

Cross and Crescent. Responding to the Challenge of Islam. Colin Chapman. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003

(Also: *Cross and Crescent. A Study Course on Islam for Christians.* London: The Church Mission Society, 2003)

Colin Chapman taught a course on Christian outreach to Muslims at Crowther Hall, the CMS training college in Birmingham, England. More recently he has taught at the Near Eastern School of Theology, Beirut, Lebanon.

This year I had the pleasure of attending a *Cross and Crescent* course led by Colin Chapman. I was highly impressed by his scholarship, his integrity and his concern to present issues in a manner that presented the Islamic perspective truly and fairly in the mind of any reasonable Muslim who might be present.

This book is a tremendous resource. It is a dense book, crammed with information and insights. In what follows I attempt summarise this book and interact with Chapman's positions at various points.

The study course follows the basic framework of the book. It is designed to cover each of the five parts of the book in five sessions of about 1½ hours each. Some of the material is UK specific (e.g. summary of Islamic groups in the UK) and needs to be adapted for other contexts.

Introduction

The significance of the symbol of the crescent:

- Muslims follow a lunar calendar¹.
- A new moon is increasing so the crescent symbolizes 'growing in strength'.
- The crescent was once used as a symbol for the city of Byzantium.²
- Muslims place the crescent on top of the minaret or the dome of a mosque.

"Muslims claim that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, with about 1,000 million adherents, and that it is now poised for the conversion of Europe and North America." (13) In the course book a page is devoted to statistics showing the "Distribution of Muslims across Europe (at the end of the 1990s) and comparative world figures for Christian and Muslim populations. It is anticipated that by mid-2025 22.8% of the world's population will be Muslim.

"Since Muhammad regarded himself as both prophet and statesman, his followers have always believed that 'Islam must rule.' The assumption was that the territory occupied by Islam (*dar al-Islam*) would eventually overcome and absorb the territories as yet outside the control of Islam (*dar al-harb*)." (13-14)

If Charles of Martel had not stopped the advance of the Islamic empire at the Battle of Tours in AD 732 Islam may have conquered the whole of Europe.

Part One. Relating to Our Muslim Neighbours

Chapter 1. Meeting Face to Face

Chapman begins by stressing the need to treat Muslims as human beings and to find situations in which we can build relationships with Muslims in a natural manner. He also suggests ways of taking the initiative - visiting a mosque or Muslim bookshop, talking to a Muslim shopkeeper or inviting a Muslim student home.

In most of the Muslim world it is not an intrusion to visit people in their homes. It may be natural to ask a Muslim contact, "May I visit you in your home?"

Chapter 2. Appreciating Islamic Culture

One way of learning to appreciate Muslim culture is to allow Muslims to explain their culture in their own words.

Chapman lets the book *Islam: A Brief Guide* outline the Muslim way of life as described by a Muslim for non-Muslims. This emphasises the importance of the festivals of Idul Fitr (first day after the month of Ramadan) and *Idul Adha* (begins 10th day of the month of Dhul Hijjah and continues till the 12th day. It celebrates the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son Ishmael³). Other important occasions include:

- The beginning of the *Hijrah*: celebrates the migration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in AD 622.⁴
- *Lailatul Miraj* (Night of the Ascension; Qur'an 17:1): Some Muslims believe Muhammad was taken physically from Mecca to Jerusalem and from there up to heaven by night. Others believe it was but a mystical or spiritual experience.
- Dates of Islamic battles fought by Muhammad
- *Lailatul Qadr* (Night of Power). Occurs on one of the last ten nights of Ramadan (an odd-numbered night) - a night "better than a thousand months" (Qur'an)

The guide also speaks of the importance of the initials *pbuh* - "Peace be on him", used whenever the name of any prophet is spoken by a Muslim.

The guide speaks of marriage as the basis of family life in Islam. Islam does not permit the free mixing of men and women nor sex before marriage. Extramarital sex is severely punished and that divorce, while permitted, is most displeasing to Allah.

The guide explains which foods are specially forbidden for Muslims to eat, namely the blood of animals and meat from pigs (5:3), or animals which died of natural causes, or of a disease or were slaughtered without invoking the name of Allah, or were strangled to death, or are carnivorous, or were devoured by wild beasts.

The guide explains that men must cover themselves from the navel to the knees and that women should cover the whole body except for the face and hands. Some jurists believe women above the age of puberty should cover the face when going out or meeting strangers. Women must avoid any kind of clothing that would arouse male lust. Further, men are not allowed to wear pure silk (based on Muslim tradition that Muhammad did not wear silk and forbade Muslim men to wear silk) or gold.

The Arabic word for 'God' is Allah, but this is not associated exclusively with Islam, also being used as the word for 'God' by up to 14 million Arabic-speaking Christians all over the Middle East and, we might add, also by millions of Indonesian Christians.

Some key characteristics of Muslim culture:

1. Importance of the extended family.
2. Obligations to family and society take precedence over the individual.
3. Veneration of the aged.
4. Importance of the honour (*izzat*) of especially the family and the community.
5. Hospitality is almost a sacred obligation.
6. Education is much more reliant on rote learning.
7. Allah is concerned with the whole of life: no distinction between sacred and secular.

However, *none* of these characteristics are *exclusively* Islamic, e.g. many Christians living in Islamic societies who have the same cultural characteristics.

But other aspects are particularly Islamic. Some of these are based on the Qur'an, some on the example of the Muhammad and some on Islamic tradition.

<i>Qur'an</i>	<i>Muhammad's Example</i>	<i>Islamic Tradition</i>
* Prohibition of eating the blood of an animal and of eating certain kinds of animals (2:168; 2:173; 5:3; 6:145; 16:115) * Prohibition of alcohol (5:90-91) ⁵ * Possibility of marrying up to four wives (4:3)	* Eating with right hand and washing hands before meals * Men must not wear silk or clothes decorated with gold	* Begin meals with the words <i>bismillahi rrahman irrahim</i> ("in the name of God, the most merciful and most kind") and end with <i>al hamdu lillahi ladhi at'amana wa sagana wa ja'alana minal muslimin</i> ("all praise be to God who gave us to eat and drink and made us Muslims") * Dogs are unclean and not to be treated as household pets

Generalisations about "Islamic culture" and "Islamic society" are dangerous:

There is no such thing as 'Islamic society;' there are societies partly moulded by Islam, but formed also by their position in the physical world, their inherited language and culture, their economic possibilities and the accidents of their political history. Before Islam was, they existed, and if Islam has shaped them, they also have shaped it, each in a different way. (Albert Hourani)

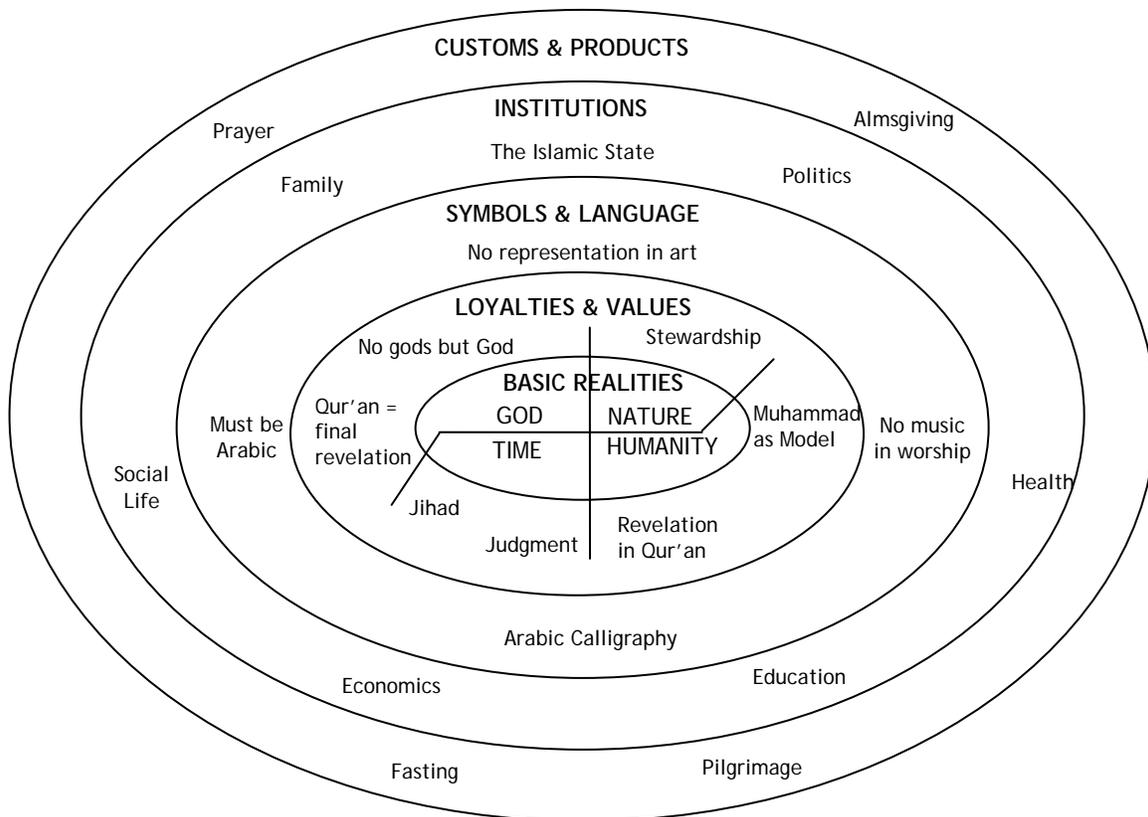
Common Muslim criticisms of Western culture include the self-absorption of Westerners, the fragmentation and break-up of families, lack of respect for the elderly, irresponsibly allowing young people to be exposed to harmful influences and appalling moral standards (e.g. promiscuity and blasphemy). It is important to recognize that Muslims find it difficult to differentiate between such characteristics of Western culture and the lifestyles of committed Christians.

Basic Do's and Don'ts

1. A man shouldn't visit a woman in her home when she is alone or be alone with a woman in other situations.
2. A man shouldn't look a woman in the eye.
3. A man shouldn't shake the hand of a woman unless she herself offers her hand.
4. Do not receive a present or eat with the left hand since this is considered to be the hand one uses when going to the toilet.
5. Don't sit with legs folded in the presence of an older person.
6. Don't point the soles of your feet at another person, especially if sitting on the floor.
7. Show respect for the Qur'an and the Bible. Don't place these books on the floor or under a pile of books. Muslims wrap the Qur'an in a special cloth. Muslims should

- ritually wash before opening the Qur'an. Muslims are often shocked at the casual way Christians treat the Bible.
8. Don't voice admiration for anything in a person's home or for someone's child. This might be construed as involving a sinister power known as the "evil eye".
 9. Don't offer Muslims pork or alcohol. Strict Muslims only eat *halal* meat, that is, killed by a Muslim with the proper ritual and using the name of Allah.
 10. Eat meat offered to you by a Muslim - it is doubtful 1 Corinthians 8 applies.

Chapman next presents a fairly typical 'onion' model of culture and worldview (38). It goes like this:



This is helpful. However, it is important to stress that this diagram simply highlights the relationship between culture and worldview. It does not provide an adequate understanding of Islamic culture. There are in fact many attempts to portray culture itself using an onion model which more or less corresponds to this model presented by Chapman. These are very much Western approaches to understanding culture since they are based on an idealist philosophy, that is, the assumption (often unconscious) that ideas constitute the essence of reality and the bedrock from which all else flows - values, commitments and all the other expressions of culture, which Chapman categorises as symbols, language, institutions, customs and products. This is a lopsided view of reality and how culture is shaped and developed and it is out of tune with a more biblical understanding of human nature in society. For it must not be forgotten that the whole of culture thinking, attitudes and behaviour is learned and this in turn presupposes social processes which inculcate such learning. Hence in any culture worldview itself is profoundly shaped by parents, families, peers, teachers, authority figures, the ideologies of groups to which we belong or in which we are involved, etc.

The Bible is fully cognizant of this reality, hence, for example, its considerable emphasis on the church and Christian fellowship as integral to the shaping of Christian worldview and cultural expression, in all its variegation.

Thus what is lacking from Chapman's presentation is an adequate appreciation of processes of socialization and enculturation in Islamic societies.

On page 39 Chapman treats Islamic views of God/gods, Nature, Humanity and Time as close to those found in Judaism and Christianity. While there are some strong similarities there are also significant points of departure with respect to all of these areas. For example, God as Trinity, the immanence of God in creation and not merely his transcendence, the doctrine of people created in God's likeness for intimate relations with God, and a rich eschatological understanding of time which recognizes that in a very real sense Christians are already experiencing a foretaste of that which will later be consummated.

Chapter 3. Examining Our Attitudes

Chapman challenges four attitudes:

1. "If Christianity is true, then Islam is false"
2. "Islam needs to be strongly resisted in the West"
3. "It's impossible to convert Muslims, and we shouldn't try anyway"
4. "Muslims seem to be very prejudiced and have closed minds"

Truth and Falsity with Respect to Christianity and Islam

The main point Chapman wants to establish in this section is that it is simplistic to think "if Christianity is completely true, Islam and all other faiths must be completely false" (42). He contends, "We can hardly say that they contain no understanding of God, his creation or humanity."

In my opinion this section is poorly handled by Chapman and his use of Scripture to support his argument is dubious. He rightly begins by recognizing biblical polemic against "other faiths". He then misleadingly states: "On the other hand, other passages reflect a much more positive and open approach to people of other faiths (Genesis 14:18; Malachi 1:10-11 [RSV]; Acts 10:30-43; 17:16-31)."

Let's start with the Areopagus address of Acts 17. Does this really "reflect a much more positive and open approach to people of other faiths"? This is a misreading of Paul's speech. He is certainly gracious. He certainly exploits Stoic and Epicurean philosophical thought in presenting the Christian message. He certainly adapts the way in which he presents it to fit the audience, without in any way compromising the integrity of gospel truth. But Paul's approach is not positive. Rather, he skillfully hammers home the fact that his hearers are completely ignorant of God and that their ignorance is culpable. Even though Paul cites from the Stoic poets Epimenides and Erastus in verse 28 and establishes some common ground with the pantheistic understanding of the Stoics, Paul does so as one who rejects pantheism itself (a point which is made quite clear in his presentation of God as the Creator of the world, as the direct Creator of man and as the one on whom all people are dependent.

Acts 10 concerns Peter's interaction with Cornelius, which is hardly comparable to interactions with Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus and other religionists. For Cornelius was a

"God-fearer" - one who believed in the God worshiped by the Jews and rejected pagan gods. Further, in Peter's communication with Cornelius there is no indication whatsoever that Cornelius had pagan conceptions, some of which Peter accepted as at least partially true. In fact, Chapman uses this story to challenge racial and religious prejudice. That's fine. But here Chapman is confusing the need for graciousness in our approach to other religionists with a need, in his mind, to accept that other faiths are not completely false. Chapman's use of Acts 10 does nothing to establish his point.

It is unfortunate that Chapman should appeal to Malachi 1:10-11. The text states:
 "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

Clearly, if this text is uprooted from the context of Malachi and the Bible as a whole, then it *could* be construed - at a considerable stretch I might add - as saying that God anticipates that sincere Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims will effectively be worshiping him through their religious practices. But this is quite plainly not the meaning. The text is simply saying that Yahweh will reveal himself as Yahweh to all nations and that all over the world people will come to recognize him as the true God. Thus far from being a passage which teaches that other religions are not completely false this passage, if anything, indicates the need for other religions to be completely displaced with a religion which worships Yahweh.

The Genesis 14 passage concerns Melchizedek. But this doesn't really serve Chapman's purpose either for not a thing is said about Melchizedek's religious beliefs and practices other than that he was "priest of God Most High" and relays revelation to Abram from God Most High. The passage is simply not interested in the issue which concerns Chapman and it is unwarranted to read into this passage some implication that pagan religion receives a measure of endorsement or acceptance.

More of concern than any of these misuses or misapplications of Scripture is Chapman's unfortunate handling of John 14:6. He wants to limit the force of this text to saying "that people cannot know God as Father, and enjoy all the blessings of the father-child relationship, unless they recognize and trust Jesus as the Son" (42). Having narrowed down the application of the text in this way he concludes that Jesus "can hardly mean that a person who does not believe in him knows nothing about God and has no relationship with him." The emotive "hardly" doesn't help the cause. In this connection, it is surely significant that in John's Gospel Jesus challenges "the Jews", stating: "My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him" (8:54b-55).

Jesus is not saying here that his opponents merely fail to know God *as Father*. He is saying that, notwithstanding their claims, they do not know God; that they do not have a real relationship with God. As he has just told them in verse 47: "He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

Consequently, Chapman produces no solid evidence at all to defend his thesis: "We can hardly say that [other faiths] contain no understanding of God, his creation or humanity." There's that unfortunate "hardly" again!

This section confuses issues of truth between religions and the matter of the right approach to other religions. The bottom line is that biblical religion is grounded in revelation and all other religions are not. The Bible nowhere insinuates that people can naturally work out for themselves what God is like through personal reflection upon or experience of life in this created order. True, "since the creation of the world" God has plainly revealed his "eternal power and divine nature" (Rom 1:19-20). But Romans 1 teaches that people have so suppressed the (revealed) truth that they now are characterized by an inexcusable failure to properly respond to God or rightly think of him. Indeed, what Romans 1 emphasises is that people have substituted other deities for God. So, with respect to each element that is essential to biblical revelation - God, creation, human nature, moral state of humanity, moral rectification, eschatology, etc. - it can be said that where other faiths touch on these same areas they will always necessarily be characterized by radical distortion.

Islam teaches that God is one. But this belief is not a product of biblical revelation. Indeed, Islam pointedly rejects the biblical revelation of Trinity, *which is a doctrine of divine unity*. Consequently, from the standpoint of biblical revelation, the Islamic conception of the unity of God constitutes a radical distortion of human understanding of divine unity. Yes, it makes sense in presenting the gospel to Muslims to recognize that at a superficial level there is a common commitment to insisting on the oneness of God. But this "positive and open approach" is not predicated upon the view that Muslims have a true "understanding of God" at this point.

Similarly, Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism contain conceptions of human incarnations. However, while a "positive and open approach" may use such thinking as a springboard for understanding the Incarnation, nevertheless there can be no doubt that, from the standpoint of biblical revelation, the Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist conceptions represent a gross distortion of the possibility for and reality of incarnation.

Of course, as we communicate with people other than ourselves, no matter what cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious background from which they hail, we invariably discover common perceptions of reality. For example, we both believe the world is round and that "1 + 1 = 2" and that eating too much takeaway food makes one fat. All people are created in the image of God and though that image has been seriously damaged it has not been eradicated. Consequently, all people have an ability to think and understand. However, as Romans 1 makes clear, when it comes to God all people, being fallen creatures, have an inherent aversion to knowing him. Therefore, at the levels at which it really matters the conceptions of all fallen people are radically confused and distorted. As Christians we do not do ourselves any favours by assuming, with respect to essential gospel truths, that people already have some partial grasp of these truths. The biblical image of people outside of Christ being blind is not a hyperbole, but constitutes essential reality.

"Islam Needs to be Strongly Resisted in the West"

Chapman concedes that some Muslims are trying to conquer the world and Islamicize the Western societies and cultures in which they are living. However, he maintains

that the majority of Muslims are only interested in the survival of their Muslim communities. Their concern that their children might be infected by godless Western society causes them to be preoccupied with holding on to their children rather than seeking to spread the message of Islam.

Chapman rightly warns Christian leaders against entering into open-ended dialogue with Muslims who have no real interest in such communication, but only in using it to advance Islam.

Of course, there will always be those who convert to Islam. Some are attracted to Islamic mysticism, Sufism. Others are converted because they marry Muslims. However, the foreignness of Islam to Westerners causes many Christians to doubt that many white Westerners would convert to Islam.

Chapman admits that oil wealth is used to spread Islam. He points out that in the past Christians have also used whatever wealth and resources have been available to them to spread Christianity.

Chapman also addresses the view of some that Muslims living in the West have no right to ask for the implementation of Islamic law. Chapman fails to find any legal or theological reason why Muslims should not be allowed to have halal meat in schools or prisons. If Christians were living in Muslim societies they would want the government to respect the feelings and special needs of the Christian community. Similarly, the same latitude should be given to Muslims living in Western societies. When they ask for such freedoms it is also appropriate to ask whether Islamic law in Muslim societies would allow the same kinds of freedoms to Christians and other minorities. The failure of Muslim societies to do this does not give us warrant, in Chapman's mind, given the Golden Rule (Mt 7:12), to treat Muslims the same way in our own societies.

Chapman regards Christian talk about minority Muslim communities transforming Western countries into Islamic states as absurd rhetoric which plays on people's fears about "the thin edge of the wedge" and "the domino theory."

Chapman also points out the inconsistency involved in demanding that Muslims assimilate themselves to Western culture when most Westerners have not behaved similarly when they have lived overseas.

Should the government resist the spread of Islam? The only grounds for governmental action against Muslims, in Chapman's mind, is if Muslims threaten law and order.

Chapman recognizes that "near the heart of many Western responses to Islam's presence is that it is out of place", that it "has no right to be here!" Chapman suggests that if we had a better understanding of history we would appreciate what life must have felt like for them when they were "at the receiving end of our missionary work for two hundred years." He asks, "Are they doing anything in principle in our country which we haven't done in theirs?"

In this section one factor Chapman does not deal with, but is very important, is the particularly high birth rates characteristic of Muslim communities. There are Christians

who believe that it is a fundamental Islamic strategy to conquer the West by eventually overwhelming them with numbers.

“It’s Impossible to Convert Muslims, and We Shouldn’t Try Anyway”

Chapman notes ‘live and let live’ attitudes, assumptions that all religions are basically the same and that it is arrogant to insinuate Christianity is superior, problems experienced in relating to Muslims and the high cost usually paid by Muslims who do convert.

Chapman helpfully suggests there is a parallel between the Jonah who, not loving the Ninevites, runs away from God’s call and Christians, not loving Muslims, who run away from the challenge of Islam.

He also reminds us that it is not we who convert people but the Lord and that he is able to transform hostile people, such as Paul.

“Muslims Seem to be Very Prejudiced and Have Closed Minds”

When Christians say this it is very “often a case of the pot calling the kettle black!” Again, Chapman’s use of Scripture at this point is very helpful. He rightly observes a striking similarity between the prejudices of many Christians towards Muslims and those of the Jews towards Samaritans in Jesus’ day. Indeed, he pointedly notes that John’s statement of fact – “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” (Jn 4:9) is often sadly paralleled by “Christians have no dealings with Muslims” or, at least have as few dealings as possible.

He also points out that there were three reasons for Jewish prejudice towards Samaritans, all of which resonate with Christian prejudice against Muslims:

1. *Racial*. The Jews despised the Samaritans for their mixed ancestry (see 2 Ki 17:24-41).
2. *Religious*. The Samaritans had their own temple on Mount Gerizim, rivaling the Jerusalem temple. They recognized the Pentateuch but not the Prophets and the Writings.
3. *Political*. For many centuries there had been tensions and rivalries between the Jewish and Samaritan communities.

The example of Jesus in his dealings with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4), his famous parable which presents a Samaritan as a hero (substitute Catholic for Northern Ireland Protestants and Jew for Palestinian Arabs), and his command to take the gospel to Samaria (Acts 1:8) all constitute effective calls upon us to put aside our prejudices against Muslims.

In the course I raised the question of another common attitude towards Muslims I have encountered: “You can’t trust Muslims because they think it is legitimate to lie.” This is the principle of *taqiyyah* (“fear”, “guard against”). So, for example, after 9/11 some Muslim leaders publicly denounced what had been done, though in some cases it seemed that privately they not only applauded what had been done but even held this up as a model for other Muslims to emulate.

Originally, the principle of *taqiyyah* was developed by Shi’ites, appealing to the Qur’an (16:106; 3:28), who maintained it was alright to pretend they were Sunnis while living among Sunnis and in danger of their lives. This practice was strongly criticized by Sunni scholars and not all Shi’ites accept it. However, arguably,

commitment to high standards of truth and honesty is a problem in Muslim communities. But, as Chapman commented in response to my question, it is dangerous to adopt the extreme position that “almost all Muslims tell lies”. Chapman emphasized the importance of building relationships with Muslims and in the context of such relationships discerning those who can be trusted and not trusted.

Chapter 4. Visiting a Mosque

If a group of Muslims visited our church we would expect them to come primarily to listen and learn, not to preach to us. So, when we visit a mosque we should behave similarly.

The word *mosque* is an Anglicized version of the word *masjid* which refers to a place of prostration, that is, worship. Mosques are also used for education, teaching Islam and the Qur'an.

Protocols:

- Women wearing scarf, long skirt or trousers, covering arms
- Some mosques: women will be asked not to visit during menstruation
- Men sometimes expected to cover heads, but not usual
- Take off shoes before entering main prayer area of mosque

Features:

- Place for *wudu* (ritual washing) before prayer.
- Alcove marking direction of Mecca (*mihrab*).
- Pulpit (*minbar*) with steps, usually made of wood. Imam gives sermon from here during Friday prayers.
- Arabic writing: 99 names of Allah, name Muhammad, the Fatiha (1st sura of Qur'an), Qur'anic verses.
- Minaret (possibly): place from which the call to prayer (*adhan/azan*) is broadcast by loudspeaker.
- Separate area for women to pray (possibly).
- Special room for Qur'an classes (possibly). Often children come to the mosque for an hour or more per day after school to learn the Qur'an.
- Hall for social functions, e.g. weddings and festivals (possibly).
- Morgue (possibly).

I have taken many groups to visit mosques myself. On the whole this chapter gives a helpful summary of what behaviour and protocols are to be expected of visiting Christians and what features they may find in the mosque. This chapter would be strengthened with further advice on the kinds of questions visiting Christians should ask of their guide. Christians should also be advised that aggressive questioning is inappropriate. A list of possible questions would be helpful. Also, the debriefing is very important. For this purpose it is highly recommended that, following the mosque visit, the group go to another location where they can speak freely and where they will be led by someone who has a genuine love for Muslims and also a profound knowledge of Islam. In this way useful input and observations can be reinforced and some of the propagandist statements that might well be made by the guide, whether sincerely believed or not, can be reassessed and corrected. Also the debriefing session is useful for helping Christians, in the light of what they have learned from the visit, to consider how best they might relate with and minister to Muslims.

Chapter 5. Immediate Issues

This is a chapter of case studies raising various issues:

- Should a redundant church be sold to Muslims who will convert it into a mosque?
- Since the government funds Protestant, Catholic and Jewish schools should Christians support Muslim requests that their schools too receive government funding?
- Should schools support or oppose Muslim attempts to have girls wear veils at school?
- What advice would you give to an engaged couple living in a Muslim country who cannot be legally married there because the woman is from a Muslim background and cannot legally change her Muslim faith or marry a Christian?
- Should Christians living in countries where they are violently attacked by Muslims be allowed to take up arms to defend themselves and their families?
- How should a pastor respond when a Muslim woman expresses interest in becoming a Christian?
- To what extent should Christians resist Islamization of the law when they are living in a country where many Muslims are pressing for such changes?
- Should Christian leaders engage in public debates with Muslim leaders?

Part Two. Understanding Islam

Chapter 6. Muslims at Prayer

The call to prayer (*adhan/azan*) chanted in Arabic five times a day:

God is most great, God is most great, I bear witness that there is no god except God: I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of God. Come ye unto prayer. Come ye unto good. Prayer is a better thing than sleep. Come ye to the best deed. God is most great. God is most great. There is no god except God. (Kenneth Cragg, 72)

In the course Chapman noted that many Christians negatively react when they hear the *azan* being loudly chanted from mosques. Where we lived in Pakistan we could hear *azans* being blared out from five mosques simultaneously. Chapman explained how he has learned to be sympathetic to the *azan* and to use it as a goad urging him to devote himself to personal prayer to God and for Muslims.

The Five Daily Prayer-times

- Between dawn and just before sunrise
- Between midday and afternoon
- Between late afternoon and just before sunset
- Between sunset and dark
- At night before midnight or dawn

Ritual ablutions (*wudu*) are performed prior to offering prayer involving the following stages (this is diagrammatically shown in the course book):

- Washing both hands up to the wrists three times.
- Rinsing the mouth three times.
- Sniffing water to the nostrils.
- Washing the tip of the nose three times.
- Washing the face three times.
- Washing the arms three times from wrist to elbow.
- Passing the wet hand over the head and both hands over the back of the head to the neck.
- Washing inside and behind the ears with wet fingers.
- Washing both feet thoroughly up to the ankles.

Compulsory Prayers (*Salat*)

A ritual prayer is called a *raka'a* and involves the following main stages:

- Standing upright on the prayer mat, facing the *Ka'ab* and saying words expressing one's intention (*niyya*) aloud or silently, e.g. "I intend to say four *raka'as* of the dawn prayers for Allah facing the *Ka'ba*."
- Raising one's hands to one's ears and saying, "God is most great". One places one's right hand on one's left just below the navel or on the chest, saying,
- Allah, glory and praise are for you, and blessed is your name, and exalted is your Majesty; there is no god but you. I seek shelter in Allah from the rejected Satan. In the name of Allah, the most merciful, the most kind.
- Reciting the *Fatiha* (the first sura) and other Qur'anic verses.
- Bowing from the waist and saying, "God is most great" and placing one's hands on one's knees, saying, "Glory to my Lord, the Great", then standing, saying, "Allah hears those who praise him. Our Lord, praise be to you."
- Prostrating oneself on the floor with forehead, nose, both palms and both knees touching the ground and saying, "God is most great. Glory to my Lord, the Highest", then standing, saying, "God is most great", then sitting upright with knees bent and both palms on knees. This is followed by prostrating oneself again, saying, "God is most great" and then getting up saying these same words.
- Saying other prayers (*du'a*). These may be either memorized or extemporaneous, e.g.
 - Oh Allah, I have been unjust to myself and no one grants pardon for sins except you; therefore, forgive me with your forgiveness and have mercy on me. Surely you are the Forgiver, the Merciful.
 - Turning one's face to the right, whether or not someone is praying there) and saying, "The peace and mercy of Allah be on you" and then turning left and uttering the same words.

Chapman points out the following things for Christians to bear in mind in assessing this approach to prayer:

- Muhammad possibly learned some of these postures from Syrian Christian monks.
- Prostration is found in the Bible (Ezek 1:28)
- Muslims are trying to express their total submission to Allah in a physical manner.
- Muhammad first taught Muslims to pray toward Jerusalem, like the Jews. It was only when the Jews rejected his message that this was changed to Mecca.

The Fatiha (Cragg's translation)

Every form of ritual prayer includes recitation of this first sura:

In the name of the merciful Lord of mercy,
 Praise be to God, the Lord of all being,
 The merciful Lord of mercy,
 Master of the Day of Judgment,
 Thee alone we worship
 And to Thee alone we come for aid.
 Guide us in the straight path,
 The path of those whom Thou has blessed,
 Not of those against whom there is displeasure,
 Nor of those who go astray.

In the course Chapman pointed out that according to Islamic commentaries "against whom there is displeasure" refers to Jews and "those who go astray" refers to Christians. But most Muslims are unaware of this interpretation.

Chapter 7. Basic Muslim Beliefs and Practices

Basic Beliefs

Islam means voluntary surrender to the will of Allah and, since this is the way to get peace now and in the hereafter the word *Islam* also means peace. A *Muslim* is someone who accepts the Islamic way of life.

There are three fundamental beliefs:

- *Tawhid* - the oneness of Allah (the most important belief)
- *Risalah* - prophethood (28 apostles named in the Qur'an)
- *Akhirah* - life after death

Tradition teaches that Muhammad summarized the basic articles of Islamic faith as "God, and his angels, and his books, and his apostles, the last day and the decree of both good and evil."

Five Basic Practices (Pillars):

- *Shahadah*: *La ilaha illa lahu Muhammadur rasulul lah* - "There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."
- *Salat* (compulsory prayer)
- *Zakah* (almsgiving; welfare contribution): a compulsory annual payment constituting 2.5% of the value of cash, jewellery and precious metals. A separate tax applies to animals, crops and mineral wealth. *Zakah* is not charity because it is not optional. Nor is it a tax that can be used to meet any societal needs, for it must be applied to a limited range of purposes, especially meeting the needs of the poor and needy, the disabled, the oppressed and debtors.
- *Sawm* (the annual fast during *Ramadan*, the 9th Islamic month). Obligatory on all Muslims except for the sick, travelers, pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children.
- *Hajj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca during *Dhul Hijjah*, the 12th Islamic month): all Muslims who can afford to do so, must undertake the pilgrimage at least once in their life.

Chapter 8. The Qur'an

(The course book provides suggestions on how to go about familiarizing oneself with the contents of the Qur'an, pp21-22)

In the course Chapman maintained that many Muslims believe the Qur'an is eternal; that it was in the mind of God before creation. Chapman claims, "It is essential for Christians to realize that the Qur'an is to Muslims what Jesus is to Christians" (84). He contends that it is a mistake to think that the Bible is the Christian counterpart to the Qur'an or to think Jesus is the counterpart to Muhammad. However, Chapman fails to adequately explain why these are mistakes. After all, the only Jesus we know is the Jesus revealed to us in the Bible. So for Christians, while Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God, nevertheless we can also speak of the Bible in a very similar manner to that in which Sarwar speaks of the Qur'an (84-5):

The Bible "is the sacred book of" Christians. "It is the last book of guidance from" God, "sent down to" the apostles and prophets through the Holy Spirit. "Every word of the Bible is the word of" God. "It was revealed over a period of" around 1400 years in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek and contains 66 books. Christians "learn to read it in" their own mother tongues [where the Bible has been so translated] and many memorise

portions of it. Christians “are expected to try their best to understand the [Bible’s] meaning and practise its teachings.”

“The [Bible] is unrivalled in its recording and preservation. The astonishing fact about this book of [God] is that it has remained unchanged even to a letter over the past” [3000] years.

“The [Bible] deals with man and his ultimate goal in life. Its teaching cover all aspect of this life and the life after death. It contains principles, doctrines and directions for every sphere of human activity. The theme of the [Bible] broadly consists of three fundamental concepts: [The Kingdom of God/Sovereignty and Glory of God; the Centrality of Christ; and Salvation]. The success of human beings on this earth and in the life hereafter depends on [faith-]obedience to [the Lord and his] teachings.”

Given this Chapman’s claim remains unsubstantiated.

Chapman considers whether Muhammad was actually illiterate. There are two verses in the Qur’an which have been construed as teaching this, namely 7:157 and 29:48. However, the Arabic word *ummi*, often understood to mean “illiterate”, has also been translated as indicating Muhammad was “the Prophet of the common folk” (Arberry) or “the unlettered prophet”, that is, “the prophet to the people without a book” (Cragg).

The Qur’an and later tradition teaches that many revelations came to Muhammad with the command, “Recite”. It is understood by Muslims that Muhammad then recited the revelations he had received to his followers who memorized them all carefully. Chapman believes much of the Qur’an was probably written down in one form or another during the lifetime of Muhammad.

Strong tradition has it that during the Wars of Apostasy (AD 632-634), caliph ‘Umar was concerned that many of those able to recite parts of the Qur’an had been killed. So he urged the first caliph, Abu Bakir, to make an official collection. After some hesitation, Abu Bakir commissioned one of Muhammad’s secretaries, Zayd ibn Thabit, to do this. Tradition says he collected the verses “from pieces of papyrus, flat stones, palm-leaves, shoulder-blades and ribs of animals, pieces of leather and wooden boards, as well as from the hearts of men” (87).

Serious disputes about the reading of the Qur’an arose among Muslim troops and the general reported this to ‘Uthman, who commissioned Zayd ibn Thabit to make another collection of the Qur’an. The Qur’an was then revised according to the principle that where differences of reading occurred, the dialect of Quraysh (Muhammad’s tribe) would be followed. This is how the authoritative text of the Qur’an was fixed.

One copy of this authoritative text was kept in Medina. Other copies were sent to Kufa, Basra, Damascus and possibly Mecca. All other copies were destroyed.

Chapman refrains from challenging this traditional Islamic position on textual transmission, which is actually very shaky and dubious given Islamic failure to make manuscript evidence available for objective scholarly scrutiny.

Chapman notes that though the Qur’an is considered to be the Word of God revealed in Arabic, many Muslim scholars do allow for some translations, but view these more as paraphrases. There is a fundamental difference here between Muslims and Christians

for, although we stress the importance of studying the Bible in its original languages, we recognize that the Bible is the Word of God in whatever language it comes to us.

For Muslims recitation of the Qur'an is of first importance and so Muslim missionaries often begin with a Qur'an school. However, for Christians comprehension of God's word is primary, hence the prior need for a good translation in the heart language of the people concerned.

The earliest important commentary available today was written by al-Tabari (d. 923). Also esteemed are commentaries by Zamakhshari (d. 1143) and al-Baidhawi (d. 1286).

A major exegetical principle for Muslims is that of abrogation, that is, a revelation from Allah at one particular time can be regarded as temporary and be 'abrogated', superseded or replaced by a new revelation given later. This principle is based on Qur'anic verses: 2:106; 16:101. In the course Chapman argued that Christians have a similar principle given, for example, that in the Old Testament it was valid for the Israelites to wipe out the Canaanites under Joshua, while it is now completely invalid for Christians to do such a thing under the new Joshua, Jesus.

Chapter 9. Muhammad

Again Chapman begins by warning against comparing Muhammad with Jesus. Following Eaton, his basic argument is that this is not warranted because of the different roles performed by each. It's hard to see that this justifies not treating Muhammad and Jesus as in some sense counterparts. After all, there is no doubting that for Muslims Muhammad is the most revered human figure. Any person who blasphemes his name in the hearing of Muslims is asking for trouble! Chapman obviously feels strongly that it is inappropriate to line up the Bible with the Qur'an and Jesus with Muhammad, but his reasons for this are not adequately explained in the book.

In the course Chapman explained how Muslims eventually appealed to Deuteronomy 18 and John 14 as prophesying the coming of Muhammad, probably because initially they were unable to explain why there were no prophecies about him in the Bible.

Chapman presents a standard overview of the life and times of Muhammad, which I will not attempt to summarise. The historical review of the caliphs is useful. Chapman points out that the period of the first four caliphs ("Rightly Guided" or "Righteous") is regarded as the Golden Age of Islam:

- **Abu Bakr** (632-634): chosen because Muhammad had nominated him to lead the prayers. He prevented many tribes from breaking away from the new Islamic state during the Wars of Apostasy. He defeated the Byzantine army in 634 and Islam spread to Syria, Iraq and Yemen.
- **'Umar** (634-644): nominated by Abu Bakr. He authorized the collection of the *suras* of the Qur'an. In 634 he captured Damascus. He defeated the Byzantine army at the Battle of Yarmuk and captured Jerusalem (636) and Alexandria (641). He gained control of Syria, Egypt and Persia and gave Jews and Christians the choice of converting to Islam or leaving Arabia. He was stabbed to death by a Persian Christian slave.
- **'Uthman** (644-656): established the office text of the Qur'an and had other texts burned. He was a weak leader, accused of nepotism. His leadership provoked rebellion and he was assassinated.
- **Ali** (656-661): Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. He fought against the followers of Muhammad's widow, A'isha, at the Battle of Camel and then against the governor of

Syria, Mu'awiya, who had proclaimed himself caliph. Following a truce in 660 Mu'awiya ruled over Syria and Ali over the rest of the Islamic empire.

When Ali died there was conflict concerning who should succeed him and it was this that led to the split between Sunnis and Shi'ites (the "party of Ali").

By the time of the rise of Islam Christianity had become for many Arabs synonymous with Byzantine domination and the fierce repression of beliefs that differed from Byzantine state religion.

Following Muhammad's death various accounts of his life were written, the earliest by Ibn Ishaq (707-773). Later Ibn Hisham (d. 840) wrote a *sira* (account of Muhammad's life), incorporating Ibn Ishaq's work.

Chapter 10. Tradition (Hadith and Sunna)

Hadith: literally means a communication, narrative or record. It refers to a record of the actions and sayings of Muhammad and his Companions.

Sunna: literally means a way or a path. It refers to "the way of Muhammad" or "Muhammad's example". The way Muhammad did or said something is considered to be the way Muslims must follow.

Effectively, *hadith* and *sunna* refer to the same body of traditions about Muhammad that developed after his death. Six particular collections are prominent and considered to be most authentic: Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Daund, Nasdi and Ibn-I Majah.

Every hadith has two parts:

1. The chain of authority (*isnad*, "supports"): the names of those who handed it on: "A told me, saying that B said C had informed him, saying D mentioned that he heard E relate, 'I heard F ask the Apostle of God such and such.'"
2. The substance of the report of what Muhammad said or did (*matn*).

To discriminate between genuine and dubious traditions the following classification was adopted by collectors of *hadith*:

1. "Sound": no weak links in the chain of authorities and the content is not inconsistent with Muslim belief.
2. "Fair": *isnad* is incomplete or incomplete agreement about the reliability of the authorities.
3. "Weak": some transmitters are deemed unreliable or there are doubts about content.

Practices based on the imitation of Muhammad include a man putting on his trousers while sitting, putting on his turban while standing, starting with the right foot when putting on his shoes, beginning with the forefinger of the right hand when cutting his nails. Al-Ghazzali mentions the example of a pious man who never dared to eat a melon because he couldn't find out the precise manner in which Muhammad did this.

As was noted in the course in practice for many Muslims the *hadith* are more important than the Qur'an.

Chapter 11. Law (*shari'a*) and Theology (*kalam*)

Law takes priority over theology in Islam, since submission to the will of Allah is primary.

The process of formulating Islamic law took 200-250 years, with a fixed form established around AD 850.

There are four sources (*usul*) of law in Sunni Islam:

- Qur'an
- *Sunna/Hadith*: clarifying or elaborating the teaching of the Qur'an
- *Ijma'*: consensus of the community. In practice this consensus results from a process of "enterprise" (*ijtihad*) - scholars (*ulama*) use all sources of the law, with their kind of reasoning, to formulate legal precepts dealing with new situations.
- *Qiyas*: principle of analogy. If the Qur'an or sunna provides no clear ruling then the ulama use their personal judgment (*ra'y*), motivated by concern for "the good of the community" to formulate a comparable ruling that suggests an appropriate parallel.

Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) varies from Islamic school to school:

- The Hanafi School (founded by Abu Hanifa [d. 767] in Iraq) prioritises the Qur'an and treats the sunna as secondary.
- The Maliki School (founded by Malik ibn Anas [d. 795] in Medina), the oldest and a very conservative school, treats Qur'an and *sunna* as main sources and allows some place for *ijma'*.
- The Shafi'i School (founded by Al-Shafi'i [d. 820] from Baghdad and Egypt) adopts a middle position between the Hanafi and Maliki Schools and rejects *ra'y*.
- The Hanbali School (founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal [d. 855] in Baghdad) is the most conservative accepting only Qur'an and sunna and rejecting *ijma'* and *qiyas*. This is the school followed in modern day Saudi Arabia.

Major Theological Issues Confronting Islam

- *The question of succession*. Ali and the Shi'ites argued the successor should be from Muhammad's family. Ali became the fourth caliph. Ali's first son Hasan renounced his claim to be the fifth caliph. When Ali's second son, Husayn, was killed in the Battle of Kerbala (680) the family was unable to compete with the Umayyad caliphs ruling in Damascus. Sunnis believe that Islamic leaders should be chosen by the community.
- *The definition of "Muslim"*. Kharijites ("Seceders"), a puritanical sect, maintained that a Muslim who committed serious sin and refused to repent automatically became an unbeliever, an apostate. But the Murji'ites ("Postponers") claimed only Allah could decide who was a good Muslim and would give his verdict on the day of judgment.
- *The challenge of rationalism*. The Mu'tazilites adopted a "rationalist" or "modernist" position, questioning the more extreme versions of predestination and arguing for the freedom of the will, insisting that individuals have power over their own choices and actions. Al-Ashari moved from this position and became venerated as one of Islam's greatest theologians, stressing the transcendence of God, preferring a strong view of predestination and claiming God's justice is different from any human concept of justice. Al-Ghazzali, another venerated Islamic theologian, re-established orthodox theology against the threats posed by Greek philosophy.
- *The definition of orthodoxy*. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Khan (1836-1908) founded the Ahmadiyah missionary movement which sought to revitalize Islam and claimed to be a kind of Mahdi ("Messiah"). In 1974 the Pakistani government declared this to be non-Muslim because it seemed to question the finality of the Prophet Muhammad.

- *The question of development.* Only those schooled in traditional Islamic disciplines can be called *ulama*. But, Chapman claims, many Muslims are now questioning the idea that the law cannot develop.
- *The status of shari'a law.* "Fundamentalists" do not believe that Islamic law should be supplemented, let alone superseded, by legal systems coming from non-Islamic sources. Other Muslims prefer to see a combination of shari'a and Western law.

Chapter 12. Subgroups in Islam

(There is a very helpful diagrammatic presentation of this in the course book, including a summary of "Movements within the Muslim community in the UK")

The break between Sunnis and Shi'ites dates from AD 661 when Ali died. Shi'ites believe that salvation comes from following the imam. Sunnis believe it comes from being a member of the Muslim community.

Chapman identifies other major subgroups:

- Kharijites: scattered small communities in Algeria, Tunisia, Tanzania and Oman. Militant puritan emphasis on jihad and asceticism.
- Shi'a Twelvers (Imami): found in Iran and constituted 50% of the population of Iraq, 20% of Lebanon and 8% of India and Pakistan. The imam is regarded as infallible. The Qur'an is interpreted in a non-literal manner. The tombs of imams are treated as sacred shrines. Salvation occurs through the messianic return of Mahdi.
- Seveners (Isma'ili): located in India and East Africa. Recognised the imams ending in Isma'ili.
- Zaidi: Recognise only the first four imams.
- Alawi ("Worshippers of Ali"): constitute 10% of Syrian population. Also found in Turkey. They are extremely syncretistic, including pagan and Christian elements.
- Druze: found in Lebanon and also around 250,000 in Syria. They believe in the transmigration of souls and are committed to monogamy. This sect was established by Darazi in the 11th century AD.
- Bahai: found in 139 countries. Really now a separate world religion, thought it was first established in 1844 by Bab, a Persian.
- Ahmadiyya: worldwide, but especially found in Africa and Indonesia. Its founder claimed to be Mahdi. Ahmadis teach that Jesus was taken down from the cross before he died and was later revived in the tomb. Escaping from Jerusalem he traveled to Kashmir where he died. The Pakistan government has officially declared Ahmadis to be non-Muslims.

Chapter 13. Sufism

It was al-Ghazzali (d. 1111) who introduced this facet to mainstream Islam, which emphasises mysticism and intense personal devotion, appealing particularly to Qur'anic verses such as 5:54; 24:35; 50:16. The word *sufi* probably comes from the word *suf*, meaning "undyed wool". A *sufi* was someone who wore *suf*.

Basic Practices and Emphases

- "Recollecting" or "remembering" the name of God is prayer (*dhikr*). This is sometimes accompanied by flute music or dancing and occasionally by the use of drugs.
- Belonging to a group (brotherhoods/communities/associations). Sufi ecstasy is essentially corporate in nature. The group of Sufis engage in a circle of rhythmic utterance often accompanied by the swaying (or whirling) of the body, controlled breathing and accelerating tempo until an ecstatic trance is reached. The form of words used is *Allah, Allahu or Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar* ("God greater! God greater!") or *La ilaha illa Allah* ("There is no god but God"). The group is guided by a

- murshid, shaykh or pir*. In Pakistan we stayed at times at Akram Lodge in Murree next door to a *pir's* house where we occasionally heard ecstatic chanting through the walls.
- The questioning of selfhood and the quest for union with God. Sufis strive for a relationship with God in which the distinction of "I" and "he" is dissolved and becomes "we" in a state (*fana*) in which we are no longer aware of our individual self. In 992 al-Hallaj was crucified for blasphemy, for claiming to be God, when he said "I am the real, The Truth".
 - Walking the mystic "way" (*tariga*). Stages to union with God are:
 - Repentance and renunciation
 - Contentment and tranquility
 - Union with God (vision of God, spiritual illumination, absorption to God, love of God)
 - Missionary zeal. Sufi brotherhoods are among the most effective agents in spreading the message of Islam.

Sufism and Orthodox Islam

During the early centuries orthodox Muslims criticized Sufism for encouraging individualism, potentially downgrading the importance of the five pillars, dissolving the distinction between Creator and creature and creating an unfavourable climate for esoteric speculation, superstition, magic and the desire for supernatural demonstrations of power.

Later Sufism became less and less orthodox and sometimes verged on pantheism. 18th century Wahhabism represents a counter-reaction against Sufism and folk Islam.

Chapter 14. "Folk" or "Popular" Islam

Some lay Muslims subscribe to various magical practices, e.g. wearing amulets, warding off the evil eye, drinking water in which has been immersed a written Qur'anic verse, magically using the name of God, drinking spring water thought to possess magical properties, making pilgrimage to the shrines of holy people to derive blessing.

In the course Chapman pointed out that while in the Islam of the Qur'an and *hadith* there is no concept of sacrifice dealing with sin, there are ideas of this nature in Folk Islam.

Chapter 15. The Spread and Development of Islam

Cragg believes one of the primary reasons for the rise of Islam was the deficiencies of the Christian Church. The development of Islam can be traced in the following manner:

632	Death of Muhammad
632-661	First four caliphs ruling in Medina
660-750	Umayyad Dynasty ruling in Damascus
661	Split between Sunnis and Shi'ites
710	Muslim forces reach the Indus
711	Campaigns in the Sindh under Muhammad ibn Qasim
714	Muslim occupation of Spain
732	Islamic Empire stretches from Spain to Persia Charles Martel defeats the Muslim forces at Poitiers in France
750-1258	Abbasid Dynasty rules in Baghdad: a "Golden Age of Islam"
909-1171	Fatimid Dynasty rules in Egypt
c.1000	Mahmud of Ghazna invades the Punjab (NW India); Muslim governor set up in Lahore

Things to know about the spread of Islam:

- Sometimes Christians welcomed the spread of Islamic rule. In Syria it brought relief from Byzantine rule. In Egypt it helped the Copts depose a puppet patriarch and recall their own exiled patriarch and, in league with Muslims, they were able to drive out the Byzantines.
- All Jews and Christians were treated as *dhimmi*s (members of a protected community). All non-Muslims paid a land tax (*kharaaj*) and Jews and Christians paid an additional poll tax (*jizya*). They were not allowed to do military service or pay the Muslim's alms tax.
- It is a dangerous oversimplification to say Islam was 'spread by the sword'. In the Indian subcontinent, the Far East, and West and East Africa Islam was spread by traders, many originally from Arabia. Also Sufis played an important role in spreading Islam. The treatment of people by Muslim invaders varied:
- In the earliest years of Islam Hammudah Abdalati, a Muslim, reports:

"This is the only time force was applied to bring such people (hostiles) to their senses and make them realize their responsibilities: either as Muslims by accepting Islam freely, or as loyal citizens by being tribute-payers, capable of living with their Muslim compatriots and sharing with them equal rights and duties." (138)
- Khalid, the great Muslim military leader immediately after Muhammad's death, acted disgracefully when he murdered the leader of a tribe that had surrendered to him in order to forcibly marry the leader's wife (both of whom had professed Islam). This led to a rebellion in the Muslim ranks, mild censure from the first caliph, but removal from command by the second caliph.
- According to John Taylor, a Christian Islamicist, the Muslim conquests in the Middle East "were remarkable for their discipline and lack of wanton destruction" (139).
- In NW India, "Mahmud the idol-smasher", ruler of Ghazni, plundered gold and jewels from Hindu temples and slaughtered many Brahmin priests.

Many Muslims carry a deep scar because of the Crusades (1096-1291) and for them it is as though it happened only yesterday. The Crusades have left an enduring legacy of suspicion and enmity.

Also from a Muslim standpoint Western missionaries, soldiers, traders and administrators associated with colonialism, all are expressive of the desire of the Christian West to dominate the world.

Chapman identifies nine people who led movements for the reform and renewal of Islam:

- Wali Allah (1702-1762), possibly the main person responsible for the renewal of Indian Islam.
- Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), founder of the Wahhabi movement attacking folk Islam, lowering moral standards and such additions as Sufism.
- Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) influenced some Indian Muslims to see how Islam might fit in the modern world.
- Jamal al-Din al Afghani (1839-1897), leader of the Pan-Islam movement, which called for the creation of an Islamic world state.
- Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) caused secular modernism to develop in the Middle East.
- Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938) was a former leader of the Muslim League and is often regarded as the spiritual founder of the state of Pakistan.
- Mawlana Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) was the founder of Jama'at-i-Islami (Community of Islam) who sought to thoroughly Islamicise the government of Pakistan.

- Hasan al-Banna (1906-1979) with others formed the Muslim Brothers which seeks the restoration of shari'a law through both peaceful and violent means.
- Ayatollah Khomeini (1900-1989)

In the course Chapman pointed out that 1953 is a major turning point for Muslims - the overthrow of a "democratic" government in Iran in a coup orchestrated by the CIA and MI5.

Also in the course Chapman noted that while Muhammad's relations with Jews were bad, for many centuries in early Islam the Jews were treated as protected minorities. The modern Palestinian problem has reminded Muslims of Muhammad's bad relations with Jews and the criticism of Jews in the Qur'an. However, anti-Semitism is not essential to Islam.

Chapter 16. Islam and Muslims in the World Today

Cragg observes,

The chief external fact about twentieth-century Islam is that almost everywhere it has recovered its political self... Political power is almost everywhere back in Muslim hands where there are Muslim people (147).

Since the fall of the Ottoman Empire there has been a dilemma as to how to express the unity of Muslims in political terms.

There are currently 49 Muslim majority states which account for 70% of the world's Muslims.

Muslims have tried to be consistent in following Islamic teaching concerning banking, given that the Qur'an explicitly forbids usury (*riba*), e.g. 2:276-279; cf. 3:130; 4:161; 30:39. Some believe no economy can survive without capital generating interest. Some believe Islamic banks do in fact charge interest but just call it by another name.

Chapman also quickly surveys modern Muslim questions concerning the Qur'an as divine revelation, the state of Israel, human rights, the struggle between fundamentalists and modernists and attitudes toward Western influences on the Muslim world.

Chapter 17. Women in Islam

Chapman points out that in assessing this issue it is important not to compare the worst in Islam with the best in Christianity. In the course he also reminded us that historically Christians do not have a good record of treating women, e.g. 19th century England. Therefore, while in some Muslim societies the treatment of women can only be described as degrading it is simplistic to cast the differences as those between Christian and Muslim attitudes to women. Further, as Chapman also points out, the sexual exploitation and promiscuity of women in the West gives Muslims every right to be critical of the Western way of treating women.

He summarises the teaching of the Qur'an about women and marriage. Among other things he notes that men are commanded to treat women kindly (4:19) and men may only marry non-Muslims who are Jewish or Christian ((5:5; 2:221) and that while women must draw their cloak or veil around them when they go outside there is no suggestion that they should be completely veiled (33:59; 24:30-31).⁶

He summarises the teaching and example of Muhammad which includes injunctions to be kind to one's wives. Muslims often argue that Muhammad treated his wives equally but this is a position that is hard to defend rationally and seems to be rooted in a dogmatic refusal to face facts. For example, it seems to be indisputable that A'isha was treated with special favouritism. In the course Chapman also argued that many of Muhammad's marriages were primarily aimed at achieving political ends.

The example of Muhammad with respect to women poses well-known problems. For example, when Muhammad was 50 years of age he married A'isha, who was only seven years old and the daughter of his companion Abu Bakr. The marriage was consummated the next year in 622. It's hard to defend this marriage on any grounds. The fact that A'isha became his favourite wife, if anything, makes this even more disturbing. Indeed, although A'isha is greatly venerated by Muslims, it is difficult on these grounds to have full confidence in the credibility of A'isha as a major source of traditions about Muhammad.

Further, between the ages of 56 and 60 Muhammad married nine additional women. There are problems here:

- For all other Muslims the limit is four wives⁷ and the Qur'an speaks of Muhammad having a special dispensation from Allah to have more. This smacks of a convenient 'revelation' and also has the appearance of hypocrisy and a double standard.
- One of those he married was Zaynab bint Jahsh, one of Muhammad's cousins who had been the wife of his adopted son Zaid. She became Muhammad's wife after another convenient 'revelation' (Qur'an 33:37). Chapman presents a weak and unconvincing attempt on the part of W. Montgomery Watt to rationalize this marriage on the grounds that Muhammad's contemporaries would not have viewed this as morally defective. He also argues that Muhammad's moral standards were higher than the norm for his time. This attempt at relativisation does not really address the fundamental problem.

The inequality of men and women seems to be built into the very fabric of Islam as illustrated by the following rulings within *shari'a*. Here I feel the need to state the position more strongly than Chapman has done:

- A man may marry up to four wives - a woman does not have the same latitude.
- The testimony of two women is equivalent to the testimony of one man.
- Muslim men are allowed to contract a temporary marriage (*mut'a*). Muslims have been known to justify satisfying their lust with a prostitute on this basis.
- While a Muslim man can marry a Jewish or Christian woman no Muslim woman is allowed to marry a non-Muslim.
- Muslim men can easily divorce their wives but, in practice, if not also in law, it is extremely difficult and often impossible for Muslim women to divorce their husbands.

In addition, it should be noted that Muslim women, if they go to the mosque - and many don't (they are often encouraged to pray at home) - have to meet in a separate area, not merely to avoid distracting the men, but so their voice will not be heard above that of the men's voices. This seems to imply the unfortunate assumption that Allah's ears are more attuned to the prayers and devotional expressions of men than of women.

In the course Chapman pointed out that it is misrepresentation by Christians to say that no women will go to paradise. However, the *hadith* do make it clear that there

will be more men than women in paradise and the Qur'an depicts paradise as a very masculine place.

It is also common in Muslim societies for a woman's worth to be based on her ability to give birth to sons.

It cannot be assumed that all Muslim women detest wearing the veil. Indeed, Chapman notes some of the reasons Muslim women themselves have given for their decision to wear the veil through interviews conducted with a Moroccan journalist, Hinde Taarji. Such reasons include (and here I am interacting in a way Chapman doesn't):

- Escaping masculine aggression in public and encouraging male respect. Those who argued wearing the veil on these grounds said the veil liberated them. However, this seems a tragic way to experience 'liberation' and only serves to underscore the subjection of Muslim women to the expectations and demands of Muslim men.
- As a sign of total commitment to Islam. This seems to be a tragic reason for wearing the veil, given that at this point it is arguable that male honour and male domination are the primary Islam grounds for making the veil a symbol of total submission.
- There is still scope for women, while wearing the veil, to leave the home and go to work. However, the reality is that in many Muslim societies such women are the exception that proves the rule: most women who are required to wear the veil are also kept in a state of purdah (a state of exclusion).
- Muslim women who decide to wear the veil, without first being told by men, are showing their own freedom to interpret Islam. This again seems to be a tragic way for women to justify wearing the veil, since, while pre-emptive, it still indicates that male honour and male dominance constitute the ultimate grounds for such a decision.

It doesn't help the cause much to find Muslim women who express positive reasons for wearing the veil. This doesn't address the issue. Cognitive dissonance adequately explains why Muslim women, finding themselves in a societal context where there is little option other than to express commitment to Islam, are psychologically forced to rationalize behaviour expected of those who make such a commitment.

Chapman's closing warnings in this chapter against comparing the best of Christianity with the worst of Islam do have their relevance. However, when all is said and done, there is simply no comparison between the conceptions of women characteristic of Islam and Christianity respectively.

The course book (47) considers a case study involving a Muslim wife and mother living in Britain with a brute for a husband. The course book also cites Abd Al-Masih, challenging Muslim attempts to put a positive spin on the status of women in Islam: Marriage and family laws place women under the common dominion of men, despite the protest of some Muslims. According to the Shariah, a man can marry up to four wives. The man has the right to discipline, guide and educate his wife, and, if necessary, to strike her. In most Islamic countries, a man can divorce his wife at any time. In such a situation, the children always belong to the father only. In court, the testimony of a man counts as much as the testimony of two women. In the case of inheritance, the female is always underprivileged.

Part Three. Entering Into Discussion and Dialogue

For chapters 18-20 I leave it to readers to look up Chapman's own comments. Christians who have a sound biblical understanding should be able to address these questions, objections and issues.

Chapter 18. Questions and Objections Concerning Christian Practice

- The eating of pork
- The drinking of alcohol
- Drinking wine in church
- Turning the other cheek is unreasonable - a sign of weakness
- Priesthood in Christianity (no class of persons in Islam who perform priestly functions).⁸

Chapter 19. Questions and Objections Concerning Christian Beliefs

- It is blasphemy to speak of the Trinity since this necessarily means three gods.
- It is blasphemy to speak of Jesus as the Son of God.
- Jesus was not crucified.
- The Scriptures have been corrupted.
- There are errors and contradictions in Scripture.
- Muslims recognize Jesus as a prophet so why don't Christians recognize Muhammad as a prophet?
- The Bible foretells the coming of Muhammad, so why don't Christians acknowledge this?

Some Muslims will also object that all religions are basically the same, though when pressed they don't really believe this.

Chapter 20. Social and Political Issues

- Western (Christian) children don't obey their parents in the same way Muslim children do.
- The West (Christianity or the result of Christianity) is degenerate.
- Christian Zionism.

Chapter 21. Guidelines and Aims in Discussion with Muslims

- Avoid arguments
- Don't criticize Islam
- Seek to remove misunderstanding
- Distinguish between the important and the non-important
- Admit the mistakes and crimes of Christians in the past and present
- Be positive
- Be loving
- Use personal testimony
- Be prepared to communicate just a small aspect of the gospel at a time
- Encourage reading of one of the Gospels, when appropriate.

Chapter 22. A Deeper Look at the Main Muslim Objections

"The Bible has been corrupted"

Chapman produces citations from the Qur'an which tell Muslims to believe the previous Scriptures, but also speak of changes made to these previous Scriptures. In response to the standard Muslim charge that Jews and Christians have corrupted the Scriptures, Chapman points out:

- That none of these later verses from the Qur'an indicate that the text of the Scriptures has been corrupted.
- That the accusation about the corruption of the text was developed by later Muslim apologists.
- Chapman advises asking Muslims to answer the question, "When do you believe they were corrupted and by whom?" Muslims have a problem if they say that this corruption occurred before the time of Muhammad because then it can be fairly asked why the Qur'an says the message revealed to Muhammad was a confirmation of the previous Scriptures. But they also have a problem if they say the corruption occurred after the time of Muhammad because the manuscripts on which the Scriptures are based were written centuries before the time of Muhammad.
- Further, the Qur'an speaks of Allah protecting his word so that it seems unthinkable that he would allow the Scriptures to be corrupted.
- In addition, Muslims place themselves in a completely untenable position when they claim the Gospel of Barnabas was the first injil revealed to Jesus, since internal evidence strongly indicates this book was written in Italy in the 16th century, probably by a Spaniard of Jewish origin who had converted to Islam.
- Chapman observes that Muslim suspicions about corruption in the Bible are at least partly due to their understanding that divine revelation and inspiration can only be effected through dictation.
- All these arguments will not win the day. Since Muslims cannot accept New Testament teaching that Jesus is God's Son the Bible, by definition, must be corrupted.

"Jesus was not the Son of God"

- The Qur'an explicitly denies the divinity of Christ and expresses repugnance at the idea of him being called God's Son. In his response Chapman points out:
- Muhammad's objection to this doctrine is probably rooted in his repudiation of the idols at Mecca, for many of these gods had been thought to have sexually coupled to produce sons and daughters. In the course Chapman pointed out that when Muhammad destroyed the idols he did not destroy an icon of the Virgin Mary and Jesus.
- Muhammad misunderstood the Trinity as involving sexual union between God and Mary to produce Jesus.
- It is not necessary to make much of the title "Son of God" in discussions with Muslims. Jesus himself avoided use of "Messiah" because the Jews had distorted ideas as to what this meant.
- Christian faith in Jesus as God's Son is not merely based on the teaching of the apostles, but on the words and actions of Jesus himself.
- The followers of Jesus were strict monotheists and their accommodation of Jesus as divine did not involve movement away from strict monotheism.
- The sonship of Jesus is not merely of theological importance but of immense relevance to Christians. Muslims are slaves of Allah, but Christians are the sons and daughters of God.
- The Qur'an itself uses sonship language in a figurative manner. In the course of this discussion Chapman advises using Qur'an 4:171 because of the way it refers to Jesus as God's "Word" and as "a spirit from him". This does not justify using the Qur'an to prove Jesus' deity but only provides an opportunity to use this verse as a bridge by which Christians may share with Muslims what the New Testament means when it calls Jesus "the Word" and speaks of "the Spirit of Jesus".

"Jesus was not crucified"

- The traditional interpretation of 4:157-159 is that God raised Jesus up to heaven in a miraculous manner before the crucifixion took place and that someone who looked like him was crucified in his place. Many Muslims believe Jesus will return to the earth at the end of the world to establish Islam as the one true religion. Then Jews and

Christians will also become Muslims. Jesus will then die and be buried, but raised on the Last Day with all people. At that time he will expose the false beliefs that Jews and Christians hold about him. Chapman suggests two responses:

- The Qur'an only denies that the Jews carried out the crucifixion but does not actually deny the crucifixion itself.
- 19:33 and possibly 3:55 and 5:117 (depending on translation) may in fact indicate Jesus did die a natural death.
- For many centuries Muslim scholars debated the crucifixion. Some Muslims reject all theories about a substitute being crucified in the place of Jesus.
- Some more open-minded and liberal Muslims may be open to this correction of traditional Muslim teaching, but the vast majority accept as dogma that Jesus was not crucified.
- The Qur'an generally teaches that God gives victory to his prophets and is bound to vindicate his servants and so assumes God would naturally rescue Jesus from death through supernatural intervention. We respond that God has indeed vindicated Jesus but not by rescuing him from death, but by allowing him to go through death on our behalf and then raising him from death.

Chapter 23. Learning from the Controversies of the Past

Muhammad and the Christians of Najran (c. AD 632)

During the time of Muhammad, one Christian community was located in Najran in the SW of the Arabian peninsula (modern Yemen). It had its own cathedral and bishop. On one occasion Muhammad met with a delegation of sixty Christians from Najran. These Christians argued Jesus is God because:

- He worked miracles. However, in addition to instancing his raising of the dead and his healing of the sick, they also apocryphally added that he made clay birds and breathed into them so that they flew away.
- He was born of a virgin. However, they also apocryphally claimed that while he was a baby in the cradle he spoke to defend the honour of his mother Mary.
- The Trinity is indicated in God's statements "We created, we commanded."

At this meeting the Muslims criticized the belief that God has a son, the worship of the cross, as they perceived it, and the eating of pork. They insisted on defending the transcendence and unity of God. They argued that miracles do not prove the deity of Christ and in fact show his power was limited, e.g. he did not have the power to change day to night. Muslims accepted the virgin birth of Christ but insisted he was created by divine fiat.

John of Damascus (675-753)

This man was the first to think seriously about Islam. In his book *The Fount of Wisdom* he described Islam as the "heresy of the Ishmaelites". However, he generally avoided polemics, had close dealings with Muslims from childhood and possessed an accurate knowledge of the Qur'an and Muslim beliefs and practices. John argued for Jesus' divinity from the Qur'anic titles "Word" and "spirit" and suggested Muhammad could not have been a prophet because his coming was not foretold in the Bible and he did not work miracles.

Al-Tabari (d. 855)

He wrote a book *Refutation of Christianity* intended to destroy the faith of Christians, after converting from Nestorian Christianity to Islam at the age of seventy. Al-Tabari argued that Christian beliefs about Jesus are absurd and self-contradictory, e.g. that Jesus could be simultaneously God and man, that God could experience suffering and

death, that God could be simultaneously Creator and creature. As a Nestorian Christian, however, Al-Tabari “failed to recognize that most Christians have generally understood Jesus to have two natures, divine and human” (214).

The Correspondence of Al-Hashmi and Al-Kindi (c. 820)

A Christian, probably a civil servant living in Baghdad, composed fictional and highly influential correspondence between a Muslim and a Christian. The first letter fairly presents Muslim beliefs and practices, accuses Christians of being in error and unbelief, and invites them to become Muslims. The reply explains the Christian view of the Trinity and questions Islamic claims, e.g. Muhammad’s prophethood dubious because of his doubtful morals, absence of biblical prophecies and miracles; nothing exceptional about the language of the Qur’an to justify the Muslim claim that it’s a miracle; the pillars of Islam can’t purify the heart; Islam has been spread by the sword; Islam is a lax and easy religion compared to the ‘narrow way’ of Jesus.

Ibn Hazim (994-1064)

This master of anti-Christian polemics maintained (without ever dialoguing with Christians or other Muslim adversaries):

- The text of the Bible had been corrupted.
- The idea that three “things” can be one is absurd.
- The incarnation implies a change of nature and, therefore, absurdly, that God in becoming man ceased to be God.
- Discrepancies in the Gospels show Scripture is not revealed by God.

Raymond Lull (1234-1315)

Following his conversion Lull spent 22 years preparing himself for missionary work among Muslims, studying theology, Islam and Arabic. He wrote more than 200 books of Christian apologetics for Muslims. “[At] the age of sixty he made trips to Tunis, Cyprus and Algeria. In each case he became involved in public controversy, and was arrested and expelled” (216). Later in Algeria he was stoned when he publicly criticized Muhammad. Though confrontational in his approach Lull nevertheless recognized that Muslims could not be won for Christ by physical force. He was convinced that to reach Muslims Christians must study Islam carefully and sought to convince Muslims by “irrefutable logic”, depending far too much on rational argumentation.

Henry Martyn (1781-1812)

Martyn, an East India Company chaplain at the age of 24 was an outstanding linguist. Within seven years he translated the New Testament into Urdu and thoroughly revised the Persian New Testament and commenced a revision of the Arabic New Testament. Martyn stressed the need for a relational approach to winning Muslims, at one stage commenting that he had lost all hope of convincing Muslims through argument.

Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803-1865)

At the age of 26 this German missionary wrote *Balance of Truth*, a much-used textbook of Christian apologetics with Muslims which was written in a gracious manner, recognized common ground between Christian and Muslim beliefs and involved citations from the Qur’an, hadith and many other Muslim sources. However, his attacks on Muslim beliefs were sometimes just polemical and he relied far too much on an appeal to reason rather than the heart. Later a Muslim scholar,

Rahmatullah al-Hindi, defeated him in a public debate, and wrote his critique of Christianity, *Manifestation of the Truth*.

Temple Gairdner (1873-1928)

This gifted linguist had a sound knowledge of Islam, debating publicly with sheikhs in Arabic. Of him it has been said: "Other teachers taught how to refute Islam; he taught us how to love Muslims" (220). Gairdner included stories, history, drama, music, poetry and pictures in his Christian apologetic to the whole man.

Ahmad Deedat (1918-2005)

This South African Muslim apologist engaged in public debates with Christians for over thirty years. His style was aggressive and polemical, aimed at ridiculing Christian beliefs.

Chapter 24. Exploring Dialogue

In this chapter Chapman sets out a proposed agenda for discussion between a Christian and a Muslim or a group of Christians and Muslims meeting together over a period of time. He lists questions under the following headings: Who are we? What about the past? What are we up against? (facing common dangers) Can we find new ways of bearing witness to our faith?

Chapman identifies the following statements as those to which both Christians and Muslims can assent: God creates, God is one, God rules, God reveals, God loves, God judges, God forgives. As Cragg comments, "The question is not whether, but how" (226). Chapman proceeds to examine each of these statements and compare and contrast Christian and Islamic conceptions.

In the course Chapman noted that the Qur'an does use the word "love" in speaking about Allah. However, it really means "like". That is, God *likes* certain types of moral people and he doesn't *like* other types of non-moral people. This is in sharp contrast to the Bible in which God loves sinners, e.g. the Parable of the Two Lost Sons.

Part Four. Facing Fundamental Issues

Chapter 25. Theological Questions

Is the God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity?

Chapman regards this question as akin to a trick question, an unhelpful way to address the underlying issue. He recommends breaking down the question into several smaller questions:

Is the Christian idea of God the same as the Muslim's idea of God?	No
Is there anything in common between the Christian's idea of God and the Muslim's idea of God?	Yes
Is there enough in common between these respective ideas of God to justify using the same word for 'God'?	Christians differ

Chapman proposes an analogy. In one country people never see the sun in a cloudless sky, by contrast with people living in the Mediterranean. Yet it is the same sun for people in both places, though they will have a different mental image and experience of it, depending on where they live.

Those who accept the analogy conclude Muslims and Christians are talking about the same God, though their ideas and experience of God differ considerably.

Those who cannot accept the analogy, see the difference as akin to the difference between the sun and the moon, assuming Muslims and Christians are talking about two totally different beings.

Chapman reasons that the latter position makes "communication between Christians and Muslims extremely difficult, if not impossible" (236). He believes that in Acts 17 Paul is able to use the same word for "God" for the "unknown God" and the God who raised Jesus from the dead, since there is enough in common between the pagan concept of god and his concept of God.

However, this use of Acts 17 is stretching the friendship; the logic is starting to crack and crumble. Clearly, Paul did not think that these pagans and Christians were actually referring to the same God, hence "unknown God" and his stress on their culpable ignorance. Here Chapman is confusing an actual reality, the sun, with ideas about what constitutes ultimate deity or reality. Paul actually illustrates that if there is overlap in ideas, not an overlap in knowledge of reality, then it is very possible to communicate the gospel with great effectiveness. Consequently, even if Christians believe that Muslims are completely ignorant of God and are merely mouthing their ideas about what constitutes ultimate deity, they are able to communicate the gospel effectively on the basis of overlap in conceptions. The difference is that the Christian idea of God is linked to knowledge of the real and living God, whereas the Muslim idea of God is just an idea, which happens, for historical reasons, to bear some conceptual overlap with Jewish and Christian conceptions of God.

Chapman further seeks to defend his view that at some level Muslims and Christians are talking about the same God by arguing, "Many converts and inquirers from Muslim backgrounds assume there is some real continuity in the knowledge and experience of God before and after conversion to Christianity." He cites the example of Bilquis Sheikh in *I Dared to Call Him Father* as pointing to continuity rather than discontinuity. But the argumentation here is not convincing. After all, what we have just said above adequately explains this experiential phenomenon. Because Islamic belief about Allah has historical links with Jewish and Christian conceptions of God there are ideas about God that a Muslim has prior to conversion which are incorporated into the post-conversion knowledge of God. Further, since conversion is preceded by a period, long or short, of experiential preparation by God's Spirit, it follows that an experience of continuity does not confirm that at some level Muslims and Christians know the same God. Rather, the converted Muslim has been subject to a prior process of being brought to the knowledge of God. Indeed, entrance into the kingdom of God presupposes regeneration, being born "from above", of the Spirit (John 3). The Spirit blows where he wills, so it is not even helpful to base an argument on pre-conversion and post-conversion experience.

Chapman observes that fourteen million Arabic-speaking Christians in the Middle East use "Allah" for God and, we might add, so do millions of Indonesian Christians. But, as I've indicated above, there's no problem with this given the validity of exploiting commonality in ideas. Clearly, it is not necessary to share Chapman's theological position to come to this conclusion.

Is there any revelation in Islam?

Chapman doesn't like the formulation of this question and feels it is simplistic to merely answer "Yes" or "No". Bible-believing Christians will reject the view that Muhammad received special revelation, but Chapman reasons that general revelation was available to Muhammad as it is for all people. Also, Chapman is partial to the idea that Muhammad was a sincere seeker after God and was, therefore, akin to Cornelius before his conversion and might be described, using Kraft's expression, as "chronologically A.D. but informationally B.C.", perhaps akin to Old Testament figures such as Gideon or maybe even Elijah.

Theologically, this is weak argumentation. The parallel with Cornelius and other God-fearers is forced. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that "no one seeks after God" (Rom 3:11) and, as Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (Jn 6:44). Consequently, if someone is genuinely seeking after God then it is because the true and living God has caused him or her to do so as part of his predestined purpose to bring that person to himself. Christians who want to think that Muhammad began as a sincere seeker after God need to think again. If we knew Muhammad's real inner motives, which we don't, then perhaps we would have considered some of Muhammad's aims very noble. However, Muhammad never became a child of God and, therefore, whatever he might have been genuinely seeking it was certainly not the true and living God. It is true that much of Muhammad's understanding of Christian truth reflected a BC rather than an AD understanding. But that is true of many unbelievers and does not justify the conclusion that he already possessed a knowledge of God akin to that of Gideon and other Old Testament figures.

It might be tempting to compare the displacement in Arabia of pre-Islamic polytheism with Islamic monotheism with the displacement of Canaanite polytheism with Israelite monotheism. The temptation should be resisted. The monotheism involved is not grounded in a revelation by the one and only true and living God.

Further, it is academic to ask the question, as Chapman does, how Muhammad would have responded if he had had an opportunity to hear the true rather than a distorted gospel. However much we may lament that Muhammad received no such opportunity and was grossly misinformed, the fact remains that he did end up rejecting essential Christianity.

Chapman is right to caution against extreme interpretations of the psychological processes involved in Muhammad's reception of 'revelations', e.g. that they came from evil spirits. Muhammad's practice of meditating in caves is indeed comparable with the practice of many Christian ascetics, monks and mystics.

Chapman notes that there are four main views held by Christians concerning Islam:

- The Qur'an is inspired by the devil.
- We should recognize and make the most of anything in the Qur'an that is consistent with biblical revelation.
- Muhammad was a prophet in some limited sense, comparable to Gideon and Elijah.
- The Qur'an is a revelation of God to Arabs and Muhammad was a genuine prophet for Muslims.

Chapman rightly warns against writing off the Qur'an, Muhammad and Islam as Satanic. Chapman asks those who adopt this approach why Islam should be singled out for special mention. Given the general applicability of passages such as 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 6:12 and 2 Corinthians 11:14 it is important not to get things out of proportion. Further, overemphasizing demonic influence on Islam masks the terrible record of the Christian church in its relations with Islam and its followers and does not help the Christian church to accept responsibility for these great sins. Also, while it is true that the occult is a very real facet of especially folk Islam, overemphasizing demonic influence prevents Christians from treating Muslims as normal people. Christians who demonise Islam are more profoundly influenced by stereotypes than they realize and are also likely not to understand the complexities of history and politics that are involved in the contemporary resurgence of Islam. For some Christians demonizing Islam really expresses their inability to cope with that which is culturally strange and foreign in Islam.

Chapter 26. The Islamic View of Jesus

Chapman summarises what the Qur'an says about Jesus:

- He is one in the line of prophets sent by God (4:163; 3:84-85).
- He was born of a virgin, his birth announced to Mary by an angel (3:45-49).
- He performed many miracles (5:110).
- It is blasphemy to elevate Jesus to the level of God (5:17; 6:101-102).
- He is unique among the prophets being given unique titles, "Word" and "Spirit" (4:171-172).
- He is similar to Adam since both were created by the word of God (3:59-61).
- He was not crucified (4:157-159).

Later Islamic tradition adds other elements:

- One story tells how he dyed ten garments in different colours in one single vat, while another tells how he turned a group of children to pigs.
- He is portrayed as an ascetic who wore a robe of wool, exhausted by his labours, the poorest of the poor, "the prince of wanderers" (248).
- According to various traditions, at the end of history he will descend to earth to vindicate Islam and show its greatness to the whole world. He will arrive at the eastern gate of the Great Mosque at Damascus. Then he will worship with other Muslims in a mosque in Jerusalem. All the People of the Book will believe in him when he kills all the pigs, breaks all the crosses, destroys Jewish synagogues and Christian churches, kills all Christians who don't believe in him and kills the Antichrist. There will be global peace and justice and forty years later Jesus will die a natural death and be buried next to Muhammad in Medina.
- Ahmadis believe Jesus was taken down from the cross before he died and revived in the tomb, escaping to Kashmir where he actually died.
- Many Muslim apologists have claimed the so-called *Gospel of Barnabas*, a demonstrable forgery, is the only authentic account of the life of Jesus.

Christian Responses

The Qur'an is unable to see Jesus as more than a prophet because, to quote Jens Christensen, "Islam says: Book from God = revelation from God. Christianity says: "Christ from God = revelation of God" (250).

Chapman believes that Christians who know what they are doing do not need to treat the Qur'anic picture of Jesus as putting an end to the discussion, but can use this as a starting point.

Chapter 27. Crucial Differences: The Parting of the Ways

	Islam	Christianity
Revelation	Can only know God's will not God himself.	God can be known.
Inspiration	The words of the Qur'an are in no sense Muhammad's words since he only received and recited them. Since the Qur'an came directly from God to Muhammad it is wrong to look for "sources". The Qur'an must be read and recited in Arabic; translations are not the Qur'an.	The Bible is simultaneously the Word of God and the word of men; the authors were not passive. There is no reason why we shouldn't look for sources. Translations are encouraged and are as much 'the Bible' as the original Hebrew and Greek, since the meaning of the original can be adequately conveyed in any language.
Unity of God	Islam is committed to monotheism. It is <i>shirk</i> (idolatry) to put any other human or supernatural being on the same level as God.	Christianity is committed to monotheism. Father, Son and Spirit are three 'persons' within the one God, not three distinct gods.
Human Nature	The proper relationship between God and people is that of Master and servant/slave. People are created to act as stewards of what God has made. Adam's sin did not constitute the Fall of humanity. Sin is substantially a matter of actions and behaviour. Individuals and communities must live according to the pattern of the life and teaching of Muhammad as revealed in the Qur'an and the traditions.	The relationship God seeks with people is that of Father and children. People are created to act as stewards of what God has made. All people are born sinners as a consequence of Adam's Fall (original sin) Sin involves not merely our actions but our nature. Individuals and churches are shaped into the likeness of Christ through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
Forgiveness and Salvation	Forgiveness depends solely on the mercy of God and his pronouncement of forgiveness. Only on the Day of Judgment will Muslims discover whether their good deeds have outweighed their bad deeds and have therefore accumulated sufficient merit to move Allah to declare forgiveness.	A simple pronouncement of forgiveness undermines God's justice since his laws have been broken. Only the propitiating death of Jesus makes it possible for God to pronounce forgiveness while remaining perfectly just. Those who believe in Jesus' substitutionary death may have full assurance of salvation prior to the Day of Judgment.
Politics and the State	Muhammad was Prophet and Statesman, called to establish an Islamic society in Medina.	Jesus was a Prophet but much more than this, but while he inaugurated the dynamic rule of God on earth he distanced himself from Jewish aspirations for the creation of an political state.

	For Muslims it is nigh impossible to separate mosque and state.	Since Christ's kingdom is not of this world it is important to discriminate between Church and State, recognizing there our responsibility to serve both may involve difficult tensions.
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Chapman also distinguishes between Islamic and Christian views of divine predestination. This distinction doesn't fit well under "the unity of God", where Chapman puts it. The difference is that Muslims believe God predestined both good and evil whereas for Christians the thought of God being in any way the author of evil is anathema.

Chapman helpfully closes the chapter by applying to Islam Jesus' rebuke of Peter - "You think as men think, not as God thinks." He sees Islam doing this in various ways:

- Exclusion of the possibility of incarnation and reducing Jesus' identity to that of a prophet amounts to telling God what he can and cannot do in revealing himself to people.
- Adopting a mechanical view of divine communication.
- Failure to appreciate oneness can be more complex than that of a single mathematical unit.
- Superficiality in failing to appreciate the deep-seated corruption of human nature.
- Encouraging people to approach the Day of Judgment with fear and uncertainty or perhaps complacency.
- Failure to appreciate the almost unavoidable corruption that attends human political power.

Chapter 28. Thinking Biblically About Islam

Chapman warns that our thinking about Islam is not adequately biblical if we confine ourselves to the biblical categories of "false prophets" and "antichrist" when approaching Muhammad's teaching. These points need to be borne in mind (here I am developing Chapman's arguments):

1. Muhammad did not begin his public ministry with a rejection of Christian beliefs.
2. Although Muhammad had contact with some individual Christians and Christian groups it seems unlikely that he was ever exposed to faithful communication of the biblical gospel or sound Christian teaching about how the oneness of God and Trinity cohere. Consequently, while Muhammad did reject as blasphemy the concepts of Jesus as Son of God and of the Trinity, he was rejecting poor Christian representations of these truths and, indeed, Muhammad's understanding that the Trinity was God, Mary and Jesus probably illustrates the distorted form of Christianity he encountered.
3. Muhammad would understandably have found it difficult to discriminate between such distorted expressions of Christian truth, involving, for example, the veneration of Mary (maybe as "mother of God"), and the crude polytheistic beliefs of the Meccans.

Chapman also proposes that it is inadequate to think of Allah as merely the God of Islam. Here he observes that the Arabic for "god" is *ilah* and that originally "Allah" probably meant "the God" (compare *el*, "god", and *ha'el*, "the God") indicating that he was the highest deity among the pantheon of gods and goddesses in Mecca during Muhammad's life. He compares Muhammad's call to worship Allah, the High God of the Arabs, with Old Testament demands for monotheism. He notes that it has been common for Christian missionaries, when communicating the gospel in other languages, to adopt the name used by people for their high god, e.g. Gott and Dieu. Although Allah is not the same as the God of the Bible the name Allah is close to

Hebrew words for God and need not be thought of as a name for "God" which can be used only by Muslims.

Chapman also wants to draw a limited parallel between the initial vision of Muhammad and Gideon's initial fervour, though this is problematic and of dubious value.

Chapman considers Muhammad's early contact with the Jews, noting that Muhammad's reaction to Christian claims about Jesus is similar to the Jewish reaction which culminated in Christ's crucifixion. Muhammad was influenced by Jewish thought and initially prayed, like the Jews, with his face toward Jerusalem, but following the negative response he received from Jews in Medina, he prayed facing Mecca. Muhammad also claimed Abraham and Ishmael had been associated with the building of the Ka'ba in Mecca and that Abraham was a Muslim. Chapman observes the New Testament portrayal of Judaism as a hostile body of beliefs and traditions and individual Jews, of varying kinds. He recommends that we accept that Muslim individuals also will respond in a variety of ways.

Chapter 29. Counting the Cost of Conversion

Abul A'la Mawdudi commented, "Islam is a one-way door, you can enter through it but you cannot leave" (277). The tolerance Islam might show in other areas does not extend to Muslims who convert to another religion, who are treated as traitors deserving of the severest punishment.

Qur'anic verses concerning the treatment of those who renounce Islam are 4:89; 3:90-91 and 2:217. Chapman points out that in their original context none of these verses is concerned with Muslims becoming Christians, but with hypocrites, idolaters who pretended profession of Islam but then reverted to an idolatrous way of life. Chapman notes some Muslims who interpret the Qur'anic verses and statements from the *hadith* in a milder manner, e.g. emphasizing "there is no compulsion in religion" or trying to limit their application to the historical situation that confronted early Islam. He observes a passage from the *hadith* requiring the death penalty for an apostate, though he forgets 4:89 when he incorrectly claims that the death penalty is not mentioned in the Qur'an (280). Traditions differ as to whether apostates should be given an opportunity to repent.

Chapman concludes, "However charitable we want to be, we have to reckon with the fact that in the majority of cases Muslims who want to become disciples of Christ are thought of, and treated as, apostates and outcasts from their family and community" (284).

The course book considers other issues involved in conversion (pp44-45): the importance of confession, the question of being a 'secret disciple', relationships with the family and the community, relationships with Christians and the Church, the question of whether baptism is essential or not, and the question as to whether suffering is inevitable or not.

In the course Chapman noted three common ingredients to Muslim conversions:

1. Impressed by the sacrificial giving and love of Christians.
2. Exposure to Scripture.
3. Experience of supernatural power, e.g. a vision, dream or miraculous healing.

With Muslims the experience often comes before understanding.

Chapter 30. Facing the Political Challenge of Islam

Chapman notes that from the time of the *Hijra*, the "migration" of Muhammad, with his followers, from Mecca to Medina, established Muhammad as not merely prophet but also statesman, the leader of the Islamic community. In the course Chapman emphasizes what a major turning point the *hijra* is in Islamic history, crucial for understanding the political nature of Islam which understands that "the kingdom of God" must be "incarnated" in a human community, as per Medina.

The Qur'an contains a mixture of attitudes toward Jews and Christians, some positive, others negative. Often Muslims let Jews and Christians under their rule practice their own religion if they didn't submit to Islam. Such non-Muslims were called *dhimmis*. They were tolerated and protected minorities who were required to pay the "tribute" (*jizya*) as stipulated in the Qur'an. Chapman cites from an agreement made by Muhammad with the Christian communities in Najran in the south of Arabia (modern Yemen). Muhammad required payment of a yearly tribute, but allowed them to continue with their churches and services, stating that no bishop, monk or church warden would be removed from their positions. Provided they were loyal and fulfilled their obligations Muhammad promised them the protection of Allah and *dhimmah* of the prophet "for ever".

After Muhammad's death the caliph 'Umar claimed that during his last illness Muhammad had said, "Two religions shall not remain together in the peninsula of the Arabs". Consequently, Christians and Jews were expelled from Arabia.

For centuries Jews and Christians in lands under Muslim control outside of Arabia were subject to the Code/Ordinance/Pact of Umar:

1. They were required to pay the *jizya* with many documents requiring that they should experience some form of humiliation while paying, e.g. being struck on the neck.
2. They were exempt from *jihad*, Islamic military service.
3. They were not allowed to build new churches or synagogues or repair them.
4. They were not allowed to display the cross outside churches or hold public religious processions outside.
5. They were not allowed to build houses taller than those of Muslims.
6. They were to be visibly distinguishable from those of Muslims, often by wearing a badge or sometimes by the shaving of the head.
7. They were forbidden to ride on horses and only allowed to ride on mules or donkeys.
8. They were required to show respect to Muslims, e.g. giving up their seats to them.

Sometimes these requirements were strictly enforced and sometimes they were not enforced. However, modern parallels are to be found:

- In the Gulf States church buildings have to be located away from the centres of towns.
- In the Gulf States many congregations must share one building.
- In the Gulf States no Christian symbols must be displayed.
- In the Gulf States the ringing of church bells is forbidden.
- In Saudi Arabia church buildings are prohibited.
- In Saudi Arabia religious police may break up services in Christian homes.

Chapman discusses various Islamic concepts of *jihad*. The recent distinction made by many Muslims between efforts to establish the supremacy of Islam in the world and inner spiritual struggle is not reflected in the way Muslim thinkers of the past have understood the concept. So, for example, Ibn Khaldun (1333-1406), clearly sees it as an Islamic obligation “to gain power over other nations” and states that it is “clearly stated in the noble Qur’an” that it is for non-Muslims to choose between “conversion to Islam, payment of the poll tax, or death” (293). Chapman also cites a contemporary Nigerian Muslim leader who advises imposing the tax on non-Muslims as a way of pressuring them to leave the area and preparing them to be the targets of *jihad* if they refuse to pay it. By contrast, Rafiq Zakaria lists a series of leaders “in the secular mould” who “were the real builders of modern Islam”, namely Ataturk, Jinnah, Nasser, Sukarno, Tenko Abdul Rahman, Mujibur Rahman, Qaddafi and Boumedienne.

Chapman sets out some important principles as providing the framework within which Christians can decide how to face the challenge of Islam on the political level:

1. Accurate information and responsible publicity. “Our information is often one-sided, misleading or hopelessly out of date” (296).
2. United local protest. “In some situations where they have reason to be concerned, Christians of all denominations must get together to make their voices heard” (296).
3. United protest from international bodies.
4. Lessons from history. Chapman reminds us that in the Christianity encountered by Muhammad church and state were one. Indeed, this may even have influenced the model adopted by Muhammad. Medieval Europe also followed this pattern of church-state relations.
5. Turning the other cheek.
“...what Jesus here demands of all his followers is a personal attitude to evildoers which is prompted by mercy not justice, which renounces retaliation so completely as to risk further costly suffering, which is governed never by the desire to cause them harm but always by the determination to serve their highest good” (Stott, 298).
6. The Golden Rule: “We have no right to point the finger of accusation at Muslim communities and governments, if we are blind to the ways in which Muslim minorities suffer from unfair discrimination in so-called Christian countries in the West” (Lausanne Report on Christian Witness to Muslims, 299).
7. Appealing to Islamic principles. Chapman cites a paper written by Michael Nazir-Ali, while living in Pakistan, appealing to the Qur’anic conception of human beings as vice-regents of God as providing the basis for “a broad and liberal system” in which minorities will feel at home (300).
8. Appealing to international law.

Part Five. Sharing our Faith

Chapter 31. Natural Openings in Everyday Life

In this very short chapter Chapman gives the example of a Christian asking a Muslim neighbour who comes with a gift of cakes during an *Id* to explain what *Id* means. The Muslim expresses the view that *Id* is comparable to Christmas for Christians. Chapman sets out various responses the Christian might make and asks the reader to assess how appropriate they are.

Chapter 32. Christian Responses to Folk Islam

Chapman proposes three guiding principles for Christian response to folk Islam:

1. Felt needs are being met through folk Islam.

2. Where appropriate we can point to Jesus as the greatest mediator. Here there is a need to particularly stress Jesus' victory over the powers of evil.
3. We may be involved in spiritual warfare.

Chapman supplies a useful chart listing felt needs in popular Islam and what animistic answers are frequently adopted to meet these needs. In each case he suggests what the Christian alternative to meeting the felt need involves.

Chapter 33. Using the Bible

Influenced by Kenneth Bailey, Chapman recommends use of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which he prefers to call the Parable of the Two Lost Sons. He identifies five reasons why this parable is a particularly valuable way of introducing Muslims to the message of Jesus:

1. It is a story told by Jesus himself.
2. It presents the message of Jesus in the form of a story.
3. The parable teaches the essence of the good news proclaimed by Jesus: God loves all people, his love is unexpected (we don't expect him to love the rebellious), he demonstrates his love in action and this is costly for him, "since in a sense he suffers in the process of forgiving sins" (312).
4. The parable comes out of a culture similar to the culture of much of the Muslim world. For example, "who could imagine a younger son asking for his share of the inheritance while his father is still alive? Should a father not punish his sons when they dishonour the name of the family?"
5. The teaching of the parable is especially appropriate for the Muslim mind. As with the returning prodigal Muslims are taught to think of themselves relating to God as "servants". The father, however, wants to welcome the prodigal back as a son.

Chapman also provides three reasons for recommending Luke's Gospel as the one to give to Muslims:

1. The Christology is a little easier to appreciate.
2. The fuller birth narratives may be of special interest to Muslims.
3. It makes a lot of sense for Muslims to go on to Acts after Luke.

Chapman also recommends use of the Bible Society of Lebanon production *The Message of the Tawrat, the Zabur and the Injil*, now translated into many languages (www.biblesociety.org.lb). The studies make the following points:

1. God is one and has created us to serve and love him.
2. God gives us his laws.
3. God warns us of the consequences of failure to keep his laws.
4. God is merciful and loving and wants to forgive.
5. God revealed to his prophets that he would come among us.
6. God sent Jesus the Messiah as his Word through a miraculous birth and gave him miraculous powers.
7. God gave Jesus the Messiah the message of the *injil* (the gospel)
8. God demonstrated his love for sinful people through the death of Jesus the Messiah.
9. God raised Jesus from death.
10. God gave his Spirit to the disciples who recognized Jesus as God's Messiah and God's Word

Chapter 34. Rethinking and Restating the Gospel

Chapman cautions against simplistically thinking that the resistance of Muslims to the gospel is all due to reasons on their side. He emphasizes the need to work hard at finding ways to communicate the gospel in ways that Muslims will understand.

Chapman presents three themes and in each case begins with a study of that theme in the Qur'an before turning to that same theme in the Bible:

1. God and his prophets

Chapman summarises Islamic teaching as follows:

- (1) A *rasul* (messenger/apostle) is sent with divine Scripture to guide and reform humankind, especially Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad.
- (2) All prophets teach the message of Islam to guide a group or nation. There are 25 prophets mentioned in the Qur'an and 124,000 in Islamic tradition.
- (3) All prophets are moral exemplars protected by God from serious sin and bad diseases.
- (4) All prophets must be accepted and no prophet should be treated more highly than any other.
- (5) Many prophets are mocked and rejected, but evidently God is normally obliged to rescue them.
- (6) Some of the prophets, however, were wrongfully killed (Abel, Zecharias and Yahya).
- (7) Muhammad is "the seal of the prophets" (33:40).

In the course Chapman pointed out that the Islamic view is that prophethood fully meets the human need so that there is no need for an incarnation. He also noted that Muslims are generally unaware of many Old Testament prophets such as Ezekiel and Hosea.

Chapman suggests using Jeremiah as a point of contact, observing some superficial similarities between the call of Jeremiah and the call of Muhammad. Remembering that Muhammad is thought to be "almost like a typewriter used by God to deliver his word" it is interesting to note that at times Jeremiah recited the words given to him by God. Jeremiah like Muhammad preaches God's judgment. In very un-Islamic fashion Jeremiah shares the anguish of God over his sinful people. Chapman continues with observations from the career of Jeremiah by way of developing a Christian understanding of prophethood. With a view to showing the necessity for the sufferings of Christ, he recommends using the story of Jeremiah to drive home:

- the depth of human perversity involved in rejecting the Word of God
- the integral nature of suffering in the experience of God's prophets
- the suffering of God reflected in the suffering of God's prophets
- the fact that God does not always rescue his suffering prophets

2. God and his Word

Chapman begins by noting how Jesus is spoken of as God's Word in the Qur'an (3:45; 4:171), observing that the traditional Muslim interpretation is that Jesus is called this because he was created by the Word of God. It is possible Muhammad came across the title "Word" from heretical Christian sources, though, of course, this thought is anathema to Muslims. Chapman suggests that this title opens up the possibility of explaining what Christians mean when they call Jesus "the Word" and proceeds to unpack this.

3. God and his Mercy

The Qur'an teaches:

- (1) God is merciful and forgiving.
- (2) God loves certain kinds of (noble) people and does not love other kinds of (ignoble) people.
- (3) Forgiveness is associated with obedience to God and Muhammad.
- (4) God's forgiveness is inscrutable; he forgives whom he wills.
- (5) We cannot be sure of forgiveness; God will show mercy on the day of judgment.

(6) There is no forgiveness for certain sins, especially *shirk*.

Chapman then summarises the relationship between God and his mercy in the teaching of Jesus, especially using the Parable of the Two Lost Sons (Prodigal Son), drawing obvious points of contrast with Islamic views of mercy and forgiveness.

Chapter 35. Strategies for the Church. What Can We Do Together?

This is a chapter of questions in which Chapman asks us to consider strategies for such things as:

- Meeting Muslims
- Serving Muslims and serving the community with Muslims
- Recognizing political issues of importance to Muslims and working with or for Muslims on issues where appropriate
- Determining what input we need to give Christians in our churches to help them understand Islam and reach out to Muslims
- Making contact with Muslim leaders
- The implications of Islam for schools
- Supporting and setting aside people to minister to Muslims
- Ensuring prayer for Muslims⁹
- Identifying key strategies for evangelizing Muslims
- Learning from churches in Muslim countries and supporting them

For all these areas Chapman encourages us to think what can be done by us as individuals, as individual churches and as churches cooperating together in a particular area.

The course book also has a helpful section on "11 September 2001 and 'Islamic Terrorism'" (pp24-27). Chapman notes a variety of Muslim responses:

1. These were genuinely Islamic actions carried out against the enemies of Islam in accordance with Islamic teaching (Hijacker; Al-Muhajirun).
2. These actions cannot possibly be justified in terms of Islamic teaching (Dr Zaki Badawi, Ziauddin Sardar).
3. We sympathise with their motives, but can neither support nor condemn their actions.

Chapman also notes a variety of Christian responses:

1. This has nothing to do with Islam.
2. These actions show the true nature of Islam. This is real Islam exposed in its true colours (Dr Patrick Sookhdeo).
3. Islam can be expressed in different ways - some of which can be identified in Islamic sources (Dr Peter Riddell).

¹ The lunar year is around 10 days shorter than the solar year. Consequently, festivals occur about 11 days earlier each year. Muslims have their own names for the twelve months of the year. The first sighting of the new moon at the beginning of the ninth month of the Islamic calendar signals the start of the fast of Ramadan.

² Today this is the city of Constantinople. It was once believed that the city had been founded by Keroessa, the daughter of the moon-goddess Io-Hera. When the Muslims conquered the city in AD 1453 the crescent had already been a centuries-old Turkish symbol.

³ In the course Chapman pointed out that the Qur'an simply speaks of Abraham being willing to sacrifice his son and does not name the son. However, it is the fixed dogma of Islamic scholars that the son was Ishmael. Sacrifice is involved in the feast but it has nothing to do with the removal of sin.

⁴ This is the most significant event in Muhammad's life next to receiving the Qur'an. Years in the Islamic calendar are all dated from this central event. So, e.g. AD 1994 = 1414/1415 Anno Hegirae.

⁵ In the course Chapman pointed out that the ban on alcohol is due to the application of the principle of abrogation in the Qur'an, since earlier verses simply prohibited drunkenness while later ones prohibited alcohol altogether.

⁶ In the course Chapman pointed out that the Qur'an does not require the complete covering of women but rather speaks of the need for modest dress. The covering of women in black from head to toe appears to be a pre-Islamic practice.

⁷ As was noted in the course many Muslims argue that while they are allowed to have up to four wives in reality the ideal is monogamy because in practice it is hard to treat more than one wife equally.

⁸ In the course Chapman observed that Muslims perceive priests to function as mediators and by contrast claim to have direct access to God.

⁹ In the course Chapman asked penetratingly when in our church intercessory prayers we last heard a prayer for the Muslim community.