a Neighbour friend. Make it no longer than two minutes. Practice it 5-10 times! Share it with at least one unbeliever. (An expatriate would do!) Bring the written copy with you to the next session.

* Read through the **Religious Terminology** handout and see how many terms you already know in the local language. Look for an opportunity to try out these words.

* Read through **Building a Useful Conversation** again. What can you put into practice from this paper?

Handouts for Session Six: Beginning to Build Relationships

- Bible Study on Relating to the Lost
- Who Am I?

Session 5

Identity : My Own and My Neighbour's

In relating to our Neighbours, we often insist on a change of identity on their part (name, legal status, dress code, diet etc.). When we insist on such a change we are not distinguishing between an individual's **spiritual identity** and their **natural identity**. This confusion gives rise to a great deal of offense in the Neighbour community. Offense about us has been substituted for the offense of the Cross. In order to understand the difference between natural and spiritual identities we need to clarify what the Bible teaches about identity. We receive a **natural identity at our first birth**. God gives us a **spiritual identity at our second birth**.

1. **What describes the natural identity of your Neighbours?** Include social, cultural, religious aspects, values, activities, events and practices! *(You probably need a notebook with a page for each of these headings. Add to it over the coming months.)*
2. **Examine the two identities of Jesus in Mt. 16:13-20**
 - How did Jesus describe His natural identity in verse 13?
 - Why do you think He called Himself this? (Ez. 2:1, 3, 6, 8; Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 1:13-14)
 - What did people say His natural identity was in verse 14?
 - What did Peter say Jesus' spiritual identity was in verse 16?
 - How did the people come to understand these two identities?
(Note that the process was different.)
 - Why did Jesus tell His disciples in verse 20 not to reveal His spiritual identity?
3. **In Col. 3:11-14 Paul helped the Colossians to understand their two identities!**
 - What natural, physical, religious and cultural identities are mentioned in verse 11? Add any others from Gal. 3:28.
 - Despite the very different identities, what does Paul assure the Colossians in verse 11?
 - What qualities characterize the citizens of the Kingdom of God in verses 12-14 – regardless of their natural identities?
4. **The believers in Corinth lived in a culture that was both idol-worshipping and highly immoral.**
 - Read 1 Cor. 7:17-24. What was Paul's advice to them in verses 17, 20 and 24?
 - What did he say the Corinthians did not need to do regarding their natural identity received at birth? (v. 18)
 - What should their emphasis actually be? (v. 19)
 - Why did Paul emphasize this teaching in all the churches? (v. 17)
5. **How does Paul's discussion of "becoming all things to all men" (1 Cor. 9:19-23) relate to the encouragement for a believer to retain his or her natural identity?**

Questions for Group Discussion

- How do these passages apply to our Neighbours?
- What issues will they face as they remain in their natural context with their natural identity and live out their new spiritual identity?
- What further questions do you have about this whole topic of identity?

Session 5

Building a Useful Conversation leading to a Lasting Relationship

Five Principles

These days we watch TV so much that we are in danger of losing the art of conversation!

1. Be a Good Listener

- Look at the person you are talking to
- Give visual approval
 - ✓ Eyes
 - ✓ Nodding
 - ✓ Smiling
 - ✓ The way you sit
- Give verbal approval
 - ✓ Approving noises
 - ✓ 'I understand – 'I see' – 'Tell me more'
- Listen intently (one of the reasons that people believed in Freud)

2. Learn to ask Questions in a Plan

Here are seven good questions to **start** a conversation:

- What is your name? (Name)
- Where do you live? (Home)
- Tell me about your family. (Family)
- How do you spend most of your time? (Work)
- Do you often travel? Where are your favourite places?
- What do you do for relaxation?
- What do you think about life? Raising children? The economy? etc.

Quaker Questions

- Where did you live between the ages of 7-12? Who did you live with?
- How was your home heated?
- Who/What was your centre for emotional warmth? Which person? Book? Place?
- When did God become more than a word for you?

Lasting and meaningful relationships develop when **we** reveal **ourselves** and **others** reveal **themselves** to us.

Some retired people were asked what they would do differently if they were back in their 20s again. Here are their three top answers:

1. Reflect more on what I was doing
2. Take more risks
3. Ask a lot more questions

There are two basic types of questions:

Closed Questions: Do you like apple pie?

Open Questions: What kind of pie do you like?

We need to learn to ask open questions.

3. Use Conversation Expanders

These are essential to expand an understanding of the solution / problem / issue.

Who? What? When? Where? How? Why?

Who are some of the Milestone People in your Life?

- People who have helped you make progress – usually through lots of affirmation
- The person you would like to be like
- What are your feelings about your Milestone People?
- Have you ever given feedback to these mentors? Write a letter of thanks!

4. Move into “Ministry Matters” in the area of perceived ‘felt needs’.

Ask questions about:

- **Challenges, frustrations and concerns** people are facing
- **Goals and dreams** – where they would like to be and what they would like to be doing in ten years.
- **Achievements and accomplishments:**
 - What have been some of the highlights in your life?
 - What do you feel you have done well or what has given you the greatest satisfaction?

(At this point affirm people. Reflect back to them your pleasure at their achievement.)

- **Who or what has been an inspiration in their lives?**

5. Respond in Love

- Affirm, Affirm, Affirm
- Would it be helpful if I.....?
- Would it be OK if I prayed for you? Would you mind.....?

Prayer is important.

Session 5

A Religious Terminology Quiz

A. Match the following Arabic words to their English equivalents:

1.	<i>Ahli Kitaab</i>	a.	Ransom / Redeem
2.	<i>Rasul</i>	b.	To resurrect
3.	<i>Al-Iman</i>	c.	Apostle / Messenger of God
4.	<i>Yawn al-Deen</i>	d.	Surrender
5.	<i>Al-Fadi</i>	e.	People of the Book
6.	<i>Ta'a</i>	f.	To die
7.	<i>Maut</i>	g.	Judgement Day
8.	<i>Qu'ama</i>	h.	Faith
9.	<i>Sallim</i>	i.	Obedience

B. Match the following English words with their Arabic equivalents:

1.	Divine Guidance	a.	<i>Wuduh</i>
2.	Infidel	b.	<i>Sallim</i>
3.	Polytheism	c.	<i>Hadith</i>
4.	Submit yourself	d.	<i>Surat al Mustaqim</i>
5.	Compulsory	e.	<i>Askyan</i>
6.	Traditions	f.	<i>Kafira</i>
7.	Ablutions before prayer	g.	<i>Shar</i>
8.	Rebellion	h.	<i>frdh</i>
9.	Evil	i.	<i>Ta'adud</i>

C. Define the following words:

1. *waseat* _____
2. *ghrafour* _____
3. *touba* _____
4. *al-fadi* _____
5. *katiya* _____

D. Identify a handful of words you could see yourself using in conversation. Commit them to memory. Practice saying them.

E. Try to use at least three or four of them in conversation this week.

F. What did you discover when you used the words? Did they communicate what you had hoped? How were they received?

Session 5

A Religious Terminology Quiz: The Answers

(Not to be handed out!)

Section A

1e; 2c; 3h; 4g; 5a; 6i; 7f; 8b; 9d

Section B

1d; 2f; 3i; 4b; 5h; 6c; 7a; 8e; 9g

Section C

1. Mediator
2. Forgive
3. Repent
4. Saviour / Redeemer
5. Sin / missing the mark

Answers from Homework on Honour and Shame

To build up honour:

- Showing honour to the elderly
- Demonstrating generous hospitality – gifts and food
- Flattering comments

Behaving honourably

- Have a good family heritage and so have good connections
- Demonstrate wisdom (use proverbs and wise sayings)
- Physical strength and size
- Psychological charisma
- Bravery and loyalty
- Violence (a very positive attribute if used to protect the honour of your clan)
- Money and spending it generously

Session 5

Religious Terms

As we begin to talk to our Neighbours, we must realise that often the things we say may take on quite a different meaning to the one we intended. This is because, to a Neighbour, certain words hold connotations, associations and pictures that differ from, and even conflict with, our understanding of that word. It is important to realize this and to begin to learn our Neighbours' way of thinking so we can communicate effectively with them. Below is a chart of religious terms contrasting the Neighbour understanding and our understanding of the words listed.

OUR UNDERSTANDING		NEIGHBOUR UNDERSTANDING
NEAR – PERSONAL Loving Concerned Righteous judge The same yesterday, today & forever	GOD 'ALLAH'	DISTANT – IMPERSONAL Merciful Vengeful Almighty (Akbar) Capricious (does what He wants)
GOD THE SON Jn. 1:14 INCARNATE – the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Lk. 1:32 Son of the Most High Mt. 16:16 You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.	JESUS CHRIST 'ISA' 'SON OF MARY' 'AL MASSIH' 'KALIMET ALLAH' 'RUH ALLAH'	PROPHET (Nab) Rasul (apostle)
GOD THE SPIRIT personally indwells the true believer	HOLY SPIRIT 'RUH'	A POWER impersonal
FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT	TRINITY	GOD, MARY AND JESUS
OBJECT Jesus as God incarnate (Col. 1:15)	FAITH 'IMAN'	OBJECT In theory Allah, in practice Muhammad
Rebellion against God (includes both sins of omission and sins of commission) Acting in a way which is inappropriate for God family or community Committing acts which defile the body	REVEALING UNRIGHTEOUSNESS SIN and GUILT SHAME and DISHONOUR UNCLEAN and DIRTY	Rebellion against God's laws. Refusal to submit to God, Getting caught – losing face Ceremonial washing

<p>REQUIREMENT</p> <p>By grace through personal faith in the One that God has declared to be the Saviour of the World.</p> <p>PROVIDER</p> <p>God in Christ</p> <p>ASSURANCE OF SALVATION</p> <p>According to the finished work of Christ on the Cross (I Jn. 5:13)</p>	<p>SALVATION</p> <p>'KHALAS'</p>	<p>REQUIREMENT</p> <p>By uniting oneself to 'Dar-al Islam' (the House of Islam)</p> <p>Obedience to the Law</p> <p>PROVIDER</p> <p>God, according to His will</p> <p>NO ASSURANCE</p> <p>Only a proud or presumptuous person would say otherwise</p>
<p>INTERNAL</p> <p>Emphasis on response to power from the Holy Spirit with obedience to the Lord</p>	<p>SANCTIFICATION</p>	<p>EXTERNAL</p> <p>Emphasis on ritual and obedience (i.e. Duties)</p>
<p>STRESS ON COMMUNITY AND WORLD</p> <p>Beyond the family and religious community limits</p>	<p>LOVE</p> <p>'MAHABA'</p>	<p>STRESS ON FAMILY</p> <p>With logical limit</p> <p>Love limited to 'House of Islam '</p>
<p>BELIEF BASED ON THE TEACHING OF THE BIBLE</p> <p>Involves awareness, not fear</p> <p>Assurance of Christ's victory over the powers of darkness</p>	<p>SUPERNATURAL POWERS</p>	<p>SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEF IN WORLD</p> <p>Involves fear of spirit beings (JINN)</p> <p>Belief in the power of curses and the use of talisman and curses</p>
<p>REVELATION FROM GOD</p> <p>Authoritative and reliable</p>	<p>HOLY BIBLE</p> <p>'KITAB MUKADAS'</p>	<p>REVELATION FROM GOD</p> <p>Said to be changed or corrupted</p> <p>Quran only says that the Jews twisted it</p>
<p>HEAVEN</p> <p>A place of communion with God</p> <p>A spiritual body</p> <p>Garden of Eden reclaimed</p>	<p>ETERNITY</p>	<p>PARADISE</p> <p>A place of sensual rewards</p> <p>No communion with God</p> <p>Liken to an earthly oasis</p>

Session 6

Beginning to Build Relationships

Objectives:

Head: To grow in our understanding of evangelism as a process and a lifestyle

Heart: To appreciate that the Gospel is **very good news** for everyone

Hands: To gain a greater strategic focus on Neighbour friends and be more intentional in ministry to them.

1. Welcome and prayer

2. Debrief group members as to their homework assignments:

- Ask each group member to share what they learned about their Neighbour friends' perceptions and views about Christians.
- Ask members what they learned about their Neighbour friends' faith and practices.
- Ask members how many times they practised sharing their "story" since you last met. Did they manage to build conversations by asking questions? How did it go?

3. Discuss the Relating to the Lost Study

- Work your way through the study question by question.
- Have different members of the group summarize key concepts along the way.
- Discuss how these Biblical concepts challenge the current thinking and/or practices of individuals in the group.
- Get a sense of what might be key issues for on-going discussion.

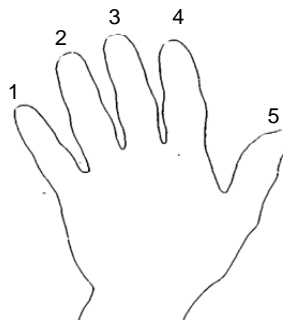
4. Study the Who I am in Christ outline

- Have group members take turns reading each statement.
- After each group of statements has been read, ask which statements mean the most to each of the group members.
- Ask the group members which of these statements might mean the most to Neighbours.
- Close with a time of prayer affirming how Jesus is **Good News** for **ALL**.

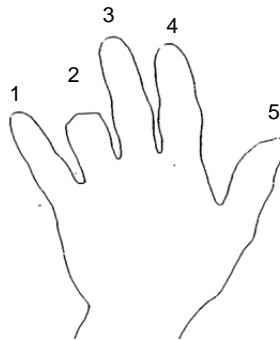
5. Share that evangelism is not only a process but also a lifestyle

- Share the hand illustration with the group.

(Ask each group member to trace one of their hands on a piece of blank paper. Starting with the little finger write each of the following components on each successive finger. Discuss each one in turn.)



- 1) **Meeting** – take the initiative in building rapport with those around you – where you live, shop keepers and where you work. Introduce yourself. Find out and memorize names. Exchange cards etc.
 - 2) **Praying** – Pray regularly for those you are meeting. God will help you to begin to focus on key individuals.
 - 3) **Interacting** – Look for ways you can spend time with people within their comfort zone – tea shop, watching TV with them, going for a walk etc.
 - 4) **Serving** – As you are meeting people, praying for them and interacting with them, God will begin to show you ways to serve them. Respond to their felt needs. Take the initiative.
 - 5) **Sharing** – God will naturally (i.e. in an unforced and non-artificial way) give you opportunities to share His reality in your life. Look for these opportunities and take them.
- Have the members of the group turn the paper over and trace their hand again. This time draw the length of the fingers and thumb in proportion to their present strength or weakness in that area. For example: if they meet people easily but are not disciplined in prayer then finger number 2 will be very short! When everyone has finished let the group members discuss what they have drawn.



6. Identify and focus on your *OIKOS* (extended family)

Read Acts 16:25-34

When Paul exhorts the jailer and his “household” to believe and be saved, he uses the Greek word ‘*oikos*’. In first century Greek this would have been understood to include his immediate and extended family as well as his servants and any others within his immediate sphere of influence.

Many of our Neighbours live in communities and extended families that are much stronger than the typical nuclear family of the West. Even in the West, nuclear families are becoming rarer.

We need to recognize the concept of the ‘*oikos*’ and even specifically focus on reaching not only individuals but the whole ‘*oikos*’ of a person. But some of these extended families/kinship groups involve several hundred people. We can easily become overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of people and the complexity in an ‘*oikos*’.

Read John 5:16-23

Jesus declares, “***My Father is always at His work whatever the Father does, the Son also does.***” We need to recognise, as Jesus did, that God is at work in the life of every person around us. We need to ask God to show us where He is at work and what He wants us to do. This is how we can partner with God in doing His work.

Practically speaking, you are unlikely to interact with more than two or three separate kinship groups/‘*oikos*’ simply because of lack of time! Even with only one ‘*oikos*’ it may be better to have three tiers of interest based on your level of personal interaction and what you perceive to be their level of receptivity – the degree to which God may be at work in their hearts.

- Top level in ‘*oikos*’ – two to four people
- Middle level – three to six people
- Bottom level – everyone else in the ‘*oikos*’

Keep a list or chart of who is who in relation to each other in the *'oikos'*. List who is at each spiritual level. Prioritize your prayer, your involvement, sharing with those at the top first and then the middle level. For example, you might choose to pray daily for top level people and weekly for middle level people and then to pray for the rest as God brings them to mind. If you are free for an hour, contact a top level person and ask him/her to go out for a cup of coffee. If no top level person is available, then try a middle level person.

As circumstances change and as you see God at work in your *'oikos'*, you might need to move people up or down levels.

Take a few minutes to arrange your friends in an *'oikos'* and then arrange them into levels. Ask God to begin to give you an understanding and sensitivity as you try to discern where He is working.

Henry Blackaby, author of the Bible Study series **Experiencing God**, speaks of 7 stages in experiencing God:

God is always at work around you.

God pursues a love relationship with you that is real and personal.

God invites you to come and be involved in His work.

God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and other believers to reveal Himself, His purposes and His ways.

God's invitation to you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.

You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.

You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.

6. Prayer

Spend time in prayer for one another, for the ministry and for your Neighbour friends.

Homework

Head: Share the **Hand Illustration** with one other person. Think about one or two adjustments you need to make in your life and ministry related to your areas of weakness.

Heart: Read and pray through the **Who am I?** verses in your daily time of prayer with God. Thank Him for all that you have in Christ. Ask God to burn into your heart the deep conviction that your Neighbour friends are in desperate need of Jesus. Pray about making a commitment such as:

"I aspire to develop a lifestyle in this community of loving my Neighbours into the Kingdom by meeting with them, praying for and with them, serving them and sharing the Gospel with them."

If you do make this commitment, share it with your group leader and ask for his/her blessing.

Hands: Ask God to confirm in your heart who should be your "top level" as you consider ministry to your Neighbours. Initiate at least one activity with them that you think would be conducive to relationship building.

Handouts for Session 7: Storytelling

- Storytelling and Witness
- Conversation Openers
- How would Jesus talk to a Neighbour?
- Presenting the Gospel
- The Chronological Bible Story Teaching Model
- Seven Crucial Stories to Develop
- Seven Great Mysteries of God

Session 6

Relating to the Lost : The Example of Jesus in Luke's Gospel

We often only think of evangelism in terms of presenting a message. But it is so much more than that! Jesus is the best example of how the messenger (who he is) and his behaviour (what he does) is just as important as his message (what he says).

As we reach out to a people conditioned against receiving our message, the example of the Lord Jesus in relating to the lost of His day has a great many lessons for us. To His disciples He says, ***"Follow Me*** (i.e. do what I do) ***and I will make you fishers of men."***

All of this study is from the **Gospel of Luke**.

What did Jesus do?

These are thirteen things that Jesus **did** in Luke's Gospel. If we are to become, ***"fishers of men"*** among our Neighbours, we should also do each of these things.

1. Jesus visited homes

1.1 Whose homes did he visit? Why? What happened as a result?

Text	Who?	Why?	What happened?
4:38-41 (Mk. 1:29-37)			
5:29-31			
7:36-50			
14:1-14			
19:1-10			

Summarize your observations:

Note: *In the first three centuries of the church, homes and kinship groups (oikos) were the primary and most natural expression of the church. See Acts 2:46; 5:42; 10:24-28; 11:14; 16:14-15; 16:31-34; 18:7-8; 20:20.*

1.2 Share some stories of visits to your Neighbours' homes. What did you observe?

2. Jesus helped individual people

2.1 Who were some of the people Jesus helped and how and why did He help them?

Text	Who?	How?	Why?
4:38-39			
5:17-26			
6:6-11			
7:11-15			
9:12-17			
9:38-43			
18:35-43			

2.2 What motivated Jesus to help people?

2.3 ***“Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, ‘How can I help?’ That’s exactly what Jesus did. He didn’t make it easy for Himself by avoiding people’s troubles, but He waded right in and helped out. ‘I took the troubles of the troubled’ is the way Scripture puts it. Even if it was written in Scripture long ago, you can be sure it is written for us now.”*** (Rom. 15:1-4 – The Message)

What can you do to help a Neighbour you know?

3. Jesus associated with social outcasts

3.1 Who were the social outcasts Jesus associated with and what were the consequences?

Text	Who?	Consequences and explanations
5:12-14 17:12 (Lev. 13:45-46)		
5:29-38		
7:36-50		
Mt. 9:9-13		
Jn. 4:4-42		

3.2 Who were the Samaritans?

3.3 How would you compare the Jews’ relationship with the Samaritans with your nation’s relationship with Neighbours?

4. Jesus ate with people

4.1 Who did He eat with?

Text	Who?	Social acceptability and consequences
5:29-30		
7:36-37		
14:1		
15:2		
19:5-7		

4.2 What does eating with someone imply in Rev. 3:20?

4.3 What is involved in eating with our Neighbours?

5. Jesus taught us to love our enemies – Lk. 6:27-36 and Mt. 5:47-48

5.1 What possible reasons could make our Neighbours our enemies?

5.2 What are we told to do for them?

5.3 What should motivate our behaviour?

6. Jesus told stories – Lk. 8:4-15 and Mt. 13:1-52

6.1 What do the **seven** stories in Mt. 13 talk about?

6.2 When the disciples asked Jesus why He told stories, He replied:

“You’ve been given insight into God’s Kingdom. You know how it works. But not everyone has this gift or this insight. It hasn’t been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this message, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. That’s why I tell stories – to create readiness; to nudge people towards receptive insight.” (Mt.13:11-13 – The Message)

Explain this reply of Jesus in your own words.

6.3 What stories can we tell to our Neighbours?

6.4 Every miracle that Jesus did and every story that He told illustrates the Gospel. Pick one of the stories or miracles of Jesus that you know really well and contextualise it to your Neighbour audience – i.e. write out the story using names and details from your context. You should be able to tell this story in 10-15 minutes.

7. Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom

7.1 What did He say or do about the Kingdom?

Text	Information on the Kingdom
4:43	
10:9	
11:20	
12:31-32	
16:16	
17:20-21	

7.2 Who else preached the Kingdom?

Text	Who
Mt. 3:2	
Lk. 9:2	
Mt. 16:19	
Mt. 24:14	
Acts 28:23	

7.3 What does it mean to preach **The Kingdom** or **The Gospel of the Kingdom**?

8. Jesus looked for the fruit of repentance and faith

8.1 In the following incidents, what was Jesus looking for and from whom?

Text	What did Jesus see?
5:17-20	
7:1-10	
8:43-48	
13:1-9	
19:1-10	

8.2 What evidences of faith and repentance did you notice in the above events?

8.3 What evidences of faith and repentance should we look for as we make friends with our Neighbours?

9. Jesus encouraged hospitality

9.1 What does 14:12-14 say about hospitality?

9.2 What practical steps can I take to extend hospitality to my Neighbours?

9.3 Share some of your attempts to invite Neighbours to your home.

10. Jesus learned people's names

- a. Who did He call by name in 19:5?

- b. What have you learned about the meanings of your Neighbours' names?

- c. Write down the names of all the Neighbours that you know personally.

11. Jesus avoided politics

11.1 Explain why this was important and how He did this in the following passages:

- a. Lk. 20:20-26

- b. Acts 1:6-8

11.2 How can we avoid politics (but not justice issues) in our attempts to build relationships?
Why is this important?

12. Jesus used Scripture

12.1 What do you observe about Jesus' use of Scripture?

Text	Observation
20:17	
20:41-44 (Mt. 22:41-46)	
24:25-27	
24:44-48	

12.2 Summarize your observations.

12.3 How can we use the Scriptures in our relationships with our Neighbours?

13. Jesus explained the ethos of His strategy

Jesus was often criticized for associating with the lost. He explains His whole ethos and His conduct in three stories in Luke 15: **The Lost Sheep – The Lost Coin – The Lost Sons.**

What can be learned from Jesus' explanations about relating to the lost?

Session 6

Who Am I?

(Taken from Victory Over the Darkness by Neil Anderson)

I am Accepted!

I am a child of God. (Jn. 1:12)

As a disciple, I am a friend of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Jn. 15:15)

I have been justified. (Rom. 5:1)

I am united with the Lord and I am one with Him in Spirit. (1 Cor. 6:17)

I have been bought with a price and I belong to God. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

I am a member of Christ's body. (1 Cor. 12:27)

I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child. (Eph. 1:3-8)

I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. (Col. 1:13-14)

I am complete in Christ. (Col. 2:9-10)

I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ. (Heb. 4:14-16)

I am Secure!

I am free from condemnation. (Rom. 8:1-2)

I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances. (Rom. 8:28)

I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I can't be separated from the love of God. (Rom. 8:31-39)

I have been established, anointed and sealed by God. (2 Cor. 1:21-22)

I am hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-4)

I am confident that God will complete the good work He has started in me. (Phil. 1:6)

I am a citizen of heaven. (Phil. 3:20)

I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind. (2 Tim. 1:7)

I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me. (1 Jn. 5:18)

I am Significant

I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life. (Jn. 15:5)

I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit. (Jn. 15:16)

I am God's temple. (1 Cor. 3:16)

I am a minister of reconciliation for God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 2:6)

I am God's workmanship. (Eph. 2:10)

I may approach God with freedom and confidence. (Eph. 3:12)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:13)

These are only about 30 promises. There are thousands more! When it comes to impacting the lives of others, the more you live each day in the recognition and the JOY of all God has done for you, the more brightly your life will shine out for Jesus.

Session 7

Storytelling

Objectives:

Head: To understand the rationale for storytelling and its use in our witness to Neighbours

Heart: To discover that through storytelling I can find more freedom to share spiritual truth

Hands: To gain greater confidence and skill in telling stories

Time Together

1. Welcome and prayer

2. Debrief the group as to their 'Homework' assignments

- Ask the group if they shared the 'Hand Illustration' with anyone? How did it go?
- Ask if any of the "Who Am I?" verses made a special impression on them. Ask them to share which verses and explain why.
- Ask the group to share what God is doing in their hearts related to their own commitment to minister to Neighbours.

3. Work your way through the Bible study Storytelling and Witnessing

- Have different members of the group summarize key concepts in Points to Ponder.
- Discuss how these Biblical concepts challenge the typical way we have been taught to 'do evangelism' (the Bridge Method, the Four Spiritual Laws etc.)
- Once two boys were fighting. An adult asked the 8-year old why he was beating up his 6-year old brother. The 8-year old said, 'He won't learn!' 'What won't he learn?' 'The Sunday School verse!' What is the verse?' 'God is love.'

Sometimes we are like the older boy in our approach to Neighbours. The theology is excellent but the method is too confrontational!

4. Discuss how to recognise God's timing for sharing a particular spiritual truth

Some possible timing indicators might include:

- Circumstances
- Someone sharing a felt need with a direct link to a Gospel theme
- What is happening in your own life – an opportunity to 'overflow'
- Asking permission to share – with permission granted
- Other timing indicators

5. The challenge of shifting from "the natural realm" to the "spiritual realm" – finding 'Transition Strategies'

There is no 'magic formula'! We need to be led by the Holy Spirit. Here are two suggestions:

- *"That reminds me of..."* These are very useful words! Saying, *'That reminds me of...'* gives you the freedom to talk about anything! Of course you need to use some common sense in shifting from a point in the flow of conversation to a Bible story. But you need to be alert to the point when you can say, *"That reminds me of a story Jesus once told."*
- When you have finished the story you can readily put the ball into their court by encouraging them to get involved with this new direction in the discussion and by asking them about the relevance of the story to them.

- “You might remember....” This statement intentionally affirms the knowledge of the other in the conversation, while still retaining some of the personalisation of, ‘That reminds me of....’
- What other transitional statements have you used?
- Read through **Conversation Openers** and **Case Studies** and answer the questions.

6. Read through: Presenting the Gospel.

6.1 Defining the Gospel

6.2 Presenting a Relevant Gospel – A ‘Felt-Needs’ Approach

6.3 Presenting an Accurate Gospel

- How would you define the Gospel? Is this definition too oriented towards a truth-guilt culture? How would you modify it for a shame-honour culture?
- What are the spiritual felt-needs in your culture?
- How can you measure how accurate your presentation is?

7. Read through: The Chronological Bible Story Teaching Model

8. Read through: Seven Crucial Stories to Develop

Develop one of these stories in a ‘Neighbour Culture’ framework.

See **The Seven Great Mysteries of God** for an example (from Bangladesh)

Homework

Head:

- Read through: **How would Jesus talk to a Neighbour?** How do you think these principles will affect you in your storytelling?
- Think about 3 or 4 felt needs that your Neighbour friends have expressed to you or you have recognised in their lives. Find one story that addresses each felt need.

Heart:

- Ask a Neighbour friend to tell you his/her favourite story from the Quran (or of a prophet). Be ready in case he/she asks you to do the same! Afterwards reflect on how much spiritual truth was shared. Ask yourself if you got further than you might have done by using a linear presentation of propositional truths.

Hands:

- Take one of the stories you have identified and practise telling it at least three times.
As you tell the story:
 - Think about the beginning – getting into the story
 - Think about the middle with all the important details – especially shame and honour
 - Think about the ending – the main point you want to communicate clearly
- Work on Seven Crucial Stories. Assign one person to work on each story.

Handouts for Session 8: The Value of Working Together

- The Two-by-Two Principle
- Why we Believe in Team
- The Importance of Working Together
- Principles of Developing Networks

Session 7

Storytelling and Witness

Perhaps one of the oldest art forms in the world is that of storytelling. The oral tradition has helped shape and maintain cultures and communities from the earliest times. In non-literate societies storytelling is the medium through which values are communicated and social norms are maintained. Even in the 21st century most people prefer a presentation filled with stories to one that is just a presentation of hard data and statistics.

A few preliminary points

- **Jesus is the centre of our message** so it is vital our Neighbours should know about whom we are speaking. The name used for Jesus in the Quran is *Isa* (used 25 times). The title *Al-Masih* is used 8 times. If you identify Jesus with *Isa Al-Masih Ibn-a-Miriam* (son of Mary), then your Neighbours will be in no doubt about whom you are speaking.
- **Thinking their way**
This generally means thinking in a Semitic way. We can continue thinking in our logical dichotomistic Greek way, but we will not be understood and we will fail to communicate the message we love best. Someone has said of us, "You westerners! You leave nothing to the imagination!" We naturally think and discuss in logical terms. We think in steps and straight lines. We find it very difficult to be holistic and think in inclusive circles. But truth doesn't have to be communicated/understood only by logic and concept. It can also be communicated by imagery, poetically and by suggestion. It is important to learn to present truth through stories, plays, proverbs, poems and illustrations in the very way that Jesus often did.

1. Developing a Foundation for Storytelling

1.1 Read 2 Samuel 11:1 – 12:4

- Who told the story in 2 Sam. 12:1-4?
- What led to the telling of the story?
- What seems to be the main point of the story?
- Why do you think the person told the story rather than coming directly to the point?
- How can you apply this approach to your ministry?

1.2 Read Matthew 13:1-23

- Who told the story?
- What led to the telling of the story?
- What seems to be the main point of the story?
- Why do you think the person told the story rather than stating the main point? (see verses 10-15)
- How might this apply to your ministry?

1.3 Read Matthew 18:15-35

- Who told the story?
- What led to the telling of the story?
- What seems to be the main point of the story?
- Why was a story told rather than stating the point?
- How would you apply this to your ministry?

1.4 Read Luke 20:1-19

- Who told the story?
- What led to the telling of the story?
- What seems to be the main point of the story?
- Why was a story told rather than stating the point?
- How would you apply this to your ministry?

1.5 Read Acts 6:8 – 7:60

- Who told the story in Acts 7:2-53?
- What led to the telling of the story?
- What seems to be the main point of the story?
- Why was it told in story form rather than directly?
- How might this apply to your ministry?

1.6 Read Acts 21:37 – 22:29

- Who told the story in Acts 22:3-21?
- What led to the telling of the story?
- What seems to be the main point of the story?
- Why was it told as a story rather than directly stating the point?
- How might this apply to your ministry?

Summarize the principles you have learned from your study above.

Can you think of occasions when storytelling might not be appropriate?

See: Mt. 23:1-39; Acts 3:1-10; Acts 4:8-12; Acts 13:44-48

2. Telling Parables

There are many kinds of stories you can tell. You can tell parables as Jesus so often did. It isn't difficult to re-tell the parables in modern and Islamic dress. We need to prepare beforehand to do this. We need to learn to relate them to a Neighbour rather than to a Jewish audience.

For Example:

Two men went to the mosque to pray at the hour of prayer. The first man performed all the ablutions and the ceremonial requirements. He did the *raka'* as he should and completed the *salat* exactly, but as he did all this, his mind was not on God but on the beautiful girl in the house next door. The second man was so overcome by shame for his sins that he forgot some of the required ablutions and went into the mosque. He bowed down his face and cried to God for mercy.

Now a Neighbour hearing this story and asked to say which man he thought God would more readily accept, will often say that the first man gained God's favour because he fulfilled all the ritual correctly. A few will have the discernment to see that it was the second man. At this point read or refer to the Biblical account (Lk. 18:9-14) and point out God's acceptance of the second man. Sin and the basis for forgiveness may then become a fruitful and relevant discussion point.

If we read or tell the story in the form in which Jesus originally told it, it won't be seen to be very relevant or meaningful to a Neighbour.

Useful Parables to re-tell

2.1 On Sin

- The Pharisee and the Publican: Lk. 18:9-14
- The Rich Fool (covetousness): Lk. 12:16-21
- Ceremonial and real defilement: Mt. 15:1-20

2.2 On God's love and our need to repent

- The Lost Sheep: Lk. 15:3-7
- The Lost Coin: Lk. 15:8-10
- The Lost Sons: Lk. 15:11-32

2.3 On the judgement of God

- The Dragnet: Mt. 13:47-50
- The Wheat and Tares (weeds): Mt. 13:24-30

2.4 On God's way for man's salvation

- The Great Wedding Feast – the Garment of Righteousness: Mt. 22:2-14
- The Wicked Tenants – God's provision of His Son: Lk. 20:9-18

2.5 On counting the cost of following Jesus

- The Hidden Treasure: Mt. 13:44
- The Precious Pearl: Mt. 13:45-46
- The house build on the rock and the house built on the sand: Lk. 6:48-49

2.6 On living a life pleasing to God

- The Two Debtors (forgiving others): Lk. 7:41-43
- The unmerciful Servant (forgiveness): Mt. 18:23-35
- The Wise Steward (serving God): Lk. 12:42-48
- The Talents (serving God): Lk. 19:11-27
- The Good Samaritan (love): Lk. 10:30-37
- The New Cloth: Lk. 5:36

3. Plays / Drama

Here are two plays that you might use or adapt:

- **The Story of the Two Sons** – found in Ken Bailey's book: **The Cross and the Prodigal**, Concordia Publishing House
- **Joseph and His Brothers** – Temple Gairdner

4. Proverbs

An apt proverb often makes a spiritual truth come alive. In a few seconds it illustrates what may still not be clear after ten minutes of logical presentation.

Collect useful proverbs used by the local people. The languages of most of our Neighbours are rich in proverbs. Ask people to share proverbs with you and listen for them in ordinary speech as you interact with people.

The Book of Proverbs is also very valuable. King Solomon is very highly respected in the cultures of our Neighbours.

5. Stories

Collect local stories that are useful in illustrating spiritual truths. Mullah Nassrudin is a great source for these.

6. Redemption Analogies

Don Richardson has taught us that there are redemption analogies placed by the Holy Spirit in all cultures. Find them in your Neighbours' culture.

An Example: The Aqiqa Sacrifice

This takes place on the seventh day after a birth. The child is named. His/her hair is shaved and an animal is slaughtered. The idea behind the sacrifice is substitution so that malevolent forces will be satisfied with an animal victim instead of the child concerned. (see also page 135.)

7. Illustrations

Learn to use illustrations that come out of the culture of your Neighbour friends. Here is one example:

Q. *"How long have you lived in _____? Do you prefer living here or in England?"*

A. *"When it is God's will for me to live here I like this best. When it is His will for me to live in England, I am sure I will like that. But neither here nor England is my real country. I am just a traveller in this world – as we all are – and I am travelling towards my real home."*

Heb. 11:13-16 says that like Abraham we are, **"Strangers and pilgrims on the earth."** From this you can go on to explain more about our heavenly home and how we can get there safely.

This is not the way of speaking in the West! But it will be meaningful to Neighbours.

8. Using Points of Contact as Examples

• Amulets and Charms

These are to protect the wearer from the evil eye and other powerfully evil forces. Sometimes it is a Quranic verse. Make a comment about the reality of demon attacks on people. Next ask if they think that God prefers His words to be around our necks or in our hearts. You can then share the words of God that you have memorised and hidden in your heart. (Ps. 119:11)

• Wearing the Veil

Women are often asked why they don't wear the veil. One possible answer is to spiritualise the matter. You can answer (with surprise), "But I am wearing my spiritual veil all the time." This will lead to a further explanation of what you mean. Use Is. 61:10 and Rom. 13:14.

• The Shehada

Our friends will very often say, "There is no God but God and Muhammad is the apostle of God." They may ask you to say their creed or they may ask if you have a "Witness" statement. John 17:3 is very useful in this context, **"This is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ (the Messiah) whom You have sent."** This verse speaks of one God, of Jesus the apostle and of knowing God.

- **Fasting**

During Ramadan we will often be asked about our beliefs and practices concerning fasting. Is. 58 is a helpful passage to explain to our friends – especially verses 6 and 7.

To be effective communicators we must understand our Neighbours' way of thinking. We must enter into their mindset, heart, emotions etc. We must 'walk in their shoes'. See 1 Cor. 9:20-22.

From these examples it is easy to see that storytelling allows you to share spiritual truth in an indirect manner that communicates well and leaves the relationship open for further sowing.

An Exercise

Read the verses below and construct a story by weaving in background information. For each of the verses jot down a few lines of an outline to a story. Tell your stories to other members of the group.

- Mt. 7:21 Many think they are going to heaven but are not.
- Jn. 14:6 Jesus is the **only** way.
- Lk. 9:23-26 Those who follow Jesus are called to – and should expect – suffering.

For further thought

1. In the course of this study what is the one thing you need to prioritise for action?
2. What other questions do you have that relate to storytelling and witness?

Session 7

Conversation Openers

Examples from personal experience

It has been my experience that women themselves, out of curiosity, ask personal questions that easily provide the opportunity to talk about my beliefs. Since I am single, I can talk about how God directs my life and my choices and how He gives peace in the difficult moments. A married woman will have similar occasions to speak of God's help in caring for her children, in developing a good marriage and in accepting the difficulties of her life.

One question that is often asked concerns the Christian concept and practice of prayer. And from that topic it is easy to discuss the need for cleansing in order to approach God. Muslim women will think in terms of the physical – washing hands and feet and not menstruating. I like to take them on to think of the spiritual cleansing necessary for communion with God.

Often I have a topic that interests me personally – one that I am reading and/or writing about. Since I am praying over the subject itself, I ask God to direct my conversations with my friends so that we will have mutually profitable conversations. Once I was thinking about the meaning of idolatry, so I would bring up that topic. Another time it was about the attributes of God, so I asked certain friends what qualities they find in Him. Discussions on our identity and roles as women have interested many educated young women. If possible, I would try to get into some portion of Scripture that was relevant to our discussion.

Here are some examples of opening conversations to lead to spiritual truths:

- During Easter week we said, *"This is a special time for us, a holy week, especially Good Friday."* The occasion was when we were invited out to a party and we declined, saying we wanted to spend the day in meditation and prayer. This was answered by the Neighbour woman saying it was also a holy day for Neighbours as it was 15 days before Ramadan.
- One lady said to me as I was driving her somewhere, *"I am afraid to drive, but I should learn."* This led to my testimony that I was afraid too, but I prayed for the Lord's help and He answered me and gave the assurance that He was with me – His presence was real etc. She responded that that was what she should do too.
- *"Do you know God?"* This question was put to me by a ten-year-old girl. A young Neighbour asked this same question to another young man who was visiting here.
- Inevitably one is asked questions concerning politics. But this has given me the opportunity to talk about the need of people in every country because people are sinful. There is corruption in every country. Men and women need to be saved – only God can change the hearts of men and women.

Case Studies

A. Sally grabs a French book, a translation of John Stott's book on **Basic Christianity** that her husband has used with his friends. She closes the door on the kitchen disaster area where she has spent the last hour trying to prepare supper and tidy up. Her efforts have made her later than she planned so she drives off in great haste. A near accident reminds her to calm down. When she arrives at Madame Ben Khaled's door she finds that Nadia, the daughter, has not yet returned from school. Sally accepts a cup of coffee from the mother and they carry on a halting conversation in broken French over the noise of the TV that has been turned on for her entertainment. Sally invites Nadia's mother to come over some afternoon with her daughter. Finally Nadia returns an hour later than planned. There is only time to ask her a few questions about her schoolwork before Sally must rush off to pick up her son at nursery school. She thrusts the book into Nadia's hands with one or two words of explanation and runs. That night Sally consoles herself that she did something for God by giving a Christian book to Nadia.

Evaluation:

1. Identify positive points in Sally's efforts.
2. Examine the weaknesses in her ideas, plans and actions.
3. Make suggestions as to ways she might improve her witness to this family.
(Include ideas about conversation openers, literature, Bible studies.)

B. Beverly's husband teaches English at a school in a North African city. He has introduced her to Jamila, a young married woman, who teaches at the same school. The two women, particularly Beverly, work hard at developing their friendship, but they never succeed at bringing their husbands together. Once again, after leaving her husband to keep an eye on their toddler, Beverly stops by Jamila's house and they sit down for a cup of coffee. They converse in a mixture of English and French, as Beverly is hesitant to speak only French. She rarely tries to use the Arabic she has learned. Jamila shares certain frustrations of her married life with Hamid, who is conservative and speaks only Arabic. Beverly replies with illustrations of forgiveness from the Bible that are relevant to Jamila's anger in the situation. Just as Jamila starts to respond, Hamid comes in with their children and his mother who takes care of them while the parents work. Beverly shyly shakes hands with them, kisses the grandmother and children and excuses herself, cutting short the visit.

Evaluation:

1. Mention the positive and negative dynamics of this illustration.
2. Encourage Beverly in ways to improve her friendship with the family.
3. Think through examples of pardon from the Scriptures that would be relevant to husband-wife, parent-child relationships.
4. Discuss the importance of reaching out to Jamila's husband and suggest ways both Beverly and her husband could do this.

C. Carol, a single woman who has worked five years in the Arab World, has an afternoon free. Aisha, her friend's mother, comes to ask her for a ride to a nearby town to see a sick sister. After a brief moment of regret at giving up her afternoon to relax, she accepts Aisha's request as from the Lord and asks Him to use her to share His truth with this older illiterate woman. Driving along, Carol looks at the countryside for topics of conversation to lead to spiritual truths. They cross a bridge over a deep gorge and Carol talks with Aisha about the break in our relationship to God and the need for a bridge just as people could not cross the gorge without a bridge. In response to her words about Christ the perfect sin-bearer, Aisha replies that Muhammad takes care of her. When Carol goes on to ask if she is sure that she is cleansed from sin, Aisha answers, "*In shallah, the all-merciful God will accept me.*" Then Aisha points out a saint's tomb that they are passing. Carol begins to ask her about her beliefs and practices in terms of folk religion. Aisha opens up to reveal her superstitions, fears, and insecurities. While Carol is searching for ideas to lead the older woman to think about Jesus Christ, they arrive at their destination.

Evaluation:

1. Discuss the positive and negative dynamics in this example.
2. Suggest illustrations of God's love and care that might touch women like Aisha.
3. Discuss methods of teaching Scripture or its truths to semi-literate or completely illiterate women.
4. Encourage Carol in ways to relate Christ's truth and power to women bound to the practices and beliefs of folk religion.

D. Alice has known Sayda for a number of years. She was a BCC contact who came to the house several times and then moved to another town when she married. Alice remains in contact with Sayda's family so she learns that Sayda is divorced from her first husband. After six months in her home country, Alice returns to the Arab World to hear that Sayda has remarried. Another year passes and Sayda returns home divorced by her second husband. With her children away at secondary school, Alice has time to reach out to Sayda. She goes to spend the day with her. After some moments alone with Sayda, catching up on

news, Alice sees God answer prayer by directing the conversation to deeper personal issues without the presence of other family members. She begins to question the young woman about her thoughts concerning God. Sayda talks about the comfort she is finding from daily selected Quranic readings and intercessory prayer – but she doesn't go to the mosque or follow formal prayer times. After listening sympathetically for an hour and praying silently, Alice rejoices when Sayda turns to her and asks, *"And you, what do you believe about God?"* Out comes her New Testament and they read several passages of Christ's encounters with women. Then Sayda shows Alice pictures of her second wedding and tells how much she still cares for her husband. The photos show some new wedding practices – involving swords, marabouts, and dances. Sayda explains the reason for the divorce. Her husband's cousin, who had originally refused to marry him herself, became jealous when he married Sayda. The cousin put a spell on him to come back to her. At this point Sayda's family joins them for a meal. Later on, as Alice leaves Sayda, she gives her a New Testament and encourages her to read it.

Evaluation:

1. Identify positive points in Alice's efforts.
2. Discuss the difficulties in Sayda's situation.
3. Examine scriptural truths about male-female relationships that are not culture-bound and mention ways of communicating them to Muslim women to meet their 'felt need' on such issues.
4. Suggest to Alice ways to combat the evil bondage in Sayda's life.

Session 7

How would Jesus talk to a Neighbour?

John Chapter 4

The prejudice and resulting wall of misunderstanding between the Jews and the Samaritans in Jesus' day was very similar to that between us and our Neighbours today. There are many parallels between the faith of the Samaritan woman and the faith of our Neighbour friends.

The Samaritan religion and that of our Neighbour friends both have their roots in Judaism. While there has been a conscious alteration of certain external forms, the underlying structure of the faith has remained similar. The Torah (Tawrat) is foundational in both cases. The Jews prayed towards Jerusalem. The Samaritans changed the centre of worship to Mt. Gerizim. Our Neighbours originally faced Jerusalem when they prayed, but during the lifetime of the prophet, they changed the direction towards Mecca.

The Samaritan woman was looking for the Messiah to come (v. 25). Today Shia Neighbours are looking for the Mahdi to come and many Sunnis believe that Jesus the Messiah will return.

For both Samaritans and our Neighbours religion is seen as a total way of life combining what westernised people call "religion" and "politics". Both faiths hold many Old Testament patriarchs and prophets in common – e.g. *"Our Father Jacob"* (v. 12). The Samaritan woman, like our Neighbours, even understood Jesus to be a prophet (v. 19). From these and other parallels between the context of John 4 and the situation in which we find ourselves, we may project from this passage what Jesus would say to a Neighbour and consequently what we can say in a similar atmosphere of prejudice.

Before turning to a detailed study of Jesus' methods, it is important to note that there is a danger in concentrating on "methods". Meaningful Christian witness comes from the genuine and contagious character of your life rather than from saying all the "correct" things. Yet, as disciples, we all need to learn from Our Master: *"Jesus, wearied as He was with His journey, sat down beside the well."* (v. 6)

This shows us the basic fact that **communication will cost**. Jesus was tired and deserved to rest. But He realised this woman had a need and He wanted to meet that need, so He was willing to talk to her even though He was tired. We are all very busy. If we are really going to help our Neighbour friends – to seek to understand them and share our faith with them – we will have to pay the price of spending time with them however tired we may be.

"There came a woman of Samaria to draw water." (v. 7)

What were the sources of prejudice? Firstly, she was a woman. Then, as in many Neighbour countries today, a man did not speak to a strange woman. Secondly she was a Samaritan and He was a Jew. Thirdly, she was a sinner. Jesus had all these areas of prejudice to overcome. In the same way, when we get together to talk with our Neighbours, much prejudice must be overcome on both sides. Jesus' problem was to get her to accept what He had to say despite the fact that He was a Jew.

"Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'." (v. 7)

This is **Principle One**.

Learn the art of receiving.

Most of us feel that we should give and give. We have often travelled a long way just to do this and we forget that we also need to receive.

Jesus could have performed a miracle to meet His needs. But no, He was willing to make Himself a debtor to this woman so that He might have the chance to give her something so much more important. If we are always giving, we set up an unnatural situation in which people are repelled. Either we create a situation in which people receive passively with little involvement or, more commonly, people feel uncomfortable and resentful because they find themselves under an obligation to repay us in some way. Consequently,

they are not willing to go on receiving. If we can deliberately place ourselves in positions where we are willing to receive from people perhaps they will be willing to receive more from us.

One form of receiving involves asking questions. We are often great talkers, but the answers we give are to questions that no one is asking! Why is it important for us to ask questions?

- As Christians we have a genuine concern for people. This is not a gimmick. Asking questions helps us to form a reciprocal relationship with people quickly. If we **genuinely** listen to others they, in turn, will usually be willing to listen to us.
- People like to talk about themselves. As we ask our friends to share their experiences and talk about their problems a cordial relationship is established. One result of asking questions can be that a person begins to have a **self-revelation of his own needs** without you pointing them out to him. For example, if you ask, *"What is your experience of God?"* and the person has no experience of God, he will realize this for himself. It isn't necessary to point a finger and say, *"You don't know God personally"*. Your friend will usually run out of words about his experience and switch to an academic statement of beliefs and practices. Often he, himself, realises what he has done and his own lack of a real experience.
- Questions centre interest on a person's experience and need rather than theoretical abstractions. Often arguments about such things as the Trinity are a smoke screen behind which a person hides to avoid any personal involvement or commitment. We often find ourselves speaking about a Christian approach to the religion of our Neighbours. But we should not be interested in a Christian approach to the religion of our Neighbours! It is a religious system. We are interested in sharing **our faith and experiences with God** with our Neighbour friends. Do you see the difference? We don't speak to systems, but to people – friends. Frequently people don't believe what the system says they are supposed to believe. Find out what your friends think and believe on a one to one basis. Don't assume anything. Above all, don't assume that his/her beliefs are a carbon copy of some orthodox theological manual.

Principle Two can be derived from the early verses of John 4.

We need to establish social contact with our Neighbours.

If we want to speak to our Neighbours about God, we must make friends with them. Join social or sports clubs where you can establish genuine, personal relationships with people.

Notice how Jesus started His conversation. He said, **"Give me a drink"**. He talked about everyday things. Here was a woman who had not come asking about spiritual things and so Jesus had to establish a relationship with her first. What was her response?

"The Samaritan woman said to Him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans?' " (v. 10)

Principle Three is:

Be Patient.

Hostility that has grown up over many years will not be broken down overnight. We need to remember that hostility hasn't come from only one direction. There were Christian crusaders who invaded the Middle East with barbaric cruelty. The exploitation that took place during the colonial period of the 19th and 20th centuries has left its scar on the minds of the peoples in many Neighbour countries.

"Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is who is saying to you, 'give me a drink', you would have asked of Him and He would have given you living water'."

Here we can see **Principle Four**:

It is necessary to show we have something that others need or want.

We are fellow human beings with many common concerns. Does your life show that you have found satisfaction, joy and peace? Do you have a sense of the presence of God in your life? Do you have a calmness in situations of tension? If there is nothing in your life that people want, there is not much point in trying to communicate.

The woman replied: **"Are you greater than our father Jacob?"** (v. 11)

Here is a common heritage for Samaritan and Jew. It is also true of us and our Neighbours – **"Our father Jacob"**. With our roots in the Old Testament, we can find a great deal upon which we **can** agree before we turn to those areas where honesty demands that we disagree.

Now Jesus could have responded to the woman, **"Yes, I am the Messiah"**. However, He didn't reveal this until a much later time. If Jesus had asserted His Messiahship too soon, she wouldn't have understood His meaning, for the expectation was that the Messiah would be an earthly political ruler. Jesus postponed this self-revelation until she had enough understanding not only of the title, but also of the job description that went with the title. This suggests Principle Five:

Principle Five:

Don't present difficult Biblical terms and statements until your friend has sufficient experience and understanding to grasp them.

Titles such as **"Son of God"** fit into this category. Our Neighbour friends misunderstand the Biblical meaning of this title just as many in Jesus' day misunderstood the term "Messiah".

There is a further principle in the way Jesus answered the woman's question. He didn't enter into a discussion on whether He was greater than Jacob or not. He kept the discussion focused on her personal need – **"living water"**. This highlights Principle Six:

Principle Six:

Don't get entangled in irrelevant academic discussions, but concentrate on the needs of individuals.

It is easy to get entangled in a fruitless academic argument – for example on the Trinity – rather than concentrating on what it means to have God in Christ at work in our lives experimentally and to know the guidance of God and His power within us.

"Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. The water I shall give him shall become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life'." (v. 13)

Here is **Principle Seven:**

Learn the art of a simple illustration.

Good stories convey truth and are easy to remember long afterwards. Jesus showed His understanding of this basic principle in the way He told parables. Until fairly recently the storyteller was the main entertainer in the towns and villages of many Neighbour countries. Make a collection of useful illustrations, parables and proverbs.

The reply the woman gave in verse fifteen indicates that her curiosity was aroused and she was experiencing a sense of need. **Now** Jesus could take the next step in touching the root of the problem.

" 'Go and call your husband.....' The woman answered Him, 'I have no husband'. Jesus said to her, 'You are right.... for you have had five husbands and he whom you now have is not your husband'."

Principle Eight is clear here:

Try to communicate a sense of sin.

There is both a theological and a practical difficulty in communicating a sense of sin. The Quran and most orthodox Muslim theologians present sin as **a weakness that can be overcome** with increased effort.

They don't see the need for a major transformation of man's nature. In the Bible man's sin is seen as **the problem**. How can we communicate this Biblical concept of the depravity of man?

One way is the Bible's own way of presenting the utter holiness of God. In Isaiah 6, when Isaiah saw the Lord of Hosts as He really was, he also saw himself as **he** really was and cried out,

"Woe is me! for I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!"

Reference can be made to Romans 7 and man's inability to do what he knows to be right. Also many Neighbours have a high concept of man's honour. Try and use this by pointing out that God's holiness and justice cannot tolerate sin any more than a Neighbour can tolerate the violation of his honour! Sin must be made right before reconciliation can take place.

"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet'." (v. 19)

Here is an affirmation we share with our Neighbours. Jesus was able to lead her from a point of common affirmation to show that He was more than a prophet.

We see **Principle Nine**:

Use your friend's background to point him beyond it.

There is much in Islam concerning Jesus that we hold in common with our Neighbour friends – His miraculous birth, His miracles, His ascent into heaven and His future return. The burden we bear is to show how He was **not only** a prophet, but **also** Priest, King, Saviour and Lord.

"Our fathers worshipped on this mountain and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." (v. 20)

This is very much like asking, *"Should we face Jerusalem or Mecca when we pray?"* Jesus responds:

"The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father." (v. 21)

Principle Ten is:

Avoid unnecessary argument.

Jesus didn't allow himself to be diverted into unnecessary argument. Argument is a poor method of communication because our goal easily shifts from finding truth to winning the argument. Let us look at some ways to avoid arguments.

One way is to concentrate on your religious experience. You might say, *"Tell me about your religious experience and I will tell you about mine."* A testimony about your personal experience doesn't lend itself to argument. If everyone is talking at the same time, you could suggest people take turns and speak for a stated period of time. Always be quick to acknowledge the many points on which we agree.

"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews." (v. 22)

Here we find **Principle Eleven**:

We must present our understanding of the truth in spite of prejudice.

Honesty demands a clarification of the differences as well as the similarities we have with our friends. Ultimately there is always the stumbling block of the Cross. Our task is to see that we do not add additional unnecessary stumbling blocks.

"The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (vs. 23, 24)

The woman's ultimate aspiration was to worship God. The Lord Jesus showed her how this could be fulfilled.

Principle Twelve:

Discuss common aspirations and show how Jesus fulfils them.

The chief concern of our Neighbour friends is to worship God correctly without associating anyone else with Him. Our task is to show that this can only be done as we open our hearts to the full revelation of God in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit teaches us to worship the Triune God.

Christ revealed Himself as the Messiah in verses 24 and 25 because the woman had had enough experience with Him to understand the term in its true sense.

"The woman left her water jar and went away into the city and said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?'"

Principle Thirteen:

People must act on their understanding.

Give your friends opportunities to act on the basis of what they have understood. If you don't do this, they will not mature in their understanding.

"Many believed in Him because of the woman's testimony." (v. 39)

Principle Fourteen:

Give a personal testimony.

"Many more believed because of His word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the World."

Principle Fifteen:

People must see Jesus.

Our job is to remove prejudices and misunderstanding so that people can see Jesus as He is. This involves not only our words, but also our lives. For only as people see us take up our cross and follow our Master, will they understand the self-giving love that led Him to accept the Cross.

John Chapter 3

It is interesting to look briefly at John 3 to see how Jesus spoke to Nicodemus – a pious follower of the Law. We will see He used many of the same principles used with the Samaritan woman.

There are many parallels between Nicodemus and our more pious Neighbour friends – those with leanings towards fundamentalism. They both emphasize the law with its moral and ceremonial injunctions. Their basic creedal statements – recited daily – are comparable, **"The Lord our God is one Lord"** and **"There is no God but God"**. They share prophets. To both of them religion is a total way of life. They both concur in their rejection of a Suffering Messiah – a concept incompatible with their expectations of God's sovereign rule. Our Neighbours would certainly endorse Nicodemus' view of Jesus in verse 2:

"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no-one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."

Jesus opens the discussion with this statement: ***"Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."*** (v. 3)

It seems that Jesus wanted Nicodemus to see man's (and therefore his own) basic problem and the solution offered by God. Here is Jesus working with Principle Eight – communicate **a sense of sin**. This is one of the hardest things to do and it is so instructive to have Jesus' example.

Let us backtrack a little and look more deeply at the problem of man as viewed by the Quran and the Bible. In order to contrast the somewhat different views of man's problem, let us compare and contrast the account of the fall of Adam and Eve in the two sources.

In Genesis 3:2-6 Adam and Eve **knowingly disobeyed** God's command, while in sura 20:114/115, Adam **forgot** and **didn't intend to do wrong**. As to the consequences of sin, in the Bible (Gen. 3:23-24), they involved **banishment from fellowship with God** and the ultimate means of reconciliation was not until Christ's substitutionary death on the Cross. In contrast, in the Quran (sura 2:35-37) Adam was **quickly reinstated** by God. A means of salvation was unnecessary. Our Neighbour friends believe that to require one would be to limit the sovereignty of God who, *"Forgives whom He wills and does not forgive whom He wills."*

In the Bible man is seen as having a bias towards evil. Sin and its consequences are extremely grave. Eph. 2:3 asserts, *"We were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind"*. In the Quran, man is alright if he decides to do God's will. Sura 12:53: *"The soul is an inciter to evil"* is an exception, as is Al Baidawi's comment on sura 19:33 where he says, *"There is not a newborn child but Satan touches it when it is born, except Mary and her son"*.

Since the problem of sin is seen differently, so the solution is seen differently. The solution in the Quran is the revelation of God's will in His law. Man is seen as able to do God's will if he understands it. Paul, coming from a very similar background, saw that the Law demanded a righteousness. His problem was that man did not have the power to fulfil the law – to be righteous. There was a need for new life and power. Jesus gave the solution to man's problem when He said a man must be **"born anew"**.

The dual nature of the Biblical solution is brought out in verse five, **"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God"**. "Water" and "Spirit" to one schooled in the Old Testament would convey the forgiveness of sins and new life (see Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Verses 14 and 15 point to the means of salvation: **"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up"**. The Quran does not ask the question, *"How can God be just and justify the sinner?"* It is the Bible that both asks the question and gives the answer: Christ **"Bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed"** (1 Peter 2:24).

As in verses 14-16 the means of providing cleansing and new life is the death of Christ, so the means of acquiring these is faith: **"Whoever believes in Him may have eternal life"**. The majority of Neighbours don't accept this emphasis on salvation by faith although it can be found in the Quran – sura 7:145-147 and 5:7-5. Neighbours believe sins are forgiven on the basis of good works – sura 3:190-193, 194-195 and sura 18:87-88.

Verse 16 adds another major ingredient of the Christian message – the **love** of God. **"For God so loved the world...."** The love of God is mentioned in the Quran, but is reserved for those who love Him (3:29/31-32), do good (2:191-196) or repent (2:222). The message that we share with our Neighbour friends is that God's love is for those who don't love Him and are sinners – Rom. 5:8 and 1 Jn. 4:10.

Notice Jesus' use of the terms "Son of Man" (v. 14) and "Son of God" (v. 18) rather than "Messiah" which would miscommunicate – Principle Five. He used the title "Son of Man" because Nicodemus had a basis for understanding it in religious literature that he was familiar with (Ezekiel, Daniel and other apocalyptic literature such as the Book of Enoch). It was free from loaded political connotations. It would be better for us to use the term "Messiah" as it is now free from loaded connotations, whereas "Son of God" is definitely loaded.

Note the shift from 3rd person in verse 3 (**"Unless one is born anew.."**) to 2nd person in verse 7 (**"You must be born anew"**). This is an application of Principle Six where you speak directly to an individual – your friend – rather than being content only to speak about theological abstractions. Make sure you get beyond the level of the intellect to the level of the will in order to elicit a personal response.

Nicodemus might have been prepared for an intellectual discussion for he said, **"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God"**. Our Neighbour friends are often ready for a stimulating religious discussion, but Jesus wasn't interested in a philosophical discussion. He wanted Nicodemus to make a real commitment of himself that would result in new life within.

Don't be content to be drawn off into a sterile, impersonal discussion. Always call for a personal response to God as He has revealed Himself through Christ. It is important for our friends to realise that it is God, by His Spirit, who transforms men and women.

The reference Jesus makes to the wind is an example of Principle Seven. Languages reflect the way in which those who speak them look at the world. Most Neighbour languages have words that are rich in meaning, but don't lend themselves to logical arguments. Western languages, with their wealth of prepositions and prefixes, allow shades of meaning that make elaborate rational arguments possible.

Middle Easterners, such as Averoes and Philo, who are among the world's greatest philosophers, had a far greater influence in the West than "at home" because in the West the languages and people's views of the world were more receptive. What is known as 'peripatetic philosophy' has had little effect on the masses in Neighbour countries. From all this, perhaps we can see why elaborate rational arguments are often not convincing to many people. Illustrations not only help understanding, but can often influence **the will** because they can touch the emotions.

In verse 14 Jesus used Nicodemus' religious background to illustrate something about Himself:

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up".

Here Jesus is using Principle Nine. This verse also indicates an expansion of Principle Eleven. We must present our understanding of truth in spite of prejudice. **The central truth is the death and resurrection of Jesus.** This is the heart of the apostolic preaching of the Gospel. In 1 Cor. 15:3-4 Paul said it was of **"first importance"**.

"I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified". (1 Cor. 2:2)

The reason for this is seen in Jn. 12:32 where Jesus says, ***"I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself"***.

The idea of someone suffering on behalf of another is foreign to the majority of Neighbours, although some Shia have interpreted the death of Hussein, the grandson of Muhammad, in these terms. There are also echoes of this truth in the sacrifice of an animal during Eid-al-Adha. In sura 37:107 God says, ***"We ransomed him (Abram's son) with great sacrifice (the ram)!"***

Although this is not a sin offering, it clearly shows the idea of substitution – i.e. the ram became the substitute for the son just as Jesus became the substitute for sinners in 1 Pet. 1:18-19, ***"You were ransomed with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish."***

There is a sacrifice in various Neighbour countries called 'Aqiqqa. As practised in some Neighbour countries, the child's head is shaved after he is born, a sheep or a goat is killed and then a prayer is made like the one following:

"O God, here is 'Aqiqqa for my son – its blood for his blood, its flesh for his flesh, its hair for his hair and save my son from the fire."

The parallels with Jesus' substitutionary death are obvious. The Samaritan woman certainly became a believer. Nicodemus, the pious follower of the law, probably believed as well. Certainly he showed great courage and identified himself with Jesus when he saw Him "lifted up".

Application of these principles, when saturated with prayer and much faith, will result in some of our Neighbour friends becoming believers in Jesus.

Session 7

Presenting the Gospel

In this paper we will look at:

7.1 Defining the Gospel

7.2 Presenting a Relevant Gospel

7.3 Presenting an Accurate Gospel

7.1 Defining the Gospel

There is an Asian proverb: *'If dirty water exists downstream, its source must be dirty.'* If you present a distorted message to your Neighbours, then you will have considerable difficulties later on in discipleship.

On the road to Emmaus Jesus opened up the Scriptures to two discouraged and disheartened disciples. He taught them all the things **'concerning Himself'**. (Lk. 24:27, 44) **"The Gospel of God.....concerning His Son"** (Rom. 1:1-3) is the way that Paul put it. Jesus is the Good News of the Bible.

The Gospel involves not just a **truth encounter** between two different worldviews, but also a **power encounter** because there are spiritual powers that are vying for supremacy.

There are verses that state the purpose of Jesus coming:

- To destroy Satan's work: 1 Jn. 3:8
- To become the Saviour of the World: Jn. 3:17; 1 Jn. 4:14
- To seek and save that which is lost: Lk. 19:10
- To call sinners to repentance, not the righteous: Lk. 5:32

Clearly there is a power encounter between Jesus and Satan. An invitation to receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour will inevitably open the door to a considerable power encounter. The Gospel is:

- Based on a historical event that will never be repeated.
- Based on the fact that God revealed Himself and His will through the prophets, but when Jesus came to earth He was God's full and final revelation to humanity. (Heb. 1:1-2)
- Confirmed by fulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament that Jesus literally fulfilled by personally demonstrating the reality of the tabernacle sacrifices and ceremonies. (Mt. 5:17; Jn. 5:39)
- Demonstrated on the Cross – Jesus' willing sacrifice on the Cross superseded all other sacrifices ever offered and made all succeeding sacrifices redundant. (Heb. 7:27; 9:25-26; 10:10) This is why Jesus could triumphantly shout, **"It is finished!"** (Jn. 19:30)

The Gospel reveals our true position before God as human beings: lost, shamed, dying and faced with severe judgement bearing eternal consequences.

We not only **inherit** the sin of Adam and Eve, we also **practice** it. We die and we face eternal torment and separation from God. (Rom. 3:23; Heb. 9:27) God classifies us all as His enemies since we are Satan's children. (Jn. 8:44; Rom. 5:10) Just as Satan faces eternal punishment in Hell, so will all his sons and daughters. (Mt. 8:12, 13:42; Lk. 16:24) So all people everywhere are without life, without hope, without excuse and with no inheritance and no forgiveness. (Eph. 2:1, 12, 5:5; Acts 26:17-18; Rom. 1:20)

But the Gospel **also** teaches the profound **worth of people**. Out of His great love for us, Jesus came to earth to restore our broken relationship with God. Through His death, burial and resurrection Jesus defeated Satan, conquered death, paid for our sins and He now offers eternal life freely to all who become His followers. (Jn. 3:16; Eph. 1:7; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14) Because of what Jesus has done for us human beings, God can now become our Father. We no longer need to fear death or worry about how to pay for our sins.

God promises eternal life to all who believe. What we could not do for ourselves, Jesus did **for us** through the selfless giving of Himself.

The Gospel also reveals the profound worth of God's physical creation. Redemption is not linked only to human beings who place their trust in Jesus. It includes the whole of the decaying universe! (Rom. 8:19-22)

Paul provides us with a succinct definition of the Gospel in 1 Cor. 15:3-4, **"....that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ..."** The Gospel didn't embarrass Paul because it is, **"...the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."** (Rom. 1:16) Although Paul believed that there was sufficient evidence in creation to point people to God and for their consciences to bear witness to God's moral nature, **he considered the Gospel essential for obtaining salvation from sin.** (Rom. 1:20; 2:14-15) Paul claims that, **".....faith comes by hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ."** (Rom. 10:11)

In Gal. 1:8-9 Paul claims that **only one** Gospel exists. He warns that anyone tampering with that Gospel can expect eternal condemnation. He uses sobering language to alert us to the preciousness and exclusiveness of the Gospel. In Gal. 3:1 Paul calls the Galatians 'foolish' for adulterating the message of Good News with legalism. Paul's strong conviction is that there is **only one** Gospel for the whole world. Clearly this didn't please the Galatian believers. (Gal. 1:10) But Paul refused to compromise on this issue. Whether he was addressing those in Galatia who wanted to syncretise the Gospel with legalism or the proto-gnostics and antinomians in Colossae who wanted to swing the pendulum to the other extreme or even the idolaters in Athens, he preached that **only Jesus** is able to solve the dilemma of humanity's rebellion against God.

The Gospel requires repentance on the part of those who believe. Jesus called for repentance. (Lk. 5:32) Peter called for repentance before Jewish audiences. (Acts 2:38; 3:19) Paul called for repentance with his Gentile audiences. (Acts 20:21; 26:20) As we will see in Session 12, 'inadequate conversion' due to this aspect being missing in the conversion process will result in innumerable problems later.

It is by faith that people appropriate the Gospel, but **faith is not the Gospel**. Faith provides the means of personalising what Jesus has done for us. By its nature, faith takes its value from an object/person. In this case it is Jesus who declares believers righteous before God. (Rom. 4:5; Eph. 2:8) The true reception of the Gospel results in changed behaviour in the lives of those who believe. Believers gain a new standing before God. They receive the Holy Spirit who empowers them to live transformed lives. (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:13) So **what Jesus did for us** provides the foundation of what the Holy Spirit **produces in us** and so makes our good works acceptable to God. (Eph. 2:8-10)

In summary, the Good News of the Gospel means that Jesus the Messiah became God's sacrificial substitute to meet God's demands of love and holiness. His gracious work resulted in a way of salvation for all who believe and follow Him as well as the eventual restoration of a polluted and fallen universe.

7.2 Presenting a Relevant Gospel

There are three types of personal needs that must be differentiated:

- Basic needs
- Felt needs
- Supra-cultural needs

Basic Needs

Maslow listed five basic needs common to all people in all cultures:

- ❖ Physical needs – food, water, housing etc.
- ❖ Safety – from attack
- ❖ Affection – from those around them
- ❖ Esteem
- ❖ Self-actualisation

Felt Needs

If one of the basic needs is not being met then the individual or the community realises this and presents a felt need.

Common felt needs include the need:

- To solve basic needs – food, clean water, sanitation, work etc.
- To solve urgent social and communal problems
- To reconcile modern thought with religion
- To strengthen the community
- For honour
- To show hospitality
- For an all-encompassing religion
- For protection from the Evil Eye and other spirits
- For blessings
- For freedom from shame
- For freedom from sickness
- To surrender to God's will
- To be thankful
- For inward spiritual vitality
- To overcome the fear of death
- For a mediator between God and man
- For education
- For individual freedom

The Supra-Cultural Need

This is more than just spiritual needs (some of these are felt needs). The supra-cultural need deals with restoring one's own personal broken relationship with the Creator God.

People will experience all three types of need at different times in their lives. When Jesus ministered on earth, He met all three types of need. He gave sight to the blind. He healed the lame. He raised the dead. He caused demons to obey Him. Nature obeyed Him and He removed personal sin. (Heb. 1:3-4)

As they taught the Gospel Peter, Paul and the other apostles also performed numerous miracles in meeting needs. (Rom. 15:18-19) We are commanded not just to verbalise the love of God, but also to demonstrate this love through good deeds. (Gal. 6:10; 1 Jn. 3:17-18) We must meet the physical, emotional and social needs of people as well as their spiritual needs.

As a westerner, I was taught to dichotomise and to distinguish felt needs into the physical and the spiritual. An example of this is the 'Four Spiritual Laws'. The aim of this tool was to address the felt needs of love, acceptance and security that came about in a Californian society that was characterised by individualism, independence and mobility. However, there was a tendency to confuse a felt need with the supra-cultural need. The Gospel is **not**, *'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life'*. Other examples of this confusion causing a 'false Gospel' to be shared are:

- If you are sick the good news is that Jesus will be your personal healer.
- If you are in financial difficulties the good news is that Jesus will be your personal provider.
- If you are lonely the good news becomes that Jesus will be your best friend.
- If you are sad the good news becomes that Jesus will make you happy.
- If you are experiencing low self-esteem the good news becomes that Jesus will give you great self-confidence

So in this approach the good news is defined as, 'Jesus will meet your specific felt needs'.

Workers among Neighbours often do exactly the same thing:

- If you live in fear of the Evil Eye then the good news is that Jesus will protect you because His power surpasses the power of all other spirits combined.

- If you need economic assistance, health, better crops etc. then Jesus becomes your Elder Brother.
- If you have lost a valuable object, the Jesus – the all-knowing One – will help you find your lost object.

But does making people happy, healthy, wealthy, safe, economically sound etc. also make them righteous before God? In our passionate desire to make the Gospel more palatable are we in danger of re-defining it? Has it, in fact, become ‘another gospel’? What perception of redemption remains in the minds of our Neighbours? Does trying to produce a **relevant** Gospel cloud the sin issue that is so vital to the Gospel of Jesus? Is the supra-cultural need of our Neighbours to have a restored relationship with God being met in all this?

In dealing with people, Jesus never avoided the sin issue. In Mt. 9:1-3 Jesus not only healed the paralytic but also forgave the man’s sin. When the rich young ruler approached Jesus, Jesus did not address his felt need. Instead He drew attention to his selfishness hoping that he would recognise his need for a saviour. Jesus moved people beyond felt needs to the supra-cultural need. He sought to rectify the broken relationship that was the result of inherited and practised sin. His aim was for “an enemy” to become “a friend/child”.

We **must** become involved in **holistic ministry**, but our involvement in meeting the felt needs of our Neighbours should not imply that we are sharing “the Gospel” as taught by Jesus or Paul. The Gospel is Jesus’ sacrifice to restore our Neighbours’ broken relationship with God and to restore the cosmos. This is based **only** on the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus the Messiah.

The **fruit** of the Gospel – i.e. addressing peoples’ felt needs, should not be confused with the **root** of the Gospel – the death of Jesus to provide access to God for all people. The fruit focuses on meeting human felt needs. The root focuses on restoring the supra-cultural need.

7.3 Presenting an accurate Gospel

We must make sure that we are presenting to our Neighbours an accurate Gospel. This means integrating the supra-cultural Gospel with a felt needs approach.

Felt Needs	The Gospel
* Focuses on people	* Focuses on Jesus
* Emphasises present needs	* Emphasises the ultimate need
* Focuses on present doings	* Focuses on the past (what Jesus has done)
* Recognises changeableness (different cultures/different times)	* Recognises unchangeableness
* Issue of fruit	* Issue of root

There needs to be a balance between **conformity** and **confrontation**.

Conformity

This focuses on the felt needs of our Neighbours. It involves adapting to our Neighbours’ expectations and contextualising the Gospel. If we do this well we will gain a hearing for the Gospel. Felt needs has its focus on conformity and commonalities.

Confrontation

There are many things in our Neighbours’ worldview that contradict the Bible. Confrontation will challenge traditional assumptions and will bring about disharmony and rejection by the community.

For example: The Gospel brings into people’s lives confrontation between allegiance to their present beliefs and allegiance to Jesus. Peter challenged the Jews in Jerusalem to accept Jesus as their Messiah. The offer was rejected by many (especially the religious elite) because it challenged both the spiritual and the social presuppositions held for generations. Confrontation focuses on the contradiction. The Gospel brings bad news as well as good news!

Jesus used both conformity and confrontation in His ministry. He wanted His message understood, but He wasn’t willing to compromise the message to secure a following. He believed that the Gospel itself set the

agenda for the people – not the other way round. This stand resulted in receiving verbal abuse and ultimately in the Cross. Jesus indicated that the Gospel transcends all cultures, yet it must be incarnated into each one.

Learning to Integrate

If you focus on conformity, then syncretism may be the result. If you focus on confrontation, then indifference – at best – will be the result. Expulsion is more probable! An accurate presentation of the Gospel integrates conformity with confrontation.

Homework

Try and identify the key components of the Gospel that will confirm or contradict the worldview of your Neighbours.

	Bible	Neighbours
God	Personal	?
Satan	Deceiver	?
Sin	Missing the mark	?
Jesus	Lord and Saviour	?
Cross	Death	?
Gift	Free	Reciprocal
Hell	Judgement	Torment
Heaven	Worship	Pleasure

Do you see more that contradicts rather than conforms? If so, then much foundational teaching will be needed before the Gospel can be really understood. Take time to think through the components of the Gospel and how you can correct (confront) the errors in our Neighbours' beliefs. Learn to anticipate how Neighbours are going to interpret each component and, as a team, learn to strategize on how you will overcome their wrong pre-suppositions.

The Limitations of all Theories

Behind every question asked there is a theory, a methodology or a theology. All questions asked either by us or our Neighbours arise from certain pre-suppositions. These blind us to some answers and give us insight to others.

One theory about culture is **Functionalism** that defines a culture as a system of a number of interrelated parts whose function is to keep a society stable. The focus is on unity, harmony and balance. You can see the influence of functionalism in the language we use:

- Bonded relationships
- Dynamic equivalent translations
- Dynamic equivalent conversions
- Dynamic equivalent churches
- Functional substitutes
- etc.

One obvious outgrowth of functionalism is relativism. This encourages us to be sensitive to our Neighbours.

Another theory uses the **Conflict Paradigm**. This calls attention to conflict and contradiction and seeks to manage these.

I find it helps to integrate confrontation and conformity if I can distinguish in my ministry two clear Biblical mandates – the Creation Mandate and the Commission Mandate.

➤ **The Creation Mandate** (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15)

This commands us to care for the social, political, economic, ecological, agricultural and cultural needs of others. It challenges injustice in every area of life.

➤ **The Commission Mandate** (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-47; Jn. 20:21; Acts 1:8)

This commands us to proclaim the Gospel and disciple those who respond.

The Bible speaks clearly about both mandates, yet it clearly differentiates between the two. We need to keep this distinction in mind. Integration of the two into a whole is called **holistic ministry** or **transformational ministry**. This is beyond the scope of this manual. We have produced another manual called **Transformation**. It has 18 Bible studies designed to help people think Biblically about this integration.

Conclusion

The Gospel is both good news and bad news. It is good news because God accepted the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as the means of redemption for the human race and the cosmos. What Jesus did by dying met God's total requirements of love and justice.

The Gospel is bad news on that it contradicts the faith-allegiance of our Neighbours. This means that Neighbours must accept that **Jesus alone** provides the way to God. They must turn to Him and away from anything else. They must be committed to follow Him.

How this Gospel is presented will determine how churches will grow.

Session 7

The Chronological Bible Story Teaching Model

McIlwain of New Tribes Mission recognised that there was a need to share the Bible in story form with illiterate tribal people. He realised that it is better to teach both the Old and the New Testament in a chronological way. God has revealed Himself and His purposes through progressive revelation – a slow, careful, patient build-up of truth step-by-step.

He developed 68 stories from the Old Testament that are crucial to New Testament doctrine. However, it is always easier to understand spiritual truths when you tell them within their historical contexts. So, you need to develop stories beginning with Genesis chapter one.

McIlwain thought there were four crucial themes that needed to be developed for animistic tribal peoples:

- ❖ The Character of God – a God who communicates – a God of justice and holiness
- ❖ Satan's Role
- ❖ The State of Humanity – in rebellion
- ❖ The need of a Saviour – Redeemer

These four themes are also suitable for our Neighbours.

In the cultures of most of our Neighbours something **new** is not appreciated. The Arabic word for heresy (*bida'a*) means 'something new' or 'an innovation'. So it is important to emphasise that the Good News is **not new news**, but goes back to Creation! You can demonstrate this by beginning at the beginning (Genesis).

Teaching through Chronological Bible Storying

The aim is to instil truth and counteract lies. There are so many "strongholds" of error that have to be attacked and destroyed. For example:

- Fear of punishment makes a person better.
- God loves strong people but He hates the weak.
- The main problem of man is ignorance of God's will.

The systematic teaching of Scripture is our main tool to instil truth. The rate at which we teach depends on the hearer's ability to absorb truth.

In most of our Neighbours' cultures learning is by rote memorisation. So in each chronological story teach at least one memory verse and **then** teach them to think about it. Teach in such a way that there is plenty of time for feedback and review.

A List of Stories for Neighbours

1. An introductory talk about the characteristics of God – mainly ask questions.
2. The Creation Story – everything was perfect and good.
3. Angels and the fall of Satan (Is. 14:12-14; Ez. 28:11-19) Explain the presence of Satan and evil spirits in the world.
4. Adam and Eve's sin and the consequences – God knows everything.
5. Cain and Abel – God knows everything.
6. Noah and the Flood – God doesn't tolerate sin and God provides salvation.
7. The Tower of Babel – disobedience to God's command has consequences.
8. Abraham's call and his walk of faith with God – Abraham was a man of faith, but was not sinless.

9. Ishmael's birth and life including banishment and God's promises for him – the birth of Isaac – God keeps His promises.
10. The Sacrifice of Isaac – God provides an acceptable sacrifice.
11. A summary of the lives of Isaac and Jacob including the birth and names of this dysfunctional family – God's care for them in spite of their dysfunctionality.
12. Joseph's experiences from birth to Potiphar's wife – God was with Joseph wherever he went. Each person has a sinful nature, but the act of sinning is a choice.
13. Joseph's experience in prison, the famine and the reconciliation of Joseph with his brothers. God wants us to forgive each other and be reconciled.
14. Summary of 400 years in Egypt, the birth of Moses through until the Burning Bush experience on Mount Sinai. God doesn't forget injustice or people's pain.
15. God delivers the people out of Egypt. Include the story of the Passover. God determined the acceptable act for salvation.
16. God directs the people through the desert and the giving of the Ten Commandments.
17. The Law – the rebellion of the people – a summary of the 40 years in the desert – the death of Moses.
18. The entry into the Promised Land – Jericho with an emphasis on Rahab and her faith resulting in her decision to follow God.
19. The story of Ruth – our need of a kinsman/redeemer.
20. The birth of Samuel – the nature of a prophet – the call and ministry of Samuel – why the people wanted a king.
21. Saul and the Witch of Endor. Review why Saul, who started well, lost his communication with God. This story deals powerfully with Folk Islam.
22. David and Bathsheba – David knew the law but chose to disobey. Sin has consequences even when the individual repents.
23. The Story of Elijah – This shows the value of prayer and quiet meditation.
24. Elisha stories (18 of them!) For example the healing of Naaman – salvation requires doing exactly what God says and not what the individual wants to do.
25. The Birth of Jesus – include some of the prophecies of His birth.
26. The baptism and temptations of Jesus
27. Jesus is more powerful than nature – feeding 5000 – calming the storm – walking on the water.
28. Jesus is more powerful than evil spirits – the Gadarene Demoniac.
29. Jesus is more powerful than sickness and death – the healing of the woman who had been sick for 12 years – the raising of Jairus' daughter – the son of the widow of Nain.
30. Jesus has the authority to forgive sins – the adulterous woman at the house of Simon – the healing of the man with four friends.
31. Jesus and the Samaritan woman
32. Jesus – from Palm Sunday to the Last Supper
33. The arrest, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus
34. The ascension of Jesus and a review of the meaning of the stories told.
35. The story of Lazarus and the rich man – the Day of Judgement.

Session 7

Seven Crucial Stories to Develop

- 1. Creation and the Essence and Purpose of Man** – Genesis 1 and 2

See **The Seven Mysteries of God** – [The Mystery of Creation](#) for the sort of product you should aim at.

- 2. Satan, Sin and Death** – Genesis 3

See [The Mystery of Evil](#).

- 3. Sacrifice** – Genesis 22

See also Section 10 – the section on building bridges.

- 4. Sacrifice and Atonement** – Leviticus 16

- 5. Suffering for Sin – a perfect, voluntary sacrifice** – Isaiah 53

- 6. The Word and the Lamb** – John 1

- 7. Sin / Death / Atonement / Suffering** – Luke 23 and 24

Session 7

Seven Great Mysteries of God

(This was written in the context of Bangladesh and the transliteration and use of words reflects this.)

The aged pir sahib watched solemnly as the long piece of cloth was passed among his disciples. Each of the one hundred men who were being initiated eagerly grasped one section of the cloth. The pir then took the end of the cloth and stood and prayed for the forgiveness of sins of each of his devotees.

Following this, a large pitcher of lemonade was brought to the pir. He touched his finger to his tongue and then put his finger in the lemonade. This was done three times. Assistants of the pir took the juice and gave a small glass to each of the disciples.

The men were searching for a meaningful and mysterious encounter with God through the intermediary efforts of the pir. The disciples were sincerely reaching out in pursuit of a real and vital relationship with the one true God.

Life is full of mysteries. The most intellectual scientist hasn't yet begun to probe the depths of the universe. Likewise, who can understand the marvel of the human brain? And what can be said of a little seed that grows into a towering, strong banyan tree? Man is inadequate to comprehend the tremendous truths of life.

And. . . now, let us consider God. He is so great, so powerful, so mighty, so awesome. Can mere man ever come to comprehend a God who is so full of mystery? There is an exciting verse in the Injil Sharif which says, ***"The mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations is now made manifest to his people"***. (Col. 1:26)

Yes, now in this age we can unlock the deep mysteries of God. Let us look at the following seven mysteries of God:

1. The Mystery of Creation
2. The Mystery of Evil
3. The Mystery of the Law
4. The Mystery of Mercy
5. The Mystery of Hazrat Jesus
6. The Mystery of Salvation.
7. The Mystery of Assurance.

1. The Mystery of Creation

In Al-Tawrat Genesis 1:1-2 we read:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

There are men who deny that there is a God. These are learned men who believe that somehow the earth, moon, sun, and stars just happened. The Al-Tawrat deals with the mystery of the beginning of the world and refutes the ideas of such unbelievers.

When was "the beginning"? Our small minds can't begin to think in terms of eternity! We think about the year of the great cyclone or of 1971 as the year Bangladesh became a free nation. But we can't do much better than remember back to our great-grandfather. What must it be like to think of many thousands of years ago when God wonderfully created all those beautiful stars that we see on a clear night?

And then, most amazing of all, God formed the earth and made it possess all that was necessary for the habitation of man. The Al-Tawrat tells how Hazrat Adam and Bibi Eve were created in perfection. They were told to go and subdue the earth. All of the animal kingdom was to be in subjection to them.

How lovely must have been the Garden of Eden! Perhaps it was full of the fragrances of gardenias and roses. There may have been an abundance of luscious mangoes, oranges, and pineapples. Surely, there was a mighty river flowing nearby. What a delightful picture of peace and happiness. How contented Hazrat Adam and Bibi Eve must have been! But then. . .

2. The Mystery of Evil

As we all know, Satan came into the garden and introduced sin and evil into the world. Today, Satan is still alive and active. He goes about as a roaring tiger seeking whom he can destroy (Injil Sharif 1 Peter 5:8). We can all imagine the danger of facing a ferocious Bengal tiger in the Sunderbans. Such is the danger of the power of Satan's working among the people of this earth.

The first two created people, Hazrat Adam and Bibi Eve, had a choice set before them in the Garden of Eden. They could obey God and eat freely of all the trees with the exception of one or they could listen to the advice of Satan and take of the fruit of the forbidden tree. How sad it is that Hazrat Adam and Bibi Eve clearly disobeyed God and became the world's first sinners. Their sin has a direct effect on you and me. In Injil Sharif (Romans 5:12) we read, ***"Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."***

Injil Sharif in 1 John 1:8 declares, ***"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us."*** Is there anyone who can say he has never told a lie, never had an evil thought or never received or given bribery? A little child may be clearly instructed not to touch the packet of biscuits on the table. But as soon as mother leaves the room, the child grabs the biscuits and eats them as quickly and as secretly as possible.

Yes, sin is a universal disease. It creates divisions within families. Societies are torn apart by hatred. Nations go to war causing horrible loss of life. The human race has gone far from the path of God.

Injil Sharif (2 Thess. 2:7) says, ***"For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work."*** What is the way out for sincere people who want to follow God? Has God made a plan to enable sinners to return to Himself?

3. The Mystery of the Law

Hazrat Moses was a man of God. We are told he was willing to forsake a life of great ease in the king's palace in order that he might serve God. In a miraculous way, Hazrat Moses was used to deliver the people of God from a wicked Pharaoh.

During the time of wandering in the hot Sinai desert, Hazrat Moses had a very special experience with God. We read about it in Al-Tawrat (Exodus 19:16-17).

"So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain."

What a day of mystery and excitement! God was about to reveal the Law through His devoted servant, Hazrat Moses. Consider the privilege of being selected by God to receive a revelation that would be known to all people of all ages as **The Law**.

God gave many laws that should be followed by mankind. A few of these are:

- You shall have no other gods besides Me.
- Everyone should love God with all his heart.
- It is a sin to curse God.
- No one is allowed to worship idols.
- Anyone who commits adultery is guilty of a grave sin against both mankind and God.
- Stealing is a sin.
- Lying and coveting is against the will of God.

All of these Laws were given to man for a specific purpose. Al-Tawrat (Exodus 20:20) tells us that this reason was so that man **"would not sin."**

How good it would be to say that after receiving the Law, everyone loved God and everyone obeyed all His commands. But is that what happened?

No indeed, it seemed as if mankind became even greater sinners. They knew the truth of God's path, but rejected it. They chose to disregard God, His Law, His will and His peace.

The Law is something like a doctor diagnosing an illness. It is the first step towards a cure. The Law reveals the illness of mankind that is called sin. All can understand God's standard of holiness through the Law. Then they can see how they fail to meet God's standard of righteousness.

But, is it enough just to diagnose a disease? Would anyone be happy to be told by a doctor that he has a stomach ulcer, but not be given the proper medicine to cure the problem? No! It is extremely important not only to be diagnosed, but also to be cured.

The Law is important and helpful – but not totally adequate. We must go on to see God's further provision of a remedy to the great problem of man's alienation from all that is holy and righteous. This leads us to consider the mystery of God's mercy.

4. The Mystery of Mercy

Al-Jabour (Psalm 103:10-12, 17) has some beautiful words concerning the mercy of God.

"God has not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him! As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our sins from us.The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him."

Isn't this an encouraging statement from God's Holy Word? If God gave us what we deserve, we would all spend eternity in hell. But there is hope for sinful man. Satan's work does not have to end in victory.

Here is a great mysterious word. How far is the east from the west? How far is heaven above the earth? Al-Jabour doesn't give us the answer. Rather, it points us to the vast distance God has put between us and our sins. Who can measure the breadth and depth of God's mercy? It is from everlasting to everlasting.

Another descriptive passage concerning God's mercy is found in Al-Tawrat (Exodus 34:6-7).

"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps mercy for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin."

No man can stand before God and declare his own righteousness. No person is good enough to be able to demand entrance into heaven. Yes, we may have fasted and prayed with great regularity; we may have given many alms to the poor, but God declares clearly in Injil Sharif (Titus 3:5), ***"Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to God's mercy He saved us"***.

Our righteousness is often only external. We give some money to beggars on the train or bus so fellow passengers will see us and praise us as a religious person. But God looks on the heart. Man judges by external appearances; but God searches the inner parts of our being.

Our sin separates us from God. But God joins us to holiness and righteousness through His unfathomable mercy. Let us see how God has chosen to do this wonderful and mysterious work.

5. The Mystery of Hazrat Jesus

In Injil Sharif (1 Timothy 3:16) we find a very famous passage in which Hazrat Jesus is linked to the great mystery of godliness.

"And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness. He (Hazrat Jesus) who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up into glory."

How amazed Mary was to be told by an angel that she was to have a baby even before she had a physical relationship with a man. Such a thing is totally impossible! Yet, this is exactly what happened. Hazrat

Jesus Christ was born without a human father. God spoke. He gave the command and instantly, mysteriously, Mary became pregnant.

Here we see the unique relationship of Hazrat Jesus to God. Over and over in the Injil Sharif we read that Hazrat Jesus was the "Son of God." This has caused a problem to many people. How can God who is Spirit be the father of a son? Such a thought is blasphemous.

Surely, this is so. God is wholly Spirit and has no form. It is impossible to think of God having a physical relationship with a woman. What then does the term "Son of God" really mean?

These words are to be interpreted in a spiritual sense. There is nothing physical in them at all. "Son of God" is a term that simply points to the close and mystical relationship between God and Hazrat Jesus. It is a union of a spiritual nature. This is why the Injil Sharif speaks of the **"great mystery of godliness"**. This truth of God takes us beyond our normal intellect into the realm of the spirit and into the deep mysteries of God.

Hazrat Jesus often refers to himself as "Son of Man." Yes, the Messiah became man in order that He might identify with God's created beings. Have you ever tried to talk to an ant? You could shout, or even whisper ever so lightly. Still, the ant can never comprehend your human words. The only way you can communicate with an ant is to actually become one! Surely you have watched ants as they put their heads together and talk to one another.

In a similar way, sinful man refused to listen to the God who is so much greater and more powerful than he is. So the Injil Sharif declares that God sent Hazrat Jesus as a man to our world to declare God's path of mercy and forgiveness of sin. Hazrat Jesus was totally man and yet in Injil Sharif (John 12:45) Hazrat Jesus, could declare that, **"He who sees Me sees the one who sent Me"**.

The Injil Sharif also states clearly that Hazrat Jesus was without sin. He never told a lie, lusted after women or gave bribes. His main work during the last three years of His life was to preach the Kingdom of God, heal the diseases of the afflicted and teach His disciples the deep things of the Spirit of God.

Hazrat Jesus spoke and men were healed. He spoke and the storm and waves were stilled. He spoke and Lazarus came to life. His words were magnificently powerful. For this reason, one of the names of Hazrat Jesus is **"Word of God."** This power to do good was a direct result of the mysterious and intimate relationship between Hazrat Jesus and God.

How sad that so many of His own people hated the light and rejected the One who said in Injil Sharif (John 14:6), **"I am the way, the truth and the life."** Hazrat Jesus was then, and is today, the only way to God. A beautiful summary of who Hazrat Jesus is and what He has done is found in Injil Sharif (Hebrews 1:1-4).

"At many times and in many ways God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets but in these last days He has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature and upholds all things by the word of His power. When he had made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs."

6. The Mystery of Salvation

How can man know God? Is it possible to be assured of spending eternal life in heaven? Where does one go to obtain freedom from one's heavy burden of sin? Can peace with God be a reality in this life?

All mankind is in desperate need of salvation. The Injil Sharif gives us guidance in this area of great mystery. Let us see both what salvation is and what it is not.

Salvation is not obtained by keeping the Law. Injil Sharif (Galatians 3:11) states, **"No-one is justified before God by the law."** Injil Sharif (Ephesians 2:9) declares that salvation is, **"Not as a result of works."** No matter how hard we try, we are totally unable to keep all of the Law. Injil Sharif (James 2:10) reveals the high standard of God, **"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all."** A person may not be guilty of murder or adultery, but is there a person who can say he has never told a lie or had an evil thought? No, we are deeply condemned and the Law is inadequate to free us from the grip of sin.

Salvation is received through faith in Hazrat Jesus Christ. Injil Sharif (Galatians 3:24) indicates the relationship of the Law to Hazrat Jesus. **"Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that**

we may be justified by faith." The Law was preparation for salvation; the fulfillment is faith in Hazrat Jesus. What would you think of a person who needed a tutor all of his life? Yes, at an early stage of life man needs assistance and enlightenment. But later, it is time to move on to a more mature stage. The Law is necessary to vividly point out our corrupt condition before God. But then we find that release from sin and bondage comes through our faith in Hazrat Jesus, ***"If righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."*** (Injil Sharif Galatians 2:21)

Salvation is not gained by the blood sacrifice of animals. It has been the habit of man through all ages to seek to appease God by the offering of the blood of chickens, goats, cows, and camels. Those offerings have been given as a substitution for the sin of man, but what is God's evaluation of such acts?

"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. . . . In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin God has taken no pleasure! . . . And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices that can never take away sins" Injil Sharif (Hebrews 10:4-6, 11).

Salvation is imparted through the sacrifice of Hazrat Jesus. How exciting to realize that Hazrat Jesus has become the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people of all ages!

"For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. . . . But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God. . . . In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace." – Injil Sharif (Hebrews 7:26-27; 10:12; Ephesians 1:7)

Hazrat Jesus came into the world for the express purpose of becoming the sacrifice of God. Now men and women, rich and poor, black and white – all have access to God. There is no barrier to the wonderful salvation so freely offered through the blood of Hazrat Jesus Christ.

Salvation is provided by the Mediator, Hazrat Jesus Christ. ***"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men - the man Christ Jesus"*** – Injil Sharif (1 Timothy 2:5).

In one of the greatest of all mysteries of all ages, we find that God sent Hazrat Jesus from the perfection of heaven to take up residence on this corrupted earth. Hazrat Jesus took His position between sinful man and a holy God. He became a mediator. There is no further need of sacrificed animals. Nothing now stands between man and God. The Saviour, Hazrat Jesus Christ, who is alive today in heaven, has removed all barriers.

These are the wonderful truths about God's plan of saving men from their sins.

7. The Mystery of Assurance

Assurance is a wonderful thing. We like to be assured of the permanence of our employment. It is also important to be assured of the love of our family. Assurance gives peace, whereas doubt causes unrest.

Most people in the world have no assurance of where they will spend eternity after they have died. It is commonly agreed that there will be an after-life and that man's soul will live forever. Almost everyone believes in the existence of heaven and hell. But few have the assurance that their spiritual being will live for eternity in heaven.

One of the greatest revealed mysteries is that a provision has been made for each person to know whether or not he will spend eternity with God. And this wonderful knowledge and assurance can be obtained right now – in this present life!

Hazrat Jesus Christ's own words in Injil Sharif (John 5:24) help us to understand this truth.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

This verse points to the importance of believing in the living Hazrat Jesus. This act of faith is the key that opens the door to eternal life. Hazrat Jesus, through His death, has accepted the sting of judgment. We are now free to experience life and light in place of death and darkness.

Injil Sharif (1 John 5:13) tells us that, ***"These things I have written to you who believe. . . in order that you may know that you have eternal life."***

This is one of the great verses of assurance in the Injil Sharif. We are told that by believing in Hazrat Jesus and in His resurrection, there is a sure knowledge that we will be privileged to live forever in the presence of God. There is no doubt in this verse.

One final word, Injil Sharif (Revelation 10:7) tells us, "***In the days of the voice of the seventh angel. . . the mystery of God is finished.***" The concluding mystery of life will be completed in the last days. Are you ready to meet God at the great concluding point of all history? You can be if you put your faith in Hazrat Jesus Christ who not only died, but rose from the dead, is alive in heaven today and one day is going to return to this earth in power and glory. He is the KEY that unlocks all the great mysteries of life and death.

Session 8

The Value of Working Together

Objectives:

Head: To grow in your understanding of how you can team up with others in ministry to Neighbours

Heart: To realise you need to partner with others to minister effectively to Neighbour friends

Hands: To experience and learn from “two-by-two” ministry

To experience the value of team

To experience the value of networking

Time Together

1. Welcome and prayer

2. Debrief the group as to their ‘Homework’ assignments

- Did they share some stories with their Neighbours? How did it go?
- Which were their favourite stories?
- Did they learn some principles from the model of Jesus in John 4?
- How can you check they are presenting an accurate and relevant Gospel to their friends?
- What are the key stories that need to be told in a chronological story-telling approach?
- Have each person tell his/her crucial story. Any suggestions for improvement?

3. Discuss the Two-by-Two Bible Study.

- Work your way through the study question by question.
- Have different members summarise key concepts after each section.
- Discuss how these principles challenge usual practices of western churches.
- Get a sense as a group of what are the key issues that need further discussion.

4. As a group, identify ways that you can enhance team dynamics as a whole.

- List specific areas of ministry and work where teaming can enhance the effectiveness.
- Use this opportunity for the group members to affirm each other and also to affirm the team members who have already been through the course – i.e. the longtermers – especially in the areas of their gifting/strengths.
- Encourage the members of the group to share perceived areas of weakness or inadequacy that need input/help from the team.
- Brainstorm about some specific action steps to make progress in improving the quality of team life.
- Repeat the process for inter-team interaction in your country or Field.
- Discuss how the teams of Our Company could profitably interact with other ministries – with media ministries and others in wider partnerships.

5. Spend some time discussing the area of prayer and the levels of trust – especially as these relate to teaming.

- How can group members encourage each other and build up trust levels through praying together?
- How much time are you praying for each other – two by two? As a team? Is this adequate?
- How could individual/group/team praying be more strategic and focussed?
- How can you get information so you can pray effectively for other teams in your country/Field/Area as well as for those in other similar groups, companies and media ministries?

6. Spend time in prayer as a group – for one another – for your Neighbour friends – for your team and all the others you have mentioned.

7. Read through Why We Believe in Team. Discuss if the full potential of your team is being met.

8. Read through The Importance of Working Together. Discuss how you could co-operate with people in other companies.

9. Read through The Principles of Developing Networks.

Homework

Head: Make a list of all you are doing in relation to your life and ministry. Add to the list all you hope or wish to do in the future. Put a check (✓) by every activity that might be enhanced by doing it together with someone else – at least on occasion. Then put a possible name or names next to the (✓) of who you could work with.

Heart: Pray through any issues that may be standing in the way of you growing in relationship and trust with others in the group and/or team.

Hands: Take the initiative to go to the person/people you put by the (✓) in the activities above. Ask them about the possibility of working together. Identify people in the group or on the team who have strengths in the areas where you need to learn/grow. Ask them to help you – by giving you some of their time or by lending you a book or two that have helped them to grow stronger in that particular area.

Handouts for Session 9: Answering Tough Questions

- Jesus Under Attack
- Our Neighbours' Objections to Our Faith
- Approaches to Answering Questions
- Answers to the "Son of God" Issue
- Answers to the Issue of Three Gods/Trinity
- Answers to the Charge that we have Corrupted the Scriptures
- Answers relating to the Gospel of Barnabas

Session 8

The Two-by-Two Principle

1. Read Deut. 17:6; 19:15 and Num. 35:30

In these passages the main reason for two or three witnesses was to confirm or testify to evidence. In these cases it was testimony sufficient to put people to death.

Other relevant passages include:

Deut. 32:30; Josh. 2:1, 23; 6:22; Amos 3:3

In the Old Testament one witness was insufficient.

Read Mk. 6:7-13 and Lk. 10:1-9. Why do you think the Lord Jesus sent out His disciples two by two? Write down as many reasons as you can think of.

2. Read Luke 7:19-24

John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask Him if He was the Messiah. John was following the Old Testament principle of confirming the truth with two witnesses. Jesus said to them, ***“Go and report to John what you have seen and heard.....”***

How does going with another person help you to share your faith? Write down several reasons.

3. Read the following passages:

Mt. 18:16; 26:60; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28.

The Old Testament principle is continued in the New Testament. The purpose is that every fact or word can be confirmed by two witnesses. (Note that two witnesses were produced at the trial of Jesus.)

There are many examples of the two-by-two principle. Here are just a few:

- Jesus never sent His disciples out alone except for Judas when he was going to betray Jesus: Mt. 26:14; Mk. 14:10; Jn. 18. (Was the fact that Peter was alone part of the reason for his failure?)
- Jesus sent His disciples out in twos to do things for Him:
 - ❖ Two disciples were sent to find a donkey. (Lk. 19:29; Mk. 11:1)
 - ❖ Two disciples were sent to find the Upper Room. (Mk. 14:13)

- Jesus was crucified between two robbers – possibly to confirm the crucifixion (Jn. 19:18)
- God sent two angels to confirm the resurrection of Jesus. (Lk. 24:4; Jn. 20:12)
- Jesus appeared to two followers on the road to Emmaus. (Lk. 24:13)
- The disciples put forward two candidates to replace Judas. (Acts 1:23)
- Jesus called several of the disciples in pairs. (Mt. 4:18,21)
- The disciples in Jerusalem sent two men to find Peter. (Acts 9:38)
- At the Transfiguration of Jesus two men – Moses and Elijah – talked with Him. (Lk. 9:30)

4. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Write down as many reasons as you can think of why two are better than one.

- The two-by-two principle was and is a practical/legal reason in testimony cases.
- The disciples were to go in twos for the sake of witness and fellowship.
- Sending them in pairs strengthened their witness and made travelling more pleasant.
- The presence of a pair helps in conditions where morals are low and temptations high.
- In an emergency situation one can help the other.

The practice of sending out pairs was continued in the early church.

See Acts 13:2; 15:27, 39-40; 17:10; 18:5; 19:22.

5. Read the promises in Mt. 18: 19-20. How do they confirm the Two-by-Two Principle?

6. Application:

Take some time to think and pray. Ask the Lord who He would want you to partner with. Write down the name of the person. Then write down who you and your partner could talk to this coming week. Can you schedule it now? Also establish who you can pray with at least once a week for your Neighbour friends.

Session 8

Why we believe in Team

1. There is a Trinitarian root for the concept of working together in teams. God is a “team” and we are made in His likeness. **God always encourages team** as a way of working rather than singularities or individualism. Our Neighbours’ concept of God is that of an absolute singularity. Ultimately this leads to people fighting each other. Team is difficult for Neighbours.

2. Team is the womb of spirituality

It is in the relationships of team living that spiritual life grows and that character is developed. Those without team often stagnate spiritually because they are without the affirmation, exhortation and admonition of others.

Ecclesiastes says, *“Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall the one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no-one to help him up. And if one prevails against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not easily broken.”* (Eccl. 4:10-12)

- It is in team life that spiritual growth is catalysed.
- It is in team that the skills of spiritual warfare are sharpened. In **Cinderella with Amnesia**,¹ Michael Griffiths points out that the Ephesians 6 passage isn’t modelled after a lone Roman soldier or a lone Christian soldier. The Roman army was successful because it learned to fight in multiple units of up to 6000 men. The Eph. 6 passage refers to **a team spiritual fighting unit**.
- It is in team that worship can more effectively take place and intercession be focussed.
- One of the basic principles of warfare is the concentration of firepower, a massing of forces to produce local superiority in order to inflict a decisive blow on the enemy. Team seeks to do this.

3. The example of the Lord Jesus in building teams

Much has been written about this. In summary, from the Lord Jesus we learn two things about team and team life.

a) This is **the best way to train** people in ministry and in character development.

b) This is **the best way to evangelise** the world!!

The Lord Jesus only mentions “church” twice. The emphasis is on team. *“If you get together to do something in My Name, then I will do it.”* (Mt. 18:20)

4. Team life inhibits fall-out and attrition

Worldwide the attrition rate among workers is 5.8% per year. It is over 10% for those in the Muslim World. This is a huge loss of experienced personnel. We can’t afford this! Scripture says, *“Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.”* (Gal. 6:2) The emotions of a human being are so deeply embedded into his/her cultural background that only those of a similar background and experience have sufficient commonality to make a deep empathetic response of caring.

A team member who shares a common vision, shares the risks and joys of ministry together and shares a sense of commitment and accountability with the other team members. He/she can weep with a team member who is weeping and rejoice with those who are rejoicing. The probability of surviving spiritually and emotionally in difficult settings – let alone thriving – will be greatly enhanced by team.

For example, the effects of culture shock are greatly diminished by having the support of team members who remain accountable for each other’s beliefs, life-style and personal identity. They are the ones who can drag you from “the pit of shock”.

5. Team life keeps leaders humble

The Lord Jesus said, ***“And don’t be called ‘leaders’, for one is your leader – that is God. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted!”*** (Mt. 23:10-12)

Pride is perhaps the greatest hindrance in God’s work. Pride in a leader causes very great damage. As a leader, nothing is more helpful than to have a team about you, who know you well, from whom no secrets are hidden and who have the courage to confront you in all areas of your life. This keeps a leader humble and effective!

6. Team as a model for church planting/church strengthening

New believers need to **see** our faith worked out **in a community**. Team life should act as an observable model for church life. In fact, good churches are usually birthed out of team. Failure to create an adequate team life as a model to new believers is often reflected in lack of progress in church planting.

7. Teams increase productivity and effectiveness

Batteries connected up in a series produce more power. Teams allow **synergy** to take place. ***“One can chase 1,000, two can chase 10,000.”*** (Josh. 23:10 and Deut. 32:30) One horse can pull about 5 tons while two horses can pull about 20 tons. A team can discuss difficult situations and since they are close to the action and have the help of the Holy Spirit, they can come up with effective tactics to achieve breakthroughs. Leadership thousands of miles away can never do this.

8. Teams improve communication and learning

As teams intensify their focus on the task in hand, their intra-team communication and their corporate learning improve because they are stakeholders in their own success. There is enhanced sharing of information and delegation of parts of the work to those most gifted to accomplish those parts. Corporate learning is often the key to success in evangelism and church planting.

9. Teams do the work that individuals can’t do.

Often a ministry of evangelism and church planting is multi-functional by nature. No one person is sufficiently multi-gifted, nor does he/she have time to do everything! A versatile team with the different members working together can accomplish much more, and in a shorter time, than any individual. There is often just too much to know and too much to do for any one person to know it all and do it all!

10. Teams make better use of financial and other resources

When teams work well they make sure that little is wasted. Teams focussed on the essential tasks, with good intra-team communication, use money and other resources (knowledge) more effectively. This is because they are using their Holy Spirit aided intelligence/brain power to directly impact the task in hand. There is also less chance of the duplication that is a major source of wastage in Christian organisations.

11. Teams are more creative in seeing opportunities and more efficient at solving problems

When teams are motivated and are close to the cutting edge in ministry, they combine their multiple perspectives in seeing **new opportunities** for ministry and new areas of service. They are also much more efficient at problem solving since they can use their multiple perspectives and knowledge. The result is that teams invariably know more about the length, depth and breadth of their ministry than the “leader” up in the pyramid hierarchy.

12. Teams make higher quality decisions and handle crises better

Good leadership comes from good knowledge. The essence of the team idea is **shared knowledge**. Quality decisions and improvements in ministry need the best ideas and the energy of everyone in the team. This is especially true in times of crisis when a leader may be inadequately informed or even paralysed by fear! Team increases knowledge and knowledge applied at the right moment produces good decisions. Good decisions are the key to continuous improvement.

13. Teams can improve processes

Processes are often the key to effectiveness. Action can be misguided. Ideas by themselves don’t produce results! Putting the right processes into action and maintaining them, produces results. Processes occur

across many different functions. A team can cover all the contributing factors to the process in hand. They can do this because, as a team, they can see the whole task in perspective. So, together, teams can design ways to remove obstacles. They can speed up cycles that often appear in processes. They can apply muscle where it matters.

14. Teams allow differentiation as they integrate

Unity/Diversity is often the key to ministry. Many organisations, sensing strong centrifugal forces, want to downsize and out-source in order to increase their efficiency. But too much downsizing and too much de-centralization leads to fragmentation. Teams allow a blending of people with many different kinds of knowledge and experience to work together. In other words teams are centripetal:

Centripetal = directed or moving **towards** a centre or axis

Centrifugal = directed or moving **away from** a centre or axis

Centripetal organisations usually have strong structures that pull power and authority towards the centre.

Centrifugal organisations diversify and spread power and control. The spreading out of control from the centre necessitates improved communications, re-affirmation of core values and a high quality of trust in order to prevent fragmentation.

Teams allow a balance between the need for and the power of integration over against differentiation and flexibility.

From the beginning of its history our company has worked in teams. Team is fundamental to our ethos of ministry. Our vision is that:

Teams empowered by the Holy Spirit with clear goals and strong mutual commitment can evangelise all the unreached peoples of the world and build the church of Jesus Christ in all lands.

Teams have been our modus operandi since the time George Verwer, Dale Rhoton and Walter Borchard went to Mexico in the summer of 1957 – a three-man team.

Session 8

The Importance of Working Together

Introduction

Referring to nuclear war and its consequences, Bertrand Russell – a famous British philosopher who was an atheist - said, *“It is co-existence or no existence!”* Humanly-speaking the same could be said of the church. But the Holy Spirit is looking for so **much more than co-existence**. He is looking for **real intentional working together** – co-operation.

A Story

A young man from a poor village was going to get married. He was ashamed because he couldn't afford a suit. His uncle gave him money and he went off to the city to buy a suit. He went to a big department store. He tried on many jackets and eventually found one that was a really good fit. He didn't realise there were fitting rooms to try on the trousers. He was too embarrassed to try them and so he just bought the suit.

The night before the wedding he tried on the trousers only to find that they were about 10 cm. too long! He said, *“Never mind! I will fold them up very carefully and no-one will notice!”*

The young man's **grandmother** was staying with them. She couldn't sleep for thinking about the humiliation of her grandson going to his wedding with rolled up trousers! After everyone had gone to bed, she went to the room where the trousers were hanging up. She took them from the hanger. She cut off 10 cm. and carefully sewed them up and pressed them. She replaced them on the hanger and went back to bed to sleep peacefully.

But the young man's **mother** woke in the night with a nightmare! Everyone was laughing at her son during the wedding because of his rolled up trousers. About 2.00 am she went to the room where the suit was. She carefully took down the trousers. She cut off 10 cm. from each leg. She sewed them up neatly, pressed them and returned them to the hanger. She went back to sleep very happily!

Very early the next morning – the morning of the wedding – **the older sister** of the young man got up from her bed. She had slept very badly thinking about the trousers. Before anyone else was up she went to the room where the suit was. She took the trousers from their hanger. Carefully, using her scissors, she cut 10 cm. from each trouser leg. She hemmed them neatly and put them back on the hanger.

An hour before the wedding the young man put on his suit. Imagine his shock as he put on his trousers only to find that they barely covered his knees!!

The point is clear! **If there is no communication and no co-operation, the story can end in tragedy! Even when there are good intentions and there is skilful work: even when there is great satisfaction in finishing the job well, the results can still be tragic!**

This story highlights what can easily happen if we fail to act as **one body** and we don't work harmoniously and co-operatively together.

The Biblical Basis for Co-operation

We don't have enough time for a full exposition of John 17 and Ephesians 4, so I would just like to summarize some basic principles.

1 Cor. 12:27 ***“Now you are the body of Christ and each of you is a part of it.”***

Rom. 12:5 ***“So in Christ, we who are many form one body and each member belongs to all others.”***

Eph. 4:25 ***“...for we are all members of one body.”***

These Scriptures emphasize the unity of the Body of Christ with Jesus as the Head and all redeemed people (past, present and future) as the Body.

What was the beginning of Paul's understanding of this great theme in Scripture? I think it was his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus. Paul had been doing his best to wreak havoc in the church. Perhaps Paul would have expected Jesus to say, *“Why are you persecuting my people?”* But no!

What Jesus actually asked was, ***“Why are you persecuting ME?”*** Perhaps that was the beginning of Paul’s understanding that we are all ***“in Christ”***. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit this was expressed to the church as the Body of Christ.

If we are to demonstrate our oneness as the Body of Christ, five major principles need to be followed. These are outlined in 1 Cor. 12:12-26.

1. The principle of induction (v. 12-13)

“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we are all baptised by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the One Spirit to drink.”

It is the Holy Spirit who inducts us into the Body of Christ. We are regenerated – born again – by the Holy Spirit and united with Christ as part of His Body. And in Christ there are no racial or cultural distinctions, neither are there social or economic distinctions. God has given **all** His people the Holy Spirit to dwell in them so that their lives may overflow with the fruit of the Spirit. We are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

2. The principle of indispensability (v. 14-16)

“Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.”

We are all indispensable to each other. Note that we are **not** indispensable to the Lord Jesus! Although Jesus longs to use each one of us in glorifying His Name and promoting His Kingdom everywhere, He is not bound, limited or tied down to any single individual. One very great missionary leader (C.T. Studd) was once asked, *“What will happen to your work when you die?”* The answer he gave was, *“When I die, my Lord will have one fool less to contend with, He can therefore do His work better!”* God may bury His workmen but He never buries His work! We are not indispensable to the Lord Jesus, but we are indispensable to each other! **Every believer is a necessary member of the Body of Christ.** Every member of the Body of Christ is to fulfil a particular function. Each one of us can help build up the church and each other through mutual encouragement, exhortation and the sharing of victories and defeats.

Each of us can live in continuous personal revival as we humbly share our failures and as we ask for prayer for victory over them. If we do, then we do others and ourselves immense good as we walk in the light with each other. Personal revival may lead to corporate revival.

3. The principle of inter-dependence (v. 17-22)

“If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.”

Amputation is not a good option! The body is poorer for the loss of a limb and the severed limb can’t function on its own. **‘Solo performance’** is not an option for a believer. The structure of the body does not admit the possibility of isolated individualism.

Every believer needs the help of every other believer. Each part of the body has its own contribution to make to the growth of the Kingdom of God and the building up of the church. So **all churches in all nations** need help from one another!

4. The principle of impartiality (v. 23-25)

This means not giving preferential treatment. In fact, particular respect should be shown to those members who **seem** less important than others.

“The parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour and the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.”

Every believer plays a significant role in the life of the Body of Christ. **We** might not appreciate that role, but **Jesus does!** Before Him all things are laid bare and wide open and Jesus will always evaluate justly. When this principle is violated, the result is factions and dissension. In chapter two of his letter, James makes it very clear that favouritism is wrong!

5. The principle of identification (v. 26)

“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part is honoured with it.”

All believers should have the same care for each other. If one member of the body suffers, all the members suffer with that member. If one believer is honoured, all the rest are glad. They don't get upset, unhappy or burned up with jealousy when honour is conferred on another believer. Instead, they rejoice with that brother or sister and thank God for the favour He has bestowed on them.

If we practice these five principles fervently, then the world will notice our corporate oneness and our unity. They will come to understand that God alone has done this.

Working out the Principles from the Global to the Local Church.

Usually these principles are learned slowly, step by step. There is a development by stages:

- **Coming** together is a beginning
- **Staying** together is progress
- **Thinking** together is real unity
- **Working** together is success

You have to work through the process stage by stage. You can't skip stages and hope to move right away from the first stage to the final stage. May God give us the grace to **come, stay, think and work** together, so we can demonstrate that we, the followers of Jesus Christ, **can** co-operate with each other with a single purpose – that of **bringing glory to our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Unity in Diversity is nothing new. Paul encouraged the churches he had a part in founding to maintain this distinctive – so that the world may believe that Jesus was sent by the Father (John 17:21).

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA)

Principles of Working Together

A statement of faith was drawn up. One of the central beliefs included:

“The great essentials of divine revelation contained in the Scriptures; namely the fall of man, the necessity of the new birth, the atonement of Christ and justification by faith, with an emphasis on presenting these truths to all.”

Evangelicals, including both conservatives and charismatics, came to distinguish between **principles** and **preferences**.

The principles of the Gospel never change – for example:

- The death of Jesus was to atone for our sins.
- Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour of the World.
- Without Jesus all people are lost.

We can never compromise on principles. But there are other teachings in Scripture that are matters of personal interpretation. For example: the exact period when the church will be raptured to meet the Lord. Devout Godly men have maintained that it is:

- Before the tribulation
- During the tribulation
- At the end of the tribulation

In the end, these are preferences of opinion. Looking carefully at the Scriptures, some people prefer one interpretation over the others.

On our principles we must speak out strongly. On our preferences we may speak quietly and graciously being very careful not to sacrifice the unity of the Body of Christ. A paraphrase of a statement by a North African theologian summarises it well:

In essentials – unity

In non-essentials – liberty

In everything – love

For believers, unity must always be **unity in truth**. And truth is rooted in the Bible. Co-operation is only possible if there is a substantial measure of unity. Believers everywhere should be characterised by **unity – fellowship – co-operation**.

Henri Blocher wrote a paper called **The Nature of Biblical Unity**. In this paper he gives five criteria that can be used to evaluate any Biblical teaching to determine if it is **a principle or a preference**:

1. **The Biblical Criterion** – the place given to the subject in the Bible itself
2. **The Theological Criterion** – how strategic the teaching is
3. **The Practical Criterion** – having to do with the consequences of the teaching in the lives of the believers
4. **The Historical Criterion** – how this particular teaching has been evaluated in the past by Godly believers
5. **The Contemporary Criterion** – where Godly believers who have studied the teaching in depth from a variety of sources find themselves (in numbers) in disagreement, we can conclude that this teaching does not belong to the vital centre of truth – i.e. it is not a principle.

Possible areas of co-operation:

- Evangelism and spiritual revival in the church
- Theological education/ leadership development
- Education for children/youth in Biblical truth
- Literature / Media / Communication
- Relief and economic development
- Reaching unreached peoples
- Prayer
- Annual Conference
- A leaders' Book Club
- Creating employment

What are the current blockages to regional and national co-operation?

- **Satanic opposition:** he constantly promotes disunity, discouragement and despair through lies, fear etc.
- **Fear** that if North African believers are seen to be well established and organised, then this will provoke a backlash.
- **Doctrinal disunity** arising from an inability to distinguish between principle and preference.
- **A lack of trust among leaders** because they don't know each other. They don't meet often enough. Too much travel gives rise to suspicion.

- **Foreign involvement and especially foreign money** tends to “buy” loyalty to foreign groups. This means that local churches are not free to build local, national and regional ties.
- **Lack of understanding of the “big picture”** of the global church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Churches are small** and maturity levels are low.
- **Leaders are known locally but not nationally** and so levels of trust are low.

Summary

There are warnings to be heeded. There are mistakes to be avoided. But given the will to **come** and **stay** and **think** and **work** together, we can demonstrate to the world that, as followers of Jesus Christ, we can co-operate with a single purpose – to glorify the Lord Jesus and, ***“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”*** (Eph. 4:3)

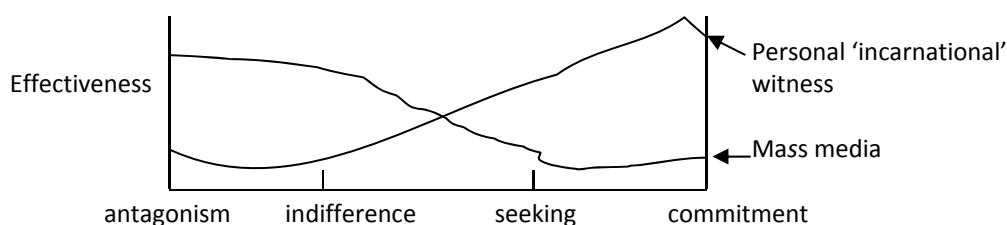
Session 8

Principles of Developing Networks

It is self-evident that Our Company can't do everything! However, if what we do is linked up and connected with what other people are doing then there is likely to be greater effectiveness in terms of the impact of the Gospel. There is a critical and fundamental need to improve our inter-personal communication and co-operation with other groups and churches working among our Neighbours.

There are **stages in evangelism** starting with the information stage. This is followed by the reflection stage, the reinforcement stage, the motivation stage, the conviction stage, the decision stage and finally by the action stage. Our input into these stages needs to be carefully reviewed and thought through. If, for example, we only input the information stage and neither we nor others have input into the other stages, then we are not likely to complete evangelism.

If you try and graph the effectiveness of different types of evangelism against a receptivity scale of antagonism through indifference to commitment, you get something like this:



If this is true, then the mass media – literature distribution, radio, Satellite TV etc. have a usefulness during the initial stages of information sharing, but their effectiveness drops off as people get more interested in the Gospel. Neighbours will never be reached by 'long distance' evangelism because the final stages of evangelism are most effectively done by 'incarnational' witness, where a person is in face-to-face communication. So both are necessary – the mass media and the personal, 'incarnational' witness – but it will be through the latter that the task is completed.

Work among Neighbours in general is a balance between a mass media ministry and an 'incarnational' witness ministry. It is very important never to give up either end of the spectrum! This means that it is vital for us to recognise the need to work together with those in mass media evangelism – especially those in radio and TV evangelism.

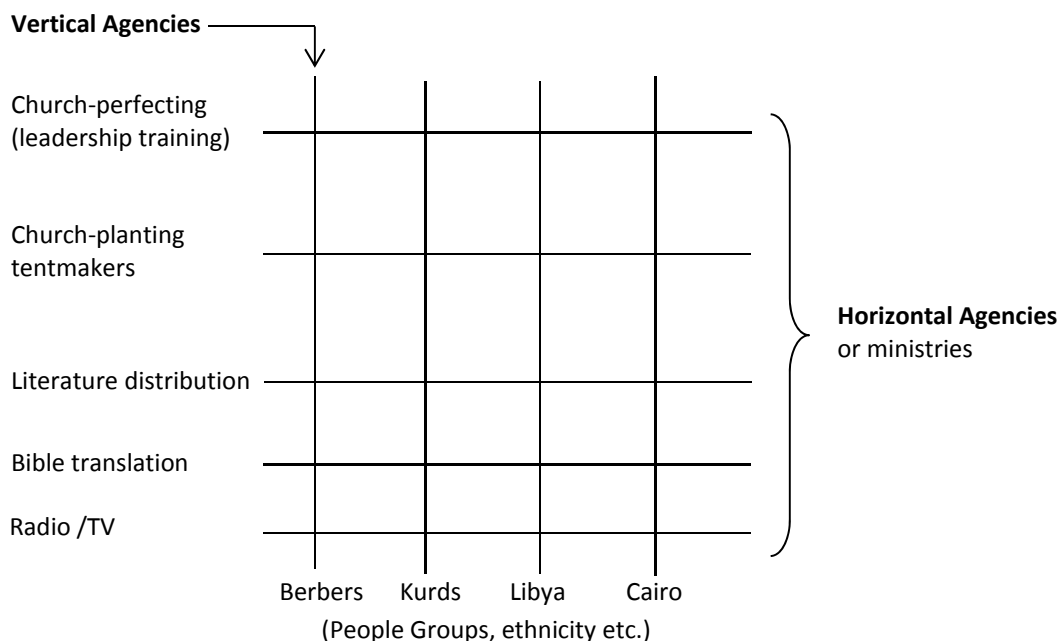
In business there are horizontally-oriented companies and those that are vertically-oriented. A vertically oriented company is one that supplies all its own needs from the raw materials to the finished product. Horizontal companies specialise in one area – i.e. an advertising company using their expertise in advertising in as wide a field as possible – often becoming a multi-national company in that area.

Using this same model, there are some 'companies' that are vertically oriented and others that are horizontally oriented. FEBA is an example of a horizontal company. It just produces radio programmes but covers a wide diversity of language groups. Other companies are vertically integrated – i.e. trying to reach one people group exclusively. To reach this people group they get involved in the production of radio programmes, translating the Scriptures, literature production, church planting, leadership development, Bible Schools etc. – geared to reach their one people group. Effective working together happens when we network the two types of 'companies'. The benefits of this networking are:

1. Reduced duplication and increased effectiveness and co-operation
2. Conservation of limited resources
3. Increased credibility, as there is less individualism and more of a community relationship

Networking

A good model of networking is a **net of vertical and horizontal strands**.



Webster defines a 'net' as:

"A fabric or structure of cords or wires that cross at regular intervals and are knotted or secured at the crossings."

There are various horizontal ministries reaching out to Neighbour peoples. Examples would be Bible Correspondence Courses and TEE (Theological Education by Extension). There is also a need for vertically integrated programmes reaching a particular people group or a country or even a city.

A vertically integrated programme (VIP) reaching, for example, the Kurds would have people working on radio programmes in Kurdish, the production and distribution of Scriptures and other books in the various Kurdish languages etc. These people involved in mass media will plan and co-ordinate with those people on the ground – tentmakers involved in church planting etc. When a worshipping group is in place, those with skills in leadership training and TEE will enter the programme.

The value of a VIP is as follows:

- Each agency can contribute in their area of strength. A danger for many agencies is that they experiment and get involved in things they are not good at. In this way they dissipate their resources.
- As different agencies contribute to a part of the VIP, this reduces the risk factor that is inherent in any new venture.
- It opens new areas of ministry with minimum effort.
- It enhances our stewardship of resources or – to put it another way – it maximises the return on our equity.

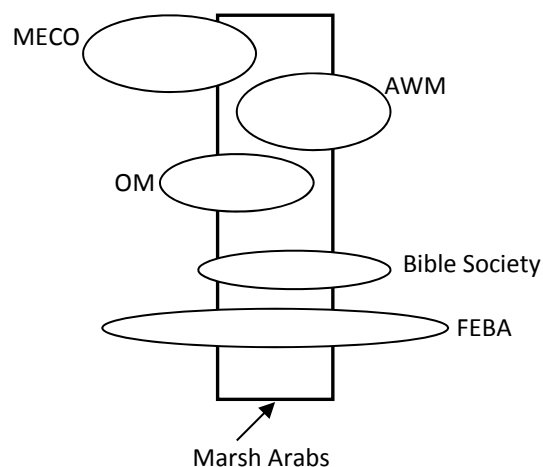
A VIP works best when there is a great deal of affinity in the people group (city, country etc.). In order to organise a VIP there needs to be a motivating sense of need and a commitment to work through all the difficulties. A VIP probably takes from three to five years to develop.

Whenever possible our teams working among Neighbours should enter into a VIP. We could take Iraq as an example. This has an adequate area of commonality. Other areas of commonality would include similar language, nationality, geographic proximity or ethnicity.

All agencies interested in Iraq would be approached to see if they would be open to working together in a VIP. The commitment would be to work together for an **on-going process** – not just for an event like the

Athens Olympics. Each agency would contribute in its area of expertise to a common approach and programme.

Below is a diagram showing the contributions of the various agencies to the Marsh Arabs of Iraq. They all contribute something, but the amounts differ depending on other commitments.



The initiative to work in a VIP should come from the local level. Those on the ground in touch with the local situation can best understand what is needed for a VIP to come into being. It is very important to realise that a VIP goes far beyond co-operation. It is a common, integrated plan to do things together over an extended period of time.

Affirmation 17 of the “Manila Manifesto” says:

“We affirm the urgent need for churches, mission agencies and other Christian organisations to co-operate in evangelism and social action, repudiating competition and avoiding duplication.”

And:

“We affirm that co-operation in evangelism is indispensable, first because it is the will of God, but also because the Gospel of reconciliation is discredited by our disunity and because, if the task of world evangelism is ever to be accomplished, we must engage in it together.”

How do you start?

The First Step is to pray. Hostile political/religious structures, active satanic opposition and historical patterns of fragmentation and individualism in ministry are formidable obstacles to effectiveness.

The Second Step is to make an intensive commitment to partnership in mission. The leader must have the vision and deep commitment both to the people group and to the idea of functional co-operation in a VIP. It will take a commitment to a considerable effort in time preparing to do whatever is necessary to bring such a partnership to life.

The Third Step is to discuss privately with other agencies and churches that are interested in the particular people group or who are already working with them. You should explore each ministry’s objectives, perceptions of the circumstances and of the felt needs of the people. Explore their interest in the possibility of co-operation and understand what their priorities might be if joint discussions were held with other ministries.

The Fourth Step is to determine who should be contacted and invited to enter the VIP. Care needs to be taken that smaller groups with a significant contribution to make are not left off the ‘recommended’ list. The involvement of non-western, national-led ministries usually takes special effort.

The Fifth Step is to call together a working meeting. Often the meeting brings together people who have never met before or worse – those who have in some ways competed in the past. The best of your skills in diplomacy will be needed here! At this meeting each group should share their backgrounds and ministry objectives. They should also share what they perceive as needs both within the various ministries and also in the area.

Discuss the following:

1. What are the major obstacles or problems to evangelism and church planting?
2. Which issues should receive priority if a VIP is started?
3. What would be a suitable timetable for action?
4. What are suitable financial arrangements?
5. How can you establish the best procedures for reporting and communications?
6. On what basis should the group evaluate its work together?
7. What is the preferred form of decision-making?

You may think of additional points to add to this list. From this meeting there should emerge a common plan – a VIP!

Session 9

Answering Tough Questions

Objectives:

Head: * To grow in your understanding of the role of apologetics in witness to Neighbours

* To grow in your understanding of some basic beliefs and practices of Neighbours

Heart: To understand that Jesus is the ultimate solution to all their felt-needs and not our answers

Hands: To be able to respond to some of the most usual questions with adequate answers so enabling the conversation and the friendship to progress.

Time Together

1. Welcome and prayer

2. Debrief the group as to their 'Homework' assignments

- Ask the group to share how their two-by-two ministry went.
- Ask how the group felt relationships had improved in the group and/or team in proportion to the quality of teaming.
- Do they have a better understanding of "networking"?

3. As a group work your way through the Jesus under Attack Bible Study.

As you go through the study get a number of the group in turn to summarize the key concepts.

At the end discuss how these concepts challenge their current ideas of how to witness.

Remember that most Neighbours have never had a serious spiritual conversation with a believer. Most believers stay away from such topics in an effort to 'keep the peace'. When Neighbours do find themselves in such spiritual conversations they often bring up issues that are apologetic in nature. They have been taught these from childhood. They relate to 'falsehoods' in Christianity and these have been used to strengthen their own religious identity. Sometimes they are curious as to how you will answer. At other times they are looking for an opportunity to score points and to underwrite the superiority of their religious beliefs.

Your goal is to try and get to personal issues, felt needs and vital Gospel themes. However, it is also necessary to be able to answer some basic objections. They must be answered both at a simple level and at a deeper level.

4. Have members of the group read out the six sections of : Our Neighbours' Objections to Our Faith.

5. Work through the paper on Approaches to Answering Questions and discuss which approach you feel most comfortable to start with.

6. Read through each of the following:

- ❖ Answers to the '**Son of God**' issue
- ❖ Answers to the '**Three Gods**' issue
- ❖ Answer to the **corruption of Scriptures** issue
- ❖ Answer to the **Gospel of Barnabas**

After you have discussed an issue, break the group into pairs and have them **role play** the simple answer. Do this for each issue.

8. Spend some time praying for Neighbour friends and for each other in the group.

Homework

Head: Ask a close Neighbour friend to explain to you what he/she **understands** about:

- The deity and sonship of Jesus
- The Trinity
- The corruption of Scripture

Don't try and answer at this point. Just try to understand and **feel** what he/she feels about these issues.

Heart: Make a list of how Jesus meets the spiritual and emotional/social needs of your Neighbour friends.

Hands: Practice role playing the most relevant level of answers you can give to your friends on the various issues.

Handouts for Session 10: Beginning Where They Are

1. Building Bridges
2. How to Read the Quran with a Christian Interpretation
3. Guidelines for reading the Quran – what the Quran says about itself
4. Using the Quran as a Bridge
5. Jesus in the Quran and other Sources
6. A Reference List of Jesus in the Quran
7. God's Love in the Quran and the Bible

Session 9

Jesus Under Attack

One of the fears of many believers is that they will be asked questions they can't answer! They don't want to look foolish nor do they want their message compromised by their inadequacies. Because of this some believers stay away from any topic or social setting that could lead them into a 'hot spot'.

Jesus was often under attack by the Pharisees and Sadducees – the religious leaders of the day – who were continually trying to discredit Him by asking Him questions that would destroy His influence with the people.

We will look at several examples of Jesus under attack and discover some principles that we can apply to our lives.

A. Read the passage and then for each passage answer the following questions:

- Who was attacking Jesus?
 - What is Jesus being asked?
 - How does Jesus answer?
 - What principle can we learn from this situation?
1. Mt. 4:1-11
 2. Mt. 22:15-22
 3. Mt. 26:57-68
 4. Lk. 15:3-32
 5. Lk. 17:20-21
 6. Jn. 8:1-11

List the Principles you have gained from your study of these passages:

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.
- vi.

B. We have looked at **how** to answer questions when 'under attack'. But usually this is not our problem. Our problem is **not knowing** the answers to the questions we are asked! The following passages of Scripture should help us:

1. 1 Peter 3:15
2. Acts 17:10-12
3. James 1:5
4. Proverbs 10:19
5. Mt. 10:16-20
6. Acts 4:1-13
7. Eph. 6:19-20

Read through these Scriptures one by one. Have a different member of the group read each one. How do these verses help in the question of knowing the appropriate answers?

C. Sometimes it is a help **not** to know the answer to a question straight away! Reflect on someone you have known in the past who always seemed to have a slick answer to any question or situation!

At least being asked questions that we can't adequately answer will encourage us to think, pray and study more!

What are some of the other benefits of not having an immediate answer to the issue raised?

D. What do you think God has been teaching you about answering questions through this study?
What specific actions are you going to take as a result?

E. What other questions do you have about this topic?

Remember

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have, but do this with gentleness and respect."

(1 Peter 3:15)

Session 9

Our Neighbours' Objections to Our Faith

A. The Authenticity of the Scriptures

1. The present Bible cannot be the original one, since it does not agree with the Quran.
2. Though corrupted, the present Bible contains parts of the original truth: the unity of God, punishment and reward, the significance of the coming of the last prophet – Muhammad. It is these parts only that the Quran is said to confirm and protect.
3. Where is the Gospel of Jesus? Did He not take it to heaven?
4. Which of the four Gospels is the one that descended on Jesus, the son of Mary?
5. Latter day Christians have not been able to preserve the Holy Injil on account of their forefathers erasing the statements concerning the coming of Muhammad.
6. As the Tawrat was abrogated by the coming of the Zabour and the Zabour by the Injil, so the entire Bible is abrogated by the Quran.

B. Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible

1. The Gospels cannot be accepted as trustworthy because they were not written down from the dictation of Jesus Christ Himself, but passed through a period of oral transmission before being finally committed to writing.
2. Why are there four Gospels?
3. Christians practically admit the corruption of the Bible. They are still ready to corrupt it by periodic publication of corrected or revised English versions.
4. Our Neighbours believe in pre-Islamic revelation, but do not believe that the Christian Bible is the actual Word of God. They believe that Jesus and Moses were the direct recipients of divine revelation. The Christian Scriptures are merely human compositions. Luke admits this. He does not claim divine origin for his Gospel.

C. The Person of Jesus Christ

1. The Christians say that Jesus is the Son of Allah – is Allah male or female? If male, has Allah a wife that He should have a son? The idea that God should have a son is merely a relic of pagan superstition.
2. The belief in God begetting a son lowers God to the level of an animal.
3. The coming of God into limited human form is a degradation of Him. The concept is absurd and impossible. Communion is not attained by bringing God down to man in the sense of incarnation, but by man rising gradually towards God by spiritual progress and the purification of his life.
4. The life of an individual, however holy and pure, is an inadequate and indeed impossible medium for the expression of the life of God. His attributes are infinitude, omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence,
5. The claim of Divinity is the deadliest sin and greatest outrage to the sanctity of God's name.
6. To find you crying out to one who was only a man as though He were God, makes our hearts shudder.

D. The Doctrine of the Trinity

1. The plain dictates of nature are the Unity of God and the absence of any rival or partner.
2. This absurd teaching is the most deadly sin of which a man can be guilty. Our Neighbours believe that Allah is one solitary, almighty Person without internal distinctions or relationships.
3. Equally detestable is the blasphemy that God is not perfect unless the Holy Spirit and Jesus, son of Mary, join with Him and that these three together make God.

E. The Historicity of the Crucifixion

1. It has been the challenge of the Holy Quran that Jesus did not die on the Cross.
2. The idea of the physical death of the Infinite God is no doubt the worst blasphemy that has been uttered in the world. Even a denial of God would come second to it.
3. The Quran – sura 4:156-158, *“And for their (the Jews) saying, ‘Verily we have slain the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary and Apostle of God’ – Yet they slew him not, and they crucified him not, but they had only his likeness. And they who differed about him were in doubt concerning him. No sure knowledge had they about him, but only followed an opinion; and they did not really slay him, but God took him up to Himself and God is mighty and wise.”*

F. How Christ Saves

1. Belief in the omnipresence of God keeps a man from secret sins.
2. According to Islam, man enters the world without any sin in his nature. Sin is an acquisition – an after-acquisition, not a heritage.
3. The doctrine of vicarious atonement amounts to a negation of God's justice and man's moral responsibility.
4. Belief in the atonement involves disbelief in the mercy of God, for He was not satisfied until He had punished Jesus for the sins of mankind.
5. I do not see how the Cross helps us to repent.
6. The Quran teaches that, "For the forgiveness of a sinner God does not require to be paid any compensation."
7. There is no need for death on the Cross. God affects what He purposes by merely manifesting His wish.

Here is the reply that was given by the editor of a Muslim Monthly Magazine to someone who wrote in deeply troubled by her sinful life:

"Turn a new leaf. Lead a righteous life henceforward. This alone can wash off past sins. This is the only true atonement. Sins are washed off, the Quran assures us, by good deeds and these alone."
(Quran sura 11:114)

Session 9

Approaches to Answering Questions

1. The Differences between Polemics, Apologetics and Dialogue

- **Polemics** (from the Greek word for war – *polemos*) means **attacking** the practices and beliefs of the other person.
- **Apologetics** (from the Greek word for defence – *apologia*) means defending our beliefs against attack and, where appropriate, questioning the validity of the beliefs and practice of the other person.
- **Dialogue** (from the Greek word describing speaking between two people – *dialogia*) means engaging in a **discussion** in which there is a frank and open exchange of views and experiences hopefully leading to a meeting of hearts and minds in **mutual understanding**, but maybe not in agreement.

It is probably best to **start** with a **dialogue approach**. Some people are uneasy about the word ‘dialogue’ because they think it suggests compromise – pretending differences don’t exist or trying to find the lowest common denominator that both sides can agree on. But this is not necessarily so. Dialogue may not always be evangelism, but it always seeks **mutual understanding** of our various beliefs and practices and this is a very good start!

2. The “Knock it Down” Approach

This may end up in polemics, in which case it is usually counter-productive. But it can be used usefully in open countries where our Neighbours are in a minority. You need to know your arguments very well. At best it is good, strong apologetics.

3. The “Build Upon” Approach

This is the approach used in this manual. It is built on **understanding where they are** in their understanding of beliefs and spiritual experiences and building on it. It means using the Quran, but moving from it to the Bible. It means understanding Folk Islam, the shame culture and the felt needs of Neighbours – spiritual, emotional and social. Once you have an understanding of these things, it is possible to contextualise the Gospel so that Neighbours can see how it relates to their needs. It incorporates both the apologetic and the dialogue approach. Paul’s address on Mars Hill (Acts 17) is a classic example of this approach.

4. The “Walk Around” Approach

This is to ignore Islam and just to preach “Jesus and Him crucified”. This approach is commonly used by short-termers. It has obvious drawbacks. Often there is a failure to understand what words and concepts mean to the other person. But it is probably quite a good place to start.

Ask all the longtermers the following questions:

- What are the most helpful kinds of Christian apologetic you have seen?
- Are there apologetics you are not happy with?
- History: If we accept the very many criticisms about Christianity in the past and present, are there some that we must challenge and how?
- Our way of life: How do we defend the Christian life against attacks and accusations and how do we comment on it in a positive way?
- Politics: How do we respond to challenges about such things as:
 - ✦ The role of Constantine in defining our faith and spreading Christianity with a sword
 - ✦ The Crusaders
 - ✦ Western Christian imperialism
 - ✦ Christian Zionism

- About Muhammad: Is it ever appropriate to say anything critical about Muhammad?
- How do we distinguish between major issues where we should ask penetrating questions and issues that are of lesser importance?
- Has there been any research on the effectiveness of various approaches in the way we present the Gospel?
- Finally ask if they have any suggestions of how we can learn from the past and from each other and so make our communication of the Gospel more effective?

5. Answering General Questions

Neighbours will probably ask many questions that you would never be asked in your own culture. But Neighbours don't necessarily expect a straight answer. Our difficulty is that we are unprepared as to how to answer, since we don't ask these questions in the cultures from which most of us come. There are three issues unrelated to theology that often cause us problems – money, our friends (team) and family.

Money: Possible questions include:

- ✧ What is your salary?
- ✧ How much rent do you pay?
- ✧ How much did your car cost?
- ✧ How can you afford a car?

Sometimes Neighbours will expect you to exaggerate because that would add to your importance. Work out appropriate answers to these questions! Suggestions include:

- "I get a fair salary."
- "The rent is reasonable for the size of the flat."
- "I sold my own car before I left home."

These questions can be difficult for language students to answer.

Friends: If people ask you questions like:

- ✧ What does he do?
- ✧ Where did you meet?

You need to work out answers to the question of the identity of your team – but without looking as if you are a team!

Family: There are questions like:

- ✧ Why aren't you married?
- ✧ Are you pregnant?
- ✧ Why not?

In answering, any reference to the will of God can be misunderstood since it is a matter of obedience and acceptance with joy of God's will rather than our Neighbours' concept of suffering the will of God. Often our Neighbours think it is a sin not to get married.

The question of pregnancy is often related to our Neighbours' law that a wife who has children under seven years old and who is divorced has a right to keep the children until they are seven. As a result, wives are less likely to be divorced if they have very young children. This means that pregnancy is a very good thing in respect to the possibility of divorce!

Session 9

Answers to the “Son of God” Issue

Answer to the issue of the Son of God can be given at different levels. Two possible responses are given here: **the simple response** and the **more advanced response**.

The Simple Response

Question: “How can you say that Jesus was the Son of God?”

Response: “What do you mean by the title ‘Son of God’?”

When the Bible speaks of the ‘Son of God’, it isn’t speaking in biological terms – genetics etc.

It is often difficult to put the great truths of the nature of God into human language. The term ‘Son of God’ is pointing to a special relationship Jesus had with God. This **doesn’t** mean that Jesus was the result of any sort of sexual relationship. This special relationship began with the miraculous birth of Jesus and simply grew from there.

“The angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you and for that reason the holy child will be called the Son of God.’ ” (Lk. 1:35)

Jesus is called *Isa ibn Maryam*. Who was His father? It wasn’t Joseph. In the Middle East sons are called after fathers, so Jesus was called *ibn Allah*.

The More Advanced Response (This is a **long** section but I hope it is well worth reading.)

In Biblical Hebrew and in Aramaic the words for son are ‘ben’ and ‘bar’. These words occur in many idiomatic and metaphorical phrases. These deal with **relationships** between people and society and between people, society and God. In Arabic the equivalent word is ‘*ibn*’ and it is only rarely used in a metaphorical way. An example would be to call the Bedouin ‘Sons of the Desert’. In Arabic the usual word for son is ‘*walad*’ and this only has a **biological** meaning. Neither ‘*ibn*’ nor ‘*walad*’ are used for personal relationships – not even for a stepson or an adopted son. In some dialects of Arabic ‘*abu*’ (‘father of’) can be used metaphorically – ‘*abu kirsch*’ – ‘father of a pot belly’ or ‘*abu shanab*’ – ‘father of a moustache’.

So Old Testament Hebrew terms translated into Arabic and New Testament Aramaic terms translated into Greek and then translated **literally** into Arabic will always cause difficulties because in Arabic they always mean sexual pro-generation. In the polytheistic worldview of pre-Islamic Arabs gods fathered other gods by visiting mortal women. So the term ‘Son of God’ implies a genetic offspring from a sexual union of some sort. There was a widespread Christian heresy – Arianism – in the 4th–7th centuries that held that God in some way begat Jesus in time.

There were Christians in Arabia pre-Muhammad. They were called the Nasara. They **did** believe Jesus to be the Son of God in this polytheistic way. They held that God had a sexual relationship with Mary and begat another god – Jesus. This is what Muhammad believed that Christians believed! (see sura 6:101). This view is condemned in the Quran as so terrible as to cause the heavens to burst, the earth to split and the mountains to collapse (sura 19:88-92). The Quran affirms that both Mary and Jesus ate food (sura 5:75) and were therefore humans and not gods. The Quran states clearly that God doesn’t have a lover or a child from such a union. (sura 72:3;6:101,102) In fact it says that anyone who calls Jesus the ‘Son of God’ is ‘*kafir*’ and condemned to hell forever. (sura 9:30) Moreover the Quran mocks anyone calling himself a ‘Son of God’ as we are clearly humans and not gods. (sura 5:18)

By condemning the concept ‘the Son of God’, the Quran has caused all Muslims to know, fear and hate this title being used of Jesus. Muslims believe that all Christians believe in the sexual union of God and His lover – Maryam. They believe that the product of this union was God’s bastard – Jesus. They then use this to prove that Christians are terrible blasphemers and that the Bible is horribly corrupt. They are filled with

loathing of us for these awful thoughts. Often our explanations of the title convince them even more that Christians are polytheists and are hopelessly condemned to hell.

6a.1 What does the Biblical phrase ‘Son of God’ mean?

In Hebrew and in Aramaic the word for ‘son’ or ‘sons’ often means **belonging**. For example:

Sons of Zion – Ps. 149:2

Sons of the prophets – 2 Kings 2:5

Sons of the Kingdom – Mt. 13:38 (KJV)

It is also used for someone who **benefits** from something. For example:

Sons of the resurrection – Lk. 20:36

Sons of light – Lk. 16:8 and Jn. 12:36

Son of peace – Lk. 10:6

So a ‘son’ or ‘sons’ are people who willingly belong to God and who enjoy His special favour. God cares for them, and calls Himself their ‘Father’. (Deut. 32:6 and Jer. 31:9)

The New Testament uses the same phrases to mean the same thing:

Sons of the world – Lk. 16:8

Sons of the evil one – Mt. 13:38

Son of destruction – Jn. 17:12

In translations of the Bible for our Neighbours the translators have tended to use similes. So instead of ‘Son of God’ or ‘children of God’ they have used, ‘God will say they are like children to Him’ or ‘God will consider them as if they were His children’.

But even similes like this are repugnant to our Neighbours. So some more contextualised versions have used ‘The righteous servants of God’ for ‘sons of God’ or ‘saints’. One of the most ancient translations for ‘sons of God’ is ‘companions (*wali*) of God’ – an expression that emphasises our future state. (Lk. 20:36; Eph. 1:5)

6a.2 The Concept of the ‘Son of God’ in the New Testament

The Davidic monarchy appeared to end at the exile, but God had promised that David’s throne would last for ever. As a result, there was a hope that God would raise up a descendant of David to be their ultimate and everlasting King. In addition to Daniel 2 and 7 there were several prophecies that this King would not die and that His Kingdom would never end. Read:

Micah 5:2

Is. 52:13–53:12; 42:1–4 (the source of ‘the Servant’)

Mt. 12:18–21

Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30

Ps. 110:1 (This verse is quoted 33 times in the New Testament.)

Is. 11:1 (the source of the title ‘Son of David’)

Jer. 23:5–6; 33:15–17

Ez. 37:24–26

1 Chron. 17:11–14 (the source of the title ‘Son of God’)

See also the Messianic Psalms – Ps. 2, 72 and 89:27.

Ps. 2:7 is echoed in the baptism of Jesus and in the transfiguration. It is also quoted in Acts 13:32–33 and in Heb. 1:5. In royal Biblical language “begetting” refers not to conception but to enthronement. So it is used in reference to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

Another example is Rom. 1:4, ***“.....and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ Our Lord....”***

“For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given” (Is. 9:6-7) is one of the sources of ‘Son’ as a messianic title. See also Ps. 2:12. By the first century Jewish teachers were interpreting all the ‘royal son’ and ‘messiah’ passages in the Old Testament as Messianic along with such passages as:

Gen. 3:15; 49:10

Num. 24:17-19

Ps. 80:15

Ps. 118:22-29

Messianic expectations among the Jews differed. The nationalists (Pharisees and Zealots) were expecting God to send a military leader to destroy the Gentile armies, expel all sinners and foreigners and restore the Kingdom to Israel. Israel would then dominate the world on behalf of God. They were ready to go to war as soon as the Messiah appeared. They called the Messiah ‘The King of the Jews’, ‘The Lord Messiah’, ‘Son of David’ and ‘Son of God’.

The Jews were not alone in calling their king ‘the Son of God’. When a Pharaoh was enthroned in Egypt, he was given the title ‘Son of God’. It was also a title given to Caesar.

About 100 BC the Pharisees wrote ‘A Psalm of Solomon’ – the first recorded use of the word ‘Messiah’ for the awaited Saviour King. By the end of the inter-testamental period it is clear that ‘Messiah’ and ‘Son of God’ were equivalent titles and both referred to a unique king through whom Israel would gain world domination.

6a.3 the Avoidance by Jesus of the Titles ‘Messiah’ and ‘Son of God’

Jesus rejected the nationalistic view of the Messiah and his kingdom. He avoided the Messianic titles used by the nationalistic sects such as ‘Messiah’ and ‘the Son of God’ but He didn’t reject them. Instead He insisted on calling Himself **the Son of Man**. The ‘Kingdom of God’ (as we will see later in Session Eleven) includes all peoples. (Is. 2:4, 11:10, 42:1, 52:10-15, 55:4-5; Ps. 2:7-8 and Amos 9:11-12 that is quoted in Acts 15:16-17).

If Jesus had called Himself the Messiah/Son of God, then the Zealots would probably have immediately acknowledged Him as king and risen up in revolt against the Romans – i.e. they would have forced Him to follow their agenda. The readiness to rise up was based on Ps. 110:3. John 6:15 speaks of the withdrawal of Jesus from the crowds to avoid being made king by force. The rest of the chapter shows that He offended them just enough to drive them away.

Jesus not only avoided these titles, but He forbade others to use them of Him. He even forbade the demons to use these titles.

“And demons also came out of many crying, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But He forbade them and would not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Messiah.” (Lk. 4:41)

In general when people addressed Him as Messiah/Son of God, Jesus changed it to the title ‘Son of Man’ – a title that we will see is a higher title and one that was free of negative overtones and nationalistic connotations. Here are some examples:

- Mt. 16:16, 20-21, ***“Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God’. Then He strictly charged His disciples to tell no-one that He was the Christ (Messiah). From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He (in Mark it is the ‘Son of Man’) must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things.”***
- Jn. 1:49-51, ***“Nathaniel answered them, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God, You are the King of Israel!’ And He said to him, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”***
- Mt. 26:63-64, ***“.....And the High Priest said to Him, ‘I adjure you by the Living God, tell us if you are the Messiah/Christ, the Son of God.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have said so, but I tell you from now on you will see the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13) seated at the right hand of power (Ps. 110:1) and coming on the clouds of heaven.”*** (Dan. 7:13)

The Jewish leaders were looking for a reason to condemn Jesus. His use of the title 'Son of Man' outraged them because it is a higher title than Son of God. In effect Jesus is saying, *'I am the unique, divine person of pre-existent origin.'* All three writers of the synoptic Gospels (Mark, Luke and Matthew) make the claim of Jesus to be the 'Son of Man' the basis of the Sanhedrin's charge of blasphemy.

In summary, by the first century the title 'Son of God' (i.e. belonging to God) and Messiah were equivalent titles meaning the Messianic King. They were not an ascription of divinity. Note that Peter's confession at Caesarea was not meant to imply divinity. See the records of Luke and Mark. Luke shortens the confession to ***"The Messiah/Christ of God"***. He omits the word 'Son' as superfluous. Mark retains only ***"You are the Christ"***. If Luke and Mark thought there was an additional revelation not already present in the title Messiah, they would hardly have omitted it to save space!

Jesus preferred the title 'the Son of Man' or the shorter form 'the Son'.

6a.4 The Title – 'the Son'

In the Old Testament the term 'the Son' was used for the king chosen by God to govern His people. In the Gospels 'the Son' occurs in contexts where it would have been awkward to use the longer title, 'Son of Man'. (See Mt. 11:27 and Lk. 10:22.)

"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father and no-one knows the Son except the Father and no-one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him."

Since Jesus is never quoted as calling Himself 'the Son of God' in the Synoptic Gospels, it would seem likely that when He calls Himself 'the Son' this is a shorter form of 'the Son of Man'.

In John's Gospel, after quoting Jesus' statement that the 'Son of Man' descended from heaven, (3:13) John comments that ***"God.....gave His Son"*** (3:16) and ***"God sent the Son into the world"***. (3:17)

One of the very few places where Jesus calls Himself 'the Son of God' is in Jn. 5:25 (but also note v. 27). When Jesus wants to explain His relationship with the Father, He uses first person pronouns and not kinship terms:

"I and the Father are One" (Jn. 10:30)

"He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him Who sent Me. And he who sees Me, sees Him Who sent Me." (Jn. 12:44-45)

See also Jn. 14:8-10.

6a.5 The Title – 'the Son of Man'

In the indefinite form in normal Aramaic 'Son of Man' merely meant a human being, but in the definite form **'the Son of Man'** it referred to a human-like ruler as in Dan. 7:13-14, 18. This verse in Daniel inspired great hope that a heavenly person – "like a son of man" – would come from heaven, save people **from all nations** from their sin and from evil and be their king in an everlasting kingdom set up by God. (See Daniel 2:44.) So the Messianic King would **not** be the king of the Jews who would rule over everyone else. Rather, he would save all and rule over all inclusively.

In the inter-testamental period, various writers developed the concept of 'the Son of Man'. 1 Enoch (quoted in Jude v. 14) sees 'the Son of Man' as a pre-existent heavenly being who will establish a universal kingdom, destroy evil, rule the earth, judge all people at the resurrection and usher in a new world that is free of all evil. In 1 Enoch, He is called 'the Elect One', 'the Righteous One' 'the Light of the Nations' and 'God's Messiah'.

Jesus never used the title 'the Son of God' of Himself, but preferred to use 'the Son of Man' when He was trying to explain who He was.

Note some of His claims that, as 'the Son of Man':

- He has authority higher than the law. (Mt. 12:3-8)
- He has the authority to forgive sins. (Mt. 9:6)
- He has power to raise the dead. (Jn. 5:21, 27)
- He has the power to raise Himself from the dead. (Jn. 2:19, 10:18)
- He has the authority to grant eternal life to others. (Jn. 17:2)

- He has a Kingdom not of this world. (Jn. 18:36-37)
- He will come again in His glory (Mt. 25:31) – the glory of His Father. (Mt. 16:27)
- He will send His angels into His Kingdom. (Mt. 13:41, 16:27)
- He will sit on His glorious throne. (Mt. 19:28)
- He will judge everyone in all nations (Mt. 25:31-32)

Jesus as ‘the Son of Man’ declared that the Father had given Him:

- All things (Mt. 11:27; Jn. 13:3; Lk. 10:22)
- All authority and power (Mt. 28:18)
- All judgement (Jn. 5:22)
- All of His sheep (Jn. 6:37, 45)
- Every word He said (Jn. 8:28, 38, 47)
- Every deed He did (Jn. 5:19, 36)

Jesus further declared that:

- He existed before Abraham. (Jn. 8:58)
- He proceeded and came forth from God. (Jn. 8:42)
- He is the only One who has seen God. (Jn. 6:46)
- He is the One who knows God. (Lk. 10:22)
- He came from heaven. (Jn. 3:13)
- He came to give His life as a ransom for many. (Mt. 20:28)
- He is present wherever two or three gather in His name. (Mt. 18:20)
- He and the Father are One. (Jn. 10:30, 38)

Note that many of these attributes are reserved for God alone. To Jews living in the first century the term, ‘the Son of Man’ was extremely loaded with meaning. A statement like, “*I am the Son of Man*”, was a claim to deity. But outside Jewish contexts it had no meaning. So to the Gentiles the title is dropped and the term LORD is used. The exception to this is in Acts 7:56 when Stephen was speaking to a Jewish audience.

To ordinary English-speaking people the title ‘Son of Man’ conveys very little other than a reference to Jesus’ human nature. In the older Arabic versions ‘*ibnu l-insan*’ (son of the person) is equally meaningless. A new Arabic version uses ‘Lord of Mankind’ (*sayyidu l-bashar*).

So, in explaining the title ‘**Son of Man**’ refer to Daniel 7 – someone who is “like a man” and who is made Lord of All (*sayyidu l-kull*).

6a.6 The Use of the term ‘the Son of God’ after the Resurrection

After the enthronement of Jesus in heaven, there was no danger that the Jewish nationalists would start a revolution to support Him. It was clear now that the nature of the Kingdom of God was clearly ‘**not of this world**’. There was no further need to conceal Jesus as Messiah. In fact it was the resurrection that was the proof that Jesus was ‘the Son of God’ and ‘Christ Our Lord’. (Rom. 1:4) Clearly the disciples no longer felt themselves bound that they should not tell anyone that Jesus was the Christ. (Mt. 16:20)

In fact the reverse is true. They were commissioned to proclaim that Jesus was the Messiah. They used the titles ‘Son of God’ and ‘Messiah/Christ’ interchangeably.

See Acts 9:20-22 – “**And in the synagogues immediately he** (Paul) **proclaimed Jesus saying, ‘He is the Son of God’ ... proving that Jesus was the Christ.**” (See also Gal. 1:11-16, 4:6 and 1 Jn. 5:1, 5.)

However, they usually proclaimed Jesus simply as ‘Lord’. This replaced the title ‘Son of Man’ – probably because the latter was unknown to the Gentiles. Paul uses ‘Son of God’ only twelve times, but he uses ‘Lord’ and ‘Christ’ hundreds of times.

In systematic theology, by the fourth century, the divine nature of Jesus as a person in the Trinity came to be identified as ‘God the Son’. So it is not surprising that we, as evangelical believers in the twenty first century, see ‘Son of God’ in the text of the New Testament and misunderstand the phrase to mean ‘God the Son’. We think that the phrase ‘Son of God’ asserts the divinity of Jesus rather than messianic authority.

The Bible does affirm the divinity of Jesus but not by calling Him the 'Son of God'. There is no verse in the Bible where 'the Son of God' is used with clear intent to ascribe divinity to Jesus beyond that suggested by the title 'the Messiah'.

So, in coming to the issue of explaining the title 'Son of God' to your Neighbours be very careful not to confuse Biblical titles and the use of those titles with later theological use developed 300 years after the New Testament was written. Stick to Biblical usage!

Modern translators of the Arabic Bible have replaced the title 'Son of God' with the unique and accurate expression 'God's Messiah'. This has also been used in some Arabic versions of the 'Jesus' film. Our problem is that although our Neighbours are familiar with this title being given to Jesus, they don't know the **meaning** of the term.

Both 'Messiah' and 'Son of God' (equivalent terms) should be explained as titles for the Righteous King sent from God to save and rule over His people forever and to judge the nations. (See Acts 3:14, 4:26; Lk. 9:20, 23:35; Rev. 11:15, 12:7-10.)

6a.7 The Divinity of Jesus

The titles of the Messiah – 'Son of Man' and 'Son of God' – are not used at all in the Bible to describe the humanity and deity of Jesus. As we have seen, 'Son of Man' is the more exalted title. But to say 'the Son of God' is equivalent to 'Messiah' is not to belittle the title. The title 'Messiah' is also exalted.

The Messiah King was to have a supernatural origin. (Micah 5:2-4 and Jn. 7:27) The Messiah was only **like a human**. (Dan. 7:13; Rev. 1:12) The Messiah performed the acts of God on God's behalf. The Saviour was both human (Zech. 9:9) and divine (Zech. 14:9).

But the full divinity of Jesus is not revealed in the Bible by the use of any title, but by the things He did and the things prophesied about Him. (Many of these were listed in the 'Son of Man' section.)

Mark points out nineteen (!) sayings portraying Jesus as sharing the prerogatives of God as a glorified divine being. Twenty of the parables of Jesus portray Him in roles – real or metaphorical – that are attributed to God in the Old Testament.

Still the disciples didn't recognise the divinity of Jesus before the resurrection. They did ask themselves, ***"Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"*** After the resurrection Thomas says to the risen Jesus, ***"My Lord and My God"***. (Jn. 20:28) John writes in John 1:1-18 that Jesus is the Divine Word of God incarnate who reveals God to us. The 'Word of God' was a well-developed concept to both Jews and Greeks. It is frequently mentioned in Aramaic targums recited in every synagogue service. To the Jews the Word of God is the personalised projection of God through whom the world was created, through whom God's communications and activities on earth are performed and through whom God reveals Himself. However, the Jews never anticipated that the Messiah would be an incarnation of the Word of God.

The New Testament makes this assertion over and over. It states clearly that Jesus is the Messiah and the Word of God. The Messiah is described as revealer, creator and sustainer:

- Jn. 1:1-5 ***"The Word of God" through whom "all things were made"***
- Col. 1:15-19 ***"The image of God" through whom "all things were created and hold together" in whom "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell."***
- 1 Cor. 8:6 ***"One Lord...through whom are all things and through whom we exist."***
- 2 Cor. 4:4-6 ***"The likeness of God" and "The glory of God in the face of Jesus."***
- Heb. 1:2-3 ***"The radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being"***
"Through whom He made the universe."
- Col. 2:9 ***"The fullness of Deity dwells" in the Messiah Jesus.***

The Deity of Jesus is demonstrated in the Gospels and it is taught in the Epistles. And the Epistles were written to believers! **In the evangelistic preaching in Acts no attempt is made to explain the divinity of Jesus to unbelievers.** In fact, it is clearly stated that before people come to faith they are **unable to understand** these things because they lack the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:14 and Jn. 16:12-13) The implication is that once people have come to faith in Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life, **then** they begin to grow in understanding as the Holy Spirit enlightens their minds.

The Bible warns us not to put stumbling blocks in the way of others. (Lk. 17:2 and Rom. 14:13) I believe we **do** put a stumbling block in the path of a Neighbour who is seeking the truth when we say, *“You must accept the Divinity of Jesus and the Trinity before you can be saved.”* It took the church nearly 300 years and the invention of a lot of vocabulary to work out a formula for the Trinity. Someone who is not yet ‘born from above’ is hardly going to do it! So, if your Neighbours ask you to explain the Divinity of Jesus, follow the pattern of Scripture. Challenge them to read the Gospels and answer the question, *“Is Jesus merely a human? If not, who is He?”*

Don’t get side-tracked into debates about the nature of the Divinity of Jesus. Keep the main thing the main thing! Challenge them to see and accept Jesus as Messiah and Lord – as the One who cleanses and strengthens His followers and gives them eternal life in the Kingdom of God. Many Neighbours have testified that when they came to faith in Jesus and received the Holy Spirit, **then** they began to grow in their understanding of His divine nature.

6a.8 The title ‘Lord’ in the Arabic Bible (For those who work among Arab Neighbours)

The disciples came to understand that Jesus is ‘Lord’ or ‘Lord of All’ (Acts 10:36) and not just King of the Jews. Jesus accepted and affirmed that He was ‘Lord’. (Mt. 7:21-22, 12:8, 21:3, 25:11, 37, 44; Jn. 13:13-14)

“Therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11)

Roman citizens were required to confess that “Caesar is Lord” – meaning the highest authority on earth. The conflict caused by this led to persecution in the first three centuries of the church.

In **early Arabic** Bible translations God’s Hebrew name ‘Yahweh’ was translated using His Arabic name ‘Allah’. Modern translations often use ‘ar Rabb’. ‘Rabb’ means highest caretaker/upbringer and it is usually found as ‘rabbu l-bayt’ (head of the family/household). It is also found as ‘ar Rabbuna’ (our caretaker). This latter word is quite common and is used as a title for God the Father. In prayer God the Father is often addressed as ‘Ya Rabb’ (O Father).

In modern versions of the Arabic Bible ‘ar Rabb’ is not only used as ‘The Father’, but it is also as a title of the Messiah. So when our Neighbours see ‘ar Rabb’ in the New Testament they assume it refers to God. When they read that, ***“People preached in the name of the Lord”*** (Acts 14:3) or ***“Believed in the Lord”*** (Acts 11:21, 18:8), they assume it means that people believed in God – which they think they already do. They do not hear in these verses a call to believe in Jesus. When they hear ‘ar Rabb’ used of Jesus, they react negatively as if we see Jesus as ‘The Father’.

‘The Elegant Gospels’ is an early translation of the New Testament into Arabic done in 810-830 AD. Two manuscripts still exist in Leiden and in the Vatican. They are called ‘elegant’ because of their poetic style. They use ‘Isa’ for Jesus and translate the name of God as ‘Allah’ or ‘ar Rabb’. The title ‘Lord’ is translated ‘Sayyid’ or ‘Sayyiduna’. This distinction has been followed in the ‘Jesus’ film and in the recent **Kitab Allah**. So if your Neighbour asks you why you call Jesus ‘ar Rabb’, explain that it means ‘Sayyidu l-kull’ (Lord of All) which is also the meaning of the title ‘Messiah’.

6a.9 Conclusion

There is a great deal of confusion about Messianic titles – even among us! People often confuse titles with being statements of metaphysics/theology (us) or statements of genealogy (our Neighbours). In fact titles define specific roles.

Often we assume ‘Son of God’ to be a statement of Deity. It is not. We assume ‘Son of Man’ to be a statement of humanity. It is not! These titles are not only confusing to our Neighbours. **They are also repulsive leading many to reject the truth before they have had a chance to consider the real message.**

Try to explain carefully that ‘Son of Man’/‘Lord’ describes **the authority** Jesus has over all mankind. Also explain that ‘Son of God’/‘Messiah’ means that Jesus is **the Eternal King** over the people of God’s Kingdom. In some cases serious objections to considering following Jesus will melt away when these terms are carefully explained.

Session 9

Answers to the Issue of Three Gods/Trinity

Simple Responses

Question: “Why do you believe in three Gods?”

Answer: “We don’t believe in three Gods. Jesus Himself said that God is One!”

“Hear O Israel, the Lord Our God, The Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mk. 12:29-30)

Question: “Don’t you believe in the Trinity – that God is three?”

Answer: “What we know is that God has revealed Himself through His Word and through His Spirit. How can you separate God from His Word and from His Spirit?”

Question: Why do you believe it is possible to raise a man – even a very great man – to the position of deity?

Answer: “Both the Bible and the Quran teach that Jesus is the Word of God. The Bible explains that Jesus is the Word of God who by a miracle of God became a man.

Look at the analogy between the Quran and the Bible:

The Eternal Word by a Miracle of God became the Quran

The Eternal Word by a Miracle of God became Jesus

If God can make His Word become a book, why can He not make His Word become a man?
With God nothing is impossible!

If we remember that Jesus is the Word of God, it helps to explain why Jesus is a revelation from God. Can you really separate God from His Word?

A More Lengthy Answer to the Issue of the Trinity

1. Make sure you have a Biblical understanding of the Trinity

Don’t rely on the formula of the Nicene Creed. The definition of the Trinity here is not the Word of God! Note that the word ‘Trinity’ is not a Biblical word, so it is better not to use it. Wayne Grudem’s **Systematic Theology** (Zondervan 1999) has a very good section on the Trinity (chapter 14). It covers:

➤ Explanation and Scriptural Basis

- **The Doctrine of the Trinity is progressively revealed in Scripture**
 - ✧ A partial revelation in the Old Testament
 - ✧ A more complete revelation in the New Testament
- **Three Summarizing Statements** – each is covered in detail in Grudem’s work. Simplistic rational explanations nearly always deny one of these statements and all analogies have shortcomings:
 - ✧ God is three persons
 - ✧ Each person is fully God
 - ✧ There is One God
- **Errors that come by denying any one of the three statements:**
 - ✧ **Modalism** – claims there is one person who appears to us in 3 different forms (modes)
 - ✧ **Arianism** – denies the full deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit
 - ✧ **Subordinationism** – says that Jesus is inferior to the Father
 - ✧ **Adoptionism** – this is the view that Muslims think we believe in.
 - ✧ **Tri-theism** – also the view that Muslims think we believe in.

➤ **The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity**

- The persons of the Trinity have different functions in relating to the world.
- The persons of the Trinity eternally existed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The Relationship between the three persons and the Being of God
- Can we understand the Trinity?
- Application

My general impression is that most believers have not thought through and studied carefully the nature of God. Now is the time to do this! You will find it extraordinarily rewarding. There are two books you might find helpful:

Understanding the Trinity, McGrath, Alister E. Grand Rapids, Zondervan (1988)

The Doctrine of God, Bavinck, Herman, Baker Books (1977)

2. Learn to ask questions

You almost always run into the mathematic formula:

$$1+1+1 \neq 1$$

This is quite true of mathematics and to believe it does is irrational!

Our answer is based on the incomprehensibility of God in relation to man. God cannot be reduced to a mere integer.

Ask the question: "Is the Quran the created or uncreated Word of Allah? If it is the uncreated Word (what orthodox Muslims believe), how can you explain the existence of two uncreated entities – Allah and His Word?"

Within the Islamic framework, the Word of Allah + Allah is part of the same essence – i.e. uncreatedness. So they have an equal problem mathematically!

$$1+1 \neq 1$$

So the answer both our Neighbour friends and we must give is that God is a mystery to us. All we can know of God is what has been revealed to us in Scripture.

The Problem of Shirk and the Trinity

This is probably the greatest problem our friends have with the Christian faith. If we are to worship God aright, we need to understand God as He really is. This leads our Neighbour friends to reject the Trinity and their motives for doing so are right! Their position is as follows:

- * Worshipping anyone but God is sin. It is the greatest sin – idolatry!
- * Adding anything to God is just as bad. This is the sin of 'shirk'. To make an ordinary man a god is the height of folly and blasphemy.

Christians are rebuked in the Quran for their belief in the Trinity:

Sura 4:169 "O you People of the Book, overstep not the bounds of your religion ... The Messiah, Jesus, Son of Mary is only an apostle of God and His Word, which He conveyed unto Mary and a Spirit proceeding from Himself. Believe therefore in God and his apostles and say not three God is only one God. Far be it from His glory that he should have a son."

Sura 5:77 "They are surely infidels who say God is the third of three, for there is no God but one God!"

To understand our Neighbours' rejection of the Trinity you need to understand the background.

a) **Polytheism**: There was a highly idolatrous situation in Mecca at the time of Muhammad. Some of the more popular lesser deities were the 'daughters of Allah'. They were worshipped both in Mecca and in the whole of Arabia. Muhammad quite rightly rejected these false deities. God is not immoral. He has no biological daughters and no biological sons either!

b) As Christians, we need to repent and confess that it is our fault Muslims misunderstand the Trinity. Most misunderstandings arose because of heretical Christians living in Arabia at the time of Muhammad. They lived outside the Byzantine Empire to avoid persecution.

- ❖ Sura 5:116 clearly indicates that Muhammad thought the Trinity was Allah, Jesus and Mary.
- ❖ There was a Christian sect called the Kalaridians (reported by St. Epiphanius a Greek Orthodox scholar of the 6th century) in Arabia who believed Mary to be God and worshipped her and offered sacrifices to her. They actually did say that the Trinity was three separate gods.
- ❖ There was excessive veneration of Mary in the Middle East church then and there is the same practice today. Coptic and Orthodox Christianity tend to reinforce this myth. Look at the works of art – icons etc. There is often a bigger halo around Mary than around Jesus!

So what the Quran is rejecting is tri-theism – i.e. sura 4:171 *"Believe... in God ... and say not three."*

Implication: If we understood what Muslims understand by the Trinity, we would reject it as well! We are not polytheists!

How to Share about the Trinity

We must be very careful not to add any 'thing' or person to God (shirk), but we must also be very careful not to subtract any 'thing' from God – this is equally bad.

- So we dare not mutilate God by separating Him from His Word and His Spirit.
- God has revealed to some extent what He is like – not so that we might understand Him, but so we will worship Him aright.
- Don't make the Trinity a major point of witness. We are to praise and worship the Triune God.
- God has revealed Himself in human form so we can better understand Him. We are persons and ultimately we can only understand personality.
- Note that Christians have never raised a man, Jesus, to the position of the Godhead. No, the Bible teaches that God was incarnated in the person of Jesus.
- Sadly, some Christians have so elevated Mary, that it appears to our Muslim friends that we think we have the power to make Mary a goddess! This is not Biblical and we should say so.

A Christmas Story

An unbelieving farmer stays at home on Christmas Eve. His wife and family go to church. It is very cold. It is snowing and there is a blizzard. The farmer, sitting by the fire, hears a bird tapping with its beak on the window. The farmer goes outside and tries to get the bird to fly into the barn. He opens the doors. It is warm in the barn but the bird doesn't understand. It panics and keeps trying to get through the window. The farmer is very frustrated and the bird is near exhaustion. The church bells ring. The farmer falls to his knees in tears. All of a sudden he realizes this is what God had to face! How could He let us know that He loved us and wanted to save us? The farmer thought, 'O to be a bird to be able to tell that bird it was warm and safe in the barn!' So he understood the incarnation – God in Christ is the guarantee that we will understand God aright so we can worship Him a right – Jn. 14:9. Jesus made God known.

The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth, has been sent to us to lead us into all truth – including the truth about God. The Spirit of Truth is the One who reveals and interprets God truly and exactly to us so that we can worship Him aright.

Both our Neighbours and we, ourselves, want to worship God aright, but we come to different conclusions. Our Neighbours say you can't add a man and a woman to God! We say that God Incarnate and the Holy Spirit guarantee that our understanding of God is correct so that we can worship Him.

3. Go back to Scripture and see how God has revealed Himself

Genesis 3 is a good place to start. Note that the word 'Trinity' never occurs in Scripture. The emphasis is on God's relationship with Adam and Eve – *Adama* and *Hawa* in Arabic. He walks with them and talks with them and asks them questions.

This is a key passage of Scripture for many reasons. But note the problems:

- ✧ Who is running the universe while God is walking in the garden?
- ✧ How is it possible to be in a physical location and be omnipresent in the universe at the same time?

What about when God visited Abraham? (Gen. 13)

What about when God wrestles with Jacob all night? (Gen. 32)

What about when God met Moses at the Burning Bush? (Ex. 3)

God revealed Himself to man for a number of reasons:

- To promise us blessing (Gen. 16)
- To give us information (Ex. 34)
- To rebuke a prophet (Num. 22)
- To destroy an army (2 Kings 19)

How did the Early Disciples arrive at the Truth of the Nature of God?

- The early disciples were not philosophers. They couldn't have an erudite discussion on the transcendence vs. the immanence of God! They were simple Jewish village people – mostly fishermen.
- As Jews they recited twice a day, *'The Lord our God is One Lord'*. They believed this before they met Jesus, while they were with Jesus and they continued to believe it afterwards. All their lives they were monotheists.
- For three and a half years they lived with Jesus and they came to the observable conclusion that God was in Jesus. They didn't try and figure it out. They **experienced** it!
- They were cowardly – all forsook Jesus at His trial except John and he didn't walk round with a sign, *'I am a disciple. Kill me if you dare!'* He kept a low profile that day!
- They **experienced** the resurrection. That was the proof! Jesus was God. Then they **experienced** Pentecost! A power that was divine came to live in them! They changed from being cowards to being men who preached fearlessly about Jesus.
- They **experienced** God as a complexity. They worshipped Him as a complexity!
- The Trinity isn't a violation of God's unity. It is a way of understanding it. The Trinity isn't something to argue about or formulate. It is the way we are to **experience** God. We must introduce our Neighbour friends to the faith by the same path as the early disciples – bring them into **an experience** of Jesus as Lord and Saviour before verbalizing our faith to them in creedal statements.

The Complexity of God is not Irrational or Unbelievable

Beware of using the wrong models e.g. How can Jesus be fully God and fully man? If a glass is full of water, how can it be full of oil at the same time? Of course it cannot! But Jesus is not a glass!

An electron can be described as a particle (it has weight). It can also be described as a wave for it has some properties of waves. It can also be described as an area of negatively charged space. Clearly we can't exactly describe an electron with words, so we have to use approximations. Electrons (and quarks) are primary matter. We can't adequately describe them. God is the other end of the spectrum – infinite. It isn't irrational to suppose that we can't understand or describe Him adequately with words.

- ❖ The higher the form of life – the higher the complexity.
- ❖ Amoebas have a low form of unity and they are complex enough.
- ❖ Yet we as humans, who are vastly more complex than amoebas, are still one. Even so, we are vastly more similar to amoebas than to God! Unity is possible in diversity!
- ❖ The complexity of God is to be expected – one, but diverse! By definition He is the highest form of life!

- ❖ In maths we need to introduce many dimensions (up to nine) to grapple with String Theory! God is more complex than we could ever hope to understand and describe.
- ❖ God can do all things, so if He reveals Himself as complex, we can't argue with God and say we are baffled!

Scripture reveals that God is complex

- ❖ We believe God is complex because Scripture says so! We don't believe it because we reasoned it out.
- ❖ There are passages in Scripture that describe Him this way. God is described in a triune way in Mt. 28:19 and Jn. 14:16.
- ❖ Our Neighbour friends have a similar problem about how to describe God. In the Quran there are many anthropomorphic terms.
- ❖ There are schools of law in Islam that argue and wrestle with these terms – '*the hand of God*'; '*the foot of God*' etc. They can't deny the Quran, so God has a hand because the Quran says so. Is the hand connected to an arm? No! So it's not like a human hand? No! What is it like? It is impossible to say! It is "*Without how*".

Warning

We need to stick very closely to the words of Scripture in our explanation of Scripture. Our orthodox formulations such as, "*Three persons in one substance*" can be misleading. Scripture never uses the word '*substance*' in connection with God. Even the word '*person*' is a more individualistic concept today than it was in the 4th century world where they worked out Trinitarian formulae. The Greek word '*personae*' was used of an actor. One actor could put on 3 different masks during a play and be considered to be 3 different persons – one actor, three persons. So the theological terms in the creeds did not have the same meaning then, when they were drawn up, as they do today.

So why do we believe in the triune nature of God? Because this is the way that God has revealed Himself to be – "*without how*". We can make four basic statements about the Trinity:

1. In the Bible there are three who are recognised as God.
2. The way these are described in Scripture compels us to think of them as distinct personalities.
3. The tri-personality of the Divine Nature is not merely economic (i.e. each having a different role or function). It is not just temporal, but eternal and imminent.
4. The tri-personality is not tri-theism since they have one essence and are equal.

So we, as Christians, understand and experience what God does and our relationship to Him. The Old Testament demonstrates that men who had faith in this Divine Unity (God) had a relationship with Him.

- Fellowship presupposes freewill.
- Freewill involves the possibility of evil.
- Experience shows that evil is a reality in separating us from fellowship with God.
- God's sovereignty requires this to be overcome. His love also demands it.
- God intervenes in history.
- God's love for man "begets" or "generates" the activity of redeeming love evident in the incarnate Jesus.
- The monotheists who lived with and experienced Jesus could only explain this redeeming experience by saying that '**God was in Christ**' – God in self-revelation in Jesus.
- Evil is overcome.
- We can experience God's presence in a new way – joy, power and fellowship.

So the Biblical teaching about the Triune Nature of God is always in the context of God's relationship with man. This relationship is the clue to His Nature.

Rough Parallels in Muslim Thought

- ❖ Our Neighbours have an **objective**, visible form of revelation – the Quran – believed to be eternal. We have an **objective**, visible form of the revelation of God – Jesus *"The Word was in the beginning with God. The Word was made flesh."* (Jn. 1:1-14)
- ❖ Our Neighbours sometimes experience inner revelations – a subjective experience – this is especially true of Sufis who have many mystical experiences. We too, have an experience of God that is subjective – the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- ❖ Some people like to use illustrations such as: sun/heat/light or body/soul/spirit to show diversity. Like all models they have their limitations.

Another Warning

Jesus is given the titles in the Quran, *"The Word of God"* and *"The Spirit of God"*. It is a mistake to put too strong a Biblical meaning into these terms! They can't be used as proof texts.

There are two good books written by a Roman Catholic scholar called O'Shaunassy entitled:

The Word of God in the Quran and The Meaning of the Spirit in the Quran.

These books clearly demonstrate that Muhammad didn't have any idea of the Greek term *'logos'*; neither had he heard of the Holy Spirit.

Islamic scholars maintain that the "spirit" occasionally refers to the Angel Gabriel, but more usually to an impersonal force. They also maintain that when the Quran says Jesus is the *'Word of God'*, it means that God said, *"Be!"* The creative word *"Be"* then passed into the womb of Mary and made her pregnant and Jesus was the result. The spirit from God (i.e. the impersonal force) was cast into the womb of Mary etc.

These are not the Biblical meanings of the words! It is possible to quote sura 10:94. This verse says, *"If you do not understand your revelation (the Quran) ask the people of the Book what it means."*

On this basis it is possible to say that Islamic scholars are wrong and the real meaning is given in John chapters 1 and 13-16.

Conclusion

You don't need to be a clever theologian to explain the Trinity. We need spiritual men and women who have experienced the work of the Triune God in their lives in a non-intellectual, deeply pragmatic way. This experience leads them to demonstrate a life of **worship** and a life of loving relationships. This will communicate!

4. Be Patient!

For three centuries the early church wrestled with the difficulty of understanding God from what is revealed in Scripture with the limitations of human language that has no words to express the reality of One God who is there. Even this definition in English seems illogical and so illustrates the point!

As an example of the difficulty that a concept like this causes, the North African church theologian, Tertullian (145-220 AD) created 590 new nouns, 284 new adjectives and 161 new verbs to help explain this and other theological terms found in the Scriptures. These ideas had such a depth of meaning that new terminology was needed to help us to understand them. It was Tertullian who came up with the word *'Trinity'* and over the years *'Trinity'* became the accepted word to describe this concept.

Let us pray that God will lift the veil of disbelief and misunderstanding concerning the Trinity from the spiritual eyes of hundreds of millions of our Neighbours. Let us pray that God will allow them to see and to know Jesus for Who He really is – God, Lord and Saviour. Only God can reveal the idea of the Trinity to the searching hearts of our Neighbours.

Some Quranic References to the Trinity

Sura 112:1-3 *"Say: 'He is God, the One and Only: God the Eternal, Absolute: He is not born (yalidu) nor is He to be born (yoolidu)."*

Sura 17:111 *"Say: 'Praise be to God who begets no son (waladan – a physical son) and has no partner (shariku – no-one outside Himself) in dominion'..."*

- Sura 18:4 *"Further that he may warn those who say, 'God has begotten (yoolidu) a son (waladan)' "*
(The Jews are being quoted here.)
- Sura 4:171 *"Say not Trinity (thalathatun – three): desist. It will be better for you: For God is One God (wahed – one, unique); Glory be to Him: above having a son (walad – a physical son)."*
(Addressed to the Jews.)
- Sura 39:4 *"Had God wished to take to Himself a son (waladan – a physical son), He could have chosen whom He pleased out of those whom, He did create...."*
(This is the heresy of Adoptionism.)
- Sura 6:101 *"To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son (walad) when He has no consort? (saw-hub-a-tun)?"*
- Sura 19:35 *"It is not befitting to God that He should beget (here not 'yoolidu' but 'yatakluza' – take to Himself or adopt) a son (walad)."* The implication is that God did not acquire a son in the course of time. (This is an anti-Arian, anti-Adoptionist statement.)
- Sura 10:68 *"They say, 'God has given birth to a son (waladan)'. Glory be to Him! He is self-sufficient."*
- Sura 9:30 The connection with Ezra suggests the context of being anti saint-worship. So the Quran's attacks are largely against heretical Christian ideas especially that the Father + Mary = Jesus. The positive attack is on the basis of the **Unity of God** – especially 43:81

Specific references to the Trinity include:

- 5:73 }
5:116 } All these attack Mariolatry and Tri-theism. In the fifth century the title 'Mother of God'
4: 171 } was widely used in Greek Orthodox circles.

In Arabia in the sixth and seventh centuries there was a group called the Collyridians. They offered to Maryam cakes of bread (*collyrida*). These were offered in the same way as they had offered them to the great earth mother in pagan times.

See 1 Cor. 8:4, ***"A false god has no existence in the real world. There is no God but One."***

5:17 *"Assuredly they have disbelieved who say that God is the Messiah, son of Mary."*

5:72 *"Assuredly they have disbelieved who say that God is the Messiah, son of Mary."*

The New Testament never says that **God is Jesus**.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." (2 Cor. 5:19)

"You belong to Christ and Christ to God." (1 Cor. 3:23)

A heresy arose in the second and third centuries and also more recently. We now call it the **Jesus Only** heresy. This heresy says there is only One God – Jesus – i.e. Jesus is the Father and the Holy Spirit. Tertullian said that a man called Praxeas went to Rome and *"He drove out prophecy and brought in heresy. He put to flight the Comforter and crucified the Father."*

So again this is an anti-heresy statement.

Session 9

Answers to the Charge that we have Corrupted the Scriptures

The Simple Response

Question: “The ‘Injil’ has been changed hasn’t it?”

Answer: This question puzzles me because even the prophet Muhammad encouraged people to read the Holy Book (the Tawrat/Zabour – i.e. the Old Testament and the Injil – the New Testament). Surely he would not have done that if they had already been changed while he was alive?

Logically, any changes (if there are any) must have occurred after Muhammad lived, but that doesn’t make any sense because the New Testament of today can easily be checked against Greek New Testaments from long before the time of the Prophet Muhammad ... and there are no differences!

How do you tell the difference between counterfeit money and genuine currency? The only way is to compare the two.

Tell a simple story: A bank was robbed. Money was stolen. Would the thief deliberately leave behind evidence as to his identity?

If we had changed the Scriptures deliberately, why would we not collect up and destroy all the evidence? But we haven’t! Early manuscripts (pre-Muhammad) are very precious treasures.

An Answer in Greater Depth – See also Session 10 and Section 5 (*largely borrowed from J. Dudley Woodberry*)

We understand that Jesus is the **Living** Word of God and is a mysterious blend of a divine nature and a human nature – fully both. We understand the Bible to be the **written** Word of God – also as a blend of the human and the divine.

Our Neighbours don’t believe in the divinity of Jesus, but they also call Him the Word of God. They only understand Him to be **fully human**. They have no belief in any human content in the Quran – i.e. it is wholly divine. They also call the Quran the Word of God. **This is a major difference between us.**

To our Neighbours, God’s revelation is only in spoken form and is recorded in the Quran. So there can’t be anyone who is ‘more than a prophet’. We believe God has revealed **Himself** in Jesus and that Jesus is much ‘more than a prophet.’

To our Neighbours, God’s revelation in His written word is primarily about His will, though His names are small windows into His nature. But for us the Living Word has opened to us **God’s nature** in all its fullness and also His words express His will.

To our Neighbours, God spoke in Arabic, so translations are not technically the Word of God. The Arabic language and culture is a homogenizing, unifying force that encourages the cultures of all our Neighbours to conform to Arabic culture and language.

Jesus spoke in Galilean Aramaic. The accounts of His life and words were written in Greek and have been translated wherever they have gone. The result has been the enhancing of many cultures.

These contrasts lead our Neighbours and ourselves to different **expectations** from the Bible and the Quran. Our Neighbours, when they read the Bible, find it very different from the style of the Quran. They encounter all sorts of human factors and so they don’t **feel** it is the Word of God. We find the style of the Quran rather tedious and we can’t see the redemptive acts we expect to find in God’s Word.

It will be useful to look at:

- The Source of the Two Scriptures
- The Reliability of the Two Scriptures
- The Content of the Two Scriptures
- The Use of the Two Scriptures

The Source of the Two Scriptures

What is the source of the Quranic material and to what extent, if any; can we say that it is from God? The Quran **describes itself** as 'sent down by God' – confirming the Old and New Testaments that He sent down before. (sura 3:1-7) The Quran itself can't be of human origin (sura 10:37-40). God made it in Arabic for the sake of the Arabs. It is a copy of one in heaven (sura 43: 1-4) and it has always existed – i.e. it is uncreated. (sura 85:22)

What was the verdict of Muhammad's peers? Some believed of course. Others said that Muhammad was demon-possessed. (sura 15:6 and 31:22) Others claimed he had a human teacher who was a foreigner (sura 16:103; 25:4-5; 44:13-14). The internal evidence of the Quran tends to support the latter.

Sadly, none of the Gospels had been translated into Arabic at that time. However, the Diateseron (a harmonisation of the four Gospels into one) – though not in Arabic – predated Muhammad and was available in Arabia. Perhaps this is the reason the Quran refers to the Gospel as if it were a single book.

It is clear that Muhammad heard stories from the Bible through oral tradition rather than through written texts. For example: there is an apparent confusion of Maryam the mother of Jesus with Maryam the sister of Moses and Aaron. Another example would be placing Haman (from Esther) in the court of Pharaoh rather than the Persian King Ahasuerus. This implies oral transmission.

Was Muhammad illiterate? The Quranic description of Muhammad implies that he was not a scholar. He was 'unlettered' (Arabic *'ummi'*). In the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul there are letters that he is supposed to have written. It is possible that he was literate but not a scholar. Like most Neighbours he was an oral preference learner.

Direct and indirect Jewish and Christian influences are obvious though the Quranic evidence indicates that Muhammad had very little contact with orthodox Christians. Most of the religious vocabulary is borrowed from Christian Syriac and Aramaic. The name of Jesus (*Isa*) is a corruption of Syriac. There were Christians in Syria and in Yemen – the ends of the caravan route. There is evidence of syncretism even in Mecca for we read of an oath before the black stone of the Kaaba "*In the name of the Lord of Mecca (Allah) and the crucifix.*"

Oral tradition probably caused the mix up that put Abraham in the fiery furnace (sura 21:59-64). There is also evidence of pre-Islamic monotheism in Arabia – the Hanifs. All these elements are combined in the Quran.

The Reliability of the Two Scriptures

Muhammad began to preach about 13 years before the Hijra – his flight from Mecca to Medina (622 AD). The first collection of Quranic texts was put together by Caliph Uthman about 30 AH (after the Hijra). This was ~40-45 years after Muhammad began to preach and recite the Quran.

Jesus began to preach about 25 AD and most scholars believe much of the New Testament was written before 70 AD – except John's Gospel that could be as late as 90 AD. So again, in 40-45 years the canon of the New Testament had been formed.

The earliest copy of the Quran is in the British Museum in London. It is dated about 150 AH – about 163 years after Muhammad began to 'recite'. There are fragments of Gospels in the John Rylands Library in Manchester dated about 120 AD. There are complete copies of Luke, John and ten Pauline Epistles dated about 190-200 AD – so about 175 years after Jesus began to preach. So the period of the collection of the material for the Quran and the New Testament is about the same.

(A helpful book is, ***The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*** F.F. Bruce, IVP 5th edition (1960))

We need to look at the Quranic charge of the corruption of the Bible. The context of these charges indicates that most of them were against the Jews. But there are two that specially also include the Christians with the Jews (sura 2:140). The background to all this is:

- **The Quran claims to confirm the Bible** (sura 3:43).
- Christians are told to make judgements on the basis of Scripture (sura 5:51).
- Muslims are required to believe Christian Scriptures (sura 3:78).

The charge the Quran makes is that people conceal the truth (sura 2:73, 141) or change it when they read it aloud (sura 2:141). In both cases the implication is that the actual text is correct.

Of course there are minor textual variants in the Bible, but these are also present in the Quran despite the attempt to destroy all the variant manuscripts. Based on a comparison of two of the earliest Quranic manuscripts (*Ibn Musud* and *Ubay ibn Kab*) with four of the earliest New Testament manuscripts (Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus and Ephraemi Rescriptus) the percentage of variants is slightly higher for the Quranic manuscripts (0.61% of the verses) than for the New Testament (0.52% of the verses).

What is more, all the variants are omitted verses in the New Testament manuscripts, suggesting that our present text is complete. Half the variants in the Quranic manuscripts are additions, suggesting that the current text may not be complete. In the Islamic view of revelation, the Quran is the exact words spoken by God. This means that any variants are a major problem.

(A good book for further study is **The Quran and the Bible in the Light of History and Science**; 1986 William F. Campbell ISBN: 1881085007)

Other problems in the Quranic text are factual errors. There are also linguistic errors (using an accusative or genitive form rather than the nominative that is called for by the sentence structure) (sura 2:177).

In conclusion, the Quranic and Biblical texts are reliable.

The Content of the Two Scriptures

Many of the themes of the Quran and the Bible are the same:

- The Unity of God
- Human responsibility for the rest of creation
- The Revelation of God
- Prophethood
- Satan and Evil
- Seeking forgiveness
- Worship
- Eschatology

There are similarities of perspective, yet there are also some crucial differences.

Both Muhammad and Jesus faced opposition – in Muhammad's case for twelve years from the Quraysh in Mecca who represented paganism and in Jesus case for three and a half years from the Pharisees with their high form of monotheism. But they each faced opposition very differently. Eventually Muhammad fled persecution and went to Medina (the Hijra). Jesus went to the Cross. The Quran sees that man's deepest problem is ignorance. If we know the will of God, then we will be able to do it. The Bible sees that our major problem is sin, rebellion and evil.

What the Quran denies of the Biblical faith is not clear. For example, when the Quran says, "*Say not three*". Is it denying the Trinity or heretical theism or a tri-theism that includes Maryam? Yet when it affirms the titles of the Lord Jesus like Messiah, the Word of God, the Spirit of God, the Servant; it fails to fill them with any New Testament meanings.

The Use of the Two Scriptures

We should certainly study the Quran and try to understand it in the context of listening to how our Neighbours explain it. But while reading the Quran with empathy, we must share our faith **based on God's revelation** in the Bible. We need to pray unceasingly that our Neighbours will read and study the Bible themselves. We must give them every encouragement to do so.

The question arises as to the extent to which the Quran may be used in our witness. The Biblical writers were familiar with the religious and secular writings of their neighbours, e.g. the Babylonian Epics. Others were secular writings such as the Greek poets that are quoted by Paul. If the Biblical writers were familiar with such literature we should be familiar with the Quran.

Biblical writers borrowed expressions from other sources such as God 'riding the clouds'. Paul borrowed concepts like "mystery" (*mysterion*) from the Greek mystery religions. Jesus borrowed and adapted the parable of the Judge and the Widow in Luke 13:2-5 from Ben Sirach, a Jewish rabbi of the 1st century BC. Borrowing like this doesn't imply agreement with everything in the original. To King Agrippa Paul describes his conversion by quoting from a Greek play **Euripides Bacchus** (line 795). But when Paul explained his conversion to Jewish people in Galatians 1:15, he used the language of Jeremiah. This contextualisation of the message would suggest a similar freedom in the use of the Quran.

Finally – a Story to Tell: The Story of the Corrupted Letters

There was once a man who had two sons. He had two large documents that he wanted to preserve for future generations of the family. So he gave one copy of one document to each of his sons, instructing them to preserve them in the best way they knew. Soon after this he died.

Both sons hired ten or twenty scribes to copy the documents they had been entrusted with. (There were no photocopiers in those days!) They were to keep a copy in their family and make copies for each of their sons and so to pass the documents down through the generations.

Unfortunately the scribes were not perfect. In fact, they made a small number of random errors on each page. This was not discovered until the two original sons were very old. The younger son had all the copies of the document that he could find gathered together. He chose the copy he thought was the best and the closest to the original and then he burned the rest. The older son didn't think this was the wisest plan. Rather, he reasoned that he would let all the copies exist. In this way, future generations could compare the copies and discover all the random errors and correct them. Even if they missed one or two random errors, the document had its major points repeated so many times that **the message** of the documents would **not** have been corrupted.

Question:

How would you explain the meaning of the story? Try and tell the story to a Neighbour. What was his/her reaction?

Session 9

Answers relating to the Gospel of Barnabas

Simple Response

Some monks wrote the Gospel of Barnabas in the 15th/16th century – i.e. 1400 years after the events. It was translated into English in the 1920s and had detailed in the introduction the reasons why it was a forgery. Sadly, it was reprinted without that introduction and spread through the world.

A Longer Response

There are two very helpful booklets you might want to get hold of:

Origins and Sources of the Gospel of Barnabas, Gilchrist, John; FFM Publications, PO Box 175, Sheffield, S. Yorks S11 8EN, UK

The Gospel of Barnabas – A False Teaching, Iskandar Jadeed, The Good Way, PO Box 66, CH-8486 Rikon, Switzerland

Apparently the book was written by a monk called Fra Marino who said he found the book in the Vatican library. He said that on reading it, he became a Muslim calling himself Mustafa Al Arandi. It was probably written originally in Moorish Spanish. It is clearly of mediaeval origin. Some of the evidence for this is as follows:

- It quotes an edict by Pope Bonifas the Eighth (~1300 AD) concerning the Year of Jubilee.
- There are numerous quotations from Dante's **Divine Comedy** written in the 14th century.
- In describing Palestine in Jesus' day, it does not describe Palestine at all, but Spain!
- It uses feudal language i.e. Lazarus was 'the overlord' of the towns of Magdala and Bethany.
- Wine is stored in casks – as in Europe in the Middle Ages.
- Nazareth is placed by the sea – i.e. the Mediterranean Sea

The Gospel of Barnabas contradicts the Quran.

- Jesus says He is not the Messiah – see Sura 3:45.
- It says that Mary had no pain as she gave birth – see Sura 19:23.
- It contradicts what the Quran says about the last day.

It is generally ignorant about First Century history.

- It says that Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea from the birth of Jesus. He was actually appointed governor in 27 AD.
- It says there was a battle in Palestine involving 600,000 men in a Jewish civil war. (The whole of the Roman army in the Empire was less than half this number.) There is no record in history of this battle.

It quotes Arabic writers of the 9th – 13th centuries.

Of course it has many contradictions of things in the four Gospels and the whole of the Bible. For example, it states that the Messiah is prophesied to be of the seed of Ishmael.

It also has many unscientific explanations. For example: *"When God said to the followers of Satan, 'Repent and acknowledge that I am your Creator.' They answered, 'We turn from worshipping You because You are unjust, but Satan is just and innocent and he is our Lord.' Then Satan, as he left, spat on a small heap of dust and Gabriel lifted the spit with some of the dust, with the result that man came to have a navel in his belly."*

If you would like to study more details you can refer to, **The Gospel of Barnabas: Its True Value**, Campbell, William F., Christian Study Centre, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

Session 10

Beginning Where They Are

Objectives:

Head * To read and understand the Quran

* To understand how some Quranic verses build a bridge for the Gospel

Heart: To see that the Quran is sometimes a good starting point for sharing the Good News

Hands: To be able to share the story of salvation beginning with the Quran and ending with the Scriptures

Time Together

1. Welcome and prayer

2. Debrief the group as to their 'Homework' assignments:

- Quiz the members of the group concerning the questions that they role-played last session.
- Debrief them as to their experiences with their Neighbours using the questions and answers.
- Find out from the group which responses seemed inadequate and brainstorm as to the best ways to answer at a deeper level.

3. Work through the study 'Building Bridges' looking up the verses in both the Bible and the Quran.

- Answer the questions.
- Have members of the group summarize key concepts as you complete each of the three sections.
- Discuss how these Biblical concepts challenge the current thinking/practices of the group.

In most Eastern countries people are generally far more courteous and respectful than Westerners. This raises the question of how we can show respect without compromise. In talking about the Quran with Neighbours you might want to use an adjective of respect like '*majid*' (glorious) or '*sharif*' (noble) before the word 'Quran'. This is similar to using the term 'Holy Bible'.

4. How to read the Quran with a Christian Interpretation

Read through this article. Did anything surprise you? Do you now have a more positive attitude to asking your Neighbours about these verses?

5. Verses from the Quran about the Quran

As you read these verses, are you surprised by the number of verses in the Quran that affirm the Bible?

6. Using the Quran as a bridge

This is not for **beginning** a relationship with a Neighbour. It is not to be used like 'The Bridge Method' taught at some conferences. It is to be used after some/many discussions with your friend.

7. Jesus in the Quran and Other Sources

Read through this and discuss together any helpful points.

8. A Reference List of Jesus in the Quran

This is given for future reference.

9. Divine Love in the Quran and the Bible

This paper is given to show how easy it is to misunderstand a common word like 'love'. Read it through and discuss its relevance.

Homework

Head: Memorize the concept of the Quranic Bridge and the five verses.

Heart: Ask God to show you the potential He has provided in the use of the Quran.

Hands: Practice in role play the Quranic Bridge and/or develop a simple Gospel presentation starting from Quranic sources.

Handouts for Session 11: Learning Patience!

- The Kingdom of God
- The Concept of the Spectrum
- Not 'Closed Sets' but 'Centred Sets'
- Why Neighbours are Coming to Faith
- The Afterlife in the Quran and the Hadith
- Types of Encounters with Neighbours
- P.R.E.P. ing in Ministry

Session 10

Building Bridges

1. The Story of Abraham commanded to sacrifice his son

Read: sura 37:99-112

Mt. 16:21; Lk.18:31-33; Jn. 1:29, 36

Q. According to the Quran, was Abraham willing to sacrifice his son on the altar? Why or why not?

Q. What was God's provision to Abraham in the end? Why? What was this provision from the Lord a sign or a reflection of?

Q. How much later did this sign come to pass and who came to fulfil it?

Q. Who called Jesus the Messiah 'The Lamb of God'? What was this Lamb supposed to do?

Read sura 19:33-34; sura 5:117; sura 3:55.

Sample:

Sura 3:55 *"Allah said: 'O Jesus! I am causing you to die and am causing you to ascend to Me.....I am cleansing you from the unbelievers, until the resurrection....'"*

Sura 5:117 *"Then Jesus said: 'And I was a witness over them (i.e. to His disciples) while I dwelt amongst them. When You (Allah) killed me. You were the Watcher over them (i.e. the disciples) and you are a Witness to all things.'"*

Q. Did Jesus the Messiah speak of His death while here on earth?

See Mt. 16:21; Mt. 17:22-23 and Lk. 18:31-33

2. Quranic verses that encourage the reading of the Bible

Read John 1:1-14 and John 3:14-15

Read from sura 10:94

"And if you, Muhammad, are in doubt concerning that which We (God) reveal to you, then ask those who read the Scripture that was before you." (i.e. before Muhammad's time – the Old and New Testaments)

3. The Titles of the Lord Jesus in the Quran

Read sura 3:40-55 (This is the 'key' passage in "The Camel Method".)

⁽⁴⁰⁾ *"When the angel said, 'O Mary! Verily God gives thee the glad tidings of the Word from Him; (Some translations say a more accurate rendering is, 'That thou shalt bear the Word, proceeding from Himself.') His name shall be the Messiah, Jesus – the son of Mary regarded (or honourable) in this world and the next and of those whose place is nigh (to the presence of) God. ⁽⁴¹⁾ And he shall speak to people in his cradle and*

when grown up and shall be among the righteous.’ ⁽⁴²⁾ She said, ‘Lord how can I have a son when man has not yet touched me?’ He said, ‘Thus God creates what he pleases. When he decrees a matter he only says, ‘Be’ and it is; ⁽⁴³⁾ and he will teach him the Book, and wisdom, and the law, and the Gospel; and he shall be an apostle to the people of Israel (saying), that I have come to you with a sign from God, namely that I will create for you out of clay as though it were the form of a bird, and I will blow thereon and it will become a bird by God’s permission. And I will heal the blind from birth and lepers; and I will bring the dead to life by God’s permission and I will tell you what you eat and what you store up in your houses. Verily in that is a sign for you if you are believers. ⁽⁴⁴⁾ And I will confirm what is before you of the law and will surely make lawful for you some of that which was prohibited from you. I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear God and follow me, for God is my Lord and your Lord – to worship Him: this is the right path.’ ”

⁽⁴⁵⁾ “And when Jesus perceived their unbelief, He said, ‘Who are my helpers for God?’ Said the apostles (the Arabic word is ‘Hawariyun’ – a word ‘Hawarya’ from an Ethiopic root meaning ‘to send’), ‘We are God’s helpers. We believe in God, so bear witness that we are resigned (i.e. of Islam). ⁽⁴⁶⁾ Lord we have believed in what Thou hast revealed and we have followed the Apostle, so write us down with those which bear witness.’ ⁽⁴⁷⁾ But they (the Jews) were crafty and God was crafty, for God is the best of crafty ones.” (Some translations: ‘The Jews plotted and God plotted. But of those who plot, God is the best.’)

⁽⁴⁸⁾ “When God said, ‘O Jesus I will make Thee die and take Thee up again to Me and will clear Thee of those who misbelieve, and will make those who follow Thee above those who misbelieve at the day of judgement, then to me is your return. I will decide between you concerning that wherein you disagree. And as for those who misbelieve, I will punish them with grievous punishment in this world and the next and they shall have none to help them.’

⁽⁵⁰⁾ “But as for those who believe and do what is right, He will pay them their reward, for God loves not the unjust.”

“That is what we recite to thee of the signs and of the wise reminder (The word is ‘dkikr’ – a word used for the recitation of the Quran, but usually applied to the meetings of Sufis.)

⁽⁵³⁾ “Verily the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from the earth, then He said to him, ‘Be’ and he was – the Truth from thy Lord; so be thou not of those who are in doubt. And whoso disputeth with thee concerning Him (i.e. Jesus) after what has come to thee of knowledge, say, ‘Come, let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves; then we will imprecate and put God’s curse on those who lie.”

⁽⁵⁵⁾ “Verily these are the true stories and there is no God but God. And verily, God, He is the mighty, the wise; but if they turn back, God knows the evil doers.”

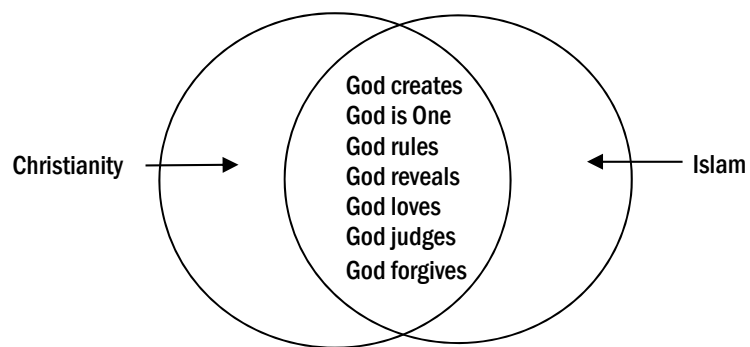
Q. What are the titles that are given to Jesus in the Quranic passages?

3:45 * _____
 * _____
 * _____
 3:53 * _____

Q. How is the Injil confirmed in this passage?

Q. These are unique titles and confirmation of the validity of the Injil. Why is Jesus given these titles?

The question is not whether we can find common ground, but how? The Quran is one area. Another is in the attributes of God. In his book, *The Call of the Minaret*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1964 ISBN: 0195007093) Kenneth Cragg sees a major overlap in this area.



These seven attributes are common to both. How would you use these attributes?

Is there an exact equivalence in our understanding?

Session 10

How to Read the Quran with a Christian Interpretation

Orthodox Muslims consider the Quran to be an earthly replica of the heavenly original – the eternal, heavenly Word of God. The recited Quran is the “living” Word of God and as it is recited it is believed to have power to drive away evil and cure diseases. This is so even if the one reciting doesn’t know Arabic.

The **study** of the Quran is very rare and is usually done by those who have mastered classical Arabic. Translation of the Quran into other languages is often discouraged. Such translations are seen as interpretations and not literal translations. Serious study of the Quran can only be done if you know Arabic. Translations into English – e.g. by Youssef Ali – usually reflect the biases and prejudices of the Islamic translators.

How can we read the Quran and understand its message? We are not speaking of the esoteric, often pantheistic, message of the Sufi mystics, but the message of God – the Gospel of the Kingdom. Is such a message actually there to be found? And if so, is the Gospel in the Quran so that we can extract it without violating every basic principle of exegesis?

As believers, we interpret the Old Testament “in the light of Jesus”. So let us try and interpret the Quran in much the same way. I hope the result will be helpful.

The Quran appears to most Westerners difficult to understand with its mixture of stories, legends and prayers together with complex social, civil and ceremonial laws. The Quran contains supposed divine utterances, eschatological scenarios, apocalyptic visions, prayers, songs, historical narratives about the prophets, war documents and parts of the Sharia.

The Quran is divided up into 114 Suras. These are arranged in order from the longest to the shortest (2-114) rather than chronologically. It is a Semitic book, written by a Semite for Semites in a Semitic language. Semites draw truth from stories and parables rather than from systematic logic. Chronology is unimportant to them. The Semite is emotionally involved in the events he is reading or hearing about. Semitic people often substitute words for action in their everyday lives.

The western mentality is more detached, objective and analytical. It is usually very concerned with the timing of related events: past, present and future. Our thinking is basically static. We freeze events and isolate them on a linear timescale – first – next – last. Semitic thinking is dynamic and events pile up on top of each other with little logical progression. These are important differences as you come to the Quran with its seeming randomness and repetition. It almost has a stream-of-consciousness style.

In order to interpret the Quran it is necessary to look at the historical and cultural context. The background to the Quran can most easily be understood by considering the three groups of non-Muslims who are addressed in it:

- **The Leaders of the Jewish community** in Yathrib – they appear to be mainly “Sadducees” in their theological position.
- **Heretical Christian Sects** in Arabia at the time. There was a fairly high concentration of these. During the long war against the Persians fought by the Byzantine Empire, heavy taxation was placed on all non-orthodox Christians. Many moved into Arabia (outside the Byzantine Empire) to escape this heavy taxation.
- **The polytheistic, idolatrous Arabs:** These people were the main focus of Muhammad’s preaching. He sought to bring them out of their immorality and polytheism to the worship of the One True God.

The Jewish leaders are referred to in the Quran as “the People of the Book”. Today this phrase is applied to both Christians and Jews, but in the Quran it usually means Jews.

To them the Quran states plainly that Jesus was a prophet sent by God and is the Messiah. It declares that Mary is to be held in high honour against their charges that Jesus was illegitimate.

To the heretical Christians there is a confused picture, for Arabia was the ‘garbage dump’ of heretical Christians. It appears that many were **Docetics** (Docetism comes from the Greek word ‘to seem or to

appear to be'). Any theological position that says that Jesus was not really a man, but only appeared to be a man, is called Docetic. Behind Docetism is an assumption that the material creation is inherently evil and therefore any unity between human and divine nature is impossible. This view plagued the church from the second to the seventh centuries. It was present at the end of the first century. It was this that caused John to write 1 John 4:2-3.

There were groups of heretical Christians who did refer to Mary as the 'Mother of God' (a term used by the Greek Orthodox today). It was very offensive and pagan to Muhammad to think of God as having a mother. There were some who went further and worshipped Mary and offered sacrifices to her as a female deity.

There are various Quranic passages that try and refute the Docetic view of these heretical Christians. The emphasis is on the **humanity** of Jesus e.g. sura 5:75, *"They do blaspheme who say, 'God – He is the Messiah, son of Mary.' "*

If you say the Messiah is God, you reduce the Godhead to just the Messiah, excluding the Father and the Holy Spirit and this allows Mary to be called 'the Mother of God', which exalts Mary above God as His mother!

There was a minority group of Christian heretics who acknowledged the Messiahship of Jesus, but who denied His deity – **the Ebionites**. These Christians rejected all the writings of Paul. They insisted on circumcision and on practicing the law. To them Jesus was only human. Their name is derived from the Hebrew word for 'poor'. Another group of Christians were the '**Adoptionists**'. They believed that Jesus was an ordinary man and that God 'adopted' Jesus as His 'Son' and conferred on Him supernatural powers. Even after adoption, Jesus was not divine in nature. He was only an exalted man. This error is also rejected by the Quran – *"Neither was a son added to Him."*

The **pagan Arabs** worshipped a pantheon of gods and goddesses. At the head of their pantheon stood Allah – the Supreme God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Some supposed that he had a wife goddess called Allat and two daughter goddesses. He was also the Father of human sons through sexual intercourse with various women. These beliefs about Allah are strongly condemned in the Quran when it states that God never had a son or a wife or a concubine.

Sadly, it appears that Muhammad never interacted with or understood Biblical, orthodox Christianity and nearly all anti-Christian statements actually rebuke heretical Christian views that we would also reject. This includes the concept of the Trinity – understood by Muhammad to be tri-theism – the belief in three separate Gods, *"Say not three! Desist! It will be better for you: God is One God."* *"They do blaspheme who say, 'God is the third of three Gods.' "*

The Quran's Rules for its Interpretation

The Quran gives clear guidelines for its own interpretation and it claims a unique relationship to the Bible. The Quran never claims that the Bible has been corrupted. It never claims to replace the Bible as God's final revelation. **It clearly states that its purpose is to confirm the Bible.** (See suras 3:4; 4:47; 6:92 and 10:37.) It commands Muslims to believe in and practice 'the previous Scriptures' (suras 2:3-5; 2:121 and 136) and it commands Christians to hold fast to the Bible (sura 5:71).

The Quran says, *"Nothing is said to you (Muhammad) that was not said to the apostles before you."* (sura 41:43)

In the Quran Muhammad claims to have only a partial revelation, likening himself to a blind man, *"I tell you not that with me are the treasures of God, nor do I know what is hidden, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. But I follow what is revealed to me.....Can the blind be held equal to the seeing?"*

According to sura 17:85 the Quran's message is incomplete in itself: *"The Spirit comes by command of my Lord; of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you."* Again in sura 10:94, God speaking to Muhammad says: *"If you are in doubt as to what We (God) have revealed to you, then ask those who were reading the Book (i.e. the Bible) from before you."*

So the Quran points to the Bible for an interpretation of its message. So the true interpretation of the Quran is that which matches Biblical theology, not only because the Bible is true, but because the Quran itself commands it. A Christian interpretation of the Quran uncompromisingly applies the Quran's own rules of exegesis.

So often in evangelism with our Neighbours, there has been “a battle of the books”. The result is usually frustration, discord and the alienation of our friends. This approach takes an assumed hypothetical position of honouring the authority that the Quran has among our Neighbours. Why not use the Quran as a bridge to understanding? Why not lovingly and respectfully open the eyes of our friends to the message and testimony of the Quran about Jesus? Perhaps, in God’s sovereignty, it was put there for our use! Rather than trying to disprove the legitimacy of the Quran and the prophethood of Muhammad, try and reveal that Jesus was much more than a prophet!

Session 10

Guidelines for Reading the Quran – What the Quran says about itself

1.	The message was given to a specific people.	Sura 32:3: <i>“Nay, it is the truth from the Lord, that you may admonish a people to whom no warner has come before you.....”</i>
2.	There is nothing new in the message.	Sura 41:43: <i>“Nothing is said to you that was not said to the apostles before you.”</i>
3.	The message was given in a specific language for a specific purpose.	Sura 46:12: <i>“And before this was the book of Moses as a guide and a mercy. And this book (the Quran) confirms it (the book of Moses) in the Arabic tongue.”</i>
4.	The message is incomplete in itself.	<p>Sura 17:85: <i>“They ask you concerning the spirit (of inspiration). Say: ‘The Spirit comes by command of my Lord: Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (O men!)’ “</i></p> <p>Sura 20:99: <i>“This do we relate to you some of the information of what happened before.”</i></p> <p>Sura 6:50: <i>“Say: ‘I tell you not that with me are the treasures of God, nor do I know what is hidden, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. But I follow what is revealed to me.’ “</i></p>
5.	The message confirms the previous Scriptures.	<p>Sura 35:31: <i>“That which we have revealed to you of the Book is the truth confirming what was revealed before it.”</i></p> <p>Sura 3:3: <i>“It is He who sent down to you in truth the Book, confirming what went before it. And He sent down the Tawrat (of Moses) and the Injil (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind.”</i></p> <p>Sura 4:47: <i>“O you People of the Book, believe in what we have revealed, confirming what was already with you.”</i></p> <p>Sura 10:37: <i>“...it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it and an explanation of the Book, wherein is no doubt from the Lord of the worlds.”</i></p>
6.	The message commands its hearers to believe in and practice the previous Scriptures.	<p>Sura 2:3-5: <i>“Those who believe in the unseen and who keep up prayer and spend out of what we have given them, and who believe in that which was revealed to you and in that which was revealed before you, and they are sure of the hereafter, these are on a right course with their Lord and these it is that shall be successful.”</i></p> <p>Sura 2:121: <i>“Those to whom we have sent the Book study it as it should be studied. They are the ones that believe therein. Those who reject faith therein, the loss is their own.”</i></p>
7.	The interpretation of the message is found in the Book (Bible).	<p>Sura 2:136: <i>“Say: ‘We believe in God and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes and in that given to Moses and to Jesus and that given to all the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one and another of them...’ “</i></p> <p>Sura 10:94: <i>“If you were in doubt as to what we have revealed to you, then ask those who were reading the Book from before you.....”</i></p>

Session 10

Using the Quran as a Bridge

In sharing with a friend it is best not to go at them with all canons fully loaded! It is best to slowly introduce one verse at a time during different conversations. Use phrases like. *"I have been reading the Quran and I have noticed this verse. Could you explain to me what it means?"*

Paul quoted the Athenian poet on Mars Hill (Acts 17:28), not because he believed the poet was an authority on spiritual things, but because he knew **his audience** viewed the poet as an authority. By referring to what **they** trusted, Paul established common ground.

When we use the Quran as a bridge it is **not** because we believe God revealed it, but because this is what our friends believe. We want to give them a reason to listen to us.

The Quranic sura 3:42-55 (see p. 197/8) is a good place to begin with your friends. Pray that they will have a revelation in their hearts and minds that indeed Jesus is 'more than a prophet'. It helps not to jump from passage to passage, but to stay in one place until you have explored the meaning.

There are other discussion starters.

No one can change the Word of God – note that this charge is made of us!

Sura 6:115: *"The words of thy Lord are fulfilled in truth and justice; there is none to change His words, for He both hears and knows."*

Sura 10:65: *"There is no changing the words of God."*

Sura 18:27 *"There is no changing His words."*

They are to believe and obey the truths in the Bible

In addition to the Suras in Section 5, you can use:

Sura 2:86-89

Sura 29:45-46

Sura 46:12

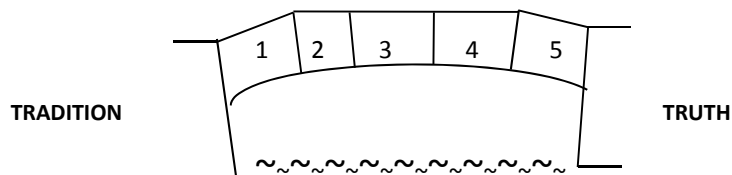
Sura 5:70-74

Sura 4:163-165 This says that God spoke directly to Moses and gave the Psalms to David.

Sura 43:61-63 Here our friends are instructed to worship God and to follow Jesus because He is the straight path!

Look up these passages and evaluate their effectiveness as "discussion starters". How do any of these relate to the felt needs your friends might have? Can you relate any of these passages to your storytelling?

Using the Quranic Bridge (only to be used after many discussions)



- Draw the above diagram with the numbers and words on a piece of paper.
- Explain that you have had several interesting discussions about various verses that you have read in the Quran and that they seem to you to fall into a pattern! Ask if you can share your thoughts with them.
- Suggest that your friend finds and reads the references with you from his/her own Quran.

1st Block in the Bridge : sura 6:34: *“For there is none to change the words of God.”*

Then ask the question: *Can God’s Word be changed?*

2nd Block in the Bridge : sura 5:68-70: *“If they observe the Torah and the Gospel and what is revealed to them from Allah, they shall be given”*

Then ask the question: *Are the Torah and the Injil to be considered God’s Word?*

3rd Block in the Bridge: sura 46:9

Then ask the question: *Did Muhammad have a clear understanding about eternal life?*

4th Block in the Bridge: sura 89:22

Then ask the question: *Who is the most exalted in this world and the next?*

5th Block in the Bridge: sura 43:63-64

Then ask the question: *What do these verses say about the ‘straight way’ to eternal life?*

Tie up the answer with John 14:6 – ***“Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.”***

Be respectful of the Quran since it is an important book to your friend. Don’t get into an argument! He might think that ‘for honour’s sake’ he ought to give the ‘politically correct’ answers.

Help your friend to see the connection of the prayer – Al Fatiha – that he prays ten times a day (!) and sura 43:63-64. Help him/her to realise that it is clearly identified with John 14:6 and the Lord Jesus.

There are other ways of using the Quran as a bridge including:

- The Camel Method
- The Common Ground

Session 10

Jesus in the Quran and Other Sources

1. Jesus in the Quran

Jesus is mentioned in 14 different suras of the 114 Suras in the Quran. Some 93 verses refer to *Isa ibn Maryam*. The title *al-Masih* occurs 22 times but orthodox Muslim theologians don't associate the title with the Hebrew concept of the Messiah.

Jesus is the fourth most popular Biblical person in the Quran – if frequency of mention is the measure of popularity. Moses is mentioned in 500 verses, Abraham in 250 verses and Noah in more than 130 verses. According to the experts who put the 114 suras of the Quran in chronological order, Jesus is not mentioned in the first 57 suras and so had no role in the Meccan period. We know Muhammad's first wife, Khadija, had a Christian relative – Waraka. It was Waraka who was the first to point out to Muhammad the continuity of his preaching monotheism with the Judaeo-Christian revelation. This confirmed to Muhammad that he was called to be a prophet to the Arabs.

About two thirds of the verses in the Quran that relate to Jesus deal with His birth – especially the stories in suras 19 and 3. According to those who placed the suras in chronological order, sura 19 is the first mention of Jesus. In the Gospels the central event in the life of Jesus is His death and resurrection, but according to the Quran the central event is His birth by the Virgin Mary.

Note some of the central features of the Quranic version of the life of Jesus.

- The honour of Mary is strongly defended. She is received with suspicion when, as an unmarried woman. She arrives home with a newborn child. Jesus, as a baby, takes part in the story first and foremost to defend His mother!
- Jesus, the baby, speaks to His mother to comfort her and speaks to her family to defend her honour. This is seen as one of the miracles that legitimised the prophethood of Jesus. Every prophet should have a Hijra (flight) and the flight into Egypt is understood in this context.
- Jesus announces Himself as a servant of Allah (*abdallah*) and a prophet (*nabi*). He is given the Book (*al-Kitab*) and blessing (*baraka*). He practices prayer (*salah*) and charity (*zakat*). This implies that Jesus performed Islam as far as it could be done.
- Jesus is only a human being. See sura 19:36 and sura 3:59.
- Jesus performs miracles by speaking from the cradle, 'knowing the secrets'; giving life to a clay bird; healing the blind and the lepers and raising the dead. He demonstrated His authority by confirming the law and making lawful things that were forbidden before His time.
- There is a certain amount of controversy concerning the real identity of Jesus and this is due to the titles of Jesus in the Quran.

2. The Titles of Jesus in the Quran

Ibn Maryam and *al-Masih* have already been mentioned. Two other titles are found in sura 4:171. Jesus is called the Spirit of Allah (*Ruhullah*) and the Word of Allah (*Kalimatullah*). Some Muslim theologians say that these titles confirm the prophethood of Jesus. Jesus spoke the word of God and breathed out the speech of God – i.e. a sort of Semitic parallelism.

Others have seen it as a 'Christology' hidden in the Quran. If you link sura 4:171 to sura 97 where it is stated that the Spirit descended in the Night of Power, some see here the theology of the incarnation of Jesus.

These titles have caused many people to wonder about Jesus. One piece of research from Pakistan indicates that about one in four of our Neighbours who come to faith started a search for the truth because of what they read in the Quran about Jesus. One said, "*Even the Quran says He is much more than that*"

(the Son of God). *The Quran calls Him 'Ruhullah'. We know that the breath of a person is related to his life. If he does not breathe, he is dead. This must mean that Jesus carries God's very life in Himself."*

3. Jesus in the Hadith

This is a short survey of how Jesus is portrayed in the Hadith. It is based on the Mishkat al-Masabih. This collection is drawn from all "six books" (the 6 recognised collections of the Hadith within Sunni Islam). There are 25 stories where Jesus is involved.

- Jesus **and** Maryam are seen as the only humans not being touched by Satan during their birth. The cry of a newborn baby is seen as a reaction to Satan's touch. This is often related to the belief that Jesus was without sin.
- When the last hour is at hand, Jesus will lead the believers in prayer and the final battle against the *dajjal* – the anti-Christ. Jesus will have descended from heaven before this confrontation. There are several stories that deal with His return stating, for example, that, *"The Son of Mary will soon descend among you as a just judge. He will break crosses, kill swine and abolish the jizya..."*
- According to Muhammad, when Jesus comes to earth again He will, *"Marry, have children and remain 45 years, after which he will die and be buried along with me in my grave. Then Jesus, son of Maryam, and I shall arise from one grave."* Muhammad's grave is in the great mosque in Medina.
- In the meantime the Hadith places Jesus in heaven. The story of Muhammad's journey to the seven heavens includes an encounter with Jesus. Muhammad found John the Baptist and Jesus in the second heaven and they welcomed him as, *"The good brother and the good prophet."* From this ranking the Hadith does not give much honour to Jesus. Adam is in the first heaven; Joseph is in the third; Aaron is in the fifth; Moses is in the sixth and Abraham is in the seventh heaven (the highest).
- Another story deals with the issue of mediation. On the great day of resurrection when Jesus and Muhammad are raised from the grave in Medina believers look for an intercessor. They approach several prophets – Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses. All of these excuse themselves because of the sins they have committed. Then the believers will approach Jesus, but He will say, *"I am not in a position to do that for you, but go to Muhammad. A servant whose former and latter sins have been forgiven him by God."* When Muhammad intercedes he gets the promise from God that, *"If you make a request, it will be granted."*

So, in the Hadith Jesus is subordinated to Muhammad. Jesus is just one of his predecessors. Although there are Quranic verses concerning Jesus – such as being without sin and being called the Word of God and the Spirit of God – Jesus is still inferior to Muhammad.

4. Jesus in Muslim Theology

Al Ghazali (who died in 111 AD) is considered to be the greatest Muslim theologian of all time. One of his works is a reflection of the divinity of Jesus. The Christology that he argues against is that of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt. He had clearly done his homework well in studying what the Coptic church taught.

To Al-Ghazali Jesus is a very great example of ascetic teaching and living and the entire world should follow His way. But in spite of all His greatness, He was only a man. He is called the Word of God because He is created in His mother's womb by a divine command and this title should not be related to God's eternal and unspoken Word. But as 'The Servant of God', He is a sign from God, a guidance for all and a light for the world. He was a man with power and miracles from God – but always only a man.

When we, as believers, have tried to make Jesus God, we have misunderstood the revelation of Jesus and have brought shame on human sense.

5. Jesus in Muslim worship

While orthodox theologians have attacked our lack of logic in our Christology, pious worshipping Muslims through all the centuries have been deeply attracted to the person of Jesus.

Ibn Arabi (who died in 1240 AD), a great mystic from Moorish Spain, wrote a great hymn to Jesus as part of his great work on the Prophets of Islam. In this hymn he states that, *"The Spirit became a Being"* and *"He (Jesus) became worthy to be close to His Lord."* He confirms his belief in the virgin birth of Jesus, His

miracles and His power. It is a great hymn and what is clear is that Ibn Arabi was enormously attracted to the person of Jesus.

Another great Persian mystic and poet was Jalal ad-Din ar-Rumi who died in 1273 AD. He also had a high regard for Jesus. He sees Jesus as the very best man – the ideal ascetic. At the same time Jesus was often smiling and in a good mood.

Rumi sees us (Believers) as very close relatives to Neighbours – at least if we have the same mystical experiences. We are brothers in a secret meaning of the word.

Many Neighbours both from the Sufi traditions and from ordinary Islam are attracted to Jesus because of His gentle character and the nature of His miracles. He is seen as a kind and loving person and His miracles are seen as acts of service (*diakonia*). In particular those involved in Folk Islam pray to Jesus for healing since many believe that Jesus still has great healing powers.

6. Jesus in the eyes of Neighbours who have come to faith.

When we ask Neighbours who have come to faith to tell us about the Jesus they have met, we get an interesting perspective. They come to Jesus to find assurance, but they tell us that Jesus is absolutely unique and wonderful/awesome!

Here are just two verses that are mentioned frequently:

- ❖ Jn. 14:6 ***“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no-one comes to the Father except by Me.”***

‘The Truth’ and ‘the Life’ are two of the 99 names of God (*al Haqq and al-Hayat*). This makes a powerful statement. Part of ‘*salat*’ (daily prayers) is the recitation of the al-Fatiha and this is prayed by a pious Muslim about six thousand times a year! Part of the prayer is asking God to lead one on the ‘straight way’. This is a puzzle to many Muslims. Why should they constantly say this prayer if Islam is the ‘straight way’. Many Neighbours who have come to faith rejoice that they no longer need to ask to be shown the ‘straight way’. They have found Him – Jesus!

- ❖ Mt. 11:28 ***“Come to Me all of you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest for your souls. My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”***

Many are very tired of carrying heavy loads of shame and fear. They need rest. Those who choose to highlight these verses usually focus on the person of Jesus. He presents Himself as **the solution**. They don’t concentrate on a method, a programme, an organisation or a lifestyle. Jesus said, ***“Come to Me and I will....”*** This shows that faith is a living relationship with Jesus.

Session 10

A Reference List of Jesus in the Quran

General Remarks

- Mentioned in 15 Suras – 93 verses (There are 6,211 verses in the Quran.)
- Meccan Suras (610-622) 6, 19, 23, 42, 43, (21)
- Medinan Suras (622-632) 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 33, 57, 61, 66

1. The Names of Jesus

- ✧ Messiah: 3:45; 4:157; 171:2 (mentioned 11 times – all Medinan)
- ✧ Servant: 4:172; 19:30; 43:57-61 (mentioned 3 times – mixed)
- ✧ Prophet: 19:30 (mentioned once)
- ✧ Messenger: 2:27, 253; 3:49, 53 (mentioned 3 times – mixed)
- ✧ Word: 4:171; 19:34; 3:45 (mentioned 3 times – mixed)
- ✧ Spirit: 4:171; 5:110; 19:17 (mentioned 7 times – mixed)

2. The Birth of Jesus (19:22-33; 3:59-62)

- ✧ Born of a virgin: 19:20-21; 21:91; 3:47
- ✧ Preached as a child: 19:27-34
- ✧ Sinless: 19:17, 19 (Muhammad was a sinner – 40:55; 48:12)

3. The Works of Jesus

- ✧ Miracles: 5:109-110; 3:49; 2:87
- ✧ Feeding the 5,000: 5:112-115

4. The Words of Jesus

- ✧ 3:43-52: Some of this resembles the message sent by Jesus to John the Baptist.
- ✧ 61:14: Almost the same as above.
- ✧ 5:112-117: See parallels in John 6 and 17:12 (sura 42:11)
- ✧ 5:76:
- ✧ 43:63-64
- ✧ 48:29: Similar to Mark 4:26-30
- ✧ 61:6 – *Ahmedu*: Was the name *Ahmed* (meaning praised) a later interpolation? Was '*parakletos*' (the comforter) confused with '*periklutos*' meaning celebrated (in Arabic it is written '*faraqliq*')
- ✧ There are many verses in the Quran that remind us of phrases that Jesus spoke.

5. The Death of Jesus

- ✧ 19:33 *"The day of my death and the day of my being raised up alive"* – does this refer to the crucifixion and resurrection? Argument that it does not:
 - 19:15 – the same phrase is used of John the Baptist and so the resurrection must be the general resurrection on the Last Day.
 - 4:157 – Again this implies 19:33 as death **after** the second coming.

- ✧ 3:55 *"...term to an end and raise thee to Myself..."* This phrase is used in 2:240 of men dying.
- ✧ 5:117 *"...Thou didst take me to Thyself..."*
- ✧ 5:17 God may wish *"to destroy the Messiah..."* affirming the humanity of Jesus.
- ✧ 5:75 Jesus does like other messengers before Him.

Summary so far

- The possibility of the Messiah's death is affirmed.
- The fact of Jesus' death is affirmed.
- The return of Jesus to God is spoken of.

But to our Neighbours all these verses are interpreted in the light of the sura 4:155-158 passage.

The problem passage on the crucifixion of Jesus – sura 4:155-158

*"So then, because they have violated the Covenant
and have disowned the signs of God
and have killed the prophets wrongly
and have said: 'Our hearts are uncircumcised!'
(but it is God rather who has sealed their unbelief
so that but few of them believe.)
And again for their unbelief and for having spoken
a horrible slander against Maryam;
and for having said, 'We killed the Messiah,
Jesus, Son of Mary, the messenger of God!'
Whereas they neither killed him nor crucified Him.
But it appeared so to them.
(And in truth those whose opinion on this matter
differs are certainly in doubt),
nor have they any knowledge about this matter,
although they follow a conjecture.
It is certain that they did not kill Him!
But God raised him up to Himself;
and God is powerful and wise."*

(For prophets killed in the Quran see sura 5:70)

Note the following:

- **The Context** – the rejection of the messengers of God by the Jews.
The Jews claimed to have killed the Messiah and therefore He could not have been the true Messiah.
- **The Purpose** – to defend the Messiah against the Jews who claimed to have killed Him and destroyed His Messiahship.
- **The Traditional Interpretation** – the Jews tried to kill Jesus but were unable to do so.
Some think there are two options here:
 - ✓ That Jesus did not really die – this was a view widely promoted by the docetics.
 - ✓ That there was a substitute – this was also a view promoted by various heretical sects
e.g. the Persian teacher Mani.

Note:

- a) The Quran does not say that Jesus suffered in a false body – docetism.
- b) The Quran does not say that a substitution was made.

Our Interpretation

"They did not crucify Him..." (ma salabu-hu) – i.e. 'They did not cause His death on the Cross.'

In fact the Romans did this.

In fact Jesus gave up His own life – John 10:17-18.

(A true 'Abd' lays down his life – cf. 8:17 and those who lay down their lives at the Battle of Bedr.)

In fact it was God who required the death of the Messiah – cf. 5:17 and Acts 2:22-24.

"...It appeared so to them..." The text in Arabic is '*shubbiha la-hum*'. It literally means, 'It appeared to them as such' – no mention of a substitute – i.e. the Crucifixion was an event that they could not understand and neither could the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Conclusion: The Quranic verses strongly favour of a real death – a complete self-surrender of Jesus – as well as the resurrection and the ascension! No substitute theory is even suggested.

6. Jesus and the Future

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| 3:55 | } | These verses relate to the rapture of Jesus in bodily form into heaven – See Acts 3:31 |
| 4:158 | | |
| 19:33 | | |
| 43:61 | | |
| 3:45 | } | These verses hint at the return of Jesus. |
| 4:159 | | |
| 89:22 | | This is a verse that says Jesus is Muhammad's Lord. |

Session 10

God's Love in the Quran and in the Bible

Two things are important when we think about sharing the Gospel with Neighbours. One is a thorough understanding of Biblical faith. This is essential. The other (not so essential) is an accurate understanding of the beliefs of Neighbours and an awareness of **their** understanding of those beliefs.

The New Testament places **the unconditional love of God** at the heart of the Good News about Jesus. Does the Quran reveal a similar teaching? Let us look at the two verbs used for 'love' in relation to Allah.

The two Arabic verbs are '*habba*' and '*wadda*'. '*Habba*' means "to love, like, to wish, to want or like to do something". This verb appears in its active form some 40 times with Allah as the subject and with a variety of human objects. For example:

Allah loves:

- 'good-doers': 2:195; 3:134; 3:148; 5:93
- the 'just' 5:42; 49:9; 60:8
- the 'God-fearing' or conscientious: 9:4,7
- 'those who fight in His way': 61:4

Allah does not love:

- 'evil-doers' (oppressors): 3:57; 3:140; 42:40
- the 'proud and boastful': 4:36; 31:18; 57:23
- 'workers of corruption' or those who are violent: 5:64; 28:77
- 'prodigals' ('*musrifun*') - wasteful ones: 6:141; 7:31

In all there are 22 statements about who Allah does not love and 18 statements about those whom Allah loves. The noun from this verb '*mahabba*' occurs only once: '*I cast love from me over you* (Moses).' sura 20:39.

The second verb for 'love' in the Quran is '*wadda*' meaning "to love, to like, to be fond of, to want and to wish". This occurs just three times.

- On the Day of Resurrection Allah will assign love – '*wudd*' – to "*those who believe and do deeds of righteousness*" (sura 19:96).
- The prophet Shuaib (perhaps he was Moses' father-in-law Jethro) is reported to have said that his Lord is loving – '*wudood*' (sura 11:90).
- Allah is said to be loving '*wudood*' in association with forgiveness and mercy. '*Wudood*' is the affection with which his master responds to the loyalty of a faithful servant.

One authority – Muhammad Daud Rahbar – concluded that Allah loves only people who are "perfectly pious". And since it is presumptuous for a human being to claim perfect piety, Rahbar reasoned that the question as to whether Allah actually loves any human is left open. As a reflection of this, human love for Allah is mentioned very rarely in the Quran.

The Old Testament uses a number of words for 'love'. Like the Quran, it mentions God's love for those who love Him and do His will as well as punishment for those who do not love Him or do His will (Deut. 7:12-13; Ex. 20:5-6). Yet it speaks in much more personal terms of God's love for His People and His relationship with them. This relationship is made analogous to that of a mother (Is. 49:15), a father (Ps. 103:13) and a husband (Is. 54:5). In this last analogy, it is a relationship in which He accepts suffering brought on by unfaithfulness (Hosea 1-3). The emphasis on the love of God is not found in orthodox Muslim theology that tends to concentrate on the sovereignty of God. However, Sufis put great emphasis on God's love.

In contrast to the Quran, the Old Testament has God taking the initiative in loving and choosing His People (Deut. 7:6-8; 10:15-16).

The major word used in the New Testament to express God's love is '*agapé*' – a word used to describe the nature of God (1 Jn. 4:8). It is **not** conditional, but extends even to those who have not turned to God. It finds its fullest demonstration in Jesus (who fully revealed the Father) giving His life for mankind. So Paul says in Romans 5:8, ***"God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us"***.

And in 1 Jn. 4:10 we read, ***"In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*** The believer also loves God, but the sequence is significant because it reverses the Quranic sequence by saying, ***"We love because He first loved us"***. (1 Jn. 4:19)

Things to think about

1. If someone was to say to you, *"Allah is the same in Islam and Christianity. In both religions He is loving and merciful and compassionate. Do you agree?"* How would you answer?
2. How will you describe and share about the true love of God as found in the Gospel with a Neighbour who also thinks that Allah is good and loving? Give some specific examples to help you think clearly. How did Jesus Himself share this and explain it?

Session 11

Learning Patience

Objectives:

Head: To grow in your understanding of how to prioritise your ministry activities for the longterm

Heart: To be deeply convinced that God **will** save Neighbours in **His** time and **His** way

Hands: To be able to schedule into your life:

- Prayer
 - Reflection
 - Evaluation
 - Planning
- } **PREP**
Times!

Time Together

1. Welcome and prayer

2. Debrief the group as to their 'Homework' assignments

- Memorize and use the Quranic Bridge – check that each member has it memorized.
- Did anyone use the Quranic Bridge with a Neighbour? What was the result?
- How did the members personalise the Quranic Bridge with storytelling alongside?

3. Discuss the 'Kingdom of God' Bible study

- Work your way through the study question by question.
- Summarize the key concepts along the way.
- Discuss how these Biblical concepts challenge the thinking of the members of the group.
- Get a sense of some of the key issues.

4. The Concept of the Spectrum

Discuss whether you thought this was helpful in avoiding 'compartmentalising' the whole process we are involved in. What are the dangers of concentrating on only one section?

5. Not closed sets but centred sets

Discuss whether this was helpful in making too much of conversion and the dichotomy between evangelism and discipleship.

6. Why Neighbours are coming to faith

Discuss these points and also some of the hindrances you have already encountered.

7. The Afterlife in the Quran and the Hadith

Read and discuss the questions to ask your Neighbours.

8. Types of encounters with Neighbours

These types of encounters need to be 'filled out' in future study and reflection.

9. Discussion and Equipping

- Jn. 4:34-38 emphasises the different roles of 'sowing' and 'reaping'. How does this apply to our relationships with Neighbour friends and the process of moving them towards Jesus?
- As a group, discuss how the phrase, *'Build bridges of trust that can withstand the weight of truth'* could impact the **pace** of your relationship with Neighbours you meet.
- Initially the disciples had great difficulty understanding the Kingdom of God. They only grew in their understanding over a considerable time. How does this reality provide clues to the process of our Neighbours' comprehension of the Gospel?

10. PREP-ing for ministry

- How did the article relate to your life and ministry?
- What adjustments might you need to make to be more intentional in this area?
- Is there someone whom you would feel comfortable to include in your PREP process on a regular basis?

Homework

Head: In the next week share with one other person what you have learned about the Kingdom.

Heart: Mt. 5-7 (The Sermon on the Mount) has been considered as the 'constitution' of the Kingdom. As you consider the lifestyle of the Kingdom that Jesus described in this 'sermon', see how your life lines up with the standards and values that He described. Ask God to integrate all these values into your heart and life.

Hands: As you relate to your Neighbours, try to begin to describe yourself less as a 'Christian' or 'church member' and more in terms of your citizenship in the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed.

Work on your own PREP. Share your plan with at least one person for the sake of accountability.

Handouts for Session 12: Discipling a Neighbour Believer – Beginning Steps

- Bible Study on 'How to Disciple Your Neighbour'
- Hindrances to Discipleship
- The Birthing Process – How to be a Good Midwife
- Issues that need to be covered in Initial Discipleship
- A Curriculum for Life-Changing Discipleship
- Developing Biblical Functional Substitutes for Cultural Practices
- The Concept of Reproduction
- Moving Towards a Believing, Reproducing Community

Session 11

The Kingdom of God

The theme of **the Kingdom** was the major teaching of Jesus. There are over 90 separate references to the Kingdom in the Gospels alone. The Kingdom was the very first thing and the very last thing that Jesus spoke about on earth. When beginning His public ministry Jesus proclaims, ***“Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”*** (Mt. 4:17)

After His resurrection Jesus spoke about only one topic – the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Across all phases of His ministry Jesus spoke often about the Kingdom. However, a major paradigm shift occurred over the next three centuries!

E. Stanley Jones wrote this, ‘By the time the creeds were written in the 4th century what had happened to the concept of the Kingdom of God? The Nicene Creed mentions it once beyond the borders of this life – in heaven, ‘Your Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom’. The Apostles Creed and the Athanasian Creed don’t even mention it. The three great historic creeds summing up Christian doctrine mention once what Jesus mentioned hundreds of times. Something had dropped out. A vital, vital thing had dropped out.”

Today we talk much about the church and also about church planting, but we talk very little about the Kingdom – something that was **foundational** in the teaching of Jesus. Developing an understanding of the Kingdom is important for:

- Our own understanding of God’s rule and reign in the world today
- Our ministry to Neighbours

1. The Meaning of the Kingdom: Mt. 13

In Mt. 13 Jesus explains the secrets of the Kingdom to His disciples through seven parables. What do you observe about how the Kingdom works?

- The Parable of the Sower – 1-23

Observations:

- The Parable of the Weeds – 24-30, 36-43

Observations:

- The Parable of the Mustard Seed – 31-32

Observations:

- The Parable of the Yeast – 33

Observations:

- The Parable of the Hidden Treasure – 44

Observations:

- The Parable of the Pearl – 45-46

Observations:

- The Parable of the Net – 47-50

Observations:

Now summarize your observations from Mt. 13

2. A Brief Overview of what Jesus taught about the Kingdom

- ***“The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe in the Gospel.”*** (Mk. 1:15)

How did Jesus begin His ministry?

What did He mean by ‘at hand’?

- ***“And He said to them, ‘To you has been given the secret of the Kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything is in parables.’ ”*** (Mk. 4:11)

What is the secret of the Kingdom?

- ***“Fear not little flock for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”*** (Lk. 12:32)

In what way has the Kingdom been given to us?

- ***“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ ”*** (Mt. 25:34)

When and how will we come into our inheritance?

- ***“Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the Kingdom of Heaven is like a master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”*** (Mt. 13:52)

What does Jesus mean here?

- ***“The law and the prophets were until John; since then the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached and everyone forces his way into it (or everyone is forcefully urged into it).”*** (Lk. 16:16)

How do we enter into the Kingdom?

- ***“And Jesus said to him, ‘Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the Kingdom of God.’ ”*** (Lk. 9:60)

What is to be the focus of our proclamation?

- ***“To them He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the Kingdom of God.” “So when they had come together, they asked Him, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be My witnesses....’ ”*** (Acts 1:3, 6-8)

What do you think Jesus meant here in relation to the Kingdom?

3. A Simple Definition of the Kingdom

The Kingdom represents <u>the reign and rule</u> of God.

If you read over the verses in 1 and 2 above substituting the phrase ‘the reign and rule of God’ whenever you see the term ‘Kingdom’ (of God/Heaven) what insights do you gain?

4. The Motivation and Values of the Kingdom

As the disciples began to grasp something of the Kingdom, they began to ask questions about its **structure** like the one found in Mt. 18:1, ***“At that time the disciples came to Jesus saying, ‘Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?’ “***

Jesus answers their question in the next three chapters (18, 19 and 20) not by defining position or status or structure, but by explaining the values of the Kingdom that should be their values.

What **values** did Jesus encourage members of the Kingdom of Heaven to practice?

- Mt. 18:1-4 Observations:

- Mt. 18:15-20 Observations:

- Mt. 18:21-35 Observations:

- Mt. 19:4-6 Observations:

- Mt. 19:16-24 Observations:

- Mt. 20:1-16 Observations:

- Mt. 20:20-28 Observations:

5. Reasons why the paradigm of the Kingdom of God is helpful with Neighbours

➤ ***The Kingdom represents a less misunderstood paradigm***

As we relate to our Neighbours, using terms like ‘Christianity’ or ‘church’ will result in unnecessary misunderstanding since these terms are loaded with 1400 years of hostility! In addition, these terms fall short of the amazing reality that Jesus proclaimed. The concept of the Kingdom is a much better concept to introduce to our Neighbours.

➤ ***The Kingdom and its principles and values provide an objective reference point*** to evaluate, reject, adapt and transform our lives in the areas of cultural adaptation and contextualisation into the culture of our Neighbours.

➤ ***The Parables of the Kingdom remind us that evangelism is a process*** and that we are to play our part as citizens of the Kingdom. See Jn. 4:34-38. This is the ‘centred set’ again.

The goal of our ministry with Neighbours is “to build bridges of trust that can withstand the weight of truth”. Understanding and using the concept of the Kingdom of God will help us avoid unnecessary offence that only creates barriers. It will help us build bridges with our friends. Our whole effort must produce the fragrance of the Kingdom so that the character of the King can be plainly detected.

6. Questions for Discussion

- Why did Jesus’ disciples have such great difficulty in understanding the Kingdom?

- Why do we have such difficulty understanding the Kingdom today?

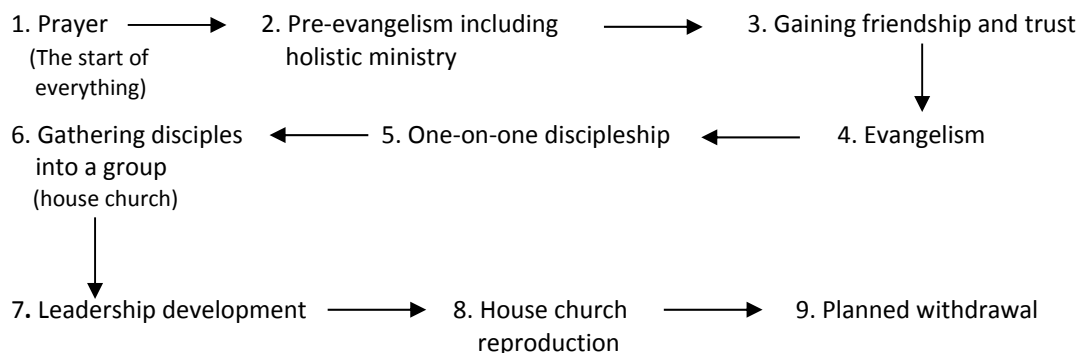
- Why did the Kingdom have such a big place in the ministry and teachings of Jesus?
- What is the relationship between 'the Church' and 'the Kingdom'? Look first at Mt. 16:13-20.
- How will the core teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God affect:
 - Your relationship with God?
 - Your relationship to ministry?
 - Your personal understanding of ministry?

NOTE: Many Arabic translations of the Bible don't use the phrase '**the Kingdom of God**' but rather '**God's Sovereignty**' to which all of creation is subject. This weakens the Biblical concept of the Kingdom.

Session 11

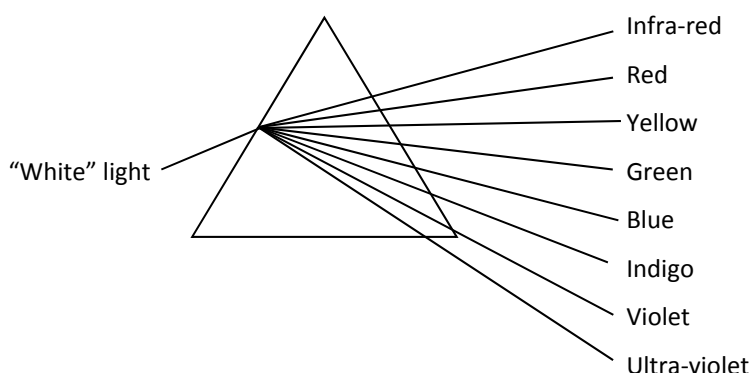
The Concept of the Spectrum

We have to see our approach to our **friends** as holistically meeting their spiritual, emotional, social, physical and economic needs. However, we usually think sequentially something like this:



The problem is that when you, as a team, begin to **think** sequentially, you begin to **act** sequentially. This leads to actions that tend to be optimised for that segment of the process that you are involved in. For example, you may focus on steps 2 and 3 and become very good at that. But you may then be reluctant to move on to step 4. The goal is healthy churches that can reproduce rapidly and effectively. Focussing on one segment of the process and trying to achieve excellence there may actually be counter-productive in the long run. This manual focuses on phases 3 and 4 only.

An alternative way to view the overall holistic process leading to a church planting movement is to compare it to white light (or the electromagnetic spectrum). This is a unified whole that can be artificially split up into different wave lengths. **For the purpose of evaluation** you can break it up into its component parts by passing it through the equivalent of a prism.



In reality these component parts are just part of the electro-magnetic spectrum. In the next session we will look at discipleship. But the process of discipleship is going to be built on the way evangelism was done. One-on-one discipleship will impact the shape of the group as disciples begin to gather together.

Because you are constantly modelling, the way you do **Phase 2** will impact the disciples' understanding of leadership (phase 7). The way you make friends and build trust will strongly influence **reproducibility**. Everything is happening because of either what was being done before (when and how) or what is not being done. So it is essential that you see this as a **whole** process and not a **sequential** process.

Modelling has far greater impact than the content of teaching. No matter how well you teach or how excellent the materials are! If modelling doesn't support the teaching, nothing will happen. So how you

pray, how you train, how you prepare yourself to do pre-evangelism and evangelism, how you form a group and how you prepare leaders etc. is all **discipleship**.

If a church planting movement has started, the gap between the first believers and a functioning house group is often just weeks. This is not an accident. It comes about by applying Biblical expectations (faith), prayer and Biblical patterns.

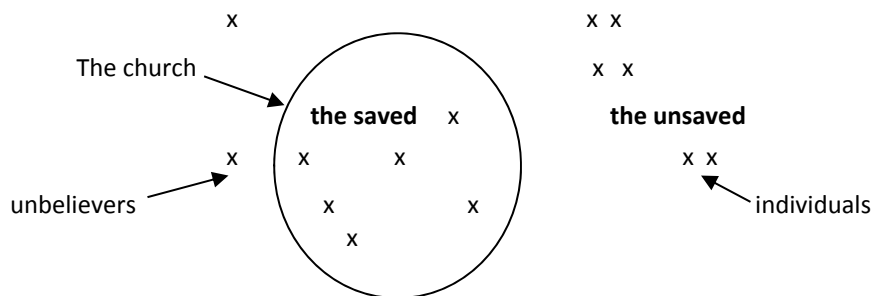
The pattern of the world is to perform services for people so that they become dependent on you to provide that service. For example: if they made it very easy for cars to be serviced it would put hundreds of thousands of mechanics out of a job. When you buy a car from a garage they don't teach you how to service it! No! They **want** you to depend on them!

Our situation is exactly the opposite. We want local Neighbours who have come to faith to reach a level of faith that will enable them to replace us!

Session 11

Not 'Closed Sets but 'Centred Sets'

A **'Closed Set'** is one where there is a clear boundary and where you are either **in the set** or you are outside it. It is easy to see 'salvation' as a closed set.

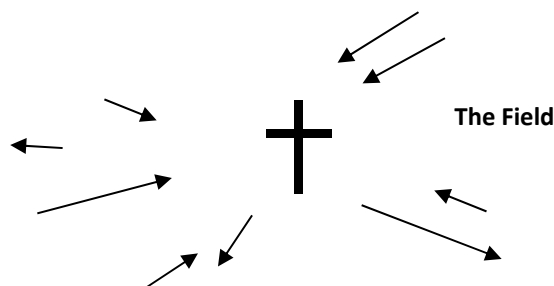


The saved are 'inside'. They are in the Kingdom of Life. Their names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. The unsaved are outside. In this model the boundary of the set is 'being born again'. Before you were dead in sin. Afterwards you are made alive in Christ.

Now this **is** a Biblical perspective, but it is not the only one. The focus of a closed set model is to get people from being outside to being inside. The emphasis is on 'the decision' – the point of conversion. The sequential church planting model blends itself well with this model – get Neighbours into the circle and train them to reproduce the circle.

A 'Centred Set'

This is an alternative model. In a centred set you have a set of vectors rather than a set of points (x) as in a closed set. Each individual is a vector. In the centre of this set is Jesus (represented by a cross)

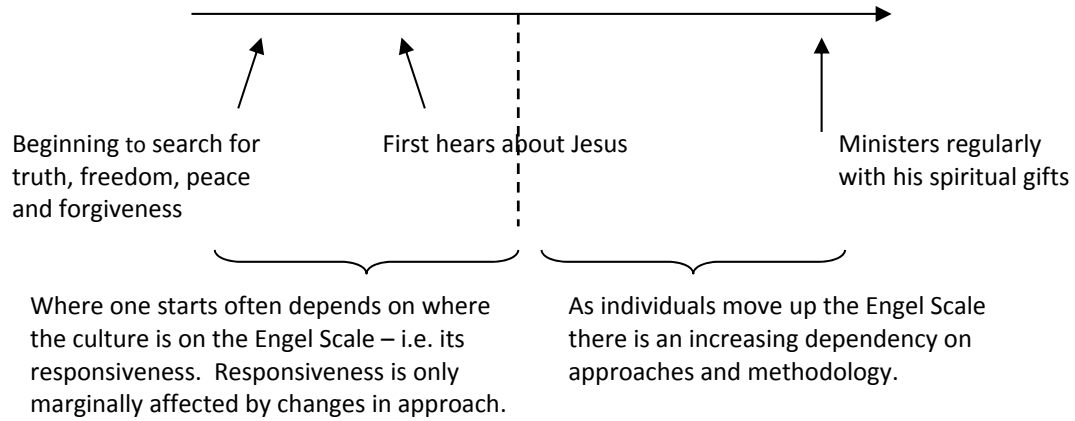


So there is the Field representing a network of relationships. People are either moving away from Jesus or **they are moving towards Jesus**. Clearly in this model people can change direction. People can impact each other within the Field (both for good or evil). Here you have a dynamic model rather than the static one of the closed set. Note that in this model there is no separation between evangelism and discipleship. People are either moving towards Jesus or they are not! Your Neighbour friends may have turned towards Jesus long before they met you. They may have been seeking an 'unknown Jesus'. Then your role is just to speed up the process.

A Brief look at a Vector – Moving towards Jesus

At the breakfast on the beach (Jn. 21) Jesus asked Peter, ***“Do you love Me?”***

The size of the vector is a measure of that love.



Session 11

Why Neighbours are Coming to Faith

Islam is the world's fastest growing religion. But much of this is biological growth. Conversion growth is much smaller. It has been estimated that about one million people turn to Islam from all other religions each year. One recent estimate of the number of Neighbours coming to faith in Jesus annually is around six million. Why? Below are nine reasons. These are stated very briefly and they are not prioritised.

1. Assurance of Salvation

Many of our Neighbour friends live in great fear of death and of future judgement. There are many traditions of what is going to happen on the Day of Judgement. The assurance of forgiveness and of salvation is a wonderful continuing experience.

(Please read 'The Afterlife in the Quran and the Hadith' – Section 7. This will help explain why the assurance of salvation is wonderfully 'Good News' to our Neighbours.)

2. The Quranic Testimony to Jesus

This leads many to the Bible. They long to know more about this person who is so vaguely outlined in the Quran.

3. The Bible itself

The Bible is often a forbidden book. Many Neighbours love to read it. It is a Semitic book – written largely by Semitic people for Semitic people. Culturally they find it very meaningful.

4. Dreams

About 25% of Neighbours who have come to faith have had a spiritual demonstration of the power of God in a dream or in a healing. Often these dreams indicate:

- They are reading the wrong book
- A place they are to go in order to find the truth
- Instructions to meet a person

5. A Divine Encounter

Many have a vision of Jesus directly – often in daylight. Jesus speaks to them directly.

6. The Power of Love as it is seen in the believers they know and trust

In a survey of 1000 believers from a Neighbour background and from many different countries, 366 reported they had been greatly influenced by the love demonstrated by a family member who had come to Christ. Another 642 reported that a very close friend they had known from childhood who had come to faith in Jesus had shown them a great example of love.

7. The Love of God

This is the experience that God loves them unconditionally. They are blessed. They are released from loneliness and feelings of not being loved.

8. Peace with God

This includes freedom from fear of the Spirit World and all the forces of the occult. They experience a sense of peace that they have found 'the truth'. Above all they have peace with God. They know they have been reconciled. They experience a release from demonic oppression.

9. Persecution

When people see Neighbours who have come to faith endure hardship and suffering with joy and patience, they begin to realise that we have found 'a treasure' that is worth a very great deal.

Why some of our Neighbours are having difficulty coming to faith

- The religious vocabulary is foreign and hard to understand.
- The Gospel is not 'good news' because it doesn't meet their spiritual felt needs – fear of the spirit world – how to deal with shame and a feeling of uncleanness etc.
- Where is the role of Muhammad in this new faith? It is difficult to downsize a major hero and role model.
- The 'inspiration' of Scripture when there is so much of the 'human' in it.
- The history of the Crusades
- Exploitation of the Colonial Period and cultural imperialism
- The modern State of Israel – why do Christians unconditionally support this political entity?
- Being a Christian is buying into the whole package. The West is Christian, yet Western states are so arrogant – committing treason to my people.
- Home and kinship values are very precious.
- Becoming a believer will involve a loss of identity and a loss of the possibility of being an authentic Arab (or Turk, Pakistani, Malay etc.)
- All the support systems for life – work – family – wife – customs – honour etc. will cease. How will I live?

Session 11

The Afterlife in the Quran and the Hadith

The Quran and the Afterlife

Humanity progresses from this world (*dunya*) to the next world (*akhira*) where there will be judgement and recompense for one's actions and one's response to the prophets God has sent. (suras 74:38 and 69:15-19)

After the teaching that God is One, the teaching about the Last Judgement may be considered the second great doctrine of the Quran. Essentially this is the teaching that, on the last day, people will be raised to life and will appear before God to be judged and to be assigned to Paradise or Hell according to whether their deeds have been mainly good or mainly bad. So there are two paths:

- Obedience brings the reward of Paradise – often described as the Garden
- Disobedience brings the reward of Hell – often described as the Fire

The Garden and the Fire

➤ The Garden

"Gardens beneath which rivers flow" is found often in the Quran. (sura 2:25) Sura 47:15 describes these rivers as flowing with water, milk, honey and wine. There will be lots of trees and fruit, plentiful food and drink, couches and carpets on which to lie, fine clothing and ornaments, maidens with big lustrous eyes, youths to serve and the presence of one's family. (suras 44:52-55; 52:17-24; 55:46-78; 56:8-38; 76:5-22)

➤ The Fire

Unbelievers, those who associate partners with God and sinners will be in the Fire that will surround them like the walls and roof of a tent.

There are many categories of sinners:

- those who seek evil
- doers of evil deeds
- those who conceal God's revelations
- those who reject faith
- those who turn back from fighting
- those who practice usury
- those who practice false religion and join partners with God
- those who mock the giving of alms
- those who eat up the property of orphans
- those who forget the Day of Judgement
- etc.

Those in the Fire (Hell) will be clothed with garments of fire and of liquid pitch. Water like molten brass will scald their faces and melt their insides. Their thirst, that will rage like a diseased camel, will force them to drink foul pus, boiling water and murky intensely cold fluid.

Further punishment will come from being shackled with chains and from blows with iron maces. There will also be bites from devils that grow on the Tree of Zaqqam in deepest hell. (suras 14:49-50; 18:29; 22:19-22; 25:11-13; 37:62-68; 44:48-50; 69:30-37; 78:21-27)

The imagery of the Garden and the Fire is a graphic picture of the best and worst of physical sensations experienced in this world – particularly for those who live in the deserts of Arabia. There are approximately twice as many Quranic references to the Fire as there are to the Garden. So the threat of Hell predominates over the promise of the Garden.

The Hadith and the Afterlife

The Hadith were collected and compiled largely in the 3rd Islamic century.

➤ Afflictions in the Grave

There is a period between death and resurrection spent in the grave. This period is called '*barzakh*' – a term that comes from sura 23:100 and means 'partition'. In suras 6:93; 56:83; 8:50 and 47:27 you have a description of what happens at death:

- The angels stretch out their arms to receive the soul.
- The soul of the dying person comes up their throat.
- The wicked die in agony and the angels beat them on the back.

Martyrs skip this period in the grave and go straight to the Garden. (sura 2:154)

Muhammad prayed both for himself and for his followers that they would be saved from a painful death and torment in the grave. (see Muslim's Hadith Kitab al Salat Vol. 1:1217 p. 291; 1224 p. 291)

When the mourners have left the newly interred body then two angels called *Munkar* and *Nakir* enter the grave and proceed to interrogate the dead person concerning his/her faith and practice. Good answers by a faithful believer will result in a peaceful sleep refreshed by a breeze coming from the Garden. However unbelievers, hypocrites and nominal believers will suffer tortures of being crushed between the two sides of the grave, being burned with fire, being struck with a sledge hammer that could crush mountains and being bitten by 99 snakes.

(NOTE: even a believer who has fallen short to some degree is subject to torment in the grave.)

The Hadith expand the descriptions of the Garden and especially of the Fire. Details are given on the degrees of heat and the minimum amount of punishment.

Some situations that will enhance your prospects of going to the Garden include:

- Looking after orphans
- Raising three daughters
- Having to endure the early death of two children
- Being truthful and righteous

Some situations that will lead to the Fire include:

- Killing a fellow Muslim
- Irresponsible talk
- Being an undutiful son
- Hoarding wealth
- Being an ungrateful wife

In Al Bukhari's Hadith: The Book of Belief Vol. 1:28 p. 29 it states that the great majority of people in the Fire are women.

NOTE: Both Muslims and non-believers will be in the Fire. One Hadith says that half the people in the Garden will be Muslims and one in a thousand of the people in the Fire will be Muslims. There are several Hadith that emphasize that a combination of intercession by Muhammad and God's mercy will bring Muslims up out of the Fire. But Al Bukhari also records Muhammad saying that he can't save either his aunt or his own daughter from God's punishment. In fact no good deed can ever guarantee entry into the Garden apart from God's mercy. There is a strong degree of predestination in all this. One Hadith says that God has created some people for the Garden and some people for the Fire.

Muslims who do find themselves in the Fire will be transferred to the Garden according to divine mercy and Muhammad's intercession after a period of time in proportion to the amount of good they have done. Eventually those left in the Fire eternally will be infidels for whom there is no deliverance.

Summary

Actions in this life will result in recompense in the next. Practising Muslims will surely go to the Garden (a hoped-for assumption, but because of predestination no-one can ever be certain). Those who reject Islam will go to the Fire. Non-practising Muslims will **eventually** enter the Garden. However their disobedience will result in punishment both in the grave and in the Fire before they enter the Garden. The descriptions of these punishments are truly terrifying! Non-Muslims who reject Islam will spend eternity in the Fire.

Questions to Ask your Neighbours

- How can I escape God's judgement? How can I be sure to enter Paradise?
- What do we need to **do** and **be** in order to be saved?
- What do you think is God's standard for keeping the external rituals and internal moral laws?
- How is it possible for any human being to keep **all** of God's laws in his/her inner heart?
(Examples: lying, impure thoughts, hate – Look up Jer. 17:9 and Mt. 15:19-20)

NOTE: This is a truth/guilt approach based on the fear of death and the fear of the torment in the grave and in the Fire.

Session 11

Types of Encounters with Neighbours

1. A Truth Encounter

Here the **mind** needs to understand the truth – to understand the Gospel. The apologetic approach used in this manual is primarily directed to an encounter with the truth about Jesus.

The process is largely through ‘drip-feeding’ truth from the Bible through stories and other means over a period of time. It involves starting from where they are and moving through a process to understanding and cognitively accepting the truth about Jesus.

2. A Power Encounter

This type of encounter has not been dealt with at all in this manual. The great example in Scripture is Elijah on Mount Carmel. It is dealing with the worldview of those who are involved in demonic power – often called ‘Folk Religion’.

A Power Encounter releases people from demonisation and demonic bondage. It largely affects the will.

3. An Allegiance Encounter

This involves a transfer of the **emotions and loyalties** from their previous religion to Jesus.

Session 11

P. R. E. P. ing in Ministry

One of the great challenges in ministry is to balance the “being” and the “doing”. ‘Practising the presence of God’ is critical to our hearing God’s voice and truly being led by Him. In addition to our **daily** walking in step with the Holy Spirit, we must set extra time aside for **Pray**er, **Reflection**, **Evaluation** and **Planning** (P.R.E.P.)

We saw in the section on the Kingdom of God that God very often works in ways we don’t see and in a time-frame that is geared in the light of eternity. If we fail to recognise that God is at work when neither the process of transformation nor any fruit is yet visible, we not only become discouraged, but we also fail to be sensitive to what our on-going role and tasks should be. PREPing helps us to continue to seek to recognise the activity of the Holy Spirit and to understand how we can co-operate with Him and make the necessary adjustments to join in what He is doing.

Each person will probably approach this a little differently. It will depend of our personalities and our stage in both life and ministry. The challenge is to fight against the urge to be overwhelmed by ‘the tyranny of the urgent’ – that is simply doing whatever is most pressing at the time. By constantly responding to urgent tasks, some of the non-pressing but ‘important’ tasks are never done.

It is often helpful to PREP on a daily basis, weekly basis, monthly basis and annually. A good plan would be something like the following:

30 mins daily

2 hours weekly

½ day monthly

2 days annually

If you follow a schedule like this it will probably make a considerable difference in your ministry. You will be much more intentional and possibly much more productive.

Much has been written about this elsewhere. There are many books on time management. What is essential is to have some basic, written strategic objectives in your life and ministry. Without these it is hard to plan and evaluate. Write these down and read them every time you PREP.

The more you get feedback and input from others and the encouragement of others, the more this will compensate for your own weaknesses and lack of experience.

Session 12

Discipling a Neighbour Believer – Beginning Steps

Objectives:

Head: To understand the problems and priorities for a new believer

Heart: To understand that new believers must quickly discover how to walk with God and be a witness within their family

Hands: * To evaluate your own discipleship in the light of Jesus' *"Follow Me...."*

* To identify areas in your own life as a potential discipler that demand your attention!

Time Together

1. Welcome and prayer

2. Debrief the group as to their 'Homework' assignments

- Ask the group if they shared what they learned about the Kingdom of God with others. Did they understand? How did it go?
- Ask the group if they reviewed the Kingdom values of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7). What insights did they gain from that study? What are the areas they need to grow into?
- Ask the group how it went when they introduced themselves as members of a Kingdom rather than as members of a Christian group. Discuss ways to grow in our ability to dis-entangle our faith in Jesus from membership of a religious group.
- Debrief the members of the group in relation to initiatives to PREP on a regular basis.

3. Discuss the Bible Study Discipling your Neighbour

- Work your way through the study question by question.
- Have different members of the group summarize the key concepts along the way.
- Discuss how these Biblical concepts challenge the current thinking/practices in your group.

4. Read Hindrances to Discipleship – discuss this article and answer the questions.

5. Read The Birthing Process – How to be a Good Midwife – discuss this paper.

6. Read Family Issues – discuss this paper.

7. Read A Curriculum for Life-Changing Discipleship – discuss this paper.

8. Read Developing Biblically Functional Substitutes – discuss this paper.

9. Read A Strategy for Reproduction – discuss this paper.

10. Discussion and Equipping

- Notice from Jn. 17:19 that Jesus highlights the fact that He was set apart – sanctified – for the sake of the few that were 'given to Him'. What changes will be required in your priorities and schedule to help you follow Jesus' example of focusing on a few?
- The Bible study focused on how Jesus related to His disciples and the values that He considered priorities for their on-going walk of faith (unity, sanctification, vision for the next generation etc.).

Several other NT passages provide insight into priorities for new believers. Look up the following passages and note some of the values and characteristics that followers of Jesus should reflect as they grow in Him:

- Romans 12:9-21
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Galatians 5:22-26
- Ephesians 4:17 - 5:21
- Colossians 3:1-17
- From the very beginning of His relationship with those He would focus on (the 12 and the 72), Jesus put a vision within them for the next generation. Sometimes this important aspect of the Kingdom is missed because of an emphasis on security and protection of the believer. Sometimes it is missed because a new believer is not considered 'qualified' to share his/her faith before he/she has grown significantly in faith.
- How can we model to our Neighbours who come to faith in the same way that Jesus modelled discipling with His disciples? Our goal is that they will be able to relate naturally to their families who have yet to come to faith.

11. Moving towards a Believing Community

Homework

Head: Share with one person the idea that discipleship begins on 'Day One' of a Neighbour's encounter with a believing friend. Perhaps use the centred-set concept. As you do so also share how this is changing the way that you relate to non-believers.

Heart: How committed are you to investing your life – as Jesus did – into a few key people that God brings into your life? How do your priorities reflect your commitment?

Hands: Take time to note the relationship networks that your friend moves in – his/her family and close friends. These are likely to be the natural streams where he/she will grow in confidence and be able to share the Gospel. Consider whether you are enhancing or damaging his/her future ability to impact these networks.

Session 12

How to Disciple Your Neighbour (Modelled on how Jesus taught His disciples)

It is interesting that in five accounts of the Great Commission ‘church planting’ is not even mentioned. (Mt. 28; Mk. 16; Lk. 24; Jn. 20; Acts 1) What is clearly commanded is that we are to be witnesses of Jesus, to preach the good news and to make disciples. In all this our primary model is Jesus. He preached about the Kingdom and He made disciples.

Over the three years that the disciples followed Jesus, their faith grew in small incremental steps like kilometre markers on the road. Just as Jesus’ disciples grew in understanding and belief, so our Neighbour friends will grow in understanding and belief as they get to know Jesus over a period of time. Their lives will be shaped by this experience as they are discipled by you **from the first day of your meeting**.

If we are to follow the pattern Jesus gave us in relating to disciples, it is important to recognise that discipleship doesn’t begin after evangelism and the Neighbour coming to faith. Rather discipleship begins at the very first meeting you have with your Neighbour.

We can learn a lot about the commitment of Jesus to making disciples by looking at Jn. 17 – the Great High Priestly Prayer:

1. What do you think Jesus meant by ‘completing the work’ (v. 4) that God had given Him to do?
Why do you think this?
2. Count the number of times the words ‘those’, ‘they’ and ‘them’ occur in the chapter.
Who do these words refer to?
3. This prayer of Jesus tells us what Jesus actually did in working with the twelve disciples:
 - **He revealed God to them** (v. 6, v. 26)
 - How did Jesus do this?
 - How can we reveal God to our Neighbours?
 - **He gave them God’s words** (v. 8, v. 14)
 - How did Jesus do this?
 - How can we give God’s words to our Neighbours?

- **He prayed for them** (v. 9) (see also Lk. 22:32)
 - Why didn't He pray for the world?
 - What about our prayers for our Neighbours?
- **He protected them** (v. 12)
 - How did Jesus do this?
 - What was His level of care? (see also Jn. 6:39; 10:28; 18:9)
 - How can we protect those whom God has given to us?
- **He sent them into the world** (v. 18) (see also Jn. 20:21)
 - How did Jesus do this?
 - How can we do this for our Neighbours?
- **He sanctified (set apart) Himself for their sake** (v. 19)
 - How did Jesus do this?
 - Why was this important?
 - How can we sanctify ourselves for our Neighbours?

4. Note the subjects about which Jesus prayed for the Twelve:

- Protection (v. 11b, v. 15)! From what or whom?
- Unity (v. 21-23) Why?

- Sanctification (v. 17) How is this to happen?
- The next generation (v. 20) Do we pray like this?
- A vision of His glory (v. 24)

5. What applications from this prayer can we make as we disciple our Neighbours?

Other Questions

6. What does it mean to make disciples?
7. When does discipling start and when does it finish?
8. What is the difference between evangelism and discipling?
9. Which Neighbours am I now discipling and what changes do I need to make in my relationship with them?

For further study

Review Mark's Gospel for an extensive study of how Jesus taught His disciples.

Session 12

Hindrances to Discipleship

When a Neighbour begins to follow Jesus he may soon find himself totally isolated. Family and friends begin to put pressure on him to return to his former beliefs and patterns of living. At best the pressure comes in the form of ostracism and the threat of being disowned by his own family and kinship group. They believe that he has blasphemed the Prophet and is in danger of becoming a *kafir*. In so doing he has brought enormous dishonour on his parents and his whole family. By following a 'foreign religion' he has become a traitor to the *Umma*!

Now the disciple can try to do his best (with good coaching from you) to explain things to his parents, relatives and friends. He can show them verses in the Bible and the Quran that he has not blasphemed God, neither has he become a traitor. But in the majority of cases this does no good.

1. The Cost to Family Honour

Parents and friends will try and force him to turn back and repent – usually not from a sense of religious duty but as a matter of honour – '*izzat*'. Their main worry is, 'What will people say?' The community believes that Islam covers every aspect of life – political, social and religious. All that a family does over the generations is to build up the family honour. Now a family member is going to become an apostate! This is the worst thing possible! Huge dishonour will be brought to the family name.

In the 9th century the Arab poet Abu Tamman wrote:

"With the sword will I wash my shame away: Let God's doom bring on me what it may!"

Such honour killings are not unknown! Such pressure is often too great on a new follower of Jesus and he/she may be tempted to run away and be extracted out of the community.

2. The Law of Apostasy

There is no clear authority for killing an apostate in the Quran. Sura 9:12 is often quoted, *"But if they break their oaths after their promise and defame your religion, then fight the leaders of disbelief – for they have no faith – that they may be restrained."*

Soon after Muhammad's death there was a great apostasy among the Arab tribes who reverted back to paganism. The first Caliph, Abu Bakr, spent his entire caliphate bringing these apostates back to Islam. After this, apostasy was considered very, very bad and this is reflected in the Hadith. The following Hadith refers to this, *"Abbas reported that Muhammad said, 'Whoever changed his Islamic religion (from Islam to anything else), then kill him.'"* (Sahih Bukhari. Vol. 9 p. 43)

All four schools of Islamic law have unanimously agreed upon punishment by death in the case of apostasy. There is some disagreement about how to deal with a woman apostate. Some hold that she is to be imprisoned and scourged every day at the times of prayer until she repents. Others say that she is to be treated as a man.

So the Hadith and the laws of orthodox Islam are clear. They are used as a threat and sometimes this threat is carried out.

3. Marriage and Inheritance

Apostasy by one part of a married couple is sufficient cause for the cancellation of their marriage. This should take place immediately without requiring the decree of a judge. An apostate is not allowed to marry a Muslim woman and Muslim men may not marry an apostate.

An apostate man is considered to be dead from the date of his apostasy. His Muslim relatives become heir to all his property. In the case of a woman, her property is not divided until her actual death. If a husband and wife both leave their religion and if she bears a child after their apostasy and the husband should then die, the child is entitled to a share of his inheritance if the birth takes place more than six months from the

date of the apostasy. If the birth takes place less than six months from the apostasy, then the child has no rights and no inheritance.

4. Miscellaneous advice given to Neighbours who follow Jesus:

➤ Remain a secret believer

These believers remain in the community. Usually they don't grow. It is very hard for them to remain faithful in their relationship with Jesus. What happens if the secret gets out? They may deny that they are Christians – i.e. they may lie!

Al-Ghazali, the Muslim mystic and theologian, said, *"If a lie is the only way to reach a good result, it is allowable. A lie is lawful when it is the only path to duty. We must lie when the truth leads to unpleasant results, but tell the truth when it leads to a good result."*

Question: Is this a good solution? Is it Biblical?

Look up Mt. 10:36 and 16:24-25

What about Phil. 1:29? Is this relevant?

➤ Extraction out of the family and community

"When they persecute you in one city flee to another." (Mt. 10:23)

The new follower of Jesus is helped to leave home and family and move to another city or country where he/she is unknown. Ideally the hope is that he/she will join a Christian fellowship that will encircle him/her, teach them and become their alternate family.

Often extraction occurs into another culture – either a 'Western' culture or a 'Christian' culture (i.e. in the Arab World, Pakistan, Bangladesh or from a Malay to a Chinese culture). This cultural transition often involves a change of name, a change of identity, a change of diet, clothes and a good deal more. All this involves 'culture shock' that can be very destabilizing for the new believer.

Question: Is this a better option than the previous one? What are the probable consequences of such extraction – for the family – for the community – for the new believer and for those who have disciplined him/her? Has the above verse been taken out of context?

Some churches do encourage Neighbours to follow Jesus, but when those Neighbours need teaching, training and care they are often too overloaded with their other responsibilities to be able to help much! Procrastination leaves new believers on their own. They come from backgrounds where their business is everyone's business. Now they feel terribly alone!

Other churches go to the other extreme and drag the new believers to a different Bible study every evening. They try to tell them they have the 'real' truth and other groups don't! They teach them their particular 'ism'. Life can be very confusing when confronted with 22,500 denominations!

- **A third option is to keep the new believer within his/her community and develop a worshipping sub-community within the larger group**

This raises the whole issue of contextualisation – a subject too vast for this manual!

Question: Ideally what would this sub-culture look like? How would you start it?

It is always important to remember that a Neighbour who follows Jesus comes from a culture with an interwoven family system. Expect Neighbours who follow Jesus to 'join your family'. Expect them to share their problems, burdens and joys. Remember Jesus was told, ***"Your mother and brothers are standing outside wanting to speak to you."*** Pointing to His disciples He said, ***"Here are my mother and my brothers for whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*** (Mt. 12:46-48)

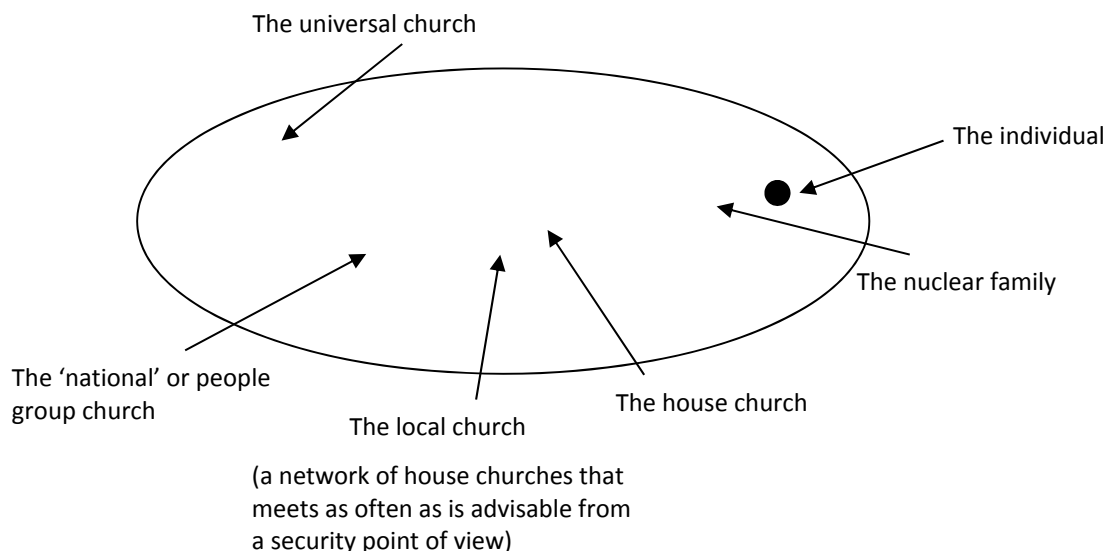
The concept of 'Umma' is a very powerful force for our Neighbours both in theory and in practice. So the new believer needs to find a new family – a new community. He/she needs a new social and economic life along with the new spiritual life he has adopted. If the new believer is either forced or extracted out of his community he will try very hard to find another family and kinship group.

Sadly, where there is a minority Christian church, the evangelical churches bypass the spiritual nature of the church and make it a birth-ascribed kinship group. A church can easily 'cold-shoulder' a believer from a Neighbour background.

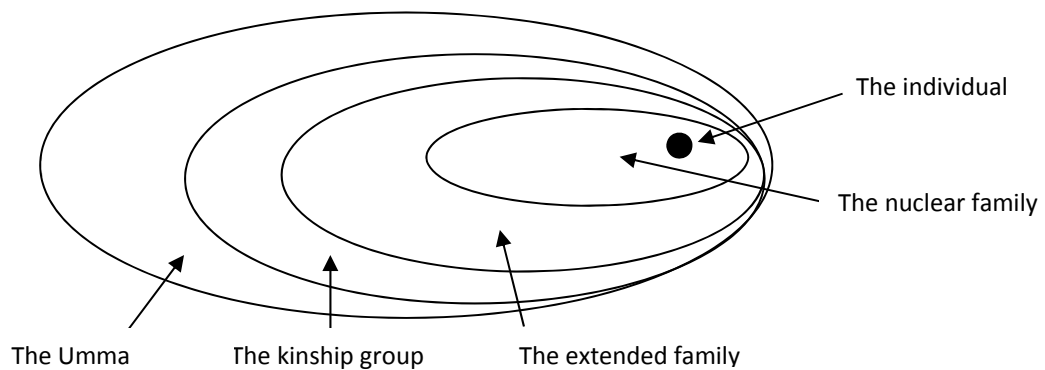
Even if welcomed, such a believer is faced with serious problems of re-socialisation into the Christian community. They will face an identity crisis and a great deal of social insecurity. This often causes the Christian culture to have a poor impression of the new believer and this results in increasing the alienation. It is a rare evangelical church in the Christian minority that has a re-socialising process in place for such new believers.

For this reason many believe a better model is to try and keep the new believer within the overall cultural framework of the Neighbours.

The Future Model



The Past Model



The “church” exists on **four levels**:

- **The universal church** – in heaven and on earth – the mystical “Body of Christ”
- **The national or people group church** – so it is possible to speak of the Kabyle church of Algeria.
- **The local church** – see Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15-16 for the difference between a local church “churches in Asia” and the fourth level. This should be the **new kinship** group.
- **The house church** – this household church needs to be the **new extended family**.

The *Umma* is a cultural and political grouping. “The Communion of the Saints – the Universal Church”. It transcends all cultural, social and political systems of human existence.

A house church should have the following characteristics and functions to facilitate the gradual integration of a new believer into his new family:

- ✓ A small group of nuclear families are identified.
- ✓ The group meets in any of the homes once a week in an informal manner for **Praise**, for **Prayer**, for **Preaching** (a teaching session), for a **Party** (a meal together and a fun time) and for a discussion as to how to **Practically** help each other.
- ✓ New believers are linked with more mature believers for teaching.
- ✓ In case of financial distress, everyone helps each other from a central fund established within the group through spontaneous, voluntary contributions.
- ✓ The group shows solidarity with other groups as part of a **spiritual kinship group** on the pattern of a **blood kinship group**. This probably means meeting with each other occasionally as extended families do. The **blood kinship group** is usually called the ‘*kemsa*’ (the five) and includes all males who are within five degrees of relationship – i.e. an individual – his brothers – his cousins – his second and third cousins.

Session 12

The Birthing Process – How to be a Good Midwife

5.1 The Western Model of Spiritual Birth

The following characteristics seem to be typical of how westerners think of the spiritual birthing process. Most of them probably arose as an over-reaction to Catholicism:

- It tends to be **theoretical** and cerebral. The emphasis is on the ability to repeat the correct doctrine.
- It is **instantaneous** – hence the ‘born again’ language. Yet we all know that transferring loyalty takes time – from an Islamic system to a Saviour.
- It is **individualistic**.

This model works well in a ‘Christianised’ culture – as it is in the USA and as it was in the UK up to the 1960s. This culture is increasingly being broken down and so this model is increasingly ineffective. Sadly much of the evangelism among Neighbours still uses assumptions and methods that were developed for work among nominal Christians.

5.2 Inadequate Conversion

James Engel reported the following (EMQ April ‘90):

- Gradual conversion is the most common manner in which those with little or no prior exposure to meaningful Christian background come to faith in Jesus.
- Gospel knowledge doesn’t become efficacious until there is some grasp of the **implications** of the truth in the context of life goals, felt needs and basic motivations.
- There is no distinct decision per se as is usually found in extended problem solving. Rather there is a gradual change of allegiance. An overt act such as a verbally stated prayer or going forward at a meeting is **not** normative in salvation and it can be highly misleading when it is interpreted as signifying salvation.
- The process of making disciples begins before conversion, proceeds through the conversion process and is unending as the new believer grows in faith and maturity.

The probable reason why so many apparent BMBs backslide and fail to grow at all in their love for the Lord Jesus is that they are ‘still born’. They never were ‘born again’ to begin with. This is our failure!

5.3 Healthy Birth

In the birthing process there are **four** elements:

- Faith in Jesus
- Repentance
- Baptism in the Holy Spirit
- Baptism in water

The last is not essential as the other three are. But it is an important outward and visible sign of what has occurred inwardly. As such it is very helpful. Let us look at each of these elements:

Faith in Jesus

As our Neighbours are coming out of a background of generations of false teaching, it takes **time** and careful **teaching** to bring them to a place where they have enough understanding to sustain a new direction of love and allegiance to the Lord Jesus. It takes **time** to clear away the rubbish of wrong concepts of God, of Scripture, of sin and of Jesus.

Teaching needs to start at the beginning with Genesis and to focus on God’s progressive revelation of Himself – i.e. in whole passages of Scripture. Avoid jumping from verse to verse all over the Bible.

From Genesis, move on to Moses and the law and sacrifice. Go through the great Old Testament prophecies of the coming of the Messiah. Study Matthew or Luke especially looking at Jesus, the Kingdom of God and Jesus' call to forsake all else and follow Him. As we have seen in earlier lessons, all this needs to be put in a **story** form.

Repentance

The key roots of sin in our Neighbours' lives need to be cut off as they come through the birthing process. In general, there is an area where, as westerners, we are weak. We often emphasise faith and neglect repentance. Both are necessary.

Examples of repentance:

- **Zacchaeus:** He repented of stealing from the poor and returned the money fourfold. (Lk. 19:1-10)
- **New believers in Ephesus:** They repented of their occult practices and accordingly burned their very valuable occult books. (Acts 19:18-19)

Notice that in both cases repentance involved public restitution demonstrating their sincerity.

How do we teach a Biblical view of sin and repentance? One helpful method is to go through the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20) and the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) in detail. As you go through these passages carefully with your Neighbour you can help him/her identify the roots of sin in his/her life. You can then work through this and decide an appropriate form of repentance and restitution. In this way he/she knows exactly what he/she has **to do** in order to follow Jesus.

By now your Neighbour is beginning to realise the meaning of the Lordship of Jesus over all aspects of life. He/she is beginning to see that following Jesus involves a constant life of repentance, apologies, confession and brokenness. All this involves counting the cost. But obedience in this area gives the opportunity of victory over sin, assurance of forgiveness and the joy of knowing the approval of Jesus. Jesus always linked repentance and joy!

Often the process takes some time. Repentance is often costly and involves accepting shame. This **is** very costly in a honour/shame culture. What if the process stops through an unwillingness to repent? Then your focus should be on prayer and a renewed focus on Jesus (the faith aspect) and what He has accomplished. Especially look at Mt. 11:28-30:

"Come to Me all who labour and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Don't push for an untimely birth. Allow the Holy Spirit to do His work of convicting of sin.

Finally, it is **essential** to apply the same demanding standards of holiness and repentance in our own lives. Failure in this area causes a failure in our witness to the liberating power of the forgiveness of sin.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

This too needs to be taught. It is a wonderful counter-balance to the negative aspects of repentance and restitution. Our Neighbours need to **experience** the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Experiences and signs of the Holy Spirit vary a great deal, but they are all accompanied by:

"...a pouring into our hearts of God's love through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." (Rom. 5:5)

Our Neighbours experience an amazing sense that they are **accepted** and loved by God. Rom. 8:15-17 says,

"For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ – provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him."

Our Neighbours come from cultures where religious **experience** is prized – whether on Hajj or in Sufi meetings or just at Friday prayers. Sermons are not often directed to the mind, but rather to the emotions. Have you ever seen Shia on the tenth day of Muharram? It is sheer emotion that causes them to cut themselves with knives.

So without a deep subjective experience of God's love, of having peace with God and of God's Fatherly care, prayer and worship are impossible. Solid faith and repentance lay the foundation of being filled with the Holy Spirit since the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey. (Acts 5:32)

Teaching followed by the laying on of hands and a simple prayer of faith opens up the way for Our Father to send the Holy Spirit into the believer and bring about regeneration and all the other precious gifts that the Father wants to give to us His children.

Baptism in Water

This issue always creates a lot of questions such as when? and by whom? I would like to cover this briefly.

When? Soon! Long delays, a long period of probation etc. are not Biblical. It is wise to put new believers through some basic course (8-12 weeks) – see section 7.

By Whom? By local believers if at all possible (See section 7 – shepherds have this role. Baptism is into a **family**, so the new believer needs to be introduced into a group. However, Acts 8:26-39 does give us a Biblical exception.)

5.4 What is Discipleship?

- ***“Teaching the next generations”*** (Deut. 6:1 ff.)
- Carrying out the plan of God – read God's instructions to Joshua in Josh. 1.
- Training a small group – Mt. 10:1-15

Discipleship is the process of reproducing in someone else what the Spirit of God is doing in you, in such a way that they are enabled to reproduce it in a third generation.

In other words it is training someone until he/she is able to train others and actually does so.

What are the goals of a discipling ministry?

Among other things, it is to see emerging a people who are living on the basis of **Biblical priorities**. As we have seen these are defined in John 17 as:

- Progressive commitment to Jesus
- Progressive commitment to the Body of Jesus (i.e. the church)
- Progressive commitment to the work of Jesus in the world

Each one of these is really important. Over emphasis or lack of emphasis on any one of these will lead to imbalance.

What is the process of discipling?

Among other things there is a basic emphasis on **training in small groups**. In such discipleship groups the BMBs can learn how to study the Bible, how to pray and how to worship and praise the Lord. (This is the first priority above.)

In small groups the BMBs learn how to relate, share with one another and support one another. Their commitment grows both to one another and to the wider Body of Christ. (This is the second priority above.)

The small group also forms the basis of their witness and service in the world. (The third priority above.)

Is discipleship carried out primarily in one-to-one situations or is it primarily a group process? Is it generally an inactive process or a participative process? Is it a one-way structured lecture/programme? Is there accountability for life-change as well as for knowledge? Is there accountability for passing on what has been learned?

Who is competent to disciple another person? In other words, is discipleship for those who have reached some specified level of 'maturity' or education or is it the responsibility of any believer who is one step ahead of another? Who is responsible for seekers and the birthing process? Does this include the newest follower of Jesus? What aspects of body life are the responsibilities of each member of the body as opposed to being the sole responsibility of the more formal leaders? Who is responsible for reproduction and when do they start being responsible?

All these questions (and many more) need answers! What you will tend to find, as you go through the process, are all the harmful patterns and precedents you have created in the previous phase or stage!

I want to emphasize again that when it comes to reproduction of discipleship, **modelling** has far greater impact than the **content of teaching**. No matter what is taught about the various Biblical truths, if the modelling of that truth doesn't support and illustrate the teaching, then it won't be effective!

So the discipleship of BMBs is affected by all the activities you have carried out from the very beginning of the work. It is affected by how you pray, how you are trained and how you prepare yourselves, how you form your identity in the new culture, how you do evangelism, how you live an incarnational lifestyle, how you form 'church', how you prepare leaders and so on.

So discipleship as an aspect in the process can't be separated out from the whole. As you apply Biblical patterns and expectations, effective discipleship will happen. The spiritual life is intended to be one in which each one of us is responsible to pass on that which we have received. ***"Freely you have received, freely give!"*** (Mt. 10:8) ***"From those to whom much has been given, much will be required."*** (Lk. 12:48) The parable of the talents is all about this principle. (Mt. 25)

This whole process looks something like a mother duck (Jesus) leading a procession of ducklings. In one sense, only the first duckling is following the mother duck! The second duckling is following the first and so on. No one of us is "fully mature" having attained to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ (Eph. 4:13) But each of us needs to say, as Paul did, ***"Follow me as I follow Christ."*** (1 Cor. 11:1)

Session 12

Issues that need to be covered in Initial Discipleship

6.1 General Issues (not prioritised):

- The nature of God (Biblical versus Neighbour culture)
- Grace and forgiveness
- Legalism
- Worship and singing
- Prayer and intercession
- Feeding their spirits from the Word of God
- Fasting
- Handling demonic attacks
- Expectations and handling persecution
- The value of group discipleship
- Avoiding extractionism – the problems of running away
- The careful, cultural way to express their faith – storytelling
- Dealing with financial and economic problems – unemployment – micro-finance schemes
- Emotional healing for post-traumatic stress disorders
- Our identity as children of God
- Understanding baptism
- Understanding and experiencing the Holy Spirit
- How to have a pure thought life
- Learning how to be generous

6.2 Family Issues

There are a number of family issues including:

- The age of conversion
- How and when should the family be told of the change of allegiance to Jesus?
- Marriage – how to tell your spouse
- Marriage – finding a believing partner
- Marriage – to an unbelieving spouse
- Developing godly patterns of loving your spouse – resolving conflict, forgiveness and reconciliation etc.
- Polygamy
- Children of the second generation
- Being divorced for your faith

This manual can't deal with each of these issues in detail. Here are just a few thoughts to stimulate your thinking and discussion:

The age of conversion

There was a 14 yr. old girl in Egypt who was the daughter of a famous sheikh. She had a dream in which the Lord Jesus appeared to her. The next day she told her family she wanted to be a Christian. This got her into a great deal of trouble. She was beaten frequently and tried to run away several times. Finally she did escape and contacted a Christian pastor saying she wanted to identify herself as a Christian and find shelter in the Christian community. The pastor's advice to her was, *"Go home, tell your father it was all a mistake. Return to the Dar-el-Islam. Keep your relationship with God and your love for Jesus a secret **until** you have finished your education and are financially independent."*

What would you have said? What would you have done? Does child evangelism have any validity within an Islamic context? Sons are treated differently from daughters. Daughters are often advised not to tell their families until after they have finished their education. Why do you think they are given this advice?

Telling the family about the new allegiance

Is it wise to go straight to your father and tell him you are now a Christian? There are two issues: **when** and **how**.

The key issue here is the really huge amount of shame that comes on the family if it has known that one of them has become an apostate. Often the only way to mitigate this shame is an 'honour killing' or expulsion out of the community. So the **when** and **how** should be determined by finding ways to minimize the shame associated with becoming a believer in Jesus.

The when:

- Not at the beginning!
- Build up the believer's ability to 'honour his father and his mother'.
- Make sure he/she has repented, confessed and put right any broken relationships within the family.
- Teach him/her the art of telling stories – an indirect approach.

The how:

- Don't let him/her use the word 'Christian'. It will always miscommunicate.
- Encourage the BMB to identify at an early stage with a well-respected older person in the extended family – someone like the paternal grandmother – someone the BMB can trust and to whom he/she can slowly leak the story. This person can then act as a mediator between the BMB and his family.
- Try to tell what has happened in such a way that it will be seen to strengthen the honour of the family. Family preservation is the primary objective of the culture. To this end the children are brought up in an Islamic worldview. The role of the father is to assure that the child becomes a functioning part of the *Umma*. The role of the mother is to retain the emotional bond – especially with her sons.

So the new believer needs very careful tutoring in **how** and **when** to tell the family about his/her new-found faith in Jesus.

Ask BMBs you know how they told their families and how they **wish** they had told their families of their commitment to be a follower of Jesus.

Marriage

Finding a partner who is from the same background and who is following Jesus is difficult. In different places the ratios of men and women coming to faith are quite different. In North Africa single men (usually students) are coming to faith in a ratio of 10:1. In Cairo in one church there are five women BMBs to every BMB man. Various schemes have been proposed to solve this problem. What would you propose?

The marriage itself is a problem. Should you have the ceremony in a church or in the mosque? How to you make the marriage **legal**?

What about 'mixed' marriages where one partner is a BMB and the other is not? Is divorce acceptable? How and when should a BMB tell his wife what has happened to him?

Then there are all the complexities of polygamy. What should you do if a man with multiple wives comes to faith?

The children of the second generation

So often there is a lack of teaching and a lack of models for BMB families. Their children struggle with their identity at school. The school sees them as Muslim children with Muslim names. School consists of a heavy curriculum usually involving a great deal of Islamics.

How does a child answer questions in school? Do we encourage a type of schizophrenia – i.e. one thing at home and another thing in school?

Session 12

A Curriculum for Life-Changing Discipleship

7.1 Stages of Discipleship

It is helpful to break down discipleship into stages and phases. This helps curriculum development.

These stages are:

- The seeker (the pre-discipleship phase)
- The new believer
- The beginning disciple
- The growing disciple
- The serving disciple
- Shepherds
- Elders

To make it a little easier to understand we will look at the first three of these.

➤ Stage One: The Seeker

The goal: To expose the seeker to compelling truth and light affecting the heart, the mind and the will so that he/she is turned around, is willing to repent of sin and is ready to begin to love Jesus.

The major activity: prayer, evangelism and incarnational ministry

The strategy: To pray for the relatives and close friends of existing BMBs and invite them to begin learning for themselves about 'The Way'. BMBs are the best evangelists. Help them use existing corridors of trust.

The tools: These will vary from place to place. It is important to constantly revise the number of useful tools and to add to the 'Tool Box'. Tools should include:

- A seeker's Bible reading guide – selected passages from the Bible for them to read
- Verses to memorise
- A study of the Book of Genesis – i.e. begin at the beginning
- A number of key stories (see Session 7)
- The Jesus Film and other videos
- Various evangelistic books
- BCCs, booklets etc.
- Possibly a visit to a house church (security permitting)

➤ Stage Two: The New Believer

The goal:

- To ground the new believer in the basics of the faith
- To integrate him/her into a house church
- To prepare him/her for baptism

The major activity: Prayer and initial follow-up – it probably won't be clear when the decision to turn in repentance was made. Be prepared for an overlap between the Seeker Stage and the New Believer Stage.

The strategy: (the ideal!) One or several of the serving disciples should be spending extensive time with the new believers. Much of this time should be one-on-one answering questions from the Bible.

The tools:

- A follow-up Bible reading schedule
- The Ten Commandments check list
- The 8-10 session new believers' Bible Study Programme covering the basics of the faith.
- Ralph Shallis' book, **From Now On**
- A Bible study of the Book of Luke

➤ **Stage Three: The Beginning Disciple**

The goal: to cover the basic issues involved in following Jesus

The major activity: To integrate the beginning disciple into a discipleship group (it may be a 'cell' or a house group). Usually it is best if the others in the group (except the leader – a shepherd) are all at the same level i.e. all are beginning disciples.

The strategy: The disciple grows by learning, sharing, praying and working with a small home fellowship.

The tools:

- An annual Bible reading schedule
- A study of Acts
- Teaching on the basics of the spiritual disciplines: prayer, worship, fasting, feeding the spirit and maintaining joy

The next four stages are beyond the scope of this manual. Each team should develop a well-stocked 'Tool Box' of useful materials for each of these stages. Just looking at these three stages it is clear there should be an overall strategy of curriculum development for seekers and for the six stages of discipleship.

All sorts of questions arise at this point:

- How can we involve BMBs in the curriculum development?
- How should we teach the 'lesson plans'? Remember that the way people learn is very culture bound. Many people prefer memorising facts. How do we affect head, hands and heart?
- Are our 'lessons' meeting the stated goals? What is the best way to evaluate how well we are doing in our training?
- How do you evaluate the most effective tools in your 'Tool Box' for a particular individual?

7.2 Twelve Suggestions for Curriculum Development

➤ **Aim at life-changing lessons.**

Following Jesus is a way of life. The curriculum (i.e. the collection of lessons in sequence) should address **all** areas of life not just 'the spiritual'.

Each lesson should have its own 'Tool Box':

- Written materials
- Cassettes, videos
- OHPs
- Useful stories etc.

The goal of each lesson ought to help the BMB to experience God and keep growing in love for Him. It should help the BMB to understand him/herself (appreciating their new standing in Jesus) and to grow in his/her ability to love others and indeed to love all of God's creation.

Input from BMBs is vital, so avoid a 'lecture' style. It is best to teach what are often called inductive Bible studies. In this way the members of the group discover the meaning of the passage for themselves. They learn how to apply it to their own cultural setting.

Great emphasis must be given to the fact that the Holy Spirit and the Word of God itself are the authority behind what the Bible teaches. The BMB must understand this and **not** ascribe authority to the ex-pat worker.

➤ **Focus on the whole Word of God.**

The curriculum should help the disciples to go through the Bible and find for themselves the answers to life's questions. So don't just give them the answers! Go to the text of Scripture and help them to seek the answer to their questions from the text of the Bible. This builds up trust in the Word of God as the source of all wisdom. Like Paul in Acts 20:27, teach **'the whole will (counsel) of God'**.

➤ **Teach the lessons in an order appropriate to your group in response to their urgent felt-needs.**

There is no correct order in which to teach God's truth. Cognitive learning styles differ in different cultures. Every group needs its own curriculum.

There are perhaps five levels of complexity in teaching – from the simple to the complex:

Level One: Simple straightforward translation from what you learned in your own culture – i.e. 'Love one another' is simply said in your host's language.

Level Two: The vocabulary is adjusted to the current cultural idioms.

Level Three: Illustrations are changed to refer to local experiences.

Level Four: Instructions are re-structured to relate specifically to the learning style of the students.

Level Five: The content of the whole lesson is recast to reflect the worldview of the learners.

At which level was Paul operating as he taught the disciples in Romans, Corinthians, Galatians etc.?

Again, more advanced BMBs are vital in all of this. If it is to help change lives, the curriculum needs to touch those lives – emotionally, intellectually and in the area of the will. Imported material from other cultures very rarely accomplishes this. Find out from the more mature BMBs **what works!**

There are two key factors:

- **The current felt-needs of the disciples**

Don't stick to a pre-planned sequence of lessons. Teach the group about issues they are currently wrestling with. This will help them to see how the Bible is relevant to their situation.

- **The learning style of the specific group**

Ask them how they best remember things. Use stories, proverbs, and examples from real life. Always evaluate afterwards – rather like the de-briefing times in these 12 sessions.

➤ **The curriculum should challenge both the individual and the whole of the culture.**

As they interact with a Biblical worldview, the disciples constantly need to see, "I need to change" and "We need to change". As individuals change and as the worshipping community changes, this will begin to challenge "the structures of sin" within the culture.

➤ **Effective curricula are those that have been widely field-tested.**

Curricula need exhaustive input from the learners – i.e. the disciples – as well as from those teaching the material. In any course (including this one – Beginning to Share Life) there will be inadequacies. These may be cultural, theological or application weaknesses that become obvious with use. These issues can be altered or eliminated.

➤ **Effective curricula have a narrow focus but a broad application.**

As a discipler of others you need to learn the fine art of omission! Aim at a narrow focus – emphasise essential, basic truths that need to be readily reproduced by believers so they can disciple others.

For example: Jesus reduced the innumerable Jewish laws down to two essential, basic laws, ***“You shall love God...and you shall love others as yourself.”*** (Mt. 22:37-38) This basic message is easy to understand but it is of very wide application.

Narrowness in content with breadth in application allows for a quick understanding by the disciple. This then leads to an exploration of how to apply this truth in the disciple’s particular cultural setting.

➤ **An effective curriculum integrates all aspects of life**

Be as holistic as you can! Lots of subject matter needs to be included in the curriculum:

- The spirit world
- Rites of passage
- Health
- A theology of work
- God’s purpose in history
- Family life and marriage
- Bringing up children etc.

If you don’t cover all areas, voids will occur that will be filled from other sources and hinder the disciple from growing.

To do all this effectively you will need to spend many hours discussing issues with more mature believers from within your own Neighbours’ culture. If there are none, then ask those from a near culture.

➤ **Effective curricula are graded**

Jesus said, ***“I have much more to say to you, more than you can bear now.”*** (Jn. 16:12) In Hebrews the writer makes a distinction between teaching the mature in faith and teaching those who are ‘babies’ in faith. (Heb. 5:11-14). Develop a curriculum for each of the six stages of discipleship.

In many ways John’s method of teaching in 1 John is the best. In 1 John he has 3 or 4 points and he repeats these several times. But he doesn’t **just** repeat them. When he gets to a point it is not just review. He repeats the point and then adds to it! This is called ‘helical’ teaching. It is very effective since it builds constant review into the process of adding information. Study 1 John and you will see ‘helical teaching’ done brilliantly!

➤ **Encourage the learning group to build solid relationships**

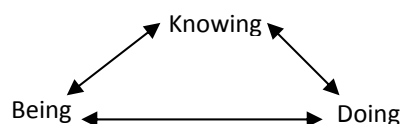
Group-culture people prefer group activity. So focus your application of principles towards the group, “How are you all going to apply this?” The reason is that group-culture people find it very difficult to take action alone. You should raise questions like, “How can we help Mustafa in his family situation?”

So teach, study together, discuss together and make group applications together.

➤ **Call for immediate action in response to teaching**

As a Westerner, I like facts and I like to ask the question, ‘Why?’ In other words, I enjoy cognitive knowledge. But I find it much more difficult to take the next step – what am I going to do with this knowledge? Learn how your Neighbours learn.

There are three key concepts:

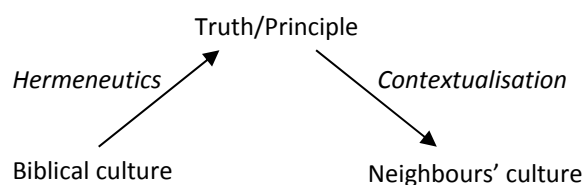


Different cultures emphasise the steps of interaction in different sequences. On the road to Damascus Paul responded as a typical Semitic person, ***“What shall I do?”*** (Acts 22:8-10) Arabs usually learn by doing, so reflective action becomes the central focus. Many of the words Jesus used often are action words: give thanks – remember – say – come down – encourage one another – forgive etc.

In ‘doing-cultures’ it is important to emphasise this as well as reflection on what you do. This leads to second step knowing.

➤ **The curriculum should build into the disciple an ability to interpret the Bible faithfully**

You might not want to use the word! But you have to teach them hermeneutics (principles of Biblical interpretation). Essentially this is learning to extract **truth** and **principles** from their cultural setting in both the Old and New Testaments. These truths and principles then need to be put into the context of your Neighbour’s culture – the process of contextualisation.



Both hermeneutics and contextualisation are subjects larger than we can explore in this manual.

➤ **As you get into the serving disciple, shepherd and elder stages let the BMBs determine the design of the curriculum.**

Let the ownership be with the national believers as early as you can. Let them design the order and the way in which things are taught. Encourage them to contextualise. Help them to see the line between good contextualisation and the error of syncretism.

Session 12

Developing Biblical Functional Substitutes for Cultural Patterns

A 'functional substitute' is a term borrowed from cultural anthropology. In your discipling of new believers, if you uncritically accept all the cultural practices of our Neighbours, you may well end up with a very unbiblical lifestyle. The principles of the Kingdom frequently challenge "the world" of our Neighbours' culture.

All cultures lie under the influence of the principalities and powers and forces of wickedness. (Eph. 6:10-11) To some extent all cultures have been demonised. These aspects of the culture must be deliberately **"put off"**. (Col. 3:5-14) However, "putting off" isn't enough. If you ask a new believer to abandon some cultural aspect or ceremony without replacing it with something else, you will have an emotional and social void. The emptiness won't last long and he/she will revert back to previous cultural practices and fall into sin.

We need to find a suitable, Biblically acceptable, cultural substitute for the cultural custom that is being "put off" – i.e. it should be replaced with something to "put on".

8.1 Areas in the cultures of our Neighbours where we should look for Biblically Functional Substitutes

➤ Aspects of folk religion and religious rituals

Ritual and 'magic' fill the emotional, social and physical needs of many people. But they are permeated with the occult and Biblically functional substitutes are needed.

The areas of culture that need "putting off" vary from culture to culture.

Areas we need to look at include:

- Agricultural cycles and how they are marked and celebrated
- Dedication of buildings
- Protection for travel
- Protection from curses
- Attracting the opposite sex
- Events surrounding human life cycles:
 - ✓ conception
 - ✓ birth
 - ✓ naming
 - ✓ circumcision
 - ✓ initiation into adulthood
 - ✓ marriage
 - ✓ death

As a team study the various aspects of the culture such as:

- How is property viewed?
- What about domestic and communal authority?
- Who controls labour and productivity?
- Is there a theology of work?
- Who makes decisions in the family?
- What is the place of ritual in the lives of the people?

Also study issues that relate to children such as:

- Praying before and during pregnancy for the mother and the child
- What of the sanctity of life of the unborn?
- Dedicating babies
- Use of songs for baby dedications
- The amount of money spent by families at rites of passage parties

➤ **Areas of sickness**

Many Muslim cultures have procedures to be followed when someone is sick or has a congenital disease or disability. In urban centres western secularism is replacing some, but not all, of these procedures.

Two suggestions have been made:

a) Retain the relevance of religion in this situation.

b) Meet inherent and felt needs.

Both of these will help to avoid a cultural void. Cultural voids occur when believers “take off” the old elements of the occult but don’t “put on” anything new. Their felt needs remain unmet. Something must fill such voids. Mt. 12:43-45 warns us that the end result might be worse than the situation at the beginning. In the Roman Empire in the 2nd century AD Gnosticism filled a cultural void in the church.

Syncretism is an evident sign that Christian workers have not succeeded in filling the voids of felt needs. Cultural voids also give rise to legalism. Luke writes, ***“You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed and all of them are zealous for the law.”*** (Acts 21:20) Legalism can easily fill a cultural void.

A church planting team needs to identify potential cultural voids. Neglect in this area will give a new church either a strong pull to syncretism or a pull into formalism and ritual. Another feature of a cultural void is dualism – i.e. God is interested in our future destiny but not in our daily lives.

So the best way to deal with Folk Islam and its ability to meet felt needs is **not** to repress it or ignore it, but to replace it with a Biblical functional substitute.

The family and sickness: Church leaders can:

- Advise adoption over divorce in the case of barrenness.
- Provide assistance to the sick and to those who have lost loved ones.
- Gather for prayer at the home of the sick – James 5:14-18.
- Encourage a family commitment to Christ.

8.2 Who should start the Biblically Functional Substitutes?

Expatriate church planters or national leaders when there are some? The answer is that **neither** should act independently of the other. If ex-pats take charge of the process the following may result:

- They may bring in foreign elements
- Legalism may easily set in and ex-pats become police officers enforcing new laws!

If only nationals are involved then the danger is syncretism.

8.3 The Goal of Biblically Functional Substitutes

There are two goals:

- i) To clarify the Gospel and God’s Word within cultural forms
- ii) To introduce a better life than the one offered by the previous belief system

Biblically functional substitutes must present **visual** and mental images that attest to a living, active, caring God who promises believers present assistance and who guarantees hope for the future.

In Hebrews the author makes a comparison between Jesus and their previous religious rituals:

- Jesus is better than the angels – 1:4
- Jesus provides a better covenant than the first – 7:22
- Jesus is a better High Priest – 8:6
- Jesus offered a better sacrifice than animals – 9:23
- The Kingdom is better than “the promised land” – 11:16
- etc.

We need to demonstrate the same sort of differences in regard to Islam and show how they lead to a better way of life.

8.4 Guidelines in Conveying Functional Substitutes

- Identify the traditional components and functions.
- Identify areas of compatibility.
- Identify areas in need of change.
- Implement the revision then review and adjust as needed.

The goal is to develop national leaders who understand Biblical principles and apply them in a culturally relevant way. To do this they must have a deep respect for their own culture, yet be willing to evaluate it and jettison all that is not helpful for believers – some of which will be specifically harmful.

This process begins with group analysis of a question such as:

*What are the components/institutions regarding **weddings** in this culture? How do “things” work?*

Proceed with steps as follows:

- Isolate all the component parts.
- Compare each part with Biblical principles.
- Discover the function of that part in terms of felt needs in the culture – why is it there?
- Determine what can be kept unchanged in that component and what must be changed.
- Find a Biblically functional substitute for that component that meets the emotional, social or physical felt need.

In this way ceremonies and rituals can be transformed. These decisions should be re-evaluated over a period of time.

Conclusion

Most Muslim peoples operate holistically. If the Gospel is to be relevant to them it must be accompanied by a holistic worldview. To develop this holistic worldview there is a need to introduce Biblically functional substitutes that are culturally acceptable and meaningful. The dangers are very great if cultural voids are created!

Session 12

The Concept of Reproduction

Everything alive was created to reproduce itself. Our goal is **not** just to see Neighbours saved or to plant churches. We want to start churches that will rapidly reproduce themselves by starting many other churches that will also rapidly reproduce themselves.

The usual perception in the West is that church planting is a two-step process:

Step One: When our church is large enough, strong enough, trained enough then we will move to Step Two.

Step Two: Start to plant out another church.

But Step Two rarely ever happens!

I would like to introduce you to another **Two-step Process** for church starting:

1. An element of the miraculous

Jesus said, ***"I will build my church!"*** (Mt. 16:18) In looking at the history of church plants among our Neighbours there is always an element of the miraculous in the initial indication of where to start and with whom to start.

Often someone is really open to the Gospel and prepared by the Holy Spirit. (Some groups call this person a 'man of peace' – see Lk. 10.) In Luke 10 Jesus told His disciples that as they went where He sent them, He Himself would come to those places. So when Jesus told His disciples to, "Stay in the house" of a man of peace, the implication is that He had **readied the harvest**.

There are three good examples of a 'man of peace – or better 'a person of peace': **Lydia, Cornelius and the Samaritan woman** at the well. There are three characteristics common to each of these three people:

- They were receptive.
- They were people of reputation – whether good or bad.
- They were able to influence others.

The Gospel then flowed from them to their '*oikos*' (household or circle of influence).

So prayer is a very vital part of **Step One**. It is also important to spread the 'seed' of the Gospel widely and then to expect **and look for** signs of a miraculous response. In this context dreams and visions are often common.

2. Never do what the new believers can't do

- Don't preach to them 45 min. messages that would get high grades in a homiletics class!
- Don't quote famous preachers and learned commentators. Why? Your new disciples might learn a lot from the message, but they will say to themselves, *"I'll never be able to preach like that. It will take years of study and learning and I'll never be able to cope!"*
- So limit yourself to short messages – a story perhaps – with just one point. Your aim is that the new disciples will say, *"Well, perhaps I could share a message like that."*
- Don't pray long and deeply theological prayers.
- Don't introduce non-indigenous worship songs, styles or instruments.
- Constantly ask yourself, *"Am I a good model that is easy for new believers to copy?"* They should be able to do everything you do.
- As they mature, you can advance (longer messages etc.). Remember that your life will be copied and should be copied!

This is the art of reproduction.

Session 12

Moving Towards a Believing, Reproducing Community

In the past, the emphasis was mainly on evangelism by winning individuals. Today the emphasis is on evangelisation by multiplying churches. This reflects the growing awareness of the importance of community and the place of the Church in God's plan. Clearly, **the goal of evangelism** is not merely to make disciples, since this does not do justice to the Biblical understanding of the Church. **The goal of evangelism is the formation of a Christian community.**

There are a few implications to this:

- The evangelistic task is not complete until it becomes self-perpetuating. Jesus didn't separate follow up from evangelism. It was all in the same package – "making disciples".
- The church is "the community of God's people" with structure based on some form of large-group **and** small-group gatherings.
- Evangelism and discipleship must be a team based ministry for neither Jesus nor Paul normally evangelised alone.

This twelfth session has mainly focussed on one-on-one discipleship. Yet, as we saw at the beginning, our goal is church planting movements. A key factor in all this is to see Neighbours journey **together** to Jesus and enter the Kingdom **together**.

At first glance it is true that in the ministry of Jesus the focus was on key **individuals**. But, although He called them as individuals, some of them were brothers and others were business partners. Jesus and His team demonstrated community as they walked, talked, ate, served and stayed together.

When you read Acts you begin to see the development of a believing community and how it reproduced itself. With the exception of Philip, all ministry is carried out with others and not as an isolated individual.

We trust that a few ideas from this manual have been and will continue to be of help to you in your journey of sharing the love of God with our Neighbours.

This manual is produced by Crescent Consultants for in-house distribution.
e-mail: crescon@swissmail.org