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**THE PROPHETHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST
IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY:
A BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO MUSLIMS**

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ABSTRACT

The research is directed to correct some erroneous views that certain people have concerning Islam and Christianity. They included the beliefs that the two religions are the same in essence; both of them are efficacious for the salvation of humanity and so, Christianity has no message for the Muslims.

On the basis of this, Christians have been encouraged to witness to Muslims about the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. They were also urged to appreciate Christianity and be more faithful in their religious obligations. Moreover, they are enlightened to dialogue with their Muslim neighbours vis-a-vis the prophethood of Christ, the nature of God and the concept of sin and atonement.

Besides, Muslims and Christians are earnestly requested to live harmoniously with one another in an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence. Therefore, they are asked to show love and acceptance to one another wherever they meet.

The method employed to achieve these objectives are a study of the Christian and Islamic doctrines as well as a comparative analysis of them. It also includes a sociological consideration of these doctrines and an evangelical approach.

It was discovered that, the Islamic belief about predestination in which God is believed to have programmed the affairs of humanity is capable of making a person to deny the responsibility of his or her wrong doings. At the same time, it nullifies the notion which claims that sin came into the world via the fall of Adam and his wife, Eve. However, that God by reason of His mercy and compassion will not just destroy and save those He wishes without counting on their response to the means of salvation which He has provided for them. Moreover, its claim of the second coming of Christ in order to judge only the Christians and destroy them is a biased concept that lacks credibility due to the impartial nature of God. The idea that He would die after living for a while at His return is inconsistent with His acclaimed ascension when He first came.

Hence, it is advised that more research be conducted on Islamic belief about **Jesus Christ**. This is with the impression that the process would provide better **understanding** of His nature and purpose to the Muslims.

B. CONCLUSION

Interestingly, the Quran confirms the above. First, it says that those who follow Jesus Christ will be placed higher than those who do not. Also that believers in Him will be blessed while the unbelievers will be punished (Quran 3:55-56, 60). Moreover, the Bible asserts that whoever believes is already saved and whoever does not is already condemned (John 3:16-18). Thus, Christ indeed is the Way, and the Truth that gives life forever (John 14:6). The Quran says, He should be obeyed (Quran 43:61; 3:50)

Second, the Quran like the Bible warns that unless an individual believes before his or her death, he or she cannot be forgiven (Quran 4:149; 2 Corinthians 6:2; John 3:16-18; 5:24). Hence, there is no error in expressing faith in the Lordship of Christ. To believe in it is to be saved.

¹¹Ghabril, p. 99.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To My Muslim Relations

a. Prayerfully consider the above. God answers and directs anyone who sincerely seeks Him. He convinces of the truth.

b. Thank God and ask Him to help you to respond adequately. He requires an appropriate response from us. A response is beneficial to the observer.

c. Learn to listen to Him. That is make it a duty to do nothing else but what He says. You will encounter oppositions from within and outside. But a resolution to abide by God's will encourages one to be determined.

d. Note that nothing else than salvation profits most here and hereafter. Therefore, shun shame, and whatever is at stake and claim the best you can get on earth. God by His love and faithfulness will help you against the odd.

e. Make a promise not to deny Him. Therefore, pray for the ability to follow and obey Him. He requires that the believer should live by His will.

f. Get a matured Christian or pastor to help you to understand Christianity and the Bible in a better way. You will have questions that cannot be overlooked. Most of what you know before may not be true. Moreover, there is a lot you still do not know. For effective Christian living you have to be guided.

g. Begin to attend a church. Fellowship, and worship is necessary for the growth of a Christian.

h. Get a Bible and begin to study it prayerfully. You will also have to participate in corporate Bible study and prayer. They will enrich your Christian knowledge and growth, and the fulfilment of its obligations.

2. To my Christian Brethren

a. Thank God for His gift of life. be sure you are saved indeed. Recommit yourself afresh to Him for the many things you have come to know through this research.

b. Pray for Muslims to know and accept the truth about Christ. Some are sincere seekers after God. They believe as Muslims that they are in God's will, and doing what he requires. Perhaps there are some who have known the truth but are hindered by fear of persecution, shame of changing from one religion to another, the loss of reputation, position, etc.

c. Prayerfully begin to share the Gospel with Muslims. They cannot know except they are told.

d. Love and accept them. When they know you are truly or well disposed to them, they will be friendly with you. They will also be willing to listen and discuss with you.

e. You should not argue with them. That is do not try to win them over by struggling. You should avoid a holier-than-thou approach of yourself or Christianity as against a Muslim or Islam. If not, you will lose them because of the fear of defeat and inferiority. However, it is God that convinced and not a person. Therefore, you should only do your best to present the gospel as it is.

f. Seek for a conducive environment and time to witness. A rowdy situation will cause distraction and lack of concentration.

g. Do not compromise your faith and commitment. As you try to help them to believe in Christ they will also do the same to make you a Muslim.

h. Do not be hasty; go step by step. Otherwise, you will not be thorough in your witness. Your effort may be assumed to be competitive as well.

i. If you do not succeed, you should not regret or be discouraged. The fault may not be yours. However, the more you are involved in sharing, the more experienced you become. Besides, the Lord is the One who convicts and the individual is opened to make a decision of its own.

j. Invite and lead a willing prospect to the Church. He or she becomes your disciple and you have to train him or her to know and do what Christianity entails.

k. In the case of conversion you should inform your pastor. He should be willing to discuss with the convert(s) and help you to make an appropriate follow-up. He will also get the church involved if need be.

l. Encourage a prospect or a convert not to give up. There will be oppositions and causes of discouragement even from the Christian side. You should always pray and enlighten him or her. You should also seek help from other Christians with his or her knowledge.

m. Do not rush for testimony. It may pose a risk to the convert from other Muslims. He needs protection as a baby. Let him or her grow first.

n. Be careful in your dealings. Some people may disguise themselves as new Muslim converts seeking for help. Whereas, they are dupers and agents searching for information.¹

o. Do not engage or agree to a debate. It does not help in witnessing. The Gospel is not shared by competition. Therefore you should encourage and seek for dialogue. This will enable you to learn and share God's gift of life with others.

p. Get and study other materials or book(s) on Muslim evangelism. They will broaden your knowledge and understanding of Islam and the Muslims, as well as provide you with more skill for witnessing to them.¹²

¹²Some of the above points are found in the following books: Anonymous, Christian Witness Among Muslims: A Handbook Written Especially for Christians of Africa (South of Sahara) (Achimota: African Christian Press, 1977), pp. 8-9; Nicola Yacoub Ghabril, Themes for the Diligent (Rikon: The Good Way, n.d.), p. 7; Bill A. Musk, The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel With Ordinary Muslims (Sutherland: MARC, 1989), pp. 18, 259; Marie Van Lear, Neighbours: Christians and Muslims (Ibadan: Publication Board, Nigerian Baptist Convention, nd.), p. 50ff.