

**Understanding and evangelizing other ideologies**  
(that are considered "Christian ways of thinking")

In 1/3 of the world there exists a "Christian way of thinking". Unfortunately, this statistic does not mean that 1/3 of the people of the world actually are Christians. Jehovah Witness and Mormonism have what might be considered a "Christian way of thinking". However, they are not within Christianity. They are cults. Secular humanism sometimes appears to think in a "Christian way". However, in it's purest form it has become a world religion that is not within Christianity. Catholicism certainly is based on a Christian way of thinking. It is considered as being within Christianity. Nevertheless, it has a great tendency to breed religiosity. The tragic result is that many Catholics are not Christians.

Of course, Catholicism is much more "Christian" than Mormonism. I have met Catholics who are Christians. I have never met a Mormon who is a Christian. Mormonism is a cult. There must be a distinction, therefore, between the two. Christians can be found within Catholicism (although it is often the exception and not the rule). Christians are not found within Jehovah Witness and Mormonism (although both groups often claim they are Christian and can appear to have a Christian way of thinking). Secular humanism, as a religion, does not have Christians within it. However, many Christians are affected by the ideas of Secular Humanism. These Christians are often called nominal Christians (weak Christians).

The previous paragraphs are only for the purposes of introduction. It is not the purpose of this course to place people in groups and to judge them. It is the purpose of this course to understand and to evangelize these groups of people. If the person is already a Christian we can help lead him closer to the Lord. If the person is not a Christian we must evangelize him. Both of these things can happen only if we first understand the person and his ideology.

**Catholicism**

Evangelical Christians have made two great mistakes concerning their perspective of Catholicism. At one extreme, we have those who say that Catholicism is a cult. They say that it is not possible for a Catholic to be saved. At the other extreme, we have those who simply say, "Catholics think in one way and we think in another way." Both extremes are extremely wrong. They are too simple.

First, it must be remembered that Catholicism is based on the central Christian Doctrines. Therefore, it is possible for a Catholic to be saved. Second, we must not ignore false doctrine for the sake of "unity". Actually, that only produces false unity. False doctrine must be challenged because it keeps many (if not most) Catholics from entering the Kingdom of God. Therefore, two points must be emphasized:

Accept the fact that a Catholic can be a Christian. But how can you call a Catholic a believer when Catholics do not understand the doctrine of salvation? The same way that "*certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed*" (Acts 15:5) could be called believers yet not understand the doctrine of salvation. In Acts 15:1 we read about the beginning of the confusion that led to the Council at Jerusalem. Some were saying, "*Unless you are circumcised according*

*the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.*" In verse 5, those called believers (in the book of Acts a believer is always a Christian) agree with the confused understanding of the doctrine of salvation. Yet, they are still saved. We must remember that salvation is of the heart, not of the mind. God does not depend on doctrine to save us. Thus, someone could be saved. He could know the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and intimate Lord, and still not have a perfect understanding of doctrine. Look at the heart of the person. A Christian will know if another person is a Christian without knowing the name of his church. Is Jesus in his heart? Does he love Jesus? Has he given his life to Jesus?

Be prepared to challenge false doctrine. The goals are to evangelize unsaved Catholics and to teach correct doctrine to saved Catholics. In order to be successful this must be done on 2 levels: level #1--the "what?" of false doctrine: what do these doctrines say? What do Catholics teach and believe that is not biblical? Level #2--the "why?" of false doctrine: why is the doctrine wrong? Why do they have the doctrine? why does the individual Catholic believe the doctrine? It may be necessary to understand level #1 to talk with a Catholic. But it is necessary to understand level #2 in order to evangelize a Catholic. If you only understand level #2 then you can argue with a Catholic. But if you also understand level #1 then you can touch his heart and replace the false doctrine with the biblical doctrine. Always remember: The Catholic believes the false doctrine because he is trying to fill up an empty place in his relationship with God. This only results in frustration. Only the true doctrine can satisfy him.

### 12 Points or Areas of False Doctrine in Catholicism.

#### Mariology.

At it's worst it is a cultic doctrine that makes Mary a God. She is worshiped. At it's best it is a series of dogma that has no biblical basis. It produces an extreme distortion of the identity of Mary.

The Immaculate Conception -- created by Pope Pius IX in 1854. It says that Mary was born without original sin. For this to be true, one of the following must be true also: Mary was not born within humanity (that is to say that she was not human). There was a chain of sinless births. This would have to extend back to Adam being sinless. This would deny the fall of man. Catholic theology does not deny the fall of man. Therefore, the usual implication of the Immaculate Conception is that Mary is extra-human.

The Ascension--created by Pope Pius XII in 1950. Mary was taken bodily (translated) into heaven. This is not in the Bible. Prayers to Mary--the rosary and other prayers are offered to Mary so that she will help. All of these doctrines result in some degree of worship of Mary. Why? For a Roman Catholic it is difficult to approach Jesus. The personal relationship that he offers is not taught in the church. God is viewed as being far away. There is an unhealthy fear of God that makes him unapproachable. This leaves the empty place is filled by an understandable figure -- the mother figure! The mother figure is caring, compassionate, and soft. She is very approachable. The solution is Jesus! It is necessary to offer the personal Jesus. Evangelism must emphasize the opportunity to have a real and intimate relationship with God through Jesus.

The following scriptures could be used: Jn. 15:14; Mt 11:28; Lk 10:38-42; 1 Tim. 2:5. In order to show that Mary was a human being you could use Lk. 2:22-24 and Lev. 12:8 to show that she had to offer sacrifices to God like anyone else. She needed forgiveness. She needed a savior like all other human beings (Lk 1: 47). It can also be shown that Jesus himself would not agree with the exalted position given to Mary (Lk 11:27,28; Mk 3:31-35).

What can be kept? We can give honor to Mary as we give to Paul (an example to be imitated). We can imitate her pure faith (Lk. 1:38,45), and her simple humility (Lk. 1:46-48).

#### Baptism of infants.

Infants are sprinkled with water. This cleanses them of original sin and they are saved. The need for a salvation experience is not really taught in the church. The gospel is not presented in a way that challenges the individual that he needs to make a decision. He needs to repent and give his life to Jesus. Instead, someone else makes the decision for you when you are a baby. Biblically, that is impossible. It is necessary to emphasize the need for repentance. Then the Holy Spirit can convict the person that he is a sinner. It must be understood that in order to receive a personal Savior the person must make a personal decision. Jesus taught that we must decide with our own free will to give our lives to Him. The following Scriptures could be used: Rom. 6:3-10; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 2:38; Mt. 16:24-25.

What can be kept? We can dedicate our babies to the Lord and express our commitment to teach them about Jesus and our desire that they grow up as Christians.

#### Purgatory.

It is a place and state of punishment. The soul suffers in order to be cleansed before going to heaven. Prayers of the saints and money make possible the transfer. This is done through the Mass (prayers are said and money is given). There is a lack of understanding and acceptance of the final, sufficient, and complete work of the cross. The solution is Jesus! It is necessary to emphasize the work of the cross and the cleansing power of the blood. Focus on the fact that there is complete forgiveness of sins in Jesus. The following Scriptures could be used: Jn 19:30 ("It is finished" =totaldebt= the debt is paid in full), 1 Jn. 1:9.

What can be kept? The idea that Christians suffer is very biblical. We do suffer the sufferings of Christ in this life because Christ is in us (not because we are saved by suffering). See Phil. 3:10; Jn. 15:20; 2 Tim. 3:12; Col. 1:24.

#### Penance

Sins are confessed to a priest. The priest gives the person a certain act to do in addition to turning from the sin. The completion of the act insures forgiveness. There is a lack of ability to trust Jesus completely for forgiveness of sins. There is a desire to earn forgiveness. The solution is Jesus! It is necessary to emphasize the "penance" of confession and repentance unto God. Explain the doctrine of forgiveness by the blood of the cross. Use 1 Jn. 2:1,2; Jn 6:28,29; Gal 2:21.

What can be kept? Christians do need to confess sins one to another (James. 5:16).

### The Mass.

The Mass is a sacrifice (without blood). Day and night, worldwide, Jesus is being sacrificed (over 50,000 times a day). He dies again and again with each Mass that is given as if the sacrifice at Calvary was not complete and final. There is a lack of ability to see the immediate availability of salvation. The sacrifice at Calvary is not seen as being complete. The work of Jesus of the cross is not viewed as a complete and final work. The solution is Jesus! Show that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was final and complete. Salvation is available now in Christ. Furthermore, stress the resurrection and the ascension. Jesus is not on the cross anymore. He is in heaven! Use Eph. 1:20; Mt. 27:51; Heb. 9:24-28; Heb. 10:11,12; Heb. 6:4,6.

What can be kept? The idea of meeting together to celebrate the cross.

### Tradition.

For Catholics there are two sources of revelation. The Bible is one source. The traditions of the Church are another source. In practice, the traditions have more authority (reaffirmed in the second Vatican Council). There is a lack of interest and love for the Word of God. There is a distorted view of the Church as Savior. Offer Jesus as a personal Savior. Teach that the Church is the body of Christ, and that the blood of Jesus is the salvation of God. Encourage the Catholic to read the Bible. Encourage loyalty to the Kingdom of God. Use Ps. 138:2; Mt. 24:35; Jn. 12:48; Mk. 7:6-8; Rev. 22:19.

What can be kept? Biblical traditions can be very useful. Tradition is not automatically bad.

### Mediators other than Jesus.

Jesus is replaced by others who are mediators between God and man. Priests. The priest stands in for Jesus and represents Him on earth. He is said to be "alter Christus" (another Christ). The priest performs many acts on behalf of the people. Saints. Specific prayers are offered to specific saints in order to receive their help. When there is no personal Jesus there is a need for substitutes. Jesus must be accepted as the only mediator. Emphasize that Jesus is always available and always wants to help us. Use Jn. 14:6; Is. 8:19; I Tim. 2:5; Mt. 27:51; I Pt. 2:9; I Sam. 28:8-19; Rom. 8:26; Heb. 7:25.

What can be kept? We are a priestly people. Christ lives in us (I Pt. 2:9).

### The Pope.

He has a divine title (Holy Father). He sits as Christ in the Vatican. His words are automatically God's words. He is infallible. He makes undeniable doctrine. Pope Leo XIII claimed that he held the place of God almighty upon the earth. Boniface VIII declared that he was God. He said that "to be subject to the Pope is necessary for salvation." The lack of a relationship with Jesus creates a great need for a replacement. The spiritual is replaced with the tangible. Emphasize that Jesus is a personal Savior. He alone is perfect. He alone is the Head of the Church. Use Rom. 3:10,23 and Eph 1:22.

What can be kept? Respect for leaders of the Church (1 Thes. 5:12,13).

### Statues, the monstrance, shrines, and necklaces.

All of these things become objects of worship (idols). Prayers are offered to statues. The Holy Eucharist is put in the monstrance. The shrine is a special place to worship. Necklaces are worn as Holy objects. All of these objects are revered as being special and Holy. Many times Catholics have a theology of good works instead of a theology of faith. The spiritual world seems so distant. Like faith, it seems so intangible. Worship in the Spirit seems so intangible. So the Catholic turns to a more tangible form of theology and worship. Emphasize the reality of the resurrection. Show that Jesus is a personal Savior. Spiritual relationship with Him through faith is something that is real. It can be experienced. Use Eph. 2:8-10; Jn. 4:20-24; Acts 17:22-31; Mk. 7:3,4,18-20.

What can be kept? It is dangerous to keep anything that can be worshiped!

#### The Eucharist.

Miraculously, the bread and wine are changed into the actual body and blood of Christ. The elements are thought of the treated as is they were God. Here again, we see the need for the tangible. Stress the spiritual presence of Jesus Christ. Use Mt. 28:20.

What can be kept? The actual spiritual presence of Jesus at the Lord's Supper.

#### Sacraments as a way to salvation.

The Catholic sacraments form a system of religious rites. This system serves as a channel through which to receive salvation. It builds confidence. Because of a lack of faith in the work of the cross there is a need for a tangible system of events that will insure salvation. Jesus is the only true channel to salvation. Use Eph. 2:8-10 and Jn 14:6

What can be kept? The symbolic use of biblical sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper).

#### Lack of Assurance.

It is a Catholic doctrine that there is no assurance of salvation. The Council of Trent stated: "Anathema is the person who says they have assurance of salvation." Catholic doctrine promotes salvation by works. Thus, a person cannot know the final result until after his works are completed (after he dies). Explain that we cannot trust in our own lives. We must trust in the life of Jesus. Jesus life is over. The verdict is in. There is no more waiting for the person who trusts in a life that has already happened. Use Jn. 1:12; 3:16,36; 19:30; Acts 4:12; 2 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 3:3-9; 1 Jn. 2:5; 3:2,14,19,24; 5:13.

What can be kept? It is true that we must endure until the end. We must finish the race (Mt. 24:13; I Cor. 9:24-27).

In summary, Catholicism has extra non-biblical doctrines that reduce the greatness of Jesus. It minimizes the work of the cross, and it promotes a good works theology. This is because there is a lack of Bible knowledge; a lack of the Spirit (the power of the Spirit is replaced by tangible substitutes); there is the desire to earn salvation; a desire for piety through superficial holiness; a lack of a personal relationship with Jesus; a lack of faith in the work of the cross; and because Catholic doctrine has never made the full jump from the old covenant to the new covenant.

Jesus is the only solution! Lift Him up, magnify Him, stress faith and focus on the Bible. Emphasize the successful, sufficient, complete and final work of the cross. Challenge the unsaved Catholic to make his own personal decision. He must repent and give his life to Jesus. Most important, offer him the opportunity to have a personal, real and intimate relationship with Jesus.

The most important book for a Catholic to read is Hebrews. The most important verse for a Catholic is Gal. 2:21.

### **Secular Humanism.**

What is humanism? The Humanist Manifesto states, "No deity will save us. We must save ourselves." For the humanist, man is God. Humanism is a religion that believes that man is God. Augustine said, "Sin is believing the lie that you are self-created, self-dependent, and self-sustained." In this sense, humanism is the ultimate sinful ideology. It is the ultimate idolatry (man worshipping man).

Where is humanism? Humanism exists everywhere that man exists. Pure humanists are atheists (actually, there is no such thing as atheism since all people have a god--even if the god is the person himself). At the same time, humanism has entered every religion. Unfortunately, it has even entered Christianity. There are two results of humanism within the church: The churches are filled with "good" people who are not Christians. There are tares among the wheat (Mt. 13:24-30) and the churches are filled with weak Christians (often called nominal Christians). These are people who are saved. However, humanistic ideas and philosophies keep them from growing in the Lord.

The 2 main philosophies of popular humanism: Situational ethics and tolerance.

#### **Situational ethics**

This principle defines the moral code of humanism. It says that everything depends. There are no absolutes. Everything depends on what? It all depends on what you want. It is an egotistical morality. Since man is God, man makes the rules. What are the rules? It depends. It depends on what benefits man the most. It is a utilitarian philosophy the individual then the action is considered moral. A humanist definitely would say, "Do whatever works out best for you" (consider Jdg. 21:25). This is why people can have abortions and say that it was the morally correct thing to do.

#### **Tolerance**

This principle defines "love" for the humanist. It claims that love is to tolerate all things (I Cor 13:7 says it "bears all things"). Biblical love bears all things (it accepts and supports the person even if it cannot and will not accept the actions of the person). Humanistic love tolerates all things (it accepts the person and his wrong actions but does nothing to help the person). It is a love of words only. Humanistic love says, "I am O.K. and you are O.K.". It says, "You do not bother me and I will not bother you."

The root and result of both of these philosophies is that man is sovereign. Man is god. Man makes the rules. Whatever man does is acceptable. Since man is God, the most important topic in humanism is human rights. Man must defend his rights. He must hold onto his rights at all costs. A humanist would say, "When a man has lost his rights he has lost his life" (compare this with Mt. 5:38-41; Mt. 16:24-26; Phil. 2:5-7).

Humanism always leads to hedonism (the love of evil pleasures). Humanism says that man is God. Reality says that man has a sin nature. The result is that in humanism god has a sin nature. God is free to do what he likes. Thus, god (man) will act according to his nature. The result is hedonism.

Especially in the Western world, humanism appears to be "good". Humanists are seen as good people who want to live as brothers with all peoples of the world. They want to do what is good for mankind. The people who have biblical values and morals are the "bad" people (even though part of the reason why Humanism appears to be "good" is because it does hold to certain Christian principles and practices)

Humanists also believe: The universe was not created; man is evolving toward perfection (evolution); the supernatural does not exist; there is no life after death; there needs to be a new world order; and Socialism.

To evangelize Humanists you must challenge their minds. The humanist believes in tolerance. However, humanists do not tolerate Christians. Humanism is militantly against Christianity (or any other form of orthodox religion). The Humanist Manifesto promotes tolerance but aggressively opposes religion. It wants to say, "Man can do whatever makes him happy as long as it does not involve religion." This is inconsistent. A humanist may not even be willing to listen to your testimony until you challenge him on this level.

Humanism says that man has the power within himself to make the world a perfect place to live. It is only a matter of time (evolution). Why then do things only seem to be getting worse? More crime. More murders. More starving. More pollution. More divorce. More violence. More wars. More pornography. Challenge the humanist. Where is his hope? History shows us that it is hopeless to hope in man. Without God there is no hope.

You must also challenge their hearts. Remember that Humanism is an intellectual religion. Do not waste a lot of time with intellectual arguments. Challenge his mind with the purpose of creating an opportunity to challenge his heart. Use the Word of God. Trust in the power of the Word (Rom 1:16). Contrast the failures of mankind with the solutions of Christ. Try to find an area in his life that has problems. Offer Jesus as the solution. Focus on his natural need for forgiveness. Pray for conviction of sin. Offer him eternal life. Humanism offers no hope for the future. All human beings have a natural desire for eternal life. Here is a great opportunity in the evangelism of humanists. Finally, explain to him that he can have a relationship with God. Humanists replace fellowship with God with social awareness (supporting a cause or a social issue). This, however, does not fill the empty place left in the life of someone who does not know God. Touch the need of his heart. Offer him Jesus!

## **Jehovah Witness and Mormonism**

### Jehovah Witness.

It began in 1879 under the leadership of Charles Russell. They use the Bible as their Holy Book. However, they place reason above the Bible. If what is written in the Bible goes against human reason then it is denied. Their, doctrine (false doctrine), therefore, is based on rationalism.

Jehovah Witness doctrines: They deny the Trinity. They deny the divinity of Christ. They deny the pre-existence of Jesus. They deny salvation by faith. They deny the need for a supernatural Savior. They say that Jesus already returned (secretly) in 1914.

### Mormonism.

It began in 1830 under the leadership of Joseph Smith. They use the Bible as a Holy Book. However, the Book of Mormon is used as a higher authority (Smith received the contents of this book from the angel Moroni and he translated them from mysterious golden plates).

Mormonism doctrines: They deny the Trinity. They deny the divinity of Christ. They deny the pre-existence of Jesus. They deny salvation by faith. They deny the need for a supernatural Savior. They deny the fall of man (in Mormon doctrine Adam is God the Father). They believe in and practice salvation by polygamy.

When evangelizing these cults, the most important thing is to emphasize the divinity of Jesus Christ. All cults deny His deity. This, of course, is the foundational problem. Use Scripture: Jn 20:28; Heb 1:8; Jn 17:5, Jn 8:51-59, Matt 14:33 and Jn 9:38, Lk 5:21-24, Mk 2:5-11, Col 1:16, Heb 1:3, Mt 28:18, Jn 10:30, Jn 14:9, Jn 8:58 and Mk 14:62, Is 6:1-3 with Jn 12:41 and Is 8:13 with 1 Peter 3:15 (especially with Jehovah's Witnesses).

You should also focus on the availability of salvation by faith in Jesus. All cults promote some form of salvation by works. Ask the question: "Have you been forgiven?" Offer the opportunity to have a relationship with God. Cults deny this possibility.

People who are in Cults are very deceived. It is very difficult to evangelize them. Jehovah Witness and Mormonism are two of the largest Cults. They are also two of the most difficult to evangelize. There are many more false doctrines (many of which are very extreme -- for example, Mormonism claims that Jesus was a polygamist).

There is much more that could be said about evangelizing the Cults. The study of the Cults is really a whole course itself. Here, we only wanted to consider it as part of a more general study of ideologies that differ with Evangelical Christianity (even though they are often considered as being a "Christian way of thinking"). We have spent most of our time studying Catholicism because it has more in common with Evangelical Christianity than do Secular Humanism or the Cults. Perhaps we could say that unsaved Catholics are riper for the Gospel than pure Humanists or members of cults. In any case, in order to more effectively evangelize people with other ideologies, we must understand them first.

## Islam

A Christian man wanted to witness to his friend. His friend was a Muslim. One day his friend was preparing for prayer. He washed his hands. He washed his arms and his face. He washed many other parts of his body. Then the Christian said, "You forgot to wash the most important part." "What part?" asked the Muslim. "You forgot to wash your heart," replied the Christian. The Muslim said, "Do not be silly. I cannot wash my heart." The Christian agreed, "That is right. That is why you need Christ."

A large number of people in the world are Muslims. How can we reach them? We must first understand who they are and what they believe. Then we must evangelize them according to our understanding of them.

Islam means "to submit to God" --thus, a Muslim is one who submits to God. About 20% of the world is Muslim. 52% of all Muslims live in Asia. 28% live in the Middle East and North Africa. 13% live in sub-Saharan Africa. About 6% live in Europe and Russia. 2. Islam Officially began in 680 A.D. The Muslim calendar begins in 622 A.D. (year zero for Muslims). Muhammad, the founder of Islam, lived from 570-632. Muhammad received his first revelations in 610 and began preaching publicly three years later. Muhammad immigrated from Mecca to Medina in 622.

One basic Muslim belief is that Muhammad is the last great prophet, and he is greater than all others. The Holy Books of Islam and their prophets include: The Torah—Abraham, Psalms – David, The Gospels – Jesus, and the Koran – Muhammad. Muslims believe in angels (both bad and good). Muslims believe in a day of judgment. The criteria for acceptance into heaven is according to good works. If a person has done more good than bad then he can go to heaven. They believe in the day of resurrection. Muslims believe in destiny. Whatever Allah decrees must come to pass. Allah is Arabic for God. He is unique, all-powerful, and merciful to all Muslims.

Basic Muslim practices include the confessions of the creed -- "I witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Ritual prayers, giving alms, the fast of Ramadan, the pilgrimage to Mecca and Jihad (holy war) are other Muslim practices.

### Evangelizing Muslims

Jesus presents the gospel in one way to Nicodemus who is a Jew (Jn 3:1-21) and in another way to the woman at the well who is a Samaritan (Jn 4:7-26). The presentation varies according to the background of the listeners. The evangelist must know the Bible. He must also know his audience. The contents of the gospel do not change. The method to present the gospel will change. In the book of Acts the gospel is presented in different ways. The presentation of the gospel must apply biblical truth to the specific needs and situations of those who are listening. The method of witness to a Jew was different than the method of witness to a Gentile. In today's world we might say that the method of witness to a secular humanist will be different than the method of witness to a Muslim. We need to consider different methods of evangelism for different people. We need to form bridges in our evangelism.

Bridges are instruments that join together things that are separated. Bridge building in evangelism does not create a false unity. It does not avoid difference for the sake of good relations. It does not offer a partial gospel for the sake of not offending the other person. Bridge building in evangelism does use what is available. It does focus on what the two people have in common. It blesses whatever can be blessed. It does become all things to all men that by all means it might save some (1 Cor 9:22). Bridges do not promote syncretism (the mixing of different religions). Bridge building in evangelism does promote responsible contextualization (allows the gospel to enter cultures).

There are general approaches and attitudes that can be used to build bridges to Muslims. C.R. Marsh is an expert on Muslim evangelism. He says this: "Start with the glimmer of truth which he has in his religion and lead him on to know the full revelation of God."

Study and use the strong points of Muslim belief to enter into conversation with a Muslim. Offer the kingdom of God to fill up the places that are lacking. For example: A Muslim knows that he has not reached God's standards. He prays repeatedly for forgiveness (strong point). However, in his religion there is no assurance of forgiveness. He can only hope (a place that is lacking). The Christian must offer him the atonement (the Kingdom of God).

Muslim belief is monotheistic (they believe in one God). Christianity is monotheistic. We must take advantage of this common belief. Do not treat Muslims like pagans or atheists. A Muslim has a definite fear of God. This can be a bridge.

Muslims are not ashamed of what they believe. They are often eager to share their beliefs with others. Therefore, there are many opportunities to witness to Muslims. They will admire the same eagerness and openness in a Christian. Thus, be bold in Muslim evangelism. At the same time show humility (boldness and humility are often thought as being separate--the exact opposite is true--when they are real they always are together). The message must be bold (without compromise). The messenger is as important as the message. Thus, it is important to live a life before the Muslim that is consistent with your message to the Muslim (this is especially important in the Muslim culture).

Avoid condemning Islam. Avoid speaking in an offensive way about Muhammad. Have an attitude of compassion. Put yourself in his place. What if you were a Muslim? Speak the truth and let the truth do the condemning. Speak positive of Jesus. Do not speak negative of Muhammad. To speak negative of Muhammad only upsets the Muslims and shuts the door of evangelism. To speak positive of Jesus (even to quote Jn 14:6) also may shut the door, but at least it gives an opportunity to the Holy Spirit to work. C.R. Marsh says, "Present the true vine in such a way that he may desire to gather for himself the fruit of the gospel."

Be sincere. Be real. Try to speak to his heart and conscience. A religious Muslim will want to have theological discussions. It will be necessary to participate with him at the intellectual level. However, always return to a focus on his need for a Savior. Point to his need for forgiveness. His spirit is crying out for the way to forgiveness. Appeal to his need. Offer him Jesus as Savior. It is not important how religious he seems to be. He still needs a Savior.

More than anything, show him love. Consider the words of one Muslim who was converted: "Then that man of God felt so sorry for me in my unbelief and pride that he began to weep. His tears did for me what his arguments did not do ...they melted my heart." C.R. Marsh says, "In nearly every case of conversion of a Muslim, he has first been influenced by Christian love."

There are also theological and religious bridges. Because of secular humanism in the West it is not perceived as natural to talk about the things of God. In the Arab world this is different. All of life revolves around religious convictions. One author says, "religious convictions influence practically every act during each moment in life." This creates a very useful bridge called "interest". For Muslims it is natural to speak of the things of God. Realize this and use it to your advantage. Feel free to discuss religious matters and ideas. Read scripture together.

Islam is a religion that tries to cover all of life. It does not stop at the mosque (a mosque is the Muslim place of worship). Islam enters into all parts of life. Here is a bridge. The Muslim can understand the comprehensive nature of the Kingdom of God as taught by Jesus. They will not say (as many Western Christians would say), "We should not include God in every area of life. There is a time and a place for the things of God." Their religion says that God must be included in every part of life. And so we have a bridge to use when we are testifying of the Kingdom of God. A Muslim will understand our claim that Christianity must be a whole way of life. A nominal Western Christian may be offered by Prov 3:6, but a Muslim would have no problem with the concept of "a complete life".

For a Muslim, Jesus is the stumbling block. However, the wise evangelist can use Jesus as a bridge to reach Muslims. The virgin birth is in the Koran (the most important of Islam's Holy Books). Abdul Haqq, an Arab writer, reports, "It is evident from the Koran that the incarnation of the word of God took place through a unique creative miracle rather than by way of natural procreation." The Koran accepts the unique way in which Jesus was born. This can be used as a bridge to lead the Muslim to accept that Jesus is a unique Person. That is to say that Jesus is the Savior.

The Koran does not deny the supernatural teaching of Jesus. It affirms that Jesus cast out demons, healed the lepers, gave sight to the blind, made the deaf to hear, and raised people from the dead. Muslims are very curious about the miracles of Jesus. They must be challenged with the historical fact that he healed in his own name and power. The Koran recognizes the power and authority in Jesus' ministry. This can be used as a bridge to lead the Muslim to recognize the ultimate authority and power that Jesus has now. That is to say that Jesus is Lord.

The Koran does not deny the perfection of Jesus. It affirms his sinless life. Who else in history was sinless? Nobody. Not even Muhammad! Muhammad said that he asked for forgiveness 70 times each day. The Koran recognizes the uniqueness and incomparability of Jesus' sinless life. This can be used as a bridge to lead the Muslim to recognize the Deity of Jesus.

The death of Jesus must be used to challenge the Muslim. Jesus predicted his own death. He knew when, how, and where he would die. No other human being knows these things. Again, not even Muhammad! He died very unexpectedly. The Koran recognizes the sinless life of Jesus. It recognizes the sinless life of Jesus. It recognizes his death. Jesus did not have to die. This can be

used as a bridge to lead the Muslim to recognize Jesus as the Lamb of God. That is to say to recognize the atonement.

The Koran teaches the second coming of Jesus Christ. According to the Koran, Jesus (not Muhammad) will return to earth to reign for 40 years. The Muslim must be challenged with the question, "Why?" Why Jesus? Why does he return? The Koran accepts the return of Christ. This can be used as a bridge to lead the Muslim to accept Jesus as the Judge.

The Muslim accepts the Gospels as Holy Books. He must be challenged with the commands of Jesus. Jesus claimed that "no one comes to the Father but through Me" (Jn 14:6). He said things like "Come to Me" (Mt 11:28), and "take up your cross and follow Me" (Mt 16:24). The Muslim accepts the Gospels. He calls Jesus a great Prophet. Yet he does not obey the commands of Jesus. Moreover, he does not accept the truth of what Jesus says. This is not consistent. It goes against logic. Jesus was either a great Prophet or he was a great liar. He cannot be both. Muslims must be challenged with the fact that they must choose. If he is a great prophet then his words must be accepted as truth. The Koran accepts Jesus as a great Prophet. This can be used as a bridge to lead the Muslim to accept the commands of Jesus. Moreover, the Koran accepts the return of Christ. We must challenge Muslims by asking: "When Jesus returns, what will you say to him whom you called a Prophet, yet whose words you did not believe?" Remind your Muslim friend that Jesus said, "I AM the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). He did not say, "I BRING the way, the truth, and the life."

The Koran refers to Jesus as the Word of God. This can be a bridge to lead the Muslim to consider more closely the identity of Jesus Christ. What is the Word of God? Who is Jesus?

In conclusion, we want to emphasize that we are not trying to challenge a friend and draw him in. Our goal is not to win an argument. Our goal is to win the person! We are not lawyers trying to win a case. We are evangelist trying to win a soul!

As we have seen the Koran can be used as a bridge to evangelize Muslims. The Koran speaks of Jesus with great respect. The Koran also places a very high value on the Bible. The Bible itself can be used as a very effective bridge. Many reports reveal that a large number of Muslim converts come to the Lord by reading the Bible. One report describes the case of an Afghan chief who is very influential Christian leader in his area. The chief testifies how a Christian gave him a Bible and encouraged him to read it. He encouraged him according to his already established respect for the Scriptures. Remember our philosophy. Bless whatever can be blessed! Here is an important bridge to Islam. A Muslim respects the Holy Books. This can be used to lead him to THE Holy Book. The Christian must remember not to offend the culture of the Muslim. The Muslim, for example, would never put the Koran on the floor. He holds it or places it on a wooden stand. We should do the same with our Bible to strengthen the bridge.

Prayer can be used as a bridge also. Muslims are dedicated to prayer, but it is a system of ritual prayers. The dedication comes from a sense of duty and obligation; a debt is owed to God. The Muslim's prayer system offers no real relationship with God. Present to them the opportunity to commune with God in prayer through Christ Jesus.

Indigenous training (training nationals so they can evangelize and disciple those in their own culture) is the most effective long-term bridge! He already knows the culture and religious system! The student should train in his own location if possible. The student should train in his own language if possible. Language goes quickly to the heart. The Muslim language (Arabic) has certain key words that must be learned and used properly.

The family unit can be used as a bridge. In the Muslim culture the family is very strong and influential. The religion actually exercises its authority over the individual through the family. Family and religion strengthen each other as part of Arab society. In the past, missionaries have not had success because they have only focus on individuals. The positive influence of the family must be used as a bridge. Culturally, an individual only participates in larger groups through the social connections of his family. Thus, the evangelism of whole families should be practice. Muslims often come to the Lord in family units.

Hospitality can be used as an important bridge. In Muslim culture hospitality is extremely important. It is a highly respected virtue. Here is a very natural bridge to Christianity. The New Testament emphasizes hospitality as a Christian virtue (Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8; 1 Pt 4:9). Visiting and being visited can lead to a strong friendship and to many opportunities to share the faith.

The "Witness" is a bridge. As we learned, one of the main practices of the Muslim faith is what is called the witness. The Muslim will repeat with conviction, "I witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." In this practice there is no obligation to change in his moral life. Thus, the witness of a Christian must emphasize the change in the moral life that is available in Christ. Our testimony is that we are born again. We are new creatures (Jn 3:3; 2 Cor 5:17). The bridge is our own lives will appeal to the Muslim's sense of a lack of ability to change. He may soon discover that what he lacks is what Christ offers.

Felt needs are bridges (especially with folk Muslims). One felt need is a relationship with God. Islam proclaims, "Whatever your mind may think of, God is not that." Nevertheless, every human being has a need to know God. For example, folk Muslims (a popular form of Islam that is more mystical) have known to try to come into contact with God through repeating "Oh God" 20,000 times over a period of 3 days. We must use this zeal to be in communion with God as a bridge. The felt need is the bridge. Jesus waits on the other side to provide for this need.

Fear of the unknown is a second felt need. Many Muslims (especially folk Muslims) have a fear of the unknown. For example, a Muslim may have a great fear of the future. Their answer to this fear is angel worship, divination, and fatalism. The Muslim can be evangelized through offering the real solution in Christ. It is in Christ where the future already exists (Eph 2:10). Thus, to be in Christ is to have no fear of the future (also consider Heb. 2:15 with Phil 1:21; Rom 6:6-11; 1 Jn 5:13). We must show the Muslim how the real, personal, relationship oriented Jesus can be a guide. He can be our protector. He can provide personal security that will replace their fears. To address the felt need in compassion is to build a bridge to the cure. Jesus is the cure.

The need to have community is another felt need. The bridge is the Christian concepts of the family of God and the household of God. The need for protection from the evil eye and evil spirits is a felt need. The bridge is the power of Jesus over demons. The need for freedom from sickness is a felt need. The bridge is the healing power of Jesus. There is also the need for a mediator between God and man. The bridge is Jesus! (1 Tim 2:5).

Evangelism through felt needs takes time. Patience is essential. We must be patient enough to build the bridge. Then we can walk across it. If we are not patient we might try to swim across. Sometimes we are successful. But many times we drown in the raging waters that only a well-built bridge can span. The felt need approach may take more time, but it has certain advantages. The message is introduced gradually, arguments are avoided, and Christianity is more relevant and practical.

The bridge is not the final goal. Nobody builds a bridge and just leaves it there. Bridges are made for crossing. Felt needs are recognized in order to recognize eternal needs. Theological and religious bridges are built so that true theological and religious understanding may be presented. Perhaps the most important bridge that needs to be built concerns our own perception of who the Muslim is. When we stop thinking of them as cruel, ruthless murderers, and begin seeing them as lost souls searching for God, then we will see them as Jesus sees them and we will be able to lead them to him! When we stop thinking of them simply as Muslims, and begin seeing them as human beings who are like us and need a Savior, then we will see them as Jesus sees them and we will be able to lead them to him!