

**A STUDY OF THE PERSON OF JESUS IN THE BIBLE AND THE
QUR'AN: ITS RELEVANCE FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM
DIALOGUE IN THE KUMASI METROPOLIS.**

KNUST



BY

AUGUSTINE KINGSFORD AIDOO

AUGUST, 2016

A STUDY OF THE PERSON OF JESUS IN THE BIBLE AND THE

**QUR'AN: ITS RELEVANCE FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM
DIALOGUE IN THE KUMASI METROPOLIS.**

KNUST
By

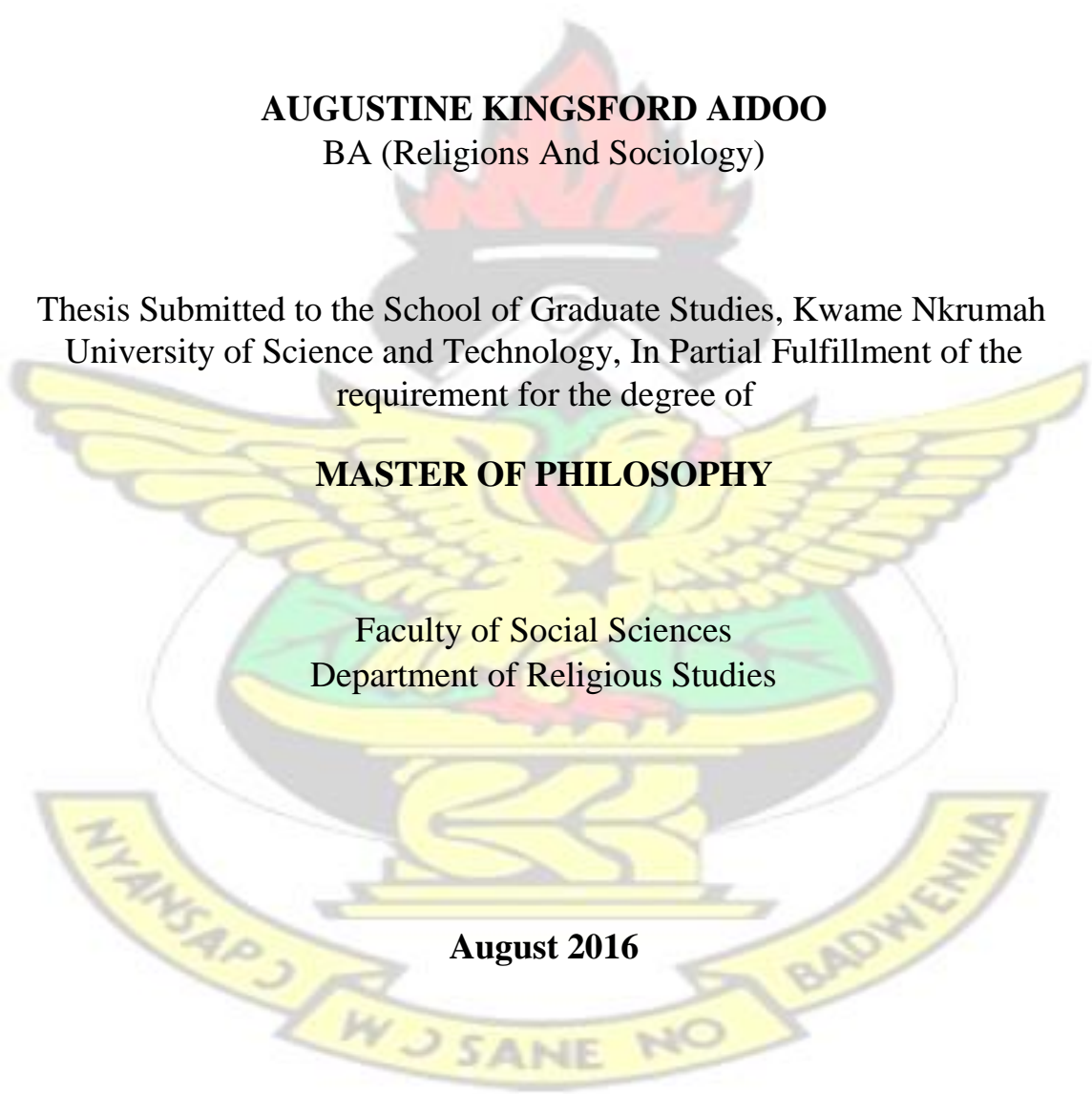
AUGUSTINE KINGSFORD AIDOO
BA (Religions And Sociology)

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah
University of Science and Technology, In Partial Fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Religious Studies

August 2016



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is as a result of my own thoughts and ideas towards the MPhil in Religious Studies, and to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any material previously published by another person in this university or anywhere except where the due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

AUGUSTINE KINGSFORD AIDOO

(Std Id 20363943)

(Signature)

(Date)

Student's Name & ID

Certified by:

REV. FR. DR. EMMANUEL K. E. ANTWI

Supervisor

(Signature)

(Date)

Certified by

Rev. Fr. Dr. Francis Appiah-Kubi

Head of Department

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

To my beloved, caring and lovely parents Mr. John Kingsley Aidoo and Mrs. Agnes Aidoo. Your continual words of encouragement have not been fruitless.

KNUST



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All things work well for those who put their trust in the Lord, thus says the Apostle Paul (Rom 8:28). I am most grateful to God whose guidance and sustenance have taken me through till date. ‘If the Lord had not been on my side ...’ (Ps 94:17). The gratitude I owe to those who have helped me in making this research a success are many and varied to different groups of personalities that no words of expression really can convey my profoundest appreciation.

I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisors, Rev Fr. Dr. Emmanuel Kojo Ennin Antwi and Rt Rev Dr. Nathan I. Samwini of Religious Studies, KNUST, under whose astute direction and academic eyes brought this thesis to its successful conclusion. I am indebted to Rev. Fr. Dr. Antwi. His availability, firm criticisms and close scrutiny coupled with unrelenting guidance and infinite patience brought this work to its present state.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Nathan Iddrisu Samwini, I’m so much grateful to you. The work was not introduced to you on time yet your immense contribution cannot be glossed over. Out of your hectic episcopal schedule, you managed to impart greatly to the success of this study. May the good Lord bless you all continually.

To my colleague priests Rev. Fr. Jude Anin-Agyei I cannot satisfactorily thank you. This course was pursued after a number of months of continual persuasions and encouragement from your end. Your counsel has brought me to where am I now. Rev Fr Clement Arthur Boachie, the one and only closest friend who were there when I nearly gave up. I appreciate the numerous reasons you offered which kept me on.

ABSTRACT

Christians and Muslims have cohabited in the same community and vicinity in Ghana since the 19th century. Adherents of both religions have known and seen each other, relating well in their communities and live in mutual understanding. The faiths, being Abrahamic origin, have some common beliefs about Jesus which if well understood would help foster peaceful relations between members of the two religions. The research is about the person of Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an; its relevance for Christian Muslim dialogue in Kumasi Metropolis. The study employed qualitative and quantitative methods of research. It used questionnaire and interviews in collecting the data for the work. Purposive sampling technique was used in soliciting for views through interviews. The findings were analysed and discussed and some findings were made. Jesus is presented in the Qur'an as Isa. The Bible and Qura'an agree on the Immaculate Conception of Jesus by the Virgin Mary. It found out that both holy books consider Jesus as Prophet *par excellence*. It was also revealed that if members acknowledged the various differences and similarities their teachings on Jesus, greater understanding leading to tolerance and respect will be the hallmark in the Christian-Muslim dialogue. The study recommends that dialogue for Christians and Muslims should focus more on the commonalities which are found in the respective faiths. This would yield more results. Dialogue held with open mind and free from prejudice will result in each party gaining a better understanding of the other's faith.

KNUST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi

CHAPTER ONE	
1 GENERAL	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Backgrounds to the study	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem	4
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Objectives of the Study	5
1.6 Significance of the study	5
1.7 Scope of the Study	6
1.8 Methodology	6
1.9 Literature review	7
1.10 Organization of the study	21

CHAPTER TWO

23 JESUS IN THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN

..... 23

2.1 Introduction	23
2.2 Jesus in the Bible.....	24
2.2.1 The Divinity and Humanity of Jesus	25
2.2.2 Conception and Virgin Birth of Jesus	27
2.2.3 Childhood of Jesus	29
2.2.4 Miracles of Jesus	30
2.2.5 Crucifixion	32
2.2.6 Resurrection	34
2.2.7 Second Coming of Jesus	35
2.3 Jesus (Isa) in the Qur'an.....	36
2.4 The nature of Jesus in the Qur'an	37
2.4.1 Virgin Birth of Isa (Jesus)	40
2.4.2 Ibn Maryam (Son of Mary)	41
2.4.3 Jesus as Nabi (Prophet) and Rasul (Messenger)	42
2.4.4 Ruh Allah (Spirit of God / Spirit from God)	43
2.4.5 al-Masih (Messiah)	44
2.4.6 Miracles of Jesus in the Qur'an	46
2.4.7 Jesus as the son of God	48
2.4.8 Crucifixion	49
2.4.9 Second coming	51
2.5 Similarities and dissimilarities shared in the Bible and the Qur'an	53
2.6 Conclusion	54

CHAPTER THREE	
55 CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATION IN KUMASI: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY SCENE	
55	
3.1 Introduction	55
3.2 Background of the Metropolis	55
3.2.1 Traditional Set-up	56
3.2.2 Ethnic diversity	57
3.2.3 Nationality of Residence in Kumasi	57
3.3 Religious Composition	57
3.3.1 Christianity in Kumasi	58
3.3.2 Islam in Kumasi	59
3.3.3 Historical Perspective	61
3.3.4 Christian-Muslim Encounters in Ghana	62
3.4 Co-operation between Christian and Muslim leaders	65
3.5 Christian-Muslim Response to the Presence of Each Other	66
3.6 Conclusion	67
CHAPTER FOUR	
68 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FIELD WORK ... 68	
4.1 Introduction	68
4.2 Objective of the Field Work.....	68
4.3 Respondents' details	68
4.4 Methodology	69
4.4.1 Religious and Gender composition of respondents	69
4.4.2 The Findings	70

4.4.3 Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an	71
4.4.4 Common knowledge of Jesus held by both Christians and Muslims	73
4.4.5 Rating the existing relationship between Christians and Muslims in Kumasi .	77
4.4.6 The Need for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Kumasi	78
4.4.7 Fostering unity and peaceful co- existence	82
4.5 Interpretation of the Responses	88
4.5.1 Common views shared in both Scriptures about Jesus	88
4.5.2 Divergent views identified from both Scriptures about Jesus	89
4.6 Conclusion	91
CHAPTER FIVE	
93 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
..... 93	
5.1 Introduction	93
5.2 Summary of the study	93
5.3 Conclusion	96
5.4 General recommendations	97
REFERENCES	
99 APPENDICES	
109	

KNUST



CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a general introduction to the research work. It comprises the background to the study, statement of problem, research questions, and objectives of the study. The rest include scope of the study, significance of the study, methodology, literature review and organization of the thesis. This chapter set out the direction in which the research was taken.

1.2 Backgrounds to the study

It is a known fact that Ghana is a religiously pluralistic state having three main religions—Christianity, Islam and Traditional religions. There are also some minority faiths observed in Ghana as well. Samwini indicates that Ghana has had its fair share of religious persecution as has happened in other parts of the world following the advent of Christianity and Islam in the country.¹ In other words, the history of inter-religious relations in Ghana can hardly be called smooth without some challenges in the past. Though at the grassroots level, individual Muslims and Christians for example, have often lived and worked together quite harmoniously, the official discourses between the two religious communities were mostly characterised by exclusivist, polemic and offensive language...²³

¹ N. I. Samwini, —Religious Toleration as a key factor for Social Stability in Plural Ghana| *Developing Country Studies*, Vol.4, No.12, 2014, p. 112.

² M. Th. Frederiks, —Let us understand our differences: Current trends in Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Sahara Africal in *Interfaith Relations After One Hundred Years*. Regnum Edinburgh 2010 Series,

³, p. 58

There are times however when religion is used by political groups with vested interests to create an attitude of intolerance and violence between people of different religions. Scriptures are used in many cases to increase divisions between Christian and Muslim communities shifting from building bridges to building barriers, causing hatred and mistrust of the other.

Christianity largely entered the country through the coastal areas before the eighteenth century. As a result of the endeavours of the various missionary groups, many Christian denominations now exist in Ghana. They include the Basel Missions, Methodist church, Roman Catholic Church and Anglican Church in addition to Pentecostal traditions. There are also countless indigenous churches founded by Ghanaians, and, more recently, numerous charismatic ministries.⁴ According to Azuma, the British colonial administration on arrival in northern Ghana in the late nineteenth century recognized the presence of *malams* in the traditional courts. Islam entered the country through the northern part as a result of trading activities⁵. It must be noted here that, Islam entered into the northern parts of the country long before the arrival of Christianity.

Christians and Muslims have lived side by side in many communities in the country. At the grassroots level, Christians and Muslims have on the whole lived in peace. It is very common to find members of the same family adhering to different religious traditions. Muslim relatives and friends visit Christians at Christmas to wish them well and Christians also visit their Muslim friends and relatives during the festivals of *Eid-Ul-Fitr*

⁴ J. Azumah, —Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup! Current Dialogue (36), December 2000, World Council of Churches, p. 2

⁵ A. Ofori Atiamo, —Religion and Inculturation of Human Rights in Ghana! Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013, p. 76

and *Eid-Ul-Adha*. On these occasions gifts and meals are shared. On occasions such as marriage celebrations and child naming ceremonies, and even the ordination of priests, Muslim-women, in particular, are on various occasions seen at Christian programmes and vice-versa because the ceremony involves a friend or relative. A kind of social dialogue is already going on at the grass-roots level.⁶

The importance of better Christian-Muslim relations in the country cannot be underestimated due to dangers they poses to national stability in the absence of such. In an address to Muslim leaders in Cologne, Germany, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the importance of inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians: —Interreligious dialogue and intercultural dialogue between Muslims and Christians, in the view of Benedict XVI, —cannot be reduced to an optional extra. It is in fact a vital necessity, on which in large measure our future depends. In the Pope's call for dialogue offers an alternative to the attitudes of fear and suspicion that most often mark the interaction between these two religious groups. The Papal statement thus gives an impulse to Christian-Muslim relations worldwide. For Ghanaians, it means that the various Inter faiths groups should invest in Christian-Muslim relations by publications, the training of personal and active participation in dialogue programmes and encounters with Muslims.⁸

At times, these goals are realised when similar trends in both religions are identified and utilized in the dialogue process. In engaging in dialogue, it is important for the actors to

⁶ J. Azumah, —Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana: Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup| Current Dialogue (36), December 2000, World Council of Churches, p. 3

⁷ *The Signature, Muslim-Christian Dialogue: Challenges and Prospects*, The Student Newsletter of the Department of Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas - November 2010, p. 1

⁸ M. T. Frederiks, —Let us understand our differences: Current trends in Christian-Muslim Relation in sub-Saharan Africa. In *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 27, no 4 2010, p. 7

identify commonalities between the two faiths and build on them to facilitate the dialogue process. One of such commonalities is Jesus who appears both in the Bible and the Qur'an. The person of Jesus does not only appear in the two sacred Scriptures, but also plays a significant role in historical and theological development of the two faiths. It is true that Christians have many things in common with Muslims, especially with reference to God and Jesus. In our case the dialogue focused on Jesus. This means that Muslims and Christians have common issues to discuss. It is in this vein that we studied the person of Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an with the view to creating an intellectual platform for Christian-Muslim dialogue.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Both Christians and Muslims claim brotherhood with Jesus. —Jesus Christ represents the common link between the two religions having the most followers on earth today – Christianity and Islam.⁹ Even though critical differences may exist in both scriptures, it is important for any Christian-Muslim relations efforts to fall on the similarities and differences to establish a common ground for dialogue. However, many Christians and Muslims on both sides are not aware of the fact that the Bible and the Qur'an speak at length, and in glorious terms, about Jesus. Therefore, any academic inquiry to identify the personality of Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an would positively enhance Christian-Muslim relations. It is from this perspective that this study sought to do a comparative study of the person of Jesus from the Bible and the Qur'an with the aim to providing a fertile platform where effective Christian-Muslim dialogue could be nurtured.

⁹ A. A. B. Philips. *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, (Lagos: Hamzat Intl. Pub House, 1996, p. 5

1.4 Research Questions

1. What do the Bible and the Qur'an say about Jesus and how can that information be used as a catalyst for healthy Christian-Muslim dialogue?
2. Are there semblances of ideas about Jesus as presented in the Bible and in the Qur'an?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at using the Bible and the Qur'an as basis for dialogue between Christians and Muslims by focusing on the personality of Jesus, a person common to both scriptures for a sustained national development.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study was intended to serve the purpose of having Christians and Muslims enrich their knowledge of each other's religious tradition and to establish a model for a successful dialogue by avoiding prejudices and judging the 'other' as wrong. In addition, it contributed in developing openness towards the readings of 'other' scriptures. It thus offered a better and richer understanding to the reader. Parallel threads between both scriptures which were offered differently, thus adding different views that were not seen by the regular readers and augment or lead to greater respect for the 'other' scriptures. Equally, the use of Jesus as a model in this research helped in seeing two different views of Jesus and caused a fusion to create a common view of an interfaith dialogue. A comparative study of this prominent religious personalit therefore was of great interest, using the Bible, and the Qur'an as primary sources.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Jesus plays a vital role in helping to enrich dialogue between Christians and Muslims. We limited the scope to an analysis of the ways in which Jesus is presented as a role model in both the Christian and the Islamic scriptures. Our focus was on textual passages from the Bible and the Qur'an, on the one hand, and on interviews on the other hand.

The study concentrated on how Jesus is presented to us on both scriptures, with historico-critical approach about Jesus, better was gained which further foster interfaith dialogue. Theological understanding of specific references on Jesus was sought from theologians from Christianity and Islam.

1.8 Methodology

In this study we made use of descriptive analysis and the empirical approach in the sense of typology in order to interpret and compare selected scriptural passages on the role Jesus plays in the Bible and in the Qur'an. Besides describing one person in two sacred texts, our study took the scriptural passages on this personality as sources of common understanding between Christians and Muslims. These materials have proven that much as they displayed a clear variation in the teachings for their followers, the same Books have portrayed there are common grounds for both adherents to ponder. That is to say there were some selected texts in the Bible and in the Qur'an which became relevant and thus makes the context of dialogue more possible.

Using the empirical approach, we conducted interviews and administered questionnaire to Christians and Muslims to highlight their views and suggestions about Jesus and

interfaith dialogue and its factors. We also employed an inter-scriptural comparative and parallel study of the Bible and the Qur'an with the aim of finding some positive elements that encourage people of both faiths to engage in dialogue. In so doing, distinctive beliefs which each tradition holds were discovered and highlighted. Awareness was created for areas that Christians and Muslims varied in understanding. Acceptance for the differences in belief between Christianity and Islam would cement challenges faced in interfaith dialogue in the study area.

The population for the study was made up of Christian and Muslim leaders, interfaith experts and Christian and Islamic Theologians. Five (5) research participants from each religion were interviewed. Questionnaire was distributed to one hundred and twenty (120) people out of which hundred and sixteen (116) questionnaire were answered and retrieved.

1.9 Literature review

Several researches have been conducted and papers written on interfaith dialogue especially those involving Christians and Muslims. This subsection of our work therefore reviews what has been documented regarding inter-religious dialogue and how these writings can help in the development of our theme. For the purpose of clarity, the reviewed materials have been classified under two main themes. These are Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an, and Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Fry writes on the way Jesus has been presented in the Qur'an and the Bible. According to him, the Qur'an presents the Virgin Birth of Jesus. While there is no mention of Joseph, the step-father of Jesus, there is considerable attention given to Mary. Mary is presented

in the Qur'an as a mother of prophet. Fry writes that Mary is the only female prophetess mentioned by name in the Qur'an, and because she is the mother of Jesus, she is the only Muslim prophetess to physically mother another prophet. The New Testament writers, in the words of Fry, also consistently affirm the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. Matthew and Luke both feature the story of the Virgin Birth at the beginning of their biographies of Jesus. —For in the Christian Scriptures the story of the Virgin Birth is crucial because it tells us who Jesus is.¹⁰

The story of the birth of Jesus in the Qur'an and the Bible presents us with a common ground for peaceful co-existence on the part of Christians and Muslims. The story also bears repeating, that the Qur'an and the Bible leave the door open for dialogue and that a loving but bold presentation of the surpassing grandeur and beauty of Jesus will not alienate the Muslim and the Christian's heart. It means making use of the titles and works that describe the person and work of Jesus in the Qur'an and Bible. It is true that the Qur'anic Jesus is embryonic and mysterious, but Fry indicates that the Muslim reader is encouraged to seek Christ above and beyond the Qur'an; likewise the Christian. This might be a strong platform for dialogue.

¹⁰ C. G. Fry, —The Quranic Christ, *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, (Volume 43, Number 3, June 1979), p.

Ajaj also indicates that some Muslim scholars seek to justify the differences and contradictions between the Biblical stories and the Qur'an by claiming the Bible was twisted, or at least it was changed during the time of its transmission. He puts it this way:

—the Torah as we have today contains part of what was revealed to Moses... some was dropped and other was added. The Quran is the measure whereby it, the added information as well as what was taken away, can be revealed¹¹

What the author is saying is that, the Qur'an is the absolute truth, and therefore if any part of the Bible contradicts it, this would be a sign that that part was twisted or corrupted. According to him, the name of this concept in Islamic thought is *tahriif*.

Our observation from Ajaj's work is that some scholars, both from the Christian and Islamic side have taken entrenched positions regarding the Scripture of each other. Each of them sees their Scripture as the authentic, casting doubt on the authenticity of the other. Can this posture help in the effort to create dialogue? Certainly not. We have shared our opinion on this in the final chapter of this work based on the data from the field.

Ndongo similarly asserts that the Jesus' story starts in the Bible with his birth, which is recorded in two gospels only. In Matthew 1: 18-25 and Luke 1: 31-35, it is recorded that angel Gabriel was sent by God to the Virgin Mary to inform her of the favour bestowed upon her to be the mother of a son, whose name shall be Jesus. Jesus, the Christ, is born of a woman, but without having an affair with any man, which makes his birth to be considered miraculous. Consequently, his father can only be God, the author of life.¹²

¹¹ A. Ajaj, *The Joseph Story in the Qur'an and the Bible, and in Muslim and Jewish Tradition*, Prague: International Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000, p. 6

¹² N K. Alphonse, Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an: a comparative study. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 12, Issue 1 (May. – June, 2013), pp. 14-19 (14) ¹²G. S. Reynolds,

Jesus Being the son of God is strongly repudiated in the Qur'an which equivocally denies the fatherhood of God to Jesus. God has no son or wife. This is a strong stand of Islam. Is the sonship of Jesus in the Bible a matter of misinterpretation of the biblical statement or a fact of truth? How can we reconcile this with the strong stance of the Qur'an? We sought answers from the Christian theologians and Muslim Scholars among our research participants in our quest to project the figure of Jesus as a platform for healthy Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Writing on *The Muslim Jesus: Dead or alive?* Reynolds indicates that Muslims believe that Jesus did not die. According to the author, they claim that on the day of the crucifixion, another person – whether his disciple or his betrayer – was miraculously transformed and assumed the appearance of Jesus. This person who replaced Jesus was taken away, crucified, and killed, while Jesus himself was assumed body and soul into heaven.¹²

Our interest in Reynolds' work is not in those apologetics; but rather lies in the fact that there are different views from the perspective of the Bible and the Qur'an regarding Jesus. Nevertheless, there are also numerous similarities in these writings regarding the same figure. While we acknowledge the differences, our interest therefore will be on the similarities and how to utilize them to the benefit of healthy Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana.

—The Muslim Jesus: Dead or alive?|| School of Oriental and African Studies. *Bulletin of SOAS*, 72, 2 (2009), pp. 237–258.

According to Barker and Gregg in *Isa Ibn Maryam* (Jesus, son of Mary), is considered to be a Messenger of God and *al-Masih* (the Messiah) in Islam who was sent to guide the children of Israel with a new scripture, (the Gospel). In their view, the belief that Jesus is a Prophet is required in Islam. This is reflected in the fact that he is clearly a significant figure in the Qur'an, appearing in 93 *ayaat* (or verses), though Noah, Adam and Moses appear with even greater frequency.¹³

According to the authors, the Qur'an states that Jesus was born to Maryam as the result of virginal conception, a miraculous event which occurred by the decree of God. To aid in his ministry to the Jewish people, Jesus was given the ability to perform miracles (such as healing the blind, bringing dead people back to life, etc.), all by the permission of God rather than of his own power. It is clear from the above that the story of Jesus is not unique to the Bible alone; the Qur'an also has a similar version.

Khalidi narrates an intriguing Islamic tradition that takes us back some 1200 years in history. According to him, it is reported that when Muhammad realized his dream and occupied the city of Makkah in AD 630 he proceeded to cleanse the Ka'abah of idols. He (Muhammad) gave the command that all icons be destroyed, but when he saw the Virgin Mary and her son, he covered them with his coat. Khalidi writes that this story, repeated in the canonized traditions, says the first cry a baby makes after birth is when Satan touches it and only Jesus and his mother were exempted.¹⁴ This position could be doubted or rejected as it is an interpretation from Ahadith.

¹³ G. A. Barker and S. E. Gregg, *Jesus Beyond Christianity: The Classic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 84.

¹⁴ T. Khalidi, (ed. & transl). *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature*. (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001). p. 2

Whether or not these stories are true is not as important as the fact that they demonstrate Muslims respect for Jesus. Aside the differences in the Biblical narratives, Jesus is respected and placed strategically in the Qur'anic narratives. In Islam, Jesus is placed within a theological framework that makes Christians wonder where the Biblical narrative has gone. That theological framework insists God would never get his hands dirty in an incarnation and never allow his esteemed Prophet to be killed. In a sentence, the major difference is Christological. For Muslims, Christology is not included in theology, but for Christians it is central.¹⁵¹⁶

Nevertheless, in spite of this profound difference, Parrinder suggests that the best way to approach Muslims is to point them to the Christ of the Qur'an: Jesus is always spoken of in the Qur'an with reverence; there is no breath of criticism, for he is the Christ of God.¹⁷ From Parrinder we can deduce that there are still some common grounds for dialogue and this is the focus of our work.

Rosty informs us that the Qur'an and Bible possess many similarities as the holy scriptures of Islam and Christianity, respectively. They consist of narratives, teachings, and poetry. Many narratives contain the same basic events and figures. According to Rosty, both the

¹⁵ J. D. Woodberry, —The Muslim Understanding of Jesus, in *Word and World*, vol. 16, No. 2, Spring, 16

¹⁷ G. Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an* (London: Sheldon Press, 1965), p. 16.

Qur'an and the Bible teach the creation of the world by a single almighty, omniscient God who commands humans to follow the morality set out for them.¹⁸

KNUST



¹⁸ S. Rosty, Similarities between the Bible and the Qur'an, *Truth Booth Online*, May 2007. Available at <http://www.truthboothonline.org>

Focusing on the Qur'an, the author indicates that Muslims believe God dictated every word of the Qur'an and that God has protected the Qur'an from any possible human mistakes. The Qur'an, therefore, is perfect in every way as God is perfect. Most Muslims believe that the Qur'an is applicable to every person regardless of context. On the Bible, Rosty has this to say: —Christians believe the Bible is completely true, but in a different way. The Bible is the record of God's revelation to the Jews and through Jesus.

It is written by humans together with God through a process called Divine Inspiration.¹⁹

Our view from Rosty's work is that, the stories in the Qur'an often contain few details and tend to concentrate more on the moral or spiritual significance of the story. Some Muslims may turn to the Bible to give a fuller picture of the person concerned. However there are guidelines set out in the way Muslims are to understand the Bible, the primary one being that the Qur'an is always more authoritative than the Bible. Therefore, anything in the Bible that agrees with the Qur'an is accepted, and anything in the Bible that disagrees with the Qur'an is rejected. Since the focus of this study is to bring out the similarities and differences in the Biblical and Qur'anic narratives about the personality of Jesus, Rosty's work will guide us in developing our theme in the framework of Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Sarbah is of the view that Christian-Muslim relations all over the world are usually associated with instances of intolerance, tensions, and conflicts. Such associations, according to him, are the result of wrong impression often created by the misinterpretation of history. They are also due to the media's characterization of

¹⁹ ibid

Christians and Muslims as enemies who are always at each other's throats. —Reports on conflicts, especially in Africa, often claim that Christian-Muslim intolerance is the main cause²⁰. Sarbah however, admits that there are many areas in our world today and Africa for that matter, where peaceful and harmonious exchanges do take place on daily basis between Christians and Muslims.

We believe that such positive exchanges have received little attention in the study of religions in Africa. Furthermore, some people often either deliberately or inadvertently fail to see the very complexities and underlying issues involved in Christian-Muslim conflicts across the globe. We have the intention of expanding this theme, especially in relation to Jesus.

The Qur'an speaks tenderly of the spirituality of the humble monks and learned priests of the Christians, — . . . for there are among them monks and learned priests, and they are not proud.²¹ In the view of Ayoub, this Qur'anic passage makes two significant assertions, which can still serve as a good motivation for constructive dialogue between the two faith-communities. The first is that the Christians are the nearest people in community to the Muslims. The second, in the view of Ayoub is that Christian monks and learned priests recognize the truth when they hear it and shed tears in humility for God's guidance.²²

²⁰ C. J. E. Sarbah, *A critical study of Christian-Muslim Relations in the Central Region of Ghana with special reference to traditional Akan Values*, PhD Thesis submitted to University of Birmingham; (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2010) p.10.

²¹ Surah 5:82

²² M. Ayoub, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Goals and Obstacles", *the Muslim World*, Vol. 94, July 2004, pp. 313-314.

Furthermore, Ayoub stressed that like the people of faith among the Muslims, these humble monks and learned priests covet God's grace and pray that they be accounted among the witnesses to God's oneness and guidance to the truth. Therefore, dialogue between them ought to be a dynamic and creative engagement among friends, not enemies, to which the Qur'an (3:64) invites the people of the Book. Even when the Qur'an reproaches the Christians for their deification of Jesus, it considers this to be extremism in their religion, rather than outright rejection of faith. It then affirms, as the Christians do, the absolute truth that —God is One.²³

Ayoub adds that there is, however, another side to this positive Qur'anic view of the Christians and particularly with regard to their status in the Islamic state. The Qur'an is not only a book of moral and pious precepts, but is also the primary source of the sacred law (*Shari'ah*) of God, which must guide the Muslim *Ummah* (community) and regulate its relations to other faith-communities. Ayoub's work will guide us in explaining the position of the Qur'an on the relationship between Muslims and Christians in our quest to project healthy Christian - Muslim dialogue.

Turkson discusses issues relating to Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana and writes that since independence, Muslims have continued to contribute greatly to the socio-economic and political life and development of Ghana. He describes Muslims in Ghana as having shown great openness to, and an appreciation of non-Islamic education. According to him, the establishment of several English/Arabic schools has greatly facilitated this development.

²³ Surah 4:171.

From Turkson's observation, for the past years we have seen Muslims playing an active role in the socio-political development of Ghana. Not only are they increasingly involved in sponsoring political activities, they have also succeeded in having the government establish a *Hajj* Commission for them and sponsor pilgrimages to Makkah. They have obtained government recognition for, and declaration of two Islamic feasts as statutory national holidays.²⁴ To sum it all, Islam is a visible and an audible religion in Ghana. Everywhere there are mosques (in villages, towns, schools, markets, hospitals, and work places), amplifying the call to prayer.²⁵

With all these going on in a predominantly Christian community, we believe that tolerance and mutual respect should be the keys to living harmoniously in a multireligious society such as Ghana; and it is dialogue which makes this possible. The primary aim of Christian-Muslim dialogue is, therefore, to gain a better understanding of each other, to do away with prejudices and stereotypes, and to cultivate harmonious relations and the peaceful coexistence of people of different faiths in Ghana. This is the focus of the study. Still on the possibility of dialogue amidst differences in the narratives, Cragg puts it this way:

There is a Christian constituency to educate in the significance of the place Jesus occupies in the belief and devotion of Muslims. The status he enjoys there has often been neglected or discounted by some Christians. The reasons are not far to seek; for, as they see, asad reductionism has occurred. By New Testament criteria, the Qur'anic Jesus is a much attenuated figure. Many of his most cherished deeds and sayings are left to silence, and what the Qur'an does with the final climax has desolating consequences for Christianity.²⁶

²⁴ Eid-Ul-Fitr and Eid- Ul-Adha.

²⁵ P. K Turkson, —Ghana, if Islam Becomes an Enigmal, *FondazioneInternazionale*, Oasis: Year 3 N.6 October 2007. p. 2

²⁶ K. Cragg, *Jesus and Islam: An Exploration* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), p. 4.

A cursory look at the history of Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana reveals the crucial importance of social and political setting in shaping and developing the opinions, beliefs and attitudes of Christians and Muslims towards each other. Samwini²⁷ has done a detailed work on Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana. He indicates that the two religions came to Ghana from different directions and as such during the early stages, the two religions operated mainly from distinct parts of the country. However, in contemporary times, the acrimonious interactions between Christians and Muslims largely demonstrated by theological and polemic writings cannot be espoused properly and appraised when isolated from the social and political milieu.²⁸

Goddard also espouses that the theological formulations of Christian-Muslim encounters as well as the images and the attitudes that accompanied them were designed mainly to score political and psychological points and not grounded on any sound and accurate perception of each other. Changes in political and social conditions in favour of either Christians or Muslims will make the other turn inward which later sparks off polemic writings and activities from both sides.

In this outwardly religious country, we can say that harmony between Muslims and Christians is part of the social make up. Believers in any of religion in Ghana and the rest of the continent should continue to see one another as brothers rather than members of the same ethnic group, a political party or even a family. If this is done,

²⁷ N. I. Samwini, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950 and its effects upon Muslims and Muslim-Christian relation*. A Thesis submitted to the school of Historical Studies, University of Birmingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2003, p. 101

²⁸ G. Hugh. *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2000), p. 60.

religious diversity, even in its diverse form, will provide social control that will help stabilize and sustain the society.

Samwini, in another work, explains that the effects of dialogue of life are many and diverse. He indicates that any community that practices dialogue of life is in a position to tolerate one another and coexist peacefully. —Believers of the different religious communities find living together and accepting one another as natural and habitual. They practice their religion freely and with open minds.²⁹

In the event of a conflict or violence of any nature, Samwini intimates that members of the communities are able to detect the signals and most times settle it before it escalates to uncontrollable proportions. In many religious conflicts, the fuel for many wars, are easily eliminated when an atmosphere is created for dialogue of life and constructive engagements among religious people. Dialogue results in understanding and tolerance, both of which make peaceful co-existence possible.

Azumah raises alarm on a general lack of awareness and interest amongst Christians concerning Christian-Muslim issues. As far as many Christians, including Church leaders are concerned, there is no need to study Islam. According to Azumah, very few seminaries teach Islam as a small part of comparative religion and the majority does not even have it as part of the curriculum.³⁰ The notion of a Muslim amongst the majority of Ghanaian Christians is that of a dirty, illiterate watchman from the north or uncouth bunch of strangers living in the dirtiest and filthiest part of the city. These perceptions, though,

²⁹ N. I. Samwini, —The need for and Importance of Dialogue of Life in Community Building: The Case of Selected West African Nations, Interreligious Dialogue. irdialogue.org, p. 4

³⁰ J. Azumah., *Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: "Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup"* *Current Dialogue* (36), December 2000, p. 4

according to Azumah, have more to do with ethnic prejudice than it has to do with religious prejudice. To such Christians, the Muslim presence has little or no relevance to them.

KNUST



Azumah describes another group of Christians who see Muslims purely as objects of evangelism. They are engaged in open air preaching in Muslim areas. As far as this group of Christians is concerned, the only legitimate relationship a Christian can have with a Muslim is in the area of evangelism. There is no need for dialogue just for dialogue sake.³¹ Dialogue must have the ultimate end of converting the Muslim and this,

to most of them, is an unnecessarily long process confronting them with Jesus because Muslims cannot be regarded as neighbours. There are however those who are seriously seeking to promote a better understanding of Islam and trying to creatively address the Muslim presence. Azumah mentions the Christian Council of Ghana as one organization which has shown much interest in Christian-Muslim dialogue. It has a Christian-Muslim department which seeks to organize Islamic seminars for Christians.

The issues raised by Azumah clearly show that there is still a lot of work to be done as far as the issue of Christian-Muslim dialogue is concerned. The purpose of this study is not to condemn Christians or Muslims evangelizing each other. Our interest however lies in how these can be done without prejudice and evangelical polemics. The most urgent goal toward which both religions ought to strive is therefore the mutual acceptance of the legitimacy and authenticity of the religious tradition of the other as a divinely inspired faith. We admit also that this fundamental requirement for honest and constructive dialogue remains an ideal hope, not a reality.

³¹ *ibid*, p. 4

To Troll, both Christians and Muslims believe that God took the initiative in history to speak to human beings. Believers in both religions consider themselves the fortunate beneficiaries of the —gift of the Word. To Muslims, the Qur'an is the final, unique and fully authentic manifestation of the Word of God, addressed to humankind through the ministry of Muhammad³². It must be stated that Christians are also persuaded that in many and various ways God spoke of old to their fathers by the prophets; but in these last days He has spoken to them by a Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things. According to Troll, in the effort to clarify to each other the ways in which the Christian and the Muslim religion receive and understand the Word of God, Christians and Muslims will point out the different ways in which the two religions identify the Word addressed to them by God. For Muslims, this Word is the Qur'an itself, a revelation of the Lord of the Worlds ... in plain Arabic speech³² and mention will be made of the Qur'an's importance for them as discourse about God and as a law for humankind. According to the Christian view, the Word of God came into the world —in the fullness of time³³ not in the form of a Scripture, but in the person of Jesus Christ, revelation of the Father and presence of God in the world of human beings.³⁴

From the above, we can say that, for a dialogue to be authentic, we must take account of the profound difference in the faith convictions of Muslims and Christians regarding the nature and message of Jesus Christ in their respective Holy Scripture so as to avoid useless confusion and irrelevant criticism. We believe that, dialogue cannot take place in an atmosphere of suspicion. In a situation where there is no trust, dialogue cannot take place.

³² C. W. Troll, —Bible and Qur'an in Dialogue: The Word of God in Christian-Muslim Dialogue, *Bulletin Dei Verbum* 79/80, pp. 31-32. ³² Surah 26:192, 195

³³ C. W. Troll, —Bible and Qur'an in Dialogue: The Word of God in Christian-Muslim Dialogue, *Bulletin Dei Verbum* 79/80, pp. 31-32.

³⁴ C. W. Troll, —Bible and Qur'an in Dialogue pp. 31-32.

Dretke bemoans an existing misconception and suspicion from Christians and Muslims about each other as one major factor that mitigates good relationship.³⁵ He points out that particularly Muslims wonder if the call for healthy Christian-Muslim relation is not a cover up for a fresh and more disguised evangelistic strategy that seeks to open the Muslim to Christian idea identical with Islamic fundamental teachings and theology. In the same way, Dretke indicates that some Christians also grapple with idea of religious exclusivists' supposition that Muslims have nothing to offer Christians. He raises the question of religious disunity as one major setback to good relation between Christians and Muslims.

From the above, it is clear that various literatures reviewed have put forward strong arguments and findings on Christian-Muslim dialogue through a coherent analysis of various factors that either help or fight healthy dialogue. However, of particular interest to us is our quest to employ the personality of Jesus as found in the Bible and the Qur'an as a basis for dialogue between Christians and Muslims. This is what we seek to do in the proceeding chapters.

1.10 Organization of the study

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, area of study, significance of the study, limitation, methodology, literature review and organization of the study. The second chapter discusses the figure of Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an under specific theme starting from the birth through to the expected second coming. Chapter three is an

³⁵ J. Dretke, *A Christian Approach to Muslims: Reflections from West Africa* (London: William Carey Library Publishers, 1979), pp. 120-132.

overview of the socio- religious factors in the Kumasi Metropolis that make it suitable to be used as a case study. The fourth chapter deals with data analysis and discussions of the field findings. The fifth chapter concludes the research by presenting a summary of the research, discussing issues that emerged out of the study and gives recommendations.

KNUST



CHAPTER TWO

JESUS IN THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN

2.1 Introduction

Having discussed the direction for the study at the introduction in the previous chapter, this chapter looks at the personality of Jesus in both Biblical and the Qur'anic narratives.

This is evident not only in the Bible, but also from the practice among contemporary Arabs. Names, surnames, nicknames, and appellations are bestowed upon mankind and places with the intent of expressing the very character of the person or the thing named.³⁶ The person named Jesus in the scriptures of the two Abrahamic Religions is of much interest to this study.

The first part of this chapter analyses the Biblical narrative regarding the person of Jesus. We would discuss Jesus' nature, his conception by the Virgin Mary, his birth to issues relating to his second coming. The second part of the chapter dwells on the Qur'anic presentation of Jesus. The section will focus on Qur'anic understanding of Jesus in the Muslim scriptures, *Isa ibn Maryam*, *Nabi*, *Al-Masih*, the Virgin birth of Isa, his crucifixion and his second Coming. Similar beliefs held by Christians and Muslims would be the focal points in the subsequent discussions in Christian-Muslim dialogue. We would consider the theoretical implication for Christian-Muslim dialogue.

³⁶ S. Zwemar, —The Muslim Christl *An Essay on the Life, Character and Teachings of Jesus Christ According to Quran and Orthodox Traditions*. Available at www.truthne.org/islam/Muslimchhrist/1/, Retrieved on 2nd October, 2015.

2.2 Jesus in the Bible

Two of the four canonical gospels provide accounts of the genealogy and the birth of Jesus.³⁷ While Luke traces the genealogy upwards towards Adam, Matthew, however, traces it from Abraham downwards towards Jesus.³⁸ Both gospels state that Jesus was begotten by God.³⁹ The accounts trace Joseph back to King David and from there to Abraham. According to Howard, these lists are identical between Abraham and David (except for one), but they differ almost completely between David and Joseph.⁴⁰ Matthew gives Jacob as Joseph's father and Luke says Joseph was the son of Heli. Attempts at explaining the differences between the genealogies are varied in nature⁴¹ and in the view of Borg, much of modern scholars interpret them as literary inventions.⁴²

Luke and Matthew's accounts of the birth of Jesus have a number of points in common; both have Jesus being born in Bethlehem, in Judea, to a virgin mother. In Luke's account, Joseph and Mary travelled from their home in Nazareth for the census to Bethlehem, where Jesus is born and laid in a manger.⁴³ Angels proclaim him a Saviour for all people, and shepherds come to adore him; the family then returns to Nazareth. In Matthew, astrologers follow a star to Bethlehem, where the family is living, to bring gifts to Jesus,

³⁷ Luke 3:23–38 Matthew 1:1–17

³⁸ R. P. Martin, *Where Christology began: essays on Philippians 2* Brian J. Dodd (Ed) Westminster John Knox Press, 1998 p. 28

³⁹ M. D. Johnson, 'The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies: With Special Reference to the Setting of the Genealogies of Jesus' *Volume 8 of Cambridge Studies in Advanced Mathematics* *Volume 8 of Monograph series, Society for New Testament Studies*, Monograph series, 1989, pp. 229–233

⁴⁰ I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978, p. 158.

⁴¹ W. Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, Westminster: John Knox Press, 2001 pp. 49–50

⁴² M. J. Borg and J. D. Crossan, *The First Christmas*, Cambridge: Harper Collins, 2009 p. 95.

⁴³ Biblical literature." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011. Web. 22 January 2011.

born the —King of the Jews. In an attempt to kill Jesus, King Herod massacres all males under two years old in Bethlehem. Jesus' family, however, flees to Egypt and later settles in Nazareth. Over the centuries, biblical scholars have attempted to reconcile these contradictions,⁴⁴ while modern scholarship mostly views them as legendary.⁴⁵ Generally, they consider the issue of historicity as secondary, given that gospels were primarily written as theological documents rather than chronological timelines.⁴⁶

2.2.1 The Divinity and Humanity of Jesus

Hedley argues that if there is one thing of which modern Christians have been certain, it is that Jesus was a —true man, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, in all points tempted as we are.⁴⁷ Hedley further states that theologians of all shades of opinions have declared that His human nature, Christ is consubstantial with mankind.⁴⁸ Christians only need to read the Gospels to attest to the fact of Jesus' genuine humanity. As human, he got hungry (Mark 11:12-14). At the well of Samaria he asked the woman who was drawing water for a drink (John 4:7-9).⁴⁹ When he grew tired, he needed rest or sleep (Matt 8:24). He learned obedience in the way mankind must learn it. When his disciples were unfaithful it was very cutting to his heart. The blindness of the city he longed to save moved him to tears (Luke 19:41). In the garden, he experienced the normal agony of any

⁴⁴ M. D. Roberts *Can We Trust the Gospels?: Investigating the Reliability of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*, Westminster: Good News Publishers, 2007 p. 102

⁴⁵ M. Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth: An Independent Historian's Account of His Life and Teaching*. Bloomsbury. Harper Collins, 2010, pp. 145–146.

⁴⁶ M. Casey, p146.

⁴⁷ G. Hedley, *The Symbol of the Faith*, London: Macmillan, 1948. p. 26

⁴⁸ G. Hedley, 1948. p. 26

⁴⁹ John 4:7

individual in the same situation (Matt 26:26-46). On the Cross, he added to all physical tortures the final agony of feeling God-forsaken (Mark 15:3).⁵⁰

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the humanity of Jesus. He is seen agonizing in prayer (5:7) embracing the Cross with joy and faith (12:2). Springing from the tribe of Judah, He passed through the normal development of human life, learning obedience, even though a Son, by the things which he suffered (5:8). Like all other men, he was tempted (Matt 4:1-11), yet Christians believe that no corrupt strain existed in His nature. The scriptures put up an emphasis of the humanity of Jesus, paralleled nowhere in the New Testament. Again, Jesus was by no means omniscient. His knowledge was essentially limited by human conditions. Again Christians notice the human character of Jesus' moral and religious life.

After establishing the full humanity of Jesus, we still find an element in his life which transcends the human. To see Jesus as a 'mere' good man like all other prophets is by no means sufficient to explain him. Moreover, the historical setting in which he grew up, the psychological mood and temper of the age and of the house of Israel, the economic and social predicament of Jesus family—all these are important. This uniqueness in the spiritual life of Jesus has led Christians to see him not only as a human being, but as a human being surrounded with divinity. Prior to all other facts about Jesus stand the spiritual assurance that He is divine. Brown indicates that the appearance of such a person, more divine and more human than any other, and standing in closest unity at once with God and man is the most significant and hopeful event in human history. This divine quality or unity with

⁵⁰ W. A Brown, *How To Think of Christ*, New York: Scribner, 1945. See also Mathew 26:36-46

God, according to Brown, was not something thrust upon Jesus from above, but it was a definite achievement through the process of moral struggle and self-abnegation.⁵¹

2.2.2 Conception and Virgin Birth of Jesus

The virgin birth of Jesus has attracted mixed scholarly interpretations. Christians believe that Jesus was conceived in the womb of his mother Mary through the Holy Spirit without any human agency.⁵² The New Testament references are Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38. It is not explicitly mentioned anywhere in the Christian scriptures,⁵³ and in the words of Bruner, —the modern scholarly consensus is that the doctrine of the virgin birth rests on a very slim historical foundation.⁵⁴ The virgin birth was universally accepted in the Christian church by the 2nd century AD and, except for some New Religious Movements, which was not seriously challenged until the 18th century. It is enshrined in the creeds that most Christians consider normative, such as the Nicene Creed (—incarnate of the Virgin Mary) and the Apostles' Creed (—born of the Virgin Mary), and is a basic article of belief in the Catholic and most Protestant churches.⁵⁵

2.2.2.1 New Testament references to the Virgin birth

Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV)

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, —Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the

⁵¹ W. A. Brown, *How To Think of Christ*. p. 9

⁵² T. M. Dorman, —Virgin Birth, in Bromiley, Geoffrey W., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: Q-Z*, Eerdmans, . (1995), p. 990.

⁵³ K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, A&C Black, 2004, p. 175,

⁵⁴ B. Frederick [1st ed. 1987], *Matthew: The Christbook, Matthew 1-12*, Bloomsbury T&T Clark: Eerdmans, 2004, p. 37.

⁵⁵ Britannica (2007). —Virgin Birth. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*.

Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: —The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means, —God with us. When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.—Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew 1:23 refers to a prophecy from Isaiah, —Behold, a virgin shall be with a child, and shall bring forth a son. The Hebrew word used in Isaiah, *almah*, signifies a girl of childbearing age without reference to virginity, and Isaiah is in any case talking about his own immediate circumstances in the year 735 BC, not the distant future. Matthew continues with Isaiah's prophecy that —they shall call his name Immanuel, which means —God with us. In Isaiah, the 'Immanuel' prophecy has an immediate aim, but Matthew uses it to find patterns of God's dealings with Israel rather than a single and specific fulfillment.

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, —Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights. But Ahaz said, —I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said, —Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.—Isaiah 7:10–16 (NIV)

2.2.2.2 Luke 1:26-38 (NIV)

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, —Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, —Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end. —How will this be, Mary asked the angel, —since I am a virgin? The angel answered, —The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she

who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.¶ —I am the Lord's servant,¶ Mary answered. —May it be to me as you have said.¶ Then the angel left her.

Modern theology adhering to the principle of historical development, and denying the possibility of any miraculous intervention in the course of history cannot consistently admit the historical actuality of the virgin birth. According to modern views, Jesus was really the son of Joseph and Mary and was endowed with an admiring posterity with the halo of Divinity; the story of his virgin birth was in keeping with the myths concerning the extraordinary births of the heroes of other nations.⁵⁶ Without insisting on the arbitrariness of the philosophical assumptions implied in the position of theology, we shall briefly review its critical attitude towards the text of the Gospels and its attempts to account for the early Christian tradition concerning the virgin birth of Christ.

2.2.3 Childhood of Jesus

Other than Luke 2:41-52, the Bible does not tell us anything about Jesus' youth. As a result Christians do know much about Jesus' childhood. First, He was of a parentage that was devout in their religious observances. As required by their faith, Joseph and Mary made the yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. In addition, they brought their twelve (12) year old son to celebrate His first Feast in preparation for His *bar mitzvah*⁵⁷ at age 13, when Jewish boys commemorate their passage into adulthood.

Here, we see a typical boy in a typical family of that day. We see also in this story that Jesus' lingering in the temple was neither mischievous nor disobedient, but a natural result

⁵⁶ Gunkel, —Zum religionsgesch. Verst. des N.T., Göttingen, 1903, p. 65

⁵⁷ First, when a boy comes of age at 13-years-old he has become a "bar mitzvah" and is recognized by Jewish tradition as having the same rights as a full grown man. A boy who has become a Bar Mitzvah is now morally and ethically responsible for his decisions and actions.

of His knowledge that He must be about His Father's business. That He astonished the temple teachers with His wisdom and knowledge speaks to His extraordinary abilities, while His listening and asking questions of His elders shows that He was utterly respectful, taking the role of a student as was fitting for a child of His age.⁵⁸

From this incident to His baptism at age 30, all we know of Jesus' youth was that He left Jerusalem and returned to Nazareth with His parents and —was obedient to them (Luke 2:51). He fulfilled His duty to His earthly parents in submission to the fourth commandment (honour your father and mother, that your days may be much longer on the land the Lord your God will give thee {Ex 20:12}), an essential part of the perfect obedience to the Law of Moses. Beyond that, all we know is that —Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52). There are some extra-Biblical writings which contain stories of Jesus' youth (the Gospel of Thomas, for example), but we have no way of knowing whether any of these stories are true and reliable.

2.2.4 Miracles of Jesus

The miracles of Jesus are the supernatural⁵⁹ deeds attributed to Jesus in the Christian Bible. According to the Gospel of John (21:25), only some of these miracles were recorded. The majority of those described are exorcisms, as well as faith healing, resurrection of the dead and control over nature (Mark 5:21-43).⁶⁰ In the Synoptic Gospels

⁵⁸ <http://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-childhood.html>

⁵⁹ —Miracles Attributed to Jesus in *Revolv.y* Accessed on 17/02/2015 [https://www.revolv.y/main/index.php?s=Miracles attributed to Jesus &item_type=topic](https://www.revolv.y/main/index.php?s=Miracles+attributed+to+Jesus&item_type=topic)

⁶⁰ G. H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* Westminster: InterVarsity Press, 1999, p. 263.

(Mark, Matthew, and Luke), Jesus refuses to give a miraculous sign to prove his authority. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is said to have performed seven miraculous signs that characterized his ministry, from changing water into wine at the start of his ministry to raising Lazarus from the dead at the end.⁶¹ To many Christians, the miracles are actual historical events.

Ramm indicates that many Christians believe Jesus' miracles were historical events and that his miraculous works were an important part of his life, attesting to his divinity and the dual natures of Jesus as God and Man. They see Jesus' experiences of hunger, weariness, and death as evidences of his humanity, and miracles as evidences of his divinity.⁶² Christian authors also view the miracles of Jesus not merely as acts of power and omnipotence, but as works of love and mercy, performed not with a view to awe by omnipotence, but to show compassion for sinful and suffering humanity.⁶³ According to the Gospel of John, it was impossible to narrate all of the miracles performed by Jesus. The Catholic Encyclopedia states that the miracles presented in the Gospels were selected for a two-fold reason: first for the manifestation of God's glory, and then for their evidential value. Jesus referred to his —works as evidence of his mission and his divinity, and in John 5:36, he declared that his miracles have greater evidential value than the testimony of John the Baptist.⁶⁴ John 10:37-38 quotes Jesus as follows:

—... Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, which you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father. (NIV)

⁶¹ S. L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, Palo Alto: Mayfield. 1985, pp. 302-310

⁶² B. L. Ramm *An Evangelical Christology* Vancouver: Regent College Publishing 1993, p. 45

⁶³ Miracles Attributed to Jesus in *Revolv*.y Accessed on 17/02/2015

[https://www.revolv.y/main/index.php?s=Miracles attributed to Jesus &item_type=topic](https://www.revolv.y/main/index.php?s=Miracles+attributed+to+Jesus&item_type=topic)

⁶⁴ *ibid*

In Christian teachings, the miracles were as much a vehicle for Jesus' message as his words. They emphasize the importance of faith, for instance in cleansing ten lepers, Jesus did not say: —My power has saved you! but said,⁶⁴ —Rise and go; your faith has saved you! (Luke 17:19).

According to Dwight, Christian authors have discussed the miracles of Jesus at length and assigned specific motives to each miracle. Pentecost suggests that the walking on water miracle centered on the relationship of Jesus with his apostles, rather than their peril or the miracle itself. And that the miracle was specifically designed by Jesus to teach the apostles that when encountering obstacles, they need to rely on their faith in Christ, first and foremost.⁶⁵

Over the centuries, Christian authors have reviewed, discussed and analyzed the miracles attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. In most cases, authors associate each miracle with specific teachings that reflect the message of Jesus.⁶⁶ In the Healing of the Centurion's servant, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke narrate how Jesus healed the servant of a Roman Centurion in Capernaum at a distance. The Gospel of John has a similar account at Capernaum, but states that it was the son of a royal official who was cured at a distance. The Gospel of John specifically states that the miracles it recorded were but a portion of the miracles that Jesus actually performed.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ H. Lockyer, *All the Miracles of the Bible*, Westminster: Zondervan, 1988, p. 235

⁶⁵ D. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. Westminster: Zondervan, 1980. p. 234

⁶⁶ C. A. Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries* pages, 2001, pp. 6-7

⁶⁷ G. H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* (InterVarsity Press, 1999) p. 263.

2.2.5 Crucifixion

Jesus' crucifixion is described in all four canonical gospels, and is attested to by other sources of that age (e.g. Josephus and Tacitus), and is regarded as an historical incident. After the trials, Jesus made his way to Calvary and the three synoptic gospels indicate that he was assisted by Simon of Cyrene, after being compelled by the Roman Soldiers to do so.⁶⁸ In Luke 23:27-28, Jesus tells the women in the multitude of people following him not to cry for him but for themselves and their children.⁶⁹ Once at Golgotha, the Bible tells us that Jesus was offered wine mixed with gall to drink — usually offered as a form of painkiller. Matthew's and Mark's gospels state that he refused this.⁷⁰

The soldiers then crucified Jesus and cast lots for his clothes. Above Jesus' head on the cross was the inscription 'King of the Jews' and the soldiers and those passing by mocked him about the title. Jesus was crucified between two convicted criminals one of whom rebuked Jesus, while the other defended him.⁷¹ Kelly indicates that each gospel has its own account of Jesus' last words, comprising the seven last sayings on the cross.⁷² In John 19:26-27, Jesus entrusts his mother to the disciple he loved and in Luke 23:34 he states: —Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do, usually interpreted as his forgiveness of the Roman soldiers and the others involved in His crucifixion.⁷³

⁶⁸ C. A. Evans, *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew-Luke, Volume 1* 2003, p.509-520

⁶⁹ C. A. Evans *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary*, pp. 509-520.

⁷⁰ A. J. Köstenberger, and L. Scott Kellum, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* 2009, pp. 211-214.

⁷¹ J. D. Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, HarperOne 1995, p. 145.

⁷² J. F. Kelly, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2006, p. 153.

⁷³ W. E. Mills, and Roger Aubrey Bullard, *Mercer dictionary of the Bible* by 1998, p. 648

In the three synoptic gospels, various supernatural events accompany the crucifixion, including darkness of the sky, an earthquake, and (in Matthew) the resurrection of saints.⁷⁴

The tearing of the temple veil, upon the death of Jesus, is referenced in the synoptic. The Roman soldiers did not break Jesus' legs, as they did to the other two men crucified (breaking the legs hastened the crucifixion process), as Jesus was dead already.

Subsequently, one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus with a lance and blood and water flowed out. In Mark 15:39, impressed by the events, the Roman centurion calls Jesus the Son of God.⁷⁵ Following Jesus' death, Joseph of Arimathea asked for permission from Pilate to remove the body. The body was removed from the cross, was wrapped in a clean cloth and buried in a new rock-hewn tomb, with the assistance of Nicodemus. In Matthew 27:62-66, the Jews go to Pilate the day after the crucifixion and ask for guards for the tomb and also seal the tomb with a stone to be sure the body remains there.

2.2.6 Resurrection

The gospels state that the first day of the week after the crucifixion, typically interpreted as a Sunday, the followers of Jesus encounter him risen from the dead, after his tomb was discovered to be empty.⁷⁶ The New Testament does not include an account of the —moment of resurrection| and in the Eastern Church icons do not depict that moment, but show the Myrrh-bearers, and depict scenes of salvation.⁷⁸ The resurrected Jesus then appears to his followers that day and a number of times thereafter, delivers sermons and has supper with some of them, before ascending to Heaven. The gospels of Luke and Mark

⁷⁴ A. J. Köstenberger, and L. Scott Kellum, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* 2009, pp. 211-214.

⁷⁵ G. Martin, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 2005, p. 440

⁷⁶ J. F. Walvoord, and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 1983, p. 91 ⁷⁸S. Evalyn and Frank. *Woman in the World of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978, pp. 144–150.

include brief mention of the Ascension, but the main references to it are elsewhere in the New Testament.⁷⁷

In Matthew 28:5, Mark 16:5, Luke 24:4 and John 20:12, his resurrection is announced and explained to the followers who arrive there early in the morning by either one or two beings (either men or angels) dressed in bright robes appear in or near the tomb.⁷⁸ The gospel accounts vary as to who arrived at the tomb first, but they are women and are instructed by the risen Jesus to inform the other disciples. All four accounts include Mary Magdalene and three include Mary the mother of Jesus. The accounts of Mark 16:9, John 20:15 indicate that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene first, and Luke 16:9 states that she was among the Myrrh-bearers who informed the disciples about the resurrection. In Matthew 28:11-15, to explain the empty tomb, the Jewish elders bribe the soldiers who had guarded the tomb to spread the rumor that Jesus' disciples took his body.

2.2.7 Second Coming of Jesus

The Second coming (sometimes called the Second Advent or the Parousia) is a concept in Christianity regarding a future return of Jesus to Earth after his —first coming| and ascension to heaven about two thousand years ago. The belief is based on messianic prophecies found in the canonical gospels and is part of most Christian eschatology. Views about the nature of Jesus' second coming vary among Christian denominations. Most English versions of the Nicene Creed include the following statements on the second coming:

—... he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his

⁷⁷ J. F. Walvoord, and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 1983, p. 91

⁷⁸ J. F. Walvoord, and R. B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 1983, p. 91

kingdom will have no end. ... We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come⁷⁹.

From the above, we can summarily say that Jesus is unique in the Bible. Jesus plays a central role in the development of Christian theology. How is he represented in the Qur'an and how can His figuration be a point of dialogue in Christian - Muslim relations?

2.3 Jesus (*Isa*) in the Qur'an

Islamic texts regard Jesus as a human being and a righteous Messenger of God. Islam rejects the idea of him being God or the begotten Son of God. According to Islamic scriptures, the belief that Jesus is God or Son of God is *shirk*, (the association of partners with God), and thereby a rejection of *tawhid* (God's divine oneness or strict Monotheism) and the sole unpardonable sin.⁸⁰ *Shirk* is the associating partners with God after having received the divine guidance. Qur'an reads:

They have certainly disbelieved who say that Allah is Christ, the son of Mary. Say, —Then who could prevent Allah at all if He had intended to destroy Christ, the son of Mary, or his mother or everyone on the earth? And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. He creates what He wills, and Allah is over all things competent. Surah (Al-Ma'ida) 5:17⁸¹

The notions of the divinity of Jesus resulted from human interpolations of God's revelation. Islam views Jesus as a human like all other prophets, who preached that salvation, came through submission to God's will and worshiping God alone. Thus,

⁷⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed, pp. 185-187 .

⁸⁰ J. L. Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

⁸¹ J. L. Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*

according to Khalidi, Jesus is considered in Islam to have been a Muslim by the definition of the term (i.e., one who submits to God's will), as were all other prophets in Islam.⁸²

An alternative, more esoteric interpretation is expounded by Messianic Muslims⁸³ in the Sufi and Isma'ili traditions so as to unite Islam, Christianity and Judaism into a single religious continuum.⁸⁴ Other Messianic Muslims hold a similar theological view regarding Jesus, without attempting to unite the religions. The Qur'anic passages on the death of Jesus affirm that while the Pharisees intended to destroy the Son of God completely, they, in fact, succeeded only in killing the Son of Man, being his *nasut* (material being). Meanwhile, the Son of God, being his *lahut* (spiritual being) remained alive and undying – because it is the Holy Spirit.⁸⁵

2.4 The nature of Jesus in the Qur'an

An Islamic concept of Jesus aims to understand —the role of Jesus within the divine plan of human history,⁸⁶ how he served God, and in what ways he edifies mankind.⁸⁷

Although Muslims and Christians can agree that most titles and qualities of Jesus in Islam set him apart, some terms have historically divided them, and need special attention.⁸⁸

⁸² T. Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2001

⁸³ J. Travis, —Messian Muslim Followers of Isal. *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (2000), 17:1 (Spring): 54. Retrieved Spring 2000.

⁸⁴ J. Cumming, —Muslim Followers of Jesus?!. *Christianity Today*. Retrieved 2nd July, 2015.

⁸⁵ Encyclopedia of Islam, *Jesus* article. cf. L. Massignon, *Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon Ghazali*, in REI, 1932, pp. 523-536.

⁸⁶ M. Ayoub. *A Muslim View of Christianity: Essays on Dialogue*, ed. Irfan A Omar (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), p. 134.

⁸⁷ A. Albert. *Orientating, Developing and Promoting An Islamic Christology*, (MA diss., Florida International University, 2010), p. 1

⁸⁸ Some Christian missionaries in the past have sought to use the Qur'an to prove Jesus' superiority and discredit Muhammad. This is not to critique a classic, but the best example is Carl Pfander, *the Mizan alHaqq (Balance of Truth)*, (London: the Religious Tract Society, 1910), p. 306.

Yet, when looked at carefully, it will be seen that bridges can be found and misunderstandings can be removed.

Isa was the son of Maryam whose uncle was Zakariya the father of Yahya. Maryam was the daughter of Imran and she was chaste (Surah 66:12). He is a messiah and a messenger (Surah 5:75). Surah 3:33 of the Qur'an narrates the lineage of Jesus. We understand from the Surah that Jesus was not born like any other human being but that God breathed his spirit into Maryam who put faith in the words of God and was obedient (Surah 66:12). Hence she is the mother of the Messiah. She was a virgin and Surah 19:16-21 describes her encounter with angel *Jibril* as regards the son she was to give birth to and Surah 19:22-23 tells the story of the birth of Isa. The same Surah is dedicated to Maryam, the mother of Isa (Jesus).

According to the Qur'an, Isa's message to the people of his time was to fear Allah and follow His teaching. The Jews of his time tried to kill him but he was saved by Allah and taken into heaven.⁸⁹ In the Qur'an, three of the extraordinary circumstances of Isa's birth are contextualized in terms of Allah's power and ability: —Isa in Allah's sight is like Adam; He created him from dust, then He said to him: *Be*, and there he was!⁹² These verses together constitute an Islamic version of Isa as the second Adam, with a different role in history. The connection between Isa and Adam is made in the Qur'an to temper the argument that because Jesus was conceived without male agency, he is somehow really or symbolically the son of God.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Qur'an 4:157 and 3:55

⁹² Sura 3:59, 47

⁹⁰ A. Albert. *Orienting, Development and Promoting An Islamic Christology*, p. 39.

Isa is commonly used among Muslims generally with the prefix *Nabi* (prophet) and often with the addition —Son of Mary, is used twenty-five times in the Qur'an.⁹¹ The presentations of Qur'an mostly revolve around his birth, his mother Maryam (Mary), his prophecy and his miracles.⁹² Many theories abound to explain the name Isa for Jesus by Prophet Muhammad in Qur'an. According to Zwemer, Mohammad used the name Isa for Jesus because it rhymed better with the name of Moses, Musa, since the Qur'an was written in poetic prose.⁹³ Thus Moses and Jesus become Musa and Isa.

The problem with this theory, however, is that they are only linked five times.⁹⁴ For Gibb and Kramers, the Jews referred to Jesus as Esau in hatred, meaning that the soul of Esau had been transferred to Jesus....⁹⁵ However, Bedawi, a commentator, argues that Isa is the Arabic form of the Hebrew *Yesu'a* (Joshua). An additional theory, which has gained traction on the name was as a result of the Jews of Medina, who gave Muhammad the Hebrew name Esau, *Isa*, in place of Joshua, as a term of derision,

.... explanation offered by Dr. Otto Pautz. —The Koran expression Isa corresponds with the Hebrew Esau, the name of the brother of Jacob (Israel). Because his descendants, all through their history, stood hostile over against the Israelites, who were the people of the promise, the later Jews caricatured the name of Jesus by making it Esau. Mohammed took this form of Esau from the Jews at Madinah, without being conscious of the sinister import connected with the name in their minds...⁹⁶

Thus, Isa was not introduced in the Qur'an as it appears. It was a familial name to the community of Muhammad.

⁹¹ Surah 2:28,130,154; 3: 40,45,48,52,78, 4: 156,161,169; 5: 50, 82,109,112,114,116; 6:85; 19:35; 33:7; 42:11; 43:63; 57:27; 61:6,14s

⁹² A. Albert. *Orienting, Development and Promoting An Islamic Christology*, p. 39.

⁹³ S. Zwemer, *The Moslem Christ*, Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1912, Pg. 34

⁹⁴ —Who is the Muslim Jesus? —Isal. *Islam and World Event*. Accessed September 22, 2015. <http://www.truthnet.org/islam/Islam-Bible/>

⁹⁵ H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, eds. *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*: (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 173.

⁹⁶ S. Zwemer, *The Moslem Christ*, Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1912, p. 34

In any event, Jesus is designated —*Isa ibn Maryam*” (Jesus, the son of Mary) and, according to the Qur‘an, Jesus was born of a virgin, performed miracles, raised the dead, and restored monotheism.⁹⁷ Isa is the son of Maryam whose uncle was the father of Yahya. Maryam was the daughter of Imran and she was chaste (Surah 66:12). He is a Messiah and a Messenger (Surah 5:75). Surah 3:33 of the Qur‘an narrates the lineage of Isa.

2.4.1 Virgin Birth of Isa (Jesus)

The Qur‘an narrates the virgin birth of Isa severally. Mary was overcome by the pains of childbirth. During her agony and helplessness, God provided a stream of water under her feet from which she could drink. Furthermore, near a palm tree, Mary was told to shake the trunk of the palm tree so that ripe dates would fall down and she could eat and be nourished. Mary cried in pain and held onto the palm tree, at which point a voice came from —beneath her||, understood by some to refer to Jesus, who was yet in her womb, which said, —Grieve not|| Your Lord has provided a water stream under you; And shake the trunk of the palm tree, it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon you. And eat and drink and calm thy mind.|| That day, Mary gave birth to her son Jesus in the middle of the desert. Mary carried baby Jesus back to her people.

Mary then brought Jesus to the temple, where she was immediately ridiculed by all the temple elders. Zakariyyah believed in the virgin birth and supported her. The elders accused Mary of being a loose woman and having touched another man while unmarried. In response, Mary pointed to her son, telling them to talk to him. They were angered at

⁹⁷ M. Milani, —Representations of Jesus in Islamic Mysticism: Defining the —Sufi Jesus|| Literature and Aesthetics, 2011, p. 46

this and thought she was mocking them, by asking them to speak with an infant. It was then that God made the infant Jesus speak from the cradle and he spoke of his prophecy for the first time. He said:

—I am indeed a servant of Allah: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; And He hath made me blessed wherever I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live; (He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)!⁹⁸. (Surah Maryam) 19: 30-33

There are several references to the birth of Jesus in the Qur'an but Surah 3:45-47 is closest to the description.⁹⁹

Behold the angels said: — O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus. The son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to Allah; He shall speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company) of the righteous. She said; O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man hath touched me! He said: —Even so: Allah created what He willet: when He hath decreed a plan, He but smith to it, Be! and it is.

Another passage (19:16-40) is summarized as follows:

During Mary's pregnancy she is provided with drinking water from a stream and fed dates from a nearby tree. Upon giving birth to a son, she returns home and accused of immorality, but Jesus defends her and announces his prophethood. Additional passages say Jesus spoke from the cradle in defense of his mother. Surah 19 shows —some links¹ with the canonical Gospels, but more with apocryphal literature.

2.4.2 *Ibn Maryam* (Son of Mary)

The title —Son of Mary¹ occurs twenty-three times in the Qur'an. It occurs sixteen times as Jesus, Son of Mary, and seven times alone or with other title.¹⁰⁰ She is the most important female character in the Qur'an identified by name. In the Qur'an, however, a tradition in which Mary does not command much influence, a whole surah (chapter) is

⁹⁸ Three translations of the Koran (Al-Qur'an) Side by Side, Vol 1 of Library of Alexandria

⁹⁹ Since Muslims may send Christian friends Christmas cards commemorating the birth of Jesus, Christians

¹⁰⁰ G. W. Braswell Jr, *What You Need to know about Islam and Muslims*, (Nashvile, Tannessee, 2000) p. 108

dedicated to her birth and life.¹⁰¹ Surah 19 is dedicated to Maryam, which is the Arabic name for Mary. The story of Jesus in the Qur'an commences with the birth of Jesus to Virgin Maryam. —How can I have a son when no man has touched me, nor am I unchastell, she replied (Surah 19:20). Angel Gabriel answers her thus:

...So will it be, your Lord said: That is easy for me. And we wish to appoint him as a sign for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a matter already decreed.

The title, son of Mary, is also very common for Jesus in the Qur'an.¹⁰² Djaballa says Christian apologists in the Middle Ages considered it demeaning, since in Arab custom ancestry is generally traced through the father. This, he argues, is unwarranted because Islamic tradition always treats Mary with respect.¹⁰³

2.4.3 Jesus as *Nabi* (Prophet) and *Rasul* (Messenger)

Nabi (prophet) in the Qur'an is seen as a messenger who comes with revelation from God which becomes a book, the *Torah*, the *Zabur* (Psalms), the *Injil* (Gospel) and the Qur'an.¹⁰⁴¹⁰⁵ In Islam, there are differences between Messengers and Prophets of God. A prophet (*Nabi*) is someone who came with a revealed message from God. They came with something new other than the known word or message. Thus they presented to their community a new scripture. A messenger (*Rasul*) on the other hand was sent to confirm already known message. They are commissioned to make clear or proclaim a message which is already revealed to the people. While every *Rasul* is a *Nabi* not all *Anbiya*

¹⁰¹ I. N. Campbell, —The Virgin Mary: A Muslim, A Protestant and A Goddess. (MA Diss. Athens GA, 2007) p. 28.

¹⁰² There are a total of 35 references. For example: 2:87, 2: 253; 3:36, 3:45; 4:157; 171; 5: 19, 49, 75, 78, 81, 113, 115, 117, 119; 9:31; 19:19, 34; 21:91; 23:50; 33:7; 43:57; 57:27; 61:6, 14.

¹⁰³ A. Djaballah, —Jesus in Islam, *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, vol. 8, No. 1, Spring, 2004, p. 19.

¹⁰⁴ G. W. Brasswell Jr, *What you need to know about Islam & Muslims*, (USA, B&H publishing Group,

¹⁰⁵) p. 109

(Prophets) are *Rasul*. Jesus is thus both a *Nabi* and a *Rasul* like Noah (*Nuh*), Abraham (*Ibrahim*), Moses (*Musa*) and Muhammad. In fact these four including Jesus make up the *Ulul-Azmminar Rasul* (the greatest among the Messengers).

Jesus, in the Qur'an, is recorded that he spoke in defense of his mother while still in the cradle, (19: 17-35). In his speech he identified himself as a Prophet who had been given a book (revelation) from Allah. Isa concludes, —Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I rise from the dead (19:33). It is important to keep in mind that Jesus identified himself as a Prophet almost from the day of his birth.¹⁰⁶ Within twenty-four hours he declared his identity at birth. He is unique and the only prophet who did not marry nor had children.¹⁰⁷

In Islam it is not appropriate for anyone to consider one Prophet to be more or less important than the other. For they all came from the same God in heaven for a purpose to specific people. This confirms the statement of Aziz-Us-Samad that —*un musulman doit croire dans les fondateurs de toutes les grandes religions.* Thus, Jesus is portrayed as a Prophet and a messenger of Allah sent on earth for a particular assignment, at a particular time, to a particular community and with a particular message.¹⁰⁸ As a prophet, he did not call people to worship him but to worship Allah, whom he himself worshipped. The Qur'an presents him as a prophet right from his infancy.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ A. Albert. p. 39

¹⁰⁷ M Taqra, *Beautiful Story of prophet Jesus (Isa) & Virgin Mary (Maryam) in Islam*, (Krakatau Dragon Self, 2014), p. 4

¹⁰⁸ N. K. Alphonse, *Jesus in the Bible and Quran: A Comparative study*; in IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), Volume 12, Issue 1 (May. - Jun. 2013), pp. 14-19 ¹¹¹ Surah 19:30-35.

2.4.4 *Ruh Allah* (Spirit of God / Spirit from God)

The term *Ruh*, an Arabic word meaning Spirit, is employed in Qur'an twenty times.¹⁰⁹ In the general Qur'anic perspective, it is applied to Jesus in two contexts: the first has him being aided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit;¹¹³ the other informs us that Jesus originated from the breath of the divine spirit.¹¹⁰

The use of the term *spirit* is common to Semitic religions as a means to identify the agent of God's creative activity in the world; but it is likely that the use of this term in the Qur'an originated independently.¹¹¹ *Ruh* is always used in the Qur'an in the singular; there cannot be many or multiple spirits, just one. Moreover, what we do know of the spirit is limited by God: —They ask you about the spirit. Say: _The spirit is of my Lord's Command, and you have not been given except a little knowledge' (17:85). This verse is interpreted to be in reference to Gabriel.¹¹²

2.4.5 *al-Masih* (Messiah)

Islam knows Jesus as —al-MaseeHu _Eesa meaning —Jesus the Messiah. This is made clear in Qur'an:

—When the angels said to Mary, _O Mary! Allah gives you glad tidings of a word from Him. His name will be _al-MaseeHu _Eesa', the son of Mary; Honourable in this world and in the hereafter, and from those who are near (to Allah). [Surah Aal-Imraan, 3:45]

¹⁰⁹ T. J. O'Shaughnessy, *The Development of the Meaning of Spirit in the Qur'an*, (Rome Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1953) pp. 13-15 ¹¹³ Surah 2:87, 2:253, and 5:110.

¹¹⁰ Surah 21:91 and 66:12

¹¹¹ O'Shaughnessy pp. 9-10

¹¹² O'Shaughnessy p. 43

The name *Masih* (Messiah) is usually linked to that of Jesus and in some occasions by itself occurs eight times in the Qur'an.¹¹³ The title Messiah is referred to only Isa in the Qur'an. He received this from all the Madinan Suwar (3: 40, 45; 4:156,157, 4:169,171; 4:170,172; 5: 19, 17 twice 5: 79, 75; 9: 30, 31).¹¹⁴

Scholars in Arabic language agree on two root verbs from which *Masih* is derived.¹¹⁵

The verb *masaha* means 'to rub with the hand' and 'to anoint'. Thus in its passive tense Jesus is referred to as Messiah because; a) He is anointed by means of blessings and honours bestowed by God...; b) He is covered from birth onwards and in the wings of Gabriel to shield him from the bite of Satan; c) He is anointed in Adam, like a man, but in a particular way in order to be implanted in Mary.¹¹⁶ By inference Jesus is *Masih* (Messiah) because; He anointed the eyes of the blind to cure them..., b) he rubbed the sick people with his hand, and he anointed with a holy oil.

The other root verb *Saha*, also means 'to travel', 'to go on pilgrimage' and 'to wander'. For the mystic Muslim writer, Jesus became 'the model of the pilgrims', 'the *Imam* of the wanderers' and the 'example of the mystics'.¹¹⁷

With regard to difference in meaning to the title, Ibn Abbas gives various explanations. That Jesus was known as *al-Masih* because whenever he touched the sick with his hand they were cured. Again, that Jesus was a traveler and he used to move all around the country and thus this title could be read as *al Massih* (an emphatic form of *Masih*) or

¹¹³ Surah 3:40; 4:156, 169,172; 5:19, 76,79; 9: 30

¹¹⁴ G. Parrinder, *Jesus in the Quran* (London: Faber and Faber Publications, 1965). p. 30

¹¹⁵ E. Donzel, et al (eds), *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol.4, (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1978), p.82

¹¹⁶ B. P. Sinapati, *Jesus the Kalimatullah: A Christian - Muslim Relation* (ISPCK, 2009), p. 48

¹¹⁷ *ibid* p49

traveler. Another reason that he argues Jesus to be *al-Masih* is that he often laid his hands on orphans to call God's blessings upon them. Additionally, he calls Jesus *alMasih* because he was pure and free from sin and evil.¹¹⁸

There is another belief that the word was derived from Syriac *m"Shiha* and became known to Muhammad in its Arabic version. We tend to go by this thought considering that Qur'an was written in prose poetic style. That is we would have *m"Shiha, Masih*. Since Arabic nouns are prefixed with *al* (the) to make them definite, this becomes *„alMasih – the Messaih*.

2.4.6 Miracles of Jesus in the Qur'an

Jesus in the Qur'an holds one of the highest statures amongst the Prophets. Unlike other Prophets who performed miracles, Jesus himself was a miracle, as he was born of a virgin mother, and Allah describes him and his mother Maryam as such: —...and we made her (Mary) and her son (Jesus) a sign for the worlds. (Qur'an 21:91) Nonetheless, in the Qur'an, Jesus is described as having many miracles not bestowed upon other prophets. Allah says: —And we gave unto Jesus, son of Mary, clear miracles (Qur'an 2:87). The following is a brief description of the miracles performed by Jesus as mentioned in the Qur'an:

¹¹⁸ ibid, p. 49

2.4.6.1 A Table Laden with Food

In the fifth chapter of the Qur'an, —The Table— named after this miracle of Jesus, God narrates how the disciples of Jesus requested him to ask God to send down a table laden with food, and for it to be a special day of commemoration for them in the future.

—When the disciples said: O Jesus, son of Mary! Is your Lord able to send down for us a table spread with food from heaven? He said: Observe your duty to God, if ye are true believers. They said: We desire to eat of it and our hearts be at rest, and that We may know that you have spoken truth to us, and that We may be witnesses thereof. Jesus, son of Mary, said: 'O God, our Lord, send down for us a Table laden with food out of heaven, that shall be for us a recurring festival, the first and last of us, and a miracle from You. And provide us our sustenance, for You are the best of providers!!
(Qur'an 5:112-114)

This passage is interpreted as either the feeding of the poor or Holy Communion. Since the occasion was to be —for us a recurring festival, it is likely the Last Supper,¹¹⁹ also called the Lord's Supper, Breaking of Bread, Eucharist, or Communion. The Eucharist has always been at the center of Christian worship. Encyclopedia Britannica says:

—Eucharist is a Christian sacrament commemorating the action of Jesus at his Last Supper with his disciples ... The letters of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles make it clear that early Christianity believed that this institution included a mandate to continue the celebration... The Eucharist has formed a central rite of Christian worship!¹²⁰

2.4.6.2 While Still in the Cradle

One of the miracles mentioned in the Qur'an is the fact that Jesus, while still in the cradle, spoke out to protect his mother from any accusations people may have placed on her due to having a child without a father. When she was approached about this strange incident

¹¹⁹ Matt. 26:17–29; Mark 14:12–25; Luke 22:7–38; I Cor. 11:23–25

¹²⁰ —Eucharist, Encyclopedia Britannica from Encyclopedia Britannica Premium Services. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9033174>)

after her childbirth, Mary merely pointed to Jesus, and he miraculously spoke, just as God had promised her upon annunciation. —He shall speak to people while still in the cradle, and in manhood, and he shall be from the righteous.‖ (Qur‘an 3:46)

2.4.6.3 Giving Life to a Model of a Bird

There is a miracle given to none other in the Qur‘an but Jesus, one which is quite parallel to how God himself created Adam. This miracle was one which none can argue its greatness. In the Qur‘an that Jesus says: —I create for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with God’s permission.‖ (Qur‘an 3:49)

This miracle is not found in the New Testament, but it is found in the noncanonical ‘Infancy Gospel of Thomas,’ —When this boy, Jesus, was five years old, he was playing at the ford of a rushing stream... he then made soft clay and shaped it into twelve sparrows... but Jesus simply clapped his hands and shouted to the sparrows: —Be off, fly away, and remember me, you who are now alive!! And the sparrows took off and flew away noisily.‖ (Infancy Gospel of Thomas: 2)

2.4.6.4 The Resurrection of the Dead

—...and I bring to life the dead, by the permission of God.‖ (Qur‘an 3:49) This, like the creation of a bird, was a miracle of incomparable nature, one which should have caused the Jews to believe in the prophet-hood of Jesus without doubt. In the New Testament, we read three cases where Jesus brought the dead back to life— the daughter of Jairus (Matt 9:18, 23; Mark 5:22, 35; Luke 8:40, 49), the widow’s son at Nain (Luke 7:11), and Lazarus (John 11:43).

2.4.6.5 A Demonstration of Truth

Similar to other prophets, Jesus performed miracles to convince unbelievers of his truthfulness, not to demonstrate his divinity. The Qur‘an says: “Surely in that is a sign for

you, if you are believers.¹²¹ These miracles were performed only by the Will of God, had he not willed them to occur, they could never come to be. God explicitly states this in the Qur'an, saying that they were: —...by the permission of God (Qur'an 3:49; 5:10).

2.4.7 Jesus as the son of God

There is great divergence between the Qur'an and the Bible as regards Jesus as —Son. In the Qur'an, he is not God, and not the Son of God (4:171, 172; 5:19, 75-78, 119- 120, 9:30-31; 19:35). He is no more than the —slave or the —servant of God and he himself worshiped God (43:59). The Qur'an categorically denies that he ever said anyone should worship him (5:119-121). Yet, in spite of Muslim-Christian misunderstanding and disagreement over this term, there is still room for dialogue. Relevant Qur'anic passages must be read in context: —Say: He is Allah, the one and only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetten not nor is begotten and there is none like him (112:1-4). As Parrinder points out, this passage was not intended to be an attack on Christianity.¹²²

This short *surah* is one of the most popular, recited every day by most Muslims. It is a denial of God producing offspring in the human manner, and of God having any associates. It stresses the unity of God and His difference from men. Since it is generally regarded as one of the earliest Makkah Suwar, this would mean that it was directed against the idols of pre-Islamic Arabia, though later Muslim scholars turned it also against Christian doctrine.

2.4.8 Crucifixion

In general, the Qur'an does not clearly narrate about the murder and crucifixion of Jesus.

¹²¹ Qur'an 3:49

¹²² G. Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an* (London: Sheldon Press, 1965), p. 126.

What is mentioned by the Qur'an is that Jesus was not an ordinary human being, not God and he did not die crucified. With this, the Qur'an has denied the killing of Jesus through crucifixion as has been stated in the Bible. The negation is clearly captured by

Allah in the Qur'an:

—And [for] their saying: _Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Isa the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah, and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him; but another was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption, and they did not kill him, for certain_. Rather Allah exalted him with all honors to His presence. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.¶¹²³

This verse talks about the evil conspiracy of the Jews and Romans who were determined to kill Jesus, but he was taken care of by Allah who lifted him to the sky in the form of body and soul. Consequently, they had killed and crucified another person mistakenly thought of as Jesus. In actual fact, Allah had replicated the face of Jesus in another man. This is one issue of debate between the Muslims and the Jews and Christians.¹²⁴ The Qur'an, handed down six hundred years ago after the death and resurrection of Christ denied that the person crucified was Jesus.

The position of Islam is remarkably similar to the Gnostic¹²⁵ teaching of Basilides, a first century Gnostic, who taught Jesus was not crucified because Jesus changed forms to look like Simon of Cyrene, and Simon was made to look like Jesus. Jesus then watched the crucifixion and laughed, returning to Heaven. Islam believes Jesus did not die on the cross, but only appeared to die; Jesus was taken up into heaven, like the Jesus

¹²³ Qur'an; Al-Nisa' 4: 157-158

¹²⁴ A. DaimaZain et al. —Yahuza al-Iskhriyuti (Judas Iscariot) According to the Views of Qur'anic Muffassin Scholars¶. *Research in Islamic Studies* Vol 2 No.2 (2015), pp. 18-25

¹²⁵ Gnostics, the name comes from the Greek word, Gnosis, meaning knowledge. As the Christian faith spread throughout the Greek and Romans world, the Gnostics attempted to preserve the Greek religion by incorporating elements into Christianity. Many of the Gnostics had fled the Roman/Byzantine Kingdom for the protection of the deserts of Arabia.

Basilides presented.

Wherefore he did not himself suffer death, but Simon, a certain man of Cyrene, being compelled, bore the cross in his stead; so that this latter being transfigured by him, that he might be thought to be Jesus, was crucified, through ignorance and error, while Jesus himself received the form of Simon, and, standing by, laughed at them. For since he was an incorporeal power, and the Nous (mind) of the unborn father, he transfigured himself as he pleased, and thus ascended to him who had sent him, deriding them, inasmuch as he could not be laid hold of, and was invisible to all..... If anyone, therefore, he declares, confesses the crucified, that man is still a slave, and under the power of those who formed our bodies; but he who denies him has been freed from these beings, and is acquainted with the dispensation of the unborn father.¹²⁶

In the sixth century AD, many of the heretical Christian groups fled to the security of the Arabian Desert, bringing with them their heretical teachings and writings. There may be a possibility Muhammad developed his ideas written in the Qur'an, from material documented by the Gnostics about not dying on the cross, but an image presented to look like Jesus. In this case, Simon of Cyrene, many Muslim commentators have speculated Judas was made to look like Jesus among others.¹³¹ Mention must be made that Muhammad was not lettered according to Qur'an

2.4.9 Second coming

According to Islamic tradition which describes this graphically, Jesus' descent will be in the midst of wars fought by *al-Mahdi* (*lit.* —The rightly guided one), known in Islamic eschatology as the redeemer of Islam. His descent will be against *al-Masīh ad-Dajjāl* (the Antichrist —False messiah) and his followers.¹²⁷ Jesus will descend at the point of a white arcade, east of Damascus, dressed in yellow robes—his head anointed. He will say prayer behind *al-Mahdi* then join him in his war against the *Dajjal*. Jesus, considered as a Muslim, will abide by the Islamic teachings. Eventually, He will slay the Antichrist, and

¹²⁶ Irenaeus, 120-202 AD —Against Heresies, Book 1, Chapter 24, doctrines of saturninus and basilides.

¹³¹ <http://www.truthnet.org/islam/Islam-Bible/5MuslimJesus/index.ht>

¹²⁷ T. Sonn, *A Brief History of Islam*. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

then everyone who is one of the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*, referring to Jews and Christians) will believe in him. Thus, there will be one community, that of Islam. *Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 43: Kitab-ul-'Ilm* (Book of Knowledge), Hâdith Number 656:

Allah's Apostle said, —The Hour will not be established until the son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends amongst you as a just ruler, he will break the cross, kill the pigs, and abolish the *Jizya* (tax). Money will be in abundance so that nobody will accept it (as charitable gifts).—Narrated by Abu Huraira.¹²⁸

After the death of *al-Mahdi*, Jesus will assume leadership. This is a time associated in Islamic narrative with universal peace and justice.

Islamic texts also allude to the appearance of *Ya'juj and Ma'juj* (known also as Gog and Magog), ancient tribes which will disperse and cause disturbance on earth. God, in response to Isa's prayers, will kill them by sending a type of worm in the napes of their necks.¹²⁹ Isa's rule is said to be around forty years, after which He will die. Muslims will then perform the funeral prayer for him and then bury him in the city of Madinah in a grave left vacant beside Muhammad's, Abu Bakr, and Umar (companions of Muhammad and the first and second Sunni caliphs (*Rashidun*) respectively).¹³⁰

In the Qur'an, Jesus is connected with eight of the fifty signs of the End.¹³¹ Many Muslims believe the Qur'an makes reference to Isa's return in at least two verses: The first verse says: - And there is none of the people of the Book but must believe in him before his

¹²⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari, 3:43:656

¹²⁹ T. Sonn, *A Brief History of Islam*. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

¹³⁰ —Isa, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Online edition

¹³¹ Al-Tabari, Commentary, Part 6, in Neil Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*: Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991, p. 81.

death; and on the Day of Judgment he will be a witness against them (4:159). The Arabic is not clear as to who is the one to be believed in (before his death) and who will be a witness against the Jews on the day of judgment. Al-Tabari thinks it will be the People of the Book who will believe in Jesus before his return when all believers unite under the banner of Islam. The second verse commonly used to support his return says:

And (Jesus) shall be a Sign (for the coming of) the Hour (of Judgment) (43:61).

Al-Bukhari, the most respected of all traditions, describes the event in this way: Narrated Abu Huraira, Allah's Apostle said, — By Him in whose hands my soul is, son of Mary, Jesus will shortly descend amongst you people (Muslims) as a just ruler and will break the cross and kill the pig and abolish the Jizya (a tax taken from the non-Muslims, who are in the protection of the Muslim government).¹³²

al-Muslim mentions other details concerning Jesus' important role:

Certainly, the time of prayer shall come and then Jesus (peace be upon him) son of Mary would descend and would lead them in prayer. When the enemy of Allah would see him, it would (disappear) just as the salt dissolves itself in water and if he (Jesus) were not to confront them at all, even then it would dissolve completely, but Allah would kill them by his hand and he would show them their blood in his lance (the lance of Jesus Christ).¹³³ ... And (in this connection) he made mention of the smoke, the Dajjal; the beast; the rising of the sun from the west, the descent of Jesus son of Mary (Allah be pleased with him).

These traditions have obviously influenced modern Muslims a great deal, for as Jan Goodwin demonstrates, ordinary Muslims have definite views as to what Jesus will do

¹³² S. al-Bukhari, *The Maqaddimah*, transl. Franz Rosenthal, Vol. 3, No. 425, New York: Pantheon, 1958, pp. 233-234.

¹³³ *Al-Muslim*, Vol. 4, No. 6925, p. 1501.

when he comes back. In 1994 she visited a Qur'anic class for Kuwaiti women, and a thirty-three year-old female teacher who had studied at the University of Southern

California, had this to say:

There is a *hadith* that says Islam will rule the world just before the world ends. At that time, there will be a war between Muslims and Jews, a lot of killing. Jesus Christ will guide the Muslim troops as a Muslim. We believe he will come again and break the cross. He will show he was a prophet, not the son of God. The world will benefit when it is Muslim. Everyone will feel at ease.¹³⁴

The challenge for Islam is how to reconcile the return of Jesus with the widely-held interpretation that he never died. Muslims quote the Qur'an: ... They killed him not, nor crucified him ... it was made to appear to them. But this means that all—including Mary—was ultimately deceived. The Qur'an states that Jesus was taken up to heaven, without having died, but will later die. Some speculate he might have died a natural death after the crucifixion and remained dead for several hours after which he was raised to life.¹³⁵

2.5 Similarities and dissimilarities shared in the Bible and the Qur'an

After reviewing the figure of Jesus in both scriptures, some common trends as well as differences have emerged. Christians and Muslims have debated their differences of belief about Jesus Christ in a context which has allowed room for discussion. Areas or issues in the Qur'an and the Bible where these two books are in agreement about certain features of Jesus' life and personality were identified.

While these two sacred books may differ in the interpretation of the facts they both admit, Muslims and Christians can confidently study these points as a stepping-stone to the true

¹³⁴ J. Goodwin, *Price of Honor: Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silence on the Islamic World*, New York: Little Brown and Company, 1994, p. 188

¹³⁵ N. Geisler and A. Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993, pp. 284-285.

knowledge of Jesus simply by virtue of the fact that the facts are themselves common cause between Islam and Christianity. It can safely be assumed that where the Qur'an and the Bible agree in any matter, that matter can henceforth be accepted as true without further ado by Christians and Muslims alike. It may well be necessary for both to prove these facts to outsiders all in the name of peaceful co-existence.

2.6 Conclusion

Jesus is the major figure in the Bible, particularly the New Testament, where he appears as the Savior of humankind. He is also a major Prophet in the Qur'an. In both books, Jesus continues building on the Law of Moses, the Torah, introducing a number of important innovations. Jesus cures the blind and lepers and raises the dead. The Qur'an and the Bible both portray Jesus surrounded by his disciples. However, the teachings of Jesus are not fully expounded in the Qur'an but there are many phrases in other contexts that are similar in content. Jesus' figure is not only espoused in the four gospels but also in the letter from the various apostles. The handful of verses in the Qur'an that tell of the life, work and messages of Jesus are enough to hold the Christian and the Muslim together. Is that really the case in the Kumasi Metropolis? What are the Geo-Political and Socio-religious factors in the metropolis that predispose the city to pursue a healthy Christian-Muslim relations? The next chapter takes a look at these issues.

CHAPTER THREE

CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATION IN KUMASI: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY SCENE

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the religious and cultural setting of the study area, Kumasi. Even though the topic for the research points to a wider Ghanaian religious

milieu, the study was carried out in Kumasi as the city's historical and cultural location makes it appropriate to represent the entire selected research area. We begin with a brief survey of historic-cultural background of the metropolis before moving on to Christian-Muslim relation.

3.2 Background of the Metropolis

Kumasi became the capital city of the new Asante State built from a voluntary amalgamation of about a dozen city states.¹³⁶ The Asanteman Traditional Council, the traditional governing authority of the old Asante Kingdom, was restored by the British Colonial Authority in 1935 and Kumasi became the seat of the Council though without political powers which were kept by the British Colonial Government with its seat in Accra.¹³⁷

Until 1995 the Metropolis was known as the Kumasi City Council (KCC). Kumasi's beautiful layout and greenery accorded it the accolade of being the —Garden City of West Africa.¹⁴³ It grew outwardly from Adum, Krobo and Bompata (some suburbs in Kumasi) in a concentric form to cover an area of approximately ten (10) kilometers in radius. The direction of growth, according to the 2010 Population Census, was originally along the arterial roads due to the accessibility they offered resulting in a radial pattern of development.¹⁴⁴ Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) is the second largest most populous city in the country, next to the national capital (Accra). Its strategic location has also endowed it with the status of the principal inland transport terminal, thus giving it a

¹³⁶ A. Adu-Boahen, *Topics in West African History*, London: Longman, 1971.

¹³⁷ A. Adu-Boahen, *Topics in West African History*, London: Longman, 1971.

¹⁴³ A. Adu-Boahen, *Topics in West African History*, London: Longman, 1971.

pivotal role in the vast and profitable business of the distribution of goods in Ghana and beyond to other West African countries.¹⁴⁵

3.2.1 Traditional Set-up

Kumasi is the capital of the Asante Kingdom. The kingdom covers Ashanti Region, part of Brong Ahafo and Volta Regions. The Asante Kingdom emerged as a State in 1701 after the defeat of the Denkyira State, the then overlord. The Kingdom is now a Traditional Council, the Asanteman Traditional Council which is headed by the Asantehene (Asante King) who also doubles as Kumasihene or the Paramount Chief of Kumasi.

He is the embodiment of the culture of the people and presides over 45 *Amanhene* (paramount chiefs) in the kingdom. These *Amanhene* wield authority over a certain number of communities within the kingdom. Under the *Omanhene* (Paramount Chief) are *Odikro* (Chiefs) who rule communities. The ascension to chieftaincy (except *nkosohene* which is by virtue of one's contribution to society) is through a matrilineal descent system. This hierarchical structure has created a generally peaceful and united atmosphere in the Metropolis. It may also serve as a critical instrument for socio-

¹⁴⁴2010 population and housing census, District Analytical report: Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 2014.

¹⁴⁵2010 population and housing census
economic development of the Metropolis since the rulings of the *Asantehene* tend to be respected and abided-by the populace.¹⁴⁶

3.2.2 Ethnic diversity

Data from the 2010 Population and Housing Census reveals that the largest ethnic group in the Kumasi Metropolis is the Asante (80.7%), a sub-group of the larger Akan ethnic

group. This is followed distantly by the Mole Dagbon (8.7%) and Ewe (3.6%). Almost all the other ethnic groups in Ghana are residents in the Metropolis. Although, ethnic and cultural diversity abounds tremendously in the Metropolis, the population is closely-knit together in a harmonious relationship due to the presence of a strong traditional administrative set-up that endeavors to foster cohesion among the diverse ethnic groups.¹⁴⁷

3.2.3 Nationality of Residence in Kumasi

According to the 2010 population and housing census, Ghanaians by birth constitute 95.4 percent of the population and those who have naturalized constitute 0.6 percent and the non-Ghanaian population is 2.1 percent in the Metropolis.¹⁴⁸

3.3 Religious Composition

Due to its location and position, Kumasi has historically been a focal point of migration in the country. All the major religious groupings in Ghana can be located in Kumasi. In other words, the immigrants from the other regions and the other parts of Africa and the other non-African countries have brought their religious values which have made

¹⁴⁶2010 population and housing census District Analytical report: Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 2014, p. 5

¹⁴⁷2010 population and housing census, p. 5

¹⁴⁸2010 population and housing census, p. 75

Kumasi _notoriously religious'¹³⁸. Thus, Kumasi of today is not solely influenced by Christian religious practices even though they dominate.¹³⁹ The dominant religion in the region is Christianity (77.5%) followed by Islam (13.2%). The proportion of Christians is

¹³⁸ For the expression _notoriously religious', see John S. Mbiti. *An Introduction to African Religion*, (London: Heinemann, 1975), p

¹³⁹ Kyei, S., A Critical Reflection on the Liturgical Acclamation, —Make a Joyful Noise unto God! Among some selected Churches in Kumasi (Ghana). Unpublished Masters' Thesis, 2014, p. 26

¹⁵¹<http://www.kumasimetropolitanassembly.com/about.us>. Accessed on 29th March, 2013

higher than the national average (68.8%), while that of Muslims are lower than the national average (15.9%). All other religious groups constitute insignificant proportions of the population. The proportion with no religion is however relatively high (7.3%).¹⁵¹ This statistical reflection greatly provides us with the impetus to pursue effective Christian-Muslim relation.

3.3.1 Christianity in Kumasi

The Christian Missions immediately after establishing their bases at Elmina and Cape Coast respectively, decided to extend their faiths to Asante. The coastal towns, perhaps because of their early contact with Europeans accepted Christianity without any major recorded squabbles. In November 1838, when the Methodist Church was only forty-four months old in Ghana, resolved to extend the church to Asante in the forest zone of Ghana. The Asante by their religious thoughts and practices were adherents of the indigenous Akan Traditional Religion.¹⁴⁰

In the second half of the 1830s the missionaries believed that if there were to be progress in Asante, their alleged ‘fetishism’ must be replaced with Christianity. According to Bob-Millar and Gloria, the Asante did not only resist the introduction of a foreign religion into their Kingdom, but they viewed every move by the missionaries with great suspicion and consternation. Hence all early attempts at proselytizing the Asante to Christianity were thwarted. The first attempt was made by the Methodist Church when the Freeman (Missionary) led a team from Cape Coast in February 1839 to visit the Asante Kingdom.

¹⁴⁰ Bob-Millar, G. M., and Bob-Milliar, G. K., —Christianity In The Ghanaian State In The Past Fifty Years. Available at [http://www.ghanaweb.com/Feature Article](http://www.ghanaweb.com/Feature%20Article) of Wednesday, 28 February 2007

Christianity is now a dominant religion in the Kumasi Metropolis constituting 77.5 % of the inhabitants.

3.3.2 Islam in Kumasi

Many factors contributed to the introduction of Islam to Kumasi. Some of the factors were trade, diplomatic missions, and diplomatic contacts with Burkina Faso and other northern towns. The British colony in 1874 defeated the Asante regime¹⁴¹. The period also saw the decline of Salaga market. Salaga in the northern part of Ghana served as a major trading point for the Hausas whose main occupation was trading. They dealt in items like spices, salt, cola, medicines and slaves. The decline of the market resulted in the dispersion of Hausa traders to the south. As traders and merchants in Kola nuts, gold and cowries, the Hausa traders found themselves in other parts of Ghana. The Hausa occupation of Salaga contributed to the spread of Islam in Ghana. Until the involvement of Hausa in trade with the Asante, Salaga and its trade were dominated by Dyula Muslims.¹⁴²

The fall of the Salaga market, according to Samwini, made the Hausas, who were mainly Muslims, turn their attention to the middle part of Ghana, particularly Kumasi, the southern point of the trading route. According to his account —The Salaga market enabled Hausa Muslim traders to frequent and settle among the Gonjas and in Kumasi, the southern point of the trade route. The market was noted for its trade in cola nuts and slaves.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ J. Asafa, The Triple Causes of African Underdevelopment: Colonial capitalism, State terrorism and Racism in International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, Academic Journal, Vol 7(3) pp. 75-9; Research Paper Submitted to University of Tanneessee, USA, 2015, p. 85

¹⁴² N. I. Samwini, The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950 and its Effects upon Muslims and MuslimChristian Relations. Berlin, Lit Verlag, 2006, p. 318

¹⁴³ *ibid*, p. 30.

Samwini quoting Hiskett stated that:

the Hausa occupation of Salaga had important consequences for the spread of Islam in Ghana. The Hausa involvement in the trade with Asante meant that, an important centre of Hausa, and to some extent Bornu Islam had been established in an area that previously was dominated by Dyula Islam. The position of Salaga as a mid-way town between Hausaland in northern Nigeria and Kumasi in the forest belt of Ghana opened the way for Hausa penetration not only into Asante, but also the other southern part of the country.¹⁴⁴

Though the decline of the Salaga market might have increased the number of Muslims in Kumasi they were not the pacesetters for Islam in Kumasi. The Dyula Islam was established before the Kanem Bornu Islam.¹⁴⁵

In their efforts to expand their kingdom, the Asante kings established diplomatic contact with Burkina Faso and other northern towns. According to Levtzion —the Muslims in Kumasi sold amulets to anybody who paid for them, but their most important duty was to help the king. In this respect the Muslims in Kumasi did not act alone, and thus, apart from producing amulets and praying for victory, they had to be in communication with the Muslim leaders in the hinterland to get their blessings for the Asante king.¹⁴⁶

Samwini went further to say:

In this collection there are fifteen letters of correspondence between the Muslims in Kumasi and their brethren in Mamprusi, Dagomba and Gonja. These letters illustrate the relations between the Muslims in Kumasi and those in the northern states, and throw some light on the leading personalities of the Muslim communities in Kumasi.¹⁴⁷

This quotation points to the fact that Muslims were more or less godfathers to the Asante kings and the entire Asante kingdom.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 31.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 31.

¹⁴⁶ N. Levtzion, *Islam in West Africa*. Britain, Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Limited. 1984, p. 208

¹⁴⁷ Levtzion, 1984

It has been stated by some scholars that Muslims came to Asante on diplomatic missions or upon invitation by the *Asantehene*¹⁴⁸. Other factors brought Muslims to Kumasi and other parts of the south of Ghana. Aside the diplomatic missions other Muslims came on visits or upon the invitation of clerics by the *Asante* kings.¹⁴⁹ Though believers of Traditional Religion, the *Asantes* tolerated and lived peacefully with the believers of other religions including adherents of Islam. The *Asantes* were however not interested in these new religions.¹⁵⁰ The visits by the various diplomatic missions to Asante also show how important the Asante kingdom was in those days as it is today.

3.3.3 Historical Perspective

There are many areas in Kumasi which are dominated by Muslims but our main areas of study was Aboabo, Asawase, Bantama-Ohwim, Mossi-Zongo, Old Tafo and Suame, In the initial stages, all Muslims were residing at one geographical location in Kumasi tagged as the Zongo before other Muslim communities sprang up in Kumasi.¹⁵¹ According to Levtzion —in Ghana of the mid-eleventh century, Muslims lived in a separate town or quarter-like the Zongos of Modern Ghana under the auspices of a pagan king. It may seem that the Zongo community was created by the British commissioner to support the Muslims who were living in Kumasi against the Asantes in order to reduce the powers of the Asantehene at that time.¹⁵² Even though these areas have been earmarked as predominant Muslim areas, it will be very challenging for one to draw the distinct

¹⁴⁸ N. I. Samwini, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950 and its Effects upon Muslims and Muslim-Christian Relations*. Berlin, Lit Verlag, 2006, p. 26

¹⁴⁹ N. I. Samwini, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana ...* 2006, p. 30.

¹⁵⁰ N. Levtzion, *Islam in West Africa*. Britain, Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Limited. 1984, p. 208

¹⁵¹ V.A. Appiah, *The Rights of Muslim Women in Marriage Relationship within the Kumasi Metropolitan Area*. Kumasi: KNUST, 2011, p.13

¹⁵² N. Levtzion, (1984). *Islam in West Africa*. Britain, Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Limited. 1984, p. 208

residential lines as Christians and Muslims virtually live together throughout the metropolis.

3.3.4 Christian-Muslim Encounters in Ghana

In contrast to Islam, Christianity largely entered the country through the coastal areas in the 19th century. As a result of the endeavours of the various missionary groups, many Christian denominations now exist in Ghana.¹⁵³ They include the Roman Catholic Church and denominations of mainline protestant traditions such as the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian; and in addition, churches of the mainline Pentecostal tradition such as the Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God and the Apostolic Church.¹⁵⁴ There are also countless indigenous churches founded by Ghanaians, and, more recently, numerous charismatic ministries.

The British colonial administration on arrival in northern Ghana in the late nineteenth century recognized the presence of *Malams* in the traditional courts. As they had decided to rule through the chiefs, and most, if not all chiefs, at the time had some Islamic influence, the British inadvertently imposed —Muslim rulers from some ethnic groups on others. They also debarred Christian missionaries from operating in the north, arguing, albeit erroneously, that the North was Muslim.¹⁵⁵ The British policy was apparently aimed at mitigating Christian-Muslim conflicts. It did, however, delay the introduction of Christianity and the formal education that went with it into the northern parts of the

¹⁵³ J. Azumah, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: —Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup*” <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html>

¹⁵⁴ J. Azumah, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: —Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup*” *Current Dialogue* (36), December 2000 <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html>

¹⁵⁵ J. Azumah, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: —Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup*” *Current Dialogue* (36), December 2000 <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html>

country. The same policy coupled with the fact that Muslims' first contact and influence was with northerners, led people of southern Ghana to perceive every northerner as a Muslim. In the same way, northerners see Christianity in general and mainline Protestant Christianity in particular as a southern domain.¹⁵⁶

Although this misconception still lingers on in the minds of many, the situation on the ground is certainly different. Apart from a few tribes in the north like the Wala, Dagomba, Gonja, and Mamprusi who have strong Islamic influence in their urban centres, northerners have largely remained traditionalists. Some of these are open to Christianity and have converted in significant numbers.

In the south, as already indicated above, the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission is dominant amongst southern Akan speaking groups. The repealing of the British —mission-proof policy for northern Ghana after independence, coupled with migration, has brought Muslims and Christians to live in closer proximity than ever. There is hardly any town or village in Ghana today where one cannot find both Muslims and Christians, either as minorities or majorities.

At the grassroots level, Christians and Muslims have on the whole lived in peace. It is very common to find members of the same family adhering to different religious traditions. Muslim relatives and friends in the metropolis regularly visit Christians at Christmas to wish them well and Christians also visit their Muslim friends and relatives

¹⁵⁶ *ibid*

during the festivals of *Id-ul-Fitr* and *Id-ul-Adha*.¹⁵⁷ On these occasions gifts and meals are shared. Azuma writes:

On occasions such as weddings and child naming ceremonies, and even the ordination of priests, Muslims are known to come to church and vice versa because the ceremony involves a friend or relative. And so what some people have called the —dialogue of life is going on at the grass-roots level.¹⁵⁸

Formerly Christians were content with evangelising Christians from one denomination to the other. This has changed and Christian groups have sprung up with the sole aim of converting Muslims to Christianity. The most popular of these ministries is the —Converted Muslims‘ Christian Association. This ministry was started in the late _80s in Kumasi by a convert from Islam and now operates in many parts of the country.¹⁷¹

Public anti-Islamic polemical preaching is conducted by this and similar groups. Muslim converts are paraded in churches and at conventions to give —testimonies about Islam and their conversion, most of which involve exaggerations and blatant distortions.¹⁵⁹ Muslim-Christian polemics have led to occasional confrontations and violence between members of the two faiths, thus threatening to undermine the peaceful co-existence of the two faiths.¹⁶⁰

Many factors account for these tense Muslim-Christian relations. This ranges from external to local and from religious to political. The external factors include global Muslim self-assertiveness backed by the wealth generated from petroleum products under the

¹⁵⁷ J. Azumah, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: —Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup*” *Current Dialogue* (36), December 2000 [http://: www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html)

¹⁵⁸ *ibid*:

¹⁷¹ *ibid*

¹⁵⁹ *ibid*

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*

control of Islamic governments. According to Azuma, Muslim countries such as Iran, Libya and Saudi Arabia, under the guise of offering financial support to different Muslim organizations, are in fact transporting their own politico-religious rivalries into the country. This is very much evident in Tijaniyya (Sufi) - Alhus Sunnah controversies, the former enjoying Iranian support and a Saudi backing for the latter.

3.4 Co-operation between Christian and Muslim leaders

In spite of the above instances of tension, Christian and Muslim leaders occasionally come together to issue statements on matters of national concern. During the general elections of 1992 when tension mounted between the opposition and ruling party the Christian Council of Ghana, the National Catholic Secretariat, the Ghana Pentecostal Council and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission met and issued a statement calling upon the political parties to exercise restraint.¹⁶¹

Similarly during communal fighting in northern Ghana in 1994, Azuma indicates that the religious bodies met and called upon warring factions —in the name of God and in the name of Allah to stop fighting. On the 7th December 1994 the same religious groups met and in a *nine points resolution* called upon Ghanaians to eschew all hatred, ethnic exclusivism and religious extremism, adding —as religious leaders we remain united in our continuing search under God's guidance of peace and justice.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ <http://www.myjoyonline.com>

¹⁶² J. Azumah, Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: —Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup” Current Dialogue (36), December 2000 [http:// www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html)

In February 2000, the religious leaders – Christian, Traditional and Islamic - met and issued a resolution calling for restraint and respect for the other's traditions on a controversial traditional ban on drumming and all noise making during the month of May in the Ga Traditional area. However, those involved in the polemics and confrontational evangelism do not recognize the leadership of the religious bodies. On both the Muslim and Christian fronts, Azuma indicates that the controversialists derive their support from outside the country and do not in any way regard themselves answerable to these religious leaders. In fact some polemics regard the religious leaders and their institutions as religious miscreants if not outright —unbelievers in need of proper —conversion. ¹⁶³

3.5 Christian-Muslim Response to the Presence of Each Other

Arguably, there is general lack of awareness and interest amongst both Christians and Muslims concerning Christian-Muslim relational issues. As far as some Christians are concerned there is no need to study Islam and vice versa. Very few seminaries teach Islam as a small part of comparative religion and the majority do not even have it as part of the curriculum.

These, though, have more to do with doctrinal prejudice than it has to do with theological prejudice. To such Christians, the Muslim presence has little or no relevance to them. In the same way, some Muslims have a strong repudiation of Christianity, describing the latter as heretic. It must be said, though, that the recent *Shari'ah* related carnage seen

¹⁶³ J. Azumah, Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: —Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup” Current Dialogue (36), December 2000 [http:// www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html)

through the operations of the terror group *Boko Haram* in Nigeria has awakened some of the Christian leaders from their deep slumber on Christian-Muslim issues.¹⁶⁴

There are also those Christians who see Muslims purely as objects of evangelism. They are engaged in open air preaching in Muslim areas. As far as these groups of Christians are concerned, the only legitimate relationship a Christian can have with a Muslim is in the area of evangelism. There is no need for dialogue just for dialogue sake. Dialogue must have the ultimate end of converting the Muslim and this, to most of them, is an unnecessarily long process. The study of Islam to such Christians is always geared at looking for the —weaknesses! in order to prove to Muslims that there is no salvation in Islam. Some popular Muslim preachers in Kumasi's suburb of *Alabaral* so blatantly castigate Christians especially on their teaching on the Trinity.

There are however those who are seriously seeking to promote a better understanding of Islam and trying to creatively address the Muslim presence. The Christian Council of Ghana has a Christian-Muslim Department which seeks to organize Islamic seminars for Christians. Response to this approach is still very low key and even with heavily subsidized seminars, very few people attend.¹⁶⁵ The few, who attend, according to Azuma, are normally from the mainline Protestant Churches. Though this trend seems to have some prospects for effective and healthy Christian-Muslim relation. The trends may not be as bad as one may think. In the same way, it seems healthy on the surface but beneath it may be some hot fires brewing.

¹⁶⁴ J. Azumah, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: —Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soup*” Current Dialogue (36), December 2000 [http:// www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.html)

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.ccg.org/aboutus>.

3.6 Conclusion

Kumasi by its location and composition is deeply religious. Christians and Muslims live side by side in various parts of the metropolis. There is seemingly peaceful co-existence between them. The next chapter discusses findings from the field as we find answers to the above question.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FIELD WORK

4.1 Introduction

In this present chapter, our work proceeds to present and discuss the data gathered. The purpose of our field research is to test whether the research problem stated earlier have any bearing on the findings from the field and also to provide answers to the thesis questions.

4.2 Objective of the Field Work

The purpose of the survey was to find out if the presentation of Jesus in the Bible and in the Qur'an would serve as enough grounds for dialogue between Christians and Muslims. To help the realization of this goal, the researcher administered questionnaire and conducted some interviews.

4.3 Respondents' details

Views and ideas were sought from the respondents who were grouped into different categories of age, gender, religion, their status in their denominations. In the survey five (5) Christians and five (5) Muslims were interviewed to compliment the respondents' thoughts. It's worth noting that out of one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaire

administered, hundred and sixteen (116) constituting 96.7% were answered and received. Of this number, 66 of them were Christians and 50 Muslims representing 56.9% and 43.1% respectively. Various questions were asked and similar responses were received. In other cases divergent views were expressed. With regard to age, respondents were classified into five groups: 10-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 50 and above. This was to ensure that ideas received would be representative enough of the people who might have been informed about the person of Jesus.

4.4 Methodology

We employed both qualitative and quantitative research method in this work. Questionnaire supplemented by field interviews and observations were used to generate data. The study also outsourced data from other secondary sources such as books, articles and newspaper publications.

The study area of the research was Kumasi Metropolis. Since Muslims are densely populated in some communities where the presence of Muslim communities chosen from the metropolis included Asawasi, Suame, Aboabo, Old Tafo, Mossi-Zongo, and Bantama–Ohwim Communities, We employed probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In the case of the former, simple random was adopted in reaching the respondents. Purposive sampling was used in conducting the interviews. This was to enable the researcher to get the views and ideas of experts from both religions. Using empirical approach, the researcher made use of questionnaire and interviews in seeking for the consent of the respondents on the relevance of the person of Jesus as found in the Bible and in the Qur'an. These tools also helped finding out how this figure will be a basis for dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

4.4.1 Religious and Gender composition of respondents

Respondents for the study included both Christians and Muslims. This was to enable the researcher to attain a fair and balanced representation of the believers of the religions involved. As a result of the random sampling approach which was used in administering the questionnaire, equal numbers for both religions could not be attained. Out of 116 respondents whose questionnaire were retrieved, 56.9% of them were Christians and 43.1% being Muslims. 37.9 % of the respondents were males whereas 62.1% were females. More females were approached because of their willingness to cooperate with the researcher.

4.4.2 The Findings

From the primary and secondary sources of information coupled with questionnaires and interviews conducted, the following results and findings were made:

4.4.2.1 Identity of Jesus

The respondents were asked whether they have heard about Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an. The overwhelming response in affirmation, which is all the respondents, (100%) indicated that they have heard about him. We gathered from the respondents that the whole Bible was written about him. In an interview with a Christian tutor,¹⁶⁶ it is only neophytes in Christianity who will look for Jesus from New Testament only. For, according to the interviewee, the Old Testament foretold His coming. An Islamic scholar¹⁶⁷, added that

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Fr Felix Kyei, a tutor in Christian Religious Studies at Osei Kyeretwie Senior High on 23th April, 2016 at 11:14am

¹⁶⁷ Interview with IssahLedarni, tutor in Islamic Religious Studies at Islamic Senior High, BohyenAmpaame on 23rd April, 2016 at 6.45pm.

Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an is very revered. He is considered a beloved Prophet and a dedicated Messenger of Allah. Responses provided by the respondents clearly showed that Jesus was sent by God with a message to the chosen people of Israel.

4.4.3 Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an

A question was asked as to how Jesus is presented in the Bible or Qur'an. Based on the alternative answers given different responses were received. 54.3% of the respondents said he is the Son of God, 40.5% respondents said he was a Prophet, 4.3% who held the view that He is God, and 0.9% of the respondents said he was a good man.

The explanations offered to buttress their responses brought home different levels of understanding about Jesus. Respondents explaining that He is the Son of God wrote that Jesus in his prayer referred to God as his Father. Hence Jesus taught the apostles to call God their father as they pray. He taught —Our Father, who art in Heaven....! Jesus also said —My Father is working still and I'm working also!. Again Jesus on the cross prayed that _Father, Forgive them'. These responses demonstrated that respondents regarded Jesus as Son of God because Jesus called God his Father. The respondents limited themselves to words they have heard or they have read to have come from Jesus' lips. They do not know that the *Son-ship* concept is derived from the annunciation of the Lord. (Luke 1:26-38).

All respondents who described Jesus as solely Prophet were Muslims. They likened him to the status of Adam, Abraham (*Ibrahim*), Noah (*Nuh*), Moses (*Musa*) and Muhammad. They equaled Jesus to Adam purposely because he had only one parent, a mother. Adam

also had one parent, a father. Like Adam, according to an Islamic scholar,¹⁶⁸ Allah just said *‘Be’* and he came to be. Sheikh Issah speaking on this very idea adds that the similitude of Isa is to that of Adam. He was without father or a mother. The Almighty Allah only instructed —*Be* which is *kun fayakun* and it was. This statement is actually echoed by the Qur’an itself when it says —the similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He creates him from dust, then said to him: —*Be* and he was. (Surah 3:59). In like manner, Jesus is likened to Prophet Moses (Musa) because he was given the gospel (*Injil*) while Moses was given the Torah (*Tauwrat*). They were both given something, a book, to teach and preach about. The interviewees, however, added that as a revered Prophet and a Messenger, Jesus is among the five distinguished and eminent messengers in Islam, namely Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Jesus (Isa) and Muhammad. These were all given something more than revelations. As prophet, according to an English tutor¹⁶⁹ Jesus is highly revered though not worshiped in Islam. One cannot claim to be a Muslim if he does not belief in Jesus as a Prophet. For him, the love that Jesus preached, if we were to live it, the world would be the happiest place. For our inability to live the preaching of Jesus, God sent Prophet Muhammad. As Prophet Jesus urged the people of his time to love all with our hearts and our beings and everything within us. It worth mentioning that the exhortations from Adam on the prophethood of Jesus is in line with the Open Letter written by 38 Muslim scholars to Pope Benedict XVI. In finding the common ground for Christians and Muslims, the Muslim Scholars posited that:

¹⁶⁸ Interview with MallamMahey, a Deputy Imam of Gonja Community in Ashanti Region, on 18th February, 2016.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Muhammed Adam, English tutor at Jachie-Pramso senior High on 14th March, 2016.

—the main goal of the two religions are identical: that is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself.¹⁷⁰

There were other Christian respondents who regarded Jesus as God. These defended their arguments on the bases of the Trinity, the Christian doctrine. Trinity is a belief that there is One God but three persons in Him. The three distinct persons are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

One person, however, held the view that He is a good man. To him Jesus did not sin, neither did anybody blame him nor accused him of any wrongful act. The clarity given by this individual showed that he sees Jesus as a Holy man and not just good man.

4.4.4 Common knowledge of Jesus held by both Christians and Muslims

The narratives of Jesus presented in the Bible and Qur'an commence with his birth. In both cases they attested that the Mother of Jesus is Virgin Mary, (Matt1:18-25; Surah 19: 16-23). The respondents were asked to express their knowledge about Jesus from the Bible or/and Qur'an. It was discovered that all respondents had read or heard about Jesus from these religious books. 40.5% had read from the Bible only. We found out that, Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. His coming was in fulfillment of all prophecies.

In support of this a Methodist superintendent, in an interview¹⁷¹ said Jesus is the Son of God. As more than the Son, according to this religious leader, Jesus is Human and Divine, he is the revelation of God and *the finality of all God's prophecies*. According to him, Jesus said —Once you have seen me you have seen God (cf. John 14:9). Other views expressed were that God sent angel Gabriel to announce that Mary would conceive Jesus

¹⁷⁰ An Open Letter of 38 Muslim Scholars to H. H. Pope Benedict XVI. *A Common Word Between Us and You*. Amman, 2007. The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought. *A Common Word*. Amman: RISSC, 2012

¹⁷¹ Interview with Rev. Charles Aaron Ekuban of Methodist Church, a Superintendent of Bantama Circuit on 1st March, 2016.

and she agreed. Again, Jesus came to save mankind by shedding his blood on the Cross. Jesus was crucified, died and rose from the dead on the third day. The respondents' explanations trace the history of Salvation which dwells on the birth of Jesus, his works and ministry in general. Information retrieved from the varied respondents on their understanding on the ministry of Jesus, indicated they were wellversed in the Bible more than the Qur'an.

There were 30.2% who had read only the Qur'an. This category of respondents were all Muslims, knew Jesus to be the Son of Maryam, they disclosed that Jesus could order food from heaven to come down, even as a child he defended his mother Maryam from her adversaries. The respondents knew Jesus to be a Prophet and a Messenger sent by Allah to present the Gospel. In an interview with a *Mallam*¹⁷² who belongs to this category, declared that for him, Jesus is more than a Prophet. He explained that Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Muhammad are most eminent among all the Messengers. In narrating the works of Jesus in the Qur'an, he indicated that Jesus healed lepers; he raised the dead and fed many people. The findings of these respondents go a long way to display the divergent views held by Christians and Muslims on the personality of Jesus.

There were 25% respondents who had read from both Bible and Qur'an. Understanding how Jesus is presented in both Bible and the Qur'an, they posited that Jesus a Prophet is found in both Bible and Qur'an. The interview with a religious minister¹⁷³ who uses both Bible and Qur'an to preach brought to light that both scriptures acknowledge Jesus as Prophet *par excellence*. According to the minister Jesus said —no prophet is accepted in

¹⁷² Interview with Mallam Muhammed Mahey Ibrahim, a Deputy Imam of Gonja Muslim Community in Ashanti Region on 18th February, 2016

¹⁷³ Interview with Rev Dr. Ahmed Agyei of Straightway Chapel International, Kumasi on 17th March, 2016

his own native land, family or country (cf. Matt 13:56-58). He adds that the Qur'an declares Jesus' prophetic status (It came to pass that) the Son of Mary said, —I am indeed a servant of Allah, He has given me the book, and made me a Prophet.... (Surah 19:30-33). He explained that he came with a message to revive God's people.

The researcher's encounter with Muslims underscored the reality that Jesus (Isa) was a Prophet of God. Prophets in Islam are those sent by Allah to convey his message to the people. Playing the intermediary role, the prophet ensures that he redirects the people's heart back to Allah. This was buttressed more by a missionary of Ahmadiyyah Muslims Mission¹⁷⁴. The missionary explained that the Bible and Qur'an clearly bear witness that Jesus, as a prophet, was sent by God. He opines that Muslims have some common beliefs with Catholics when it comes to reverence towards Virgin Mary. Her dressing is what Muslims have embraced. He reiterated that Mary was a Virgin mother. He agreed with *Mallam* Mahey that Jesus was not crucified. Mahey recounts the incidents which led to Jesus' arrest. God made all the apostles with Jesus to look alike. So they mistakenly arrested one other than Jesus. That individual who replaced Jesus at the crucifixion is not known to the Qur'an. Scholars have resorted to extra-Qur'anic sources or Ahadiths to identify the individual.

In Tafsir Ibn Kathir narration from Ibn Abbas declares that —... when Isa got to know that he was to be arrested and killed, Jesus asked his companions with him who is willing to have his face replicated with mine and he will be my friend in heaven? A youth who happened to be the youngest among the companions of Isa was selected after three rounds of voting. Then the man had his face replicated by Allah to resemble the face of

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Maulvi Abdul Hameed Tahir, Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission in Ashanti Region

Isa before he was seized and crucified.¹⁷⁵ *Imam* al-Tabari had also recorded another story which mentions that Yudas Zakariya Yuta, one of the *Hawaris* (apostles) of Isa was bribed by the Jews around thirty dirhams to show them which one was Isa so that they would be able to detect him. With the signal of Yudas kissing the Apostle, the Jews would then be able to know him. But the one kissed by Yudas was actually with his face sharing a resemblance with Isa's face and finally Sarjis was killed and subjected to the crucifixion. However, Yudas really regretted his actions, and later he committed suicide using a rope.¹⁷⁶

In *Tafsir al-Manar*, Muhammad Rasyid Ridha had explained that Yahuza al-Iskhiriyyuti was the person whose face resembled the face of Isa and he was killed and crucified by the Jews.¹⁷⁷ *Imam* Fakhr al-Din al-Razi did mention that the person who was killed was named Titayus. He was instructed by Yahuza, the head of the Jews to kill Isa.¹⁷⁸ Al-Sya'rawi, while interpreting the verses of al-Nisa', states that there was a man named Tatyanus who was killed and crucified as his face resembled that of Isa. Another story states that Sarkhas was Isa's follower who was killed and crucified after he had expressed his willingness to be made to look like Isa. Another belief establishes that after the Jewish knew that Isa was rescued by Allah to the sky, they had to kill someone to prevent him from the mass to idolize and worship Jesus.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ al-Dimasyqi, Imad al-Din Abi al-Fidal Ismail bin Umar bin Kathir al-Qursyi. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Riyadh: Dar al-Salam Li al-Nasyrwa al-Tawzi' 2001, p. 22

¹⁷⁶ al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammed bin Jarir. *Jami' al-Bayan An Ta'wil Ay al-Quran*, al-Qahirah: Dar al-Salam. 2005. p. 23

¹⁷⁷ Muhammad Rasyid Ridha. *Tafsir al-Manar*, Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, n.d.

¹⁷⁸ Muhammad al-Razi Fakhr al-Din al-Allamah Diya' al-Din Umar. *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr. 1985. p.23

¹⁷⁹ al-Sya'rawi, al-Syeikh al-Imam Muhammad Mutawalli. *Tafsir al-Sya'rawi*, Misr: al-Maktabah alTawfiqiyah, n.d.

The afore-mentioned arguments point out that Islamic Scholars agree with the Qur'an that Jesus was not crucified but someone was taken in his stead. Scholars still speculate and associate individuals to the crucifixion of Jesus. Among them are the apostle Jesus loved, Sarkhas, Sarjis, Yahuza al-Iskhiriyyuti, Titayus, Tatyanus and others. We go with the argument that the silence of the Qur'an on the individual whose face replicated Jesus has given room for further speculation among Islamic clerics in identifying the crucified person.

A tutor at training college¹⁸⁰ would not accept Jesus to be reduced to a prophet only without adding 'Jesus was also Priest and King'. These are the threefold offices of Jesus which should be looked at together and not separately.

The respondents who have not read from both Bible and Qur'an constituted 4.3%. The views shared by these respondents centered on the moment Jesus made his public speech or when he spoke for the first time publicly. Until the age of 12, no speech or words came from him in the Bible. Unlike the Qur'an when he spoke officially at the tender age, the Bible's presentation of Jesus informs us that He spoke at the age of 12 in the temple. This was after the feast of Passover in Jerusalem when his parents considered that he was among the children. He however stayed behind. There, the parents found him in a discussion with the leaders of the Jews. Qur'anic presentation, however, informs us that right from birth Jesus spoke in defense of his mother at the temple and announced that he is a prophet (Luke 2:41-52; Surah 19:27-35). Here we realized that though Jesus encountered officials at the tender age, the occasions from the Bible and Qur'an are not the same.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Rev Fr Richmond Osei Amoah, tutor at St.Louis Training College on 17th March, 2016

4.4.5 Rating the existing relationship between Christians and Muslims in Kumasi

Respondents were asked to rate the existing relationship between Christians and Muslims in the Kumasi metropolis. From 116 questionnaire retrieved, 34.5% of the respondents rated the relationship to be very good. Reasons given among others were that there is existing peace in Kumasi. Christians and Muslims live in common homes and work together. 7.8% declared that the relationship is good because no disturbance has ever been caused based on faith. These respondents, however, are not privy to 1921 religious violence and conflicts in Kumasi and other towns in Ghana. Owusu-Ansah, quoting Samwini in an interview with him, said —since the Ahmadiyyah [Muslim] Mission arrived in Ghana in 1921, there had been simmering or clear religious conflicts in this country because the Ahmadis... in Kumasi, at Saltpond ...in Tamale came out clearly to speak against the position of Christianity. They denounced the person of Christ, denounced his divinity, they said —no, he didn't die on the Cross and so on, and even they said the [Christ] won't come again because —Ghulam (Muhammad) had come back in his [Christ's] place. In some cases, they generated real conflict. They also condemned the practices of mainstream Islam. In their view, Ghulam Ahmad the reformer had come after the Prophet Muhammad. This caused violence and conflicts in these areas because the Qur'an teaches that there should be no prophet after Muhammad.¹⁸¹ So there has been some conflict in the past which the respondents would need to be brought to the known. 38.7% of the respondents are of the opinion that the relationship between Christians and Muslims used to be nice but with Atebubu and Tafo's incidents between them we cannot reiterate that any more. There were 19% of the respondents who felt the relationship is bad because Christians and Muslims cannot be friends and relate well for long time. They

¹⁸¹ Samwini, N. I. Interview by Owusu-Ansah David. *The Role of the Ghana Christian Council to InterDenominational and Inter-Faith Dialogue in the Country* (Ghana); Accra, July 18, 2005, p. 6.

explained that each has something which he is hiding from the other. That is to say their friendship is usually superficial.

4.4.6 The Need for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Kumasi

—Dialogue, according to Svare, is a conversation between two or more persons characterized by mutual goodwill, openness and cooperation. It is a conversation where you, together, reach for a common goal.¹⁸² Samwini says —an interreligious dialogue seeks understanding on similarities ... seeks to bring peace even amidst acknowledged differences ...it involves listening to one another about the content of each other's faiths.¹⁸³ As Christians and Muslims live in the same community, they are exposed to practical daily living of their religious counterparts in the common environs. The merits of dialogue help members to appreciate the belief of the other's faith better. Respondents were asked if they see the need for dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Kumasi Metropolis. Respondents constituting 62.1% agreed that dialogue will help adherents of both faiths to understand the religious practices and beliefs of the other. It erases stereotype, prejudice and wrong notions that one holds about the —other's beliefs. A lecturer in Guidance and Counselling¹⁸⁴ added that if it is organized for people within the same caliber, profession and common level of reasoning, the desired goal could be reached. For instance, symposium for scholars from both religions, among Pastors and Imams, a conference among politicians from both faiths, and the like could bring

¹⁸² H. Svare., *Den godesamtalen. Kunsten å skape dialog*. Oslo: PaxForlag A/S., 2006

¹⁸³ Md. Sanaullah., *Interfaith Dialogue in Islam: A Scriptural Scrutiny*; An M. Phil Theses, Department of Islamic Studies in IQSR Journal Of Humanities and Social Sciences (IQSR-JHSS) Vol 19, Issue 3, Ver. IV (March 2014), p. 89 Surah Al-Maidah

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Rev Fr. Dr Francis Sam, A Lecturer at University College of Education, Kumasi Campus

Christians and Muslims closer as they will understand the respective beliefs of the other. Sheikh Abdul Hamid¹⁸⁵ commending this approach reiterated that this is already in existence in Kumasi. Sheikh Abdul-Hamid added that, a radio station in Kumasi, Fox FM, 97.9 MHz organizes a *debate* where Pastors and Sheikhs or Imams are called to share their beliefs from either the Bible or the Qur'an. He recommends this medium strongly since Christians and Muslims listening are given the chance to phone in and contribute to discussion which bothers on faiths of Christianity and Islam. Understanding and considering debates as a way of dialogue as Sheikh Abdul-Hamid is propagating is in conformity with Fitzgerald and Borelli's¹⁸⁶ recommendation. According to them, dialogue can take the form of a debate at a conference of experts. In this approach, religious experts' goal is to score points by defending logically and philosophically.

Gerard Forde, however, quoting Sheikh Umar Al-Qadri writes:

—... Interfaith dialogue is not about preaching, it is about sharing. It is not about converting, it is about serving. It is not about winning, it is about loving. It is not about becoming religious, it is about becoming spiritual. It is not about proving, it is about understanding. It is not about why, it is about why not and the possibilities. It is not about confrontation, it is about cooperation. It is not about becoming superior, in fact it is all about becoming human.¹⁸⁷

Debate seeks for superiority and aims at winning and scoring points. Dialogue on the other hand explores common grounds and does not cling to self or individualism. At debates, one listens with the view of finding faults, flaws and failures in the other's delivery, resulting in counter arguments. With dialogue, one listens to understand, aims at finding meanings and dwells more on areas of agreements. Unlike debate which critiques the

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Sheikh Abdul-Hamid, A panelist on Fox Fm. Kumasi on Christian-Muslim Issues; on April 27, 2016

¹⁸⁶ M. Fitzgerald and J. Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue: Catholic View*, Orbis USA, (2006). p. 76

¹⁸⁷ G. Forde, *A Journey Together, Muslims and Christians in Ireland: Building Mutual respect, understanding and Cooperation*, A Resource for Christian Muslim Dialogue., Cois Tine, Ireland, 2013, p.

others' views, positions and ideas, dialogue re-examines and re-evaluates one's thoughts and all positions and arrives at new options. And this would not be ideal means in realizing dialogue which aims to build a better co-existence among people of different faiths.

Looking at the religious riots in Kumasi and other parts in Ghana caused by the utterances of some members of the Ahmadiyyah in 1980s, a forum for dialogue through debate in Kumasi would not make the desired goal achievable. 37.9% of respondents did not agree to the need for dialogue. They argued that with different religious beliefs from the Bible and the Qur'an, all must relate well with all. That dialogue will not make Christians follow Muhammad nor do Muslims change their doctrines about Jesus. There are some Muslims with the view that if you succumb to interreligious dialogue it is like

19
agreeing to the notion that every religion has a little truth in line with the similitude of blind mice exploring an elephant. The parable goes like this: the first mouse feels the elephant's ear and proclaims, —It's like a giant leaf!! The second touches the leg, and says, —No, it's more like a tree!! The third comes into contact with the trunk and is certain that it's more like a huge snake. The analogy to this parable suggests that inter-religious dialogue is a dialogue between different good people who have partial truths. Islam regards these types of dialogues as totally rubbish, because Islam is a complete religion. It is not a partial truth; it is the complete and ultimate truth. Allah says: —..., I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion....¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸⁸ Md. Sanaullah, *Interfaith Dialogue in Islam: A Scriptural Scrutiny*; An M. Phil Researcher, Department of Islamic Studies in IQSR Journal Of Humanities and Social Sciences (IQSR-JHSS) Vol 19, Issue 3, Ver. IV (March 2014) p. 89 Surah Al-Maidah

That we don't need to embark on anything which may spark some misunderstanding; they were of the view that nothing common is between Christians and Muslims because Muhammad and Jesus are two distinct individuals who came with two separate books – Bible and Qur'an. —There are also those Christians, according to Azuma, who see Muslims purely as objects of evangelism. There is no need for dialogue between Christians and Muslims just for its sake. Dialogue must have the ultimate end of converting the Muslim and this, to such Christians, is an unnecessarily long process¹⁸⁹. It is worth noting that books were rather written about Jesus and Muhammad and they not they came with books. In the instances where the relationship between Christians and Muslims is thought to be cordial there is still the need to have continual dialogue for the sustenance of the seemingly existing peace.

4.4.7 Fostering unity and peaceful co- existence

As a way to improve the relationship between Christians and Muslims in the Metropolis, respondents made some recommendations. Among the various views expressed, we found marriage, education, shared homes and having periodic conferences to be outstanding. 48% of the respondents shared that marriage unites families, leads to mutual understanding among members from both families. This group was of the view that it will gradually erase the seemingly wrong perception that some adherents have about the other's faith. Their closeness will unveil whatever one does as regards one's belief and practices. In support of this proposal, Ekuban added that inter-marriages between Christians and Muslims be allowed.

¹⁸⁹ J. Azuma. Christian-Muslim Relation in Ghana: Too much Meat Does Not spoil the Soup. Retrieved from <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.htm> accessed on 27/4/2016.

However, he does not support what he calls —the current conditional marriage of Muslims. In his view, when it comes to marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, presently the non-Muslim must become a believer of Islamic faith. Thus if this conditionality is removed, inter-marriages between Christians and Muslims will be increased. This will help the members of both religions to be more integrated into the community of the ‘other’. In furtherance to this, Muslims living in *Zongos* (strangers quarters) or excluded areas and others living apart will be no more. He continued that just as Muslims can marry anybody at all, there should be that openness for others to marry their women without any strings attached. Their women should have that right to be married to by people of other faiths. Respondents argued that marriage unites not only the couple but their entire families. If members were allowed to marry Muslim women without necessarily becoming Muslims, it would bring Christians and Muslims together closer than before.

Proponents of inter-faith marriage (Christian-Muslim) especially Muslim women marrying non-Muslim men have had varied opinions. References on a Muslim eligibility to marrying non-Muslims are discussed from three sources – Qur’an, Sunnah and Scholars. Qur’an addresses marriage to non-Muslims in two instances: Surah Al-Baqara and Al-Mai‘da and Islamic tradition. According to Surah Al-Baqara states:

—And marry not an idolatress until she believes; while a believing maid is certainly better than an idolatress even though she may highly please you. And do not give (believing women) in marriage until men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a (free), idolater even though he may highly please you...! [Surah 2:221]

While as in the above verse, both Muslim men and women are prohibited from marrying *mushrikeen* (Idol worshippers or people who associate partners with God) the following

verse rather permits Muslim men to marry People of the Book, that is generally the Christians and the Jews.

And Surah Al-Mai'da adds that:

—This day all good and pure things have been made lawful for you. And the food of those who have been given the Scripture is lawful for you (provided the food does not include anything forbidden in Islam), and your food is lawful for them. And [lawful for you for marriage are] the chaste women from among the believing women and chaste women from among those who have been given the Scripture before you, provided that you pay them their dowers (to live with them) after contracting valid mild marriage when you have given them their due compensation, desiring chastity, not committing fornication, nor seeking secret love affair ...! [Surah 5:5].

Prohibition of Muslim women marrying to *kitabiyah* (people of the book) basing on the premise of above references, has been a hot issue among scholars. Ibn Kathir (d. 1373), is of the opinion that Surah 2:221 forbids marriage to the *mushrikeen*—but that 5:5 then adds an exception for men only¹⁹⁰. In the Arabic language, —there is a literary style called *al-iktifa*, where we need only to state a particular part (of a writing), from whence we may understand the other parts. For example, this verse asserts that a Muslim man may marry a woman of *Ahlul-kitab* [People of the Book], so logically a Muslim woman may marry a man of *Ahlul-kitab*”.¹⁹¹

We observed from the discussion above that the decision to bar Muslim women from marrying to *kitabiyah* is traditional. For Muslims, kinship system is patrilineal. Thus the individual inherits the cultural identity of his father and cannot transmit it to his children unless he is a man and there is a need to maintain a certain order under that system. The

¹⁹⁰ Ishmail Ibn Umar Ibn-Kathir, *Tasfsir Al-Qur'an Al-,,Azim* (Bairut: Dar Al-Andalus, 1966), pp. 37-38.

¹⁹¹ S. Mulia, *Promoting Gender Equity Through Interreligious Marriage: Empowering Indonesian Women*, in *Muslim-non-Muslim Marriage: Political and Cultural Contestations in Southeast Asia*, ed Gavin W. Jones (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), p. 269

family lineage is passed through the father so if a Muslim woman marries outside the Muslim community, this would somehow impede the growth of the *Ummah* as a whole. The child is a Muslim because the father is Muslim. Marriage of a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man is deemed inconceivable as it would produce non-Muslim offspring to a Muslim mother. This explains why what is possible in one direction is not permissible in the other. Haqqani makes it clearer when he states that:

—Qur'anic understanding of marriage is broader than tradition, or traditional scholars and exegetes, have explained it. In some cases, the specific context of a verse has been universalized and made applicable to all situations when it may or may not be the intended message of the Qur'an. Although there are more reasons to believe that the Qur'an supports marriage between Muslim women and People of the Book, tradition consistently argues against it, relying on subjective understanding of women's roles in society to support their prohibition.¹⁹²

The proposal of Rev. Ekuban seem to be in agreement with Haqqani's stand on inter faith marriage between Christians and Muslims. However, having a critical look at this position, one comes by numerous factors which challenge the feasibility of marriage between a Christian and a Muslim where each still hold on to his or her religion.

Sharia is the code of conduct or religious law of Muslims. According to Muslims belief, sharia is the words of Allah as revealed in the Qur'an and the traditions gathered from the life of Prophet Muhammad. Sharia does not allow Muslim to marry nonMuslims. The only grounds that Islamic marriage is to be declared null and void is change in religion and the differences in religion. When an interfaith marriage is contracted according to Islamic jurisprudence and a partner passes on, a non-Muslim spouse would not be allowed to inherit the Muslim partner. As according to sharia, a non-Muslim is not allowed to inherit

¹⁹² S. Haqqani, *Gendered Expectations, Personal Choice and Social Compatibility in Western Muslim Marriages*, B A Thesis in the University of Texas, Austin, 2013. p. 36.

a Muslim. However, in Ghana, one party is allowed to inherit the other in marriage if they contracted the marriage legally, according to Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) law 111. This clearly will be a challenge to the couple since the Islamic law is in contravention to that of that of the PNDC.

One other hurdle which Muslim and non-Muslim marriage would have to deal with is Polygamy and Monogamy issues. A Muslim is allowed, by the Holy Qur'an, to have multiple wives. The Holy Qur'an states that:

... Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice.¹⁹³

This verse unequivocally permits the men to have up to four wives. This is not the case with biblical position on marriage. The Bible recommends monogamy for Christians;

... —Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.¹⁹⁴

This verse points out that Marriage is between one Man and one woman, hence the insistence on the two becoming one. Differences in beliefs of religion really will have a negative impact on the sustenance of the marriage. Having the same beliefs, values, partaking in the same sacred rites or religion complement the joy in the marriage and thus bring about equilibrium in a marriage. Related to the above is the issue of divorce in Islamic and Christian marriages. In the verse quoted from Holy Bible above, God does not approve of divorce among Christians. The statement that *“what God has joined together*

¹⁹³ Surah 4:3

¹⁹⁴ Matt 29:4-6

let no man separate” (Matt 19:6b) indicates that no judicial institution or even the couple themselves can opt out before the God. Thus before God once marriage is contracted, until a spouse passes on, even if one leaves and marries another wherever, the old marriage still exist (Mark 10: 11-12). Thus in the strict sence, the word divorce has no place in Christian marriage. Same cannot be said for Muslims. In Islam divorce is granted when all efforts to make the couple live together in peace fail (Surah 4:35).

For the Quran allows for divorce as it states that —*a divorce is only permissible twice: after that the parties should either hold together on equitable terms or separate with kindness...*” (Surah 2:229). This means that a man can actually divorce his wife on two occasions. After each divorce the man can go back and remarry her. However, when he divorces her for the third time he cannot go for her right away unless she has contracted another marriage and has divorced the marriage. Only then can the first man remarry her (Surah 2:230). This battress the point that both the man and the woman are allowed to divorce their spouse as and when it suits the partner. The afore-mentioned discussion raises difficulty for both Christian man and the Muslim woman should they be allowed to marry. The doctrinal differences would not auger well for such marriage. This notwithstanding, should marriage be contracted conditionally? For the proposal from

Rev. Ekuban was in line with means fostering a dialogue between Chriatian and Muslim. One should not marry with the intention of promoting a dialogue between parties. Marriage should purely be based on mutual love they have for each other with out strings attached.

Sheikh Issah Ledarni, an Imam of Bohyen Muslim Community in suggesting means to foster a better relationship recommends education. According to him people must be introduced to issues related to interreligious studies right at the basic schools. This could be done at the general assembly or worship hours. That the more one is introduced into

other's religion the clearer one begins to appreciate what that belief really entails. There had been instances of some clashes in Kumasi between some Christians and some Muslims. To him those were caused by some itinerant preachers in both Holy books. Normally, according to Sheikh Issah Ledarni, —half-baked knowledge is dangerous if not poisonous. It is known that if we were to read more on other's belief, we would be more informed as to live more peacefully with them. In adding his voice to the issue of education Muhammad Adam reiterated that Christians and Muslims who attend secular institutions are well integrated into the society more than those from missions, either Christian or Islamic. This is because they have friends and colleagues from acrossboard. The respect and understanding they have for members in society are not based on religious lines as it appears to be most often. Tolerance also comes to play in discussing issues of inter-religious dialogue. If the same number of examples of tolerance from Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religions are taught with extra emphasis on peaceful co-existence with neighbours from other faiths, it will have positive impact on one's relations with the other faiths. There were others, 15%, who suggested that the laws of the land should not be seen to favour any group to the detriment of the other.

4.5 Interpretation of the Responses

We made the following discoveries based on the responses from the questionnaires, interviews, primary and secondary sources of information. The outcomes are analyzed and conclusion is drawn from the survey.

4.5.1 Common views shared in both Scriptures about Jesus

Among the areas of common interest which we identified from the respondents and interviewees on the figure of Jesus, the study revealed that the Bible and the Qur'an agree

to the virgin birth of Jesus. The mother was Mary or Maryam depending on the language one uses. In both scriptures, Mary was a virgin and chaste when God sent angel Gabriel to her announcing the birth of Jesus. She accepted and had faith in the message the angel brought her. This is made clear in her response to the angel at the annunciation;

—How will this be, Mary asked the angel, —since I am a virgin? The angel answered, —The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God ... —I am the Lord's servant, Mary answered. —May it be to me as you have said. Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:34-38 NIV)

Similarly the holy Qur'an presents the annunciation not different from that of the Holy Bible;

(The angel) said: —I am only a Messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son. She said: —How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste? He said: —So (it will be), your Lord said: —That is easy for Me (Allah): And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter (already) decreed, (by Allah). —So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place. (Surah 19: 20-22).

These buttress the concept that the Virgin Birth of Jesus is clearly upheld by the Bible and the Qur'an.

The holy scriptures acknowledge Jesus as a Prophet *par excellence*. The scriptures make it clear that he was sent by God with a message for a chosen people. In the Bible, Jesus declares, —no prophet is accepted in his own native, family or country (Matt 13:56-58). He made this statement when the Pharisees at Nazereth wanted Him to repeat the wonders they have heard him perform in other towns. The statement testifies that Jesus admitted being a Prophet. In the Qur'an also Jesus declared his Prophetic status right from his childhood (Surah 19:30-33). He is a Prophet who had been given a book from God. He declared that —Peace be on to me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day

I will rise from the dead.¶ This explains that he was a Prophet from birth. Bible and Qur'an confirm the second coming of Jesus. The holy books announce Jesus' return at the end of time. The function of Jesus however, at the second coming as presented by both books differs from each other.

Similar to the New Testament, the Qur'an mentions the healing of the blind and lepers by Jesus. —I also heal the blind and the leper.¶ (Surah 3:49; Mark 8:22-25) The miracles Jesus performed demonstrated his status in the society not as ordinary man but as one whose presence indicated the presence of God among his people.

4.5.2 Divergent views identified from both Scriptures about Jesus

The views expressed by the research populace revealed that some beliefs of both Christians and Muslims on the person of Jesus are not the same. These findings emerged in the survey.

The concept of Trinity as espoused in the Bible is strongly repudiated in the Qur'an. To associate anybody or anything with Allah as equal is considered in Islam as *shirk* which is a sin. It's a practice against Tawheed (the Oneness of Allah).

O People of the Book! do not engage in religious excesses. Jesus Christ, son of Mary is none other than the messenger from Allah, Word and Spirit proceeding from Allah. Believe in Allah and his messengers alone. Desist from saying, —Three! ... (Quran 4:171)

Unlike the Bible where Jesus is presented both as human and divine, Qur'an depicts him solely as human and admonishes the people of the book to desist from claiming Isa ibn Maryam as God so as not to inherit hell.

Jesus' life in the public domain or his encounter with the officials around him is biblically registered at the age of 12 in the temple. Qur'anic presentations, however, inform us that right from birth Jesus spoke in defense of his mother at the temple and announced that he is a Prophet (Luke 2:41-52; Surah19:27-35).

The difference between messengers and prophets in Christianity and Islam is that, in Christianity prophets were also referred to as messengers. Thus there is no difference between a messenger and a prophet in Christianity. In Islam, a prophet (*Nabi*) is different from a messenger (*Rasul*) because the two played different roles.²⁰⁸ The distinction is clear in the Qur'an itself:

—God took a covenant from the prophets, saying, —I will give you the scripture and wisdom. Afterwards, a messenger will come to confirm all existing scriptures. You shall believe in him and support him.¶ He said, —Do you agree with this, and pledge to fulfill this covenant?¶ They said, —We agree.¶ He said, —You have thus borne witness, and I bear witness along with you.¶ (Surah 3:81)

From the study we discovered that a prophet comes with a revelation from Allah. This is evident in the life of Musa (Moses) who came with Torah, David with the Psalm and Jesus came with the *injl* (Gospel or the goodnews). Thus all the prophets and messengers got revelations from Allah to the communities they were sent to proclaim

²⁰⁸M. M. Tayviah, *A comparative Study of the Concept of Prophecy in Christianity and Islam*. Mphil Thesis Submitted to Kwame Nkrumah University and Technology; Department of Religious Studies . 2013, p. 42

the word. They basically came to warn the people of God's way and to worship one true God. They played intercessory role between God and the people.

A remarkable difference in the Bible and in the Qur'an lies in the individual who was crucified in the cross. The Bible clearly states that Jesus was the one killed and crucified by the Jews and Romans. Christianity holds that the plot of Jesus' arrest and later crucifixion is yielded by the act of betrayal committed by Judas Iscariot. However, in the

context of Islam, Isa was not murdered and crucified, but was replaced, rescued, and lifted to the sky by Allah. The person murdered and crucified was someone else, whose face was made to resemble the face of Isa. The Qur'an, however, does not mention the name of the said person.

The second coming of Jesus is understood differently in the Bible and in the Qur'an. In the Bible, Jesus will come as King and a judge of the world; that his coming will be the day of Judgement and also the end of time. In Islam however, Jesus will return to earth near the day of Judgement to restore justice and fight to defeat *al-Masih ad-Dajjal* (the false prophet or Anti-Christ). For Muslims Jesus will not come again as another or a new Prophet but will proceed from where he left off before his Ascension. He has another 40 years to live on this earth before his natural death.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed the field work, report findings and presented the data analysis or revelations which came up in the survey. The objective was to find, if any, the possibility of Jesus can be a catalyst for Christian-Muslim dialogue. We discussed the identity of Jesus as presented in both the Bible and the Qur'an. It was discovered that among a number of differences and similarities that the Bible and the Qur'an bring out concerning the figure of Jesus, we realized that further discussion could dwell on the nature of Jesus' prophethood. Since both scriptures believe His conception was through Angel Gabriel's annunciation, Jesus was born by Virgin Mary. Christians and Muslims regard him as prophet with a difference.

KNUST

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter looked at the discussion and analysis from the field work. We sought respondents' knowledge and understanding on the person of Jesus, how He is presented in the Bible and in the Qur'an. It was identified from the field that both holy books have some similarities and differences when it comes to the nature of Jesus. The Bible and Qur'an agree to the virgin birth of Jesus, (Matt 1:18-25; Surah 19:16-23). The holy books also agree that God sent angel Gabriel to Mary. It was when she consented to the angel's message that she conceived. The scriptures acknowledge Jesus to be a Prophet but with different understanding to his prophet-hood. The Bible considers Jesus as the Son of God (Matt 6:9-15). According to Christians, Jesus is more than a prophet because he is God incarnate. The Qur'an on the other hand declares that Jesus is but a prophet *par excellence*. Jesus was sent with the *injl* to the people of Israel. As prophet, he is equal to Adam in the sense that both Adam and Jesus had only one parent. This our final chapter gives the summary, makes some recommendations for further discussions and considerations and draws a conclusion to the entire work.

5.2 Summary of the study

The study had been on the person of Jesus in the Bible and in the Qur'an, its relevance for Christian-Muslim dialogue with focus on Kumasi Metropolis. Our purpose had was to find out what the Bible and Qur'an say about Jesus and to find out if that information can be a model for healthy Christian-Muslim dialogue, identify similarities, if any, and to find out the means to foster a deeper Christian-Muslim relationship.

We realized that the account of Jesus as presented in the Bible and in the Qur'an began with the annunciation of angel the Gabriel to Mary. The mother of Jesus is only mother in Qura'an to have mothered. Mary was the only human parent of Jesus. The common narratives on the birth of Jesus in the Bible and in the Qur'an present good grounds for peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. The child Jesus was named before his birth. His ministry was characterized by miracles which revealed and identified Him as God-sent Messiah. We observed that the primal focus of dialogue between members of the two faiths center on better understanding of the _other's' faith without giving room for stereotypes and prejudices. This leads to harmonious relations among the adherents of different beliefs.

The study revealed some commonalities and differences which are involved in the beliefs of Christians and Muslims with regard to Jesus. The adherents of the faiths believe in the virgin birth of Jesus through the annunciation of the angel Gabriel to

Mary. Virgin Mary consented to the will of God which made Mary to conceive Jesus.

Jesus as prophet is also attested to by both the Bible and the Qur'an. In both the holy Books, the status of Jesus as Prophet is understood based on the responses He gave to those around Him. (cf. Matt. 13: 56-58). The Qur'an gives similar understanding in the

life of Jesus. When Jesus was born and Mary was being accused, she pointed to her child Jesus for defense. According to the Qur'an Jesus said —I am indeed a servant of Allah, He has given me the Book, and made me a Prophet (Surah 19:30). Other areas we found to have similar understanding was the fact that Jesus would come again. His second coming is attested to by both the Bible and the Qur'an. The difference is on the mission of Jesus when He comes again. It was identified in the study that Jesus healed lepers in both the Bible and in the Qur'an (Mark 8:22-25; Surah 3:49).

There were other areas where we discovered some variance in belief between Christians and Muslims on the nature of Jesus. In the area of prophet-hood, Christians do not differentiate between Prophets and Messengers as Muslims do. Christianity does not differentiate between prophets and messengers as both are the same. Christians believe in Trinity and explain that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. Islam rather holds that Jesus is solely human and that God cannot have a son. This is in contrast to Christians who hold that Jesus is both human and divine.

The research also discussed the life of Christians and Muslims in Ghana and narrowed it down to the Kumasi Metropolis. It found out that the followers of both faiths have coexisted in Kumasi since 18th century. The Muslims were secluded from the Asantes at their arrival in Ashanti region and lived in Zongos. The two communities currently live, stay and work together in the same communities, homes and offices in Kumasi. There had been some religious misunderstandings between some members of the two faiths which resulted in violence. Eventually it threatened the peaceful co-existence of the adherents of both faiths in the 1980s. Notwithstanding the challenges which

characterized the lives of the believers in years past, respondents almost agreed that there is much to be done for the desired peaceful co-existence among Christians and Muslims in the Metropolis to be realised.

The researcher looked at the understanding and the interpretation of some Christians and Muslims living in the Kumasi Metropolis about the person of Jesus in their respective Holy Books. It was realized that Jesus was considered as a prophet, Son of God, a good man and a second person of the Trinity. The work identified some common notions held by both Christians and Muslims on Jesus. Among the common understanding issues on Jesus include his virgin birth by Mary; that it was the same angel Gabriel who was sent to Mary in both holy books which led to her pregnancy. These commonalities considered would make dialogue between Christians and Muslims possible. The work came out with some suggestions as to how best to improve the relation between Christians and Muslims.

5.3 Conclusion

The research sought to find out the relevance of Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an in Christian-Muslim dialogue. The work was situated in Kumasi Metropolis with much emphasis on selected Muslim dominated settlements. The work identified that amidst some doctrinal differences among the belief of Christians and Muslims on Jesus, there are still some common understandings. These similarities or common notions adhered to by both, if those thoughts were highlighted more among both, it would be a base to facilitate dialogue. The work observed that for the good number of years that Christians and Muslims have co-existed in common homes, worked together in some offices and played

together, not much is known among themselves that they have some common understandings on the personality of Jesus.

The plurality of the religious environment is not unique to the Ghanaian context it is gradually becoming a lasting feature of every society in the world and bringing with it attendant challenges. Inter-religious relationships must be a priority to the world if mankind is to overcome its present divisions, religious and otherwise. The findings of the fieldwork conducted in the Kumasi Metropolis revealed that theological and sociological issues and models are at play in dealing with Christian-Muslim exchanges in that part of Ghana.

5.4 General recommendations

The following recommendations are made following from the field work. The research revealed that Islam and Christianity have some doctrines and beliefs on which they would not agree. Among some of the teachings are Christian beliefs in Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus. Also Islam stands on Jesus as pure human and nothing more and denounce Jesus's Son-ship. Both religions have entrenched positions with regard to these.

Jesus is a common personality in Christianity and Islam. Both religions have reverence for Him as a person sent by God. We recommend that the reverence for Jesus should enable Christians and Muslims to live in love that Jesus came to proclaim. We recommend that this should be a spring board for dialogue between Christians and Muslims. This would lead to mutual understanding, respect and tolerance.

Words of Jesus is highly valued and mother Virgin Mary respectfully honoured by both Christians and Muslims. These are indications that they esteem an upright life. We recommend that the virtues exhibited by both Jesus and Mary, kindness, service to all and not seeking to be served, embracing all people that they encountered and prayerful lives, must be practised by both Christians and Muslims. This will make each Christian and Muslim to appreciate the presence of the other irrespective of ones religion.

We recommend, based on the afore-mentioned discussions that for fruitful dialogue to occur the individual differences must be acknowledged and respected. On their respective faiths Christians and Muslims must be aware that their religions are not the same and cannot be the same, hence the need to tolerate the differences there are in their religions.

This explains the common semblance of ideas which run through the Bible and Qur'an. We are of the view that if common beliefs in Christianity and Islam are more highlighted It would deepened their knowledge about each other's traditional practices and religious beliefs of the —other's faith. This would minimize if not erase the mistrust and suspicion which often characterise their relations.

Christians and Muslims have co-existed in Kumasi since the 18th century. These adherents currently outnumber any religious group in the world. Their understanding and mutual respect for each other are *sine qua non* for the peace of the entire universe; It is dialogue which could sustain and nurture the relative peace Ghana enjoys in the subregion.

KNUST

REFERENCES

Interviews

Interviewee	Position	Date
Rev Fr Felix Kyei Baffour	Tutor in Christian Religious Studies at Osei Kyeretwie Senior High School	23 rd April, 2016
Sheikh Issah Ledarni	Tutor in Islamic Religious Studies at Islamic Senior High School	23 rd April, 2016
Muhammed Adam	English Tutor at Jackie Pramso Senior High School	14 th March, 2016
Rev Charles Aaron Ekuban	Suprintident of Bantama Methodist Circuit Church	1 st March, 2016
Mallam Muhammed Mahey Ibrahim	Deputy Imam of Gonja Muslim Community in Ashanti Region	18 th February, 2016
Rev Ahmed Agyei	Founder of Straightway Chapel International, Kumasi	2 nd March, 2016
Maulvi Abdul Hameed Tahir	Missioner of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Ashanti Region, Kumasi	16 th March, 2016

Rev Fr Richmond Osei Amoah	Tutor and Counsellor at St. Loius Training College, Kumasi	17 th March, 2016
Rev Fr Dr Francis Sam	Ag. Head, Department Educational Leadrship, Faculty of Education and Communication Sciences, University Campus of Education, Winneba – Kumasi Campus	21 st February, 2016
Sheikh Abdul Hamid Umar	Radio Panelist on Islamic Propagation, Ayija - Kumasis	27 th April, 2016

Books

Adu-Boahen, A., *Topics in West African History*, London: Longman, 1971

Ajaj, A., *The Joseph Story in the Qur''an and the Bible, and in Muslim and Jewish Tradition*, (Prague: International Baptist Theological Seminary). 2000

al-Tabari, Commentary, Part 6, in Neil Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*: Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

Atiemo, A. O., *Religion and Inculturation of Human Rights in Ghana*. Bloomsbury. 2013

Barclay W., *The Gospel of Luke*, Westminster: John Knox Press, 2001.

Barker, G. A., and Gregg, A. S., *Jesus Beyond Christianity: The Classic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,). 2010

Barth, K., *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, A&C Black, 2004,

Borg M. J., and J. D., Crossan, *The First Christmas*, Cambridge: Harper Collins, 2009.

Braswell Jr, G. W., *What You Need to know about Islam and Muslims*, Nashville, Tennessee, 2000

Brown, W. A., *How To Think of Christ*, New York: Scribner, 1945.

Bruner, F., [1st ed. 1987], *Matthew: The Christbook, Matthew 1-12*, Bloomsbury T&T Clark: Eerdmans, 2004.

Casey, M., *Jesus of Nazareth: An Independent Historian's Account of His Life and Teaching*. Bloomsbury. Harper Collins, 2010.

Catholic Encyclopedia on Miracles

Craig A. E., *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 2001.

-----, *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew-Luke, Volume 1* 2003.

Crossan, J. D., *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, Harper One 1995.

Dorman, T. M., —Virgin Birth, in Bromiley, Geoffrey W., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: Q-Z*, Eerdmans, (1995).

Dretke, J., *A Christian Approach to Muslims: Reflections from West Africa*. London: William Carey Library Publishers, 1979.

Encyclopædia Britannica, Biblical literature. Encyclopædia Britannica Online., 2011.

Encyclopedia of Islam, Online edition.

Esposito, J. L., *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Forde, G., *A Journey Together, Muslims and Christians in Ireland: Building Mutual respect, understanding and Cooperation, A Resource for Christian-Muslim Dialogue.*, Cois Tine, Ireland, 2013

Goddard, H., *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books). 2000

Gunkel, —Zum religionsgesch. Verst. des N.T. Göttingen, 1903

Gibb, H. A. R., and Kramers, J. H., eds. *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*: Ithaca, NY:

- Cornell University Press, 1961.
- Harris, S. L., *Understanding the Bible*. Palo Alto: Mayfield. 1985.
- Hedley, G., *The Symbol of the Faith*. London: Macmillan, 1948.
- Hurairah, A., *Biblica Mullahs: Discovering the True Islam Behind the Myths*, 2014 Ibn-Kathir, I. I.U., *Tasfsir Al-Qur'an Al-,,Azim* Beirut: Dar Al-Andalus, 1966.
- Jan, G., *Price of Honor: Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silence on the Islamic World*, New York: Little Brown and Company, 1994.
- Johnson, M. D., —The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies: With Special Reference to the Setting of the Genealogies of Jesus|| *Volume 8 of Cambridge Studies in Advanced Mathematics* *Volume 8 of Monograph series*, Society for New Testament Studies *Society for New Testament Studies*, Monograph series, 1989.
- Kelly, J. F., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2006.
- Kenneth, C., *Jesus and Islam: An Exploration* (London: George Allen and Unwin). 1985
- Khalidi, T., (ed. & transl), *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature*. London: Harvard University Press. 2001
- Kostenberger, A. J., Kellum, L. S. and Quarles, C. L., *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament*. B&H Publishing group Tennessee, U.S A. 2009
- Lockyer, H., *All the Miracles of the Bible*, Westminster: Zondervan, 1988.
- Fitzgerald, M., and Borelli, J., *Interfaith Dialogue: Catholic View*, Orbis USA, (2006).
- Marshall, H., *The Gospel of Luke* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- Martin, G. G., *The Gospel According to Mark: Meaning and Message*. Chicago: Loyola, 2005.

- Martin, R. P., *Where Christology began: essays on Philippians 2* Brian J. Dodd (Ed) Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.
- Mills, W. E., and Roger A. B., *Mercer dictionary of the Bible*. Mercer University Press, 1990
- Mulia, S., *Promoting Gender Equity Through Interreligious Marriage: Empowering Indonesian Women*, in *Muslim-non-Muslim Marriage: Political and Cultural Contestations in Southeast Asia*, ed Gavin W. Jones Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009,
- Norman, G. and Abdul S. *Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993.
- O'Shaughnessy, T. J., *The Development of the Meaning of Spirit in the Qur'an*. Rome Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1953
- Ouspensky, L., and Lossky, L. O. V., *The Meaning of Icons*. Crestwood NY, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982.
- Parrinder, G., *Jesus in the Qur'an*. London: Sheldon Press 1965.
- Pentecost, D., *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. Westminster: Zondervan, 1980.
- Perkins, P., *Reading the New Testament*. Toronto: Paulist Press, 1988.
- Philips, A. A. B., *The True Message of Jesus Christ*. Lagos: Hamza Intl Pub House. 1996
- Ramm, B. L., *An Evangelical Christology* Vancouver: Regent College Publishing 1993.
- Roberts, M. D., *Can We Trust the Gospels?: Investigating the Reliability of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*. Westminster: Good News Publishers, 2007.
- Samwini, N. I., *Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950 and its effects upon Muslim and Muslim-Christian relation*. A Thesis submitted to the school of Historical Studies, University of Birmingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006.

Sarbah, C. J. E., *A critical study of Christian-Muslim Relations in the Central Region of Ghana with special reference to traditional Akan Values*, (Birmingham: University of Birmingham). 2010

Sinapati, B. P., *Jesus the Kalimatullah: A Christian - Muslim Relation*. ISPCK, 2009.

Sonn, T., *A Brief History of Islam*. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Stagg, E. and Frank. *Woman in the World of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978.

Svare, H., *Den gode samtalen. Kunsten å skape dialog*. Oslo: Pax Forlag A/S., 2006

Three translations of the Koran (Al-Qur'an) Side by Side, Vol 1 of Library of Alexandria

Twelftree, G. H., *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* Westminster InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Usener, —Geburt und Kindheit Christi in —*Zeitschrift für die neueste. Wissenschaft*, IV, 1903

Walvoord, J. F., and Roy B. Zuck, *the Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 1983.

Zwemer, S., *The Moslem Christ*. Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1912.

Journals

al-Dimasyqi, Imad al-Din Abi al-Fidal Ismail bin Umar bin Kathir al-Qursyi. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Riyadh: Dar al-Salam Li al-Nasyr wa al-Tawzi' 2001

al-Sya'rawi, al-Syeikh al-Imam Muhammad Mutawalli. *Tafsir al-Sya'rawi*, Mizr: alMaktabah al-Tawfiqiyah, n.d.

al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammed bin Jarir. *Jami' al-Bayan An Ta'wil Ay al-Quran*, alQahirah: Dar al-Salam. 2005.

Amar, D., —Jesus in Islam, *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, vol. 8, No. 1, Spring, 2004.

An Open Letter of 38 Muslim Scholars to H. H. Pope Benedict XVI. *A Common Word Between Us and You*. Amman, 2007. The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought. *A Common Word*. Amman: RISSC, 2012

Asafa, J., *The Triple Causes of African Underdevelopment: Colonial capitalism, State terrorism and Racism* in International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, Academic Journal, Vol 7(3) pp75-9; Research Paper Submitted to University of Tanneessee, USA, 2015

Ayoub, M., “Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Goals and Obstacles”, *the Muslim World*, Vol. 94, July 2004

Azumah, J., —Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana: Too Much Meat Does Not Spoil the Soupl *Current Dialogue.*, World Council of Churches, December 2000.

Encyclopedia of Islam, *Jesus* article. cf. L. Massignon, *Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon Ghazali*, in REI , 1932.

Frederiks, M. Th., —Let us understand our differences: Current trends in Christian-Musliml, 2010. M. T. Frederiks, —Let us understand our differences: Current trends in Christian-Muslim Relation in sub-Sahara Africa.l *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 27, (no 4.) 2010

Fry, G. C., —The Quranic Christl, *Concordia Theological Quarterly*. Volume43, Number 3, June 1979

Haqqani, S., *Gendered Expectations, Personal Choice and Social Compatibility in Western Muslim Marriages*, B A Thesis in the University of Texas, Austin, 2013.

Irenaeus, 120-202 AD “*Against Heresies*l, Book 1, Chapter 24, DOCTRINES OF SATURNINUS AND BASILIDES.

Ishmail Ibn Umar Ibn-Kathir, *Tasfsir Al-Qur’’an Al-., Azim* Bairut: Dar Al-Andalus, 1966

Levtzion, N., *Islam in West Africa*. Britain, Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1984.

Muhammad al-Razi Fakhr al-Din al-Allamah Diya' al-Din Umar. *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghaib*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr. 1985.

Muhammad Rasyid Ridha. *Tafsir al-Manar*, Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, n.d.

Mulia, S., *Promoting Gender Equity Through Interreligious Marriage: Empowering Indonesian Women*, in —Muslim-non-Muslim Marriage: Political and Cultural Contestations in Southeast Asia, ed Gavin W. Jones. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009.

Ndongo, K. A., Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an: a comparative study. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Volume 12, Issue 1 (May– June, 2013),

Relations in sub-Saharan Africa. In *Interfaith Relations After One Hundred Years* edited Marina Ngursangzeli Behera, (Regnum Edinburgh 2010 Series).

Reynolds, G. S. —The Muslim Jesus: Dead or alive? School of Oriental and African Studies, *Bulletin of SOAS*, 72, 2; (2009).

Samwini, N. I. Interview by Owusu-Ansah David. *The Role of the Ghana Christian Council to Inter-Denominational and Inter-Faith Dialogue in the Country* (Ghana); Accra, July 18, 2005.

Samwini, N. I., —Religious Toleration as a key factor for Social Stability in Plural Ghana. *Developing Country Studies*, Vol.4, No.12, 2014.

-----, Interview by Owusu-Ansah David. *The Role of the Ghana Christian Council to Inter-Denominational and Inter-Faith Dialogue in the Country* (Ghana); Accra, July 18, 2005.

Sanaullah, Md., *Interfaith Dialogue in Islam: A Scriptural Scrutiny* in *IQSR Journal Of Humanities and Social Sciences (IQSR-JHSS)* Vol 19, Issue 3, Ver. IV (March 2014)

Sanaullah, Md., *Interfaith Dialogue in Islam: A Scriptural Scrutiny*; An M.Phil

Researcher, Department of Islamic Studies in IQSR Journal Of Humanities and Social Sciences (IQSR-JHSS) Vol 19, Issue 3, Ver. IV (March 2014)

Setzer, C..., —Excellent Women: Female Witness to the Resurrection.‖ *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 116, No. 2 (Summer, 1997).

The Signature, Muslim-Christian Dialogue: Challenges and Prospects, The Student Newsletter of the Department of Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas - November 2010.

Travis, J., —Messiah Muslim Followers of Isal. *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (2000), 17:1 (spring): 54. Retrieved Spring, 2000.

Turkson, P. K., —Ghana, if Islam Becomes an Enigma‖, *FondazioneInternazionale*, Oasis: C.F, 2007.

Woodberry, J. D. —The Muslim Understanding of Jesus, in *Word and World*, vol. 16, No. 2, Spring, 1996

Online resources

2010 population and housing census, District Analytical report: Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 2014.

Appiah, A. V., *The Rights of Muslim Women in Marriage Relationship within the Kumasi Metropolitan Area*. Unpublished Masters' Thesis, 2011

Azuma. J., *Christian-Muslim Relation in Ghana: Too much Meat Does Not spoil the Soup*. Retrieved from <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd36-01.htm> accessed on 27/4/2016.

Bob-Millar, M., and Bob-Milliar, G. K., —Christianity In The Ghanaian State In The Past Fifty Years‖. Available at [http://www.ghanaweb.com/Feature Article of](http://www.ghanaweb.com/Feature%20Article%20of%20Wednesday,%2028%20February%202007) Wednesday, 28 February 2007

Cumming, J., —Muslim Followers of Jesus?‖. *ChristianityToday*. Retrieved 2nd July, 2015.

Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2007. <http://www.islamhelpline.net/node/4519>.
Accessed on 3rd July, 2015

Haqqani, S., *Gendered Expectations, Personal Choice and Social Compatibility in Western Muslim Marriages*, B A Thesis in the University of Texas, Austin, 2013

Kyei, S. A., *Critical Reflection on the Liturgical Acclamation, “Make a Joyful Noise unto God” Among some selected Churches in Kumasi (Ghana)*, MPHIL Thesis in KNUST, 2014

Miracles Attributed to Jesus‖ in *Revolvy*. Accessed on 17/02/2015
[https://www.revolvy/main/index.php?s=Miracles attributed to Jesus &item_type=topic](https://www.revolvy/main/index.php?s=Miracles%20attributed%20to%20Jesus&item_type=topic)

Samwini, N. I., —The Need for and Importance of Dialogue of Life in Community Building: The Case of Selected West African Nations‖, *Interreligious Dialogue*.
irdailogue.org.

Rosty, S., Similarities between the Bible and the Qur‘an, *Truth Booth Online*, May 2007.
Available at <http://www.truthboothonline.org>.

Tayviah, M. M., *A comparative Study of the Concept of Prophecy in Christianity and Islam*. 2013

Troll, C. W., —Bible and Qur‘an in Dialogue: The Word of God in Christian-Muslim Dialogue‖, *Bulletin Dei Verbum* 79/80,

APPENDICES

PRIMARY SOURCES

Appendix 1:

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

This questionnaire aims at seeking for your views on academic exercise with a topic *a study of the person of Jesus (Isa) in the Bible and in the Qur'an, its relevance for Christian-Muslim dialogue in the Kumasi metropolises*. The respondent's identity would be highly treated as confidential as this is purely for academic purpose.

Please tick (✓) your choice of response where answers are provided and fill in the space where necessary.

QUESTIONNAIRE *Please tick ✓ one*

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age bracket
10- 20 ☐ 21-30 ☐
31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51+ ☐
3. Religions:
Islam ☐ Christianity ☐ Traditional ☐
4. Status in the religious denomination or group:
A member ☐ A Clergy / Imam ☐
5. How did you become a member of your religion?
By birth or parental heritage ☐
Conversion ☐

Voluntary Association []

6. Have you read from either Bible or Quran or Both

a) Bible only [] c) Bible and Qur'an []

b) Qur'an only [] d) None []

7. Do you have any knowledge of Jesus in the Bible or Isa in the Qur'an?

a) Yes [] b) No []

8. If YES, who is Jesus / Isa?

a) Son of God [] c) A Good Man []

b) A Prophet [] d) God []

9. Explain your answer to question 8.

.....

.....

.....

10. Do you identify any commonality or difference in the teachings of Bible and Quran about Jesus / Isa?

a) Yes [] b) No []

11. If _yes_, kindly explain your answer to Question 9.

.....

.....

Do you see Jesus as a Messenger?

a) Yes [] b) No []

12. Explain your answer to question 10.

.....

.....

13. Do you have some Christian friends?

- a) Yes [] b) No []

14. Do you have some Muslim friends

- a) Yes [] b) No []

15. In which way do you rate the level of relationship between Christians and Muslims in Kumasi Metropolis?

- a) Very Good [] c) Quite Good []
b) Good [] d) Bad []

16. What is your reason for your answer to question 12 above?

.....
.....

Is there the need for Christians and Muslims to have a dialogue for better understanding of each other's faith?

- a) Yes [] b) No []

17. Explain your answer to question 16 above.

.....
.....

Can the knowledge of Jesus in the Bible and Isa in the Quran foster more understanding and unity among Christians and Muslims?

- a) Yes [] b) No []

18. Explain your answer to question 18.

.....
.....

19. Do you feel willing and ready to discuss religious issues with Non-Muslim / Non-Christian friends?

- a) Yes [] b) No []

Appendix 2:

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Christian leaders

1. Who is Jesus?
2. What have you heard about Jesus/Isa in the Qur'an?
3. Who is Jesus in the Bible?
4. What is the difference between your view of Jesus as a Christian and how that of Islam (as you perceive)?
5. How will you describe the relationship between Christians and Muslims in your community?
6. How do you expect members of your church to relate with Muslims in their communities?
7. How can we foster unity and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in the Metropolis?

Muslim leaders

1. Who is Jesus/Isa?
2. What have you heard/read about Jesus in the Bible?
3. What does the Qur'an say about Isa?
4. Is the Christian view of Jesus the same as that of Isa in the Qur'an?
5. How would you describe the relationship between Christians and Muslims in the mosque?
6. How do you expect the Muslims in your mosque to live with Christians in their communities?
7. How can we foster unity and peaceful co-existence between Christians and

Muslims in the Metropolis?

KNUST

